English Language and Linguistics, 27.2: 373–436. © The Author(s), 2023. Published by Cambridge University Press

REVIEWS

doi:10.1017/S1360674321000289

Patrick Honeybone and Warren Maguire (eds.), *Dialect writing and the North of England*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020. Pp. xii + 356. ISBN 9781474442565.

Reviewed by Katie Wales, University of Nottingham

This is a comprehensive collection of thirteen up-to-date analyses of dialect writing from the North of England from the eighteenth century to the present day, showing a wide variety of methodologies and text types, including letters or 'ego-documents', poetry, novels, cartoons and social media tweets. Each chapter seriously and methodically considers its place in the definitions of 'North' and 'dialect writing' before considering particular case studies. All the contributors show detailed knowledge of the linguistic structures of the dialects being represented, and consider the ever thorny issue of the extent to which representations constitute linguistic 'evidence' of the variety under discussion. In the process of their discussions they also engage with questions about audiences, attitudes and particularly the concepts of *enregisterment* and *indexicality*.

The editors, Patrick Honeybone and Warren Maguire, confirm in their Introduction, subtitled 'What is dialect writing? Where is the North of England?', that what counts as the 'North' of England linguistically for this book is very broad indeed. Essentially, it is those areas lying north of the STRUT and BATH vowel 'transition zones' (figure 1.2, p. 16). East Anglia is not included, but most of the Midlands is. Accordingly, there are chapters on the Black Country (chapter 2, 'Black Country dialect literature and what it can tell us about Black Country dialect', by Esther Asprey); Nottingham (chapter 4, 'Nottingham: City of Literature. Dialect literature and literary dialect', by Natalie Braber); and Staffordshire (chapter 5, 'Enregistering dialect representation in Staffordshire Potteries' cartoons', by Urszula Clarke). It is to be hoped that this volume encourages linguists to devote a comparable book-length collection of essays on dialect writings in the Midlands in their own right.

Certainly the North of England is a rich source of materials, both literary and non-literary, and its many varieties have attracted considerable attention from the nineteenth century onwards from scholars and the wider public. The editors point out (p. 2) that not only is there a lot of dialect writing about, but also that it is still being produced in a wide variety of formats. 'Dialect writing', in this volume, includes both 'literary dialect' and 'dialect literature'. There is particular focus on twentieth-century Liverpool English, with contributions from Tony Crowley (chapter 7, 'Representing the language of Liverpool; or, the (im)possibility of dialect writing'), Patrick Honeybone (chapter 10, 'Which phonological features get represented in dialect

writing? Answers and questions from three types of Liverpool English texts') and Kevin Watson and Marie Møller Jensen (chapter 14, 'Automatic analysis of dialect literature: Advantages and challenges'); on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Tyneside dialect (chapter 3, 'Dialect and the construction of identity in the ego-documents of Thomas Bewick', by Joan Beal; chapter 8, 'Metaphor and indexicality in *The Pitman's Pay*: The ambivalence of dialect', by Rod Hermeston; and chapter 11, by Warren Maguire, 'Phonological analysis of early nineteenth century Tyneside dialect literature: Thomas Wilson's *The Pitman's Pay*'); and nineteenth-century Yorkshire dialects (chapter 6, 'Russian dolls and dialect literature: The enregisterment of nineteenth century 'Yorkshire' dialects', by Paul Cooper, and chapter 9 '"Did she say dinner, Betsey, at this taam o'day?": Representing Yorkshire voices and characters in novels 1800–1836', by Jane Hodson). The Northwest of England is represented only by Bolton (chapter 13, 'The Bolton/Worktown Corpus: A case of accidental dialectology?', by Ivor Timmis).

I hope I have indicated in my opening a sense of the professionalism of all the contributions. I say this, because I wish to focus on just a few of the chapters for points of special interest or further debate. So in chapter 5, in discussing dialect representation in Staffordshire potteries' cartoons from the 1970s to the new millennium, Clarke adds to her use of enregisterment the Bakhtinian concepts of double-voicing, burlesque and carnivalesque, and Kenneth Burke's concept of frames of acceptance and rejection. This provides a refreshing and insightful perspective on a particular kind of dialect writing rooted firmly in social types in the local community. As she rightly points out (p. 105), representation of dialect can be said to be 'metaphoric' in that it is a linguistic evocation of localness. Further, many readers will read in stigma, regardless of writers' conscious or unconscious motivations or intentions (p. 105). She argues (pp. 110–14) that the cartoons subvert dominant ideologies through humour and dialect. Poignantly, these particular cartoons seem to her to frame the experience of working-class life as one of acceptance: reminiscent of the 'world' of *Andy Capp* perhaps?

The work of Mikhail Bakhtin is also invoked as one of the frameworks used by Hermeston (chapter 8), in an interesting and novel discussion of the metaphors in Thomas Wilson's Tyneside poem (1826–30) *The Pitman's Pay*, also the subject of Warren Maguire's chapter (chapter 11); he considers Wilson to be one of the most important writers of Tyneside dialect. For Hermeston, in a kind of Bakhtinian 'dialogism', the voices in the poem are blended to become part of the social meanings indexed within the message; and also the dialect is in dialogue with ideas of a 'standard' language (pp. 173–4). He shows that choices of metaphor in the poem are clearly related to the local and labouring-class experience, but also show a high degree of creativity, especially the extended metaphors. Inevitably, he concludes, however, despite depicting a thriving culture, of value to local readers, horizons are limited. There was during this period a 'hierarchy of value' (p. 185) within which the local dialect took a subordinate place to the emerging standard.

Some chapters, despite their detail, left me wanting yet more information. For example, Crowley (chapter 7) traces the written representations of Liverpool speech from their first appearance in the mid to late nineteenth century through to the present. The influence of

the 'Mersey Sound' on what came to be known as 'Scouse' from 1950 onwards is only briefly mentioned in a parenthesis (p. 161). If Irish English, contrary to popular opinion, is not the biggest influence on Liverpool English, but American English is (p. 150), why is this so? Why is the *dodger*, a glass of beer, known locally as a *Peter Hudson*? (p. 151). Informative and entertaining are the many contemporary comments on the distinctive prosodic and qualitative features of the dialect (pp. 152, 158), such as J. B. Priestley's (1934) 'thick, adenoidy, cold-in-the head accent'. It is a frustrating paradox, implicit elsewhere in the book, that such features which mark many varieties so prominently are not adequately represented in spelling practices, if at all. This makes it difficult for dialectologists to trace their emergence, or their disappearance, so any ancillary comments must be helpful. Watson and Jensen in their chapter on the automatic analysis of Liverpool English (chapter 14) note that plosive lenition is the variety's most regionally restricted feature (p. 321) but make no further comment on its written representation. Maguire (chapter 11) laments the fact that the 'Northumbrian Burr' is not represented in Thomas Wilson's poem (pp. 261–2). Andrea Nini, George Bailey, Diansheng Guo and Jack Grieve, in their chapter on graphical representations in the tweets of social media (chapter 12, 'The graphical representation of phonological dialect features of the North of England on social media'), note that Northern features such as 'dark' /l/ and post-nasal [g]-presence are also not usually represented in writing. However, the fact that they have 'low social profiles' (p. 271) may not really be a key factor here.

On the face of it, this chapter by Nini *et al.* brings 'dialect writing' right up-to-date with its focus on a corpus of 183 million geocoded tweets, or 1.8 billion words: tweets are characteristically and usefully informal and orthographically creative. Currently Twitter users, as they say, tend to be younger males (p. 268), which might reveal useful trends. One problem, however, might be that, although the location of the messages sent can be verified, it is impossible to know the linguistic identity of the Tweeters, that is, whether or not they are really from the area. As the authors say themselves, a form like *Manchesteh* 'can be used by all speakers, regardless of dialect, in order to imitate a Mancunian accent' (p. 278). What comes across from the data very strongly is indeed a highly conscious portrayal of Northern identities (p. 280) which could be quotative. Many of the examples occur in highly frequent collocations, or a restricted set of lexical items or stereotypes. Phrases like *a lorra lorra laughs* evoke the 1960s Liverpool of Cilla Black; *doon toon* and *broon ale* are well known Geordie-isms. Northerners and Southerners alike are just as familiar with phrases like *daan saaf* and a *cappa tea*.

Ours is an age of an increased popular awareness of regional differences in speech, at least the most salient ones, and their strong association with local identity; and also, as several of the other chapters in this volume reveal, an age of increased commodification of these, whether in pseudo-phrase books, or printed on tea-towels or mugs. As Asprey notes, however, with reference to the Black Country dialect, commodification does tend to make use of 'moribund or declining forms' (p. 33): in the nostalgic promotion of heritage, perhaps? Post-Covid comes another reason, the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1360674321000289 Published online by Cambridge University Press

promotion of domestic tourism to help the local economy. In the summer of 2021 Middlesbrough council was busy promoting the town with banners proclaiming 'We are mint' ('fabulous') and 'We are, like' with a Teesside utterance-final tag. The editors in their Introduction claim to be interested in the 'cultural positioning' of dialect writing, and this is a fruitful line of enquiry in future research.

Reviewer's address:
School of English
University of Nottingham
University Park
Nottingham NG7 1RD
United Kingdom
katie.wales@nottingham.ac.uk

(Received 26 June 2021)

doi:10.1017/S1360674322000314

Nikolay Slavkov, **Sílvia Melo-Pfeifer and Nadja Kerschhofer-Puhalo (eds.),** *The changing face of the 'native speaker': Perspectives from multilingualism and globalization* (Trends in Applied Linguistics 31). Boston and Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2021. Pp. iv + 355. ISBN 9781501517693.

Reviewed by Marco Santello, University of Leeds

Scholars have repeatedly pointed out that certain speakers experience marginality in their 'perpetual falling short of the imagined ideal of "perfect" homogeneous English' (Piller 2016: 203) and that among multilinguals the search for native-like fluency keeps being elusive (Romaine 2019: 267). As a matter of fact, the concept of native speaker has been so widely contested in applied linguistics that bringing up the issues around it has become an easy social gel among researchers. Yet there is still a lot to say about this contentious term particularly when considering that not only many societies but also a number of linguistic subfields are partly blind to these issues. This edited volume puts together studies that collectively question the usefulness of the concept of native speaker for the understanding of the complexity of our multilingual world and warn against its potential domineering force. It also offers a variety of perspectives that depict the notion as changing, some of which are in fact not questioning it entirely. The book, therefore, while aiming at debunking nativist approaches to multilingual repertoires, is an agora where many voices can be heard, thereby giving a broader and more detailed treatment of the dangers of nativespeakerism and its correlates. Reading this volume can raise awareness of these dangers also (and perhaps especially) when