Varieties of English in Writing
Varieties of English Around the World (VEAW)

A companion monograph series devoted to sociolinguistic research, surveys and annotated text collections. The VEA W series is divided into two parts: a text series contains carefully selected specimens of Englishes documenting the coexistence of regional, social, stylistic and diachronic varieties in a particular region; and a general series which contains outstanding studies in the field, collections of papers devoted to one region or written by one scholar, bibliographies and other reference works.

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Varieties of English in Writing. The written word as linguistic evidence
Edited by Raymond Hickey
Varieties of English in Writing
The written word as linguistic evidence

Edited by
Raymond Hickey
University of Duisburg and Essen

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Preface

The history of English depends on written documents and for the development of the language in England there is a well-known body of texts which are drawn upon for the linguistic analysis of previous periods of the language. The range and nature of these texts has been expanded considerably in recent years by scholars examining documents for their historical work which were not primarily intended as written texts. Such additional material includes court depositions, dialect glossaries, personal correspondence, travel diaries, to mention just a few types of text which can now be studied by linguists in electronic form.

In the light of this expansion of the historical data basis for English, it seemed appropriate to the editor to take a new look at the written material available for varieties of English outside the mainstream of English studies. To this end it was possible to bring together a number of scholars who have been working on forms of English outside those strands of the language which led to modern standard English. It soon became obvious that the scope of these scholars encompassed the greater part of the anglophone world and so a volume arose which deals with varieties of English across a considerable geographical spectrum. In addition to this, scholars were recruited who have examined the paths of development taken by non-standard English, both in England and overseas, and the evidence for this in a wide range of sources. In many cases these forms of English fed into the emergent standards in locations beyond Britain.

For the contributors to this volume the unifying theme in their work has been the examination of written documents and the re-evaluation of their significance for linguistic analysis. The structure of the book is as follows: after the introduction, the first four chapters are dedicated to English in England. There follow three from the Celtic regions which are then followed by two on English in North America and a chapter on early writing in the Caribbean. The four chapters which follow are dedicated to the development of English in the southern hemisphere, ranging from St Helena in the south Atlantic to New Zealand in the south-west Pacific.

I would like to thank here my colleague Edgar Schneider, University of Regensburg, for advice and constructive criticism of the project and for his willingness to accept the volume in the series Varieties of English Around the World. Thanks also go to Kees Vaes at John Benjamins who was, as always, a professional editor who provided much support in the final stages of the book.

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Linguistic evaluation of earlier texts

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Assessing non-standard texts from previous centuries of necessity involves examining the notion of 'standard' which existed before the present. The modern notion of standard English is an eighteenth-century development which builds on formal usage prior to that. The prescriptivism which arose at this time led to the social marginalisation of dialects and their literature. Works written in dialect or containing dialect can be examined in an attempt to reconstruct vernacular features for different regions at various times. Here the central question is how reliable are the written representations which have been handed down. There are a number of criteria for classifying and evaluating earlier texts. Rendering these explicit helps to prepare the ground for later linguistic analysis.

1. The question of 'standard' in previous centuries

The aim of the present volume is to consider the records for varieties of English which lie outside the mainstream of what was later to become standard British English and to consider to what extent such records, incomplete and fragmentary as they may be, are useful in determining the development and form of these varieties. This enterprise begs a number of questions and it is important to clarify these in advance so that the principles lying behind the investigations to be found in this volume are clearly laid out.

Some of the chapters, especially the first two, explicitly refer to non-standard English and consider its grammar and lexis. The very term 'non-standard' (Blake 1999; Taavitsainen & Melchers 1999) is contrastive by nature as it implies a comparison with an entity called the 'standard' to which the features of the 'non-standard' do not belong. But to what extent does it make sense to talk of 'standard English' before the eighteenth century? It is true that there was a fifteenth-century Chancery Standard (Fisher 1996: 36–64) but this was a register-specific variety of written English used for court and legal documents and should not be interpreted in the modern sense of standard which is a variety propagated by education, codified in books and favoured by non-regional speakers in a society.

Standard English, in the codified sense, is a development of the eighteenth century (Hickey 2010). There are many reasons why it should have arisen then. First it should be noted that there were precursors to the eighteenth-century notion of standard.
John Hart (d. 1574) in *An orthographie of English* (1569) offered a reformed spelling of English so that ‘the rude countrie Englishman’ can speak the language ‘as the best sort use to speak it’. George Puttenham (d. 1590) in *The arte of English poesie* commented that ‘After a speach is fully fashioned to the common vnderstanding, & accepted by consent of a whole countrey & nation, it is called a language’. He then stated that in his view the prime form of this language was ‘the vsuall speach of the Court and that of London and the shires lying about London within lx. myles and not much aboute’. Such comments show that, already by the end of the sixteenth century, the conception was prevalent that English was the language of the entire country of England and that its lead variety derived from the language of the established classes in the capital. About a century later, Christopher Cooper in his *Grammatica linguae anglicanae* (1685) stated that he regarded London speech as ‘the best dialect’, the ‘most pure and correct’. These comments are significant as they firmly acknowledge the prestigious status of English in the capital. However, Cooper does not show the later judgmental dismissal of varieties outside of London and appears to have been tolerant of variation, consider his remark that ‘Everyone pronounceth them (words) as himself pleases’.

The crystallisation of ‘standard English’ as a concept in the eighteenth century had at least an intellectual and a social dimension. On an intellectual level one finds authors during the Augustan Age – the early eighteenth century comprising the reigns of Queen Anne (1702–1714) and King George I (1714–1727) – who showed a distinct concern with ‘fixing’ the English language. Linguistically conservative writers, most notably Jonathan Swift (1667–1745), were keen to stem change in English and appealed to language use in the past.¹ The notion of ‘fixing’ English represents a key aspect of the emerging standard, though one which does not correspond to reality, namely immutability. Later in the eighteenth century reconciling recommendations for the supposedly unchanging standard with the recognition that this in itself displayed variation was a difficulty for writers like Thomas Sheridan (1719–1788) and John Walker (1732–1807). Apart from literary authors, there were others for whom the ‘fixing’ of English was a practical concern. The eighteenth century is a period in which a large number of grammars appeared, mostly for practical purposes, i.e. for use in education, often private education. It was also the period in which women wrote many such works (Tieken Boon-van Ostade 2010a) and these grammars do not concern themselves with variation but with imparting knowledge about a unified form of language. The greatest authority among the eighteenth-century grammarians was undoubtedly Robert Lowth (1710–1787) whose *Short introduction to English grammar*

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¹ See Swift *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Language* (1712).
Linguistic evaluation of earlier texts

(1762), rightfully or wrongly (Tieken Boon-van Ostade 2010b), became an icon of prescriptivism from the time of its publication.

The social dimension to eighteenth-century notions of standard English concerns the attitudes to language use and the increasing concern of an incipient middle-class (then termed the ‘middling orders’, Rogers 2002) with the linguistic expression of their social status. This dimension is most clearly visible in the works on pronunciation from this time. As phonology is the aspect of people’s speech which is most readily accessible for social assessment it was a particular concern with writers of the time. The practice of elocution acquired a new meaning, not just the art of successful public speaking and oratory, but the technique of speaking with a non-regional, quasi-standard accent (Smart 1842). A significant market for works on this topic arose in the mid-eighteenth century and authors like Thomas Sheridan were responsible for both stimulating this market, by generating linguistic insecurity, and then supplying the market with works with which to alleviate this very insecurity (Hickey 2010).

The details of these eighteenth-century developments lie beyond the scope of the present chapter but suffice it to say that they are central to the judgmental attitudes towards non-standard speech which arose then and which fed directly into the nineteenth-century Victorian condemnation of regional and local accents. In both fictional and non-fictional literature a change had taken place. While pre-eighteenth century references to and examples of regional and local accents in literature served an illustrative purpose, as of the eighteenth century there was a clear message that these were socially unacceptable to the established classes of English society. The opprobrium attached to non-standard accents was initially felt by those outside England, first and foremost the Irish, but also the Scots, and to a much lesser extent the Americans (Cooley 1992). However, it was quickly extended to the regions of England outside the Home Counties, the north, the south-west, etc.

Indeed the standard became more and more characterised by its non-regional character. The divorcing of preferred public usage from regionality and local identity meant that the emerging standard was an essentially non-regional form of English. Hence favouring this incipient standard in public, educated usage meant that the regional accents were condemned accordingly: ‘a strong provincial accent … destroys all idea of elegance’ (Roscoe in Mugglestone 2003: 43).

In fact the more the standard became an instrument of social inclusion or exclusion the more it lost its geographical basis in the south-east. By the early nineteenth century the standard was being defined as a form of speech which is characterised by the lack of just this regional basis. Consider the remarks of Benjamin Smart in Walker Remodelled (1836) ‘The common standard dialect is that in which all marks of a particular place and residence are lost, and nothing appears to indicate any other habit of intercourse than with the well-bred and well-informed, wherever they be found: This is not far from what contemporary sociolinguists regard a ‘standard’ to be: ‘an idea in the
mind rather than a reality – a set of abstract norms to which actual usage will conform to a greater or lesser extent’ (Milroy & Milroy 1999: 23).

1.1 Standard and non-standard English in linguistic research

The narrative of standard English has many dimensions and one which has direct bearing on the current volume is that modern works on standard English from the eighteenth century onwards implicitly concentrate on developments in non-local forms of English in the south-east (Melchers, this volume). Virtually any work published in Britain with a title along the lines of ‘A history of English’ will have just such an orientation. More inclusive and/or contrastive overviews have titles which explicitly indicate their difference from mainstream works, e.g. Crystal (2004) The Stories of English or Bex and Watts (eds) 1999 Standard English. The Widening Debate, Watts and Trudgill (eds, 2002) Alternative Histories of English.

In the context of the current volume, the label ‘varieties of English’ is meant in a similarly contrastive sense. It refers to forms of English which are historically, geographically and socially outside the domain of mainstream south-east English. In all the chapters the data discussed is written material from the early modern (Cusack ed. 1998) and/or late modern period, approximately from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The reason for this chronological focus is that this is the period during which both the standard of English in England emerged and during which the overseas varieties of English in both the northern and southern hemispheres arose.

2. Identifying and analysing varieties of English

Within the narrower context of England the question of just what belongs to standard English is central and has hence been addressed by the authors in this volume concerned with varieties within England (Claridge and Kytö, Durkin, Wales, Melchers). Because of the lack of a codified standard before the eighteenth century it would appear more pertinent to talk of careful, formal usage in documents which would be later classified as written in standard English, e.g. scientific or religious texts (Claridge and Kytö). However, many of the features of these formal written texts had disappeared by the eighteenth century at the latest. For instance, Claridge and Kytö show that the oblique third person plural pronoun *them* was found as a demonstrative in relatively formal usage of the early modern period but later does not occur in textual records of this kind.

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2. Works explicitly critical of the exclusive nature of standard British English can also be found, above all the monograph by Milroy and Milroy (1999).
Is it then true to maintain that demonstrative *them* was once standard English but is now no longer so? Perhaps it might be more appropriate to say that certain features of earlier formal usage were not adopted into the codified standard of British English which emerged during the eighteenth century and which was shaped by the strictures of normative grammars which were published at that time (see above). It may of course be the case that prescriptive usage of the general educated public – and not primarily of the grammarians – led to the demise of structures such as demonstrative *them*.

2.1 Deciding what belongs to the standard

Rational arguments for what elements of early modern usage should have been adopted into the standard are not generally available, in fact the opposite is the case. The arbitrariness of what was to become standard usage can be easily recognised, consider verbs in modern English. The majority of these are regular and show the suffix -*ed* in the past, e.g. *laugh, laughed*. But irregular verbs in English can display up to three distinct forms for the present, preterite and past participle respectively, though many have just two and others only one.

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Today, the non-standardness of the two-form versions of the above verbs results from the syncretism of preterite and past-participle. But as the examples in (1a) show, this is accepted usage for a variety of other verbs. What may well have happened is that *seen* and *done* as preterites became associated with vernacular speech and were quite salient, given their high frequency in English. Hence they came to be excluded from formal usage and did not enter the later standard.

The widespread occurrence of two-form versions of *see* and *done* is attested by their presence in virtually all vernacular varieties of English, both in Britain and overseas, and the same is true of demonstrative *them* mentioned above. This would imply that these features have been present in colloquial forms of English for centuries but were excluded from formal usage in the eighteenth century. However, their existence on a vernacular level would explain why they have continued in non-standard varieties of English throughout the anglophone world.
2.2 What was previously ‘non-standard’

Given that the term ‘standard’ with reference to English is a label which does not appear until the nineteenth\(^3\) century, is it permissible to speak of ‘non-standard’ before this time? This would appear justified because authors writing on matters of language and concerned with condemning usage which they saw as socially unacceptable use labels such as ‘vulgar, ignorant, inaccurate, barbarous, uneducated, shameful, disgraceful’ (see discussion in Hickey 2010). The forms of English which prescriptivists such as Thomas Sheridan and John Walker criticised are what would be termed ‘non-standard’ today. So the concept of ‘non-standard’ usage already existed in the eighteenth century, even though this precise label was not employed.

Usage which was censured in previous centuries was usually connected with choices which speakers could make. Where variants were available more than one possibility existed for a pronunciation, word or syntactic structure. Of the existing variants one was generally regarded as preferred in public, educated usage and the other or others were stigmatised as what would now be called ‘non-standard’. The only real exception to this were cases of archaic language where prescriptive authors, such as John Walker, simply recommended that more modern words be used (Hickey 2010).

2.3 The yardstick for preferred usage

The decisions on what variants of a variable were to be preferred were not always conscious and rarely rational, though authors such as John Walker did attempt, when making recommendations, to apply the notion of ‘analogy’, i.e. regularity and symmetry among similar forms and in paradigms. Well into the eighteenth century a common yardstick of good usage was the language of ‘our best authors’. The works of writers from the Augustan period were regarded as embodying the English language in an elevated form, e.g. Jonathan Swift’s writings which were much admired by Robert Lowth.

The implicit notion of standard in the early eighteenth century involved the idea of a ‘national’ variety of English. This idea of ‘national’ appears already in the early eighteenth century: Richard Johnson talked of his *Grammatical Commentaries* (1706) as ‘being an Apparatus to a new National Grammar’. What is being referred to here is a work which would unify usage throughout the regions of Britain and Ireland. This notion was taken up repeatedly by authors in the eighteenth century, especially those concerned with educational matters, see Thomas Sheridan’s *British Education* (1756).

Within England certain types of record did not participate in the increasingly depersonalised and purely content-oriented nature of public texts. Private correspondence remained rooted in familiar usage so that letters from regional speakers show

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3. The first reference to ‘Southern or standard English’ in the *Oxford English Dictionary* dates from 1836.
an abundance of non-standard features (see the discussion in Claridge and Kytö, this volume). Testimonies such as those found in the depositions of *The Old Bailey Corpus* (Huber 2009) illustrate regional speech. Furthermore, in the constructed speech of literary drama there are many attestations of regional features (Kytö, Culpeper & Walker 2006).

3. Investigating ‘non-standard’ texts

While the classification as ‘standard’ or ‘non-standard’ is an issue for early modern and late modern texts in England there is a sense in which all texts produced outside England within this time span are, by their very geographical provenance, ‘non-standard’. The only exception to this would appear to be high literary works and those intended explicitly for public consumption in England. This holds for writers as different in their background and authorial personalities as Jonathan Swift and Thomas Sheridan. Swift’s literary compositions and his political commentaries are written in the formal, public style of his time, i.e. in the ‘standard’ English of the early eighteenth century: there are no indications of his Irish background in his written language. The same is true of Sheridan’s prescriptive work on the English language of his time (mid to late eighteenth century). However, both authors were aware of non-standard English in their Irish environments and wrote brief pieces portraying this. Swift composed two short items – *A dialogue in Hyberian style between A and B* and *Irish eloquence* (both probably from the 1730s, see Bliss 1977) – poking fun at the English of planters which showed transfer features from Irish. Sheridan, in his student days, composed a single play – *Captain O’Blunder or The Brave Irishman* (1740/1754) – in which the protagonist’s Irish English contrasts strongly with that of English characters whose language is basically mid eighteenth-century standard English (see further discussion in the chapter on Irish English linguistic stereotypes, this volume).

For the development of standard English the language of Swift’s and Sheridan’s main works have a significance of their own, but it is the minor works of these and many other authors which offer a glimpse of what non-standard English – here vernacular Irish English – may have been like during their lives. The linguistic assessment of such texts is not an easy matter (Schneider 2002: 70–73): to satisfactorily examine ‘non-standard’ language of previous centuries it is necessary to have access to texts in which such language is encoded as reliably as possible. However, it is more often than not the case that ‘non-standard’ texts are typical examples of ‘bad data’ (Nevalainen 1999; Kytö, Culpeper & Walker 2003), data which was never intended to be a source of the language it contains and which is often fragmentary and incomplete. But there are research paths which have produced promising results in this area. In recent years increasing attention has been paid to written representations of spoken language (Bliss 1979), with corpus collections being made available, e.g. *The Old*
Bailey Corpus mentioned above and The Corpus of English Dialogues (Kytö, Culpeper & Walker 2006).

The heterogeneous and incomplete nature of texts attesting the historical development of non-standard varieties makes it necessary to classify these and discuss their relative value for linguistic analysis in advance of any examination of actual texts.

3.1 Fidelity of representation

The central question would appear to revolve around the fidelity of dialect representation. Whatever texts there are for a given variety can only be as reliable for analysis as they are faithful renderings of this variety at the time at which the texts were composed. This of course assumes that it is possible to determine separately what is a ‘faithful rendering’ and what is not. However, there are means of ascertaining this with relative certainty. Cross-textual comparison and double-checking with modern forms of the variety under consideration helps to build up a clearer picture of what shape a variety must have had at a given time. Comparison with present-day varieties can be misleading, however, because when examining historical texts one may be looking at features no longer present in any contemporary variety.

3.2 Classification criteria for non-standard texts

In this volume it is the nature of the texts which is the central issue for linguistic analysis. Before discussing actual texts it would appear appropriate to give a general classification of text types and textual parameters which should be considered when analysing historical material for varieties of English.

1. Vernacularity

When looking at non-standard writing the degree of vernacularity will tend to be high. The lower this is the more formal the register and hence the more standard the language will be. This parameter, like the others listed here, is scalar rather than binary in nature, i.e. it is a question of ‘more’ or ‘less’. A high level of vernacularity implies a high incidence of non-standard features which are indicated by unexpected spelling and grammar. When this seems to represent features known from later attestations of a variety it can be useful in dating the relative age of a feature.

2. Text-internal scope

For dramas which consist entirely of non-standard speech the scope of such language within a text is complete. However, in narrative prose, the scope is usually partial, with only some direct non-standard speech. The language of the omniscient narrator in such instances is always close to the standard. However, an
author may unconsciously show low-salience features which are typical of a variety because they are part of his own vernacular.

If the text-internal scope is partial then there may be a deliberate contrast between the standard and the non-standard stretches of text. This type of highlighting is quite common in satirical literature and regional comedy such as Dion Boucicault’s mid-nineteenth century Irish dramas.

3. **Author of text(s)**

An author can be a member of the speech community whose language is contained in a text and hence an insider, e.g. a northern English writer using northern dialect. There may be intermediate cases, e.g. an author born and partially reared in Ireland but active in England as an adult. Lawrence Sterne, the author of the burlesque novel *Tristram Shandy*, is an example of such a writer. The status as complete outsider nearly always goes together with a satirical approach (Lawrence 1912), e.g. the Englishman Ben Jonson who wrote *The Irish Masque at Court* in which he satirises Irish speech and manners.

4. **Language of text(s)**

This language can be intrinsic or extrinsic to the author. Again this is a scalar parameter: the degree of distance from an author can be great as in those cases where someone is reporting on speech from a different country, e.g. a traveller from Britain in Canada or Australia in the nineteenth century. The distance is slight where the author is describing/representing the speech of those in his/her own country or geographical region.

Where the language being represented is extrinsic to the author it may well be unreliable. Very often authors are content with vacuous re-spellings, e.g. *minnit* for *minute* (Durkin, this volume) or with superficial ‘signals of difference’ which do not necessarily correspond to phonetic reality in the variety being represented or at least does not clearly represent this. For instance, there is almost a tradition of writing the word ‘Irish’ as *Oirish* in English ‘eye dialect’ (Bowdre 1971; Macaulay 1991). It is not certain what was intended by authors, such as Rudyard Kipling, who used this spelling. Was this supposed to represent [әɹɪʃ] or [ɜɹɪʃ] or [ʊɹɪʃ]?

This example shows that representational practices can arise and become traditions. Another instance would be the use of *v*, *z*, *zh* to indicate initial fricative voicing in south-western English. This is a stock feature in satirical representations of south-westerners and does not provide any new insight into the nature of their English.

5. **Approach to language**

Non-standard writings can be classified into two broad types regarding their approach to language. If this is entirely representational then one is dealing
largely with ‘dialect literature’ (Melchers, this volume) which is generally written for speakers of the dialect in question or at least for those who have first-hand knowledge of it. In this sense it is reader-specific.

There may, of course, be instances of ‘naive’ writers who were either not fully acquainted with standard English orthography of their time or, as in the case of the poet John Clare, resisted the pressure to use this, preferring spellings of his own. How accurate these were can only be determined by comparative work such as that done by Durkin (this volume) in his investigation of Clare’s spellings. For this Durkin had recourse to both the Oxford English Dictionary (version 3, being currently compiled) and the Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) resource, both of which provide a good means of comparing Clare’s practice with more general spelling conventions of the time.

If the language an author uses is construed then one is usually dealing with ‘literary dialect’ (Blake 1981; Ives 1971). Construed language does not generally have complete text-internal scope (see 2 above) but is incidental to the standard language of the entire work in which it occurs. It furthermore gains its dialect profile from the implicit contrast with the standard language of the rest of the work in question. The speech of dialect figures in novels, such as those by George Eliot or Charles Dickens, are instances of this construed language. The audience for such works is also much broader and more diffuse.

6. Approach to content

Construed non-standard language in otherwise standard works is generally illustrative and not infrequently satirical. This is certainly the case if the construed language is typical for a region far from that of the author, e.g. Ireland or Scotland in the case of English writers (Myers ed. 1983). The closer the identification of an author with a region the less his/her representations of its speech are likely to be satirical, e.g. Thomas Hardy who uses south/south-western dialect extensively in his novels, but not in a satirical sense.

7. Chronological perspective

There may well be a distance between the time at which some piece is composed and that which it attempts to represent. This is also a scalar category. The degree of ‘retrospectiveness’ can vary from author to author.4 For instance, in his use of supposedly peasant speech from the west of Ireland in his plays John Millington Synge was recalling his encounters with natives of the west of Ireland when composing

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4. ‘Retrospective’ would correspond to ‘recalled’ in Schneider’s classification (Schneider 2002: 75). However, in his discussion of this category he refers to non-fictional texts.
his plays and portraying what he claimed was their speech. This is a relatively short time span. A larger one would be where an author recollects the language of the region where he/she grew up, especially when this is not where he/she lives anymore. For instance, the Irish playwright Dion Boucicault (1820–1890) grew up in Ireland but as a young man went to England to study and later moved to America and then back to England again. Nonetheless, he successfully used vernacular Irish English in his plays written when he was outside Ireland.

A much longer period of time can be seen where an author writes a historical novel or play. The distance to his/her present can easily be a few centuries if not much more. In such instances, authors use contemporary local dialect if it is needed rather than trying to re-create dialect from the period being portrayed. This can be seen in Shakespeare’s King Lear which takes place sometime in early Britain. For the portrayal of Edgar, Shakespeare avails of initial fricative voicing and contractions showing the dialectal form *ich* \[\text{tʃɪl} = \text{әi wɪl}\] ‘I’, features of south/south-western English at Shakespeare’s time, but not obviously at the time which forms the framework for the play: *Chill* \[\text{tʃɪl} = \text{әi wɪl}\] *not let go*, *zir*, \[z = s\] *without vurther* \[v = f\] ‘cagion’.

3.3 Classification in Schneider (2002)

The above criteria are similar though not identical to those found in literature on non-standard language. Best-known of recent studies in this field is Schneider (2002). It is possible to classify the types of texts used in the chapters of this volume using the parameters laid out in Schneider (2002). Thus one can claim that none of the texts are transcripts (Schneider’s category 1: ‘recorded’). Some may be ‘recalled’ (category 2), such as diaries (Siebers, this volume) or travelogues (Dollinger, this volume). Most of these text types were written by outsiders, but some diaries may be by insiders. Schneider’s category 4: ‘observed’ would apply to glossaries or word lists while all the literary documents examined here are in category 5: ‘invented’.

4. Conclusion

The criteria laid out here, and those put forward by other scholars (e.g. Gordon 1998; Maynor 1988; Mesthrie 2005; Preston 1985; Sullivan 1980), provide a basis for proceeding with the linguistic analysis of non-standard texts from previous centuries. The textual record varies from case to case and the dialect evidence is not spread evenly across different literary genres (Melchers, this volume). Regional literature with dialect characters arose in the early nineteenth century with novels by Maria Edgeworth and Walter Scott. Before that the material (Bartley 1954; Duggan 1969 [1937]) is satirical
and linguistically two-dimensional, though there are exceptional texts which provide important insights into the early shape of varieties. Here it is essential to stress the need for intertextual comparison. For instance, northern English is attested in witness depositions, drama and fiction. The specifically northern vocabulary found there is also documented in the glossarial work of John Ray (1674), confirming the regional usage encoded in texts of these types (see Claridge and Kytö).

If the criteria discussed above are applied rigorously and if as many different text types as are available are cross-checked for consistency of representation then the likelihood of reaching firm conclusions increases. Taken together the criteria outlined here provide a methodology for assessing textual records of very different forms of non-standard English and for offering a linguistically reliable analysis of their language.

References


Sheridan, Thomas 1754 [1740]. *Captain O’Blunder or The Brave Irishman*.


Non-standard language in earlier English

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The concept of ‘non-standard’ remains somewhat fuzzy during the Early Modern English period. Language change and especially ongoing standardization can make it difficult to pin down an individual feature at any given time as clearly non-standard. Contemporary views of ‘good’ language, which we also discuss here, need to be taken into account and may lead to a more socially restricted idea of standard and thus a wider area of non-standard. Regionally restricted uses, both with regard to the lexicon and pronunciation, are investigated with the help of (comparing) sources like Ray's dialect dictionary (1674) and the Corpus of English Dialogues, and shown to be relatively rare in writing. Socio-stylistic variation or evidence for non-standard forms, including lower-class, uneducated, and emotive uses (often called ‘vulgar’ or ‘low’ by contemporaries), is investigated with the help of metacomments, pauper letters and the treatment of taboo usage. Two case-studies on demonstrative them and non-standard third-person subject-verb concord show the features to be very rare in the Corpus of English Dialogues and to occur predominantly in authentic spoken contexts and with lower-ranking speakers. We argue that rarity is an indicator for non-standard status, but also that the status of these features is different from that of modern sociolinguistic markers.

1. Aims of the study

It is a truism that what could be considered standard and what non-standard usage may differ from one period to another in the history of a language. These levels of language use are not always easy or even possible to distinguish, especially as features characteristic of spoken and written language also play a role in the assessment. In this paper, we will investigate textual evidence of non-standard usage from regional, social and stylistic perspectives, and also reflect on the usefulness of various sources of evidence in terms of methodology. We will also explore how useful modern sociolinguistic categories may be for the study of early non-standard language use. We will focus mainly on Early Modern English, a period of major significance to the formation of modern ‘Standard English’.
We start by asking how the non-standard language use of past periods can be defined meaningfully (Section 2). We then turn to Early Modern English texts that might yield evidence of language use which could be considered non-standard from regional, social or stylistic perspectives (Sections 3.1 and 3.2). We draw on the Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760 (CED) and a number of other sources, including early word lists of dialectal usage and testimony left by usage-conscious language users. In Section 4, we investigate two linguistic features and try to assess their value as specimens of potential non-standard usage in the past, i.e. the use of *them* for demonstrative *those* (Section 4.1) and third-person subject-verb concord (Section 4.2). Section 5 summarizes the study and presents its conclusions.

2. Defining non-standard in the past

The concept of ‘non-standard’ is a fairly recent one, judging from the recency of an explicit label. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*, 2003 draft rev.) gives the year 1890 for the first non-linguistic instance of the word *non-standard* and 1927 for the first occurrence in the linguistic sense. The word *standard* is only about a century older, with the first relevant *OED* quotation being dated 1836 (s.v. adj. 3e). The unavailability of a/our label does not necessarily mean the nonexistence of a relevant concept, however, in particular as the standardization of English has been in progress since the fifteenth century.

It may thus be enlightening to look at a contemporary view of what characterises that variety of a language which is or comes close to being ‘standard’. Hugh Campbell’s *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), written at the very end of the period under consideration here and during the final stages of standardization, contains very relevant remarks in Chapter 1 of Book II, where he says that “use, or the custom of speaking, is the sole original standard of conversation … and the custom of writing is the sole standard of style” (p. 344). *Use* (not standard) is the key word here, which he goes on to define as the type of use which is (i) reputable, (ii) national, and (iii) present – which in shorthand he simply calls ‘good use’ (p. 370). Reputable for Campbell also means that good use must be distinguished from bad use, in particular vulgarisms, which he links to “the lower walks of life” (p. 346) and uneducated speakers. Good use is also recognized by those individuals who do not (or not always) apply it, as people with varying usage will choose the ‘good’ linguistic variants in writing or in formal spoken contexts (p. 347). Campbell thus here introduces the notions of prestige as well as of social and situational appropriateness. Good use is furthermore “authorised … by the writings of a great number, if not the majority, of celebrated authors” (p. 353). National use is that which is “current, especially in the upper and middle ranks, over the whole British
Non-standard language in earlier English

empire” (p. 354), i.e. Campbell is again adding a social dimension as with the first aspect. National is distinguished from provincial dialects, professional dialects (e.g. commerce, medicine) and foreign use. It is at least partly defined by general intelligibility, regardless of the user’s own dialect. Present use is meant to exclude both obsolete and short-lived, fashionable items and constructions; in exemplifying this use Campbell has recourse to reputable authors of the first half of the eighteenth century (those who wrote after 1688, but were not alive at his time of writing, were his prototypes for then present usage).

Despite his defence of use, Campbell nevertheless considers the possibility that some forms of usage, “gross improprieties” in the terms of Swift, may better be discarded. Violation of the lexico-grammatical rules of the language is among the criteria he lists for identifying such cases. Some ideas of Campbell’s are also found in Johnson’s preface to the Dictionary, such as the time dimension (omission of obsolete words) and a relatively restrictive approach to professional and cant varieties. That the ideas of Campbell were in the air, so to speak, is also evidenced by the value labels used in a wide variety of grammars and dictionaries, as for example documented by Sundby et al. (1991). Reputable is echoed in reverse with labels like ‘low; adopted by the ignorant; colloquial; uncouth,’ national by ‘dialectal; Scotticism; cant,’ and present by ‘obsolete; rare’; suspected violations against the rules of the language are marked as, among others, ‘bad; corrupt; erroneous; ungrammatical.’ The eighteenth century seems to have had a fairly clear idea of the standard, even if it did not call it thus. Statements towards the beginning of the period under consideration here are far less elaborate and precise than Campbell’s. While the well-known and brief statement by George Puttenham in Of the Arte of English Poesie (1589: book III, chap. IIII) mentions the social (the language of the “better brought vp sort”) and the temporal aspect (accepting roughly the preceding one hundred years), it does not postulate a “national” usage – doubtlessly also reflecting the fact that it did not exist. The different degrees of prominence and elaboration of discussions of the “right” linguistic variety at these two points in time thus highlight the progress of standardization.1

Two of Campbell’s criteria can also be found in modern theories on the standard, where standardization has been said to be marked by the increasing importance of deregionalisation (cf. national), by prestige (cf. reputation), invariance, and depersonalisation (Milroy 1992; Rissanen 1999a: 190). Standards tend to contain less internal

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1. It might be added here that the aspect ‘national’ did in fact appear before Campbell, namely in Richard Johnson’s Grammatical Commentaries, Being an Apparatus to a New National Grammar (1706), where it apparently refers to a unified usage throughout Britain and Ireland. We owe this reference to Raymond Hickey.
variation as they have undergone codification, although there is of course no form of a language completely devoid of variation. In all of them, including non-standard varieties, the variation will be rule-governed to a certain extent. This point is therefore not a very useful criterion to distinguish standard and non-standard and it is also problematic to use it in the context of flux such as that represented by Early Modern English. However, the presence of codification in the form of (prescriptive) grammars and dictionaries is useful, in particular as it links up to (seventeenth and) eighteenth-century ideas. Depersonalisation refers to a standard having features that enable its use in an objectivised manner, in contexts which are oriented towards content rather than relationships and which are not marked by affect. This goes together with the fact that the standard evolved in a process of increasing de-oralisation in written contexts. Rissanen (1999a: 191) lists these criteria together with their applicability to selected discourse contexts, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Genres and features of importance to the development of the standard (from Rissanen 1999a: 191)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Invariance</th>
<th>Lack of affect</th>
<th>Generality</th>
<th>Prestige</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documentary &amp; statutory</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>±</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fictitious</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>±</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So far we have not defined non-standard. It is of course a logical approach to say that non-standard is in some meaningful sense the opposite of standard. The following aspects could thus be seen as potential candidates for non-standard usage:

- any kind of clearly regionally restricted use (i.e. non-national), whether phonetic (as represented by “deviant” orthography), lexical or syntactic;
- uses that are indicative of a certain professional group and possibly too specific to be generally understood;
- uses which are socially marked as belonging to lower, marginalised and/or uneducated social strata; the viewpoint taken here is thus that of the upper social ranks of the relevant time, who stigmatized these forms. The question at hand is one of the social appropriateness of specific linguistic uses and of “polite” usage, which was of special importance for the eighteenth century (cf. McIntosh 1998). From this perspective not only slang, but also informal and colloquial language may well be excluded from the standard, even though from the modern perspective the standard of course allows various degrees of (in)formality (Trudgill 1999);
– uses which are emotive in themselves or occur in emotionally-charged contexts. This contrasts with the more depersonalized nature of typical standard features and also links up to modern sociolinguistic concepts. According to Labov’s principle of attention, the less attention paid to speech, the more casual and vernacular the style used will be. Emotionality is an important factor for lowering a speaker’s attention (Labov 1972a, 1975);
– uses which are archaic (unless they occur in fiction, in particular poetry, for particular effects);
– variables of features which do not occur in the standard any more at a given time, because the feature has lost its variability there and is normatively fixed. This is linked to ongoing codification and thus fairly hard to determine;
– linguistic uses which stand out as unusual and inappropriate in the contexts they occur in. This situational inappropriateness is linked to its social counterpart but also to generic (in)appropriateness: genres are characterised by the expected co-occurrence patterns of features forming the ‘norm’ or ‘standard’ for that genre (Taavitsainen & Nevanlinna 1999).

This listing allows for a fairly fuzzy approach to (non)standard and also takes account of the social and normative concerns of the period under consideration and how these developed and were brought to greater prominence. What we must not forget, however, is that the notion of (non)standard is constantly shifting within the two to three hundred years we are dealing with. Our time frame presents a linguistic situation in flux with a continually evolving standard and where features were being gradually pushed to the edges and had an unclear status vis-à-vis relative (non)standardness. It will only be possible to call a feature clearly non-standard if a relevant standard feature can be unequivocally shown to have been fully established. The first time one can probably unambiguously speak of both standard and non-standard as whole “units” is in the nineteenth century, a period beyond our concern here.

3. Theory and data: Empirical evidence from early texts

In this section we will draw on various types of data, partly in conjunction and comparison, to investigate possible instantiations of non-standard English. One type is represented by metalinguistic sources, such as dictionaries, grammars and language criticism. A second consists of language produced by lower class and/or uneducated speakers. And the last is language close to speech or with oral characteristics, as provided for example by the Corpus of English Dialogues (1560–1760) (CED). In modern terms writing is statistically much more likely to be composed in the standard than
in a non-standard form, while spoken contexts make the occurrence of non-standard forms more likely; however, there is of course no necessary connection between the latter two (cf. Palander-Collin 1999: 244).

3.1 Regional language use

While a correlation of dialects with sociolinguistic significance in the modern sense is not viable for the English Middle Ages (cf. Machan 2003), an awareness of the link between dialects and social stratification/social desirability is growing during the Early Modern English period. Thus, Puttenham (1589) lists varieties of English to be avoided; his regional examples are Northern English (spoken beyond the Trent), English of the marches, frontiers and port towns, and the English spoken in rural areas in general – together with his other statements this leaves the variety of London and its immediately surrounding area as the acceptable one. While he thus clearly picks out the incipient standard, it needs to be pointed out that his topic is the language use of poets, i.e. he is not necessarily talking about a general social desirability of one variety. What may go in this direction, however, is Sir Thomas Malet’s statement on Sir Walter Raleigh to the effect “that notwithstanding his so great mastership in style, and his conversation with the learnedest and politest persons, yet he spoke broad Devonshire to his dyeing day.” (Wyld 1936 [1920]: 109). In addition to the sheer fact that the statement was made, its contrastive connectives (notwithstanding, yet) register surprise at an unusual state of affairs. Persons of more than local significance were apparently expected at this time to conform to a supralocal form of the language, or at least accent. Nevertheless, (clear) statements about dialects are few in the Early Modern English period. This could simply mean that the implementation of the (written) standard was fast (cf. Görlach 1999: 484) and that dialects thereafter were seen as unimportant/inconsequential. Johnson (1755) accordingly does not include dialect words in his dictionary, which is also true of lexicographers before him.

On the other hand, we find evidence of interest in dialects, such as John Ray’s Collection of English Words (1674), which lists exclusively dialect words and does so without a trace of judgement on them. Ray’s collection is based on local, presumably spoken, usage as observed by himself and his friends and acquaintances across the country (cf. “To the reader”). For many entries, localities are given in merely informative terms, e.g. for capo ‘a working horse’ the qualification “Chesh.” (p. 9), for bourd ‘to jest’ the qualification “used most in Scotland” (p. 7), or for cosset, “A Cosset lambe or colt, etc. i.e. a cade lamb, a lamb or colt brought up by the hand, Norf. Suff.” (p. 62). Less precise localisations also occur, e.g. for the adjective glum, “To be Glum; to look

2. Originally quoted in Aubrey, Short Lives, fifty years after Raleigh’s death, which at least makes it unclear which time this quote reflects.
Non-standard language in earlier English

sadly or sowerly, to frown; contracted from Gloomy. A word common to the Vulgar both in the North and South. More than the mere use of a word can be commented on, as for instance with ding, which is given two senses, “to fling, Ess.” followed by the specification, “in the North it signifies to beate” (p. 64). These specific terms are of special interest to our data survey as they all occur in the CED (for the full list, see the Appendix). Matching Ray’s word lists to the CED yielded 28 types that Ray had included among his Northern words and three types listed in the section for Southern/Eastern words. (This discrepancy very much reflects the amount of attention devoted to the Northern vs. Southern/Eastern words in Ray’s work: of the 80 pages on dialect words in the book, 56 pages are devoted to Northern words and only 23 pages to Southern/Eastern words.) In the 1.2-million-word CED, the 28 Northern word types yielded 43 tokens as against the three instances listed in the Southern/Eastern section. Tables 2 and 3 below summarize the results for the Northern word tokens across the period and genre parameters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Northern words</th>
<th>Incidence per 10,000 words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1560–1599</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600–1639</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1640–1679</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1680–1719</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720–1760</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Two separate text lists of all of Ray’s entries for the North and the South/East respectively, with as many possible spelling variants of the words that we could think of and supplemented by wildcards for possibly occurring suffixes, were run over the CED with the help of the WordSmith program.

4. The term glum was counted as one of the Northern words as Ray lists it in his Northern word list, despite the reference to the Southern use made of the word. – Originally, we found 29 Northern words, but subsequently excluded fain, which occurred eighteen times in the CED. It also occurs in considerable numbers in other sources and in many genres, which makes it seem rather standard in nature. Also, Ray gives the same meaning as the OED (‘glad’), so that dialect semantics is also excluded. Either its inclusion by Ray may be seen as a mistake, or he was indicating that the word is (much) more common in northern dialects. As the OED provides an Old Norse equivalent in the etymology section for fain, a strengthening in the North is possible.
Table 3. Northern words listed in Ray (1674) found in the CED (by genre)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Northern words</th>
<th>Incidence per 10,000 words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trials</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness depositions</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didactic works</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for change in time (Table 2), up until the 1640s the rates of occurrence for Ray’s Northern words in the CED are 0.7 and 0.6. The figures sink by more than half in the course of the seventeenth century, then recover slightly, but after 1720, practically no instances are found. As for genres (Table 3), witness depositions yield most instances, with the incidence figure of 1.0. Drama and fiction contain proportionally somewhat less than half that number of instances (0.4), leaving didactic works slightly behind (0.3). It is noteworthy that trial proceedings yield practically no instances: they clearly lead the standardization process, with recorders (or printers of the proceedings) filtering out possible dialectal uses.\(^5\)

Comparisons between the CED and Ray’s lists are of interest in a number of ways. For instance, searches yielded nine types (eight for the Northern words and one Southern/Eastern word) amounting to 13 tokens in contexts where it was not clear whether other readings than those given by Ray were the ones intended. Thus, in Example (1), lazy could be taken to mean ‘averse to labour, indisposed to action or effort; idle; inactive, slothful’ (OED, s.v. lazy, 1.a) or, as recorded by Ray, ‘naught,’ ‘bad’ (p. 26):

(1)  By and by comes the Gentleman in his white linnen boot-hose ready to the purpose. A poxe of lazy coblers says hee, my boots, shall I forfeit a bond for your pleasure? (CED, d2farmin, 1608)

Among such uses in the CED were loom, peevish, speare, spice and worried (for the meanings given in Ray, see Appendix). Conversely, the CED texts also yielded some ten types of dialectal words (amounting to about 20 tokens) not recorded by Ray.\(^6\)

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5. No instances were found in the Miscellaneous works, either, but they only comprise a handful of texts in the CED, no more than some 26,000 words, as against the some 286,000 words included in the category of trial proceedings.

6. Note that there might be further, so far undetected dialect words in the CED, as it is difficult to look up open-class lexical items with the computer without a prior search word list. Some of those we did find were due to a fortuitous use of spelling variants and wildcards.
Among these are e.g. *beck*, illustrated in Example (2) (OED: ‘gesture expressive of salutation or respect; an inclination of the head; an obeisance, a bow, a curtsey, a nod’. Chiefly Sc.):

(2) My sonne ifaith, my very sonne ifaith, When I was yong and had an able back, And wore the brissell on my vpper lippe, In good *Decorum* I had as good conuayance, And could haue ferd, and ferkt y’away a wench, As soone as eare a man alieue; tut boy, I had my winks, my *becks*, treads on the toe, Wrings by the fingers, smyles and other quirkes, Noe Courtier like me, your Courtiers all are fooles, To that which I could doe, I could haue done it boy.

(CED, d2cbarre, 1611)

One of these terms, a phrase involving the use of the verb *walter* (obsolete in present-day English, apart from dialectal uses, *OED*, s.v. *walter*), is actually commented on by the speaker, Mr Bacon, one among the Queen’s Council at the trial of the Earls of Essex and Southampton:

(3) I speake not nowe to simple men, I speake to them that can drawe p’se owte of the nature of the thinges themselves. It is knowne by bookes, by experience and by common talke, that noe Lawfull intendimt'es are bent directlie againste the Prince, but there is a *walteringe* of gou’m'es (as the phrase is in Scottland).

(CED, d2wsouth, 1600/1873)

The comment by Mr Bacon indicates that speakers must have been aware of regional differences in language use and even found it necessary to localise or account for regional usage in official contexts, perhaps so as to prevent any misunderstandings from taking place.

Evidence of geographical variation can be found not only in vocabulary but also on other levels of language such as spelling, pronunciation, morphology and syntax (see Görlach 1999: 486–493). In addition to dictionaries, sources of regional forms of language use comprise, for instance, texts by localisable authors, regionally-based genres and texts, and the speech of fictional characters. It is tempting to think that the regional provenance of an author would be reflected in his or her writing habits. Yet this need not be the case. To take an example, Wyld (1936 [1920]: 81) points out that we would expect to find a record of a pure regional dialect in the writings of John Shillingford, Mayor of Exeter in the late fifteenth century, who lived all his life in Devon. However, even in his private missives he follows the London English of the time, dropping into provincialisms only occasionally. These slips made Wyld conclude that despite his adherence to London English in writing, Shillingford “spoke with a pretty strong Devonshire accent” (p. 81). This is indicative of the difference that seems to have existed in the use of regional variants in spoken and written language in the Early Modern period as well. According to Görlach (1999: 506), “the loss of regional features in the writing of ‘provincials’ was so rapid in the fifteenth century
that no consistent dialect, or even regional characteristics that would allow attribution to a particular place, are normally found in written evidence [such as letters, diaries and other informal texts]”, and the use of regionally marked forms became a result of “a conscious decision to aim for a special effect”. This points to literary texts as a source of dialectal language use.

Indeed, Early Modern fictional texts contain instances of characters using regional dialects, even though there is not that much evidence around as one might have expected (Görlach 1999: 508, with reference to Blake (1981) on the scanty use made by Shakespeare of stage dialects). Consulting the CED, we find Thomas Shadwell’s *The Lancashire-Witches, and Tegue O Divelly the Irish-Priest*, “a comedy acted at the Duke’s Theater” (1682), where conspicuous spellings are used to render the language of one of the main protagonists, an Irish priest, to reflect the speech habits of his home country:

(4) **Smerk.** ’Tis a fine Church, a Church of Splender, and riches, and power, but there are some things in it –

**Priest.** Shome things! Phaat dosht dou taalk of shome things? By my shoule I vill not see a better Church in a Shommers day, indeed, dan de Caatholick Church. I tell you there is braave dignities, and promotions too; what vill I shay unto you? by St. Phaatrick, but I do beleve I vill be a Cardinal before I vill have death. Dey have had not one Eerish Cardinal a great while indeed.

**Smerk.** What power is this that urges me so fast, oh Love! Love!

**Priest.** Phaat dosht dou shay, dosht dou love promotions and dignities? den I predee now be a Caatholick. What vill I say unto you more? but I vill tell you, You do shay dat de Caatholicks may be shaved, and de Caatholicks do shay, dat you vill be after being damn’d, and phare is de solidity now of daat, daat dou vill not turn a good Caatholick?

(CED, Shadwell, *The Lancashire-Witches*, p. 51)

Interestingly, despite its overall consistency, the spelling system adopted to render this stage dialect also contains occasional deviations, e.g. *there* for *dere* in “I tell you there is braave dignities” and *What for Phaat* in “What vill I say unto you more?” In addition to play-texts, dialectal speech is used to characterise protagonists in e.g. prose fiction. A famous example can be found in Thomas Deloney’s “Jack of Newbury” (or, *The Pleasant History of John Winchcomb, in His Younger Yeares Called Jack of Newberie, the Famous and Worthy Clothier of England*, from 1596–1597, 8th ed. 1619). In the following extract, the seemingly local speech habits of Jack’s future father-in-law with its voiced “s” sound and other dialectal features signals to the reader that “the olde man” comes from the countryside:

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7. The processes of supralocalization by which a number of morphological and syntactic features developed towards standard usage have been studied by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003).
Sir (quoth the olde man) Iwis che zee you bee bominable rich, and cham content
you shall haue my daughter, and Gods blessing and mine light on you both.
But Father (quoth Iack of Newberry) what will you bestow with her? Mary hear
you (quoth the old man) I vaith cham but a poore man, but I thong God, cham
of good exclamation among my neighbours, and they will as zoone take my vice
for any thing as a richer mans: thicke I will bestowe, you shall haue with a good
will: because che heare very good condemnation of you in euery place, therefore
chill giue you twenty Nobles and a weaning Calfe, and when I dye and my Wife,
you shall haue the reuelation of all my goods.

(CED, Deloney, *lack of Newberie*, p. D3r)

In this as in most texts, the ‘non-standard’ language placed in a character’s mouth
stands in contrast with the more ‘standard’ spelling practices followed elsewhere in
the text (for discussion, see Culpeper & Kytö 1999: 182–183). Some of the features
intended to represent ‘non-standard’ usage became fixed and were used widely, e.g. the
above cham (for I am, from the southern and western form icham, *OED*, s.v. be, A.1.1);
cf. for by my fay, I cham sicke, I chill go home to bed, I thinke I shall dye (uttered by a
cobler from the parish of Dys, near Norwich, in *Merie Tales Newly Imprinted & Made
by Master Skelton Poet Laureat*, 1567, CED/Fiction) and God saue you sir, I pray be
good to me for cham a poore man (uttered by an old man in *A Most Pleasant and Merie Nevv Comedie, Intituled A Knacke to Knowe a Knaue*, 1594, CED/Drama).

In addition to evidence of regional forms, we also have evidence of social variation
in early English texts. This is what we will focus on in the next section.

3.2 Social and stylistic varieties (“lower class”)

People living in the Early Modern English period were keenly aware of differences
in social status, which must naturally have included the way these differences mani-
fested themselves in linguistic behaviour. This is exploited in literature for, among
other things, comic effects. An instance is found in *Much Ado About Nothing* (e.g.
III,iii; III,v; IV,ii), where Dogberry misapplies words out of ignorance, which reflects
his social position and (lack of) education. Certain less desirable linguistic forms and
“mistakes” were obviously thought to be more expected and/or credible from mem-
ers of the lower social orders. The eighteenth century presents more outspoken evi-
dence of this, for example in the letters Lord Chesterfield wrote to his son, which touch
on many sociolinguistic aspects. His general assessment of lower-class speech is that it
contains many barbarisms, vulgar words and the like, which are typical of “a low turn
of mind, low education and low company”. Furthermore, “ordinary people in general
speak in defiance of all grammar, use words that are not English, and murder those
that are.” (quoted from Neumann 1946: 466). Chesterfield’s choice of words here, and
in other passages of his letters, is reminiscent of many of the usage labels one finds in
eighteenth-century dictionaries and grammars. Johnson’s *barbarous* indicates conflict
with both grammatical correctness and good taste (the latter probably that of the
middle and upper social classes), whereas *low* denotes a practice ‘not fit for polite use’, where polite again has clear social connotations (cf. Görlach 1999: 526). *Vulgar* also has increasingly negative social implications, cf. Johnson’s definition, whose second meaning is ‘mean, low’. Solecism, which Lowth for instance uses to brand the construction *you was* (1762: 48, fn2), seems the only term that does not necessarily in itself mix linguistic and social undesirability. But in general eighteenth-century terminology seems to lay the ground for the modern conflation of unwanted, i.e. non-standard speech and social characteristics. Of course, a person could depart from his normal social character, so to speak, and shift to another socio-stylistic level, as Kent does in *King Lear* when insulting Oswald (II, ii), but as time went on such stylistic shifts may have been regarded as more and more inappropriate.

But let us return to Lord Chesterfield, as he is more precise about his dislikes in other letters. He regards proverbs and other ‘trite sayings’ to be a hallmark of vulgar speech and disapproves of both ‘favorite words’ and ‘hard words’, presumably because they make the speaker seem affected and pedantic (Letter 83, 1749). In another place he uses an invented letter, purportedly by his son to the Secretary of State, to illustrate the kind of barbarisms, solecisms, and vulgarisms (capitalised in the letter) that “would, in a very few days, circulate through the whole kingdom, to your disgrace and ridicule”.

(6) MY LORD: I HAD, last night, the honor of your Lordship’s letter of the 24th; and will SET ABOUT DOING the orders contained THEREIN; and IF so BE that I can get that affair done by the next post, I will not fail FOR TO give your Lordship an account of it by NEXT POST. I have told the French Minister, AS HOW THAT IF that affair be not soon concluded, your Lordship would think it ALL LONG OF HIM; and that he must have neglected FOR TO have wrote to his court about it. I must beg leave to put your Lordship in mind AS HOW, that I am now full three quarter in arrear; and if SO BE that I do not very soon receive at least one half year, I shall CUT A VERY BAD FIGURE; FOR THIS HERE place is very dear. I shall be VASTLY BEHOLDEN to your Lordship for THAT THERE mark of your favor; and so I REST or REMAIN, Your, etc.

(Chesterfield XCI, Nov. 24, 1749)

While these features are said to be socio-stylistically inadequate for the purpose of an official letter, does that also make them non-standard? *Set about doing* and *cut a figure* seem perfectly alright and standard from the present – and perhaps also contemporary⁸ – perspective. Interestingly, Chesterfield does not highlight the form *have wrote*, labelled by the *OED* as dialectal or illiterate, which a modern observer would single out. *Vastly* used as a bleached intensifier is a form criticised repeatedly by Chesterfield; it is an item apparently fashionable in the eighteenth century (*OED*; 3 occurrences

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8. *Set about* occurs seven times in the Lampeter Corpus, in two cases followed by verb-*ing*, in contexts which are stylistically neutral or formal. In contrast, it is found only once in the CED.
in the CED) and so falls under his category of ‘favorite words’ to be avoided, but it is no more or less standard than any of the numerous other intensifiers introduced into English (cf. Peters 1993). Therein seems to be a feature going gradually out of linguistic fashion (i.e. becoming archaic) and/or retreating into a specialised register (law). It occurs 94 times in the CED, but only six times (in four works) in period 4, 1680–1719, and twice (in one work) in period 5, 1720–1760. For to is another obsolescent feature (Rissanen 1999b: 288), which in the CED only occurs twice in period 4 and once in period 5, though common in earlier periods. Chesterfield is thus sensitive to archaic features, which for him no longer belong to good usage – and by extension to the standard, if one assumes him to have a similar, if unexpressed, view to Campbell. The most interesting cases in the above letter are perhaps the unusual premodifiers that there/this here and the highly redundant as how that, neither of which is traceable in the CED and CEECS, although the former are attested in the OED (s.v. here 1d, there 2c) and there marked as dialectal and vulgar. Metalinguistic statements (or illustrations) like Lord Chesterfield’s are problematic for several reasons: they are often hazily expressed so that the grounds of the judgment remain unclear. They are subjective and reveal nothing about the (extent of) usage of an item in social and stylistic respects.

We will therefore now turn again to use in real-life, authentic (non-literary) contexts. There are several ways to approach non-standard language use. One is via the speakers, another via the addressees and a last via specific text types and contexts. Speakers who are members of the lower social classes, and who have received little or no formal education are more likely users of non-standard features than educated, socially higher ranking speakers. Such speakers have on the whole left relatively few records, but a source exists that has been neglected by linguists so far, namely pauper letters such as edited by Sokoll (2001) and discussed by Fairman (2006, 2007). The following letter is taken from Sokoll’s edition (2001: 518):

(7) Ann Garner in Attleborough, Norfolk to Mr Cook in Havering-atte-Bower, 16 April 1795:

M’ Cook

Ann Garner the wife of James Garner Could wish to be hapy to Live with my husban again but I am very uneasy & unhapy that he have Left mee a Gain for I have been Lawfull married to him 27 years and have had thirteen Childrern by him now I think It tis a unjust thing for you Gentleman & officers to harber married men thair from thair wife and familys now I understand the Letter wich m’ Cook sent to the Attlburg officer that he have a wife and family in your place and if he be thair I meen to be thair my self and beg of you to send me a Answer weather he be thair or near for I think tis not proper for a nother to in joy my Right his Daught wich Laid in when he was thair have Laid il so to hart that thea think she out Live

From your humble servent

Ann Garner
The letter shows a language user unaccustomed to writing, as is visible in the complete lack of punctuation and the uncertain orthography. Apart from this the letter also gives evidence for features which do not conform to the standard as found at the end of eighteenth century, notably deviant subject-verb concord (*he have*),\(^9\) which used to refer to a human referent (*daughter*), and article usage (*a unjust, a answer*).\(^10\) A related aspect to the last is also found in *a nother*, with unexpected word segmentation, which is found frequently in earlier times but at this stage of the language is non-standard. Uncertainties regarding what constitutes a word are also seen in (*it* *tis*, in which case it essentially results in a double use of *it*. Unusual lexical usages are found in *daught* and *out Live*. The former is a short form of *daughter* (not attested in the *OED*), which could of course be an abbreviation but in the absence of punctuation this is hard to decide. The latter is interesting because of its meaning: while in the standard it means *survive*, here rather the opposite seems to be intended. Whether these two are idiosyncratic uses or more widespread would need more investigation. The past tense form *laid* seems to be used here for the verb *lie*. Two potential phonetic points are found in *husban* and *thea*. *Husban* shows deletion of the final consonant, which is also found in other letters (e.g. Sokoll 2001: 560) and thus might be a more widespread phenomenon. *Thea* for *they* is a surprising variant (not listed by the *OED*), which is either a spelling analogous to *thear* or really represents a specific pronunciation. Further features of interest found in other letters are, for example, *do*-less structures (8a) and multiple negation (8a, b), and the use of *aint* for both *be* and *have* (9).

\(^8\) a. he *Not got* a coffin Nor I have got *No Money*  
   b. i did *not* know *no* other way  

\(^9\) I *aint* had only ten shillings of you (...) It *aint* my wish now ...  

\(^9\) Certain further below for concord.

\(^10\) Deviant article usage of this kind is only found once in the CED, namely *a engagement* in d4fbehn (1689).
form. This is the kind of data we find in the CED. As to addressees, it is possible that certain target audiences are served with a certain kind of language, in a specific form of accommodation. A less formal, more colloquial, at times even non-standard speech style may be used for addressing one class of addressee but not another. The language of comedies, represented in the CED, may be seen in this light, for example, as audience expectations might colour the speech of stage characters. On the whole, however, the influence of the addressee on linguistic usage may be difficult to prove, and will therefore be set aside here.

As mentioned above, non-standard will more likely be found in some contexts than in others. Among them are definitely speech-related, dialogic contexts, as found in the CED. Another case in point are emotionally charged contexts, in which the speakers relax control over their linguistic output and produce expressions which might be offensive or not be completely appropriate to the situation. Cusack (ed., 1998: 28, her ex. 6E) provides the following example:

(10) … he did shewe me (the said George Baily) thy pricke or his pricke, and saidst or said, this prick hath fuckt Ioan Pecke many tymes (meaning thereby that the said John Slocombe was and is a man of dishonest life and Conversation and that he had the carna(l) knowledge of the bodie of the said Ioane Pecke (1629)

This is taken from a document of a defamation case where verbal abuse needs to be testified to. It is in the nature of abuse to use strong language, here prick (labelled by the OED as ‘coarse slang’) and fuck (OED: taboo, coarse), of a type that is excluded from ‘polite’ usage. It is non-standard from the point of view of social desirability. The interesting point in (10) is that the scribe noting down the offending words has provided his own translation, using a highly circumspect phrasing, which illustrates what the expected and more appropriate forms in formal conversation would have been. Words like the above have often or as a rule not been put into print up to the recent past, which is a clear sign of their social non-standardness. Typographically, euphemistic usages are thus also found in the CED, with devil and damn partly blanked out as illustrated by the instances in (11).

(11) a. What the D–l have we got here? (CED, d5hogilp, 1748)
    b. and Swan said, G–d D–n your Blood, I have a great Mind to shoot you, and to blow your Brains out, (CED, d5tswan, 1752)

Seven such abbreviated uses of damn occur in the CED, while the fully spelt out form is found in about 75 swearing cases. Similarly the insult bitch is found both blanked out and spelt fully. Bloody is another case in point of such an undesirable, inappropriate word, one which does not occur blanked out, however. About ten relevant occurrences, i.e. those probably involving the angry epithet or strong intensifier, are found in the
CED, as illustrated in (12). (12b) is a borderline case, as it could also more literally refer to the shedding of blood.

(12) a. Well, in short, I was drunk; damnably drunk with # Ale; great Hogen Mogen bloody Ale: I was porterly drunk, and that I hate of all things in Nature. (CED, d3cdryde, 1669)

b. Yow shall know yet before March wind be blowne that we phenatticks will looke all those in the face which now doe oppose us, for the Kinge is a blody Papist, … (CED, d3wyork, 1655–1664)

c. Indeed, I think they would not have yielded much to the Bishops: For they were bloody mad at them; and I think if they had sitten till now, they would have sent them to the Church from the House, to pray to God; but not to have letten them prate any more to the House of Lords. (CED, d4hosam, 1681)

The almost modern sounding (12c) is supposed to represent a dialogue between lower-ranking workers. These occurrences are found in the periods 2 (1600–1639), 3 (1640–1679) and 4 (1680–1719), most commonly in 3. Noteworthy is the non-occurrence in period 5 (1720–1760), the middle of the eighteenth century, when both politeness ideals and notions of standard language were at their strongest. They are distributed very evenly between the text types: comedy (2), witness depositions (2), trials (3), didactic works (2) and fiction (1).

4. The status of ‘standard’ vs. ‘non-standard’ features in Early Modern English: Assessing textual evidence

We shall now look at two illustrative features, selected according to the fact that they were at some point in time relegated beyond the boundaries of the emerging standard and are regarded as non-standard and/or dialectal today. We would like to discuss to what extent it is possible to see these features as ‘non-standard’ in Early Modern English.

4.1 Them for demonstrative those

There is a use of them corresponding to the demonstrative those, which the OED marks as ‘now only dial. or illiterate’ (s.v. them, I.3, III.5) and which is common in “many Non-standard Modern Dialects” (Trudgill 1990: 79). According to Faiss (1989: 162) there are attestations around the end of the sixteenth/the beginning of the seventeenth century which can be called ‘standard’ besides many more non-standard ones, but he does not give relevant quotes. Apart from the fact that there was no unambiguous standard at that time, one can only say that the first three OED quotes under III.5 are from contexts which make a careful and formal use of language very likely:
Such uses may at least mean that the usage was not actively stigmatized; it need not mean that it was either regarded as fully ‘correct’ or as elegant. In the CED one finds eleven potential occurrences of demonstrative *them* (as against 962 instances of *those*). Two of them are early (1582, 1602/23 = Shakespeare), five occur in the mid to late seventeenth century, and four in the middle of the eighteenth century. The latter are certainly to be regarded as non-standard, as no grammar writer of the eighteenth century would have accepted this use as grammatically correct. Lowth and Priestley, for example, do not mention this use at all, whereas Miège in the seventeenth century lists *they/them* among the demonstratives, though apparently only in a non-determinative use (cf. 15c below). It is also noteworthy in this respect that the *Lampeter Corpus* (1640–1740), which is not geared towards speech-related texts, does not provide a single instance of demonstrative *them*. Despite a few *OED* citations later than the ones in (13), demonstrative *them* had apparently no status in the written language. As to the kind of texts which contain this feature in the CED, these are witness depositions (4 instances), trials (3), didactic works (2) and comedies (2), i.e. demonstrative *them* occurs relatively more often in contexts which report authentic speech.\footnote{11} However, three of the four witness deposition instances represent the same repeated phrase in one text (cf. 14), but at least representing two different deponents. These are seamen testifying in a case of court-martial around Captain Norris of the ship Essex, one of them a lieutenant and the other one, the speaker in (14), a midshipman.

\begin{footnote}[11]{The incidence figures per 10,000 words counted for these frequencies are as follows: trials 0.11, witness depositions 0.23, and drama and didactic works 0.08.}

\begin{footnote}[12]{It could be a case of hypercorrection on the part of the master, similar to those instances found in the lower middle class today (p.c. Raymond Hickey).}
(15)  

a.  
*I say, that for the general Correspondence I have had for two or three years, they have had every one of them Letters, that I know of.*  
(CED, d3tcolem, 1678)

b.  
And when I came there, I found them lyeing on the Bed in the middle of the Day; and had them Prisoners in my Custody two or three Months; and then they were all sent out of my hands into Scotland Prisoners.  
(CED, d4thambd, 1683)

c.  
Q. Were those Ships in a Line with their Admiral?  
A. *Them* seemed to come up to close the Line with their Admiral.  
(CED, d5tambro, 1745)

While (15a) is a clear instance just like the previous ones, (15b) is the one occurrence which is structurally somewhat ambiguous, as it could also be parallel to a construction like ‘take sb. prisoner’ with *them* being the object. In (15c) *them* can stand either for *those* or for *they*, but in each case it would have to be regarded as ungrammatical and therefore non-standard. As to the speakers, (15a) is the answer of a prisoner with the social status of gentleman, for whom the situation was certainly emotionally charged, (15b) presents the speech of some law-enforcing official of unclarified rank, and (15c) is spoken by a seaman of the rank of master’s mate. Interestingly, the form nevertheless also occurs in a language teaching text (16), in this case one for learning French. (16) is the English version of a French dialogue between a steward and a cook, thus supposedly representing the language use of servants.

(16)  
*Pick (or fleece) them Pullets; draw them, tuck them up well, and lard them neatly. Shell them Peese and Beans, and let them boyl about a quarter of an hour.*  
(CED, d4hfboye,1694)

The instances found in the CED have a somewhat different sociolinguistic flavour compared to the *OED* quotes in (13). They directly or indirectly concern speakers of comparatively lower social stations and they deal with more mundane situations not demanding stylistically elevated speech (cf. especially 14, 15c, 16). The formality of the courtroom does not seem to have been an inhibiting factor, but to have been overridden by social and emotive speaker characteristics. This together with the sheer infrequency of this use of *them* in writing in itself speaks for its marginal status in the language and thus for its emerging non-standardness at the time of investigation. Interestingly, this feature seems to have passed below the radar of contemporary grammarians and other linguistic arbiters. For instance, there is no reference to it in Sundby et al. (1991).

4.2  
Third-person subject-verb concord

Subject-verb concord, more precisely third-person concord, is the other feature we wish to investigate. If one looks at early modern grammars the situation is relatively straightforward, in so far as a third-person subject requires a verb marked with -*th*
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or -s – this state of affairs is found for example in seventeenth-century grammars such as those by Butler, Wallis, Miège or Aiken (with the latter apparently allowing variation with regard to was/were). Sundby et al. (1991) present lists of works which condemn inappropriate concord with, e.g. he (p. 138), it (p. 139) and she (p. 151), using such labels as ‘ungrammatical’, ‘improper’, ‘bad’, ‘absurd’ and ‘inelegant’. This would lead one to assume that there was an (early) awareness of the inappropriateness of an unmarked third-person verb, at least in written and more formal contexts. Fairman (2007: 176) mentions the occurrence of unmarked third person in pauper letters, but only as a regional dialect feature to be found in Cambridgeshire, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. The question is thus whether this feature occurs in the CED as a more general non-standard feature. We cannot provide a comprehensive answer here, as it would have been too time-consuming to find all third-person subjects in an untagged/unparsed corpus for the purposes of the present study. We thus restricted our searches to the third-person pronouns (all orthographical variants of she; he/hee; it followed by do or have). The search for truly unmarked third-person verbs is further complicated by two aspects: the precise usage and extent of subjunctive forms (itself in retreat), and the use of present forms as unmarked, irregular past tense forms, for the exclusion of both of which cases some contextual interpretation is necessary. (17a), for example, is a subjunctive form induced by the nonfactuality of the temporal clause introduced by before; similar instances can be found in conditional, final and in nominal clauses containing reported speech (cf. Rissanen 1999b). The wager in (17b) is also marked by irreality typical for subjunctive uses. Cases like (17c) have to be disregarded as the surrounding verbs make clear that the past tense is intended.

(17) a. Then it is likely to be darke night before he finde the way home.  
(CED, d2hohoby, 1615)
b. I’ll bet Fifty Pound, that he don’t live till Morning.  
(CED, d5cgarrri, 1757)
c. so she run up to the Door, and gave me notice; and presently call’d to him again:  
(CED, d5fdefoe, 1722)

This leaves very few cases, in the range of ten to twenty, to be considered as real unmarked third-person verbs. Two instances involve the form don’t, which in both cases is followed in close proximity by s/he says, in (18a) by the same speaker who uses he don’t.

(18) a. Prisoner. And that he never refus’d any body under his Examination the Sum of five Guineas?  
L. Ch. Baron. He don’t say so; he says, he never could refuse his Charity to People that begg’d as you did.  
(CED, d4tfranc, 1716)
b. Giles, My Lord, she don’t say she was with us all the while, but we came to an House where she was, and several other People our Neighbours.  
Record. She says you did go out sometime: Now see whether I mistake you.  
(CED, d4tgiles, 1680)
Due to the phonetic difference between don't and doesn't the effect of substitution in spoken contexts is fairly striking and noticeable. In fact, the contracted form doesn't seems to be actively avoided by speakers in the CED; there are only two occurrences of it versus over a hundred non-contracted instances and more than five hundred of don't. Ease of pronunciation may thus account for even the judge in (18a) using don't. This usage survived long into the 19th century and could be used by educated speakers, but only in familiar speech (Denison 1998: 196f); this is in contrast to the judge’s ‘official’ use in (18a). Another auxiliary occurs in unmarked form, namely the perfective marker have as in (19). While (19b) might partly be explicable through its indirect speech context this is not the case in (19a).

(19) a. These persons have undertaken to manage it; all the Witnesses Mr. Farewell has brought, have contradicted him in all he have said. (CED, d4ttfp, 1682)  
   b. she confessed to this infor. that she 3 imps theyr names Antony blackfast and will, the 2 first like rabets and they sucked on her and the other like a crow and that she dry nursed and that she haue had these [2]8 years, …  
   (CED, d3wsuffo, 1645)

The three examples in (18, 19a) are taken from trial proceedings in courts in London, where the non-marking of third person was not a local feature. (19b), in contrast, is located in Suffolk, where the unmarked third person might have been a dialect feature (Trudgill 1990: 94).13 There are three further relevant occurrences in the same file from Suffolk, one of which is she wer married. Three further cases are listed in (20). In both (20a) and (20b) it is also marginally possible that past tense was intended, whereas this is not the case in (20c).

(20) a. L. Ch. Just. For Mr. Sheriffs honour we must take notice of what he hath said. He say, he heard of a man that spoke something of that nature, and therefore he left him out of the Jury. (CED, d4tcolle, 1681)  
   b. “how shall not caule Katherine Reid mother, for she caul me hoor, and I never maid fault but for this christen soull, and they wyll nott dytt ther mowethes with a bowell of wheit that wold say she had bore a barne in Chirton.”  
   (CED, d1wdurha, 1560–1588)  
   c. Yet hees not fit for a Souldier, any man may bende him as hee list.  
   (CED, d2mworke, 1615)

13. Comparing the above examples with the evidence given in Orton et al. (1978), one finds that the speakers’ origins in (18b – Middlesex), (19a – Devon) and (19b – Suffolk) fit the areas indicated as using (he) don’t and (he) have (cf. Maps 37 and 41); the speaker in (18a) comes originally from Lincolnshire, which lies just outside the (he) don’t area.
List, infrequent as it is in itself, seems to attract unmarked use; it does, however, also occur twice as listeth so that a distinction is maintained. When discussing the pauper letter examples above we came across ain’t, which could be seen as an institutionalized form for avoiding concord, as it works for all grammatical persons and for two verbs with several grammatical forms. Fourteen relevant instances are found in the CED, of which three are presented here:

(21)  

a. For, say a man offer to blowe thee up with Love-powder, If his traine lie so open, you may see it, you have the wit I hope to shun it; – h’an’t you. (CED, d3ctb, 1647)

b. Your Hand, Sister, I an’t well. (CED, d4cfarqu, 1707)

c. The little Gaeties and Excesses of Youth, are as much the Beauty and Perfection of that State, as Care and Policy are of Age; and yet because they an’t immediately grave and gray-headed, we are dissatisfy’d and offended. (CED, d5cmille, 1734)

While (21a) represents haven’t you and an intermediate form on the way to ain’t (there are nine forms with initial h), (21b) stands for I am not and (21c) for they are not. In contrast to the pauper letters the more modern spelling ain’t does not occur in CED.

What is noteworthy with regard to the non-marking of the third person in the present data in general is that (i) it tends to occur primarily in contexts related to authentic speech (trials and witness depositions), which links it either to a certain class of speakers and/or less careful, online speech production (cf. 18a), (ii) it was apparently very rare, which speaks for its avoidance by many speakers, and (iii) with the exception of ain’t, it is not found at all in the latest period in the CED, in which standardisation must have had the strongest effect.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have dealt with a period which was both highly language-conscious – and perhaps getting even more so as time progressed – and characterised by a very high awareness of social distinctions. Finding evidence of non-standard in such a context is of course not an easy undertaking. We have used various sources in order to evaluate their usefulness.

One type of source is the metalinguistic kind, such as provided by dictionaries, grammars and Lord Chesterfield’s letters. While eighteenth-century writers in particular are quite forthcoming with their linguistic views, it is difficult to be certain about the status of the features which are being criticized. The following points about these
sources need to be borne in mind. The evaluations are usually not explained in detail, and as such are also hard to link up to modern descriptive categories of (non)standard. Furthermore, there is no knowing how frequent and widespread or restricted the features were in the usage of the time, and how they were intertwined with the social structure of society. As we saw with the features singled out by Chesterfield, not all of them are traceable in corpora or they are found in contexts which seemingly contradict the judgement given. Can non-occurrence be taken to mean that the features are so extremely non-standard that they do not find their way into writing at all? Not necessarily. It might simply mean that the available corpora are too small, and/or geographically and socially not comprehensive enough. It is of course also possible that some criticized features represent individual pet hates of the authors in question. On the other hand, these metalinguistic statements remind us of the fact that contemporary views of non-standard – in contrast to linguistic ones – are not value-free. This has led us to include taboo language in our discussion above, thus taking account of period-internal approaches to approved (~ standard) versus censured (~ non-standard) language. While metalinguistic sources are thus useful to a degree, they need to be approached with care.

We have of course found some overlap between metalinguistic and corpus-linguistic evidence, but we have also discussed two instances (them and ain’t) which only occurred in the corpus evidence. These are interesting as they show us that the contemporary “radar” for potential non-standard uses was not perfect. This, however, leaves us with a problem: if we do not follow up leads from metalinguistic statements, how do we identify what features to look for? In the two cases mentioned above, we have taken modern attestations of non-standard as our basis. This may be both restrictive and misleading for the past, as features we are not even thinking of might have been of importance. Also, sometimes this approach leads the researcher simply to stereotypes with a potentially tenuous relationship to reality, as in the case of stage dialect. Essentially, we are faced with the problem of looking for the “great unknown” here – a problem we cannot offer a solution to at the moment. Furthermore, the features we investigated were very infrequent in corpora, as we have seen with regard to them and concord. The question here is whether infrequency in itself can be taken to be proof of the non-standard status of a feature. We tentatively argue for that (though not as the sole criterion), as high frequency, in contrast, would certainly speak against non-standardness. In addition to low frequency, it would of course be desirable to find the features attested in contexts which fit the expectations for non-standard. As we have seen, this is not always unambiguously the case. This may mean that the features we have discussed were not yet clear sociolinguistic markers in Labov’s sense (1972b: 535), so that not all members of the speech community used them in a uniform manner, resulting, in our data, in somewhat unclear socio-stylistic variation.
What is the way forward in historical investigations of non-standard? In general we think that the approach that we tried out here, despite its shortcomings, is promising. More systematic studies matching and combining metalinguistic evidence, modern non-standard features and historical corpus data may shed more light on this underresearched area.

References

CED = A Corpus of English Dialogues 1560–1760. 2006. Compiled under the supervision of Merja Kytö (Uppsala University) and Jonathan Culpeper (Lancaster University).
Labov, William 1972a. 'Some principles of linguistic methodology', Language in Society 1: 97–120.

**Appendix**

Evidence of dialectal usage in John Ray’s *Collection of English Words* (1674) and the *Corpus of English Dialogues* (1560–1760) (CED); the items listed are given in the form they appear in the CED.
A. Northern words listed in Ray (1674) and recorded in the CED\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{aundent} (1 × d1wchest)

Ray, p. 4: "The \textit{Aunder}, or as they pronounce it in Cheshire \textit{Oneder}..."

\textbf{barne} (3 × d1wdurha, 2 × d2farmin)

Ray, p. 5: "A \textit{Barn} or \textit{Bearn}: A Child: it is an ancient Saxon word..."

\textbf{bouned} (1 × d1wdurha)

Ray, p. 7: "To \textit{Boun} and (un)boun; to dress and undress ..."

\textbf{bourd} (1 × d1wchest, 1 × d1clyly)

Ray, p. 7: "To \textit{Bourd}; to jest, used most in Scotland..."

\textbf{capo} (1 × d4cshadw)


\textbf{coleworts} (1 × d3finewes)

Ray, pp. 11–12: \textit{Cole} or \textit{Keal}: Potage; \textit{Cole-worts}: Potage-herb: Potage was so denominated from the herb Colewort, because it was usually thereof made, and Colewort from the Latine word \textit{Caulus} ...

\textbf{dings} (1 × d4cfarqu)

Ray, p. 14: To \textit{Ding}; to \textit{Beat}...

\textbf{dizen’d} (1 × d4hotwo)


\textbf{eames} (1 × d1ftales)

Ray, p. 16: \textit{Eam}, mine \textit{Eam}: My Unkle, also generally my Gossip, my Compere, my Friend...

\textbf{flacket} (1 × d1wdurha)


\textbf{fow} (4 × d4cshadw)


\textbf{gibe} (1 × d2fdelon)

Ray, p. 20: To \textit{Ghype} or \textit{Gipe}: to Scold...

\textbf{glum} (1 × d3cether)

Ray, p. 21: To be \textit{Glum}; to look sadly or sowlry, to frown; contracted from \textit{Gloomy}.

A word common to the Vulgar both in the North and South.

\textbf{greet} (1 × d1fboord)

Ray, p. 22: To \textit{Greit} or \textit{Greit}; to weep or cry: ...

\textbf{hight} (1 × d2farmin, 1 × d1cpeele)

Ray, p. 25: To \textit{Hight}; \textit{Cumb}. To Promise, or vow; as also the Saxon verb...

\textbf{kit} (2 × d3wsuffo, 1 × d2wpendl)

Ray, p. 27: A \textit{Kit}: a milking pail like a Churn with two ears and a cover ...

\textsuperscript{14} The reference in parentheses after each word is derived from the labelling used in the \textit{Corpus of English Dialogues}.\vspace{12pt}
marrow (1 × d4hoep; from the CED: IN THE SOURCE TEXT Marrow IS GLOSSED AS “A North Country word for Fellow”)
Ray, p. 31: A Marrow: a Companion or fellow … Vox generalis.

Piggin (1 × d2wpendl)
Ray, p. 37: A Piggin; a little pail or tube with an erect handle.

rack, rack’d (1 × d4ccongr, 1 × d4hosam, 1 × d2honord, 1 × d5fdavys)
Ray, p. 38: To Rack or Reck; to care, never Rack you, i.e. Take you no thought or care. …

sakles (1 × d4wyork)
Ray, p. 39: Sackless: innocent, faultless, without crime or accusation;…

stanges (1 × d2wdioce)
Ray, p. 44: A Stang; a wooden bar … This word is still used in some Colleges in the University of Cambridge; to stang Scholars in Christmas …

swill (1 × d1wdarcy)
Ray, p. 47: A Swill; a keeler to wash in, standing on three feet.

taste (1 × d2heron)
Ray, p. 48: To Tast; i.e. to smell in the North: indeed there is a very great affinity between these two senses.

thwited (1 × d2hochur)
Ray, p. 49: To Twhite, to whittle, cut, make white by cutting. …

walker (1 × d4wyork)
Ray, p. 51: A Walker; a Fuller…

warch (2 × d2wpendl)
Ray, p. 51: To Warch or wark; to ake, to work…

wende (1 × d1wbarks)
Ray, p. 52: To Wend; to goe …

worried (1 × d4hosam)
Ray, p. 55: To be Worried: to be choak’t…

b. Northern words listed in Ray (1674) and recorded in the CED but unclear whether the same sense was intended

lazy (1 × d2farmin)
Ray, p. 26: Lazy: Naught, bad…

Loome (2 × d2fdelon, 1 × d5hobapt)
Ray, p. 31: A Loom; an Instrument or a tool in general, Chesh. …

peevish (1 × d3cether)
Ray, p. 37: Peevish: Witty, subtil…

soule (1 × d1fsharp)
Ray, p. 44: to Sowle one by the ears, Lincoln. …
speare (1 × d2farmin)
Ray, p. 44: The Speer, Chesh. the chimney post…

spice (1 × d2cheywo, 1 × d5hojs)
Ray, p. Spice: Raisins, plums, figs and such like fruit. York-sh. …

starke (1 × d2cbarrre, 1 × d1fboord)
Ray, p. 44: Stark: stiff, wary, …

worried (1 × d4hoep)
Ray, p. To be Worried: to be choak’t…

c. Southern/Eastern words listed in Ray (1674) and recorded in the CED

Cosset (1 × d1mdando)
Ray, p. 62: A Cosset lambe or colt, etc. i.e. a cade lamb, a lamb or colt brought up by the hand, Norf. Suff.

dings (1 × d4cfarqu)
Ray, p. 64: To Ding: to fling, Ess. in the North it signifies to beate.

bauen (1 × d2hferon)
Ray, p. 59: Baven: Brush-faggots, with the brush-wood at length. or in general brush-wood

d. Southern/Eastern word listed in Ray (1674) and recorded in the CED but unclear whether the same sense was intended

awkard (1 × d4cmanle, 1 × d4hfboyer)
Ray, p. 58: Auk, and awkward, untoward, unhandy, ineptus…

e. Words of potential interest found in the CED but not listed in Ray (1674)

happe (1 × d2wralei)
Listed as dialectal by Wright, but the OED gives it without dialectal classification.

haratantara (1 × d1cpee)
Wright lists the form tantara ‘noise, disturbance, outcry’ (Devon, Cornwall); this short form is also listed in the OED.

lighes (1 × d1wdurha)
A variant of lea ‘open ground, meadow.’ Listed by Wright as in general dialectal use.

shearers (1 × d2hfwoadr)
Listed by Wright as in Northern dialectal use (‘reaper, harvester’).

waltering, walteringe (1 × d4wyork, 1 × d2wsouth)
Listed by Wright as in Northern dialectal use.

Wearing (4 × d5twilli, 1 × d5tambro)
Listed by Wright as in Northern dialectal use.
Assessing non-standard writing in lexicography

Philip Durkin
Oxford English Dictionary

In this chapter I will look at some aspects of the treatment of non-standard and regional varieties in historical dictionaries, especially the OED. I will examine closely the spelling forms found in a series of passages written by non-professional, naïve writers, and the challenges for interpretation, presentation, and labelling which such data pose for a historical dictionary. My main focus will thus be quite narrow, but I hope that this detailed approach will raise issues and challenges which resonate with those faced by other researchers in this area.

1. Revising the OED

The first edition of the OED was published between 1884 and 1928. A single-volume supplement was added in 1933, and a major four-volume supplement between 1972 and 1986. All of this material was brought together in one sequence in OED2 in 1989, but the bulk of the text remained unchanged from the late 1800s or early 1900s. Now the whole of the OED is being revised for the first time, taking account of a century of scholarship and new research methods. At the time of writing a quarter of the existing dictionary has been published in revised form online, thus constituting the first quarter of the new, revised edition of the dictionary (OED3). All aspects of the dictionary text are being reconsidered and reassessed on an entry-by-entry basis, including pronunciations, form history, etymology, labelling, and definitions. Antedatings, interdatings, and postdatings are being added to the quotation evidence, and a large proportion of the existing quotations are being rechecked against better editions, and the bibliographical details of citations rechecked and standardized.¹

The coverage of OED3 does not make any exclusions on the basis of variety of English or register: all varieties, regional or social, technical or non-technical, are

considered appropriate for inclusion in the dictionary, so long as they are reflected in printed, published sources, which remain the primary source of documentation. However, printed, published sources are, obviously, much more representative of some varieties of English than of others. Inclusion of lexemes, as also of spelling forms and meanings, from modern standard English is determined primarily on the basis of frequency of use in published, printed sources, as reflected through the dictionary’s own reading programmes, and through electronic text databases. Reading of specialist print publications and use of specialist electronic text databases can alert editors at least to the most salient characteristics of the lexis of specialist, technical registers of standard English. Coverage of non-standard varieties poses many more problems. Any usage which is reflected frequently in modern printed, published sources will be included, but this automatically imposes a selection on the material included, in comparison with what would be found if any large database of any non-standard variety could be compiled and then exploited for the dictionary. This issue is by no means restricted to the coverage of traditional regional varieties. Modern urban varieties are likewise encountered in the OED largely at second-hand, and in those respects in which they influence the print media. Similarly the contemporary usage typical of SMS text messages or of emails is reflected in the OED only to the extent that it finds an echo in the print media.

1.1 Historical regional variation in the OED

One notable feature of the data available for documenting historical regional variation from England is the large volume of reliable glossarial evidence available from the nineteenth century. In determining whether words, forms, or senses should be included in the OED, glossarial evidence is weighed alongside examples of contextual use; indeed, sometimes items will be included in the dictionary without any contextual evidence, particularly when words evidenced only by glossarial and other secondary sources help to explain relationships among other related words. This is also an area where the relationships between different historical dictionaries are particularly important: for instance, the OED does not seek to incorporate every piece of information, nor every lexeme, from the English Dialect Dictionary, but often reference from an OED entry to an EDD entry can be employed to provide a fuller context for

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2. In OED3 all regionally based variation is labelled regional (rather than dialect), usually with some geographical specification, such as English regional (northern). The same labelling is thus used for Traditional Dialects (as defined in Wells (1982) or Trudgill (1999)) and for regionally defined varieties of more recent origin.
a particular word history. The glossarial sources which constitute the mainstay of the EDD’s evidence generally employ a transcription system based on a modified form of standard English orthography. From the twentieth century onwards there are also numerous sources employing IPA (or other modes of phonetic transcription), with or without an accompanying orthographic transcription; most significant in this respect are the Survey of English Dialects materials. The OED3 entry for paigle illustrates how such material can be reflected in the dictionary, with evidence based on orthographic transcriptions (such as predominates in the EDD) appearing with appropriate labels in the “Forms” section, while evidence from non-orthographic transcriptions, as well as more detail on regional distribution, can be described in notes in the etymology section (which appears within square brackets):

paigle, n.

Now Eng. regional (chiefly east.) and Welsh English (Pembrokeshire).

Brit./ˈpɛɪɡl/, U.S./ˈpɛɡ(ə)l/


See many conjectures in N. & Q. (1883) 6th ser. 7 405, 455.

Eng. Dial. Dict. records the word in use in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, Dorset, and Pembrokeshire; Surv. Eng. Dial. records the word from Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, and Essex.]

The cowslip, Primula veris. Also: the oxlip (both the true oxlip, Primula elatior, and the false oxlip, P. × polyantha).

In some districts where the cowslip is called paigle, the name cowslip itself denotes the oxlip.

?c1450 in G. Müller Aus Mittelengl. Medizintexten (1929) 75 Tak kousloppes, þat is plaggis [read pagglis], and primerose-leues, and sauge-leuys, and leuys of þe red nettles, and mustard-sed, and stamp all þese to-gedere. 1526 Grete Herball ccxii. sig. Mvi/2 (heading) De herba paralisii. Cowlysp or pagle. 1568 W. TURNER Herbal (rev. ed.) III. 80 A Cowislip, and..an Oxislip..are both call [sic] in Cambridgeshyre

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3. Compare for example the OED3 entries for perkin n.² (which notes the EDD entry for related perkins), or ourn adj. (which notes the material from various dictionaries for the similar forms oursn and oursn), or plouter v. (where the evidence from EDD and SND for plodder, plother, and plowster is compared).
Pagles. 1629 J. PARKINSON *Paradisi in Sole* xxv. 247 In some countries they call them Paigles, or Palsieworts, or Petty Mulleins, which are called Cowslips in others. 1650 S. SHEPPARD *Amandus & Sophronia* v. 125 The Primrose, Lilly, Calaminth are here, The Violet, Paunys, Pagle, and Kings-Speare. 1691 J. RAY S. & E. Country Words (E.D.S.), Paigle..is of use in Essex, Middlesex, Suffolk, for a cowslip: cowslip with us signifying what is elsewhere called an oxslip. 1760 J. LEE *Introvd. Bot.* App. 321 Pagils or Paigles, *Primula*. 1785 S. JACKSON Misc. I. II. 123 The fillies chiefly choose to eat The primrose, pagle, violet. 1866 J. LINDLEY & T. MOORE *Treasury Bot.* 836/1 Paigle, pagle, or peagle, *Primula veris*. 1892 *Littell's Living Age* 6 Feb. 358/2 It is about twenty years since the whorled primrose of Japan was introduced… Now it may be seen sowing itself in the borders with the freedom of an English ‘paigle’ 1922 E. BLUNDEN Shepherd 25 Their garlands are of peagles that flaunt their yellow heads. 1974 J. AIKEN *Midnight is Place* ix. 257 The man who had assisted them was commanded by his mother to fetch down the paigle cordial. 1997 *Countryman* Apr.-May 52 The cowslip gives no encouragement either; we still know them as ‘paigles’ and local wisdom suggests that you never get warm settled weather until the ‘paigles are finished’.

For some further (and in many cases more complex) examples of citation of evidence from SED and similar sources (such as fieldwork cited in entries in the *Scottish National Dictionary*) compare for example the OED3 entries for *missus n.*, *nieve n.*, *nay adv.*¹ and *n.*, *overrack v.*

Alongside the evidence from glossaries and fieldwork, there is a significant amount of evidence from dialect literature of various sorts, in which divergence from standard English is again signalled by adaptations of the orthography of standard English. As investigated by Trudgill (2002), the particular features of regional varieties which are identified in dialect literature can vary greatly, especially between writing intended for native speakers of that variety, and writing intended for outsiders. However, the mode of representation remains the same, namely a modified form of standard English orthography. Such data can pose considerable difficulties of interpretation. It is hoped that at least one assumption can usually be made: where an expert on a particular variety has given a transcription employing a modified form of standard English orthography, this can usually be assumed to reflect some sort of phonological or morphological difference from standard English. However, dialect literature written for outsiders constitutes a very broad category, in many respects forming part of a continuum with the use of features indicating regional or social dialects in the direct speech of characters in literary works. In assessing material of the latter type, it cannot be assumed that modified spellings reflect actual phonological or morphological divergence from standard English; ‘eye dialect’ is frequent, in which spellings such as *minnit* for *minute*, which have no phonological significance with reference to southern standard English in the late modern period, are nonetheless frequently employed as markers of regional origin.
and/or low social status. (For this and similar examples, see Mugglestone 2003: 176–7). As noted by Mugglestone, “The success of this technique depends not on the fidelity which may or may not exist between the written and spoken forms selected but instead on the clear perception of notions of norm and deviation which are thereby offered to the reader” (Mugglestone 2003: 119). Also found, and more difficult to interpret, are spellings such as *wot* for *what*, which reflect a sound change which was still in progress in many varieties of southern British English in the eighteenth and even nineteenth centuries, but which are deployed in nineteenth-century literary works as markers of social and regional identity in ways which clearly do not correspond to the realities of pronunciation (on this example, see Mugglestone 2003: 186–9). The use of such spellings constitutes part of a complex system of signalling of social status in literary works (and beyond), albeit one which frequently displays little or no grounding in the accurate representation of specific features of particular regional or social varieties:

The cultural ideal of the ‘literate speaker’ was..regularly incorporated in literary texts as ‘gentlemen’ and ‘ladies’. and..heroes and heroines were regularly given speech which reproduced the orthographical patterns of the standard language without deviation. Servants, members of the lower ranks, Cockneys, and rustics were instead habitually made to deploy patterns of speech in which the absence of expected graphemes, and the presence of others equally unexpected, was marked. The basic premise within this affiliation of sociolect and spelling traded.. on the implicit (if entirely fallacious) assumption that the non-localized norms of the written language were, in themselves, to be understood as representative of the non-regional forms of ‘correct’ speech. (Mugglestone 2003: 175)

The consideration of particular representations of regional speech in literary works is a difficult question (compare Poussa (2002) for a detailed discussion of a particular example): as a general rule, it is necessary to proceed with caution, and assess each instance carefully on a case-by-case basis. The treatment of such material in dictionaries also raises difficult questions. Regardless of its lack of any correspondence to a distinct spoken form, *wot* clearly demands a place in *OED*, and appears in a distinct entry, identified as a ‘non-standard written form’, with a set of historical illustrative quotations. When this entry is revised in *OED3*, it is hoped that some supporting comment can be added on the relevant sound change, together with references to the secondary literature on this topic. (For some examples of entries reflecting such complex phenomena from revised sections of the *OED* see *naow adv.², noo adj., noos n., laydee n., lovely adj.², orf adv. and prep., pooty adj.*) As a general rule though, spelling forms from literary representations of dialect will not be presented among the primary evidence for spelling history in the dictionary: where such forms are used, it is more likely to be in discursive notes, commenting on the evidence provided by such spellings for the distribution of particular phenomena.
1.2 Scots and English regional variation contrasted

A brief consideration of the situation in Scots may provide a useful background for considering the situation that we find in written representations of English regional varieties. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Scots developed orthographic norms and conventions which differed in many respects from those of the emergent standard south of the border: some of these correspond to phonological or morphological differences, while some others are purely graphic, reflecting different local spelling conventions. From at least the mid seventeenth century onwards, we see the interaction of these conventions with southern, standard English spelling conventions. Today Scottish standard English in its written form is indistinguishable from English standard English, and we cannot distinguish a book published in Edinburgh from one published in London on orthographic grounds. However, modern Scots dialect literature frequently employs at least some of the orthographic features of Older Scots, as well as showing features of ‘eye dialect’ bearing as little relation to the realities of the spoken language as those encountered in literature from south of the border. In OED3, Scots data is normally presented in a separate sequence of spelling forms, with the abundant data for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries showing some continuities with the forms found in the eighteenth century and later. One of the main themes of the rest of this paper will be the unlikeliness that we can identify similar continuities in the representation of regional varieties in England. In place of the Scots story of a set of local norms and conventions in interaction and competition with the norms and conventions of southern standard English, in the written evidence from speakers of English regional varieties we find naïve, idiosyncratic solutions to orthographic problems. These can yield very useful linguistic data, but we do not find orthographic continuities or traditions. This has very important implications for the use that can be made of such data in historical dictionaries.

1.3 What of the unpublished writings of ‘naïve’ non-professional writers?

In comparison with representations of dialect in literature, and even with self-conscious attempts to write dialect literature by writers with a detailed knowledge of standard English orthography, it may seem that the evidence of ‘naïve’ non-professional writers, who spell as they do because they know no other way of spelling, will offer a much more direct and reliable source of information about phonological and morphological variation. Indeed the usefulness of data from such sources for linguistic research is in no doubt: compare e.g. Lass (1987) on the journals of a South African settler of the 1820s. However, in the absence of any local spelling traditions (and hence unlike the situation we find for Scots at least for the early modern period and arguably somewhat beyond), we cannot assume that the particular spellings we find in such writers are anything other than idiosyncratic solutions to the orthographic challenges of writing.
English: crucially, divergent spellings will not necessarily show any mapping with variation in the spoken language, nor will they necessarily show any continuity with spellings employed by any other writer.

2. An examination of the spelling forms found in some sample texts

2.1 John Clare, prose piece *The Farmer and the Vicar*

In some ways John Clare seems an ideal choice as a literary informant on early nineteenth-century regional use. His writings can be dated with a reasonable degree of accuracy, and we know that he was of very humble origins from the village of Helpston in north-east Northamptonshire, and that he had only very little formal education, although he was quite well read: compare his own list of authors he had read recorded in a letter reproduced in Robinson and Summerfield (1978: 9), or references passim in the letters in Storey (1985). He was frequently labelled in the nineteenth century ‘the Northamptonshire peasant poet’. In his lifetime, editions of his work often showed a high degree of ‘correction’ of spellings. Modern scholarly editions (especially those of Eric Robinson and his collaborators) are based more closely on his manuscripts, and reflect his own spellings. A first glance reveals that his spellings are unusual for the early nineteenth century, especially by comparison with published material of this date. However, it is much more difficult to determine how his spelling forms should be interpreted, and what sort of evidence they can provide for a historical dictionary.

For the purposes of this chapter, I have examined all of the spelling forms in Clare’s prose piece *The Farmer and the Vicar*, as edited by Robinson and Powell (2004: 438–444), a passage of approximately 3,500 words. I have compared its spellings with those recorded in the *OED* for the nineteenth century (including in quotations given at entries other than that for the relevant headword). I have then compared all spellings which do not have any correspondence in the *OED* record with those found from eighteenth-century sources on *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (*ECCO*), which has the virtue of presenting in searchable form a sizable proportion of surviving eighteenth-century print sources. (I have not made any comparison with a database of nineteenth-century sources because of the lack of any suitable large database of nineteenth-century usage. It should also be noted that precise spelling searches on *ECCO* can be difficult because of false matches resulting from errors in the *OCR* processing of more common strings.)

I have reported results here very briefly, because they can very easily be replicated. These examples should give a good impression of the sorts of tools available to historical lexicographers in assessing evidence of this type, and the sorts of decisions which have to be made on the basis of the available evidence.
Plural forms such as *citys, enemys* show marked preferences of Clare’s. The evidence of *ECCO* shows that they were also still quite common in the late eighteenth century. Other idiosyncracies of Clare’s spelling are: a preference for writing compound words with a space between their constituent elements, contrary to the conventional spellings of particular items in this period, e.g. *out skirts, nick name, a foot, over ruled, now adays; use of *(ye)* rather than *(ie)* in *tryed, dyed, etc.; spellings without *(l)* in *woud, coud, shoud*; avoidance of apostrophes in e.g. *calld, heres, joint, considerd, pepperd,* or in possessives such as *vicars,* etc., also *girles* (but once *farmer’s*).

Some forms such as *tho* ‘though’, *stiled* ‘styled’ may be surprising to a contemporary reader but are listed as current forms for the nineteenth century in *OED,* even though they may not have been the majority forms. *stopt* ‘stopped’, *exence* ‘expense’ both have very limited nineteenth-century evidence in *OED.* Examples in *OED* of *usefull* ‘useful’ from this period are mostly but not all in non-professional writing.

*Christmass* ‘Christmas’, *cobler* ‘cobbler’, *existence* ‘existence’, *oppulent* ‘opulent’, *appologize* ‘apologize’, *appology* ‘apology’, *opportunity* ‘opportunity’, *begining* ‘beginning’, *deficiency* ‘deficiency’, *ommitted* ‘omitted’ each have a number of examples on *ECCO* (some of these also have eighteenth-century examples in *OED,* but not nineteenth-century ones). *aluded* ‘alluded’, *anoyed* ‘annoyed’, *lammass* ‘Lammas’, *sometimes* ‘sometimes’, *tennant* ‘tenant’ each have a few examples on *ECCO.*

Some spellings are not paralleled in *OED* or *ECCO,* but convey no interesting phonological information, and there seems no reason to regard them as anything other than idiosyncratic but uninformative spellings by a naïve writer: *stumacher* ‘stomacher’, *surcumstance* ‘circumstance’, *Dairey* ‘dairy’, *innoscent* ‘innocent’, *pregudice* ‘prejudice’, *liscence* ‘licence’ (the last of these is recorded in *OED* for Older Scots). Probably also to be classed among these is Clare’s characteristic spelling *hugh* ‘huge’. Similarly:

- *neeghbür* ‘neighbour’ is listed by *OED* only as a twentieth-century Scottish spelling; there are no examples on *ECCO.*
- *chusing* ‘choosing’ is listed by *OED* (in a fascicle published in 1893) as “arch.”, but *OED* has a number of examples from print sources from the early decades of the nineteenth century which are not obviously archaic or archaizing.
- *counsils* ‘counsels’ is last found in *OED* in an example from 1689, *ECCO* has examples from one work of 1790. It probably results from association with *councils.*
- Robinson and Powell correct *acqua[i]nted* and *acquai[n]tance,* and indeed Clare uses *acquainted* in some other places.

Some spellings can be paralleled in other non-professional writings from this period:

- *generaly* ‘generally’ is recorded in *OED* in non-professional writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (On *ECCO* it cannot be disambiguated from false matches for *generally.*)
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There are forms which do seem indicative of phonological or morphological variation, or of both:

- *concerns* ‘concerns’: *OED* has examples in non-professional writing from the eighteenth century; the only examples on *ECCO* are as examples of bad spelling in a pedagogical manual.
- *cloathsbrush* ‘clothes brush’: *cloaths* is quite common even in printed sources in the late eighteenth century, and in non-professional writing in the early nineteenth century.
- *wether* ‘whether’ is hard to disambiguate on any untagged database from the word *wether* and from similar forms of *weather*; *OED* has examples from Middle English and the sixteenth century. The spelling clearly reflects the usual pronunciation of Clare’s period.
- *colledge* ‘college’ appears chiefly in non-professional writing from the beginning of the eighteenth century (later examples on *ECCO* are mostly quotations from earlier sources). (Interestingly, *collidge* ‘college’ is found as a graphic marker of non-standard speech in literary representations in the nineteenth century: compare Mugglestone (2003) 177.)
- *therefor* ‘therefore’ is found chiefly in non-professional use in eighteenth century in *OED* (and is not easily searchable in *ECCO*).

Interestingly, at least some matches can also be found for nearly all of these spellings in early twenty-first-century use on web pages.

The spelling *frumitory* is not found in *OED* or *ECCO*, but *OED* does record for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries *fu(r)mery*, and for the eighteenth *frumentary*. Clare’s form thus extends the range of variation recorded; whether or not this particular form was restricted in regional distribution is less clear, and on the basis of only one example it would seem rash to assume that it was restricted to e.g. Northamptonshire. (It could just as easily have been restricted just to the village of Helpston, or just to Clare’s own usage, or it could have been found more widely in the Midlands, or it could have been found at least sporadically in all parts of the country but happened only to be recorded in Clare. In the context of the other spellings recorded for this word, the latter seems perhaps the most likely scenario.)
otherwise 'otherwise': *OED* has some examples for this period, not all from regional or non-standard sources; *EDD* records it from Nottinghamshire and Devon; *ECCO* shows that it was common in the late eighteenth century. In this context, we would probably not be safe to regard Clare's use as showing specifically regional currency: it may be chance that this relatively late example is in his works, or he could have picked it up from his reading.

mizardly 'miserly' shows a derivative of *misard*, a variant of *miser* which is recorded from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in *OED*, and then subsequently (as *miserd*) in English regional, chiefly northern, sources. *mizardly* thus provides a parallel to the form *misertly* recorded in use in Northern Ireland in the *EDD*, and probably can be regarded as a regional item in Clare, although what the regional distribution of this item may have been is much less clear.

Some forms are highly unusual, but of uncertain significance:

Publice presumably means 'public house' in “he went round the village to caution…the servants to keep out of the Publice in church time”. If so, the meaning is unremarkable at this date (*OED3 PUBLIC n. 3a*), but the spelling is very unusual, *OED*’s last example being in a quotation from *a1716*. (It is very difficult to search for this string on *ECCO*, among matches for Latin *publice*.)

Thus, we can reach some very tentative conclusions about Clare’s spellings:

1. There are some idiosyncratic spellings, showing in some cases personal solutions to orthographic difficulties, and probably in others more or less deliberate personal stylistic choices.
2. A good number of the spelling forms were current slightly before Clare’s time, and better searchable databases of early nineteenth-century English might well find contemporary parallels. Such spellings are certainly disproportionately common in Clare, but this could result partly from the nature of his literary reading.
3. Only a very few forms are likely to yield any useful information about the spoken language in Northamptonshire in the early nineteenth century. In most cases, we can only establish this by comparison with the data in the *EDD* and in regional dialect glossaries.

An example of the practical difficulties involved in labelling data derived from Clare is provided by the word *pooty*, defined in *OED* as ‘the banded or grove snail’. This is a very frequent word in Clare’s works. The *EDD* and the two dialect glossaries it normally draws upon for Northamptonshire (Sternberg 1851, Baker 1854) all list this as a Northamptonshire word, but all attribute it to Clare. Presumably it can be classified as a Northamptonshire word, but it would be reassuring to have some evidence of use
entirely independent of Clare: on the evidence currently available, it does not seem impossible that it was in fact restricted to a much narrower area. Labelling at the level of a county is at best somewhat arbitrary.

Regardless of these difficulties of labelling, *pooty* has sufficient currency (post-Clare, in echoes of his work, etc.) to merit inclusion in *OED*. The case with Clare’s idiosyncratic spellings is much less certain: if they are not used more widely, and do not convey information about phonological or morphological variation, to include them in the listings of spellings in a general historical dictionary would seem an arbitrary selection out of a huge range of other idiosyncratic spellings by other writers.

2.2 A comparison with a contemporary U.S. source: The journals of Lewis and Clark

The explorers of the American West Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were near contemporaries of Clare’s. I will give four very short examples from their journals, without analysis of particular spelling forms:4

- Monday June 3rd 1805 [Lewis]
  to this end an investigation of both streams was the first thing to be done; to learn their widths, depths, comparative rapidity of their courants and thence the comparative bodies of water furnished by each.
- May 23 1804 [Clark]
  we incamped below a Small Isld. in the Meadle of the river
- August 19, 1804 [Clark]
  we gave one Small Meadel to one of the Cheifs & a Sertificate to the others of their good intentions
- May 16, 1804 [Clark]
  it contains about 100 indefferent houses, and abot 450 Inhabetents principally frinch, those people appear pore and extremely kind, the Countrey around I am told is butifull. interspersed with Praries & timber alturnetly and has a number of American Settlers

Non-standard spellings are much more frequent than in Clare, and among them there is a much higher proportion of spellings indicating phonological and/or morphological variation. The main reason for this is that Lewis and (especially) Clark had a less secure command of the spelling conventions of standard written English than Clare did.

Their evidence is additionally valuable because we lack any contemporary tool comparable to the *EDD* and the glossaries of the English Dialect Society for nineteenth-century U.S. English. The *Dictionary of American Regional English* is a wonderful tool, but the majority of its documentary sources are from a considerably later period. However, for this very reason the data becomes yet more difficult for a historical dictionary to use, especially when not mediated by a detailed analysis in a grammar of the text language of the Lewis and Clark journals, and a comparison with a range of other contemporary sources. Spellings such as *debths* 'depths', *frinch* 'French', *meadle* 'middle', or *meadel* 'medal' seem obvious indicators of certain phonological developments, but what we really want to know is how frequent such spellings are in this text and in contemporary texts, what other spelling types are found, and what is found for other words which might be expected to show a similar sound history. In other words, we need ideally some basic philological analysis of this variety to mediate between the text and a historical dictionary entry. As with Clare's spellings, in the present state of knowledge and working with the available data, lexicographers will in practice make use of the evidence of spelling forms from this source when it chimes with data from other sources, and helps complement the documentation for particular types of forms in a particular variety in a particular period. When the spelling forms point to an apparently isolated feature, they are likely to be used much more cautiously. When they appear simply to reflect idiosyncratic approaches to English spelling, they will not normally be recorded in the *OED*'s listings.

2.3 How does the evidence of ‘naïve’ witnesses differ for earlier periods?

Material from non-printed sources of the early modern period has not been the subject of any comprehensive linguistic survey. Much remains unedited, or has been edited by historians with a different approach to such questions of normalization of text and expansion of abbreviations, which can make editions difficult or impossible to use for linguistic purposes. Some material is now available in electronic form in careful transcriptions, notably the large sample of letters collected in *The Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/CEEC/), but there have been to date no major analyses of spelling practices in such texts. Some very useful samples have been made available in print form in Cusack (ed., 1998), chiefly with pedagogical purposes in mind. Such texts for the period 1500–1700 can be compared with the evidence of usage in published print sources provided in searchable electronic form by *Early English Books Online* (*EEBO*), in a similar manner to that in which *ECCO* can be used as a point of reference for the later period. However, it should be borne in mind that *EEBO* is much less comprehensive in coverage for its period than *ECCO*. At present *EEBO* has only 11,500 texts in searchable form, while its full database has 100,000 texts, and there are “over 125,000 titles listed in Pollard...
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and Redgrave’s *Short-Title Catalogue* (*1475–1640*) and Wing’s *Short-Title Catalogue* (*1641–1700*) and their revised editions, as well as the *Thomason Tracts* (*1640–1661*) collection and the *Early English Books Tract Supplement* (see http://eebo.chadwyck.com/marketing/about.htm). Thus only a small proportion of the published texts of the period can be searched, and failure to find evidence for a particular spelling does not necessarily mean that it does not occur in other published texts of this period. Nonetheless, *EEBO* places a powerful tool in the hands of anyone investigating spelling variation in this period.

Clearly in this period attitudes towards spelling in unpublished writing could differ considerably from those encountered in later centuries, as noted by Görlach:

Correct spelling has, at least since the eighteenth century, assumed great socio-linguistic importance, but there is considerable evidence that the stigmatisation of spelling mistakes is a new development. True enough, if uneducated speakers like the undertaker Henry Machyn spelt according to their lower-class pronunciation, the spelling would be stigmatised too…Puttenham must have had people like him in mind when warning against ‘ill shapen sounds and false ortographie’. However, Queen Elizabeth’s spelling *righmes* [for *rhymes*] indicates that rather unpredictable spellings were found in educated writers; and letters and diaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are still full of them – and they were often used by female writers. Many people must have thought that to spell correctly was the secretary’s job, and not necessarily a badge of liberal education. This attitude changed only in the eighteenth century when many of the educated became obsessed with orthography. (Görlach 1999: 487)

Reading of texts by writers such as Machyn for the *OED* poses many questions about how, and if, the spelling forms encountered should be documented in the dictionary. For this chapter I have taken two samples from Cusack (ed., 1998) and compared all of the spelling forms encountered in them with *OED*’s evidence and with the searchable portion of *EEBO*.

The first sample I have taken is Cusack’s text 17, the records of the churchwardens of Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire from 1664 (Cusack ed., 1998: 84–5).

*EEBO* provides parallels for many forms in this text which are not paralleled by *OED*’s current documentation, e.g. *lift* ‘left’ is later than any of *OED*’s examples, but *EEBO* has a seventeenth-century example of *lift hand*.

*claper* ‘clapper’, *ereckted* ‘erected’ are paralleled in *EEBO* only for the fifteenth century, and thus this evidence extends the date range of the forms. *warddon* ‘warden’ is not paralleled elsewhere, but *wardon* is (albeit sparingly).

Some forms are not paralleled in *OED* or *EEBO*, and appear promising sources of information about phonological variation: *gooying* ‘going’, *vsily* ‘usually’, *peorch* ‘porch’, *pillow* ‘pillar’, *deoare* ‘door’ (*EEBO* gives one match for this last form, in Lancelot Andrewes, but this probably shows a printing error, since the same text otherwise has
doore). *parrotor* 'paritor' is also not paralleled elsewhere, and perhaps conveys some useful information about the quality of unstressed vowels. Whether the phonological variation reflected by any of these forms was regionally restricted in distribution is much less clear.

An occurrence of the word form *plase* could, as Cusack notes, show either 'please' or 'place', since the syntax of the passage in which it occurs is very unclear. If it does show 'please' this is rather interesting, because the only seventeenth-century example *EEBO* has is from passages of stage representation of Scots in a play, John Tatham's *The mirror of the late times* (1660), hence at least showing that this form was no longer part of the normal repertory of spellings for *please*, if it could be used in this way as an indicator of regional speech. However, if we interpret it instead as showing 'place', then it is much less remarkable, and this is therefore perhaps the safer course.

Two spelling forms probably can be assumed to show regional features with some degree of confidence:

- **vant** 'font' seems to show the voicing of an initial fricative we would expect in a south-western text. (*OED* has no forms for this word with ⟨v⟩; *EEBO* has too many matches for the string *vant* to make a full check of all examples easily practicable; the *EDD* does not include the word.)

- **wothr** 'other' is not found in seventeenth-century sources on *EEBO*; *MED* has three of examples of *wother* 'other', one in an unlocalized manuscript, one in a manuscript from Devon, and another in a manuscript from western Leicestershire or Warwickshire (following data from the *Linguistic Atlas of Later Middle English* (McIntosh et al. 1986)); it also has *woder* once in a text from Cornwall. *EEBO* (and *OED*) have frequent sixteenth-century examples in Tyndale (who came originally from Gloucestershire), although also a scattering of forms from other texts with no such obvious western connections; evidence from the late nineteenth century onwards shows such forms to be *English regional* (*south-western*) (in the labelling style of *OED3*).

An interesting case is presented by *leveth* 'lives'. Recent research for this word for *OED3* found evidence for *leve*, *leue* types only up to the sixteenth century; there is then evidence from the nineteenth century onwards, but restricted to English regional (chiefly northern) sources. This begs the question whether the evidence from this text should simply extend the date range for the earlier use, without any labelling of regional provenance, or whether a regional restriction in distribution should be suspected at this date (but in a different region from the later use). A close search on *EEBO* finds a parallel form for the derived noun: “And vicious leuing to eschew” (1604); the following probably also shows a similar form for the derived adjective (rather than for *loving*): “Christ the sone of the leuing God” (1602). The evidence is slim, but probably the most we would want to say is that the *lev* type was rare in the seventeenth century.
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As a second text sample I have made a similar analysis of all of the spelling forms in the first 27 lines of Cusack’s text 35, another text from 1664, the journal of Roger Lowe, from Ashton-in-Makerfield, Lancashire (Cusack ed., 1998: 175).

Some spellings found in this text sample are simply very rare in other sources for this period, e.g. enioind ‘enjoined’, or concerninge ‘concerning’ (which is found in one example in OED in the journal of the religious writer George Fox). eflicted ‘afflicted’ is not paralleled elsewhere, but efflicted and afflicted are both found for this period.

I have not found parallels for the spelling ⟨aij⟩ for the reflex of Middle English ai found in this text in mundaij ‘Monday’, paijd ‘payed’, staijd ‘stayed’ on EEBO or in OED for this period, although paijd is found in late Middle English in the Paston Letters. It is unclear whether this has any phonological significance.

tords ‘towards’ is not recorded elsewhere, and seems to provide useful evidence of currency of a monophthongal variant with/o:/ (compare Dobson 1968: II, §208 (i)).

OED’s general policy for spelling evidence pre-1700 is that we should not neglect evidence from any source, print or non-print, in view of the relative scarcity of data, the different attitudes to spelling in non-print writing, and the less highly developed standardization of spelling even in print sources. In practice the only categories of material normally left out are obvious misprints in print sources and obvious ‘slips of the pen’ in (post-medieval) non-print sources. All other spelling variants encountered are listed in OED entries. More difficult is the question of how they should be labelled. Practical experience, as illustrated by the examples discussed here, suggests that spelling forms from print and non-print sources from this period should normally be listed together without explicit labelling. As with the later period, regional labelling will normally only be attempted where there is a clear fit with patterns of variation for which we have evidence for similar patterns of regional variation in either earlier or later periods or (ideally) in both.

3. Some conclusions

I hope that the main part of this chapter has illustrated the background to some of OED’s policy decisions in dealing with written evidence for non-standard varieties. All evidence from up to approximately 1700 will be used to provide primary documentation for OED’s listings of historical spelling variants. Within this period, any labelling adopted will be cautious, and spellings will not be identified as ‘regional’ or as belonging only to non-published writings unless there is strong corroborating evidence for this.

The eighteenth century marks a major change in our evidence, at least in England. Non-published writings continue to show a greater degree of variation in spelling forms than published writings, but this degree of variation is greatly reduced. Where
we find writings by naïve, non-professional writers, these generally stand somewhat apart. Clare’s spellings are instructive: we find some spellings which are simply unusual or uncommon for this date (in many cases somewhat archaic, and disfavoured by printers); other spellings show home-grown, idiosyncratic solutions to spelling English words. Where we find spellings that show no continuities with the spellings of other writers, these may (or may not) in individual cases tell us something interesting about phonological or morphological variation in a particular period and/or in a particular variety, but presentation of such spellings side-by-side with spellings of other types in a listing of historical spellings is unlikely to be instructive: more useful is the discussion of such spellings in a discursive note, where some further information can be given on the context and circumstances in which they occur. Ideally any discussion of such spellings would be linked (either by a bibliographical reference or, in an electronic dictionary, perhaps by a hyperlink) to the full context of occurrence, since this provides the surest basis for interpretation and understanding of the spellings adopted by a particular writer.

This chapter began with the EDD and the glossaries which provide the mainstay of its data. These and more recent surveys and glossaries remain the surest foundation for documenting regional variation in English English in the late modern period. We can enrich this picture by drawing upon other sources, including writings by naïve, non-professional writers, but care must be taken in both the interpretation and presentation of their evidence. Ultimately only a good deal of collaborative scholarly work on this field will enable lexicographers and others to extract all possible data from sources of this type.

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Northern English in Writing

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Northern English is an important variety of British English, which has tended to be neglected in textbooks on the history of English. The chapter describes Northern English from the Early Modern period (1500–1900), based on evidence from a wide range of vernacular texts and styles. The first section of the chapter gives an overview of the foundations of Northern English. The second surveys the main types of texts used as data, and discusses also issues of reliability and limitation. In the third section salient features of ‘common core’ Northern English from this period are described, and also noteworthy regional variants, on the levels of phonology, morphology, syntax, lexis and discourse. Degrees of resilience or recessiveness are indicated, and particular innovations. The chapter as a whole seeks to confirm the distinctiveness of Northern English north of the Humber; and more generally the richness of vernacular literature as a source of data about dialect speech, much of it as yet under-explored.

The aim of this chapter is to describe Northern English from the Early Modern to the Late Modern period (1500–1900), based on evidence from a wide range of vernacular texts and styles. While it is acknowledged that this ‘slice’ in time represents but a part of the complex and varied story of this important variety of British English, or rather varieties, it is hoped that nonetheless there is enabled a more detailed scrutiny of Northern English features than conventionally appears in histories of English as a whole. It has to be said in any case that Northern English has tended to be neglected or marginalised in such histories, which concentrate on the history of Standard English, and of London English in particular. Even here, however, they have failed to do justice to the contribution made by Northern English to the formation of the standard. This particular topic is beyond the scope of this chapter, but see further Wales (2006, Chapter 3), a study which overall tries to survey the dialects of Northern English from Old English to the present-day, socially and culturally as well as linguistically.

In a narrower focus of 500 years, however, a richer picture can emerge of linguistic variation on all levels; and significant issues and implications of all kinds arise, some of which are not without relevance, it has to be said, to notions of the ‘standard’ and ‘non-standard’, precisely because of the *terminus a quo* (1500). As I shall try to show, the relationship between the standard, the production of dialect and its representation is highly complex. The period is also particularly pertinent to the history of
Northern English, because it marks the first signs of the emergence of urban dialects as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, which was of momentous significance for England north of the Trent: urban dialects are themselves sociolinguistic phenomena which are still but imperfectly understood.

Although 'Northern English', unlike 'Southern English' (see Melchers, this volume), is a widely used and well established term, its scope of reference reveals considerable variation, as indeed the term 'North of England' does. For this chapter, the North comprises the six counties named by Orton and Halliday for their post-Second World War Survey of English Dialects (SED) volume, useful also for historical divisions: Northumberland, Durham and Yorkshire east of the Pennines, and Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire to the west. So counties north of the Humber, Trent and Mersey are common perceptual boundaries in the popular imagination. It is arguable, however, that linguistically speaking, for the period 1500–1900, counties like the West Riding of Yorkshire and southern Lancashire are more accurately part of a North Midland dialect area (see Section 1 below on the 'Ribble-Humber' boundary.) Although many of the ancient county names and boundaries changed in 1974 and also later, nonetheless the traditional names remain useful labels, and are well known from publications such as those of the English Dialect Society in the nineteenth century. The only convenient term from the post-1974 county boundary arrangement is 'Cumbria', to comprise both Cumberland and Westmorland. It also, happily, has an historical usefulness for the earliest period of the North's history, like the term 'Northumbria', which in Anglo-Saxon times comprised the modern counties of Northumberland (Bernicia), Durham and the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire (Deira) (see Section 1 below).

Other general labels are sometimes used for convenience: 'North-east' for territory east of the Pennines from the Scottish border down to and including Teesside, straddling the Durham and North Yorkshire border; and 'North-west' for west of the Pennines from the border to Merseyside, straddling that of Lancashire and Cheshire. A popular label traditionally has been the 'far North', but this has tended to be ambiguous. Frequently, it has reflected a southern and London bias against counties north of the Trent; most specifically it refers only to Scotland. In ballad literature of all periods, moreover, it can cover north Northumberland and Cumberland, as well as the Scottish border area. For the linguist J.C. Wells (1982: 350), however, it refers to modern Tyneside and Teesside.

The present chapter is divided into three main sections. The first gives an overview of the foundations of Northern English; the second surveys the main types of texts to be used as data in the period 1500 to 1900. Issues of the limitations and reliability of the evidence will also be discussed. In the third section, which attempts to reconcile both a diatopic and diachronic approach, I describe significant or salient features of 'common core' Northern English and noteworthy regional variants, on the levels of phonology, morphology, syntax, lexis and discourse. This description is based on a
survey of a range of texts which are listed under ‘primary sources’ in the bibliography. Degrees of resilience and recessiveness will be discussed where desirable; and innovations noted. I am not, it has to be said, going to pay attention to features which are widely found in informal English, e.g. verb contractions and levelling of preterites and past participles.

1. The foundations of Northern English

Viewed over almost 1500 years, it is important to emphasise that the ‘pedigree’ of Northern English is much older than that of Standard English. Until the beginning of the sixteenth century the North of England, whose huge sparsely populated domain stretched from Edinburgh beyond the modern Scottish border to the Humber at the very least, remained politically as well as linguistically distinctive. In the seventh and eighth centuries Northumbria was the most powerful and cultured kingdom in England, with Lindisfarne, Wearmouth, Jarrow, Ripon and York, for example, important religious settlements and scriptoria. Our earliest extant (religious) texts, albeit few in number, and dated between the seventh and ninth centuries, are written in a distinctive ‘Old Northumbrian’ dialect. This is not the place to discuss its origins (see further Wales 2006, Chapter 2); but from Northumbrian and West Saxon versions of Caedmon’s Hymn, in manuscripts of translations of Bede’s Historia Ecclesiastica, we can see clear evidence of phonological differences between these two dialects by the late ninth century. So Northumbrian reveals monophthongisation, West Saxon diphthongisation, before /r/ in a labial environment, as in *uerc* (WS *weorc* ‘work’), *barnum* (WS *bearnum* ‘bairns’): pronunciations which survive throughout the period 1500–1900.

It is equally important to emphasise that the Old Northumbrian dialect was born out of and shaped by language contact on all its borders. As Sisam reminds us (1967: 267), five hundred years of written standardization have all too readily given us the mindset that homogeneity and stability are ‘natural’ language states.

From the ninth century onwards York in the ‘lower north’ was the capital of a powerful Anglo-Scandinavian province, with its own distinctive laws, and the locus of an important linguistic ‘norm’ or koine. Despite a frustrating shortage of textual evidence from the Old English period itself, the huge linguistic impact of the Scandinavian settlers, both Danes and Norwegians, on the place names and dialectal phonology, grammar and lexis of the North, which persists to the present-day, is generally recognised. More precisely, it refers to that area of England north to the river Tees from a rough line between the Mersey and the Thames Estuary, the so-called ‘Danelaw’ area, and so includes Lincolnshire and East Anglia. It may have been only after the Norman Conquest that Norse died out. I note some striking features in Section 3 below. The varieties of Old Norse are likely also to have strengthened already emerging
differences between the Northern variety and those varieties to the South. So, phonologically speaking, the velar plosives /g/ and /k/ and the cluster /sk/ marked a Northern, as well as Norse, pronunciation, as distinct from the WS palatal, as in rigg (‘ridge’), kirk (‘church’) (see also Section 3 below).

More disputed is the question of possible Celtic influence, although there is no doubting the territorial closeness of Celtic speakers at different periods on all sides. The earliest Anglo-Saxon settlements were east of the Pennines, and it took 200 years to establish a frontier in the west where the displaced British had settled (Leith 1996: 106). I return to this below. Cumbria, sparsely populated, remained Celtic-speaking until the Viking invasions at the earliest (see further Strang 1970: 256; Thomason & Kaufman 1988: 287); so also the kingdom of Elmet in the south of Yorkshire (Leith 1996: 106). In the North-west, there is also the possibility of direct influence from Irish Gaelic across the Irish Sea until the tenth century (Elmes 1999: 27). The ancient British kingdom of Strathclyde, originally settled by the Welsh Celts, stretched from the Clyde into Cumbria, and continued until the thirteenth century (Samuel 1998: 24). Lothian on the river Tweed did not leave the rest of Northumbria for ‘Scotland’ until after the Battle of Carham in 1016 (Beal 1993: 188): hence its old Northumbrian dialect reclassified as Inglis, now ‘Lowland Scots’. (Scottis in the medieval period referred to Gaelic).

Despite political conflict between England and Scotland until the Act of Union (1700), the linguistic closeness of Lowland Scots with Northumbrian English has nonetheless remained until the present-day, especially in the border regions such as Berwickshire, and is confirmed historically in the literary tradition of balladry, common to the region and to Cumberland. Also, thanks to poets like Burns, in the eighteenth century as Goodridge says (2003: xii), Scotland was the ‘engine’ of British folk and popular culture. Spellings like mickle/muckle (‘much’); twa (‘two’); morphological variants like dinna (‘don’t’) and lexical items like bonny (‘pretty’) and ken (‘know’) are shared across the Border and across the centuries.

Viewed from the perspective of language contact, both from Celtic and Viking/Norse, it is easier to give one plausible motivation for that distinctive feature of Northern English throughout the Old and Middle English periods, namely the loss and simplification of its grammatical inflexions. It is already evident in the early eighth century runic inscriptions on the Ruthwell Cross in Dumfriesshire. This, of course, came to have highly significant implications for the analytical phasing of the English language as a whole.

One consequence of the Celtic settlements is that the southern limit of Northumbria west of the Pennines must have been of a later date than that to the east. There is no agreement amongst historians on this, although some favour the Mersey. However, Wakelin (1972: 102–3) argues that from the later Old English period at least there was a discernible linguistic ‘boundary’ roughly along the River Ribble, and following an ecclesiastical boundary: so separating what came to be northern Lancashire from
southern Lancashire and the West Riding, originally in Anglo-Saxon Mercia. Sometimes termed the ‘Ribble-(Calder-Aire)-Humber line’, since it crossed the Pennines, this marked the confluence of a distinctive set of eight isoglosses that are certainly very important for rural Northern speech throughout the period 1500–1900. So there are distinctive pronunciations for words of the kind /gruːnd/ ground; /ɡoʊs/ goose; /blɪnd/ blind; /eɪt/ eat; /ræn/ wrong; /kəʊl/ coal; /lɪf/ loaf; and /kʌf/ cow. In present-day Northern English, however, this bundle of isoglosses has receded northwards into Northumberland and Cumbria (see also Section 3 below).

2. Northern English 1500–1900: Weighing the evidence

On the basis of a comprehensive survey of manuscript evidence of different text types, Cuesta & Ledesma (2006, 2007, 2009) provide a detailed analysis of the linguistic continuity between Northern Old English (both early and late) and Middle English of the thirteenth century, despite a two-century gap. Even so, the evidence from the North in the Early Middle English period is very scarce, as they say. It includes the lengthy encyclopaedic poem Cursor Mundi, a Pater Noster and Creed, and a macaronic sermon. In the later Middle English period (which I take to extend to 1500) much more manuscript material has been preserved, and in a wider variety of genres, although predominantly religious still, e.g. catechisms, and the writings of Richard Rolle from Yorkshire. Certainly it is the case that more and more formal and administrative documents came generally to be written in English, rather than French or Latin as in the earlier period. So now there are also extant Northern texts such as civic records, indentures and wills, as well as family correspondence (see further Takeda 2000; Cuesta & Ledesma 2004).

Görlach (1999: 459) sees Middle English as a whole ‘best described as a loose conglomerate of unstable varieties’, with little known about the ‘social correlates’ of age or education, etc. More contentious is his notion, shared by others, that it was as early as the fifteenth century that ‘a new standard language’ began to constitute a ‘linguistic norm for written supraregional English’, and especially with the emergence of ‘printed norms’. This is particularly associated with the official Chancery writings in London. Blank (1996: 3) states quite starkly that ‘Northern and Southern dialects have all but disappeared in formal writing since the fifteenth century’; and Kristensson (1994: 103) asserts ‘that there was a standard written language in the fifteenth century is obvious and commonplace’. It is not ‘obvious’, however, that ‘standard’ is the right term to be used for any such variety at such an early date, especially in the North. Moreover, such writers (and Görlach) make no distinction between non-literary and literary writings, and between what Cusack (ed., 1998: x) calls ‘formal’ and ‘naïve’ documents, such as accounts and memoirs. More plausibly, however, Smith (1996: 7) speaks of a more ‘focussed’ usage in government and legal documents (see also Taaavitsainen 2005).
while Takeda (2000) speaks of dialect ‘levelling’ from dialect contact. Moreover, even when printed texts superseded handwritten ones, rates of ‘standardisation’ varied throughout the Early Modern period for spelling, lexis and grammar. Görlach himself is later forced to admit (1999: 472) that spelling did not matter so much in the sixteenth century as a sociolinguistic indicator of ‘proper’ education, as it later did in the eighteenth century. Granted the speedier regularisation of orthography generally, this still leaves grammatical, pragmatic and lexical variation much in evidence, at least until the end of the nineteenth century and of our period of focus here, with the rise of mass state-organised education. In any case, little research has been done on how Chancery English came to be disseminated from the fifteenth century to the ‘provinces’ and the North, a dissemination which would also be dependent upon the degree of literacy and education of the scribes. Certainly by the late sixteenth century extant bureaucratic documents reveal influence from London English, although as evidence from Cusack’s anthology reveals (1999), Northern features can still be distinguished.

Equally disputable is Görlach’s further claim (1999: 460) that the process he designates ‘standardisation’ almost *automatically* [my italics] devalued the use in writing of all forms that were locally or otherwise deviant.’ Devalued to whom? To London publishers and the literati perhaps; and to later, modern compilers of histories of English literature and language and editors of the *OED*; but not to the many writers from the regions themselves, proud of their local identity and heritage. Just as Northern English continued to be a living speech used by both the working and middle classes, so dialect literature, as distinct from administrative or non-literary documents, continued to be written and published throughout the period to 1900, and in ever greater diversity of genres, and by a wider social spectrum of writers, as rates of literacy increased and printing became cheaper. We can note, for example, ‘dialogues’ in prose and verse from the seventeenth century onwards, pastoral poetry in eighteenth-century Cumberland, and almanacs in the nineteenth century, particularly in the West Riding of Yorkshire. What I have termed elsewhere the ‘bucolic dialogue’ tradition (Wales 2006: 94–8) reflected a growing scholarly interest in dialects: the earliest extant, from Yorkshire, in rhyming couplets in 1673 (anon) and 1683 (by George Meriton, possibly a Northallerton attorney). Northern English in particular was viewed as representing the most ancient of English dialects. For some authors no doubt such dialogues were an intellectual diversion. Ann Coward Wheeler admits in her address to the reader that she had not written hers (in the Westmorland dialect) to be published, but she had been encouraged by friends ([1791] 1802: v). Whilst such authors might be guilty of what Hickey (2007: 241) terms ‘vernacularity’, i.e. a concentrated use of vernacular forms in the interests of edification as well as amusement, this is obviously of considerable benefit to a modern analyst.

At the same time, throughout the period, there were also flourishing traditions of oral composition and oral delivery, even with the advent in the nineteenth century of
local newspapers and higher rates of literacy: for example, the working songs of the industrialised mill-hands on both sides of the Pennines; the songs for dancing at fairs and races; the popular music-hall songs and dramatic monologues of the coal-mining districts in the North-east, and of the end-of-pier shows at the burgeoning Northern seaside resorts like Blackpool. As Shorrocks (2001: 1559) states, such working-class literature was also performed in ‘schools, at penny readings or union meetings, in churches and at other social gatherings, or read out aloud … in pubs and homes’. The advent of literacy and cheaper printing and newspapers did not kill off this oral culture, but rather encouraged it. Broadsides of popular ballads were themselves reprinted in the newspapers, which also encouraged local song competitions, with prizes to be won. Many Tyneside songs became local ‘anthems’, continuing to be sung throughout the twentieth century, in working-men’s clubs and at football matches.

The prime aim of such vernacular compositions was entertainment, and much of it is comic. But the humour is directed towards the characters and situations, not the dialect, and a case of laughing with as much as at. Northern English was emblematic of the community values of the ever-growing working-class: homeliness, stoicism, self-reliance, common sense and lack of pretension. Many writers, it has to be said, did ‘code-switch’: reserving standard English for solemn, philosophical or moralizing modes.

Here as elsewhere there is the danger of applying later and modern attitudes to variation to earlier texts and periods. ‘Deviant’, for example, in Görlach’s own words in the quotation about devaluation above, is a term that should really be avoided: not only because it implies a ‘norm’ (the standard) but also because it suggests oddity or abnormality. The popular label ‘non-standard’ is another contentious term (see, e.g. Blake 1981), which has had the unfortunate evaluative connotations of ‘sub-standard’ or culturally inferior, even uncouth (for Northern English in particular). Regional literature in the vernacular is more rightly served by assessment on its own merits throughout this period.

While I concentrate attention on dialect depiction as far as possible by native Northern English writers, it is possible to see some value in those depictions by ‘outsiders’, who attempt to give a particular Northern colouring to characterisation: notably in drama and later, in the nineteenth century, in the novel. Whilst it is true that the general tradition of stage dialect representation since the sixteenth century has tended conventionally to be restricted to lower class characters and often for comic effect, nonetheless in those plays relevant for Northern English we do find other functions. So Richard Brome’s The Northern Lass (1632) presents the attractiveness of plain speaking for jaded London palates in his modest and honest heroine Constance from the ‘bishoprick of Durham’ (Act III). If this is not the earliest example we have of literary North-east English (see Chaucer’s representation of his two Cambridge students in The Reeve’s Tale), then Brome and Thomas Heywood’s play The Late Lancashire Witches (1634) provides possibly the earliest examples of literary Lancashire dialect, in the dialogue of two bewitched and rebellious retainers.
Such plays (and others) are significant linguistically speaking, concerned as they are with the depiction of colloquial-sounding language, for their marking, however stereotypically, of features salient for non-native listeners. In their over-use of certain words they also testify to the possibility of lexicalisation: ancient pronunciations preserved in a handful of common words: like amang, wrang; or kirk and sic (‘such’) (see further Section 3 below). One notable exception to the value of ‘outsider’ stage representations of Northern English, however, is Ben Jonson’s unfinished play The Sad Shepherd (printed 1640/1), which presents a conglomerate Northern/Scots for certain characters, set as it is in Sherwood Forest, north of the Trent (see also 3.2. below).

A similar distinction must be made between writing by ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in the tradition of novel writing, beginning most pertinently for Northern English with Thomas Deloney’s novella Thomas of Reading (1600) about a group of clothiers from districts all over England, including Hodgekins from Halifax. A Northern clothier appears in Ben Jonson’s play Bartholomew Fair (1614), testifying to the continuing significance of the wool-trade for the prosperity of the North from the Middle Ages onwards. Once industrialization took hold, in the nineteenth-century so-called ‘realist’ novelists from within and outside the North took great interest in the working conditions of mill and factory, and represented the speech of the hands with varying degrees of dialectalisms: literary dialect in works otherwise written in standard English; as distinct from dialect literature. The ‘stage Northerner’, however, with its mixed set of features, had passed into the novel tradition from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, as in Tobias Smollett’s Roderick Random (1748). Charles Dickens’ portrayal of the Northern farmer John Browdie in Nicholas Nickleby (1838–9) is decidedly hotchpotch; yet his representation of the mill-worker Stephen Blackpool in his novel Hard Times (1854), set in industrial Lancashire, is more reliable, since he had evidently done some research (Easson 1976). Even more reliable is the work of Elizabeth Gaskell, who could claim to be more of an ‘insider’ than an ‘outsider’. Although born in London and brought up in Cheshire, she spent all her married life in Manchester. Joseph Wright used her novel Mary Barton (1848), set in industrialised Manchester, in the composition of his English Dialect Dictionary. Nonetheless, Victorian novels have generally to be read with care. Extensive use of eye-dialect (e.g. yor, sed) was an unfortunate substitute for vernacular realism, with its popular class-marking associations of illiteracy.

It is to be acknowledged that even texts by native or local writers, however informal, have potential problems as accurate or reliable sources of linguistic data, particularly phonological. As Shorrocks notes (1988: 91–2), the authors, albeit enthusiastic, are not trained linguists and would have had varying degrees of education in any case. There is often inconsistency in orthographic representation between writings of two authors from the same region (e.g. the nineteenth-century worker songs of Edwin Waugh and Ben Brierley in Manchester) or within one and the same text. Such variation, however, may well not be haphazard, but indicate differences of social nuance
or tone, of which a modern reader may be unappreciative. Variant spellings may well indicate variant pronunciations even within the same locality (see Cuesta & Ledesma 2007); or difficulties in identification of a sound, e.g. so-called 'Northern fronting' (see Section 3 below). The same songs or ballads, especially those deep-rooted traditionally or anonymous, like the popular Scottish border ballads, could recur from collection to collection with differing degrees of dialect ‘broadness’. Editors and collectors of such songs, who flourished from the end of the eighteenth century onwards in the growing industrial cities of the North-east, Yorkshire and Lancashire, despite their antiquarian interests and local patriotism, were prone to tidy up inconsistent spellings or to normalise them towards the standard (as indeed grammatical features also) in the interests of wider intelligibility for a potentially larger non-local reading-public. As the mother of the Tyneside composer Joe Wilson warns in one of his songs, his fame is not likely to spread from 'your Tynesdie hyem! Newcassell tawk's a queerish thing te reed' (1891). This concern for intelligibility also preoccupied nineteenth-century novelists. It is well known, for instance, that Charlotte Bronte modified the old servant Joseph's speeches for the 1850 edition of Emily's Wuthering Heights (1847) for Southern readers. In the case of the Newcastle bookseller Thomas Allan, there was certainly a desire to see some form of regional standard spelling (Allan, ed. Harker 1972 [1891]: xxvi).

Nevertheless, the problems posed by regional spellings should not be over-dramatised. In the texts surveyed here there is clear evidence, as in Old English and Middle English, of a sensitivity to high-frequency variables of pronunciation, reflecting the expressiveness of (semi-)phonetic regional spellings in contrast to the standard. Certainly, the high proportion of 'eye-dialect' even in native representations of dialect speech, however irrelevant to any analysis and irritating to dialectologists (see Kellett 1997: 52), testifies to a concern to make the written medium 'sound' like speech. It is also arguable that from the eighteenth century onwards at least an educated author might have made a conscious decision to distinguish a particular feature in relation to the perceived standard in a standard literary variety (Ives 1971: 146); although it is just as likely that this same kind of author would have veered (unconsciously) towards standard spellings in one and the same text (as in the poems of the Cumbrian vicar Josiah Relph). This does not necessarily mean, of course, that the pronunciation is affected: rhymes frequently indicate the Northern pronunciation (e.g. out/cloot; do/now). Moreover, in areas and periods where texts are more plentiful, it is possible to make cross-textual comparisons to confirm particular features. Vernacular literature, with its attunement to the rhythms of the spoken voice, is significant also for the representation of colloquialisms such as discourse markers, normally ‘erased’ from formal writing.

Of course it is to be recognised that no spelling system in English history has been able to represent distinctive prosodic features: so, e.g. for Northern English, the rising intonation of the North-east; or the nasalisation of Liverpool and Lancashire; features that would have been very evident in oral delivery and performance. The advent of
sound recordings after 1900 has made such features easier to identify and catalogue. Even phonological features are frustratingly difficult to recognise from spelling, however phonetic: e.g. the ancient velar articulation of the Border region in words like sight, sigh, night; a long vowel in words like book and post-vocalic /r/ in some parts of the North; and the /gl/- articulation in -ing forms in southern Lancashire. In such cases comments from contemporary compilers of local dictionaries often provide useful verification; as also for significant innovations in this period otherwise difficult to date, such as the highly salient general Northern retention of short 'a' before a fricative in words like bath, grass; or the more localised but still emblematic so-called Northumbrian ‘burr’ (see further Section 3.1).

3. Northern English features 1500–1900

3.1 Phonology

Several features show continuity from OE or ME. In the vowels, generally in the North OE long /æ/ remained unrounded, so we find the corresponding spellings waie ‘woe’, ain ‘own’ throughout this period. This is markedly in evidence in literary dialect stereotypes from Chaucer’s Reeve’s Tale onwards (e.g. na ‘no’, atanes ‘at once’ in the dialogue of the Northern students). Short /a/ from OE remained before a nasal cluster as in amang, wrang, lang. These three words, indeed, recur so frequently as to suggest lexicalisation, and they certainly tend to be (over-) used in stereotypical dialogue. Short /a/ before a nasal is frequently shown to be rounded in various parts of the North, from Lancashire to Tyneside, as in ony, monny, londe. Interesting is the coil/toil rhyme found in an anonymous poem from Yorkshire (1730), where coil is ‘coal’ (also hoils in the nineteenth century for ‘holes’). This pronunciation is recorded in the fifteenth-century Townley or Wakefield pageant plays of the North Midlands, according to Easther (1883).

The absence of the effects of the Great Vowel Shift, which appears not to have reached the Northern counties north of the ‘Humber-Ribble’ line of Section 1, is reflected in the retention of the long vowel in words like throosand, aboot, coo (‘cow’); and goo (‘go’), foaks, and een (‘eyes’). It was only the long back vowels, however, which remained unaffected: for the long front vowels the North appears to have had its own, earlier, shift, giving rise to breaking or fronting and raising in words with ME /æ:/ in words like feace (‘face’). A similar change affected OE long /æ/ which was rounded in the south in ME: so Northern heame (‘home’), byeth (‘both’) and ryaps (‘roaps’). In the common verbs make and take, short /a/ remained characteristically unlengthened as far north as the Durham-Northumberland border: so mak/mek; tak. Fronting and raising of ME /ɔ:/ is reflected in spellings like gude ‘good’, tuke ‘took’;
also teuk; beuk/buik/beauks. Fronting also is found in common words like ‘do’, as seen in such rhymes as me/dee and the spelling dea; and in nineteenth-century texts from Yorkshire and Lancashire in the word fayther, fayther (‘father’).

In the consonants, Old Northumbrian /k/ and /g/ are retained throughout the period in words like sec/sike/sic (‘such’); brigs (‘bridges’); and ilk(a) ‘each’; although Heslop (1892) believes whilk (‘which’) is obsolete on Tyneside at the time of writing, if possibly still found in remote parts of Northumberland. Also retained is the spelling ⟨s⟩ for the alveolo-palatal fricative [ʃ] as in sal, sud (‘shall’, ‘should’). The OE medial dental plosive articulation is retained and even extended in Cumberland, in words like brudder (‘brother’), anudder (‘another’). ‘dh’ and ‘th’ spellings in nineteenth-century Yorkshire and Lancashire seem to reflect aspiration rather than plosion in words like hundhreds, dhrunken. The OE velar fricative is certainly lost in most of the North by the seventeenth century, with compensatory lengthening in words like neet (‘night’), reet (‘right’). At the beginning of the period spellings with ⟨quh⟩, ⟨qu⟩ reflect initial aspiration, as in OE /hw/: so qwat (‘what’), qu’ha (‘who’); also noted for Northumberland by Heslop (1892). Interestingly, in eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Cumberland, spellings like whick (‘quick’) and whyat (‘quiet’) are found. In Cumberland also tnit, tnee (‘knit’, ‘knee’) appear, vestiges of the OE cluster /kn/. Further south and across the Pennines in Yorkshire, the spellings ⟨tl⟩ and ⟨dl⟩ reflect an articulation of the clusters /kl/ and /gl/ in words like tlay (‘clay’) and dlass (‘glass’).

Innovations in this period appear to include the vocalisation of /l/ and diphthongisation in words like coud (‘cold’), owd (‘old’), haud (‘hold’), noted by John Ray as a Northern feature in 1674; and yod-formation or initial /j/-glide in words like yen, yence (‘one’, ‘once’), also noted by Ray. On Tyneside the reverse phenomenon is found, so eers for ‘years’. An initial /w/-glide appears in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century texts from Cumberland and the Manchester area, as in worchet (‘orchard’) and whoam (‘home’). Cumberland poetry also consistently reveals a notable /w/ intrusion, particularly before long ‘o’ and/or ‘r’ plus consonant, as in Gwordy (‘Geordie’), cworn (‘corn’), and fwock (‘folk’). This is noted at the end of the nineteenth century by Heslop (1892) for Northumberland, but it was not in evidence in my own data. Puzzling as to origin is the linking intrusive /v/ particularly before a vowel in unstressed function words like tiv (‘to’), intiv (‘into’), noted in 1788 by William Marshall for Yorkshire and later Joseph Wright (1892) for the West Riding. It occurs very frequently in the nineteenth-century songs from Tyneside, and in a verb like div (‘do’) and its negative divvent, still heard today.

A marked innovation in the North-east is the so-called ‘Northumbrian Burr’ or uvular /r/ in all positions, first commented upon in the 1720s and of unknown origin, despite the strong /r/-articulation of neighbouring Scots. (See further Wales 2006: 100f). Post-vocalic /r/ at least was generally disappearing from fashionable speech further south in the eighteenth century, but survived until the end of this
period in Lancashire and the West Riding (see, e.g. Wright 1892: 9). Distinctive in sound though the Burr is, it has proved difficult to render in spelling. Heslop (1892: xxi) notes words like *orrob* (‘rob’), *arraign* (‘rain’). In nineteenth-century ballads we find spellings such as *mothor* (‘mother’), *Dorham* (‘Durham’), where the ⟨o⟩ of the vowel suggests anticipatory vowel retraction.

The best known retentive features in the North in this period have come to be salient markers of a ‘North-South divide’ roughly around Birmingham (see further Wales 2000, 2006); simply because in London and the South certain vowel pronunciations markedly changed in fashionable speech in the eighteenth century. Short /a/ was lengthened and fronted before a fricative and nasal groups in words like *bath, grass, dance*. Short /u/ was unrounded and centralised in words like *cut, run*. The spelling convention in the North to show the retention of the rounded /u/ was either vowel doubling as in *country, coom* (‘come’); or consonant doubling as in *summ* (‘some’): both examples from the eighteenth century. Consonant doubling was also used for the short /a/, as in *Newcassel, laffs* (nineteenth-century examples).

3.2 Grammar

The verbal morphology of Northern English in this period sets it apart from dialects to the south. Remarkably resilient and pervasive from Late Old Northumbrian onwards has been the present tense verbal inflexion ‘-s’ for all persons, singular and plural, so ‘thou setts’, for example. The possible influence of Norse has been much discussed (see, e.g. Knowles 1997: 34; Cuesta & Ledesma 2007). Very marked also is the frequent use of *I is* in this period, particularly in the North-east, and a feature captured by Chaucer in the *Reeve’s Tale*. Out of context, *I’s* could be ambiguous: meaning ‘I am’, ‘I have’ or even ‘I shall’: see 3.1. above. The ‘-s’ inflexion in the present tense is particularly striking to non-Northern ears in the equally resilient and equally much discussed so-called ‘Northern subject rule’, emerging in the Middle English period north of what McIntosh ([1983]1989) sees as a ‘Chester-Wash’ line, and including Scotland. The ‘-s’ ending occurs in all persons unless adjacent to a personal pronoun subject (so ‘horses runs’; ‘they run’). Klemola (2000) argues for Celtic influence, but there is no extant evidence from Old English. In Lancashire, until the end of this period, -en is found for the third person plural present tense ending. By the seventeenth century at least there is found an interesting feature of verbal concord affecting the past tense of the verb ‘be’, with forms like ‘he war’, ‘I wor’ in the North Riding and Westmorland, still heard in Yorkshire today.

In the pronouns, the second person singular *thou* and its unstressed often enclitic variants remained consistently throughout this period in informal familiar usage in all areas of the North, apart from north of the Tyne where ye tended to be the singular form. In reflexive pronouns, Northern English favoured -sell or -sen formations, the
latter mainly in Yorkshire; and possessive pronouns throughout the paradigm, so, e.g. *thorsels, thersehns*. *Wor* as a variant of ‘our’ is today particularly associated with Tyne-side speech, but in the nineteenth century it appears in songs of the Manchester area, and is recorded for Huddersfield (Easther 1883) and the West Riding (Wright 1892). Also associated with Tyne-side is the variant *whe* for ‘who’, which occurs frequently in nineteenth-century songs. An earlier example is found in Edward Chicken’s poem *The Collier’s Wedding* ([1729] 1764). In contrast to these apparent innovations, *hoo* is a definite relic from OE *heo* ‘she’, surviving throughout this period in representations of Lancashire dialect by both outsiders and insiders, and noted for the North-west by John Ray (1674). The deictic *thae* ‘those’ noted in Robert Anderson’s Cumberland ballads (1805), for instance, is also a relic from OE. Variants of ‘these’ as *thir*-forms (also *thur/thor*) appear from the ME period onwards, and are found very frequently on both sides of the Pennines.

Conservatism also marks certain noun plurals like *childer, eyen een/eyne*, and *sheun/shoon/shoine* found on both sides of the Pennines until the end of the period. The latter ‘-en’ plurals appear to be lexicalised, since they occur very frequently, in literary stereotypes as well.

Probably obsolete even at the beginning of this period is the OE and ME -*and* present participle, possibly reinforced by the Norse form. According to Cuesta and Ledesma (2006), in Late ME legal texts the -*ing* forms were already predominant, with the -*and* participle still favoured in literary texts (and so for the fifteenth-century York pageant plays, for example). Its occurrence in Spenser’s poems *The Shepherd’s Calendar* and *The Faerie Queene* at the end of the sixteenth century is undoubtedly due to the influence of medieval poetry such as that of the so-called ‘Scottish Chaucerians’ of the fourteenth century and fifteenth century. The same literary archaic influence probably accounts for its appearance in the seventeenth century as part of the mixed Northern-Scots dialect of some of the characters in Jonson’s play *The Sad Shepherd*: e.g. *trilland, stinkand*. Interestingly, John Harland (1865) reprints in his Lancashire collection a fragment of an ‘Ancient Ballad of a Tyrannical Husband’ from ‘the reign of Edward IV’, which includes forms like *walkande, sleepand*. Cuesta and Langmuir (2008) suggest that -*en* recorded in eighteenth-century Cumberland poetry might be an unstressed form (see also Heslop 1892); but by this late date it could well be an unstressed form of -*ing*.

So-called ‘definite article reduction’ (DAR) in contrast appears to be an innovation in this period, and has come today to be a salient and stereotypical marker of Northern English, for Yorkshire and Lancashire (in eighteenth-century writings also found in Cumbria). Its origins are much disputed (see further Jones 2002). The most frequent spelling for the reduced form is ⟨t’⟩, probably most likely to indicate a plosive or glottal pronunciation; also ⟨th’⟩: which may (or may not) indicate a fricative; and sometimes no article at all is marked, to suggest a zero-articulation. However, there is
frequent variation within one and the same text. My own first example of DAR comes from George Meriton (1683); and of the zero form from Henry Carey’s ballad opera *The Honest Yorkshireman* (printed 1736). DAR has become lexicalised in the common adjective *tother* (‘the other’).

The pervasive influence of the Scandinavian settlements is reflected in the very frequent use throughout this period in literary dialect and dialect literature alike of the modal verb *mun* (negative *munnet/munnot* ‘must’ and the causative *gar* ‘make’. The very common use also of *at* as a universal relative form, may also, as Wright (1892) suggests, be of Norse origin. The common preposition *till* with the meaning ‘to’ is found in Old Northumbrian in *Caedmon’s Hymn*; but its use with this meaning in the North could well have been reinforced by Norse influence.

3.3 Lexis

Scandinavian influence is deeply ingrained in the vocabulary of the North. Bragg (2003: 28) sees the words of Norse origin as ‘lying at the core of the fundamental separation … between north and south’. In the texts of this period they typically reflect everyday concerns (*lug* ‘ear’, *lop* ‘lea, throng’ ‘busy’), and rural preoccupations (*garth* ‘yard, paddock’, *haver* ‘oats’, *skeel* ‘pail). They distinguish the Durham landscape from the Northumbrian (*beck* vs. *burn* ‘stream’); and colloquial discourse from that to the south with the salient markers of assent (*aye* ‘yes’) and dissent (*nay* ‘no’) (see also 3.4. below).

Many words recur like motifs throughout the songs and balladry of this period, emblematic of the region’s own held values: *gradely/greadly* (‘proper’) in Lancashire, *bonny*, and *canny* (‘nice’) in the North-east. Non-native writers of literary dialect tend to over-use particularly salient words, like catch-phrases: such as *bairn* (‘child’), *gang* (‘walk’), *greet* (‘weep’), *brass* (‘money’).

In contrast, writers of bucolic dialogues, like George Meriton, for instance, and lively song-writers like Robert Anderson in Cumberland, seem drawn to expressive lexis, marked by sound patterns of reduplication, alliteration and phonaesthesia. This is found in all dialect speech, but commonly erased in formal writings. So in Northern English it *ploshes* (is wet underfoot); sheep are *clowclagged* (covered in dirt). There are *gammerstangs* (foolish girls), *flirtigiggs* (flirts), and *blether-breeks* (boasting braggarts). *Trinkum-trankums* and *fal-dher-dals* are trifles; *snocksnarles* are tangled heaps. Emily Bronte’s novel *Wuthering Heights* exploits in its title and house name the Yorkshire adjective referring to the rushing noise made by the wind, or cattle bellowing (see Easther 1888).

Most significant for the cultural history of the North is the marked shift in the kinds of words that reflect economic production and consumption, as the effects of the Industrial Revolution on working practices came to be felt on both sides of the Pennines. In song and ballad alike, seventeenth and eighteenth-century preoccupations
with farming reflected in terms like *bar whams/baurchwams* (‘horse collars’; *beestlings* ‘first milk after calving’; *hopper* ‘seed corn basket’; *trouts* ‘curds’) give way in the nineteenth century to *t'swingers* (handloom weavers) and *doffers* (person who takes away full bobbins) in Lancashire; *scribble* (wool cutting machine) and *shoddy* (waste material) in Yorkshire; and *trams* (coal trucks) and *yokens* (collisions) in the North-east. Some song-writers helpfully provided glosses for their printed editions, to help a wider readership outside the artisan communities.

3.4 Discourse features

It is unfortunate that, despite the growth of interest in historical pragmatics in recent decades, what we may think of as a variational approach (see Hickey 2007: 370f.) has yet to take root in the analysis of dialect writings. Discourse features have been generally ignored by traditional dialectologists, yet they provide a fascinating glimpse of the everyday conversational rituals and routines of the past, which bound communities together. The Northern texts between 1500–1900 provide an appropriate and rich source of data, since they are most of them essentially speech-based genres in Biber and Finegan’s terms (1992): characterised by an oral style, involvement and situation-dependency: in consequence discourse features are not ‘erased’ as in formal genres. Many of the songs or ballads are actually dramatic monologues; and many are interspersed with prose ‘patter’ or interludes, or *tawkin* as the Tyneside Joe Wilson puts it, as the singer communes directly with his audience. Bucolic dialogues, songs and almanac anecdotes and tales alike invoke the speech acts of greetings, quarrels, gossip, complaints, insults, jokes, and courtship alongside proverbial wisdom, colourful analogies and emotive exclamations. The settings are both domestic, and public, as home and hearth alternates with street, ale-house and festival, in village and town. Robert Anderson, for example, vividly evokes the street life of Carlisle at the turn of the eighteenth century, with the tradesmen’s cries of ‘Here’s beef fit for a bishop’ and ‘Bleng-ki-ship cwoals’. On Tyneside could be heard ‘Here’s your caller [‘fresh’] herrin’.

Very aptly, some dialogues open with greetings. So *The York Minster Screen* (1833) begins with Mike greeting his friend on horseback: ‘Hollo, Bob Jackson, ow’r the plague’s thee boon?’ [where the plague’s thee bound]; ‘Stop mun, let’s touch thee flesh’ [i.e. shake hands]. In a dialogue from the Craven district by William Carr (1828; extract in Glauser 1997) Bridget responds to Giles’s opening greeting (‘how isto?’) with ‘Deftly as owt, and as cobby [‘merry’] as a lop [‘flea’], thanksto’. George Meriton in the seventeenth-century records ‘God ya god moarne’; and the later Cumberland poet Robert Anderson records ‘Aa! Gies ty fist, how’s tou?’ The Tyneside singer Joe Wilson has a song on the very subject of ‘what Foaks say when they pass i’ the street’, such as ‘says he – It’s a vary fine neet’.

The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century songs of Tyneside and the North-East provide a rich source of data for terms of address. *Hinny* (‘honey’)/*maw hinnies* for
both men and women I have recorded as early as Edward Chicken in the 1720s; it is
even used to address a supposed ghost: *hinny ghost, man*. This vocative tag or expletive
*man* recurs frequently, often to end song lines, and would have been uttered with vary-
ing degrees of emphasis or exasperation. Chaucer deftly marks the north-east dialect
by its very early occurrence in the *Reeve’s Tale*. The adjective *canny* commonly appears
in vocatives like *canny lad, canny man, canny lass* and *canny bit bairns* (‘little’). The
characteristic term of address between pitmen, *marra/marrow* ‘mate’, is recorded from
Brome’s play *The Northern Lass*.

Interjections represent a variety of emotions, according to the vicissitudes of the
weather, farming disasters, the vagaries of relationships, etc. *Wellaneerin(g)/ weella-
neare* (‘alas’) is found in several seventeenth-century Yorkshire texts; *waies is me* and
*whaw, whaw* express the same feeling. *Wya, wya* means ‘well, well’. The now stere-
typical phrase *by gum* expressing astonishment occurs in a Yorkshire almanac of the
1870s. Probably a euphemistic distortion of ‘by God’, it has popularly succeeded earlier
exclamations such as *birlady* (seventeenth-century Yorkshire), *ods-ducks* (Lancashire)
and *odswinge* and *godlins* (Cumbria). Some phrases lubricate the flow of discourse,
marking assent, as in the Tyneside *why aye man/ whey aye/ eigh-wye/ way-eye*; or dis-
agreement: *howay man/ give over/ gerraway/ ger on with you* (‘come along with you,’ ‘be
done’). The variety of spellings to some of these testifies to the fact that they are rarely,
if ever, represented in the formal registers of standard English. *But* appears finally as a
tag in an utterance in the North-East to mean ‘however’, comparable also to the north-
est and Yorkshire final *mind*: as in ‘She’s got a bugger of a temper, mind’. Final *like* in
Yorkshire texts is equivalent to ‘so to speak’.

Insults recur frequently since the sixteenth century, often recorded in that ear-
ier period in official defamations (see Cusack ed., 1998, passim). Telling someone
abruptly to go away might be *cut thor sticks* (North-East); to be quiet *wind up thi lip*
(Lancashire) or *had yor jaw* (Tyneside). *Theau great drhunken slotch* [‘drunken lazy
sod’] screams one of Edwin Waugh’s spouses; *ye clarty fah* [‘dirty gypsy’] and *ye greet
sk’yet gob* [‘skate/fish-mouth’] one of Joe Wilson’s neighbours: clearly ‘as welcome as
watter into a shipp’, as George Meriton’s farmer would say.

4. Conclusion

As even the selective analysis of discourse features above reveals, I hope, vernacular
literature provides a rich source of linguistic data about dialect speech, much of it
as yet under-explored (e.g. the almanacs of Yorkshire, and the dialect poetry of the
Lake District). Yet it has to be said that dialect historians do remain hampered by
a lack of reliable data in the Early Modern period, particularly from 1550 to 1650.
Useful research also remains to be carried out, for the purposes of comparison and
cross-checking, on the numerous Northern dialect dictionaries and glossaries published in the nineteenth century under the aegis of the *English Dialect Society*. Such commentaries could provide helpful information on etymologies, dates of likeliest first appearances, and rates of obsolescence, etc. In the meantime, while many features of Northern English show a robust continuity from Old Northumbrian, others seem to make their first appearance after 1500. Overall, however, there is no doubting a noteworthy division, on several linguistic levels, between Northern English as a whole and varieties of English south of the Humber.

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Secondary Sources


Southern English in writing

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This chapter deals with written evidence of regional varieties of language representing the middle and southern parts of England. ‘Southern English’ is here taken in a very wide sense, basically equivalent to ‘non-Northern’ and thus constituting a companion piece to the previous chapter. For two reasons, the chapter focuses on data from the nineteenth century: the written evidence is richer and, above all, reliable and detailed contemporary linguistic data collections and descriptions are available, notably the English Dialect Dictionary. Extensive use has also been made of data from the Survey of English Dialects. With regard to linguistic levels, special attention is given to phonological representation. Finally, the significance of genre, motivation and awareness is discussed.

1. Introduction

A companion piece to the presentation of ‘Northern English’, this chapter is devoted to the analysis of writing representing the middle and southern parts of England. The division of labour is not arbitrary but clearly consistent with most attempts at distinguishing major dialect areas in England, with reference to the early to late modern English period (the framework of this volume) as well as the present. A case in point, very relevant for this publication because of its historical approach, is the structure of the Survey of English Dialects (SED) (Orton et al. 1962–71), the twelve Basic Material volumes of which were published in four regionally-based sections: 1. The Six Northern Counties and the Isle of Man, 2. The West Midland Counties, 3. The East Midland Counties and East Anglia and 4. The Southern Counties. The region covered in this chapter thus corresponds to Sections 2–4 in the SED, representing a large and heterogeneous area, viewed geographically, historically, culturally and linguistically.

Unlike ‘northern English’, ‘southern English’ is not an established, widely used or even definable term (if used, it tends to apply to the American South). It is used here mainly to mark the distinction and scope of this chapter as compared with the previous one. Admittedly, clear north-south linguistic distinctions can be made, especially with regard to phonology, e.g. considering the well-known variation in present-day realizations of the lexical sets FOOT-STRUT and BATH, but as shown by Trudgill
(1999a: 65) and Wells (1982: 349f.), ‘the linguistic north’ comprises not only the north as covered in the previous chapter but also most of the midlands.

Considering the scope and linguistic complexity of the middle and south of England, an overview of the dialectal variation throughout the region is first given, followed by a discussion of some general issues related to ‘dialect in writing’, illustrated by examples taken from texts representing ‘southern English’. Two specific regions will receive somewhat more attention than others, viz. the West Country and East Anglia, linguistically different but both characterized by a complicated history as well as richness in written evidence. They have both been singled out as ‘stable relic areas’ (Viereck 1986: 731).

By way of introduction it should be pointed out that written representations of regional dialects in the south and middle of England are neither as easily found nor as well researched as those of the north. A major reason, quoting Wyld 1936 (cf. Görlach 1999b: 506), is that regional dialect

...disappears completely from the written language of the South and the Midlands; both from Literature proper, and from private letters and documents ... We are able at most to point here and there to a feature – generally connected with grammatical forms – which we may attribute to the writer’s native country.

This explains why the most significant and fruitful research on varieties in writing, also including our area, has been done on morphosyntactic features (cf. e.g. Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003). The thrust of that pioneering research has been the exploration of sociolinguistic patterns. This presentation, by contrast, focuses on regional rather than social variation. For two reasons, most of the presentation and discussion is related to the nineteenth century. The bulk of the accessible data is from that period and, most importantly, representations of regional features can be assessed in the light of near-contemporary reliable linguistic observations and recordings.

2. An outline of the area and its demographic history

Geographically, ‘Southern English’ as featured in this chapter stands for the English used from Land’s End in the south-west to Kent in the south-east, and from the south coast up to Yorkshire and Lancashire in the north. In the west the area borders on Wales, but its longest border is constituted by the sea (the Bristol Channel, the English Channel, the Atlantic, and the North Sea). For convenience the area will henceforth be usually referred to as ‘our area’ because of the shifting implications of ‘south’ and ‘southern’ in the references. It comprises the following counties, as defined and named before the 1974 Local Government Reform:

Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Surrey, Kent, Hampshire, Sussex (the SED Southern counties);
Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire, 
Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Berkshire, Bedfordshire, 
Hertfordshire, Essex, Middlesex & London (the SED East Midland and East 
Anglia counties);
Cheshire, Derbyshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, 
Warwickshire, Monmouthshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire (the SED West 
Midland counties).

It is symptomatic that the pioneering publication *Alternative Histories of English* 
(Watts & Trudgill 2002) includes a chapter entitled “‘North of Watford gap’: a cultural 
history of Northern English (from 1700)” but nothing else on English in England. The 
éarly demographic and linguistic history of our area is, in fact, more or less identical 
with that describing the traditional history of the emergence of the standard English 
language (cf. e.g. Hogg & Denison 2006), with reference to the Old English dialects 
of Mercian (in the Midlands from East Anglia across westwards to the Welsh bor-
der), Kentish (in the south-east) and West Saxon (in the south and south-west). In 
addition to the major Germanic founding populations from various North Sea coastal 
regions, the north-eastern parts of our area (‘Scandinavian Mercia’) and the whole of 
East Anglia as well as the south-eastern Midlands were later contained in the Danelaw, 
ruled and settled by Vikings. This is still strikingly evidenced in a large number of local 
place-names (cf. Gelling 1978: 215ff.), but also in traditional dialect features.

Whereas the impact of the Viking settlers in England can mostly be related to the 
Danelaw, that of French influence is less regionally determinable (Wakelin 1977: 138). 
Wakelin’s lexical examples, however, based on data from the SED, seem to point to the 
West Country as a core area. Other early important language contact scenarios include 
the Dutch and Flemish trade activities in the Hanseatic period and the immigration of 
weavers and canal builders in East Anglia.

The Celtic substratum, whose significance has generally been belittled in tradi-
tional accounts of the history of the English language, is receiving increasing attention 
by dialectologists (cf. Filppula, Klemola & Paulasto 2008, for instance). In our area it 
surfaces not only in the counties of Devon and Cornwall, which were based on the pre-
Saxon Celtic kingdoms known in Latin as Dumnonia and Cornubia, but to a varying 
degree and on various levels of language in other areas as well. It should be borne in 
mind that parts of Wales were incorporated into the English counties of Shropshire, 
Herefordshire and Gloucestershire as late as 1535. Welsh speakers in Monmouthshire 
as well as a few villages in Herefordshire and Shropshire were reported as late as the 
1870s by Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte.

Conurbation areas, highlighted in present-day geolinguistics but largely neglected – if 
not scorned – in traditional dialectology, must have played an important role in Early 
and Late Modern English with respect to variation and change. The significance of 
London as a melting-pot and centre of innovation from the Late Middle English period 
wards (cf. Hogg & Denison 2006: 18, for example) is indisputable, but considering
the general thrust of this publication, London English (with the exception of some aspects of Traditional Cockney) and its role in the emergence of Standard English will not be included here. There are, however, effects of other conurbations to be considered in our area and time span. The period between 1680 and 1760, for example, saw a tenfold increase in the population of Liverpool, i.e. bordering on our area (Ihalainen 1994: 232). The emergence of the industrial towns of the Potteries in Staffordshire with their elaborate infrastructure in the eighteenth century is another example, as is, of course, Birmingham, with a strong reputation as a metal working centre as early as the seventeenth century and the industrial and commercial centre of the Midlands by the time of the Industrial Revolution. In the eastern part of our area, Norwich, one of the largest towns in England in the Early Middle Ages, remained an important centre for the wool trade until the early nineteenth century. In the West Country, finally, Bristol was one of England’s most densely populated areas in the early nineteenth century (cf. Görlach 1999b: 466). It will appear, however, that urban varieties are poorly represented in the quite substantial data consulted for this presentation; a case in point is the non-existence of examples of ‘Bristol /l/’, which is found even in the very name of the city (Bricsiou 1169 > Bristoll 1200).

3. The middle and south of England as a linguistic area

The widely quoted mapping of ‘Traditional Dialect areas’ in Trudgill (1999a: 34) largely draws on SED data and is hence very relevant for this presentation, as it can be claimed that “no radical changes took place in English dialects in the post-1776 period until the second half of the twentieth century” (Ihalainen 1994: 205; cf. also Schneider 2002: 69). Trudgill’s maps confirm that the major division is a north-south one. The boundary is, not surprisingly, found to run from the Lancashire coast down to the mouth of the River Humber, reflecting the Anglo-Saxon dialect boundary between the kingdoms of Northumbria and Mercia. Following this division, our area is thus firmly set in the south; yet Trudgill’s ‘south’, exclusively based on linguistic criteria as it is, also includes the southern parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire. By contrast, the best-known northern characteristics of all, i.e. unsplit FOOT-STRUT, conspicuous by the early eighteenth century by which time the split had occurred in the south (Beal 2006), and ‘flat-BATH’ realizations, i.e. /a/ for /æ/ in this lexical set, are found in our area north of a line from the Severn estuary to the Wash (excluding Herefordshire and part of Shropshire).

Before presenting Trudgill’s criteria relevant to our area, it should be pointed out that his definition of ‘traditional dialect’ is somewhat vague and refers to morphosyntax and lexicon rather than phonology, although the actual map is based on phonology only. Eight major criteria are provided, exemplified by the lexical items long (front vs. back vowel), night (monophthong vs. diphthong), blind (short vs. long vowel),
land ([land], [lænd], [länd]), arm (rhotic vs. non-rhotic), hill (with H-dropping or without), seven (voiceless vs. voiced initial fricative), and bat ([bat] vs. [bæt]). Among these, only the characteristically northern front-vowel long is not represented in our area. Lincolnshire, however, typically displays some ‘northern features’ such as short-vowel blind and land realized as [land]. Night is ‘southern’ throughout our area, i.e. realized with a diphthong; arm is rhotic in a large area, not only in the south-west, but including parts of Kent and Surrey, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Shropshire; hill is characterized by H-dropping excluding East Anglia and Essex; seven is realized with a voiced initial fricative in most of the West Country; the [æ] realizations of bat are typically found in the south-east, including the London area, East Anglia, Kent, Sussex, Surrey, parts of Hampshire, Berkshire, and Wiltshire. Variation in land is more complicated, with the rounded back vowel found in a largish area in the West Midlands, and the [æ] realizations in the same area as those of bat.

The distribution of these eight criteria can be said to constitute a basic structure of traditional-dialect areas in England, but richer and more detailed information is needed for the linguistic background to our analysis of varieties in writing. Some additional criteria, for example, confirm the ‘northern affiliation’ in Lincolnshire dialect, such as the monophthongal realization of down, out, house, represented in writing as doon, oot, hoos. Another ‘outsider’ part of our area is western Cornwall, where, for example, the dialect is not characterized by voiced initial fricatives as in the rest of the West Country. English was not much spoken in Cornwall until the sixteenth century and it was then the standard forms of pronunciation that tended to be learnt (Upton & Widdowson 1996: 19).

In a more refined categorization of ‘The South’, Trudgill (1999a: 41–47) subdivides the area into two major areas (Central and Southern), distinguished, above all, by the realizations of the bat vowel, i.e. TRAP in the Wells lexical set system, and BATH, which was lengthened in the Southern area towards the end of the eighteenth century. The central area is further divided into Western, including Staffordshire, Cheshire, Shropshire, and parts of Derbyshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, and Eastern (Lincolnshire and Leicestershire); an important distinction being the realization of land, as described above, with a rounded vowel in the west. An intriguing characteristic of the Western Central (West-East Midland transition) area, is further a number of ‘cross-overs’ or a ‘chain’ in the vowel system: bait is pronounced like beat (and vice versa), bought like boat, which is realized as boot, in turn pronounced as bout, in turn pronounced as bite, which finally has moved to [bæt].

The southern area, i.e. of Trudgill’s ‘The South’, is further divided into six dialect areas, viz. Western, comprising Western Southwest (the West Country including Wiltshire and parts of Gloucestershire and Hampshire), Northern Southwest (Herefordshire and parts of Shropshire, Monmouthshire and Worcestershire), Eastern Southwest (Oxfordshire and parts of Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire and Warwickshire), Southeast (Berkshire, Sussex, Surrey, Kent and parts of northeastern Hampshire) and
Eastern, comprising Central East (Cambridgeshire and parts of Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertforshire and Essex) and Eastern Counties (Norfolk, Suffolk and NE Essex). The main phonological distinctions between these areas are based on five of the criteria used for the overall categorization, viz. arm, land, seven, bat and hill, whose various realizations were described above. There are, of course, also a number of more localized characteristics, such as the insertion of 〈w〉 before 〈o〉 (Dorset and Somerset wold for ‘old’), a close fronted vowel [yː] in the GOOSE set (Devon), loss of final 〈l〉 (Sussex, Essex), a complicated system involving GOAT, GOOSE and FOOT (Norfolk, cf. Wells 1982: 338), interchange of 〈v〉 and 〈w〉 (Eastern Counties, including, of course, traditional Cockney), and the non-merger of moan/mown, nose/ knows (Eastern Counties). Yod-dropping in East Anglia (Fisiak & Trudgill, eds, 2001), a ‘mainstream’ feature but observed in Cockney as early as the eighteenth century, is another characteristic, as is the localized intrusive 〈l〉 in Bristol.

Since this volume is to cover a time span of about 400 years (1500 to 1900), albeit mostly drawing on nineteenth century texts, it is clearly desirable to consult earlier attempts at describing regional language variation in our area as well. Although the first truly systematic descriptions of the dialects of England are not to be found before the end of the nineteenth century, notably Ellis 1889, earlier observations by contemporary linguists, such as orthoepists, grammarians, lexicographers (including lay compilers of local glossaries), are on hand and should be considered. In his important contribution The Dialects of England since 1776, Ihalainen (1994) draws on data contained in works by such linguists as well as fictional writers. In the present introductory reference section the focus will be on information supplied by the linguists, thus avoiding a somewhat circular procedure since the analysis of actual text samples is the main purpose of this study. Only information adding to or qualifying the regional criteria and divisions presented above will be included.

John Bullokar (1616), in his definition of ‘dialect’, writes: “… as in England the Dialect or manner of speech in the North, is different from that in the South, and the Western dialect differing from them both” (cf. Blank 1996: 7). A more serious early attempt at indicating dialect areas in England was made by Alexander Gil, a renowned schoolmaster in London. In his work Logonomia Anglica (1619: 102) he claims the existence of six major dialects, two of which are socially/stylistically labelled ‘the general’ and ‘the poetical’, interpreted by Blank (1996: 3) as “an elite variety of London English” vs. “the vernacular”, and four clearly regional, representing the cardinal points. Unfortunately, there are no indications of geographical boundaries, which, according to Ihalainen (1994: 199) “suggests that people already had some kind of general idea of where these varieties could be heard”. Gil does, however, provide examples of characteristic regional features. The following are worth noting to complement the linguistic background to our area: Lincolnshire is regarded as a northern dialect; voiced initial fricatives characterize Gil’s southern as well as western dialect; the merger of ME /æ:/ as in name and /ai/ as in
pay is observed in the eastern dialect; in the same dialect fire has a long monophtong /iː/. Another early source (Ray 1674) also refers to Lincolnshire as 'northern', as well as some other counties in our area: Cheshire, Derbyshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Shropshire. From the spelling of his entries it seems that he, too, assigns the voicing of initial fricatives to a wide area in the south, including Sussex.

The first truly ambitious attempt at mapping English dialect areas was that of Alexander Ellis, published in 1889, i.e. at a time when most of the SED informants were already born, establishing six dialect 'divisions', consisting of 42 'districts'. It should be pointed out that Ellis, as distinguished from Joseph Wright, based his dialect descriptions almost exclusively on spoken data. The Ellis divisions, in fact, correspond strikingly with Trudgill's traditional dialect areas (Ihalainen 1994: 255). A detailed account of Ellis' divisions is not feasible here; the following may, however, be noted: ‘Welsh’ intonation patterns were found to be characteristic of West Country accents (cf. Ihalainen 1994: 241); East Anglian intonation, too, was singled out but not described; in the same area ‘intrusive 〈r〉’ was observed.

So far, dialect areas described here have been exclusively based on phonology. To complete this outline of regional variation in the south and middle of England, it remains to give some indication about provenance with reference to other levels of language. The following provides some important characteristics in morphosyntax: three-way distinctions in demonstrative pronouns, including a ‘distal’ form (West Country); (in most positions) that rather than it (East Anglia); all possessive pronouns ending in -n, e.g. hisn, theirn (the central part of the area, excluding the West Country, East Anglia, and most of Lincolnshire); distinctive forms of the second person pronouns (thou in Cheshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, thee in the West Country and some neighbouring counties, stretching into the West Midlands (cf. Upton & Widdowson 1996: 66), and the plural form youse in Merseyside); thee/thou areas typically also feature traditional verb forms, such as dost, canst; gender-marking in personal pronouns is particularly striking in the West Country, where some areas display almost total generalization of he, e.g. referring to tools and vehicles (cf. Wagner 2005: 291ff.); ‘pronoun exchange’, i.e. switching the case assignment of he-him, she-her, we-us, and they-them (Her’ll do it), is characteristic of the West Country and neighbouring countries, stretching into the West Midlands (cf. Klemola 2003, suggesting a Celtic connection) and also found in Essex; traces of the old ic/ich forms of the first person singular in parts of the West Country; the northern form hoo for ‘she’ is found in Staffordshire, where the traditional dialect is also characterized by negative verb forms ending in -na: coma, ama, binna (cf. the Eliot example in the next section); verb endings in the present tense: no third-person-singular -s endings at all in East Anglia and Essex, but generalized -s in the Western part of our area; the West Country is traditionally characterized by -eth endings in the third person, whereas Staffordshire features plural forms in -en; the use of ‘habitual do’ is found in the West Country, where another characteristic of the
verb system is a special form of the infinitive, ending in -y if there is no object; forms of be, finally vary in a complicated way, with the northeastern part of the area having generalized am, whereas the southwest (extending far beyond the West Country) has be (cf. Trudgill 1999a: 107).

Most of the information in the preceding paragraph is drawn from the SED, but generally supported by earlier observations (note, however, that Görlach (1999b: 492) maintains that evidence of Early Modern English dialect syntax is “almost nil”). With the exception of recent pioneering work in historical pragmatics (cf. Jucker 2002), regional discourse based on written data is virtually unresearched, as pointed out by Beal (2004: 139), claiming that discourse markers, for example, are regionally distributed and highly salient.

Yet the main interest of pre-Ellis ‘dialectologists’ as well as the SED, with 730 of its 1,092 questions relating to the lexicon, was vocabulary. There is, however, little information on precise localization in the early period. A structured, exhaustive presentation of regional lexical variation is notoriously difficult and cannot be achieved within the framework of the present study. The reader is referred to Viereck 1986, an investigation based on a selection of SED items demonstrating that various speech areas can be identified. These are, notably, a great part of Lincolnshire and East Anglia, both clearly set apart from the adjoining regions; “the Home Counties and beyond”, constituting a focal area (with Standard English words predominating there); certain regions in the Southwest, mainly Devon and eastern Cornwall, but also Dorset and parts of neighbouring counties, clearly separated from each other. Finally, certain areas in the western West Midlands and a smallish part in the Southeast also constitute distinguishable regions. In this presentation, dialect words will, of course, to some extent be considered and localized in the exemplification and analysis of specific texts. Although Halliwell’s Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words (1847) is definitely worth consulting for dialect vocabulary, the most important source of reference is clearly Joseph Wright’s English Dialect Dictionary (EDD), especially after recently having been made easily accessible and searchable (cf. http://speed.uibk.ac.at/wright). In conjunction with the SED, Wright’s dictionary, largely based on written evidence, to some extent taken from various genres as it is, in fact constitutes altogether the most indispensable source of information for this presentation, even though much of our area is poorly represented owing to scarcity of sources (García-Bermejo Giner 1994: 233).

4. The representation of non-standard dialect in writing: Variation, problems, accuracy

The ultimate aim of this section is to consider to what extent dialect literature can be of value for linguistic analysis, drawing on available written documents relating
to varieties in the south and middle of England. Hence all the examples given here reflect attempts at representing local varieties and a key issue will be to assess the accuracy of these attempts; above all, to ‘check’ whether they meet the criteria listed in the previous section.

Viewed from an exclusively ‘technical’ perspective, the representation of dialect features as well as the assessment of accuracy is superficially quite easy with respect to morphosyntax and vocabulary. In his poem *The Village Wife* (1880), set in Lincolnshire, Tennyson, for example, uses the adjective *unheppen* ‘clumsy’. A search in the *EDD* as well as the *SED* confirms that this is a northern characteristic, and particularly relevant for Lincolnshire at that. Similarly, the use of *crowd* in the sense of ‘push’ as in *crowd the barrow up the hill* (Grose 1790) rings true in an East Anglia context and confirms the Dutch element in local dialect (cf. Du *kruien*). It is true that spelling might constitute a problem in representing non-standard vocabulary since there is seldom a local, generally embraced, spelling convention, but the representations of intended lexical items are usually transparent. As an unequivocal example of a morphosyntactic feature, *Cham a Zummerzetshire mun* (Hughes Scour *White Horse* (1859), cf. the *EDD*), bears witness to the provenance of the extant *ic/ich* forms of the first person singular. Note, however, that these forms “may also have developed a more general non-standard association” (Blake 1981: 56). A source representing popular writing from another county, Cheshire, confirms the use of a form of *thou* as well as an old verb form: *tha’rt game, if tha’rt owd* (cf. Skeat 1911: 123), as does also George Eliot’s *Why, thee’st forgot the panels* in the dialogue of *Adam Bede*, presumably representing a Warwickshire dialect. Eliot’s form of *be* in *I binna frighted at Adam*, on the other hand, suggests a somewhat more northerly area (cf. Trudgill 1999a: 107 and the *EDD* entry *be*), but then Eliot had a “deep, serious knowledge” of several Midland counties (Garcia-Bermejo Giner 1994: 240).

The representation of sounds, by contrast, is fraught with innumerable problems, for the writer as well as the reader. In his 1809 work on the dialect of Bedfordshire, Batchelor describes “the Deficiencies of the English Alphabet, when applied in the Explanation of provincial Errors of Pronunciation” (Zettersten 1974: 157). About a century later, G.B. Shaw, known to be well versed in phonetics, originally attempted to use some special symbols in *Pygmalion*, e.g. for schwa, in indicating Eliza’s speech, but gave up: “Here, with apologies, this desperate attempt to represent her dialect without a phonetic alphabet must be abandoned as unintelligible outside London” (whether it would indeed be intelligible to the London reader is an interesting question to be discussed later in this section).

A reasonably successful attempt at using (almost) exclusively letters of the alphabet to indicate pronunciation is made by Wells in the *Reader’s Digest Great Illustrated Dictionary* (1984), where *(ә)* is the only symbol taken from outside the alphabet. Some regional features, “considered standard in a particular region” are also catered for; *bath,*
for example is transcribed as (baath || bath), and r-fulness is indicated, but there is no indication of the FOOT-STRUT split.

Similarly, for the first edition of *The Dialects of England* (1990) Trudgill designed a system consisting of alphabetic letters, in which the FOOT-STRUT split is shown as ⟨oo⟩ vs. ⟨u⟩, for example, but “at the request of many readers” he felt the need to complement these transcriptions with IPA versions. Nevertheless, these carefully designed letter-based systems do prove that a fairly detailed representation is possible, although probably not attractive for a writer of fiction.

‘Semi-phonetic’ spellings are, however, “perhaps the most widespread method of representing dialect” (Beal 2006: 531) and varieties in writing from our area display attempts at suggesting virtually all the distinctive phonological features listed in the previous section. Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, the general north-south distinctions do not appear to be represented. Walker, however, writes ⟨oo⟩ for unsplit STRUT, mainly signalling his attitude that the northerners’ lack of this phoneme marks them out as provincial (Beal 2006). This is indicative of a difference between northern and southern data, due to a perception of general southern features as connected with the standard. It is northern speech that is characteristically ‘marked’ (cf. Blank 1996: 15, for instance).

The following presents attempts at and, to some extent, failures in representing phonological characteristics in our area as listed above. The italicized lexical items indicated in the criteria represent sets of words.

- **realization of land**: E’s gotten a bwile in ‘is lonk, poor bwoy. (Hrf. Bound Provinc. (1876) (cf. lank, ‘groin’)), found in Shropshire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire, also represented as ⟨lunk⟩. Other examples from the area include mon, hond, ony (García-Bermejo Giner 1994). Towards the end of the nineteenth century this became an exclusively West Midland feature when it disappeared from south-western English (Ihalainen 1994: 217). Distinguishing between [land] and [lænd] is obviously more problematic;

- **short-vowel blind** (Lincolnshire ‘northern’ feature): This feature does not seem to be reflected in the spelling, although indicated in entries found in the *Peacock Lincolnshire Word Books* by means of the diacritic (‘). Possible spellings, such as ⟨blinnd⟩, suggesting a long (geminate) consonant, as, for example, in Shetland dialect writing, are rare, but cf. nassty, lasst (Derbyshire, García-Bermejo Giner 1994: 242);

- **rhotic arm**: For obvious reasons (the relative lateness of non-rhoticity in conjunction with the spelling convention), this feature does not appear to be indicated. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, set in the West Country, Hardy occasionally marks the speech of the Scotsman Donald Farfrae, e.g. in warrld ‘world’ (presumably signalling focus), but never in the representation of his local speakers. Conversely, r-lessness is easily (although selectively) represented, as in oh (‘she’) went ter
choch (‘church’) in the Derbyshire version of a well-known folk-song. According to Batchelor (Zettersten 1974: 100), r is pronounced in final position but not necessarily before a consonant. Ter may well exemplify ‘hyper-rhoticity’ induced by a final schwa, observed by Walker and Sheridan, Halliwell (from Sussex and Bedford) and found in SED data for yellow and meadow. Intrusive r is reported by Forby (1830: 102). The interpretation of r-fulness/r-lessness based on spelling must be done with caution, however, since the social significance of r-dropping remains unsettled even in the early twentieth century (Ihalainen 1994: 215) and it is the occasional presence of rhoticity that attracts attention (Wells 1982: 30);

- **H-dropping** (excluding East Anglia and Essex): asta (‘have you’, quoted from the same Derbyshire folk-song as above), ’ands (Lincolnshire, as represented in a poem by Tennyson; cf. Tilling 1972: 99), but note that “because of its wide distribution, h-dropping has not played a particularly important role as a regional diagnostic in traditional dialectology” (Ihalainen 1994: 217). As a social symbol it became prominent only towards the end of the eighteenth century. In *Adam Bede* George Eliot makes one of the characters use hypercorrect H insertion to suggest identity with the gentry: *hodd* for ‘odd’, *hany* for ‘any’, while Dickens in *David Copperfield* characterizes Uriah Heep’s speech by exaggerated H-dropping;

- **voiced initial fricatives**: vorzeaken ‘forsaken’, zot ‘sat’, vrom, zide (William Barnes’ poem *The Broken Heart*; the protagonist’s name is Fanny, however);

- **monophthongal realization of down**: doon, roond (Peacock, *Th’ Lincolnsheer Poâcher* (Campion 1976: 58));

- ‘a chain’ in the vowel system: *bait* is pronounced like *beat* etc. (cf. the complete description in the previous section): no completely matching written evidence has been found, but the *EDD* gives examples such as *theer* ‘there’, *join* ‘fine’ for Staffordshire. Judging by twentieth century data, especially from the Potteries, the vowel qualities appear to be shifting. Unfortunately, Staffordshire is not well represented in the *EDD*, but evidence of the *same/seem* switch is found in a Staffordshire text from 1823 (Halliwell 1881: XXVIII) and Garcia-Bermejo Giner (1974: 234ff.) provides interesting evidence suggesting many of the other switches;

- insertion of ⟨w⟩ before ⟨o⟩ (Dorset, Somerset): *primrwose*, *hwome* (William Barnes, *Blackmware Maidens*);

- [y:] in the GOOSE set (Devon):güze-chick, güze vlesh (*EDD*);

- loss of final /l/ (Essex); no examples found, but cf. pre-consonantal loss in *a’most* (*Our Mutual Friend*);

- a complicated system involving GOAT, GOOSE and FOOT (Norfolk): *rood* rhyming with *wood* is found in twentieth century writing (Trudgill 1999a: 45) but no earlier examples have been located;
- **non-merger of moan/mown, nose/nows** (Eastern Counties): again, no examples found (not even in the *EDD*), but then it might not occur to a local writer, an ‘insider’, to represent this, since it is signalled by the standard spelling;

- **interchange of /v/ and /w/** (Eastern Counties): “A man your *vorship*, may call out ‘boots’ and not *violate* any hact *vatsomdever*” (*The Times*, Jan. 26, 1835). Wells (1982: 333), assessing ‘literary Cockney’, dismisses Dickens’ elaborate representation of this feature as a literary stereotype, seriously out-of-date at the time of writing. [w] for /v/, however, is reported by Skeat from London in the latter half of the nineteenth century (personal observation, cf. Gerson 1967: XIX);

- **yod-dropping** (East Anglia): *solitoode, gratitoode* (Dickens, *Great Expectations*). Batchelor (Zettersten 1974: 88, 93) reports – and condemns as vulgar – ‘the long oo’ as variably heard in Bedfordshire ‘new’, ‘cure’, ‘beautiful’, etc. In this context ‘YOD-insertion’ may be mentioned, of which early written West Midland evidence is reported e.g. by García-Bermejo Giner (1994: 237), as in *yerd* ‘heard’ and hypercorrect *unkyoote* ‘uncouth’;

Some other diagnostic features might, of course, have been added to this basic list. TH-fronting, for example, is found, but not well represented, in early sources and generally described as a mispronunciation (Gerson 1967: 246). Glottal stops are obviously difficult to represent and so are, one would think, West Midland g-ful endings (cf. however *plingk* in an 1886 Cheshire text, quoted by Skeat, 1911: 122). We have also seen that complicated vowel shifts do not easily lend themselves to orthographic representations. Tennyson’s elaborate use of ‘outlandish’ spellings, e.g. *maäke* ‘make’ is a case in point: “largely inaccessible to the general reader because of an unsuccessful attempt by the poet to indicate the precise nature of the sounds of his native dialect” (Tilling 1972: 108).

Like Tennyson, most of the producers of non-standard spellings exemplified above were quite knowledgeable about the variety they wanted to represent, but were often unsuccessful due to the inadequacy of the orthographic system. Montgomery (cf. Schneider 2002: 88) claims that “unconventional spellings almost always turn out to be phonetically based in whole or in part”. We must, however, also consider cases where writers of fiction use so-called ‘eye-dialect’ partly or entirely for the purpose of hinting that a character uses a non-standard accent, is lower-class and/or illiterate. ‘Eye-dialect’ is here used in the sense of ‘respellings which reflect no phonetic facts’, such as *sez* for ‘says’, *wimmin* for ‘women’, including representations of allegro speech such as ‘*cause*, ‘*bout’, showing natural phonetic processes (richly demonstrated in local glossaries, for example). No examples, finally, have been found to represent prosodic patterns such as rising intonation or sentence stress, as successfully attempted in some present-day fiction (cf. Wells 1982: 529; Melchers & Shaw 2003: 21).
5. The significance of genre, motivation and awareness

**Genre:** A distinction is usually made between ‘dialect literature’ and ‘literary dialect’ (cf. Beal 2006: 533f.; Shorrocks 1996: 386; Görlach 1999b: 512); the former term referring to works composed wholly, or at least partly, in non-standard dialect, produced for a local readership (e.g. much of the poetry by William Barnes), whereas the latter refers to the representation of non-standard speech (almost exclusively in the dialogue) in literature otherwise written in Standard English (such as the novels by George Eliot). This distinction is somewhat fuzzy, in that writers of dialect literature more often than not produce themselves in Standard English as well, and novelists like Eliot may be extremely knowledgeable about the variety they represent. It is not completely true that “dialect is a variable dependent on the demands of fictional situation rather than on the probable behaviour of an actual speaker” (Page 1988: 59).

Schneider (2002: 71f.) provides a useful classification of text types according to their proximity to speech, considering category (recorded, recalled, imagined, observed, invented), reality of speech event (ranging from real to hypothetic), speaker-writer relationship, and temporal distance. Text types include transcripts of trial records, letters, diaries, commentaries, and literary dialect. According to Schneider, texts should be as close to speech as possible to be of value for variationist studies; in addition they must fulfil certain size requirements. Formal and literary writing is dismissed, since it normally displays “categorical, invariant usage”. Unfortunately, as seen from the previous section, most of the preferred text types are poorly represented in the available data for this presentation. In particular, it would have been desirable, as documented from present-day fieldwork, to examine informal letters and ‘scribbles’, especially in bidialectal speech communities. Otherwise, however, the local writer’s competence is questionable and must have been so in our area throughout the nineteenth century, if not before, due to the impact of standard English.

Dialect evidence is unevenly spread across literary genres (cf. Görlach 1999b: 508ff.). There is hardly any dialect drama before the nineteenth century, and very little poetry. The increase in dialect literature as well as literary dialect in the nineteenth century was related to the rise of the novel, a much enlarged reading public and a ‘scholarly’ interest in the dialects (cf. Görlach 1999b: 513). Also “in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England, there was no such thing as dialect literature so understood” (Blank 1996: 3).

**Motivation:** There will clearly be many reasons for a writer to include regional/non-standard language in a text. Inability to use a more standardlike variety of English, however, is hardly one of them; at least it appears not to be the case in the texts examined for this presentation. Instead, the writer’s motivation is characterized by various attitudinal – not mutually exclusive – incentives, such as the propagation of knowledge
or ‘evangelizing’, entertainment, portrayal, and local involvement. Critics do not always agree as to the motivation behind the use of dialect by writers of fiction. There is, for example, a debate whether George Eliot’s purpose was ‘joking or realism’. Not even a fictional writer’s own proclamation concerning the speech of her/his characters is to be trusted; a case in point is Hardy’s famous passage in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* on the protagonist’s bidialectism, ‘speaking the dialect when at home’, which is not borne out in the actual representation.

Propagation of knowledge or instruction is obviously the main purpose of the many eighteenth and nineteenth century local dialect glossaries, some of which have been referred to in previous sections. They are often highly moralizing if not contemptuous, such as Grose (1787), talking about “loanwords so corrupted by passing through the mouths of illiterate clowns as to render their origin scarcely discoverable”. Conversely, writers may elevate the status of a regional dialect, by drawing attention to its historical and literary links. The Renaissance writer Richard Carew tried to promote the English spoken in Cornwall by describing it as “the true descendant of the ‘Saxonage’” (Blank 1996: 82). Similarly, in 1870, Lady Verney in the preface of a novel set in Hampshire deplores the loss of dialects, e.g. “inflexions which show the history of our tongue” and forms of speech which are found in Chaucer and Shakespeare (García-Bermejo Giner 1994: 241).

Imitations and representations of regional dialects, usually based on canonical stereotyping have been – and still are – characteristically, and sadly, often used exclusively for the purpose of entertainment. Particularly exposed to ridicule were Kentish and, above all, West Country dialects, which in early modern English literature were reserved for the exclusive use of ‘clownish’ characters, whereas northern English was “at once the rude dialect of ploughmen and an ancestral English” (Blank 1996: 82). A less stereotypical and more harmless representation of dialect speech is found in a passage in Fanny Burney’s *Camilla* (1796; Book IV, Ch.VIII) in a lively account of a performance of *Othello*, in which all the parts except Iago were played by actors speaking their own local dialect: Cassio from Norfolk, saying *dewk* for ‘duke’; Othello ‘a true Londoner’, *wery, avay*; Desdemona’s father from Somerset, *zpeak, confez* (!), whereas the actress playing her is said to come from Worcestershire (confusingly represented mainly through excessive H-dropping and insertion).

It is often unfairly taken for granted that any representation of regional dialect in writing or stage performance is meant for amusement. When, in 1836, Dickens was accused by the *Spectator* of using dialect as a means of mockery, he retorted: “I believe that virtue shows quite as well in rags and patches as she does in purple and fine linen, …even if Gargery and Boffin did not speak like gentlemen, they were gentlemen” (Gerson 1967: 371–2).

*Awareness*: Fanny Burney, as quoted above, was known to have a ‘good ear for dialect’ which is, on the whole, apparent from her representations. A good writer of
fiction can perhaps be assumed to be a good observer, giving graphic accounts of landscapes, clothes, customs etc. Unfortunately, as sometimes demonstrated in present-day representations, it does not necessarily follow that language use is convincingly true to reality. Disregarding the more technical problems of representing linguistic features, a key issue here may be the degree of local involvement and the origin of the writer; in other words whether he/she is an ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’. Fanny Burney appears to be particularly successful in representing her home dialect (Norfolk). For Renaissance writers, however, dialects had nothing to do with ‘home’; Shakespeare, for example, never represented Warwickshire speech (Blank 1996: 3).

In an important paper, Trudgill (1999b) shows how Norfolk YOD-dropping is seen as a very salient feature by outsiders and thus represented in writing (Dickens, for example writes *dootiful* for ‘dutiful’), whereas insiders do not bother to change the spelling or, confusingly, write *bewtiful* (in fact, representing the traditional-dialect vowel [u̯]), which is undergoing dedialectalization to [u̯] in another set of words such as *boot, rood, fool*. The conclusion is: “As usual, Norfolk people know best”. This is not an unqualified truth, however, since insiders are known to have a tendency to seek to confirm their own preconceived notions and stereotypes, whereas outsiders may have ‘fresh ears’ (cf. Melchers 1996: 164f). Ideally, investigations of local dialects should be carried out by insiders and outsiders working together (cf. various studies by James and Lesley Milroy, for instance).

Present-day research on language awareness may add to our understanding of written representations of accents and dialects. Recently, Wells observed that “native speakers quite easily notice phonetic (realizational) differences between their own speech and other people’s, implicitly or explicitly, but are very slow to become aware of phonological (systemic) differences” (www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/ wells/blog0902b.html). On the other hand, judging by present-day popular representations, e.g. upper-class *trizers* for ‘trousers’, it seems as if only phonemes are indicated, i.e. where there is a shift towards a phoneme which is distinct in your variety (Philip Shaw, personal communication).

6. Concluding remarks

Linguistic work on non-standard writing in English generally focuses on the representation of northern speech, and occasionally on West Country dialects. This is also the case with general descriptions of the field of study, e.g. Beal (2006), Shorrocks (1996). In the *EDD*, perhaps the most valuable data source of all, many of the non-northern areas are poorly represented, notably the West Midlands and the West Country. This is strikingly apparent in the *EDD* online version. A simple explanation of the imbalance in representation could of course be that there was less writing
in dialect in our area owing to the greater impact of the standard. Yet the laborious
detective-like explorations by García-Bermejo Giner suggest that there is a great deal
more to be found in local archives for linguists to examine (cf. also Edwards 1993). The
EDD list of contributors provides a good starting-point.

Available corpora representing regional variation in Late Modern English have
proved to be of use in variationist studies and led to new insights, especially of a
sociolinguistic character, with regard to the distribution of certain morphosyntactic
features. By contrast, the nineteenth century corpus CONCE, recently developed by
Kytö et al., does not include literary dialect, let alone dialect literature. This is
understandable, and it is, in fact, doubtful whether a representative written dialect corpus,
including semiphonetic spellings, could be created in a meaningful way. Clearly, the
EDD online constitutes a corpus of a kind, but as we have seen, its regional distribution
is extremely uneven. Even Schneider (2002: 88f.) who is all for variationist analysis,
admits that the analysis of phonetics with written records is problematic and argues
that a more qualitative, yet token-based approach has its merits. Britton’s analysis of
Henry Machyn’s language (Britton 2007) is an outstanding example of such a study.

It is probably true that literary sources tend to overuse stereotypical markers but
reduce variability. Nonetheless, since the written documentation is all we have by way
of data on regional and social variation in earlier periods, we have to take any token
of it seriously. It is often claimed that caution has to be exercised with written dia-
lect material, since it is characterized by canonical forms which may have been highly
recessive at the time of writing. As Trudgill showed in his work on dedialectalization,
such texts can be highly informative given that the interpreter is knowledgeable about
the variety in question. Another familiar warning has to do with the lack of consis-
tency and ‘completeness’ in representations of dialect. Yet, as is well known, this is also
ture of speakers in real life.

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The distinctiveness of Scots
Perceptions and reality

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The speech-forms in use at the extreme ends of the Anglo-Saxon dialect continuum eventually acquired the status of national languages in the kingdoms of Scotland and England; and though the Scottish form lost this status in the aftermath of the Union of the Crowns, the substantial differences which still existed between spoken Scots and English were often reflected, albeit crudely and unsystematically, in texts purporting to represent Scottish speech. Later, the differences came to be examined in a more careful and scholarly fashion. Though Scots was never a fully autonomous form, it has been recognised from at least the sixteenth century as integral to Scotland’s cultural identity.

1. Historical background

By the late fourteenth century, the English language had come to be spoken over most of the Kingdom of England and a substantial part of the Kingdom of Scotland. The medium in which John Barbour wrote his *Brus*, and that in which Geoffrey Chaucer wrote his *Canterbury Tales*, were by all linguistic criteria forms of the same language: mutually remote points on a continuum of which other points were represented by the Yorkshire dialect of Richard Rolle, the North-West Midland dialect of the *Gawain* poet, the South Midland dialect of William Langland and the Kentish dialect of the *Asenbyte of Inwyt*. If Barbour and Chaucer ever met (as they surely did) during the former’s various diplomatic missions to London, their conversation would have been conducted with much less difficulty than a dialogue between a Buchan and a Cockney speaker of today. And though the theme of Barbour’s epic was precisely the successful defence of the independence of the Scottish realm, and he deliberately wrote it in the vernacular language of the monarchy, government and much of the populace of his kingdom (instead of Latin) so that it would be widely read, related and appreciated to the furtherance of Scottish national pride, it did not occur to him that the language itself was anything but *Inglis*.

The fifteenth century and first half (roughly) of the sixteenth saw the development of this linguistic medium, in the hands of a sequence of poets and later also prose-writers of outstanding merit, to the status of one of the greatest literary languages
in Europe: the remarkable qualitative contrast between the literary achievements of Scotland and England in this period is a commonplace of history. However, this relatively undistinguished stage in the history of English literature (in the national sense) is also the period of the accession of the London dialect to the status of a national standard language; and when English letters began to recover, it was this form of the language, to the steadily increasing exclusion of all others used within the kingdom, that furnished their principal medium.\(^1\) As far as the written language was concerned, that is, the dialect continuum which had characterised the entire Middle English period was effectively gone; and in its place was a pair of mutually remote dialects each serving as the language of government, administration and letters in its own kingdom.

2. **Gavin Douglas's *Eneados***

Linguistically, the medium used by William Caxton for his *Eneydes* and the medium in which Gavin Douglas scathingly dismissed it before proceeding to write his own incomparably finer *Eneados* showed a greater degree of mutual distinctiveness, the natural result of a century of steady independent development, than the media of Barbour and Chaucer. Their close relationship, however, was still apparent, as the following passages show.\(^2\)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dydo, aggrevit ay quhil he his tayl tald,} \\
\text{With acquart luke gan towart hym behald,} \\
\text{Rollyng vmquhile hir eyn, now heir, now thar,} \\
\text{With syght onstabil waverand our alquhar,} \\
\text{And all enragyt thir wordis gan furth braid:} \\
\text{"Nothir wes a goddes thy moder, as is sayd,} \\
\text{Nor zyt Kyng Dardanus cheif stok of thi kyn,} \\
\text{Thou treuthless wyght, bot of a cald, hard quhyn} \\
\text{The clekkyt that horribill mont, Cawcasus hait –} \\
\text{Thou sowkyt nevir womanis breist, weil I wait,} \\
\text{Bot of sum cruel tygir of Araby} \\
\text{The pappis the fosterit in the wod Hyrcany.}\(^3\)
\end{align*}
\]

\(^1\) It goes without saying that this is a massive over-simplification, and that the interplay of what was becoming the "standard" with socially and regionally distinct speech-forms was an exuberantly productive part of Renaissance English literature. For a useful introduction see Blank (1996).

\(^2\) Douglas’s is a poetic translation made directly from the Latin; Caxton’s a prose re-writing of a French text which can best be described as a free paraphrase of selected excerpts from Virgil with extensive additions from Boccaccio and others. This is one of the few passages where the verbal correspondence is close enough for direct comparison.

In sayeng the whiche wordes by eneas dydo lokyng at one side, torned hir eyen sodaynli, wythout to speke neuer a worde as a persone furybounde & furyous: and or euer that she coude saye ony thyng, as rauysshed helde her sighte all mobyle, wythout to areste it vpon one thyng of a long while and after, by gret yre, gadred by immense sorow intrysiuque wythin her hert, sayd to hym in this wyse: "o man right false and vntrue, that, what someuer men sayen, was neuer borne of no goddesse, nor procreated of Royalle lynee comyng of the puissaunt dardanus, fyrst founder of the grete cyte of troye, but arte engendred of Caucasus whiche is a mountayne terryble in ynde, all ful of hard stones of dyuerse fygures, of merueyllous height that recheth almost vnto the heuyns […]"

in folowyng the condycions of ye subsiduous modre that hath made the to be norysshed and fedde wyth the mylke of the tygres of Yrcanye, that are made wythoute to haue pyte of ony thynge that is borne in this worlde […]

Had social, political and cultural factors not been in operation, there would have been no case, either then or since, against considering them as dialects of the same lan-
guage. But of course, such factors were in operation. Gavin Douglas was not the first
to apply the term Scottis to his language, but he signalled a radically new perception
of it by proclaiming his work to be \textit{writtin in the langage of Scottis natioun}, and this to
be a \textit{different language} from what he called \textit{Sudron} – \textit{kepand na sudron bot our awin
langage}. Shortly afterwards he added further emphasis to the point by arguing that as
Latin included loan words from Greek, so he was at times obliged to use \textit{sum bastard
Latyn, French or Inglis} … \textit{Quhair scant was Scottis} – that is, English is a foreign lan-
guage like Latin or French from which a Scottish writer may borrow as Romans could
from Greek; and this time he does not follow the established practice of referring to it
as \textit{Sudron} but puts all his cards on the table by using the national adjective. Scots is for
the Scots, English for the English.

Precisely what led Douglas to this almost revolutionary view of his language is
a tempting field for speculation. Patently, substantial differences in spelling, mor-
phology, syntax, vocabulary and (by Douglas’s time) literary development existed
between the medium based on the dialect of Edinburgh and the Lothians and that
based on the dialect of London and South-Eastern England; but this had been true
throughout the history (which virtually begins with Barbour) of a national Scottish
literature in the Lowland tongue, and had until then prompted no major poet to call
the language \textit{Scottis}, much less to make a patriotic point of the existence of a Scots
language. Douglas’s contemporary William Dunbar, in apostrophising Chaucer with

\begin{footnotes}
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Was thou nocht of oure Inglisch all the lycht [...]?, was expressing the established and unquestioned view that his language and that of his great English predecessor were essentially the same. Douglas’s contemptuous diatribe against Caxton as a translator of Virgil identifies him as of Inglis natioun; but a well-grounded literary antagonism to one writer would hardly have been a sufficiently weighty reason to prompt a new assessment of the whole relationship between their languages.

Nor does any political motivation suggest itself: as Douglas was writing his Eneados, relations between James IV and Henry VIII were bad and rapidly deteriorating; but hostility between the monarchies was the normal state of things – and obviously there was no foreseeing the sad coincidence that the Eneados was completed only weeks before the disastrous battle of Flodden, which ended James’s brilliant reign, plunged Scotland into a period of factional strife and near-breakdown of effective government, and drew Douglas himself into a stormy political career in which his work as poet and scholar was at an end. Douglas had travelled to England and would no doubt have been struck by the difference between his hosts’ speech and his own, certainly far more marked between the spoken than between the written languages; but so had Dunbar. And though assuredly Douglas was proudly aware of the richness and distinctiveness of the national literary tradition to which he was contributing, this too had been true of all his predecessors.

When all is said, the only certain facts are these: the mutual divergence of the Edinburgh and the London dialects, by the early sixteenth century, was substantial but not approaching mutual unintelligibility; the chronic enmity between the nations had not impeded a lively and productive cultural relationship, based on what was perceived as a common language, in which Scottish writers engaged on equal terms in literary debate with Chaucer and other English poets; and Douglas’s proud assertion of his tongue’s status as a national language signalled a new perception of its status which some, but not all, of his successors were to follow his lead in accepting or actively proclaiming.

3. The status of Scots

The status of Scots as a language, that is, has been ambivalent from the outset: an ambiguity manifest not only in the contradictory attitudes to it expressed by writers, scholars

5. Generous praise of Chaucer, and also Gower and Lydgate, is common in Scottish poetry of the Stewart period; but Henryson’s Testament of Cresseid asks of Chaucer’s source poem Quha wait gif al that Chauceir wrait was true?, and Douglas severely criticises Chaucer for his presentation of the Dido story in The Legend of Good Women with My mastir Chaucer gretly Virgill offendit.
and the general public from then till now, but also by the history of the written form. For several decades after the appearance of Douglas’s *Eneados*, the language proceeded in its course of independent literary development. Around the middle of the sixteenth century, however, the process began which is customarily, if simplistically, described as Anglicisation: the gradual, erratic and unsystematic, but cumulative, replacement of distinctively Scottish features of spelling, grammar, vocabulary and idiom by the norms of English usage. The rate at which this occurred varied with text type, and even within the corpus of any given text type with individual habit: as a notable example, recent research in corpus linguistics shows that in personal letters and journals there is a definite tendency for Anglicisation to occur more slowly in women’s language than in men’s; a development of which printed texts in such fields as poetry, historiography, formal records of Parliament or burgh councils, or utilitarian documents such as treasurers’ accounts, give no clue whatever. This gradual but inexorable disappearance of distinctively Scots features in printed texts is chronologically associated with the Reformation, but (despite a deep-rooted tendency in Scotland to see the two as causally linked) the fundamental cause was the advent of printing. The Reformation unquestionably created a climate favourable to linguistic Anglicisation, resulting as it did in the distribution of the Geneva Bible in Scotland and the wholesale importation of works by English Protestant scholars and pamphleteers, and a close political connection with England arising from the adoption by both kingdoms of the reformed church; but under any conceivable historical circumstances the establishment of printing would have led to English texts, necessarily produced in greater numbers than Scottish, being imported into Scotland and exerting a linguistic influence on the written language there. Several of the first printers in Scotland were Englishmen or trained in England; and even Scottish printers were naturally inclined to adjust their productions so as to make them more appealing to the lucrative English market: a factor which became much more important after the accession of James VI to the English throne.

As the written language used in Scotland became progressively less distinguishable from metropolitan English, however, the spoken language remained substantially unaffected. What emerged was not a loss of the distinctive Scots dialects but a functional bilingualism extending progressively down the ranks of society. Members of the Scottish aristocracy and landed gentry who, in the years following the Union of the Crowns, acquired positions and lands in England grew accustomed to speaking English when in residence there and Scots at home. There is evidence that many had

6. For a detailed statistical examination of this as applied to some specific features see Devitt (1989); for discussion of some literary examples in their historical context see the present writer’s chapter “Anglicisation” in Mapstone and Mann (eds, 2009).

7. For general discussion see for example Meurman-Solin (1993); on this specific point see Meurman-Solin (2001).
learned English before 1603, in anticipation of James's accession to the English throne and the opportunities for enrichment which it would bring: the King himself used English in diplomatic correspondence with Elizabeth. However, adult Scots learning English as, if not precisely a foreign language, then certainly a substantially different medium from their own, naturally retained a perceptible Scottish accent. As accomplished a scholar as James VI would assuredly have become able to speak English as well as he did French, Italian and Latin; but the evidence which his pronunciation gave of his Scottish origin was clear enough to draw satirical comments – comments on the same level as are often heard today.

The impressive size, quality and diversity of the corpus of extant Scottish writing from 1375 (the date of completion of Barbour's Brus, though the manuscripts are nearly a century later) to the Union of the Crowns has provided evidence for comprehensive descriptions of the history of the language in its written form, and the elucidation of its developing phonology, orthography and grammar. In this respect the academic study of Scots is as productive and as well-developed as that of the English language as a whole, of which it is an integral part. Another aspect of the history of the language which deserves to be examined, however, is the question of how it was perceived in relation to metropolitan English: an issue which became steadily more important as the monarchical union became first increasingly probable and then a dynamically developing reality. Scholarly descriptions and discussions of Scots speech furnish material here. So too do representations of it in literary texts in which it specifically contrasts with English: plays and novels in which the dialogue of Scots-speaking characters is pointedly different from the English of the surrounding dialogue or narrative, for example. In what follows, a few selected sources of different kinds will be examined for what they reveal not only about actual Scottish usages but about evaluative responses to them.

Blank (op.cit., p. 105) lists a number of features used by English writers of the Renaissance period to suggest Northern England dialect speech, and correctly notes that attempts at representing Scots are not, as a rule, clearly distinguished from this: Northern English shibboleths which do not appear in Scots are occasionally put into the mouths of Scottish characters (e.g. whayet for “quiet” in a speech by the character of Bohan in Greene's James the Fourth; see further below). Among those features are orthographic a corresponding to o in ane, fra, wrang, bath, etc.; u or uCe corresponding

8. Naturally the departure of King James did not instantly ring down the curtain on Scottish literature, still less the Scots language; but its importance in the history of both is much more than as a mere chronological marker. The loss of a cultured court, in which letters had been practiced and promoted as a deliberate act of policy by a king internationally renowned for his enthusiasm for literature and scholarship, was a major blow to literary patronage and hence productivity in Scotland.
to oo in gude, buke, etc.; what she calls the "velarisation of ch" in sic, whilke, kirk, etc.; I is and thou is, sometimes in reduced forms Ise etc.; and common words like gif, til, mun, gar, barn (barne, bairn), gang, sight, bonny, deift, derne.

An early and small-scale, but within its limits interesting, instance of pseudo-Scots writing which illustrates such forms is the tiny part of Captain Jamy in Henry V. "The Scots Captaine" appears in only one scene (III. ii), where the much more important character of Fluellen is joined by him and the Irish Captain MacMorris (Mackmorrice in the Folio), the contrasting speech-idiosyncrasies of the three heroes being indicated, albeit crudely and inconsistently, by the written forms used in their dialogue. The erratic spellings of the Folio text give rise to some difficulties of interpretation. Jamy's theise, for example, is generally retained by modern editors as if it were meant to indicate a Scottish pronunciation, when in fact it is simply a variant spelling found in all contexts (and neither in Henry V's time nor Shakespeare's was there any distinctive Scottish pronunciation of these, for the simple reason that the word was not a part of Scots speech at all, the corresponding form being thir). Slomber, too, is a normal English form of the period. Conversely, the last word in his I wad full faine heard... is now generally emended to hear, the Folio -d being assumed to be a misreading of a scribal -e (though it would be unusual for the typesetter to misinterpret a normal spelling and construction as what for him would be a decidedly abnormal one); but I wad [would] heard for "I would have heard" would be in full accordance with Scots grammar, and is perfectly possible in the context. The question arises, too, whether de (for do, though do occurs two lines later) is intentional: unless he came from the North-East (and in Shakespeare's time probably not even then) Jamy would not have pronounced the word as [di], and de is not the most obvious phonetic representation of the form he would have used, namely [de:]. Ayle [I'll] can hardly be a misprint, though the normal Folio lle appears thereafter: what it implies, however, is doubtful (I and ay are interchangeable spellings for ay [yes], suggesting that their sound-values were identical). However, some features of Jamy's dialogue are unmistakable: wad [would] and sal [shall] are straightforward phonetic spellings, mes [mes] "mass", grund [gran] "ground" and tway "two" likewise, the latter suggesting a South-Eastern [twe:] as contrasted with the more

9. In fact, of course, the Southern ch is a palatalisation of [k].

10. I is has never been a Scots usage, but I's for I shall is possible, and is correctly used by Greene (see below).

11. It is most unlikely that Henry's army would have included a Scots captain in reality, as the Scots, true to the Auld Alliance, were fighting (very effectively) on the French side. But James I, then a captive, was indeed taken by Henry on his Agincourt campaign and instructed by him to order the Scots troops home – which he declined to do, saying that as a prisoner it would not beseem him to give orders as a King.
general [twæ] or [twɛ], and gud “good” – used six times in less than a dozen lines! – is no doubt intended to suggest a front-rounded [ʊd]. (If the rounding had been lost, as in the commonest modern form [ɡʊd], presumably the spelling gid would have been adopted.) Bath for “both” is misleading or at best ambiguous: the modern pronunciation is [beθ], and though the vowel may have been lower in Shakespeare’s time it was certainly not an [a]. Ligge “lie”, finally, is an authentic Scots lexeme.

4. The Valiant Scot

A more elaborate example from a few years earlier occurs in Greene’s James the Fourth (Sanders, ed., 1970) in the speeches of Bohan (designated “a misanthropic Scot” in the dramatis personae). His first speech contains what’s thou, grammatically a correct Scotticism, and later ay’s gar thee…”(I’ll make you...”) illustrates the Scots’s as a reduction of sall. Guid and fute are familiar; ene and nene for “one” and “none” unexpected: the vowel is [e], not [i].12 Gang “go”, deel “devil” (used as an expletive: the deel a whit reck I thy love, etc.), threap “brag”, trattle “chatter”, wemb [wem] (the spelling is unusual but genuine Scots) “stomach”, rid (in authentic Scots rede) “advise”, lopo (authentically lowp [lʌp]) “leap” are among the Scots lexemes which appear: Greene’s use of these in such abundance in the tiny compass of the part is quite striking.

A much more extensive use of quasi-Scots in a work by a (presumably) English dramatist13 is The Valiant Scot by the unidentified “J. W.”,14 in which the central figure is William Wallace and several incidents are recognisably derived from Blind Hary’s epic (though neither the events of the play nor – assuredly – the historical stance assumed by the author have much warrant in ascertained fact). Pseudo-Scots is used by the character Peggie, Wallace’s beloved and briefly his wife;15 by a Friar (a tiny part – the

12. Except in the modern North-Eastern dialect, and there is evidence that this pronunciation had already emerged there in the sixteenth century: see Macafee (1989).

13. Blank (1996: 164) assumes, on no stated grounds, that the author is Scottish; but apart from the likelihood that a Scottish writer would be able to make a much more convincing attempt at representing the dialect, there is the certainty that no Scottish writer, of that or any period, would write a play based on the assumption that Edward Langshanks was the rightful overlord of Scotland.

14. The edition used is that found in Byers (1980). For an illuminating discussion of the play in its historical context see Kerrigan (2008, Chapter 2).

15. Tradition gives Wallace’s wife the name of Marion Braidfute and it is tempting to speculate that the dramatist has deliberately assigned to her a less dignified name; but in fact her Christian name is never mentioned by Hary, and it is unlikely that J. W. had examined any other sources.
The distinctiveness of Scots

ghosts of those two characters also talk quasi-Scots when they later appear); and by Wallace in an episode in which he appears in disguise and his companions in this event. Peggie does not appear to be intended as a figure of mockery and the Friar certainly is not, but the fact that Wallace uses pseudo-Scots when assuming the identity of a common soldier is indicative of the dramatist’s assumptions regarding its status (Byers compares the episode to the disguised Edgar’s use of peasant dialect in King Lear). Peggie’s first speeches are as follows:

Why shild I hayd my Scottis face? My Scottis face is as gude as yare English feace, ‘tis a true Scotties feace. […]

Hange yare flee-flaps! Na Scottis woeman is asheamed a that luke, that the master painter abuife guifes her; whare mun I gangand now? Fay, fay, fay, what lossell am I that am hurrand thus till and fra with sweards and wapins? Whay mun backerd men gang fencing and florishing about me? Am I yare may-game? […]

Are yee my jalor? What kin bin you to the hangman? Senu you? Whare’s hee? Wha is that foule loone amang you, that mun be my hangman? […]

I reckand mickle your luife! Fay upon sike luike, the awd fellon theef, luifand the truemans siller as you luifand me. I’ de rather be a Scutchmans whore, then an Englishmans waife, and be dreave toth’ Kirke with helters.

(Byers 1980: 131–4 [I.ii. 2–33])

Among this seeming near-chaos, a few features can be identified which appear to be neither authorial errors or guesses nor misprints. The form Scottis (but not Scotties, a plain mistake) is that used by Blind Hary and in pre-Union Scots texts in general. Similarly, the ending -and is the authentic Middle Scots present participle ending, though the author clearly had no understanding of its use: only in luifand the truemans siller (siller is authentic, meaning “money”) is it used grammatically, and in two cases where it could have been properly written the author has used the English -ing instead: fencing and florishing.16 Neither Scottis nor -and corresponded to seventeenth-century pronunciation; but at least J. W. can be credited with using, or misusing, a genuine written form. Mun for “must”, usually written man in early and maun in modern Scots texts, is good enough as a phonetic spelling; the same is true of a for “of”. Wha for “who” [hwa:], amang for “among” [a:man], wapins for “weapons” [wapinz], flee-flaps for “fly-flops”17 [fli:flaps] and dreave for “drove” (assuming that the intended pronunciation is [drɛv]) are satisfactory representations of authentic forms. Awd for “old” is a form

16. Byers takes reckand to mean reckon, but it seems to me more likely that it is the -and ending ungrammatically affixed to reck.

17. Fly-swatters, according to Byers. The reference is apparently to a veil which another character is attempting to put over her face.
found in representations of Northern English dialect which the author has wrongly assumed will do for Scots: the correct form would be *ald* or *auld*, representing (interchangeably) [ald] or [old]. *Swerd* is an authentic Scots spelling for “sword”, presumably representing [swerd] or [swerd]: this could be intended by J. W’s *sweard*. (What, if anything, he intended by the *ea* digraph in *feace* and *asheamed* can only be guessed.) *Gang* “go”, *mickle* “much”, *sike* [sɪk] “such” are readily recognisable. *Shild* “should” and *yare* “your” are certainly not authentic Scots written forms, but could be seen as desperate attempts to convey the fact that those words when unstressed contain a vowel of [ɪ]-like quality. *Gude* no doubt has the same implications as Shakespeare’s *gud*, and has the advantage of being an actual Scots spelling: *luke* and *luife* presumably imply the same sound. (The *luike* in the ninth line of this extract might be the same thing; it might be a misprint for *like* (*sic* *like* is familiar Scots); or it might be a misprint for *luife*.) Finally, the repeated use of *ai* or *ay* in words where the English spelling is with *i*, which occurs throughout Peggie’s part (and is in fact a regular feature of the pseudo-Scots of English writers), is puzzling; the diphthongisation of ME [ɪ] and the monophthongisation of ME [ai] proceeded in Scotland as in England, and the normal early seventeenth century sound-value of *ai*, [ɛ], would categorically not have been used by a Scots speaker in *hide*, *fie*, *wife*. J. W. has clearly made a serious attempt, if not to ensure that his characters’ Scots speech is authentic, at least to ensure that it is clearly different from metropolitan English and contains some recognisable Scots forms; and the fact that he has used an authentic Scots text as his literary source imparts a couple of details to his writing which are lacking in most other such cases.

5. **Alexander Hume’s Of the Orthographie and Congruitie of the Britan Tongue**

These samples of the pseudo-Scots of English authors scarcely furnish evidence regarding actual Scots usages. However, they certainly demonstrate the fact that Scottish speech was recognised as differing, in specific and identifiable ways, from that of the English metropolis; and that the differences were sufficiently well understood to furnish dramatic capital: often, if not always, for English jokes at the expense of the Scots. More scholarly observations are useful in presenting these perceptions in somewhat more credible and more systematic form. Most of these are from later dates than the dramatic examples examined; but an example from the Jacobean period is Alexander Hume’s *Of the Orthographie and Congruitie of the Britan Tongue* (Wheatley 1865), written in or near 1617, which calls attention to some differences between the usages of the two kingdoms. His title is a reference to James VI’s assumed style “King of Great Britain” and his strongly-promoted, but unsuccessful, aim of uniting Scotland and England under a single government; and it is observable that he usually refers to
“the north” and “the south” – the former being “we” and the latter “they” – rather than to Scotland or England. His contrasting of how “we” and “they” pronounce the various sounds is often entertainingly loaded: the name of the letter A “the south sounds as beath thei and we sound it in bare, nudus; and we, as beath thei and we sound it in bar, obex”; but our practice is better because “their sound of it is not far unlyke the sheepes bae, quhilk the greek symbolizes be η not α, βη not βα”.

Hume’s observations on the contrasting Scots and English methods of pronouncing Latin, though interesting, are not to the present purpose, but clear statements regarding the contrasts between national usages in the contemporary vernacular also occur: Latin æ had a sound “sik as we pronounce in stean [i.e. stone], or the south in stain”; “a heal head, as we call it, quhilk the English cales a whole head”; “the frensh sound is neerest the voual sound as we pronunce it in mule and muse” (i.e. Scots retained a front rounded vowel, probably [ɔ] rather than [y], as could be heard in some Eastern and Southern dialects until within living memory); “knaledge with us, in the south knowledge” (here it is possible that he is referring to a purely orthographical distinction). An entertaining passage relates a dispute which he had with an English friend, arising from the fact that he (Hume) “denyed quho [who] to be spelled with a w, but with qu” on the grounds that “a labial letter can not symboliz a guttural syllab. But w is a labial letter, quho a guttural sound. And therfoer w can not symboliz quho, nor noe syllab of that nature”. A mutual acquaintance gave his arbitration: “the proposition, said he, I understand, the assumption is Scottish, and the conclusion false. Quherat al laughed, as if I had bene dryven from al replye, and I fretted to see a frivolouse jest goe for a solid ansuer”. The implication of this is that Scots still retained a strongly fricative [xw] in interrogatives and other words as the the reflex of OE hw; and Hume’s irritation might have been avoided if he had observed that in English it had by this time been weakened to [hw] or [ɔ]. He also lists a number of instances where the Scots and the English forms of Latin loan-words differ, the Scots always being closer to the form in the source language:

Lykwayes we sould keep the vouales of the original, quherin the north warres the south; from retineo, the north retine, the south retain; from foras, the north foran, the south forain; from regnum, the north regne, the south raigne; from cor, the north corage, the south courage; from devoro, the north devore, the south devour; from vox, the north voce, the south voice; from devoveo, the north devoute, the south devoute; from guerrum, the north were, the south war; from gigas, gigantis, the north gyant, the south giaunt; from mons, montis, the north mont, the south mount. Of this I cold reckon armies, but wil not presume to judge farther then the compass of my awn cap, for howbeit we keep nearar the original, yet al tongues have their idiom in borrowing from the latin, or other foran tongues.

Hume’s few hints demonstrate a clear awareness of the differences between Scots and English usages; and since his treatise is intended for school use and is aimed at
promoting uniformity in Latin as well as in the vernacular in the two kingdoms, it may be understood that his observations on Scots refer to educated usage. For him, Scots and English were in themselves respectable alternative forms of “the Britan tongue”, though the monarchial union of the two kingdoms had now made it desirable for the differences to be assimilated.18

6. Scots in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

The greater part of the seventeenth century, notoriously a fallow period in Scots letters, is also lacking in writings on the Scots language. By the early eighteenth, a new phase had begun in the social history of the language: the loss of Scotland’s independent parliament in 1707 was from one point of view a setting of the seal on the nadir to which the national life had fallen; but it also provided an impetus for a process which had already been marked by some straws in the wind: a deliberate revival of interest in Scotland’s literary and cultural achievement of the past with a view to restoring national pride and confidence. It was in this context that the first work appeared which, even though incidentally, constitutes a ground-breaking scholarly study of Scots: Thomas Ruddiman’s monumental 1710 edition of the Eneados, to which is appended an extensive set of “General Rules for Understanding the Language of Bishop Dowglas’s Translation of Virgil’s Aeneis”, and a glossary covering not only the vocabulary of the Eneados but “a great Number of Scottish Words, Phrases and Proverbs, which are not to be found in our Author”.19 This glossary has an importance extending well beyond its value as a guide to one of the richest and most extensive of Middle Scots texts: it is a landmark in the development of lexicography, giving as it does not only definitions (sometimes various possible definitions) and line references but, in many cases, etymological notes suggesting the derivation of the word and its kinship to existing words in other languages, cross-references to other scholarly works, and comments on the current use of the word: as an example:

Wyndil strayis, Scot. & Ang.Bor, windle-streas, Ang.Bor. also wringle streas; gramen, agrorum, venti spica, sic dicta quod spicam habeat quovis ventulo facile mobilem. Skin.20 gramen oristatum, J. Bauhini, al. pratense cristatum, seu gramen

18. Cf. Francis Bacon’s view that the peaceful union of the two kingdoms “is like to bring forth the enriching of one language, by compounding and taking in the proper and significant words of either tongue, rather than a continuance of two languages”.

19. On this see further Aitken (1989).

20. That is, Stephen Skinner’s Etymologicon Linguae Anglicanae, London 1671, one of Ruddiman’s frequently-cited authorities.
spica oristata laeve, Smooth crested grass: In pratis & pascuisubique circa Solstition
aestivum floret. Ray. These Authors call them also bents or bent-grass. But S. by
bent we commonly understand, a kind of grass that grows in sandy ground on the
Sea shore, quite different from Windle-streas, and consequently from what the
English call Bents.

In the Preface, the editor notes that “There are many Words, which are to this day
used in some parts of Scotland by the common people, and therefore we have dis-
tinguished them from the rest [i.e. in the glossary] by a Capital S subjoined to them.
[...] [A]ny that is not wholly a stranger to the Scottish Dialect must acknowledge, that
there are in it very many Words and Phrases most Significant and Emphatical; which
makes it hard, and almost impossible, to find English Words fit to express them in their
full Force and genuine Meaning: and therefore in the Explication we were often con-
strained to make use of Circumlocutions, or such English Terms as we thought came
nearest to them in their Signification.”

The “General Rules” (forty-three in number) explain specific points of orthog-
raphy, grammar or prosody in Douglas’s language; and in several cases reference is
made to the survival of the feature in question in contemporary Scots: “Two Negatives
do not make an Affirmative, but deny more strongly, as generally in the Greek, French,
Saxon, and frequently among the Vulgar in Scotland at this day.” Other features thus
identified as characteristic of the Scots of Ruddiman’s own time are the use of for to
rather than simply to with infinitives, the -s ending in parts of the verb other than the
third singular, the absence of the -ed ending in the past participles of Latin-derived
verbs in -ate (separate, predestinate, narrate), the use of an alveolar rather than a velar
nasal in the present participle and verbal noun ending, the presence of k in Scots words
where English has ch or tch (pik, thak, steik, reik, streik, nokkis, sik, eik, beseik, for pitch,
thatch, stitch, reach, stretch, notches, such, each, beseech), the use of a where English has
o: here he promiscuously lists together words in which the orthographical correspon-
dence results from a variety of unrelated phonological developments (ald, cald, aik,
ait, wame, blaw, lang, snau, saul, hame corresponding to old, cold, oak, oat, womb (in
Scots the word generally means “stomach”), blow, long, snow, soul, home), and “a great
number of Preterits of Verbs, most of which continue among the Vulgar of Scotland to
this day, which are not used in England, such as beuk, clam, keist, lap, ran, shape, share,
slaid, swang, swate, wosche, begoude, wrang, &c. for did bake, did climb, cast, leap, run,
shape, shear, slide, swing, sweat, wash, begin, wring.”

6.1 Allan Ramsay’s The Ever Green

The success of Ruddiman and others in reviving interest in earlier Scottish literature
prompted a new movement, known as the Vernacular Revival, in the recovery of
Scots as a vehicle for contemporary poetry. The central figure in this movement was
Allan Ramsay; and his observations on Scots are of great interest in illuminating the state of the language. His remarks on prevailing social attitudes show his abounding contempt for the fashion of affecting to despise it: his preface to The Ever Green (“A collection of Scots Poems wrote by the ingenious before 1600”) includes the following much-quoted passage:

There is nothing can be heard more silly than one's expressing his ignorance of his native language; yet such there are, who can vaunt of acquiring a tolerable perfection in the French or Italian tongues, if they have been a Fortnight in Paris or a Month in Rome; But shew them the most elegant thoughts in a Scots Dress, they as disdainfully as stupidly condemn it as barbarous.

Ramsay’s first collection of his own poems (1721) includes a glossary, which is introduced by “Some general Rules shewing wherein many Southern and Northern Words are originally the same, having only a Letter changed for another, or sometimes one taken away or added”. His categorisation of the differences between cognate words in the Scots and the English of his own time appears to be based, in his own perception at any rate, simplistically on orthographic features; yet this list, though naturally uninformed (if not especially so by the standards of the time) regarding historical change and the relationship of phonology to orthography, is a much more thorough attempt than Ruddiman had made to devise a regular categorisation of the divergences between Scots and English. His lists begin with two sets of words illustrating l-vocalisation: the difference between the two sets is that in the first the l is simply dropped from spelling as from pronunciation (a, ba, ca … fou, pou, woo corresponding to all, ball, call … full, pull, wool) and in the second an orthographic u or w indicates the pronunciation (faut, fause, maut; bowt, gowd, how, stown; bouk corresponding to fault, false, malt, bolt, gold, hole or hollow, stolen, bulk). This list also gives caff and haff corresponding to calf and half, though the [l] had of course long disappeared from the Southern English pronunciations of those words. Ramsay’s orthography for the Scots cognates suggests that he pronounced them with [a], distinct from both English [æ] and the [ɒ] which (it appears from his spelling) he used in faut, fause, fawn (fallen). Most modern dialects have either [a] or [ɒ] in all those words. His next list is headed “An o, before ld. changes to an a. or au”: examples are auld, bauld, cauld, fauld, hald or had, sald, tald, wad (the last corresponding to would). The choice between a and au is difficult to explain: except for wad, which is not an illustration of the same correspondence (the absence in Scots of the Southern raising of the vowel before the sequence -ld: in would the [l] had long since been lost in English), those words again have the same sequence, [ald] or [ʊld] depending on regional dialect, in all the examples.

A much longer list follows, containing words in which “The o, oe or ow is changed to a, ae, aw or ai”. It is in this section that Ramsay’s (for his time) unsurprising failure to distinguish phonological from orthographical issues emerges most clearly: like
Ruddiman, he classes together words showing unrelated phonological developments. Several illustrate the long-term results of the rounding of OE long ə in Southern but not Northern dialects, a distinction already operative by the ME period: aith, alane, baith, hame, mair, saip, stane for oath, alone, both, home, more, soap, stone; others show the different developments of the OE sequence aw: awn, blaw, craw, slaw, snaw for own, blow, crow, slow, snow; and a third set arises from the much later change by which short ə was lowered to a: a change for which there is evidence in southern as well as northern dialects, though it never became part of the metropolitan standard: aff, aften, amang, drap, saft, sang.

Finally, a fifth section demonstrates that “The o. or u. is frequently changed into i”. Here too, an orthographic correspondence is used as the basis of the classification in disregard (through natural ignorance) of the fact that the phonological relationships between the words in the pairs have various historical sources; anither, brither, mither and fit (foot) illustrating the fronting and subsequent shortening of the OE long ə, and hinny (honey), nits, rin and sin a later change differentiating the reflexes of the OE short ə. Nonetheless, Ramsay’s listing has the landmark status of an early attempt to arrange the shibboleths of Scots as contrasted with English pronunciation in a systematic order; and defective as it is by the obviously inapplicable standards of recent scholarship, it is in its own terms a careful and revealing work.

Since The Ever Green (1724) is not a collection of original but of historical poems, the linguistic commentary which Ramsay provides is accordingly different in focus. In an extended footnote to the first poem in the collection, Christ’s Kirk on the Green (for which his source is the Bannatyne Manuscript of 1567), he notes that “we strictly observe the old orthography” (though this is not quite invariably true), and refers to several correspondences between the sixteenth-century spellings of his text and those of his own time. This, he notes, refers to “words that have nothing else of the Antique, or difference from the English: But shall refer you to the Glossary at the end of the second Vol. for the explanation of all that kind in particular, and of those that are more peculiar to this Nation.” His extensive glossary in fact includes many Scots words which have phonological cognates in English, but by far the greater number are words “peculiar to this Nation” in the sense that they are etymologically different from their nearest English translation equivalents. Ramsay here calls attention to the status of Scots and English as differing from each other both by divergent phonological developments and by mutually independent growth of the vocabulary.

For his orthographic comparisons the assumed norm is English, not any established orthography for Scots as used in 1724; he rarely comments on pronunciation. The spelling features which he cites include grene, sene, clene; danss, fenss, glanss; dicht, licht, richt; gluvis, lufe, haif; shune, mune, sune; weil, deid, heid; sae, wae, mae, nane, wald (here too, the orthographic correspondence between a in the Scots words and o in their English cognates has led him to class together words where both the historical origins
of the correspondence and the sound values of the letters are mutually distinct), nyss, wyss, byt (“Our not sounding the i as the English do, accounts very well for our Elders spelling all words with a y of such a sound”; he does not explain the difference between the Scottish and the English sound-values of i); sang, lang, band; tuke, blude, gude; quhyle, quhat, quho (“The qu is always used for the German w, when a h immediately follows”); auld, bauld; fader, bruder, moder; zellow, zaip, zung (he prints the yogh of his ms. source as z: whether he understood its sound value is impossible to ascertain); cum, sum. He also calls attention to a few grammatical features previously mentioned by Ruddiman: the present participle ending -and, and the irregular preterites begoud, beuk, clam, keist (from begin, bake, climb, cast: “Our old Authors have a great many of such preterites of Verbs, most of which continue amongst us still”).

As the Vernacular Revival progressed, and as the national self-confidence was restored by the enormous cultural and intellectual achievements of the Enlightenment, perceptions of the status of Scots became increasingly confused. The fashionable disdain for it already castigated by Ramsay became, if anything, still more marked; yet the quality and popularity of recent poetry in the language, culminating of course with Burns, not only underpinned its survival as a spoken vernacular but encouraged the continuing attention to it by scholars and literati. The lists of “Scotticisms” compiled by David Hume, Alexander Beattie, John Sinclair and others provide much information on contemporary usages; as in a different way does the fact that the items on those lists were specifically presented as usages to avoid.21

6.2 James Elphinstone’s Propriety Ascertained in her Picture

The perception, or recognition, of Scots as a semi-autonomous dialect, however, had unmistakably taken root with some scholars. This is the assumption underlying one of the most detailed works on the subject, the second volume of James Elphinstone’s Propriety Ascertained in her Picture (1787), an extensive discourse on English orthography.22 The “Analysis of the Scottish Dialect” which forms the second volume gives at first sight an almost chaotic impression, not mitigated by Elphinstone’s idiosyncratic spellings:

So mutually ar dhe vowels, az wel az consonants, allied; som, douthes, more closely dhan oddhers; dhat, more or less accountabel, iz almoast evvery interchainge: particullarly, dhat ov a and e, e and i, o and o: no wonder if ov o direct and depressive (o and oo), ov oo and ou; i, oi, and ei; which last, dho not Inglish, waz a Gaulic and Greek dipthong. Hence hear we, in colloquial Scotch, mare uttered mere, blaze bleze, complain compleen, entertain enterteen: widh weigh wee, weight,
The distinctiveness of Scots

litterally wacht; figuratively wyte, raddher Gaulicly weit, in the load ov blame: so receiv resave, or Frenchly reçéve, reçriev reprise, reçriev retrace; ly lee, child, familiarly chiel (or chiell) in dhe figurative sense ov fellow; slow slaw, sloe slae; more mare, home hame; cave cove, rave rove, lake, loch, or lough; az low and dough (truly dow) wer Scottishly laigh and daigh. So board boord, o’r our, loose louse, and louse loose; brew brow, and brow broo, like dhou dhooh, or foul and fowl, fool: also fire, foir, or (Welchly feir. By such chainges hav we seen dhe Inglish straw become strew, dhen strow; chew (Scottishly chow widh dhe dipthong) now chaw; shew and sew, now show and sow, (widh dhe true vowel and servile) fearless ov coincidence. So became dhe annimal, wonce ew, yoe, or yow widh no dipthong. Not onely hav oo, and ew, prooved dhye Scottish ou. Au or aw, iz dhe Scotch, az dhe German dipthong: witnes thwaw or author, emitted outhor and thow. Nay hope may be herd houp, even leap loup; az, on dhe oddher hand, dhe brow ov a hil iz a brae, and spout makes dhe Scottish spate, swel or inundacion. Oil haz also overflowed into’oul; as edher, not only into’adher (and idher), but even into’oudher.

(Most of this is in fact accurate as far as the pronunciation alone is concerned: mare rhymes with dear in the final couplet of Tam o’ Shanter and bleeze is a regular spelling; compleen and enterteen are historical Middle Scots forms which survived into the eighteenth century, and so on. His assumption that the Scots and English words with contrasting pronunciations are in fact forms of the same word is sometimes mistaken: wyte (blame) is not related to weight, spate to spout nor cove and rove to cave and rave (unfortunately, in the latter case, for Elphinstone’s intended contrast with the Scots [e] – English [o] correspondence in hame – home, mair – more!); lowp and brae are Norse loan-words (though ultimately from the same roots as leap and brow) and loch, of course, from Gaelic; but the usages and pronunciations are genuine). The 218 pages of his “Analysis of the Scottish Dialect” cover many aspects of the subject under headings referring to features of vowel and consonant phonology, accentuation, grammar, “Inglish words misapplied” (“Dhe Scottish dialect uses abbacy for abbey, college for university, clas for scool or scool-room, humanity for Lattin, land for tennement, lodging for mansion-house, loft for gallery, roof for ceiling, sole for sil, chimney for grate or stove…”), “Peculiarity ov Phraze or Circumstance” (“Dhe bairns hav gotten dhe play, dhe children hav got a holiday … He gave me a hat: he made me a bow”) and so on. Each section contains an abundance of examples; but the sheer quantity of the material and the complete lack of organisation within each section makes for a daunting work, a full critical account of which would require a book-length study. Of interest for our present purpose, however, is Elphinstone’s claim in his final pages that since Scots is now “braught into’ a system, she [Scotland] now can (hwat she never cood before) dis-criminate her own from dhe Inglish diccion; az dhe Poartugueze or Catalan, from dhe Castillian; dhat so dhe Scotch may be regularilly and effectually trezzured, not onely widh dhe three grait dialects ov Spain, but widh dhe Provençal and dhe French; widh
dhe Lattin, dhe Greek and dhe Gaulic [.]” Scots, that is, should and now can claim the status of a distinct dialect, systematically described (though with reference to its deviations from the assumed norm of English) as other languages and dialects are.

6.3 Alexander Geddes’ *Dissertation on the Scoto-Saxon Dialect*

A few years later, Alexander Geddes likewise argued for a more respectful rating of Scots in its relationship to English. In his well-known *Dissertation on the Scoto-Saxon Dialect* (1792), Geddes perceptively identified a fundamental misconception which has affected writers of Scots, with results readily visible especially in the field of poetry, from the Vernacular Revival to the present. Criticising recent writers (“Allan Ramsay not excepted”) for failing to distinguish authentic Scots from vulgarisms, he argues “To write Scottish poetry, (for prose has seldom been attempted), nothing more was deemed necessary than to interlard the composition with a number of low words and trite proverbial phrases, in common use among the illiterate; and the more anomalous and further removed from polite usage those words and phrases were, so much the more apposite and eligible they were accounted. It was enough that they were not found in an English lexicon to give them a preference in the Scottish glossary; nor was it ever once considered, that all words truly Anglo-Saxon were as truly Scoto-Saxon words; and that every exotic term which the English have borrowed from other languages, the Scots had an equal right to appropriate.” That is, the assumption that Scots consists only of the words which are not part of the standard English vocabulary is a fallacy: as it assuredly is. Geddes here shows a clear awareness of the true historic relationship between Scots and English: speech forms with a common origin and common history, sharing not only most of the native vocabulary but a large number of borrowings, many made before the two dialects had diverged to any major extent. His term “Scoto-Saxon”, a parallel to “Anglo-Saxon”, is patently chosen to illustrate this perception of the two as existing on an equal footing as mutually independent developments from a common source.

He proceeds to argue that another symptom of the debased status of Scots in recent times has been the absence of any systematically devised or generally agreed orthography or grammar for the language. He ruefully concedes that it is hardly worth attempting to rectify this deficiency now, since “Few persons of genius or learning will be inclined to write in the Scottish dialect; and if any were inclined, they could not look for encouragement or imitators.” The sad state of Scots as it is in reality he contrasts with a hypothetical state which might have prevailed in a different world: “if the Scots remaining a separate nation, with a King and court residing among them, had continued to improve and embellish their own dialect, instead of servilely aping the English, they would at present be possessed of a language in many points superior to the English.” Scots, that is, has been spoiled by two conflicting developments: on
the one hand, the characteristics which made it distinctive in earlier times have been obscured or lost by a wilful assimilation to the norms of metropolitan English; on the other, an ill-considered attempt to counter this has taken the form of an unregulated importation, not of words and phrases characteristic of the language in its years of uninterrupted independent development, but merely (or at least predominantly) of illiterate and vulgar expressions.

Though Scots has lost the opportunity to outstrip English in development, Geddes proceeds to argue, even in its present debased state it compares favourably in several respects to the Southern dialect. A number of features make its pronunciation more melodious. “In the Scoto-Saxon dialect, there are fewer hissing sounds. The sh rarely occurs, its place being generally supplied by s single, as sal, bus, polis, peris, punis, diminis, preadmonis… in like manner is the s itself, whether single or double, excluded from the Scots, by a different and often more regular derivation of verbs from the Latin … expreme, depreme, compreme, expone, depone, compone.” The reasons for this correspondence are various: the verbs in the last-mentioned group, for example, illustrate a general tendency in Scots for Latin-derived verbs to take their forms from the present stem as contrasted with the derivation of corresponding words in English from the supine. Scots also simplifies consonant clusters to a greater degree than English: neglek, sel’, twel, precink, decerp, temp, kil [kiln]; perfet and perfyt [these are presumably mere spelling variants], solen [solemn: his evident failure to realise that English no more than Scots had a final consonant cluster in this word is surprising], stown [stolen].

Geddes cites several other characteristic features of Scots which, he claims, make it more harmonious than English. These include the use of “softer” sounds in descryv, luf, haif, optene [obtain]; the frequent metathesis of r in e.g. thrid, thrist, drit, wrat [rat for “wart” is still heard in southern Scots dialects], and the use of d for th (as he explains this, “they retained the ancient Saxon and Teutonic sound and symbol d, which the English have changed into th”, but this is true only in some cases) in fader, moder, broder, hidder, quhidder [whither]. The last of these is not characteristic of all Scots dialects, and Geddes’s observation is probably based on that of the North-East. In vowels as well as consonants, he finds, Scots is more agreeable than English: one example is the “open or broad a … one of the most harmonious vocal sounds” where English has “open short a” (grass, hand, man, mass) or “long slender a” (same, dame, spake, awake, brake, take, nation, consideration): if this is understood to mean that the Scots [a] has a much more retracted articulation than the [æ] of metropolitan English and not to imply a lengthened sound like modern RP [α:], then his observation is correct. He also mentions with approval the retention of “Italian i” in admire, retire, live, survive, require: this is no doubt the explanation for Ramsay’s reference to a difference between the Scots and the English sound-values of i; and confirms a feature which, except for live, still pronounced with [i] by many Scots speakers, is now almost entirely obsolete. One feature of Scots, the “guttural ch”, he admits “must appear highly
disagreeable to an English, French or Italian ear”; yet this unfortunate idiosyncrasy of Scots might be pressed into service in poetry for its onomatopoeic value.

The obvious and entirely forgivable partisan stance of Geddes’ *Dissertation*, and the value judgements on the aesthetic qualities of vowels and consonants (which, amusing as they may seem to modern scholars, lay-people have certainly not outgrown), should not obscure the fact that this is a work of serious scholarship, and an important source of information on the language as Geddes knew it. His transcriptions of two Scots poems (translations from Virgil and Theocritus, in respectively the Edinburgh and the Buchan dialects), using an invented phonetic spelling, are not always possible to interpret with certainty; but serve for the most part to give a remarkably clear impression of what must have been his contemporary pronunciation (McClure 2002: 22–27).

HUYL wè fre nàt’ fèlds an’ dèrest hèm
Ar fors’l to flè in forran klyms to rèm;
Thù raxt at èz, aniou the shàdan bús
O that brad bèch, meist wù the sylvan múș
An’ tèch the wùds, responsif to thy leis
To ekho bak fâr Amarillis’ preis.

... 

A God he was, my frènd – At lèst to mè
The god-lyk mán a god sál ivir bè,
Hua gà’ this invy’d blis: hens aft, as dû,
My fàttist lám’s his áltar sál imbû.
He bàd my bèvs, as huylom frè to fèd
Mè as y list, to tûn my rustik rèd.

Geddes’ account of his phonetic orthography suggests the following interpretations: $a = [a]$; $á = [\alpha]$; $â = [\alpha:]$; $e = [\varepsilon]$; $é = $ a higher $[\varepsilon]$-like vowel (the first is as in *element*, the second as in *send*: “the difference is much more apparent in Scots” (the raising effect of the following nasal is indeed audible in some dialects: in the North-East the vowel in the historic sequence $[\varepsilon n]$ has become $[i]$), $ê = [i]$, $ei$ (his description “*ei* German and Italian, nearly English *ay*” is incomprehensible; but the contexts in which he uses the digraph suggest that he means an $[\varepsilon]$ lengthened by a following voiced fricative or a morpheme boundary), $i = [i]$, $i = [i]$, $iou$ “a sound peculiar to the Scots”: he appears to mean $[jau]$, and his example in this passage *aniou* meaning “under” is a rarely-attested North-Eastern form; $o = [\nu]$, $ð = [o]$; $u = [\lambda]$, $û = [u]$, $û = [ju]$, $y = [\lambda i]$ or $[ae]$. The suggestion that *hame* and *raim* (home, roam) are pronounced with $[i]$ instead of the expected $[e]$ is peculiar: no other source suggests this, nor is such a pronunciation attested in modern speech. Geddes’ transcription is not free of demonstrable misprints, but other instances of this particular oddity later in the passage (e.g. *Rèm* for “Rome” more than once) show that this is intentional.
Apart from this, most of the pronunciations suggested by his phonetic orthography are perfectly credible.

7. Conclusion

What thus emerges, not only from the study of Scots itself in the various stages of its historical development but from that of the changing perceptions of it by observers and the features on which those observers have chosen to focus, is that Scots has never, strictly speaking, exhibited complete autonomy in relation to metropolitan English: it is hard even to avoid the conclusion that some degree of special pleading must be present in any attempt to argue that there was ever a realistic chance of its achieving this. On the other hand, it is unequivocally true that a highly distinctive speech form (or rather, set of speech forms) has been clearly recognised since the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as belonging to Scotland and forming an integral part of the nation’s cultural identity, as perceived by itself and others. That, surely, is of value.

References


Irish English in early modern drama

The birth of a linguistic stereotype

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A number of dramatic texts are scrutinised here for the linguistic analysis of Irish English in the early modern period. A broad range of different plays by authors from the late sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries are examined to determine if the non-standard spellings contained in these texts reflect genuine features of spoken Irish English at the time of writing. The analysis shows that some of the features which the textual record reveals have disappeared entirely while others have been confined to specific varieties in certain phonotactic environments while yet others persist in general Irish English today. The texts considered are furthermore useful when determining the earliest attestations for known features of Irish English.

1. Introduction

At the very end of the sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth centuries, English authors began to produce dramas which contained portrayals of non-English individuals. These portrayals are generally negative, satirising individuals who were regarded as less cultivated than the English of the time with whom they were implicitly contrasted. Such writing is connected in no small part to Elizabethan and Jacobean notions of the value of English culture and the lower cultural status attached to those outside England. Elizabethan satire also rests on the notion of ‘Four Nations’ – England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland – and in particular uses characters from Scotland and Ireland in order to provide comic relief within English plays. Among the earliest writers to do this is Shakespeare in Henry V. In this play he created four characters, officers in the king’s army, and contrasted their personalities and speech in the Four Nations scene. There are a number of features which can be identified in the speech of Captain Macmorris (the Irishman in this scene) and which re-occur in later portrayals of the Irish well into the later modern period (see remarks in 2 below).

Parodies of non-English are found in dramas both on the level of contents and of language. Certain obvious features which were putatively typical of the non-English
group being parodied were availed of to characterise their speech. This practice led to
the birth of a linguistic stereotype which is central to the history of Irish English.

For the present chapter the features used by English drama writers to satirise the
Irish will be examined in detail. The discussion will also be put in the broader context
of how non-standard language is represented in writing (Taaavitsainen & Nevanlinna
2000), i.e. it will look at how a tradition of portraying non-standard English became
established in the seventeenth century. There is a considerable body of literature which
focuses on this general topic. There are early treatments, above all Eckhardt (1910–11),
Lawrence (1912), Duggan (1969 [1937]) and Bartley (1954) with Bliss (1979) a more
recent study which forms a bridge in the Irish context between scholars working in the
first half of the twentieth century and those active at present. Blake (1981) is a similar
study of some decades ago which looks at the broad English context, while Taavits-
sainen, Melchers and Pahta (eds, 2000) is a wide-ranging examination of the practice
of representing non-standard English in literature in general and is the most recent
book-length study of this subject.

1.1 The rise of the stage Irishman

When parliamentary rule in the middle of the seventeenth century ended the English
king, Charles II, was restored to the English throne (1660). Cultural life in England
after the return of Charles experienced a re-awakening, something which is clearly
seen in the re-opening of the theatres in England. It led to a blossoming of drama,
particularly comedies, and many of these had Irish characters in them. A type of dra-
matic character arose which later became known as the stage Irishman. To ensure that
the Irish nature of this character was clearly recognised on the stage, English authors
attempted to represent the speech of the Irish figures in their dramas.¹

The figure of the stage Irishman (Duggan 1969 [1937]) has a long pedigree in
English drama and in fact somewhat predates the Restoration period in England. The
stereotypical picture of him is as an excitable, eloquent and pugnacious individual,
with a fair portion of national pride. These are features which literary critics such as
Kiberd (1980) see as consistent with the subsequent portrayals of the stage Irishman.

1. Given the number of Irish figures who appear in English plays from the Restoration
period onwards, there has been no shortage of manuals in which prominent features of Irish
English are described, e.g. Blunt (1967). Blunt has a chapter on 'Irish' (1967: 75–90) in which
he gives a series of guidelines to those prospective actors unfamiliar with an Irish accent of
English. Other works which contain dialect descriptions for actors are Molin (1984) and Wise
(1957). In such cases phonetic transcription is rare, rather some system based on English
orthography is used.
His function as a foil within English literature is of significance and continued through the centuries, see Kosok (1990: 61–70) and the various references in Morash (2002). In the plays considered below, which have a mixture of Irish and English characters, the latter comment on the eccentricity of the former. For instance, in Captain O’Blunder the English sergeant comments on O’Blunder’s lack of logical thinking as when he suggests shooting the enemy and then flogging him. This illogicality is a feature of the so-called ‘Irish bull’, a short anecdote which satirises the putatively contradictory nature of Irish thinking (Edgeworth 1802).

1.2 The limits of reconstruction via satire

Documents illustrating Irish English from the early modern period fall into two distinct types, both of which are available from the seventeenth through to the nineteenth century.

(1) a. More or less genuine representations of Irish English by native Irish, frequently anonymous writers.
   b. Stretches of texts by English writers where the non-native perception of Irish English is portrayed.

Such texts can serve as general guidelines for the more salient features of Irish English (see Sullivan 1976, 1980 who supports this view). In essence, the difficulty is that one must rely on eye dialect. The orthography of English is not necessarily suitable for rendering the idiosyncrasies of Irish English and indeed one cannot assume that a non-native speaker’s attempt at caricaturing Irish English will be satisfying and accurate, though it may well give indications of what features of a dialect were salient to non-native ears, so to speak.

Furthermore, phonetic details cannot be indicated by spelling and so these will not be recoverable via the textual record. For example, the distinction between dental and alveolar stops, an essential one for varieties of Irish English to this day, cannot be represented with the orthography of English, though the use of a stop rather than a fricative can be, and was, indicated in spelling.

2. The late sixteenth century

Shakespeare’s historical play *Henry V* dates to 1599 and was printed in the 1620s. In the well-known Four Nations scene Shakespeare contrasts the manners and speech of a representative of each nation in the British Isles, i.e. England, Wales, Scotland and
Ireland. The Irishman is Captain Macmorris who speaks on four occasions: what he says totals 204 words in all:

Macmorris. By Chrish Law tish ill done: the Worke ish giue ouer, the Trompet sound the Retreat. By my Hand I sweare, and my fathers Soule, the Worke ish ill done: it ish giue ouer: I would haue blowed vp the Towne, so Chrish saue me law, in an houre. O tish ill done, tish ill done: by my Hand tish ill done.

Macmorris. It is no time to discourse, so Chrish saue me: the day is hot, and the Weather, and the Warres, and the King, and the Dukes: it is no time to discourse, the Town is beseech’d: and the Trumpet call vs to the breech, and we talke, and be Chrish do nothing, tis shame for vs all: so God sa’me tis shame to stand still, it is shame by my hand: and there is Throats to be cut, and Workes to be done, and there ish nothing done, so Christ sa’me law.

Macmorris. Of my Nation? What ish my Nation? Ish a Villaine, and a Basterd, and a Knaue, and a Rascall. What ish my Nation?

Macmorris. I doe not know you so good a man as my selfe: so Chrish saue me, I will cut off your Head.

Table 1. Linguistic features of the Four Nations scene (Henry V)

1. Replacement of /s/ by /∫/, e.g. tish ‘it’s’, ish ‘is’, Chrish ‘Christ’.
2. Possibly [β] for /v/, e.g. giue ‘give’, saue ‘save’, haue ‘have’. This interpretation would seem justified given that elsewhere in Henry V Shakespeare writes give, have, etc.
3. Devoicing of /dʒ/, e.g. beseech’d ‘besieged’.
4. Singular verb form despite plural subject with existential there, e.g. …there is Throats to be cut…

Feature (1) is a consistent feature of Irish English in all literary representations and remained typical into the twentieth century. However, by the modern period the shift of /s/ to /∫/ was confined to a pre-consonantal environment in syllable codas, e.g. west [wε∫t], best [be∫t].

Feature (2) is also a genuine feature of Irish English through its entire history (on its occurrence in Irish English in the fourteenth century, see Hickey 1993 and 2007, Section 2.3). It rests on the fact that speakers of Irish frequently use bilabials realisations of /f/ [φ] and /v/ [β], these then being transferred to their pronunciation of English. In present-day Irish these realisations are typical of western and northern pronunciations and they probably had a greater geographical scope in previous centuries. The variation in the realisation of Irish /f/ and /v/ can be seen in the anglicisations of Irish names, e.g. Ó Faoláin which has been rendered as both Pheelan with /f/ and Wheelan with /v/.

In the reverse direction one has Irish /f/ as the equivalent to English /f/ in loanwords like faoitin from whiting. Given the bilabial and voiceless nature of Irish /f/ one finds ⟨f⟩ written for ⟨wh⟩ in many early modern texts, e.g. fat for what.
Feature (3) is attested in many early modern texts though it is not typical of modern Irish English. However, in contact Irish English it is found given that Irish has no voiced sibilant (/z/ and /ʒ/ do not occur in the language). Hence voiced fricatives which contain /ʒ/ were devoiced. This applied to loanwords from Anglo-Norman/English into Irish (which also show metathesis), e.g. *page* [-dʒ-] > *páiste* [p̥aːʃt̥e] ‘child’; *college* [-dʒ-] > *colaiste* [k̥ol̥̊aːʃt̥e] ‘college’.

Feature (4) is also documented throughout the entire history of Irish English and is found in all vernacular varieties of Irish English today. Generally, this phenomenon is known as the Northern Subject Rule (Ihalainen 1994), though it has been shown to occur in various parts of Britain. The original English input to Ireland was of a western or south-western nature so that the appearance of singular verb concord with plural subjects supports the view that this is by no means an exclusively northern feature in England.

There are other features of Irish English which are not shown by Shakespeare but indicated by his near contemporary Ben Jonson (see below) such as unshifted Middle English /i:/ and /u:/ which in London at around 1600 would have already been diphthongised to /æi/ and /æu/ if not /æi/ and /æu/ respectively.

The anonymous play *Captain Thomas Stukeley* is available in a single edition from the year 1605 and probably dates from 1596. It contains one scene in Irish English, the seventh scene, which by some curious twist is present in two consecutive versions in the extant edition. The first version is in blank verse, like the remainder of the play, and the second is in prose. Bliss (1979: 32f.) supports the view that the Irish English scene is not by the author of the rest of the play and attributes a good knowledge of Irish affairs to its original composer. There are discussions of this play in older literature, notably Eckhardt (1910–1), Duggan (1937: 51–57) and Bartley (1954: 14–16). Some of this literature contains linguistic discussion, for instance when Eckhardt (1910–1: 38–41) deals with phonetic peculiarities of Irish English.

**Table 2. Linguistic features of Captain Thomas Stukeley**

1. (i) Replacement of /s/ by /ʃ/, e.g. *Cresh blesh* vs ‘Christ bless us’, *ish* ‘is’, *tish* ‘it is’, *Secretary* ‘secretary’, (ii) replacement of /ʃ/ by /s/, e.g. *sall* ‘shall’.
2. (i) Use of [f] for wh- [ʍ], e.g. *feete* ‘white’, *fate* ‘what’, *fan* ‘when’; (ii) Use of [v] for /w/, *valles* ‘walls’, *vater* ‘water’, (iii) Possibly [β] for /v/, e.g. *giue* ‘give’, *euen* ‘even’.
4. Unshifted Middle English /u:/, e.g. *toone* ‘town’, *prood* ‘proud’, *aboote* ‘about’.
5. Unshifted Middle English /i:/, e.g. *feete* ‘white’, *dree* ‘dry’, *lee* ‘lie’.
6. Lowering of /ər/ to /əɾ/, e.g. *ovare* ‘over’.

Feature (1) shows replacement in both directions in this document. /ʃ/ by /s/ is not found in the Four Nations scene but it is attested in the early fourteenth-century *Kildare Poems* (Hickey 1993).
Feature (2) shows additional complexities with /w/ being substituted by [v], probably due to the merging of [v] and [w] under [β]. The variation among labial fricatives both in early Irish English (again in the Kildare Poems) and in Anglo-Norman/English loanwords into Irish is considerable. In the latter one finds the substitution of /b/ for /w/, e.g. *balla* ‘wall’, probably because the form [wal] was regarded by the Irish as showing lenition (a change of stop to fricative) and was ‘reversed’ on borrowing, yielding initial /b/- in Irish.

Feature (3) is again known from the late medieval period and is characteristic of vernacular forms of Irish English to this day. The spelling used to indicate this stopping is generally *t* for voiceless *th* /θ/ and *d* for voiced *th* /ð/. This feature is among the most salient in Irish English and has been repeatedly indicated in stage-Irish portrayals in early modern and late modern literature.

Features (4) and (5) show that the English long vowel shift (the ‘Great Vowel Shift’, Pyles & Algeo 1993 [1964]: 170–3) was not found in varieties of Irish English. Because of this the vowels written as ⟨a, i, u⟩ were pronounced as /a, i, u/. Evidence of this can also be found in English loanwords in Irish, e.g. *bácus* /baːkuːs/ ‘bakehouse’ and *slísín* /sliːʃiːn/ ‘little slice, rasher’ which show unshifted /a, i, u/. In general this vowel shift was slow to be implemented in Ireland: /a/, /i/ and /u/ were recorded in the FACE, PRICE and MOUTH lexical sets respectively (Wells 1982) until the early eighteenth century. Unraised long *E* is also part of the English long vowel shift: it stems from Middle English /ε:/ (the vowel in *meat* /mε:t/ and by extension the vowel in *meet* /meːt/ with which it later merged). Long *E* (either from /ɛ/ or /e/) was not raised to /i/ in Ireland and nineteenth-century, supraregional Irish English (Hickey forthcoming) adopted an /i/ pronunciation in line with mainstream British English.

Feature (6) shows a lowering of /e/ to /a/ before /r/. This is the same feature as found in *barn, dark, parson*, and county names like *Derbyshire, Berkshire, Hertfordshire*, etc. in British English. It had a much wider range in Irish English, either due to its quantitative representation in input varieties or to an extension of the /er/ > /ar/ shift within Ireland. The feature is very widespread in texts representing Irish English up to the late nineteenth century after which it disappears. It is not found in present-day spoken Irish English anymore. In writing the shift is indicated by ⟨ar⟩, e.g. *sarve* ‘serve’ *sarch* ‘search’. Because the form *sarve* is so frequent in the textual record, the shift is termed SERVE-lowering in the present chapter.

3. The seventeenth century

The early seventeenth century marked the appearance of *The Irish Masque at Court* (1616) by Ben Jonson (1572–1637) which illustrates the satirical portrayal of Irish
characters by an English author. This is a drama piece, some six pages long, in which four Irish characters – Dennish, Donnell, Dermock and Patrick – are made fun of by Jonson.

Table 3. Linguistic features of *The Irish Masque at Court*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>(i) Use of ph- [f] for wh- [w], e.g. phair ‘where’, phich ‘which’; (ii) ph- [f] for w- [w], e.g. phit ‘with’; (iii) Use of [v] for /wl/, vilt ‘wilt’, vit ‘with’, vay ‘way’, vsrsh ‘worst’; (iv) Possibly [β] for /v/, e.g. sheruice ‘service’, fiue ‘five’, giue ‘give’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Unshifted Middle English /i:/, e.g. creesh ‘Christ’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Unshifted Middle English /e:/, e.g. hee ‘he’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Low vowel retraction and raising, e.g. daunsh ‘dance’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Lowering of /er/ to /ar/, e.g. var ‘where’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>(i) Final devoicing, e.g. got ‘god’, gotsh ‘god’s’, ant ‘and’, heet ‘heed’, (ii) Sibilant devoicing, e.g. doshen ‘dozen’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feature (1) shows the unconditioned realisation of /s/ as /∫/. It occurs word-finally, prepausally and before a stop, and also initially before a vowel and before a stop.

Feature (2) shows a similar degree of variation to that in *Captain Thomas Stukeley*. Jonson writes ph-, presumably to indicate a sound different from English /f/. This would suggest the bilabial voiceless fricative [φ].

Features (4) and (5) suggest that the English long vowel shift had not taken place, e.g. chreesh ‘Christ’ points to Middle English /i:/ and the spelling hee for ‘he’ would seem to imply /he:/ with Middle English /e:/, however, the dangers of putting too much store by English representations of Irish English are evident here: Jonson implies in spellings such as mout ‘mouth’, now ‘now’, tou ‘thou’ that Middle English /u:/ had shifted, or at least he leaves the matter undecided as he does not avail of the spelling ⟨oo⟩ in such words (as did the author of *Captain Thomas Stukeley*).

Feature (6) is only attested in one word in Jonson, but it is found in later texts. It implies that /a:/ was raised to /ɔ/, perhaps first before nasals and later unconditionally. This feature is censured by Thomas Sheridan (1781: 144f.) in the late eighteenth century (Hickey 2010). He mentions *psalm* with /ɔ/ which shows a raising of /ɔ/ itself a retraction of /a/. The raising of low vowels along a back trajectory was later reversed (Hickey 2002a) and lowering became typical and remained so into the twentieth century only being reversed to a raising tendency in contemporary emergent varieties of supraregional Irish English (Hickey 2003).

Feature (7) is the same type of lowering of /er/ > /ar/ which was found occasionally in *Captain Thomas Stukeley*. It is worth commenting on the fact that none of the
plays looked at so far have many tokens of this feature (this contrasts starkly with later cases). This might imply that the feature was not very widespread in Irish English at the time. It may well be that the later high incidence of /er/ > /ar/ was due to renewed English input in the mid-seventeenth century as a consequence of the Cromwellian settlements which provided land to English soldiers who had rendered military service to Cromwell and whom he had to recompense. If this is the case then the varieties of English brought to the south of Ireland in the mid-seventeenth century were responsible for the later widespread appearance of /er/ > /ar/ in Irish English.

Feature (8) has two variants. The first is final devoicing which is attested in later texts. It is also found in present-day vernacular rural varieties of Irish English but only in post-sonorant position, e.g. beyond [biˈjʌnt], killed [kilt]. The second variant is the devoicing of all sibilants of English whether /z/ or /ʒ/, whether on their own or in clusters or affricates. This is a clear transfer feature from Irish which has no voiced sibilants.

Reviewing the above features and considering their putative genuineness the question can be asked how a writer like Ben Jonson attained his knowledge of Irish English. He is not known to have been in Ireland (though he did visit Scotland). Perhaps he acquired some acquaintance of Irish English from inmates during his many spells in prison in London and/or through contact with Irish vagrants of which there were many in England in the early seventeenth century (Edwards 1973: 139). The latter may also have been true for Shakespeare.

4. The eighteenth century

4.1 Drama in the eighteenth century

Not all Irish or Irish-related drama in the early modern period is centred around the stage Irishman. Dramatists were active at the beginning of the eighteenth century who worked in the Restoration tradition of the comedy of manners. William Congreve (1670–1729) and George Farquhar (1678–1707) are probably the two best examples. Congreve was born in Leeds but his father was posted on military service to Ireland which led to his son being educated there, first at Kilkenny School and later at Trinity College, Dublin, where he was a fellow student of Swift. He is the author of a number of dramas, the best known of which is probably *The Way of the World* (1700). The language of his plays does not, however, betray any non-standard features and cannot be taken as particularly Irish in character.

George Farquhar, was born in Derry and later started studying in Trinity College, Dublin and then worked as an actor in the Smock Alley theatre, playing major
Shakespearian roles. He left for London in 1697 where he began as a playwright. His best known comedy, *The Beaux Stratagem* (1707), was written just before he died. Farquhar is one of the last Restoration dramatists and his many plays, such as *The Twin Rivals* (1702) and *The Stage Coach* (1704), had a strong influence on subsequent writers in the eighteenth century, including novelists like Fielding, Smollett and Defoe. His plays sometimes contain Irish characters and Farquhar attempted to represent the Irish speech of his time.

The later eighteenth century (Morash 2002: 67–93) saw the novelist and dramatist Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774) produce his popular comedy *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) as well as the Dublin playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816) begin his dramatic production in 1775 with *The Rivals* which was a success at Covent Garden. Soon afterwards, Sheridan produced his major work, *The School for Scandal* (1778), which was quickly followed by another comedy of considerable merit, *The Critic* (1779). Neither Goldsmith nor Sheridan were particularly concerned with representing Irish speech in their plays. Indeed it was Sheridan's father, the elocutionist Thomas Sheridan (1719–1788), who in his one play, *Captain O’Blunder or The Brave Irishman* (1740/1754), did portray Irish speech by manipulating English spellings using conventions which are reminiscent of Ben Jonson, e.g. *ph* for [φ]. The following two extracts show stretches of Irish English from pieces by Farquhar and Thomas Sheridan. In the first extract the figure Teague speaks. The name used here – deriving from the Irish first name *Tadhg* – is a typical name used for Irish characters in early modern drama. In the second extract the eponymous hero of the play – *Captain O’Blunder* – is speaking and, given his telling name, it is hardly necessary to say that he is a figure of satire.

(2) George Farquhar: *The Twin Rivals* (1702/1703)

Teague. *Fet* [what], dear Joy, ‘tis the bravest *Plaase* [place] I have *sheen* [seen] in my Peregrinations, *exsheping* [excepting] my nown brave *Shitty* [city] of Carick-Vergus. – uf, uf, *dere ish* [there is] a very fragrant *Shmell* [smell] hereabouts. – *Maishter* [master], shall I run to that *Paishtry* [pastry]-Cooks for *shix* [six] penyworths of boild Beef?

Teague. Early! *Deel tauke* [devil take] me, *Maishter,* ‘*tish* [Master, ’tis] a great deal more than almost twelve a-clock.

Teague. *Be me Shoul* [By my soul], my *fole* [whole] Generation ish [is] so. – I have *noting* [nothing] but *thish* [this] poor Portmantel, and *dat* [that] it *shelf ish* [self is] not my own.

Teague. [Aside.] I will tell a *Lee* [lie] now; but it shall be a true one. – Macfadin, dear Joy, was his *Naam* [name]. He *vent* [went] over *vith* [with] King Jamish into France. – He was my Master once. – *Dere ish de* [there is the] true *Lee,* *noo* [lie, now].
Table 4. Linguistic features of The Twin Rivals

1. Replacement of /s/ by /∫/, e.g. sheen ‘seen’, ish ‘is’, shix ‘six’.
2. Use of /φ/ for /ʃ/ or /ʃ/, e.g. fet ‘what’, fole ‘whole’; shift of /w/ to /v/, e.g. vent ‘went’.
4. Low vowel retraction and raising, e.g. tauke ‘take’.
5. Unshifted Middle English /i/ or /i/, e.g. lee ‘lie’.
6. Unshifted Middle English /a/ or /a/, e.g. naam ‘name’.
7. Unshifted Middle English /u/ or /u/, e.g. noo ‘now’.

(3) Thomas Sheridan: Captain O’Blunder or The Brave Irishman (1740/1754)

Captain. Yesh [yes], you shons [sons] of whores, don’t you see by my dress that I am a shentleman [gentleman]? And if I have not better cloaths [clothes] on now, phat [what] magnifies that? Sure I can have them on to-morrow.

Captain. Arra then! … and they know my faash [face] ever since – Shir [Sir].

Captain. O, … you mean my chister’s [sister’s] husband …

Table 5. Linguistic features of Captain O’Blunder

1. Replacement of /s/ by /∫/, e.g. yesh ‘yes’, shons ‘sons’, shix ‘six’, shivil ‘civil’.
2. Shift of /ʃ/ to /vʃ/, e.g. chister ‘sister’, Chergeant ‘sergeant’.
3. Use of /φ/ for /ʃ/ or /ʃ/, e.g. phat ‘what’, phipt ‘whipped’, phat ‘what’.
4. Unshifted Middle English /a/ or /a/, e.g. faash ‘face’, plaash ‘place’.
5. Raising of /e/ to /i/ before nasals: phin ‘when’.
6. Verbal -s as marker of narrative present, e.g. And so you tells me … ; if I catches any of these…

Feature (2) is common in Irish English of the late modern period and occasionally rendered orthographically as here. It was commented on in the early twentieth century by P.W. Joyce (1979 [1910]: 98): ‘there is a curious tendency among us to reverse the sounds of certain letters, as for instance sh and ch ‘When you’re coming to-morrow bring the spade and chovel, and a pound of butter frech from the shurn’.

Feature (5) is not represented before Sheridan and he himself has only one token. As this is easily represented in English spelling it may well be that it simply was not widely present in Irish English in the early eighteenth century. But by the nineteenth century the unconditioned raising of /e/ to /i/ became a salient feature of Irish English and one which is repeatedly indicated in dramas with Irish characters. In present-day rural Irish English of the south-west and mid-west the conditioned raising before nasals is still found but the unconditioned raising does not occur anymore.

This is the first attestation of feature (6) in Irish drama and points to the existence of this feature in Irish English already in the early eighteenth century. It is still widespread in vernacular varieties, both rural and urban.
Sheridan’s piece is noticeable for not having some features which were definitely present in vernacular Irish English of his day. For instance, he does not use t/d for th to indicate stopping of the voiceless and voiced fricatives.

*The term ‘brogue’*

Sheridan would appear to be the first dramatist to use the word ‘brogue’ (Murphy 1943) in a play when referring to an Irish accent of English (Sconce to Captain O’Blunder: ...you have not the least bit of the brogue about you.). This term was afterwards used repeatedly to characterise the speech of Irish characters in satirical and/or sentimental drama, e.g. by Dion Boucicault in his play *The Colleen Bawn* (1860):

*Eily, with her awkward manners, her Kerry brogue, her ignorance of the usages of society.*

... but I’m gettin’ clane of the brogue, and learnin’ to do nothing – I’m to be changed entirely.

*When I am angry the brogue comes out*

*May the brogue of ould Ireland niver forsake your tongue*

In another play, *The Shaughraun* (1875), Captain Molineux, a young English Officer, remarks favourably on the Irish English accent (after hearing Claire Ffolliott, a Sligo lady, say you mane [me:n] ’you mean’): Delicious brogue – quite delicious! By this stage (the second half of the nineteenth century) there was a certain reverse pride in the use of an Irish accent in English as can be seen from a later comment by Claire Ffolliott in the same play: *That speech only wanted a taste of the brogue to be worthy of an Irishman.*

The eighteenth century also saw some minor dramatists of sentimental comedies who are now more or less forgotten. Of these one could mention John O’Keefe (1747–1833) who was quite successful and devised a distinctly Irish mode for plays produced in Ireland, often in the reputable Smock Alley Theatre (Morash 2002: 71–74).

The documents for English in eighteenth-century Ireland are fairly abundant, at least compared to those for the centuries before this. The dramas by English authors give an indication of what features of Irish English were generally known to an English audience. Seen from this point of view, a play like *A Wife Well Managed* (1715) by Susannah Centlivre (1667–1723) is of interest. In general, there is more linguistic detail in the plays written by Irish authors themselves, e.g. by John Michelbourne (1646–1721) whose tragi-comedy *Ireland Preserved, or the Siege of Londonderry* (1705) contains a lot of information on language. This short piece is noticeable for a number of reasons, e.g. it contains the first recorded instance of the habitual do of later Irish English and has several instances of the *after* perfective (Hickey 2000).
Table 6. Linguistic features of Ireland Preserved

1. (i) replacement of /s/ by /ʃ/, e.g. plaash 'place', graash 'Grace', (ii) replacement of /ʃ/ by /s/, e.g. seep 'sheep', sall 'shall'.
2. Possibly /f[φ]/ for /w/, e.g. fee 'we', fill 'will', faarne 'warm', fell 'well'; /f[φ]/ for /ml/, e.g. fen 'when', fy 'why'; /f/ for /v/ fery; /w/ for /v/ before /a:/, e.g. waacancy 'vacancy'.
3. Low vowel retraction and raising, e.g. laubour [l手工] 'labour', mauke 'make' [m手工].
4. Shift of /tʃ/ to /ʃ/, e.g. shamber 'chamber'.
5. Unshifted Middle English /e:/, e.g. fee 'we'.
6. Unshifted Middle English /a:/, e.g. graash 'grace', haast 'haste'.
7. Unshifted Middle English /ɔ:/, e.g. cloaths [-手工] 'clothes'.
8. Stopping of interdental fricatives, de 'the', den 'then', fid 'with', fai 'faith'.
9. Possible final stress in cases like bacoan [ba手工:n], trooparr [tru:par], laubour [l手工 bur] 'labour', shouldar [ʃual'dar] 'shoulder'.
10. Habitual do: and fen de Trooparr do get up, he does go and bring home de Seep and de Muck … and no body do taake any ting from me 'and when the trooper do get up, he do go and bring home the sheep and the pig … and nobody do take anything from me'.
11. After perfective; he has been after wearing dem himself 'he has been wearing them himself', I'll bee after telling deer de Raison 'I will have told you the reason', …and I fill be after doing fell for my shelf '…I will have done well for myself'.
12. Uninflected finite be; We be dose de Rebels call Rapparees, we be de Kings gued Voluntiers. 'We are those the rebels call rapparees, we are the King's good volunteers.'

Features (1) to (3) are those found in other texts, see comments above. Feature (4) is the reverse of the shift of /ʃ/ to /tʃ/ as was found in Sheridan's play (cf. chister 'sister', see remarks above). Features (5), (6) and (7) show the lack of the Great Vowel Shift as one would expect in an Irish English text from about 1700. Feature (8), the stopping of interdental fricatives is unremarkable in the Irish English context.

Feature (9), assuming the interpretation of the spelling is correct, is an archaic feature of Irish English, namely final stress in words ending in a sonorant (here /n/ or /r/). This stress pattern is known from Anglo-Norman and words borrowed from it into Irish (in southern Irish, Hickey 1997) and from the archaic dialect of Forth and Bargy in the south-east corner of Ireland (Hickey 2007: Section 2.4).

The remaining three features – (10), (11) and (12) – are syntactic and show that by 1700 two of the central features of Irish English grammar, the after perfective and habitual do, were already clearly established. The instances of uninflected be in this text show that this prominent feature of vernacular Irish English was also present, probably an archaic feature (see Hickey 2007: Section 4.4.1 'The verbal area').

4.2 Summary of features up to 1800

By the end of the early modern period (c 1800) a number of features of Irish English were clearly established and represented with reasonable consistency in different dramas
by various authors. The general regularity of the representations would imply that the authors not just copied from each other but that the features in question were indeed present in Irish English contemporary to the author in question. These features are summarised in the following table with the approximate date when they ceased to be attested in the textual record given in the right-most column.

Table 7. Historical features of early modern Irish English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Realisation</th>
<th>Representation</th>
<th>Attested until</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vowels</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Long U-retention</td>
<td>now [nu:]</td>
<td>⟨oo⟩, noo</td>
<td>mid 18c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Long I-retention</td>
<td>lie [li:]</td>
<td>⟨ee⟩, lee</td>
<td>mid 18c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Long A-retention</td>
<td>face [fas]</td>
<td>⟨aa⟩, faash</td>
<td>mid 18c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Long OA-retention</td>
<td>clothes [kβz]</td>
<td>⟨oa⟩, cloaths</td>
<td>mid 18c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A-back raising</td>
<td>take [tæk]</td>
<td>⟨au⟩, tauke</td>
<td>late 18c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. SERVE lowering</td>
<td>serve [særv]</td>
<td>⟨ar⟩, serve</td>
<td>late 19c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A-raising</td>
<td>what [fet]</td>
<td>⟨e⟩, fet</td>
<td>early 20c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Short E-raising</td>
<td>yes [jis]</td>
<td>⟨i⟩, yis</td>
<td>now only pre-nasally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Unraised long E</td>
<td>speak [spæk]</td>
<td>⟨aCe⟩, spake</td>
<td>today, recessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. OL-diphthongisation</td>
<td>old [auld]</td>
<td>⟨ou⟩,ould</td>
<td>today, restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consonants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. F [φ] for WH</td>
<td>when [φen]</td>
<td>⟨f, ph⟩ fen</td>
<td>19c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. V [β] for W</td>
<td>went [βent]</td>
<td>⟨v⟩ vent</td>
<td>19c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. S-palatalisation</td>
<td>self [ʃelf]</td>
<td>⟨ʃi⟩, shelf</td>
<td>today, recessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. SH-CH exchange</td>
<td>sister [ʃista]</td>
<td>⟨ʃi⟩, chister</td>
<td>early 20c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. TH-fortition</td>
<td>nothing [nætɪn]</td>
<td>⟨t⟩, noting</td>
<td>today</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

1–4 The English long vowel shift which began during the late Middle English period in England, was slow to be implemented in Ireland. /u/ and /i/ were recorded in the MOUTH and PRICE lexical sets respectively until the mid eighteenth century. Unraised long E is also connected to the English long vowel shift: the vowel stems from Middle English /ε/ (and by extension from words with /e/ in Middle English) which was not raised to /i/ in Ireland. In the nineteenth century, non-local Irish English speakers adopted an /i/ pronunciation in line with mainstream British English. /a/ in the FACE lexical set and /o/ in the GOAT set are further evidence that the long vowel shift had not taken place in Ireland by the mid eighteenth century. This feature was censured by Thomas Sheridan in the late eighteenth century, see Sheridan (1781: 141). Its origin is uncertain.

5 Lowering before /r/ had a much wider range in Irish English, probably due to its quantitative representation in input varieties.

6 This feature appears to have been continued with some speakers into the twentieth century (it was a prominent characteristic of conservative Received Pronunciation until the mid-twentieth century, Bauer 1994: 120f.).

7 Short E-raising is common today, but only in south-west and mid-west rural Irish English and only in pre-nasal position, e.g. when [atin], pen [pin]. Joyce (1979 [1910]: 100) states that ‘short e is always sounded before n and m, and sometimes in other positions, like short i: “How many arrived? Tin min and five women.”’

(Continued)
Table 7. Historical features of early modern Irish English  (Continued)

9 Unraised long E has a special status as a stereotypically Irish feature which has been lexicalised in the expletive *Jaysus!* [dʒɛˈzəz] and in set expressions like *lea* ‘[lɛ:] me alone!* It is found regularly in vernacular varieties throughout Ireland.

10 OL-diphthongisation is most common with *old* and *bold* today. Joyce (1979 [1910]: 99) mentions it with reference to these words and to *hould* where it is not found in supraregional speech today. However, in vernacular varieties, both north and south, there is a greater range of forms with OL-diphthongisation. Pre-1800 texts do not show this diphthongisation, but it must have been present seeing as how it is an inherited feature of early varieties of English taken to Ireland. The feature was already noted in England by John Ray in 1674.

11–12 What appears to have happened here is that speakers used Irish non-palatal /f/ (phonetically [φ]) as an equivalent for [s] and Irish non-palatal /v/ (phonetically [β]) for [w] during language shift. In eye dialect the bilabial fricative [φ] is rendered as /f or ph/, and its voiced counterpart [β] as /v or u/. This development would appear to be independent of developments in Britain, although a case might be made for the transportation of [φ] and [β] to the Caribbean by indentured Irish in the seventeenth century (see Trudgill, Schreier, Long & Williams 2004 on approximants in this context but without a consideration of the Irish situation).

13–14 S-palatalisation (the shift of /s/ to /ʃ/) is a still feature of contact Irish English, e.g. *best* [bʃɛst] and is generally confined to syllable codas in pre-consonantal position.

15 TH-fortition takes on two forms (i) fortition to dental stops and (ii) fortition to alveolar stops. The former is part of supraregional Irish English, e.g. *thin* [tʃɪn], *this* [ðɪʃ], whereas the latter is stigmatised. In the textual record there is no means of telling whether the non-standard spellings indicate fortition to an alveolar or to a dental stop. This is a phonetic detail which is simply not recoverable via English orthography.

5. **The nineteenth century**

The history of Irish English can be divided into two periods, an early one which began in the late Middle Ages and continued until the sixteenth century and a second period which began around 1600. The features of the early period were by and large replaced from the seventeenth century onwards. Some phonetic traces of English from the first period (before 1600) were to be found during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries and can be seen in colloquial Dublin English today, e.g. unshifted [u] in the STRUT lexical set (Hickey 2005). Features of a phonological nature, e.g. vowel values which contrasted in the sound system of Irish English, were generally aligned to those of English in England by the eighteenth century. A few were retained by relegation to the vernacular level, i.e. by representing an alternative, non-standard pronunciation which is still used for local flavour in colloquial Irish English, e.g. ‘Unshifted long E’ as in *leave, tea, eat, speak* with [eː] or [ɛː] rather than [iː].

Nonetheless, there are features of early modern Irish English which are shown clearly in dramatic representations of Irish English (see remarks in various sections above) but which no longer occur in any variety of Irish English today and which disappear from the textual record in the late nineteenth century, or by the early twentieth century at the latest (Hickey 2008).
Unshifted long vowel values were used by literary authors in their parodies of Irish accents of English into the 18th century. For example, George Farquhar in his play *The Beaux’ Stratagem* (1707) has /aː/ in the FACE lexical set. Somewhat later, Jonathan Swift used end-rhymes which indicate that for him words like *placed* and *last* rhymed. At the end of the eighteenth century, Thomas Sheridan criticised the Irish use of /aː/ in *matron*, *patron*, etc.

But by the mid-nineteenth century there are no more references to /aː/ in the FACE lexical set (or to the unshifted vowels in the MOUTH and PRICE sets for that matter). The playwright Dion Boucicault, who shows many non-standard pronunciations in his dramas, does not indicate unshifted Middle English /aː/ when writing some eighty years after Sheridan. The older pronunciation was replaced by the newer one in the generations between the late eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century, i.e. within three generations.

This kind of development can be shown to have applied to a number of features. For instance, SERVE-lowering appears to have died out during the nineteenth century: By the beginning of the twentieth century the feature had all but disappeared.

### Table 8. Development of Irish English features since 1800

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features which have disappeared entirely</th>
<th>Consonants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vowels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unshifted long U, I, A</td>
<td>S palatalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-back raising</td>
<td>SH depalatalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVE lowering</td>
<td>SH-CH interchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-raising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features which have developed a more restricted occurrence</th>
<th>Restriction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unraised long E</td>
<td>Only in vernacular varieties, not for all words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short E-raising</td>
<td>Only pre-nasally in south-west and mid-west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final devoicing</td>
<td>Only after sonorants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OL-diphthongisation</td>
<td>Confined to few words, e.g. <em>old</em> [aul], <em>bold</em> [baul]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[φ] for WH, [β] for W</td>
<td>Only in contact Irish English, if at all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Persistent features in the history of Irish English**

| TH-fortition | Habitual *do, after* perfective |

The above table might suggest that of all the phonetic features discussed in this chapter only TH-fortition has survived since the early modern period. However, the comments above refer to features which are clearly indicated in non-standard English spellings. There are many other features which cannot be represented via the orthography and hence are ‘invisible’ in the textual record. For instance, the lenition of /t/
in post-vocalic, intervocalic or pre-pausal position is not shown in writing but must have been an established feature of Irish English for some time, not least because it was transported abroad, e.g. to Newfoundland in the eighteenth century by Irish migrant labourers in the fishing industry and later by settlers (Hickey 2002b).

7. Conclusion

The development of specific features of Irish English can be traced in dramatic texts from about 1600 onwards. These texts are largely satirical in nature and general contrast Irish English speakers with those who language was more formal or standard. While it is true that only a selection of salient features are picked out by all authors, the re-occurrence of these across texts of different types would point to their existing in spoken Irish English of the early modern period.

In many cases one is dealing with features which no longer exist in Irish English so that the 'bad data' of satirical drama is indeed the only source for the features in question. This means that the written word in this form is the only linguistic evidence for many aspects of Irish English at the onset of the modern period. In other cases the texts are useful as early attestations of features which persist to this day. Either way, the acceptance of these records as sources for linguistic analysis is justified. This assumes that cross-comparison and comparison with present-day varieties is done in each case to ensure the maximum degree of reliability for statements about early modern Irish English made on the basis of the textual record.

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‘[H]ushed and lulled full chimes for pushed and pulled’

Writing Ulster English*

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The history of Northern Irish English is rather episodic because studies of written Ulster English tend to be case studies of particular writers, texts or text types, and only a small number of linguistic features have been examined. This chapter surveys work done on this variety of English based on literary and letter data, commentaries and folklore collections. There is a brief discussion of ways of systematically approaching texts and principles to be applied in studying written texts. Recent and ongoing developments using synchronic and diachronic corpora containing written texts from the region are also discussed.

1. Writing Ulster English

No linguistic study of South Derry English exists, but in ‘The Ministry of Fear’, Seamus Heaney teaches us something about this variety in a poetic comment on his own mediation between his native rural dialect and standard English in his early poetry:

I tried to write about the sycamores
And innovated a South Derry rhyme
With hushed and lulled full chimes for pushed and pulled.
Those hobnailed boots from beyond the mountain
Were walking, by God, all over the fine
Lawns of elocution. (Heaney 1975: 63f.)

*Irish English* is the general term used here to refer to all varieties of English in Ireland (Hickey 2007: 3–5). It is qualified to make distinctions between sub-varieties, though Northern Irish English and Ulster English refer alternately (and interchangeably) to varieties in the north of Ireland, Ulster Scots varieties included. Ongoing issues relating to the status of Ulster Scots, language planning and the emergence of written norms are so complex, and as yet unresolved, as to be beyond the scope of this paper. The most comprehensive account to date is Falconer (forthcoming), which offers a historical survey of issues and developments, linguistic and political, and suggests the apparently sensible way forward of abandoning Ulster-Scots linguistic separatism in favour of fostering the link with Scots in Scotland.
The implication is perhaps that the mature poet has learnt to suppress the dialect rhyme, which depends crucially on the use of a central [ʌ] vowel in all four italicised words, pairs that cannot rhyme for most English-speakers. In a biographical essay, Belfast poet Michael Longley alludes to the identity-signalling function of accent as he describes his personal encounter with sociolinguistic variation related to ongoing change in Belfast English, where diphthongal [eә, iә] realisations of /e/ in words of the face set are a class shibboleth:

[T]he accent, abrasive and raucous as a football rattle […] I soon acquired in order to make myself less unacceptable. “Len’ us a mey-ek”—“Lend me a make” (a ha’penny). At home I would try to remember to ask for “a slice of cake” and not “a slice of cey-ek”, […] By the age of six or seven I was beginning to lead a double life, learning how to recreate myself twice daily. (Longley 1994: 25)

The monophthong belonged to the middle-class accent of Longley’s childhood home, the diphthong to the working-class variety of school and the streets. Longley negotiated the transition between these worlds in part via shifting vowel realisations. These metalinguistic comments – accurate in phonetic detail – are evidence for the vowel systems of the two poets’ native varieties, valuable as documentation of Ulster speech, as well as for the sociolinguistic awareness they reveal. This paper sets out a case for exploring the full range of existing textual evidence for Northern Irish English (NIrE), including not only texts as poetic and linguistically insightful as those cited, but also the enormous body of more workaday texts lying for the most part untouched by linguists in libraries and archives. In such texts, writers of Ulster English (UlstEng) not only trample the lawns of elocution but also bend the twigs of English grammar, and in doing so give glimpses of the history of NIrE that might one day be combined into a meaningful collage.

2. Research on Ulster English

Growing interest in NIrE is reflected in lengthening surveys and bibliographies. There is a substantial literature on twentieth-century dialects of UlstEng and a good deal of sociolinguistic research (e.g. Harris 1984a; Corrigan 1990; Kirk 1997a; Hickey 2002: 229ff.; McCafferty 2007). But the deeper history of NIrE remains hazy, in spite of some diachronic surveys (e.g. Braidwood 1964; Kallen 1994: 187ff.; Montgomery & Gregg 1997; Hickey 2007: 85ff.), a grammar of Ulster Scots (Robinson 1997), an Ulster dictionary (Macafee 1996; cf. also Wall 2001; Dolan 2004; Share 2008), and glossaries at various levels of ambition (e.g. Traynor 1953; Todd 1990; Fenton 2001; Montgomery 2006a). Much of the research applies the latest linguistic methodologies,
using recorded speech, questionnaire surveys, elicitations, and corpora, while studies of written UlstEng in any period remain rare and limited in scope, though *ICE-Ireland*, the Ireland component of the *International Corpus of English* (Kallen & Kirk 2008), has begun to improve this situation for present-day Irish English (IrE), north and south.

The older landmark historical studies of literary IrE (Taniguchi 1956/1972; Bliss 1979; Sullivan 1980) include texts by Ulster-born or Ulster-based authors, while Braidwood (1964) discusses the relationship of NIrE to Elizabethan English. But little empirical research on written IrE as a whole either looks at earlier periods or takes a longer diachronic perspective. Existing historical studies of UlstEng tend to have a narrow focus. Commentaries by observers of local dialects are studied in Connolly (1982) and Lunney (1994, 1997; cf. also Montgomery & Gregg 1997: 581ff.). Studies of historical documents, personal letters, and transcribed folklore material examine aspects of the use of specific features in particular locations and/or periods. (e.g. Robinson 1989; Montgomery 1992, 1994; Corrigan 1992, 1993, forthcoming; Kirk 2000; McCafferty 2003a, 2005a). Literary uses are surveyed linguistically in several places (e.g. Todd 1989, 1999; Hickey 2002: 194ff.; 2007: 296ff.), and the usage of a small number of literary authors is examined by, e.g. Kallen (1991a), Kirk (1997b, 1999), Amador Moreno (2005, 2006, 2007), and McCafferty (2005b, 2008, forthcoming). Consequently, while we know a great deal about certain features and authors, linguists have yet to systematically exploit written evidence for earlier NIrE.

Texts of all kinds are legitimate sources of data for linguistic research, provided they are studied in relation to other text types and the spoken language. In the absence of speech data from a particular place or time, literary and journalistic writings, personal and public correspondence, memoirs and diaries, court transcripts, minutes and memos, and texts from other categories, different as they all are, can offer unique insights into the emergence and development of UlstEng. Though most of these text types have not been used in the study of NIrE to date, their value is demonstrated by a growing body of diachronic studies of other varieties (e.g. Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003; Kytö, Rydén & Smitterberg 2006; also contributions to Beal, Corrigan & Moisl 2007).

In spite of the lack of corpora designed with historical (socio)linguistics in mind, studies of UlstEng texts have already produced valuable results. Since NIrE cannot, and should not, be studied in isolation from other varieties of Irish or British English, a sketch is presented below of the construction of a corpus of texts from Ireland that will permit comparative diachronic study of UlstEng and other Irish varieties. Given Ireland’s position as a recipient of large numbers of English-speakers in the earliest phases of the overseas spread of the language, and as a continuing recipient and massive contributor to its later diffusion (Hickey 2004a, 2007: 384ff.), such a corpus has the potential to make a significant contribution to the history of the English language.
3. **Approaching text types**

The history of any language until the twentieth century is necessarily based on careful analysis of written texts. Nevertheless, dialectologists and sociolinguists, who are accustomed to studying ‘the real thing’, tend to be cautious about using written, especially literary, data; some are even sceptical or dismissive about the usefulness of, e.g. personal letters as linguistic evidence (Horvath 1985: 26; Görlach 1999: 36, fn. 39), although others argue for their orality (Biber 1988, 1995). For the present-day language, better data is available as recordings or transcriptions, but historical (socio) linguistics must resort to texts, and accounts of the history of the language can only gain from using different text types. Diachronic approaches to regional and social varieties are enriched by using arguably more vernacular documents, e.g. personal letters, journals and diaries, court transcripts, and the like. Besides providing attestations of linguistic forms, such texts may also permit empirical answers to questions of, e.g. the scope of linguistic variation or the validity of literary representations in different periods. And variationist linguistics offers a proven, principled methodology that can be applied to the linguistic evidence of different text types and a large body of findings from studies of real speech against which text-based results may be assessed.

In his classic article on literary dialect, Ives correctly asserts that ‘[t]here can be no doubt that the pages of a story are a poor substitute for adequate fieldwork […]’; he is equally right in adding that ‘[t]he evidence given in a carefully and competently written literary dialect regarding pronunciations is similar in many respects to the evidence on which some historical conclusions are based’ (Ives 1950/1971: 177). These observations also apply to evidence from other kinds of texts and to lexis, morphology and syntax as well as phonology. For synchronic work, written texts cannot, indeed should not, replace speech data, but can provide useful complementary material, provided reference is made to natural spoken language (Labov 1972a: 109). Mesthrie notes that comparison with spoken data collected for sociolinguistic purposes allows us to assess the validity of literary representations (2005: 323–324). Literary texts aiming at speech realism can show a remarkably good fit with findings based on ‘live’ transcripts or speech (e.g. Yaeger-Dror, Hall-Yew & Deckert 2002), so that ‘[…] a text written by a writer with “insider” status may (unconsciously) replicate the principles of variation rather well, in the interests of realism’ (Mesthrie 2005: 324). For diachronic research on periods beyond the advent of recording technology, there is no alternative to written texts; yet such studies continue to produce important linguistic insights, as witnessed by the extensive literature on the history of the English language, virtually all of it based on written (often literary) data. The much wider data bases of the most recent diachronic research adds to our knowledge of the history of the language rather than invalidating earlier findings.

Since the Renaissance, the history of English has largely been the story of the standard(ising) language, a variety whose users have been strongly affected by an
ideology of prescriptivism, and ultimately at pains to exclude regional features and those associated with lower social strata (Blank 1996; Mugglestone 2003; Crystal 2004: 168ff., 338ff.). But findings from ICE-Ireland (Kirk & Kallen 2006; Kallen & Kirk 2007), studies of written standard twentieth-century English in general (e.g. Mair 2006), and of diachronic and synchronic differences between British and American English (Rohdenburg & Schlüter 2009) explode the myth of the invariant standard: even standard English varies across and within the many territories where it is used. The robustness of the uniformitarian principle, as shown by a large body of variationist linguistic studies, informs us that this variation, some of it deposited in the textual record, reveals language change. Where such deposits are found, they should be exploited, analysed and assessed in relation to other evidence in a rigorous and principled way.

The issue of the data's validity is a perennial one in relation to written texts. Ives (1950/1971) proposes guidelines for gauging the authenticity of regional varieties in literature. Ives' concern was with literary dialect, but his suggestions make equal sense for the study of other text types too. The emphasis is on empirical documentation: research must be linguistically informed and based on adequate samples, and the features studied must be independently attested in relevant linguistic literature (Ives 1950/1971: 172ff.). Minnick (2004) updates Ives' principles for her study of literary dialect. Scholars should:

1. give comprehensive analyses of texts,
2. select comparable data across analyses,
3. apply benchmarking (reference to sources outside the texts for verification of features in non-standard varieties),
4. use sociolinguistic methods for interpretation of data and inferential statistics for analysis, and
5. acknowledge the creative nature of literary texts by employing qualitative methods in the experimental design and application of results. (after Minnick 2004: 43ff.)

Minnick's first and last principles are perhaps less immediately relevant to the study of other than literary texts (but cf. 4.4.3., below). Comprehensive analysis conflicts with established practice in corpus linguistics, where data is typically drawn from samples of extracts from large numbers of texts, chosen to constitute a valid corpus by other criteria (text type, region, period, etc.). A reasonable compromise position might be that adopted by Fritz (2007), whose findings are based on a balanced two-million-word corpus of Australian English, subsequently checked against an eight-million-word database of 'reference texts' as a means of assessing the representativity of the corpus. The creative aspect of literary writing is part of the context of text production. For literary and non-literary texts alike, the fullest possible consideration of relevant, documented aspects of context – historical, regional, social, purpose of writing, audience
factors, etc. – should be part of any linguistic study. This is standard practice in (historical) sociolinguistics. Taking account of the aims or purposes for which texts are produced ensures the relevance of this principle beyond literary texts.

The remaining principles are guides to research practice. For reliable conclusions, data from different texts must be comparable – linguistic features/variables must be circumscribed and the same definitions applied similarly across texts and text types, in accordance with Labov’s principle of accountability to the data (1972b: 72). Benchmarking can be achieved by consulting existing literature on the variety under investigation. At one level, linguistic features are verified if the features in a text do occur in the spoken vernacular, while a more stringent criterion – which few literary texts are likely to fulfill (but see McCafferty 2005b: 347ff.; Mesthrie 2005: 316ff.) – is that features should occur with similar frequencies and in similar environments as in the vernacular (Kirk 1999: 53). Finally, sociolinguistic interpretation based on statistical methods offers a further guarantee of quality, neatly summarised in Simpson’s (2004: 3f.) ‘three Rs’: this kind of historical (socio)linguistic approach produces rigorous, retrievable and replicable research.

The model proposed by Schneider (2002) elaborates on the principles of benchmarking and methodology. Relationships between text types are a key concern. Schneider insists that texts for variationist analysis ought to be as close as possible to speech, especially vernacular styles (2002: 71). Though this might exclude many text types, including literary writing, Schneider’s categorisation of types by proximity to speech gives a handy sketch map of text-speech relations (Table 1). The categories are labelled according to the relation between the reality of the speech event and the act of writing. The scale stretches from the ‘Recorded’ – ‘live’, verbatim transcripts of interviews or court proceedings, that are perhaps as close to speech as we can get – to the ‘Invented’, e.g. literary uses. Personal letters fall within the mid-range ‘Imagined’ category. Though it would be unwise to allocate texts uncritically to these categories or exclude texts in the categories most distant from speech, with care this model is a useful tool for empirical investigation of written sources.¹ A general rule of thumb is that if the evidence provided by the best available data sets – in the absence of natural

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¹ Kirk (1997a, 1997b; 1999) examines poetry in standard English and Ulster Scots, and prose texts in narrative and conversational styles that use the standard language, non-standard language and dialect to varying degrees. Kirk proposes a model of speech realism for literary texts that may allow relationships between texts to be assessed in terms of proximity to spoken or literary models of language use. Schneider’s ‘Invented’ category may be approached in light of the fact that, while this category may, generally speaking, be furthest removed from speech, certain types of speech-based literary texts – e.g. prose dialogue, fiction in conversational style, and ‘oral narrative’ (Kirk 1997b: 197f.), as well as drama – may be distinguished from others modelled on written norms.
speech, the text types closest to speech – confirms findings based on less speech-like data, then we can have confidence in the evidence of the latter too.

Table 1. Text types according to proximity to speech (after Schneider 2002: 73, Table 3.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Reality of speech event</th>
<th>Speaker-writer identity</th>
<th>Temporal distance speech-record</th>
<th>Characteristic text types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recorded</td>
<td>real, unique</td>
<td>different</td>
<td>immediate</td>
<td>interview transcripts, trial records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recalled</td>
<td>real, unique</td>
<td>different</td>
<td>later</td>
<td>ex-slave narratives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagined</td>
<td>hypothetic, unique</td>
<td>identical</td>
<td>immediate</td>
<td>letters, diaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>usually real, unique</td>
<td>different</td>
<td>later</td>
<td>commentaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invented</td>
<td>hypothetic, Unspecified</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>unspecified</td>
<td>literary dialect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rather than bar literary texts, or any other type, on principle, Schneider’s model invites us to treat their language’s authenticity as an empirical issue for investigation through comparison with other text types and speech. Addressing issues of representativeness and validity, Schneider also fleshes out the principles. Representativeness can be achieved by employing sampling methods and using diversified and stratified samples from different texts or writers, to avoid skewing (Schneider 2002: 81f.). Validity can be ensured by including only texts by writers whose reliability is confirmed by extralinguistic evidence of social background, statements of interview or transcription practice, etc.; validity can also be assessed in terms of the context of production – nature of texts, production conditions, etc. – or linguistic criteria – e.g. consistency in portrayal of variable features, fit with other studies, and familiar linguistic distributions (Schneider 2002: 83ff.). The work on written NIrE presented in the next section complies by and large with the approach outlined above; lack of space prevents detailed discussion of the methodologies used by researchers.

4. Studies of written Ulster English

To the best of my knowledge, no historical work on NIrE has yet used Recalled texts, though these are certainly available for the region. Texts in the Recorded, Observed, Imagined and Invented categories – comments by travellers, surveyors and commentators, personal letters, and literary texts, etc. – have been studied and are discussed in 4.1. to 4.4. While these studies demonstrate the potential of such data, they tend to be restricted in focus to a small number of linguistic features, frequently using small
data bases, and hence small quantities of data. Attention is also limited to particular periods, places, and/or writers. The result is an intriguing patchwork that begs to be filled out and extended; Sections 4.5. and 4.6. discuss ways in which this is happening through the compilation of synchronic and diachronic corpora.

4.1 Ulster English recorded

Little use has been made of the Recorded text category in UlstEng. Nevertheless, several notable studies document dialect features in the Glens of Antrim and South Armagh in transcripts of folklore material (Corrigan 1992, 1993), while Corrigan (forthcoming) is an innovative study, based on this text type, that uniquely combines full-scale generative and sociolinguistic accounts of variation in South Armagh syntax. The folklore archive transcripts accessed for this study proved to be a rich source of data for study of dialect and language contact phenomena in South Armagh, where Irish survived in pockets into the twentieth century.

4.2 Northern Irish English observed

Observations on language in regional descriptions and surveys, travelogues, diaries, etc., not only provide glimpses of what commentators observed – though such comments are often no more than general characterisations of local varieties of UlstEng as ‘purest English’, ‘strongly Scottish’, or ‘Irish’ – but also reveal something of the observers’ linguistic attitudes (Lunney 1997: 117). In the north of Ireland, areas of English speech are praised: thus, one eighteenth-century traveller remarked that:

[T]he town of Lurgan from the similarity of its general figure, of the language, manners and dispositions of its inhabitants, to those of the English, had, for many years, acquired the name of Little England, and an Englishman at Lurgan indeed will think himself in his own country. (Luckombe 1780: 309)

In contrast, Scottishness often provokes negative comment. In the nineteenth-century *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* examined in Connolly (1982) and Lunney (1994, 1997), the speech of some parishes is described as ‘disagreeably Scottish’ or ‘broad and coarse’ (Day, McWilliams & Dobson 1994: 106); cf. also Montgomery and Gregg (1997: 581ff.). This reflects widespread prejudice against Scots-influenced speech that is also present in literary authors like William Carleton, who comments in one place on ‘that intolerable Scoto-Hibernic jargon which pierces the ear so unmercifully’ (1830 Vol. I: xi).

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2. Published in 40 volumes by the Institute of Irish Studies, Queens University Belfast, 1990–98.
Such attitudes are also expressed by amateur dialectologists, as in the observation on (mainly) Donegal speech that:

The pronunciation would give [the English visitor], as a whole, but slight difficulty. Certain individuals will always be met with (especially in the neighbourhood of Londonderry) who have exaggerated and atrocious northern accents of a high-pitched and most unmusical nature [...] (Hart 1899: 3)

Such comments accumulate to give a consistent view of long-lived linguistic attitudes that cannot be ignored in any diachronic account of NIrE. When combined with the ability and effort to describe usage at some level – however strongly the commentator may disapprove – such prejudices can, ironically, prove rich sources of knowledge about the vernacular in earlier times. This is certainly the case with Sheridan's notes on eighteenth-century Dublin English (cf. Hickey 2005: 178ff.) and Patterson's (1860) pamphlet advising Belfast's citizens on how to rid their speech of provincialisms, which has informed sociolinguistic studies conducted in the north of Ireland since the 1970s (J. Milroy 1981; L. Milroy 1987), because it contains detailed information on vernacular vowel realisations in mid-nineteenth-century Belfast.

4.3 Ulster English imagined

Imagined texts are those, like letters, where the speech events do not take place in the real world but in the minds of writers who had no alternative to committing themselves to paper. NIrE is well served as regards this kind of text, for heavy immigration into the region in the seventeenth century, followed by mass emigration across the Atlantic and to the southern hemisphere from the eighteenth century onwards, has left a wealth of migrant letters in archives in many parts of the world (e.g. Houston & Smyth 1990; Wells 1991; Fitzpatrick 1994; Miller, Schrier, Boling & Doyle 2003). While Montgomery (1995) has made a strong case for the value of this text type in charting earlier usage, generally speaking, this material has not been much exploited to date. A number of studies of the Northern Subject Rule (NSR) in UlstEng are based on letter collections (e.g. Montgomery 1992, 1994, 1997a, 1997b; McCafferty 2002, 2003a, 2005a), as are studies of perfect aspect (Pietsch 2005, 2007), punctual whenever (Montgomery & Kirk 2001), habitual be(s) (Montgomery & Kirk 1996) and the do-habitual in the south of Ireland (Hickey 2007: 213ff.). These studies address issues like the origins of vernacular features as retentions from British varieties or the outcome of dialect levelling and language contact. Due to space restrictions, I discuss only the most-studied feature: the NSR.

Particular attention has been paid to the NSR in NIrE because it was first studied by a linguist interested in tracing the origins in Britain and Ireland of vernacular features of North American varieties (e.g. Montgomery 1997a, 1997b). The NSR permits
use of the verbal -s ending with plural NP subjects, as in (1) and (2), and with pro-
nominal third-person plural subjects provided subject and verb are not adjacent, as in
(3), where *they all professes and they are are grammatical, while *they is would not be.

(1) This I man confes in respect as materis hes fallin out sensyne wes
my greatest folie. (Montgomery 1992: 57)

(2) [...] far your mereitis towards me hes deserwit moir. (Montgomery 1992: 64)

(3) Yett they all professes that they are not able to give. (Montgomery 1997b: 136)

While the NSR must have come to Ulster from Scotland and the north of England –
the main sources of British settlers in the Plantation era – its presence outside Scotland
is systematically played down in the work of Montgomery and his associates. Thus,
early-seventeenth-century letters between members of one family show rapid shift
towards Southern British norms (Montgomery & Gregg 1997: 588), which is explained
by reference to contact with English settlers (Montgomery 1997b: 130). However, the
(southern) English texts used by Montgomery and Robinson (1996) do not differ as
strongly from the Scots texts as the authors claim: the English texts do not attest verbal
-s with adjacent they (Montgomery & Robinson 1996: 418), and the overall rate of -s
with plural NP subjects in the English texts (26%) is within the range for the Scots texts
(19–46%). Such results cannot support the case for a sharp English/Scots dichotomy
(cf. also Montgomery 1997b; Montgomery & Robinson 2000).

Montgomery (1997a) suggests southward diffusion from Ulster to explain use
of NSR in the south of Ireland in the eighteenth century. Although aware that the
NSR was more widespread in Britain (Montgomery 1997a: 250), the emphasis on the
Scottishness of this and other features of UlstEng is maintained (cf. also Montgomery
2006b). Studies based on nineteenth-century letters in Fitzpatrick’s (1994) account of
Irish emigration to Australia compare use of the NSR in different dialect areas of Ulster
(McCafferty 2002, 2003a), showing that the NSR was stronger in Mid-Ulster English
than in Ulster Scots. Letters from the south of Ireland (McCafferty 2004a) and com-
parison of the data for the whole island (McCafferty 2005a) show the NSR to be pres-
ent in all districts surveyed and as robust in a western region (counties Clare, Galway
and Offaly) as in the Ulster letters (cf. also Dublin evidence in Hickey 2005: 158ff.).
The strength of the NSR beyond the region of Scottish settlement is not the result of
southward diffusion, but is more likely due to the fact that the largely English settlers
outside Ulster came from regions of England where the NSR was widespread when
large-scale migration to Ireland began, and thus came to Ireland with English and
Scottish migrants alike. The English/Scots dichotomy crucial to much of the work on
the NSR in Ulster is difficult to maintain in view of the historical distribution of the
NSR in varieties of British English, for this morphosyntactic feature is of joint north-
ern English and Scottish provenance: by the Late Medieval period, the NSR was found
south to the Chester-Wash line; it was present in London from the late-fifteenth to the seventeenth century (e.g. McIntosh 1989). The presence of the NSR in the very English regions that provided much of the British input into the colonisation of Ireland, north and south, is significant for the history of NIrE (and SIrE too). It is only thanks to the availability of personal letters in archives and edited collections that work at this level of detail can be conducted.

4.4 Ulster English invented

Kirk (1997: 155) points to the need for a corpus of literature portraying any evidence of NIrE speech realism that can be systematically analysed. Hickey’s (2003) A Corpus of Irish English is a start, but it is too small to support representative regional analyses. The two Ulster writers whose language has been studied most closely are two bilinguals born about a century apart: William Carleton (1794–1869) and Patrick MacGill (1891–1963). Their literary works not only document vernacular features of the dialects they represent; they may also extend the vernacular in that the evidence of literary works may offer a crucial corrective to views of authenticity based, anachronistically, on present-day usage; and Carleton can be seen taking an active role in creatively (re)forming literary IrE. All three of these activities are exemplified in the following sub-sections.

4.4.1 Documenting the vernacular

The validity of Carleton’s and MacGill’s dialects is shown at one level in their use of many of the features of IrE highlighted by commentators and documented by linguists. Amador Moreno’s (2006: 59ff.) analysis of MacGill’s syntax studies the full range of features treated in Filppula’s (1999) account of IrE grammar. McCafferty (2005b) includes a similar inventory of features used in Carleton. A comprehensive account of MacGill’s vernacular lexicon (Amador Moreno 2006: 177ff.) shows the influence of Irish, especially in relation to aspects of local life (agriculture, clothing, landscape, etc.) and affective terms (e.g. terms of endearment). But it also shows retentions of archaic English forms and Scots lexicon that are part of Donegal English both as a result of the Plantation and due to interaction between Irish-speaking, later bilingual, Donegal and Scots-speaking areas of Ulster as well as Scotland itself (Amador Moreno 2006: 278).

A higher level of validity is suggested by comparison of the NSR in Carleton’s literary dialect, as studied by Kallen (1991a), and letters from William Fife (1803–1880), a close contemporary of Carleton, from a neighbouring area and similar social background.

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3. Kallen uses nineteenth-century literary data to show the NSR was a robust tendency in different regions of Ireland, north and south. His results broadly concur with the findings of McCafferty (2004a, 2005a). The writers show a strong tendency to follow the NSR constraint
There is striking agreement between these men’s concord systems, suggesting a remarkable degree of accuracy in Carleton’s portrayal of dialect: neither uses -s forms with adjacent they, while -s occurs variably with plural NP subjects (Carleton 64%, Fife 78%). Thus, Carleton’s literary dialect closely approximates to the rate of plural verbal -s use by a contemporary from the same background, accurately reproducing the pattern of variation in the region. Agreement of this order in these very different data sets permits a considerable degree of confidence in the accuracy and validity of the literary dialect, so that Carleton’s writings may be regarded as a reliable source of the vernacular of his time.

4.4.2 Extending the vernacular
Perfect aspect in IrE has attracted considerable attention (cf. Hickey 2007; McCafferty 2007) because two of the constructions used exemplify either transfer from Irish of the ‘hot-news perfect’ (4), or in the case of the resultative (5), retention or convergence between Irish and English.

(4) but I am after receiving two letters from his son Edward for the first time.  
(Fitzpatrick 1994: 184)

(5) we have some good brick Houses erected […].  
(cited in Pietsch 2005: 14)

Until recently, it was common to argue against the validity of much early IrE literary dialect with reference to the use of the be after V-ing construction with future time reference (McCafferty 2003b, 2003c). Such tokens in older literary representations have been attributed to ignorance of real IrE. Attested since the late seventeenth century, this is one of the most distinctive grammatical features of IrE, and is certainly a transfer from Irish. In present-day usage, it refers to events in the immediate or recent past; it has been known as the ‘hot-news perfect’ since Harris (1984a, 1984b), but is also the ‘immediate perfective’ (Hickey 2000, 2007) or ‘after perfect’ (Filppula 1999: 99ff.), though Kallen (1989, 1990, 1991b) and Ronan (2005) have shown that the after-construction is not restricted to hot news but covers the full range of perfective meanings, and analysis of literary data suggests that, while hot news is the predominant perfective use, other senses are found in earlier centuries too (McCafferty 2006).

Twentieth-century speech data provides few examples of the hot-news construction. The studies by Harris, Kallen, Ronan and Filppula are based on small token numbers (n = 4 – 140). Only seven tokens occur in the 270,000-word letter corpus used by Pietsch (2007). Perhaps the most reliable guide to its frequency in speech today is that on -s with adjacent they, while -s with plural NP subjects occurs at rates in the range of 37–75% (Kallen 1991a: 27ff.).

4. The Fife letters are reproduced in Fitzpatrick (1994: 412ff.).
Amador Moreno and O’Keeffe’s conversational data from the Limerick Corpus of Irish English (forthcoming) has 95 tokens in one million words.

For study of the hot-news construction, literary data is considerably richer, and covers a much longer timespan, than the data used in studies based on spoken and letter corpora. Diachronic surveys based on literary data (McCafferty 2003b, 2004b, 2006) use considerably greater amounts of data (up to 1,347 tokens) to trace the construction’s evolution from mainly future and increasingly perfective uses until 1800, and finally shifting to almost exclusively perfective uses after 1850. Further support for this account of semantic change involving the demise of future uses is found in Ó Corráin’s (2006) attestation of both future and perfective meanings for the Irish source construction in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts in Irish, as well as the usage of a bilingual writer like William Carleton, who uses it in both future and perfective functions in the nineteenth century (McCafferty 2005b). Finally, crucial comparison with older, more vernacular data is provided by documentation of eighteenth-century future uses in the ‘Recorded’ texts of Irish people’s oral testimony in the Old Bailey Proceedings (Hickey 2007: 201ff.). Clearly, future uses of this most Irish construction cannot be attributed to ignorance of IrE. The evidence from texts by a bilingual writer, Irish-language texts and court proceedings is a better measure of the validity of literary dialect in the past than are assumptions founded on non-occurrence of future meanings in the present.

A pragmatic approach to the after-construction by Kallen (1991b) points to its use in realising certain types of speech act, e.g. ‘giving out’ (chiding), announcements, reporting, and narrative. Hickey (2000) uses prototype theory to distil this into an account that sees the core use of the after-construction as conveying immediacy and relevance to the present; it also has a high informational value and its use in ‘giving out’ is a function of informational value and present relevance. Amador Moreno and O’Keeffe (forthcoming), using speech data from the Limerick Corpus of Irish English (Farr, Murphy & O’Keeffe 2002), add to this account that it is often used as a narrative device ‘to present events as emotionally vivid and dramatic’ from the speaker’s perspective.

Extending our knowledge of (N)IrE on other fronts, Amador Moreno’s (2006) monograph on the Donegal proletarian writer MacGill, is the most comprehensive, linguistically informed study to date of the language of any single Irish writer in English. It is an exhaustive account of MacGill’s language, which Amador Moreno argues is important as evidence of Donegal English in the early twentieth century. From a bilingual background in Donegal, MacGill’s early novels show the effects of syntactic transfer, discourse features and overgeneralisation of rules from the English superstrate. The analysis of syntactic features is based on Filppula’s (1999) account of IrE grammar, so that Amador Moreno covers a wide range of features: uses of the definite article, reflexives, habitual and perfect aspect, clefting, topicalisation, word order in embedded questions, subordinating and,
discourse markers, and the use of prepositions (Amador Moreno 2006: 59ff.). MacGill’s uses of these features are evaluated in a sensitive discussion of their origins as possible retentions from older forms of English/Scots or Irish substrate influence on Donegal English, or the result of learning strategies in a situation of language contact and shift. Amador Moreno’s data is studied against a careful reading of the existing literature on IrE, not only confirming the existence of features in early-twentieth-century Donegal, but also adding to our understanding of certain constructions.

For example, Amador Moreno (2005, 2006: 140ff.) examines MacGill’s use of a number of discourse markers, with his use of sure receiving most attention. In IrE, sure typically, but not exclusively, appears in front position, and its primary function is to add emphatic force to a proposition or as an intensifier, as in (6):

(6) “Sure the mountain is there to this very hour …” (Amador Moreno 2005: 84)

But it also carries other connotations: it can be a marker of cause; it can imply contrast; it can have an indexical function, referring back to previous utterances or given information; it can mark an appeal for consensus or agreement; and it may signal transition to a new topic or perspective (Amador Moreno 2005: 83ff.). Amador Moreno’s use of literary dialect data breaks new ground in several ways: first, by looking at discourse markers rather than other linguistic levels, and second, because the features she examines have not previously been looked at in any detail in spoken conversation in IrE (but cf. also Kallen 2005).

4.4.3 (Re)shaping the vernacular
Given his Ulster origins, William Carleton’s native UlstEng would have shown Scots influence. As his stories are set in his home area, we might expect peasant characters portrayed by a writer concerned with authenticity to reflect Scots features of the local dialect in their speech. A recent study of Carleton’s peasant NiRe between the first and second stories in his first collection (McCafferty 2008) shows him to have practiced ‘dialect hygiene’, a conscious literary dialect levelling, aimed at avoiding marked features of northern speech and ensuring that his peasant dialect consisted of features shared by most, if not all, varieties of IrE. Besides making his text more readable, Carleton levelled the dialect for two reasons: he shared the widespread prejudice against the Scots-influenced varieties of Ulster, and he aimed to be the national writer of Ireland; a levelled ‘national’ variety of IrE served that aim better than one marked by Scots features that set UlstEng apart.

5. This discourse structure almost certainly goes back to Irish, e.g. Go deimhin, tá an sliabh ann fós [sure, is the mountain there still], an assumption which is all the more likely given that Patrick McGill was a native speaker of Irish. – Raymond Hickey.
In two of his early stories (‘Ned’ and ‘Tasks’), published consecutively in his first collection, *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (1830), Carleton took active steps to make his literary dialect more generally Irish, even as the overall dialect element was reduced. First, he excised features of general colloquial English, like final stop deletion (*an’* < *and*), *h*-dropping in unstressed *him*, and alveolar [*in*] rather than velar nasal [*in*] in *-ing* endings. Consequently, any remaining non-standard features mark his characters as Irish. Their Irishness is then reinforced by: (a) retention of features shared by speakers throughout all or most of Ireland, like dental /t/ and /d/ before /r/ in, e.g. *wondher* and *counthry*, and (b) avoidance of features typical of NIrE only, e.g. final stop voicing in, e.g. *bud* < *but* and realisations of words in the *foot* set with central [*a*]. As a result, his peasants’ speech shifts southwards, and the southward movement is underscored by retaining or increasing the frequency of features typical of SIrE only, such as merger of *pen* and *pin* in [*i*], which appears to be typical of the south-west only. Both General IrE and typically SIrE forms double as a proportion of all dialect forms between the two stories (46% of dialect features in ‘Ned’, 96% in ‘Tasks’). In contrast, General English and UlstEng features drop from 32% to 3.5% and 21% to 0.5%, respectively (McCafferty 2009). Thus, the text becomes less dialectal overall, but more solidly Irish, with a Southern rather than a Northern tinge. This leaves Carleton’s peasants with a levelled Irish variety of English, largely cleansed of Northern, Scots-influenced forms, consisting of features shared by the majority of speakers in most parts of the country.

While Carleton’s practice was motivated by negative attitudes towards Northern speech, there is also a positive aspect to his avoidance of Scots-influenced elements in his wish to promote a positive, English-speaking Irishness. In this, he may be seen as an exponent of postcolonial ‘nativisation’ (Schneider 2007), as shown by the fact that his linguistic choices serve the clear purpose of constructing a more representative, national literary dialect. In so doing, Carleton’s literary dialect moves beyond mere representation into the realm of political and national aspirations. As such, it is an interesting object of linguistic study in itself, and all the more so since his political and national ambition was not, as one might expect, to see Ireland free, but the moderate nationalist position that the Irish nation should be fully integrated within the United Kingdom as equal partners with full citizenship (Carleton 1830: x). Carleton’s

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6. Carleton himself moved south, of course, and lived in Dublin most of his life. He may, as Raymond Hickey has pointed out (personal communication), have adopted these features, perhaps unconsciously, into his own speech. However, the changes made in these stories represent deliberate, conscious authorial/editorial decisions that shift his characters’ IrE in the particular direction outlined.
treatment of the language is a reminder that the creative aspect of literary production may also be relevant to the study of dialect representations.

4.5 **ICE-Ireland** – a corpus of present-day Irish English

*ICE-Ireland*, the Ireland component of the *International Corpus of English* (Kallen & Kirk 2008) puts the study of present-day IrE on a new footing and promises to vastly improve our knowledge of standard usage in both parts of Ireland. *ICE-Ireland* is a balanced one-million-word corpus, consisting of spoken and written subcorpora from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. A broad range of genres is sampled; the written texts represent 17 text-type categories (Kallen & Kirk 2008: 10). *ICE-Ireland* can, therefore, be used to study differences in written (and spoken) standard usage in the two jurisdictions, even though it cannot reveal much about some of the more peculiarly Irish phenomena that have attracted the attention of scholars of IrE to date, since these occur infrequently, if at all, in the contexts and text types sampled in ICE corpora.

Work using *ICE-Ireland* to date is summarised in Kirk and Kallen (2006) and Kallen and Kirk (2007). Many of their sample analyses do not distinguish spoken from written uses, and others use the spoken subcorpora only. Yet their comparisons between *ICE-Ireland* and *ICE-GB*, and between the northern and southern *ICE-Ireland* subcorpora are suggestive of how useful this corpus will be for investigating written IrE and for comparisons between IrE and other major national varieties as more ICE components become available.

Only some of the findings reported in Kirk and Kallen (2006), which focuses on Irish influence on IrE, are relevant to discussion of writing. Use of reflexive pronouns *myself*, *himself*, etc., in subject position is studied in data from, e.g. social letters. This feature, probably a transfer from Irish (Filppula 1999: 77ff.; Hickey 2007: 243ff.), clearly sets *ICE-Ireland* apart from *ICE-GB* (Kirk & Kallen 2006: 103), where no such uses occur. Although this and other Irish-influenced features are not particularly frequent in *ICE-Ireland*, Kirk and Kallen argue that, due to their salience, even minimal use of Irish-influenced features functions to establish and define the speech community (Kirk & Kallen 2006: 108ff.).

In another analysis that includes data from social letters, Kallen and Kirk (2007: 136ff.) report differences in rates of use of certain dialect words between NIrE and SIrE. Use of borrowings from Irish in, e.g. administrative prose and learned natural science texts, are more frequent in the Republic, reflecting the place of Irish in official domains there (Kallen & Kirk 2007: 143ff.). Their analysis of auxiliary *have* suggests the conservatism of *ICE-Ireland* compared to *ICE-GB*: IrE prefers *have* + simple NP, and makes less use of the innovative *do* + *have* and *have got* (Kallen & Kirk 2007: 146ff.). Another analysis using some written data shows the relative unity of NIrE and SIrE
contra ICE-GB in use of non-finite subordinate clauses (Kallen & Kirk 2007: 151ff.). In avoiding do + have, IrE is more British than British English, where this ultimately American innovation is spreading (Kirk personal communication).

While Kallen and Kirk (2008) is a corpus of standard or supraregional usage north and south of the border, it can be used to address topics like the linguistic consequences of partition. It permits comparison between standard English in Ireland and standard varieties used elsewhere, helping to chart variability in standard Englishes as used in countries that share a common, relatively invariant core that may still vary across national boundaries as a result of different dialectal and linguistic histories, differential pace of change, and other factors (Kallen & Kirk 2007: 154). Significantly, ICE-Ireland demonstrates that variability persists even in the standard language; standardisation, understood as the establishment of an invariant norm, is never fully achieved, despite educational and social pressures, and a strong prescriptive ideology, that favour the standard (Kirk & Kallen 2006: 109).

4.6 CORIECOR – Corpus of Irish English Correspondence

The discussion above has shown that studies of written texts, however patchy the coverage, have contributed a great deal to our current state of knowledge about UlstEng. The greater linguistic potential contained in written texts may be unlocked by constructing corpora of a wide range of text categories representing NIrE – and IrE more generally – through the last four-and-a-half centuries. CORIECOR – Corpus of Irish English Correspondence (Amador Moreno and McCafferty in preparation) is intended to provide a basis for historical study of IrE, north and south. As with ICE-Ireland for present-day standard IrE, diachronic regional differences in IrE are deemed to be a matter for empirical investigation. In the first instance, the plan is to compile a corpus of personal letters to and from Irish emigrants, representing a text type towards the oral end of the scale. This part of the corpus will provide good coverage of the period from c. 1740 to the early twentieth century, as represented in the Irish Emigration Database (IED) hosted at the Centre for Migration Studies (at the Ulster-American Folk Park, Omagh, Co. Tyrone). While the corpus is at an early stage of compilation, the raw material included at present contains approximately 2.5 million words of personal letters dating from c. 1670 to 1940. The intention is to add other text types later, eventually covering the full range of categories in Schneider’s (2002) hierarchy. CORIECOR is intended to feed studies of IrE primarily from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. In this period, first, Ireland underwent large-scale immigration from Great Britain, giving way after about 1750 to mass emigration to North America, Great Britain and the southern hemisphere (e.g. Miller 1985, 2008; Bardon 2001; Canny 2001; Lambkin & Fitzgerald 2008). In the same period, Ireland also underwent language shift from Irish to English that was almost total by 1900,
and new varieties of English evolved in the island. CORIECOR will permit study of variation and change in IrE throughout this formative period, providing data for comparison between regional varieties of IrE and with other varieties for which relevant corpora have been compiled.

5. Prospect

The value of paying attention to the existing evidence for IrE in the past, which can only be approached via written texts, is shown by the above discussion of the results of previous research, largely achieved without access to large digitised corpora, but well worth paying attention to nonetheless for the insights it affords and the hypotheses it may suggest for future research that will fill in the gaps in our knowledge of the history of IrE. New resources for the study of written NIrE are now or will become available (e.g. Hickey 2003; Kirk & Kallen 2008; Amador Moreno & McCafferty in preparation) and hold out the promise of more systematic approaches to relevant issues in the twenty-first century. In combination with the extensive previous literature on varieties of IrE (see references in introduction) and the spoken material available in, e.g. the Northern Ireland Transcribed Corpus of Speech (Kirk 2004), ICE-Ireland (Kirk & Kallen 2008), A Sound Atlas of Irish English (Hickey 2004b), and the Limerick Corpus of Irish English (Farr et al. 2002), these resources promise to take the study of IrE, north and south, spoken and written, to new levels of sophistication in the twenty-first century.

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Dialect literature and English in the USA
Standardization and national linguistic identity

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This chapter analyzes the role of literary dialect in attempts to establish a distinctly American language and especially to authorize and enforce a preferred standard. The roles of gender, race, and linguistic diversity are key considerations to the analysis in light of popular nineteenth-century assumptions that conflated ideas about a preferred national language variety with developing ideologies about national identity. This chapter outlines the ways that these assumptions found voice in the national discourse, including via the deployment of literary dialect, which both documented and participated in that discourse.

1. Introduction

Literary dialect has documented as well as contributed to the development of the English language in the United States. Since colonial times, literary representations of the English spoken in the U.S. have functioned as travelogue curiosity, social status marker, regional identifier, comic trope, and mimetic device, sometimes performing multiple functions. Building on traditions established by British writers, who were among the first to attempt literary depictions of the speechways of colonial North Americans, U.S. authors took these traditions in new directions, responding to and thereby helping to document the growing diversity of the American people and the ways they used the English language. Analysis of dialect in American literary texts, especially those produced in the nineteenth century, beginning just a few decades after the United States declared its independence from England, helps to color in details about the development of what eventually became a uniquely American English for the newly independent nation, albeit an American English of extensive internal variety. It can also provide insights into the ways that varieties of English were understood, interpreted, and valued by participants in the American speech community as it evolved and established its norms. Literary dialect thus illustrates the values and debates surrounding the earliest attempts to establish a distinctly American language, as well as those that drove ongoing efforts to authorize and enforce a preferred national variety.
This chapter, then, focuses on the intertwining social, political, and linguistic concerns of the new republic as they found their way into print, and specifically into literary representations of speech. These representations are then considered in terms of the insights they can provide into language attitudes and controversies in general and into those of the burgeoning American nation in the nineteenth century in particular. The discussion here does not center on questions about whether literary dialect is reliable linguistic data for helping to reconstruct and document older varieties of language. Rather, it emphasizes other creative applications for literary dialect, such as using it to map social and political contexts as they impact linguistic issues in the public consciousness. The contexts considered in this chapter, namely the conditions that informed the development of American English and the authorization of its linguistic norms and standards, are used to demonstrate ways to apply literary dialect analysis with non-traditional linguistic objectives in mind, but the type of analysis described here would work in other contexts as well, as determined by research goals and researcher interests, as outlined below.

The discussion begins with methodological considerations, before moving into an overview of the conditions in early America that informed the campaign for a unique and ultimately standardized national linguistic identity, followed by a discussion of how nineteenth-century literary dialect operated in relation to the political and linguistic goals associated with the move toward a national language and especially toward establishment of a preferred standard. Finally, the role of linguistic and ethnic diversity is considered, especially the role of African American English (AAE) and its speakers in challenging long-held mainstream assumptions that a preferred national variety is or should be white, and how these complications found voice in literary dialectal representations. Examples of literary dialect analyses and suggestions for possible future work according to the methods and theoretical models proposed herein appear throughout the chapter.

2. Methodological considerations and assumptions

One of my working assumptions is that literary texts can yield useful linguistic information when appropriate research questions and methods for addressing these questions guide the inquiry. In previous work (Minnick 2004), I advocate a set of guiding principles for literary dialect analysis projects with non-traditional linguistic aims. These principles apply to the uses of literary speech data discussed in this chapter as well. Since my earlier work outlines and demonstrates these principles extensively, I direct interested readers to that study and discuss only a few key principles here that most directly engage the questions this volume is designed to address. These key principles are comprehensive analysis using corpus methods, application of inferential
statistics and rigorous counting procedures, and benchmarking literary dialect with
external linguistic data.

The principles emphasize comprehensive corpus design and computational analysis
methodologies because of their efficiency and accuracy but also because these methods
reveal patterns in the data that are otherwise extremely difficult if not impossible to dis-
cern. For example, in previous work (Minnick 2001, 2004), my findings about the dis-
tribution of linguistic features in the speech of African American characters in William
Faulkner’s 1929 novel The Sound and the Fury are at significant odds with those of other
researchers who used extracts of the literary dialect rather than a character’s speech data
(or that of several characters) in its entirety, according to the comprehensive analysis
principle. Some of these incongruencies are attributable to alternative interpretations
of the data or of the literary text. But it is clear that the different sampling methods also
contributed substantially to the conflicting outcomes. This raises the question of whether
results of analyses that use smaller selections of data may be specific to the sample. Addi-
tionally, an author’s artistic objectives can problematize even the most rigorous selection
protocols, because an author may have different artistic or narrative goals at different
points in a literary text, or during different phases of its composition, especially for works
that were years in creation. In other words, an author may deploy dialect inconsistently
for a number of reasons, whether deliberate or not, and these disparities are worth iden-
tifying, comparing, and analyzing in relation to the whole. What may appear at first
glance to be inconsistency in the portrayal of the speech of a single character in The
Sound and the Fury, for example, turns out upon comprehensive analysis to reveal a
complex and remarkably consistent set of patterns that map a continuum of social, rela-
tional, and linguistic attitudes among several key characters in the novel and that suggest
similar patterns in real-world speech communities.

The Sound and the Fury is a novel in four sections, each narrated in a different
voice, but with the same characters figuring (and speaking) throughout. For this text,
a comprehensive approach that considers a character’s speech in its entirety as well as
comparatively as it is represented in each section is far less likely to produce uncertain
results, or in other words, results that might be specific to a particular sample and thus
possibly different from the results a different sample might have generated. For example,
some researchers have concluded, as Davis (1983: 117) observes, that “there is little dif-
ference between the colloquial speech of blacks and that of whites” in the first of the
novel’s four sections, known as the ‘Benjy section’ after its narrator, compared to the
subsequent sections. This interpretation turns out to be partially but not completely
accurate. Certainly visual representations of phonological features of AAE are fewer in
the Benjy section than elsewhere, as a comprehensive analysis confirms. But the rate of
representation for a number of grammatical features is consistent throughout the novel,
including in the Benjy section. Table 1 illustrates the frequencies for several phonological
and grammatical features in the speech of two major characters, Dilsey Gibson and her
grandson, Luster. Stopping of syllable-initial fricatives, a phonological feature common in AAE,¹ is not articulated at all in the Benjy section, but frequencies for this feature in the speech of both Dilsey and Luster approach one hundred percent in subsequent sections, a trend consistent with the way that phonological features of AAE are represented across sections of the novel, as Table 1 also shows. Conversely, frequencies for a number of key grammatical features are high as well as stable across the novel. Two sample features, copula or auxiliary deletion, and third-person -s deletion, illustrate this consistency in Table 1.

Table 1. Type and token analysis with frequencies for phonological and grammatical features for key speakers in The Sound and the Fury. (Significant at p ≤.05 except where noted. After Minnick 2004.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>syllable-initial fricative-stopping</th>
<th>all phonological features</th>
<th>copula or auxiliary deletion</th>
<th>3rd person s-deletion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dilsey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjy section</td>
<td>0/93 0%</td>
<td>24/639 3.8%</td>
<td>64/86 74%</td>
<td>15/17 88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent sections</td>
<td>183/191 96%</td>
<td>580/884 66%</td>
<td>96/136 71%</td>
<td>12/15 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjy section</td>
<td>0/78 0%</td>
<td>12/275 4.4%</td>
<td>26/35 74%</td>
<td>8/9 89%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsequent sections</td>
<td>55/56 98%</td>
<td>202/294 69%</td>
<td>36/43 84%</td>
<td>14/15 93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not significant.

Additionally, of the remaining six grammatical features analyzed for Minnick (2004: 159–161), two² showed similar consistency in the speech of both Dilsey and Luster, while the remaining four varied in frequency, with several, including multiple negation and noninverted questions, occurring at higher frequencies in the Benjy section than in one or more subsequent sections. For The Sound and the Fury, then, categorical claims about the rate at which dialectal features are deployed in the text do not always hold up when investigated via comprehensive analysis.

For other works of literature, their unique designs and structures will call for unique corpus development appropriate to those texts. The common principle is the use of comprehensive analysis. My position is that for studies of phonological and grammatical features in a literary text, a comprehensive corpus approach is the best way to avoid potentially sample-specific results. Such results are a distinct possibility when interpretations drawn from smaller selections of literary speech data are used to

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¹. See, for instance, Green (2002).

². First-person verb + -s and second-person verb + -s, the latter rare in AAE but deployed in The Sound and Fury as a marker of vernacular speech.
make wide, generalized claims about the language in a particular text or of a particular character, about the fitness of the literary dialect in that text to function as real-world linguistic evidence, or about literary dialect as it is used by a particular author.

Information about linguistic features identified by way of comprehensive analysis of literary speech corpora is made more useful through adherence to rigorous counting methods and the application of inferential statistics, which is the next key guiding principle. Literary speech corpora for individual characters can amount to thousands of words each. For phonological data, the type-and-token counts familiar to language variationists make it possible, for example, to compare relative frequencies for particular features among the speech of several characters, within a single character who functions or is represented in different ways in different parts of a text (as in The Sound and the Fury), or between fictional and real speakers. Additionally, statistical analysis works as a probability measure to determine whether distributions of these features are linguistically and/or textually meaningful rather than simply the result of chance or random variation. In conjunction with a corpus approach, these frequencies and probabilities are particularly valuable, because larger and more comprehensive data sets increase the level of confidence with which claims about the data can be made and supported.

The final key guiding principle is the use of benchmarking, or reference to external sources of data from real speakers, to evaluate a corpus of literary speech data and thereby its fitness for use as linguistic evidence. These uses have traditionally included attesting or reconstructing earlier language varieties and features, but analysis of literary dialect can also help decode authorial language attitudes or those of others, such as characters within a text, as well as attitudes held – or imagined to be held – by the contemporaneous reading audience. Analyzing literary dialect alongside non-literary speech data, rather than relying exclusively on literary data to make broad and general claims about the language of any particular moment in time, can help fill in details that may be missing from our knowledge of earlier varieties of language. In other words, literary dialect is often at its most valuable as linguistic data when it is consulted in relation to external (non-literary) sources in order to try to document the linguistic features reproduced in literary speech. Good sources for real-speaker data include community-based studies and results of survey research. For example, data collected for the various Linguistic Atlas projects conducted in the Unites States can be useful for benchmarking diverse regional, social, and ethnic varieties as they were spoken through much of the twentieth century. Additionally, while the oldest Linguistic Atlas data in the U.S. dates back to the 1920s, the project’s original emphasis on interviewing elderly speakers results today in an apparent-time window through which it is possible to access information about speech from decades earlier. For The Sound and the Fury, the extensive documentation of Mississippi speech in the Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States (LAGS), collected between 1968 and 1983, is of particular value (Pederson, McDaniel, Adams, & Liao, 1989).
Similarly, North Carolina author Charles W. Chesnutt’s literary dialect contains rich prospects for exploration when considered alongside the linguistic data of elderly North Carolinians interviewed for the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States (LAMSAS) in the 1930s (Kretzschmar 2001). Chesnutt uses extensive dialectal representations in a cycle of stories written between 1887 and 1898, many of these collected in his 1899 volume The Conjure Woman. The conjure stories, as they are known, take place during slavery but are situated in a post-Civil War narrative frame set some time later, probably in the mid to late 1870s. The Atlas material is not an exact match for Chesnutt’s literary demographic, even as apparent-time data, but it is still a useful benchmark for the speech of characters in the stories and of Julius McAdoo, the former slave aged approximately 55 who narrates them. For example, Chesnutt documents several phonological variants that have since become rare but correspond to features recorded in the speech of a number of older interviewees in the LAMSAS and LAGS projects, including alternation of /e/ for /a/ in articulations of because, which Chesnutt represents with the phonetic respelling ‘kaze. African American speakers in North Carolina interviewed for LAMSAS in 1937 articulated the /e/ variant in all but one case, as did most of the white Type I speakers (‘folk’ speakers, according to Atlas criteria) interviewed in or near Chesnutt’s hometown of Fayetteville, North Carolina, the same year. In response to fieldworker Guy Lowman’s questions, a 60-year-old African American interviewee noted that the /a/ variant was “new,” and she and another North Carolina interviewee, a seventy-year-old white woman, both said they considered the /e/ variant “old” or “old-fashioned.” The Gulf States data is also useful to an analysis of the same feature as Mark Twain deploys it in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884), in which Jim, an escaped African American slave, uses the variant, which Twain variously respells as bekase, ‘kase, and ‘kaze. For a traditional application of literary dialect, i.e. to attest and document earlier features and varieties of spoken language, the data that Twain and Chesnutt contribute on this feature supplements the later Atlas data by illustrating its occurrence in context and yielding evidence of its use at least as far back as the 1880s, a time from which there is little surviving spoken-language data from real speakers.

Benchmarking can thus corroborate researcher interpretations of linguistic features in literary dialect and provide documentation for the features deployed in the literary texts. Conversely, though, in other cases benchmarking may expose literary dialectal features as stereotypical depictions or orthographic conventions that signify something other than authentic speech, information that can be central to an attitudes-based analysis. But I do not concede that literary data should always be subordinated to other documentary sources of earlier varieties of language. In many ways, literary dialect is uniquely situated to help illuminate widely held language attitudes and beliefs, as well as the social and racial attitudes, beliefs, and biases bound up in these language perceptions. For example, Azevedo (2002: 505) argues convincingly that a key application for literary dialect is “what the interplay of prestigious and non-prestigious
speech discloses about relationships between language and power, marginalization, and social exclusion, and the role of language variation in the formation and maintenance of social hierarchies and cultural ideologies.” As the work of Azevedo and others has shown, literary dialect is a fruitful source for information about language attitudes, their role in social organization, and what they reveal about social valuations associated with language varieties and features within and beyond the text. Therefore, I contend that literary data has value in its own right. For the purposes of this chapter, thinking about literary dialect in part as documentation of the mainstream linguistic assumptions of its time, and in part as validation and thus perpetuation of these assumptions, is particularly apt: Representations of spoken language in American literature are rich with clues about language attitudes in the U.S. and what these attitudes might have meant to the construction of a national identity, linguistic and otherwise, and consequently, what role they might have played in attempts to institutionalize a uniquely American English and, perhaps more important, to impose a preferred variety.

The kinds of applications outlined here, however, do not free the analyst from the responsibility to consider the quality and reliability of literary speech data, whether it is used to make claims about language use and variation, language change, language attitudes, or to support any other kind of linguistic claim. Hence the emphasis on benchmarking. This is not to say, though, that accuracy of representation, the determination of which is often the sole aim of reliability testing for literary dialect, functions in the kinds of analyses suggested in this chapter in the same ways that it does when literary data is used to reconstruct historical varieties or to make claims about varieties or features and their distribution at a particular point in time. The success or failure of a literary dialectal representation, including but not exclusively in terms of its value as linguistic data, is not necessarily determinable on the basis of how closely it resembles real speech. On the contrary, attempts at strict linguistic accuracy can present a serious artistic problem for a literary text. A linguistically exact literary representation of vernacular speech, if it were possible to create one, which it may not be given the constraints of orthography, would have aesthetic costs and consequences. As Bernstein (2000: 340) has noted, “accuracy is constrained by the very nature of the creative process [and by] the very limited space of the text.” While some linguists opposed to the use of literary dialect as linguistic evidence might cite precisely these aesthetic and orthographic roadblocks to accuracy as justification to reject literary data, perhaps arguing (rightly) that the author’s primary concern with the artistic value of his or her work necessarily subordinates linguistic concerns, such a claim would place unnecessary limits on what linguistic researchers can do with literary dialect and on the value of such data not despite but because of these constraints on their creators.

A literary dialectal representation that does not pass the accuracy test, then, can be especially revealing of the kind of linguistic information under consideration
here, including what a questionable representation might indicate about the language attitudes of the author and the linguistic expectations of his or her contemporaries. Indeed, a conventionalized, stereotypical representation of dialect may be particularly revealing in this respect. Thus, information about accuracy, consistency, and reliability might be applied very differently when literary data is being used to explore social attitudes and political contexts affecting language use and perceptions. Still, regardless of how the information will be used, reliability evaluations need to be conducted and thus the benchmarking principle applies. The common denominator is that accuracy, consistency, and reliability always matter in some way; they just do not always matter in the same ways. In other words, answering questions about the accuracy of a representation is critical, but it is never enough for those to be the only questions.  

Finally, while it does not qualify as the kind of authentic linguistic data that benchmarking requires, metalinguistic commentary can be a useful supplementary source in conjunction with documented non-literary speech data and literary dialect. The next part of this chapter features writings of two prominent advocates of a national languages, John Adams and Noah Webster. Their commentary highlights a significant point in the linguistic evolution of early U.S. English and stands as documentary evidence of attempts to engineer its development. In other words, their writings today allow us access to the political environment and other contexts within which the relative statuses of varieties of English in the U.S. were negotiated in early America. Because these treatises established a widely accepted and lasting paradigm for what U.S. English could and, their authors believed, should be, a paradigm whose influence is evident in much American literary dialect of the nineteenth century, we next turn briefly to them.

3. The early American context

The Americanization of English was both an overtly political phenomenon and a natural linguistic process. It was political in the sense that a number of influential proponents

3. Obviously, these principles will not always apply to investigations of discourse-level features or other categories of language above the level of phonological, grammatical, or lexical features. But they may often be useful in such cases, particularly if large bodies of text are analyzed. For example, an investigation (proposed later in this chapter) of code-switching by otherwise standard-speaking frame narrators in the ‘Old Southwestern’ humor genre could potentially benefit from comprehensive analysis. Additionally, recourse to the linguistic, topical, and pragmatic motivations for code-switching in real speakers, as well as to the constraints on switching, is crucial to benchmarking the literary data and informing its analysis, as is recourse to external data in relation to the linguistic features that authors use to signal as well as to characterize the shifts.
of national independence also campaigned emphatically for the establishment of an American English distinct from that spoken in the mother country as a necessary part of the process of self-determination. Language consciousness shows up in the writings of a number of U.S. ‘founding fathers’, including John Adams (1735–1826). Adams represented Massachusetts as delegate to the First and Second Continental Congresses beginning in 1774 and helped to lead the independence movement. He later served as the first Vice President of the United States (1789–1797) under George Washington and succeeded Washington as the second president (1797–1801). The writings of Adams and others who called for a uniquely American version of English helped to construct early but enduring ideologies about national identity, including in relation to language, and set the stage for nineteenth-century writing, including literary works, that promoted similar ideologies, albeit not always consciously so. Adams (1780: 249) prefaced a letter to Congress, the purpose of which was to propose an American language academy, with an argument attributing the quality of a nation and its people in part to its language:

As eloquence is cultivated with more care in free republics than in other governments, it has been found by constant experience that such republics have produced the greatest purity, copiousness, and perfection of language. It is not to be disputed that the form of government has an influence upon language, and language in its turn influences not only the form of government, but the temper, the sentiments, and manners of the people. The admirable models which have been transmitted through the world, and continued down to these days, so as to form an essential part of the education of mankind from generation to generation, by those two ancient towns, Athens and Rome, would be sufficient, without any other argument, to show the United States the importance to their liberty, prosperity, and glory, of an early attention to the subject of eloquence and language.

Noah Webster (1758–1843), Adams’s younger contemporary and a fellow advocate for independence, was a teacher by profession who was also politically active. A strong believer in political and cultural – including linguistic – independence, Webster is best known today for his dictionaries of American English. His publications were instrumental in helping to promote and legitimize the Americanized spellings he championed and in many cases created, an effort that was largely successful in part as a result of the popularity of his ‘blue-backed speller’, which sold nearly 100 million copies in the hundred years after its first printing in 1793. Webster’s *Compendious Dictionary of the English Language* (1806) was also notable for its Americanized spellings and for its status as the first dictionary of American English, but it was his comprehensive *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828), with 70,000 entries, that cemented his enduring reputation as one of the most important lexicographers of all time.

Webster vigorously championed the establishment of a distinctly American English, which he saw as a necessary act of American identity and self-determination. In *Dissertations on the English Language* (1789: 20), he insisted that “As an independent nation, our honor requires us to have a system of our own, in language as well
as government” and questioned American attachment to British linguistic customs and literature, claiming that the “taste of her writers is already corrupted, and her language on the decline.” In “An Essay on the Necessity, Advantages, and Practicability of Reforming the Mode of Spelling,” included as an appendix to the Dissertations, he again appeals to unabashed nationalism:

[A] national language is a band of national union. Every engine should be employed to render the people of this country national; to call their attachments home to their own country; and to inspire them with the pride of national character. However they may boast of Independence, and the freedom of their government, yet their opinions are not sufficiently independent; an astonishing respect for the arts and literature of their parent country, and a blind imitation of its manners, are still prevalent among the Americans. Thus an habitual respect for another country, deserved indeed and once laudable, turns their attention from their own interests, and prevents their respecting themselves.

(397–8; emphasis in original)

Webster concludes this essay in even stronger terms:

Let us then seize the present moment, and establish a national language, as well as a national government. Let us remember that there is a certain respect due to the opinions of other nations. As an independent people, our reputation abroad demands that, in all things, we should be federal; be national; for if we do not respect ourselves, we may be assured that other nations will not respect us. In short, let it be impressed upon the mind of every American, that to neglect the means of commanding respect abroad, is treason against the character and dignity of a brave independent people.

(406; emphasis in original)

But despite the passionate rhetoric, much of which was widely circulated and influential in its time, most of the differences today between U.S. and British English, apart from Webster’s Americanized spellings, actually evolved by way of linguistic rather than political mechanisms, meaning that these distinctions owe more to the natural processes of language change than to external interference, including of the politically motivated kind advocated by Webster, Adams, and others. Although it is indisputable that Webster successfully entrenched a number of new American spelling conventions, it is equally undeniable that the U.S. English that exists today as a multiplicity of uniquely American varieties results primarily from geographical distance from the English as it was spoken in England, albeit in all its many varieties, and from language contact situations and immigration patterns unique to North America from the colonial period onward. In other words, a unique kind of English, or collection of Englishes, would certainly have evolved in the colonies – later, the republic – without any interference at all from those ardent nationalists, and in fact it most assuredly did just that by a process already well underway by the late eighteenth century. The first
permanent English-speaking settlements were established in North America during the seventeenth century, and the diversity of language spoken in the colonies practically from the beginning is well documented, even among native speakers of English, who arrived speaking a variety of long-established British dialects and came into practically immediate contact with one another and with speakers of multiple indigenous languages (see, for instance, Krapp 1925; Kurath 1928; Baron 1985, and Bailey 1991 and 2004.) Also, as Bailey (2004: 10–11) reports, the English-speaking population of the colonies grew from zero in 1600 to a quarter million by 1700, mushrooming to 2.8 million by 1780. Bailey also observes that more than twenty percent of colonial European Americans were not native speakers of English, resulting, by the time of the American Revolution in 1776, in what he describes as “communities with as many languages (if not more) than any modern city in the same region” (Bailey 2004: 11). Under these conditions, unique language-contact situations were inevitable, and so was American divergence from British English.

But the establishment of a prestige or preferred variety of English in the U.S. was far from a natural, inevitable process. The campaign to establish a national standard was driven by concerns about variation and the differential value that even the earliest proponents of standardization already recognized as attached to different varieties then spoken in the colonies. Similarly, in the nineteenth century, anxiety about the diversity of languages spoken by waves of newly arriving immigrants, still mostly European at that point, intensified the promotion of a preferred standard variety. This anxiety resulted in the reinforcement of widely held mainstream beliefs about language varieties and attitudes toward speakers of lesser-valued immigrant, ethnic, or social varieties. Still, even eighteenth-century proponents of standardization, many of them the same independence advocates who promoted a national language, were already apprehensive about the burgeoning of varieties that characterized the new and evolving American English. Their maneuvers to authorize a prestige variety found voice in their writings as well. Webster (1789: 18–19), for example, argued as vehemently for a uniform standard for American English as he did for a national variety, on grounds of what he saw as “the influence which a uniformity of speech may have on national attachments”:

[T]here are … important reasons, why the language of this country should be reduced to such fixed principles, as may give its pronunciation and construction all the certainty and uniformity which any living tongue is capable of receiving.…. The body of the people, governed by habit, will still retain their respective peculiarities of speaking; and for want of schools and proper books, fall into many inaccuracies, which, incorporating with the language of the state where they live, may imperceptibly corrupt the national language. Nothing but the establishment of schools and some uniformity in the use of books, can annihilate differences in speaking and preserve the purity of the American tongue.
Perhaps most interesting about Webster’s argument, apart from his eyebrow-raising claim that there had ever been a “purity of the American tongue” to be preserved and protected, are his convictions that the fledgling nation could not function as a unified whole without a standard version of American English to be spoken by all, and thus that a failure to standardize the language would have political consequences. Also worth noting is his implication that linguistic prejudices were strictly identified with the language varieties themselves rather than projections of prejudices against certain kinds of speakers, and could thus be eliminated upon the adoption of a uniform standard:

A sameness of pronunciation is of considerable consequence in a political view; for provincial accents are disagreeable to strangers and sometimes have an unhappy effect upon the social affections. All men have local attachments, which lead them to believe their own practice to be the least exceptionable. Pride and prejudice incline men to treat the practice of their neighbors with some degree of contempt. Thus small differences in pronunciation at first excite ridicule – a habit of laughing at the singularities of strangers is followed by disrespect – and without respect friendship is a name, and social intercourse a mere ceremony.

(19–20)

Webster was not alone among his contemporaries in campaigning for not only a uniquely American English but also for authorization of a standard version. Cmiel (1990: 46) notes that in the late eighteenth century, “it was difficult to find anyone who did not argue that the nation needed a refined, cultivated tongue.” Cmiel counts Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, Benjamin Rush, and Thomas Jefferson, among others, in addition to Webster and Adams, as prominent proponents of “a refined language and literature in the new nation.” We might surmise that the standard version of American English each of these prominent men envisioned probably sounded a lot like the one he himself spoke.

The insistence on a national language to distinguish the new republic from England, and especially on the authorization of a standard version thereof, plays out in interesting ways in corresponding efforts to launch a national literature, another project the founders advocated. Literary dialect as it functioned in the nascent national literature, with a few dialectal representations appearing in the eighteenth century before fully flowering in the nineteenth, largely cooperates with the goals that Adams, Webster, and others promoted for the new nation, including their emphases on distinctiveness and a cultivated standard. That is, the discourse surrounding the establishment of a standard American language informed literary dialectal representations as well as ideas about what an American literary tradition ought to look like, including how it might best serve the construction and projection of a national identity.
4. Literary dialect, a new national identity, and standardization in American English

Lobbying for the institutionalization of a preferred language variety was not a particularly innovative use of literary dialect on the parts of American authors. Blank (1996) demonstrates that the deployment of literary dialect in British literature in the service of helping to determine and authorize prestige forms of English dates as far back as the Renaissance. But the role of literary dialect in the authorization of a standard for U.S. English still makes an interesting story. Through analysis of texts, we can find evidence that some nineteenth-century authors who used literary dialect participated, sometimes subliminally and other times more overtly, in debates about standardization. Their dialectal representations help shed light on language attitudes that prevailed amidst the historical, social, and linguistic contexts within which the authors worked, and here some of the most interesting uses for literary dialect as linguistic data emerge. To illustrate these uses, we look next at some of the ways that literary representations of dialectal speech functioned in American literature in the nineteenth century, especially as part of a long-running national discourse about the character, language, literature, and identity of the young nation, a conversation whose genesis dates, as we have seen, to the infancy of the republic.

Dialect representation in American literature is most commonly associated with the nineteenth century, a period still formative for the new nation. Before that, it turned up in a few novels and plays with colonial themes as well as in travel writing by Europeans visiting or exploring the colonies. Cooley (1992: 169) notes that prior to the 1780s, literary dialect was relatively rare in American writing in contrast to the “frequency and quantity” of dialectal representations in literature of the following century and suggests that its earlier rarity could be evidence of a lack then of a standard version of American English. Certainly Webster’s plea for a uniform standard in 1789 is evidence as well that there was not one in place at that time. Literary dialect, then, would not have been a particularly useful device for eighteenth-century authors, according to Cooley, “since writers can use [it] to evoke reader response only after the language varieties are recognized in relationship to a standard lect” (170). Azevedo (2002: 506) concurs: “As a stylistic device, literary dialect operates primarily on the contrasts between non-standard varieties and the standard language in which most mainstream literature is written.” This may help to explain why, while regional idiosyncrasies and other linguistic curiosities did occasionally find their way into eighteenth century literature, the most linguistically and otherwise significant American dialect literature came later.

One of the first American contributors to the establishment of literary dialect as a popular nineteenth-century convention was the pioneering journalist, travel writer,
cultural critic, political gadfly, and sometime novelist and playwright Anne Newport Royall, one of few women of her time to participate in public discourse, including in what was for decades a male-dominated tradition of dialect writing. Royall began publishing in the 1820s, and by the 1830s, an American literary dialect tradition was underway, with representations turning up most often in humorous sketches about unsophisticated, provincial characters. Among the most popular settings for American dialect humor were rural New England and the Southern frontier, the latter of which was already receding in the 1830s into the myth of literary nostalgia as the population of the United States expanded. Quirky, vernacular-speaking characters typified the genre. Cohen and Dillingham (1994: 254) note that particularly in sketches set in the Southern U.S., the rise of the ‘common man’ as epitomized by U.S. President Andrew Jackson (1767–1845) was foundational to the direction that dialect humor began to take. Jackson, who served two terms as president, from 1829 to 1837, had in his teens fought in the Revolutionary War and was later decorated for his service in the War of 1812. Orphaned at 14, he was widely admired for his bravery on the battlefield and for his rise to prominence and power despite having started in life with few material advantages. What became known as Jacksonian democracy was characterized by moves toward class egalitarianism, at least for white males, including the extension of voting rights to all white men when previously only landowners could vote. Jackson became a folkloric figure even during his lifetime to many Americans who saw his rugged-frontiersman image as a welcome check on the political influence of the usual power brokers, characterized as privileged, educated, out-of-touch elites. The Jacksonian image and its challenge to the entrenched power structure of a wealthy ruling class was a popular motif in its time and still appeals today, persisting in the minds of many as quintessentially American. The ‘Old Southwestern’ dialect-humor tradition, so called after the popular Southern frontier settings⁴ is clearly a product of its time. It was constructed in part on nostalgia for the wild and untamed territory of what was then the recent past, portrayed in the sketches as still gloriously uncivilized, and featured colorful, uneducated, rough-and-tumble protagonists, many of them modeled on the Jacksonian archetype. The speech of these characters was represented with dialect conventions that included non-standard grammatical features, malapropisms, and alternative respellings, sometimes to indicate non-standard phonology but also

⁴ Beginning with the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, westward expansion redefined what constituted ‘the West’ in the United States. While today the U.S. ‘Southwest’ comprises west Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and southern California, in the mid-nineteenth century, the ‘Old Southwest’ meant inland regions of what is now the southeastern U.S., including Alabama, Tennessee, and the western parts of Georgia and the Carolinas, as well as then-recently settled Southern states further west, mostly along the Mississippi River, including Mississippi, Arkansas, and Missouri.
sometimes to emphasize a character’s rural ‘otherness’, ostensibly for humorous effect. Along with dialect, themes of drunkenness, gambling, and sex also characterized some of sketches set in the Old Southwest, setting up humorous situations and symbolizing an idealized, rollicking frontier yet to be civilized. But while the Jacksonian ideal no doubt influenced the design of protagonists in the Old Southwestern tradition, a distinct ambivalence runs through many of these characterizations as well, with implications for the ways that dialect is deployed in the genre.

Authors working in the Old Southwestern tradition had little in common with their fictional protagonists, including linguistically. Augustus Baldwin Longstreet for example, author of the highly influential and commercially successful collection *Georgia Scenes* (1835), was hardly a frontiersman but was, rather, a superior court judge, newspaper publisher, and college president who also served briefly as a member of the Georgia state legislature. *Georgia Scenes* includes sketches such as “The Horse Swap” and “The Shooting Match,” titles evocative of their frontier themes, and Longstreet represented dialect extensively and skillfully in the speech of his backcountry protagonists. *Georgia Scenes* celebrates these backwoods types to some extent, but Longstreet himself was politically and temperamentally closer to the Whigs, a party initially defined primarily by its opposition to Jacksonian democracy. While *Georgia Scenes* appears somewhat favorably disposed toward, or at least amused by, the common-man archetype, some of Longstreet’s later work is more overt about the threat he must have felt it represented to the socioeconomic status quo. For example, Silver (2006: 42) reads Longstreet’s “Darby Anvil,” a story that appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in 1844, as “a Whig nightmare” and a “bitter satire on the moral dangers of Jacksonian democracy.” The title character is a vernacular-speaking ‘common man’ with political ambitions and a distrust of upper-crust types, presumably including the author himself. But Longstreet had not been born into privilege, either, and so *Georgia Scenes* makes its peace, on the surface at least, with the Jacksonian ideal. However, Longstreet’s ambivalence underwrites this collection to some extent as well, as discussed below.

Other popular writers in the Old Southwestern tradition include Thomas Bangs Thorpe, a Massachusetts-born journalist and editor, and William Tappan Thompson, a successful newspaper editor who was mentored in legal study and journalism by Longstreet. Thompson was born in Ohio but loyal to the Southern cause, working for a time at Longstreet’s *States Rights Sentinel* newspaper in Augusta, Georgia. Dialect humor in the nineteenth century, then, was published mainly by educated professionals sending up less educated, rural inhabitants, yet its popularity and ubiquity also point to a widely held sentiment that literature in the U.S. should be a democratic enterprise, meaning for and about ordinary people, in contrast to genteel literary forms popular earlier in the century and in Europe, according to Nagel (1997: xxii), especially Romanticism, “with its elevated language and sophisticated concerns.” The sometimes bawdy dialect humor might not have been precisely the kind of national literary tradition
the founding fathers had envisioned, steeped as the genre was in anti-intellectualism, undignified behavior, and non-standard speech. And indeed, some of Longstreet’s work, for example, incorporates these features for what appear to be political reasons, namely to critique what he saw as relinquishment of the serious responsibilities of governance to ordinary (read: inferior) people from the lower classes. But as a literary product, dialect humor certainly was distinct from what Noah Webster (1789: 389) had earlier called the literature of the “parent country” and, by featuring non-aristocratic, ordinary people in lead roles, and portraying them as speaking common, familiar language, it did in some ways embody the ideals of democracy that the founders had championed. “The authority of individuals is always liable to be called into question,” Webster observed in the Dissertations (1789: 29), “but a unanimous consent of a nation” is a version of authority, he argued, to which “most men will readily submit.” According to Simpson (1986: 75), Webster believed “in the naturally rational instincts of the common man.” Simpson adds that “Webster’s goal was always that of a standard American language… that had the advantages of ubiquity without the disadvantages of being a socially divisive imposition from above, by a learned or privileged class” (92).

But political tensions as they are externalized in Old Southwestern humor, especially in works by politically oriented writers like Longstreet, along with the popular convention in the genre of a standard-speaking frame narrator whose speech is juxtaposed with the protagonist’s vernacular, seem to manifest just this kind of “imposition from above.” The genre highlights the distance, linguistic and otherwise, between the frame narrators, who tended to be educated, middle- and upper-class professionals like the authors themselves, and the exoticized ‘folk’ characters who inhabit the stories, echoing and reinforcing real-life social and linguistic chasms. Much of the original readership would have been assumed to identify with the standard-speaking frame narrators; it may go without saying that the readers, unlike many of the featured characters, were literate and had the means to access books and periodicals. It is crucial to note, though, that the commercial success, popularity, and resulting ubiquity of the genre attests an audience that was by no means limited to upper-class elites. For example, Longstreet published Georgia Scenes himself in 1835, but Harper and Brothers acquired it in 1840 and reprinted it 26 times by 1897 (Rachels 1998: 269). And the collection is still read today and considered by many “as fine a piece of Southern fiction as anything written before the war” (Mayfield 2004: 126).

And so the uneducated, vernacular-speaking, fictional backwoodsmen who populate nineteenth-century American dialect humor also symbolize a profound ambivalence on the parts of some of the genre’s authors and readers. While this frontier archetype is treated in the texts as ‘other’ in relation to the standard-speaking frame narrator, and, by extension, to the author and audience, the protagonists’ independence and rugged individualism are also idealized in these texts, with even authors who rejected the political ideologies that popularized the archetype invoking the romanticized
Jacksonian image in their fiction. This figure became a popular if stereotypical symbol for American national identity and particularly for American masculinity, often turning up in exaggerated form, as in Mayfield’s (2004: 116) memorable description of “some alligator man whose chief purpose was to gouge eyes, chew off ears, and drink whole barrels of whiskey for sport.” Significantly, these characters are also clearly idealized for their rejection of mainstream values and social constraints on the way they chose to live their lives.

Analysis of the literary dialect in Old Southwestern humor and its role in the construction and enforcement of standardization norms could be particularly fruitful in the context of a theoretical model that explores the conditions under which non-standard speech can be tolerated in the dominant culture. Since such tolerance is far from automatic in mainstream American society, consideration of social, gender, and race preferences, and of the ways in which those preferences are implicated in mainstream language attitudes, offers an interesting theoretical framework for analysis of dialectal representations in literature, including in the Old Southwestern humor genre. This type of study would be welcome in light of important multidisciplinary work in gender and sexuality theory, including work in linguistics (see, for example, Meinhof & Johnson 1997, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003; Coates 2003, and Cameron & Kulick 2006) and outside it (see especially Butler 1990 and 1993). From a sociolinguistic perspective, the concepts of overt and covert prestige may be particularly applicable to an analysis of the interplay among class, gender, and race preferences in relation to situational acceptance of non-standard speech. For example, it seems clear that covert prestige is afforded to the fictional frontiersman of the Old Southwestern tradition because of his toughness, despite (or because of) his lack of interest in and knowledge of things the author and audience were likely to value, including standard speech. This kind of covert prestige has been extensively documented in real-life language attitudes, particularly in middle-class white male attitudes toward working-class speech because of its perceived indexing of toughness and virility, qualities valued for their masculine associations (see, for instance, Trudgill 1974.) But as Mayfield (2004: 114, 115–16) suggests, the image of the upper-class Southern gentleman that many of the authors working in the Old Southwestern tradition themselves symbolized and projected in their work, competes with the “alligator man” for masculine primacy, sometimes even as dual facets within a single male identity. This competition is acted out subtextually as well as sometimes quite literally in the sketches, overtly by way of emphasis on the material success and education of the merged persona of narrator/author, indexed in

part by standard speech, but also more covertly, including in ways of particular interest to the linguist: namely, the educated narrator/author's own shifts into dialect. Long-street (1835: 3–4) at once owns and disclaims his own code-switches in the concluding paragraph of the preface to *Georgia Scenes*, signaling at once his own proficiency in the vernacular by merging his authorial identity with that of the participant-observer narrator, who moves easily between standard and vernacular, and his recognition of its potential negative social values and associations:

> I cannot conclude these introductory remarks without reminding those who have taken exceptions to the coarse inelegant and sometimes ungrammatical language which the writer represents himself as occasionally using, *that it is language accommodated to the capacity of the person to whom he represents himself as speaking.*

(Emphasis in original)

An interdisciplinary approach could add in significant ways to our understanding of how apparent mainstream preferences for standardness, maleness, and whiteness can be complicated by competing if not always conscious beliefs and desires about gender, race, and class. In other words, while values like whiteness, masculinity, and standard speech might be officially projected as universally desirable, public challenges to these ideals mounted by changing demographics and social values, along with private questions about what it might take to qualify for the masculine, ethnic, or linguistic ideals, find voice in the literature and especially in the ways that dialect is used, which can therefore help to illuminate how these competing positions function within and beyond the literary work. For example, analysis of the author/narrator’s code-switching in *Georgia Scenes*, including attention to linguistic features but also to discourse-level details, such as linguistic and contextual signals that trigger the shifts, could offer new insight into the ways that masculinity is constructed, performed, and policed linguistically. Dialect humor and its creators, then, are both agent and subject: They overtly enforce popular masculine ideals of physical strength and vitality to which they themselves are then subjected, but at the same time they also subtly act out more complicated idealizations of maleness, mirroring real-life struggles amid competing models that value intellectual sophistication and financial success on one hand but admire independence, nonconformity, and rejection of mainstream values on the other.

So while the frontier speech of these literary texts is marked unambiguously as non-standard, the characterizations that rely on vernacular speech cannot be read as unambiguously disapproving, especially for speakers who embody positive values that authorize the use of non-standard speech. Thus, the valuation of a preferred, standard variety of American English, at least as it functioned in the Old Southwestern tradition, did not automatically extend to condemnation of vernacular varieties and their speakers, especially varieties that indexed culturally popular values like masculinity,
independence, bravery, and physical strength. However, some vernaculars, and their
speakers, were more likely to be accepted than others, especially as the nineteenth
century wore on and changes wrought by the Civil War, the end of slavery, and the
Industrial Revolution helped to cement social, racial, and ethnic divisions and hierar-
chies in American society.

Following the U.S. Civil War (1861–65) dialect literature remained popular, and
in sketches like Mark Twain’s “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County”
(1865) and George Washington Harris’s *Sut Lovingood Tales* (1867), the frontier-
humor tradition and focus on the southern and western regions of the U.S. continued
to flourish for a while longer. Also, ‘local color’, a minor literary movement by itself
but nonetheless a key contributor to the evolution of dialect writing and to the rise
of realism in American fiction, maintained to some extent the traditions of the Old
Southwestern genre in highlighting the idiosyncrasies of particular regions and their
inhabitants. But local color is also characterized by new uses of literary dialect, namely
to create realistic depictions of characters and their speech, with New England and
the South continuing to be popular settings. These depictions of vernacular speech
served to authenticate the setting, characterization, and language for mimetic rather
than for humorous purposes. Regional vernaculars of this kind turn up in writing by
local colorists including Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Sarah Orne
Jewett, and Rose Terry Cooke, all of whom sketched the folkways and speechways of
rural New England. They also appear in the work of Southern writers such as George
Washington Cable and Kate Chopin, both of whom illustrated the lives and language
varieties of the Louisiana Creole, Tennessee writer Mary Murfree, and Joel Chandler
Harris, who wrote about his fellow Georgians, among many others.

Local color helped to position literary dialect as both signifier of and participant
in the experiments with realism that helped to define the national literature in the late
nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Significantly, local–color representations of
regional vernaculars show by their very existence that a standard for American English
had emerged by the last quarter of the nineteenth century and that literary dialectal
depictions clearly got their linguistic as well as artistic valuation by way of their con-
tradistinction to that standard, whose legitimacy they validated and reinforced, whether
deliberately or not. An American standard for English, then, emerges through the contrast
to it that the literary representations of vernacular speech provided, since they are replete
with information about what is *not* standard by their very markedness. This contrast
contributes to an image of invisibility for ‘standard American’, a prestige variety defined
by no identifying characteristics of its own but rather only by what it is not: regionally
or socially or racially marked. The ‘otherness’ of the vernacular-speaking characters of
the local color tradition, then, is part of an increasingly vivid background against which
an image of a ‘standard’ American English that otherwise has no appreciable iden-
tity of its own is rendered visible. Analogously and not coincidentally, by the late
nineteenth century, the image of a preferred American national identity also suggests
a set of unmarked and hence invisible norms that ultimately index an identity marked
\textit{minus-other}, with whiteness perhaps the most important ‘non-other’ diagnostic. Additional
attributes of this identity, like standard American English itself, are easier to
describe by what they are not: poor, rural, illiterate, and immigrant, for example.

The process of social, racial, and linguistic othering during the nineteenth cen-
tury, and the role of othering in norming standard American, in part by contribut-
ing to the negative definition for the standard along with a developing default American
identity that is also defined by what it is not, is made visible by using literary data in
the kinds of non-traditional ways suggested in this chapter. An interesting example is
Evans’s (1971) analysis of the Louisiana Creole speech in George Washington Cable’s
1879 local-color novel \textit{The Grandissimes}. As Evans’s analysis shows, Cable’s linguis-
tic depictions are worth exploring in their own right. But more applicable to a dis-
cussion of the institutionalization of a preferred variety American English, especially
one that practically by definition is assumed to be the property of white speakers, is
the metalinguistic commentary that Cable’s dialectal depictions triggered among his
critics, whose views provide insights into prevailing attitudes towards speech variet-
ies and, by extension, their speakers, at the end of the nineteenth century. According
to Evans (216–17), several critics reacted angrily to what they labeled as the author’s
“inappropriate” and socially “misleading” linguistic characterizations. An 1893 review
of \textit{The Grandissimes} accuses Cable, who was white, of attributing to “accomplished
women and cultured cavaliers … a jargon unreal and impossible beyond conception
in people of their class.” But Cable’s presumed class transgressions are only the begin-
nng, as another critic, white Creole historian Charles Gayarre, makes clear in a series
of articles he published in the \textit{New Orleans Times Democrat} on the topic of “Mr. Cable’s
Freedmen’s Case in Equity” (Thompson 2001: 248). In the articles, Gayarre condemns
Cable’s dialectal representations of the white Creoles in \textit{The Grandissimes}, denouncing
the author for insulting them by depicting their language as the “broken, mutilated
africanized English of the black man” (quoted in Evans 215). Evans demonstrates that
white Louisiana Creoles of French descent, regardless of social class, did indeed speak
the creole language varieties and use the linguistic features that Cable represents, and
that those varieties were probably at least shared by black speakers if not in fact directly
influenced by them. But such evidence would have been immaterial to Gayarre and
other critics, whose belief in the otherness of dark-skinned Louisianaans was so strong
as to be inextricable from the belief (erroneous, according to Evans) that their lan-
guage was ‘other’ also. In this view, Cable has violated the unspoken code of present-
ing upper-class white speech as an unmarked norm in relation to the marked speech,
meaning that which is orthographically represented by the author as vernacular, of
African American characters in the novel.
5. Standard American English, literary dialect, and African American as ‘other’

The relatively short heyday of local color, beginning in the 1860s and giving way to the subsequent rise of literary realism, which was “well established in American literature” by the 1890s (Nagel 1997: xxiii, xxvii), coincided with the decline of the frontier, which was succumbing to burgeoning population and industrialization. An upsurge in European immigration to the United States, along with the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to the rapidly industrializing cities of the Northeast and Midwest after the Civil War, increased exponentially the ethnic and linguistic diversity in urban centers. The resulting cultural and economic changes shifted the focus of the national literature, resulting in new uses for literary dialect. For example, Stephen Crane’s portrayals of the brutal hardships of New York City street life, most notably in the naturalistic novel Maggie, A Girl of the Streets (1893), are rife with realistic depictions of the brutal and profane language of the Bowery as observed by the author, a struggling young New York City journalist until the 1895 publication of his breakthrough Civil War novel, The Red Badge of Courage. Gavin Jones (1999: 143) emphasizes the significance of Maggie to the evolving but still distinctly American linguistic and literary trends, arguing that Crane brought to audiences “the new dialect of the city – dialect entirely foreign to literary ideals.” Crane’s literary dialect is notable in part because of the way it rejects nostalgia for rural Southern or New England life by taking on harsh realities of turn-of-the-century urban life but also because of its documentation of rising concerns about urban poverty, vice, and racial and ethnic heterogeneity. Jones contends that the popularity of literary dialect in realistic fiction after the Civil War coincided with renewed attention to the idea of a distinctly American language, motivated now by “fear of foreign infiltration” and concerns about the possibility of corruption of American English by non-mainstream regional, racial, social, and immigrant influences (33). The Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South was perceived as no less threatening. What began over one hundred years earlier as a challenge to external authority and a movement to reject British political, cultural, and linguistic control was by the late nineteenth century a preoccupation with heading off a different kind of linguistic threat.

Perhaps consequently, widely read literary representations of African American speech by white authors proliferated after the Civil War, some of these responding or reacting to social changes generated by the freeing of African Americans who had been enslaved and the subsequent entry of significant numbers of them into communities outside the rural South and into the newly industrializing economy. Probably the most famous example of postwar African American literary dialect by a white author is in Mark Twain’s Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, published in 1884 but set “forty to
fifty years” earlier, as Twain explains in a prefatory note, when slavery still flourished in Missouri, where the novel takes place. The characterization of Jim, an uneducated African American slave, has been a popular subject for critical debates, with Twain’s representation of Jim’s speech often implicated in charges that Jim is stereotyped and minstrelized and that his dialectal speech as represented by Twain has much to do with that characterization. (See, for example, Lott 1995, Morrison 1998, and Woodward and MacCann 1992). Such critiques have raised serious questions about the author’s own racial attitudes and about the artistic and political meanings of the novel, especially in a post-Civil War, post-Reconstruction context. As I have discussed elsewhere (Minnick 2004), while analysis of Jim’s language according to the methodological principles I advocate will not resolve these questions to everyone’s satisfaction, it can address them in creative and meaningful ways. One way is by analyzing the representations beyond the impressionist interpretations upon which many of the critiques are based; another is by helping to identify the effects of written representations of linguistic features in the text on language attitudes pervasive beyond it. My analysis suggests ways that these attitudes can collaborate in the construction of negative perceptions about Jim or his speech, or of perceptions about the characterization that may not be about Jim’s language, or rather Twain’s portrayal of Jim’s language, at all.

Such a reading does not necessarily exonerate Twain, of course, but analysis of Jim’s speech using the guiding principles described above reveals that the author was a mostly conscientious observer and reporter of common features of African American English. Thus, objections to how Jim’s speech is represented might arise from the way these representations function as constant reminders of Jim’s social and narrative position as other, even compared to community outsider and vernacular-speaker Huck, whose speech is also rendered in dialect but to a far lesser extent, including, somewhat problematically, for non-standard features that Jim and Huck would undoubtedly have shared. In these cases, Huck’s speech is either not represented dialectally at all, or if it is, he produces the given vernacular feature at much lower frequencies than does Jim. One example is alternation of /n/ for standard /ŋ/ in present–participle forms and other final unstressed /ŋ/ constructions, as illustrated in Table 2. Jim articulates /n/ in ninety-seven percent of possible occurrences for present–participle constructions, while for other final unstressed /ŋ/ forms, he produces the non-standard variant eighty-five percent of the time. On the other hand, Huck produces the standard /ŋ/ variant in 100 percent of occurrences, which is surprising given his otherwise vernacular speech, also shown in Table 2, and his social status, and given Pederson's (1965: 3) findings of widespread /n/ articulation among black and white Missouri speakers across the social spectrum. Thus we might expect Huck to use the non-standard variant, which according to Pederson was probably even found in “the cultivated Midland dialect of Mark Twain” himself. Because Jim’s speech is marked as non-standard even in relation to Huck’s, several critics including Leonard and Tenney (1992) have
contended that this constitutes a racially motivated marking of Jim as other. Obviously, a features analysis cannot by itself definitively substantiate or refute such a claim, especially if the analysis is removed from the context of what else is going on in the text or ignores the social and linguistic values beyond it that inform its production and consumption. All any researcher can do is make an argument. But a comprehensive analysis does provide us the tools to support the argument and even to resolve questions left open by impressionistic readings of the dialect, impressions that are sometimes contradicted by way of the kind of comprehensive features analysis advocated here (see, for example, Minnick 2001 and 2004).

Table 2. Frequencies for /n/ alternation for /ŋ/ in present participle and other /ŋ/-final constructions in the speech of Jim and Huck, along with speaker means for non-standard feature production. (Significant at p ≤ 0.05.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>/n/</th>
<th>/ŋ/</th>
<th>Mean non-standard feature articulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jim (Huckleberry Finn)</td>
<td>68/72 (94%)</td>
<td>4/72 (6%)</td>
<td>89%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huck (Tom Sawyer)**</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huck (Huckleberry Finn)**</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Average for 14 phonological features analyzed, after Minnick (2004). (**After Tamasi 2001.)

While my (2004) analysis suggests that Twain appears to have represented linguistic features conscientiously, this information by itself neither confirms nor rules out the possibility of linguistic othering, as the comparison of frequencies for /n/ articulation in Jim’s and Huck’s speech suggests. But it does provide a useful and concrete starting point for evaluating the meanings that Twain’s linguistic distinction of Jim in relation to white speakers, including Huck, might encode in the text and what it might mean beyond it. Is it evidence of Twain’s own attitudes? A way to satirize the perceptions of his white contemporaries, including liberal anti-slavery Northerners, in the post-Reconstruction era? Could Jim’s greater number of non-standard features and his higher frequencies of occurrence for shared features symbolize his limited educational opportunities under a system of slavery that included forced illiteracy? Does it serve a narrative or artistic function, to help delimit Huck’s new narrative primacy as he moves from a supporting role in Twain’s earlier novel Tom Sawyer (1876) to protagonist and narrator of the sequel? According to Tamasi (2001), in Tom Sawyer, Huck articulates vernacular features at significantly higher frequencies than in the novel that bears his own name (although interestingly, even in Tom Sawyer, Huck has zero occurrences of non-standard /n/ alternation). Whatever the explanation, and it seems likely that there are multiplex and possibly even contradictory explanations, what appears certain is that linguistically and otherwise, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn positions Huck
as norm, defining others in relation to him. *Huckleberry Finn* thus yields a wealth of data about the ways that literary dialect enforces standardization or at least documents beliefs and assumptions about the role of standardness in social organization, including by continuing to define the standard by what it is not. In the case of Jim, the standard is clearly defined in contradistinction to blackness.

While Twain's portrayal of Jim and his language has stimulated extensive debate about its racial meanings, the novel itself is generally not categorized as the kind of politically motivated literature associated with the 'plantation tradition.' This tradition, similar to local color in that also incorporates dialect and regional identification, diverges in its political motives, which reach far beyond the harmless nostalgia for the then-recent past that characterizes local color literature. The fiction of plantation-tradition authors such as Thomas Nelson Page and Thomas Dixon reads clearly as white-supremacist propaganda with the goal of rewriting the realities of life under slavery, implicitly claiming that atrocities had been exaggerated by former slaves and Abolitionists, and that the South would voluntarily improve conditions for blacks without further Northern intervention of the kind implemented via Reconstruction. As Sundquist (1993: 275) has noted, national reconciliation after Reconstruction was “predicated upon northern acquiescence in southern control of the ‘Negro problem’” resulting in “an escalation of racial discrimination and violence” against African Americans in the South. Postwar unease, which Jones (1999: 34) describes as the “terrifying thought…that the marrow of Anglo-American culture might be contaminated by otherness,” plays out in plantation-tradition fantasies of a restored prewar social order based on enslavement and racial hierarchy. Plantation tradition depictions of black speech thus participated in the move to define American (linguistic) identity as white, indirectly promoting standardization as a reaction to perceived threats to the language (and to the social order) from this internal other. Additionally, the plantation tradition used dialectal representation to position a white linguistic norm and mark African Americans linguistically, segregating them symbolically from narrator and reader. The plantation tradition is thus literary documentation of political arguments on behalf of the “northern acquiescence” that Sundquist describes, and its linguistic representations are profoundly implicated in attempts to situate African Americans in the position of other and to define former slaves and their descendants as intellectually inferior and thus in need of continuing white supervision. A look at Thomas Nelson Page's 1887 sketch collection *In Ole Virginia: Or, Marse Chan and Other Stories* demonstrates this.

Page applies the convention, well established by this time, of framing each story in a white, standard-speaking narrator's voice. After their introduction by the frame narrator, the stories of *In Ole Virginia* are then told by an African American speaker in dialect. The white frame narrator in the plantation tradition re-enacts the pre-war social order linguistically, by recreating and reinforcing the distance between himself and the African American narrator who tells the story; there is no code-switching
of the kind Old Southwestern author/narrators like Longstreet regularly engaged in when they surrendered to the vernacular of their characters amid the action of a story. Page’s white narrator is also prone to editorializing and projecting an ideology that both patronizes African Americans and rather disingenuously implies that he himself would sooner dispense with the old social and racial hierarchies. For example, in the initial encounter between the white frame narrator and the elderly former slave who narrates “Marse Chan,” the white narrator indicates that he acquiesces to the prewar order only out of respect for the older man’s preference: “Instantly, and as if by instinct, the darky stepped forward and took my bridle. I demurred a little; but with a bow that would have honored old Sir Roger, he shortened the reins, and taking my horse from me, led him along” (Page 1887: 4). The emphasis on the chasms of power and status between the two speakers, and between the African American narrator and the predominantly white audience, is thus constantly and deliberately reiterated. Fienberg (1987: 164–5) describes this kind of frame narration as an “illusion of distance for the comfortable reader, a kind of cordon sanitaire which makes it safe to contemplate the words and deeds of social and racial inferiors.” He explains the schema of white narrative control as a “strategy of containment which returns the freed slave to a state of narrative bondage,” and concludes that “The black narrator tells precisely the tale the white Southern listener would wish to hear.”

In Ole Virginia and other works of the plantation tradition portray former slaves nostalgic for the old plantation days and still fiercely loyal to their masters, whose brave and sometimes tragic exploits often comprise the plots of the stories. The representations of dialect in these stories were analogous to the dialect performed in minstrel shows, which contributed actively to the stereotyping of African Americans as intellectually inferior. For all intents and purposes, the plantation tradition is literary minstrelsy. Representations of African American vernacular speech were a popular device onstage and in print and were presented to white readers and audience as implicit “evidence” of black inferiority. Reactions to The Grandissimes, discussed above, correspond and were contemporaneous to the racial attitudes and their linguistic manifestations as externalized in works associated with the plantation tradition that appeared in the same post-Reconstruction period as Cable’s novel. As a consequence, many black writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries avoided representations of African American dialectal speech in their work. African American authors who did use dialect at the turn of the century, such as Paul Laurence Dunbar and Charles W. Chesnutt, and those who experimented with it later, in the 1920s and 30s, notably Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston, found, as Sundquist (1993: 304) observes, that it “was fraught with the tension between capitulation to stereotypes and the desire to find an audience for African American literature.” Chesnutt, for example, privately expressed a deep ambivalence toward African American vernacular speech, believing that it was a legacy of nearly universal forced illiteracy under slavery, yet he used it to
create some of the most linguistically and artistically important literary representations of African American English in U.S. literary history.

Born to free African American parents in 1858, Chesnutt was a prodigy who became a teacher at age 15 and promoted standard English among African Americans. Journals he kept as a young man reveal his distaste for the folk customs he would later portray in his stories, including the custom of black vernacular speech. Yet he deployed it skillfully in works of fiction that were artistically and commercially successful. There is no evidence that Chesnutt was anything but a proponent of standard English and committed as a teacher to the eradication of African American vernacular speech, but he championed equality for African Americans, as this 1880 (139–40) entry in his personal journal demonstrates:

The object of my writings would not be so much the elevation of the colored people as the elevation of the whites – for I consider the unjust spirit of caste which is so insidious as to pervade a whole nation, and so powerful as to subject a whole race and all connected with it to scorn and social ostracism – I consider this a barrier to the moral progress of the American people; and I would be one of the first to head a determined, organized crusade against it.

Appropriating the stylistic conventions of the plantation tradition, Chesnutt wrote a series of 14 stories set during slavery, some of which were collected in an 1899 volume, *The Conjure Woman*. These stories featured dialect as well as African American folk customs, especially ‘conjure’ and mysticism, and appeared, on the surface at least, to invoke stereotypes of African Americans as superstitious, also a popular motif in minstrel shows. Sundquist (1993: 304–5) argues that Chesnutt uses these devices to create “a mode of cultural discourse that deliberately signified upon stereotypes,” in which dialect is “the language of the folk trickster – both the protagonist and the author – transferred to literary narrative,” as well as a means for him to explore the ways in which language is perspectival and coded with assumptions of hierarchy and power.”

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6. See also Houston A. Baker (1987: 41), who argues convincingly that Chesnutt subverts and signifies on the plantation tradition, resulting in a “deep and intensive recoding of form.” In apparent capitulation to the demands of his white publisher and audience, Baker says, Chesnutt “presents a world in which ‘dialect’ masks the drama of African spirituality challenging and changing the disastrous transformations of slavery” (44). He credits Chesnutt with transforming black fiction from the plantation tradition, explaining that Chesnutt was motivated artistically and politically by his sense that “the plantation tradition in American letters and even more studied efforts by white authors to write about the Afro-American experience were inadequate and frequently idiotic…. [and] radically opposed to the story he wanted to tell” (42). Petrie (1999: 184, 187) also asserts that Chesnutt deliberately manipulated the plantation tradition “for racially progressive purposes” in order “to exploit plantation-dialect regionalism’s capacity for cultural mediation while ridding it of its white racist values” (187).
But the class consciousness and language attitudes Chesnutt professes in the journals he kept as a young man complicate Sundquist's reading of the dialect in the conjure stories. An 1875 journal entry Chestnutt composed during a frustrating summer he spent teaching in South Carolina at age 17 suggests the complexity of his attitudes toward the people he had dedicated himself to helping: “Well! uneducated people are the most bigoted, superstitious, hardest headed people in the world!” (81). These comments and others recorded in Chestnutt's journals raise questions about the extent to which his youthful distaste for African American dialectal speech and his perception of it as symptomatic of ignorance and poverty inform the literary portrayals of black characters and their speech that he produced as an adult. Other African American authors of his time avoided dialect and themes of folk culture in their work precisely to avoid invoking such negative stereotypes, and those who did not, notably Paul Laurence Dunbar and later, Zora Neale Hurston, came in for censure by other African American authors and critics of their era. Chesnutt somehow avoided similar disapproval during his lifetime, but several prominent African American critics charged him decades later with trafficking in stereotypes. These critics, reports Wonham (1998: 56), “identified Chesnutt with an assimilationist black middle class” who, in the words of Amiri Baraka, “wanted no subculture, nothing that could connect them with the poor black man or the slave” (quoted in Wonham). In light of Chestnutt's journal entries, this interpretation hits close to home. But the themes of the stories suggest strongly that Chesnutt did not use dialect to index black inferiority, nor to emphasize class differences or skin-tone gradations among African Americans. In his other 1899 collection, *The Wife of His Youth*, he clearly and repeatedly condemns intra-group racism. Rather, in the guise of the plantation tradition, and especially in the camouflage of dialect, Chesnutt was free to critique the cruelest realities of slavery, including families torn apart, violence, and forced illiteracy, and thus subvert the racist agenda of the genre. As Foster and Yarborough (1997: 522) observe, “Chesnutt was the first African American writer of fiction to enlist the white-controlled publishing industry in the service of his social message…. reaching a significant portion of the national reading audience with his analyses and indictments of racism.” The conjure tales, which white audiences consumed voraciously, are unequivocal indictments of slavery and continuing racism. But even though he drew skillfully on African American vernacular speech, Chesnutt never openly acknowledged its power. But because of

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7. See James Weldon Johnson (1922: 880), who initially warned African American authors against using dialect in their work to avoid invoking negative stereotypes. (He later revised this opinion.) Richard Wright's (1937: 17) scathing review of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) is probably the most famous example of African American criticism of Hurston's work, including her use of dialect. See Minnick (2004) for a detailed analysis of the charges leveled against both Dunbar and Hurston by African American authors and critics.
his meticulous ear and sensitive representations, all the more remarkable given his perception that African American vernacular speech was inferior to standard English and the linguistic legacy of oppression, his literary dialect is artistically and historically significant, including for the kind of historical reconstruction described previously. It is also a rich source for analysis in the context of an evolving identity for American English and the complications to that identity wrought by the end of slavery and the rise of industrialization at the end of the nineteenth century.

The processes of authorizing and legitimizing a standard American English did not end in 1900, of course. Literary dialect, especially in representing African American speech, continued to flourish in American literature in the twentieth century and beyond. Harlem Renaissance and Modernist writers like Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, William Faulkner, and Gertrude Stein in particular redefined dialect writing into the 1930s, some by challenging traditional uses for literary dialect and staking out new definitions for linguistic legitimacy, while others simply innovated new ways of making old arguments. But it does not end here, either. African American literary dialect continued to change profoundly through the twentieth century as new generations of writers used it no longer as a tool for othering but for new artistic and linguistic purposes, all of which contribute to national conversations about race, class, and the value of language diversity.

In his essay “If Black English Isn’t a Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?” James Baldwin (1979: E19) illustrates the folly of attempts at legislating language purity: “Now, I do not know what white Americans would sound like if there had never been any black people in the United States, but they would not sound the way they sound.” Alice Walker, whose free indirect discourse owes as much to Zora Neale Hurston as Walker herself is owed for recovering and saving Hurston’s work from obscurity, and Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison are the best known of a generation of more recent and highly gifted inheritors of the legacy of literary dialect as a medium for encoding African American language and meanings in print. Morrison (1981: 123) continually asserts the value of African American vernacular speech, including by using it in her novels to encode meaning: “There are certain things I cannot say without recourse to my language,” she explained in an interview with the New Republic magazine. The late poet, novelist, and essayist June Jordan (1995: 69) offers her own compelling explanation for the value of African American dialectal speech and for the ultimate failure of efforts to marginalize it to the point of extinction:

As a Black poet and writer, I am proud of our Black, verbally bonding system born of our struggle to avoid annihilation…. I am proud of this language that our continuing battle just to be has brought into currency…. and so I work, as a poet and a writer, against the eradication of this system, this language, the carrier of Black-survivor consciousness. (Emphasis in original)

The survival and prosperity of African American vernacular English are remarkable in the face of concentrated eradication, marginalization, and de-legitimization efforts, in which literary dialect is implicated. Conversely, the continuing mainstream stigmatization of AAE seems equally incongruous in light of its linguistic vigor and expressive power. But the linguistic norming that has been part of the national discourse since the country’s inception has succeeded in developing and perpetuating mainstream language attitudes, even as stigmatized varieties have proven too valuable to their speakers to succumb to eradication attempts.

6. Conclusion

Literary dialect served well into the twentieth century as part of an infrastructure of ideologies that privilege standard American English, and consequently, about the valuation of other varieties in relation to the standard. In addition to exploring literary dialect in order to understand its participation in the institutionalization of prestige linguistic varieties and the stigmatization of non-prestige varieties, literary dialect can also contribute to what we know about the indexing and linguistic signification of social status, both within and beyond the literary texts. As we have seen, literary dialect had a normative function in early America that it continued to perform for well over a century, and analyzing it today as linguistic data helps to illuminate not only how that function was implemented, and whether and to what extent it may have succeeded, but the data also bears witness to the history and evolution of the kinds of beliefs and prejudices that may have motivated authors in their artistic and linguistic efforts.

Nineteenth-century American writers who used dialect in their work, then, participated in the construction of a linguistic ideal as well as in the ongoing reinforcement of its value, and therefore, of the lesser value of other varieties. Despite some tensions and ambiguities in mainstream views about what constitutes ‘standardness,’ tensions that are mirrored and documented in literary works, the valuation of white middle-class speech and its positioning as an ideal to which non-standard speakers should aspire has been fairly constant. The fact that linguistic norming mechanisms, including education, print and electronic media, popular culture, and literary dialect, among others, have ultimately failed to achieve a universal standard reflects the reality that an idealized standard cannot possibly meet the needs of all users in all speech situations and thus cannot succeed in supplanting other valued means of expression.
But this failure is not for lack of trying. In some cases, the differential valuations of language varieties written into literary dialect may have been deliberate while they were merely conventional in others. But regardless, the end result is the same: Literary representations of dialectal speech by their very existence serve to mark as ‘other’ the varieties treated as dialectal, and by extension, the characters who ‘speak’ the literary dialect are often marked as other as well. For cases such as African American literary dialect represented by white authors, African American speech is differentiated from a standard (white) norm because its real-life speakers are already imagined as other by author and a presumed white audience. Literary dialect can thus make valuable contributions to the study of the many ways that English has been and continues to be used in the United States, even if these are not always the kinds of contributions traditionally expected and valued by linguistic researchers. We need only be open to thinking about the ways that historical, political and social realities exert their influences on written language, including literary dialect, just as they do on spoken language.

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Written sources for Canadian English

Phonetic reconstruction
and the low-back vowel merger

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The study of Canadian English has, for the most part, relied on synchronic data and description. Via the apparent-time method and earlier linguistic studies, evidence is available for the most part of the twentieth century. This paper provides possible pathways towards examining pre-twentieth century evidence for Canadian English. Using principles of sociohistorical research, the paper offers an outline of how to make the best use of existing data by combining evidence from both literary and authentic written sources. As a test case, central focus is given to the reconstruction of a pivotal Canadian feature, the low-back vowel merger. Texts are used, in conjunction with secondary materials, such as Canadian informants in linguistic atlas data, accounts of settlement history and anecdotal evidence, to show the possibilities and limitations of written evidence in historical phonetics and phonology. As a test case, the approach, which is complemented by a rudimentary sketch of sources across the country, is intended to be easily transferrable to other linguistic levels.

In the present paper I will assess written evidence for the reconstruction of early Canadian English (CanE) features to about 1900. Earlier historical studies have focussed on literary dialect, which is an approach that has fallen out of fashion in sociolinguistics. In this paper, focus will be given to both literary and non-literary sources with a short characterization of available materials. First, I will introduce important non-textual sources for comparison, second, I will highlight the different qualities of literary and non-literary text types available for study, while, third, I will exemplify the suggested approach as an example of a prominent feature in Canadian phonology. This methodological part will be on the historical development of the low-back vowel merger, a feature that is notoriously hard to trace in written instantiations. Traditionally known as the caught-cot merger, the merger causes many Canadians (and increasingly more and more Americans) to pronounce the vowels in LOT and THOUGHT identically.
For reasons of space, I will continue the long-standing focus on historical phonology (Minnick 2004: 31). Most of the materials listed, however, are immediately relevant for non-phonological variables. The reconstruction of spoken language features based on written materials has a long pedigree in English historical linguistics. Virtually the entire disciplines of historical philology and comparative linguistics were founded on the principles of the comparative method and internal reconstruction, which would fruitfully inform the exploitation of historical written sources by combining modern-day evidence and related dialects. Canadian English, however, represents largely unchartered territory in this respect and only a handful of studies have rigorously apply this method (e.g. Hiscock 1982; Pringle 1981; Avis 1950). Regardless of the type of written evidence, a principled approach to “filter removal” (Schneider 2002) needs to be developed for all sources.

1. **Written sources and sociolinguistic reconstruction**

Sources must be distinguished between non-literary and literary text types. In general, historical dialectologists and sociolinguists have tended to prefer non-literary text types for their authenticity and generally closer proximity to spoken language. Montgomery (1995) characterizes letter sources as more useful for historical reconstruction than literary representations, but does not fail to point out that “the overwhelming majority of [emigrant letters] have to be ignored” (p. 34) for a lack of non-standard features. Generally, texts by semi-literate or barely literate writers, whose “ naïve records are particularly illuminating” (Eliason 1956: 28), are the most coveted sources, based on their lesser exposure to prescriptivist tendencies and traditions.

Non-literary sources are apparently “authentic”, while literary sources, in the first instance, meet the requirements of the plot and characterizations rather than linguistic goals. Two important differences between literary and non-literary sources are the frequency of non-standard features and the effort in their interpretation. Literary dialects tend to exhibit features more frequently in comparison to non-literary sources. The identification of relevant items in non-literary sources can be like the search for the proverbial needle in a haystack. Literary sources, on the other hand, need to be approached via the author’s own dialect background (Ives 1971), and, the literary intention and effect of features need to be considered. When, however, the literary purpose and the linguistic depiction of a character coincide, literary texts may be among the best sources available. Ideally, historical sociolinguists would aim to harness evidence from both types of sources, while linguistic or metalinguistic documentation, via lay commentary, often in the form of travel reports, or later usage surveys and linguistic atlases, are crucial pieces of evidence.
1.1 Approaching written sources: Methodology and supporting evidence

As a study of historical dialects should begin with our knowledge of present-day dialects, any notion of dialect boundaries for an area will necessarily influence one’s interpretation of the material. In Canada, recent linguistic atlas data (Atlas of North American English [ANAE], Labov, Ash & Boberg 2006) and lexical studies suggest the division into four major dialect boundaries (see Map 1).

Settlement history plays another important role. Newfoundland was settled in the early seventeenth century with input from southwestern England and southeastern Ireland. In mainland Canada, two distinct waves of settlement before 1900 can be identified. Apart from the Maritime provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island), which were settled by English speakers after 1713, the Canadian territory was populated in the wake of the American Revolution after 1776.

Starting around 1776 and peaking in the mid-1780s, a first wave of Loyalists settled from the United States. These first-wave immigrants came from the coastal New England states (Connecticut, Massachusetts, but also from Maine and Rhode Island) and moved into the three Maritime Provinces either to stay or to relocate later to England, or further inland to Ontario (then Upper Canada). Immigrants from the middle states of the original Thirteen American colonies came, above all from Pennsylvania and upstate New York, with New Jersey and western Vermont following. This group first settled Ontario; the New England migrants, coming via the Maritimes arrived later leaving “no trace” (Chambers 1993: 4) in Ontario speech. The second wave of immigration set in after 1815 and was comprised of speakers of British English dialects – Scots, Irish and mostly Northern English. This influx of non-standard English varieties from the British Isles continued for some 50 years. From Ontario, the country was settled westwards (Avis 1973).

Once the dialect boundaries and settlement patterns are known, the origin of the authors of the source materials needs to be researched. For letter writers this can be an onerous task. For the Corpus of Early Ontario English, pre-Confederation Section, 1776–1849 (henceforth: CONTE) only about 41% of all writers have been identified (Dollinger 2008: Table 4.1). Of these writers only a fraction are semi-literate writers.

The next step is to identify pervasive features in the writers’ vernaculars as a baseline against which the evidence is compared: this can be either features of the input variety, e.g. Ulster Scots or Southern Irish English, or, for later periods of development, the features of the developing regional dialect, e.g. early Nova Scotian English. Here, it is important to match one’s evidence with existing accounts of earlier Canadian English. Benchmarks are isolated variables that have been gleaned from historical Canadian data (Dollinger 2008: 56–61 for a summary), while a vast resource that needs to be reassessed from a Canadian perspective is found in studies on Early American English. The approximation of Early American for Early Canadian features is problematic, but
Map 1. Major Canadian dialect boundaries – grey shadings.
(northern area boundaries are arbitrary, as data is not available)
generally works well if settlement history is considered appropriately (Chambers 1993, for Ontario see Dollinger 2008: 63–98).

For historical phenomena, linguistic atlas data, earlier scholarly accounts (see Lougheed 1988, Avis & Kinloch 1977; Mencken 1963 for CanE sections) and anecdotal evidence are of crucial importance and provide cues for historical studies. Hogg (1992–2001) offers comprehensive overviews on both LModE British and American varieties, but not on historical Canadian English, which is found in Dollinger (forthcoming, a).

In historical phonology spelling evidence, that is unconventional spellings, and occasionally rhymes, are the essential raw data. Here, especially phonetic spellings (e.g. freend for friend) and inverse spelling (karki for khaki, which assumes an r-less pronunciation of the speaker) have special importance for the reconstruction of speech sounds. As for the type of material, generally manuscript sources and originals (rather than typescripts) are preferable, as most editions show some editorial interference. Some general principles of the interpretation of non-standard features can be listed:

- Any spelling representation, regardless of text type and intention, is limited by the alphabetic set the writer can draw from
- the spelling repertoire of a writer needs to be established (Ives 1971)
- more than one token of a given spelling would be required to substantiate a given claim

An inventory of Late Modern English spellings in a North American context is found in Eliason (1956: Appendix B), where ‘significant spellings’ are listed and linked to a discussion of their phonological value. This appendix serves as an introduction to spelling conventions, practices and aberrations of lower-class writers and is still of value today.

1.2 Types of complementary evidence

An excellent source is orthoepic evidence, which, in the Canadian context, usually comes by way of side-remarks in travel reports. Examples span in detail and reliability the entire spectrum from fairly precise (and presumably reliable) information to derisive rants on Canadian English. There can be value in both of them. Some statements reconfirm settlement patterns, as does Anna Jameson’s comment on a wagon driver in Col. Talbot’s settlement in Ontario in 1827:

His accent was decidedly Irish. It was indeed a brogue as “nate and complate” as ever was sent forth from Cork or Kerry; (Jameson 1839, II: 17)
Probably one of the earliest transcriptions of Ontario English is found in Patrick Campbell, a Scot travelling the province in 1792 with a “note-book in hand” (p. vii). He renders four lines by an Ontarian resident near Hamilton, who was “an old Yankee rascal”, spoke the “twang peculiar to the New Englanders” but had not yet lived in Ontario for a year:

I asked him if he had come from the head of the Lake [...] , “I viow niew you may depen I's just a-comin.” ‘And what distance may it be from hence?’ said I; “I viow niew I guess I do'no, – I guess niew I do'no, – I swear niew I guess it is three miles,” he swore, vowed, and guessed alternately. (Campbell 1937 [1792]: 157)

Material of this type comes close to Schneider’s (2002: 73) best proximity to speech (of five categories) as the (near-) immediate recording of a real speech event that is usually only found in interviews or transcripts. These data are hard to come by, however. For travellers in Canada, Waterson (1989) is an indispensable resource and guide into their writing.

In any case, a multi-faceted approach and a comparison of as many pieces of evidence as possible is desirable. Of imminent importance to the interpretation of written Canadian sources are the subprojects of the Linguistic Atlas of the United States and Canada, begun in 1930, which can be found on the Linguistic Atlas Project website (see LAUSC). Four projects are of immediate interest to Canadian English as they include Canadian informants: the Linguistic Atlas of New England (LANE, including New Brunswick), the Linguistic Atlas of the Upper Midwest (LAUM) and the two unpublished atlases, the Linguistic Atlas of the North Central States (LANCS, including western Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan) and the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States (LAMSAS, including Pennsylvania and New York; the data is currently digitized on the Linguistic Atlas Project website). For a detailed overview of the work to the mid-1970s, which comprises the bulk, see Allen (1977). Unpublished data for LANCS and LAMSAS has been successfully used in the reconstruction of Canadian Raising, pre-dating the phenomenon from the 1930s to 1880 (Thomas 1991: 162).

More recent reference tools are Schneider (ed., 2008) and accompanying volumes, which include chapters on Canadian English and the American and British English input varieties with further references. For North American phonology, however, the Atlas of North American English provides an excellent starting point and continental overview, including Canadian data. Boberg (2008) offers more Canadian data and thus detail than the Atlas of North American English, while Thomas (2001) provides acoustic phonetic reference points for speakers from many North America areas, including 38 Ohio residents and one Canadian speaker. Canadian present-day data is available via the Dialect Topography of Canada website. For seven Canadian regions, plus four adjacent American regions, data is provided for free access on the web from all linguistic levels (Chambers 1994). For lexis, Boberg (2005) is a present-day national survey of
a set of 50+ variables that complements the *Dictionary of Canadianisms on Historical Principles* (DCHP) with a sociolinguistic dimension. The *Bank of Canadian English*, the database for the revision of the DCHP, is the best diachronic source for linguistic study (Dollinger 2010) and can, at present, be accessed via individual request from the compilers (www.dchp.ca).

Apart from these large-scale projects and data, a number of sociolinguistic urban studies are available. The most prominent ones are Woods (1999) in Ottawa and Gregg (1992) in Vancouver. An overview of other studies is provided in Dollinger (2008: 9–58). A small diachronic corpus for the time period 1776–1850 exists in the *Corpus of Early Ontario English, pre-Confederation Section* (Dollinger 2008: 99–119). The *Dictionary of American Regional English* also informs the study of Canadian English. Focussing on non-standard usage, it is one the best resources for the identification of spelling variants for CanE.

Finally, a note on unpublished survey data needs to be made. As Wanamaker (1981: 89) pointed out, a problem in Canadian English research is that “so little of it has been made public in print”. One dialect map based on such data is found in McConnell (1979: 32). This unpublished material includes the *New Brunswick Dialect Survey, 1969–1973*, as part of a Maritime Dialect Survey,¹ and a 1960s survey of British Columbian English, both of which are unexplored resources.

To date no repository of historical recordings of elderly or historical speakers of Canadian English (as in the case of New Zealand English) has been found, although the Archives of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation include historical sound recordings that may serve as benchmarks for analyses (http://archives.cbc.ca/).

1.3 Literary dialect

Literary dialect has, as of late, not figured prominently as a source for historical dialect data in Canada as “applications of sociolinguistic methods to literature are largely untried” (Chambers forthcoming: Section 8), but see Minick (2004) for such studies on AmE. Despite being considered the lowest level of proximity to speech in Schneider’s (2002) classification, literary dialect offers a real-time window, yet a distorted one, on periods that may otherwise be difficult or impossible to recover.

Since the advent of modern sociolinguistics, literary representations of speech have usually been disregarded as suboptimal evidence. Sociolinguistic enquiry, going into the direction of synchronic field work, leaves these resources to literature scholars

¹ The NBDS archival materials are located at the University of New Brunswick Library (see http://www.lib.unb.ca/archives/finding/kinloch/series2.html, 2 Dec. 2008). Henry Alexander’s dialect survey in Nova Scotia in the 1930s, again unpublished, used Linguistic Atlas work-sheets as part of a Maritime dialect survey for 35 informants (Avis 1973: 55).
and their different vantage points. Minnick (2004) is one recent attempt to bring linguistic and literary perspectives back together.

If Ives (1971: 172) is right, historical linguists are disregarding a plethora of information when leaving aside literary representations, since, “As a general rule, […], the modern practitioners of literary dialect are far less concerned with exact representation of pronunciation features than were their nineteenth century predecessors”. Considering the slowly-developing norms for dialect literature, one would assume that the nineteenth-century century writer, being at the beginning of the tradition, could afford to pay more attention to detail and less to convention, than has been possible or customary since. But there are limitations. Usually, evidence of social and regional variation in lower class speakers is plentiful and the social gradation between the social classes is made quite explicit. On the other hand, regional variants of educated speech is usually absent for the sake of increasing the literary effect.

Several factors influence the interpretation, or filter removal, of literary dialects, one of which is the consideration of the author’s own dialectal background. Ives (1971: 158) proclaims this principle “perhaps the most important single axiom in the study of literary dialects”. The best writers would therefore be authors who are native to a given region they wish to represent and who are conversant in the standard accent of the area. On the other hand, their nativeness might prevent them from noticing differences of locality which occur in sociolects which are obvious to outsiders (Ives 1971: 163). In some way, we will see, it is precisely the outsider’s view that, if presented in the right light, will illuminate the pervasive features of a given dialect region.

In interpreting the evidence – spelling, syntactic features or word-forms, pragmatic expressions, formulaic phrases, and lexis – the linguist must not lose track of the story, its plot, and effects. Often times, literary dialect is used as a formal device to convey a message. As a result, usually stereotypical features will be chosen, and those features tend to be exaggerated. This is nowhere more apparent than in eye-dialect, which is an orthographic representation that reveals no phonetic information, but uses non-standard spelling to denote the ‘difference’, usually the uneducated status, of a character. Bailey (1981) assesses the dialect representations of immigrant and minority dialects, i.e. “non-Yankee dialects”, in nineteenth-century Nova Scotian writing and identifies features – compared with other sources, that do “derive from emerging literary conventions rather than from the close observation of real speakers” (p. 96). One needs to keep this caveat in mind, which is why the comparison with non-literary sources is so important.

Early sociolinguistic projects do show traces of an integrated approach that include not only authentic sources, but also literary representations. The Dictionary of American Regional English, for instance, includes all spelling variants in their entries from the pre-recording era and establishes a three-tiered typology of spellings evidence (Cassidy 1987: 127): bad spellings of the undereducated, spellings of writers with a
good ear, and eye-dialect. A first task is therefore to separate the eye-dialect passages from the passages including phonetic information and then to separate “good” from “bad” representations. Task 1 is easy, task 2 is rather complex (see Section 3).

We will see later that Susanna Moodie turns out have a ‘good ear’, in the sense of Cassidy’s definition above, but she uses, in a work of literary aspirations, eye-dialect, as shown below, uttered by an Irish immigrant:

Shure the ladies, the purty darlints, never sent you wid that ‘ugly message to Pat’ […]

(Moodie 1857 [1852]: 29)

While we find pointers towards vowel quantity and devoicing of word-final consonants, the spelling *shure* is an instance of eye-dialect and is used solely for comic effect or as a social marker for the sake of the plot. When Moodie reports of Irish immigrants near Matilda, Ontario, on her way upcountry in 1832, she uses dialect features, but not consistently:

“Eggs and ham, summat of that dried venison, and pumpkin pie,” responded the aide-de-camp, thoughtfully.

(Moodie 1857 [1852]: 28)

The example, uttered by the Irish tavern owner, is a mix of features. Presented in standard spelling, except for the dialectal rendering of “somewhat” as *summat* (OED-3, s.v. ‘somewhat’), Moodie does not use linguistic features to distinguish between the ‘civilized’, composed husband and the hysterical, bad-mannered and rash wife. The Scottish immigrants, however, having just lost their son in an accident, show many dialectal pointers:

“Ah, Jeannie, my puir woman,” said the husband, grasping her hand, “ye maun bear up; ’tis God’s will; an sinfu’ creatures like us mauna repine. But oh, madam,” turning to me, “we have sair hearts the day!”

(Moodie 1857 [1852]: 28)

Here, phonetic indicators, e.g. *puir* for *poor*, as evidence for a high mid vowel, morphological hints – *maun* for *must*, dropping of syllable-final */-l/ *sinfu*’ for *sinful*, or *sair* for *sad*, word forms – *the day* for *today*, all provide leads for comparison with Scottish English sources and evidence for Canadian input. For the student of historical CanE the three types of spelling pronunciations are important to keep apart. Cassidy’s third type of spelling-pronunciation, the spelling by writers with a bad ear, or little schooling, is linked less with literary representations, but more with non-literary, authentic texts, to which we will turn next.

1.4 Non-literary sources

Non-literary genres and text types are copious, and for the nineteenth century onwards, the sheer amount of material available is a rich, yet poorly tapped resource. For practical reasons I will limit the discussion to only a few, prominent text types. Studies of early
CanE have recently included letter data, diaries and newspaper sources. Texts from all three genres comprise the Corpus of Early Ontario English. Newspaper sources are comparatively easily available in digitized formats, e.g. The Globe and Mail (1844-) and The Toronto Star (1892-). For print media and published sources, several reference works and case studies exist (e.g. Fleming 2004–7, Stabile 2002).

Characteristic of Canada, however, and more rewarding, are early manuscript documents, mostly letters, pertaining to land grants, purchases, commercial interactions and the administration of the province that involve texts by semi-literate writers. These texts are accessible at national, provincial and at times municipal archives. A classification of the material is hard to carry out, but most of the material up to 1850 concerns the securing of land titles. The following is a transcription of just such a letter from CONTE:

[308]
[reply on reverse side of 307, dated 6 April 1794]

Gentleman – ther is no in Aargument on My plan as any boddy no is of and Jams O Conly Says that he is one of the first settlers one he nos that Mr Gray has not taken up the land for yet [Gives] his land
Ples send me my tickit and you Will [xxx] your f [friend] Phillip Snyder

Only small fractions, i.e. less than 6% of the material, is composed by lower class writers. Other sources refer to land surveys between the deputy surveyors in the field and the surveyors general in each province. These types of materials can be found in most Canadian jurisdictions and present the most-readily available manuscript source.

Diaries, together with travel reports, and at times mixed types, represent other sources. Children’s diaries, such as the one by Eleonora Hallen, can at times – despite middle class upbringing – provide evidence for colloquial usage. Settler diaries, such as Benjamin Smith’s diary, who, as a semi-literate farmer in the Toronto area as of the mid-1790s, are perhaps among the sources that are closest to the vernacular. The identification of useful sources must proceed on a one-by-one basis, but Matthews (1950) and Buss (1991) are useful resource guides in this respect.

2. Literary sources East to West: Points of departure

As Allen (1980: 37) pointed out some years ago, Newfoundland English has received by far the most attention of any Canadian variety. Naturally, the resources and data at the English Language Research Centre at Memorial University and partner institutions, including the historical Dictionary of Newfoundland English² and the Dialect

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For the Maritimes (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island), the writings of Thomas Chandler Haliburton are both of literary and linguistic significance. For Prince Edward Island, a historical *Dictionary of Prince Edward Island English* is available and co-functions as a bibliography for non-standard language literature.

Representation of second-language Quebec English are plentiful ("Oui! you strike me on the head side. Bon! I strike you de same way! By Gar!"), while Anglophone Quebec English renderings are almost always shown in standard spellings. British immigrants and travellers, such as Susanna Moodie, give crucial hints (see New 1989 for other authors). For the linguistic enclave of the Ottawa Valley, Pringle (1981) offers a linguistic analysis of Ralph Connor's writing, which he matches with nine (unpublished) field records of counties pertaining to the novel, showing the limitations of Connor's literary data (see Padolsky & Pringle 1981).

The best point of departure for works on Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta is Peel et al.'s (2003) bibliography. Searchable online, one can easily identify potentially relevant works for linguistic analysis outside the literary canon. A 1920 novel on an Albertan family near Calgary (p. 84) bursts with inverse spellings, eye-dialect and sometimes more telling hints:

> "Warsh yer han's, Mosey, an' Par, an' come on, Mar, here's yer tea an' crackers. Wisht I hed a piece of jelly-roll.”
> (Winlow & Pocklington 1920: 203)

Clearly, *r* is used for literary effect (e.g. *wash, Ma, Pa*), while vowel quality (*hed*) would require more systematic study.

A bibliography of British Columbia print works exists for 1900–1950 (Edwards & Lort 1975); while useful, it is not searchable and includes many non-fictional texts where little variation can be expected to be found. A pioneer account is Allison’s (1976) report from the 1850s to the 1870s, written around 1930. While she does not generally reproduce non-standard language, e.g. First Nation members speak Standard English not Chinook jargon, she includes, from 1880, what may be the first rendering of a Chinese-Canadian interlanguage: “He gone, he gone, too muchie devilo come – he go.” (Allison 1976 [1931]: 59).

---

3. See http://www.mun.ca/elrc/, with some resources available online.
The Canadian territories north of the 60th parallel are virtually linguistically unstudied. Some data may be found in literary language. Si-wash, a member of a Yukon First Nation band, is rendered as such:

“We camp quick.” He pointed away out at the far side of the valley confronting them. “We mak dat valley. See dat hill? We come go. We mak round it. It bad. So. Long, deep fall. Dogs haul ’em long side hill. Very bad. So we mak ’em before storm. Good. After hill mush wood. Tall, big. It is we camp.” (Cullum 1914: 18)

Considering how little is known, passages such as these may contain hints on salient features such as morphosyntactic and pragmatic features, devoicing (dat), vowel quality (mak) that are noteworthy.

3. Tracing the low-back vowel merger in Canadian English

A standard feature in many descriptions of Canadian phonology is the pronunciation of caught and cot with identical vowels (the ‘caught-cot merger’, i.e. that of Wells’ lexical sets LOT and THOUGHT). Scott (1939) was the first to produce data on the phenomenon in Canada, reporting a Winnipeg informant who had the same vowel qualities for cawed, caught, cod, and cot, but with longer vowels for the former two. Shortly before Sprague de Camp (1939) hypothesized that “many, perhaps most, New Englanders make no consistent distinction” between caught and cot. This “obvious tendency … is also I think, heard in Eastern Canada” (Sprague de Camp 1939: 6). Brinton and Fee (2001: 428) list other homophonous pairs in CanE: offal/awful, Don/dawn, hock/hawk, lager/logger, Otto/auto, holly/Hawley, tot/taught. The merger affects the open-mid back vowel /ɔ/, low rounded /ɒ/ and low unrounded /ɑ/. Canadian English differs from American English dialects in its preservation of /ɔ/ before r, such as in sorry, tomorrow, Dorothy.

Chambers (1993: 11) suggests that the merger in Canada originates from western Pennsylvania (and surrounding areas), based on settlement patterns and exemplary evidence. In the following discussion, written sources will be combined with linguistic survey data and anecdotal evidence to assess if and where the low-back vowel merger was present in early nineteenth-century Canada and to exemplify the methodological approach.

3.1 Contemporary evidence

The Atlas of North American English states that the low-back merger “does not define any one dialect region” in North America, but several ones, “including roughly half of the geographic territory that the Atlas covers.” The change towards the merger is still
in progress and is leading to considerable heterogeneity (Chambers 1993: 59), and is favoured in syllables closed by /n/ as it is more advanced in those contexts. In North America, the merger is most advanced in the following regions, in descending order:

Table 1. Advancement of merger by region (ANAE: 59, Table 5.3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Advancement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Pennsylvania</td>
<td>-.28 completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern New England</td>
<td>-.07 moving towards completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>0.21 moving towards completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>0.54 completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midland</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland North</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lower the coefficient, the more /ı/ and /a/ (or /an/) are merged. There is a split between positions 4 and 5. While in Canada the coefficient is not lowest, meaning that some Canadian respondents produced the two vowels as “close” to each other and as not the same, consideration of age shows that “Only in Canada is the merger well enough established to show no correlation with age” (ANAE: 65, see Boberg 2008: 135 for a bigger sample), suggesting that the merger has a higher dissemination and, perhaps, a longer history there. Moreover, there is clear evidence for the salience of the merger in CanE for both the perception and production in minimal pair tests, with Canada and Western Pennsylvania on top of the pack (ANAE: 62, fig. 9.1 and 9.2).

Knowledge is essential of the direct connection via settlement patterns of Upper Canada and the U.S. midlands, “Pennsylvania and [upstate] New York, among others” (Chambers 1993: 4). There is reason to assume a connection between the merger in Western Pennsylvania and Upper Canada. But was the merger also present in Eastern New England and the Maritime provinces? A split between Eastern New England, which has the merger, and Western New England, which does not (Nagy & Roberts 2004: 53), can be dated via apparent-time models and a reinterpretation of Kurath’s data to at least the 1880s (Boberg 2001: 13). This is how far the linguistic atlas data reaches back.

3.2 Diachronic evidence

Particularly interesting for a diachronic development is the comparison in ANAE with older dialect atlas data (Kurath and McDavid 1961, data from 1931–33) and Labov’s 1966 telephone survey.

LANE includes seven informants from New Brunswick, LAUM five from Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, which are not shown in ANAE (Map 2). General impressions of all informants are collected in both publications; in LAUM, nothing pertaining to the low-back merger is found, in LANE, however, the following is reported for
Map 2. Low-back vowel merger 1930s-1990s, ANAE (fig. 9.4)
informant 429, from Hampstead, N.B.: “The vowel as in hot is low-back and slightly rounded; the vowel as in father either low-back or low-central” (Lowman, quoted in Kurath 1939: 238–240 for Canadian regions). The fieldworker Lowman, moreover, characterizes all seven Canadian informants as similar to a mid-western American speech “except that the vowel as in father, calm, lot, bother is fully back” (ibid: 238). Table 2 re-classifies the LANE data for New Brunswick and Northern Maine (for comparison). L stands for a low-back vowel, N for any other:

Table 2. Vowel tokens in LANE, classified as low-back (L) or not (N)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Brunswick</th>
<th></th>
<th>Northern Maine</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>% of L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M30 swamp</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>88 (100)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M30 bog</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M35 (rock)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80 (100)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M45 (rod)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75 (100)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M50-1 long way</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>88 (100)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M96 fog</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>70 (90)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M180 hauling</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>88 (100)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M204 hogs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75 (88)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M211 dog</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75 (88)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M231 frog</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>71 (86)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M239 wasp</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>71 (86)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M293 sauce</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>88 (100)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M301 salt pork</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>88 (100)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M330 log</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75 (88)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M359 laundry</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75 (88)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M499 caught a cold</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M511 jaundice</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>57 (71)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M527 god</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>83 (100)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M550 law and order</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>83 (100)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M638 brought</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M641 caught7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80 (100)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before /t/</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>88 (96)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grey shaded columns in Table 2 quantify the percentages of the low-back vowel in comparison to other vowels. The data in parentheses in the New Brunswick set excludes the information of one informant, informant 426, a 87-year-old housewife, who, with the exception of brought, uses the mid-low back vowel /ɔ/ categorically.

7. Only first forms, excluding alternative verb forms.
and skews the picture. Such (near-) categoricity is not found with any Maine speaker. What is interesting is that the Canadian data shows two categorical contexts without the corrected data, but eleven with the correction (as opposed to one in Maine). Percentages for low-back vowels are high before /t/ and, with the exception of jaundice, high before nasals (swamp, long way, laundry). Informant 427, a 77-year old farmer, uses low-back vowels categorically, again, with the single exception of jaundice. Subtracting 60 years from the fieldwork date, projecting back to when the farmer was 17, would provide evidence for the merger in New Brunswick in 1871–73.

The evidence in LAUM for Canadian data is more varied and inconsistent, probably because four variants for the back vowels were used in the transcriptions (LAUM, III: 258–67). Apart from disparate occurrences, a low-back lax unrounded vowel can be found in all five Canadian locations in watch, and in four in on and office (but in no Canadian location in faucet, because, jaundice, wash, long, strong). Again, it seems that a following /t/ and /n/ facilitate the merger.

A comparison of acoustic phonetic analyses shows that the mean measurements of the first and second formants, which define vowel quality, across eight regions from Newfoundland to British Columbia are identical for the vowels father, caught and bother (or cot) (Boberg 2008: Figure 2). The merger is shown in Thomas’ (2001) analysis of the vowel systems of North American speakers with the speaker from Toronto, Ontario (born in 1927), Massachusetts (North Truro, Haverhill, Uxbridge), New Hampshire (Belmont), Pennsylvania (Burgettstown), but not from Connecticut (speaker born in 1853, p. 68) and early twentieth-century New York speakers (p. 71). Ohio and Indiana are identified as transition areas in ANAE (p. 64). Thomas’ 38 speaker sample from Ohio provides some diachronic insight. Rearranged by age (born 1878–1982) and geographic location, the northern third of Ohio has been holding strong as a non-merged area ever since, pointing towards a border effect: in the Cleveland area, next to the Canadian border, all subjects, born in 1878, 1946, 1969 and 1977, have non-merged systems, with similar results for the area further west, around Sandusky (born 1898, 1924, 1950, 1970). Farther south, the transition area has been expanding in the twentieth century.

Simply put and generalizing somewhat, one could say that in the 1930s, the Maritimes (New Brunswick) had a higher dissemination with the merger than bordering Maine. Ohio has been merging in the twentieth century, Connecticut has not.

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8. She could have been a case of Canadian Dainty, i.e. Canadian-born aficionados of things British, including speech.

3.2.1 Literary sources: Haliburton’s literary eye and ear

Haliburton’s writings seem to be a good starting point for written sources as the materials have already been classified from a linguistic point of view (Avis 1950). Concerning the particular focus of this case study in vowels, Ives (1971: 156) identifies the general problem of representation of the low-back vowels:

some vowels, such as the low back vowels generally found in water, wash, bouth, moss, and law require considerable ingenuity in representation and care in interpretation, for there seems to be no letter or combination of letters which can be used consistently in all words having these sounds.

On the other hand, Avis (1950: 21), in an excellent unpublished analysis, considers the “non-standard vowels used in Haliburton’s representation of Slick’s speech […] the most significant indications of dialect pronunciation”.

In the case of Haliburton, New England representations can serve as clues to early Nova Scotian speech. Sam, the protagonist, is a Yankee pedlar from Connecticut travelling throughout Nova Scotia and playing jokes on the somewhat gullible Nova Scotians. Third-generation Nova Scotian and, as a judge, in contact with people of all walks of life, Haliburton knew the speechways of the land (Avis 1950: 4–5). Early nineteenth-century New England and Nova Scotian English are unanimously considered a non-rhotic variety. For this reason, Haliburton “rarely represents this phenomenon in his writing, except in such words […] which form a special class historically and which were traditionally so represented in dialect writings” (Avis 1969: xxv). With regard to spelling, Haliburton (1852, qtd. in Avis 1950: 16) expressly states seven principles of his literary approach to dialect, the seventh of which is of importance to us:

Au in such words as daughter and slaughter he [Sam Slick] pronounces ah.

(Haliburton 1852, quoted in Avis 1950: 16)

This direct statement is certainly an indicator that Haliburton intends Sam Slick to use a low-back vowel /a/ – represented by ah – in lieu of an RP-like mid-low rounded vowel /ɔ/. If we did not have Avis’ statement, we would have no certainty of telling. This insight confirms Ives principle (1971: 163) that authors who feature the merger in their own dialect would not find it necessary to respell words like slaughter as slarter to indicate a low-back vowel. At least not in all cases. Avis (1950: 32) includes the following spellings as renderings of /ɔ/ that are most likely lowered vowels /a/ and /o/ (# of occurrences): apple sarce ‘sauce’ (3), darnt ‘daunt’ (1), darnted ‘daunted’ (2), dants, darter ‘daughter’ (14), harnted ‘haunted’ (1), sarcy ‘saucy/saucily’ (2), sarcers (1), sarce garden (6), sarsages ‘sausages’ (1).
Together, there are 31 tokens of a clear replacement of /ɔ/ with a low-back vowel, shown in one context below:

So I jist put up my feet on his fender, free and easy, to show him he couldn't 
dart me by his airs and graces, and then spit right atween the polished bars
(Haliburton 1840: 64)

The spelling “darter” for daughter, a conventional feature of dialect writings, can be read as “ar equals [ɑ]” (Avis 1950: 32) and Haliburton is consistent, for the character of Sam Slick, for both sare and darter: Sam does not use them in their standard spellings. If Haliburton had wanted to indicate a mid-back vowel, he could have resorted to other spellings, such as or in thort, for thought, which would have been a logical choice. But he did not, which gives compelling spelling evidence for a low-back vowel in these positions in the mid-1830s. In which region, then, did the merger occur? Considering the evidence from LANE, ANAE and Thomas (2001) the merger did not occur in western New England, including Connecticut, where Sam is from. Either Haliburton was unaware of Connecticut as an exception, patterning with western New England, or he represented his own characteristics or the characteristics of Nova Scotian rural dwellers with the merger. By combining new data with Avis’ analysis, the merger probably represents the state of affairs in Nova Scotia in the 1830s more so than in Connecticut. However, this says little about Eastern New England (see Bengtsson 1956), which was most likely, almost as “merged” as the Canadian area.

3.2.2 Literary dialect and authentic data
In moving beyond one work of art, data from six novels and travel reports will be compared to the diary, letter and newspaper data in CONTE. For such comparison, the establishment of a list of variables is key. While hits for darter – in non-rhotic dialects – would be a piece of evidence, excellent variables in oral data elicitation, e.g. swamp or wasp, cannot be used here, as it would be difficult to indicate a low vowel apart from adding an h: swahmp, wahsp, which was not done.

10. Here, as throughout this chapter, the availability of digitized versions, such as Google Books (see the references and footnotes) are taken full advantage of.

11. Kiefte and Kay-Raining Bird (2010) characterize present-day English Halifax speech as having the merger, South Shore speech as “often merged […] even in local dialect speakers”, while many Cape Breton speakers “retain the LOT-THOUGHT distinction”. These present-day data suggest, with the exception of Scottish and Irish diasporas, a loose fit with the historical interpretation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Priest (1858)</th>
<th>Haliburton (1837–40)</th>
<th>Moodie (1857)</th>
<th>Moodie (1853)</th>
<th>CONTE-pC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard sp.</td>
<td>Non-stand. sp.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sarce &lt; sauce</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sarce &lt; source</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>darter &lt; daughter</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brather &lt; brother</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hal &lt; haul</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lang &lt; long</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brat &lt; brought</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brot &lt; brought</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cot &lt; caught</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca(w)t &lt; caught</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gad &lt; god</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gat &lt; got</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wark &lt; work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No hits found for: bather < bother, sarry < sorry, wards < words, hat < hot, gat < got, lat < lot, rad < rod, fag < fog, hags < hogs, da(w)g < dog, fra(w)g < frog, la(w)g < log, landry < laundry, jandice < jaundice, lang < long, ra(w)ck < rock, ba(w)g < bog, ha(w)p < hop, Scatch < Scotch, pastive < positive

What is as important as attestations for non-standard spellings in Table 3 is the long list of words that did not produce results. This shows one of the problems of identifying appropriate lexical items. Two works, by Anna Jameson (1839 [1838]) and Catharine Parr Traill (1846 [1836]), did not produce any non-standard spellings from the list. However, six lexical items with non-standard spellings were found in the literary works, and two in the authentic texts. The authentic data include two tokens of hauling as haling by Benjamin Smith, an early farmer in the Ancaster area, close to Hamilton, Ontario, with attestations from 1799 and 1812:

June 20, 1799

twenty first June finished Haling Shop Logs and wood of my …

4th Hald all the poles of my New ground and finished …

21 [October] Finished haling in Corn and Some Punkins Do

[1812]

eighteenth I and Syd Cleaned up oats David hald wood Solomon V D Drest flax

12. Representing Scotch dialect.
13. Representing Yorkshire dialect.
14. From representations of Scotch dialect.
This is supported by 96 occurrences of *hald* for *hauled* in the corpus text sample. Benjamin Smith migrated at the age of 14 with his parents, United Empire Loyalists, from New Jersey to Ontario (then Upper Canada) and married in 1794. New Jersey is not known as a merger area (ANAE). While the spelling evidence might indicate a low-back vowel, there is possible confusion with character-sound correlations such as *Walden, all, fall*, with /ɔ/. By considering all the evidence, which are Smith’s origin in non-merging New Jersey and the little schooling he received, this spelling is perhaps better interpreted as /ɔ/ rather than assuming that he merged the two low-back vowels in his system from age 14 onwards to 5 years after his marriage (1799).

Other non-standard spellings include renderings of British English dialects, which would be fruitfully checked against the *English Dialect Dictionary* for early British English. The spelling *sarce*, however, first identified in Chambers (1993) as indicating a low-back vowel merger, is shown as recurring consistently in Moodie’s work, and frequently in that of Haliburton:

The woman [Betty Fye] was such an original that I gave her what she wan[ted]. As she was going off, she took up one of the apples I was peeling.
I guess you have a fine orchard?’ – ‘They say the best in the distr[ict.]’
‘We have no orchard to hum, and I guess you’ll want sarce.’
‘Sarce! What is sarce?’
‘Not know what sarce is? You are clever! Sarce is apples cut and dried, to make pies in the winter. Now do you comprehend[?]’
I nodded. (Moodie 1857 [1852]: 50)

Betty Fye, Susanna Moodie’s neighbour in 1832 somewhere north of Belleville (between Toronto and Kingston), gives us the first unambiguous piece of evidence for the low-back vowel merger in Canada. And she does so quite prominently, as Susanna Moodie is poking fun at the pronunciation not just in this one publication of hers. Pronounced *r*-less, in keeping with Moodie’s middle-class English dialect at the time, the low-back vowel /ɔ/ is the best explanation, especially since the evidence is matched by data from the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (Vol. V: forthc.). Under “sauce”, citations from 1834 (New England), 1844 (New York) and 1848 (upcountry Massachusetts) mesh nicely with the Canadian settlement history.

4. Conclusions

This paper has shed some light on the various resources for the study of historical Canadian English. The combination of evidence, starting with literary and non-literary

15. “Oh, dear, yes: she lost all her clothes, and three large jars of preserves she made about a week ago, and sarce in accordance!” */ “A common Yankee phrase, often used instead of the word proportion.” (Moodie 1853: 202)
sources, has produced evidence for low-back vowel mergers in the 1830s for both Nova Scotia and Ontario. In Nova Scotia, there is reason to assume that, for the merger, Haliburton represented his own Nova Scotian or an Eastern New England dialect, but not Connecticut features. Haliburton gave clear hints at an unrounded, low vowel for some spellings (see his principle 7).

The present test case has shown that literary sources, often – and for good reasons – considered poor representations of actual speech, can nevertheless be crucial in the historical reconstruction of Late Modern English features, such as the dating of the dissemination of the low-back vowel merger in Canada. Without literary dialect representation from a nineteenth-century British immigrant, who does not have the best reputation for capturing dialect among literature scholars, we would have no clear evidence from Ontario. There is a chasm to be bridged between literary assessments of dialect literature – which prefer Catharine Parr Traill's dialect as not just more objective, but “more idiomatic, more adept at recording dialect” than that of her sister Susanna Moodie (New 1989: 55). It turns out that Moodie's writings provide the crucial linguistic evidence, not Parr Traill's.

This finding implies that Ives' statement from above, claiming that an author's own dialect needs to be close to the target dialect, has to be altered. Susanne Moodie, as much as she complained about Canada, came with a good ear and used comparatively little eye-dialect. While she was not a speaker of early Canadian English, her writings are, doubtless, “valuable samples of the emerging standards of Upper Canadian speech” (Chambers 1993: 6).

From the authentic texts, Benjamin Smith's diary proved to be the most interesting one. The possible evidence for the merger – his spellings of *hald* for *hauld* – was, at this point, treated as too weak to support an antedating of the merger in Ontario from 1832 to 1799 (when the first attestation is found). Unless additional evidence can be produced that traces the merger to the mid-1790s in Ontario or, prior to that, in New Jersey (Smith's state of origin), this indicator remains too ambiguous.

For CanE, it appears that the low-back vowel merger entered via two channels: via New England and via western Pennsylvanian immigration. From the New England Atlas data we can tell that by 1880, the merger was already more established in Canada, which suggests a nineteenth-century Canadian development markedly different from the American patterns. From these two areas the merger (or the propensity for it) seems to have spread, to other Canadian regions. Linguistic metacomments from the late 1930s onwards, and the data in ANAE, support such an interpretation from a more recent perspective.

What remains to be stressed is that in the present context authentic sources of the type preferred in Schneider (2002) did not produce historical evidence. Instead, in two cases literary sources offered highly convincing clues for the reconstruction of early nineteenth-century Canadian speech. It seems that a reconsideration of the early
literary sources for emerging varieties of English, in addition to authentic data, might be beneficial.

Acknowledgements

I am thankful to Luanne von Schneidemesser for providing a draft entry from DARE, Vol. V. For Section 2, I am grateful to colleagues at UBC who have sent many suggestions, too numerous to be listed here. Special thanks must go to William H. New, who gave me many new hints about the nineteenth-century.

References


**CONTE Corpus = Corpus of Early Ontario English, pre-Confederation Section. 1776–1849.** Compiled by Stefan Dollinger.


Earlier Caribbean English and Creole in writing

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In research on Creoles, historical written texts have in recent decades been fruitfully employed to shed light on the diachronic development of these languages and the nature of Creole genesis. They have so far been much less frequently used to derive social information about these communities and to improve our understanding of the sociolinguistics and stylistic structure of these languages. This paper surveys linguistic research on early written texts in the anglophone Caribbean and takes a critical look at the theories and methods employed to study these texts. It emphasises the sociolinguistic value of the texts and provides some exemplary analyses of early Creole documents.

1. Introduction

Research on Caribbean English-lexicon Creoles has made use of early textual documents collected by missionaries (cf. for instance, Oldendorp 1996 [1767–1768], 2000 [1777]; cf. also Mühlhäusler 2001), planters (e.g. Leslie 1740; Lewis 1834; Long 1970 [1774]), travellers (e.g. Nugent 1907 [1802]; Sloane 1707) or fictional accounts by writers (e.g. Scott 1833). Historical written texts continue to be an important source for shedding light on earlier stages of creolization (e.g. Arends 1995a, 1995b; Arends & Perl 1995; Baker & Bruyn 1999), the diachronic development of Creoles as well as on structural features and variation within a particular variety. The size of text corpora varies greatly within the Caribbean: while there is a very substantial collection of earlier texts on Sranan Tongo, Saamaka and Negerhollands (cf. Arends 2002: 50), textual documentation on other early Caribbean Englishes and Creoles is less prolific and consists of diverse text types – from short quotations of speech contained within travel accounts of outsiders to whole texts written in a Creole by insiders. For instance, lyrics of songs, poems, cartoon captions or commentaries that appeared in newspapers for the aim of entertainment (cf. Baker & Winer 1999: 103–4; for an overview of the development of literate culture in the Caribbean, cf. Roberts 1997).

Winer & Rimmer 1994), Guyanese (Rickford 1987: 81–120) or Bajan (Rickford & Handler 1994; Fields 1995) have also been less subject to structural research than their Surinamese counterparts. An exception to this is research on early Kittian texts to which a whole volume (Baker & Bruyn 1999) is devoted. Recent years have seen a wealth of new and annotated editions of nineteenth century Caribbean fiction, where embedded speech portrayal may also serve as useful language material. The time period of text collections covered comprises mainly the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, even though isolated material from the seventeenth century can also be found for early Bajan (Rickford & Handler 1994: 223–229; Fields 1995).

It is clear that writing is never an accurate representation of speech, neither in its standardised form nor – unquestionably – in the idiosyncratic recordings of colonial writings that were greatly influenced by the documenter’s own linguistic background, linguistic knowledge and attitude towards the subject of recording. Due to the social conditions in the Caribbean plantation society, early texts in the Caribbean are less likely to have been produced by actual speakers of the language varieties (Creole/Caribbean Englishes) than in any other region covered by this volume. Several authors (e.g. Rickford 1987: 81; Baker & Winer 1999: 114) have remarked on the high proportion of non-native authors of such texts. To use earlier Caribbean English and Creole written texts as a source for linguistic reconstructions and feature analysis,


the researcher must therefore exercise necessary caution and consider not only the historical background of the language situation in which it was produced (cf. Arends 1995b: 54), but also additional features such as linguistic and personal background of the writer, text type, writing event and intended audience. In addition to language information that can be filtered from the documents, a wealth of text- and sociolinguistic information can also be obtained from them, e.g. literacy practices, the emergence of different text types and orthographies, as well as attitudes towards language varieties and the social conditions of writing and text production.

This contribution will not only give a survey of linguistic research on early written texts in the anglophone Caribbean but also take a critical look at the theories and methods employed to make use of them. It will thirdly also place emphasis on the sociolinguistic value of the texts and provide some exemplary analyses of early Creole documents.

2. The writing context in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Caribbean

With the exception of two texts in Bajan (cf. Rickford & Handler 1994: 223–229) from the seventeenth century, the first materials written in Caribbean English-lexicon Creoles date from the early part of the eighteenth century. The first materials for Sranan Tongo (henceforth Sranan), for instance, date from 1707 and the earliest records and reports for Jamaican Creole appear from the 1740s onwards. However, for all languages, the documents from the second part of the century are much more substantial, numerous and also socially diverse. In countries like Trinidad or Grenada records of English-lexicon Creoles emerged only in the early nineteenth century due to various colonial power and language shifts in the eighteenth century. In this section we discuss the characteristics of the available textual sources.

2.1 The authors

Social information on the authors of written materials in a Creole is highly variable. Sometimes the writers were quite well known, while in other cases there is no information and the social background has to be inferred from various sources. In the case of Suriname, there is relatively detailed information about the writer of the early Sranan and Saamaka dictionaries, C. L. Schumann (cf. Van den Berg 2007: 28). By contrast, the identity of the author of the Herlein fragment (1718) “remains somewhat of a mystery” (Van den Berg 2007: 19) and in the case of the Van Dyk language guide (c 1765), there is “not enough evidence […] to positively identify him” (Van den Berg 2007: 22). However, a good bit of social information about him can be gleaned from his writing
(Arends 1995b; Bruyn 1995). The life and times of the author of the collection of early Kittian texts (1793, 1822), Sam Mathews, is subject to a whole chapter in the Baker and Bruyn volume (O’Flaherty 1999). Many of the West Indian planters whose diaries contain excerpts of Creole records stayed only for a short time and wrote from the point of view of an outsider. An exception is Matthew ‘Monk’ Lewis (Lewis 1834) due to his other career as a writer of fiction.

The writers of Creole texts came from a relatively diverse set of backgrounds. In the case of Suriname and the Virgin Islands, for instance, writers had different national origins. Some of the ‘Surinamese’ authors came from the Netherlands (e.g. Herlein, Nepveu, van Dyk, Weygandt), while others such as Schumann, Wietz and Riemer were German. Suriname also boasts a number of local authors such as King, Focke, Kraag, Albitrouw, Alabi, Grego who were born and raised in Suriname. This suggests that writers came from different linguistic backgrounds, including writing conventions, and also had different levels of competence in the Creole. Only some of the authors, generally those who grew up in Suriname, were native speakers of one of the Creoles and used it as their main means of communication. However, this does not necessarily mean that they wrote in their native language but may have used a closely related language. For example, in the case of Johannes King, who wrote religious texts in Sranan, we know that he was exposed to the Maroon Creoles Matawai and Ndyuka by his parents, however, Sranan “belonged to his repertoire from early on, and even though it may not have been his mother tongue, it must have been a primary language for him” (Bruyn 1995: 37) because he partly grew up in Paramaribo. In colonial British West Indies, most of the authors of planters’ diaries and travelogues came from the British motherland. Their linguistic ability to record the speech they heard varied considerably. J.B. Moreton, a bookkeeper in the Jamaican parish of Clarendon and collector of songs and stories (1793), was a non-native of Jamaica but “his record of songs and conversations suggest a keener and more sympathetic ear than that of any earlier commentator” (D’Costa & Lalla 1989: 12). In the nineteenth century, local writing gained ground in the Caribbean, not only because of the arrival of printing presses but also due to advances in education. Winer (ed., 2003) estimates that Adolphus, a novel by an anonymous author serialised in the Trinidadian newspaper in 1853 is “the first Trinidadian – and possibly Caribbean – novel by a presumably non-white writer born and raised in Trinidad” (ed., 2003: x).

The majority of the writers have to be classified as second language speakers with differences in linguistic competence. They usually learned the Creole later in life, often for professional reasons, and probably did not use it as their main means of communication. In the case of Suriname, some writers spent only relatively little time in the country and had comparatively little exposure to, and competence in, the different varieties at the time of writing (e.g. Riemer and Herlein). However, others such as
Nepveu spent most of their life in the colony and are likely to have been fluent users in the language (Arends 1995b: 18). But time spent in the country is not always the best predictor for language competence. Although Schumann only stayed for eight years in Suriname, his writings are generally assumed to be very accurate, most likely because he had had linguistic training and was actively engaged in language description and translation projects using native consultants.

Authors were also professionally quite diverse. A good number of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century documents were authored by Moravian Missionaries (e.g. Schumann & Wietz in Schuchardt 1914; Riemer 1780 in Arends & Perl 1995; cf. Brathwaite 2005: 256–7), but Wesleyan Methodists were also active in the Caribbean (cf. Brathwaite 2005: 345 on letters and Anon. “A series of tracts for Slaves in the West Indies”). Their educational backgrounds and abilities as linguists and translators must have varied considerably though. For instance, while Schumann appears to have studied theology in Germany and is generally described as a very skilled observer of language, Riemer who had previously worked as a weaver, lacked this scholarly background (Perl 1995: 247). Other writers held more mundane professions. For instance, Nepveu was a public servant who first worked as a secretary for the governor of Suriname and then became governor himself (Arends 1995b: 17). The ‘authors’ of the court records were scribes. Weygandt was an auctioneer of books and Van Dyk was possibly a slave officer on one of the plantations (Arends 1995b). Little is known about the professional background of the native speaker authors who mostly wrote during the nineteenth century. Bruyn (1995) suggests that Focke was a lawyer and that Johannes King engaged in religious activities teaching the Gospel among the Ndyuka and in the Para region. Some of the other writers were engaged in prosylitizing but most likely also performed other activities such as farming. This suggests that the different authors had different degrees of familiarity, experience and ability in the medium of writing prior to their writing in a Creole. Some must have regularly engaged in writing in their own language(s) and had a good knowledge of writing conventions while others most likely had few opportunities lacking in-depth knowledge of these conventions. In the West Indies, native speaker authors were faced with the fact that educational opportunity usually came with writing in the Creole’s lexifier language, thus making it a difficult act to balance the conventions of English orthography with the marking of Creole phonological and grammatical features (see also 2.3 below).

2.2 The nature of the texts

The historical documents differ in two important respects: size and text type. Some sources are relatively small such as the Herlein fragment (1718) which consists of just 200 tokens while others such as Schumann’s Sranan Dictionary or Van Dyk’s (1765)
language manual are substantial, numbering 20,000 and 15,000 tokens respectively (Van den Berg 2007: 18).

The available texts also belong to different text categories. Using criteria such as (a) the reality of a speech event portrayed, (b) the relationship between the speaker and the recorder and (c) the temporal distance between speech event and its recording, Schneider’s (2002) typology of historical texts posits five categories of texts – *recorded, recalled, imagined, observed, invented* – that “represent a continuum of increasing distance between an original speech event and its written record” (2002: 72). The Caribbean documents include texts from all of these categories. For instance, Van den Berg (2007: 19) argues that the Saamaka Peace treaty (originally performed) and written in Sranan and the Sranan tokens from the judicial court records belong to what Schneider (2002: 73) classifies as “the most reliable and potentially the most interesting” type of data, so-called *recorded* data since they present a direct record of a speech event which actually occurred. For the West Indies, such direct recordings of texts are mainly found in artistic forms such as poems, lyrics of songs and tales (cf. D’Costa & Lalla 1989; Lalla & D’Costa 1990; Roberts 1997: 34–68). As a primarily oral format, such texts often follow rather formulaic and fixed patterns, mnemonic devices such as rhyme and collocations, making oral transmission over generations possible before they were written down. This also includes the possibility that such texts actually preserve earlier speech forms and archaisms. In addition to these artistic forms, there are also recorded texts from actual speech events, such as sermons, prayers, speeches in self-defence and conversations (cf. Lalla & D’Costa 1990: 40).

Schumann’s dictionaries for Sranan and Saamaka are mostly part of the category *recalled* since the entries and sentences were reconstructed on the basis of his own knowledge and available field notes. “However, as Schumann checked his texts with his consultants (Kramp 1983) and the dictionary shows several corrections and insertions that were added later, some parts of the [Sranan] dictionary should be regarded as recorded” (Van den Berg 2007: 19). Some of the nineteenth century West Indian texts are based on recollections of actual (speech) events. George Ross’s diary (in D’Costa & Lalla 1989: 20–24), for instance, narrates the occurrences relating to the war and exile of Jamaican Maroons in 1800 and 1801 and includes “recalled conversations.” Similarly, we find in Captain Hugh Crow’s *Memoirs* (1830) apparent recollections of speech situations on board of slave ships (D’Costa & Lalla 1989: 24–28). Some of Winer’s collection of early vernacular texts from Trinidad, 1839–1851 (Winer 1997) are examples of what seems to be recollections of “overheard conversations,” as are quite a few of the dialogues in the *Spectator* texts (Winer 1984).

The categories *imagined* and *observed* are somewhat difficult to keep apart. It is likely that the author of an imagined dialogue, typical for a work of fiction, would

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base their embedded dialogue on observed situations or models in order to make
the scene more credible and authentic (cf. Mühleisen 2002: 183–207; see Lalla 2005
on the function of Creole in the early phases of Caribbean fiction). The success of
such ventriloquism or authenticity depends, however, on the individual’s access
to real-life models and his or her ability to adopt them. The letters written by the
Saamaka Maroons Alabi and Grego and the materials authored by Johannes King
should probably be categorized as imagined texts since they were conceived by the
authors and/or writers themselves and are not generally based on specific models.
Most of the fictional texts fall into this category, as do “imagined dialogues” such as “a
conversation on marriage,” produced for educational purposes in a religious context
in Jamaica (cf. Anon., Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, quoted in Brathwaite
2005: 332–36). But the historical language materials from the Caribbean also include
texts belonging to the category observed. For instance, van den Berg (2007) notes that
there are two language guides for Sranan that each include parts where the authors
present expressions that they consider to be typical language use. However, other parts
of these guides such as the dialogues and plays that were included for illustrative pur-
poses, are better classified as belonging to the category ‘invented’ since they are not
modelled on a real, observed situation, but were invented based on both some expe-
rience and the writers’ imagination. Equally, part of the text category ‘invented’ are
the various translations of religious texts into Saamaka such as parts of the Gospel
by Wietz in Schuchardt (1914) and into Sranan by Schumann (1781) (Arends 2002).
Text material in planters’ diaries, travelogues and letters may be taken to vary between
recorded, observed and invented speech.

2.3 Technical issues

The encoding of any kind of language material – be it historical or contemporary – in
a new and non-standardised form bears all kinds of problems due to the differences
between speech and writing. A few issues therefore need to be taken into consideration
when interpreting them. One issue relates to whether the mostly non-native speaker
authors had sufficient language competence to accurately represent actual language use
(Arends 1995b and 1995c: 57). While it is likely that second language features entered
their writings, they were probably rather limited for at least four reasons (but see also
Migge & Van den Berg 2009). First, most of the non-native writers appear to have spent a considerable amount of time in the colony before writing in Creole and gener-
ally also practiced the language themselves. Second, some of them (e.g. Schumann)
worked with native informants who provided part of the data and with whom they
also checked the data. Third, comparative studies suggest that the language use rep-
resented in the different texts shows important correspondences with chronologically
surrounding texts and with modern usage (cf. also Baker & Winer 1999: 117). Finally,
differences between texts are not necessarily instances of insufficient competence on
the part of the writer, but may equally be due to style, register or variety differences (Arends 1995b; Van den Berg 2007).

However, it is possible that some changes were introduced through the process of writing. For instance, in relation to the relative absence of African vocabulary in historical sources, Stein (1995: 46) argues that (European) writers often excluded Africanisms probably because they did not understand them or did not know how to write them down. In some cases writers “were thinking of their European educated readers, who would neither understand the African elements nor be able to recognize the words” (Stein 1995: 46). Another aspect that may lead to difficulties when assessing documents is variation in orthographical conventions. In the case of most Creoles, fully viable orthographies were only devised in the twentieth or twentieth-first century so that most of the written documents from the eighteenth and nineteenth century employed different kinds of writing conventions. Essentially, authors would apply orthographical conventions from the European languages in which they had learned to read and write the Creole. If the writers for the same Creole came from different countries, they would then tend to apply different writing conventions to the same language and therefore obscure similarities in language use (Hinskens & Van Rossem 1995: 76). Moreover, orthographical conventions devised for European languages may have made it difficult to represent forms and distinctions in the Creole because the writing system lacks appropriate graphemes for their representation. Or, certain grammatical differences in the Creole were misrepresented in the texts because non-native speakers of the Creole were not able to perceive them due to influence from their native language and/or lack of linguistic skills (Baker & Winer 1999: 104, 105; Rickford 1987: 81–82). Moreover, depending on their educational and professional background, writers may have had more or less experience in writing in general and thus used a more or less consistent spelling prompting the impression that the writer lacked competence in the language (Bruyn 1995: 41).

It is also likely that some practices underwent stylistic transformation as a result of their being written down. Being used to specific conventions for representing written texts from their native language, writers may have, at least in part, adapted Creole texts, especially those from the text category imagined or invented, to fit a European stylistic mode rather than observe local conventions (cf. Garrett 2000 on the transfer of British style rules in contemporary St. Lucian radio recordings). Baker and Winer (1999: 104) also raise the possibility that authors “might have exaggerated particular features for comic or dramatic effect”, however, “they could not stray very far from reality without the risk of losing credibility in the eyes of their readers.” A related issue that has hitherto not been examined in much detail concerns the possibility of transfer of grammatical conventions from one Creole to another. Baker and Winer (1999: 104–105), for example, suggest “that visitors often spent time in several different territories and, especially in the Caribbean area where territories are close to
one another and speech varieties rather similar, may have been influenced, perhaps unconsciously, by their limited knowledge of one variety in recording speech of another territory”. Similar concerns apply to the Surinamese Creoles. Most authors of Saamaka documents had either previously authored Sranan documents (e.g. Schumann) or they had been trained to read and write in Sranan by missionaries using Sranan texts. Even just a cursory look at some of the eighteenth century Saamaka texts (e.g. the Saamaka letters, Wietz in Schuchardt 1914) reveals features that closely resemble Sranan rather than modern Saamaka features. To date it is not clear whether they are transfer features from Sranan or are reflective of diachronic change in Saamaka. Another potentially problematic issue involves the (re)editing of documents. For instance, there appear to be several differences between the original version of Schumann’s Saamaka dictionary and the version published in Schuchardt (1914). Finally, persons who wrote texts in place of an author may have also regularized variation.

3. Linguistic analysis of early texts

The last 25 years or so have witnessed a remarkable growth of interest in early Creole documents mainly due to their greater availability for a number of Creoles. To date the Surinamese Creoles, especially Sranan, and Negerhollands have figured most prominently. However, Baker and Bryun (1999) also edited a collection dealing with eleven texts by Samuel Augustus Mathew in the English Creole of St. Kitts. From the mid-1980s on, Winer (1984, 1994, 1995, 1997, also Winer & Rimmer 1994) has used early Trinidadian literary sources for structural and sociolinguistic analysis and Barbara Lalla and Jean D’Costa (D’Costa & Lalla 1989; Lalla & D’Costa 1990) compiled and analysed a diverse set of Jamaican texts that provide important insights into language use in eighteenth and nineteenth century Jamaica. To date, most of the research has focused on structural linguistic issues. We explore this research in the next section.

3.1 Research aims and methodological approaches

Most of the research on historical documents from Caribbean Creoles and Englishes has broadly focused on identifying the linguistic properties of earlier varieties, their etymological origin and their diachronic development. The results have been brought to bear on issues of Creole genesis and their diachronic development such as the relative role of the different sources of Creole grammars, namely substrate and superstrate influence and language internal changes, the exact nature of these sources and the nature of the diffusion of shared features. Some of the research has also dealt with whether contemporary Creoles derive from so-called deep Creoles or from dialectal varieties of a European language (cf. Fields 1995).
Depending on the size of the available corpus, studies have either taken a combined quantitative descriptive approach or a qualitative descriptive approach. In the case of relatively large corpora the former approach is common while the latter approach is usually pursued in the case of smaller data sets.

3.2 Overview of grammatically oriented studies of historical Creole documents

Research on historical documents has investigated a number of structural features. Table 1 gives a non-exhaustive list of grammatical areas and Creoles studied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical area</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phonology</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Sranan</td>
<td>Smith 1987, Plag &amp; Uffmann 2000; Uffmann 2008; Smith 1987;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Saamaka</td>
<td>Aceto 1996</td>
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<td></td>
<td>St. Kitts and Barbados</td>
<td>Plag 1999</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jamaican Creole</td>
<td>Lalla and D’Costa 1990: 47–67</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bajan</td>
<td>Rickford &amp; Handler 1994</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Trinidadian Creole</td>
<td>Winer 1984, 1995</td>
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<td>Vowel system</td>
<td>St. Kitts</td>
<td>Smith 1999</td>
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<td><strong>Morphosyntax</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Copula</td>
<td>Sranan</td>
<td>Arends 1986, 1989, 1995b; Van den Berg &amp; Arends 2004a, b</td>
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<td>Bajan</td>
<td>Rickford &amp; Handler 1994; Fields 1995</td>
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<td>Property items</td>
<td>Sranan</td>
<td>Van den Berg 2007</td>
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<td>Clefting</td>
<td>Sranan</td>
<td>Arends 1986, 1989, 1995b</td>
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<td>Focus-marking</td>
<td>Saamaka</td>
<td>Smith 1996</td>
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<td>Question words</td>
<td>Sranan</td>
<td>Bruyn 1993; Arends 1995b</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Saamaka</td>
<td>Smith 2001</td>
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<td>Atlantic Creoles</td>
<td>Bruyn 1999</td>
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<td>Bajan</td>
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<td>Saamaka</td>
<td>Kramer 2006</td>
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<td>Trinidadian Creole</td>
<td>Winer 1984, 1995</td>
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<td>Saamaka</td>
<td>Migge &amp; Winford 2009; Tagliamonte 1999; Migge &amp; Winford 2009;</td>
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<td>St. Kitts</td>
<td>Corcoran &amp; Mufwene 1999; Tagliamonte 1999</td>
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<td>Bajan</td>
<td>Rickford &amp; Handler 1994; Fields 1995</td>
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<td>Trinidadian Creole</td>
<td>Winer 1984, 1995</td>
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(Continued)
Table 1 demonstrates that most of the research on historical documents has been carried out on the Surinamese Creole Sranan by members of the Amsterdam research group. There are also a number of studies on a range of features of early Trinidadian
Creole by Winer, of Bajan by Rickford and Handler and Fields, and of St. Kitts Creole English, Jamaican Creole and Saamaka. We expect that more research will in future emerge on the latter Creoles and others because in recent times more historical data have been discovered and are being disseminated. Table 1 also shows that research on morphosyntactic features including morphological aspects figures prominently while phonological, lexical, syntactic and discourse features have received comparatively little attention. This is reflective of current research trends and the fact that morphosyntactic features are most frequently represented in the data and easily lend themselves to quantitative analysis. The small number of studies on phonological aspects of earlier Creoles may also be due to the special challenges related to the interpretation of individual writers’ orthographic choices.

3.3 The findings from research on historical documents written in a Creole

Research on historical documents has provided important insights into the process of Creole formation. It has revealed that contemporary Creole grammars did not emerge abruptly (Bickerton 1981; Thomason & Kaufman 1988) but over an extended period of time (Arends 1993). For instance, Bruyn (1995) shows that the development including the functional focusing of the singular and plural definite determiners na and den in Sranan stretched over a considerable period of time. In the early texts they functioned as demonstrative determiners as well as definite determiners. However, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century they came to be more generally used as anaphoric articles (Bruyn 1995: 129) due to grammaticalisation and their demonstrative function was taken over by the elements disi and d ati occurring in post-N position. Moreover, the processes of grammaticalisation in Creoles are similar in kind, but maybe faster than those found in other languages.

Another important finding is that Creole genesis was not a single or unique process but involved other processes besides language internal change. For example, Bruyn (1995: 238) argues that “the lack of diachronic development, or rather the relatively sudden establishment of certain functions, can be explained by assuming that interference from substrate languages has played a role.” The slaves’ first languages also had an impact on features that appear to reflect a diachronic development. While the development of the ‘dative’ preposition gi from the verb meaning ‘to give’ seems to have proceeded gradually along accepted universal paths, there is no reason to assume

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project is the Suriname Creole Archive project (Van den Berg 2007: 18; Arends 2002: 52) completed in 2008.
that internal development was solely responsible for this. First, in the case of gi there was no immediate functional need for the development of such a preposition because Sranan had another preposition and also double-object constructions. Second, in the main African substrate languages, the Gbe languages, the main verb meaning ‘to give’ shows the same kind of functional ambiguity (cf. Migge 1998). This suggests that gi’s development is a case of apparent grammaticalization, namely grammaticalization “where the feature does not result from grammaticalization that took place within the Creole language itself but rather from the transfer of the result of a process of grammaticalization that has taken place in another language.” (Bruyn 1996: 42).

4. Sociolinguistic research on early texts

4.1 Aims and Methods

Historical texts are not only interesting for the reconstruction of earlier stages of language structure, but also give important insights into language use, language attitudes, communication and the social structure of the early colonies (Roberts 1997: 69–109). The relationship between different social classes and ethnic groups (cf. Brathwaite 2005) in the plantation society is of vital importance for an understanding of the linguistic influences of the groups. Early texts like planters’ diaries, letters and other narratives provide observations on, for example, the relationship between Creoles, who were born in the colony, and the newly imported Africans (cf. Roberts 1997: 82–85), but also on the presence of specific European groups like the Scottish. Generally, sociolinguistic research on historical data focuses on the following issues:

- Linguistic and stylistic variation in the texts and what it suggests about the sociolinguistic structure of the language (Grant 1999; Van den Berg 2007, last chapter; Arends 1995b). Here, attitudes towards the variety and the group of speakers it is associated with both through authors and speakers portrayed in dialogues from fictional texts are also at stake (Winer & Rimmer 1994; Winer 1984, 1997).
- Shifts in function and prestige of Caribbean Creoles as a result of their use in writing (cf. Mühleisen 2005a).
- Type of interaction between the different groups in the community and patterns of verbal behaviour.
- Social information on authors, text type and audience. This also includes information on literacy and literate communication in the plantation society (Roberts 1997: 110–131) as well as the impact of the development of printing on the spread of different types of texts.
4.2 Overview of research in this area

Roberts (1997) uses a wealth of historical text material to describe the development from oral to literate societies in the Caribbean. Brathwaite (2005) equally draws on early Jamaican texts. The study of variation in an oral language is limited in written documents. As Lalla and D’Costa (1990: 81) point out, “because social attitudes have affected the compilation, survival, or extinction of written records, evidence of historical variation from one century to the next and of social variation at any one period is subtle and elusive.” They do, however, examine selected phonological and morphosyntactic features in the recorded speech of various speakers in early Jamaican texts and correlate these with social factors (level of education, social class, cf. also sample analysis in 4.3).

In Winer (1984) early Trinidadian newspaper articles are analysed with regard to their structural characteristics (lexicon, representation of phonology, morphosyntactic features) and their authenticity value. She uses several internal and external criteria (e.g. consistency, complexity, probability of co-occurrence, intelligibility to audience) to determine a likely correspondence between invented literary dialogues and contemporary real life speech. Winer and Rimmer (1994) investigate different varieties or styles used in various nineteenth century Trinidadian novels and single out a number of varieties such as Standard British Literary English, British Dialect English, Victorian Gothic English, Victorian Villainous English, Creole Rococo English and Yankee English. The social evaluation of Caribbean Creoles in a historical context is part of the general historical development of discourse about the concept of Creole in Mühleisen (2002) and evidence of language attitudes can be found in most early sources written by planters or travellers (e.g. Long, also cited in Lalla & D’Costa 1990: 90; Roberts 1997: 45).

Grant (1999) investigates linguistic variation in Mathews’ texts in order to determine the sociolinguistic structure of St. Kitts Creole. He shows that the variable realization of /l/ in intervocalic and word-final position in words like belly, call, tell and kill may be due to phonotactic patterns in the slaves’ African languages but argues that “we cannot distinguish characters or their backgrounds on the basis of such variants and must assume that Mathews chose from among the current variants somewhat arbitrarily.” (Grant 1999: 127). However, in the case of the definite determiner in the text called ‘Mr Thompson’ Grant argues that the low occurrence of definite determiners in the speech of the African-born slave is most likely indicative of the existence of an ethnolect while Mathews’ use of this features in the same text must be interpreted as a case of linguistic accommodation to that ethnolect. This suggests that in early St. Kitts, at least two and possibly three broad social varieties – European, Creole and African Kittian – could be distinguished.

Van den Berg (2007), discussing the linguistic structure of Sranan, shows that some early documents like Schumann’s (1783) Sranan dictionary invoke different
varieties. Geographical varieties include *Djutongo* of the Sephardim plantation area, *English tongo* linked to the plantations of early English planters and *Fototongo* of the town population. There was also a fourth not explicitly named and “less marked, more neutral variety of plantation Sranan.” (p. 380). Some are differentiated by a range of features (e.g. *Djutongo* vs neutral variety) while others differ by only very few features (e.g. *Fototongo* vs *English tongo*). Schumann also invoked two social varieties, *Ningretongo*, the vernacular of the population of African descent, and *Bakratongo*, the practices of Europeans and persons of mixed European-African descent. *Bakratongo* involves greater influence from Dutch while *Ningretongo* is characterised by greater influence from the first languages of the slaves, namely varieties of Gbe, Kikongo and Akan. There are 36 linguistic variables that have a *Ningretongo* and/or *Bakratongo* and/or ‘intermediate variant’. Finally, Van den Berg (2007: 385–387) also demonstrates that there is stylistic variation along a formal-informal dimension involving linguistic features such as terms of address, commands and the absence and presence of the past time marker *ben*, the future marker *sa* and sentential coordinators and subordinators.

Linguistic-anthropological observations on patterns of verbal and cultural behaviour can also be drawn from early texts. Roberts (1997: 45, 57) cites several historical observations on Afro-Caribbean communicative practices, like for instance, verbal duelling in early nineteenth century market places, or the avoidance of gaze between interactants. Mühleisen (2005c) uses historical sources like planter’s diaries to investigate forms of address and their origins in the Caribbean. The development of literate communication in the Caribbean is well documented in Roberts (1997: 110–131).

### 4.3 Sample analysis

Even small data sets can provide interesting insights on the relationship between social structure and speech patterns. One example of an analysis of a single speech event is given in Lalla and D’Costa (1990: 93–96). Here, extensive documentation of a wake held about 1844 for the fisherman Tom Kittle (Murray 1877, reprinted in D’Costa & Lalla 1989: 88–111) is used to analyse the speech of the participants represented in this event, “massnegers” (friends and neighbours of the deceased) and landowners from the area. As Lalla and D’Costa 1990: 95 note, “in the data, paradigms such as sex, age, and color can be related to that of social class in terms of educational opportunity. A wide variety of idiolects are indicated and appear to be significantly related to a definable spectrum of variation between J(amaican) C(reole) basilect and acrolect.”

The following table summarises some of the results (from Lalla and D’Costa 1990: 94).

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4. Basilect = most removed from Standard English; acrolect = closest to Standard English.
Table 2. Sociolinguistic analysis based on a historical text

Selected Basilectal Features in Jamaican Speech at a Single Event, ca. 1850

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basilectal Features</th>
<th>Landowners</th>
<th>“Massnegers”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adult Man</td>
<td>Adult Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educated</td>
<td>Uneducated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Color</td>
<td>Color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative replacement</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction of consonantal clusters</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrusion of final vowel</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-English lexeme</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked pronoun case or tense</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No auxiliary in negative VP</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>For</em>/fe complement</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal predication</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The speech of the participants is not only characterised by the presence or absence of a particular feature, however, but also by the frequency of occurrence. Thus, speaker number 4 (adult woman, uneducated, black) shows the highest frequency of basilectal features, such as fricative replacement, intrusive final vowel or nonverbal predication, not only in comparison with the group of landowners but also in contrast to her male fellow “massneger” (cf. Lalla & D’Costa 1990: 95).

4.4 Problems

Conclusions drawn from early written texts on language variation in Caribbean Creoles have to be treated with caution. The representation of the language of basilectal speakers depends much on the writer’s individual background and attitudes. Furthermore, subtle meaning differences in diverse styles and registers are not always easy to determine, particularly since some features (e.g. prosodic features) inevitably remain unrecorded in writing. Additionally, as Lalla and D’Costa (1990: 98) note in the following quote, diachronic and synchronic variation may not always be easy to keep apart:
Historical reconstruction requires us to resolve an added complexity: the distinction between synchronic from diachronic variants. The corpus does not prove that the variant lects of early J(amaican) C(reole) speakers at any particular stage (e.g. 1790–1810) do or do not represent “interrelated stages of a general change in progress” (Rickford 1981: 47). However, it does establish the existence, from the eighteenth century, of extensive variation (among speakers and within individual usage) in features of basilectal and acrolectal models of Jamaican speech. The data also confirm considerable mixing of such features. By this period, the focusing of speakers on either of these coexistent systems and the mixing of features drawn from them was apparently conditioned by social and economic characteristics and by situational requirements.

5. Conclusions and outlook

Although the investigation of historical documents written in Caribbean Creoles and Englishes emerged relatively late as a separate area of research (Arends 1995c) it has developed into a thriving area of investigation over the last roughly 25 years. It has so far provided numerous important insights into the emergence and development of Creole grammars and into the social structure of Creole languages and societies, many of which have challenged previous findings reached on the basis of synchronic data alone. However, early language data must not be divorced from other available data types such as information on the social context and the input languages, as well as synchronic language data. Only an analysis that combines all available data types can provide the most comprehensive insights into historical processes (cf. Arends 1995c).

Analyses of historical data have up to now taken diverse foci. However, the majority of studies have to date dealt with structural linguistic issues, investigating the distribution of linguistic features and their implications for Creole genesis and the processes involved. Comparatively few studies are dedicated to exploring sociolinguistic issues. However, these studies have revealed that Creole languages were, from the beginning, complex languages involving a range of clearly distinguishable linguistic varieties. As in the case of other languages, these varieties were linked to existing and emerging local social identities defined by geographical location, social background and ethnicity and to different social situations.

Research on the sociolinguistic structure of early varieties has also led to a reframing of issues such as reliability and the social representativeness of historical data often raised as an issue in previous work (Arends 1995c). More detailed information on the contexts and analyses that attend to both the social and linguistic issues of texts make it possible to classify texts more comprehensively. This in turn will lead to more socially sensitive textual analyses that allow distinguishing between primarily synchronic variation and variation that is indicative of diachronic developments.
There is much room for more sociolinguistic research based on historical written texts in the Caribbean. Ideally, this might be supplemented with pragmatic analyses – an area of analysis that has hardly been touched upon in the Caribbean context. Studies in the relatively recent but thriving field of historical pragmatics (see Jucker 1995) have demonstrated that early written texts can also provide interesting insights on language performances and practices.

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Earlier Caribbean English and Creole in writing


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Earliest St Helenian English in writing

Evidence from the St Helena Consultations
(1682–1723)*

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The early formation phase of St Helenian English saw input of a standard-like variety of English, non-standard Southern English as well as of restructured varieties of English and other languages (Portuguese, French, Malagasy). This chapter analyses some of the earliest records available, the St Helena Consultations, compiled between 1682 and 1723. It aims at documenting the presence and function of these varieties on the island and retraces their importance for the evolution of a local variety on St Helena.

1. Introduction

This chapter looks into the historical development and origins of St Helenian English (StHE), the oldest variety of South Atlantic and also of Southern Hemisphere English (SHemE). The community was founded in the mid-seventeenth century by British planters and administrative staff, slaves from St Iago and other Portuguese colonial possessions, various locations along the West African coast and also from Madagascar, India and several areas throughout the Indian Ocean. Twentieth century StHE has been described extensively (Wilson & Mesthrie 2004; Schreier 2008), but earlier documents that would allow us gain insights into its formation and diachronic evolution are sketchy. Evidence of direct speech comes from a variety of sources: court cases, short

*We are grateful to Dr Alexander Schulenburg for photographing the relevant folios of the Fort James manuscript. Our thanks also go to Philip Baker for providing information about English-lexicon creoles, to Dr John McAleer of the National Maritime Museum for providing information about slaves at this date, and to Raj Mesthrie for fruitful discussions. Extracts from these cases are discussed in Wright (fc.) ‘Some early creole-like data from slave speakers: the island of St Helena, 1695–1711’, Michael Picone & Catharine Evans Davies (eds) Language Variation in the South, and A. Schulenburg (fc.). Language and Culture on the Island of St Helena, South Atlantic. London: Westminster Press.
stories, letters by semi-literate writers, official documents from the London archives of the East India Company, henceforth: EIC, (Wright 2004, fc.), and anecdotal eyewitness reports by travellers, visitors, or office personnel. The documents we evaluate and discuss in this article are court proceedings from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These provide evidence of the language variety/varieties spoken by the local population, both planters of British origin and slaves, who were numerically the most influential founder group of the community in the early 1700s and thus instrumental in shaping the early development and formation of StHE. The goal of this chapter is to describe and evaluate some of the earliest records known and to assess their sociolinguistic significance. This will give us insights about the crucial formative years of the variety and contribute to answering the all-important question whether or not it originated in a context of language contact (i.e. through creolisation) or whether it is by and large a contact dialect that was (substratally) influenced by other varieties present. We begin with a brief overview of the social history of St Helena and then go on to present and evaluate the written sources.

2. A brief social history of St Helena

The volcanic island of St Helena lies in the mid-central South Atlantic Ocean, 1,930 km west of Angola and just south of the equator. Its nearest neighbour (geographically speaking) is Ascension Island, more than 1,000 kilometres to the north-west. St Helena covers 122 square kilometres, and its topography mostly consists of steep, relatively barren and rocky territory, unsuitable for cultivation. The island’s capital and only town is Jamestown, although there are other smaller settlements such as Half-tree Hollow, Blue Hills, Sandy Bay and Longwood (the latter being the residence of Napoleon Bonaparte, who was exiled on the island from 1815 to his death in 1821). St Helena’s population of approximately 4,000 (2006) is almost without exception of mixed European, African and Asian origin, and English is the only language spoken on the island today.

With a settlement history of almost three and a half centuries, StHE is the oldest variety of SHemE, outdating the major varieties by more than a century. Its social history is fairly well documented: there are several detailed accounts of St Helena (Brooke 1808; Beatson 1826; Anon. (F. Duncan?) 1805; Melliss 1875; Gosse 1938), visitors’ reports and diaries (Hakluyt 1600; Gargen 1665; Darwin 1844), logbooks (by William Dampier, Daniel Beeckman, Joseph Banks, Edmond Halley, Father Fernandez Navarette), as well as letters, court cases and other records produced for the East India Company and stored in the Castle archives of Jamestown, St Helena, as well as in the British Library in London (MS G/32/2). The social history can be summarised as follows: Originally uninhabited, St Helena was discovered in 1502 by the Portuguese, who,
like the other European seafaring nations who followed in their wake, used the island as a refreshment station and sick bay on their journeys to and from the East. Until claimed by the British East India Company in 1658, the island had no permanent population (Gosse 1938). From this date, a concerted settlement policy was implemented, and soldiers, servants and planters (employed and contracted by the Company, who held direct control over the island until the 1830s) were recruited to St Helena, along with slaves supplied on request by passing ships. Even though the exact origins of the British settlers are not known, there is socio-historical evidence that most of them came from southern England. Moreover, the majority of the planters had working class origins and the EIC recruited many of its soldiers (and settlers as well, for that matter) from among the unemployed in England (Gosse 1938: 72). We know that many of them were illiterate (as evidenced by an entry in the St Helena Records (quoted in Brooke 1808) on 2 February 1774: “On 31 January six soldiers deserted in the night taking two Boats … The deserters were illiterate men of bad character and only a few days provisions and must inevitably perish at sea.”).

The East India Company and the free planters who lived on St Helena were slave-owners, and the slaves came from places as diverse as Guinea, Angola, Java, India, Madagascar, Sumatra, Borneo, Malacca and Malaya, etc. Such diversity in place of origin is unusual in the context of seventeenth-century slavery; it is the result of the East India Company’s sphere of operation in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and its traffic via the South Atlantic. Unlike the Caribbean islands, St Helena was not a plantation economy but a victualling station for the Company’s ships travelling to and from the Far East. In 1789, the importation of slaves officially ended and the lack of cheap labour was compensated for by Chinese indentured labourers, who arrived on the island in the early nineteenth century. However, very few, if any, stayed on permanently and slavery was finally abolished in 1832 (Melliss 1875). In 1815, the total population was 3,342, comprising 694 whites, 1,517 slaves, 933 non-permanent army personnel, as well some 300 indentured labourers from China.

The situation was to change dramatically when in 1834, St Helena's administration was transferred from the East India Company to the British government, as a result of which it officially became a crown colony. Poverty led to out-migration and the remainder of the nineteenth century was characterised by extreme hardship. Crucially, this period saw an increase in mobility and was characterised by ethnic mixing. Governor Charles Elliot remarked in 1868 that “there can be no position on the face of the earth where it would be more difficult to discriminate between the various strains of blood of which the body of the population is composed than here in St Helena” (quoted in Gosse 1938). The population loss due to out-migration was compensated for by the arrival of immigrant groups: the afore-mentioned indentured labourers from China; liberated African slaves, brought to the island after 1840, when St Helena was used as a base for rehabilitating slaves from captured slave ships (some of them chose to stay
while the majority were sent on to the West Indies or repatriated back to the African mainland) and hundreds of Afrikaans-speaking Boer War prisoners, only very few of whom stayed behind upon their release.

The increasing use of steam-driven ships and the opening of the Suez Canal voided the island’s strategic purpose as a refreshment station. With the exception of a short-lived flax industry (which ended in 1965 when the British postal service switched to cheaper synthetic fibre), no industry has provided a viable means of sustaining the island. There is no airport and the single government-subsidised ship that connected the island with the United Kingdom has changed its route to become more cost-efficient, now only serving Ascension, St Helena and Cape Town. Today, many Saint Helenians take on contract work on the military bases on Ascension and the Falkland Islands; since 1999, when the British Government conceded full citizenship rights to the islanders, they have full access to United Kingdom workplaces. This affected the community heavily, as perhaps up to 30 per cent of the population, mostly younger Saints, left the island in search of better job opportunities.

3. Earlier evidence of St Helenian English

We now go on to present evidence of islanders’ speech taken from the *St Helena Consultations*, the proceedings of the East India Company’s island court, for the years 1682–1723. Extracts here are taken from the copy of the *St Helena Consultations* held in the British Library. We present them in the order of (a) representations of Standard English speech; (b) representations of non-standard southern English speech; and (c) representations of restructured English speech (slaves only).

a. Standard English

Most of the language in the St Helena Consultations is represented in the standard English of the day. Brief illustrations are presented in order to demonstrate that a given feature is attested, taken from passages of direct speech (with the occasional quotation from indirect speech in the construction “s/he said that …”). Tokens are dated, which does not mean that this is the earliest attestation of the feature. Moreover, tokens have been selected from a range of different speakers in order to give some idea of variation within the speech community (had the earliest token been selected for each feature, far fewer speakers would have been represented). The features are loosely grouped into grammatical categories (verb phrase, noun phrase, etc.) and the majority of the following examples from the slaves’ speech (in order to illustrate that they are represented as speaking in standard English) even though similar (or even identical) forms are found in both the planters’ and soldiers’ speech. Dates such as 1706/7 indicate that the token is taken from text dated January, February or March in the year dated old-style as 1706, new-style as 1707, and ( ) indicates illegible letter-graphs.
Verb phrase

Auxiliaries have, do, be and modals:

- *They have bin* (Fierbras’ report of Powells Jack’s speech (slaves), 1695)
- *wee haue don* (Garret’s report of Will’s speech (slaves), 1695)
- *he had heard* (Robin’s report of Tobey’s speech (slaves) 1706)

I *doe not understand* (Sarrah Gurling, servant, 1695)
I *dont Care* (Christopher Harling’s report of Tobey’s speech (planter, slave), 1706)
*he then added some few other words which he dont Remember now* (Recorder’s report of Blackwall, slave, 1718)
*he did not Love* (Tobey, slave, 1706)

I *am gone out* (Seu’s report of Phill’s speech (slaves), 1706)
*if all was willing he was* (Seu’s report of Phill’s speech (slaves), 1706)
*I was Used to Carry a gunn* (Fierbras’ report of Ruface's speech (slaves), 1706)
*they were Drinking* (Tobey’s report of Mingo’s speech (slaves) 1706)

*I can handle a gunn* (Fierbras’ report of Ruface’s speech (slaves) 1706)
*I cannot trust you* (Garret's report of Will's speech (slaves), 1695)
*you Cant gett* (Tobey, slave, 1706)
*he cold deale* (Garret, slave, 1695)
*he wold not trust me* (Hemp, slave, 1695)
*Ile kill them* (Powells Dick’s report of Will’s speech (slaves), 1695)
*if you wont you may let it Alone* (John Clavering’s report of Mingo’s speech (planter, slave), 1706)
*Jack shold goe* (Fierbrass, slave, 1695)
*you shall have better* (Tobey’s report of Mingo’s speech (slaves), 1706/7)
*if he had a stout heart might do otherwise* (Joseph Fox’s report of Domingo’s speech (planter, slave) 1706)
*I must gett the powder* (Tobey’s report of Mingo’s speech (slaves) 1706)

Negative imperative:

- *Doe not questyon* (Fierbras’ report of Powells Jack’s speech (slaves), 1695)
- *dont be Afraid* (Tobey’s report of Mingo’s speech (slaves), 1695)
- *be not Afraida* (Pressillah Grandy, planter, grandmother, 1695)

Affirmative imperative:

- *when you hear I am gone out, then do you follow me* (Seu’s report of Phill’s speech (slaves), 1706)
- *Gentellmen of the Jury harken to yor Verdict* (Captain Stephen Poirier, Deputy Governor, 1695)

Negative interrogative:

- *dont you know* (Seu’s report of Hemp’s speech (slaves), 1706)
Affirmative interrogative:
- What will you doe (Hannah, slave, 1695)
- wheare must I then live (Hary, slave, 1695)
- cannot you tell me (Garret, slave, 1695)

Negative declarative:
- hee knows not (John Waller, planter, 1682)
- I dont care a Turd for you (John Long, planter, 1717)

Affirmative declarative:
- he did vse to give him this powdr: (Henery Coales’ report of Michael Isaack’s speech, soldiers, 1695)
- He did the Last Week (whilst the Kent was here) cause all the Honble Compas blacks that were Lame or decriped, sickly & unfitt for service to be reviewed (Recorder’s report of the Governor, 1715/16)
- they had ye Candle of one of ye Govrs: Black boys to Game by & did play till they fell asleep (recorder, 1716/17)

Subjunctive:
- if Moll do not goe I wont goe (Lucas, slave, 1718/19) (n.b. subjunctive usage was still variable at this date)

Strong past participles and preterite:
- those that haue runn A way (Fierbras’ report of Powells Jack’s speech (slaves), 1695)
- wee haue spoken (Civill’s report of Randall’s speech (slaves), 1695.
- I have fought (Joseph Fox’s report of Domingo’s speech (planter, slave) 1706)
- she Came (Tobey, slave, 1706)

Passive voice
- that are to be found (Fierbras’ report of Powells Jack’s speech (slaves), 1695)

Noun phrase
- **-s** plurals:
  - two or three Forts (Fierbras’ report of Powells Jack’s speech (slaves), 1695)
- **-s** genitive construction:
  - being upon Doctor Moores plain one Evening (Sam, slave, 1705/6)

Subject pronouns:
- I will not goe (Ciuill, slave, 1695)
- you doe (Hannah, slave, 1695)
says she (Seu, slave, 1695)
he would gett (Tobey’s report of Mingo’s speech (slaves), 1706)
wee will venter yt (Hannah’s report of Will’s speech (slaves), 1695)
They have bin (Fierbras’ report of Powells Jack’s speech (slaves), 1695)

Object and possessive pronouns:
I was mending my Cloaths (Tobey, slave, 1706)
you told me (Jack, slave, 1695)
you may take Care to keep yor selfe (Christopher Harling’s report of Tobey’s speech (planter, slave) 1706)
I would have you (Christopher Harling’s report of Tobey’s speech (planter, slave) 1706)
I allwayse tell talles of him (Hemp, slave, 1695)
with all his hart (Jack, slave, 1695)
Jack askt her blacks (Seu’s report of Jack’s speech (slaves), 1706)
that will help us (Fierbras’ report of Powells Jack’s speech (slaves), 1695)
Nobody was Come but them (Seu’s report of Jack’s speech (slaves), 1695)
Why then says the sd Reverend Mr Giles I dont think it worth my while to come among yee (Recorder’s report of Rev. Giles’ speech, 1723)

Word order
Interrogatives:
What will you doe (Hannah, slave, 1695)
where must I then live; what is the matter (Hary, slave, 1695)
how can you denye (Jack, slave, 1695)

Negation:
you Need not fear any thing (Tobey, slave, 1706)

Discourse markers
Interjections, exhortations, epithets:
Dam it (Robin’s report of Tobey’s report of Joseph Fox’s speech (slave, slave, planter), 1706)
Dam blood I must gett the powder, and blow all the People to the Devill (Tobey’s report of Mingo’s speech (slaves), 1706)
have a good Heart (Tobey’s report of Mingo’s speech (slaves), 1706)
why says he go along with me (Tobey’s report of Mingo’s speech (slaves), 1706)
what will you prove me a wich (Andrew Wilson’s report of Mrs Grandy’s speech (planters) 1696)
why Mingo can you give me one (Yon, slave, 1722)
b. Non-standard Southern English

Many of the speakers before the court use features of regional non-standard dialects, most of which are common to many non-standard regional and extraterritorial varieties. They were indexical of the labouring or lesser-educated classes and do not, of themselves, indicate pidginised English.

Verb phrase

Present-tense non-standard agreement between subject and verb:

\[ [+\text{-s}] : \]

- *says I* (Tobey, slave, 1706)
- *who both lives together* (Powell’s Dick, slave, 1695)
- *Lemmon Valley Fort wheare the(are) Is two Soldrs* (Frances, planter, 1695)
- *there is Eleven Island blacks, besides the New Fellows at the Fort, Designs a Musterday* (Christopher Harling’s report of Tobey’s speech (planter, slave) 1706)
- *Was ye guns Loaden by you before* ((foreman of the) jury: Orlando Bagley, planter, 1695)
- *noe ships has arrived heare* (Judge Richard Keling, 1695)
- *when Charles warrall and ye sd Michll Isaack has come* (Ripin Wills, planter, 1695)
- *John French Gunner, Thomas Cason Serjt and Thos Freeall Declares that they saw the French ship board the Queen and took her under Dutch colours* (recorder’s report of three soldiers, 1706)
- *No Mr Alexander I can assure you you was not so much as thought on very well* (planter, 1706)
- *two blacks that speaks portuguize* (recorder, 1707)
- *Our Honble Masters has been basely Cheated; there is severall Young People wants Habitations; the Books Now Lyes before us* (Recorder, 1709)
- *I hope your Worship will be so kinde and favourable as to pass by this my One Offence, and do’s beg you would* (John Alexander, ex-Recorder, 1709)
- *the owners of such Run away Blacks is very Remiss & Negligent in the taking them. Whoever Therefore are willing to undertake Employt: or Charge of Catching the Renegado Blacks are to repair to ye: Govr* (Recorder’s report of the Governor’s edict, 1717)
- *Capta: Bazett say’s if they (meaning Mr Tovey and the assistt:) do’s but goe Forward* (Recorder’s report of Captain Bazett’s speech, 1718)

Zero marker:

- *he think that* (Will, slave, 1695)
- *because he gave him the Ly about some Morter that the said Greentrees blacks Dagg, and Carry off the said Powills Ground* (Recorder’s report of Powell, planter, 1706)
he at no time do no manner of duty (Chief Mate of the Godolphin, 1709)
The Governor says he dont take him as an Evidence (Island Governor, 1705/6)
he dont think the said Hester Williams is a fool (Recorder's report of James Green-
tree's speech, 1705/6)
Thomas Swallow says, he dont deny the Debt, nor never did (Recorder's report of
Thomas Swallow's speech (planter), 1706)
your Petitioner in behalf of the Parish do humbly desire (planter, 1711)
which make in all thirty three (Recorder, 1715/16)
Neither is it fitt to Entertain a man here in our business who have been bred up so
much above it (Governor, 1719)
the overseer of the Blacks acquainted him that Benjar one of the Honble: Companys
Blacks was missing but supposed he was gone into the Countrey to fetch his yamms
but he being not heard of since do beleive he gott privately on board the ship afore-
said (Governor's report of the Blacks' Overseer, 1722)

Past tense inflection:

Jacob a slave that run away (Garret, slave, 1695)
and as they come back: to kill all the white(s) they mett wth (Fortune, slave, 1695)
she catcht her Husband Lying with the said Sarah Bradley (planter, 1705/6)
Upon the first suspition of there being Enemys (which was when we see the Queen
give them a broad side) we fired at them from the shoar (soldier, 1706)
the said Ruface laid hands on the stic<>< he struck him with, and threw it away some
yards, and Run away again (Hugh Bodley, overseer, 1707)
Our church Yard at the Fort is very small and hardly Room to digg a Grave for Rocks,
and Graves Already Digg' d (planter, 1711)
Serjeant Slaughter have Notice given him, that if he don't take Immediate Care to have
his Black Catcht, He shall be Obliged to pay for all the Damages (Recorder, 1717)
Charles Ablard say's that on Fryday morning last he was going afishing on the West
Rocks and see a Coat lying near the sand hole there (Recorder's report of Charles
Ablard, planter, 1718)

Past participles:

he had spoke (Fierbrass's report of Jack's speech, slaves, 1695)
I had spoke (William Knight, planter, 1707)
Harmon Anthonison a Dutch(man) that had runned away out of ship Sampson
(John Vernon, Recorder, 1695)
We have Writt for Two Hundred Blacks more (planter, 1710)
which were drove (Recorder, 1722)
he has stole (Recorder’s report of Jonathan Doveton's speech, 1723)
[a + verb + ing]:

Truly gentlellmen I think he had bin a drinking (Mr Hay, planter, 1696)
being in Sandy-bay a measurement some Land (Matthew Bazett, planter, 1705/6)
Challemoy Goes in the Long boat or a fishing (Recorder, 1715/16)

For-to Infinitive:

for says he there is Eeleaven Island blacks, besides the New Fellows at the Fort, Designs
a Musterday for to kill the White Women and Children while the Men were a Mus-
tering (Christopher Harling's report of Tobey's speech (planter, slave) 1706)

Noun phrase

Zero genitive construction:

the key of Michell Isaack Chest (Serjeant Dixon, 1695)
Tobey Mr Robinson black (i.e. ‘Tobey, Mr Robinson’s black’) (Seu, slave, 1695)
Mingo Henry Webley black (i.e. ‘Mingo, Henry Webley’s black’) (Limbrick’s report
of Mavarro’s speech (slaves), 1706)
he being Ashamed to speak to the Governour Face (planter, 1711)

Subject pronoun:

manny blacks and him had agreed (Fortune, slave, 1695)

Object pronoun:

the Devill waited for such a Baite as hee (Anne Cannady, planter, 1682)

Preposition

‘On’:

Told him a Tuesday last (Fortune, slave, 1695)
they two played some time a Satterday night (planter, 1705/6)
Then I got Up and took her a one side (Margaret Francis, planter, 1705/6)
I ordered a book a purpose (Governor, 1709)
People has no shelter when they are upon there duty a Nights (planter, 1710)
Captn Mashborne Reports that the hard Winds a sunday Night blew down the
Old Blacks house in the Countrey (Recorder’s report of Captain Mashborne’s
speech, 1711)

Word order

Multiple negation:

and not tell noe body (Garret, slave, 1695)

Avertive:

[had like(d) to have + V] meaning ‘nearly’.
the said Black had Likt to have Throtled him had not James Harris come as he did (Henericus Williams, soldier, 1705/6)

It has Intirely washed Away the Lower Fort of Two Guns at Bankses, and had Like to Wash the Guns Away … and has Damaged the Angle their, where the Round Tower is of One Gun, Insomuch that it was Like to Tumble down … by Reason of the high seas. Which had Like to Wash down the Crane (Governor, 1710/11)

he lay twenty days at Cape of Good Hope & rode out severall hard storms & had like to have lost the ship she having struck in five Fathom Water (planter, 1716)

Zero relative marker:

Chelmondly Civill summoned for gaming, said ‘he thought they were all Wood Cocks lived here …’ (Recorder’s report of surgeon Chelmondly Civill’s speech, 1719)

Regional lexis

to snude some fish Hooks (Margaret Francis, planter, 1705/6) (n.b. ‘to bait’, Cornwall, EDD)

Mum Hatton put his Cock to my Cock (Margaret Francis’ report of Elizabeth Francis’ speech, 1705/6) (We have been unable to trace any dictionary reference to cock ‘female genitalia’, but it is still in use in the American Appalachians (native speaker, personal communication)

c. Restructured English

Verb phrase

Zero present-tense inflection:

he think that they three weare ye first (Will, slave, 1695) (n.b. this occurs infrequently, and occurs in whites’ speech too. It is found in present-day South-Western and East-Anglian English dialects, as well as in low-frequency ratios in London English.)

Zero past-tense inflection:

whereupon went both into Powells Valley, and Mett with the Companys sheepe, and sett on his Dogg, and Catch One (Robin, slave, 1705/6)

Zero copula:

Jack noe such foole (Hemp, slave, 1695)

Noun phrase

Zero plural:

tyeing theare hand behind them (Hannah, slave, 1695)

when shipp doe arriue heare (Fortune, slave, 1695) (n.b. there is a missing -s just prior to this: ‘a usually the sold(ie)rs doe when shipp doe arriue heare’)
two Madagascar shipp weare in ye Roade (Richard Parrum, planter, 1696) (n.b. just prior to this, in planter Praise Pledgerd’s testimony, the same expression is written ‘2 last Mallygascyer shippes weare in the road’) he shold find hand enough to assist them (Garret, slave, 1695) (n.b. the Fort James copy has ‘hands’) Zero-marked genitive constructions: if he knew were charles Steward fatt heifer was (Robin’s report of Tobey’s report of Joseph Fox’s speech (slave, slave, planter), 1706) (n.b. zero genitive constructions occurred in Early Modern English too) Subject pronoun: me no savy speake English (Hary, slave, 1695) (n.b. Philip Baker points out that the me no savvy construction can be analysed as wholly Portuguese) Object pronoun: such boy as I (Hemp, slave, 1695) Jack and hee (Will, slave, 1695) (n.b. the Fort James version has ‘Jack and him’) Word order Interrogatives: why you will not goe (Civill’s report of Randall’s speech (slaves), 1695) why you ask me (Tobey, a slave, 1706) Omission of article: such boy as I (Hemp, slave, 1695) Negation: I noe tell you (Jack, slave, 1695) (although this may perhaps be a serial verb, ‘know tell’?) Jack noe such foole (Hemp, slave, 1695) me no savvy (20, Hary, slave, 1695) never negation meaning ‘not’: and said you shall Never be the better for it (John Clavering’s report of Mingo’s speech (planter, slave) 1706) Lexical items, lexicalised phrases By and by: you will see by an by (Hannah’s report of Will’s speech (slaves), 1695)
Savvy:  
*he did savey something* (John Clavering’s report of Mingo’s speech (planter, slave) 1706)  
*you noe savy* (Jack, slave, 1695)  
*I savy nothing; me no savy speake* English (Hary, slave, 1695)

No good:  
*you haue no good hart* (Garret, slave, 1695)

One time (meaning ‘once’):  
*one time: Two persons belonging to Capt(ain) Wildys shipp being att his Masters house in discourse: amongst other affaires s(ai)d they wondered that The blacks did not rise in this Island* (Jack, slave, 1695)

4. Assessing the sociolinguistic significance of earlier evidence

The evidence presented here provides some important clues on the origins and early evolution of StHE. The discussion of the community’s social history strongly implies (1) that the contact history on St Helena was multidialectal and multilingual; and (2) that the development of StHE took place in a context that involved both dialect contact and language contact. The language contact situation, i.e. all the varieties that fed into the feature pool out of which StHE drew its structures, consisted of up to a dozen different languages that co-existed on the island at various stages: these were brought to the island from Europe (English, Dutch, Portuguese, French), Africa (unspecified, though places of origin on the Gold Coast, Nigeria and southern Africa are likely, plus Afrikaans from South Africa), and Asia (mostly Cantonese, various Indian languages), and, most important of all, Malagasy.

Following Schreier (2008), not all of these varieties were of equal importance. Some groups were numerically small (the slaves from Nigeria, Angola or the Maldives, or the Huguenots from France), and this overrides the fact that they arrived early enough to be included among the founder population. The most substantial of these groups were the Huguenots, who arrived in 1695 (the *Consultations* read “Noah Debuse, John Lefever, Anthony Dehure, and I(◊) Morin being foure of those French men that came over as vinerouns with Capt Poirier”) and brought several children and adolescents along. Within a few years they represented important offices, including the island governor. Notwithstanding, they were at all times keen on integrating and communicated with the local population in English, both in private and for official purposes, and were thus unlikely to leave a permanent imprint. Other groups were
not well enough integrated into the community in order to transmit language features to the newly developing variety (here we can include the indentured labourers from Canton, the Boer prisoners or the liberated slaves from West Africa). The case is different here: they were present in numbers large enough to swamp the local community. However, their segregation in camps and their short stay on the island thwarted their numerical advantage so that we can discard the potential impact of a good number of varieties brought to the island, such as French, Afrikaans, or Cantonese. Speakers of these languages were insignificant in number, arrived too late to have an impact, or were simply not integrated in the community, leaving at the first occasion.

Returning to the focus of this chapter, the earliest evidence in the form of the St Helena Consultations allows us to make a number of observations. First of all, there was a range of basilectal to more or less acrolectal proficiency. Some slaves had a good command of English very early on whereas the knowledge of others was rather basic. Black Oliver, who was instrumental in guiding the English troops on their rescue mission and helped recapture the island from the Dutch, enjoyed full privileges and his family was held in high esteem on the island. They had full access to English and interacted with the white population on a daily basis. The transcript of a court proceeding against one of his sons (John Oliver, ‘Prisoner’) in 1690 shows that his English was highly proficient indeed:

Judge: John Oliver what hast thou to Say for thyselfe you have heard the several witnesses and (?) they have sworne

Prisoner: All that I shall say is that I never did the said fact, nor offer to do anything like buggary

Judge: Have you one thing to say before the jury withdraws

Prisoner: No I am wrongfully accused by Monks declarations. I leave my cause to God and the verdict of the jury

By 1700, English was used widely in the community. The majority of the white population had British origins or descended from immigrants from England. English was the language used in court, in church, in the administration and for all official purposes, and the slaves had to defend themselves in court in English (even if it was to claim that their competence was not sufficient to partake in plotting a rebellion, as discussed in Schreier 2008, which again indicates that the slaves had at least some knowledge of English). The documents discussed above reveal that practically all the slaves in the early period were in some way proficient in English. This speaks against a possible pidginisation or creolisation of StHE and the sociolinguistic context of the early years did not favour large-scale language contact in the seventeenth century. The constant presence and numerical advantage of monolingual English-speaking planters and soldiers on the one hand and English-speaking slaves on the other did not favour the development of an expanded pidgin. With this in mind, it is possible of course
that some slaves spoke other languages, so that a slave acquired on St Iago spoke (and continued speaking) his ‘country language’ and a Portuguese-lexicon creole, only to pick up restructured English on St Helena (both for interaction with English planters and soldiers and as a medium of interethnic communication with other slaves). This may certainly have happened but these were isolated cases at best; we simply have no reports of slaves who spoke languages other than English only.

The dominant function of English in the colony’s early years was to some extent politically motivated; for fear of rebellions and uprisings, the importation of cheap labour was strictly regulated until the 1790s. Though there were different edicts as to how slaves should be brought to the island, it was common practice for Governors on St Helena to extract slaves as a human toll fee from passing ships:

\[
\text{[E]very Madagascar ship that touched for refreshment, was obliged to leave one Negro, a man or a woman, at the Governor’s election, for the service of the Company’s plantations … Besides the Negro which every English vessel trading to Madagascar was obliged to leave on the island, each ship paid a duty of two shillings and six pence for every ton of her admeasurement.} \quad \text{(Brooke 1808)}
\]

This effectively meant that slaves did not arrive in large numbers; in fact, when ships passed and called at St Helena with a cargo of slaves, it was common practice that a handful (or even only one) of them remained for the local markets, at times hand-picked by the governor, a practice that varied according to date and current policies. They thus arrived in very small numbers, which would have facilitated their integration into the community for the reasons outlined. The scenario in the early years was thus different from locales in the Caribbean or North America where slaves arrived in shiploads and also from later developments on St Helena, which saw the arrival of more than 100 slaves from Madagascar in 1716.

The role of English on St Helena in the late seventeenth century was further strengthened by the fact that the community was not urbanised at the time, and that the planters lived in small farms and villages scattered all over the island. Slave ownership was not extensive, and the fact that the vast majority of the planters owned less than five slaves would certainly have meant that English was readily accessible. It was used as a medium of communication between whites and blacks and functioned as a lingua franca among the slaves themselves also when their first languages were not mutually intelligible. Of course, this is not to say that the slaves shifted to English quickly and that they acquired a native-like command quickly; they were socially stratified (just as the whites were) and thus displayed considerable variation from very early on, ranging from rudimentary (perhaps a jargon or minimal pidgin) to acrolectal varieties.

In sum, we still have to ascertain whether the slaves had learnt English in other colonies or whether they spoke a restructured English used on board the ships that brought them to St Helena (i.e. nautical or ship English), and perhaps we will never
know. Notwithstanding, the fact that English was accessible to all sections of the community and that planters used it as a medium of communication with their slaves legitimises speculations that it was quickly adopted as a medium of interethnic communication across the island. Other languages continued to be spoken and individual bilingualism persisted (there are records of English-Malagasy and English-Portuguese speakers). By the same token, some slaves are represented as using features typical of pidgins (copula absence, zero pluralisation, preverbal markers, etc.). This shows that language contact had an impact on the formation and evolution StHE, though not via pidginisation and creolisation on the island, for the reasons explained above. It is quite remarkable that some of the features reported in earliest StHE predate the earliest attestations of pidgin features, as compiled by Baker and Huber (2001), on occasion by more than a century:

1. *me no* used in subject position\(^1\) (previous first attestation 1718 in Suriname Creole English)
2. adverbal *by and by*, meaning ‘soon’ (previous first attestation 1765 Suriname Creole English)
3. *never* as a negative-completive (previous first attestation 1785 in St Kitts Creole English)
4. *no good* as an adjective, meaning ‘bad’ (previous first attestation 1795, Eastern Australian Pidgin English)
5. *one time* meaning ‘once’ (previous first attestation 1718, Suriname Creole English)

Consequently, this is both diagnostic of language contact and suggestive that there are structural similarities between StHE and English-based contact varieties in the Caribbean (see Hancock 1991).

5. **Conclusion**

This chapter has documented some early evidence of StHE via the analysis of court testimonies. These show that English was used as a medium of interethnic communication and as a lingua franca at a very early stage (but we note reports of bilingualism, i.e. of Portuguese and Malagasy-speaking slaves, cf. Schreier 2008). Though the inputs of white settlers (non-standard varieties of southern English English) were paramount, we found a number of features that occur frequently in scenarios of language contact, i.e. pidginisation and creolisation. The presence of these features in the documents

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\(^1\) The full attestation is: *me noe save speake English* (St Helena Consultations; MS G/32/2, December 1695).
studied can be explained as follows. As StHE, per se, did not pidginise and creolise, some of the slaves must have picked up an English jargon or pidgin somewhere (as evidenced by “me no savvy”) – either at their slaving station, on board ship, or perhaps even on St Helena from other slaves. We therefore suggest that a restructured English was spoken on the island in early settlement times, alongside non-standard southern English and acrolectal standard English, not to forget the ‘country languages’ and Portuguese of some sort.

In conclusion, StHE developed in a context of dialect and language contact and adopted a number of prototypical creole features (which are still used in present-day StHE; Wilson & Mesthrie 2004; Hancock 1991; Schreier 2008). The early sociolinguistic context thus saw at least four different categories of inputs: (1) non-standard southern English spoken by the settlers (the variety that was most influential, for the reasons outlined); (2) Portuguese, or a Portuguese-lexicon creole (spoken by slaves from St Iago); Malagasy (spoken by slaves from Madagascar); and (4) the ‘country languages’ that were the slaves’ first languages (Indian and African languages, no longer possible to identify). This almost certainly changed in the 1720s, when the balance tipped in favour of the Malagasy-speaking population and more than a hundred slaves were imported from that location alone. Further research on documents produced in the eighteenth century is necessary to highlight their influence on the development of StHE, but the St Helena Consultations give us a much better understanding of the crucial formative years of early StHE.

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‘An abundant harvest to the philologer’?
Jeremiah Goldswain, Thomas Shone
and nineteenth-century South African English

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This article examines two early sources for nineteenth century South African English, Jeremiah Goldswain’s Chronicle and the Journal of Thomas Shone. Their writings provide evidence for the vernacular of the 1820s settlers and can be considered as representing different stages on the non-standard continuum due to their different social backgrounds. While Goldswain represents the prototypical semi-literate writer whose non-standard orthography offers insights into the settlers’ sociolect (e.g. /h/-dropping, hypercorrect /h/), Shone’s writing is to be found nearer to the standard end with only occasional examples of phonologically significant spellings. However, their use of non-standard grammatical features is remarkably similar. A detailed analysis of was/were variation reveals that the same linguistic constraints are in operation.

1. Introduction

In his inaugural lecture on the dialect of Jeremiah Goldswain in the 1950s, Casson made the following claim: “Even the language of an illiterate can provide an abundant harvest to the philologer” (1955: 43). While this statement probably does not reveal a major insight to the twenty-first-century linguist, it is remarkable for a linguist working in the 1950s, at a time when the object of linguistic study in South Africa was almost without any exception the standard language and when the notion of the vernacular, which was to become the concern of linguists in later decades, had not been ‘discovered’ as yet. Casson does not only seem to be innovative with regard to the object but also the time of study. The nineteenth century, as Lass and Wright (1985: 137) stated some 30 years later “is not seen as a very exciting field”. Recent decades have seen a shift in focus to vernacular sources as well as the nineteenth century as a field and time of study. Not least among the interests of linguists in this context are the transported varieties overseas which Lass has dubbed ‘extraterritorial Englishes’ (ETE). Given the interest that contemporary postcolonial Englishes (the New Englishes in particular)
have attracted in the last three decades, it is hardly surprising that their origin and development have become of prime interest. During the heyday of colonial activities for the southern hemisphere, the nineteenth century saw the emigration of many settler communities and the birth of new varieties.

Due to the unavailability of recordings for earlier periods in the varieties of English (with the notable exception of the ONZE recordings), linguists have developed an interest in the written word as linguistic evidence (e.g. Lass 1987; Mesthrie 2005). Written documents which approximate to speech are of particular interest and the writings of illiterate, or more precisely semi-literate, people potentially provide such evidence.

As Garcia-Bermejo Giner and Montgomery (1997: 168f.) have argued, the study of written sources from the nineteenth century can serve different aims. Firstly, these sources offer important data for the study of non-standard input (i.e. donor varieties) for the early stages of emerging varieties in colonial settings. At the same time, such sources can potentially offer important insights into some of thephonological and grammatical structures and allow us, to some extent, to study regional and social variation of British varieties in the first half of the century, for which few sources are available in contrast to the better documented second half of the nineteenth century when the first studies of the English Dialect Society and the first dialect dictionaries and large-scale studies (e.g. those by Alexander Ellis and Joseph Wright) were published.

One of the best-known sources for the early period of British settlement in South Africa is the chronicle of Jeremiah Goldswain (Long 1946/49). This is the journal of a fairly uneducated British settler, born in 1802, who immigrated to South Africa at the age of 18. Apart from the value such a diary has for historians as a source of knowledge about 1820s settlers, Casson (1955) was probably the first to discover that “linguistically, his Chronicle is of great interest” (1955: 2f) and he mainly attributes this to Goldswain’s lack of formal education. Another interesting though lesser-known early source is the journal of Thomas Shone, edited by Silva (1992). Despite “the interest this holds for linguists” (Silva 1992: ix), identified by the editor as well as others (Mesthrie & West 1995: 110), Shone’s journal has not been subjected to linguistic analysis as yet. The present chapter will discuss to what extent vernacular sources such as Jeremiah Goldswain’s Chronicle and Thomas Shone’s Journals can inform the study of nineteenth-century South African English. Before the main sources for this study will be examined in further detail, a short overview of British settlement in South Africa will be given.

2. Early South African English

In 1819, the British government allocated £50,000 to assist the settlement of several thousand settlers in the Cape Colony. Due to the tense economic situation in England,
the government sought to take measures against unemployment but was not willing to finance the settlement of paupers at the Cape. Thus the settlers were carefully selected and the “small agricultural capitalist” (Peires 1989: 474) was seen as the ideal settler. The ‘independent party’ formed the largest group of settlers, a ‘joint-stock’ of respectable individuals who pooled their capital with others (1989: 475). Those individuals who lacked the financial means had the possibility of emigrating as indentured labourers of a so-called ‘sole-proprietor’ party, headed by a director who paid their deposits to the government for the land allocation. The ‘individual party’ type formed a rather small group of 155 people (Hockly 1957: 30). In 1820 about 4,000 ‘official’ settlers, organised in 60 parties, and about 1,000 individual emigrants settled in the Albany district under the emigration scheme. With about 4,000 settlers already living in South Africa (1957: 32), the British population was more than double that size before the emigration scheme. The 1820s settlers regionally and socially formed a fairly homogenous group: they were predominantly members of the lower middle and working class and more than half of them hailed from London and the Home Counties. Their accent is characterised by Lanham and MacDonald as “the non-standard speech of the majority from south-east England”, and according to them, the contact of speakers from many regional dialects gave rise to a homogenous speech pattern for which they consider social levelling to be the main promoter (1979: 72). As Lanham (1978: 19) states: “In one generation it emerged as a distinct, homogeneous dialect from at least 30 regional and social British dialects”. But little is known about how this process of speech homogeneization progressed and which features were affected. The development of different transplanted dialects in a new environment, i.e. new dialect formation, has attracted considerable attention in recent years (Trudgill 2004; Hickey 2003). As mentioned by Lanham and MacDonald, one factor contributing to homogeneization is levelling, a process whereby “socially marked or stigmatized elements are eliminated from the pool of variants” (James Milroy 2002: 8), cf. Section 6.1 below. This process is very similar to what Trudgill has described as the rudimentary leveling through the contact of speakers from different dialects, stage 1 in his model of new dialect formation (Trudgill 2004; Gordon et al. 2004). However, Gordon et al. (2004: 253) quote Dorian who points out that levelling is not necessarily the only or major cause for homogeneity. Instead, a tradition of standardisation has a strong effect on homogeneity. Standardisation and the suppression of local features as a major force can even lead to a process described by Hickey (2003, 2011) as supraregionalisation.

The second major wave of emigration was the assisted settlement of Natal by the Byrne scheme in 1848–9. These settlers mainly came from the Midlands, Yorkshire and Lancashire and were members of the middle and upper classes (Lanham & MacDonald 1979: 74). Due to the large proportion of socially higher-ranked settlers, social levelling was not a major factor and the Natal settlers therefore retained more of their diversity. Until the 1870s there was little contact between the two very different settler
communities in the Cape and Natal (apart from a few 1820s settlers who moved to Natal) and consequently two forms of settler Englishes co-existed, of which the former was severely stigmatised and the latter very much orientated towards Southern British norms.

The discovery of gold and diamond deposits in the area of the Witwatersrand led to the burgeoning of Johannesburg as a social and economic centre and the birth of a ‘New Society’. It was only then that speakers from Natal and the Cape had more intense contact and this had linguistic consequences: the heterogeneous make-up of the urban centre of Johannesburg (developing into a linguistic melting pot through the arrival of further British and European emigrants) prevented the development of the two settler Englishes into two distinct varieties. Natal English was the prestigious dialect and the Cape settlers, aware of the stigma attached to their English, accommodated towards this type of English. This accommodation towards Natal English is what Lanham and MacDonald call its “social approbation in the wider SA society” (1979: 75). The adoption of prestigious Natal norms in Johannesburg propagated their nation-wide diffusion.

3. Sources for South African English

The question arises as to what kinds of sources are available to study the vernacular of the 1820s settlers. As for unpublished sources, Mesthrie and West (1995) investigated unpublished letters housed at the Cape Archives, e.g. letters from the 1820s settlers to the Governor, or insurance claims (dated 1820 to 1825). This is the most important study which underlies the present article, and the results of the grammatical features analysed in the last sections are set in relation to their results. With regard to published material, a number of sources are available; but what is of interest to the social historian is not necessarily a valuable source for the historical linguist. Published sources are important data sets but have to be checked carefully by linguists as Garcia-Bermejo Giner and Montgomery (1997: 169) caution us: “In consulting published letters, it is important to assess how reliable the editors may be. As a rule, only more recent publications have respected the spelling and grammar of the original mss. Older collections unfortunately were often revised and ‘corrected’ (e.g. Scrope 1831), rendering them useless for our purposes …”. While this certainly can be considered a general rule in many cases, the picture is somewhat mixed for the South African context. Many sources have been published by the van Riebeeck Society whose general aim it is to make “primary sources available in a readable and enjoyable form”.

such published primary sources are potentially of interest, the suitability of these for a linguistic analysis of course mainly hinges on the method applied by the editors (cf. basic requirements for texts specified in Schneider 2002: 71). Some of the editors have done a remarkably good job in this regard (e.g. Long for Goldswain’s Chronicle) by deciding not to normalise the spelling and grammar, as, unfortunately, too many editors did. The aim of publishing these sources and making them available to a wider audience often runs counter to the interest of linguists. It almost seems as if Long was ahead of her time in this respect and it is probably due to her editing that we have Casson’s remarkably early study on Goldswain’s dialect. In comparison with Long’s editing process, editors of subsequent publications in the series of the Van Riebeeck Society tended more towards normalisation of the manuscripts. An example of this trend is the journal of John Ayliff. Despite the editor’s claim “to change as little as possible in the original but to try and make it attractive and readable for as wide a public as possible”, he concedes that his changes included “eliminating spelling mistakes and obvious errors in grammar” (Hinchliff 1971: 8). For him, it obviously sounds like a minor detail, but of course these are highly relevant details in the evaluation of the validity of the documents (cf. methodology section below). According to Lass’ (2004: 156) ‘Hierarchy of Badness’, this is the worst type of document for linguistic analysis, as such normalisation procedures render the documents almost worthless for the linguist.

In this case (and probably others too) it seems that this appeal to a wide audience is made at the expense of its suitability for linguistic analysis (Hinchliff 1971: 8). This is particularly deplorable, since Ayliff’s journals seem to be the type of vernacular source that is so often sought after by the linguist.

Other settler journals published in the Grahamstown series will not be included in the discussion here, since these are most likely to be found more at the standard end of the English continuum, either due to the position (e.g. Sophia Pigot, edited by Rainier 1974) or profession of the authors. Sophia Pigot was the daughter of Major Pigot and belonged to the privileged few among the 1820s settlers, a fact that is also reflected in her writing. However, as the editor remarks, “well educated by contemporary standards, Sophia nevertheless used certain words and phrases which are archaic, colloquial or regional dialect, and spelling which indicate pronunciations differing from modern practice” (Rainier 1974: 4).

Another type of source is the writing of nineteenth century missionaries. Focussing on letters written to the London Missionary Society, Mesthrie (1996) shows that

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2. As one such error he mentions Ayliff’s almost invariable use of _was_ instead of _were_, a feature that otherwise could have been analysed in the present study. Further corrections include “archaic and illiterate forms”, the latter refers to forms which could be deemed a window to Ayliff’s pronunciation such as cases of h-dropping, _e.g._ _ail_ for _hail_ (Hinchliff 1971: 8).
English missionaries were not as highly educated and confident in their writing of standard English as commonly believed, since “for some it was also a source of employment and an avenue for a better life overseas than as a craftsman in England with little education” (1996: 150). However, for those letters that Mesthrie (1996: 153) examined, he concludes that “the average English missionary’s writing skills were superior to those characterised in [his article]”. Missionaries not only wrote letters to the Missionary Societies but were also instructed by these to keep journals, many of which were later published. Since most of the missionaries seem to have been aware that the journals they kept would be read by a wider audience as records of their missionary activities, most writers obviously tried to give the most detailed accounts of their daily activities and their awareness affected the style of writing, for instance Fast (1994) characterised the journal of the missionary William Shrewsbury by “painstakingly neat handwriting and concern for grammatical correctness” (1994: xv). The lack of personal information is another indicator of its more public nature and the fact that it was never intended as a private document. The writing of another missionary, Shaw, is evaluated quite similarly: “Shaw had been a schoolmaster. There are practically no errors of syntax” (Hammond-Tooke 1972: 17). Apart from the letters studied by Mesthrie, the writings of missionaries can therefore not be considered a valuable source for Cape English. In the following, I therefore rely on Goldswain and Shone as my major sources.

4. Methodology

Before the two sources are discussed in more detail, a number of issues connected with the study of written documents have to be addressed. In his overview of variation and change in written documents, Schneider mentions six difficulties that linguists often face in studying such documents: representativeness, validity, different levels of language organization analyzing phonetics with written records, type of approach and extralinguistic context parameters. The relation of some of these to the two sources will be discussed in this and the two subsequent sections.

Variationists, naturally, have always been particularly interested in the vernacular. Since the vernacular is a difficult concept in written sources, historical linguists working in the variationist paradigm have therefore resorted to focusing on so-called speech-based registers. Schneider (2002: 73) presents an overview of written sources that have been used as linguistic evidence and categorizes them according to their proximity to speech into five categories: Recorded, recalled, imagined, observed and invented. In the first category the relation to speech is closest, as the text directly relates to the speech event; this includes interview transcripts and trial records for example.
These sources have been successfully used as linguistic evidence for the Early Modern English period by the Helsinki team. The category that is of particular interest in the present context is third, the imagined category, which is characterised by Schneider (2002: 72) as follows: “A writer records potential, conceived utterances by himself which, for lack of the presence of the addressee, need to be written down rather than said; but he remains in a near-speech mode.” This text type includes diaries and letters whose authors typically have little education and little experience in writing and “need to put their thoughts onto paper for some reason” (73), which is why they have to be separated from any form of professional writing. Letters written by such semi-literate authors have been extensively studied by Montgomery for a number of different contexts (1993, 1999, Schneider & Montgomery 2001). The supposed similarity to the vernacular for these sources is based on the assumption that, due to the lack of formal education, the writers have been largely unaffected by the standardising influence of formal writing. If the only familiar mode is the spoken mode, the usual differences found between spoken and written registers are not necessarily entirely absent, but the writing at least resembles speech. Despite the writers’ lack of education, many of these had strong motivations to go to the trouble of undertaking a rather unfamiliar activity as Montgomery has shown. In a “typology of colloquial letter writers”, he distinguishes between three types of writers: “desperadoes”, “lonelyhearts” and “functionaries” (1999: 26). Thus, a state of desperation or loneliness provided motivation for the writers to compose such letters; good examples of “lonelyhearts” were soldiers’ letters to their families during the Civil War, and examples of “desperadoes” are letters written by veteran soldiers or their widows to the so-called Freedmen Bureau or pension claims agents directly after the Civil War or in the subsequent decades (Siebers, Montgomery & Schneider 2008).

As a main aspect of the methodology section, I should discuss the type of approach in this study. As described by Schneider, a lot of recent research on written documents in historical linguistics is quantitative. However, a purely quantitative approach is problematic in a number of contexts because such written documents are scarce and the available data does not always allow for a quantitative analysis. Limited as an analysis may thus be without a quantitative foundation, a qualitative analysis of the linguistic evidence is still of value: “if it is not possible to ask and analyse how often a variant occurs, frequently it still makes sense to ask if it occurs at all, which variants are found, and, possibly, who its users are” (Schneider 2002: 89). In doing so, two approaches can be employed: first, what Schneider calls a “strictly inventorial, token-based approach” and second a “broader idiolect-based mode of analysis” (89). Mesthrie and West’s analysis on the grammatical features found in the writings of a variety of 1820s settlers is an example of the first approach, and the detailed, in parts quantitative, analysis of two individuals of the settler community to be undertaken in this paper follows the
second approach. Limited as each of the two may be when taken on their own, it is argued here that combining and relating the results to those of Mesthrie and West helps to evaluate the findings, to go beyond the limits of two idiolects and hopefully to provide a more comprehensive picture of the first settler generation. The value of such sources as Goldswain has yet to be ascertained but to give an early and partial answer to the question posed in the title of this paper: the language of an illiterate might provide a harvest to the philologer but certainly not to the variationist.

5. Jeremiah Goldswain and Thomas Shone

A few remarks on the validity of the sources are in order here. Casson informs us about an important shortcoming in Long's section on editorial method. He points out that Long failed to mention that the original Chronicle was written on 528 pages of “uniform pale-blue quality” which Casson sees as “evidence that the Chronicle was a single undertaking, all of one period of the author's life” (1955: 9). Furthermore, he identifies afterthoughts which were each labelled with letters a, b, c, d etc and stored separately, as well as corrections, which according to Casson do not stem from Goldswain. Needless to say, this type of editorial information provided by Casson adds important insights into the history of this piece of writing and makes clear why the classification of the original, whenever possible, is indispensable. Although it is probably not that easy to ascertain who corrected the manuscript, such corrections nonetheless tell us a lot about the corrector’s evaluation of Goldswain’s writing. These corrections could potentially tell us more about which of the non-standard features were actually perceived as vernacular and inappropriate (at least in writing). Whether private letters survived or not often lay in the hands of the family members. When they were considered by family members as an important contribution to a historically relevant period, they were more likely to be handed on to archives or historians. If the opposite was the case, the manuscripts might even have been destroyed. Thomas Shone’s diary is an interesting example here. Silva points out in her introduction that there are gaps in the manuscript diary and goes on to write that “the section for 1840–49 was destroyed by a descendant who felt that certain aspects of Thomas Shone’s life should remain hidden” (1992: xviii).

In order to evaluate the results of a linguistic analysis of the vernacular sources, it is necessary to look at the linguistic profile of the writers. The place of birth of the emigrants, their social adaptations, the occupations before migrations and their age at the time of emigration form some of the background information of interest to the linguist (García-Bermejo Giner & Montgomery 1997: 170). Both writers belonged to the first group of settlers who arrived in early 1820. While the Government originally
only sought to send over wealthy Englishmen and their families, so-called proprietary parties were later admitted to the Albany settlement programme too. Goldswain had been hired by Wait’s party and Shone first belonged to Scott’s party and later changed to Nottingham’s.

Jeremiah Goldswain was born in Great Marlow in Buckinghamshire in 1802. He represents the typical profile of the 1820s settlers: his family was poor, he struggled to earn a living in Britain and he sought to start a new and more prosperous life elsewhere (Casson 1955: 1). The advertisement campaign by Wait must therefore have presented a welcome alternative. He quickly signed up on Wait’s list, very much to the distress of his mother as he vividly describes “Jery you will brake my hart if you are deturmnid to go and leve me for ever” (Long 1946: 3). Shortly after arriving in the Albany district he married Elizabeth Debenham. Apart from a short period in Grahamstown, Goldswain in the first three decades after his arrival lived in Bathurst where he first attended to farming and later opened up a shop. From 1848 until his death in 1871, he lived on his son’s farm near Grahamstown.

Thomas Shone was born in London in 1784. At the age of 19, he joined the Royal Navy, and while on board The Lord Nelson he was captured and imprisoned by the French. He was kept as a prisoner-of-war at Givet and Sarrelibre (Silva 1992: 17). While not much is known about the length of imprisonment, Silva speculates that it lasted about seven years. In 1814, Shone was married to the mother of his son, Sarah Phillips. Until his emigration he lived with his family in the Newington-Walworth-district which consisted of, fashionable suburbs in London at the time. It is not clear whether Shone was still with the Navy after his return to England or whether he found a new occupation. In the settlers list he was listed as a labourer, and it is therefore not unlikely that he was working as a shoemaker, a trade he supposedly learned during his time in France. The fact that Surrey was a centre for the footwear industry supports this hypothesis (Silva 1992: 18). In 1819 Shone, his wife and three children were accepted by George Scott’s party of settlers and they reached the South African shore in the following year. Aged 36, Shone settled near Bathurst and remained there until his death in 1868. He came from a fairly wealthy family and his writing reflects a good education, which, according to Silva is “strangely at variance with his description in the Settler lists as a labourer” (1992: ix).

While most semi-literate writing stems from letter writing, diaries are an “equally interesting” type of autograph (Schneider 2002: 78). However, so far only very few diaries have been considered as a valuable vernacular source and the reason for this might lie in the fact that the very act of keeping a diary regularly requires a certain degree of literacy. Thus, those writers who struggle to write a letter because they urgently wish to produce relief to the often dire situation they find themselves in usually lack a similarly strong motivation to overcome the obstacles of a very limited literacy
and become regular diarists. Shone seems to be an interesting exception here. First of all, one has to concede of course that he is not the most prototypical semi-literate writer, which made the whole business of keeping a diary easier. His motivation was very similar to that of Montgomery’s ‘desperadoes’ and ‘lonelyhearts’ described above, as several circumstances led him to write down daily entries: he was desperate and lonely after the death of his wife Sarah in December 1837 and it was certainly no coincidence that he started his journal shortly afterwards in 1838. Another circumstance is most likely connected with the first: Shone had a drinking problem and in many journal entries he reports on his attempts to stay away from drink. Thus, his very first entry on 30 June 1838 even begins with his resolution “to drink no more Spirits for the space of twelve months” (Silva 1992: 49). The point in time when writers put pen to paper often reveals a lot of their motivation. The following entries can be considered typical examples:

(1)

a. 7 July Mended a boot for Pikes, 2Sk[illings]. The same day went to Bathurst for meat, to Mr. Hartley. Resolution said ‘Give me a glass’, I said ’No, you will want more, so I shall give you none’ (49)

b. 31 July […] Resolved not to give Resolution any more Spirits on account of having treated him for this 30 years and upwards. So I find that if I listen to him, in my Old days he will try to be my ruin, so no more for you, my old Chap. (51)

c. 5 August At home all the day. Laid down on the bed for several hours, and took a good sleep, not having much Sleep the night before. Very uncomfortable in my mind for the loss of my aimable partner. The loss of a good Wife is great pain to the mind of the unfortunate husband who is the Sufferer. (51)

d. 19 August […] My trials since the death of my belov’ d partner as been great, which cause me to give way to drinking more than usual, knowing that, when I had lost her, I had lost the only faithfull and true friend I ever had since I have been a man, and in whom all my comfort ever rested. […] (51f.)

Shone had an interesting way of describing his desires to indulge in drinking by some form of ‘interior dialogue’. Unsuccessful attempts to resist the temptation are described by obscuring the agent of drinking as in “John Thurret treated Resolution with a glass of beer” (Silva 1992: 54). The writing of a journal must have given him comfort initially, but it obviously became a routine in later life. Most of the entries are rather short and document daily activities of farming, but at the beginning there are occasional longer entries in which he elaborates at some length on the misdemeanour of members of his community. Despite the very private nature of this journal, Silva points out that “there are signs that he was at times conscious of a possible audience” (1992: xiii). He also seems to have had a notebook which he used for making entries into the journal as comments such as “Wrote my journal afresh” indicate (1992: xv). The time
span of the journal – more than 22 years – is remarkable. Apart from the years 1840–9, which are missing, a total of 1,400 manuscript pages provide a rich account of the settler Thomas Shone.

Another issue is the time that passed between the migration and the writing, as it might give us an idea whether particular features are evidence of possible regional traits or effects of accommodation (García-Bermejo Giner & Montgomery 1997: 170). As late as 18 years after his emigration, aged 54, Shone began his journal. Although Jeremiah was only 19 when he settled in South Africa, a similar time period must have elapsed before he began writing his Chronicle. The exact date is almost impossible to reconstruct, which is a disadvantage compared to the exactly datable and diaries letters. The Chronicle covers the years 1819 to 1858. The events recounted start with the immediate time before his emigration, but it seems obvious that it was written retrospectively, possibly about 15 to 20 years after his arrival. It is more difficult to assess Goldswain’s motivation, particularly because he was the more illiterate writer of the two. He must have developed an awareness that he was part of a pioneering generation, and he considered his life eventful enough to cast it into the form of a long narrative. In contrast to Shone, Goldswain is more concerned with the collective experience of the 1820s settlers. Casson characterises Goldswain’s Chronicle “as something between autobiography and history” (1955: 2) The nature of the document also affects his style of writing; Attempting a literary account, the result is occasionally “pompous” (2).

6. **Phonological features**

The most revealing characteristic of a vernacular source is its non-standard orthography (other indicators are for example lack of punctuation, random capitalization etc.). Not only do many sources show lack of adherence to standard conventions but they also evince naïve and idiosyncratic spellings. The most important question in dealing with non-standard orthography is to ascertain whether certain spelling variants are phonologically significant. Lass (1987: 156) suggests the following classification:

1. garbage, i.e. spellings that have to be dismissed as mistakes, as they do not represent a possible pronunciation, e.g. *vligeles*. (Casson calls them ideographic spellings and ascribes them to “careless scribal habits” 1955: 6)

2. purely graphic variations for a particular writer, e.g. *c* for *s* as in *cerprise*, (García-Bermejo Giner & Montgomery 1997: 170 mention the lack of silent letters in *bilding*, *iland* and semi-phonetic forms like *dasht* as other unconventional spellings that do not have phonological significance)

3. phonologically significant spellings
The third category has to be evaluated against historical or “possible, natural” developments, taking into account the factor or regional origin. Lass (1987: 157) points out that Goldswain is particularly interesting with regard to the hypercorrect or inverse use of the graphemes ⟨h⟩ and ⟨wh⟩. The following two sections will take a closer look at these spellings. Other examples of phonologically significant spellings are listed in the table below:

Table 1. Phonologically significant spellings in Goldswain and Shone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Goldswain</th>
<th>Shone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/æ/ raised to /e/</td>
<td>contructor</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/e/ raised to /t/</td>
<td>git, kittle</td>
<td>thier (‘their’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/t/ lowered to /e/</td>
<td>convenced, enstance, deferent</td>
<td>discharged, deciple deligent, entitled, subborn, sen[t],</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cluster simplification</td>
<td>accustome, inhabitense</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post vocalic /r/</td>
<td>surplied, dorn</td>
<td>Forse (Foss, surname)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g-dropping</td>
<td>askin, havin, talken, lien</td>
<td>engraven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hypercorrect g</td>
<td>gardeing, eleveing</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While there are only a few significant examples from Shone, Goldswain’s writing offers many more and only a summary is presented here. So what can be learned from Goldswain’s idiosyncratic orthography? Casson argues that Goldswain’s ‘misspellings’ offer a guide to his pronunciation and considers the pronunciation representative of his social class at the time and typical of the informal speech of the educated a century earlier (1955: 8). This is borne out by examples that are indicative of an extremely colloquial (even vulgar) pronunciation and a certain slovenliness in the articulation of consonants in particular (the reader is referred to Casson’s detailed discussion of various assimilation phenomena resulting in the loss of consonants 1955: 24–7). These are the main reasons why Goldswain’s spelling is so different from Shone’s. In addition to the characteristics outlined above, what makes Goldswain a unique source are the spellings that are indicative of variable pronunciation. Casson further claims that all of these are not indicators of a regional dialect in the typical sense but more of a

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3. The first three features form part of two convergence zones in Lass and Wright’s model of the South African chain shift (for a detailed discussion cf. 1985: 144–7).

4. Lanham and MacDonald (1979: 73) claim that g-dropping was eliminated early on (cf. section on h-dropping).
class dialect, or “Modified Standard” as he calls it (9). Lass and Wright (1985: 143) consider this “an accurate characterization”, as their reconstruction of the South African Chain Shift confirms this “modified standard”. Thus, Lass (1987: 161) concludes that Goldswain can be considered a reliable source and that “this should make us happier and more confident in using him”.

6.1 *h*-dropping

*H*-dropping is known to be a feature in nineteenth-century England although it not clear from comments on this matter by contemporary sources how widespread it was and contrasting statements can be found as to its diffusion. Wyld notes that it is sporadic, while Ellis claims that it was widespread. Given this presence in English dialects, it is not surprising that *h*-dropping was transported to British settlements overseas. *H*-dropping is attested for nineteenth-century Australian English (cf. Burridge, this volume), St. Helenian English (Schreier 2008: 137f) and first-generation British immigrants to the United States (García-Bermejo Giner & Montgomery 1997). (It should be noted here that *h*-dropping is otherwise absent in North American English). The most comprehensive evidence for *h*-dropping comes from New Zealand; not only is it attested by the frequent comments of school inspectors presented by Gordon (1998), it is also found in the speech of ONZE project (Gordon et al. 2004).

Milroy (1983) sees the widespread diffusion of *h*-dropping in English dialects as an indicator for its long history. He dates this back to the Middle Ages when the *h* was first dropped with non-native words like *honour* and *horrible*. *H*-dropping later spread to native words as well but “the exact timing of this development is a matter of some dispute” (Mugglestone 1997: 97). The avoidance of homophony with words like *hill* and *ill*, *hand* and *and* was originally the main concern with the issue of pronouncing *h* (Mugglestone 1997: 96). The social stigma associated with *h*-dropping only arose at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries with the rising influence of prescriptive grammarians and phoneticians. The prescriptive discourse around the glottal fricative has been convincingly elucidated by Mugglestone (1997) in her chapter on *h* as a symbol of the social divide. Only those who could read were aware of the presence of *h* in writing and could thus match grapheme with sound (1997: 104). The dropping of the corresponding sound was thus equated with lack of literacy. Mugglestone (1997: 95) points out that “its absence has come to function

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5. Analysing similar material, Fairman (2007) addresses the need of classifying the language we typically find in the writings of semi-literate writers, or in the author’s words: “What variety is this?” (171)
as prime diacritic of the linguistically and socially unacceptable” and that it was perceived as a symbol of the social divide in the nineteenth century.

As Table 2 below shows, Goldswain provides examples of h-dropping in early South African English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Following vowel</th>
<th>Example from Goldswain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>START</td>
<td>artey (JG, 10)9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>arid (JG, 141)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ongrey (JG, 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOAT</td>
<td>oped (JG, 120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>oie (‘whole’, JG, 44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>olding (JG, 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NURSE</td>
<td>ert (‘hurt’, JG, 62)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H-dropping occurs in Goldswain’s writing, very “frequently” according to Casson (1955: 27). The h in one-syllable common words is often dropped. As Gordon et al. (2004: 190) have shown, lexically frequent words are more prone to h-dropping. Interestingly, Goldswain not only drops the aspirate word-initially but also in stressed syllables following unstressed ones as in beaved (‘behaved’) (JG, 4) and inabitance (JG, 6).

As would be expected, h is also dropped in unstressed words, but the relative infrequency of this dropping is particularly noteworthy, as we find the reverse trend in speech. The lack of aspiration at the beginning of grammatical words such as have, has or had is found with all speakers and therefore this is not considered a case of h-dropping (Trudgill 2004: 72). Despite the fact that it is usually not considered as h-dropping in speech, it is remarkable if it occurs in writing.

In contrast to Goldswain, Shone was less uncertain and with him h-dropping proper is restricted to a handful of examples, inself (TS, 53) is one of them. As for unstressed words, Shone almost categorically drops the h in has but not in other grammatical words like had or his, apart from one or two exceptions (ad for had, he had hurt is foot (TS, 117). Since the aspiration of all of these grammatical words is commonly absent, it is not clear why it is only absent from Shone’s has.7 Similarly, the dropped aspirates in the letters analysed by Garcia Bermejo-Giner and Montgomery (1997: 173) mainly occur in auxiliaries and personal pronouns, with the exception of apence, old, and ank.

6. In the following, all examples quoted from Goldswain’s and Shone’s writing will be abbreviated to JG and TS with subsequent numbers that refer to the page of the edited volumes (Long 1946) and (Silva 1992) respectively.

7. Trudgill (2004: 74) points out that a number of ONZE speakers show an unusual way of h-dropping; the h is only omitted in stressed grammatical words. This is difficult to determine with written sources, but it is rather unlikely that this was the case with Shone.
Further South African examples can be gleaned from the editor’s remarks in Ayliff’s journal, in which ‘illiterate forms’, such as *ail for hail* were eliminated (Hinchliff 1971: 8). The following example stems from the settler letters (Mesthrie & West 1995: 113):

(2) *Its with the Deposumility I take up my unworthy pen* [...].

While the few examples from Goldswain and Shone given here are only impressionistic, a couple of remarks on general constraints are called for. Based on their analysis of the ONZE database, Gordon et al. (2004: 191) identified the linguistic constraints that favour *h*-dropping. It most frequently occurs following sonorant consonants and plosives. Preceding pauses and vowels tend to prevent the *h* from being dropped. As for the following vowels, the START and THOUGHT vowels rank most highly as facilitators, followed by yod + GOOSE, GOAT, NURSE and TRAP vowels. A major issue is whether the principles for speech also apply to writing. If so, it would be another indicator of the proximity of vernacular sources to speech. Only limited conclusions can be drawn of course, but the above examples fit fairly well into the facilitator hierarchy.

The question arises what we can infer about his speech from Goldswain’s writing. Casson speculates that “it is to be supposed that Goldswain omitted *h* from his speech more often than appears from his spelling” (1955: 27). A similar conclusion is drawn by García-Bermejo Giner and Montgomery (1997). In their study of nineteenth century British letters they find evidence for *h*-dropping in 11 out of 17 different collections of letters, regionally widespread. While they concede that in most instances *h*-dropping occurs in unstressed syllables such as verbal auxiliaries, they come to the conclusion that “this unsureness in spelling the consonant is taken to indicate the general lack of pronunciation of *h*.” I concur with Casson that the amount of *h*-dropping is most likely to be higher in speech than in writing, or to put it another way: If the *h* is dropped in writing, there is no reason to think that it would occur in speech. However, to claim a general lack of aspiration on the basis of a few instances in writing does not seem to be warranted. Gordon et al. (2004: 189) show that even in the speech of the most frequent *h*-droppers the overall percentage of *h*-dropping is not higher than 70%, and for the majority of speakers it is less than 10%.

The question is whether the instances of *h*-dropping in Goldswain and Shone (and the differences in particular) are to be interpreted as regional or social variation, that is, do we find hardly any instances of *h*-dropping in Shone’s journal because he was the more educated, socially higher-ranking settler of the two? Or, is this fact due to the absence of *h*-dropping in his native dialect? As can be gleaned from the Linguistic Atlas of England maps, the area of London (including Surrey) and north of it up to East Anglia does not belong to the *h*-dropping areas (Orton et al. 1978: Ph220-1). Here, the normative influence of Received Pronunciation in the London metropolitan area should not be underestimated. Goldswain’s native dialect region, Buckinghamshire, is a clear case of an *h*-dropping area. However, disentangling the social and regional influence in this is a difficult matter and the combination of the two does not seem unlikely.
6.2 *h*-insertion

*h*-insertion, on the other hand, is of course related to the spread of *h*-dropping and the stigma attached to it, since those who would try to avoid the impression of being considered uneducated would be very careful in pronouncing the *h*. This has resulted in hypercorrection and the pronunciation of *h* where there is no match in spelling. Likewise, this became socially stigmatised as the “stereotype of the ‘new rich’” as Mugglestone (1997: 110) calls it. It was considered by the educated as typical of the new rich, who were eager to show that they not only possessed money but also education and culture and who tried to avoid revealing any traces of where they originally came from (1997: 111). The hypercorrections of the lower middle class in Labov’s classic studies as well as many other sociolinguistic studies show that this is a typical behaviour of socially insecure groups. Mugglestone concludes that the many comments on the absence of *h* “guaranteed to foster the linguistic (and) status anxieties of many speakers” (1997: 111).

Goldswain hypercorrects the *h* even more often than he drops it, which Casson interprets as “outcomes of misapplied carefulness” (1955: 28). Many of the hypercorrected words occur several times, e.g. *hapitite* (3x), *herly* (2x), and *hone* (5x). Among grammatical words, the hypercorrections *ham*, *hare* (also written *hear*) and *his* are particularly noteworthy. Milroy (1983: 41) also cites *ham* and *his* as examples from written sources (cf. also examples in García-Bermejo Giner & Montgomery 1997: 173). Due to their frequency, they might have diffused in their hypercorrect forms.

According to Wright (1905), emphasis on a particular word is one function of hypercorrect *h* in nineteenth century British English. As Casson (1955: 28) emphasises, apart from the following example, this is not the case with Goldswain: “I longed for the time [when] sum of they members wold invite me hin; but no.”

As Shone is not a frequent *h*-dropper, it is not surprising that there are only a few hypercorrections, e.g. *he his going* (TS, 171). The question is whether the *h* is randomly hypercorrected or whether it is more systematic with speakers emphasising the *h* preceded by those vowels where it is usually likely to be dropped, see the facilitating vowels mentioned in the last section. When one considers the hypercorrection examples followed by START, GOAT, NURSE vowels above, this cannot be entirely dismissed.

To sum up, what can be concluded for both dropped and hypercorrected *h*? As Gordon (1998) has illustrated with her analysis of the school inspector reports, in New Zealand *h*-dropping was considered a bad habit that the colonists brought with them. It is not unlikely that similar attitudes prevailed in South Africa, and it is probably due to this stigma that the feature was “apparently eliminated at an early stage”, as Lanham and MacDonald claim (1979: 73). How early it was eliminated is of course
difficult to ascertain. The examples from Goldswain show that it was still present in the writings of the first generation of settlers around the middle of the nineteenth century. Only an analysis of the writings from this generation’s children could shed light on the question whether *h*-dropping was indeed eliminated. The fact that hypercorrect *h* occurs more often than a dropped *h* in Goldswain’s *Chronicle* could be interpreted as a sign of gradual loss or as a form of supraregionalisation preceded by the hypercorrection of stigmatised features as outlined by Hickey (2011). Although it is only restricted to this feature (and possibly ‘*g*-dropping’) and no supraregional variety emerges, the underlying process of suppression of vernacular features seems to apply. Stigmatised features are replaced by their standard variants and “hypercorrection would appear to die away with supraregionalisation. This stands to reason: if local features are replaced by more standard ones then later generations master the correct distributions of sounds immediately” (Hickey 2011). Goldswain was undoubtedly aware of the stigma and attempted to get his glottal fricatives right to prevent being perceived as uneducated, an aspect that is probably even more prominent in writing than in speech. This “uncertainty with the aspirates” (Casson 1955: 28) (and in fact Goldswain’s *Chronicle* as a whole) can be interpreted as an indicator of his social aspirations. If people with social aspirations show receding frequencies of a stigmatised feature and hypercorrect patterns, it can be seen as “an indication that they are diffusing the change in a ‘downward’ direction.” (Milroy 1983: 47).

6.3  /ʍ/ ~ /w/ merger

The distinction in pronunciation between *witch* and *which* in standard English was lost at the end of the eighteenth century, but due to the prestige it held, the distinction was still common among educated speakers of Southern British English in the nineteenth century (Gordon et al. 2004: 193). The merger is related to *h*-dropping, since speakers who retain /w/ also retain *h* (2004: 193). Contrary to *h*-dropping, the voicing of /w/ that results in the *witch*-which merger is not stigmatised. Speakers of early New Zealand retained the distinction, and it was only merged in the second half of the twentieth century. The long survival of this distinction can presumably be ascribed to the Irish and Scottish groups among the early settlers, reinforced by the emphasis it received in teaching. The distinction is retained in most present-day accents of Scottish and Irish English (Hickey 2007: 332) but lost elsewhere in the British Isles as the *Linguistic Atlas of England* maps show, with the exception of a few relic areas in the north east (Orton et al. 1978: PH222). The gradual loss of the distinction in English for the majority is likely to have been completed in the first half of the nineteenth century and for educated speakers in the second half (Gordon et al. 2004: 193). Since the proportion of Scottish and Irish emigrants was significantly lower than in Australian
and New Zealand settlements and a strong influence from educated speakers was not to be expected among the 1820s settlers, we should be surprised to find any indicators for a distinction between /ʍ/ and /w/.

In line with the above, Goldswain’s spelling seems to indicate h-loss with high-frequency pronouns such as which, when and where. As Gordon et al. (2004: 199) show, frequent function words with high vowels are less likely to be pronounced with /hw/. When is almost categorically written wen (seven out of eight, this was checked for the first chapter). Similarly, which is mostly written wich, apart from one example of witch that could be taken as evidence that which and witch were homophones for Goldswain. The picture is different for what: except for one case, the spelling is always standard. There is less variation in spelling with Shone: He occasionally writes were for where (TS, 57, 58, 66) and shows a few hypercorrect spellings whoud (TS, 57) and where for were (TS, 62). The latter occurs quite consistently in 17 out of 88 were tokens (analysed for Section 7.2) and seems to indicate that the words were homophones for Shone.

When Goldswain and Shone use non-standard orthography with high-frequency words such as pronouns, does this mean that this reflects speech and the variation in their speech patterns? Does this variable presence indicate a trend towards the entire loss of /ʍ/? Can we conclude that when Goldswain uses no wh in writing that it was also absent in his speech? This is not entirely unlikely but it certainly is a point which needs critical investigation before we draw hasty conclusions. Thus, if we take this as evidence that Goldswain voiced the labio-velar fricative, how do we interpret the glottal fricatives that are represented in his writing? As Fairman (2007) has shown, this type of non-standard orthography might tell us more about degree of literacy. Non-standard orthography with common words is more typical of the least literate writers, whereas the semi-educated, as Fairman calls them, show phonetic spelling only with lesser-known words. However, the heterogeneity and meaning of non-standard orthography has yet to be studied in more detail and Montgomery (1999: 6) reminds us that “the process of putting words into a written code operates in ways that linguists do not understand, filtering out some non-standard forms completely, lessening the frequency of others while sometimes producing hypercorrections”.

7. Grammatical features

This section will take a closer look at Goldswain’s and Shone’s grammar. In his work on Goldswain’s chronicle, Casson states that most of the peculiarities of Goldswain’s grammar and syntax “are all signs of the untrained and unskilful writer; to make them more explicit would be tedious and unprofitable” (1955: 31). However, he also notes that “there are some isolated points of grammatical interest that are worth noticing”
(32) which he refers to as “survivals of older usages”. He mentions the following features: ‘They’ as demonstrative adjective, (The movement of they dancers), -ed added to weak past tense forms (agreeded, kikted), confusion of weak and strong conjugations, (drinked, bloood).\(^8\) Other more frequent features are listed and contrasted with Shone in Table 3 below. The last two features will be given particular emphasis in Section 7.1 and 7.2.

**Table 3.** Grammatical features of Goldswain and Shone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Goldswain</th>
<th>Shone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adjectives for adverbs</td>
<td>The Oxen could ease pul the wagon.</td>
<td>Broke my face very bad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intered me to eat artey of it.</td>
<td>In the night it began to rain very heavy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We arrived home safe.,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a + present participle</td>
<td>a-sawing, a-dressing,</td>
<td>a jobbing, a hunting,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a-fighting, a-sheep shearing</td>
<td>a gossiping, a Buffleloe hunting,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past tense for</td>
<td>broke, came, drank, stole</td>
<td>as broke, have stole, have began</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past participle for</td>
<td>begun, don, shown</td>
<td>done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past tense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singular form with</td>
<td>all kind of tooles that</td>
<td>my bones was very stiff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plural subject</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for Shone’s grammar, Mesthrie and West (1995: 110) mention the dative of advantage, variable use of is, was and does with third person plural subjects and done as a simple past verb. An example of the dative of advantage is the following:

(3) \(\text{Came home and took breakfast and began to make me a harrow.} \) (Silva 1992: 59)

As we learn from Mesthrie and West’s study on settler English, this is not only a salient feature of Shone’s grammar but also frequently occurs in their data, with build me and build him in particular (1995: 123f). Casson does not mention this construction, but as a closer analysis revealed, it can be found in Goldwain’s Chronicle as Example (4a) shows:

(4) a. \(\text{When theas ware all gon traid was put a stop to for meney tradesmen that} \)
\(\text{had left thear location for to setle them selves in Bathurst had build them} \)
\(\text{little Houses.} \) (JG, 50)

b. \(\text{for they were too selfish even to buy themselves the common nesseries of life.} \) (TS, 53)

\(\text{8. Casson also lists the survival of hem (The three men that was with 'hem) but already dismisses it as potential example of assimilation.}\)
Example (4b) shows a similar use of this construction with *self* in Shone’s diary. The fact that this construction was not only wide-spread in the settlers’ English but is also attested for the English of the missionaries as well as contemporary Cape Flats English, led Mesthrie and West (1995: 124) to conclude that this feature can be considered a “dialect survival”. Given the absence of this construction in other New Englishes, the characterisation of a dialect survival rather than an interlanguage phenomenon is certainly more likely.

7.1 Past tense *done*

The feature to be discussed here is particularly interesting with regard to recent research on British dialects (cf. Anderwald 2009). As mentioned above, the use of *done* as a past verb is characteristic of Shone’s grammar. It is typical of his factual style and occurs frequently in the diary; most often, though not exclusively this construction refers to his own daily activities. The following quotes represent typical examples:

(5) a. I *done* nothing all the day (TS, 126)
b. I also *done* a little weeding (TS, 92)
c. So I *done* no work (TS, 99)
d. I *done* some trifling (TS, 133)
e. we *done* nothing this day (TS, 103)
f. The horses *done* a great deal of damage (TS, 123)
g. It *done* me some good (TS, 192)

*Done* does not occur as frequently in Goldswain’s writing as it does in Shone’s, which is probably why Casson (1955: 34) mentions this form only in passing, as one of the past participles that appear as past tense. The following example from Goldswain at least shows that he also used *done* in this way:

(5) h. *This we don* for sevrel Months (JG, 55)

In her study of non-standard verb morphology in British dialects, Anderwald points out that two non-standard ways of levelling the standard *do*-paradigm (*do*-did-done) are known: *do*-did-Did and *do*-done-done (2009: 126). Both levelled forms occur in British dialects but Anderwald identifies an important functional distribution: the latter two-part paradigm is restricted to the use of *done* as a main verb. All examples quoted above conform to this functional distinction. As Anderwald (2009: 127) has pointed out, in contrast to other verbs like *run* and *eat*, past tense *done* is not mentioned before the middle of the nineteenth century (the first mention for this is a quotation from 1848 cited in the *English*
Dialect Dictionary. Data from Wright’s *English Dialect Dictionary* give further evidence of the use of *done* in many dialects from the end of the nineteenth century (cf. Map 5.3 in Anderwald 2009: 128). Based on this data, Anderwald concludes that it can be mainly considered a Midlands and southern phenomenon. Of particular interest here are of course the home counties of Goldswain and Shone. Area 34, Surrey, is clearly indicated as one of the areas for which *done* is reported. Unfortunately, the situation is more difficult for Buckinghamshire, since this belongs to the areas for which Wright did not provide any data.10

The use of *done* in Shone’s grammar not only confirms the evidence of Wright’s *EDD* but also predates it by at least fifty years. The Shone examples can be taken as evidence that past tense *done* was already widely used in Surrey at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Due to the fact that the speakers of the *Survey of English Dialects* (henceforth: *SED*) were born in the nineteenth century, this can provide information on language usage in the previous century. Unfortunately, responses from the *SED* contain only instances of *done* in negative contexts such as *I never done it*. While it is certainly problematic to infer from negative evidence to this response, since *done* occurs here in combination with punctual *never*, and non-occurrence of *done* could simply mean that past tense *done* is used but the dialect does not permit constructions like punctual *never*. This must be interpreted as a valid explanation, as the examples from Shone, the evidence from Wright and the high frequencies from the *Freiburg Corpus of English Dialects* show that *done* has an early origin and a strong continuity in Surrey. The reverse is less problematic, as evidence with *never* suggests that it is also most likely used in positive contexts too. Based on the *SED* results, the map in Anderwald shows that Buckinghamshire can be considered as one of the areas with past tense *done* usage. As this section

9. Anderwald (2009: 127) specifies that the very first entry of this use of *done* is to be found in an American source but the gap of just one year indicates that this is not necessarily an Americanism but that it most likely has been in use before. In fact, examples from *A Corpus of Irish English* give evidence that this feature is much older. The use of *done* in the works of the Banim brothers and William Carleton not only suggests that it was established in Ireland in the nineteenth century but also that it was transported to Ireland in the seventeenth century (Raymond Hickey, personal communication).

10. Furthermore, Anderwald cites results from the *Freiburg Corpus of English Dialects* which show that in the twentieth century past tense *done* is found in all dialects albeit with different frequencies. The frequencies are highest for the South East with 79.9% and Anderwald therefore concludes that it is a southern phenomenon that has gradually spread into other dialect areas (2009: 130).
has shown, sources like Goldswain and Shone are not only windows on the study of early South African English but also predate and complement British dialect sources on “an inconspicuous form that has not attracted much notice by dialectologists” (Anderwald 2009: 127).

7.2 Past tense be

Was/were has been studied in a number of varieties and lends itself well to a cross-variety comparison (e.g. Tagliamonte 1998, Tagliamonte & Smith 2000; Schreier 2002). In the present study, it has been selected for two reasons: first of all, with a type of source in which the main purpose is to recount things of the past one very likely obtains a higher number of past than present forms of be. Therefore with the aim of studying present be paradigm, it would have been more difficult to yield the critical number of tokens for such an analysis. The second reason is that was/were variation has been studied in many varieties world-wide and its external as well internal constraints are well-known so that it is possible to investigate to what extent Goldswain’s and Shone’s variation follow these constraints.11

Goldswain shows instances of was with plural subjects, most frequently in combination with relative pronouns, conjoined nouns and existential there (Casson 1955: 34). Mesthrie and West (1995: 110) also identify the variable use of was with third person plural subjects as a salient feature of Shone’s grammar. Due to the occurrence of this feature in both settler sources, it has been selected for further (comparative) analysis. Since this feature is widespread and much is known about the linguistic constraints on this feature, one of the main questions of the subsequent analysis will be whether and to what extent the use of was and were is governed by the same constraints. The methodology for this section is as follows: for both sources the first two chapters were searched for all occurrences of was and were. This preliminary analysis revealed that contrary to other varieties, both sources only show instances of non-standard was in the third person plural, and therefore the subsequent analysis focused on third person plural only (for other concord patterns in Goldswain see discussion below). A similar number of tokens was aimed at; however, it should be noted here that the overall occurrences as well as the length of the sources vastly differed. While the 124 possible contexts for third person plural past tense be represents the overall number of all such instances in the entire journal

11. Was/were variation has also been subjected to the study of polarity recently (e.g. Tagliamonte & Smith 2000; Anderwald 2001). However, since the diaries do hardly contain negative was/were, only affirmative sentences were considered in this context.
of Shone, the 121 contexts listed for Goldswain is the amount for the first three of sixteen chapters only. The following table gives the occurrences for was in third person plural subjects:

Table 4. was in third person plural subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>plural existentials</th>
<th>Nonexistentials</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldswain</td>
<td>6/23</td>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>47/121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shone</td>
<td>5/7</td>
<td>0/18</td>
<td>31/99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since existentials are known to have a strong effect on the use of was (for a comprehensive comparative analysis of 14 communities see Tagliamonte 2009), a distinction between existentials and non-existentials is often made to disentangle their effects. While the effect is strong in most data sets, the frequencies vary considerably across varieties: they range from 44.4% in Australian English (Eisikovits 1991: 243) to a near-categorical use of 96.3% in Tristan da Cunha English (Schreier 2002: 85). Since most of these results are drawn from studies on contemporary speech communities, it will be interesting for the present context to consider results from studies that report on an earlier stage of the variety in question. The ONZE project is a case in point. For a set of 35 speakers born in the 1850s, the percentage of singular was is 80%, a rate that gradually decreased over the next decades (Hay & Schreier 2004: 216). Unfortunately, no such recordings are available for earlier South African English, but since the time of settlement and the composition of settler groups was very similar in both countries, it certainly qualifies as a viable point for comparison.

As we can glean from Table 1, the analysis for Goldswain and Shone produced very different frequencies and frequency rates. While the overall number of existentials in the entire journal of Thomas Shone is as low as seven occurrences, in five of these was is used. Goldswain uses more existential constructions but only 26.1% have singular concord. What is interesting here is not this percentage but its relation to the proportion of singular concord with non-existentials, which is much higher at 41.8%. Goldswain’s relation of existentials and non-existentials is as we would expect it: the proportion of singular concord with there is considerably higher (71.6%) than that of non-existentials (26.5%). As Tagliamonte (2009: 115) reports, most speech communities pattern in this way; however, she finds one speech community where the pattern is exactly the other way round. Most studies show that singular and plural existentials are levelled in favour of singular concord but in this community there is also levelling
of singular existentials towards were. Interestingly, we also find such levelling with Goldswain as the following example shows:

(6)  About eight o'clock we ware called up to the Galley to git our boiled water: thear ware no delay you may depend. (JG, 13)

Were with singular exisentials is not unknown. Pietsch (2005: 124f) shows that this is also found in Northern Ireland where it is particularly frequent in the North and Northwest regions with frequencies of 36% and 24% respectively. Pietsch (2005: 128) further shows that it is a conservative feature and speculates that the origin of this may lie in Scots varieties. With Goldswain, the use of were in singular contexts is not restricted to existentials and the subsequent instances are evidence of this:

(7)  a. and everey thing ware planted (JG, 23)
b. but he reused until he had rad the Summens wen it ware asked who ware missing wen (JG, 27)
c. but the mesanger stating to Capn. Somerset that he belived that It ware all a sham and (JG, 31)

Some form of levelling towards were in the third person singular is apparent here, which is interesting, as these forms are not known for Goldswain's dialect, Buckinghamshire county. Forms such as he were or it were have only been reported for the south west of England. Thus the question is whether such forms can be considered as a result of dialect contact. Therefore the linguistic profile of the writer and social issues are relevant to the interpretation of such patterns. While it is always difficult to make out exactly how much mutual influence there was from other dialects, Goldswain's closest family seem to offer an explanation: His wife was from Somerset and it is not unlikely that the were forms shown above resulted from interdialectal influence.

7.3 Verbal concord

The next constraint to be discussed is the subject-type-constraint, also called Northern Subject Rule (NSR). This is a regional concord pattern according to which verbal -s occurs in third person plural more often with full NPs than with the pronoun they. As the name already indicates, this is a typical feature of northern and Scottish dialects (Ihalainen 1994: 221). This systematic pattern was first described by Murray (1873), who argues for a Scots origin. In a detailed analysis of several data sets from four centuries, Montgomery (1994) shows that the first attestations of this constraint in Scots go back as far as the thirteenth century. He also shows that this constraint was not only operative for verbal -s but also for is and was. Singular concord with was revealed the highest frequencies, a finding which is confirmed by a number of other studies (García-Bermejo Giner & Montgomery 1997, Schneider & Montgomery 2001;
Trüb 2006). At the same time, all these higher frequencies of singular concord with was are concomitant with a weakening of the subject type constraint, that is, they is less likely to occur with is than with was. Montgomery (1994) illustrates that this pattern is already discernible in the earliest records of Scots and therefore hypotheses that due to a relatively longer history, the subject-type constraint with non-standard was weakened over time. Furthermore, Trüb (2006: 259) argues that the weakening of this constraint was possibly reinforced by analogical levelling and the results for we was and you was in her data support this argument.

Rates for non-existentials presented in Table 1 are separated according to subject type in order to investigate whether the NSR is in operation. As the results show, the effect of the Northern Subject Rule is particularly strong here. Apart from the following example from Goldswain, they categorically occurs with were:

(8)  *they was removed to Grahams Town* (JG, 50)

What is more, the categoricity of the “they-constraint” is surprising here. In order to evaluate these results, it is instructive to compare these figures to others that stem from similar sources and from a similar or even earlier time. While the origin of the NSR is clearly in the north, from what is known in the literature it is obvious that this feature has spread to other dialects as well. In an analysis of the depositions of London prisoners at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, Wright (2002) shows that the NSR, or what she calls the “they-constraint”, is operative in London speech albeit as a low-frequency variant. However, we have to keep in mind here that Wright’s analysis is restricted to verbal -s in the third person plural. While it is not unlikely that the NSR is not only found for verbal -s but also for was – all other studies show similar constraints for verbal -s, present and past tense be despite differing frequencies – we have to be careful here before rushing to any conclusions. Further material for comparative purposes is provided by García-Bermejo Giner and Montgomery (1997). In different sets of family letters from four different regions, García-Bermejo Giner and Montgomery show that the NSR was in operation for verbal -s as well as past tense be to differing degrees. As expected, the rate for singular concord for third person plural is highest in the family letters from the north, 87% and 78% for Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire respectively. The rate is lowest for a family from Suffolk with 50%. Since Goldswain’s and Shone’s journals were written at approximately the same time, their overall frequencies of 29% and 38% support the picture of a north-south continuum instead of a north-south divide. Finally, it should be pointed out that while the writing of Goldswain and Shone can be considered as representative of the 1820s settlers, the frequencies reported here are restricted to the patterns of two male individuals. Nothing can be said about a larger population, let alone about any gender differences. In an analysis of 35 speakers of the ONZE project, Hay and Schreier find considerable differences in the usage of men and women. While the overall percentage
of singular concord in non-existentials is only 9%, the male speakers show a frequency of 23% (Hay & Schreier 2004: 223). The higher percentage of non-standard forms for male speakers is a finding that is reported for numerous sociolinguistic studies worldwide. Considering this, a larger and more balanced sample of the settler communities would in all likelihood produce a lower overall number than reported here.

In contrast with *they*, plural NPs often show singular concord but there are certain conditions under which its use is favoured. Not all studies report on these constraints but the present analysis revealed that these are of interest. Table 2 provides the frequencies for the types of NPs:

### Table 5. Percentage of *was* according to NP type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conjoined nouns</th>
<th>Relative pronoun</th>
<th>other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goldswain</td>
<td>8/8</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shone</td>
<td>22/46</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conjoined nouns highly favour the use of *was*, as can be seen with Goldswain who has categorical *was* in that context, but almost 50% of the conjoined nouns in Shone's writing also follow this pattern. Again, this is corroborated by the frequencies given elsewhere: Montgomery, Fuller and DeMarse (1993: 347) report 60%, but Hay and Schreier (2004: 225) only find singular concord for 8% of the conjoined nouns in early New Zealand English. Relative pronouns also have a strong effect in Goldswain's writing. As regards Shone, frequencies are very low once we exclude the conjoined nouns. Apart from a few instances in the category ‘other’, e.g. common nouns, conjoining seemed to be the sole favouring constraint. Examples of each category can be found in the following:

(9) a. *this morning me and the Children* was *transplanting of Onions* (TS, 61)
    b. *At the same time they would not listen to men who* was *capable of declaring the truth* (TS, 56)
    c. *My thoughts this day* was *on Sin* (TS, 66)

Given the restrictions with regard to representativeness discussed in the methodology section, it is vital to know whether the type of *was/were* variation discussed here also occurs in the writing of other settlers. The missionary John Ayliff is another example of a settler who shows non-standard past *be*, as the editor informs us that “Ayliff almost invariably writes ‘was’ instead of ‘were’” (Hinchcliff: 1971: 8). Unfortunately, we cannot study the nature of this pattern, because the editor eliminated evidence for this by correcting Ayliff’s “obvious errors”, as he calls them. Mesthrie (1996) used the unpublished diary of Ayliff which gives evidence of this pattern. The following two examples were penned by Ayliff (Mesthrie 1996: 151):
'An abundant harvest to the philologer?'

(10) a. **The resolutions were all put in Dutch and all the speeches was in Dutch except one**
    b. **and thankful to the Lord we was**

Mesthrie (1996: 151) concludes that “[g]enerally Ayliff’s writing is reminiscent of that of a great many of the British settlers of the period.” This is corroborated by the following examples from the settlers’ letters (Mesthrie & West 1995: 128):

(11) a. **to save the lives of her infants who was crying round her**
    b. **I cald at your office the same day that you took your departure from Graham’s town for my Memorial but found that you was gone**

Looking at other concord patterns, the kind of non-standard variation that we find with Shone and Goldswain is by no means restricted to past be. However, it is certainly of importance that we find exactly the same constraints in the present paradigm of be as well as verbal -s with lexical verbs and auxiliary do as the following examples illustrate:

(12) a. **Then they same questions is asked the young man** (JG, 45)
    b. **The ways of God to his people is all love** (TS, 109)
    c. **Henry and Jack is gone to Cayler Ville** (TS, 162)
    d. **The other children is sicking with them** (TS, 97)
    e. **Friendly feelings does not exist** (TS, 125)
    f. **They are stubborn and careless, and does not care what troble** (TS, 69)
    g. **Henry, Jack, and the boys as been doing what I call nothing.** (TS, 129)
    h. **Henry and Jack as had a quarrel** (TS, 167)
    i. **they Gentlemen of this Cort as disided** (JG, 35)
    j. **Henry and his wife sleeps up at Haywood** (TS, 186)
    k. **The crops looks very bad for the want of rain** (TS, 82)
    l. **But the pleasures of this world over comes me, and makes me a slave to sin** (TS, 75)

Again, the type of data analysed by Mesthrie and West confirm the constraints outlined in the preceding sections. They cite the following structures from their vernacular letters (1995: 128):

(13) a. **These misfortunes has left your Memorialist destitute ....**
    b. **I have sold my beds from under me and has scarcely blankets to cover and and family**
    c. **Your Memorialists humbly prays your Excellancy to make**
    d. **These things makes me to lay before your excellency my care**

Mesthrie and West conclude that they cannot make out with certainty whether the above structures reflect vernacular forms or hypercorrections. On the basis of this article, the former seems more likely.
To sum up, the results of this study are in line with Methrie and West (1995) and with regard to was/were their findings could be further substantiated by presenting the constraints on this variation. From García-Bermejo Giner and Montgomery’s study we know that the NSR existed in speakers from different regions but it is not surprising that the 1820s settlers evinced non-standard was, given that the speech of settlers in New Zealand from a similar background showed this too. It is remarkable, however, that the NSR also shows up in writing, a fact that further testifies to the vernacularity of the sources. Moreover, this analysis substantiates García-Bermejo Giner and Montgomery’s results and gives nineteenth-century evidence for the south-east.

So what can we conclude for the South African sources and how do the findings presented here fit into the general picture of was/were variation in varieties of English world-wide? As has been shown here, both the NSR and past tense be variation are phenomena that have a long history in various dialects in the British Isles and have been shown to be features that were transported by settler groups to the United States, New Zealand, Tristan da Cunha and also to South Africa. While the NSR is still widespread on the British Isles, it has not survived in South Africa and other varieties for which it was once reported, e.g. contemporary African American English and present-day New Zealand English. Interestingly, the only varieties which still show this feature are the more isolated varieties like Tristan da Cunha in its extreme form with near-categorical non-standard was. For other varieties, like New Zealand and Australia, non-standard was has only survived in existentials.

8. Conclusions

The above analysis has shown that vernacular sources like Goldswain’s and Shone’s writing can be fruitfully studied to several ends and can be considered as reliable sources, on the basis of which some deductions can be made concerning the vernacular of the 1820s settlers. While the language of two individuals does not necessarily provide the ‘abundant’ information one would wish for, they nevertheless give evidence of non-standard features that the British settlers transported to the Cape. Shone does not represent the typical ‘illiterate’ source one would consult in this context and thus does not tell us more about the sociolect of the settlers as evidenced by Goldswain (with the exception of some characteristics of the South African chain shift) but otherwise the similarities are remarkable. The differences can be best interpreted as different stages of the non-standard continuum, influenced by different social backgrounds. However, more unpublished letters of the kind Mesthrie and West analysed are needed to give us a better idea of the variety of lects that must have existed in the early phase of the settlement.
All the non-standard features of the 1820s presented here have disappeared and compared to other varieties, South African English has a very low feature index (Kortmann & Szmrecsanyi 2004). Although many features did not survive in the Antipodes either, the situation in South Africa was rather unlike the settlement in Australia or New Zealand, as the settler populations in the antipodes were more heterogeneous, comprising a considerable group of Irish as well as Scottish settlers (cf. Burridge, this volume, Gordon et al. 2004: 48). The less heterogeneous composition of the settler population in South Africa presumably accelerated the process of leveling, motivated by the accommodation towards the speech of the few but influential middle class speakers, e.g. the leaders in the society of that time. A further pull towards standardisation and the loss of vernacular features is conceivable in the second half of the nineteenth century, reinforced by the increasing influence of schooling and by contact with the more standard British-oriented Natal English speakers.

The evidence for the features presented here is restricted to the vernacular of the 1820s settlers. Whether such features were also present in the writings of Natal settlers is an entirely different matter. For the historical reasons outlined in Section 2, one is tempted to speculate that this was not necessarily the case. For the same reason, potential vernacular sources are even more difficult to unearth. Yet, exactly such sources are needed to fill the void and to provide a more comprehensive picture of nineteenth century South African English.

References


‘A peculiar language’

Linguistic evidence for early Australian English

Kate Burridge
Monash University

In his *A Letter from Sydney* of 1829, Edward Wakefield described the language he encountered in the new colony as “peculiar” (in other words, it was distinctive). This paper aims at contributing to our understanding of the linguistic processes that were going on at that time, particularly the survival techniques of those features that went on to thrive in the new variety. It will draw on evidence from nineteenth century New South Wales. While no recordings of this speech are available and reliable written evidence is scarce, we are lucky to have a collection of ‘verbatim’ vernacular texts from this period (Corbyn 1854). These texts give us a rare glimpse of the linguistic input from the Englishes that were around during that decisive period, particularly with respect to the phonological level. While it is clear that a range of accent types would have always existed in the colony, we do not know much about the characteristics of these early forms, nor indeed do we know much about the manner in which they later evolved and differentiated.¹

1. Introduction

There have been many excellent and pithy historical accounts of English in Australia over the years (recent examples include Jupp 2004: Chapter 2; Kiesling 2004; Fritz 2007) and it is not my intention to contribute yet another. However, I do feel that a few details are necessary in order to better understand what occurs linguistically in the texts to be examined. Accordingly, I offer the following brief historical backdrop.

¹ I am very grateful to Ray Hickey, Peter Trudgill, Anthea Fraser Gupta and Debbie Loakes for the advice and information they have given me, especially when it came to interpreting the linguistic curiosities that flourished in Corbyn’s records.
1.1 Background – early Australian English (AusE)

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the population of the British Isles was small (estimations are around 15 million).\(^2\) At this time, as many as one third of the inhabitants spoke their own Celtic languages with little or no English. Of the native English speakers, a good many did not speak the standard (or what was to emerge as the standard). This was a time when regional dialects flourished and the dialect differences could be striking (not surprisingly, considering horses and sailing vessels were the most efficient means of travel and communication).

This is roughly the state of the language, when exploration southwards established the first English-speaking settlers in the Antipodes. For Australia, the date coincides with the arrival of Captain Cook in 1770 and the establishment in 1788 of the first British penal colony in Sydney (New South Wales). Isolated coastal settlements then sprang up in Van Diemen’s Land (now Tasmania), Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. The first arrivals were largely prisoners, prison officers and their families. Non-convicts, or free settlers as they were known, didn’t really reach significant numbers until the middle of the following century. The following table gives an idea of the population mix in New South Wales based on the census taken in the early nineteenth century (Yallop 2003: 131).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convicts</td>
<td>15,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-convicts (pardoned or freed)</td>
<td>7,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults born free</td>
<td>3,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults arrived free</td>
<td>4,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 12</td>
<td>5,780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Population of New South Wales (taken from 1828 census figures)

Convicts came from all over the British Isles, with the majority from cities. The names of these cities, however, were not always reliable clues to a convict’s origins, since many were tried away from home. According to Nicholas and Shergold (1988), the birthplace records of around 20,000 convicts transported to New South Wales (1817–40) suggest the majority originated in “the heartland of England” (over-represented were the counties of Middlesex and Warwickshire) and also eastern Ireland (with around a

\(^2\) The first general census was not taken until 1801; notwithstanding the notorious inaccuracies of such data collecting practices (especially in these early times), this census has the population at 16,345,646.
quarter coming from Dublin alone). The speech of the convicts and free immigrants would have reflected the regional diversity at this time and “the linguistic melting pot” is a common metaphor used to describe urban settlements like Sydney during these early times. The original mix was largely made up of varieties from southeast England, Ireland and Scotland (in order of strength of input), with a particularly hefty dollop of London English (cf. the calculations of Robson 1994: 162).

Some have argued that London English alone provides the basis for the main features of AusE, with other influences like the Irish and Scottish appearing later (for example, Cochrane 1989). While there is no doubt that AusE, and Australasian Englishes generally, closely resemble London English both in features of accent and social distribution, most linguists now refute the single origin theory. More recently, accepted wisdom explains the evolution of postcolonial dialects like AusE through the process of koineisation (cf. Kerswill 2002; Kerswill & Trudgill 2005) – when the contact dialects from the British Isles came together in those early years, the blending of features produced a new compromise dialect with the features of transported south-eastern British English figuring prominently. Trudgill (2004) has identified a number of stages in the dialect's formation: Stage 1 (the speech of the first settlers, showing rudimentary levelling and elimination, through accommodation, of minority features); Stage 2 (the speech of first generation of native born settlers, characterized by considerable inter- and intra-speaker variability) and Stage 3 (the speech of the second generation of native born settlers, with mixing, levelling, unmarking and reallocation focusing to produce an identifiable stable new dialect).

Presumably, this process would have begun on the journey out to Australia. Bear in mind that the First Fleet left Spithead, outside Portsmouth, on 13 May 1787 (with almost one and a half thousand people crowded onto eleven small ships), and it wasn’t until 18 January 1788 that one of the smaller and faster of these ships, the Supply, finally arrived in Botany Bay – so ample time for some form of rudimentary linguistic levelling to take place. Admittedly, subsequent journeys became shorter, but the distances were always startling – Australia was a long way away. Unfortunately, we will

3. Schneider (2007) also proposes that there is a shared underlying process driving the formation of the postcolonial Englishes, but sees these as variously shaped by the social, cultural and political background at the time. He identifies a sequence of five stages that characterize the development of transportation varieties such as AusE: Phase 1 (foundation – dialect mixture and koineisation); Phase 2 (exonormative stabilization – a “British-plus” identity for the English-speaking residents); Phase 3 (nativization – the emergence of local patterns); Phase 4 (endonormative stabilization – “Australian self-confidence” and codification) and Phrase 5 (differentiation – the birth of new dialects).

never be able to get a full picture of “Ship English” and know the extent of this levelling (cf. Hickey 2004a: 50).

While Trudgill’s model suggests a clear-cut delineation of stages, it is clear that with the continued arrival of convicts (transportation ended in New South Wales in 1840 but continued elsewhere until 1868) and increasing numbers of free settlers (with the added impetus from the wool industry and numerous gold rushes), the pattern in each place of settlement would have been one of overlapping stages. Moreover, given that the individual histories of the early colonies within Australia were all so very different, and there were constant fluctuations and changes, the stages and different dialect mixes would have also differed slightly around the country.

Yet, AusE was, and remains, a remarkably uniform variety, especially so given the size of the continent. Trudgill explains this unity in terms of the fall-out of the original dialect mixing and levelling and also subsequent “drift” (à la Sapir); in other words, he sees the seeds of change as having been sown in the source language long before the contact situation and this accounts for the parallel linguistic developments in different locations. In addition, as Bernard (1969) originally argued, uniformity was aided by the transience of settlers in those early years. The mobility of the population was surprisingly high given the remoteness and distance of the settlements. With New South Wales as the point of departure, travel was largely by sea, and the swift spread kept the language uniform. Moreover, the rapid pastoral expansion and gold rushes all around the continent meant that any emerging regional distinctiveness was soon diluted by floods of new arrivals.

Hickey (2003a) explains the lack of regional variation slightly differently. He describes a process of “supraregionalisation” whereby

\[
\text{dialect speakers progressively adopt more and more features of a non-regional variety which they are in contact with. The contact does not have to be through speaker contact, indirect exposure to the non-regional variety can be sufficient. Supraregionalisation is distinct from accommodation which does require such contact and it is different from dialect levelling in which the input varieties lose salient or minority variants, resulting in a new mixture not present before. (Hickey 2003a: 236)}
\]

Hickey views a supraregional variety as emerging after focusing (Trudgill’s Stage 3) in mixed population settlements of relatively high density and size, subsequently spreading to settlements with speakers of more distinctly local dialects. A supraregional variety such as AusE becomes an important identity marker for speakers nationally, while the vernacular dialect features survive as markers of the local. We can see a version of this unfolding in the ‘glocalization’ story of English in modern times – on the one hand, the disappearance of local identifiers and conformity at the global level, and on
the other, greater diversity at the local level (the growth spurt of local identifiers in reaction against increasing global uniformity).

1.2 Written texts as evidence for early Australian English

The challenge is to find documents that might shed some light on these processes. Unfortunately, we have no comprehensive corpus of spoken English from these early times in Australia, certainly nothing remotely resembling the New Zealand English spoken corpus (known as the Origins of New Zealand English or ONZE). This is a collection of recorded reminiscences of 325 first-generation Anglo New Zealanders (born in New Zealand between 1850 and 1900) made between 1946 and 1948; in other words, recorded English of the New Zealand-born offspring of the very first settlers (cf. Gordon et al. 2004). As the researchers argue, this corpus is an almost unique record of the moment before a new variety is born, so it represents important evidence for any theory of dialect formation. In the Australian context, Felicity Cox’s Ancestors Project is the closest we come to such a corpus. This database contains recordings of 21 elderly men and women from rural working class backgrounds (originally oral history interviews from the 1960s-80s). This research is on-going and promises to shed light on pronunciation prior to the time of Federation. (cf. details http://clas.mq.edu.au/felicity/index.htm). It is also worth pointing out that in recent years there has been a concerted push by Australian linguists and language technologists to establish a massive online database of spoken and written language in Australia (the National Australian Corpus or AusNC); currently, there is an audit taking place in order to establish an accurate listing of the language data held in Australia, and part of this audit is an appeal to those in the general public who might hold interesting data such as the oral history recordings of Cox’s corpus.

Until we uncover such recordings, however, we have no alternative but to resort to written evidence – and there’s the rub. Writing conventions (even ones that are just emerging) will always restrict what we can observe.

As Svartvik and Leech have pointed out (2006: 191), there is an apparent paradox in Modern English. On the one hand, the language appears to be changing less – speakers today can read the literature of, say, 1700, but those in 1700 could not read the literature of 1400. On the other hand, we know that English is currently manifesting more change than ever before – the language has never been so diverse. This paradox, of course, is the knock-on effect of standardization and the linguistic straitjacketing that this process entails. The emergence of Standard English has meant that written texts that once would have provided the clues about early forms of speech are no longer as revealing. Another real danger is the skewing effect of a growing literary tradition together with increasing literacy.
As an aside, consider my own long-term study of Germanic syntax (Burridge 1991). The non-fictional texts (from 1300–1650) resembled as closely as possible the spoken idiom of those times. Yet, how could I be sure that apparent changes revealed in these texts over the 350 years were not simply the symptom of an emerging autonomous prose style? The shift from pragmatically to grammatically controlled word order, for example, and the increase in syntactic complexity might just be the by-product of the transition from the organizational principles of unplanned discourse to the more elaborated code typical of planned discourse. Even minimizing the interference of stylistic considerations by choosing texts with little stylization and literary ambition, and keeping the texts as uniform as possible over the selected time span, a developing writing tradition will inevitably give rise to increasingly syntactized registers (the apex of which must surely be the modern super-literate registers such as legalese and bureaucratese).

The difficulties that come about on account of standardization are very apparent in the search for reliable evidence of early Australian English. Without doubt the most comprehensive collection of early Australian texts currently is COOEE (CORpus of Oz Early English). This marvelous database comprises around 2 million words, including parliamentary proceedings, diaries, reports, memoirs, private letters, petitions and speech-based styles such as court minutes, plays and speeches. It provides the basis of Fritz’s corpus-based account of the evolution of English in Australia (with a focus on lexical and grammatical features; cf. Fritz 2007). But how do we gain access to the spoken styles of the time? As my own hunt through historical documents revealed, even those text types closest to spoken Australian English only ever provide us with sporadic clues to vernacular speech forms, especially features of pronunciation. For example, David Hill’s (2008) narrative account of the First Fleet draws from all sorts of first hand materials. He provides extracts from journals, letters and reports from this earliest period of colonial history. However, the language of all his primary sources is disappointingly standard. The same is true of other early accounts such as those of Dixon (1822) and Cunningham (1827). The journal of Annie Dawbin contains some 845,000 words covering the years 1834–68 (Frost 1992) and, while it presents a remarkable account of Annie’s life in colonial south-eastern Australia, it too does not reveal much about the language spoken at the time. Likewise, the wonderful letters of Louis Lawrence Smith, who migrated from England in 1852 (aged 22 years) as ship’s surgeon on the Oriental, arriving in Melbourne where he spent the remainder of his life as medical practitioner and politician. In his more unguarded moments in the letters to his mother, we get a glimpse of a more colloquial style; yet we are no closer to really knowing how Louis Lawrence Smith spoke. Australia’s magazine industry

5. My sincerest thanks to historian John Poynter for providing me with these letters and for generously making available to me his treasure trove of early Australian material.
developed rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century and is a good source of early written journalese. *Melbourne Punch* is a fine example. While it mimicked the format and presentation of its London prototype (Mahood 1969), it was uniquely colonial in its focus and humour. Over a seventy-five year period, it satirized public opinion and social appearance in the colonial days. Yet, it is only occasionally that we are given a taste of the colloquial forms and structures of the day.

The problem becomes even more acute, of course, when accents are the issue. None of the examples just cited give us real insights into the colloquial styles of nineteenth century AusE, certainly not its spoken vernacular. In this regard, the work of Charles Adam Corbyn is remarkable. Corbyn reported for two papers – a sporting weekly *Bell's Life in Sydney* and a newspaper the *Empire*. In 1854 he published a selection of his reports with the long title *Sydney revels (the eighteen-fifties) of Bacchus, Cupid and Momus; being choice and humorous selections from scenes at the Sydney Police Office and other public places, during the last three years*. This work was later supplemented by Cyril Pearl who added reports from *Bell's Life in Sydney* (taking the collection up to 1859) and he republished the work in 1970. These police-court reports allow us (in the words of Pearl) “to peep into the lives of ordinary people and to hear them speak with their own voices” (p. 25) – we hear directly from the dialect “melting pot” in urban Sydney in the 1850s. The reports are vivid accounts, extraordinarily uninhibited by the constraints imposed by today’s sensitivities. Corbyn’s reports abound in what now might be described as -IST language (language that is racist, sexist, ageist etc.) of the type that would make a modern-day reader’s toes curl. What is additionally remarkable about Corbyn’s writing is that it also does not appear to have been constrained by the conventions of standard orthography. When he renders the words of Sydney’s lawmakers and lawbreakers of the day, his idiosyncratic phonetic spellings provide us with tantalizing clues as to the range of accent features at that time. Even assuming he might have given into occasional exaggeration and stereotyping, the linguistic features that he includes (as well as those he omits) are revealing.

Corbyn’s is clearly not a phonetic system, and it is not easy at times to know what sounds he was attempting to represent. What does Corbyn intend when he writes *provoke as provooke* in the speech of Mrs O’Callaghan (I-13)? The spelling suggests a long monophthongal pronunciation of this sound – but the question is which vowel. It might well be [ɔː] (attested in Irish English) or equally [uː] (still found in Norfolk; Trudgill 2004: 102). The fact that Mrs O’Callaghan is Irish doesn’t help us greatly, given the amount of dialect mixing that appears in these dialogues. There are also many sounds, particularly vowel sounds, which Corbyn could not have captured with the symbols at his disposal. This is especially problematic for those ‘proto-cultivated’ speakers he is quoting. Inevitably, many of the pronunciations lurking behind his symbols are going to remain obscure to us. It is also difficult to know how to interpret the apparent absence of a feature. There is nothing, for example, in his orthography
to suggest HAPPY-tensing (the closer pronunciation of /ɪ/ at the end of words like Sydney) – evidence in the ONZE corpus suggests it would have been emerging around this time (Trudgill 2004: 137–38). This might mean that the sound didn’t occur in the speech of Corbyn’s characters, or it existed but he didn’t know how to represent it – or more likely still, it existed but he wasn’t aware of it (which could well be the case if it occurred in his own speech). It is also true, that our insights are limited by how good Corbyn’s ears were. Of course, all that was available to Corbyn at that time was a quill, pen or pencil and he probably used the pen-writing method of shorthand – stenotype machines didn’t become available until the 1870s. Nonetheless, as will soon be apparent, the number of features Corbyn did manage to capture (especially at the phonological level) is impressive.

Before we look at Corbyn’s texts, it is worth saying something about the background of the man himself, since clearly this could have an influence on the way he represented his speakers. Corbyn was actually transported to Australia as a very young man. As reported in The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (Thursday 18th June 1835), he confessed to stealing gold watches and other valuable property belonging to Sir Charles Forbes. After a suicide attempt, Corbyn then ended up one of 280 convicts transported on the 26th October 1835. (cf. http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/2198686). Described in the newspaper as “a fine youth about eighteen years of age, the son of a captain in the navy”, Corbyn would appear to have come from a prestigious background (it’s worth pointing out that he had been dining with Sir Charles Forbes at the time of the robbery).

For additional insights into what might lie behind Corbyn’s transcriptions, I have occasionally referred the work of Benjamin Suggitt Nayler (1796–1875). Nayler began his life in England but ended it with a decade of lecturing and writing in Australia. His book, with another extravagant title (typical of the time) Commonsense Observations on the Existence of Rules (not yet reduced to System, in any Work extant) regarding the English Language has been described by Kirsop (2006: 25) as “the most substantial of his Australian writings” and it is useful for the occasional light it can shed on the English spoken in Australia at this early time. Nayler’s remarks on pronunciation

6. There is some doubt surrounding the feature HAPPY-tensing. As Ray Hickey has suggested to me, what we may have is HAPPY-laxing in RP and the normal ‘tense’ /i/ elsewhere. Evidence from pronouncing dictionaries given in Beal (2004: 152) indicates that this would have been an area of variation since the late 18th century at least.

7. Many thanks to Anthea Fraser Gupta for digging up these facts about Corbyn. As she writes – there is clearly a very good story here!

8. I am extremely grateful to Wallace Kirsop. Not only did he alert me to the existence of Nayler and his prescriptive endeavours, but, in an act of extreme kindness, also leant me an edition (now very rare) of Nayler’s Commonsense Observations.
commonly contain references to “conspicuous blemishes in the pronunciation of thousands, and tens of thousands, who speak the English language” (p. 86) and were clearly intended to help the “Schoolmaster (or Mistress) in the Colony” (p. 125).

2. Sydney’s lawbreakers and lawmakers of the 1850s

Corbyn sometimes provides information on the background of the characters whose words he is representing. However, these details are not always made plain. Occasionally, we are lucky enough to be able to infer the information from hints given in the dialogue or narrative snippets and of course names often provide additional clues. On this basis, we can assume that the court reports contain sixteen individuals of Irish background, but only one clear example of a speaker of Scottish origin. It stands to reason that there is going to be a considerable number of Londoners in Corbyn’s collections, but unfortunately names provide no clues here. On the basis of information hidden in the extracts, however, we can probably identify five London origin speakers. The background of the other 35 individuals, unfortunately, remains a mystery.

We do know the personal history of some of the legal characters who also appear in these reports. One prominent figure is George Robert Nichols (to whom the collection is dedicated). Born on the 27 September 1809 in Sydney, Nichols was the first native-born Australian admitted as a solicitor in New South Wales. He was also the son of Isaac Nichols, a convict who arrived in the colony in 1791 and who ended up flourishing there after his sentence had expired. There are undoubtedly a number of other ‘currency lads and lasses’ in these texts (in other words, first generation of native born, contrasting with the sterlings or “immigrants”). There is a telling exchange in one of Corbyn’s reports between the police magistrate and the solicitor Mr Johnson: “What!” exclaimed Mr. Johnson, “do you call England abroad? I always considered England at home.” “That’s a matter of opinion,” retorted the Police Magistrate, “you may call it at home, but we Currency lads call it abroad, and this our home.” (p. 97).

In the discussion below, I provide three illustrative examples for each type of dialect speaker. However, the appendix includes all of the dialogues (extracted from the reports) and also sections of narrative description that Corbyn occasionally embellishes with the dialect features. I have abridged those dialogues where the language is fairly standard. Also in the interests of space, I have not included the Chinese English or the three American English dialogues, two of which illustrate Black English (but see Taylor 2003 for an account of these reports). 9 Each example text is numbered and

9. The contribution of American English at this time was largely lexical. Some classic AusE expressions derive from early contact: squatter “one who settles upon land without legal title” > “respectable pastoralist”; bush “woods, forest” > “the country as distinct from the town”;
the speakers have been labelled. I have also bolded the phonological, grammatical and lexical features that prove interesting and have summarized these in lists.

2.1 Irish background speakers

The following are the non-standard linguistic features gleaned from the language of these speakers. Some of them are distinctly Irish English; some are more widespread – but most interesting of all, are those that have never been noted as Irish English. These anomalous features have been asterisked.

Phonology
1. raising of /e/ to /ɪ/ (especially preceding nasals) as in gentleman for gentleman, recolick for recollect; also high vowel /ɪ/ in jist for just; sich for such
2. lowering of /ɪ/ to /e/ as in paceable for peaceable; baste for beast
3. unrounding and lowering of /ɒ/ to /a/ as in darter for daughter
4. unrounding and lowering of /ɔ/ to /a/ as in hanner for honour, sasingers for sausages, becase for because (not confined to Irish but present in other dialects)
5. lowering of /e/ to /a/ before /r/ as in warn’t for weren’t (also not confined to Irish but present in other dialects)
6. diphthongization before velar /i/ as in ould for old, houlds for holds [“grips”]
7. some evidence of raising of /æ/ to /ε/ as in ketch for catch [in I-15, Corbyn puns on the word ketch “vessel” and ketch “catch”]
8. unstressed vowel/syllable deletion as in ’gainst for against, cept for except
9. evidence of weak vowel differences (Wells 1982: 167) in dialect spellings like purlitest for politest, pisthill for pistol, sathis-waxshan for satisfaction [these spellings suggest [i], [ə], or perhaps [ʌ]]
10. one case of reduction of final /o, ou/ to /ә/ in widder for widow [although this particular lexical item is not confined to Irish English]
11. monophthong [o] in GOAT vowel as in provooke for provoke [or is this [u]?

bushranger “woodsman” > “criminal who hides in the bush”. The influx of Americans to the goldfields from the 1850s provided additional colloquialisms.

10. General raising was typical of Irish English up to the late nineteenth-century after which it receded, see Hickey (2008) for further discussion. But, as Peter Trudgill has pointed out to me, high vowel realizations in some words (like such) are not innovations but rather relics of Old English (swilc); these particular pronunciations are widespread across dialects.

11. Raising of the ASH vowel, especially after velars, was also present in colloquial British English already in the eighteenth century as noted by presciptivist commentators such as Thomas Sheridan and John Walker, see Sheridan (1781) and Walker (1791).
12. lowering and unrounding of /io/ to /ʌ/ reflected in the irregular preterite form *mistuck for* mistook [this might be a hypercorrection]
13. possible evidence of rhotacism (the Irish “rough, harsh” /ɾ/; cf. Nayler 1869) in different representations of vowels before /ɾ/ as in *shouldur* for shoulder
14. dentalisation of /t/-/d/ before /ɾ/ as in *murthered* for murdered; *crathur* for creature
15. occasional fricativization of /t/ as in as in *sathis-waxshan* for satisfaction, *sthone* for stone [sthone might also be evidence of dentalization of /t/ after /s/; see feature 14]
16. fortition of alveolar/dental stop /θ/-/ð/ to /t/-/d/ as in *everything* for everything; *dat* for that
17. high back vowel /u/ before /ɾ/ as in *shure* for sure [Note, Corbyn is unlikely to be using (sh) to indicate palatalization here, since the palatal variant was commonplace and this spelling of sure only ever appears in the dialogue of Irish speakers]
18. final devoicing (especially after sonorants) as in *kilt* for killed
19. cluster simplification as in *fren* for friend, *recolick* for recollect, *arter* for after; *allers* for always [not confined to Irish, but widely attested in English dialects]
20. metathesis of /sk/ as in *ax* for ask, *asked* for asked [also not specifically Irish, but widespread across English dialects]
21. palatalization of /s/ word finally, as in *dish* for this, *countenansh* for countenance, *muderoush* for murderous
22. single example of /w/ substitution for /f/ as in *sathis-waxshan* for satisfaction
23. /w/-/v/ merger as in *violence* for violence and *vorm* for worm, *Janivary* for January
24. *H*-dropping as in *‘urt* for hurt, *‘usband* for husband
25. *H*-hypercorrection as in *hinnercent* for innocent, *Han* for Anne, *pisthill* for pistol
26. *NG*-hypercorrection as in *hevings* for heavens, *roaming* for Roman, *orphing* for orphan
27. *INK*-substitution (i.e. /ŋk/) for final /ŋ/ in quantifying pronouns as in *notink* for nothing

Most of these features are recorded as early characteristics of Irish English pronunciation and are still widely attested, especially in traditional rural speech (cf. Hickey 2007: 303–309); the exceptions are those that have been asterisked and these will be discussed in more detail later. A good many of the early Irish would have been bilingual (or even monolingual) Gaelic speakers and a number of the variants in this list can be attributed to Gaelic interference. Feature (21) for example, the palatalization of /s/ word finally, is an historical feature that is still found in contact Irish English (Hickey 2005: 191 attributes it to the influence of the palatal /sj/ of the Irish language). It is more usually encountered after high vowels, but Corbyn's examples suggest no such restrictions. Hickey also attributes the unusual variant given in (22), /w/ substitution
for /\l/, to Irish influence, specifically Irish /\l/ – a bilabial voiceless fricative. Hickey suggests (pers. com.) that Corbyn in his sathis-waxshan example is using ⟨w⟩ to depict the [\f] of the Irish language speakers at that time (or those early immigrants in contact with these people).

Feature (23 – /w/-/v/ merger) is a stereotypical trait of Cockney English that occurs frequently in Corbyn’s Irish English dialogues. It is not a feature that survived in AusE (or in any British English dialect for that matter). The reports contain numerous examples of transfers in both directions (i.e. [w] for [v] and [v] for [w] substitution), supporting the idea of a merger to a single, different segment (possibly a bilabial approximate; cf. Trudgill et al. 2004). Nayler (1869: 72) comments on this feature: “The commonality of London are notorious for their “weal, vine, wedgetables, and vall-flowers”; neither are such words always heard accurately among “the better-educated classes” in the Metropolis. This transposition of w for v and v for w, may be heard in some of the Provinces in England; but, the Cockneys bear away the palm”. Hickey (2004b: 45) has found [v] for [w] substitution in early Irish texts, attributing it (as for feature 21) to Irish interference. The fact the variant flourishes (and in both directions) in these particular dialogues does, however, suggest additional influences from the London English settlers at the time. This transfer of [v] and [w], together with rather unIrish English features like (25–27), illustrates the sort of unusual dialect feature combinations that we might predict for this stage of a new dialect (see below).

Grammar and discourse
1. invariant use of verbal -s inflection as in I sends; you seems
2. shift of strong verbs over to the weak as in cumed for came
3. irregular preterite forms such as mistuck [but see phonological explanation above under feature 12]
4. possessive me in place of my
5. negative concord as in it’s not saying notink at all, at all, I am; he’s never bit nobody yet
6. non-standard relative particle as as in I’m a widder woman, as has buried two usbans
7. second person plural forms ye/yer
8. IT-clefting as in It’s a murthering kind of gintilmin is Mister Christie; Is it funning me you are
9. subordinate and as in yer an hinnercent gal, Mary Han, and expects to be married
10. *progressive a + ing as in a-talking [a widespread early dialectal feature; not recognizably Irish]

The majority of these non-standard vernacular features are widespread and are by no means peculiarly Irish English. The exceptions are (8) and (9). The IT-cleft constructions in Corbyn’s reports are definitely Irish. They are far more numerous and quite
different in construction than the parallel standard cleft (which normally prohibits the focusing of subject complements such as *a murthering kind of gintilmin*). Subordinating *and* is also assumed to be unarguably Irish (even though the use of *and* to link pragmatically “bound” (or dependent) clauses is well attested in early Germanic generally; cf. Burridge 1991). The construction appears in a number of different guises. In the mainstream version, *and* introduces a dependent clause, either with a participial verb or else a complement with understood copular (and usually with a different grammatical subject from the main clause); for example [...] *for it ud be hard for him to see you, an’ you stuck in Ryan’s snug* (Hickey 2005: 176; cf. also Fritz 2007: 210–13). The clause has a temporal or weakly concessive meaning and can be substituted with *what with, considering*. While there are no examples from Corbyn’s dialogues that exactly fit this description, the example cited above is clearly something like a subordinating *and* (but the linked clause is more like a relative). The speech of Patrick M’Grath below shows what looks to be another manifestation of subordinating *and*. In the two examples *Is it afraid ye mane; shure and I’m in a mortal fear; Shure and he’s never bit nobody yet, and* appears to amplify the linked clause (and with a adversative sense).

Surprising grammatical omissions from Corbyn’s Irish dialogues are the “hot news” (or “immediate”) perfective *be after* [VERB]-ing. The single instance of this form is provided elsewhere by John Hilt: *Now go a head, old’un, if you’ve got any more questions to be arter axing me, as time’s precious*. Described by Corbyn as a “young Creole”, Hilt is a precocious and extremely sassy 13 year-old, who hails from New York. The construction here is rather odd, although the appearance of such salient Irish feature is not surprising in an American dialogue – the construction appears extensively in those New World areas where there was a strong Irish presence. More surprising is its non-appearance in Corbyn’s Irish texts here. Also missing are any signs of the infinitival marker *for-to* and also the sentence final discourse marker *but* (another putative Irish input into AusE; cf. Horvath 1985: 39).  

Lexicon

1. *ball* [< ball of malt] “whiskey” [Irish English slang]
2. *O! hone* [< ochone] “oh”, “alas” [largely Irish and Scottish]
3. *gossoon* “boy” [garçon] [chiefly Irish English]
4. *polthoge* “thump, punch” [Irish English slang]
5. *sasingers* [< sassages/sausages] [*sassage* is general English slang; however, the vowel in the version *sasinger* would suggest Irish]
6. *at all, at all* [Irish English]

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12. Both this construction and the “hot news” perfective appeared in the ONZE recordings (Peter Trudgill pers. com); their absence here is probably a gap in the data.
As expected, these texts reveal a dialectal mixed bag of lexical items, some clearly Irish, and others drawn from the different dialect sources that came together to form the colonial slang of the time. *Nobbler*, for example, was originally a regional English word (chiefly Shropshire and Staffordshire) meaning “something used for hitting (especially on the head or *nob*);” its metaphorical use is only recorded for Australia and New Zealand. The colloquial use of *trap* for the constabulary is from thieves’ cant (recorded in Grose’s *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* 1783/1811), but has become part of general colonial vocabulary. As with the expressions used by other speakers (discussed below), many of these terms became an important component of the in-group speech of convicts and ex-convicts at this time (used to distinguish them from the other settlers; cf. Ramson 1966).

**The Cracked Crown** [Pat Hely, I-1]

Pat Hely [“a stalwart son of Erin”]

Mister Hely being a *gintilman* who is rather fond of a drop of the *crate*, went as usual, on Friday last, to do *pinance* at the *Triple Crown*, by drinking a few tumblers of Irish whiskey […] [He charged the landlord with] “taking him in *houlds*” […]. Another Pat, whose surname is Connor, was called to prove that Mister Hely had been almost *murthered* entirely quite, and that he was a *paceable*, *illigant*, harmless *gintilman*.

**Ancient Pistol** [Patrick M’Grath, I-2]

Patrick M’Grath [“a Bardolphen-shaped mass of humanity”]

Pat M’Grath deposed: I’m Postmaster general of Burwood, and *dat ould gintilmin* came to me, *wild* [wild/with?] *murther* written in
his countenansh. Riclick, says he, dish pisthill’s loaded, and by
de tails of me coat I’ll lodge de contints in yer big thick carcase.

Mr Dowling: Are you afraid of him, that he will do you some bodily harm?
Paddy M’Grath: Is it afraid ye mane; shure and I’m in a mortal fear. Look at his
countenansh; it’s plain to percave the muderous intinshins.

Mr Dowling: Do you bear him any malice?
Paddy M’Grath: O! hone, me bear malice! Not at all, only the swatest of loving
kindness and friendliness. I’m the paceablest crathur on the
terrestrial globe, but it’s a murthering kind of gintilmin is Mis-
ther Christie!

Mr Cory: Have you got a savage dog?
Pat M’Grath: What! My dog savage! Poor Faugh-a-ballagh savage! Shure and
he’s never bit nobody yet; the civilest crathur of the canine
genius in this counthrey or any other.

Assault [Margaret O’Brien, I-6]
Margaret O’Brien [“a rather formidable looking dame”], Elizabeth MGregor [“a pretty
girl about seventeen”] and Miss Mary Anne Walsh [“a middling aged spinster”]
“On Monday night,” quoth Mrs O’Brien, “my blessed husband went to St Pathrick’s
a’cos ‘tis a taytotaler he is. I sends my darter arter a pound and a-half of pork
sasingers jist to have reddy ‘gainst he cumed home, for that tay-
tolling work allers makes him mortal hungry; when that baste of a woman as
his huffing and blowing afore the Court, hits my darter, who screeches, and out
I runs. I axked her in purlistest terms the raison of her violence, when she ups
with this sthone, runs arter me, and just as I gets into my own door, she sends it
arter me. If it had only hit me, I should not have been here to tell the tale.”
[…]

Mr Cory: Now, Marm, I ask you again, have you got any witness, and
what’s her name?

Mrs O’Brien: She’s a female, and her name is Lizzibith. […]
Mr Cory […] called Miss Mary Anne Walsh […]
“I seed,” quoth Mary Anne, “all the row on Monday evening. Mrs O’Brien came to Mrs Callaghan’s, who told her as how she
wasn’t wanted, and she chucked a big stone at Mrs Callaghan
houldin the blessed babbie in her arms at the time, and Mrs
Callaghan never flung anythink at all, but only says she, ‘mur-
ther! I’m kilt!’”

Mrs O’Brien: Hevings forgive you, Mary Han, for telling sich a whopper; yer
an hinntercent gal, Mary Han, and expects to be married; Hev-
ings forgive you!

Mary Anne: Hevings forgive you!
2.2 One speaker of Scottish origin

In the following extract, the language is not straightforwardly Scottish English but shows a strange mixture of features. Those not recognizably Scottish have again been asterisked.

Phonology
1. /u/ in place of /au/ as in doot for doubt
2. curious lowering of /I/ to /e/ in both syllables of Saydnay for Sydney (an attempt to represent the central Scottish KIT vowel; Peter Trudgill pers. com.)
3. raising to /I/ and /u/ before /r/ as in as in theerfur [also indicating rhotacism, as in Irish examples above]
4. some evidence of vowel reduction in spellings like posithun for position (where ‘u’ represents the ‘obscure vowel’)
5. final consonant reduction as in gie for give, na/dinna for not/do not
6. *?possible devoicing of final consonant in natif for native (although difficult to generalize on the basis of this one example)
7. *dentalization of /t/ before /r/ as in enstrcht for instruct [also an Irish feature]
8. *?dentalization of /sj/ or /∫/ as in posithun for position [this is a curious form which perhaps is meant to indicate a lack of palatalization – but the dental substitute is unexpected]

Grammar
1. second person plural pronoun ye

Lexicon
1. kenn “know”
2. gang “to walk, go”
3. “mayhap “perhaps” [English dialects, but nowhere evident in Scottish]

If we are looking for evidence of unusual dialect blending then Mrs Melville is a good example. There are some quintessential Scottish features here combined with some rather unScottish-looking ones, such as the dentalization of /t/ before /r/ (Irish) and mayhap (regional British). The forms natif and posithun are curious and do not illustrate obvious Scottish traits either.

Wanted 1,000 Young Milliners for the Gold Diggings – Here’s Some of ‘Em
Mrs Melville [‘a mild looking young female, with an infant in her arms’]
Mr Nichols cross-questioned Mrs Melville, for so was the lady called, to try and shake her testimony, but she only shook her baby […] At last, poor, poor, woman! she could no longer maintain her silence, but she said – “I’m na a natif av Saydnay, and theerfur am unable to gie ye the geographical posithun av Market-lane, but mayhap ye ken the Sheriff, and if ye’ll just gang to him I dinna doot, he’ll enstrcht ye as to the desirable spot”
2.3 Speakers of London origin

The following are the features found in the five speakers that could be identified as London background speakers.

Phonology
1. H-dropping as in *ere* for *here*, *onor* for *honor*
2. H-hypercorrection as in *hinsted* for *instead*
3. final consonant deletion as in *lor* for *lord*
4. cluster simplification as in *Lunnon* for *London*
5. */w/-*/v/* merger as in *werry* for *very* and *avay* for *away"
6. epenthetic final */t/* as in *sarmint* for *sermon*
7. unstressed vowel deletion as in *nat’ral* for *natural*, *’pon* for *upon*; *nuff* for *enough*
8. spelling pronunciations such as *sky-antiffic* for *scientific*, *feelosofers* for *philosophers*
9. lowering of */e/* to */a/* before */r/* as in *sarmint* for *sermon* [noted above for Irish, but widespread across the dialects of English; cf. current-day alternative pronunciations of *clerk* and placenames such as *Berkeley* and *Derby*]

Grammar
1. irregular plurals such as *mices* for *mice*
2. invariant use of verbal */s* inflexion as in *I lodges, feelosofers calls it*
3. regularization of strong verbs such as *seed* for *saw*
4. non-standard subject concord of *be* as in *the post and postesses was safe; were hit a nugget; that wur a smash*
5. non-standard singular form for *do* as in *mices does play*
6. progressive */a/* + */ing* as in */a-having*
7. relative particle as as *that ere lady has thinks herself above the likes on me*
8. non-standard prepositions as in *hinsted on the bed* for *instead of the bed, hout on the vay for out of the way*
9. pleonastic expansion of *as to* as *how* [southern England]

Lexicon
1. *nob* “head”

A Visit To The Railway [Maurice L-1]

Note, it is not clear here whether *cockney* refers to a “Londoner” or is simply (as the OED puts it) “a derisive appellation for a townsman”.
Mr John Walker [“a nutty looking old gent, marvellously possessed by the demon of irritability, and “warhawk!” to any cockney individual who selects the railway embankment for the end of his Sunday walk”]

Last Sunday two respectably dressed young men, named Maurice Evans and George Clarke, took a walk to the railway “*Pon onor,* said Maurice, “it’s *werry sky-antiffic, so it be*.”
Wanted A Bookkeeper [Henry Lookalive Sloman, L-2]
Mr Henry Lookalive Sloman [“emigrated to this colony from the sequestered shades of Dyot-street, Bloomsbury-square in consequence of a quack political sarmint which he heard preached in the Galowgate by the werry reverend Dr Done More Lang”]

The Snob Family [Thomas Hopkins L-3]
Mr Ninivan Stewart [“a long-nosed, lank-jawed, hypocritical-looking shoemaker, dwelling in Kent-street”] against Thomas Hopkins [“a miserable looking little wretch of a cobbler, inmate of the Stewart snob family”]

Tommy Hopkins: I lodges long on muster and mother Stewart, and I seed that ere lady a getting hup stares. I wur ‘pon the bed, a’having a lie down, as his nat’ral nuff seeing has how master Stewart vos away: cos, don’t ye know, ven the cats avay, the mices does play. That ere lady has thinks hersel above the likes on me, ups with the jug off the wash-hand stand, and lets fly, and smash goes the looking-glass; lor that wur a smash

Cross-examined by Mr Roberts:
Missus Bella [“Stuvart vos hin the room; she picks up vot they calls The Morning Chronicle in Lunnon, first, and she makes ready, and presents, and fires at the lady Catherine, and at the same moment the lady Catherine ups with the jug and shies it at mussus Stuvart, who bobs hout on the vay, and hinsted on the jug”] Catching her hon the nob, it smashes the glass to smithereens. Hif Mussus Bella Stuvart had stood fire, it might have smashed her fizzonomy, hor vot the feelosofers calls hit, but hid vooodn’t have hit the looking-glass. I knows as how the lady meant the jug to hit mussus, and by her bobbing, the glass was smashed.

The features of these three speakers are overwhelmingly Cockney. By contrast, the other two London speakers (see appendix) show fairly standard speech, with one example of H-dropping (’orrid for horrid), although it is conceivable that this is one of the recommended H-less pronunciations of the time (as in the case for herb, humour and humble).

2.4 Speakers of unknown background

Because Corbyn’s descriptions suggest an age range of each for these speakers, I have organized the illustrative extracts into three age groups – adolescent, young and middle-old age – with samples for each group (with some additional extracts because the linguistic features are so varied and often curiously distributed among these speakers). Since the features of London, or south-eastern generally, are the best represented here, I have asterisked those in the lists that stand out as something else.

Phonology
1. YOD-dropping as in infortinite for unfortunate, permiskeus for promiscuous
2. H-dropping as in even for heaven, ’usband for husband
3. H-hypercorrection as in himprimiss for imprimiss [“in the first places”]; hi for I
NG-hypercorrection as in *Helling Bear [= Helen Baird]*

cluster simplification as in *arter for after*

/w/-/v/ merger as in violence for *violen*ce and *Janivary* for *January*

/v/ substitution for /b/ in *marvel* for *marble*

metathesis of /sk/ as in *axked* for *asked*

metathesis of /r/ and vowel as in *permiskeus* for *promiscuous*

epenthetic final /t/ as in *Mr Currant* for *Curran* [undoubtedly also word play!], *varmint* for *vermin*

substitution of /ŋk/ for final /ŋ/ in quantifying pronouns *nothing* and *anything*

deletion of /w/ as in *ooman* for *woman*, *red-un* for *red one*

unstressed vowel deletion as in *pleesman* for *policeman*, *bout* for *about*

pronunciation of the vowel in past tense forms as in *jum-ped* for *jumped* [the speaker here (U-26) used rather flowery language here and comes across as extremely pompous]

/w/ pronunciation of /hw/ possibly indicated by spellings like *wot* and *wat* for *what*

lowering of /e/ to /a/ before /r/ as in *varmint* for *vermin* [a very Irish feature, but also widespread across other English dialects]

reduction of final /o, ou/ to /ε/ in *windee* for *window* [more usual spelling would be *winder*; this is a well attested colloquial form of *window*, although the vowel reduction isn't typical for London English]

*raising of /ɛ/ to /ı/ in *diskivered* for *discovered*, *infortinite* for *unfortunate* [the latter not a clear example, since *in-* might simply represent the incorrect negative prefix]

*front vowel raising of /e/ to /ı/ (especially preceding nasals) as in *gintilmin* for *gentleman*

*lowering of /ız/ to /ıe/ as in *feymale* for *female*

There are five distinctly Irish features here (16, 17, 18, 19, 20). The first two are widely attested in other English dialects, but (18–20) are salient Irish features. Feature (18) occurs in the speech of Mother Nott (U-23); she also has marked Cockney features such as H-hypercorrection and [v] for [w] substitution. The second two features occur in the speech of one individual Mr Short (U-20); unfortunately the dialogue is too brief to glean any other features.

Speakers U-13 and U-31 offer the only evidence we have of YOD-dropping. We know that this pronunciation was well underway in London English in the eighteenth century and stigmatized as a Cockneyism (cf. Beal 2004: 149). However, it was, and is still, a complicated variable, involving lexical, geographical and social variation.13

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13. In current-day AusE, yods (/j/) tend not to be dropped after coronals before /u/ (*news* [ɲuːs]), although there is considerable variation (e.g. [njud]–[nud]). There is also coalescence of /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /sʃ/, /zʃ/ to /tʃ/, /dʃ/, /sʃ/, /zʃ/ (e.g. tune, dune, assume, presume). There is also variation ([əsʃʊm] ~ [əʃʊm]), although palatal versions are more likely in unstressed syllables (*educate* ([ˈɪdʒɪkeɪt])).
Grammar
1. demonstratives *that ere* [note the mismatch of deictics here]; *this here*
2. invariant *a* before nouns as in *a ironstone*
3. zero plural inflection after numbers as in *five sovereign*
4. second person form *yer* for *you* and *your* [probably indicating the unstressed vowel]
5. double-marked comparative as in *more persecuteder*
6. collapse of the preterite and past participle forms within the class of strong verbs; in particular, the past forms such as *drank* replacing participle forms *drunk*
7. invariant present and past tense forms for the verb *be* as in *is yer sure; were hit a nugget*
8. non-standard subject concord of *do* as in *does you think; I doesn’t know*
9. non-standard subject concord of *has* as in *I hasn’t*
10. invariant use of verbal -s inflection as in *I screams, they jumps on me*
11. shift of strong verbs over to the weak as in *commed, blowed, knowed*
12. negative concord as in *cos vy, he’d not got no treasure; he never knowed nohow*
13. bare adverbs as in *permiskeus for promiscuously, scandalous for scandalously*
14. use of *ain’t* as an all-purpose negative auxiliary for the verb forms of *be* and *have* as in *there ain’t a lawyer; he aint got nothink at all*
15. general negator *never* as in *I never hit a blow [= “I didn’t hit a blow”]; Mrs Callaghan never flung anythink [= “didn’t fling anything”]*
16. zero relative subject pronoun as in *There ain’t a lawyer in Sydney ø can be backed against him for “spitting the Dick”*
17. pleonastic expansion of *as* to *as how* [southern England]
18. non-standard prepositions as in *hout on my bed-room for out of my bed-room, afeerd on for afraid of*
19. *progressive a + ing* as in *a marketing* [widespread dialect feature]
20. *one example of isolated negative no* in *I shan’t tell you whether I struck him or no*
21. *inflected -n* possessives as in *your’n and hern* [widespread dialect feature]

Most of these features are very typical non-standard features for the time. Many still appear in varieties around the English-speaking world and would qualify as vernacular universals (cf. Szmrecsanyi & Kortmann 2009). The exceptions are features (19–21). Present participles with *a*-prefixes are commonplace here (also in the Irish texts). This construction has its roots in an old locative construction and continues today in the speech of Appalachia. Possessive with -n was once common to the dialects of central, eastern and south-western England and can still be found in traditional dialects of some of those areas. There is one solitary example of an isolated negative no, another
fairly widespread dialect feature but occurs here in the dialogue of an otherwise standard English speaker (U-6).

Lexicon
1. *hexplainify* [nonce word? on the formation of *explain*; cp *argufy, speechify*]
2. *dick* [< dictionary?] “fine language, long words” [slang]
3. *peepers* “eyes, spectacles” [slang]
4. *tarnal* [< eternal] [slang]
5. *flash* “showy, smart, gawdy” [slang]
6. *fork out* “hand over, pay” [slang]
7. *sov* [< sovereign] [slang]
8. *nohow* “not at all” [colloquial]
9. *top-knot* “head, hair” [slang]
10. *quod* [< quadrangle?] “prison” [slang]
11. *on the town* “on the streets” (engaged in thieving, prostitution etc.)
12. *shut up* “cease talking”
13. *go it!* “be off with you” [slang]
14. *a-piece* “each person, individually” [colloquial]
15. *bilk* “cheat, deceive” [cant]
16. *cove* “chap, customer” [cant]
17. *blunt* “ready money” [cant]
18. *dout* “extinguish” [according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, this appears in nearly every dialect glossary from Yorkshire to Isle of Wight]
19. *postesses* “post” [midland and southern England]
20. *kiver* “a kind of tub” [dialectal; Warwickshire – although here the word seems to refer to a type of hat]
21. *whatsomedever* [whatsomever] “whatever” [dialectal]
22. *afeerd* [< afraid] [Scottish]
23. *ooray* [< hooray/hurrah] “good bye” [Australian and New Zealand]
24. *flimsy* “a banknote” [Australian English, but a survival of British slang]
25. *nobblers* “quantities of drink” [Australian English; see above]

The language of many of these speakers is portrayed generally as fairly standard. It appears to differ little from current-day AusE, although of course it is impossible to know what accent features are hidden behind the standard orthography. Some of these speakers also demonstrate fairly widespread non-standard linguistic traits such as H-dropping, H-hypercorrection, G-hypercorrection, */v/-*/w/ merger, YOD-dropping, reduction of unstressed vowels. A number of speakers show quite a blend of features. In grammar and accent they might fluctuate between standard and non-standard forms; with vocabulary showing a blend of standard, colloquial, cant and dialectal forms.
Into the mix there might also be a dash of different regional features from around the British Isles. Mother Nott (U-23) shows the vowel raising (diskivered) typical of Irish, alongside salient Cockney features like [v] for [w] substitution and H-hypercorrection. Mrs Hall (U-26) is mostly standard but shows the occasional non-standard feature such as aint, nothink, a living and afeerd. Catherine Trevor (U-6) speaks for the most part unremarkably standard AusE, with the exception of her a-prefixed progressive (a-marketing) and her isolated negative (whether I struck him or no).

Group 1 – Adolescents

A Young Jehu [Samuel Jones, U-1]
Samuel Jones [“aged about sixteen”]
Samuel Jones deposed: “I was riding with Charley that night, and we were going a jig a jog pace. The horses were as slender as parchment. They are regular jibs up a hill. I saw the old man Terence in the road. He was tacking about this way (Here Samuel Jones went through the drunken gyrations of Terence) We shouted to him to get out of the way, but he caught hold of the old mare’s head, and she was so weak that she tumbled down I cannot say which fell uppermost, the old mare or Terence.”

The Young Idea A-Shooting [James Willock, Marianne Anderson, U-2, 3]
James Willock [“a little criminal, about fourteen years of age”] charged with assaulting Marianne Anderson [“a little cocknosed maiden, age thirteen”]. Marianne deposed that she was a playing at “fly-the-garter,” with some other young ladies, when the boy “heaved her down by a stone on the head”.

Police Magistrate:  Now, Master Willock, have you any questions to ask the little girl?
Boy (grinning):  I’ve a few. Himprimiss, is yer sure it vos hi has heaved the stone?.
Little Maid:  I’m positive.
Boy:  Ver’s yer mark?
Little Maid:  […] Here’s my mark.
By:  Vot sort of a stone were hit has hi heaved? Were hit a nugget, hor a ironstone, hor a marvel?
Little Maid:  It was a stone, and it hurted me.
Boy:  […] Wor hit has big has this?
Little Maid:  It was a stone and a very hard one. You were standing by Reach’s fence.
Boy:  It’s a tarnal story.
[…]  I hasn’t got no blunt; so I’ll take it out in bread and vater.
Group 2 – Younger Speakers

Fox and Goose; Or The Grapes Is Sour [Mrs Wheeler, Mrs Thompson, U-4, 5]

Mrs Wheeler [“alias Turner”] and Mrs Amelia Thompson [“a good-looking, respectably clad young woman”]

Mrs Wheeler: O! but I wanted a holiday, and I can give you lots of evidence if you want it. I’ll tell you one thing, that Polly Fox is as jealous as possible, and no mortal creature wot wears a bonnet can go past her house, but she thinks she’s arter her blessed husband.

[Mrs Amelia Thompson] “Vell then, here goes, if it must be done, it must be done, but it’s a curious thing is this ere law, as much kissing and hugging as if responded: one was christening a baby.”

Like Niobe, All Tears [Johanna Elvia, U-11]

Johanna Elvia [“a very beautiful specimen the frail sisterhood, whose soft pale oval face, rich blue eyes, and dark chestnut hair …” – later described as “the handsome Cyprian before the Court”]

Mr. Hill (to Johanna, who was weeping): Are you a married woman?

Miss Elvia: No, my lord. I wishes as how I was. (Here she burst into tears and sobbed convulsively.) If as how I had an ‘usband it isn’t likely I’d be in this here fix, no more I wouldn’t: but I’ve gotten nobody to take care on me but my own blessed self, and Missis Jones insulted me, and I give it her back again.

Inspector Read: She’s been on the town a long time, your Worship.

Johanna: How do you know: shut up.

[Note, give the physical appearance of Johanna Elvia, Corbyn here is probably using Cyprian to mean “licentious, lewd (often applied to prostitutes)”]

Group 3 – Middle-Aged-Older Speakers

The Heroine of Cook’s River [Mrs Hilton, U-22]

Mrs Elizabeth Hilton [“a tall, powerful woman, whose face outvies in colours those of a round of spiced beef […] living in the suburban retreat of Cook’s River”]

[Mrs Hilton] perpetrated the following: “There was a slogging match, or fite a’tween two coves at the River t’other afternoon. Von has his called Jones, and a stranger cove; Gannon, the old’un offers to bet a £5 on Jones, and my husband sends for five sovereign to take on t’other. Fluffen Bill hits out at my ‘usband. I lets drive at Fluffen Bill, and knocks him over a bush. Old Gannon gives me a right-handed spank a’tween the peepers, and sends me on the broad of my back. Up comes young bill Gannon, and he jumps on me, and up comes two or three of ‘em, friends of Gannon, and they jumps on me and kicks me, and
precious nigh knocks the breath hout hof me. I never hit a blow, but behaved like a baby."

A (K)notty Affair [Elizabeth Nott, U-23]
Elizabeth Nott [“a tall rough-looking dame”]
Sergeant 4 C: Yer Wurchip, Mrs Nott’s not here.
Mother Nott (struggling through the crowd): I’m a coming. […]
Mr Dowling (to Policeman): I thought you told me Mrs Nott was not here.
Mother Nott: Well, and s’pose they did; I’m here; Nott’s here; and I’m Nott; not here! he! he! he!
Mrs Nott then kissed the sacred volume, and gave the magistrate to understand, that […] she diskivered soon after leaving the shop that […] Mrs Nott also trundled out of Court exclaiming, “Vell hi never! Did you never!”

Mince-Meat Extraordinary [Hannah Hall, Andrew Flannan, U-26, 27]
Hannah Hall [“a tall bony woman, about 5ft 113/4, and about 50 years of age”] against Andrew Flannan [“lodger”]
Mr Dowling: Do you actually believe that he will chop you into mince-meat?
Old Woman: I’m afeerd on him; he’s a lodger of mine, and to tell the truth, I’ve been a living with him these many, many years; but he’s turned out such a mortal drunkard that I’m resolved to get rid of him at any rate, cost what it will.
Mr Dowling: The old gal wants to cut the connection, and if we release you from custody, will you promise not to go near her house?
Andy Flannan: I wants to know if all the things be hern; I wants my own things.
Old Woman: He aint got nothink at all.

A Penny Lawsuit [John Stockley Pacey, James Harrickes U-31, 32]
John Stockley Pacey [“a sworn-in constable”]; James Harrickes [“a big, thick, red-headed navvy”]
John Stockley Pacey deposed that […] he is a sworn-in constable, but a more persecuted individual he never knowed nohow; that red-un was a little too flash, and bilked him of the toll times out of number. Last Sunday was a week the red-un and 40 or 50 more navvies commed up to him quite permiskeus [= “massed together and disorderly”]. They were all employed by Randall a-making on a new line of road. So they all holds out a sov. Or a flimsy a-piece; the red-un offered him half a sov., and blowed him up sky-high for not forking out the change directly. He knowed
the red-un, and had it in for him for having bilked him so often; the kids about the Market Wharf used to call him “Ginger” on account of the colour of his top-knot; he (witness) was determined to make an example of “Ginger”, to try the case whether he was obliged to change pound notes for a penny or not; so he took him into custody. However, “Ginger” says, “If you don’t let me up, I’ll knock you down,” and he called on his mates to rescue him. Witness couldn’t leave the toll gate to take him to the watchhouse, and he sent ashore to Pleesman X to come and take “Ginger” to quod.

3. Whence Australian English? What Corbyn’s texts reveal

We have already seen that Corbyn’s reports contain a number of branded features; in other words, stigmatized characteristics which at that time were attracting social comment. There is the chance, therefore, that Corbyn may well have given in to occasional parodying for more comedy, using these stereotypes as lampooning fodder. The characteristic of stereotypes is that they acquire a kind of bogus authenticity that is immune to change; so a number of these marked features might well have been receding in the real speech of the time – or perhaps were no longer present. It seems unlikely, however, that Corbyn’s reports are pieces of linguistic fiction. What is striking about them is the curious pot-pourri of different dialect features shown by individual speakers. Corbyn depicts mixtures of features here that we do not encounter anywhere in the dialects of the British Isles around that time. Since stereotypes involve the features that are associated with the norms of specific speech communities, we would surely not expect Corbyn to represent such a linguistic jumble.

So what can we make of the blended features in Corbyn’s writing? In a study of some of his court reports, Taylor (2003) dismisses his dialect mixing as inaccuracies – straightforward errors, often intentionally in order to send-up his characters.

From these analyses we can conclude that there is much in Corbyn’s reproductions of his subjects’ non-standard speech that can be regarded as authentic, but there are cases where we must suspect that he overdoes certain features for satirical purposes; in other cases he applies them inconsistently. At times we can say with fair certainty that he is in error, as with Mrs Melville’s alleged use of mayhap. It is possible too that he indulges in a degree of dialect mixing, as in the case of Mrs O’Brien, whose Irish English contains Cockney features such as $h$-hypercorrection, [v] for [w] substitution and […] her use in her final utterance of Hevings for heavens, where final [εn] becomes [ɪŋ] (Taylor 2003: 180)

However, there is another way of viewing all this. Reminiscent of some of the speakers in the ONZE findings (cf. Gordon et al. 2004), Corbyn’s linguistic ‘bitsers’ offer nice support for Trudgill’s second stage of new dialect formation. In the ONZE recordings, the individuals do not sound like each other, nor do they sound much like modern New Zealand English speakers. What is striking about their speech is that it shows
unusual combinations of what would have been the dialects features of their parents; in other words, the original input varieties. There is also considerable variation both between speakers (even those of similar backgrounds) and within individuals. It is precisely this sort variation that is predicted by Trudgill’s “tabula rasa” scenario – with the children selecting variants from the different dialects they were immersed in (and, Trudgill argues, more or less randomly, since there was no common peer-group dialect at the time; cf. Gordon & Trudgill 2004: 450).

The mass of Sydney humanity that flowed through the Police Office in the 1850s would have represented an overlapping of Stages 1 and 2 of Trudgill’s model. We have younger speakers and older speakers and we know from descriptions that many were new arrivals, while many were clearly born in Australia. In earlier sections, I already alluded to some of the curious intermingling of features found in Corbyn’s dialogues. Presumably, as in the New Zealand case, these sorts of individual combinations are the result of the speakers at the second stage making idiosyncratic selections of the features from the dialects they heard around them. Take the pronunciation of /h/ by the Irish speakers here. Hickey (2007) describes the position of /h/ in Irish English as very stable; indeed its retention in AusE has always been attributed to Irish influence (cf. Hickey 2004b: 110; also Trudgill 2004: 72–77; 116 on H Retention in New Zealand English). Yet, some of Corbyn’s Irish speakers are depicted as exuberant H-droppers; H-insertion is also well represented. The flourishing of [v]-[w] two-way transfers in the Irish dialogues, such a salient Cockney feature, must also be part of this variability (admittedly also encouraged, as earlier described, by transfer from the Irish language). And while irregularity is not uncommon in speakers generally, the idiolectal inconsistencies shown by many of Corbyn’s speakers are remarkable. Often in one breath they fluctuate between standard and non-standard variants. For example, Mrs Murphy (I-16) shows variation in the matter of agreement between subject and verb (I live in ‘Leseebeth-street. And sells …). Tommy Hopkins (L-3) alternates between Stewart and Stuvart when he refers to his landlords. In fact, most of the speakers who show this feature do so variably (as do the H-droppers). Miss Ann Watts (U-13) varies between non-standard progressives like a walking and perfectly standard forms like is chopping (these alternations do not appear to be phonologically or semantically constrained). She is also an occasional H-dropper. Fourteen year-old James Willock (U-2) fluctuates between wor and standard were; moreover his speech is strikingly different from his little mate, thirteen year-old Marianne Anderson (U-2), who he is accused of hitting with a stone.

Corbyn’s reports are also interesting for what they do not include. I have already mentioned some of the missing Irish features. There are also several quintessential London/south-eastern features that never appear in the court reports:

**G-dropping**

The fact that Corbyn has copious examples of NG-hypercorrection (across the different dialect speakers) is initially something of a puzzle, since he does not include a
single instance of so-called G-dropping. It is also surprising, given the prevalence of the non-standard a-prefixing progressive, which combines naturally with the alveolarization of /ŋ/. Certainly, in contemporary English novels G-dropping was widespread as an indicator of working class speech. Nayler (p. 83) is quite clear on this matter: “What I wish my readers clearly to understand, is this – that not to give “the ringing sound” at all, is a defect; while, to give it on two consecutive syllables, is a trespass; it should neither be overdone nor underdone”. Nayler is recommending here the /in/ variant where the verb stem already ends in the velar nasal and he indicates this in spellings like bringin and singin. Telling is the fact that he is less condemning of the “underdone” pronunciation than one he describes as “overdone” (where the second ing “is harshly rung”). This he labels a “tautophany […] contrary to Good-usage – not to say decidedly vulgar”. The fact that Corbyn does not indicate G-dropping (and it must have been a trait of many of his speakers, including those of the upper crust) suggests that this was probably not a salient social or regional variant in Australia at this time. He perhaps didn’t even notice it. On the other hand, hypercorrect forms and also the substitution of final /ŋ/ with /ŋk/ in (as in nothink etc.) were unmistakable markers of vernacular speech.14 Both variants are frequent in Corbyn and remain so in current-day AusE (although associated more with speakers, especially males, at the Broad end of the accent spectrum; cf. Horvath 2004).

**TH-fronting**

Corbyn’s dialogues contain no examples where /f, v/ has substituted for /θ, ð/. Moreover, Nayler in discussion of “the digraph th” makes no comment on this pronunciation beyond it presenting a “formidable obstacle to Foreigners” (p. 76). As Beal discusses (2004: 198), there is plenty of evidence for TH-fronting in lower class London speech towards the end of the eighteenth century. Yet it would seem not to be terribly widespread in the nineteenth century, certainly not in the Antipodean settlements, or we would expect some hint of it here. In current-day AusE, substitution of /f, v/ for /θ, ð/ is more widespread than is usually acknowledged (cf. also Horvath 2004); Corbyn’s data suggests its spread has been recent.

**R-dropping**

In the first part of the 1800s, r-dropping was still stigmatized (Beal 2004: 156). Although Nayler (on the “rough and smooth sound of r”) explains that each type of sound “has its place in the utterance of correct readers and speakers”, he goes on to point out that “one of the peculiarities of Irish pronunciation, consists in the prevalence of the rough, harsh sound; while the smooth and almost inarticulate sound, is a conspicuous singularity in the dialect of the commonalty of London, a characteristic of the so-called Cockney-twang”

14. Nayler is very condemning of the latter: “To utter bring, thing, nothing, etc. as brink, think, nuthink, is provincial, and, in London is considered excessively vulgar” (p. 85).
(1869: 72). His recommendations seem to suggest weakened intermediate rhoticity in postvocalic position. There is no doubt that Sydney in the 1850s would have shown the full range of rhotic variants that were around in urban and regional Britain at the time (including tapped and retroflexed versions), although the trend towards non-rhoticity would have been well advanced in the majority of settlers at this time. While some of his spellings do suggest the rhotic nature of his Irish speakers and (one) Scottish speaker, there is no instance of what might be seen as Nayler’s “smooth” or “inarticulate” /r/; in other words, r-dropping. Corbyn might well have indicated this in his spelling, but did not. The fact that he himself was probably nonrhotic (suggested by his spellings such as *darter* for *daughter*) probably means he was unaware of this feature – as pointed out to me by Debbie Loakes, even well-trained phoneticians have trouble hearing /r/ variation. So it is probably not surprising if Corybyn overlooked this feature. Certainly, r-dropping wouldn’t seem to be a good social indicator for the time, and therefore not something that would have contributed to Corbyn’s true-to-life vignettes of the goings-on in Sydney’s Police Office.

There is a lot that Corbyn’s notations do not – and cannot – capture. We still know nothing about prosodic features of the time, for example. One striking prosodic feature of current-day AusE (and New Zealand English) varieties is so-called Australian Questioning Intonation (or High Rising Tone/Terminal). This high rising contour on declarative clauses (especially common in narratives and descriptions) might well have its roots in Irish English (Horvath 1985: 39). There is some evidence that it was around in these early times. Certainly, the following early description by Valerie Desmond is suggestive of something going on (even though we should probably take a lot of it with a grain of salt – just as we do current-day lay condemnations of the speech of ‘others’):

> But it is not so much as the vagaries of pronunciation that hurt the ear of the visitor. It is the extraordinary intonation that the Australian imparts to his phrases. There is no such thing as cultured, reposeful conversation in this land; everybody sings his remarks as if he was reciting blank verse in the manner of an imperfect elocutionist. It would be quite possible to take an ordinary Australian conversation and immortalise its cadences and diapasons by means of musical notation. Herein the Australian differs from the American. (Desmond 1911: 15)

Unfortunately, Corbyn’s writing does not shed any light on the matter of Antopodean ‘up-talk’ and its origins.

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15. According to Scobbie, Stuart-Smith and Lawson (2008), changes in current-day Scottish English suggest that /r/ derhoticisation is a gradual process. Ultrasound tongue imaging shows that speakers produce rhotic-like gestures, but /r/ may not be evident auditorily in certain environments – so speakers might produce /r/, but hearers can’t hear it. I am very grateful to Debbie Loakes for pointing me in the direction of this research.
3.1 The Cockney clout

In his outline of new dialect formation, Trudgill rejects the notion that it was the cachet of south-eastern English that influenced the outcomes of Australia’s dialect melting pot – who was accommodating and to whom at that time was not a matter of status and prestige but rather demographic factors (such as proportions of different dialect features). And yet, as with other linguistic settings, it is hard to imagine how social conditions and identity constructions could have escaped being part the story of this new variety.\(^{16}\)

We know that from the earliest time of settlement, a range of socially relevant linguistic variation would have been present in Australia. In other words, both the so-called ‘Cultivated’ and ‘Broad’ ends of the pronunciation spectrum would have been transplanted, with the accents of officials and clergy representing an early form of Received Pronunciation or later ‘Cultivated Australian’ (the minority sociolect), and those of the convicts showing the low prestige features (the majority sociolect, later to become ‘Broad Australian’). Subsequently, social mobility and the movement of linguistic features both up and down the social scale had the effect of bringing these end points closer together. ‘General Australian’ would have emerged as a kind of compromise variety between the two extremes. It is worth remembering, however, that ‘General’ has always fallen closer to the ‘Broad’ end than the ‘Cultivated’ end in its features (cf. Horvath 1985).

It is worth quoting here a lengthy passage from Edward’s Wakefield’s *A Letter from Sydney* (1829: 106–7):

The base language of English thieves is becoming the established language of the colony. Terms of slang and flash are used, as a matter of course, everywhere, from the gaols to the Viceroy’s palace, not excepting the Bar and the Bench. No doubt they will be reckoned quite parliamentary, as soon as we obtain a parliament. It is common to reproach the Americans with having departed from the language of their ancestors; but the fact is, that most of the words which we suppose them to have coined, are current, at this day, in different parts of England. Dear old Franklin tried in vain to establish the best English in America. Had he lived till now, experience would have taught him that, whilst, in old countries, modes and manners flow downwards from the higher classes, they must, in new countries, ascend from the lowest class. Though in England the son of a costermonger may become a peer, the individual donkey-driver cannot – whereas a great portion of the magnates of Australasia not only may, but necessarily must, have formed, in

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\(^{16}\) Many do not accept Trudgill’s argument against the role of social factors here, among them Kerswill 2002; Hickey 2003a; Kiesling 2004 and Schneider 2007 (cf. also Gordon et al. 2004: 283–4).
their own persons, part of the dregs of society. Hence, bearing in mind that our
lowest class brought with it a peculiar language, and is constantly supplied with
fresh corruption, you will understand why pure English is not, and is not likely to
become, the language of the colony. This is not a very serious evil; and I mention
it only to elucidate what follows.

As Pearl reminds us in the introduction to Corbyn's police reports, “the Sydney of the
eighteen-fifties […] was a dirty, intimate, hard-drinking, evil-smelling town” (p. 1).
Economist William Stanley Jevons arrived in the city in 1854 to work as an assayer in
the Royal Mint. Of the district The Rocks, he writes, “I am acquainted with some of
the worst parts of London … and with the most unhealthy parts of Liverpool, Paris
and other towns, but nowhere have I seen such a retreat for filth and vice as The Rocks
of Sydney” (cited by Pearl, p. 3). I do not want to overdo this bleak picture of Sydney
(Jevons also describes it as a “pleasant and cheerful place”); yet clearly, under these
circumstances the colonial vernacular would have thrived – and pulled considerable
weight. Fuelled by anti-authoritarian sentiment, it became an important way of fitting
in and avoiding the label “stranger” or “new chum” (cf. Gunn 1970: 51). This appears to
hold true also for New Zealand. Turner (1966: 114), for example, describes how a char-
acter in Alexander Bathgate's novel *Waitaruna* (Bathgate 1881) justifies his use of such
colloquialisms: “No use letting every one know you are a new chum”. As Corbyn’s texts
confirm, the cant of the underworld (so-called “flash” or “kiddy” language) flourished
in these early days – and, as the various corpora of modern Australian and New Zealand
English also attest, colloquialisms and “bad” language generally have remained the
stamp of the Antipodean idiom (cf. Allan & Burridge 2009).

The following eye-witness account makes very plain the considerable clout and
magnetism of the London speakers in particular:

The really troublesome among them seldom exceed one in ten; and by keeping
your foot upon the necks of these, all the rest will follow like lambs. The cockneys
are, of course, beyond all dispute the worst, and a leaven of a dozen of these is
enough to infect a thousand of the country yokels, with whom peace is generally
the order of the day. Such a number of these townies will keep a hundred of the
others in subjection, from the manner in which they cling together, and from
their overwhelming oratorical abilities. – The less gifted yokels have not a chance
with them, if the strong hand of power is not stretched out for their protection.

(Cunningham 1827: 252)

Even in the sort of “tabula rasa” conditions described by Trudgill (where there is no
prior-existing population speaking the same language, either in the colonial location
or close by), it is not clear how children in the “melting pot” settlements could have
escaped being socialized into the social views and values of these rough and extremely
macho times. Cunningham himself describes how London slang has been “ingrafted”
on the colloquial dialect of the “currency youths”. It is hard to imagine that the Stage 2 and Stage 3 children were not selecting linguistic features in order to create their own distinctive linguistic identities (although it is true that the unusual combinations of features that have surfaced in Corbyn’s collection do suggest some randomness).

3.1.1 W(h)ither the Irish features?
The Irish accounted for some 20–30 percent of the early population, with more in New South Wales than anywhere else in the country. Given these numbers, it is surprising how few Irish English features went on to survive in AusE. A straightforward explanation is the general antagonism towards the Irish and the accompanying low prestige of Irish varieties at this time (cf. Kiesling 2004: 422; Hickey 2004b: 110). There is no doubt that Corbyn’s Irish characters, particularly their language, supply much of the rauccous humour in his collection. Even given the anti-British sentiment that was around at the time, it stands to reason that early settlers would have avoided the very salient features of Irish English, and accommodated to those linguistic features of the more prestigious groups of London and south-eastern English speakers. As Hickey (2004: 110) describes:

A lack of influence presupposes that the Irish community was easily identifiable and so easily avoidable in speech. It can be assumed that the language of rural immigrants from Ireland in the later eighteenth and during the nineteenth century was a clearly identifiable contact variety of Irish English and so its features would have been avoided by the remainder of the English-speaking Australian population.

So how can we account for those few Irish features that did end up thriving in AusE? It is telling that these survivors are largely confined to the broader vernacular varieties. The Irish had an important part in shaping the Australian self-image – and this is an image that has always been closely tied up with the vernacular. Many Australian English speakers continue to see their colloquialisms, nicknames, diminutives, swearing, and insults to be important indicators of their Australianness and expressions of cherished ideals such as friendliness, nonchalance, mateship, egalitarianism, and anti-authoritarianism (cf. Allan & Burridge 2009). 17

17. Many expressions are recognisably symbolic of this identity: whinge “to complain, gripe”; battler “persistent struggler against heavy odds”; bludger “one who lives off the efforts of others”; she’s apples/she’ll be right/no worries “everything is under control” (note the female pronoun here, typical of male vernacular expressions); fair-go “the fair treatment to which everyone is entitled”; tall poppy “a high achiever or overly ambitious person who generates envy and derision” (note, tall poppies do not include sporting heroes); dob in “betray, inform against”; wet blanket “person dampening the ardour of others”; The Yarts “high brow culture such as ballet, opera”.
As Hickey also points out, the Irish English input to AusE involved variants that would have slipped under the prescriptive radar, either because they were never part of formal usage (as in the case of plural youse) or because people simply didn’t notice them (as in the case of epistemic mustn’t). Certainly, youse is nowhere to be found in Corbyn’s dialogues and neither is epistemic mustn’t or, for that matter, vowel epen-thesis (as in helm [helәm]), another potential Irish input to vernacular AusE. Gaps of course do not mean that the features were absent at this time. The non-inclusion of youse is particularly surprising, given how lively it is in the current-day AusE vernacular. Examples of plural ye are plentiful, but youse must not have been terribly usual, even in informal speech, or it would have appeared somewhere in these ‘verbatim’ reports.18

Clefting is another vernacular feature that might well represent further Irish input (cf. Bradley 2003). Certainly, the abundance of clefts in Corbyn’s Irish texts lends some support to this. Clefting is said to be more frequent in spoken AusE than in varieties of British English; so its overall high frequency of occurrence could well be due to Irish influence. However, the AusE cleft is fairly standard. As earlier described, the range of syntactic constituents that can be focused is far more restricted than in the Irish version – it is a very different construction.

As already discussed, the pronunciation of /h/ in AusE English has always been attributed to Irish influence. However, Corbyn’s four H-dropping Irish speakers now cast doubt on the actual role played by Irish English here. Of course, given that this was (and still is) such a pronunciation shibboleth of working class speech, it is always possible that Corbyn was using this feature as a means of portraying (parodying?) Irish speech. More likely, though, is that these speakers were accommodating to the H-dropping dialect speakers of London and elsewhere in southeast England. The question is then why didn’t H-dropping triumph in the Antipodes? Beal (2004: 159) points out that it is not until the second part of the eighteenth century that H-dropping was stigmatized. When it took on the character of a shibboleth and branded with the stamp of the “vulgar”, it would have been avoided by a population ever attentive to

18. Citations with youse (addressing more than one person) in the Australian National Dictionary only begin in 1902. There is, however, one example from E. Nevill’s novel (1885) Gleanings with Meanings where Nevill is portraying a drunken Irishman (with a singular addressee): As he staggered along the footpath, he met a gentleman, whom he thus accosted, ‘Plaise, sor, can yiz be aftir tellin me which is the other soide ave the sthreet?’ This is actually the combined form from ye + /zl/. This form, like youse (< you + /zl/), is essentially a development of the mid nineteenth century which would not be expected to turn up in the colonies with Irish emigration, such as Australia and New Zealand, before the third quarter of the nineteenth century. For more information on plural second person pronouns, both Irish and more general forms, see Hickey (2003b).
spelling and what might be considered the best pronunciation. Gordon et al. (2004) also offer additional quantitative evidence for its disappearance, at least in New Zealand English. Their ONZE data suggests that, while the majority of south-east English speakers showed this feature, it only ever involved a minority of all dialect speakers at the critical phase. According to Hickey (2003a), another nail in the coffin for H-dropping would have been the fact that, like the /v/ to /w/ shift, it introduces considerable homophony into English, and “while the general principle that mergers are preferred over distinctions in contact situations holds, this is not so when significant homophony arises as a result” (p. 219).

Another phonological feature that is often attributed to Irish input is the weak vowel merger, specifically, the loss of the distinction between [i] and [a] in unstressed syllables (cf. Hickey 2004b: 109; Trudgill 2004: 117–19). The fact that this weak vowel merger eventually triumphed in Australia is hardly surprising, given that it represents a shift towards an unmarked variant that was well underway in lower class speech generally at that time (it would undoubtedly have been a feature of early lower class London English; cf. Gordon et al. 2004: 164). This is supported by Nayler’s observations (p. 65):

[… the Unaccented vowels are heard purely from the refined classes alone – the commonality either sinking them into indefiniteness, or, changing them into others sounds; and this defect is grosser and more general in the Provinces than in the Metropolis.

Corbyn’s occasional use of different spellings to render the pronunciations of his Irish speakers might suggest that it was in fact these speakers who were better at maintaining the distinction between unstressed vowels, although it is hard to know what he meant by spellings like purlitest and pisthill. It might also point to the second type of “defect” just described by Nayler.

One final Irish-AusE feature that Corbyn’s collection does provide evidence for is T-lenition, in particular frication. This is something that is very much part of current-day AusE (at least for speakers on the east coast, where all the research to date has been carried out; cf. Horvath 1985; Tollfree 2001). As Horvath’s earlier study showed, fricated /tʃ/ is especially frequent in intervocalic and pre-pausal positions (e.g. That’s a

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19. In current-day AusE H-dropping in unstressed (function) words, such as him and her, is usual in normal rapid speech, but in content words it remains highly stigmatized and tends to occur only at the Broad end of the accent spectrum (more usually in male speech).

20. They emphasize that only those forms in the majority will survive, where “majority” refers to the numerical occurrence of a form across all dialect groupings of late nineteenth century New Zealand and not just in the most numerous grouping (by which they mean the settlers of south-east English origin); Scottish, Irish, Northumbrian, West Country and East Anglian, among others, showed H Retention at this time; cf also Trudgill 2004: 116.
beautiful hat [hæt]) and is associated with women, middle class and cultivated vowel sounds.\textsuperscript{21} If this feature is attributable to Irish English input, it is another not particularly salient one (Australians are still unaware of this feature) and would have slipped easily through the controls undetected.

4. \textbf{In conclusion}

There is no doubt that if we were lucky enough to have early extensive recordings (such as those available for New Zealand English), the picture of nineteenth century AusE to emerge would be far more complicated. Nonetheless, what Corbyn’s reports reveal is interesting and the linguistic detail he provides for many of the dialogues in these reports suggests that he really did have a talent for discerning dialect features. The language he presents mirrors beautifully the social diversity as it would have existed in Sydney in the 1850s. The speech of solicitors and police magistrates, for example, is unsurprisingly standard in grammar and orthography. The speech of the rest, “the mass of Sydney people” (as Corbyn describes them), shows the full gamut of social variation, with features ranging from standard to non-standard and in many different and unusual combinations. The reports reveal idiosyncratic mixtures of features, considerable variability within individuals and variability between individuals (although we can be less certain of this since we can never be confident that speakers were of similar backgrounds) – all nice support for Trudgill’s second stage in the process of new dialect formation. And unlike the older New Zealand speakers from the ONZE corpus (who might well have been accommodating over the years to more modern forms of New Zealand English), Corbyn’s speakers spring directly from the linguistic melting pot. \textit{Sydney Revels (the Eighteen-Fifties) of Bacchus, Cupid and Momus} affords us a very rare glimpse of Sydney life in the nineteenth century – a crucial time and place for the formation of this postcolonial dialect.

\textbf{References}


\textsuperscript{21} Tollfree’s data also showed that fricated forms are age-related, and she suggested this it represents a recessive feature of Australian English speech (p. 59).


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Appendix — Corbyn’s extracts

Irish background

The Cracked Crown [Pat Hely, I-1]

Pat Hely [“a stalwart son of Erin”]
Mister Hely being a gintilman who is rather fond of a drop of the crature, went as usual, on Friday last, to do pinance at the Triple Crown, by drinking a few tumblers of Irish whiskey […] [He charged the landlord with] “taking him in hoults” […]. Another Pat, whose surname is Connor, was called to prove that Mister Hely had been almost murthered entirely quite, and that he was a paceable, illigant, harmless gintilman.

Ancient Pistol [Patrick M’Grath, I-2]

Patrick M’Grath [“a Bardolpheian-shaped mass of humanity”]
Pat M’Grath deposed: I’m Postmaster general of Burwood, and dat ould gintilmin came to me, wild [wild/with?] murther written in his countenansh. Ricolick, says he, dish pisthill’s loaded, and by de tails of me coat I’ll lodge de contints in yer big thick carcase.

Mr Dowling: Are you afraid of him, that he will do you some bodily harm?

Paddy M’Grath: Is it afraid ye mane; shure and I’m in a mortal fear. Look at his countenansh; it’s plain to percave the muderous intinshins.

Mr Dowling: Do you bear him any malice?
Paddy M’Grath: O! hone, me bear malice! Not at all, only the swatest of loving kindness and friendliness. I’m the paceablest crathur on the terrestrial globe, but it’s a murthering kind of gintilmin is Misther Christie!

Mr Cory: Have you got a savage dog?
Pat M’Grath: What! My dog savage! Poor Faugh-a-ballagh savage! Shure and he’s never bit nobody yet; the civilest crathur of the canine genius in this counthrey or any other.

A Jolly Marine [Lizzy MacCluskey, I-3]
Lizzy MacCluskey [“a nymph of the pave”]
[…] Lizzy suggested a quiet pint of pure pine-apple Jamaica amongst, which, as she remarked five, “couldn’t urt a vorm” […] Lizzy received two shillings from him; procured the alcohol and poured him out a “ball”. […] Miss Lizzy was once more set at liberty with a warning from the Mayor that the pitcher which comes often to the fountain gets broken at last. To this she replied quietly “It warn’t a pitcher, please your Vusship, but a glass decanter”.

Robbery [Margaret Clark, I-4]
Margaret Clark [“a pugnosed, rosy-cheeked, humpty-dumpty looking woman, with a bonnet trimmed with artificial cauliflowers”]
[Margaret Clark] gave vent to the following original oratory: “I’m as honest a married woman as ever the sky grew over, and sure its in Sussex-street I was. Well, Mr Clarke, that’s my husband, the big blackguard, goes out to get a ball; I in course goes to fetch him home. As soon as I goes into the public-house, Dunn axes how I did, and caught hold of my hand and squeezed it, so he did, and then passes my hand to the other gossoon. ‘It’s mighty free yer making,’ says I, and with that I looked, and sure enough my rings were gone.”
Mr P Long: “How many persons were in the public-house at the time?”
Mrs C: “I didn’t count them.”
Mr Long: “Were you drunk at the time?”
Mrs C: “Is it me you mane?”
Mr Long: “Are you drunk now?”
Mrs C: “Is it me? Sure I’ve only had one glass before breakfast, and that wasn’t a full one, for they gave me bad measure”
Mayor: “The prisoners are remanded until Monday. The woman is too drunk to be able to give evidence; take her over to the watch-house for contempt of Court”
Mrs C: “Is it me you mane?”
Assault [Mary Ann Murphy, I-5]

Mary Ann Murphy [“as neat a little specimen of the feminine gender as ever scratched a face or flung a quart bottle”]

“I’ve Mr Nickells as isn’t here. She drinks; she must have tumbled down, and trod on her eye. I didn’t do it”

Assault [Margaret O’Brien, I-6]

Margaret O’Brien [“a rather formidable looking dame”], Elizabeth MGregor [“a pretty girl about seventeen”] and Miss Mary Anne Walsh [“a middling aged spinster”]

“Oh Monday night,” quoth Mrs O’Brien, “my blessed husband went to St Patrick’s acos ‘tis a taytotaler he is. I sends my darter arter a pound and a-half of pork sasingers jist to have reddy ‘gainst [“in time for”] he cumed home, for that taytolling work allers makes him mortal hungry; when that baste of a woman as his huffing and blowing afore the Court, hits my darter, who screeches, and out I runs. I axked her in purlistest terms the raison of her violence, when she ups with this sthone, runs arter me, and just as I gets into my own door, she sends it arter me. If it had only hit me, I should not have been here to tell the tale.”

[...]

Mr Cory: Now, Marm, I ask you again, have you got any witness, and what’s her name?

Mrs O’Brien: She’s a famale, and her name is Lizzibith. [...] Mr Cory [...] called Miss Mary Anne Walsh [...] “I seed,” quoth Mary Anne, “all the row on Monday evening. Mrs O’Brien came to Mrs Callaghan’s, who told her as how she wasn’t wanted, and she chucked a big stone at Mrs Callaghan houldin the blessed babbie in her arms at the time, and Mrs Callaghan never flung anythink at all, but only says she, ‘murther! I’m kilt!’”

Mrs O’Brien: Hevings forgive you, Mary Han, for telling sich a whopper; yer an hinnercent gal, Mary Han, and expects to be married; Hevings forgive you!

Mary Anne: Hevings forgive you!

The Fiery Element – Bed-Making Extraordinary [Mrs Fitzgerald, Katey I-7, 8]

Mrs Fitzgerald is a buxom lady, living in the aristocratic locality of Wynyard Square Among her domestics is an “Hirish Orphing,” name Katey [...] Mrs Fitzgerald gave Katey “her turn out” last Sunday [...] Just as Katey was returning home, whom should she meet but Teddy M’Mahon, who drives the Garry Owen mild Machine, rule sweetheart to Katey. He allured Miss Katey
to promenade with him on the Lovers’ Walk. It was in vain that Katey protested that “she had not made the beds, and shure missis would be angry, so she would.” […] On their departure, one of the firemen assured Mrs Fitzgerald that “they had doubted the fire, but the bed was in hashes, although the post and postesses was safe” [Note, presumably these are the words of the fireman but said by Mrs Fitzgerald]

A Nightman’s Lady’s Maid [Mary Atkins, I-9]

Mary Atkins [“a turnip-nosed, cribbage-faced female from the land or Erin”]

Mr Hargraves: Were you lady’s maid?

Mary: Och! shure an gintilmin’s maid, and everyting else into the bargain.

Mad Bull [Paddy Turnbull, I-10]

Paddy Turnbull [“a wild looking fellow”]

[Turnbull] replied, “Sure and I wash dhrunk, yer Honer’s glory, and it’s mistuck her I did for another woman, so I did”

The Son of An Irish King [Thomas O’Connell, I-11]

Thomas O’Connell [“a hale, uproarious old fellow, as drunk as he could stand in the dock”]

He shouted out: I’ll be d – d if my name’s O’Connell; I’ve been many years in her Majesty’s service, and I wish I’d been shot before I’d come to this country.

Constable Whale, 17 D: He was very drunk, dancing, shouting, and staggering on the South Head-road.

Prisoner: That’s very like a whale; I was not drunk; I was a full corporal or a general, or a ral of some sort or other, in the Spanish war, and my name’s Captain Connelly […]

Mr Moffatt: The mud on the South Head-road is enough to make anybody stagger. (Laughter)

Mr Egan, JP: You must pay ten shillings or spend a night and a day in gaol.

Prisoner: What! Send me to gaol! Oh, Moses! I’m the son of an Irish king. (Exit, struggling with the indigos [= “police”])

Fox and Goose; Or The Grapes Is Sour [Mary Fox, I-12]

Mary Fox [“essence of feminine Hibernianism”]

Mr Nichols: What gave rise to the quarrel, Miss?

Mary Fox: He rose his foot.

Mr Nichols: Did you not call his wife bad names?

Mary Fox: Were you ever in the Cove of Cork?
Mr Nichols: Did you not accuse his wife of infidelity?
Mary Fox: Is it funning me you are?
Mr Nichols: Why did you abuse his wife?
Mary Fox: Bee-cos she harboured my 'usband.
Mr Nichols: Did you call her anything else?
Mary Fox: You'd better send for her; you seem to be mighty partial to her.
Mr Nichols: Did you?
Mary Fox: Did I?
Mr Nichols: Come, Miss, I must trouble you to answer my question.
Mary Fox: I suppose you're the gentleman he was a'talking about. He said he had a great, great lawyer, as could arguify for him through the epochs of ages. But two can play at that game, and I've got two policemen who will speak for me, and they promised me last night that if I'd stand "nobblers round," they'd spake to Miclehery [?] for me.

Police Magistrate: Why are you called in the information May Fox, spinster, if you are married?
Mary Fox: Ax no questions, and you'll hear no stories, and mind your own business, which is the first law of nature.

Police Magistrate: Have you got any witnesses?
Mary Fox: Shure enough and I've got the two traps to whom I stood trate.

Police Magistrate: What are their names?
Mary Fox: An how should I know their names? One of em's dressed in a big blue coat, and so is the other, and one of em's got a roaming nose, and the other has a cast in his eyes. But they're sure to be here, because I trated em last night on purpose, and they promised me they'd swear a hole through a gate-post for me in the morning. Here! you two constables? why don't you come?

Mr Nichols: I'm afraid, madam, that your grapes are sour.
Mary Fox: How do you know? You never tried them [...]

Mary Fox was compelled to quit the Court, without having, as she expressed it, "hobtained sathis-waxshan".

The Battle of Athlone [Mrs O'Callaghan, I-13]

Mrs O'Callaghan ["a stout, ill-featured dame, living in a certain place, called Athlone-place in Parramatta-street"]

Mr Nichols: Are you the lady who goes by the name of the Great Gunn of Athlone?
Kate Burridge

Mrs O’Callaghan: No, by the hokey, I’m not de great gun, nor the little pisthill neither.

Mr Nichols: Did you give her any provocation?

Mrs O’Callaghan: Is it me provooke her? Shure and all I said was, “Go it, Sal, I’ll hould yer bonnet”

Mr Nichols: Pray, what are you, madam?

Mrs O’Callaghan: I’m the mother of sixteen children, and ‘leven’s alive.

Mr Nichols: I’m not asking about your children, but what are you?

Mrs O’Callaghan: I’m forty-two next Janivary.

Mr Nichols: Do not you understand my question? What are you, ma’m?

Mrs O’Callaghan: I’m a widder woman, as has buried two ‘usbans, and expects to bury two more.

Wanted 1,000 Young Milliners for the Gold Diggings – Here’s Some of ‘Em [Margaret Develin, I-14]

Margaret Develin [“of Irish extraction”]

“Ah shure”, quoth Margaret, “it’s not saying notink at all, at all, I was, when up comes Miss Darby, and a lady as is a mighty good fren o’ mine was nursing on her baby, and she sings a little ditty bout – She caught him, she stabbed him, she tore him in three, bekase he had murthered her babby and she. And Miss Darby runs at me vid de broom, and hits me a polthoge on de shouldur”

Helping a Confine to Escape [?Mr Finnucane, I-15]

Note, this is not a clear example. Three characters are involved – Mr Finnucane (Inspector-General of Cockatoo Island horse-marines), M’Innis and George Lord (both charged with rescuing the prisoner John Cruden). Not clear whose words are being cited here.

Mr. Maurice Finnucane informed the Bench […] the boat they called in was called a ketch, and a day or two ago he was informed that they had ketched Johnny Cruden.

A She Lushington [Mrs Murphy, I-16]

Mrs Murphy [“Her discourse was as flowery as one of her country parties”]

It was as follows: “I live in ‘Leseebeth-street. And sells red herrings, pares, paches, and tay. In comes Betty and stands a ball, then I stands another, and och! Shure she gets dhrunk, and tumbles the pares and paches, and all the other combustibles over the shop. I goes to pick them up and she outs with the till and stales the money.”

Mayor: How many glasses did you drink with the prisoner?

Mrs Murphy: Only six glasses of half and half.
Mayor: And how many glasses did you drink before the prisoner visited you?

Mrs. Murphy: It's only two nobblers of brandy, and a glass of two of ale, and a glass of rum in the morning, yer hanner.

Scottish background

**Wanted 1,000 Young Milliners for the Gold Diggings – Here's Some of 'Em**

Mrs Melville ['a mild looking young female, with an infant in her arms']

Mr Nichols cross-questioned Mrs Melville, for so was the lady called, to try and shake her testimony, but she only shook her baby […] At last, poor, poor, woman! she could no longer maintain her silence, but she said—“I’m na a natif av Saydnay, and theerfur am unable to gie ye the geographical posithun av Market-lane, but mayhap ye ken the Sheriff, and if ye’ll just gang to him I dinna doot, he’ll ensthstruct ye as to the desirable spot”

London background

**A Visit To The Railway [Maurice L-1]**

Note, it is not clear here whether cockney refers to a “Londoner” or is simply (as the OED puts it) “a derisive appellation for a townsman”.

Mr John Walker [“a nutty looking old gent, marvellously possessed by the demon of irritability, and “warhawk!” to any cockney individual who selects the railway embankment for the end of his Sunday walk”]

Last Sunday two respectably dressed young men, named Maurice Evans and George Clarke, took a walk to the railway “Pon onor,” said Maurice, “it’s werry sky-antiflic, so it be”.

**Wanted A Bookkeeper [Henry Lookalive Sloman, L-2]**

Mr Henry Lookalive Sloman “emigrated to this colony from the sequestered shades of Dyot-street, Bloomsbury-square in consequence of a quack political sarmint which he heard preached in the Galowgate by the werry reverend Dr Done More Lang”.

**The Snob Family [Thomas Hopkins L-3]**

Mr Ninivan Stewart [“a long-nosed, lank-jawed, hypocritical-looking shoemaker, dwelling in Kent-street”] against Thomas Hopkins [“a miserable looking little wretch of a cobbler, inmate of the Stewart snob family”]

Tommy Hopkins: I lodges long on muster and mother Stewart, and I seed that ere lady a getting hup stares. I wur ’pon the bed, a’having a lie down, as his nat’ral nuff seeing has how master Stewart vos avay: cos, don’t ye know, ven the cats avay, the mices does play. That ere lady has thinks hersel above the likes on me, ups with the jug off the wash-hand stand, and lets fly, and smash goes the looking-glass; lor that wur a smash
Cross-examined by Mr Roberts:
Missus Bella ["Stuvart vos hin the room; she picks up vot they calls The Morning Chronicle in Lunnon, first, and she makes ready, and presents, and fires at the lady Catherine, and at the same moment the lady Catherine ups with the jug and shies it at mussus Stuvart, who bobs hout on the vay, and hinsted on the jug"] Catching her hon the nob, it smashes the glass to smithereens. Hif Mussus Bella Stuvart had stood fire, it might have smashed her fizzonomy, hor vot the feelosofers calls hit, but hid vooodn’t have hit the looking-glass. I knows as how the lady meant the jug to hit mussus, and by her bobbing, the glass was smashed.

Miss and Maid [Leah Harris, U-31, Elizabeth Gilman, Fanny Border, L-4, 5]
Mrs. Harris [“a handsome Jewess”; Elizabeth Gilman “just come from England in the Wilson Kennedy”; Fanny Border “another … black-haired damsel”]
Mrs. Harris said: That lady is my cook; I brought her form the Wilson Kennedy. She has refused to obey my lawful commands; (Fanny: O! my!) I told her to clean out the kitchen, and she hasn’t done it. I agreed to give her £20 per annum.

Elizabeth: O! dear me, I’ve scrubbed it with a birch broom, I have indeed. (Fanny in the witness-box: so you have, Lizzy dear, so you have.) […]

Mrs. Harris: She didn’t sweep the cobwebs; she only mopped out the kitchen, and told me she didn’t come all the way from London to go on her knees and scrub kitchens. (Fanny in the witness-box: O! dear me; well, I never did!)

Elizabeth: Really, gentlemen, it is such a terrible old kitchen; I’ve cleaned it nine times; but it’s all of no use; I’ve got the rheumatics with kneeling down to scrub it, and so I mopped it and scrubbed it with a birch broom. It’s such an ‘orrid kitchen.

Mrs. Harris: O! you naughty thing! Isn’t there a Russell’s stove in it?
Elizabeth: She put me and Fanny into a dirty bed with such dirty sheets.

Mrs. Harris: O! O! O!
Fanny Border was then called as witness in behalf of Elizabeth, and deposed as follows: Mrs. Harris came to the Wilson Kennedy and hired me as needle-woman, and Lizzy as cook, and O! we’ve been such slaves! Poor Lizzy has actually scrubbed that kitchen over and over again, but the more she scrubs the more she may scrub, scrub, away. It was so dirty when we went there that the only way to clean it thoroughly will be to pull it down and build a new one. I left service yesterday.

Mr. Dowling: I suppose from your appearance that you were both fine ladies at home.
Fanny: I wasn’t a fine lady. I often scrubbed kitchens, and am able and willing to do so again; but I wish for something like fair usage.

Unknown background

Group 1 – Adolescents

A Young Jehu [Samuel Jones, U-1]

Samuel Jones [“aged about sixteen”]

Samuel Jones deposed: “I was riding with Charley that night, and we were going a jig a jog pace. The horses were as slender as parchment. They are regular jibs up a hill. I saw the old man Terence in the road. He was tacking about this way (Here Samuel Jones went through the drunken gyrations of Terence) We shouted to him to get out of the way, but he caught hold of the old mare’s head, and she was so weak that she tumbled down I cannot say which fell uppermost, the old mare or Terence.”

The Young Idea A-Shooting [James Willock, Marianne Anderson, U-2, 3]

James Willock [“a little criminal, about fourteen years of age”] charged with assaulting Marianne Anderson [“a little cocknosed maiden, age thirteen”]

Marianne deposed that she was a playing at “fly-the-garter,” with some other young ladies, when the boy “heaved her down by a stone on the head”.

Police Magistrate: Now, Master Willock, have you any questions to ask the little girl?

Boy (grinning): I’ve a few. Himprimiss, is yer sure it vos hi has heaved the stone?

Little Maid: I’m positive.

Boy: Ver’s yer mark?

Little Maid: […] Here’s my mark.

By: Vot sort of a stone were hit has hi heaved? Were hit a nugget, hor a ironstone, hor a marvel?

Little Maid: It was a stone, and it hurted me.

Boy: […] Wor hit has big has this?

Little Maid: It was a stone and a very hard one. You were standing by Reach’s fence.

Boy: It’s a tarnaal story.

 […]

Boy: I hasn’t got no blunt; so I’ll take it out in bread and vater.
Group 2 – Younger Speakers

Fox and Goose; Or The Grapes Is Sour [Mrs Wheeler, Mrs Thompson, U-4, 5]

Mrs Wheeler [“alias Turner”] and Mrs Amelia Thompson [“a good-looking, respectably clad young woman”]

Mrs Wheeler: O! but I wanted a holiday, and I can give you lots of evidence if you want it. I’ll tell you one thing, that Polly Fox is as jealous as possible, and no mortal creature wot wears a bonnet can go past her house, but she thinks she’s arter her blessed husband.

[Mrs Amelia Thompson] “Vell then, here goes, if it must be done, it must be done, but it’s a curious thing is this ere law, as much kissing and hugging as if one was christening a baby.”

Among the Graces; Or, Did You Ever Send Your Wife A Marketing In Sydney On Saturday Night? [Catherine Trevor, Mrs Elizabeth D, Mrs Mary Conroy, U-6, 7, 8]

Catherine Trevor [“the belle ideal of blonde, beauty, nearly, yet fashionably attired”], Mrs Elizabeth D [“plump, agreeably-countenanced landlady of the Melbourne Hotel, King-street”] and Mrs Mary Conroy for the defence [“a very fair-complexioned Grace with beautifully tinted cheeks, and a most encouraging smile”]

Mrs Elizabeth D […] took a seat on a chair upon the floor of the Court, under the protecting genius of her solicitor, to hexplainify why and wherefore she administered castigation to the beautiful person of Catherine Trevor […] Catherine, then under examination by Mr Nichols, spoke as follows: I was out a marketing on Saturday night, but as I was passing by the Melbourne, a heavy fall of rain induced me to enter. I was accompanied by three ladies. The landlady of the Glen Albion Inn, Mrs Irwin, and Catherine Lewis. I made some remark relative to the change in the times since the “good old times” when Mrs D and her husband kept The Green Dragon. Mr D was asked to drink with us.

Mr Roberts: What! has the Court to be occupied listening to this rigmarole? We have nothing to do with what Mr D said.

Catherine Trevor: I was just a beginning from when I entered the hotel to when I was put out of it. Mr D took a glass with the landlady of the Glen Albion. Mr D pushed me out of doors, and Mrs D struck me and tore my bonnet off. She cut my lip. She accused me of speaking about her, because she is aware that I knew her secrets. She threatened me […] I do believe she is determined to injure me. I know she has been accustomed to do battle with quart pots and similar missiles, and I’m sure if she met me by night she’d ill-use me.
Mr Nichols: Don't get angry with Mr Roberts, he's one of the best
tempered young gentlemen in Sydney.

Catherine Trevor: I'd be very sorry to be on bad terms with him.

Mr Roberts: How came you out so late at night?

Catherine Trevor: You don't call half-past nine late on a Saturday night!
You're not such a brute as that! You must know that
every lady in Sydney is out on Saturday night a mar-
keting. That was the only time I've been in her house
since she kept The Melbourne Hotel, but I lived with
her when she kept the Green Dragon. I had no gin
hot, I swear to it. It was only gin and peppermint. It
did not make me hot [slang “reckless”, “boisterous”].
Nobody ever saw me tipsy; but Mrs D and her hus-
band have often been so. Now, Mr Roberts, you can't
puzzle me. I and the […] [C. Trevor's speech con-
tinues – it is quite standard with a few exceptions:
“I shan't tell you whether I struck him or no”; “None
whatsomedever”; “he had drank many glasses”].

[Mrs Mary Conroy] crossed-examined by
Mr Nichols: I only went to the step outside the door Ha! ha! ha!
ha! ha! ha! Oh! you're such a funny man, Mr Nichols,
you do make me laugh so - he! he! he! Ho! ho! ho!
his bonnet couldn't a'been knocked off without my
seeing it. He! he! he! Ho! ho! ho! She didn't go out-
side, didn't Mrs D. I heard the screaming. He! he! he!
I don't know who did the screaming; 'twasn't I. I never
screams He! he! he! They knows best who did scream,
so they do. Ha! ha! ha! […] Me strike her – what me.
Well, that is not so bad neither.

Assault [Elizabeth MGregor, Miss Mary Anne Walsh U-9, 10]
Elizabeth MGregor [“a pretty girl about seventeen”] and Miss Mary Anne Walsh
[“a middling aged spinster”]

Mr Cory: Now, Marm, I ask you again, have you got any wit-
ness, and what's her name?

Mrs O'Brien: She's a female, and her name is Lizzibith

Mr Cory: Is she a little girl?

Mrs O'Brien: No shure, but a middling aged girl.

Mr Cory: What did Mrs O'Brien throw?

Elizabeth: Oh! nothink; Mrs O'Brien was very good, consider-
ing: she only made one row that evening by calling
Mrs Callaghan anythink cept an honest woman
Mr Cory [...] called Miss Mary Anne Walsh [...]  
“I seed,” quoth Mary Anne, “all the row on Monday evening. Mrs O’Brien came to Mrs Callaghan’s, who told her as how she wasn’t wanted, and she chucked a big stone at Mrs Callaghan houldin the blessed babbie in her arms at the time, and Mrs Callaghan never flung anythink at all, but only says she, ‘murther! I’m kilt!’”

Mrs O’Brien: Hevings forgive you, Mary Han, for telling sich a whopper; yer an hinnercent gal, Mary Han, and expects to be married; Hevings forgive you!

Mary Anne: Hevings forgive you!

Like Niobe, All Tears [Johanna Elvia, U-11]  
Johanna Elvia (“a very beautiful specimen the frail sisterhood, whose soft pale oval face, rich blue eyes, and dark chestnut hair ...” – later described as “the handsome Cryprian before the Court”)

Mr. Hill (to Johanna, who was weeping): Are you a married woman?
Miss Elvia: No, my lord. I wishes as how I was. (Here she burst into tears and sobbed convulsively.) If as how I had an ‘usband it isn’t likely I’d be in this here fix, no more I wouldn’t: but I’ve gotten nobody to take care on me but my own blessed self, and Missis Jones insulted me, and I give it her back again.

Inspector Read: She’s been on the town a long time, your Worship.
Johanna: How do you know: shut up.

[Note, give the physical appearance of Johanna Elvia, Corbyn here is probably using Cyprian to mean “licentious, lewd (often applied to prostitutes)”]

The Derwent Slasher, and The Queen of Tipperary [Mrs Watts, Miss Watts, Miss Lemon, U-12, 13, 14]  
A number of characters involved: Mrs Hannah Watts (“a rubicund, middle-aged individual, with an aquiline nose, and a thoroughly Amazonian tout ensemble”), Miss Ann Watts (“a handsome spinster”) and Miss Emily Lemon (“whose name was highly characteristic of the expression of her countenance”). There is also Caroline McRae (“a middling sized, youthful, and beautiful recent arrival from Hobart Town”), whose words are quoted by Miss Lemon.

Mrs Hannah Watts: She lives opposite just over the way, and between midnight on Saturday and one o’clock on Sunday morning, she smashed eleven squares of glass in my windees by pelting stones.

Miss A Watts: […] I’m no relation to Mistress Hannah; I saw Miss Caroline break the windows; she was not a walking in her sleep; she broke the windows with stones.

Police Magistrate: How far do you think it was?
Ow far off does you think it vos? Hordier! – hordier!

I doesn't know the distance; but I swears it vos she.

Are you married?

No; thank Even! I'm not so infortinite.

How come you to see it at such a late hour of the night?

I was a looking hout on my bed-room window for pleasure.

Perhaps you were waiting to be serenaded?

Is your Worship a serenader? (great laughter in Court) The fact is, that we don't retire till late on Saturday nights in our house. Our ground floor lodger is a butcher, and he is chopping away all Saturday night. Mrs Watts keeps a grocery establishment, and the lady who sticks so close to Mr Roberts keeps a – a – a – lodging house. I'm sure she was the person who smashed the windows. She had on at the time a light muslin dress with two flounces, her handkerchief over her shoulder, and her lovely hair hanging down to her waist. […]

Miss Emily Lemon […] heard an old lady, who was supposed to be the defendant's mother, exclaim, “Carry, come home;” to which Carry replied “Vait a minute,” and then Carry sent the stones a-flying.

Group 3 – Middle-Aged-Older Speakers

A Titivating Husband [Ann and William Blakey, U-15, 16]

Addison William Blakey [“a cove what has seen better days”] and Ann Blakey [“his wife”]

Mrs Blakey said, that about five weeks ago, her “model ‘usband” gave her the magnificent sum of 6d, saying […] “here miladi is maintenance for bub and grub for a fortnight.” On Saturday last, Addison W B inserted his cauliflower noodle, and gave his missis eighteen pence.

What can he earn if he likes to work?

I don't know what he can earn; he is mostly drunk; but if he keeps sober he can earn six shillings a day […] I don't want to have him sent to gaol, for he can't earn anything there.

It seems that he would be as useful to you in gaol as anywhere else.

Yes, I think he'll be better, because he'll be sober; but he'll miss his nobblers.

Does he come home at night?

Indeed he does, but always tipsy; and he is very sick after drinking […] [AW Blakey] said “Tis not with the slightest intention to enter into disputation that I commence to”–
Wife (interrupting): Oh, he can speak fast enough, and that’s about the best thing he can do. There ain’t a lawyer in Sydney o can be backed against him for “spitting the Dick.”

Mayor: We’ll postpone the case for a fortnight; and in the mean time an information shall be filed against you for non-compliance with the order of the Bench. If in the course of the fortnight you can come to an amicable arrangement with your industrious, creditable, but ill-used wife, there will be an end to the matter; but if her ground of complaint continues to exist, you will be sent to gaol, and there detailed till you comply with the order.

Addison Willliam Blakey then put a California kiver on his cabbage head, and ambled out of Court.

The Head of the Family [Robert Tindal, U-17]

Robert Tindal [“a hen-pecked old man … charged with using threatening language”]

Old man: “The girl and her mother want to make out that I’m crankey, but I’m as sound as a drum.”

Assault [Ann Rudgeley, U-18]

Ann Rudgeley [“an old mulberry faced, grizly-haired woman”]

Mrs Ann Rudgeley bit the book and swore: “She threw a cap at me”.

Police Magistrate: “Was it a dad cat or a live cat?”

Mrs Ann Rudgeley: “It was not a cat you goose you, it was a cap”.

Police Magistrate: “Was it a China cup or common crockery?”

Mrs Rudgeley: “Surely, it was not a cup at all, it was a cap; don’t you know what a cap is? Don’t you wear a night cap?”

Police Magistrate: “Oh, it was a cap, and she threw it at you? Did it hurt you?”

Mrs Rudgeley: “Och hone! Och hone! I’ll never come here any more. No, I won’t. She didn’t throw a cap at me, man! She pulled a cap to pieces off my head” […] Mrs Rudgeley, who admitted having called Miss Ward “a dictating hussey” […]

Unlawful Weapons [John Short, woman, U-19, 20]

John Short [“a bald-headed, cranky-looking, elderly man”]

Mayor: Have you any witnesses?

Short: Faith and I’ve my wife.

Woman: Don’t tell lies, man, I aint yer wife.

Short: I’ve got several of the most respectable and influential gin-tilmin of Durand’s-ally, male and feymale.
The Battle of Athlone [see rest of extract above] [William Rutledge, U-21]

William Rutledge [“an old man”]

Mrs O’Callaghan then called […] William Rutledge, and he swore that […] he heard Sal Dunn cuss and svere, but couldn’t understand the other old ‘ooman, cos she was Hirish, and he’d never been in Hireland.

The Heroine of Cook’s River [Mrs Hilton, U-22]

Mrs Elizabeth Hilton [“a tall, powerful woman, whose face outvies in colours of those of a round of spiced beef […] living in the suburban retreat of Cook’s River”]

[Mrs Hilton] perpetrated the following: “There was a slogging match, or fite a’tween two coves at the River t’other afternoon. Von has his called Jones, and a stranger cove; Gannon, the old’un offers to bet a £5 on Jones, and my husband sends for five sovereign to take on t’other. Fluffen Bill hits out at my ‘usband. I lets drive at Fluffen Bill, and knocks him over a bush. Old Gannon gives me a right-handed spank a’tween the peepers, and sends me on the broad of my back. Up comes young bill Gannon, and he jumps on me, and up comes two or three of ‘em, friends of Gannon, and they jumps on me and kicks me, and precious nigh knocks the breath hout hof me. I never hit a blow, but behaved like a baby.”

A (K)notty Affair [Elizabeth Nott, U-23]

Elizabeth Nott [“a tall rough-looking dame”]

Sergeant 4 C: Yer Wurchip, Mrs Nott’s not here.

Mother Nott (struggling through the crowd): I’m a coming. […]

Mr Dowling (to Policeman): I thought you told me Mrs Nott was not here.

Mother Nott: Well, and s’pose they did; I’m here; Nott’s here; and I’m Nott; not here! he! he! he!

Mrs Nott then kissed the sacred volume, and gave the magistrate to understand, that […] she diskivered soon after leaving the shop that […] Mrs Nott also trundled out of Court exclaiming, “Vell hi never! Did you hever!”

The Ball at the Saracen [William Elkins, U-24]

William Elkins [“a rough looking nugget, with a sunburnt face and a bruised eye”]

William Elkins stated that he followed the occupation of gold-digging […] Cross-examined by Mr Johnson: I offered to pay him ninepence for the broken plate. I wanted to pull off my coat to fight him if he was game. If you speak plain I’ll be able to understand, but I doesn’t know nothing bout dickshonary. I didn’t know the prisoner gave the ball. The ball was held next door to the Saracen, but the supper took place at the latter place. I thought little of the pocket-book, but a great deal of the mashiating I got. I came from Melbourne last Janivary in the Helling Bear (Helen Baird).
The Races – £1,000 Stakes [Stratford Hartigan, U-25]

[...] a Purser Extraordinary, named Stratford Hartigan [...] had to shut up shop, cos vy, he'd not got no treasure.

Mince-Meat Extraordinary [Hannah Hall, Andrew Flannan, U-26, 27]

Hannah Hall ["a tall bony woman, about 5ft 113/4, and about 50 years of age"] against Andrew Flannan ["lodger"]

Mr Dowling: Do you actually believe that he will chop you into mince-meat?
Old Woman: I'm afeerd on him; he's a lodger of mine, and to tell the truth, I've been a living with him these many, many years; but he's turned out such a mortal drunkard that I'm resolved to get rid of him at any rate, cost what it will.

Mr Dowling: The old gal wants to cut the connection, and if we release you from custody, will you promise not to go near her house?
Andy Flannan: I wants to know if all the things be hern; I wants my own things.
Old Woman: He aint got nothink at all.

An Itching Palm [John Lawson, U-28]

John Lawson ["a seedy looking old man with the organ of acquisitiveness strongly developed"]

One of the people finding strange hands in his pocket, turned sharply around to Lawson with a "halloa you've got your hand in my pocket!" – "Vell, wot's the difference," replied the thief, "you can put your'n into mine if you likes."

The Grocer and the Snob [John Joe Curran, U-29]

Mr John Joe Currant ["a methodistical looking grocer, residing in Parramatta Street"]

Mr Curran asseverated an oath: – "Lo! and behold; he ow-ed me a bill for divers supplies in the sugar, soap, and candle line, and when I presented him with my bill, he jum-ped off his stool; he blasted my eyes with his tongue, and my forehead with his lapstone.

Mayor: Did not you give him any provocation except presenting him with the bill?.
Grocer: Verily none whatever, save calling him a little rogue, a rascal, and a swindler.

A Comical Case of Desertion [Stephen Timmins, U-30]

Stephen Timmins [answering "the complaint of Ann, his wife, for deserting her"]

“There,” concluded Timmins, “your Worships can call that desertion, if you like; but, in my opinion, it seems that she deserted me."
A Penny Lawsuit [John Stockley Pacey, James Harrickes U-31, 32]

John Stockley Pacey [“a sworn-in constable”]; James Harrickes [“a big, thick, red-headed navvy”]

John Stockley Pacey deposed that […] he is a sworn-in constable, but a more persecuted individual he never knowed nohow; that red-un was a little too flash, and bilked him of the toll times out of number. Last Sunday was a week the red-un and 40 or 50 more navvies commed up to him quite permiskeus [= “massed together and disorderly”]. They were all employed by Randall a-making on a new line of road. So they all holds out a sov. Or a flimsy a-piece; the red-un offered him half a sov., and blewed him up sky-high for not forking out the change directly. He knowed the red-un, and had it in for him for having bilked him so often; the kids about the Market Wharf used to call him “Ginger” on account of the colour of his top-knot; he (witness) was determined to make an example of “Ginger”, to try the case whether he was obliged to change pound notes for a penny or not; so he took him into custody. However, “Ginger” says, “If you don’t let me up, I’ll knock you down,” and he called on his mates to rescue him. Witness couldn’t leave the toll gate to take him to the watchhouse, and he sent ashore to Pleesman X to come and take “Ginger” to quod.

The Turf – North Shore Races [Policeman Hydes U-33]

Policeman Hydes [“a person of a severe puritanical aspect”]

Policeman Hydes states that, on the fifteenth instant, he saw Mr. M’Mahon and another young gentleman “racing like winking” [= “like anything”] at the North Shore. “They was a girlhopping scandalous down ill. A crowd of little boys vos going to school, and bawled out ‘ooray! go it! go it!”

The Fiery Element – Bed-Making Extraordinary [unnamed fireman U-34]

On their departure, one of the firemen assured Mrs Fitzgerald that “they had douted the fire, but the bed was in hashes, although the post and postesses was safe”

Interesting Recreations [unnamed waiter, U-35]

A waiter of “Samivel Weller” appearance came forward to prove “wat a howdacious rapscallion that ere tricoloured cove was”.

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Describing and complaining

Written evidence of early New Zealand English pronunciation

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This chapter considers the written evidence of New Zealand pronunciation provided in 1887 by Samuel McBurney a self-taught phonetician, and the evidence from complaints about pronunciation in the early New Zealand School Inspectors’ Reports, and the literary journal *The Triad*. This written evidence has been compared with data of spoken New Zealand English obtained from recordings collected in the 1940s of old New Zealanders born in the 1850s–1890s. Some features present in the recordings were commented on in the written accounts; others were not commented on. This enables us to establish which features were the result of innovation, and which were conservative, and which had reached a level of public awareness at the time. The comparison of written and spoken data shows that the written reports reliably reflect the spoken data.

New Zealand English is the most recent variety of native-speaker English in the world, apart from the English of the Falkland Islands. For a study of the written word as linguistic evidence, the newness of New Zealand English has advantages and disadvantages. The early European settlers wrote letters, diaries and accounts of their experiences in the new colony, but they wrote in standard spelling. Unlike the idiosyncratic phonetic orthography of Jeremiah Goldswain’s *Chronicle*, which provides clues about early South African English (Lass 1987), the writing of New Zealand’s early colonists gives us no evidence of their pronunciation.

However, the fact that New Zealand English is a recent variety of English also means that recordings are available of the first generation of New Zealand born speakers. In addition, letters, articles and reports are a rich source of commentary on the pronunciation of English in New Zealand, and in this case the accuracy of these comments can be tested against actual recorded evidence.

The beginning of the European settlement of New Zealand is usually dated from 1840, when a number of Maori chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi with a representative of the British crown. At that time there were about 2,000 Europeans living in the country, many surviving in small coastal settlements. From this date onwards the
European population grew very quickly. By the time the 1857–8 census was taken, the European population had increased to 60,000, outnumbering Maori. By the 1881 census, there were half a million Europeans of whom 250,000 were New Zealand born (Belich 1996: 278).

It was about 60 years after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, at the turn of the twentieth century, that people became aware of a distinctive New Zealand accent, calling it a “colonial twang.” Once recognised, the response was lively and hostile and came from all over New Zealand.

The written evidence of early New Zealand English pronunciation falls into two categories. One comprises the attempts in 1887 by a visiting Scot, Samuel McBurney, to record and describe the pronunciation of English in New Zealand (and Australia). The other comprises a steady stream of derogatory comments and complaints both from New Zealand school inspectors in their annual reports and from The Triad, a popular literary journal written mainly by Charles Baeyertz its editor and publisher.

1. Samuel McBurney: The describer

McBurney was for some years the principal of the Ladies College in Geelong, Victoria. On the sea journey to Australia, McBurney taught himself phonetic transcription by studying Melville Bell’s Visible Speech and A.J. Ellis’s Pronunciation for Singers. He was the first person to use phonetics in the description of Australian and New Zealand English.

McBurney travelled around different Australian and New Zealand towns in 1887 teaching the tonic sol-fa singing method and taking notes of some pronunciations he heard. He sent these notes to A.J. Ellis who published them in volume five of his book On Early English Pronunciation (1889, V: 236–248) under the heading “Australasian South Eastern – a Comparative Table of Australasian Pronunciation”. Ellis also reproduced parts of an article that McBurney wrote for The Press newspaper in Christchurch in 1887.

Consonants

Non-prevocalic /r/ attracted more attention from McBurney than any other consonant. In his newspaper article he remarked on the difference between the usage of the immigrants and their children:

Where the young colonial finds himself understood by half the oral exertion necessary, he forthwith abbreviates …and the strong trilled final r is avoided as an unnecessary exertion, when it is noticed that the majority of arrivals habitually neglect it. It is therefore quite common for the children to call farther fahthu (u of but) when the parent says farrthurr with a very loud trill: world, wu’ld, instead of wurruld and so forth. The insertion of r where it is not wanted, as in idea-r-of,
is also explicable, as it is easier than to make the necessary hiatus between two
tongue positions of the several vowels.  

(The Press 8 October 1887)

In the table published by Ellis (1889: 240–5) McBurney observes that final /r/ was
common in New Zealand and variable. For the /r/ on the test word sure he says a few
people had it in Auckland and some in Christchurch; /r/ on poor was used by a few in
Nelson but was general in Christchurch and Dunedin. For morning the /r/ was general
in Christchurch, Nelson and Dunedin; and for pearls the /r/ was used by half the speak-
ers in Christchurch and more than half in Dunedin. From McBurney’s table, it would
seem that final /r/ was common in the South Island but not in the North Island.

McBurney gives some information about other consonants. He noted a few
instances of yod-dropping in tune and new in Christchurch, Nelson and Dunedin.
He looked for /hw/ or /w/ in the test word which and found both variants everywhere.
In Auckland a few used /hw/ but /w/ was general; in Wellington /hw/ was general for
girls, whereas /w/ was general for boys; in Napier there were equal numbers of /hw/
and /w/; in Nelson a few had /hw/ but many had /w/, unlike Christchurch where many
used /hw/ and only a few used /w/. In Dunedin /hw/ was general for girls and also used
by many boys. Some boys also used /w/.

Although McBurney noticed h-dropping in the Australian towns he visited, he
said he did not find it in New Zealand towns. He found a few people in the South
Island towns he visited saying anythink.

1.1 Vowels

McBurney found some vowels in New Zealand quite noteworthy. He claims that the
vowel in hand was highly variable, with examples of [hænd], [hεnd], [hε̃nd] and
[hænd]. In Auckland [hεnd] was general for girls and [hε̃nd] general for boys; in
Wellington and Napier [hænd] and [hε̃nd] were equally common, and both were
heard also in Dunedin. In Christchurch and Nelson the most common pronunciations
were [hænd] and [hε̃nd].

For the vowel in dance McBurney also found variation. A few girls in Auckland
and some people in Dunedin pronounced it “dens”. However it was more common to
hear it pronounced “dans” – with many in Napier, general in Christchurch and Nelson,
general for girls in Auckland, and used by a few in Wellington. The alternative “dæns”
was general for some boys in Auckland, some people in Wellington and Napier, and
used by many in Dunedin.

For the vowel in but and tub McBurney noted that it was relatively open and similar
to the vowel in ‘father’.

The only point that has struck me in New Zealand as peculiar is the short u in
“but”, “tub,” etc which has a much more open sound than I am accustomed to,
approaching the “ā” in “father”, but difficult to describe.

(The Press October 8 1887)
McBurney used *now* and *town* to demonstrate the pronunciation of /au/. He found a considerable amount of variation in all the New Zealand towns he visited with more examples with front raised starting points than lowered back starting points. Examples of the diphthong shift [æu] and [eu] occurred in various parts of the country. Bauer (1994: 393–4) interprets this information as evidence that New Zealand was behind Australia in the diphthong shift when McBurney was writing, but suggests that this changed in a period of about thirty years.

In McBurney’s table, the test words for the /ai/ diphthong were *die* and *my might*. He noted variation between [ɐɪ] and [ɔɪ]. In *The Press* he wrote:

> One thing in common with Australia is the broadening of the “i” in die, which is a diphthong formed by a very broad “ah”, tapering to “ee”. This in Tasmania and parts of New Zealand even approached “oi”, “I die” sounding like “oi doi”.

The /ei/ diphthong was represented by *day* and *say* in McBurney’s table. He noted a small amount of diphthong shifting [dæɪ] in Wellington and Napier. For /ou/ he used the test words *no* and *toe*. It seems there was less diphthongisation for *no* than there was for *toe*. The diphthongised *toe* [təʊ] occurred in every town he visited in New Zealand, with most using it in Napier and Wellington, more than half using it in Auckland, Nelson and Christchurch, and less than half in Dunedin. McBurney did not comment on the unstressed vowel but he noticed some HAPPY-tensing. For words like *city* and *simplicity* he found variation in New Zealand towns between [ɪ] and [ɛɪ].

### 2. The school inspectors and The Triad: The complainers

A regular source of comment and complaint about early New Zealand English pronunciation exists in the annual reports of the New Zealand school inspectors, published from 1880 to 1930 in the *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives (AJHR)*. Some individual inspectors always commented on the pronunciation of the children whose reading, recitation and “oral composition” they were examining. (See Gordon 1983, 1994, 1998; Gordon & Deverson 1989; Gordon & Abell 1990.)

The main concerns of the school inspectors between 1880 and 1900 were with h-dropping and the use of word-final /n/ instead of /ŋ/ for words ending in ‘-ing.’ Before 1900, there was nothing in the school inspectors’ reports to suggest that they were aware of a distinctive New Zealand variety of English. After 1900 there was a notable change in the tone of the comments about pronunciation. Inspectors reported the increasing occurrence of a “colonial twang” and said that this was to be deplored. Of considerable concern was the fact that some of the teachers were also using this so-called “twang”. The Government was called on to support corrective measures and speech-training lessons were introduced into all primary schools. These had little effect (Gordon & Deverson 1989: 43–50).
In 1912, a government enquiry into education in New Zealand, known as the Cohen Commission, travelled around the country collecting submissions, and its report was published in the *Appendices* (*AJHR* 1912, E12: 1–744). Two of the commissioners, Mr Wells and Mr Pirani, were especially interested in pronunciation, and questioned teachers and school principals about the “unfortunate” changes in the spoken English of their pupils.

Another voice of complaint on this subject was that of Charles Baeyertz, the editor and publisher of New Zealand’s best known early literary journal, *The Triad*, of which he also wrote much of the content. A third generation Australian, he was a teacher of modern languages, music, singing and elocution, and a regular judge of singing and recitation competitions throughout New Zealand (Woods: 2008). His complaints about “mispronunciations” were caustic and trenchant, and no doubt increased the circulation of his journal. His criticisms, while mainly directed at those who in his view distorted and mangled the language, were from time to time directed at those (especially female teachers) who affected a “genteel pronunciation.”

As well as his own writing, Baeyertz regularly published articles by others on the subject of pronunciation, in addition to selected extracts from the report of Cohen Commission on Education where there were especially strong complaints about the newly emerging New Zealand accent.

2.1 Vowels

2.1.1 The closing diphthongs

After 1900, school inspectors began to comment on “faulty pronunciation” or “mispronunciation” of vowels. The diphthongs /au/ and /ai/ were salient and attracted early comment. The earliest written reference to /au/ (apart from McBurney’s observations in 1887) comes from the British writer Rudyard Kipling who visited New Zealand in 1891 and wrote a story for the *Auckland Herald* called “One Lady at Wairakei.” In it he referred to a New Zealand woman as “a red-faced raddled woman who talks about ‘ke-ows’ [cows] and ‘bye-bies’ [babies]” (Kipling 1892: 27).

In 1902, Nelson school inspector W. Ladley wrote about /au/: “Reading and recitation are usually well taught, though in some parts a twangy pronunciation, particularly of the ‘ou’ and other vowel sounds, prevails” (*AJHR* 1902, E-1B: 28). Two years later, in 1904, the Wanganui inspectors W. Gray and J. Milne gave a list of words which they thought should be drilled every day in school: *house, pound, ground, round, bounce, how, cow, now, brown, gown etc.* (*AJHR* 1904, E-1B: 10).

The /ai/ diphthong also attracted early notice. Wellington school inspector Robert Lee complained as early as 1889 that there was a tendency “to pronounce ‘i’ as ‘oi’ … thus ‘fine’ is ‘foine’” (*AJHR* 1889, E-1B: 14). It clearly troubled Mr Lee because he made reference to it again in his 1900 report, complaining that “five” was being pronounced “foive” (*AJHR* 1900, E-1B: 14). The Nelson inspectors G.A. Harkness and D.A. Strachan
also complained in 1903 about “the broadening of the vowel ‘i’ until it resembles ‘oi’”, which they recorded as “a defect in pronunciation” (AJHR 1903, E-1B: 30).

In 1908 the Wellington inspectors T.R. Fleming, F.H. Bakewell, and J.S. Tennant complained about the pronunciation of both /ai/ and /au/: “Such mistakes cannot be a noticeable feature in a well disciplined school. Failure to appreciate the value of the common vowel sounds – e.g. moine, teown” (AJHR 1908, E-1B: 16). The pronunciation of these two diphthongs were similarly derided by school teacher E.W. Andrews in 1910, as quoted by Baeyertz in The Triad (August 10, 1910: 40):

The broad “a” diphthongs diverge, “ah-oo” into “e-oo,” and “ah-i” into “aw-i”; so that “noun” (nah-oon) becomes “ne-oon” and “mile” (mah-ill) becomes “maw-ill.” Ask a colonial child to say, “I went down the town to buy a brown cow,” and you may almost make sausages out of that mangled beef.

In the same article, Baeyertz suggests ways the teachers could correct these “mispronunciations”:

I believe it would engage the children’s attention if each classroom has a few placards on the wall, printed in big heavy type, such as “c o w” spells “k-ah-oo” not “ke-oo” or “f l y” spells “fl-ah-i” not “flaw-i.” (op. cit.)

Baeyertz was also aware of hypercorrection and he went on to comment on the genteel version of /ai/:

…several English ladies who are teaching in New Zealand, desiring no doubt to keep their girls as far as possible from the vulgar “good-boy” (good bye) instruct them to say “good-be-i” which adds affectation to the blunder and makes the last state of the farewell worse than the first. (op. cit.)

A letter writer to The Triad, sharing Baeyertz’s concern about the pronunciation of /au/, told a story about a young male who went into a shop and asked for something the assistant at first understood as “piano candles” only to find he wanted “a pound of candles” (The Triad, 10 May 1912: 13).

In 1912, the report of the Cohen Commission on Education referred to /au/, as in the following transcript of an interview between Mr Wells, one of the commissioners, and A. Heine, acting headmaster of Wellington College:

Mr Wells: With regard to this objectionable colonial dialect, do you mean that things are becoming worse in that direction?

Mr Heine: Much worse in the last ten years. I have noticed it in the last ten years.

Mr Wells: On what do you base that statement?

Mr Heine: Simply on my experience in the English class. Boys of ten or twelve years ago did not have the careless way of pronouncing vowels that they have nowadays. I think it is getting worse every year. If you take a class of thirty at the beginning of the year I do not think you will find more than three or
four who will say “house” correctly. Of course, I do not believe in overdoing it, as you find in the case of some people who have been Home, but at the same time the word is “house” not “heouse”.  

(AJHR 1912, E-12: 623)

In the school inspectors’ reports, complaints about closing diphthongs /ei/ and /ou/ appeared some years after the comments about /au/ and /ai/. In 1911, D.A. Strachan, the Marlborough inspector, set out a long list of pronunciations which annoyed him, including “mail” said as “mile,” and “tail” as “tile” (AJHR 1911, E-2 App. C: xxvi). In 1916 the Wanganui inspectors, B.Strong, Jas Milne, and D. Stewart noted:

…faults due mainly to a wrong shaping of the lips in emitting the sound. For example, “cake” is pronounced “cah-ake,” which will presently further degenerate to “cike”. In sounding the “a” the pupil opens his lips too widely and sounds “ah” before closing the mouth slightly to sound “a”. From the same cause “home” becomes “hah-ome”. Such faults are easily overcome provided the environment favours correct speaking.  

(AJHR 1916, E-2: App. B: ix)

In 1910, The Triad also mentions /ei/, with regard to the possibility of a further change when it approximated /ai/: “The ‘ah-ee’ for the long ‘a’ (of ‘fate’) is a very common error, and changes such words as ‘straight’ and ‘make’ into ‘stryte’ and ‘mike,’ which by a second change …often become ‘stroit’ and ‘moik’” (10 August: 40).

2.1.2 The short unstressed vowel

Modern New Zealand English has undergone what Wells (1982: 167) calls the “Weak Vowel Merger,” where there is no contrast between the rabbit and the abbot /ræbət/ classes of words. The earliest reference to the unstressed vowel in early New Zealand English was from Baeyertz in the Triad in 1883, where he described singers pronouncing “heaven” as “heavun” (October 15: 13). He continued to complain about this pronunciation in later issues of the journal, as in: “Miss Plummer is a very clever little lady, who will do something one day. In this recitation there were many mispronunciations, such as: ‘lansuz’ (lancers), ‘evun’ (even)” (February 1, 1909: 9). In the following year he referred to the pronunciation of “possable”, “trinerty” and “peopull” which he described as “incorrect vocal sounds” but he added that these were “not so common nor so hideous as the evil-sounding diphthongs” (August 10, 1910: 40). In 1912 he provided another list including “‘voisuz’ for ‘voices’, ‘viol-uts’ for ‘violets’, ‘silunce’ for ‘silence’, ‘darknuss’ for ‘darkness’, ‘evul’ for ‘evil’” (The Triad, 10 December 1912).

The school inspectors also noticed the unstressed vowel. Robert Lee, the Wellington inspector wrote in 1900: “Some teachers…speak so badly as to be quite disqualified… Those who say ‘systum’ for system are manifestly unfit to teach reading” (AJHR 1900, E1-B: 14). Three Wellington inspectors in 1908 described this feature as “a failure to
appreciate the value of common vowel sounds – *ut* for ‘it’, *plasuz* for ‘places’. They also said that this was a recent development (*AJHR* 1908, E1-B: 16). The same inspectors raised the subject again in 1914. In their view some pronunciation problems might have been caused by overcrowding in the classrooms, but:

> [t]his excuse, however, cannot be accepted in the matter of enunciation. Carelessness or indifference on the part of the teacher is mainly responsible for such improprieties as “partikler”, “sorce” (source), “plasuz” (places), “dishers” (dishes), “ut” for “it”, “paintud” for “painted”.  (*AJHR* 1914, E-2, App. C: xii–xiv)

### 2.1.3 H-dropping

Non-standard spelling was rare or non-existent in early New Zealand writings. An exception was Jane Oates, who emigrated to New Zealand from Derbyshire, and who wrote in 1857 to her sister and brother in England using spelling that reflected her Derbyshire dialect. She used variable h-dropping and also hypercorrect h-insertion.

> We have not got bullocks to plow yet but he as a plow so we must trie to hire bullocks to plow till we have got of hour howne…When we can grow howr own crops we shall be rite a nuf …We are in hour new house but it is not quite finished yet.…  (quoted in Porter & Macdonald 1996: 165–6)

This letter shows that h-dropping and h-insertion was a feature of the English of some of the early settlers in New Zealand.

From the beginning of the annual reports of New Zealand school inspectors, h-dropping was seen as a problem. In 1880 the Westland inspector John Smith remarked:

> It is a common experience to find children repeating such lines as “O ’appy, ’appy ‘ummin’-bird,” varied by “O wappy yappy yummin’-bird” and such defects are naturally more marked in the few cases where the teachers themselves have acquired a habit of incorrect pronunciation.  (*AJHR* 1880, H-1I: 25)

Two years later the Wellington inspector Robert Lee wrote:

> In the past year I was visiting a country school and had given a composition exercise to a class, and heard that class read, when a few minutes after all were sent out into the playground. I noticed that one big boy, who had read fairly well, sounding the aspirate, and who had written a tolerably good composition exercise, immediately fell in with others to a game at leap-frog. His first ejaculation was, “Old yer ed down.” Another boy said, “Don’t never go no further ner the top of the ill.” The language of the playground teams with such expressions. If all teachers were to join in the games with the express object of trying to make a reformation in this matter, something might be done.  (*AJHR* 1882, E1B: 7)
In every year between 1880 and 1913 at least one inspector, and often more than one, referred to the dropping of the aspirate.

1883 Southland inspectors:
…the initial h is too cruelly neglected in many quarters.  (AJHR 1883, E-13: 24)

1884 South Canterbury inspectors:
In a few schools …the pupils frequently drop the “h”.  (AJHR 1884, E-1B: 23)

1884 Westland inspector:
In one school the teacher of which habitually disregards the aspirate, both in speaking and reading the sound of the letter ‘h’ is scarcely ever heard.  
(AJHR 1884, E-1B: 23)

1896 Taranaki inspector:
Dropping the final consonant and misplacing the aspirate also are very common in some parts of the district, the latter being extremely difficult to overcome.  (AJHR 1896, E-1B: 8)

1905 Nelson inspectors:
The use of the aspirate still presents difficulty in a few localities, the home influence being hard to overcome.  (AJHR 1905, E-1B: 30)

After about 1905, the references to h-dropping declined and those who did mention it suggested that it was less common.

1907 Marlborough inspector:
The trouble with ‘h’ was less pronounced this year, and there was evidence of an organized attempt to deal with it….  (AJHR 1907, E-1B: 23)

1908 Westland inspector:
The consonants suffer mostly from indolent methods, especially final letters. This does not apply so much to the initial ‘h’, the omission of which is now infrequent.  (AJHR 1908, E-2: 124)

1913 Grey District inspector:
The misplacing of the aspirate and the dropping of the final “g” were hardly ever met with.  (AJHR 1913, E-2 App. C: xxxvii)

The view that h-dropping was declining was supported by Mr A. Heine, acting headmaster of Wellington College, in his submission to the Cohen Commission on Education in 1912: “…you very rarely find a boy dropping his h’s” (AJHR 1912, E-12: 623). Charles Baeyertz quoted E.W. Andrews of Napier Boys’ High School, who made the same point.

With regard to ‘h’ which is so commonly misplaced in England as a sin of both omission and commission, I have never come across a boy, born and educated in New Zealand, who had any difficulty with this refractory letter. He rather
overdoes the sound, if anything, triumphing over the obstacle so vigorously that victory then becomes defeat… it would almost make the hearers think that the ancestors of the New Zealander had been dropping h’s for generations, and that he is nowadays engaged in picking them up several at a time!

(The Triad 10 August 1910: 37)

3. Methodological issues

The research of Samuel McBurney on his visit to New Zealand in 1887 has been described by Bauer as “the earliest trustworthy account of New Zealand English pronunciation” (1994: 391). How trustworthy is McBurney’s account? We know that he had taught himself phonetics on the sea voyage to Australia and his information, published by Ellis in 1889, was considered reliable.

One of the first problems a modern researcher has with McBurney’s table of pronunciations is his use of the phonetic transcription Glossic, which Ellis converted into palaeotype. Like old recording technology, Glossic is no longer used or even understood today. McBurney’s symbols would have remained obscure without the lucky discovery of A.J. Ellis’s book Speech in Song: being the singer’s pronouncing primer of the principal European languages for which vocal music is usually composed. In this small, undated book Ellis provided key words for his symbols. Because McBurney used a phonetic script his observations are more reliable and capable of finer distinctions than are possible with the manipulation of orthodox spelling as used by lay commentators. There is always a question of how good a phonetician McBurney was, and this we cannot answer. Without any other information, and without similar material from this time, much must be taken on trust.

From the viewpoint of a modern researcher, McBurney’s social categorisation of sounds is primitive. Ellis (1889: 239) tells us that he used eight categories:

- **G** general or almost all, more than three quarters; **m** many or more than half; **e** equal proportion, and hence if only one or two pronunciation are mentioned, half; **s** some or several, but less than half; **f** few, two or three, less than a quarter; **?** doubtful if the proportion is rightly estimated.

“In some cases,” wrote Ellis, “he even found it expedient to separate the habits of boys (B) and girls (G) in schools” (1889: 237). One of the difficulties with this system of categorisation is that we are not told how many people McBurney had in his sample, so the figures need to be taken with some caution.

McBurney’s information can be contradictory. He claimed in his table, for example, that there was no evidence of final /r/ in Dunedin, even though in a note he said the /r/ on more was heard more in Dunedin than in other places. In his article in The Press McBurney claimed that in New Zealand (as in Australia) there was “a general
tendency for a Cockney pronunciation” and he gives the seven features of Cockney as described by Ellis. He tells us that of these, the “clipping of ing, as in singin’ and shillin’” was the only Cockney feature commonly heard in New Zealand. It is surprising, therefore, that he did not collect examples of the /ıŋ/ or /ın/ suffix for ‘-ing’ for his comparative table of Australasian pronunciation.

A more minor difficulty for researchers is the fact that in Ellis (1889), McBurney’s article on New Zealand pronunciation is said to have been published in the Lyttelton Times in Christchurch, whereas it was actually printed in The Press.

In a footnote Ellis referred directly to the methodological problem of using the written word as linguistic evidence. He wrote that McBurney did not test the words city and simplicity for HAPPY-tensing until he came to Brisbane. In that city two Englishmen drew it to his attention as “a colonial peculiarity.” After the feature was pointed out to him, McBurney then found it in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne and all the New Zealand towns he visited. It is highly probable that HAPPY-tensing existed in the towns in Victoria and in Tasmania that McBurney visited before Brisbane. However, using only written evidence, this cannot be assumed.

The writing of other individuals complaining about the New Zealand accent introduces a different set of methodological problems. Where McBurney took notes in a phonetic transcription, others had only the resources of conventional spelling. For some examples it is not difficult to recognise the intended pronunciations – ‘fine’ pronounced as ‘foine’ for example. In some cases the writers struggled to find an appropriate representation of the sounds they were describing. A number of different versions were produced to represent the diphthong shift in /au/: “teown for town”, “nee-ow for now”, “bree-a-oon (brown)”, “heyow neyow breyown ceyow (how now brown cow)” for example.

Considering the written word as linguistic evidence raises the question of the absence of written comment about certain features. McBurney demonstrated that /æ/ was highly variable, giving four variants of hand; the school inspectors and the writers in The Triad make no reference at all to this vowel. This could be because their purpose, unlike McBurney’s, was not to describe but to prescribe. Diphthong shifting with the closing diphthongs was salient and seen as unpleasant; the variable /æ/ vowel was just not noteworthy. In McBurney’s table there is one example of the /s/ vowel in the test word pearl. There are no references to this vowel in any of the school inspectors’ reports, or in The Triad. In present day New Zealand English /s/ is a strikingly rounded vowel. From the written evidence it is impossible to know if the absence of early comment about /s/ was because the distinctive rounding had not yet taken place, or because it had taken place but was not noticed, or because it had taken place but it was too difficult to represent in conventional spelling.

Another of the questions raised when the written word is used as linguistic evidence is the importance of background information about the writer. With recorded
spoken evidence this is crucial and material is unusable without it. Is it important, for example, whether the writer was New Zealand born or was an immigrant? To understand their writing, do we need to know that McBurney was a Scot who had taught himself phonetics or that Baeyertz was an Australian born teacher of elocution, singing and modern languages?

Background information about some of the school inspectors is difficult to find. But for those for whom we have some details it does not necessarily seem to affect their comments on language. Complaints about h-dropping, for example, were just as likely to be made by men born in New Zealand as by men who came from England or Scotland. It is possible that an outsider would be more aware of New Zealand features of pronunciation than someone who was native born. Robert Lee, for example, the Wellington school inspector, who was one of the first to complain about the /ai/ diphthong (‘foive’ for ‘five’) and the unstressed vowel (‘systum’ for ‘system’), came to New Zealand from Grantham in Scotland as a young man of 27, and wrote these observations at the age of 63. Some inspectors give us clues to their backgrounds in their reports, and also about their attitudes towards language variation. Mr D. Petrie, an Auckland inspector, who came to New Zealand from Scotland in 1874, wrote in his 1907 report:

> During the past year several boys fresh from their native Yorkshire heath and Yorkshire Board schools have passed through my hands. Their dialect was as atrociously uncouth as I remember it 35 years ago. (AJHR 1907, E-1B: 2)

4. **Comparing written records with spoken evidence**

At the University of Canterbury we have the possibility of comparing written accounts of the developing New Zealand accent with spoken evidence. In 1989, the university acquired an archive of recordings collected in 1946–8 by members of the Mobile Disc Recording Unit of the New Zealand National Broadcasting Service. Members of the “Mobile Unit” travelled around several parts of the North Island, and around Otago in the South Island and collected, among other things, reminiscences about the pioneering days of New Zealand’s European settlement (see Lewis 1996; Gordon et al. 2004). In this archive are recordings of over 300 people born in New Zealand between the 1850s and 1890s. In Gordon (1998) a detailed comparison has been made between the data obtained from written records, and the evidence obtained from some of the analysis of the spoken data from the Mobile Unit archive. In this chapter a summary will be provided.

4.1 **Variability in early New Zealand English spoken data**

For all its difficulties, McBurney’s Comparative Table of Australasian Pronunciation has been a valuable resource for those researching early New Zealand English pronunciation. It is a standard reference for anyone who wants to know if a variant was
heard in New Zealand in the 1880s. While the details might not be always reliable, we know from McBurney’s information that there was a high degree of variability in 1887; for example McBurney gave four variants of the vowel in *hand*, three variants of the vowel in *dance*. Analysis of Mobile Unit speakers by Peter Trudgill has also revealed a high degree of variability between speakers and intra-speaker variability. For example, in one speaker the pronunciation of /æ/ varied from [ɛ] to [æ] to [a] (see Trudgill et al. 1998; Trudgill 2004). The spoken data confirms McBurney’s general observation that there was much variability even if it is not able to confirm specific claims as to individual variants in all the geographical locations mentioned in his observations.

### 4.2 H-dropping in the spoken data

Although McBurney claimed that he heard little h-dropping in New Zealand, it was a regular concern of school inspectors after 1880. Recordings of 37 speakers from the Mobile Unit archive born between 1857 and 1898 were analysed for h-dropping. The analysis involved lexical words and grammatical words in a stressed position. The results indicate that h-dropping was used by a minority in the corpus of spoken data. Of the 37 speakers, only nine were marked as h-droppers. For one speaker 60% of the relevant tokens were h-less, for another the figure was 40%, but for five speakers it was between 20% and 30%. Of the nine h-droppers, six were born in the 1850s and 1860s. Of the three who were born in the 1870s, one used only prestige h-dropping (on words like *humble, herb, humour, hotel*).

The spoken data therefore supports the comments of the school inspectors, which identified h-dropping as a problem in some places, but one which reduced over time until by the turn of the century it was rare or non-existent.

### 4.3 Closing diphthongs in the spoken data

The features commented on most regularly in the school inspectors’ reports and in *The Triad* were the four closing diphthongs: /au/, /ai/, /ei/ and /ou/. Unlike h-dropping, which was seen to be the result of carelessness or an unwelcome import from “uncouth” British dialects, the pronunciation of the closing diphthongs was seen to be an integral part of what was called the “colonial twang.”

In the school inspectors’ reports and in *The Triad* there is a clear difference between the references to /au/ and /ai/ on the one hand and /ei/ and /ou/ on the other. Many more complaints are made about /au/ and /ai/, and they appear much earlier – /ai/ in 1889, and /au/ in 1892. It was not until 20 years later that there were comments about /ei/ (in 1909) and /ou/ (in 1912). Comments on /ei/ and /ou/ in the inspectors’ reports and in *The Triad* also occurred for a limited period – /ei/ between 1909 and 1924, and /ou/ between 1912 and 1924. References to /ai/ and /au/, on the other hand, appeared much earlier and continued much longer. In some places, complaints
continued for decades. For example, in the New Zealand Listener magazine, there was a complaint about /ai/ in 1978 (25 November).

The analysis of the spoken data in the Mobile Unit archive shows clear evidence of diphthong shifting and/or of glide weakening, especially with /au/ and /ai/. Of 41 speakers analysed, 25 demonstrated the diphthong shift with /au/ and 13 with /ai/. Only one speaker with the diphthong shift with /ai/ did not also have the shift with /au/. There were also speakers with glide weakened realisations of /au/ and /ai/. (These speakers were also among the oldest in the Mobile Unit archive). Only five speakers out of 41 had the diphthong shift with /ei/ and of these speakers, two had the shift with all of the closing diphthongs, and one had it with /au/, /ai/, and /ei/. Eight speakers out of 41 had diphthong shifting with /ou/, and of these, six also had diphthong shifting either with all the other closing diphthongs or with /au/ and /ai/, or at least /au/.

The results of the analyses of spoken data show clearly that the emerging pattern of diphthong shifting corresponds well with the pattern of comment in the written records. It should also be remembered that those recorded by the Mobile Unit were born well before any comments appeared in writing.

4.4 The unstressed vowel – the spoken evidence

McBurney does not give any information about the unstressed vowel but written comments about the nature of unstressed /ı/ first appeared in 1900, and they continued to appear in the school inspectors’ reports and in The Triad. The Wellington school inspectors in 1908 described it as “a more recent development.” In the Mobile Unit archive, only ten speakers out of 41 analysed had a noticeably centralised vowel /ә/ in the unstressed position as opposed to the other speakers’ relatively front /ı/.

5. Conclusions

An examination of the writing of Samuel McBurney – the describer, and Charles Baeyertz and the school inspectors – the complainers, gives us a source of information about early New Zealand speech. McBurney wrote as early as 1887 that, since coming to New Zealand, he was able definitely to say, “There is another type here” but, he then adds, “this is difficult to define” (The Press Oct 8 1887).

The school inspectors and Baeyertz in The Triad began to complain about a “colonial twang” after about 1900. By 1910, complaints had become widespread. The causes of complaint fall into two categories. H-dropping, which was seen as an irritation, was thought to be the result of carelessness or an import from British dialect. The New Zealand accent, on the other hand, was said to be caused by “the home and the street” and was a much more serious problem. Its noted characteristics largely involved the
pronunciation of /au/ and /ai/ followed some years later by the less noticeable /ei/ and /ou/. Comments were also made about the unstressed vowel.

Spoken evidence has been able to confirm that those writing about early New Zealand pronunciation, notwithstanding their intemperate language, were remarkably accurate in their observations. H-dropping was found in the spoken data of a few speakers, born early in the European settlement, but it diminished over time, until it was practically unknown. This exactly corresponds with the school inspectors’ comments about “difficulties with the aspirate,” comments which ceased altogether after 1913. Diphthong shifting of /au/ and /ai/ was early and common, followed later by the less common /ei/ and /ou/, facts corresponding very well with the written evidence. The one point where the written and spoken data differ is in the timing. Features which were only recognised and commented on after 1900 were found to be present in the spoken English of people born in the 1870s, even 1860s. This supports the idea of a time-lag of 20–30 years before there is public awareness of a sound change (Gordon 1998: 82).

The absence of comment about certain features must also be accounted for. There were no references to the raised /æ/ or the raised /e/ in the school inspectors’ reports or in The Triad, even though there was clear evidence of this raising in the spoken data analysis. This could be because the raising of the front vowels was not a change in New Zealand but a conservative feature imported from Britain (see Trudgill et al. 1998). Another possibility could be that these vowels did not attract comment because they did not have the social stigma of the diphthong shifted closing diphthongs. For example, one speaker in the Mobile Unit archive, Sir Stephen Allen, a member of an aristocratic family, came to New Zealand at the age of 10 in 1894. An analysis of his speech shows remarkably close front vowels.

The purpose of those writing about pronunciation can also affect the results. McBurney produced a non-judgemental list of pronunciations he heard. He was interested in describing variation. The school inspectors and Baeyertz, on the other hand, concentrated on a small group of sounds that symbolised for them the undesirable changes in New Zealand speech which they wished to remedy. Sounds or changes that were not stigmatised did not get mentioned.

The existence of spoken data enables us to recognise features which were present in the recordings but which were not commented on in the written accounts. This is important when we are reconstructing an earlier variety from written records. It can help us to establish which features might have been the result of innovation and which were conservative, and to determine which changes had reached a level of public awareness at that time. The written word as linguistic evidence can be valuable and illuminating, but there is always a slight doubt, as we have with the work of McBurney, that the information might be inaccurate or incomplete. As his written words are all we have, and they were written in 1887, there is no possibility of checking their accuracy. Put beside the evidence of spoken data some of these difficulties can be resolved,
and together the two sources of data are mutually illuminating. The emerging pattern of diphthong shifting found in the analysis of spoken data corresponds closely with the pattern of comment in the written records. This is a remarkable finding made possible by the existence of two sources of data. The combination of both written and spoken data produces a complex and interesting picture of early New Zealand English.

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