A DECADE OF GRAMMATICAL LIBERALISM

APPROVED:

E. S. Clifton
Major Professor

Henry Dannelly
Minor Professor

E. S. Clifton
Director of the Department of English

Robert B. Toulouse
Dean of the Graduate School

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James M. Guinn, B. A.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the last ten years, since 1944, a raging battle has been going on among grammarians. Many of the arbiters of grammatical "correctness" have revolted against the hard and fast rules set down by the eighteenth-century grammarians to the extent that, in the opinion of some of their contemporaries, they have become over-liberal. The more conservative of the modern grammarians have now revolted against this over-liberalism among their fellow scholars. Therefore, there are two factions expressing fervently their ideas about what constitutes grammatical "correctness" and about what procedures should be used for teaching English grammar in the schools and colleges of the United States. One modern grammarian has stated very clearly the outline of the controversy:

> The last few decades have witnessed an amiable but spirited battle between linguistic scientists and defenders of traditional ways of teaching English. Linguists have been in revolt against two assumptions that underlie the tradition: (1) that there are absolute criteria--logical, analogical, etymological, or whatever--by which correctness can be measured; and (2) that there are universal, nonlinguistic concepts through which the linguistic categories of any language can be identified and defined.[1]

Roberts continues by predicting that the views of linguistic science will eventually be established in the American school system, since non-science gives way to science in our society.[2]

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[1]Paul Roberts, "The Future of Grammar," Inside the ACD, VI, No. 3 (February, 1954), 1.

[2]Ibid.

It can be seen from these comments that the linguistic scientist bases his theories of "correctness" upon current usage; the traditional grammarian, or purist, upholds grammatical "rules," surviving from the precepts of the eighteenth-century grammarians, as his standard.

At this point in the discussion it seems fitting to present the viewpoint of a traditional grammarian on the six issues to be considered in this thesis. A grammar by Curme,[3] which was published in 1925, along with some remarks from Mason Long's grammar,[4] which was published in 1928, will illustrate the traditional point of view.

About *who* and *whom*, Curme makes the following remarks:

> There is a strong tendency in colloquial speech to abandon the special *who* forms and use the modern forms here: I don't know *who* (instead of *whom*) he plays with. I will go with *whoever* I like, instead of *whomever* I like, [*to go with*]. But of course: I will go with *whoever* is going my way. The relative pronoun always has the case form required by the construction of the clause in which it stands. Thus in the last example it is nominative since it is the subject. In the preceding example it is the object of the preposition *with* understood. We should withstand the strong drift here toward the modern forms and use the more expressive older ones.[5]

Curme is not at all sympathetic in this book toward *It's me*. He says, "In choice language we should resist the strong colloquial drift to put an inflected predicate pronoun into the accusative; the nominative is the proper form."[6] In another

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[3]George O. Curme, *College English Grammar*.

[4]Mason Long, *A College Grammar*.

[5]Curme, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46. [6]*Ibid.*, p. 112.

part of the book he says, "The predicate complement agrees with its subject in case: It (subject nominative) is he (predicate nominative)."[7]

Of the dangling participle this author writes:

> In "Taking all things into consideration, his lot is a happy one" taking is a dangling participle, having no word that can serve as its subject. In such sentences we feel no deficiency, for the reference is general and indefinite, so that we expect no definite mention of a subject. This is the only place where the dangling participle is common in the literary language. In a few expressions the dangling participle has become established also elsewhere:
>
> Including today, they have been here a week.
> Beginning with the July number, it is intended to widen the scope of this Quarterly.
> This service is to be performed standing.
>
> In general, the dangling participle is slovenly English and can easily become ridiculous: Being not yet fully grown, his trousers were too long.[8]

Curme says of the position of only that such distinguishing adverbs as this word have the peculiarity that as sentence adverbs they can direct attention not only to the verb and thus to the sentence as a whole, but also to any person or thing that becomes prominent in the situation as a whole, standing either immediately before or after the noun or pronoun. Examples of different meanings caused by different positions of only are:

> John passed only in Latin (or in Latin only).
>
> John has passed only once in Latin.
>
> Only John (or John only) passed in Latin.
>
> John only (=barely) passed in Latin.[9]

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[7] Ibid., p. 121.

[8] Ibid., pp. 160-161.

[9] Ibid., p. 156.

Curme is considerably more liberal about the end preposition and the split infinitive than he is about the other issues. Of the former, he writes:

> The position of the preposition before a word indicates that it brings this word into relation with another word. It often has a characteristic position at the end of the sentence or clause: What do you write with? This is the pen I write with.[10]

Here it becomes necessary to supplement Curme with the statements made by Long:

> The preposition is normally placed before the noun which it introduces and which it connects to some other word in the sentence. It will be found, however, that in certain sentences the preposition does not precede the noun, as in "Whom did you look for?" A more formal rendering of the above sentence would, of course, be "For whom did you look?"[11]
>
> Good usage calls for the placing of the preposition in its normal grammatical position (unless emphasis is especially desired), namely before its noun or noun-equivalent.[12]
>
> The prepositions usually precede the object: Come in the morning. The separation of the preposition from its object is not to be encouraged, except, perhaps, where the relative pronoun is the object:
>
> Whom are you talking to?
> This is the old lady whom I talked to.
>
> It is better, however, to state the foregoing sentences thus:
>
> Whom are you addressing? or
> To whom are you talking?
> This is the old lady to whom I talked.[13]

Of the split infinitive, Curme writes:

> The much-censured split infinitive is an improvement of English expression. It first appeared in the fourteenth century and has since been gradually gaining favor as it has become better understood. . . . It is avoided by many, especially our minor writers, who here follow the instructions of their school-teachers.[14]

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[10] Ibid., p. 94. [11] Long, op. cit., p. 180.

[12] Ibid., p. 181. [13] Ibid., p. 301.

[14] Curme, op. cit., p. 301.

Mason Long's opinion of this locution is more traditional than Curme's. He says, "When a modifier separates the preposition to from its infinitive, a Split construction is the result. Best usage seems to avoid the Split infinitive construction."[15]

The very liberal grammarians have come out as strongly against such rules as those set forth by Curme and Long as the advocates of the rules have shown themselves in favor of them. An interesting quotation from one modern handbook shows that its editors are caught between the views of the two opposing factions. They say,

> Grammar has to do with the functions and relations of words in a sentence. You need not memorize complicated rules in order to grasp the essentials of grammar. You need have only a knowledge of the basic elements of a sentence and an understanding of the logical relationships between them.[16]

It is apparent that these editors are attempting to be liberal in their attitude toward grammatical "correctness," but they still are clinging to the idea that logic can be employed in writing and in speaking English.

Margaret M. Bryant has written more convincingly on the subject of abandoning eighteenth-century grammatical rules. She says that, to many educated persons, grammar appears to be one of the few remaining eternal verities. She says that these people know that the meanings of words change, that slang is

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[15]Long, op. cit., p. 157.

[16]Garland Greever, Easley S. Jones, Agnes Law Jones, The Century Collegiate Handbook, p. 54.

ephemeral, and that to a certain extent styles alter with regard to spelling and even punctuation, but these same people have the comforting belief that syntax in the language, like the multiplication table in arithmetic, is fixed and immutable. However, she continues by stating that just as the meanings, spelling, and sounds of words change with the years, so does syntax. It is her belief that as changes gradually come about in language, the only arbiter to be considered in linguistic matters is usage. She says, "The purist may like to hold on to the expression he learned in his early days, but he will find that his wishes are disregarded. Language change is a democratic process, and the few invariably make way for the many."[17]

In his revision of The Development of Modern English, Frederic G. Cassidy furthers the case for usage as a standard of correctness in English grammar, as opposed to "logical" rules. He writes:

> Despite the popular admission that vocabulary and spelling and the sounds of words change in the course of time, there is still somehow the feeling that "grammar" is changeless. Somehow the categories of grammar are identified in many people's minds with "logic," or the very modes of thought of the human mind. Numerous grammarians of the past have held this view, consciously or unconsciously--indeed some write of "logical" word order. But the more we see of language and languages throughout the world, the clearer it becomes that what seems logical to one man is exactly the contrary of what seems so to another. . . . The fact is that there is a world of variety

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[17]Margaret M. Bryant, Modern English and Its Heritage, p. 264.

> in the structural devices which mankind has utilized in language; to talk about "logic" in this connection, therefore, is beside the point. The real question is, in any given language, what devices are used at a given time for a given purpose; and if we study that language historically, what changes come about as it develops? For we must recognize the principle that, though syntax is more stable than pronunciation or vocabulary, it, too, changes. And even if we admit the logician's definition of what is or is not logical, we will find that admittedly "correct" usage contains a number of illogicalities which everyone accepts--indeed, of which the majority of people are entirely unaware.[18]

Cassidy continues his presentation of his side of the logic-usage controversy by saying,

> Logic, as it is usually thought of, is not necessarily in agreement with "correct grammar." Correctness is a matter of acceptance and acceptability: if a majority of people of cultivation--literary men, educators, editors, linguists, and others who have a professional knowledge of language--approve and use any locution, it is, by that very fact, good usage. Furthermore, strict logic has its limitations, since it offers no way out of some of the dilemmas that arise in language.[19]

Cassidy mentions the fact that, since Shakespeare lived before the establishment of the "rules" by grammarians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the freer syntax that his works display--where not "corrected" in modern school editions--often anticipates developments that are only now being given academic sanction.[20]

Myers, in his recent English grammar, makes an interesting statement in regard to the liberal concept of usage as the criterion of grammatical correctness. His theory is this:

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[18]Stuart Robertson, The Development of Modern English (revised by Frederic G. Cassidy), pp. 291-292.

[19]Ibid., p. 304. [20]Ibid., p. 295.

> The man who wants to talk "perfect English" without being in the least "highbrow" has a long chase ahead of him. This is not because "perfect English" is "highbrow," and he has to choose; it is because there is no such thing as "perfect English." Neither the theory nor the practice of the language is uniform, and we can't possibly satisfy Jones without running into criticism from Smith.[21]

The idea that there is no one "correct" English for every purpose has led to the development of the concept of "levels of usage." Since modern grammarians rely so greatly on the theory of "levels" to justify many of the liberal grammatical trends which they accept in their works, it will be well to present the ideas of at least one such grammarian as an example of the concept. Paul Roberts has the following to say on this subject:

> It is now well understood that there is no single "Standard" English but rather several standards or levels of usage, whose propriety depends largely upon the circumstances in which they are used. There are also "substandard" levels of usage which obtain among the more or less uneducated portions of the populace. . . . In a treatment of grammar it seems best to choose main terms that will emphasize the medium and the background of the user rather than the situation. Grammar is, to be sure, affected also by circumstances; we vary some grammatical forms according to whether we are addressing an umpire or a bishop. But compared to vocabulary grammar changes little with the situation, whereas it is very much affected by whether we are speaking or writing and by our social background.[22]

Roberts then names his levels of usage and explains them. His terms are: Choice Written English, General Written English, Choice Spoken English, General Spoken English, and Vulgate English.[23]

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[21]L. M. Myers, American English, p. 32.

[22]Paul Roberts, Understanding Grammar, pp. 13-15.

[23]Ibid.

An example of the concern over theories of correctness in present-day English and of the reactions of various groups to liberal trends in grammar is the survey which Norman Lewis made for Harper's Magazine in 1949.[24] Lewis sent questionnaires to 750 people, 468 of whom replied. These people were asked to vote on 19 controversial issues as acceptable or unacceptable in everyday speech, regardless of violation or nonviolation of grammatical rules. The group of respondents consisted of 155 college English teachers, 12 lexicographers, 33 authors, 80 editors, 22 radio columnists, 32 high school English teachers, 60 Harper's subscribers from throughout the nation and of varied occupations and professions, 48 feature writers and newspaper columnists, and 26 editors of women's magazines.[25]

The percentage of acceptance for each expression was determined among the respondents as a whole, labeling any expression which received an affirmative vote of 75 per cent or more as Established English, any expression which received between 50 and 75 per cent acceptance as Acceptable English, any expression which received less than 50 per cent but more than 35 per cent acceptance as Controversial, and any expression which failed to receive as much as 35 per cent acceptance as Rejected.[26] The people who responded to Lewis's queries expressed their opinions on some of the issues which

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[24]Norman Lewis, "How Correct Must Correct English Be?" Harper's Magazine, CXCVIII (March, 1949), 68-74.

[25]Ibid., pp. 69-70. [26]Ibid., p. 70.

will be discussed in this study, and their opinions will be included in later chapters.

Lewis ranked each group of respondents according to its acceptance ratio (a. r.) and found the most liberal group to be the college professors, with an aggregate a. r. of 70; next came the lexicographers with 65, then the authors with 56.14. Close behind the authors were the editors, with an a. r. of 56.11. The radio columnists amassed an a. r. of 51.7, the high school teachers one of 51.4 (with half or more of them voting for only 9 of the usages), the Harper's subscribers one of 50, the newspaper feature writers and columnists one of 47, and the most conservative group of all, the editors of women's magazines, one of only 45.[27]

The director of the survey concluded: "It is certainly obvious that 'correct' and 'incorrect' are subtle, intangible, and relative terms when applied to informal educated speech, and that reverential adherence to hidebound grammatical 'rules' is not a characteristic of the educated speaker in America."[28]

The counter-reaction staged by the grammarians who feel that some of their compeers have become over-liberal is well portrayed in an article by Louis B. Salomon, who writes:[29]

> I think it's about time to warn the English-speaking public--in this country, anyway--that there's a growing conspiracy to give their language back to them, lock, stock, and barrel. The conspirators are, of all people, professional experts, teachers of English: members of that priesthood whom the public has long regarded as the custodians if not outright owners of the crown jewels

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[27] Ibid., pp. 69-70. [28] Ibid., p. 74.

[29] Louis B. Salomon, "Whose Good English?" A. A. U. P. Bulletin, XXXVIII (Autumn, 1952), 442.

> and holy things of the King's English. And now some of them want to dump the whole glittering treasure into the public's lap, saying "Here, take it; it's been yours all along. Don't ask us what to do with it. We only work here."
>
> In case you don't even know this is going on, let me explain what has happened. In place of the old-fashioned grammarian who treated English as if it were a dead language, with a neat, logical code of laws, modern scholars and workers on the educational production line lean more to the view that a language is made (and continually altered) by the people who use it--that it has no a priori rules whatever but only customs and usages which can be observed and tabulated like preferences in brands of cigarettes. . . . A sentence communicates an idea or starts a revolution not because a grammarian says it's correct but because for the eyes and ears of its audience it is correct by the surest test of all: it works.[30] The only tangible result of all the attempts to teach a language of logical rules instead of real practice has been to make a lot of people self-conscious, like a little boy receiving a prize Bible for Sunday School attendance.[31]

Another grammarian has been less jovial in his attack on over-liberalism. Harry R. Warfel has written a whole book, called Who Killed Grammar?, condemning many of the liberal ideas of C. C. Fries.

Against this background of conservatism, liberalism, and counter-reaction among linguists, this study will survey the degrees of liberality shown by the writers of a group of present-day handbooks and grammars toward six disputable issues. Chapter Two will consider two issues created by inflectional leveling and the effects of word order on syntax: the problems of who and whom and the use of the expression It is me, or

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[30] Ibid., p. 443.

[31] Ibid.

It's me. Chapter Three will deal with four problems coming under the general heading of modifier positions: (1) the dangling participle, (2) the position of *only*, (3) the preposition at the end of a sentence, and (4) the split infinitive. Chapter Four will conclude the study with general conclusions drawn from the body of material studied.

CHAPTER II

THE EFFECTS OF INFLECTIONAL LEVELING AND WORD-ORDER CONSCIOUSNESS ON *WHO*, *WHOM*, AND *IT'S ME*

In his revision of *The Development of Modern English*, Frederick G. Cassidy explains what is happening to pronouns in general in current English. He gives as a general summary of the problem a quotation from Jespersen's *Essentials of English Grammar*: "On the whole, the natural tendency in English has been towards a state in which the nominative of pronouns is used only where it is clearly the subject, and where this is shown by close proximity to (generally position immediately before) a verb, while the objective is used everywhere else."[1] After stating that Jespersen's summary applies better to personal pronouns than it does to relatives and interrogatives, Cassidy expresses his own views on what is happening to pronouns. He says that the tendency noted by Jespersen is more marked in colloquial than in literary style and that, as yet, it has won but little recognition in the grammars and handbooks of writing and in our schools. He believes that when it is admitted that there is a drift in current English to take more account of the position of pronouns in the sentence

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[1]Robertson, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-297.

than of the traditional meaning of their case forms, the drift is all too likely to be noted as resulting in "incorrect" syntax. He also believes that the drift is not really a tendency for accusatives to replace nominatives in all positions, but rather for the separate forms to be interpreted and used in a new way, one dictated by word order.[2]

It can be seen from Cassidy's remarks that a leveling of inflected forms and the use of forms seemingly dictated by word order have brought about changes in the uses of *who*, *whom*, and *It's me*.

Further elaboration on the same idea comes from an article by Donald J. Lloyd, who writes:

> Our remaining inflections are most strongly intrenched among the pronouns, naturally enough, for older forms survive longest among the most common words. But wherever these inflected forms come into conflict with our dominant patterns of word order, little points of stress occur which are resolved in confusion by the users of the language in favor of word order. Thus *who* is pressing in on all uses of *whom*, and such a phrase as *it is I* is slowly giving way to *it is me*, since the *I* occurs where we normally look for an object.[3]

One writer has made the following statement about modern grammatical studies: "The result of any thorough study of cultured speech would not be a prescription--only description

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 297.

[3] Donald J. Lloyd, "The Main Drift of the English Language," *English Journal*, XXXVIII (October, 1949), 442.

from which teachers and curriculum committees would decide what to teach in any community or class. . . . A satisfactory description would show which errors are committed only by the thoroughly illiterate or careless and which locutions rejected by the fastidious are used by a great many educated persons."[4] It is the purpose of this chapter, then, to see how far the writers studied have gone in adopting the descriptive, or liberal, method of teaching who, whom, and It's me, as opposed to the prescriptive, or traditional methods exemplified by the earlier works of Curme and Long, which were cited in Chapter I.

The uses of who and whom and of It's me will be discussed in separate sections of the chapter, and it seems logical to present first the most traditional views on each and then to progress to the most liberal views.

Who and Whom

Perhaps the most prescriptive and traditional viewpoint on who and whom expressed among the authors studied is that of R. W. Pence, who writes:

> The case of a relative pronoun is determined by its use in its own clause, never by the case of its antecedent (whether expressed or unexpressed) and never by its position in its own clause. Inasmuch as a relative pronoun normally introduces the clause in which it stands and so perhaps may not have the position in its clause that a noun of similar function might have, the function of a

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[4]W. L. Hatfield, "What Standards of Usage?" English Journal, XXXVIII (February, 1949), 96.

relative pronoun may be mistaken.[5]

He states that one should be especially careful to note the case demands made by subjects and complements of finite verbs, subjects and subjective complements of infinitives, objects of prepositions, and constructions in which appear such parenthetical expressions as we believe and he thought.[6] After giving a long list of examples for each of these constructions, Pence cautions his readers that they must be equally careful in giving proper case forms to interrogative pronouns. He says, "Care needs to be exercised to meet the demands of subjective complements of finite verbs and of infinitives. But especial care needs to be taken that the proper objective form is used when an interrogative pronoun coming first functions as the object of a preposition that is delayed."[7] He then gives another lengthy list of who and whom examples "correctly" used. Finally, to make his presentation seem completely traditional, he has the following to say in a note in fine print:

> In spoken discourse, which is the subject of neither prevision nor revision (that is, we never consciously plan our sentence before we start to utter it nor revise it once it is uttered) the nominative case for the interrogative who is very commonly heard when the pronoun precedes the verb or the preposition that governs it. This use of the nominative in informal spoken discourse is regarded by a few as acceptable, although the fastidious person will probably look upon it as sloppy speech.

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[5] R. W. Pence, A Grammar of Present-Day English, p. 202.

[6] Ibid., pp. 202-203.

[7] Ibid., p. 204.

> But inasmuch as written discourse is the subject of both prevision and revision, there is certainly not much excuse for this erroneous nominative when the construction demands the objective. In formal speech and certainly in written discourse, one should say: "Whom are you looking for?" "I don't know whom she is writing to." "I wonder whom they are talking about now." "Whom are you thinking of?" "Whom is your letter from?"[8]

Similar traditional viewpoints on who and whom have been expressed, though not so extensively, by other writers in the 1944-1954 decade. Curme is said by a writer in American Speech to have been with the conservatives in his Principles and Practice of English Grammar (1947). This writer says, "He dislikes 'Who did you meet?' and 'Who did you give it to?' and says, 'We should withstand the very strong drift here toward the modern forms and use the more expressive older ones.'"[9] Evidently Curme had not changed his ideas about inflected pronouns since 1925.

The editors of the Harbrace Handbook are succinct and traditional in their treatment of who and whom. They say, "Use the objective case for the object of a verb, a verbal, or a preposition. Especially troublesome are the relative and interrogative pronouns."[10] These authors then present a group of who and whom examples marked Right and Wrong. The

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[8] Ibid., p. 205.

[9] Karl W. Dykema, "The Grammar of Spoken English: Its Relation to What Is Called English Grammar," American Speech, XXIV (February, 1949), 46.

[10] John C. Hodges and Francis X. Connolly, Harbrace College Handbook, pp. 66-67.

only hint of liberalism in their discussion is the fact that they accept "Who did you vote for?" as acceptable, informal usage.

Three editors, in the fourth edition of their handbook, make the following remarks:

> The objective case of a pronoun is used to show that the pronoun is the direct object or the retained object of a transitive verb, the indirect object of a transitive verb, the object of a preposition, the object of a verbal, or the assumed subject of an infinitive. . . . Notice that, except in loose colloquial speech, the pronoun that is the object of a preposition is always in the objective case. Careless speakers sometimes forget this fact when the pronoun, coming as the second or third part of a compound object, is remote from the preposition. Careful writers and speakers should never forget it.[11]

Another traditional viewpoint is expressed by the editors of the handbook presently in use in freshman English classes at North Texas State College. They write:

> A pronoun used as the direct or indirect object of any verb or verbal should be in the objective case. Use the objective case of a pronoun which is the subject or predicate complement of an infinitive. Use the objective case of a pronoun which is the object of a preposition. The case of the relative pronoun (who or whom, whoever or whomever) depends on the use of the word in the clause of which it is a part. So far as its case is concerned, the relation of the relative to the rest of the sentence should be disregarded.[12]

These editors do add, however, that in informal writing who is sometimes used instead of whom in such a sentence as "Whom did you wish them to be?" They then hasten to explain that

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[11]Kendall B. Taft, John McDermott, and D. O. Jensen, The Technique of Composition, pp. 88-89.

[12]Howard H. Dunbar, Mildred E. Marcett, F. H. McCloskey, Writing Good English, pp. 147-148.

whom is actually the subjective complement of them, the subject of to be.[13]

In the fifth edition of their College Handbook of Composition, the editors write:

> The case of a relative pronoun is determined by its use in the dependent clause which it introduces. When in doubt, substitute the personal pronoun for the relative. If he (or they) fits the context, use who; if him fits the context, use whom. . . . If the interrogative pronoun who begins a sentence and is the object of a verb or a preposition at the end of the sentence, the tendency in speech and in informal writing is to use the nominative case.[14]

They label "Who did you mean?" as Acceptable, but "Whom did you mean?" as Correct.[15]

A second group of writers appears to be somewhat more liberal than those mentioned above; however, they still tend to be more prescriptive than descriptive. Warfel and his associates, in their textbook, give a group of examples in which the nominative who is used for the accusative whom, and add that in such questions as "Who did you find at home?" and "Who does he think he was talking to?" the locution is colloquially acceptable.[16] They say,

> The probable reason for the use of who in these sentences is that subjects ordinarily come at the

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[13]Ibid., p. 149.

[14]Edwin C. Woolley, Franklin W. Scott, and Frederick Bracher, College Handbook of Composition, pp. 214-215.

[15]Ibid., p. 215.

[16]Harry R. Warfel, E. G. Mathews, and John C. Bushman, American College English, p. 96.

> beginning of their clauses, and the relative and interrogative pronouns almost always begin their clauses; therefore it seems natural to use the nominative or subjective form. The grammatical use of _who_ and _whom_ is necessary in formal usage.[17]

The editor of the new edition of the _MacMillan Handbook_ is a little more descriptive in his discussion than some of the other writers. He writes:

> The objective case of the pronoun is used when the pronoun is the direct object or indirect object of a verb or verbal. . . . When the pronoun, especially _whom_, is out of its normal position, we have to distinguish between formal, grammatical agreement and informal, conversational usage. In questions, when _who_ begins a sentence, the nominative form is commonly used in speech for the objective form. . . . In informal conversation, expressions like "Who did you call for?" are common, and most educated persons accept them as appropriate in informal situations.[18]

However, the editor is careful to distinguish between _conversational_ usage and _formal_ usage.[19]

In their handbook Garland Greever and his associates state the usual rules for placing objects of verbs and prepositions in the objective case. They then add, "In speech or informal writing the interrogative pronoun _who_ is often used to begin a sentence when strict grammar requires _whom_. Informal, but allowable: 'Who did you see?'"[20]

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[17] _Ibid._

[18] John M. Kierzek, _The MacMillan Handbook of English_, pp. 305-306.

[19] _Ibid._

[20] Garland Greever, Easley S. Jones, and Agnes Law Jones, _The Century Collegiate Handbook_, p. 57.

In Writing With a Purpose the author writes:

> In general, errors in case occur for two reasons: (1) because the construction is such that the student does not clearly see what function the pronoun is performing; and (2) because the case which is inappropriate in writing is so frequently used in speech that the colloquial form seems more natural than the formal one. Often these two reasons merge into one. That is, the construction requires more deliberate analysis than speakers are willing to give it and therefore begets a colloquial usage which competes with the formal usage.[21]

He adds,

> It should be noticed that although such case forms as "Who are you pointing to?" and "Who are you inviting?" ignore the general rule and are not acceptable in formal writing, they have won acceptance as colloquial usage. Their use, therefore, would be appropriate if the style of the writing justified colloquialisms.[22]

A third group of writers, including authors of articles in current periodicals, is much more liberal regarding who and whom than are the writers already discussed. L. M. Myers writes of relative pronouns: "The one troublesome question that arises is when to use who or whoever and when to use whom or whomever."[23] He states the usual rule about the function of the pronoun in its clause determining its case and gives examples of usages made mandatory by the theory. However, he does not stop here, but continues:

> If we take this theory seriously we shall have to recall a number of the concepts of Latin grammar which we have dismissed as inappropriate to English, simply to justify rules about one pronoun in its

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[21] James M. McCrimmon, Writing With a Purpose, p. 336.

[22] Ibid., p. 338.

[23] L. M. Myers, American English, p. 126.

> simple and combined forms. Luckily, all the available evidence indicates that, in spite of the objections of purists, the following sentences are in good standard usage:
>
> "I know who you saw.
> Tell me who you gave it to.
> Give it to whoever you see first."
>
> About the only advice that is worth giving on the subject is never to use whom or whomever unless you are perfectly certain of your mastery of the theories. There is plenty of support for the who forms in any construction. The whom forms are at best an artificial preservation. There is no harm in using them if they have become natural through long habit; but to strain at them, and then use them in the wrong places, makes a writer look ridiculous.[24]

Myers later adds: "The use of who rather than whom . . . is even more thoroughly established in questions than in comparable relative clauses-- possibly because there is no way of compromising by using that. Whom is of course also permissible."[25]

The author of Writer's Guide and Index to English writes:

> Twenty-five years ago the Oxford English Dictionary said whom was "no longer current in natural colloquial speech." The struggle to make writing conform to grammatical rules of case is consequently difficult and full of problems. Whom consistently occurs only when it immediately follows a preposition as object (I don't know to whom I should go). But since the preposition often comes last in the expression, in general usage we find who (I don't know who I should go to). Three factors combine to make this construction usual: (1) the position before the verb--the "subject territory," (2) the infrequent use of whom in speech, and (3) our habit of not using relative pronouns to introduce clauses (I know the man you mean). Formal usage, no doubt largely enforced by copy editors, generally keeps the objective form:
>
> Formal: "Whom do you introduce to whom?"
> General: "Who do you introduce to whom?"
>
> In formal and academic writing there will be more whoms than there will be in informal narratives and personal

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[24] Ibid. [25] Ibid., p. 133.

writing. When who is the subject of a verb separated from it by other words, care should be taken to keep the subject form: "He made a list of all the writers who he thought were important in the period." Whom sometimes occurs here, probably as the result of trying to keep the formal practice of using whom when it is an object preceding its verb.[26]

Paul Roberts writes descriptively of who and whom:

> Who is one of six English words preserving an objective form. . . . Whom is less firmly embedded in the language, however, than any of the personal pronoun forms. Probably some educated speakers of English live long and happy lives without ever letting the word pass their lips. Whom is strongest, of course, in Choice Written English, where it is used regularly according to handbook precepts. It is used more sparingly in Choice Spoken English; many radio announcers, for example, avoid it altogether; possibly they feel that the average radio audience would find it too hoity-toity. In General Written English it is avoided more often than not, and it is seldom heard in General Spoken English. . . . It is no doubt the possibility of omitting the relative when it serves as object that is eliminating whom from the language.[27]

In his modern grammar, Jordan writes:

> When the interrogative who is used as a complement it is in the objective case, whereas it is in the nominative when it is a subject. In informal and colloquial speech, however, this distinction is not closely observed. In such speech the position preceding the verb is regarded as the subject or nominative position. Hence we find not only: "Who did this?" but also: "Who did he marry?" Likewise the position following the verb is regarded as the complement or objective position. These two positions of subject and complement are so clear in present usage that case in pronouns is of decreasing importance. It is conceivable that who may eventually follow what and which and that, which have already lost all case distinctions.[28]

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[26]Porter G. Perrin, Writer's Guide and Index to English, p. 816.

[27]Paul Roberts, Understanding Grammar, pp. 73-74.

[28]John Clark Jordan, A Grammar for Heretics, pp. 59-60.

In her history of the English language, Margaret M. Bryant states: "The tendency toward the loss of inflections continues, as may be observed in the colloquial use of *who* for *whom* in present-day '*Who* did you hear from?'"[29] In another section of the book she says that *who* is well on its way in replacing *whom* in present-day English.[30] Then she makes the following interesting comment:

> Every adult, intelligent radio listener in America probably knows about the Information Please program and one of its veteran performers, F. P. Adams. What is not so widely known, however, is that some years ago when Mr. Adams was a newspaper columnist for the old *New York World* and then for the *Herald Tribune*, he took delight in ferreting out literary misuses of *whom* and citing them with the sardonic question, "'*Whom are you?*' said Cyril." Actually the survival of the accusative form *whom* bedevils even skillful writers when the word appears in a complex sentence. So much emphasis has been placed by teachers, and F. P. A., on the importance of *whom* in accusative or dative constructions, that writers now have the tendency to use it when *who* is actually required.[31]

Still later in her book, this author discusses *who* and *whom* as interrogative pronouns. She says that word order makes the use of *who* before a verb and *whom* after a verb seem natural. She continues, however, by saying: "There is, however, more involved here than word order; that is, the tendency to substitute the nominative *who* for *whom* in every position."[32]

Frederic G. Cassidy makes the following descriptive comments about *who* and *whom*:

> The general leveling of inflections in English

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[29]Margaret M. Bryant, *Modern English and Its Heritage*, p. 32.

[30]*Ibid.*, p. 242. [31]*Ibid.*, pp. 242-243. [32]*Ibid.*, p. 266.

> provides a powerful impetus to substitute a caseless and generalized who even where traditional syntax calls for whom. After all, many people get through life without ever saying whom; if they are aware of its existence at all, they regard it as a luxury of speech beyond their simple needs. George Ade once described in these illuminating terms a man obviously not of the folk: "He wore horn-rimmed spectacles and said whom." . . . What we are here concerned with is the drift, making its way upward from the lower levels of speech, to replace whom with who in every position in the sentence. The interrogative who coming first in the sentence is the entering wedge of a more general movement to eliminate whom completely.[33]

Cassidy makes further allusions to the "decadence" of this form and to its "lack of any real vitality in contemporary English."[34]

Perhaps the most liberal attitudes toward the interchanging of who and whom come from articles in periodicals whose editors are interested in the English language. One of the issues on which the respondents to Norman Lewis's survey for Harper's voted was "Who did you meet?" This locution was classified as Controversial; yet it was accepted by 43 per cent of the respondents.[35]

Another interesting reaction is mentioned in an article by Donald J. Lloyd:

> On the subject of what surely is a harmless word, whom, Kyle Crichton, associate editor of Collier's, is quoted in Harper's: "The most loathsome word (to me at least) in the English language is whom! You can always tell a half-educated buffoon by the care he takes in working the word in. When he starts it I know I am

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[33]Robertson, op. cit., p. 298. [34]Ibid., p. 299.

[35]Lewis, op. cit., p. 74.

> faced with a pompous illiterate who is not going to have me long as company."[36]

Doris Greenberg says, "The 'American' language, as opposed to formal English, admits a lot of things grammarians used to throw their hands up about. Even the use of who for whom no longer affrights English teachers as it once did; in the scale of grammatical sins, saying 'Who do you want?' is several levels below 'Whom are you?' for instance."[37]

James B. McMillan bases the following conclusions on information gathered from a study made by C. C. Fries in 1940 of letters written by thousands of Americans and on the findings of Hans Kurath in the 1943 Linguistic Atlas of New England:

> (1) In cultivated and popular informal English both who and whom are "correct" as interrogatives in the objective when the pronoun precedes the verb or preposition. (2) In cultivated and popular informal English both who and whom are "correct" as relatives in the objective when the pronoun precedes the verb or preposition (with whom more prevalent in the written English of more cultivated people). Handbooks and grammars which insist on whom in the objective preceding the verb or preposition are either (a) out of date or (b) descriptive of formal written English (and should be consulted only for formal written grammar).[38]

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[36]Donald J. Lloyd, "Snobs, Slobs, and the English Language," American Scholar, XX (Summer, 1951), 282.

[37]Doris Greenberg, "The Way You Say It," New York Times Magazine, April 7, 1946, p. 15.

[38]James B. McMillan, "Who and Whom" (Current English Forum), College English, VII (November, 1945), 105.

Three brief but pointed comments come from magazine articles. Kemp Malone says whom is out of place in unstudied style.[39] Norman Lewis mentions the fact that the editors of a New York newspaper felt that people would think them "pretty high-hat" if their canvassers went around asking, "Whom do you want for mayor?"[40] His conclusion is: "The whole problem of good English boils down to this: the language pattern of educated speakers is the only valid criterion of correctness. If we avoid illiterate and unprecedented usages, we are speaking the best grammar there is."[41] Hart Stilwell says that the liberalized use of who merely illustrates the fact that language is a growing thing that cannot be confined by any set of rules or it becomes "Latin" and what the people speak becomes "Italian." He says that he will say goodbye to whom and that he will miss it, but will shed no tears.[42]

Some interesting facts about who and whom have come from student research in usage. Stimulated by the editorial "What Standards of Usage?" in the February, 1949, English Journal,

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[39]Kemp Malone, "Whom" (Current English Forum), College English, X (October, 1948), 37.

[40]Norman Lewis, "Good English for Everybody," Coronet, XVIII (October, 1945), p. 131.

[41]Ibid., p. 134.

[42]Hart Stilwell, "Goodbye Whom - and Maybe Shall," American Mercury, LXXVIII (June, 1954), 68-70.

Carlton H. Larrabee asked twenty-two of his students to collect examples of usages of who and whom and different from and different than. He asked his students to collect their evidence from formal oral language situations involving college students and graduates. Examples of both formally "correct" and "incorrect" usages were wanted. Larrabee writes the following:

> In situations where the pronoun directly, or almost directly, follows the governing verb or preposition, whom is ordinarily used. The students reported fifty instances of this usage, including a few quick revisions of a speaker who "corrected" an original who to whom, even to the point of recasting a sentence as in "Who should secondary education be provided for" to "For whom should secondary education be provided." There were reported, however, fifty-eight instances of the use of the accusative who in situations where the pronoun occurred in the nominative territory or where it was considerably removed from its governing word so that the accusative force was thereby lessened. One speaker was reported as always using who in speech situations of this kind but as using whom in similar written situations.
>
> Some comments show that students believe that the majority of their fellows tend to use who in all instances and that both students and college graduates are likely whenever possible to avoid a doubtful construction calling for who or whom. Reports also indicate that whom is not frequently used but that when it is, it is used correctly according to formal standards except for three cases of the "sway-back" error:
>
> "Whom did you say presented that report?"
>
> "He's the one whom I said had the best analysis."
>
> "I asked her whom she thought was the better dramatist."
>
> Several reports commented on the inconsistency in the use of who and whom by some speakers, such as the lecturer who in the course of a few moments said, "You have an officer whom you can see as more than a serial number" and "a person who you can perceive as."[43]

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[43]Carlton H. Larrabee, "Student Research in Usage," English Journal, XXXIX (October, 1950), 454.

Another survey of current usage was made by students of J. N. Hook at the University of Illinois. The colloquial English of 2,500 or more persons was represented in the survey. Hook quotes the most representative findings on *who* and *whom*:

> "No one attempted to use *whom* in ordinary conversation. Occasionally I heard students use *whom* in speaking to a medical doctor or to a member of the faculty."
>
> "Usually when the preposition immediately precedes the pronoun, *whom* is used. I did, however, hear He was secretary of state under *who*?"
>
> "At the beginning of a sentence, students tend to use *who*; in the middle, they sometimes pause to decide whether *who* or *whom* is preferable."
>
> "I asked sixteen people how they would write and say Give the package to (*whoever*, *whomever*) opens the door. All sixteen said that they would write *whomever* but say *whoever*. Ah, correctness, thy name is error!"
>
> "To most of us, I don't know *who* you mean seems to be the same construction as I don't know *who* he is. . . . Because the distinction between *who* and *whom* is often a fine one, *whom* seems to be losing prestige at the U. of I."
>
> "I asked twenty students what baffles them most in English usage. Fifteen said *Who* and *Whom*."[44]

Further indication of the waning prestige of *whom* comes from *The Lady in the Lake* by Raymond Chandler: "Lt. De Garmo lunged past the desk toward an open elevator. The clerk snapped at his heels like a terrier. 'One moment, please. Whom did you wish to see?' De Garmo spun on his heel and looked at me wonderingly. 'Did he say *whom*?' 'Yeah, but don't hit him,' I said. 'There is such a word.'"[45]

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[44] J. N. Hook, "Today's Collegiate English," *Word Study*, XXVI, No. 3 (February, 1951), 1-3.

[45] "Did He Say '*Whom*?'" *Word Study*, XXIII, No. 5 (May, 1948), 8.

A general conclusion from the material surveyed would seem to be that whom is gradually disappearing from the English language. Although some modern grammarians are still prescribing the old rules, many are dropping them in favor of word-order patterns. Many grammarians seem to feel that there are more important points for drill than who and whom. Margaret M. Bryant writes:

> Such a sentence as the following is inexcusable and yet is not covered by "error lists": "The whir of an airplane expecting a raid ran to the shelters but came pouring out as the 'all clear' sounded." Such a sentence shows a fundamental need for clear thinking which no quantity of drill on who and whom will supply.[46]

It's me

Margaret Bryant gives in her history of the English language a concise history of the locution which is now either It is I or It's me. She says that the predicate noun has had a long and fairly even life in English, going back to the Old English period and even earlier, and that the expression in which most changes have occurred is the controversial "It is I" or "It's me." She explains that in Old English the wording was "Ic hit eom" (I it am) and that in Middle English the order was reversed, giving "(H)it am I." Since in this form it was eventually felt to be the subject, the verb changed to is--"It is I." She makes the observation that the shift to

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[46]Margaret M. Bryant, A Functional English Grammar, p. 306.

"It is me" is thus the fourth change undergone by this construction within the past millenium. She says that as early as the sixteenth century me was competing with I and that this change in the case of the pronoun has undoubtedly come about because the accusative case generally follows the verb.[47]

With this historical sketch as a background, it seems logical to survey the attitudes of contemporary grammarians toward the uses of It is I and It's me. Again, the plan will be to work from the most traditional attitudes to the most liberal ones. R. W. Pence writes: "The case of a subjective complement is always the same as the case of the substantive to which it refers. The subjective complement of a finite verb will be in the nominative case inasmuch as the subject of the finite verb is in the nominative case."[48] He gives as examples: "Hackett thought that the person was I" and "Father does not know which loves him more, you or I."[49] He makes no observations on It's me.

The author of Writing With a Purpose states that the complement of the verb to be takes the subjective case in formal writing.[50] His example is: "It was not I who said that."[51]

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[47] Ibid., p. 137. [48] Pence, op. cit., pp. 200-201.

[49] Ibid., pp. 201-202.

[50] McCrimmon, op. cit., p. 335.

[51] Ibid.

A similarly traditional attitude is expressed by the editors of the Century Collegiate Handbook. They say,

> Put both the subject of a finite verb and the predicate noun in the nominative case. . . . The verb to be (in any of its finite forms) does not express action or take an object. A noun or pronoun completing this verb agrees in case with the subject. . . . Put predicate nouns in the nominative case: Was it she? Was it they? It is he. The only contributors have been he and his mother.[52]

Still traditional, but showing a faint tinge of liberalism, are the editors of the College Handbook, who say that the complement of all forms of the verb to be, except the infinitive, should be in the nominative case. They do add, however, that in ordinary speech It is me has become accepted.[53] Similar to this attitude is the one expressed by the editors of Writing Good English: "A predicate complement should be in the nominative case: It was he; It is I (It is me or It's me is colloquially acceptable, but It is I is preferable in formal writing. Never use it is her, him, us, or them.) This is she--never This is her."[54] A somewhat more brief but still similar statement may be found in the Harbrace Handbook: "Use the nominative case for the predicate (subjective) complement.

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[52]Greever, Jones, and Jones, op. cit., pp. 54-56.

[53]Wooley, Scott, and Bracher, op. cit., p. 214.

[54]Dunbar, Marcett, and McCloskey, op. cit., p. 147.

Right: It is I (he, she, we, they). Note: Informal usage accepts It is me (It's me) but not It is him (her, us, them)."[55]

A second group of writers is somewhat more liberal than those mentioned above. Kierzek writes:

> In formal, literary English, the nominative case form is used when the pronoun is a subjective complement after the verb be. In conversation, it's me is generally accepted. Some educated persons might say: it's us or it's him, but since others, whose opinion the student may value highly, would regard such forms as signs of slovenly language habits, it is well for him to cultivate formal usage in sentences like the following:
>
> It was we who gave the alarm.
> It was they who notified the police.
> It was he who carried the message to Garcia.
>
> The occasion to use it's me, it's us, it's him does not arise very often in the writing of college students.[56]

The editors of American College English say that It is him represents grammar on the colloquial, or informal, level.[57] They then add,

> Even educated people say It is me, This is me, and the like, in conversation. Formal occasions, however, call for the grammatically correct nominative, It is I; It is she; It is he; It is we; It is they. In his writing the college student is well advised to use the grammatically correct nominative after the linking verb to be.[58]

The editors of Writing and Thinking apply the concept of levels of usage to the problem of using the objective case

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[55]Hodges and Connolly, op. cit., p. 65.

[56]Kierzek, op. cit., p. 305.

[57]Warfel, Mathews, and Bushman, op. cit., p. 73.

[58]Ibid.

after a linking verb more specifically than do some of the other writers. Their prescription is:

> Observe standard modern usage in the case of a pronoun which functions as a predicate (subjective) complement:
>
> Formal: It was I who first objected to this artificial separation of history and criticism.
>
> Informal: It's me, Sister; let me in.
>
> Standard: It is she. That was he. Was it they?
>
> Nonstandard: It is her. That was him. Was it them?
>
> In the first person the subjective case forms I and we are preferred in formal written English, although the construction rarely occurs in formal situations. The objective case forms me and us have a long and reputable history in cultivated spoken English, and hence in many kinds of writing; they are standard English in this construction. In the third person, standard written usage prefers the subjective case forms, he, she, and they. Although It's her, It was him, and It's them are heard very commonly, sometimes in the speech of cultivated people, these forms are avoided in writing.[59]

In The Technique of Composition appears the following statement: "In writing that is not conversational, place in the nominative case a pronoun used as the predicate complement of a linking verb. It is now generally admitted that the use of me after a linking verb is permissible in speech that has no pretensions to formality. The use of him, us, and them in such circumstances is also common, but not the use of her."[60]

A letter which appeared in the Saturday Review of Literature expresses concern over the It is I - It's me issue. The

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[59]Foerster and Steadman, op. cit., pp. 118-119.

[60]Taft, McDermott, and Jensen, op. cit., p. 86.

writer says,

> English teachers may in the past have been too insistent about "It is I," but since the appearance of the studies in "Current English Usage" by Sterling A. Leonard, they are likely to allow "It is me" except in formal writing. To be consistent, the person who says "It is me" should also say "It is him, It is them, It is us." According to the Leonard investigation, all of the 229 judges approved "It is I," while a majority of the judges likewise approved of "It is me." Two-thirds of the judges rated "It is him" as disputable. It appears from this investigation that grammar has little to do with these constructions, and it remains to be seen which way usage will finally swing.[61]

A final group of writers is considerably more liberal than the writers of the first two groups. L. M. Myers writes:

> "It is me" may get you a low mark in an English class, but "It is I" may get you blackballed by the Elks. Which gives rise to the natural question, "Short of being a chameleon, what is a man supposed to do?" Actually, the situation is not quite so bad as it sounds. We may find it advisable to shift gears occasionally, but a man who talks "standard English" comfortably and as a matter of course, without giving the impression that he is smug about his own language or over-critical about that of others, can usually get along very well in an Elks Club or a cow camp as well as at a meeting of a learned society.[62]

Later in his book, this author states,

> Our reaction to word order has become so much stronger than our reaction to the forms of words that the communicative value of case-forms has disappeared almost completely. We have retained, however, a very strong feeling about the propriety of certain uses. In distinctly formal English, the subject form is required when the pronoun is joined to the subject by any form of the verb to be. In informal usage, even of the unquestionably standard variety, there is a definite division of practice on this point. The

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[61] A. L. Phillips, "It is I, It is Me?," Saturday Review of Literature, XXVIII, No. 34 (August 25, 1945), 21.

[62] Myers, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

> general feeling seems to be that the subject form is more "correct," but that the object form is more natural and "human." A good many cultured people share the popular attitude that "It is I" sounds affected; but the school room insistence on this use (which would probably have disappeared if allowed to depart in peace) has won many strong supporters. The theoretical arguments on both sides are interesting, but unimportant. This is a point on which we can't please everybody, so we might as well please ourselves.[63]

His examples are:

> "It is I.)
> It must have been they.) or
> (It is me.
> (It must have been them."

His concluding statement is that the only variations really to be avoided are: "It is me--I mean I," and "It was her--ain't my grammar awful?"[64]

Margaret Bryant writes:

> Today It is me (more often It's me) is good colloquial English. The position of the word in the sentence was more important than the traditional syntax in determining the inflectional form. Even Shelley ("Ode to the West Wind," ll. 61-62) lets poetry triumph over grammar in his use of me in
>
> "Be thou, spirit fierce,
> My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!"
>
> The objective case seems to be more normal and more emphatic. Much emphasis is gained by Be thou me instead of Be thou I.[65]

She later makes the statement that It is I is reserved for formal, literary style.[66]

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[63] Ibid., pp. 152-153. [64] Ibid., p. 153.

[65] Margaret M. Bryant, Modern English and Its Heritage, p. 217.

[66] Ibid., p. 265.

Paul Roberts makes some interesting comments about It's I and It's me. He says, "The forms I/me, we/us, he/him, she/her, they/them, and the relative who/whom are the only English words which preserve the distinction between nominative and objective case. Were it not for these forms, the words nominative and objective would be entirely superfluous in an account of Modern English grammar."[67] Roberts then states the usual rules governing pronoun case forms, but he goes on to discuss exceptions to the rules:

> In the first person the objective is regularly used after "to be" except, perhaps, in Choice Written English, where the construction does not often occur. "It's I," "It's we" would sound unnatural and affected to many careful speakers, who would say instead "It's me," "It's us." In the third person, the objective is avoided on some levels, "It's he," "It's they" being preferred to "It's him," "It's them." The objective forms are often heard in General Spoken English, however, and can hardly be said to denote illiteracy.[68]

Perrin says that the argument over "It's me" is a case of theory vs. practice and finds that the theory demanding the nominative case of a pronoun after the verb be is consistently contradicted by the actual usage of good speakers.[69] He says,

> All the large grammars of English regard It's me as acceptable colloquial usage--and since the expression is not likely to occur except in speech, that gives it full standing. Fowler approves it, and one of the "judges" in Current English Usage wrote: "I sounds quite made in certain cases; e. g., pointing to a photo: 'Which is I?'!!! 'Oh, I see, that's I'!!! Absolutely non-English, hang all the grammarians on earth."

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[67]Roberts, op. cit., p. 60.

[68]Ibid., pp. 61-62.

[69]Perrin, op. cit., p. 613.

> . . . The upshot of the discussion is that in their natural settings "It's me," "It was him all right," "Something was wrong--was it him or the crowd?" are appropriate.[70]

The author of Grammar Without Tears writes of the problem of case in pronouns:

> This piece of clumsiness, the vestigial remnant of the whole battery of case endings in Anglo-Saxon, does not give as much trouble as it might, simply because pronouns are used so often that we get a great deal of practice in getting them right, and probably get them right in the end without much conscious effort. But doubtful cases crop up fairly often, and give rise to quite a high proportion of the "mistakes" that grammarians like to detect in the English of the young. There is, for example, a tendency for children to prefer the form "me" to "I," even when it is not used as an object: their instinct . . . is for an invariable word. Their preference is shared by many speakers of local dialects. . . . And it leads to the wide use of an expression such as "It's me," which the grammarian would condemn because the pronoun is not in any sense an object, and should be in the nominative case--"It's I." This instinctive liking for "me" is often countered in the schoolroom with the doctrine that it is "vulgar" to say "me" when its use is not grammatically justified. But in later life, while the grammar is forgotten, the sting of the social stigma remains, so that "well-educated" people are often heard to say such things as: "He's been very good to my sister and I." . . . It is difficult not to believe that this instinct (to avoid placing reliance on special word endings for grammatical purposes) will sooner or later wear away the remaining bad habits of the pronoun, and make it as invariable as the noun.[71]

Some brief comments on It's me come from Margaret Bryant and John Clark Jordan. The former writes: "The matter of 'It is I' as opposed to 'It is me' has occasioned great controversy.

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[70] Ibid., p. 614.

[71] Hugh Sykes Davies, Grammar Without Tears, pp. 62-63.

The upshot seems to be that the student is free to choose whichever form he prefers."[72] Later, she adds:

> Where the pronoun is used after asserting verbs, usage in the past has demanded the nominative: "This is he." "It was they." "It is I." Today "It is me" has won acceptance from many authorities, and there is at least the possibility that the accusative will take the place of the nominative in all such constructions. This would satisfy the feeling for placing accusatives after verbs, a feeling fostered by the frequency of their use in the direct-object construction.[73]

Still later, she says, "As predicate noun of full verb, the nominative case is usually preferred: 'It is I.' This rule is relaxing in favor of the often heard 'It's me.'[74] Jordan's comment is: "The position following the verb is regarded as the complement or objective position, especially in response to a question: Who is coming in? Thus: It's me."[75]

Cassidy, in his revision of The Development of Modern English, says,

> The true status of the two expressions actually seems such that It is I rather than It is me is now on the defensive. This reversal of attitudes that have obtained in the past is illustrated in a characterization of It is I as "suburban English." The implication is of course that the phrase is overcorrect, artificial, and stilted. . . . Contemporary English, in other words, discriminates between It is I and It's me by employing the one phrase in formal, literary style and the other in informal, colloquial expression; and it may well be argued that the language is the richer for the distinction.[76]

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[72] Margaret M. Bryant, A Functional English Grammar, pp. 32-33.

[73] Ibid., p. 137.

[74] Ibid., p. 310

[75] Jordan, op. cit., p. 59.

[76] Robertson, op. cit., p. 294.

Cassidy accounts for the drift to *It's me* by saying that the sense of case has become so weakened in Modern English, and the force of word order so dominant, that the latter overrides the former.[77]

Louis B. Saloman heaps coals upon the heads of teachers of traditional grammatical rules when he says,

> It took the National Council of Teachers of English a long time to get around to endorsing *It is me*, and even now a good many people find it so hard to believe that the expression they've always used is quite proper, that they gulp down their Adam's apple and bring out *It is I*, and then, by their own brand of analogy, of course, go proudly on to *They invited Mary and I for the week-end*. English teachers undoubtedly have a lot to answer for (including the half-educated conviction that this sentence would read more elegantly: "English teachers have a lot for which to answer").[78]

From other periodicals come more liberal attitudes toward *It's me*. Norman Lewis recorded the following reactions in his survey for *Harper's*:

> *It is me*. Acceptable English. Acceptance, sixty-two per cent. Seventy-seven per cent of the professors, seventy-five per cent of the lexicographers, and almost eighty-two per cent of the authors accepted this popular violation of strict grammatical rule. The majority of *Harper's* subscribers, newspaper writers, and women's magazine editors, however, rejected it. Among the high-school teachers the vote was close: seventeen for, fifteen against.[79]

Karl W. Dykema, in an article on the grammar of spoken English, echoes the opinion of Kemp Malone, one of America's foremost linguists, who wrote in *Modern Language Notes* for

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[77] *Ibid.* [78] Saloman, *op. cit.*, pp. 443-444.

[79] Norman Lewis, "How Correct Must Correct English Be?" *op. cit.*, p. 73.

February, 1942, that, in his opinion, *It is I* should be classed as an archaism, inappropriate for contemporary conversation except in the mouths of the pseudo-refined.[80]

In an article called "The Way You Say It," Doris Greenberg says,

> Winston Churchill spoke three words before sailing home that placed him squarely on the side of every school child. "This is me," he said. Not "I," but "me." He used the phrase in a recorded thank-you to men who made the machine with which he will dictate his memoirs. And since it came from an acknowledged master of the language, pure-grammar circles held their fire.
>
> As a matter of fact, "it is me" has been accepted by the National Council of Teachers of English for more than a decade on the theory that mere grammatical propriety must always bow before living language, especially when adopted by the literary set. In other cases, simple resignation has favored the acceptance of the phrase: "If somebody knocked on my door and called 'It's I,' I'd faint," a city school teacher declared recently.[81]

A final thought on this disputed usage comes from the *C. E. A. Critic* under the title "C. E. A. Limerick of the Month":

> When folks who are simple and shy
> Say *eyether* and *yes*, *it is I*,
> I'll bet their vernacular
> Feels as spectacular
> As me in my tails and white tie.[82]

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[80] Karl W. Dykema, "The Grammar of Spoken English: Its Relation to What Is Called English Grammar," *American Speech*, XXIV (February, 1949), 46.

[81] Greenberg, *op. cit.*

[82] B. J., "C. E. A. Limerick of the Month," *C. E. A. Critic*, March, 1954, p. 5.

The conclusion drawn from this material is that *It's me* has become a well-established locution, particularly in speech. Some of the authors agree that it is permissible in writing that makes no pretense at formality, and some even seem to be ready to place *It is I* permanently on the junk heap of worn-out expressions in favor of *It's me*. However, it is clear that most grammarians are not yet so willing to accept the use of objective forms other than *me* as subjective complements after the verb *to be*.

CHAPTER III

POSITIONS OF MODIFIERS

Just as the rules governing who, whom, and It's me have become liberalized through usage and word-order consciousness during the last several years, so have the rules governing some modifier positions become liberalized. One writer has the following to say about this liberalization:

> Are you uncertain of what's correct, or do you stake your life on the rules you've learned? Does a split infinitive scare you, or does it just embarrass you? Could you explain to anyone who asked you why it is that an infinitive shouldn't be split? Could you explain, for that matter, why it is that a sentence shouldn't end with a preposition? Or why "only" should always go next to the word it's supposed to modify? Or why a participle mustn't dangle? . . . If you can, you've learned the old rules, all right. But if you follow them religiously, you're probably guilty of some not-so-perfect language.[1]

After this writer has discussed the differences between present-day usage and traditional rules in regard to the above-mentioned issues, she concludes that no rule can be applied mechanically and that users of English have to know when rules should be broken. She says that if speakers and writers will remember that grammar has no reason for existence outside the effectiveness it can give to everyday speech and writing, they will stand a better chance of using it intelligently.[2]

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[1]Lillian Mermin, "Overruling Grammatical Don'ts," American Mercury, LXII (June, 1946), 734.

[2]Ibid., p. 739.

The Dangling Participle

With the foregoing query in mind, as to whether or not one who avoids the dangling participle is often able to explain why he avoids it, it is interesting to see how liberal grammarians of the 1944-1954 decade are in their treatments of such an issue. Typical traditional and prescriptive views on the dangling participle are presented by several of the authors whose books were used as sources for this study. The editors of Writing and Thinking say that one should avoid modifiers which cannot be connected immediately and unmistakably with the words to which they refer. They say that a dangling modifier occasionally makes a sentence ridiculous, but that, more commonly, it simply violates a convention of formal written English and may momentarily distract the reader.[3] Their final word of warning is:

> In general, do not begin a sentence with a verbal in -ing unless the verbal clearly refers to the subject of the following (governing) clause; and do not end a sentence with a participle unless the participle clearly refers to some word in the preceding clause. A sentence containing a dangling verbal may be corrected either by (1) expanding the verbal phrase into a full subordinate clause, or by (2) recasting the sentence so as to make the verbal agree with the subject of the governing clause.[4]

The editors of American College English explain that, when the participle, alone or as part of a phrase, stands at the beginning of a sentence, it is expected to modify the subject and

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[3]Foerster and Steadman, op, cit., pp. 394-395.

[4]Ibid., pp. 395-396.

that, if the participle does not describe the subject, the result is a dangling participle. They suggest that such a dangler can be detected by reading first the subject of the main clause, then the verbal phrase, to see if the participle modifies the subject as it should.[5] They caution the student that a dangling modifier cannot be remedied by placing it at the end of its sentence and that a participial phrase placed after the main clause may be ambiguous, since the reader may not know whether to attach it to the subject or the object.[6] These editors do concede, however, that such phrases as Granting what you say, Looking at details now, and Talking of prize fights, placed at the beginnings of sentences are equal to parentheses, absolute phrases, or transitional phrases, and may modify the whole sentence idea rather than the subject and be idiomatic exceptions to the rule that a verbal phrase qualifies the subject of the clause it precedes.[7]

The Century Collegiate Handbook prescribes that each participle, phrase, or elliptical subordinate clause must have a word to modify and must be linked closely in position with that word to keep from dangling or attaching itself to the wrong word. The editors suggest that, in general, common sense should be used in making the modifier relate unmistakably to

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[5]Warfel, Mathews, and Bushman, op. cit., p. 168.

[6]Ibid., pp. 169-170.

[7]Ibid., p. 170.

the proper word.[8] They say that a phrase modifier at the beginning of a sentence must have a subject to which it can clearly and properly refer or be changed to a subordinate clause and that the only test of the reference of a modifier at the end of a sentence is common-sense logic[9]--the logic which other writers say cannot be employed in dealing with English grammar. The editors of this handbook are liberal enough, though, to say that modifiers which do not imply a special actor qualify the sentence as a whole and need not be attached to single, particular words. Their examples are: Taking everything into consideration, the investment is a good one and Generally speaking, women live longer than men do.[10]

The writers of the handbook Writing Good English say,

> Dangling constructions lead to ludicrously illogical associations. Unlike misplaced modifiers, danglers cannot be corrected by a change of order or position; they call for the addition of words or a change of structure so that the reader will associate the modifier with the word it modifies. Dangling constructions . . . cause the reader to make a wrong association for what is basically the same reason: participles, gerunds, and infinitives describe an action or make an assertion, but they do not change their forms to indicate person or number; consequently a sentence which contains a participial, gerund, or infinitive phrase must be so constructed that the reader sees at once who acts or what is acted upon.[11]

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[8]Greever, Jones, and Jones, op. cit., p. 34.

[9]Ibid., pp. 34-35. [10]Ibid., p. 35.

[11]Dunbar, Marcett, and McCloskey, op. cit., pp. 216-217.

They conclude by saying that a writer should distinguish sharply between dangling constructions which cause illogical association of ideas and similar constructions which are "logically clear." Constructions which they consider to be "logically clear" are:

> Generally speaking, his opinion is worth little.
> Granting his good intent, he has not done what he promised.
> Even allowing for unforeseen expenses, the estimate is too high.
> In swimming, the body should be relaxed.[12]

McCrimmon gives an explanation of what constitutes a dangling participle and explains the methods of correcting such a construction.[13] He states that the convention is that, when a sentence opens with a modifying phrase, there should be some element in the main clause for that phrase clearly to modify and shows a group of dangling modifiers revised to fit the convention.[14]

Similarly traditional are the opinions expressed in The Technique of Composition and American English. The editors of the former textbook simply say that a dangling participial phrase should be avoided by constructing a sentence so that the substantive nearest to the participial phrase is the logical one for the phrase to modify or by converting the participial phrase into a clause.[15] The author of the latter work says that the reader who gets a wrong impression from his first

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[12] Ibid., p. 219. [13] McCrimmon, op. cit., p. 151.

[14] Ibid., p. 318.

[15] Taft, McDermott, and Jensen, op. cit., p. 136.

reading of a sentence containing a dangling participial phrase will correct his first impression, but that he may snicker at the writer before doing so. He then explains corrective measures and notes that the dangling effect is often the result of an unnecessary shift to the passive voice.[16]

Another group of writers is somewhat more liberal toward dangling participles than those mentioned above. After stating that dangling participles should be avoided, Hodges says that participles, gerunds, and infinitives designating a general truth rather than the action of a specific person or thing may be used without relation to the main clause. He uses as an example "Taking everything into consideration, the campaign was successful."[17] Jordan says that there are occasions when the dangling participle does not disturb the reader because he is to so slight a degree conscious of the difference in subjects that the illogicality of the sentence is unnoticed. He says that in the sentence "Beginning in September, the fee will be one hundred dollars" the reader is conscious primarily of the time and the extent of the change, and the fact that fee and beginning have no logical relationship does not disturb him. He adds, however, that such participles must be used with caution and with skill.[18]

In the MacMillan Handbook, Kierzek writes:

> Although it is possible to find dangling modifiers

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[16]Myers, op. cit., p. 119. [17]Hodges, op. cit., p. 279.

[18]Jordan, op. cit., pp. 130-131.

> in the writing of many reputable authors, a dangler is permissible only if it does not call attention to itself instead of to the intended meaning of the sentence. It is a stylistic fault, not a grammatical one. Most objectionable are the ones that suggest a ludicrous meaning never intended by the writer.[19]

He then presents the methods of correction given by most of the other writers surveyed for this study and presents as a test for determining whether or not a modifier dangles the procedure of asking who or what is doing what the verbal in the phrase states and checking to see if the answer is in the main clause. He lists as idiomatic expressions and exceptions to the rule the phrases generally speaking, taking everything into consideration, providing, looking at.[20]

Perrin is somewhat liberal, yet rather cautious in his viewpoint. He says that dangling participles should be avoided simply because educated readers do not expect to find them. He states that, as a rule, there is no real question of the proper meaning of the sentence, though sometimes the faulty reference of a participle is ludicrous. He quotes from Kennedy the sentence "Having swelled because of the rains, the workman was unable to remove the timber" as an example. He adds that such a dangling construction should not be confused with the absolute construction, in which the participial phrase is equivalent to a subordinate clause and is properly used, especially for adding details: "He had worked for four hours, copy piling up quite satisfactorily."[21] Later, he

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[19]Kierzek, op. cit., p. 469. [20]Ibid., pp. 470, 472.

[21]Perrin, op. cit., p. 639.

writes that a participle used as an adjective should refer clearly to some particular noun or pronoun. He says,

> It is not so much a matter of meaning, for the sentence with a dangling participle is rarely ambiguous (though it may be amusing). It is rather a matter of accurate expression: Participles used as adjectives should modify definite words.
>
> The participle-as-adjective should not be confused with the participle in a phrase which relates to the whole sentence (to the situation) rather than to a particular word. Some such phrases are very common, perhaps even formulas (idioms).[22]

His examples of such phrases are "Judging from her looks, she isn't under fifty" and "Beginning with the class of 1943, the tuition was raised fifty dollars.[23]

Pence believes that probably the main reason participles dangle is the fact that we lack in English a satisfactory indefinite expression corresponding to the German man or the French on. He says that "one" is not entirely satisfactory, that "you" is not satisfactory, and that the indefinite "we" does not entirely meet the demand. Hence, he believes, the inexpert writer, or speaker, in trying to avoid an unsatisfactory "one," "you," or "we," resorts to the passive voice and unwittingly uses a participle without a suitable noun to which it can attach itself immediately and unerringly.[24] However, he still advocates the avoidance of all dangling participles except the few which are allowed through usage to stand as "absolute participles": allowing, concerning, owing, speaking,

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[22] Ibid., pp. 679-680. [23] Ibid., p. 680.

[24] Pence, op. cit., p. 257.

talking. He feels that some of these participles may well be regarded now as prepositions.[25]

A comment made by another team of editors is that many British writers do not regard dangling modifiers as a serious fault. In spite of the British view, however, these editors say that such constructions are always illogical and sometimes confusing. They suggest corrective measures and then list as "stock" introductory expressions, which need not be attached to any particular noun, generally speaking, strictly speaking, taking all things into consideration, and judging from past experience. They also say that the verbal expressing some generalized process, as in swimming, in baking, is often used without attachment to a particular noun.[26]

Paul Roberts and Margaret M. Bryant, among textbook writers, and contributors to current periodicals present the most liberal views on the dangling-participle problem. Roberts writes: "Many participles have lost their verbal force and now function as prepositions. . . . There are a dozen or so words which function sometimes as participles, sometimes as prepositions."[27] Later, he has:

> A participial phrase used in the absence of an implied subject of the participle is commonly called a dangling participle, and such use is generally forbidden by handbooks. Under certain conditions, however, the

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[25]Ibid., p. 258.

[26]Wooley, Scott, and Bracher, op. cit., pp. 85, 87.

[27]Paul Roberts, Understanding Grammar, p. 229.

> participial phrase is so used, even in Choice English. In the first place, we have a number of words like considering, pending, taking, which are so often used impersonally that they are not felt to need an implied subject. In such usage considering, pending, taking may be construed as prepositions rather than as participles. . . . Choice English extends the practice to almost any participle that can be used impersonally.[28]

Bryant says that such a sentence as "Burning brightly, we watched the flames dance up the chimney" is to be condemned, since the literal meaning is ludicrous and not the real meaning, but she does not consider this sentence to contain the typical dangler. She says that the typical dangler occurs in erudite writing and is something like "Assuming its importance, the genesis of the theory nevertheless eludes us." She states that this sentence is scarcely ludicrous or lacking in clarity and that if one may regard assuming as a preposition rather than a verbid, the construction ceases to give any trouble. She lists, as other near-prepositions of the same sort, beginning and concluding.[29]

Some excerpts from articles in periodicals of the 1944-1954 decade will indicate the liberal opinions of a few people who work with and write about grammar. A brief statement comes from an article on the similarity of the gerund and the participle: "Sometimes, in the case of an absolute participle, the subject is not understood or implied in the sentence, because

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[28] Ibid., p. 351.

[29] Margaret M. Bryant, A Functional English Grammar, pp. 263-264.

the reference is general and indefinite."[30] Lillian Mermin writes: "In some sentences, a dangling participle has no ambiguous effect on meaning, and correction to a 'proper' form would make the language stiff and unnatural. In such cases it is felt quite proper to ignore the rule."[31] Pooley makes some interesting comments in an article on the dangling participle for "Current English Forum" in College English. He says,

> My contention is that educated readers do not expect to find dangling constructions because they neither look for them, nor are they conscious of them except when the constructions are grotesquely absurd. . . . The textbooks must modify their rules considerably. They must point out that although the initial participle or gerund phrase is frequently followed by an expressed subject, the subject can be and frequently is omitted when the meaning is not obscured. . . . A "howler" calls attention to itself by its absurdity and is therefore for purposes of communication less than successful. It deserves reproof on the grounds of interference with the transmission of meaning. But when the construction offers no bar to clarity of meaning and is free of absurdity, it should stand unchallenged even in a college exercise.[32]

Another writer for "Current English Forum" says that, because it cannot be parsed in accordance with the simple, and static, rules of elementary Latin grammar, the dangling participle is unreservedly condemned by prescriptive grammarians, who are seldom if ever historical students of English. She then presents proof that the dangling participle is not so strongly condemned by unbiased students of language. Her

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[30]Neille Shoemaker, "The Nature of the Gerund and Participle," American Speech, XXVII (May, 1952), 111.

[31]Mermin, op. cit., p. 737.

[32]Robert C. Pooley, "When Does a Participle Dangle?" College English, XIV (December, 1952), 170-171.

conclusion is that the dangling participle, as it is and has been used by good English writers, is not to be criticized simply because it cannot be equated grammatically with anything in Latin sentence structure. She believes that the ubiquitous dangler which offends against sense and style is a fault of half-educated writers, trying to sound like a book. Her final statement is: "If you never begin a sentence with a participial phrase, you will seldom dangle, and you will probably write better English to boot. But, so long as you rely on rules of thumb, your English will never be anything to boast of."[33]

A general conclusion seems to be that the dangling participle, when it causes no ambiguity, is not condemned by those who consider themselves descriptive grammarians and that even most of the traditional grammarians are now willing to admit at least a few idiomatic dangling participles into English syntax.

The Placing of *Only*

A traditional statement on the placing of *only* in the sentence comes from Margaret Bryant, who writes: "So far as sentence order is concerned, the element most frequently misplaced is the modifier. Illogical: He *only* wanted a small piece. Logical: He wanted *only* a small piece."[34] Also

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[33]Adeline C. Bartlett, "Dangling Participles," *College English*, XIV (March, 1953), 353-354.

[34]Margaret M. Bryant, *A Functional English Grammar*, p. 312.

traditional in their treatment of only are the editors of two other recent handbooks. The editors of Writing Good English state that such adverbs as only, merely, almost, nearly, scarcely, just, ever, and even are frequently misplaced. They call the sentence "He only has five tasks to perform" colloquial usage and say that it would be better to write "He alone has five tasks to perform" or "He has only five tasks to perform."[35] In The Technique of Composition, the editors present a similar opinion, saying that such adverbs as those mentioned above should be placed next to the words they modify if there is any possibility of confusion.[36]

Among the somewhat liberal attitudes toward the placing of only is the one expressed in Writing and Thinking. These editors say that only is commonly placed in an illogical position, but that such a sentence as "We only want to reserve one cottage" is not faulty, since the meaning is clear. They caution the student to place only close to the word it modifies if there is any possibility of a misunderstanding of meaning.[37] Later, they remind the student that in speech the reference of an adverb is made clear by stress, but that the position of modifiers is much more important in writing than in speech, since there is no conventional stress mark.[38]

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[35]Dunbar, Marcett, and McCloskey, op. cit., p. 222.

[36]Taft, McDermott, and Jensen, op. cit., p. 131.

[37]Foerster and Steadman, op. cit., p. 342.

[38]Ibid., p. 393.

Other somewhat liberal attitudes appear in some of the other handbooks and grammars. Warfel and his associates say in their book that in colloquial usage not, only, not only, scarcely, almost, just, quite, and even are often illogically located and that the meaning is usually made clear by the context.[39] Wooley, Scott, and Bracher say that adverbs should be placed next to the words they modify, but they add that the practice of placing only before the verb is very common and can be found in good writing.[40] Hodges' opinion is similar. He gives the usual rule for placing adverbial modifiers, but says in a note that British usage and colloquial American usage often place only before the verb instead of before the word modified when no ambiguity will result.[41] Kierzek writes:

> In informal writing and in speech, usage sanctions placing only and not elsewhere than near the words they modify. In formal writing, a more logical placement of adverbs is common, but examples of the misplaced adverb can be found in the writing of the so-called "best" writers. For the guidance of the student, about all that we can say here is that logically an adverb belongs near the word it modifies but idiomatically it often strays to some other part of the sentence.[42]

Several of the writers surveyed are more liberal still in their attitudes toward the placing of only. In contrast to her statement in A Functional English Grammar, Bryant writes in her history of the English language that the familiar English sentence pattern of subject, adverbial modifier, verb,

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[39]Warfel, Mathews, and Bushman, op. cit., p. 145.

[40]Wooley, Scott, and Bracher, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

[41]Hodges, op. cit., p. 276.

[42]Kierzek, op. cit., pp. 464-465.

and object tends to be followed even when the adverb does not logically refer to the verb, as in "We only had one left."[43] In another section of the same book, she writes:

> Of particular interest is the placing of the adverb only in a sentence. Theoretically, it should immediately precede the word it modifies, but usually it is to be found before the verb, even if it actually modifies some later word in the sentence. Thus, She only came for the dance should mean that she came for nothing else except the dance, but as the sentence reads it implies that she did nothing else but come. Sometimes this misplacing of only can cause confusion; on the other hand, it appears to be achieving status as an idiom of the language that no amount of condemnation will be able to eradicate.[44]

Cassidy, in his revision of The Development of Modern English, agrees with Bryant that the familiar sentence pattern tends to be followed even where the adverb does not really modify the verb and says that "He only had one" is an order objected to by purists but nevertheless persisted in by a very great majority of speakers.[45]

Jordan lists only with a group of words which he says are not really adverbs. He says these words do not add to or enrich the meanings of the words they are attached to, but merely intensify those meanings. He states that these words may be used almost anywhere in a sentence.[46] Roberts is similarly liberal when he writes: "Usage permits us a little latitude with the word only. The sentence 'He only smokes when he is

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[43]Margaret M. Bryant, Modern English and Its Heritage, pp. 267-268.

[44]Ibid., p. 251. [45]Robertson, op. cit., pp. 300-301.

[46]Jordan, op. cit., p. 35.

not in training' is literally nonsense, but it is not taken literally, and such constructions are plentiful in Choice as well as in General English."[47]

Perrin believes that the importance of the position of only has been greatly exaggerated. He says that, logically, only should stand immediately before the element modified, as in "I need only six more to have a full hundred." However, he contends that usage is not always logical and that in such a sentence usage is conspicuously in favor of placing the only before the verb. He says that there is no possible misunderstanding in the meaning of "I only need six more to have a full hundred." He concedes that there are instances in which the placing of only can make a foolish or a funny statement ("with only a face that a mother could love"), but he holds that placing only with the verb is a characteristic and reputable English idiom.[48]

Myers furthers the case for the "misplacing" of only by saying that modification is merely a matter of habitual association and that a position that seems natural to the writer will usually be satisfactory to the reader. He believes that any theory of modification that is not based on the associations that are actually made in human minds is essentially false. He gives examples of various placings of only and indicates that meanings are not greatly changed when the word is moved from one place to another.[49]

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[47]Paul Roberts, Understanding Grammar, pp. 215-216.

[48]Perrin, op. cit., p. 661. [49]Myers, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

Norman Lewis included the sentence "We only have five left" in his survey questionnaire for Harper's magazine. The sentence received 44 per cent acceptance and was labeled Controversial. Lewis says,

> It is a little surprising, I think, that this usage fared as poorly as it did. I have rarely heard even the most erudite of people, unless they were speaking with studied formality, place only in its grammatical position (before the word it actually limits) rather than in its natural and popular position (before the verb). It is true, of course, that written and edited English shifts only to the position which the stricter grammarians insist upon, and in manuscripts prepared for the printer, I am sure that this innocent adverb is circled and arrowed more than any other word in the English language.
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> Nevertheless, despite the emphasis in the introduction to the ballot that this was a poll on speech, the vote went against the usage 265 to 203. The professors of course accepted the sentence, by vote of ninety-seven to fifty-eight; the lexicographers were split evenly, six to six. Other groups, however, turned it down in varying ratios: editors by five to three, radio people by three to one, women's editors by three to one, and newspaper writers by almost four to one.[50]

The writer of an article for "Current English Forum" in College English says that the colloquial "misplacing" of only is justified by historical usage, by analogy, and by the very nature of the spoken language, which does not allow an individual the time to make nice distinctions in word order. She believes that there is very little chance of ambiguity arising in spoken usage where stress makes quite clear the word or group of words which only modifies. However, she thinks that

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[50]Lewis, "How Correct Must Correct English Be?" op. cit., p. 72.

at the present time written usage is far more precise and careful than colloquial usage.[51]

Lillian Mermin writes:

> There's something about only which has tended to put it before the verb even when the verb was not meant to be modified. And scholars have shown that good practice since the sixteenth century, both in speaking and writing, has used this pre-verbal position. . . . The idea, then, is that only has no set position. . . . It can come next to the element it modifies or away from it, depending on the needs of the particular sentence.[52]

A general conclusion seems to be that usage and the familiar English sentence pattern which places an adverbial modifier before the verb have worked together to make the idiomatic placing of only acceptable in speech, and even in writing where no ambiguity will occur because of it.

The Final Preposition

All of the writers surveyed for this study are at least tolerant of the final preposition, and some go out of their way to defend it. Brief statements come from three books. The simplest is found in the Century Collegiate Handbook: "The introducing preposition does not always come first. Example: Which address did you write to?"[53] Hodges says that the preposition may follow, rather than precede, the noun or pronoun, and appear at the end of the sentence. He believes that at times a sentence is most emphatic or idiomatic with the preposition at the end, and he considers "What are you waiting for?"

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[51]Gladys D. Haase, "The Placing of Only in the Sentence," College English, XII (April, 1951), 400, 402.

[52]Mermin, op. cit., p. 736.

[53]Greever, Jones, and Jones, op. cit., p. 6.

more natural than "For what are you waiting?"[54] Roberts says that in a prepositional phrase the object, together with any modifiers it may have, usually follows the preposition, but that when the object of a preposition is an interrogative or relative word, the object may come first in the clause and the preposition last.[55]

Fuller statements, but statements carrying reservations in regard to the use of the final preposition, come from a second group of writers. In Writing Good English appears the following comment:

> Many students are of the opinion that a preposition should never end a sentence, but how can this order be avoided in such a statement as The show must go on? It is true that a preposition, normally an unimportant word, rarely ends a sentence effectively; but this is a principle, not a rule. The principle should be followed except on the rare occasions when placing the preposition elsewhere would result in awkwardness or when the preposition needs special emphasis.[56]

Pence makes the same sort of statement, saying that there are many times when a preposition or preposition-like adverb comes naturally at the end of a statement. After he has called the stigma against ending a sentence with a preposition a "silly superstition," he says, "Of course, there are times when, from the point of view of effective composition, a preposition becomes a poor word to end a sentence with." He speaks of the emphasis which falls on the end of the sentence

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[54]Hodges, op. cit., p. 17.

[55]Paul Roberts, Understanding Grammar, pp. 222-223.

[56]Dunbar, Marcett, and McCloskey, op. cit., p. 256.

and of the weakness of prepositions and concludes that, instead of declaring that it is grammatically wrong to end a sentence with a preposition, one may take the position that especially in written discourse a preposition may very well be a weak word with which to end a statement. However, he insists that in spoken discourse it is often more natural to end with a preposition than to plan deliberately to avoid such an ending.[57]

Margaret Bryant, in her grammar, mentions the fact that a preposition usually stands before the word it governs, but not always. She illustrates her point by saying that the separation of a preposition from its object occurs often in questions. She says that the rule against final prepositions is not given today as it frequently was in older grammars, but that the student should be warned against awkward preposition or preposition-adverb combinations, whether at the end or in the middle of sentences.[58]

The most liberal writers are more strongly in favor of the final preposition. Myers writes:

> The objection to "ending sentences with prepositions" was invented by the poet Dryden (who had been doing it for years). Dryden gave an exaggerated importance to both the literal meaning of "preposition" (placed before) and the patterns of Latin grammar. His theory was soon adopted in many school texts, and has been taught so long and so insistently that the artificial for whom you built

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[57]Pence, op. cit., pp. 296-297.

[58]Margaret M. Bryant, A Functional English Grammar, p. 148.

> the house pattern must now be regarded as legitimate, though slightly pedantic. It is certainly no better than (that) you built the house for.[59]

American College English also explains the origin of the rule against final prepositions, but holds to the belief that it is often more idiomatic in English for the preposition to come at the end of the sentence or clause, its normal position if it is used adverbially or in a question. The editors also include in their discussion the fact that the best of writers locate adverbial prepositions at the end of sentences.[60]

Perrin says that it was once fashionable for textbooks to put a stigma upon prepositions standing at the end of their constructions. He considers the deferred preposition a characteristic English idiom, even though it runs contrary to the usual tendency to keep words of a construction close together. It is his feeling that putting the preposition last is so generally the normal word order that the real danger is in clumsiness from trying to avoid a preposition at the end of a clause or sentence.[61]

Both Cassidy and Davies favor the final preposition as acceptable English usage and condemn Dryden's injunction, which has carried over into school grammars. The former calls the rule against the final preposition a case of "pedantic prohibition in the face of widespread and thoroughly idiomatic

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[59]Myers, op. cit., p. 123.

[60]Warfel, Mathews, and Bushman, op. cit., pp. 156-157.

[61]Perrin, op. cit., p. 700.

usage" and an "absurd principle."[62] The latter calls the rule a "dismal little piece of pedantry so unhappily introduced by Dryden."[63]

Some writers in periodicals have also defended the final preposition. Charnley writes:

> A preposition is held to be no word to end a sentence with. It is a usage that writers like Johnson would carefully avoid: one would have to go through many pages of his Lives of the Poets before encountering half a dozen. The idiomatic smack of the construction is evident in writers of a more spontaneous nature. . . . To sum up, practice has been right in departing from the school-grammarians' rule that prepositions always must be preposed. English has thereby overcome to a degree the disadvantages derived from its rigid word order and, literally making a virtue of necessity, has in some respects surpassed other languages in brevity and vividness.[64]

Pence adds to the defense:

> If one has to choose between naturalness and an affected correctness in either written or spoken discourse, certainly he should choose naturalness at all costs. If this means, especially in spoken discourse, ending any sentence naturally with a preposition, so be it. If this means at times cutting across a principle of grammar, again so be it.[65]

Lillian Mermin says that there is no set formula; the preposition can go afterward or beforehand, wherever it reads better. She quotes the sentence "What are you bringing that book that I don't want to be read to out of up for?" from the Saturday Review of Literature and says that, although the child's

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[62]Robertson, op. cit., pp. 318-319.

[63]Davies, op. cit., p. 118.

[64]Bertens Charnley, "The Syntax of Deferred Prepositions," American Speech, XXIV (December, 1949), 268-269.

[65]R. W. Pence, "Up With Which We Can No Longer Put," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXV (April, 1949), 201.

question may represent a five-fold error to the traditional purist, it would be interesting to see that sentence untangled with any improving result.[66]

In his survey for Harper's, Norman Lewis was able to label the sentence "He's one person I simply won't do business with" as Established English, with 86 per cent acceptance. He writes: "That few sane people trouble themselves very much about the heinousness of ending a sentence with a preposition is indicated by the overwhelming majority of acceptance for sentence 15. The radio people, however, voted almost 41 per cent against it." In the same discussion, Lewis quotes a random comment which he received from Charles Earle Funk: "This has been a dead issue for so many years that I am amazed to see it still classed as controversial."[67]

The conclusion seems to be that the final preposition is here to stay, especially in spoken discourse, where it is considered natural and idiomatic, and even in written discourse when its object is an interrogative or a relative pronoun, or where the preposition is a near-adverb. Even those grammarians used as sources for this study who present traditional viewpoints on many issues are tolerant of the final preposition, which Dryden once termed as "barbarous."

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[66]Mermin, op. cit., p. 735.

[67]Lewis, "How Correct Must Correct English Be?" op. cit., p. 73.

The Split Infinitive

The final issue involving a modifier-position problem to be considered in this study is the split infinitive. Most of the writers of books used in the study make some provision for splitting infinitives. The most traditional viewpoint is that of Hodges, who merely advises his readers to avoid awkward splitting of infinitives or needless separation of subject and verb, and of parts of verb phrases. He gives an example containing a split infinitive and improves it by unsplitting the infinitive.[68]

The editors of The Technique of Composition say that it is often unwise to separate the sign of the infinitive (to) and the infinitive itself. However, they add that, frequently, a sentence may be clearer and more effective with an adverb between the to and the infinitive. They say that in a sentence like "No one has even been able to fully understand what he means" it is obviously idiomatic to split the infinitive. After this one exception to the rule, they caution the student that if there is no clear advantage in separating the to and the infinitive, the writer should avoid separating them and that to and the infinitive should never be split by a long adverbial element.[69]

Among the more liberal attitudes toward the split infinitive is the one expressed in American College English.

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[68]Hodges, op. cit., p. 277.

[69]Taft, McDermott, and Jensen, op. cit., p. 133.

The editors say that the adverb has no fixed location, but that it must be so placed that it modifies the right word and that it does not split constructions illogically or awkwardly. As an exception to the rule, they use the sentence "This course is designed to _better_ equip graduates who plan to go into business." They say that this split infinitive can be defended because any other location of _better_ would make the sentence ambiguous or awkward. They conclude their discussion with the following observation:

> One fact about the use of adverbs explains in part the common tendency to split infinitives. An adverb placed before a verb leaves the emphasis on the verb: "He bravely _died_." To place the adverb after the verb emphasizes the adverb: "He died _bravely_." This emphasis is so well established that when _similar_ combinations are turned into infinitives, a speaker may deliberately say "He determined to bravely die" in order to preserve the emphasis on _die_.[70]

Foerster and Steadman call the split infinitive an old and useful English construction and say that whether to use or avoid a split infinitive is a matter of style rather than a question of correctness. They feel that, since many people object to splitting an infinitive, the student should use the construction only when it improves his sentences in smoothness, emphasis, or clearness.[71] The editors of the _Century Collegiate Handbook_ say that although a split infinitive does not violate logic, it separates the parts of a construction and appears to many readers, including thousands of non-academic ones, to be a fault. However, they state that the split infinitive is

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[70]Warfel, Mathews, and Bushman, _op. cit._, pp. 144-145.

[71]Foerster and Steadman, _op. cit._, p. 403.

preferable to the artificial construction which too consciously avoids it.[72] Similar to the opinion of these editors is the one presented in Writing Good English, where the editors mention the flexibility of the English infinitive, but warn the student that he should not abuse that flexibility. They take the position that splitting an infinitive is not necessarily wrong, but that such splitting is never justifiable unless it serves to make the writer's meaning clear or unless it helps him to avoid awkwardness.[73] Another partially liberal opinion comes from the handbook of Wooley, Scott, and Bracher, who advise the student to avoid awkward split constructions, but agree with other writers that the split construction is better than an ambiguous or an artificial one. They say that the split infinitive may often be the simplest and most natural form of expression.[74]

Kierzek seems to be playing safe when he writes:

> The split infinitive is no longer considered one of the seven deadly sins of college composition--if it ever was. It is not true that the parts of an infinitive are inseparable. But since a split infinitive still causes many persons discomfort, if not actual suffering, it is better for the student not to split his infinitives too rashly or promiscuously. A good rule to follow is this: place the adverbial modifier between to and the verb of an infinitive only when such an arrangement is necessary to avoid an awkward phrase.[75]

Pence makes two observations about the split infinitive: (1) that many people do not understand what actually constitutes

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[72]Greever, Jones, and Jones, op. cit., p. 50.

[73]Dunbar, Marcett, and McCloskey, op. cit., p. 226.

[74]Wooley, Scott, and Bracher, op. cit., p. 90.

[75]Kierzek, op. cit., p. 466.

a split infinitive, and (2) that the problem of the split infinitive is one of rhetoric, not of grammar. His opinion is that a split infinitive is often a needlessly ungraceful way of saying a thing, but he does not condemn the locution entirely.[76]

In his attitude toward the split infinitive, Myers is in the camp of the most liberal group of writers. He says that the idea that all split infinitives are necessarily bad is now seldom taken seriously. He believes the construction to be intrinsically no worse than the "split perfect tense" ("I have already done it"), to which few critics have thought of objecting. According to this writer, the split infinitive is often both clearer and more forceful than any feasible rearrangement.[77] Perrin is similarly liberal in his attitude that, since the adverb modifies the verb, its natural position seems to be next to the actual verb form.[78]

Bryant writes:

> There used to be a rule, which may linger still in some conservative textbooks and newspaper offices, against inserting any word between to and the infinitive word. . . . But ordinarily this construction seems innocent enough. Instances of it can be found in many classic authors. . . . A careful study of the textbooks which include the rule against the split infinitive will usually reveal that their practice is not equal to their profession.[79]

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[76]Pence, A Grammar of Present-Day English, p. 269.

[77]Myers, op. cit., p. 183. [78]Perrin, op. cit., p. 772.

[79]Margaret M. Bryant, A Functional English Grammar, p. 257.

And in her history of the English language, Bryant says that, despite the authoritarian hold, good writers and speakers have continued to split the infinitive where avoiding the split would have caused ambiguity or patent artificiality, and that at last students of English usage have shown that the split infinitive is established. It is her contention that, in the long run, the great forces of analogy, clarity, and word order win against the authoritarian.[80]

Jordan feels that to has ceased to be a preposition and has become only an introductory sign to the infinitive, and, therefore, that all that follows to can be regarded as a unit, with an adverbial modifier not acting as an intruder between the preposition and its complement. He says that it cannot be denied that in many instances the split infinitive is a distinct aid to clear expression. He believes that the construction will in time place itself squarely within the pale of accepted usage, however much debate it may be subjected to at the present time by the would-be learned.[81]

Roberts thinks that the split infinitive is not a characteristic of Vulgate or even of General Spoken English. He believes that, if it is native anywhere, it is native to Choice English, where the complexity of expression often needs the splitting to facilitate understanding.[82]

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[80]Margaret M. Bryant, Modern English and Its Heritage, pp. 268-269.

[81]Jordan, op. cit., pp. 123-124.

[82]Paul Roberts, Understanding Grammar, p. 204.

Davies calls the proscription of the split infinitive one of the "fantastic principles which have so often dominated English grammar" and an illustration of "that concentration on the inessential, to the obliteration of the essential, which has been the main result of basing English grammar upon Latin." He says that it is pure nonsense to maintain that to is a necessary and inseparable part of the infinitive, joined with it in a kind of linguistic holy matrimony, not to be put asunder by any man without dire offense. He also states that the argument from usage is overwhelmingly in favor of the placing of words between to and the infinitive.[83] And Cassidy, after a slap at "non-split diehards," concludes that, while deference to a not very reasonable convention makes it wise to avoid the construction ordinarily, and certainly makes it unwise to take the opportunity to split every possible infinitive, the occasional use of a split infinitive is entirely permissible.[84]

Norman Lewis, after his survey for Harper's, ranked "We must remember to accurately check each answer" as Acceptable English, with an acceptance of 53 per cent among his respondents. Two random comments quoted by Lewis came from R. W. Riis, Roving Editor of the Reader's Digest, and Ralph A. Beebe, Editor, Doubleday and Company. The former wrote:

> I would like to defend the split infinitive. The structure adds strength to the sentence--it is compact and clear. The adverb, sewn and riveted to the verb

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[83]Davies, op. cit., pp. 135-139.

[84]Robertson, op. cit., p. 304.

> that way, cannot possibly modify anything but its own verb. This is to loudly say that I split an infinitive whenever I can catch one.

The latter wrote:

> The restriction against the split infinitive is, to my mind, the most artificial of all grammatical rules. I find that most educated people today split infinitives regularly in their speech and only eliminate them from their writing when they rewrite and polish their material. The only reason they do so is because they were so taught in elementary school.[85]

A similar idea on the established nature of the split infinitive comes from a writer who reports that the Leonard study of current usage found "We can expect the commission to at least protect our interests" to be an established locution.[86]

In an article for "Current English Forum," Bryant calls the dictum against the split infinitive a "fetish which no longer has any validity, if it ever had" and states that she wrote the article not to advocate the splitting of infinitives but to show that the construction is sound, historically and syntactically, and is in common usage.[87] And Mermin further defends the usage when she says that split infinitives are very natural in speech, since they put emphasis exactly where it comes in the train of thought. In her opinion, the scrupulous avoidance of infinitive-splitting will often produce the kind of correctness that defeats itself.[88]

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[85]Lewis, "How Correct Must Correct English Be?" op. cit., p. 73.

[86]Arthur Minton, "You Can Say 'It's me,'" High Points, XXX (October, 1948), 47.

[87]Margaret M. Bryant, "The Split Infinitive," College English, VIII (October, 1946), 39-40.

[88]Mermin, op. cit., pp. 737-738.

The general conclusion seems to be that the split infinitive is gaining recognition; indeed some of its defenders even cite historical examples of its use. It seems to be better established in speech than in written discourse, since stress can be properly placed by the speaker to make his meaning perfectly clear. However, many authorities commend the split infinitive as a means for precise conveyance of meaning in some written situations.

A general conclusion about the four types of modifiers discussed in this chapter seems to be that word-order consciousness and actual usage are, in many cases, defeating traditional rules and that, by doing so, these two forces are causing the English language to become more flexible than it could be by adhering rigidly to rules derived originally from Latin grammar.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

It can be learned from a study of grammars, handbooks, and periodical articles on grammar that a battle has been raging for several years, and is still raging, between grammarians who uphold traditional rules as standards of correctness and grammarians who uphold usage in a living, growing language as their criterion for measuring correctness. The latter group does not concern itself with what should be said, but rather with what is said by a majority of educated speakers. In the course of the battle, the concept of levels of usage has arisen among the liberal grammarians, who believe that the grammar used in addressing an umpire and the grammar used in addressing a bishop are not, and need not be, one and the same. The traditional grammarians condemn their adversaries as being grammatical anarchists, and the condemned ones in turn accuse the traditionalists of being stuffy, narrow, and unwilling to let English grow and change as the need arises.

It is apparent that grammatical thinking is becoming liberalized in spite of the authoritarians who would keep English grammar as near to Latin grammar as possible. It has been the purpose of this study to see how far a group of selected grammarians, who have expressed their views in grammars, handbooks, histories of the English language, and periodicals, during the

1944-1954 decade, have gone toward accepting liberal trends and advocating them as useful and correct. The study has attempted to fulfill its purpose by surveying the opinions of the selected group of writers on six controversial grammatical issues: the use of who for whom, the use of It's me for It is I, the dangling participle, the placing of only in the sentence, the final preposition, and the split infinitive. It is interesting to note that, although a few of the writers are still cautious and do not give full sanction to these issues, most of them recognize the fact that these locutions are in use and give them their approval at least for conversation and informal writing.

The partial replacement of whom with who has been brought about by both word-order consciousness and usage; and although expressions range from condescension from some to enthusiastic support from others, all of the writers used as sources for this study at least recognize the fact that the change has come about and accept it for some purposes. The most conservative writers simply observe that in colloquial usage, who sometimes replaces whom as an interrogative pronoun. More liberal writers observe that, although an introductory interrogative pronoun may actually serve as an object in its sentence, it is felt to stand in subject position or "subjective territory" and seems natural when placed in the nominative case. The same feeling holds when who introduces a clause as a relative pronoun, even though it may not function as a subject or subjective complement. Some writers even consider the whom form of the

pronoun useless and abominable, and others do not consider it a form which is worth inculcating into the minds of students by force when the time could be spent in teaching students to think and express themselves clearly. The general conclusion seems to be that who can replace whom as an interrogative, and sometimes as a relative word, in conversation and in informal writing, particularly when the pronoun stands in "subject territory." Writers of works of a formal nature are still expected to conform to traditional rules of usage for who and whom.

Similarly, It is I has been largely replaced by It's me through word-order consciousness and usage, which has caused inflectional leveling. Here, the pronoun is felt to stand in "object territory," making the objective case of the pronoun seem natural. A few of the writers still demand that the subjective complement of a copulative verb be in the nominative case. However, the majority recognize It's me for informal usage. Some stronger defenders feel that It is I tends to be pedantic and unnatural, and a teacher is quoted as having said that she would faint if someone knocked on her door and called out "It's I." Liberal grammarians do not rule out the possibility that accusative forms will replace nominative forms in all such constructions, since word-order consciousness makes accusatives seem proper after verbs. Generally, however, grammarians accept It's me as acceptable informal usage and reject such locutions as It's him, It's her, It's us, and It's them.

The dangling participle is still looked on with disfavor by many, but some exceptions are made to the rule that an introductory participial phrase must refer specifically to the subject of the clause which follows it. The grammarians still warn students against dangling participial phrases which can change or make ludicrous the meaning of a sentence, but they generally agree that such phrases as strictly speaking, speaking of pictures, and taking everything into consideration may act as "absolute participles" and refer to a whole idea, rather than to a specific noun or pronoun subject.

Only is, for the most part, still expected to be placed as near as possible to the particular word it modifies or intensifies, especially in formal writing. However, descriptive grammarians state that the sentence order of subject, adverbial modifier, predicate, and object is such a familiar one in English that it tends to be followed even when the adverb does not actually refer to the verb. In their opinion, no ambiguity arises when only is so placed in spoken English, since stress can be placed on the important elements. They also let it be known that only is frequently "misplaced" by the "best" writers and indicate that they consider such "misplacing" no serious crime.

The final preposition seems to be here to stay, and several writers soundly condemn Dryden for ever having thought the final preposition a barbarism. Neither do they have any sympathy for the writers of school grammars who adopted the "rule," which occurred to Dryden when he realized that Latin

sentences never ended with prepositions. The majority of these grammarians consider the final preposition natural and sometimes necessary, especially in questions introduced by an interrogative pronoun which serves as the object of a preposition. One textbook presents as an illustration of the unavoidable final preposition the sentence "The show must go on," where the word on seems actually to be nearer to an adverb than to a preposition. The extreme case in favor of the final preposition is the sentence "Why are you bringing that book that I don't want to be read to out of up for?" which one writer says would be hard to improve, and the extreme case of avoiding the final preposition is expressed in the sentence "This is a situation up with which we can no longer put," which another writer condemns as unnatural and ridiculous.

The split infinitive also has lost much of the condemnation which once followed it wherever it went. One writer says that it is no longer considered one of the "seven deadly sins of college composition," and others say that the split infinitive is often a means of clear and concise expression. The feeling seems to be that it is especially useful in formal written English, where the complexity of expression often demands it to prevent ambiguity, and it is also recommended for conversation where stress, plus the split infinitive, will often place just the proper emphasis in just the proper place. Most of the writers recommend that infinitives not be split promiscuously and unthinkingly, but advocate the split

wherever it will clarify and improve the smoothness of a statement. Therefore, it seems safe to conclude that users of English may split an infinitive wherever such a split appears to be helpful.

It can be seen from the attitudes of these writers that grammatical thinking is becoming more liberal as the English language grows and changes and that it is leaving the authoritarian so far behind that he will eventually be forced to catch up with it. Possibly the most liberal grammatical thinkers today are those people like Margaret M. Bryant and Frederic G. Cassidy, who are students of the history of English, and the other college professors who teach and work with grammar and express themselves through current periodicals. The most nearly traditional writers seem to be those who write handbooks for college freshmen and seem to feel that some concrete and unswerving rules are still necessary for the teaching and learning of English grammar. However, even the most nearly traditional of contemporary grammarians prove to be more liberal in their views than the authors of the two traditional grammars cited in the first chapter of this study.

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