36. I was pretty mad about it. (122: disputable)

A linguist remarks, “Hardly English. English colloquial sick.”

Standard Dictionary: “. . . archaic in lit. Colloquially, in the U. S., mad in this sense is very common, and as a provincialism is not uncommon in England. Its use may be regarded as permissible colloquially when connected with a cause of vexation that is not a person.”

N. E. D.: “Now only colloq.”

In the U. S. this is probably acceptable in informal discourse.

37. That will be all right, you may be sure. (48: established)

There is practically no disagreement among the judges in classifying this expression as established in cultivated colloquial usage. Only 5 out of over 200 condemn it as vulgar. Some of those who classed it as colloquial indicated that they believed it would soon belong with literary English.

The N. E. D. gives 1686 as the date of its earliest recorded use, and makes no objections to the form.

DEBATED SPELLINGS

Such naïf actions seem to me absurd. (148: disputable)

The Standard Dictionary says: “Same as naive.”

One linguist says: “In English usage naïve is employed without reference to gender. The use of naïf for naïve is a purist affectation.” Another remarks: “I have read such sentences a few times.”

18% of all the judges classified this expression as technical; the rest were almost evenly divided between the other three classifications—almost as many thought it acceptable for formal literary English as condemned it as illiterate! The expression then, clearly belongs among disputable usages because there is no agreement as to its standing.

CHAPTER THREE

REFERENCE LISTS OF GRAMMATICAL USAGES AS RANKED BY JUDGES

The sentences in the grammatical usage questionnaires are here listed to show their order of acceptability according to the judges’ ballot. They are arranged in numerical order from one to 230—one being the sentence containing the usage most generally approved, and 230 being the sentence containing the one most generally condemned as illiterate.

Three rankings of items are presented: first, the ranking by the linguists of all the 230 usages; second, a composite ranking of the 102 items in Ballot One by all the judges averaged by groups; and, third, a ranking of all the items on both ballots according to a per capita count of all the judges.

I. RANKING OF USAGES BY LINGUISTS

In this list the items are grouped in three classes. The first contains items of (A) established usage; that is, items approved (literary or good colloquial) by at least 75% of the experts in linguistics, and disapproved by not more than 25%. The second contains items of (B) disputable usage; that is, items approved by more than 25% of the linguists, and fewer than 75%. The last contains the remaining items, whose disapproval by 75% or more of the linguists and approval by fewer than 25% places them in the class of (C) uncultivated or illiterate usage.

The group of established usages begins with those approved for formal literary use and on the whole proceeds downward through those approved for good colloquial use. Toward the end of the established usages appear a few items
which, though not definitely in class 1 or 2, are nevertheless justified for use as technical terms within the limits of the occupation where they are used; e.g., coverage is a good usage among people dealing in insurance.

This third classification, "commercial, foreign, scientific, or other technical uses," although suggested in the New English Dictionary, did not prove very serviceable, at least in respect to the particular expressions included in the two ballots on which this study is based. While 104 and 106, below, seem indubitably to belong to this group, a majority of the judges did not so recognize them, and their position in this section is based rather on the authority of the dictionaries.

It is to be remembered that these rankings first presented are those given by the linguists, because their special expertness in judging language trends renders their judgements more significant than those of the judges in general. For rankings of other judges, see Appendix F, and for special discussion thereof, see Chapter II. Items near the dividing line between classes (numbers 180 to 193) will often be found open to question as to their exact placement.

A. ESTABLISHED USAGES

1. *A Tale of Two Cities* is an historical novel.
2. It was I that broke the vase, father.
3. Why pursue a vain hope?
4. One rarely enjoys one's luncheon when one is tired.
5. The invalid was able partially to raise his body.
6. It behooves them to take action at once.
7. I had rather go at once.
8. In this connection, I should add . . .
9. This is a man . . . . I used to know. (Omitted relative)
10. You had better stop that foolishness.
11. Each person should of course bear his or her share of the expense.
12. Galileo discovered that the earth moved.
13. This hat is not so large as mine.

14. My position in the company was satisfactory from every point of view.
15. He toils to the end that he may amass wealth.
16. In the case of students who elect an extra subject, an additional fee is charged.
17. The defendant's case was hurt by this admission.
18. I for one hope he will be there.
19. This is the chapter whose contents cause most discussion.
20. Under these circumstances I will concede the point.
21. I have no prejudices, and that is the cause of my unpopularity.
22. You may ask whomsoever you please.
23. The honest person is to be applauded.
24. He stood in front of the class to speak.
25. This much is certain.
26. He did not do as well as we expected.
27. We got home at three o'clock.
28. He has no fear; nothing can confuse him.
29. There is a large works near the bridge.
30. As regards the League, let me say . . .
31. "You just had a telephone call." "Did they leave any message?"
32. I was attacked by one of those huge police dogs.
33. The women were all dressed up.
34. This was the reason why he went home.
35. This book is valueless, that one has more to recommend it. [Comma splice.]
36. Take two cups of flour.
37. *None* of them are here.
38. I drove the car around the block.
39. He doesn't do it the way I do.
40. The New York climate is the healthiest in Fall.
41. I felt I could walk no further.
42. One is not fit to vote at the age of eighteen.
43. Our catch was pretty good.
44. We have made some progress along these lines.
45. The catcher stands back of the home plate.
46. My colleagues and I shall be glad to help you.
47. I went immediately into the banquet room, which was, I found later, a technical error.
48. That will be all right, you may be sure.
49. We will try and get it.
50. We cannot discover from whence this rumor emanates.
51. I can hardly stand him.
52. Jane was home all last week.
53. I'd like to make a correction.
54. I've absolutely got to go.
55. We can expect the commission to at least protect our interests.
56. That's a dangerous curve; you'd better go slow.
57. There are some nice people here.
58. Will you be at the Browns' this evening?
59. Have you fixed the fire for the night?
60. I don't know if I can.
61. In hopes of seeing you, I asked...
62. It says in the book that...
63. It it wasn't for football, school life would be dull.
64. His attack on my motives made me peevish.
65. We taxied to the station to catch the train.
66. We only had one left.
67. My viewpoint on this is that we ought to make concessions.
68. Factories were mostly closed on election day.
69. He moves mighty quick on a tennis court.
70. He stopped to price some flowers.
71. He worked with much snap.
72. This room is awfully cold.
73. It is me.
74. Who are you looking for?
75. A treaty was concluded between the four powers.
76. You had to have property to vote, in the eighteenth century.

77. The kind of apples you mean are large and sour.
78. I have a heap of work to do.
79. I felt badly about his death.
80. The real reason he failed was because he tried to do too much.
81. Invite whoever you like to the party.
82. Drive slow down that hill.
83. Harry was a little shaver about this tall.
84. I didn't speak to my uncle by long distance; I couldn't get through.
85. They had numerous strikes in England.
86. I will go providing you keep away.
87. I have got my own opinion on that.
88. He made a date for next week.
89. My father walked very slow down the street.
90. There was a bed, a dresser, and two chairs in the room.
91. They invited my friends and myself.
92. It is now plain and evident why he left.
93. I wish I was wonderful.
94. I've no doubt but what he will come.
95. What was the reason for Bennett making that disturbance?
96. Can I be excused from this class?
97. Haven't you got through yet?
98. Everyone was here, but they all went home early.
99. He loaned me his skates.
100. My folks sent me a check.
101. He came around four o'clock.
102. If it had been us, we would admit it.
103. They went way around by the orchard road.
104. The banker loaned me $200 at 6%.
105. Pikes Peak is in Colorado.
106. The sailors laid out along the yards.
107. Is your insurance sufficient coverage for your house?
108. That clock must be fixed.
109. My contention has been proven many times.
110. Sam, who was then in town, was with me the three or four first days.
111. One rarely likes to do as he is told.
112. He never works evenings or Sundays.
113. They have gotten a new car this year.
114. The Rock Island depot burned down last night.
115. Sitting in back of John, he said, "Now guess what I have."
116. I took it to be they.
117. I guess I'll go to lunch.
118. He went right home and told his father.
119. He could write as well or better than I.
120. I expect he knows his subject.
121. I can't seem to get this problem right.
122. I was pretty mad about it.
123. Either of these three roads is good.
124. You are older than me.
125. What are the chances of them being found out?
126. There is a big woods behind the house.
127. I know it to be he.
128. Do you wish for some ice cream?
129. Intoxication is when the brain is affected by certain stimulants.
130. Neither of your reasons are really valid.
131. He dove off the pier.
132. Trollope's novels have already begun to date.
133. Will you go? Sure.
134. He is kind of silly, I think.
135. I will probably come a little late.
136. That was the reason for me leaving school.
137. They eat (et) dinner at twelve o'clock.
138. I'll swear that was him.
139. Well, that's going some.
172. I suppose I'm wrong, ain't I?
173. John was raised by his aunt.
174. Martha don't sew as well as she used to.
175. He most always does what his wife tells him.
176. It sure was good to see Uncle Charles.
177. My experience on the farm helped me some, of course.
178. It's real cold today.
179. His presence was valueless not only, but a hindrance as well.
180. We don't often see sunsets like they have in the tropics.
181. I am older than him.
182. She leaped off of the moving car.
183. She sung very well.
184. It is only a little ways farther.
185. It looked like they meant business.
186. Do it like he tells you.
187. The child was weak, due to improper feeding.

C. Uncultivated or Illiterate Usages

188. John had awoken much earlier than usual.
189. I haven't hardly any money.
190. The engine was hitting good this morning.
191. The dessert was made with whip cream.
192. Now just where are we at?
193. The kitten mews whenever it wants in.
194. A woman whom I know was my friend spoke next.
195. He drank too much ice water.
196. Reverend Jones will preach.
197. All came except she.
198. The party who wrote that was a scholar.
199. My Uncle John, he told me a story.
200. He begun to make excuses.
201. I calculate to go soon.
202. This is all the further I can read.
203. That ain't so.
204. The data is often inaccurate.

II. Ranking of Items in Ballot One by All the Judges

In this list, the items in Ballot One are arranged so as to show the order of their acceptability to all the judges. In making this list, the weights assigned to each item by each group of judges were totaled, and the resulting index number was used in effecting the arrangement. Thus each group of judges cast a single vote, and the rankings are an average of
CURRENT ENGLISH USAGE

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