

POSTPOSED INDEFINITE *OF*-PRONOUNS

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1.0. Introduction

British English (BrE) allows the postposition of pronouns such as *all*, *both*, *each* following plural pronouns or plural nominal groups (cp. Quirk et al. 1985: 380–2).

- (1) a. We all left the meeting.
b. All of us left the meeting.
- (2) a. The students will each receive a picture postcard.
b. Each of the students will receive a picture postcard.

Apart from structures like (1) a. and (2) a., postposed pronouns occur in syntagms followed by *of* and a pro-form (in objective case) of its (pro)-nominal antecedent.

- (3) We all of us left the meeting.
- (4) The students will each of them receive a picture postcard.

Postposed indefinite *of*-pronouns seem to be typical of BrE. In a corpus of fifty novels for American English (AmE), I have found 24 examples for structures such as (3) and (4). Several native speakers of AmE when confronted with the corpus material classified it as 'British', while speakers of BrE accepted it as nothing unusual.

... we are all of us simply putty in the hands of the great potter." (Vidal, *Breckinridge*: 175)

Man wasn't born to live, he was born to die. We're each and every one of us born to die. (Terkel, *Division Street*: 133).

... we're none of us getting younger... (Updike, *Couples*: 316)

The standard grammars and handbooks of English have not much to say on *of*-pronouns that pattern postnominally. In some instances they give illustra-

tions (see e.g. Jespersen 1949: 592—622, Scheurweghs 1959: 144—5) but there is no detailed treatment. The extensive recent literature on quantifiers in English barely mentions this type of structure. The only exception seems to be Carden (1968: IX—15 — IX—41, 1973: 91—102). The data presented in the following sections are drawn from a corpus of written BrE which is listed in the appendix. According to the data chosen, postposed *of*-pronouns are used as modifiers of subjects. There are no examples like (5) b. and (5) c. in the corpus.

- (5) a. The committee accepted all (of) the students.
 b. *The committee accepted the students all.
 c. *The committee accepted the students all of them.

A sentence such as (5) b. is acceptable with a pronoun preceding, e.g., *The committee accepted them all*; a sentence like (5) c. is okay, when *all of them* is used as a non-restrictive appositive marked off in writing e.g. by a comma or a dash, i.e., *The committee accepted the students — all of them*.

I tell you one thing, all of you, for what it's worth. I've been telling it to myself ever since this started. We're up against good acting. (Marsh, *Murderer*: 73)

Postposed *of*-pronouns are seldom found in newspapers or in (news) magazines. They are also rare in scientific writings. Considering their frequency in dialogues in novels and dramas, they seem to be typical of 'spoken prose' (Abercrombie 1963: 10—6) where they are encountered in the speech of educated speakers in formal style.

2.0. The insertability of verbal elements

Examples such as (3) and (4) show that postposed indefinite *of*-pronouns can immediately follow their subjects or can be separated from them by an element of the verbal group.

- (6) ?We none of us can step into the same river twice.
 (7) We can none of us step into the same river twice.

What elements can be inserted between the subject and its postposed *of*-pronouns? They are

- A. predicate *be*,
 B. auxiliaries of the verbal group:
 a) passive *be*
 b) progressive *be*
 c) temporal *have*
 d) modal
 e) *do*

It will be obvious that the insertable verbal elements are identical with those for simple postposed pronouns. Insertability has been taken as one of the defining characteristics of auxiliary verbs (Quirk et al. 1985: 126, 136—7). To give some illustrations:

A. predicate *be*

Adjectives, nouns, adverbs, prepositional phrases and *wh*-clauses are attested as predicate complements in the corpus.

... they were all of them sick with horror... (Lessing, *Notebook*: 366)

"We're neither of us particularly well off, are we?" (Gordon, *Life*: 186)

"We are all of us human beings." (Greene, *Consul*: 131)

"... we're none of us saints..." (Golding, *Spire*: 202).

They were most of them here. (McIlvanney, *Docherty*: 307)

"Leave off about the bread-line, Grandad," Sam advised. "We're none of us on it tonight..." (Sands, *Sam*: 133)

"We're all of us what we are..." (Huxley, *Eyeless*: 357)

"We are none of us what we look." (Fowles, *Magus*: 218)

There are only two examples which do not insert predicate *be*. One involves formulaic *let us*, the other shows the fronting of the *of*-pronoun, which is very rare.

"Tomorrow morning, ten-thirty, and let's all of us be here on time, okay?" (Symons, *Problem*: 54)

"Each of us we are white like ghosts." (Murdoch, *Flight*: 70)

B. auxiliaries of the verbal group

Of the 50 examples found in the corpus for inserted auxiliaries, the modals occur most frequently, i.e., 28 attested cases, followed by temporal *have* (14), progressive *be* (4), passive *be* (2), and auxiliary *do* (2).

We can most of us recall having had experiences in which so much was happening at the same time around us that we were in utter confusion. (Britton, *Language*: 21)

... we might each of us do what we did not want to do... (Murdoch, *Child*: 63)

Because a lunatic has used a box of matches to burn down a house, does that mean we must none of us use matches again? (*Spectator*, 15 March 1975: 301.3)

"If it [=living together] doesn't work we shall neither of us be worse off than we are now." (Maugham, *Edge*: 173)

"We wouldn't be afraid to be native and foolish, that's the only thing we should none of us be afraid of..." (Lessing, *Notebook*: 535)

You will each of you come to yourselves.. (Lessing, *Briefing*: 124)

"Even if Mrs. Middleton *was* for a moment careless, we have all of us been so..." (Wilson, *Attitudes*: 134-5)

"Well," said Demoyte, "we've each of us received a picture of ourselves." (Murdoch *Sandcastle*: 309)

Inner disciplines, respect for tradition, taste for formality, had none of them been sufficient. (Powell, *Philosophers*: 123)

"After all, we've none of us slept for weeks." (Lessing, *Marriage*: 8)

"We're each of us screaming away in our own private padded cell." (Murdoch, *Prince*: 152)

"Luckily we are none of us intending to get married." (Lessing, *Marriage*: 48)

We are both of us controlled by something else. (Murdoch, *Prince*: 317)

"You don't any of you understand the value of leisure," said Gabriel. (Compton-Burnett, *Women*: 215)

As in the case of predicate *be*, auxiliaries of the verbal group can as a rule be inserted. There is just one example of a postposed *of*-pronoun immediately adjoined to its subject.

"Now, now, you know we none of us can take that stand." (Compton-Burnett, *Women*: 118)

With regard to the acceptability of inserting auxiliaries between the subject and its pronoun postmodification, the findings are the same for simple and *of*-pronoun postpositions. Quirk et al (1985: 126) write that a sentence such as *?We both are working late* is "exceptional, and less acceptable" than its interposed alternant, i.e., *We are both working late*. Verbs of intermediate function (cp. Quirk et al. 1985: 136-48) are preceded by *of*-pronoun postposition, if they contain no predicate *be* or auxiliary. This is attested for *grow to*, *have to* and *seem to* in the corpus. If predicate *be* is part of their lexical form, the *of*-pronoun modification follows the *be*-form, exemplified in the corpus by *be going to*.

As a matter of fact I think we each one of us grow to look like that thing we love... (Naughton, *Alfie*: 76)

"Why is it that we all of us have to get out from under awful parents who damage us?" (Lessing, *City*: 296)

"We all of us seem to live with dead fathers, don't we?" (Greene, *Consul*: 248)

"We're none of us going to get out of England again, except as emissaries of culture." (Powell, *Books*: 137)

The only linking verb attested in the corpus, i.e., *get*, is preceded by the *of*-

pronoun modification. Main verb *have* shows the same pattern with one inserted alternant.

"Well, we none of us get any younger." (Fuller, *Comedy*: 15)

"There's one belief we both of us have — that we'll all be dead in a hundred years." (Greene, *Power*: 195)

They had neither of them enough chic to work upstairs. (Waugh, *Dust*: 10)

Main verbs, be they intransitive, transitive, prepositional or otherwise, are preceded by the *of*-pronoun modification, if they do not contain an auxiliary.

... they all of them moved... (Lessing, *Summer*: 90)

"... you must remember that you neither of you went at my request." (Compton-Burnett, *Women*: 216)

"I think I'm right in saying that we all of us admire you". (Spark, *Gate*: 32)

"We none of us like guilt-feelings, do we?" (Dennis, *Cards*: 74)

"They neither of them cared about me..." (Lessing, *Ripple*: 274)

"The point is we neither of us took kindly to the goings-on." (Lehmann, *Grove*: 266)

The only example to the contrary involves the numeral *two*.

We went the two of us very quietly into my place... (Naughton, *Alfie*: 105)

When modified by an auxiliary, the *of*-pronoun modification as a rule follows it. The data presented so far allow the conclusion that postposed indefinite *of*-pronouns follow the first auxiliary of the verbal group or predicate *be*: they precede the main verb, immediately adjoining the subject, if there is no predicate *be* or auxiliary in the verbal group. The same has been observed for the distribution of simple postposed pronouns as mentioned above.

3.0. Subjects and their postposed *of*-pronouns

The corpus contains examples for subjects only. Plural personal pronouns, i.e., *we* (93), *you* (12), *they* (24), nonpersonal *it* (1) referring to a collection of events, demonstrative *these* (1), and plural nominal groups (7) function as subjects.

They all of them saw the future as something short and violent. (Lessing, *Ripple*: 123)

"It was none of it true, of course." (Wilson, *Hemlock*: 225)

These were all of them occasions which Mor never forgot. (Murdoch, *Sandcastle*: 91)

These excellent young men have most of them grown up under German occupation..." (Powell, *Philosophers*: 197)

The subject has to refer to a number of persons or things other than one. The corpus material (the attested cases are given in parentheses following the various subject expressions) shows that *of*-pronouns are most frequent after plural persons pronouns. The postposed modifications are in all instances but one pronouns. The odd element out is the numeral *two* which shows the further peculiarity that it follows the finite verb *went*, the only example to be found in the corpus and quoted in section 2. The pronouns comprise universal *all*, *each*, *everyone*, *both*; assertive *any*, *some*, *most*; non-assertive (*not*) *any*, (*not*) *either*; and negative *none*, *neither*. The four groups of indefinite *of*-pronouns are listed in diagram 1, as attested in the corpus novels (appendix A).

Diagram 1
Indefinite *of*-pronouns as postposed modification

subject:	<i>we</i>	<i>you</i> (plural)	<i>they</i>	nominal group (plural)	<i>these</i>	<i>it</i>	
total :	93	12	24	7	1	1	138
<i>all</i> :	16	1	5	—	1	—	23
<i>each</i> :	7	1	—	—	—	—	8
<i>every-</i> <i>one</i> :	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
<i>both</i> :	8	1	5	—	—	—	14
<i>any</i> :	1	1	—	—	—	—	2
<i>some</i> :	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
<i>most</i> :	3	—	3	1	—	—	7
(<i>not</i>) <i>any</i> :	—	2	—	—	—	—	2
(<i>not</i>) <i>either</i> :	5	1	—	—	—	—	6
<i>none</i> :	33	4	8	3	—	1	49
<i>neither</i> :	20	1	2	2	—	—	25

To give some illustrations:

Universal *all*, *each*, *everyone*, *both*:

... they were all of them sick with horror and with pity... (Lessing, *Notebook*: 366)

... I suppose we each of us need our little mask against the cruel world. (Lessing, *Notebook*: 428)

They everyone of them got drunk... (Lessing, *Marriage*: 244)

"And that's where you're both of you so bloody wrong," Charly Fortnum said.. (Greene, *Consul*: 41)

Assertive *any*, *some*, *most*:

"The only thing you can any of you do for me is to leave me alone..." (Maugham, *Edge*: 158)

The Neutrals, in their position further east of the transept, had some of them shown inferior mastery of the drill... (Powell, *Philosophers*: 223)

"Bunny has thousands of friends and they'll most of them be bound to side with him." (Hardwick, *Dance*: 103)

Nonassertive (*not*) *any*, (*not*) *either*:

"You don't any of you understand the value of leisure," said Gabriel. (Compton-Burnett, *Women*: 215)

"Well, after we'd got you and Miss de Vine to bed and had made up your minds you wouldn't either of you peg out yet awhile..." (Sayers, *Night*: 407)

Negative *none*, *neither*:

... well, ok, we're none of us perfect. (*Spectator*, 11 Jan. 75: 35.1)

Robert Venables as General and William Penn as Admiral were neither of them to be subject to each other... (Fraser, *Cromwell*: 525)

The figures in diagram 1 show that the universal and negative pronouns comprise more than four-fifths of the examples attested in the corpus, i.e., 86.9%, the negatives accounting for more than half of them, i.e., 53.6%. Among the subject expressions, personal *we* was found to be the most numerous item. Concerning the data of the present corpus, syntagms such as *we all*/*each*/*both* of *us* and *we none*/*neither* of *us* are frequent in use.

4.0. Simple and expanded postposed pronouns

Simple and expanded indefinite pronouns as postmodifiers of subjects differ in one important respect. Whereas of the former only universal *all*, *both*, and *each* can be postposed, expanded indefinite pronouns, i.e., *of*-pronouns, allow all four classes of indefinite pronouns to occur postnominally. We will illustrate this difference with regard to universal *all*/*both* on the one hand, and negative *none*/*neither* on the other.

- (8) a. We all (of us) have to do things we do not like.
b. We none of us have to do things we do not like.
c. *We none have to do things we do not like.

- (9) a. We are both (of us) cameras.
b. We are neither of us cameras.
c. *We are neither cameras.

Why this difference? It seems to have to do with the quantifying range of the pronoun. Of the four groups distinguished in section 3.0, i.e., universal, assertive, nonassertive, and negative indefinite pronouns, only the first allows some of its members to postmodify plural pronouns or plural nominal groups, i.e.

all, both, and each. These three function likewise as determiners (*all, both, each*) or predeterminers (*all, both*). The rule thus seems to be that only universal pronouns which also function as determiners can pattern postnominally. This explains not only why the three other groups of pronouns do not show up in postnominal position but also why the universal pronoun *everyone* cannot postmodify. The determiner *every* is not homonymous with its pronoun.

A further question to be answered is why do *universal* and not e.g. assertive pronouns which are also used as determiners (like *most*) allow nominal postposition? In a clause such as *We are all/ all of us sick with horror* the group of persons denoted by *we* and *all of us* is the same, whereas in the case of *We were *most/ most of us sick with horror*, the subject (*we*) and the postposed *of*-pronoun (*most of us*) denote different sets. Thus, co-denotation between the two, i.e., between a postposed *of*-pronoun and the noun it is referring to, is required for simple pronouns to be used postnominally. This is true of *all, both, and each* (cp. Allan 1986: 72–74).

universal	{	all of them	they all
		both of them	they both
		each of them	they each
		everyone of them	*they everyone
assertive	{	some of them	*they some
		any of them	*they any
		most of them	*they most
non-assertive	{	(not) any of them	*they (not) any
		(not) either of them	*they (not) either
negative	{	none of them	*they none
		neither of them	*they neither

How are syntagms like *We (×)all of us* to be analyzed? I take them to be appositives consisting of a plural personal pronoun or a plural nominal group followed by *of*-pronouns which stand in apposition to them. The examples looked at so far all display restrictive appositives, i.e., postposed *of*-pronouns that are not marked off by a comma or equivalent graphemic means used in writing to indicate their grammatical status. Postposed *of*-pronouns can likewise be used as non-restrictive appositives. In this case, they tend to occur at the end of the clause, as a kind of afterthought.

Of course we possess, all of us, other instruments. (Britton, *Language*: 276)

“What are you going to do now, all of you?” (Sayers, *Night*: 429)

“You look awful, both of you.” (Powell, *Marriage*: 174)

They [various courageous Europeans] were eaten, every one of them;

Some raw; others stewed and seasoned... (Waugh, *Scoop*: 74)

They don't know themselves, see, most of them (Naughton, *Darling*: 12-13)

You can't be trusted, any of you. (Burgess, *Inside*: 14)

“You're not hurt, are you — either of you?” (Hardwick, *Dance*: 68)

We can look forward to so much peace..., the two of us. (Burgess, *Inside*: 147)

There are no examples in the corpus such as *You can be trusted, none/ neither of you*, the reason being that negation tends to be expressed in the verbal group to characterize the proposition as being negated. Introducing the negative element in the non-restrictive appositive would mean specifying an essential part of the utterance in a non-obligatory part of its structure thus potentially confusing or detracting from the communicative intent. Negative pronouns when used non-restrictively have to occur before the first element of the verbal group or as a part of it.

We, none of us, said anything to this flight of fancy. (Lessing, *Notebook*: 108)

And there was no blaming Egg, of course, we would, none of us, ever blame Egg. (Irving, *Hotel*: 164)

Apart from the indefinite pronouns and the numeral *two* there are some further examples of non-restrictive appositives not attested in the corpus for restrictives.

“Still, what have we to complain of, either of us?” (Gordon, *Life*: 62)

And the law courts worked on, plenty of them... (Lessing, *Memoirs*: 161)

“Have you made your minds up yet, the pair of you,”... (Sands, *Sam*: 185)

In AmE non-restrictive appositive *of*-pronouns are likewise frequent, the difference between the two national varieties being that BrE in addition favours the restrictive type.

“We lived together on a high level, all of us.” (Bellow, *Herzog*: 198)

“They were eighty or more, both of them — the man died first.” (Oates, *Garden*: 198)

“I agree! I agree they do, some of them!” (Salinger, *Catcher*: 137)

“We're not crazy, either of us. Just frustrated, sometimes.” (Updike, *Rabbit is rich*: 380)

“For months we had only one dream, the two of us, how best to restore Jefferson to the tranquil beauties of Monticello.” (Vidal, *Burr*: 332)

They were dancing, a few of them, to the music on the jukebox. (Kerouac, *Road*: 28)

One final remark: It has been proposed, by Scheurweghs (1959: 144) for example, that restrictives such as *we all/ both of us* originated as blends of the two pronominal structures *we all/both* and *all/ both of us*. This explanation is pos-

sible for the three universal pronouns *all, both, each* but it runs into difficulties with the three other groups, i.e., the assertives, non-assertives and the negatives. These three cannot be postposed as simple pronouns but only as *of*-pronouns. A proposal along these lines fails with regard to syntagms such as *we most/ (not) any/ none of us*, unless one is willing to invoke analogy.

APPENDIX

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