

博士(文学)学位論文タイトル:

A Study on the Language of Samuel Johnson: With Special Reference to the Language of his Correspondence

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博士論文全文の要約

The 18th century in Britain is often recognised as ‘the age of reason’ or ‘the period of stability’. After violent upheavals in the previous century (i.e., the establishment of plantations, Civil War, the restoration, etc.), order returned towards the end of the 17th century. A similar environment prevailed over the linguistic world as the changes in the English language started to stabilise. For instance, the establishment of the Academy was requested to control the language, and many glossaries, linguistic commentaries, and grammar books were published. It is easily conceivable that prescriptivism had an impact on contemporary prose style. Due to the rise of the printing industry, many pamphlets, journals, booklets, magazines, and novels were published and enjoyed by the increasing population of ‘middling sorts’ and above. The present study is part of a wider project to investigate the influence of the language of individuals on the establishment of Standard English. This thesis investigates the characteristics of Samuel Johnson’s language (1709–1784), specifically, that of his correspondence. As one of the most influential figures in both the literary and linguistic worlds in the 18th century, it would be safe to say that we cannot avoid him when we talk about 18th-century English language and literature. Why look at his personal letters and not major works? Regarding his language, style, and relation to the English language, most scholars have focused on *A Dictionary of the English Language* or his Latin-based works in publications such as the *Rambler*, *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, the *Idler*, and the *Lives of Poets* in conventional Johnsonian studies. Consequently, based on previous studies, the perception of Johnson as a prescriptivist was established. However, little attention has been paid to his colloquial language by scholars. In socio-historical linguistics, which has recently received more attention in historical linguistics, personal correspondence is one of the most invaluable primary materials to provide reflections of the real colloquial language of the time. For instance, it is generally recognised, that ‘[p]ersonal letters are closer to spoken language than other written types’ (Biber and Finegan, 1989: 116), and ‘letters from past centuries provide genuine communication between individuals and various communicative patterns through which the correspondents linguistically establish and express their relationships’ (Palander-Collin 2002: 132). Daghlian (1968: 109) stated that correspondence was a necessary form of communication, but he wrote letters only when he had something to say. Hence, there is a great

possibility that his letters not only provide a relatively direct view of his character but also a closer look into his spoken language and that of the period. Moreover, the two chapters in Lynch and McDermott (2005) were also the motivation to study Johnson's language. The titles of the chapters are: 'Johnson the prescriptivist? The case for the prosecution' by Geoff Barnbrook and 'Johnson the prescriptivist? The case for the defence' by Anne McDermott. This shows the editor intended to emphasise the problem by placing these conflicting positions next to each other. The former argued that Johnson was guilty of prescriptivism and condemned him. The latter defended his innocence from the perspective that he was not a prescriptivist. Barnbrook (2005: 92–112) attempted to demonstrate his prescriptive attitude using statistical methods by comparing the variety and frequency of usage notes on headwords in the first (1755) and fourth edition (1773) of Johnson's *dictionary*. Specifically, the number of annotated headwords increased from 11.3% in the first to 13.5% in the fourth edition, providing evidence of his normative emphasis. McDermott (2005: 113–128) attempted to create a non-normative image of Johnson based on the seemingly careless inclusion of rough and vulgar vocabulary in his lexicon. Furthermore, she argued that the purpose of Johnson's numerous quotations was not to make the dictionary 'authoritative' but to provide a living example. Although the two authors had different points of view, the findings of the present study should shed new light on the problem and might produce a decision.

In the following, we summarise the findings of the present study. Chapter 1 looked at the background and circumstances of the period in Britain before investigating Johnson's language. We examined the political, social, economic, and cultural events of the period that characterised the 'long 18th century' in Britain, which showed that after a period of upheaval in the 17th century, a sense of stability prevailed over the social, literary, and linguistic worlds. Furthermore, Chapter 1 also shows that Late Modern English studies, which was disregarded until the 1980s, has been progressing dramatically since the 1990s. This was mainly due to the development of new disciplines of linguistics and computer technology, such as computer programs and analytical tools, as well as compilations of linguistic corpora.

Chapter 2 focuses on the nature of Johnson's prose in the framework of corpus linguistics. First, we tried to locate his place among 18th-century prose writers and variations of his language and style through Biber and Finegan's multidimensional approach. The results revealed that English prose in the 18th century was not uniform; there were stylistic differences between the first and second halves of the period. A clear shift from an oral to a literary style was also seen after 1750 when Johnson was active. Furthermore, despite the overall literary nature, Johnson altered it according to the different genres of prose. We also examined him in the context of the history of the English language and style and determined his contribution to English vocabulary based on

quotations from his writings in the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* and conservative or prescriptive attitude toward style.

Chapter 3 deals with Johnson's life, the philological aspects of his letters, and the consideration of his social network regarding the number of letters and their opening formula. The edition used for this study was *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, edited by Robert Redford. The first letter is dated 30 October 1731 when Johnson was 21 years. It ends on 10 December 1784, three days before his death. The period spans more than 50 years, and the total number of letters is 1,504. In the present study, all letters in Bruce Redford's *Hyde Edition* were manually scanned and transferred to a machine-readable format. A closer look at the chronology of these letters reveals that the number increased dramatically after 1750, especially after 1770 when Johnson turned 60 years old. As for his correspondents, John Taylor, his old friend, and Lucy Porter, his step-daughter, corresponded with Johnson for more than 40 years. From 1760 onwards, Hester Thrale and James Boswell, who were younger generations, not only joined his social network but also became the top two recipients of his letters. Furthermore, between 1780 and 1784, when Johnson was in his 70s, he wrote more letters to Maria Thrale, Hester's daughter, and John Perkins, a member of the Thrale family. Joshua Reynolds, who was involved in the creation of The Club and his sister Frances, joined the list. We found that the opening formula used by Johnson in his letters varied more than that suggested by Baker (1980). Moreover, the more letters he sent to the addressee, the more informal the opening formula became. This indicated that the number of letters sent by Johnson corresponded to the intimacy he felt with them.

Chapter 4 discusses the spelling of Johnson's letters. In the first section, based on Görlach's (2001) comments and the author's experience, we examined the situation of *shew/show*, *chuse/choose*, and adjectives with the suffix *-ck* in 18th-century English using two representative corpora: PPCMBE and ARCHER. We found that *shew* was dominant during this period but became mainstream in the 19th century, and *chose* was common in the first half of the 18th century. Regarding *-ck* adjectives, the two corpora showed similar changes. In PPCMBE and ARCHER, *the public* was common in the first half of the 18th century. While its presence continued in the former, *the public* disappeared in the latter during the 19th century. Next, we examined his letters' spelling, referring to the 'dual spelling system', as pointed out by N. Osselton. We then considered the differences between the spellings of the headwords in Johnson's *dictionary*, in his letters, and *Rambler*. This showed that he did not always follow the 'public standard' and that three principles impacted spellings: a) practice was consistent with his rule; b) practice in the letters was inconsistent with his rule; and c) his choice was inconsistent. Furthermore, we briefly discuss other spelling variations in the letters (*-ll* / *-l*; *-our* / *-or*; and final *-e*) pointed out by Görlach (2001). We noted that there was evidence of Johnson rewriting *of bothe* as *both*. In the final section of Chapter 4, we

examined the variation in the compound pronouns/adverbs and reflexive pronouns, which showed that he did not spell according to a single rule, especially in his letters, where many compounds occur in various spellings.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the features of language in Johnson's letters in terms of lexical and phrasal levels. We found that Johnson is the 45th most frequently quoted author in the *OED*, with a total of 5,240 quotations (about 0.14% of all *OED* quotations). The number of quotations providing the first evidence of a word was 156, and that of a particular meaning was 585. We then compared the characteristics of vocabulary in his letters with that in *Rambler* regarding occurrences, keyness, and linguistic involvement. The frequency of the first- and second-person pronouns were particularly high compared to the *Rambler* as well as PPCMBE and ARCHER. Next, we examined the characteristic words in the letters regarding 'keyness', using the vocabulary of the *Rambler* as a reference. The results revealed that the language of the letters was characterised by a high-frequency vocabulary, such as first- and second-person pronouns and private verbs, expressing a subjective or involved attitude whereas that of the *Rambler* was characterised by third-person pronouns and abstract nouns, which reflected the author's objective or detached attitude. Furthermore, we examined linguistic involvement in Johnson's letters within the framework of Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014). We found that Johnson was more 'involved' in his letters than in the *Rambler* regarding all the evaluation criteria of ego involvement, interpersonal involvement, and intensifiers. After considering 'Johnson as a linguistic innovator' by looking at words that the *OED* identifies as new words (three examples) and senses (26 examples), we examined whether nominalisation and parallelism, two of the Johnsonian dictions for which the *Rambler* is famous, were used in his letters. The results indicated that although the use was about half of that in the *Rambler*, the so-called Johnsonian style was seen in his letters.

In Chapter 6, we investigate the grammatical features of Johnson's letters in terms of several major syntactic developments in the Late Modern English period during which long-term changes had been stabilised, and the foundations of present-day syntax in English were established. These focuses were on categorical changes, statistical changes, and some issues related to colloquialism. Regarding the categorical changes, we examined the 'progressive passive' and the 'get-passive' in Johnson's letters. We found only three *get*-passives in his letters and the *Rambler*, indicating that Johnson was conservative in the use of these innovative grammatical constructions. The next issues covered were: 'the regulation of *do*', 'the progressive', 'the *be* perfect constructions', and 'preposition stranding in relative clauses', which are recognised as statistical changes manifested in late modern English. We found that the types of verbs that occurred with the *do*-less negative constructions in his letters were few, and they were: *care* (1), *doubt* (20), *fear* (1), *go* (1), *know* (271), *like* (1), and *mistake* (1). However, regarding *know*, the *do*-less type was a 'standard'

negative construction for Johnson, the distributions of the ‘know not’ and ‘do not know’ were almost the same in the letters and the *Rambler*. In contrast, regarding *doubt*, the distributions were different from those of *know*: the ‘do not *doubt*’ type was in the majority, especially in the *Rambler*. As to Johnson’s use of the ‘progressive’, the construction preferred the colloquial context of letters to the informational context of moral essays in the *Rambler*. Furthermore, the distributions of the ‘progressive’ over the years revealed that its use increased with Johnson’s age. This means that the progressive forms had gained ground in the spoken register in late modern English, and even Johnson might have been influenced to keep up with the usage of the time. Regarding the choice of the ‘*be/have* paradigm with perfect constructions’, he generally preferred the *be*-perfect construction (71.8%) to the *have*-perfect construction (28.8%), but the investigation of his choice over a lifetime revealed that similar to the use of the progressive, Johnson used the *have*-perfect at an increasing rate as he got older. Furthermore, we found that his treatment of ‘preposition stranding’ was obvious: he rarely stranded prepositions at the end of sentences or clauses, and he preferred ‘ *pied-piping constructions*’, specifically, in the *Rambler*. Finally, regarding colloquial expressions, we found that although Johnson seldom wrote *you was* (only twice), a doubtful case was found in which he corrected the original *you was* to *you were*, whereas he never used adjectives as intensifying adverbs.

As summarised above, the analysis of the language of Johnson’s letters in terms of spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and the use of objective data through the corpus linguistics method enabled us to clarify the position of Johnson’s language. In the introduction, it is stated that the present study is part of a wider project to investigate the influence of individuals’ language on the establishment of Standard English. Although we are far from reaching this goal, we hope this study significantly helped future research.