



*He towd her soe monny a mad farrant Tele:
On flotsam, respellings and the
enregisterment of /-vocalisation and
/a/+nasal in the Late Modern
Lancashire dialect*

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ABSTRACT: This paper addresses the concept of *flotsam* in relation to language by examining the non-standard spellings used in a selection of literary representations of the Lancashire dialect written in the Late Modern English period. The analysis is placed within the framework of enregisterment and indexicality, which I explore in combination with recent sociolinguistic approaches to the study of orthography. Attention is paid to two of the frequently occurring features in these speech recreations (*/-vocalisation* and the rounding of */a/+nasal*), arguing that the respellings employed to represent them can be taken as instances of flotsam in that they contribute to highlighting and enregistering linguistic differences.

KEY WORDS: flotsam; respelling; enregisterment; Lancashire dialect; Late Modern English



INTRODUCTION

The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* defines *flotsam* as ‘Such part of the wreckage of a ship or its cargo as is found floating on the surface of the sea (s.v. sense 1.a.), which is sometimes used ‘jocularly for ‘odds and ends.’ (s.v. sense 1.b.) in collocation with *jetsam*, as in the following citation:

1884 R. BUCHANAN in *Harper’s Mag.* Sept. 603/1 A mania for buying all sorts of flotsam and jetsam

The dictionary records that the use of *jetsam* ‘Goods discarded from a ship and washed ashore’ (s.v. sense 1) is extended to cover the sense ‘Something washed up or discarded; refuse, detritus’ (*OED* s.v. sense 2), one which is likewise recorded by the *Oxford Dictionary of English* in the phrase *flotsam and jetsam* ‘useless or discarded objects’ (s.v. *flotsam*). Here, the figurative meaning of *flotsam* is defined as ‘people or things that have been rejected or discarded as worthless’ and illustrated with the following example: “the room was cleared of boxes and other flotsam”.

This paper places the concept of *flotsam* in relation to language. I examine the ways in which widespread ideas about the linguistic ‘other’ respond to a conscious process of selection that has an immediate social impact on linguistic practices attempting to recreate ‘discarded’ linguistic features or divergences from the norm. I aim to exemplify this considering the non-standard spelling forms that have been employed to represent the Lancashire dialect in a selection of literary texts written between 1700 and 1900 that are now included in *The Salamanca Corpus (SC)*. For this purpose, I invoke Agha’s framework of enregisterment, which I explore in combination with recent sociolinguistic approaches to the study of orthography (e.g. Jaffe *Non-standard*; Sebba *Spelling*; Sebba *Orthography*). As such, this paper follows on from a previous study on the enregisterment of the Lancashire dialect in Late Modern English (LModE) in which respellings are analysed for the light they shed on the features that were evaluated as most distinct(ive) of the dialect during this time, as well as on their degree of localisedness (see Ruano-García *Enregisterment Lancashire*). My aim here is to examine the representation of two of the enregistered Lancashire forms found in the corpus, namely *l*-vocalisation (e.g. *towd* ‘told’) and the rounding of /a/+nasal (e.g. *monny* ‘many’). I argue that the textual recreation of Lancashire is socially meaningful insofar as it is a highly conscious practice in which respellings evoke shared ideas about what the linguistic difference is thought to be. The claim is made, therefore, that respellings can be taken as instances of flotsam that contribute to highlighting and enregistering that linguistic difference

The paper explains, first, Agha’s theory of enregisterment, paying attention to the role of dialect writing in the process. Then, I look at recent sociolinguistic approaches to the study of orthography, considering pronunciation respellings and their function in literary representations of dialect. The analysis and discussion of the corpus data are detailed in Section 4 in which the methodology is likewise explained. I hope that this paper may contribute to current discussion on the manifold



manifestations of flotsam, casting some light on the linguistic side of the phenomenon.

ON THE FRAMEWORK OF ENREGISTERMENT

Agha (*Social Life*) introduced the concept of *enregisterment* to explore the emergence of the so-called Received Pronunciation (RP), as well as the socially constructed and continuing nature of the cultural values attached to it. As he details, this model of standard pronunciation can be traced historically to a regional variety of south-eastern England, which was originally used by a small group of speakers who did not associate it with correction nor with upper social class. The prescriptivist input provided by the publication of pronouncing dictionaries and the metalinguistic judgment circulated via different types of discourse—newspapers, novels, usage guides—, effected the gradual association between a set of pronunciation forms and a supralocal standard, which was in turn identified as a symbol of social status in Britain. Consequently, in the words of Johnstone et al. (80), these traits “have been represented collectively in the public imagination as a stable variety and maintained across time and region via metapragmatic practices that reiterate the value of this variety and its link to social status and correctness”.

As with RP, there are sets of linguistic features that are seen as non-standard, and as a result are understood as varieties, or dialects, which are rather stable or homogenous and thus linked with specific groups of speakers from specific places. Needless to say, this association between speaker, space and speech involves linkages of different kinds which vary depending on the speaker, as linguistic forms have no inherent social meaning, and may represent distinct values for different persons. Some of these values, and the links behind them, however, may be shared by different users thanks to practices and discourses that typify speech and contribute to their dissemination. In fact, Johnstone (*Dialect Enregisterment* 657-658) holds that these practices, which she calls metapragmatic, “help people show one another how forms and meanings are to be linked”. For instance, dialect dictionaries and glossaries, personal narrative, websites devoted to a specific variety, commodities such as T-shirts, comic strips, and the literary renditions of dialect provide ample evidence of the public representation of sets of non-standard features as stable varieties. By disseminating habits of speech, either of perception, recognition or production, these activities create public awareness of the values indexed by the features represented, as well as collective ideas about varieties, about dialects.

One key aspect in this language-ideological approach is that of the orders of indexicality proposed by Silverstein, which refers to the various levels at which linguistic forms take on social meaning. His taxonomy comprises three orders that, in the words of Beal (*Introduction* 94), “relate to ascending levels of awareness within and beyond the speech community”. The first order refers to the correlation between a linguistic form and a social category. That is, first-order indexicality refers to the way a linguistic form correlates with belonging to a specific group, 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 meaning, as well as of the way it begins to be employed variably according to context, register, style, etc. Finally, third-order indexicality shows that the features associated with specific sociocultural categories are the object of overt comment and public representation in a range of different practices both by insiders and outsiders of a given variety. Indeed, as Clark (*Indexicalization* 443-444) notes, “people, including those from the “inside” [...] deliberately draw upon [these features] to perform local or regional identity”. Unger (353) provides a clear illustration of these three stages in relation to *innit*. This contracted tag question developed as a discourse marker used “by younger speakers in Southern England from the 1980s onwards” (353), which would represent Silverstein’s first order of indexicality. Later, it became consciously and overtly associated with a specific type of persona or characterological type (third-order indexicality), which Unger links with Sacha Baron Cohen’s TV character ‘Ali G’.

Enregisterment refers, therefore, to “the processes through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms” (Agha, *Social Life* 231-232) or the process “whereby distinct forms of speech come to be socially recognized (and enregistered) as indexical of the speaker attributes by a population of language speakers” (Agha, *Voice* 38). It comprises the mechanisms by which linguistic features take on sociocultural meaning and index a specific type of persona, this link becoming visible through a series of metapragmatic practices and discourses that put it on display. These activities do in fact reveal that sets of regional features are linked to an ideological scheme by which they are evaluated against other, often standard, forms that make them become salient and thus index certain social and cultural values (Johnstone, *Pittsburghese* 160).

As a linguistic framework, enregisterment has had a notably greater impact on studies concerned with variation in the English language, especially in the field of modern varieties of American English. Adams (116) claims that “enregisterment, as an analytical approach to dialect, synthesizes history (including current history), material culture, linguistic fieldwork, folk linguistics/perceptual dialectology, discourse, style, phonology, lexis, syntax—in fact, nearly every aspect of American speech and nearly every approach to studying it”. Johnstone’s extensive work on the so-called Pittsburghese is a clear example. In the case of British Englishes, Clark (*Indexicalization*) and Honeybone and Watson have relied on Agha’s framework to explore two modern varieties in light of their literary representations: those of the Black Country and Scouse, respectively. Historical varieties have been approached by Beal (*Enregisterment; Enregistering; Dialect*), Cooper and Ruano-García (*Enregisterment Northern; Enregisterment Lancashire*), amongst others. They have convincingly shown that dialect writing can provide insightful evidence concerning the enregisterment of regional varieties in the past. This is because literature mirrors the correlation between language, place and related sociocultural values that are circulated and transmitted over time. As such, literature relies on a relatively stable set of forms recognised as salient of the dialect, so that the users of such forms are indexed as locals to the place. To do so, literature builds upon a series of representational strategies, amongst which



conscious spelling choices to signal regional sounds clearly prevail. In this sense, Clark (*Indexicalization* 445) adds that “orthography depicts not only a representation of a sound pattern alone, but also links to a framework of social identity in much the same way”.

THE SOCIOLINGUISTICS OF SPELLING

Respellings feature amongst the most frequent representational strategies or “authenticating practices” (Bucholtz 408) that are employed in literature to highlight regional forms of speech. They have often been dismissed on account of their unreliability for historical linguistic investigation as it is clear that peculiarities of pronunciation are hard to capture and reproduce with accuracy in writing. Recently, however, respellings have been taken to act as semiotic devices that writers consciously select and that signal pronunciation habits that are understood as salient of the variety represented. Honeybone and Watson (306) hold in this regard that these conscious choices “shed light on which particular features are salient to the speakers of a given community, perhaps even to the extent that this leads to, or at least reflects, those features being “enregistered” in the dialect”. Their argument has, at least, two implications. First, that the written representation of a dialect, and orthography more broadly, is a conscious social practice. Second, that the potential audience of such texts are able to identify the sound-spelling correspondences captured by those forms, whilst they are aware of and share knowledge about the prominence of the features recreated and the meanings they evoke.

Such views fall within recent sociolinguistic approaches to orthography, which Sebba (*Spelling* 31) describes as “a social practice [...] which involves members of a community in making meaningful decisions, albeit from a constrained set of possibilities”. Sebba illustrates the social potential of orthography with a range of examples from contemporary writing practices. A case in point is the use of Spanish <k> /k/ instead of standard <c>/<qu> /k/ in forms like <anarkía> ‘anarquía’ (*anarchy*) that we can find in street graffiti and circulated in T-Shirts as a “form of symbolic resistance to mainstream Spanish culture”, Sebba (50) points out. The association of <k> with values of otherness has to do, first, with the fact that the use of <k> is very rare in Spanish, which enables that forms like <anarkía> index this specific meaning. Also, the widespread association of this alternative spelling with values of resistance linked with counterculture has to do with the contexts, activities and purposes for which it began to be employed and circulated by social groups that claim such a variant as part of their own public persona. Of course, the activation of such values largely relies on a twofold prerequisite. On the one hand, there must be awareness amongst speakers that <k> diverges from the norm. On the other, <k> must be recognised as an alternative variant for <c>/<qu> to represent /k/, as it is the case in Spanish. In other words, the scope for variation enables that a variant like <k> takes on social meaning, which is activated and propagated in different practices such as graffiti and literature (see further Sebba, *Orthography*).



Jaffe (*Transcription* 204-205) identifies several types of respelling, including:

- 1) eye dialect: spellings that signal standard sounds by means of non-standard forms; e.g. <woz> for *was*;
- 2) allegro forms: those that attempt to capture informal or connected speech, as in <snice> for *it's nice*;
- 3) prosodic spellings: forms that point to prosodic features such as lengthening; e.g. <baaad> for *bad*;
- 4) dialect or pronunciation respellings: those that attempt to capture dialectal sounds, as in <aw> for *all* (see also Androutsopoulos 520-522).

Whilst eye dialect and allegro forms are frequently employed in literary representations of speech, pronunciation respellings are most often exploited in dialect writing as a resource to signal salient features linked with values commonly recognised as distinctive of the dialect represented. Androutsopoulos (514-515) argues that this is because “the primary communicative potential of written dialect is not symbolic but indexical”, which naturally applies to the respellings chosen for the representations.

It is worth noting that some of the non-standard spellings found in dialect writing belong to a long tradition in which some of them have been conventionalised to represent the sounds that best recreate the dialect in the popular imagination. In this sense, Sánchez-García asserts that “It is the continuous and generalised use of a certain sequence which will eventually make it attain a permanent status over other occasional spellings” (270). This naturally contributes to the activation and circulation of ideas about the set of forms that are enregistered in the dialect represented, as well as of the meanings linked with such forms. Actually, it is by means of the recurrent deployment of such respellings in stylistic practice that the sounds they evoke “take on sufficient meaning to participate in processes of enregisterment” (Eckert, *Waves* 97). These meanings are dynamic from a historical point of view, reflecting the writers’ and readers’ ongoing (re)interpretations of the meanings attached to the sounds evoked by the respellings used. This is an association which, as Eckert (*Variation* 464) notes, “take[s] place in a fluid and ever-changing ideological field”. Another aspect that is worth underlining is the fact that pronunciation respellings are not deployed to the same degree in different texts. The fact that one representation is more or less dense and consistent in this respect has commonly been explained on account of the writers’ knowledge of the dialect recreated, as well as of the readers’ knowledge of the sound-spelling correspondences intended by the respellings used. While it is far too obvious that the target audience of a dialect representation underlies the sense of linguistic detail that we may find, inconsistencies in the deployment of certain forms do not seem to respond to poor knowledge of the dialect in all cases. Rather, the combination of standard and non-standard spellings to represent a given feature may also be due to the localisedness and salience of that feature, as Honeybone and Watson (312) have shown in their recent study of Scouse.



ANALYSIS

METHODOLOGY

As already noted, this paper builds upon a previous study on the enregisterment of the Lancashire dialect in LModE. My aim here is to identify and examine the respellings that are most commonly employed in representations of Late Modern Lancashire English to highlight two of the linguistic forms that are evaluated as characteristic of the dialect: *l*-vocalisation and the rounding of /a/+nasal. To do so, the analysis is based on a selection of literary representations of the dialect that are now included in the SC. They have been chosen according to the following criteria.

First, I have considered instances of dialect literature (DL) and literary dialect (LD) written between 1700 and 1900. Shorrocks explains that DL represents those texts that are written entirely in dialect and that are often produced for a native audience. By contrast, LD refers to texts that contain passages in dialect but are otherwise written in standard English. Unlike DL, LD is not necessarily targeted to an in-group audience and these representations are sometimes produced by outsiders of the dialect. The study of both types of representation has allowed me to determine whether insiders' and outsiders' recreations of Lancashire speech relied on a comparable set of linguistic forms, and if they deployed similar respellings to highlight such features. Needless to say, this has made it possible to provide some insight into contemporary perceptions about the dialect from within and beyond the speech community.

Second, the analysis looks at examples of fiction and poetic dialogue in the form of ballads, for example. Dramatic representations of the Lancashire dialect have not been considered for scrutiny, basically because the SC has very few Lancashire plays that can provide us with representative results.

Third, I have endeavoured to compile a balanced sample of material from the two centuries considered, even though this has not been totally possible. As I have explained elsewhere (see Ruano-García, "Late Modern Lancashire"), this is because there are very few surviving representations of the dialect from the eighteenth century and the first half of the 1800s. In spite of this, I have selected one text from the first and second halves of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, considering instances of DL and LD produced by different authors so as to avoid results that may represent idiosyncratic practices concerning the use of specific linguistic features and spelling forms. As displayed in Table 1, the analysis is based on a total of 9 texts that amount to c.38,000 words.

The data have been quantified so as to identify the set of salient features associated with the dialect, paying special attention to the respellings whereby these forms are represented. Honeybone and Watson (312) argue that salience "is not an 'all or nothing' matter" and, as such, "it may be too simplistic to assume that all processes have the same potential for salience" (312). The present analysis follows their methodology and treats respellings as sociolinguistic variables that are quantified to determine the relative salience of the linguistic traits they represent. Thus, I have manually annotated the examples of *l*-vocalisation and the rounding of /a/+nasal



according to whether they were spelt following standard or non-standard patterns, thus counting the number of instances of standard and Lancashire forms.

QUANTITATIVE MATERIAL		
Text type	1700-1800 N texts (N words)	1800-1900 N texts (N words)
DL	2 (15,119)	3 (11,460)
LD	2 (1,166)	2 (9,947)
Total	4 (16,285)	5 (21,407)
TOTAL	9 (37,692)	
QUALITATIVE MATERIAL		
Text type	1700-1800 N texts	1800-1900 N texts
General works	2	6
Localised works	0	5
TOTAL	13	

Table 1. Corpus material

It is worth noting that the data have been checked against non-literary evidence from the period that offers qualitative insight into the dialect in the form of metalinguistic commentary on some of the traits found. Table 1 shows that the qualitative data comprises thirteen texts that contain either direct discussion about the dialect and its defining peculiarities (e.g. “short o [developed] into oo”), and/or general discussion about the dialect with commentary on its attributed values (e.g. “unintelligible”, “exceedingly puzzling”). The qualitative material includes thus general works that address Lancashire speech (e.g. Axon) as well as localised glossaries from different parts of the county that contain remarks on the pronunciation and spelling of Lancashire items (e.g. Bamford, Taylor) (see Ruano-García *Enregisterment Lancashire* for details about these thirteen works).

ENREGISTERED LANCASHIRE FEATURES

I have shown elsewhere that the set of enregistered features documented in LModE representations of Lancashire speech comprise a number of traits that are consistently documented in cases of DL and LD. Table 2 shows that they include features like Definite Article Reduction, *r*-levelling in the past forms of *to be*, contractions, the [U]-type realisations of the GOAT diphthong in cases like *booth* ‘both’ and *goo* ‘go’, as well as the retention of verbal *-n* with subject plurals (e.g. *they come’n* ‘they come’).

It is worth highlighting that many of these features have been noted as distinctive characteristics of the traditional dialect. Beal (“Phonology” 122) brings to our attention that “Accounts of the traditional dialects of Yorkshire and Lancashire (Wright 1892; Ellis 1869-1889) suggest that the typical pattern in these areas was one in which *were* occurred with all subjects, singular and plural” (see further Ruano-García et al.). Of interest is also the MOUTH diphthong which ranks second on the list of frequent traits documented in the corpus. It was described in the nineteenth century as “the South Lancashire shibboleth” that was “usually written *heawse*, *eawt*” (Picton



32), and remains a salient feature of a nevertheless more restricted area including Wigan and Greater Manchester.

FEATURES	1700-1800		1800-1900		TOTAL	
	tokens	NF	tokens	NF	tokens	NF
DAR (<i>t'mon</i> 'the man', <i>th felley</i> 'the fellow')	249	15.29	560	26.15	809	21.46
MOUTH (<i>abeaut</i> 'about', <i>teaw</i> 'thou')	411	25.23	347	16.2	758	20.11
past BE (<i>l wur</i> 'I was')	178	10.93	280	13.07	458	12.15
<i>ot/ut</i> 'that'	290	17.80	127	5.93	417	11.06
<i>l</i> -vocalisation (<i>aw</i> 'all', <i>towd</i> 'told')	189	11.6	185	8.64	374	9.92
clitics (<i>shanna</i> 'shall not', <i>whimmeh</i> 'with me')	259	15.90	95	4.43	354	9.39
<i>/a/</i> + nasal (<i>bond</i> 'band', <i>mon</i> 'man')	163	10.01	157	7.33	320	8.48
PRICE (<i>neet</i> 'night', <i>loik</i> 'like')	49	3	150	7	199	5.27
preterites (<i>coom</i> 'came', <i>catched</i> 'caught')	57	3.5	129	6.02	186	4.93
2nd p subject <i>thou</i>	65	3.99	104	4.85	169	4.48
GOAT (<i>gooh</i> , <i>goo</i> 'go')	50	3.07	107	4.99	157	4.16
lengthening of ME /e/ (<i>geet</i> 'get')	73	4.48	46	2.14	119	3.15
ME /a:/ (<i>tak</i> 'take')	28	1.71	68	3.17	96	2.54
verbal -n (<i>come'n</i> 'come')	40	2.45	21	0.98	61	1.62

Table 2. Enregistered Lancashire features: raw data and NF / 1,000 (see further Ruano-García *Enregisterment Lancashire*)

As with the MOUTH diphthong, there is qualitative evidence from LModE that bears witness to the salience of these forms. They are evaluated as “peculiarities” or “leading characteristics” of the dialect at least in four of the works examined. *l*-vocalisation, the rounding of */a/+nasal* and contractions are amongst the forms that were most frequently evaluated as distinctive of the dialect during this time (see Ruano-García *Enregisterment Lancashire*). By way of illustration, Axon referred to contractions as one of the “grammatical peculiarities of the dialect” (68), highlighting that examples like *luthee preo* ‘look thee, pray you’ and *mitch goodeeto* ‘much good may it do you’ “render[ed] some sentences unintelligible to a “foreigner”.” (69). Indeed, Picton emphasised that the Lancashire “‘shorthand’ of speech” (26) accounted for the outsiders’ derogatory views about the dialect, which they perceived as “coarse, vulgar, and debased”, as it produced in them “only aversion and disgust” (28). In a similar vein, contemporary writer Thomas Heywood and Lancashire glossarist George Milner remarked on the distinctiveness of *l*-vocalisation and the rounding of */a/+nasal* as well as on their associated values, as I explain in the following section.

THE REPRESENTATION OF L-VOCALISATION AND /A/+NASAL

Table 2 shows that these traits are two of the most frequently occurring forms in the representations of the Lancashire dialect in 1700-1900. The data suggest that variation concerning their total frequencies over the period are not especially pronounced. As we can see in Figure 1, there is some relative stability in both cases, which would go some way to indicating that they were seen as characteristically Lancastrian by local and external audiences alike. The differences detected, however, could be taken to



imply that both /l-vocalisation and the rounding of /a/+nasal would appear to have shifted into forms that were perceived as less salient in the course of the nineteenth century.

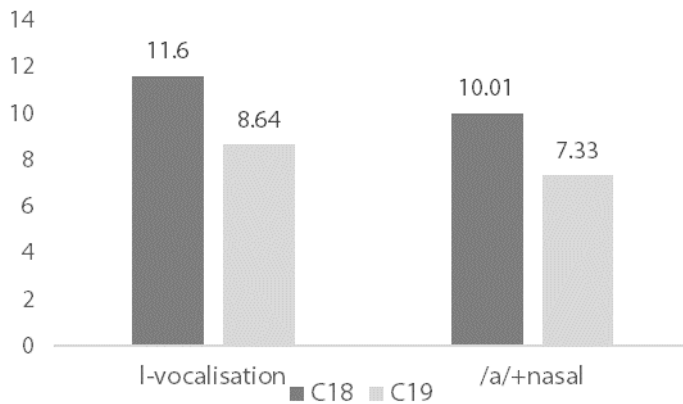


Fig. 1. Variation of /l-vocalisation and /a/+nasal over the period (NF/1,000)

A closer scrutiny of the distribution of these forms across time and type of representation reveals that these shifts seem to respond to questions relating to the audience addressed and thus to changing ideas and perceptions about the dialect itself. Figure 2 shows, on the one hand, that the frequency of /l-vocalisation in cases of DL and LD is quite stable over the period, suggesting that it remained a relatively salient feature to both insiders and outsiders. On the other hand, the data indicate that whilst local audiences perceived /a/+nasal as a fairly distinctive characteristic of the dialect over LModE, external audiences of the nineteenth century would not have associated it so strongly with Lancashire as in the 1700s.

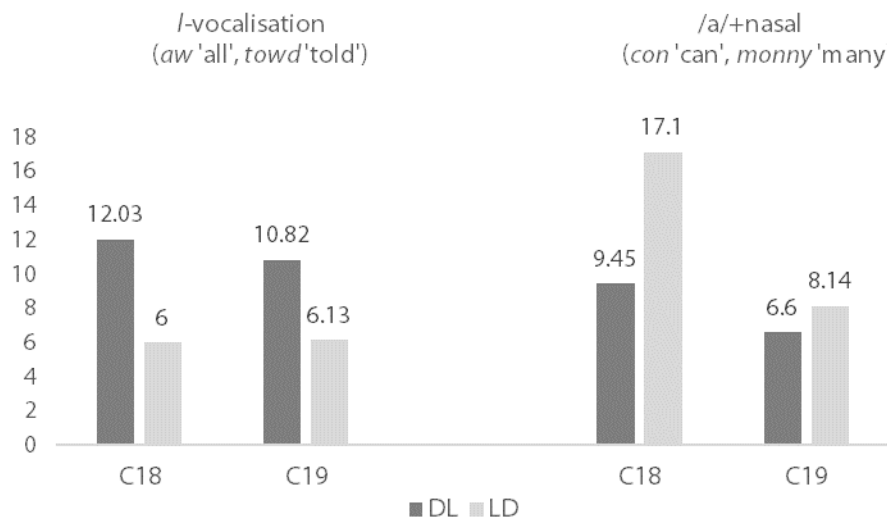


Fig. 2. /l-vocalisation and /a/+nasal across time and type of representation (NF/1,000)



The available qualitative commentary on the dialect gives some insight into contemporary perceptions of these two features. Milner (32), for example, refers to *l*-vocalisation, noting that “in place of “au” in “fall” and “all,” we get the broad and open “o,” as in “fo” and “o’;”, a sound which, Heywood (28) specifies, was “both archaic and not partially colloquial”. The old pedigree of the dialect was likewise highlighted concerning forms like *mon* ‘man’ and *lond* ‘land’ that, Heywood (25) explains, were “firmly retained amongst us”, pointing out that the rounding of /a/ “although a common archaism it is in the present day one of the distinctive characteristics of the dialect”. The archaic nature of the rounded vowel was indeed understood by Gaskell (12) as “nothing more than Anglo-Saxon. Thus, for man we have mon; hand, hond; many, mony; [...] can, con”. Most of the qualitative sources scrutinised qualify this feature as a distinctive peculiarity of the dialect, which we can regularly find in contemporary glossaries. Nodal and Milner gloss *bonk* as the Lancashire pronunciation of ‘bank’, whereas Peacock does so for the variant *con* ‘can’ which he finds in Lonsdale (North Lancashire), testifying to the fact that forms showing the rounding of /a/ were seen as distinctive enough to deserve an entry in such localised compilations. As the examples show, this feature was regularly represented by <o>, in the same way that forms showing the vocalisation of /l/ were often respelt with <w>. In this regard, Cunliffe’s notes on the dialect of Rochdale-with-Rossendale inform that “It has been the practice to spell the local form of “old,” and certain other words having a similar ending, with a w. Thus “bold” becomes bowd, “cold,” cowd, “fold,” fowd” (vi). The corpus shows that both spelling patterns (<o> instead of <a> and <w> instead of <l>) were commonly employed in the representation of these two enregistered features.

Figure 3 shows that there are noticeable differences concerning the extent to which these traits were respelt in the corpus. Whilst *l*-vocalisation was spelt according to standard patterns 13.6% of all possible cases (59/433), the rounding of /a/+nasal was spelt standardly 39% of the time it is represented (205/525). The obvious implication is that *l*-vocalisation evoked a stronger meaning to local and external audiences, who may have understood it as a salient characteristic of the dialect, unlike the rounded vowel, which despite being respelt on a quite frequent basis in the corpus, is represented non-standardly in a comparatively smaller number of cases: 60.9% (320/525) vs 86.4% (374/433). Even though these percentages reflect overall patterns during LModE, a closer inspection of the spelling practices employed to signal these features across time and type of representation may provide some tantalising information about their degree of salience and how they were perceived by contemporary in-group and out-group speakers.

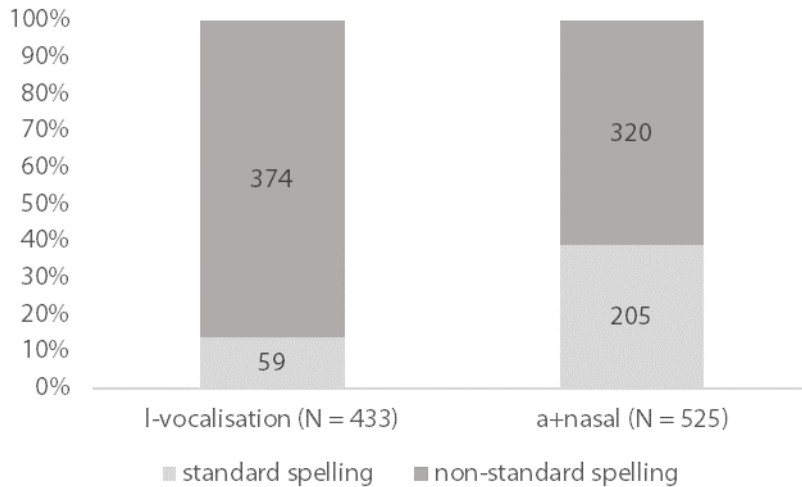


Fig. 3. (Non-)standard spellings for *l*-vocalisation and /a/+nasal: raw data

L-VOCALISATION

Concerning forms showing *l*-vocalisation, we have seen that they were reported to have been pronounced with “the broad and open ‘o,’” (Milner 32). Wright’s *English Dialect Grammar (EDG)* (10; §40) records [Q]-type pronunciations for words such as *all*, *fall* and *call* (< ME /a+l/). More specifically, the long open monophthong “[ō]” is documented for *all* in the county, with variants such as “[o]” being recorded in north-western and central Lancashire, and “[ō]” elsewhere in southern districts. Ellis (340) records “oo” for *all* in Blackburn and Hoddlesden, central Lancashire. Both works further inform that the rounded pronunciation of ME /a+l/ is attested in other northern and Midland dialects, including Yorkshire, Westmoreland and Cheshire. Similarly, an [Q]-type diphthong is recorded by *EDG* (105, 132) for items such as *cold* and *hold* (< ME /a:+ld/), which, according to Cunliffe, were regularly represented as <ow>. By way of illustration, “[koud]” was attested in northern, central and southern Lancashire where “[kQud]” was likewise found. The evidence from contemporary surveys shows again that such diphthongal realisations were also characteristic of some neighbouring dialects such as Yorkshire and Cheshire. Cooper, for example, finds evidence for this feature in literary representations of the Yorkshire dialect where *old* is represented as <owd>. This is in fact, he explains, “the most frequent construction employed in the commentary material” (112), which we have likewise documented for Lancashire.

Table 3 displays the respellings found in the corpus to represent this feature.

RESPELLING	1700-1800		1800-1900		Total
	DL	LD	DL	LD	
<ow>/<ou>	139	5	108	38	290
<aw>/<au>	48	1	7	23	79
<oe>/<o'e>	0	0	5	0	5

Table 3. Pronunciation respellings for *l*-vocalisation (N=374)



Instances of <ow>/<ou> clearly predominate in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, both in DL and LD. These forms are regularly employed to represent words that are otherwise spelt in standard English, such as *old* and *told* that we find as <oud> and <towd>. In a similar vein, the pattern <aw>/<au> appears as the Lancashire choice for words spelt <al> in standard English: examples are <cauf> for *calf* in the anonymous *A Lancashire Tale* and <tawkin> for *talking* in Ainsworth's *Lancashire Witches*. It is worth noting that the corpus shows some preference for respellings containing <w>, so that <tawk> and <owd> are more common than <tauk> and <oud>. The form <oe> is an isolated pattern attested in Brierley's *Ab-o'th-yate at the Isle of Man*, which is only used to represent the verb *to call*; e.g. <coed> *called*.¹ <aw>/<au> is here regularly employed to respell words like *half* (e.g. <hawve>, <hauve>), while <ow> is found in cases like <howd>.

The distribution of (non-)standard spellings across LModE in DL and LD suggests that *l*-vocalisation remained a highly salient feature for local audiences. Figure 4 shows that non-standard spellings were employed 100% of the time in the eighteenth-century material, whilst they were found 88.5% (123/139) of all possible cases in the nineteenth-century DL texts. In a similar vein, non-native audiences of the eighteenth century seem to have easily identified this pronunciation feature as a characteristic of the Lancashire repertoire, as it is also represented non-standardly 100% of the time. This should, however, be taken with a pinch of salt, as the corpus contains just seven examples. Figure 4 displays that there is an important decrease in the LD data as regards the use of respellings during the 1800s: the non-standard representations amount to comparatively just 59% (62/105). The fact that, as we have seen, *l*-vocalisation was qualified by some in the second half of the nineteenth century as “both archaic and not partially colloquial” (Heywood 28) could account for the decline concerning the non-standard representation of this feature, which may not have been seen as a living characteristic of the dialect from outside the county. This had apparently not been the case earlier in time. Instances of *l*-vocalisation are actually documented as early as 1634 when the dialect was dramatised and recreated by non-native Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome in their celebrated *The Late Lancashire Witches*. Here, we can find forms such as <awd> and <owd> for *old*. Similarly, Thomas Shadwell's comedy *The Lancashire Witches* of 1681 has <cawd> for *called* and <haud>/<hawd> for *hold*.

¹ Interestingly, Clark (“West Midlands” 160) explains that “There is written evidence for medial preconsonantal L-vocalisation or loss” in Birmingham/Black Country, which she illustrates with examples containing a similar pattern: <fode> *fold*, <ode> *old*.

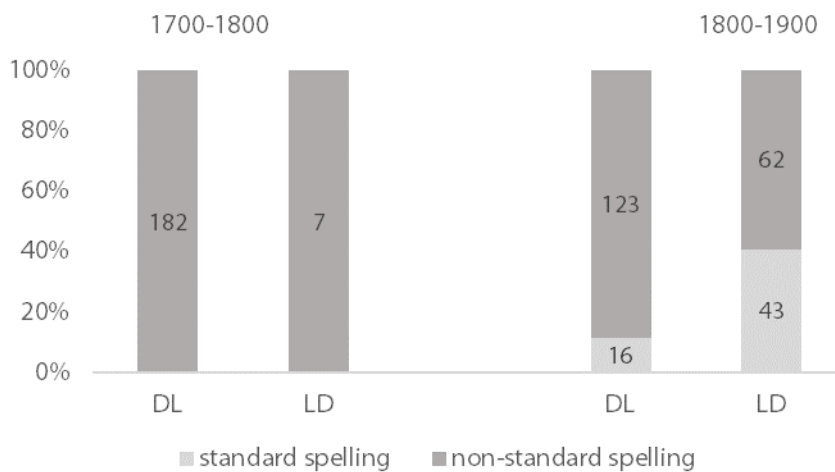


Fig. 4. (Non-)standard spellings across time and type of representation: /l-vocalisation

/A/ + NASAL

As regards the rounding of /a/ + nasal, the available commentary material from LModE, as we have seen, remarks on its distinctiveness as a Lancashire form that was perceived as old as Old English. Trudgill lists this feature amongst the set of pronunciation forms of traditional dialects. He explains that it is a “dialect difference of great antiquity” (23) that “has persisted for perhaps twelve centuries or so and still distinguishes between dialects in the west, from Lancashire to Herefordshire, with ‘o’, and dialects to the east, with ‘a.’” (23). This is also noted by Wakelin (96), who localises the rounded vowel to “a west-Midland area [that] has [Q] instead of [a] in words in which ME o/a occurred before a final nasal”. The *Survey of English Dialects* likewise finds it in an area comprising the South of Lancashire and most of the West Midlands (see Upton and Widdowson Map 2). Earlier in time, the *EDG* (141; §30) records “[mon]” for *man* in Lancashire and other adjacent West Midland dialects such as Cheshire, whilst the pronunciation “[kon]” is given for *can* in southern Lancashire and some areas of Cheshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire (99; §30). It is worth noting that in both cases the *EDG* finds [a]-type pronunciations — “[kan]”, “[man]” — in the northern districts of Lancashire. Ellis (342) records “onz” for *hands* in Ormskirk, South Lancashire. Similarly, a rounded vowel [o] is attested in South Cheshire for *stand* (422), whilst “sOnd” is reported as the pronunciation of *sand* in Derbyshire (442).

As expected, the Lancashire choice to represent this feature is <o>, which is consistently employed over the period in cases of LD and DL. Figure 5 charts its distribution across time and text type, showing shifting preferences for the use of (non-)standard patterns during LModE. The data indicate that standard forms are increasingly employed, both in texts written for local and external audiences. Their use was doubled by the nineteenth century in DL, with 14.8% (25/168) of all possible cases in the 1700s and 31.5% (35/111) in the 1800s. In a similar vein, the percentage of standard spellings found in the eighteenth-century LD data (23%; 6/26) increased



considerably during the 1800s when they were chosen 63.2% (139/220) of the time this feature was represented. Despite this gradual preference for standard forms, which would suggest that the rounded vowel was not so strongly associated with the dialect during the course of the period, the data show that this feature still remained a landmark of Lancashire English for insiders in the nineteenth century. In fact, respellings are found 68.5% (76/111) of all possible representations, which is a significant number.

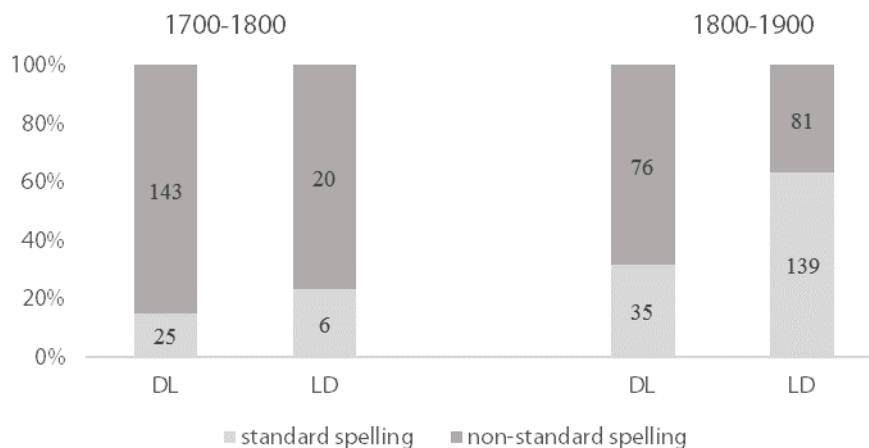


Fig. 5. (Non-)standard spellings across time and type of representation: /a/+nasal

FINAL REMARKS

Taken together, quantification of the (non-)standard spellings used to highlight these two Lancashire features points that *l*-vocalisation was comparatively more prominent than rounded /a/ in LModE, or, at least, that *l*-vocalisation was perceived as a more localised and therefore authentic characteristic of the dialect. Honeybone and Watson (324, 333) have shown that the extent to which a dialect feature is localised is linked with its potential for salience, which, as a result, has an immediate influence on the degree with which that feature is respelt in literary recreations of a dialect. They talk about the 'localisedness criterion' according to which one should expect that the more localised a feature is, the more frequently it is spelt according to non-standard patterns in those recreations. As we have seen, neither of the two traits analysed here was localised to Lancashire alone, both of them having been reported as characteristic of neighbouring northern and West Midland dialects as well. However, the fact that the rounding of /a/+nasal was apparently more widespread across an area that comprises most of the West Midlands could account for the larger number of standard spellings found in the Lancashire data, also possibly suggesting growing awareness that the rounded vowel was "a common archaism", as Heywood (25) pointed out.



CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the use of non-standard spellings in LModE representations of the Lancashire dialect to highlight two of the pronunciation features that seem to have been enregistered as distinctive of Lancashire speech: /-vocalisation and the rounding of /a/+nasal. The analysis has been placed within the framework of enregisterment and recent sociolinguistic approaches to orthography with a twofold purpose. First, I have endeavoured to show that respellings can be taken as instances of flotsam in that they are the result of conscious selection based on conventions and shared ideas about what the Lancashire dialect was like. In this sense, such spelling choices have immediate implications for their use in conscious practices like literary representations of non-standard speech, as they play a crucial role in highlighting divergences from the norm and enregistering linguistic differences. Second, the analysis has considered these alternative spelling forms as valuable resources to gain insight into both contemporary perceptions about the dialect from within and beyond the county, as well as into the degree to which these features were localised and thus understood as authentically Lancastrian at the time. Drawing on Horobin and Watson's methodological framework, our approach has proved valid insofar as the treatment of respellings as sociolinguistic variables can cast interesting light on the writers' evaluation of 'other' linguistic features and their social meaning, one which does not see alternative spellings as worthless because their use in LModE representations of dialect is often inscribed within larger performances of identity.

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Appendix: Corpus

DL

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