



Dialect in the Making: A Third-wave Sociolinguistic Approach to the Enregisterment of Late Modern Derbyshire Spelling

PAULA SCHINTU MARTÍNEZ*
Universidad de Salamanca (Spain)

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ABSTRACT

Within the framework of third-wave sociolinguistic research, Asif Agha's (2003) theory of *enregisterment* has proved a successful approach to explore the mechanisms that lead to the indexical connection between language and identity. Beal (2009, 2020), Cooper (2013, 2020), and Ruano-García (2012, 2020, 2021), among others, have investigated this phenomenon from a diachronic perspective. They have highlighted the value of dialect writing as a window into the main features associated with particular dialects, as it draws upon authenticating practices such as the use of dialect respellings, which not only signal salient phonological features, but also link them to wider schemes of sociocultural values and identities. This paper seeks to add to this field of research by looking at literary representations of Derbyshire speech (1850–1900) through the lens of enregisterment. My aims are twofold: I attempt to (1) shed light on the main phonological features of the Derbyshire dialect, while (2) determining how this variety was enregistered in the Late Modern English period, and whether meaningful text type-dependent indexical shifts might have affected the way in which this dialect was understood and thus represented by native and non-native speakers.

KEYWORDS

Derbyshire dialect; Enregisterment; Respellings; Late Modern English.

1. INTRODUCTION

The past twenty years have seen an increased interest in the study of the instrumental function of language in social and stylistic practice, displacing traditional views of speakers as “passive and stable carriers of [language]” and advocating for their role as “stylistic agents

**Address for correspondence*: Calle Placentinos, 18, Department of English Studies, Faculty of Philology University of Salamanca, 37008 Salamanca, Spain; e-mail: paulasch@usal.es

tailoring linguistic styles in ongoing and lifelong projects of self-construction and differentiation” (Eckert, 2012: 97). Such an approach to language use has brought the individual to the forefront of sociolinguistic enquiry by emphasising their active role in the construction of social meaning via linguistic variation, which is seen as a product of speaker’s agency rather than as the result of external social pressures. This shift from a variable-dependent to a speaker-centered, socio-constructivist view of sociolinguistic variation is framed within what Eckert (2012) has called the third wave of variation studies, a research current that focuses on patterns of intra-speaker variation in which language is deployed as a “semiotic resource, where style is a crucial part of social meaning-making and the projection of difference between individuals and groups due to the symbolic significance of choice” (Hernández-Campoy, 2016: 31). It is the creative potential of choice, therefore, that allows the (re)construction of sociolinguistic meaning, which, as Eckert (2012: 94) explains, is constantly negotiated in stylistic practice, “as speakers make social-semiotic moves, reinterpreting variables and combining and recombining them in a continual process of bricolage”. And it is when the mutability of sociolinguistic meaning comes into play that the notions of *indexicality* and *enregisterment* become relevant.

Already in the 18th century, Samuel Pegge (1704–1796) remarked on the distinctiveness of his native Derbyshire dialect by commenting on its peculiar “pronunciation [, which was] widely different from that of the South [;] much to be preferred, as more analogical and more consonant to orthography” (1896 [c. 1751]: xix). As such, he presented the variety as a separate linguistic entity on account of its characteristic phonology, which was markedly different from northern and southern English. Pegge’s observations thus testify to early awareness of sociolinguistic differences as regards dialect sounds in Derbyshire, which would later be mirrored in the considerable body of Derbyshire dialect writing that emerged during the 19th century. These works provide windows not only into the variety’s main phonological features reflected in the non-standard spellings employed to represent dialect sounds, but also into the processes of enregisterment of the form-meaning connections they depict.

This paper explores the enregisterment of late modern Derbyshire dialect by focusing on the pronunciation respellings employed in literary representations of the variety taken from the *Salamanca Corpus* (García-Bermejo Giner et al., 2011). It examines instances of both dialect literature (henceforth DL) and literary dialect (henceforth LD) (Shorrocks, 1996) in an attempt to identify potentially enregistered phonological features of Derbyshire speech, while trying to unearth possible indexical shifts that can be attributed to the type of dialect representation. The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 deals with Silverstein’s (1976) and Agha’s (2003) notions of *indexicality* and *enregisterment* and focuses on the study of these phenomena in historical contexts via the exploration of literary representations of dialect.¹ Instances of Derbyshire dialect writing are surveyed in the following section, where

a brief explanation of the socio-historical context in which they were published, and the main motifs and motivations underlying dialect representation is also provided. Section 4 is devoted to the analysis of the data, while it also includes the main methodological considerations behind this study. Finally, section 5 summarises the most important conclusions drawn from the analysis.

2. FROM LANGUAGE TO SOCIAL ASSET: THE NOTIONS OF INDEXICALITY AND ENREGISTERMENT

Michael Silverstein's (1976) and Asif Agha's (2003) notions of *indexicality* and *enregisterment* constitute two different yet interrelated frameworks for the understanding of the dynamic processes of gradual (re)valorisation of patterns of language use whereby linguistic choices become "objects of value" in social practice (Agha, 2003: 232). Echoing Labov's (1972: 178–180) concepts of *indicators*, *markers*, and *stereotypes*, Silverstein (1976) distinguishes three stages that describe the increasing levels of speaker awareness of the indexical link between language and ideology based on their social evaluation of specific linguistic features. His theory of indexicality would later be expanded by Johnstone et al. (2006), who explore the three orders by complementing Labov's first-wave approach to linguistic variation in order to further refine our understanding of this value assignment process. At the first order of indexicality, there is a correlation between a given linguistic feature and a certain socio-demographic category which is often accounted for by outsiders of the speech community, as speakers are unaware of the indexical link that exists between their language and specific cultural values. Thus, and since the linkages between language and social values become meaningful only upon awareness, "first-order indexicality is potential indexicality" (Johnstone et al., 2006: 83). It is precisely speaker awareness that marks the shift from first to second-order indexicality, when speakers come to interpret and rationalise the connection between their habits of speech and certain social connotations. Second-order indexicality thus involves style-shifting on the basis of social criteria, as speakers have become aware that the use of certain linguistic features entails a message. This is made possible by processes of social mobility, which Johnstone et al. (2006) identify as crucial practices that disrupt otherwise close social networks, allowing comparison, contrast, and variation. At the third order of indexicality, the possibility of second-order stylistic variability has become noticeable enough so that speakers may overtly comment and deliberately turn to regional forms to perform and (re)construct identity, thus playing "an active part in the transmission of the social meanings associated with linguistic features" (Beal, 2020: 53), which begin to be employed as tokens of regional identity (Johnstone et al., 2006: 93).

While there is a correlation between Labov's taxonomy and Silverstein's paradigm in general, and between the Labovian notion of *stereotype* and the third-order of indexicality in

particular, Eckert (2008: 463) points at a crucial difference between them. According to her, the key distinction is in the “continual interpretation of forms in context, [the] in-the-moment assigning of indexical values to linguistic forms”. Unlike Labovian categories, Silverstein’s orders of indexicality are always subject to (re)interpretation on the part of speakers, and thus linguistic variables cannot be attributed permanent social meanings. Rather, they have a wide range of potential context-dependent interpretations that Eckert (2008: 453) calls *indexical fields*. While stigmatised stereotypes in the Labovian sense are liable to disappear, third-wave research has shown that third-order indexicals are not the last step of the process (see Beal, 2020: 53). In fact, third-order indexicality is central in processes of enregisterment.

Enregisterment —the “processes through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms” (Agha, 2003: 231)— has become central in third-wave research seeking to explain the connection between language and social values, as well as the mechanisms by which sets of linguistic forms come to be perceived as distinctive varieties and registers. As is well known, registers are not inherently loaded with social meaning, but are rather context-bound linguistic constructs that reflect and develop from speakers’ social and linguistic performance. They are built upon “a precipitate of sociohistorically locatable practices, including discursive practices, which imbue cultural forms with recognizable sign-values and bring these values into circulation along identifiable trajectories in social space” (Agha, 2003: 232). In fact, it is precisely the link between linguistic repertoires and particular ideological schemes that allows the contrastive evaluation of linguistic varieties. In order for individuals to be able to trace this connection and, therefore, in order for a variety to be truly enregistered, attention must be drawn to such form-meaning link. This, Agha (2003: 243) claims, necessarily involves “the circulation of messages typifying speech” that allow for the “replication of its forms and values over changing populations” (Agha, 2007: 155). In other words, enregisterment depends on the existence and dissemination of what Johnstone et al. (2006: 80) call *metapragmatic activities*, or “activities that point to a feature’s appropriate context of use”, that locate “register in a continual process of production and reproduction” (Eckert, 2008: 456). Metapragmatic practices include a variety of oral and textual artefacts that not only reflect language features and help to shape the indexical links that connect them with specific social meanings, but also contribute to their circulation and legitimation, creating “public awareness of the values indexed by the features represented, as well as collective ideas about dialects” (Ruano-García, 2020: 3). As such, when metapragmatic activities and the form-meaning connections they circulate become socially regular and accepted, varieties become enregistered and are linked with specific social values and personae, so that their deliberate use becomes in itself an “act of identity” (Clark, 2013: 442).

In this sense, a key issue to bear in mind when discussing enregisterment is that of authenticity, as Agha’s theory is not concerned with whether enregistered features are

authentic or not, but rather with how sociolinguistic traits are attributed such quality. In line with third-wave, socio-constructivist approaches to language, it views authenticity as the result of speakers' self-conscious, strategic, ever-changing and creative linguistic demeanour rather than as an immutable and deterministic property inherently granted by social or regional provenance. It is by means of speakers' constant (re)negotiation of sociolinguistic meaning in social and stylistic activity that speech communities' *claimed* linguistic peculiarities become indexical of *perceived* authentic personae and come to be available for identity performance not only by insiders, but also by outsiders to the variety. Indeed, authenticity claims "feature in conventionalised accounts of what is distinctive about local speech, once a speech style has come to people's awareness through the process of enregisterment" (Coupland, 2014: 28).

Agha's approach has been adopted by a number of scholars investigating variation due to its potential to provide a more refined understanding of the meaning of linguistic varieties in social context. Well-known are the pioneering works on Pittsburghese by Johnstone (2006, 2009, 2011, 2013, among others) and Johnstone et al. (2006), which have laid the foundation for the study of the enregisterment of modern dialects. Research on this phenomenon in historical contexts, though, has received less attention. Relevant examples are Asprey (2020), Beal (2009, 2012, 2016, 2020), Cooper (2013, 2016, 2020), Beal and Cooper (2015), Ruano-García (2012, 2020, 2021), and Schintu (2020), who have explored older varieties of British English. Further works on historical enregisterment include Picone (2014), Amador-Moreno and McCafferty (2015), and Paulsen (2022), which have been concerned with Irish and American dialects. All these works have highlighted the role of historical textual material as a source of both linguistic and sociolinguistic information about dialects long gone by. Crucially, most of them turn to literary representations of dialect as a tool to reconstruct the form-meaning connections reflected in the performative interplay between literary characterological types and their linguistic behaviour, which is in turn mediated by the real-life experience, perceptions, and ever-changing shared expectations of literary authors and audiences. Their views on dialects, thus, have a direct impact on the way linguistic varieties are publicly construed, (re)valorised, and (re)typified (Ruano-García, 2021: 124), which highlights the agentive role of dialect writers in building and circulating ideas about linguistic varieties. As such, dialect writing not only offers fertile ground for the exploration of enregistered dialect features at a particular point in time. Rather, it is also "a rich, though complex, source to attest to" "indexicalisation changes" (Asprey, 2020: 48) over prolonged periods and across changing populations, as form-meaning connections are always subject to (re)interpretation on the part of speakers, which often results in enregistered items undergoing indexical shifts as their social meanings are negotiated by changing speaking communities (see Cooper, 2013, 2016; Ruano-García, 2020).

Dialect writing can therefore be understood as a conscious indexical process in which writers' linguistic choices imbue dialect items with social and regional values, thereby leading to the enregisterment of the forms they represent. By reason of their opposition to the normative variety, linguistic features become loaded with social meaning whereby they come to be understood as sociolinguistic markers of specific registers and identities. Thus, they not only inform us about the perceived salience of particular items, but also “perform identity work insofar as their choice evokes a set of social and linguistic values linked with place and indexical of character” (Ruano-García, forthcoming: 8). In this line, the orthographic representation of dialectal phonology is a case in point, as the conscious respelling of particular words “is one of the most obvious signs that a text is intended to be dialect writing” (Honeybone, 2020: 213). Orthography, Sebba (2007: 31) claims, can be seen as “a social practice —a widespread and recurrent activity which involves members of a community in making meaningful choices, albeit from a constrained set of possibilities”. The possibility of variation endows pronunciation respellings with indexical power; as such, they not only depict “a representation of a sound pattern, but also links to a framework of social identity” (Clark, 2020: 105). Therefore, as Ruano-García (2020: 6) explains, “their generalisation to evoke and highlight specific dialectal sounds [...] contributes to activating and propagating ideas about which features are enregistered in the dialect”.

3. LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DERBYSHIRE DIALECT

As is well-known, the late 18th and 19th centuries were a period characterised by an unprecedented linguistic awareness prompted by several factors such as the improvements in education and transport, as well as the increasing social mobility whereby the English aspiring and self-conscious middle class became linguistically insecure. However, in a period when standardisation and levelling should have been the most immediate consequences of England's socio-demographic context, the same factors that threatened English linguistic heterogeneity also brought dialects to the fore, including, of course, in literature. Dialect writing developed in response to the needs and concerns of the emergent urban working class. For the first time during this period, as Shorrocks (1999: 89, 95) argues, the population “wanted to read about their own class” “in their own language”, and regional novels had the potential to provide “both entertainment and consolation within the sphere of the familiar” while putting forward the emancipation of the working classes (Vicinus, 1974: 2–3). Indeed, Hodson (2017: 1) claims that “the number of dialects represented increased, as did the range of dialect-speaking characters and the degree of detail with which those dialects were represented”, as late modern authors aimed at a faithful representation of local and lower-class reality, which of course entailed the depiction of the language of the communities portrayed (Blake, 1981: 162). In this context, highly industrialised areas such as Yorkshire

and Lancashire received extensive literary attention, while others like the Midland counties rather lagged behind. Still, when it comes to the representation in literature of the Midland dialects, as García-Bermejo Giner (1994: 240) points out, “it seems that the speech of Derbyshire was the one preferred”. 19th-century Derbyshire witnessed the production and publication of a considerable number of dialect works that, similar to the Lancashire texts described by Ruano-García (2020: 8), became “a mode of popular entertainment” which dealt with the “concerns and preoccupations often set in domestic contexts [...], the celebration of family virtues and the daily life of the working classes”. They placed members of the lower classes within an upper-class oriented society and helped to create and strengthen feelings of solidarity and reassurance among them.

LD works are the most numerous in 19th-century Derbyshire, and they represent both poetry and prose. Instances of Derbyshire verse include Thomas Tapping’s (1817–1886) 1851 edition of Edward Manlove’s *The Liberties and Customs of the Lead Mines within the Wapentake of Wirksworth in the County of Derby* (1653), which is the earliest literary record of the dialect. The poem elaborates on the customs of the town and the “strange and uncoth” (Tapping, 1851: 19) language of its “poor and laborious” (20) inhabitants. Their identity and peculiar idiosyncrasy are here extolled, while the dialect represented mostly revolves around mining lexis Manlove intends to preserve and make known. Another interesting example is Richard Furness’s (1791–1857) *Medicus Magus or the Astrologer. A Poem with a Glossary* (1836). In line with Manlove’s work, both the poem and the glossary are rich in mining terminology, which highlights Furness’s wish to showcase and safeguard such linguistic relics. The poem also celebrates the lifestyle, traditions, and language of Furness’s fellow working-class natives, as, in the author’s own words, “the character of *labourer* is most *honourable*” (vi).

LD prose focuses on similar themes. Mary Howitt’s (1799–1888) *My Uncle, the Clockmaker* (1844: 22), for instance, revolves around the daily affairs of the humble working-class inhabitants of a Derbyshire village, who are described as families of no “great worldly account [...]; merely farmers, cottagers and labourers”. Just like Howitt, Frances Parthenope Verney (1819–1890) also used dialect to characterise Derbyshire natives in *Stone Edge* (1868), given that regional forms were “fast dying out in England” (qtd. in García-Bermejo Giner, 1994: 241). Although Lady Verney was not a dialect speaker herself, she was keen on regional dialects, including that spoken in Derbyshire, where she spent prolonged periods of her life at her residence in Lea Hurst (North Derbyshire) (García-Bermejo Giner, 1994: 241). Her novel tells the story of a family of poor and hardworking farmers. By means of characters such as Roland Stracey, Lady Verney depicts the lives of those who had to travel and migrate from rural Derbyshire to industrialised urban centres in search for a better future: this allowed her to recreate differences in speech not only at the regional, but also at

the social level. The contrast between Derbyshire country life and the city is also addressed by Mrs. Humphrey Ward (1851–1920) in *The History of David Grieve* (1892). The first part of volume I narrates the protagonist's childhood in a dialect-speaking farming community in the High Peak. Just like Lady Verney, Mrs. Humphrey Ward was not a native of the region; however, she did have knowledge of its dialect. During the novel's writing process, the author travelled to the Peak District in an attempt to collect first-hand information about the variety, which she profusely represented throughout the pages of her work (García-Bermejo Giner, 1994: 242). The lives and idiosyncrasy of “the rough-and-ready” Derbeians (Murray, 1897: 179) are likewise documented in Robert Murray Gilchrist's (1867–1917) works, where the author's interest in Derbyshire and the Peak District can be observed. Such an interest, García-Bermejo Giner (1994: 242) contends, might derive from the years the Sheffield-born author lived in the county, during which time he probably attained the knowledge of the local speech he shows in his novels. *A Peakland Faggot. Tales of Milton Folk* (1897) is a collection of stories set in rural Derbyshire. In line with most of the LD works published in the period, the stereotypical non-mobile and industrious farming communities are the focus of these tales, in which we can find the same tropes, identities, and motifs that permeate the vast majority of dialect writing representing Derbyshire, its people, and their dialect.² The stories contained in *A Peakland Faggot* (1897), together with those in Murray's *Frangippany* (1893), *The Rue Bargain* (1898), *Willowbrake* (1898), and *Nicholas and Mary, and other Milton Folk* (1899), contain abundant dialect respellings, lexis, and morphology which are systematically deployed to identify Derbyshire natives.

Works composed by dialect-speaking authors are comparatively less common. As regards DL poetry, only very short works can be found. An example is *Derbyshire Men* (1864), a brief poem including instances of local speech written by Walter Kirkland of Matlock (1828–1899) which was published in *The Reliquary*. The poem has as its point of departure the well-known proverb *Derbyshire born, Derbyshire bred, strong i' th' arm, an' wik i' th' yed*. Kirkland opposes here the traditional and mistaken interpretation of such a saying by extolling the virtues of his fellow Derbeians and their cultural identity based on “the rich vein'd Mine [and] the Mountain hoar” (1864: 145). The poem displays a variety of non-standard spellings representing dialect sounds, as well as Derbyshire lexis and a few morphological traits.

During the decade between 1870 and 1881, Joseph Barlow Robinson (c.1820–1883) wrote the only available examples of 19th-century DL prose: five short stories narrated and featured by the character of Sammy Twitcher. Robinson was concerned about the loss of his native dialect due to the social and demographic changes of the 1800s, as we learn in the preface to his first work, *Owd Sammy Twitcher's Visit tu't Gret Exibushun e Derby* (1870a: 1–2), in which he advocates for the preservation of local varieties by means of the written word:

the time is fast approaching when, by the spread of education, railways, and other means, all peculiarities will be lost, and merge into one general and universal manner of speech throughout the kingdom. A work of this character will then serve to give future generations some idea of those who lived before them, and prevent their many peculiarities from being totally lost.

He set out to record “the thoughts and manner of speech of one of the many old farmers yet to be met with: jolly old chaps, with more genuine fun in them than half-a-dozen of the young ones growing up round them” (1870a: 1). Robinson’s stories are rich in dialect spellings, morphology and lexis. In fact, some of them include glossaries explaining some of the dialect words used. Besides displaying and advocating for the use of dialect, these works, like their LD counterparts, are also a celebration of the local. Interestingly, they recall Cooper’s (2013: 262–264) description of “celebratory dialect literature” in 19th-century Yorkshire in that they are allegedly written by a native ‘character’, in this case Owd Sammy Twitcher, as a celebration of his community’s lifestyle and language.³

Mirroring the contemporary socio-cultural setting stemmed from the changes prompted by the Industrial Revolution, most of these works reflect the concerns, lives, identities, and demands of those who wrote and read them. They share a range of common themes and motifs which give insight into late modern Derbyshire life, culture and language. Within this context, dialect features acted as a tool to both characterise and shape the identities of the members of this speech community, while establishing their relationship with the outer world and specifying their position within contemporary social hierarchies based on their linguistic performance. As such, literary representations of dialect are valuable sources of information not only about the variety’s most salient linguistic features, but also about the patterns of language use and the rationale and social dynamics which underlie them. These, in actual fact, constitute a window into late modern Derbyshire and the enregisterment of its characteristic language.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

4.1. Methodological remarks

This paper draws on a selection of texts, most of them extracted from *The Salamanca Corpus* (García-Bermejo Giner et al., 2011), which have been chosen according to three main criteria. Firstly, only texts published in the period between 1850 and 1900 have been considered. This time period has been selected given the limited availability of texts during the first half of the century, and because evidence on dialect awareness is more commonly documented then than in any other period given the increased geographical mobility caused by the Industrial Revolution. The selection has aimed at providing a representative, well-

balanced sample of the dialect, and thus the corpus contains texts for every decade of the period analysed, when possible.⁴ Secondly, all the literary works selected are prose fiction texts. Finally, in an attempt to unearth potential indexical shifts that can be attributed to the type of dialect representation, the corpus contains examples of both DL and LD given the key differences between these two text types in terms of authorship, purpose, and target audience, which may affect the information they provide about the variety under study and the associated contemporary perceptions. As a result, the analysis is based on a total of seven texts. These amount to a total of 267,422 words, including both dialectal and standard language.

The texts shown in Table 1 have been processed and analysed using corpus software for quantitative information, and the data obtained have been classified according to the standard pronunciation of the terms gathered following the lexical sets proposed by Wells (1982). Although a considerable number of potentially enregistered phonological features has been identified, this study focuses on highly consistent and recurrent traits (> 700 tokens), and examines the four most frequent respellings employed to represent each of them. The resulting data have also been approached from a qualitative perspective by comparing them against contemporary non-literary evidence on the dialect which included discussion of the variety's linguistic features.

Table 1. Corpus texts.

Dialect representation	Year	Author	Title	N words
DL	1870a	Robinson, Joseph B.	<i>Owd Sammy Twitcher's Visit tu't Gret Exhibishun e Derby</i>	7,764
DL	1870b	Robinson, Joseph B.	<i>Owd Sammy Twitcher's Crismas Bowk for the Year 1870</i>	8,535
LD	1864	Le Fanu, Joseph S.	<i>Uncle Silas</i>	54,958
LD	1868	Verney, Frances P.	<i>Stone Edge</i>	66,541
LD	1870-71	Brushfield, Thomas ⁵	<i>A Village Sketch, at Ashford-in-the-water, in Illustration of the Derbyshire Dialect</i>	1,584
LD	1892	Humphrey Ward, Mrs.	<i>The History of David Grieve (Vol. I)</i>	95,893
LD	1897	Murray Gilchrist, Robert	<i>A Peakland Faggot</i>	32,147
TOTAL				267,422

4.2. Linguistic analysis

Quantification of the data has brought to light clear patterns in the way the Derbyshire dialect is represented in both DL and LD. They involve a set of respellings suggestive of specific dialectal phonological features; these are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Most consistent non-standard phonological features in the corpus (> 700 tokens):⁶ raw data and NF / 1,000.

Traits (examples)	DL			LD			TOTAL		
	Types	Tokens	NF	Types	Tokens	NF	Types	Tokens	NF
STRUT (<i>coom</i> ‘come’)	71	394	24.17	98	524	2.09	169	918	3.43
GOAT (<i>goo</i> ‘go’)	67	297	18.22	68	497	1.98	135	794	2.97
MOUTH (<i>abaaat</i> ‘about’)	85	427	26.20	64	308	1.23	149	735	2.75
FACE (<i>mak</i> ‘make’)	105	364	22.33	57	356	1.42	162	720	2.69

As Table 2 shows, 19th-century literary representations of the Derbyshire dialect relied on a common set of fairly recurrent phonological traits which include dialectal realisations of STRUT, GOAT, MOUTH, and FACE. The fact that these features are not only consistently employed in the two text types considered, but are also present in all the texts analysed, goes some way towards suggesting that they were widely recognised and thus enregistered as characteristically Derbyshire both within and outside the speech community where they were used. However, taken individually, the data extracted from DL and LD point to differences in the degree of perceived localness of the features represented depending on the type of dialect representation and, consequently, on the writers and audiences involved in their production. It is necessary, therefore, to further scrutinise the distribution of these phonological features in order to gain in-depth knowledge of the rationale behind their literary use as well as of their social and regional significance.

4.2.1. The STRUT set

Table 3. Top four STRUT respellings in the corpus (raw numbers).

Respellings	Examples	DL		LD		Total	
		Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens
<u>	<i>suns</i> ‘sons’	60	293	18	101	78	394
<oo>	<i>roon</i> ‘run’	0	0	48	301	48	301

<i>	<i>sich</i> ‘such’	5	38	13	69	18	107
<o>	<i>onwillin</i> ‘unwilling’	5	62	7	7	12	69

Table 3 shows that Derbyshire STRUT is most frequently represented by means of <u> and <oo> respellings. They point at [u]-type sounds, which are extensively documented in contemporary non-literary sources like Hallam (1885, 1896), Ellis (1889), and the *English Dialect Grammar* (henceforth *EDG* [Wright, 1905]), where examples such as *su_om* ‘some’ (1889: 429), *muudd-ŭ-r* ‘mother’ (1896: lxxxv-lxxxvii),⁷ and *uf* ‘enough’ (§167) are extremely common. This suggests that the centralisation and unrounding of medieval /u/ that traditionally distinguishes northern and southern varieties of British English (Wells, 1982: 337; Trudgill, 1990: 51, among others) might not have taken place in the dialect. Indeed, Ihalainen (1994: 220) points out that “rounded *u* is really both a midland and northern feature”, which concurs with Clark’s claim (2004: 139) that the linguistic North includes “the Birmingham-Wolverhampton conurbation”, thereby placing the [ʊ] isogloss somewhere south of the West Midlands. Although tripled by <oo>, <i> respellings are relatively common in the corpus too. Interestingly enough, and in line with the non-literary sources consulted (see Ellis, 1889: 431, for instance), two forms stand out as the most frequent items: *mi(t)ch* ‘much’ and, particularly, *si(t)ch* ‘such’, which are not otherwise respelt. Finally, <o> respellings, most likely pointing at [ɒ], are also documented both in the corpus and in Pegge (1896: x), Ellis (1889: 434), and the *EDG* (§169), which respectively record *plom* ‘plum’, *wɔn* ‘one’, and *o* in *mother*.

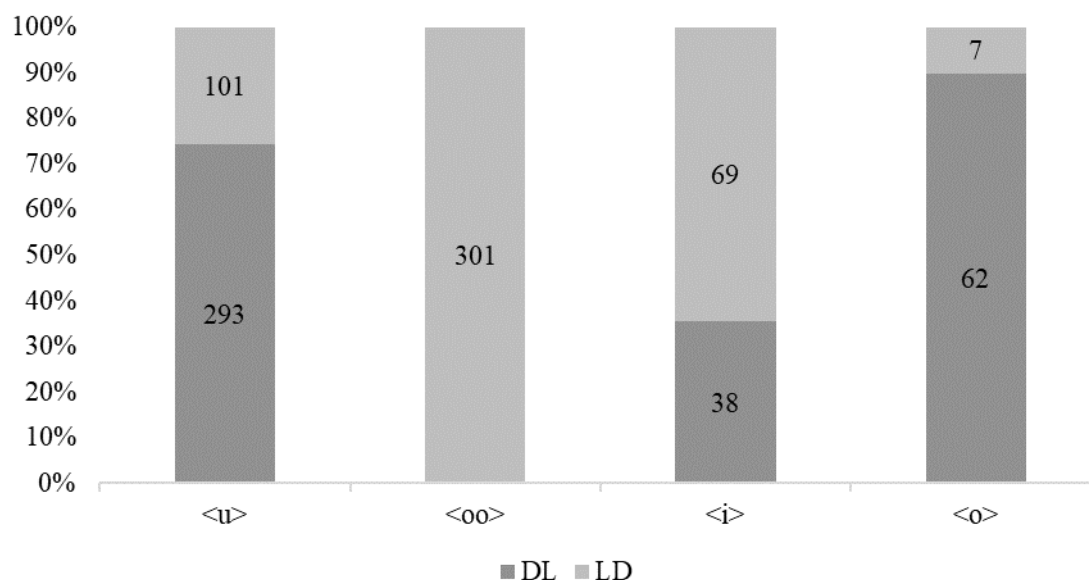


Figure 1. Distribution of the STRUT respellings in the corpus: DL vs. LD (raw numbers).

As can be gleaned from Figure 1, however, a closer look at the data and their distribution across DL and LD reveals meaningful variation in the representation of STRUT across text types, pointing to discrepancies in the degree of perceived localness of the features reflected depending on the author and audience addressed. <u>, which, as previously discussed, is clearly evocative of unsplit [ʊ], is by far the most frequent in the DL data, which reveals the salience of the lack of FOOT/STRUT split for natives of the dialect, especially as regards *sum* ‘some’ and related forms like *summut* ‘something’, which prevail over the other forms. Respellings indicative of lack of FOOT/STRUT split visibly outnumber other less common forms in LD too, though the data seem to cast a different light on their distribution. Overall, LD <u> is clearly outnumbered by <oo>, which suggests that <u> forms were not so commonly favoured by non-native writers and readers. Instead, LD writers tended to choose <oo>, which does not feature in texts written by native speakers, on a significantly more frequent basis, particularly when it comes to *coom* ‘come’ and *soom* ‘some’. Unlike in the case of *coom*, however, <u> respellings of *some* do appear relatively frequently in the LD material. Interestingly enough, they seem to be lexically restricted: they correspond to the term *summat/summut* ‘something’. Even the texts that represent other forms of *some* by means of <oo> crucially turn to <u> for this term, which they quite consistently respell with <u>, suggesting that, in line with the DL data, it could have been an accepted convention in the representation of the dialect.

<o> respellings seem to be restricted to very specific lexical items (e.g., *kom* ‘come’, *won* ‘one’) and are mostly confined to the DL material, suggesting that, while they were relatively emblematic for native Derbeians, they were hardly noticeable for outsiders. Just like <o>, <i> is used for a limited number of high-frequency words, among which *mi(t)ch* ‘much’ and *si(t)ch* ‘such’ stand out as the most recurrent in both text types.

4.2.2. The GOAT set

Table 4. Top four GOAT respellings in the corpus (raw numbers).

Respellings	Examples ⁸	DL		LD		Total	
		Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens
<u>	<i>druv</i> ‘drove’	6	13	9	187	15	200
<oo>	<i>goos</i> ‘goes’	21	146	7	52	28	198
<oa>	<i>boan</i> ‘bone’	14	47	10	129	24	176
<o(‘)>	<i>ston</i> ‘stone’	8	36	4	8	12	44

Non-standard realisations of GOAT are very frequently represented in the corpus and in contemporary non-literary evidence. Table 4 reveals that alternative spellings suggesting [ʊ],

[u:], and, presumably, the centring diphthong [ʊə] are overwhelmingly more recurrent in the corpus than <o (ʰ)> variants. Pegge (1896) comments on the currency of forms like *goo* and *goo(a)* ‘go’ in the county (ix), which were also reproduced by Hallam (e.g., *gu* ‘go’ (1885: 46), *noa-d* ‘knowed’ (1896: lxxxii)), among others. Although their rate of occurrence is relatively comparable, the variety of items represented by <oo> and <oa> respellings is higher than that of <u>, which was most of the times used to respell the same set of words: enclitic negative forms like *dunno* ‘don’t’, whose representation with <u> is nearly categorical. Finally, words involving /w/ dropping (e.g., *shod* ‘showed’) and the term *whom* ‘home’ are the only <o (ʰ)> form in the corpus. Similar items are found in Ellis (1889); he gives *noon* and *wòm* for ‘known’ and ‘home’, respectively (436, 428).

As with STRUT words, a detailed analysis of the distribution of GOAT respellings across DL and LD reveals considerable discrepancies in the way this particular feature was represented in each of them.

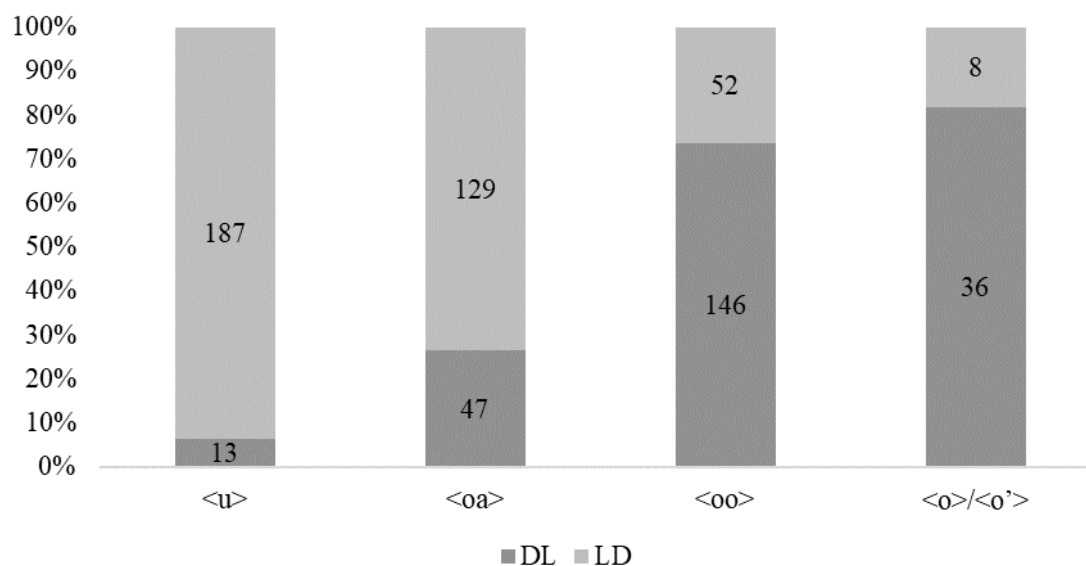


Figure 2. Distribution of the GOAT respellings in the corpus: DL vs. LD (raw numbers).

Figure 2 illustrates how, while <oa> and, most notably, <u> seem to have been perceived as markedly Derbyshire by outsiders, dialect speakers’ understanding of the phonological realisation of GOAT in their native county leaned towards <o (ʰ)> and, particularly <oo> forms, which goes some way towards suggesting that [ʊ] and [u:] realisations of this diphthong were generally understood as typically Derbyshire by native users. These are in turn almost disregarded by LD authors, as are <u> respellings in the DL material. Only 6.5% (13/200) of these forms can be traced to DL texts, where, crucially and similar to LD, they commonly appear in items like *dunna* ‘don’t’. As such, the data suggest that the [ʊ]-pronunciation of the enclitic negative auxiliaries may have been fairly emblematic of the dialect for non-native and native speakers alike. <oa> respellings also

deserve some comment. Despite their high frequency in the LD corpus, 96.9% (125/129) of these forms are found in *The History of David Griev* (1892), which suggests that they could have been the result of authorial preference and, thus, that they were not as noticeable for out-group audiences as the respellings pointing at [ʊ].

4.2.3. The MOUTH set

Table 5. Top four MOUTH respellings in the corpus (raw numbers).

Respellings	Examples	DL		LD		Total	
		Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens
<aa>/<aah>	<i>aar</i> ‘our’	64	316	44	268	108	584
<u>	<i>fun</i> ‘found’	4	33	8	21	12	54
<aw>/<au>	<i>haw</i> ‘how’	6	38	1	3	7	41
<a>/<ah>	<i>math</i> ‘mouth’	8	35	1	1	9	36

Table 5 reveals the predominance of [a:] realisations of MOUTH in the corpus texts: <aa>/<aah> respellings are overwhelmingly more frequent than the other variants both in terms of types and tokens. Together with <a>, they point to the distinctiveness of [a]-type long and short monophthongs, which seem to have been characteristic shibboleths of Derbyshire English. Indeed, Ellis (1889) extensively records spellings pointing at [a:], which was “the general norm” for Derbyshire MOUTH (425) in words like *daats* ‘doubts’ (427). Hallam also testifies to the existence of such sounds in Derbyshire. In fact, he devotes a whole section of his introduction to *Two Collections of Derbicism*s (1896) to the local development of OE /u/ and /u:/ into “[aaw, aa, a]” (xciv), also qualified as the “normal development of OE. ū” in Derbyshire in the *EDG* (146). This certainly underscores the salience of these non-standard MOUTH forms in the Derbyshire dialect. The <a> element can also be found in a number of less frequent digraphs in the corpus, namely <aw> and <au>, which are also documented by Ellis (1889: 425) and the *EDG* (§171). Besides, <u> respellings, although significantly less recurrent than <aa>/<aah>, are the second most common respelling to represent MOUTH. Just a strikingly small number of words are thus represented, namely *bun* ‘bound’, *fun* ‘found’, *grun*’s ‘grounds’, *pun* ‘pound’, *workhus* ‘workhouse’, and related variants (e.g., *fund* ‘found’). The *EDG* records the [ʊ]-pronunciation of this set of words in the county (85; §104), which Ellis (1889: 432) and Hallam (1896: lxxxv) confirm for *fun(d)* ‘found’. It is worth noting that *fund* is not only the most frequent <u> item in the corpus, but also the only <u> item that is not otherwise respelt, which hints at its status as a characteristic Derbyshire form.

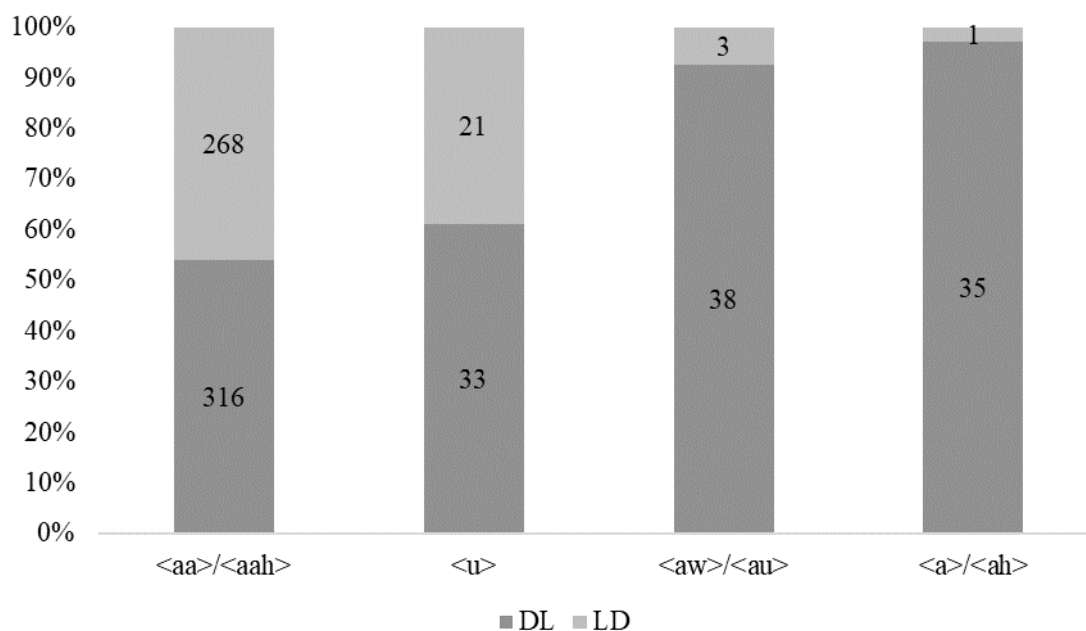


Figure 3. Distribution of the MOUTH respellings in the corpus: DL vs. LD (raw numbers).

As such, as Figure 3 shows, [ʊ]-type pronunciations of certain MOUTH words appear to have had similar rates of incidence in the two datasets, suggesting that they were fairly notable for both native and non-natives. The same appears to hold true for the all-pervading <aa>/<aah> respellings, which are not only and by far the most recurrent forms in both DL and LD, but also seem to have a comparable degree of salience in both text types, while they also display the highest number of types (see Table 5). Taken at face value, these data could be understood as a clear sign of the overwhelming prevalence of forms like *taan* ‘town’ for the MOUTH set in the mental image of the Derbyshire dialect within and outside the community where it was spoken. However, the data should be taken cautiously because all of the instances of <aa>/<aah> in LD are traced to *A Peakland Faggot* (1897). Besides, there is just one example in this type of representation pointing to a shorter [a]-type monophthong: *hahaver* ‘however’, which reveals that, despite their remarkable frequency and variability in the LD texts, [a(:)] pronunciations were perhaps not as noticeable, emblematic and representative of the dialect for non-natives as they seem to have been for native speakers. Interestingly enough, apart from <aa>/<aah> and <ah>, only twenty-four examples of non-standard MOUTH are documented in the LD sample, which reveals that, while this feature, as we have seen, appears to have held strong perceptual ties with notions of locality for natives of the dialect, it was not particularly noticeable for outsiders, with the exception, perhaps, of words like *fund* ‘found’.

4.2.4. The FACE set

Table 6. Top four FACE respellings in the corpus (raw numbers).

Respellings	Examples	DL		LD		Total	
		Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens	Types	Tokens
<ei>/<ey>	<i>mey</i> ‘make’	58	243	6	9	64	252
<eC>/<eCC>	<i>tekken</i> ‘taken’	4	26	16	149	20	175
<aC>/<aCC>	<i>mak</i> ‘make’	4	5	13	118	17	123
<ea>	<i>neame</i> ‘name’	17	36	3	8	20	44

Table 6 illustrates the conspicuousness of the digraphs <ei> and <ey> for Derbyshire FACE in the corpus texts,⁹ followed by <eC>/<eCC> and <aC>/<aCC>, which suggest either short [e] or [a], as in *tek* ‘take’, *babby* ‘baby’. These forms are significantly more numerous than <ea>, which is not particularly frequent, yet relatively varied. All the respellings uncovered by the analysis are recurrently commented upon in the non-literary sources scrutinised. Pegge (1896: x), for instance, points to a short [a] monophthong for /ei/ by recording *tak* ‘take’ in his list of Derbicisms, while highlighting this spelling’s lack of final <e> so that it “lengthens not the word”. The same sound is documented by Ellis (1889: 428) and Hallam (1896) in relation to the word *make*, which they represent as *mak* and *maak*, just like the *EDG* (§45), where, apart from *make*, other words such as *game* and *take* are listed as examples of [a] in Derbyshire. Short [e] is also reflected by Ellis (1889: 429, 434) in *gret* ‘great’ and *k ɛ m* ‘came’, while the *EDG* also considers this pronunciation but, interestingly enough, only for *take* (§45). Respellings suggestive of non-standard diphthongal realisations of FACE are also reported in the literature. Pegge (1896: viii) remarks on <ey> for <ay> in *dey* ‘day’, while the *EDG* gives iə for words like *behave* and *cake* (§44).

Despite the fact that all the respellings analysed are documented by both natives and non-natives, Figure 4 displays the marked contrast between DL and LD representations of the local pronunciation of this diphthong. While almost 100% (243/252) of the total <ei>/<ey> respellings and over 80% (36/44) of the <ea> forms are documented in the DL material, only c.10% (26/175) and 5% (5/123) of the respellings pointing to short monophthongs were used as markers of the dialect, which suggests that such realisations were not particularly notable among natives. In contrast, they were consistently used in instances of LD, where <ea> is rarely employed and <ei>/<ey> almost disregarded. The preference for respellings suggesting diphthongal pronunciations in DL texts hints that they were commonly understood by natives as characteristic of the dialect. By contrast, the tendency to rely on respellings that evoke short vowels in cases of LD rather shows that these were most commonly associated with Derbyshire speech by non-native authors and audiences. In both cases, <e>- and <a>- respellings are employed with a limited number of words, amongst which *make* and *take*

stand out as the most numerous. Remarkably, these two terms are the only items respelt with <aC> in DL, while *mey* ‘make’ and its derivatives (e.g., *meyd* ‘made’) are the most recurrent <ei>/<ey> forms in this text type too. Taken together, the data reveal that, although both insiders and outsiders associated non-standard realisations of FACE with local speech, especially as regards *make* and *take*, their perception of the specific sounds employed by speakers varied considerably.

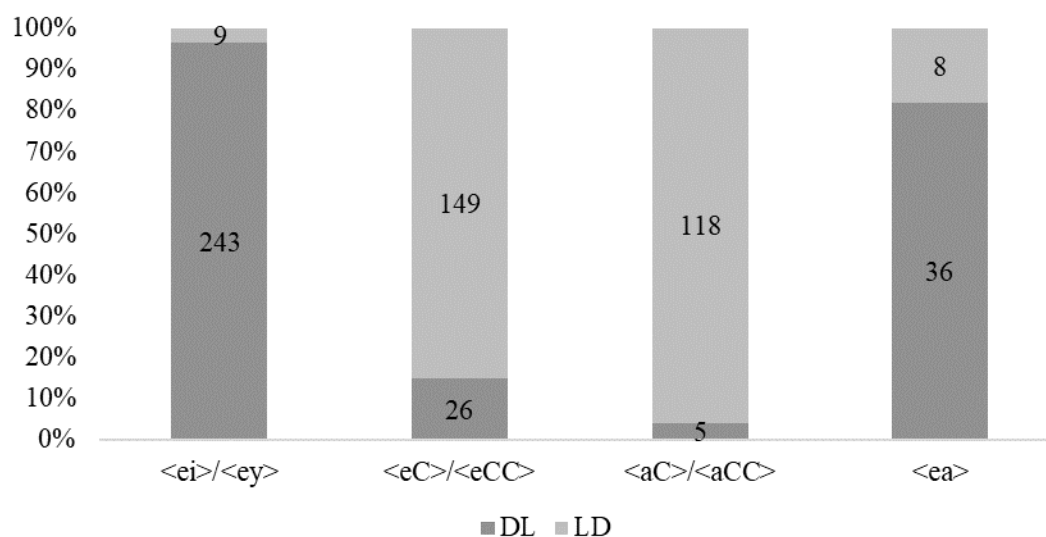


Figure 4. Distribution of the FACE respellings in the corpus: DL vs. LD (raw numbers).

5. CONCLUSION

This paper has been concerned with the exploration of 19th-century Derbyshire dialect through the lens of enregisterment in an attempt to unveil the most common non-standard spellings used to reflect Derbyshire-specific pronunciations in literary representations of the dialect. The analysis has shown that there is consistency in the way 19th-century literary renditions of the dialect (re)construct the variety and articulate the indexical links between Derbyshire speakers and a shared repertoire of phonological features which are consistently used and foregrounded in literary discourse in order to evoke social meaning linked to place. According to these works, talking “Derbyshire” involved the employment of a specific set of non-standard pronunciations which seem to have been widely evaluated as inherently local by native and non-native writers alike. Indeed, their conscious choice to reproduce these features in works aimed at in-group and out-group readers suggests that they were salient enough to be understood by both types of audience. Public awareness and recognition of such traits, thus, bears witness to second-order indexical links between notions of localness and the forms represented, as the correlation between such values and forms is deliberately exploited as a means for identity construction and performance. Seeing as all the features discussed are

not only used and circulated as semiotic resources in literature, but also explicitly commented upon in contemporary non-literary metadiscourse, it seems clear that form-meaning indexical connections had already reached the third-order of indexicality and were, thus, enregistered.

This is the case of respellings suggestive of dialectal realisations of STRUT, GOAT, MOUTH, and FACE. As we have seen, albeit with different degrees of frequency and consistency, these non-standard spellings are extensively used as literary devices to signal authenticity and localness, especially those redolent of the lack of FOOT/STRUT split. These are the most common STRUT respellings in works written by native and non-natives, which suggests that, despite the differences in the respellings employed to represent them, they were perceived as typically Derbyshire by all types of audience. This is also true of GOAT, which is most of the times represented by means of <u>, <oo>, and <oa> respellings, most likely pointing to [ʊə] and [u (:)] sounds. Remarkable divergences, however, have been found between LD works, where <u> realisations of standard /əʊ/ are favoured, and the DL material, whose authors seem to have understood this diphthong in terms of a longer sound that they evoked with <oo>. Monophthongal [a]-type realisations of MOUTH also attracted considerable literary attention; the impressive frequency of this trait points to its marked local character for local audiences. Perceptual differences seem to have existed between native and non-native speakers, though, as only one LD text profusely employs words like *abaat* ‘about’, which suggests that they were not understood as peculiar to Derbyshire beyond the county’s borders. Indeed, the evidence suggests that, perhaps with the exception of e.g., [ʊ] in *fun* ‘found’, which is also common in DL, MOUTH words were not widely associated with the dialect outside Derbyshire. Non-standard respellings of FACE were also recurrently employed as authenticating devices to recreate the dialect’s phonology in texts written by local and non-local writers, but there are remarkable divergences in the way this sound was represented. Natives favoured the digraphs <ei>/<ey>, whereas LD authors relied on spellings pointing to short monophthongs, namely <aC>/<aCC> and <eC>/<eCC>, which respectively suggest [a] and [e]. While the DL digraphs <ei>/<ey> were only briefly mentioned in Pegge (1896), [a] and [e] are ubiquitous in the qualitative non-literary material and in contemporary metadiscourse. This suggests that they had already been conventionalised as part of the dialect’s repertoire, especially in the non-local popular imagination.

All in all, these findings foreground that, while all the features explored were present and recurrently employed in the totality of the DL and LD material, profound perceptual divergences existed between natives and non-natives as regards their awareness and evaluation of the degree of salience of such traits. These outcomes emphasise not only the mutable nature of indexicality and enregisterment, but also the fact that they are inherently dynamic processes, as remarkable indexical shifts have been found to operate over type of

dialect representation. This, in actual fact, only adds to the crucial agentive role of writers and their knowledge of the variety, which, in turn, is highly determined by the audience addressed and their degree of familiarity with the dialect.

NOTES

¹As is well known, DL comprises texts composed by dialect speakers “wholly (sometimes partly) in a non-standard dialect, and aimed essentially, though not exclusively, at a non-standard-dialect-speaking readership”, while LD refers to “the representation of non-standard speech in literature that is otherwise written in standard English [...] and aimed at a general readership” (Shorrocks, 1996: 386). The latter works are in most cases written by outsiders of the speech community represented, which often affects the quality of the representation as out-group authors tend to appropriate dialect representations in LD, sometimes falling into inconsistent and more stereotypical conventions given the lack of representational control over the language they aim to portray (Jaffe, 2000: 509; see also Ruano-García, 2020: 6).

²One of the very few exceptions to the general literary focus on the Derbyshire working class is Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu’s (1814–1873) *Uncle Silas* (1864), whose narration revolves around the life of an upper-class family. Still, dialect features can be found in the speech of lower-class local servants. The novel is set in the Peak District, near which Le Fanu is known to have spent some time; according to García-Bermejo Giner (1994: 241), he might have taken this opportunity to learn about the region’s most prominent linguistic features.

³These and other examples of 19th-century Derbyshire dialect writing are taken from Schintu (2020).

⁴It has not been possible to find texts for every decade of the period considered. In particular, I have been unable to locate texts written between 1850 and 1859, nor in the 1880s. In addition, as Table 1 shows, there are two DL texts published in 1870. This is due to the impossibility to find more examples of DL and the fact that these are rather short pieces. The 19th-century material comprises another representation published between 1870 and 1871, which I have decided to include given the lack of other LD texts from this decade.

⁵Although Thomas Brushfield (1828–1910) was not a Derbyshire native and spent most of his adult life in London, Surrey, and East Devon, it is probable that he gained knowledge of the county’s dialect from his father, Thomas Brushfield, who had been born in Derbyshire.

⁶Due to space constraints, only those features whose frequency exceeded 700 tokens in total were considered for analysis.

⁷When reporting on the evidence provided by late modern authors, I have reproduced their particular spelling conventions and notation systems to the extent possible (e.g., Ellis’s paleotype alphabet).

⁸It should be noted that some of these examples (e.g., *knoes* ‘knows’ and *rode* ‘road’) could also be understood as instances of eye dialect.

⁹Some of the words respelt with <ei> and <ey> could be considered eye dialect; e.g., *freyme* ‘frame’.

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