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### **Negative concord in 18th-century English: a corpus perspective on social stratification**

The aim of my paper is to shed light on the use of negative concord (multiple negation) by lower social ranks in the late 18th century. My material comes from the Corpus of Early English Correspondence Extension (CEECE), which covers the 18th century. I will discuss the extent to which personal correspondence provides data for a study of this kind, and what its implications may be for historical sociolinguistics. I will also place the spread of non-assertive forms to negative contexts in a typological perspective. In particular, I will be interested in the generalization of non-assertive forms in contexts such as interrogatives, conditionals and comparatives in the history of English.