



## Shaping the Other in the Standardization of English: The Case of the ‘Northern’ Dialect

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### ABSTRACT

This paper explores the other side of standardization by looking at one of the early modern regional varieties of English that remained outside the “consensus dialect” (Wright, 2000: 6). Drawing on Agha’s (2003) framework of *enregisterment*, I examine a selection of literary representations of the ‘northern’ dialect that are now included in *The Salamanca Corpus* (García-Bermejo Giner et al., 2011–), as well as contemporary lexicographical evidence on northern words. My aim is to provide a window into contemporary ideas that saw and constructed the North as the ‘other’, whilst showing, as a result, that such views were immediately relevant to how the dialect and their speakers were imagined and represented alongside the emerging standard. To do so, I undertake a twofold quantitative and qualitative analysis of the evidence to identify the repertoire of forms that were associated with the dialect and the values attributed to such forms.

**KEYWORDS:** Northern dialect; Enregisterment; Standardization; Literary dialects; Lexicography.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Linguistic accounts of the standardization of English have traditionally focused on the genesis and development of a “consensus dialect” (Wright, 2000: 6), considering the four stages of Haugen’s influential model: “(1) selection of a norm, (2) codification of form, (3) elaboration of function, and (4) acceptance by the community” (1966: 933). This foundational framework,

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as Beal (2016: 303–304) explains, has been modified and refined by Milroy and Milroy (1999), who consider the place of ideology in the gestation and maintenance of standard varieties, as well as by Nevalainen and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2006), amongst others. All of them agree that standardization should not be seen as a “linear, unidirectional or ‘natural’ development, but a set of processes which occur in a set of social spaces, developing at different rates in different registers in different idiolects” (Wright, 2000: 6), thus challenging long-established claims that relate its origin to the practices of the Chancery and circumscribe it to the South-East. Indeed, recent research has shifted the focus to regional centres to examine the impact of the urban vernaculars of York, Bristol, Coventry and Norwich on the rise of supralocal norms and the shape of a common form of written English between 1400 and 1700 (see Auer, 2018; Auer et al., 2016). Such a framework will offer an undoubtedly groundbreaking and alternative account of language standardization in England as a set of ongoing processes which involve different norms from different text types produced in different social, cultural and geographical contexts. Not surprisingly, as it is also the case of earlier studies, the major concern of this novel approach is the consensus dialect, placing little emphasis, if at all, on the side effects of these processes or on “the other side of the coin of standardization” (Beal, 2016: 309). The forms of Early Modern English (EModE) that remained outside the common dialect have rarely been studied in their own right, and a more comprehensive narrative of the consequences of standardization has yet to be written. Penhallurick and Willmott (2000: 43) contend that standard English “excludes the majority and, through a familiar twist, places the minority at the centre of normality”, thereby raising awareness of and shaping ideologies about the non-standard, about the other: “With Standard English at the centre, all *dialect* becomes strange”, they conclude.<sup>1</sup> The other EModE varieties excluded from the centre include “very divergent local dialects ... [that] were enjoying a flourishing life” (Milroy, 2001: 542), and that were “based upon geographical, occupational and social allegiances, which divided up the country in a complex configuration of overlapping ‘speech communities’” (Fox, 2000: 52).

This paper looks at the other side of standardization by examining one of the varieties of EModE that remained outside the “centre of normality” or the emerging form of English that was accepted as a common dialect. My interest does not lie in determining the reasons underlying the exclusion of some northern features from the incipient ‘standard’ dialect, nor to reconstruct or describe Early Modern Northern English in light of contemporary records, such as witness depositions and wills (see Fernández-Cuesta & Rodríguez-Ledesma, 2004; Kytö et al., 2007). Rather, I examine some of the available evidence in which the ‘northern’ dialect was circulated as different from the emerging standard in order to gain insight into contemporary linguistic ideas about the North, the northern speaker and their dialect. That is, I attempt to ascertain the repertoire of linguistic traits that may have been salient at the time and associated with a northern way of speaking and persona in the popular imagination. In this sense, I invoke Agha’s (2003) framework of enregisterment in order to explore such links, whilst arguing that the processes of standardization in EModE largely contributed to shaping

and cementing linguistic ideologies about the North, about the other. To do so, this paper draws upon different text types that provide contemporary insight into the dialect and related social values. Attention is paid to ‘standard’ lexicographical works that include remarks on northern items, along with literary representations of the dialect, considering instances of dramatic dialogue, broadside ballads and prose works. These are literary texts that are now included in *The Salamanca Corpus* (SC) (García-Bermejo Giner et al., 2011–), and in which the representations of the North have been scrutinized to determine whether such recreations built upon a set of linguistic forms indexical of particular social values. My purpose is thus to determine the extent to which these practices testified to and had an effect on contemporary ideas about the dialect.

The paper is divided as follows. The first section offers an overview of Agha’s (2003) framework of enregisterment, placing emphasis on the role of dictionaries and literary representations of dialect in the process. Then, I focus on some EModE evidence on the northern dialect, with special reference to metalinguistic comment, literature and lexicography. Some methodological remarks, the analysis and discussion of the data are presented in section 4. There is hope that this paper may contribute to the narrative of the effects of standardization, while adding to recent investigation on dialect enregisterment in historical contexts and Early Modern Northern English (e.g. Beal, 2009; Beal & Cooper, 2015; Cooper, 2013; Ruano-García, 2010, 2012).

## 2. ON DIALECT ENREGISTERMENT IN HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

As is well known, Asif Agha introduced the concept of *enregisterment*, which he defined as “the processes through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms” (2003: 231–232). As Hernández-Campoy (2016: 150) puts it, it is “a model that accounts for how meaning gets attached to linguistic forms and how these indexicalized forms metapragmatically circulate and reproduce in social interaction, permeating discourse”. Enregisterment comprises the mechanisms whereby linguistic forms take on and index social meaning, this link becoming visible through a series of practices and discourses that put it on display, which include “dialect writing, dialect dictionaries and, more recently, websites dealing with issues of dialect and local identity” (Beal, 2010: 94–95). Of course, this process is not a straightforward one in that the ideological links between language and social values become visible and are thus recognizable gradually over time.

Enregisterment is critically grounded in Silverstein’s (1976, 2003) orders of indexicality, which refer to the various levels at which linguistic forms are imbued with social significance. His taxonomy comprises three orders that “relate to ascending levels of awareness within and beyond the speech community” (Beal, 2010: 94). First-order indexicality refers to the correlation between a linguistic form and a social category which is observable from beyond

the speech community, for example by a linguist. At the second order, there is awareness of the link between that linguistic form and its social meaning: people notice that speakers of a given social class, place, etc. use that particular form. Finally, third-order indexicality shows that the features associated with specific social categories are the object of overt comment and public representation in a range of practices produced by both outsiders and insiders of a given variety, who may “deliberately draw upon [these features] to perform local or regional identity” (Clark, 2013: 443–444; see also Johnstone et al., 2006).

This ideological approach to the study of dialect has permeated recent studies exploring enregisterment in historical contexts. Picone (2014) and Amador-Moreno and McCafferty (2015) have examined the process in US and Irish Englishes, whereas Beal (2009, 2018), Cooper (2013, 2014, 2015), Beal and Cooper (2015) and Ruano-García (2020) have addressed the enregisterment of northern varieties of British English mostly during the late modern period. They have scrutinized different text types, namely dictionaries, correspondence and especially dialect writing, which, because it draws consciously upon regional forms, Clark (2013: 461) emphasizes, “may not only be an intentional act, but an act of enregisterment”.

Dialect writing has often been explored on account of the linguistic insight it may give on the language of bygone times, especially when contemporary records are scarce or unavailable. As is known, it does not feature detailed descriptions of the language, yet research has convincingly revealed that literary representations of dialect provide some tantalizing guidance to advance our historical understanding of some traits (e.g. Beal, 2000; Blake, 1981; García-Bermejo Giner, 1999, 2008, 2013; Ruano-García et al., 2015; Wales, 2010). Recently, “work in enregisterment has reawakened scholarly interest in literary texts” (Hodson, 2016: 28) given that regional writing –both literary dialects and dialect literature (see Shorrocks, 1996)– is a clear conduit whereby the link between language, place and social values, as well as the ideas derived from it, are foregrounded, circulated and consumed. Similarly, historical dialect dictionaries and glossaries do not only contain rich cultural data and terms ascribed to a specific variety. Also, they testify to ideas about what the vocabulary of that variety was like by listing a repertoire of forms in an attempt to describe it. In fact, dialect compilations show how lexicographers and glossarists selected a set of items that were circulated as distinctively characteristic of a dialect and therefore provided “models for the performance of local identity” (Beal, 2009: 140). The available evidence further suggests that these choices were sometimes based on those of earlier works, and that the repertoire of items circulated in the form of dictionaries and glossaries was the result of a long transmission whereby lexical ideas about a dialect were constructed, reinforced, and to which compilers contributed commentary on the status or usage of specific items highlighting the association of such items with the dialect described. In this regard, Johnstone (2006: 10) claims that “dictionaries [...] do not simply describe existing dialects, or even folk ideas about existing dialects. Rather, they are part of the process through which sets of features that can be heard in a particular area, or in the speech of a particular category of people, come to be identified as a dialect in the first place”. Even

though this is particularly characteristic of the localized compilations of the late modern period, and those issued from the nineteenth century onwards in particular, the EModE lexicographical record shows the identification of some items with specific dialects that were thus labelled in ‘standard’ compilations, revealing awareness about the otherness of such forms.

### 3. SOME EARLY MODERN EVIDENCE ON THE ‘NORTHERN’ DIALECT

In this section, I look at some early modern evidence on the ‘northern’ dialect, considering, first, direct discussion of northern features in the form of definitions of the term *dialect* and metalinguistic comment circulated in non-literary works. Reference is then made to literary and lexicographical works, paying attention to the images of otherness displayed in them, which show awareness about the distinctiveness of the dialect and their speakers.

Wales (2006: 65) asserts that “the North was ‘constructed’ from the medieval period onwards as alien and barbaric”, which has largely influenced popular images about the North and the dialect. Of course, outsiders’ evaluations of the northern way of speaking were further intensified during the course of the EModE period as the consensus dialect was gradually accepted. Both forms of English were often contrasted in comments and observations that sometimes attempted to diagnose and delineate the boundaries of usage and correction: ‘standard’ English delimited itself by defining the other(s). William Harrison’s (1535–1593) *An Historicall Description of the Island of Britaine* highlighted that “[t]he Scottish English hath been much broader and less pleasant in vtterance than ours [...] as Englishmen themselves did speak for the most part beyond the Trent, whither any great amendment of our language had not as then extended it selfe” (1587: 14). George Puttenham (1529–1590/91) also saw the Trent in his celebrated *Arte of English Poesie* (1589) as a natural boundary that divided up the country’s language, whilst warning poets against “tak[ing] the termes of Northernmen, such as they vse in dayly talke [...] nor in effect any speach vsed beyond the riuer of Trent, though no man can deny but that theirs is the purer English Saxon at this day” (cited in Willcock & Walker, 1970: 145). Even though the uncorrupted quality of the northern dialect that Puttenham emphasizes seems to contradict earlier derogatory views, such purity did in fact account for its linguistic otherness, as it was “not so Courtly nor so currant as our Southerne English is, no more is the far Westerne man’s speach”, Puttenham wrote (cited in Wilcock & Walker, 1970: 145).

In line with Puttenham’s advice, EModE definitions of *dialect* highlight awareness of regional variation in English and testify to the existence of different forms of speech. One of such early definitions, as Stein (2014) explains, is found in Sir Thomas Elyot’s (c. 1490–1546) *Dictionary* of 1538 that refers to “Northern speche, Southerne, Kentyshe, Deuenishe, and other lyke” (2014: 103). Broadly speaking, northern and south-western forms of English were singled out alongside south-eastern English as illustrations of *dialect*, which in Elyot’s words

denoted “a maner of speche, as we wolde saye diuersities in englysshe” (cited in Stein, 2014: 103). Thomas Blount (1618–1679) relied on such differences to gloss the term later in *Glossographia* (1656), which he illustrated with an example taken from Verstegan’s (1548–1640) *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1605: sig. 8v): “At London we say, I would eat more cheese if I had it, the Northern man saith, *Ay sud eat mare cheese gin I hadet*, and the Western man saith, *Chud ee’at more chiese on chad it: Chud ee’at more cheese un ich had it*”. Clearly, this example shows conscious awareness about the distinctiveness of the northern dialect, whilst providing insight into some of the features that were most identified with it and differentiated from London speech: e.g. *mare* ‘more’ informs about the northern development of Old English (OE) /ɑ:/ > Middle English (ME) /a:/, and *gin* ‘if, whether’ is an example of a chiefly northern conjunction, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) (s.v. *gin*, conj.<sup>1</sup>) points out.

Direct discussion about northern forms of EModE is more explicit in Alexander Gil’s (1565–1635) *Logonomia Anglica* of 1619. Native of Lincolnshire, Gil’s remarks on the “dialectus borealis” are made alongside his description of the “dialectus communis”, and comprise a number of traits that include phonological features such as the development of ME /a:/ (e.g. “beað pro boh both ambo” [1619: 15]), and of ME /i:/, which he illustrates with “faier, pro fjer ignis” (‘fire’), noting that “Ai pro j. Borealiū est” (1619: 15). Also, he refers to the northern fronting of ME /o:/: “pro gud kuk, gyd kvk, bonus coquus” (‘good cook’) (1619: 16). Examples of morphological forms are the reflexive pronoun *seln* ‘self’, whereas *gang* ‘to go’ and *sark* ‘shirt’ are instances of northern vocabulary. Beal and Cooper note that this work “is a reliable witness for the existence of these features in northern dialects, but not necessarily of their enregisterment” (2015: 32). They go on to explain that some of them, such as the development of ME /i:/, “were probably at what Silverstein would call the first level of indexicality” (2015: 32). In this sense, Simon Daines’s (fl. 1640) *Orthoepia Anglicana* echoed some of Gil’s observations, likewise noting from the outside that “many of our Northerners especially abuse it with too broad a sound [...] like the diphthong Ai, making no difference in pronunciation between *fire* and *faire*” (1640: 6). A comparatively different case was made by William Nicolson (1655–1727) in his largely unnoticed *Glossarium Brigantinum* (1677): his observations are made from the inside, being thus more localized as they are related to the dialects of Cumbria. Native of Great Orton, Cumberland, Nicolson comments on the pronunciation of two vowel sounds which have traditionally marked off northern from southern standard English. On the one hand, he explains that the pronunciation of words with ME /a:/ (< OE /ɑ:/) was halfway between Latin *a* and *e*; e.g. *stâne* ‘stone’ and *bâne* ‘bone’ (1677: 357). He witnesses, on the other hand, the fronting of ME /o:/ with examples like *blûme* and *tûme*, which were respectively pronounced *bleum* and *teum* (1677: 358). His testimony goes some way towards suggesting that such forms, also discussed in earlier works, were at second order indexicality. They were noticeable to external observers and users of the dialect alike, showing insiders’ awareness that these pronunciations were characteristic of their dialect, and which,

like Cumbrian words, were seen as barbarous by southern Englishmen, Nicolson wrote (see Ruano-García, 2014: 168–176).

Many of the features noticed by contemporary commentators were circulated in literary representations of the dialect, in which they were overtly associated with a northern persona distinguished by a recognizable set of social and cultural attributes. As is well known, EModE saw the publication of a large number of works including representations of other Englishes, most of which were identified with the south-western and the northern dialect (see Blake, 1981: 80–107; Blank, 1996: 100–125). The latter often includes a conglomerate of linguistic features, so that northern English and Scots are combined in these representations, especially in those cases in which the dialect is localized to the far North.<sup>2</sup> Writers, most often playwrights, projected regional voices in their works, often juxtaposing speech forms and marking a contrast of characterological types. These dialects were usually recreated in opposition to London English, thereby delineating linguistic, cultural and social boundaries, while constructing an ideological scheme whereby these forms of English and their values were openly contrasted. It is worth noting, however, that northern and south-western varieties were not treated alike. Whereas the South-West was often seen with disdain, and personified by country bumpkins, the North was usually rendered as an old, uncorrupted, remote and plain dialect embodied in the persona of a simple, frank, honest northerner that was portrayed as appealing too. William Warner's (c. 1558–1609) *Albions England* (1586) features "a simple Northerne-man" (1586: 113) who, like the "rough hewne" (1612: sig. C3r) clothier protagonist of Deloney's (1543–1600) *Thomas of Reading* (1612), represents the honest northerner associated with a "broad Northern speech" (1612: sig. C3r). This was usually depicted in relation to simplicity of character and manners, as in the case of Camillus in Richard Brathwait's (1588–1673) *The Two Lancashire Lovers* (1640), as well as linked with sentiments of attraction for the dialect. The language of Constance and Innocentia, the northern heroines of Brome's (c. 1590–1692) *The Northern Lasse* (1632) and Lacy's (1615–1681) *Sir Hercules Buffoon* (1684), respectively, epitomize the paradoxical attractiveness that non-northern speakers felt when commenting on their language: "Yes, and they say her Northern Speech is a great addition to her Beauty, which is very strange" (Lacy, 1684: II, ii) (see further Paravano, 2018: 64–69; Ruano-García, 2010: 54–72). These values typified a characterological figure that, though taking different shapes in different works (e.g. the innocent lass, the honest clothier, etc.), was explicitly associated with the dialect circulated in these texts and that was placed in stark contrast with the emerging standard. EModE representations of the North not only evoked, therefore, ideas about foreignness, but also mirrored the widespread acceptance of the meanings attached to the features recreated, as well as collective ideas about the dialect itself, about the other.

Plays, ballads and prose works contributed to the fabrication and eventual circulation of such images of otherness. It is worth noting that whereas most of the plays were produced by non-northern speakers, ballads are mostly anonymous and reflect the longstanding oral literary tradition of the northern and border counties (see Wales, 2004: 25–30). Also, plays were often

represented in London for a non-northern audience, whilst broadsides were massively distributed, appealing to both rural and town targets, as well as people from different social classes (Schwegler, 1980: 435). The fact that plays were not usually aimed at a northern audience implies that the northernisms employed in them may have been salient enough to be recognized by southern speakers and associated with the northern persona. Similarly, the widespread circulation of ballads, both in terms of space and social class, suggests that the repertoire of features attested in them might have been known to insiders and outsiders alike. Additionally, even though plays and ballads are speech-purposed texts, dialectalisms are used with different aims: playwrights consciously used them for characterization purposes, whereas ballads often relied on them as geographical indicators which contextualized the recitation of events and provided them with a sense of realism and authenticity.<sup>3</sup> These differences notwithstanding, they are similar as regards the forms they contain. Spelling forms signalling northern sounds along with morphological features and instances of northern vocabulary helped writers to construct the links between place, speaker and speech.

Many of the northern words used in these literary works are recorded in lexicographical compilations where they are evaluated as ‘other’ items. For example, some hard-word dictionaries of the seventeenth century included regional items, revealing both the myriad of existing vocabularies and registers in contemporary England, while at the same time they witnessed lexicographers’ attitudes towards northern words, which they saw as outdated items that required an interpretation. Blount’s *Glossographia* (1656) notes that *barn* ‘a child’ “tis we say in the north of England, how do Wife and Barnes” (1656: sig. F4v), whilst *threpe* ‘to rebuke’ was “still used in the North” (1656: sig. Rr). In this same vein, Edward Phillips’s (1630–1696) *The New World of English Words* (1658) records a few northernisms (e.g. *kerck*, or *kirk* ‘church’, *mickle* ‘much’) which are marked as old words. An exception is *godsgood* ‘barn, yeast’, which Phillips localizes to the “North of England”, and the *OED* (s.v. *God’s good*, n. 2) ascribes to East Anglia and Kent in light of John Ray’s (1627–1705) celebrated *A Collection of English Words not Generally Used* (1674) and other works. Following Ray’s example, White Kennett’s (1660–1728) *Etymological Collections of English Words and Provincial Expressions* (c. 1696) has a remarkable number of northernisms which were identified as survivals and contemporary manifestations of the older language. They show Kennett’s allegiance to the antiquarian and etymological scholarship of the late 1600s visible in other compilations with a substantial dialect element such as Nicolson’s *Glossarium* (1677) and Hickeys’s (1642–1715) *Dictionariolum Islandicum* (1689) (see Ruano-García, 2015). An example of a northernism recorded by Kennett that had gone unnoticed in earlier works is *neckabout* ‘any linnen put about a woman’s neck’, which is localized to Sheffield (c. 1696: 67–70). In addition to these sources, northernisms found a place in word lists added to literary works. Spenser’s (1552?–1599) *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579), for instance, has *crags* ‘neckes’ and *gange* ‘to goe’, which are not evaluated explicitly as northern items, but rather

glossed as archaisms or “olde and obsolete wordes [that] are most vsed of country folke” (1579: sig. ijr).

Like literary representations, the evidence furnished by EModE lexicography shows awareness concerning the identification of some forms with the northern dialect, thus stressing their otherness. Also, lexicography showcases the widespread attribution of values of purity and uncorruption to the northern word by virtue of its immediate link to the country’s linguistic past. However, unlike literature, the available lexicographical material from the period does not for the most part comment on nor show the indexical association between such values and the northern speaker. Of course, the literary use of the dialect vocabulary found in these compilations is immediately relevant to the construction and circulation of the northern persona, their dialect and the values that it evokes. This evidence is thus valuable enough to explore the repertoire of forms that were imagined to be characteristically ‘northern’ in EModE in contrast to what was being gradually accepted as the norm.

## 4. ANALYSIS

### 4.1. Some methodological considerations

This analysis is based on EModE literary works with representations of the dialect that are now included in the SC. As previously noted, my aim is to determine whether such recreations built upon a set of linguistic forms that were linked with the northern dialect and associated with the values attributed to the northern speaker. A quantitative scrutiny of the most recurrent features used in these texts may provide valuable insight into the linguistic repertoire that was differentiable as characteristic of the dialect during this time. These features have been identified thanks to a wordlist retrieved with the *Corpus Presenter* suite (Hickey, 2003).

These works have been selected according to the following criteria. First, cases of literary dialect alone are examined for the analysis; that is, works that contain dialect passages but are otherwise written in standard English (see Shorrocks, 1996: 386). This is because of two reasons: on the one hand, there are just a couple of surviving EModE specimens written entirely in northern dialects; on the other, the evidence furnished by literary dialects is of particular interest as it lends itself to providing a glimpse into the attitudes and ideas that ‘standard’ speakers had about the North. This has made it possible to ascertain the set of traits that may have been salient at the time and linked with the dialect in the popular imagination, as these forms were possibly known to ‘standard’ and dialect speakers alike. Secondly, I have considered instances of dramatic dialogue, prose and broadside ballads. This trans-genre approach has enabled me to determine if all of them built upon a comparable repertoire of forms, and if some of these features were characteristic of one or another genre. Also, and as a result, I have been able to diagnose whether any of these genres played a more critical role in ‘othering’ the North and circulating linguistic ideas about the dialect amongst southern

speakers, while I have detected changes over the course of the period in the use of certain spellings to signal northern sounds (e.g. ME /a:/).

As displayed in Table 1, the analysis draws upon a sample comprising 115 texts published between 1564 and 1700.<sup>4</sup> It excludes examples of verse and verse dialogue (e.g. Stuart's *Joco-Serious Discourse* of 1686) which have been explored in other studies (Ruano-García et al., 2015), and includes prose texts that have not been so far interrogated in terms of enregisterment (e.g. Richard Brathwait's *The Two Lancashire Lovers* of 1640).

Genre	No. of texts	No. of words
Ballads	77	49,785
Drama	34	654,089
Prose	4	83,892
<i>Total</i>	<i>115</i>	<i>787,766</i>

**Table 1.** Corpus material.

Whenever possible, the corpus data have been checked against non-literary evidence, looking not only at dictionaries and glossaries, but also at works like *Logonomia Anglica* (Gil, 1619) and scattered metalinguistic commentary with a view to providing some qualitative insight into the treatment of the dialect forms in other contexts.

## 4.2. Data and discussion

### 4.2.1. Enregistered northern features: lexical and phonological forms

Quantification of the data has shown a common repertoire of features that are consistently employed in the corpus, in cases of ballads, drama and prose. Table 2 lists the set of features that are found in all of the corpus works, and which include phonological forms such as the northern fronting of ME /o:/, *l*-vocalization, as well as instances of northern vocabulary comprising *bonny* 'nice' and *ken* 'to know'.

Features	Ballads		Drama		Prose		TOTAL	
	No.	NF	No.	NF	No.	NF	No.	NF
ME /a:/ ( <i>sa</i> ‘so’)	213	42.7	350	5.35	32	3.81	595	7.55
ME /o:/ ( <i>luke</i> ‘look’)	75	15	242	3.69	24	2.86	341	4.51
<i>l</i> -vocalization ( <i>aw</i> ‘all’)	51	10.2	202	3.08	7	0.83	260	3.3
ME /k/ ( <i>blenk</i> ‘blench’, <i>kirk</i> )	118	23.7	93	1.42	13	1.54	224	2.84
ME /i:/ ( <i>Chraist</i> ‘Christ’)	19	3.8	184	2.81	3	0.35	206	2.61
<i>bonny</i> ‘nice, pretty’	84	16.87	30	0.45	2	0.23	116	1.47
<i>mickle</i> ‘much, great’	52	10.44	50	0.76	2	0.23	104	1.32
<i>gif(f)</i> , <i>gin</i> ‘if’	7	1.4	68	0.22	1	0.11	76	0.96
<i>sik(e)</i> ‘such’	36	7.2	18	0.27	4	0.47	58	0.73
<i>ken</i> ‘to know’	15	3.01	28	0.42	4	0.47	47	0.59
<i>barn(es)</i> ‘children’	5	1.0	6	0.09	4	0.47	15	0.19
<i>Total</i>	<i>675</i>	<i>135.3</i>	<i>1271</i>	<i>18.5</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>11.4</i>	<i>2042</i>	<i>26.1</i>

**Table 2.** Consistently occurring features: raw data and normalized frequencies (NF) / 10,000.

The larger amount of material representative of dramatic dialogue accounts for the attestation of a larger number of dialect features in this genre (1,271 items) than in cases of broadside ballads (675 cases), and especially in prose (96 items), where the dialect is sparsely represented. Indeed, dramatic representations of the dialect include a varied set of traits that comprise forms that are not documented in examples of ballads and/or prose. By way of illustration, we may refer to the rounding of /a/ followed by a nasal consonant (e.g. *con* ‘can’, *understonde* ‘understand’), instances pointing at the lengthening of ME /e/ such as *teel* ‘tell’, where <ee> suggests a long monophthong [i:], as well as different realizations of ME /u:/ (e.g. *baund* ‘bound’, *mooth* ‘mouth’), forms such as *sall* ‘shall’, where <s> points to [s] instead of /ʃ/, and lexical features that include *mun* ‘must’ and *gang* ‘to go’. Some of them are likewise shared by ballads, where we find *mon* ‘man’, *weel* ‘well’, *gange* ‘to go’ and *mun* ‘must’. Even though ballads constitute the smallest sample of the corpus material, Table 2 shows that dialect features are most frequent in them. This is possibly due to the fact that they are products of the oral tradition of the North and border counties, and because dialectalisms are not restricted to characterization alone, as I have already noted. Prose works, on the contrary, provide little evidence besides the forms common to drama and broadside ballads. Cases reporting on the opening of /o + ŋg/ > /a + ŋg/ (e.g. *lange* ‘long’) are documented alongside localized items such as *whiskin* ‘a shallow, brown drinking bowl’ that we find in Brathwait’s *The Two Lancashire Lovers* (1640) and the *English Dialect Dictionary (EDD)* (Wright, 1896–1905) cites from Lancashire and Cheshire.

The repertoire of common words have traditionally been given as examples of items commonly used across the North and Scotland. The *OED*, for example, labels *bonny* as “chiefly *Sc.*, *Eng. regional* (chiefly *northern* and *midlands*)” (s.v. *bonny*, adj., n.<sup>1</sup> and adv.), while

*mickle* is described as an archaism and a regional item chiefly restricted to Scotland and the North of England. The *EDD* cites *bairn* from Scotland, Ireland and all the northern counties to Cheshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire; the *OED* (s.v. *bairn*) points out that the form *barn* “still survives in northern English”, whilst *bairn* is the Scottish variant. The *EDD* also refers to *ken*, which is ascribed to Scotland, Ireland and the northern counties of Durham, Cumberland, Yorkshire and Lancashire (s.v. *ken*, v. and sb.<sup>1</sup>). Such general northern/Scottish attributions are also a characteristic of the EModE compilations where these words are recorded and evaluated. As with the words described in section 3, they are in most cases identified with the ‘northern dialect’. Phillip’s *The New World of English Words* (1658, s.v. *barn*, or *bern*) cites *barn(es)* ‘children’ as “a Northern word”, which Hogarth (1689, s.v. *bearn*) describes as “a downright northern word”, stressing its pan-northern status. Indeed, Kennett (c. 1696) quotes *bairn* from Scotland and the North of England, whilst Nicolson (1677) gives *barn* as a Cumbrian noun. Similarly, Nowell’s *Vocabularium Saxonicum* (c. 1567) refers to the Lancashire distribution of *kenne* ‘knowe’, which Nicolson (1677, s.v. *to kenn*) cites in Cumbrian use. Kennett (c. 1696, s.v. *ken*) refers to its general northern distribution and illustrates it with the example “I ken him not, i.e. I don’t know him” (c. 1696: 253). Also, the northern usage of *mickle* ‘much’ is pointed out by Verstegan (1605, s.v. *micel* or *mikel*), who explains that “[w]ee vse for it in the south partes of England, the Spanish woord mucho” (1605: sig. Ff2v); Kennett (c. 1696, s.v. *mickle*) gives the example “Every little makes a mickle” (c. 1696: 286) to illustrate it.

In a similar vein, most of the common phonological features found in the corpus have been noted as characteristic forms of traditional northern English. Trudgill refers to ME /a:/ (< OE /ɑ:/), ME /i:/ and ME /u:/ as the traits “which distinguish the NORTH dialect area from the SOUTH” (1990: 35–37). In the case of ME /a:/, Trudgill explains that “today Scots dialects have the same long ‘ā’ vowel in stone and home [...] In the NORTH of England the same failure to change Anglo-Saxon ‘a’ to ‘o’ is found” (1990: 36). Such a failure is shown by northern forms such as *mara* ‘more’, *twea* ‘two’ and *thase* ‘those’ that are used in the corpus works. Also, Trudgill (1990: 36) notes that items such as *out* and *cow* have retained the ME long monophthong /u:/ in the traditional varieties of Scotland and northern England “into northern Lincolnshire”; *thoosand* ‘thousand’, recorded in the SC, points to this retention. Similarly, Wakelin (1991: 88–89) highlights that there are a number of salient features which serve to distinguish northern from North Midland and southern dialects. They comprise, in this order, ME /u:/, ME /o:/ and ME /a:/, amongst other forms such as lengthened ME /e/ and ME /o + ŋg/ > /a + ŋg/. He explains that their northern realizations are respectively [u:], [Iə] and [ʊə] against southern standard /aʊ/, /u:-/ʊ/, /əʊ/ (see also Beal, 2004: 123, 124, 125 on the GOAT, MOUTH and PRICE diphthongs).

As is the case with the lexical material, there is EModE evidence that witnesses the distinctiveness of some of the common phonological forms identified, reporting that they seem to have been perceived as different from ‘standard’ English at the time. Special attention should be paid to items showing the reflex of ME /a:/, which are particularly frequent in the corpus. I

have already pointed out in section 3 that Gil (1619) and Nicolson (1677) explicitly comment on words with ME /a:/ as a northern trait noticeable to outsiders and insiders alike. Similarly, Kennett's (c. 1696) entries for *beer* 'bier', *een* 'eyes' and *sare* 'sore' refer to their northern status, whilst adding remarks that highlight their authenticity and genuineness on account of their close etymological link with the older language (c. 1696: 60–61). *Sare*, Kennett explains, is how "in Sc. and the borders they rightly pronounce" *soar*, a pronunciation which was retained in the compound "sare-cloath or sear-cloth", he adds (c. 1696: 366). As in this example, Kennett often uses <ea> and <a(Ce)> to spell northern pronunciation variants showing the reflexes of ME /a:/ (< OE /a:/). Examples are *bane* 'bone', *stane/stean* 'stone' and *yan* 'one' that he cites in northern use, whereas *bath/beath* 'both' are localized to Yorkshire (c. 1696: 68). Interestingly, <a(Ce)> had been evaluated as a signal of the northern dialect over a century before. Thomas Cooper (c. 1517–1594) provides first-order indexical information in this regard when noticing in *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae et Britannicae* (1578, s.v. *albion*) that "at this present time the northerne men of this realme doe vse A, in wordes, where southerne men vse O, as a bane, a stane, a bare, a band: for a bone, a stone, a bore, a bond" (1578: n.p.). The identification of this spelling form with the northern dialect is corroborated by the corpus where this correspondence is overtly represented, as I explain in the following subsection.

#### 4.2.2. Spelling representations of ME /a:/ (< OE /a:/)

Table 3 shows the wide range of spellings documented in literary representations of the dialect to highlight the pronunciations of words with ME /a:/.

Spelling forms		Drama	Ballads	Prose	TOTAL
<ea>	<i>eane</i> 'one', <i>teaken</i> 'token'	114	56	1	171
<a>	<i>bath</i> 'both', <i>sa</i> 'so'	118	44	1	163
<e(Ce)>	<i>clethes</i> 'clothes', <i>ne</i> 'no'	52	31	19	102
<a(C)e>	<i>alane</i> 'alone', <i>wae</i> 'woe'	49	31	11	91
<ai>/<ay>	<i>waimb</i> 'womb', <i>tway</i> 'two'	9	28	0	37
<ee(re)>	<i>gee</i> 'go', <i>meere</i> 'more'	8	23	0	31
<i>Total</i>		<i>350</i>	<i>213</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>595</i>

**Table 3.** Spelling forms highlighting ME /a:/ in the corpus.

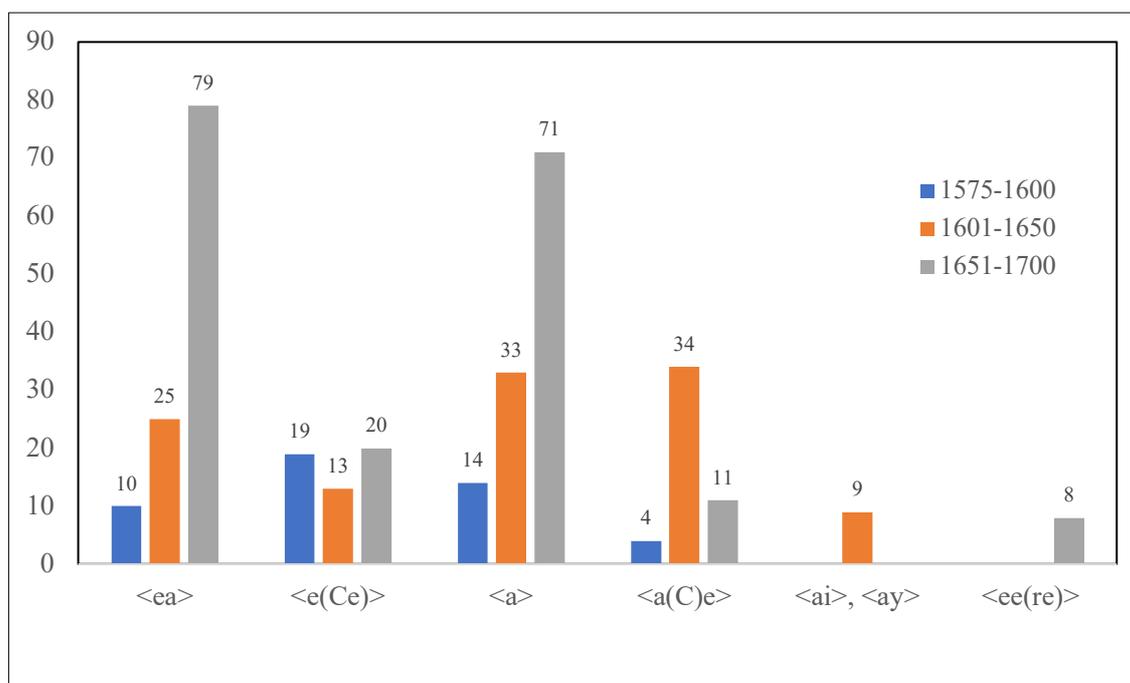
<a> and <ea> are the most frequently employed spellings along with <e(Ce)> and <a(C)e>, which all together outweigh instances of <ai>/<ay> and <ee(re)>. García-Bermejo Giner's (2008) study on some early sixteenth-century evidence for the northern development of ME /a:/ also finds that some of these forms are employed in representations of the northern dialect. She explains that "<a> + consonant + <e>, <e> + consonant + <e>, or even <ee> + <r> + <e> are the usual ways of suggesting the reflexes of OE long a in the north" (2008: 60),

which are also found in recreations of “Scottish English where <e>, <ai>, <ee>, <ae> <ai> are also used” (2008: 60). It is worth noting that in the corpus <ai>/<ay> and <ee(re)> are found only in dramatic texts and ballads, with examples such as:

(1) “Nordern. I’le ne maire, my waimb warkes too mickle with this auready” (Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fayre* 1631: IV, iv)

(2) “Stoneware. Ne bred a geod Ime ne meere a Loord then yer neene self” (John Tathan, *The Rump* 1660: V, i)

Prose texts show some preference for <e(Ce)> (x19) and <a(C)e> (x11) over other forms such as <ea> (x1) and <a> (x1), which are widely documented in plays and ballads. The data suggest that the spelling forms for ME /a:/ were not distributed alike during the course of EModE. Figure 1 charts their distribution across time in examples of drama.

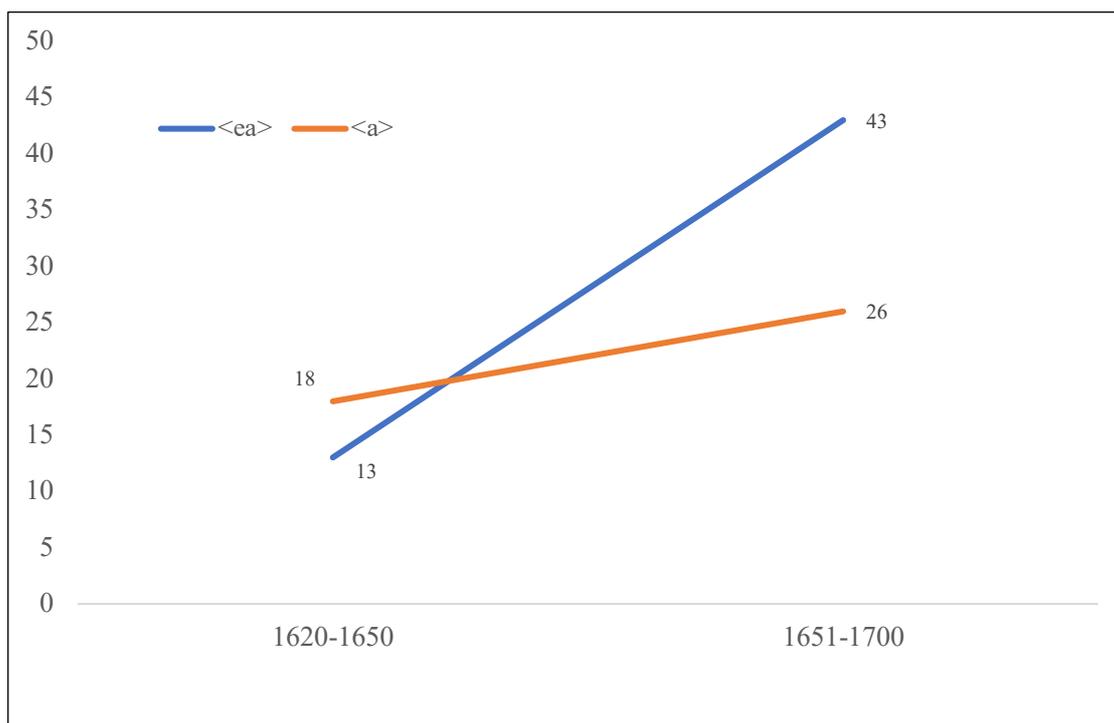


**Figure 1.** Distribution of spelling forms for ME /a:/ across time: Drama (raw data).<sup>5</sup>

As we can see, during the first subperiod examined (1575–1600), <e(Ce)> is the most noticeable form followed by <a>, <ea>, and <a(C)e>, and it remains relatively steady in terms of frequency during the course of the seventeenth century. The data suggest that the frequency of <a(C)e> increased during the first half of the seventeenth century, with a remarkable decrease in the following fifty years, possibly because of the widespread use of <ea> and <a>. Indeed, as we can see, the use of <ea> and <a> remarkably increased during the 1600s, especially during the second half of the century. This is comparatively more significant in the case of <ea>, which became the most usual spelling device to recreate this northern feature. It is worth noting that already in 1579, Spenser’s glosses to *The Shepheardes Calender* relied on

<ea> to mark the “northerne pronouncing” (1579: fol. 47v) of *home*, which he spelt *heame*, and that we find in *nea* ‘no’ and *sea* ‘so’ in Woodes’s *A Conflict of Conscience* (1581), for example. One century later, White Kennett also employed <ea> to signal the pronunciation of *race*, noting that “in the North they still pronounce a Reace” (c. 1696: 319).

The data further suggest that the growth of <ea> and <a> during the seventeenth century was not restricted to dramatic representations of the dialect. Broadside ballads, as shown in Figure 2, likewise reveal that these two spelling forms considerably increased in terms of frequency during the second half of the century, especially in the case of <ea>. There are other spelling forms that are likewise documented in the corpus of ballads, as Table 3 shows. As in the case of dramatic recreations of the dialect, they were more commonly employed during the first decades of the seventeenth century than <ea> and <a>. By way of illustration, <a(C)e> is attested 22 times in 1620–1650, whereas it is found on 9 occasions in the following subperiod examined. Interestingly, ballads rely on <ai>/<ay> on a more frequent basis than drama, with more examples being found in the first half of the 1600s (x21) than in the period 1651–1700 (x7).



**Figure 2.** Distribution of <ea> and <a> for ME /a:/ across time: Ballads (raw data).

Because of their massive distribution during the period, ballads may have acted as a conduit whereby northern features were circulated across the country, being in this way brought in contact with ‘standard’ speakers, whilst creating a collective linguistic idea about the dialect itself. It could thus be surmised that the repertoire of traits attested in ballads and the spelling forms employed to highlight some of them may have had some impact on other genres, as most

writers were non-northern speakers. As such, the increase in the use of <ea> that we observe in dramatic recreations of the North during the second half of the century could have been influenced by the set of spellings propagated in the written record of the oral tradition of Scotland and the northern counties known to dialect and ‘standard’ speakers alike. It seems a reasonable assumption, therefore, that the choices of early modern writers include those forms commonly perceived and circulated as genuinely characteristic of the dialect and that contributed to shaping and cementing ideas about the other alongside the developing standard.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper, I have been concerned with the other side of the coin of standardization by looking at one of the varieties of EModE which was not included in the “consensus dialect”. I have examined some of the contemporary evidence on the ‘northern dialect’ in order to determine the extent to which the emerging standard had an impact on contemporary perceptions that saw and constructed the North as the ‘other’, whilst showing, as a result, that such views were immediately relevant to how the dialect and their speakers were imagined and represented. To do so, I have explored a corpus of literary representations of the dialect through the lens of Agha’s framework of enregisterment, considering that such practices are examples of third-order indexicality as the dialect is overtly associated with a set of social values that, as we have seen, comprise honesty, frankness, innocence, purity, etc. Such linkages are clearly recognizable and circulated in EModE literature, as well as sometimes documented in contemporary lexicography where specific items are identified with the dialect and linked with notions of obsolescence and purity as well. Quantification of the data has raised a number of points.

Firstly, it has been possible to identify a set of consistently occurring features in cases of drama, broadside ballads and prose works, which include forms like ME /a:/, ME /o:/, *ken* ‘to know’ and *barn(es)* ‘children’. Their frequency in the corpus and consistent attestation across the genres examined suggest, on the one hand, that EModE recreations of the ‘northern’ dialect built upon a repertoire of linguistic features, which, on the other hand, may have been salient at the time and linked with the dialect and the northern speaker in the popular imagination. Secondly, and in spite of this, we have seen that the enregistered forms are not distributed alike across text types, as they are more often documented in dramatic recreations of the dialect and ballads. Indeed, it seems that ballads had a bigger impact on the circulation of this set of features, thus contributing more largely to othering the dialect amongst southern speakers, which can be accounted for in terms of their massive distribution and wide social appeal. Thirdly, and as a result, it is possible that the dialect circulated in this kind of cheap print popular specimens was behind the ‘standard’ fabrication of the North in other types of discourse, not only as regards the set of features employed in them, but also concerning the

linguistic devices deployed to highlight their difference. In this regard, the analysis of the spelling forms employed to signal the northern reflexes of ME /a:/ has revealed change concerning the use of <e(Ce)>, <a>, <ea> and <a(C)e> over the period, and at the same time that the important increase in the use of <ea> during the second half of the seventeenth century could be due to the input of broadside ballads. In light of these results, it would seem that these artefacts played a relevant role in enregistering the dialect. In fact, they testified to contemporary views about the dialect and their speakers that were likewise circulated in other texts produced by ‘standard’ writers where they were rendered as the other.

In sum, this paper has sought to provide some glimpse into the other effects of standardization, as it likewise, and naturally, contributed to shaping ideas about the other EModE varieties that were imagined, represented, described and circulated in contrast with the developing standard. Agha’s model of enregisterment offers fruitful avenues to investigate such effects, as it allows us to understand those varieties in connection with language ideologies within the context of standardization.

## NOTES

- 1 Such a widespread view on what standard English means and implies should be taken carefully when considering the development of the common dialect in EModE, especially because the notion of (non-)standard is, in Hickey’s (2012: 2) words, “essentially an eighteenth-century development”.
- 2 In this regard, García-Bermejo Giner (2008: 60) points out that “at the time the general public did not really distinguish linguistically between Northern and Scottish characters and frequently the same traits were given to both”.
- 3 Culpeper and Kytö (2010: 17) explain that speech-purposed genres, “such as Play-texts, are designed to be articulated orally. Some genres, Sermons and Proclamations for example, are designed to produce monologue (they are ‘read out’), but others, most notably Plays, are designed to produce real-time spoken interaction (they are ‘performed’)”.
- 4 Because of space restrictions, see Ruano-García (2010: 511–517) for a detailed list of the texts scrutinized here, some of which have not yet been uploaded to the SC. At the time of writing (January 2019), the early modern northern material compiled for the corpus amounts to 131 texts (c. 1,3 million words) (see also Ruano-García et al., 2015: 136).
- 5 For comparison purposes, the data documented in plays have been divided in three subperiods of fifty years each, except in the case of dramatic texts of the sixteenth century, the first example of which included in the SC dates from 1575. The same applies to the data represented in Figure 2: the first ballad recorded in the corpus is from 1620.

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