As Heard on TV

*A Study of Common Breaches of Prescriptive Grammar Rules on American Television*

Ritgerð til BA-prófs í Ensku

Ragna Porsteinsdóttir

Janúar 2013
As Heard on TV

A Study of Common Breaches of Prescriptive Grammar Rules on American Television

Ritgerð til BA-prófs í Ensku

Ragna Þorsteinsdóttir
Kt.: 080288-3369

Leiðbeinandi: Pétur Knútsson
Janúar 2013
Abstract

In this paper I research four grammar variables by watching three seasons of American television programs, aired during the winter of 2010-2011: *How I Met Your Mother*, *Glee*, and *Grey's Anatomy*. For background on the history of prescriptive grammar, I discuss the grammarian Robert Lowth and his views on the English language in the 18th century in relation to the status of the language today. Some of the rules he described have become obsolete or were even considered more of a stylistic choice during the writing and editing of his book, *A Short Introduction to English Grammar*, so reviewing and revising prescriptive grammar is something that should be done regularly. The goal of this paper is to discover the status of the variables “to lay” versus “to lie,” “who” versus “whom,” “X and I” versus “X and me,” and “may” versus “might” in contemporary popular media, and thereby discern the validity of the prescriptive rules in everyday language. Every instance of each variable in the three programs was documented and attempted to be determined as correct or incorrect based on various rules. Based on the numbers gathered, the usage of three of the variables still conforms to prescriptive rules for the most part, while the word “whom” has almost entirely yielded to “who” when the objective is called for. This development has been in motion for decades and might predict the changes for the other three variables and other grammar rules.
# Table of Contents

Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 5

Lowth’s *Short Introduction to English Grammar* ................................................................. 6

  Lowth’s General Principles of Grammar ............................................................................. 7

Prescriptive and Descriptive Grammar .............................................................................. 8

Researching Grammar on TV ............................................................................................. 9

Methodology ....................................................................................................................... 9

The Shows ........................................................................................................................... 10

Analysis ............................................................................................................................... 11

  “To lay” vs. “to lie” ........................................................................................................... 11

  “X and Me” vs. “X and I” ................................................................................................ 13

  “Who” vs. “Whom” ......................................................................................................... 16

  “May” vs. “might” .......................................................................................................... 18

  All Data .......................................................................................................................... 20

Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 21

Appendix 1 – “lay” / “lie” ................................................................................................ 24

Appendix 2 – “X and I” / “X and me” .............................................................................. 25

Appendix 3 – “who” / “whom” ......................................................................................... 29

Appendix 4 – “may” / “might” ........................................................................................ 30

Works Cited ...................................................................................................................... 34
Introduction

The way we speak is largely controlled by trends in the language and how we experience speech around us. William Tyndale translated the New Testament into English in 1525 and, in doing so, introduced many new words and phrases which are still in use today (Meyer 34). Shakespeare is famous for having invented words which took hold around him and whose usage persists even now. He changed nouns into verbs, added suffixes and prefixes, and created compound words to get a slightly different meaning out of them. His neologisms include blanket, cold-blooded, to elbow, luggage, laughable, and many more (Mabillard). Bishop Robert Lowth was one of the first to write down particular grammar rules (Meyer 34), which people today unwittingly cling to even though it was written in 1762 and the English language has greatly changed since then. A Budweiser commercial that ran during the Super Bowl in 1999 got friends shouting “whassup” at each other at every opportunity, and this trend regularly resurfaces when new commercials are broadcast. These evolutions in grammar and vocabulary are spread by the popular media of the day. Tyndale’s words and phrases were disseminated to the public via King James Version in 1611 (Meyer 34), which was largely based on Tyndale’s version (Wansbrough). It is very likely that most families owned a Bible or the New Testament back in those days, and it might have been even the only literature available to the poor. Shakespeare’s work has also been widely broadcasted throughout the ages and is mandatory reading for most people learning English. And finally, the Super Bowl and its commercials are watched by millions every year, so the exposure to the language used, both during the commentary and the commercials, is enormous.

With exposure to other people’s speech, grammar and vocabulary are bound to change. Word meaning is shifting and word formation with it. For example “irregardless” is noted as a nonstandard version of “regardless” in the dictionary, even though using both “ir-” and “-less” is a redundant use of negatives. Another example of the shift is that a collection of slang, abbreviations, text-speak, and new words and phrases can be found online on urbandictionary.com. Fewer and fewer can recognize þágufallssýki (“dative disease”: the compulsion to use the dative or nominative form of nominals where the accusative is the prescriptively correct form) in Icelandic, or why “I’m going to lay down” is technically incorrect. However, as Robert Lowth writes in
his *Short Introduction to English Grammar*, “[t]he principal design of a Grammar of any Language is to teach us to express ourselves with propriety in that Language” (Lowth iv), and, back in his day, it was polite and respectable to use proper grammar and not end sentences with prepositions, both in publishing and in communications. But how relevant is that today, when speech is much more relaxed, and popular media is probably leading the way? Writers and television producers want the public to relate to their product and empathize with it, and in this day and age, formal speech is often considered pompous and sometimes even conceited. By looking at some of the most common breaches of prescriptive grammar on American television, I want to determine where the changes lie and what those changes might mean for the development of the English language.

**Lowth’s *Short Introduction to English Grammar***

Robert Lowth, who came from a line of clergymen, chose the path of the Church and eventually became the Archbishop of Canterbury (van Ostade 246). He intended to write *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* for his son, but the publisher from his previous work decided to publish and advertise it for the public (van Ostade 242). This book is one of the earliest publications on English grammar and its proper use, and many later grammar books are closely based on his work. It details the different letters, words, and sentence structures, among other things, like punctuation. In addition, the last ten pages of the book are dedicated to practice sentences which are analyzed word-by-word to define their categories and cases, together with explanations as to why they get that case.

In the Preface to *A Short Introduction*, Lowth talks about the development of the English language during the two centuries prior to the publication of his book. He mentions how “[i]t hath been considerably polished and refined; its bounds have been greatly enlarged; its energy, variety, richness, and elegance, have been abundantly proved, by numberless trials, in verse and in prose, upon all subjects, and in every kind of style” (iii). However, immediately afterward he says that in spite of these improvements, “it hath made no advances in Grammatical Accuracy” (iii). He then spends most of the book laying out the grammar rules, not only the way they seem to be in English, but also how *he* feels they should be, and when *he* thinks these rules can be
broken. In several footnotes he mentions his opinions; in one case he addresses the use of *whose* as a possessive case of *which*, and proclaims this to be an improper use (33); in other cases he exempts poetry from proper grammar rules (38, 124). He seems not to have used any resources for his book, aside from the publications he criticizes for using either good or bad grammar.

According to Lowth, the reason that many native speakers of English speak incorrectly is that grammar is neglected, not because it is difficult to learn, but because it is so simple that grammarians hadn’t thought it worthwhile to document syntax (vi-viii). Indeed, he addresses Jonathan Swift’s public letter to the Earl of Oxford in which Swift criticizes the state of the language. Lowth believed Swift to be justified in his judgment, as he writes “he is one of the most correct, and perhaps the best, of our prose-writers” (iv). For his own part, Lowth theorizes as to why the English language is so affronting, both to himself and Swift:

> Does it mean, that the English Language, as it is spoken by the politest part of the nation, and as it stands in the writings of our most approved authors, often offends against every part of Grammar? Thus far, I am afraid, the charge is true. Or does it further imply, that our Language is in its nature irregular and capricious; not hitherto subject, nor easily reducible, to a System of rules? In this respect, I am persuaded, the charge is wholly without foundation. (v)

The first statement he backs up with his comments on published works, whether it be Shakespeare or Pope, and the second he proves right with the publication of his book. Lowth presents two reasons for why grammar is important: first, “to teach us to express ourselves with propriety in that Language; and to enable us to judge of every phrase and form of construction, whether it be right or not” (xi); second, “the facilitating of the acquisition of other Languages, whether antient [sic] or modern” (xii).

**Lowth’s General Principles of Grammar**

Only a part of Lowth’s grammar rules are relevant to my thesis and the principles of grammar I will explore later on. I will be comparing his rules to more recent published works on grammar, documenting the difference, if there is any, and then exploring how relevant they are in modern day society by observation of American television shows.
The debated rule of never ending a sentence with a preposition is often credited to Robert Lowth (O’Conner and Kellerman). Several grammar blogs refute this rule, either calling it a myth or an outdated rule. When I googled “never end a sentence with a preposition,” four of the first ten results spoke of this as a myth or superstition, five referred to the Churchill quote “This is the sort of bloody nonsense up with which I will not put” (Brians; Churchill) (in five different variations) — and three of those spoke of it as a grammar rule — and the last one was a YouTube clip from a comedy show. Out of the pro-rule sites, one said it was a just-because rule (Walston), the second claimed it was a rule with certain exceptions (Ending a sentence in a preposition), while the third one spoke of it as a rule meant to be broken (Eberz). Only one of these sites refers to Lowth as the source (Walston), while the others either don’t speak of the source or claim it to be a Latin remnant. Lowth, however, said: “Prepositions, so called because they are commonly put before the words to which they are applied, serve to connect words with one another, and to show relation between them” [bold emphasis mine] (89). Here, he does not mention that they cannot occur at the end of a sentence, though he later criticizes Pope for ending several sentences with them. According to Lowth, it is a common idiom in English to “separate [a preposition] from the Relative which it governs, and join [it] to the Verb at the end of a sentence,” and that “it prevails in common conversation, and suits very well with the familiar style in writing” (133). He then adds that “the placing of the Preposition before the Relative is more graceful as well as more perspicuous; and agrees much better with the solemn and elevated style” (134), which implies that this so-called rule is simply a stylistic choice. Somewhere over the years this was translated into a rule, and there are still people who will stick by it, despite it being a difficult practice to live up to.

**Prescriptive and Descriptive Grammar**

To make life harder for language learners and speakers, the world of grammar is not always simply wrong or right. Each language has its own set of rules that make up the grammar of that language, and most of the literary ones most likely have at least two versions: prescriptive grammar and descriptive grammar.

Prescriptive grammar mostly came about during the eighteenth-century when men like Robert Lowth and Samuel Johnson set about writing their grammars and
dictionaries (Yule 77). It means that there are certain sets of rigid rules that make up the proper use of that language, i.e., there is a sense of “wrong” and “right.” For instance, the aforementioned “never end a sentence with a preposition” rule counts as prescriptive. Descriptive grammar is more focused on the actual usage of language, or as Yule says in *The Study of Language*, “attempt[s] to describe the regular structures of the language as it [is] used, not according to some view of how it should be used” (78). For instance, the results rendered from my research should depict the descriptive grammar in the United States today.

While descriptive grammar is the one in use among speakers, prescriptive grammar is more likely to be used when writing official or academic documents. The difference between the two shows certain distinctions between formal and informal settings, and being prescriptive about grammar can completely change the tone of the speech or written work.

**Researching Grammar on TV**

**Methodology**

In order to research common breaches of prescriptive grammar on television in the United States, I chose to focus on popular television shows. I selected season 1 seven of *Grey’s Anatomy*, season six of *How I Met Your Mother*, and season two of *Glee*, all of which are widely popular both within the United States and elsewhere in the world. I specifically chose these seasons as they were the most recently released on DVD when I started the research. All of these seasons aired in the winter of 2010-2011. As none of these TV shows has transcripts available online, I watched every episode and made notes whenever I noticed something of interest. I listened for certain words and phrases, making sure to document both correct and incorrect usage, according to prescriptive grammar.

The four main variables I chose to study were “lay” vs. “lie,” “X and I” vs. “X and me,” “may” vs. “might,” and “who” vs. “whom.” On the side, I also took notes on use of prepositions, mostly at the end of sentences, and a category I named “other,” including usage of adverbs and adjectives. The prepositions category ended up being the

---

1 In American terminology, “season” means the set of episodes running together during a period of one year (usually). The word “series” is used to mean the entire span of the television show.
biggest set of data, but studying them in this case would probably not render accurate results, since this category conflates several different features. In the case of “who” vs. “whom,” I focused on instances where the sentence called for “whom.”

The Shows

How I Met Your Mother (HIMYM) is a half-hour show that circles around five friends living in New York City. Ted, the main character, spends each season looking for his true love, while his four friends, Lily, Marshall, Robin and Barney, help (or sometimes hinder) him in this search. Along the way, these five characters have to deal with relationship issues, advances in and loss of jobs, starting families, and maintaining friendships.

Glee is a one-hour show set in William McKinley High School in Lima, Ohio. It is a musical comedy about a group of social outcasts who get together and form a show choir at their school. The show touches upon subjects relevant to teenagers in today’s society, such as homosexuality, bullying, teen pregnancy, underage drinking, forming and maintaining friendships and romantic relationships, and finding one’s voice in the crowd. There are love triangles, unrequited loves, break-ups and make-ups, and everything else that comes with being a teenager on popular TV. Each season, the kids compete at singing competitions, trying to reach the ultimate goal: winning the national championship of show choirs.

Grey’s Anatomy is a one-hour medical-drama set in Seattle, Washington. Meredith Grey, the main character, is a resident at Seattle Grace Mercy West Hospital and is trying to balance her personal life and her career. She and her fellow residents have to deal with making difficult decisions as doctors and choosing between following protocol or doing what they feel is right.

These three shows are set in different areas in the United States, have different kinds of characters, and depict hypothetical but realistic situations in very different ways. They are broadcast on three different networks and on different days. According to the Nielsen ratings for the winter of 2010-2011, the shows collectively had over 30 million viewers, though some of those viewers may have watched two or all three shows. However, the differences between the three shows might limit repeat viewers.

Table 1 shows the ranking and viewership of these three shows according to the Nielsen ratings in 2010-2011, taken from TV by the Numbers (Gorman).
The Nielsen ratings do not account for illegal downloads, online streaming, recordings, or DVD sales, so the exposure is most likely greater than these numbers show.

What the Nielsen does is measure the behavior and demographic of the viewers of television shows by constructing panels via metering technology and viewer diaries (The Nielsen Company). This technology gathers data about how many devices are tuned in during the airing of a show or have it on demand (via services such as Netflix or TiVo) and calculates the ratings and share. The rating is based on the number of all household viewers, while share represents the percentage out of households (Nielsen Media Research). These numbers are mentioned simply for background purposes and will not be referred to again.

**Analysis**

When referring to “correct usage” and “incorrect usage,” I base the determination on prescriptive grammar.

All data can be found at the end in Appendixes 1-4.

**“To lay” vs. “to lie”**

The verbs “to lay” and “to lie” are often confused as they follow a common pattern of other similar-sounding English verbs, when one verb is weak (takes –ed or –d in past tense) and transitive, while the other is strong (has an irregular ending in past tense) and intransitive (such as hang/hanged vs. hang/hung). In this case, the former is a transitive
verb and therefore requires a direct object, while the latter is intransitive and does not need an object (Lunsford 284). To add to the confusion is the fact that the verb “to lie” becomes “to lay” in past tense, so the word “lay” itself is more common in English.

In the 22 episodes of season seven of Grey’s Anatomy, there were 13 instances of “lay,” “lie,” or a derivative of the two words, averaging 0.59 instances per episode. Seven of them were variations of “lay” and six were variations of “lie.” Out of the 13 occurrences, eight were correct (i.e., “to lay” was followed by an object; “to lie” had no object), three were incorrect (i.e., “to lay” was not followed by an object), and for the last two, which was one clause repeated, it was difficult to determine the correctness. In episode 18, the clause “if I lay here” is repeated as a part of a musical number, in which the word “lay” is used without being followed by an object. However, the word “if” indicates this is a conditional clause using “to lie” in its past tense, especially since the clause that follows (“would you lie with me”) includes the correct usage of “to lie.” All six instances of “to lie” were used correctly; the three errors were all instances of using the verb “to lay” instead of “to lie.” In the overall use, the correct verb was used almost two-thirds of the time, or 62%. When focusing solely on the correct or incorrect use of the verb “to lay” and not counting the use of a possible conditional, it was used incorrectly 60% of the time (see chart 1).

Glee’s 22 episodes included 14 instances of “to lay,” and five of “to lie,” or a total of 19 occurrences (averaging 0.86 samples per episode). Of these, 15 were correct and four were incorrect. Five of the 15 correct instances were cases of “to lie,” and all four incorrect instances were cases of “to lay” where it should have been “to lie.” There was one sentence that was tricky; the sentence “Lay off Finn” (2:08:15) at first
didn’t seem to have an object, but “to lay off someone/something” means to leave someone/something alone, which makes “Finn” the object, or the someone who is to be left alone. The data showed that “to lie” and “to lay” was used correctly almost 79% of the time. In the case of “to lay” being used correctly, there is slightly different ratio, or 71% correct usage (see chart 2).

_HIMYM_ had by far the fewest results, with only three uses of “to lie” or “to lay,” two of the former and one of the latter. On average, there were 0.13 instances per episode. Both instances of “to lie” were correct, but the one “to lay” was used incorrectly (6:06:11). In terms of ratio, the usages were correct 67% of the time, but the limited data cannot show an accurate picture of the correctness of the use of “lay.”

In the 35 examples collected from these three shows, while the verb “to lie” was always used correctly, the verb “to lay” was almost half the time used incorrectly. The writers used “to lay” instead of “to lie” 40% of the time (see chart 3).

“X and Me” vs. “X and I”
A common hypercorrection is to use the nominative “I” in all instances when talking about oneself and another person, instead of using the objective form “me” when prepositions or transitive verbs call for it. When it comes to the word order (i.e., “X and Me/I” or “Me/I and X”) there are few rules that dictate which should come first, the speaker or the other person. In their discussion on coordinated noun phrases in _Grammar of Spoken and Written English_, Biber et al. say “I is almost always placed second in the coordinated phrase. I represents a more considered choice, and it is felt to be more tactful to delay reference to the speaker; in addition, it is considered to be formally more correct, according to prescriptive grammar, to use a nominative form” (338).

There were 28 instances of compound subjects or objects that included the pronouns “I” or “me” in _Grey’s Anatomy_, or 1.27 instances per episode. Out of those, 24 were correctly used, one incorrectly, and three were difficult to tell. There were 24
instances of “X and I” and all but one were correct; the last one was the sentence “Just Lily and I,” in the context of a single parent telling the doctors that they only have each other (7:06:27). Assuming the words “it is” have been omitted, prescriptive grammar rules would say this is right, but “it is me” is becoming the norm (Biber et al. 336).

There was another sentence that had a similar structure, though it took the accusative form; “So it’s just you and me” (7:05:29) has the same structure as “Just Lily and I,” though in this case “it is” is included but followed with the accusative. In any case, one or the other is incorrect, based on whether the accusative or nominative form is considered more correct. There was also the sentence “Me and you, okay” (7:04:39), which put the speaker first in the compound instead of the traditional way of putting oneself last. This is not included in either correct or incorrect category, also because it is unclear which case is correct. Even the context and the preceding sentence duel each other, as the context suggests that they are facing the world together (which allows for the sentence to be “[it’s just] me and you, okay”), while the preceding sentence “Whatever happens, happens” could mean the sentence is “[it will happen to] me and you, okay.” Without a transitive verb or preposition to govern the compound, neither overt nor covert, the nominative is more likely to be correct.

The only definitely incorrect instance of this variable in Grey’s Anatomy was the sentence “We’re finally happy, you and me” (7:17:32), when it should have been “you and I.” Even though “X and me” would be accepted in day-to-day conversation, in this case it is supposed to be repeating the beginning of the sentence (“We’re”), so it should display the same case as the original phrase.

The ratio of the correctness of all data for Grey’s Anatomy is 86% correct instances and 11% incorrect (see chart 4). The correct data includes one of the questionable sentences (“Just Lily and I,” and “So it’s just you and me”), while the other sentence was put in Incorrect. “Me and you, okay”
is categorized as Other. Even if the last sentence had been deemed incorrect, the prescriptively correct sentences would still have been by far the largest group, with 86%.

*Glee* had by far the biggest data sample of the three series, providing 87 instances of this variable, or 3.95 samples per episode. The majority of these instances was “X and I,” or a total of 71 samples. Only nine times was it used in cases where “X and me” was appropriate. “X and me” appeared nine times, and seven times it was used instead of the correct “X and I.” There were six cases of “me and X,” using the right case, though the correctness of the order is debatable.

There was one sentence, “You and me, eight o’clock, Breadsticks” (2:02:38), that had the right order but the correctness of the case is questionable. It has no overt or obvious covert transitive verb or preposition to determine the case.

The data presented correct cases over 80% of the time, including those instances when the order was reversed (see chart 5). The sentence mentioned in the last paragraph is the 1% represented as Other. In the data there were 108 instances of “I” and only 27 instances of “me,” which clearly shows the preference for using “X and I.” The use of “X and I” was correct 98% of the time, and “X and me,” including those instances where the pronouns were switched, was correct 61% of the time. If the switched pronouns are counted as incorrect, the ratio becomes 26% correct usage of “X and me” versus 74% incorrect.

There were 20 instances of this variable in *How I Met Your Mother*, or 0.83 instances per episode, on average. “X and I” was used correctly 13 times, and “X and me” was correct

---

2 Instances of “I and X” were none.
three times. There were three instances of “me and X,” one of which used the wrong personal pronoun (i.e., “it will just be me and Zoey” (06:11:01) instead of “it will just be Zoey and I”). One sentence had possibly the wrong personal pronoun (i.e., “I just wanna make sure you and I hanging out doesn’t, you know, cross any lines” (6:11:20) instead of the strictly correct “your and my”), though the current form could be accepted and is counted as correct in my data.

The show used the correct cases 95% of the time, including sentences with reversed order (see chart 6). Even when the reversed pronoun sentences are counted as incorrect, the data shows an incorrect usage at only 15%.

The television shows collected 135 samples of this variable—1.99 per episode on average. In charts 7 – 9 above, there is a drastic difference between the correctness of “X and I” and “X and me.” The latter includes the sentences that had the compound in reversed order. “X and I” was used most of the time correctly, while “X and me” is only correct 61% of the time. Chart 9, representing the ratio between the use of “X and me” and “me and X” looks similar to chart 8 and could suggest there was some correlation between the usage of “me and X” and the incorrect usage of “X and me,” though the data has only one incorrect usage of “me and X.”

“Who” vs. “Whom”
The subjective “who” has been used instead of “whom,” the objective, for decades, probably even centuries, and has been gradually gaining acceptance. H. W. Fowler mentions this in his *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* from 1964, though he still

---

3 Does not include Grey’s Anatomy samples 07:06:27 and 07:05:29, since which sample is correct has yet to be determined.
calls these usages “mistakes” (723). When discussing the results of this variable, I will be ignoring the fact that some of the sentences end in a preposition. The goal was to study the use of “who” or “whom” in sentences when “whom” should be used, not the word order. During the course of this research, there were no instances of the use of “whom” when “who” should have been used.

Grey’s Anatomy had eight examples of “who” vs. “whom,” or 0.36 instances per episode. Only twice was the word “whom” used. One of those occasions was a part of formal speech at a wedding ceremony (7:20:35), while the other was during a speech by a distressed character and there was no discernible reason for her to speak formally (7:14:08). The latter instance was therefore a one-of-a-kind instance of the correct usage of the objective “whom” in day-to-day speech in this series. All in all, it was correctly used only a quarter of the time (see chart 10). Of the incorrect instances, four were followed by a preposition and two were preceded by a transitive verb.

In Glee, there were no instances of the word “whom” and nine when “who” was used in its stead, averaging 0.41 instances per episode. Six of these instances had a preposition later in the sentence; one instance had the preposition in front of the pronoun; one was preceded by a transitive verb; and the last one was an answer to a question, so it included a covert transitive verb.

How I Met Your Mother had more examples of sentences that should have had “whom,” or 14 samples, averaging 0.63 samples per episode. The season also had an instance of “whoever” where “whomever” should have been used, which is included in the results. Interestingly, there was one instance where “who” was used instead of “whose,” but this is not included in the statistics. The two times HIMYM got it right according to prescriptive rules, the pronoun was preceded by the preposition governing its case. Of the twelve incorrect instances, half the time the pronoun had the controlling preposition somewhere following it, twice the preposition preceded it, and four were followed by transitive verbs.
The writers of these three shows used the wrong case 87% of the time the pronoun “whom” was called for (see chart 11). With 31 cases all in all, this variable appeared on average 0.47 times per episode. Two of the four cases of correctly using “whom” had governing prepositions preceding them, and the other two had transitive verbs following the variable. Of the incorrect cases, only three sentences had a governing preposition preceding the variable, while 16 cases had the preposition at the end of the clause.

“Whom” is clearly overlooked a lot of the time, and this might have something to do with the relaxed style stranded prepositions offer to speech.

“May” vs. “might”

According to Leech and Svartvik, the difference between “may” and “might” in the most basic terms is the degree of possibility: “may” is factual possibility (128) while “might” in [its] hypothetical sense [is] often used to express <tentative> possibility” (129). They also express permission (143). In my deliberation over each example of this variable in my data, I therefore attempted to include these criteria, which may at times be subjective in my analysis of the following data.

Grey’s Anatomy had 36 instances of this variable, averaging 1.25 instances per episode, out of which I had a problem identifying three examples. The first one was the idiom “come what may” (7:18:30), though it is likely referring to a factual possibility: something will be coming; it is just a question of what it will be. The other two problem sentences were “who might or might not be called Ben” (7:09:32), spoken in a drunken
stupor, and “what I might have seen or might not have seen” (7:15:24). In the other cases, there were 24 correct examples and nine incorrect. Out of the 24 correct, five were “may” as permission, 16 were “may” as factual possibility, and three were “might” as theoretical possibility. “May” marked permission 24% of the times it appeared in this set of data. All of the incorrect instances were “might” as factual possibility. The usages were correct two-thirds of the time (see chart 13). The three sentences I couldn’t identify are included as Other. “Might” was used correctly only 22% of the time.

*Glee* had 37 instances of this variable, averaging 1.68 instances per episode. Out of these, 29 were correct, five incorrect, and three I could not determine. Two from the last category were instances of “may or may not,” as opposed to the “might or might not” from *Grey’s Anatomy*. The last sentence is “I had a feeling you might be behind this” (2:17:31), which could fit Christophersen and Sandved’s description: “If the verb of reporting is in the past tense the auxiliary in the reported speech occurs in a different form from the one used in the original utterance: it may be true – he said it might be true” (204).

Out of the 25 instances of “may” in the *Glee* data, ten (or 42%) marked permission. The occurrences of “might” were right four times and wrong five times. The overall categorization is similar to the one for *Grey’s Anatomy*, though the correct instances were at 78%, or 11% higher (see chart 15).

What is interesting to remark in regards to *Glee* is that half of the instances of permission were uttered by the character Kurt Hummel, a recently-out gay teenager who has a flair for daring fashion and theatricality (somewhat of a cliché). In all of those instances he correctly used “may.” Presumably, the writers have chosen to utilize this more formal way of asking for permission to emphasize his character trait of theatricality and decorum.
HIMYM provided only a third of the data the other shows had for this variable, or a total of 12 samples as opposed to their 36 and 37 samples. Eight of the 12 were correct, and four incorrect, or 67% versus 33% (see chart 17). All of the incorrect ones were instances of “might,” which came out to 57% incorrect usages of “might” as opposed to 43% correct instances. The correct sentences included five instances of “may” and three of “might.” Not once was this variable used in the sense of permission.

All in all, there were 85 examples of “may” or “might,” or 1.25 instances on average per episode. Not counting the six sentences not yet determined, all 51 instances of “may” were used correctly, but only 36% of the uses of “might” were correct. “May” was used for permission in 15 sentences, or 29% of the time. If the instances used for permission are disregarded, the modal “may” is used only 56% of the time.

**All Data**

With all four variables and all three shows, the data ended up being 287 samples from popular American television programs, or 4.22 samples per episode on average. Correct samples were 194, 79 were incorrect, and 14 were inconclusive. The correct data is in noticeable majority at 68% (see chart 18). The almost complete lack of correct samples in the “whom” variable skews the overall outcome, though these results are only a vague idea of correct usages in these three shows and on American television.

The “X and I/me” variable had the most data, and so did Glee. HIMYM only surpassed the others in the “whom” variable (see table 2).
Conclusion

By looking at the results from studying these four variables, the trend in speech on popular American television shows becomes apparent: only one of the four seems to be in danger of becoming obsolete. “Lay vs. lie,” “X and I/me,” and “may/might” all had correct instances in vast majority, while “whom” was almost exclusively incorrect (see table 3).

It is surprising that in the compound subject/object variable, usages that are prescriptively incorrect have become accepted in everyday speech (e.g. “it’s just you and me”), in spite of the fact that the correct usage still prevails. The distribution could
be the way it is because the scripts have been proofread for prescriptive language, though the amount of prescriptive errors still present makes that unlikely.

Looking at the “whom” variable, it is clear that the use of “whom” in day-to-day speech is dwindling, though this was predictable, as this has been the case for decades (as is evident in Fowler’s A Dictionary of Modern English Usage, originally written in 1926), if not centuries. Perhaps it is time to accept that the use of “whom” is archaic and only belongs in formal writing. This is something that would need to be studied in more detail and with a bigger sample group, though I believe using television shows and other popular media to study this variable is a valid medium, as popular media have had a lot of influence on contemporary speech throughout history.

At first glance, the “may/might” data looked as if the modals were being used interchangeably, and the usage of “may” versus “might” without counting the times “may” was used as permission or idiom came very close to being equal (see chart 19). Based on the frequency of instances of either word, the modals may actually have been used interchangeably. This variable is also something to study more closely to get a more accurate reading on its status in modern language use. It should also be studied in relation to the modals “can” and “could,” especially when it comes to permission. As represented on American television today, people seem to get “may” or “might” right roughly three times out of four, so it has some way to go before it can be considered to becoming obsolete.

The hypercorrection of “X and I” instead of “X and me” is such a common phenomenon that I fully expected to see very few samples of the latter. What I discovered, however, was that the real challenge of collecting the data was to catch the correct instances of this variable, since the errors were by definition more noticeable. Despite this, “X and me” was only correct 60% of the time, including the reversed order of pronouns, so this case could soon be only held together by a couple of old rules which would no longer apply. The question is, would this form ever be considered formal if it became outdated, as is the case with the use of “whom,” or would it be
frowned upon? After all, the reason this is falling by the wayside is because people believe “X and I” to be the proper case.

Lastly, “lay” versus “lie” presented very similar results as “X and I/me”; the use of “lay” instead of “lie” happened 40% of the time in all the shows. The reason for this slow take-over is probably the fact that “lay” is also a form of “lie,” so this is a source of confusion. It could be worthwhile studying more closely the instances when this breach occurs, and whether it is related to the structure of the language, or whether it has something to do with the speaker (in which case, a scripted television show would probably not be of much use). It would also be interesting to compare these results to ones from a similar research project done for the words leggja “lay” and liggja “lie” in Icelandic, as they are closely related to the English words and follow the same grammatical pattern (i.e., the weak verb takes a regular ending in past tense and is transitive; the strong verb is irregular and intransitive).

In the last three variables, I believe it may be possible to maintain the prescriptive rules in everyday speech, and anybody wanting to be like the average person on television might try to copy this correct usage. “Whom” must concede to being shelved for everyday speech and only brought out for special occasions, such as wedding vows or academic papers; there is very little chance of American television bringing it back into colloquial speech. Perhaps it is time to accept that despite many attempts to prove otherwise, Lowth being one of the first, the English language is in a constant state of flux and will not be “easily [reduced] to a System of rules” (Lowth v).
## Appendix 1 – “lay” / “lie”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>How I Met Your Mother</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:06:11</td>
<td>Before you lay with a maiden</td>
<td>Marvin Eriksen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:18:05</td>
<td>I may however lie on her</td>
<td>Barney Stinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:21:03</td>
<td>I can’t have any single female friends lying around</td>
<td>Barney Stinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grey’s Anatomy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:02:00</td>
<td>Seeing Derek lying on the floor</td>
<td>Meredith Grey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:03:28</td>
<td>You laid in a pool of your own blood</td>
<td>Richard Webber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:12:29</td>
<td>Lay it on me</td>
<td>Teddy Altman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:15:23</td>
<td>Lay back, let me examine you</td>
<td>Derek Shepherd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:16:25</td>
<td>Gonna lay low for a couple of weeks</td>
<td>Teddy Altman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:18:34</td>
<td>Lay down a list</td>
<td>Arizona, “How to Save a Life” by The Fray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:18:03</td>
<td>If I lay here, if I just lay here&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>The cast, “Chasing Cars” by Snow Patrol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:18:03</td>
<td>would you lie with me</td>
<td>The cast, “Chasing Cars” by Snow Patrol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:19:06</td>
<td>Lie back</td>
<td>Christina Yang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:22:32</td>
<td>While you’re lying in a hospital bed</td>
<td>Teddy Altman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:22:37</td>
<td>I need to lie down</td>
<td>Christina Yang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:22:40</td>
<td>I’ve gotta lie down</td>
<td>Christina Yang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Glee</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:03:11</td>
<td>As I lay me down</td>
<td>Mercedes, “I Look to You” by Whitney Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:03:15</td>
<td>Let’s lay down on the bed</td>
<td>Rachel Berry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:03:23</td>
<td>Help me face what lies ahead</td>
<td>Rachel, “Papa, Can You Hear Me” by Barbra Streisand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:03:37</td>
<td>I will lay me down</td>
<td>Mercedes, “Bridge Over Troubled Water” by Aretha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>4</sup> Format: Season:Episode:Minute

<sup>5</sup> Counts as two
2:04:11  You gotta lay low for a little bit         Franklin
2:04:11  and singing with another dude is not laying low       Finn Hudson
2:08:08  This kid lays a finger on you         Sue Sylvester
2:08:10  Did he ever just lie there          Brittany S. Pierce
2:08:15  Lay off Finn                  Kurt Hummel
2:11:20  To choose once and for all where your true loyalties lie       Sue Sylvester
2:11:31  We’re just gonna lie down on the ground, we’re just gonna lie there 6
2:12:03  To just lay it all on the line     Blaine Anderson
2:14:41  Lay one on him                      Rachel Berry
2:18:47  I’m not so sure I wanna lay on a couch      Emma Pillsbury

Appendix 2 – “X and I” / “X and me”

**How I Met Your Mother**

6:02:00  So this chick and I are going at it                  Barney Stinson
6:02:06  Hey it’s a picture of you and me when we were little kids       Barney Stinson
6:02:06  There’s a picture of me and Barney in an envelope   James Stinson
6:03:18  Don and I will always be a loose end            Robin Scherbatsky
6:03:18  Don and I were moving in together             Robin Scherbatsky
6:11:01  I guess it will just be me and Zoey          Ted Mosby
6:11:02  Zoey and I are just friends                  Ted Mosby
6:11:03  You and I never really hang out alone        Marshall Eriksen
6:11:20  I just wanna make sure you and I hanging out doesn’t, you know, cross any lines       Ted Mosby
6:13:03  So my wife and I are trying to get pregnant    Marshall Eriksen
6:15:00  Zoey and I met because she was trying to save an old building from being torn down     Ted Mosby - voiceover
6:15:14  I really thought you and I were friends         Zoey Pierson
6:16:10  Zoey and I are getting serious on Valentine’s Day       Ted Mosby
6:16:14  There is one difference between you and me          Nora
6:19:08  Between you and me, I had a lot of acid last night      Jerome Whittaker
6:20:01  Zoey and I loved to challenge each other      Ted Mosby - voiceover

6 Counts as two
7 Counts as four
6:20:02 Marshall and I have been together 15 years
Lily Aldrin

6:20:11 You know, just because Zoey and I are a different kind of couple than you and Marshall doesn’t make us a worse couple
Ted Mosby

6:21:01 Would you like to go fishing with me and J.J. on Sunday morning
Jerome Whittaker

6:24:00 In the spring of 2011, Zoey and I broke up
Ted Mosby - voiceover

Grey’s Anatomy

7:01:04 Torres and I are gonna need to coordinate
Mark Sloan

7:02:29 This is something you and I do
Callie Torres

7:03:17 Meanwhile, you and I are like the government
Derek Shepherd

7:03:28 You and I are gonna take the elevator
Richard Webber

7:04:13 Lexie and I were talking about the living situation
April Kepner

7:04:37 We’re going on a date, you and I, alone
Arizona Robbins

7:04:39 And you and I, we’ll have a lot of sex
Derek Shepherd

7:04:39 [Whatever happens, happens] Me and you, okay
Derek Shepherd

7:05:29 So it’s just you and me, sourpuss
Heart patient

7:06:09 Derek and I, we go way back
Mark Sloan

7:06:11 Bill and I left town
Colonoscopy patient

7:06:27 [It’s just the two of us.] Just Lily and I
Trachea patient’s mom

7:08:14 Between you and me, he’s a good man
Secret Service Officer

7:08:22 Dr. Hunt and I are going to operate
Teddy Altman

7:10:22 You and I, we don’t work
Lexie Grey

7:12:25 Brady and I went to sign the papers
Gay patient’s partner

7:12:31 You and I are like siblings
Arizona Robbins

7:13:14 Ben and I watched as […]
Alzheimer patient’s wife

7:13:18 How can Meredith and I try for months
Derek Shepherd

7:15:21 Dr. Altman and I agree
Meredith Grey

7:17:21 You and I are technically married
Teddy Altman

7:17:28 Richard and I stayed home
Adele Webber

7:17:32 We’re finally happy, you and me
Adele Webber

7:18:38 You and I will be parents
Derek Shepherd

7:19:05 Altman and I had a falling out
Christina Yang

7:20:14 You and I are getting married
Arizona Robbins

7:21:29 Lucy and I, it’s new
Alex Karev

7:22:36 You and I, we’re a team
Meredith Grey
Glee
2:02:10 ‘Cuz Brits and I wants to get our anesthesia on Santana Lopez
2:02:15 I don’t know what’s gonna happen with Emma and I Carl Howell
2:02:29 To tell Coach Beiste that Finn and I both wanna be on the team Artie Abrams
2:02:37 [frustrated about] Me and Carl Emma Pillsbury
2:02:38 With all the nastiness between you and I behind us Quinn Fabray
2:02:38 You and me, eight o’clock, Breadsticks Quinn Fabray
2:03:40 I believe in us, you and me, that’s what’s sacred to me Kurt Hummel
2:04:13 He and I are singing a duet together Kurt Hummel
2:04:17 I’ve already bought custom bibs for me and Mercedes here Santana Lopez
2:04:29 You’re probably not gonna beat Finn and I Rachel Berry
2:04:38 I think that you and I are a little bit more similar than you think Rachel Berry
2:04:38 It’s got everything that both you and I love Rachel Berry
2:04:38 I thought this one could be for me and you Rachel Berry
2:05:03 Carl and I are gonna dress up as characters from the show Emma Pillsbury
2:06:11 You and I are gonna take this dough Noah Puckerman
2:06:13 You and I, we’ll be young together/forever Blaine, “Teenage Dream” by Katy Perry
2:06:32 Kurt and I would like to talk to you about something Blaine Anderson
2:07:38 She and I both agreed Will Schuester
2:08:02 Rob ad I are engaged TV woman
2:08:31 Rachel and I are Finchel Finn Hudson
2:09:01 For Finn and I to sing Rachel Berry
2:09:02 ‘Cuz he and I totally got it on last year Santana Lopez
2:09:13 You and I never had a chance at either of them Tina Cohen-Chang
2:09:37 Are we a part of something special, you and me Finn Hudson
2:10:00 Since I told you about me and Carl Emma Pillsbury
2:10:01 Carl and I are having a big Christmas eve party Emma Pillsbury
2:10:25 You and I are the leaders of this club Rachel Berry
2:11:07 ‘Cuz you and I are gonna do some dancing Sam Evans
2:11:08 She and I both agreed Will Schuester
2:11:12 Unless you and I become allies again Noah Puckerman
2:11:29 If he and I were still together Rachel Berry
2:12:22 If he and I got married Blaine Anderson
2:12:25 You and I got coffee twice Jeremiah
2:12:30 You and I, we hang out Kurt Hummel
2:12:34 And Finn and I go to the nurse Quinn Fabray
2:12:35 Until I figure out what’s going on with me and Sam Quinn Fabray
2:12:35 Nothing’s going on with me and Rachel Finn Hudson
2:13:20 You and I should talk soon Santana Lopez
2:13:42 Do you think you and I should do it together Rachel Berry
2:14:21 Kurt and I were just talking about you Blaine Anderson
2:14:27 Blaine and I have a lot in common Rachel Berry
2:14:32 Finn and I didn’t have any Kurt Hummel
2:15:03 How about you and I pop in some Sweet Valley High Santana Lopez
2:15:11 You and I are not in cahoots Kurt Hummel
2:15:17 Lauren and I were gonna make a sex tape Noah Puckerman
2:15:19 Brit and I may need your help to sing it Santana Lopez
2:15:24 My dad and I rebuilt […] Blaine Anderson
2:15:29 Wish you and I were that close Sam Evans
2:15:29 Zizes and I were gonna make a sex tape Noah Puckerman
2:15:30 The girls and I are gonna perform a song Emma Pillsbury
2:15:32 I think Emma and I need an appointment Carl
2:15:32 It’s time you and I had the talk Burt Hummel
2:15:39 If Artie and I were to ever break up Brittany S. Pierce
2:15:40 I thought you and me were an item Noah Puckerman
2:16:09 Maybe you and I could write our song together Quinn Fabray
2:16:13 Tina and I have been working on a song I wrote Santana Lopez
2:16:16 It’s not gonna put you and I back where we belong Quinn Fabray
2:16:23 And then Finn and I will stay here Quinn Fabray
2:16:27 Because you and I are gonna kill this thing Blaine Anderson
2:16:29 When it was you and me Blaine and Kurt, “Candles” by Hey Monday
2:17:01 Artie, Tina, Brittany and I are on the Brainiacs Mike Chang
2:18:16 So you and I are gonna be each other’s beards Santana Lopez
2:18:22 You and I both know Will Schuester
2:18:26 Which is why Santana and I have started a new club David Karofsky
2:18:27 My wife and I spending money that we don’t have Burt Hummel
2:18:29 And demand that you and I start a chapter of PFLAG Kurt Hummel
2:19:18 Now that Artie and I aren’t together Brittany S. Pierce
2:19:19 When Finn and I used to date Rachel Berry
2:19:25 You want Finn and I to stop singing together Quinn Fabray
2:19:25 Finn and I have amazing proven harmonies Rachel Berry
2:19:33  Nothing is going on between Sam and I  Quinn Fabray
2:19:39  Dave and I are going strong  Santana Lopez
2:20:06  You and I are going to the prom  Blaine Anderson
2:20:06  Mercedes and I, we have a proposition for you  Rachel Berry
2:20:08  The Bully Whips and I would be more than happy to provide you with  Santana Lopez
2:20:33  But he and I are nominated for  Quinn Fabray
2:21:01  Rachel and I should do a duet  Finn Hudson
2:21:17  That Jesse and I once had feelings for each other  Rachel Berry
2:21:17  Jesse and I both appreciate  Rachel Berry
2:22:06  A duet with me and Rachel  Finn Hudson
2:22:23  But you and I have some unfinished business to take care of  Will Schuester
2:22:34  You and me keep on dancing in the dark  Santana, “Light Up the World” by the cast of Glee
2:22:34  You and me keep on trying  Santana, “Light Up the World” by the cast of Glee
2:22:35  You and me turn it up 10.000 watts  Finn, “Light Up the World” by the cast of Glee
2:22:35  You and me keep staring at the road  Artie/Tina, “Light Up the World” by the cast of Glee
2:22:41  What about you and I  Santana Lopez
2:22:41  All I know about you and I  Brittany S. Pierce

Appendix 3 – “who” / “whom”

How I Met Your Mother
6:01:10  Who else did you tell  Lily Aldrin
6:05:02  With whom Robin was really starting to hit it off  Ted Mosby – voiceover
6:05:09  We all change a little for whoever we’re into  Ted Mosby
6:07:07  Just tell me who you slept with  Lily Aldrin
6:07:19  Robin, who’d you sleep with  Lily Aldrin
6:13:06  Who’s the second message from  Marshall Eriksen
6:13:14  [Question: I looked up his address] Who  Robin Scherbatsky
6:15:03  Speaking of whom…  Robin Scherbatsky
6:16:03  Wherever you are, or whoever you’re under, you must get home  Barney Stinson

8 Should be “whose”—not included in statistics
While wolfing down the box of chocolates you had delivered to yourself at work from your fiancée, who no one’s ever met

Since it doesn’t really matter who Zoey’s doing now

You will not believe who I just ran into

Of who? Santa’s elves?

Okay, who do I know

Who’s that from

**Grey’s Anatomy**

Who are you with today

Who are you with again

Call who

Now who am I gonna talk to about women

Can’t choose who you save

Whom I’ve just met just now

With whom I spend my life

My friend who I told you about

**Glee**

Who are you gonna sing with, Kurt

But who are you gonna sing a duet with

So who are you gonna sing a duet with

Who are your Cheerios gonna cheer for

Why are you so caught up with who it was

You get who you get

Who you fall in love with

Who are you talking to

[do you want to disappoint her] who

**Appendix 4 – “may” / “might”**

How I Met Your Mother

I may have mentioned it in passing

We thought we might be the exception

You may be able to talk the brain surgeons you pick up into doing whatever you want but it’s not gonna work on us
31

6:02:08  He might be one of our fathers  James Stinson
6:02:08  Sam Gibbs might be  James Stinson
6:02:11  I think you may have known my mother  James Stinson
6:03:10  [Robin: This is a number you will never dial again] I might  Lily Aldrin
6:03:03  I may have called him  Robin Scherbatsky
6:04:11  It’s my fault for thinking that you might care  Robin Scherbatsky
6:04:15  The only upside is we might get rid of Barney  Lily Aldrin
6:14:12  Which is ironically what I might be looking at  Lily’s dad
6:18:05  I may however lie on her  Barney Stinson

Grey’s Anatomy
7:01:00  We may look the same  Meredith Grey
7:02:26  Other people might lock you in a cell over night to be urinated on by a meth head  Derek Shepherd
7:03:29  We may try stretching the skin  Mark Sloan
7:04:12  May I scrub in  Teddy Altman
7:04:13  She may have had syncope  Lexie Grey
7:05:40  Well, things may be a little different  Richard Webber
7:08:21  You might be more comfortable  Secret Service Officer
7:09:19  A fistula may occur in patients  Miranda Bailey
7:09:32  Who might or might not be called Ben  Miranda Bailey
7:10:01  She may have agreed to it last night  Meredith Grey
7:10:10  You may need—  Christina Yang
7:15:20  That reservation may have to wait  Teddy Altman
7:15:24  What I might have seen or might not have seen  Derek Shepherd
7:15:28  We may already be too late  Teddy Altman
7:16:20  A social worker may be coming around  Meredith Grey
7:17:10  It may not feel like it now  Meredith Grey
7:18:01  Nobody knows where we might end up  Callie, “Cosy in the Rocket” by Psapp
7:18:10  I may be a little out of my depth here  Lucy Fields
7:18:14  Might end up killing the baby  Alex Karev
7:18:17  I might need to— [do something]  Lexie Grey
7:18:17  She may not come back  Derek Shepherd
7:18:17  Her brain may not come back  Derek Shepherd
7:18:20  People may stop and stare  Nurse Eli, “Runnin’ on Sunshine” by Jesus Jackson
7:18:30  Come what may  Callie, “Grace” by Kate Havnevik
7:18:30  But I know I might change  Callie, “Grace” by Kate Havnevik
7:19:26  May I sit with you  Meredith Grey
7:19:38  Or I might be taking you home  Teddy Altman
7:19:41  You might not even recognize yourself  Meredith Grey
7:20:31  Keep this up and you may be getting your own slow clap  Richard Webber
7:20:41  May I cut in  Callie’s dad
7:21:06  It might cause you insurance headaches  Teddy Altman
7:21:20  […] and may have passed the gene on to me  Meredith Grey
7:21:39  May I please have a divorce  Henry Burton
7:22:06  You might have destroyed her career  Christina Yang
7:22:27  Pain meds she might need  Alex Karev
7:22:40  If it fell a part I might not make it  Meredith Grey

**Glee**

2:02:00  Mr. Schue, if I may  Kurt Hummel
2:03:05  The things that you might have done  Noah, “Only the Good Die Young” by Billy Joel
2:03:05  You might as well be the one  Noah, “Only the Good Die Young” by Billy Joel
2:03:17  I may have to call you back  Sue Sylvester
2:03:17  […] that might lose his father  Emma Pillsbury
2:03:21  May the light of this flickering candle illuminate  Rachel, “Papa, Can You Hear Me” by Barbra Streisand
2:03:26  Mr. Schue, if I may  Kurt Hummel
2:04:20  Mr. Schue, if I may  Kurt Hummel
2:06:08  This might be the opportunity I’ve been waiting for  Sue Sylvester
2:06:21  We might show up  Noah Puckerman
2:08:12  I believe you still might  Sue’s mom
2:09:04  If I may  Kurt Hummel
2:10:14  The neighbors might think  Kurt, “Baby It’s Cold Outside” by Frank Loesser and Lynn Garland

2:10:18  You may or may not be aware of this  Sue Sylvester
2:11:02  You just may have a point  Sue Sylvester
2:11:13  I may have to read the owner’s manual  Sue Sylvester
2:11:31 Those little baby canons might just go hungry
Sue Sylvester

2:12:08 May I please say something
Kurt Hummel

2:12:19 I’m so in love I may just start crying
Tina Cohen-Chang

2:13:14 As you may know
Sue Sylvester

2:13:20 I may have a proposition for you
Lauren Zizes

2:13:43 I think she might be making a come-back
Finn Hudson

2:15:19 Brit and I may need your help to sing it
Santana Lopez

2:16:36 You may think that I’m a zero
Rachel, “Loser Like Me” by
New Direction

2:16:36 You may say that I’m a freak show
Rachel, “Loser Like Me” by
New Direction

2:17:24 I think I may know a way to shut these hecklers up
Will Schuester

2:17:31 I had a feeling you might be behind this
Will Schuester

2:18:05 I may not have been born this way
Emma Pillsbury

2:18:14 And you may just get enough votes
Quinn Fabray

2:18:19 May I have the floor please
Rachel Berry

2:18:30 You may not have to come out
Kurt Hummel

2:18:39 You may wanna have a seat
Lauren Zizes

2:19:03 As you may or may not know
Sue Sylvester

2:20:41 May I have this dance
Blaine Anderson

2:20:41 Yes you may
Kurt Hummel

2:21:01 May I
Jesse St. James

2:21:24 She may be difficult, but boy can she sing
Kurt Hummel
Works Cited


