

**‘Farmer Pearse had three distinct manners of speech’:
Representations of dialect speech in Late Modern English dialect writing**

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As is known, representations of speech in dialect writing are mediated through the experience of literate authors, which makes it difficult to access and adequately reconstruct authentic usage of lower-class dialect speakers. Research has persuasively shown, however, that such representations can open revelatory windows into the dialects of the past if treated cautiously and properly triangulated with other evidence (e.g. Beal 2000; García-Bermejo Giner 2008; Maguire 2020; Picone 2016). As an intentional practice, dialect writing evokes and recreates (socio)linguistic differences by means of selected features that inform us about the characteristics of a dialect, show dialect awareness as well as ideas about and attitudes towards regional speech, while they offer a glimpse into questions of salience relating to the linguistic forms writers consciously choose to represent.

In this presentation, I seek to illustrate what dialect writing can tell us about the speech of Late Modern English dialect speakers. I look at instances of literary dialect and dialect literature (Shorrocks 1996) from the *Salamanca Corpus* with a twofold purpose. On the one hand, my aim is to show that dialect writing can improve our knowledge of Late Modern English dialect speech by examining its contribution to the record with selected case studies. On the other hand, this presentation explores how sociolinguistic frameworks such as enregisterment (Agha 2003) and indexicality (Silverstein 2003) productively inform our understanding of dialect speech circulated in Late Modern English literary texts. Not only can it be read as a reflection of the linguistic perceptions of mediator writers, but also as a set of dynamic indexical associations between place, speaker and speech during this time.

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