Archaic Deixis Expressions in *Wuthering Heights* and Their Equivalence in Modern English

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ABSTRACT

This study examined archaic pronouns in the selected passages of Wuthering Heights, with a specific focus on the pronouns 'ye,' 'thy,' 'thee,' and 'thou.' The objective is to explore the different types of archaic pronouns used by characters and what their equivalents are in modern English. Through a qualitative analysis, the research explores how they functioned in Early Modern English reflected in the novel and how they correspond to pronouns in modern English. The findings reveal that 'ye' occurs 13 times, 'thy' 6 times, 'thee' 5 times, and 'thou' 4 times. In terms of modern equivalents, 'ye' corresponds to 'you' (plural), 'thy' to 'your' (possessive), 'thee' is replaced by 'you' (object), and 'thou' corresponds to 'you' (subject, informal). The study concludes that the shift from these archaic pronouns to the standardization of contemporary 'you' and 'your' reflects both grammatical simplification and social changes, signifying the loss of distinctions between singular and plural forms, as well as formal and informal addresses in English. The results highlight the evolution of English towards a more uniform structure, driven by cultural and linguistic developments.

Keywords: *archaic pronouns; equivalence; person deixis; wuthering heights*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a vital tool for communication, enabling humans to convey their ideas, emotions, and intentions in both spoken and written forms. It is a set of symbols, sounds, and gestures that enable people to engage with one another in social contexts (Lyons, 2002). People discuss their thoughts and feelings, connecting with others to share what they know and make sense of their experiences. However, language is not fixed nor static; it is constantly evolving. The words and meanings used in expressions vary according to the degree of time, extending to how societies utilize them as they evolve. Therefore, studying language helps one learn how people move within their social world and along with that is how the accompanying language evolves and changes in the areas such as phonetics, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Exploring changes in the areas of pragmatics, where language use is of primary focus, also partly poses and highlights the complexity involved in how language use evolves not only because of the social and cultural factors but also because of the language users and use across time and space. Despite such changes, as far as language use in communication is concerned, any

instance of communication is considered pragmatically and contextually successful if the participants involved in the speech events and their speech acts understand each other during the process (Hendar & Anshari, 2021).

Pragmatics is a part of linguistics that studies how context contributes to meaning in a speech act. According to Purba (2018), pragmatics is the study of the connection between the context and language that focuses on grammatical in the structure of language, it means the people can analyze the meaning of context by their statements. Yule (1996) defines pragmatics as the study of how language is used in context and how speakers and listeners rely on contextual cues to convey and interpret meaning. The primacy or importance of context is also in line with Levinson's account stating that pragmatic study is concerned with those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of a language (1983). In the realm of pragmatics, understanding utterances is inseparable from the referentially decisive roles of the context, and part of the discussion of the reference and relevance of context and its contributions is dealt with in the study of deixis.

Deixis is a term that always shifts or varies based on the situation to denote a person, location, time, social distinction, and discourse role (Viahapsari & Parmawati, 2020). It is important to note that deixis is a form of grammatical characteristic that includes numerous categories such as person, place, and time (Febriza, 2020). However, deixis plays a vital function in communication by referring to the thing being discussed (Afrilian et al., 2019). Furthermore, deixis is a type of deictic expression that refers to words or phrases that require clear information about the viewpoint in order to be comprehended; if the information situation is ambiguous, deixis cannot be understood (Abdulameer, 2019). Deixis is roughly divided into five types: person, spatial, time, discourse, and social deixis (Cruse, 2000). The use of deixis is a phenomenon that demonstrates the existence of many utterances and expressions that carry a specific meaning within each context.

Deixis is typically discussed in terms of present-related expressions, as well as temporal and spatial deixis, along with personal deixis. This reflects how language mirrors or represents social hierarchies and relationships change over time. Of the personal deixis, a subarea that has garnered some attention in the literary studies community is archaic deixis. Archaic deixis refers to words and expressions that were once commonly used but are no longer employed in everyday speech, often replaced by more modern equivalents. Archaic deictic expressions, such as the second-person pronouns 'thou', 'thee', 'thy', and 'thine', were frequently used in older documentary versions in English, may now mostly be replaced by the modern equivalent, 'you' along with its related-pronoun derivatives.

Archaic deixis is frequently employed in works of literature, particularly during periods when the forms were still in use, as it enables us to delve into the past and gain insight into its social norms, cultural practices, and linguistic conventions. For example, the archaic pronouns in *Wuthering Heights* not only reflect the state of the English language in the 19th century but also convey important social and emotional values. The expressions were used to indicate levels of respect or intimacy, as well as formality or

informality, between one individual and another. Archaic deictic forms in novels, such as *Wuthering Heights*, can provide a sense of emotional depth and historical realism, contributing to the richness of character interactions and the depiction of social dynamics (Wibowo & Nailufar, 2018).

Although such deictic expressions are no longer popularly in use nowadays, they remain socio-historically important and pose unique and peculiar challenges for modern readers and translators. The lack of their direct equivalents in modern English means that understanding and translating these expressions requires careful contextual attention, and the readers' reconstruction of context is critical to understanding deictic references (Herman and Pardede, 2020). Matters become more complicated when such archaic expressions are involved, as modern readers are unfamiliar with them, and hence cannot easily understand them due to socio-cultural and temporal distance in the light of modern contemporary English.

This study focuses on exploring such archaic deictic expressions used by the selected characters in *Wuthering Heights*, and attempt to provide their equivalents in modern English. In so doing, contemporary readers may hopefully grasp and enjoy reading the novel in a more comprehensible way, and understand more deeply Brontë's linguistic choices in the novel, and in turn, may ignite wider and broader discussions on historical and dynamic intersection of language, culture, and literature.

Deixis

Deixis, derived from Greek, is a technical term concerning any linguistic form that describes one of the most basic things we do with language, namely, utterances, and it literally means 'pointing' (Yule 1996). According to Levinson (1983), deixis refers to how language encodes or grammaticalizes characteristics of the context of an utterance or speech event as well as how utterance interpretation is context-dependent. Levinson (1983) further outlines that there are five types of deixis, namely personal, temporal, spatial, discoursal, and social.

Personal deixis is reflected directly in the grammatical categories of a person, and the function of which is to indicate people. It is to encode the role of participants in a speech event, where the utterance is delivered. The first person category is the grammaticalization of the speaker's reference to himself, the second person is the encoding of the speaker's reference to one or more addressees, and the third person encodes references to persons or entities which are neither speakers nor addressees of the utterance in question. In English, person deixis comprises three divisions, namely first person 'I' (singular), and 'we' (plural); second person 'you'; and third person 'she/he' (singular), and 'they' (plural) (Levinson, 1983).

Table 1. Person Deixis

	Singular	Plural
1st Person	I/Me	We/Us
2nd Person	You	You
3rd Person	He/Him, She/Her, It	They/Them

Temporal or time deixis is concerned with the encoding of temporal points and spans relative to the time at which a speech was delivered or written message encoded, while spatial or place deixis is concerned with encoding spatial positions relative to the participants' places in a speech event, as in the use of adverbs of place such as "here" and "there" which are used to indicate location (Levinson, 1983). The next type of deixis, discoursal, is concerned with encoding references to sections of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance (including the text-referring term) is positioned, such as the use of 'this, that, these, and those' to indicate the location in the discourse (Levinson, 1983). The last, social deixis, is concerned with the encoding of social distinctions related to participant roles, specifically characteristics of the existing social relationship between the speaker and the addressee, or the speaker and some referent, and the function of which is generally to distinguish social status, such as the use of Mr. President, Your Honor (Levinson, 1983).

English Pronouns

Many language experts have expressed interest in the term "English pronominal system." Elbourne (2011) describes the English asset as a collection of terms that refer to both inanimate and human referents, including "names, pronouns, and demonstratives (this and that)". Pronouns can be used in structural clauses and sentences in place of nouns and can be presumed to be subject and object. For first language learners, the definition of a pronoun is more specific: "a pronoun is a word that occupies the slots of a preceding noun which names people, locations, objects, or conceptions." This helps them avoid repetitive words like "too frequent" (Wise, 2002).

English Archaic Deixis

English archaic deictic expressions, as parts of and to the history of English development and its discourse in literary and social interactions, are evidently observable in the use of archaic pronouns such as 'thou', 'thee', 'thy', 'thine', 'ye', and 'you'. (Nguyễn, 2022). They once played a crucial role in marking social hierarchy, formality, and intimacy but have largely disappeared from modern English. Archaic pronouns survive in the realm of books and speech. They do so for reasons that are largely stylistic, regional, or social. In Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, archaic pronouns like 'ye', 'thy', and 'thou' are employed in the speech of Joseph as a servant to indicate social status and regional identity (Brontë, 2012). The real use of archaic pronouns goes far beyond their grammatical function alone. In both historic and literary contexts, they have been used as indicators of social relationships, politeness, and belonging to a particular group. For example, in Early Modern English-speaking usage at least 'thou' (singular 'you') signaled levels of intimacy-familiarity-respect between speaker and addressee (Nguyễn, 2022).

The development of English pronouns from Old English to Modern English is accompanied by significant contraction in form and a tendency toward simplification. The Old English pronouns were distinguished by gender, number (singular, plural, and dual), and case (nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative) (Jebson, 2001). By the time of Middle English, the dual had disappeared, and the forms of the pronouns had

undergone significant diminution. For instance, the system of Old English, which had more than fifty forms, was reduced to about thirty-four forms by Chaucer's time (Bennett, 1995). This simplification continued into Early Modern and Modern English, resulting in the pronoun system familiar today.

Table 2. Archaic & Standard English Pronouns

	Subject	Object	Reflexive	Possessive Pronoun	Possessive Determiner
Singular Standard	you	you	yourself	yours	your
Singular Archaic informal	thou	thee	thyself	thine	thy/thine (before vowel)
Plural Standard	you	you	yourselves	yours	your
Plural Archaic	ye	you	yourselves	yours	your

A significant part of knowing archaic pronouns is seeing how they fit with today's English pronoun system. Archaic pronouns like 'thou' (subject, singular informal), 'thee' (object, singular informal), 'ye' (subject, plural or formal), 'thy' (possessive determiner, singular informal), and 'thine' (possessive pronoun, singular informal right before vowels) have exact matches in modern English. In detail, 'thou' and 'thee' both get replaced by the single word 'you' in regular use no matter their role in a sentence or number; similarly, 'thy' and 'thine' become 'your' and 'yours.' The plural or formal 'ye' was previously used as the subject form for speaking to more than one person or when being polite to a single person, but it has also been replaced by 'you' in modern English ("Archaic Pronouns in English Grammar", n.d.). This convergence shows a broader move in English to make things simpler and the fading of grammar differences between the doer and receiver forms, also between one and many, in 'you'. Consequently, the rich pragmatic and social nuances once signaled by archaic pronouns, such as intimacy, respect, or group membership, are now inferred mainly through context or other linguistic devices rather than explicit pronominal marking.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is concerned with the exploration of social phenomena. As Berg (2001) indicated, qualitative research is concerned with the meaning, concepts, characteristics, definitions, and descriptions of objects. A detailed explanation of certain phenomena that require analysis can be gained through the qualitative method. This can be seen through the characteristics and context of the phenomena.

The study applies a descriptive qualitative approach. It falls under descriptive qualitative research because the data is extracted in words, phrases, and sentences relating to deixis theory. As stated by Krippendorff (2004), textual samples can be taken at various levels, including words, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, or entire

publications. The data is the outcome of either observing or measuring a variable; it can take numerical form. More technically, data are a set of values of qualitative or quantitative variables concerning one or more persons or objects.

The method is used to identify the different types of archaic pronouns used by the characters in *Wuthering Heights* and to explore their equivalence. This research focused on archaic pronouns: 'thee', 'thy', 'thou', 'ye', and 'thine'. The object is *Wuthering Heights*, chapter 11-20. *Wuthering Heights* is the only novel by the English author Emily Brontë, initially published in 1847 under her pen name "Ellis Bell". This research collected the data with the following steps: (1) read the novel, (2) identify the archaic person deixis contained in the novel, (3) classify the data found in the novel, (4) analyze the data using the supporting theories, (5) draw conclusions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher found four type archaic pronouns used in *Wuthering Heights* chapter 11-20.

Table 3. Archaic Pronouns in *Wuthering Heights* (Chapter 11-20)

No.	Archaic Pronouns	Frequency
1.	Ye	13
2.	Thy	6
3.	Thee	5
4.	Thou	4
5.	Thine	0
	Total	28

Table 3 shows that the number of archaic pronouns found in *Wuthering Heights* chapters 11-20 is 28 times. Of the archaic pronouns, 'ye' appears most frequently, with 13 instances, equating to modern English 'you', which serves both as a subject and an object in present usage. The possessive form 'thy' occurs 6 times equated to modern possessive 'your'. The pronouns 'thee' and 'thou' are less frequent, with 5 and 4 occurrences replaced by 'you' in modern English. Previously, 'thou' was used as a subject and 'thee' as an object in archaic contexts. Interestingly, the possessive form 'thine', which earlier mainly functioned as a before-word alternative to 'your' or 'yours', especially before words beginning with a vowel sound, is absent from these chapters. A total of 28 counts of these archaic pronouns show their shrinking space as modern English moved towards standardization in the use of pronouns. It underscores how the shift to 'you' for both subject and object in modern English mirrors wider linguistic evolutions over time.

Archaic Pronoun *'Ye'*

a. 'Mim! mim! mim! Did iver Christian body hear aught like it? Mincing un' munching! How can I tell whet **ye** say?'
(Brotë, 1996, p. 81)

In this conversation, it is Joseph who utters 'ye'. He is the servant of Wuthering Heights and addresses Isabella Linton. The present use by Joseph of "ye" reflects the

carryover from older English, where the second-person pronoun was distinguished as formal and informal, along with a plural form. Within this context of conversation, it may be assumed that Joseph addresses Isabella informally, familiarly, or even with contempt; their relationship does not seem to be one of high regard, given Joseph's status as a servant. This 'ye' indicates that Joseph is speaking to Isabella in an informal setting, less respectful or more contrastingly formal than we would use nowadays.

In modern English, the second-person singular and plural pronouns have merged, so Joseph's words would just be 'you' in today's English. The change in the pronouns may be different, but the tone and context of the conversation (and Joseph's probable contempt for Isabella) would likely remain equivalent.

b.   'To-morn, he's come hisseln, and thrust HIM out, if **ye** darr!'
(Brotë, 1996, p. 117)

Joseph's statement "To-morn, he's come hisseln, and thrust HIM out, if ye darr!" would be understood in modern English as: "Tomorrow, he'll come himself, and thrust him out, if you dare!"

Here, 'ye' again takes Linton as a singular informal. The use of 'ye' here is noteworthy because it suggests that Joseph may have a lower social status or a more informal, familiar relationship with Linton, who is apparently of higher social standing. It may indicate that Joseph addresses Linton with disrespect or uses a degree of familiarity that seems slightly out of place, given the hierarchical nature of their roles. Modern English would replace 'ye' with 'you' in both singular and plural forms, using it neutrally and non-contextually to address any person, irrespective of rank. However, the social dynamic between Joseph and Linton, wherein Joseph appears to be somewhat more dismissive or assertive, will still come out as an important constituent in the overall tone.

Archaic Pronoun '*Thy*'

a.   'I'll see thee damned before I be **THY** servant!'
(Brotë, 1996, p. 112)

In the sentence "I'll see thee damned before I be thy servant!", 'thy' is the possessive pronoun relating to Catherine, translating into modern English as 'your'. The modern equivalent would be: "I'll see you damned before I be your servant!"

The use of 'thy' shows the old way of possession and tells the time when the text was written. While 'your' is the modern possessive word used by everyone today, 'thy' was used in Early Modern English when speaking to one person (second person singular), mainly in informal or familiar situations. Here, it shows Hareton's direct and somewhat familiar approach toward Catherine despite her higher social class.

b.   'None of that nonsense! We're not going to hurt thee, Linton - isn't that **thy** name? Thou art thy mother's child, entirely! Where is my share in thee, puling chicken?'
(Brotë, 1996, p. 120)

In the sentence "isn't that thy name?", it is believed that the archaic possessive 'thy' relates to Linton's name, something that it possesses. In modern English, this would be simply stated as 'your name'. Usage of 'thy' corresponded with Early Modern English usage, where 'thy' belonged as a possessive form of 'thou' for addressing one individual

informally or in an intimate setting. The present-day equivalent, 'your', is now universally used in both formal and informal situations and does not depend on the relationship between the speaker and the listener.

This can be interpreted to mean that Heathcliff's use of "thy" in addressing Linton suggests a combination of familiarity and detachment or disdain. Although Linton belongs to the Linton family, the language used by Heathcliff is more informal and disrespectful, which suits his contemptuous view of Linton. It is 'thy' here instead of 'your' that underscores the fact that there is no respect for Linton by Heathcliff; he considers him not an equal.

Archaic Pronoun *'Thee'*

a.   'God bless **thee**, darling!'

(Brotë, 1996, p. 64)

In the sentence "God bless thee, darling!", the archaic form 'thee' is used by Nelly to address Hareton, and it is an object pronoun. The modern equivalent would be 'you': "God bless you, darling!" In modern English, 'you' serves as both the subject and object form of the second-person pronoun, regardless of formality or number.

'Thee' is an example of a more intimate or informal tone, as 'thee' was used in Early Modern English to refer to people with whom one had closer relations. Here, Nelly uses it for Hareton, hinting at some closeness or tenderness. This is then juxtaposed with the modern 'you,' which is used in everyday speech regardless of the emotional closeness or distance between the parties speaking or being spoken to.

b.   'Damn the curate, and **thee**! Gie me that,'

(Brotë, 1996, p. 64)

In the sentence, "Damn the curate, and thee! Gie me that," Hareton is expressing anger and frustration toward Nelly. The modern English equivalent of this sentence would be: "Damn the curate, and you! Give me that." The use of 'thee' in this context indicates that Hareton is addressing Nelly informally, but with a much more hostile and aggressive tone, compared to the more affectionate usage of 'thee' seen earlier.

Generally, the pronoun 'thee' is an object form of 'thou' and would be replaced by 'you' in present English just as in all other instances of 'thee', where modern English does not make a distinction between subject and object forms of the second-person pronoun. However, here, the tone is angry and defiant, indicating a fundamental change in social dynamics between the characters. Whereas traditionally, 'thee' was supposed to be more informal, it appears here discontentedly and defiantly rather than familiarly or affectionately.

Archaic Pronoun *'Thou'*

a.   'Now, wilt **thou** be ganging?'

(Brotë, 1996, p. 80)

In the sentence "Now, wilt thou be ganging?" the archaic 'thou' is the subject of the sentence, and in modern English, it would be replaced by 'you'. The modern equivalent would be: "Now, will you be going?"

The use of 'thou' here is significant because it reflects the older English distinction between subject pronouns. In Early Modern English, 'thou' was commonly used for

addressing one person informally or intimately. Here, Joseph's use of 'thou' could imply a more familiar tone toward Isabella. However, this familiarity is tinged with a certain condescension or command, considering the context of the scene and their relationship dynamics. In modern English, 'you' would replace 'thou', simplifying the distinction between formal and informal addresses. The tone in modern English, however, would likely feel less hierarchical, whereas 'thou' in the original text adds a layer of social nuance, reflecting the power dynamics and the social roles of the characters. Joseph, as a servant, using 'thou' to address Isabella (who is of higher social status) reflects the more rigid social stratification of the time.

b.   'Damned - **thou** saucy witch!'

(Brotë, 1996, p. 112)

In the sentence "Damned - thou saucy witch!" Hareton is addressing Catherine directly using 'thou'. The modern English equivalent would be: "Damned - you saucy witch!"

Here, 'thou' is used as the subject pronoun to address Catherine directly. The phrase 'thou saucy witch!' conveys much contempt and aggression; while the modern equivalent 'you' can express the same level of hostility, it adds an extra dimension of informality and intimacy, contrasting with the derogatory tone. The old use 'thou' was mainly used when talking to one person in a casual, known, or even close situation. However, here, Hareton's use of 'thou' along with a word indicates a shift in how 'thou' can be perceived as a sign of disrespect. This shows that 'thou' was not just reserved for polite or affectionate conversations but could also be used to convey power, insult, or express anger. In contemporary English, 'you' would take the place of 'thou', and while the present pronoun does not have the equivalent connotations of yore, it acts as a neutral way to address both formally and informally. However, here, it is 'thou' that makes the original interaction between Hareton and Catherine more emotionally charged, intensifying their relationship.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of archaic pronouns in Wuthering Heights has revealed notable instances of 'ye' (13), 'thy' (6), 'thee' (5), and 'thou' (4). These findings reflect the use of older forms of second-person pronouns, which were once distinct in terms of subject, object, and possessive functions. Each of these archaic forms can be directly equated to modern English pronouns, though their historical context adds layers of social nuance that are not present in contemporary speech.

In short, the archaic pronouns 'ye', 'thy', 'thee', and 'thou' have all been changed by the new 'you' and 'your'. This change not only reflects a shift in grammar but also indicates social change, as the distinctions between formal and informal ways of speaking English have become less rigid over time. The study provides an insight into the language development that has occurred from Early Modern English to the present, illustrating how English has evolved towards standardization and simplification.

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