

The Verb Forms *Hath* and *Has* in *The Gentleman's Magazine*: With Special Reference to the Issues for January, February and March 1731

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Abstract

This paper made a linguistic analysis of the third-person singular present indicative verb forms *hath* and *has* in *The Gentleman's Magazine* published in 1731. The examples analysed include those functioning as auxiliaries and those as full verbs. In the statistical analysis of the forms, I have observed that *has* is the predominant form and *hath* is the minor variant form used in the text regardless of their grammatical functions. In the contextual analysis of the forms I have mainly dealt with the instances of the archaic form *hath* and explored the stylistic effects achieved by them.

Keywords: the third-person singular present, *hath*, *has*, the eighteenth century, *The Gentleman's Magazine*

1. Introduction

My study aims to make a linguistic exploration into the third-person singular present indicative verb forms *hath* and *has* found in the ordinary written English in an early eighteenth-century journal. As a background, Section 1.1 outlines the history of the third-person present-tense indicative singular endings of English verbs and reviews some preceding studies on this matter. Section 1.2 offers an introduction to *The Gentleman's Magazine*, the text used for analysis. Section 2 presents a statistical analysis of the forms *hath* and *has*, functioning as auxiliaries and full verbs. Section 3 is a contextual analysis of the forms.

1.1 Background

In Old English the third-person singular present indicative suffix used in the South of England was *-þ* (later replaced by *-th*) and that used in the North was *-s*. After the two forms competed with each other in Middle and Modern English periods, *-s* came to be the standard suffix in the South as well.

As for spoken English, *-(e)s* is presumed to have become the universal third-person singular present ending in the first half of the seventeenth century (Jespersen 1982, Haraguchi 2005). As for written English, *-(e)s* had come to predominate over *-(e)th* in the seventeenth century and presumably became the universal ending by the end of the eighteenth century (Haraguchi 2003a, 2003b, 2005). Today, the form *-(e)th* is regarded as archaic and not normally found in Standard English. However, it is sometimes used in the press deliberately, as in the humorous example below, which is a headline at the top of a British newspaper article:

Cometh the day, **Cometh** the UK? (written by Mark Ravenhill in *The Guardian*, 11 June 2007: online)

The history of the *-(e)th* and *-(e)s* forms is complex and has drawn academic interest. Scholars point out that the distribution of the two forms differs from century to century, from text type to

text type and that the preference for one ending over the other varies from author to author (Jespersen 1982:188-192, Görlach 1991:88-89, Haraguchi 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2005, Nevalainen 2010). The distribution of the use of the two endings differs from verb to verb. Haraguchi (2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2005) demonstrates that in certain texts some verbs occur with either *-(e)th* alone or *-(e)s* alone and the others occur with both *-(e)th* and *-(e)s*. From historical sociolinguistic points of view, Nevalainen (2010) suggests that there may be connections between the choice of the suffixes and the differences in gender and social ranks.

The third-person verbal forms, *hath* and *doth*, the old forms of *has* and *does*, call for special attention. Jespersen (1982:190) explains that 'the frequency of occurrence protected the old forms from being modified analogically, so that they were prevalent till about the middle of the eighteenth century.' Nevalainen (2010:14) comments that 'When most of the other verbs have more than 90 per cent of *-s* in the [Helsinki] corpus in the latter half of the 17th century, *do* takes it in half of the cases and *have* in less than one third.' Based on the Corpus of Early English Correspondence (the CEEC), she states the point more clearly:

In that period [1660-1681], the CEEC contains data from a total of some 100 writers, who used the incoming form [*-s*] in about 90% of the cases with verbs other than *have* and *do*. As far as most verbs are concerned, the change was then as good as completed. However, the situation looks rather different when the diffusion of *-s* to *have* is considered, which applied to only 27% of the cases, indicating that, with *have*, the process had barely reached the new and vigorous stage by this time. (2010:17)

As Jespersen and Nevalainen state above, the forms *hath* and *doth* occur much more frequently than the *-(e)th* forms of other verbs even after the seventeenth century. A good deal of work should be done on them in comparison with their standard counterparts *has* and *does* in the eighteenth-century English texts. As such, this paper analyses the forms *hath* and *has* in an early eighteenth-century journal and presents their features from linguistic points of view.

1.2 Text Used

The text used is *The Gentleman's Magazine: Or, Monthly Intelligencer*, founded by Edward Cave (1691-1754) under the pseudonym of Sylvanus Urban in London in January 1731 and published monthly. It was the first to use the word *magazine* (meaning *storehouse*) for a periodical publication. It ran for nearly 200 years until 1914. Each issue consists of a monthly digest of various news and topics such as political debates, foreign affairs, commodity prices, marriages, deaths, poetry and so on.

According to Harada (2006), one of the distinctive characteristics of *The Gentleman's Magazine* (hereafter *The GM*) is that it includes not only its own original contributions but also extensive extracts from other periodicals. After the selection of appropriate extracts was made by Cave, most of them were rewritten by his young anonymous staff and printed in *The GM* at his printing house at St John's Gate. In such sections as *Monthly Intelligencer* in *The GM*, the extracts from other publications would have been reproduced faithfully without being rewritten. Each time one-year issues of *The GM* were published, they were bound together in one volume and reprinted with consecutive page numbers.

In this research I use a hardcover copy of Volume I of *The GM*. Printed in 1732, it contains all the issues for the year 1731. The general condition of the copy is satisfactory for reading the pages. However, I occasionally encounter words or letters blurred. In such cases I double-check the correct spellings by getting access to the digital texts of *The GM* in the Internet Library of Early Journals run by the Universities of Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester and Oxford.

The scope of my analysis is restricted to the first three-month issues of the volume. In terms of pages, the data has been collected from a page of introduction to the volume and the articles on pages 1 to 136 (January pp.1-42, February pp.49-92, March pp.93-136).

2. Statistical Analysis of the Forms *has* and *hath*

In the data examined there are a total of 124 uses of the third-person singular present forms of *have*, namely 110 uses of *has* and 14 uses of *hath*. Of the total, I exclude 9 uses (7 of *has* and 2 of *hath*) found in the verse parts of the articles. That exclusion is necessary for me to focus on the examples found only in the prose passages that reflect the ordinary forms of written English without metrical structure. As a result, there remain 115 examples for investigation, including the uses functioning as auxiliary verbs and the ones functioning as full verbs.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the forms *has* and *hath*, the uses of auxiliaries and those of full verbs combined. Table 2 shows the distribution of each form functioning as auxiliary verbs. Table 3 shows the distribution of each form functioning as full verbs. According to the *OED*, the spelling *hath* is used from the fourteenth century and it has been archaic since the eighteenth century (s.v. *have*, v. A.2.c.).

Table 1 Auxiliaries & Full Verbs Combined

Total	115	(100.00%)
<i>has</i>	103	(89.56%)
<i>hath</i>	12	(10.44%)

Table 2 Auxiliaries

Total	80	(100.00%)
<i>has</i>	71	(88.75%)
<i>hath</i>	9	(11.25%)

Table 3 Full Verbs

Total	35	(100.00%)
<i>has</i>	32	(91.43%)
<i>hath</i>	3	(8.57%)

In each of the tables *has* occurs in about 90% of the cases and *hath* in about 10%. It is demonstrated that *has* is the predominant form and *hath* is the minor variant in the first three-month issues of the magazine published in 1731. In order to explore the implications of the statistical findings, here I attempt to compare the distributions shown above with those shown in the two preceding studies.

In the eighteenth-century texts analysed by Haraguchi (2005:63-64) that cover nine different genres (biographies, drama, essays, fiction, journals & reports, letters, linguistics, official documents and poetry), the auxiliary *has* occurs 83.5% of the time, while the auxiliary *hath* occupies 16.5%. The full verb *has* occurs 61.7% of the time, whereas the full verb *hath* occurs 38.3%.

According to Araki and Ukaji (1984:200), in Volume 1 of *The Covent-Garden Journal* edited by Henry Fielding and published in 1752, the spellings *has* and *hath* appear 17 times (11.4%) and 132 times (88.6%) respectively. In short, Fielding's volume shows the distribution to be quite the opposite of that in the issues of *The GM* investigated.

Since Haraguchi's analysis differs greatly from mine in terms of the amounts and the types of data, any fair comparison cannot be made between the two. However, it is suggested that the *GM* text examined is more progressive in making use of the standard form *has* than Fielding's journal.

3. Contextual Analysis of the Forms *has* and *hath*

This section examines linguistic features of the forms *has* and *hath* in context. In the examples presented below, the stretches of language under discussion are highlighted in **bold**. Some eighteenth-century English characters such as the long <s> (ſ) are modernised for ease of reference. However, most of the period-specific conventions including italics, capitalisations and punctuations follow the original text unless otherwise stated.

The round bracket after each instance shows the page number and the month of issue for *The GM*. In most cases, the following square bracket denotes the source material from which the article was extracted by Edward Cave and rewritten (or in certain cases reproduced faithfully) by his young

anonymous staff and printed in *The GM*. It represents the title of the periodical, the month and day of publication and the issue number for the source. In the sections *Foreign Advices* and *Foreign Affairs* that report on overseas news, *The GM* does not mention the source materials. In some sections that report the domestic news, it also provides no source information. On such occasions the square bracket indicates the title of the section only.

3.1 *Has* as Auxiliary Verbs (71 examples)

There are 71 examples of the pattern where *has* functions as an auxiliary to form the present perfect tense or the present perfect progressive tense, as in (1) and (2). This type is prevalent in Present-Day English:

- (1) IN this Journal Mr *D'anvers* resumes the topick which he **has** often **treated** of, namely, the liberty of the press. (70, Feb.) [*Craftsman*, Feb. 27. No.243]
- (2) Happiness is the Butt or Point, at which human Wit **has**, thro' all Ages, **been levelling** its Arrows, but the Marksman never found. (117, March) [*Weekly Register*, March 27. No.50]

In the page of introduction to *The GM*, the writer, who is perhaps the founding editor Edward Cave himself, consistently uses *has* in this pattern 4 times, not using *hath* at all, as in (3):

- (3) *IT has been unexceptionably advanced*, ... // *This Consideration has induced* ... // ... *this Undertaking has met with* ... // ... *it has been our Endeavour* ... (INTRODUCTION)

3.2 *Has* as Full Verbs (32 examples)

There occur 32 cases in the pattern where *has* functions as a full verb, mostly signifying 'to possess,' as in (4) and (5). This usage is also common in Today's English:

- (4) *Belliza has* Wit and Beauty, accompanied with a solid Judgment. (14, Jan.) [*Universal Spectator*, Jan. 2. No.117]
- (5) An island **has** no business with the affairs of the continent, only as a friendly neighbour, and a fair trader. (53, Feb.) [*Craftsman*, Feb. 6. No.240]

3.3 *Hath* as Auxiliary Verbs (9 examples)

I have found a total of 9 examples where the auxiliary *hath* serves to form the present perfect tense, as in (6):

- (6) ... the Majority of Men cannot distinguish glittering Tinsel from Sterling Worth, and are delighted with neither, but as it glares in their Eyes; that such is the Depravity of human Nature, that Men hate the best Characters, meerly because they are so; and so surprizing is the Itch of Scandal, that the Infirmities, Slips, and Errors of every Man, whose Merit or Fortune **hath raised** him to Notice, are narrowly watched. (97, March) [*Free Briton*, March 4. No.66]

In reading *The GM* published in the early eighteenth century, we cannot make an immediate linguistic response to the social and stylistic nuances introduced into the text, because the period is linguistically more removed from us than it may appear. Nevertheless, on the supposition that the archaic spelling *hath* is often associated with a formal or dignified style of language, in what follows

I present each example in context and attempt to explore the stylistic effects achieved by the spelling.

(7) is a part of the article cited from the section *Foreign Affairs*. It concerns the political situation as of 1731, one year before the Colony of Georgia was established in America. The phrase *His Majesty* is used as an honorific for King George II. The phrase *graciously pleased* to increases politeness. The dignified form *hath*, co-occurring with these phrases, seems to be a suitable choice in the context referring to the king:

- (7) His Majesty **hath been** graciously **pleased** to order the attorney general to prepare a charter to incorporate the petitioners who intend to establish *Colonies* in the manner of the old *Romans*, viz. in liberty and property. (88, Feb.) [*Foreign Affairs*]

However, the form *hath* was not a regular choice in the phrase *His [Her] Majesty ... been graciously pleased to* at the turn of the eighteenth century. The *OED* records a total of 3 citations of this type of phrase that suggest fluctuations in choice. They are all taken from the articles in *The London Gazette*. While *has* appears in the examples for the years 1684 and 1686, perhaps referring respectively to kings Charles II and James II, the conservative *hath* occurs in the one for 1709, referring perhaps to Queen Anne:

- 1684 *Lond. Gaz.* His Majesty **has** been graciously pleased to constitute ... (s.v. *Rear'-Admiral* 1.†b.)
 1686 *Lond. Gaz.* His Majesty . . . **has** been Graciously pleased to bestow ... (s.v. *consulship* b.)
 1709 *Lond. Gaz.* Her Majesty **hath** been graciously pleased . . . to Grant ... (s.v. *flask*, n.² 6.)

Extract (8) appears in the *DEATHS* section of *The GM* reporting that Lady *Catherine Howard* died on January 22 and has left her estate to her daughter and a grandchild. The solemnity in context and a respect for the lady of high rank might call for the choice of *hath*:

- (8) 22. The Lady *Catherine Howard*, Widow and Relict of the late Lord *Frederick Howard*, and formerly of Sir *Richard Kennedy*, of *Mount Kennedy*, in *Ireland*, Baronet. She left Issue only a Daughter by Sir *Richard, Elizabeth*, married to Sir *William Dudley*, of *Clapton*, in *Northampton*, Baronet, to whom and her Issue by Sir *William*, she **hath left** the Bulk of her Estate. (34, Jan.) [Jan. 22. *DEATHS*]

Both (9) and (10) are quoted from the same article where we find 2 examples of *hath*, with no example of *has* attested. The elevated form *hath* arises in the contexts referring to socially high-class people and place such as *Ministry*, *Court* and *Emperor*:

- (9) ... the fluctuation of Affairs **hath oblig'd** the Ministry to go from *Court to Court*; (4, Jan.) [*Craftsman*, Jan. 9. No.236]
 (10) **Hath** not the Emperor **shewn** that he does not fear us? (4, Jan.) [*Craftsman*, Jan. 9. No.236]

In *The GM*, political controversies that have arisen among different publishers are reported in summary. (11) is the opening paragraph of an article that reports on the refutation by the author of *Free Briton* against a falsity advanced by Caleb D'Anvers, the pen name of the editor of *The Craftsman*. In the statement made by Mr *D'anvers* in the inverted commas, the archaic spelling *hath* occurs in the religious context referring to the event of *an Election of Church-wardens*,

accompanied with the legal expression *putting this Law in Execution*:

- (11) THE Author refutes a Falsity advanced by Mr *D'anvers* in the *Craftsman* of the 13th of *Dec.* wherein speaking of the Riot Act, he says, "That an Election of Church-wardens **hath been** already **made** a Handle for putting this Law in Execution. ... (15, Jan.) [*Free Briton*, Jan. 7. No.51]

(12) is quoted in full from the section *FOREIGN ADVICES*. It is devoted to the news about The Hague. The large portion in italics is the contents of a letter addressed from 'their High Mightinesses' to 'the United Provinces' to celebrate 'a Day of solemn Thanksgiving, Fasting, and Prayer.' The language of the letter seems rather formal, considering that each clause is quite long and complex due to the frequent use of subordinators, adverbial parentheses, abstract nouns and adjectives. In this letter, we encounter the two similar constructions (*it hath pleas'd God that ... // it hath pleased God to ...*) in which the pronoun *it* is the impersonal subject of the verb *please*, the real subject being a following *that* clause or *to* infinitive. The dignified spelling *hath* seems well-matched in the context referring to *God*, here the dative object of the verb. This sort of construction was 'Formerly usual in deferential phrases of address' (*OED* s.v. *please*, v. 3):

- (12) *Hague*. About the latter End of this Month their High Mightinesses wrote a Letter to the United Provinces, for the Celebration of the 28th of *Feb.* as a Day of solemn Thanksgiving, Fasting, and Prayer, importing in Substance, *That altho' it hath pleas'd God, in his infinite Patience and Clemency, that we have enjoyed Peace last Year, this Peace was nevertheless attended with so much Uneasiness and Difficulty, in relation to the small Success of the Negotiations set on foot for terminating amicably the Differences in Europe, and establishing a general Tranquility, that we are still in a very uncertain and difficult Situation, and have great reason to fear that a War may at last happen, wherein this State may be engag'd, contrary to its Inclinations: That our Apprehension in this Respect increases so much the more when we consider, that notwithstanding all the blessings which it hath pleased God to shower down upon our dear Country, the Sins and Iniquities thereof, far from diminishing, increase daily, to such a Degree, that last Year horrible, abominable Sins appear'd, almost unknown before in this Country; and that we ought to fear, that the Patience of the Lord, justly provok'd, ceasing, his Judgments may at last fall upon our dear Country, unless we endeavour to prevent them, by an unfeigned Repentance and Conversion.* (39, Jan.) [*FOREIGN ADVICES*]

In the *OED* the earliest example of the construction with the casual form *has* is quoted from the nineteenth century. By way of comparison, see below:

1836 Pusey in Liddon, etc. *Life* (1893) I. xvii. 401 The Ministerialness of the act consists in that **has pleased God that** the absolution should be conveyed through a minister. (s.v. *mini'sterialness*)

Example (13) occurs in the essay titled '*REMARKS on the BILL depending in PARLIAMENT, to prevent SUITS for TYTHES, where none, or any Composition for the Same, have been paid in a certain Number of Years.*' Although the italicised part below is claimed to be the representation of 'the Statute of *Edward the 6th*' enacted in the sixteenth century, it might possibly be a somewhat modernised translation in terms of spelling. For instance, the spelling *praedial* is used from the seventeenth century in the *OED* (s.v. *predial*). Despite this possibility, the presence of *hath* in the

text seems to contribute to a tinge of archaism and formality associated with the legal language:

- (13) The Statute of *Edward* the 6th, on which this Bill seems to be grounded, says, *That all praedial Tythes shall be paid in such Manner and Form as **hath been** of Right **yielded** and **paid** within forty Years next before the making this Act, [or of Right or Custom ought to have been paid.]* (109, March) [REMARKS on the BILL depending in PARLIAMENT]

In the remaining parts of the essay, the writer exclusively uses the casual form *has*. Compare (13) with (14):

- (14) ... the Proof of Tythe being paid in a certain Number of Years, is to rest upon the Incumbent; who coming a Stranger to the Parish, may not know what **has been done**, and may easily defrauded where Tythe **has not been taken** in Kind, but paid in Money, ... (109, March) [REMARKS on the BILL depending in PARLIAMENT]

3.4 *Hath* as Full Verbs (3 examples)

A total of 3 uses are found in the pattern where *hath* serves as a full verb chiefly in the sense of ‘to possess.’

(15) is the opening paragraphs of an article on legal topics. In the first paragraph the unexpressed subject of the verb *OBserves* is interpreted as *The Universal Spectator*. In the subordinate clause that follows, the standard form *has* arises as an auxiliary in the phrase *has been long wished for*. Renewing the paragraph, the writer switches to the formal form *hath*, here functioning as a full verb after the subject *no Law*:

- (15) *OBserves* that the Regulation of the Law is a point of the greatest consequence to the publick, and **has been long wished for**. See p.19. N. I.

That no Law **hath**, or can have, juster or better principles than the *Common Law of England* [as it is dictated by reason, settled by wise men, and confirmed by custom ;] ... (98, March) [*Universal Spectator*, March 6. No.126]

(16) is the opening three paragraphs of an article. In the first paragraph the unexpressed subject of the verb *MAintains* is the writer of *The Craftsman* who is referred to as *he* and *his* in the article. Mr *Osborne*, mentioned in the second paragraph, is the writer of *The London Journal*. Mr *Walsingham*, mentioned in the third paragraph, is the writer of *The Free Briton*. This article summarises *The Craftsman*'s counterargument against those two writers:

- (16) *MAintains* the Liberty of the *Press*, in opposition to those who argue for the necessity of *some* restraint, which, if granted, he says, might be made use of to destroy all News-papers whatsoever, except the *Gazette*.

After repeating most of the points in debate, he defends his *Hague* Letter, (for which the Government thought fit to call him to an Account) in asmuch as there was nothing in it asserted, but only supposed; and adds, he **has** as much right to reason upon Suppositions as Mr *Osborne*; and to censure the Conduct of Ministers, as he **hath** to approve it; for unless the right is reciprocal, the Liberty of the Press is no Liberty at all.

As to what Mr *Walsingham* had allowed, that we have a right to reason upon Political Affairs, tho' not to lay down false Facts; he replies, that he **has asserted** no Falshoods, and only exercised the natural right of every *Free Briton*, to offer his Opinion on affairs. (5, Jan.) [*Craftsman*, Jan. 30. No.239]

It is noted that the writer uses the two variant forms *has* and *hath* in the second paragraph. The omitted object of *hath* would be interpreted as *much right*. According to Haraguchi (2005:66), 'In order to make the contrast between two things clearer, some authors use the *-(e)th* ending with one subject and employ the *-(e)s* ending with the other subject.' Since the subjects of both *has* and *hath* are identified as the identical pronoun *he* in the article examined, the grammatical situation is different. Nevertheless, a contrast in meaning is pointed out between the verb phrases *to censure the Conduct of Ministers* and *to approve it* as below:

[The writer of *The Craftsman*] adds, he has as much right to reason upon Suppositions as Mr *Osborne* ; and **to censure the Conduct of Ministers**, as he hath **to approve it** ; for unless the right is reciprocal, the Liberty of the Press is no Liberty at all.

It is difficult to estimate the extent to which the distinct endings in *has* and *hath* here contribute to bringing out the contrast, but it is interesting to meet the two variants in close proximity to each other in one paragraph. In the third paragraph the writer switches again to the standard *has* though functioning as an auxiliary.

(17) is a whole paragraph that deals with the observation made in a letter by a correspondent of *Fog's Journal*. Introduced by the reporting verb *saith*, the archaic spelling of *says*, the observation centres on a series of biblical allusions that compare the life of the world to that of man:

- (17) The *second* letter is an observation which the author made from a *French* astrologer, that the world was near at an end. Man, **saith** he, is a little world, and **the world** a great Man, and is subject to various distempers, **hath it's Infancy, childhood, youth, middle-age, old-age and dotage** ; that from *Adam* to *Noah* was the world's infancy, from *Noah* to *Abraham*, his childhood, from *Abraham* to *David* his youth, from *David* to the captivity of *Babylon*, his middle-age, from thence unto *Christ* his old age, from *Christ* to the treaty of *Seville*, his dotage, and goes now, as it were, upon Crutches, and **has an ugly hosket cough**, and is milt-grown. (99, March) [*Fog's Journal*, March 6. No.128]

In this paragraph the two variant forms *hath* and *has* appear. The phrase *the world* put in bold is interpreted as the subject of both forms though they occur far apart from each other. This interpretation is supported by the following citation in the *OED* :

1731 Gentl. Mag. I. 101 [The world] has an ugly hoskey cough, and is *milt-grown. (s.v. *milt*, n. 1.b.)

While the objects of *hath* indicate the stages of life (*it's Infancy, childhood, youth, middle-age, old-age and dotage*) that *the world* has already passed, the object of *has* indicates the stage of the disease that *the world* suffers now. The archaic form *hath* refers to the past stages of life for *the world* and the standard form *has* refers to the present stage of life for *the world*. In short we find a contrast in time between the past and the present. It is suggested that the distinct spellings *hath* and *has* are exploited to enhance the contrast.

4. Final Remarks

This paper has made a linguistic investigation into the third-person singular present indicative verb forms *hath* and *has* in *The Gentleman's Magazine* with special reference to the issues for January, February, and March 1731. The examples analysed include those functioning as auxiliary

verbs and those functioning as full verbs.

The statistical analysis has demonstrated that *has* is the predominant form and *hath* is the minor variant form in the text used regardless of their grammatical functions. In the contextual analysis I have focused chiefly on the instances of the archaic spelling *hath* and explored the stylistic effects achieved by them.

What I have done in this study serves as a preliminary survey of *hath* and *has* found in Volume I of *The GM*. As a next step to improve the accuracy of the linguistic observations I will extend the scope of my analysis to the whole volume.

Text

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