AN ANALYSIS OF SOUNDS AND SPELLINGS BASED ON RP [i:] IN THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY LANCASHIRE VERNACULAR[1]

ANÁLISIS DE SONIDOS Y GRAFÍAS BASADAS EN LA PRONUNCIACIÓN ESTÁNDAR ACEPTADA DE [i:] EN LA VARIEDAD VERNÁCULA DE LANCASHIRE DEL SIGLO XIX

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Resumen
El dialecto de Lancashire ha tenido una extensa representación en la literatura. En este sentido, la literatura regional es considerada una herramienta eficaz en el estudio dialectal. Este artículo pretende analizar los sonidos y las grafías relacionadas con el grupo léxico FLEECE en el dialecto de Lancashire del siglo diecinueve a través de un análisis manual de varias obras de dialecto literario. Este estudio también examina la coexistencia de sonidos considerando razones históricas y dialectales.
Palabras clave: dialecto de Lancashire; dialecto literario; grafías no estándares; sonidos dialectales; grupo léxico FLEECE

Abstract
The Lancashire dialect has been substantially represented in literature. In this sense, regional literature is believed to a be useful tool in dialect research. This paper attempts to analyze the sounds and spellings related to the FLEECE lexical set in the nineteenth-century Lancashire vernacular through the manual examination of several literary dialect works. This study also examines the coexistence of sounds on the grounds of historical and dialect reasons.
Keywords: Lancashire dialect; literary dialect; deviant spellings; dialect sounds; FLEECE lexical set.

1. INTRODUCTION

Regional literature is considered a valuable source for dialect study (Sullivan 1980: 21; Sánchez García 2003; Ruano-García 2007: 111; García-Bermejo Giner 2010: 31). Dialect representation in literature is classified into two distinct approaches: dialect literature and literary dialect. The first type refers to those works that are completely

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written in a non-standard variety. As a result, dialect literature is mainly addressed to a limited readership: those readers who are capable of reading and understanding the vernacular variety represented. Alternatively, literary-dialect texts are largely composed in Standard English or the prestige variety except the characters' dialogues that are marked with a particular dialect, most often to denote their low social status or to stereotype their discourses. One of the most salient characteristics of this type of representation is the presence of readable non-standard or deviant spellings based upon semi-phonetic spellings of Standard English. As a result, readers who are not well connoisseurs of the variety depicted would not find the reading cumbersome. As literary-dialect writers were not linguists or dialect experts, they were not thoroughly rigorous and meticulous in dialect depiction as that was not their principal concern.

Nevertheless, literary-dialect texts are believed to be useful tools for linguists in dialect study (Ruano-García 2007: 111; Beal 2011: 204). As noted, literary dialect works attempt at representing the pronunciations that were once typical in a regional variety by means of deviant spellings. Thereby, a detailed examination of the non-standard or deviant spellings may aid to obtain phonological information about a particular vernacular variety. Therefore, these works allow philologists to inquire into the phonological realizations of a particular dialect at a specific period of time. In the light of the significance of literary-dialect production, this paper relies on these texts to examine the Lancashire vernacular variety.

This paper is framed within the synchronic research of the Lancashire dialect during the nineteenth century. Despite previous studies on this dialect (Ruano-García 2007; Barras 2015), the phonological features of this variety still remain unexplained. This is because research has mainly tackled the general linguistic phenomena of northern dialects or general dialect features of the Lancashire dialect. This paper shall endeavor to broaden the scope of previous investigations by exploring the distinct realizations that might have been in use in the dialect.

As a complete analysis of the Lancashire vernacular would be beyond the scope of this research, this paper aims at examining the non-standard or deviant spellings represented in nineteen different literary dialect works and their possible suggested pronunciation associated with RP [i:] or the FLEECE lexical set, according to the classification Wells (1982) provides for words related to that RP monophthong. The present research focuses on this lexical set due to the possible historical and linguistic reasons underlying both the standard pronunciation and the dialect sounds in FLEECE. This paper will also attempt to set out and explain the distinct dialect pronunciations and the possible coexistence of sounds within the same group of words.

On approaching a synchronic study on the Lancashire dialect through the examination of various literary-dialect texts, the degree of accuracy in dialect depiction needs to be regarded. As previously mentioned, literary-dialect authors may not be exceptionally conscientious in dialect portrayal as they were not philologists or dialect specialists. As a result, pronunciations or phonological linguistic details might be incorporated erroneously. The issue of historical grounds, when it comes to the linguistic and historical development

of sounds, should also be considered, since pronunciations that do not correspond to a particular set of words may appear. These two aforementioned factors can trigger the emergence of more than one dialect realization for the FLEECE lexical set.

The present paper will try to discuss the possible coexistence of sounds within the same lexical set by contemplating historical and dialect reasons in order to address the two aforementioned issues. This procedure may help ascertain which sounds were possible or typical for FLEECE in the Lancashire dialect during the nineteenth century.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Prior to the nineteenth century, English dialects, especially northern dialects, were stigmatized varieties. In this regard, the scholars Wales (2010: 61) and Hickey (2010: 13) point out that northern regional varieties were the most stigmatized forms as they were socially unaccepted. Görlach (1991: 84) also adds that non-standard dialects were principally limited to humorous and nostalgic aspects.

The publication of the Lyrical Ballads in the eighteenth century marked the approval of regional dialects and literary dialect works. Görlach (1981: 84) considers that writers such as Robert Burns or Sir Walter Scott contributed to this since they employed regional dialects in their writings. The reassessment of non-standard varieties involved an increase of the Lancashire literary production. *A view of the Lancashire Dialect* (1746) by John Collier, also known by the pseudonym Tim Bobbin, is a clear example of Lancashire dialect literature. This literary work, which was first published in Manchester, contains several dialogues wholly composed in a non-standard variety (Honeybone & Maguire 2020: 3). Other works such as *That Lass O' Lowrie's* (1877) and *The Haworth's* (1879) by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849-1924) or *Th' barrel Organ* (1862) and *Home-Life of the Lancashire Factory Folk* (1867) by the notable Lancashire writer Edwin Waugh (1817-1890) are valuable examples of this literary expansion of the Lancashire vernacular.

Samuel Laycock (1826-1893) was also a prominent writer in the representation of the Lancashire dialect. This poet attempted to depict this vernacular variety in works such as *Warblin's fro' an Owd Songster* (1893) and *The Collected Writings of Samuel Laycock* (1900). Other Lancashire authors such as Isabella Banks (1821-1897), Benjamin Brierley (1825-1896) and William Bury Westall (1834-1903) also outstand in the nineteenth century.

Regional literature is a valuable source for dialect study (Ruano-García 2007: 111; Beal 2011: 204). Traditionally, dialect representation was assumed to be divided into two distinct categories: dialect literature and literary dialect. The former refers to novels, plays and poems totally composed in one particular dialect and written by non-native speakers of that variety. Therefore, this literary approach is addressed to a non-standard dialect-speaking readership. The latter refers to those writings that are entirely composed in Standard English except for the characters' interventions which are marked with a particular vernacular variety. Despite this distinction, both approaches are sometimes

difficult to identify. Hodson (in Honeybone and Maguire 2020: 13) considers that "the boundary between dialect literature and literary dialect can be a rather permeable one".

This categorization of dialect writing should be broadened. Honeybone and Maguire (2020: 4) also identify 'non-fiction dialect writing', present in journalism; 'Generic literary dialect', which uses general features without attempting to represent a particular dialect; 'Contemporary humorous localized dialect literature', normally exemplified by published comic texts; and 'translations into a dialect', whose principal examples are *Gospels in Scouse* and *Alice's Adventchers in Wunderland*.

As literary-dialect writers wished their works to be read by a wide readership, they adopt deviant readable orthographical conventions suggesting other sounds which are 'phonetic' or 'semiphonetic' spellings of Standard English (Brook 1963: 185). Sánchez (2003: 20) suggests that these writers employ a set of traditional spellings that allow them to represent the non-standard pronunciations. Additionally, Honeybone & Maguire (2020: 15) suggest that these literary writings contain "long traditions and established orthographic conventions" in order to depict specific dialect features. The non-standard spellings <ay> and <eea>, which are present in the corpus compiled, are good instances of traditional spellings as they constitute long-established conventions within literary dialect writing.

Literary-dialect works have become a valuable source to obtain linguistic information such as phonology, syntax, or lexis of a particular regional dialect at a specific period of time (García-Bermejo Giner 1999: 252; Ruano-García 2012: 60). García-Bermejo Giner (1999: 252) also points out that comparing the standard and the non-standard orthography or the deviant spellings may allow researchers to predict particular dialect sounds or regional linguistic traits.

Despite the importance of literary-dialect works in dialect research and the previous studies that have been carried out on the Lancashire dialect (Downing 1980; Sánchez 2003; Ruano-García 2007; Barras 2015), the phonological aspects of this variety remain largely unexplored. Thereby, the present paper expects to contribute to a better understanding of the phonological phenomena of the Lancashire vernacular.

3. METHODOLOGY

In the interest of examining the sounds and spellings within the FLEECE lexical set, a corpus compilation consisting of different literary-dialect works[2] was elaborated in order to undertake the present research. Table 1 illustrates the distinct writers and their corresponding literary works selected for this study. As shown, nineteen different nineteenth-century literary-dialect texts[3] written by five authors were adopted.

2 The majority of the works selected for the corpus are novels except for *The Three Buckleys: A Local Farce in One Act* (1870) by Benjamin Brierley, which corresponds to the theatrical genre.

3 The corpus contains three literary texts that belong to the first decade of the twentieth century. This is because, their corresponding author, John Ackworth, was a nineteenth-century writer who succeeded in mastering the Lancashire dialect of that time and tried to represent it in all their writing compositions.

Table 1. Selected nineteenth-century writers and literary-dialect works for the corpus.

John Ackworth (1854-1917)	Benjamin Brierley (1825-1896)	Isabella Banks (1821-1897)	James Marshall Mather (1834-1903)	William Bury Westall (1834-1903)
Beckside Lights (1897)	*Gooin' to Cyprus* (1850)	*The Manchester Man* (1876)	*Lancashire Idylls* (1895)	*The Old Factory: A Lancashire Story* (1881)
The Scowcroft Critics (1898)	*The Layrock of Langley-Side: A Lancashire Story* (1864)	*Caleb Booth's Clerk: A Lancashire Story* (1882)	*The Sign of the Wooden Shoon* (1896)	*Ralph Norbreck's Trust* (1885)
The Minder (1900)	*Ab-Oth'-Yate at the Isle of Man* (1869)	*The Watchmaker's Daughter* (1882)	*By Roaring Loom* (1898)	*Birch Dene: A Novel* (1889)
The Mangle House (1902)	*The Three Buckleys: A Local Farce in One Act* (1870)	*Forbidden to Marry* (1883)		
The Partners (1907)				

Most of the literary compositions chosen and examined for this study were collected from The Salamanca Corpus: Digital Archive of English Dialects[4]. The works *The Manchester Man*, The *Watchmaker's Daughter* and *Forbidden to Marry* were retrieved from the Internet Archive: Digital Library of Free and Borrowable Books[5]. Finally, the novel *By Roaring Loom* was obtained from the resource Minor Victorian Poets and Authors[6].

The selection of the five writers was based on whether they were born in the county of Lancashire or found in the dialect their vehicle of communication in literature, as is the case of John Ackworth and James Marshall Mather. These two authors, despite being born in Yorkshire and Durham, respectively, turned to the Lancashire vernacular

4 *The Salamanca Corpus* is a free-access digital corpus comprising valuable documents representative of literary dialects and dialect literature. It is available at http://www.thesalamancacorpus.com/.

5 This is a free-access digital repository containing a large number of documents, books, movies, etc. It is available at https://archive.org/.

6 *Minor Victorian Poets and Authors* is a digital collection of texts composed in poetry and prose, the majority of which written in the Lancashire dialect. It is available at https://minorvictorianwriters.org.uk/.

in order to represent the speeches of nineteenth-century Lancastrians[7]. The literary-dialect texts were chosen when they contained the representation of the Lancashire dialect. This is because some of the writers' literary works are entirely composed in Standard English without any trace of dialect depiction.

In literary dialect works, as the dialect is solely used to mark the discourse of the characters when they intervene, this study principally examines and focuses on their dialogues, but without overlooking the storyline and the context of the texts. As noted, literary-dialect works are a significant source to obtain linguistic information of a particular regional variety at a specific time. In this regard, García-Bermejo Giner (1999: 252) affirms that a comparison between the standard and the non-standard orthography is of great value when researchers attempt to approach a phonological study via literary-dialect texts. Accordingly, the deviant spellings that are associated with RP [i:] or the FLEECE lexical set are grouped together and attributed to their possible pronunciation in the dialect. The gathering of the different orthographical conventions was done manually without the assistance of any concordance tool.

As previously noted, the present study principally centers on the different characters' dialogues. In the reading and analysis of the characters' speeches, words related to the FLEECE lexical set are first identified and collected. Afterwards, the distinct non-standard spellings contained in those terms are gathered and classified based on their similarity and attributed to their possible pronunciations in the Lancashire dialect. In order to analyze the sounds suggested by the digraphs collected, the present paper is grounded on two central pillars. On the one hand, the structure of Standard English orthography, since the deviant spellings present in literary dialect works are based on semiphonetic spellings of the standard. On the other hand, the use of relevant literature related to northern dialects and the Lancashire dialect, such as Wright (1905), Wakelin (1977), Wells (1982), Shorrocks (1994), Sánchez (2003), and Clark (2004).

4. DEVIANT SPELLINGS AND THEIR RELATED DIALECT SOUNDS BASED ON THE RP MONOPHTHONG [i:]

This section addresses words comprising the non-standard spellings <ay>, <ey>, <ei>, and <eea> which relate to the standard orthography <e>, <ea>, and <ee> and the standard sound [i:]. According to Wells (1982a: 140), terms containing the RP monophthong [i:] but other realizations in other dialects and accents, are grouped into the FLEECE category.

As far as the readability of the spellings <ay>, <ey>, <ei>, and <eea> are concerned, readers who are not familiar with the Lancashire vernacular may not find their reading cumbersome. This is because all of them are present in the Standard English orthography, with the exception of <eea>.

7 The concept Lancastrians refers to those native speakers or inhabitants of the county of Lancashire.

Table 2 illustrates the different deviant spellings included in the lexical set of FLEECE and the types and tokens. The second column comprises the total number of terms containing each deviant spelling. The third right column includes both the types or the different word forms and tokens. Tokens or the total number of each type is indicated by "x" and the corresponding frequency in brackets.

Table 2. Deviant spellings, total amount of words, types and tokens, according to the corpus

Deviant spellings	Total number of words represented	Types and tokens
<ay>	4	Cr**ay**tur (creature) (x1); d**ay**cent (decent) (x22); f**ay**ver (fever) (x10); t**ay**cher (teacher) (x1)
<ey> / <ei>	3	Sp**ey**k (x8) / sp**ei**k (speak) (x13); **ey**t (eat) (x16)
<eea>	9	Cl**eea**n (clean) (x7); d**eea**l (deal) (x18); f**eea**st (feast) (x1); k**eea**pin' (keeping) (x1); l**eea**ve (leave) (x6); m**eea**t (meat) (x1); pl**eea**s (x1) / pl**eea**sed (pleased) (x2); st**eea**m (steam) (x5)

As noted, literary-dialect works are entirely written in Standard English except for the characters' speeches which are marked with a particular non-standard linguistic variety, in this case, the Lancashire dialect. Accordingly, the different dialogues incorporate numerous dialect instances without any trace of standard orthographical conventions. As a result, all the terms collected in the corpus are not found in their corresponding standard forms. In this regard, the recurrence of terms is not determinant or decisive for the present study, since the repetition of words throughout the texts principally relies on the context and the particular plot of each literary text and not on dialect reasons.

4.1. HISTORICAL ORIGINS

The main goal of the present section is to present a diachronic insight into the linguistic origins of the RP monophthong [i:] and the dialect diphthongs [ɛɪ] and [ɪə][8]. This analysis may help discern at which point the Lancashire vernacular began to depart from Standard English.

8 The connection between the spellings and their corresponding sounds are further tackled in sections 5, 6, and 7.

Most of the terms comprised in this study contain the spelling <ea> in the standard orthography. This standard spelling proves, according to Gimson (1980: 160) and Sánchez (2003: 122), the existence of the Middle English vocalic sound [ɛ:].

According to Hoad (1986), the terms "speak", "eat", "meat", and "feast" contained the short vowel [e] in Old English. This short monophthong apparently experienced Open Syllable Lengthening. This sound change consists of a process by which short vowels lengthened and lowered in open syllable. This means, in syllables in which they were followed by a single consonant along with another vowel. As a result of this phonological process, Old English [e] became [ɛ:] in Middle English.

Hoad (1986) records the terms "teacher", "mean", "clean", "deal", and "leave" with Old English [æ:], which later developed into [ɛ:] in Middle English (Algeo 2010: 124). The term "steam" is recorded by Hoad (1986) with the long diphthong [æ:ɑ] in Old English, which, according to Algeo (2010: 124), monophthongized into [ɛ:] in Middle English.

Hoad (1986) attests the words "please", "creature", and "decent" and argues their French origin. The first two words probably entered with [ɛ:] as the standard spelling <ea> suggests. Finally, this scholar (1986) records "fever" and "keep" with [e:] in Old English, which remained unchanged during the following period.

All these terms experienced Great Vowel Shift. This phonological process is considered the most significant of all phonological developments in the English history since it contributed to delimiting the Middle English period from the Modern English. This sound change involved a change in vowel quality as mid vowels raised one step; the low vowel [a:] fronted to [æ:] and subsequently to [ɛ:] and to [e]; and the highest vowels [i:] and [u:] diphthongized into [aɪ] and [aʊ], respectively. As a result of the Great Vowel Shift sound change, Middle English [ɛ:] and [e:] developed into [i:], which is the current pronunciation that the words recorded herein present in Standard English. On the other hand, the two Lancashire Dialect diphthongs [ɛɪ] and [ɪə], evidenced in the present study, possibly underwent different processes.

The diphthong [ɛɪ] in words related to RP [i:] is explained by Dobson (1968: 777) on the association of Middle English [ɛ:] with Middle English [aɪ] and [a:]. He adds that this association was rare before 1600 and not common until roughly 1700 (Dobson 1968: 778).

On the other hand, [ɪə] is explained considering its Middle English origin. Sánchez (2003: 221) claims that although Middle English [ɛ:] and Middle English [e:] merged into one single sound, [i:] in the prestige variety, the dialects of Yorkshire and Lancashire preserved a phonological distinction. This means, the first Middle English pronunciation derived into the diphthong [ɪə] and the second into the monophthong [i:] in these two counties. Orton (in Sánchez 2003: 221) also indicates that the development of Middle English [ɛ:] before turning into [ɪə] was [ɛə] and adds that this process was completed in around 1500.

5. LITERARY DIALECT SPELLING <ay>

This subsection tackles the four words containing the spelling <ay>: *craytur* (creature), *daycent* (decent), *fayver* (fever), and *taycher* (teacher). This digraph and all these terms are exclusively present in Ackworth's and Mather's works. The subsequent occurrences exemplify the use of these terms in the corpus recorded:

"An' th' craytur 'at used to rub itsel' abaat his legs, an' eyt his meat" (And the creature that used to rub itself about his legs, and eat his meat) (By Roaring Loom [Mather 1898: 9, emphasis added])

"Lijah used to be a daycent sort; but he's held his yed daan latly, as though he'd done summit wrang, as they say" (Lijah used to be a decent sort; but he's held his head down lately, as though he'd done something wrong, as they say) (The Sign of the Wooden Shoon [Mather 1896: 17, emphasis added])

"He geet rheumatic fayver six year sin'" (He got rheumatic fever six years ago) (Lancashire Idylls [Mather 1895: 82, emphasis added])

"Two or three of th' young lady taychers o' th' Sundo' schoo'" (Two or three of the young lady teachers of the Sunday School) (By Roaring Loom [Mather 1898: 53, emphasis added])

Sánchez (2003: 215) and Clark (2004: 148) record the spelling <ay> for words which relate to the RP monophthong [i:]. Sánchez (2003: 215) continues adding that this spelling should not be considered as an orthographical innovation, since it constitutes a traditional variant within the literary dialect representation.

Shorrocks (1994: 232) and Sánchez (2003: 215) connect the deviant spelling <ay> with the diphthong [ɛɪ]. In addition, Wakelin (1977: 89) also records [ɛɪ] for the area of the north Midlands.

Wright (1905) records the diphthong [ɛɪ] in Lancashire, but only in the words "teacher" and "fever". [ɛɪ] for the first word is seen in central, mid-south, south-western and southern Lancashire. For the second word, this diphthong is limited to south-eastern Lancashire. Ellis (1889) uniquely shows the presence of this centring diphthong in the term "teacher" in the North Midlands, which is, according to this scholar (1889), the dialectal area to which Lancashire belongs. According to the Survey of English Dialects (hereinafter SED), this fronting diphthong is found in these words in the county of Lancashire.

6. LITERARY DIALECT SPELLINGS <ey> AND <ei>

The non-standard spellings <ey> and <ei> are grouped together in the same section as they could be allographs suggesting the same sound in the Lancashire dialect. The corpus only records *speyk* / *speik* (speak) and *eyt* (eat), which are employed by three distinct authors: John Ackworth, James Marshall Mather and William Bury Westall. These words are exemplified in the following sentences:

"There's one for thi to eyt wi' me and 'Lijah, and one for thi to tak' whom. We know haa to bake" (There's one for you to eat with me and Lijah, and one for you to take home. We know how to bake) (The Sign of the Wooden Shoon [Mather 1896: 94, emphasis added])

"He's promised no' ta speik abaat it fur a wik, hasna he?" (He's promised not to speak about it for a week, hasn't he?) (Beckside Lights [Ackworth 1897: 194, emphasis added])

"I mun have a different tale fro' that afore I speyk to th' mayster. I mun see for mysel'" (I must have a different tale from that before I speak to the master, must see for myself) (The Old Factory [Westall 1881: 193, emphasis added])

The deviant spelling <ey> / <ei> is only evidenced by Sánchez (2003: 229). However, she only records them for words related to RP [ɑ:] but not to RP [i:] as in *feyther*, *reyther* for "father" and "rather" respectively.

The possible pronunciation for <ey> / <ei> is, according to Sánchez (2003: 229), the diphthong [ɛɪ]. Wright (1905) does not provide any deviant spelling but suggests [ɛɪ] for "eat" and "speak" in the county of Lancashire, specifically in central, mid-southern, and south-western areas of the county. Ellis (1889) also suggests the diphthongal sound [ɛɪ] for these two words in the region of the North Midlands. According to this scholar (1889), this fronting diphthong in "eat" is also present in other areas of the country, such as Northwestern, Wessex and Norse.

7. LITERARY DIALECT SPELLING <eea>

This category centers on the non-standard spelling <eea> and the seven different words including it: *cleean* (clean), *deeal* (deal), *feeast* (feast), *keeapin'* (keeping), *leeave* (leave), *meeat* (meat), *pleeas/pleeased* (please/pleased), and *steeam* (steam). These dialect words are adopted by all the authors in the compiled corpus. The subsequent sentences illustrate the use of these terms in the corpus:

"An' gi'e th' matrimonial sky sich a cleean sweep" (And give the matrimonial sky such a clean sweep) (Ab-O'th'-Yate at the Isle of Man [Brierley 1869: 20, emphasis added])

"Theau purtends t' know a good deeal abeaut animals" (You pretend to know a good deal about animals) (Gooin' to Cyprus [Brierly 1850: 16, emphasis added])

"And without as mich as with yor leeave, or by yor leeave, shouted eawt--- But aw mun be off" (And without as much as your leave, or by your leave, shouted out – I must be off) (Caleb Booth's Clerk: A Lancashire Story [Banks 1882, 2, emphasis added])

"An' we can pleease aarsel's whether we goa or not" (And we can please ourselves whether we go or not) (Beckside Lights [Ackworth 1897: 350, emphasis added])

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Shorrocks (1994: 233) and Sánchez (2003: 221) record the non-standard spelling <eea> for words that relate to RP [i:]. Sánchez (2003: 221) also points out that this digraph is not an authors' innovation as this is a very common representation among northern counties, especially in Yorkshire.

The dialect spelling <eea> may suggest a diphthongal realization, whether [iːə] or [ɪə], in the Lancashire vernacular. Algeo (2010: 118) holds the idea that in order to indicate vowel length, "Middle English writing frequently doubled letters, particularly *ee* and *oo*, the practice becoming general in the East Midland dialect late in the period". However, since the English language does not contain long diphthongs, [ɪə] seems to be most feasible option.

Shorrocks (1994, 233) and Sánchez (2003: 221) connect the digraph <eea> with the diphthong [ɪə]. Wright (1905), Wakelin (1977: 89) and Wells (1982: 195) also record the diphthong [ɪə] but without including any spelling. Wells (1982: 195) adds that [ɪə] belongs to the traditional dialect of Middle English counties, including that of Lancashire.

Wright (1905) records the diphthong [ɪə] in Lancashire for all the words in this group. Specifically, [ɪə] in "meal" is seen in the mid-east, in "please", it is reflected in the south-mid, and in "keep", the diphthong is recorded in south-eastern Lancashire.

In the rest of the terms, the diphthong [ɪə] is more geographically widespread. This diphthong in "meat" is seen in the east-mid, north-western, and north-eastern Lancashire. In "clean", it is reflected in areas of the southwest and south; in "deal", [ɪə] is recorded in the southeast and the southwest. Finally, in "steam", this dialect centring diphthong is recorded in the north, east-mid, mid-south, southeast and the southwest of the county. Ellis (1889) evidences this centring diphthong in "please" and "steam" in the area of the North Midlands. On the other hand, based on the data provided by SED, this diphthong is the most common and widespread pronunciation in this group of words in the counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

8. DISCUSSION

Our corpus records four different spellings <ay>, <ey>, <ei>, and <eea> related to the standard written conventions <e>, <ea>, and <ee> and the RP monophthong [i:]. As previously noted, the spellings <ay> and <ey> / <ei> represent the diphthong [ɛɪ] and <eea> [ɪə]. Therefore, the present paper shows the coexistence of two different pronunciations, the diphthongs [ɛɪ] and [ɪə], for the same lexical set in the Lancashire dialect.

The use of the spellings <ay> and <ey> / <ei> to represent [ɛɪ] is not equally employed by the five writers as it would depend on the writers' writing techniques. This is seen in Ackworth's use of <ay> and <ei> in *craytur* and *speik* respectively, Banks's and Westall's preference for <ey>, and Mather's employment of both <ey> and <ay>. However, the fact that <ey> / <ei> are merely associated with terms related to RP [ɑː] (Sánchez (2003: 288) and that both orthographical forms are solely represented in

three words in total would suggest the unusual character of these digraphs and their correlated pronunciation, [ɛɪ], for the FLEECE lexical set.

The corpus also reflects the prevalence of the diphthong [ɪə] over the sound [ɛɪ], as it is present in a larger number of words (see table 2). The diphthong [ɪə] is shown in words used by all the five writers and [ɛɪ] in words used by only three of them. The diphthong [ɪə] may be assumed as a familiar sound for FLEECE because all the writers make use of the spelling <eea> in several words to represent this realization. This would allude to the premise that [ɪə] was probably known or usual for this lexical set during the nineteenth century in the county of Lancashire.

9. CONCLUSIONS

This paper's main aim was the analysis of sounds and spellings related to the RP monophthong [i:] or the FLEECE lexical set in the nineteenth-century Lancashire dialect. The present study revealed three distinct types of spellings <ay>, <ey> / <ei>, and <eea>, which suggest two divergent pronunciations [ɛɪ] and [ɪə] and their coexistence within the same lexical set.

The concurrence of pronunciations within the same group of terms set is not arbitrary. The realization of the diphthong [ɛɪ] within the FLEECE lexical set is the result of phonological changes different from those of Standard English. As noted by Dobson (1968: 777), the monophthong [i:] began to be commonly associated with words containing Middle English [ɛ:] in the 18th century. The realization [ɪə], represented by the spelling <eea>, is used by the five writers of the corpus and it is depicted in numerous words. This fact would indicate that this centring diphthong was probably more common or typical than the closing diphthong for this group of words during the nineteenth century in Lancashire.

Therefore, the deviant spelling <eea> is the most adopted convention in FLEECE. Based on the number of terms containing <eea> and that the five writers make use of it, its corresponding diphthong [ɪə] would be the most representative pronunciation for this group of terms.

Although this paper solely covered sounds and spellings related to terms related to RP [i:] or the FLEECE lexical set, this research expects to shed some light on the pronunciations that were once in use in the Lancashire vernacular during the nineteenth century. It is hoped that further research is carried out in order to increase the knowledge and understanding of this vernacular variety.

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