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John Ash and the Rise of the Children's Grammar

Navest, K.M.

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John Ash and the Rise of the Children's Grammar

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<i>overige leden</i>	Prof. dr. P.G. Hoftijzer
	Prof. dr. I. Sluiter
	Dr. D. Stoker (University of Wales, Aberystwyth, UK)

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For my parents

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	v
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1. The teaching of English grammar	1
1.2. The concept of unacknowledged copying	8
1.3. John Ash and his grammar	10
1.4. Aims.....	12
1.5. Outline of the thesis	14
Chapter 2. John Ash, his life and his grammar	19
2.1. Introduction	19
2.2. John Ash's life	20
2.3. Publication history of the grammar	24
2.3.1. The first five editions of Ash's grammar	24
2.3.2. Ryland's editions of Ash's grammar	26
2.3.3. British editions and reprints of Ash's grammar.....	36
2.4. The reception of Ash's grammar	45
2.5. Conclusion.....	60
Chapter 3. Ash's grammar: its sources, structure and approach	63
3.1. Introduction	63
3.2. Ash's use of sources	66
3.3. The structure of Ash's grammar	80
3.4. John Ash: prescriptive or descriptive grammarian?	86
3.5. The fourth edition of Ash's grammar	93
3.6. Conclusion.....	98
Chapter 4. Ash's influence across the Atlantic	101
4.1. Introduction	101
4.2. The publication of Ash's grammar in North America	103

4.3. A tale of two grammars: Ash's <i>Grammatical Institutes</i> and Webster's <i>Grammatical Institute of the English Language</i>	109
4.4. The popularity of Murray's grammar	118
4.5. Murray's dependence on Ash	121
4.6. Conclusion.....	128
Chapter 5. Female users of Ash's grammar	131
5.1. Introduction	131
5.2. Ash's <i>Grammatical Institutes</i> and the Young Ladies' Boarding School	133
5.3. Ash's grammar studied by women	138
5.4. Ash's <i>Grammatical Institutes</i> and the teacher-grammarians	144
5.5. Conclusion.....	151
Chapter 6. "Borrowing a few passages": Lady Ellenor Fenn's dependence on Ash's <i>Grammatical Institutes</i>	153
6.1. Introduction	153
6.2. Lady Ellenor Fenn: life and works	155
6.3. Fenn's little treatises on grammar	167
6.4. Ash's grammar as a source of inspiration for Fenn	182
6.5. Differences between the grammars by Ash and Fenn.....	189
6.6. Conclusion.....	200
Chapter 7. Fenn and nineteenth-century female grammarians	203
7.1. Introduction	203
7.2. Fenwick's <i>Rays from the Rainbow</i>	204
7.3. Ballantine's <i>Decoy</i>	207
7.4. Marcet's <i>Mary's Grammar</i>	210
7.5. Corner's <i>Play Grammar</i>	216
7.6. More nineteenth-century grammars for children.....	219
7.7. Conclusion.....	225
Chapter 8. Conclusion.....	227

Appendix 1	235
Appendix 2	251
References	255
Primary sources.....	255
Secondary sources	269
Samenvatting	293
Curriculum Vitae	301

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. The teaching of English grammar

On 1 February 1770, Hester Lynch Thrale (1741–1821), an eighteenth-century literary hostess who is nowadays best remembered for her close friendship with Dr Johnson (1709–1784), recorded in her journal, also known as the “Children’s or rather Family Book” (ed. Hyde 1977: vii–viii) that her eldest daughter

Hester Maria Thrale was four Years and nine Months old when I lay in of Lucy; and then I first began to teach her Grammar shewing her the Difference between a Substantive and an Adjective as I lay in Bed (ed. Hyde 1977: 34).

Hester Maria, otherwise known as Queeney (1764–1857), a nickname Dr Johnson had given to her, may have been a precocious child (cf. Navest 2003: 1–2; Navest 2010), but teaching grammar to very young children was by no means unusual in eighteenth-century Britain. Michael (1970: 550) informs us about John Ash (1724?–1779), a minister at Pershore (Worcester) who wrote a grammar called *Grammatical Institutes: or grammar, adapted to the genius of the English tongue* (1760) for his five-year-old daughter. The grammar proved to be a success since the little girl “learnt and repeated the whole in a short Time” (Ash 1766: Advertisement). The production of grammars during the 1760s was the result of the codification process of the English language which involved “the laying down of rules for the language in grammars and dictionaries which would serve as authoritative handbooks for its speakers” (Nevalainen and Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2006: 283; see also Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008a: 1). Since England did not have an Academy which would have produced an authoritative English grammar, many individuals had taken it upon themselves to compose grammars (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008a: 4), and Ash was one of them.

During the second half of the eighteenth century the ambitions of middle-class parents for the education of their sons and daughters created a market for

such works (Beal 2004: 105). Because of the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and the fact that the economy had “shifted from being land-based to money-based”, a person born into lower classes could now “rise to a higher position in society” (Beal 2004: 93). In order to improve their social and economic status, many members of the middle class started to imitate their superiors in every possible way (Miller 1972: 304). However, while they were trying to imitate the language of the class above them, these people came to realise that there were “some linguistic variants that were ‘better’ or more prestigious than others, but that they themselves did not always use these” (Beal 2004: 94). They were thus in need of guides to good English (Beal 2004: 94), works which would teach them the so-called “language of gentlemen” i.e. “the kind of upper class educated English used in ‘polite’ London circles” (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000a: 883; see also Leonard 1929: 169).

The most popular normative text at the time that seemed “to guarantee social mobility”, according to Fitzmaurice (1998: 309), was Robert Lowth’s (1710–1787) *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762). Due to the popularity of the work, Lowth’s name soon became synonymous with prescriptive grammar (McArthur 1992, s.v. “Lowth”). Lowth’s grammar is famous for its footnotes, in which he quotes the “best Authors” who break the rules of grammar, as in “For ever in this humble cell *Let Thee* and *I*, my fair one, dwell. Prior. It ought to be *Me*.” (Lowth 1762: ix; 117n). Although Lowth stated in the preface to his grammar that “[t]he principal design of a Grammar of any Language is to teach us to express ourselves with propriety in that Language, and to be able to judge of every phrase and form of construction, whether it be right or not” (1762: x), he also argued that English grammar could prepare children for the study of Latin: “if children were first taught the common principles of Grammar by some short and clear System of *English Grammar*,” he argued, “which happily by its simplicity and facility is perhaps of all others the fittest for such a purpose, they would have some notion of what they were going about, when they should enter into the *Latin Grammar*” (1762: xiii).

While carrying out research on the publication history of Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762), Tieken-Boon van Ostade discovered two autograph letters that indicate that the grammar was originally written for the author's eldest son Thomas Henry (1753–1778), who was about four years old at the time his father embarked on it (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000b: 25–26; 2003: 43). In the first of these two letters, addressed to the translator and classical and biblical scholar James Merrick (1720–1769), Lowth noted: "The history of it [i.e. the grammar] is this: I drew it up for the use of my little Boy, for the reasons mentioned in the Preface" (Lowth to James Merrick; ca. 8 February 1762). In the second letter, addressed to Joseph Spence (1699–1768) and written shortly after the publication of the grammar, we find him writing: "I am very glad You approve of Tom's Grammar, on its appearance in y^e. world" (Lowth to Joseph Spence, 2 March 1762).

However, it turns out that this is not the only evidence that Lowth originally wrote the grammar to facilitate his young son's introduction to the Latin tongue. The example sentences in the following quotations taken from *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* similarly show that Lowth must have had his "little Boy" in mind while composing the work that brought him fame (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2010a: 357–358):

the relation of Possession, or Belonging, is often expressed by a Case, or a different ending of the Substantive. This Case answers to the Genitive Case in Latin, and may still be so called; tho' perhaps more properly the Possessive Case. Thus, "God's grace: " which may also be expressed by the Preposition; as, "the grace of God." It was formerly written *Godis* grace: we now very improperly always shorten it with an Apostrophe, even tho' we are obliged to pronounce it fully; as, "**Thomas's book**:" that is, "**Thomas's book**;" not "*Thomas his book*," as it is commonly supposed. (1762: 25–26)

A Verb Active expresses an Action, and necessarily implies an agent, and an object acted upon: as, *to love*; "**I love Thomas**."

A Verb Passive expresses a Passion, or a Suffering, or the receiving of an Action; and necessarily implies an Object acted upon, and an Agent by which it is acted upon: as, *to be loved*; "**Thomas is loved by me**." (1762: 44)

1st Phrase: The Substantive before a Verb Active, Passive, or Neuter; when it is said what thing *is*, *does*, or *is done*: as, "I am;" "Thou writest;" "**Thomas is**

loved:” where *I, Thou, Thomas*, are the Nominative Cases, and answer to the question *who, or what?* as, “**Who is loved? Thomas.**” (1762: 96–97)

Although Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2010a: 358) observes that the brief examples in the above-mentioned quotations from Lowth’s grammar could easily be memorized by children, she also draws our attention to the fact that “[t]he rest of the text in these passages” is aimed rather at a scholarly audience than at young learners.

In 1762 the *Critical Review* described “the ‘method of arrangement’ of Lowth’s text as ‘a little embarrassed, so as not to be easily comprehended, or retained, by young beginners’” (Percy 1997: 131). Lowth’s *Short Introduction to English Grammar* was thus received as a scholarly treatise rather than as a grammar suitable for a young child (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2010a: 356). In the preface to his *New Grammar of the English Language* (1771), Daniel Fenning (1714/15–1767) indeed referred to Lowth’s grammar as a work “much fitter for Men of Letters than for Youth at school” (1771: v). In his *English Rudiments, or an easy introduction to English grammar for the use of schools* (1771), which served as an “Introduction to his Lordship’s [i.e. Lowth’s] Grammar”, the reverend Matthew Raine (*fl.* 1771) similarly remarked:

The Grammatical Treatise, which he [i.e. Lowth] published some Years since, will supersede any future Attempts for the Instruction of Adults, in the English Language; I say Adults, for his Lordship’s grammar, one may be allowed the Expression, is too perfect, that is, too scientific for Children. It was never intended as the first Rudiments for Beginners, who are by no means able to carry on a Chain of Reasoning in lengthened Periods, and long Sections; but ought to have all their Instructions reduced into the Form of Rules, and these as detached, and short as possible (Raine 1771: vi).

The views of Fenning and Raine were supported by the anonymous author of *A Short English Grammar, designed principally for children* (1794) and by William Milns in his *Well-Bred Scholar, or practical essays on the best methods of improving the taste, and assisting the exertions of youth in their literary pursuits* (1794). Although the author of *A Short English Grammar* regarded Lowth’s work as “an admirable composition”, he believed that the work was “rather calculated to gratify the critical curiosity of one who has already perfected his

Education, than to be useful to a Child who is just beginning it; and does not seem to possess either the perspicuity or conciseness necessary for a student scarcely emerged from the nursery" (1794: iii). In his *Well-Bred Scholar* Milns referred to Lowth's grammar as "the most elegant grammatical performance to be met with in any language", but also observed that "[s]ome parts of it, however, chiefly the notes, and his remarks on the structure of sentences, have been found too difficult for the ordinary comprehension of children" (1794: 11).

That Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* was not an elementary grammar but a more advanced work is further confirmed by Anna Porter (later Larpent) (1758–1832), who noted in her diary in 1778 how she had studied Lowth's grammar before teaching English grammar to her thirteen-year-old sister Clara (1764–1833) (as quoted from Skedd 1997a: 192–193):

We studied Grammar thus. She had gone through all the usual rules. I had carefully studied Lowth, the Hermes, &c. – I began Lowth with her – we read a small portion attentively, taking in an unbroken instruction, illustration &c. When I had simplified it as much as possible, I reverted out tasks. She explained it to me. I then formed the days Lesson into concise Questions, & She from her recollection of it, furnished the answer, all written down.

The fact that Porter had to simplify Lowth's grammar while teaching her younger sister implies that the work was even too difficult for children who, like Clara, had already been initiated in the rudiments of English grammar. It is interesting that Porter herself had followed the advice given by Lowth in the preface to his grammar to study James Harris's *Hermes* (1751) after having read his own work (Lowth 1762: xiv–xv). It is worth mentioning that if Porter's mother, Clarissa Catherine Porter (*d.* 1766) (*ODNB*, s.v. Larpent, Anna Margaretta), had still been alive at the time, it most likely would have been her who had taught Clara English grammar. From the 1770s onwards it had become the mother's task to teach "her children language that would signal their good breeding and distinguish them from parvenus and servants" (Percy 2003: 74–75).

A knowledge of grammar served as an important marker of class, as can also be inferred from the following extract from George Eliot's (1819–1880) *Middlemarch* (1871–2) in which Mrs Garth explains to her son Ben why she is teaching him English grammar:

'I hate grammar. What's the use of it?' 'To teach you to speak and write correctly, so that you can be understood,' said Mrs Garth, with severe precision. 'Should you like to speak as old Job does?' 'Yes,' said Ben, stoutly; 'it's funnier. He says, "Yo goo" – that's just as good as "You go".' [...] 'These things belong only to pronunciation, which is the least part of grammar,' said Mrs Garth [...] Job has only to speak about very plain things. How do you think you would write or speak about anything more difficult, if you knew no more of grammar than he does? You would use wrong words, and put words in the wrong places, and instead of making people understand you, they would turn away from you as a tiresome person. What would you do then?' (Eliot [1871–2] 1994: 244–245).

Apart from identifying parts of speech and parsing sentences, until the middle of the nineteenth century most pupils were expected to learn the rules of grammar, or at least part of it, by heart (Michael 1987: 321; 347). Lyman (1922: 115) indeed informs us about a schoolboy who in 1765 recorded that "at six [...] I learned the English grammar in Dilworth by heart". It must be clear that the young pupil had been busy studying Thomas Dilworth's (d. 1780) *A New Guide to the English Tongue* (1740), a highly popular spelling-book which also included "A Practical English grammar", written in the form of question and answer, a common approach at the time:

Q. *What is a Noun Substantive?*

A. A Noun *Substantive* is the name of any Being or Thing, perceivable either by the Senses, or the Understanding; as a *Horse*, a *Book* (Dilworth [1740] 1751: 97).

Another pupil, Elizabeth Grant (1797–1885), noted in her Memoirs that upon the arrival in 1804 of her new governess, Miss Gardiner, "the large edition of Lindley Murray's grammar" (Grant 1898: 24–25) was put into her hands. According to Grant, who was seven years old at the time of her first grammar lesson,

[i]t was never any trouble to me to have to get whole passages off by rote; I was not asked to take the further trouble of thinking about them. No explanations were either asked or given, so that the brain was by no means over-excited, and

the writing and cyphering and pianoforte lesson which followed the drier studies of the morning pleased me exceedingly (1898: 25; see also Percy 2008a).

Frances Mary Buss (1827–1894), headmistress of the North London Collegiate School, similarly remembered a “school in Kentish Town kept by a Miss Cook”, where she had been sent by her grandparents before attending “a more advanced school in Hampstead” at the age of ten. The school “simply consist[ed] of children learning Murray’s Grammar” (*ODNB*, s.v. Buss, Frances Mary). Interestingly, it is also Murray’s *English Grammar* which Ben Garth is made to study in *Middlemarch* (Eliot [1871–2] 1994: 244).

Lindley Murray’s (1745–1826) popular *English Grammar, adapted to the different classes of learners*, was first published in York in 1795. Alston (1965: 92–96) records no fewer than 65 numbered British editions of the work until 1867. According to Jones (1996: 65), the success of Murray’s grammar lay in its attention to layout. In Murray’s grammar a young learner could find “[t]he most important definitions, rules, and observations” of English grammar “printed with a larger type” (Murray 1795: iv). Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1996a: 18) believes that it must have been due to the learnability of the rules in Lindley Murray’s *English Grammar* that nineteenth-century authors such as William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863) and Herman Melville (1819–1891) were still able to quote “Murray from memory” many years later. Charles Dickens (1812–1870), too, must have been taught the rudiments of English grammar with the help of Murray’s popular work, as is pointed out by Sørensen (1984: 238), who came across a quotation from the grammar in Chapter 2 of *Dombey and Son* (1846–1848):

“My dear Louisa,” said Miss Tox, “is the vacancy still unsupplied?” “You good soul, yes,” said Mrs Chick. “Then, my dear Louisa,” returned Miss Tox, “I hope and believe – but in one moment, my dear, I’ll introduce the party.” Running downstairs again as fast as she had run up, Miss Tox got the party out of the hackney-coach, and soon returned with it under convoy. It then appeared that she had used the word, not in its legal or business acceptance, when it merely expresses an individual, but as **a noun of multitude, or signifying many [cf. Murray 1795: 94]**: for Miss Tox escorted a plump rosy-cheeked wholesome apple-faced young woman, with an infant in her arms; a younger woman not so

plump, but apple-faced also, who led a plump and apple-faced child in each hand; another plump and also apple-faced boy who walked by himself; and finally, a plump and apple-faced man, who carried in his arms another plump and apple-faced boy [...] (Dickens [1846–1848] 2002: 24; emphasis mine, as throughout).

It is interesting to note that the definition is the same as the one found in the second edition of Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (see Tiekens-Boon van Ostade 2011: 7–8). This is not strange, since Vorlat (1959a: 110) has pointed out that Lowth was one of the main sources Murray had relied on while compiling his popular work.

1.2. The concept of unacknowledged copying

Murray's grammar was not an original work, but "a new compilation" of the "most useful matter" as he noted himself (Murray 1795: iii). But it was by no means the first compilation to appear on the market. In the preface to *The Accidence, or first rudiments of English grammar* (1775), the female grammarian and schoolmistress Ellin Devis (1746–1820) had similarly stated that "The following Pages are not offered as entirely new; the greatest Part is selected from the Works of our best Grammarians" (1775: v). It was indeed quite common for eighteenth-century grammarians to borrow from their predecessors, as is shown by the following English grammars, which are all mentioned in Volume I of Alston's *Bibliography of the English Language from the Invention of Printing to the Year 1800* (Alston 1965: 69; 76; 90; 92):

Egelsham, Wells (1781) *A short sketch of English grammar; intended for the use of such as study that language only: consisting of a few **rules abstracted chiefly from** Johnson, Lowth, Ash, etc.*

[A., M.] (1785) *The elementary principles of English grammar, **collected from** various authors; but chiefly from Dr. Priestley, and printed for private use.*

Mennye, J. (1785) *An English grammar; being a **compilation** from the works of such grammarians as have acquired the approbation of the public.*

Scott, William (1793) *A short system of English grammar; with examples of improper and inelegant construction, and Scotticisms: **selected chiefly from Lowth's Introduction to English Grammar.***

Miller, Alexander (1795) *A concise grammar of the English language. With an appendix chiefly **extracted from** Dr. Lowth's critical notes.*

The practice of dropping names of popular grammarians in the titles of grammars seems to have been a selling device at the time (cf. Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008b), and the above titles are no exception to this. On the other hand, there were also authors who acknowledged their sources in the prefaces to their grammars. In the preface to his *Rudiments of English Grammar, adapted to the use of schools* (1761), the famous dissenter Joseph Priestley (1733–1804), for instance, informed his readers:

It is not denied that use hath been made of other Grammars, and particularly of Mr. *Johnson's*, in compiling this: But it is apprehended, that there is so much that is properly original, both in the materials and the disposition of them in this, as is more than sufficient to clear a work of such a nature from the charge of plagiarism (1761: iv).

Priestley probably decided to add this information because he did not want to run the risk of being accused of plagiarism. His remark is exceptional, since many of his contemporaries copied without acknowledging their sources (Vorlat 1959a: 125), and Lindley Murray is a good example of such a grammarian. Despite the fact that he had declared that his grammar was not original, people thought of him as a plagiarist because he had not taken sufficient care to acknowledge his sources (Vorlat 1959a: 109; see also Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1996b: 88). Being publicly accused of plagiarism affected Murray so much that in the 1798 edition of his grammar he noted:

In a work which professes itself to be a compilation, and which, from the nature and design of it, must consist of materials selected from the writing of others, it is scarcely necessary to apologize for the use which the Compiler has made of his predecessors' labours; or so omitting to insert their names [...] But if this could have been generally done, a work of this nature would derive no advantage from it, equal to the inconvenience of crowding the pages with a repetition of names and references. It is, however, proper to acknowledge in general terms that the authors to whom the grammatical part of this compilation is principally indebted for its materials, are Harris, Johnson, Lowth, Priestley, Beattie, Sheridan, and Walker (1798: 6–7).

His main reason for not acknowledging his sources was that he did not want to crowd the pages of his grammar “with a repetition of names and references” (1798: 7), which would confuse his young target audience. It will become clear that Murray was not alone in doing this.

1.3. John Ash and his grammar

As shown above, Lowth was not the only parent engaged in writing a grammar at the time. The Pershore minister John Ash had similarly composed a grammar for his five-year-old daughter, which was first published in Worcester in 1760. The main difference between the two men, however, was that Ash understood much better than Lowth what it took to write a children’s grammar (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2003: 43). In the advertisement to the 1766 and 1768 editions of Ash’s grammar, which both carried the subtitle “The easiest introduction to Dr. Lowth’s English grammar”, Ash’s friend, John Collett Ryland (1723–1792), a Baptist minister and headmaster of a boys’ boarding school in Northampton, remarked that

[t]he Editor of this new Impression [i.e. Ryland], who has been engaged in the Province of instructing Youth for near eighteen Years, has pursued many Methods of teaching the first Rudiments of our own Tongue – and for six Years past has made full Trial of Mr. Ash’s Grammar, upon at least sixty Scholars; and he is obliged in Justice and Gratitude to his worthy Friend to own, that nothing of this Kind has succeeded so well – it is really surprising to see how easily it is learnt and recollected by many Children under ten Years of Age (1766: Advertisement; see also Michael 1970: 550).

Ash’s “somewhat more elementary manual” (Baugh and Cable [1951] 2002: 275) was, however, presented very differently from Lowth’s grammar in that its material appeared in the form of brief numbered rules that could be easily memorized by children (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2003: 43).

Ash’s grammar was extremely popular. Reaching fifty editions and reprints down to 1810, it was the second most popular grammar of the period, after Murray’s *English Grammar* (1795) (see Alston 1965). In addition, Ash’s

grammar was twice translated into German (Alston 1965: 32–38). While the year 1775 saw the appearance of *Herrn John Ash Grammatikalische Anleitung zur Englischen Sprache*, it was not until 1790 that a German translation of Lowth's grammar was brought out (1965: 34; 47). The year before, in 1789, a new edition of Ash's grammar, translated by Christian Heinrich Reichel, had been published entitled *Grammatische Anweisung; oder eine leichte einleitung in D. Lowth's Englische sprachlehre für schulen* (Alston 1965: 36). Since Lowth's name is mentioned in the title, this work might have prompted the publication of *D. Lowth's Englische Sprachlehre, mit kritischen noten*, especially since this translation was also by Reichel (Alston 1965: 47). Ash's grammar thus contributed to the development of English as a world language from 1775 onwards. This was considerably earlier than the first publication of Murray's grammar which Osselton (1996) regarded as the starting point of this development (see also Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1996a: 17; Klippel 1996: 99).

Ash's *Grammatical Institutes; or, an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar*, as it was called from 1769 onwards, was among the twenty-five eighteenth-century grammar books selected by Alston for his facsimile and microfilm series (1967–70), as being among “the most relevant books on linguistics” (Görlach 2001: 18). The work was also one of the five grammars chosen for the CD-ROM *Landmarks in English Grammar. The eighteenth century* (ed. Nelson 1998), which, according to Nelson (1998), were selected “for their importance in the history of English grammar, for their contemporary influence, and for their influence on later writers”. In spite of his grammar's popularity, Ash is not discussed in *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* (McArthur 1992) or *The Lexicon Grammaticorum* (Stammerjohann et al. 1996; Stammerjohann et al. 2009; see also Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000a: 876). Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* has not, moreover, been the focus of much scholarly research. Vorlat's 1959 article about the publication history of Ash's grammar and Downey's introduction to the facsimile edition of the 1785 edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, printed in Worcester, Massachusetts

(Downey 1979), are the only sources from which we can gain some information about Ash's popular grammar. Since it was a school textbook rather than a children's book, Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* has also been brushed aside by historians of children's literature (Avery 1995: 2), even though the work can be found among many special collections of children's literature. It therefore is the main purpose of the present study to prove that scholarly neglect of Ash and his grammar has been unfounded.

1.4. Aims

This study aims to present a detailed account of Ash's grammar, its contents as well as its influence on later grammarians. An analysis of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* in relation to other eighteenth-century grammars for children, which were all one way or other influenced by his work, will throw light on the evolution of grammars specifically written for a young audience. Not only will these grammarians' adaptations of Ash's grammar be analysed, it will also be investigated how their approaches differed from the one adopted by Ash. In addition, it will be shown that the most suitable grammars for children had a basis in sound pedagogical views that were in the process of being developed at the time.

Although some of the grammars presented here were consulted during research visits to the British and Bodleian libraries, the majority of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century grammars analysed here have been studied with the help of Eighteenth Century Collections Online (henceforth ECCO), a digital and fully searchable collection featuring, in its present form, 180,000 printed works, including grammars, Google Books, and Internet Archive. For seventeenth-century grammars which might have formed the basis of Ash's grammar, use has been made of Early English Books Online (EEBO). The reconstruction of the publication history of Ash's grammar was greatly facilitated with the help of the English Short Title Catalogue (henceforth ESTC),

COPAC, WorldCat, and ECCO, which has 27 editions of Ash's grammar dating from 1766 to 1799. The freely available English Short Title Catalogue lists over 460,000 works, issued mainly in the British Isles and North America, from the collections of the British Library and more than 2,000 other libraries throughout the world (<http://estc.bl.uk/>). While COPAC "gives free access to the merged online catalogues of many major University, Specialist, and National Libraries in the UK and Ireland" (<http://copac.ac.uk/>), WorldCat provides "a global network of library content and services" (<http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/>).

The reception of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* and other grammars in the press at the time have been studied with the help of the 17th–18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers and 19th Century British Library Newspapers databases.¹ The use of the past participle form *wrote*, as discussed in Chapter 5, has been studied with the help of the British and Irish Women's Letters and Diaries 1500–1900 database. Biographical information of persons mentioned in this study, has been gathered from the online version of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB).

In contrast to his fellow grammarians, i.e. Lowth, Priestley and Murray (see Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2011; Straaijer 2011; and Fens-de Zeeuw forthc.), no autograph letters written by Ash or addressed to him have come down to us. The only private document that was available to me was Ash's Will, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2. In the case of Lady Ellenor Fenn (1744–1813), however, another grammarian whose work will play a major role in the study below, I was able to draw on her correspondence with Horace Walpole (ed. Lewis 1980), six unpublished autograph letters written by Fenn herself and her husband's unpublished *Memoirs* (1782–1794). Finally, for references to English grammar in contemporary literature use has been made of Literature Online (LION).

¹ For reasons of space, issues of newspapers included in these databases that will be referred to in this thesis are not listed in the Bibliography.

1.5. Outline of the thesis

This study is arranged as follows: in Chapter 2 my focus will be on the man behind the grammar and on the publication history and reception of Ash's popular work. In addition, the chapter provides an analysis of J.G.'s *An Easy Introduction to the English Language: with various rules and examples for correct speaking, upon a new plan* (1796). This ephemeral grammar is of great interest since it "openly admits its debt to Ash" (Downey 1979: xvii), but even more so because its author is the first to point out that Ash's grammar was not regarded as an easy introduction after all. Chapter 3 examines which sources Ash might have used while composing his *Grammatical Institutes*. This chapter also discusses the structure of the grammar, and investigates whether the work should be regarded as prescriptive or descriptive. This is a question that has already been studied for the grammars of Ann Fisher (1719–1778), Priestley and Lowth by Rodríguez-Gil (2003), Hodson (2006) and Straaijer (2009), and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2010b), respectively, for which reason it will also be considered here. Furthermore, a detailed analysis of the fourth edition of Ash's grammar will be presented, published in 1769, which unlike the second and third editions was revised by Ash himself. Chapter 4 takes a closer look at the publication history of Ash's grammar in North America. It examines Noah Webster's (1758–1843) dependence on Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* while he was composing his *Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (1784). I will show that, apart from Webster, the American-born Lindley Murray seems to have relied on Ash's work while composing his own grammar which was first published in Britain in 1795. Chapter 5 considers the different groups of female users of Ash's grammar. I will show that not only girls at boarding school, but also governesses, young women and mothers may have had a copy of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* at their disposal. The dependence of the teacher-grammarians Ellin Devis and Mrs. M.C. Edwards (*fl.* 1796) on Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* will also be discussed in this chapter.

In Chapter 6 I will deal with another writer who depended on Ash, i.e. the female grammarian, children's writer and educationist Lady Ellenor Fenn. Part of this chapter is based on three previously published papers on Fenn (Navest 2008a; 2008b; 2009). Fenn's grammars are of great interest, since they were the first to offer advice to mothers, "who may not have attended to the subject themselves" (Fenn 1795: title page), on how to initiate their children into the rudiments of English grammar. Although Fenn has been the subject of much scholarly research (Percy 1994; Immel 1997; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000c; Cajka 2003; Percy 2006; Stoker 2007; Stoker 2009; Percy 2010), the extent to which she relied on Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* has not been previously examined yet. Apart from Fenn's reliance on Ash's grammar, this chapter also discusses the differences between their two grammars.

Fenn's approach to grammar teaching was innovative, and in its turn it inspired nineteenth-century children's writers to compose grammars for children. Chapter 7 is devoted to Fenn's influence on the children's writers Eliza Fenwick (1766?–1840), E. Ballantine (*fl.* 1813), Jane Haldimand Marcet (1769–1858), and Julia Corner (1798–1875). As a final point, by way of a continuation of further research on the subject, reasons are given in this chapter why a study of nineteenth-century children's grammars might prove fruitful. Chapter 8, finally, summarises my findings.

The present study ties in with current international research interests in eighteenth-century grammars and grammar writers. This is evident from Tieken-Boon van Ostade's (2000a) overview of eighteenth-century grammarians and their grammar books, followed, six years later, by a special issue of *Historiographia Linguistica* entitled *New Approaches to the Study of Later Modern English* (Beal et al. 2006a). The contributions in this issue not only illustrate "the range of social and educational backgrounds from which grammar writers of the period hailed" (Beal et al. 2006b: 2), but also show that Leonard (1929: 13) was much mistaken in portraying the eighteenth-century grammarians as "mainly clergymen, retired gentlemen, and amateur

philosophers". The year 2008 saw the appearance of *Grammars, Grammarians and Grammar-Writing in Eighteenth-Century England* (ed. Tieken-Boon van Ostade), a collection of papers which not only sheds light on eighteenth-century English grammarians and their grammars but also stresses the importance of ECCO as a source of data for those interested in carrying out research in the field. Grammars and grammar writers similarly feature in the proceedings of the Late Modern English conferences edited by Dossena and Jones (2003), Pérez-Guerra et al. (2007) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade and Wim van der Wurff (2009), *Perspectives on Prescriptivism* (Beal et al. 2008), and, most recently, in *Eighteenth-Century English: Ideology and change* (Hickey 2010). In December 2010 the first version of the Eighteenth-Century English Grammars database (henceforth ECEG) was released in free electronic and searchable format. The main aim of the compilers of this database, Rodríguez-Gil and Yáñez-Bouza, is to provide scholars "with an up-to-date resource for the study of the eighteenth-century grammatical tradition at both macro-and micro-level" (Rodríguez-Gil and Yáñez-Bouza 2009: 154). Apart from offering bibliographical information on eighteenth-century grammar books, ECEG contains biographical information about the authors of these works.

Since we are dealing with texts targeted at small children, the present study also contributes to recent scholarship on the history of education and children's texts. In 2006 a special issue of the *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, entitled *The Cultures of Childhood* (ed. Grenby), appeared which included essays on children, childhood and children's culture by literary historians, book historians and art historians. During this same year Arizpe's and Styles's *Reading Lessons from the Eighteenth Century: Mothers, children and texts*, about the vicar's wife Jane Johnson (1706–1759) and her hand-made nursery library for her children, was brought out. The proceedings of the following two conferences held at the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge are similarly of great interest to the present study. *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, cultures, practices* (Hilton and Shefrin

2009a) contains important contributions from scholars from different disciplines on the learning and teaching of children and adolescents during the period of the British Enlightenment (Hilton and Shefrin 2009b: 1, 20). *Acts of Reading: Teachers, texts and childhood* (Styles and Arizpe 2009) includes papers on the history of reading and texts for children. Interest in the topic dealt with here is clearly considerable, and I expect to be able to contribute further to the existing scholarship in the field of eighteenth-century grammarians and eighteenth-century children's texts.

Chapter 2. John Ash, his life and his grammar

2.1. Introduction

In his sermon *The Tears of Christian Friendship* (1779), preached at the funeral of his friend the Reverend John Ash, LL.D., the Particular Baptist minister Caleb Evans (1737–1791) told the congregation at Pershore, Worcestershire, that their pastor

was happy in his union to you, as a sensible, pious, candid, peaceable and affectionate people; and I know you thought yourselves honored and happy in your connection with him, as your friend and Pastor. Nor were his labours confined to you only, but extended to the world in general, and the youth of the rising age in particular. By his learned writings, which in 1774, procured him the honourable diploma of Doctor in Laws, though dead, he yet speaketh, and will continue to speak, I doubt not, to distant ages. **His philological works, I mean his celebrated grammar and dictionary, are so well known, and universally esteemed, that they are greatly above my humble encomiums** (Evans 1779: 22).

The so-called community of British Particular Baptists had “emerged from the womb of English Puritanism in the early mid-seventeenth century” (Haykin 1998: 16). In addition to valuing the importance of Christian biography and Christian heroes, Baptist preachers like Ash and Evans “used the opportunity of funeral sermons to set forth deceased members of their community as role models for the Christian life” (Haykin 1998: 17). Ash’s *A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Mrs. Sarah Evans, wife of the Rev. Caleb Evans, of Bristol* (1771) and Evans’s above-mentioned *The Tears of Christian Friendship* are examples of such funeral sermons.

It is not so much as a Particular Baptist minister but as “the author of a celebrated English Grammar” (Anon. 1779b: 190) and “Dictionary of the English Language, of some repute” (Rose et al. 1848: 241) that Ash is best known to historical linguists. The latter work, the full title of which is *A New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* (1775), is “best-known for the blunder under ‘curmudgeon’, which Johnson had derived from *cœur méchant*,

on the authority of an ‘unknown correspondent’” (see *ODNB*, s.v. Ash, John). While compiling his dictionary, Ash had taken Johnson’s example too literally, describing the derivation of the word *curmudgeon* as: “‘from the French *cœur* unknown, *méchant* correspondent’” (see *ODNB*, s.v. Ash, John; Ash 1775: 247). Ash’s blunder apparently became a “long-lived literary joke” according to Micklethwaith (2000: 50), who also points out how seventy-five years after the publication of Ash’s dictionary Alexander Spiers in his *General French and English Dictionary* (1850?) openly admitted “that he had never consulted Ash, ‘who after his etymology of *curmudgeon*, can inspire no confidence’”.

According to an advertisement for the dictionary in the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* of Saturday 20 May 1775, Ash’s *New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* was designed for the “USE of SCHOOLS and PRIVATE GENTLEMEN”. Ash’s two-volume octavo dictionary not only provided its readers with the meanings of “many obsolete words, and such provincial or cant words, as had then come into general use” (Anon. 1844a: 761), but also contained “a comprehensive grammar” (Ash 1775: title page), which Michael (1970: 550) describes as not very original since it comprises almost the same material as Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*, often word for word.

In this chapter I will first provide some information about Ash’s life (§2.2). Subsequently in §2.3 the publication history of the grammar will be examined. Finally, in the last section I will discuss the reception of Ash’s popular work.

2.2. John Ash’s life

Ash was born in Stockland, Dorset in 1724. In his informative biographical piece on Ash, Taylor (1963: 4) describes Ash’s parents as being “pious persons” but “of an inferior station in life”. Ash was baptised in the Baptist Church at Loughwood, in the vicinity of Lyme (Rose et al. 1848: 241; *ODNB*, s.v. Ash, John). Before the age of sixteen Ash had joined this church, which at that time was run by his relation the Reverend Isaac Hann (Evans 1779: 20). Until he decided “to

devote himself to the Christian ministry” (Evans 1779: 20), Ash worked as a blacksmith’s apprentice. In 1740 he went to study at the Rev. Bernard Foskett’s (1685–1758) Bristol Baptist Academy to be educated for the Baptist ministry (*ODNB*, s.v. Ash, John; Moon 1979: 7). At this academy, which “can trace it’s [sic] roots back to the Clarendon Code of 1661–1665 which banned Dissenters from Oxford and Cambridge Universities” (Wellum 1998: 215), Ash had met his friend Caleb Evans (see above). Their friendship seems to have been fruitful, since the year 1769 saw the appearance of their joint *Collection of Hymns Adapted to Public Worship* (Wellum 1998: 221). According to Hayden (1991: 231), this publication, which consisted of songs¹ that expressed truths about God as well as selections of music that captured “the warmth of evangelical and personal experience” has been referred to as “the first Baptist Hymn Book” (Hayden 1991: 231). Another friend Ash made during the time he spent in Bristol was John Collett Ryland (1723–1792). In what follows I will show that Ryland played an important role in the publication history of Ash’s grammar.

Apart from making new friends, Ash also developed a fondness for the study of mathematics while staying at Bristol, and he is said to have “made a distinguished figure in the publications of that day” (Evans 1779: 20). At the end of his studies, in 1746, Ash was invited to fill up a vacancy in the Church of St. Andrew’s, Pershore, where he would be ordained as a minister in June 1751 (*ODNB*, s.v. Ash, John; Evans 1779: 21).

When Ash began his ministry at St. Andrew’s, the church had 48 members (Taylor 1963: 9). This is a rather small number, especially since Pershore’s population was about 2,500 at the time (Taylor 1963: 9). Pershore was also the place where Ash met his wife Elizabeth Goddard. Taylor (1963: 8) notes that Elizabeth, as “a comparatively wealthy young woman with good connections”, would have been able to marry “into a higher and more secure station, yet she was willing to accept a young, [then] unknown Baptist minister of humble

¹ According to Moon (1979: 112), the work “contained 412 hymns including those of Watts, Wesley and Doddridge”.

origin and settle down in the Pershore manse [i.e. the house of a minister of the church] among the very people who had known her most of her life". The couple married on 26 August 1751 and they had eight children, Eliza (1752-?), Martha (1754-?), John (1756-58), John (1758-67), Sarah (1760-1837), Louisa (1763), Samuel (1765-1811) and Joseph (1771-?), who were all baptised at St. Andrews's, Pershore (Kahler 2001). Taylor (1963: 8) and the *ODNB* entry list only six children, but this is presumably due to the fact that two of Ash's sons, who were both called John as well, died at the age of two and nine respectively (Kahler 2001).

Ash and his family first lived in the Baptist manse which had been built by Elizabeth's uncle Samuel Rickards Jnr in 1742 (Taylor 1963: 8). As a result of his relations and talent, Ash's family prospered, and a house was bought (Taylor 1963: 8; *ODNB*, s.v. Ash, John). From Ash's Will, which is dated 8 April 1779, it becomes clear that he owned and occupied a house at Pershore: he bequeathed to his wife and eldest daughter Eliza "all those two Messuages and Tennaments in Pershore afores'd which I lately purchased of Mr. John Sitch the Elder and Mr. John Sitch the Younger" (John Ash's Will; see also Taylor 1963: 10). Taylor, minister of Pershore Baptist Church (Vorlat 1959b: 143), who published a biographical account of Ash in 1963, claimed that at that time there were still many Georgian houses in the centre of Pershore (1963: 10), and he believed that Ash's property was probably still standing in 1963 (Taylor 1963: 10).

In 1774 Ash was awarded an LL.D. degree from Marischal College, Aberdeen (Anderson 1906: 328).² Although non-conformists were not allowed to enter Oxford or Cambridge, they could, however, study at Scottish universities (Chapman 2008: 28). Three years after Ash had received his degree, his *Sentiments on Education* (1777), "a collection of the views on education of various writers interspersed with comments made by Ash himself"

² According to Russell (as quoted from Moon 1979: 8), Ash "was awarded an honorary degree of LL.D., by Edinburgh University".

(Foreman 1980: 1), was published. Just before his death *The Dialogues of Eumenes* (1779) appeared on the market (Evans 1779: 23). According to the *Critical Review*, this work, which was aimed at promoting “humanity, benevolence, and generosity” (Anon. 1779a: 370) consisted of

twelve Dialogues, in which farmers, and servants, as well as persons of a higher station, are separately and occasionally introduced. Some of these Dialogues are on subjects of religion; such as, family prayer, baptism, faith, scruples of conscience, religious liberty, and the customs and rites of different churches. Others are on more familiar topics [...] such as, cruelty to brute creatures, the pernicious effects of riots in contested elections, the hardships attending the common mode of pressing seamen for the navy, the rapacity of usurers, &c (Anon. 1779a: 371).

Ash died at Pershore on 10 April 1779 aged fifty-five, “after a very short and sudden illness” (Anon. 1779b: 190), which the *ODNB* identifies as diabetes. He had made his Will only two days before (Taylor 1963: 18). It is worth mentioning that Ash had made his wife Elizabeth and eldest daughter Eliza the executrices of his Will, something which was quite unusual in those days (Taylor 1963: 18). The Will also informs us that Ash kept a shop, but unfortunately nothing further is said about it.³ The only information Ash provides us with is that “the said Trade of Business be carried on in the Firm of Mrs. Ash and Company and as near and as consistent in the manner that it now is” (John Ash’s Will; see also Taylor 1963: 10).

Ash was buried at St. Andrew’s, Pershore on 15 April 1779. His tombstone contains the following text:

In Memory of THE REVEREND JOHN ASH LLD.
 He lived highly esteemed and honoured by the World
 For his great Abilities and learned Publications
 Justly beloved by all that knew him for his
 Integrity Piety Benevolence
 And many other Virtues
 Peculiarly endeared to the Christian society of this Place

³ According to *The Modern Universal British Traveller*, “[t]he principal trade carried on here [i.e. in Pershore] consists of woolen stockings, in which branch many hands are constantly employed” (Burlington et al. 1779: 158). Woolen stockings might have been sold in Ash’s shop.

In the Character of a faithful and affectionate Pastor
 For more than twenty eight Years.
 He died in the Meridian of his Fame
 And usefulness both as an Author and a Minister
 On the 10th Day of April 1779
 Aged 55
 Deeply lamented
 To perpetuate the Remembrance of the many Excellencies
 Of so great and good a Man
 His much afflicted Congregation
 Have here placed his humble Monument
 Sorrowing ... that in this World
 They shall see him no more (as quoted from Taylor 1963: 19–20).

2.3. Publication history of the grammar

Alston (1965: 32–38) lists fifty editions and reprints of Ash’s popular *Grammatical Institutes*, some of which are numbered, others pirated, i.e. reprinted without the permission of the author or the original publisher of the work (Feather 1994: 74, see also Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008b: 107). In §2.3.1 the reconstructed publication history of the first five editions of the grammar will be presented. Ryland’s editions of Ash’s grammar will be described in more detail in §2.3.2. In §2.3.3 the remaining British editions and reprints of Ash’s grammar will be discussed. The reception of the grammar will be dealt with in §2.4.

2.3.1. The first five editions of Ash’s grammar

According to Alston’s bibliography (1965: 32), the first edition of Ash’s grammar was published in Worcester in 1760 as *Grammatical Institutes: or grammar, adapted to the genius of the English tongue*. It was printed by the bookseller and printer Richard Lewis (1752 (before) –1782), whose premises were situated “at the *Bible and Crown*, in High-street” (Lovett 1766: title page; see also the British Book Trade Index: <http://www.bbti.bham.ac.uk/>), and who, according to Plomer et al. (1932: 155), “is said to have been still in business in 1771”. The first edition of Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* only survives in one

imperfect copy (all pages are lacking after page 58) which can be found in the Worcester Public Library (see Alston 1965: 32; 1967a). Since Alston was unable to locate a second or third edition of Ash's grammar, the next edition of the grammar in his inventory is the fourth. According to Alston (1965: 33), this edition of the grammar was probably published in 1763 under the title *Grammatical Institutes; or, an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar*.

Although the date on the title page of this edition was printed as 1762, Alston believed that "one of the roman numerals had failed to print" and that the year of publication should be 1763 instead (1965: 33). For this information Alston appears to have based himself on Lyman (1922), but if he had read Vorlat (1959b) he would have been aware of the mistake Lyman had made in dating the grammar (1959b: 143). Whereas Lyman (1922: 35) describes Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* as being "first published in London, 1763", Vorlat (1959b: 143) argues that no edition of the grammar was published during that year. I concur with Vorlat (1959b: 143) on this and believe that instead of being published in 1763, the fourth edition of Ash's grammar must have appeared after 1768. At the time when Vorlat was carrying out her research, the fourth edition of Ash's grammar had not been located yet. A copy of this edition can now be found at the Bodleian Library (Opie Collection of Children's Literature) in Oxford and is available in ECCO.

While studying the fourth edition of Ash's grammar, which ECCO describes as being published in 1761, it immediately becomes clear that this edition of the grammar cannot have been brought out before 1768, since in the Advertisement to the work we can read that

Two Editions, however, of this little Book have been since [i.e. since 1760] published in London, under the direction of the Reverend Mr. Ryland, of Northampton, who had, as he says made full Trial of it in his School, for some Years before with singular success ([1769] 1763: Advertisement).

In 1766 and 1768 Ash's friend John Collett Ryland had re-issued the grammar as *The Easiest Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar* (Alston 1965: 33; Michael 1970: 550). Since Ryland's editions of Ash's grammar were published

after the first and before the fourth edition of the work appeared, this implies that the years 1766 and 1768 must have seen the appearance of the second and third edition of Ash's grammar, two editions which until today were believed not to have survived (see Alston 1965: 33, 1967a). From the above it can also be concluded that the fourth edition of Ash's grammar must have been published after 1768 and before 1771, the year in which the fifth edition of the grammar was printed (Vorlat 1959b: 143). I agree with Alston that one of the Roman numerals failed to print, but in my opinion it must have been an 'X' rather than the 'I' Alston seems to think had fallen off. The title page of the fourth edition should have read 1769 (MDCCLXIX) instead of 1763 (MDCCLXIII) or, as ECCO has it, 1761. The reconstructed publication history of the first five editions of Ash's grammar is summed up in Table 1:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>Title</i>
1760	[First]	<i>Grammatical Institutes: or grammar, adapted to the genius of the English tongue.</i> Worcester, R. Lewis
1766	[Second]	<i>The Easiest Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar, designed for the use of children under ten years of age [...].</i> London, E. & C. Dilly [re-issued by Ryland]
1768	[Third]	<i>The Easiest Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar, designed for the use of children under ten years of age [...].</i> London, E. & C. Dilly [re-issued by Ryland]
[1769]	Fourth	<i>Grammatical Institutes, or an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar [...].</i> London, E. & C. Dilly
1771	Fifth	<i>Grammatical institutes, or an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar [...].</i> London, E. & C. Dilly

Table 1. Reconstructed publication history of the first five editions of Ash's grammar.

2.3.2. Ryland's editions of Ash's grammar

Ryland's editions of Ash's grammar are of great interest. When Ryland became pastor of College Lane Baptist Church, Northampton on 5 October 1759, he also decided to move his prospering boarding-school there, which he had conducted during his residence at Warwick (Naylor 1998: 185; 188; Oliver 2006: 35). The

entry fee for the school was one guinea (approximately £79 today),⁴ not including tuition and boarding charges (Naylor 1998: 197). Ryland's school became a huge success. Newman (1835: 11) notes that while Ryland operated his school at Northampton, over £25,000 passed through his hands (see also Naylor 1998: 197). Samuel Bagster (1772–1851), one of Ryland's pupils at Northampton, described the school which he had entered in 1779 as one "of celebrity", noting that it consisted of "about ninety boys" (as quoted from Oliver 2006: 36; see also Culross 1897: 39; *ODNB* s.v. Bagster, Samuel, the elder). Although Bagster was seven years old when he entered the school, Ryland apparently also admitted older boys. Two other boys at Ryland's academy were William Bunton (1754–1821) and Robert Hall (1764–1821), who were twelve and eleven when they became boarders in 1766 and 1775 respectively (Oliver 2006: 99; *ODNB*, s.v. Hall, Robert).

Hans (1951: 61) describes John Collett Ryland as a pioneer "who introduced the study of sciences and 'polite learning' among the Baptists". The boys at Ryland's academy were taught "English, Latin, Greek, French, Arithmetic, Geography, Geometry, Natural Philosophy, Mechanics, Astronomy, History and Drawing" (Hans 1951: 62). In addition, Hans points out that by way of a teaching method "Ryland introduced the use of cards in all school subjects" (Hans 1951: 62). It could have been Isaac Watts (1674–1748), who inspired him to design such cards. We know that Ryland was familiar with Watts's *Treatise on the Education of Children and Youth* (1769) (Ryland 1792: 101), in which Watts had pointed out that cards could serve as educational aids: "May not some little Tablets of Pasteboard be made in Imitation of *Cards*, which might teach the unlearned several Parts of Grammar, Philosophy, Geometry, Geography, Astronomy, &c" (1769: 114). I did indeed come across an advertisement for such sets of cards. This advertisement, which can be found at the back of Ryland's *An Easy Introduction to Mechanics, Geometry, Plane*

⁴ See the National Archives Currency Converter (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/>).

Trigonometry, Measuring Heights and Distances, Optics, Astronomy (1768), lists “geometrical cards”, “cards of ancient history in X. periods”, “optical cards”, “cards of modern history, with the chronology annexed”, “cards of astronomy and a living Orrery made with sixteen School Boys”, “cards of anatomy” and “Geography made a Recreation on Message Cards”. They were printed and sold by Carrington Bowles, whose shop could be found “at No. 69. in St. Paul’s Church Yard”. Ryland’s “packs of cards” are also mentioned by James Boswell (1740–1795). In the spring of 1768 Boswell recorded in his diary how his friend, the bookseller Edward Dilly (1732–1779), had introduced him to Ryland during one of his dinner parties:

The next man I was introduced to was Mr. Ryland, master of an academy at Northampton, and a dissenting clergyman; a bold Briton with a very strong voice and much zeal. He has published a little book on mechanics, and is **publishing packs of cards** on all the sciences (ed. Brady and Pottle 1956: 161).

Naylor (1998: 197) states that since they were “[a]ssured of a sale of their textbooks to their pupils”, ministerial proprietors who operated schools in the eighteenth century often created their own materials. Apart from bringing out textbooks and cards Ryland had a “zeal for publishing pamphlets” (Roe 1997: 32). This passion, however, together with the fact that his “hand was apt to be liberal beyond his means” led to the closure of Ryland’s school in November 1785 (Roe 1997: 31–33). In 1786 Ryland moved to Enfield, where he established another prospering boarding school (Roe 1997: 33).

Ryland was responsible for the library at Enfield (Roe 1997: 46), and he evidently took this job seriously, for according to William Newman, an assistant tutor at Enfield in 1789, in the school library he had “greater advantages for seeing, reading, and hearing of good books than thousands of youth in my age” (Pritchard 1837: 18). It would be interesting to speculate about whether Ash’s grammar had a place in the school library as well, and whether John Keats (1795–1821), who entered Enfield School in 1803 and stayed there until the summer of 1810, might have been taught grammar from Ash’s book (Roe 1997: 30; 33; 46; *ODNB*, s.v. Keats, John). Although by the time Keats came to Enfield

School Ryland had been dead for ten years, according to Roe (1997: 33), “in the library and classroom routines of the school itself, Ryland’s remarkable presence and achievement lived on: as one Memoir puts it, ‘all of them in after days kept up the traditions [Ryland] implanted”.

Ryland’s editions of Ash’s grammar contain some important information about the history of the work. According to Taylor (1963: 12–13; see also Anderson 1906: 328), “[t]here is a strong tradition that Ash, like a number of other ministers, kept a private school or academy for pupils of which he first produced his educational books”. However, a perusal of the Advertisement to the 1766 edition of Ash’s grammar shows that Ash originally wrote his grammar for his five-year-old daughter⁵ who, as Ryland puts it, “learnt and repeated the whole in a short Time” (1766: Advertisement; see also Michael 1970: 278; 550). In addition, Ryland informs us that Ash’s “Love to the rising Generation, and a Desire to communicate the first Principles of English Grammar in a pleasing and familiar Manner, induced him to print a few Copies for the Use of his Friends who were concerned in the Education of Children” (1766: Advertisement). One of these friends must have been Ryland himself.

As shown in Chapter 1, in 1766 Ryland had had six years of experience teaching English grammar with the help of Ash’s work, which suggests that he must have used the grammar from the start. If we are to believe the Church of England clergyman and hymn writer Augustus Montague Toplady (1740–1778), Ryland must have been an excellent grammar teacher, since he possessed “in a very distinguished degree, the happy art of simplifying and familiarizing to young minds, the most useful branches of useful and ornamental knowledge” (as quoted from Naylor 1998: 197). Amongst the first pupils who had to study Ash’s grammar at Ryland’s school were John Ryland

⁵ This was probably Ash’s eldest daughter Eliza (b. 1752) or her younger sister Martha (b. 1754) (see Ash’s Will and Kahler 2001). Christian Reichel, who was responsible for the 1789 German translation of Ash’s grammar, similarly notes that Ash wrote the grammar merely for his five-year-old daughter. Since the grammar exceeded his expectations, Ash made its usefulness available by publishing it. According to Whelan (2011: 426n.60), Eliza Ash married Joshua Hopkins of Alcester (1738–1798) in 1789 or 1790 and “died in March 1794, at the age of 41”.

junior (1753–1825), Ryland’s eldest son (*ODNB*, s.v. Ryland, John), and the radical newspaper editor Benjamin Flower (1755–1829) (ed. Whelan 2008: 71–72). In a letter to his future wife Eliza Gould (1770–1810), written at Newgate Prison in August 1799, Flower recorded that as a nine-year-old boy he

learned with M^r Ryland, the elements of the Latin, and a very trifling smattering of the Greek and Hebrew languages, not at the expence of the English. He [i.e. Ryland] was very particular in this respect, and made every boy learn the couplet – “Let all the Foreign tongues alone Till you can read and spell your own.” To him the public are endebted for D^r Ash’s Introduction to English Grammar (ed. Whelan 2008: 71).

Ash’s grammar may also have been used at Mrs. Martha Trinder’s school. According to Oliver (2006: 37), Martha Trinder was a member of Ryland’s College Lane Church who ran a girls’ school. Ryland might have advised her to use the grammar as well.

Just as in the case of Lowth’s *Short Introduction to English Grammar*, it is not clear how many copies were printed of the first edition of Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*. According to Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2011: 59), it seems likely that instead of a usual print run of 1,000 copies, the first edition of Lowth’s grammar had a print run of 500 copies. The same might have applied to Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*. Unfortunately I haven’t been able to find any information on the different sizes of Richard Lewis’s print runs. What we do know, however, is that Ryland must have needed more than sixty copies of the work since in the Advertisement to the 1766 edition he had stated that he “for six Years past has made full Trial of Mr. Ash’s Grammar, upon at least sixty Scholars”.

The boys at Ryland’s school probably owned their own textbooks, as can be inferred from the preface to *An Easy Introduction to Mechanics, Geometry, Plane Trigonometry, Measuring Heights and Distances, Optics, Astronomy* (1768), where Ryland indicated that the work

is not designed for the learned; it was written for the use of boys, and with no design to go any farther than my own school; but the trouble of transcribing, with exactness, by each youth that wanted it, would be so great, as to prevent the easy communication of this kind of knowledge (1768: i–ii).

Interestingly, however, this work turns out not to have been written by Ryland at all. In the preface Ryland pointed out:

THIS short treatise was drawn up, at my house, by a judicious friend, who is well acquainted with these sciences, and has a happy talent for communicating knowledge in the most clear and easy manner. I am not at liberty to mention his name, which would do me honour – excite the attention of the public – and very much promote the sale of the book. I had long wanted an easy and familiar treatise of this sort, for the use of my scholars, and it gave me a most sensible pleasure, when I had prevailed on my friend to execute it (1768: i).

Ryland's "judicious friend" was James Ferguson (1710–1776) who was famous for his lectures on natural philosophy and for inventing scientific instruments (*ODNB*, s.v. Ryland, John Collett; Ferguson, James).

Whereas Ferguson evidently knew that Ryland intended to publish his *Easy Introduction to Mechanics* for the use in his school, Ash was not informed by Ryland when in 1766 Edward and Charles Dilly (1739–1807) were about to publish a new impression of his grammar. In the Advertisement in the 1766 edition of Ash's grammar, Ryland remarked:

As this Edition was printed without the Author's Knowledge or Consent, let him not be blamed, if it has not had his latest Corrections and Improvements. Be it sufficient to observe, that the Editor being in great Want of Copies, he was suspicious that if the Publication had been referred to the Author, his great Modesty and Attention to important Duties of Life, would have occasioned too long a Delay. The Editor knows his Friend, and has a full Confidence in the Goodness of his Dispositions. He dares venture his Displeasure. It is upon the same Principle that he has presumed to add an Appendix, which contains a Praxis of an easier Nature, for younger Children [...] (1766: Advertisement).

Since he was too impatient to wait for Ash's new revised edition of the grammar, Ryland clearly decided to get the work published himself. As a result the 1766 edition of Ash's grammar was issued by the London booksellers Edward and Charles Dilly, whose shop could be found "at the *Rose and Crown*, in the Poultry", "near the Mansion-House" (Crookshank 1766: title page; Craner 1766: title page). The Dillys must have been immensely pleased when Ryland approached them to print Ash's grammar, especially since school books like Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* were "the sector where the real money was to be made" (Immel 2009: 742). Although they had previously published John

Entick's *New Spelling Dictionary* (1764) (ODNB, s.v. Entick, John), which also included "A GRAMMATICAL INTRODUCTION to the *English Tongue*" (Entick [1784] 1787: title page), a proper English grammar was not part of their stock yet. Publishing Ash's grammar also enabled the Dillys to compete with Andrew Millar and Robert and James Dodsley, who, from 1762 onwards, were bringing out Lowth's popular and authoritative grammar (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008b: 110).

From the above-mentioned quotation it becomes clear that Ryland had added an appendix to his edition of Ash's grammar. Ryland's "Appendix to Ash's Grammar" consisted of the following parts ([Ryland] Ash 1766: title page):

- I. Some Short Observations on the various Sounds of the Vowels.
- II. Easy Parsing Exercises on the English Language.
- III. A Select Collection of Books for Boys and Girls, to shorten the Path to Knowledge.
- IV. Select Lessons to instill just Sentiments of Virtue

Of great interest is Ryland's "Library for Little Boys and Girls", a seventeen-page reading list which includes books on the English language, such as the grammars by Ash (1760), Priestley (1761) and Lowth (1762), in addition to books of amusement and imagination, geography, ancient and modern history, arithmetic, poetry, letter-writing, Christian religion, education and the sciences. Ryland decided to add the reading list because he believed that it might help "to direct some tender and valuable Parents who may possibly be at a Loss what Books to buy for their Children; and likewise to gratify some young People of an inquisitive and ingenuous Disposition, who have a keen Taste for Books, but for want of Experience often purchase Trash" (Ash 1766: Advertisement).

Avery (1995: 1) points out that "the least weighty section" in Ryland's reading list is the one entitled "Books of Amusement and Imagination" (Ash 1766: 111–112). Although this section included books by the children's publisher John Newbery, such as *Robinson Crusoe* and *Aesop's and Gay's Fables*, it also contained less amusing and imaginative works such as *The Pleasures of*

Imagination, Spectator Vol. VI, W. Rose's *The Moral Miscellany*, and Dr. Fordyce's *Temple of Virtue*. According to Avery (1995: 12), the contents of Ryland's reading list clearly shows that "many people, even in the 1760s, expected children to be greybeards while they were still in petticoats".

By bringing out a new edition of the grammar and by adding an appendix to it, Ryland, as he put it in the Advertisement, risked displeasing his friend (1766: Advertisement). Ash's reaction to Ryland's 1766 and 1768 editions of his grammar can be inferred from an interesting letter that is quoted in Taylor (1963: 17). This undated letter, with the heading "The Picture of Ingratitude of John Ash of Pereshore [sic], Worcestershire. In a Copy of a Letter from him to Mr. Ed. Dilly", was copied by Ryland into his MS Book, a notebook that contained handwritten material ⁶ (Taylor 1963: 17). The letter reads as follows:

Sir,

My Friend Mr. Ryland, not to say Mr. Dilly, has used me exceedingly ill. The Edition of the Grammars published by you, was, as he confess'd in the Preface, entirely without my Knowledge. Since that time I have heard not so much as one single Word from him by Way of Excuse or otherwise. But as he then made no Alteration and I knew the Man I gave myself no further concern about it. When I was last in London I thought (sic) indeed to have call (sic) on you for some Satisfaction but other Engagement prevented me. I now find by your Letter that a second pirated Edition is in the press with some Alterations, not to say Improvs by Mr. Ryland, which I look upon as a further Abuse of that Friendship that once subsisted between us, and such an one as, I do assure you, I will not put up with. If he has given you to understand that I ever gave him any Liberty to alter, publish or do anything with it, he has greatly abused you. I look upon the Copy to be entirely **my own Property at my own Disposal**. And if the present Edition is printed off without my first seeing the proposed Alterations I will actually redress myself to the utmost of my Power. Mr. Ryland may have made some Improvts but I must be convinced of this and approve of what he has done. And I hope both of you will give me leave and Opportunity to make what Alterations I may think proper in my own Work for my own is shall still be. When that is done, as to Terms, they shall not be unreasonable on the part of

Yr hub Sert.
JOHN ASH.

⁶ Ryland's MS book can be found in Bristol College Library.

Ash's letter clearly suggests that as the original author he believed he had a right to be involved in the publication of what he rightly considered to be his "own Work". Though Ryland possibly believed that by publishing the work he was doing his friend a huge favour, Ash in fact felt betrayed by him for making alterations to his original grammar, which he regarded as "my own Property at my own Disposal". Apart from adding an appendix, however, Ryland had not made any changes to Ash's original text in the 1766 edition. As for the next edition of Ash's grammar, which was published by the Dillys upon Ryland's authority in 1768 as "A NEW EDITION, Improved" (Ash 1768: title page), Ash was far from happy when Edward Dilly informed him about this edition. He insisted that he wanted to inspect the copy before it would be published once again and stated that he wished to make alterations to the copy himself. Below I will show that Ash may have had the chance to do so.

While describing the 1768 edition of Ash's grammar, Alston (1965: 33) pointed out that in this edition "[t]here are several changes throughout the text". My comparison of the 1766 with the 1768 edition showed that there were no more than twenty changes. One example is the discussion of the use of adverbs in which Ryland replaced Ash's original example sentence "a *very* loving Friend" (Ash 1760: 34) with "he is *secretly* plotting" (Ash 1768: 50). In addition, he left out some words, rephrased a number of sentences and introduced some new terminology (the possessive case, primitive, adjective, definite or emphatic pronouns (Ash 1768: 10; 14; 16). Ryland also added new verbs to the catalogue of irregular verbs (Ash 1768: 38–45) and included a list of 25 verbs which have the same form for the past tense and past participle (Ash 1768: 47–48). The most interesting change, however, that I came across is the following piece of information which Ryland added after the discussion of the nominative and genitive case of English nouns:

The other four Cases, which in the Latin have different Terminations, namely, the Dative, Accusative, Vocative, and Ablative are expressed in our Language by the Prepositions, *to, from, with* &c.

<i>Singular.</i>	<i>Plural.</i>
Nom. <i>a</i> Pen	Pens
Gen. <i>of a</i> Pen	<i>of</i> Pens
Dat. <i>to a</i> Pen	<i>to</i> Pens
Acc. <i>a</i> Pen	Pens
Voc. <i>O</i> Pen	<i>O</i> Pens
Abla. <i>from a</i> Pen	<i>from, with, or by</i> Pens ([Ryland] Ash 1768: 11)

It seems that Ryland is catering for his own academy here. As I have shown above, Latin was one of the subjects taught at Ryland's school. This was probably also the reason why Ryland added the Imperfect tense of the potential mood. While the above-mentioned paradigm and the potential mood might have been useful for Ryland's pupils, this information was of little use to the audience Ash had in mind for his work. As I will show in Chapter 3, Ash's intended audience for his grammar consisted of "Ladies" and "young Gentlemen design'd merely for Trade" (Ash 1760: iii). Algeo notes that for these "young scholars, who needed to learn how to use English well, the grammatical machinery of Latin was of no concern – would indeed have been only a bewildering handicap" (1986: 312).

In his *Grammar of English Grammars* (1851) Goold Brown decided to attribute a grammar entitled *English grammar* and printed at Northampton in 1767 to John Ryland (1851: xviii). Poldauf, following Brown, even claims that "John Collett Ryland wrote an English grammar for use among the Baptists and dissenters at Northampton in 1767" (Poldauf 1948: 115). Alston (1965: 33), however, believes that Brown made a mistake and that it is in fact the 1768 edition that we are dealing with here which was signed by Ryland at Northampton on 12 September 1767.

Ryland's editions of his grammar prompted Ash to revise his original work, and the amendments and additions he made to it were incorporated in a fourth edition (1769). What is striking about the fourth edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* is the fact that Ash decided to omit the majority of additions Ryland had made to his grammar. Apart from the above-mentioned paradigm, Ash also decided to leave out Ryland's "Library for Little Boys and Girls", in the fourth

(1769) and fifth editions (1771) of his grammar. From 1772 onwards, however, the library, under the new title “A Library for Young Gentlemen and Ladies”, forms part of Ash’s grammar again.⁷

Apart from this ‘library’, the 1772 edition also includes a “Supplement to Mr. Ash’s Grammar: consisting of Select Lessons to *instill* Sentiments of *Virtue* in Youth” (Ash 1772: title page), taken from the works of the dissenters Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge (1702–1751) (see also Percy 2003: 65). The addition of these “select lessons” to the grammar is even announced on the title page of the work. What is interesting, however, is the fact that the majority of these lessons are not new but seem to have been copied from Ryland’s editions of Ash. Since Ryland’s library and the select lessons are lacking from the fourth and fifth editions of the grammar which were both corrected and revised by Ash himself (Michael 1970: 382), the Dillys rather than Ash himself seem to have been responsible for these changes. It might also be the case that Ash was no longer involved in the publication of his grammar, maybe because the compiling of his *New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* (1775) was taking up all of his time.

2.3.3. British editions and reprints of Ash’s grammar

Alston lists fifty British and American editions and reprints of Ash’s grammar until 1810 (1965: 32–38). Gaskell ([1972] 1985: 313) points out “that there is a new edition when more than half the type has been reset, but that if less than half the type has been reset we are dealing with another impression”, or reprint. In this section I will be concerned with the British editions and reprints of Ash’s grammar only. The editions and reprints of Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* that appeared in North America will be discussed in Chapter 4 where I will discuss the publication history of Ash’s grammar across the Atlantic.

⁷ “A Library for Young Gentlemen and Ladies” can be found in all editions published between 1771 and 1796, which are all available in ECCO.

Since the publication of Alston (1965), more editions and reprints of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* have come to light. These editions and reprints which have been retrieved from the ESTC, ECCO, COPAC, WorldCat, and Google Books, are listed in Table 2 below. The ESTC citation numbers are given in square brackets.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>A new edition</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Additional information</i>
1777	Sixth		12°	London: E. & C. Dilly [ESTC T118377]
1786				London: printed for F. Osborne and J. Mozely [sic] [ESTC N18072]
1788		+	12°	London: Charles Dilly [ESTC T89335]
1789				London: printed for Henry Smithson [ESTC N18073]
1790				London: printed for the Booksellers
1791		+		London: printed for Charles Dilly, in the Poultry [ESTC N30673]
1791				London: printed for the Booksellers [ESTC N70500]
1793		+	12°	London: Charles Dilly [ESTC N17996]
1793				London: Symonds [ESTC N17997]
1794		+	12°	London, C. Dilly, G.G. and J. Robinson, C.D. Piquenit; and Darton and Harvey [ESTC T118761]
1796				London: printed for W. Osborne, T. Griffin, and H. Mozley and Co. Gainsborough [ESTC T204023]
1798				London: printed for the Booksellers [ESTC T166199]
1801				London: published for the booksellers and printed and sold by H. Mozley and Co. Gainsborough
1807				London, J. Mawman [etc.], Wilson and Spence
1808			12cm	Banbury: printed by J. Rusher, for William Rusher, Bookseller

Table 2. British editions and reprints of Ash's grammar not listed in Alston (1965).

The British editions of Ash's work can be divided into regular editions, i.e. editions published by Ash's regular publishers Charles and Edward Dilly, and editions that were brought out by other publishers, presumably without the author's approval. Table 3 shows the regular editions and reprints of Ash's grammar.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>A new edition</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Additional information</i>
1766	[Second]		12°/18°	<i>The easiest introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar, designed for the use of children under ten years of age [...].</i> London, E. & C. Dilly [re-issued by Ryland] [ESTC N9071]
1768	[Third]		12°/18°	<i>The easiest introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar, designed for the use of children under ten years of age [...].</i> London, E. & C. Dilly [re-issued by Ryland] [ESTC T84962]
[1769]	Fourth		12°/8°	<i>Grammatical institutes, or an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar [...].</i> London, E. & C. Dilly [ESTC T184667]
1771	Fifth		12°	London, E. & C. Dilly [ESTC N3622]
1775	Seventh		12°	London, E. & C. Dilly [ESTC T84961]
1777	Sixth		12°	London, E. & C. Dilly [ESTC T118377]
1779		+	12°/18°	London, Edward and Charles Dilly [ESTC T89333]
1780		+	12°/18°	London, Charles Dilly [His brother Edward had died from consumption in 1779] [ESTC T84977]
1781		+	12°/18°	London, Charles Dilly [ESTC T89336]
1783		+	8°/18°	London, Charles Dilly [ESTC T232357]
1784		+	12°	London, Charles Dilly [ESTC N17998]
1786		+	12°	London, Charles Dilly [ESTC N18072]

1787	+	12°	London, Charles Dilly [ESTC N65837]
1788	+	12°	London, Charles Dilly [ESTC T89335]
1791	+	18°	London, Charles Dilly [ESTC N30673]
1792	+	12°	London, Charles Dilly
1793	+	12°	London, Charles Dilly, G.G.J. and J. Robinson, C.D. Pignenit and Darton & Harvey [ESTC T89334]
1793	+	12°	London, Charles Dilly [ESTC N17996]
1794	+	12°	London, C. Dilly, G.G. and J. Robinson, C.D. Pignenit; and Darton and Harvey [ESTC T118761]
1796	+	12°/24°	London, C. Dilly, G.G. and J. Robinson, C.D. Pignenit; and Darton & Harvey [ESTC T82044]
1799	+	12°	London, C. Dilly, G.G. and J. Robinson, J. Scatcherd [et al.]

Table 3. Regular editions of Ash's grammar (those in bold are not listed in Alston 1965).

Table 3 shows that Ash's grammar was mostly printed in duodecimo and octodecimo. Although Alston (1965: 33) describes the 1766 and 1768 editions of Ash's grammar as being published in duodecimo, the size of the grammars, according to the ESTC and ECCO, is octodecimo. Similarly, two sizes are given for the fourth edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*. Whereas Alston (1965: 33) records an octavo edition, the ESTC and ECCO describe the size of the grammar as duodecimo. As regards the 1779 edition, Alston describes this particular edition as duodecimo, but it is listed as octodecimo in the ESTC. Two different sizes were likewise found for the 1780 and 1781 editions. According to Alston these editions were duodecimo, but they are described as octodecimo by the ESTC and ECCO. In the case of the 1783 edition, Alston records an octavo edition whereas the ESTC and ECCO refer to this edition as octodecimo. Alston

likewise describes the 1796 edition as duodecimo whereas it is included as a twenty-fours edition in the ESTC.

The British Library octodecimo copy of the 1768 edition of Ash measures 8.3 by 13.6 cms. It might well have been because of its compact size that Ash's grammar was referred to as "little". Ryland, for instance, referred to his editions of Ash's work as "this little Book" (1766: Advertisement; 1768: 8), whereas Ash himself called his *Grammatical Institutes* a "little Manual" and later a "little Treatise" (1769: vi–vii). Robert Lowth likewise referred to his *Short Introduction to English Grammar* as a "little System" (Lowth 1762: xiii). Percy (2008b: 136) notes that in the case of Lowth's grammar, reviewers of the *Critical* and *Monthly Review* described his *Short Introduction to English Grammar* as "little" when they "felt that it was suitable for schools". As I will show in §2.6. and Chapter 5, Ash's grammar was indeed studied in many schools at the time as well. This is also confirmed by Nesbit, who, while discussing some of the "best Grammatical Works" for "Young Persons" in his *Introduction to the Arts and Sciences; or an essay on education* (1842), points out that "Dr. Ash's Little Work, was formerly much used in Schools" (1842: 183).

ECCO contains a rather peculiar edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, which is included in Tables 2 and 3 above. According to the title page of the work it is the sixth edition of the grammar printed for Edward and Charles Dilly in 1777. However, since the 1775 edition of Ash's grammar is already described as being the seventh edition, this suggests that we might be dealing with either a printing error or maybe even another edition published without Ash's approval.

What is of further interest here is the fact that during the years 1793, 1794, 1796 and 1799 Ash's grammar was also printed by the Quaker booksellers William Darton (1755–1819) and Joseph Harvey (1764–1841). They had their premises at 55 Gracechurch Street, London, and are nowadays best remembered for their so-called juvenile books (*ODNB*, s.v. Darton, William). Darton (2004: xx) points out that "Many of the books with which Darton and

Harvey were concerned were not published by them alone but jointly with other booksellers". This means that they had all evidently purchased a share of the copyright of Ash's grammar during a trade sale. That this was common practice at the time has also been shown by Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2008b: 110). Apart from mentioning the different booksellers involved in the publication of Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755), she points out that Robert Lowth had sold the copyright of his *Short Introduction to English Grammar* to Robert and James Dodsley and Andrew Millar. According to Darton (2004: xx), during these times trade sales took place at the Queen's Arms, The Horn Tavern or The London Coffee House. Since an album of Darton and Harvey's "receipts for sums they paid for copyrights" has come down to us, we can get an idea of what they had to spend in order to get a share of the copyright of Ash's work. On 16 November 1792 Darton and Harvey purchased "1/8 share of Ash's Grammar" for "£12.12s." (Darton 2004: 14). The receipt is signed by "C[harles]. Dilly". Five years later, on 15 February 1797, the receipt is signed by the London booksellers Vernor & Hood and contains the following statement "Ash's Grammar 1/16-£7.17.6". In 1795 Vernor and Hood had published a second edition of Ash's *New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* (Alston 1966: 53). The fact that they signed the receipt for Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* suggests that they were the owners of the copyright of Ash's grammar as well. However, since I haven't come across any edition published by Vernor and Hood, and Alston (1965: 38) still lists a 1799 edition of the grammar published by "C. Dilly, G.G. & J. Robinson, J. Scatcherd [et al.]", this does not seem to have been the case. Darton and Harvey not only shared in the publication of Ash's grammar but also had a "one-eighth share" in the publication of Lindley Murray's works (Darton 2004: xxi). In contrast to Ash's grammar, which just like Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* appears to have had print-runs of 1000 copies (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008b: 102; see also Suarez 2000: 136), Murray's *English Grammar* and his *English Exercises*, according to

Darton (2004: xxi-xxii), “consisted of 10,000 copies each”. This indicates the immense popularity these works enjoyed at the time.

Just as in the case of Lowth’s grammar, there are also pirated editions of Ash’s grammar that have come down to us (see Table 4 below). In contrast to the regular editions of Ash’s grammars, these editions were either published outside England or issued by booksellers other than Edward and Charles Dilly who, as I pointed out, were responsible for all regular editions of Ash’s grammar, after the first edition.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>A new edition</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Additional information</i>
1772	Sixth		12°	London: printed for E. and C. Dilly, in the Poultry, and Kincaid and Creech at Edinburgh
1777	Fifth		12°	Dublin: William Sleater
1786				London: printed for F. Osborne and J. Mozely [sic]
1789			18°	London: printed for Henry Smithson [ESTC N18073]
1790				London: printed for the Booksellers
1791			18°	London: printed for the Booksellers [ESTC N70500]
1791		+	12°	London: A. Millar, W. Law, and R. Carter
1793				London: Symonds [ESTC N17997]
1793	Eighth		32°	Dublin: R. Cross [ESTC T166198]
1794		+	12°	London: Henry Smeaton [ESTC N17995]
1794		+	12°	London, the Booksellers
1795		+	12°	London, the Booksellers [ESTC T166194]
1796		+	8°	London: printed for W. Osborne, T. Griffin, and H. Mozley and Co. Gainsborough [ESTC T204023]
1798		+	18°	London: printed for the Booksellers [ESTC T166199]
1799	Ninth		24°	Dublin, P. Wogan [ESTC T204113]
1801				London: published for the booksellers and printed and sold by H. Mozley and Co. Gainsborough
1803				Oxford: [Slatter and Munday]
1804				Oxford: [Slatter and Munday]
1807				London, J. Mawman [etc.], Wilson and Spence
1808			12cm	Banbury: printed by J. Rusher, for William Rusher, Bookseller
1810				Banbury: printed by J. Rusher, for W. Rusher and sold by all other booksellers

Table 4. Pirated editions of Ash's grammar (those in bold are not listed in Alston 1965).

WorldCat lists an 1807 edition of Ash's grammar published by Joseph Mawman. Unfortunately this work has been unavailable to me. According to the information provided in WorldCat, the work is bound together with Goold Brown's *The First Lines of English Grammar* published in New York in 1823. This suggests that after Mawman had succeeded Charles Dilly in 1800 he must have continued publishing Ash's grammar.

Ash's grammar continued to be published after 1810, the year in which the last edition appeared according to Alston (1965: 38). In 1824 Thomas Martin (*fl.* 1824) noted in his *Philological Grammar of the English Language* that "A new and improved edition of ASH's Institutes appeared in 1808, and two others in the mean time" (Martin 1824: 269). That Ash's grammar continued to be used well into the nineteenth century is further confirmed by the London publishers W. Simpkin's and R. Marshall's "SCHOOL CATALOGUE" which can be found at the back of James Morrison's *The Mercantile Teacher's Assistant: or a guide to practical book-keeping* (1829). In this catalogue, which Simpkin and Marshall described as containing "ALL the Books now in use" (1829: 257), "A new Edition" of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes; or an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar* is listed for the price of "1s bound" under "English Grammar, Composition". Eighteen years later Simpkin and Marshall were still trying to attract buyers for copies of Ash's grammar. In Simpkin and Marshall's catalogue entitled "Popular Books, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, French, German and English" at the back of *Phaedrus Construed. The fables of Phaedrus construed into English. For the use of grammar schools* (1847), an "18 mo. 1s. bound" edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* can be found. This also suggests that the grammar continued to be published in different sizes.

Finally, it is interesting to note that additional copies of Ash's grammar can be found in special collections of children's books around the world. The Opie Collection of Children's Literature, for instance, which is housed in the New Bodleian in Oxford, possesses a copy of *The Easiest Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar*, the 1766 edition of Ash's grammar, which is not recorded by

Alston. The same goes for a copy of the 1768 edition of Ash's grammar which is held by the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books at the Toronto Public Library, and a 1789 pirated edition, printed in London for Henry Smithson (see Table 4), which can be found in the Monaghan Collection at the University of Kansas. The Victoria & Albert's Renier Collection of Historic and Contemporary Publications for Children also has two copies of Ash's grammar that cannot be found in Alston either, namely a 1793 edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* and an 1808 pirated edition of the work, printed in Banbury for W. Rusher (see Table 4). The Cotsen Children's Library at Princeton University similarly holds a 1794 copy of Ash's grammar that is lacking from Alston's bibliography (see Table 4).

2.4. The reception of Ash's grammar

In the preface to the fourth edition of his grammar, Ash explained that since he had decided to publish his original work for his friends who were engaged in teaching youth, "no Means were made Use of to recommend it to the Public" (Ash 1769: Advertisement). As a result, Ash's grammar did not become available to a wider public until 1766. Although the Advertisement in the 1766 edition of Ash's grammar is signed by Ryland as "Northampton June 10, 1766", Ash's grammar is reviewed in the *Critical* and *Monthly Review* only at the beginning of the next year. In January 1767 the *Critical Review* described the work as "a plain, easy, compendious system of English grammar, properly calculated for children" (Anon. 1767: 74). A month later, Ash's grammar was reviewed in the *Monthly Review*'s "Monthly Catalogue for February, 1767". The entire review reads as follows:

Art. 29. *The easiest Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar; designed for the Use of Children under Ten Years of Age, to lead them into a clear Knowledge of the first Principles of the English Language.* By the Rev. John Ash of Pershore in Worcestershire. With an appendix, &c. Small 12 mo, 1s. Dilly.

Grammar, as Mr. Locke observes, is the proper study of mature years; and therefore to teach its elements to children under ten years of age, must be

doing little more than obliging them to get the terms by rote: For that purpose this book seems to be well enough contrived (Langhorne 1767: 161).

According to Percy (p.c.) (see also Nangle 1934: 235), the above-mentioned review of Ash's *Easiest Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar* was written by John Langhorne (1735–1779). In contrast to his colleague William Rose (1719–1786), who reviewed the more scholarly works like Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar*, Langhorne tended to do the less significant grammars (Percy p.c.). The favourable reviews of Ash's grammar in both periodicals suggest that Ryland was not the only one who looked upon Ash's work as "an easy Grammar" (1766: Advertisement), i.e. a grammar which could be easily "learnt and recollected by many Children under ten Years of Age" (1766: Advertisement).

The majority of the public, however, probably learned about the publication of Ash's grammar from other sources. During the eighteenth century it was common practice to advertise grammars and textbooks in the local press (Robinson 1972: 341, as quoted from Beal 2004: 105). According to Percy (2004: 155), "the winter months of December, January, February and March furnish a particularly high number of advertisements placed by booksellers exploiting the holiday season and schools and teachers, anticipating the beginning of term".

While searching the 17th–18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers and 19th Century British Library Newspapers databases I found no fewer than 293 advertisements for Ash's grammar published in 23 different newspapers (see Appendix 1). It is worth mentioning that 151 of these advertisements appeared in the *Public Advertiser*, a very popular London newspaper which "sold between 3000 to 4500 copies per day" (Barker 2000: 32). The first advertisement for Ash's grammar that I came across can be found in the *Public Advertiser* of Friday 22 August 1766. "The easiest Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar, by the Rev. Mr. Ash, 1s. bound" is one of the seventeen "NEW BOOKS, For the USE of SCHOOLS" advertised by Charles and Edward Dilly in this issue. On 8, 18 and 22 November of that same year, Ash's grammar was promoted by

Edward and Charles Dilly in the *St. James Chronicle or the British Evening Post* in an advertisement for a new edition of Samuel Patrick's *Terence's Comedies, translated into English prose*. It wasn't, however, until the end of that month, i.e. 29 November 1766, that the first proper advertisements for Ash's grammar appeared in the *St. James Chronicle or the British Evening Post* and the *London Evening Post*. The advertisement in the latter reads as follows:

This Day was publish'd,
 Price neatly bound 1 s. or 10 s. per Dozen,
 THE EASIEST INTRODUCTION
 to Dr. LOWTH'S ENGLISH GRAMMAR.
 Designed for the Use of Children under Ten Years of
 Age, to lead them into a clear Knowledge of the first
 Principles of the English Language.
 By the Reverend JOHN ASH,
 Of Pershore in Worcestershire.
 With an APPENDIX, containing, 1. Some short Ob-
 servations on the various Sounds of the Vowels. 2. Easy
 Parsing Exercises on the English Language. 3. A Select
 Collection of Books for Boys and Girls, to shorten the
 Path to Knowledge. 4. Select Lessons to instil just
 Sentiments of Virtue.
 Printed for Edw. and Cha. Dilly, in the Poultry.
 Where may be had,
 Three Dialogues, between a Minister and one of his
 Parishioners, by the Rev. Mr. Vivian, A. B. the 14th
 Edit. Price 3 d. or 20s. per Hundred
 (*London Evening Post*, 29 November 1766).

On 15 December 1766 Ash's grammar is mentioned as "just published" in an advertisement for the Rev. Mr. Thomas Vivian's *Three Dialogues between a Minister and one of his Parishioners* in *The Public Advertiser*. It is worth bearing in mind that the inclusion of phrases such as "just published" or "This day is/was published" appears to have been a marketing device among eighteenth-century booksellers, and does not necessarily provide an indication on what day certain works were published. Despite the above announcement, I have shown that the work was already available in August of that same year. Tierney (1995: 114) indeed points out that the standard formula *This day was publish'd* "cannot always be taken at face value". According to him such a statement did not "mean 'this day is the first day that this work is available for purchase'", but

simply informed “the public that this volume is ‘available at this time’” (Tierney 1995: 114). Raven (2007: 286) similarly notes that the phrase “‘This Day is Published’ seems to have been accepted as in the continuous present, with notices routinely repeated the next day or week, or even in successive weeks thereafter”. The Dillys were no exception in repeatedly advertising Ash’s grammar during the month of December, as has been demonstrated by Robinson (as quoted from Beal 2004: 105), who pointed out that during the eighteenth century English grammars were often advertised in local newspapers around Christmas. By publishing these advertisements booksellers hoped to persuade parents and schools to buy these texts as Christmas gifts for their children or pupils.

Ryland’s second edition of Ash’s grammar, the edition to which he had made changes without informing the author, was first advertised in the *Public Advertiser* of 31 October 1768:

This Day is published,
 A new Edition, corrected and enlarged,
 Price neatly bound 1s. or 10s. per Dozen,
 THE Easiest Introduction to Dr.
 Lowth’s English Grammar: Designed for the
 Use of Schools, and to lead young Gentlemen and
 Ladies into a clear Knowledge of the first Principles
 of the English Language.
 By the Reverend JOHN ASH,
 Of Pershore, in Worcestershire.
 With an Appendix, containing, 1. Some short Ob-
 servations on the various Sounds of the Vowels. 2.
 Easy Parsing Exercises on the English Language. 3.
 A select Collection of Books for Boys and Girls, to
 shorten the Path to Knowledge. 4. Select Lessons
 to instil just Sentiments of Virtue.
 Printed for Edward and Charles Dilly, in the
 Poultry (*Public Advertiser*, 31 October 1768).

While the Advertisement in the 1768 edition by Ryland is dated 12 September 1767, it apparently took more than a year before this new, corrected and enlarged edition of Ash’s grammar appeared on the market. The delay in the publication of the 1768 edition suggests that Edward Dilly must have allowed

Ash to inspect Ryland's "proposed Alterations" to his grammar after all, just as he had desired in his above-mentioned letter to him.

Although I have not come across an advertisement for the fourth edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, it is worth mentioning that in an advertisement for Joachim Lange's *Easy and Pleasant Latin Conversations* in the *Lloyd's Evening Post* of 21 April 1769, Ash's grammar is no longer marketed as "The Easiest Introduction to Dr Lowth's English Grammar" but as "Ash's Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar, a New Edition" instead. This "New Edition" of Ash's grammar may as well have been the fourth edition, which as I have shown above seems likely to have been published in 1769.

Contrary to the fourth edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, the publication of the fifth edition was announced in the *Public Advertiser* of 23 February 1771:

Friday, March 1, will be published,
 Price One Shilling, bound in Red Leather, the 5th
 Edition, revised and corrected by the Author,
 GRAMMATICAL INSTITUTES; or
 An easy Introduction to Dr. LOWTH'S EN-
 GLISH GRAMMAR; designed for the Use of Schools,
 and to lead young Gentlemen and Ladies into the
 Knowledge of the first Principles of the ENGLISH
 LANGUAGE,
 By JOHN ASH.
 With an Appendix, containing, 1. The Declension of
 Irregular and Defective Verbs. 2. The Application
 of the Grammatical Institutes. 3. Some useful Ob-
 servations on the Ellipsis.
 Printed for E. and C. Dilly in the Poultry,
 Of whom may be had, just published, 1. Entick's
 New Latin and English Dictionary, 4s. bound. 2.
 His New Spelling Dictionary, new Edit. 2s. bound.
 3. His New Spelling Book, 2s. bound. 4. Dr Nu-
 gent's New French and English Dictionary, 3s.
 bound.
 N.B. The above four Books are much approved,
 and are introduced into the most eminent Schools in
 England (*Public Advertiser*, 23 February 1771).

The first proper advertisement for the fifth edition of Ash's grammar, however, which according to the text above was "bound in Red Leather", can be found in the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* of 28 August 1771, more than five months after the work had first been published. The advertisement reads as follows:

For the Use of Young Gentlemen and Ladies,
This day is published,
The Fifth Edition, revised and corrected by the Author,
price 1s. neatly bound in red,
GRAMMATICAL INSTITUTES; or an
easy Introduction to Dr. LOWTH'S ENGLISH GRAM-
MAR. Designed for the Use of Schools; and to lead young
gentlemen and ladies into the knowledge of the first princi-
ples of the English Language. By the Rev. JOHN ASH,
of Pershore. With an Appendix, containing, 1. The De-
clension of irregular and defective Verbs. 2. The Appli-
cation of the Grammatical Institutes. 3. Some useful Ob-
servations on the Ellipsis.
Printed for E. and C. Dilly, in the Poultry,
N.B. School-masters and others, that cannot be conve-
niently supplied with this book in the country, may have a
dozen, or a larger number at a time, with a considerable al-
lowance of the publishers (*Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 28 August
1771).

From 29 November 1770 onwards, "Ash's Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar" (*London Evening Post*, 29 November 1770) was frequently promoted by Edward and Charles Dilly in their advertisements for John Entick's *New Latin and English Dictionary*. From the year 1771 onwards, the Dillys also marketed Ash's grammar in their advertisements for Thomas Nugent's *New Pocket Dictionary* and John Entick's *New Spelling Dictionary*. On 30 December 1772 they likewise advertised Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* in an advertisement for John Entick's *New Spelling Book* in the *Lloyd's Evening Post*. The grammar is also mentioned by the Dillys in seven other advertisements for Entick's *New Spelling Book* that all appeared in the *Public Advertiser* throughout the year 1773.

In the *General Evening Post* of 14 January 1772, the fifth edition of Ash's grammar is described as one of eight books "For the Use of Young GENTLEMEN

and LADIES, Recommended by the most eminent Teachers" (*General Evening Post*, 14 January 1772). The Dillys apparently took care to distribute Ash's grammar all over the country, as can be inferred from the following piece of information that can similarly be found in this advertisement:

N.B. School-masters and others, that cannot be conveniently supplied with this book in the country, may have a dozen, or a larger number at a time, with a considerable allowance, of the Publisher (*General Evening Post*, 14 January 1772).

New editions of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* continued to be advertised. In the *Public Advertiser* of 18 August 1774 "The 6th Edit. bound in Red" was included by Edward and Charles Dilly in an advert for Thomas Nugent's *New Pocket Dictionary*. This is interesting information, especially since Alston in his bibliography recorded no sixth edition of Ash's grammar. The advertisement for the seventh edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* in the *Lloyd's Evening Post* of 6 November 1775 is also of great interest, since it informs us that Ash continued to revise and correct later editions of his grammar:

For the USE of YOUNG GENTLEMEN
and LADIES.
This Day was published,
The Seventh Edition, revised and corrected by the Author,
Price One Shilling, neatly bound in Red,
GRAMMATICAL INSTITUTES;
or, an EASY INTRODUCTION to Dr.
LOWTH'S ENGLISH GRAMMAR. Designed for
the Use of Schools, and to lead young Gentlemen and
Ladies into the Knowledge of the first Principles of the
English Language.
By the Rev. JOHN ASH, L.L.D.
With an Appendix, containing, 1. The Declension of
Irregular and Defective Verbs. 2. The Application of
the Grammatical Institutes. 3. Some useful Observations
on the Ellipsis.
To which is now added, Select Lessons, to instill just
Sentiments of Virtue in Youth; and a Collection of
Books proper for young Gentlemen and Ladies to shorten
the Path to Knowledge.
Printed for Edward and Charles Dilly, in the Poultry.
Of whom may be had,
Dr. Ash's new and compleat [sic] Dictionary of the English
Language. Two Vols. 8vo. Price 12s. bound (*Lloyd's Evening Post*, 6 November
1775).

During the years 1777 and 1778 puffs for Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* could also be found in the Dillys' advertisements for another work by Ash, his *Sentiments on Education*. The first of these advertisements that I came across can be found in the *London Chronicle* of 29 March 1777:

On Friday the 11th of April will be published,
For the Use of YOUNG GENTLEMEN and
LADIES,
Neatly printed in Two Vols. Duodecimo, price 6s.
bound,
SENTIMENTS ON EDUCATION. Collected
from the best Writers: Properly methodised,
and interspersed with occasional Observations.
By JOHN ASH, L.L.D.
Printed for E. and C. Dilly, in the Poultry; sold
also by J. Robson and Co. New Bond-street, and J.
Walter, Charing-cross.
Of whom may be had, by the same Author,
1. A New and Complete Dictionary of the English
Language, 2 vols. 8vo. price 12s. bound.
2. Grammatical Institutes, or an Easy Introduc-
tion to Dr. Lowth's Grammar. Sixth edition, 1s.
bound (*London Chronicle*, 29 March 1777).

Instead of advertising the seventh edition of Ash's grammar, which as I have shown above was available by then, the Dillys were promoting the sixth edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* in the advert above. Whether this was an attempt to get rid of some old copies of Ash's grammar or simply a printing error we will never know for sure. The last numbered edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* that was advertised was the eighth edition. This edition was first marketed by the Dillys in an advertisement for Nugent's *New Pocket Dictionary* in the *Public Advertiser* of 4 August 1777. This advertisement is of great interest as it further informs us about the publication history of Ash's grammar. Just as in the case of the sixth edition, an eighth edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* is lacking from Alston's bibliography (1965: 34).

Other advertisements for Ash's grammar can be found in the *London Chronicle* and *Public Advertiser* of 18 January 1785. In these particular issues

Charles Dilly promoted “A New Edition, of Grammatical Institutes, or an Easy Introduction to Dr. Lowth’s English Grammar, by Dr. Ash” in his advertisement for John Fell’s (1735–1797) *An Essay Towards an English Grammar*. Just like Ash, Fell was a dissenting minister: the Dillys had a “notable reputation for promoting dissenting material” (*ODNB*, s.v. Dilly, Edward). The last eighteenth-century advertisements for Ash’s grammar can be found in the *World* of 28 July 1792 and of 14 January 1793. In both these issues Ash’s grammar is listed in an advertisement for “Wenman and Hodgson’s Cheap Editions of the most Celebrated Works in the English Language”.

Appendix 1 also includes eight nineteenth-century advertisements for Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*. From these advertisements we can conclude that during the years 1823–1835 the grammar was published by W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, who were briefly discussed in §2.3.3, and whose premises could be found in Stationer’s Hall Court, Ludgate-Street, London. According to the advertisement in *The Examiner* of 18 July 1824, Ash’s grammar was one of Simpkin and Marshall’s fifteen “BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS”, that were “sold by all Booksellers, with a good allowance to Teachers” (*The Examiner*, 18 July 1824). In the last advertisement that I came across in the *Liverpool Mercury* of 14 August 1835, Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* is advertised as one of the four “VALUABLE SCHOOL BOOKS” published by Simpkin and Marshall. It is worth pointing out that apart from advertising the grammar in the local press in 1767, Edward and Charles Dilly also included Ash’s *Easiest Introduction to Dr. Lowth’s English Grammar* as the first book in their Catalogue “BOOKS printed for E. and C. DILLY in the POULTRY. For the USE of SCHOOLS” which can be found at the back of their edition of *Terence’s Comedies, translated into English prose* (1767), a work that can be consulted in ECCO.

As shown in the above-mentioned advertisements, in order to cater for schools, the Dillys sold Ash’s grammar for “10s. per Dozen”. One shilling, however, was the regular price one had to pay in order to obtain a copy of the grammar. According to Robinson (1972: 341; as quoted from Beal 2004: 105),

“this price was still within the means of most artisans”. In a useful appendix entitled “Cost of Living, Currency and Prices” Picard ([2000]2002: 293–298) has demonstrated that in Dr. Johnson’s London 1s was the equivalent to “dinner in a steakhouse – beef, bread and beer, plus tip”, “postage of one-page letter from London to New York” or “1lb of perfumed soap” (Picard [2000]2002: 295). At one shilling, Ash’s grammar was less expensive than Lowth’s, which, according to Percy (1997: 131), was advertised for three shillings in the *Monthly Review*. Although Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2008b: 115) discovered that cheaper editions of Lowth’s grammar were available at 1s.6d. “for the Use of Schools”, these too, were still more expensive than the one by Ash.

Since the Advertisement to the 1768 edition of the grammar is dated “Northampton, Sept. 12, 1767”, this suggests that the print run of the first edition of the grammar issued by Ryland must have been exhausted within a year. Bottigheimer (2005: 21) believes that in those days school books must have sold particularly fast, since these were the books English schoolchildren had to buy. As for Ash’s grammar, we know, for instance, that the work was used by pupils at Rugby School during the years 1778–1794 when Dr. Thomas James (1748–1804) was headmaster there (Butler 1896: 24; 37). Since Fergus (2006: 172; 178; 180) has demonstrated that Rugby boys bought their own school texts, it seems likely that they all possessed a copy of Ash’s grammar. In many booksellers’ catalogues at the time Ash’s grammar was indeed found in the schoolbook section. An example of such a catalogue is William Bent’s *London Catalogue of Books* (1773) (Auer 2008: 60). I also came across “Ash’s Introduction to Lowth’s Grammar” in Bent’s 1779 and 1785 *General Catalogue of Books*. It is noteworthy that in his catalogues for 1791 and 1799 Bent lists the grammar as “Ash’s Eng. Grammar”. This suggests that he was now trying to sell Ash’s grammar to an audience which was no longer familiar with Lowth’s authoritative work (see below).

Ash’s grammar was not only available in bookshops in Britain but in Ireland as well, as is confirmed by the Cork bookseller Anthony Edwards’s *Catalogue of*

Books, in most branches of literature (1785) where the work is listed under “English School-Books, Gazetteers &c.” as “Ashes’s Introduction to Louth’s Grammar” [sic] (1785: 37). In Chapter 4 it will be shown that Ash’s grammar could be obtained from American booksellers as well.

It is worth mentioning that in his two editions of Ash’s grammar, Ryland not only recommended his friend’s work as an introduction to Lowth’s grammar, but also as an introduction to the non-conformist Joseph Priestley’s grammar, which according to him, should be studied before Lowth’s *Short Introduction to English Grammar*:

the Editor is certain, that if this little Book was prudently used, by School-masters and Governesses of Ladies Boarding-schools, they would find their Scholars improve with greater Expedition, and be soon prepared to learn with Understanding and Pleasure, those higher and more excellent Grammars with which we are now favoured. He means Dr. Joseph Priestley’s English Grammar, 12 mo. which should be read and taught after this, and then a Youth should be made acquainted with the Beauties and Blemishes, the Defects and Perfections of our finest English Writers, by reading with Attention and frequent Repetition, the best Grammar ever written in our Language, by one of the most amiable of men, Dr. Robert Lowth⁸ (1766: Advertisement).

A possible reason why Ryland might have brought up Priestley’s grammar here was that he was acquainted with Priestley himself. According to Roe (1997: 27), a friend of Ryland’s, John Clarke (1757–1820), who worked as an assistant teacher at his school in Northampton and later in Enfield, was “an ‘intimate’ friend of Priestley”. It may therefore have been through Clarke that Ryland met Priestley. It is striking that Ash does not mention Priestley’s grammar at all in the 1760, 1769 and later editions of his grammar, nor does he refer to Priestley’s grammar in his *Sentiments on Education* (1777), where he notes:

We take the liberty to recommend to the young pupil, as the best practical books, *Ashes’s* [sic] *Grammatical Institutes*; Dr. *Lowth’s Introduction to English Grammar*, *Holmes’s Latin*, and *Greek Grammars* to which he may add, the book intitled *Hermes; or, a Philosophical Enquiry concerning Universal Grammar*. By *James Harris, Esq;* (1777: 16)

⁸ Ryland adds a footnote in which he explains that Lowth is “Now Lord Bishop of St. David’s”. In the 1768 edition this has been changed into “Now Lord Bishop of Oxford”. According to Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2011: 25), in 1766 Lowth “was first made Bishop of St. David’s, then in the same year Bishop of Oxford”.

Though Ryland advocated Ash's grammar as an introduction to Priestley, it was as "an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar" that the work was known at the time. In his *Liberal Education: or, a practical treatise on the methods of acquiring useful and polite learning* (1781), Vicesimus Knox asserted:

I need not point out the proper Introduction. Every one will anticipate me in chusing Lowth's. Some parts of it are unavoidably too difficult for a child's comprehension. Ash's introduction to it, adapted to the use of children, may be sometimes used with great advantage (1781: 132).

Two years later, Henry Bright in his *Praxis, or, a course of English and Latin exercises* (1783) similarly mentioned: "If *Lowth's Grammar*, after our Endeavours to make it intelligible, be too difficult, *Ash's Grammatical Institutes*, or Introduction to *Lowth's Grammar* may be previously read for a Time, till it is intelligible" (1783: 11–12). In her *Letters on Education* (1790), the historian Catharine Macaulay (1731–1791) also recommended Ash's grammar as an introduction to Lowth's, stating that "[d]uring this period [from the age of ten until fourteen], the English grammar ought to make part of the pupil's study, beginning with Ash's introduction to Lowth, and then with Lowth's introduction" (1790: 129).

The year 1796 is of interest as it saw the publication of a rather obscure grammar entitled *An Easy Introduction to the English Language: with various rules and examples for correct speaking, upon a new plan*.⁹ The work was written by a person whose initials were J.G., and who at that time was master of the Bristol Commercial and Literary Seminary. It seems likely that the author of the grammar was Joseph Guy whose "seminary for young gentlemen" is listed in *Matthew's New Bristol Directory for the Year, 1793–4*. Alston (1965: 97) records only one edition of Guy's grammar, but a second edition of the work, published in Bristol in 1799, can now be found in ECCO. Although the use and influence of Guy's *Easy Introduction* "seem to have been short-lived" (Downey 1979: xvii),

⁹ The first edition of the grammar is not available in ECCO, a copy is, however, available in the British Library.

the grammar is nevertheless worth studying, since it enhances our knowledge of the reception of Ash's grammar in the eighteenth century. In the preface to his grammar, Guy praises Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, asserting that "THE elegant conciseness of the definitions, and the many other excellencies of Dr. Ash's Introduction, have justly merited for it the very general reception it has met with among Schools, in every part of the Kingdom" (1796: v). In addition, he admits that he is aware that "[a]fter a reputation so well established, it may seem a step at once rash and useless to attempt to offer any thing *so nearly upon the same Plan*, that may hope for a better claim to public estimation" (1796: v). Guy nevertheless decided to publish his work, since he believed that it was aimed at a different audience from that of Ash's. While discussing Ash's grammar, Guy observes that "in many respects, no one seems to have been better calculated than he was for such a work, and had his experience as a teacher been equal to his judgement as a scholar, it would have probably been the most perfect manual of the kind ever offered to the Public for the junior classes in Schools" (1796: 118). Because Guy wrote his grammar "*solely for the junior classes*", he decided to omit "everything apparently above their comprehension" (1796: vi).

Although Guy's grammar "openly admits its debt to Ash" (Downey 1979: xvii),¹⁰ in the "ADDRESS TO TEACHERS" at the end of his book Guy severely criticizes Ash's grammar:

in writing a book, particular regard should be paid to the capacity of those for whom we write. Dr. Ash seems to have erred herein, he professedly writes for youth, yet writes many things above their comprehension. I have already observed that his Grammar has been more frequently used in Schools, both in London and the Country, than almost any other. Yet I have never known any tutor thoroughly satisfied with the whole. Some parts have been almost generally omitted, and the other parts used only for want of better. What boy, for instance, ever would be at the [sic] pains to derive any clear ideas of Orthography from the first part of the book, though the rules are in themselves

¹⁰ Apart from the etymology section, the appendix (which consists of "The Declension of Irregular and Defective Verbs" and parsing lessons taken from the Bible, Pope's translation of the *Iliad*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*) and syntax section in Guy's grammar similarly resemble that of Ash's.

good? – Or who ever learnt to *speak* or *write*, even tolerably correct from the exercises of false English subjoined to that Treatise? learners may have corrected the whole, and after all, remain grossly ignorant of the most common errors of Grammar. In short every tutor must acknowledge that in Dr. Ash's Grammar there is much that boys need not, and more that they cannot understand, and some things that can never be usefully reduced to practice (1796: 117–118).

As I will show in the next chapter, “*Of the ALPHABET and the Sounds of the Letters*” was one of the sections which Ash, inspired by Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar*, had added to the fourth edition (1769). The section indeed contains pronunciation rules which must have been difficult for children to learn by rote, such as “G is *hard* before *a,o,u*, and all *Consonants*, and at the *End* of words, as *gat, got, Gut, glad, Jug*” (1769: xx).

As concerns the exercises of bad English, which had been added to the grammar in 1780, a year after Ash's death, Guy did not realise that these exercises had not been designed by Ash. According to Michael (1987: 325), exercises of false English were “the most generally used exercise” in English grammars after parsing lessons (1987: 325). Such exercises were first applied to the teaching of English syntax by Ann Fisher in the second edition of her *New Grammar* (1750) (Michael 1987: 325; see also Rodríguez-Gil 2002a and b; Görlach 2003). Michael (1987: 329) indeed lists “J.G.” as one of the teachers who “objected to these exercises”. The reason why Guy did not include these exercises in his own grammar was that he believed that they had a tendency “to impress *bad habits* by making those errors too familiar” (1796: vii). Instead of “Examples of *grossly bad English*” (1796: vi), Guy's grammar contained “various examples of correct expressions”¹¹ (1796: vii), which according to him were “strictly agreeable to the rules of Grammar, and to the use of the more polite circles” (1796: 120). Guy believed that this approach was an innovation:

The method here used for counteracting a vitiated style, and establishing good habits, the Author believes, is new; and it is hoped, if properly and generally

¹¹ An example is “You and I will go” (1796: 119). He later states that the sentence “Let you and I go” is wrong since “the pronoun in this instance must be formed in the accusative”. According to him, the sentence “*Let you and I go*, seems so familiar to many persons that they have no idea of the impropriety” (1796: 119).

adopted it might greatly contribute to correct provincial errors, and make one pure mode of expression almost universal throughout the nation (1796: vii).

Although Guy clearly regarded his own grammar as an improvement upon the one by Ash, his *Easy Introduction to the English Language* did not become a success. A possible reason for this might be the fact that Guy's grammar was published a year after Lindley Murray's popular *English Grammar* (1795). In 1796 Murray's grammar with its print runs of ten thousand copies (Monaghan 1998: 131) was "already in its 'Second Edition, with Improvements'" (Jones 1996: 66).

Guy's grammar "may not have exerted an influence", but Downey nevertheless notes that it played its "part in the line of grammars which followed Ash" (Downey 1979: xvii). The grammar also shows that thirty-six years after its original publication Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* was still regarded as a useful source; or as Guy put it, one of the "practical excellencies" (1796: viii), containing "valuable" information. Finally, it is worth pointing out that the important role Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* played in the teaching of English grammar can also be inferred from references to the work in the poem "A Narrative of the early Days of a modern Declaimer" about the preacher and religious writer William Huntington (1745–1813) which was published in *The Universal Magazine* in 1805 (for a full version of the poem, see Appendix 2):

To fit himself, he learnt to read,
And then to write – hard tasks indeed!
But harder still, he try'd to hammer
At **Dr. Ash's English grammar!**
Here for awhile the hero stuck,
Puzzling his brains o'er this small book:
Sad were his days, his nights as sad,
Till the poor dunce was almost mad!
At last his self-complacent pride
Led him to throw the book aside (Anon. 1805: 315, ll.13–22).

And now this *learned* man, and *good*,
Had thoughts of writing, if he could,
Tho' scarcely able yet to scrawl,
And knowing nought of **Ash** at all! (Anon. 1805: 315, ll.53–56)

The poem was sent to the editor of the *Universal Magazine* by an author who wrote under the pseudonym “SCRIPTOR VITARUM” (Anon. 1805: 315). According to this author, “[t]he principal incidents to which the following lines allude, were told me by a gentleman who knew him [i.e. Huntington] in early life: and if you think they will amuse your readers, you are at liberty to insert them in your useful Magazine” (Anon. 1805: 315). Huntington, who was already 21 years old when Ash’s grammar became widely available in 1766, apparently experienced great difficulties while studying “Dr. Ash’s English grammar”. This suggests that Huntington may not have been taught English grammar at the Cranbrook grammar school where he had acquired his rudimentary education (ODNB, s.v. Huntington, William). The references to Ash’s grammar in the poem about William Huntington suggests that the poet assumed that the audience of *The Universal Magazine* would immediately recognize the work which they had been made to learn by heart as a young child.

2.5. Conclusion

In the present chapter I have demonstrated that Joseph Priestley and John Fell were not the only eighteenth-century grammarians who did not belong to the established church (Langford [1989] 1998: 307). As a “native of Dorsetshire” (Evans 1779: 20) and a “protestant dissenting minister, of the Baptist denomination” (Rose 1848: 241), Ash, too, claims membership of the so-called group of radical grammarians, i.e. “authors who were in some way outside the mainstream of ‘polite’ British society”: those who were dissenters, female, provincial or colonial.¹² Görlach (2001: 2) points out that “in the field of

¹² Radical grammarians are defined as such by Joan Beal, Jane Hodson, Richard Steadman-Jones and Carol Percy in their call for papers for the colloquium “Histories of Prescriptivism. Alternative approaches to the study of English 1700–1900” (<http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~cpercy/sheffield/HistoriesOfPrescriptivism.htm>, consulted on 14 July 2010). This colloquium was held in Sheffield in July 2003.

grammar books and dictionaries, the number of books from the provinces became notable in the 18th century". Ash's status as a provincial author is also highlighted by the Baptist minister and schoolmaster Ryland, who on the title page of the 1766 and 1768 editions of his friend's grammar declared that the works were being written "By the Rev. JOHN ASH, Of Pershore in Worcestershire".

Although Ash was angry with Ryland for having re-issued his grammar in 1766 and 1768, I believe that if Ryland had not been "in great Want of Copies" (1766: Advertisement) for his own school, Ash's grammar might never have been published in London and, as a consequence, would have been unavailable to a wide public. Moreover, Ryland clearly knew how to market his friend's grammar. Because Ryland decided to change the original title of the grammar in 1766 into *The Easiest Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar* (Ash 1769: viii), the work must have appealed to many parents and schoolteachers, especially at a time when Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* was being considered too difficult for children. Since Ash was aware that Lowth's name had become a so-called selling point (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008b: 109), he knew that he had to keep "Dr Lowth" in the new title of his grammar. In contrast to the 1766 and 1768 editions, Ash's *Grammatical Institutes, or, an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar* was corrected and revised by Ash himself. In addition, I have pointed out that instead of being published in 1761 or 1763 this fourth edition of the grammar appears to have been published by Edward and Charles Dilly in 1769. My search for British editions and reprints of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* further produced a sixth edition (1777) and fourteen unnumbered editions of the grammar that are not listed in Alston's bibliography. I also found ten pirated editions of the grammar that have come to light after the publication of Alston (1965).

In 1767 Ash's grammar was favourably reviewed by the *Critical and Monthly Review*, but many people must have learned about the grammar from reading one of the London newspapers at the time. With the help of the 17th-

18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers and 19th Century British Library Newspapers databases I found a total of 293 advertisements for Ash's grammar published in 23 different newspapers during the years 1766–1835. Apart from advertisements in the local press, Ash's grammar was also advertised in bookseller's catalogues. In 1847 "Ash's Grammatical Institutes; Or an Easy Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar" is still included in such a catalogue at the back of *Phaedrus Construed. The fables of Phaedrus construed into English. For the use of grammar schools.*

Instead of being referred to as *Grammatical Institutes*, Ash's grammar was known as "an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar" at the time. Whereas Vicemicus Knox, Henry Bright and Catherine Macaulay recommended Ash's grammar as an introduction to Lowth, the master of the Bristol Commercial and Literary Seminary, Joseph Guy, did not consider Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* an easy introduction at all. Despite his criticisms of Ash's grammar, Guy nevertheless depended on the work while writing his own *Easy Introduction to the English Language* (1796), a grammar which did not become a success. The huge popularity of Ash's grammar is furthermore confirmed by the references to it in the poem about the preacher and religious writer William Huntington.

Chapter 3. Ash's grammar: its sources, structure and approach

3.1. Introduction

The year 1798 saw the publication of *Practical Education*, which advocated a “scheme for the educational upbringing of children within the family” (*ODNB*, s.v. Edgeworth, Richard Lovell). The book was written by Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744–1817) and his daughter Maria (1768–1849), and it enjoyed a favourable reception (Narain 2006: 59). During the late 1770s Edgeworth and his second wife Honora Sneyd (1751–1780) had taken the education of their young children upon themselves. Among the Edgeworth Papers in the Bodleian Library are two notebooks compiled by Honora in which she recorded the children's responses to their lessons. These notebooks were to form the basis of the Edgeworths' *Practical Education*, a work that is of great interest to the present study since it contains a vivid description of Richard Lovell Edgeworth's experimental system of grammar teaching. In Chapter XIII, which is entitled “On Grammar, and Classical Literature”, Edgeworth allows us a glimpse into how he taught “his little daughter H[onora]” (1774–1790) the rudiments of English grammar:

A few months ago, Mr. – gave his little daughter H –, a child of five years old, her first lesson in English grammar; but no alarming book of grammar was produced upon the occasion, nor did the father put on an unpropitious gravity of countenance. He explained to the smiling child the nature of a verb, a pronoun, and a substantive. Then he spoke a short familiar sentence, and asked H – to try if she could find out which word in it was a verb, which a pronoun, and which a substantive. The little girl found them all out most successfully, and formed no painful associations with her first grammatical lesson (Edgeworth and Edgworth 1798: 397).

In addition to the above-mentioned chapter on grammar, Richard Edgeworth, according to Narain (2006: 59), also wrote chapters on Arithmetic, Classical Literature, Chronology, Geography, Geometry, and Mechanics. The remaining

essays in *Practical Education* were written by Edgeworth's daughter Maria, who appears to have been responsible for revising her father's chapters as well (Narain 2006: 59).

Just like Edgeworth, John Ash had taught his daughter English grammar and it was probably in order to facilitate these lessons that he had undertaken to compose a grammar for her use. It was published in Worcester in 1760 (Ash 1766: Advertisement; see also Chapter 2). Interestingly both girls were only five years old at the time of their first grammar lessons. Though this may strike the modern reader as rather early to start learning grammar, in Chapter 1 I already indicated that this was by no means uncommon in eighteenth-century Britain. In his *Sentiments on Education* (1777) Ash remarked that "As soon as the young pupil is tolerably versed in the art of reading; we may with propriety introduce the ENGLISH GRAMMAR" (1777: 11). Unlike today, children in Georgian Britain were taught to read before they went to school (Michael 1987: 59; Fairman 2002: 560), and often as early as at the age of two. In a letter to his wife dated 25 September 1755 Robert Lowth stated that he is "very glad to hear that [at twenty-one months his son] Tom learns his book so well" (as quoted from Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2004: 282). On 19 July 1768 Lady Sophia Carteret (1745–1771) similarly recorded in her diary how she had been busy that day teaching her two-year-old son "to spell words" (as quoted from Shefrin 2003: 12). From Hester Lynch Thrale's (1741–1821) diary entries we can also infer that at the age of two her eldest daughter Queeney could "tell all her Letters great & small & spell little Words as D,o,g, Dog, C,a,t, Cat &c" (ed. Hyde 1977: 21) and that she could "read tolerably" by the time she was four (ed. Hyde 1977: 29).

Children's books for the teaching of reading, such as Anna Letitia Barbauld's (1743–1825) *Lessons for Children* (1778–79) and Lady Ellenor Fenn's *Cobwebs to Catch Flies* (1783a, g), were also aimed at an extremely young audience. Whereas the first volume of Barbauld's popular *Lessons* was aimed at boys and girls "between two and three years old", volume one of

Fenn's widely read *Cobwebs to Catch Flies* (1783a) contained reading lessons in words of three, four, five and six letters "suited to Children from THREE to FIVE Years of Age" (McCarthy 2005: 92; Fenn 1783a: title page; see also Chapter 5).

It is interesting to speculate whether Ash, like Edgeworth, at first taught English grammar conversationally. However, it is also possible that he already presented his young daughter with the manuscript of his *Grammatical Institutes* (probably in notebook format) during her first grammar lesson. The five-year-old girl had to learn the grammar by heart, and she managed to do so rather quickly, according to Ryland in his comment in the Advertisement of the 1766 edition of Ash's grammar, in which he points out that "she learnt and repeated the whole in a short Time" (1766: Advertisement, see also Chapter 2). However, if we are to believe the following statement from the section "On teaching grammar" in Ash's anthology of educational texts *Sentiments on Education* (1777), we may assume that he aimed to teach the subject to his daughter in small steps:

The parts of speech, and the different inflexions of words are first to be inculcated. The numbers and genders of nouns; the degrees of comparison in adjectives; the different cases of the pronouns; and especially the declensions of verbs, both regular and irregular, are to be carefully observed, and rendered as familiar as possible, in a great variety of forms and examples [...] As soon as the understanding begins to open, let the order, connection, and agreement of words in a sentence be fully illustrated in attending to the rules of syntax (1777: 11–12).

Ash was not the only father who wrote a grammar for his child. In §1.1 I already pointed out how Robert Lowth, too, had originally begun to write his *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762) for his eldest son Thomas Henry, when he was only four years old (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000b: 25–26; 2003: 43). Unlike Lowth, who was educated at the prestigious Winchester College from the age of twelve to eighteen, Ash's parents were "of an inferior station in life", and he was apprenticed to a blacksmith (*ODNB*, s.v. Lowth, Robert; Taylor 1963: 4). Ash must have received some minimal education in or near his native Stockland before he started his apprenticeship, but it was not until he had quit his job as an apprentice and started studying "for the Baptist ministry under

Bernard Foskett” at the age of sixteen that he was instructed in French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew (McKibbens 1986: 30). It was probably due to his grammatical knowledge of these languages that Ash felt confident enough to compose a grammar and in doing so he was clearly no exception at the time. Chapman (2008: 22) points out that since “there were no professional linguists available” in eighteenth-century Britain, grammars were written by schoolmasters, clergyman “and other seemingly self-appointed grammarians”.

As the first edition of Ash’s grammar appeared in 1760, he must have been engaged in writing the grammar during the 1750s. Since Ryland informs us that Ash’s daughter was five years old when she started learning grammar, Ash must have finished the manuscript in 1757 if he had designed it for his eldest daughter Eliza (b. 1752), or in 1759 if the work was intended for Eliza’s younger sister Martha (b. 1754). The fact that Ash decided to compose a grammar for his daughter suggests that he must have been dissatisfied with the English grammars that were available at the time. In this chapter, however, I will provide evidence that Ash did rely on one of these grammatical works while writing his popular *Grammatical Institutes*. In addition, I will describe the structure of Ash’s grammar and discuss whether the first edition of his *Grammatical Institutes* should be regarded as a prescriptive or descriptive work. Finally, I will present a detailed analysis of the fourth edition of Ash’s grammar, which unlike the second and third editions was revised by Ash himself.

3.2. Ash’s use of sources

Since no clues are given by Ash in the first edition of his *Grammatical Institutes* as to which grammars he consulted while writing his work, we are left to wonder which sources he might have used. Although Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* became widely known for being “an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth’s English grammar” (Ash 1769: title page), we need to bear in mind that when

Ash embarked upon the grammar during the 1750s, Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* had not appeared yet. One of the works which must have been available to Ash while he was in the process of composing his grammar was Samuel Johnson's (1709–1784) *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). Apart from a section on "The History of the English Language", Johnson's *Dictionary* also had a grammar prefixed to it, which was entitled "A Grammar of the English Tongue". As a prospective lexicographer, Ash must have owned a copy of Johnson's *Dictionary*. That he did so by the time he was compiling his *New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* (1775) can be inferred from references to the *Dictionary* in this work. A comparison of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* with Johnson's "Grammar of the English Tongue" shows hardly any correspondence between the two works,¹ so it is unlikely that Ash relied on Johnson's grammar. The reason for this may be that Johnson's grammar was not aimed at beginners. In the grammar section of his *Dictionary* Johnson explained how he had

collected rules and examples, by which the English language may be learned, if the reader be already acquainted with grammatical terms, or taught by a master to those that are more ignorant. To have written a grammar for such as are not yet initiated in the schools, would have been tedious, and perhaps at last ineffectual (1755: sig. d^r).

The least extensive section in Johnson's *Grammar of the English Tongue* is his section on syntax, which consisted of ten lines (Lowth 1762: v). Johnson defends his decision not to pay too much attention to syntax by stating that "The established practice of grammarians requires that I should here treat of the Syntax; but our language has so little inflection, or variety of terminations, that its construction neither requires nor admits many rules. Wallis therefore has totally omitted it" (1755: sig. c2^r). Ash disagreed with Johnson on this matter, as can be inferred from the preface to his grammar where he refers to

¹ Johnson's examples of words that end in *-f* but which do not form their plural by *-ves*, i.e. *dwarf*, *grief*, *hoof*, and *muff*, are also listed as exceptions by Ash (1760: 8). The examples he uses to illustrate the irregular plurals of some nouns, i.e. *penny* (*pence*), *mouse* (*mice*), *ox* (*oxen*) and *man* (*men*), can similarly be found in Ash's grammar. Below I will show that it was in fact not Johnson but another grammarian who had provided Ash with these examples.

“Men of Learning” who believe “that the *English Tongue* is too *vague*, and *untractable* to be reduc’d to any *certain Standard*, or *Rules of Construction*” (1760: iii).

Another reason why Ash may not have relied on Johnson’s *Grammar of the English Tongue* was that the grammar was arranged similarly as the one by Lily (Kolb and De Maria 2005: 264). William Lily’s *Short Introduction to Grammar*, first published in 1549 (Padley 1988: 232), was reprinted about 350 times (Alston 1970: i), and was used in schools for three centuries since it was first published (Vorlat 1975: 7). DeMaria (1993: 7) describes Lily’s grammar as one of Johnson’s “childhood grammar books”, which he studied whilst attending Lichfield Grammar School. Ash, however, wrote his grammar “for those who were deemed not to need a classical education” (Beal 2004: 104). In the preface to his *Grammatical Institutes* he noted:

THE Importance of an *English Education* is now pretty well understood; and ’tis generally acknowledged, that not only for Ladies, but for young Gentlemen design’d merely for Trade, an intimate Acquaintance with the Proprieties, and Beauties of the English Tongue, wou’d be a very desirable, and necessary Attainment (1760: iii).

Ash’s remark echoes that of John Locke’s (1632–1704), who in §156 of his famous *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) had already stated:

Can there be any thing more ridiculous, than that a Father should waste his own Money, and his Son’s Time in setting him to learn the *Roman Language*, when at the same time, he designs him for a Trade, wherein he having no use of *Latin*, fails not to forget that little, which he brought from School, and which ’tis Ten to One he abhors [sic], for the ill usage it procur’d him? Could it be believ’d, unless we had every where amongst us Examples of it, that a Child should be forced to learn the Rudiments of a Language, which he is never to use in the course of Life, he is designed to, and neglect all the while the writing a good Hand, and casting Account, which are of great Advantage in all Conditions of Life, and to most Trades indispensibly necessary? But though these Qualifications, requisite to Trade and Commerce, and the Business of the World, are seldom or never to be had at Grammar Schools, yet thither, not only Gentlemen send their younger Sons, intended for Trades, but even Tradesmen and Farmers fail not to send their Children, though they have neither Intention nor Ability to make them Scholars. If you ask them why they do this, they think it as strange a Question, as if you should ask them, why they go to Church. Custom serves for Reason, and has to those who take it for Reason, so

consecrated this Method, that it is almost Religiously observed by them, and they stick to it as if their Children had scarce an Orthodox Education unless they learn'd *Lily's grammar* (Locke 1693: 193–195).

This quotation can also be found in the fourth edition of Ash's grammar. The extract from "LOCKE on Education" is one of the six "*Lessons*, relative to the *English Language*" (1769: 140) in Ash's grammar, which according to the author "may serve, at Pleasure, as a farther *Praxis* both on the *Grammatical Institutes*, and the *Strictures on the Ellipsis*" (1769: 140). Ash did not, however, end his "LESSON III" with the words "*Lily's grammar*", which is how §156 in Locke's treatise ended, instead he added another of Locke's statements interspersed with his own comments: "[Nevertheless] I think [it must be granted] that if a Gentleman [and much more a Tradesman] be to study any Language, it ought to be that of his own Country, that he may understand the Language, which he has constant Use of, with the utmost Accuracy" (Ash 1769: 144).²

Since Ash's intended readership consisted of ladies and "young Gentlemen design'd merely for Trade", I believe that a Latin grammar cannot have formed the basis of his work. During the eighteenth century it had become common practice amongst English grammarians to translate Latin grammars into English. Johnson translated parts of Wallis's *Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae* (1653) for his own grammar (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1988: 22–24). While for his *Essay Towards a Practical English Grammar, describing the genius and nature of the English tongue* (1711) and his *Royal English Grammar, containing what is necessary to the knowledge of the English tongue* (1737) James Greenwood (1683?–1737) had similarly drawn upon Wallis's grammar (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1996b: 82).

Ash, however, disapproved of this method, as can be inferred from his anthology *Sentiments on Education* (1777) in which he noted that "[t]he genius

² Although this statement cannot be found in the 1693 and 1695 editions of Locke's work, it is present in all the eighteenth-century editions of the book that are available in ECCO, editions to which Ash must have had access at the time.

of the Latin is so totally different from that of the English, that nothing can be more inelegant, and, in some instances, more ungrammatical, than a literal translation" (1777: 14). Not only did Ash criticize the practice of translating Latin grammars into English, in the preface to his *Grammatical Institutes* he also expressed his dissatisfaction with those grammarians who had imposed Latin categories on the English language:

MANY Gentlemen, who have wrote on the Subject, have too inconsiderately adopted various Distinctions of the learned Languages, which have no Existence in our own: Many, on the other hand, convinc'd of this Impropriety, have been too brief, at least, too general in their Definitions, and Rules, running into the quite opposite Extreme: And all of them, I think have too much neglected the Peculiarities of the Language on which they wrote (1760: iv).

This quotation suggests that Ash was familiar with what Michael (1970) refers to as the Latin tradition in English grammar writing, and with those grammarians who represented this tradition. In contrast to the above-mentioned "Gentlemen", Ash decided to compose what Algeo (1986: 313) terms a *nativist* work, a grammar that "abandoned Latin categories that had no clear correlate in English and sought to describe English grammar on its own terms". To illustrate this, a Latin-bound grammar such as Thomas Dilworth's popular *New Guide to the English Tongue* (1740) presented the English noun as having no fewer than six cases, i.e. nominative "A Book," genitive "Of a Book," dative "To a Book," accusative "The Book," vocative "O Book!" and ablative "From a Book" ([1740] 1751: 100; Algeo 1986: 311). Ash (1760: 13), however, only distinguished between the nominative and the genitive cases of nouns in his *Grammatical Institutes*. Algeo (1986: 313) indeed describes Ash as a grammarian who "was fairly successful in avoiding the grosser Latinisms in favor of native categories". According to him, it was especially in his discussion of the verb that Ash moved away from the Latin tradition. Unlike grammarians such as Lowth, who followed the Latin model where verbs were either active, passive, or neuter, Ash, according to Algeo, "recognizes that in English 'passive' is a syntactic, not a morphological category, since it involves the use of an 'auxiliary sign' (the *am* in *am loved*)" (Algeo 1986: 313). In addition, Ash

believed that “The *Verb itself* has but *two Terminations respecting Time: as, love, and loved*” and that other tenses and moods are formed with the help the so-called “auxiliary Signs”, i.e. “*to, do, did, have, had, shall, will, may, can, must, might, would, could, should*” (Ash 1760: 20; 18; Algeo 1986: 313).

Because Ash advocated a so-called “*English Education*” (1760: iii), it seems plausible that he based himself on the work of a grammarian who promoted such an educational system as well. An example of such a grammar was the anonymous *Easy Introduction to the English Language; or, a compendious grammar for the use of young gentlemen, ladies, and foreigners* which was published by John Newbery (1713–1767). The grammar was first published in 1745, and Alston (1965: 23) records a third edition of the work, published in London in 1755. Just like Ash, the author of this grammar considered it vital for the “Youth of both Sexes to *speak and write their own Language with Propriety*” (1745: vi). In addition, he or she firmly believed that “the *English Language* ought to be learnt by an *English Grammar*” such as his or her own, which according to him or her was “written in an easy, familiar, and instructive Method, and free from the Embarrassment of *Latin Terms and Rules*” (1745: ii). It is not clear whether Newbery, who is nowadays best remembered as “the first British publisher to create a permanent and profitable market for children’s books” (Avery 1990 [1989]: 114), was the actual author of the grammar, but Alston (1965: 22) notes that “the work is generally attributed to him”. Percy (2010: 44), however, points out that “[a]lthough John Newbery signs the dedication to *An Easy Introduction to the English Language; or, a Compendious Grammar for the Use of Young Gentlemen, Ladies, and Foreigners* (1745), the title page features only his role as publisher”.

Just like Ash’s grammar, *An Easy Introduction to the English Language* was aimed at a young audience. The grammar was one of the seven “little volumes” that formed Newbery’s *Circle of the Sciences*, a collection that “could be considered the first children’s encyclopaedia” (Roscoe 1973: 5; *ODNB*, s.v. Newbery, John). The first advertisement of the work stated in 1745 that “for the

sake of those who can't afford to lay out much Money at a Time, [the work] will be published in little Volumes, bound, at six-pence each" (as quoted from Townsend 1997: 83). Townsend (1997: 83) describes the little volumes on grammar, arithmetic, geography, chronology, poetry, rhetoric and logic that made up *The Circle of the Sciences* as being "among the best-selling, and in their days best-known Newbery books for the young". Immel (2009: 743) observes that the "*Circle* went into edition after edition during Newbery's lifetime, then those of his successors, who eventually sold the copyrights in the 1790s to William Darton senior when he was setting up his business in children's books". The popularity of *The Circle of the Sciences* is also confirmed by John Ryland, who recommends it in his "Library for Little Boys and Girls", a reading-list which he had added to his edition of Ash's grammar in 1766 (see §2.3.2). As concerns the little volume on grammar, Alston (1965: 23) still lists a fifth edition of the work published in 1787.

The author of the Newbery *Easy Introduction to the English Language* believed that the subject of grammar "ought to be taught Children as soon as they have a Capacity for it, which is generally very early; for 'tis a Shame we should be ignorant of our own Tongue" (1745: iii). This might have been the reason why he or she had decided to inscribe the grammar to Prince William Henry (1743–1805), the son of Frederick Lewis (1707–1751), prince of Wales, and the grandchild of George II, who was only two years old at the time. From the dedication in the grammar it becomes clear that the author not only wrote his or her grammar for children who were educated at home by their parents but also for those at school, who were taught by "School-Masters and Governesses" (Anon. 1745: dedication). While reading the Advertisement in the fourth edition of Ash's grammar it becomes clear that Ash had a similar audience in mind, since he notes that the "Amendments and Additions" that he had made to his original grammar "will render it more acceptable and useful to those Gentlemen and Ladies, who may think proper to make Trial of it in their Schools or Families" (1769: viii).

However, the preface in the Newbery grammar suggests that, in contrast to Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, children were not the only target audience of the work:

THOUGH the following Grammar may probably be look'd upon, at first View, as nothing more than a new Invention for the Amusement of Children; yet we flatter ourselves, that, upon a diligent and impartial Perusal, it will prove the Foundation or Ground-work of *Polite Learning*, and an acceptable Service, not only to Infants, but to Persons more advanced in Years (Anon. 1745: i).

The reason why this particular grammarian decided to market his or her grammar for an older readership as well, was that he or she believed that

[f]or want of an early Acquaintance with *English* Grammar, there are many grown Persons, and those of good natural Abilities, who not only express themselves very improperly in common Discourse, but who cannot so much as write a Letter of moderate Length to a Friend or Correspondent, without trespassing a hundred times either against the Rules of *Orthography* or *Syntax* (Anon. 1745: iv).

This does not appear to be the only difference between the two grammars. Whereas Ash's grammar consists of brief numbered rules, such as: "3. A *Noun*, or *Substantive*, is the *Name* of any *Person*, *Place*, or *Thing*; as *John*, *London*, *Honor*, *Goodness*" (1760: 8), the Newbery *Easy Introduction to the English Language* is written in the so-called Question and Answer format, which at that time was "commonly believed to be an exquisite pedagogical device" (Vorlat 2007: 518):

Q. WHAT do you mean by NAMES?

A. Names, or Nouns Substantives, (as they have been usually call'd are Words that express Things themselves, that convey a certain idea to the Mind, and need not the Help of any other Word to make us understand them: Such as *an apple*, *a pear*, *a man*, *a horse*, *sickness*, *health*, *happiness*, *misery* &c (1745: 58–59).

From the above it can be concluded that Ash did not adopt the definition of the noun from the Newbery grammar. Unlike Ash, who as I will show below, distinguished ten parts of speech, i.e. Article, Noun, Adjective, Pronoun, Verb, Participle, Adverb, Conjunction, Preposition, and Interjection (1760: 7), the author of the Newbery grammar only discussed four, i.e. Names [nouns],

Qualities [adjectives], Affirmations [verbs] and Particles [adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections] (1745: 58; Michael 1970: 260).

The only similarity between the Newbery grammar and Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* that I came across can be found in the discussion of the gender of nouns. According to the author of *An Easy Introduction to the English Language* (1745: 69), one of the ways in which the sexes in the English language are distinguished is "[b]y two different Words; as *boy, girl; brother, sister; duck, drake; goose, gander, &c*". He further adds that "In some few Words the Female is distinguish'd from the Male by the Change of Termination into *ess*; as *abbot, abbess; count, countess; heir, heiress; prince, princess*; or into *ix* in these two, *administratrix, executrix*, from *administrator* and *executor*" (1745: 70). While discussing the gender of nouns, Ash provides a long list of 55 masculine nouns and their feminine equivalents (Ash 1769: 31–33) (see Table 1):

<i>Masculine.</i>	<i>Feminine.</i>	<i>Masculine.</i>	<i>Feminine.</i>
Abbot	Abbess	Emperor	Empress
Actor	Actress	Father	Mother
Adulterer	Adulteress	Friar	Nun
Ambassador	Ambadress	Gander	Goose
Administrator	Administratrix	Governor	Governess
Baron	Baroness	Husband	Wife
Bachelor	Maid	Horse	Mare
Boar	Sow	Heir	Heiress
Boy	Girl	Hunter	Huntress
Bridegroom	Bride	Jew	Jewess
Brother	Sister	King	Queen
Buck	Doe	Lord	Lady
Bull	Cow	Lad	Lass
Bullock	Heifer	Lion	Lioness
Cock	Hen	Marquis	Marchioness
Count	Countess	Man	Woman
Duke	Dutchess [sic]	Master	Mistress
Dog	Bitch	Milter	Spawner
Deacon	Deaconess	Nephew	Neice [sic]
Drake	Duck	Prince	Princess
Elector	Electress	Prophet	Prophetess
Executor	Executrix	Poet	Poetess
Patron	Patroness	Wizard	Witch
Ram	Ewe	Whoremonger	Whore
Son	Daughter		
Stag	Hind		
Shepherd	Shepherdess		
Tutor	Tutress		
Viscount	Viscountess		
Uncle	Aunt		
Widower	Widow		

Table 1. Ash's list of nouns as presented in the fourth edition of his *Grammatical Institutes* (1769).

Since the ten pairs of nouns that are listed in the Newbery grammar can all be found in this list as well, this suggests that either Ash relied on *An Easy Introduction to the English Language* or that he and the author of the Newbery grammar both relied on the same source whilst writing their grammars.

A grammar that had been published before the Newbery *Easy Introduction to the English Language* appeared on the market was the schoolmaster William Loughton's *A Practical Grammar of the English Tongue: or, a rational and easy introduction to speaking and writing English correctly and properly* (1734). Since, according to Alston, an eighth edition of Loughton's grammar was published in London in 1755, the work must have been available to Ash as well. The title page of Loughton's grammar informs us that the work is "[p]eculiarly adapted to the Nature and Genius of the Language, and free from the hard and unnecessary Terms of the *Latin Rudiments*" (1734: title page). In addition, we are told that the grammar is "calculated chiefly for such as require only an *English Education*" (1734: title page). This suggests that both Ash and the author of the Newbery grammar were very little inspired by Loughton's grammar.

In order to find further evidence for this I examined the way in which Loughton discussed the gender of nouns. At first glance Loughton's discussion seems similar to that of the author of the Newbery grammar. Just like the author of the Newbery grammar, Loughton states that the sexes in English can be distinguished "By two different Words, as *Boy* for the *Male*, *Girl* for the *Female*, &c" (1734: 59) and that "In some few Words the *Female* is distinguish'd from the *Male* by the ending in *ess*; as *Abbot*, *Abbess*; *Baron*, *Baroness*; *Count*, *Countess*, &c. and two in *ix*, as *Administratrix*, *Executrix*" (1734: 59). But since the author of the Newbery grammar provides other pairs of nouns than Loughton, it is unlikely that he or she used Loughton's grammar as his or her only source. Loughton's examples of pairs of nouns can be found in Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, so I believe that it was not Loughton but another grammarian who must have given Ash the idea of including a list of 55 pairs of

nouns in his grammar. In her study on the development of English grammatical theory 1586–1737, Vorlat (1975: 40) provides a possible candidate for this when she describes Loughton's *Practical Grammar of the English Tongue* as being "a mere copy" from Greenwood. James Greenwood, who from 1721 was surmaster at St. Paul's School in London, became best known for his *Essay Towards a Practical English Grammar, describing the genius and nature of the English tongue* (1711) (ODNB, s.v. Greenwood, James). Vorlat (1975: 36) describes Greenwood as "a pedagogue of renown", who wanted to present his pupils with a grammar that would be "easy and delightful" (Greenwood 1711: A3^r). Since Alston (1965: 15) lists a fourth and a fifth edition of Greenwood's *Essay*, published in London in 1740 and 1753, the work may have been available to the author of the Newbery grammar and Ash at the time they embarked on their grammars. A comparison of the Newbery grammar and Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* with Greenwood's *Essay* indeed shows that Loughton was not alone in choosing Greenwood as a source.

At the time when Ash was writing his grammar he could also have consulted another work of Greenwood's, namely his *Royal English Grammar, containing what is necessary to the knowledge of the English tongue* (1737). A fifth edition had appeared in London in 1754 (Alston 1965: 20). Greenwood's *Royal English Grammar*, which was dedicated "to her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales", was an abridgement of his *Essay* (Greenwood 1737: v–vi). Greenwood describes the difference between the two works as follows:

I have here intirely left out the large *Historical Preface*, and all the Critical Notes; and have so adapted Matters to the Understanding of the meanest Capacity, that they who never learnt any *Latin*, may attain to a good knowledge of the Nature and Genius of their MOTHER TONGUE (Greenwood 1737: vi).

The full title of the first edition of Ash's grammar *Grammatical Institutes: or grammar, adapted to the genius of the English tongue*, however, suggests that Ash probably used one of the later editions of Greenwood's *Essay Towards a Practical English Grammar. Describing the genius and nature of the English*

tongue (1711).³ That Ash cannot have used the first edition or second edition of this work becomes clear when we compare his list of 55 pairs of nouns with the 59 pairs that are listed by Greenwood (1711: 56–57).

Unlike Ash, Greenwood had decided to divide the pairs of nouns into two groups. First, he listed pairs of nouns where the difference of sex is expressed by different words such as *Boy, Girl*, and secondly pairs of nouns “which distinguish the *Female Sex*, from the *Male*, by the ending [ess], i.e. *Prince, Princess*” or “by [ix] *Administratrix, Executrix*” (Greenwood 1711: 56–57). While 45 of the pairs of nouns from Ash’s list can be found in the first edition of Greenwood’s *Essay*, ten of these, i.e. *Baron – Baroness, Boar – Sow, Bullock – Heifer, Jew – Jewess, Lad – Lass, Poet – Poetess, Ram – Ewe, Son – Daughter, Wizard – Witch, Whoremonger – Whore* are not listed by Greenwood.⁴ Nine of these pairs of nouns were added to the second edition of Greenwood’s *Essay*, but it is not until the third edition of the work (1729) that all the pairs were incorporated including *Baron – Baroness*, which was the only pair of nouns that was still missing in the second edition.

The majority of the pairs of nouns in Greenwood’s *Essay* and *Royal English Grammar* were in fact copied from John Wilkins’s (1614–1672) *Essay Towards a Real Character, and a philosophical language*, a work which was first published in 1668, and which, according to the *ODNB*, had served as one of Greenwood’s sources (*ODNB*, s.v. Greenwood, James). Greenwood’s dependence on the “*Great and Good Man Bishop Wilkins*” (1711: 244) is further confirmed by a reference to him in the preface and in the main text of his *Essay Towards a Practical English Grammar* (1711). Although Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1996b: 82) observes that in Greenwood’s *Essay* one can find “many parts [...] which are almost literal translations from Wallis”, a comparison of the two grammars revealed that Greenwood could not have depended on John Wallis’s *Grammar*

³ The third (1729), fourth (1740), or fifth (1753) edition (Alston 1965: 15).

⁴ *Drone – Bee, Sloven – Slut*, and *Prior – Prioress* were the only pairs of nouns that Ash did not copy from Greenwood. In contrast to Greenwood who lists the pair *Master – Dame*, Ash has *Master – Mistress*.

of the *English Language* (1653) for his list of 59 pairs of nouns, as such a list does not occur in Wallis's grammar.

Apart from the above-mentioned list of pairs of nouns, Ash's dependence on Greenwood is also evident from his definitions of the parts of speech:

An *Adverb* is a Part of Speech *join'd* to a *Verb*, an *Adjective*, a *Participle*, and sometimes to another *Adverb*, to express the *Quality*, or *Circumstance* of it; as, He reads *well*, a *truly* good Man, a *very* loving Friend, He writes *very correctly* (Ash 1760: 34).

An *Adverb* is a Word that is joined to a *Verb*, to an *Adjective*, to a *Participle*, or another *Adverb*, to denote or mark some *Circumstance*, some *Quality*, or Manner signified by them (Greenwood 1711: 57).

An *Interjection* is a Word that expresses any *sudden Motion* of the Mind, *transported* with the Sensation of Pleasure, or Pain; as, *O! Oh! Alas! lo! &c* (Ash 1760: 36).

The *Interjection* is nothing but an Expression which is used to denote some sudden Motion or Passion of the Mind (Greenwood 1711: 165).

While discussing plural forms of nouns Ash notes that "When the *Singular* ends in *s*, *x*, *ch*, or *sh*, the Plural is form'd by adding the Syllable, *es*; as, Miss, *Misses*; Box, *Boxes*; Peach, *Peaches*" (Ash 1760: 8). This rule can also be found in the fourth edition of his grammar (Ash 1769: 29), but Ash added another example, namely "Brush, *Brushes*" (1769: 29). In his *Essay*, Greenwood, too, had observed that "when the Singular ends in *ch*, *sh*, *ss*, or *x*, then the Pronunciation requires that *e* be put before *s*, or (which is all one) that *es* be added to the Singular" (1711: 47). He then provides four examples, among which are the words "Box" and "Brush" (1711: 47). Finally, it is interesting to note that Ash's examples of words that end in *-f* but which instead of *-ves*, "take *s*, to make the *Plural*" (1760: 8), i.e. *Dwarf*, *Grief*, *Hoof*, *Muff*, can be found in Greenwood's *Essay* as well (1711: 48–49).

Ash's choice of Greenwood as a source for his grammar is not strange. Apart from endeavouring to "excite Persons to the Study of their Mother Tongue" (1711: A3^r), one of Greenwood's aims in writing the *Essay* was "to oblige the *Fair Sex* whose *Education* perhaps, is too much neglected in this Particular" (1711: A3^r). Since Ash originally wrote his grammar for his little

daughter, Greenwood's plea for the teaching of English to "the *Fair Sex*" must have appealed to him. Just as in the preface to Greenwood's *Essay*, "the Fair Sex" feature in Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* as well. In the preface to his grammar Ash stresses "THE Importance of an *English Education* [...] for Ladies" (1760: iii). The publication of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* thus enabled ladies to obtain "an *English Education*" by studying an English grammar which had originally been written for a young lady as well.

3.3. The structure of Ash's grammar

As has been shown in section 3.2, Ash distinguished ten parts of speech i.e. Article, Noun, Adjective, Pronoun, Verb, Participle, Adverb, Conjunction, Preposition, and Interjection (1760: 7). This system of parts of speech was an extended version of the eightfold Latin division (which divided words into nouns, verbs, participles, articles, pronouns, prepositions, adverbs and conjunctions) which had been first used by Dionysius Thrax in the second century BC and which had been copied by Lily in 1527 (Michael 1970: 48; 214; Beal 2004: 108). Ash was not the first to come up with this tenfold division, which is listed under "System 9" in Michael (1970: 222–223). Although Michael (1970: 222; 278) describes Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* as the first published grammar "[t]o make all ten components of the system of equal status", he also adds that the tenfold system had already been used by James Douglas (1675–1742) in the first draft of his grammar which, according to the *ODNB*, may have been written for his young children (see *ODNB*, s.v. Douglas, James). In the section "The Parts of English Speech" in his "Grammatical Manuscripts, c. 1720?", Douglas indeed noted: "There are Ten different Sorts of Words in the English Tongue, commonly called so many Parts of Speech" (Douglas c. 1720?, MS. No 585. fol. I^r; as quoted from Michael 1970: 222). Apparently Douglas did not stick to this division, since Michael (1970: 222) points out that in his next manuscript "he included the participle within the verb" and stated that "English

men make use of nine different Sorts of Words, commonly called Parts of Speech" (Douglas c. 1720?, MS. No 585. fol. I^r; as quoted from Michael 1970: 222). Finally, "in a later manuscript he put the adjective back into the noun and wrote: "There are Eight different Sorts of Words, called Parts of Speech"" (Michael 1970: 222).

While in his *Grammatical Institutes* Ash simply states that "IN *English* there are *ten* Kinds of Words, or Parts of Speech" (1760: 7), in his *New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* he explains why he is in favour of such a division:

THE *kinds* of words, or *parts of speech*, in the English language, are *ten*. *Article*, *substantive*, *adjective*, *pronoun*, *verb*, *participle*, *adverb*, *conjunction*, *preposition*, and *interjection*. The Latin Grammarians, without the article, which they have not in their Language, make eight parts of speech, confounding the substantive and adjective, under the common name of a noun: but this is a manifest impropriety. The substantive and the adjective are certainly as distinct parts of speech as the noun and the pronoun, or the verb and the adverb. Several other distributions have been proposed by different English authors, which we need not enumerate. And one very ingenious writer seems to give it as his opinion that all divisions on this subject are equally uncertain and arbitrary. But notwithstanding this, it is presumed, the division given above will be found, on the maturest deliberation, to have a precision which cannot be well controverted (Ash 1775: 5).

Ash's system of parts of speech became the most popular and frequently used system (Michael 1970: 278; Beal 2004: 109). According to Michael (1970: 278) a possible reason for the popularity of the tenfold system was that it was far more comprehensible for young learners than the "English systems, which were commonly considered to conceal a nine-or tenfold system beneath the appearance of a fourfold system", that comprised a substantive, adjective, verb and particle (Michael 1970: 254–262). He points out that "[i]t was just this sort of complication which the teacher of young children wished to avoid" (Michael 1970: 278). An example of such a teacher was Henry St. John Bullen (*fl.* 1797–1799), who in his *Rudiments of English Grammar, for the use of schools* (1797) stated:

If any Grammarian should feel disconcerted at hearing that there are ten parts of speech, let him remember that I write for children, not for critics. Properly

speaking, perhaps, there are but three, the Substantive, the Adjective, and the Verb; but if we exclude all the other names what account are we to give of them which would be intelligible to young minds? It is therefore thought preferable to multiply terms a little, than to take advantage of a simplicity which would be altogether obscure (1797: 115).

It is worth mentioning that the female grammarians Ellin Devis, Lady Ellenor Fenn, Mrs. Edwards, Jane Gardiner and Mrs. Eves, who all wrote for a young readership, decided to adopt this tenfold division as well (Michael 1970: 223).

Vorlat describes grammars as traditionally comprising “four parts, usually called orthography, etymology, syntax and prosody” (2007: 504). According to Algeo (1986: 314), this fourfold division goes “back to early grammars of the classical languages”. Although Greenwood used the fourfold division in both his *Essay* and his *Royal English Grammar*, the first edition of Ash’s grammar only contains sections on etymology and syntax, which together are divided into 127 numbered rules, such as: ⁵

2. AN *Article* is a Part of Speech *set before Nouns* to fix their vague Signification; as, *a Man, the Man; an House, the House*. There are *three Articles, a, an, and the* (Ash 1760: 7).

125. The *Adverb* is *always plac’d immediately before the Adjective; but most frequently after the Verb; as, A very pious Man prays frequently* (Ash 1760: 45).

In his *Short English Grammar* (1748) John Wesley (1703–1791), too, had numbered the rules he presented. The only difference with Ash’s grammar was that Wesley had decided to number the rules per section. While in the etymology section in Ash’s grammar children had “to learn the definitions of word classes by heart” (Vorlat 2007: 520), the syntax section taught them about “the *Agreement, and right Disposition* of Words in a Sentence” (Ash 1766: 48).⁶ Smith (1986: 246), however, points out that rather than with “the structure of the language as one might have expected from his own definition”, Ash, just like Kirkby and Martin before him, was concerned with observations on usage in his syntax section. It is worth mentioning that while the syntax

⁵ 140 numbered rules can be found in the fourth (1769) edition of Ash’s grammar.

⁶ Since this particular page is missing from the first edition of Ash’s grammar, I am here referring to the 1766 edition of Ash’s grammar.

section in the first edition of his *Grammatical Institutes* consisted of 33 rules, eleven new rules were added to the fourth edition of his grammar. Below I will discuss what might have caused him to do so.

Although Ash's friend Ryland had included "Some short Observations on the various Sounds of the Vowels" (Ash 1766: title page) in the appendix to the 1766 edition of the grammar, it is not until 1769 that a proper section on orthography entitled "AN INTRODUCTION TO THE GRAMMATICAL INSTITUTES" (1769: xi) was prefixed to the grammar. In this section not only the alphabet but the sounds of the letters are discussed (Ash 1769: xii). Ash himself regarded the changes he had made to the fourth edition of his grammar as a great improvement, but, as shown above (§2.4), one grammarian at least, i.e. Joseph Guy, had expressed his dissatisfaction with the orthography section in Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*. Prosody, according to Vorlat (2007: 504), "deals with stress placement, figures of speech, style, and more than once also with homonymy and synonymy". Such a section does not occur in any of the editions of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*.

Ash's grammar does include a section entitled "APPLICATION of the *Grammatical Institutes*. For the Use of those who may want the Assistance of a Master" (1760: 47), in which a number of sentences are parsed. According to Michael (1987: 325), parsing lessons were the most popular exercises found in English grammars at the time. Parsing lessons required the pupil to "state various morphological and syntactic facts about each word in the sentence" (Algeo 1986: 314). In the first parsing lesson in his grammar entitled "Part of Davids Speech to Goliath, the Philistine" (1760: 47; see also 1 Samuel 17: 45) Ash provided the following information for the sentence "Thou comest to me with a Sword":

THOU, a Pronoun, 23; sing. Number, 4; nom. Case, 24; the Agent of the Verb, 115; the second Person, 107. Comest, a Verb 27; irregular, 84; indicative Mood, 33; present Tense, 38; sing. Number and second Person, 53; agreeing with its Agent, Thou; 108. To, a Preposition, 93. Me, a Pronoun, 23; accusative Case, 24; following a Preposition, 118. With, a Preposition, 93. A, an Article 2; set before a

Noun of the sing. Number and a Word beginning with a Consonant, 95. Sword, a Noun, or Substantive signifying a Thing (1760: 47–48).

Ash thus referred the reader to the relevant sections in which the specific features were dealt with.

Ryland must have regarded the parsing lessons in Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* as rather difficult for beginners, since in his edition he included "a Praxis of an easier Nature, for younger Children" (Ash 1766: Advertisement) on Genesis 45: 1–6 and "Dr. WATT's Divine Songs" (Ash 1766: 92–109), where the pupil only had to list the parts of speech. Ash apparently approved of Ryland's praxis on Genesis, since it can also be found in the fourth edition of his grammar under the title "An Easy PRAXIS on Gen. xlv.i. &c." (1769: 97–103). The passages which Ash quoted from the Old Testament, (i.e. 1 Samuel 17: 45; 46, in which David slays Goliath, and Genesis 45: 1–6, which deals with the conflict between Joseph and his brothers), were already recommended as suitable for children by John Locke. In §151 of *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) Locke observed that "there are some Parts of the *Scripture*, which may be proper to be put into the Hands of a Child, to ingage [sic] him to read; such as are the Story of *Joseph*, and his Brethren, of *David* and Goliah [sic], of David and Jonathan, &c" (Locke 1693: 187). Ash was not alone in following Locke's advice. In his study on the use of literature in schools during the Late Modern English period, Michael (1999: 60) points out that during the period 1700–1830 "Old Testament stories, especially those of Joseph and his brothers, were retold in collections and spelling books".

The other passages that make up Ash's parsing lessons were taken from Milton's *Paradise Lost* ("Part of Adams Speech to Eve" and "Part of Adam and Eves Morning Hymn", 1760: 54–58) and the twenty-fourth book of Pope's translation of the *Iliad* (1715) ("The Conclusion of Priams Speech to Achilles, when he beg'd the Body of his Son Hector", 1760: 51–53). Although to a modern reader the *Iliad* might seem a rather advanced work for a child, it was not uncommon for Georgian children to be familiar with this famous epic. Evidence for this can be found in the following diary entry written by Hester Lynch

Thrale on 1 February 1770 in which she proudly recorded that her five-year-old daughter Queeney had

persed [sic] the first Couplet of Pope's *Iliad*, beginning of her own accord at the Vocative Case; tho this Couplet [sic] is I think rather uncommonly difficult from the awkward Transposition of the Words – I mean awkward only to a Child (ed. Hyde 1977: 34; see also Navest 2010: 92).⁷

That children were indeed familiar with Pope's *Iliad* is further confirmed by Lord Byron (1788–1824), who confessed reading "Pope's Homer" as a child "with a rapture which no subsequent work could ever afford" (ed. Carruther 1853: 98), and by Elizabeth Grant, who in 1806, at the age of nine, noted how "[i]n the hot summer days aunt Mary often read to us fairy tales, or bits from the Elegant Extracts, latterly Pope's Homer, which with her explanations we enjoyed extremely, all but the shield of Achilles, the long description of which I feared was never to end" (as quoted from Pollock 1987: 140).⁸

Although Michael notes that "[a]fter parsing, the most generally used exercise [in English grammars] was the correction of 'false English'" (1987: 325; see also §2.4 above), such exercises cannot be found in the first edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*. Ash advocated the use of these exercises in his *Sentiments on Education* (1777), but it is not until 1780, a year after his death, that some exercises of false English were added to his grammar by his publishers presumably to attract more buyers.⁹ When presented with these exercises, Algeo (1986: 315) notes: "The student was to identify the errors, cite the rule that each violated, and make corrections". In §2.4 I pointed out that Joseph Guy, master of the Bristol Commercial and Literary Seminary, disapproved of the exercises of false English in Ash's grammar. Just like other

⁷ The first couplet of Pope's *Iliad* reads: "THE Wrath of *Peleus'* Son, the direful Spring/ Of all the *Grecian* Woes, O Goddess, sing!/ That Wrath which hurl'd to *Pluto's* gloomy Reign/ The Souls of mighty Chiefs untimely slain;/ Whose Limbs unbury'd on the naked Shore/ Devouring Dogs and hungry Vultures tore" (Pope 1715: 1).

⁸ The shield of Achilles, which he used to fight Hector, is described in great detail in Book 18, lines 478–608 of the *Iliad*.

⁹ In his *Sentiments on Education* (1777) Ash described syntax as that "part of grammar [which] cannot be too much inculcated". According to him, "[t]he pupil should hardly pass a day without a proper exercise of this kind. Let him be frequently employed in turning verse into prose, and examples of bad English into good" (Ash 1777: 12).

teachers at the time Guy believed that these exercises had a tendency “to impress *bad habits* by making those errors too familiar” (Guy 1796: vii; see also Michael 1987: 329–330). Guy was not the only one to refer to the exercises of false English in Ash’s grammar (Michael 1970: 196 n.2). In his *Essay on the Best System of Liberal Education, adapted to the genius of the government of the United States* (1799), Samuel Knox noted:

In acquiring a proper knowledge of English grammar, let the scholar, after having committed the rules to memory, write exercises, and parse in the same manner as is practiced in learning Latin. Ashe’s Introduction to Lowth’s grammar is well calculated for this purpose; but as it does not afford a sufficient number of examples for exercises of false grammar, Buchanan’s English syntax should be next introduced” (1799: 102).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that a section on punctuation entitled “Of the POINTS or STOPS, and other Characters made use of in Writing” (1769: xxii–xxv) was added by Ash to the fourth edition of his grammar. Unlike the punctuation section in Lowth’s grammar, which was aimed at “those who set up for Authors among us” (1762: x; see also Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2011: 101), Ash’s section on punctuation seems to have been well calculated for children. It consisted of brief rules such as: “A *Quotation* [‘-’ or “-”] includes a Sentence, &c. taken from an Author, or introduced as spoken by another” (1769: xxiii).

3.4. John Ash: prescriptive or descriptive grammarian?

According to Leonard, “[t]he notion is abroad that the eighteenth century wrote grammar entirely, as it were, in the imperative mood” (1929: 239). Ash’s grammar may thus be expected to be similar in this respect. Since they wanted to avoid their children to be “confused with their social inferiors”, many middle-class parents were among the consumers of such books (Beal 2004: 94). In many of these guides young children were taught about the benefits which the study of English grammar would bring them. Mrs. Eves’s *The Grammatical Play-Thing, or winter’s evening’s recreation, for young ladies from four to twelve*

years old (1800), for instance, includes a passage in which a Mrs. Friendly tells her pupil Miss Henrietta that one

cannot speak elegantly without a knowledge of grammar! Every well educated person is a good grammarian; people will judge of your abilities in other respects by the purity of your language. Would you like to be thought a vulgar untaught young lady; inferior to all your friends and companions? (Eves 1800: xi)

In order to find out whether Ash's grammar can indeed be looked upon as a "prescriptive guide to 'correct usage'" (cf. Beal 2004: 94), I searched it for the occurrence of what Sundby et al. (1991: 14) and Rodríguez-Gil (2003: 192) refer to as "value judgements". According to Rodríguez-Gil (2003: 192), these are "expressions such as *right vs. wrong, properly vs. improperly, elegantly vs. inelegantly, it ought / it should / it must* etc., which imply a sense of suitability and prescription or proscription". A selection of these value judgements, or "proscriptive labels", as Sundby et al. (1991: 21) term them, taken from Vorlat (1996), Percy (2003); Rodríguez-Gil (2003) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2010a), are listed in Table 2 below.

right vs wrong
good vs bad
polite vs impolite
proper(ly) vs improper(ly)
elegant(ly) vs inelegant(ly)
correct(ly) vs incorrect(ly)
grammatical(ly)
vs ungrammatical(ly)
fault(y)
just(ly)
vulgar
mistake
error/erroneous
solecism
inaccuracy
superfluous
propriety vs impropriety
censurable
unsuitable
corrupt
doubtful
ought, should, must

Table 2. Value judgements in eighteenth-century English grammars.

Interestingly enough, a perusal of the first edition of Ash's grammar (1760) resulted in only a few instances of prescriptivism, i.e. *elegant(ly)* (5) , *Elegancy*

(1), *properly* (1), *must* (4), and *ought* (1). The following passages all contain value judgements as listed in Table 2 above:¹⁰

A Noun of *Multitude* may have a Verb either *singular*, or *plural*; as, The People *is* mad, or, The People *are* mad. The latter seems to be **more elegant** (Ash 1760: 42).¹¹

When *two* Nouns come together with the Preposition, *of*, between them denoting *Possession*, the *latter* may be **elegantly** made the *genitive* Case, and set *before* the other; as The Property *of* the Men; **elegantly**, *The Mens* Property (Ash 1760: [37]; 1766: 49).

Nouns of the plural Number that end in *s*, will not *very properly* admit of this **Elegancy**" [i.e. such nouns cannot be made (Ash 1760: [37]; 1766: 49).

When *Thing*, or *Things*, is Substantive to an Adjective, the Word *Thing*, or *Things*, is **elegantly** omitted, and the Adjective is put *absolutely*, or *without* its Substantive; as, Who will shew us any *Good*? For, Who will shew us any *good Thing*? (Ash 1760: [38]; 1766: 50).

After Verbs of *shewing*, *giving*, &c. the Preposition, *to*, is **elegantly** omitted before the Pronoun, which notwithstanding **must** be in the *Accusative*; as I give him the Book; for, I give *to* him the Book (Ash 1760: 43–44).

In the last example we even find two instances of value judgements, the adverb *elegantly* and the modal verb *must*. As concerns modal verbs I came across three other instances of *must*, one of which is cited below. Apart from containing an instance of *must* it also contains the modal *shou'd*:

When *two Nouns*, or *Pronouns*, are join'd together in a Sentence, they **must** have a *plural* Verb, tho' they **shou'd** be both of the *singular* Number; as, The Man, and his Wife, *are happy* (Ash 1760: 42).

Apparently, using a singular verb instead of a plural verb, "When *two Nouns* or *Pronouns* are join'd together in a Sentence" (Ash 1760: 42), was a common mistake at the time.¹² In one of the dialogues in Ann Murry's *Mentoria: or the young ladies instructor* (1778), which Skedd (1997b: 124) describes as "one of the most popular educational manuals in the Hanoverian period", *Mentoria* tells her pupils that she will

¹⁰ Since pages 37–38 are missing in the 1760 edition of Ash's grammar, these quotations have been copied from the 1766 edition.

¹¹ Vorlat (1999: 326) also points out that Ash frequently uses the term *elegant(ly)* in his grammar.

¹² Concord is one of the five rules described by Johnson in his syntax section.

endeavour to make some observations on the use of Grammar; which, I hope, will be of future service to you. I shall begin, by supposing you in company with a little girl about your own age; who would perhaps say, "Pray, Lady Mary, when was you at the play? When my Aunt and I *was* there, it was vastly full of company. Sir George and Lady Simple *desires* their compliments to you, and hopes you are well, and *wishes* to know how *them* pretty flowers of yours *goes* on." I hear you reply, "My Governess, Miss Simple, teaches me, when I speak in or of the Plural, always to say *were* instead of *was*: or if I address my discourse in the singular number, to make use of the words, *desires*, *sends*, *hopes*, *enquires*, *wishes* &c (Murry 1778: 23–24).

Finally, I also discovered one instance of *ought* in the first edition of Ash's grammar:

The auxiliary Sign, *do*, with its Inflexions, *dost*, *doth*, or *does*, **ought** to be us'd *only* for the Sake of *Emphasis*; as I *do* love (Ash 1760: 44).

Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2011: 113) similarly found twenty-two instances of *ought to be* in Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762). According to her the modal is used to describe the correct alternative to an "impropriety of a particular usage".

It is thus difficult to find examples of prescriptivism in the first edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, but Ash is not alone in this, for Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2010b: 83) has shown that the same applies to the grammars of Ann Fisher (Rodríguez-Gil 2003), Priestley (Hodson 2006), and Lowth (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2010b). It is also interesting that Ash does not discuss preposition stranding and double negation at all in his grammar, especially since we expect to find such strictures in a prescriptive grammar. Interestingly enough, the constructions are discussed by James Greenwood whose *Essay* (1711), as I have shown in §3.2, Ash used as his main source (see Yáñez-Bouza 2008b: 267–268).

Instead of focusing on what was correct or incorrect, Ash might have taken a rather more descriptive approach to grammar. According to Rodríguez-Gil (2003: 185), this approach to grammar was interested in "observing authentic spoken language and portraying it faithfully, with its variation, without interfering with personal judgements and prejudices". In order to determine whether or not we can call Ash's grammar a descriptive grammar, I searched for the following key words: *us'd*, *use*, *usage*, *author(s)*, *writer(s)*, *custom*,

observe, observations, and say. My search produced the following instances of descriptivism:

According to the **Custom of the Language**, we **use** *you*, instead of *thou*, when we speak to *one Person only*; and in that Case, it has a *plural* Verb join'd with it; as *You are my Brother* (Ash 1760: 41).¹³

We **say**, *O me! Oh me! ah me!* but, *O thou! O ye*, &c (Ash 1760: 44).

NOTE. The Preposition, *unto*, and the Adverb, *until*, are not *much us'd* by **late Authors** (Ash 1760: 36).

NOTE. 'Tis suppos'd this Case had its Origin from a Contraction; as *John's Book*, for *John his Book*. And tho' this Contraction can be admitted only in the *Singular* Number, and the *Masculine* Gender, yet it being found a concise, and smooth Expression, **the best Authors** use it in the *other Number*, and *Gender*; and therefore **several late Writers** have, and 'tis presum'd, very properly called it a *genitive* Case (1760: 13).

These findings suggest that the norm of correctness Ash based himself on was that of "the best Authors", but unfortunately he doesn't provide us with the names of these writers. The only author I have been able to identify in the grammar is Alexander Pope (1688–1744). Ash quotes from Pope's *Essay on Man* in order to show his young audience the difference between *that* and *this*:

102. When *two Persons*, or *Things*, are spoken of in a Sentence, and there is Occasion to mention them over again, for the Sake of Distinction, *that* is us'd when it refers to the *former*, and *this*, when it refers to the latter; as, "Self-Love, the Spring of Motion acts the Soul; Reasons comparing Balance rules the whole; Man but for *that* no Action cou'd attend, And but for *this* were active to no End" (Ash 1760: 39–40).

Since the quotation supplied here turns out to be an example of good usage, it might have been that Pope's language served as an example to Ash. If this is true, we could say that, whilst writing his grammar, Ash based himself on what Leonard (1929: 169) calls the "language of gentlemen", this was "the kind of upper class educated English used in 'polite' London circles" (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000a: 883),

¹³ The wording of this rule was changed by Ash in the fourth edition, where he states that "In the complaisant stile, it is common to use *you*, instead of *thou*, when we speak to *one Person only*; and in that Case, it has a *plural* Verb join'd with it: as, 'You are my Brother'" (1769: 77).

Robert Lowth, too, regarded Pope as “some of our best Writers” (Lowth 1762: 86–87; see also Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1997; Navest 2006), and he had similarly included the above-mentioned quotation from Pope’s *Essay on Man* in the second edition of his *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1763) (Navest 2006):

When *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, refer to a preceding Sentence, *this*, or *these*, refers to the latter member or term; *that*, or *those*, to the former: as, “*Self-love*, the spring of motion, acts the soul; *Reason’s* comparing balance rules the whole: Man, but for *that*, no action could attend; And, but for *this*, were active to no end.” Pope, *Essay on Man* (Lowth 1763: 150).

Because Lowth regarded the first edition of his grammar as “a kind of trial version” (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2003: 36), he had asked his readers for suggestions and comments in the preface of his work:

If those, who are qualified to judge of such matters, and do not look upon them as beneath their notice, shall so far approve of it, as to think it worth a revision, and capable of being improved into something really useful; their remarks and assistance, communicated through the hands of the Bookseller, shall be received with all proper deference and acknowledgement (Lowth 1762: xv).

In the second edition of his grammar, Lowth points out how “several Learned Gentlemen” had responded to his request (Lowth 1763: xviii). As a result, the second edition contains many additions. Whereas the first edition contains 272 quotations, no fewer than 149 new quotations were added to the second edition of the grammar in 1763 (Navest 2006). As regards the quotation from Pope’s *Essay on Man*, I believe that it might even have been Ash himself who provided Lowth with the quotation. Ash, as I will show in §3.5 below, had access to Lowth’s grammar, so he may have been among those who responded to Lowth’s call for comments. Alternatively, one of Ash’s “schoolmaster friends” (Michael 1970: 278) may have sent the quotation to Lowth, since they already had access to Ash’s grammar before 1766, the year in which the work was published by the Dillys and became available to a wider public. By the time Lowth’s *Short Introduction to English Grammar* appeared on the market these schoolmasters had been teaching English grammar with the help of Ash’s

Grammatical Institutes for two years, and they probably knew the quotation from Pope's *Essay on Man* by heart.

Because the first edition of Ash's grammar contains both prescriptive and descriptive elements, I believe that it is better to refer to the work as a normative grammar. I base this statement on Vorlat (1998), in which she describes the following three categories of grammar:

- (1) descriptive registration of language without value judgements and including ideally – as a very strong claim – all language varieties.
- (2) normative grammar, still based on language use, but favoring the language of one or more social or regional groups and more than once written with a pedagogical purpose;
- (3) prescriptive grammar, not based on usage but on a set of logical (or other) criteria (Vorlat 1998: 485–486; see also Rodríguez-Gil 2003: 199).

Ash's grammar was definitely written with a pedagogical purpose. Although originally written for his little daughter, the work was printed in 1760 “for the [U]se of his Friends who were concerned in the Education of Children” (1766: Advertisement). It was indeed as a school grammar that Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* became known at the time. As late as 1837, *The Gentleman's Magazine* referred to the work as “the little manual of our schoolboy days” (1837: 399).

3.5. The fourth edition of Ash's grammar

Whereas the first edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* (1760) seems to be well calculated for the use of schoolchildren, a perusal of the fourth edition (1769), which was edited by Ash himself, shows that this edition was less suitable for such a young readership. Apart from an analysis of the fourth edition of Ash's grammar, in this section reasons will be given which might have persuaded Ash to make changes to his original grammar.

The fourth edition of Ash's grammar is much more prescriptive than the first. This is particularly due to the “useful Observations on the Ellipsis” (1769: title page) which Ash added to this new edition. References to Ash's section on ellipsis can also be found in Sundby et al.'s *Dictionary of English Normative Grammar* (1991), a work which includes proscriptive comments, i.e. comments

informing readers about what was not correct (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2010a: 358), taken from 187 eighteenth-century grammars.

According to Sundby et al. (1991: 42), “[t]he fact that an utterance is included in the Dictionary is proof enough that it was probably frowned upon by eighteenth-century grammarians”. In the case of Ash’s fourth edition (to which Sundby et al. refer as the 1763 edition), they found 34 proscriptive comments (Sundby et al. 1991: 461), 22 of which are taken from the section on ellipsis (Ash 1769: 119–139).

Smith (1986: 253) describes Ash’s discussion of the ellipsis of the adjective as being “far in advance of the time”, but she notes that “[u]nfortunately it does not occur to Ash that there might be some kind of underlying system associated with these problems and he makes no attempt at generalisation that would help a student to make decisions about texts which do not occur in the *Grammatical Institutes*”. Ash described ellipsis as “the Omission of some Word or Words which must be supplied, either to compleat [sic] the Sense, or to make out the grammatical Construction of the Sentence” (1769: 119). He believed that “[t]he principal Design of Ellipsis is to avoid disagreeable Repetitions, as well as to express our Ideas in as few Words, and as pleasing a Manner as possible” (Ash 1769: 119). According to Vorlat (1999: 35), Ash “wants speakers to avoid ambiguity (Ash 1769: 119, 120) and ‘to prevent Confusion and Obscurity’” (Ash 1769: 124). Since Ash, as Sundby et al. (1991: 242) put it, “draws an explicit distinction between the proper and improper use of ellipsis”, it is easy to find instances of value judgements in this section, a selection of which can be found below. When describing the ellipsis of the article, for instance, Ash provided the following example:

“Not only the Year but *the* Day, and *the* Hour.” In this Case the Ellipsis of the last Article would be rather **improper** (Ash 1769: 120).

Whilst in his discussion of the ellipsis of the noun he noted that “in common Conversation at least, it is **much better** to say ‘I went by Saint *Pauls*:’ than ‘I went by Saint *Pauls Church*’” (Ash 1769: 121). In order to illustrate the ellipsis of the adjective Ash included the following example: “A *delightful* Orchard and

Garden. i.e. A *delightful* Orchard and a *delightful* Garden" (Ash 1769: 122). He did, however, add that "[i]n such elliptical [sic] Expressions, the Adjective **ought** to have exactly the same Signification, and to be quite as **proper**, when joined to the latter, as to the former Substantives; otherwise the Ellipsis **should** not be admitted" (Ash 1769: 122). As concerns the ellipsis of the verb Ash informed his readership that

some Verbs, through Custom at least, seem to require the Ellipsis of this Sign [i.e. of the infinitive Mode].

"I *bid* you rise and go. He *made* me go and do it. I *heard* him curse and swear. I *saw* her go that way. You *need* not speak. Would you *have* me call?"

In all which Instances the Sign of the infinitive Mode would be **improper** (Ash 1769: 126).

As an example of "the Impropriety of Ellipsis" (Ash 1769: 133), Ash provided the following example sentence:

"That learned Gentleman, if he had read my Essay quite through, would have found several of his Objections might have been spared." It **should** have been – Would have found, *that*, several of his Objections, &c (Ash 1769: 133).

Of great interest is Ash's discussion of the ellipsis of the relative pronoun, because it illustrates his indebtedness to Lowth (Fitzmaurice 1998: 321). We know that Ash was familiar with Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762), since in the preface to the fourth edition of his *Grammatical Institutes* he described the work as "that valuable Book" (1769: viii) and referred to its author as "so great a Man" (1769: ix). In addition, Ash quotes from the preface to Lowth's grammar in one of the "Lessons, relative to the *English Language*" at the back of his grammar (Ash 1769: 140–142). According to Ash, it is "**much better**" to have the relative pronoun expressed in complex Sentences (1769: 124). As for the sentence "In the Posture I lay" (1769: 124), Ash thus believes that it is **Better** [to] say, "The Posture in *which* I lay " (1769: 124). If we compare Ash's statement with that of Lowth's, it becomes clear that Ash must have consulted Lowth's grammar: ¹⁴

¹⁴ According to Leonard (1929: 87; see also Fitzmaurice 1998: 321), Lowth was the first grammarian to mention "the subject of improper ellipsis of particles".

“In the posture I lay.” Swift, *Gulliver*, Part I. Chap. I. In these and the like Phrases which are very common, there is an Ellipsis both of the Relative and the Preposition; which were much better supplied [...] “In the posture *in which* I lay” (Lowth 1762: 137).

Lowth indicated that the quotation had been taken from Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*: “I heard a confused Noise about me, but in the Posture I lay, could see nothing except the Sky” (1727: 7), but Ash probably left out the source of the quotation because he did not want to crowd the pages of his grammar with references that were of little use to his young audience. Another example, “We speak *that* we do know, *and* testify *that* we have seen” with which he illustrated the improper ellipsis of the relative pronoun, was probably also taken from Lowth’s (Ash 1769: 124). Whereas Lowth (1762: 134) provided his readership with the source of this quotation, i.e. John 3: 11, Ash once again did not acknowledge the source at all.

Apart from the prescriptive remarks in the section on ellipsis, I also found some examples of prescriptivism in the new rules which Ash, as I have mentioned above, added to the new edition of his grammar. Ash told his readers that “[t]he *genitive* Case is formed by adding *s*, with an *Apostrophe*, to the *Nominative*: as Men, *Men’s*; Ox, *Ox’s*” (1769: 33), adding a footnote in which he stated:

In the Formation of this Case I have complied with a late Refinement; and what I really think a **corrupt** Custom. The *genitive* Case, in my Opinion, might be much more **properly** formed by adding *s*, or, when the Pronunciation requires it, *es*, without an *Apostrophe*: as Men, *Mens*; Ox, *Oxes*; Horse, *Horses*; Ass, *Asses* (Ash 1769: 33).

I also came across an instance of the label *inelegant*:

The *genitive* Case of a Pronoun is *always* used when joined to a Noun to denote *Property* or *Possession*: as, “*My* Head and *thy* Hand.” The Head *of me* and the Head *of thee* are **inelegant** Expressions (1769: 74).

The following example is one of the three instances of the modal verb *must* that I came across:

Where two or more Nouns or Pronouns of the *singular* Number are joined together in a Sentence, the Pronoun which refers to them **must** be in the *plural* Number: as, “The *King* and the *Queen* had put on *their* Robes” (1769: 73).

Finally I also discovered one instance of *should*:

The *passive Participle*, and not the *past Tense*, **should** be always used when *joined* in a Sentence with the *neuter Verb*; as "It *was written* (not it *was wrote*) in Hebrew" (1769: 81).

The fact that Ash decided to include the above remark in the new edition of his grammar implies that many people were guilty of making this mistake at the time. Gustafsson (2002) indeed found variation between the past participle forms *wrote* and *written* in the letters of Richard Sheridan, Edmund Burke, Sarah Lennox, and Fanny Burney. While searching the British and Irish Women's Letters and Diaries 1500–1900 database, I also came across eleven instances of *was wrote* in letters and diaries written between 1767 and 1782. In 1768, for instance, the novelist Fanny Burney (1752–1840) wrote the following in her diary:

I have this very moment finish'd reading a novel call'd the Vicar of Wakefield. It **was wrote** by Dr. Goldsmith, author of the comedy of the Good-Natured Man, and several essays (ed. Ellis 1907: 13).

There are other additions too in the fourth edition of the grammar. In contrast to the first edition, this edition of Ash's grammar also contains footnotes and I believe that this is another instance of his influence from Lowth. That these footnotes were less suitable for young learners has been pointed out by Vorlat (2007: 518). Not only does Vorlat describe the footnotes she encountered in elementary teaching grammars such as Ash's as containing "references to Latin and Greek, and/or to Saxon" (2007: 518), she also points out that

[t]hey may also offer additional, more detailed rules, which complete the main rules in the text. Or they may explain or justify the specific wording of a rule. In general footnotes are more useful to the teacher than to the pupil (Vorlat 2007: 518).

Lowth's grammar may similarly have inspired Ash to devote more space to syntax. Apart from adding eleven new rules to his syntax section, Ash, as I have demonstrated above, also included an appendix which contained "Some useful Observations on the Ellipsis" (1769: title page). Ash firmly believed that the additions which he had added to the fourth edition of his grammar made the work "more acceptable and useful to those Gentlemen and Ladies, who may

think proper to make Trial of it in their Schools or Families" (1769: viii), but they turned his grammar into a more scholarly work.

3.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed some possible works that Ash may have had at his disposal while he was engaged upon writing his grammar during the 1750s. A comparison of these grammars with Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* revealed that he must have drawn upon Greenwood's *Essay* or his *Royal English Grammar*. In addition, I showed that Ash was not alone in relying on Greenwood for his own work. My findings suggest that Greenwood's influence on his fellow grammarians is even bigger than has been hitherto assumed (cf. *ODNB*, s.v. Greenwood, James). Unlike Greenwood, however, Ash distinguished a system of ten parts of speech. As it was regarded as more comprehensible for young children, this system soon became the most popular system of parts of speech in use. Another difference between Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* and its main source was that whereas Greenwood's *Essay* was written in the form of questions and answers, Ash's grammar consisted of brief numbered rules that could be easily memorized. Though the passages Ash selected for his parsing lessons may strike the modern reader as rather advanced for a young child, Georgian children were indeed familiar with stories from the Old Testament and Pope's translation of Homer's *Iliad*. Ash recommended the use of exercises of false English in his *Sentiments on Education* (1777), but such exercises were only added to his *Grammatical Institutes* after his death. Since Ash favoured the so-called "language of gentlemen" (Leonard 1929: 169) and had written his grammar with a pedagogical purpose, the first edition of Ash's grammar can be considered a normative work. Finally, my analysis of the fourth edition of Ash's grammar revealed that this edition is much more prescriptive. It is worth pointing out that not only Ash's grammar but also the one by Priestley underwent such a change (Hodson 2006; 2008). I believe that it was probably

due to the popularity of Robert Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762) that Ash might have opted for a similar prescriptive approach to grammar teaching. As a result, his grammar became less suitable for children. I already referred to Joseph Guy, who in his *Easy Introduction to the English Language* (1796) had pointed out that "in Dr. Ash's Grammar there is much boys need not, and more that they cannot understand, and some things that can never be usefully reduced to practice" (1796: 118). In the next chapters it will become clear that Guy was not alone in offering an easy introduction to "Dr. Ash's Grammar" (Guy 1796: 118).

Chapter 4. Ash's influence across the Atlantic

4.1. Introduction

On 24 October 1782 Noah Webster (1758–1843) recorded the following in his *Memoir*: “your memorialist has with great labor & expence compiled a work which he proposes to call *The American Instructor*” (as quoted from Micklethwait 2000: 56). With this work, which consisted of two volumes, a spelling book and a grammar, Webster hoped to create “a standard American speech that would serve as a unifying force in the new Republic” (Monaghan 1983: 13; see also Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000a: 880). Webster’s grammar was to be “extracted from the most approved modern writers upon that subject, with his own observations & some notes pointing out the most common & flagrant errors in speaking & writing, the whole being reduced to the Capacity of children” (as quoted from Micklethwait 2000: 58; 56).

The fact that Webster decided to publish his spelling book and grammar separately was rather unusual. During the 1780s American schools still relied upon the Englishman Thomas Dilworth’s *New Guide to the English Tongue* (1740), which combined a spelling book and grammar into a single volume (Avery 1994: 50; Micklethwait 2000: 56). Dilworth’s *New Guide* was first published in London in 1740, but reached the New World in 1747, when it was brought out by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia (Algeo 1986: 310; Finegan 1980: 35). It was indeed Dilworth’s *New Guide* which Webster had studied as a young schoolboy and which he had used while being employed as a schoolmaster in Sharon (Connecticut) and Goshen (New York) during the years 1781 and 1782 (*ODNB*, s.v. Webster, Noah; Finegan 2001: 542). Webster’s decision not to publish his spelling book and grammar in a single volume dates back to this time, when, as an instructor, he had noticed that when his pupils had “advanced to the grammatical section [of Dilworth’s *New Guide*], constant handling by tiny hands had usually torn the book to shreds, leaving the

grammar indecipherable” (Unger [1998] 2000: 71). Consequently parents who desired their children to proceed with the study of English grammar had to buy a second copy of the book. In order to solve this problem, Webster cunningly offered two books for the price of one (Unger [1998] 2000: 71).

By January 1783 Webster had decided to change the title of his two-volume work from *The American Instructor* to *The American Spelling Book and Grammar*. However, when he discussed this title with the president of his alma mater Yale College, Ezra Stiles (1727–1795), Stiles suggested that the work should be called *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* instead (Micklethwait 2000: 58), and this is how it was eventually published. The book consisted of three parts, Part I, a spelling book (1783), Part II, a grammar (1784), and Part III, a reader (1785). Whereas the spelling book, also known as the “Old Blue-Back” speller because of its blue cover, turned out to be the most popular part of the *Grammatical Institute*, Webster’s grammar “was the first American textbook on the subject to attain wide circulation” (Monaghan 1983: 83; Lyman 1922: 77–78). According to Morgan (1975: 64), “the first edition was exhausted within a year”. Alston (1965: 72–76) lists 23 editions and reprints of the grammar until 1800.

Downey (1980: vi) notes that Webster’s grammar “became known by the title of the entire book, that is, by *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*”, a title which is similar to that of Ash’s grammar. This, however, does not seem to have been a coincidence, since, according to Downey, Webster “had made a thorough study of Ash when he was searching for sources for his own work” (1979: xvii). It was probably because of the book’s subtitle that Webster decided to consult Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*. A grammar which claimed to be “an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth’s English grammar” must have been of great interest to Webster, who just like Ash before him, was offering his own grammar as a simplification of Lowth’s.

Instead of serving American schoolchildren, Lowth’s grammar, first published in America by R. Aitken in Philadelphia in 1775, was in fact used by

students at Harvard and Yale (Lyman 1922: 42n.67; Finegan 1980: 35).¹ Webster had entered Yale College in 1774 and it was here that he was first introduced to Lowth's popular work, as can be inferred from a letter he wrote to John Pickering (1777–1846). In this specific letter, written in December 1816, Webster told Pickering:

You and I, Sir, when in college, studied **Lowth's Grammar** (now copied substantially into Murray's). We there learnt, for example, that 'in English there are but two articles, *a* and *the*; *a* becomes *an* before a vowel' (ed. Warfel 1953: 373).²

Judging from experience, Webster regarded Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* as unsuitable for beginners. In the preface to his grammar he asserted that

Dr. Lowth was well acquainted with the origin and genius of the language; and his *Short Introduction to English Grammar*, which is an original performance, cannot be studied with too much attention. But his style and method are not suited to the capacities of youth, his treatise was expressly designed for a *private and domestic use*, and is exceedingly well calculated for this particular purpose, as well as for schools of a higher class (Webster 1784: 3).

Apart from describing the publication history of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes; or, an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar* in North America, I intend to show in this chapter to what extent Webster depended on Ash's grammar while writing his own introduction to Lowth. In addition, I will show that not only Webster but also the American-born Lindley Murray seems to have consulted Ash's work while composing his own *English Grammar* which was first published in York in 1795.

4.2. The publication of Ash's grammar in North America

The origins of the study of English grammar in North America go back to the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century. At this time, "when public

¹ Although Lowth's grammar continued to be studied at Yale until 1784, the work served Harvard students as late as 1841 (Lyman 1922: 42n.67; Finegan 1980: 35).

² Webster is quoting from Lowth's grammar: "In English there are but two articles, *a*, and *the*: *a* becomes *an* before a vowel or a silent *h*" (Lowth 1762: 15).

speaking was manifestly shaping a new world and when other languages were competing for status” (Finegan 2001: 65), the teaching of English grammar was promoted throughout the colonies. Although the instruction in English grammar was first carried out with books brought in from England (Lyman 1922: 33), there was from the beginning “a desire to produce the required schoolbooks on home soil” (Carpenter 1963: 15). At the time when Webster was writing his grammar, Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes, or an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth’s English grammar* was one of the British grammars “available for schoolroom use” in North America (Finegan 2001: 365). Before 1774, the year in which its first American reprint appeared, Ash’s grammar was shipped to the colonies and sold by American booksellers such as Henry Knox, whose “London Book-Store” was situated in Cornhill, Boston (Knox 1773: title page). Since “Ash’s Introduction to Lowth’s grammar” is listed in Knox’s *Catalogue of Books* under “School Books and Classical Authors” (Knox 1773: 36), this suggests that in North America, too, Ash’s grammar was regarded as a suitable textbook “to prepare children for the more difficult work by Lowth” (Good 1956: 36–37).

Since there was no national copyright legislation at the time, British textbooks like Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* could be reproduced “on the presses of colonial America without costing their American publishers a penny” (Monaghan 1983: 12). In the preface to the facsimile edition of Ash’s grammar, Alston (1967a) describes it as “the first [grammar] produced in England to enjoy publication in America”.³ In his inventory he lists no fewer than nineteen pirated editions of Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes or, an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth’s English grammar* that were published in no fewer than eight different places: New York, Chatham (PA), Worcester (MA), Philadelphia, Boston, Albany (NY), Windsor (VT), and Washington (Alston 1965: 34–38) (see Table 1 below for an overview).

³ As I pointed out above, Dilworth’s *A New Guide to the English Tongue* (1740) had been published in Philadelphia in 1747. This work, however, was mainly a spelling-book (Lyman 1922: 33).

<i>Year</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>A new edition</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Additional information</i>
1774	Seventh		12°/24°	New-York: Hugh Gaine [ESTC W38518]
1779				New-York: Hugh Gaine
1783		+	12°	Chatham [N.J.]: S. Kollock [ESTC W12497]
1785		+	8°/12°	Worcester: Isaiah Thomas for F. Battelle and W. Green (Boston) [ESTC W12562]
1785		+	12°	Philadelphia: Joseph Crukshank [ESTC W39726]
1786				New-York: Shepard Kollock
1788			12°/18°	Philadelphia: Peter Stewart. To this edition was added <i>An essay on punctuation</i> by Joseph Robertson (London, 1785) [ESTC W33814]
1788			12°	Philadelphia: Joseph Crukshank. [ESTC W33816]
1792				New-York: Hugh Gaine
1794		+	12°/14cm	Boston: I. Thomas and E.T. Andrews [Sold at their bookstore, no. 45, Newbury Street, Boston, and by Thomas, Andrews and Butler, in Baltimore] [ESTC W886]
1795			12°/18°	Philadelphia: John M' Culloch. To this edition was added <i>An essay on punctuation</i> by Joseph Robertson (London, 1785) [ESTC W33815]
1798		+	12°	New-York: J. Buel for E. Dyckinck & Co., Robert Magill, and Peter A. Messer [ESTC W12496]
1799		+	12°/18°	New-York: M.L. and W.A. Davis for T.S. Arden [ESTC W889]
1800			12°/18cm	Philadelphia: Stephen C. Ustick (Mount Holly) for Matthew Carey [ESTC W891]
1801				New-York: [printed and sold by G.&R. Waite, at no. 64, Maiden-Lane]
1802			14cm	Albany: [printed by Charles R. & George Webster]

1802	Windsor (Vermont)
1804	New-York
1807	<i>Compendium of Ash's Grammatical institutes, or, An easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar: with considerable alterations, and a concise syntax : adapted to the use of schools.</i> Washington: J.D. Westcott & Co

Table 1. Pirated (American) editions of Ash's grammar as listed by Alston (1965).

For the first pirated edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, which was brought out in 1774, the New York bookseller Hugh Gaine, whose bookstore and printing office was situated at the Bible and Crown, in Hanover-Square, had reprinted the seventh London edition of the grammar (Alston 1965: 34; Ford 1902: 134; Downey 1979: vi).⁴ Gaine, a Scotch-Irishman, had come to New York in 1745 (Boynton 1991: 103). Seven years later he started building up New York City's "largest printing and publishing business" (Boynton 1991: 103; Oswald 1937: 193). Apart from importing books from England, Ireland and Scotland, Gaine started reprinting English plays and novels (Gaine 1792: title page; Boynton 1991: 127) from the 1760s onwards. On top of that, he began publishing American editions of John Newbery's children's books (Ford 1902: 108; MacLeod 1995: 105). Since he was engaged in the publishing of children's books, Ash's school grammar must certainly have appealed to Gaine as well.

Whereas Gaine never brought out an American edition of Lowth's grammar, the work was imported by him from England, as can be inferred from his *Catalogue of Books, lately imported from England, Ireland, and Scotland* (1792). A "Short Introduction to the English Grammar with critical Notes, by Bishop Lowth" (Gaine 1792: 18) is one of the works recorded by Gaine in this catalogue. Unfortunately we do not know whether Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* was already imported by Gaine before the year 1792. It

⁴ Only one imperfect copy of this edition has come down to us. It can be found in the State Library of Pennsylvania (see Alston 1965: 34; Vorlat 1959b: 141n.30).

seems probable that Gaine, just like Henry Knox, in whose 1773 *Catalogue of Books* Lowth's grammar is listed twice (Knox 1773: 23; 36), was already importing the work before 1775, the year which saw the first pirated edition of Lowth's grammar in North America. It could also have been that the success of Ash's *Easy Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar* had created a high demand for its sequel and that this was the reason why Gaine had started to import Lowth's grammar. Apart from Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar*, "Ash's Grammatical Institutes" (1792: 18) can be found in Gaine's 1792 *Catalogue of Books*. Although this may suggest that Gaine was no longer publishing Ash's grammar himself, Alston (1965: 36) lists a 1792 edition of Ash's grammar which he believes to have been an issue of Gaine's press. According to Ford (1902: 165), a 1792 edition of Ash's grammar, published by Gaine, was "[a]dvertised at the end of 'The Young Gentleman's and Lady's Monitor,' 1792". I believe that this edition was most likely a reprint of the 1792 London edition published by Edward and Charles Dilly (Alston 1965: 36).

As can be seen from Table 1 above, Ash's grammar was mostly brought out in duodecimo format, with one exception, an octavo edition published in 1785. This edition, which was printed at Worcester, Massachusetts, by Isaiah Thomas was probably a reprint of the 1783 London edition, which, as I showed in Chapter 2 (Table 3), had similarly been printed in octavo. Just like Hugh Gaine, Isaiah Thomas was famous for his reprints of "the best-known English children's books of the time" (MacLeod 1995: 105), and this may explain his interest in Ash's grammar.

In Chapter 2 I updated the bibliographical information in Alston (1965) with regard to the regular and pirated British editions of Ash's grammar. In my search for American editions and reprints of Ash's grammar, I came across seven pirated editions which were all published in North America but which are not included in Alston's inventory. These pirated editions are listed in Table 2 below:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Edition</i>	<i>A new edition</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i>Additional information</i>
1793		+	14 cm.	Philadelphia: Re-printed and sold by Joseph Crukshank, no. 87, High-Street [ESTC W885]
1795		+	13cm/18°	Charleston, [S.C.]: printed by W.P. Young, Franklin's Head, no. 43, Broad-Street [ESTC W887]
1798	Second		14 cm.	Charleston, [S.C.]: printed by W.P. Young, Franklin's Head, no. 43, Broad-Street. [ESTC W888]
1803		+		Baltimore: printed for George Hill, by John W. Butler
1804		+	18 cm	Philadelphia: printed for Matthew Carey, no. 122, High-Street
1804				<i>Dilworth's spelling-book improved: being a new and easy guide to the English tongue. To which are now added, Ash's grammatical institutes.</i> The ninth edition. Washington: printed for the benefit of the family of the late John Colerick
1823				Baltimore: printed by Martin & Pratt, John Icer [Rice]

Table 2. Pirated (American) editions of Ash's grammar not listed by Alston (1965).

The sixth entry in the table is of great interest, since here we are dealing with an edition of Ash's grammar that was added to the ninth edition of *Dilworth's Spelling-Book Improved*, a work which was first published in Albany in 1796 (Alston 1967b: 80). Alston (1967b: 80) lists two other editions of this work, one published in Baltimore by George Keatinge in 1796 and another published in Washington (Pennsylvania) by Colerick, Beaumont and Hunter during the same year. Whereas in his bibliography Alston (1965: 38) still lists a pirated edition published in Banbury (Britain) in 1810, I discovered that in North America Ash's grammar continued to appear in print as late as 1823, the year in which John Icer Rice issued a pirated edition of the grammar in Baltimore.

4.3. A tale of two grammars: Ash's Grammatical Institutes and Webster's Grammatical Institute of the English Language

One of the first things I noticed while comparing Webster's grammar with that of Ash's was that Webster's *Grammatical Institute of the English Language* was written in the form of questions and answers. As I pointed out above, Webster was familiar with this format, since as a schoolboy and instructor he had used Thomas Dilworth's *New Guide to the English Tongue* (1740) which followed the same principle (Finegan 2001: 542). While describing the schools of his forefathers in Philadelphia the educator James Pyle Wickersham (1825-1891) also mentioned this popular method of teaching:

So much of Geography and Grammar as was taught in the early schools was taught mainly by question and answer. The master read the questions from a book, and the pupil gave the answer he had committed to memory. Taught in this way, without maps, globes, illustrations, pictures of life past or present, even Geography was a dull study; much more dull must Grammar have been, presented wholly in the form of abstract definitions and rules, uncombined with practical exercises of any kind (Wickersham 1886: 206).

The discussion of the parts of speech was the first thing I looked at while comparing the two grammars. One of the more striking differences is that while Ash provides his young readership with example sentences to illustrate the use of the different parts of speech, Webster does not offer such examples at all:

A *Pronoun* is a Word used *instead* of a Noun, to avoid the *too frequent* Repetition of the *same* Word: as, "The Man is merry, *he* laughs, *he* sings" (Ash 1769: 36).

What is a pronoun? A pronoun is a word standing for a noun (Webster 1784: 15).

Another significant difference between the two grammars is that the information provided by Webster is more detailed and therefore far more difficult for children to learn by heart. This becomes clear when we compare his description of the article with that of Ash's:

What is an Article?

An article is a word placed before a noun to show how far its signification extends.

How many are the English Articles?

Two, *a* and *the*. *A* is placed before consonants and before vowels *y* and *w*; as *a year, a week*: But for the ease of pronunciation, it becomes *an*, before *a, e, i, o, u*, and before a silent *h*; as, *an art, an egg, an inch, an ounce, an umbrella, an hour*.

How is the article a used?

The article *a* or *an*, is used to point out one single thing of a kind; as, *a tree, a book*; but leaves us uncertain which one of the whole is meant: *A* is therefore called the *indefinite* article.

How is the article the used?

The is used to point out one thing or a number of things, which are supposed to be known; as *the Commander in Chief, the Church, the twelve Apostles*. The is therefore called the *definite* article (Webster 1784: 9–10).

AN *Article* is a Part of Speech *set before Nouns* to fix their vague Signification; as, *a Man, the Man; an House; the House*. The *Articles* are *a, an, and the* (Ash 1769: 28).

From the above it can be concluded that while Webster immediately introduces the term indefinite article, Ash doesn't explain the difference between a definite and indefinite article until the syntax section at the back of his grammar. While comparing the grammars of Ash and Lowth, Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2003: 43) already noted that because of its brief numbered rules Ash's grammar could be easily memorized and was therefore much more suitable as a children's grammar than that of Lowth's. As I pointed out in Chapter 2, in 1767 the *Monthly Review* had similarly described Ash's work as "well enough contrived [...] to get the terms by rote" (Langhorne 1767: 161).

While discussing the gender of nouns, Ash, as I pointed out in Chapter 3, either relied on Greenwood's *Essay* (1711) or Greenwood's *Royal English Grammar* (1737) for his list of 55 masculine nouns and their feminine equivalents. Since 39 of these nouns can also be found in Webster's grammar, this may suggest that Webster borrowed from Ash here. A close reading of the two grammars, however, reveals that, unlike Ash, Webster, divided the masculine nouns and their feminine counterparts into three groups: 1) pairs of nouns where the different genders are expressed by different words, such as *father, mother, husband, wife*, 2) pairs where the nouns feminine have the regular ending in *ess*, i.e. words like *prince, princess, emperor, empress*, 3) those

nouns which “make *ix* in the feminine”, such as *administrator*, *administratrix*, *executor*, *executrix* (Webster 1784: 14–15).

Instead of basing himself on Ash's grammar, Webster seems to have relied on James Buchanan's (*fl.* 1753–1773) *A Regular English Syntax* (1767) for this. Evidence for this can be found in Webster's preface to his *Grammatical Institute*, in which he remarked that “Mr. Buchanan a later and much celebrated Grammarian, had given the world a *Regular English Syntax*” (Webster 1784: 4), and added that in this work “he has improved upon Dr. Lowth's method and made many judicious remarks upon the construction and arrangement of periods”, i.e. sentences (Webster 1784: 4). Although the first two editions of Buchanan's grammar were published in London in 1767 and 1769 respectively, Alston (1965: 52–53) lists five pirated editions of the grammar, all published in Philadelphia in 1780, 1783, 1786, 1788 and 1792. Since Webster's grammar was first published in Hartford in 1784, he must have consulted either the first or the second American edition of Buchanan's *Regular English Syntax*. Just like Webster, Buchanan had divided the masculine nouns and their feminine counterparts into pairs of nouns which “express the Difference of Sex by different Words” (*Husband – Wife*) (1767: 18), pairs of nouns which “form the Feminine regularly, by *ess*” (*Baron – Baroness*) (1767: 19), and those “which make their Feminine in *ix*” (*Executor – Executrix*) (1767: 20).

Webster's fourteen examples of pairs of nouns which express the different genders by different words, such as *boy – girl*, *bull – cow*, *brother – sister*, *bridegroom – bride* can all be found in Buchanan's grammar.⁵ All the examples of pairs of nouns where the feminine ends in *ess*, such as *duke – duchess*, *master – mistress*, *viscount – viscountess* were similarly copied by Webster from Buchanan's *Regular English Syntax*. Nine of these thirty-two examples (*benefactor – benefactress*, *peer – peeress*, *priest – priestess*, *protector –*

⁵ It must be borne in mind that just as in his *Complete English Scholar* (1753), Buchanan heavily relied on Greenwood's grammar while composing his *Regular English Syntax*. Buchanan's list of 32 nouns in which the gender is expressed by different words can similarly be found in the second (1722) and later editions of Greenwood's *Essay* (1711) as well as in Greenwood's *Royal English Grammar* (1737).

protectress, sorcerer – sorceress, traitor – traitress, tiger – tygress, songster–songstress, and seamster – seamstress) can only be found in Buchanan’s grammar and not in Greenwood’s *Essay* (1711) or his *Royal English Grammar* (1737), one of which Buchanan had used as his main source.

After comparing Webster’s section on gender with the one in Ash, I contrasted their discussions of the verb. Since he felt that “the common division into active, passive, neuter is faulty”, Webster divided verbs into transitive and intransitive ones (1784: 19). Ash, on the other hand, had divided verbs into active and neuter, since according to him “there is *no passive Verb* in the English Language” (1769: 40). In her study on teaching grammars, Vorlat (2007: 501) criticizes authors like Ash, who, although catering for schools, include discussions on whether the English language has a passive. Vorlat (2007: 501) believes that such discussions “are of little use, especially in schools where Latin is not taught”. Although Ash’s discussion of the passive verb was one of the brief numbered rules which children had to memorise by heart in the 1760, 1766 and 1768 editions of his grammar, from the fourth edition onwards the discussion can no longer be found in the main text but is presented in the form of a footnote. This suggests that by that time, Ash regarded his discussion of the passive verb as more suitable for the advanced learner or teacher than for mere beginners.

Despite the fact that Webster, like Ash before him, wrote his grammar “for the Use of *English* schools” (1784: title page), he, too, inserted a footnote in which he stated that he was happy to find his own rejection of the passive verb “supported by so respectable an authority as Dr. Ash” (1784: 18):

As to *passive* verbs, we have no such thing in the language. I cannot better express my ideas on this subject, than in the words of **Dr. Ash, in a Grammar prefixed to his Dictionary**. He observes that ‘Properly speaking, there is no *passive* verb in the English language; for though, *I am loved*, is commonly called a *passive* verb, yet *love* is no part of the *verb*, but a *participle* or *adjective* derived of the verb, *love*’ (Webster 1784: 19).

Webster, however, is not quoting from Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* here (where one can find the exact same discussion) but from his *New and Complete*

Dictionary of the English Language (1775) which, as I have shown in Chapter 2, also contained “a comprehensive grammar” (Ash 1775: title page). This grammar was based on Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*.

Webster’s opinion of the imperative mode was similarly supported by Ash (1784: 20), who in his dictionary had noted that “*Let*, commonly called a *sign* of the imperative mode, is *properly* a *verb* in that mode: as, in the example, *let him love*, the meaning is *permit*, or *suffer* him to love: *let*, therefore, seems to be a verb of the *imperative*, and *love*, of the *infinitive* mode, the sign, *to*, being understood, though not expressed” (1775: 9).⁶ In his grammar Webster had likewise stated that “in most cases, *let* is certainly a principal verb, of the same import as *permit* or *suffer*, and used in the second person of the imperative mode” (Webster 1784: 20).

In contrast to his *Grammatical Institutes*, Ash’s dictionary was divided into so-called “dissertations”. Downey (1979: xiv) points out that one of these dissertations, Dissertation III, entitled “ ‘On the Derivation and Composition of Words’, is of special interest because of the attention Noah Webster gives to it”. While discussing the derivation and composition of words in his dictionary, Ash had noted that “HERE we enter the grand laboratory of the English language, in which all kinds of words are transformed and compounded at pleasure” (1775: 14). According to Downey (1979: xiv), this expression must have appealed to Webster, since he decided to include it in his grammar. While writing on the “DERIVATION and COMPOSITION of WORDS”, Webster noted that “This is what Dr. Ash calls the grand laboratory of the English language; for by the help of certain prefixes and terminations, we form new words to express any idea we please” (Webster 1784: 115). Downey further notes that like Ash, Webster divided the origins of words into *Saxon Modes*, *Latin Modes*, *Greek Modes* and *French Modes* (Downey 1979: xv–xvi; Webster 1784: 115).

⁶ This note can also be found in Ash’s grammar proper (1769: 49). Whereas Ash’s discussion of the imperative mode was one of the brief numbered rules in the 1760, 1766 and 1768 editions of his grammar, it appears in a footnote from the fourth edition onwards.

The above-mentioned quotations are the only instances I came across in which Webster is actually basing himself on Ash's *New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language*. A possible reason for this can be found in Webster's preface to his grammar. Though Webster believed that "Dr Ash has corrected some errors and supplied some defects of these Authors [i.e. Lowth and Buchanan]", he also thought that Ash had "omitted other articles of equal importance" (Webster 1784: 4). Since Webster clearly had access to Ash's dictionary, the question arises how he got hold of his copy. Given that Ash's dictionary was not published in America (Alston 1966: 53), it seems likely that Webster relied on a British copy of the work. As is clear from his 1792 book catalogue the above-mentioned Hugh Gaine was one of the booksellers who was importing Ash's "New and Compleat Dictionary, with a compendious Grammar" at the time (Gaine 1792: 19).

Despite the fact that Alston (1966: 53) only lists a second edition of the dictionary, published by the London firm of Vernor and Hood in 1795, Ash's dictionary continued to be used well into the nineteenth century, as is made clear by a reference to the work in Thomas Hardy's (1840–1928) *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874). In Chapter 8 of this famous novel we are told that the 28-year-old shepherd Gabriel Oak possessed a copy of Ash's dictionary and that from this work and the six other books that made up his library he "had acquired more sound information by diligent perusal than many a man of opportunities has done from a furlong of laden shelves" ([1874] 2003: 63). According to Page (2000: 309), the fact that Hardy, who himself owned a copy of Ash's *New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language*, referred to a 1775 dictionary written by "a Dorset-born Baptist minister" in his novel suggests that in 1874 Ash's dictionary was "clearly still a prized possession among Dorset folk". Since Gabriel Oak is already in his late-twenties, this implies that Ash's dictionary, unlike his grammar, wasn't felt to be aimed at a young audience. Though advertised in the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* of 20 May 1775 as being designed "For the USE of SCHOOLS and

PRIVATE GENTLEMEN", the work clearly was not intended as a work to be learnt by heart. This is suggested by its typography, which was described in the advertisement in the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* as "Neatly printed on a small New Letter". In 1775 *The Monthly Review* had likewise remarked that "though the print is necessarily small, it is obvious that dictionaries are not for continued reading but for occasional consultation" (Anon. 1775b: 216).

A question which still needs to be answered is why Webster, while writing his simplification of Lowth's grammar, turned to Ash's dictionary instead of his *Grammatical Institutes; or, an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar*. A possible answer to this question can be found in Warfel's *Noah Webster: Schoolmaster to America* ([1936] 1966). In this biography, Warfel notes that towards the end of his life Webster recalled that "The grammar in Dilworth's was the only one I knew, till [Bishop Robert] Lowth's appeared. This was printed by Robert Aitkins of Philadelphia in 1775" (as quoted from Warfel [1936] 1966: 11). As I have shown, the first American reprint of Ash's grammar appeared in 1774, so a year before Lowth's. Webster's recollection thus suggests that he simply was not familiar with Ash's grammar at all. Since he had never heard of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, Webster saw no reason not to follow Dr. Stiles's advice and call his grammar *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, a title which echoed that of Ash's.

Instead of being based on Ash's grammar, the title *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language*, as Morgan (1975: 47–48) observes, "was probably drawn [...] from John Calvin's *Institutes [of the Christian religion]*" which had first been published in 1536. Webster's grammar was not received uncritically. According to Morgan (1975: 48) the pretentious title of the work made Webster "vulnerable to charges of vanity". Johnson ([1904] 1963: 171), for instance, mentions how "[n]ames like 'Mr. Grammatical Institute,' and 'Mr. Institutional Genius'" were used to refer to Webster at the time. In addition to the title, the contents of Webster's grammar were heavily criticised as well. Warfel ([1936]

1966: 84) notes that Webster's grammar was generally regarded as "a learned, pugnacious book, beyond the reach not only of the children for whom it was designed, but also of most schoolmasters". While recalling his own school days in Ridgefield Connecticut around the turn of the century, the children's author Samuel Griswold Goodrich (1793–1860) stated that Webster's grammar "of which there were two copies in a room of perhaps forty pupils" (Finegan 1980: 37),⁷

was a clever book, but I have an idea that neither Master Stebbins nor his pupils ever fathomed its depths. They floundered about in it, as if in a quagmire, and after some time came out pretty nearly where they went in, though perhaps a little obfuscated by the dim and dusky atmosphere of these labyrinths (as quoted in Finegan 1980: 37; see also Lyman 1922: 116).

Webster must have been aware of such criticisms of his *Grammatical Institute*, since in his later *Rudiments of English Grammar*, which was "a simplified, abridged edition of his grammar for five-year-olds" (Unger [1998] 2000: 163)⁸, he stated: "THERE has been a general complaint among the teachers of schools, that the Second Part of the Grammatical Institute is a work too complex and difficult for young beginners in Grammar" (Webster 1790: 4; see also Baron 1982: 135). Instead of a grammar aimed at young learners, Webster now regarded the second part of his *Grammatical Institute* as a work "where the instructors of schools and the advanced student will find what is necessary to a correct knowledge of the English tongue" (Webster 1790: 4). He now considered his *Rudiments* as the most suitable grammar for beginners, a work to be studied before proceeding to his *Grammatical Institute*. In order not "to perplex and discourage the young learner" Webster made sure to leave out "[m]inute distinctions, exceptions to general rules and critical remarks" in his *Rudiments* (Webster 1790: 4). It is, moreover, worth mentioning that in his

⁷ Carpenter (1963: 15–16) points out that because of the scarcity of school books at the time, "half a dozen, or even less, had to do for classes of considerable sizes".

⁸ According to Unger ([1998]2000: 97; 108) Webster's friend Timothy Pickering (1745–1829), whose own children, including the above-mentioned John Pickering, had learnt to read by studying Webster's spelling book, had suggested to Webster to improve "the *Institute* by developing abridged, elementary versions of the speller, grammar, and reader for five-year-olds".

elementary grammar Webster continued to stress the importance of rote learning, pointing out that

[r]ules are drawn from the most general and approved practice, and serve to teach young students how far their *own practice* in speaking agrees with the *general practice* of the nation, and thus enable them to correct their errors. For this purpose, rules are highly useful; and altho the young pupil may not fully comprehend them, when at school. yet [sic] if he commits them to memory, he will afterward recollect them with ease and apply them with advantage (Webster 1790: 4).

In order to ease memorization, Webster had written this sequel to his *Grammatical Institute* in the question and answer format as well.

Whereas Webster's *Rudiments* continued to be published until 1833 his original grammar disappeared from the market at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁹ On 22 November 1803 Webster received a letter from the firm of Thomas and Andrews in Boston in which they told him that

[t]he Selection [Part III] and the Gram^r [Part II] are so little used and the small demand for them being on the decrease, that though we might wish to continue to print them, to have them accompany the Spell^s Books when wanted, we should not be willing to pay anything for them but should expect to have them be considered as included in the contract for the Spell^s Book (as quoted from Shoemaker 1966: 125; see also Skeel 1958: 151).

Three months later, on 13 February 1804, they again wrote him a letter in which they mentioned that "[t]he 2^d part we have not standing and it is not likely we shall ever find it worth our while again to print it" (Skeel 1958: 151). On 19 October 1807 Webster sent a letter to Joel Barlow (1754–1812), who had been his "classmate and closest friend at Yale College" (ed. Warfel 1953: 536), in which he explained that his "*Grammar* had its run, but has been superseded by [Lindley] Murray's" (ed. Warfel 1953: 292).

⁹ Whereas Part II of Webster's *Grammatical Institute* never crossed the Atlantic, Part I and III eventually reached Britain. The year 1856 saw the appearance of *The Illustrated Webster Spelling Book with Two Hundred Fifty Engravings* and *The Illustrated Webster Reader* which were both part of the London firm Ward & Locke's Educational Series (St. John 1975a: 143).

4.4. *The popularity of Murray's grammar*

The famous grammarian Lindley Murray was born in Swatara, Pennsylvania on 22 April 1745. In 1784 Murray moved to Britain together with his wife, where they settled in Holdgate, not far away from York (*ODNB*, s.v. Murray, Lindley). York was also the place where the first edition of Murray's *English Grammar* appeared in 1795. According to Austin (1996: 46), Murray had written his grammar for the benefit of the pupils of the York Girls' School, or Trinity Lane School. This boarding school "for the guarded education of young females" (Murray 1826: 249) educated Quaker girls from the age of twelve to fifteen (Grubb 1927: 147; see also Fens-de Zeeuw forthc.).

Murray's grammar immediately established itself as a popular grammar. Alston (1965: 92–96) records 65 numbered British editions of the work until 1867. Murray's brother had copyrighted the *English Grammar* in New York on 4 December 1798, but Monaghan (1998: 95) notes that it was not until the year 1800 that the first New York edition was published by Isaac Collins. Alston (1965: 93), however, indicates that this edition was not the first American edition which had appeared of Murray's grammar. In his inventory he lists an edition, published in Boston by Manning and Loring for Joseph Nancrede, which, according to its title page, claimed to be the "First American edition" (Alston 1965: 93). Murray's grammar met with a favourable reception in North America. A reviewer of *The American Review and Literary Journal* stated that "Mr. Murray's Grammar, as well as his other publications, has received the uniform approbation of literary characters and journalists [...] They deserve to take place of all other works of the same kind which are now used in our schools" (as quoted from Ikeda 1996: 147).

That Murray's grammar came to be used in American schools during the nineteenth century can also be inferred from Harriet Beecher Stowe's (1811–1896) *Oldtown Folks* (1869).¹⁰ In this novel we read about a Miss Asphyxia, who "was past fifty" and who "conducted a large farm by the aid of a hired man, and

¹⁰ This reference was found with the help of the online database Literature Online.

drove a flourishing dairy, and was universally respected in the neighborhood as a smart woman" (Stowe 1869: 105; 98). As a child this Miss Asphyxia

had been sent to the district school, where, always energetic in whatever she took in hand, she always stood at the head of the school in the few arts of scholarship in those days taught. She could write a good, round hand; she could cipher with quickness and adroitness; **she had learned by heart all the rules of Murray's Grammar**,¹¹ notwithstanding the fact that, from the habits of early childhood, she habitually set at naught every one of them in her daily conversation, – always strengthening all her denials with those good, hearty double negatives which help out French and Italian sentences, and are unjustly denied to the purists in genteel English (Stowe 1869: 118).

Stowe's reference to Murray's grammar in this novel suggests that, just like Miss Asphyxia, she herself had studied the work as a young girl. Stowe's contemporary Herman Melville (1819–1891) had clearly learnt Murray's grammar by heart as well (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1996a: 18). In his famous novel *Moby Dick* (1851), Melville lets one of the characters, the African-American Pip, recite the conjugation of the verb "to look" from Murray's grammar (Melville 1851: 483–484).

Apart from being studied in schools, Murray's grammar also found its way into the domestic sphere. Evidence for this can be found in the Memoirs of Martha Laurens Ramsay (1759–1811), an American mother, who

[f]or her first children, compiled an English grammar, being dissatisfied with what had been written by Lowth, Ash, and others; but when she became acquainted with Lindley Murray's writings, she laid aside her own compend, and received his, as throwing new light on what before was obscure" (Ramsay [1811] 1812: 33).

It is worth mentioning that according to Ramsay it wasn't Ash but Murray who had succeeded in making the obscure rules of grammar palatable for her children.

The success of Murray's grammar was mainly due to his attention to layout (Jones 1996: 65). Howatt ([1984] 1985: 122; see also Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1996b: 89) describes Murray's grammar as the first to use "a deliberate system

¹¹ According to Reibel (1996: xi), a reference to Murray's grammar can also be found on the first page of Stowe's popular novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852).

of grading” in order to cater for its young audience. In June 1796 the *Analytical Review* had indeed praised Murray’s useful grammar, noting that “[t]he compiler has very properly distinguished the leading heads from their subordinate illustrations, by printing them in a larger character” (as quoted from Jones 1996: 65; see also Ikeda 1996: 145). In the preface to his *English Grammar* Murray had also commented on the special division of text in his grammar, stating that “[t]he most important definitions, rules, and observations, and which are therefore the most proper to be committed to memory, are printed with a larger type; while rules and remarks that are of less consequence, that extend or diversify the general idea, or that serve as explanations, are contained in the smaller letter; and will be perused by the student with more advantage, after the general system has been completed” (Murray 1795: iv).

Despite its favourable reception in Britain, Murray was soon accused of plagiarism. Murray had stated in the preface to his *English Grammar* (1795) that “little can be expected from a new compilation, besides a careful selection of the most useful matter, and some degree of improvement in the mode of adapting it to the understanding, and the gradual progress of learners” (1795: iii), but people still thought of him as a plagiarist because he had not taken sufficient care to acknowledge his sources (see Vorlat 1959a: 109; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1996b: 88; Jones 1996; Mugglestone 1996). Being accused of plagiarism affected Murray so much that in the fourth edition of his grammar he noted:

In a work which professes itself to be a compilation, and which, from the nature and design of it, must consist of materials selected from the writing of others, it is scarcely necessary to apologize for the use which the Compiler has made of his predecessors’ labours; or for omitting to insert their names [...] But if this could have been generally done, a work of this nature would derive no advantage from it, equal to the inconvenience of crowding the pages with a repetition of names and references. It is, however, proper to acknowledge in general terms, that the authors to whom the grammatical part of this

compilation is principally indebted for its materials, are Harris, Johnson, Lowth, Priestley, Beattie, Sheridan, and Walker (1798: 6–7).¹²

While Ash was not listed by Murray as one of his main sources, Vorlat nevertheless identified him as such in two of her studies. In the one on Lindley Murray's prescriptive canon, she indicated that Murray's "*English Grammar* is obviously and admittedly to a large extent a copy (sometimes with slight alterations in the examples) of Robert Lowth, **John Ash**, James Buchanan, Joseph Priestley, George Campbell, James Wood, Hugh Blair, Lewis Brittain and others" (Vorlat 1996: 165). Three years later she likewise mentioned Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* (1763) as one "of the grammars on which he [i.e. Murray], admittedly or not, depends" (Vorlat 1999: 319). The above-mentioned studies by Vorlat are of great interest, especially since in her earlier article from 1959 she had not listed Ash as one of the sources for Murray's popular grammar. As I will proceed to show in the next section, a comparison of the fourth (1769) edition of Ash's grammar with the first edition of Murray's *English Grammar* (1795) immediately shows that Vorlat was right in describing Ash as one of Murray's sources.¹³

4.5. Murray's dependence on Ash

Ash's grammar was first published in 1760, but it seems likely that Murray consulted a later edition of the work while he was composing his *English Grammar* during the 1790s. This is the reason why in this section Murray's grammar is compared to the fourth edition of Ash's grammar (1769) which, as I pointed out in the previous chapter, had been revised and corrected by Ash

¹² Coote, whose *Elements of the Grammar of the English Language* was first published in 1788, was later added to this list by Murray (Vorlat 1959a: 108; see also Tiekens-Boon van Ostade 1996b: 88).

¹³ According to Jones (1996: 73), Ash is also described as one of Murray's sources in the anonymous *Lindley Murray Examined* (1809). Jones points out that in this work the author "airs his [Murray's] knowledge – Lowth, Priestley, **Ash**, Murray, Walker, Devis, Pape. Shaw, Knowles, Crombie, Harris, John Clarke, Ruddiman (*passim*), 'and several others of inferior note'" (1809: 52).

himself. Arguments will be provided in order to show that it was either this or a later edition of the grammar which Murray turned to at the time.

While comparing the two grammars, I found at least 59 instances of unacknowledged copying by Murray. Some of these, which comprise sections meant for children to be learnt by heart, were printed in larger type. It is noteworthy that Murray's definitions of the pronoun and the adverb are remarkably similar to the ones we find in Ash:¹⁴

A *Pronoun* is a Word used *instead* of a Noun, to avoid the *too frequent* Repetition of the *same* Word: as, "The Man is merry, *he* laughs, *he* sings" (Ash 1769: 34).

A Pronoun is a word used instead of a noun, to avoid the too frequent repetition of the same word: as, "The man is happy," "*he* is benevolent," "*he* is useful" (Murray 1795: 29).

AN *Adverb* is a Part of Speech *joined* to a Verb, an *Adjective*, a *Participle*, and sometimes to another *Adverb*, to express the *Quality*, or *Circumstance* of it: as, He reads *well*, a *truly* good Man, he is *secretly* plotting, he writes *very correctly* (Ash 1769: 65–66).

An Adverb is a part of speech joined to a verb, an adjective, or sometimes to another adverb, to express some quality or circumstance respecting it; as, "He reads *well*;" "A *truly* good man;" "He writes *very correctly*" (Murray 1795: 74).

Although Murray does not reproduce Ash's example sentence in order to illustrate the use of the pronoun, the sentence which he provides instead clearly echoes the one we find in Ash. As regards Murray's description of the adverb, it can be observed that apart from "he is *secretly* plotting" (1769: 66), all the other example sentences were lifted straight from Ash's grammar.

Even though Murray does not literally copy Ash's description of the preposition, his example sentence resembles that of Ash's:

A *Preposition* is a Word *set before* Nouns, or *Pronouns*, to express the *Relation* of Persons, Places or Things to each other: as, He came *to*, and stood *before* **the City** (Ash 1769: 67).

¹⁴ While defining the pronoun and adverb in the beginning of his grammar, Murray, curiously enough, relied on Lowth's grammar here (Murray 1795: 20; see also Vorlat 1959a: 111). The example sentences which he provided to illustrate the use of the adverb, i.e. "he reads *well*"; a *truly* good man; he writes *very correctly*" (Murray 1795: 20), are, however, copied from Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*.

A preposition is a word set chiefly before nouns or pronouns, to connect them with other words, and to shew their relation to those words; as, He came *to*, and stood *before*, **the house** (Murray 1795: 77).

While comparing Murray's grammar "with the treatises of R. Lowth, J. Priestley, and C. Coote, and with those of Harris and Buchanan" (1959a: 109), Vorlat (1959a: 121) discovered "[t]he various tricks which are used [by Murray] to vary the examples". One of these tricks was "[t]he substitution of one proper name by another" (Vorlat 1959a: 121). Lowth's example sentence "I love Thomas" was substituted by "I love Penelope" in Murray's grammar (Vorlat 1959a: 121). Since in the above-mentioned quotation Murray replaced Ash's "the City" with "the house", this shows that he substituted nouns as well in the examples he borrowed from his predecessors.

Rule V in Murray's syntax section is also of particular note, as it contains two example sentences which resemble those in Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*:

Pronouns must always agree with their antecedents, and the nouns for which they stand, in gender, number, and person; as, "This is the friend *whom* I love;" "That is the vice *which* I hate." **"The king and queen had put on *their* robes;" "The moon appears, and *she* shines, but the light is not *her* own"** (Murray 1795: 95-96).

105. The *Pronouns* must *always agree* with the *Nouns* for which they *stand*, or to which they *refer* in *Number*, *Person*, and *Gender*: as, "The *Sun* shines and *his* Race is appointed to him: **"The *Moon* appears, and *she* shines with *Light*, but not *her* own [...]"** (Ash 1769: 72).

107. Where two or more *Nouns* or *Pronouns* of the *singular* Number are joined together in a *Sentence*, the *Pronoun* which refers to them must be in the *plural* Number: as, **"The *King* and the *Queen* had put on *their* Robes"** (Ash 1769: 73).

Whereas the syntax section in Ash's grammar is divided into 44 numbered rules (rules 97-140) which children had to memorise by heart, the one in Murray's grammar was printed in two different types. In the preface to his grammar Murray remarked that whereas the text printed in a larger type had to be committed to memory, those "rules and remarks that are of less consequence, that extend or diversify the general idea, or that serve as explanations, are contained in the smaller letter; and will be perused by the

student with more advantage, after the general system has been completed” (Murray 1795: iv). Since the examples from Murray’s grammar listed below were all printed in smaller type, this suggests that Murray regarded Ash’s original statements as more suitable for advanced students than for young beginners.

Rule VIII in Murray’s syntax section is worth discussing, too, since here Murray does not reproduce but abridges an example sentence which he found in Ash’s grammar:

113. When *two Persons*, or *Things*, are spoken of in a Sentence, and there is Occasion to mention them over again, for the Sake of Distinction, *that* is used when it refers to the *former*, and *this* when it refers to the *latter*: as,
**“ Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the Soul;
 Reason’s comparing Ballance rules the whole:
 Man but for that no Action could attend,
 And but for this were active to no End”** (Ash 1769: 75).

When two persons or things are spoken of in a sentence, and there is occasion to mention them over again, for the sake of distinction, *that* is used in reference to the former, and *this* in reference to the latter; as, **“Self-love, which is the spring of action in the soul, is ruled by reason; but for that, man would be inactive; and but for this, he would be active to no end”** (Murray 1795: 105).

As I pointed out in §3.4, the above-mentioned quotation was taken from Pope’s *Essay on Man*. In order to make his work more readable for his young audience, Murray, just like Ash before him, did not supply the source of the quotation.

Apart from abridging the example sentences which he borrowed from the works of his predecessors, Murray, according to Vorlat (1959a: 121–122), frequently added a new example sentence to a series of examples. While comparing Murray’s discussion of the prepositions with that of Ash’s, I indeed noticed that Murray had added three new examples, i.e. “I shall be at Paris”, “Birmingham” and “He lives at Montpelier”, to Ash’s original text (Murray 1795: 126).

139. The Preposition, *to*, is *always* used *before* Nouns of *Place*, after Verbs and Participles of *Motion*: as, “I went *to* London; I am going *to* Town, &c.” But the Preposition, *at*, is *always* used when it *follows* the *neuter* Verb in the same Case: as, “I have been *at* London; “I am *at* the Place appointed.” We likewise say, “He touch’d *at* any Place; “He arriv’d, He lives *at*,” &c (Ash 1769: 82–83).

140. The Preposition, *in*, is set before *Countries, Cities* and *large Towns*, especially if they are in the *same Nation*: as, "He lives *in London, in France*," &c. *At* is set before *Villages, single Houses*, and *Cities*, if they are in *distant Countries*: as, "He lives *at Hackney*," &c (Ash 1769: 83).

The preposition *to* is made use of before nouns of place, when they follow verbs and participles of motion; as, "I went *to London*;" "I am going *to town*." But the preposition *at* is used after the neuter verb *to be*; as, "I have been *at London*;" "I was *at the place* appointed; "**I shall be *at Paris***." We likewise say, "He touched, arrives, lives *at any place*." The preposition *in* is set before countries, cities and large towns; as, "He lives in France, in London, or in **Birmingham**." But before villages, single houses, and cities, which are in distant countries, *at* is used; as, "He lives at Hackney;" "**He is at Montpelier**" (Murray 1795: 126).

When describing the position of the adjective, Murray even replaced Ash's example "The genuine Cause of every Deed divine" (Ash 1769: 71) with three new example sentences:

101. The *Adjective* is usually set *before* its *Substantive*: as, "The *second Year*, a *good Man*". But frequently, for better Sound's Sake, especially in poetry, the *Adjective* comes *after* its *Substantive*: as, "**The genuine Cause of every Deed *divine***" (Ash 1769: 70–71).

The adjective is usually set before its substantive; as, "The second year;" "A good man." Sometimes, however, for the sake of better sound, especially in poetry, the adjective comes after the substantive; as, "**The torrent tumbling through rocks abrupt;**" "**Alexander the Great;**" "**A man just, wise, and charitable:**" (Murray 1795: 105).

Murray, moreover, in copying rule 129 from Ash's grammar, also added some new matter to the original text:

129. The *Interjections, O, Oh*, and *Ah*, require the *accusative Case* of a *Pronoun* in the *first Person*; as, "O *me*, Ah *me*." But the *nominative* in the *second*: as, "O *thou*, O *ye*" (Ash 1769: 79–80).

The interjections *O! Oh!* And *Ah!* require the objective case of a pronoun in the first person after them; as, "O me!" **Oh me!** Ah me!" But the nominative case in the second person; as, "Oh thou **that rulest!**" "Oh, ye **rulers of this land!**" (Murray 1795: 100).

Curiously enough, 44 of the 59 instances of unacknowledged copying that I came across can be found in Rule XXI in Murray's syntax section (Murray 1795: 134–139). In this particular rule Murray provided some "Directions respecting the Ellipsis" (1795: vii) which he almost completely copied from Ash's "Some useful Observations on the Ellipsis" (1769: title page), a section, which, as I

explained in Chapter 3, Ash had added to the fourth edition of his grammar, and which is included in all editions of the grammar after 1769.¹⁵

Murray's dependence on Ash, for instance, immediately becomes clear when we compare his discussion of the ellipsis of the article with that of Ash's:

The ELLIPSIS of the ARTICLE.

"A Man, Woman, and Child. i.e. "A Man, a Woman, and a Child."

"A Father and Son. *The Sun and Moon. The Day and Hour.*"

In all which Instances the Article being once mentioned, the Repetition of it, unless some peculiar Emphasis requires it, would be unnecessary.

"Not only *the Year* but *the Day*, and *the Hour.*"

In this Case the Ellipsis of the last Article would be rather improper (Ash 1769: 120).

The ellipsis of the article is thus used: "A man, woman and child;" that is, "a man, a woman, and a child." "A house and garden;" that is, "a house and a garden." "The sun and moon;," that is, "the sun and the moon." "The day and hour;" that is, "the day and the hour." In all these instances, the article being once expressed, the repetition of it becomes unnecessary. There is, however, an exception to this observation, when some peculiar emphasis requires a repetition; as in the following sentence. "Not only the year, but the day and the hour." In this case, the ellipsis of the last article would be improper (Murray 1795: 135).

For his discussion of the ellipsis of the adjective Murray similarly relied on Ash's grammar:

The ELLIPSIS of the ADJECTIVE.

"A *delightful* Orchard and Garden. i.e. A *delightful* Orchard and a *delightful* Garden."

"A *little* Man and Woman. *Great* Wealth and Power."

In such elliptical [sic] Expressions, the Adjective ought to have exactly the same Signification, and to be quite as proper, when joined to the latter, as to the former Substantives; otherwise the Ellipsis should not be admitted (Ash 1769: 122).

The ellipsis of the adjective is used in the following manner. "A delightful garden and orchard;" that is, "a delightful garden and a delightful orchard." "A little man and woman;" that is, "a little man and little woman." In such elliptical expressions as these, the adjective ought to have exactly the same signification, and to be quite as proper, when joined to the latter substantive as to the former, otherwise the ellipsis should not be admitted (Murray 1795: 135).

¹⁵ In his *Elements of English Grammar* (1785) George Neville Ussher also heavily relied on Ash's section on ellipsis.

Ash's description of the ellipsis of the pronoun was likewise copied by Murray. The only difference is that Murray replaced Ash's example sentence "This is the Man they hate" (1769: 123) with "This is the man they love" (Murray 1795: 136) and that he decided to leave out two other examples from Ash, i.e. "Are these the Gods they worship?" and "Is this the Woman you saw?" (Ash 1769: 123). Instead of copying Ash's example sentence "She *was* young and rich and beautiful" in order to illustrate the ellipsis of the verb, Murray added the example "She was young, and beautiful, and good" (Murray 1795: 136) to his grammar. Finally, it is worth pointing out that while describing the ellipsis of the preposition and verb Murray substituted some words in the examples he had borrowed from Ash. In addition, he added two new examples:

PREPOSITIONS *are often suppressed.*

"He went *into* the **Churches**, Halls, and public Buildings: *Through* the Streets and Lanes of the City: He spake [sic] *to* **every Gentleman and Lady of the Place**. i.e. *To* every Gentleman and *to* every Lady" (Ash 1769: 129).

The ellipsis of the preposition, as well as of the verb, is seen in the following instances. "He went into the **abbeyes**, halls, and public buildings;" that is, "he went into the abbeyes, he went into the halls, and he went into the public buildings." "He also went through all the streets and lanes of the city"; that is, "through all the streets, and through all the lanes, &c. "He spoke to **every man and woman there;**" that is "**to every man and to every woman.**" **This day, next month, last year;**" that is, "**on this day, in next month, in last year.**" "**The Lord do that which seemeth him good;**" that is, "**which seemeth to him**" (Murray 1795: 137).

Whereas Murray's definition of ellipsis appeared in larger type, the rest of the text in Rule XXI of his syntax section was printed in smaller type. This clearly suggests that Murray regarded his discussion of the ellipsis as more suitable for students who had already completed his "general system" of grammar (Murray 1795: iv).

It is striking that in his *Grammatical Institutes* Ash does not inform us about the readership he had in mind for his "useful Observations on the Ellipsis" (1769: title page). Unlike Murray, Ash does not point out that the footnotes in his grammar are more useful for the advanced student or teacher than for a young beginner. The only thing he adds with regard to the section is that he

believed that it was one of the additions which would make his original grammar “more acceptable and useful to those Gentlemen and Ladies, who may think proper to make Trial of it in their Schools or Families” (1769: viii). As we can infer from the title page of his grammar, Ash had designed the fourth (1769) edition of his grammar for the use of schools and for “Young Gentlemen and Ladies” (Ash 1769: title page). As regards Ash’s “useful Observations on the Ellipsis (1769: title page)”, however, I believe that instead of being written for those “Young Gentlemen and Ladies” who still had to be initiated “into the Knowledge of the first Principles of the English Language” (Ash 1769: title page), this particular section was aimed at the advanced student.

In contrast to Ash, Murray wanted to compose a grammar that could be studied by “different classes of learners” (Murray 1795: title page), and it must have been this goal that motivated some of the changes he made to Ash’s original text. Murray’s interest in catering for different readerships can also be inferred from the publication of his *Abridgment of L. Murray’s English Grammar* (1797), an introduction to his *English Grammar* which he had “[d]esigned for the use of the youngest class of learners” (Murray 1795: title page). According to Austin (1996: 51), the interesting thing about the *Abridgment* is that “[i]t omits most of Murray’s comments in smaller type that make up a large part of the original work”. Although Murray’s *Abridgment* still included the definition of ellipsis, his discussion of the ellipsis had been left out as a consequence.

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to shed light on the publication history and influence of Ash’s grammar in North America. I showed that before the first pirated editions appeared, copies of Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes or, an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth’s English grammar* were imported from England by American booksellers. In addition, I identified seven pirated editions which have come to light since the publication of Alston’s bibliography in 1965.

In order to determine Ash's influence across the Atlantic, I compared his *Grammatical Institutes* with the grammars of Noah Webster and Lindley Murray. Despite the similarity of the titles, I demonstrated that instead of relying on Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, Webster consulted his *New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* while writing his *Grammatical Institute of the English Language*. Whereas Webster, as a lexicographer in the making, showed a keen interest in Ash's dictionary, he does not seem to have been familiar with his popular grammar. Downey (1979: xviii) notes that Ash's "work was so highly regarded and imitated by Noah Webster", but I only found a few instances in which Webster actually depended on Ash's *New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language*. Although Webster tried to improve upon the works of his predecessors, Lowth, Buchanan, and Ash (Webster 1784: 4), his grammar did not become a success and was driven off the market by Lindley Murray's popular *English Grammar*, a work which was first published in York in 1795 and which turned out to be a great success from its first appearance in America as well as in England.

Murray never acknowledged Ash as one of his sources, but Vorlat (1996; 1999) has pointed out his dependence on him. My comparison of Murray's *English Grammar* with Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* in fact revealed that Murray relied heavily on Ash's grammar while composing his own work. Though Lowth, according to Vorlat (1959a: 110), "is the main source of Murray's Grammar, especially of the section on Etymology", I showed that Murray's definitions of the pronoun, adverb and preposition, closely resemble those of Ash. I also came across traces of Ash in Murray's syntax section. In this particular section, Rule XXI, which discusses the use of ellipsis, is of particular interest, since it was here that I found 44 instances in which Murray is clearly indebted to Ash's "useful Observations on the Ellipsis" (1769: title page) which had been added to the grammar from the fourth edition onwards. Unlike Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, Murray's grammar was printed in two different types, text printed in larger type that beginners had to learn by heart and "rules and

remarks” in smaller type aimed at the student who had already been initiated in the rudiments of English grammar (Murray 1795: iv). Since Murray’s discussion of the ellipsis appears in smaller type, this suggests that he, unlike Ash, rightly regarded this as an unsuitable topic for beginners in grammar. Despite his dependence on Ash, Murray thus managed to improve upon Ash’s original grammar by producing a work which, unlike Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*, was targeted at “different classes of learners” (Murray 1795: title page). In the next chapters it will be shown that Murray was not the only grammarian who succeeded in offering an improvement to Ash’s work

Chapter 5. Female users of Ash's grammar

5.1. Introduction

On 2 February 1784 a certain Mary Branwhite acquired a copy of the 1781 edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes; or an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar*. This is clear from the inscription on this young lady's copy of Ash's grammar, which can be found in ECCO. Interestingly, the flyleaf of the copy not only contains the inscription "Miss M Branwhite Feb^{ry}..2^d..1784", written in a mature hand, but in addition, bears the ownership signature "Mary B", which seems to have been written by a little girl. In her study of marginalia, Jackson (2001: 19) indeed points out that as soon as children "can read and write, they write their names, often over and over again" in their books. Apart from her declaration of ownership on the flyleaf of the grammar, Mary B's handwriting can also be found on the final page of the work. Under "Percival's Fathers [sic] Instructions to his Children",¹ the last reading suggestion in the appendix "A Library for Young Gentlemen and Ladies" (Ash 1781: 181), the girl wrote down the following:

Mary
Miss Madam
young
Madam

Mary might have been practicing her hand-writing here. According to Grenby (2007), for children at that time books were not only "lines of type which could be read": they were also "items to collect and treasure, or plain paper on which to draw pictures or practice writing". Since Mary's hand clearly differs from the mature one in the ownership inscription, I believe that it must have been Mary's mother, her governess or her teacher, who inscribed the copy at the

¹ Thomas Percival's *A Father's Instructions to his Children; consisting of tales, fables and reflections, designed to promote the love of virtue, a taste for knowledge, and an early acquaintance with the works of nature* was published in three parts, i.e. Part I (1775), Part II (1777) and Part III (1800) (see Grenby's 2001 Hockliffe Project website <http://www.cts.dmu.ac.uk/AnaServer?hockliffe+0+catalog anv>).

time.² As soon as Mary could write, however, she could not resist what Jackson terms the so-called “impulse to stake a claim” (Jackson 2001: 19).

Whether Mary’s 1781 edition of Ash’s grammar was also purchased in February 1784 is hard to say. According to Grenby (2007), a comparison of “dates of publication to dates of inscription [...] can function as an indication of the turnover, and thus dynamism and health, of the trade [...] an indication of how long titles stayed in publishers’ warehouses or lay on booksellers’ shelves”. I think, however, that Mary was simply given the 1781 edition of Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* in February 1784 because at the time of purchase the 1784 duodecimo edition of the grammar had not appeared yet and all the copies of the 1783 edition of the grammar had been sold (see §2.3.3, Table 3).

Mary Branwhite’s copy of Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* is not the only one of the 27 copies included in ECCO that has an ownership inscription. A 1794 edition of Ash’s grammar similarly contains an ownership signature: “Elizabeth Steuart 25th May [5]”. Judging from the rather mature handwriting, however, this copy either seems to have belonged to a woman rather than a child, or, again we are dealing with a little girl’s mother, teacher, or governess who inscribed the copy. I also came across two ownership inscriptions, “CB Dew LH” and “Elizabeth Dew L Hayford”,³ in an edition of Ash’s grammar, published in Banbury, Oxfordshire, in 1808, which can be accessed through Google Books. Here, too, neither signature appears to have been written by infant hands. Although we do not know the sex of CB Dew, it seems probable that Elizabeth Dew either inherited CB Dew’s copy or that the copy was shared by members of the family. Once CB Dew no longer needed Ash’s grammar, the work was passed down to Elizabeth.

Mary Branwhite’s, Elizabeth Steuart’s and Elizabeth Dew’s ownership marks are of great interest, since Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*, though originally written with a special young lady in mind, the author’s five-year-old

² Since the inscription does not bear the formula “from xxx to xxx”, (see Grenby 2007), Mary probably did not acquire the grammar as a gift.

³ “LH” and “L. Hayford” probably refer to the village of Lower Heyford, Oxfordshire.

daughter, and targeted at a female audience, was widely regarded as a grammar for schoolboys. In the fifth edition of his *Treatise on Education* (1792) George Chapman advocated the use of Ash's grammar "for Boys while they read the Classics at School" (1792: 173; see also Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2011: 90) whereas Joseph Guy in his *Easy Introduction to the English Language* (1794) asserted that in Ash's popular school grammar "there is much that boys need not, and more that they cannot understand" (G[uy] 1796: 118). As late as 1837, *The Gentleman's Magazine* referred to Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* as "the little manual of our schoolboy days" (1837: 399).

In the present chapter I will show that Mary Branwhite, Elizabeth Steurt and Elizabeth Dew were not the only females who owned a copy of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* at the time. Girls at boarding school, governesses employed in wealthy families, young women who had already left school, mothers and teacher-grammarians, they all had or are likely to have had access to Ash's popular grammar.

5.2. Ash's Grammatical Institutes and the Young Ladies' Boarding School

In 1773 Elizabeth Montagu (1718–1800), wrote a letter to her sister Sarah Scott (1720–1795) in which she mentioned that

I am glad you intend to send my eldest neice [sic] to a boarding-school. What girls learn at these schools is trifling, but they unlearn what would be a great disservice – a provincial dialect, which is extremely ungenteel, and other tricks that they learn in the nursery. The carriage of the person, which is of great importance, is well attended to, and dancing is well taught [...] I believe all the boarding-schools are much on the same plan, so that you may place the young lady wherever there is a good air and a good dancing master (Borer 1976: 184; see also Percy 2010: 48).

During the eighteenth century mothers like Montagu's sister "began to perceive that if their daughters were to make good marriages, they must have some education, or at least accomplishments" (Bayne-Powell 1939: 12; see also

Miller 1972: 306; Jones 1990: 99). As a result, “dozens of small boarding schools for ‘young ladies’” were established all over the country (Borer 1976: 184). According to Borer (1976: 184), “[a]s early as 1711 an advertisement appeared in the *Spectator*, announcing that ‘Near the Windmill in Hampstead is a good Boarding School; where young Gentlewomen may be boarded and taught English, French, Dancing, Musick and all sorts of Needlework’”. While examining school advertisements published in *Jackson’s Oxford Journal* during the period 1753 to 1820, Skedd discovered that apart from “the basic school curriculum of reading and needlework”, many establishments started to offer lessons in English and French grammar (Skedd 1997b: 121; see also Percy 2004: 155).

I believe that Ash’s grammar must have been used in some of the girls’ boarding schools at the time. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 2, already in 1766, Ryland had recommended his friend’s “little Book” to “Governesses of Ladies Boarding-schools” (Ash 1766: Advertisement). As an introduction to Lowth’s more complicated work, Ash’s grammar must have appealed to many of these women teachers. One headmistress who possibly might have introduced Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* into her own school was Mrs. Elizabeth Cumyns (1741?–?1782). According to her childhood friend Hester Lynch Thrale, Cumyns had set up her boarding school in Kensington Square because of her husband, “a shocking Scoundrel” who had taken all her money (ed. Hyde 1977: 86; see also Skedd 1997b: 117). Hyde (1977: 86) notes that as Mrs. Cumyns’s establishment “was well thought of [...] Mrs. Thrale felt safe in entrusting [her daughter] Susan [(1770–1858)] to her friend’s care, though the child was not yet four” (ed. Hyde 1977: 86). English grammar was part of the curriculum at Mrs. Cumyns’s school, as can be inferred from entries from Thrale’s journal (Navest 2010: 102). On 20 January 1775, for instance, Thrale recorded that her daughter, who would turn five in May, “has a Knowledge of the Parts of Speech that She cannot be ensnared by any Question” (ed. Hyde 1977: 112). Susan apparently continued studying grammar at Mrs. Cumyns’s

school, because in September 1777 Thrale noted in her journal that “her Geography & Grammatical Knowledge go on to my Wish” (ed. Hyde 1977: 188)], while in her journal entry for “the last Day of the Year 1778”, she wrote that “Susan’s Geographical & Grammatical Knowledge amazes even me” (ed. Hyde 1977: 214). Since Susan Thrale, according to her mother’s journal, already possessed “a Knowledge of the Parts of Speech” on 20 January 1775, this suggests that she cannot have studied Ellin Devis’s grammar. Devis’s *Accidence; or first rudiments of English grammar* (1775) was the first grammar written explicitly for young ladies (Devis 1775: title page; Percy 2003: 45). First advertised in the *St. James Chronicle* of 26–28 January, the work became a very popular girls’ grammar (Percy 2003: 77). Alston’s bibliography (1965: 60–61) includes as many as eighteen numbered editions of Devis’s “little grammatical treatise” (Anon. 1775a: 343; Percy 2003: 55).

Apart from “Mrs. Devis Rudiments of Grammar. 1s.6d.”, “Ash’s Grammar. 1s” was one of the grammars listed by Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802) in the “Catalogue of Books” in his *Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools* (1797: 120). Darwin’s *Plan* had originally been written for his illegitimate daughters Susan and Mary Parker, who, with the help of their father, had set up a boarding-school in Ashbourne, Derbyshire in 1794 (Darwin 1797: 127; *ODNB*, s.v. Darwin, Erasmus). Despite the presence of Ash’s grammar in Darwin’s “Catalogue of Books”, it was probably Ellin Devis’s *Accidence* that was used during the grammar lessons at the Miss Parkers’ school. Evidence for this can be found in the main text of the *Plan*, where Darwin describes Devis’s *Accidence* as “a small and useful rudiment of grammar [...] which may be taught as an introduction to Lowth’s grammar” (Darwin 1797: 16). However, since, according to Percy (2010: 54), Mary Parker owned a copy of George Neville Ussher’s *Elements of English Grammar*, it might as well have been Ussher’s grammar, first published in 1785, that was studied by the pupils at the boarding-school in Ashbourne at the time. Ussher’s *Elements of English Grammar* was not recommended by Darwin in his *Plan*, but the fact that

the work was “designed particularly for the use of ladies’ boarding schools” (Ussher 1785: title page) may have convinced the Misses Parker to introduce the grammar into their school.

Even if Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* was not studied at the Miss Parkers’ school, the inclusion of the work in Darwin’s *Plan* clearly suggests that it was regarded as a suitable grammar for young ladies.⁴ Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* could even prepare young ladies for the study of French, as can be inferred from the following reference to the work in Volume 10 of *The Britannic Magazine; or entertaining repository of heroic adventures* (1794–1807):

As soon as young ladies can read with fluency let them begin to learn Lowth’s or **Ash’s Grammar**, and to read at the same time some easy and elegant author, with a view to exemplify the rules. They should learn a part in grammar every morning, and then proceed to read a lesson, just in the manner observed in classical schools in learning Latin. After a year spent in this method, if the success is adequate to the time, they should advance to French, and study that language exactly in the same mode. In the French grammar, it will not be necessary to go through those particulars which are common to the grammars of all languages, and which have been learned in studying English. Several years ought to be spent in this elementary process; and when the scholar is perfectly acquainted with orthography and grammar, she may then proceed to the cultivation of taste. Milton, Addison, and Pope, must be the standing models in English; Boileau, Fenelon, Fontenelle, and Vertot, in French; and these should be attended to for a considerable time (Anon. 1794–1807: 364).

The above-mentioned quotation was very likely copied from “SECTION XXVII. ON THE LITERARY EDUCATION OF WOMEN” of Vicesimus Knox’s *Liberal Education: or, a practical treatise on the methods of acquiring useful and polite learning* (1781: 233–234). However, a comparison between the two texts reveals that Knox only recommended the study of Lowth’s *Short Introduction to English Grammar*: “As soon as they can read with fluency, let them begin to learn Lowth’s Grammar, and to read at the same time some very easy and elegant author, with a view to exemplify the rules” (Knox 1781: 233). The fact that *The Britannic Magazine* apparently felt the need to add Ash’s grammar to

⁴ Ash’s grammar might have been recommended to Darwin by some “of the ingenious of both sexes”, who read the manuscript of the *Plan* and had provided Darwin with their observations (Darwin 1797: 127).

Knox's original text once more confirms the suitability of the work for a young female audience.

The level of grammar teaching in eighteenth-century girls' boarding-schools clearly depended on the women who were in charge of these establishments. Whereas Susan Thrale could evidently put into practice what she had learned, her mother had encountered a schoolgirl for whom this was troublesome:

what do you know of Grammar Miss said I. I know answers the Girl that a Pronoun stands instead of a Noun for a Substitute and a Representative.⁵ – What part of Speech is *His* then for Example; as *his* Hat, *his* Sword &c? – *His'n* Ma'am? Replies the Lass with an Air! I believe it is an Adverb, – A'nt it? – (March/April 1778; ed. Balderston 1951: 259; see also Percy 2003: 52).

According to Percy (2003: 52) the above-mentioned schoolgirl had clearly "failed to understand the content of her trendy grammar lesson and in the process used a vulgar dialect form", which immediately tells us something about her social class.

A big problem was the fact that throughout the century basically everyone could open a boarding school (Cohen 2006: 324). While discussing the evils arising from the increase of boarding schools in her *Plans of Education; with remarks on the systems of other writers. In a series of letters between Mrs. Darnford and her friends* (1792), Clara Reeve (1729–1807) noted:

In every town, village, and even hamlet, there are persons found who take upon them the great and important charge of female education: and over their doors are seen in letters of gold, "*A Boarding School for Young Ladies.*" Adventurers of all kinds have found resources in this profession: needy foreigners, without friends or characters; broken traders; ladies of doubtful virtue; ladies' waiting-maids; nay even low and menial servants, have succeeded in raising a boarding school. What must we think of the negligence and credulity of such parents as intrust their most precious treasures, their children, the sacred deposits of heaven and their country, to the care of the unknown—perhaps, ignorant,—perhaps, unprincipled people? We do not mean to include all boarding schools under this description; we know that there are some, which answer every purpose of virtuous and ingenuous education, such as we encourage and

⁵ The girl's definition of the pronoun is very similar to that found in Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar*: "A pronoun is a word standing instead of a Noun, as its Substitute or Representative" (1762: 31).

recommend; but we insist, that far the greater number are either useless, or pernicious, especially to the lower classes of people [...] (Reeve 1792: 134–136; see also ed. Jones 1990: 116–117).

Due to these criticisms boarding schools gradually fell out of favour, and private governesses started to be employed, “first in aristocratic households and then lower down the social scale until, in the nineteenth century, a governess became an essential status symbol in every genteel household” (Martin 1998: 52; 3).

Agnes Porter (1745–1814) is an example of a governess who possibly had a copy of Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* at her disposal while teaching the children and grandchildren of the second Earl of Ilchester between 1784 and 1806 (Martin 1998: 1). Agnes must certainly have possessed a sound knowledge of grammar, as can be concluded from the fact that by the time she retired, her employers expressed their wish for “a governess, who should be ‘a religious and well educated woman’ and should be able to teach ‘French and English grammatically and the fundamental part of musick’” (Martin 1998: 63). A knowledge of English grammar was clearly expected of a governess during those days, as can further be inferred from newspaper advertisements, such as the one below, which was published in the *Morning Herald* of Wednesday, October 30, 1799:

WANTED, a Governess, to educate a family of young Ladies; she must speak French fluently, and must possess a grammatical knowledge of that language, and of English; [...] (*Morning Herald*, 30 October 1799).

While studying advertisements in the *Daily Advertiser*, Percy (2004: 169) discovered that from 1775 onwards prospective governesses in search of a job, not only claimed to possess a knowledge of the prestigious French language but also emphasized their ability “to teach English grammatically”.

5.3. Ash’s grammar studied by women

Apart from being used by girls at boarding schools, Ash’s grammar was also studied by young women who had already left school. The year 1797 saw the

publication of *Letters on Several Subjects, from a preceptress to her pupils who have left school, addressed chiefly to real characters, and designed for the use of young ladies from fifteen to twenty years of age* (Percy 2009: 91).⁶ This work, which contains letters on subjects such as complimentary cards, dress, choice of books and clandestine marriages, was written by Charlotte Palmer (b. c. 1762, d. in or after 1834), a schoolmistress, who “ran schools near London, teaching writing and grammar” with her sister (*ODNB*, s.v. Palmer, Charlotte). The postscript to Palmer's *Letters* reads that she added “a remark or two on some of the most obvious errors which occur in almost every sentence of the inattentive speaker” (Palmer 1797: 101). As regards the teaching of English grammar, Palmer strongly believed that

[i]f young ladies would attend, as they ought, to the pleasing study of their own language, the remarks, I have made would be rendered superfluous; and indeed there are so many cheap and useful books extant for their instruction, that it is a disgrace to a lady of tolerable capacity to be unacquainted with them.

Ash's Introduction to Lowth's English Grammar

Dr. Trinder's Essay on English Grammar

Ellin Devis's English Accidence

And a late edition of Entick's Spelling Dictionary, are all worth the attention of adults; but it is generally thought too childish for grown ladies to attend to books used by children at school; therefore those who are above listening to advice, must continue to read *novels*, and remain in ignorance” (1797: 105–106; see also Percy 2009: 91).

Born around 1762, Palmer's recommendation of “Ash's Introduction to Lowth's English Grammar” suggests that she might have learned grammar with the help of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* herself. Apart from advocating the use of Ash's work and referring to it while discussing the genitive case (Palmer 1797: 102), Palmer also quoted from the grammar in the postscript to her *Letters*. In order to support her statement that “[t]o desert our own language for the sake of another is like preferring a stranger to a friend; and yet I am far from discouraging any acquirement: I only wish to observe, that our *friends* have the first title to our attention” (Palmer 1797: 106), Palmer added a footnote in

⁶ According to Borer (1976: 198), during the eighteenth century most girls left school at the age of fifteen when they were “considered ready to come out into society”.

which she cited Ash's plea for "The importance of an English education" (Palmer 1797: 106–107, Ash 1760: iii; see also §3.2).

That "grown ladies" were indeed studying Ash's grammar at the time is further confirmed by Anne Lister (1791–1840), an upper class woman from Halifax, Yorkshire, who is nowadays best remembered for her outspoken lesbianism. On 25 October 1823, Lister recorded in her diary that she and her lover, the 30 or 31-year-old M[ary] Belcome,

got home a few minutes past one. M – & I tête-à tête in the drawing-[room] almost all the time. Brought down **Dr Ash's little book, *Institute of English Grammar***, trying to give M – some instruction & lent her the book [...] (ed. Whitbread 1988: 309).

According to Whitbread (1988: xi), Lister had met her lover in York in 1812 "when she was twenty-one and M – a year or two younger". Despite Belcome's marriage to Charles Lawton, she and Anne continued to have a secret relationship for some years (ed. Whitbread 1988: xi). Lister's ownership of a copy of Ash's grammar suggests that she probably studied the work as a young girl in one of the private schools she attended in Ripon and York (*ODNB*, s.v. Lister, Anne). She evidently attached great importance to grammatical correctness. On 22 March 1819 she noted in her diary that she had been to a lecture in the Assembly room, given by a certain Mr. Webster. According to Lister, the gentleman "seemed to understand his business as a lecturer & performed his experiments very neatly but his oratory is disfigured by frequent instances of bad grammar and an unpolished pronunciation" (ed. Whitbread 1988: 84). She continued, adding that "after reading Mr Webster's book on chemical & natural philosophy & not remembering or observed in it any heinous sins against grammar, I did not expect that his oral language would be so thickly strewn with the misuse of the person of his verbs" (ed. Whitbread 1988: 84). Taking this into account, it might have well been her lover's similar use of bad grammar that made Anne decide to teach her correct English with the help of "Dr Ash's little book".

According to Percy (2003: 74–75), “[t]he expectation that women’s language could and should be both natural and correct put a great deal of pressure on the new generation of mothers”, especially since during the last three decades of the eighteenth century it had become a mother’s responsibility to teach “her children language that would signal their good breeding”. By instructing their children into “the grammatical terminology that was now part of English, part of ‘the mother tongue’”, mothers not only prepared their sons for the study of Latin grammar at school but at the same time guaranteed their daughters’ future (Percy 2003: 75; Percy 2010: 53). Percy (2006: 130; 2010: 53) also notes that a so-called “grammatical education prepared girls not only to teach their own children, but also other people’s – in the event that they did not marry”, or when they had husbands who, like Mrs. Cumyns’s, took all their money and left them to fend for themselves.

As I will show in the next chapter, by the end of the eighteenth century Lady Ellenor Fenn offered anxious mothers, “who may not have attended to the subject themselves” (Fenn 1795: title page), a helping hand in teaching their children the rudiments of English grammar. However, before Fenn’s grammars appeared on the market, many mothers must have made use of Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*. As I pointed out in §2.4, in her *Letters on Education* (1790), the historian Catharine Macaulay recommended Ash’s grammar in order to prepare boys and girls for Lowth’s more complicated work (1790: 129). This suggests that she must certainly have been familiar with the work, perhaps as a result of the fact that she used it while teaching her own daughter Catherine Sophia Macaulay (born ca. 1760)⁷ grammar in the early 1770s. But since according to a certain Mary Delany, the daughter of Bluestocking Mrs. Delany (1700–1788), “[t]he great Mrs Macaulay hardly knew the meaning of the word grammar until she was thirty years old” (Paston 1900: 198), Macaulay may also have studied the work herself. After the death of her mother,

⁷ The life dates of Catherine Sophia are unknown. The only thing we know for certain was that she was six years old when her father, the London physician Dr George Macaulay, died in 1766 (Miegon 2003: 30).

Macaulay and her sister had been left by their father “in the care of an antiquated and ignorant governess” (*ODNB*, s.v. Macaulay, Catherine). Cohen (2006: 325) notes that Macaulay “benefited from her father’s library for her early and self-directed reading in history”, but an English grammar seems to have been lacking from that library’s shelves. It is worth mentioning that if Macaulay did indeed study Ash’s grammar during the 1760s, it might have been Ryland, the editor of Ash’s grammar, who had recommended the work to her, for Ryland was a correspondent of Macaulay’s (Hill 1992: 93).

A mother who definitely made use of Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* in order to prepare her young son for his entrance to school was the novelist Fanny Burney. Burney refers to Ash’s grammar in a letter to her nephew Charles Parr Burney (1785–1864), in which she asked him for advice on how to teach her six-year-old son Alex (1794–1837) grammar with the help of Ash’s work (Percy 1994: 127):

I write to my dear Charles, in the confidence of his kindness, to assist a *female Usher* with some hints how to use **Ash’s Grammar** for a Pupil in preparation – whether it is to be learnt *by heart* throughout, beginning with the introduction – or with the *Grammatical Institutes*. In short, to try to recollect how he began himself, that I may endeavour to spur on his little Cousin to emulate his career. I would not trouble your dear-toil worn Father [i.e. Charles Burney (1757–1817)] with an enquiry you can so well answer (4 March 1801, ed. Hemlow 1973: 475).

Burney thus knew that her nephew had studied Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* as a young boy and that the grammar would be used at her brother Charles’s school in Greenwich which Alex would attend (ed. Sabor and Troide 2001: 464n.8). Unfortunately, Charles Parr Burney’s reply to his aunt’s letter has not come down to us. We can, however, assume that he would definitely have been able to provide her with some useful suggestions on how to tackle the work.

That Burney had to appeal to her nephew for help was mainly due to the meagre education she herself had received as a young girl. According to her father, Charles Burney (1726–1814), his daughter was “wholly unnoticed in the nursery for any talent or quickness of parts”, and at eight years old she still did not know her letters (D’Arblay 1832: 141–2, as quoted from *ODNB*, s.v. Burney,

Frances). Harman (2000: 23) points out that when Fanny “did eventually learn to read it happened according to her father, ‘all at once [...] as if by intuition, nor did any of the family ever know how the talent was acquired’”. In 1762 the ten-year-old Burney and her younger siblings Susan and Charles were sent to Mrs. Sheeles’s boarding-school in Queen Square to be out of the way during their mother’s final week of illness (Hemlow 1958: 7). Although Susan and Burney’s elder sister Hetty were later sent to Paris to be educated by a Madame Saintmard (Chisholm 1998: 18), Borer (1976: 186) notes that “for Fanny the brief spell at Queen Square was the only school she ever knew”. In the *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* (1832), a work which was published under her husband’s name D’Arblay, Burney similarly recorded that she “was the only one of Mr Burney’s family who never was placed in any seminary, and never was put under any governess or instructor whatsoever” (as quoted from Chisholm 1998: 293n.60).

Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* may thus well have proved useful to Burney herself, as around this time she was not only engaged in teaching her son Alex, but in addition was busy preparing the text of the second edition of her novel *Camilla*, which was brought out in 1802 (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2010c: 62). In his 1796 review of *Camilla* for the *Monthly Review* Ralph Griffiths had pointed out several “grammatical inaccuracies”, such as “‘The owner of the horse *laid* dead.’ – ‘One of the horses *laid* dead.’ – ‘She *laid* down in her cloaths’ – ‘Where *laid* the blame?’” (Griffiths 1796: 162). Burney’s struggle with the past tense of the verb *to lie down* is also described by Bloom (1979: 384–385; see also Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2010c: 62). According to him, it was only in the second edition of *Camilla* that “laid” was altered to “lay’ or ‘lain” (Bloom 1979: 384–385). Since *lay* is prescribed as the preterite form of the verb *lie* in Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*, this might have convinced Burney to start making the above-mentioned changes to her original text.

5.4. Ash's Grammatical Institutes and the teacher-grammarians

As shown in §3.3, Ash's grammar was the first published grammar in which a tenfold system of parts of speech was presented. According to Michael (1970: 278), "it seems likely that this feature was welcomed as a helpful simplification". His survey indeed shows that in their grammars the female grammarians Ellin Devis, Lady Ellenor Fenn, Mrs. M.C. Edwards, Jane Gardiner and Mrs. Eves, who were all writing for a young audience, had introduced this tenfold division as well (Michael 1970: 223). The same applied to Mrs. Taylor, who in the grammar section in her *Easy Introduction to General Knowledge and Liberal Education*, a work which is not mentioned by Michael (1970), similarly recorded ten parts of speech. Apparently, the tenfold system of parts of speech was not the only thing which the female grammarians adopted from Ash's grammar. In the next chapter, for instance, it will be shown that Lady Ellenor Fenn heavily relied on Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* in other ways as well.

In order to determine whether Fenn was indeed the first and/or only female grammarian who made use of Ash's grammar, I decided to compare the works of what Cajka (2008) calls the so-called teacher-grammarians, Devis, Edwards, Gardiner, Eves and Taylor, who, unlike Fenn, were "mistresses of their own schools" (Cajka 2008: 191), with Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*. I did not examine the teacher-grammarian Blanch Mercy's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1799) as her grammar lists only nine parts of speech and cannot be accessed through ECCO. It turned out that just like Fenn, Ellin Devis and Mrs. M.C. Edwards depended on Ash's grammar while composing their own works. Although at first glance Gardiner's definition of the pronoun in *The Young Ladies' English Grammar* (1799) appears to have been taken from Ash, it was in fact Fenn's *Child's Grammar* (1795), a work which will be discussed in great detail in the next chapter, that Gardiner consulted here. Instead of Fenn's example sentence "I love Mary; and I teach *her*" (Fenn 1795: 5), Gardiner's grammar has "I love Eleanor, and I teach *her*" (1799: 14). Gardiner's definition of the adverb similarly echoes that of Ash's but was probably copied by her

from Murray's *English Grammar* (1795) or Ussher's *The Elements of English Grammar* (1785), two works on which she depended while writing her own grammar (Cajka 2008: 197).

Ellin Devis, whose life and works have been studied in great detail by Percy (2003) and Cajka (2003, 2008), was the first of the female grammarians to adopt Ash's division of the parts of speech (Michael 1970: 223). Devis, the daughter of the portrait painter Arthur Devis (1712–1787), spent her long career as a schoolmistress educating “young upwardly-mobile women in the most fashionable areas of London” (Cajka 2008: 191). During the 1790s she took over a fashionable girls' boarding school in Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, which under her headmistressship became known as “the Young Ladies Eton” (Borer 1976: 185,188; see also Cajka 2008: 199). Apart from being taught English grammar from Devis's *Accidence; or first rudiments of English grammar*, the young ladies at Devis's school “learned to speak and read French with a very good accent” (Cobbe 1894: 59). They were also instructed in “the great Art of Society; the art of properly paying and receiving visits, of saluting acquaintances in the street and drawing-room; and of writing letters of compliment” (Cobbe 1894: 60). Behind Devis's school there was even a “carriage taken off the wheels, and propped up *en permanence*”, which enabled the pupils to “practice ascending and descending with calmness and grace, and without any unnecessary display of their ankles” (Cobbe 1894: 59; see also Percy 2010: 49).

Ash's *Grammatical Institutes: or an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar* must have appealed to Devis, as she, too, offered her work as an introduction to “Bp. Lowth” (Devis 1775: v; see also Percy 2003: 55). While Thomas Martin (1824: 269), in his *Philological Grammar of the English Language* (1824), described Devis's *Accidence* as “a neat little work, modelled principally from LOWTH's design”, Percy (2003: 55) revealed that Devis relied on Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* as well. Although the first edition of Devis's

grammar contains one footnote in which she indicates her debt to Ash,⁸ Percy (2003: 55) notes that “[i]n pursuit of ‘Perspicuity and Simplicity’”, Devis may have depended more on Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* than this single reference suggests. Devis’s dependence on Ash was beyond the scope of her paper, but Percy does point out the following similarities between the two works:

- 1) the vertical layout of Devis’s “Example of Grammatical Construction in which all the Parts of Speech are explained” (1775: 73–81) is similar to that of the “Easy PRAXIS on Gen. xlv.i.&c.” (1769: 97–103) in Ash’s grammar (Percy 2003: 61n.7).
- 2) Devis’s list of gendered nouns echoes that of Ash’s. The only difference is that offensive words such as *Adulterer* and *Whoremonger* were omitted by Devis (Percy 2003: 63).
- 3) While defining the adverb, Devis depended on Ash’s example sentences “He *reads* WELL” and “a TRULY *good Man*” (Devis 1775: 63), but changed his “he is *secretly* plotting” (Ash 1769: 63) into “She is SECRETLY plotting” (Devis 1775: 63; Percy 2003: 63).

Analysing Devis’s grammar in further detail, I found some more instances where Devis seems to have relied on Ash’s grammar but did not acknowledge his work as such. Devis’s definition of the conjunction, for instance, clearly resembles that of Ash’s:

A *Conjunction* is a Part of Speech that joins Words or Sentences together (Ash 1769: 66).

A Conjunction is a Part of Speech that joins Words and Sentences together, and shews the Manner of their Dependence on one another (1775: 68).

The other instances of Devis’s indebtedness to Ash that I came across are of particular interest as they give us an indication as to which edition of Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* Devis might have used. Although Percy (2003: 62–63)

⁸ Devis (1775: 26) refers to Ash who believes that “there are no Passive Verbs in the English Language”. According to him, “*loved* is no Part of a Verb, but a Participle or Adjective derived of the Verb *Love*”.

notes that “the representation of girls and their world [...] is not immediately perceptible” in Devis's grammar, she does add that Devis's examples of “irregular noun plurals [such as *Miss* and *Misses*, *Brush* and *Brushes*, *Lady* and *Ladies*] begin to represent girls a little more clearly”. However, it was Ash who had provided these examples in his grammar. Since *Brush*⁹ and *Lady* are not mentioned in the first edition and Ryland's editions of Ash's grammar (i.e. the 1766 and 1768 editions), Devis must have consulted an edition published after 1768 while writing her own work. The above-mentioned examples appear for the first time in the fourth edition of Ash's grammar which, as I pointed out in §2.3.1, was probably published in 1769.

Another indication that Devis had access to the fourth or a later edition of Ash's grammar can be found in her discussion of conjunctions. According to Ash (1769: 128):

There are several *Pairs of correspondent Conjunctions*, or such as answer to each other in the Construction of a Sentence, which should be carefully observed, and perhaps never suppressed (Ash 1769: 128).

As an example of a pair of correspondent conjunctions Ash listed “*Yet* answering to *though* or *although*” the use of which he illustrated with the following example sentence: “*Though* she was young *yet* she was not handsome” (Ash 1769: 129). When we have a look at Devis's grammar, it immediately becomes clear that she borrowed from Ash's work:

Have not some Conjunctions their Correspondent Conjunctions belonging to them? Yes: They are such as answer to each other in the Construction of a Sentence; as, *Although*, answering to *Yet*, or *Nevertheless*. Example: *Although* she is young, *yet* she is not handsome [sic] (Devis 1775: 70).

Devis similarly copied the example sentences “It is *so* obvious *that* I need not mention it”, “The City of *Bristol* is not near *so* large *as* that of *London*”, *Neither* the one, *nor* the other”, and “*Whether* it were I or You” from Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* (Ash 1769: 129; Devis 1775: 70–71).

⁹ In §3.2 I pointed out that Ash probably copied this example from Greenwood.

The year 1777 saw the publication of the third edition of Devis's *Accidence*. What makes this edition particularly interesting, according to Percy (2003: 68), is the fact that it includes "some significant additions that make the text more overtly prescriptive" (Percy 2003: 68). Among these additions are some "Examples on the Use of the Ellipsis" (1777: vi) such as:

"THERE is nothing men are more deficient in, than knowing their own characters." REFLECTIONS ON RIDICULE.

There is nothing (*in which*) men are more deficient, than (*in*) knowing their own characters (Devis 1777: 103).

That it must have been Ash's grammar which inspired Devis to include these examples becomes clear when we have a look at the fourth edition of *The Accidence* which was published in 1782. In this edition, no fewer than three example sentences can be found that seem to have been copied from Ash's "useful Observations on the Ellipsis" (1769: title page), i.e. "*A man, woman, and child*; i.e. a man, (*a*) woman, and (*a*) child", "*The day and hour*, i.e. the day and (*the*) hour" and "*I love and fear him*; i.e. I love (*him*) and (*I*) fear him" (Devis 1782: 108–109; Ash 1769: 120; 123).

Another teacher-grammarian who seems to have based herself on Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* was Mrs. M.C. Edwards. Alston (1965: 97) lists only one edition of Edwards's *Short Compendium of English Grammar* (1796), a work which had been written for the author's own seminary "nine miles west of London, near Kew in the town of Brentford Butts" (Cajka 2008: 191; Edwards 1796: viii). Since Edwards's grammar could be studied "after the Primmer [sic] and Spelling Book" (Edwards 1796: vi), Cajka (2008: 211) believes that Edwards's seminary must have been "an elementary level tuition school". While Smith (1999: 212) describes *A Short Compendium of English Grammar* as "an elementary version of the popular eclectic Murray (1795)", Percy (1994: 130–131) observes that Edwards's work resembles that of Richard Oliphant's somewhat longer *Compendium of English Grammar. Drawn up for the use of the ladies at the boarding school, Newcastle upon Tyne* (1781), which also contained "a (six-line) rhyming list of conjunctions" for easy memorisation.

A comparison of the grammars of Ash and Edwards, however, revealed that Edwards must have drawn upon Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* while writing her own grammar. Her definitions of the article and noun, for instance, are identical to those of Ash:

An Article is a Part of Speech, set before Nouns, to fix their vague Signification (Edwards 1796: 2).

AN *Article* is a Part of Speech *set before Nouns* to fix their vague Signification: as, *a Man, the Man; an House, the House* (Ash 1769: 28).

A Noun, or Substantive, is the Name of any Person, Place, or Thing (Edwards 1796: 3).

A *Noun, or Substantive*, is the *Name* of any *Person, Place, or Thing*: as, *John, London, Honor, Goodness* (Ash 1769: 28).

Of particular note is the fact that in pursuit of "brevity, simplicity, and utility" (Cajka 2008: 211), Edwards decided to leave out all the examples originally provided by Ash. In her definitions of the pronoun, participle, conjunction and preposition, which all echo those of Ash as well, no example sentences can be found either. While defining the preposition, Edwards does, however, copy Ash's list of prepositions:

A *Preposition* is a Part of Speech *set before Nouns and Pronouns* in a Sentence. – The following are Prepositions: *About, above, after, against, among, amongst, at, before, behind, below, beneath, between, beyond, by, for, from, in, into, of, off, on, upon, over, through, to, unto, towards, under, with, within, without* (Edwards 1796: 38).

A *Preposition* is a Word *set before Nouns, or Pronouns* to express the *Relation* of Persons, Places, of Things to each other: as, He came *to*, and stood *before* the City. Prepositions used in this Sense are such as follow. *About, above, after, against, among, amongst, at, before, behind, below, beneath, between, beyond, by, for, from, in, into, of, off, on, upon, over, through, to, unto, than, towards, under, with, within, without* (Ash 1769: 67).

Since Edwards was composing her small work "for the narrow comprehension of Infant Minds" (Edwards 1796: vi), Ash's brief and simple definitions of the parts of speech must have particularly appealed to her.

Apart from the definitions of the parts of speech, Edwards also depended on Ash's grammar for her description of the terms singular, plural, masculine, feminine and the genitive case:

The Singular Number speaks of one, as *Thing*; the Plural of more than one, as *Things*. Hence the Plural is made by adding an *s* to the Singular Number (Edwards 1796: 3).

There are *two Numbers*; the *Singular*, which speaks of one: as, a *Man*, a *Troop*: And the Plural, which speaks of *more than one*: as, *Men*, *Troops* (Ash 1769: 28).

The Masculine denotes the Male, or He-Kind; the Feminine denotes the Female, or She-Kind; the Neuter, as it is called, is neither Male or Female, and relates only to Things without Life (Edwards 1796: 4).

The *Masculine* denotes the *He-kind*: as, a *Man*, a *Prince* (Ash 1769: 30).

The *Feminine* denotes the *She-kind*: as, a *Woman*, a *Princess* (Ash 1769: 30).

Nouns signifying Things *without Life*, are *properly of no Gender*: as, a *Pen*, a *Table* (Ash 1769: 30).

The Genitive Case is formed by adding *s* with an Apostrophe to the Nominative, as *Men*, *Men's* (Edwards 1796: 4).

The *genitive* Case is formed by adding *s*, with an Apostrophe, to the *Nominative*: as, *Men*, *Men's*, *Ox*, *Ox's* (Ash 1769: 33).

From the above it can be concluded that here, too, Edwards tried to make Ash's original descriptions even simpler for her young audience.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that just like Ash, Edwards distinguished five tenses, "the Present, Imperfect, Perfect, Pluperfect, and the Future" (1796: 11) and that she relied on his grammar for the "Declension of VERBS" (Edwards 1796: 14–28). Comparing Edwards's work with the grammars of Mrs. Taylor and Blanch Mercy, Percy (2009: 90) noted that although the latter two "classify the past participle variant *wrote* as a 'fault', Mrs. Edwards, neutrally exemplifies irregular verb forms with this stigmatized variant: 'I have wrote, or have written'" (Edwards 1796: 32). Edwards might have based herself on Ash for this information, who in his grammar had stated that "there are *two Ways* of expressing the *perfect* and *pluperfect* Tenses in *most irregular Verbs*: as, I *have wrote* or, *have written*, &c. I *had wrote*, or *had written*" (Ash 1769: 65).

5.5. Conclusion

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Ash's grammar was not only studied by boys at school but by (young) women as well. Because of these female users of Ash's grammar, I believe that it is more appropriate to refer to Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* as a teaching grammar. In contrast to school grammars, teaching grammars, according to Vorlat (2007: 500), are targeted at anyone who wants "to learn the language or improve their mastery in it".

Although this chapter only featured a small group of women who had access to Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, many more women, young as well as old, must have been familiar with the grammar but simply did not mention the work in their Memoirs, diaries or letters. According to Percy (2008a), references to the study of English grammar are indeed rare in autobiographical writings. In the case of Jane Austen (1775–1817), for instance, the only thing we know is that "from spring 1785 to December 1786" she was sent to the Abbey House School in Reading (*ODNB*, s.v. Austen, Jane). Crystal ([1995] 2004: 77) points out that at the time Austen would have arrived at this school, "Lowth's *Grammar* was well established, and a second generation of 'young ladies' was having its tenets instilled into them". Tiekens-Boon van Ostade (2009: 78), too, believes that Austen may have "learned English grammar from Lowth either directly or indirectly, through *The Accidence; or First Rudiments of English Grammar* by Ellin Devis". My findings, however, suggest that Austen, like her contemporary Mary Branwhite, might well have studied Ash's *Grammatical Institutes: or grammar, adapted to the genius of the English tongue*. instead.

As regards the eighteenth-century female grammarians, I have shown that the teacher-grammarians Ellin Devis and Mrs. M.C. Edwards both relied on Ash's grammar while writing their own works. In the next chapter it will become clear that while composing her popular grammars targeted at mothers and their children, Lady Ellenor Fenn, too, to adopt her own words, borrowed "a few passages" from Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* (Fenn 1798b: x).

Chapter 6. “Borrowing a few passages”: Lady Ellenor Fenn’s dependence on Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*

6.1. Introduction

On 1 March 1799, the Reverend Henry St. John Bullen, author of *Rudiments of English Grammar, for the use of schools* (1797), and first assistant master at the grammar school in Bury St. Edmunds, included the following dedication in his *Elements of Geography, expressly designed for the use of schools* (1799) (see also Stoker 2007: 842):

TO LADY FENN.
MADAM,

To you, who have made the rising generation the object of your constant care, I am convinced that every thing which concerns their mental improvement will be interesting; no other motive should have induced me to [sic] inscribe to you a mere *geographical compilation*. It is allowed that there never was a time in which so many useful and intelligent books were published for the information of children: but among all the promoters of juvenile learning, none holds a more distinguished place than your Ladyship – to adapt the rules of grammar to their tender capacities, and to teach them to express the “young idea” in pure and accurate language, have been the peculiar happiness and success of your pen [...] I ought to beg pardon for making this bold discovery of your name, but whether you choose to vary the mode of concealment under the title of a TEACHWELL, or a LOVECHILD, the praise of such merit as their’s [sic] has already been appropriated by a discerning public to it’s [sic] right owner; and every parent or tutor, who has at heart the improvement of his child or pupil, feels a due sense of gratitude to LADY FENN, for having greatly facilitated the means of instruction (1799: iii–iv).

Apart from her “valuable little treatises on grammar” as St. John Bullen called them, the children’s writer and educationist Lady Ellenor Fenn, who wrote under the pseudonyms of Mrs. Teachwell and Mrs. Lovechild, composed numerous books during her lifetime. According to Stoker (2009: 49; 64–72), Fenn wrote or compiled “in the region of fifty book titles and eleven educational games and teaching schemes”. In one of Fenn’s works, entitled *The Female Guardian* (1784), a list of eighty-one English and four French titles can be found that together form “Mrs. Teachwell’s library for her young ladies”.

Interestingly, reference is already made to this library in the beginning of *The Female Guardian*. Besides asserting that “No books are allowed to be read but such as I provide”, Fenn’s alter ego, the schoolmistress Mrs. Teachwell, remarked that her “library for the use of the young people is selected with the utmost caution, as a point on which depends the health and purity of their minds” (1784: 9). In *School Occurrences: supposed to have arisen among a set of young ladies, under the tuition of Mrs. Teachwell; and to be recorded by one of them* (1783b), Mrs. Teachwell similarly tells a stranger that she is the one who regulates her pupils’ “choice of books” and states that she has “a pretty large collection of such as I approve” (1783b: 113). In this same work Miss Worthy, one of Mrs. Teachwell’s pupils, declares that she reads “nothing but what my Mamma supplies me with herself; or those books that are in Mrs. Teachwell’s closet” (1783b: 93). Apart from Lowth’s *Short Introduction to English Grammar* and Johnson’s *Dictionary*, “Mrs. Teachwell’s library for her young ladies” also contained a copy of “An easy Introduction to Grammar. By Ashe” (Fenn 1784: no page number).

After providing some more information about Fenn’s life, her children’s books and grammatical works, I will demonstrate in this chapter that Fenn not only advised her young readership to consult Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* but that she herself made considerable use of it while writing her popular treatises on grammar. In doing so, I will seek to address the following questions: (1) To what extent did Fenn rely on Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*? (2) How did her linguistic ideas differ from those of Ash and how were they reflected in her adaptation of his grammar? and (3) Why did Fenn choose Ash’s grammar as one of her main sources? Although Ash, as I pointed out in Chapter 1, has been credited with being the first grammarian who really understood what it took to write a children’s grammar, it is not until the 1780s, when Fenn’s little treatises *The Art of Teaching in Sport* (1785) and *A Spelling Book* (1787a) appeared on the market, that children gained access to appropriate elementary grammars.

6.2. *Lady Ellenor Fenn: life and works*

Ellenor Frere, daughter of Sheppard Frere (1712–1780) of Thwaite, Suffolk and his wife Susanna Hatley (1709/10–1779) (*ODNB*, s.v. Fenn, Ellenor) was born in Westhorpe, Suffolk, on 12 March 1744. She became the wife of the antiquary John Fenn (1739–1794), who is nowadays remembered as the first editor of the *Paston Letters, or original letters, written during the reigns of Henry VI, Edward IV. and Richard III. by various persons of rank or consequence* (1787–1823), for which he was offered a knighthood in 1787 (Festing 1901: 302; Stoker 1995). While studying at Gonville and Gaius College, Cambridge, John Fenn had become friends with Ellenor's brother John Frere (1740–1807). In his *Memoirs* he recorded that

[h]e generally spent some time in every year with M^r Frere at his Father's House (then) at Bacton in Suffolk, & there he became acquainted with Miss Frere, the only Daughter of Sheppard Frere Esq^r. & Sister to his Friend. To this Young Lady he paid his Addresses in July 1763, & was married to her on the 1st. of Jan^y. 1766 (John Fenn MS: 10).

After their marriage the couple took up residence in East Dereham, where "M^r Fenn [had] purchased a Capital Mansion House" (John Fenn MS: 11), called Hill House, which was situated "at the N.E. corner of the market square" (Serpell 1983: 100; Frere 1982: 73).

Apart from being the wife of John Fenn, Ellenor was well known as a propagating philanthropist (Darton 1982: 163). In his *Lavengro* (1851), the writer and traveller George Borrow (1803–1881) who had lived in East Dereham as a child, referred to Fenn as "Lady Bountiful – she the generous and kind, who loved to visit the sick, leaning on her gold-headed cane, whilst the sleek old footman walked at a respectful distance behind" (Borrow 1851: 29–30). "Lady Bountiful" must have been a common nickname for Fenn, as can also be inferred from John Chambers's *Pocket Herbal; containing the medicinal virtues and uses of the most esteemed native plants; with some remarks on bathing, electricity, &c* (1800). In the preface to this work, Chambers, "[a] medical man of East Dereham", according to Frere and Frere (1899: 12),

expressed the hope that his “Lady Bountiful will find the collection of miscellaneous but approved Prescriptions at the end of the Herbal, a valuable addition to her Family Receipt-book” (1800: iv).¹

In 1786 Fenn assisted in setting up a Sunday school in East Dereham, where she “even taught one of the girls’ classes herself” (Stoker 2007: 838). Inspired by her friend the author and educationist Sarah Trimmer’s (1741–1810) *The Oeconomy of Charity, or, an address to ladies concerning Sunday-schools* (1787), which explained the ways in which “industrial work might be started in schools”, she also established “an industrial school for poor women and children”, where they were taught to spin tow (Festing 1901: 300; Stoker 2007: 838). Fenn and her husband did not have any children of their own,² but they did raise a girl, called Mary Andrews, “who had been left orphaned at the age of eleven”, from 1766 until 1776, while in 1778 they decided to adopt Ellenor’s nephew William Frere (1775–1836), the second eldest son of Fenn’s brother John Frere (John Fenn MS: 19; 41; Cajka 2003: 130).

Fenn’s children’s books were originally written for John Frere’s (1740–1807) family at Roydon Hall, near Diss in Norfolk. They were later published under the pseudonyms of “Mrs. Teachwell” or “Mrs. Lovechild” by the London publishers John Marshall, Elizabeth Newbery, John Harris, Darton and Harvey, Grant and Griffith, and Griffith and Farran. Festing (1901: 296) points out how “[a]n old gardener well remembered seeing her sitting on the lawn at five o’clock on a summer morning, her portfolio on her knee, carefully printing the words, letter by letter, with her pen, for the sake of the children who were not old enough to read written characters. She then bound the tiny volumes in gaily

¹ Fenn’s “Family Receipt-book” still exists today and can be found in the Norfolk Record Office (MC 443/1, 715X9).

² That Fenn regretted the fact that she remained childless is illustrated by the following quotation taken from her *Art of Teaching in Sport* where she cites Thomson’s *Domestic Love and Happiness*: “I almost envy the joy of a young lady who looks around on her – ‘Smiling offspring . . . sees by degrees The human blossom blow; and every day, Soft as it rolls along, shew some new charm.’ But I too have my joys; – if it were not a pleasure to me to facilitate the progress of children, I should not engage in preparing this apparatus for them” (Fenn 1785: 23).

coloured paper". In *Cobwebs to Catch Flies; or dialogues in short sentences, adapted to children from the age of three to eight years* (1783a, g), which Stoker (2007: 825) describes as her most popular work, Fenn made sure to inform her young audience about the origin of the work, by telling them that she had sent her adopted nephew William Frere

to play in the garden, without me, telling him I should be busy. And what do you think I did? I cut out the prints, wrote some stories to suit them, and pasted the prints into my little book. I covered it nicely; and the next morning, when he had done his lesson well, I took it – "Here, my dear, said, I, is a book for you, in which you can read" – I wish you had seen his joy – I do not think that even your lively fancies can figure to you how he capered about; he ran to tell the maids, he jumped; he shouted; he danced; (he could not sing;) but, what was best, he read in it very well – so I hope *you* little ones will do (1783a: xxiii–xxiv).

The prints Fenn cut out for William's book were so-called "lotteries", "small engravings covered with little pictures laid out in rows, depicting such subjects as the social ranks, traders and professions, caricatures, humorous subjects, animals, birds, fish, plants, the seasons, and sports and games" (Immel 2005: 66).

The little masters and misses who appear in Fenn's other books, called *Juvenile Correspondence* (1783c), *Rational Sports* (1783d) and *Lilliputian Spectacle de la Nature, or nature delineated* (c. 1786), similarly bear the names of William and his siblings. In her dedication to her sister-in-law Jane Frere (1746–1813) in *Rational Sports* (1783d), Fenn noted the following:

ALLOW me, my dear ***** to dedicate to you, what seems so peculiarly your property. Yet let me caution you against imagining, that I mean to offer to *you*, "a hint how you may, inform the minds of your little people –" *No*, – I am not so conceited: but, as when I wrote the original, to give myself the pleasure of affording you some slight assistance in that agreeable task, I made your children the persons of my drama; so now, that I am seeking to oblige a few of my particular friends with copies, I feel a degree of satisfaction in continuing the names of the speakers, a circumstance which places me for an instant, as it were in your family (1783d: vii–viii).

Apart from including their names in her little volumes, Fenn also dedicated some of her works to her nieces and nephews. Her *Juvenile Tatler* (1789), for instance, contained the following dedication to Susan Frere:

To Miss S----F----

MY DEAR,

I have never given myself the pleasure of dedicating to you one of my little volumes; which I wish to do: and therefore, request your acceptance of this: – The lessons contained in it are, perhaps, rather above your present age; but I think that a few years hence, when they are better suited to your time of life, you will value them the more from the circumstance of them being thus addressed to you; and, am certain, that you will esteem them *much beyond their real worth* for my sake: knowing (as you do) with how much sincerity and tenderness I sign myself, *My Dear, Your affectionate Aunt*, E----- F---. April 23, 1789 (1789: iii–iv).

Although the early editions of Fenn’s *Child’s Grammar* (1795), which as I will show below turned out to be her best-selling work, lacked a dedication, I came across a dedication addressed “TO MRS. BARKER, DISS, NORFOLK”, in the twenty-sixth edition of *The Child’s Grammar* (1820), published by Harris and Son seven years after Fenn’s death:

DEAR MADAM,

IT is with the utmost satisfaction that I offer to your patronage the new edition of the Child’s Grammar. I gave myself the pleasure to dedicate it to you at its first appearance, expressing then my hopes of success in your recent undertaking: the lapse of some years having realised those hopes, by giving indisputable proof of the excellence of your method of education, allow me now to offer my congratulations.

The true maternal attention which you extend to your adopted Children, even exceeds the most sanguine expectation which I had formed, from my knowledge of your character and conduct as the Mother of a Family. With what delight have I witnessed the improvement of the children! With what heartfelt satisfaction heard the strong expressions of approbation which have burst from their friends! I dare not say all I could wish, lest I should be suspected of flattery. Those to whom you are a stranger, might think I went too far; whilst the happy parents, who have experienced the good effects of your unremitting endeavours, would allow that I fell far short; and many charming young women, who have been your pupils, would exclaim, “You cannot say too much;” giving their testimony to the merits of yourself and your Daughters, not only in their appearance and essential accomplishments, but by professions of sincere attachment to Ladies from whom they have experienced so much kindness. When speaking of your School, my pen is not easily restrained; it shall only add my sincere wish for a continuance of success, so that your Daughters’ Daughters may rise up and call you Blessed.

Your sincere friend,

THE AUTHOR (1820: iv).

According to Cajka (2003: 150), Mary Barker Frere was the wife of Fenn's brother Edward Frere, by whom she had nine sons and five daughters. It is interesting to speculate whether this new edition of Fenn's *Child's Grammar* was also introduced into Mrs. Barker's school. Fenn, however, had died in 1813, so I believe that the above-mentioned dedication to her sister-in-law was first included in 1803, because that was when Fenn's publisher John Harris brought out his first edition of *The Child's Grammar* (Stoker 2009: 67).

Because Fenn "lived at a time when Norfolk was two days' tedious journey from London", Frere believes that "her influence was mainly confined to the small country circle in which she moved" (1874: 11). However, when she started to publish her children's books in the early 1780s, Fenn was able to exert her influence on those outside her country circle as well. In her dedication to her sister-in-law Jane Frere in *Rational Sports* (1783d) Fenn indeed declared that by publishing those works which she had originally written for her nephews and nieces she was "emerging from a circle of partial friends to hazard the censure of strangers" (1783d: viii).

Fenn is best known today for her *Cobwebs to Catch Flies; or dialogues in short sentences, adapted to children from the age of three to eight years*. This work which was influenced by Anna Letitia Barbauld's (née Aikin) (1743–1825) *Lessons for Children* (4 vols.), which had been published five years previously, in 1778–9, turned out to be her most successful publication (Todd 1984: 122–123; Stoker 2007: 825). In the preface to the first volume, Fenn acknowledged her indebtedness to Barbauld when she pointed out that she need not "blush to supply prattle for infants, since a lady of superior genius condescended long since, to set the example" (Fenn 1783a: vii; see also Cajka 2003: 132). Just like Barbauld, who had written her *Lessons* for her adopted nephew Charles (McCarthy 1999: 196), Fenn originally wrote *Cobwebs* for her adopted nephew William Frere.

The first volume of *Cobwebs* was targeted at children aged 3 to 5 and it included stories about toys and animals written in words of one, two, three,

four, five and six letters. The second volume similarly offered stories written in words of one, two, three and four syllables for children aged 5 to 8 “on subjects with which they are familiar, and in which they are interested” (Fenn 1785: 13–14). According to Stoker (2007: 826), “[o]ne of the undoubted attractions of *Cobwebs* for children lay in the two frontispieces and the twenty six oval relief illustrations”, which may have been drawn by Fenn herself. The two volumes of *Cobwebs* proved immensely popular; they were published in Britain and America until the 1870s (*ODNB*, s.v. Fenn, Ellenor; see also Stoker 2007: 825–828; Stoker 2008). In 1874 Fenn’s great-nephew, Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere (1815–1884), claimed that “there are many now living who can recollect receiving their first reading-lessons in *Cobwebs to catch Flies*” (1874: xv n.2). Frere’s contemporary Louisa Twining (1820–1912), the youngest daughter of the tea merchant Richard Twining, indeed, noted in her autobiography that she remembered “learning to read the then first book of all children, the ‘Cobwebs to catch Flies’” (1893: 16). In her Memoirs, written between 1845 and 1854, Elizabeth Grant likewise recorded that she and her younger siblings “had pleasure in reading to ourselves, for even Jane at three years old could read her ‘Cobwebs to catch Flies’” (1898: 31).

Stoker (2007: 820) points out that Fenn may have been introduced to the London publisher John Marshall by George Wollaston (1738–1826), brother of the East Dereham rector Francis Wollaston (1731–1815). From 1774 to 1790, George Wollaston was rector of St. Mary Aldermary in the City of London. According to Stoker (2007: 820), it was in St. Mary’s churchyard that John Marshall and Company had set up their printing office which specialized in the publication of children’s books. The firm’s publications must have appealed to Fenn, as can be inferred from her “Address to Mothers” at the back of *Fables, by Mrs. Teachwell: in which the morals are drawn incidentally in various ways* (1783e). Fenn, as she explained to her audience, believed that she “might render an acceptable service to mothers, by supplying young people with a series of little volumes, tending to enforce the Duties of Childhood and early

Youth". She decided to ask "*Marshall* (the Children's Printer) whether he would accept a manuscript [of her first book *School Occurrences* (1783b)] and print it without expence to the unknown writer" (Fenn 1783b: 75–76; see also Stoker 2007: 821).

Fenn appears to have been on friendly terms with Marshall. According to her husband's Memoirs, after the publication of *School Occurrences* Fenn received "about 60 Copies to present to her Friends & Marshall gave her a complete Set of the Books he published for Young People" (John Fenn MS: 41). In the case of *Juvenile Correspondence*, John Fenn notes that his wife "had about 70 Copies to distribute amongst her Friends & Marshall presented her with 'Dr Johnson's Lives of the English Poets' 4 vols 8vo handsomely bound 1763" (John Fenn MS: [43]).

Tierney states that in the case of the publisher Robert Dodsley a novel "prompted at least three letters from both parties, and frequently more" (1988: 51, see also Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008c: 57), but I have been unable to find any correspondence between Marshall and Fenn, nor between Fenn and her later publishers Elizabeth Newbery and John Harris. Nevertheless, I did come across one letter from Fenn addressed to "M^r Tabart Bookseller New Bond Street" (Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books, Toronto), dated around 1807 (Moon 1990: 7). Fenn's letter to the publisher and bookseller Benjamin Tabart (1767–1833), whose business from its opening in 1801 "attracted some of the best contemporary writers for children" (Moon 1990: 7), reads as follows:

From principle & from inclination I would gladly contribute to supplying innocent amusment [sic] for children introducing some instruction I will write more at leisure – when I send a copy of the hints: which I will as soon as possible I must insist on good paper – to say truth your books are generally such – I do not like wire-woven or hot-pressed paper for any thing – but of a good quality and colour [...] I shall wish several copies to distribute sending you

a list of friends³ to whom I would give them – for you to pack & direct–& some I should have sent to me (Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books, Toronto).

The book that is mentioned here was probably Fenn’s *Hints to Young Women Who Are Engaged in Education*, which was first published by John Harris around 1802 (Stoker 2009: 70). Moon (1990: 7), however, points out that in the end, for reasons unknown, the book was not published by Tabart but by Harris.

All in all, Fenn wrote about fifty books for mothers and their children (Stoker 2007: 817; Stoker 2009: 49). Three of these books, *Cobwebs to Catch Flies* (1783a, g), *The Rational Dame* (1786) and *School Occurrences* (1783b) were read by the children of King George III (1738–1820) and Queen Charlotte (1744–1818) (Shefrin 2003: 57). Just like her husband, who in 1787 desired to present a copy of the first two volumes of the *Paston Letters* to the King (Stoker 1995), Fenn wanted to present her works to the royal family. Since the Royal Governess, Lady Charlotte Finch (1725–1813), was responsible for the education of the royal children, Fenn sent some of her works to her. On 3 July 1784 she wrote a letter to the author Sir Horace Walpole (1717–1797), in which she told him: “I am gratified with the hope that my works may have afforded a few hours’ innocent amusement in the Royal Nursery, as I ventured to send them to Lady C. Finch and was honoured with a polite letter in return” (ed. Lewis 1980: 106; see also Cajka 2003: 125).

Fenn and Walpole had been acquainted for some time. Fenn’s husband John Fenn had been a correspondent of Walpole’s since 30 March 1774. Walpole had ardently encouraged the publication of the *Paston Letters* several years later (ed. Lewis 1951: 231). When the first two volumes of the *Paston Letters*, “with a dedication by permission, to George III” (Frere 1982: 82), were published in

³ Unfortunately, Fenn’s “list of friends” has not come down to us. One name which might have been on this list was that of Margaret Glover, whose father John Glover (1713/14–1774) was a clergyman from Norwich (see *ODNB*, s.v. Glover, John) and whose mother has been described as “one of Fenn’s closest friends” (Frere 1982: 318). In 1798 Glover had received a presentation copy of Fenn’s *A Miscellany in Prose and Verse, for young persons, on a Sunday*. Glover’s copy, which can be found in the British Library, contains the following inscription: “Margaret Glover given by Lady Fenn – 1798 –”.

1787, Walpole was extremely enthusiastic. In his letter to his friend Lady Ossory, on 1 February 1787, he wrote:

The Letters of Henry VI.'s reign etc. are come out, and to me make all other letters not worth reading. I have gone through above one volume, and cannot bear to be writing when I am so eager to be reading (ed. Lewis 1954: 556).

Walpole was also acquainted with Fenn's work, because earlier that year she had presented him with a copy of her *School Dialogues for Boys* (1783f). In the following letter to her husband, Walpole refers to the work, describing it as a "very useful, lively and engaging present on education" (ed. Lewis 1980: 101):

It is a great satisfaction to me, Sir, that Mrs Fenn and you and Mr and Mrs Frere were amused at Strawberry Hill; but I shall never forgive myself for having been so engrossed by showing it, that it put quite out of my head to thank Mrs Fenn for her very useful, lively and engaging present on education. I am too seriously ashamed of myself not to confess the truth and my own selfish ill breeding, for which I have no excuse – and yet I assure you, Sir, the merit of her work was by no means lost on me – though it is plain that I am too old to be taught – I hope she will meet with more deserving scholars, whose virtues will be the better for hers. She too will learn not to throw pearls before the superannuated who have lost their eyes or memories, or both, as was the case of her and Your most obedient and obliged humble servant HOR. WALPOLE [Walpole to Sir John Fenn, 29 June 1784 (ed. Lewis 1980: 101; see also Cajka 2003: 124)].

From Fenn's reply to the above letter by Walpole of 29 June it becomes clear that she had not only sent him a copy of her *School Dialogues for Boys* (1783f), but that she had also included "a few passages" from Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764)⁴ in another work of hers entitled *The Female Guardian* (1784):

I do indeed, Sir, think myself highly honoured by your approbation of my little vols. Your silence on the subject I imputed to that politeness which shone so conspicuously in your whole behaviour and spared those blushes which must have arisen had you recalled to my mind the liberty I had taken in offering to your acceptance such trifles. My attention was too much engrossed by the beautiful objects around me to allow my thoughts to wander even for a moment, so that I never recollected the confusion which I escaped except when

⁴ A reference to *The Castle of Otranto* can also be found in Fenn's *School Occurrences* (1783b) in which Miss Sprightly tells Mrs. Teachwell: "I recollected a passage which my mama once read aloud to me: I think it was in a sort of romance that *Mr. Walpole* wrote. A young lady was advised to listen, and she refused; saying, 'that a daughter should have no eyes or ears but as a parent directs'" (1783b: 61). Mrs. Teachwell then tells Miss Sprightly that the passage is from "the castle of *Otranto*" and mentions that she thinks it is "a delicate thought!" (1783b: 62).

Mr Fenn pointed out to me that the picture of Lord Falkland in the gallery which you mention as having given rise to an incident in *The Castle of Otranto* – now I have selected from that delightful work a few passages to insert in a little volume which is now in the press, an obvious train of thoughts brought my ‘School Dialogues’ for an instant to my mind – but they were soon banished by the agreeable scene and I forgot the presumption of which I had been guilty in striving to procure for my books the honour to be presented by Mr Walpole to the use of some friend of his. I am gratified with the hope that my works may have afforded a few hours’ innocent amusement in the Royal Nursery, as I ventured to send them to Lady C. Finch and was honoured with a polite letter in return – but your smile is still more flattering ‘for sure your smiles are fame’ (ed. Lewis 1980: 106; see also Cajka 2003: 124–125).

The words “for sure your smiles are fame” at the end of the above quotation echo the last line of Walpole’s sonnet to Lady Mary Cokes (“For sure thy smiles are Fame”) which can be found at the beginning of the fourth edition of his *Castle of Otranto* (Walpole [1764] 1782: xi). Fenn evidently knew this particular line by heart; in her *Female Guardian* she had admitted that she had “read the *Castle of Otranto* often” (1784: 88). In addition, she had noted that

I DARE not place the *Castle of Otranto* in Mrs. Teachwell’s library⁵ (it is not suited to the perusal of early youth) yet I wish young ladies to read abundance of beautiful passages which are interspersed through the whole work; not so much for the sake of the elegant language, as the delicate morality [...] The story is so interesting the events are so astonishing, that one cannot resist the temptation of hurrying on to the catastrophe (Fenn 1784: 88–89).

On 7 July 1784 Walpole replied to this letter as follows:

You have doubled my confusion, Madam, instead of removing it, by the very genteel answer you have made to my apology – however, with such evidences in my hands, I shall not again be in danger of forgetting you are an authoress, which your sentiments, sense and style ought to confirm you in the practice of being; and the last of which I wish you may not injure by adopting phrases from any trifle of mine – yet if you do intend me that honour, I cannot affect so much modesty as not to beg to see your new work – and so I certainly should, if not personally interested in it (ed. Lewis 1951: 244–245).

John Fenn similarly noted in his Memoirs that his wife “with her Pen expressed herself with an ease, elegance, & correctness, equal to the best Writers in the English Language” (John Fenn MS: 10). In addition, he added that she

⁵ This is a reference to the above-mentioned reading list which can be found at the back of *The Female Guardian* (1784).

“surpassed most of her Sex in literary Knowledge”. In *The Art of Teaching in Sport*, one of Fenn's publications on grammar that will be discussed in more detail below, Fenn indeed described herself as someone “who lays aside *Milton*, *Gray*, and *Shakespeare*, to turn abecedarian to the children of other people” (1785: 7–8).

Fenn's favourite poet was William Cowper (1731–1800), who she and her husband knew personally. Towards the end of his life Cowper even lived a year or two in East Dereham and also died there in 1800 (Norton 1994: 45). In her *Friends of Mothers* (1799) Fenn not only referred to Cowper as a “bewitching Author” but also calls him the “first of Poets” (1799: 15). In this same work, she quotes a few lines from Cowper's *Tirocinium, or a review of schools* (Fenn 1799: 14–15). Apparently, Cowper was aware of Fenn's interest in his poetry, since on 5 May 1792 we find him writing to his cousin Lady Hesketh (1733–1807):

There is a Sir John Fenn in Norfolk, who collects names & hand writings as Patty More does; he wished for mine, and at Johnny's request, I shall send it him thus accompanied. But before I transcribe the lines, it is necessary I should tell you that Lady Fenn has published a book in which she makes large citations from the *Task* (ed. King and Ryskamp 1984: 74).

The book which Cowper refers to here was Fenn's *Select Passages from Various Authors* (1787b). In the preface to this work, Fenn noted that in order “to win the affection of sprightly youth, I was glad to avail myself of a late most charming publication, whence I interspersed many passages to enliven my volume; it hardly need be said that I am speaking of the *Task*” (1787b: iv). According to Newey (1982: 93), Cowper's 6000-line poem *The Task* (1785) embraces “practically the entire spectrum of contemporary English life”. Fenn also recommended “Cowper's poems” in “THE YOUTH'S LIBRARY”, a reading list which could be found at the end of the book (1787b: 384). It is interesting to note that Cowper again referred to Fenn as well in an epigram he wrote for her husband, entitled “To Sir John Fenn”: “Two omens seem propitious to my fame, Your spouse embalms my verse, and you my Name; A Name which, all self-flatt'ry far apart / Belongs to One who ven'rates in his heart / The wise and good, and therefore, of the few known by those titles, Sir, both *yours* and *you*”

(ed. King and Ryskamp 1984: 74). According to Stoker (p.c), the epigram must have accompanied Cowper's answer to John Fenn's request for his autograph.

In addition to her interest in contemporary literature, Cajka (2003: 128) also mentions Fenn's familiarity with French, Latin and classical literature. While describing his dear aunt in her later years, John Hookham Frere (1769–1846), likewise referred to her as a learned woman: "It is difficult to give any one nowadays an idea of the kind of awe which, in my boyhood, a learned old lady like her inspired, down in the country, not only in us, her nephews and nieces, and in those of her own age and rank who could understand her intellectual superiority, but even in the common people around her" (Frere 1874: 11). Fenn died on 1 November 1813 and was buried in the family vault at Finningham Church, Suffolk (*ODNB*, s.v. Fenn, Ellenor; Frere 1982: 83). Festing (1901: 302) notes that "she was greatly missed by high and low". Her will, according to Frere (1982: 83), "left the Dereham property to [her adopted nephew] William with all its contents, and the poor at Dereham were to receive £5".

Despite the fact that Henry St. John Bullen, as I have shown in §6.1, disclosed Fenn's identity in his dedication to her in his *Elements of Geography*, Fenn apparently succeeded in maintaining her anonymity in the eyes of the general public until her death on 1 November 1813, when her obituary appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* which openly referred to her use of the pseudonyms Mrs. Lovechild and Mrs. Teachwell:

At Dereham, Norfolk, in the 70th year of her age, Lady Fenn, relict of Sir John Fenn, and sister of the late J. Frere, esq. M.P. of Roydon, in that county. It may be truly said of this lady, that her whole life has been spent in doing good; her little productions for the benefit of the rising generation, under the feigned names of Mrs. Lovechild and Mrs. Teachwell, will remain lasting monuments of her philanthropy (1813: 508).

After the publication of Fenn's obituary her publisher John Harris no longer felt the need to preserve her anonymity, as can be inferred from the following remark in his book-list in Barbara Hofland's *The Blind Farmer and his Children* (1816) (Stoker 2009: 55; Moon 1992: 51):

As the lady who wrote these little works, (which were done purely with a view of informing the rising Generation) is now gone to another and better world, to receive the reward of her labours, the Publisher cannot resist this opportunity of saying, that the feigned names of Mrs LOVECHILD and Mrs TEACHWELL, were united in Lady FENN, of DEREHAM, in NORFOLK (Moon 1992: 51).

During the 1850s Harris's successors Grant and Griffith similarly advertised their editions of Fenn's *Child's* and *Mother's Grammar*, two of Fenn's most popular publications which will be described in more detail below, as being written by "the late Lady Fenn under the guise of Mrs. Lovechild" (Stoker 2009: 55).

6.3. Fenn's little treatises on grammar

Until the 1790s, when Fenn's "valuable little treatises" (St. John Bullen 1799: iv) on grammar started to appear on the market, mothers already had Fenn's *Art of Teaching in Sport* (1785) and *A Spelling Book* (1787a) at their disposal to teach their children the rudiments of English grammar (Navest 2009: 74–75; 77–80). *The Art of Teaching in Sport* served as an accompanying manual to Fenn's *Set of Toys* (c. 1785), an educational game in a large mahogany box that included "three small Boxes, or Trays" labelled *The Spelling Box*, *The Grammar Box*, and *The Figure Box*, which were all "divided into ten or twelve compartments" (Shefrin 2003: 58; *World*, 24 December 1787).⁶ Fenn's *Set of Toys* was incredibly expensive (Percy 2006: 113; see also Stoker 2007: 828). According to the advertisement in the *World*, in 1787 Fenn's publisher John Marshall sold the "Spelling, Grammar and Figure Box in one" for 18 shillings, *The Spelling Box* for 9 shillings, and the "Grammar and Figure Boxes in one" for 14 shillings.⁷

A reference to *A Set of Toys* can already be found in the second volume of Fenn's *Cobwebs to Catch Flies* (1783g) (Percy 1994: 129; Percy 2006: 120). In the dialogue "The Useful Play" (1783g: 5–12), "SECOND GIRL" teaches "FIRST

⁶ For an image of Fenn's *Set of Toys*, see Shefrin (2003: 58).

⁷ According to the National Archives Currency Converter, 18, 9, and 14 shillings would today be worth £ 56.57, £28.28 and £ 44.00.

GIRL” how to play with what appears to be Fenn’s *Spelling Box* (Percy 2006: 120):

FIRST GIRL.

LET us lay words. Where is the box?

SECOND GIRL.

How do you play?

FIRST GIRL.

I will shew you. Here I give you c,e,u, h,q, and n;-now place them so as to make a word.

SECOND GIRL.

It is *quench!* (1783g: 5-7)

In addition, FIRST GIRL shows her friend how she can teach her younger brother Charles the rudiments of English grammar:

SECOND GIRL. I wish you would teach me some of your sports; then I could teach *Charles*.

FIRST GIRL. Print words on a card; on the back write the part of speech; let it be a sport for him to try if he can find what each is? – let him have the words, and place them so as to make sense (Fenn 1783g: 8).

The end of the dialogue is worthy of note as Fenn’s publisher John Marshall supplied it with the following footnote: “Schemes to assist parents in teaching their children, by way of sport, are in the possession of *John Marshall* and Co. who intend executing them with all possible dispatch. – Due notice will be given of their completion” (Fenn 1783g: 12; see also Stoker 2007: 828). Although the production of Fenn’s *Set of Toys* seemed to be well on its way in 1783, Stoker (2007: 828) notes that it would take two more years before her “elaborate and very expensive *A Set of Toys* was announced in an issue of *Cobwebs to Catch Flies* dating from about 1785”.

There is some evidence that the novelist Fanny Burney taught her son Alex the alphabet with the help of Fenn’s *Spelling Box*, which consisted among other things of “little alphabets of roman, italic and black letters for spelling out words” (Immel 1997: 222). In July 1797, Burney wrote a letter to her sister Susanna telling her that she had begun to teach Alex, who was only two and a half at the time, the alphabet. She also added that her little boy “has taken the utmost delight in playing with the Letters, placing, bringing & naming them”

(ed. Hemlow 1973: 325). Another reference to *The Spelling Box* can be found in Sarah Trimmer's *Little Spelling Book for Young Children* (1787), where the hero of the work is described as being engaged in playing with Fenn's "nice box of Letters and Pictures" (1791[1787]: vi; 23).

According to the leaflet accompanying Fenn's *Set of Toys, The Grammar Box* was designed for "rendering the distinction of the parts of speech easy to a child" (Fenn 1785: 33). The work included "Twelve Cards, containing a compendious Set of Grammar Lessons, to be learned by Rote in small Portions; designed for little People to study as they walk, and numbered in order as they should be learned" and "The Parts of Speech, in little Packets" (as quoted from Immel 1997: 224). In addition, there were "Four Packets of Nouns, with a Cut [i.e. a picture] on the Back of each", "Two Packets of Verbs" (as quoted from Immel 1997: 224), and one packet of articles, adjectives, pronouns, helping verbs, participles, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, interjections and terminations. Four-year-old George Nugent Grenville (1788–1850) was one of the children who played with Fenn's *Grammar Box* at the time. From George's school report book we can gather that in December 1792 he "forms sentences from the seperate [sic] words in the grammar box one day – forms words with letters the other day as he has done for above a year past (Huntington Library ST 2000)". Shefrin (2003: 56) points out that even the children of George III might have had access to Fenn's *Boxes* in the royal nursery. As discussed in §6.2, in 1784 Fenn had presented the Royal Governess Lady Charlotte Finch with some of her publications and her *Set of Toys* might have been one of them.

In *The Art of Teaching in Sport* (1785), the book accompanying Fenn's *Set of Toys*, mothers could find "Directions and Hints for the proper management of the Boxes" (*World*, 24 December 1787). With regard to *The Grammar Box*, Fenn informed mothers that the single words in this particular box "may be read as an exercise" (1785: 34):

What part of speech is this? The child answers then turns the card to look.
"Who finds a noun?" "There is one, see! there is a picture at the back!" (1785: 34).

Once a child knew how to distinguish a noun, Fenn advised mothers to

let him make use of the article. Then prefix what adjective he pleases. Then use a pronoun and verb. And perhaps it should be long before you attempt to explain any more. In the mean time, the replacing of the other parts of speech, in their respective boxes, may give him some idea of their names (1785: 35).

Fenn clearly regarded her *Art of Teaching in Sport* as an elementary grammar, or as she put it, a grammar “for babies” (Fenn 1785: 40). This is probably also the reason why the work only includes the definitions of five parts of speech (noun, adjective, pronoun, verb and article), and why Fenn tells mothers that “the five parts of speech which are here named, are sufficient for them to be allowed to play with at present; and in them I should not advise any further distinction to be made, till the little people are perfect in their comprehensions of the former parts” (1785: 46).

Just like her *Art of Teaching in Sport*, Fenn’s *Spelling Book, designed to render the acquisition of the rudiments of our native language easy and pleasant* (1787a) could be used for early lessons in English grammar. Apart from alphabets, monosyllables and words of two or more syllables, *A Spelling Book* contained “A Course of easy Reading Lessons for young Children; beginning with single Words of three Letters, and advancing gradually to Sentences of six or seven Words” (1787a: iii). The book could also be used by mothers for teaching the rudiments of grammar (1787a: x), for Fenn pointed out that since the words in these reading lessons were “arranged under their respective denominations of nouns, adjective and verbs” (Fenn 1809: 17) ladies could easily test their children’s grammatical knowledge. The only thing a mother had to do, according to Fenn, was to “enquire, what is *Ann*? What is *bat*? what is *new*?” (Fenn 1809: 18). In addition to the lessons on nouns, adjectives and verbs, Fenn’s *Spelling Book* also contained lessons for elder children “in which the sentences are all constructed in a similar manner, and the part of speech marked above” (1787a: x). Examples given are *a ripe grape, a clean frock, flies are brisk* (1787a: 120). According to Fenn, the advantage of such lessons is that they “will enable the teacher, as she sits at her needle, to examine the progress

of elder children, and *that* even without the knowledge of grammar herself; it is only to break the sentences, and ask; 'What part of speech is *ripe?* – what is *frock?* – what is *brisk?*' (1787a: x). In her *Spelling Book* Fenn also provided mothers with the definitions of a noun, adjective, verb and pronoun (1787a: 108; 112; 113; 117). Although she did not define the article and preposition, these parts of speech were included in some of the reading lessons (e.g. *birds fly through the air, moles live under the ground, worms live in the earth*) (Fenn 1787a: 124).

That Fenn's *Spelling Book* could indeed be used for instruction in English grammar can further be inferred from *The Child's Grammar* (1795), where Fenn pointed out to mothers that "Mrs. Teachwell's Spelling Book affords easy parsing lessons" (1795: 8–9) and from Joseph Guy's *An Easy Introduction to the English Language* (1796). Although Guy, as I have shown in §2.4, heavily relied on Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, he also drew upon Fenn's *Spelling Book*. Since he believed that "the different ages of Children require[d] elementary treatises suited to their respective capacities" (1796: viii), Guy had included "A Sketch of Grammar, For Children under Seven Years old" in his *Easy Introduction*. In the preface to his grammar, Guy admitted that "[s]ome of the examples of the [ten] parts of Speech" in his "Sketch of Grammar" had been "taken from Mrs. Teachwell" (1796: viii). Guy's reliance on Fenn's *Spelling Book* suggests that it must have been a popular work at a time when Fenn's popular series of grammar books had not yet appeared.

By 1799, when Henry St. John Bullen was engaged in writing his dedication to Lady Fenn (see §6.1), Fenn's little treatises on grammar had appeared on the market. The six volumes, which were advertised by Fenn's publisher Elizabeth Newbery (1745/6–1821) as "Mrs. Lovechild's First Rudiments of Learning" (*London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post*, 14 December 1798; see also Percy

2010: 53), could be purchased at Newbery's bookshop at the Corner of St. Paul's Church-Yard in London for the following prices: ⁸

THE Infant's Friend – Part I. – A Spelling Book, &c. – Price 8d.
 The Infant's Friend – Part II. – Reading Lessons – Price 1s.
 The Child's Grammar. – Price 6d.
 Parsing Lessons for Young Children – Price 9d.
 The Mother's Grammar – Price 6d.
 Parsing Lessons for Elder Pupils. – Price 1s. 3d.

In the "Address to Young Mothers" in her *Infant's Friend – Part I* (1797a) Fenn announced her forthcoming "Series of Books for Teaching" (Anon. 1798a):

I am anticipating the pleasure of assisting young Ladies in their first essays in teaching Reading, Spelling, and Grammar. For this purpose I have planned a Series of little volumes: but I must now confine myself to the beginning, and explain the first part of that Series; namely, the Spelling Book" (1797a: vi).

Despite the fact that the first volume of *The Infant's Friend* was a spelling book and that *The Infant's Friend – Part II* consisted of reading lessons, both works could be used by mothers for teaching their children grammar (Navest 2009: 80–81). In her *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* (1798a) Fenn indicated that

[f]or early Lessons; to give variety, and to multiply the very easy ones, a Lady who may choose to attend so far, can produce *The Infant's Friend, Part I* – She will say – "Find the nouns in this set of words as you read them. – Now find the verbs," &c – Part II. affords very easy Parsing Lessons in the Short Sentences; the Reading Lessons in Part II. may be used too, by those who are more advanced, as Parsing Lessons (Fenn 1798a: x–xi).

Apart from alphabets of roman and italic letters, *The Infant's Friend – Part I* includes 26 pages with sets of monosyllables, such as:

wage bake cake lake make
 dame fame game lame name
 dice lice mice nice rice vice
 foot hoof roof cool fool tool
 word world work worse worm
 house louse mouse rouse ounce
 squeeze cheese geese fleece sleeve (Fenn 1797a: 19; 20; 22; 26; 31).

⁸ See the advertisement called *A Series of Books for Teaching, by Mrs. Lovechild: sold by E. Newbery, corner of St. Paul's Church-Yard, London* (Anon. 1798a). According to another advertisement in the *Oracle and Daily Advertiser* of 23 December 1799, at E. Newbery's bookshop there "may be had, a Catalogue of some Hundred of instructive and amusing Books, Cards, Games, &c. which are always ready for inspection".

These monosyllabic words, which were placed in sets so “as to make the acquisition as easy as possible by paying attention to the sound in the first word of that set” (Fenn 1797a: ix), gave elder children the opportunity of picking out nouns, adjectives and verbs (Fenn 1797a: vi; ix).

Fenn's so-called 107 “Short Sentences”, such as *the hills, cows low, babes cry, good boys, tall girls, nice cake, a white mouse, a horse is swift, the dog has claws, the cat loves fish, mice steal cheese, spell each word with care, Thank those who teach you*, in the second volume of *The Infant's Friend*, similarly assisted “young Mothers in their attempts to instill early the rudiments of grammar” (Fenn 1797b: 4–9; Fenn 1799: 63). The reading lessons on animals, insects, toys and dolls in this volume could likewise be used by mothers as parsing lessons for elder children who were already more advanced in grammar (Fenn 1798a: xi). The two volumes of Fenn's *Infant's Friend* thus enabled mothers to teach their elder children grammar with the same book with which they were instructing their younger ones to read.

The Child's Grammar: designed to enable ladies who may not have attended to the subject themselves to instruct their children (1795) was without a doubt the most popular item in Fenn's “Series of Books for Teaching” (Anon. 1798a). Alston (1965: 105) lists 26 numbered editions of “this popular little grammar”, while Michael (1987: 453) records “at least forty edns to 1843”, which testifies to its continuing popularity. Alston (1965: 105) describes a 1799 Dublin edition published by Robert Napper as “the earliest dated edition” of Fenn's *Child's Grammar*. However, since the sequel to *The Child's Grammar*, *The Mother's Grammar*, appeared in 1798 (Alston 1965: 104), it seems likely that the first edition of *The Child's Grammar*, or “the little pupil's manual” (Fenn c. 1795/1796: iv) as Fenn referred to it herself, was brought out during that year as well or maybe even earlier (Navest 2008a: 60n.4; Navest 2008b: 224n.5). Stoker (2007: 840) similarly believes that *The Child's Grammar* must have been published before 1798, namely ca. 1797. Two years later he indicates that the work must have appeared for the first time in 1790 or 1791, since Fenn's

publisher John Marshall produced at least five editions of *The Child's Grammar* before 1800 (Stoker 2009: 53; 67). Interestingly, it has now come to light that instead of being published in 1790 or 1791, Fenn's *Child's Grammar* was issued in 1795 (Stoker p.c.). As a member of the Worshipful Company of Stationers of London, Fenn's publisher John Marshall could register new titles of his publications in order to prevent other booksellers from bringing out copies of them. Since Marshall entered *The Child's Grammar* on the Stationer's Register on 13 March 1795, Stoker believes that the work would have almost certainly been published for the first time during that month. This suggests that *The Child's Grammar* must have appeared around the same time as Lindley Murray's *English Grammar*, which according to this author's Memoirs also "appeared in the spring of the year 1795" (Murray 1826: 90–91).

Fenn's *Friend of Mothers: designed to assist them in their attempts to instil the rudiments of language and arithmetic, at an early age, and in a manner agreeable to their children* (1799), is of great interest as it suggests possible reasons for the popularity of her *Child's Grammar*. According to Fenn, "'The Child's Grammar', by its diminutive size [7.5 by 12.5 cms], pleases Children, who will be willing to study a small portion of it, to prepare them for the sport of the day" (1799: 37). In addition, she added:

When Mrs. Teachwell's Box⁹ was published, there was not any grammar but what looked rather formidable to a Child: the diminutive one since printed by the title of 'The Child's Grammar, by Mrs. Lovechild', almost supersedes the occasion for any number of stiff sheets, since it contains all that is necessary to commit to memory. The circumstance of Children being able to study as they walk abroad, is a great advantage. The Child's Grammar is as portable as a card; and there is no long succession of lessons to alarm the Learner. The modes and tenses are there explained familiarly. The tenses of the indicative mode are given in a clear and concise manner, with examples to impress them strongly. It is hoped that a little Boy may derive great comfort at his entrance upon school from having learned in a chearful manner the rudiments of grammar, to which he might conceive disgust, if he had at once the double difficulty of a new language and a new study (1799: 58–59).

⁹ This was probably *The Grammar Box* which together with the *Spelling Box* and *Figure Box* made up Fenn's *Set of Toys* (c.1785) or her *Grammatical Amusements in a Box* [1798?], which was sold by Elizabeth Newbery (Alston 1965: 109; Stoker 2009: 72).

Although Fenn's *Child's Grammar*, as Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2000c) has shown, appears to have been "intended for girls only", the above-mentioned quotation suggests that despite its girlish example sentences ("Every girl is a girl, but – is your proper name", "A pretty doll", "You have made a neat seam", "Mary is a good girl; *oh!* how I love her" (Fenn 1795: 3; 4; 16; 20), the work was meant for little boys as well.¹⁰ The grammar was recommended in a later work of Fenn's entitled *The Teacher's Assistant in the Art of Teaching Grammar in Sport* (1809). This manual appears to have accompanied Fenn's teaching scheme *Mrs. Lovechild's Box of Grammatical Amusement, intended to enable ladies, by means of sportive exercises, to instil in the minds of youth the first rudiments of English grammar* (1809) (*The Ipswich Journal*, 23 December 1809; *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 23 December 1809; Moon 1992: 164; Stoker 2007: 846n.91). In it, Fenn told mothers that

even if amusement *alone* were the object, some previous study would be indispensable; and the habit of submitting to a daily task should be very early acquired. I suppose a daily lesson to be learned in the *Child's Grammar*; a very small book, suited to an infantine pupil, affording the plainest examples taken from dolls and toys, to engage the attention of little folk (1809: 5–6).

Fenn's *Child's Grammar* and her other grammatical works lack illustrations; for all that, they must have appealed to young readers because of their attractive covers. According to Alderson and Oyens (2006: 270), "[f]rom the second quarter to the end of the eighteenth century 'Dutch flowered paper' was apparently the most widely used covering for children's books, either glued to the sewn bookblock [...] or stretched over more durable pasteboard". Opie et al. (1989: 17) describe Dutch flowered paper as "a decorative paper [...] embossed with a floral design and then coloured with dabs of paint and dusted with gilt".¹¹ From an advertisement at the back of Fenn's *Spelling Book* we can infer

¹⁰ In *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* Fenn's *Child's Grammar* is similarly described as a work "in which the little people study" (Fenn 1798a: viii).

¹¹ Alderson and Oyens (2006: 270) observe that the term Dutch flowered paper was "used to indicate a variety of decorated papers, which were manufactured mostly in southern Germany and imported via Dutch merchants, although later in the century there was some local production in England".

that her publisher John Marshall made sure that his books “may be had in various Bindings; or if ordered, uniformly bound in Sets” (see also Stoker 2007: 832). According to Stoker (2007: 832), this “indicates that Marshall was catering to as wide a range of potential customers as possible”. I have indeed come across different bindings of Marshall’s editions of Fenn’s *Child’s Grammar*. The Bodleian library, for instance, possesses one copy bound in Dutch flowered paper (decorated with golden leaves and blue and pink flowers). The British library has a copy of *The Child’s Grammar* in marbled paper boards, and the copy in the possession of Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade is simply bound in plain paper boards.

Presumably because of its popularity, Fenn’s *Child’s Grammar* was one of the twenty tiny volumes issued in John Marshall’s *The Juvenile; or Child’s Library* (1800), “a complete and elegant library for youth of both sexes” (that included books on “various subjects, viz. Picturesque Views of interesting places in England, with a description of each place; History, Select Stories, Poetry, Natural History, Geography, Grammar, Arithmetic, &c. &c.” (*Porcupine*, 7 November 1800; see also Alderson 1983: 4; Laws 2002). Bondy (1981: 59) notes that “[a]round 1800 several London publishers brought out complete libraries for children which were housed in their own specifically designed ornamental bookcases”. Laws (2002) points out that in *Frank: a sequel to Frank in early lessons* (1822) Maria Edgeworth describes two children who owned such a special “little bookcase” of “entertaining books”. *The Juvenile; or Child’s Library*, which was housed in a wooden box with a sliding front that was “painted to resemble a glazed book-case with drawers below”,¹² could be purchased for a guinea (Alderson 1983: 4; *Porcupine*, 7 November 1800).¹³ The fact that Fenn’s *Child’s Grammar* was included in Marshall’s miniature library suggests that at the beginning of the nineteenth century English grammar was

¹² On the shelves of this glazed book-case the same titles could be found as those that were present in the box itself (Alderson 1983: 13).

¹³ According to The National Archives Currency Converter, in today’s money a guinea would be worth £32.17.

one of the subjects middle-class parents expected their children to learn (Cape 2001).

Fenn's *Child's Grammar* also formed the basis for *Short and Easy Rules for Attaining a Knowledge of English Grammar* (1800), one of the nine volumes in John Wallis's miniature library *The Book-Case of Knowledge or Library for Youth* (1800) which was published in 1801, 1803 and 1813 (Alderson 1983: 19; Alston 1965: 108). At the end of this incredibly small trigesimo-seculo grammar Fenn's grammatical works are recommended to parents:

Thus much we have introduced for our grammatical department. More copious information may be obtained by consulting the little works of the ingenious and philanthropic LADY FENN; we mean the little grammars and lessons which she has with so much care compiled for the instruction of the rising generation" (Anon. 1800: 33).

In 1804, by which time Fenn had established a professional relationship with Elizabeth Newbery's successor John Harris, *The Child's Grammar*, *The Mother's Grammar* and the two volumes of *Parsing Lessons* were reprinted as parts of "Mrs. Lovechild's Series of Grammatical Knowledge" (Trimmer 1805: 199). In 1805 Fenn's friend Sarah Trimmer assessed her "Series of Grammatical Knowledge" in *The Guardian of Education*, a periodical targeted at parents and teachers (Immel 2009: 744), which, according to Grenby (2005: 138), was "the first work to review [only] children's books". In her review Trimmer observed:

According to our prescribed plan, we can, from our own judgment, speak of the merits of this Book only in a general way, as calculated from the simplicity of its style and examples, to answer the design of its ingenious author; but justice requires us to add that we have frequently heard the different articles of which it is composed mentioned in terms of high approbation, both by young mothers, and Governesses of Schools (Trimmer 1805: 200).

It is worth pointing out that in this review Trimmer refers to Fenn's "Series of Grammatical Knowledge" as a book. From Fenn's *Teacher's Assistant in the Art of Teaching Grammar in Sport. Designed to render the subject familiar to children* (1809) we can infer that this series was indeed "bound together" but that the little volumes could also be purchased separately (Fenn 1809: 28). Interestingly, this was not the first time that Trimmer had commended Fenn's

works. Already in the second volume of *The Guardian of Education*, she had described “Mrs. Lovechild’s Mother’s and Child’s Grammar, and her Parsing Lessons, sold at Harris’s, late Newbery’s St. Paul’s Church Yard” as “useful works by which the acquisition of English grammar is rendered easy and pleasant” (Trimmer 1803: 26n).

The Child’s Grammar remained popular even after Fenn’s death in 1813. In an advertisement in *The Happy Sequel, or the History of Isabella Mordaunt* (1814a), Fenn’s publisher John Harris noted that “[f]rom eight to ten thousand Copies are sold annually of this little work” (Anon. 1814a: 141) (see also Stoker 2009: 55n.42), while two years later he advertised the grammar as follows: “This is certainly the best introduction to English grammar ever printed; and, as proof of its excellence, the publisher can assure the public that ten thousands¹⁴ are sold annually” (St John et al. 1975b: 117). Whether this impressive number was the actual number of copies Harris sold each year or whether he was simply exaggerating in order to sell more copies is hard to decide. While trying to produce an estimate of the reading public in Britain between 1790 and 1830, Jackson (2005: 6) points out: “We tend to rely on figures occasionally reported by publishers, booksellers, or authors, but these are in the nature of things exceptional cases, and the figures are often unsubstantiated”. According to Bottigheimer (2008), at that time “a standard printrun was about 1,000”. Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2008b: 102) similarly found that in the case of Robert Lowth’s *Short Introduction to English Grammar*, only 1000 copies appear to have been published each year. She based this on a passage from Lowth’s Memoir in which Lowth states that no fewer than 34,000 copies of his grammar had been published between 1762 and 1780 or 1781. Kinnell (1995: 40) notes that during the late eighteenth century “[e]ven a popular novel such as *Pamela* only sold five editions a year, possibly a total of about 9,000 copies”.

¹⁴ The same applied to Lindley Murray’s *English Grammar* (1795) according to Elizabeth Frank, who noted that “[f]or many years past [...] every edition of the Grammar has consisted of ten thousand copies” (as quoted from Monaghan 1998: 131).

While advertising the 32nd edition of *The Child's Grammar* in *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post or Plymouth and Cornish Advertiser* of 16 March 1826, Harris declared: "The extensive circulation, to the amount of 150,000 copies since the first appearance of this little book, is a flattering proof of its superiority". Apparently Harris decided to make some changes to *The Child's Grammar*. In an advertisement in the *Caledonian Mercury* of 15 July 1826 he noted that "[t]he present publication differs from its predecessors in presenting to the learner a more copious selection of small words and suitable reading exercises and tales progressively arranged". One of the little girls who was busy studying Fenn's *Child's Grammar* at this time was seven-year-old Princess Victoria (1819–1901) (Mullen 1987: 9). From a list that Victoria's tutor, the Reverend George Davys, "a fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, later Bishop of Peterborough" (Hibbert 2000: 18), kept of her reading we can gather that in 1826 the Princess not only studied "The Child's Grammar – by Mrs. Lovechild" but also Fenn's *Rational Dame* (1786), a book on natural history (Homans 1997: 177). The list further shows that in addition to *The Child's Grammar*, Princess Victoria read *The Decoy; or an agreeable method of teaching children the elementary parts of English grammar, by conversations and familiar examples* (1813) (Homans 1997: 177). This is a charming little grammar written by E. Ballantine, which appears to have been influenced by Fenn's grammatical works and which will therefore be discussed in more detail in §7.3.

In 1829 no fewer than 200,000 copies of *The Child's Grammar* had been sold, as can be inferred from Harris's advertisement for the work in Edward Mangin's *Stories for Short Students; or, light lore for little people* (1829). Michael (1987: 453) refers to an advertisement for the 50th edition of *The Child's Grammar*, published by Harris's successors Grant and Griffith, in the 1876 edition of Morell's *Essentials*, but I discovered that this particular edition was already advertised as early as 1866 in George Manville Fenn's *Featherland, or, how the birds lived at Greenlawn* (1866) and M.C. Gray's et al. *Early Days of English Princes* (1866). Even though Stoker (2009: 54) states that Griffith and

Farran stopped advertising *The Child's Grammar* after 1872, I still came across an advertisement for the 50th edition of this best-selling work of Fenn's in Catherine Cooper Hopley's *Snakes: curiosities and wonders of serpent life* (1882).

Fenn's sequel to *The Child's Grammar*, *The Mother's Grammar* (c. 1795/1796) was also a great success. Alston (1965: 104) records 21 numbered editions of the grammar until 1820. John Marshall did not register *The Mother's Grammar* in the Stationer's Register, but Stoker (p.c.) asserts that, just like its predecessor, the work was brought out in 1795, or otherwise early in 1796. Despite the fact that it enabled mothers to teach grammar "to the female part of their family" and to instruct "their little sons before they go to school" (Fenn c. 1795/1796: iv), Fenn's *Mother's Grammar* was not really a children's grammar but, as the title suggests, a grammar specifically targeted at mothers. Thus, in *Parsing Lessons for Elder Pupils* (1798b) Fenn advised mothers who had not had the opportunity of studying grammar themselves "to read over, carefully, the Mother's Grammar, whilst their Pupils are going through the Child's" (1798b: ix), while in *The Mother's Grammar* she pointed out that the work "is designed to remain for some time in the possession of the teacher, for her own occasional use" (c. 1795/1796: iv).

Just like *The Child's Grammar*, *The Mother's Grammar* continued to be published throughout the nineteenth century. In an advertisement in the above-mentioned *The Happy Sequel, or the history of Isabella Mordaunt* (1814a) John Harris declared that he sold "[m]any hundred Copies" of "Mrs. Lovechild's Mother's Grammar. Price 1s". A year later, Fenn's *Mother's Grammar* was recommended by the educationist Elizabeth Appleton (c. 1790–1849) in *Private Education or, a practical plan for the studies of young ladies: with an address to parents, private governesses, and young ladies* (1815) (see also Percy 1994: 130):

The study of grammar is in itself a dry one, and is particularly so to very young people, without great care be used in its introduction and pursuit. A very small portion at a time might be taught by conversation, with reference to books. If,

however, the child have a task from it to learn, it should be a very short one; every word having been previously explained, and the sense of the whole bent to the dullest capacity. The first and best work of the kind for children, in my opinion, is a little one called **The Mother's Grammar**; the next is Murray abridged; from this we proceed to Murray's large grammar (Appleton 1815: 86).

Appleton's *Private Education* was dedicated to the daughters of the Countess of Leven and Melville (ODNB, s.v. Appleton, Elizabeth). Appleton was employed as their governess, so these girls must definitely have studied Fenn's *Mother's Grammar* at the time. By 1849, *The Mother's Grammar*, had reached twenty-two editions (Stoker 2009: 48). Interestingly, an advertisement for the twenty-second edition of *The Mother's Grammar* could still be found ten years later in Leonora G. Bell's *Sunday Evenings with Sophia; or, little talks on great subjects. A book for girls* (1859).

Parsing Lessons for Young Children (1798) and *Parsing Lessons for Elder Pupils* (1798) were written by Fenn as companions to *The Child's* and *Mother's Grammars* (Fenn1798a: viii). Whereas *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* consisted, as Fenn put it, of "exercises for Infantine Pupils", *Parsing Lessons for Elder Pupils* contained "exercises for young Grammarians, who are more advanced" (as quoted from Trimmer 1805: 200). Both volumes were well received at the time. *The Critical Review* observed that "[t]hese productions will be found particularly useful to those parents who are not conversant in the principles of grammar; and their utility will be felt in diminishing the trouble of others who undertake the task of teaching children" (Anon. 1798b: 466), while Jabez Hiron, writing for *The Monthly Review* (Immel 1997: 216), noted:

In former years, not very distant, our youth knew little or nothing grammatically of their own language, unless they were taught the Latin or the French, and even then they too often became very imperfectly acquainted with grammar. Considerable care has been manifested of late (judging at least by the productions of the press) to correct this error. The little tracts before us are parts of a series of books for this purpose [...] The four sets of lessons in each appear to be suitably directed, both to engage the attention and to employ the capacity of the young scholar. – The good old Dame designs well; her method is amusing; and she has already, we are told, had the satisfaction of finding that her labours have been acceptable (Hiron 1799: 334; see also Cajka 2003: 185).

Although Fenn made sure that *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* and *Parsing Lessons for Elder Pupils* could be used separately, Michael (1970: 3) claims that “Mrs Lovechild’s *Parsing Lessons* cannot be separated from their companion grammars”. Percy (1994: 129), similarly notes that “[c]opious cross references unite the books”. Thus, for instance, in *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* Fenn stated that “[i]n the respective Lessons, a reference is given to the little Grammars, to enable the Pupils to consult the passages, and prepare themselves” (Fenn 1798a: xiii).

Just like *The Child’s* and *Mother’s Grammars*, Fenn’s volumes of *Parsing Lessons* sold well and continued to be issued during the nineteenth century, as can be inferred from the above advertisement in *The Happy Sequel, or the history of Isabella Mordaunt* (1814a) and from an announcement in the twenty-sixth edition of *The Child’s Grammar* (1820).¹⁵ In *The Morning Chronicle* of 18 March 1822, Harris commended the seventh edition of *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* and the fifth edition of *Parsing Lessons for Elder Pupils*, together with Fenn’s *Child’s* (30th edition) and *Mother’s Grammars* (15th edition) as an “EASY INTRODUCTION TO GRAMMAR”. Finally, in the anonymous *Key to Knowledge; or things in common use simply and shortly explained* (1841) an advertisement for the eighth edition of *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* can be found.

6.4. Ash’s grammar as a source of inspiration for Fenn

Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* must have appealed to Fenn, since, just like Ellin Devis and Ash before her (see §5.4 and §2.5), she wanted to offer her *Child’s Grammar* as an easy introduction to Lowth’s. In the preface to *The Child’s Grammar*, Fenn stated:

¹⁵ According to Harris he sold “Many hundred Copies” annually of Fenn’s *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* and *Parsing Lessons for Elder Pupils* (Anon. 1814a: 141). Google Books lists an 1818 edition of Fenn’s *Parsing Lessons for Elder Pupils*, which unfortunately cannot be accessed.

Dr. *Lowth* speaks of his introduction to English Grammar as being calculated for the Use of the Learner, even of the lowest class: but Perusal of it will convince any Person conversant with *such Learners*, that the Doctor was much mistaken in his calculation. It is a delightful Work! Highly entertaining to a young Person of Taste and Abilities, who is already initiated: and perhaps in the private and domestic Use for which it was designed; his Lordship's Commentary might render it intelligible to those of his own family; but for general and public Use there is certainly Need of an Introduction to it: – There must be a DAME to prepare a Scholar for Lessons of such a Master; And should I be gratified in my Wish to supply that Office, I shall think myself highly honoured (1795: vi).

The above comment suggests that if it had not been for his father's commentary, Thomas Henry Lowth would have been unable to digest *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2010a: 351–352). Since Fenn regarded Lowth's grammar as rather difficult for beginners, she decided to compose a work in which she prepared her young audience "for Lessons of such a Master" (1795: vi). The educationist Joseph Robertson (1726–1802), however, did not share Fenn's opinion. In his *Essay on the Education of Young Ladies. Addressed to a person of distinction* (1798) he noted:

AMONG all the books, which are intended for the use of young people, who have the happiness to receive a polite education, I know none more worthy of their constant study, and repeated perusal, than Lowth's Introduction to English Grammar [...] Lowth's Grammar is supposed by some people to be too difficult for female students of ten or twelve years of age. But it is evident, that the judicious author was not of this opinion, when he styled it an INTRODUCTION; and observed, that 'it was calculated for learners, even of the lowest class.' To the ignorant and the idle, it may seem difficult; but what difficulty is there in the rules or the notes of this treatise, compared with the perplexities of a Latin, or a French grammar? (Robertson 1798: 31–32).

Despite the fact that *The Child's Grammar* was originally designed as an introduction to Lowth's authoritative grammar, Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2000c) believed that Fenn had based her grammar on Lindley Murray's popular *English Grammar* (1795) because of the resemblance of the descriptions of parts of speech between both grammars, such as:

Murray:

A Pronoun is a word used instead of a noun, to avoid the too frequent repetition of the same word (1795: 29).

Fenn:

A Pronoun is a word used *instead* of a Noun, to avoid the too frequent repetition of the same word (1795: 4).

However, since this definition of the pronoun can already be found in Fenn's earlier works *The Art of Teaching in Sport* (1785: 44) and *A Spelling Book* (1787a: 118), it is unlikely that Fenn based herself on Murray's *English Grammar*, a work which appears to have been published after Fenn's *Child's Grammar*. In *A Spelling Book* (1787a) Fenn tells her young readers that "A PRONOUN is a word used instead of a noun to avoid the too frequent repetition of the same word" (Fenn 1787a: 118). In *The Art of Teaching in Sport* (1785), the book accompanying her *Set of Toys*, Fenn not only included this definition, but also provided her young audience with an example sentence in order to illustrate the use of the pronoun *he*:

John is merry; *he* jumps, *he* laughs, and *he* chatters; you would not say *John* is merry; *John* jumps; *John* laughs, and *John* chatters (1785: 44).

When we compare Fenn's definition of the pronoun in *The Art of Teaching in Sport* and *A Spelling Book* with that of Ash's in his *Grammatical Institutes*, it immediately becomes clear that Fenn must have consulted his grammar while writing her own works. In Ash's *Grammatical Institutes: or grammar, adapted to the genius of the English tongue*, the following definition of the pronoun can be found:

A *Pronoun* is a Word us'd *instead* of a Noun to avoid the *too frequent* repetition of the *same* Word: as, "The Man is merry, *he* laughs, *he* sings." (1760: 15).

In *The Child's Grammar* Fenn, slightly varying Ash's example sentence, informs us that it is

Not John is merry; John jumps; John laughs, and sings – this would be very awkward – we say – John is merry; *he* jumps, *he* laughs, and *he* sings (1795: 5).

Fenn is thus actually making Ash's original rule much more prescriptive here, similarly to Lindley Murray, who "turned what was no more than a descriptive statement in Lowth's grammar into a strongly prescriptive one: 'But *it is better* to express an affirmation by a regular affirmative than by two negatives'" (Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2008d: 204).

Not only Fenn's definition of the pronoun, but also her definitions of the noun, the adjective and the verb in *The Art of Teaching in Sport* seem to have been borrowed from Ash's grammar. As regards the article Fenn came up with a definition herself: "And when you have learned the line which explains the noun, and that which explains these little words which are placed before them, you will be able to play" (1785: 40). Fenn's *Spelling Book* similarly contains definitions of the noun and the adjective which echo those of Ash's. Although the *Spelling Book* lists six parts of speech, Fenn did not provide her audience with definitions of the article or the preposition, and in the case of the verb, she provided a definition of her own: "WHATEVER you *do* is a verb", because, as she explains, "This is easily exemplified to the little one" (1787a: 113).

The extent to which Fenn relied on Ash's grammar while composing her own works is most clear when we look at her description of the parts of speech. Just like Ash, Fenn distinguished ten parts of speech in her *Child's Grammar*, *Mother's Grammar*, *Parsing Lessons for Young Children*, and *Parsing Lessons for Elder Pupils*. Her definitions of eight of these parts of speech, the article, noun, pronoun, adjective, participle, adverb, conjunction, and preposition, are all similar to those found in Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*. In the case of the verb, however, Fenn adopted Lowth's definition for *The Child's Grammar* and *The Mother's Grammar*, while the two volumes of *Parsing Lessons* contain the definition from Ash. Fenn's definition of the interjection is also of great interest. Instead of depending on either Lowth ("The interjection, thrown in to express the affection of the speaker, though unnecessary with respect to the construction of the sentence", Lowth 1762: 9) or Ash ("AN *Interjection* is a Word that expresses any *sudden Motion* of the Mind, *transported* with the Sensation of Pleasure, or Pain; as, *O! Oh! Alas! lo! &c.*", Ash 1760: 36), she borrowed from both of these definitions in drawing up her own: "An Interjection is a *word thrown* in to express any sudden emotion of the mind but not necessary to the sense. Mary is a good girl; *oh!* how I love her. *Ah!* What a nice doll" (1795: 20). While providing a definition of the adjective in *The Mother's Grammar*, Fenn not

only copied Ash's definition as well but also his examples "a *good* Man" and "a *great* City" (1760: 13), substituting Ash's "a *fine* House" by "a neat church" (1798: 10).

Another instance in which Fenn borrowed from Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* can be found in her definition of the adverb in *The Mother's Grammar*:

Ash:

An *Adverb*, is a Part of Speech *join'd* to a *Verb*, an *Adjective*, a *Participle*, and sometimes to another *Adverb*, to express the *Quality*, or *Circumstance* of it: as, He reads *well*, a *truly* good Man, a *very* loving Friend. He writes *very correctly* (1760: 34).

Fenn:

An *Adverb* is a part of speech joined to a verb, an adjective, a participle, and sometimes another adverb, to express the quality or circumstance of it: as, Mary reads *well*; she is *very* good; she is a *truly* loving sister; you work *very* neatly (c. 1795/1796: 10–11).

In *The Child's Grammar* Fenn had used similar example sentences as "You read well", "I write ill or badly", "A truly good girl", "A much beloved friend", "You read very well" (1795: 7) to illustrate the use of the adverb. Probably because the two volumes of *Parsing lessons* were written as companions to *The Child's* and *Mother's Grammar*, they only give the definitions of the parts of speech and do not contain any example sentences. Fenn's indebtedness to Ash can further be perceived when we consider her discussion of gender:

Ash:

11. There are *two* *Genders*; the *Masculine*, and the *Feminine*.
12. The *Masculine* denotes the *He-Kind*; as, a *Man*; a *Prince*.
13. The *Feminine* denotes the *She-Kind*; as, a *Woman*; a *Princess*.
14. Nouns signifying Things *withou[t]* *Life*, are of *no* *Gender*; as, a *Pen*; a *Table* (1760: 9–10).

Fenn (The Child's Grammar):

There are two genders, the *masculine* and *feminine*. The *masculine* denotes the he-kind. The *feminine* denotes the she-kind. Nouns which signify things without life are of no gender; so they are called of the neuter gender (1795: 13).

Fenn (The Mother's Grammar):

Nouns have two genders, the *masculine* and the *feminine*: the *masculine* denotes the *he-kind*, the *feminine* denotes the *she* kind [sic]. Nouns signifying things without life are of no gender; they are sometimes called of the *neuter* gender (c. 1795/1796: 15).

For all that, I only came across a single reference to Ash in *The Mother's Grammar*:

THE Participle is often an adjective derived of a verb; as from the verb to *love* we derive the participles *loved* and *loving*. Ash (Fenn c. 1795/1796: 48).

The fact that we encounter a proper reference to Ash in *The Mother's Grammar* is not strange, since in the preface to this work Fenn had pointed out that the work was in fact a compilation:

The substance is professedly borrowed; but being extracted from the works of our best writers upon English Grammar, it is hoped that it will not be unacceptable to those ladies who are engaged in tuition, and consequently have not much leisure to turn over various authors in search of further information upon any subject than is immediately required, as being suited to the capacities of their younger pupils: *such* it is meant to supply; and to enable the teacher to express and enlarge: therefore sometimes two or three passages are quoted much to the same effect (Fenn c. 1795/1796: iii).

Apart from referring to Ash's grammar, Fenn also included references to the following authors in her *Mother's Grammar*:

James Beattie (1788), *The Theory of Language. In two parts. Part I. Of origin and general nature of speech. Part II. Of universal grammar* (1)

Abel Boyer (1694), *The Complete French Master, for ladies and gentlemen (a translation of Guy Miège's Grammaire Angloise-François, 1688)* (1)

John Clarke (1733), *A New Grammar of the Latin Tongue and An Essay upon the Education of Youth in Grammar-Schools* (2)

The Eton grammar (2)

Samuel Johnson (1755), *A Dictionary of the English Language* (2)

Robert Lowth (1762), *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* (4)

As I have pointed out in Chapter 1, Fenn was by no means the first nor the only one to compose a compilation which was extracted from the works of the "best writers upon English Grammar". According to the early nineteenth-century grammarian Thomas Martin, however, Fenn did not acknowledge all her sources in *The Mother's Grammar*. In his *Philological Grammar of the English Language* (1824) Martin stated: "She tells us that 'the substance is professedly borrowed,' but she does not name the author who *lent* her the idea that 'an

adjective has in itself no meaning', that 'a pronoun has two cases' or that the articles 'are three'" (Martin 1824: 224–225). I similarly came across some instances in *The Mother's Grammar* where Fenn indeed borrowed "a few passages" from Lowth's *Short Introduction of English Grammar* but did not acknowledge the book as a source (see Navest 2008b: 229–31; 233).

As I demonstrated in Chapter 4, Lindley Murray's main reason for not acknowledging his sources in his *English Grammar* (1795) was that he did not want to crowd the pages of his grammar "with a repetition of names and references" (Murray 1798: 7). According to Reibel (1996: xxii), Murray clearly realised that his target audience, "school children, or their teachers, who usually lacked a classical education [...] would be little concerned with where the material came from". Fenn similarly believed that it was not pedagogically useful to refer to other grammarians in an elementary grammar for children. This is the reason why we only find references to grammarians like Ash and Lowth in *The Mother's Grammar*, a work which apart from being targeted at mothers and teachers could prepare little boys for their classical education in school (Fenn c. 1795/1796: iv).

Fenn's definition of the participle, as it can be found in *The Mother's Grammar* (see above), is of further interest as it gives us an indication which edition of Ash's grammar Fenn might have drawn upon. While discussing the participle in the fourth and later editions of his grammar, Ash noted that "A *Participle* is *derived of a Verb*, and *partakes of the Nature both the Verb and the Adjective*" (1769: 55), later adding that "In the Formation of the Participle, if the Verb ends in *e*, the *e* is *omitted*: as, love, *loving*, *loved*" (1769: 57).

However, if we compare the quotation from Ash's grammar in *The Mother's Grammar* to Ryland's editions of Ash's grammar, it turns out that Fenn must have relied either on these or on the first (1760) edition of Ash's grammar, as these are similar to her own account of the passive:

82. A *Participle* is an *Adjective deriv'd of a Verb*.

83. There are *two Participles* pertaining to most Verbs; the *active*, which *always ends in ing*; and the *passive*, which for the *most part*, ends in *ed*; as, from the

Verb, *love*, are derived [1760, deriv'd] the participles *loving* and, *loved* (Ash 1766: 33; Ash 1760: 27).

Fenn's familiarity either with the 1760 edition of Ash's grammar or with the editions edited by Ryland can further be inferred from her description of the tenses:

Fenn: The preter-imperfect denotes the time *not fully* compleated; as I loved, or was loving (*The Mother's Grammar* (c. 1795/1796: 44).

Ash: The *imperfect* denotes the Time *not fully compleated*; as I loved, or was loving (1760: 18).

Ryland: The *imperfect* denotes the Time not fully compleated; as I loved, or was loving (1766: 17).

Ash: The *Imperfect* denotes the Time past indeterminately: as, I loved; or, was loving (1769: 43).

I believe that Fenn must have consulted one of Ryland's editions of Ash's grammar, since these include a so-called "Library for Little Boys and Girls", a seventeen-page reading list, which, as I showed in §2.3.2, was compiled by Ryland. Because 26 titles from Ryland's library can also be found in "Mrs. Teachwell's library for her young ladies" at the back of Fenn's *Female Guardian* (1784) it is very likely that Fenn turned to Ryland's list while she was compiling her own in the 1780s.

6.5. Differences between the grammars by Ash and Fenn

For all the similarities between them, there are also some differences between Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* and Fenn's grammatical works, which suggest that Fenn did not copy Ash's work uncritically. Although Fenn included Ash's definition of the preposition in *The Child's Grammar*, the explanation and example sentences she provided were much more suitable for children than those found in Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*:

Ash:

A *Preposition* is a Word set before Nouns, or Pronouns to express the Relation of Persons, Places, or Things to each other; as, He came *to*, and stood *before* the City (1760: 35-36).

Fenn:

A Preposition is a word *set before* nouns and pronouns to express the relation of persons, places and things to each other. See

Mary came *to* me.

John is come *from* school.

To and *from* are prepositions.

A preposition is not significant of itself; but of great use to unite two significant words.

My papa is gone [to] London.

My brother is [in] Scotland.

My uncle is [at] Dover.

Leave out the preposition and the sentences will be unintelligible.

I stand you

Putney is London

This is nonsense – add *by* and *near*, and you understand my meaning

(*The Child's Grammar* 1795: 20).

In *The Friend of Mothers* (1799) Fenn similarly advised mothers to:

Lay sentences, omitting a word, and require the word omitted to be discovered.

Am church going I: I am going – church. “Oh!” he cries, “the word *to* is wanted.”

This affords an opportunity of explaining to him the use of prepositions (Fenn 1799: 44–45).

Fenn's discussion of the noun as it can be found in *The Mother's Grammar* is also of great interest. After giving Ash's definition, Fenn pointed out: “There are *nouns* which are not the objects of our outward senses; such as qualities of the mind, *goodness, valour, &c. &c* but these should be reserved till the pupil is familiar with the distinction of the different parts of speech” (c. 1795/1796: 9). A few pages later she reiterated that “[y]oung grammarians will not readily conceive an idea of any noun which is not an object of sense: it is therefore expedient to confine ourselves to such at the beginning” (c. 1795/1796: 13).

In contrast to Fenn, Ash did not make such a distinction in his definition of the noun, even including one of the examples (*goodness*) that Fenn advised mothers to avoid:

A *Noun, or Substantive*, is the *Name* of any *Person, Place, or Thing*; as *John, London, Honor, Goodness* (1760: 8).

In *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* Fenn even provided mothers with some hints how to illustrate the idea of a noun to their children:

The room is full of nouns; you cannot turn your head but you see one – the *table*, the *chair*, &c. – these you see; they are therefore nouns [...] I can shew you these, or pictures of them – we can have no pictures of any words but nouns (1798a: 6).

That cuts, i.e. “illustrated and labelled flash cards” (Immel 1997: 222), were Fenn's favourite teaching aid (*ODNB*, s.v. Fenn, Ellenor) can also be inferred from *The Friend of Mothers* where she stated that “[t]hese [grammar] lessons may be rendered delightful by the assistance of cuts: moveable ones, to be produced after the lessons, are best; or such as have their names at the back” (Fenn 1799: 34). Fenn continued to design different sets of these cuts until the end of her life (Immel 1997: 223).

According to Immel (1997: 222), Fenn was not the first to come up with the idea of using cards for teaching. Already in 1659 the educational reformer Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670) had used “labelled pictures to make learning easier for children” in his famous *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (Arizpe and Styles 2006: 87). A year later, the translator of Comenius's work, Charles Hoole commended the use of “pictures and letters printed [...] on the back side of a pack of cards, to entice children, that naturally love that sport, to the love of learning their books” in his *New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole* (1660) (Hoole 1660: 8, as quoted from Arizpe and Styles 2006: 72–73). In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) John Locke had likewise noted that as soon as a child “begins to spell, as many pictures of animals should be got for him as can be found, with the printed names to them which at the same time will invite him to read” (as quoted from Arizpe and Styles 2004: 59). According to Cunningham (2005: 61) during the eighteenth century Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* “became the guide for innumerable middle-class families”, and more than twelve editions had been published by 1750. As Locke's work was very popular at the time, Fenn may have picked up the idea of using pictures for teaching from him. Colourfully illustrated alphabet cards, and “word and verse cards organized around syllables, parts of speech, and common items from daily life” can also be found in Jane Johnson's *Nursery*

Library (Heath 1997: 20), a special hand-made library which the vicar's wife Jane Johnson (1706–1759) had prepared for the education of her daughter Barbara (1738–1824) and her son George (1740–1814) (Arizpe and Styles 2006: xxii n.3; 208).¹⁶ Finally it is worth noting that cards for the teaching of English grammar that appear to have been similar to those of Fenn's are also mentioned by Isaac Watts in his *Treatise on the Education of Youth* (1769 [2nd ed]: 114): "May not some little Tablets of Pasteboard be made in Imitation of *Cards*; which might teach the unlearned several Parts of Grammar" (1769 [2nd ed]: 114).

In contrast to Ash, Fenn believed that grammar could be taught out of doors as well. In *The Friend of Mothers* (1799) we hear a mother telling her children: "Now, put on your hats, and we will walk in the garden: there we shall see abundance of nouns" (1799: 53). Since it was "as portable as a card", Fenn's popular *Child's Grammar* could equally be studied while walking outside (1799: 59). Her *Grammar Box*, too, contained stiff sheets with grammar lessons which allowed children "to study as they walk" (1785: 47). In *The Art of Teaching in Sport* (1785), a mother indeed presents her children with such a sheet, asserting that before they can "play with the box of adjectives" they should "learn that little piece [i.e. the definition of the adjective which was printed on the sheet] by heart as you walk in the garden" (1785: 43). In *The Friend of Mothers* (1799) a young girl is given a similar sheet by her mother: "Now, Elizabeth, learn that little piece by heart, as you walk in the garden; and when you return, perhaps you may be able to discover which are adjectives, as I read or repeat sentences to you" (Fenn 1799: 54).

In proposing to the teaching of grammar in the open air, Fenn appears to have been influenced by the Abbé Noël Antoine Pluche's (1688–1761) *Spectacle de la Nature* (1732–1751). According to Koepp (2006: 154), "Pluche's *Spectacle de la nature* was a phenomenal best-seller throughout Europe". The English

¹⁶ The contents of Jane Johnson's Nursery Library can be accessed via the following website: http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/findingaids/view?doc.view=entire_text&docId=InU-Li-VAA1275.

translation of this “beautifully illustrated eight volume text” had gone through twenty-two editions before 1800 (Koepp 2009: 246), and Fenn may have been familiar with it. Although Koepp (2006: 159) notes that Pluche’s work “played a major role in increasing an interest in natural history”, she also argues that it was in fact a “‘how-to’ book on effective teaching and parenting” and that this may have well been one of the reasons for its success. Just like Pluche, who in his *Spectacle* had pointed out to parents “that even a simple walk, can provide an opportunity for learning” (Koepp 2006: 161), Fenn presents us with the image of “[t]he intelligent Mother, who walks abroad with her Child”, not only to improve its health but also its knowledge (Fenn 1799: 35). Fenn shared Pluche’s interest in natural history, as can be inferred from her publications *Lilliputian Spectacle de la Nature* (c. 1786), *The Rational Dame* (1786), *A Short History of Insects* (1796), and *A Short History of Quadrupeds* (c. 1790) (Stoker 2009: 66–69). According to Stoker (2007: 832), Fenn’s three-volume *Lilliputian Spectacle de la Nature; or, nature delineated, in conversations and letters passing between the children of a family* (1786) was inspired by Pluche’s *Spectacle*, as indeed the title suggests. Percy (2006: 112) likewise states that in “her use of a grammar ‘box’ rather than books”, Fenn depended on Pluche’s popular work.

Fenn offered a graded approach to grammar teaching, another difference between her grammatical works and Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes*, and this can similarly be traced back to Pluche. According to Koepp (2006: 158), in his *Spectacle* Pluche “had promised his audience that he would not let things get too difficult too soon: ‘We will change our path if it proves too rugged’ and strike out on the ‘most agreeable and amusing track – so long as it will lead us eventually to the same place’” (Koepp 2006: 158). In her earliest work on grammar, *The Art of Teaching in Sport* (1785), Fenn had similarly told mothers that her “heart glows at the idea of smoothing the thorny paths of a thousand little innocents” (Fenn 1785: 23). In addition, like Pluche before her, she believed that a mother should regulate “the Measure of Instruction she gives

her Children by their actual Capacity” (Pluche 1763: 36; see also Koepp 2006: 162). Thus, in *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* (1798a) Fenn told mothers:

This book being designed for Children of different ages, examples are given of every part of speech; but it cannot be too often inculcated, that beginners must long be kept to the five first; of which they may be led to conceive a clear idea; and in them should enter upon no distinction the first time of going through them. In the following set of lessons the younger Pupils must leave all beyond 5 as *particles*. All should acquire the names by rote very perfectly, *article, noun, &c.* only very young ones must not attempt to distinguish beyond the *verb* (1798a: 15).

Already in *The Art of Teaching in Sport* (1785) Fenn had stressed that her motto in teaching was “Peu à peu” (Fenn 1785: 21). In *The Teacher’s Assistant in the Art of Teaching Grammar in Sport*, which was first published in 1809, Fenn similarly noted that

the greatest caution must be used not to proceed too fast in expectation. We cannot too often put ourselves in the place of a child; we cannot expect too little. Whoever has the patience to sow grain by grain, may almost depend upon a plentiful crop in time: but we must not look for it to spring up at once: we must consider that there is a long interval between seed-time and harvest” (Fenn 1809: 10–11).

Fenn’s comment echoes that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s in his popular *Emile*, which was published in 1762 and “translated into English in the same year – a sign of the interest it provoked” (Woodley 2009: 24):

Some of my readers, even of those who agree with me, will think that it is only a question of a conversation with the young man at any time. Oh, this is not the way to control the human heart. What we say has no meaning unless the opportunity has been carefully chosen. Before we sow we must till the ground; the seed of virtue is hard to grow; and a long period of preparation is required before it will take root (Rousseau 1762: 284).

Because of her experience as a children’s writer, Fenn’s parsing lessons were much more suitable for young learners than those found in Ash’s grammar, which, as I have demonstrated in §3.3, were taken from the Bible (Samuel 17: 45; 46, and Genesis 45: 1–6), Pope’s translation of the *Iliad* and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*.

Probably because of her interest in natural history the majority of Fenn’s parsing lessons feature flowers, trees, insects and farm animals (Cajka 2003:

162). Fenn not only inserted parsing lessons on subjects familiar to children but also made sure that these lessons were adapted to “the tender age of the Pupil” (1798a: vii), as can be inferred from her *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* where she stated that

if a sentence be not perfectly level to the capacity of our young grammarian, how is it possible that he should resolve it into the elements of which it is composed? No; Parsing Lessons for a Child must be in the most easy and simple language (1798a: vii).

It is worth mentioning that the parsing lessons about the horse, ox, sheep, ass, hog, goat, deer, cat and dog that can be found in *Parsing Lessons for Elder Pupils* (1798b) were in fact taken from one of Fenn's books on natural history, *The Rational Dame, or hints towards supplying prattle for children* (1786). Since the parts of speech dealt with in these lessons are given in italics (e.g. “THE *horse* is a noble *creature* and very useful to *man*”; “The ass is *humble, patient, and quiet*”; “A goat *is* like a sheep; but the goat *has* no wool: he *has* hair” (Fenn 1798b: 16; 19; 21), Fenn advised mothers who possessed a copy of *The Rational Dame* “to lay the volume before the Pupil, whilst she keeps this [i.e. *Parsing Lessons for Elder Pupils*] in her view” (Fenn 1798b: 15). Apart from italics, Fenn also used numbers, i.e. 1. Article, 2. Noun, 3. Adjective, 4. Pronoun, 5. Verb, 6. Participle, 7. Adverb, 8. Conjunction, 9. Preposition, 10. Interjection, to indicate the parts of speech in her parsing lessons (Fenn 1798a: 18):

5	9	4	3	2		
Look	at	your	little	grammar		
5	1	2	9	4	3	2
Learn	a	piece	of	it	every	day

According to Fenn, the advantage of this method was that “a Child may, by means of a slip, amuse himself by trying his own skill” (Fenn 1798a: xi). She also noted that this “same method may be pursued in those [parsing lessons] where the Words are placed in columns and the Part of Speech put opposite” (Fenn 1798a: xi).

Furthermore, Fenn's parsing lessons enabled mothers to examine two children “at the same time, though their progress be not the same” (1798a: ix).

To illustrate this, with regard to the sentence “For her young”, Fenn informed mothers that for

to a very young grammarian [...] is named particle; to one who is conversant with all the parts of speech, preposition, or conjunction, according as it is used. – “For her young: ” – You remind your elder pupil, that *for* here shews the relation of the two nouns – the *bird* and her *nestlings*. Remark to all, that *young* is a noun, because it means *young ones*, or *young birds*: it would be an adjective, if the word *birds* were added (1798a: 36–37).

Although Ash had offered parents some advice on how to teach English grammar in his *Sentiments on Education* (1777), no advice such as that mentioned above could be found in his *Grammatical Institutes*. In the previous chapter I already pointed out that the novelist Fanny Burney consequently had no other choice but to ask her nephew for “some hints how to use Ash’s Grammar” while she was teaching her little boy grammar in March 1801. Given that Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* was published to assist some of the author’s “Friends who were concerned in the Education of Children” (1766: Advertisement), people, in other words, who did not need to be told how to teach English grammar, Ash must have considered it unnecessary to include any advice on how to use his work. That the same applied to the studying of Lowth’s *Short Introduction to English Grammar* is shown by Henry Bright, master of New-College School, Oxford, in his *Praxis: or, a course of English and Latin exercises* (1783). Instead of “being entered at once in the Latin Grammar” (1783: 6–7), Bright believed that the pupil

should be put into some concise, clear, and comprehensive System of English Grammar, such as is **the last Edition of Bishop Lowth’s Introduction, which having by the Master’s Explanation understood and digested**, he should often analyse English in a parsing Praxis, beginning always from short easy Portions, and proceeding by Degrees to longer Ones (1783: 7).

In contrast to Ash’s grammar, Fenn’s grammatical works were written to assist insecure mothers who did not have the advantage of having studied grammar

when they were young.¹⁷ To illustrate this, in *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* Fenn remarked that “[t]he office she has assumed is an humble one – that of Dame behind the curtain, to prompt such Mothers as are diffident of themselves” (1798a: v–vi).¹⁸

An example of a mother who viewed the teaching of English grammar “as an arduous undertaking” and was “fearful of engaging of it” (1798a: v) was Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire (1757–1806). When writing to her mother in September 1788, the Duchess of Devonshire was about to teach her five-year-old daughter “little G” (1783–1858) the rudiments of English grammar:

Tomorrow I shall write you my idea of grammar, and what each part of speech is, that I may see if I am fit to instruct my G. I am asham'd of my own ignorance but I must learn for and with her (ed. Bessborough 1955: 134).

The Duchess of Devonshire was thus in great need of a grammar like Fenn's, a work which was to be “Designed to enable ladies who may not have attended to the Subject themselves to instruct their Children” (1795: iii), and which contained useful hints such as in the following excerpts:

As a beginning of grammar, you may remark, that there can be no pictures of any kind of words except *nouns*. Parents must judge how much to communicate: perhaps a Child may very early comprehend the idea of a noun in its most simple definition; namely, “whatever you can see, hear, or feel:” the objects of sense only can be intelligible to a Child. Soon after, we may say that “a noun is the name of a person, place or thing,” and point some out. By degrees, the little Pupil will make discoveries, which will be highly interesting to him. These lessons may be rendered delightful by the assistance of cuts: moveable ones, to be produced after the lessons, are best; or such as have their names at the back, [...] But even without these aids, much may be done by a lively young mother, who will apply her vivacity to its best use – the information and improvement of her Children – and endeavour to render the lessons chearful by such observations as these: “*Barn* is a place where we keep corn; *Ball* is what you play with,” &c. Such remarks create pauses; they enliven the task; they prevent precipitation; and it can never be too often inculcated, that Children must not run on at will till they heave for breath, and then catch it with a noise like a pair of bellows (Fenn 1799: 32–34).

¹⁷ In *The Friend of Mothers* Fenn even adds that “[s]he hopes, too, that Grandmamma, doomed to a sedentary life, may enjoy the satisfaction of witnessing, and even assisting the lectures provided” (1799: v).

¹⁸ For a discussion on mothers' anxiety about teaching grammar, see Percy (2006: 116–120).

[...] it must be remarked by everyone who is conversant with Infants, that they make no use of pronouns till they are taught to do it (Fenn 1798a: 5).

Of a verb you may give Children an idea by keeping them long to active verbs, or at least [sic] common ones, and by telling them that *I, he, &c. &c.* can be prefixed to no other kind of words (Fenn 1798a: 4).

Ladies should be very cautious not to confuse the ideas of their pupils: for instance, take care not to convert a verb into a noun, by saying, "let us have a dance;" or, "give me a kiss." Neither must the name of colours be substantively used. Do not say, "I like red," &c (Fenn 1809: 12–13).

Mothers could also profit from the dialogues which Fenn provided in most of her work, such as the following dialogue which is taken from *The Friend of Mothers*:

Mamma

Let us play at grammar. Look for a noun: you need not seek far; the room is full of them – *Gown*. What is *Isabella*? – A noun proper. Now find a quality for her: she may be *good* or *naughty*. – Oh, *Mamma*! she is *good* (Fenn 1799: 61–62).

What do lambs do? – They bleat.

Bleat, then, is something that is done; it is therefore – a verb, *Mamma*, is it not? – It is, my dear. Now do you find some more verbs suited to lambs. They *frisk, skip, run, suck, &c.* And what is the word *they*? It is used instead of repeating the noun lambs – Oh! it is a pronoun (Fenn 1799: 63–64).

Those mothers who possessed a copy of Fenn's popular *Child's Grammar* could also benefit from a "list of queries, referring to the respective pages of the Grammar" (Fenn 1809: 24) that could be found at the end of the work. In *The Teacher's Assistant in the Art of Teaching Grammar in Sport* (1809) Fenn explained that the main reason for adding these queries was "to spare trouble to the teacher, in recollecting every circumstance; or (as the grammarians style the variations) *accidents*" (Fenn 1809: 24).

Ash, as I demonstrated in Chapter 2, had originally written his *Grammatical Institutes* for his little daughter, but he appears to have published the work so that it could be used in his friends' schools. Instead of what Michael (1993: 2–3) labels a "home text", Ash's grammar became widely known as a "school text". Despite the fact that Fenn's grammars were primarily intended for home use, Michael (1987: 184) points out that they "were certainly used in school" as well. In contrast to Ash's publishers, Edward and Charles Dilly, Elizabeth

Newbery and John Harris made sure that Fenn's grammatical works "appealed to both the home and the school markets" (Michael 1993: 3). That Fenn's grammars were not only targeted at mothers who were educating their children at home, but also at schoolteachers is most evident from *Parsing Lessons for Elder Pupils*. In this work, which was issued by Elizabeth Newbery in 1798, Fenn observed that

[i]n a School, which does not admit of so much attention being paid to each individual as might be afforded by a Mother; and where, of course, there are many Pupils in the same class, any of the lessons may be used thus: Copy a certain portion for the lesson of the day; and let each Pupil consider it by himself; then parse it by word of mouth to the Teacher, or do it in writing, and shew it to the Teacher; who to spare trouble, can compare it with the book (Fenn 1798b: 4).

That Fenn's grammars were indeed used in schools at the time can further be inferred from Trimmer's review of "Mrs. Lovechild's Series of Grammatical Knowledge" which was discussed in the section "Schoolbooks" in *The Guardian of Education*, and from the fact that *The Child's Grammar* was advertised as one of John Harris's "Popular Books for Schools and Private Tuition" (*Derby Mercury*, 13 May 1829).

From Ryland's editions of Ash's grammar we may gather that Ash's work was targeted at "Children under ten Years of Age" (1766: Advertisement). Fenn seems to have had a similar audience in mind for her grammars, but her works are different from Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* in that they offer "instruction to the various branches of the family, according to their respective age and progress" (Fenn 1799: v). To illustrate this, in *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* Fenn provided an example in which two siblings had to parse the sentence "Lambs bleat":

A young Child.

Lambs – noun, we see them, &c.

An elder one.

Lambs – plural nominative – going before the verb answering the question *what*.

A young Child.

Bleat – verb – it is something which they *do*.

An elder.

Plural agreeing with the nominative Lambs. *Third person – Indicative mode*, as it declares something – *Present tense*; it means now, at this time (1798a: xii).

Similarly in *The Teacher's Assistant to the Art of Teaching Grammar in Sport* Fenn advised mothers to “[k]eep the beginner long to finding the nouns in a sentence, then the adjectives, then the pronouns, and after that, the verb” (1809: 14). In *The Friend of Mothers* she gave the following advice regarding the instruction of elder pupils:

To various other uses of the single words, let me add, that they may be made conducive to elegance in forming a stile. An elder Child may be told why such a sentence would have been more elegant, had the words been placed in such or such a manner: propriety ought first to have been remarked. Take an instance of a common error: *Whom did you give my grammar to?* A preposition ought not to conclude a sentence. – *To whom did you give my grammar?* Though the meaning remains the same, the language is improved (Fenn 1799: 46).

As shown by Yáñez-Bouza (2008a; 2008b), strictures against the use of ending a sentence with a preposition were very common in eighteenth-century grammars. Ash did not discuss preposition stranding in his grammar, but Fenn apparently thought it was necessary to inform mothers and elder children of this shibboleth.

6.6. Conclusion

When advertising Lady Ellenor Fenn's grammatical works in *The Morning Chronicle* of 17 December 1816, Fenn's publisher John Harris declared: “THE following popular little WORKS are so well known, that they scarcely need the aid of an advertisement; but the Publisher is desirous of reminding the Public that he has printed new editions of them, and on which good allowance is made to Schools”. In his “list of New and Useful Books for Young Persons” at the back of *The Monthly Review* (1818), moreover, he pointed out that “the immense sale which they have had, and the continued demand there is for most of them, precludes the necessity of saying more in their praise” (see also Immel 1997: 227n.6). In the present chapter I have shown that the popularity of Lady Ellenor Fenn's “Child's and Mother's Grammars, and other Helps for attaining a

Grammatical Knowledge of the English Language", as Harris advertised Fenn's series of grammar books in *The Morning Chronicle* of 16 August 1805, lasted well beyond her lifetime. Fenn's complete course of grammar teaching is of great interest as it was addressed to mothers as well as to children. When it came to teaching the subject of grammar Fenn believed that "a sprightly young Woman, who will condescend to avail herself of the experience of an old one, is the Person to initiate young students" (Fenn 1798a: vi). According to Cajka (2003: 169), Fenn's *Mother's Grammar*, for instance, gave ladies the "opportunity to study grammar on their own, saving them from the potential shame and embarrassment of buying, using, or even being discovered studying a book at a child's level of learning". In her grammars Fenn provided mothers with "useful and innovative teaching methods" (Beal et al. 2006b: 6, see also Percy 2010: 52-53.).

In addition, I have demonstrated that Fenn was not only familiar with Lowth's authoritative *Short Introduction to English Grammar* but with Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* as well. While writing her popular series of grammar books Fenn especially depended on Ash's grammar for the definitions of the parts of speech. As a result of this, Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, which had originally been written for his five year-old-daughter, continued to play a role in the teaching of English grammar among women and children, and it was through Fenn's, whose grammatical works were advertised as late as 1882, that Ash's influence continued well into the nineteenth century.

Though Fenn, like many of her contemporaries, was guilty of unacknowledged copying, or "borrowing a few passages", as she put it herself, she deserves credit for offering a simpler method of teaching grammar than Ash and for "rendering the entrance pleasant" (Fenn 1798b: x; 1798a: vii). In *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* (1798a) Fenn noted:

If I have any conceit, it is that I have acquired a knack of communicating the little knowledge which I possess, so as to be intelligible to the capacities and agreeable to the taste of infantine Pupils (1798a: vii).

Fenn's experience as an adoptive mother, aunt and Sunday schoolteacher enabled her to produce grammars for children that were unique at the time. Her publications could be used by children of different ages and contained parsing lessons "in the most easy and simple language" (Fenn 1798a: viii). In addition, her grammar lessons could be enlivened by the use of labelled illustrated cards and portable stiff sheets, which enabled children to study grammar as they walked in the garden. Fenn's views on learning were similar to those of John Locke and the Abbé Noël Antoine Pluche. In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) Locke had already advocated the use of labelled pictures as teaching aids. Just like Pluche, Fenn stressed the importance of a so-called graded approach and recommended teaching children in the open air. Fenn's graded approach was similar to Lindley Murray's, even though she, as I have shown, did not rely on his *English Grammar* (1795), a work which was published during the same year as her popular *Child's Grammar*.

Because of her graded approach to grammar and her focus on women's self-education, I agree with Tiekens-Boon van Ostade (2000c) that Fenn deserves to be included in any next edition of the *Lexicon Grammaticorum*. By publishing her little volumes on grammar Fenn not only succeeded in "smoothing the thorny paths of a thousands little innocents – of sparing the tears of helpless infants" (Fenn 1785: 23), but also "in teaching mothers how they may best succeed in the most delightful and praiseworthy of all employments, the early education of their offspring" (Anon. 1799: 53). This was important in a time when there was no compulsory education and no teacher training colleges (Austin 2003). In addition, Fenn's innovative approach to grammar teaching also inspired nineteenth-century children's writers to compose grammatical works for their young audiences. These children's grammars will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7. Fenn and nineteenth-century female grammarians

7.1. Introduction

In her *Private Education* (1815), the educationist Elizabeth Appleton, as I have shown in the previous chapter, not only recommended Fenn's *Mother's Grammar* but also provided her audience with some additional hints on teaching English grammar:

Articles are, generally, the first parts of speech in the arrangements of grammarians: with them the little girl must stay until she is fully acquainted with their use, and then advance to the substantive. In the course of a walk a thousand objects present themselves. – When the little heart is bounding in gaiety and health we may insinuate instruction without ever damping enjoyment: we might at such a time endeavour to draw out theory for practical use. The parent or preceptress can say, “There is a fine horse grazing in the meadow: will you tell me what is the word horse in grammar?” The pupil will instantly answer, “Horse is a substantive,” “Why?” – “Because you can see him. Frock is a substantive, I can feel it; flower, I can smell; birds, I can hear whistle; so horse, and flower, and birds, are substantives. Oh, and fruit I can taste, so fruit is a substantive.” Thus might a child prattle as it skipped along the green fields, and pleased with fancied discoveries, repeat a lesson of grammar (Appleton 1815: 86–87).

Appleton's advice is of great interest as it echoes Fenn's remarks about the teaching of grammar in the open air. Appleton, however, was by no means the only woman writer to be influenced by Fenn's grammatical works at the time. In this chapter I will show that, while composing their children's grammars, the nineteenth-century children's writers Eliza Fenwick, E. Ballantine, Jane Haldimand Marcet and Julia Corner appear to have been inspired by Fenn's grammatical treatises as well. I will deal with these grammar writers one by one to show the extent to which they were influenced by Fenn, and through Fenn by Ash. Finally, reasons will be given why nineteenth-century grammars for children are an interesting topic for a further, more detailed study.

In order to examine the extent to which the eighteenth-century British women grammarians “may have influenced the rising generation of woman

scholars and writers”, Cajka (2003: 267–269) composed an appendix of nineteenth-century English grammars for future research. While the grammars of Fenwick, Marcet and Corner are included in this appendix, Ballantine’s *Decoy* is not mentioned by Cajka. A possible reason for this is that the author of *The Decoy*, like the female grammarian Ann Fisher before her (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2000c), had published her grammar anonymously. Although *The Decoy* was written anonymously, the contents of the work suggest that the work must have been written by a lady. The work is included here because of its attractiveness and because it was published by Darton, Harvey and Darton whose firm was well known for its children’s books, educational aids and pastimes (see Darton 2004; Shefrin 2009).

7.2. Fenwick’s Rays from the Rainbow

Instead as the author of an “interactive paint-by-numbers grammar book” (Paul 2006: 439), Eliza Fenwick (1766?–1840) is nowadays best remembered as Mary Wollstonecraft’s friend who sat at her “side when she died [...] [and] was the first nurse to the newborn daughter, later to become Mary Shelley” (Paul 2006: 428). Fenwick’s *Rays from the Rainbow. Being an easy method for perfecting children in the first principles of grammar* (1812) was published for Wollstonecraft’s husband William Godwin (1756–1836), whose children’s bookshop the Juvenile Library could be found at No. 41, Skinner-Street, London (Fenwick 1812: cover). The body of Fenwick’s grammar consisted of “RULES for the CONDUCT OF LIFE EXTRACTED FROM THE SCRIPTURES”; it starts with “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother”, and concludes: “REMEMBER now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the devil days come not, nor the years draw high when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (Fenwick 1812: 1; 58; Grundy 1998: 15).

Fenwick’s grammar is of great interest, since it used “little [coloured] rectangulars under each word” to teach children the different parts of speech

(Grundy 1998: 15; Fenwick 1812: iii). Each part of speech had its own colour: Article (Purple), Noun (Blue), Adjective (Orange), Pronoun (Sky-blue), Verb (Red), Participles (Pink), Adverb (Yellow), Preposition (Green), Conjunction (Pea-green), Interjection (Straw-colour). Whereas a ready-coloured copy of *Rays from the Rainbow* could be purchased for 3 shillings, a plain one that children could paint themselves cost 1 shilling only (Fenwick 1812: cover; Grundy 1998: 15–16). In the preface Fenwick explained that her grammar was “sold plain as well as coloured” (Fenwick 1812: v), since according to her

[e]very child is fond of the use of paints; and will therefore, with the least degree of skill in the introduction of the amusement, very gladly employ his industry in colouring a copy for himself. He may first colour a plain copy from a coloured copy before him. It will be another step clearly gained in the ladder of improvement, when he is able to colour a copy from his own memory and observation only, without a model (Fenwick 1812: viii).

Whereas a coloured copy can be found in the Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books in the Public Library in Toronto, the British Library has a plain copy among its collection. Interestingly, only the first four pages of this copy were painted in. In the preface Fenwick further stated that in her *Rays from the Rainbow*:

Blue and *red* are assigned to the NOUN and the VERB, as being the two chief or cardinal colours. The NOUN is *blue*, and the PRONOUN *sky-blue*; the ADJECTIVE *orange*, and the ADVERB *yellow*; to mark the affinity of the first to the second and of the third to the fourth (Fenwick 1812: xii).

She clearly believed that “[w]hen the child has gone through fifty-eight pages of substantives, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, &c. first having his discrimination assisted by colours, and then going through the same task without that assistance, he will by that time be found sufficiently grounded to be able to perform a good deal of the same sort of task upon any book that is put before him” (Fenwick 1812: v).

Although in December 1811 *The Monthly Chronicle* described Fenwick’s forthcoming grammar as “AN ENTIRELY NEW INVENTION” (*The Monthly Chronicle*, 26 December 1811), Fenwick’s innovative use of colours to distinguish the different parts of speech can in fact be traced back to Fenn. In

The Teacher's Assistant in the Art of Teaching Grammar in Sport (1809) Fenn had already noted that

[t]he words in sheets [that were included in the accompanying teaching scheme *Mrs. Lovechild's Box of Grammatical Amusement* (1809)] are designed to bring beginners acquainted with the parts of speech. **Those, of which it is most easy to give an idea, may be marked by colours;** the rest, should be sunk to young grammarians, under the general appellation of particles; words of less consequence than the others; and which he cannot yet learn to distinguish (Fenn 1809: 12).

A few pages later she similarly observed that while the “Nouns are distinguished by cuts”, or pictures, “the other parts of speech, which can be rendered intelligible to children” and that could be found in the *Box* “may be distinguished by a colour at the back” (Fenn 1809: 16).

Fenwick's grammar offered a graded approach that similarly resembled that of Fenn's, as can be inferred from the preface where Fenwick observed:

If he were set in the first instance to name the part of speech of each word just as it occurs, his tender capacity might be apt to be confused with the variety of colours; just as if, supposing me to lead him to a garden plat where all the varieties of flowers are growing in gay confusion; he would be hardly able at first to say, “This is a tulip,” and “This is a rose” (Fenwick 1812: iv).

She believed that as a result of having used her grammar, “[t]he infant mind will no longer be confounded by an obligation to consider and analyse ten parts of speech, in a single half-hour, but will be led on by the most natural process, from the knowledge of one part of speech, to that of two, and so onward, till insensibly he finds himself able to give an account of them all” (Fenwick 1812: 60).

Another similarity between Fenwick's work and Fenn's grammars is that, just like Fenn, Fenwick had designed her grammar for both home and school use. In the preface to *Rays from the Rainbow* she explained that apart from being “a very agreeable amusement in play-hours and holidays” (Fenwick 1812: viii),

[t]he next purpose of this book is, to be used in school by a whole class or circle of pupils at once, as they stand round the master or governess. Each child, while the master or governess has a book lying open, from which to repeat the words to the pupils, will now name his part of speech from memory, till the class is

gone through, which then begins again with the head-child, and so on as long as the Lesson continues (Fenwick 1812: iv–v).

There is some evidence that Fenwick's grammar was used in schools in Halifax, Yorkshire. Wood (1957: 23) describes Fenwick's *Rays from the Rainbow* as one of the "readers" in the possession of Anne Lister, whose life and ownership of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* have been discussed in Chapter 5. However, since Lister was already 21 at the time when Fenwick's grammar appeared, I believe that instead of using the work herself she must have recommended the grammar to Halifax schoolmasters and governesses in whose schools she "took an active interest" (*ODNB*, s.v. Lister, Anne). It is also interesting to speculate whether Fenwick might have used *Rays from the Rainbow* herself while she was working as a governess for the Honnor family of Lee Mount, near Cork, during the years 1812–1814. Grammar was indeed one of the subjects taught in the schoolroom at Lee Mount at the time, as can be inferred from the following fragment taken from a letter that Fenwick wrote to the writer Mary Hays (1759–1843) on 21 December 1813 (ed. Wedd 1927: 148):

Shall I give you a detail of my week? – Monday. – (allow always for a walk before breakfast when weather allows. In summer we breakfast at 8, now at ½ past). In School at nine (prayers before breakfast), Mary Anne at the instrument till 10; then begin **the English by rote lessons, consisting of spelling, grammar**, Geography, sections of Blair's Preceptor on the arts & sciences, & sections of History, together with prose reading from all (ed. Wedd 1927: 149).

7.3. *Ballantine's Decoy*

A year after the publication of Fenwick's *Rays from the Rainbow*, William Darton (1755–1819), Joseph Harvey (1764–1841) and Samuel Darton (1785–1840), whose firm at 55 Gracechurch Street, London, was renowned for its juvenile books (*ODNB*, s.v. Darton, William), published *The Decoy; or an agreeable method of teaching children the elementary parts of English grammar by conversations and familiar examples* (1813). Apart from a second edition which appeared in 1814, Michael (1987: 436) notes that there were "at least two

British and two American further editions to 1823". An eighth edition of *The Decoy*, published in 1836, is listed by Darton (2004: 16). *The Decoy* continued to be advertised as late as 1865, as is shown by advertisements for the work in Rev. J.G. Gregory's *Earth's Eventide and the Bright Dawn of the Eternal Day* (1865), Emma Jane Worboise's *The Wife's Trials* (1865), and Frank Edward Smedley's *Gathered Leaves: being a collection of the poetical writings of the late Frank E. Smedley* (1865). Although *The Decoy* was published anonymously, according to Darton (2004: 16), the work was written by E. Ballantine (*fl.* 1813). The book met with a favourable reception. *The British Critic* of 1813 listed *The Decoy* among the books "recommended as excellent Christmas boxes for Children" (Anon. 1813: 631). A year later *The Monthly Review* recommended the little book "as an useful present to the nursery; the dialogues being simple and amusing; and explaining clearly the nature of the different parts of speech" (Anon. 1814b: 212). In 1817 *The Juvenile Review* similarly praised the work because of its "very amusing anecdotes, chiefly from natural history" and because "the grammatical information is conveyed almost imperceptibly, while the stories and observations tend to improve the heart as well as the mind" (as quoted from Darton 2004: 16). Just like Fenn's *Child's Grammar*, *The Decoy* was one of the books studied by the young Princess Victoria in 1826 (Homans 1997: 177).

The heroine of *The Decoy* is Mary, "a little girl of six years old", who, just like the readers of Fenn's grammars, had "a kind mamma to teach her to read and work" ([1813] 1819: 5). We are told that

when Mary could read the little books which were given to her, without being obliged to spell any of the words, her mamma began talking to her about the different parts of speech; and she explained to her that it was necessary for her to become acquainted with them, in order that she might be able to speak and write correctly. Mary was very attentive to all her mother said; and, in six months, she understood so well what she had been taught, that she was permitted to begin learning a great deal more about them, from a book called a *Grammar*, which Mary did not find so very difficult as children generally do, who have no kind friend to prepare them for understanding it (Ballantine [1813] 1819: 5-6).

Not only the name of the girl featuring in Ballantine's grammar is identical to that in Fenn's *Child's* and *Mother's Grammars*, the discussion of the noun, as it can be found in *The Decoy*, similarly resembles those discussions on the same topic in Fenn's grammars (see §6.5 above):

MARY. Mamma, I remember what you told me yesterday about a *noun*; it is any thing which I can *see*, or touch, or think of. I see my bonnet, which is on the chair; and I can touch the table, which is near me; and I can think of my dear brother William, who is at school. So I suppose that brother is a noun. Is it not, mamma? MAMMA. Yes, my dear; You have remembered so well what I told you yesterday, that I think I may give you this short description of the ingenuity of the Laplanders, and beg that you will draw a line with your pencil, under every word which you think is a noun (Ballantine [1813] 1819: 6–7).

In order to show children what a Laplander looked like, Ballantine inserted an illustration of a Laplander travelling through the snow in a reindeer-drawn sledge.

A few pages later Mary is presented with a similar exercise to the one described above. This time she has to underline all the personal pronouns in a letter that she received from her brother George. The letter is rather amusing, as George tells Mary about his visit to “a gentleman, whose Swiss servant has a very droll animal, called a marmot”, which can perform “many comical tricks” (Ballantine [1813] 1819: 37–38). *The Decoy* includes an attractive illustration of “The Swiss & his Marmot”.

Fenwick and Ballantine, just like Fenn, used a graded approach to grammar teaching. After explaining the use of a noun to Mary, Mamma tells her that “I think that I have told you quite enough for the present. You may now go and work in your garden” (Ballantine [1813] 1819: 11). Similarly, when Mary asks her mother about the word *am*, her mother tells her:

When you are a little older, I will endeavour to explain the nature of this verb to you, and you must learn all the changes which it undergoes; but as my present intention is only to give you a general idea of each part of speech, I think it better to say but little about this verb, for fear of puzzling you: I must, however, tell you, that this verb is called the verb “*to be*”, and that *I am* is one of the changes which it undergoes (Ballantine [1813] 1819: 51).

Finally, Ballantine also shared Fenn's interest in natural history. When mother has told Mary about adjectives, she presents her daughter with a written "account of the squirrel from a book of natural history" in which she "may mark the adjectives" (Ballantine [1813] 1819: 27). Ballantine also wrote a book on natural history, entitled *Natural Quadrupeds for Children* (1813) (Darton 2004: 16), which, just like *The Decoy*, was well received at the time. According to *The Monthly Review* this work "may be offered to very young readers with perfect safety, and with great likelihood of attracting their attention by the agreeable anecdotes and well executed engravings which it contains" (Anon. 1814c: 438).

Just like Fenn's grammars, Ballantine's *Decoy* offered its readers an easy introduction to the study of English grammar, as can be inferred from the end of the grammar where mother tells Mary that

I have very little more now to tell you; my dear; and as you have been so attentive to my instructions, I will very shortly allow you to learn a great deal more about every part of speech, from a book called grammar, which will teach you to express your thoughts in proper language, and enable you to write them with ease and propriety; and I flatter myself that our little conversation will have so prepared your mind for understanding this book, that you will have very little trouble in overcoming its difficulties; and that grammar will soon become as easy to you as reading, or any thing else which habit has rendered familiar (Ballantine [1813] 1819: 56–57).

7.4. Marcet's Mary's Grammar

Apart from her popular *Conversations on Chemistry, intended more especially for the female sex* (1805), which has been described as "one of the first elementary science textbooks" (*ODNB*, s.v. Marcet, Jane Haldimand), Jane Haldimand Marcet (1769–1858) wrote a children's grammar entitled *Mary's Grammar: interspersed with stories for the use of children* (1835). The book was "widely used" and "became a classic text" (Michael 1991: 19; *ODNB*, s.v. Marcet, Jane Haldimand). In 1835 *The Christian Teacher* described Marcet's children's grammar as "simple and striking" (Anon. 1835: 700). The anonymous reviewer further noted: "Its principles are generally good and well developed" and "The

stories interspersed are interesting, and afford both a pleasant relief to severe study, and a means of leading the pupil to find illustrations for himself of the truths he has just learnt" (Anon. 1835: 700). Nine years later, *The Quarterly Review* again described *Mary's Grammar* as "[a] sound and simple little work for the earliest ages" (Anon. 1844b: 24).

Michael (1987: 512) records a second (1836), third (1838), fourth (1840), fifth (1841) and seventh edition (1843) of *Mary's Grammar* as well as four other editions of the work published in 1851, 1865, 1870, and 1902 respectively. Cajka (2003: 268) lists a tenth edition of the work published in 1855, twenty years after it was first brought out. I, myself, moreover, possess a so-called "new edition" of the grammar published in 1853. *Mary's Grammar* continued to be advertised after Marcet's death, as appears from an advertisement for the work in the *Birmingham Daily Post* of 30 January 1860. According to this advertisement, *Mary's Grammar* could be obtained from the Cornish Brothers, who claimed to have "THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF CHEAP STANDARD SCHOOLBOOKS IN THE MIDLAND COUNTIES", and whose shop could be found in New Street, Birmingham. The preface to *Mary's Grammar* is of great interest, as it is here that Marcet explains what prompted her to write a children's grammar: "I HAVE so often pitied children who have been studying grammar which they did not understand, that I thought I could not do them a better service than endeavour to render so abstruse a subject easy and familiar" (Marcet [1835] 1853: preface). She further notes that "[t]he stories have been introduced with the view of amusing children during the prosecution of so dry a study; but they may be used with advantage as parsing exercises" (Marcet [1835] 1853: preface).

Just as in Fenn's *Child's* and *Mother's Grammars* and Ballantine's *Decoy*, we meet "A LITTLE girl" called Mary at the beginning of Marcet's grammar. We are told that she

was sitting one day with a book in her hand, which she was studying with a woe-begone countenance, when her mother came into the room. "Why, Mary!" said she, "what is the matter? Your book is not very entertaining, I fear." "No,

indeed it is not," replied the child, who could scarcely help crying; "I never read such a stupid book; and look," added she, pointing to the pencil-marks on the page, "what a long hard lesson I have to learn! Miss Thompson says, that now I am seven years old, I ought to begin to learn grammar: but I do not want to learn grammar; it is all nonsense; only see what a number of hard words that I cannot understand!" (Marcet [1835] 1853: 1-2).

While writing *Mary's Grammar*, Marcet, like Fenn and Ballantine before her, relied on the so-called "family-based conversational format" (Demers 2004: 197; see also Cohen 2009: 102), a successful method of teaching which at that time was "identified with female domestic learning" (Hilton and Shefrin 2009b: 15; see also Myers 1986: 38; Percy 1994: 136). According to Cohen (2009: 114), this format "reinforced the idealized pattern of familial, domestic teaching". Just as in Fenn's grammars and the abovementioned *Decoy*, it is the mother who teaches her child the rudiments of English grammar:

"Let us see if something easier comes next," said her mother, and she went on reading. "'A noun is the name of any thing that exists: it is therefore the name of any person, place, or thing.' Now, Mary, I think you can understand that: what is your brother's name?" "Charles," replied Mary. "Well, then, Charles is a noun, because it is a name; it is the name of a person" (Marcet [1835] 1853: 3).

Marcet's definition of the noun not only resembles Fenn's definitions found in her grammatical works but it is also similar to Ash's definition. The same applies to Marcet's definition of the adjective. Like Fenn, and Ash before her, Marcet described the adjective as follows: "An adjective is a word added to a noun, to express its quality; as a good child, a wise man" (Marcet [1835] 1853: 29). It is, however, interesting that here, Mary immediately asks her mother about the meaning of the word "quality":

"Oh, but mamma, I do not know what 'to express its quality' means: you must tell me all about it, or I shall never understand it." "Quality," replied her mother, "means the sort of thing. Tell me what sort of table is this?" Mary, after staring at the table a few seconds, said, "It is a round table." "Well, then, *round* is an adjective, because it points out the quality of the table." "Oh but, mamma, it has other qualities; it is a large table: is *large* an adjective too?" "Yes, every word added to a noun which expresses a quality, is an adjective". "If that is all," said Mary, "an adjective is not half so difficult as I thought; I dare say that I can find out more adjectives for the table (Marcet [1835] 1853: 29-30).

Similarly, when Mary's mother tells her daughter that "Prepositions serve to connect nouns together, and to show the relation between them" (Marcet [1835] 1853: 115), Mary says: "I do not know what relation means [...] unless it is like uncle and aunt Howard, and my cousins, who are all our relations" (Marcet [1835] 1853: 116).

In order to show children the use of prepositions Marcet, just like Fenn (see §6.5), leaves out the preposition in a sentence:

Now, if I say, 'Put the chair by the *table*,' *by* is the preposition which shows the relation between the table and the chair. If I left out the preposition, and said, 'Put the chair the table,' you could not understand what I meant". "No, indeed, mama, for it would be nonsense; but the little word *by* explains it all very clearly" (Marcet [1835] 1853: 116).

The example sentence used by Marcet to illustrate the use of the adverb likewise echoes the example sentences found in Ash's grammar ("He reads *well*" (1760: 34)), Fenn's *Child's Grammar* ("You read well: *well* shews you the manner in which you *read*" (Fenn 1795: 16)), and *Mother's Grammar* ("Mary reads *well*" (Fenn c. 1795/1796: 11)):

"Then what does the adverb show, mama?" "Several things, replied her mother. "In the first place, it shows the manner of the verb. You can read, Mary; but in what manner do you read? "Oh, mamma, I hope that I can read well, now that I am seven years old." "Then *well* is an adverb added to the verb to read (Marcet [1835] 1853: 88–89).

Another similarity between Marcet and Fenn is that both women included parsing lessons in their grammars. When Mary's mother has taught her daughter about nouns and pronouns, we read that

the next morning, when Mary brought her Grammar, her mother said, "No, my dear, we shall not go any farther to-day. I will read you a little story [about a little girl that gets stung by a bee], and you shall afterwards look out for all the nouns and pronouns in it. That is called parsing" "Oh, how I shall like that!" said Mary: a story of nouns and pronouns too; how funny it will be to find them out!" (Marcet [1835] 1853: 25–26).

Marcet also offered a graded approach to grammar, as Fenn (as well as Murray) had done before her. After Mary's mother had presented her daughter with another parsing lesson, this time about a hen and chickens, we are told:

THERE had been no lesson of grammar during a whole week, in order that Mary might have time to fix in her memory what she had already learned, before she began any thing new. At length she brought her exercise, and showed her mother that she had gone through the whole of the story of the Hen and the Chickens, and had found out in it the several parts of speech she had learned. Her mother then thought it time to go on to the Verbs (Marcet [1835] 1853: 60–61).

Marcet also postpones the discussion “of nouns the objects of which cannot be perceived by the senses” (Marcet [1835] 1853: 164). Unlike, Fenn, however, she discusses these nouns in “PART THE SECOND” of *Mary’s Grammar* (Marcet [1835] 1853: 162). There, Mary’s mother tells her daughter, who is now eight years old:

“I did not make you acquainted with a class of nouns the objects of which cannot be perceived by the senses.” “Those must be curious nouns,” observed Mary, “which can neither be seen, heard, or discovered by any sense! How is it possible to find them out?” “If, I did not make you acquainted with them sooner” replied her mother, “it was because I thought them too difficult for a beginner; but now that you have made some little progress in grammar, I think that you will be able to comprehend these strange nouns. They are discerned by the understanding alone: *virtue, honesty, greatness, goodness, and wickedness* are of this description.” “Well!” exclaimed Mary, “I never should have supposed these words to have been nouns surely they are not the names of things?” “Not of bodily things, which we can see, or feel, or perceive by any of our senses; but they are the *names* of things which we can understand the meaning of. If I say that *happiness* is the reward of a good conscience, you understand what I mean by happiness?” “Oh yes,” replied Mary; “it is something that I like very much – that everybody likes. Happiness gives us joy, and pleasure, and all sorts of good things.” “And what is *goodness*?” inquired her mother. “*Goodness*,” said Mary, “is doing every thing right (Marcet [1835] 1853: 164–166).

Like Fenn, who believed that in the case of complex grammar notions like the use of the subjunctive: “It is much better to refrain from farther explanation, till the pupil is perfectly mistress of the whole of the first part of the Child’s Grammar” (1795: 26n.), Marcet makes sure that it is not until the second part of the grammar that Mary’s mother starts to explain the subjunctive mode (Marcet [1835] 1853: 287–291).

Marcet’s discussion of the verb is of great interest. According to her mother, Mary “will like the verbs that do something best” (Marcet [1835] 1853: 61) and because of this she will first teach her daughter all about them:

Come here, Mary;" and, as Mary approached, she added, "Well, what are you doing now?" "I mean to come to you, mamma, as you desired me." "Then *come* is a verb; and how do you come?" "You see, mamma," said Mary, smiling "I walk; and is *walk* a verb too?" "Yes, certainly." Mary then began to run. "Now I am doing another verb," said she; "*run* must be a verb also," and presently she ran out of the room. Her mother wondered what she was gone for: but she soon came back with her skipping-rope; and skipped very lightly round the room, looking all the while at her mamma, and smiling, as much as to say, "You see I know that *skip* is a verb too" (Marcet [1835] 1853: 61–62).

Fenn's idea of teaching grammar out of doors was also adopted by Marcet:

"Now, Mary, can you tell me some of the adjectives belonging to that pony, which is grazing in the meadow, yonder? "Oh, it is a pretty little pony; then it is grey; and I am sure it is spirited, it frisks about so much. Now, I believe, it is hungry, for it is eating grass; and now, I suppose it is tired, for it is lying down to rest (Marcet [1835] 1853: 31).

In contrast to Ash and Murray who had both included syntax sections in their grammars, Fenn and Marcet regarded syntax as "a branch of grammar" (Marcet [1835] 1853: 345) too difficult for young beginners. At the end of *Mary's Grammar* mother tells Mary that

I have no further remarks to make on the other parts of speech; so I believe, Mary that we may now conclude our lessons, till you are old enough to learn Syntax: a branch of grammar which requires more sense and reflection than children have at your age." "But since there are no more parts of speech to learn, mamma, what can Syntax be?" "It teaches you," replied her mother, "how to place the several parts of speech in their proper places, when you speak or write; in short, how to speak and write correctly" (Marcet [1835] 1853: 344–345).

Finally, it is worth pointing out that in 1842 Marcet, like Fenn before her, brought out an educational game entitled *The Game of Grammar*, which according to Cajka (2003: 268), consisted of "290 cards & 24 counters" (i.e. fake pieces of money). The game is referred to on the final page of *Mary's Grammar*: "her mother gave her a box, containing a game called the Game of Grammar, which she had made for her, and which she said, might amuse her, and help to imprint on her memory some of the lessons she had learnt, and enable her to teach the different parts of speech to her younger sisters" (Marcet [1835] 1853: 360–361).

7.5. Corner's Play Grammar

Julia Corner (1798–1875) not only wrote popular history textbooks for children, but also a children's grammar entitled *The Play Grammar, or the elements of grammar explained in easy games*, which was issued by Thomas Dean and Son in 1840. Corner's *Play Grammar* turned out to be a success. According to Michael (1987: 430), there were "at least twenty-six editions to [1879?]", and Cajka (2003: 267) similarly lists a 25th edition of *The Play Grammar* published in 1876. The first advertisement of Corner's grammar that I came across can be found in the *Daily News* of 7 February 1849. By this time the fourth edition of *The Play Grammar*, "with illustrations, price 1s., sewed, or 1s.6d. bound", had just been published (*Daily News*, 7 February 1849). In December of that same year a "New edition, with illustrations, 1s. sewed" of Corner's grammar was advertised as one of the "NEW HALF CROWN BOOKS, bound tastefully in fancy cloth, gilt edges, for CHRISTMAS PRESENTS for LITTLE LADIES AND LITTLE GENTLEMEN, both amusing and instructive" (*Daily News*, 22 December 1849). "[T]he Sixth Edition, enlarged of the PLAY GRAMMAR by Miss CORNER" was first advertised in *The Examiner* of 11 January 1851, an "Eighth Edition, improved" and an "11th Edition, improved" were announced in *The Examiner* of 30 July 1853 and *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post or Plymouth and Cornish Advertiser* of 12 January 1854, respectively. In the *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post or Plymouth and Cornish Advertiser* of 14 January 1858 we can even read the following advice: "Do you desire your child to learn Grammar or Geography with pleasure, and not as an irksome task CORNER'S PLAY GRAMMAR and SARGEANT'S EASY GEOGRAPHY are the means".

Corner, like Fenn before her, believed that "A KNOWLEDGE of the first principles of grammar may be communicated to children at a very early age, if pains be taken to render the subject amusing and agreeable". This is the reason why her *Play Grammar* like *The Decoy* and *Mary's Grammar*, was written in the "family-based conversational format": we are presented with a mother who is

teaching her children Fanny and Herbert English grammar by means of easy games. When Fanny and Herbert are familiar with two of the nine parts of speech, their mother tells them that they may “try the first game in the book by pointing at each noun and verb in some of the sentences, and whoever misses one, is to pay a forfeit” (Corner [1840] 1848: 10). Since it will take Fanny and Herbert ten days to go through *The Play Grammar*, the chapters of the work are entitled FIRST DAY, SECOND DAY, THIRD DAY etc.

Corner’s description of the noun resembles Fenn’s discussion of the noun in *Parsing Lessons for Young Children* (1798a): “The room is full of nouns; you cannot turn your head but you see one – the *table*, the *chair*, &c. – these you *see*; they are therefore nouns” (1798a: 6):

the names of things that we can *see*, are called nouns [...] “Oh that is easily understood,” said Fanny, “all the things we can see are nouns: – “then a *chair* is a noun, and the *carpet* is a noun, and the *table* is a noun, and this *book* is a noun, and all the things in this room are nouns – but my *doll* is not a noun, I suppose.” “Why not, my dear?” “Because I cannot see her, mamma; she is up stairs.” “Could you see her if she were here Fanny?” “Yes, mamma; you know I could,” replied Fanny, laughing. “Well, then, she is just as much a noun as if you had her in your arms” “Is she?” said Fanny, “then I suppose all things are nouns that we could see, if they were here.” “Exactly so, my dear, and as NOUN means NAME, it also belongs to things that cannot be seen: as joy, happiness, grief, and *every thing* that can be talked about.” “Dear me, how easy!” exclaimed the little girl. “Now I think I know all about nouns” (Corner [1840] 1848: 8–9).

Nevertheless, a few pages later, Fanny still has difficulty understanding the concept of the noun. When mother asks Fanny to parse the sentence “A little white mouse eating the cheese” (Corner [1840] 1848: 23), Fanny makes a mistake:

“Stop, Fanny, not quite so fast; white is not a noun.” “Not a noun mamma! – I can see white.” “You can see that the mouse is white; but if you were to tell me that you had seen a white, I should not know what you meant, and should say, ‘a white what?’ my dear.” This appeared so droll to both the children that they laughed heartily. When they had ceased, their mamma explained, telling them that no words were nouns unless they meant something by themselves, without any other word joined to them. “Besides,” she continued, “the word *white* is used in this sentence to tell us what kind of mouse it is that is eating the cheese; so that, if we did not see the picture, we should know that it was a white mouse, not a brown one” (Corner [1840] 1848: 24).

The purpose of this dialogue is to make mothers aware of the difficulty children face when asked to distinguish between an adjective and a noun.

In order to facilitate the learning of the degrees of comparison, Corner included a game “with funny little pictures” in her *Play Grammar*. Mother tells Fanny and Herbert that the way to play the game is this:

you look at one of these pictures [of clowns (*funny*), kites (*large*), plum puddings (*hot*), trees (*tall*), pigs (*little*), butterflies (*pretty*), flowers (*beautiful*)] and think of any adjective that will suit it, trying in turn till you think of the right one, which you must repeat with the three degrees of comparison. The one who chooses the word correctly, receives a counter; and the possessor of the greater number of counters at the end of the game wins whatever is played for (Corner [1840] 1848: 82).

Interestingly, a reference to this game can be found in *The Victorians* (1915) by the writer and playwright Netta Syrett (1865–1945). This is “a largely autobiographical novel centring on the changing roles of women at the end of the century” (King and Plunkett 2005: 73):

Miss Piddock [governess of the nine-year-old Rose] now took up ‘The Play Grammar’, and ‘heard’ her pupil repeat the prepared task. It concerned the degrees of comparison of adjectives, and was illustrated by woodcuts showing three plum-puddings in various stages of heated activity [...] Three clowns beneath the puddings were intended to portray the relative meaning of ‘funny, funnier, funniest,’ but the artist’s instructive intent to fix the attention on the rules of grammar, was frustrated by the human interest evoked by his clowns in the annoying brain of Rose. She studied their faces attentively, and despite the broader grin on the countenance of the ‘comparative’ comedian, she considered the ‘positive’ entertainer much more amusing, and insisted on debating the question with Miss Piddock (as quoted from King and Plunkett 2005: 73).

The discussion of the interjection as presented in Corner’s *Play Grammar* is similarly mentioned in *The Victorians*:

Rose began to read the paragraph which interested her solely on account of the trousered little girl known in ‘The Play Grammar’ as ‘Fanny’. Her reading was punctuated with delighted giggles. “‘La, Mamma!’” cried Fanny, “‘I have twisted my ankle.’” “‘There, Fanny!’” returned Mamma, plunging without a word of sympathy into English grammar. “‘You have uttered an interjection!’” Rose, who had been many times through ‘The Play Grammar,’ never ceased to be amused by this conversational opening [...] “‘La!’” repeated Rose mockingly. ‘Nobody says “la” now. And nobody wears trousers like Fanny. This book must have been written ages ago. And do you believe Fanny was interested, like they make

here, in adverbs and adjectives and things? *I don't* (as quoted from King and Plunkett 2005: 74).

Thus, already in 1854 the reviewers of Corner's *Play Grammar* for *The Rambler, a catholic journal of home and foreign literature [&c.]* seem to have shared Rose's opinion as to Fanny's zeal for learning grammar:

The little book on grammar is, we think, much more successful; though we have ourselves seldom met with children so clear-headed as those here supposed, or so accommodating as to find "a grammar-play" a really entertaining pastime. The explanations for the most part are accurate and clever (Anon. 1854: 291).

Corner nevertheless regarded her *Play Grammar* as an "entertaining pastime", which would prepare children for more difficult works on grammar. At the end of *The Play Grammar* Mother tells her children that she hopes that "when you learn grammar from books that would now be too difficult for you to understand, I think you will find the subject pleasing, from having first studied it in these little games" (Corner [1840] 1848: 112).

7.6. More nineteenth-century grammars for children

In her study of eighteenth-century female grammarians in England, Cajka (2003: 245) already suggested that it would be useful to carry out a survey of nineteenth-century grammars. Because they were written anonymously, two further popular and attractive nineteenth-century grammars, *The Paths of Learning Strewed with Flowers: or English grammar illustrated* (1820) and *The Infant's Grammar, or a pic-nic party of the parts of speech* (1822), will be discussed here, which were not included by Cajka (2003: 267–269) in her appendix which she compiled in order to provide scholars with an overview of works written by nineteenth-century British women grammarians. Judging from the contents of these two instructional works, it does, however, seem likely that both were written by women. Moreover, *The Infant's Grammar* has been attributed to the poet and writer Elizabeth Ham (1783–1859) (see the Digital Collection of Historical Children's Literature, University Libraries,

University of Washington). Ham indeed wrote a grammar book for children entitled *The Infant's Grammar* which she described in her Memoir as follows:

I had two copies sent me of my *Infant's Grammar*. They asked me if I were not proud to see myself in print? I certainly was pleased, though they had altered some of my Figures in the Engravings, and improved others, and I did not altogether approve of their being put in Fancy Dresses (ed. Gillett 1945: 230).

The Paths of Learning Strewed with Flowers: or English grammar illustrated and *The Infant's Grammar* could thus be added to Cajka's appendix. Not only do the two little grammars live up to our modern expectations of what a grammar for young children should look like, they also clearly confirm that during the 1820s "[t]he new technique of amusing the child and arousing his interest by making forms and principles come to life had quite supplanted the dry formal rules imposed on earlier generations" (Kiefer 1948: 147).

The purpose of *The Paths of Learning Strewed with Flowers*, "a delightful and famous work" (Michael 1987: 538) which Opie and Opie (1980: 7) describe as the "most elegant grammar ever published", was "to obviate the reluctance children evince to the irksome and insipid task of learning the names and meaning of the component parts of grammar" (Anon. 1820: vignette; see also Grenby 2001). In order to gain the child's interest, the anonymous author of this little work included (hand-coloured) copper engravings in the text (Grenby 2001; Alderson and Moon 1994: 24). Ten parts of speech are listed in the grammar. The definition of the pronoun (see Figure 1) not only resembles the definition given by Fenn, but can also be traced back to Ash (see §6.4).

Presumably because of its attractive illustrations, Moon (1987: 88) calls *The Paths of Learning Strewed with Flowers* "one of the most charming books" in the second series of "Harris's Cabinet of Amusement and Instruction", which consisted of 38 "most approved NOVELTIES for the NURSERY" (Anon. 1820: 18). Moreover, as Alderson and Moon (1994: 24) have shown "The 'Verb' image of the rider [...] was chosen in 1968 by the British Museum as an emblem for its exhibition of children's books" (see Figure 2).

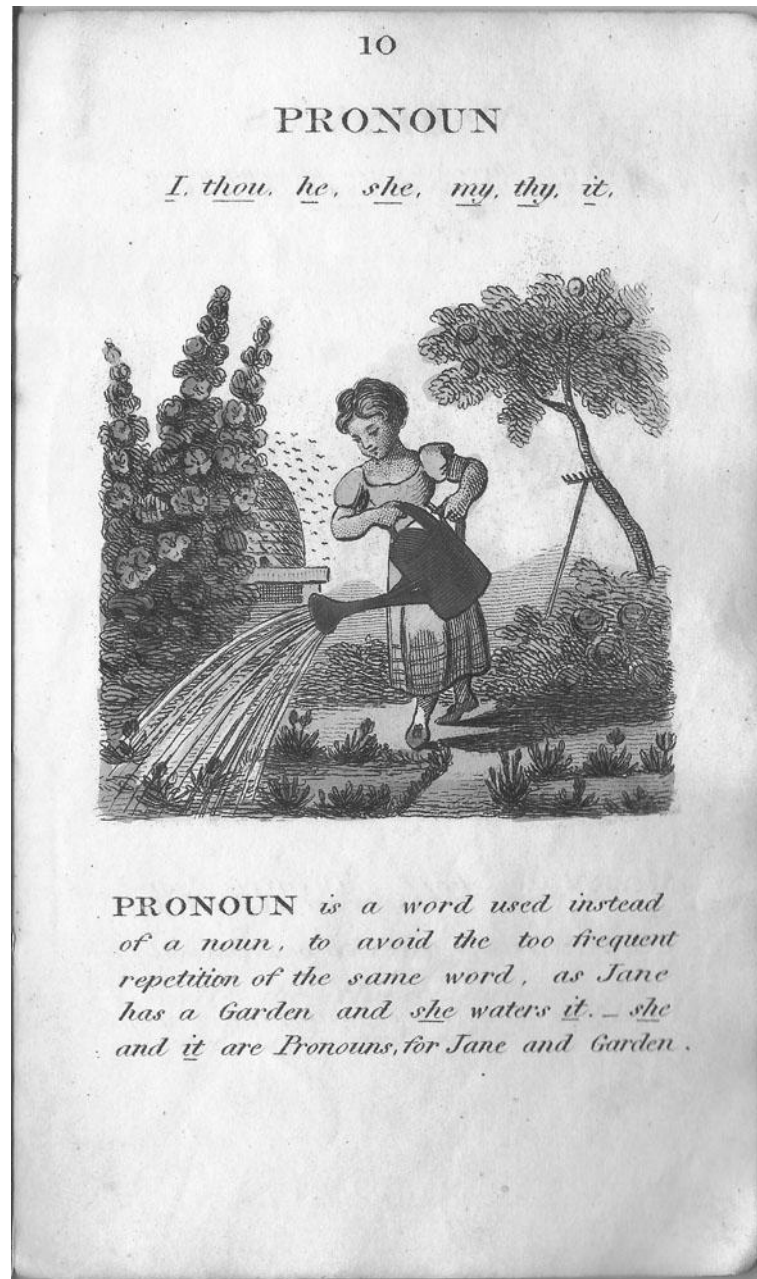


Figure 1. The definition of the pronoun in Harris and Son's *The Paths of Learning Strewed with Flowers: or English grammar illustrated* (1820) (reproduced with the permission of Glenna Baptiste).

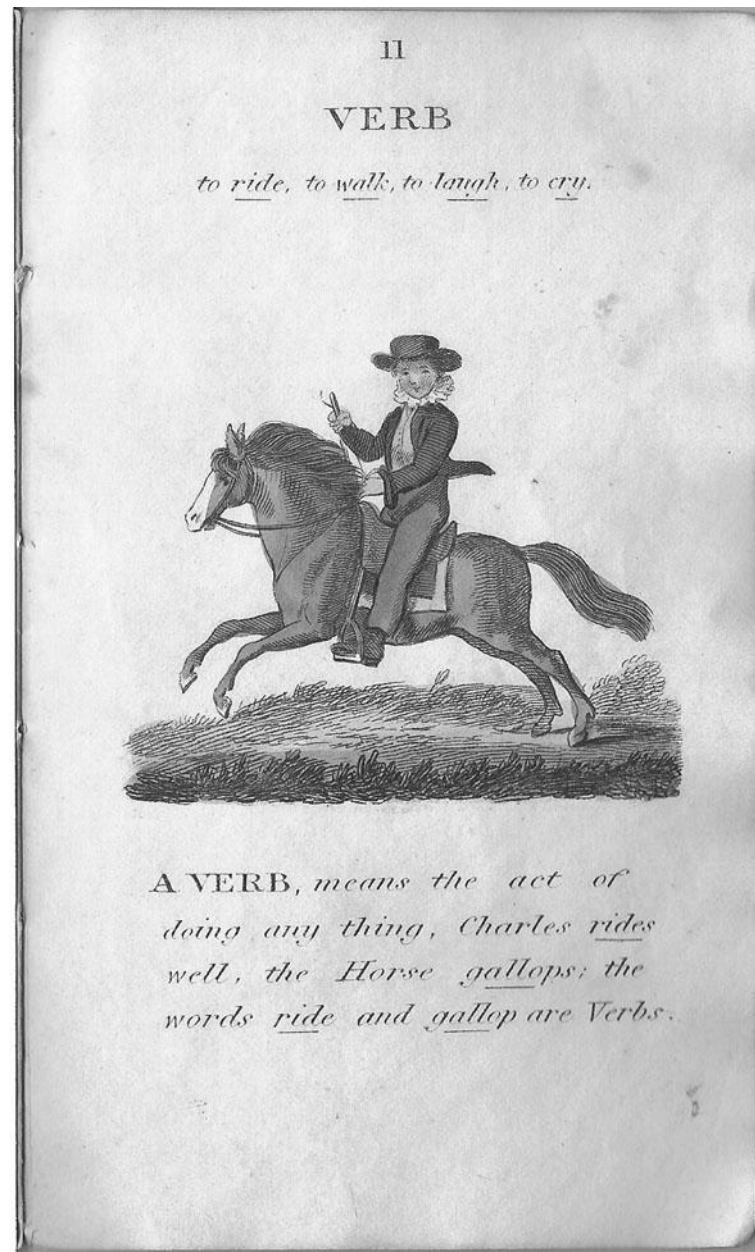


Figure 2. The definition of the verb in Harris and Son's *The Paths of Learning Strewed with Flowers: or English grammar illustrated* (1820) (reproduced with the permission of Glenna Baptiste).

Two years after the publication of *The Paths of Learning Strewed with Flowers* Harris and Son published a grammar entitled *The Infant's Grammar, or a picnic-party of the parts of speech* (1822), which tried to teach children the parts of speech through image and rhyme (Grenby 2001). Michael (1987: 486) lists two other editions of this work which were published in 1824 and probably 1825. Grenby (2001) points out that there were four editions of *The Infant's Grammar*, "the first appearing in 1822 and the fourth in c. 1830". According to Kiefer (1948: 147), *The Infant's Grammar*, with its nine personified parts of speech, offered "a happy new approach to language study". This immediately becomes clear from the introduction to the grammar:

One day, I am told, and, as it was cold,
I suppose it occur'd in cold weather,
The NINE PARTS OF SPEECH, having no one to teach,
Resolv'd on a PIC-NIC together.

The ARTICLE mov'd, and the PRONOUN approv'd
That the NOUN should preside at the feast;
But the ADJECTIVE said, though the Noun might be head,
The VERB should be none of the least.

The ADVERB cried out, "PREPOSITION, no doubt,
Will sit at one end of the table:"
CONJUNCTION replied, "Let us sit side by side,
And let him act as Vice* who is able."

INTERJECTION, said "PISH!" Let me have but a dish,
And a look at your good-humour'd faces; -
Then they who think fit may exert all their wit,
To make a selection of places."

Now loud was the call, - ETYMOLOGY-HALL!
Run, ARTICLE; - SUBSTANTIVE, run:
My Reader, run too; and perhaps you may view
Some scenes full of innocent fun.

*Vice-president (Anon. [1822] 1824: 2).

The definite and indefinite articles, an illustration of which can be found on the cover of this thesis, are the first parts of speech introduced in the grammar:

An A and a THE, two ARTICLES small,
Had on their best clothes, to attend at THE Ball;
Like two little lackeys they stood at the door,
That when the Nouns came, they might run in before:

The temple was wrapp'd in the shadows of night,
 But the torch of young DEFINITE gave a clear light
 (Anon. [1822] 1824: 3).

Prepositions are presented as two small boys who are dancing with a young lady and two young gentlemen:

PREPOSITIONS were busy: they ran in between,
 And with Substantives, Pronouns and Verbs they were seen,
 Holding one IN each hand, thus together TO bind,
 AT, BY, FOR, EXCEPT, SINCE, AFTER, BEHIND;
 WITH, THROUGH, BESIDES, INTO, AGAINST, of, ABOUT,
 AMONG, ON, ABOVE, WITHIN, and WITHOUT
 (Anon. [1822] 1824: 11).

The poem ends with Interjection, personified as a maid who has to clean up after her fellow parts of speech:

Having finish'd their Pic-nic, without much apology
 The party all quitted the hall Etymology;
 But such litter was scatter'd about in the room,
 That, when INTERJECTION came up with her broom,
 Her surprise was so great that she nothing could say,
 But, O! AH! ALAS! GOOD LACK! WELL-A-DAY!
 (Anon. [1822] 1824: 13)

Whalley (1975: 124) notes that the *The Infant's Grammar* "could perhaps be used today", because it is "attractive, simple and memorable – and what more could be required of a grammar book?". The popularity of *The Infant's Grammar* also prompted imitations (Opie and Opie 1980: 7). Madame Linstien's *The Rudiments of Grammar in Verse; or, a party to the fair* [1820–1829], was one of the "closely related poetical grammars" issued by the children's books publishers Dean and Munday during the 1820s (Opie and Opie 1980: 7; see also the Digital Collection of Historical Children's Literature, University Libraries, University of Washington). The grammar begins as follows:

MISS SYNTAX, one day, being too old for play,
 Resolv'd a new school to commence,
 Where the Nine Parts of Speech she determined to teach,
 The order of Grammar and Sense (Linstien [1820–1829]: 6).

Since the parts of speech "learn'd with such speed", Miss Syntax decides to take them to the fair as a reward (Linstien [1820–1829]: 7).

7.7. Conclusion

Among the eighteenth-century female grammarians Lady Ellenor Fenn was the first to see a new opportunity in catering for “baby grammarians”, little boys and girls aged 3 to 8 who were taught English grammar at home by their mothers, before going to school. Fenn’s “baby” grammars served as introductions to school grammars such as Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* (1760) or Murray’s *English Grammar* (1795), but also enabled mothers to prepare their young sons for the study of Latin and their young daughters for the study of French (Fenn 1799: 59; Smith 1999: 212; Percy 1994: 137). Influenced by Locke and Pluche, Fenn was the first to offer a playful approach to grammar teaching. Learning grammar was no longer presented as a dull task but as a “lively amusement” (Fenn 1785: 10), and as a subject that could be taught out of doors. Fenn’s grammars, cards and boxes were advertised as perfect (Christmas) gifts for children. Fenn evidently knew how to market her grammars as her works proved extremely popular. In this chapter I have shown that Fenn’s popular works on grammar also prompted other children’s writers to compose grammars for children and to market them in similar ways. Due to the efforts of writers like Eliza Fenwick, Jane Haldimand Marcet, Julia Corner and E. Ballantine more accessible grammars for children were brought out as the nineteenth century progressed. Two of these works, the anonymous *Paths of Learning Strewed with Flowers* (1820) and Marcet’s *Mary’s Grammar* (1835), contain descriptions of the parts of speech which cannot only be traced back to Fenn but to Ash as well. This suggests that more than sixty years after the first publication of his *Grammatical Institutes* (1760), Ash’s brief rules were still considered highly learnable for little boys and girls, and that through popular and attractive children’s grammars like *The Paths of Learning Strewed with Flowers* and *Mary’s Grammar* his influence continued well into the nineteenth century.

According to Kiefer (1948: 148), nineteenth-century grammars, such as *The Infant's Grammar, or a pic-nic party of the parts of speech* (1822), clearly “reveal the new interest in childhood” at the time. Instead of encouraging their children to become as precocious as Kate Stanley in Hannah More’s *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809), “who proudly abandons childish things at eight: ‘I am eight years old today. I gave up all my gilt books, with pictures, this day twelvemonth, and today I gave up all my little story books, and I am now going to read such books as men and women read’” (as quoted from Hussey and Fletcher 1999: 21), nineteenth-century middle-class parents, according to Hussey and Fletcher (1999: 21), began to cherish innocence. As a result of this new trend there was a healthy market for nineteenth-century children’s grammars, works which with their innovative approaches clearly succeeded in making the study of English grammar more appealing to children.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

In the present study I have aimed to contribute to the growing field of scholarship on eighteenth-century grammars and grammarians by providing an in-depth study of the Pershore minister John Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* (1760) and its influence on other grammars for children. Since these textbooks were targeted at a young audience this study also adds to a growing body of literature on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century children's texts, especially since grammars for children have been ignored by historians of children's literature.

As I explained in the first chapter, children's grammars became increasingly popular during the final decades of the eighteenth century. By having their sons and daughters study English grammar ambitious middle-class parents hoped to improve the economic and social status of their children (Percy 2010: 39; see also Klein 1995). During those days the most popular normative text that seemed "to guarantee social mobility" was Robert Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762) (Fitzmaurice 1998: 309). Although Lowth originally composed the grammar for his eldest son, who was only four years old at the time, the work was not received as a children's grammar at all. Another father who fared much better in this respect was John Ash, who similarly wrote a grammar for his five-year-old daughter entitled *Grammatical Institutes: or grammar, adapted to the genius of the English tongue* which was first published in Worcester in 1760 (Michael 1970: 550). Ash's daughter does not appear to have had any troubles studying her father's grammar, as we are told that she "learnt and repeated the whole in a short Time" (Ash 1766: Advertisement). This must have been due to the fact that, in contrast to Lowth's grammar, the material in Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* was presented in the form of brief numbered rules that could be easily memorized by small children. Since Ash understood much better than Lowth what it took to write a children's grammar, his *Grammatical Institutes* formed the basis of this study.

The main aim of Chapter 2 was to provide information on Ash's life as well as to shed more light on the publication history and reception of his grammar. In contrast to fellow grammarians, such as Lowth, Priestley and Murray, very little is known about John Ash's life. As for his grammar, I have shown that he must have written the work for his eldest daughter Eliza (b. 1752) or her younger sister Martha (b. 1754). While trying to reconstruct the publication history of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, I demonstrated that the second (1766) and third (1768) editions of Ash's grammar were not reprints, as traditional accounts suggest, but actual editions "published in London, under the Direction of the Reverend Mr. Ryland, of Northampton" (1769: Advertisement). Ash was angry with his friend Ryland for re-issuing these editions, but if Ryland had not been in need of copies for his own boarding school, Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*, a text written from the margins by a radical grammarian as McIntosh (1998: 178) puts it, might never have been published in London and would never have become a success. It was Ryland who had brought the grammar under the attention of the London booksellers Charles and Edward Dilly and who had come up with the idea of marketing the work as "The Easiest Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar". This title suggests that Ryland must have been aware of the reception of Lowth's grammar and the fact that many parents and teachers were in great need of an introduction to it.

Although Ash's grammar appears to have been a publisher's project like that of Lowth's and other grammars of the period, Ash's letter to Edward Dilly, in which he stated that he still regarded his grammar as "to be entirely my own Property at my own Disposal" (as quoted from Taylor 1963: 17), shows that this was not the case and that Ash still wanted to be involved in the publication of his grammar. In contrast to the second (1766) and third (1768) editions, the fourth edition of Ash's grammar entitled *Grammatical Institutes, or, an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar* was corrected and revised by Ash himself. I have shown that instead of being issued in 1761 or 1763 this edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* appears to have been published by the Dillys in

1769. My search for British editions and reprints of Ash's grammar yielded one sixth edition (1777), fourteen unnumbered editions or reprints and ten pirated editions that have come to light after the publication of Alston's bibliography (1965). In addition, I pointed out that the grammar continued to be published after 1810, the year for which Alston (1965: 38) records the last edition of Ash's *Grammatical Institutes*. The 293 advertisements for Ash's grammar that were published in the local press during the years 1766–1835 and that were retrieved with the help of the 17th–18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers and 19th Century British Library Newspapers databases are another indication of the enormous popularity Ash's grammar enjoyed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (see Appendix 1).

In Chapter 3, I presented some possible sources which Ash might have consulted while he was writing his *Grammatical Institutes* during the 1750s. A comparison of these works with Ash's grammar revealed that it must have been primarily James Greenwood's *Essay Towards a Practical English Grammar* (1711) or his *Royal English Grammar* (1737) on which Ash relied for his own work. Ash's dependence on Greenwood is most evident from a long list of 55 masculine nouns and their feminine equivalents which Ash provided in his grammar in order to illustrate his discussion of the gender of nouns. Since Ash, as I have shown, was not the only grammarian who depended on Greenwood at the time, this suggests that the influence Greenwood exerted on his fellow grammarians is even bigger than has been hitherto assumed (cf. *ODNB*, s.v. Greenwood, James). Contrary to what one might expect from an eighteenth-century grammarian, Ash's comments in the first edition of his *Grammatical Institutes* (1760) are largely descriptive. A comparison of the first edition of Ash's grammar with the fourth edition of the work (1769) revealed that the latter includes many more instances of prescriptivism. I pointed out that it might have been Robert Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* which brought about this change. In order to make his work as popular as Lowth's, Ash may have adopted Lowth's prescriptive approach to grammar teaching.

What he probably did not realise, however, is that in doing so his grammar became less suitable for young learners, the audience he had in mind for his work.

The publication and influence of Ash's grammar across the Atlantic were investigated in Chapter 4. In this chapter I demonstrated that American booksellers imported Ash's grammar from England before the first of nineteen pirated editions appeared in 1774. Although the title of Noah Webster's *Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (1784) resembled that of Ash's, I have shown that it was in fact Ash's *New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* (1775) on which Webster relied while writing his grammar. Although the American-born Lindley Murray did not acknowledge Ash as one of the sources for his popular *English Grammar* (1795), I have shown that he heavily drew upon Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* for his definitions of the pronoun, adverb, and preposition, as well as for his discussion of the ellipsis. This indebtedness was not noted by Vorlat in her 1959 study on Lindley Murray's sources. Since the discussion of the ellipsis appears in small type in Murray's grammar, this suggests that he did not consider this a suitable topic for young students. In contrast to Ash, Murray thus catered for beginners and for pupils who had already been initiated in the rudiments of English grammar.

In Chapter 5 various female users of Ash's grammar were presented. Since Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* was studied by girls, young women who had already left school, mothers, governesses of boarding schools, governesses employed in wealthy families and teacher-grammarians, it is more appropriate to refer to his work as a teaching grammar instead of a school grammar because the audience of a teaching grammar consists of everyone who wants "to learn the language or improve their mastery in it" (Vorlat 2007: 500). The teacher-grammarians and their works have been studied in great detail by Cajka (2003, 2008) and Percy (1994, 2003, 2010), but the extent to which these women relied on Ash's grammar had not been examined yet. A comparison of the works by Devis and Edwards with that of Ash's revealed that both teacher-

grammarians relied on Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* while composing their own grammars.

Chapter 6 discusses the life and works of the prolific children's writer Lady Ellenor Fenn. Fenn was not only familiar with Lowth's authoritative *Short Introduction to English Grammar* but with Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* as well. Ash's grammar must have appealed to Fenn, as from her popular *Child's Grammar* (1795), a work which was even studied by Princess Victoria in 1826, we can infer that she, too, wanted to offer her work as an introduction to Lowth. Fenn not only recommended Ash's grammar in "Mrs. Teachwell's library for her young ladies", a list of eighty-one English and four French titles that could be found at the end of her *Female Guardian* (1784), but she also relied on the work for the definitions of the parts of speech while writing her popular series of grammar books.

Fenn believed that in the case of grammar there is need "of a Dame, to conduct young Students, till a Superior shall deign to take them by the hand" (1798a: ix) since "Men of learning are incapable of stooping sufficiently low to conduct those who are but entering the paths" (1798a: vi). A comparison of Fenn's grammars with Ash's *Grammatical Institutes* indeed revealed that Fenn took care to produce grammars that were "intelligible to the capacities and agreeable to the taste of infantine Pupils (1798a: vii).

Fenn offered a graded approach to grammar. Instead of being influenced by Lindley Murray's *English Grammar*, I showed that this approach was independently conceived. In contrast to Ash, Fenn not only offered a graded approach, but, like Pluche and Locke before her, also advocated the teaching of grammar in the open air and designed illustrated and labelled flash cards to enliven the lessons of grammar. In addition, she made sure to include parsing lessons on subjects familiar to children in her works. Because of experience with her adopted children, nephews and nieces and the pupils at the Sunday school, Fenn, moreover, was able to assist insecure mothers in teaching their children grammar. This was important in a time when there were no teacher

training colleges and no compulsory education from the lack of which especially women suffered. In *The Art of Teaching in Sport* (1785) she noted that “[a]ge and experience, with a good degree of observation regarding children may perhaps enable me to give a few useful hints” (Fenn 1785: 7). As we can infer from this quotation, Fenn’s grammar books were not only targeted at children but also at insecure mothers who “may not have attended to the subject themselves” (Fenn 1795: iii). Fenn has been described “as both a pioneer in the development of modern child-centred pedagogy and a designer of educational aids” (Immel 1997: 226) and “a pioneer in the field of education of young children” (Stoker 2009: 44). My findings suggest that she can be considered a pioneer in the teaching of English grammar to small children as well. Fenn heavily depended on Ash’s grammar for her definitions of the parts of speech, but unlike Ash, she succeeded in further developing the concept of a children’s grammar. What is more, Fenn’s innovative approach to grammar writing also inspired the nineteenth-century children’s writers Eliza Fenwick, E. Ballantine, Jane Haldimand Marcet and Julia Corner to produce grammars for children. Their works and the extent to which they relied on Fenn’s grammars are described in Chapter 7.

In this chapter I also pointed out that because of their original approaches nineteenth-century grammars, such as *The Paths of Learning Strewed with Flowers: or English grammar illustrated* (1820) and *The Infant’s Grammar, or a pic-nic party of the parts of speech* (1822), succeeded in making the study of English grammar more palatable for children. Already in 2003 Cajka suggested that it would be useful to carry out a survey of nineteenth-century grammar books. My presentation of several case studies in this chapter has shown that nineteenth-century children’s grammars are definitely worthy of further study. Although Anderson (1906: 328) described Ash’s *Grammatical Institutes* as “an excellent primer, which ran through a large number of editions”, his grammar was not as accessible to children as those of Murray, Fenn and the nineteenth-century female grammarians.

It may be concluded from the study presented here that John Ash played an important role in the rise of the children's grammar. Not only did he succeed in writing a grammar which remained popular well beyond his lifetime, his influence can also be detected in Murray's and Fenn's grammars, works which are both known for their graded approach to grammar teaching, as well as, through Fenn, in many children's grammars produced in the nineteenth century.

Appendix 1

Ash's grammar, as advertised in newspapers included in the 17th-18th century Burney Collection Newspapers and 19th-century British Library Newspapers.

A. Eighteenth-century Newspapers

Year	Newspaper	Date	Number
1766	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Friday 22/8	7
		Monday 8/9	
		Wednesday 15/10	
		Wednesday 22/10	
		Wednesday 10/12	
		Monday 15/12 (in advertisement for Vivian's <i>Three Dialogues, between a minister and one of his parishioners</i>)	
		Monday 22/12	
1766	<i>St. James Chronicle or the British Evening Post</i>	Saturday 8/11 (in advertisement for Terence's <i>Comedies</i>)	5
		Tuesday 18/11 (in advertisement for Terence's <i>Comedies</i>)	
		Saturday 22/11 (in advertisement for Terence's <i>Comedies</i>)	
		Saturday 29/11	
		Saturday 6/12	
1766	<i>London Evening Post</i>	Saturday 29/11	1
1766	<i>Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser</i>	Friday 12/12	2
		Saturday 20/12	
1767	<i>London Chronicle</i>	Saturday 14/2	2
		Saturday 21/2	

1767	<i>Lloyd's Evening Post</i>	Monday 16/2	1
1767	<i>St. James Chronicle or the British Evening Post</i>	Saturday 10/10 Thursday 22/10 Thursday 29/10 Tuesday 3/11 Tuesday 10/11	5
1767	<i>London Evening Post</i>	Thursday 22/10 Tuesday 1/12 Tuesday 8/12 Tuesday 29/12	4
1767	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Thursday 27/8	1
1767	<i>Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser</i>	Thursday 5/11 Friday 25/12	2
1768	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Wednesday 13/1 Thursday 21/1 Saturday 30/1 Monday 31/10 (Ryland's 2 nd edition)	4
1768	<i>Lloyd's Evening Post</i>	Wednesday 27/1	1
1768	<i>St. James Chronicle or the British Evening Post</i>	Tuesday 12/7 Tuesday 19/7	2
1768	<i>London Chronicle</i>	Saturday 31/12	1
1768	<i>Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser</i>	Friday 15/1 Friday 22/1 Tuesday 26/1	3
1769	<i>London Chronicle</i>	Saturday 7/1 Tuesday 2/5	2

1769	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Thursday 5/1 Tuesday 31/1 Tuesday 14/2 Tuesday 15/8	4
1769	<i>Lloyd's Evening Post</i>	Friday 21/4 (advertised as "Ash's Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar, A New Edition" in advertisement for Joachim Lange's <i>Easy and Pleasant Latin Conversations</i>)	1
1769	<i>Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer</i>	Saturday 22/4 Tuesday 25/4	2
1769	<i>St. James Chronicle or the British Evening Post</i>	Thursday 11/5 (same as Lloyd's Evening Post 21/4) Tuesday 16/5 (same as Lloyd's Evening Post 21/4)	2
1769	<i>Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser</i>	Tuesday 5/1	1
1770	<i>London Evening Post</i>	Tuesday 27/11	1
1770	<i>General Evening Post</i>	Thursday 29/11 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>New Latin and English Dictionary</i> , henceforth <i>NLED</i>)	1
1770	<i>Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty</i>	Thursday 20/12 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>) Tuesday 25/12 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>) Saturday 29/12 (in ad for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	3
1770	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Friday 21/12 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>) Friday 28/12 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	2
1770	<i>Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser</i>	Thursday 27/12 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>) Friday 28/12 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	2

1771	<i>Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty</i>	Thursday 3/1 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	1
1771	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Friday 18/1 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>) Thursday 31/1 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>) Friday 8/2 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>) Saturday 23/2 (5 th ed. of Ash's grammar is announced) Monday 19/8 Tuesday 20/8 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>) Thursday 29/8 Monday 2/9 Tuesday 10/9 Saturday 14/9 Tuesday 17/9 Thursday 3/10 (5 th ed. of Ash's grammar) Wednesday 30/10 Monday 23/12	14
1771	<i>London Evening Post</i>	Thursday 21/3 (in advertisement for Nugent's <i>New Pocket Dictionary</i> , henceforth <i>NPD</i>) Tuesday 26/3 (in advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>) Thursday 5/9 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>New Spelling Dictionary</i> , henceforth <i>NSD</i>) Saturday 7/9 (5 th ed. of Ash's grammar) Saturday 14/9 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>) Saturday 28/12 (5 th ed. of Ash's grammar)	6

1771	<i>London Packet or New Evening Post</i>	Friday 26/7 (advertised as "a new edition" (5 th ed. is not mentioned))	1
1771	<i>Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser</i>	Wednesday 28/8 (first advertisement for the 5 th ed. of Ash's grammar)	1
1772	<i>London Evening Post</i>	Thursday 16/1 Saturday 15/8 Thursday 20/8	3
1772	<i>Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser</i>	Friday 17/1 (5 th ed. of Ash's grammar) Tuesday 21/1 (5 th ed. of Ash's grammar) Friday 14/2 (5 th ed. of Ash's grammar)	3
1772	<i>General Evening Post</i>	Tuesday 14/1 ("Recommended by the most eminent Teachers") Tuesday 11/2 ("Recommended by the most eminent Teachers") Tuesday 25/2 ("Recommended by the most eminent Teachers")	3
1772	<i>London Packet or New Evening Post</i>	Wednesday 15/4 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	1
1772	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Friday 21/8 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>) Monday 7/9 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>) Tuesday 8/9 Thursday 17/9 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>) Thursday 15/10 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>) Wednesday 28/10	6
1772	<i>Lloyd's Evening Post</i>	Wednesday 30/12 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>New Spelling Book</i> , henceforth <i>NSB</i>)	1

1773	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Wednesday 13/1 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSB</i>)	15
		Friday 5/2 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSB</i>)	
		Wednesday 21/7 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSB</i>)	
		Friday 30/7 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Friday 27/8 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Saturday 4/9 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Monday 6/9 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	
		Friday 10/9 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Tuesday 21/9 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	
		Saturday 25/9 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	
		Monday 11/10 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSB</i>)	
		Wednesday 13/10 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSB</i>)	
		Wednesday 3/11 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSB</i>)	
		Monday 8/11 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSB</i>)	
		Wednesday 24/11 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
1773	<i>Lloyd's Evening Post</i>	Monday 19/7 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	1
1773	<i>London Evening Post</i>	Saturday 2/10 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	1

1774	<i>General Evening Post</i>	Saturday 29/1 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	3
		Saturday 5/2 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Saturday 12/2 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
1774	<i>Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser</i>	Wednesday 2/2 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	1
1774	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Friday 28/1 (in advertisement for Dr. Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	16
		Monday 28/3 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Wednesday 30/3 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Friday 1/4 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Monday 20/6 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Monday 27/6 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Wednesday 6/7 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Wednesday 20/7 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Thursday 18/8 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
		Friday 2/9 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement or Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
		Thursday 15/9 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
		Thursday 22/9 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
		Wednesday 2/11 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
		Friday 4/11 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	

		Thursday 10/11 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
		Thursday 17/11 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
1774	<i>London Chronicle or Universal Evening Post</i>	Tuesday 3/5 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	2
		Saturday 7/5 (in advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
1775	<i>St. James Chronicle or the British Evening Post</i>	Tuesday 14/11 (7 th ed.)	1
1775	<i>Lloyd's Evening Post</i>	Friday 13/1 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	4
		Monday 6/11 (first advertisement for the 7 th edition)	
		Monday 20/11 (7 th ed.)	
		Friday 1/12 (7 th ed.)	
1775	<i>Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser</i>	Friday 13/1 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	4
		Tuesday 17/1 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Wednesday 25/1 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Tuesday 31/1 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
1775	<i>General Evening Post</i>	Thursday 2/2 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	2
		Tuesday 21/2 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
1775	<i>London Chronicle</i>	Saturday 25/11 (7 th ed.)	1
1775	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Wednesday 16/8 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	21
		Friday 18/8 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Thursday 24/8 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	
		Tuesday 29/8 (6 th ed. advertised in an	

advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Wednesday 30/8 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Monday 4/9 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Friday 1/9 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Thursday 7/9 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Friday 8/9 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Monday 11/9 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Thursday 14/9 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Friday 15/9 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Saturday 16/9 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Wednesday 20/9 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Monday 25/9 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Wednesday 27/9 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Saturday 14/10 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Thursday 23/11 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Friday 22/12 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Saturday 23/12 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

Tuesday 26/12 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's *NSD*)

1776	<i>London Evening Post</i>	Saturday 19/10 (a new ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	1
1776	<i>St. James Chronicle or the British Evening Post</i>	Saturday 19/10 (a new ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>) Tuesday 29/10 (a new ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>) Saturday 2/11(a new ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	3
1776	<i>Public Ledger</i>	Wednesday 23/10 (a new ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	1
1776	<i>London Chronicle</i>	Saturday 26/10 (a new ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>) Saturday 2/11 (a new ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>) Saturday 9/11 (a new ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	3
1776	<i>Lloyd's Evening Post</i>	Friday 1/11 (a new ed. advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	1
1776	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Tuesday 6/8 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>) Wednesday 4/9 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>) Saturday 7/9 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>) Monday 16/9 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>) Thursday 19/9 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>) Tuesday 22/10 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>) Thursday 24/10 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>) Monday 28/10 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>) Saturday 28/12 (6 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	9

1777	<i>London Chronicle</i>	<p>Saturday 29/3 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>)</p> <p>Thursday 3/4 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>)</p>	2
1777	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	<p>Friday 10/1 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)</p> <p>Friday 11/4 (in advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>)</p> <p>Saturday 19/4 (in advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>)</p> <p>Tuesday 20/5 (in advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>)</p> <p>Saturday 26/7 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)</p> <p>Saturday 19/7 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)</p> <p>Saturday 2/8 (6th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)</p> <p>Monday 4/8 (first advertisement for the 8th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)</p> <p>Tuesday 5/8 (8th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)</p> <p>Tuesday 12/8 (8th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)</p> <p>Monday 18/8 (8th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)</p> <p>Tuesday 19/8 (8th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)</p> <p>Saturday 23/8 (8th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)</p> <p>Monday 25/8 (8th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)</p> <p>Thursday 28/8 (8th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)</p>	27

	Friday 29/8 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Saturday 30/8 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Wednesday 3/9 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Saturday 6/9 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Wednesday 10/9 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Tuesday 16/9 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Friday 19/9 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Saturday 20/9 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Tuesday 23/9 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Thursday 25/9 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Friday 31/10 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Friday 26/12 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
1778	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	17
	Monday 19/1 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Monday 2/2 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Tuesday 31/3 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Wednesday 8/7 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Tuesday 14/7 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
	Friday 17/7 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	

		Thursday 23/7 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
		Wednesday 29/7 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
		Saturday 1/8 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
		Monday 3/8 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
		Thursday 13/8 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
		Thursday 8/10 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	
		Monday 5/1 (in advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>)	
		Friday 9/1 (in advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>)	
		Tuesday 27/1 (7 th ed.)	
		Friday 6/2 (7 th ed.)	
		Tuesday 17/2 (7 th ed.)	
1778	<i>Morning Post and Daily Advertiser</i>	Saturday 3/1 (7 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>)	4
		Saturday 10/1 (7 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>)	
		Saturday 17/1 (7 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>)	
		Monday 26/1 (7 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>)	
1778	<i>St. James Chronicle or the British Evening Post</i>	Thursday 8/1 (7 th ed.)	1
1778	<i>London Chronicle</i>	Saturday 3/1 (7 th ed.)	2
		Tuesday 6/1 (in advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>)	

1778	<i>London Evening Post</i>	Saturday 7/2 (7 th ed.) Saturday 21/2 (7 th ed.) Saturday 28/2 (7 th ed.)	3
1778	<i>General Evening Post</i>	Tuesday 13/1 (in advertisement for Ash's <i>Sentiments on Education</i>) Saturday 14/3 (7 th ed.) Saturday 28/3 (7 th ed.) Tuesday 28/4 (7 th ed.)	4
1779	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Friday 2/4 (8 th ed. advertised in an advertisement for Nugent's <i>NPD</i>)	1
1779	<i>General Evening Post</i>	Tuesday 24/8	1
1780	<i>London Evening Post</i>	Saturday 8/1 Thursday 27/7	2
1780	<i>General Evening Post</i>	Tuesday 9/5 Tuesday 11/7 Thursday 13/7	3
1780	<i>London Chronicle</i>	Tuesday 6/6 (advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	1
1780	<i>Whitehall Evening Post</i>	Saturday 27/5 Saturday 3/6 Thursday 29/6 Tuesday 26/12 (advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	4
1780	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Thursday 8/6	1
1780	<i>St. James Chronicle or the British Evening Post</i>	Saturday 1/7	1
1780	<i>London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post</i>	Friday 14/7 ("A New Edition, Revised, Corrected, and Enlarged").	1
1780	<i>British Chronicle or Pugh's Hereford Journal</i>	Thursday 7/9	1
1781	<i>Whitehall Evening Post</i>	Tuesday 16/1 (advertised in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NSD</i>)	1

1782	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Monday 25/11	1
1783	<i>Whitehall Evening Post</i>	Friday 3/1 (in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	5
		Thursday 16/1 (in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	
		Thursday 23/1 (in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	
		Thursday 30/1 (in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	
		Tuesday 11/2 (in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	
1783	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Monday 13/1	2
		Friday 24/1 (in an advertisement for Entick's <i>NLED</i>)	
1783	<i>London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post</i>	Monday 20/1	1
1784	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Tuesday 16/11	2
		Saturday 20/11	
1785	<i>London Chronicle</i>	Tuesday 18/1 (a new edition is advertised in an advertisement for John Fell's <i>Essay Towards an English Grammar</i>)	1
1785	<i>Public Advertiser</i>	Tuesday 18/1 (a new edition is advertised in an advertisement for John Fell's <i>Essay Towards an English Grammar</i>)	1
1792	<i>World</i>	Saturday 7/7 (advertised by the booksellers Wenman and Hodgson)	2
		Saturday 28/7 (advertised by the booksellers Wenman and Hodgson)	
1793	<i>World</i>	Monday 14/1 (advertised by the booksellers Wenman and Hodgson)	1
	Total		285

B. Nineteenth-Century Newspapers

Year	Newspaper	Date	Number
1823	<i>The British Mercury</i>	Monday 3/11 (advertised by the publishers Simpkin and Marshall)	1
1824	<i>The Examiner</i>	Sunday 18/7 (advertised by the publishers Simpkin and Marshall)	1
1825	<i>The Leeds Mercury</i>	Saturday 22/1 (advertised by the publishers Simpkin and Marshall)	1
1825	<i>The Examiner</i>	Sunday 23/1 (advertised by the publishers Simpkin and Marshall)	1
1828	<i>The Examiner</i>	Sunday 3/2 (advertised by the publishers Simpkin and Marshall)	1
1834	<i>Liverpool Mercury</i>	Friday 14/3 (advertised by the publishers Simpkin and Marshall)	2
		Friday 8/8 (advertised by the publishers Simpkin and Marshall)	
1835	<i>Liverpool Mercury</i>	Friday 14/8 (advertised by the publishers Simpkin and Marshall)	1
	Total		8

Appendix 2

William Huntington's study of Ash's grammar

A Narrative of the early Days of a modern Declaimer

From whence arose this wond'rous man?
Tell me, ye aged, if ye can!
An aged friend replies, he knew
The field in which this *thistle* grew,
And well remembers this *believer*,
When he was only a *coal-heaver*.
But soon disdainning this vile work,
(Lab'ring, poor fellow, like a Turk)
He saw, he said, his destiny –
'A *preacher* I must shortly be!
Then though his wife and friends dissuade,
He throws aside pick-ax and spade.

To fit himself, he learnt to read,
And then to write – hard tasks indeed!
But harder still, he try'd to hammer
At Dr. Ash's English grammar!
Here for awhile the hero stuck,
Puzzling his brains o'er this small book:
Sad were his days, his nights as sad,
Till the poor dunce was almost mad!
At last his self-complacent pride
Led him to throw the book aside;
Hence from that hour, mark, ye discerning!

Our hero hates all kind of learning!
'I cannot, will not longer try,
Nor can I see a reason why
This world of ours abounds with fools,
Like me, despising grammar-rules.
What tho' unlearned, can't I reach
The art, among the *poor*, to preach?
To preach and preach again I will,
Whoever tries to keep me still.'

His education now *complete*,
He sought a *call* somewhere to meet;
At length a village congregation
Heard of his wonderful conversion,
Then sent at once for this Arts-Master,
Who soon was chosen for their pastor.
Here 'mongst the poor he preach'd with fame,
Who had no art nor mind to blame;
But soon ambition fill'd his mind,
He could not brook to be confin'd.
'What, shall I stay in this poor place,
To hide my talents and my grace?
Born to instruct, and sent to teach,
I'll go to other towns to preach!'

About this time surprising whims,
That came to him by night in dreams,
Soon puff'd him up with vain desire,
And prompted him to rise still higher.
His character, his whim, and fame,
At length, perchance, to London came: –
Some mighty wise, *discerning* men,
That much perplex'd the churches then,
Resolv'd to send for this *coal-heaver*,

And strange! believ'd him no deceiver!
Now with his wild, high-minded themes,
His mystic words, and midnight dreams,
He soon obtain'd a flock to hear, –
To him no matter who they were;
Nor did he mind their sinful ways,
If they would come, believe, and gaze!

And now this *learned* man, and *good*,
Had thoughts of writing, if he could,
Tho' scarcely able yet to scrawl,
And knowing nought of **Ash** at all!

Thus tho' he sought the world to *bless*,
He knew not how to go to press!
He was advis'd, howe'er, to send
To a *book-making*, author's friend –
A skilful amanuensis he,
To polish prose or poetry.
There straight they form'd a coalition,
Like 'pothecary and physician,
This to pronounce the patient ill,
While *that* prepares the boasted pill!
So these two quacks have long been known,
For *godly* med'cines thro' the town,
Which, while their patients have been *quaffing*,
They chink'd the money, and stood *laughing*.

But as *diplomas* are of use,
Our author's wit could one produce.
'Let others boast a *double D*.
S.S. my title now shall be:
And tho' not knowing what is meant,
The puzzled wags their jokes may vent,

And diff'rent explanations spell,
It suits a *Surly Sinner* well!
Then first sprung forth 'The naked bow'
Naked enough, poor soul, we know!
And then, as this deponent saith,
Starts up his wond'rous 'Bank of Faith!'
Since which, between his friend and him,
We have been plagu'd with many a whim.

The Muse no further deigns to trace
The boaster of superior grace. –
Most safely perch'd in London city,
To catch the simple, please the witty;
Let him go on howe'er he may,
(For ev'ry dog must have his day)
Let him declaim in pulpit loud,
In strains abusive, coarse, and proud;
Let him still write to *gull* his friends,
And serve, meanwhile, his *selfish* ends;
Tho' some respect him as a father,
I treat him as a novice rather;
And though he often mounts the rostrum,
I can't take in a single nostrum –
Resolv'd on this, and won't deceive him,
Whoever may, *I'll ne'er believe him*
(Anon. 1805: 315–316).

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Samenvatting

Vanaf het midden van de achttiende eeuw ontstond er in Engeland een grote vraag naar grammaticaboeken. Door het bestuderen van deze werkjes leerden de kinderen van de middenklasse niet alleen bepaalde grammaticale fouten te vermijden, maar ook de taal te spreken van de hogere klasse, waardoor zij hogerop de sociale ladder konden komen. Omdat Engeland in tegenstelling tot Frankrijk, Italië, Spanje en Zweden geen Academie had, die een grammatica voor dit doel kon produceren, werden grammaticaboeken geschreven door wie zich daartoe geroepen voelde.

Het meest invloedrijke achttiende-eeuwse grammaticaboek dat sociale mobiliteit garandeerde, was dat van Robert Lowth (1710–1787). Hoewel Lowth zijn *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762) oorspronkelijk had geschreven voor zijn vierjarige zoontje Thomas Henry (zijn grammatica bevat voorbeeldzinnetjes als *Thomas's book* en *I love Thomas*), werd zijn werk niet als een kindergrammatica maar juist als een grammatica voor geleerden beschouwd.

Lowth was niet de eerste vader die een grammaticaboek schreef voor zijn kind. Twee jaar eerder had de doopsgezinde dominee John Ash (1724?–1779) al een grammatica geschreven voor zijn vijfjarig dochttertje. Al vrij snel kende het kleine meisje de korte genummerde grammaticaregeltjes uit haar hoofd en kon zij deze opzeggen. De reden dat Ash uiteindelijk besloot om zijn *Grammatical Institutes: or grammar, adapted to the genius of the English tongue* (1760) in Worcester uit te geven, was dat zijn vrienden, die allemaal schoolmeester waren, zo ook gebruik konden maken van zijn werk. Het duurde nog zes jaar, voordat de grammatica voor het eerst in Londen verscheen. Eerst als *The Easiest Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar* (1766) en vanaf 1769 als *Grammatical Institutes; or, an easy introduction to Dr. Lowth's English grammar*.

De grammatica van Ash was een groot succes. Tot 1810 verschenen er maar liefst vijftig edities en herdrukken. Ook werd het werk, tot twee keer toe, vertaald in het Duits, in 1775 en 1789.

Omdat Ash veel beter dan Lowth begreep hoe hij een grammatica voor kinderen moest schrijven, vormt zijn grammatica de basis van dit proefschrift. In tegenstelling tot het werk van zijn tijdgenoten Lowth, Joseph Priestley (1733–1804) en Lindley Murray (1745–1826) is de grammatica van Ash nooit eerder diepgaand bestudeerd. Het doel van deze studie is dan ook een uitvoerige beschrijving te geven van de grammatica van Ash en de invloed vast te stellen die dit werk heeft uitgeoefend op andere populaire kindergrammatica's uit de achttiende en negentiende eeuw. Tevens wordt ingegaan op de vraag in hoeverre deze werken een verbetering waren ten opzichte van de grammatica van Ash.

Hoewel ik een aantal grammatica's heb geraadpleegd in de British Library in Londen en de Bodleian Library in Oxford is het merendeel van de grammatica's door mij bestudeerd met behulp van Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), een elektronische database met op dit moment 180.000 boeken uit de achttiende eeuw, Google Books en Internet Archive. Voor zeventiende-eeuwse grammatica's heb ik gebruik gemaakt van de database Early English Books Online (EEBO).

In hoofdstuk 1 wordt het onderwerp van dit proefschrift geïntroduceerd. Het laat zien dat het in achttiende-eeuws Engeland niet geheel ongebruikelijk was om zeer jonge kinderen regels uit grammaticaboeken uit het hoofd te laten leren. Een vergelijking van werken uit deze tijd toont aan dat veel grammaticaschrijvers zonder bronvermelding stukken overnamen uit grammatica's van hun voorgangers. Daarnaast wordt in dit hoofdstuk het belang van dit onderzoek gemotiveerd. Deze studie sluit namelijk niet alleen aan bij recent onderzoek op het gebied van achttiende-eeuwse grammatica's en grammaticaschrijvers, maar heeft ook raakvlakken met recente studies over de geschiedenis van het onderwijs en de kinderliteratuur in Engeland.

Hoofdstuk 2 bevat de levensgeschiedenis van John Ash. Daarnaast beschrijft dit hoofdstuk de publicatiegeschiedenis en receptie van zijn *Grammatical Institutes*. In dit gedeelte wordt aangetoond dat de tweede en derde edities van de grammatica geen herdrukken zijn maar echte edities die zonder toestemming van Ash door zijn vriend, de schoolmeester John Collett Ryland (1723–1792), op de markt waren gebracht. De reden hiervoor was dat Ryland dringend nieuwe exemplaren nodig had voor zijn eigen kostschool in Northampton, waar hij al sinds 1760 gebruik maakte van de grammatica van Ash. Verder blijkt dat de vierde door Ash zelf herziene editie van de grammatica in 1769 is uitgegeven door de Londense boekverkopers en uitgevers Charles en Edward Dilly en niet in 1763 zoals vermeld staat in Alstons bibliografie van achttiende-eeuwse Engelse grammatica's (1965). De grammatica van Ash werd positief ontvangen in de pers. Zowel de *Critical* als *Monthly Review* vonden het werkje zeer geschikt voor kinderen. Naast deze twee recensies bevat hoofdstuk 2 ook een aantal krantenadvertenties over de grammatica van Ash. Met behulp van de 17th–18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers en 19th Century British Library Newspapers databases zijn maar liefst 293 van dit soort advertenties gevonden (zie Appendix 1). Tenslotte wordt in dit hoofdstuk kort de grammatica van Joseph Guy besproken. Deze schoolmeester uit Bristol gaf openlijk toe zijn eigen *Easy Introduction to the English Language* (1796) te hebben gebaseerd op de grammatica van Ash, maar hij uitte daarnaast ook zijn kritiek op het werk.

In hoofdstuk 3 gaat de aandacht uit naar de vraag welke bronnen Ash heeft geraadpleegd tijdens het schrijven van zijn grammatica. Ook wordt in dit hoofdstuk de opbouw van zijn *Grammatical Institutes* beschreven en wordt ingegaan op de vraag of we zijn werk als prescriptief of descriptief moeten beschouwen. Terwijl een prescriptieve grammatica beschrijft hoe je als spreker een taal correct moet gebruiken, haalt een schrijver van een descriptieve grammatica zijn taalregels uit de gebruikte taal. Tijdens het schrijven van zijn grammatica maakte Ash gebruik van James Greenwoods *Essay Towards a*

Practical English Grammar. Describing the genius and nature of the English tongue (1711) of zijn *Royal English Grammar, containing what is necessary to the knowledge of the English tongue* (1737). Dit blijkt voornamelijk uit een lange lijst van 55 mannelijke zelfstandige naamwoorden met hun vrouwelijk equivalent (*Boy – Girl, Father – Mother, Horse – Mare, Prince – Princess*). In tegenstelling tot de eerste editie van de grammatica van Ash bevat de vierde editie van zijn grammatica meer prescriptieve opmerkingen. Deze prescriptieve aanpak zou te maken kunnen hebben met het feit dat Ash inmiddels was beïnvloed door de grammatica van Lowth, een werk dat pas na zijn eigen grammatica op de markt kwam. Wat Ash zich waarschijnlijk niet realiseerde was dat, door het toevoegen van deze prescripties, zijn grammatica een stuk minder toegankelijk was geworden voor een jong publiek.

Hoofdstuk 4 behandelt de publicatie en invloed van de grammatica van Ash in Noord-Amerika. Hoewel de titel van de grammatica van Noah Webster *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* (1784) lijkt op die van Ash, blijkt dat Webster zich voor zijn grammatica op het woordenboek van Ash, *A New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language* (1775), had gebaseerd. In dit hoofdstuk komt ook de *English Grammar*, een grammatica die Lindley Murray schreef voor een Quaker meisjesschool in York en die daar in 1795 verscheen, aan bod. De reden hiervoor is dat Murray in Swatara, Pennsylvania, geboren is en dat hij pas in 1784 met zijn vrouw naar Engeland verhuisde. Murrays werk was niet alleen zeer populair in Engeland maar ook in Amerika, waar het vanaf 1800 zijn intrede deed. Naast Charles Dickens en William Makepeace Thackeray in Engeland, verwezen ook Amerikaanse schrijvers als Herman Melville en Harriet Beecher Stowe in hun romans naar Murrays grammatica. Murray noemde Ash niet als één van de bronnen van zijn *English Grammar*, maar een vergelijking van zijn grammatica met die van Ash geeft aan dat hij zich wel degelijk heeft gebaseerd op de *Grammatical Institutes*. Dit blijkt onder meer uit de definities van het persoonlijk voornaamwoord, het bijwoord en het voorzetsel. Ook Murrays beschrijving en voorbeelden van de ellipsis (het

weglaten van één of meer woorden in een zin) zijn zonder bronvermelding overgenomen uit de grammatica van Ash. Het enige verschil is dat deze informatie in Murrays grammatica in een kleiner lettertype is weergegeven. Murrays gebruik van het kleine lettertype diende ertoe om aan te geven dat sommige onderwerpen (als ellipsis) meer geschikt waren voor gevorderde studenten dan voor beginners.

Hoewel Ashs *Grammatical Institutes* bekend stond als een schoolgrammatica, laat hoofdstuk 5 zien dat zijn werk in de achttiende en negentiende eeuw ook door verschillende groepen vrouwen (meisjes, jonge vrouwen, moeders, gouvernantes, leraressen en schrijfsters van grammatica's) werd bestudeerd. Een vergelijking van de grammatica's van de leraressen en grammaticaschrijfsters Ellen Devis en Mrs. M.C. Edwards toont aan dat beiden het werk van Ash moeten hebben geraadpleegd tijdens het schrijven van hun eigen kindergrammatica's.

Hoofdstuk 6 beschrijft het leven en de grammaticaboekjes van de kinderboekenschrijfster Lady Ellenor Fenn (1744–1813). Het bijzondere van de werkjes van Fenn is dat zij niet alleen voor kinderen waren geschreven, maar ook voor moeders die in hun eigen jeugd geen grammaticaonderwijs hadden genoten. In dit hoofdstuk laat ik zien dat Fenn niet alleen bekend was met het werk van Robert Lowth, dat zij net als vele anderen te lastig vond voor kleine kinderen, maar ook met de grammatica van Ash. Het waren vooral de korte definities van de woordsoorten die Fenn overnam van Ash. Opvallend is het verschil in benadering tussen de werken van Ash en Fenn. In tegenstelling tot Ashs *Grammatical Institutes* waren Fenns grammatica's geschikt voor kinderen van verschillende leeftijden. Terwijl Ash zijn jonge publiek zinnen liet ontleden die afkomstig waren uit de bijbel, de Engelse vertaling van de *Ilias* van Homerus en John Miltons *Paradise Lost*, koos Fenn voor zinnnetjes over dieren en insecten. Fenn was een pionier op het gebied van grammaticaonderwijs voor jonge kinderen. Zij was de eerste die het spelenderwijs leren van grammatica mogelijk maakte. Ze ontwierp onder andere een *Grammar Box*, een hardhouten

grammaticakistje met daarin kaartjes met afbeeldingen van zelfstandige naamwoorden, kaartjes met verschillende woordsoorten en zelfs speciale kaarten met grammaticaregels die kinderen mee naar buiten konden nemen en spelenderwijs in de tuin konden bestuderen.

De grote rol die Fenn speelde in de ontwikkeling van de kindergrammatica blijkt ook uit hoofdstuk 7, dat gewijd is aan vijf negentiende-eeuwse grammaticaschrijfsters die allemaal door Fenn geïnspireerd blijken te zijn. Zo laat Eliza Fenwick kinderen in haar *Rays from the Rainbow* (1812) de woordsoorten met verschillende kleuren verf inschilderen, een tip die Fenn moeders ook al drie jaar eerder gaf in haar *Teacher's Assistant in the Art of Teaching Grammar in Sport* (1809). In E. Ballantine's *Decoy* (1813) treffen we een meisje aan dat op dezelfde manier leert van haar moeder hoe ze een zelfstandig naamwoord in de woonkamer kan ontdekken. De definitie van het zelfstandig naamwoord in Jane Haldimand Marcets *Mary's Grammar* (1835) is niet alleen hetzelfde als die in de grammaticaboekjes van Fenn, maar ook als die in de grammatica van Ash. Zo leeft de invloed van Ash via Fenn door tot in de negentiende eeuw. Marcets *Mary's Grammar* en Julia Corners *Play-Grammar* (1840) zijn interessant, omdat de jonge hoofdpersonen in deze werken meteen aan de bel trekken als ze een grammaticaregel niet begrijpen. Na nog wat extra grammatica-uitleg van moeder kan weer verder worden gegaan met de lessen. Naast de werken van deze vijf schrijfsters worden in dit hoofdstuk ook twee anonieme werkjes besproken. Zowel *The Paths of Learning Strewed with Flowers* (1820) als *The Infant's Grammar, or a pic-nic party of the parts of speech* (1822) voldoen aan onze moderne verwachting van hoe een grammatica voor kinderen eruit zou moeten zien. Opmerkelijk is het feit dat we in *The Paths of Learning Strewed with Flowers* dezelfde definitie van het persoonlijk voornaamwoord aantreffen als in het werk van Fenn, maar ook zoals in de grammatica van Ash. Dit suggereert dat meer dan 60 jaar na het verschijnen van zijn grammatica, deze definitie nog steeds geschikt werd bevonden voor jonge kinderen.

In hoofdstuk 8 worden de conclusies van dit onderzoek gepresenteerd. Door het schrijven van zijn *Grammatical Institutes* heeft Ash een belangrijke bijdrage geleverd aan de ontwikkeling van de kindergrammatica. Zijn grammatica beïnvloedde niet alleen de populaire kindergrammatica's van Murray en Fenn, maar via Fenn ook negentiende-eeuwse grammatica's voor kinderen. Het verder bestuderen van deze negentiende-eeuwse werkjes vormt een goede suggestie voor verder onderzoek.

Curriculum Vitae

Karlijn M. Navest was born in Bergen op Zoom in The Netherlands on 13 September 1980, and grew up in Ossendrecht. From 1992 to 1998 she attended the Regionale Scholengemeenschap 't Rijks in Bergen op Zoom. After completing her secondary school education (*Atheneum*) in 1998, she enrolled at the University of Leiden to do a degree in English Language and Literature. In 2001 she spent five months at the National University of Ireland, Galway as an Erasmus student. After obtaining her master's degree (*cum laude*) in November 2003, she worked as a research assistant under the supervision of Professor Dr. I.M. Tiekens-Boon van Ostade at the English Department of the University of Leiden (February 2004–August 2004) in order to do research on Robert Lowth and his grammar, which resulted in two articles, and an entry on Lowth in the *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics, 2nd edition*. In July 2005 she successfully completed a teacher training MA in English at the Leiden University Graduate School of Teaching (ICLON). From September 2005 to August 2009 she was employed as a PhD student in Professor Dr. I.M. Tiekens-Boon van Ostade's VICI-project "The Codifiers and the English Language: Tracing the Norms of Standard English" at the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (LUCL). This thesis is the result of the research carried out during these years. She is currently working as an English teacher at the St. Stanislascollege (Westplantsoen) in Delft.