"Practised among the common people": "vulgar" pronunciations in eighteenth-century pronouncing dictionaries

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In a corpus compiled from the notes in John Walker's pronouncing dictionary (first edition 1791), Trapateau (2016) found that the most frequently occurring evaluative term used was *vulgar*. In Walker's dictionary, *vulgar* is defined as "plebian, suiting to the common people, practised among the common people, mean, low, being of the common rate; publick, commonly bruited". The frequency of this term in Walker's critical notes suggests that the role of his dictionary was to warn against unacceptable pronunciations as well as to provide an account of acceptable or, to use Walker's second most frequent term, *polite* ones. In this presentation, I discuss some of the pronunciations labelled *vulgar* by Walker and other eighteenth-century authors and argue that, far from dismissing such evidence as prescriptive, we should consider the role played by Walker and his contemporaries in the enregisterment of stigmatised variants and varieties.

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Stage Yorkshiremen and Yorkshire boors: sociological fractionation and enregisterment in nineteenth century literary dialect

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In this paper I seek to understand discourses surrounding enregistered Yorkshire dialect and identity which appear to demonstrate ideological differences to each other as represented in nineteenth century texts. My data comes from 62 texts which feature direct commentary on Yorkshire dialect in relation to the kinds of social identities most frequently and consistently associated with it. In addition, I consider a corpus comprising 108 texts of Yorkshire dialect writing totalling 106,463 words of both dialect literature and literary dialect (Shorrocks 1996), including dialect poems, ballads, songs, dialogues, as well as the dialect from Yorkshire characters in novels and plays.

My results show emergent discourses in which some literary dialect writers present Yorkshire speakers as boorish and use representations of the dialect enregistered (Agha 2003) as general "Yorkshire". Other writers, many of whom are from Yorkshire themselves, contest these representations and argue that the dialect used by the former group is inaccurate. Moreover, analysis of the corpus data indicated quantifiable differences in the representations of certain dialect features in dialect writing aimed at local versus wider audiences. This also correlated with a broader range of social identities depicted for Yorkshire speakers in dialect literature than in the literary dialect, observable as variation in the occupations attributed to these speakers in each type of text. I conclude that the recirculation of these discourses is evidence of sociological fractionation (Agha 2007), as we see an "in group" challenging and contesting the views and identities portrayed by an "out group". At the centre of these discourses, we can consistently observe discussion and use of enregistered Yorkshire dialect, which illustrates the additional ideological complexity of the links between language and identity in the nineteenth century.

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Speech Reflections in Late Modern English Pauper Petitions

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In the absence of direct records of speech, language historians, when reconstructing orality in Late Modern English, have a range of text types at their disposal that contain speech-like elements, such as personal correspondence, trial proceedings or drama and fiction (cf. Culpeper & Kytö 2010: 7–18). A written source that similarly reflects contemporary spoken language during the Late Modern English period is pauper petitions, i.e. letters written by the labouring poor to apply for out-relief (financial or other support) to their home parish. As many of the writers had not received much schooling, let alone grammatical training, the data source can reflect the varying levels of education and elements of speech of the writers from different regions in England.

The first part of the paper briefly introduces the SNSF-funded research project *The Language of the Labouring Poor in Late Modern England (2020–2024)* and the corpus of pauper petitions we are currently compiling. We will present sociohistorical background information like education and mobility which is relevant for understanding speech reflections in these petitions. In the second part, we will present case studies from different geographical areas, including Dorset and Northern counties. In our analysis of the speech reflections in the pauper petitions we draw on comparative resources such as dialect poems by William Barnes (1801–1886), his *Dissertation on the Dorset Dialect of the English Language* published in 1844 (Burton 2013, 2017a/b; Burton & Ruthven 2013), as well as *Dialects, Poems, Songs, and Ballads by Various Writers, in the Westmoreland and Cumberland Dialect* (1839). While sociolinguistically variable features such as h-dropping and h-insertion are common in all regions, different writers reveal different sets of regionally more restricted features. Augustine Morgan from Dorset, for instance, must have pronounced "week" with a short vowel (spelt "wick"), lowered the KIT vowel ("lettel" for "little") and elided final /t, d/ ("han" for "hand", "nex" for "next"). Since all paupers represented in our corpus had moved away and wrote back to their home parishes, the petitions also allow us to identify the likely origin of the paupers, and track mobility patterns as well dialect contact in the past. The data gathered from pauper petitions thus significantly increases our knowledge of spoken and regional features in Late Modern England and pushes the boundaries of dialect studies back in time.

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"he used most disgusting language": Speech Descriptors and the Social and Pragmatic Evaluation of Speech in the Old Bailey Corpus

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The Proceedings from the Old Bailey, the central criminal court in London, have been argued to represent "as near as we can get to the spoken word of the [Late Modern English] period" (https://fedora.clarin-d.uni-saarland.de/oldbailey/index.html), and several studies have been devoted to the specific question of the linguistic reliability of the documents as records of the spoken language of the past (e.g., Huber 2007; see also Archer 2014). Assuming the material's proximity to the spoken language (though with various caveats), other researchers have used the linguistic corpus compiled from a selection of the Proceedings to chart trends as regards a variety of speech-related, sociolinguistic, and interactional features in Early and Late Modern English (e.g., Traugott 2011; Säily 2016; Widlitzki and Huber 2016; Claridge 2020; Claridge, Jonsson, and Kytö 2020). In this paper, I take a different approach to this material: I do not aim to evaluate the reliability of the "spokenness" of the records; nor do I intend to study "spoken" features of the Proceedings per se. Instead, I explore how the speech reporters (whether witnesses, the scribes taking down the records, or others) evaluate, frame, and position the speech that they represent. To do so, I look at "speech descriptors," which modify or comment on the represented speech, such as "exultingly" in "It was said exultingly" (1821; OBC t18210411_64) or "most disgusting" in "he used most disgusting language" (1846; OBC t18460706_1443) (see Grund 2017, 2018, 2020a, 2020b). Such descriptors have the potential to give us access to a range of broader as well as more localized attitudes toward and negotiations of the represented speech and, by extension, attitudes toward the identity and characteristics of the original speaker. I chart the sociolinguistic and pragmatic meanings of speech descriptors in the Old Bailey Corpus, showing the ways in which metatextual features can enhance our understanding of perceptions and evaluations of speech and speakers in the Late Modern English period.

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Talking to Peasants:
Language, Place and Class in British Fiction 1800-1836

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The impact of Wordsworth's *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* (1800) on later English poetry has been well explored and contested during the 200 years since its publication. In this paper I will direct my attention to the relationship between the *Preface* and the representation of the language of the labouring poor in novels written in its immediate aftermath.

The Dialect in British Fiction 1800-1836 project (http://www.dialectfiction.org) has surveyed a representative sample of novels published during these years. Overall, the story it tells is of a gradual rise in the quantity of dialect representation, as well as a shift in function from stereotyping to greater realism, and from a small number of dialects to a wider range. In this paper I focus on the place of the English rural poor in these novels. I observe that while between 1800 and 1815, well-born young ladies in novels did not talk to the local peasantry, from around 1815 a small but significant minority of heroines started to step outside the doors of their country houses and engage with the people living on their doorstep. I explore a number of scenes from these novels, demonstrating that while the outcomes of such encounters varied, many of them express concerns with language, identity and lived experience. I argue that the issues being played out at these moments are part of a wider shift, from understanding dialect speakers only as objects of aesthetic appreciation or benevolent improvement, towards understanding them as subjects who exist and have agency within their own communities.

'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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Representation of phonological changes in GOAT and /r/ in 19th century grammar writing

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This paper is part of an ongoing research project that investigates the representation of changes in pronunciation in the *Collection of Nineteenth Century Grammars* (CNG), which is a compilation of 258 grammars published in 19th century Britain and the US (cf. Anderwald 2016). My overall aim is to gather evidence that aids us in the reconstruction of English phonology. The 19th century is of particular interest for this enterprise as it has often been ignored in historical phonology (Beal 2004: 124-5) and as it saw an astonishing increase in grammars published (cf. Görlach 1998). Moreover, it marks the advent of phonetics as a discipline and saw the emergence of the supra-regional prestige variety RP (cf. Ellis 1869: 23).

In this paper, I will present my preliminary results and show what grammars proposed as variants for two features, viz. GOAT diphthongisation and /r/, and discuss what these reveal about the language of the century. As regards the first feature, Beal (2004: 138) remarks that for BrE, "the first tentative description of a diphthongal pronunciation comes from the turn of the nineteenth century." However, according to Jones (2006: 303), evidence suggests "diphthongal forms were only firmly established in prestige speech by the middle of the nineteenth century at the earliest." I will demonstrate that throughout the 19th century GOAT words were presented as one of the prime examples of what grammarians called "improper" or "impure" diphthongs and that in their opinion this vowel clearly belonged to the monophthong system of English. Nonetheless, I will illustrate that there were some grammarians who did discuss either both monophthongal and diphthongal variants or provided clear diphthongal descriptions. Concerning the second feature under scrutiny, i.e. /r/, there is evidence that post-vocalic /r/ deletion must have been variable in Britain until the 1870s (cf. Lass 1999: 115; Trudgill & Gordon 2006: 242). My data indicate that throughout the century British as well as US grammars continued to propose what could be considered a trill-approximant distribution, with the former occurring in initial and the latter in final position. However, I will show that grammarians also discussed post-vocalic /r/ loss and that they displayed neutral as well as negative attitudes towards the feature.

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