



FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA
TRABALLO DE FIN DE GRAO
Grao en Lingua e Literatura Inglesas

English spelling reforms and proposals in Early Modern English (1550-1650) with special reference to Richard Mulcaster's *Elementary*.

Autora: Isabel Rodríguez González

Titor: Luis Iglesias Rábade

Curso académico 2018/2019

Febreiro 2019

Traballo de Fin de Grao presentado na Universidade de Santiago de Compostela para a obtención do grao en Lingua e Literatura Inglesas.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	4
INTRODUCTION	6
CHAPTER 1	10
Historical background	10
1.1 The linguistic consequences of the Norman Conquest on English spelling ...	10
1.2 The Middle English dialects and the rise of a standard	12
1.3 The re-establishment of the English language	15
1.4 The impact of the printing press on English spelling	18
CHAPTER 2	21
The Early Modern English period	21
2.1 English language in the Early Modern English period.....	21
2.2 Spelling in Early Modern English.....	26
2.3 Spelling reformers and their proposals.....	29
2.3.1 Phonetic reformers.....	29
2.3.1.1 Thomas Smith	29
2.3.1.2 John Hart	30
2.3.1.3 William Bullokar	33
2.3.1.4 John Baret	34
2.3.1.5 Alexander Gil	34
CHAPTER 3	36
Mulcaster's <i>Elementary</i> (1582)	36
3.1 Preliminary notions	36
3.2 Richard Mulcaster's spelling reform	37
3.2.1 Custom, use and reason	37
3.3 Mulcaster's defects on spelling	40
3.4 Mulcaster's seven principles for the correct spelling	41

3.4.1	General rule	41
3.4.2	Proportion	44
3.4.3	Composition	45
3.4.4	Derivation	46
3.4.5	Distinction	46
3.4.6	Enfranchisement	47
3.4.7	Prerogative	48
CONCLUSION		50
REFERENCES		53



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CUBRIR ESTE FORMULARIO ELECTRONICAMENTE

Formulario de delimitación de título e resumo
Traballo de Fin de Grao curso 2018/2019

APELIDOS E NOME:	Rodríguez González Isabel
GRAO EN:	Lengua y Literatura Inglesas
(NO CASO DE MODERNAS) MENCIÓN EN:	
TITOR/A:	Luis Iglesias Rábade
LIÑA TEMÁTICA ASIGNADA:	Estudios de variación e cambio lingüístico con referencia á lingua inglesa.

SOLICITO a aprobación do seguinte título e resumo:

Título: English spelling reforms and proposals in Early Modern English (1550-1650) with special reference to Richard Mulcaster's *Elementary*.

I intend to study the attempts to reform English spelling in Early Modern English (1550-1650) along with the debates and proposals of the main spelling reformers in this period with special reference to Richard Mulcaster's *Elementary* (1582) which is considered to be "the major study of English orthography" (Lass 1999:32) and "the first consistent attempt to codify and promulgate detailed rules for normalising and regularizing traditional English spelling" (Lass 1999:20).

I also intend to provide a historical background of English spelling in Middle English period especially in the late Middle English and emphasize the impact of the printing and William Caxton's role in a time in which "there was no generally recognised standard form of English speech, and only the beginnings of a standard orthography" (Lass 1999:15) to understand the situation of English orthography in Early Modern English Period. In so doing, some key notes will be shown to design the status of English in a daily linguistic contact environment in which Latin and French continued to be the dominant languages in the fields of knowledge having an important imprint on English spelling.

The method of analysis will focus on the contrast of the main debates and proposals for the reform of the spelling in the period covered by this research with special reference to *Elementary* so as to appraise its impact on the subsequent development of the English orthographic system.

SRA. DECANA DA FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA (Presidenta da Comisión de Títulos de Grao)

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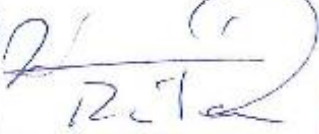

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Santiago de Compostela, 05 de novembro de 2018.

Sinatura do/a interesado/a 	Visto e prace (sinatura do/a titular/a) 	Aprobado pola Comisión de Títulos de Grao con data 16 NOV. 2018  Selo da Facultade de Filoloxía
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SRA. DI CANA DA FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA (Presidenta da Comisión de Títulos de Grao)

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to explain the situation of English spelling in England during the 16th century and the proposals and the debates of the main spelling reformers to stabilize English orthography.

I intend to provide a historical background of the situation of English language and spelling in the Middle English period and the impact of the printing press on English spelling to understand the reforms of the 16th century. In so doing, I show the situation of English language and spelling in an environment in which English coexisted with French and Latin which continued to be the dominant languages, and which had a great impact on English spelling. Then, I analyse the proposals of the main spelling reformers of the 16th century with special reference to Richard's *Elementary* so as to appraise its impact on the next reformers of English orthography.

First, chapter 1, which deals with the historical background of English language and spelling, is divided into four sections:

The first one is devoted to the impact of the Norman conquest on English spelling. As Barber and Cable stated, it “had a greater effect on the English language than any other in the course of its history” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 105). I intend to explain the main changes in English spelling that were produced by the introduction of French conventions.

The second section deals with the dialects that existed in Middle English and the rise of a standard variety. These events show the lack of stability in English spelling because there was not a standard variety. To explain that I provide two texts that belong to different times and different regional dialects. Thus, I intend to explain the main features of each text to show the great diversity that existed during the Middle English period. Although London English gained the status of a standard variety, there were still inconsistencies and variations in spelling. The regional diversity and the lack of an official standard variety will be an important matter of discussion for the reformers of the 16th century.

The third section is devoted to explaining briefly the re-establishment of the English language that started gradually around 1200 and culminated by the end of the 15th century when English was used in formal domains. However, Latin continued to be the

language of scholarship and French was the language of the Court. However, French was no longer considered the vernacular language because “In the fifteenth century it virtually disappeared as a language of everyday communication” (Gramley 2012: 98).

Finally, in the fourth section, I discuss the impact of the printing press on English spelling. This event was one of great importance because the printing press helped to take the first steps toward the standardization of English spelling. I intend to explain briefly the advantages of printed books in comparison with the disadvantages that manuscripts presented for the stabilization of orthography. In addition, I discuss the inconsistencies in writing that appeared in the printed books that Caxton produced.

Secondly, chapter 2 is devoted to the Early Modern English period. I divide this chapter into three sections:

The first one deals with the situation of English in the 16th century. I intend to explain the changes that the English language underwent during the Early Modern Period regarding its use in writing and reading. The 16th century was a time in which although English had defeated French as the spoken vernacular language and its use in formal domains, Latin continued to be the language used in fields of education and knowledge. However, with the spread of national feeling, the increase of literacy and the translation of classical works into English, demand of books in English increased and consequently, there was broader use of English language in reading and writing. Nevertheless, the lack of specific vocabulary and the lack of a standard written system made it impossible to consider English suitable for use in higher education. The lack of a standard variety and the inconsistencies in spelling were a matter for discussion amongst the reformers of the 16th century which I discuss in the last section of this chapter.

The second section is devoted to English spelling in the Early Modern English period. In this section I compare three texts to show the variability and inconsistencies in spelling that existed at that time in the English language. The instability of English spelling made some scholars consider English to be vulgar and chaotic. As Barber claimed, “[...] the fact that it was subject to change, was one of the reasons for calling it rude or barbarous. Classical Greek and Latin, by contrast, were fixed and unchanging” (Barber 1997: 52). For that reason, some scholars believed that a spelling reform was necessary to stabilize English spelling which we will see in detail in the next chapter.

Finally, the third section of chapter 2 deals with the main spelling reformers of the 16th century, especially those who advocated a phonetic spelling. These reformers considered that the English alphabet did not have sufficient letters to represent all the speech sounds of the English language and they claimed that English spelling was unstable and unfixed. For that reason, they proposed some changes in English spelling that I explain in this section. As Baugh and Cable stated, “Spelling was one of the problems that the English language began consciously to face in the sixteenth century” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 209). This section is subdivided into five parts. Each one corresponds to one spelling reformer. The first one is dedicated to Thomas Smith and some of his proposals such as the introduction of Greek and Anglo-Saxon letters to the English alphabet; the second part corresponds to John Hart who was one of the most radical spelling reformers. I intend to comment on his proposals about the orthography of English based in his principle “one letter one sound”, such as the introduction of a new alphabet in which he included new letters. Moreover, I explain the four main “vices” which according to him, made English spelling corrupted. In this part I also mention the main proposals of *etymologizers* and the opinion that Hart had about them; the third part deals with the proposals of William Bullokar. Like his predecessors, he considered that English spelling was unstable and there was not a correspondence between sound a symbol. However, he emphasised on the necessity of Grammar and dictionaries to fix English spelling; the fourth part is devoted to John Baret and some of his ideas that included in his dictionary *Alvarie or Quadruple Dictionarie*. Finally, the fifth part deals with Alexander Gil and his proposal related to the letter <g>.

The last chapter of this dissertation is devoted to Richard Mulcaster and his work entitled *Elementary* which is considered “[...] the most extensive and the most important treatise on English spelling in the sixteenth century” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 205). This chapter is divided into four sections. The first one is an introduction to the author and his book. In the second section I intend to explain his position against a spelling reform and a written system based on phonemic principles. Thus, I explain his principle “custom, use and reason” which according to him is the basis of “the right writing”. The third section deals with the defects that Mulcaster found in English spelling and finally the fourth section is subdivided into seven parts. Each one corresponds to one of the seven principles that according to Mulcaster “[...] should form the basis of a correct orthography” (Salmon 1999: 33). *Generall rule, Proportion, Composition, Dereiuation, Distinction,*

Enfranchisement and *Prerogative*. I intend to introduce them and show the importance of each one for “the right writing”.

CHAPTER 1

Historical background

1.1 The linguistic consequences of the Norman Conquest on English spelling

One of the events that had a major impact on the history of the English language was the Norman Conquest in 1066. It “had a greater effect on the English language than any other in the course of its history” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 105).

Before the Conquest the late West-Saxon dialect was considered the first standard English. This dialect was “strongest at the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century” (Blake 1996: 105).

However, with the arrival of Normans this situation changed. After 1066 English was spoken by the majority of people, between one and two million speakers. In fact, “The Anglo-Saxon nobility spoke English habitually” (Horobin and Smith 2002: 26), while French was only spoken by those of Norman origin who came to England in the course of the 11th century, thus being around 20.000 speakers (Gramley 2012: 69). Old English was still in use for a time after the Norman Conquest, but this situation changed when French became the language of administration and the language of court, although Latin remained the language of the church, scholarship, learning and international communication. At that time “English was a marginal language” (Horobin and Smith 2002: 27) because it lacked prestige.

Therefore, this context in which two languages coexisted in the same territory produced a situation of *diglossia*. The term *diglossia* is defined “[...] as a situation where two closely related languages are used in a speech community. One for *High* (H) functions (e.g., church, newspapers) and one for *Low* (L) functions (e.g. in the home or market)” (Meyerhoff 2011: 308). So, English was the low language and the language of the lower social groups which was relegated to be used in colloquial family contexts while French was the high language which was used in formal domains.

The Norman conquest produced many changes and some inconsistencies in English spelling. They can be seen in the introduction by the Anglo-Norman scribes of French spelling conventions into English (Brook 1958: 108). The French men scribes “[...] wrote, when wrote English pretty much as they heard it, using French graphemic conventions” (Bloomfield and Newmark 1964: 178). These changes produced a great

confusion in writing since a word could be spelt in many ways. For instance, the OE /e:/ (represented <ē>) preserved the same pronunciation in ME but, due to the French influence, the spelling of /e:/ corresponded with the eME spelling <e, eo> and later the lME <e, ee, ie> in words such as “field” which was spelt *feld*, *feeld* and *field* (Iglesias-Rábade 2003: 152).

Another change that produced hesitation in writing was in some words that took the letter <y>. For instance, in OE the letter <y> in *bysig* and *byrgan* “busy” and “bury” was pronounced [ü]. But, as [ü] in French was represented by <u> the words *bysig* and *byrgan* became “busy” and “bury” (Iglesias-Rábade 1995: 43). Moreover, <y> was often represented in ME [i] without distinction between short or long (Brook 1958: 109), as it came to be used matching together with <i> as in the verb *sinken/synken* “to sink” that both <y> and <i> represent /i/ or the word *child/chyld* “child” in which <y> and <i> represented /i:/ (Iglesias-Rábade 2003: 152). As Barber claimed, “The letter y was no longer used to represent a front rounded, but was simply as an alternative to i [...]” (Barber 1993: 152).

The influence of the Anglo-Normans in English spelling was not only produced in vowels but also in consonants. As Scragg claimed, “A special problem introduced by the use of French pronunciation and French spelling affects borrowings which begin with <h>” (Scragg 1974: 41). The aspirate <h> was lost in Latin soon after the classical period (Scragg 1974: 41). Latin borrowings that take the letter <h> and that were introduced into French did not present aspiration but as the Old French scribes were influenced by the Classical Latin, they introduced the unpronounced <h> in writing (Scragg 1974: 41). So, many Romance borrowings with a silent <h> were introduced into Middle English. Scragg divides these borrowings that take an unpronounced <h> into three groups: those in which <h> disappeared as in *able*, *ability* and *arbour*; those in which <h> is written but it is not pronounced as in *heir*, *honour*, *honest* and *hour* and those in which <h> was reintroduce and it is aspirate as in *horrible*, *hospital* and *host* (Scragg 1974: 41).

Moreover, due to the French influence, some words that were written with <s> came to be written with <c>. In French, the letter <c> was pronounced /s/ next to front vowels (Brook 1958: 112), so the influence of French on English spelling made that traditional spelling of some native words that take <c> changed, as for instance the OE

word *īs* “ice” and *sinder* “cinder” which came to be written in ME *ice* and *cinder* (Brook 1958: 112).

As can be observed, there was a great hesitation in writing due to the merging English spelling tradition and the new graphemes introduced from French. However, some French graphemes cleared up some ambiguities that OE presented. For example, the “phonemicization” (Gramley 2012: 75) of /s/ and /z/, and /f/ and /v/. As Blake said, OE did not make a distinction between voiced and voiceless fricatives which were <f, s, þ> but “The introduction of many voiced forms from French led to the discrimination between voiced and voiceless forms of /s/ and /z/ and /f/ and /v/” (Blake 1996: 118). For instance, in OE [v] and [f] were allophones of /f/, they never contrasted (Bloomfield and Newmark 1964: 179). However, in ME due to the introduction of <v> from French, “ME speakers learned to hear the difference between the initial [v] in Early ME *ver* and the initial [f] in Early ME *fer*” (Bloomfield and Newmark 1964: 179). Therefore, in ME [v] and [f] became phonemes.

Summing up, the Middle English period was a time in which the English language underwent a great change. As Blake said, “To many people the Norman Conquest symbolises the submersion of the English language under the influx of French” (Blake 1996: 107). The introduction of French conventions into the English language produced changes in spelling. These changes not only cleared up the ambiguity in some OE words, but also produced some inconsistencies in spelling that will be the matter of discussion of the spelling reformers of the 16th century.

1.2 The Middle English dialects and the rise of a standard

Strang described ME as “par excellence, the dialectal phase of English” (Strang 1970; quoted by Horobin and Smith 2002: 33). This period had five dialectal varieties: Northern, West Midlands, South-Western, Kentish and East Midlands. During the Middle English there was not a standard variety all over England. Speakers wrote and spoke their own regional dialect. “[...] English after the conquest began to exhibit marked dialectal diversity in the written mode” (Horobin and Smith 2002: 32).

“[...] the orthographic picture in Middle English is one of great variety” (Scragg 1974: 26) since in this period there were many ways of writing a word. For instance, there were an indefinite number of spelling words for the word “knight”. Among them, we can

find: <knight>, <knighte>, <knyght>, <knyht> <knyghte>, <knict> etc. And for the writing of the word “day” there was several forms of spelling such as <daye>, <dai>, <dey>, <dawe>, <dæi> etc. (Crystal 2004: 211).

As David Crystal said in his work *The stories of English*, “With no standard language to act as a control, Middle English illustrates an age when all dialects were equal [...]” (Crystal 2004: 215). At that time, a prescriptive attitude toward the written language did not exist. So, Middle English was a chaotic period for English spelling.

Scragg stated that “The situation in Middle English generally is that such texts as we have were written initially in one orthography and copied by scribes familiar with another” (Scragg 1974: 24-25).

For example, on comparing two texts of the Lord’s Prayers that Scragg provided in his work *A history of English spelling*, he shows the variation that existed in Middle English times in writing.

<p>1. Fader oure þat is in heuen, Blessid be þi name to neuen. Come to vs þi kyngdome. In heuen and erthe þi wille be done. Oure ilk-day-bred graunt vs today, And oure mysdedes forgyue vs ay. Als we do hom þat trespas us Right so haue merci vpon vs, And lede vs in no foundyng, Bot shild vs fro al wicked þinge.</p> <p><i>1. North-east Midlands of circa 1375.</i></p>	<p>2. Owre fadur þat art in hewon, Blessud be þi name to newon. Cum to vs þi kyndome. In hewon and erthe þi wyl be done. Owre ilke dayus bred grawnt vs today, An owre mysdedus for3yf vs, As we do hom þat to vs trespas Ryght so haue mercy vpon us, And lede vs into no fowndyng, But schyld vs fro all wyccud þing.</p> <p><i>2. West Midlands of the mid-fifteenth century.</i></p>
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Source: (Scragg 1974: 25)

Both texts belong to different times and dialects in the Middle English period. The first one (1) belongs to the north-east Midlands and was written around 1375 and the second one (2) belongs to the West Midlands and was produced in the mid-fifteenth

century (Scragg 1974: 25). So, the changes that these texts underwent not only are regional changes but also chronological changes.

These texts show differences in spelling of some words. The scribes of both texts made use of the letter <i> and <y> alternatively. However, the text of the north-east midlands shows a preference for the use of <i> as for instance in words like *wille*, *merci*, *shild* and *wicked* while the text from west-midlands shows a preference for <y> *wyl*, *mercy*, *schyld* and *wyccud* (Scragg 1974: 25).

Scragg found another difference. The use of <u> to represent /v/ in text 1 as in words like *heuen* and *neuen* and the use of <w> to represent /v/ in text 2 as in *hewon* and *newon* (Scragg 1974: 25).

As Scragg stated, “Not all of these variations are related to the use of different regional orthographies, but some are and the potential for confusion caused by incomplete transmission from one system to another is obviously great” (Scragg 1974: 25). Texts like the Lord’s Prayer are transmitted and copied several times through the history of the culture of one society, so they are subjected to changes in writing. Furthermore, each scribe adapted the text to their own way of writing.

Therefore, Middle English period shows a wide chronological and regional variation in spelling as can be seen in both texts above. As David Crystal pointed out, “The Middle English period lasts for over 300 years, and during that time there were major changes in the language, which affected all dialects” (Crystal 2004: 198).

As I mentioned before, during the Middle English period there was not a standard variety since the role of it was carried out by French and Latin. The latter was the language of the church and scholarship and French was the language of law and of government. Late West Saxon which was considered the most extensive variety of OE was decaying in 11th century but it did not disappear until early 13th century because there are manuscripts that correspond to that century in which some norms of this dialect are used (Crystal 2004: 195).

Furthermore, as shown, West Saxon was in Old English times the most powerful of all kingdoms so, the late West-Saxon dialect gained the prestige of the literary and

standard language at that time. Nevertheless, in 14th century the dialect which achieved the position of standard was the dialect of London. One of the main reasons was that the city of London at that time concentrated commercial and political activities. Moreover, it was a city in which an extensive literary and artistic life predominated and “Large numbers of people were involved in literary activities [...]” (Crystal 2004: 230).

However, despite using the London dialect as standard, there was still variation in spelling and there was not a uniform way of writing. “The clear-cut distinction between ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’ did not exist in late Middle English” (Crystal 2004: 223). The notion of this “correct usage” of the English language spread gradually from 1600 to 1850. As Bloomfield and Newmark claimed, “[...] a systematized doctrine of correctness, which grammars and dictionaries provided, did not come into existence until the eighteenth century” (Bloomfield and Newmark 1964: 306).

1.3 The re-establishment of the English language.

After 1066, William replaced the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy and nobility with Normans who were placed in the high positions in the church and in the government. Moreover, many of the English native nobility were killed at the battle of Hasting on 14 October 1066. As a consequence, the members of the church such as bishops and archbishops in England were French (Gramley 2012: 68-69) except Wulfstan of Worcester who “[...] was the only Old English bishop who retained his office until the end of the conqueror’s reign [...]” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 110)

“French became the language of the ruling class, and remained important as the court language and the medium of parliament and the law until the fourteenth century” (Scragg 1974: 15). However, even before, Edward the Confessor, who ruled England between 1042 and 1066, had introduced many Normans in the English government and in the church, since his mother Emma of Normandy was of Norman origin and his father Æthelred the Unready was English and was the king of Wessex until 1016. Furthermore, he spent several years of his life in Normandy and Norman French was his native language. He “[...] was almost more French than English” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 106).

Therefore, “For several generations after the Conquest the important positions and the great estates were almost always held by Normans or men of foreign blood” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 109).

However, after 1200 the situation that English language had undergone with the Norman Conquest changed. First, King John lost Normandy in 1204 and all his French territories were confiscated. Moreover, a large number of the nobility owned lands in both countries, so due to the rivalry between them, they had to choose between England or France and to choose which country they would be loyal to (Gramley 2012: 72). As a consequence, this event led to a great rivalry between both countries that later culminated in the Hundred Years' War from 1337 to 1453.

In England, during the reign of Henry III (1216-1272) a feeling against foreigners began due to the new arrival of French nobility from the south of France to England in order to occupy high positions in the government of the country. King Henry III had an important connection again with France since his mother Isabella of Angoulême and his wife Eleanor of Provence were of French origin (Baugh and Cable 1993: 127-128). He “[...] was wholly French in tastes and connections” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 127). As a result, this event caused a feeling of resentment among the English nobility because they felt mistreated and marginalized which led to the emergence of a strong feeling of English national identity. The English nobility considered French people “[...] not merely foreigners; they are the worst enemies of England” (Richardson 1987; quoted by Baugh and Cable 1993: 130).

The growth of English identity among the nobility was linked to the language. The foreigners who were French “do not understand the English tongue, neglect the cure of souls, and impoverish the kingdom” (Richardson 1897; quoted by Baugh and Cable 1993: 130). The result of the feeling against foreigners can be seen in the *Provisions of Oxford* a document written in 1258 which can be considered the first written constitution made by a group of barons and led by Simon de Montfort who, paradoxically was Norman-born (Baugh and Cable 1993: 130). With the document, the barons proposed to restrict the power of King and share it with the parliament, but the king did not accept it and this gave rise to the Baron's war in 1258 (Gramley 2012: 73). However, the significant matter was that the *Provisions of Oxford* was the first official document issued in English since the Old English period (Gramley 2012: 73). It should be noted that it was also published in Latin and French (Gramley 2012: 73).

The situation of the English nobility regarding their occupation in the government and the position of the English language in England changed during the reign of Edward

I (1272-1307) since most of the office-holders were English and they could use the English language. When “Edward [...] came to the throne we enter upon a period in which England become conscious of its unity [...]” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 130). Moreover, although French continued to be used by the ruling classes, “The spread of English among the upper classes was making steady progress” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 133).

In the 13th century, French was still used by most part of upper the classes but the reason for using it was different from the previous centuries. Before the 13th century, French was a language which speakers of Norman origin inherited from their ancestors and that passed down from generations to generations (Baugh and Cable 199: 132). Before 1300 French was spread to English people who wanted to improve their position in society, as Gramley stated, “[...] the use of French marked class more than ethnic or national identity” (Gramley 2012: 69). Nevertheless, by the 13th century French was only used in administrative and business fields but no longer as an inherited first language. (Baugh and Cable 199: 132).

By the middle of the 13th century “French is treated as a foreign language” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 134). The most significant fact was the treatise written by the Anglo-Norman poet Walter of Bibbersworth entitled *The treatise* which was at first a manual addressed to a noble Dionisie de Muchensi to help her children to learn French (Baugh and Cable 1993: 134). The treatise “[...] had much wider circulation than in just the family for which it was originally written [...]” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 134). At that time “The number of French-teaching handbooks increased greatly during the thirteenth century [...]” (Crystal 2004: 129). Some references indicate that by the year 1300 the first language of some children who belonged to the nobility was English and they had to learn French in school (Crystal 2004: 129).

By the end of the 13th century “The tendency to speak English was becoming constantly stronger even in those two most conservative institutions, the church and the universities” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 136). The most significant event was the translation of the Bible from Latin to English by John Wycliff and the Henry’s IV speech during his coronation in 1399 which was in English. In fact, he was the first king whose first language was English after the Norman Conquest in 1066 (Gramley 2012: 99).

Finally, by the 15th century English was a language of prestige used in formal domains. Even though French was the language of the Court, at the end of the 15th century

English was the language used in documents of the parliament and Latin continued to be the language of scholarship (Gramley 2012: 74).

1.4 The impact of the printing press on English spelling.

The printing press had an important role in the history of English spelling. William Caxton introduced it for the first time in London in 1476. He devoted his life to printing and editing books. Nevertheless, “Caxton, it must be noted, was not a language specialist or professional writer; he was a businessman who wanted to make a living by selling books” (Crystal 2004: 255)

The printing press had a great impact on English writing. On the one hand, it helped to some extent to take the first steps towards the standardization of English orthography. “Spelling in printed press became fixed by about mid-seventeenth century” (Brinton and Arnovick 2006: 357). As Crystal claimed, “A standard can evolve without printing; but printing makes it spread more rapidly and widely” (Crystal 2004: 262). With the printing press the kind of English writing which was used to print texts, or which was used to translate the foreign ones, could be easily propagated through the country. However, in the previous centuries with the use of manuscripts, the rapid expansion and the exactitude in copying could not be possible. As Lass said, “[...] the exigencies of manuscript transmission did not guarantee identical replicas of a given exemplar [...]” (Lass 1999: 6) because before the printing press, it was difficult to show one way of writing since as I said before related to the texts of Lord’s Prayer in section 1.2., with the use of manuscripts each scribe adapted the text that he had to copy to his own dialect. There were several texts with the same content with differences in spelling since manuscripts could not be copied with the same exactitude and with the same rapidity and in the same quantity as with the printing press. Therefore, those manuscripts were exposed to a major probability of being copied with different types of regional varieties.

With the use of the printing press, the orthography could be fixed in a written form and contributed “[...] to reproduce a book in a thousand copies or a hundred thousand, every one exactly like the other” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 196). So, that way of writing could serve as a model to other writers and thus can have only one way of writing.

On the other hand, the English that was used in the printing press was not consistent at all. At that time in England there did not exist the notion of what was correct

or incorrect writing. It was in the 16th when a concern about English orthography started to appear with reformers such as Richard Mulcaster, Bullokar or John Hart of whom I will talk about below. The variety which was considered as standard around 1430 was the Chancery standard but, as Salmon stated, “[...] the influence of Chancery orthography had led to the perception of a greater need for consistency, and gradual encroachment of Chancery forms in the written English of regional dialect speakers” (Salmon 1999: 23). So, according to Salmon, “It is not surprising, therefore, that Caxton found difficulties in producing a form of printed English which could act as a standard [...]” (Salmon 1999: 24).

Crystal pointed out that “Although many words are spelled consistently, there is a noticeable lack of standardization” (Crystal 2004: 258). This fact is generally due to the translation of the texts and the compositors of foreign origin who worked with Caxton. Those compositors had to be precise when copying or translating a text into English but sometimes it could be possible that they introduced some spelling conventions of their own language (Salmon 1999: 24). However, not only did they use those spelling conventions, but Caxton also did in his translations. Crystal gives an example of it:

If he is translating a Dutch text, his spelling can reflect Dutch conventions, such as *oe* instead of *o* or *oo*: “good”, for example, appears as *goed* in the Dutch *Reynard the Fox*, but as *gode* and *good* in his Prologue to the Latin *Eneydos* (Crystal 2004: 258).

What Caxton did was to make uniform the texts that were written in different regional varieties which prevailed in the Middle English period. However, it was very easy to find some inconsistencies in the texts as we have already seen, and which later produced a great attack against Caxton and a wide debate between the reformers of the 16th century. For instance, Salmon provides a comment that the spelling reformer Alexander Gil made about printers as responsible for the corruption of English spelling stating that “corruption in writing originated the printing of our books, I lay all the blame for our chaotic spelling on the last” (Alston’s translation of Gil’s *Logonomia Anglica* quoted by Salmon 1999: 19).

It should be noted that Crystal sticks up for Caxton stating:

He had to deal with material from a variety of sources, both native and foreign, in manuscripts which displayed considerable scribal and sometimes dialectal variation. Several manuscripts, such as those by Chaucer and Malory, were

extremely long. He had to act as publisher, printer, and editor, writing his own supplementary material in the form of his Prologues and Epilogues. There was no one he could really turn to for help (Crystal 2004: 259-260).

All in all, the printing press contributed to the expansion of the English language through the printing of books all over England but at the same time, readers were exposed to the variation of some words that appeared in books. There was uniformity in the texts, but variation prevailed until the next centuries. This inconsistency was the matter of preoccupations of the spelling reformers of 16th century which I am going to explain in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

The Early Modern English period.

2.1 English language in the Early Modern English period

The Early Modern English period, which corresponds to the Renaissance, dated from 1500 to 1650. It should be noted that as Barber stated, “All such divisions are arbitrary [...]” (Barber 1997: 1) since other historians and philologists date this period from 1500 to 1700 such as Charles Barber (1997) or Terttu Nevalainen (2006).

At that time, English enjoyed a certain degree of prestige in comparison with its position during the Norman Conquest, because as I mentioned in the previous sections, English was already used in formal domains in the 15th century. However, although English “[...] had gained most of the early functions of Latin and French” (Nevalainen 2006: 13), the first one continued to be the language of scholarship and educated people while English was considered to be a “rude” and “barbarous” language. As Baugh and Cable said, “[...] a strong tradition still sanctioned the use of Latin in all fields of knowledge” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 198). Moreover, Latin at that time was a privileged language because it “[...] was still the international lingua franca of learning” (Nevalainen 2006: 16), so literary men who could speak, read, and write in Latin, could communicate easily with the rest of Europe and could have access to knowledge and new ideas.

The reason why Latin continued to be the language of scholarship was mainly due to the return to classical learning and reading and to the return to Latin and Greek models of writing. The dominant language in all domains of education was the Latin language. “In grammar the schools, the Latin classics were central. The pupils learnt to read and to write Latin. They read Latin literature [...]. And they read classical works of history, philosophy, geography and natural science. [...]. Moreover, the pupils learnt to speak Latin” (Barber 1997: 43).

As an example, in the second half of Roger Ascham’s *The Schoolmaster* [1974 (1570)], which is entitled “The Ready Way to the Latin Tongue”, Ascham shows “[...] six ways appointed by the best learned men for the learning of tongues and increase of

eloquence [...]” (Ascham 1974 [1570]: 82) and how to translate and to teach Latin showing the importance of learning it. As he pointed out:

For in the rudest country and most barbarous mother language many be found can speak very wisely, but in the Greek and Latin tongue, the two only learned tongues which be kept not in common talk but in private books, we find always wisdom and eloquence, good matter and good utterance, never or seldom asunder (Ascham 1974 [1570] :114-115).

English is defined as the “barbarous” mother tongue in which those speakers who are wise could not express their wisdom, while the learned tongues which are Latin and Greek are the most eloquent. Furthermore, Ascham in this book talks about the importance of the imitation of the greatest classical authors to improve and to learn languages:

The second kind of imitation is to follow for learning of tongues and sciences the best authors. Here riseth amongst proud and envious wits a great controversy whether one or many are to be followed, and if one, who is that one – Seneca or Cicero, Sallust or Caesar, and so forth in Greek and Latin (Ascham 1974 [1570]: 116).

Finally, in the last part of the work, he concluded that Caesar was the best writer characterized by his perfectness and eloquence:

His seven books *De bello Gallico* and the three *De bello civili* be written so wisely for the matter, so eloquently for the tongue, that neither his greatest enemies could ever find the least note of partiality in him [...], nor yet the best judgers of the Latin tongue, nor the most envious lookers upon other men`s writings, can say any other but all things be most perfectly done by him (Ascham 1974 [1570]: 161-162).

What Ascham shows in his work is that the classical languages (especially Latin) in the 16th century were still considered the superior and the most eloquent languages used in education. He refers to the writing of classical authors as examples of role models for their pure and eloquent Latin while English was the “rude” language which was marginalized in the field of knowledge and advanced education. The only way for English to be an eloquent language was to introduce vocabulary from the classical languages. As Jones claimed, “Eloquence inhered not in the native elements in the language but only in the words introduced into it from the classics” (Jones 1966: 7).

Not only Ascham wrote about Latin but also Thomas Elyot in his work *The governor* (1531), in which he “[...] insists that a nobleman’s son must be taught to speak pure and elegant Latin [...] and suggests methods of teaching spoken Latin to children before they reach the age of seven” (Barber 1997: 44). In addition, the Bishop of Durham in 1499 published a work entitled *The Contemplation of Sinners* which he wrote “[...] partly in English, for those who could not read in Latin, and partly in Latin, ‘to gyue consolacyon in that byhalf to lettred men whiche vnderstande latyn’” (Jones 1966: 10).

Furthermore, it should be noted that many scientists, philosophers, doctors and writers, wrote their works in Latin, such as Isaac Newton, Galileo Galilei or William Harvey (Barber 1997: 43) and that contributed to the importance of Latin as the language of knowledge.

However, the situation of English language changed again in the course of the Early Modern English period and “[...] Latin, despite its continuing prestige, gradually declined in importance in England, and the prestige of vernacular rose” (Barber 1997: 45). As I mentioned before in the previous headlines, by the 13th century the feeling of an English national identity emerged among the English nobility. In the EME this feeling was spread further and was linked to the English language. The pride and importance of England as a nation implied the same pride and importance in both the English Language and Literature. As Barber stated, “National feeling led to a pride in the national language, and to attempts to create a vernacular literature to vie with that of Greece and Rome” (Barber 1997: 45).

“When the Early Modern Period opened, a substantial part of the population could read” (Barber 1997: 46). The expansion of education, literacy and reading was very important for the English language and its expansion at that time. As we have seen, in this period what stands out is the printing press which was a modern device already introduced in 1476 that “[...] brought words from manuscript obscurity to the sunlight of books [...]” (Jones 1966: 142). This event is connected with the spread of literacy and education which began in the latter Middle Ages among people of the middle classes and that was spread further in the 16th century. The rapid expansion of books made it possible to reach many people who were able to read due to the increase of education at that time. So, as Baugh and Cable said, “As a result of popular education the printing press has been able to exert its influence upon language as upon thought” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 196).

As I mentioned, Latin was the language of scholarship and many authors considered it as a pure and perfect language worthy of admiration and a language that students should learn. However, as Barber claimed, “A considerable part of this reading public must have been unable to read Latin” (Barber 1997: 46). Most people generally attended only “petty schools” which correspond to primary schools in which people learnt only to read English and children who attended grammar schools and were taught Latin were not fluent in this language (Barber 1997: 46). As a consequence, English was preferred by the majority of ordinary people who had a basic education in which they learnt to write and read in the English language. Those people with basic studies were the majority in society since only a few could have an advanced education and learn Latin. Hence, they were interested in reading the translations of the classics in English. In fact, “[...] there was a great demand for translations from Greek and Latin, especially for poetry and history, and there are numerous such translations throughout the period” (Barber 1997: 46). The demand for books in English contributed to spreading literacy in the English language and helped the vernacular to be used in the field of education.

Nevertheless, during the 16th century the English language was still considered inferior to Latin and Greek since English could not supply the new concepts that appeared in England related to the new discoveries and evolution in techniques, in sciences or in education. “English was unsuitable for scholarly works, because it lacked the necessary technical vocabulary” (Barber 1997: 48). Moreover, English lacked a standard variety and the spelling was very unstable “[...] unlike classical Latin and Greek, which were ‘fixed’” (Barber 1997: 48). So, classical languages were the ones which could express these new concepts. “Greek and Latin, with their capacity for compounding and derivation, provided the necessary new terms, and these were absorbed into the vernacular languages [...]” (Scragg 1974: 53).

In the English language there were numerous Latin borrowings which had already been introduced in the Middle English period and that by the 16th century had increased greatly up to the point of making English language lose its essence. As Crystal pointed out:

There had been a steady trickle of Latin borrowings into English throughout the Middle English period, but during the fifteenth century their number greatly increased, and in the sixteenth century they became so numerous [...] that the character of the English lexicon was permanently altered (Crystal 2004: 288).

Some writers of that time were conscious of the influence of Latin in English language with the introduction of so many borrowings. So, “[...] the feeling was widely held that borrowing had gone too far [...]” (Crystal 2004: 292).

There was a debate concerning borrowings in English language in which some were in favour of borrowings to enrich English language and others were against. In this period appeared “[...] three main schools of thought” related to vocabulary and borrowings (Barber 1997: 53). The most representative figures were: first, the *Archaiser* Edmund Spenser who decided to bring obsolete Anglo-Saxon words to light and replace Classical vocabulary. Secondly, the *Purist* John Cheke who was against the introduction of loan words. In fact, Crystal provides a letter that Cheke wrote to the politician Thomas Hoby in which he claimed that “[...] our tung should be written cleane and pure, vnmixt and vnmangeled with borrowing of other tungs” (Crystal 2004: 292) and finally, the *Neologiser* Thomas Elyot who claimed that borrowings were necessary to enrich the language as Latin and Greek borrowed from other languages (Barber 1997: 53).

For most of the 16th century, English was considered a “rude” and “vulgar” language which was not able to express the new concepts related to the new discoveries of the time because “The scholarly monopoly of Latin throughout the Middle Ages had left the vernaculars undeveloped along certain lines” (Baugh and Cable 1993: 210).

It should be noted that by the middle of the 16th century books of rhetoric started to appear and they were considered necessary to improve and enrich the English language. As Barber stated, “[...] a language was made eloquent by being adorned with the devises of classical rhetoric” (Barber 1997: 52).

Although Latin and Greek were the favourite languages for use in literature and education, the interest in a literature in English began to emerge. Therefore, the orthographic reform, which we will see in detail in the next section, will be extremely important for English to be a fixed language like Latin and Greek and to give stability to English spelling and thus consider it suitable for learning.

All in all, by the end of the Middle English Period, English defeated French as the spoken vernacular language of England but in the Early Modern English Period, England had to compete with Latin to show its capability as a language of knowledge.

2.2 Spelling in Early Modern English.

According to Crystal, “The Early Modern English period is essentially an age of linguistic awareness and anxiety, in which Caxton’s writing represents a dawning appreciation that the language is a mess and needs sorting out [...]” (Crystal 2004: 286).

For the English language to be considered as worthy and eloquent as Latin it must be “fixed”. The first steps toward the standardization of the English spelling that took place between 1540 and 1640 were very crucial for the improvement of the English language. At that time “[...] there was no single set of universally accepted spellings. There were many widely accepted conventions [...]” (Barber 1997: 4). Moreover, the fact that there was not a correspondence between sounds and symbols led to disparities between the reformers. For example, in the EME words *debt* or *doubt* the letter *b* was not pronounced since they came directly from French *dete* and *doute* in which *b* do not occur. However, they were written with *b* as they derived from Latin *debitum* and *dubitare* in which all letters were spelt (Iglesias-Rábade 1995: 46).

Barber shows an extract taken from Thomas Elyot’s *The boke named the Gouernor* published in 1531 in which he comments on Elyot’s way of writing and the inconsistencies found in that passage. I show below the first paragraph that Barber provided in his work *Early Modern English* (1997):

But the moste honorable exercise in myne opinion / and that besemeth the astate
of euey noble persone / is to ryde suerly and clene / on great horse and a roughe
/ whiche vndoubtedly nat onely importeth a maiestie and drede to inferiour
persones / beholding him aboute the common course of other men / dauntyng a
fierce and cruell beaste / but also is no litle socour / as well in pursuete of enemies
and confoundyng them / as in escapyng imminent daunger / whan wisdometherto
exhorteth. Also a stronge and hardy horse dothe some tyme more damage vnder
his maister [...]

Source: (Barber 1997: 2)

The letter <u> and <v> at that time could represent both a vowel or a consonant. The examples that Barber shows are: the word *but* in which <u> represents a vowel and the word *euery* in which <u> represents a consonant; <v> as the representation of a vowel in the word *vnder* and as the representation of a consonant in the word *violence*. The explanation that Barber found is that although both letters seem to be used indiscriminately, there was a reason for the use of each one. Printers used <v> at the

beginning of a word such as in *vnder* and *violence* and on the contrary, they used <u> in other positions of the word such as in *euery* and *but* (Barber 1997: 3).

On comparing the use of <v> and <u> of the extract of Elyot given by Barber to the text that I show below of Richard Mulcaster's *Elementary* (1582) and Jonathan Swift's *A Proposal for correcting, improving and ascertaining the English tongue* (1712) some differences in spelling can be seen:

Now my dewtie in that behalf towards hir maiestie begin so discharged, whom the presenting of my book makes priuie to my purpos, doth not the verie stream of my dewtie, & the force of de sert carie me straight frō hir highnesse vnto your honour, whether I haue in eie your general good nesse towards all them [...] there is no one corner in all our cuntrie but it feleth the frute, and thriues by the effect (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: iij).

The period wherein the *English Tongue* received most improvement, I take to commence with the beginning of Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign, and to conclude with the Great Rebellion in Forty Two. 'Tis true, there was a very ill Taste both of Style and Wit, which prevailed under King James the First, but that seems to have been corrected in the first Years of his successor [...] (Swift 1969 [1712]: 17).

The three works were written in different years. Elyot's work, as I have mentioned, was written in 1531; Mulcaster's work was published in 1582 and Jonathan's in 1712. As can be observed, Mulcaster's text is very similar to Elyot's. Both follow the rule of using <v> at the beginning of a word. For instance, Mulcaster uses <u> in *haue* as a consonant in the middle position and <v> as a vowel in the beginning of the word *vnto*. On the contrary, he uses <u> as a vowel in *but*, and <v> as consonant in *verie*. However, if we look to Swift's text some differences regarding the use of <v> and <u> can be seen. Swift uses <v> in the middle position of a word (*have* and *prevailed*) instead of using <u> as Mulcaster and Elyot. Furthermore, Swift uses <u> at the beginning of a word as in *under* instead of <v> as Mulcaster uses in words such as *vnto* and swift in *vnder*.

This change in which <v> was used as a consonant and <u> as a vowel as in present-day English, took place around 1630 due to the continent influence (Barber 1997: 3). As Swift's work was published in 1712 it seems closer to present-day English.

Therefore, on comparing these texts, it can be observed that English spelling underwent a process of change and variability. There was not a stable orthography paradigm. This was one of the reasons why English was not considered a constructive

linguistic code for academic purposes like Latin. Thus, scholars and reformers intended to codify English spelling and make it consistent and standardized.

As we have already seen, variability in spelling were commonplace in the 16th century. Each writer had his own spelling system. For instance, for Sir John Cheke, the long vowels /a:/, /e:/, /i:/, /o:/ and /u:/ in words such as *take, hate, made, mine or thine*, are doubled as *taak, haat, maad, mijn, thijin* (Baugh and Cable 1993: 203). In the Early Modern period there was the possibility of choosing among different spellings for example, of present-day English word “enough”: *ynough, enoff, yenough, eno’, enouch* etc. (Görlach 1991: 46). Furthermore, in *A Notable Discovery of Coosnage* (1591) by Rober Greene, the word *coney* spelt is in many different ways such as *cony, conny, coney, connie, cunnie* etc (Baugh and Cable 1993: 204).

However, more inconsistencies are found in private letters and diaries. With the rise of literacy which increased in 16th century, scribes were not the only ones who could write but also educated men could write their own letters and documents. For instance, the well-known Paston’s letters, which consisted of correspondences between the members of Paston’s family. Those letters presented an unstable orthography because private letters were not written to be published as books. So, they could write “[...] without necessarily being forced to adopt a consistent standard of orthography like the scribes” (Salmon 1999: 15).

In the 16th a spelling reform was needed to make English orthography fixed as it was Latin and Greek spelling, “But the progress towards a more homogeneous spelling was slow” (Danielsson 1963: 64). The reform took place mainly in England between 1540 and 1640. John Cheke, John Hart and Thomas Smith were the main reformers who intended to reform English spelling following their own designs and proposals which are to be shown in the following section.

We can distinguish three main tendencies: those who defended the idea that spelling should be phonetic; those who wanted to retain traditional spelling and custom and those who advocated etymological spelling.

2.3 Spelling reformers and their proposals.

The debate of spelling reform of the 16th century started with Hart's work published in 1551, *The Opening of the unreasonable writing of our English tongue* and continued in that century with Mulcaster's *The First Part of Elementary* published in 1582 and which will be commented on detail in the last chapter.

2.3.1 Phonetic reformers

2.3.1.1 Thomas Smith

Thomas Smith and John Cheke had already dealt with the issue of English orthography before. As Jones stated, "Cheke and Smith were in large part responsible for the movement, but unlike the latter, Cheke left no treatise on spelling [...]" (Jones 1966: 144). Cheke was the most conservative. According to him, all unsounded letters should be avoided. He had "[...] a more consistent and simplified spelling system [...]" (Salmon 1999: 20). He applied his system to the translations from Greek into English of the Gospel of Saint Matthew, but until the nineteenth century his proposals were not published (Salmon 1999: 20).

Thomas Smith followed the conservative line of Thomas Cheke. As the latter, Smith stated that there were letters that did not represent any sound, so they were unusable. Furthermore, in his work published in Latin *De recta et emendate Linguae Anglicae Scriptione, Dialogus* (1568) he shows that English spelling was very inconsistent and that it was necessary to increase the number of letters in the alphabet, since some of them did not represent any sound and there were not enough letters to represent the speech sounds of English (Jones 1966: 145-146).

The aim of his work was "[...] to bring order into all this confusion by a scheme that would make spelling correspond exactly to sound" (Jones 1966: 147). Smith advocated an alphabet which could provide sufficient letters to represent the sounds of English. He introduced the character thorn taken from Anglo-Saxon alphabet and theta from Greek. In addition, to indicate length of a vowel he proposed to use a circumflex or two dots over it (Jones 1966: 147).

It should be noted that for Smith, the spelling should imitate the speech sounds. For that reason, he "[...] did his best to remove the 'abuse' of letters by making orthography the imitation of speech [...]" (Jones 1966: 147).

2.3.1.2 John Hart.

John Hart was considered the most important phonetician of the 16th century. He followed the line of Smith and Cheke. In fact, he advocated “an international phonetic alphabet which would make it easier for English speakers to read their mother tongue, for dialect speakers to acquire the standard, and for anyone to learn foreign languages” (Görlach 1991: 50-51). Hart imitated the French reformer and grammarian Louis Meigret, “[...] he took his cue from the orthographic reformers in France who had been active since the beginning of the thirties, and more especially from Meigret” (Danielsson 1963: 64).

Hart defended his principle: “one letter, one sound”. He complained about the lack of graphemes in English language. Moreover, he stated that it was necessary to introduce new graphemes in order to represent each sound. In so doing, Hart wanted to abolish the use of digraphs, two letters to represent one sound. According to him, “Pure vowels are to be represented by single symbols, never by diagraphs, and an accent is used to show that a vowel is long” (Barber 1997: 83). Hence, the digraphs *ai*, *ei*, *ea*, *ee*, *oo*, *eo* that represented the long vowels /ε:/, /i:/ and /u:/ had to be eliminated. The solution that Hart found in order to show the length was to add a dot below the vowel instead of using a double vowel, “[...] when there is not dot, the vowel is short” (Danielsson 1963: 54).

Hart realised that English spelling was “corrupted” and had many defects. According to Hart there are four main “vices” which can make the written language corrupted. They are: *diminution*, *superfluity*, *usurpation* and *misplacing*. As Barber stated, “English written suffered from all these corruptions except the first” (Barber 1997: 82) which “[...] is the use of too few symbols in the written form for the number of speech-sounds to be represented” (Barber 1997: 82). Hart considered “superfluity” one of the English writing vices which consisted of the use of more symbols than speech sounds. As examples of “superfluity”, Hart talks about <g>, <h>, <l>, <o>, <p> and <s>. These superfluous letters in writing did not represent a sound in words such as *eight*, *authoritie*, *souldiours*, *people*, *condemned* and *baptisme*. They had not correspondent speech sound, so they were unnecessary (Barber 1997: 82). Moreover, the letters <w>, <j>, <y>, <c>, <e> and <q> should be excluded because like the letters mentioned above, they did not represent any sound. According to Hart, <w> should be abolished and <u> should be used to represent the vowel *u* and the semi-vowel *w*. The letter <i> should

represent a vowel and <j> a consonant. The letter <g> should be used to represent /g/ and <j> to represent /dʒ/ and <k> should be used for /k/ and <c> for /tʃ/, so the letter <q> should disappear (Barber 1997: 83).

The same occurred with vowels that did not represent any speech sound. Hart rejected final <e> when it was not pronounced as in words *stoppe* and *passee*. In addition, he considered that <e> in other positions in which is mute should be avoided as in words *handes*, *thinges* and *childeren* which should be written *hands*, *things* and *children* (Danielsson 1963: 52). Moreover, final <-e> to indicate that a preceding vowel is long should be avoided (Görlach 1991: 51).

As Latin was a prestigious referent language, “[...] it was inevitable that writers should try to extend the associations of English words by giving them visual connection with related Latin ones” (Scragg 1974: 56). For instance, the superfluous letter <c> in words *scissors* and *scythe* had not correspondence to any speech sound (Scragg 1974: 57). In ME they were written *sisoures* and *sithe* but in Early Modern English some “etymologizers” (a movement that appeared around the 15th century, though it continued in the 16th century) considered that in both words <c> should be introduced, as they came from Latin *scindere* and *cisorium*, in order to give English spelling an idea of stability (Scragg 1974: 57).

However, Hart considered it unnecessary to show the etymological origin of words. As Barber stated, “We are under no obligation to the nations from whom we borrow words, and it is of no profit to us to use etymological spellings” (Barber 1997: 83-84). Thus, Hart considered that English did not need etymological spellings as Latin had not used them.

Scragg claimed that “The zeal of those intent on reforming spelling along etymological lines often led them astray in cases in which their knowledge of Latin exceeded that of the history of the words they were emending” (Scragg 1974: 57). *Etymologizers* did not establish English spelling, on the contrary they limited themselves to adding these inorganic letters which did not represent any sound. For that reason, Hart wanted with his proposals to avoid them. For Hart “The ideal spelling ought to be simple, easy, and phonetic, and should therefore represent as accurately as possible by means of letters or symbols the sounds of the spoken language” (Danielsson 1963: 50).

The second vice that made English written corrupt was “usurpation” which consisted of a symbol that could represent two different sounds (Barber 1997: 82). For example, in words such as *gentle* and *together* the letter <g> is pronounced in a different way since in both words represent a different speech sound, [g] and [dʒ] (Barber 1997: 82). So, according to Hart, the letter <g> should only represent the sound [g] and “Words like *genet* ‘jennet’, *gentel* ‘gentle’, *giles* ‘Giles’ should be written with *j* instead of *g* to distinguish the sound [dʒ] from that used in *together* and *geve* ‘give’” (Danielsson 1963: 51-52).

“Misplacing” is another way of corruption which consisted of the wrong order of some letters in a word. For example, <l>, <m>, <n>, and <r> in words such as *fable* and *circle* should be written *fabel* and *cirkel* because speakers pronounce <e> before <l> (Barber 1997: 83).

Like Smith, Hart considered it necessary to create new letters and eliminate some that already existed. He proposed a phonetic alphabet in his book *An Orthographie* (1569). Danielsson shows in his work the new alphabet. It consisted of 26 symbols: 5 vowels (a, e, i, o, u) that differentiate the long vowel from the short one in a dot; 21 consonants: 12 voiced (b, v, g, dʒ, d, ð, z; l, m, n, r and l̄), 7 voiceless (p, f, k, tʃ, t, s, þ and h, ʃ); 11 diphthongs (made up of short vowels: ua, ue, ui, ei, ie, iu, ou and made up of one short vowel and one long vowel: uā, uē, iū, oū) and finally 3 diphthongs (ieu, uei, eau) (Danielsson 1963: 56).

It should be noted that for some reformers, custom was very important since it would mean preserving the spelling traditions of written English. However, Hart was against this idea because to base English spelling on custom would entail “a foe to progress” (Hart 1551; quoted by Danielsson 1963: 50).

Hart’s proposals were very innovative but at the same time they were “[...] too much radical to stand a chance of being accepted” (Görlach 1991: 54). However, it should be noted that Thomas Whythorne an English composer, partly used Hart’s spelling system in his autobiography *booke of songs and sonetts with longe discourses sett with them* (1576) (Salmon 1999: 20).

2.3.1.3 William Bullokar.

Like Hart, William Bullokar advocated a spelling reform based on phonetic principles. Bullokar is defined as “[...] a schoolmaster who devoted much time and a not inconsiderable part of his limited income to the furthering of the reform cause, publishing many pamphlets and a series of translations recorded in his revised spelling” (Scragg 1974: 95). His most important work was *The Booke at Larger for the Amendment of Orthographie for English Speech* (1581). Bullokar “[...] envisaged linguistic reformation in a more compressive manner than any of his predecessors” (Jones 1966: 153). He was the first in advocating the importance of a grammar in order to improve the language and the necessity of a dictionary to preserve and fix the orthography (Jones 1966: 153). Bullokar considered that for English orthography to be fixed and improved, it was necessary to create first a grammar; otherwise, “[...] it could not escape the charge of barbarousness” (Jones 1966: 155). Furthermore, foreigners considered English rude because of the lack of grammatical rules which made the English language difficult to learn. According to Bullokar, grammar could make English easy to learn and thus, give it the vernacular respect and importance (Jones 1966: 155-157).

Bullokar shared the same idea as Hart and Smith of a spelling based on pronunciation but he considered his proposals superior to those of Hart and Smith because they were not interested in grammars or dictionaries as something of vital importance for the reformation of English orthography (Jones 1966: 156-157).

Bullokar claimed that the proposals of his predecessors were very radical as they imposed strange letters which could change the traditional alphabet, but he considered that the characters that he proposed did not break with it (Jones 1966: 156). In fact, he wanted to preserve the Anglo-Saxon spelling combining it with new letters and symbols that could represent those sounds that did not have a correspondent symbol because the characters of the English alphabet were not enough to represent English speech sounds (Jones 1966: 155-156). However, as Jones claimed, “These innovations which, he himself considered slight enough, are sufficient to give a passage written in his orthography about as weird a look as any from previous writers” (Jones 1996: 156).

Among Bullokar’s proposals what stands out is the use of accents over the vowels to indicate length; the use of apostrophes to indicate quality in <c> and <g>; the invention

of new symbols for *ph*, *sh*, *th* and *wh* and the introduction of an accent over the vocalic *l*, *m*, *n* and *r* to express their sounds (Jones 1996: 156).

Nevertheless, his proposals were not accomplished because the new graphemes and symbols that he proposed were accent marks, cedillas or apostrophes which could result so strange as they were symbols that had never existed before in English spelling (Iglesias-Rábade 1995: 51).

It should be noted that although Bullokar's spelling proposals were not successful, they appeared "[...] in a few manuscript notes on a book by Goodman published in 1616" (Salmon 1999: 20).

2.3.1.4 John Baret.

The English lexicographer John Baret published in 1580 a dictionary of English, Latin and French entitled *Alvarie or Quadruple Dictionarie*. In the dictionary he provided the explanation of an English word accompanied by its translation in French, Greek and Latin. Although a dictionary could not give a chance of discussing orthography, Baret when explaining the letters of the alphabet could introduce his opinions about silent letters and the lack of correspondence between sound and symbol which had already been discussed by Hart (Jones 1966: 150). In fact, he stated in the preface that he was encouraged by Sir Thomas Smith and John Hart. Like Hart, Baret was in favour of avoiding the letters <y>, <w> and <c> and found the final <e> unnecessary when it is silent (Jones 1966: 150).

Therefore, Baret with his dictionary in which he expressed the same ideas as his predecessors about an orthography based on phonetic criterions, made a contribution to reinforce the idea of a spelling based on pronunciation.

2.3.1.5 Alexander Gil.

Alexander Gil was an English scholar and an important spelling reformer who published in 1619 his work *Logonomia Anglica* written in Latin which deals with English grammar, phonetics and orthography. Gil blamed the earliest printers for the instability of English orthography of his time. For Gil <ȝ> and <ð>, which represented in Old English and Middle English [j] and [ð], were useful letters that earlier printers had got rid

of because Caxton's printing press did not have movable types which could represent those letters, so they were replaced by <g> and <th> (Iglesias-Rábade 1995: 52).

This situation produced a confusion between these letters. For instance, in words like *gentle* "gentle" and *get* "yet", <g> represented different sounds. In *gentle* it represented [dʒ] and in *get* it represented [j]. Therefore, according to Gil, it was necessary to introduce <ʒ> again to represent [dʒ] (Scragg 1974: 96).

Unlike those reformers who advocated a spelling reform based on pronunciation with radical proposals, there were some who were in favour of stabilizing the orthography by means of less radical proposals according to tradition and custom as we will see in the next chapter.

Summing up, in the 16th century different visions about English spelling can be observed. There was a tendency to make English orthography stabilized and fixed. Although some proposals failed, they served as examples to the next generation of reformers and as Scragg stated, "[...] made people aware of deficiencies of English orthography" (Scragg 1974: 73).

CHAPTER 3

Mulcaster's *Elementary* (1582).

3.1 Preliminary notions

As we have seen in the previous chapter, there were reformers who based the spelling reform on phonetic principles such as Hart, Bullokar, Smith, Gil etc. However, there was another tendency that consisted of the stabilization of English orthography according to custom and tradition. The most significant figure was Richard Mulcaster and his work *Elementary* published in 1582.

Richard Mulcaster was the first headmaster of Merchant Taylor's school in 1582 and in 1608 was appointed the master of St. Paul's school. His interest in the reform of English spelling arose from his job as pedagogue. Furthermore, he participated in John Baret's dictionary *An Alvearie* writing some Latin verses which were included in the preface and this might also have stimulated Mulcaster's interest in spelling reform (Salmon 1999: 32).

He wrote two noteworthy books: *Positions Concerning the Training up of Children* published in 1581 and *The First Part of The Elementary* published in 1582.

Elementary is an incomplete work which served as a guide for teachers to show them how to teach children. It was considered the “[...] major study of English orthography, designed for the use of teachers rather than students” (Salmon 1999: 32). It should be noted that official dictionaries and grammars did not exist at that time.

Before *Elementary*, there was a rudimentary anonymous spelling book from the 1560s entitled *A.b.c for chyl dren*. Spelling books of the 16th century could only provide some knowledge of the alphabet (Scragg 1974: 74-75). However, Mulcaster's *Elementary* went beyond as it “attempted to formulate spelling rules [...]” (Scragg 1974: 75). As Mulcaster stated in the epistle of his book:

[...] I did promis an Elementary, that is, the hole matter, which childern ar to learn, and the hole manner how masters ar to teach them, from their first beginning to go to anie school, vntill theie passe to grammer, in both the best if my opinion proue best (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: the epistle).

The first sixty pages of the book deals with problems in the education and learning system at that time. Mulcaster explains in the first chapter *Why I begin at the elementarie, and wherein it consisteth* that learning is divided into two parts. One is *knowledge* “to encrease vnderstanding” and the other is *behauour* “to enlarge vertew” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 4). According to Mulcaster, these two elements are committed to the teachers who are responsible for instructing children. Moreover, Mulcaster talks about the role of parents in the education of their children stating that “[...] the chefe performance & practising thereof is cōmitted vnto parents, as nearest care & most certain autoritie ouer their own childern” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 4).

Mulcaster provides five subjects that children had to learn: “The thinges be fiue in number, infinite in vse, principles in place, and these in name, *reading, writing, drawing, singing and playing*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 5) which according to him they are the “[...] most necessarie to be delt with all” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 5).

For the author, learning and knowledge are very important and it is something that should be cultivated. He considers ignorance and prejudice as the main enemies of knowledge stating that “Ignorance is violent and like vnto a lion [...]” and “[...] preiudice a poison to anie common weall [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 46-47).

However, the most significant part of the book is that which Mulcaster dedicates to English orthography. As he states in the epistle of his work, “[...] I handle speciallie in it the right writing of our English tung, a verie necessarie point, and of force to be handled, ear the child be taught to read, which reading is the first principle of the hole elementary” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: the epistle).

3.2 Richard Mulcaster’s spelling reform.

3.2.1 Custom, use and reason.

Mulcaster, as a schoolmaster was aware of the instability of English spelling that made it inferior to Latin and Greek and that made it unsuitable for use in academic fields. As he says, he began his book “at the argument of right writing [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 61). In his book he shows a clear rejection of the spelling reform stating that “The second cause, that moued me to begin at this method, is, thereby to answere all those obiections, which charge our writing with either insufficiencie, or confusion [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 62). As Scragg claimed, “[...] he is content to accept the spelling

of his own day but he is concerned to stabilise wherever variant spelling appear” (Scragg 1974: 61).

In his work he develops an allegory to explain his position and his attitude toward the English orthography and to express the inconveniences of a spelling reform based on phonetic principles. He presents four principles: sound, reason, custom and art. He talks about the “prerogative of sound” that “[...] alone did lead the pen, and euey word was written with those letters, which the *sound* did commaund [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 65-66). Some of the predecessor reformers such as Hart, Smith and Cheke advocated a written system based exclusively on sound. According to Mulcaster, “[...] these appeal to *sound*, as the onelie souerain, and surest leader in the gouernment of writing [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 84). However, Mulcaster proposes that *sound* should rule with *custom* and *reason* which are “The 3 severall gouernments ouer writing” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 64). Considering this, he wants to show that the “power” should be shared between *reason*, *custom* and *sound*. *Reason* decides the rules that should be observed “[...] to consider what wilbe most agréable vpon cause” and *custom* that by its experience confirms “which reason should like best, and yet neither to do anie thing, without conference with sound” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 68).

But, as there was not a standard writing, and errors were commonplace, reason has to introduce a “good ‘notary’ as an authority to prevent continual revolt” (Jones 1966: 159) which is art. As he stated:

The notary to cut of all these controuersies, and to brede a perpetuall quietnesse in writing, was Art, which gathering al those roming rules, that *custom* had beaten out, into one bodie, disposed them so in writing, as euerie one knew his own limits, *reason* his, *custom* his, *sound* his (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]:74).

The art is the authority that serves to “write all those things down in percept and method, wherein *sound*, *reason* and *custom* all thrè had consented an agreid [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 104-105). That is, art writes down and fixes the spelling rules that sound, reason and custom worked out and accepted.

Mulcaster shows in his book a position against a phonetic spelling based on the principle “one letter, one sound” because according to him, an alphabet in which every sound could represent exactly every letter has never existed. On the contrary he defends diversity in writing and speech stating that:

[...] euerie man naturallie haue two eies, two ears, one nose, one mouth and so furth, yet there is allwaie such diuersitie in countenances [...] so likewise in the voice, tho in eurie one it passe thorough, by one mouth, one throte [...], yet is it as different in euerie one [...] Which diuersitie tho it hinder not the deliuerie of euerie mans minde, yet is it to vncertain to rule euerie mans pen in setting down of letters (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 69).

Mulcaster was aware of the deficiencies of English spelling but according to him a reform was not necessary and there was no need for radical changes such as the invention of new letters or the manipulation of the “old characters” like Hart, Cheke and Smith who “[...] fly to *innouation*, as the onelie mean, to reform all errors, that be in our writing” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 84). His predecessors considered custom a “vile corrupter” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 83) and as John Hart said, custom would entail “a foe to progress” (Hart 1551; quoted by Danielsson 1963: 50). However, Mulcaster advocates use and custom which it supposes will preserve the essence and the identity of English people’s way of writing and to preserve the vernacular language. In fact, he defines custom as “a great and a natural gouernor” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 86).

As shown, the previous reformers based English orthography on sound but Mulcaster found inadequacies in the phonetic spelling that Hart, Smith and Bullokar proposed. Mulcaster mentions some inconveniences “of ruling the pen by the sound alone” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 104):

[...] bycause of the differēce in the instrumēt of our voice wherewith we soūd: bycause of the finenesse or grossenesse of the ear, wherewith we receiue sonnds: bycause of the iudgemēt or ignorānce in the partie, which is to pronounce, of the right or wrong expressing of the sound (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 104).

According to Mulcaster, a spelling system based strictly on pronunciation presents some inconveniences that determines that sounds are produced in different ways and then they are introduced into writing thereby producing confusion. Some of inconveniencies are mentioned above such as the differences in vocal organs which Mulcaster refers to as “the differēce in the instrumēt of our voice”, the capacity to interpret a sound “the finenesse or grossenesse of the ear” and the capacity to reproduce a sound “the iudgemēt or ignorance” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 104).

For some of his predecessors, letters have an innate nature that make each one correspond to one sound only and they consider it “abuse” if one letter could represent several sounds (Jones 1966: 161). However, for Mulcaster “Neither is it anie abuse, when

theie which vse, can giue a reason why, sufficient to wise, and not contrary to good custom” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 93).

Another reason that supports his opposition against a spelling reform and against a phonetic spelling system was based on his idea that letters are an artificial creation:

The letters being thus found out to, serve a nedefull turn took the force of expressing euery distinct *sound* in voice, not by them selues or anie vertew in their form [...] but onelie by consent of those men, which first inuented them [...] (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 65).

According to him, “natur makes one thing to one vse” such as natural things and artificial ones like letters (“our own inuentions”) “maie serve to sundrie ends & vses” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 92). He states that one word could have different meanings. “The number of things, whereof we write and speak is infinite [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 92), so one letter could represent more than one sound. For that reason, he opposed the idea of “one letter one sound” of the earlier reformers.

Furthermore, some reformers complained about “the insufficiency and pouertie of our letters” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 87). However, Mulcaster considers that the number of letters of English alphabet is enough as “This paucitie and pouertie of letters, hath contented and discharged the best & brauest tungs [...]” and “The peple that now vse thē &, theie that haue vsed them, haue naturallie the same instruments of voice, and the same deliuerie in *sound*, for all their speaking, that we English men haue [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 89).

Summing up, these are the main reasons that Richard Mulcaster proposes against the idea of a spelling reform and a written system based on pronunciation. Reason, sound and custom should rule together in order to improve the language and it is not necessary to apply a radical reform using radical devices. Thus, there is no need to reform and change custom and tradition.

3.3 Mulcaster’s defects on spelling.

Mulcaster states that in order to achieve the “right writing” it is necessary:

[...] to direct the pē by such rules, as ar most conformable, to the proprietie of *sound*, the cōsideration of *reason*, & the smoothing of *custom* ioyntlie, speciallie in those points of our writing where there is some difficultie & disagreement both

in opinion of the writers, & in nature of the letters, concerning to much, to litle, or to diuerse (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 105).

He enumerates three main orthographic defects in English “concerning to much, to litle or to diuerse”. First, like Hart and Bullokar, he thinks that superfluity like the doubling of consonants in words like *putt*, *grubb* and *ledd* is unnecessary because there are “to much” letters. Therefore, according to him, “[...] the rule is, that no consonant must be dabled in anie word at all, or in anie place of the word at all, but onelie where either consonāt belongeth to seuerall syllabs, as in syl-lab” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 105).

Secondly, there are “to litle” letters in words like *fech* and *scrach* that according to him it should be written “fetch” and “scratch” to indicate the distinction between the derivatives “[...] that, t, is to be written before ch, in such deriuatives [...]” from the primitiues “[...] as haue t, in the primitiue as fet, scrat [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 105).

Thirdly, he considers “To diuerse, as in choíce *anoìnt*, *boùght*, *boúght*, [...] *lòue*, *lóue*, *mòther*, *móther* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 106) which he considers the main reason why English spelling is so confusing. As he says, “[...] which be the chefe causes why our writing is so charged with so great confusion” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 106).

Finally, he states that this confusion “is easily to be certained, without anie more ado, thē the mere following of *reason*, *custom* and *sound* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 106).

Thus, Mulcaster presents what he considers to be the basis of a correct spelling which are the seven principles: *Generall Rule*, *Proportion*, *Composition*, *Deriuation*, *Distinction*, *Enfranchisement* and *Prerogative*.

3.4 Mulcaster’s seven principles for the correct spelling.

3.4.1 General Rule

He describes *Generall Rule* as:

[...] whose peculiar dewtie is, to ascertain our right writing, either by main grounds, reaching, thoroughout the hole tung, or by limiting the force of eurie particular charact [...] the rules which belong to right writing in this kinde, be either generall to the tung, or particular to the charact (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 108).

Generall Rule analyses the properties of vowels, consonants and diphthongs. As he says, “Generall rule, wherein the nature, and force of euery particular letter is examined” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 108). I will concentrate only on the main representative vowels and consonants treated by Mulcaster.

Regarding <e> “that it either soundeth or is silent, and that either in the former or in the last syllabs” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 111), Mulcaster makes a distinction between “E sounding in the end” and “E in the end and not sounding” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 111). According to him, final <e> “sounding” “it soundeth sharp, as, *mé, sé, wé, agré.*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 111). He refers to the final <e> “not sounding” as “qualifying E” that “It altereth the sound of all vowels, euen quite thorough one or mo consonants as, *máde, stéme, éche, kínde, strípe, óre, cúre, tóste* sound sharp with the qualifying E in their end” but “*màd, stèm, èch, frind, strip, ore, cur, tost* [...] sound flat without the same E” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 111). Although he does not clarify, the use of the “not sounding” final <e>, serves as a spelling marker to distinguish a word that takes a long vowel or a diphthong from a short vowel as in *máde* “made” and *màd* “mad” in which final <e> alters the preceding vowel <a> to make it long in *máde* while *màd* without the “not sounding” final <e> the preceding vowel <a> is short.

Moreover, final <e> should be introduced in words such as “*daie, maie, trewlie, safetie* where it maketh i, either not be heard, or verie gentlie to be heard [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 112) and words in which final <i> sound “loud and sharp” “must be expressed by y. as in *deny, aby, ally*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 112).

In words such as “where” that could be written *where, whear, wheare, hwear* etc., Mulcaster finds the solution to this diversity by using custom. As the most common was to write *where*, this was the form that should be used. As he says, “[...] the prerogative of custom vsing e, in the end, *where, here* contrarie to the proportion, in *bear, wear, ear* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 113)

Furthermore, Mulcaster preferred to use silent letter <e> before <r> in words such as *childern* and *letter* instead of *children* and *lettre*. “Som vse the same silent e, after r, in the end, as *lettre, cedre, childre*, and such where methink it were better to be the flat e before r, as *letter, ceder, childer* and so *childern* rather then *children* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 113).

Regarding <v>, Mulcaster claims that it has two uses, one as a vowel and the other as a consonant. As a vowel “v vowellish”, Mulcaster proposes to use <ew> in final position instead of using <u> in words such as *nú*, *trú*, and *vertú* that should be written *new*, *trew* and *vertew* because as he states “V [...] besides his time and tune, is to be noted also not to end anie English word, which if it did it should sound sharp” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 116).

Then, <v> as consonant “v consonantish”, “It is vsed cōsonantlike also [...] when it leadeth a sounding vowell in the same syllab, as *vantage*, *reuiue*, *deliuer*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 116). For Mulcaster, using both <v> and <u> as consonant and as vowel, was not a reason to consider English spelling chaotic because Latin used both letters as consonant and as vowel too. As he says, “This double force [...] is set from the Latin, and therefor it is neither the vncertaintie of our writing, nor the vnstedfastnesse of our tung, for to vse anie letter a duple vse” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 116). The same occurs with <y> which has a double use “likewise is sometime consonantish, sometime vowellish” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 117) as in words like *young* in which <y> (when preceding a vowel) is a consonant and *tyrant* in which <y> is a vowel (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 117).

Regarding consonants, I am going to mention the letters <f>, <v>, <g> and <s>. First, according to Mulcaster, <f> has two uses. The first one, is the Greek letter <ph>. Words that take this letter, should be written with <f>. As he says, “we maie vse our f, still, [...] as the *Italians* do in their writing, commonlie setting down, *filosofie*, *orthografie* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 120). It can be observed that he is in favour of using <f> instead of <ph> in words that came from Greek. This idea is in opposition to “etymologizers” who wanted to preserve <ph> in words such as *phantasy* instead of *fantasy* to show the Greek origin of the word. The use of <ph> “lasted until the nineteenth century when the simpler <f> reasserted itself” (Scragg 1974: 56).

The second use of the letter <f> is in some verbs that take <v>, it sounds like [f] in present system and in preterit system <f> represents [f]. As he says, “The second force of f, is like to v, the consonant, which I vse to call cosens, bycause of their correspondēce in change, as, *bereue*, *bereft*, *leaue left*, *cleaue cleft*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 120).

As regards <g>, Mulcaster describes it as “strong” and “weak”. <g> is strong “before a.o.u [...] as, *gaie*, *gant*, *god*, *good*, *gout*, *gut*, *gulling*” and before <r> and <l> in words such as “*graue*, *grant*, *glance*, *glew*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 120). The letter <g>

before “qualifying e” is weak as in “*cage, huge, drudge, snudge, hedge, dodge*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 120). Nevertheless, <g> before <e> and <i> could be weak as in *gentle* and *ginger* or strong as in *begin* and *gét* (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 120). Furthermore, Mulcaster asks why “do some vse to put an u, after the strong g, in some places, as in *guise, guide, guest, beguile*, and not to write them all without the u [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 120). For him, <u> in words in which it is not pronounced should be avoided. As he claims, “I se no cause why, but that the u, maie well enough be left out” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 120). As can be observed, he shared the same idea as his predecessors about the elimination of superfluous letters.

Finally, <s> sounds weak “[...] in all beginning of anie syllab, either before vowel, diphthong or consonant, *saie, seke, sift, soft, substance* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 122) and “sometime it yeildeth weaklie to the z [...] as in *wise, nose, amase, use, excuse* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 122). According to Mulcaster, <z> is “[...] much heard amongst vs, and seldom sene. I think by reason it is not so ready to the pen as s, is, which is becom lieutenant generall to z [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 123). Then, <s> is doubled in final position “When the vowel sitteth hard vpon the s [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 122) as in words like “*passe, grasse, finesse, nedelesse* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 122). If <s> does not sound hard, a single <s> should be used “as in *fines, nedles, promis, treatis* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 122).

According to Mulcaster it is necessary to analyse the properties and uses of letters in order to write correctly. Furthermore, by analysing letters people can realise the difficulties that some letters might present. As he says, “Whereby methink that the greatest difficultie in our writing riseth about the vncertaine force of i [...]” and “c,g,f, the consonants [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 124).

3.4.2 Proportion.

Mulcaster, refers to *proportion* as “[...] a number of words of like sound ar written with like letters [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 124). The examples that he shows are the words: *hear, fear, dear, gear* and *wear* in which “the like proportion is kept” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 124). These words are written with the same letters <-ear>, so by analogy, which “is generally defined as ‘structural similarity’” (Itkonen 2005: 1), they have to be pronounced in the same way. However, according to Mulcaster, in words like *where, here* and *there* “[...] our *custom*, hath won that writing in such aduerbs of place [...]”

(Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 124) because these words take <-ere> but they are pronounced in different way due to custom.

3.4.3 Composition

This chapter of *Elementary* deals with the use of compound words in English writing. He defines *compound* as a word “which is made of two or mo simple words, whereof euerie one signifyeth somewhat agreable to the cōposition, euen when they ar vsed alone [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 141). He gives examples of compound words: *catchpoll*, *churchyard*, and *outlaw*.

According to Mulcaster, English compound words are divided into three classes that depend on their origin: those that are English compounds “whē theie & their parcells be altogiether English words, as *comecase*, *headfall*, *beadman*, *cupboard*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 141); foreign compounds which are those that “[...] their substance is mere foren [...] as *presuppose*, *infringe*, *circumstance*, *ortografie*, *filosofie*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 141), and “mungrell” compounds which are “half foren, half English” such as “*Headlong*, *wharfage* and *princelike*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 141).

Mulcaster considers that “The knowledge of composition is verie necessarie for the right writing of our tung manie waies” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 141). As for instance, if people know which elements make up compound words, it would be easy for them to write these words correctly when “we ar oftymes enforced to break out our words in the latter end of our lines, and to write out that, in the beginning of the next line, which we left vnwritten in the former” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 142), as in “cramp-ring, not crampring, in dis-honest, not dish-onest [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 142). In addition, the knowledge of compounds words, serves to “[...] discern the difference of meaning, which is to be expressed in writing” in order to prevent “[...] the error by deuiding those words, which are to be united, or by vniting those which are to be deuided as in words like *a-wry*, *a-waie*, *be-long*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 142).

Therefore, Mulcaster considers the knowledge of compound words “[...] a verie necessarie instrument for vs to vse, in the finding out of our right writing [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 144).

3.4.4 Derivation.

In this chapter of *Elementary*, Mulcaster provides the rules to follow in writing in order to write correctly derivative words.

According to Mulcaster, *deriuation* “handleth the coplements of one hole word, and som addition put to it, which addition of it selfe signifieth nothing alone, but being put to the hole word qualifiyeth it to som other use [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 144).

Mulcaster divides derivates into *perfit/vnperfit* and *sustantiarie/accidentarie*. English derivatives are *perfit* “when the vowell of the primitiue is not clipt awaie by the addition, as in *holelie*, *worthienesse*, *cosinage* [...] or *vnperfit*, when it is, as in *fine*, *fining*, *dare*, *daring* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 145). *Sustantiarie* derivatives are those that “[...] tho theie do com of som other, yet theie themselves serue again for the heads of other [...] as *upland*, *uplandish*, *war*, *warrious* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 145) and *accidentarie deriuatives* are those which deal with persons and tenses “[...] and such properties as we call accidents [...] as *wo*, *woes*, *cry cryes*, *word words*, *fish fishes*, *tree trees* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 146).

Then, he exhibits the terminations for *deriuatue substantiues* which are *-nesse*, *-ship*, *-age*, *-dom*, *-th*, *-hood*, *-let*, *-rie*, *-ance*, *-all*, *-ing*, *-er*, *-our* and the terminations for *deriuative adjectives* such as *-lie*, *-an*, *-ish*, and *-ie* (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 146).

To know the rules of derivation is extremely important in order to write correctly. As he says, “[...] such like considerations doth deriuation shew it self verie seruiceable for the right writing of our English tung [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 148).

3.4.5 Distinction.

Mulcaster uses the term *distinction* to refer to punctuation and accents. In this chapter, he provides an explanation of their different uses. “The number of them be thirteen, and their names be *Comma*, *Colon*, *Period*, *Parenthesis*, *Interrogatiō*, *long time*, *shorte time*, *sharp accent*, *flat accent*, *streight accēt*, *the seruerer*, *the uniter*, *the breaker*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 148).

According to Mulcaster it is necessary to consider these different accents and punctuation marks in order to write and pronounce correctly.

On the one hand, as regards the first five types of punctuation, he states that they are useful “[...] to our breathing & distinct vtterance of our speche [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 149)

On the other hand, the use of accents is necessary to express “the long or short pronouncing of syllabs” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 149). Mulcaster proposes to use a “streight outright line” (*long time* symbol) over a vowel or a diphthong when they are pronounced long as in *perūsing* and a “half circle opening vpward” (*short time* symbol) when a vowel or a diphthong are pronounced short as in *carpēnter* and *natūral* (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 149). Moreover, accents were important to indicate the quantity of a vowel or a diphthong. So, Mulcaster proposed to use the *sharp accent* <'> when a vowel or diphthong “[...] sounded sharp and high, as *rāge, crépe, míne, hóme, púre* [...]”; the *flat accent* <^> when the vowel or diphthong “[...] sounded flat and quick as *ràg, stèp, thìn, fòr* [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 151).

Therefore, punctuation and accents are necessary to distinguish words and to write them correctly. As he says, “If there want distinction, then accent must be mean to auoid confusion, or some such duise, which made distinguish with praise, and not pester the writing, with anie to od strangenesse” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 93).

3.4.6 Enfranchisement.

This chapter deals with borrowings and the rule that should be followed in order to write foreign words correctly and to avoid confusion in writing. Mulcaster thinks that borrowings are useful for English language because “[...] their vouchsafe to be com English to serve our need [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 154). As I said in section 2.1, English vocabulary was not enough to supply the necessities of academic fields.

As Mulcaster stated, “All the words which we do vse in our tung be either naturall English [...] or borrowed of the foren [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 153). These borrowings are used in English language but “[...] with some alteration in form, according to the frame of our speche [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 154). He refers to borrowings as *enfranchised* when they “become bond to the rules of our writing [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 155).

According to him, *strange words* must “yield to our lawes, bycause we ar both their vsuaries and fructuaries [...] and that as near as we can, we make them mere English [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 155).

Therefore, it is necessary to adapt foreign words to English pronunciation and writing in order to avoid confusion in writing. If not, “[...] great incoueniencies will follow, and all the rules, which we kept in our tung, must take exception against the foren, or the foren against them, when theie com to writing” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 156).

3.4.7 Prerogative.

Mulcaster considers that a language is a living being that changes because “[...] all things else, which belong to a man be subject to change, so the tung also is [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 158).

He states that languages can reach its height point and can descend to the lowest. “For euerie tung hath a certain ascent from the meanest to the height, and a discent again from the height to the meanest [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 157).

Prerogative is “the law of mutation” (Jones 1966: 165) that Mulcaster defines as:

This secret misterie, or rather quikning spirit in eurie spoken tung, and therefor in ours, call I *Prerogative*, bycause when *sound* hath don his best, when *reason* hath said his best, when *custom* hath effected, what is best in both, this prerogative will except against anie of them all, and all their rules, be theie neuer so generall, be theie neuer so certain. Whereby it maketh a waie to a new change that will follow some degree of the tung [...] (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 158).

For Mulcaster, languages cannot be fixed and cannot be protected from change because “[...] with the peple the tung will altered and change” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 159). Changing is beneficial for a tongue because if speakers deny it the possibility of changing, a language will be “[...] shrined up in books, and not ordinarie in vse, but made immortal by the register of memory” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 158).

Furthermore, language change means progress for Mulcaster. As he points out, “This prerogative and libertie [...], is the cause, and yet not blamed therefore, why the English writers be now finer, then theie were som hundreth yeares ago [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 160).

According to Jones, “No one has ever perceived more clearly the necessary element of change in a speech, nor sensed more distinctly the essential nature of a living language, than Mulcaster” (Jones 1966: 165).

Finally, in the last chapter of *Elementary*, Mulcaster provides *the generall table* to show how to write words correctly according to his system of rules and the seven principles that he explained. In the table he includes “[...] the most of those words, which we commonly vse in our hole speche” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 163). It should be noted that, as shown, William Bullokar, like Mulcaster, considered it necessary a grammar and a dictionary to fix and to improve the language. Bullokar “[...] wished to extend the limits of the reform to include a dictionary and a grammar so that English might gain the dignity and respect which a ‘ruled’ language as Latin possessed” (Jones 1966: 167).

Mulcaster’s *Elementary* is book dedicated to teachers that served as a guide to show them how to teach. As shown, the major part of the book deals with spelling. His proposals for the correct way of writing are based on custom and tradition. For instance, as shown in section 3.4.1, he proposed to use <f> instead of the Greek letter <ph> in words that came from Greek. Moreover, as shown in section 3.4.6 he proposed that foreign words should be adapted to English “[...] bycause we ar both their vuaries and fructuaries [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 155). Furthermore, he shows that it is very important to know how a language works in order to write correctly. For instance, to know the composition and derivation of words and to know the properties of vowels, consonants and diphthongs that he treats in his book. As Scragg claimed, “In the *Elementary* Mulcaster codified existing conventions and formulated rules for learning them” (Scragg 1974: 62).

The debate about the spelling reform in the 16th century ends up with Richard Mulcaster’s *Elementary* to pave the way for new proposals and debates of the 17th century. As Barber claimed, “The movement in favour of regularization grew in strength during the seventeenth century and was very powerful from the restoration onwards” (Barber 1997: 53).

CONCLUSIONS

The Norman Conquest was an event that greatly changed the English language and spelling. As shown in chapter 1, these changes produced some inconsistencies in the orthography of English that later would be the subject matter of discussion of the spelling reformers of the 16th century. Moreover, in the Middle English period there were different dialects with no official standard variety. Although the English of London acted as the standard, there was still a great deal of variation in writing. In addition, there was not a notion of the “correct” way of writing until the 18th and 19th centuries. “By 1825, English had a prestigious, ‘correct’ form, which was stabilized more or less in dictionaries and grammars” (Bloomfield and Newmark 1964: 298).

As shown in section 1.4 of chapter 1, the introduction of the printing press in England was an event of great importance for English spelling. It helped to some extent to stabilize spelling but at the same time the books that were produced presented a lot of inconsistencies and irregularities.

By the end of the 15th century English was considered a prestigious language used in formal domains, though English also coexisted with Latin and Greek which were the most eloquent languages in the 16th century. So, English had to match together with those people who compared it to Latin and Greek and those who stated that English was not suitable for learning because it was “rude” and “barbarous” due to the lack of specific vocabulary and the lack of stability in spelling. This was the reason why the spelling reformers of the 16th century wanted to change this situation and make English spelling stable.

As shown in chapter 2, the Early Modern English period was characterized by a great interest in the English language. In this period appeared the main spelling reformers who advocated a spelling reform based on phonetic principles. However, their proposals were considered much too radical because most of them proposed new letters and new accents that had never been used in English before. These spelling reformers were very important for the English language and spelling since they were the first to open the debate about spelling reform that did not end until 20th century. However, their opinion about English was different from that of another scholar who was concerned about the

variability of English spelling, Richard Mulcaster. While the first reformers considered English to be “rude” and “chaotic”, Mulcaster with his work *Elementary* proved to have a different idea about English spelling.

First, as shown, Mulcaster opposed a reform based exclusively on phonemic principles. However, although he advocates for use and custom, he does not forget sound. What Mulcaster wants to show is that sound should not be the centre of attention, as he said, “[...] *reason & custom*, do assure their own ioynt gouerment with *sound*, by the mean of *Art*” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 64).

His proposals were considered “[...] saner that those of more ambitious philologist of his days” (Jones 1966: 166). His intention was not to provide a new and innovative spelling system like his predecessors but to use the current one based on custom and tradition.

According to Mulcaster, the solution to the problem of the orthography was not to make radical changes by “[...] altering of the old charats, or deuising of som new, or increasing of their number” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 62) but to get rid of defects and errors of the English spelling system (such as the superfluous letters) and not to increase them.

Secondly, Mulcaster promoted the use of the vernacular language in a time in which it was considered chaotic and rude and not suitable for learning. His answer for those who considered English to be barbarous was that “[...] the finest tung, was once in filth, the verie course of nature preceding from weaknesse, to strength from imperfection to perfitnesse, from a mean degré, to a main dignitie [...]” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 62).

He supported English language by basing English spelling on tradition and custom that, as proved, it was something that reformers such as Hart, Bullokar and Cheke firmly opposed. For instance, as shown in section 3.4.1, the fact that English used the letter <v> as a vowel and as a consonant was considered chaotic but Mulcaster did not agree and stated that, “This double force [...] is set from the Latin, and therefor it is neither the vncertantie of our writing, nor the vnstedfastnesse of our tung, for to vse anie letter a duple vse” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 116). Moreover, he showed a national feeling and an esteem to his native language claiming that, “I love Rome but London better, I favour

Italy, but England more, I honor the Latin, but I worship the English” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 254). This patriotism was something that his predecessors did not show.

According to Jones, “It was Richard Mulcaster, however, who most loudly proclaimed the equality of the vernacular with the classical languages, most earnestly asserted its independence of them, and most confidently urged its widest use” (Jones 1966: 192).

Thirdly, some of his predecessors wanted to modify the English alphabet and to make it fixed in order to protect it from change. However, as shown in section 3.4.7 of chapter 3, Mulcaster pre-empted a modern idea about the mutation of language. Nowadays, we know that languages change. As Lass claimed, “Language change happens ‘in the (spacio temporal) world’” (Lass 1997: xvi preface) and Mulcaster knew that languages cannot be protected from change stating that “[...] with the people the tung will altered and change” (Mulcaster 1970 [1582]: 159).

Finally, Mulcaster’s *Elementary* had an impact on coming reformers. His idea of basing English orthography on custom and reason was adopted by some of the reformers of the 17th and 18th centuries. For example, Edmund Coote’s book *The English Schoole-Maister* (1596) was based on Mulcaster’s theory (Scragg 1974: 62). In addition, like *Elementary*, Coote’s work was designed for teaching English, as Coote said, “[...] I vndertake to make thee to write the true Orthography of any word truly pronounced” (Coote 1968 [1596]: The Preface). Moreover, like Mulcaster, Coote opposed the proposals of Hart and Smith (Scragg 1974: 62).

It should be noted, that some of Mulcatster’s proposals succeeded. As for instance, the use of final <-e> to indicate that the preceding vowel is long, became standardized in Present-Day English, for example in words such as *made* and *take*.

Thus, the Early Modern English period represented a time in which the interest in linguistic matters increased, especially, the interest in reforming English spelling. The debates about orthography did not end until the 20th century and the attempts of scholars and pedagogues of the 16th to give English orthography a stability, helped to take the first steps towards the standardization of English spelling.

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