

Chapter 10

Which phonological features get represented in dialect writing? Answers and questions from three types of Liverpool English texts.

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10.1 Introduction

One of the (many) reasons why linguists are interested in dialect writing is because it might offer an insight into which phonological dialect features are salient to speakers of specific dialects – this can then connect to the complex and little-considered (but quite fundamental) question of what we might mean by ‘dialect feature’ in the first place: what limits are there on what can count as a dialect feature? how psychologically real are dialect features? are the dialect features that linguists discuss the same things (or, even, *the same kind of things*) that speakers might discuss? Engaging with these kinds of questions connects to some of the ideas that are studied in perceptual dialectology (which might allow us to understand which dialects are recognised by speakers as relevant to themselves) and also to our understanding of linguistic change: we might expect certain types of change only in features which are salient (and others in features which are not). Understanding this aspect of dialect writing thus can in principle offer us much, but also requires much of us. One of the things that it requires is a deep understanding of the kinds of ‘respellings’ that are typically used in dialect writing to represent phonological dialect features: which respellings actually represent dialect features? how often are they used in texts? why are some respellings used which *don’t* represent dialect features?

One chapter like this cannot hope to answer all these questions, or even to engage with all of these issues, but I list them here because they all shape the lens through which I investigate dialect writing in this chapter, and some of what I consider addresses some of them directly.¹ It strikes me that many of these points are quite poorly understood. The specific question of this chapter’s title (which connects to many of the broader issues just mentioned) is: which dialect features get represented in dialect writing? If we can understand this, we can hope to move towards answering some of the other questions just mentioned. I pursue it at the phonological level. Some of the issues that crop up here no doubt also affect the representation of dialect features at other linguistic levels (lexis, morphology, syntax, pragmatics, etc), but there are also doubtless level-specific issues which are not relevant to the interaction of dialect writing and phonology. I do not engage with them here. We will have enough to deal with even if we focus only on phonology. A substantial separate (but related) goal of this chapter is to work towards an understanding of the whole notion of ‘respelling’ in dialect writing. We will see that both phonological and non-phonological (and dialectological and non-dialectological) issues constrain and motivate the use of respelling. All of this adds up to make dialect writing an immensely complex and multifaceted phenomenon.

I focus on dialect writing that has been produced to represent one variety of English. The variety in question ranks high in terms of its dialectal salience in Britain, and is notable because it has a number of phonological dialect features which set it apart from many other varieties, including those which are spoken in the same area of the country (I discuss both of these points briefly below). The variety in question is Liverpool English (LE). I have worked to describe aspects of the phonology of LE for around 20 years, and the knowledge of the variety that I have developed over this period will prove to be important below. It can be crucial that a reader knows a variety well in order to fully understand the spellings that might be used to represent it.

In section 10.2 of this chapter, I consider some basics of dialect writing (of the types that I investigate), and then focus on some of the general constraints that affect its ability to reflect the phonology of non-standard varieties – this discussion is intended to be one of the main contributions of this chapter, as such issues are rarely discussed in detail and are in part quite poorly understood. Section 10.3 introduces the kinds of dialect writing that exists in Liverpool English, and section 10.4 then considers how respelling is used and which phonological features are represented in a corpus of LE dialect writing texts. I take an inductive, systematic and quantitative approach, noting each occasion of a respelled word in three texts, and allocating them to distinct dialect features (or to eye dialect) as appropriate, thus generating a set of dialect features which are represented in the texts (and which are thus at least some of those that can be represented in dialect writing for Liverpool English). This is discussed in the light of some of the issues raised in section 10.2, and is intended as the other main contribution of this chapter. Section 10.5 concludes, although I should admit from the outset that this chapter is only a small step on the way to understanding the issues that it engages with (both in general terms, as part of ‘dialect writing studies’, and specifically in terms of understanding LE dialect writing), and part of its intention is to simply to set out the issues clearly, and to show what else we need to understand.

10.2 Dialect writing

The broad spectrum of dialect writing (as discussed in Honeybone and Maguire, this volume) includes a vast variety of types of texts, from ephemeral electronic ego-documents (as discussed in Nini et al, this volume) to locally-published comic material (as discussed in Clark, this volume) to ‘serious’ novels (as discussed in Hodson, this volume). I focus on three types of texts here, all of which aim to represent Liverpool English in at least part of their text. As further discussed in Honeybone and Maguire (this volume), and as is well recognised (in part following Shorrocks 1996), dialect writing can vary in its intentions along a number of axes, including: the proportion of a text which aims to represent dialect (is it the whole text, or only parts of direct speech, or some other specific parts of the text?); the audience (is the text intended for a general audience of anyone who can read English, or is it intended primarily for readers who speak the dialect represented?); and the seriousness of the attempt to represent the dialect (is the author really attempting to represent the precise dialect features associated with the variety, or doesn’t it really matter to the author, as long as the relevant part of the text is seen to be ‘non-standard?’). The main texts that I consider in this chapter

vary somewhat along these axes, as I discuss when I describe them in section 10.3, although all of them, I argue, make a serious (and to a non-negligible degree successful) attempt to represent LE. They are all written by people who have a considerable knowledge of LE (which is, of course, not always the case in dialect writing).

10.2.1 Respellings and representing phonology in dialect writing

The key tool that authors use to represent phonological dialect features is to 'respell' words, whereby words are consciously spelt in a way that is different to their standard spelling – indeed, the use of respelling is one of the most obvious signs that a text is intended to be dialect writing. In part, however, the respelling involved in dialect writing may simply be used to indicate that the text is intended to represent a non-standard variety and may not be intended to represent a dialect feature – this is entirely rational and works straightforwardly: it involves the use of non-standard spelling to represent non-standard dialect. Such respellings may simply be alternative representations of the phonology of a word which does not diverge from the phonology of a reference variety. This can be very productive in English as many words have the same underlying representation in many dialects (or at least involve phonological units which correspond in a one-to-one relationship across dialects), and English orthography involves many graphemes, so that most phonological segments can be written in several ways. Such spellings are often called 'eye dialect', a term that I adopt here. For example, the word *people* (which arguably has the underlying form /pipl/ in most dialects, with the final consonant realised as syllabic) could just as well be spelt *peepul*, as <ee> is a common representation of the tense vowel, and represent the syllabic /l/ well. Equally, *cow* could be *respelled* as *kow*, which simply makes use of the fact that both <c> and <k> can spell /k/ in English when they occur initially before a back vowel. The spelling out of General English 'weak forms' is also typically seen as eye dialect, as it would also work just as well for Standard English as for a particular non-standard dialect. Thus *was*, which is commonly realised as [wəz] in English, could be spelt as *wuz*, which removes the ambiguity of the spelling of the final fricative and uses <u> to spell schwa (as in *focus*, *rectum*, *syruip*). The use of eye dialect in dialect writing is sometimes disparaged (as in, for example, Preston 1982, 1985). While important points are made in such work (about the representation of non-standard language by non-speakers of the dialect concerned), I argue below that there can also reasons to view the use of eye dialect in positive ways.

Most dialect writing does not simply rely on eye dialect to mark a text as non-standard, however. The point of interest in this chapter is that many respellings in such texts are intended to represent phonological dialect features. This point is at the same time very obvious and also very poorly understood. There is a fair amount of previous work on the interpretation of what authors are doing when they use respellings to represent dialect phonology in dialect writing, and certain principles are well established, but there is very little work which really goes into the phenomenon in detail, either to understand the processes involved or to consider precisely what specific writers (or sets of writers) have done in representing specific varieties. For example, Beal (2000) aims to document that

certain recognised dialect features are represented in certain specific texts, and Honeybone and Watson (2013) focus on a small set of predetermined features to determine how robustly they are represented in texts. Such work typically restricts the number of dialect features that are considered while investigating a text (which is a perfectly sensible thing to do in order to be able to investigate the representation of those specific features). In this chapter, I aim to do the opposite. As I explain in section 10.4, I aim to consider all of the types of respellings that are used in a number of texts, in order to (begin to) investigate which (types of) dialect features get represented at all in dialect writing.

Given that I am aiming to understand how the dialect features in speakers' phonologies can be represented in dialect writing, it will be important to be clear about some fundamental issues that affect the basic processes involved. I consider them in the remainder of this section. I am not aware of much previous detailed work on these issues, and some of the points discussed here begin from a quite basic level.

Firstly, what *are* dialect features? As I understand it, a 'dialect feature' is a specific structural characteristic of language where a particular non-standard dialect differs from a standard or reference variety (in what follows, I talk of Standard English (StE) when referring to morphology, lexis or syntax, and Reference English, or RefE, when referring to phonology, on the assumption that there is not really a *standard* pronunciation – to most intents and purposes, RefE is something like RP). Defined in this way, many 'features of a particular dialect' will be shared widely with many other dialects – only a few are fundamentally unique to one dialect area – but that does not mean that they are not dialect features of the particular dialect under consideration. For example, just because LE shares an absence of a FOOT-STRUT split with other dialects from the north of England does not mean that 'the absence of a FOOT-STRUT split' is not a dialect feature of LE. On the other hand, dialect features which are *not* shared with other varieties (such as the widespread lenition of stops in LE, for example) might be expected to differ in the extent to which they are salient to speakers (whether they do differ in salience in this way is a moot point – Honeybone and Watson 2013 and Honeybone, Watson and van Eynhoven 2017 argue that things are more complicated than this, partly in phonologically predictable ways).

This definition of dialect features assumes that the person who assumes something to be a dialect feature knows enough about a standard or reference variety in order to recognise that the two varieties are different. For linguists investigating dialects, we may expect that such knowledge is at a high level, but the extent to which this works for 'lay' speakers is in and of itself an interesting and complex point, which is worthy of study. The extent to which speakers of non-standard dialects are familiar with a standard variety has changed considerably over time, and this might be expected to affect how dialect features have been represented in dialect writing in different time periods. In the same way, it is likely the case that authors' knowledge of non-standard dialects that are not their own, but which they nonetheless aim to represent in writing (as in some of the cases of 'literary dialect' considered by Hodson, this volume, among others), has increased over time, or at least that it varies from author to author. It could be that speakers of a particular dialect might define (some of) the dialect features that they are aware of in terms of differences with other (perhaps neighbouring or nearby) non-

standard dialects – so, for example, something may be a salient dialect feature of Liverpool English because it is different from South Lancashire English, or Manchester English (see in this regard the discussion of the salience of differences between the dialects of Geordie and Mackem, spoken in the neighbouring cities of Newcastle upon Tyne and Sunderland, in Beal 2000). To keep things manageable, I assume here that writers are aware of differences between the varieties that they are representing and Standard/Reference English.

Some basic assumptions that are necessary for the existence of phonologically relevant respellings in dialect writing and for how we should interpret them are thus: (i) that writers are aware of what they are doing, (ii) that writers and readers know the standard English spellings of words, so that any divergence from this will be recognised and will mark out a form as ‘dialect’, (iii) that writers and readers furthermore know the segmental principles of English orthography, in terms of the mappings that are possible for grapheme-to-phonological-entity (for example, that a tense high rounded vowel can be represented in English in several different ways, such as <u...e> as in *chute*, <oo> *boot*, <ew> *blew*, <ue> *true*, <ioux> *Sioux*, <ough> *through*), and can use them in creative ways, and (iv) that writers and readers know about the phonological differences that exist between the reference variety and the dialect that is being represented. I have just considered how complex a point (iv) is, and point (iii) really invites considerable reflection, too. Even if we set aside the immense complexity of English orthography and the vast range of options that exist in it for spelling phonological features, the full picture is that writers and readers of dialect writing need to understand English orthography-to-phonology mappings in the light of both the phonology of Standard/Reference English *and* the dialect that is being represented (which are never exactly the same and are often considerably different), and be able to compare the two in order to recognise analogues between them. I will need to set many of these complexities aside here.

A short example of dialect writing that Hodson (2014) reports, found on a sign from the Lake District will allow us to explore some of these points. She writes that ‘the respelling is aimed at showing how Cumbrian English differs from RP’ and reproduces the sign as in (1).

- (1) TEK CARE
LAMBS
ONT ROAD

There are two respellings here: *tek* is used instead of *take*, and *ont* is used instead of *on the*. The first of these is relatively straightforward to interpret. The writer of the sign has recognised that the phonology of the Cumbrian corresponds to Reference English /teɪk/ (with a diphthong, or at least a long, tense monophthong) and that the two are different, and has adopted a spelling to represent this. The spelling unambiguously represents the fact that the writer’s dialect has a short/lax vowel in this word (something like /tɛk/) – although <Cek> is not at all common in English spelling (with ‘C’ standing for ‘any consonant’), <e> can only represent a long/tense/diphthongal vowel if the <k> represents a consonant in an onset, as in *eureka*, or if it is part of a split digraph (<e...e>), as in

eke. The sequence <CeC#> is not unusual as a representation of /ε/ in English (as in *step, net, yes*) and there is one model for <Cek>: *trek*.

The second respelling is clearly intended to represent Definite Article Reduction (DAR), which is a highly salient difference between many dialects from the north of England (in which the definite article can be realised in fully vowelless forms, such as [t], [ʔ] and [θ] – see, for example, Jones 2002), and other dialects, including Standard/Reference English (where the definite article is typically realised as [ðə], or perhaps as [ð], but only through extreme vowel reduction). The form *ont* represents DAR quite clearly, including the absence of any vowel in the definite article, although it is not clear whether the writer intended to represent [t] or [ʔ] (or indeed whether they could differentiate between them) because <t> could obviously represent [t], but <t> is also the letter that most commonly corresponds to the segment that is involved in *t*-glottalling in those varieties of English that feature it, so the <t> in *but* and *butter* could be seen as a way to represent a [ʔ] if a speaker pronounces them as [buʔ]/[bʌʔ] and [buʔə]/[bʌʔə]. A further complicating factor here is, however, as Jones (2007, 61) writes, DAR ‘has a long tradition of orthographic representation in literature and the media, most commonly as <t’>’. It is by no means the case that each act of dialect writing involves a completely novel invention of an orthography for the variety represented – it surely does sometimes, but in the majority of cases it does not. As Beal (2000) notes, certain dialectal spelling conventions can ‘become tokens of a regional identity’, and traditions of dialect writing can develop in areas which can lead to the development of established orthographic conventions for the spelling of dialect features, such as the use of <oo> to spell the fact the words such as *town, down, about* have a monophthong in English from the north-east of England, which is different to the diphthong found in reference varieties (giving *toon, doon* and *aboot*). Since Agha (2003), this kind of codification of particular dialect features as part of a fixed repertoire of features that speakers are highly aware of is often called ‘enregisterment’ (as discussed in several other chapters of this book, especially that by Cooper). It seems to me that this notion of enregisterment has something important to tell us about which features may get written in a piece of dialect writing – it can offer clear ‘dialect spellings’, such as the case just mentioned above where <oo> (rather than, for example <u...e>, <ew> or <ue>) is used for cases of [u:] which correspond to [aʊ] in many other varieties – but I suspect that many dialect features never become enregistered but may still be spelt, at least on occasion, in dialect writing (as long as writers can be aware of them at all). It can surely be the case that certain dialect spellings are handed down from writer to writer, but others (perhaps in the same text) may well be invented (or reinvented anew) as the writer writes.

As Agha uses the term enregisterment, it refers to a ‘linguistic repertoire differentiable within a language as a socially recognised register’ (2006, 231; see also Asprey, this volume). This raises another limitation of the notion which we need to explore here in order to get to grips with my main point of interest – one which, in fact, somewhat challenges the very notion of ‘dialect writing’. It is clearly the case that much of what happens in the kinds of texts that are under discussion in this book is indeed done with reference to the differences that exist between the variety that is being represented and a standard or reference variety (as argued thus far in this chapter), but there can be a competing impetus behind the

production of such texts: the idea that the variety being represented can or should be treated as an independent system in its own right: as a ‘language’ rather than as a ‘dialect’ (which is ‘within’ an overarching language, such as English). This impetus can be seen at its starkest in, for example, the representations of Scots in sections of such works as *Trainspotting* (Welsh 1993), and in the ‘translations into Scots’ that are regularly published by such publishers as Itchy Coo (such as Robertson’s 2008 translation of *Winnie the Pooh* and Fitt’s 2017 translation of *Harry Potter*). There is a case to be made (and a movement making it) that Scots should be seen as a separate language to English, but there is no standard Scots (although there are some established Scots spelling traditions), and the kind of Scots texts just mentioned are at least in part intended to be readable by those who unambiguously identify as speaking English. But yet also, there is an impetus to understand at least some such texts as being produced in a coherent system (a ‘written language’) which is distinct from that of English, not inherently ‘leaning on’ Standard English orthography and dialect. Many pieces of locally-produced humorous dialect literature (of the type labelled ‘CHLDL’ in Honeybone and Watson 2013 – a term considered further here in section 10.3) pretend to be phrase books, of the type that are typically produced for learners of different languages. This is intended as a joke – not a serious claim to ‘languagehood’ on the part of the dialect represented – but it is not entirely absurd to argue that robust and distinct dialects from the north of England have as much right as contemporary Scots does to be seen as separate languages from English (googling ‘Geordie is a language’ and ‘Scouse is a language’, for example, brings up some positive results). There are some lengthy published texts produced in contemporary northern dialects, some following the lead of *Trainspotting*, and there are semi-serious translations in such dialects, such as Shaw and Williams’ (1967) version of *the Gospels in Scouse*. I investigate an example of each of these genres in section 10.4. Many complex issues arise here, but for our purposes, we need to acknowledge that the conception along these lines that a writer has of the variety that they are representing (or perhaps: the conception that a writer wants to promulgate of the variety) might affect how they represent it – should it be seen as very clearly ‘a dialect of English’ or should it be seen as a linguistic system in its own right? In the discussion of orthographies devised for Scots (see, for example, Bann and Corbett 2015, 93) these issues are discussed in terms of whether a writer takes a ‘minimalist’ or a ‘maximalist’ approach – the question is: should a writer stay as close to Standard English as possible (in order to allow for the greatest possible comprehensibility of the text), or should they emphasise the difference between the text (and the form of language that it represents) and Standard English? The same issues resonate in considering which features get represented in dialect writing, and more generally how phonological dialect writing might be done: if a text is intended for a readership of dialect speakers, a ‘maximalist’ approach to representing dialect features (and to the way in which the features are represented) may be felt appropriate by a writer.

To return to the short text in (1), there is more to say. It is very unlikely that the $\varepsilon \sim e_i$ correspondence and the presence of DAR are the only phonologically relevant differences between the writer’s phonology and that of Reference English. If a speaker has those two features, it is highly likely that they would not have the RefE diphthongs in *care* and *road* (/kɛə/ and /rəʊd/). It is more likely that the

writer would have long general northern monophthongs (/kɛ:/ and /ro:d/), which could be spelt – either as something like *kehr*, *rohd*, which might aim to represent vowel length, or as something like *kare* and *rode*, which would equally work as spellings for the RefE forms (as eye dialect), but could serve to direct attention to the word as different from their RefE correspondents, relying on the knowledge of the reader to fill in the details. It is therefore worth considering why the writer did *not* respell *care* and *road*. It is possible that they are not aware of the differences (that is, that the dialect features in question are not salient to the writer), or if they are aware of the differences, that they do not think them salient enough to warrant writing. This is another factor that might constrain which dialect features get represented in dialect writing: they need to be salient enough to writers to be available for respelling.

The point just made about *kare* and *rode* is worth pursuing. It may be difficult for a dialect writer to respell words to represent dialect phonology straightforwardly, because the mappings that are possible for grapheme-to-phonological-entity in English are established on the basis of RefE phonology, and many dialect features involve phonological segments that are not in RefE. This need not mean that such dialect features are unspellable, however. It could be enough to simply respell a word (in whatever way is possible) in order to draw attention to it. This means that forms which are eye dialect for Standard English need not be eye dialect for other dialects, so, for example, Liverpool English has a front/central GOOSE vowel (around /ɘ:/), but there is no grapheme in Standard English to clearly spell a high central rounded long vowel. A respelling like *skewl* for *school* is eye dialect in RefE: as discussed above, <ew> is one of the spellings available to represent the tense high rounded vowel that occurs in RefE, so *skewl* works as well as *school* to represent /sku:l/, but when it is used in LE (as in Shaw 1966, a text discussed below), it may be thought to be a phonologically motivated respelling of a dialect feature – the simple fact that the word is respelt draws attention to it, which flags up the fact that it has a different phonological form to that of RefE (/skɘ:l/).² Equally, even when the phonological entities involved in a difference between a dialect and RefE are describable in terms of segments that are all present in RefE, there may not be an unambiguous way to spell some phonological form. For example, every grapheme used widely to spell /ʊ/ in RefE (<oo> *book*, <u> *put*, <o> *wolf*) is also used to spell /ʌ/ (*blood*, *cup*, *love*), but a writer in the north of English may want to represent the absence of the FOOT-STRUT split (that is, that STRUT has the same vowel as in FOOT, unlike in RefE accents). This can still be done. If *strut* is spelt *strutt*, even though the respelling works perfectly well as eye dialect in RefE, in dialect writing it could function to signal the phonological difference between the dialect and RefE.

A final point to make about (1) is that it is quite minimalist in its difference from Standard English. One of the tasks in understanding dialect writing is to understand why certain decisions that could be taken to differentiate a text from Standard/Reference English may *not* be taken. As well as the fact that the two dialect features just mentioned are not represented, *lambs* keeps its Standard English ‘silent b’ – this maintains a relationship with Standard English and implies that the writer intends the text to be seen as representing a variety of English, not of a separate system (that is, it really is ‘dialect writing’ in the strict sense). The write *could* have written the text as in (2).

- (2) TEK KEHR
LAMZ
ONT ROHD

The text in (2) is heading towards a maximalist approach to dialect spelling, including an eye dialect respelling for *lambs*. As mentioned above, eye dialect spellings are often viewed negatively as it is assumed that they are intended to show (or unintentionally emphasise a perception of) speakers' illiteracy or lack of education. It strikes me that this need not be the case in dialect writing, and that eye dialect need not contribute negatively to a dialect writing text. Eye dialect spellings often provide a phonologically 'better', more phonemic spelling, and can thus show a writer's phonologically sophisticated awareness, but more importantly (and more relevantly for readers), it can help to differentiate a text from Standard English, potentially reinforcing the perception that the variety being represented is an independent linguistic system that is fully distinct from Standard English.

To sum up this section, there are quite a few factors which can constrain the way in which dialect phonology can get represented in dialect writing and (relatedly, but more broadly) the way in which respellings are used in dialect writing. These factors include those set out in items (i) to (viii), below. The first four of these relate to issues that have been discussed above and the second four have not yet been much discussed in this chapter, but also clearly play a role.

- (i) The extent to which a dialect feature is *salient* might influence the likelihood with which it might be represented in dialect writing through respelling – we might expect more salient features to be more likely to be represented. Saliency is a complex notion, and I discuss it a little further in section 10.4, but it seems clear that there are multiple types of saliency: different types of phonological feature can have different degrees of saliency to speakers, and the extent to which a feature is localised to a particular place and/or dialect can affect its degree of saliency.
- (ii) Related to (i), it might be that *how observant a writer is* might affect the extent to which they are able to represent phonological dialect features in writing (some might notice only the most salient features, and some might notice more). There is good evidence that there are individual differences in terms of speakers' ability to perceive phonological distinctions (see, for example, Hall-Lew, Honeybone and Kirby, to appear), and we might expect that those writers with keener perceptual abilities might be more likely to represent a wide number of dialect features. Differences in this regard might well also be influenced by the extent to which a writer has had some linguistic training and is aware of the kind of thing that might count as a dialect feature.
- (iii) Also related to (i), but not exactly the same point is the question of whether particular dialect features have become enregistered or not. We

would expect that those phonological features that have become enregistered would be more likely to be represented in dialect writing through respelling. It is quite probable that particularly salient features are the most likely to become enregistered, but we cannot assume that this is always the case, because there may be other factors (including some of those discussed in this list of eight) which militate against certain salient features being written (or which maintain perhaps archaic features in an enregistered tradition). Also, there is a feedback loop at play here: the features which are most commonly written in dialect writing are probably those features which are likely to become enregistered, and those features which are enregistered are probably those features which are likely to be written. Teasing the two points apart (and teasing apart both points' relationship to the differential salience of features) is likely to be an intricate undertaking.

- (iv) The position that a writer chooses to take on the maximalist~minimalist orthographic axis will affect the extent to which respellings are used in a text. If a writer wants to minimise the differences between their text and Standard English (to encourage readers of many varieties to engage with it), they will likely minimise the use of eye dialect and may choose to only represent particularly salient and/or enregistered dialect features, while at the same time minimising the 'non-Englishness' of the spellings adopted (for example, spelling /tɛk/ as *tek* as in (1) is entirely effective, as discussed above, but it would fit in better with the regularities and expectations of English orthography to spell it *teck*, because /ɛk#/ sequences are most commonly spelt <eck#>, as in *deck*, *neck*, *speck*). If, on the other hand, a writer wants to emphasise the differences between the variety represented and Standard/Reference English (in order, perhaps, to make a claim that it deserves to be seen as a clearly distinct variety, perhaps even as a separate language), a writer will likely maximise the differences, which could lead to a large number of respellings, of both the 'eye dialect' and 'phonologically motivated' kind. Related to this is the extent to which a writer takes the task of representing a variety seriously – as is well recognised (see, for example, Clark, this volume, and Hodson, this volume) much dialect writing is intended to be at least in part comic, and sometimes this involves laughing at the variety represented and its speakers. If written with this kind of attitude, there may be no impetus to represent the variety accurately: some of the representations discussed by Hodson do indeed simply rely on an inventory of 'generic rustic features' to mark off a character as speaking something that is non-standard, with no attention paid to whether the features actually form part of the dialect that is being represented or not. However, many dialect writing texts are written with an entirely different intention – perhaps as an expression of pride or solidarity, or as an expression of identity, or perhaps simply because it is fun to use dialect writing. Much of the humour in dialect writing is of the 'laughing with', rather than 'laughing at' type, and many of these latter kinds of impetus may lead to a writer making a concerted attempt to

represent dialect features accurately. All of these considerations could affect the extent to which dialect features might be represented in a text.

- (v) All of the discussion thus far in this section has focused on the intentions, abilities and knowledge of the writer of a text. This may be all that needs to be considered for unpublished texts, like certain ego-documents of the type discussed by Beal (this volume) and tweets of the type discussed by Nini et al (this volume), but if we want to understand all kinds of dialect writing, we also need to recognise that many kinds of text are the product of more than one person. Published texts undergo editing, and the editorial process can involve making considerable changes to texts. If an editor has different intentions, abilities or knowledge to the writer of a text, this could have a considerable impact on which features get represented in texts, on the extent to which respellings are used, and on the consistency with which this is done (see also Maguire, this volume). The issues here are quite obvious when we think about them, but we do need to think about them in addressing the points considered in this chapter. It may be that a writer of a text is a speaker of the dialect represented, but that an editor is not, and so an editor may make changes to the way features are represented because they don't understand what a writer intended. I consider a case of this in section 10.3, below. A final point in this regard is that dialect writing can be characterised by variation – that is, a writer may sometimes spell a dialect feature and sometimes not, or they may respell one word in more than one way. As Honeybone and Watson (2013) show, the degree of variability can be constrained by phonological or dialectology factors, but, also, Escott (2016) has argued that the very fact that there can be this variability in dialect writing is meaningful, as it reflects what happens in speech (as studied in sociophonetics, for example) and this might have both the effect of linking dialect writing more closely to spoken language than is the case for writing in Standard English, and might flag it up as 'subversive' (see also Clark, this volume, on aspects of subversiveness in dialect writing). An editor might be tempted to remove such variation, missing these points, so it may only show up in unedited or lightly edited texts.
- (vi) Related to (v), but also all the other points just discussed, the type of text that any piece of dialect writing is may well play a role in the issues discussed in this section. One aspect of this interacts with the differentiation of texts along the literary-dialect~dialect-literature axis, but it might be that there are different expectations of different text-types – it may even be that traditions of expectation in terms of the spelling conventions and inventories of features might emerge for specific types of texts (this is a similar point to that made in (iii), about enregisterment, but it is not quite the same as assuming that there might be one set of features that are available to writers who are writing in one dialect).

- (vii) A small point, but nonetheless one which is separate and can affect the way in which words are spelled in dialect literature is that in texts which are primarily intended to be humorous, one quite common feature is what Honeybone and Watson (2013) call ‘forced lexical reanalysis’. This involves a punning misparsing of the words of a phrase so that they are respelled as other existing words (or pseudo-words); one of the examples that Honeybone and Watson reproduce is the respelling *Chuck Doubt* for *chucked out*. Clark (this volume) discusses a number of cases of this kind of thing, including the phrase *shoes daz much*, which is a representation of ‘it’s used as much’. Such respellings may be eye-dialect-like in that they could represent the pronunciation of most or even all dialects of English, so the first word in this example is a realisation of the string [ɪtsju:zd], with the last consonant removed as it is represented in the onset of the following syllable (where it could be after phrasal resyllabification), and with the elision of the pronoun, which leaves from the first word (the contraction *it’s*) just the sibilant of the auxiliary, which is represented as having coalesced with the following palatal approximant, giving the string [ʃu:z]. All of these phenomena (resyllabification, elision and coalescence) are common in dialects of English, including RefE, so they are not dialect features, and it is very likely that the first word is written as *shoes* because it is funny, if somewhat forced, to point out that it can be homophonous with the plural of *shoe*. If a writer is aiming to use this kind of humour, it will have an impact on how much respelling occurs in a piece of dialect writing (some use it a lot, for example Robinson and Wiltshire’s (1970) *Krek Waiter’s Peak Bristle*, as is clear from their title, which is a respelling of ‘(the) correct way to speak Bristol’).
- (viii) A final point, but one which has a big impact on the extent to which dialect features might get represented in dialect writing is that writers are constrained by what is orthographically possible, in both general and English-specific ways. In terms of general constraints, an alphabetic orthography cannot represent a number of phonological phenomena, such as intonation or voice quality, even though such things can provide salient dialect features. In terms of English-specific constraints, writers are largely limited by the set of mappings that are possible for grapheme-to-phonological-entity which are fundamentally established on the basis of RefE phonology, so, for example, the rhotic is realised as [ɹ], in some far north-eastern varieties (the ‘Northumbrian burr’) but English orthography has no way of representing uvular fricatives as they do not occur in reference varieties. In this connection, it is fair to note, however, that English is a particularly good language for phonological dialect writing because its spelling system is ripe for respelling. English has a ‘deep orthography’ – it is ‘irregular’ which means that there are a lot of graphemes which can be reused in dialect respelling (for example, Carney 1994 lists 14 different main graphemes that are used in English to spell the FACE vowel, and 15 for the FLEECE vowel; see also Cook 2016, Ryan 2016 and Roca 2016 for phonologically-informed considerations of

the English spelling system, illustrating how complex – and hence ripe for reuse – its elements are). There are thus many resources that writers can use for eye dialect or for the representation of dialect features. We should also recognise that writers are not completely limited to Standard English spelling conventions: the non-standard glottal stop realisation of /t/ is often represented using <'>, as in *bu'er* for *butter* (see, for example, Darnton 1993). However, the fact that certain features would require specific acts of orthographic invention in order to represent them can be expected to constrain what types of phonological dialect features get represented in dialect writing. Certain phonological dialect features simply may not be representable in dialect writing, no matter how salient they are.

There are several different types of constraints in the above list of eight. Some are linguistic in the narrow sense, some are orthographic, and some are due to very different kinds of factors. I do not claim that this is an exhaustive list of factors that are relevant to understanding the patterns that occur in the kinds of respellings that occur in dialect writing, nor that we fully understand how all of them work. By setting them out in this way, however, I hope to contribute to our understanding of the envelope of possibilities in phonological representation and respelling in dialect writing. As I set out at the start of this chapter, my own prime interest in understanding these things is in order to be able to figure out what might count as a phonological dialect feature, and which dialect features might get to be salient, but I recognise that we need to understand all of the factors mentioned in this section before we can hope to do that. Earlier in this section, I devoted around 2000 words to discussing issues that arose on the basis of two respellings in the five-word dialect writing text in (1). This strikes me as the right level of detail. Understanding one dialect (re)spelling can take a large amount of analysis in order to work through the possible intentions of and constraints on a writer, and the phonological, orthographic and dialectological issues involved, and as I have argued above, we also need to analyse why dialect features are sometimes *not* respelt in dialect writing. All of this shows that dialect writing is a fantastically complicated thing. It is therefore certainly well worth asking *which phonological features get represented in dialect writing?* But it is difficult to do so. I make a start in the next section. I am cautious about trying because I am aware that each respelling mentioned should really have as much attention as was given to each in this section. That would not be possible in one chapter, so I do not attempt it in many cases, but the issues discussed here should always be in the background.

10.3 Dialect writing in Liverpool English

The texts considered below (in section 10.4) all feature representation of Liverpool English. This variety is well-recognised in Britain, always featuring prominently in lists of 'accents in Britain' and their alleged characteristics that are compiled on the basis of perceptions (see such work as Montgomery 2007 and Coupland and Bishop 2007). It is tightly centred on the city of Liverpool and the neighbouring urban areas which together make up the Liverpool City Region and the county of

Merseyside. The popular name for the dialect is 'Scouse' (see Crowley, this volume, for further discussion of the variety and of the name 'Scouse').

Some of the dialect writing that exists in LE is well known (even to some extent beyond the circles of those who are interested in dialect) throughout Britain. The volumes of the *Lern Yerself Scouse* series, the first of which was published in 1966 form some of the first volumes published in the genre of 'Contemporary Humourous Localised Dialect Literature' (CHLDL), which Honeybone and Watson (2013) describe. I discuss them further in section 10.3.1 (and then I report on an investigation of the respellings found in it in section 10.4.1). Crowley (this volume) shows, however, that the traditions of dialect writing in LE are much more extensive than this (and start before 1966). I also consider one of the recent texts that Crowley describes as part of a wave of dialect writing that involved the 'recent appearance of a number of "Scouse" novels' in sections 10.3.3 and 10.4.3. There is, of course, even more LE dialect writing that Crowley can consider. In sections 10.3.2 and 10.4.2, I discuss one text which was written in 1990 and published in 2015: a translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

The full extent of the corpus of LE dialect writing is not (and cannot ever be fully) known, because it includes a no doubt vast amount of ephemeral writing on the internet, and other ego-documents, and also sometimes brief appearances of literary dialect in who-knows-how-many novels. One example of the latter is Katie Flynn's (1994) *The Girl From Penny Lane*. Katie Flynn is a pseudonym for Judy Turner, who was born and grew up in Norwich. The volume includes passages such as that in (3)

- (3) Kitty nodded earnestly and the movement caught the young lady's eye. She swung round, looking properly at Kitty for the first time.
'Oh! I'm sorry, I didn't see you there – are you being served or did I push in ahead of you?'
'S'orlright,' Kitty said. 'I ain't a customer, I's brung work in.'

The character Kitty is from Burlington Street in Liverpool, and so her two utterances are LE dialect writing. The first, *S'orlright*, is likely simply intended as eye dialect, spelling the same kind of elision of *it* that was seen in the discussion of point (vii) above, and <orl> is as good a representation of [ɔ:l] (which is both the LE and RefE pronunciation of the first syllable of *alright*) as is <al>, although the context of use in this case implies that it could be read as implying that LE is rhotic, which it very definitely is not. It could be that this respelling is used here because the writer is using a set of generic non-standard features, as discussed in point (iv) and by several other chapters in this volume (especially the by Hodson), and this feature is part of this set because certain non-standard dialects do retain rhoticity. This kind of thing certainly is the case in the second utterance: *I's brung work in* could not be LE.³ The first person singular present form for *have* in LE is *have* (or *'ave*, as *h*-dropping can occur), which would be contracted with the pronoun to *I've*. The form *I's* is clearly intended as a contraction with *has*. This implies a levelled present tense for the verb to *has*, which is likely attested in some traditional dialect in England, but is clearly used here because the writer is using generic non-standard dialect features that are available for use in direct speech in literary

dialect. In texts like this it does not really matter if the respellings are linguistically motivated by dialect features in the variety that is being represented (hence the suspicion that the *orlright* spelling may not simply be eye dialect) – the only important thing for the writer is that the respelling marks out a character as speaking non-standard English. I do not consider such ‘generic’, non-phonologically motivated dialect spellings further. I focus on extracts from three pieces of LE dialect writing which are all fundamentally aiming to accurately represent LE dialect features. I introduce the texts in the next subsections, in chronological order of publication.

10.3.1 *Lern Yerself Scouse*

The best-known volumes of LE dialect writing are the *Lern Yerself Scouse* (*LYS*) books. This is a series of short volumes which began publication in 1966, with a volume which has the full title *Lern Yerself Scouse: How to Talk Proper in Liverpool*. The five volumes that make up this series are classic examples of a genre of dialect writing that Honeybone and Watson (2013) call ‘Contemporary Humorous Localised Dialect Literature (CHLDL)’. Texts of this sort are intended to be comic, have been published since the mid-to-late 20th century (and are typically kept in print), and are ‘localised’, by which is meant that they are published by regionally-based publishers and are fundamentally intended for locally-restricted distribution, often only being available where the dialect in question is spoken. They are typically sold in bookshops in the area concerned, but are also often available in museums, various other kinds of shops, and in local tourist information centres.

Crowley (2012, this volume) sees the first volume of *LYS* as a founding text in ‘the Scouse industry’, which is related to the enregisterment of the dialect. It is certainly well known in Liverpool. Crowley gives further details about the volume and its origins, and about its main author, Frank Shaw, who was born in Tralee, Ireland, but was raised in Liverpool, and who knew the dialect intimately (he died in 1971). Fritz Spiegl, who edited and published the *LYS* series, claims in the introduction to the ‘millennium reprint’ of the volume in question here that they were the first in a modern wave of such texts (and that it was ‘flattered by numerous imitations from other regions’).⁴ In any case, *LYS* is resolutely local, being published by the Scouse Press, which is based in Liverpool. It is still in print.

Most of *LYS* takes the form of a pseudo-phrase book, of the sort produced for those who need to learn phrases of a foreign language. It gives phrases written in ‘Scouse’ (i.e., LE) followed by a ‘translation’ into standard English. This sets up LE as a separate language from English, worthy of separate treatment, but this point should not be taken too far as the volume is intended as a piece of humour and much of the comedy derives from the fact that the LE forms include taboo-breaking and/or scatological language, whereas the ‘English’ translations are extremely formal, as in the examples given in (4), from page 18 of *LYS*.

- (4) Boogeroff.
No. Please depart.
 Ere's yer at, wur's de urry?
It has been nice to meet you, bit I now have pressing business to attend to.
 T'sarrahwell.
Farewell!

It will be clear from this short extract that there is some forced lexical reanalysis in the text, but there is also a considerable amount of phonologically-motivated respelling of LE dialect features: *booger* ('bugger') draws attention to the lack of FOOT/STRUT split, *wur* ('where') draws attention to the absence of the NURSE/SQUARE contrast, *t'sarrah* ('tara' = 'goodbye') spells the affrication of plosives, *de* ('the') spells DH-stopping, and *ere, at* and *urry* ('here, hat, hurry') spell *h*-dropping.

The volume was edited by Spiegl, who was a native speaker of Austrian German, but who moved (permanently) to Liverpool in the late 1940s, and became very familiar with the dialect. We do not know what the editing process involved, but the text is of a similar style to Shaw's other LE dialect writing (some of which was published elsewhere, such as *the Gospels in Scouse*, mentioned above), so we might assume that the editing process was not heavy handed. *LYS* concludes with a translation into LE of selected verses from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam by Stan Kelly (a pseudonym of Stanley Bootle), which is an independent piece of LE dialect writing.

Five volumes of *LYS* texts have been published in total, up until the end of the 20th century. They form together the text that was investigated in Honeybone and Watson (2013), which gives some further background about the texts. This first *LYS* volume (from 1966) is the first LE dialect writing text that I investigate (an extract from) in section 10.4. It is also the text that is analysed in Watson and Jensen (this volume).

10.3.2 A Scouse Interpretation of Alice in Wonderland

The second text that I investigate was written in 1990. A typewritten manuscript was produced by Marvin R. Sumner which includes a full text of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, translated into LE. Sumner entitled the text *A Scouse Interpretation of Alice in Wonderland*. The manuscript came into my possession when I was asked to provide a commentary on it for the volume *Alice in a World of Wonderlands: the translations of Lewis Carroll's Masterpiece* (Lindseth and Tannenbaum 2015), which is a volume which investigated all known translations of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, in order to mark the 150th anniversary of the original publication of the text. The LE text had not at that point been published (apart from one short section which appeared in Lindseth and Tannenbaum 2015), but due to the attention that it received in the Carrollian community due to the Lindseth and Tannenbaum volume, a version of it (entitled *Alice's Adventchers in Wunderland*) was published in 2015 by Everttype, a publisher which specialises in publishing translations of *Alice in Wonderland*, among other things. The publisher is based in the USA, so this published version is not localised. It was edited before publication

by the owner of Evertype, Michael Everson, and it offers a clear example of how the editing process can affect which dialect features get represented in a text, and how respelling is used in dialect writing.

Part of the original version (from 1990 – extracted from the part published in Lindseth and Tannenbaum 2015) is given in (5). This is the start of the passage which is briefly analysed in Honeybone (2015).

- (5) *'Twinkel, twinkel, littul bat!*
 'Ow I wunder wot yor at!
- 'Yunnow de song doyeray?'
 'I've herd sumtin like it,' sed Alice.
 'It goezon, yernow,' de 'atter kontinyewed, 'in diss way:—
- Up above de werld yew fly,*
 Like a tea-tray in de sky.
 Twinkel, twinkel—'
- 'Ere de Dormowse shuk itzself an began singin innitz sleep
 'Twinkel, twinkel, twinkel, twinkel—' an wenn on so long dat dey 'ad
 to pinch it to make it stop.
 'Well, I'd 'ardly finished de ferst verse,' sed de 'atter, 'wenn de
 Kween bawled out, 'E'z murdrin de time! Off wid 'iz 'ead!"
 'Ow dredfully savidge!' eksclaimed Alice.
 'An ever since dat,' de 'atter wenn on inna mornful tone, "E woan
 do a ting I ask! It's orlwayz sixa klok now.'

The published version of this passage, as edited by Everson, is given in (6).

- (6) *'Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!*
 Ow I wunder what you're at!
- You know de song, do you?"
 "I've eard sometin like it," said Alice.
 "It goes on, you know," de Atter continued, "in dis way:-
- 'Up above de werld you fly,*
 Like a tea-tray in de sky.
 Twinkle, twinkle -"
- Ere de Dormouse shook itself an began singin in its sleep
 "Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle -" an wenn on so long
 dat dey ad to pinch it to make it stop.
 "Well, I'd ardly finished de ferst verse," said de Atter,
 "when de Queen bawled out, 'E's murdrin de time! Off wid iz
 ead!"
 'Ow dreadfully savidge!" exclaimed Alice.
 "An ever since dat," de Atter wenn on in a mournful tone,
 "E wo'n do a ting I ask! It's allus six o'clock now."

The editor has clearly revised the text massively, to remove all eye-dialect and produce a minimalist version of the text, contrasting with the maximalist original. Several LE dialect features have been removed by the editor: *doyeray*, which represents ‘do you, eh?’ is rendered as *do you*, which misses the LE form, *herd* (‘heard’) which spells the absence of the NURSE/SQUARE contrast is rendered as *earđ* which does not, and *orlwayz* which is clearly simply eye dialect for *always*⁵ in the original is rendered as *allus*, which uses a dialect word ([ɒles]) which is not found in LE – *allus* is found in Lancashire English, which is perhaps what has confused the editor, but it is not LE (for example: as Crowley, this volume, reports, Shaw 1952 states in his glossary of LE forms, that *always* is to be pronounced as *alwiz* in LE, a fast-speech form of *always*).

The editing process has massively altered the original text, to a degree that makes it unrecognisable. Many of that characteristics of dialect writing identified above have been removed (eye dialect, variation, lexical reanalysis), and dialect features have been confused. What could be seen in the original as a spectacularly confident claim to being an independent linguistic system has been rendered a poor and apologetic version of a text which is highly dependent on the Standard English original. It is a great shame that the original text was not published as the author intended, and I recommend that anyone interested in LE dialect writing ignores the published version and considers the original. I analyse a section of the original version (from 1990) in what follows.

10.3.3 *Stump*

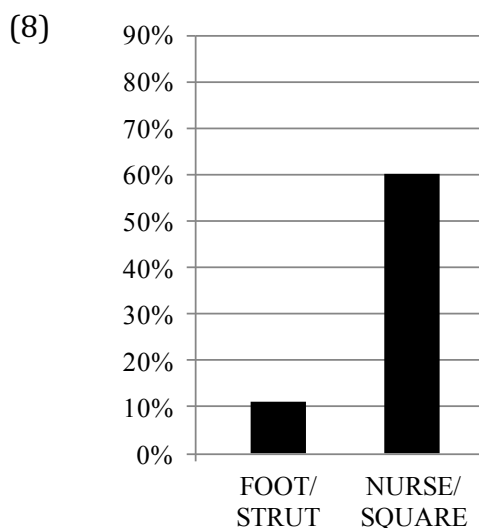
The third text that I investigate is *Stump* by Niall Griffiths, published in 2003. This is a novel, published by the national publisher Cape, and widely available in Britain (i.e., it is not localised). It won the Welsh Books Council Book of the Year Award and the Arts Council of Wales Book of the Year Award. Griffiths was born and raised in Liverpool, so is closely familiar with the dialect. He later moved to Wales, and is now highly associated with Welsh literature (hence the Wales-based awards). The Guardian newspaper has reported that he has been called the ‘Welsh Irvine Welsh’ (2001), and indeed, while not derivative of *Trainspotting*, *Stump* is clearly influenced by it. It features a high proportion of dialect writing, and while there is humour (as in many novels), it is far from being a comic text (as *LYS* is). Crowley (this volume) discusses the context of the novel in further detail and an extract is given in (7). Some passages of the text may be describable as literary dialect, but others include non-standard features in the background text (that is, in sections that are not direct speech).

- (7) – Fuckin useless mudderfucker *cunt* of a car ... fuckin Tommy givin *this* pure piecer fuckin wank ...
 Alastair the passenger does not look up from the *Reader’s Digest Book of the Road* he is studying balance on his trackie’d knees.
 – Yeh want Runcorn
 – I know I want Runcorn, Ally. I *know* me way out of the fuckin city.
 – Runcorn, an then we can gerron to the M56 til ... Hapsford or somewhere, wharrever the fuck it’s called.

There are several phonologically-motivated respellings here: for example, *fuckin* spells *g*-dropping (that is, (-ing) variation), *mudderfucker* spells DH-stopping, *gerron* spells T-to-R. An extract from *Stump* is the third text that I consider in the following section.

10.4 Which features are represented in Liverpool English dialect writing?

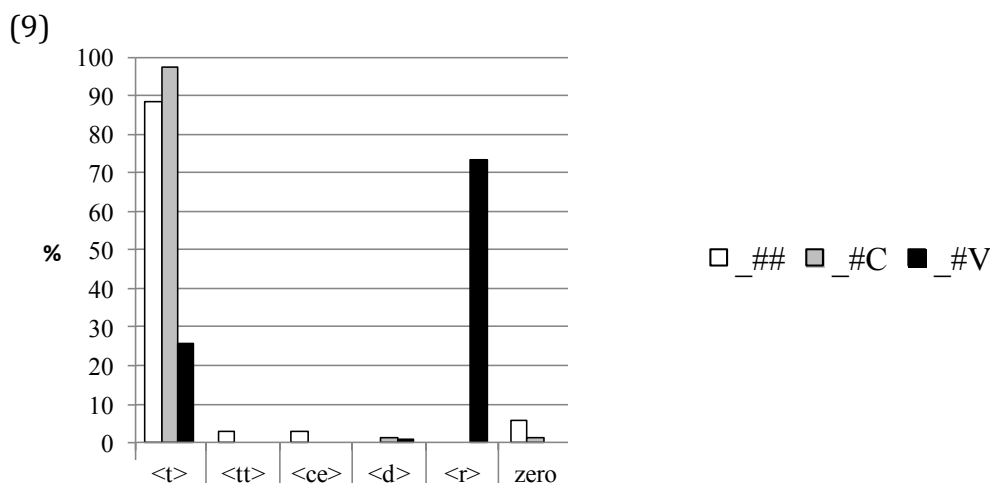
My key goals in investigating dialect writing are to understand the use of respellings in such material generally, and – more specifically – to consider whether such material can show which dialect features are salient. Some previous work has shown that a quantitative investigation of dialect writing respellings can be insightful in terms of the latter question. Honeybone and Watson (2013) and Honeybone, Watson and van Eyndhoven (2017) show that it is not just which phonological dialect features are represented in respellings that is interesting, but also the *extent* to which they are represented. This work decided in advance which dialect features may be worth investigating and set out to see how commonly they were represented in a corpus of *LYS* texts, and found that the NURSE/SQUARE absence of contrast (when compared to RefE) was represented much more robustly than the FOOT/STRUT lack of contrast. These are phonologically very similar features which are both realised in a relatively small set of words, but Honeybone and Watson (2013) found, on counting both where each feature is respelled and where it is not, that the results are as in (8), which shows the extent to which words which are relevant to the two dialect features are respelled in the corpus of LE dialect writing that was investigated.



The interpretation of this in Honeybone and Watson (2013) is that the NURSE/SQUARE feature is much more localised than is FOOT/STRUT (because NURSE/SQUARE is shared with very few other dialects, while FOOT/STRUT is shared with all northern dialects), so NURSE/SQUARE is more salient to speakers of LE.

Honeybone and Watson (2013) and Honeybone, Watson and van Eyndhoven (2017) show that localisedness is not all that there is to consider in this regard. Two other phonological dialect features (which can both affect /t/ in LE) pattern very differently. T-to-R (which we see spelled in (7)) is shared with a large number

of northern dialects, and Liverpool Lenition (which affects /t/ and other stops, and which we see spelled in (4)) is heavily localised to LE. Nonetheless, as shown in (9), which is extracted from Honeybone, Watson and van Eyndhoven (2017) to show only those words in which T-to-R is canonically allowed, forms which are respelled to show T-to-R (using <r>) are very common in the phonological environment that allows the phenomenon ([_#V]), whereas respellings to indicate *t*-lenition, which is very common in speech in word-final environment (using, for example, <-ce>), are practically absent.



The interpretation of this in Honeybone, Watson and van Eyndhoven (2017) is that it is due to the fact that Liverpool Lenition and T-to-R are phonologically very different kinds of features. Lenition is a ‘late’ phonological process: it creates segments which don’t exist in the lexicon (the result of lenition of /t/ does not neutralise with /s/), and it is exceptionless, whereas T-to-R is an ‘early’ phonological process: it involves segments which exist in the lexicon and it is distinctly tied to the lexicon as not all words that have the environment which allows T-to-R actually show the phenomenon. Phonological theory would predict that T-to-R should be more salient to speakers than lenition, and this seems to be borne out in the dialect writing respellings, indicating that Liverpool lenition is (surprisingly given its localisedness) not very salient.

Work like this points us towards answers to some questions that are of interest if we are trying to understand dialect writing from the perspective set out at the start of this section, but it does not answer all the questions that we will have. One crucial question is, indeed, which features get represented in LE dialect writing at all? One way of investigating this is considered in Watson and Jensen (this volume), who take an automated approach, offering a promising ‘big-data’-type methodology. In this chapter, I take a more ‘hand-crafted’ approach, focusing on the precise details of small amounts of text. I considered extracts of around 1000 words from the three texts mentioned in sections 10.3.1, 10.3.2 and 10.3.3, and considered every case of respelling in them, allocating the respellings to a category which suggested itself. One category is ‘eye dialect’, and this includes all respellings which I judged to be not phonologically motivated in spelling a difference between LE and RefE. Other categories that I have used will hopefully make sense to those familiar with English phonological dialectology. This is a

'bottom-up' kind of methodology in a sense, but it is informed by my expectations in terms of the dialect features that might be represented, and these expectations are due to my decades-long investigation and appreciation of LE. It is a quantitative methodology, because I recorded each case of a spelling which can be fitted into one of the categories that I identified. I am well aware that there are issues with the replicability of this methodology (it depends on the contents of my own head in terms of my experiences and knowledge of the dialect, and in terms of my interpretation of the intention of each respelling). I think the results are robust, but I am also cautious about them. The recognition of a respelling is straightforward as British English spelling is heavily standardised, and any word (or group of words) which does not fit with this standard can be counted as a respelling. The differentiation of the respellings into eye dialect and phonologically-motivated respellings, is more complex, however, and it is here that subjectivity can creep into the methodology.

As an example: the first sentence in *LYS* is *Ullo dur*. I analysed this as containing three respellings: 1 x *h*-dropping, 1 x DH-stopping, and 1 x the absence of contrast in *SQUARE/NURSE*. I report the proportion of all respellings from the three texts that each feature represents in the following sections. Several things need to be borne in mind while interpreting the results: they do not show how commonly a feature is spelt in relation to how commonly it *could* be spelt (that is, for example, cases of non-*h*-dropping are not counted), and also I do not attempt to break down the eye dialect respellings into categories in terms of which kind of phonological features are respelt (although I expect that this could be done, and that interesting generalisations would emerge). I simply give a percentage figure which shows how much of the total respellings in a text each feature represents. What the numbers *do* thus show is (i) which phonological dialect features have been represented in the extracts from the three texts considered, (ii) how much of an impact each individual feature contributes to the representation of LE in the extracts, and (iii) how maximalist each text can be considered to be.

10.4.1 Results: *Lern Yerself Scouse*

I only considered the passages which are intended to represent LE (ignoring the 'translations' into Standard English), and I considered the first 31 pages of *LYS*, which contained approximately 1000 words. I found 292 respellings in total, which represents around 29% of the words in the text. The set of features that I identified, and the proportion of the respellings that they make up are given in table 10.1. The numbers do not add up to 100 because a few other 'one-off' respellings also occur.

EYE DIALECT	%
DH-stopping	29
<i>h</i> -dropping	15
SQUARE/NURSE	7
<i>yer</i>	7
<i>-in</i>	6
schwa = <i>-er</i>	6
<i>me = my</i>	5
T-to-R	3
ew = ʌ:	2
C=CC	2
<i>owl = old</i>	2
<i>a = of</i>	1
<i>an = and</i>	1
T's-	0.5
<i>yiz/yews</i>	0.5
<i>are = our</i>	0.5
TH-stopping	0.5
STRUT	0.5
ewk = ook	0.5
wha	0.5

Table 10.1: respellings in *Lern Yerself Scouse*

10.4.2 Results: A Scouse Interpretation of Alice in Wonderland

For this text, I began at the start of the passage which was discussed in Honeybone (2015), and considered just over 1000 words, finishing at a suitable break in the text. I found 546 respellings in total, which represents around 55% of the words in the text. The set of features that I identified, and the proportion that they make up of the respellings in the passage are given in table 10.2. The numbers again do not add up to 100 because a few other 'one-off' respellings also occur.

	%
EYE DIALECT	46
DH-stopping	19
<i>h</i> -dropping	9
<i>-in</i>	4
<i>an = and</i>	4
SQUARE/NURSE	4
T-to-R	2
TH-stopping	2
STRUT	2
<i>ter</i>	2
C=CC	2
<i>won/ce = one</i>	1
<i>yer = you</i>	1
<i>dinnt</i>	1

Table 10.2: respellings in *A Scouse Interpretation of Alice in Wonderland*

10.4.3 Results: *Stump*

For this text, I considered the first 1000 words of the chapter ‘Car’, an extract from which is given in (7). I found 109 respellings in total, which represents around 10% of the words in the text. The set of features that I identified, and the proportion that they make up of the respellings in the extract are given in table 10.3. Again, the numbers do not add up to 100 because a few other ‘one-off’ respellings also occur.

	%
EYE DIALECT	2
<i>-in</i>	46
schwa = <i>-er</i>	13
<i>h</i> -dropping	6
<i>thee = the/they</i>	6
T-to-R	4
<i>an = and</i>	3
DH-stopping	3
SQUARE/NURSE	2
<i>me = my</i>	2
<i>ar = our</i>	2
<i>ahl = old</i>	2
<i>djer = did you</i>	1
<i>ad = I’d</i>	1

Table 10.3: respellings in *Stump*

10.4.3 Discussion

I hope that the nature of the features mentioned in the tables is clear. It would take considerably more space than is available in this chapter to discuss the phonology and dialectology of each feature, but most should be interpretable for those who are familiar with these things. A few points should be clear from tables 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3:

- the extent to which respelling are used in a dialect writing text can vary considerably; in terms of the texts considered here, this varies from around 55% to around 10%
- the amount of eye dialect used in a text can vary considerably; in terms of the texts considered here, this varies from around 46% of the respellings in a text to around 2%
- the extent to which dialect features are represented in a text can also vary considerably; in terms of the texts considered here, this varies from around from 29% in *Alice*, to 27% in *LYS*, to 10% in *Stump* (these figures were obtained by subtracting the number of eye dialect respellings from the total number of respellings in a text and working out the percentage of the number remaining from the number of words in an extract)
- different dialect features are represented to different extents in the texts; in large part this is doubtless due to the difference in terms of the token frequency of the features themselves, but it does give an idea of which dialect features make up the biggest part of the impression that a piece of dialect writing makes on a reader
- to consider the question of which dialect features are salient to speakers and which are not, we can say the following: the features represented here have some degree of salience; those dialect features that are not represented here may well have less salience to speakers, and it may be that those that are represented frequently, and in more than one text, are highly salient

The full set of features that I noted in the texts is given in table 10.4. This table also represents several of the points just made. The features are ranked in order of how frequently they are spelled in the three texts – this is also indicated by the numbers in the final column, which was obtained by a simple addition of the percentages with which they are represented in the texts. The percentages are reproduced in the second column, which also thus indicates how many texts each feature is found in. Table 10.4 is thus one way of answering the question *which phonological dialect features get represented in LE dialect writing?* The other piece of information given in table 10.4 is which dialect features I judge to be quite highly localised to Liverpool (the localised features are given in bold and are marked with an asterisk). The decision about this is quite subjective, and might reasonably be queried, but I give it because it feeds into the issues discussed at the start of section 10.4 – other factors relevant there (such as the degree of phonological salience) have not been indicated because it would take some considerable discussion of each feature to justify it.

		%
<i>-in</i>	6 + 4 + 46	56
DH-stopping*	29 + 19 + 3	51
<i>h</i> -dropping	15 + 9 + 6	30
schwa = <i>-er</i>	6 + 13	19
SQUARE/NURSE*	7 + 4 + 2	13
T-to-R	3 + 2 + 4	9
<i>an</i> = <i>and</i>	1 + 4 + 3	8
<i>yer</i>	7 + 1	8
<i>me</i> = <i>my</i>	5 + 2	7
<i>thee</i> = <i>the/they</i>	6	6
<i>ahl</i> = <i>old</i> ; <i>owl</i> = <i>old</i>	2 + 2	4
C=CC	2 + 2	4
<i>ar</i> = <i>our</i> ; <i>are</i> = <i>our</i>	2 + 0.5	2.5
STRUT	0.5 + 2	2.5
TH-stopping*	0.5 + 2	2.5
ew = u:*	2	2
<i>ter</i>	2	2
<i>a</i> = <i>of</i>	1	1
<i>ad</i> = <i>I'd</i>	1	1
<i>dint</i>	1	1
<i>djer</i> = <i>did you</i>	1	1
<i>won/ce</i> = <i>one</i>	1	1
ewk = ook*	0.5	0.5
T's-*	0.5	0.5
<i>wha</i>*	0.5	0.5
<i>yiz/yews</i>*	0.5	0.5

Table 10.4: summary of proportions of respellings in all three LE texts

Table 10.4 raises a large number of issues and invites a lot more interpretation. Unfortunately, that cannot be done in this chapter. Some of the localised features seem highly salient, and others do not, but it needs to be remembered that this could be due to different textual frequencies of the features, as well as the nature of the types of features that they represent – a full analysis would consider all this. We might also want to investigate which dialect features of LE are *not* represented in the texts. There is no full list of LE dialect features (and the list would need to consider only those features which are in principle spellable), but some LE features that spring to mind but are not represented in the texts are: the BATH vowel, velar-nasal-plus and *r*-tapping. It may, of course, be that other dialect writing texts (or other sections of the three texts considered here) might include representations of these features, but this question can and should, at least, be considered.

10.5 Conclusions and questions

This chapter has considered a range of issues that arise when we consider the nature of the respellings that are found in dialect writing. Some of the arguments made in the above concern the very possibility of spelling phonological dialect features and the constraints that affect writers when they compose dialect writing. Others are specifically aimed towards answering questions concerning my key points of interest, which connect to issues related to the phonological salience of dialect features, and the basic question of what can count as a dialect feature. What I am fundamentally interested in is: *what does it take and mean for a phonological feature to be represented in dialect writing?* I hope that I have got some way towards answering this question in this chapter, but I am well aware that in doing so I have raised many more questions, which I leave unanswered. For a phonologist who is interested in nonstandard varieties of spoken English, there is a vast amount still to understand in the patterning of respellings in non-standard written English.

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² This kind of spelling could also be, especially among the young, an insightful attempt to spell GOOSE-fronting, which is now rapidly spreading through many varieties of English (consider Macleod 2018, who discussed a case where an adult used the spelling *skool*, but an adolescent used *skewl*).

³ How do I know this? Consultation with two LE-native-speaker linguists (Tony Crowley and Kevin Watson) confirmed my suspicion.

⁴ This is a controversial claim because Stanley Baxter had produced *Parliamo Glasgow* earlier (for example, a record with that title was released in 1963). Baxter's work was not 'localised', however, as it was made available nationally (and it may be more 'laughing at' than 'laughing with' the variety depicted), so it was not exactly like *LYS*, but the fundamental idea was already in the public realm.

⁵ This is clearly not representing rhoticity, given the broader context of the text and its general accuracy at representing LE. When compared to *the Girl from Penny Lane*, this shows how one spelling (<orl>) may represent different intentions in different texts.