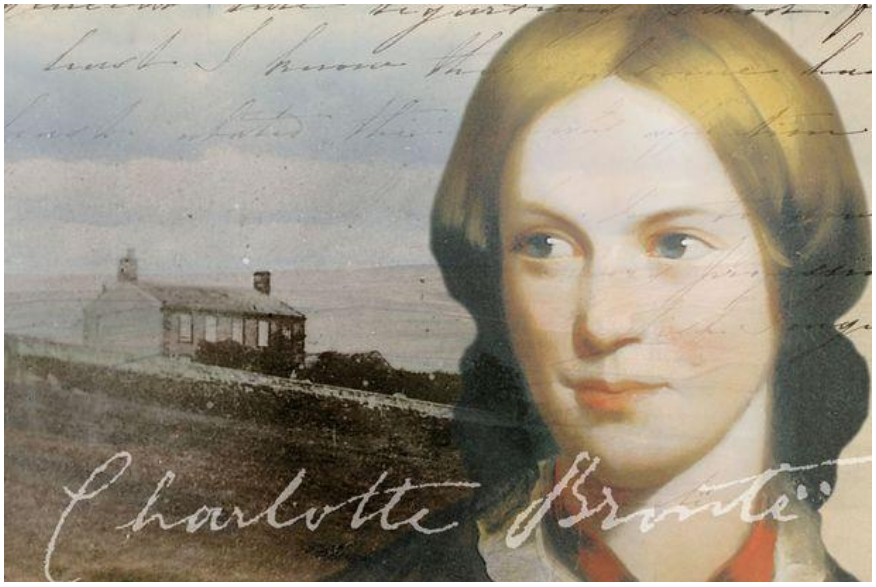

Charlotte Brontë's linguistic involvement in her personal correspondence

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 The Concept of Linguistic Involvement

Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855) wrote in one of her very first letters to her friend Ellen Nussey (1817–1897) that their "friendship is destined to form an exception to the general rule regarding school friendships" (5 September 1832, Smith 1995: 118). At that time Charlotte Brontë could not know it, but their friendship, which had originated as only a childish affection of schoolgirls, continued to blossom and turned into a strong mutual fellowship that was to last throughout her lifetime. When Charlotte Brontë sent that letter, she did not know either that she would become one of the greatest novelists of the Late Modern English period. Although the language of the heroines of her novels has been studied extensively (Pollard 1968; Peters 1973), little information is available on her own language. Even though it is impossible to analyse her actual spoken language, her letters, as accessible in the *Letters of Charlotte Brontë: with a selection of letters by family and friends* (Volumes I–III, ed. Smith 1995), are of significance, because they provide documented evidence of her private written communication.

The principal idea of this thesis is to study a particular aspect of language practice, namely involvement. According to Biber and Finegan (1989: 106–107), personal letters display an extensive use of involvement markers (e.g., intensifiers *so* and *really*) that can exhibit the writer's emotional state and affective attitudes to his or her correspondent. In this thesis, I will analyse Charlotte Brontë's private language use in her letters by focusing on linguistic involvement. By carrying out this study I aim to contribute to the knowledge of how the English language was utilized by individuals in the Late Modern Period. The topic of linguistic involvement has already been investigated before by scholars like Anni Sairio (2005) and Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014: 155–157). The findings of these two linguists showed that markers like evidential verbs, degree adverbs and

first and second person pronouns can reveal the level of involvement between author and recipient. According to Sairio, a person uses more markers of linguistic involvement if he or she is more attached to the addressee (2005: 30–32), as in the case of Dr. Johnson (1709–1784), who, she found, in his letters to relatives and friends used the highest number of abovementioned markers of involvement and displayed a stronger affection when writing to his stepdaughter Lucy Porter (1715–1786) than in his letters to his friend Hester Thrale (1741–1821), Hester Thrale's husband Henry Thrale (1724/1730–1781), her daughter Queeney Thrale (1764–1857) and his friend Elizabeth Aston (1708–1785). Previously, William Labov also argued that the emotional attitude of a person towards the conveyed information can be defined by the use of linguistic markers such as intensifiers or what he calls "emphatics" (1984: 43–45). Sairio states that letters from the past can reveal different communicative forms which can linguistically express relationships between correspondents (2005: 22). Biber and Finegan found out that personal letters have similar markers as those found in involved interaction, such as "emphatic adverbs", for example, *so*, *very* and *really* (1989: 94; see also Labov 1984: 43–45). Sairio argues that personal correspondence is "closer to spoken language than other written types of language" (2005: 22). Consequently, in order to learn more about genuine communication from the past it is essential to study personal letters. Dossena (2012) likewise confirms that personal letters have a firm connection with oral language considering that the language of the correspondence can be characterized as "gap-closing", meaning that the addressee is perceived as if he/she was present (2012: 5).

According to Biber and Finegan, studies related to the topic of involvement are usually "restricted to adverbial intensifiers" (1989: 94), which are responsible for boosting the force of a proposition. Nevertheless, there are a few studies (Chafe 1986; Sairio 2005; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2014) that focus not only on

adverbial intensifiers but also on other markers of linguistic involvement. Chafe (1985: 120) documented that involvement can also be reflected through the use of particular evidential verbs (e.g., *hear*, *feel*, *sound*, *suppose*) and first and second person pronouns (e.g. *I*, *we*, *you*). Sairio (2005), referring to Chafe, analysed Dr. Johnson's language of letters through his usage of particular words that indicate involvement. Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014) in her study of Jane Austen's language also looked at this topic from a historical perspective. I expect that these involvement markers can also be found in personal letters. My hypothesis is strongly based on Sairio (2005: 24–25) and suggests that the level of linguistic involvement, as examined by her, differs between different addressees and can be revealed by analyzing the use of evidential adverbs, degree adverbs and first- and second-person singular pronouns. This thesis examines how Charlotte Brontë's level of linguistic involvement is reflected in her private correspondence through an analysis of these markers of linguistic involvement. Therefore, this work studies whether a tendency is noticeable in applying of involvement markers by the writer in her personal letters and if the language of Charlotte Brontë will unveil different levels of involvement regarding her addressees through my analysis of various sets of her correspondence.

A pilot version of this research, with focusing only on Charlotte Brontë's use of intensifiers in her personal letters, has been carried out in the form of my final paper for the Late Modern English Letters course taught in 2018–19. In this paper, I found out that Charlotte Brontë indeed used different numbers of intensifiers depending on who she wrote to. My analysis showed that her level of involvement regarding male and female addressees, which was investigated by focusing on intensifiers only, differed. Charlotte Brontë used more intensifiers and thus was more involved with her female recipients than with male ones. Tieken-Boon van Ostade, who investigated the degree of linguistic involvement of Jane Austen (1775-1817) in her personal letters, also found out that Jane Austen used different

numbers of intensifiers and hence, exposed various degrees of affection in her letters when writing to different correspondents (2014: 157). Therefore I believe that this topic requires further investigation. This research is of interest because it contributes to the field of historical sociolinguistics drawing on the analysis of Charlotte Brontë's personal letters which come closest to the way she would have spoken. The present study aims at reconstructing intimate written communication of Charlotte Brontë by illuminating her own practice of letter writing.

1.2 The Framework of this study

My major source of inspiration for the current work was Sairio (2005), which was devoted to the examination of the topic of involvement as reflected in a writer's private correspondence. Sairio's findings suggest that the level of closeness and attachment between the writer and the recipient can be gauged by studying linguistic indicators expressing involvement (2005: 24). According to Nevalainen (2007: 3), the analysis of the way in which letter-writers communicate between each other by means of personal correspondence generates the base for reconstructing the sociolinguistic background of changes occurring in the language. Thus, studying someone's involvement through his or her correspondence provides significant evidence of the pattern of this person's interaction with individuals. Following Sairio, involvement signifies the way in which individuals communicate and it also shows how close and committed they are towards each other (2005: 24). According to Tannen (1985: 127), the notion of this term is relative, meaning that involvement can be revealed in both written and oral communication. Though the language of letters from the Late Modern English period has been extensively analysed (Nevalainen 2007; Auer 2015; Dossena and Del Lungo Camiciotti 2012), the examination of the involvement component of these letters has not often been taken into consideration in the majority of these studies. My aim is to perform a study that examines the nature of the relationship of the author of the correspondence and his or her addressees.

Charlotte Brontë is considered to be a good choice for the current study considering her status as one of the most famous writers of the Late Modern English period and the fact that her edited correspondence is available for analysis.

Throughout her life, Charlotte Brontë lived in the village of Haworth, Yorkshire, together with her father, sisters and aunt but far away from her best friends, Ellen Nussey and Mary Taylor (1817–1893), and in order to maintain relationships them, she was engaged in constant correspondence with Ellen Nussey and Mary Taylor. Smith (2012: 118) comments that Charlotte Brontë was the most prolific letter-writer in her family and that nearly 950 letters written by her were found and compiled in the William Law's collection already at the end of the nineteenth century. It is remarkable to note that the Brontë society in Britain, which is one of the world's oldest literary communities, aims to preserve and extend the collection of Brontë manuscripts, letters, first editions and other Brontë-related documents (Smith 1995: 72). Furthermore, this society continues its research on the correspondence of Charlotte Brontë and, in 1974 a set of her letters to the publisher, George Smith, was added to its already rich collection (Smith 2012: 122).

I believe that fresh insights into the evolution of the English language can be obtained by studying the language of letters. The language of Charlotte Brontë is interesting to study because she lived in the Late Modern English period and her language can serve as a reflection of that epoch. In order to examine the degree of Charlotte Brontë's involvement exhibited in her personal letters, it is considered essential to address the following topics: the language of correspondence of Charlotte Brontë with regard to the actual usage of the English language of the Late Modern English period based on the information of the language during that time provided in the *Cambridge History of the English Language, Volume IV: 1776–1997* (ed. Romaine 1999), the nature of the

relationships of Charlotte Brontë with her private interlocutors and the notion of involvement with respect to letter-writing activity.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to analyse Charlotte Brontë's linguistic involvement that is displayed in her private letters to her correspondents, I have formulated the following research questions:

- Can Charlotte Brontë's level of involvement in her letters to a selected number of recipients be exhibited through her usage of particular linguistic markers, namely: degree adverbs, evidential verbs and first and second person pronouns?
- Does Charlotte Brontë's degree of involvement vary regarding the nature of her relationship with her addressees?
- Which linguistic markers of involvement are dominant in Charlotte Brontë's private letters?
- Does Charlotte Brontë's degree of linguistic involvement in her personal correspondence differ in relation to female or male addressees?

1.4 Thesis Outline

This thesis is structured into six chapters. Chapter 2 provides essential information about Charlotte Brontë, more precisely a brief account on her life and her social network, accompanied by a discussion of her relationships with her addressees that have been selected for the present study. Relevant background information on these correspondents is also provided in this part. Chapter 3 presents the academic framework of this study, including a detailed analysis of Sairio's study as well as her findings, as well as those for Jane Austen. Chapter 4 defines the methodology that was set up to perform this study. The corpus of the

private letters of Charlotte Brontë that was compiled to carry out my analysis is introduced and further described there, as well as the process that was used to analyse the material and how the results of this analysis were obtained. Chapter 5 deals with the interpretation of the obtained results, and is followed by the identification of the most noticeable ones and their comparison with the findings obtained by Sairio (2005) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014: 155–157). Chapter 6 presents the major findings of the study. Moreover, this chapter provides the answers to the defined research questions. Ultimately, it summarizes the key outcomes of the present work and closes with the conclusion.

Chapter 2 Unquiet Soul

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a concise account is given on Charlotte Brontë's life and background. Firstly, section 2.2 will present information on Charlotte Brontë's biography. Secondly, section 2.3 will provide details on the language of her correspondence and section 2.4 will focus on the particular addressees that have been selected for this study. Next, section 2.5 will look at Charlotte Brontë's opening and closing epistolary formulas to said addressees. Finally, section 2.6 will close this chapter with some concluding observations.

2.2 The author of *Jane Eyre*

Charlotte Brontë spent most of her life with her family at the remote Haworth parsonage in Yorkshire. However, she and her well-known sisters Emily Jane (1818–1848) and Anne (1820–1849) were not shy girls from a small provincial town but rather gifted and courageous young ladies (Chapman 1968:159). According to Birch (2012: 61), Charlotte Brontë is seen as a more important figure in the Brontë family in comparison with her younger brother Branwell (1817–1848) and her two well-known sisters. She was born in Thornton, Yorkshire, as the third of the six children of Patrick Brontë (1777–1861) and Maria Brontë (1783–1821). When Charlotte was a small girl, she already experienced three major losses: her mother died in 1821 and four years later her elder sisters, Maria (1814–1825) and Elizabeth (1815–1825), died from tuberculosis (Peters 1975: 9). Since that time, Patrick Brontë became increasingly withdrawn and his four surviving children were left to themselves. Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne created their own imaginary kingdom "Angria", writing stories about the residents of their fictional world in miniature books

(Chapman 1968: 161). That was a crucial period in Charlotte's life because it gave impetus to the development of her writing abilities.

In 1831 Charlotte Brontë was sent to Roe Head School in Mirfield, Yorkshire, where she acquired an old-fashioned but profound education (Birch 2012: 64). The time she spent at this school was vital because she became acquainted with two women who were to become her closest friends, Ellen Nussey and Mary Taylor. In 1832, she started writing letters to her new friends and their correspondence was to last throughout her life (Peters 1975: 36). Although Charlotte Brontë felt a strong attachment to the Haworth parsonage, her home, the need to earn her living forced her to leave it. In 1835, she returned to Roe Head School, but this time as a teacher. She increasingly felt that the daily routine of teaching was exhausting and exasperating (Birch 2012: 64). A letter, written to Ellen Nussey in her second year of teaching, reveals her inner dejected state.

> Excuse me if I say nothing but nonsense, for my mind is exhausted, and dispirited. It is a Stormy evening and the wind is uttering a continual moaning sound that makes me feel very melancholy.
>
> (Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey: October 1836, Smith 1995: 154)

After three years of teaching at Roe Head, Charlotte Brontë returned home as her health deteriorated and a doctor advised her to rest in order to recover her health (Peters 1975: 61). Once back at home, she improved in health and spirits very quickly, but soon after she had to set to work one more time. For a time she worked as a governess but she could not find pleasure in fulfilling her duties. Moreover, she considered her governing job as "grim drudgery" and believed that the only way to escape from this wearisome routine was through establishing the Brontës' own school (Chapman 1968: 161). In 1842, Charlotte Brontë went with her sister, Emily, to Brussels in order to qualify further as a teacher and to learn

foreign languages (Peters 1975: 101). Though Emily did not stay long at the Pensionnat Heger, Charlotte Brontë continued her sojourn in Brussels as a pupil of French and later, as a teacher of English. She fell in love with her teacher of French and school headmistress's husband, Constantin Heger (1808–1896). According to Chapman (1968:161), even though her love was not reciprocated, her affection for Constantin Heger prompted the creation of her first book, *The Professor*, which was published posthumously in 1857.

The Brontës' school project was not successful and Charlotte, together with her sisters, relinquished this idea (Birch 2012, 65). The fashion of the Victorian times led the Brontë sisters to a new objective, writing novels. In 1846, Charlotte set to work and, within a year, she finished her second novel, *Jane Eyre*. It appeared in October 1847 and novels by her sisters, Emily's *Wuthering Height* and Anne's *Agnes Grey*, followed soon after (Birch 2012: 65). *Jane Eyre* was immensely successful and it immortalized Charlotte Brontë in time.

Between 1848 and 1849, Charlotte Brontë faced the great losses of Branwell, Emily and Anne (Birch 2012, 66). She kept writing in order to fight against her grief, and already in 1849 her third novel *Shirley* saw the light. *Villette*, her fourth and final novel, was published in 1853. Even though Charlotte was a well-known literary celebrity, her private life was very quiet and isolated. In 1854, she found tranquil happiness in marriage with her father's curate, Arthur Bell Nicholls (1819–1906). Unfortunately, Charlotte Brontë's family contentment did not last long for the reason of her unexpected death in 1855. The death of the great writer was universally recognized and grieved over (Birch 2012: 67).

My account of Charlotte Brontë's life shows that although she remained at Haworth parsonage for most of her life and did not travel much, she was a recognized literary celebrity. Even though she was born in a middle-class family of low income, she acquired a good education which was a vitally important

resource for her literary career. Although she did not meet a lot of people throughout her life, she built strong ties with her close friends and family through correspondence. I believe that to obtain in-depth knowledge of Charlotte Brontë and her letter-writing practice, it is important to study the language of her letters, with a focus on her actual usage of language. The next section will look at particular linguistic features of Charlotte Brontë's language through her correspondence using *The Cambridge History of the English Language* (ed. Romaine 1999) as a source of data on Late Modern English.

2.3 Charlotte Brontë's Language

In 1995 a fine collection of Charlotte's letters that was edited by Margaret Smith was published. Smith not only compiled the letters but also described the life of Charlotte Brontë and her most important correspondents. Nonetheless, I could not identify any linguistic studies that focus on Charlotte Brontë's epistolary language. Therefore, this section of my thesis aims to shed some light on her use of language through letter-writing. Considering that it is beyond the range of this work to examine all syntactical and grammatical features of her language, this part will only deal with some characteristics of her language.

2.3.1 Charlotte Brontë's Language of Correspondence

According to Algeo (1999: 62), in the *Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen* corpus (*LOB*), which was compiled in 1982, the ten most frequent English words, are *the, of, and, to, a, in, that, is, was* and *it*. Employing the Wordlist tool of the WordSmith program, a program that allows you to see the frequency of all words that occur in a text, I obtained statistical data on the most frequent words in my corpus of Charlotte Brontë's private correspondence; more detailed information on the procedure will be presented in Chapter 4. It is interesting to note that the ten most

frequent words in her letters are very similar to that of *LOB*, as they are *I, to, the, of, and, you, a, in, is* and *it*. Only two words, *I* and *you*, out of Charlotte Brontë's top ten most recurrent words do not match. The frequent occurrence of *I* and *you* is understandable, considering that first and second personal pronouns are linguistic markers of private letters (Nurmi and Palander-Collin 2008: 14).

Another interesting characteristic of Charlotte Brontë's epistolary language I found out from the WordSmith frequency list while studying which words occurred most in her letters and this characteristic is that she practically never used any French words in her letters, even though she lived during two years in Brussels and studied the French language diligently there. According to Algeo (1999: 79), the fashion of that time was in favour of words of French origin and yet it seems that Charlotte Brontë was not following this trend in her correspondence and preferred to write entirely in English.

2.3.2 Charlotte Brontë in the *Oxford English Dictionary*

It is interesting to note that Charlotte Brontë is included in the list of 1,000 writers for being the source author of new words by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) and at present, she occupies the 339th place. If considering only the female authors in the *OED*, she occupies a significantly higher position, ranking ninth after the writers like Charlotte Yonge (1823–1903), Maria Edgeworth (1768–1849), Mary Braddon (1835–1915), Harriet Martineau (1802–1876), Elisha Kane (1820–1857), Jane Austen, Funny Burney (1752–1840) and George Eliot (1819–1880). According to the information presented in the *OED*, her overall number of citations is 1,317, of which 38 lexical units were used for the first time and 149 for new meanings. The majority of the quotations come from her novels *Jane Eyre*, *Villette*, *Shirley*, and *The Professor*, while only one lexical item, *spring clean*, occurred for the first time in her correspondence. Out of 149 words that

acquired new senses in Charlotte Brontë's language only nine (e.g., *backbound*, *photograph*, *red-hot*, *double-columned*) were derived from her letters. It is interesting to notice that even though new words and phrases from her books are cited quite often in the *OED*, there is only one lexical unit in the *OED* that occurred for the first time in her letters. Thus, it appears that Charlotte Brontë's letters have not been a fruitful source for deriving new lexical items.

2.4 Charlotte Brontë and the addressees of her letters

Charlotte Brontë's letters are compiled in three volumes (ed. Smith 1995). The first volume covers the time from 1829 until 1847 and comprises letters from her childhood up to the time of publishing of her most famous novel *Jane Eyre* (1847). The second volume comprises correspondence from 1848 until 1851, which represents four years of Charlotte Brontë's life as a celebrated English writer. The last volume covers her correspondence from 1852, when she finished writing her last novel *Villette*, until the last year of her life, 1855. The focus of this thesis is on the letters that were written by Charlotte Brontë during her early juvenile period (1829–1847) to particular members of her family and close friends, namely Emily Jane Brontë, Branwell Brontë, Ellen Nussey and Henry Nussey (1817–1897), Ellen's brother. The reason for choosing these specific recipients will be explained in Chapter 4, which concentrates on the methodology of this thesis.

Most of Charlotte's letters were addressed to her best friend Ellen Nussey. According to Smith (1995: 94), Ellen was Charlotte's closest friend for twenty-four years. Ellen Nussey is described as being a friendly, affectionate and religious person who was dedicated to her family and friends (Smith 1995: 96). Her life centred on domestic duties, social events, church and charity. Even though Ellen's own life was quite tranquil, her name is eternalized in history

because, luckily, she disobeyed Charlotte's order to burn all her letters and preserved most of them (Smith 1995: 2).

Ellen Nussey's elder brother, Henry, was also a good friend of Charlotte Brontë, with whom she got acquainted during one of her first visits to the Nusseys' family house (Peters 1975: 38). Henry studied in Cambridge and later obtained a position as a church curate in Sussex (Peters 1975: 62). In 1839, Charlotte received the first letter from Henry and, to her greatest surprise, it contained a marriage proposal. Even though she did not accept the proposal, they kept a good relationship with each other and were engaged in correspondence, though the exchange of letters between them was not very frequent.

Charlotte Brontë's youngest sister Emily Jane was what today we might call a true soulmate. She supported all of Charlotte's plans, like opening their own school or travelling to Brussels (Chapman 1968: 161–162). Emily was a well-known writer at the time, being most famous for her novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847). Unfortunately, in 1848, she became severely ill and died, shortly after her literary success, of tuberculosis (Smith 1995: 89). Branwell Brontë, the only brother of Charlotte Brontë, was highly literate, just like his other siblings. In 1841, a collection of his poems was published in various local newspapers (Smith 1995: 88). His other talent was painting and for some time he made his living as a portrait painter. Throughout his life he tried various jobs, like being a railway clerk and a tutor; however, at the end of his life, he started writing again but could not complete any of his literary works probably mostly because he had possession of alcohol (Smith 1995: 89). According to Smith (1995: 90), Branwell was a promising poet, but he lost a sense of direction in his life and started abusing alcohol and other drugs. He died in September 1848 in the Brontës' family house.

The Brontë family was truly extraordinary and the children, Charlotte, Branwell, Anne and Emily Jane, worked and wrote together throughout their lives (Birth 2012: 61). However, Charlotte was not involved in constant

correspondence with them, which, I believe, can be explained by the fact that for most of their lives they lived together in their home sanctuary, Haworth (Smith 1995: 78–83).

2.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has demonstrated what Charlotte Brontë's life was like and how she became one of the most recognized literary celebrities of the Late Modern English period. Furthermore, it has introduced the language of correspondence used by Charlotte Brontë from the perspective of her actual letter-writing practice. Additionally, information on her particular intimate addressees has been presented here.

Chapter 3 Literature Overview

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant academic work on the subject of involvement. The existing literature which elaborates on the topic of involvement in letter writing is presented in section 3.2. Section 3.3 discusses Charlotte Brontë's relationship with her private addressees based on her use of epistolary formulas in her letters to them. The following section, 3.4, describes linguistic markers of involvement, namely evidential verbs, degree adverbs and first and second person pronouns, and explains how these markers influence the involvement that is transmitted through them. Section 3.5 finishes this chapter with an overall conclusion.

3.2 Involvement in Letter Writing

The notion of linguistic involvement that is exhibited in somebody's personal correspondence (Sairio 2005) may be drawn on when examining Charlotte Brontë's involvement with her interlocutors because it could help to understand how the degree of affection between writer and recipient can be measured. Sairio's hypothesis suggests that individuals will utilize more such lexical units as evidential verbs, degree adverbs and first and second person pronouns in a communication situation in which they are more engaged. The more someone uses involvement markers, the more intimate the ties are which he or she has with the addressee. However, if the relationships between people are more distant and they are less attached to each other, the number of involvement markers that they use will be significantly lower. For example, Sairio (2005) analysed Dr Johnson's relationships with five of his private correspondents, namely Lucy Porter, Elizabeth Aston (1708–1785), Mr. Henry Thrale (1724/9–1781), Mrs. Hester Thrale (1741–1821) and Queeney Thrale (1764–1857), and discovered that the highest level of involvement was found in his letters to Lucy Porter and the lowest

in his letters to Mrs. and Mr. Thrales' daughter, Queeney Thrale. Sairio further indicated that this result in relation to Lucy Porter was expected considering that she was Dr. Johnson's stepdaughter and, as he once wrote in his letter to her, that she was "the only person left in the world with whom he thought himself connected" (2005: 33–34). Tieken-Boon van Ostade also analysed linguistic involvement in Jane Austen's correspondence with her relatives and friends (2014: 155–157). The results of her analysis showed that Jane Austen displayed a stronger interest on her part in her letters to the younger generation of her relatives, in particular her nieces and nephews. Tieken-Boon van Ostade further specified that the knowledge of Jane Austen's strong interpersonal involvement with her nieces and nephews is important because it can explain some peculiarities of Jane Austen's language use. For example, in order to adapt her language to that of her younger relatives, who she was highly involved with, she purposefully utilized such word like *fun* and *sweet* in her letters to them (2014: 14, 157). Thus, studying someone's degree of involvement may prove useful in examining relationships between people (Sairio 2005: 33–34; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2014: 155–157).

It should be noted that the study of the level of linguistic involvement in personal correspondence has been introduced quite recently. However, Sairio (2005) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014) have already applied it to the personal letters of the Late Modern English Language period and proved its validity. Furthermore, studies of Sairio (2005) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014) have shown to be helpful in detecting particular kinds of involvement, like self-involvement, interpersonal involvement and involvement with the topic, that can provide more detailed knowledge on the nature of ties between writer and recipient. Section 3.4 will deal with these different types of involvement and describe the linguistic markers that define them.

3.3 Epistolary Formulas

According to Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2009: 123–125), correspondents employ particular opening and closing formulas in their letters that can reveal the nature of the relationship between the author of the letter and the recipient. She examined Jane Austen's epistolary formulas and discovered that her most intimate opening formula was "My dearest [first name]'' and that Jane Austen often used this particular formula in letters to her closest recipients (2014: 65-67). While writing to somewhat less intimate addressees, Jane Austen could use variations like "My dear Sir" or "My dear [first name]" and her most formal letters began with the opening "Sir" or "Madam" (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2014: 66).

Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2009: 123–124), referring to Baker (1980), notes that epistolary formulas can be arranged hierarchically according to a scale of formality. Formal opening formulas could be defined by the address terms like "Sir" or "Dear Sir" and formal closing formula could be as follows: "I am, Dear Sir, your most obedient humble servant". However, it is interesting to note that the replacement of *obedient* by *affectionate* in closing formulas could signal greater intimacy between the correspondents; for example, Jane Austen in most of her letters to the members of her family used the word *affectionate* rather than *humble* (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2014: 68–69). Moreover, Tieken-Boon van Ostade notes that long closing formulas established more distanced relationships between writer and recipient of the eighteenth century and, on the contrary, concise variants, like "yours sincerely" and "yours truly" showed closeness between correspondents (2014: 69–70).

According to Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2009: 125), epistolary formulas can reflect the nature of the relationship between letter writer and recipient and that is why it is crucial for my study to further present and analyse Charlotte Brontë's opening and closing formulas that were used in her letters to the selected for this study addressees. Subsequently, my findings for her linguistic

involvement will be correlated with the results of my analysis of Charlotte Brontë's use of epistolary formulas. Considering that my letter corpus yet to be presented in Chapter 4, that focuses on the methodology of this study, my analysis of Charlotte Brontë's opening and closing formulas will also be provided in the same chapter.

3.4 Linguistic markers of Involvement

Sairio (2005: 24), basing herself on Chafe (1985), specifies that the concept of involvement is complex, explaining that in fact there are three different types: ego involvement, involvement with the hearer and involvement with the subject matter of the conversation. Each type of involvement can be measured by the use of certain linguistic markers, in particular, evidential verbs, degree adverbs and first and second person pronouns. Even though this study draws upon Sairio's selection of lexical markers of involvement, it should be taken into consideration that other linguists, like Chafe (1985), Nurmi & Palander-Collin (2008) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014), referred to different linguistic units in their analysis of involvement. Hence, I believe that in order to obtain a full picture of this theme, it is likewise important to present other linguists' views on the analysis of involvement in letter writing.

3.4.1 Evidential verbs

According to Chafe (1985: 118), "evidentiality" defines how speakers and writers reveal their attitudes towards the information they are conveying. In particular, these attitudes refer to the writer's opinion on the reliability of that information, the premise or argument that led to it, or certain facts that served as its basis. Chafe specifies that evidential meaning can be transmitted through various grammatical categories like adverbs (*maybe*, *probably*, *certainly*, *may* and *might*),

the modals *must* and *should*, expressions like *seem to*, *evidently* and *be obvious* together with hedges like *sort of*, *kind of* and particular verbs that reflect sensory evidence like *see*, *hear* and *feel* (1985: 118–21). Sairio (2005: 26), basing herself on Chafe (1985), selected a set of evidential verbs (*think*, *know*, *believe*, *suppose*, *you know*, *find*, (*am*) *sure*, *doubt*) that show up most noticeably in involved communicative situations. Referring to letter writing practice it means that the greater the number of these verbs the writer uses in his or her letters, the more interest he or she has towards the addressee (2005: 24). Tieken-Boon van Ostade analysed Jane Austen's correspondence in terms of evidentiality in a similar manner, although she slightly altered Sairio's set of selected verbs and included the verb fancy as well (2014: 156). Considering that Sairio's method has been chosen as the model for the present study, in my analysis of Charlotte Brontë's usage of evidential verbs I will replicate Sairio's method.

It is worthwhile noting that Nurmi and Palander-Collin in their study of personal letters also focused on the analysis of relationships between correspondents through the analysis of what they call "private verbs", namely *think*, *know*, *hope*, *hear*, *see*, *believe*, *suppose*, *find*, *desire*, *remember*, *doubt*, *expect*, *fear*, *intent*, *consider* and *imagine* (2008: 18). I noticed that most evidential verbs in Sairio's list overlap with the abovementioned private verbs. Even though I have not found an appropriate linguistic explanation for this coincidence, it seems that various linguists approach the theme of involvement in personal correspondence from similar but slightly different perspectives.

3.4.2 Degree adverbs

It is interesting to note that one common feature of spoken language and personal letters is that a person's interest in the topic of an oral or written communication can be revealed through the frequent usage of degree adverbs or intensifiers, like

really, *so* and *very* (Sairio 2005; see also Biber and Finegan 1989: 116). Labov also discovered earlier that adverbs such as *sure* and *just* together with the above-mentioned ones, show the emotional intensity of the speaker towards the subject of the conversation (1984: 43–44). To illustrate the use of the above-mentioned adverbs Labov drew from the following examples of the family conversation: "I'm so glad she comes", "Sure it is", "I really worked while I was away" (Labov 1984: 44). Sairio, in order to study the linguistic involvement of Dr. Johnson with his addressees, selected five adverbs for her analysis, namely *very*, *so*, *quite*, *pretty* and *really* (2005: 27). To demonstrate Samuel Johnson's use of degree adverbs Sairio presented some examples derived from his personal letters:

1. Mrs. Gastrel and You are very often in my thoughts, though I do not write so often as might be expected from so much love and so much respect.

   (Dr. Johnson to Elizabeth Aston: 1779)

2. I am very poorly, and have very restless and oppressive nights, but always hope for better. Pray for me.

   (Dr. Johnson to Lucy Porter: 1778)

Tieken-Boon van Ostade, in her study of Jane Austen's involvement towards her correspondents, examined an almost identical set of degree adverbs, except for *pretty* that she replaced with *pretty well* (2014: 156). Considering that the present study draws on Sairio's method, her list of degree adverbs has been chosen for the analysis of Charlotte Brontë's commitment to the subject matter of her personal letters.

It should be taken into consideration that the usage of degree adverbs is often regarded as being a typical linguistic feature of female language (Jespersen 1922: 250; Lakoff 1975: 53–54; Coates 1986: 18–19, 112). For example, Jespersen considers that hyperbolizing and using adverbs of intensity are classical characteristics of female language. Lakoff (1975: 54), in her study of women's

language, notices that the adverb *so* appears more often in female than in male language. Considering that in terms of masculinity and femininity Charlotte Brontë's language is defined as female, the information on her usage of degree adverbs is of great value because it will help to further develop understanding of the differences that exist between male and female language. And more than that, in view of the fact that the recipients of her personal letters were both man and women it might be the case that her degree of involvement in correspondents differed depending on the gender of her addressees.

3.4.3 First and Second Person pronouns

It has been discussed above that frequent use of first and second person pronouns characterizes involvement of the letter-writer to his or her addressee. Tieken-Boon van Ostade notes that one typical feature of Late Modern English letters is a recurrent usage of first and second person pronouns that indicate the involvement of the sender with one's self and the involvement on the part of the letter writer with the recipient (2009:124–5). According to Chafe (1985: 117), ego involvement can be gauged through the utilization of pronouns such as *I*, *me*, *we*, *us*, *our*, *mine* and *ours* and also through the following phrases: *I mean*, *I don't know* and *as I say*. He further notes that interpersonal involvement with the interlocutor may appear in the form of second person pronoun, however, he does not provide any particular examples, with the exception for only one, *you know*. Nevertheless, it should be considered that Chafe discussed involvement and its linguistic markers in relation to spoken language. Then, Sairio adapted Chafe's notion of involvement to letter writing practice and introduced her own variation of personal pronouns marking involvement such as *I*, *me*, *my*, *you*, *your*, *we* (2005: 27). Tieken-Boon van Ostade in her analysis of Jane Austen's degree of linguistic involvement slightly modified Sairio's method and included such pronouns as *mine*, *myself* to the set of pronouns detecting ego involvement and

yours, *yourself* to the list of second person pronouns that reflect writer's involvement with the addressee. In order to examine Charlotte Brontë's own use of linguistic markers of ego and interpersonal involvement with her addressees, I will apply Sairio's list of abovementioned pronouns to the selected for this thesis corpus of Charlotte Brontë's correspondence. Furthermore, it should be considered that I have chosen exactly the same list of first and second person pronouns as presented in Sairio's study (2005) with the objective to further compare the overall degree of involvement in Charlotte Brontë's letters with that of Samuel Johnson and to find out whose degree of involvement was higher. I believe that the above-mentioned comparison will provide a deeper insight on the topic of involvement in letter-writing as it allows us to look at not only one person's degree of involvement within his or her addressees but also to measure and to compare the degree of involvement in letter-writing from the two different people. The following examples from my corpus of Charlotte Brontë's letters illustrate her use of first and second person pronouns:

1. I take advantage of the earliest opportunity to thank you for the letter you favoured me with last week and to apologize for having so long neglected to write to you, indeed I believe this will be the first letter or note I have ever addressed to you.

   (Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey: May 1831, Smith 1995: 110)

2. I was sorry to hear that your Mother & Brother had been ill and likewise that the Miss Taylors had suffered from bad colds.

   (Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey: January 1832, Smith 1995: 112)

3.5 Concluding remarks

The literature that was reviewed in this chapter has resulted in the formation of my research questions, and even more so it has given rise to anticipations and hypotheses pertinent for the present work. Based on Sairio's (2005) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade's (2014) studies on linguistic involvement in letter writing, it can be expected that Charlotte Brontë expresses affection towards her correspondents in various degrees of intensity and that linguistic involvement can serve as a significant indicator of the intimacy of the relationship between her and her addressees. Furthermore, Charlotte Brontë's degree of closeness with her correspondents can be measured through her use of particular linguistic markers of involvement such as evidential verbs, degree adverbs and first and second person singular pronouns. My hypothesis hopes to show that the more intimate ties Charlotte Brontë had with her addresses, the more involvement markers she used. Considering that the use of particular involvement markers can indicate various kinds of involvement and taking into account that ego involvement was seen to prevail in personal letters (Sairio 2005: 24, 26–28; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2014: 156), I expect to find more instances of ego involvement markers in Charlotte Brontë's letters than of interpersonal or topic involvement markers. Additionally, it should be considered that the nature of Charlotte Brontë's ties with her addressees can be deduced not only from the examination of the abovementioned markers of involvement but also from the analysis of the opening and closing formulas of her personal letters. I believe that the result of my analysis will show that the most intimate epistolary formulas are addressed to Ellen Nussey, considering that she was her closest friend and her main correspondent for twenty-four years (Smith 1995: 94–95). Moreover, Charlotte Brontë's degree of involvement exhibited in her correspondence will be approached from the angle of the gender of her correspondents to find out if her level of involvement differs in terms of female and male addressees.

Chapter 4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the methodology that was used to attain the results that can answer the research questions defined in Chapter 1. Section 4.2 first presents the letter material that was selected for this study and then, elaborates on Charlotte Brontë's social relationships with her private addressees. Section 4.3 focuses on the procedure that was used to examine the letters, regarding the degree of linguistic involvement that they reveal.

4.2 Corpus

In order to identify the degree of linguistic involvement reflected in Charlotte Brontë's intimate letters to her correspondents and to find out how the epistolary formulas of her letters varied with respect to the recipients, I examined 189 of her personal letters that were retrieved from the online database *InteLex Past Masters*. The collection of Charlotte Brontë's correspondence that is available through this database was compiled and edited by Margaret Smith in 1995. Throughout her life, Charlotte Brontë was involved in constant correspondence with her family members and friends. Her letters are divided into her juvenile letters (1829–1847) and her later letters written during the next four years (1848–1852). The focus of my study is particularly on the early letters that she had written to her intimate addressees before she became a well-known writer, which is why her letters of the second period are not included in my analysis. The first letter I selected for the analysis was addressed to her best friend Ellen Nussey, and dates from 11 May 1831, and the last one from her juvenile letters was written to the same addressee in December 1847. The letters from that period are mostly addressed to the people with whom she had a close relationship, that is Emily Jane Brontë, Branwell Brontë, Ellen Nussey and Henry Nussey. Charlotte Brontë was engaged in correspondence with some other people, namely Patrick Brontë

(her father), Elizabeth Branwell (her aunt) and a few more minor recipients, whose letters I added to the people mentioned to test Charlotte Brontë's involvement with them. It was important to consider that in order to present a fairly accurate account on Charlotte Brontë's degree of involvement with her addressees, the number of her letters needed to be enough to obtain a good quantity of linguistic markers of involvement to surface. Therefore, I decided that each sample of letter material per addressee that is analysed should at least contain one thousand words. In fact, only three of her seventeen personal correspondents, Emily Jane Brontë, Ellen Nussey and Henry Nussey, met these quantitative requirements. Considering that Charlotte's letters to her brother, Branwell, consist of 993 words, I decided to include her letters to him in the analysed corpus. To further clarify how the present letter corpus was compiled, special attention should be paid to Charlotte Brontë's letters to her French teacher, Constantin Heger. Four letters to him were sent by her between 1844 and 1845 but the fact that Charlotte Brontë wrote them in French made them irrelevant for the present study considering that all other letters of the analysed corpus were written in English. Thus, the letter corpus that I have compiled consists of 189 letters amount to 80,830 words in total (see Table 3).

Table 3 **Letter Material**

Letters by Charlotte Brontë 1832–1847: 80,830 words				
	Emily J. Brontë	Branwell Brontë	Ellen Nussey	Henry Nussey
Letters	8	2	174	5
Words	3,549	993	73,007	3,281

Furthermore, in order to provide an overall description of Charlotte Brontë's relationships with the selected addressees, the quality of their relationships is grouped into the following categories: family, intimate friends and friends. Thus, Branwell Brontë and Emily Jane Brontë represent her family

group of correspondents, Ellen Nussey is classified as an intimate friend and Henry Nussey as friend, but not as an intimate one. The difference between the last two categories is in the degree of closeness that is expected to be revealed in Charlotte Brontë's correspondence with her addressees. With her most intimate friends Charlotte Brontë felt free to express her genuine feelings and emotions, while in some of her letters to Ellen Nussey she could even raise critical questions related to such a sacred topic as religion. Once she even wrote the following to Ellen: "Your Ghastly Calvinistic doctrines are true—darkened in short by the very shadows of Spiritual Death! If Christian perfection be necessary to Salvation I shall never be saved" (5 and 6 December 1836, Smith 1995: 157). This extract implies that Charlotte Brontë was not in favour of some ideas established by the Anglican Church, and she was not afraid of discussing this controversial topic in her letters to Ellen Nussey. It is interesting to note that during her life Charlotte Brontë established intimate ties with two friends: Ellen Nussey and Mary Taylor. Regrettably, Mary Taylor destroyed almost all letters written by Charlotte Brontë as she considered that they were highly revealing with respect to Charlotte Brontë's true personality. According to Peters, Charlotte's letters to Mary Taylor would have affirmed the Victorian belief that "Charlotte Brontë was eccentric, crude, and not really a lady" (Peters 1975: 36). Ellen's brother, Henry, was also engaged in correspondence with Charlotte Brontë during many years, so I categorized him as a friend. Even though Charlotte and Henry shared common interests and concerns and they sometimes saw each other in the Nusseys' family house, the depth of their relationships was more superficial than between intimate friends. Therefore, Table 4 below presents Charlotte Brontë's selected addressees and her relationships with them, as well as some personal information about the selected recipients. For the classification of Charlotte Brontë's relationships with the above-mentioned addressees I drew upon the biographical material that is accessible in the *InteLex Past Masters* database and on her biography written by Margot Peters (1975).

Table 4 **Charlotte Brontë's relationships with selected addressees 1832–1847**

Addressee	Relationship to CB	Personal Information
Emily J. Brontë	Sister	Novel writer and poet
Branwell Brontë	Brother	Writer and painter
Ellen Nussey	Intimate friend	Landlady, religious woman
Henry Nussey	Friend	Church curate

4.3 Procedure

The preceding section has defined the material that was used to implement this study and described Charlotte Brontë's social relationships with selected addressees. This section aims to particularize two constituents of the procedure, i.e. data collection and corpus analysis. Furthermore, it explains what lexical tool was employed to analyse the corpus and how the data was examined with the objective to determine the degrees of Charlotte Brontë's involvement that is exhibited in her personal letters to the correspondents selected.

4.3.1 Data collection

To be able to detect with whom of the selected addressees she had the most intimate ties, I manually examined her out-letters to these recipients in terms of the opening and closing formulas that she utilized, studying successively each letter of the defined corpus. The reason why I decided to collect Charlotte Brontë's epistolary formulas manually rather than with the help of WordSmith Tools will be explained in the next section, 4.3.2, which is devoted to the corpus analysis. Subsequently, in order to identify the degree of Charlotte Brontë's linguistic involvement, I analysed her letters on the use of particular linguistic markers of involvement with the help of WordSmith Tools. Furthermore, it should be considered that one's particular choice of words in epistolary formulas, for example the use of affectionate address terms, diminutives, words of

endearments and nicknames, can serve as an indicator of a more intimate and trusting relationship between correspondents. That is why it is important to analyse Charlotte Brontë's epistolary formulas first as they provide linguistic means for the description of her relationships with the addressees. Therefore, my first step in the data collection procedure was to search for Charlotte Brontë's epistolary formulas. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 in the appendix below present an overview of her opening and closing formulas to her selected addressees for this study. Some examples of her opening (1, 2, 3) and closing (4, 5, 6) formulas are demonstrated below:

1. Mine bonnie love, I was as glad of your letter as tongue can express: it is a real, genuine pleasure to hear from home…

   (Charlotte Brontë to Emily J Brontë: July 1839, Smith 1995: 196)

2. Dear B

   I hear you have written a letter to me…

   (Charlotte Brontë to Branwell Brontë: May 1832, Smith 1995: 317)

3. My dear Sir

   Before answering your letter, I might have spent a long time in consideration of its subject…

   (Charlotte Brontë to Henry Nussey: March 1839, Smith 1995: 186)

4. I remain/ Yours respectfully/ C Brontë

   (Charlotte Brontë to Henry Nussey: May 1841, Smith 1995: 257)

5. Believe me to remain/ You affect. friend/ C. Brontë

   (Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey: May 1831, Smith 1995: 111)

6. Adieu, my Sweetest Ellen/ I am Ever yours/ Charlotte

   (Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey: January 1833, Smith 1995: 122)

It should be noted here that even though the analysed corpus consists of 189 letters written by Charlotte Brontë, the number of occurrences of her letter-writing formulas, listed in Tables 5.1 and 5.2, does not coincide with the total number of the selected letters. This inconsistency in numbers may be explained by the fact that in some of the analysed letters opening and/or closing formulas were missing. It is interesting to note that Tieken-Boon van Ostade discovered that Jane Austin did not always use closing formulas either while writing to her relatives and close friends (2014: 69). It is also worth noticing that by the enormous variety in the formulas in my tables in the appendix it appears that Charlotte Brontë varied much more in her use of epistolary formulas than Jane Austen did. In view of the above, I suppose that individual letter-writing practices might vary in terms of epistolary formulas when letters were sent to very close addressees like intimate friends and family members. Thus, I believe it may explain why Charlotte Brontë omitted sometimes the use of epistolary formulas.

Secondly, to be able to detect the degree of Charlotte Brontë's involvement that reflects her interest on the topics dealt with in her letters, I examined her letters with the objective to find linguistic markers representing this type of involvement. Hence, I explored particular evidential verbs, as follows: *think*, *know*, *believe*, *suppose*, *you know*, *find*, *(am) sure* and *doubt* along with a set of degree adverbs, in particular *very*, *so*, *quite*, *pretty* and *really*. In the case of evidential verbs I examined all the forms of the above-listed verbs, including all their forms, including, for instance, *think, thinks, thought, thinking*. Furthermore, it must be noted that the verbs included into my analysis express the meaning of evidentiality which is the way of expressing writer's or speaker's attitude regarding the information he or she is talking or writing about (Chafe 1985: 118). Therefore, in the case of the verb *find* I discarded some of its occurrences which have the literal meaning of finding something or someone, for example: "Write to me as often as you can find time" (Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey: June

1838, Smith 1995: 180). Examples (7) – (10) below demonstrate Charlotte Brontë's use of evidential verbs and her use of degree adverbs is illustrated with instances 11, 12 and 13 (emphasis added by myself).

7. I think perhaps we shall find that the best plan will be for papa to write a letter to him by and bye, but not yet.

   (Charlotte Brontë to Emily J Brontë: November 1841, Smith 1995: 274)

8. The fact is when the letter came Ellen was staying with me, and I was so fully occupied in talking to her, that I had no time to think of writing to others—this is no great compliment, but it is no insult either—you know Ellen's worth—you know how seldom I see her.

   (Charlotte Brontë to Henry Nussey: May 1840, Smith 1995: 220)

9. As usual I address my weekly letter to you—because to you I find the most to say.

   (Charlotte Brontë to Branwell Brontë: May 1832, Smith 1995: 113)

10. I am sure you will 'have' thought me very remiss in not sending my promised letter long before now, but I have a sufficient and a very melancholy excuse in an accident that befell our old faithful Tabby a few days after my return home.

    (Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey: December 1836, Smith 1995: 159)

11. I am really very well. I am so sleepy that I can write no more.

(Charlotte Brontë to Emily J Brontë: June 1839, Smith 1995: 193)

12. …when you are quite alone—quite settled and quiet—somewhere about the latter end of Summer or the beginning of Autumn—I will if all be well—make shift to toddle over and see you.

    (Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey: April 1845, Smith 1995: 389)

13. She is very comfortable and wants nothing. As she is near we see her very often—In the meantime Emily and I are sufficiently busy as you may suppose.

(Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey: December 1839, Smith 1995: 207)

Thirdly, evidence of self and interpersonal involvement were searched for based on the use of certain linguistic markers, like first person (*I, me, my, we*) and second person (*you, your*) singular and plural pronouns respectively. Charlotte Brontë's use of these pronouns is demonstrated in examples (14) – (16) below:

14. I am most exceedingly obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in seeking up my things and sending them all right.

(Charlotte Brontë to Emily J Brontë: June 1839, Smith 1995: 191)

15. I feel exceedingly anxious to know how, and in what state you arrived at home after your long, and (I should think very fatiguing journey.

(Charlotte Brontë to Branwell Brontë: May 1832, Smith 1995: 113)

16. I take advantage of the earliest opportunity to thank you for the letter you favoured me with last week and to apologize for having so long neglected to write to you…

(Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey: May 1831, Smith 1995: 110)

4.3.2 Corpus analysis

My first step in the corpus analysis procedure was searching for Charlotte Brontë's letter-writing formulas. As described above, I looked for her epistolary formulas manually for the reason that she used not only well-established opening and closing formulas, discussed in Section 3.4, but also her own creations of

epistolary formulas. For example, one of her letters to Emily Jane Brontë, written in July 1839 (Smith 1995: 196), starts with the opening formula "Mine bonnie love" incorporated in the main text and ends with the word *Coraggio* meaning "courage" in Italian, which, I suppose, represents her own variant of the closing formula. That is why in order to be certain that I have not missed any of her letter-writing formulas, I decided to examine them manually studying thoroughly each of her letters of my corpus.

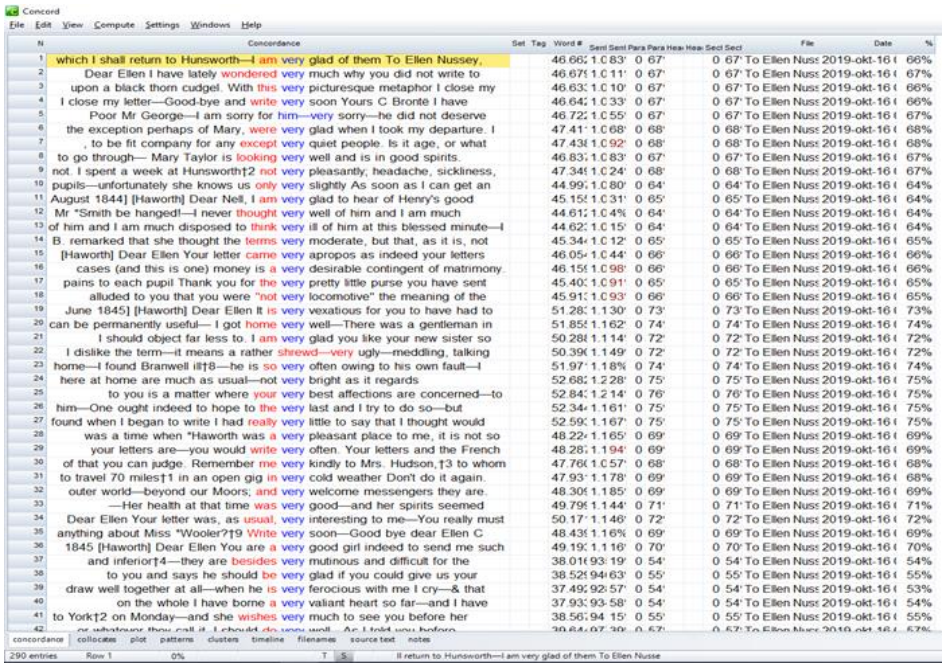
In order to analyse the corpus that was described in section 4.2 with respect to Charlotte Brontë's use of involvement markers, I made use of the lexical analysis software program WordSmith Tools. WordSmith Tools is a suite of programs, developed by Mike Scott and Tim Johns, which allows us to analyse different texts or corpora and to look at how words behave in text. This software consists of three major sub-programs, namely Concord, WordList and KeyWord. To perform my statistical analysis of this study I used two of these sub-programs, WordList and Concord.

Secondly, to be able to identify which words appeared most in the corpus, I compiled a WordList for the whole corpus. Based on this WordList, most and least frequently occurring words in Charlotte Brontë's personal letters were established and these were used to provide statistical data on her language in section 2.3.1. Thirdly, for the purpose of establishing which linguistic markers of involvement occurred most frequently in her letters to each of four selected addresses (Emily Jane Brontë, Branwell Brontë, Ellen Nussey and Henry Nussey), four WordLists were compiled.

Fourthly, I performed concordance searches to look for the linguistic markers of involvement that were described in the previous section, 4.2.1. Employing the concordance search I was able to see the sentences in which keywords (involvement markers in my case) appear and calculate the frequency of these keywords per 1,000 words. An example that shows the concordance

search of *very* in the WorldList compiled of Charlotte's letters to Ellen Nussey is presented below in Figure 1.

Figure 1 **Concordance search for the word *very*:**



A concordance search was performed for every search-word which I listed in the previous section, 4.2.1, as follows: (1) *think*, *know*, *believe*, *suppose*, *you know*, *find*, *(am) sure and doubt*; (2) *very*, *so*, *quite*, *pretty and really*; (3) *I*, *me*, *my*, *we*, *you*, *your*.

Following the examination of Charlotte Brontë's epistolary formulas and the occurrences of the linguistic markers of involvement, I analysed my corpus aiming to detect a possible correlation between her use of the linguistic markers of involvement together with her epistolary formulas and the nature of the relationships between Charlotte Brontë and her addressees. The objective of my analysis is to discover whether Charlotte Brontë's use of the linguistic markers of involvement together with her letter-writing formula can serve as a reliable indicator of the nature of relationships and degree of closeness between her and her addressees. The results of the described analyses were organized in tables and further presented and explained in Chapter 5. It should be considered here that all

the occurrences of linguistic markers of involvement in Charlotte Brontë's letters were automatically normalised per 1,000 words by the program WordSmith Tools. However, in order to further compare my findings with Sairio who did the same, I normalised my obtained data manually one more time per 10,000 words as Sairio used normalization per 10,000 in her work. The example of the normalisation of my data per 10,000 words will be presented further in Chapter 5 when all the frequencies of the linguistic markers of involvement (evidential verbs, degree adverbs and first and second person pronouns) in Charlotte Brontë's letters analysed are calculated.

Chapter 5 Results

5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces and describes the findings derived from the analyses explained in the preceding chapter. It is organized as follows: firstly, section 5.2 documents and discusses the findings regarding opening and closing formulas of Charlotte Brontë's sent letters to the selected addresses. Secondly, section 5.3 provides the findings concerning her use of linguistic markers of involvement. Moreover, section 5.3 is subdivided into five subsections: the first provides the results for Charlotte Brontë's use of evidential verbs, the second presents the findings with regard to her usage of degree adverbs, the third discusses the overall results for Charlotte Brontë's use of first and second person pronouns, the fourth discusses the findings in relation to her male and female addressees, and finally, the fifth subsection reports on Charlotte Brontë's total degree of involvement. Additionally, this section also compares Charlotte Brontë's total involvement in her correspondence to that of Samuel Johnson since Sairio's study on involvement in his letters represents the mpdel for the present work. The last section of this chapter, 5.4, presents an overall discussion of the results by

reviewing Charlotte Brontë's use of the involvement markers together with her epistolary formulas.

5.2 Charlotte Brontë's epistolary formulas

This section identifies Charlotte Brontë's relationship with the selected for this study addressees in terms of her use of epistolary formulas. It has already been discussed in section 3.4 that opening and closing formulas may serve as an important indicator of the nature of a tie between writer and addressee. Therefore, in order to obtain deeper insight into Charlotte Brontë's relationship with Emily Jane Brontë, Branwell Brontë, Ellen Nussey and Henry Nussey it is crucial to present and discuss the findings for the opening and closing formulas in her out-letters. The full list of her letter-writing formulas is documented in the appended Tables 5.1 and 5.2.

The most intimate variants of Charlotte Brontë's opening formulas are found in her letters to her best friend, Ellen Nussey, and her sister, Emily Jane Brontë; some examples are: "My dear Ellen", "My dearest Ellen", "Mine bonnie love" and "Dear Lavinia". According to Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014: 66), the omission of opening formulas in letters may be considered as the closest indicator of a writer's intimacy with his or her recipient. Therefore, it is important to mention that Charlotte Brontë did not include opening formulas in some of her letters to Ellen Nussey and also in one letter addressed to Emily Jane Brontë. Thus, it confirms that their relationships were, indeed, highly intimate. Writing to her brother, she employed opening formulas like "Dear Branwell" and "Dear B" which are, according to the list of hierarchically organized opening forms (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2009: 123), the least formal version, so, these address terms involve a more familiar relationship between letter writer and addressee. It is interesting to mention that Tieken-Boon van Ostade notes that Jane Austen changes the opening formula "Dear Sir" to "My dear Sir" in some letters addressed to her male correspondents whose relationships became more intimate

(2014: 67). It is of interest to notice that Charlotte Brontë used the same opening formulas to her recipient, Henry Nussey, but in the reverse order: her first letter starts with the opening "My dear Sir" and all subsequent ones begin with "Dear Sir" only. The reason for this change is not known, though it seems to be connected with the fact that Charlotte Brontë's first letter to him contained her negative response to his marriage proposal (Smith 1995: 186–187).

According to Tieken-Boon van Ostade, closing formulas allow the letter writer to use more variation and thus they provide more information on the relationships between writer and recipient (2014: 69). Charlotte Brontë utilized different closing formulas to various correspondents; however, there are some similarities between her closing formulas to Ellen Nussey and Emily Jane Brontë. For example, she often finishes her letters to them with the concise closing form *Good bye* and that, as in Jane Austen's case (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2014: 71), could reflect a higher degree of intimacy with her correspondents. It is worth noticing that Charlotte Brontë used the enormous number of her own variants of closing formulas in her letters addressed to Ellen Nussey. I believe that some of Charlotte Brontë's closing formulas to Ellen Nussey do indicate high level of affection reflected in the selection of words that she used in these formulas, for example: "Adieu my Sweetest Ellen/ I am Ever yours", "Your loving child" or "I am dear Nell/ Yours in spirit and flash". The word *affectionate*, which also signals greater closeness between writer and addressee, is found in Charlotte Brontë's closing formulas to Ellen Nussey and Branwell Brontë only. Out of Charlotte Brontë's letters to these four correspondents, the most formal versions of closing formulas, like "Believe me, yours respectfully" were addressed to Henry Nussey.

My analysis of Charlotte Brontë's opening and closing formulas showed that the most intimate variants are found in her letters to Ellen Nussey and Emily Jane Brontë. Charlotte Brontë's abovementioned formulas found in the letters addressed to Branwell Brontë also reflect some degree of closeness between

them. It is important to take into consideration that it was difficult for me to identify Charlotte Brontë's relationship with her brother because of the shortage of her out-letters to him in my corpus. In fact, there were only two letters in the *InteLex Past Master's* collection. I believe that she wrote much more letters to him but that only two of them remained for the reason that in one of her letters to Branwell Brontë she wrote the following lines: "Dear Branwell/ As usual I address my weekly letter to you—because to you I find the most to say" (Smith 1995: 113). It seems that Branwell did not keep Charlotte Brontë's letters addressed to him. Finally, her opening and closing formulas written to Henry Nussey reveal the most formal and least intimate ties among these addressees. It is important to notice that my identification of the nature of relationship between Charlotte Brontë and her selected addressees confirms what the biographical literature has said about their relationships (Peters 1975; Smith 1995).

5.3 Involvement in Charlotte Brontë's letters

5.3.1 Evidential verbs

Charlotte Brontë's overall use of the evidential verbs *think*, *know*, *believe*, *suppose*, *find*, *am sure* and *doubt* is presented in Table 6. The normalized per 1,000 words figures in the table report on how frequently Charlotte Brontë utilized each of the evidential verbs in relation to the provided addressees. Furthermore, the absolute frequencies that are documented in the parentheses indicate how many times Charlotte Brontë used these evidential verbs in the letters to these recipients. The total frequencies of the evidential verbs for each of the addressee are also demonstrated in this table.

Table 6 **Charlotte Brontë's use of evidential verbs**

Involvement markers	*to EJB*	*to BB*	*to EN*	*to HN*
think	3.41 (12)	6.23 (6)	3.85 (269)	6.94 (22)
know	1.42 (5)	5.19 (5)	2.87 (201)	3.47 (11)
believe	0.57 (2)	2.08 (2)	1.02 (71)	1.26 (4)
suppose	0.57 (2)	0	0.4 (28)	0.32 (1)
find	2.27 (8)	1.04 (1)	0.78 (55)	0.63 (2)
(am) sure	0	0	0.19 (13)	0
doubt	0.28 (1)	0	0.49 (34)	1.26 (4)
Total	8.52 (30)	14.54 (14)	9.6 (671)	13.88 (44)

All frequencies are normalised per 1,000 and absolute frequencies are given in parenthesis. EJB=Emily Jane Brontë, BB= Branwell Brontë, EN= Ellen Nussey, HN=Henry Nussey.

Table 6 indicates that Charlotte Brontë was more predisposed to using evidential verbs when writing to her male correspondents rather than her female ones, namely her brother Branwell Brontë and her friend Henry Nussey. The highest number of evidential verbs occurs in Charlotte Brontë's letters to her brother. The lowest frequency of the examined verbs is found in Charlotte Brontë's out-letters to her sister, Emily Jane Brontë. The frequency of evidential verbs that is found in Charlotte Brontë's correspondence with Ellen Nussey is higher than that of Emily Jane Brontë; nevertheless, it is lower than the those detected in Charlotte Brontë's letters to Branwell Brontë and Henry Nussey.

Furthermore, Table 6 shows that Charlotte Brontë had a tendency to utilize the verb *think* more often than the other analysed verbs. Table 6 also demonstrates that her least frequently utilized variant was *(am) sure*: she used it only thirteen times in her letters to Ellen Nussey, which is twenty times less often than

Charlotte Brontë's use of *think* in the letters addressed to the same addressee. It should be noticed that Charlotte Brontë never exploited *(am) sure* when writing to Emily Jane Brontë, Branwell Brontë or Henry Nussey.

5.2.2 Degree adverbs

The use of degree adverbs, in particular *very*, *so*, *quite*, *pretty* and *really*, as a linguistic marker of Charlotte Brontë's involvement with her addressees is displayed in Table 7 below.

Table 7 **Charlotte Brontë's use of degree adverbs**

Involvement markers	*to EJB*	*to BB*	*to EN*	*to HN*
very	3.69 (13)	6.23 (6)	4.15 (290)	1.58 (5)
so	3.41 (12)	2.08 (2)	4.41 (308)	3.15 (10)
quite	0.85 (3)	2.08 (2)	0.82 (57)	0
pretty	0	1.04 (1)	0.41 (29)	0
really	1.42 (5)	0	0.47 (33)	0
Total	9.37 (33)	11.43 (11)	10.26 (717)	4.73 (15)

All frequencies are normalised per 1,000 and absolute frequencies are given in parenthesis. EJB=Emily Jane Brontë, BB= Branwell Brontë, EN= Ellen Nussey, HN=Henry Nussey.

Table 7 demonstrates that the highest frequency of degree adverbs can be found in Charlotte Brontë's out-letters to her only brother, Branwell Brontë. The lowest frequency of degree adverbs surfaced in Charlotte Brontë's letters to her friend, Henry Nussey. The frequencies that occurred in Charlotte's correspondence with her best friend, Ellen Nussey, and her sister, Emily Jane Brontë, are higher in comparison with that for Henry Nussey; however, they are less frequent in

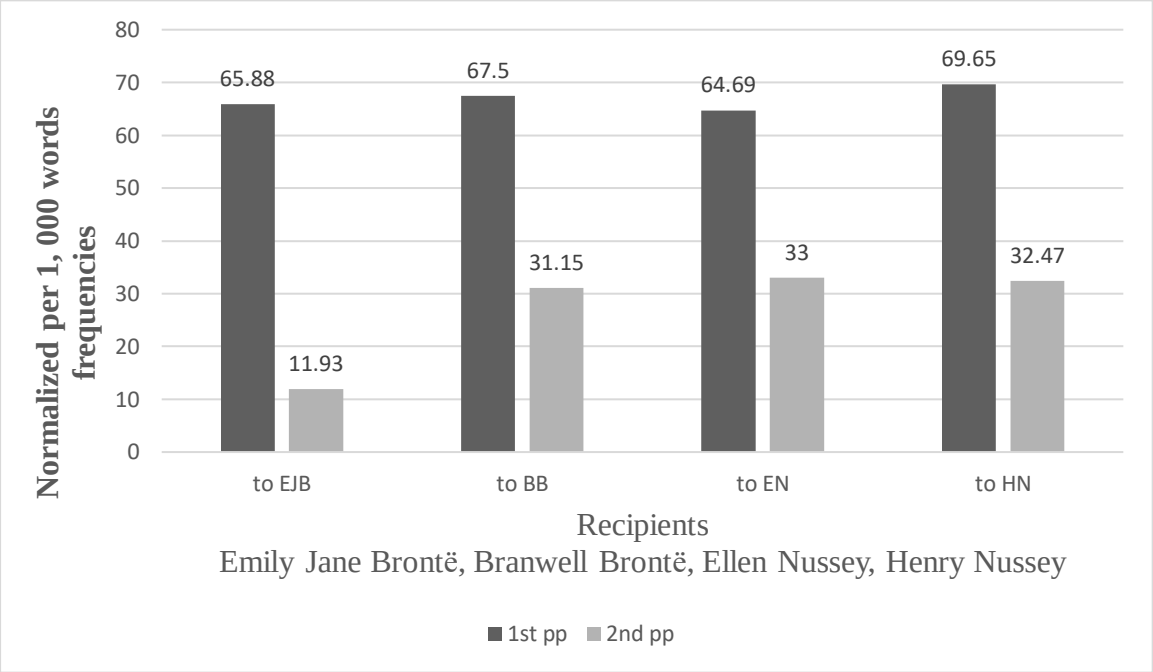
relation to the frequency that has been detected in Charlotte Brontë's letters to her brother.

Additionally, Table 7 reveals that Charlotte Brontë preferred to use two particular degree adverbs, namely *so* and *very*, over *quite*, *pretty* and *really*. In relation to the adverb *very* it is worth noting that Janine Barchas (2007) wrote an essay devoted to Jane Austen's use of *very* in her novel *Emma* (1815). Her essay argues that the word *very* in *Emma* conveys the linguistic fingerprint of Austen's peculiar style due to the high frequency of its occurrences (2007: 304–305). Taking into consideration Charlotte Brontë's frequent use of the adverb *so* it is important to mention that Coates in her book *Woman, Men and Language* (1986) also notes that *so* is used highly often by women. It is interesting to notice that the two degree adverbs that she used the least often were *pretty* and *really*, though the frequency of *really* is only slightly higher than that of *pretty*.

5.2.3 First and Second Person pronouns

A graphic image of Charlotte Brontë's total use of first (*I*, *me*, *my*, *we*) and second (*you*, *your*) person pronouns is summarized in Figure 2 below. The normalized frequencies per 1,000 words show how often she utilized the abovementioned pronouns in her personal letters to the four selected addresses discussed in section 2.4.

Figure 2 **Personal pronouns in Charlotte Brontë's letters**



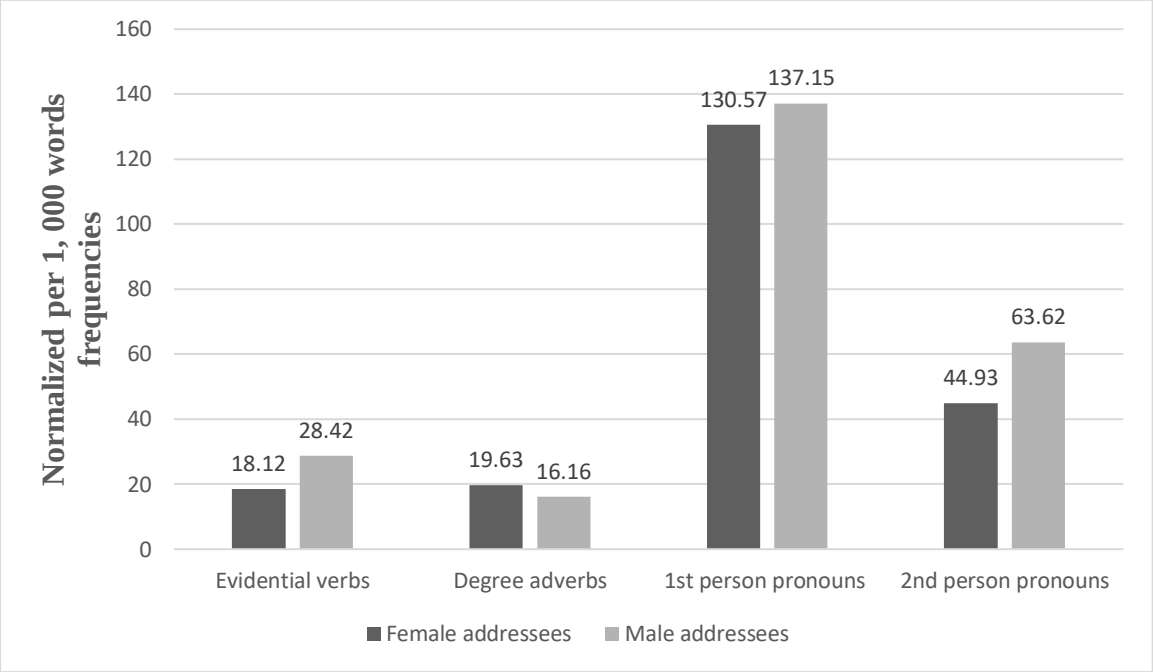
The figures presented in Figure 2 indicate that Charlotte Brontë's personal involvement is more or less the same for all the recipients analysed. Even though the highest frequency of first person pronouns can be found in Charlotte Brontë's correspondence with Henry Nussey, the frequencies for her three other addressees are not far behind and do not vary greatly. The figures for her interpersonal involvement are higher in her letters to Branwell Brontë, Ellen Nussey and Henry Nussey. Those figures for Charlotte Brontë's interpersonal involvement are the lowest in her letters to her sister, Emily Jane Brontë. The scores for Charlotte Brontë's use of second person pronouns are the highest in her letters addressed to Ellen Nussey; however, the difference between this frequency and that for Charlotte's letters to Henry Nussey is again very small. It is interesting to note that Charlotte Brontë's frequencies regarding her use of first person pronouns in comparison with those for the second person pronouns is always higher for all the recipients analysed. Thus, Charlotte Brontë's overall use of the abovementioned

pronouns shows a more straightforward picture which indicates that her personal involvement with her addressees as compared with her involvement on the part of her recipients was constantly greater.

5.2.4 Involvement between male and female addressees

This section presents the findings with respect to Charlotte Brontë's degree of involvement from the perspective of female and male addressees. In view of the fact that Charlotte Brontë's letters analysed were addressed to both female and male recipients it may be the case that her degree of involvement in correspondence varied depending on the gender of her correspondents. It has already been discussed above, in section 3.3.2, that some linguists consider that the language of women and men differs and that women tend to use degree adverbs more often than men (Jespersen 1922: 250; Lakoff 1975; 53–54; Coates 1986: 18–19, 112). Considering the fact that degree adverbs belong to the category of linguistic markers of involvement it may be the case that Charlotte Brontë used different numbers of degree adverbs while writing to female or male addressees. Therefore, Figure 3 represents Charlotte Brontë's degree of involvement from the perspective of a gender distinction.

Figure 3 **Charlotte Brontë's male and female addressees**



The data in Figure 3 shows that Charlotte Brontë's degree of involvement that is revealed in her use of evidential verbs and first and second person pronouns is higher in her correspondence with male addressees. However, it is important to consider that the particular part of her involvement that is reflected through her use of degree adverbs is higher in the correspondence with her female recipients. Furthermore, the fact that Charlotte Brontë used more degree adverbs in her letters addressed to women rather than in the ones written to men is interesting in the light of what Coates (1986) says about women using more *so* and *such dearly*. Thus, in terms of Charlotte Brontë's use of degree adverbs, it appears that the gender of the addressee plays a role here too. In total, the level of involvement in Charlotte Brontë's correspondence is higher in her letters addressed to male addressees in relation to female ones.

5.2.5 Total involvement

The three preceding sections have presented the findings regarding three categories of linguistic markers of involvement successively, in particular, evidential verbs, degree adverbs and first and second person pronouns. Subsequently, to be able to determine the total degree of Charlotte Brontë's involvement between her and her addressees all the obtained results on involvement have been added together. The total frequencies of evidential verbs, degree adverbs and first and second person pronouns to the four selected addressees are presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8 **Total involvement in Charlotte Brontë's letters**

Involvement markers	*to EJB*	*to BB*	*to EN*	*to HN*
Evidential verbs total	8.52 (30)	14.54 (14)	9.6 (671)	13.88 (44)
Degree adverbs total	9.37 (33)	11.43 (11)	10.26 (717)	4.73 (15)
First and Second person pronouns total	77.81 (274)	98.65 (95)	97.69 (6,830)	102.12 (324)
Total degree of involvement	95.7 (337)	124.62 (120)	117.55 (1,394)	120.73 (708)

All frequencies are normalised per 1,000 and absolute frequencies are given in parenthesis. EJB=Emily Jane Brontë, BB= Branwell Brontë, EN= Ellen Nussey, HN=Henry Nussey.

The overall data in Table 8 indicates that Charlotte Brontë's degrees of involvement that are revealed in her correspondence are similar between the analysed addressees. The greatest degree of involvement has been detected in Charlotte Brontë's letters to her brother, Branwell Brontë, but Henry Nussey's and Ellen Nussey's involvement frequencies were not far behind, while Emily Jane Brontë's frequency was the lowest.

I have already mentioned in Chapter 3 that the model of this work is Sairio's study on involvement (2005). Hence, I decided to look at Charlotte Brontë's overall involvement frequencies together with Samuel Johnson's total involvement frequencies in order to examine whose total degree of involvement in correspondence was higher. Considering that Sairio examined Dr Johnson's involvement with regard to his personal correspondents and that she looked at his letters addressed to family members and friends, Dr. Johnson's case is the perfect variant for my comparison. It should be taken into account that Sairio normalised all the frequencies per 10,000 words and that is why to be able to compare her results with mine on the same frequency scale, I adapted the results for Charlotte Brontë's to those of Samuel Johnson and normalised them per 10,000. The following example demonstrates how I normalised per 10,000 words the overall involvement frequency in Charlotte Brontë's letters to her sister, Emily Jane Brontë: 95.7 (frequency per 1,000 words) is multiplied by ten and it is equal to 957 (frequency per 10,000 words). The correctness of the obtained result can be verified by the following proportion: 95.7 divided by 1000 is equal to 957 divided by 10000 (95.7/1000 = 957/10000 = 0.0957). Therefore, Table 9 below shows the total frequencies on involvement for both Samuel Johnson and Charlotte Brontë.

Table 9 **Total involvement in Charlotte Brontë's and Samuel Johnson's letters**

Samuel Johnson's total involvement				
to HT	*to Mr T*	*to QT*	*to LP*	*to EA*
1020.8	1234.3	775.4	1283.6	1239.5
Charlotte Brontë's total involvement				
to EJB	*to BB*	*to EN*	*to HN*	
957	1246.2	1175.5	1207.3	
Samuel Johnson's total involvement average=1388.4				
Charlotte Brontë's total involvement average=1146.5				

All frequencies are normalised per 10,000. S. Johnson's recipients: HT=Hester Thrale, Mr T=Henry Thrale, QT=Queeney Thrale, LP=Lucy Porter, EA=Elizabeth Aston; C. Brontë's recipients: EJB=Emily Jane Brontë, BB= Branwell Brontë, EN= Ellen Nussey, HN=Henry Nussey.

It is interesting to note that the average of the overall involvement in Dr Johnson's correspondence is higher than that of Charlotte Brontë. Furthermore, Table 9 indicates that Samuel Johnson most involved letters were addressed to Lucy Porter and they displayed greater frequency of the involvement markers in comparison with the figures for Charlotte Brontë's most involved letters to Branwell Brontë. If compare the lowest involvement frequency in Dr Johnson's and Charlotte Brontë's correspondence, Table 9 shows that the figures are higher in the out-letters of Charlotte Brontë addressed to her sister, Emily Jane Brontë rather than in Dr. Johnson's correspondence addressed to his friend, Queeney Thrale. However, the overall data has revealed that Charlotte Brontë was less involved in her correspondence with her selected addressees than Samuel Johnson with his private recipients. In fact, the degree of Charlotte Brontë's

involvement in her correspondence is 1.2 times lower than that of Samuel Johnson.

5.4 Concluding remarks

This section presents the overall discussion on Charlotte Brontë's use of involvement markers and her use of epistolary formulas with regard to the same set of addressees. First of all, it is important to mention that the findings do not show a straightforward picture with respect to the nature of her relationships with the analysed addressees. The findings based on Charlotte Brontë's use of linguistic markers of involvement reveal the following information: (1) the degree of Charlotte Brontë's involvement in her letters is quite similar between three addressees, namely Branwell Brontë, Henry Nussey and Ellen Nussey. (2) The highest degree of involvement has been found in her correspondence with her only brother Branwell Brontë. (3) The lowest degree of involvement has been found in Charlotte Brontë's letters to her younger sister, Emily Jane Brontë. (4) Charlotte Brontë's overall involvement in correspondence with male recipients is slightly higher in comparison to her letters to female addressees. However, it is important to note that Charlotte Brontë's total use of degree adverbs is higher in her letters to female recipients.

In terms of Charlotte Brontë's use of epistolary formulas the results are as follows: (1) the most affectionate variants of epistolary formulas are addressed to Ellen Nussey and Emily Jane Brontë and (2) the most formal variants of epistolary formulas are found in her letters to Henry Nussey. (3) Charlotte Brontë's epistolary formulas to her brother are quite intimate and reveal a certain degree of closeness though I cannot fully rely on this datum for the reason of the insufficient number of her letter to him in my corpus.

To conclude, this chapter has presented and reviewed the results based on the analyses of Charlotte Brontë's use of involvement markers and also her epistolary formulas for her abovementioned addressees. Consequently, based on the result that have been obtained, the following Chapter 6 will present the answers to the established in Chapter 1 research question and then it will draw the overall conclusion of this study.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The present work aimed to investigate the use of linguistic markers of involvement in the personal correspondence of a writer from the Late Modern English period and it examined how usage of these markers can serve as a relevant indicator of the degree of intimacy between letter-writer and his or her addressee. My corpus comprises 189 personal letters from 1831 to 1847 written by Charlotte Brontë to her family members and friends. The analysis of her correspondence is performed through the examination of three groups of linguistic markers of involvement, namely evidential verbs (*think*, *know*, *believe*, *suppose*, *find*, (*am*) *sure*, *doubt*), degree adverbs (*very*, *so*, *quite*, *pretty*, *really*) and first (*I*, *me*, *my*, *we*) and second person (*you*, *your*) pronouns. Additionally, Charlotte Brontë's epistolary formulas used to address selected for this study recipients were also analysed in order to determine whether the nature of the relationships between her and her addressees can be as well reflected in her use of letter-writing formulas. It should be considered that even though the main idea of this work is to study and further identify Charlotte Brontë's degree of involvement in her correspondence, the knowledge on what particular opening and closing formulas she used when writing to the selected addressees can provide a better understanding of Charlotte Brontë's relationship with her recipients. Thus, the

notion of linguistic involvement as an indicator of the closeness between two people led to the establishment of the following research questions:

Can Charlotte Brontë's level of involvement in her letters to a selected number of recipients be exhibited through her usage of particular linguistic markers, namely: degree adverbs, evidential verbs and first and second person pronouns?

Does Charlotte Brontë's degree of involvement vary regarding the nature of her relationship with her addressees?

Which linguistic markers of involvement are dominant in Charlotte Brontë's private letters?

Does Charlotte Brontë's degree of linguistic involvement in her personal correspondence differ in relation to female or male addressees?

Before providing the answers to the defined research questions, the summary of the main findings of the study will be presented following the same order as the chapter 5. The key findings for Charlotte Brontë's letter-writing formulas and her use of involvement markers will be provided in section 6.2 Firstly, I will review Charlotte Brontë's letter-writing formulas in section 6.2.1. Secondly, I will summarize my findings with regard to her use of linguistic markers of involvement: evidential verbs (*think, know, believe, suppose, find,* (*am*) *sure* and *doubt*), degree adverbs (*very, so, quite, pretty* and *really*) and first (*I, me, my, we*) and second person (*you, your*) pronouns in sections 6.2.2–6.2.4. Furthermore, I will also discuss Charlotte Brontë's use of involvement markers between her male and female addressees in section 6.2.5. Subsequently, I will provide the answers to the research questions and discuss the complications of this study in section 6.3. Finally, this chapter will end with a brief conclusion in section 6.4.

6.2 Key findings

6.2.1 Charlotte Brontë's letter-writing formulas

My analysis of Charlotte Brontë's use of epistolary formulas has shown that the most affectionate variants of the above-mentioned formulas have been found in her letters to her sister, Emily Jane Brontë, and Ellen Nussey, her closest friend. Even though Charlotte Brontë's letter-writing formulas to the four selected addressees reflect some degree of affection between her and her correspondents, the most formal variants and less intimate variants of the epistolary formulas analysed are found in her letters to her friend, Henry Nussey. However, it should be considered that all the epistolary formulas analysed suggest friendly relations between Charlotte Brontë and these correspondents.

I already discussed in section 5.2 that I found it difficult to identify Charlotte Brontë's relationship with her brother as I had only two of her letters addressed to him in my corpus. However, the strong affection that existed between her and her brother and also her sisters can be deduced from the text of one of her letters written to Henry Nussey in May 1841: "…my home is humble and unattractive to strangers but to me it contains what I shall find nowhere else in the world— the profound, and intense affection which brothers and sisters feel for each other when their minds are cast in the same mould" (9 May 1841, Smith 1995: 247). Thus, it seems that Charlotte Brontë felt strongly attached to her sisters: Emily Jane Brontë and Anne Brontë as well as to her only brother, Branwell Brontë. Moreover, it should be noticed that my identification of Charlotte Brontë's relationships with her addressees with respect to her use of epistolary formulas confirms the information provided in the biographical literature that is devoted to Charlotte Brontë (Peters 1975; Smith 1995).

6.2.2 Evidential verbs

Charlotte Brontë's use of evidential verbs in relation to her addressees demonstrates that the highest frequency (14.54 per 1,000 words) occurred in her letters to her brother, while it is slightly lower for Henry Nussey with a frequency of 13.88 per 1,000 words. The lowest frequencies for Charlotte Brontë's use of evidential verbs are found in her letters to Emily Jane Brontë (8.52 per 1,000 words) and Ellen Nussey (9.6 per 1,000 words). Furthermore, the frequencies of evidential verbs do reveal one interesting feature with respect to Charlotte Brontë's language that invites my comment: when all the frequencies of evidential verbs were calculated, her most frequently used evidential verb *think* surfaced. It is interesting to note that Samuel Johnson (Sairio 2005: 26) and Jane Austen (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2014: 156) also preferred to use *think* over other evidential verbs (e.g., *know*, *believe*, *suppose*, *find*, etc.) when writing to the personal addressees. It is worth noticing that Sairio (2005) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014) discovered that the recipients' age was the most significant separating aspect that influenced on the number of the evidential verbs used in the letters of Dr. Johnson and Jane Austen correspondingly. Although Sairio found that Samuel Johnson used more evidential verbs towards addressees of his own generation, Tieken-Boon van Ostade discovered that Jane Austen, in contrast, utilized more such evidential verb phrases as, *I am sure* and *I daresay*, in her letters to young recipients. Even though it would be interesting to know whether Charlotte Brontë's use of evidential verbs varied towards correspondents of different generations, I have not been able to do so for the reason that all the analysed Charlotte Brontë's out-letters were addressed to correspondents of one and the same generation.

6.2.3 Degree adverbs

The degree adverbs *very, so, quite, pretty* and *really* similarly indicate a letter-writer's involvement with the topic of the text in the case of my study. However, the overall frequency figures are higher for Charlotte Brontë's use of evidential verbs (46.54 per 1,000 words) than those for the degree adverbs (35.8 per 1,000 words). It is interesting to notice that Sairio (2005: 27) discovered that the two most frequently used degree adverbs in Dr. Johnson's letters were *so* and *very*. Moreover, the same degree adverbs occurred most often in Jane Austen's personal correspondence (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2014: 154). My findings for Charlotte Brontë's use of the abovementioned degree adverbs also show the highest frequencies for these two degree adverbs, *so* and *very*. The overall frequency of *very* and *so* is respectively 15.65 per 1,000 words and 13.05 per 1,000 words, which indicates that *very* was the most popular degree adverb in Charlotte Brontë's letters. The rest of the degree adverbs analysed, namely *quite, pretty* and *really*, did not occur in Charlotte Brontë's correspondence very often and moreover, some of these degree adverbs never appear in her letters to some of her addressees. For example, Charlotte Brontë never used such degree adverbs as *quite, pretty* and *really* in her letters to Henry Nussey. The least commonly used degree adverb in Charlotte Brontë's letters was *really* with the total frequency 1.89 per 1,000 words which is eight times less than the frequency of *very*.

6.2.4. First and Second Person pronouns

The figures for Charlotte Brontë's use of first person singular and plural pronouns (*I, me, my, we*) in her letters are the highest in comparison to her use of other linguistic markers of involvement like evidential verbs, degree adverbs and second person pronouns. Thus, it reveals that Charlotte Brontë's letters were more

self-involved than recipient-involved or topic-involved. The figures for Charlotte Brontë's personal involvement with respect to her addressees show that her personal involvement was the highest in her letters to her brother, Branwell Brontë. However, her self-involvement in her letters addressed to Henry Nussey was not far behind from that to her brother. Then, the lowest personal involvement occurred in her letters to Emily Jane Brontë and Ellen Nussey. Thus, the frequencies for Charlotte Brontë's use of first person pronouns in her letters to Henry Nussey, Branwell Brontë, Emily Jane Brontë and Ellen Nussey are 69.65, 67.5, 65.88 and 64.69 per 1,000 words correspondingly. It is worth noting that Sairio (2005) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014) discovered earlier that Samuel Johnson and Jane Austen also used first person pronouns in their letters more frequently than other markers of linguistic involvement. Hence, it appears that letter-writers' self-involvement in the personal correspondence was common among writers of the Late Modern English period.

In relation to Charlotte Brontë's use of second person pronouns (*you*, *your*), the frequencies of their occurrences are higher in comparison to her use of such markers of linguistic involvement as evidential verbs and degree adverbs but they are lower than the frequency of occurrences of first person pronouns. The frequencies for her use of second person pronouns are similar in Charlotte Brontë's letters addressed to Ellen Nussey, Henry Nussey and Branwell Brontë and their numbers are 33, 32.47 and 31.15 per 1,000 words respectively. Charlotte Brontë's interpersonal involvement is found to be the lowest in her letters to her sister, Emily Jane Brontë (11.93 per 1,000 words).

Overall, there is one important observation concerning the distribution of linguistic markers of involvement in Charlotte Brontë's correspondence: when all the involvement markers' frequencies have been calculated, it has become evident that among all the involvement markers analysed she used most frequently first and second person pronouns. It should be considered that linguists

like Biber and Finegan (1989), Sairio (2005), Nurmi and Palander-Collin (2008) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014) who studied personal correspondence also discovered earlier that one typical feature of personal letters is the frequent use of the first and second person pronouns. Hence, it appears that my findings on Charlotte Brontë's use of these pronouns also corresponds with the data previously obtained by these linguists.

6.2.5 Female and male addressees

The present study has also looked at Charlotte Brontë's use of involvement markers concerning her female and male addressees in order to see if the degree of involvement varies according to the gender of her recipients. The findings have shown that, indeed, Charlotte Brontë's involvement differed within the above-mentioned groups and her overall degree of involvement was 1.15 times higher in her letters addressed to male recipients. It is worth noticing that the comparison between the female and male groups' involvement frequencies for four categories of involvement markers (evidential verbs, degree adverbs and first and second person pronouns) shows that the greatest frequency for both groups occurs in the category of first person pronouns that are 137.15 per 1,000 words for male addressees and 130.57 for female ones. Then, regarding Charlotte Brontë's use of second person pronouns, the frequency of their occurrences is higher for her letters addressed to men (63.62 per 1,000 words) than those to women (44.93 per 1,000 words). However, it should be considered that Charlotte Brontë used more degree verbs in her letters addressed to female recipients and the frequency of their use in her correspondence is 19.63 per 1,000 words for female addressees and 16.16 per 1,000 words for male recipients. As for Charlotte Brontë's use of evidential verbs, their overall frequency for female correspondents is 18.12 per 1,000 words, which is lower than that for male addressees which is 28.42 per 1,000 words. It is interesting to note that both sets of involvement markers, evidential verbs and degree adverbs represent a letter-writer's involvement with

the topic. Thus, the findings with regard to these two categories may mean that the degree of involvement in Charlotte Brontë's correspondence with the topic of her letters was more or less similar between female and male addressees, while her personal and interpersonal involvement was higher in her letters to male addressees.

6.3 Overall discussion

The earlier linguistic study on involvement performed by Chafe (1985: 116–121) has shown that involvement between speakers can be gauged by particular linguistic markers like evidential verbs, degree adverbs, first and second person pronouns, modal verbs, sensory verbs and hedges. Chafe specifies that the notion of involvement is complex and that there are three different types of it: ego involvement, involvement with the hearer and involvement with the subject matter of the conversation (1985: 116). Subsequently, in a later work devoted to the theme of involvement Chafe and Danielewicz discovered that the use of first person pronouns also reflected the involvement between two people (1987: 107, 111). Moreover, Sairio's more recent study (2005) on eighteenth-century personal correspondence revealed that involvement between a letter-writer and his or her addressee can be gauged not only by the occurrence of first person pronouns but also with the help of other linguistic markers of involvement: evidential verbs, degree adverbs and also second person pronouns. Additionally, Sairio suggested that the degree of intimacy of the relationship between the writer and the recipient can be reflected through the high frequency of the above-mentioned involvement markers. Sairio applied her hypothesis to the corpus of Samuel Johnson's personal letters and her findings showed that, indeed, the more markers of linguistic involvement the writer used, the greater intimacy existed between the letter-writer and the addressee (2005: 33). It should be considered that apart from the above-mentioned markers of linguistic involvement, the nature of the relationship between two people can be also identified with the help of

pragmatic rather than linguistic epistolary formulas (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2009: 125). Hence, the present work tested Charlotte Brontë's relationship with her personal correspondence from two perspectives: linguistic involvement and epistolary formulas. My findings indicated that in my case Charlotte Brontë's use of epistolary formulas can serve as a fairly reliable tool for detecting the nature of relationships between her and her addressees but in order to obtain trustworthy results it is crucially important to have sufficient corpus of letter material. Thus, I was not able to detect Charlotte Brontë's relationship with her brother because I had insufficient number of her letters addressed to him. It is important to notice that the existing biographical literature about Charlotte Brontë's friendships with the selected addressees coincides with the results derived from my analysis of her opening and closing formulas in her letters to them.

In terms of Charlotte Brontë's degree of involvement with the recipients analysed, I expected that the highest degree of involvement would be reflected in her letters to her family members and her intimate friend, Ellen Nussey and the lowest degree of involvement would surface in her correspondence with Henry Nussey for the reason that their relationship was not as close as with the other addressees analysed. The results indicate that it is only partly the case: the overall frequency of the involvement markers analysed in this study is highest in her letters to her only brother, Branwell Brontë and I believe that this finding, indeed, can mean that their relationship was highly intimate. However, the discrepancies between Charlotte Brontë's biographical literature and my findings are reflected in the fact that even though Charlotte Brontë was strongly attached to her sister, Emily Jane Brontë, and her best friend Ellen Nussey (Smith 1995: 2–3), her degree of involvement is higher in her letters to Henry Nussey, who was also her friend but not an intimate one. Although this difference is hard to explain, I suggest that the reason for such discrepancy in my results can be explained by Charlotte Brontë's health and emotional states. Sairio in her study devoted to

linguistic involvement also drew attention to the question if the writer's mental state should be considered (2005: 34). She further commented that a lower level of involvement may indicate a writer's weakening health state. In terms of the above-mentioned, it should be considered that Charlotte Brontë wrote four of five letters to Henry Nussey from Haworth, her home sanctuary, where she was surrounded by her family. According to Peters (1975: 32), Charlotte Brontë always revived when she was at home, in the quiet and intimate Brontës' parsonage. Hence, I suggest that the high level of her involvement to Henry Nussey can be influenced by her "very good health and spirits" (Charlotte Brontë to Henry Nussey: 26 May 1840, Smith 1995: 220).

In the course of this study it was discovered that the dominant linguistic markers of involvement in her letters are first person singular and plural pronouns: *I, me, my, we*. Such a result has been expected for the reason that linguists who extensively analysed personal letters, for example, Chafe and Danielewicz (1987), Biber and Finegan (1989), Nurmi and Palander-Collin (2008), Sairio (2005) and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2014), already discovered that personal letters can be characterized by the frequent occurrence of these pronouns.

It was anticipated that Charlotte Brontë's degree of involvement varied with respect to male and female addressees. The expectation was based on the existing assumption that female and male use of language differs with regard to their use of adverbs (Coates 1986). Considering that degree adverbs were also included in the list of involvement markers, I supposed that Charlotte Brontë's degrees of involvement would vary in relation to the sex of her addressees and I expected to find that Charlotte Brontë's more involved letters were addressed to women. Even though the findings of this study have confirmed that her overall frequency of degree adverbs was higher in her letters addressed to women, her total degree of involvement was higher in her letters written to men.

Nonetheless, since there are some discrepancies in the findings, it is difficult to precisely state that the use of linguistic markers of involvement can reveal the degree of intimacy between Charlotte Brontë and her recipients. More extensive study of the use of other markers of involvement that were indicated in Chafe's work (1985: 116–121), for example the use of probability adverbs (e.g., *maybe*, *probably*, *certainly*), evidential adverbs (e.g., *basically*, *essentially*, *generally*, *invariably*, etc.) and also the use of modals like *may*, *might* and *must*, in Charlotte Brontë's personal letters may suggest deeper insight into the nature of the relationships that existed between Charlotte Brontë and her private addressees. Therefore, the present study has already attempted to establish how particular aspects of language were used in the past by individuals and how language use was affected by one particular variable that is the degree of closeness between two people.

6.4 Conclusion

I am happy to inform you that Papa has given me permission to accept the invitation it conveyed, & erelong I hope once more to have the extreme pleasure of seeing almost the only, and certainly the dearest friend I possess (out of our own family). (Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey: 12 January 1835, Smith 1995: 136)

The conclusion to this chapter starts with a citation from one of Charlotte Brontë's letters to her best friend Ellen Nussey to illustrate that Charlotte Brontë had a noticeably strong attachment towards her. A critical aspect of my work, presented in the previous section, derives from the fact that my analysis of Charlotte Brontë's degree of involvement in her correspondence has not shown a straightforward picture: the total degrees of involvement in her letters addressed to her closest friend Ellen Nussey and her sister, Emily Jane Brontë, is lower than the one found in her letters to her not so intimate friend, Henry Hussey. This suggests that, in the case of Charlotte Brontë, the analysis of involvement markers

alone is not a convincing indicator of the intimacy of the relationship between Charlotte Brontë and her addressees.

In this thesis, I have also demonstrated arguments in favour of Charlotte Brontë's language use in her epistolary formulas as they can serve as a reliable indicator of the nature of the ties between her and her particular addressees. Moreover, the information on Charlotte Brontë's relationships with her addressees deduced from her opening and closing formulas' analysed correspond to her biographical facts. Charlotte Brontë's personal letters are an exceptional source of the language of correspondence during the Victorian time, considering that she was one of the most well-known English writers of that period and her letters may well hold other important features of Late Modern English language of correspondence.

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Appendix: Charlotte Brontë's epistolary formulas to her personal addressees

Table 5.1 **Opening formulas of Charlotte Brontë's out-letters (1831–1847)**

Addressee	***Opening formula***	***Number of occurrences***
Emily J. Brontë	Dear E. J.	5
	Dear Lavinia	1
	Mine bonnie love	1
Branwell Brontë	Dear Branwell	1
	Dear B	1
Henry Nussey	My dear Sir	1
	Dear Sir	3
Ellen Nussey	Dear Ellen	81
	My dear Ellen	37
	My dearest Ellen	8
	My dear, dear Ellen	1
	My dear, kind Ellen	1
	Dearest Ellen	5
	My own dear Ellen	1
	My dear Mrs. Eleanor	1
	My dear Mrs Menelaus	1
	Dear Mrs. Ellen	1
	Dear Nell	24
	My dear Nell	1
	My dearest Nell	1
	My dear Nelly	1
	Dear E. N.	1
	My dear Miss Mercy	1

	Dear Madam Ellen	1

Table 5.2 **Closing formulas of Charlotte Brontë's out-letters (1831–1847)**

Addressee	***Closing formula***	***Number of occurrences***
Emily J. Brontë	Good-bye	4
	Coraggio	1
	Your	1
	I am, yours	1
	Amen	1
Branwell Brontë	Your affectionate sister	1
	Yourn	1
Henry Nussey	Yours truly	1
	Believe me/ Your sincere friend	1
	Believe me/ Yours respectfully	1
	I remain/ Yours respectfully	1
	Your sincere friend	1
Ellen Nussey	Believe me to remain/ Your affect. friend	1
	From your affectionate friend	1
	Your real friend	1
	Your friend	3
	Adieu my Sweetest Ellen/ I am Ever yours	1
	I remain Dearest Ellen/ Your ever faithful friend	1
	Your most affectionate friend	1
	Your ever faithful friend	2
	Your affectionate friend	1
	Your true and grateful friend	1
	For ever Your's	1

	Farewell my dear dear dear Ellen	1
	Yours under a cloud	1
	Good-bye	12
Ellen Nussey	Good-bye my dear Ellen	1
	Your old friend	1
	God bless you	1
	Believe me yours unutterably	2
	Yours sincerely	2
	I am, dear Ellen/ Thy friend	1
	Yours with true affection	1
	Affectionately, warmly Yours	1
	E Nussey's friend	1
	Truly yours	1
	Your affectionate coz	1
	Farewell my own dear Ellen	1
	Your friend	2
	Your always and truly always tenderly	1
	Farewell, my dear Ellen	1
	Yours	4
	Write again very soon	1
	Write to me soon dear Nell	1
	Good night dear Nell	1
	Yours faithfully	14
	I am yours faithfully	1
	Yours dear Nell	1
	Always faithful	1
	Believe me dear Nell/ Yours faithfully	1
	Good morning/ Love to all	1

	Give my love to all/ Write again soon	1
	Good bye Dear Nell	4
	Good bye to you dear Nell	1
Ellen Nussey	Give my love to all	2
	Believe me yrs	1
	Give my sincere love to all/ Yours	1
	Write soon	1
	Give my love to all at Brookroyd	1
	Yrs	1
	Give my love to all at Brookroyd and believe me	1
	Good luck go with you	1
	I am dear Nell/ Yours in spirit & flash	1
	Write again soon	5
	Yours thankfully	1
	Believe me/ Yours faithfully	1
	Fare-thee-well Nell	1
	Good bye my lassie/ Yours insufferably	1
	Good bye—God—bless you	1
	Believe me yours sincerely	1
	Good bye dear Ellen	5
	Your loving child	1
	My dear Ellen Good-bye—Believe [me in heart & soul your sincere friend]	1
	Good night dear Ellen	1
	Believe me my dear Miss Mercy/ Yours sincerely	1
	Yours, sundered by the sea	1
	Give my love & best wishes to your Mother & Mercy	1
	Yourn	1
	Farewell dear Ellen	1

	Your unchanged friend	1
	Good-bye till Monday	1
Ellen Nussey	Good morning dear Nell	1
	Yours somewhat irritated	1
	Good-bye to you	2