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FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA

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GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES

Trabajo de Fin de Grado

The Enregisterment of the Yorkshire
Dialect in 18th-century Literary Texts

A Corpus-Based Study

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of English Studies

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Abstract

Over the last decades, there has been an increasing interest in studying dialects and registers as markers of social identity. This study has been possible due to Asif Agha's notion of *enregisterment* (2003), which refers to the link between language, society and culture. Nonetheless, scholars have been mainly focused on contemporary American or British English in general terms. Thus, little has been discussed about non-standard varieties in historical contexts. Consequently, this paper seeks to examine a linguistic corpus of the Yorkshire dialect represented in two 18th-century literary works – Joseph Reed's *The Register Office* (1761) and Rev. John Watson's "Two letters written in the Halifax Dialect" (1759) – that are now included in *The Salamanca Corpus* (SC). I have carried out a linguistic evaluation of the most salient phonological and lexical features identified in the corpus, which have been supported by the evidence recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) and the *English Dialect Dictionary* (EDD). By comparing the results obtained from the analysis of Reed's and Watson's works, we can find an important number of shared features that are represented as characteristic of the Yorkshire dialect. Therefore, we can conclude that there was an enregistered repertoire of Yorkshire dialect in the 18th century which circulated and showed the speakers' ideologies about Yorkshire people and their language.

Key Words: Yorkshire dialect, 18th century, enregisterment, phonology, lexis, dialect writing, Reed's *The register Office*, Watson's "Two letters written in the Halifax Dialect".

Resumen

En las últimas décadas, ha habido un interés creciente en estudiar dialectos y registros como marcadores de identidad social. Este estudio ha sido posible gracias a la noción de *enregisterment* propuesta por Asif Agha (2003), la cual se refiere al vínculo entre lengua, sociedad y cultura. No obstante, los académicos se han centrado principalmente en el inglés americano o británico contemporáneo en términos generales. Por lo tanto, poco se ha discutido sobre las variedades no estándar en contextos históricos. Por consiguiente, este trabajo busca examinar un corpus lingüístico del dialecto de Yorkshire representado en dos obras literarias del siglo XVIII: *The Register Office* (1761) de Joseph Reed y “Two letters written in the Halifax Dialect” (1759) del Rev. John Watson, que están ahora incluidas en *The Salamanca Corpus (SC)*. Para ello, he realizado una evaluación lingüística de las características fonológicas y léxicas más destacadas que se documentan en el corpus, que avalan el *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* y el *English Dialect Dictionary (EDD)*. Al comparar los resultados obtenidos del análisis de las obras de Reed y Watson, podemos apreciar un alto porcentaje de características compartidas que se reproducen como representativas del dialecto de Yorkshire. Por lo tanto, podemos concluir que hubo un repertorio lingüístico del dialecto de Yorkshire en el siglo XVIII que circuló y preservó las ideologías que los hablantes contemporáneos tenían sobre los habitantes del área de Yorkshire y su habla.

Palabras claves: dialecto de Yorkshire, siglo XVIII, *enregisterment*, fonología, léxico, escritura dialectal, *The Register Office* (1761) de Joseph Reed, “Two letters written in the Halifax Dialect” (1759) de Rev. John Watson.

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, Asif Agha's notion of *enregisterment* has proved a successful sociolinguistic framework to explore the links between language, place and related social values, which has gained important scholarly attention especially in relation to modern varieties of American English. As is known, one of the leading precursors of sociolinguistic studies was the father of contemporary sociolinguistics, William Labov. He was interested in how linguistic features can function as markers of identity or socioeconomic class. Actually, in 1996 he collected some data concerning the varieties of English spoken in New York City, which were published in his seminal work *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. In this study, he investigated how the presence or absence of consonantal [r] in postvocalic position can be taken as a social or stylistic marker of social stratification. Furthermore, in 2006, Barbara Johnstone, in collaboration with Jennifer Andrus and Andrew E. Danielson, carried out a study about the current enregisterment of Pittsburghese dialect. Enregisterment, however, has been little explored in relation to historical varieties of British English. What little research there has been so far has been mostly concerned with northern English in general, such as Joan Beal and Paul Cooper's study of "The Enregisterment of Northern English" (2015), and nineteenth-century Yorkshire, as Paul Cooper's "Enregisterment in Historical Contexts: Nineteenth-Century Yorkshire Dialect" (2015). Therefore, and as "the record of dialect in Yorkshire took shape in detail only after the middle of the 19th century," (García-Bermejo 22) little is known about 18th-century Yorkshire. As a consequence, this paper addresses the enregisterment of the Yorkshire dialect as represented in 18th-century literary recreations of this variety. The aim of this study is to identify the most recurrent phonological and lexical features belonging to the Yorkshire dialect which were portrayed in two 18th-century literary

texts – Joseph Reed’s *The Register Office* and Rev. John Watson’s “Two Letters Written in the Halifax Dialect” – and which contributed to the enregisterment of the dialect and circulation of the sociocultural ideas of the Yorkshiremen. To that end, this paper will be structured in four main sections. Firstly, I shall explore the historical and cultural background of the 18th century with special emphasis on the relevance of social mobility for dialectal awareness. Secondly, I will focus on the theoretical background of Asif Agha’s notion of *enregisterment*. Then, I will pay attention to the linguistic history of the Yorkshire dialect and how this development has placed it as an outstanding dialect liable to be enregistered. Finally, I will focus on the analysis of the phonological and lexical repertoire of the Yorkshire dialect that can be identified in the above-mentioned literary works. They belong to *The Salamanca Corpus (SC)* and I have analysed them with the aid of two online dictionaries, namely the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* and the *English Dialect Dictionary (EDD)*.

2. Cultural and Historical Background

The 18th-century British society witnessed the impact of the Industrial Revolution, which triggered social and geographical mobility. A network of national trade was created and new means of transport, roads and canals were built to allow people to be in contact. “Areas like Hull and York,” as Paul Cooper points out, “(...) greatly benefited from the railways in terms of trade and employment respectively.” (*Enregisterment in Historical Contexts* 6) However, this contact did not only have economic and social consequences; also, it had a great impact on the language. People became aware of the dialectal diversity and richness of their country; indeed, “linguistic forms that were previously unnoticed in the community, because everyone in a speaker’s social network used them, become noticeable in contrast with new forms emanating [such as the booming Standard English]” (Johnstone 79). A new debate,

thus, emerged. Such linguistic awareness gave way to contemporary ‘talk about talk’ (Johnstone 80) or the large number of commentaries testifying to the myriads of varieties existing at the time and contemporary attitudes towards them. Some of these statements regarding the linguistic diversity of the country were recorded in glossaries and dictionaries of this period compiled by those who had an interest in dialects. A clear example is Francis Grose’s *Provincial Glossary* (1787), a dialectal glossary that includes a large collection of local words (Fox 67). It is worth noting that these varieties were not equally treated; typically, varieties from northern and south-western areas were more stigmatised than those localised in the vicinities of London. Nonetheless, the metalinguistic comments of “18th-century authors, in condemning northern dialects, provide us with a good deal of information about the characteristic features of these dialects at the time.” (Beal, “English Dialects: Phonology” 119) Along with these sources of information, literature was also a good vehicle to portray these views. Dialect literature (i.e. works entirely written in dialect) and literary dialects (i.e. works written in Standard English that otherwise include passages representing dialectal speech) included valuable information about the image people had about speakers coming from different places. The literary use of dialects as markers of local identity is an example of what has recently been referred to as *enregisterment* in sociolinguistic theory and research (Beal, “Enregisterment, Commodification” 141, 142).

3. The Notion of Enregisterment

The concept of *enregisterment* was coined by Asif Agha in his seminal paper of 2003 “The Social Life of Cultural Value”. He defines *registers* as flexible models of language continuously changing and existing as long as they are recognised by the population. (*Voice, Footing, Enregisterment* 38, 46) In other words, the recognition of these modes of speaking is made by outsiders that are not in control of the reproduced

linguistic repertoire. In the last years, this awareness has been studied in relation to historical contexts. Authors such as Joan Beal (2004, 2009) and Paul Cooper (2014, 2015) have explored how, due to dialect contact, registers began to be recorded and revalorised as authentic markers of socioeconomic position. The role of registers, therefore, has changed and speakers have given them the status of enregistered varieties. This connection between language and ideology is what has been identified as the process of *enregisterment*, a sociolinguistic theory that Agha defines as the “processes through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms.” (“The Social Life” 231)

Agha found certain similarities between his notion of enregisterment and Michael Silverstein’s orders of indexicality, which operates along a continuum. Barbara Johnstone (78), in a more simple way, described these three orders in the following way: the ‘first order’ of indexicality refers to those indicators of the relationship between linguistic usages and the demographic area where they belong to; the ‘second order’ of indexicality works as markers of place and class; and, finally, the ‘third order’ of indexicality can be compared to William Labov’s *stereotypes*. One can, therefore, conclude that there is a correspondence between Agha’s theory of enregisterment and Silverstein’s ‘third order’ of indexicality. It is by the conscious use of lexical and morphological features as well as by the “manipulation of spelling conventions in represented dialogue” (Agha, “The Social Life” 237) that local identities “[were] foregrounded, circulated and consumed.” (Ruano, “On the Enregisterment” 377) The use of these strategies for socio-stylistic characterisation in literary works has become so recurrent that writers “[brought] into circulation images of social personhood.” (Agha, *Voice, Footing, Enregisterment* 50) Beal and Cooper provide a clear example in their work “The Enregisterment of Northern English”. They identify 16th-century texts

as specimens containing “literary representations of northern speech [that] were beginning to establish a ‘repertoire’ of northern features linked to a stereotyped persona of the northerner.” (29) One of these northern registers that has been more frequently represented in fiction is the Yorkshire dialect. In effect, it has been placed as one of the most recognised and enregistered varieties in British English literature.

4. Linguistic History of the Yorkshire dialect

No language evolves in the same way, and Yorkshire is not an exception. Both social and geographical mobility have contributed to the identification of this dialect with the ‘other’ in contrast with Standard English in the popular imagination. In fact, the lexical and phonological features of Yorkshire can be studied as signposts of its history. Though Celtic is considered the first language spoken in Britain, “most of the distinctive Yorkshire words originated from peoples who came after the Celts.” (West Winds Yorkshire Tearooms 1) Waves of new immigrants contributed to the evolution of this ancient variety. We can identify at least three waves. The first one was led by the Angles, coming from northern Germany. They settled northern and central England creating two kingdoms differentiated by their dialects, Northumbrian and Mercian. While the “Mercian dialect influenced southern and western Yorkshire, Northumbrian dialect dominated to the east and north.” (1) Thus, Angles “laid the first proper foundations of Yorkshire dialect, giving its Germanic character.” The second wave of immigrants took place in the 9th and 10th centuries, which coincided with the arrival of the Vikings. The Danes conquered Yorkshire and, under the Scandinavian jurisdiction of the Danelaw, the county was divided into three ridings and many Scandinavian words entered the English language. The third wave was the arrival of the Normans in 1066, and although they had less impact in Yorkshire than in other counties, words of French origin still exist in the dialect.

All of these waves of migration justify the relevance of this dialect with regard to other varieties of the English language. In fact, this salience was recognised by relevant Yorkshire scholars such as Joseph Hunter (1783-1861), who noted that “more attention has been paid to the verbal peculiarities of Yorkshire than of any other county” (qtd. in Cooper, “It takes a Yorkshireman” 162). These peculiarities are clear in later literary representations of the dialect, which can be broadly classified as

a) Positive representation: a dialect considered perfect and classical English.

b) Negative representation: a dialect of “unenlightened barbarians.” (Beal & Cooper 43)

The following section explores a small corpus of eighteenth-century representations of Yorkshire dialect so as to determine if they relied on a specific set of linguistic features that are linked with a specific type of persona.

5. Linguistic analysis of the data: evidence from literary texts

Although it was in the late 14th century when writers became aware of the dialectal variation in the British Isles (Beal and Cooper 29), one of the relevant periods of this awareness was the 18th century. Being conscious of certain distinctive linguistic features associated with Yorkshire speakers, and as an (immediate) consequence, writers started to use this variety to depict their characters. Some of these features can be found in literary works such as Joseph Reed’s (1723-1787) *The Register Office* (1761) and Rev. John Watson’s (1725-1783) “Two letters written in the Halifax Dialect” (1759), which provide an insight into the linguistic characteristics of 18th-century Yorkshire dialect.

To prove this, I have undertaken an analysis following the methodology which I describe below. The study is focused on the quantitative analysis of the most salient cases of spelling/phonology and lexis belonging to the Yorkshire dialect. In order to

begin with the analysis, I have compiled a corpus of two works of the 18th century that include a representation of the Yorkshire dialect: Joseph Reed's *The Register Office* (1761) and Rev. John Watson's "Two letters written in the Halifax Dialect" (1759). These works, which are instances of dialect literature, have been retrieved from the *SC* and they have been selected for two reasons. Firstly, although both of them were written in the 18th century, they were not produced in the same year. Secondly, none of these authors were either from the same place of origin or from Yorkshire. This is important information to take into account if we want to show that such literary representations reveal enregisterment of the Yorkshire dialect at this time. Afterwards, the repertoire of lexical features has been classified into two categories: cases of spelling variants suggestive of Yorkshire sounds that are not thus instances of dialect lexis proper, and items that exemplify dialectal lexis. This classification has been supported by the information provided by the *OED* and the *EDD*. On the one hand, cases of semi-phonetic spelling have been organized depending on the phonological development of the root vowel/consonant in the Yorkshire dialect in contrast to the standard development. When necessary, and due to the number of cases, some tables have been included providing information about the ME sound, the Yorkshire spelling, the PdE spelling and corpus examples. On the other hand, the lexical items of both texts have been represented in a pie chart with the percentage of (I) Yorkshire regionalisms, (II) Yorkshire and Northern counties items and (III) Yorkshire, Northern counties and Midlands lexis. Although the discussion refers to selected examples that I have briefly explained, the full list of lexical items has been included at the end in section 7 in the form of a glossary.

5.1. Joseph Reed’s “Margery and Gulwell” (Scene I, Act I), *The Register Office*

Being aware of the dialectal diversity of the English language, English playwright and poet Joseph Reed, born in county Durham (1723-1787), decided to represent dialects in his works. Although in 1744 he published a poem imitating the Scottish dialect, his play *The Register Office* was more successful than his previous work. *The Register Office* (1761), which was played in Drury Lane (London), includes a group of characters from different countries such as France, Ireland and the North of England. In fact, in Scene I, Act I we can identify the character of Margery, a woman from Yorkshire “bred and bworn at Little Yatton, aside Rosberry Topping” (Reed 10). She enters the Register Office looking for a housekeeper job as she has been harassed by her previous master, a squire. The person in charge of the office, Gulwell, finally finds her a place in a Buckinghamshire farm. The most interesting thing about this passage is Reed’s representation of the Yorkshire dialect as spoken by Margery, which is explored below.

Phonological features

I. Northern Lack of rounding + Northern ME /a:/: ME /a:/ had two different developments: while in the North the sound was retained, in the southern dialects the sound was rounded and changed into /ɔ:/.

ME sound	Yks Spelling	PdE Spelling	Corpus Example
/a:/'	<a> + consonant (x7) <e> + consonant (x1) <ae> (x1) <a> + consonant + <y> (x1) <a> + consonant + <e> (x2) <ang> (x2)	<o> + consonant <o> + consonant + <y> <o> + consonant + <e> <o> + <ng>	<i>knaw</i> ‘know’ <i>hettest</i> ‘hottest’ <i>frae</i> ‘from’ <i>haly</i> ‘holy’ <i>mare</i> ‘more’ <i>belangs</i> ‘belongs’

II. Definite Article Reduction (DAR): in Northern dialects, there is variation with regard to the standard definite article *the*, which is reduced to the form of *t'* or *th'*. As Jones notes, this phenomenon “is perhaps the most stereotypical feature of northern British English dialects, especially those of Yorkshire and Lancashire.” (qtd. in Beal *English Dialects: Morphology* 120) In the text, we only find the reduced form *t'* (x9) in examples such as: “Its' *t'* biggest Mountain in oll Yorkshire.” (11)

III. Merger of ir > ur: ME /ir/ was represented as <ur> in Northern dialects. In the text we can identify just one example: *sur* ‘sir’ (x7).

IV. Rounding before nasals: forms like *ony* ‘any’ (x5) reveal the tendency of /a/ to be rounded when followed by a nasal consonant.

V. ME /i+çt/: as Beal explains, “In words such as *night* or *right*, northern dialects retained the consonant /ç/ when this was vocalised in southern dialects in the 16th century. In dialects which remained this northern pronunciation, the vowel before /ç/ remained short, and so was not shifted to /ai/ in the Great Vowel Shift. When northern English dialects later lost this consonant, the preceding vowel was lengthened to /i:/.” (125). In the corpus, we find:

ME sound	Yks Spelling	PdE Spelling	Corpus Example
/i:/	<ee> + consonant (x5)	<i> + consonant	<i>neeght</i> ‘night’
		<i> + consonant + <e>	<i>neen</i> ‘nine’

VI. H-dropping: in Northern England there is the tendency to drop the initial /h/ sound in unstressed words (García-Bermejo Giner 27): “Pettyt’s study of West Yorkshire (1985:106) shows that h-dropping is ear-categorical for working-class males in casual speech style.” (qtd. in Beal 127) In Margery’s speech we can only identify one example of the standard *have* represented by means of the form *a*: “I might *a* had Gould by Gopins” (12).

VII. R-levelling: the text shows cases revealing *r*-levelling in the past forms of the verb *to be*; e.g. *ware* ‘were’ (x1) in the sentence “ony Lass, at ever ware” (11). In the words of Beal, this is a very typical pattern in northern dialects (122).

VIII. L-vocalisation: it is a process that affected back vowels /a/ and /o/ when followed by /l/ or /ll/. The process entailed the development of /w/ between the vowel and the consonant, the /w/ being later vocalised. The example we can find is the adjective *coad* ‘cold’.

IX. Lack of Assibilation/Northern Unpalatalised Consonants: as a result of Scandinavian influence we can find the velar sound /k/ in the North whereas in Standard English we can identify the palato-alveolar sound /tʃ/. The example in the text is *sike* ‘such’ (x4).

X. Alternative vowels <o> instead of <e>: *twonty* ‘twenty’ (x1).

Lexical features

Lexis plays an important role in Reed's representation of the dialect. Some examples of the lexical repertoire found in this work can be found in Fig.1.

From a quantitative point of view, and drawing on the information provided by the *EDD*, we can observe that most of the lexis that Reed uses can not only be found in the speech of Yorkshiremen, but also in other dialects of the British Isles. In fact, a close scrutiny of the lexical material found in the play reveals that there are (I) few examples of Yorkshire regionalisms (6.7%), (II) a high percentage of words used in Yorkshire and some other Northern counties (73.3%) and (III) 20% of words used in Yorkshire, some Northern counties and in the Midlands.

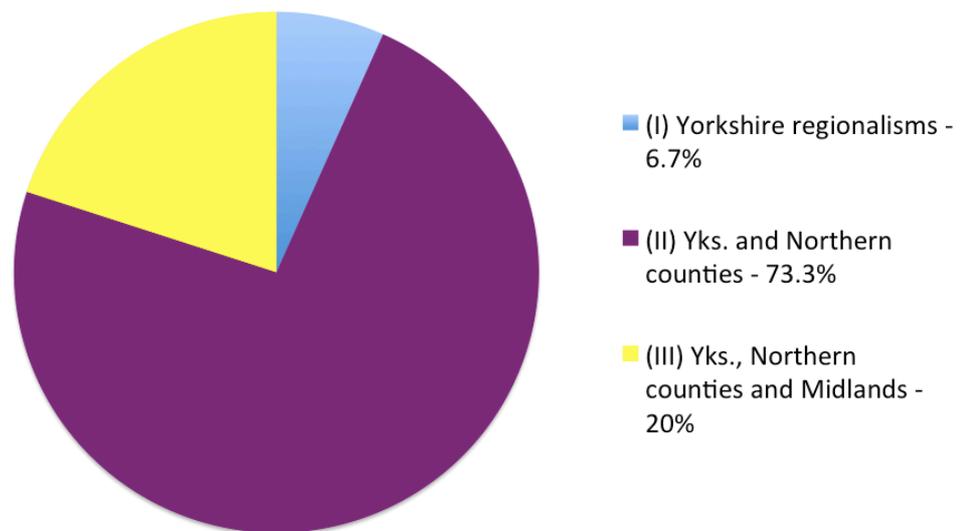


Fig. 1. Lexical evidence from Joseph Reed's *The Register Office*.

(I) Yorkshire regionalisms: though there are few words that the *EDD* localizes exclusively to the Yorkshire dialect, we can identify some examples such as: *sheer* a verb meaning 'to work brick-clay with a spade' and *(a)thof* which means 'only'.

(II) Yorkshire and Northern items: it is the most representative group in terms of words, which include:

kirk: chiefly a northern word of Scottish origin used as an equivalent of the Standard form ‘church’.

nay: as Beal claims, “the most notable, because most frequently used, of these [words of Norse origin] are the affirmative and negative *aye* and *nay*.” (137) In this text, we just can find *nay* (x4) meaning ‘no’.

sel: northern form of the reflexive pronoun ‘self’ (x2). In the text we can identify two forms: *hersel* and *mysel*.

(III) Yorkshire, Northern and Midlands words: the most outstanding example is the noun *lass*, which, as Beal (137) points out, is a retention of a colloquial alternative for the standard form of ‘young girl’.

There are some interesting adjectives and nouns used in group (II) that are worth of remark. On the one hand, Margery characterises the distinctions between Northern and Southern people by means of specific adjectives, which mirrors attitudes towards and ideas about the North-South division. For instance, whilst the adjective *canny* (‘wise, knowing’) is used as a reference to Yatton (Somerset, South of England), the adjective *gawvison(s)* (‘an awkward fellow’) refers to Margery herself; she states, “they fell a giggling at me, as if I'd been yan o't greatest *Gawvisons* i't World — Do you think, Sur, at I look ought like a *Gawvison*?” (12). One can notice, therefore, that these two examples provide a completely different portrayal of characters depending on their place of origin.

On the other hand, there are some nouns that also characterise Margery when she asserts “Nay, makins, I knaw nought o Speldering—I’se nea Schollard” (Reed 13), where *speldering* denotes her level of illiteracy as she does not know how to write her name - she explains that she has not gone to school.

5.2 “Two letters written in the Halifax Dialect”

Although these two fictional letters written entirely in dialect have been said to belong to an anonymous writer, *The Salamanca Corpus* suggests that they can be attributed to Rev. John Watson (1725-1783). Born in Lyme Handley, county Cheshire, he became curate of Halifax, Yorkshire, from 1750 to 1754. His contact with the Yorkshire dialect allowed him to write these letters which were published in 1759 in *The Union Journal* or *Halifax Advertiser*, printed throughout 1759 and 1760. His work, thus, is considered a fictional recreation of the West Yorkshire dialect, which contributes to the portrayal of the most salient features of this variety. The following section presents a selection of the phonological and lexical features found in this work.

Phonological features

I. Northern Lack of rounding + Northern ME /a:/: as it was previously mentioned, OE /a:/ > ME /a:/ in the North while in the South it was rounded (see page 10).

ME sound	Yks Spelling	PdE Spelling	Corpus Example
/a:/'	<a> + consonant (x5) <a> (x1)	<o>	<i>ald</i> ‘old’ <i>na</i> ‘no’

II. Definite Article Reduction (DAR): as already explained (see page 10), the reduction of the definite article in Northern dialects whereby *the* was reduced to the forms *t'* or *th'* can be identified in these letters in both forms *t'* (x4) and *th'* (x3).

III. Merger of *ir* > *ur*: ME /ir/ was represented as <ur> in Northern dialects. In the text we can identify examples such as the following:

ME sound	Yks Spelling	PdE Spelling	Corpus Example
/ir/	<ur> (x4)	<ir>	<i>sur</i> 'sir'
	<ur> + consonant (x1)		<i>surr</i> 'sir'
	<ur> + consonant + <e> (x1)	<ir> + consonant + <y>	<i>thurte</i> 'thirty'

IV. Rounding before nasals: forms like *con*, *on* show the tendency of /a/ to be rounded when followed by a nasal consonant.

ME sound	Yks Spelling	PdE Spelling	Corpus Example
/a/	<on> (x7)	<an> + consonant	<i>on</i> 'and'
		<an>	<i>con</i> 'can'
	<om> (x3)	<i> + <m>	<i>om</i> 'I'm'

V. ME /i+çt/: as explained on page 11, words such as *night* or *right* in northern dialects retained the consonant /ç/, which was not vocalised and, as a result, the vowel was not shifted to /ai/ with the Great Vowel Shift. Therefore, it was a /i:/.

ME sound	Yks Spelling	PdE Spelling	Corpus Example
/i:/	<ee> + consonant (x4)	<i> + consonant	<i>neegt</i> ‘night’

VI. H-dropping: as explained on page 11, there was a tendency in Northern England to drop the initial /h/ sound in unstressed words.

ME sound	Yks Spelling	PdE Spelling	Corpus Example
/h/	<ø> (x9)	<h> + vowel	<i>ad</i> ‘had’ <i>im</i> ‘him’

VII. R-levelling: (see page 11) In this text we can find the example *wor* with the meaning of ‘was’ (x2) in phrases such as “I wor at mi work” and “a dog that wor lost” and *wor* with the meaning of ‘were’ (x6) in examples like “letters wor speld”.

VIII. L-vocalisation: as explained on page 11, it is a process that affected back vowels /a/ and /o/ when followed by /l/ or /ll/. The process entailed the development of /w/ between the vowel and the consonant, which was then vocalised.

ME sound	Yks Spelling	PdE Spelling	Corpus Example
/a + l, ll/	<au + l> (x4) <au + l + consonant> (x2) <ou + l + consonant> (x1)	<a + ll> <o + l + consonant>	<i>aul</i> ‘all’ <i>caul</i> ‘call’ <i>cauld</i> ‘called’ <i>ould</i> ‘old’

IX. Alternative vowels <o> instead of <e>:

ME sound	Yks Spelling	PdE Spelling	Corpus Example
/e/	<o> (x3)	<e>	<i>porson</i> ‘person’ <i>tho</i> ‘the’

X. OO-Fronting: Northern development of Middle English /o:/, which was raised and fronted. Besides, a diacritic <i/y> was added to indicate that the previous vowel was long. In the play we can identify some examples such as:

ME sound	Yks Spelling	PdE Spelling	Corpus Example
/o:/:	<oo + i + consonant> (x6) <oo + y + consonant> (x1)	<oo + consonant>	<i>gooid</i> ‘good’ <i>fooil</i> ‘fool’ <i>soyn</i> ‘soon’

XI. Lack of FOOT / STRUT split: one of the most salient features in Northern dialects is the lack of lowering of the Middle English short /ʊ/. This suggests that while southerners pronounced /ʌ/, northerners pronounce a short /ʊ/. (Beal 121) In the text we can find one example: the verb *coom* ‘come’ (x1).

XII. Retention of ME /i:/ (or lack of GVS): in northern counties, ME /i:/ was not affected by the Great Vowel Shift (GVS) and was thus retained, yet, in southern counties, ME /i:/ diphthongised and came to be pronounced as /ai/.

ME sound	Yks Spelling	PdE Spelling	Corpus Example
/i:/	<ee> + consonant (x1)	<i> + consonant	<i>ableegd</i> ‘obliged’
	<ee> + consonant + <e> (x1)	<i> + consonant + <e>	<i>ableege</i> ‘oblige’

Lexical features

By analysing the lexis from these two letters, one can identify certain peculiarities that build up the fictional identity of the speakers. From a quantitative point of view, one can appreciate that most of the items used in the fictional letters do not belong to the Yorkshire dialect alone, but are words localized to other dialects as well. I have identified (I) few examples of Yorkshire regionalisms (11.1%), (II) a high percentage of words used in Yorkshire and some other Northern counties (83.3%) and (III) 5.6% of words used in Yorkshire, some Northern counties and in the Midlands.

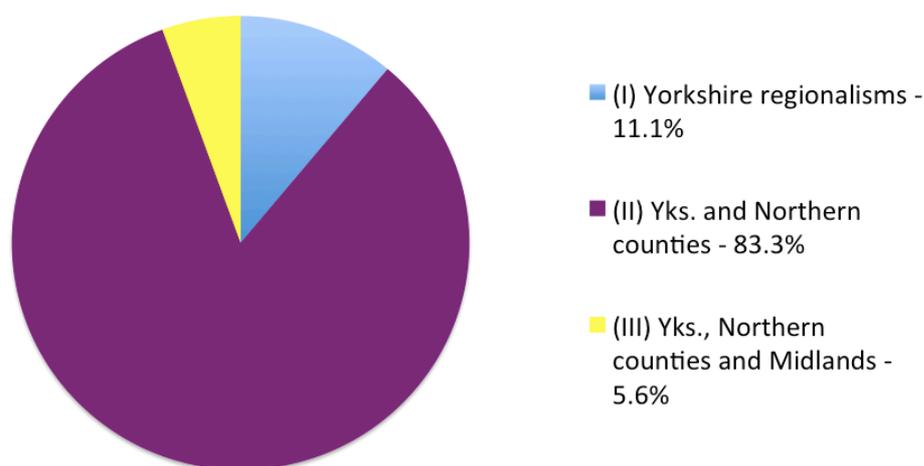


Fig. 2. Lexical evidence from Re. John Watson’s “Two letters written in the Halifax Dialect”.

I) Yorkshire regionalisms: the author of the letters used some words that the *EDD* quotes from Yorkshire: *sag* ‘saw’, *sware* ‘swear’ and *store* ‘much, greatly, to a considerable extent’.

(II) Yorkshire and Northern items: some of the most frequent examples are:
at (x13): it has been discussed that it can be a reduced form of the relative ‘that’ or a derived form from Norse (García-Bermejo Giner 31). Beal, as well, explains that “rather than *at* being a reduced form of *that*, it is more likely that, in the Danelaw, modern dialects have artificially ‘restored’ *that* in place of the Norse *at* under the influence of Standard English.” (133)

childer (x1): regional plural form for the standard word ‘children’.

nobbut (x1): meaning ‘only, nothing but’.

(III) Yorkshire, Northern and Midlands words: the only case included in this group is *slubberon* which means ‘to obscure with dirt’.

From a qualitative point of view, it is worth mentioning that some of the words of group (II) contribute to depicting the persona of the Yorkshireman. All the characters that appear in both letters refer to their work/occupational activity. While in the first letter the speaker is a “journeeman croppar” (journeyman cropper) who has lost his master’s dog, in the second letter the speakers are two men who have found the dog while they were going to work, where they were *gravin* (digging) *foors* (furrows). In addition, they also refer to the word *slane*, which, according to the *OED*, is an Anglo-Irish word to denote “a long-handled spade, having a wing at one or both sides of the blade, used in Ireland for cutting turf.” It seems, thus, that the dialectal words have been

used to create the image of a persona whose occupation is linked to manual and rural work.

5.3 Comparison and discussion of the data

An enregistered dialect is a distinctive form of speech that is often represented and circulated with the aim of depicting the ethos of a community of speakers, and that is socially recognised. This conscious decision of authors responds to a “deliberate use of dialect for stylistic purposes.” (Beal and Cooper 29) In this manner, the similarities found in the works examined above contribute to the construction of the linguistic identity of a specific community. Both Reed and Watson utilised a set of phonological features and lexical items to portray ideas and perceptions about Yorkshire people during the 18th century. In effect, before Rev. John Watson’s dialectal letters a brief recommendation to the reader was included in relation to the style of language used in them. In the first letter we can find a suggestion which reads as follows: “The following letter was sent inclosed yo the printer of the union journal, which we hope from the extraordinary manner of its style, (which we have inserted verbatim,) will not be any way disagreeable to our readers.” In the second one, the Halifax journal stated that they “hope it [the letter] will be acceptable to our readers.”

This set of forms including instances of the Northern Lack of Rounding, L-vocalisation or Definite Article Reduction (DAR) was understood as markers of the socioeconomic class of these speakers. They used local pronunciations characteristic of Yorkshire which were markedly distinct from those of southern Standard English. In line with this, the lexis employed by the speakers represented in these texts also worked as a self-defining birthmark. In fact, Margery does not only compare herself to southern

people, but also portrays herself as the typical “figure of the female helpful Northern housewife with headscarf.” (“Enregisterment, Commodification” 143)

By using this repertoire of linguistic features, Reed and Watson provided a satirical and humorous image of Yorkshire local people at the same time they paid tribute to this community of speakers, their history and folklore. In other words, their works have contributed to the enregisterment of the Yorkshire dialect, an idea which is especially relevant if we remember that, though they were born in Northern counties, none of them were from Yorkshire.

6. Conclusion

In attempting to demonstrate that the Yorkshire dialect was used as an enregistered variety in 18th-century literature, we should look back at the past and understand the historical context and the linguistic development of the dialect. The emergence and consolidation of Standard English (key element in the process of delineating an idea of Englishness through language,) implied the stigmatisation of the rest of varieties spoken in England. As a consequence, authors considered that it was their task to preserve them in their writings, some of them as a way to pay homage to their own identity, others as a way to characterise their protagonists. No matter what their intention was, by including these varieties, they presented an insightful reflection of the linguistic setting of the period, characterised by its great diversity. These representations of speech put into circulation not only dialects but also the local identities associated with them. One of the identities most often represented in literature is that of the northerner, mainly because of its linguistic peculiarities that are easy to identify. This awareness was possibly due to the particular history and linguistic development of the northern varieties which, influenced by the Scandinavian invasions, were perceived as the ‘other’ with regards to southern forms. Thus, the salience of the

linguistic features of these dialects has made it possible to study and record them through history in metalinguistic commentaries, literature or current studies such as those of Joan Beal and Paul Cooper. In the case of Yorkshire, its dialectal repertoire has been deliberately used as sociolinguistic markers that are clearly recognised by the community. In fact, as we have seen, 18th-century writers Joseph Reed and Rev. John Watson employed a repertoire of phonological and lexical features so as to delineate their characters through their speech. Actually, the analysis has shown that it is possible to identify in both works a set of commonly occurring features attributed to the Yorkshire dialect. Reed and Watson's conscious use of the dialect was, therefore, employed as a way to portray the identity of the Yorkshire community, which at some points was a comic and stereotyped depiction of non-standard speech. Nonetheless, it represented the general image found in the mentality of speakers. Furthermore, the ability of the average English speaker to identify these linguistic singularities pertaining to the Yorkshire dialect evidences to extent to which it was a noticeable variety; actually, Reed's work was played in London, which goes some way to suggesting that Londoners were aware of the dialect and recognised it as belonging to Yorkshire. All in all, this analysis has served to identify the most common linguistic features associated with the Yorkshire dialect and the attitudes and image of the Yorkshire persona present in outsiders' imagination. As a result, we can identify the Yorkshire dialect as an enregistered variety in 18th-century literary works.

7. Addenda: Glossary

In order to provide a complete analysis of the lexical features belonging to Joseph Reed's *The Register Office* and Rev. John Watson's "Two letters written in the Halifax Dialect", this section includes all the dialectal vocabulary found in both works and that has not been included previously in sections 5.1. and 5.2. This vocabulary has been classified attending to the areas where they were apparently distributed: (I) Yorkshire regionalisms, (II) Yorkshire and Northern items and (III) Yorkshire, Northern counties and Midlands words. In order to carry out this classification, I have relied on the *EDD*, which provides information about the dialectal areas in which the words were used in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.

(I) Yorkshire regionalisms

Joseph Reed's <i>The Register Office</i>	Rev. John Watson's "Two letters written in the Halifax Dialect"
- <i>Sheer</i> = to work brick-clay with a spade	- <i>Sag</i> = saw - <i>Store</i> = much, greatly, to a considerable extent

(II) Yorkshire and Northern items

Joseph Reed's <i>The Register Office</i>	Rev. John Watson's "Two letters written in the Halifax Dialect"
- <i>Afore</i> = before - <i>Aforehand</i> = beforehand - <i>Arrantest</i> = exceedingly, downright	- <i>Aboon</i> = above - <i>Afore</i> = before - <i>Awther</i> = each, either

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Canny</i> = wise, knowing - <i>Donnot</i> = worthless person - <i>Gang</i> = go - <i>Garth</i> = garden - <i>Gawvison(s)</i> = an awkward fellow - <i>Kirk</i> = church - <i>Larum</i> = alarm - <i>Marry</i> = yes, indeed - <i>Moot</i> = to say, to suggest - <i>Nobut</i> = only, nothing, but - <i>Ommost</i> = almost - <i>Sike</i> = such - <i>Sin(e)</i> = since - <i>Speldering</i> = spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Childer</i> = child - <i>Dule</i> = grief, sorrow, mental distress - <i>Feared</i> = afraid - <i>Fleid</i> = to put to flight, frighten away - <i>Foors</i> = furrow - <i>Gravin</i> = to dig - <i>Meeternly</i> = tolerably, moderately, fairly - <i>Nobbut</i> = only, nothing but - <i>Slane</i> = a long-handled spade, having a wing at one or both sides of the blade, used in Ireland for cutting turf (Anglo-Irish word) - <i>Speld</i> = to spell
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(III) Yorkshire, Northern counties and Midlands's words

Joseph Reed's <i>The Register Office</i>	Rev. John Watson's "Two letters written in the Halifax Dialect"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Asside</i> = by the side of - <i>Lass</i> = girl 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Mysel</i> = myself - <i>Hersel</i> = herself - <i>Slubberon</i> = to obscure with dirt

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