

Personal Pronouns in Present-Day English

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ABSTRAKT

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo nabídnout co největší množství informací o osobních zájmenech, jejich použití a podobě v dnešní době. Tento druh zájmen je nejpoužívanějším v běžném životě. Používají se skoro v každé větě a i tak je jim věnována malá pozornost, co se týče publikací.

Teoretická část obsahuje vysvětlení pojmu osobních zájmen, jejich použití ve větách a správný výběr zájmena pro určitou pozici. Praktická část je věnována vyhledávání ve dvou korpusech, British National Corpus a Corpus of Contemporary American English. Dále pak porovnání výsledků v obou korpusech pro britskou a americkou větev anglického jazyka. Tato bakalářská práce může posloužit jako pomůcka pro studenty, kteří si chtějí rozšířit vědomosti o osobních zájmenech v dnešní angličtině.

Klíčová slova: Osobní zájmena, dnešní angličtina, použití osobních zájmen, anglická osobní zájmena

ABSTRACT

The aim of this bachelor's thesis was to provide as much information about the personal pronouns, their usage and their nowadays' appearance. This kind of pronouns is the most used one in every-day life. They are used in almost every sentence and despite that, they are not receiving much attention concerning publications.

The theoretical part consists of describing the term of personal pronouns, their usage in sentences and the right choice of the pronoun for a certain position. The analytical part is dedicated to searching in two corpora, British National Corpus and Corpus of Contemporary American English. Moreover, it focuses on comparison of the results from both corpora of British and American branch of English language. This bachelor's thesis can be used as an aid for students who would like to enlarge their knowledge about personal pronouns in present-day English.

Keywords: Personal pronouns, present-day English, usage of personal pronouns, English personal pronouns

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

Personal pronouns are the most used type of pronouns and yet they do not have enough attention. People use them on a daily basis and yet only a few books are dedicated to them. Because in most of the linguistic books personal pronouns are discussed on a few pages compared to for example verbs. The definition of personal pronoun has not change much since the time when the term *pronoun* was used for the first time. It might be a problem as the personal pronouns that were used in the past are not being used nowadays in such dimension. Only a few locations of United Kingdom and United States of America remained loyal to the older forms and usages.

Personal pronouns are being used differently every day by various people. Some might use them in a place where the others could not picture using them. However, that is what is beautiful about language, it develops with every speech and every written sentence, and so do the personal pronouns. Many forms of them exist that our ancestors could not even think of.

This thesis focuses exactly on these left-out pronouns. Everyone uses and sees personal pronouns everywhere and that is the reason I chose personal pronouns as the topic for the thesis. The first part is theoretical. It includes the definition of what the personal pronoun is, their morphological features and typical and unusual usage and forms. Each part of the theoretical part also includes a few examples to get better idea about the topic of the part.

The second part is analytical, for which I used online corpora, namely British National Corpus and Corpus of Contemporary American English. I search various phrases and forms of personal pronouns and compare the results from both corpora. The premise is that the most of the searched forms and phrases are mainly used in spoken language.

I. THEORY

1 PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Personal pronouns are the largest categories of pronouns. The pronoun, in general, may be called a pro-form as it can substitute a noun or a noun phrase, or it may signal that reference is being made to something mentioned in recent linguistic or situational context. (Crystal, 2003) Personal pronouns together with possessive and reflexive pronouns can be called the central pronouns as they share the features that are characteristic for pronouns in general. Thus, they could be called real pronouns because not every category fully meets the characteristics mentioned above. (Quirk et al., 1985) They are influenced by person, gender and number. These are to be discussed further. Most of the personal pronouns also show a distinction of the case. (Huddleston, 2002)

Personal pronouns usually have exact meaning and represent the noun phrase. In that case, they may have a situational, anaphoric, or cataphoric reference. (Quirk et al., 1985) Although they are titled as personal it does not mean that they substitute only persons. They are called as such because they refer to grammatical persons. (Alexander, 1988) Personal pronouns are used to determine the speaker (first person), the addressee (second person) and additional or third party (third person). (Gramley, 2004) The first person and second person pronouns, in a case, when they have a specific reference, are used for those entities which are directly involved in the utter-act. (Quirk et al., 1985) Therefore, according to Wales (2006) they are called “inter-personal” pronouns. The third person pronouns can be used in some situations where the entities refer to another one whose identity can be understood from the context. Much more often, the identity of such third person entity is included in the context. (Quirk et al., 1985)

2 MORPHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Personal pronouns are the most frequently used and the most important class of pronouns. They have special grammatical properties. Those are case, person, number and gender. According to these, personal pronouns may change their form. (Quirk et al., 1985)

2.1 Case

The two case forms exist in which the personal pronouns occur. According to Huddleston (2002), they are called *nominative* and *accusative*. However, these distinctions are not often used anymore. In modern linguistic books the subjective and objective case forms are more common. (Wales, 2006) When choosing which case form the speaker or writer has to use, the decision should be made based on the function of the pronoun in a particular clause. When the pronoun is subject in a finite clause the nominative form is used, and when the pronoun is object of the verb, or object of the preposition the accusative form occurs. The only personal pronouns that do not change their form whether in nominative or accusative are *you* and *it*. (Huddleston, 2005)

			Subjective case	Objective case
First person	singular		I	me
	plural		we	us
Second person	singular/plural		you	
Third person	singular	masculine	he	him
		feminine	she	her
		neuter	it	
	plural		they	them

Table 1 Cases (Wales)

2.1.1 Constructions where subjective case of non-coordinate pronoun is obligatory

Only one function exists where the nominative case of personal pronoun is acceptable and it is subject of a finite clause. This includes non-inverted subject, subject-operator inversion, inverted subject in a question tag and subject of a finite subordinate clause. In this case, the accusative case form cannot be used irrespective of the style level as it is utterly ungrammatical. (Huddleston, 2002)

(1a) *I have never been to England.*

(1b) ***Me** have never been to England.

(2a) Did **we** visit that museum?

(2b) *Did **us** visit that museum?

(3a) She is the smartest one, isn't **she**?

(3b) *She is the smartest one, isn't **her**?

(4a) I think **he** knows.

(4b) *I think **him** knows.

2.1.2 Constructions where objective case of non-coordinate pronoun is obligatory

Compared to the previous paragraph, the accusative case form of a pronoun is obligatory in a number of functions. These may include direct and indirect object, object of the preposition (with a few exceptions) and in an infinitival clause, where the pronoun is preceded by preposition *for*. (Huddleston, 2002) Accusative case form is also used in constructions where the pronoun is pre-modified by adjective. (Alexander, 1988) In an informal style, accusatives are the only option for dislocated emphases of a subject. (Huddleston, 2002)

(5a) I met **him** on Wednesday.

(5b) *I met **he** on Wednesday.

(6a) He gave **me** a gift.

(6b) *He gave **I** a gift.

(7a) She was standing next to **me**.

(7b) *She was standing next to **I**.

(8a) For **him** to study Spanish was difficult.

(8b) *For **he** to study Spanish was difficult.

(9) Lucky **her**.

(10a) *Me*, I wouldn't lend money to anyone I don't know.

(10b) I don't like it at all, *me*.

2.1.3 Constructions where both case forms of non-coordinate pronoun are acceptable

As an opposition to the situations mentioned above, many others in which the personal pronoun can appear in both subjective and objective case exist too. (Huddleston, 2002) Decision, on which case form should be used, can be based on several factors. According to Wales (2006) the subjective case is mainly used in formal and written English. Its usage can be called as pedantic or mannered as it is mainly used by educated people, whereas the objective case is usually used only in informal writing or in every-day speech. Such usage appears among normal people. Both usages are grammatically acceptable but in some cases, the usage of subjective case could be called *overly correct*. Thus, in spoken language, native English speakers would naturally use the objective case form rather than subjective. Simultaneously, an anxiety among foreign users of English language can appear. They may get confused as to whether to use subjective or objective case and what case form is really *correct* in the situation. The possibility of usage of both cases may result in anxiety even among native speakers, especially in written language. (Wales, 2006) The first function, in which both case forms are acceptable, is subject complement. The subjective case would be used mainly by older educated people. The younger the generation, the more pedantic the usage of subjective case seems. (Wales, 2006) Although in some situations both case forms are grammatically correct, native speaker would not use the subjective case in any discourse. (Huddleston, 2002)

The most frequent occurrence of subject complement may be in *it+cleft* sentences like in examples (11a, b) and (12a, b). In these sentences, the distinction of the pronouns could be made based on whether the pronoun would be in subjective or objective case in non-cleft alternatives of these sentences. (Huddleston, 2002) For examples (11a, b) the alternative would be: *I like you* and for examples (12a, b) the alternative would be: *He likes me*. Therefore, use of pronoun *I* in example (11) would be more logical and simultaneously, use of pronoun *me* would fit more in example (12).

(11a) It is *I* who like you.

(11b) *It is **me** who like you.*

(12a) *It is **I** he likes.*

(12b) *It is **me** he likes.*

When a sentence is in a form of *be+subject complement* which is not followed by any verb, generational differences may occur in use of pronouns. For older generations, the use of subjective case would be rational as they have it fixed in their memories of prescriptive education. For younger generations, though, the use of subjective case in these situations seems harsh or pedantic regardless of the form of language. Especially in example (14), the first option would be unacceptable by young people as they may be used to answering the phone with *It's me*. (Wales, 2006)

(13a) *Look it's **she**!*

(13b) *Look it's **her**!*

(14a) *This is **I**.*

(14b) *This is **me**.*

In situations like in examples (15a, b), both cases are possible but the sentence in example (15a) would not be used by any native speaker. They would probably rephrase the sentence in order to avoid such sentence structure because they may be used to using more comprehensible sentence forms in informal every-day speech. This can result in a sentence: *I was the one that said something*. (Huddleston, 2002)

(15a) [?]*The only one who said something was **I**.*

(15b) *The only one who said something was **me**.*

In constructions where the pronouns are used after comparative prepositions *as* and *than*, the choice of the case of pronoun depends on whether the pronoun is followed by clause that was omitted. The subjective case is formally used when the clause can be added after the pronoun. The reason would be that when the clause is added the pronoun becomes subject of that clause. (Alexander, 1988) According to Huddleston (2002), the pronouns in such cases “should appear in the same case as when the verb is present”. The exception to

this would be when the pronoun is followed by *both* or *all*, like in examples (18a, b), or when the objective case seems to be the only possibility after rephrasing the sentence, like in examples (19a, b).

(16a) *She is older than **he** (is).*

(16b) *She is older than **him**.*

(17a) *He's wearing the same shirt as **I** (am wearing).*

(17b) *He's wearing the same shirt as **me**.*

(18a) **She is older than **we both/all**.*

(18b) *She is older than **us both/all**.*

(19a) **It affected others more than **I**.*

(19b) *It affected others more than (it affected) **me**.*

Concerning the pronoun as a subject of other verbless clauses, plenty of situations in which the case form of pronoun is questionable exist. In examples (20a, b), the sentences are in form of gapped constructions, which means that the sentence is structurally incomplete and predicator is omitted. The subjective case, here, would be used in formal language, whereas the objective case may seem too informal. Sentences in examples (21a, b) are in form of the polar echo constructions which mainly appear in informal spoken language. Therefore, the objective case would be more likely used, but the subjective case is possible too. (Huddleston, 2002)

(20a) *He was honest, **she** full of lies.*

(20b) *He was honest, **her** full of lies.*

(21a) *Wait, **she** a genius?*

(21b) *Wait, **her** a genius?*

Subsequent form of verbless constructions would be short answers. In examples (22a, b), both cases are acceptable by native speakers though the subjective case may be used less likely. The usage of subjective case in examples (23a, b) can seem excessively pedantic

and in examples (24a, b) it could be perceived even as excessively unacceptable. In majority of these situations, speakers would use the objective case under any circumstances. If the objective case seems too informal, this construction could be avoided by rephrasing the sentence into more acceptable form. (Huddleston, 2002)

(22a) *He waved at you, not I.*

(22b) *He waved at you, not **me**.*

(23a) *A: Who took the pen? B: I.*

(23b) *A: Who took the pen? B: **Me**.*

(24a) *A: I enjoy reading this book. B: *I too.*

(24b) *A: I enjoy reading this book. B: **Me** too.*

Probably the most confusing construction for choosing the correct case form is *but+pronoun*. As Wales (2006) suggests, two possible definitions of *but* exist. In the first case, *but* is a conjunction so the following pronoun should be in subjective case. In the second case, *but* is a preposition so the pronoun should be in objective case. Nevertheless, in examples (26), the majority of native speakers would use the objective case in such sentences because pronoun here occurs in *object territory*. (Quirk et al., 1985)

(25a) *Nobody but **she** knows it.*

(25b) *Nobody but **her** knows it.*

(26a) **I trust nobody but **he**.*

(26b) *I trust nobody but **him**.*

2.1.4 Coordinative constructions

These constructions are basically formed by two pronouns, or by a pronoun and a noun phrase that are connected by a clitch *and*. Huddleston (2002) claims that in a certain variety of English, the case of the coordinated pronoun(s) is the same as the case of the pronoun that would substitute the whole coordination, see examples (27) and (28). However, according to Wales (2006), subjective coordinate constructions in which

the pronoun is in the objective case are used in many dialects in English, see example (29). Such usage is therefore slowly spreading into the Standard English through informal speech as more and more speakers would use combination of both case forms in coordination. This shows that in present-day English, the only secure position for subjective case is when the pronoun stands for the whole subject in finite clause. (Wales, 2006)

(27) ***He and I** are going to move to Prague.*

(28) *There has always been rivalry between **him and her**.*

(29) ***Him and us** are going to be good friends.*

As mentioned above, many varieties of coordination with both cases combined exist. Some of which are usually used in common speech by many speakers. Moreover, the switch of the cases may also occur: subjective case used in coordination which stand for object and vice versa. Concerning subjective coordination, both or one of the pronouns can appear in the objective case. The clutch, or coordinator, may be treated as a preposition and therefore, the following pronoun is case-assigned as objective, see example (30). (Huddleston, 2002) These constructions are rather non-standard and according to Quirk et al. (1985), the coordination, where first person pronoun is used first like in the example (31), is even “reprehensible”. They also violate the rule of politeness, in which the first person pronoun should occur at the end of the coordination.

(30) ***He and me** are supposed to meet outside.*

(31) ***Me and Mary** can do it.*

Simultaneously, when subjective case is used for constructions which stand for object, it is more common to use the subjective case only for the final coordinate. Shown in examples (32) and (33), if the first pronoun or both pronouns are used in subjective case, it is considered rather hypercorrect. The most used coordination may be *between you and I*. Grammatically, *between* is a preposition so the pronouns should both be in subjective case. However, many speakers are used to using constructions with *I* as the final coordinate in

objective coordination. Therefore, constructions *pronoun+I* are not considered as hypercorrect but as a variety of Standard English. (Huddleston, 2002)

(32) *There's something going on between **he and her**.*

(33) *Yesterday I met **he and she**.*

(34) *Is there anything for **you and I** to discuss?*

2.2 Person

As was already mentioned, personal pronouns are called *personal* because they are related to the grammatical system of person. This system consists of three persons that are differentiated according to the roles in the discourse. First person characterically determines the speaker, or the writer, or a group of which the speaker/writer is a member. Second person is used for the addressee or a group of which the addressee is a member but excluding the speaker. The reference of the third person excludes both speaker(s) and addressee(s). It is used to determine *third party* that is not directly involved in the utterance. (Huddleston, 2002)

2.3 Number

Personal pronouns have two forms, singular and plural, which are morphologically different from each other. The only exception is pronoun *you* which has the same form for both singular and plural. Generally, the plural forms of the first and the second person pronouns have specific meanings. *We* refers to *I and other people* and simultaneously, *you* means *you and other people, excluding me*. (Quirk et al., 1985)

2.4 Gender

Distinction of gender is mainly limited to third person singular pronouns. In plural form, this distinction is not visible. Two main types of gender exist, personal and nonpersonal gender. Personal gender includes masculine and feminine type. When choosing the type of gender, the main aspect would be whether the reference is being made to a *person*. That means, if the entity has characteristics that are distinctive for a member of the human race. *Persons* are not only humans, but it may even include supernatural entities, such as gods

and angels, and higher animals; these could be for example pets or animals that are maintained by people with a special concern. (Quirk et al., 1985)

The problem with the gender is that no *common gender* pronoun is available. When a reference to a noun phrase without gender specification is required, no pronoun to cover both masculine and feminine gender exists. However, several alternatives are used nowadays. The most widely used would be *singular they*, others namely *generic he*, *generic she*, *he or she*, *(s)he*, *s/he* or rephrasing the sentence so that the reference is avoided. (Wales, 2006)

2.4.1 Singular they

The singular use of *they* goes back to Middle English where for example Chaucer used it in his works. Even though it was criticized by earlier grammars, it is widely used nowadays. (Huddleston, 2002) Many native speakers would assume that such usage is rather new, because while growing up, they were taught to use *generic he* instead. The use of *singular they* for a common gender has its supporters and opponents. (Wales, 2006) The conservative opponents would claim that pronoun *they* is only supposed to be used as a plural pronoun and that using it as a singular is incorrect. Instead, they would still recommend the use of *generic he*. However, this opinion has to face an argument, why the use of plural *they* as a singular pronoun is wrong, while using masculine *he* as a generic pronoun, even for feminine gender, is completely normal. (Huddleston, 2005)

The main advantage of the pronoun *they* is that it has no distinction of gender, thus could be used as *common gender* for both masculine and feminine. (Wales, 2006) The use of the *singular they* does not affect verb agreement. It would be natural to use suffix *-s* in the verb, only is it used the same way as if *they* was supposed to be a plural, hence no suffixation. (Huddleston, 2005) Although it would be used when the gender is not known, it could be used even when the speaker actually knows gender of the person but decides to not specify that to the addressee. It depends on the speaker how much information he wants to share based on the situation. (Wales, 2006)

(35) *Everyone has told me **they** think I made the right choice.*

(36) *When a person gets married, **they** should wear a ring.*

2.4.2 Generic he

The use of *he* for generic purposes has been considered as grammatically correct way to express both feminine and masculine gender. It mainly occurs in formal style. (Huddleston, 2002) However, this usage may seem unacceptable to many speakers. The problem with using *he* for both masculine and feminine could be that it colors the interpretation too much. In the example (37), the use of *generic he* is rather impossible to use, because it would seem that the person is a male even if it is not. In the example (38), *he* could not be used too because the antecedent is a coordination of a female person and a male person joined by *or*. These examples show that *he* does not possess gender neutrality. (Huddleston, 2005)

(37) *If a student gets ill, **he** must let the teacher know.*

(38) *[?]The husband or the wife should know that **he** is supposed to pay for the wedding.*

According to Huddleston (2002), *he* is “purportedly sex-neutral” as it is not actually gender-neutral form to be used. Using a male pronoun *he* that contains even female person(s) could be perceived as linguistically unequal. This can be seen especially in the United States, where several campaigns are lead against sexual bias in language. Thus, this usage could also seem anti-feminist and could seem like males are superior, hence pronoun *he* should not be used. (Quirk et al., 1985) On the contrary, use of *generic he* with some kind of occupation would be convincing enough. In examples (39) and (40), the speaker considers A Member of Parliament or candidate to be a male. However, such usage can seem rather biased too. (Huddleston, 2002)

(39) *A Member of Parliament is supposed to be Commonwealth citizen and **he** has to be at least 18 years old.*

(40) *The candidate has to have a degree and **he** has to be fluent in English.*

2.4.3 Generic she

The use of *she* as a gender-neutral pronoun is rather new and uncommon. It could be considers as linguistic discrimination of males and as the opposition to long tradition of the use of purportedly sex-neutral *he*. (Huddleston, 2002) As Wales (2006) claims, generic *she* is a possibility mainly in written language. However, this use is not mentioned as an option

in textbooks as it can have strong ideological connotation. Feminists tend to use it to show the superiority of women and also writers, who use generic *she* in their works, are mainly women, for example Deborah Cameron.

2.4.4 He or she, (s)he, s/he, rephrasing the sentence

The coordination *he or she* is mainly used to avoid using generic *he* or singular *they*. It is more common in formal language but can also be seen in common conversation. *He or she* is not useful in sentences where the reference is repeated as it could seem too complex. Much more acceptable would be blends such as *(s)he* or *s/he*, at least in written language. (Wales, 2006) These forms are called “experimental” by Quirk et al. (1985) as they are mainly used by minority. The difficulties of choosing the right pronoun can be avoided by rephrasing the whole sentence and thus leaving out any pronouns. The strategy would be to use plural antecedent. (Huddleston, 2002)

(41a) *A person has to prove that **they** are at least 18 years old.*

(41b) *People have to prove that **they** are at least 18 years old.*

3 PERSONAL PRONOUNS AND THEIR USAGE

3.1 First person pronouns

Two first person pronouns exist. For singular it is *I* and for plural it is *we*. (Alexander, 1988) It is hard to view their linguistic function as substituting a noun because they can stand for an infinite number of nouns and it only depends on their previously given identities. (Wales, 2006) In the singular, the writer or speaker uses *I* to refer to himself or herself. The pronoun *I* is the only one that is always spelt in capital letter regardless its position in a sentence. (Alexander, 1988)

(42) *I study English.*

(43) *She thinks that I study English.*

In plural the pronoun *we* refers to a group of people of which the speaker is a part. The group can also include the addressee. (Quirk et al., 1985) Special cases may occur where the speaker is not referring only to the group he is a part of but to people in general. This phenomenon is called editorialism. (Yadurajan, 2014)

(44) *Let's go, shall we?* (including the addressee)

(45) *We are already done. What about you?* (excluding the addressee)

(46) *We interpret things according to our beliefs.* (people in general)

3.1.1 Special uses of "I"

When expressing politeness, the speaker is supposed to mention himself or herself after anybody else. It is more usual in written English as people tend to use objective form *me* while speaking. (Alexander, 1988)

(47) *Mary and I are ready to go.*

If the pronoun follows a predicate which is in the form of *It is* or *It was*, it is usual to use *I* in the written English. This mainly occurs when the speaker wants to be very formal. (Swan, 2005)

(48) *It is I who need your help.*

(49) *It was I who broke the window.*

In North-eastern England and in Scotland, people would use pronoun *us* as a first person singular pronoun instead of *me*. This phenomenon can also be found in many other parts of Britain but in this case, such usage is limited to only several collocations. (Huddleston, 2002)

(50) *He pushed us as I was walking down the hall.* (North-eastern England, Scotland)

(51) *Give us a favour.* (in some parts of Britain)

3.1.2 Special uses of “we”

When the speaker wants to avoid using *I* in order to not be egoistical, he or she may use the pronoun *we*. This is called *editorial we* and is usual for formal writing, especially scientific, but can also be used in newspapers. (Quirk et al., 1985)

(52) *As we just showed...*

Another case might be when the speaker or writer wants to include the reader in some kind of enterprise. If he or she used the pronoun *you*, it would seem too authoritative or informal as this is mainly used in “discursive or scholarly writing”. (Quirk et al., 1985) This type is called *authorial we*. It may be argued that in example (53), the pronoun *we* still stands for a group of people in which the speaker or writer is involved. Such statement is harder to justify in example (54). In this case the pronoun *we* cannot, under any circumstances, refer to speaker + addressees because it is only the speaker who will explain the matter. (Huddleston, 2002)

(53) *We now turn to a different matter.*

(54) *In the next part of the presentation, we will explain the matter further more.*

The pronoun *we* can also refer to the addressee. This does not occur often. It appears in certain situations such as in doctor talking to his patient or teacher to his student(s). The doctor may use it when he wants to be empathetic and the teacher when he wants to

somehow share the problem with the student(s). This is mainly used in common speech. (Quirk et al., 1985)

(55) *How are **we** feeling today?* (doctor talking to his patient)

(56) ***We** need to work on this type of exercises.* (teacher talking to his student(s))

In the area of south-west of England, including Devon and Somerset, very specific system of personal pronouns exists. In this system the form of the pronoun is not, in most cases, determined by whether it is in subject or object function, but whether it is in weak or strong stress position. For *we* they use *us* in the weak position. (Hughes, 2012)

(57) ***We** would not do that, would **us**?*

In spite of that fact, that personal pronouns cannot be used in subject together with a noun, there are some cases when it is possible. It could be used with *we* and plural *you*. (Swan, 2005) For example, when a protest takes place, feminists might use *we women*.

(58) ***We women** demand this to be over.*

3.2 Second person pronoun

In general, the pronoun *you* refers to the addressee(s). (Yadurajan, 2014) This is the only personal pronoun that has the same form whether it is singular or plural. It always takes a plural verb in both cases. (Spankie, 1987) Many other forms of *you* can occur, mainly in dialects in both American and British English. (Swan, 2005) These will be discussed further.

3.2.1 Special uses of “you”

In the familiar and informal speech, most people would use *you* to refer to people in general. (Spankie, 1987) It does not refer to any particular person or a specific group of people. In this case, the pronoun *you* is an equivalent to more formal *one* and is not stressed. (Huddleston, 2005)

(59) ***You** could hear a pin drop.*

Even though *you* is a second person pronoun and hence is used for the addressee, it can also include the speaker and stand for *you+I*. For example, when speaker is describing his or her routine, which is typical for most of the people. This could include a morning/evening routine or some given process that people have to go through in order to achieve something. (Yadurajan, 2014)

As mentioned above, *you* is the second pronoun which can be used directly before noun in subject. The reason for such usage could be to emphasize and strengthen the word that follows the pronoun. This can be seen for example in political speeches, when the speaker wants to reach out directly to people. (Swan, 2005)

(60) ***You people*** are the reason I am fighting for this change.

The pronoun *you* can be also used in imperative to emphasize the demand or order. In this case, intonation and stress is very important. If *you* is not stressed, the order is not emphasized and therefore does not seem like a demand. If *you* is stressed enough, it can even induce the feeling of anger or rudeness. This can also be implied to the negative form of a sentence. (Alexander, 1988)

(61) ***You*** mind your own business!

(62) ***Don't you dare*** speak to me like that!

Pronoun *you* can also be modified by adjectives in several informal expressions. It is mainly used to emphasize or express a feeling about somebody else. It could also be used as an envious compliment. The meaning of example (64) would be that the speaker secretly wishes to be the person he or she is talking to. (Swan, 2005)

(63) ***Poor you!***

(64) ***Lucky you!***

In the area of Devon and Somerset, as mentioned above, the form of a pronoun is determined whether it is in strong or weak stress position. For the pronoun *you*, *ee* form is used in weak stress position. (Hughes, 2012)

(65) *You would not do that, would ee?*

3.2.2 Special forms of “you”

Although in most countries, the formal distinction between singular and plural *you* exists, it is not common for standard English. Many dialects and varieties of English find the distinction between singular and plural particularly useful, at least in questions and statements. The main reason would be the clarification whether the addressee is one person or two or more people. (Wales, 2006)

In the area of Northern England, including the area of Yorkshire and in the area of rural part of South-western England, the older division of second person pronouns is still being used. Usage of pronouns *thou* and *thee* is very rare nowadays. While in the Northern England, the usual form of this pronoun is *tha* for both subject and object case, in South-western England they use pronoun *thee*. (Hughes, 2012)

(66) *Whither goest **thou** without thy son?* (=Where are you going without your son?)

(67) *Is it fine with **thee**?* (=Is it fine with you?)

The pronoun *you* can also be seen and heard with a plural morpheme *-s*. The form *yous(e)* occurs in Dublin area, areas of Liverpool and Glasgow, and some parts of Northern America. This form would make the best sense in formal *plural pronoun you* because the speakers would only add *-s* to *you*. (Wales, 2006) Quirk et al. (1985) called this form “low-prestige”. The other forms of plural *you* might be *yins*, which is used mainly in Scottish English and in the area of Pittsburgh, *you all* and *y'all*, which are primarily used in the Southern United States, or *you gang*, that is used by inhabitants of Fiji. The forms *you all* and *y'all* are mainly used when people want to sound friendly or intimate. (Swan, 2005) The form of plural *you* that is increasingly used by mainly young people throughout the whole United States and Britain is *you guys*, which refers to both men and women. Older British generation, similarly, use *you lot* or *you chaps* to emphasize the number of addressees. These forms could be considered as purely British equivalents of American *you guys*. (Wales, 2006)

(68) ***Yous** are welcome.*

(69) *I'm glad that **you all** came.*

(70) *I love **you** guys.*

3.3 Third person pronouns

Third person pronouns are commonly used to refer to people or things that are neither a speaker nor an addressee. Some cases in which the speaker or addressee are being referred to as a third person exist. (Huddleston, 2005) While three forms of third person pronouns exist in singular, only one form is available for plural. The pronoun *he* is usually used to express a male person, the pronoun *she* usually refers to a female person and the pronoun *it* can have many references, for example things, qualities, events or places. According to Dušková (2003), *it* is the most common pronoun in both written and spoken English and the most multi-functional one. The only plural form, *they*, can stand for persons, animals or things or for people in general. (Alexander, 1988) This explanation can also have exceptions, as was shown in 2.4.

3.3.1 Special uses of third person pronouns

The pronoun *she* does not always have to refer to a female entity. Two cases where *she* can be an alternative for *it* exist. (Huddleston, 2005) The first ones are special personified inanimates, particularly ships. These are referred to as female entity when the speaker has an intense or close personal relationship to them. The second ones are political entities, however, the pronoun *she* cannot be used in every situation. It is inappropriate when the country is viewed geographically or when the name of the country is used for a sporting team. (Quirk et al., 1985)

(71) ***She** is a beauty, my Aurelia.* (referring to a ship)

(72) *France is glad that **she** banned plastic plates and cutlery.*

(73) **At the map of France, you can see that **she** lies west from Germany.* (the pronoun *it* would be better in this case)

(74) **France didn't believe when **she** won her first title.* (better would be *it* or *they*)

As mentioned above, the pronouns *he* and *she* are mainly used to refer to male and female persons. In the case when people are talking about their beloved pets or cars, they can also substitute the pronoun *it*. This usage is very common among people. (Yadurajan, 2014)

(75) *This is my dog. **She** is a husky.*

The pronoun *it* may appear as a referent to the entities that are not a part of the context or discourse. It is the only personal pronoun that is almost always unstressed unlike other pronouns. In the following situations, *it* cannot be replaced by any other third person personal pronoun. The first one would be called *prop it* or *dummy it*, which is mainly used to express time, distance, or atmospheric conditions. Here, *it* does not refer to anything in particular. (Quirk et al., 1985)

(76) *What time is **it**? – **It**'s 4 o'clock.*

(77) *How far is **it** to Prague? – **It**'s about 300 kilometers from here.*

(78) ***It**'s quite sunny today.*

(79) *She doesn't like **it** when you yell at her.*

A special case of *dummy it* is *anticipatory it*. In constructions like these, the pronoun *it* is basically used to introduce or anticipate the subject, which is in most cases a clause. It is used to emphasize the whole clause. (Spankie, 1987)

(80) ***It** takes time to learn a new language.*

(81) ***It** was nice to meet them again.*

It is also used in cleft sentences, where it does not appear to have a meaning or any antecedent. In these constructions, *it* is an obligatory feature and it cannot be left out unless the sentence is rephrased. (Huddleston, 2002) Cleft sentences are used mainly to emphasize a part of a sentence especially the one that follows the pronoun *it*. (Swan, 2005)

(82) ***It** must have been here that I first met her. (emphasizing here)*

(83) ***It** was John who wanted to meet you. (emphasizing John)*

Passive voice can be created with the use of extra positioned *it*. It makes the passive sentence less personal and more objective. The pronoun *it* appears with a certain verbs or in special cases of passive sentences, such as declarative clauses. (Huddleston, 2002)

(84) ***It** was decided to decline the offer.*

(85) ***It** was charged that they used the funds.*

The pronoun *it* is also used in idioms. Similarly to previous cases, it does not possess any particular meaning and can stand for several sentence functions. Completely empty *it* appears after a verb and vaguely describes life in general, like in example (90). (Quirk et al., 1985)

(86) *How's it going?* (stands for subject)

(87) *Just put it in the oven, okay?* (stands for object of the verb)

(88) *Don't go just for the sake of it.* (stands for object of the preposition)

(89) *At least we made it.* (to achieve success)

(90) *I have a hard time of it.* (to find life difficult)

3.4 Impersonal *one*

The pronoun *one* varies from the third person personal pronouns because it cannot be used as an anaphor to another noun phrase. It is gender-neutral so it cannot be listed as a fourth third person pronoun. Vast majority of speakers uses *one* when referring to people in general rather than to an individual. It possess the same features as non-referential *you* but pronoun *one* is more formal. Because of that, the pronoun *one* tends to be used in written language. (Huddleston, 2002)

Many people avoid using *one* in speech because it appears mainly in intellectual speech of more upper class. (Swan, 2005) In the United States, *one* is less likely to be used in opposite to *you*. The pronoun *one* can be found in idioms like *pulling one's leg*.

(91) *If one fails, then one has to try again.*

(92) *One would like to have breakfast in bed, please.* (upper-class British English)

The more the pronoun *one* has been used as a subject, the more it began to be used in colloquial speech. It can appear with the pronoun *you* in one sentence or utterance. The main reason would be to avoid repetition of *one* as it may seem arrogant or bumptious. The pronoun *one* cannot be used for groups that do not include speaker which is further shown in example (94). (Wales, 2006) For the reasons mentioned above, *one* can be seen as a new personal pronoun, being a variant of *you* and *I*. When used instead of *I*, the speaker may

present himself as an image of people in general. Many critics and writers are strongly against using *one* instead of *I*. (Yadurajan, 2014)

(93) *It makes **one** think whether **you** 've made the right decision.*

(94) **In fifteenth century, **one** started to use letter print. (*one* cannot be used because the speaker could not be a part of that community)*

4 ANAPHORIC, CATAPHORIC AND DEICTIC REFERENCE

Each of the personal pronouns is used either anaphorically, cataphorically or deictically. First and second person pronouns can be used only deictically as it is clear from the utterance that *I* or *we* refer to the speaker(s) and *you* refers to the addressee(s). Third person pronouns, on the other hand, can occur in every reference mentioned above. (Huddleston, 2002)

4.1 Anaphoric use of third person pronouns

Anaphoric reference (in other words, *retrospective* anaphora) is a situation in which the speaker wants to avoid a repetition of a noun phrase and uses a pronoun instead of it. The preceding noun phrase to which the anaphoric pronoun refers is called *antecedent*. (Huddleston, 2005) The anaphoric reference occurs in the discourse where the antecedent is known from the co-text. If the addressee was not familiar with the antecedent, the sentence would not be grammatical as the pronoun with no reference would appear. This type of reference is more frequent than the cataphoric one. (Wales, 2006)

(95) *The teacher handed out the tests. Then she wished good luck to the students.*

(96) *I saw your sister yesterday. She seemed happy.*

In the example (95) it can be seen that the repetition of the noun phrase *the teacher* is being omitted by using *she* instead. This has an important stylistic function because the repetition could be unnatural for the addressee. (Wales, 2006) In the example (96) the anaphoric pronoun can be used because the antecedent *your sister* do not need any further description or to be repeated once more. (Huddleston, 2002)

4.2 Cataphoric use of third person pronouns

Cataphoric reference is also called anticipatory anaphora because in this case, the antecedent appears in the utterance after its anaphoric pronoun. This reference occurs less frequently and when it can appear, the sentence can be also rephrased into the anaphoric reference. This type of reference mainly occurs in formal written English and can only be used when the cataphoric pronoun is at a lower level than its antecedent. For example, it can be applied when the pronoun is in a subordinate clause that is connected to higher clause, in which the antecedent appears. (Quirk et. al, 1985) Huddleston (2002) also suggests, that the cataphoric reference is obligatory in cases when the pronoun occurs

within a larger noun phrase and when the pronoun appears in fronted prepositional phrase. Both of which have to appear in the same clause as the antecedent.

(97) *When she was a little girl, my cousin drew all over the bedroom wall.*

(98) *[The rumors about her] made Jane think that she should maybe leave her job.*

(99) *[Not so far from his house] Mark saw his parents driving by.*

4.3 Deictic use of third person pronouns

Third person pronouns are mainly used to refer to a person or an entity that is not part of the utterance, or as in the two cases mentioned above. However, they can also be used instead of a noun to indicate something that is obvious from the situation. It is mainly linked to human senses (sight, hearing, etc.) as the pronouns can be used instead of a name of thing that speaker and addressee see, hear or point at. (Wales, 2006) In example (100) the situation is: the speaker and the addressee are in the restaurant, enjoying their meal and in the background a family of five is talking really loud.

(100) *“I love it. My mouth is in heaven.”* (referring to the meal, it is obvious because they are eating) *“Yes, it’s delicious. But they are being so noisy!”* (saying this while nodding his or her head to the group of people)

II. ANALYSIS

5 METHODOLOGY USED FOR THE ANALYSIS

The aim of the analysis is to compare occurrences of the *special uses* of pronouns, which were talked about in the first part of the thesis, in the American and British English. I chose these two forms because I had mentioned them in the thesis before. For this purpose, I chose to use the online corpora, precisely British National Corpus (further BNC) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (further COCA). The reason for choosing these corpora is that both of them include hundreds of millions of words.

For the research I chose some of the *special uses* of pronouns because I wanted to determine, in which form of English is the *special use* used more. Furthermore, the aim of the research is to find out in what form of discourse do these *special uses* occur. After summarizing the uses into the list I proceeded to search each phrase in each of the corpora. I focused on the frequency of the occurrence of the pronoun in such form or use and on the source of the discourse. Then I compared the results in both British and American English and in every category. The main categories of the occurrence in BNC are: spoken, fiction, magazine, newspaper, non-academic, academic and miscellaneous. The main categories for COCA are: spoken, fiction, magazine, newspaper and academic. Every category has its subcategories, for example *spoken* divides into books, journals, Sci-Fi, juvenile and movies. For most of the results I included an example for better idea of how are the phrases used.

6 CORPORA RESULTS

6.1 First person pronouns

For this part I chose to analyze phrases: *you and I* and *It is I who* and *we+noun*. As was mentioned in the theoretic part, these phrases mainly occur in written language or when the speaker wants to be very formal.

The results were rather distinct. The phrase *you and I* as a subject occurred differently in each form of English language. In BNC, the phrase mainly occurred in fiction, such as books, see example (1). In spoken language it is used very poorly, just as in other categories. According to COCA, the phrase is used the most in spoken language, especially in TV News and in debates or talk shows on channels like FOX, CNN (example 2) and NBC. The second largest usage of the phrase is in the fiction, as expected. The usage in other categories is insignificant.

- (1) *'Louise isn't interested in money as such, but she quite likes things. Buying things. You and I can't manage even that to any extent.'* [Passing on. Lively, Penelope. London: Penguin Group, 1990, pp. 58-178. 3730 s-units.]
- (2) *Is that good for the leader of the free world? Is television good for the country? I mean, if it's not. You and I and everybody on the panel, not to mention all the experts are gonzo.* [Anderson Cooper 360 Degrees 8:00 PM EST]

As for the phrase *It is I who*, the results were similar. In both corpora the phrase mainly occurs in fiction. This may prove the statement from the theoretical part, that this phrase is used in written language more. From COCA it is obvious that the phrase was mainly used in the past as people nowadays tend to use *it is me* more, as was mentioned in the previous part.

- (3) *'There is nothing to be sorry for. Not on your part. It is I who am so sorry for disturbing you. Come, take my hand.'* [Legacy of love. Harvey, Caroline. London: Transworld Pubs Ltd, 1992, pp. 173-309. 3207 s-units.]
- (4) *My arms ached for her as though she were mine. She is mine. I must think of her that way. She is mine and it is I who have chosen not to keep her.* [Amandine. De Blasi, Marlina. New York: Ballantine Books, 2010.]

For the last phrase I searched *we NOUN* which means that the corpora will find every possible noun that stands together with pronoun *we* and follows it. In BNC the most frequently used phrases were *we humans, we children, we women* and *we Christians*. These were mainly used in fiction, scientific writing, religious writing and biographies. In COCA, the most used phrases were *we humans, we Americans, we women* and *we kids*. Each of them was mainly used in magazines, news, in spoken languages and slightly less in academic writing. As mentioned in theoretical part, these phrases are greatly used in speeches and this may be the proof. The results from both corpora very slightly different as Americans may use these phrases in spoken language more than British people. The second most used phrase *we Americans* according to COCA could be the evidence of strong American nationalism.

- (5) *Or to reverse it, could it be that in the deepening turbulence of our generation God is not only judging a culture which has abandoned him but also, as it were, shaking up the bag and testing the foundations to see if we Christians are as ready as we think for the critical years ahead? [Doubt. Guinness, Os. Tring, Herts: Lion Pub. plc, 1976, pp. 7-115. 1998 s-units.]*
- (6) *Her insights into the background of an event, what had already happened and what might still happen, and always delivered with an optimistic outlook, that was just what we Americans needed. [PBS NewsHour for November 15, 2016]*

6.2 Second person pronouns

I chose more phrases including second person pronoun because throughout my research I encountered changes with the usage of them the most. Namely these are: *you+noun, yous, yins, you all, y'all, you gang, you guys, you lot* and *you chaps*. Searching these, I focused on their occurrence in both forms of English language and their occurrence in different categories.

Firstly I searched *you NOUN* the same way as in the chapter 7.1 for phrase *we NOUN*. In BNC the most used phrases were *you chairman, you lot, you sir, you guys* and quite many of the form of *you+name-calling*. Excluding the phrases with name-calling, the others mostly appear in meetings, conventions, classrooms, public debates, fiction and emails. In COCA, the phrase *you guys* is used much more than the other phrases like *you people, you boys* and *you folks*. These are mainly used in TV News, newspapers, tabloids and fiction.

- (7) *Near time close, I can assure you Chairman that our social workers when doing assessments will not, because I've has this from them, at grass roots level in a branch local party meeting... [Leicestershire County Council: council chambers (Pub/instit). Rec. on 29 Sep 1993 with 10 partics, 259 utts, and lasting 2 hrs.]*
- (8) *But a couple of days later, nothing was happening. So I tweeted. If they aren't the highest priority of your government in responding to such a natural disaster, what are – what are you you people spending your time doing? [The FIVE 5:00 PM EST]*

As mentioned in the theoretical part, many new (or older) form of plural *you* exist. Both British and American inhabitants tend to use different forms and that is the purpose of this paragraph: to find out the occurrence of such forms in both branches of English. These *plural forms of you* are mainly used among the people so the purpose could also be to confirm or disprove the fact that they may mainly appear in the *spoken* category.

The plural form *yous* is used in British English less than in the American. While in Britain it is mainly used in spoken language, in America it occurs in fiction the most, especially in the movies.

- (9) *That's alright, well we'll do it this morning, are your socks clean now if you're gonna take off your shoes to get them, try them on? Do yous know what size of shoes yous take? [90 convs rec. by 'Raymond2' between 15 and 17 Apr 1992 with 10i's, 5461 utts, and over 41 mins 46 secs of recs.]*
- (10) *'Me?' I said. 'The two of yous. That's what she said. She requested the two of yous. Never met the lady myself, mind you. [Hollywood North. Libling, Michael. Nov/Dec2014, Vol. 127 Issued 5/6, p197-252. 56p.]*

Form *yins* is used in both languages roughly the same, respectively to the number of the words that are included in each corpus. In BNC, only three categories were represented: miscellaneous (religion), academic (humanities) and newspaper (tabloids). In each of them, the form was used in a phrase *high held yins* or just *held yins* which informally means a person of high position, rank or importance. Similarly, *yins* in COCA appeared also three categories but different ones: fiction (prose), magazine and newspaper (tabloids). Differently to BNC, *yins* appeared alone but would rather substitute an impersonal pronoun *one*.

(11) *Ralph strives to address 'the high heid yins of Russia' to solicit news of the family, and receives his letter back from the Embassy in London, stamped... [Authors. Miller, Karl. Oxford: OUP, 1989, pp. 60-163. 1705 s-units.]*

(12) *I'm going to. I mean God love us it's high time some of these young yins got into the act. [From the Window. Kelman, James. 2005, Vol. 90 Issue 4, p545-553, 7p]*

The most popular may be the form *you all* or abridged version *y'all*. While in BNC the more frequent form was *you all* in COCA it was the form *y'all*. The results for *you all* in BNC and *y'all* in COCA were almost the same (respectively to the number of words). The category with the largest amount frequency was fiction and the second one was spoken. In the BNC the form *y'all* did not appear in the spoken category at all. It was used the most in newspaper and slightly less in magazines and fiction. As expected, the form *you all* appeared the most in the spoken category in COCA. Although, the form *y'all* is still more frequent than the prolonged version. It may be because people tend to rush everything so they rather use shortened versions of words.

(13) *BNC: And finally, not on the green sheet, I will tell you, to put you all out of your misery, that tea has been arranged for six thirty. [Radford Metropolitan Council: meeting. Rec. on 16 Jul 1993 with an unknown number of partics, 153 utts, and lasting 3 hrs 30 mins.]*

(14) *COCA: Those boys in Washington could do it for y'all but they don't want to spend the money. [I Will Send Rain. Meadows Rae. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2016]*

The forms *you gang*, *you lot* and *you chaps* may be regarded as British alternatives to American *you guys*. However, even the first one already disproves this theory. *You gang* appeared more in COCA but in both corpora the largest category was fiction (mostly movies and books). The form that confirms the theory is *you lot*. This is more used in British English and almost exclusively in the spoken category. In COCA it appears too but mostly in the fiction, especially in the juvenile literature. This may not be surprising as the ones that use the *plural versions of you* could be younger generations. The form *you chaps* also follows the mentioned theory. The frequency of occurrence was higher in BNC than in COCA. The largest category was fiction (prose) and then spoken (meeting, interview).

In COCA the largest category was the same as in BNC and others were not significant with any occurrence in spoken category at all. The last of the forms to confirm the theory is *you guys*. The usage of the phrase in COCA was about sixty times higher than in BNC. Moreover, the largest category was *spoken* and the popularity of *you guys* is gradually increasing over the past twenty seven years. In BNC the form appeared the most in fiction and in spoken language it was used over fifty percent less.

(15) *'I appreciate the offer, Kenny, but I can't stay with you guys. It wouldn't be right.'*
[Time of the assassins. MacNeill, Alastair. London: Fontana Press, 1992, pp. 7-135. 3192 s-units.]

(16) *'You have to look at a lot different things. I can understand how you guys might think, but we're not going to change a whole lot after one game.'* *[Victor Cruz's salsa dance the highlight of Mitch Trubisky show, New York Post]*

6.3 Third person pronouns

For this chapter I chose only one phrase: *he or she*. The reason would be that I would like to see how often this phrase is used in order to not offend anybody when the speaker does not know the gender of the antecedent. It not sexist and is one of the many options for such situations. These were talked about in the section 2.4.

In both forms of English the phrase is mostly used in academic writing, more specifically in education, humanities and philosophy. The reason for the phrase appearing the most in *education* category could be that it is used in many linguistic books, journals or articles. In the BNC, the vast majority of appearance of the phrase was in academic political writing, specifically in law educational books. It can be seen in laws themselves that the phrase *he or she* is being used when the gender of, for example, offender is unknown.

(17) *A citizen could be arrested without a warrant under the Deer Act 1963, the Town Gardens Protection Act 1863, or the Public Stores Act 1875 for 'obliterating marks denoting that property in stores is HM property', but he or she could not be directly apprehended for an indecent assault on a woman.* *[Freedom under Thatcher: civil liberties in modern Britain. Gearty, C A and Ewing, K D. Oxford: OUP 1990, pp. 1-117. 1777 s-units.]*

CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis was to define personal pronouns, their features and usages, and their appearance in different categories and British and American English. In each source, not so much was written about personal pronouns. Information had to be collected from different sources as in each book, similar matters were mentioned.

The theoretical part might be helpful for understanding the personal pronouns more. Some people might find using different cases difficult. However, in almost every sentence it is possible to use both cases, just not both of them would be grammatically correct.

Nowadays, the largest problem would be finding of the pronoun that could refer to all genders as the topic of LGBTIQ is more and more discussed in the society. It could be better to use gender-neutral pronouns when talking to everyone because people never know how the person they are talking to feels about his or her gender. Some may even feel like neither a male nor female. As mentioned in the introduction, language is changing rapidly every day and in this matter, it needs to be changed in order to keep up with the change of society. The best pronoun to use, which is mentioned in the thesis, would probably be *they* as it includes all people not regarding their gender.

The analytic part showed, that each of the *special uses* that were chosen appear in both British and American English but in different frequency. Some of them were more popular in the past and some were rather modern and used mainly by young people. Are young people not the ones that sculpt the today's society? They also could be the ones that come up with different forms of personal pronouns that might be used for another fifty years. Just as the ancestors came up with the pronouns and they are used until now.

The thesis could help people understand personal pronouns more as their usage might sometimes be tricky. The examples in each part could outline the idea of such even more. Personal pronouns as are known nowadays may change every day until twenty more forms of them are used in every-day English.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BNC British National Corpus

COCA Corpus of Contemporary American English

LGBTIQ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer or Questioning

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