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**”ALL OF YOUSE GUYS IS GONNA HAVE  
TO TAKE A LITTLE TEST.”**

Strategies of Pluralizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person Plural  
Pronoun *you*

Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences

Master's Thesis

August 2022

# ABSTRACT

Jenna Liedes: "All of youse guys is gonna have to take a little test." – Strategies of Pluralizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person Plural Pronoun *you*

Master's thesis

Tampere University

Master's Program in English Language and Literature

August 2022

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The purpose of this Master's thesis is to investigate the types of linguistic strategies speakers of English use to distinguish the singular second person pronoun *you* from the plural, and the different functions and meanings that have been developed for the pluralized variants of *you*. Previous studies have identified two main strategies of expressing explicit plurality with *you*: morphological (e.g. suffixation with the plural -s) and analytic (i.e. adding a plural element to the pronoun like in *you all*) strategies.

The hypothesis for the study was that plural forms of the pronoun *you* have been grammaticalized, meaning they do not only mark plurality but other grammatical functions, such as possessives, too. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that pluralized forms of *you* also have various pragmatic functions, e.g. expressing the speaker's evaluation of the addressee, or a close relationship between the speaker and the addressee. In addition to the grammatical and pragmatic functions of plural forms of *you*, their occurrences in different varieties of English were studied to find out, which pluralization strategies and forms of pluralized *you* are preferred in different regions and varieties.

The study was conducted as a corpus study, utilizing *The Movie Corpus* and *The TV Corpus*, which consist of subtitles from TV shows and movies. The data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively to answer the research questions as thoroughly as possible.

The results of the study proved the hypotheses to be true: the forms *y'all* and *youse* can be said to have grammaticalized to a certain point, as they also function as possessive forms. In addition to that, all pluralized forms of *you* had important pragmatic functions in e.g. expressing politeness or as in-group or out-group markers.

Geographically, pluralizing strategies and the preferred forms of pluralized *you* proved to be in line with previous research: analytic strategies occurred more frequently in Northern American varieties of English while suffixed forms were more common in varieties of English in Australia, New Zealand, and the British Isles.

Keywords: second person pronouns, pluralization, number-marking, grammaticalization, non-standard English, spoken language, corpus analysis

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

# TIIVISTELMÄ

Jenna Liedes: "All of youse guys is gonna have to take a little test" – Strategies of Pluralizing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person Plural Pronoun *you*

Pro gradu -tutkielma

Tampereen yliopisto

Englannin kielen ja kirjallisuuden maisteriohjelma

Elokuu 2022

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Tämän pro gradu -tutkielman tarkoitus on selvittää, millaisia kielellisiä strategioita englannin kielen puhujat käyttävät erottaakseen yksikön ja monikon toisen persoonan pronominin *you* toisistaan, ja millaisia funktioita ja merkityksiä monikollisille *you*'n varianteille on kehittynyt. Edellisissä tutkimuksissa on tunnistettu kaksi päästrategiaa ilmaista monikkoa *you*-pronominissa: morfologiset ja analyttiset strategiat, joista ensimmäiseen kategoriaan kuuluvat esimerkiksi monikon päätteiden *-s* lisääminen, ja toiseen monikollisen elementin lisääminen pronominin perään (esim. *you all*).

Hypoteesina on, että *you*-pronominin monikkomuodot ovat kieliopillistuneet niin, etteivät ne enää merkitse ainoastaan monikkoa, vaan muitakin kieliopillisia merkityksiä kuten possessiivisuutta. Lisäksi oletuksena oli, että monikollisille *you*-muodoille on kehittynyt myös pragmaattisia funktioita merkiten esimerkiksi puhujan suhtautumista vastaanottajaan kohtaan tai puhujan ja vastaanottajan läheistä suhdetta. Kieliopillisten ja pragmaattisten funktioiden lisäksi tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan *you*-muotojen esiintymistä englannin eri varieteeteissa, selvittäen, mitä monikollistamisstrategioita ja muotoja eri alueilla preferoidaan.

Tutkimus toteutettiin korpustutkimuksena ja aineistoksi valikoituivat *The Movie Corpus* ja *The TV Corpus*, jotka koostuvat TV- ja elokuvatekstityksistä. Aineistoa analysoitiin sekä kvantitatiivisesti että kvalitatiivisesti, jotta tutkimuskysymyksiin voitiin vastata mahdollisimman kattavasti.

Tutkimuksen tulokset vastasivat hypoteeseja. Muotojen *y'all* ja *youse* voidaan todeta kieliopillistuneen jonkin verran, sillä niillä huomattiin olevan myös possessiivipronominin funktioita. Lisäksi kaikilla *you*-pronominin monikollisilla muodoilla oli myös pragmaattisia funktioita esimerkiksi kohteliaisuusilmauksina tai ryhmään kuuluvuuden ilmaisuina.

Monikollistamisstrategioiden ja *you*-pronominin muotojen jakautuminen alueittain varieteettien mukaan osoittautui myös olevan linjassa aiemman tutkimuksen kanssa: pohjoisamerikkalaisissa varieteeteissa esiintyi huomattavasti enemmän analyttisiä strategioita, kun taas suffiksilla muodostettuja muotoja esiintyi useammin Australian ja Uuden-Seelannin sekä Brittein saarten varieteeteissa.

Avainsanat: toisen persoonan pronominit, monikollistaminen, kieliopillistuminen, puhuttu kieli, korpusanalyysi

Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin OriginalityCheck -ohjelmalla.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Languages are always going through various stages of change and English is not an exception to this rule. One big change in the history of English has been the loss of distinction in number of second person pronouns, meaning that there is only one second person pronoun *you* which corresponds to both singular and plural referents. Especially in spoken forms of English, however, this development has led to different strategies of trying to fill this gap in the pronoun paradigm. Speakers have noticed the need to explicitly refer to one or multiple people, and thus there is a demand for fulfilling those needs.

The example in the title of this work – “*All of youse guys is gonna have to take a little test*” – displays multiple strategies of number marking in the case of the second person pronoun. Firstly, the morphological strategy of adding the standard English plural marker *-s* as in *youse*. Secondly, the analytic strategy of combining *you* with a plural noun phrase (NP) is a commonly used strategy as well, as in *you guys*. Double marking – having two different markers of plurality, in this case the morphological plural *youse* and the plural NP *guys* – is also very common. Interestingly, many of the second person plural forms seem to have varying subject-verb agreement, i.e. a plural form can take a singular verb, as in *youse guys is*. Strategies of number marking will be the focus of this study, but other linguistic behavior surrounding the phenomenon will also be briefly discussed.

The English pronominal paradigm has historically been more complex than it is today. In the Old English period, three distinctions in number were used – the singular, the dual, and the plural. By the Middle English period, the dual had been lost and gradually towards the late Early Modern English period distinction between the singular and the plural in the second person pronoun also fell out of usage, after it had for long been used mainly to signify politeness, familiarity, and rank in conversation. (Wales 1996). Thus, by the Modern English period, the pronominal system consisted of only one pronominal form for the second person. It has proven to be slightly problematic though, as Modern English speakers are, as a result of the incomplete pronoun paradigm, inventing new forms for the second person pronoun to explicitly refer to more than one

person. These variants include forms such as the aforementioned *youse*, *y'all*, *you guys* and *you two* etc.

Second person pronouns function in an important role in communication as the addressee (Wales 1996: 50). Addressing interlocutor(s) is also a way to look at the speaker's attitudes towards the addressee(s) and can thus have a function of e.g. an in-group or an out-group marker, as for example with the pronouns *we* and *they*, or *us* and *them*, which are occasionally used to create differentiations between groups of people (Wales 1996) and mark membership to or exclusion from a social group (Keblusek et al. 2017). In English, inclusivity in a group is also marked with personal pronouns and vocatives such as *mate*, *fella*, *love*, etc. (Keblusek et al. 2017).

Wales (1996, 2003) has also stated in her studies that there is a gap in the study of new pronominal forms, i.e. second person plural forms, in English, acknowledging they are a prominent part of regional varieties. Although Wales's argument was made two decades ago, it still somewhat holds true today. Non-standard forms of the English second person plural forms (2PL from now on) have been the subject of some studies in the past. Some of the more studied 2PL forms include *y'all* (e.g. Richardson 1984, Lipski 1993, Maynor 1996) and *you guys* (e.g. Maynor 2000, Heyd 2010, Sienicki 2014). Suffixed 2PL forms, i.e. *yous* and its spelling variants, have been studied for example in the context of British English (Hickey 2011, Pearce 2021) and Australian English (Mulder & Penry Williams 2020). Besides *you guys*, little research has been done on *you* + plural noun phrase forms, and *you* + number forms also lack research.

Some comparative studies between different varieties have also been conducted. For example, Kortmann and Schneider (2004) and Kortmann and Szmrecsanyi (2011) studied World Englishes, including 2PL forms, but both failed to acknowledge their functions and focused more on the form. Quinn's (2009) comparative study on *youse* and *y'all* in inner circle varieties also mainly focuses on listing the existing variables and how frequent they are in different varieties. The most comprehensive research on different 2PL forms is perhaps Galiano (2020), in which she analyzed multiple forms of second person plurals, including *you* + number and *you* + plural noun phrase forms in World Englishes, including Outer Circle varieties in the study as well. Thus, it is evident that the phenomenon requires more research.

The main interest in this study is to determine the strategies that speakers of English use to explicitly express whether they are addressing one or multiple people. The study will also try to determine whether these 2PL forms have functions other than just number marking – i.e. if they appear as possessive determiners, reflexive forms etc., and if they carry pragmatic meanings by expressing e.g. politeness or in-group or out-group marking.

This study is a corpus-based research on plural forms of the English second person pronoun *you* (2PL). The study will try to determine how the different strategies – both analytic and morphological – of number marking are used in English to differentiate the plural *you* from singular *you*. The aim of the research is to provide a more thorough understanding on how the different forms are used in contemporary English, and what kinds of functions they have.

The data for this study will be gathered from two separate corpora on <http://english-corpora.com/>, the TV and Movie Corpora. The corpora were chosen based on their representativeness of spoken language and the ability to compare different regional varieties. Media representation of spoken language phenomena can offer some insight to how widely spread and how deeply rooted the phenomena are in colloquial language use.

In this study I will try to answer to the following questions with the help of theoretical background and data from the corpora:

1. Which second person plural forms appear in the corpora and how frequent are they?
2. What functions do second person plural forms have? Do they only function as number-markers or do they have other grammatical and/or pragmatic functions?
3. Can geographically specific preferences of number marking strategies and second person plural forms be identified?

Firstly, some theoretical background will be introduced to provide a literature review of the previous research completed on 2PL forms. The theoretical section consists of an introduction to the English pronoun paradigm – both standard and non-standard – in

section 2.1, followed by discussions on standard English and language attitudes in section 2.2. In section 2.3, language change, grammaticalization and pragmaticalization, which are processes that some of these 2PL forms might be going through, will be taken into consideration. Later, in section 3, the methodology, the corpora, and the dataset of the study will be introduced in more detail. Section 4 consists of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the 2PL forms in the corpora. Each strategy of pluralization of the pronoun *you* will be analyzed in terms of frequency, grammatical functions, and pragmatics and semantics. In section 4.1 suffixed 2PL forms *yous* and *youse* will be discussed, in section 4.2 forms *you + all*, in section 4.3 *you + number* forms, and finally in section 4.4 *you + plural noun phrase* forms. Section 4.5 will provide a conclusion and discussion on both grammatical and pragmatic functions of the different 2PL forms and pluralization strategies. Section 4.6 attempts to answer the final research question by analyzing the geographical variation of the forms. Finally, section 5 presents further discussion on the findings of the analysis and a conclusion of the whole study along with some implications for further studies.



## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this section, the theoretical framework for this study and some insights to previous research on English non-standard 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural pronouns is discussed. Firstly, the use of pronouns will be discussed along with the Standard English pronoun paradigm from a historical point of view, followed by a discussion on non-standard pronouns in English. Secondly, an introduction on Standard English – what it is and what it is not – will be provided. Thirdly, grammaticalization is a topic often referred to in studies of language change and especially grammar topics such as personal pronouns, so grammaticalization will also be examined, along with pragmaticalization and the possibilities of 2PL forms being pragmaticalized.

### 2.1 English Pronoun Paradigm

This section introduces three important topics for this thesis: first, a general overview of English pronouns and their functions, second, a historical overview of the English pronoun paradigm, and thirdly, an attempt to define 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural pronoun forms with the help of dictionaries and reference grammars.

#### 2.1.1 Pronouns: Definition and the Historical English Pronoun Paradigm

English first and second person personal pronouns *I*, *we* and *you* (1PP and 2PP from now on) differ from third person personal pronouns (*he/she*, 3PP) in their functions. While 3PP is characterized by many grammarians as a ‘substitute for a noun’ or an anaphoric form, i.e. referring back to something that has already been mentioned, 1PP and 2PP prototypically function in dialogue as inter-personal pronouns (Wales 1996: 3).

Wales (1996) states that speech situations are always reciprocal, meaning participants assume roles of speakers and receivers in turn. The role of the addressee may be one or more persons and it is important to note that the participants may have asymmetrical roles and status in relation to each other, which affects the communication and reciprocity of the speech situation. It should also be noted, how the modern English 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun

*you* obscures the distinctions of number and social status and they have to be expressed through lexical means. In languages like French, social status and the roles of the participants can be expressed with the second person addressing pronouns *tu* and *vous*, the former expressing familiarity and intimacy and the latter social distance. Wales names multiple variations of expressing plurality with the pronoun *you* in different varieties of English, e.g. *yousuns* (Hiberno-English), *yins* (Scottish English), *you guys* (AmE) and *you gang* (Fiji English). (Wales 1996).

In Old English (OE), pronouns had a four-case, three-number system, meaning pronouns expressed number in singular, plural and dual, although the latter was quite rare in usage (Strang 1970). In OE, *you* simply expressed plurality in 2PP while *thou* was used for the singular addressee. After the Norman Conquest in 1066, the use of plural *you* was changed, and since then it was used to signal polite address with a singular referent, similarly to the French *vous* (Wales 1996: 74). The semantic ‘power’ of the 2PP forms did not get firmly established in the English language, though, and there was considerable fluctuation between the usages of *you* and *thou* in medieval and Early Modern English. In general, though, *thou* was used to express emotions and intimacy, reserved for informal, private speech, while *you* was used in public and polite address. (Wales 1996: 73–78).

By the 16th and 17th centuries *you*-forms had increasingly taken over the territory of the *thou*-forms and were gradually replaced by an ‘unmarked’ (*you*) and ‘marked’ (*thou*) forms (e.g. Mulholland 1967, Quirk 1971). This was partly a result of *thou*-forms becoming associated with lower classes and low prestige. Contradictory to this development, in the 16th and 17th centuries *thou*-forms began to be used in rhetorical and literary registers with high prestige, e.g. in religious and poetic contexts (Wales 1996: 77), a trend which is still present in Modern English.

Around the 17th and 18th centuries there was a contrast of verb concord in number, *you is* being used for singular and *you are* for plural. This current was abolished by linguistic purists and the plural origins of *you* persist in the standard verb concord being in plural: *you are*. (Strang 1970).

## 2.1.2 Definitions of Second Person Plural Forms

Second person plural forms are forms of the second person pronoun that use number marking to make the forms explicitly plural. The forms are mostly used in non-standard, spoken language and thus used mainly in informal contexts, which will be more discussed in section 2.1.3. The lack of an explicit plural pronoun in the second person has resulted in the use of different strategies of pluralizing the form *you*. The term *pronoun* might not be the most useful term to use for them, so I will use the term second person plural forms (2PL from now on), since the forms can be used not only as personal pronouns, but as e.g. possessive determiners and pragmatic markers too (cf. section 4).

Two main strategies of number-marking, i.e. pluralization, with the second person pronoun have been identified in previous studies: morphological and analytic (e.g. Galiano 2020). Morphological number-marking includes e.g. suffixation (*yous*) while analytic strategies include forms where *you* is followed by another (lexical) item marking plurality, e.g. *you guys*. Instances of double marking are also possible, combining both morphological and analytic strategies, resulting in forms like *youse all*.

The 2PL forms studied in this thesis were chosen based on previous research by choosing to focus on the most frequent forms. The variables chosen were *yous(e)*, *y'all*, *you* + numbers two and three, and after analyzing the most frequent instances of *you* + plural noun phrase (NP-PL) in the corpora used for this study, the forms *you guys*, *you lot* and *you people*. *You ones* and its variants *y'uns* and *yinz/yins* yielded very few results in the corpora and were hence left out of this study, as is the case with different orthographic variants of *yous(e)* such as *youz*, *yoos* etc.

Different morphosyntactic functions that personal pronouns can fulfil in English include that of the subject, predicate complement (direct object), other predicate complement, object of preposition, address or vocative function, and possessive determiner. In addition to these, 2PL additionally have the grammatical function of expressing plurality, i.e. number-marking.

In addition to number-marking, Hickey (2003: 363) names four non-pronominal functions of plural pronouns: marking informality, non-specific address, institutional address and presupposed general knowledge. By non-specific address he refers to the use

of non-standard 2PL to address a group of people (e.g. “*Which of youse is going to pay?*”) and institutional address is used for multiple people or an institution in general, e.g. a shop or a hospital (e.g. “*Do ye have bicycle tyres?*”). Non-specific address also plays a part as a politeness strategy as it is used to avoid directness. (Hickey 2003: 363). The fourth function as “presupposed general knowledge” refers to the use of 2PP as a deictic element to point to a “known quantity referred to in a pragmatic context” (Wales 1998: 310–4, quoted by Hickey 2003: 364). Pragmatic and even semantic functions thus play an important role in the use of 2PL forms.

*Yous(e)* is a pronoun used in many contemporary varieties of English – e.g. England (especially Merseyside and Tyneside), Scotland, New York and Philadelphia (e.g. Wales 1996, Dolan 2006, Kortmann et al. 2008) where it most likely has been spread via the influence of Irish English (IrE) via Irish immigration (Hickey 2003). The form developed most likely with the influence of Irish language – which differentiates 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular (2SG) and 2PL forms, – which then influenced the development in English *you* + *-s* and *yez* from the archaic IrE *ye* + *-s* (Hickey 2003, Corrigan 2010). Another variety where *yous(e)* has been firmly established is Australian English (AuE), where *yous(e)* has also been noted to develop a singular use (Mulder & Penry Williams 2020). This singular use of *yous(e)* challenges the original reasoning for the form altogether.

*Y'all* originates in the phrasal *you* + *áll* which has developed into the pronominal form *yóu all* with initial stress (Montgomery 1992: 357, as cited by Hickey 2003: 354). Hickey (2003: 355) argues that *y'all* is based on the pronominal form *ye*, as if the underlying pronominal form was *you*, the contracted form would be *you'll*, resulting in homophony with the future tense. *Y'all* would thus also have its origins in IrE, as *ye* + *-s* is influenced by Irish.

Lipski (1993: 45) has argued that *y'all* as a pronominal form is of African American English (AAE) origin, a view which has been challenged by other linguists. Two possible explanations for the origins of *y'all* in AAE are offered:

“(i) the result of diffusion from early forms of Anglo-American English, specifically Scots-derived varieties in lower Appalachia, or (ii) an independent development based on restructuring in which the quantifier *all* was attached to the undifferentiated pronoun *you* to yield a solely plural form. Supportive evidence for the latter scenario comes from an unlikely quarter, South African Indian English.” (Hickey 2003: 355).

*Y'all* can function not only as a personal pronoun but as a possessive pronoun and a possessive determiner with the clitic 's -ending (Galiano 2020). It was also noted in Galiano's (2020) research that the phonologically reduced form *y'all*, as opposed to *you all*, is the preferred form used in a possessive function. Phonological reduction of the form, as well as its appearance as a possessive pronoun, suggest a high degree of grammaticalization.

Similar to *yous(e)* in AuE (Mulder & Penry Williams 2020), *y'all* is also occasionally used with a singular referent (Tillery & Bailey 1998: 275). Especially in Southern United States, *y'all* functions not only as a 2PL but also as an informality marker, in which case it can refer to a singular or plural referent or even take on double marking (Hickey 2003: 356). In singular use, *y'all* can also act as a symbol of solidarity between familiar interlocutors (Edwards 1974: 15).

Regarding *you* + plural noun phrase forms, quite few researchers have studied these forms from a linguistic point of view. Wing (2017) has studied the *us* versus *them* dichotomy in school shooters' discourse and the use of negative judgements towards others by the speakers. The study revealed that for example *you people* was often used in this discourse to create distance between the speaker and others, as well as expressing a negative evaluation of the referents.

Heyd's (2010) study focused on the use of *you guys* in the TV series *Friends*. Her findings were that the use of *you guys* is equally distributed regardless of the gender of the speaker or the referents. Sienicki's (2014) study of the historical changes of *you guys* is along the same lines as Heyd, as Sienicki argues *you guys* has become grammaticalized in its pronominal context, and that it has been reshaped into a pronominal unit without conveying any masculine meanings. Other appositive uses such as *you fellows*, on the other hand, have retained their structural and semantic properties and have not been

grammaticalized (Sienicki 2014: 101). So, according to Sienicki (2014), *you guys* no longer carries information about gender, but there are still feminine versions of the pronoun in use, such as *you girls*, which could index emphasis on the addressees' gender.

Second person plural forms *you* + number also lack research, although Galiano (2020) includes them in her study. Her study reveals that *you* + number forms might be grammaticalized, as their only function is not specifying the number of addressees, but they can be used to e.g. express politeness or contrast between the speaker and addressees (Galiano 2020: 189).

2PL forms have thus been the topic of research to some extent, but more research is needed. In the following section, different dictionaries and grammar books are consulted to see, whether these 2PL forms are mentioned and how they are defined by dictionaries and grammars, which generally have a tendency to focus more on standard English rather than colloquial linguistic phenomena.

### **2.1.3 2PL Forms in Dictionaries and Grammars**

Mentions in dictionaries and reference grammar books could help determine, to what degree informal language phenomena are acknowledged and used. For this section, the online versions of *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, and *Collins Dictionary* were consulted. In addition to these official dictionaries, *Urban Dictionary* was also searched, since it provides an informal, colloquial point of view to 2PL forms. The grammars considered were Biber et al.'s (2021) *Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, Huddleston and Pullum's (2002) *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* and Michael Swan's (2016) *Practical English Usage*.

*The Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) defines *yous(e)* as a regional, mainly Scottish, Irish English, American, and Australian English phenomenon. Etymologically it describes it as *you* (pronoun) + *-s* suffix marking plural ending. Regarding the frequency of *youse*, OED states that it occurs between 0.01 and 0.1 times per million words in modern English and it is "not commonly found in general text types like novels and newspapers" but it is "not overly opaque or obscure" (OED).

(1) Good luck to *youse*. (OED)

(2) *You*s are lovely boys, specially since *you*s are going to let us in for nothing.  
(OED)

OED does not mention anything of the different functions of *you*s(e), e.g. the possibility of the pronoun functioning as a possessive determiner. Different forms of the pronoun are mentioned, such as *yez*, *yowz*, *yooz*, *youz*, *youze* and *yuz*.

Regarding *y'all*, OED classifies it as a U.S. regional, chiefly southern, and Caribbean phenomenon. Originally, according to OED, it is formed by compounding the pronoun *you* with the adjective *all*. It is said to be “probably originally a plural form with plural reference” (OED), but occasionally used with singular reference to express inclusiveness to a group. *Y'all* can also be used – with either singular or plural reference – as a marker of familiarity or informality (OED). The double-marked form *you-alls/y'alls* is also mentioned in the OED.

*You'uns* is categorized as a compound of the pronoun *you* and plural of pronoun *one*. Regionally, it is placed to the U.S., more specifically the Midland and Appalachian. Several different forms and spelling variants are listed, starting from the 1800s and going through some changes towards the 2000s: e.g. *youns*, *you'ns*, *y'uns*, *ye'ns*, *y'uns*, *yens*, *yoons*. The forms *yins*, *yinz*, *younz* and *yunz* are named specifically Pennsylvanian forms.

(3) Why did you uns have to stop here?

*Merriam-Webster* defines *you*s(e) as a pronoun of substandard nature. The description of the form simply states that it is “usually used in addressing two or more persons or sometimes one person as representing also another or others” (Merriam-Webster). *Y'all* is categorized as a mainly Southern U.S. variant. For *you'uns* and its variants, no entries are to be found in *Merriam-Webster*.

In *Collins Dictionary*, *youse* is defined as an American English phenomenon. The dictionary entry states that it is not standard and defines the word as *you*, usually addressing two or more people (Collins Dictionary Online).

(4) Youse are prejudicial, and what's more *youse* are philistines. (Collins Dictionary Online)

Interestingly, *yous* has its own entries in the Collins Dictionary, both an American (AmE) and British English (BrE) one. For the BrE entry, it is categorized as not standard and defined as referring to more than one person addressed "but not including the speaker" (Collins Dictionary Online). For the American English entry, the definition is simply "plural of *you*" (Collins Dictionary Online).

(5) "Take a houl't of yourself," I said to her, "for the *two of yous* will be back together yet". (Collins Dictionary Online)

*Y'all* is, again, named a Southern AmE phenomenon in the Collins Dictionary Online. Still, it has its own entries under both BrE and AmE, categorized as an informal variant of *you all*. *You'uns* is also categorized as an informal, AmE form that pluralizes *you*. *Yinz* or other variants of the pronoun were not listed in Collins Dictionary.

(6) This here'll take a minute. Y'all just talk amongst yourselves. (Collins Dictionary Online)

Neither for the forms *you* + number nor *you* + PL-NP were entries found in dictionaries, which might suggest that they have not yet been lexicalized or grammaticalized to an inseparable unit.

*Urban Dictionary* (UD) is an online dictionary of English slang started in 1999, which currently includes over 4 million definitions of slang words. It is updated by users, meaning it is not an academically reliable source alone, but can offer some insight as to how speakers themselves see and feel about certain linguistic phenomena. Together with official dictionaries it can thus be a useful source of information for spoken language phenomena like 2PL forms.

For *yous(e)*, UD offers two entries: *youse* (spelled *you'se*) is defined simply as a plural for *you*. The other entry is for "*You'se a Bitch*", a phrase for "calling out a friend, whether



it be for ditching the guys to hang out with their girlfriend, or calling them out for not doing something, thus beibng a coward” (Urban Dictionary). The spelling variant *youz(e)* provides more entries. Some of the most commonly occurred definitions included mentions of use on the East Coast of the U.S., especially by Italian-Americans. Plurality is also mentioned. The attitudes towards the form are seemingly negative, as can be noted from the following definitions:

- (7) Improper way of saying, "You guys." (Urban Dictionary, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=youz+guys>)
- (8) Plural of the word "You" as spelt by fucking idiots. (Urban Dictionary, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Youz>)

Definitions for *y'all* in UD are along the same lines as *youz(e)*: it is defined as a contraction of *you all* and as an expression of plurality. Southern United States are mentioned as the main region of use. The attitudes towards the usage of *y'all* seem to be more positive than that of *youz(e)*. In some entries (see example 9) it is contrasted with *you(se) guys* and named a “better”, more efficient way of addressing more than one people. Sociolinguistic concerns and attitudes towards different varieties are also mentioned, as can be seen from examples (10) and (11).

- (9) The only way to address two or more people. Y'all sounds a heck of a lot better than youse guys and is more efficient as well. (Urban Dictionary, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=y%27all>)
- (10) when a black person says it, its ghetto. when a white person says it, its country. (Urban Dictionary, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=y%27all>)
- (11) The form of you + all. Mostly southern people use it. Pretty much all educated southerners use y'all, not just the poor and uneducated. (Urban Dictionary, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=y%27all>)

*You(s) guys* is defined as an informal way of addressing a group of people, without really specifying the gender. Regionally, it is labelled mainly to concern the East Coast of the U.S., particularly New Jersey and New York regions. The pragmatic use of *you*

*guys* to express speaker's anger or upset towards the hearers is also mentioned, which can suggest the pragmatic role of *you guys* as an out-group marker, as opposed to *y'all* as an in-group marker. The speakers' attitudes towards *you guys* seems to be very negative, as already mentioned in regard to *y'all*, which is seen as the better alternative for expressing plurality. Example (12) offers a very negative review of the form, suggesting it is used by less-educated people who do not speak English very well. Example (13) highlights another issue by pointing out the male as the normal in language.

(12) This term is used to reduce the awkwardness that the less-educated among us have with the fact that the singular and plural form of "you" in English is the same. -- A particularly vulgar aberration of an already bad-enough term would be to say "yous guys", which is often heard in Long Island. And then, there is the Southern aberration, "y'all" - an example of Southerners' unfamiliarity with the English language. (Urban Dictionary, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=yous%20guys>)

(13) Proof of America's sexist bias. Although it's obviously designed to address the male sex, this phrase is used just as often by girls between girls. (Urban Dictionary, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=yous%20guys>)

*You lot* is defined as simply a variant of *you guys* or *you people*. *You people* on the other hand raises a question about race, as it is labelled by many entries as a racial slur used for “referring to others that are not of your race” (Urban Dictionary, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=You%20people>). Almost all entries regard it as a negative term, an insult or a slur, and thus functions as an out-group marker similarly to *you guys*.

*You ones* does not have an entry in UD, but the forms *you-uns* and *yinz* do. *Yinz* is defined as a plural form for *you* with very negative evaluations such as a “western-Pennsylvania bastardization of the phrase you ones” and “something people from the city of Pittsburgh say to indicate that they are mentally handicapped and/or illiterate”, displaying strong negative attitudes towards the form. The entries for *you'uns* are somewhat more neutral, assigning the form to central Appalachia.

Similarly to official dictionaries, *you* + number forms did not have entries of their own in Urban Dictionary.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 426) mention *you* as a pronoun that only has a plain form, however in relation to deictic use plural and singular *you* are differentiated. Dialectal forms *youse*, *you-all*, and *y'all* are mentioned in a footnote. *You all* is also mentioned as a “compound pronoun” like *we all* and *they all*, for example (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 427).

Biber et al. (2021) refer to the problem of the ambiguity of the addressee regarding *you* in their *Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. They state that there are different strategies of making the reference more explicit, naming *you all*, *yous*, *you + number* and *you + NP*. Regional and dialectal variation is also mentioned in reference to the non-standard 2PL. The term second-person plural pronoun is used in reference to *yous* by Biber et al. and it is stated that it fills the gap in the English pronominal paradigm in number marking. (Biber et al. 2021: 330).

(14) I am sick to death of yous – All yous do is fight and ruck and fight – do you ever see a house like it Albert? (Biber et al. 2021: 330)

Michael Swan mentions different singular and plural forms for *you* in his grammar book for English learners, *Practical English Usage*, in which he states that separate forms for singular and plural *you* exist in certain varieties of English. Swan mentions e.g. the use of *thu/tha* and *thee* in Yorkshire as singular forms and plural forms *ye*, *youse* and *yiz* in “some British dialects”. Regarding American English Swan also mentions *you + plural noun phrases* (e.g. *you guys*) and the plural form *you all*, *y'all*, which he argues to be an expression of intimacy or politeness. In addition to the subject form *y'all*, Swan also mentions the possessive form *y'all's*. (Swan 2016: 174).

Dictionaries and grammars tend to either categorize 2PL forms as substandard, informal phenomena or they fail to include them altogether. Both Swan (2016) and Biber et al. (2021) are descriptive grammars, which include non-standard forms of language. However, the non-standardness of the phenomenon is emphasized. This raises questions about standard English, what it is, and how standardness is defined. These questions will be discussed in the following section, where definitions (or attempts to define) standard

English will be introduced. The entries from Urban Dictionary also suggest that 2PL forms have important sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects – which other dictionaries and grammars fail to acknowledge – that should be taken into consideration.

## 2.2 Standard English

The previous section 2.1.4 can be concluded by saying that 2PL forms are labeled dialectal, regional, colloquial, or *non-standard* in most dictionaries and reference grammars. One question that arises from this is obviously: what is standard English? A layperson would probably describe standard English as the variety learned in schools and that grammarians write about. Scholars in linguistics have, however, long debated over what is considered standard and non-standard English. Linguistic debate is often linked to social concerns of prestige and acceptability: what is ‘good’, ‘correct’ and ‘acceptable’ English. The ideal of standardness can have many social consequences. (cf. for example Milroy 1999, Watts 1999, Garrett 2010).

The emergence of prescriptivist grammars of English increased in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, leading to attitude changes among the speakers as well (Milroy & Milroy 2012). What is usually meant by ‘standard’ in reference to language, is a *canonical, legitimized* form of a language, which emerges as a result of a conscious standardization process (Milroy 1999: 17). These forms of languages are considered uniform, which is somewhat paradoxical to the fact that no language, that is in active use, is actually uniform but in continuous state of change: while speakers might believe there is a canonical form of language, that language continues to change and vary, and it will never be exactly what is described as the canonical, standard variety (Milroy 1999: 18).

The definitions of standard English has been an ongoing debate among linguists for long. While the differentiation between spoken and written language has not always been taken into account, Standard English is often used synonymously with written English, although not all writing is standard English (Bex & Watts 1999: 6–8). Trudgill and Hannah (2013: 2) argue that while native speakers learn to read and write standard English, few actually speak it.

Trudgill (1999) tries to establish that standard English is not a language of its own, nor an accent, a style or a register. He states that most British sociolinguistics at least would agree that standard English is a dialect, a variety among other varieties of English (Trudgill 1999: 123). What distinguishes standard English from other varieties, is grammatical forms, as opposed to lexical or phonological features (Trudgill 1999:125). Standard English is not a regional dialect, but a social one (Trudgill 1999:125). One of the grammatical idiosyncrasies of standard English that Trudgill (1999: 126) lists as distinguishing features from non-standard varieties is the lack of distinction between second person singular and plural pronouns.

Milroy and Milroy (2012) argue that language attitudes are mostly based on ideologies of standardness of a language and standardness is often concerned with correctness, uniformity and invariance. With the prestige of standard English, regional, informal and colloquial varieties and their speakers have suffered from a lower prestige, both resulting from and in social consequences (see e.g. Peterson, 2019). According to Peterson (2019), these informal, spoken varieties are often coined as ‘bad English’ as opposed to the standard ‘good English’. This dichotomy of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ English is very deeply rooted into speakers’ attitudes and values related to linguistic matters. Davis (1999: 69) points out that the prestige of standard English stems from its status as the language of education. Speakers – or writers, rather – of standard English are regarded as more educated and intelligent than those of informal varieties.

As stated in section 2.1, 2PL forms are generally considered colloquial, regional and dialectal phenomena and thus a part of spoken rather than written language. This means that 2PL forms tend to be considered non-standard by grammarians and dictionaries. As a non-standard phenomenon, 2PL forms can be met with different attitudes towards their usage by the speakers. For example, *y’all* along with other southern AmE features are widely met with negative attitudes and considered low status in comparison with a ‘neutral’, more standard dialect or variety (Soukoup 2000). In section 2.1 it was also noted that in Urban Dictionary, which is compiled by speakers themselves rather than trained linguists, the sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects and uses of the 2PL forms were considered. This further proves the attitudes towards 2PL forms, which in the entries of the Urban Dictionary seemed to be rather negative towards many of the forms.

Standard English as a prestige variety and prescriptivist attitudes of speakers seem to thus persist.

## 2.3 Language change and Grammaticalization

As discussed in the previous section 2.2, language change and different dialectal varieties can be subject to different attitudes, both negative and positive. In this section, the processes of language change, grammaticalization and pragmaticalization are briefly introduced.

Language as a phenomenon is, as a whole, always subject to change, which is not always met with positive attitudes (Strang 1970: 3–5). Linguistic changes can appear in all areas of language, i.e. phonology, syntax, pragmatics, etc., and the spread of English into a global language has had its effects on the language and its multiple varieties (Strang 1970). As discussed in the previous section, language change and varieties can be subjected to different negative evaluations and attitudes. What needs to be stated, though, is that typically, in the process of language change, dialects and spoken language preserve many features of older, standard language, that have been lost in the contemporary standard language (Wales 1996: 15). This holds true for example in the case of English pronouns, as regional varieties still express plurality in the second person pronoun (Wales 1996:15). Language change can also work in an opposite way, as forms tend to also spread from non-standard varieties to the standard variety (Trudgill 1999: 126).

As a research framework grammaticalization studies language change concerned with questions like how some lexical items and constructions come to serve grammatical functions, and how grammatical items can develop new grammatical functions (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 1). Grammaticalization is typically studied from two points of view, a diachronic i.e. historical, and a synchronic view (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 2). Grammaticalized forms can be independent words, but that is not always the case, as they can also be e.g. clitics, inflections or derivational forms (Hopper & Traugott 2003: 4–5).

Heine and Kuteva (2002) outline the mechanisms of grammaticalization into four main types: phonetic reduction, loss of morpho-syntactic properties, semantic bleaching and context expansion. Phonetic reduction includes cases where a loss of phonetic substance occurs in an item or construction, e.g. *isn't + it* is reduced to *innit* (Childs 2021).

Semantic bleaching results from reinterpreting forms with concrete meanings into more abstract, grammatical meanings in specific contexts, which leads to the forms becoming more divergent from their old uses (Heine & Kuteva 2002: 3). Heine and Kuteva (2002) point out however that although they use the term ‘loss’, the forms also gain something, i.e. new meanings in the process of grammaticalization, as in the mechanism of context expansion.

Pragmatic marker is a term that has not yet been fully established in the field, as many alternative names for the phenomenon have been suggested, e.g. discourse particle and discourse marker (Croucher 2004). Schiffrin (1987: 32) defines the term discourse marker as elements that can be added to and removed from sentences freely, without affecting the syntactic structure. Thus, they add pragmatic but not syntactic value to the sentence. Pragmatic markers in English have been studied quite extensively (e.g. Schiffrin 1987, Brinton 1996, Schourup 1999, Fraser 1999). Traugott (2016: 27) points out the lack of research in pragmatic markers in the clause final position, though. After the turn of the century more research has been completed on clause-final markers such as *isn't it* (Tottie & Hoffmann 2009), *innit* (Palacios Martínez 2014) and *though* (Lenker 2010). Pragmatic markers tend to be regarded mainly as a phenomenon of spoken language and especially associated with discourse (e.g. Schiffrin 1987).

In addition to the process of grammaticalization, some linguists have pointed out that certain pragmatic markers are going through a process of *pragmaticalization*: a process similar to grammaticalization but instead of grammatical markers, the emergence of pragmatic markers i.e. text-structuring devices is studied (Heine 2013: 1217). In the pragmaticalization process, lexical elements develop into pragmatic markers without first being grammaticalized (Heine 2013), resulting in the markers mainly functioning as text structuring devices in discourse (Erman & Kotsinas 1993: 79). Pragmatic markers are syntactically independent, which distinguishes them from the grammaticalization process, in which the grammaticalized items are bound to syntactic features. Some scholars (cf. Wischer 2000, Barth-Weingarten & Couper-Kuhlen 2002) regard pragmaticalization as a mere sub-category of grammaticalization, while others (cf. e.g. Erman & Kotsinas 1993, Frank-Job 2006) categorize it as a phenomenon of its own.

## 3 METHODS

In this section, the methodology of the study will be explained. Firstly, the corpora used will be introduced, and secondly the dataset and its collection. Thirdly, the methods of analysis will be further explained.

### 3.1 Corpora

The corpora used in the study are The TV Corpus and The Movie Corpus. As identified above, second person plural pronouns are a part of informal language and thus mostly a phenomenon of spoken English. These corpora were chosen based on the fact that TV and movie scripts serve as an effective way to study very informal language while actual spontaneous spoken language corpora can be quite small and not offer as much variety. For instance, the Movie Corpus is about 20 times as large as the conversational portion of the BNC, so these corpora offer much more data to study.

Scripted texts might not be optimal for the study of spoken language phenomena, since they might not be represented in the scripts at all, or the use of the forms might not be as natural as in actual conversations. However, since this study does not try to look at a specific variety and give an exhaustive explanation of the variety represented, scripts are a good source of data, even if the representation of the variables might be stereotyped or otherwise not as natural as possible. Moreover, the fact that these phenomena appear in fictional forms may suggest that they have been well established in certain linguistic varieties. In addition to scripted television and movies, the corpora also contain some reality TV, which also offers examples from spontaneous language use.

The TV Corpus contains 325 million words from 75,000 TV episodes from the 1950s to 2018. The Movies Corpus contains 200 million words from more than 25,000 films from the 1930s to 2018. Both corpora make it possible to study variation over time and between dialects. The corpora include TV shows and movies from around the English speaking world, which offers a great way to study the differences in 2PL usage within different varieties of English. The regions listed in the corpora are the US and Canada, the UK and Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand and miscellaneous. This limits the



varieties to inner-circle varieties of English but should offer an interesting view of how these large varieties use non-standard 2PL. The majority of the movies and TV shows are from the US which also sets some limitations to the study, and which will be noted in the final statistics and analysis before making quantitative statements about the regional distribution of the use of 2PL. Some limitations to the regional study were also met as the corpora do not allow differentiation between e.g. Irish and Scottish, or different U.S. regional varieties, but broad generalizations could be drawn from the data.

The data will be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analysis will answer research question 1, while the qualitative analysis will answer research questions 2 and 3. For the qualitative analysis the aim is to find out, in what different functions of grammatical (e.g. number, possession) and pragmatic (politeness, attention-getting etc.) marking the plural forms have.

### 3.2 Dataset

The studied variables and search tokens for the study were chosen based on previous research on non-standard 2PL forms (cf. e.g. Wales 1996, Hickey 2003, Galiano 2020). The data was manually checked to filter out occurrences of pluralized nominalized expressions like *thank yous* (example 1 below). In the case of *you* + number forms, *you* appeared next to a number in non-addressive contexts as well (example 2), in which case these examples also had to be discarded from the dataset. Other occurrences that had to be discarded from the dataset included instances of metalinguistic comments (3), spelling mistakes, and copy entries in the corpus.

- (1) Now, in doing this, we should also say our thank *yous* and our goodbyes to all these stores around us.
- (2) Anyway, I asked *you two* years later.
- (3) You don't understand. You're fired. "You", plural. *Youse. Y'all*. Both of you!

Each 2PL form was individually searched and analyzed. Since the corpora and the regional sub-sections within the corpora were not equal in size, the frequencies are represented on a per-million words basis to get a somewhat representative result. For the

functional and pragmatic analysis, a randomized set of 1,000 tokens for each variable from each corpus was created since the size of the data would otherwise have been too large for this study, but a 1,000 tokens per form offers reliable enough data to draw conclusions from. Regarding some of the variables, there were less than a thousand occurrences in the corpora, in which case all the available data was analyzed.

Some further limitations to the analysis were established by the corpora used. For example, collocate analysis for the standard *you* was not possible since collocates for words occurring more than a million times in a corpus could not be found in the corpora. For this study, this meant that functions and collocates for standard *you* could only be considered via previous research on the topic. The findings of 2PL forms in this study were thus compared with previous researchers' findings on the standard form *you*.

### **3.3 Methods of Analysis**

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative analysis is conducted on 2PL forms. With quantitative analysis, the aim is to show the frequencies at which the 2PL forms appear in TV and movie texts and whether some forms are more frequent than others. Geographical differences will also be taken into account in the quantitative analysis. The frequencies used in the quantitative analysis are on a per-million-word basis to ensure the data is comparable regardless of the size of the dataset from the region.

In the qualitative analysis, the functions of 2PL forms are analyzed. The two main functions are, as stated in section 2.1.1, grammatical and pragmatic marking. Grammatical marking concerns pluralization – which is expected to be the most frequent function for the 2PL forms – and marking possession. These are the main types of grammatical functions expected to be found in the case of 2PL. Grammatical functions will be analyzed manually by annotating the examples in the dataset with either plural or possessive functions. Any precise quantitative conclusions cannot be drawn from this analysis, but some general trends will be stated.

Pragmatic marking includes for example expressions of attitude, e.g. politeness or contrast between the speaker and interlocutor, which can be e.g. familiarity,

hierarchy etc. (Lakoff 1973, Grice 1975, Brown & Levinson 1987, Watts 2003). Pragmatic markers can also function as attention-getting devices, i.e. vocatives, which is a very typical pragmatic function for 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns (Sonnenhauser & Noel-Aziz 2013). Scholars studying 2PL forms in English have also found that they tend to function in emphatic identification with a singular referent, where the emphatic identification can be either positive or negative (Galiano 2020). Pragmatic marking will also be analyzed and annotated manually.

Finally, a collocate analysis will be conducted to provide further evidence on the pragmatic functions by looking at the types of words 2PL forms tend to collocate with and in which types of constructions and utterances they are likely to occur in. The qualitative analysis will not include any statistical analysis, but some preliminary assumptions about frequencies of the functions of 2PL might be possible to be made.

## 4 ANALYSIS

In this section, both quantitative and qualitative analysis will be conducted on all 2PL forms concerned in this study. Section 4.1 includes suffixed 2PL forms, section 4.2 *you* + number forms, section 4.3 *y'all* and 4.4 *you* + NP-PL forms. All sections follow the same pattern, where firstly quantitative analysis is presented, followed by a grammatical functional analysis, and finally considering the pragmatics and semantics of the 2PL forms. Section 4.5 draws conclusions from all the analyses of the 2PL forms in the previous sections and in section 4.6 geographical variation of the 2PL forms is discussed.

### 4.1 Suffixed 2PL forms

Suffixed 2PL forms are formed by the process of suffixation of the second person plural pronoun *you* with the morpheme *-s* as in e.g. *yous(e)*, as is the case in regular pluralization in English (e.g. *otter* (SG) + *-s* → *otters* (PL)) (Galiano 2020). Due to the lack of occurrences in the corpora, the rarer orthographic variations (*yuz*, *yooz*, *youz*, *yez*, *yiz*) were not included in the analysis.

#### 4.1.1 Frequencies

The following tables (1) and (2) illustrate the frequencies of suffixed 2PL forms in the corpora by region.

	US/CA	UK/IE	AU/NZ	Misc
<i>yous</i>	0.93	7.74	3.23	0.14
<i>youse</i>	1.40	4.58	16.92	0.00

Table (1): Suffixed 2PL forms. Frequencies per million words by region in The Movie Corpus.

	US/CA	UK/IE	AU/NZ	Misc
yous	0.94	7.76	0.39	0.95
youse	1.40	4.58	16.92	0.00

Table (2): Suffixed 2PL forms. Frequencies per million words by region in the TV Corpus.

From the evidence on these two tables, we can state that *youse* is much more common in Australian/New Zealand English than the other varieties. *Yous* is the most frequent in BrE and IrE in both corpora. Interestingly, if the miscellaneous category is ignored, Northern American varieties have the least instances of both pronouns in comparison to the other varieties.

#### 4.1.2 Grammatical Functions

The function of marking plurality is obviously one of the most important functions of suffixed 2PL forms, as in example (1). However, cases with a singular referent could also be identified (see example 2). Instances of suffixed 2PL forms functioning in possessive functions were also found, replacing the standard possessive determiner *your* (see example 3). Possessive function was usually marked with an apostrophe like in standard English. Although no statistical analysis of the frequencies of the functions was done, plural marking seemed to be the most frequent function of suffixed 2PL forms while possessive functions were much less frequent.

- (1) Guys? Stop! Hey! Hey! Hey, did *yous* take a blue mattress from outside?
- (2) Homer, we're just saying *youse* got a special skill.
- (3) And if he slips, he'll bust both of *yous'* butts.

Cases where the suffixed *you* was used referring to a singular referent were present in the dataset, as in example (4). This finding is in alignment with previous research on 2PL forms which state that some 2PL forms have started to behave similarly to the standard pronoun *you*, not actually marking number at all (e.g. Mulder & Penry Williams 2020).

(4) *Yous* is right, butchy. This don't feel right.

Cases where *yous(e)* is used as an abbreviation for *you + is* were also identified (see examples 7 and 8). In some cases, it was left ambiguous whether the referent is singular or plural, as in example (6), where *yous* could either be analyzed as *you + is* or a plural pronoun with an emission of the copula (*Yous are a bunch of...*).

(5) *Yous* a fuckin' sellout.

(6) What do you think, Marley? Yeah, *youse* a good dog.

(7) *Yous* a bunch of fuckin' jerk-offs, do you know that?

Although *yous(e)* appeared with a singular verb form in the dataset, the standard 2<sup>nd</sup> person conjugation of the verb seemed to be more frequent.

### 4.1.3 Pragmatic Functions

Pragmatically, suffixed 2PL forms seem to carry out two main functions: expressing emphasis with a singular referent and marking distance between the speaker and addressee(s). *Yous(e)* tends to be used as a speaker's (often negative) evaluation of the referent(s) as in examples (1), (2) and (3). *Yous(e)* is often used with another marker of number, most commonly a plural noun phrase, in which cases the phrase was almost always negatively charged.

(1) Quit breathing, *youse bastards*.

(2) Get the fuck out of London, *youse dumb fucks*.

(3) You know, maybe *yous* all deserve to be in prison.

For the collocate analysis of *yous(e)*, the corpora were combined to find ten most frequent collocations for the pronoun. The collocates *thank* and *love* were discarded due to the occurrences as a nominalized expression with *yous* (*thank yous*, *love yous*). The ten most frequent collocates were: *two*, *guys*, *both*, *are*, *lot*, *later*, *fuck*, *fuckin'*, *lads* and *boys*.

Three of the ten most frequent collocates are plural nouns (*guys, lads, boys*). The number *two* was by far the most frequent collocate. *Both* and *lot* also imply plurality. These findings suggest that double marking with *yous(e)* and a plural nominal expression, number and the determiner or pronoun *both* is very common. The only grammatical word in the ten collocates is the copula *are*, which was to be expected to collocate with *yous(e)*.

*Both* occurred mostly in the structure *both of yous(e)*, as in (4), while it could also appear on the right of *yous(e)* (*yous(e) both*). *Two, guys* and *lot* clearly appear as fixed structures with *yous(e)* on the left. *Lads* seems to function as an attention-getting device, followed by *yous(e)* in a sentence (see example 5) or as a term of address following *yous(e)* when someone is offering something to someone (see example 6). *Boys* appears both as a structure *yous(e) boys* and similarly to *lads* as an attention-getting device (see example 7) or a term of address (see example 8). *Fuck* occurs mostly in the phrase *fuck you* (see example 9) and *later* in the phrase *see you later* (see example 11).

- (4) I'll take *both* of *youse* down with me!
- (5) Well, look *lads*, do *yous* all understand what we're going to vote on?
- (6) Fags for *youse, lads*.
- (7) Hey, *boys*. Do *youse* want to find a million billion Flash bars, yeah?
- (8) I see *yous* Millwall *boys* are away up North today.
- (9) *Fuck yous* all.
- (10) *Yous* killed my da, you bastards! *Yous fucking* killed my da!
- (11) I'll see *youse later*, okay?

It seems that *yous(e)* appears often in phatic and formulaic phrases replacing the standard *you*, as in examples (4), (9) and (11). The collocation with *two* and plural nouns suggests the frequency of *you* + number and *you* + NP-PL forms and their relevance for the study of 2PL forms.

The collocate analysis also provides some information on the pragmatic functions of the suffixed 2PL forms. In the collocate analysis, *yous(e)* appeared both as an attention-getting device and as personal pronouns, which can be seen from e.g. the collocation with the copula *are*, with which *yous(e)* mostly functions similarly to a personal pronoun.

Suffixed 2PL forms also function in emphatic identification, where the evaluation of the referent(s) is often negative, which is supported by the collocate analysis which revealed the collocation with the expletives *fuck* and *fucking* (see examples 9 and 10). Negative evaluations can be seen also in example (4) and even in (5), where the speaker might be underestimating the intelligence of the referents.

Suffixed 2PL forms do not always carry a negative evaluation of the referent(s) but can also be used simply as markers of informality, which can be seen in e.g. examples (6), (7), (8) and (11). Especially in example (6), informality is also marked by the colloquial word choice of *fags* instead of a more standard *cigarettes*.

## 4.2 You + all

In this section, the analytic form *you* + quantifier *all* as a post-modifier will be analyzed. For the purposes of this study, the phrase *you all* was discarded from the search tokens and the pronominal form *y'all* (and the orthographic variant *yall*) were searched instead. *Y'all* has been regarded by some scholars to already have been gone through a grammaticalization process (e.g. Galiano 2020).

*Y'all* has already been noted to occur in phatic and formulaic phrases like *thank y'all*, *see y'all later* (Wales 2003: 16) as was the case in my previous analysis of *yous(e)*. Galiano (2020: 215) argues that *y'all* is already a grammaticalized form of *you all* and the most grammaticalized form of it is *yall* since the constituents *you* and *all* cannot be identified in the form. *Yall* and its function as a single-reference pronoun and a possessive determiner also suggest a high degree of grammaticalization (Galiano 2020: 223). However, Galiano (2020: 223) also argues that *y'all* is less grammaticalized since it does not function as a possessive determiner.

Pragmatically speaking, *y'all* and its variants have intersubjective functions, which suggests they function in managing speaker-hearer relations by e.g. expressing politeness and guiding the addressees' attention towards what is being said (Traugott 2013), which is similar to the findings with other 2PL forms (cf. section 4.3 and 4.4).



### 4.2.1 Frequencies

The following tables (3) and (4) illustrate the frequencies of *y'all* and *yall* in the corpora according to geographical variation.

	US/CA	UK/IE	AU/NZ	Misc
<i>y'all</i>	80.80	14.29	13.04	26.62
<i>yall</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table (3): *You + all* forms. Frequencies per million words by region in The Movie Corpus.

	US/CA	UK/IE	AU/NZ	Misc
<i>y'all</i>	53.02	3.09	2.72	11.86
<i>yall</i>	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table (4): *You + all* forms. Frequencies per million words by region in The TV Corpus.

It is evident in the tables (3) and (4) that *y'all/yall* occurs much more frequently in Northern American English than in other varieties, which is in line with the form's general association with American English, especially Southern varieties (Wales 2003: 15), although from this data it cannot be clearly deduced which regional AmE variety these examples occur in.

The frequencies of *y'all* in BrE/IrE and AuE/NZE are similar in both corpora, and much smaller than in AmE. This suggests that *y'all* is indeed first and foremost an AmE phenomenon, although it has spread to other varieties as well to some extent. The miscellaneous category can include e.g. co-productions with American studios, which might explain the higher frequency of *y'all* in that category.

It is also noteworthy that the spelling variant *yall* was much less frequent than *y'all*. In the TV Corpus, only 8 tokens for *yall* were found while in the Movie Corpus there were no occurrences of *yall* without the apostrophe. This might suggest that the most grammaticalized form, according to Galiano (2020), has not yet been established in screenwriting but they prefer the form *y'all* and hence, *y'all* can be regarded as the more popular variant.

#### 4.2.2 Grammatical Functions

For *y'all/yall*, as with suffixed 2PL forms, marking plurality seems to be the most frequent grammatical function, as was expected. *Y'all/yall* appears in both subjective (see example 1) and objective (see example 2) functions marking plurality of the subject or object.

- (1) *Y'all* want me to step up; This is me stepping up.
- (2) So I'll see *y'all* when we get there.

While *y'all/yall* mostly seems to function similarly to a plural personal pronoun, it can also take a singular referent (see example 3), making its status as a 2PL form ambiguous. *Y'all/yall* can also co-occur with a singular verb form (see example 4), in which case it is ambiguous, whether the referent is plural or not.

- (3) What kind of pansy Englishman are you? *Yall* from around these parts?
- (4) *Y'all* wasn't listening to me though.

As a possessive determiner, *y'all/yall* occurs both with the clitic -'s (see example 5) and without one (see example 6). Similarly to suffixed 2PL forms, possessive functions seem to be much less frequent than marking plurality, although no statistical analysis was conducted. *Y'all/yall* seems to have also developed a form of possessive pronoun (see example 7), formed with the suffix -'s, as is the case in the standard possessive pronoun *yours*. This type of function was not found in suffixed 2PL forms,

and could be due to the grammaticalization of *y'all/yall*, meaning it's appearing in different functions of the standard plural pronoun *you*.

- (5) We kicked *y'all* ass. All *y'all*. *Y'all* got your ass kicked.
- (6) It's *y'all's* fault, okay?
- (7) I'm a big fan of all of *y'all's*, every single one
- (8) One room for the boys, and one room for the girls... Unless any of *y'all's* married.

Not all forms of *y'all/yall* with the possessive –'s are possessives, though. Example 8 illustrates a case where the form *y'all's* can be interpreted as *y'all* with plural -s or the ending -s could also be a contraction of the copula *is* (in the sense of *y'all is*). The apostrophe would suggest it to be a contraction of *is*, but in the context the -s-ending could be either a plurality marker or a copula.

Cases of double-marking were also present in the dataset. The strategies of double marking included e.g. adding the quantifier *all* in front of *y'all/yall* (see example 8) or following it with a plural noun phrase (see example 9). Double marking seems to be quite common with 2PL forms as they occurred with suffixed 2PL forms as well. Double marking as a phenomenon is interesting, since it raises questions as to why the speakers feel the need to add another marker of plurality to the already inherently pluralized form. It might stem from the speakers not recognizing and analyzing the plurality of the form and thus feeling like they need to make the plurality explicit by other means, e.g. adding the standard plural suffix -s to the form or using analytic strategies such as following the form with a plural noun phrase.

- (9) All *y'all* had.
- (10) What took *y'all* guys so long?

Another interesting feature that accompanied *y'all/yall* that stood out from the data was the omission of copula and auxiliary verbs. *Y'all/yall* are often used in this manner, which might stem from African American English (AAE), as copula and auxiliary omission are prevalent features of the variety (Green 2002). Examples (10)–(12) illustrate this feature of *y'all/yall*.

- (11) And here *y'all* saying ain't no hell... ain't... sure about heaven.
- (12) How *y'all* doing today?
- (13) *Y'all* think *y'all* so fucking tough!

Grammatically *y'all/yall* functions most frequently as a plurality marker but it does also have possessive functions as a possessive determiner and a possessive pronoun. It can also have a singular referent or appear with a singular form of the verb. Double marking by plural -s or analytic strategies such as occurrence with a plural noun phrase were also identified. Another observation of *y'all/yall* was made from the form's co-occurrence with copula and auxiliary omission, which is a typical feature of AAE and Southern AmE varieties in general, which might explain this behavior, since *y'all/yall* is a salient feature of these varieties as well.

### 4.2.3 Pragmatic Functions

Pragmatically speaking *y'all/yall* functions as an attention-getting device, a pragmatic marker, a politeness strategy and to contrast speaker from the addressee(s). Cases of emphatic identification with a singular referent were also found, but the first three categories seemed much more frequent.

As a pragmatic marker, *y'all/yall* is mostly found on the right periphery of an utterance, as is typical for pragmatic markers. This behavior can be seen on example (1). As an attention-getting device, *y'all/yall* can work to guide the addressees' focus towards what the speaker is going to say (see example 2), or e.g. to join the conversation. The latter use is especially common with greeting expressions as in example (3).

- (1) This is the fucking American dream, *y'all*.
- (2) *Y'all*, wait a second. What do you want it to say?
- (3) Hey, *y'all*. Happy Tuesday. Hey, Jenn, any news about Roller?

As mentioned above, *y'all/yall* can also function as a politeness strategy and to contrast speaker from the addressee. Since statistical analysis was not conducted in this

study, it cannot be analyzed whether politeness or negative contrast between the speaker and addressee is more frequent, but both seemed to be very prevalent in the dataset. As was observed in the literature review (cf. section #####), one of the pragmatic functions of *y'all/yall* is expressing intimacy or familiarity between the speaker and addressee, so politeness strategies, expressing inclusiveness or diminishing the contrast between the speaker and addressee were to be expected to occur in the dataset (see examples 4–6).

- (4) So, what *y'all* want to play?
- (5) Oh, how *y'all* doing?
- (6) Thank *y'all* so much.

As a contrastive element for the speaker to distance themselves from the addressee, *y'all/yall* is used in a negative sense, as in examples (7)–(9).

- (7) Come on, move, *y'all* moving too slow.
- (8) But leave her at home if *y'all* gonna be arguing like that.
- (9) This does smell like bullshit. *Y'all* get out of my house.

The ten most frequent collocates for *y'all/yall* were *are*, *got*, *want*, *see*, *doing*, *need*, *thank*, *ready*, *ain't* and *later*. The collocation with the copula *are* and the colloquial, negative variant *ain't* are quite self-explanatory and were expected to collocate with *y'all/yall*. The colloquial form *ain't* however hints towards Southern AmE and AAE varieties, and the use of *y'all/yall* as an informality marker and possibly a marker of inclusivity in groups that use these varieties. *Ain't* is a negative form which might suggest that *y'all* often occurs in contexts of negation.

*Ready* collocates with *y'all/yall* in a rather formulaic, interrogative phrase “*Y'all ready?*” which is used as an attention-getting device to try and get the addressees excited, as in example (10).

- (10) *Y'all* ready to have some fun?!

*Got* collocates with *y'all/yall* on both left and right sides of the form, so the expressions it occurred in are manifold. Politeness is evident in many cases, as in example (11) where the speaker compliments the apartment of the addressee(s) or in example (12) in a request. On the other hand, example (13) shows that politeness is not always the motivator for the use of *y'all/yall* with *got*, and in many cases it simply expresses possibility or ownership. *Y'all/yall* prefers to collocate with *got* instead of the form *gotten*, which further establishes it as an AmE variant, as *got* is the preferred variant in AmE as opposed to the BrE *gotten*.

(11) Boy, *y'all* got a real nice place here.

(12) *Y'all* got any ribs?

(13) Ain't *y'all* got some place to go?

*Want* is used with *y'all/yall* mostly to either introduce someone (see example 14) or to offer someone something (see example 15). The structure “*I want y'all to...*” is also used as a hedging device in requests and orders. *Want* in collocation with *y'all/yall* is thus used as a politeness strategy in many situations.

(14) I want *y'all* to meet a friend of mine.

(15) *Y'all* want a little coffee to wash that down.

(16) I want *y'all* to keep your hands on this bar till I'm out of here.

*Thank*, *see* and *later* are parts of phatic and formulaic expressions, e.g. in greetings (“*See you later*”) and thanking. In this aspect, *y'all/yall* is similar to suffixed 2PL which also collocated with words in phatic and formulaic expressions (cf. section 4.1.3).

### 4.3 You + Number

For *you* + number search tokens, the numbers two and three were chosen based on the hypothesis that they would be the most frequent collocates. After searching for *you* + other numbers in the corpora, this hypothesis seemed to be correct as most of the occurrences were cases where *you* + number was not used to address a group of people,

but the number followed *you* and was again followed by e.g. a noun phrase, as in examples (1) and (2). In some cases, a higher number and *you* did refer to a group of people (see example 3), but these were relatively rare and thus left out of this study.

- (1) I made a promise to *you nine* years ago.
- (2) I'm going to show *you eight* crime scenes.
- (3) 91 % of all traffic accidents... are caused by *you six guys*.

### 4.3.1 Frequencies

The frequencies of occurrence of *you* + number forms are shown on tables (5) and (6).

	US/CA	UK/IE	AU/NZ	Misc
you two	100.76	78.14	99.31	85.32
you three	6.09	6.47	5.63	5.25

Table (5): *You* + number. Frequencies of the search tokens per million words by region in The Movie Corpus.

	US/CA	UK/IE	AU/NZ	Misc
you two	142.02	85.98	128.78	111.01
you three	7.06	4.99	4.28	6.64

Table (6): *You* + number. Frequencies of the search tokens per million words by region in The TV Corpus.

What can clearly be stated from the tables is that *you two* is much more frequent than *you three*, suggesting that the ‘dual’ form referring to just two people is more commonly used. Region-wise, *you two* is most frequent in Northern America, while *you three* is the most frequent in the British Isles in the Movie Corpus, although not in the TV Corpus.

Australia and New Zealand follow the U.S. and Canada in the use of *you two*. *You two* is the least frequent in the UK and Ireland in both corpora.

According to these numbers, one might conclude that *you two* is the most frequent form of *you* + number cases in all varieties, and that it is most frequently used in Northern American varieties of English.

### 4.3.2 Grammatical Functions

*You* pluralized by a following number seemed to have less grammatical functions than *you* + suffix or *you* + all forms. Number marking is the most frequent function of *you* + number and the forms function both as a subject and an object (see examples 1–4). *You* + number forms differ from the other 2PL forms in that they specify the number of referents while other 2PL forms refer to an unidentified number of people. This affects their use to some extent.

*You* + number by itself did not have possessive functions. Possession was expressed quite rarely in general, and when it was, it was done by adding the clitic -'s (see example 5) or by using a structure with the standard possessive determiner *your* as in example (6). Of these strategies, the use of *your* was surprisingly slightly more common. *You three* had only one instance of it appearing in a possessive function (see example 7) with no occurrences with the clitic -'s. Most of the examples with a clitic -'s were cases of double marking, which will be further discussed in section 4.3.5.

- (1) *You two* can go to hell.
- (2) I'll leave *you two* alone.
- (3) *You three* are my search committee.
- (4) I'm glad to have caught *you three*.
- (5) My performance was not as bad as *you two's*, so don't even start.
- (6) *You two* and your conspiracies.
- (7) How are *you three* and your pick-and-shovel brigade doing?

Grammatically speaking, *you* + number seems to thus have less functions than some other 2PL forms.



### 4.3.3 Pragmatic Functions

Pragmatically *you* + number function in similar functions as the other 2PL forms analyzed thus far: as a marker of inclusivity, politeness strategy, an attention-getting device and a contrasting device. One striking difference from suffixed *you* and *you* + *all* forms though is that *you* + number is not used to refer to a singular referent. This might be caused by the form, as the specification of the number of referents is encoded in the form itself, making it rather unproductive and counter-intuitive to use a singular referent with them.

*You two* has a clearly specific context of use in referring to a romantic couple (see example 1 and 2) or otherwise a very close relationship between two people, such as family, best friends, a sports club etc. (see examples 3–5). Besides this function, *you two* could, however, refer to two separate individuals that for example do not know each other at all (see example 6) or are otherwise not analyzable into a unit in referencing them, as e.g. a married couple would be.

- (1) So, *you two* are dating?
- (2) And a huge congratulations! *You two* are getting married!
- (3) *You two* were just inseparable.
- (4) How long have *you two* been brother and sister?
- (5) So *you two* grew up together?
- (6) I get the feeling *you two* are gonna really hit it off.

As an attention-getting device, *you two* is used when the speaker wants to specify the number of referents, the two individuals in question, and exclude all other possible people that might be present. In the function of an attention-getting device, *you two* is often accompanied by an imperative (examples 7–10), a directive (11) or an interjection (12). As an attention-getting device, *you two* can be placed both in the left or right periphery of the utterance.

- (7) *You two*, start an area search.
- (8) Listen *you two*, you'd better start trusting me, OK?

- (9) Cut it out, *you two*!
- (10) Have fun, *you two*!
- (11) I need *you two* to step out of the car.
- (12) Hey, *you two*, how's that going over there?

In attention-getting functions, *you two* also appeared in contexts where the referent is repeated to emphasize the number of referents from a larger group of people. In example (13), the speaker uses *you two* to get the attention before paying them the compliment. This could also be analyzed as a politeness strategy. In example (14), the speaker uses *you two* not only as an attention-getting device, but to hedge the imperative statement and make it more polite. Expressing politeness is also evident in example (15), where *you two* together with the conditional form *would* are used to make the directive more polite.

- (13) *You two*, you look amazing!
- (14) You do this one, *you two*.
- (15) Would *you two* stop?

Contrastive function seems to be much less frequent than that of marking close relationship between the referents. As a contrastive device, *you two* was used to some extent in the function of distancing the speaker from the referents. In examples (16) and (17), the speaker expresses their rather negative opinion of the referents and distances themselves from the referents – the speaker is not a slow walker, and they are not wearing something questionable. In example (18), the speaker uses *you two* to point out the referents' inactivity, again grouping them out of the same group as the speaker themselves. Outright derogatory or offensive uses of *you two* were not found in this dataset, suggesting that it is not as contrastive as e.g. *you people* or *you lot*, which will be discussed more in detail in section 4.4.

- (16) *You two walk* too slow anyway.
- (17) What the hell are *you two* wearing, anyway?
- (18) At least you made it up the mountain. No thanks to *you two*.

*You three* functions rather similarly to *you two* in many contexts. For example, *you three* functions in specifying three people out of a larger group (see examples 19–23). *You three* is also used to refer to a close group of people (examples 24 and 25), although

this function was clearly less frequent than in *you two* and less specific as *you two* (e.g. its use in reference to romantic couples).

- (19) *You three*, for at least one of you it's your last night in MasterChef.
- (20) *You three* advance to the next heat.
- (21) No, no, no, not "we all", just *you three*.
- (22) All of you! You too. Now! Get out. *You three* too. Leave. Now get out.
- (23) You, *you three*, go with him.
- (24) I'm scared. Scared that *you three* won't think I'm cool enough to hang out with any-more.
- (25) I know *you three* stick together like sperms on a blob of spunk.

*You three* in the function of an attention-getting device is very prevalent in the dataset as well. One interesting observation regarding the usage of *you three* as an attention-getting device is that it often seemed to occur in utterances with imperatives or directives in somehow negatively charged contexts. Examples (26)–(28) illustrate this behavior. All three of these examples include the speaker's negative attitude towards the addressee, as in e.g. (26) and (27) the tone of the speaker's utterance is somewhat irritated. In example (28) then, the speaker is threatening the group of addressees. Not all contexts in which *you three* was used with an imperative or a directive were negatively charged, as seen in e.g. examples (29) and (30), where they simply address the object of the command. In an attention-getting function, *you three* is occasionally also used as a sort of an interjection on its own as well (example 30).

- (26) *You three*, over there. Shut it.
- (27) Can *you three* get it together?
- (28) Face it, *you three*, I can't be scared.
- (29) New plan. *You three* find the others. We'll handle super-skrull.
- (30) *You three*, get after him.
- (31) *You three* up there!

In comparison to *you two*, *you three* seems to be much less used as a politeness strategy and more as a contrastive device to mark distance between the speaker and the addressees, and the contrast seems to be negatively charged in many cases. As already noted in the case of negatively charged directives, *you three* seems to be mainly

used for distancing the speaker from the addressees as opposed to using it as a marker of intimacy between the speaker and addressees. Examples (32)–(35) illustrate this behavior. In all of the examples, the speaker somehow blames the addressees for something, whether it be not helping the speaker, being unpleasant, or affecting the speaker's attitude towards women.

(32) *You three* knew I was in there, and you didn't do anything.

(33) *You three* came in here, entitled, smug, arrogant.

(34) Is it just *you three*, or is your entire gender completely mental?

(35) I blame *you three* for my unhealthy attitude towards women!

While *you two* and *you three* share many functions they also differ from each other quite drastically. Comparing *you two* and *you three* reveals that *you two* is used to mark very close relationships between two individuals while *you three* is more frequently used in order to specify three people from a larger group. *You two* is used more in positive contexts like as a marker of politeness, whereas *you three* appears to be a more negatively charged form. The collocate analysis in the next section will provide further evidence on the use of these forms and their functions.

#### 4.3.4 Collocate Analysis

The ten most frequently collocating words with *you two* are *are*, *were*, *doing*, *should*, *alone*, *together*, *guys*, *meet*, *stay* and *alone*. *Are* and *were* as the plural forms of the copula *be* is very common with 2PL forms and *doing* in an interrogative structure (see example 1) is also quite frequent with some 2PL forms (cf. section 4.4.4). *Should* seems to collocate with *you two* in two main types of contexts: firstly, in polite directives such as in example (2) and secondly, in contexts, where the speaker wants to introduce two people to each other as in examples (3) and (4). These examples and collocations further suggest the usage of *you two* as a politeness strategy.

(1) How are *you two* doing here?

(2) Well, *you two* should get going.

(3) *You two* should get acquainted.

(4) *You two* should have a lot in common.

With *meet*, *you two* often collocates in interrogative utterances where the speaker is interrogating the addressees about how they met (example 5). In very few cases *meet* was used as an imperative like in example (6). The context of asking people how they met suggests that *you two* often refers to a couple or close friends, as argued in section 4.3.3. Along the same lines – providing evidence of *you two* referring to a couple or otherwise two very close people – are the collocations with *alone* and *together*. *Alone* is used in structures and contexts like example (7), where the speaker wants to give the two people privacy. *Together* occurs in interrogations about how long the couple has been together (example 8), the speaker suggesting two people should become a couple (example 9) and in general referring to two people *together*, mostly as a couple (example 10). *Stay* collocates with *you two* in directives and imperatives, such as example (11) and (12), *you two* functioning as a hedging device i.e. a politeness strategy.

- (5) All right. So. How did *you two* meet?
- (6) *You two* meet me in two hours.
- (7) I better leave *you two* alone.
- (8) How long were *you two* together?
- (9) All we got to do is find a way to get *you two* together, you know?
- (10) I'm so happy to see *you two* together again.
- (11) All right, look, *you two* stay here and lock the door behind me.
- (12) *You two* stay put.

The collocate analysis of *you three* proved to be harder to conduct as many of the collocates were cases where *three* was a part of a noun phrase following *you* and not a part of the 2PL form. *Are* and *were* collocate with *you three* quite often. Other than that, the collocates of *you three* as a 2PL form are most often plural nouns such as *guys*, *girls*, *men*, *gentlemen*, *lovebirds*, and *ladies*. Double marking by using *you three* and a plural NP is discussed further in section 4.4.5. In that section it is noted that *you* + number + NP-PL tend to be less negatively charged than suffixed 2PL + NP-PL or *you* + *all* + NP-PL forms. The collocates of *you three* seem to support this statement.

The collocate analysis of *you two* and *you three* provided results that are in line with the findings in section 4.3.3, the pragmatic analysis. The usage of *you two* is very strongly linked to its referent being a romantic couple or otherwise close relationship between two individuals. *You two* is also more likely to be used as a politeness strategy and an in-group

marker than *you three*. The collocate analysis for *you three* was not as successful as that of *you two*, but the findings were in line with the findings in the analysis of double marking strategies including *you* + number forms.

#### 4.4 You + Plural Noun Phrase

Pluralization of *you* can also be realized by adding a plural noun phrase (NP-PL) as a post-modifier to *you*. The following table (8) introduces the most frequent occurrences of this pluralization strategy in the Movie and TV Corpora.

	Movie Corpus	TV Corpus
you guys	214.26	325.27
you people	14.72	21.23
you boys	16.48	11.34
you kids	7.17	6.90
you girls	7.06	6.25
you lot	3.11	5.18
you ladies	3.25	3.54
you folks	1.84	3.35
you gentlemen	4.49	3.12
you fellas	3.60	2.09

Table (8): Frequencies of *you* + NP-PL forms per million words in the Movie and TV Corpora.

The most frequent *you* + NP-PL structures in the corpora were *you guys*, *you people*, *you boys*, *you girls*, *you kids*, *you lot*, *you ladies*, *you gentlemen*, *you folks* and *you fellas* (see table 8). The structure *you* + nuts was also frequent, but it was discarded from the dataset due to its occurrence in the phrase “are you nuts?”, and thus not being representative of the *you* + NP-PL form. Of these forms, three were chosen for a more in-depth analysis. *You guys* is by far the most frequent form and thus an obvious choice for further analysis.

*You people* and *you lot* do not specify gender but refer to a larger group without specification of age (e.g. *you kids*) or gender (*you girls*, *you boys*). Other *you* + NP-PL forms have been noted to often carry meanings of out-group marking (e.g. Wing 2017), so these forms might behave differently from e.g. *you guys*. *You boys* and *you girls* would offer an interesting point of view of gender in relation to 2PL – while *you guys* is reported (Heyd 2010, Sienicki 2014) to have lost its reference to gender, the frequency of *you boys* and *you girls* seems to suggest that explicit reference to gender is still used in some contexts. The analyzed combinations of *you* + NP-PL are thus *you guys*, *you people*, and *you lot*.

#### 4.4.1 Frequencies

Tables (9) and (10) indicate the frequencies of occurrence of the three *you* + NP-PL forms chosen for the analysis.

	US/CA	UK/IE	AU/NZ	Misc
<i>you guys</i>	320.55	58.84	172.83	170.71
<i>you people</i>	20.22	12.49	14.23	14.32
<i>you lot</i>	0.60	21.34	11.56	2.81

Table (9): *You* + NP-PL. Frequencies of the search tokens per million words by region in The Movie Corpus.

	US/CA	UK/IE	AU/NZ	Misc
you guys	387.05	30.74	189.09	222.97
you people	23.84	8.99	14.59	12.81
you lot	0.70	26.53	15.56	4.27

Table (10): *You + NP-PL*. Frequencies of the search tokens per million words by region in The TV Corpus.

As already stated in section 4.4, *you guys* is the most frequent form of *you + NP-PL* in both corpora by a large margin. It is, however, much less frequent in BrE and IrE varieties in comparison to other regions, although it is still the most frequent form in the UK/IE section as well.

The only form that is more frequent in the UK and Ireland is *you lot*, which seems to be the characteristically BrE/IrE variant. Especially in comparison to the U.S. and Canada the frequency of *you lot* in the British Isles is noteworthy. All other forms of *you + NP-PL* are more frequent in both U.S. and Canada, and Australia and New Zealand.

#### 4.4.2 Grammatical Functions

In the case of *you + NP-PL* forms, the most characteristic grammatical function seems to again be that of number marking, i.e. expressing plurality. All of the forms studied, i.e. *you guys*, *you lot* and *you people*, were found to function both as a subject and an object (see examples 1–3). In possessive functions, possession is exclusively marked with the clitic -'s, as seen in examples (4)–(6).

- (1) *You guys* are going about this all wrong.
- (2) Well, I think I can help *you people* out.
- (3) Ten bloody years he gave *you lot*.
- (4) I wish I'd blown off [both] of *you guys's* kneecaps.
- (5) Is there no end to *you people's* preoccupation with sex?
- (6) Sorry to break up *you lot's* fucking little orgy.



In most cases, no singular referent usage was identified with *you* + NP-PL forms. However, as in example (7), the clitic *-s* could again be identified as a contraction of the singular copula *is* or a plurality marker with copula emission, in which case *you people* would be double marked as a plural.

- (7) Which one of *you people's* gonna clean my counter here?
- (8) *You people's* the happiest damn creatures on God's green Earth.

Aside from the few ambiguous instances with *you people* (examples 7 and 8), singular reference was not common among these forms. This might suggest that plural noun phrases are more commonly associated as genuine plural forms referring to a group of people, unlike e.g. *y'all* and *yous(e)* which might be misinterpreted or interpreted as a polite plural form similarly to e.g. the French *tu* and *vous* distinction.

#### 4.4.3 Pragmatic Functions

Pragmatically *you guys* functions as an attention-getting device, a pragmatic marker, and both a politeness strategy and to contrast speaker from the addressee. Emphatic identification of a singular referent was not identified in the dataset. Since quantitative analysis was not conducted, it is difficult to say which function is more frequent in the case of *you guys*, politeness marking or contrasting, since both were identified quite frequently in the dataset. Especially in requests, e.g. for help, *you guys* is used as a hedging device (see example 1). As an indication of politeness, *you guys* also appeared in contexts like example (2), where the speaker offers their help, and examples (3) and (4) where the speaker has something grave to tell and uses *you guys* as a hedging device to soften the seriousness of the utterance.

- (1) I'm gonna need a favor from *you guys*.
- (2) *You guys* need a hand?
- (3) I guess I do owe *you guys* an explanation.
- (4) I need to talk to *you guys*.

As an indicator of in-group or out-group marking, *you guys* is an interesting case. In examples (5), (6) and (7), the speaker uses *you guys* both to express closeness to the group but also contrasts themselves from the group. In example (5), the speaker thanks the group for help, but dissociates themselves from the group. Similarly, in examples (6) and (7), the speaker worries for the group but distances themselves from them as the person who checks up on them when they are not doing so well. In example (7), the speaker also lets the addressees know that they have been in the same situation, again expressing closeness to the group of addressees further.

(5) I really appreciate what *you guys* did for James

(6) I'm just checking on *you guys*.

(7) That *you guys* were in a bad way financially, and I know what that's like.

*You guys* seemed also to be a common way to refer to people the speaker did not know, as in examples (8) and (9).

(8) Are *you guys* the new neighbors?

(9) Who are *you guys*?

As a contrastive device to differentiate the speaker from the group of addressees, *you guys* seemed to be used quite often. Surprisingly many of the examples in the dataset included a negative evaluation of the addressees by the speaker, as in examples (10), (11) and (12).

(10) But, clearly, *you guys* don't bother with Christmas trees.

(11) I know nobody likes a rat, but seeing as *you guys* are already rats.

(12) *You guys* are all the same. Big damn heroes.

*You guys* was also often used as an attention-getting device (see examples 13 and 14) and a pragmatic marker in the right periphery of the utterance (see examples 15 and 16).

(13) Anyways, *you guys*, Jason has told me so much about you.

(14) *You guys*, LokSat took out my entire AG team.

(15) Come on *you guys*, being petty and juvenile is not going to solve anything.

(16) This is so good, *you guys*.

(17) Come on, look... think about it, *you guys*.

(18) That is... so creepy, *you guys*.

*You people* differs from *you guys* in its pragmatical functions. The most common type of pragmatic marking seems to be out-group marking, i.e. negative evaluation of the addressee. As stated in section 2.1.3, it is often considered a derogatory way to address a group of people and the speaker uses it to distance themselves from the group. Examples (19)–(23) indicate some of the types of negative contexts *you people* is used in. In all of the examples, the speaker clearly dissociates themselves from the group they are addressing. The negative reference can be e.g. due to a political stance (see example 19) or behavior (see examples 20–22) or just general annoyance towards the group (see example 23). *You people* seems to occur in negative contexts and meanings more so than in positive ones, as can also be seen in all of the examples provided here (see examples 19–27).

(19) Rafe McCawley's got the right idea about *you people*. You're Nazis.

(20) What is wrong with *you people*?

(21) Christ! *You people*. How do you think I feel knowing this is going on?

(22) Just checking in, making sure *you people* haven't trashed my house.

(23) I told *you people* 1,000 times, that parking meter out there is broken.

*You people* is also used as an attention-getting device similarly to *you guys*. In examples (24) and (25), *you people* is used as a vocative in getting the addressees attention, followed by the standard plural pronoun *you* in a sentence. These kinds of syntactic structures were not found in the *you guys* dataset, thus this was exclusive to the use of *you people*. In example (26), *you people* is also used as an attention-getting device. *You people* as an attention-getting device can appear in the beginning, in the middle and at the end of an utterance. As a pragmatic marker at the end of the utterance, *you people* seemed to be much less frequent than e.g. *you guys*. In fact, most of the examples of *you guys* in the dataset seemed to function as simply a subject or an object rather than these pragmatic functions. It could thus be argued that *you guys* is more pragmaticalized into a pragmatic marker than *you people*.

- (24) *You people*, you never look.
- (25) *You people*, you are terrifying!
- (26) All right, *you people*, clear out of the way
- (27) All right, settle down, *you people*.

*You lot* seemed to often appear, similarly to *you people*, in negative contexts, such as in examples (28)–(31). The speaker’s negative or even derogatory evaluation of the addressees is evident. Neutral cases were also found in the dataset, but positively connotated contexts were much more difficult to identify and, in the dataset, gathered for this analysis, very few actually positive evaluations of *you lot* were found. Some of the seemingly positive examples (see 32 and 33) can be categorized as sarcastic comments, so one could make the assumption that *you lot* is mostly used as an out-group marker.

- (28) Unlike *you lot*, we have to justify aggressive manoeuvres.
- (29) I don't know who the hell *you lot* think you are
- (30) I'm fed up with *you lot* and your guts.
- (31) I'm sick of being skint because *you lot* are skint all the fucking time.
- (32) But we are reading Shark, thanks to *you lot*.
- (33) What do you want me to say? Oh, yeah, I like *you lot*.

As an attention getting device and a pragmatic marker, *you lot* was used similarly to *you guys*, as it occurred in both functions seemingly frequently. Examples (34), (35) and (36) provide instances of *you lot* occurring utterance-initially, mid-utterance and at right periphery as a pragmatic marker.

- (34) Come on, *you lot*.
- (35) *You lot*, I want you to do everything in your power to help Debbie succeed.
- (36) Right, *you lot*, you heard the man.

*You guys*, *you people* and *you lot* all have quite similar grammatical and pragmatic functions, although *you people* and *you lot* are clearly more negatively charged variants, expressing out-group marking more so than *you guys*. *You guys* was the most frequent of these forms to appear as a politeness device, which is a function that *you people* and *you lot* lacked almost completely. *You guys* and *you lot* seem to be more pragmatized

according to the frequency of occurrence as a pragmatic marker, which was a much less frequent function for *you people*.

In the next section, a collocate analysis of *you guys*, *you people* and *you lot* will be provided.

#### 4.4.4 Collocate Analysis

All three forms studied in this section, *you guys*, *you people* and *you lot*, collocate most frequently with the verb forms *are*, *were* and *doing*. *Are* and *doing* are mostly a part of the structure *what are you # doing*, as seen in examples (1) and (2). These examples already suggest a negative connotation of these forms.

- (1) What the hell *you people* doing on my property?
- (2) Oi! What are *you lot* doing down here?

The most frequent collocates of *you guys* were *are*, *doing*, *were*, *should*, *wanna*, *later*, *ready*, *hear*, *talking*, and *seen*. The collocates of *you guys* are thus mostly verb forms. Collocating with *should* suggests a frequent occurrence of *you guys* in directives. *Wanna* collocates exclusively on the right-hand side of *you guys* in questions, suggesting it is also used in polite expressions of inclusion, as in example (5).

- (3) I think *you guys* should just smoke another joints and relax.
- (4) Hey, *you guys* shouldn't be doing this!
- (5) Hey, *you guys* wanna come?

*Ready* also collocates with *you guys* exclusively on the right-hand side in the interrogative phrase “*You guys ready?*”, similarly to *y'all* (cf. section 4.2.3), as an attention-getting device. *Hear*, *talking* and *seen* also occur mostly in interrogative sentences with *you guys* as can be seen from examples (7)–(9). *Later* is also, similarly to *y'all* and *yous(e)*, mostly used in formulaic phrases like “*see/meet/catch you later*”.

- (6) *You guys* ready to get to it?
- (7) What are *you guys* talking about?
- (8) Can *you guys* hear me?
- (9) Haven't *you guys* seen this movie?
- (10) I'll catch *you guys* later.

In conclusion, *you guys* is very frequently used in an interrogative phrase, since four of the ten of its most frequent collocates appear in an interrogative sentence with *you guys*. The collocation with *are* and *were* also appear in interrogatives, but they also occur in other contexts. In addition to interrogatives, *you guys*, similarly to *y'all* and *yous(e)* also frequently appears in formulaic expressions like greetings. The frequency of occurrence in questions and formulaic phrases further underline the heavily intersubjective nature of *you guys* and its prevalence in dialogic contexts.

The ten most frequent collocates in relation to *you people* were *are*, *doing*, *ever*, *understand*, *live*, *realize*, *read*, *insane*, *destroyed*, and *seem*. The collocations with *are* and *doing* were already analyzed above.

The collocation with *ever* suggests a tendency of generalization, as it occurs in interrogatives such as the ones in examples (11) and (12). The use of the adverb *ever* suggests a tone of irritation, frustration or disbelief of the speaker towards the addressees, underlining once again the negative connotations of the form *you people*. *Understand* also provides further evidence for the negative connotation of *you people*, as it appears in contexts like examples (13) and (14), in which the speaker's attitude is again somewhat frustrated towards the addressee. The tone of the utterances with *you people* and *understand* is quite condescending, questioning the addressees' intelligence, and thus *you people* functions as a contrasting device between the interlocutors. *Realize* occurs in similar contexts as *understand*, in interrogatives as questioning the addressee's intelligence (see example 15).

- (11) Don't *you people* ever learn?
- (12) Talk about primitive. Haven't *you people* ever heard of anti-gravity travel?
- (13) Why can't *you people* understand that kind of wrestling isn't real?
- (14) *You people* understand every language except English!
- (15) Do *you people* realize what I have gone through this week to make Thanksgiving happen?

*Read* as a collocate of *you people* continues the trend of it appearing as a negative evaluation of the speaker on the addressees, as *read* occurs in contexts where the speaker e.g. either questions the addressees' ability to read (see example 16) or states facts like in example (17). *Insane* occurs on the right-hand side of *you people* in questions, such as in example (18). Same goes for *destroyed*, which occurs exclusively in contexts like in example (19). Both *insane* and *destroyed* are semantically negative, providing further evidence for the negative evaluation of *you people* as a form.

(16) Can't *you people* read?

(17) Because less than 3% of *you people* read books.

(18) Are *you people* insane? We're supposed to operate here!

(19) *You people* destroyed my life.

With *you lot*, the ten most frequently collocating words were *are*, *were*, *doing*, *later*, *turned*, *listening*, *gawking*, *gawping*, *laughing* and *leaving*. *Are*, *were*, *doing* and *later* appear in similar contexts as *you guys* and *you lot*, i.e. in the structure 'are you lot doing' and 'see you lot later'. The latter six cases differ from the collocates of other *you* + NP-PL forms studied in this paper. The number of examples in all of these was quite low though, so any definitive conclusions cannot be drawn based on these.

The high number of present participle *-ing*-forms that collocate with *you lot* (*listening*, *gawking*, *gawping*, *laughing*, *leaving*) suggest that it functions mostly as a noun or an object of a verb, since all of the examples of the *-ing*-form were present participles and not gerunds. In many cases, *you lot* was a part of a question such as in examples (21), (22), (23) and (25). In this dataset, this was the most frequent context in which *you lot* occurred with a present participle, although some other contexts were found as well (see examples 20 and 24). Most of the examples with *you lot* collocating with the present participle, as can be seen from examples (20)–(25), are somehow negatively charged. The speaker's negative evaluation of the addressees can be detected in the interrogative sentences (examples 21–23 and 25), as the participle can be used to express discomfort with something being done.

- (20) That's what I like to see. And *you lot* looking slightly sad.
- (21) What are *you lot* looking at?
- (22) Are *you lot* listening?
- (23) What the hell are *you lot* laughing at?
- (24) I love the funny women taking their clothes off, and *you lot* gawping.
- (25) Get back in the line... what are *you lot* gawking at?

*Turned* collocates with *you lot* mostly as a part of a phrasal verb (*turn up, turn out*). Many of the contexts in which *you lot* was collocating with *turned* were somehow negatively charged (see examples 26 and 27).

- (26) There's been a crime spree in this neighbourhood since *you lot* turned up.
- (27) Did you see or hear anything suspicious last night? No. Not until *you lot* turned up.

The collocate analysis for *you lot* did not offer much insight to its uses as the examples were so low in number, but some initial generalizations could be made. Firstly, *you lot* often seems to occur in interrogative sentences with verbs in the present participle form. Secondly, the contexts in which *you lot* collocates with these words and forms are mostly negatively charged, similarly to *you people*. This tendency was also noted in the previous section 4.4.3, in which *you lot* was analyzed to often occur in negative contexts.

The collocates for all of these three forms were quite similar in both corpora, which suggest that they have quite established contexts in which they are mostly used. The collocate analysis for *you guys* showed its frequency of occurrence in directives, interrogative utterances, and formulaic phrases such as greetings. Regarding the speaker's attitudes, *you guys* showed no clear preference towards negative or positive evaluations of the addressee, both were present in the dataset. *You people* and *you lot* however proved to be mostly negative in these contexts and the collocate analysis proved it to collocate with more negative expressions than *you guys*. The speaker's negative evaluations of the addressee when using *you people* were prevalent in almost all of its most frequent collocates. With *you lot*, the negative connotation of the form was not apparent in its collocates themselves but in the contexts it appeared in, which were often negatively charged.



#### 4.4.5 Double marking

Double-marking includes 2PL forms which use two strategies of marking plurality instead of just one, for example having a suffixed form followed by a number or a plural noun phrase. The numbers and frequencies at which double marked NP-PL forms occurred in the corpora, categorized according to the strategy used in the double-marking process, can be seen in table (11) below. Some of the instances had to be filtered out as they were not representative of double marking (as “*We wanna hear y’all ideas.*”). As all of the examples in the category *you + number* were not analyzed, the category may include false instances where *you + number* is not used as a 2PL form. However, many of the examples proved to be instances of 2PL forms, so the numbers do offer some insight as to which pluralization strategies are preferred in double-marking.

	THE TV CORPUS	THE MOVIE CORPUS
suffixed 2PL + NP-PL	74	61
<i>you + all + NP-PL</i>	201	300
<i>you + number + NP-PL</i>	1667	1366
suffixed 2PL + number	96	44
<i>you + all + number</i>	43	46

Table (11): Instances of double-marking strategies in the TV and Movie Corpora.

As stated in table (11), both corpora show similar tendencies in relation to double-marking strategies with plural noun phrases. *You + number* is by far the most frequent strategy, followed by *you + all + NP-PL*. The occurrences of suffixed 2PL forms and NP-PL were surprisingly low.

The NPs used with these 2PL forms suggest that pragmatically speaking these forms tend to express negative or even derogatory evaluations towards the addressees. *Guys* was the most frequent NP-PL occurring with suffixed 2PL forms and it seemed to be used as an out-group marker as in example (1). Besides *guys*, many of the NPs were negatively connotated, for example *bastards*, *mugs*, and *pricks*, further suggesting the main pragmatic function of an outgroup marker.

Concerning *you + all* forms, of the ten most frequent NPs seven could be regarded as negatively connotated (e.g. *motherfuckers*, *bitches*, *asses*, *fools*). This suggests that *you + all + NP-PL* forms are also used mostly as out-group markers (see example 2). However, some instances of its use as a politeness marker were also found, as in example (3).

*You + number* differed to some extent from suffixed forms of *you* and *you + all*. The collocating NPs were somewhat more neutral, the more frequent ones including e.g. *guys*, *boys*, *lovebirds*, and *men*. The more derogatory terms were less frequent, although prevalent in the dataset. *You + number* seems to thus be used less as an outgroup marker than the other two strategies of pluralization, although this function is also present as can be seen from the number of negatively connotated words it collocates with (see example 4).

- (1) I wish *youse guys* would quit talking so funny and get down to business.
- (2) *Y'all bitches* are hateful.
- (3) How *y'all ladies* doing tonight?
- (4) The description matches *you three clowns*.

Another noteworthy thing considering double marked forms is that they mostly seem to function as subjects and objects rather than e.g. as pragmatic markers on the right periphery of an utterance.

As 2PL forms already entail information about number, double marking seems rather redundant. One reason for the phenomenon might be the degree of grammaticalization of the forms, in which case the speakers feel the need to reinforce number, i.e. adding another element of plurality to the expression. Another explanation could lie in pragmatic use, as speakers might use more than one plurality marker to refer not only to number of

referents, but also referencing additional categories such as inclusivity or attitude towards the addressees. The latter reasoning is particularly evident in the case of many of the double marked forms analyzed here, as they often seem to express speakers' attitudes and inclusivity to a group.

#### **4.5 Conclusion: Grammatical and Pragmatic Functions of 2PL Forms**

Regarding grammatical functions, marking plurality was – as expected – the most important function of 2PL forms. Suffixed 2PL forms and *you + all* forms, however, also had a tendency to appear with a singular referent, in which case the 2PL form was often used to emphasize the referent. Forms *you + number* and *you + a plural noun phrase* did not appear to have this function, where they would emphasize the singular referent. This could suggest that the forms *yous(e)* and *y'all* have taken on functions in e.g. politeness, similarly to the former English pronouns *thou* and *ye*, where *ye* was the pronoun of politeness and respect. Another possible explanation is that *yous(e)* and *y'all* are not as often analyzed as markers of plurality, since the plural meaning might have been lost in the grammaticalization process, especially in the case of *y'all*, since it is no longer as readily analyzable into its constituents (*you + all*), suggesting at least some degree of grammaticalization of the forms. *You + number* or a plural noun phrase are more easily analyzed as plural forms due to the explicit expression of plurality by either the number or the plural noun phrase, which any speaker of English is able to analyze into a plural.

*Yous(e)* and *y'all* were the only 2PL forms which also seemed to function as markers of possession without the standard addition of the clitic 's to indicate possession. All of the 2PL forms studied formed a possessive form with the clitic 's, but *yous(e)* and *y'all* could express possessive functions on their own as well. *Yous(e)* also appeared in structures where it was analyzed as a contraction of the copula *is*, like in *he is* → *he's*.

Pragmatically, the most frequent functions of suffixed 2PL forms were marking familiarity or intimacy between the speaker and addressees, expressing emphasis with a singular referent and emphatic identification to reveal the speaker's evaluation of the referents. Collocate analysis of *yous(e)* provided further evidence on the contexts of use

of these forms. The analysis suggests they function as an attention-getting device, in formulaic phrases such as greetings and in double-markers such as *yous guys* etc. *Yous(e)* also functions as an informality marker and in the speaker's evaluation of the addressee(s).

The most frequent pragmatic functions of *y'all* included the function as an attention-getting device, a pragmatic marker, a politeness strategy, and in contrasting the speaker from the addressee(s). Instances of *y'all* functioning as an emphatic identification with a singular referent were also found to some extent. Previous research on *you + all* forms suggests its prevalence as a politeness strategy, which was also noted in this analysis. *Y'all* functions as an in-group and politeness marker rather frequently, although in some instances *y'all* was used as a strategy of contrasting the speaker from the addressee(s). The collocates analysis of *y'all* further suggested its prevalence as an attention-getting device, politeness strategy and appearance in formulaic phrases, similarly to suffixed 2PL forms.

*You + number* forms had similar pragmatic functions as suffixed 2PL forms and *you + all* forms: marking inclusivity, politeness strategy, attention-getting and contrasting. *You + number* also had a function of specifying a smaller group of people (i.e. two or three) from a larger group, especially in an attention-getting function. *You two* was noted to often have a specific referent of a romantic couple or otherwise a very close pair of people (e.g. best friends or siblings). *You three* appeared in somewhat more negative contexts than *you two*, i.e. in directives and as a contrasting device distancing the speaker from the addressees. The collocates analysis provided further evidence for these assumptions on the pragmatic functions of *you + number* forms: *you two* functions more as a politeness strategy and an in-group marker while *you three* functions as an out-group marker, distancing the speaker from the addressees and as the speaker's negative evaluation of the addressees.

One of the main pragmatic functions of *you + NP-PL* was in-group and/or out-group marking, depending on the form. *You guys*, for example, functioned both as an in-group and an out-group marker, while *you people* and *you lot* had a clearly more negative semantic value and functioned mainly as out-group markers. All *you + NP-PL* forms also

had attention-getting functions. The speaker's negative evaluation of the addressees was also a very prevalent function of especially *you people* and *you lot*.

All of the 2PL forms studied thus show a strong tendency towards expressing pragmatic functions along with the typical function of plurality marking. Regarding the pragmatic functions 2PL forms have, they differ from the standard pronoun *you*, which is much more neutral and thus does not tend to function as e.g. an expression of politeness, nor does it indicate any attitudes of the speaker towards the addressee(s).

2PL forms express varying degrees of attitudinal bias towards the group of people spoken to or about. For example, suffixed 2PL forms seem to be somewhat more neutral than e.g. *you* + NP-PL forms, of which especially *you people* is highly negatively charged. These attitudinal tones are also acknowledged by speakers themselves, as was noted in section 2.1.3, where the attitudes towards 2PL forms were looked at through their representations in the Urban Dictionary. Regarding the grammaticalization process, it could be suggested that *yous(e)* and *y'all* are more grammaticalized as the other forms, as they are less readily analyzed into their constituents.

Finally, it could be stated that personal pronouns and their forms are not a fixed class of linguistic elements, as is often claimed. The functions expressed by 2PL forms are manifold and important for managing the speaker-hearer relationships as well as the speaker's attitudes towards the content of the utterances. The next section will briefly analyze the geographical distribution of plurality marking strategies among the varieties of English.

## **4.6 Geographical Variation**

In this section, the geographical variation regarding the strategies of pluralizing the second person pronoun *you* will be analyzed. The analysis will be based on numbers provided by the corpora used in this study. Since quantitative analysis was not conducted on the grammatical and pragmatic functions of 2PL forms in the earlier sections, the regional distribution of the functions cannot be commented here. The analysis will be solely based on the quantitative data gathered from the corpora. The miscellaneous category was discarded from this analysis due to its contents: the category included

movies and TV shows that were made e.g. in collaboration between two different countries, which would make the data difficult to analyze in terms of geographical variation.

	US/CA	UK/IE	AU/NZ
you + suffix	2.33	12.32	20.15
you + all	80.80	14.29	13.04
you + number	106.85	84.61	104.94
you + NP-PL	341.37	92.67	198.62

Table (12): The frequencies of different pluralization strategies by region in the Movie Corpus.

	US/CA	UK/IE	AU/NZ
you + suffix	2.34	12.34	17.31
you + all	53.05	3.09	2.72
you + number	149.08	90.97	133.06
you + NP-PL	411.59	66.26	219.24

Table (13): The frequencies of different pluralization strategies by region in the TV Corpus.

From the tables (12) and (13), some general regional tendencies about pluralization strategies can be identified. Suffixed 2PL forms seem to be most commonly used in Australian and New Zealand varieties of English. The numbers are considerably higher than in Northern American varieties. In comparison to varieties of the British Isles the difference is, however, not that significant. British and Irish English use suffixed 2PL

forms considerably more than American and Canadian varieties. It would be interesting to see the numbers from each region more in detail and compare e.g. the differences between the UK and Ireland, as *yous(e)* is usually considered a part of Irish English (cf. e.g. Hickey 2003), but due to time constraints this was impossible in this study.

*You + all* variants are unsurprisingly much more frequent in Northern American varieties. The numbers between the UK, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand are roughly the same, suggesting that *you + all* is still a rather marginal variant in these varieties. *Y'all* is thus chiefly an American phenomenon, which is in line with previous studies (cf. e.g. Lipski 1993, Maynor 1996, Soukoup 2000).

*You + number* as a pluralization strategy is quite similar in frequency in American and Canadian, and Australian and New Zealand varieties of English, although slightly more frequent in Northern America. Of the analyzed variants in this study, *you two* was by far the most frequent *you + number* form in all varieties. British and Irish English seem to use the analytic strategy of following *you* with a number significantly less than the other varieties, although these numbers suggest it to be the most frequent type of pluralization strategy used in these varieties as well.

*You + plural noun phrase* is, according to these tables, the most frequent strategy of pluralization in American and Canadian English, and Australian and New Zealand Englishes. *You + NP-PL* forms are significantly more frequent in Northern American varieties than the other varieties. British and Irish English on the other hand have remarkably few occurrences in comparison to the other varieties. Of the *you + NP-PL* structures, *you guys* was noted to be the most frequent form (cf. section 4.4.1) in all varieties.

In conclusion, the findings of this section on geographical variation of the 2PL forms and pluralization strategies is in line with previous research on the topic. Suffixation of *you* seems to be a more commonly used strategy especially in Australia and New Zealand, followed by the UK and Ireland. All of the analytic strategies were the most frequent in American and Canadian English, although *you* followed by a number, or a plural NP, were quite equally frequent in Australian and New Zealand English as well. *You + all* was, as expected, far more frequent in Northern American varieties than in others.

In the next section, a conclusion and discussion of the study will be provided along with some suggestions for further research on 2PL forms.



## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this work was to investigate second person plural forms and their representation in different varieties of English. The analysis yielded results that are mostly in line with the previous research conducted on the phenomenon.

There were some limitations to this study, as for example all possible forms of the 2PL indicated by previous research did not appear in the corpora used and hence had to be left out. The analysis of the geographical variation was not as thorough as it could have been due to time constraints: the corpora grouped e.g. the U.S. and Canada together, which made the analysis less accurate. With more time, the distinction between different regions could have been able to be considered. Similarly, regarding the pragmatic functions, only a qualitative analysis was conducted while statistical analysis was not possible to be done. This means that the results of the qualitative analysis are only approximations.

While there were some restrictions to the study, the analysis did yield some important insight as to how 2PL forms function grammatically, and what kinds of pragmatic functions they have. As a phenomenon of mainly spoken language, pragmatic analysis of these forms indicated that 2PL forms have important sociolinguistic functions in e.g. informality marking, in-group and out-group marking as well as indicating different attitudes of the speaker towards the group of addressees. 2PL forms also function in conversation management, especially concerning the speaker-hearer relationship as e.g. attention-getting devices or hedges in expressing politeness.

The results of the study show, that although plurality marking is the most frequent grammatical function of the 2PL forms, pragmatic functions seem to be very important. All of the forms studied had at least some pragmatic functions and most of them had some sorts of attitudinal bias linked to them.

In the introduction of this study, three research questions were presented. Firstly, the aim was to investigate which second person plural forms appear in the corpora and how frequent they are. Secondly, whether the forms have other functions from number-marking was to be studied, i.e. the aim was to investigate which types of functions 2PL

forms can have. Lastly, the geographical preferences of number-marking strategies and 2PL forms were to be identified.

The forms that occurred in the corpora are the ones analyzed in section 4, i.e. suffixed 2PL forms *yous* and *youse*, *you + all* forms *y'all* and *yall*, *you + number* forms *you two* and *you three* and *you + NP-PL* forms, which were many in number, but three forms were chosen for further analysis, i.e. *you guys*, *you people* and *you lot*. Other forms such as *you-ones*, *yinz* etc. did not have enough occurrences in the corpora to provide a meaningful analysis, and hence were left out of the study. Of the studied forms, analytic strategies i.e. *you + all*, *you + number* and *you + NP-PL* forms were the most frequently used 2PL forms. *You + NP-PL* forms seemed to be the most frequent 2PL forms.

Regarding the second research question, whether the 2PL forms have functions other than plurality marking, it was concluded that they have very important pragmatic functions, as well as some grammatical functions such as marking possession.

Geographical distribution of the pluralization strategies on 2PL forms was in line with previous research. *Y'all* was proven to most frequently appear in American Englishes, *yous(e)* was predominantly an Australian and New Zealand English variant, although it appears to be widely used in British and Irish Englishes as well. *You + number* and *you + NP-PL* forms were prevalent in all of the varieties, but more frequent in American varieties.

As stated earlier, surprisingly little research has been done on 2PL forms in the past. This study functions as a very preliminary view of the possible functions of 2PL forms. Some noteworthy observations made in this study might yield research questions for future studies, e.g. the use of 2PL forms with a singular referent and their functions could be an interesting topic of research. There are multiple possible directions for future studies of 2PL forms, especially on their pragmatic usage. Especially *you + number* and *you + plural noun phrases* – aside from *you guys*, perhaps – and their pragmatic functions could be studied in more detail, as very little research has been conducted on these forms.

This study was limited to inner circle varieties of English, and while e.g. Galiano's (2020) study includes more varieties of World Englishes, more thorough research could be conducted on e.g. the regional varieties. For example, Caribbean Englishes would offer a great deal of data for the study of 2PL forms (cf. e.g. Allsopp & Allsopp 2003), as well as English-based creoles and pidgins. Double and even triple marking of number were also present in the dataset of this study, and briefly analyzed too, but their forms and functions could be further investigated as well. Overall, 2PL forms require more research in the future and provide many different angles from which to study them.

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