

The Demonstrative ProTag Construction in Social Interaction: a historical perspective

ABSTRACT

The ProTag construction includes an apparently meaningless pronoun in the right periphery of the clause, as in *it's an awkward one **this*** and *They're nice, **those***. All types of demonstrative pronoun – singular, plural; distal, proximal – can be employed in this construction, which is attested in Present Day British English and has been identified in historical varieties as well. This paper focuses on the functions of the demonstrative ProTag construction, providing the most detailed diachronic study to date of the contributions that these seemingly superfluous pronouns make in interactions. Based on data from the Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection, a corpus of 3,874 plays dating from the 13th to the 20th century and comprising approximately 56 million words, we investigate the functions and inherent multifunctionality of this construction. Far from being meaningless, we find that the presence of a demonstrative ProTag has long been utilized by playwrights to express important facets of social interaction. While the origins of the construction appear to be rooted in the subjective function, intersubjective functions are attested from the early 17th century. The ProTag construction thus has a centuries-long history in English as a means of organizing the flow of information between co-participants in interactive contexts.

1 Introduction

This paper is the first to provide a diachronic study of the functions of the ProTag construction in English, in which an apparently meaningless pronoun – the ProTag – (given in bold) is appended to a phrase or clause (the anchor) to form a ProTag construction, as exemplified in (1).¹

- (1) a. Why this is without parallel, **this**!
(Jonson *Every man out of his humour* 1616)
- b. O, twere admirable mirth, **that**: but how wilt be done signior?
(Dekker and Middleton *The honest whore, part I* 1604)

Previous work dedicated to the examination of the ProTag construction has focused on its occurrence in Present Day British English (Mycock 2019, Mycock and Pang 2021), a sample of data from a specified historical variety as attested in the works of a small number of authors (Mycock and Misson 2020 on the construction's appearance in the works of Jonson, Shakespeare, and Marlowe), its syntactic properties (Mycock and Glaas *forthcoming*), or the

¹ All historical data are drawn from the Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection.

“identity-related social work” that groups of particular speakers use it to perform (Snell 2008, Moore and Snell 2011, and Moore 2024 on school pupils in Teesside and Bolton). Our main aims in this paper are to determine the possible functions of the demonstrative version of the ProTag construction in earlier varieties of English and to investigate how they may have changed over time. This will elucidate the reasons why such an apparently meaningless pronoun should come to be included in an utterance. The data are taken from the Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection, which comprises plays from the late 13th to the 20th century. This study contributes insights into the functions of tag constructions; their multifunctionality; and the relationship between the right periphery, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity.

Section 2 introduces the ProTag construction and summarizes its formal and functional properties and what little is known about its history. Section 3 describes the data and methodology for the current study and Section 4 presents our results. Section 5 discusses our findings, before we conclude in Section 6.

2 Features of the ProTag construction

2.1 Formal features

The ProTag construction comprises an apparently superfluous pronoun – the PROTAG, which can be either a personal or a demonstrative pronoun – attached to an ANCHOR that can be a full clause or a smaller constituent (noun phrase, adjective/adverb phrase, a clause minus its subject). The anchor expression is the ProTag’s host. Without the ProTag, the anchor would be a semantically and syntactically complete contribution to the discourse; for example, *((It’s) a) nice coat(, that)*. The anchor is usually a declarative, but interrogative and exclamative anchors are also attested (Mycock 2019). The second sentence in (2) is an example of a ProTag construction in Present Day British English (PDBE). The anchor is the declarative clause *It’s strange*. It is the combination of clausal anchor and subsequent ProTag that makes this a ProTag construction.

- (2) I haven’t seen him properly for two months, and goodness knows when I will next, or when I’ll be able to hug him. It’s strange, **that**.
(Rogers 2020)

A ProTag can but need not be turn final, as (3) shows.

- (3) And they worked a year for nothing at Croftons that was a big store **that** and they worked a full year before they got any money whatsoever
(DECTE-2007-14/669)²

All personal and demonstrative pronouns can be used in the construction with the exception of *it*; singular demonstrative pronouns *this/that* are used instead.³ Personal pronouns appear in the default case, which is the non-nominative/objective in PDBE, as shown in (4); see Denison (1996).

- (4) a. I'd be on edge all night **me**.
(DECTE-2010-24/452)
- b. He used to be dead grumpy **him**
(DECTE-PVC10/619)

In PDBE, there appears to be a difference between demonstrative and personal ProTags. Personal ProTags are employed less frequently than demonstrative ProTags, even in varieties in which both are possible (Moore and Snell 2011, Mycock 2019, Moore 2024). Whether this is due to regional or social variation or some combination of the two for PDBE speakers remains to be determined. For this reason, and because relevant properties of demonstrative and personal ProTags and relative frequencies are very similar, even in a dialect in which both kinds of ProTags are attested such as the Tyneside English of which DECTE comprises (see Mycock 2019), PDBE here refers to colloquial British English in a broader sense.

In this paper, we focus on demonstrative ProTags because their distribution is less restricted (for whatever reason) than that of personal ProTags and therefore there is a larger body of PDBE data on the demonstrative ProTag construction, its functions, and current usage. This will provide an interesting point of comparison, enabling us to assess how the functions of this type of ProTag construction have changed over time. In PDBE, plural demonstrative ProTags are less frequent than their singular counterparts, and *that* is more commonly used than *this* (Mycock 2019).

Each ProTag, in common with non-ProTag uses of such pronouns, has an antecedent: the ANCHOR POINT. Previous work has revealed that the anchor point usually has the grammatical function of subject (as in the previous

² PDBE data are taken from *The Diachronic Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English* (DECTE) and the *British National Corpus* (BNC). For examples from DECTE, the citation includes an interview file identifier followed by the line number identifying the speaker turn; for examples from the BNC, the citation includes a text identifier followed by the sentence number.

³ *This* or *that* is commonly used to replace *it* when a stressed 3SG or non-personal pronoun is required (Quirk et al. 1985: 348). While ProTags do not bear stress in a ProTag construction, the possibility that they were once able to in the construction(s) from which the ProTag construction developed may account for the lack of *it* in the set of available ProTags.

examples), but other grammatical functions are possible, for example direct object (5a) and possessor within a prepositional phrase (5b).

- (5) a. he kinda dumped it_i on me **this**_i
(Hanley and Hanley 2022)
- b. burns a hole in his_i pocket **him**_i
(DECTE-PVC18/1029)

This variability in the grammatical function of the antecedent distinguishes a ProTag construction from a tag question, which otherwise are alike in their features. In the latter, the antecedent of the pronoun in the tag can only have the grammatical function of subject. A question tag counterpart of (5a) would be ungrammatical: **he kinda dumped it on me, didn't it/this?* Data such as (5b) in which ProTag and anchor-point forms differ dependent on case also rule out a straightforward doubling analysis of the ProTag construction.

Anchor points can be overt or covert, meaning that the antecedent may be present as a constituent of the anchor or not. When they are overt, anchor points are almost exclusively pronouns. (Mycock 2019 identifies one exception in 749 examples identified in PDBE). Covert anchor points have the grammatical function subject as omission of constituents with other grammatical functions is not a feature of PDBE. Examples of covert anchor points are presented in (6).

- (6) a. Intriguing planet, **this**.
(BNC-F9X/1094)
- b. ten hour shifts a long time **that**
(DECTE-TLS13/225)

A version of (6a) with an overt rather than a covert anchor point would contain a coreferential subject pronoun, i.e. *This/It_i is an intriguing planet, **this**_i.*

2.2 Functional features

The functions we are concerned with in this paper are the functions of the ProTag construction as a *whole* rather than of a ProTag as an individual element. There has been only limited analysis of the functions of the ProTag construction in colloquial PDBE. Moore and Snell's (2011) paper represents an important contribution in this respect.⁴ Moore and Snell explore data from two

⁴ Moore and Snell (2011) refer to ProTags as right-dislocated tags, drawing parallels with full NPs that are right dislocated. However, there are a number of features which the two do not share. Right-dislocated full NPs require an overt pronoun as an antecedent; the antecedent of a ProTag, on the other hand, may be overt or covert; see (6) and (11). The two are also distinct in terms of their functions: right-dislocated NPs are primarily used for the purpose of clarification/modification "establishing beyond doubt the reference of the preceding pronoun"

ethnographic studies in order to identify the construction's interpersonal functions. This work moves beyond vague descriptions of the ProTag construction's function as being "emphasis", "highlighting", or similar (see, for example, Shorrocks 1999: 87). Moore and Snell identify the co-occurrence of the ProTag construction with the expression of evaluation and opinion – i.e., as expressing a stance or attitude to the proposition to which the ProTag is appended – and as a way to position a speaker as knowledgeable. There are also examples where the ProTag construction is used in aggressive, face-threatening contexts (*she's a liar her*; Moore and Snell 2011: 104), which serve to establish the authority of the speaker and reinforce relationships (close or otherwise) between members of a particular group. In addition, Moore and Snell found the ProTag construction used as a means of signalling close bonds via a more light-hearted, joking function. Moore (2024) also considers the interpersonal functions of ProTags, suggesting that they are evaluative in nature and can be used to achieve alignment between speaker and addressee.

Moore and Snell's focus is on personal ProTags but, as we shall shortly see, their observations also apply to the use of the more common demonstrative ProTag construction in PDBE, consistent with a subset of the functions identified for ProTag constructions.

In previous work, the ProTag construction was found to share a set of possible functions with question tags even though the two differ syntactically with respect to the possible grammatical function of the anchor point (Section 2.1). Mycock (2019) and Mycock and Misson (2020) classified functions of the ProTag construction according to a slightly amended version of the taxonomy proposed for question tags in Barron, Pandarova and Muderack (2015).⁵ The categories and their definitions are presented in Table 2.

(Biber et al. 2021: 948). This is not the case for ProTags, which add nothing in respect of propositional content and thus make a pragmatic rather than a semantic contribution. The association with a subjective core meaning is true of ProTags, but has not been claimed for right-dislocated NPs.

⁵ The amendment reframes the Challenging function to broaden the subject of the attack beyond the addressee based on evidence which shows that the attack could be directed towards a (potentially absent) third party (Mycock 2019: 268–269). We follow Mycock and Pang (2021) in using the term Attitudinal for the category originally called 'Stating a fact/opinion' in Barron, Pandarova and Muderack (2015) as the former better reflects the core subjective meaning of the ProTag construction.

INFORMATION: exchange of information	STATEMENT: used to give information; the primary knower (see Kimps, Davidse, and Cornillie 2014) is the speaker; does not expect a response	Attitudinal	communicates facts or expresses the speaker's personal beliefs, assessments, and attitudes (positive or negative) towards a topic or the addressee; see (7)
		Acknowledging Response	acknowledges the addressee's preceding assertion, signalling interpersonal accord; see (9a)
		Challenging	represents an attack; the subject of the attack is teased, mocked, contradicted, threatened, accused, or reproached in order to gain power by undermining their positive face; see (9b)
		Conversational Joking	enables the speaker 'to "present a personality, share experiences and attitudes, and promote rapport" in an entertaining fashion (Norrick 2003: 1345)' (Barron, Pandarova and Muderack 2015: 505); may involve irony or understatement and be accompanied by laughter; see (9c)
	QUESTION	seek information to be provided in the next turn; see (20)	
DESIRED ACTION: give/demand goods and services	GIVE	offers, advice, suggestions used in the exchange of goods and services; see (9d)	
	DEMAND	requests, commands used in the exchange of goods and services; see (22)	

Table 2. Summary of categories for the functional classification of question tags presented in Barron, Pandarova and Muderack (2015), adapted in Mycock (2019) for the classification of ProTag construction functions. The number of an example is provided in each cell.

The three functions identified in Moore and Snell (2011) correspond to three of the categories in Table 2: expressing a stance or attitude is consistent with the

function 'Attitudinal', aggressive and face-threatening usage with the function 'Challenging', and joking with the function 'Conversational Joking'.

The core meaning of the ProTag construction is SUBJECTIVE (Mycock and Misson 2020, Mycock and Pang 2021). A core subjective meaning encodes the Speaker's⁶ attitude or belief state with respect to an utterance's propositional content as expressed by the anchor – i.e., a speaker-oriented meaning. Notice the co-occurrence of an evaluative expression in the anchor (*impressive*) with the demonstrative ProTag in (7), supporting the subjective analysis of the ProTag construction's core meaning. In terms of the categories identified in Table 2, (7) is an example of the Attitudinal category.

(7) SUBJECTIVE (ATTITUDINAL) FUNCTION

That looks very impressive by the way, **that**.

(BNC-H61/1952)

We adopt the definition of the ProTag construction's subjective function in Mycock and Pang (2021: 95) "express/reinforce speaker's commitment to *p*" (*p* being expressed by the anchor) with the addition that this commitment is strong. This is warranted as it accounts for the difference in interpretation that arises when a ProTag appears compared to when it does not. Use of the ProTag construction has an intensifying effect, reinforcing the speaker's commitment to the stance that the anchor expresses.⁷

It is important to note that the definition provided in terms of strong commitment to a proposition is more appropriate than one which defines the ProTag construction's meaning solely in terms of speaker evaluation or attitude. This is because we find examples such as (8), in which the anchor represents a statement of fact rather than opinion.

(8) A: That's mine, **that**.

B: I know!

(BNC-KCA/2960)

This use still qualifies as subjective as the ProTag construction encodes information about the speaker's stance towards the proposition which the anchor expresses (i.e., strong commitment to the truth of *p*). The difference is that the anchor does not include evaluation.

⁶ Throughout we shall use Speaker to refer to the Speaker or Writer for the sake of simplicity; ditto Addressee(s) for the Addressee(s) or Reader(s).

⁷ An anonymous reviewer asks how this might differ from the traditional definition of "emphasis". This definition identifies what exactly is subject to intensification and a Speaker's reasons for employing the construction, tying use of the construction explicitly to specific communicative aims. This represents a significant refinement of our understanding of the ProTag construction's meaning and functions.

The possible occurrence of ProTag constructions with INTERSUBJECTIVE meanings has not been fully explored in any variety of English. Intersubjectivity can be defined as “the explicit expression of the [Speaker’s] attention to the ‘self’ of addressee/reader in both an epistemic sense (paying attention to their presumed attitudes to the content of what is said), and in a more social sense (paying attention to their ‘face’ or ‘image needs’ associated with social stance and identity)” (Traugott 2009: 128). Thus, an intersubjective meaning is more addressee oriented than a subjective one. Of the intersubjective functions listed in Table 2, all but two – Desired Action: Demand, Question – have been identified in PDBE.

(9) INTERSUBJECTIVE FUNCTIONS: PDBE

a. ACKNOWLEDGING RESPONSE

A: a hundred and twenty quid it’s steep

B: it’s far too much **that**

(DECTE-PVC09/1331)

b. CHALLENGING

As you note it is **not** an Islamic practice, why do you mention it all? Odd, **that**. In fact, it rather smacks of invective.

(Comment by Tijani on Bunglawala 2007)⁸

c. CONVERSATIONAL JOKING

A: it’s I brought you bad luck then <interruption>

B: yes it was a good year **that** <laughter>

(DECTE-PVC09/1203)

d. DESIRED ACTION: GIVE

A: Oh zero eight, yeah sorry zero eight.

B: Yeah, okay. That’s the only thing to watch, **that**.

(BNC-FM4/1137)

Notice that, as in (7), the anchors in (9a–c) include evaluative expressions (*far too much, odd, good*). While (9d) does not contain such an expression, the anchor in B’s second sentence expresses the Speaker’s attitude/belief state (B is highlighting to A something that B believes A should take extra care to do in the future).

The ProTag constructions in (9) also exhibit multifunctionality. The core subjective meaning is identifiable in each example – the Speaker is expressing/reinforcing their strong commitment to the proposition expressed by the anchor – along with a concurrent intersubjective meaning (agreeing with, attacking, building rapport with, and advising the addressee, respectively). Examples such as those in (9) demonstrate that the ProTag construction, like

⁸ At the very start of this comment, the author @-ed the individual to whom they were responding, clearly indicating the subject of this direct, face-threatening message, which was itself in response to a similarly face-threatening comment (starting *Ah, Tijani is back with his usual invective*).

other discourse-pragmatic variables, is inherently multifunctional. This highlights the inadequacy of approaches that seek to identify a single meaning or function – subjective or intersubjective – for each occurrence of the ProTag construction. The present study goes beyond that approach to consider the multiple functions that a ProTag construction can have. Furthermore, it offers a diachronic perspective on this construction’s functions.

The development of intersubjective meaning has been ascribed to a process of Intersubjectification, whereby an expression increases “in the degree to which [Speakers] overtly pay attention to [Addressees] and orient meanings towards [Addressees’] cognitive stances and social identities” (Traugott 2022: 197). Intersubjectification therefore refers to the development of interpersonal meanings which are strongly pragmatic in function and play an important role in social interaction. Traugott (2022: 197) characterizes intersubjectification as a process “by which meanings are used and reinterpreted over time”. Persistence of forms with subjective meaning alongside ones with innovative intersubjective meanings leads to layering (Hopper 1991) from the synchronic perspective. This means that older and newer functions may be attested in the same time period, as demonstrated by the data in (7) and (9) for PDBE, for example. What unites the subjective and intersubjective functions which have been identified for the ProTag construction is strengthening of the commitment to a proposition p expressed by the anchor and possibly its illocutionary force.

2.3 The ProTag construction in the history of English

With respect to historical varieties of English, scholarship on the history of English or literary works of the time has occasionally drawn attention to the occurrence of the ProTag construction, but the tendency has been to mischaracterize it as involving verbatim repetition of the subject pronoun for the purposes of emphasis (“the subject pronoun gets special emphasis by its being repeated in the same form at the end of the utterance”, Visser 1963: 56). However, this is not accurate because, just as in PDBE, the antecedent can have a grammatical function other than subject and/or have a different form from the anchor point.⁹ The Early Modern English (EModE) example in (10) illustrates.

- (10) I shall forestall thee Lord Vlysses, **thou**;
(Shakespeare *Troilus and Cressida* 1623)

Anchor points may be overt or covert in EModE, just as in PDBE.

⁹ The default case for pronouns in this variety of English is nominative; Denison (1996).

- (11) a. A plaguy dull fellow **this**, that can sleep in so good Company as we are.
 (Behn *The younger brother* 1696)
- b. Well enough **that!**
 (Fielding *The old debauchees* 1732)

(11a) shows that ProTags in earlier varieties need not be turn final. Once more, this is a property they share with ProTags in PDBE.

More recently, Mycock and Misson (2020) provided the first detailed examination of the ProTag construction in any historical variety of English based on selected works by Ben Jonson, William Shakespeare, and Christopher Marlowe. The syntactic features of the ProTag construction in EModE and PDBE as detailed in Mycock and Misson (2020) are summarized in Table 1.

Element of the ProTag construction	Syntactic features	PDBE (Mycock 2019)	EModE (Mycock and Misson 2020)
PROTAG	CASE	non-nominative/ objective	nominative/ subjective
	POSITION	turn medial, turn final	turn medial, turn final
ANCHOR POINT	CAN BE OVERT OR COVERT?	yes	yes
	GRAMMATICAL FUNCTIONS ATTESTED	subject, object, possessor	subject, object
ANCHOR	SYNTACTIC CATEGORIES	clause, NP, AP	clause, NP, AP, PP
	CLAUSE TYPES	declarative, interrogative, exclamative	declarative, interrogative

Table 1. Summary of the syntactic features of the ProTag construction in EModE (Mycock and Misson 2020) and PDBE (Mycock 2019).

Mycock and Glass (*forthcoming*) fill the gaps between PDBE as described in Mycock (2019) and the snapshot of EModE provided in Mycock and Misson (2020) with respect to the syntactic features of the demonstrative ProTag construction. Demonstrative ProTag constructions are revealed to be a rare but longstanding feature of English first attested in the late 16th century: they appear in 675 works written by 284 authors in the Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection. The occurrence of demonstrative ProTags increased in the 17th century and then again in the second half of the 19th century. As in PDBE, plural demonstratives were much rarer than singular ones. In contrast to PDBE, *this*

is more common than *that*. Use of *this* began to decrease in the 17th century. Covert anchor points became increasingly common starting in the second half of the 17th century. When anchor points are overt pronouns, they overwhelmingly have the grammatical function subject in earlier varieties of English, the same as in PDBE. The only other grammatical function attested for anchor points in historical varieties is object.

The subjective function, which is the most common function in PDBE (Mycock 2019), is also the most common function in EModE according to Mycock and Misson (2020). We find examples of this function from the earliest attestation of the ProTag construction in our corpus (12a).

(12) SUBJECTIVE (ATTITUDINAL) FUNCTION

- a. Ill tidings for my lady, **these**.
(Wilson *The cobblers prophesie* 1594)
- b. 'Tis goodly language **this**, what would it meane?
(Suckling *Brennoralt* 1646)
- c. 'Tis dreadful **that**.
(Home *Alonzo* 1773)
- d. Strange girls, **those**!
(Moncrieff *Tom and Jerry* 1821)
- e. Capital whiskey **that**, Stephen –
(Martyn *The dream physician* 1914)

Beyond the definitions adapted from Barron, Pandarova and Muderack (2015; see Table 3), intersubjective uses of the ProTag construction, i.e. those which have any of the functions listed in Table 2 except for Attitudinal, and their development remain unexplored. We aim to fill this gap via exploration of demonstrative ProTag constructions identified in the Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection. This study considers for the first time the demonstrative ProTag constructions' intersubjective functions over time and their relevance to social interaction. While previous work on the ProTag construction which adopted Barron, Pandarova and Muderack's approach to functional classification provides the starting point, our goal is to consider the ProTag construction's functions more generally, in terms of subjective and intersubjective meanings.

3 Data and Methodology

The data for this study are taken from the Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection, comprising 3,874 plays from the late 13th century to the early 20th century. In total, this corpus includes approximately 56 million words of both prose and verse according to the count provided in Hoffmann (2006). Historical dramas were selected as the most appropriate source of data as the ProTag construction is a feature of spoken PDBE, and dramas (and specifically

comedies) represent the closest available approximant to speech for earlier varieties of English (Culpeper and Kytö 2000).

Identifying ProTag constructions in a corpus presents several challenges. Demonstrative pronouns are of course very common and the only constraint on the position of a ProTag is that it must appear after the lexical verb. A search based on this distribution of demonstrative pronouns yields a huge number of results, many of which are not examples of ProTags. As members of the right periphery (Traugott 2012), ProTags appear towards the end of a clause and therefore display a tendency to be followed by a punctuation mark. While a search based on placement of punctuation does not guarantee the identification of all examples of demonstrative ProTag occurrence in a corpus, it does return a body of data of an appropriate size for the first qualitative and quantitative diachronic study of demonstrative ProTag functions. Corpus Query Language (CQL) syntax was used to search the corpus, which was tagged automatically with the English Tree-Tagger Part-of-Speech tag set (Marcus, Santorini, and Marcinkiewicz 1993) with modifications by Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014). Following initial exploratory searches, it was determined that those results in which a pronoun was preceded by a coordinating conjunction or a preposition could be excluded. Otherwise, no restrictions were placed on the material preceding the pronoun in our searches. In this way, we ensured that examples that had covert anchor points as well as those with overt anchor points were returned by our searches. The resulting data were checked individually and examples of ‘true’ demonstrative uses of pronouns (such as *I would have avoided this* or *I think I’ll taste that* or simply *This!*) were excluded, along with examples in which the pronoun preceded an interruption or was part of an incomplete utterance. Occurrences for which it was impossible to rule out that the pronoun appeared in the left rather than the right periphery (for example, when the pronoun was followed by a comma and appeared between two clauses) were also excluded. Based on the information available, examples of ProTag constructions from works that were translations (rather than adaptations or reworkings) of material not originally written in English were not included in case they reflected use in the original language.

Each demonstrative ProTag construction identified was then examined in its wider context, as it appears in the Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection (via ProQuest <https://www.proquest.com/>) and classified according to the categories presented in Table 2. In each case, the context within which the example appeared was consulted and considered, along with the relationship between characters. Multiple functions could be recorded for each example, reflecting the inherent multifunctionality of the construction. Classifications for each example were verified by a second assessor, with particular attention being paid to intersubjective functions, which do not represent the core meaning identified for ProTag constructions in previous work and are far less frequently attested in the corpora interrogated to date (Mycock 2019, Mycock and Misson 2020, Mycock and Pang 2021). It emerged that a

number of examples were designated asides, not only to other characters but also to the audience. This information was also recorded. In addition, each drama was classified by genre (comedy, tragedy, etc.).

4 Results

As reported in Mycock and Glaas (*forthcoming*), the demonstrative ProTag construction is attested in the Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection from the late 16th century onwards. It is rare ($n = 1,037$), as is also the case in the PDDBE corpora investigated in Mycock (2019), but it is present, with frequency per million words (pmw) counts ranging from 1 (1550–1599) to 28 (1900–), and a steady frequency in the range of 23–32 pmw in the period 1650 to 1899.

The relative frequencies in the corpus of demonstrative ProTag constructions used with subjective (Attitudinal) function and intersubjective functions (i.e., any of the other functions in Table 2) are presented in Table 3. Table 3 comprises counts for all occurrences of a function, including instances in which one ProTag construction has multiple functions simultaneously, as illustrated in (13).

- (13) a. CHALLENGING AND ATTITUDINAL
A fine Punctilio **this**, when a man lies a dying
(Behn *Sir Patient Fancy* 1678)
- b. QUESTION AND ATTITUDINAL
Captain: Good morrow, brother soldier – A good handsome girl
that?
Pat: She is thought so, Sir.
(O’Keeffe *The poor soldier* 1784)

		subjective	intersubjective				
		ATTI	ACKR	CHAL	COJO	QUSN	GIVE
1600–1649	<i>n</i>	116	2	9	1	2	1
	%	88.5	1.5	6.9	0.8	1.5	0.8
1650–1699	<i>n</i>	208	0	12	13	1	0
	%	88.9	0	5.1	5.6	0.4	0
1700–1749	<i>n</i>	135	1	7	11	0	0
	%	87.7	0.6	4.5	7.1	0	0
1750–1799	<i>n</i>	192	2	14	19	1	0
	%	84.2	0.9	6.1	8.3	0.4	0
1800–1849	<i>n</i>	164	0	5	7	0	0
	%	93.2	0	2.8	4	0	0
1850–1899	<i>n</i>	184	1	1	7	1	0
	%	94.8	0.5	0.5	3.6	0.5	0
1900–	<i>n</i>	28	0	2	1	0	0
	%	90.3	0	6.5	3.2	0	0
TOTAL	<i>n</i>	1031	6	50	59	5	1
	%	89.5	0.5	4.3	5.1	0.4	0.1

Table 3. Distribution of the functions of the demonstrative ProTag construction in the Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection by time period. ATTI = attitudinal, ACKR = Acknowledging Response, CHAL = challenging, COJO = Conversational Joking, QUSN = Question, GIVE = Desired Action: Give. One ProTag construction may have multiple functions simultaneously; all functions were counted.

The Attitudinal function, exemplified in (12), is overwhelmingly the most common in each 50-year period (ranging from 84.2% in 1750–1799 to 94.8% in 1850–1899) as well as overall (89.5%). Intersubjective meanings do not show a significant increase in proportion. In each 50-year period, intersubjective meanings are the minority at 5.2%–15.8% of the total (10.5% overall). This is consistent with the ProTag construction having a core subjective meaning.

Further support for the core subjective meaning is provided by the fact that when a demonstrative ProTag co-occurs with a question tag (which most often has an intersubjective function), the order is invariably ProTag > question tag ($n = 12$), as exemplified in (14). This is consistent with a general ordering principle of subjective > intersubjective; see Mycock and Pang (2021).

(14) Strange tricks **these**, are they not?

(Field and Fletcher *Four plays or morall representations in one* 1647)

Similarly, demonstrative ProTags precede pragmatic markers with intersubjective functions such as *methinks* (Brinton 2023) in the right periphery.

- (15) Strange reading **that**, methinks, For a fine lady!
(Knowles *Woman's wit* 1859)

Our primary concern in this study is demonstrative ProTag constructions with intersubjective meanings and, though they are small in number, these are attested in the corpus. A total of 121 examples were identified. They occur in 108 different works by 76 different authors. The earliest examples of each of the intersubjective functions attested appear in the first decade of the 17th century with the exception of the single example of Desired Action: Give (1633); see (16)–(20).

- (16) ACKNOWLEDGING RESPONSE
Sir Alexander: Unfortunately she did.
Chalcot: Ah! Nuisance **that** – being found out.
(Robertson *Ours* 1889)

- (17) CHALLENGING
Carelesse: Here Fido, task this hat and cloake: I will not leaue him a covering for his knavery: these are the trophies of your treachery, **these**.
Captaine: Nay good sir doe not pillage mee of all, stay till I get my owne againe.
(Marmion *A fine companion* 1633)

- (18) CONVERSATIONAL JOKING
The heart and brain – two fine companions **those!** 'Tis hard to say which plays the fool most wisely.
(Soane *Faustus* 1825)

- (19) DESIRED ACTION: GIVE
Orestes: Is this the roome, friend, where the King must be?
Chamberlaine: Yes, this is the roome Sir, 'tis the priuat'st, **this**.
(Goffe *Orestes* 1633)

- (20) QUESTION
Naturall, slid it may be supernaturall, **this**?
(Jonson *The case is altered* 1609)

The relative frequency rankings of the intersubjective meanings are 1) Conversational Joking, 2) Challenging, 3) Acknowledging Response, 4) Question, 5) Give. Conversational Joking ($n = 59$, 48.7%) and Challenging ($n = 50$, 41.3%) are far more common than other intersubjective meanings (Table 3). Mycock and Glaas (*forthcoming*), working with the same corpus, exclude data from the periods 1550–1599 and 1900– from further consideration

because the corpus includes fewer texts for either of these two periods compared to each of the periods spanning 1600–1899. We do the same in our examination of (inter)subjective meaning trends over time which follows. It is worth noting though that none of the examples of the demonstrative ProTag construction in the corpus from the period 1550–1559 exhibited an intersubjective function.

The relative frequency of intersubjective functions with respect to each of the four demonstrative ProTags is shown in Figure 1.

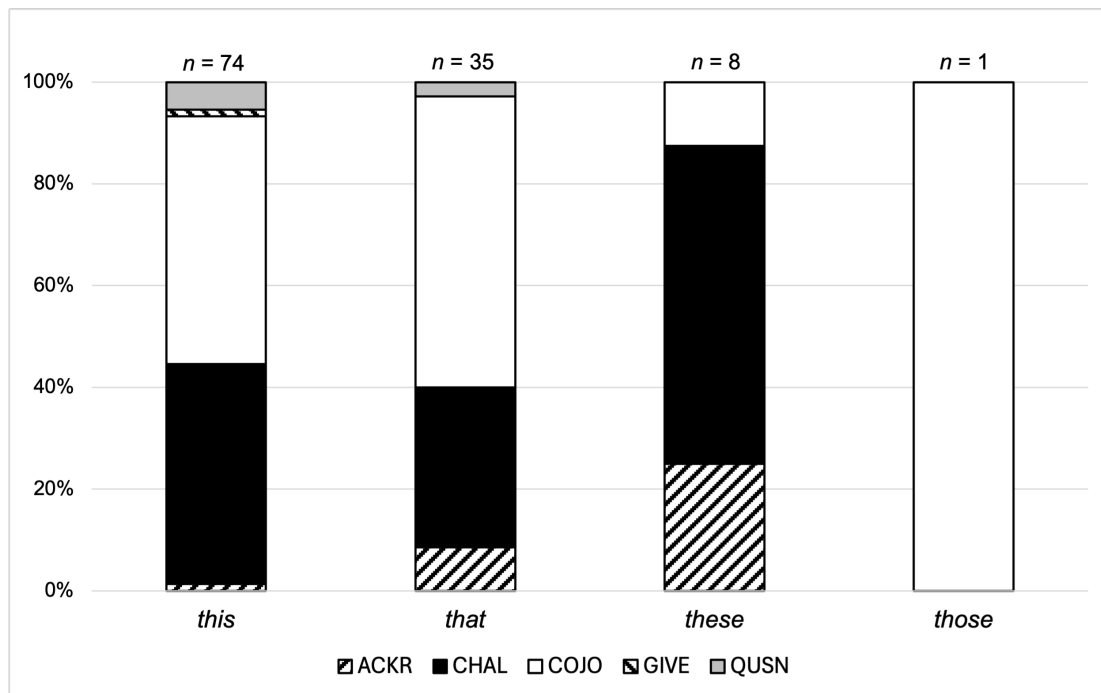


Figure 1. Distribution of intersubjective functions for each demonstrative ProTag in the period 1600–1899; Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection.

Examples of ProTag constructions with intersubjective functions that include proximal demonstratives are more numerous than distal ones. This reflects a general pattern in the data, with ProTag *this* being far more common than ProTag *that* up until the 20th century, and *those* never outnumbering examples of *these* in the same time period (Mycock and Glaas *forthcoming*). The amount of plural demonstrative ProTags is particularly small (*these* $n = 8$, *those* $n = 1$), making it difficult to draw conclusions for ProTag constructions which include them.

Regarding the two singular demonstrative ProTags, *this* is more frequently attested with intersubjective function than *that*, replicating a more general frequency pattern: for all examples of demonstrative ProTag constructions regardless of their function, *this* $n = 652$ (63.2%) and *that* $n = 313$, (30.4%). Singular proximal and distal demonstrative ProTags do not appear to differ in terms of either the intersubjective functions that they are each used to

express or their proportions. Fig. 1 shows that ProTag constructions including *this* which are used with an intersubjective function most frequently have Conversational Joking (47.4%) or Challenging (44.7%) function. Conversational Joking is also the most common intersubjective function found with the ProTag construction including *that* (57.1%). Challenging is the second most common (31.4%). The preponderance of singular demonstrative ProTags with Conversational Joking and Challenging functions reflects the same general pattern of relative frequency identified for intersubjective functions presented in Table 3. Further research is required to determine whether there are differences between demonstrative and personal ProTags in these respects.

In Mycock and Glaas (*forthcoming*), it is reported that ProTag constructions including covert anchor points always represent the majority no matter the time period. Whether covert anchor points are more common with a particular function is an issue that has not yet been explored. In our corpus, covert anchor points are more common no matter what the function, as shown in Table 4, with the sole exception of a demonstrative ProTag construction with the function Desired Action: Give. However, as there is only one example of a ProTag construction used with this function, it is difficult to draw conclusions on this basis.

		ATTI	ACKR	CHAL	COJO	GIVE	QUSN
overt	<i>n</i>	181	2	13	5	1	2
	%	18	33	27	9	100	40
covert	<i>n</i>	822	4	35	53	0	3
	%	82	67	73	91	0	60

Table 4. Distribution of overt versus covert anchor points by function in the period 1600–1899; Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection. Shading indicates the majority.

When the anchor point is overt, Challenging is the most common intersubjective meaning: there are more examples than all the other intersubjective meanings combined. Given that Challenging represents an attack directed at another, the speaker may choose to include an overt anchor point because this makes the subject of or reason for the attack clearer. Compare (21) with *An insult, this*. This hypothesis should be tested in any future research on personal ProTags and intersubjective meanings.

(21) You mean it for an Insult **this**, you do.

(Thomson *Agamemnon* 1738)

In order to provide as full a diachronic perspective as possible, Fig. 2 presents the relative frequency over time of the intersubjective meanings attested in our corpus along with the results of two other studies, namely Mycock and Misson's (2020) investigation of a smaller corpus of EModE data and Mycock's (2019) examination of PDBE data. It must be noted that these previous works considered the meanings and functions of personal and demonstrative ProTag constructions and identified only a single function for each occurrence. These data therefore differ from the data collected for this study and comparison with them should be treated with some caution. However, it is interesting to consider how our results compare with these more general findings on the intersubjective functions of ProTag constructions.

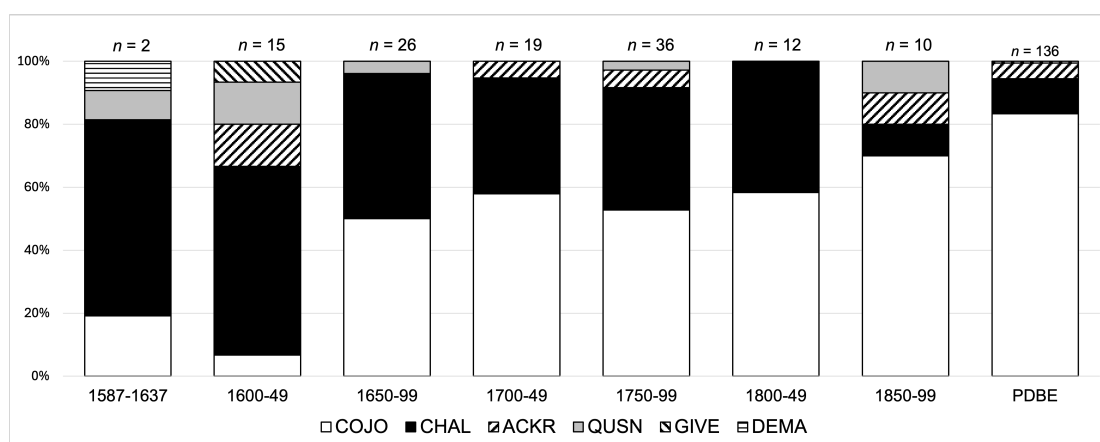


Figure 2. Relative frequency of demonstrative ProTag constructions with intersubjective meanings in the Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection over time (1600–1899, $n = 118$), of all ProTag constructions in the EModE corpus of Mycock and Misson (2020; 1587–1637, $n = 122$), and of all ProTag constructions in PDBE as reported in Mycock (2019; $n = 749$).

In terms of trends in the relative frequency of intersubjective functions, Conversational Joking and Challenging are well represented in each time period and their proportions with respect to other intersubjective meanings are stable from 1650 to 1849: 50–58% per time period for Conversational Joking, 39–46% per time period for Challenging. The period 1600–1649 differs in having a much smaller proportion of Conversational Joking uses (7% of the total for this time period).

It is useful at this point to consider genre. The data presented in Fig. 3 show the genres to which the plays that include demonstrative ProTag constructions with intersubjective meanings belong. The ProTag construction is most commonly found in comedies, both in general (67.1%) and when it has an intersubjective function (82.5%), in line with Culpeper and Kytö's (2000) observation about comedies representing the closest available approximant to speech for earlier varieties of English.

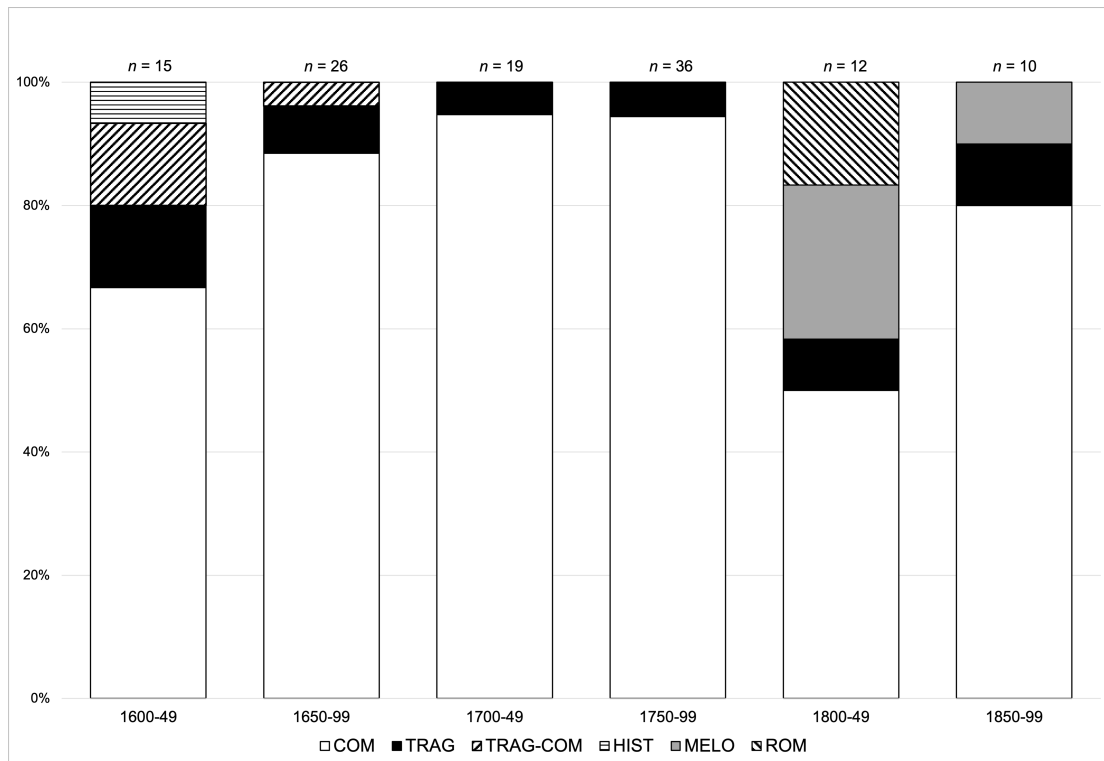


Figure 3. Relative frequency over time of plays by genre in which demonstrative ProTag constructions with intersubjective functions appear in the period 1600–1899; Chadwyck-Healey English Drama collection. Genres used in the classification are COM comedy, TRAG tragedy, TRAG-COM tragicomedy, HIST history, MELO melodrama, and ROM romance.

Fig. 3 shows that 1600–1649 is not a period which lacks examples of demonstrative ProTag constructions in comedies, which one would assume to be an obvious source of Conversational Joking examples. Rather, comedy is the genre in which most examples occur in 1600–1649, as is true of all time periods. Thus genre does not provide an explanation for the smaller proportion of Conversational Joking uses in the first half of the 17th century.

The data from Mycock and Misson (2020) included in Fig. 2 for the period 1587–1637 attest to proportions of intersubjective functions similar to those found in the present study for 1600–1649. However, both datasets may be skewed by the proportion of examples that come from a single playwright, Ben Jonson. As a result, data may be more reflective of elements of Jonson’s style than wider trends. In our corpus, 46.7% of the demonstrative ProTag constructions in the period 1600–1649 come from the works of Jonson, a playwright who employs demonstrative ProTag constructions with a wide range of intersubjective meanings, most frequently Challenging, but also Acknowledging Response and Question.

After being relatively stable since the second half of the 17th century, Challenging uses decrease and Conversational Joking uses increase from the mid-19th century. In the context of the findings for PDBE reported by Mycock

(2019), the smaller proportion of Challenging uses in the period 1850–1899 seems to be part of a trend rather than an anomaly. Tottie and Hoffmann (2009) found a similar change in the functions of tag questions when they compared data from the 16th century and PDE: Challenging was the function of 15% of tag questions in the 16th century, but only 2% in PDE data. They suggest, citing Biber (2004), that this shift could be reflective of a general change due to speakers becoming “less inclined to challenge and direct interlocutors and more inclined to involve and draw them into conversation” (Tottie and Hoffmann 2009: 154). With respect to ProTag constructions, a decrease in Challenging use, along with an increase in Conversational Joking, fit with the proposed shift, as does the very small number of Desired Action meanings found in any time period. A single example of a demonstrative ProTag construction with the Desired Action: Give function was identified in our corpus. No demonstrative ProTag construction with the Desired Action: Demand function was found in the corpus. ProTag constructions with this function which have been identified – Mycock and Misson (2020) report two examples in their EModE corpus – include the personal ProTag *you*.

(22) DESIRED ACTION: DEMAND

Falstaff: you will not doe it? **you**?

Pistol: I doe relent: what would thou more of man?

(Shakespeare *The merry wives of Windsor* 1597)

The findings of our study on demonstrative ProTags support the hypothesis that this intersubjective meaning may be restricted to use with the personal ProTag *you*.

The relative rarity of intersubjective meanings over time and the occurrence of earlier examples of ProTag constructions with only subjective meaning in our corpus is consistent with intersubjectification following subjectification, supporting this hypothesis about the development of intersubjective meanings. From the start of the 17th century, demonstrative ProTag constructions used with intersubjective meaning are attested. The only period in which all five intersubjective meanings are attested is 1600–1649. As is the case for tag questions (Hoffmann 2006), data show that writers have been using the ProTag construction with interpersonal functions for centuries. The kinds of interpersonal functions identified in PDBE (if not all the precise sub-types) had already developed by the 17th century.

5 Discussion

The subjective meaning of the ProTag construction is: speaker (S) expresses/reinforces strong commitment to the truth of proposition *p*. The intersubjective meanings of the ProTag construction build on this core subjective meaning, enabling S to pursue (dis)alignment with an interlocutor

(A), and thus to construct/reinforce/destroy/reconfigure interpersonal relations on the basis of S's expressed strong commitment to p . Table 5 summarizes the intersubjective meanings of the ProTag construction identified in the corpus.

Acknowledging Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p has previously been expressed by A • S confirms that S and A share this viewpoint and p can be added to the Common Ground • strengthening of interpersonal relation
Challenging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p challenges the truth, value, or authority of A and/or O (a third party or parties) • S thereby undermines the positive face of A and/or O and aims to strengthen in-group bonds to the exclusion of A and/or O • exclusion of the individual(s) challenged, strengthening of interpersonal relation
Conversational Joking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>IRONIC</u>: S believes A believes S believes $\neg p$ (Geeraerts 2021) • <u>UNDERSTATEMENT</u>: S believes A believes S believes that a higher point on that scale is more appropriate • <u>UNIRONIC</u>: add p to the Common Ground • strengthening of interpersonal relation
Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S asks A to confirm p or $\neg p$ in the next turn
Desired Action: Give	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S directs A to do p in A's own interests (i.e. alignment) • softens a reactive directive (A-oriented, based on assumed need of A, respects A's positive face)
Desired Action: Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S directs A to be the agent of p • strengthens a non-reactive directive (S-oriented, p is not desired by or asked for by A)

Table 5. The Common Ground managing functions, intersubjective meanings, and interpersonal significance of the ProTag construction.

At first sight, the core subjective meaning of the ProTag construction and its intersubjective meanings may seem to share very little: the ProTag construction can be used to signal interpersonal accord, but also to issue a directive or even to attack an individual. Underpinning each meaning though, with one possible exception, is the expression of the speaker's strong commitment to the truth of p and the intensifying effect that this has on illocutionary force. The exact nature of the (inter)subjective meaning depends

on the anchor to which the ProTag is attached and what the speaker intends the consequences of their strong commitment to the proposition expressed by the anchor to be on the relationship between themselves and the addressee. In this way, the ProTag construction plays an important role in organizing the flow of information between co-participants in interactive contexts. The data collected for this study show that this has been the case for centuries and that playwrights have consequently included the ProTag construction in their works as a way to express important facets of social interaction between their characters and to their audiences.

Take, for instance, the category identified as Acknowledging Response in Table 5. When S employs the ProTag construction, S expresses/reinforces strong commitment to the proposition p which has just been expressed by A. S thus confirms that S and A share this viewpoint and p can be added to the Common Ground. The result is alignment between S and A. Contrast this with the Challenging meaning, which is used in an intentionally face-threatening context and accompanies an attack on an individual, either the Addressee (A) or a third party or parties (O) who may or may not be present at the time of speaking. When S uses a ProTag construction, they express/reinforce their strong commitment to p which challenges the truth, value, or authority of A and/or O. S thereby undermines the positive face of A and/or O. S's motivation for doing so is to strengthen the bonds between themselves and other members of a group to the exclusion of A and/or O, as Moore and Snell (2011) observed.

The Conversational Joking function is an interesting counterpoint to the Challenging one. Both are involved in strengthening the bonds between S and A, but the former is not aggressive. The most straightforward example of Conversational Joking is one in which S shares their strong commitment to p with A and asserts that p should be added to the Common Ground, thus aligning the views of S and A and strengthening the bonds between them, as in (23).

(23) CONVERSATIONAL JOKING (NO IRONY/UNDERSTATEMENT)

Amusing young rascal **this**.

(Lander *Bleak House* 1885)

Conversational Joking and Acknowledging Response both have the aim of aligning the views of S and A and strengthening the bonds between them, but the latter differs from the former in involving S expressing/reinforcing commitment to a proposition previously presented by A. Conversational Joking involves S putting forward a proposition p to be added to the Common Ground rather than confirming that A's prior proposition p can be added to the Common Ground.

Other examples of Conversational Joking may involve irony or understatement. In cases involving irony, as in (24), S relies on A's assumptions about S's beliefs being the opposite of the proposition to which S expresses a strong commitment.

(24) CONVERSATIONAL JOKING (IRONY)

What, no Servants to be seen! a mighty orderly House, **this!** you must guard me.

(Odell *The prodigal* 1744)

Geeraerts (2021) proposes that the playful pretence involved in irony relies on the following scenario: S asserts p (in 24 this is that the house in question is very orderly) but A believes S believes A believes $\neg p$ (as indicated by S's preceding mention of the lack of servants). S is thus "perceived as telling an untruth under the assumption that [A] does not share, or would not be convinced to share, the untruth. [S's] utterance is then recognized as playful pretense" (Geeraerts 2021: 32).¹⁰ In cases involving understatement, S expresses strong commitment to a point on a scale, but A believes S believes A believes that a higher point on that scale is in fact more appropriate. In all instances of Conversational Joking, S aims to strengthen bonds with A ("promote rapport") by playfully indicating alignment of their viewpoints. In the case of irony or underspecification, the inclusion of a ProTag may act as a cue to the appropriate interpretation of the utterance by expressing S's strong commitment to a proposition that A has reason to believe that S does *not* believe. Explicitly overstating S's commitment in this marked way could help reduce the chances of A misunderstanding S, specifically in those cases where A might not otherwise be entirely certain that p is stated ironically or represents an underspecification. The inclusion of a ProTag, along with accompanying laughter, can help cue the appropriate interpretation of S's expressed strong commitment to p .

Between characters, the use of the ProTag construction gives the audience insight into relations between the interlocutors and marks information that is to be added to the Common Ground. The ProTag construction's role in social interaction – in building, maintaining, strengthening, and weakening interpersonal relations – is not confined to the bonds between characters on stage though. An aside enables the playwright to share a viewpoint with the audience directly, drawing them closer to a character or characters and the situations depicted. ProTag constructions are found in asides, as shown in (25).

(25) Jemmy: and we'd a choice fine Dinner! that Pig and Egg-sauce was!
Oh, dear! but there'll be a monstrous great Bill to pay!

Valentine: A vulgar Fellow **this!** but I'll touch his Cash, and then get rid of him (Aside.)

Won't you please to sit, Sir?

(O'Keeffe *The farmer* 1788)

¹⁰ Our analysis does not rely on this precise approach to irony. It is adopted for the purposes of illustration.

The use of the ProTag construction in (25) leaves the audience in no doubt as to Valentine's strong commitment to the proposition that Jemmy is a vulgar fellow. There is therefore an intensifying effect on the illocutionary force of the statement, which would have a Challenging (as well as an Attitudinal) function even if the ProTag were not present.

Functions grouped together under Desired Action in Barron, Pandarova and Muderack (2015) involve potentially face-threatening acts. They differ in terms of whether they have a softening or strengthening effect on illocutionary force, whether they are hearer or speaker oriented, and whether they are aimed at achieving alignment or not. In the case of Desired Action: Give, S expresses/reinforces their strong commitment to *p* and directs A to do *p* in A's own interests. This is a hearer-oriented (reactive) use of the ProTag construction: S uses it when they are addressing an assumed need of A and is thus supporting A's positive face. In (19), for example, Chamberlaine seeks to reassure Orestes by advising him that the room in question is the most private one and therefore best suited to the king. Inclusion of the ProTag in (19) thus intensifies the assertive force of *p*. By contrast, a ProTag construction with Desired Action: Demand meaning strengthens a speaker-oriented (non-reactive) directive: S expresses/reinforces their strong commitment to *p* and strongly directs A to be the agent of *p*, which is not desired and/or has not been requested by A. What the two sub-types of Desired Action share is their use with face-threatening directive speech acts to strengthen their force.

Finally, a ProTag construction with Question function is an information-seeking directive. The anchor is not a yes/no or "wh"-question; it has declarative syntax (20) or is a NP, as in (26).

(26) Martin: A dull village **this**?

Tom: / I don't find it dull, Mr. Chuzzlewit

(Dilley, Clifton and Dickens *Tom Pinch* 1884)

In contrast to other uses, in which the presence of a ProTag has an intensifying effect on illocutionary force, a ProTag construction with Question function appears to change the illocutionary force or point of the utterance. This use is not attested in PDBE, appearing to have fallen out of use completely by the start of the 20th century. Its scarcity in our corpus makes it difficult to determine why this should be the case.¹¹ It will be important in future research to consider whether personal ProTags were used with Question function in earlier varieties of English in order to gain a fuller insight, which may in turn aid investigation into why this intersubjective function is no longer available.

¹¹ An anonymous reviewer observes that Question function may be an atypical use of the ProTag construction. Certainly, tag questions, which we know were also available during this period (Tottie and Hoffmann 2009), would appear to be a more obvious choice to express Question function.

Demonstrative ProTag constructions are another example of the right periphery hosting a final particle associated with (inter)subjective meanings and functions (see, for example, Haselow 2013). The occurrence of a ProTag in the right periphery regularly has an intensifying effect on the illocutionary force of the anchor. Compared to adverbs, conjunctions, focus particles, and scalar particles, pronouns may seem an unlikely recruit to the right periphery. However, as a consequence of their occurrence in this syntactic slot following the anchor, they acquire pragmatic functions just as items belonging to other syntactic categories do. This diachronic study has shown that ProTags are long-term occupants of the right periphery and that the ProTag construction has a range of well-established (inter)subjective uses in English.

6 Conclusions

The ProTag construction comprises an anchor expression and a seemingly superfluous pronoun, the ProTag, in the right periphery. This construction has a core subjective meaning and a number of different intersubjective meanings. This study has revealed that demonstrative ProTags have persisted as a feature of colloquial English in Britain – albeit a rare one – for at least four centuries. The existence of demonstrative ProTag constructions with core subjective meaning and intersubjective meanings, which had previously only been studied from a synchronic perspective, are confirmed to have been in use since at least the early 17th century. While there have been some changes in relative frequency, overall the picture is one of general stability. Demonstrative ProTag constructions with intersubjective meanings always constitute the minority, but they are attested in every time period. This supports a view of the subjective meaning being the core one, as does the approach to the definition of intersubjective meanings presented. Intersubjective meaning builds on the subjective meaning, according to which S expresses/reinforces their strong commitment to the truth of proposition p . S pursues (dis)alignment with A in relation to p and consequently constructs, reinforces, destroys, or reconfigures interpersonal relations. ProTags regularly have an intensifying effect on illocutionary force when they are present.

Of the intersubjective meanings identified, Conversational Joking meaning increases compared to Challenging meaning over time. This may be due to a more general shift towards seeking addressee involvement. A very small number of demonstrative ProTag constructions are used with directive meanings (Desired Action: Give, Question) and one (Desired Action: Demand) is not attested. Further research is required to determine whether the latter is restricted to the personal ProTag construction. Similarly, the tendency for Challenging meaning to co-occur with an overt anchor point warrants further investigation.

This first diachronic study of the demonstrative ProTag construction in social interaction provides a clearer understanding of their occurrence in the

right periphery, the relationship between the subjective and intersubjective meanings of the ProTag construction, the persistence of these meanings and their relative frequencies over time, their role in managing the Common Ground and interpersonal relations, and their use by playwrights as a means of involving the audience more directly in a drama.

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