These kind of words: number agreement in the species noun phrase in international academic English

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3 The usage guides

3.1 Introduction

The Bridging the Unbridgeable (BtU) project (cf. §§1.1, 4.2.3) focused on three groups of contributors to the debate on variation in usage: the linguists, the prescriptivists and the general public. I presented the views of the linguists on number agreement in the species noun phrase, and in the clause of which it is a constituent, in Chapter 2, and I will explore the views of two sections of the general public in Chapters 4 and 5. In this chapter, I investigate the views of the prescriptivists. In the BtU project, 'prescriptivists' is a catch-all term generally used to describe the work of the usage guide writers, and it has been chosen because such writers provide advice on what to say – their prescriptions – and on what not to say – their proscriptions. As a group they are often contrasted with 'descriptivists' (cf. §1.2); in the terms of the BtU project this means the linguists, who tend to see their role as accurately describing what people actually say or write, and the circumstances in which they might use any different variants, rather than as providing advice, or even judgements, on those variants. However, it was suggested in §1.2 that this prescriptive / descriptive binary is more of a convenience than a categorisation. It suggests a difference in attitude and approach, and, as Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p. 6; and see §2.3) point out, there is in practice no reason why the linguists' reference grammars and the usage guides "should not agree on what they say about the topics they both treat". Peters (2020, p. 616) comments that whilst e.g. a (large) descriptive reference grammar will aim for comprehensiveness, in a prescriptive approach, such as that of the usage guide writers, "only selected elements of the language are considered, those on which judgments may be brought to bear". These judgements can be seen in the quotations from the usage guides given in §1.2, and I will show in the analysis of the guides in this chapter that such judgements are indeed an important part of their advice. Another criticism of usage guides is not that they are prescriptive – that is to be expected – but that the analyses they provide and the advice they give are simply wrong. A classic example of this is Pullum's (2009) excoriation of Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* (1959–2014), a usage guide which nonetheless continues to be widely used, especially in the United States. I will investigate in this chapter whether Pullum's criticisms can be applied to the usage guides in this study.

Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020, pp. xi–xii) draws a useful distinction between prescriptivists as a group of writers and 'prescriptivism' as an activity. The latter she sees as a "further stage in the English standardisation process" (2020, p. xi), following

selection, acceptance, diffusion, maintenance, elaboration of function, codification and prescription, a process first set out in Milroy and Milroy (1985, pp. 22–28) and later extended to include legitimisation and historicisation (2012, pp. 171–172).

In this chapter, I will address two separate lines of enquiry in my analyses of the usage guides. The first arises from an observation made by Peters (2020, p. 616): "The lack of lateral referencing in many usage books (Peters and Young 1997, pp. 317–319) suggests their remoteness from linguistic research and scholarship, and a reluctance to refer even to the work of other usage commentators", and this view lies behind much of the criticism of usage guide writers, such as that by Pullum above. This is an important topic, as it helps to establish whether the usage guide writers are working in isolation, believing in "a transcendental norm of correct English" to which we should all aspire, as seen by Milroy and Milroy (2012, p. 31), or whether they in fact are aware of a professional body of research and writing which they can both learn from and contribute to. For example, Burchfield, editor of the third edition of *Fowler's Modern English Usage* (1996), probably the best-known usage guide (see e.g. Crystal, 2009, p. vi), comments on Fowler's intellectual "isolation … from the mainstream of the linguistic scholarship of his day" (1998 [1996], p. vii), whilst the quotation from Ayres (1882) in §3.3.2 below suggests someone who is immersed in the scholarly language activity of his time. After describing the usage guides selected for this study (§3.2), I then investigate Peters's claim in detail for those guides (§3.3). I show that, in contrast to what Peters (2020) and also Peters and Young (1997) found, there is a good deal of recognition and acknowledgement of the work of other language professionals, including grammarians and lexicographers and other usage guide writers, throughout the period of study (§3.3.2). This part of the chapter is based on an analysis which looks at the usage guides as a whole. Following on from this, I investigate this lateral referencing in the usage guide entries for the species noun phrase (§3.3.3).

The line of enquiry focuses more specifically on how the usage guide writers in this study treat the usage issue of number agreement in the species noun phrase (§3.4.2), and in the clause of which it is a constituent (§3.4.3). This part of the investigation addresses a series of questions posed by Straaijer (2015). These include:

> When does a certain usage become problematic, or perceived as such, and when does a certain usage stop being (perceived as) problematic or disputed? In other words, when do usage problems 'begin' and 'end'?
>
> [W]hich usage problems persist?
>
> Does the discussion of specific usage problems change, and if so, in what way?
>
> [A]re there differences in usage advice for different varieties of English? (Straaijer, 2015, p. 2)

These questions are addressed in a number of studies made within the BtU project, most notably in Ebner (2017), Kostadinova (2018a), and Lukač (2018a), whilst Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020) includes a review of the project as a whole.[1] In this study I take a slightly different approach in that I focus on a single topic in the usage guides, that of number agreement in the species noun phrase, to try to determine whether there is any coherence in the approach of the guides as a whole, both synchronically and diachronically (§3.4). I investigate whether there is any difference in the advice given for different varieties and registers of English (§3.5), and I also investigate whether and how the usage guides change their views over time, with an analysis of selected guides for which I have multiple editions (§3.6). This approach enables me to address all the questions from Straaijer's list above, albeit on only this one topic. But first I need to describe the usage guides that I am analysing.

3.2 The usage guides in this study

The HUGE database (cf. §1.3) contains seventy-seven usage guides, dating from 1770 (Baker) to 2010 (Heffer; Lamb; Taggart). Straaijer (2018) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020, esp. pp. 47–61) describe the creation of the HUGE database, including the criteria they used for the selection of what they considered to be a usage guide. This use of the HUGE database in the current study means that I was spared the difficulty of this decision.[2] Tieken-Boon van Ostade gives additional information on the breakdown of the usage guides in her Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 (2020, pp. 50–58), including many guides not in HUGE. My Figure 3.1 overleaf shows the distribution of these seventy-seven guides by date. The dates used are those of the guides which are included in HUGE, which are not necessarily the first editions of those guides (see Appendix A1 for a note on editions).

Straaijer (2018, p. 12, ftn. 3) has estimated that between 250 and 300 usage guides dealing with British and / or American English have been published since 1770, whilst Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020, pp. 48–50) has calculated that nearly 350 guides were published between 1770 and 2010. Garner (1998, pp. 709–719) includes a list of "more than 350 books … on English usage", and by his fifth edition this had grown to "more than 500" (2022, pp. 1249–1261), though he notes that not all of these would be recognised as usage guides in the sense of HUGE, so HUGE should be seen as a reasonably representative sample of the guides available. There is a fairly even spread of guides in HUGE from the early nineteenth century to the late twentieth, with a spurt around the 1980s / 1990s / 2000s, reflecting the relative accessibility of the usage

1 A list of publications arising from the BtU project can be found at <https://bridgingtheunbridgeable.com/publications/> (last accessed 2 June 2023).

2 This difficulty will appear in the discussion of especially Peters and Young's (1997) work below (cf. §3.3: SUMMARY).

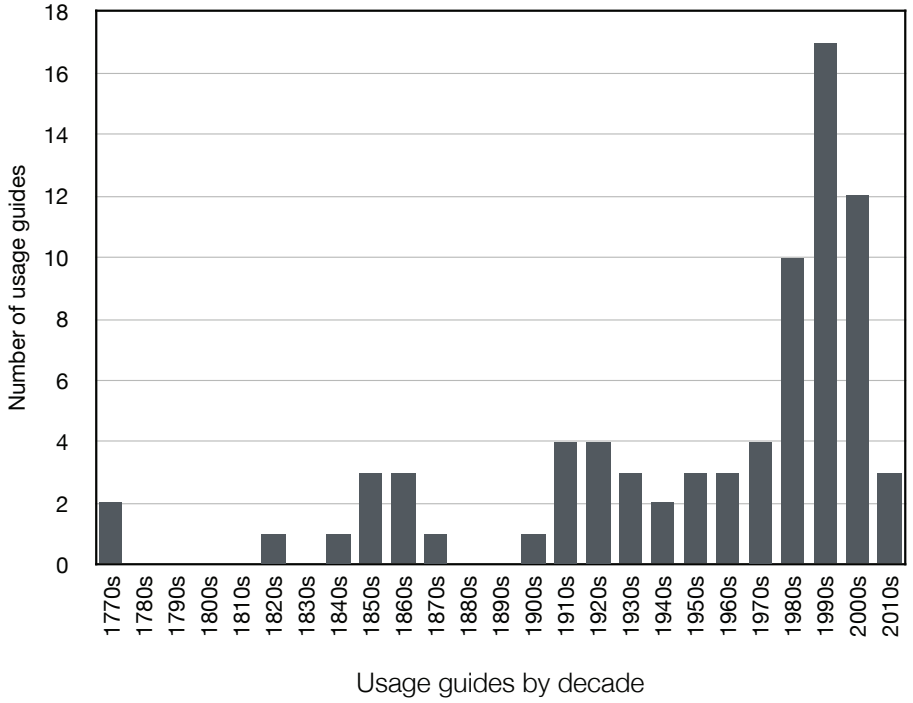

Figure 3.1 The distribution of the usage guides in HUGE by date

guides for the HUGE project, with the drop in numbers in the 2010s reflecting the time of the creation of the HUGE database (see Straaijer, 2014; 2015, pp. 6–7). There is also one early guide (in two different editions in HUGE) from the late eighteenth century. It should be noted that there are six decades which are not represented in HUGE.[3] Notwithstanding this, Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020, p. 54) was able to conclude that "coverage of the eighteenth … and nineteenth centuries … is as complete as we could hope for".

Figure 3.2 shows the number of usage guides in HUGE which do (Yes) and do not (No) include an entry on number agreement in the species noun phrase. The usage guides themselves do not use the wording 'species noun phrase', as the term 'species noun' was not introduced until Biber et al. (1999, p. 255) (see §1.1). In fact, the usage guides tend not to use a specific term for this construction at all, instead listing it as e.g. a numbered paragraph (e.g. "CXVI. SORTS"; Baker, 1770), under e.g. *those sort* (White, 1870), or simply under e.g. *kind* (Fowler, 1926). Table 3.5 in §3.4.2: EXPLANATION below includes the various technical terms used in the usage

3 This is in part due to one of the limitations of the procedure for compiling the database being that the books had to be destroyed in order to digitise them, and this ruled out access to some titles (Straaijer, 2014).

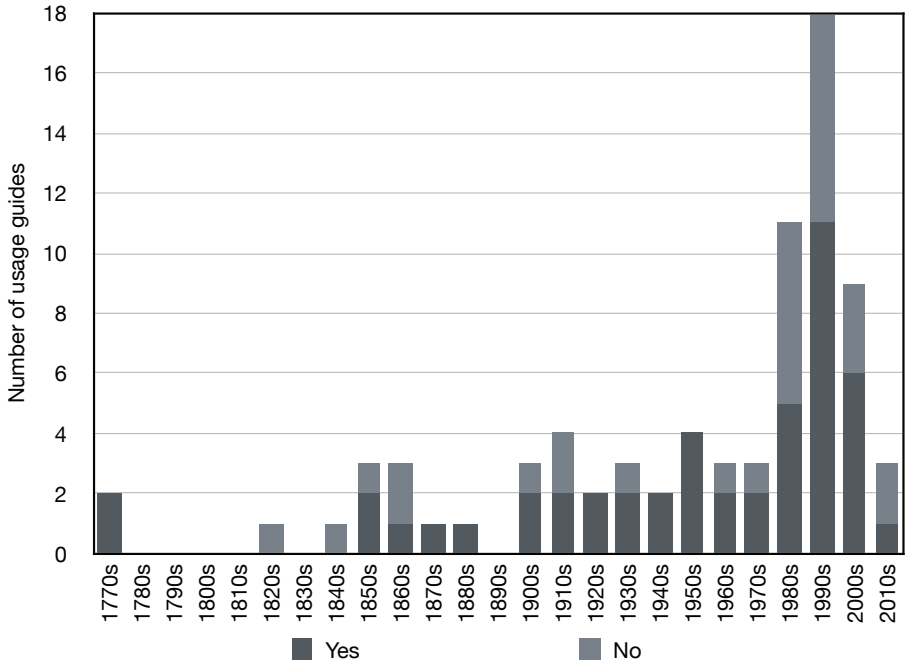

Figure 3.2 The usage guides in HUGE which do (Yes) or do not (No) include an entry on the species noun phrase

guide entries when discussing this topic. Figure 3.2 shows that forty-eight (62%) of the usage guides in HUGE do include a discussion of this topic in some form or other,[4] and that twenty-nine do not. The proportion of 'Yes/No' does not appear to vary very much by decade over the period of study, from the very beginning in the late eighteenth century to the very end in the early twenty-first century, with a peak in the 1990s. Number agreement in the species noun phrase does therefore seem to be a usage issue which has persisted over the whole of the period covered in HUGE, which addresses the first two questions raised by Straaijer (see §3.1).

A list of the forty-seven usage guides investigated for this study is given in Appendix A1. Following Anderwald's (2020, pp. 75, 89) interpretation of Labov's (1972) 'Principle of Accountability', I also list in Appendix A2 those usage guides which do not include an entry on e.g. *these kind of*, and it will be important to bear in mind throughout this study that there are also these twenty-nine guides that did not feel it necessary to include an entry on number agreement in the species noun phrase, and that these also span nearly the whole of the period, from 1829 (Anonymous)

4 This number was reduced to forty-seven after I removed Brown's (1851) *Grammar of English Grammars* from the study as I do not consider it to be a usage guide.

to 2010 (Lamb), as shown in the upper part of the bars in Table 3.2. In the list in Appendix A1, the dates given, and on which Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are based, are largely those found in HUGE. Where I have used different dates, this is generally because I had access to an earlier, typically first, edition of one of the usage guides in HUGE, or to a later edition, as well as to the HUGE edition itself. This sometimes has the effect of positioning a usage guide in an earlier decade. For example, I was able to find a first edition, dated 1906, of Vizetelly's *Desk-Book of Errors in English,* in addition to the 1920 second edition in HUGE. Sometimes, finding an earlier edition meant that a usage guide was positioned in an earlier century, as with Ayres' *The Verbalist*, where I had access to an 1882 first edition in addition to the 1911 revised edition in HUGE. Generally, I was able to access digital editions of these usage guides via the Internet Archive[5] or via the HathiTrust Digital Library,[6] and I also had access to some print editions in the Cambridge University Library in the UK.[7] This meant that, in addition to accessing the resources of the HUGE database, I was in some cases able to extend those resources to include earlier or later editions. All editions bar two[8] were searchable electronically, and in addition to the search functions in HUGE, I was able to access the full text of the editions listed in Appendix A1, both singly and collectively, using the search functions in Adobe Acrobat XI Professional.

Using these other editions is helpful for two reasons. First, whilst HUGE allows us to see that a treatment of the species noun phrase is included in usage guides published throughout the period, as shown in Figure 3.2, study of earlier and later editions can add to this by showing that whilst e.g. Howard in his *Good English Guide: English Usage in the 1990s* (1993; part of HUGE) included an entry on the species noun phrase, in a subsequent edition, his *Guide to Good English in the 21st Century* (2002), he did not include it. Conversely, Garner, in the first edition of his *Dictionary of Modern American Usage* (1998; part of HUGE) does include an entry on the species noun phrase, and in his fifth edition, now called *Garner's Modern English Usage* (2022), he continues to treat it in much the same way. Similarly, Ebbitt and Ebbitt, in their sixth edition of *Writer's Guide and Index to English* (1978; part of HUGE) do mention the species noun phrase, but it was first included, with a similar treatment, in the first edition of 1939, written by Perrin and called *Index to English: A Handbook of Current Usage and Style*. These two strands together – the usage guides in HUGE, and earlier and later editions – can thus yield a fuller understanding of the persistence of the species noun phrase as a usage guide issue over time. For example, the BtU project was unable to source Perrin's 1939 edition, and this led to difficulty in

5 <https://archive.org>.
6 <https://www.hathitrust.org>.
7 <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk>.
8 Perrin (1939, 1956), which are in my private possession.

establishing the time-line of some usage problems for them (see e.g. Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2020, p. 67, ftn. 13). I have therefore based my analyses on the first editions wherever possible, as this should make it easier to plot any differences in the approach of the usage guides over time (and see §3.6 below where I present some case studies which trace the evolution of the treatment of the species noun phrase over time in the different editions of some of the guides).

Howard (2002) therefore stands out as the only author in the forty-seven usage guides in this study to delete mention of the species noun phrase in a later edition. However, since I was able to obtain a copy of Howard's (1985) *A Guide to Good English in the 1980s* in 2023, this seems to not be the case at all, as it also does not include an entry on the species noun phrase. It seems that the *Guide to Good English in the 1980s* (1985), *The Good English Guide: English Usage in the 1990s* (1993; part of HUGE) and *A Guide to Good English in the 21st Century* (2002), all by Godfrey Howard, are not three editions of the 'same' book, but two different books: (1985 and 2002) and (1993). The 1993 book was published by Pan Macmillan, and makes no reference to the 1985 book. The 2002 book was published by Duckworth, and mentions the "[o]riginal edition" published by Pelham in 1985, but not the 1993 edition. Further to this, the main text of the 1985 edition takes up pages 10–223 (i.e. 214 pages), that of the 2002 edition pages 11–223 (213 pages), whilst that of the 1993 edition takes up pages 1–418, i.e. it is roughly twice as long, whilst also being a slightly larger format. It would seem, then, that the species noun phrase entry was included in the 1993 edition simply because there was more space.

Another topic arising from the different editions is that of authorship / editorship, and how this is reflected in the continuity of the treatment of the species noun phrase, another of Straaijer's questions. One aspect of the usage guides that quickly becomes apparent from a study of HUGE is that the forty-seven guides identified do not simply represent the views of forty-seven different authors. For example, before his 1926 usage guide, H.W. Fowler co-authored *The King's English* (1906) with his brother, F.G. Fowler. Gowers (1965) edited a second edition of Fowler (1926), and there is a third edition, edited by Burchfield (1996), and a fourth edition edited by Butterfield (2015). This fourth edition is not included in HUGE because it is too recent, but Butterfield was also the author of *The Oxford A–Z of English Usage* (2007), which is included in HUGE. Gowers also has his own usage guide, *Plain Words: A Guide to the Use of English* (1948). Greenbaum and Whitcut also have their own usage guide, the *Longman Guide to English Usage* (1988), but they had earlier revised Gowers's *Plain Words* (1948) for its third edition (1986),[9] and Whitcut also revised Partridge's *Usage and Abusage: A Guide to Good English* (1947) for a new edition (1999).

9 Strictly speaking, they did not revise Gowers's (1948) edition, but a combination of his 1948 title and his 1951 *The ABC of Plain Words* as *The Complete Plain Words* (1954);

Cameron (1995, p. 239, ftn. 3) has described this kind of (co-)authorship of several volumes as a "rather cosy relationship" and suggests that this may explain why many, especially modern, usage guides seem to exhibit a consensual approach to a topic, determined by "a few individuals [who] have played a disproportionate part in compiling the texts". Knowledge of authorship / editorship can thus help to shed light both on the persistence of a usage issue and on the continuity of the treatment of it. Along with this continuity of authorship, it should also be noted that Oxford University Press published thirteen of the forty-seven usage guides in this study,[10] from Fowler and Fowler (1906) to Butterfield (2007). Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020, esp. Chapter 4) similarly refers to the existence of networks of authors and publishers of usage guides. This consensual approach might also be a product of the usage guide writers' familiarity with each other's work, and this is the topic of the next section.

3.3 Lateral referencing in the usage guides

3.3.1 Introduction

I showed in §3.1 above that Peters (2020) regards the lack of lateral referencing in the usage guides in her study as "suggest[ing] their remoteness from linguistic research and scholarship, and a reluctance to refer even to the work of other usage commentators" (2020, p. 616). If this is indeed the case, then it might suggest that the usage guide writers were more reliant on introspection and intuition (or, of course, on their own research) for their analyses, resulting in what is often described as *ipse dixit* commentary, i.e. the "right to pass their own judgments on usage" (2020, p. 619). Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020, p. 15; see also pp. 154–161), referring to Peters's earlier statement on this (2006, p. 761), questions Peters's conclusion, noting from her own research on the HUGE database that "this is not as general a characteristic of usage guides as Peters suggests". It should, however, also be noted that Lukač (2018a, p. 107) has questioned the usefulness of lateral referencing to the readers of the usage guides, so its absence may not reveal a lack of the practice of lateral referencing so much as the absence of its mention. Notwithstanding this, in this section I investigate whether the forty-seven usage guides in this study do refer to external sources, and in particular whether they refer to other usage guides. In order to do this I initially consider the whole text of the usage guides (§3.3.2), before moving on to a discussion of lateral referencing in their entries on the species noun phrase (§3.3.3).

Fraser revised this for the second edition of 1973, and Rebecca Gowers, the author's great-granddaughter, also revised the 1954 edition for her fourth edition of 2014.

10 These were sometimes published under the imprint of the Clarendon Press.

3.3.2 Lateral referencing in the usage guides as a whole

Lateral referencing, by which I mean a reference to a named source, is first made explicit in Ayres' *The Verbalist* (1882). In his 'Prefatory Note' he says:

> The curious inquirer who sets himself to look for the learning in the book is advised that he will best find it in such works as George P. Marsh's "Lectures on the English Language," Fitzedward Hall's "Recent Exemplifications of False Philology," and "Modern English," Richard Grant White's "Words and Their Uses," Edward S. Gould's "Good English," William Mathews' "Words: their Use and Abuse," Dean Alford's "The Queen's English," George Washington Moon's "Bad English," and "The Dean's English," Blank's 'Vulgarisms and Other Errors of Speech," Alexander Bain's "English Composition and Rhetoric," Bain's "Higher English Grammar," Bain's "Composition Grammar," Quackenbos' "Composition and Rhetoric," John Nichol's "English Composition," William Cobbett's "English Grammar," Peter Bullions' "English Grammar," Goold Brown's "Grammar of English Grammars," Graham's "English Synonymes," Crabb's "English Synonymes," Bigelow's "Hand-book of Punctuation," and other kindred works.
>
> (Ayres, 1882, pp. 3–4)

This long list already suggests a broad range of external references to other works on the English language, including one usage guide familiar from the current study: Alford's *The Queen's English* (1864).[11] Other guides which specifically refer to similar works as the source of their authority are Treble and Vallins (1936), Perrin (1939), Partridge (1947), Gowers (1948), Vallins (1951), Evans and Evans (1957), Wood (1962), Swan (1980), Bryson (1984), Greenbaum and Whitcut (1988), Gilman (1989), Howard (1993), Mager and Mager (1993), Wilson (1993), O'Conner (1996), Trask (2001), Brians (2003), Peters (2004), and Sayce (2006). These references are typically to be found in the Prelims and Bibliographies of the usage guides. In all, twenty-one of the forty-seven usage guides in this study do refer to external sources. This means, of course, that twenty-six of them do not, and there remain a further thirty usage guides in HUGE that are not part of this study, so it is not possible from this study to generalise about lateral referencing in the usage guides in HUGE as a whole. Instead, it can simply be said that nearly half of the guides included in this study do include such references. It should be borne in mind, however, that I did not read the whole of each usage guide when searching for references; that would constitute a research topic in its own right. It may therefore be the case that there are more guides which do include such lateral references.

11 Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020, pp. 31–33) has pointed out that Hurd (1847) "listed … a three-page overview of 'Authorities consulted'", so this pre-dates Ayres, but Hurd is not included in this study as he does not comment on number agreement in the species noun phrase.

In addition to checking for these external sources, I also investigated whether the later usage guides in this study referred to any of the earlier guides in this study. As I had each of the forty-seven guides available as a searchable pdf file, I was able to do this using Adobe Acrobat XI Professional's search function, which makes it possible to search multiple files for the same string. I could thus make forty-seven searches on the set of the forty-seven guides. The results might seem surprising, given the conclusions of Peters and Young (1997). Only fifteen of the forty-seven usage guides were not cited by at least one other guide in this study, and twelve of those fifteen were published during or after the 1990s, so the opportunities for their being cited in later guides were fewer. In total then, twenty-two guides refer to external sources, and thirty-four guides refer to other guides in this study. A list of all the citations, including the specific guides referred to, is given in Appendix B. Table 3.1 lists the guides which are cited by other guides (first column), together with the number of guides citing them (second column) and the total number of citations in those guides (third column). The fourth and fifth columns will be discussed below.

As can be seen in Table 3.1, the numbers vary quite widely, with Payne (1911), Bailie and Kitchin (1979), Weiner and Delahunty (1993), and Sayce (2006) being cited just once, whilst Fowler (1926) is cited 2,290 times in twenty-seven different guides. The bottom of the table lists the fifteen guides which are not cited by any of the other guides in this study. Baker (1770) is both the earliest guide in this study and the earliest guide to be cited by another guide in this study. In fact Baker is cited by two other guides: Gilman (1989) and Peters (2004), a total of 82 times (see Appendix B1 for the details). The most recent guide cited by another is Sayce (2006): only once by Taggart (2010). The authors cited by the most different guides were: Fowler (1926), who is cited in twenty-seven of the other guides; Fowler and Fowler (1906), in seventeen; Partridge (1947), in sixteen; Gowers (1948), in sixteen; and Alford (1864), in twelve. Apart from Alford, this list reads like a roll-call of the major twentieth-century British usage guides. In terms of individual citations, i.e. including multiple citations in any one later guide, the most frequently cited were: Fowler (1926), cited 2,290 times; Evans and Evans (1957), 386 times; Morris and Morris (1975), 363 times; Gowers (1965), 290 times; and Partridge (1947), 285 times. Of Fowler's 2,290 citations, 792 were in Gilman (1989). Evans and Evans were cited 343 times by Gilman; Morris and Morris 347 times; Gowers 138 times; and Partridge 127 times, so it can be seen that Gilman (1989) accounts for many of these individual citations, which is perhaps unsurprising given the historical overview taken by that guide.

Looking at the practice of lateral referencing from a different perspective, it is also possible to identify which of the usage guides were making the citations. Of the forty-seven guides in this study, thirty-two cite other guides in this study. These are the guides shown in the first column of Table 3.1, with the number of different guides in

Table 3.1 Lateral referencing in the usage guides in this study

Usage guide cited	Number of other guides citing [e.g. Baker, 1770]	Total number of citations	Number of other guides cited [e.g. by Baker, 1770]	Total number of citations
Baker (1770)	2	82	–	–
Alford (1864)	12	130	–	–
White (1870)	7	245	1	9
Ayres (1882)	3	155	2	39
Fowler and Fowler (1906)	17	111	1	16
Vizetelly (1906)	2	158	3	17
Turck Baker (1910)	2	11	–	–
Payne (1911)	1	1	–	–
Fowler (1926)	27	2290	1	1
Krapp (1927)	5	108	1	1
Treble and Vallins (1936)	3	10	2	8
Perrin (1939)	4	93	2	2
Partridge (1947)	16	285	5	89
Gowers (1948)	16	132	4	22
Vallins (1951)	4	5	4	53
Vallins (1953)	1	4	6	89
Evans and Evans (1957)	8	386	4	96
Nicholson (1957)	4	26	3	34
Wood (1962)	3	9	5	35
Gowers (1965)	9	290	4	48
Morris and Morris (1975)	6	363	4	50
Bailie and Kitchin (1979)	1	1	–	–
Swan (1980 1983)	2	4	–	–
Weiner (1983)	3	8	2	2
Bryson (1984)	4	171	7	136

Usage guide cited	Number of other guides citing [e.g. Baker, 1770]	Total number of citations	Number of other guides cited [e.g. by Baker, 1770]	Total number of citations
Greenbaum and Whitcut (1988)	4	25	–	–
Gilman (1989)	4	151	21	2719
Howard (1993)	2	2	9	73
Weiner and Delahunty (1993)	1	1	3	3
Wilson (1993)	3	5	9	16
Burchfield (1996)	3	49	11	586
Garner (1998)	1	29	29	316
Allen (1999)	–	–	7	298
Trask (2001)	–	–	6	7
Peters (2004)	–	–	12	425
Pickett et al. (2005)	–	–	1	3
Sayce (2006)	1	1	2	8
Butterfield (2007)	–	–	1	1
Taggart (2010)	–	–	2	2

The following guides were not cited by other guides in this study: Baker (1779), Anon (1856 [*500*]), Anon (1856 [*Live*]), Carter and Skates (1990), Marriot and Farrell (1992), Mager and Mager (1993), Ayto (1995), O'Conner (1996), Allen (1999), Trask (2001), Brians (2003), Peters (2004), Pickett et al. (2005), Butterfield (2007), and Taggart (2010)

The following guides did not cite other guides in this study: Baker (1770), Baker (1779), Anon (1856 [*500*]), Anon (1856 [*Live*]), Alford (1864), Turck Baker (1910), Payne (1911), Bailie and Kitchin (1979), Swan (1980 1983), Greenbaum and Whitcut (1988), Carter and Skates (1990), Marriot and Farrell (1992), Mager and Mager (1993), Ayto (1995), and Brians (2003)

this study cited by them shown in the fourth column, and the total number of citations shown in the fifth column. The fifteen guides which do not cite other guides are listed at the bottom of Table 3.1. The first five of these are unsurprising, as they are also the earliest five guides in the study and so they had much less opportunity to cite earlier guides. The remaining ten guides, which span the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, had more opportunities to cite other guides but chose to not do so, perhaps for the reason cited in Lukač (2018a, p. 107), as referred to above.

The first guide to cite an earlier guide in this study is White (1870), who cites Alford (1864) nine times. The most recent guide to cite an earlier guide is in fact one of the latest guides in HUGE: Taggart (2010), who cites Bryson (1984) and Sayce (2006) once each. Of the thirty-three guides which do cite other guides, again the number of citations, and the number of different citations, vary. Gilman (1989) cites twenty-one different guides altogether a total of 2,719 times; Burchfield (1996) cites eleven guides 586 times; Peters (2004) cites twelve guides 425 times; Garner (1998) cites twenty-eight guides 384 times; and Allen (1999) cites seven guides 298 times. The complete list of figures, again including details of the specific guides referred to, presented in date sequence, can be found in Appendix B2. One aspect of these figures that again needs to be borne in mind is that they include only those cross-references to the other guides dealt with in this study; the total number of references to other usage guides, including other guides in the HUGE database, will likely be many more than this. An analysis of the lateral referencing in all seventy-seven usage guides in the HUGE database would thus make an interesting project, but one that is beyond the scope of the current study.

It can be seen from the list in Appendix B2 that there are differences in the nature of these lateral references. For example, whilst Gilman (1989) has an average of 130 cross-references for each of his twenty-one lateral references (i.e. 2,719/21), Garner (1998) has an average of only 14 cross-references for each of his twenty-eight lateral references. This reflects the fact that Garner has nine lateral references that he cites only once each, and this in turn reflects the fact that many of his lateral references are included in a very extensive 'Timeline of books on usage' section (1998, pp. 709–719). Gilman, by contrast, cites only two of his twenty-one lateral references just once, again reflecting Gilman's historical survey approach.

3.3.3 *Lateral referencing within the species noun phrase entries*

As well as lateral referencing between the usage guides generally, it is possible to look at lateral referencing specifically in the guides' entries on the species noun phrase, and this may help to shed some light on whether there is a consensual approach to the topic, as has been suggested by Cameron (1995, p. 239, ftn. 3; and see §3.2 above). To do this, I looked at references both to external sources and to other usage guides in this study, but I will comment on them separately. Table 3.2 overleaf lists those guides which do cross-refer to other usage guides or to other sources. There are (only) twelve guides which include lateral referencing within their species noun phrase entries, and again it should be noted that this means that there are thirty-five guides which do not include any such references, three times as many. These thirty-five guides are listed at

the bottom of Table 3.2. Those guides which do include lateral referencing are listed in date sequence in the first column in Table 3.2, where the second column shows any cross-references to other usage guides in this study, whilst the third column shows cross-references to other sources. The names of the guides and references are included in the table, as this data cannot be found in Appendix B. The other sources are listed in the References.

Table 3.2 Lateral referencing in the usage guide entries for the species noun phrase

Usage guide	Cross-references to other usage guides in this study	Cross-references to other source
Fowler (1926)		*OED*
Treble and Vallins (1936)	MEU [Fowler, 1926]	*OED*
Perrin (1939)		*OED*, Jespersen (1933)
Partridge (1947)	Alford (1870, third edition)	*OED*
Vallins (1953)	Vallins (1951)	
Nicholson (1957)		*OED*
Wood (1962)	Fowler (1926)	
Gowers (1965)		*OED*
Gilman (1989)	Baker (1779) Alford (1866 [1864 2nd edn]) White (1870) Ayres (1881) Fowler (1926) Gowers (1965) Howard (1980) Bryson (1984) Chambers (1985) [Davidson]	Lowth (1762) Murray (1795) Webster (1804) Brown (1851) Hodgson (1889) Leonard (1929) Jensen et al. (1935) Phythian (1979) *OED* Jespersen (1909–1949)
Burchfield (1996)		*OED*
Allen (1999)		*OED*
Peters (2004)	Gowers (1965)	

Usage guides in this study which do not include lateral referencing in their entries for the species noun phrase: Baker (1770), (1779), Anon (1856 [*500*]), Anon (1856 [*Live*]), Alford (1864), White (1870), Ayres (1882), Fowler and Fowler (1906), Vizetelly (1906), Turck Baker (1910), Payne (1911), Krapp (1927), Gowers (1948), Vallins (1951), Evans and Evans (1957), Morris and Morris (1975), Bailie and Kitchin (1979), Swan (1980), Weiner (1983), Bryson (1984), Greenbaum and Whitcut (1988), Carter and Skates (1990 [1988]), Marriott and Farrell (1992), Howard (1993), Mager and Mager (1993), Weiner and Delahunty (1993), Wilson (1993), Ayto (1995), O'Conner (1996), Garner (1998), Trask (2001), Brians (2003), Pickett et al. (2005), Sayce (2006), Butterfield (2007), and Taggart (2010).

Apart from Gilman (1989), which as we have already seen (§3.3.2) provides a historical overview of the treatment of the species noun phrase in other usage guides, only five of the usage guides include a cross-reference to another usage guide in this study in their entries for the species noun phrase. Two of these guides (Treble and Vallins, 1936; Wood, 1962) cross-refer to Fowler (1926), whilst a third (Peters, 2004) refers to Gowers (1965), the second edition of Fowler (1926). Of the other sources, nine of the twelve guides refer to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). Both Fowler (1926) and Gowers (1965) were also published by Oxford University Press. Only one of the twelve guides (Vallins, 1953), does not refer to a reference source published by Oxford.

Summary

In §§3.3.2–3.3.3, I have investigated the claim made by Peters (2006; 2020) and Peters and Young (1977) that usage guides lack lateral referencing to other language reference books. Given the number of examples of lateral referencing shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, it would seem that Peters's conclusion that "external reference points were few" (2006, p. 762; 2020, p. 617) may have been more a reflection of the forty usage books[12] in her study (Peters and Young, 1997) than a general feature of usage guides. Even focusing on the sixteen usage guides in the current study published between 1950 and 1995, the period studied by Peters and Young (1997, pp. 325–326), shows considerable lateral referencing, as can be seen in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, and in Appendices B1 and B2. Given Tieken-Boon van Ostade's (2020, p. 154) conclusion that "drawing on secondary references is … clearly not unusual at all", as noted above, the question then arises of why the results of the current study and those of Peters and Young (1997) are so different. I noted above that whilst twenty-one guides in the current study included lateral references, twenty-six did not. A comparison of the forty guides used in the Peters and Young study (1997, pp. 325–326) reveals that only ten of them also appear in the current study. So, Peters and Young looked at thirty guides that I did not use, and I looked at thirty-seven guides that they did not use. Their list also included six guides published in Australia, as well as those published in the UK and the US, as in the current study. Tieken-Boon van Ostade was also using the HUGE database for her findings, so the different conclusions may be no more than a reflection of differences in the source material. Notwithstanding that, there clearly is a section of the usage guide writers who are aware of both other professional work on language and the work of other usage guide writers (and see §3.4.4 below for a further example of this).

12 Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020, p. 55) has pointed out that Peters and Young do not distinguish between a usage guide and a style guide as strictly as in the HUGE project.

In the following sections I investigate what the usage guide writers in this study have to say about number agreement in the species noun phrase, and in particular whether they present a (more or less) unified approach.

3.4 Number agreement in the species noun phrase

3.4.1 Introduction

As noted in §1.2, the point of a usage guide is not just that it deals with usage variation, as is the case with the reference grammars discussed in §2.3, but that it deals with usage problems. I have already shown (see §3.2) that twenty-nine of the usage guides in this study do not include an entry on the species noun phrase, and so they do not regard it as a problem on a par with what they do include. However, not even all the forty-seven usage guides that do include an entry on number agreement in the species noun phrase do regard it as a problem. For example, Partridge (1947, pp. 167–168) states that "*these* or *those kind of things*, pedantically judged incorrect, is a justifiable English idiom". Evans and Evans, in their *Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage* (1957, p. 263), start their entry on 'kind of' with the observation that "[t]he use of singulars and plurals in expressions involving *kind of* is complicated only in the sense that there are several constructions all of which are equally acceptable". Similar views can be found in Vallins (1951, p. 46), though he was later to change his mind (1953, pp. 216–217), in Pickett et al. (2005, p. 272), and in Gilman (1989, p. 576). Their comments suggest that these usage guide writers are aware of a usage 'canon' on which they feel obliged to comment (see Vorlat, 1996): even when they do not think that a particular feature constitutes a usage problem, they nonetheless recognise that there is (a section of) the reading public who do see it as such and who therefore expect to find it discussed in a usage guide.

Notwithstanding the authors just cited, many usage guide writers do present number variation in the species noun phrase as a usage problem, and an indication that this is what we might expect can be seen in the titles of some of the usage guides, which often include words such as *mistakes*, *errors* or *good English*: Anon (1856) *Five Hundred Mistakes of Daily Occurrence in Speaking, Pronouncing, and Writing the English Language, Corrected*; Marriott and Farrell (1992) *Chambers Common Errors in English*; Sayce (2006) *What Not to Write: A Guide to the Dos and Don'ts of Good English*. Other guides with similar titles include Ayres (1882), Vizetelly (1906), Turck Baker (1910), Payne (1911), Partridge (1947), Vallins (1951, 1955), Howard (1993), Ayto (1995),[13] O'Conner (1996), and Trask (2001), i.e. guides from most of the period covered in HUGE.

13 Ayto's *Good English!* was first published in 1995 as *The Oxford School A–Z of English*,

Figure 3.2 above shows that the issue of number agreement in the species noun phrase is a matter of concern for many of the usage guide writers throughout the period covered in HUGE, and I now address whether the forty-seven usage guides in this study are addressing the same, or at least a similar, issue. Weiner, author of a usage guide in HUGE (see below), also contributed to a Festschrift for Robert Burchfield, in which he considers that "[a] good usage guide entry requires three things: exemplification, explanation, and recommendation" (1988, p. 178). For an example of this, I will start with Weiner's own usage guide, *The Oxford Guide to English Usage* (1983), and his entry for 'kind of, sort of':[14]

> (1) *A kind of, a sort of* should not be followed by *a* before the noun, e.g. *a kind of shock*, not *a kind of a shock*. (2) *Kind of, sort of* etc., followed by a plural noun, are often treated as plural and qualified by plural words like *these, those*, or followed by a plural verb, e.g. *They would be on those sort of terms* (Anthony Powell). This is widely regarded as incorrect except in informal use: substitute *that* (etc.) *kind* (or *sort*) *of* or *of that kind* (or *sort*), e.g. *this kind of car is unpopular* or *cars of this kind are unpopular*. (3) *Kind of, sort of* used adverbially, e.g. *I kind of expected it*, are informal only.
>
> (Weiner, 1983, p. 113)

For this study, I am interested only in issue (2). In Weiner's entry, the exemplification of the usage problem (the proscription) is provided by "*They would be on those sort of terms*", i.e. a plural determiner (*those*) followed by a singular species noun (*sort*) and a plural N2 (*terms*); the explanation is in two parts: "*Kind of, sort of* etc., followed by a plural noun, are often treated as plural and qualified by plural words like *these, those*, or followed by a plural verb", and "This is widely regarded as incorrect except in informal use". Weiner's recommendation (the prescription) is "substitute *that* (etc.) *kind* (or *sort*) *of* or *of that kind* (or *sort*), e.g. *this kind of car is unpopular* or *cars of this kind are unpopular*". The explanation itself is split, and is stated in terms of both grammar and register, i.e. there is a mismatch of grammatical number in the exemplification, which would typically be regarded as incorrect (i.e. in writing or formal speech), but which would be considered acceptable in informal language. There is no suggestion in Weiner that the three parts of the entry should appear in any particular sequence, and, as he notes (1988, p. 178), the three parts are not always discrete and easily identifiable. Note also that Weiner's (1) and (3) do not follow his strictures, and it mustn't be assumed that all the entries in this study will show Weiner's tripartite structure. For example, Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2015, p. 63) has shown that in *Five Hundred Mistakes Corrected* (Anon, 1856) the author adopts this structure in only 113 of the 499 entries.[15] It can be seen that Weiner's analysis,

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and was renamed in 2005.

14 Note again that no technical term is introduced for this topic (and cf. Table 3.5 below).

15 Tieken-Boon van Ostade points out that entry number 450 was skipped between pages 66

including that of the variability of the number of the species noun, closely resembles the analyses given in the modern reference grammars (cf. §2.3).

For my initial analysis, I start in §3.4.2 by considering what the usage guide authors regard as the problem, in terms of number agreement within the species noun phrase, by investigating their EXEMPLIFICATION. I will then move on to what they consider to be the better alternatives or variants (i.e. RECOMMENDATION), and then on to why the original exemplification is considered to be a problem (i.e. EXPLANATION). I then consider the problem of number agreement between the subject species noun phrase and the verb (§3.4.3). This part of the study will close with a look at how some of the usage guide writers provide a more general explanation of the variation in usage in terms of grammatical attraction and proximity (§3.4.4), as introduced in the reference grammars in §2.3. Consideration of whether the usage guide writers think that the variation is register- or region-specific, e.g. Weiner's "incorrect except in informal use" and Butterfield's "standard in NAmer. English" (2015, p. 479; see §1.1 above), is given in §3.5.

3.4.2 Number agreement within the species noun phrase

EXEMPLIFICATION

Gilman (1989, pp. 576–578) provides a useful historical account of the treatment of variation in number agreement in the species noun phrase in usage guides, listing forty examples from printed works between 1595 and 1986. Many of his examples are of the form *these/those + kind/sort + of + N2.PL*, i.e. a plural determiner (*these/those*) followed by a singular species noun (*kind/sort*) plus *of* followed by a (plural) second noun, e.g. *those sort of terms*. This accurately characterises the usage issue for most of the writers in HUGE, as illustrated from Weiner above. This number mismatch is seen as a usage problem precisely because there is variation in usage between e.g. *these kinds of* and *these kind of*. I will show that, for many of the usage guide writers, this mismatch in number between plural *these* and singular *kind* is not a case of usage variation, as it was for some of the analyses shown in Chapter 2, but instead shows a usage error (and see EXPLANATION below for more on this).

I showed in Chapter 2, on the grammar of number in the species noun phrase, that there are several sites, or loci, in the species noun phrase, and in the clause of which it is a constituent, where number can be identified, either as singular or unmarked, or as plural.[16] These are:

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and 67.

16 I have not included here the possibility of a subsequent pronoun with anaphoric reference to an antecedent species noun phrase. This features only in Evans and Evans (1957, p. 263): *this kind of tree is nice if you like it* vs. *these kind of trees are nice if you like them*.

This / *That* / *These* / *Those* + *kind* / *kinds* / *sort* / *sorts* / *type* / *types* + *of* + *N2.SG* / *N2.PL* + *V.SG* / *V.PL*

i.e. DET + SN + *of* + N2 + V

In this section, I will concentrate on the phrase up to and including the N2, with those examples including the verb being analysed below in §3.4.3. In twenty-five of the forty-seven usage guides, the examples used to show the error are of the type highlighted by Gilman: DET.PL + SN.SG + *of* + N2.PL. These include examples from Baker (1779, p. 99: *these sort of men*) to Taggart (2010, p. 57: *these kind of films*). In these twenty-five guides, there are eighteen examples with *these* vs. seventeen with *those*, and twenty-one examples with *kind* vs. fourteen with *sort*. There are just two examples with *type*. The choice of N2 shows no particular pattern, apart from eight examples including *people* and seven including *things*, presumably as a reflection of the authors making up their own examples, rather than examples being taken from citation files or a corpus (this last option was not available to many of the guides in this study because of their dates of publication), or of examples being copied from edition to edition or within a publishing house, e.g. Oxford University Press. A full list of the examples from the usage guides is given in Appendix C1. Table 3.3 extracts from Appendix C1 the different structures presented, with the dates of their earliest and latest presentation, and the number of different usage guides using this variant. In the table the structures are presented in frequency order; the bold numbers in brackets link the examples to the entries in Appendix C1.

Table 3.3 Exemplification in the species noun phrase entries

Exemplification	Earliest source Latest source	Number of guides using this variant
[6] DET.PL + SN.SG + *of* + N2.PL e.g. *these sort of men*	Baker (1779) Taggart (2010)	25
[2] DET.PL + SN.SG e.g *these kind*	Vizetelly (1906) Morris and Morris (1975)	5
[3] DET.PL + SN.SG + *of* e.g. *those kind of*	Nicholson (1957) Trask (2001)	5
[1] SN.SG + *of* e.g. *kind of*	Marriott and Farrell (1992)	1
[4] DET.SG + SN.SG + *of* + N2 e.g. *this sort of paper*	Sayce (2006)	1
[5] DET.PL + SN.PL + *of* + N2.SG e.g. *these types of car*	Sayce (2006)	1

It can be seen from Table 3.3 that the preferred exemplifications – [6], [2], and [3] – all contain number conflict between the determiner and the species noun, i.e. exactly the variant highlighted in the reference grammars in §2.3. Sayce (2006) is singular in showing an example with no number conflict, [4], and in showing number conflict between the determiner plus species noun and the N2, [5]. I will show in the EXPLANATION section below why these examples are used.

RECOMMENDATION

To return to Gilman's historical overview (1989, p. 576), he says: "what most of the handbooks and usage books say: use *this* or *that* with singular *kind* or *sort* and follow *of* with a singular noun; use *these* or *those* with plural *kinds* or *sorts* and follow *of* with a plural noun." I showed above and in Appendix C1 that the canonical error form of the species noun phrase (the proscription) is e.g. *these kind of*, which is presented as a mismatch of number between the plural determiner and the singular species noun *kind/sort/type*. It is therefore to be expected that the recommended form (the prescription) given in the usage guides would be e.g. *this kind of* and *these kinds of*. In this section I investigate whether this is actually the case. Some writers, perhaps oddly, give no recommendations at all: Fowler and Fowler (1906), Vizetelly (1906), Fowler (1926),[17] Partridge (1947), Gowers (1948, 1965), and Vallins (1951) fall into this category, sometimes on the basis that the error is simply too obvious to need either illustration or explanation (see e.g. the quotation from Payne, 1911, on the half-title page of this book). For some usage guide writers, if the species noun phrase contains a plural N2, e.g. *cars*, then an alternative structure should be used, e.g. *cars of this kind*, where *cars* is seen as the N2 (see e.g. Marriott and Farrell, 1992, Weiner, 1983, and Weiner and Delahunty, 1993). I return to this point below, and see the discussion in §2.3.

I pointed out in the section on EXEMPLIFICATION above that the species noun variant *type* did not feature very much in the exemplifications in the usage guides, and this is also the case with the recommendations. Only Wilson (1993), O'Conner (1996), and Sayce (2006) include *type*. O'Conner (1996) lists *type* alongside similar examples with *kind* and *sort*. Wilson (1993) does not include *type* in his entry on *these kind of*, *these sort of* (p. 436), but in a separate entry covering *kind*, *manner*, *sort*, *style*, *type*, *way*[18] (pp. 262–263), illustrating it with *this type of book*, *these types of airplanes* and

17 It should be noted that Nicholson (1957), unlike Gowers (1965), does not follow Fowler in this regard, and does list some recommendations, and so can be seen as less of a clone of Fowler (1926) than is Gowers. This conclusion is, however, at odds with that of Tieken-Boon van Ostade in her analyses of Nicholson (see e.g. 2020, pp. 142, 157, 159, 207), a consequence of differences in approach to the topic.

18 Wilson's *That manner of chatter* and *this way of writing* and *style* are not included in this study, as explained in §1.2.

those types of sand. Sayce (2006, pp. 61–63), however, takes a noticeably different stance on this: "Avoid using 'kind of', 'sort of' and 'type of' unnecessarily. When you do use them, note that 'type' has a more formal, technical meaning than 'kind' and 'sort', which are more informal terms."[19] This explains Sayce's untypical entries in Table 3.3: she is more concerned with the choice of species noun than with number agreement. Sayce's claim about *type* is investigated in the corpus analysis in Chapter 5 (see §5.5.4).

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the proscriptions in the usage guides as shown in their exemplifications, their recommendations focus on 'full' agreement. Some authors list simply the determiner and the species noun, with either singular or plural agreement, or both, whilst others include the N2 and the verb. The complete list of recommendations is shown in Appendix C2. Here, Table 3.4 extracts from Appendix C2 the different structures presented, with the dates of their earliest and latest presentation, and the number of different usage guides using this variant. In the table the structures are presented in frequency order; the bold numbers in brackets link the examples to the entries in Appendix C2.

Table 3.4 Recommendation in the species noun phrase entries

Recommendation	Earliest source Latest sources	Number of guides using this variant
[5] DET.SG + SN.SG + *of* + N2.SG e.g. *this kind of thing*	Alford (1864) Taggart (2010)	19
[9] DET.PL + SN.PL + *of* + N2.PL e.g. *these kinds of pears*	Anon (1856 [500]) Butterfield (2007)	12
[6] DET.SG + SN.SG + *of* + N2.PL e.g. *this kind of things*	Alford (1864) Brians (2003)	6
[1] DET.SG + SN.SG e.g. *that sort*	Anon (1856 [*Live*]) Mager and Mager (1993)	5
[8] DET.PL + SN.PL + *of* + N2.SG e.g. *these kinds of food*	Carter and Skates (1990) Taggart (2010)	4
[2] DET.PL + SN.PL e.g. *those sorts*	Anon (1856 [*Live*]) Mager and Mager (1993)	3
[3] DET.SG + SN.SG + *of* e.g. *this kind of*	Trask (2001)	1
[4] DET.PL + SN.PL + *of* e.g. *these kinds of*	Trask (2001)	1
[7] DET.PL + SN.SG + *of* + N2.PL e.g. *these kind of trees*	Evans and Evans (1957)	1

19 In June 2019 I contacted Kay Sayce (now Powell) on this, and she informed me that her entry was based on thirty years' work as an editor, particularly of scientific materials.

As can be seen in Table 3.4, the most frequent prescriptions – [5] and [9] – show number agreement throughout the phrase, but we can also see more variants being considered acceptable, including those with mixed number, as in [6], [8], and [7]. Despite this variation, it should be noted that all the recommendations show number agreement between the determiner and the species noun, apart from [7]. So in practice, the usage guide writers as a whole largely agree that e.g. *these kind of* is wrong, and clearly prefer number agreement between the determiner and the species noun. However, once the N2 is included in their recommendations, they present a number of alternatives, i.e. a number of variant usages. A further point is that some of the usage guide writers question their own grammatical recommendations. These are marked with an initial '?' in Appendix C2 and when they appear in the text, and are used in examples from Baker (1779), Alford (1864), and Treble and Vallins (1936; and see EXPLANATION below for more on this).

Some of the usage guides also include the variant *men of this sort* (see sections [16], [17], and [18] in Appendix C2). In comparison with the examples shown in Table 3.4, this phrase shows remarkably little variation, from Baker's (1779) *men of this sort* to Allen's (1999) *demergers of this kind*. With this variant, the N2 (i.e. *men*, *demergers*) is always plural, whilst the determiner and the species noun are singular. The one exception to this is given in Ayto (1995), who in addition to *sausages of this kind* also lists *sausages of these kinds*, with all the constituents showing plural number. None of the usage guides lists what would seem to be the obvious alternative to *these kind of N2.PL*, i.e. *N2.PL of these kind*, i.e. maintaining a number mismatch between the determiner and the species noun. With this variant, then, there is always number agreement between them. Another aspect of the usage guides' treatment of the *N2.PL of this kind* variant is the frequency of *that* as the determiner. Whilst many guides include *that/those* as an alternative to *this/these* in the 'standard' species noun phrase, i.e. *those kinds of* (see above), of the fifteen guides which include the *N2 of this kind* variant, only five include *that* in the variant *of that kind*. This lack of variation in the determiner is discussed briefly in Appendix G3.

EXPLANATION

In their book *Authority in Language*, Milroy and Milroy (2012, p. 31) make the claim that usage guide writers[20] very often "make no attempt whatever to explain why one usage is correct and another incorrect: they simply take it for granted that the proscribed form is *obviously* unacceptable and illegitimate", and that, for some usage guide writers, the problem is indeed so self-evident that it doesn't need explanation (see Payne, 1911, p. 46, cited above for an example of this). In this section, I investigate

20 Milroy and Milroy here refer to writers in "[t]he correctness tradition", which includes usage guide writers.

whether Milroy and Milroy accurately reflect the explanations of number agreement in the species noun phrase in the usage guides in this study.

The practice of not explaining the problem / variation, at least on the topic of the species noun phrase, could be seen as a reflection of the professional background of some of the authors,[21] and seems to have started with Fowler and Fowler (1906), where two examples are listed without comment, albeit under the heading 'Vulgarisms and Colloquialisms', but Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2015, p. 63) identifies a similar feature in the much earlier *Five Hundred Mistakes ... Corrected* (1856). Mager and Mager (1993) have two entries, 'kind' (p. 205) and 'these' (p. 380), where they also provide exemplification but no explanation.

It is certainly the case, as suggested by Milroy and Milroy, that some of the usage guides, both older and more recent, present the lack of number agreement in the species noun phrase as simply 'wrong' , 'incorrect' or an 'error': "it would be wrong in me to say" (Baker, 1770, p. 115; 1779, p. 60); "[i]f it sounds wrong to you, you're right" (O'Conner, 1996, p. 31); "we all see that this is incorrect" (Alford, 1864, p. 69); "so it would be incorrect" (Brians, 2003, p. 202); "another very common error" (Anon, 1856 [*Live*], p. 86); "[a] very common but nonetheless irritating error" (Morris and Morris, 1975, p. 596). Other guides taking this approach are Vizetelly (1906, p. 211) and Howard (1993, p. 235). These are indeed very bald statements of the usage problem, but some usage guides do provide more explanation, presenting the lack of number agreement as a grammatical problem: "considered grammatically incorrect" (Fowler, 1926, p. 551).[22] Others in this vein include Partridge (1947, p. 167) and Nicholson (1957, p. 303).[23] This is perhaps not surprising given the description of the problem as one of grammar (see below). However, there is also some indication, from a number of guides, that this (grammatically) incorrect usage may nonetheless be acceptable in registers other than formal writing, and I return to this topic of register variation below (see §3.5.2).

Some usage guides focus on the singular / plural contrast in *these kind of*, and their explanation is often, but not always, couched in grammatical terms, but the words 'grammatical / ungrammatical' themselves are not always used. Krapp (1927, pp. 585–586) is the first to do so: "The nouns *sort*, *kind*, being grammatically singular, require a singular form in the preceding adjective pronoun."[24] Treble and Vallins (1936, p. 167), Trask (2001, p. 168), and Butterfield (2007, p. 147) provide a similar explanation,

21 Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020, pp. 73–76ff.) includes a useful discussion of the expertise of the usage guide authors in HUGE, and see comments on "lay writers" in §1.2.

22 Fowler is here quoting the *OED*.

23 It should be noted in this context that Partridge is also quoting the *OED* and lists Fowler as one of his sources, and that Nicholson is an American edition of Fowler, though with some differences, as shown above.

24 I address the topic of the metalanguage for the word classes below (and see Table 3.5).

with Butterfield noting that the variant "is technically ungrammatical. This is because *these* is plural and needs to agree with a plural noun". Butterfield's "technically ungrammatical" suggests the notion of a cline of grammaticality, whilst Allen (1999, p. 363) has the similar "this … is ungrammatical on a normal interpretation". I revisit this view of a cline of grammaticality/acceptability, and of the tension between grammar and usage, in the survey analysis in §4.4.3.

As with the examples given above, most of the grammatical explanations specify the contrast of singular and plural, even when they do not use the term 'grammatical'; "a noun in the singular number will not allow its adjective to be in the plural" (Anon, 1856 [*500*], p. 23); "[n]ouns in the singular require demonstrative adjectives also in the singular" (Vizetelly, 1906, p. 211); "[a] plural pronoun and a singular noun do not go well together" (Ayres, 1911, p. 297). There are many more in this vein. These last three examples also raise the topic of how to describe what I have been calling the determiner. Various terms are used for this in the usage guides, as shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Metalanguage in the species noun phrase entries

Metalanguage for 'determiner'	**Usage guide(s)**
adjective	Baker (1779) Anon (1856 [*500*]) Anon (1856 [*Live*])
adjective pronoun	Krapp (1927)
demonstrative	Wilson (1993)
demonstrative adjective	Vizetelly (1906) Treble and Vallins (1936) Wood (1962)
demonstrative pronoun	Morris and Morris (1975)
pronoun	White (1870) Ayres (1911) Bailie and Kitchin (1979)
qualifier	Evans and Evans (1957)

Many of the usage guides do not specify the word class of the determiner, but instead rely simply on the contrast of singular and plural: "A mixture of singular and plural forms sometimes happens in an informal style" (Swan, 1980, §427);[25] "the incongruous combination of plural *these* and singular **sort**" (Greenbaum and Whitcut, 1988, p. 398). Some do not mention even singular and plural: "*This* and *that* are used with *kind; these* and *those* with *kinds*" (Turck Baker, 1910, p. 181). This lack of a common metalanguage in the explanations may of course be a concession to

25 The question of informal style is addressed in §3.5.2 below.

the envisaged readership of the guides, who would not necessarily be assumed to be familiar with works on grammar.

As well as the term 'ungrammatical', 'illogical' also makes an appearance in the explanations:[26] "*sort* has been used collectively, preceded (illogically) by *these* or *those*" (Burchfield, 1998 [1996], p. 728); "[t]hese are illogical forms" (Garner, 1998, p. 653). Krapp (1927, p. 586), in contrast, recognises that these forms may be logical, but he does not regard them as grammatical: "in justification it might be said that *sort*, *kind* are collective nouns, logically plural, and therefore not unreasonably preceded by plural forms of the demonstrative adjective. This reasoning, nevertheless, can not make *these* or *those sort*, *kind* unquestioned good grammatical English." Other terms used to indicate the ungrammaticality of mixed number include 'irregular': "This use of a plural qualifier and a plural verb with the singular *kind of* is formally irregular" (Evans and Evans, 1957, p. 263),[27] and here again we have the qualification "formally". Finally, we find 'incongruous', as also seen in Greenbaum and Whitcut (1988, p. 398) above: "this incongruous combination" (White, 1870, p. 168).

In addition to these grammatical descriptions, some usage guide writers make the same point, but essentially in terms of semantics. Baker (1770, 1779) addresses a slightly different issue in terms of the meaning of the N2 *goods* ("though these Swords are so many different Objects, they make but one sort of Goods"; 1770, p. 115), but in his recommendation he nonetheless exemplifies number agreement between the determiner and the species noun. Turck Baker (1910, p. 181) bases her explanation on the referential semantics of *kind*: "when referring to only one kind, in strict usage, *this* or *that kind* should be employed, unless different kinds are meant." Morris and Morris (1975, p. 596) take a similar approach: "If there are a number of things, all of one kind, the proper usage is *this kind*. If the things are of several different kinds, the proper usage is *these kinds"*. Ayto (1995, p. 171) voices a similar conclusion: "Use *this kind of sausage* … if you're referring to just one kind … and *these kinds of sausages* … if you're referring to more than one kind".[28]

I have shown above that some of the usage guide writers, whilst providing examples that they consider to be grammatical, nevertheless remain unsure about whether their examples represent 'good' English. These were marked with a '?', by Baker (1779), Alford (1864), and Treble and Vallins (1936). Comments include: "We have many ungrammatical expressions, which cannot well be avoided, without a stiffness" (Baker, 1779, pp. 99–100); "We confess, it is not so agreeable to the ear to say '*This*

26 See Weiner (1988, pp. 178–179) for a list of commonly used arguments.

27 Evans and Evans do not regard *these kind of* as an error, and note that it "must … be recognized as standard English" (p. 263).

28 Ayto also accepts *these kinds of sausage* to refer to more than one kind. I showed in the section RECOMMENDATION above that Ayto is unusual in his use of a plural *these kinds* in *sausages of these kinds*.

kind of entertainments,' '*That* sort of experiments;' but it would be easy to give the sentence a different form, and say 'Entertainments of this kind;' 'Experiments of that sort;' by which the requisitions of grammar would be satisfied, and those of euphony too" (Anon, 1856 [*Live*], p. 86); "It must be confessed that the phrases, '*this kind of things,' 'that sort of things,'* have a very awkward sound" (Alford, 1864, p. 71); "is awkward and unidiomatic, but is at least grammatical" (Treble and Vallins, 1936, p. 167).

3.4.3 Number agreement between the species noun phrase and the verb

I have shown in the previous section how the usage guide writers have treated number agreement within the species noun phrase, using Weiner's (1988, p. 178) classification of exemplification, recommendation and explanation. Here, I analyse what those writers have to say about number agreement between the subject species noun phrase and the verb. The number of guides that include this variant is relatively small, and so all three aspects of their entries are discussed in this one section. There are just ten guides which include the verb in their exemplification of the problem of number agreement, and all agree on what that problem is. The earliest and latest examples are given here: *these kind of entertainments are* (Anon, 1856 [*Live*], p. 86); *these kind of questions are* (Butterfield, 2007). In these examples, and those given in the other guides, we have a plural determiner (*these*) with a plural N2 (*entertainments*, *questions*) and a plural verb (*are*), together with a singular species noun (*kind*). The complete list of examples can be seen in section [7] of Appendix C1.

The guides are more varied when they show their recommendations. The complete list of these can be seen in Appendix C2, sections [10]–[15] and [18]. Here, Table 3.6 extracts from Appendix C2 the different structures presented, with the dates of their earliest and latest presentation, and the number of different usage guides using this example type.[29] In the table the structures are presented in frequency order; the bold numbers in brackets link the examples to the entries in Appendix C2.

More guides list recommendations which include the verb (=17; see Appendix C2, sections [10]–[15], [18]) than list exemplifications which include the verb (=12; see Appendix C1, sections [7], [9]). Also, Baker (1779) is unsure about the status of his two examples, as indicated by the question mark preceding his name (C2, [11], [12]). Evans and Evans (1957) offer a number of alternatives; it was Evans and Evans who were quoted in §3.4.1 as saying that "there are several constructions all of which are equally acceptable" (1957, p. 263). Another thing to note from the table is the variation in number of the different constituents in the examples.

29 Note that the number of guides making recommendations is greater than the number of guides including the verb in their exemplifications.

Only two of the variants – [10] and [14] – show number agreement across all the constituents, singular and plural, respectively. All the other examples show a mix of number of some kind, including that between the determiner and the species noun in [13]. The verb agrees in number with the species noun in [10], [11], [14], and [15], and with the N2 but not with the species noun in [12], [13], and [18].

Table 3.6 Number agreement between the subject species noun phrase and the verb in the usage guide entries

Recommendation	Sources: Earliest Latest	Numbers
[10] DET.SG + SN.SG + *of* + N2.SG + V.SG e.g. *this sort of thing interests*	Treble and Vallins (1936) Butterfield (2007)	13
[14] DET.PL + SN.PL + *of* + N2.PL + V.PL e.g. *these kinds of trees are*	Evans and Evans (1957) Pickett et al. (2005)	6
[11] DET.SG + SN.SG + *of* + N2.PL + V.SG e.g. *this sort of men is*	?Baker (1779) Ebbitt and Ebbitt (1978)	5
[18] N2.PL + *of* + DET.SG + SN.SG + V.PL e.g. *cars of this kind are*	Weiner (1983) Weiner and Delahunty (1993)	4
[15] DET.PL + SN.PL + *of* + N2.SG + V.PL e.g. *these kinds of tree are*	Evans and Evans (1957) Greenbaum and Whitcut (1988)	2
[12] DET.SG + SN.SG + *of* + N2.PL + V.PL e.g. *this sort of men are*	?Baker (1779)	1
[13] DET.PL + SN.SG + *of* + N2.PL + V.PL e.g *these kind of men are*	Evans and Evans (1957)	1

The explanations offered in the usage guides for those examples which include the verb tend to focus on the number agreement between the species noun and the verb. For example, Evans and Evans (1957, p. 525) observe: *"Type* is always followed by a singular verb, and *types* by a plural verb, regardless of the form of the noun [i.e. the N2] used". Pickett et al. (2005, p. 272) have: "the plural *kinds* requires the plural *these* or *those*, and the verb must also be plural". Ebbitt and Ebbit (1978, p. 542) are the only ones to specifically refer to the transfer of the head of the species noun phrase from the species noun to the N2: "there is a strong tendency to treat the plural object of *of,* rather than *kind* or *sort,* as the head of the construction and to use plural demonstratives and verbs."[30]

30 Baker (1779, p. 100) comments on a mismatch of number: "In the first [example], what seems a noun of number [i.e. a plural] is followed by a verb singular; in the last, a noun singular is followed by a verb plural. As for me, I should prefer the first." However, all of the copies of this edition I have checked include a broken character in his example, so it is difficult to confirm his analysis.

3.4.4 Attraction and proximity

In §2.3.3 I introduced the concepts of notional concord and the proximity principle, which Quirk et al. (1985, p. 757) used to explain the anomaly, as they saw it, of e.g. *These/Those sort/kind/type of parties are dangerous*. Here, their analysis would typically see singular *sort/kind/type* as the head of the species noun phrase and therefore determining the (singular) number of the verb. The plurality of the verb *are* in their example is explained by the proximity of the plural noun *parties*, which attracts plural marking onto the verb. Some of the usage guide writers in this study offer a similar explanation of this variant, even though they tend to view it as an error. The first to do this is Alford (1864, p. 69), in his explanation for the use of the "incorrect and indefensible" *these kind of things*:

> Now in the inaccurate way of speaking of which I treat, it is evident that this same tendency, to draw the less important word into similarity to the more important one, is suffered to prevail over grammatical exactness. We are speaking of "*things"* in the plural. Our pronoun "*this"* really has reference to "*kind,"* not to *"things;"* but the fact of "*things"* being plural, gives a plural complexion to the whole, and we are tempted to put "*this"* into the plural.
>
> (Alford, 1864, p. 71)

Alford (1864, p. 70) provides a lengthy explanation of this tendency, which he labels "an idiomatic usage called *attraction*", based on his analysis of Classical Greek. This is directly analogous to Quirk et al.'s (1985, p. 757) "principle of proximity" (see §2.3.3), and is an explanation for this 'ungrammatical' usage which also features in a number of the other usage guides. Alford's argument is quoted at length, although not in full, in Partridge (1947, p. 168), and continues to appear in Whitcut's revised edition of Partridge (1999, p. 172). A similar argument is made in Perrin (1939, p. 352),[31] Vallins (1953, pp. 200, 216–217), Allen (1999, p. 363), and Pickett et al. (2005, p. 272), whilst Fowler's (1926, p. 312) "inchoate compound" can also be read as something similar.[32] Attraction is used as an explanatory concept for a number of other usage problems throughout the period of study. Proximity also features as an explanatory concept in some of the usage guides, but not in any of the entries on the species noun phrase. Table 3.7 overleaf shows which usage guides in this study use either 'attraction' or 'proximity', or both, as explanatory concepts in some of their

31 This approach is maintained in Ebbitt and Ebbitt's sixth edition (1978, p. 542): "there is a strong tendency to treat the plural object of *of,* rather than *kind* or *sort,* as the head of the construction and to use plural demonstratives and verbs."

32 Fowler says "*Those kind of* is a sort of inchoate compound = *those-like* (cf. *such, = so-like*". I am taking 'inchoate' to mean 'in an initial or early stage', as in a historical sense (*OED*, 1989, s.v. *inchoate* a.). Gowers, in his second edition (1965, p. 320), repeats Fowler, but the comment is dropped in Nicholson's American edition (1957, p. 303).

entries. Cross-checking the entries in Table 3.7 with the list of "Who cites whom?' in Appendix B2, we can see the extent to which the usage guide writers listed in the table were familiar with the work of earlier writers in the table. This is shown in the third column of Table 3.7, where it can be seen that, for example, Alford (1864) is referenced by seven of the nineteen guides listed. Fowler (1926) is again the guide referenced most often. This is another very specific example of lateral referencing between the usage guides (cf. §§3.3.2–3.3.3 above), again showing that (some of) the usage guide writers had an awareness of the work of other writers on language.

However, whilst explanations in terms of attraction and proximity are quite widespread throughout the period of this study, they are not always used to condone the usage, and so should not be taken to imply that they are always used in support of usage over grammar. Some guides do point out that such attraction can nonetheless lead to error: "[b]ut such attraction is not right" (Fowler and Fowler, 1906, p. 60); "[p]roximity agreement may pass in speech and other forms of unplanned discourse; in print it will be considered an error" (Gilman, 1989, p. 57). Gilman also notes in passing that "[i]nstances do … sneak past the eyes of copy editors and proofreaders" (1989, p. 57). Treble and Vallins (1936, p. 16) and Wilson (1993, p. 21) put forward similar views on the errors of attraction.

Summary

In terms of the exemplification, recommendation and explanation of number agreement in the species noun phrase, the usage guides have been consistent throughout the period of study: the problem (the exemplification or proscription) is one of mixed number, particularly between the species noun and the determiner, e.g. *these kind*. The solution (the recommendation or prescription) frequently offered is to fix the number, to either *these kinds* or *this kind*; if this is not appropriate, then an acceptable variant with the second noun positioned at the beginning of the phrase is e.g. *N2.PL of this kind*. The problem is often presented as one of grammar, with grammar requiring number agreement (i.e. Huddleston and Pullum's agreement rule; see §2.3.1). However, it is also recognised that the ungrammatical variants are nonetheless quite common in usage, and this 'anomalous' usage can be explained with reference to attraction and proximity. It is to this anomalous usage that we now turn.

Table 3.7 'Attraction' and 'proximity' as explanatory concepts in the usage guide entries

Attraction	Proximity	Citations to earlier guides
Alford (1864)		
White (1870)		Alford (1864)
Fowler and Fowler (1906)		White (1870 1882)
Turck Baker (1910,)		
Fowler (1926,)	Fowler (1926)	Fowler and Fowler (1906)
Treble and Vallins (1936)	Treble and Vallins (1936)	Fowler and Fowler (1906) Fowler (1926)
Partridge (1947)		Alford (1864) Fowler and Fowler (1906) Fowler (1926)
Gowers (1948)		Alford (1964) Fowler and Fowler (1906) Fowler (1926) Partridge (1947)
Vallins (1951) Vallins (1955)		Fowler and Fowler (1906) Fowler (1926) Partridge (1947) Gowers (1948)
Nicholson (1957)		Fowler and Fowler (1906) Fowler (1926) Gowers (1948)
Wood, 1962)		Fowler and Fowler (1906) Fowler (1926) Partridge (1947) Nicholson (1957)
Gowers (1965)	Gowers (1965)	Fowler and Fowler (1906) Fowler (1926) Partridge (1947)
	Gilman (1989)	Alford (1864) White (1870) Fowler and Fowler (1906) Turck Baker (1910) Fowler (1926) Treble and Vallins (1936) Partridge (1947) Gowers (1948) Vallins (1951) Nicholson (1957) Wood (1962) Gowers (1965) Greenbaum and Whitcut (1988)

Attraction	Proximity	Citations to earlier guides
Greenbaum and Whitcut (1988)		
Wilson (1993)	Wilson (1993)	Fowler (1926) Partridge (1947) Gowers (1948) Nicholson (1957) Gowers (1965) Greenbaum and Whitcut (1988) Gilman (1989)
Burchfield (1996)	Burchfield (1996)	Alford (1864) White (1870) Fowler and Fowler (1906) Fowler (1926) Partridge (1947) Gowers (1948) Gowers (1965) Greenbaum and Whitcut (1988) Gilman (1989) Wilson (1993)
Garner (1998)		Alford (1864) White (1870) Fowler and Fowler (1906) Turck Baker (1910) Fowler (1926) Treble and Vallins (1936) Partridge (1947) Gowers (1948) Vallins (1951) Nicholson (1957) Wood (1962) Gowers (1965) Gilman (1989) Wilson (1993) Burchfield (1996)
	Peters (2004)	Alford (1864) Fowler and Fowler (1906) Fowler (1926) Partridge (1947) Gowers (1948) Gowers (1965) Gilman (1989) Burchfield (1996) Garner (1998)
	Pickett et al. (2005)	Fowler (1926)

3.5 Different varieties and registers

One of the questions raised by Straaijer (2015, p. 2; see §3.1 above) is whether the usage guides give different advice for different varieties of English. In §3.5.1 below I investigate whether there are any British and American differences, as these are the only two varieties systematically covered in the HUGE database. In §3.5.2 I look at whether there are any register differences.

3.5.1 British and American variation

In his historical survey of usage guides, Gilman (1989, p. 576) says, of number agreement in the species noun phrase: "We will tell you first what most of the handbooks and usage books say: … But we will warn you second that this advice applies only to American English". Peters (2004, p. 307) notes that "[o]bjections to *these kind* have been stronger in the US than in the UK … [y]et its frequency in American English is probably not very different from that of British English". It is the purpose of this section to investigate these claims. Only four of the forty-seven usage guides in this study identify themselves as dealing with American English:

> Evans and Evans (1957) *Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage*
> Nicholson (1957) *Dictionary of American-English Usage*
> Wilson (1993) *Columbia Guide to Standard American English*
> Garner (1998) *Dictionary of Modern American Usage*.[33]

All four of these guides were published in the second half of the twentieth century. These titles in themselves would seem to suggest that there may be differences (i.e. variation) between British and American usage, at least as perceived by their writers. Another approach to deciding whether a usage guide deals with British or American English is to use its place of publication – Britain or America – and this is the approach taken by Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020). An analysis of the publication details of the usage guides in this study (see Appendix A) reveals that, of the forty-seven guides, twenty were published in America between 1856 and 2005, and twenty-seven were published in Britain between 1770 and 2010. These guides are shown in date sequence in Table 3.8 overleaf, where it can be seen that guides were published in both countries throughout the period of study. However, an important question remains: Does being published in America necessarily mean that a guide is dealing

33 This title continued (without *Dictionary of*) with the second (2003) and third (2009) editions, but for the fourth (2016) and fifth (2022) editions it was changed to *Garner's Modern English Usage* (and see §3.6.5 for a note on whether Garner's advice changed).

with 'American English', as opposed to aspects of the English language being used in America?[34,35] Beal (2004) explains that:

> Of course, American English had been developing ever since the first English-speaking colonists arrived at the beginning of the seventeenth century. … The contact between the various regional dialects of the English-speaking colonists and the languages of the Native Americans and of other European colonists would also have been influencing the separate development of English in America for many years before the Revolution. However, it is only after America's political independence from Britain[36] that American English, or 'American', begins to be 'ascertained' and 'fixed' according to its own standards set out in works such as Webster's *Compendious Dictionary* (1806) and *American Dictionary* (1832).[37]
>
> (Beal, 2004, p. 210)

It would seem, then, that whilst the concept of an 'American English' might have been alien to Baker (1770; 1779), published in London, it would not necessarily have been unknown to the other usage guide writers, post-1865, and especially those published in America. For example, Bailey's *Speaking American* (2012) is sub-titled *A History of English in the United States*, but in his 'Preface' he refers to "American English" (pp. xiii–xvi). He also refers to English beginning "the process of Americanization" in Chesapeake Bay four centuries ago (pp. xiii–xiv). In his 'Introduction', he refers both to "English in America" (pp. 5, 6, 11, 15) and to "the English of America" (p. 10), but also again to "American English" (pp. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13), and he also notes the coining of the term "Americanism" in 1781 (p. 12). All of these terms are then used throughout the book. In the usage guides quoted in this section, the writers also refer to 'English in America', 'Americanism' and 'American English', but do any of these necessarily imply that there must be a distinction between what is being said about the use of English in America, and the use of English in Britain?

The first usage guide in this study to refer to American English is White (1870, p. 8), published in New York, in a general comment on his approach, but Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020, pp. 31–36) has identified Hurd (1847), published in Philadelphia, and also part of HUGE but not used in the current study, as the first American usage guide. Hurd claims to include "[the] English language peculiar to the different states

34 A similar problem in the compilation of a corpus is discussed in §5.2.3.

35 In principle, of course, this question could have been phrased about British English. Typically, American English usage guides are viewed as reflecting how American English "differentiate[s] itself from usage in England" (Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2020, p. 33).

36 This happened in 1776 (see Palmowski, 2008, p. 702), and is what Machan (2009, p. 222) calls "the originary moment of American English". The American Revolutionary War continued until 1783 (Palmowski, 2008, p. 702).

37 Beal's abbreviated titles of Webster's dictionaries are potentially misleading. Their full titles are *A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language* and *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, so neither of them is making a claim to be dealing specifically with 'American English'.

of the Union" (1847, p. [iii]), and he also includes a three-page list under the heading of "Americanisms", i.e. "those words and phrases which are used only in this country" (1847, pp. 122–124).[38]

Table 3.8 Place of publication of the usage guides in this study

US	Date	UK
	1770	Baker
	1779	Baker
Anonymous [*500*] Anonymous [*Live*]	1856	
	1864	Alford
White	1870	
Ayres	1881	
Vizetelly	1906	Fowler and Fowler
Turck Baker	1910	
Payne	1911	
	1926	Fowler
Krapp	1927	
	1936	Treble and Vallins
	1947	Partridge
	1948	Gowers
	1951	Vallins
Evans and Evans Nicholson	1957	
	1962	Wood
	1965	Gowers
Morris and Morris	1975	
Ebbitt and Ebbitt	1978	
	1979	Bailie and Kitchin
	1980	Swan
	1983	Weiner
	1984	Bryson
	1988	Greenbaum and Whitcut
Gilman	1989	

38 This again demonstrates one of the consequences of working with a smaller number of usage guides.

US	Date	UK
Carter and Skates	1990	
	1992	Marriott and Farrell
Mager and Mager Wilson	1993	Howard Weiner and Delahunty
	1995	Ayto
O'Conner	1996	Burchfield
Garner	1998	
	1999	Allen
	2001	Trask
Brians	2003	
	2004	Peters
Pickett et al.	2005	
	2006	Sayce
	2007	Butterfield
	2010	Taggart

Apart from Gilman (1989) and Peters (2004) quoted above, the only usage guide writers who mention specifically American usage in the species noun phrase are Evans and Evans (1957), Wilson (1993), and Pickett et al. (2005). Of these, Evans and Evans (*Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage*) and Wilson (*Columbia Guide to Standard American English*) include *American* in their titles, and all bar Peters were published in America. However, not all of them specifically mention American English. Evans and Evans (1957) refer to "American handbooks" (p. 263), and then: "Both constructions [*this kind of man is dangerous* and *this kind of men is dangerous*] are formally correct but the second … is not heard in the United States"; "In the United States a plural noun is generally preferred … but both forms are standard, literary English"; "not used in the United States today"; and "historically justifiable but seldom heard in the United States today" (p. 263). Wilson (1993) refers to "American English" (p. 436), and to "Edited American English", "conservative American commentary", "conservative American standards", "American Edited English standards", and "Standard-using Americans" (pp. 262–263, 436), and ends by saying that "for many Standard-using Americans, failures on these structures are powerful shibboleths" (p. 436), but he also mentions that "American Conversational and Informal uses clearly display a full range of combinations of singulars and plurals" (p. 263). Pickett et al. (2005, p. 272) refer to "a traditional bugbear of American grammarians".

Analysis of the exemplifications and recommendations listed in Appendix C nonetheless suggests that attitudes to number variation in the species noun phrase are very similar in the guides published in US and the UK, as shown in Table 3.9. When place of publication in the lists of recommendations in Appendix C2 is included, it can be seen that there is a mix of American and British publications throughout. In this Appendix, I have labelled usage guides as UK or US based solely on their place of publication. There is no evidence of a systematic difference in the advice on number agreement in the species noun phrase between British and American usage guides throughout the period of study.[39]

Table 3.9 Recommended variants for the species noun phrase in usage guides published in the US and the UK

Usage guides published in the US	Recommendations	Usage guides published in the UK
Anon (1856 [*Live*]) Turck Baker (1910) Payne (1911) Krapp (1927) Evans & Evans (1957) Nicholson (1957) Morris & Morris (1975) Carter & Skates (1990) Mager & Mager (1993) Wilson (1993) O'Conner (1996) Garner (1998)	[1] DET.SG + SN.SG (+ *of*) (+ N2.SG) e.g. *this kind (of) (thing)*	Alford (1864) Vallins (1955) Wood (1962) Bailie & Kitchin (1979) Swan (1980) Bryson (1984) Howard (1993) Ayto (1995) Allen (1999) Trask (2001) Sayce (2006) Taggart (2010)
Anon (1856 [*500*]) Anon (1856 [*Live*]) White (1870) Turck Baker (1910) Evans & Evans (1957) Morris & Morris (1975) Mager & Mager (1993) Wilson (1993) O'Conner (1996) Garner (1998) Brians (2003)	[2] DET.PL + SN.PL (+ *of*) (+ N2.PL) e.g. *these kinds (of) (things)*	Alford (1864) Wood (1962) Bailie & Kitchin (1979) Bryson (1984) Ayto (1995) Burchfield (1996) Allen (1999) Trask (2001) Butterfield (2007)
White (1870) Evans & Evans (1957) Brians (2003)	[3] DET.SG. + SN.SG + *of* + N2.PL e.g. *this kind of things*	?Alford (1864) Wood (1962) Bailie & Kitchin (1979)
Carter & Skates (1990) Wilson (1993)	[4] DET.PL + SN.PL + *of* + N2.SG e.g. *these kinds of thing*	Ayto (1995) Taggart (2010)
Evans & Evans (1957)	[5] DET.PL + SN.SG + *of* + N2.PL e.g. *these kind of things*	

39 It must be remembered, however, that this study includes only forty-seven of the seventy-seven guides in the HUGE database. Kostadinova's study for the BtU project lists 199 guides for American English alone (2018a, pp. 259–270).

Usage guides published in the US	Recommendations	Usage guides published in the UK
Anon (1856 [*Live*]) Turck Baker (1910) Nicholson (1957)	[6] N2.PL + *of* + DET.SG + SN.SG e.g. *things of this kind*	Baker (1779) Treble & Vallins (1936) Vallins (1955) Wood (1962) Bailie & Kitchin (1979) Swan (1980) Ayto (1995) Allen (1999)
	[7] N2.PL + *of* + DET.PL + SN.PL e.g. *things of these kinds*	Ayto (1995)
Evans & Evans (1957) Ebbitt & Ebbitt (1978) Carter & Skates (1990) O'Conner (1996) Garner (1998) Pickett et al. (2005)	[8] DET.SG + SN.SG + *of* + N2.SG + V.SG e.g. *this kind of thing is*	Treble & Vallins (1936) Weiner (1983) Greenbaum & Whitcut (1988) Marriott & Farrell (1992) Weiner & Delahunty (1993) Sayce (2006) Butterfield (2007)
	[9] DET.SG + SN.SG + *of* + N2.PL + V.SG e.g. *this kind of things is*	?Baker (1779) ?Treble & Vallins (1936)
	[10] DET.SG + SN.SG + *of* + N2.PL + V.PL e.g. *this sort of things are*	?Baker (1779)
Evans & Evans (1957) Ebbitt & Ebbitt (1978) Carter & Skates (1990) O'Conner (1996) Pickett et al. (2005)	[11] DET.PL + SN.PL + *of* + N2.PL + V.PL e.g. *these kinds of things are*	Greenbaum & Whitcut (1988)
Evans & Evans (1957) O'Conner (1996)	[12] DET.PL + SN.PL + *of* + N2.SG + V.PL e.g. *these kinds of thing are*	Greenbaum & Whitcut (1988)
Evans & Evans (1957)	[13] DET.PL + SN.SG + *of* + N2.PL + V.PL e.g. *these kind of things are*	
	[14] N2.PL + *of* + DET.SG + SN.SG + V.PL e.g. *things of this kind are*	Weiner (1983) Greenbaum & Whitcut (1988) Marriott & Farrell (1992) Weiner & Delahunty (1993)

3.5.2 Register variation

I showed in §3.4 above that, for many usage guide writers, the criticism of expressions such as *these kind of N2* was made largely on grammatical grounds, to the extent in some cases of supporting a grammatical form over a meaningful one. Here, I want to look at the circumstances in which the use of the 'ungrammatical' *these kind of N2* might nonetheless be acceptable. Baker comments that the form "is often … used … by many of our Writers" (1770, p. 115), and that "many approved authors … take no care to avoid it" (1779, pp. 99–100). At the other end of the time-scale of this study, Taggart (2010, p. 57) says that "educated television presenters have … been heard to say [it]".[40] It would therefore seem that, despite 240 years of criticism, these ungrammatical forms continue in use. Might that use be widespread?

In the views of the usage guide writers analysed here, the answer to this question is 'yes'; the use of the ungrammatical forms is indeed claimed to be widespread throughout the period of study. For example, in addition to Baker cited above, we also find "these kind, those sort, etc.: [s]uch expressions, though common" (Vizetelly, 1906, p. 211), "*these* or *those kinds* is frequently used" (Turck Baker, 1910, p. 181), "usages that are common [e.g. *those kind of things*]" (Gowers, 1965, p. 594), "common [i.e. *these kind*]" (Morris and Morris, 1975, p. 596), "exceedingly common in colloquial contexts [e.g. *these kind of smells*]" (Burchfield, 1998 [1996], p. 433),[41] "*these kind* … often encountered" and "undoubtedly common" (Butterfield, 2007, pp. 91, 147).[42]

But whilst this use of the 'ungrammatical' form is common in the sense of frequent, it is apparently not common in the sense of "associated with the language of the uneducated and the poor" (Ilson, 1985, p 167). White (1870, p. 168) refers to "[m]any persons who should, and who, perhaps, do, know better", and there are also comments such as "persons … of considerable culture" (Ayres, 1882, p. 207), "used today by educated people" (Evans and Evans, 1957, p. 263), "well-spoken people easily slip into" (Wood, 1962, p. 218), and "even educated persons" (Morris and Morris, 1975, p. 596).

The allegedly ungrammatical form is said to be often heard in speech: "found in the talk of us all" (Alford, 1864, p. 69), "fairly common … in colloquial speech" (Krapp, 1927, p. 586), "[t]he construction is common in speech" (Ebbitt and Ebbitt, 1978, p. 542), "common in conversation" (Gowers, 1966 [1954] p. 188),[43] "often

40 Taggart makes many remarks critical of television presenters and their ilk (2010, pp. 8, 37, 57, 88, 90, 97, 118, 123, 124), and she undoubtedly falls into what Straaijer (2018, p. 29) describes as a 'subgenre' of usage guides in the twenty-first century, one "much more loosely structured and meant … for entertainment as much as for instruction", as seen in the title and Taggart's adopted persona: *Her Ladyship's Guide to the Queen's English*.

41 This is partly repeated in Butterfield (2015, p. 455) and in Allen (1999, p. 363).

42 These are repeated in the second edition (2013).

43 This is repeated in both the second and third editions and in Gowers (2015 [2014]).

heard colloq[uially]" (Nicholson, 1957, p. 586), "often heard in speech" (Wood, 1962, p. 131), "sometimes used … in conversational English" (Swan, 1980, §565.1), "common in speech" (Greenbaum and Whitcut, 1988, p. 398), "British English and American Conversational and Informal uses" (Wilson, 1993, p. 263), "very common in speech" (Trask, 2001, p. 168), and "mostly found in speech" (Peters, 2004, p. 553).

But the ungrammatical form is also found in writing, as claimed by Baker above (1770, p. 115): "our best writers have the popular expression" (Alford, 1864, second edition, p. 77), "numerous examples of its use by esteemed writers" (Ebbitt and Ebbitt, 1978, p. 542), "could be found in good authors" (Gowers, 1962 [1954] p. 188),[44] "a long history in literary English" (Evans and Evans, 1957, p. 263), and "tends to appear in … writing" (Peters, 2004, p. 307).

If the ungrammatical form is indeed widespread, this can lead to its acceptance, in some contexts at least: "easy to forgive when they deserve forgiveness, i.e. in hasty talk" (Fowler, 1926, p. 312),[45] "a justifiable English idiom" (Partridge, 1947, p. 168), "sanctified by long usage" (Vallins, 1953, p. 216), "must … be recognized as standard English" (Evans and Evans, 1957, p. 263), "[i]n conversation we may tolerate them" (Wood, 1962, p. 218), "acceptable in colloquial speech" (Bailie and Kitchin, 1979, p. 167), "in informal use" (Weiner, 1983, p. 113),[46] "perfectly acceptable in speech" (Ayto, 1995, p. 171), and "should now be used only in informal contexts" (Burchfield, 1998 [1996], p. 728).[47] These judgements would seem to confirm a prediction from Alford (1864, p. 71) that "this may be one of those cases where ultimately the inaccuracy will be adopted into the language" (and see the comments by Mair, 2006, in §4.4.2).

That the ungrammatical usage is considered acceptable in informal language is perhaps supported by those who still disprefer it, and who often refer to an unspecified third party in support: "usually considered … wrong" (Vizetelly, 1906, p. 211), "careful speakers and writers … prefer" (Krapp, 1927, p. 646), "public opinion … condemns it … it is as well to humour the purists" (Gowers, 1954, p. 188),[48] "modern usage bans it" (Nicholson, 1957, p. 586), "best excluded from written English" (Wood, 1962, p. 131), "strong objection to it continues" (Ebbitt and Ebbitt, 1978, p. 542), "better avoided in written English" (Bailie and Kitchin, 1979, p. 167), "[s]ome people … prefer to avoid it" (Swan, 1980, §565.1), "usually avoided in a formal style" (Swan, 2005, §551.2, p. 543), "widely regarded as incorrect" (Weiner, 1983, p. 113),[49] and "you may sometimes be faulted by those who prefer …" (Wilson, 1993, p. 263).

44 This is repeated in both the second and third editions and in Gowers (2015 [2014]).
45 This is repeated in Nicholson (1957, p. 303), and again in Gowers (1965, p. 320).
46 This is repeated in Weiner and Delahunty (1993, p. 144).
47 This is repeated in Butterfield (2015, p. 763).
48 This is repeated in both the second and third editions and in Gowers (2015 [2014]).
49 This is repeated in Weiner and Delahunty (1993, p. 144).

Here we see a glimpse of another aspect of the analysis which is sometimes found in the guides: the deference not to the grammarians but to the purists, as noted by Gowers (1954, p. 188) above. For now, it seems that, whilst e.g. *these kind of N2* is regarded as ungrammatical, it can nonetheless be tolerated in informal writing and in speech. As Quirk et al. (1985, p. 14) remark: "[the usage guide] objections may persuade some to avoid certain usages, at least in their formal writing." Hill (1980, p. 255, citing Marckwardt, 1973, p. 138) points out that "attitudes towards words are a part of their history, and … the user of them has the right to know what the attitudes are, and who holds them". This is what Joseph is referring to when he talks about the value attached to expressions (1987, pp. 16–18; cf. §1.2).

Summary

The answers, then, to Straaijer's (2015, p. 2) question "[A]re there differences in usage advice for different varieties of English?" would seem to be 'No' in terms of regional variation, i.e. American English vs. British English, but 'Yes' in terms of register variation, with number discord acceptable in speech and in informal writing, but with number agreement preferred in formal writing. At the beginning of this chapter I include a quotation from Cameron (1995, p. 239, ftn. 3) about how many, especially modern, usage guides seem to exhibit a consensual approach to a topic, determined by "a few individuals [who] have played a disproportionate part in compiling the texts". The footnotes in this section showing how often comments in one usage guide are picked up and repeated in others, typically later editions, would seem to bear this out. This is a topic which I will investigate in more depth in the next section.

3.6 Changes over time: some case studies

3.6.1 Introduction

In this section, I use case studies to see whether it is possible to identify any changes in the presentation of the entries on the species noun phrase in specific usage guides over time. In order to do this, I study those guides which have been available in a number of editions over a period of several years. This is one of the benefits of having access to different editions of a usage guide, as well as to those guides in HUGE (see §3.2), as this can facilitate investigation of whether specific authorial attitudes change or remain static over time, as has been shown in many of the footnotes to §3.5.2 above. This, of course, is in addition to whether the approach to a topic in the usage guides in general changes over time, which was part of the investigation in §3.4 above.

Those guides for which I have multiple editions are shown in Table 3.10. These are not all the editions of the various guides, simply those that I had access to for

this study, i.e. the guides in HUGE plus the ones I was able to source locally and electronically (cf. §3.2 above).

Table 3.10 The usage guides in this study with multiple editions

Usage guides	Editions available (HUGE editions in bold)	Date range (years)
Baker	**1770**, **1779**	9
Alford	**1864**, 1864, 1870	6
Ayres	1882, **1911**	29
Vizetelly	1906, **1920**	14
Fowler	**1926**, **1965**, **1996**, 2015 (**1906**, 1908, **1957**, **1999**, 2008)	89 (109)
Turck Baker	1910, **1938**	28
Perrin	1939, 1956, 1965, **1978**, 1990	51
Partridge	**1947**, 1999	52
Gowers	**1948**, 1973, 1986, 2014	66
Swan	**1980** 1984, 2005	21
Bryson	**1984**, 2002 2001	17
Gilman	**1989**, 2002	13
Weiner (and Delahunty)	**1983**, (**1993**)	10
Garner	**1998**, 2016, 2022	24
Brians	**2003**, 2022	19
Butterfield	**2007**, 2013	6

The guide with the longest publishing history in this study is Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, with its four major editions published in 1926, 1965 (revised by Gowers), 1996 (Burchfield), and 2015 (Butterfield) (and see Appendix A1 for more details). In this study, I also have access to H.G. Fowler's earlier work with his brother F.G. Fowler in *The King's English* (1906),[50] to an American adaptation of the 1926 edition (*Dictionary of American-English Usage*; Nicholson, 1957), and to a pocket edition (*Pocket Fowler's Modern English Usage*; Allen, 1999, 2008). These additional editions are shown in parentheses in Table 3.10. They were all published by Oxford University Press. In addition, Butterfield edited the *Oxford A–Z of English Usage*

50 The two brothers also started to work together on what was to become *Modern English Usage*, but F.G. Fowler died in 1918, when it was only part completed (McMorris, 2001, pp. 109–111). HUGE has a second edition dated 1922.

(2007, 2013), which was not used in this analysis (see §3.6.2 below). I will therefore start this section with a review of whether the approach to number agreement in the species noun phrase in the 'Fowler'[51] family can be seen to change over the period of 109 years. I will then investigate the multiple editions of Gowers (1948–2014), Perrin (1939–1990), Garner (1998–2022), and Alford (1864–1970).[52]

3.6.2 Fowler (1926–2015)

In his preface to the second edition, Gowers notes that he has "been chary of making any substantial alterations except for the purpose of bringing [Fowler] up to date" (1965, p. ix), whereas Burchfield states that "[Fowler's] book has been largely rewritten in this third edition" (1998 [1996], p. xi). Tellingly, Burchfield sees this as a rewrite of the 1926 first edition, not of the 1965 edition (1998 [1996], pp. viii–ix; and see comments on Gowers below).[53] Butterfield claims that his fourth edition "has been thoroughly revised and updated" (2015, p. vii) from the third edition, although he also referred to the first and second editions (2015, p. ix).[54] Nicholson notes that "*American-English Usage* is an adaptation of M[odern]E[nglish]U[sage], not a replacement. AEU is a simplified MEU, with American variations, retaining as much of the original as space allowed" (1957, p. v).[55] Allen (1999, p. v) explains that his *Pocket* edition "is based mainly on Burchfield's 1996 edition (with revisions published in 1998)" (1999, p. v). Butterfield (2007, p. iv) makes no claim to be based on Fowler and so will not be considered further in this discussion.

The first edition of Fowler (1926) includes a relatively short entry on number agreement in the species noun phrase:

> **kind**, n. The irregular uses—*Those k. of people, k. of startled, a k. of a shock*—are easy to avoid when they are worth avoiding, i.e. in print; & nearly as easy to forgive when they deserve forgiveness, i.e. in hasty talk. *Those k. of* is a sort of inchoate compound, = *those-like* (cf. *such, = so-like*); *k. of startled = startled, like,* or *startled-like*. *A k. of a shock* is both the least criticized & the least excusable of the three.
>
> (Fowler, 1926, p. 312)

51 Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020, pp. 2, 19 ftn. 2) comments on how *Modern English Usage* came to be referred to as simply 'Fowler', with *Fowler* becoming an entry in the *OED* in 2017. See also Busse and Schröder (2010) on this topic.

52 Alford might seem an odd choice, as the three editions span only six years, but this will be explained below.

53 Straaijer (2017) is an insightful analysis of thirty-three published reviews of Burchfield's third edition, from which he states that "it was generally perceived as a descriptivist take on a classic prescriptivist work" (2017, p. 186).

54 Straaijer (2016) analyses how much Butterfield's fourth edition differs from the three previous editions on the basis of a survey of nine usage topics.

55 And see ftn. 17 above.

Here, Fowler identifies *Those kind of people* (exemplification or proscription) as 'irregular', but does not feel it necessary to provide the preferred form (recommendation or prescription), nor does he provide any explanation as to why it might be irregular. This follows on from Fowler and Fowler (1906, p. 331; 1908, p. 331), who list *those sort of girls* and *Those sort of writers* without comment, under the heading 'Vulgarisms and colloquialisms'. Gowers (1965, p. 320) largely follows Fowler (1926), again noting that *those kind of people* is an 'irregular' use. Burchfield (1998 [1996], p. 433) follows the earlier editions but characterises *these kind of men* as 'illogical'. Butterfield (2015, p. 455) continues with the 'illogical' description of *these kind of trees*, but adds that it is also a "strangely ungrammatical variant". Allen (1999, p. 363) also adopts the 'ungrammatical' description of *these kind of houses*, but adds that it is "ungrammatical on a normal interpretation" (and see §3.4.2: EXPLANATION above). Nicholson (1957, p. 303), in her presentation of usage in America, follows Fowler (1926) in calling *Those kind of people* 'irregular'.

In terms of providing examples of the acceptable variants (recommendation or prescription), i.e. those listed in §3.4.2: RECOMMENDATION (and see Table 3.4 and Appendix C2), Nicholson (1957, p. 303) is the first to do so, with her *this kind of tree*, again suggesting that she is not a simple clone of Fowler (1926) (and see ftn. 17). Gowers (1965, p. 320) and Burchfield (1998 [1996], pp. 433–434) provide no such recommendation. Allen (1999, p. 363) is the first British edition of Fowler to provide recommended variants, with *these sorts of ways*, and *demergers of this kind*, an approach also taken by Butterfield (2015, p. 455) with *these kinds* (or *sorts*) *of* and *of this kind* (or *sort*), thus becoming the first major UK edition to do so. It has therefore taken eighty-nine years of the British edition to move from a simple example of the problem (exemplification) to adding a recommendation of preferred usage.

There has been more movement in the commentary on why the user should avoid one variant and use another (explanation). We have already seen comments such as 'irregular' and 'ungrammatical'. However, as shown in the quotation above, Fowler (1926, p. 312) adds that the irregular uses are "easy to forgive when they deserve forgiveness, i.e. in hasty talk", and describes *Those kind of* as "a sort of inchoate compound" (see §3.4.4, ftn. 32). Nicholson (1957, p. 303) repeats the first of these comments, whilst Gowers (1965, p. 320) repeats them both. Burchfield (1998 [1996], p. 433) notes that *these kind of* "is now exceedingly common in colloquial contexts". Butterfield (2015, p. 455) repeats Burchfield, but also quotes the *OED* in support of the inchoate compound analysis, which is simplified to "the feeling that *kind of* was equivalent to an adj. qualifying the following noun" (and see §2.4 for more on this analysis). But Butterfield also acknowledges that some (unspecified) people might be critical of this variant: "[s]hould you wish to avoid a formulation which might be open to criticism" (2015, p. 455). This follows Allen (1999, p. 363) noting that when *kind*

of is followed by a plural noun, "many purists insist on making *kind* or *sort* plural as well, e.g. *these kinds* [or *sorts*] *of houses*" (and see §3.5.2 above). Burchfield (1998 [1996], pp. 433, 728) also introduces a historical explanation for the construction's irregular use, noting the early use of e.g. *these kind of* from the fourteenth century and *these sort of* from the sixteenth century (and see §2.4.5 on this).

It seems then, that 'Fowler' has slowly and gradually moved from the unacceptable variant being irregular / illogical / ungrammatical, though also common in speech, i.e. in an informal register, to offering a historical explanation as to why it might be so common. Latterly, Fowler adds references to unspecified third-party critics ("might be open to criticism") and to the 'purists' who might also criticise such usage. It thus seems to follow a trajectory, also seen across other usage guides, of moderating its criticism of the lack of number agreement in *these kind of* by explaining how it could be considered to be an acceptable grammatical construction, whilst still advising against its usage in more formal registers. However, given that these recommendations also appear in the first edition of 1926, this is hardly evidence of 'Fowler' becoming more accepting of the usage over time.

3.6.3 Gowers (1948–2014)

Another guide with a long publishing history is Gowers. First published in 1948 as *Plain Words: A Guide to the Use of English*, it was re-published in 1954, together with *The ABC of Plain Words* (1951) as *The Complete Plain Words*. A second edition, revised by Fraser, appeared in 1973, with a third edition, revised by Greenbaum and Whitcut, in 1986. A fourth edition, revised by Gowers's great-granddaughter Rebecca Gowers, was published in 2014. In Fraser's second edition he aimed to respect and update the original (1973, pp. iii–viii), and Greenbaum and Whitcut aimed to produce a similarly respectful update of Fraser (1986, pp. v–vii). In contrast, Rebecca Gowers is critical of the approach both of Fraser and of Greenbaum and Whitcut, and her fourth edition "disregards the third and second, and instead directly revises the first" (2015 [2014], p. xix). Notwithstanding these (dis)respectful revisions, the text of interest for this study has been remarkably consistent. In the 1954 edition, Gowers notes of e.g. *those kind of things* that it is "common in conversation, and instances of it could be found in good authors", but that "public opinion generally condemns it", and goes on to say that "even now it is as well to humour the purists" (1954, p. 188). This is essentially repeated in all three further editions.

3.6.4 Perrin (1939–1990)

Perrin (1939, 1956, 1965, 1978, 1990), like Fowler and Gowers, has been revised a number of times by different people. The first edition (1939, p. 352) already explains

that in the species noun phrase the number of the determiner tends to agree with the "principal noun of the construction", i.e. the N2, rather than with the species noun, and comments that it is "[o]nly the vigilance of editorial copy readers" that stops this variant appearing more in writing. The fourth edition (1968 [1965]), revised by Dykema and Ebbitt, follows this approach but adds more explanation, and also notes that this comment applies to "General and Formal writing": "As singular nouns, they [i.e. *kind*/*sort*/*type*] are expected to take singular demonstrative adjectives" (1968 [1965], p. 231). But they also continue to note that "in speech and Informal writing" ("colloquially" in 1939) the determiner and N2 agree ("usually agree" in 1939), and where the 1939 edition has "only colloquial and vulgate standing", that of 1968 ([1965], p. 232) has "is still felt by many to be Nonstandard", again with a reference to an unspecified third party (the purist argument). In addition, where (1939) refers to "the vigilance of editorial copy readers", (1968 [1965]) revises this to "the *unnodding* vigilance of editorial copy readers" (emphasis added). Here, again, the usage guide writers are presenting language professionals other than themselves, in this case the copy-editors, as the prescriptivists. Where the 1939 edition included a lateral reference to the *OED* and Jespersen (1933), the 1968 [1965] edition adds lateral references to Fries (1940), Curme (1931), and Bryant (1962). The sixth edition (1978), revised by Ebbitt and Ebbitt, clarifies this approach by explaining the non-agreement use in terms of the headedness of the species noun phrase, and notes that it is common in both speech and writing, but adds that "strong objection to it continues" and ends with a recommendation showing two examples with number agreement between the determiner, the species noun, the N2 and the verb. This sixth edition drops Curme (1931) from its list of lateral references, and substitutes Copperud (1970). In all, over time Perrin takes a consistent approach, and a similar approach to Fowler, in that a usage variant which had been criticised is explained both grammatically and in terms of its register use, and again the latest edition advises against its use in formal registers to avoid upsetting the purists.

3.6.5 Garner (1998–2022)

Garner is included in this section not because his usage guide has seen several editions over a long period, but because it has been through five editions in the relatively short space of twenty-four years. During this time it also underwent a change of title, from *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage* (1998) to *Garner's Modern American Usage* (2003, 2009) to *Garner's Modern English Usage* (2016, 2022). This brings it into line with another major Oxford University Press usage guide: *Fowler's (Dictionary of) Modern English Usage* (1926, 1965, 1996, 2015). Fowler, however, took eighty-

nine years to reach its fourth edition. The text in Garner, like that in Gowers, remains remarkably consistent between the first and fifth editions. The first edition includes:

> These are illogical forms that, in a bolder day, would have been termed illiteracies. Today they merely brand the speaker or writer as slovenly. They appear most commonly in reported speech … Of course, it's perfectly acceptable to write *these kinds* or *these types* or *these sorts*, as many writers conscientiously do … .
>
> (Garner, 1998, p. 653)

This text is essentially repeated in the 2016 (p. 906) and 2022 (p. 1094) editions. Garner provides exemplification, together with a value judgement ("slovenly"; "illiteracies" is dropped in the later editions), but there is no explanation other than "illogical", although he does add a historical note in these later editions: "These illogical forms were not uncommon in the 1600s and early 1700s, but by the mid-1700s they had been stigmatized" (2022, p. 1094).[56] So, apart from the addition of some historical context, there has been no change in Garner's approach to this topic over the five editions.

3.6.6 Alford (1864–1870)

Having looked at some guides with longer publishing histories, I now turn to a guide with a very short history. Alford published three editions in just six years (1864, 1864, 1870), having presented his views on usage first in periodical form in *Good Words* (1863). Alford is also one of the usage guides most frequently cited by other guides in this study (cf. §3.3.2 above), and the guide that gave the earliest explanation of proximity and attraction as explanations for the 'ungrammatical' *these kind of* (cf. §3.4.4). In this short space of time, Alford revises his entry on the species noun phrase to make it less value-laden and more descriptive/explanatory. This is best shown in the opening sentences of his entries for the 1864 first edition and the 1870 third edition:

> Let me further illustrate this tendency of nations by another usage, not so nearly become idiomatical, and certainly not to be recommended, but still almost inevitable, and sometimes found in the talk of us all. I mean the expression *"these"* or *"those kind of things."* Of course we all see that this is incorrect and indefensible. We ought to say *"this kind of things," "that kind of things."* Now, seeing that we all know this, and yet are all sometimes betrayed into the inaccuracy, it becomes an interesting inquiry … why this should be so.
>
> (Alford, 1864, pp. 69–70)

> Let me further illustrate this tendency of nations by another usage <u>now almost become idiomatic, and commonly</u> found in the talk of us all. I mean

56 A similar comment was also added to the 2016 edition (p. 906). I did not have access to the editions dated 2003 and 2009, so this historical context may have been added earlier.

> the expression *"these"* or *"those kind of things."* At first sight, this seems incorrect and indefensible. It would appear as if we ought to say *"this kind of things," "that kind of things."* ~~Now, seeing that we all know this, and yet are all sometimes betrayed into the inaccuracy,~~ It becomes then an interesting inquiry … why this should be so.
>
> (Alford, 1870, pp. 97–98)

In these extracts I have highlighted the changes with underlining and strike-through, but it is notable that, in the third edition, Alford presents a less dogmatic, more cautious, approach, rather than the outright condemnation of the first edition of a mere six years earlier.[57]

Summary

One of the most notable aspects of this investigation of those few guides where some revision can be seen over time, is that we have a usage variant which is a staple of the usage guides (an 'old chestnut'; see Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 2020, pp. 24–27), where the variant is described as widespread, and whose use can be explained in grammatical terms, and yet its use is advised against for fear of annoying those people who don't like it, i.e. the purists. It would seem that being a canonical entry in a usage guide can become self-fulfilling. It should also be remembered, though, that Hill (1980, p. 255, citing Marckwardt, 1973, p. 138) points out that "attitudes towards words are a part of their history, and … the user of them has the right to know what the attitudes are, and who holds them" (and cf. §3.5.2 above).

3.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter concerns the work of the prescriptivists, as identified in the Bridging the Unbridgeable (BtU) project. In this case these are the writers of usage guides, who are part of the BtU investigation alongside the linguists (see Chapter 2) and the general public (see Chapters 4 and 5). In particular, I set out to investigate two major issues with usage guides and their writers. The first concerns their apparent dislocation from the mainstream of linguistic thought (Peters, 2020, p. 616) – as evidenced by the lack of lateral referencing in the usage guides – and the consequent conclusion that they somehow 'make up' a "transcendental norm of correct English" as they go along (Milroy and Milroy, 2012, p. 31). A contrasting view, though not a refutation, is provided by Huddleston and Pullum's (2002, p. 6) comment that there is in practice no reason why the linguists' reference grammars and the usage guides "should not agree on what they say about the topics they both treat". The first part of this chapter investigated Peters's claim, the second part whether Huddleston and

57 Alford's work was widely reviewed, and he received much correspondence about it, and the contributions of these to his revisions is being considered in Stenton (in preparation).

Pullum's comment is appropriate for the treatment of number agreement in the species noun phrase in the usage guides in this study.

On the topic of lateral referencing, it was found that nearly half of the forty-seven guides in this study (22/47) do in fact refer to external sources, in the form of grammars, dictionaries, and other commentaries (§3.3.2). Further, thirty-four of those forty-seven guides refer to other guides in this study. Because of the way these figures were collected, they probably under-estimate the scale of this lateral referencing, in that I didn't read the whole text of the guides, and so only picked up those references that I was specifically looking for. These findings are more in line with those of Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2020, pp. 15, 153–161; cf. §§3.3.1, 3.3.3) than Peters (2020) and Peters and Young (1997, pp. 317–319), and an explanation for the difference in the findings is suggested in §3.3.3: Summary. When the scope of this lateral referencing was restricted to the text within the usage guide entries on the species noun phrase, it was much less in evidence, as only twelve guides included external references in their entries (§3.3.3).

The second part of the chapter (§§3.4–3.6) dealt with what the usage guides say about number agreement within and beyond the species noun phrase. The context for this part of the investigation lies in a set of questions raised by Straaijer (2015). These are:

> When does a certain usage become problematic, or perceived as such, and when does a certain usage stop being (perceived as) problematic or disputed? In other words, when do usage problems 'begin' and 'end'?
>
> [W]hich usage problems persist?
>
> Does the discussion of specific usage problems change, and if so, in what way?
>
> [A]re there differences in usage advice for different varieties of English? (Straaijer, 2015, p. 2)

It was found that the usage in question – e.g. *these kind of* – has been the subject of usage guide writers' attention from the very earliest guides in the HUGE database (Baker, 1770; 1779) to the very latest (Taggart, 2010), and indeed beyond the period covered by HUGE, to include Butterfield (2015) and Garner (2022). So the answers to Straaijer's questions on the beginning, ending and persistence of number agreement in the species noun phrase are that it has persisted from the beginning of the usage guide tradition to today, and remains ongoing. One note of caution, of course, is that there are twenty-nine usage guides in HUGE which do not comment on the species noun phrase at all.

The second major question posed by Straaijer concerns the discussion of the usage problem in the usage guides, and whether it changes over time. To address

this question I looked at how the topic was presented in the forty-seven guides, using Weiner's (1988, p. 178) tripartite classification of exemplification, explanation and recommendation. Most of the guides focused on the same topic in their exemplification (i.e. their proscriptions): that of the apparent conflict of number between a plural determiner and a singular species noun, e.g. *these kind.* Where the guides differed was the extent to which they included more context, i.e. the second noun (N2), e.g. *those type of cars*, and/or the verb, e.g. *these kind of questions are*.

In their recommendations (i.e. prescriptions) of preferred usage, most guides again focused on number agreement between especially the determiner and the species noun: *this kind* and *these kinds*, and again any differences lay in whether they included the N2 and/or the verb: *this sort of thing interests* and *these kinds of trees are*. However, there were also some recommendations with mixed number: *this sort of men is* and *these kinds of tree are*, so not all guides find the number mismatch beyond the determiner and the species noun to be a problem. In general, though, there was much support for number agreement between the determiner and the species noun, but more acceptance of number variation with the N2 and the verb. In terms of their explanations, the usage guide writers were again agreed that the problem was one of grammar, and in particular of the conflict of number between the plural determiner and the singular species noun. Although this conflict was couched in many different forms, it was always about a grammatical mismatch of number marking.

As noted above, Huddleston and Pullum don't accept that there is any necessary conflict between a reference grammar and a usage guide in terms of what they say about a particular topic, and it is indeed the case that the exemplifications, recommendations and explanations in the usage guides studied on this topic do match the descriptions and explanations given in the reference grammars studied in Chapter 2. The main differences are found not in the analyses, but in the contexts in which those analyses are expressed. The reference grammars, not surprisingly, present their analyses within the system of the grammar of English as a whole; the usage guides, equally unsurprisingly, present their analyses within a system of value, i.e. what is good or bad about a particular usage variant, and when it should and shouldn't be used. This is, after all, why non-specialists turn to usage guides for advice: if you use this phrase in this context then you may be criticised by those who believe that they are in a position to do so.[58]

There was also agreement in the approaches of the reference grammars and the usage guides in their use of the concepts of attraction and proximity in order to explain

58 Pullum has more recently noted (2023, p. 12): "Descriptive linguists and prescriptive usage writers are not rivals within a unitary study of the English language; they represent two different cultures. And use of empirical methods is not what distinguishes between them."

the "anomaly" (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 765; cf. §§2.3.2–2.3.3) or the "incorrect and indefensible" usage (Alford, 1864, p. 69; cf. 3.4.4), i.e. a singular determiner could be pluralised by a plural N2 and/or plural verb. In these analyses, the N2 is effectively functioning as the head of the noun phrase, with the number of the N2 controlling the number of the determiner, but with the species noun remaining singular. Table 3.7 showed that these principles feature widely in the usage guides. In practice, this could be seen as an acknowledgement of the post-determiner hypothesis (cf. §2.4), but this aspect of the analysis of number incongruence in the species noun phrase is not taken up by any of the usage guides, so there was no opportunity to test this post-determiner hypothesis as put forward by e.g. Denison (cf. §2.4.1).

To try to address Straaijer's question of whether the approach of the usage guides changed over time, I conducted an analysis of some of those guides which have appeared in several editions over a period of years. Here again the discussion is seen not to change very much, even over the 109 years that the various editions of Fowler have been published. However, whilst the exemplifications and recommendations have changed little over the period of the study, what has changed a little is that the explanations of the irregular uses have become more prominent, with slightly more emphasis being given to register variation (see below), although this does not always imply greater acceptance. So, there is no evidence here that the treatment of the usage problem changed much over time, as might have been expected following Mair (2006, pp. 183–193; and see §4.4.2 in the current study).

Straaijer's final question concerned whether there was different advice in the usage guides for different varieties of English. To address this question, I first looked for differences in the analyses of those guides published in the United States and those published in the United Kingdom, but could find no systematic differences. Guides from both countries covered all variants throughout the period of the HUGE database. The guides were, however, much more forthcoming in their advice for different registers of English. They were more inclined to accept, or at least to acknowledge, the use of mixed number, e.g. *these kind of* in the contexts of informal speech and informal writing. At the same time, there is also an acknowledgement that its common use is not in practice restricted to these informal registers, with "many approved authors" (Baker, 1779, pp. 99–100) and "esteemed writers" (Ebbitt and Ebbitt, 1978, p. 542) found to have used it.

It would therefore seem to be the case that, for the usage guides in this study, there is evidence that they do make use of lateral referencing, and that, in general, the usage guides studied in this chapter and the reference grammars studied in Chapter 2, do tend to agree in their analyses of the topic of number agreement in the species noun phrase, albeit from different perspectives.