

**The Urban Vernacular of Late
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The Urban Vernacular of Late Medieval and Renaissance Bristol

De stadstaal van Bristol in de late middeleeuwen
en renaissance
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

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door

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geboren op 20 april 1984 te Wamel

Promotoren: Prof. dr. P.C.H. Schrijver
Prof. dr. A. Auer

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List of abbreviations, time periods and transcription practices

Abbreviations

| | |
|---------------|--|
| <i>BRO:</i> | Bristol Record Office |
| <i>f.(b):</i> | folio (b = recto) |
| <i>LALME:</i> | A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English |
| <i>OED:</i> | Oxford English Dictionary |

Time periods

| | |
|---|---------------|
| <i>Old English period (OE):</i> | ca. 449-1100 |
| <i>Middle English period (ME):</i> | ca. 1100-1500 |
| <i>Late Middle English period (LME):</i> | ca. 1400-1500 |
| <i>Early Modern English period (EModE):</i> | ca. 1500-1700 |
| <i>Tudor period:</i> | 1485-1603 |
| <i>Steward period:</i> | 1603-1714 |

Transcription practices

Regarding the transcribed examples that are used in this thesis, abbreviations have been silently expanded, unless showing the abbreviated form serves an illustrative purpose. Original spellings have been maintained, also the orthographs *f* and *þ*. For the sake of readability, original lineation has not been maintained.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. The 'mess' that is language

The variety of shape, pattern, and color found in the languages of the world is a testament to the wonder of nature, to the breathtaking array of possibilities that can emerge, tangled and wild, from the fertile human endowments of brain and larynx, intelligence and social skills. The job of the linguist, like that of the biologist or the botanist, is not to tell us how nature should behave, or what its creations should look like, but to describe those creations in all their messy glory and try to figure out what they can teach us about life, the world, and, especially in the case of linguistics, the workings of the human mind. (Okrent 2009: 5)

Some may indeed be deterred at the sight of the “messy glory” presented by language, as a living language never seems to be willing to remain or become a stable, unchanging artefact, despite the attempts of language prescriptivists. The English language is no exception to that in that it constantly changes, which is why the English of today looks vastly different from that of hundreds of years ago. In fact, we do not even need to travel back in time to notice that the English language varies and shows different “patterns” and “colours” as you move from city to city, or as you speak to different people, i.e. you will come across different dialects and varieties of English. At the same time, however, people seem to be able to overcome this “mess” and are able to communicate with each other in one way or another. We are able to adapt our language depending on the context we find ourselves in. For instance, at home a person may speak in his or her own local dialect with relatives, but they may use another variety when they write an e-mail to a business associate. Our social abilities equip us with the capacity to adapt our language according to the circumstances at hand. The question is how we adapt our language, and when. What are the consequences? And why would we adapt our language at all? One of the most intriguing questions, and also one of

the central questions of this thesis, is how some dialects may actually come to look more like one another and lose some of their distinct “colours.” An interesting case in point is that of written English in Late Medieval and Early Modern England (c. 1300-1700), which will be the object of study in this thesis.

In the Medieval period (c.1200-1400), the English that was written down displayed all kinds of variation and reflected a rich array of dialect forms that were spoken in the different regions of England, as well as a wide variety of different spellings for the same word (Samuels 1981: 43; Smith 1992: 56). All in all, there did not seem to be a widely shared consensus as to how certain words had to be written. As time progressed, however, the language varieties that were written in the country appeared to converge and to shed some of their ‘colours’ in the different localities, while at the same time some local written varieties assumed new, more exotic colours that were shared supraregionally (Benskin 1992; Blake 1996). How did people arrive at a written variety that could be understood in every dialect area, or that did not seem to contain many local features at all? Was this a non-local variety that we later came to call Standard written English? Indeed, at first sight, the English writings from the fifteenth century are not all that different from present-day Standard English, especially compared to earlier written forms of English. How could this be the case at a time when there was no such thing as a language institution, mass schooling, or printing houses that could dictate the use of certain standardised spellings or grammar, or one particular variety of English? (cf. Milroy & Milroy 1999; Milroy 2000; Takeda 2001: 56-60) In fact, there is very little evidence that people were overly concerned with any kind of nation-wide written standard at the time, but this is why it is relevant to shed light on the supralocalisation and convergence processes that gave rise to a supra-local written variety.

1.2. Language standardisation in England¹: a new approach

Traditional accounts and students' textbooks tend to describe the development of Standard English in a somewhat uniplex manner, which Hope (2000: 49) aptly coined as the "single-ancestor dialect hypothesis", i.e. the idea that it was directly derived from a single written variety that was used by the Chancery clerks at the seat of government in Late Medieval London. The argument generally suggested that this variety gained wide currency due to the prestige that it was attributed as the language of government, but also due to London's size and pre-eminence as an urban centre (cf. Barber 1972; Strang 1974; Fisher 1977; Leith 1983). The assumption that Standard English was a descendant of a London variety was all too often based on a small set of texts from the metropolis alone (see Samuels 1963; Fisher 1996). Furthermore, texts were often scrutinised for features resembling those of the so-called Chancery Standard, glossing over the fact that many of these texts showed a wide range of variations in other respects (cf. Fisher et al. 1982; Fisher 1977, 1996). This so-called "single-minded march towards Standard English" (Lass 1976: xi) has been challenged, however, by for instance, Benskin (1992), Nevalainen (2000), and Wright (1996, 2000 (ed.), 2013), who have convincingly argued that the process behind the development of a standard variety may present itself to be more of a "messy glory" than has traditionally been assumed. Although different approaches to the Standard English problem have been proposed (cf. Benskin 1992; Nevalainen 2000; Wright 2000 (ed.); Hernandez-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2009), there appear to be no firmly established frameworks or theories that have been subjected to extensive empirical research.

The project *Emerging Standards Urbanisation and the Development of Standard English, c. 1400-1700*, of which this dissertation is a part, seeks to address this gap by identifying the complex processes that may be involved in the development of written supralocal varieties such as Standard English and aims to look at new,

¹ See also Haugen (1966), Linn & Mclelland (2002), Deumert & Vandebussche (2003), Deumert (2004) for studies on standardisation processes in other languages.

different, and more data than has hitherto been done. What is more, as hinted at in the quote by Okrent (2009) above, language is not simply an entity or skill that exists in a vacuum in the human brain. Language is inextricably wound up with the social and societal contexts in which it exists and is used. So, in order to obtain a fuller grasp of how, where, when and why the people of Late Medieval and Early Modern England started to write in a variety of English that showed less local features, we need not only consider what happened on a purely linguistic level, but we also need to consider the context in which the language was used, i.e. who those people that wrote the texts were, where they came from, where they travelled to, with whom they came in contact, how they learned to write, what they wrote, what their lives and society looked like, what was important to them, to illustrate just a few of the pertinent questions. Many of these factors are taken into account and considered as important factors in the linguistic process of standardisation. The *Emerging Standards* project thus takes an interdisciplinary approach in that it draws on the fields of historical (socio)linguistics, socio-economic/demographic history, textual history, as well as the history of literacy, so as to reconstruct as accurately as possible the context in which a supralocal written variety has developed. As pointed out earlier, previous research on standardisation has pre-dominantly focussed on London in terms of geographical location (Fisher et al. 1982; Fisher 1977, 1996; Nevalainen 2000; Wright 1996, 2000 (ed.)). The *Emerging Standards* project strives to make the picture more complete by shifting the focus to language variation and change in texts from other urban centres that were densely populated and that were of major importance in the Late Medieval and Early Modern periods, as it was in those places that literacy levels were relatively high and the production of texts proliferated. Importantly, the four urban centres that were chosen for the project are all urban centres that were of great importance in one of the major Middle English dialect areas: York (North), Norwich (East Anglia), Coventry (Midlands) and, finally, the urban centre with which this thesis is concerned: Bristol (South West).

By studying language variation and change in the respective urban centres over the period of 1400-1700, as well as by investigating

the context in which these changes took place, it will be possible to establish what role the respective four centres may have played in the development and spread of a supralocal written variety or, possibly, supralocal written varieties. Ultimately, the results of the studies of the different centres can be compared to one another as well as to existing research on London. In doing so, the project provides new data and important new observations that help unravel some of the mysteries surrounding the emergence and development of a written supralocal variety.

1.3. Research objectives and outline

This thesis will examine the role of Bristol in the emanation and spread of a written supralocal variety during the period 1400-1700. In this period, Bristol was one of the most important port towns in England and the gateway to the South West of England, Wales and Ireland, as well as to the New World and the European continent (Carus-Wilson 1962; Beetham-Fisher 1987; Fleming 1996). As it was the main hub of social, cultural and commercial activity in the South West, it can be expected that it had its own dynamics when it comes to linguistic innovation and change. By employing both quantitative and qualitative modes of enquiry, I intend to illuminate the processes that may have played a role in the development and change of the written vernacular of Bristol.

Social factors and language and dialect contact due to trade and migration will be considered to explain the adoption or dissemination of supralocal features. This means that I will provide as much extra-linguistic context as is available and relevant, i.e. I will consider the broader social context in which the written language was produced, as well as the social background of individual writers.

Since the *Emerging Standards* project, and thus also this PhD project, set out to explore a new and holistic approach to the standardisation process, a substantial part of my thesis is dedicated to the provision of theoretical and historical background that places my empirical linguistic findings in a broader extra-linguistic context. The thesis is divided into a theoretical part (Chapters 2-5) and an empirical part (Chapters 6-9):

In **Chapter 2**, I discuss and outline the field of historical sociolinguistics, which is the theoretical framework within which my linguistic research is embedded and which forms the basis of the linguistic interpretations for this study. The field is not buttressed by a single unified theory, rather, it is a conglomerate of different approaches that are united by the basic tenets that language is a social phenomenon and that language variation and change is often socially motivated (see for instance Labov 1966; Milroy 1992; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003). As I give an overview of the field, I situate my research in the field as well as address the prospects and limitations that are related to this study and connect my research problem to previous research. Lastly, I will restate the research objectives in the light of the theoretical framework that I have provided in the chapter.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the question of what precisely standardisation and standard languages are considered to be. The existing views on how the concepts should be defined and applied are diverging and often based on assumptions, rather than on empirically informed hypotheses. In order to be able to tackle the language standardisation question in the present study, it is essential that the terms *standard language* and *standardisation* are formulated as precisely as possible. In this chapter, I attempt to disentangle the different definitions and to formulate a working hypothesis that will be used for the present study. Furthermore, the working hypothesis that will be proposed in this chapter will ultimately be informed by the empirical findings of my study.

As this study utilises a sociolinguistic framework, the reconstruction of the social context is essential. **Chapter 4** zooms in on Bristol and places the urban centre in its (socio)historical context. In this chapter, I explore the demographics and social structure in Late Medieval and Early Modern Bristol (c. 1400-1700), as well as the economic, social and cultural role that the urban centre played in England over the same period. Notably, the chapter examines long- and short-term migration patterns in order to identify possible language and dialect contact scenarios.

In **Chapter 5**, I discuss an important aspect that is often overlooked in historical sociolinguistic studies, which is the role of literacy in society. By literacy I not only refer to the number of people that were able to read and write, but also the cultural space that written language occupied in society. In present-day Western societies, almost everything is recorded and conducted in written language, and various different types of written records and corresponding written conventions exist. In the past, however, as well as in present-day oral cultures, the recording of affairs in written form may not be as self-evident. It may be assumed that the shift from an oral to a literate society is pivotal in written language standardisation, hence the history of literacy deserves due attention. In other words, in this chapter, I shed light on how and when English came to be written down, by whom and under what circumstances.

Chapter 6 introduces the empirical part of my thesis and is concerned with the methodological approach to the data analyses. In order to study the written language of Bristol in the past, the collection of the appropriate data was an essential part. A significant portion of my research project was concerned with archival work, notably the searching for texts written in Bristol between 1400-1700, as well as the transcription of the texts, and the compilation and development of an electronically searchable corpus. This chapter briefly explains corpus linguistic methods in general, as well as the approach taken by the *Emerging Standards project*, and my project in particular. Since I was closely involved in the corpus design, I discuss some of the challenges that are involved in the digitising of historical data and describe some of the solutions that will be valuable to the field of corpus linguistics in general. The chapter also provides detailed background about the texts that I used for the linguistic study of this thesis.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 deal with linguistic variation and change regarding three different features in Bristol texts over the period 1400-1700. The main objective in all of these chapters is to study the development of features that became part of the emerging written supralocal variety or standard variety and to consider these changes from both an internal linguistic and an extra-linguistic perspective. Traditional studies on standardisation of Early English tend to focus on

spelling variation, whereas syntactic and morphological features have hitherto received less attention (Samuels 1963; Fisher 1977; Benskin 1992). In order to fully understand the processes involved in language standardisation, linguistic change on different levels should be investigated. Hence, my thesis takes into account a (morpho)syntactic feature, a morphological feature and a spelling variant. **Chapter 7** scrutinises the changing patterns of relative markers. The relative pronoun system underwent significant changes in the course of the Middle English period. This is a phenomenon that has received quite some scholarly attention, but that has not yet been much studied in terms of its regional distribution. The objective of this chapter is thus to gain insight into the development of the form in the South West of England and in Bristol in particular. **Chapter 8** is concerned with the development of third person present tense markers. The research aim of this chapter is two-fold. Firstly, the study investigates the marking of both plural and singular verb constructions. The existing research on the supralocalisation of the *-s* form and the disappearance of *-th* in the third person singular has been studied extensively with regard to standardisation (Bambas 1947; Kytö 1993; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2000, 2003; Gries & Hilpert 2010), whereas the occurrence of other singular forms and the plural forms is often not considered in relation to standardisation processes. Secondly, the goal is to establish what variants occurred in the Bristol area and to determine when, if and how they were replaced by supralocal forms. Finally, **Chapter 9** traces the replacement of the older English graph <þ> and other variants by <th>, which has been retained until the present day.

Each of these three chapters starts with a general historical linguistic background of the development of the feature in question and an overview of relevant previous studies to which the findings of my study are compared. Furthermore, the empirical findings are considered in the light of the social context in which they appeared. In this way, I will try to determine what may have been important external factors while also drawing on the theoretical background that I have provided in the theoretical part of my thesis. It may strike the reader that the chapters vary in length. This can be attributed to the degree of complexity of the linguistic phenomena under investigation.

Especially the survey of the relative markers called for a lengthy review of existing studies, as well as the consideration of various internal linguistic variables.

Finally, **Chapter 10** revisits the main objectives of the thesis and evaluates how the findings of my study inform the research questions that I set out to answer. For instance, based on the findings of my study, the chapter considers whether we can speak of a Bristol vernacular with typical linguistic features of its own. Other questions are: What developments can be observed with regard to variation in morphology, spelling and syntax? In relation to this, is there a clear tendency towards a non-regional form? Can we observe different patterns for the different linguistic features? Can we relate the developments to a broader social context? Taking into account the new empirical evidence, the final chapter also re-assesses the working hypothesis on standardisation as proposed in Chapter 3 and considers what may be the wider implications for existing standardisation theories in general.

Chapter 2. Historical sociolinguistics

2.1. Introduction: the theoretical basis

The present study situates itself within the field of historical sociolinguistics. Although the field comprises an array of different approaches, the main objective that underlies each approach is to study socially conditioned language variation and change in the past. The discipline's foundations are rooted in the field of sociolinguistics, which emerged as a fully-fledged linguistic discipline in the 1970s (Chambers 2013: 2). Since historical sociolinguistic theory largely draws on the foundations of sociolinguistics, I will provide a concise outline of what sociolinguistics in general entails in Section 2.2. As the present study takes a new and integrationist approach to tackle the standardisation question, I aim to explore and incorporate some of the different approaches within the field of sociolinguistics. Therefore, it is deemed appropriate to first give an overview of the various developments of the discipline that are relevant for my research. In the following section (Section 2.3.), the application of the different approaches to historical sociolinguistics will be explained. Subsequently, Section 2.4. is concerned with the long-established traditions of historical dialectology. The research carried out in this field is an invaluable source of reference with regard to regional variation, which thus provides an important baseline for the study of language variation in the different dialect areas of England. As will become clear, the caveats that the field of historical dialectology presents with regard to the study of standardisation processes demonstrate the necessity to take a more holistic approach towards the study of standardisation. Lastly, in Section 2.5., I will once again state the central research questions of the present study, and in Section 2.6., I will situate my investigation in the light of the relevant theoretical approaches.

2.2. The foundations of historical sociolinguistics

Although it has been recognised long before the 1970s that social factors have an influence on how language is used (Chambers 2013: 2-

4), it was the ground-breaking research by Labov in the 1960s that introduced the systematic study of socially motivated language variation and change. With his work on language variation on Martha's Vineyard, followed by his study in New York, Labov (1963, 1966) demonstrated that language variation is conditioned by social factors, and most importantly, he established that in terms of phonological change, language change is usually preceded by a stage of language variation. The theoretical foundations of what came to be sociolinguistics were further consolidated in the seminal paper by Uriel Weinreich, William Labov and Marvin Herzog (1968), who are now often considered the founding fathers of sociolinguistics (Chambers 2013: 3). Weinreich, Labov and Herzog (1968) convincingly established that, firstly, variation is not arbitrary but socially significant, i.e. the use of a linguistic variant is motivated by social factors, such as age, gender, level of formality and social class, and secondly, variability is inherent to language change. They proposed that the process of language change could be approached in the form of five different problems or questions that lie at the heart of what sociolinguistics investigates: *constraints*, *actuation*, *transition*, *embedding*, and *evaluation* (Milroy 1992: 14; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 1). The *constraints* problem refers to the question if and what constraints there are on language change, e.g. what changes are very unlikely to occur? It can be postulated, for instance, that it is highly unlikely that the English language will lose all its verbs. The *actuation* problem deals with issues regarding the origin and the very beginning of a change. Weinreich, Labov and Herzog (1968: 102) phrased this question as follows: "Why do changes in a structural feature take place in a particular language at a given time, but not in other languages with the same feature, or in the same language at other times?" *Transition* describes the stage in which a form or feature is replaced by another. At this stage, it is possible by means of quantitative methods to record the competition between different form(s) and to see which form(s) eventually take over at the expense of other form(s), but also to see which social factors correlate with the occurrence of the different variants (Milroy 1992: 16). This immediately ties in with the question of *embedding*, which is aimed at answering how a change is situated

linguistically and socially, that is to say, it seeks to find out what linguistic factors may play a role and in what social group of a given speech community a linguistic innovation starts, and how and in which directions it proceeds. Thus, the social factors that correlate quantitatively with the occurrence of competing innovative forms also give an insight into the *embedding* of that change, e.g. an innovation might first start to compete with older forms in a certain social group, or class, and/or in a specific region. The term *evaluation* relates to how a linguistic (innovative) feature is perceived and received by speakers in the speech community (Milroy 1992: 15; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 1). This comprises responses that are above the level of consciousness such as language attitudes, overt and covert prestige, and linguistic stereotyping, as well as change from below the level of consciousness, i.e. changes that speakers are not consciously aware of (Milroy 1992: 15). The concepts outlined above have in the meantime been established as essential tenets in the broad field of language variation and change.

As the field of sociolinguistics has grown and expanded since the late 1960s, different approaches have developed over time. Sometimes a difference is made between *sociolinguistics* or *micro-sociolinguistics* and *sociology of language* or *macro-linguistics* (Wardhaugh 2010: 13). The basic distinction between the two is that the first focuses on how language variation correlates with social structures – hence it is sometimes also referred to as quantitative sociolinguistics or social dialectology – whereas the latter focuses more on what role a given language or language variety has within a society, for instance the focus may be on multilingualism within a speech community, language policies or language shift. Arguably, there is no hard and fast dividing line between the two, since both approaches require information about social structures, as well as about societal concerns and attitudes towards language (Wardhaugh 2010: 13). As regards this particular study, it can be said to be at the interface of the different approaches, and although it focuses on quantitative variation and change, it requires a thorough contextual background that is concerned with the role of English as a written language in society. In the discussions of this chapter, however,

whenever it is relevant, a distinction will be made between sociolinguistics in the quantitative Labovian sense and other approaches.

2.2.1. Three waves of sociolinguistic approaches

The field of sociolinguistics can be said to have developed in three different waves (Eckert 2012). The first wave consists of studies that are in line with Labov's ground-breaking research of the 1960s, and are thus mostly concerned with correlations between linguistic variation and broad social categories such as age, sex, ethnicity, and social class (cf. Labov 1966, 1972a, b; Wolfram 1969; Cedergren 1973; Trudgill 1972, 1974; Macaulay 1977;) (Eckert 2012: 88).

The second wave of sociolinguistics consists of research that is more ethnographic in nature and allows for fine-grained categorisations of social groups, and focuses more on the role of the individual within the larger social structures (Eckert 2012: 90). Exemplary of the second wave is Milroy's (1980) famous social networks study on the Belfast working-class community. The most important discovery of that study was that the density and complexity of people's social networks affect the way they speak. For people with dense multiplex networks, this means that they maintain ties with the same people through various social activities within a tight-knit community, which implies a strong group identity. This type of network promotes the use of linguistic features that enforce group identity and solidarity. Conversely, loose-knit simplex networks involve ties with people that are not all locally based and are less likely to know each other, or to share several social activities. For people with loose, simplex networks, group identity and solidarity is considerably less well defined, and interaction with people is less likely to be with members of just one particular social group, hence they use features that are not as strongly associated with a particular group and location (Milroy 1980; Wardhaugh 2010: 130). Importantly, it is the people with loose, simplex networks who seem to be the propagators of a change and who are prone to use supralocal, standard forms, probably because their networks are geographically more diffuse (Milroy 1980; McColl Millar 2012: 8), but they may also be more

susceptible to innovations because they are not at the centre of “norm-enforcing” dense multiplex networks, and thus may be less strongly affected by group-norms (Bergs 2005: 29, 35). This observation may also be relevant when studying the adoption of supralocal written forms, as will become clear in the course of this and the following chapters.

In the third wave of sociolinguistics the focus shifted to the social significance of variation itself, rather than the social factors that drive variation and change. As Eckert (2012: 94) explains, “[t]he principal move in the third wave then was from a view of variation as a reflection of social identities and categories to the linguistic practice in which speakers place themselves in the social landscape through stylistic practice”. *Community of Practice* is a term that usefully describes how different social identities are played out in the community (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). In this approach, language and therefore also language variation are considered integral to and inseparable from all kinds of social behaviour. A person will generally be part of a cluster of communities of practice – some of which may overlap – in which language variation is a tool to negotiate or verify the membership of, or dissociation from a social group (Holmes & Meyerhoff 1999: 176; Wardhaugh 2010: 128-129). An important premise here is that when a group engages in some kind of common set of social activities or enterprise, a repertoire of shared practices and thus also of a shared linguistic repertoire will develop (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1999: 185).

Put in a nutshell, it could be said that the third-wave approach focuses on the actuation problem in that it sees linguistic innovation as a process of interactional identity construction by means of social practices, of which linguistic behaviour is an integral part. It zooms in on the smaller inner workings of the larger social system that is studied in first-wave studies. The social network approach of the second-wave theory also looks at the smaller-scale social structures, but it focuses more on the transmission of an innovation across the smaller communities of practice and the larger speech community as a whole.

Another approach, i.e. one which predates most second- and third-wave studies but which is very much on a par with what Eckert

(2012) describes as second- and third-wave approaches, is the theory of speech *accommodation* (Giles & Powesland 1975; Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991 a, b). This approach may be relevant with regard to the present study because it provides a model that can help explain how dialects, or written varieties may come to resemble one another, i.e. converge. *Accommodation* is used to explain how individuals or groups adjust their communicational behaviour in relation to one another. This may concern behaviour, such as dress style, but also speech. *Convergence* and *divergence* describe the two most important types of interaction. *Convergence* implies that an individual or group tries to come closer to another individual or group by accommodating their speech and/or behaviour towards the other, i.e. speech and/or behaviour will become more alike. The opposite takes place in the case of *divergence*. Here speech and/or behaviour will be adjusted in the direction away from the other in order to create a distance to the interlocutor (Giles & Powesland 1975; Giles, Coupland & Coupland 1991 a, b; Wardhaugh 2012: 113).

There are different levels at which accommodation can be observed (Auer & Hinskens 2005: 335-336). The first level is that of the interactional episode, where short-term accommodation temporarily leads to the adoption and or abandonment of linguistic forms in order to converge to or diverge from the language use of the interlocutor that is involved in a single interactional episode. The second level is that of long-term accommodation in the individual. Here language convergence or divergence by the accommodating speaker is not temporary and (no longer) dependent on one interlocutor in particular, but extended to other interlocutors in several episodes of interactional communication. The third level concerns the stage at which a linguistic change can be observed across the larger community. This is where long-term accommodation can be observed in several individuals, and where the community at large will be frequently exposed to the innovative form. In turn, the density and the multiplexity of social networks play a role in the spread of an innovation, i.e. when a substantial number of accommodating innovators are part of a dense, multiplex network a change tends to spread rapidly within the speech community (Auer & Hinskens 2005:

336)². What makes this approach so relevant to the study of sociolinguistic variation is that it can be used to explain language change in terms of both a micro- and macro-sociolinguistic level. On the micro-level, for example, Giles (1973) demonstrated how interpersonal communication influences speech styles in his “accent mobility” model. On a macro-sociolinguistic level, speech accommodation theory has been used to explain code-switching in multilingual communities (cf. Bourhis et al. (1979) for a study on language divergence in a group of francophone and Flemish students). Furthermore, it has proven a useful model to explain dialect levelling in dialect contact situations (Trudgill 1986; Kerswill 2002), but it may also be useful to explain processes of linguistic convergence in written language and the emergence of a supralocal variety, as this may well be a process of linguistic accommodation. This notion will be further explored in Chapter 3.

2.3. Sociolinguistics and its application to historical sociolinguistics

Up until the 1980s, sociolinguistic research has primarily been pre-occupied with phonological variation and change, and it was therefore mostly concerned with language and speech communities that existed at the time when the researchers carried out the studies, i.e. synchronic studies. The historical background of a speech community, as well as the historical origin of linguistic features, were generally part of a sociolinguistic inquiry, but it was the variation in speech of the present and recent past that was analysed.

² This may sound counterintuitive, since, as pointed out earlier, change tends to take place in loose-knit uniplex networks, while dense multiplex networks tend to enforce conservative language use. However, once a change is adopted within dense multiplex networks, a change may proceed rapidly (Auer & Hinskens 2005: 352). An important distinction that may also be made here is that of central and peripheral areas within a dense multiplex network. Central members are least likely to be innovators because they mostly have intense contact with people who are socially and geographically relatively homogenous, which inhibits the need and willingness to adopt new forms. Conversely, peripheral members are most likely to be innovators because they have more superficial contacts with people who are socially more diverse and thus are more prone and open to the adoption of new forms (Milroy and Milroy 1985; Auer & Hinskens 2005: 352).

Suzanne Romaine (1982) was one of the first to carry out a quantitative sociolinguistic study on syntactic variation in written language of the past. With her quantitative study on the use of relative markers in Middle Scots texts, she showed that sociolinguistics was more widely applicable. In so doing, she argued that the generalisability of sociolinguistic theory to different communicative functions and times was tested (Romaine 1982: 11). Romaine's quantitative analysis was not so much based on social class differentiation, but instead, she considered text genres and styles as factors that correlated with syntactic variation, since, genre and style being the product of the practices of a speech community, they also give rise to systematic linguistic variation. Romaine's study expedited a new approach to historical linguistic data, with text corpora as the empirical basis (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2012: 23).

The applicability of sociolinguistic theory to the past is supported by the so-called uniformitarian principle, which, simply put, presupposes that in general, processes and forces observed in the present also operated in the past (Bergs 2012: 80). Another matter, however, is to establish how and to what extent this applies to linguistic variation and change in the past. On an abstract level, it can be assumed that language has always been subject to change, and "[...] sociolinguistically speaking, it means that there is no reason for believing that language did not vary in the same patterned ways in the past as it has been observed to do today" (Romaine 1988: 1454). The challenge, however, lies in establishing the generalisability of present-day concepts, such as social class, gender and prestige (Bergs 2012; Auer et al. 2015: 5). Research in both sociolinguistics and historical sociolinguistics will almost always have to combine quantitative analyses with qualitative research in order to fully grasp the social embedding and evaluation of linguistic forms, as well as to gain insight into what constitutes the speech community under investigation. In sociolinguistics, researchers can rely on direct observations of the speech communities they study, as well as their own intuitions and knowledge of the society they are part of themselves. In the case of historical sociolinguistics, knowledge about what social factors and social groups may have had bearings on sociolinguistic variation has to

be acquired by a careful reconstruction of the social context of the speech community that is being studied (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003; Bergs 2012; Auer et al. 2015). Inevitably, this means that historical sociolinguistics has to be interdisciplinary in nature and draw on insights from the field of, for instance, socio-economic history. Additionally, as, Nevalainen and Rutten (2012: 202) and Nevalainen (2015: 239) point out, language use in a speech community should and can be considered in a wider socio-historical context. There are large-scale movements and other major historical events that affect more than one speech community; events in the Early Modern period such as urbanisation and large-scale migration, colonialisation, and the introduction of mass education all had their effect on languages and dialects in Europe and beyond.

In line with the latter observation, Bergs (2005) argues that historical sociolinguistics should not be understood as a discipline that is limited to the paradigm that is provided by correlative sociolinguistics in the Labovian sense. In other words, the field should not have to be limited to the testing of social theoretical models provided by traditional quantitative sociolinguistics, but the field should form a theoretical framework in its own right and should “[...] seek to answer questions relating to politics and language, anthropology and language, geography and language, etc.” (Bergs 2005: 12). In this view, historical sociolinguistics has a broader application and allows for the study of language variation within a much wider scope than in quantitative variationist sociolinguistics in the traditional (first-wave) sense. This allows for the necessary flexibility with regard to the data gaps that historical data present, as will be discussed in more detail below, but it also opens up the possibility to consider the social nature of language from different perspectives. An example of this could be that we can consider the transition of a society from an oral culture to a written culture and its bearings on written language. In Chapter 5, I will zoom in on the role of literacy in the past.

2.3.1. *Bad data problem?*

As implied above, a simple back projection of first-wave traditional quantitative sociolinguistic theory should not necessarily have to be the main aim of historical sociolinguistics, and it is, for practical reasons, not always possible, since the field will always be challenged with what Labov (1994) called the *bad data problem*. The major issue that revolves around the bad data problem is that of representativeness of historical data. In sociolinguistics, researchers can carefully select and interview a number of informants that are equally representative of each social class or group that may be considered relevant factors in language variation. In the case of historical sociolinguistics, researchers can only work with what has been handed down to them from the past. As concerns the social background of the authors of the texts that have survived over time, it may more often than not be the case that this type of information is severely limited or not available at all. The additional implications of using written data from the past are that the development of literacy has a profound effect on the representativeness of the data (for details concerning literacy, see Chapter 5). By way of illustration, when studying Medieval texts, there tends to be very little social variation, as those who could write were largely male scribes who were schooled at a monastery. In this case, the inclusion of traditional social factors such as gender and profession will not yield very revealing results as social differentiation can hardly be studied in a group that is so homogenous in terms of the aforementioned factors. Yet, factors that have proven to be revealing are text type, or the ecclesiastical order to which a scribe belonged (Rutkowska & Rössler 2012: 221). For a long period of time in Western European history, it was predominantly a small elite of educated men that produced the data that are studied by historical sociolinguists today. Consequently, historical linguistic descriptions, as well as the description of sociolinguistic variation, are almost inevitably biased towards that select group. It is only in the more recent past that literacy has slowly spread to the lower classes of society, enabling studies to successfully provide an insight into language variation “from below”, i.e. the lower social classes as opposed to the higher classes, as well as women, by investigating

material such as private letters and diaries (cf. Elspaß 2005; Elspaß et al. 2011; Vandebussche 2002; Rutten & van der Wal 2014, for studies on German, Flemish and Dutch respectively). Importantly, “from below” here emphasises the fact that it concerns data of classes from the lower echelons of society as opposed to the class at the top of society and differs from “below the level of consciousness” as defined by Labov (Elspaß 2007).

One of the other challenges that the field of historical sociolinguistics faces, especially in the case of quantitative corpus studies (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2. for examples of corpus studies), is that it is often difficult and sometimes impossible to work with a balanced corpus of data that is proportionally representative of the texts that were produced in a speech community. For a diachronic study, for instance, this means that there might be an abundance of data for one time-period, whereas data from another time period are scant. The type of texts that are available may also be unbalanced. To illustrate this, in the Middle English period, private letter collections are difficult to find, whereas more formal text types such as cartularies, or town council ordinances are readily available. In Chapter 6, I will further discuss matters of *representativeness* and *balancedness*.

Furthermore, the linguistic practices within a genre or text type also tend to be variable over time and dependent on locality. Consequently, they cannot be assumed to be a stable factor in diachronic linguistic inquiries, and they will need to be accounted for when correlating textual variation with other social factors (Nevalainen & Rutten 2012: 261-262; Nevalainen 2015: 250). In fact, there is an increasing body of research on text type and genre variation that provides a wealth of information on those aspects (cf. Romaine 1982; Biber & Finegan 1986; Görlach 2004). All in all, when carrying out historical sociolinguistic research, it is important to be aware of the representativeness issues that are involved with it.

Lastly, an additional factor that comes into play when working with historical texts is that it is very often difficult to establish the actual date of when a text was written. Even when a date is provided in the text, or can be deduced on the basis of the script or other

external factors, it cannot always be ruled out that the text under investigation is in fact a copy, or in some cases maybe even a copy of a copy, of an earlier text. This may have consequences when studying the diachronic distribution of a linguistic variant in that it cannot be said with certainty whether the language used can directly be related to the date that is mentioned in a text. Furthermore, potentially, the linguistic variation that is observed in a historical text consists of “layers of variants resulting from successive copyings” over time (McIntosh et. al 1986: par. 3.1.2.). It is well known that in the Middle English period, when a text was copied, the language of the original text was seldom copied unchanged. Scribes often adapted the language of the original text in accordance with their own linguistic repertoires. However, it was also not uncommon for scribes to adapt only some features in accordance with their own repertoire, while copying possible older “relic” forms of the original text (McIntosh et. al 1986: par. 3.1.3-3.2.1). The stance taken in the present study, however, is that a “relic” form was not copied randomly, but, rather, it is reflective of the fact that the form was still accepted as being part of the written repertoire to some extent of a given text community. The occurrence of these forms, or the lack thereof are interesting in themselves, regardless of their origin. Nonetheless, it is undisputable that dates given in a text cannot be taken at face value and the text may actually be a later copy. In Chapter 6, I will discuss how I addressed this specific problem with regard to the historical data that were used for the present study.

2.3.2. Spoken and written modes of communication

Another obvious challenge of working with historical data is that there is no access to spoken data, while, in the field of sociolinguistics, spoken and phonological data are the primary source of investigation, since it is in informal spoken contexts where most linguistic changes appear to start and only from there they spread to more formal contexts (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 28). For some historical sociolinguists, therefore (cf. Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003; Culpeper & Kytö 2010), the challenge is to investigate texts that are relatively informal and relatively close to the oral

register. For example, this could be personal correspondence or texts that are in some way representative of speech such as dialogues in drama texts (Auer et al. 2015: 7).

A question that the field is also concerned with is whether written and spoken language should be viewed as two completely separate modes of communication or not. Arguably, written language will always be more planned and less spontaneous than speech, and thus more consciously and explicitly monitored; this may in turn affect the way and degree in which language varies. Moreover, the interpersonal interaction in a written context is of a different nature than a day-to-day conversation, since the interlocutors may be separated by space and time. However, similarly, it could be argued that in some cases writing can be closer to colloquial modes of communication than some modes of spoken communication. A private letter may be closer to oral language than a well-prepared talk at an academic conference, for instance. Following Koch and Oesterreicher (1985), Elspaß (2005; 2015), and Nobels (2013), the view taken here is that written and spoken language should not be dichotomised, but, rather, graphic and phonic realisations should be seen as two sides of the same coin, that is to say, their actual appearance and realisations may differ, but they are affected by the same factors, such as degree of planning and the degree of immediate face-to-face contact. Both graphic and phonic realisations can be positioned on a cline with an informal register (language of immediacy / *Sprache der Nähe*) on the one end, and a highly formal (language of distance/ *Sprache der Distanz*) register on the other. Language of immediacy reflects language that is associated with high familiarity between interlocutors, face-to-face communication and dialogues, spontaneity, and casual choice in topics. Moreover, and very importantly, the communicative setting is associated with non-publicness and linked to private settings. The language registers on this cline will be of a more informal nature and the language will be typically less complex and less dense in terms of information structure (Koch & Oesterreicher 2012: 450). Language of distance, on the other hand, is typically associated with unfamiliarity between interlocutors, distance in time and space, monologues, fixed topics and more detached, formal styles

of communication (Elspaß 2015: 39, following Koch & Oesterreicher 1985: 23). The language is more formal, more planned, complex and dense in terms of information structure. In contrast to language of immediacy, this communicative setting is associated with publicness (Koch & Oesterreicher 2012: 450). Obviously, written communication occupies different places on that cline in comparison to spoken communication. For instance, an informal spoken conversation with a friend will be closer to the informal end of the cline than a private letter directed to that same friend. In essence, in both the spoken and written medium, registers vary according to the level of immediacy, albeit to different degrees. In Figure 2.1. below, written language (graphic) and spoken language (phonic) are presented in a diagram that shows where different registers of communication can be positioned on a cline of immediacy. Examples that represent the alphabetic letters at the extreme ends of spoken and written language respectively are the following: private face-to-face conversation (a) versus an academic spoken presentation (i) and an informal online chat (d) versus an academic paper (k) (Elspaß 2015: 38).

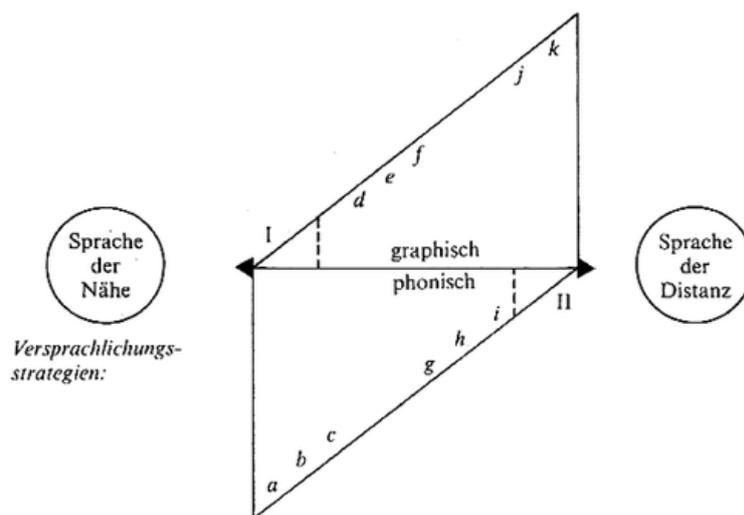


Figure 2.1. Diagram representing immediacy and distance of language (Koch & Oesterreicher 1985: 23)

The element of publicness and unfamiliarity between speakers may also be very important factors when investigating the emergence of a supralocal variety as the rise of a literacy culture in Early Modern England meant that texts came to be more public and were meant to be read by a wider audience that was not necessarily familiar to the author.

2.3.3. The study of different linguistic variables: a shift from phonological variation to other forms

Initially, traditional sociolinguistic research has predominantly focused on phonological variation. In fact, the sociolinguistic theory proposed by Labov (1994, 2001, 2010) was based on phonological data, which means that research methods were tailored to sociophonetic/sociophonological analyses and research theories were largely based on phonological data. If a historical sociolinguist were to focus on phonological variables alone, research would in many cases be seriously limited indeed as evidence for phonological variation can only be gathered indirectly on the basis of spelling and eye rhymes (Hebda 2012: 249). Since this type of evidence is not abundant in most of the texts, large corpora are needed in order to track variation and change over time. Yet, these problems are not insurmountable and sociolinguistic research on phonological change has been carried out successfully on historical written data (cf. Toon 1983; Voitl 1988; Milroy 1992). Nevertheless, as pointed out by Romaine (1982) and Bergs (2005), the task of (historical) sociolinguistics should precisely be that of establishing variation in socially and linguistically different contexts. In other words, the practical necessity for historical sociolinguistics to explore the social variability of other linguistic variables, such as orthographic, (morpho)syntactic and lexical variables, may also be considered as an opportunity to study other linguistic variables. A careful consideration of the applicability of traditional sociolinguistic quantitative approaches should precede the study of non-phonological variables, since the theory was initially developed for and tested on sociophonetic or sociophonological variation. In fact, in research on socio-syntactic variation, it has come to light that the study of grammatical variables requires different

approaches (cf. Lavandera 1978; Romaine 1984a; Cheshire 1987; Winford 1996). Unlike phonological variation, the relationship between a grammatical variable and its variants is less straightforward, i.e. whereas different variants of a phoneme are not considered to be contrastive, it is harder to determine whether a grammatical variant is truly semantically equivalent. Yet, this does not have to be the case for any grammatical type of variable that is studied. To illustrate this, modal verbs are notorious for their semantic and functional fuzziness, but with inflectional morphological features, such as verbal inflections, semantic equivalence may be less problematic (Auer & Voeste 2012: 255-256). Furthermore, when it comes to phonological variation, it is relatively easy to tease out internal linguistic factors from social factors, i.e. a particular phonetic environment may inhibit, or give rise, to phonemic variation. In the case of a grammatical variable though, one may have to deal with a range of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic factors that could co-condition variation (Auer & Voeste 2012: 255-256). Orthographic variation has a longstanding tradition in the field of palaeography (cf. Thaisen & Rutkowska (eds.) 2011; Gillespie & Wakelin (eds.) 2011) and histories of spelling (Scragg 1974; Upward & Davidson 2011). It has also been studied with regard to sound and spelling correspondences in historical linguistics but not yet extensively within the historical sociolinguistic framework (but cf. Stenroos 2004; Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 1999, 2015; Rutkowska & Rössler 2012: 213). Arguably, orthographic variation is more subject to conscious and intentional change than phonological and grammatical variation, not in the least since it is generally explicitly taught or acquired. As Rutkowska & Rössler (2012: 214) point out, “[o]rthography depends on the practices of a community of writers within a certain period and has to be established and accepted by this community”. Effects of conscious language planning and standardisation should thus be considered when studying orthographic variation (Rutkowska & Rössler 2012: 213). This is not to say that common spelling practices have always been the result of conscious and explicit language planning. As with other types of variables, orthographic variation can be conditioned by micro-sociolinguistic factors such as age, class, sex,

the level of education, and location. Other important factors typical of orthographic variation are text type or genre, script, but also the medium, i.e. printed vs. handwritten (Rutkowska & Rössler 2012: 219, 222).

I aimed to show in this section that different types of variables can and need to be used for sociolinguistic studies. However, in order to successfully correlate the linguistic variation with social factors, different variables may require different approaches. Additionally, each study of a variable needs to be studied in its historical context since there may be different external factors at play at different times. To illustrate this, for orthographic variation in Medieval England, the ecclesiastical order a scribe may have belonged to, the type of script, and the scriptorium a scribe was located at, may play a role, whereas in following period printing vs. handwritten became a relevant factor (Rutkowska & Rössler 2012: 219, 222).

2.3.4. Historical sociolinguistics: prospects

Despite the fact that historical sociolinguistics is faced with challenges that have to be overcome one way or another, there are also advantages to looking at historical data. First of all, historical data provide the opportunity to trace the development of a change from its beginning to completion, thus over a long time-span (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 27). While real-time studies can also be carried out in sociolinguistic research, i.e. a change can be tracked over a 10- or 20-year period, this is in practice not always feasible in terms of project times and funding. Furthermore, for some slowly developing changes, a longitudinal study of 20 years may still be too short. For this reason, sociolinguistic investigations are often based on apparent time studies in which people from different generations are interviewed. The assumption here is that the differences found across generations reflect on-going changes (Wardhaugh 2012: 159). The shortcoming of this approach, however, is that it is sometimes difficult to establish if the variation under investigation is a sign of language change or simply the effect of age grading, i.e. a form of stable variation in a community that corresponds with a person's age (Labov 1994: 83).

Another advantage of studying language variation and change of the past might be that historical data are generally genuine attestations of language (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 28). To be more precise, it is unlikely that the data are affected by what is referred to as the observer's paradox (Labov 1972a: 209). It is commonly acknowledged that most sociolinguistic elicitation methods such as an interview affect the way in which interviewees use their language. However, this not to say that written language is free from other external normative pressures, as written language is generally more monitored than spoken language and often written with a certain set of conventions and audience or reader in mind (cf. Tiekens-Boon van Ostade 2000a).

All in all, the field of historical sociolinguistics seems to have succeeded in tackling the bad data problem in various ways. Pivotal in the maturation of the field was the rise of corpus linguistics, which opened up the avenue to the compilation of large electronically searchable data collections (Auer et al. 2015: 6). The resourceful use of the data that have recently been made available allow for an insight into the language and linguistic practices of different social layers in past societies. Letters, diaries, travel-logs, witness depositions, but also dialogues in plays, as well as guild records provide a wealth of information. A corpus and thus a quantitative approach to historical data has been taken by, for instance, Romaine (1982) who correlated different text types with linguistic variation. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) were amongst the first who developed a corpus (*The Corpus of Early English Correspondence*) that allowed sociolinguistic research of the first-wave type (Auer et al 2015: 6). The data were tagged for social information such as class and sex of the author, as well as for geographical information and level of formality of the correspondence. By carefully reconstructing the social context and class system of Tudor England, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) demonstrated that the social factors that have been found to be relevant in present-day sociolinguistic research were also relevant in the past. As for second-wave types of sociolinguistic approaches, the social network theory as introduced by Milroy (1980) has also been proven to be a useful approach for studies of historical data. For

instance, Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2000b, c, 2008a), Fitzmaurice (2000, 2002a), and Henstra (2014) draw on social network theory to study syntactic, morphological and pragmatic variation in letters from the Late Modern English period. Similarly, Bergs (2005) fruitfully applied social network theory to the language use of the letters from the Paston family (1421-1503). A notably interesting and relevant observation with regard to social networks in the Late Medieval period comes from Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (2005: 114) who state that

[...] societies undergoing economic processes that entail social and geographical mobility and the dissolution of close-knit networks, provide the conditions under which linguistic innovations may be transmitted. Such processes have been linked with industrialization in contemporary societies. Similar conditions have been noticed in England in the course of the late fifteenth century and throughout the sixteenth century. [...] Similarly, migration, economic diversification, urbanisation and better communications all concurred in the development of loose-knit social networks and in the increase of weak ties between individuals.

Their study investigates the spread and diffusion of spellings that have become part of present-day written Standard English in letter writers from London in the fifteenth century. Some of the key factors that affected the choice for Standard spelling turned out to be the presence of contacts with the legal profession in London, as well as the social and geographical mobility of the author in question (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2005: 126).

There is also a growing body of studies that are in line with what Eckert (2010) refers to as the third wave of sociolinguistics, which focuses on social practices and identity construction and negotiation; see, for instance, Wood (2004) who carried out a discourse analysis of Margaret Paston's language and links her linguistic behaviour to social practices. Also, Fitzmaurice (2015) studied the writing practices and social identity construction in the letters of Late Modern aristocrats.

In their edited volume *Communities of Practice in the History of English* (2013), Kopaczyk and Jucker show that *community of practice* as a concept is also applicable to the study of language change in the past. I provide more details about this line of research here as it proves to be a useful concept for approaching certain types of language standardisation processes. In Tyrkkö's (2013) contribution to the volume, the orthographic variation of printed works is investigated and it is convincingly demonstrated that Early Modern London printers formed a community of practice whose shared printing practices resulted in orthographic conformity across the different printing houses in London. As a community of practice, the London printers of the Stationers' Company worked and lived together in a relatively confined area, and there is evidence that they interacted with each other in various ways; they formed a professional and commercial network, they exchanged apprentices, they took over each other's printing houses, and they intermarried across printing families (Tyrkkö 2013: 155). It seems very plausible that the conformity in the printed spelling emanated from shared social practice. The fact that the printers interacted with each other regularly and face-to-face is very important when it comes to defining a community of practice. As Wenger (1998) puts it, the shared repertoire of practices is "the result of a collective process of negotiation that reflects the full complexity of mutual engagement" in some type of joint enterprise (Wenger 1998: 77-78, qtd. in Watts 2008). This was certainly the case for the London printers who sought to be economically successful and were united by the guild of the Stationers' Company. However, there are also cases where a shared written linguistic repertoire exists amongst a group of people who do not interact directly, nor is there any type of mutual engagement. A case in point is the prescriptive discourse of the eighteenth-century grammarians who did not engage in mutual social practice, but who had surprisingly similar discursive repertoires (Watts 2008). They were separated by space and often time too, and although they may have been familiar with and heavily inspired by each other's work, they rarely had face-to-face contact. This means that their shared linguistic repertoire did not seem to arise from a set of joint social interactions and practices within a close-knit community, but

from what Watts (2008: 52) refers to as a set of “common interests, goals and beliefs, rather than a community of individuals. Those common interests, goals and beliefs are revealed by oral and written discourse practices (in our case, of course, written rather than oral), which will construct and reproduce the discourse”. Although there are some parallels, this is not what constitutes a community of practice, Watts (2008) argues, but should be referred to as a *community of discourse* (Nystrand 1982). The important difference is thus that in this type of community, social identity is not constructed through a complex set of shared social practices, but it arises from commonly shared interests, beliefs and goals (Watts 2008: 42). This notion works very well with studies in the direction of the sociology of language, i.e. how languages are perceived in society, since it helps define and analyse (meta)linguistic discourse that is associated with language ideologies and the ideology of standard languages. Furthermore, it allows the researcher to draw on what the data themselves provide, whereas with community of practice more contextual knowledge is required, i.e. knowledge about the nature of the social interaction between members of the community of practice. In the case of the present study, it may be difficult to establish if there was such a thing as a scribal community of practice or to identify communities of practice of individual writers. However, in Chapter 5, I shed some light on the role of urban literacy and education, both of which can reveal something about the social practices that the writers and scribes partook in and the effects they may have had on language practices.

From the different studies and approaches that I have described in this section we see that the field of historical sociolinguistics has found ways to make the best use of the data that are available. So far, this chapter has been mostly concerned with the social element of language variation and change. However, as the present study considers both geographical and social factors, some attention also needs to be paid to the geographical differentiation of language (see Section 2.4. below).

2.4. Historical dialectology

Even though the present study is framed in the field of historical sociolinguistics, it is essential to shed some light on the field of geographical dialectology because this field can be considered as the precursor of the (historical) sociolinguistic social dialectology approach. What is more, the field occupies an important position in historical linguistics and the history of English in particular. Scholarship within this field provides a wealth of information about regional variation, which will serve as an invaluable frame of reference in this study. In what follows, I will provide the necessary background to the interpretation of my data. To a large extent, traditional correlative sociolinguistics in the Labovian sense, also referred to as social dialectology, can be considered a branch of dialectology since it integrates methods that were traditionally used in geographical dialectology. However, social dialectology differs from traditional dialectology in that it includes social variation besides regional variation (Chambers & Trudgill 1998). Geographical dialectology emerged as a field of scientific enquiry in the nineteenth century and at the time was one of the few strands of linguistics that was interested in variation. The objective of this field, as the name implies, is to map out spatial variation. Traditionally, the field was concerned with conservative regional dialects, and inquiries were designed to exclude the effect of supraregional variation (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 45-53). As a consequence, data were elicited from informants who were most likely to use conservative vernacular forms, the so-called NORMs, or non-mobile older rural males. The shortcoming of this type of linguistic inquiry was that it was less successful in capturing urban varieties; after all, urban centres tended to be much more dynamic and complex in terms of social structures, and consequently were also much more heterogenous in terms of linguistic variation (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 45-53). Social dialectology, or quantitative sociolinguistics, as discussed in Section 2.1. above, naturally evolved from this problem and more adequately addressed the complex social and regional variation in urban settings. Geographical dialectology always had a historical element to it, as initially its intention was to explore the existence of older forms of a language that tended to be

preserved in rural dialects (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 32-33). Although studies on modern dialects in the field of geographical dialectology were abundant, it was not until the 1980s that systematic investigation into geographical dialectology of Middle English started. This mostly had to do with the difficulty of establishing the geographical provenance of many Middle English texts. The publication of the seminal work by McIntosh, Samuels, Benskin, Laing and Williamson in 1986 made historical geographical dialectology a feasible line of research; these researchers found a way to study data that had hitherto been unlocalisable and thus unsuitable for research on geographical variation.

2.4.1. LALME

The Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English, henceforth LALME, which covers the period from 1350 to 1450, was one of the first attempts at providing a substantial and comprehensive account of Middle English dialects. The work that was carried out by the LALME team made it possible to study geographical differentiation in texts that had previously never been analysed so extensively and systematically due to the fact that they could not be linked to a certain location. However, in relation to the research questions that I try to answer in the context of the present study, LALME displays some caveats and limitations, i.e. the approach that is taken is based on traditional dialectology models and does not easily lend itself to the study of types of language variation other than (rural) geographical variation.

The choice of the period 1350-1450 is based on the assumption that the language of the texts written in this period are considered 'more dialectal', whereas texts preceding this period are for the most part written in French or Latin (McIntosh et al. 1986). By 1350, English had only just started to emerge as a language for governmental and municipal records. It is believed that because of this, records written in English from this period were closer to the vernacular, since the language had not developed a 'standard' variety by then that was to be used for official and national documents (McIntosh et al. 1986). The cut-off point of 1450 has been chosen as it is often claimed that this is

the period where texts became more standardised and started showing fewer dialectal features, which makes them unsuitable candidates for geographical dialect surveys (McIntosh et al. 1986). It is important to realise that LALME emerged within the field of traditional dialectology, which operates under the underlying assumption that linguistic variation is geographically constrained and that dialects can be considered as part of a more or less uninterrupted geographical dialect continuum (Stenroos & Thengs 2012). It follows that in the light of this assumption, the provenance of a text, or more importantly, the provenance of the author and his or her associated dialect are a vital piece of information. Many texts of the period, however, are of unknown provenance, and information about the scribe is in most cases almost impossible to obtain. The LALME team addressed this problem with the so-called “fitting-technique”, which is based on linguistic grounds, rather than on extra-linguistic grounds, with the aim of localising texts. The method is as follows: as a starting point, anchor texts are used, which are texts whose provenance is established on the bases of extra-linguistic criteria. The texts that are used as anchor texts are “personal correspondence, the records of manors and municipalities, the records of courts, secular or ecclesiastical (though the latter are commonly in Latin), and legal instruments—depositions and indentures, conveyances and arbitrations” (McIntosh et al. 1986 par. 2.3.2.). By using questionnaires that consist of a fixed list of linguistic items, the anchor texts are surveyed for the variants of the item list and then serve as a reference point, e.g. they provide a linguistic profile associated with a specific geographical location which can then be used as the basis for comparing and contrasting the linguistic profiles of texts that are not localised. The same questionnaire can be applied to texts of unknown provenance and their provenance can then be deduced by matching the linguistic profiles with that of the anchor texts. The degrees to which the profiles overlap with the different anchor texts determine the location on the map of the investigated text, creating a continuum of the geographical distribution of the different features.

Texts that look highly standardised are excluded from LALME’s dialect survey. The exclusion of texts that look standardised is indeed

a valid approach for dialect studies in a classical sense, but it is not entirely clear on what grounds a text is considered standardised. Indeed, some texts may provide very few features that could reveal any geographical association in terms of spelling and lexis. However, studies have shown that there is still a great deal of variation on a morpho-syntactic level after the fifteenth century (Cuesta-Fernández 2014; see also Nevalainen 2000). LALME focuses, amongst other features, on orthographic variation because graphs, or graphemes, vary regionally and help to localise a text. The other features are phonological, e.g. variation in spellings (*stan: ston*); to a lesser extent morphological, e.g. variation in inflectional endings (*rideþ: rides*); lexical (*dark: mirk* 'darkness') (McIntosh et al. 1986: par.2.1.1). What can be gathered from LALME's general introduction is that although the compilers have recognised that there is a sliding scale between vernacularity and standardness rather than a dichotomy, texts that display 'standard' features are excluded. It is to be remembered that the aim of LALME is to represent the regional distribution of dialect material, making a somewhat artificial demarcation between what can be considered as purely 'dialectal' and 'standard', or a mixture of different dialects a necessity. With this approach, it can only deal with the geographical dimension and thus a mixture of dialects or the presence of non-localisable standard forms pose a challenge. From a sociolinguistic point of view, the exclusion of social factors, as well as texts that are geographically heterogeneous with regard to linguistic variants, is a limitation. As Stenroos and Thengs (2012) aptly point out, this limitation comes with two major problems:

Firstly, in linguistic variation we are dealing with social space rather than with strictly euclidean geography: changes are disseminated along networks of contact, not through the empty countryside. Secondly, the role of geography is less obvious in the written mode, which more easily transcends the limitations of space and time, and is also more likely to reflect formal schooling. (par.5)

These problems will be particularly prominent in the study of written variation in larger urban centres such as Bristol, which functioned as

regional hubs of contact and around which regional networks of contact tended to be centred. Then again, when it comes to historical data, access to detailed social and extra-linguistic information regarding the texts is rare. LALME's approach overcomes this problem by focusing on the data that are available; the texts themselves and the linguistic features they present. Hence, LALME does not seek to address the question whether 'written London standard features' are the result of a direct influence of the capital or the general effects of dialect levelling and or supralocalisation. However, the drawback that is intrinsic to this approach is that it does not deal very well with heterogeneity. Especially texts from urban centres can typically be characterised as documents that combine dialect features defying the linear and continuous character of dialect continua. In other words, in one single document written in Bristol, one might find Eastern and Northern features that cross various dialect boundaries. As the LALME team acknowledges, similarly to what has been established for modern-day urban varieties, especially texts produced in urban centres pose a problem with regard to the notion of a constructed dialect continuum. In particular, the dynamics of an urban centre do not allow for a straightforward model of slow dialectal diffusion, rather variation is abundant and changes take place rapidly.

As McIntosh et al. (1986: par 2.3.2) point out, LALME provides information as to where the scribe of a text was raised and not necessarily the real location of where a text was produced:

Most of these [texts] can be expected to contain indications of their local origins, and in general they can be trusted to attest a form of the written language, if not precisely of the stated place, then of somewhere near to it. There are exceptions, and in due course these can be recognised as the work of scribes whose habits of written language were acquired at a greater or lesser distance from the places to which the documents themselves relate.

It is recognised that texts may display dialect mixture. That is to say, they contain a mixture of linguistic variants used by one scribe that cannot reasonably be assumed to exist due to geographical

overlapping isoglosses, i.e. transition areas in which one dialect area overlaps with another. However, it appears that the use of an array of variants by one scribe is considered as the mixing of two or more relatively homogenous systems, which after careful analysis can be teased apart. As Stenroos and Thengs (2012: par 2) point out, this careful selection with a focus on dialect representativeness is not so much a shortcoming of the methodology as a requirement: “[I]ts purpose is to reconstruct a dialect continuum, not to provide evidence about text production. The maps based on the fit-technique answer questions such as ‘where would this text belong in an ideal dialect continuum?’ and ‘which texts are dialectally most similar to each other?’”. However, from a variationist perspective, the occurrence of features of different dialects in one single text or manuscript, and the location where it was produced, are a reality. The texts represent a testimony of the language as it was used at a particular location. It reveals what linguistic variables the dwellers of that particular location could have been exposed to and may have had access to. The difference in approach is well illustrated in the following extract:

More generally, linguistic incongruence with the surrounding dialectal configuration—badness of ‘fit’—would also provide grounds for rejecting the stated local origins of a document as evidence for its linguistic provenance. Occasionally, non-linguistic evidence is available to show that a document is the work of a man who has left home. So, for example, enough is known of the life and circumstances of William Somerwell, registrar to the archbishop of Armagh from ca. 1429 to 1458, to explain the appearance of Bristol dialect in documents written in Ireland. In a linguistic atlas, these are rightly treated as source material for Bristol, regardless of their diplomatic origins in Co. Louth. (McIntosh et al. 1986: par. 2:5)

The reality is much more complex. As people move about, they do not simply transport their native dialect to another area, their language affects and is affected by the social context. Of course, William Somerwell may have had enough Bristolian features to justify the classification of his language as Bristolian English rather than Hiberno-

English. However, there may have been features that are typically Hiberno-English, and features that are neither typically Bristolian nor Hiberno-English as a result of dialect levelling. Moreover, from the variation and change point of view, it is precisely the fact that Somerwell's Bristolian features are found in different locations that makes his language usage interesting.

An issue related to the mixing of dialects and what is referred to as "linguistic contamination" in the LALME introduction, is the practice of copying. A single document or manuscript can be written in one hand, but may consist of copies of texts written at another time and by different hands. Here, a linguistic profile results in a profile that records a scribe's linguistic profile that is "less a characterisation of an individual writer's spontaneous usage than a statement of his linguistic tolerance" (McIntosh et al 1986: par. 3.2). Yet it may precisely be the "linguistic tolerance" that could give an insight into what features did not seem to conflict with the scribe's repertoire and were, for some reason, deemed acceptable forms within the scribe's community.

In short, LALME was designed to make the mapping of a detailed Middle English geographical dialect map possible. Inevitably and inherently to geographical dialectology, this means that sometimes somewhat artificial lines had to be drawn. Moreover, the database is less suitable for sociolinguistic analyses. However, as the following section will show, the work carried out by the LALME team forms an important source on which historical (socio)linguistic research can draw.

2.4.2. *eLALME*

Notwithstanding the different approach in the collection and analyses of Middle English texts, LALME's data provide an excellent starting point to attain a first impression of Bristol's written language and the dialect areas surrounding it. This information will serve as a frame of reference to compare my own findings to. A good first step in the case of Bristol is thus to see what linguistic profiles are typically associated with it. The digital version of LALME, *eLALME* (Benskin et al. 2013), has an interactive "fitting technique" map that allows for the mapping of a text that has not been localised yet, but it is also possible to identify

LALME's survey points and the linguistic profiles that are associated with them.

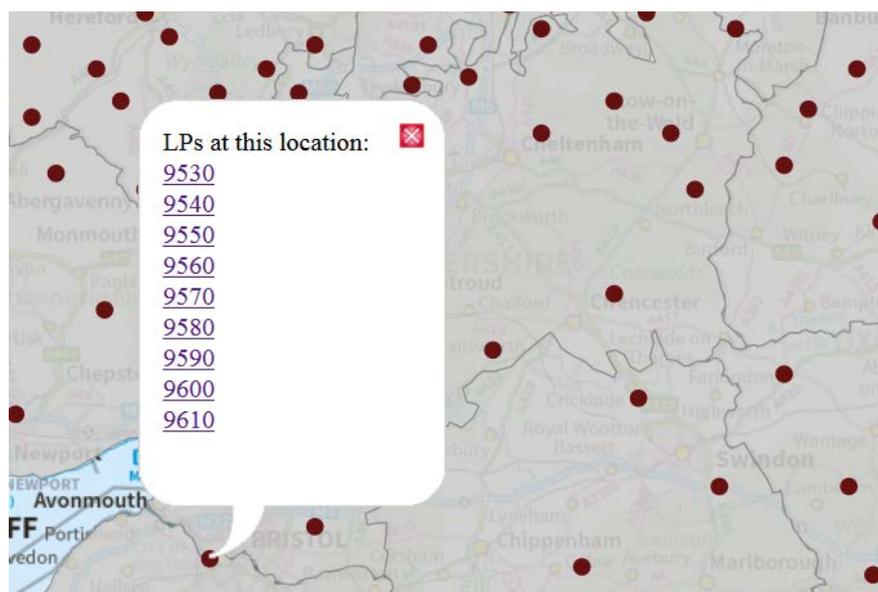


Figure 2.2. *The linguistic profiles of Bristol (Benskin et al. 2013)*

The numbers for the linguistic profiles, as shown in Figure 2.2 above, are mapped closest to Bristol and are therefore used to identify what variants of the LALME items are associated with Bristol. The location point is not exactly situated in Bristol because LALME plots a linguistic profile according to the likeness or unlikeness to other linguistic profiles. Since it concerns the reconstruction of a dialect continuum, it is to be expected that the plotting of the survey points is, in most cases, more an abstract approximation of a location than an exact localisation. The nine different linguistic profiles for Bristol each represent the linguistic profile of one scribe. Most of the texts that were surveyed are council ordinances or memoranda written in Bristol, with the exception of various documents written by William Somerwell who was native to Bristol but lived and wrote the texts in Ireland. His texts are considered a valuable contribution in that many

of the survey test items occur in his writings. A conflation of all linguistic profiles that can be linked to Bristol results in an extensive item list of 116 items and their variant forms. There is a relatively wide range of variants; some items have as many as 14. It has to be added that this mainly concerns variation in spelling and orthography. For instance, the different variants for prepositional *before* are: *a-fore*, *to-foore*, *to-fore*, *a-foore*, *be-ffore*, *by-foore*, *by-ffore* (*be-fore*) (*(afoyr)*), *to-fore*, *to-fore*, *afore*, *a-fore* (*(afore)*). The single and double brackets indicate that these forms are less frequent or rare. For the sake of space, I will not include the entire list here, but the list is provided in Appendix I. For now, let it suffice to say that the relevant variants will be mentioned in the chapters that deal with the linguistic analyses. It is noteworthy that a study by Benskin (1992) includes Bristol and uses the LALME data and method. Though this is a relatively small-scale study, it offers some important insights into the dynamics of urban written varieties. Since this study is relevant for this thesis, I will provide more details about it in the following section (2.4.3.).

2.4.3. A LALME study on Late Middle and Early Modern Bristol

Using the LALME technique, Benskin (1992) investigated some texts from Bristol from the long fifteenth century and investigated the spelling variation of nine different items (*them*, *such*, *which*, *much*, *are*, *shall*, *after*, *if*, *-ing*). He found that in some of these texts scribes used several spelling variants, some of which were strictly local and some of which had a wider regional use, whereas in other texts, scribes used fewer variants and only variants that occurred more widely in the region. Benskin (1992: 83-84) refers to the texts that only contain supraregional features as “colourless regional writing” and notices that these features are mainly found in legal and municipal texts. As shown in Table 2.1, even though both types of writing show overlap in terms of the variants that occur, the “colourless” texts have fewer variants for the different linguistic items and mostly contain the variants with a wider regional currency. Considering that Bristol was a major regional centre, it makes sense that some texts contained fewer local features and were “colourless”, as they probably needed to be accessible and intelligible to readers from a wider region (Benskin

1992: 84). The question is if and to what extent the texts came to have an increasing number of “colourless” features after LALME’s cut-off point of 1450.

| Bristol | “Colourless Bristol” |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| ham, tha(i)m, hem | hem, ham |
| sech, suc(c)h | Such |
| whi(c)ch | Which |
| mech, moch, much | much, moch |
| bith, beth, ben | Beth |
| s(c)hall | s(c)hall |
| aftour, aftir, after | after, aftir |
| yef, (yogh)if(f), yf(f), if | yf, (yogh)if |
| ing, -yng | -ing, -yng |

Table 2.1. A comparison between typical Bristol features and “colourless” (supraregional) features (adapted from Benskin 1992: 84)

Benskin found similar patterns for York, Nottingham and Norwich. Regarding the case study on dialectal features in texts from Bristol and other provincial towns, a couple of important issues become evident. Firstly, once again, text type turns out to be a major factor when investigating variation, as there was a noticeable difference in variation between legal texts and other text types. Secondly, and most importantly, another process was identified in the urban texts, and specifically in legal documents, namely that the occurrence of “colourless” urban variants can be described as a process of levelling, i.e. local forms are suppressed and forms with a wider supra-regional currency are used. This is a very important observation in the light of the investigation into the development of written standards. As will become clear in Chapter 3, there is no common agreement as to the

interpretation of the term ‘standard language’, but for now, I will use Benskin’s (1992: 75) description, which states that standard varieties can be defined on the basis of the following two conditions:

- 1) a standard language can be defined as standard in terms of internal consistency, i.e. the degree of variation is low in terms of spelling and morphology
- 2) a standard language can be defined as standard in terms of its acceptance as a “common property” (Bensin 1992: 75) that has a wide supraregional or national currency

In turn, Benskin (1992: 75) argues that a variety of the first definition “is obviously more likely to become a standard in this second sense, than one that is not”. After all, when the choice of variants is relatively limited, variation will be more predictable and be more readily susceptible to common agreement as to what forms are commonly understood and accepted. In this line of reasoning, the use of non-local “colourless” forms may well lie at the heart of the emergence of a written standard³. As mentioned earlier, the “colourless” texts avoided variants that were local, and instead the forms that were shared in a wider region were used. In other words, standardisation involves a process that makes a variety less variable and more widely accessible, transcending local currency. This process may have paved the way to the development and adoption of a nation-wide supralocal variety and its acceptance as a standard variety. However, the possible connection between these processes and the emergence of a written standard have only been considered marginally in traditional accounts of the history of written Standard English. Rather, written Standard English is often viewed as a variety that had one single ancestor that developed in London and of which the nation-wide spread is often attributed to the prestige it supposedly enjoyed. As Benskin (1992: 75) rightly points out, “[i]t has been assumed too often that the rise of

³ Again, I would like to emphasise that ‘standard’ used in the sense here is not to be confused with the way in which it is often perceived nowadays, as it is now often associated with standard ideologies (cf. Milroy 2000), which is an issue that I will return to in Chapter 3.

‘Standard English’ was simply the gradual spread of a language that was already fully formed when it began to be adopted outside the capital, and too little attention has been paid to the circumstances of its spread”. Although this caveat has also been acknowledged in more recent studies (cf. Wright 2000 (ed.)), there are no extensive systematic studies that consider factors other than prestige, or the role of other major urban centres. This brings us to what the current study is concerned with, which is to investigate the vernacular of Bristol and to explore its role in the emergence of a written standard.

2.5. Objectives of Emerging Standards: Urbanisation and the Development of Standard English, c. 1400-1700

As pointed out by Benskin (1992) and Wright (2000), the rise and emergence of written Standard English has traditionally been described as a process that was rather simple. Firstly, it was assumed that it was a variety that developed at one particular place and time, namely around the fifteenth century in the capital and largely through the hands of the Chancery clerks, who seemed to produce relatively uniform spellings, with Central Midlands features in official documents (Samuels 1963; Fisher 1977). Secondly, it was assumed that this variety replaced other written varieties nationwide, since, being the variety used in the most prominent city and the seat of government, it enjoyed high prestige. Although it can certainly be observed that English texts dating from before the second half of the fifteenth century show more local features, whereas many texts following this period show markedly less local features, it has been proven to be too simplistic to assume that this was the result of the replacement by one single prestige variety (cf. Benskin 1992; Nevalainen 2000; Wright 2000). This view also seems to be too one-dimensional in the light of (historical) sociolinguistic theory, which would seem to contradict the notion that a language simply transforms from one stage to another and which includes many more factors than prestige to explain language variation and change. Rather, the development of any variety should be seen as an on-going multi-directional process that is shaped and conditioned by various social and geographical factors.

As previously pointed out, the objective of the project *Emerging Standards: Urbanisation and the Development of Standard English, c. 1400-1700*, of which the current study is a sub-project, is to gain more insight into which processes are involved in the emergence and development of written standard languages, notably by using the development of written standard English as an example. The aim is to consider the socio-historical context in which a supralocal variety developed, and to include other factors in addition to prestige, such as trade and (work) migration and the resulting dialect and or language contact, but also the role of education, and urban communities and culture. What is more, the project seeks to provide a more complete picture of the emergence and spread of written supralocal norms by shifting the focus from the capital to four other major, regional urban centres. The four different urban centres that were chosen are York (North), Coventry (West Midlands), Norwich (East Anglia) and Bristol (South West). They were chosen on the basis of their positioning in the main late Middle English dialect areas (the North, Mid West, East, and South West respectively), their high text production, economic prominence and their important function as major regional centres. The time-span that is covered, 1400-1700, coincides with the period in which supralocal forms started to supersede local, dialectal forms up to the period where the codification of a written standard became part of public debate.

The main objective of the project is:

- ➔ to establish the extent and ways in which the urban vernaculars of the respective regional centres may have contributed to the development of a national written standard form of English (cf. Auer, Gordon & Olson 2016).

In order to do this, three other central questions need to be addressed:

- 1) What language internal and external variation (orthographical, morphological and syntactic) can be observed in the written language of York, Coventry, Norwich, and Bristol respectively?

The main factors for which variation will be examined are place, time and text type. Other factors, such as gender and social class can only be included if the data permit it. In the case of some data this means that I have detailed information, and I can consider the author's place of birth, as well as education. However, I also have data without background information where I can only rely on general textual history. As regards language-internal factors, I will draw on existing research and compare the findings of the present study to previous findings.

- 2) What patterns in the diffusion and spread of a change can be discerned in the respective urban vernaculars and how do these patterns relate to an emerging supralocal norm? In other words, do the patterns differ from what has been found in previous studies? Can we observe patterns that are unique to that particular urban centre? Did a supralocal form appear later or sooner than in other centres? Are there forms that – based on geographic dialect studies – were 'native' to the urban centre and that became supralocal forms? Also, what forms were there in the earlier period and what forms disappeared and/or were replaced by supralocal forms? Lastly, can we observe a process in which variation is decreasing? Or is it merely changing?
- 3) How can we account for the dissemination of the selected supralocal features? Can we relate trade and migration patterns and other external events that affected the way in which written supralocal forms spread? Are there other developments such as the rise of literacy, social and geographical mobility that can be linked to the spread of supralocal forms?

As previously indicated, the project is divided into four sub-projects, each of which investigates the vernaculars of one of the

urban centres that were chosen. Sub-project 1: *The Urban Vernacular of the City of York (c. 1400-1700)* is carried out by the PI Anita Auer. Sub-project 2: *Language Variation and Change in Coventry (c. 1400-1700)* is the PhD project of Tino Oudesluijs. Sub-project 3: *The Urban Vernacular of Late Medieval and Renaissance Bristol* is the object of the current study. Finally, Sub-project 4: *The Development from Urban Dialect to Supralocal Norm – the Case of Norwich (c. 1400-1700)* is a collaborative project.

2.6. Situating the research

To summarise, in this chapter, I have discussed what the basic tenets of sociolinguistics and the three major approaches and developments within the field are, which was followed by a discussion on how the different strands are applied in historical sociolinguistics. I have also addressed the challenges that historical sociolinguistics has to face, as well as the prospects that a historical sociolinguistic study may yield. The question is how the different theories and assumptions can be incorporated in the present study. First and foremost, it is assumed that the occurrence of linguistic variation is of interest in the investigation of language change, as are the frequencies of the variants of different variables, since it is the competition between the different forms and the environments in which they occur that can reveal something about patterns of change. The study will thus be concerned with the quantitative analyses of linguistic variants. Secondly, in line with all of the sociolinguistic approaches, it is assumed that language variation is always inherently social and can thus never be seen as a linguistic process detached from its users. However, it is not always possible to correlate linguistic variation with traditional external sociolinguistic factors such as social standing or age. This partly depends on the datasets that are used for the present study; after all, while some datasets can be studied with relatively detailed social background information, this is severely limited with other sets. For instance, in the case of the letter collection that will be used for the present study, it is possible to provide some social background of the letter writers, which makes it possible to link linguistic variation to the social background of the authors and in some

cases also to observe generational changes. In other cases, it is only the geographical factor and time that can be taken into account as that is the only information available. Nonetheless, the linguistic variation within the data can be observed across individual texts, as well as across different text types and time-spans. All of these have been proven to be important and relevant factors as they can reveal something about the linguistic practices that were shared within a speech community. Additionally, external linguistic history will provide very important insights into how urban society was structured and what place written English had in it. For instance, if we know that many people from different regions communicated with one another, we can postulate that accommodation processes may have taken place and have stimulated dialect levelling and or the use of supralocal forms. Similarly, insights about social and geographical mobility during the Late Middle and Early Modern period can at least reveal something about the social networks of some of the informants of this study could typically have looked like. For instance, it can be expected that they used more supralocal forms and fewer local forms, if their communication networks were loose and extended far beyond their native region (see Sections 2.2.1 & 2.2.4. above). What is more, the aim is to take into account different types of linguistic variables, namely orthographical, syntactic and morphological, each of which require a different approach. In the case of syntactic change, a fair amount of attention will be paid to the role of internal linguistic factors, since, as argued in Section 2.3.3. above, the interaction between external and internal factors is often rather complex and difficult to identify. In the case of orthography, it was mentioned that variation may be more strongly subject to deliberate normative pressures. This would mean that there should also be signs of this in the type of variation that is found, i.e. there could be a more rapid shift and a clear categorical use of one form over the other.

Most importantly, the present study seeks to go beyond the traditional sociolinguistic quantitative framework in that it considers linguistic variation in a much wider historical social context, which includes general demographic movements (the role of which will be discussed in the Chapters 3 & 4), as well as social and cultural change

such as the development of literacy and the development of English as a written language in domains that had been dominated by Latin and French for centuries (see Chapter 5).

A substantial part of this chapter was dedicated to geographical dialectology, which does not focus so much on social factors, while, at the same time it is inherently social, as a person's place of birth is an important factor to explain linguistic variation. The work carried out in this field is extremely relevant to the present study because this study also considers geographical factors, even though social variation is an important factor too. After all, in order to understand what supralocal forms made their way to Bristol and what forms were typical of the Bristol vernacular, we need to consider geographical variation in the first place. However, geography will be considered in a different way from that of traditional geographical dialectology, since geographical space cannot be considered entirely in a vacuum and separately from social space. In the chapter that follows, I shed light on the different approach to geographical space, and explain how this approach can help explain linguistic standardisation processes. However, before then and as a next step, the following chapter discusses what the existing views and ideas about the concept of language standardisation are.

Chapter 3. Language standards and standardisation

3.1. Introduction: defining standard language and language standardisation; some preliminary issues

Defining 'standard language' and determining the processes involved in language standardisation can be seen as rather challenging. This is reflected by the fact that there is no common consensus as to what the notions precisely entail, and the concepts tend to have slightly different meanings depending on the discipline and context in which they are considered. Especially in present-day debates, scholars seem to have diverging conceptions about what Standard English is (Davis 1999: 69-70). As Davis (1999: 70) points out, "[...] it is often unclear whether linguists are referring to a spoken linguistic reality, a written variety of English, or an idealisation [...]". The general assumption is that spoken language allows for greater variability than written language and the variation in spoken language may also be more directly subject to social factors as well as geographical space and situational context (Milroy & Milroy 1999: 47). An added complication may be that the intended meaning of the term is used implicitly, rather than being defined explicitly. For this study, it is therefore important to define what standard language and standardisation mean, but also what they do not mean in the specific context of the present study. In what follows, I will give an overview of the different definitions that exist for standard language and language standardisation, as well as the problems that are attached to the use of the different definitions. On this basis, I will propose a working definition or hypothesis that will work best for my study. For now, I will call it a working definition because, ultimately, the objective of this study is to more precisely define or redefine what standardisation entails in the period under investigation.

Section 3.2. particularly focuses on the sociolinguistic and dialectological view on what a standard variety is. It will come to the fore that a standard variety cannot exist as a fixed unchangeable entity in the sociolinguistic framework, but should rather be seen as an ongoing process. Section 3.3. examines the way in which standardisation processes have been described in the literature. It will

become clear that standardisation can be viewed from an ideological as well as linguistic view point, the implications of which will be further explored in Section 3.4. Section 3.5. zooms in on and critically examines the existing traditional accounts on the standardisation of written English and addresses the caveats that exist. In Section 3.6., I explore alternative explanations that have been proposed for the development of written Standard English. These alternative theories will provide a basis for the formulation of my own working definition, which will be discussed in Section 3.7. In Section 3.8., I once again review the standardisation question in light of what has been discussed in this chapter.

3.2. What is a standard variety? The perspective of social and geographical dialectology

Trudgill (1999: 124) describes Standard English as a dialect of English of which the use cannot be reduced to one single geographical area, hence it should be considered a social dialect, which is typically the speech of educated people, who in turn are associated with the groups of higher social power. More generally speaking, a standard variety is considered a dialect that is continually affected by dialect and language contact. The difference between a regional dialect and a standard dialect lies in the value that is given to it. As opposed to a regional dialect, a standard dialect exceeds geographical boundaries, has a maximal functionality, i.e. it is used in a wide range of societal functions, and it is generally accepted as the variety to be used in these contexts (Van Coetsem 1992: 16; see also Benskin 1992: 75). A standard variety may show variation, but to a lesser extent than regional dialects, and it is characterised by relative uniformity or regularity (Van Coetsem 1992: 17). Van Coetsem (1992: 16) further makes a distinction between a horizontal and a vertical dimension, a notion typically used in dialectology. The horizontal dimension represents the dialect continua, where processes such as levelling and simplification exist under the influence of contact between local dialects (Akselberg 2005: 1708). The vertical dimension relates to the social aspect of language change and expresses the social space (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2003: 714). The social space, in turn, refers

to a hierarchy that has a standard variety at the top, affecting all other dialects and varieties to a greater or lesser extent (Akselberg 2005: 1708). In practice, this means that there is a traditional dialect at the bottom end and a standard variety or an urban variety at the top (Akselberg 2005: 1708). The vertical and horizontal dimensions are said to interact; a change spreads geographically, but will often be subject to social stratification. In other words, as a change spreads geographically, an innovation is often first adopted by one social group and will then spread to other social groups (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2003: 714). In this model, one can hardly speak of a fixed standard dialect, but rather, 'standard language' is an on-going process of geographical and social diffusion. This contrasts with what Milroy (2000, 2001) calls the standard ideology, which refers to the widespread and often implicit assumption that a standard language is a more or less fixable and unchangeable variety of a language, and which in the light of what has been discussed above, can indeed only exist in the form of an ideology; after all, from the variationist perspective, one can only speak of on-going standardisation processes rather than of one standard variety. Arguably then, the term standard is paradoxical in the sociolinguistic framework, since, according to Milroy and Milroy (1999: 18) "standard languages are fixed and uniform-state idealisations, not empirically verifiable realities". Although it cannot be denied that written English has developed into a relatively uniform variety, at least in terms of spelling, but also with regard to many aspects of morphology, this uniformity is relative in that the variants that prevail at the cost of others are subject to on-going change. On the other hand, there is also the non-linguistic social attitude towards standard language, which can be considered to be a standard ideology in which the notion of a standard variety is loaded with prestige; here a standard variety is subject to highly prescriptive and conservative pressures and shaped by cultural and societal norms. It is important to keep in mind that a standard variety described from the ideological perspective does not necessarily refer to one specific (standard) variety from a purely linguistic perspective. That is to say, as part of standard ideological discourse, certain forms may be prescribed or stigmatised and considered as standard or non-standard

respectively, but these notions of standardness are not necessarily linked to one particular empirically observable linguistic variety. Milroy (2001: 531) warns against the ways in which this standard ideology may affect and has affected “some aspects of professional linguistic thinking”. For instance, in sociolinguistics, standard varieties have commonly been identified as prestige varieties and vice versa, while a prestige variety does not necessarily have to imply that it concerns a relatively uniform and internally regular variety of a language with a wide currency, e.g. a standard language from a non-ideological linguistic perspective (Milroy 2001: 532). In this case in point, the notion standard clearly has an ideological connotation, that is to say, it tends to be conceived as the highest standard that social climbers aim for, and it does not signify the non-value concept of internal linguistic uniformity, but it is labelled as standard due to its high social status. It is thus important to realise that there are two ways in which ‘standard’ is used, but at the same time the two different notions are not always carefully distinguished. One refers to the internal language structure and to some extent its function in society, while the other refers to an attributed value to a particular variety, or sometimes only to particular linguistic features. Although it may indeed often be the case that widely accepted linguistically uniform varieties enjoy prestige, this does not mean that prestige is the only driving force behind the processes of standardisation. However, as will become clear later on in this chapter, traditional historical descriptions of Standard English tend to be permeated with the notion that prestige equals standard, which affects the way in which the history of standardisation of languages has been described. Yet, that is not to say that the two different definitions cannot be connected in some way. However, they should be carefully distinguished - precisely in order to understand their possible interrelationship.

Arguably, standard ideology has more to do with the sociology of language since it relates to how a language variety is perceived in a speech community. It should also be noted that standard ideologies do not exist universally across different speech communities, nor can they be said to have been concepts of all times. More than that, the

notion of what constitutes a language may to some extent be determinable on linguistic grounds, but there are cultures where there is no language ideology, i.e. the speakers do not have a common conception of what their language is, nor do they feel that language signifies the membership of a community (Grace 1991: 15; Milroy 2001: 540). In light of this, Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) propose that there are two different types of linguistic communities: focussed and diffuse ones. A focussed linguistic community shares a set of norms and is sensitive to those norms. The factors that make a community focussed are close and daily interaction, the presence of an education system to instil the norms, "a sense of common cause," and the "presence of a powerful model" (Leith & Graddol 1996: 139). This type of community is probably more susceptible to the standard ideology that Milroy refers to. Contrastively, in a diffuse community there is no direct awareness of what kind of language is spoken, nor is there much concern as to what constitutes the language of that community (Trudgill 1986: 85-86). In diffuse communities, the existence of a standard ideology is unlikely. Conceivably, the degree to which a speech community is diffuse or focussed varies and speech communities can be positioned on a cline between the two extremes. Furthermore, depending on external social factors that may be affecting a given speech community, they can be in the process of becoming more or less focussed. What is more, this process can potentially be observed on different levels. For instance, there can be several local speech communities that are relatively focussed on a local level and have an awareness of local norms, whereas on a wider regional scale, communities are relatively diffuse, i.e. together these local speech communities do not share a sense of a common norm⁴. Due to socio-economic and or political developments such as increasing trade contacts between local communities over a wider

⁴ Somewhat confusing is the fact that Smith (1996: 68-73) uses the terms *focus* and *fixity* to describe the extent to which Middle English written varieties display linguistic (spelling) variation. *Focus* refers to the tendency to adhere to some perceived common norm while allowing considerable variation and *fixity* refers to a state in which usage is clearly prescribed and the use of certain forms may be stigmatised.

region, notions of nation-hood, or the introduction of mass-education, the sense of a local norm may become less clear, while the sense of a more regional or national norm may in time develop (cf. Kerswill & Williams 2002 for a discussion about focussing and new dialect formation). Standard ideologies seem to affect those varieties of language that serve a large speech community and usually go hand in hand with a sense of “nationhood or common identity” (Milroy 2000: 20). Typically, in this context, the existence of a standard variety is seen as a necessary means for nation-wide communication, as well as an important part of a national identity. Thus, we speak of England as the country where English is spoken and/or taught, as opposed to the country that has speakers of many different dialects and languages (Milroy 2000: 20).

3.3. Language standardisation: processes

As I have argued above, at least purely linguistically speaking, a standard language is a process rather than a fixed state. It would hence be more appropriate to speak of standardisation processes rather than a standard. The question that arises from this is what a standardisation process entails, or more precisely, what processes are involved in it. Firstly, it is important to realise that, like standard language, the term standardisation can and has been approached from different perspectives and are therefore defined in different ways. Stein (1994: 2) recognises two different definitions for standardisation:

1. Standardisation refers to the process of the convergence of varieties, resulting in a variety that enjoys wide currency and is part of “a written language, literary language, religious language, language of education and science, a language of the government, law and court, functions as a lingua franca, national language, and language of mass media”.
2. Standardisation may also typically refer to language planning and thus implies a more conscious and deliberate process, in which deliberate steps are taken

to implement and codify a certain variety within a speech community. The implementation will often be planned in the form of explicit language policies.

I would like to argue that, in the latter context, standardisation is viewed from the sociology of language perspective and will thus be more closely related to the creation and existence of a standard ideology. The second notion is closely associated with Haugen's (1966) model of standardisation, and since it has also been used to describe the development of Standard English (Leith 1983; Nevalainen 2003), an explanation of this model should be provided here. Haugen's model (1966) typically describes standardisation in four stages:

- *The selection of a norm*

This refers to two different types of selection: (1) monocentric, where an existing dialect is selected as the standard variety, and (2) polycentric, where a standard variety does not consist of one clearly identifiable source but develops over time and contains features of several dialects (Haugen 1966; Deumert & Vandenbussche 2003).

- *Codification of form:*

This involves the process in which the selected norm is described and prescribed in dictionaries and grammars. This process typically is an on-going process, as in many cases, the standard language is not a concrete or fixed variety, but it is subject to on-going change and part of public debate as to what usage of a variant is acceptable within the framework of a normative standard ideology (Haugen 1966; Milroy & Milroy 1999; Deumert & Vandenbussche 2003).

- *Elaboration of function*

What is important for a standard language to gain a wide currency is that it varies minimally in form but maximally in function. In other words, linguistically, it has as little variation as possible, but it is functionally adequate in that it can be used in different domains, i.e. the vocabulary is sufficient to be used as

a means of communication in law, education, science, literature, etc. (Haugen 1966: 249).

- *Acceptance*

This refers to the acceptance of the norm by the speech community and its applicability to different functions (Haugen 1966; Deumert & Vandebussche 2003).

The stages listed by Haugen do not all have to take place in the above-listed order; some can take place simultaneously or precede each other. Furthermore, Milroy and Milroy (1999) have added further nuances to Haugen's model. As part of the selection and acceptance process, diffusion will take place: the norm is accepted by influential members of the speech community and the norm will be diffused "geographically and socially" by means of mass communication and education (Milroy & Milroy 1999: 27). The elaboration of function of a standardised variety implies that the standard variety will become a variety that is considered to have wide currency and that it will also be attributed prestige precisely because it has maximal functionality. The (written) norms that have been established by the process of codification become the model of 'correctness' and will be emanated by means of wide-scale literacy (Milroy & Milroy 1999: 27-29). Besides the steps that Haugen has determined, Deumert and Vandebussche (2003: 3) identify some general tendencies that appear to have been conducive factors in the standardisation of Germanic languages. Standardisation can generally be linked with "economic and political unification, urbanisation, and religious movements". Moreover, the presence of a writing system appears to be an essential first step in the process of linguistic regularisation, and it seems that the written medium is more liable to the fixing and codification of a standard variety than spoken language (Deumert and Vandebussche 2003: 3).

Haugen's framework primarily serves as a model for language planning with the aim to explore what factors are conducive to standardisation by investigating how some varieties successfully have become standard varieties. It is crucial to realise that Haugen's observations are based on relatively recent examples of societies where standard ideologies were and still are pervasive. Haugen is

aware of that and often refers to how the public perceives something as a standard and how this perception is an effective means for standardisation. The model is thus an excellent starting point to investigate what factors are needed for a society to embrace a standard ideology, and how this can possibly be implemented in societies that are in need of a standard language, e.g. as may be the case with language revival. However, the model cannot be applied in an unaltered way to past stages in which language standardisation may have taken place, as there may have been no standard ideology then, and the actual process described might have to do primarily with a convergence process rather than deliberate standardisation in the context of standard ideologies. It could be argued that the selection stage can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, it can be related to macro-sociolinguistic processes in which the selection process is intimately related with standard ideology and language attitudes. Secondly, it can be related to micro-(socio)linguistic processes. So, the term *norm selection* may refer to deliberate planning as well as (socio)linguistic processes below the level of conscious awareness in which language variation is diminished and non-localisable forms are selected. It is important to bear in mind that these processes need not be active at the same time. Nevalainen (2000b: 338) has used the terms selection and acceptance “with reference to individual linguistic features” in which they have come to refer to sociolinguistic processes of the adoption and diffusion of individual linguistic features. In a way, the notion of polycentric selection can be connected to Nevalainen’s definition of selection and acceptance. However, the latter definitions are potentially misleading in that they also relate to deliberate language planning.

3.3.1. Linguistic standardisation versus ideological standardisation

As indicated in the sections above, it is important to realise that language standardisation can be viewed from two different perspectives: (1) there are linguistic processes involved in standardisation, e.g. the reduction of optional variation, and (2) there are cultural processes that give rise to the development of ideologically driven convergence. It is argued here that both processes

may take place at the same time, but need not be. Usefully, Devitt (1989) makes a strong case for the separation of standardisation as a linguistic process and standardisation as a process of deliberate institutional standardisation and prescriptivism. This is not to say that the two are not related, but as Milroy (1999, 2001) has pointed out, evaluative notions of correctness as to what belongs to the 'standard' cannot always directly be linked to what happens linguistically; rather, these evaluative notions are abstract realities entrenched in ideology and part of cultural norms. Linguistic standardisation, as coined by Devitt (1989), on the other hand, is very much in line with the definition that is maintained within the framework of social dialectology. Linguistic standardisation should be considered a process that has regularisation and reduction of optional variation as an effect, but that may or may not correspond to the conception of a standard as a cultural norm (Devitt 1989: 1). To Devitt (1989: 1-2), standardisation can be a process that operates independently from standard ideologies. In the case of the standardisation of English, the process of regularisation and uniformity was well under way before the rise of prescriptivism and standard ideologies in the 1700s. What is more, many changes in the linguistically regularised variety passed under the radar of ideological grammars, while stigmatised features sometimes continued to be used, even by the most educated speakers, of whom it is generally expected that they use standard language. A good example is the use of *whom*, which is becoming obsolete, especially in American English, while it continued to be a prescribed form for a long time (Devitt 1989: 2). Again, this does not mean that the ideology of language standardisation and linguistic standardisation should be considered entities operating completely independently from each other; stigmatisation of variants could promote the reduction of a certain variant for instance. However, ideological standardisation is just one contributing factor to standardisation rather than the constituting factor (Devitt 1989: 3-4). As Devitt points out (1989: 7), "[...] linguistic behaviour might also be affected, since the ideology of standardisation is one social factor that probably affects actual usage. The linguistic result, however, need not be linguistic standardisation, the movement toward uniformity".

Present-day spoken Standard English may serve as an example here, as in some cases the present-day standard variety may be considered less regularised, and to some extent shows more internal variation than non-standardised local dialects. To illustrate this, the present tense verb inflection of present-day spoken Standard English is relatively irregular as it only has an inflectional ending for the third person singular (*I/they walk* and *she walks*), but not for the other persons. Most dialects, however, have become more regular over time and have either *-s* for all persons (*I/she/they walks*) or no inflection at all (*I/she/they walk*) (Trudgill 1999: 125-126). Possibly, change towards the regularisation of linguistic forms is inhibited in the standard variety due to the conservative nature of standard ideologies.

3.4. Standard Ideology and standardisation in the history of English

As mentioned earlier, the standard ideology affected the way in which the history of English has been described and, in particular, the way in which the standardisation of English has been investigated. It might be instructive to explore how the terms standard and standardisation have become embedded in the discourse of linguistics in particular, and in society in general. The concept of standard language cannot be explained without exploring the notion of what we perceive a language to be, or more precisely, what the history of English entails, as the way it has been viewed and possibly is still being viewed, affects the way in which languages and their histories are described. In line with Foucault's ideas, Crowley (2003: 14) argues that the notion of historicity of language underlies the way language was and often still is studied:

For Foucault, history has been the 'fundamental code' that has structured the cultural knowledge of Western Europe from the early nineteenth century. Thus, across a number of apparently distinct fields of knowledge can be traced a unifying theme: the appearance of 'historicity'. He argued that around the end of the eighteenth century, 'a profound historicity penetrates into the heart of things, isolates and defines them in their

coherence, imposes upon them the forms of order implied by the continuity of time’.

The field of historical linguistics is also closely linked to the rise of nationhood and national identity in nineteenth-century Britain and Europe. Language became “[...] a primary means of creating or bestowing nationhood as it was the ideal medium for signalling inclusion and exclusion” (Crowley 2003: 56). English as a language was thus representative of a nation, and part of a shared history of that nation. The history of English came to be described as a language that had evolved in a linear, uninterrupted way, i.e. from the first Anglo Saxon texts to present-day written Standard English: “[...]. The standard literary language was traced as an historical phenomenon by the linguistic historians as it emerged into its role as the national, uniform, written language” (Crowley 2003: 137). In other words, a standard was sought and created in the public mind, i.e. a standard ideology was born. In conjunction with that, the standard was often also considered the best exemplar of the language and its existence had to be justified by its historicity. This affected the way in which histories of languages were viewed and the way in which data were studied, e.g. texts that were seen as exemplary of ‘the standard’ were valued as the most relevant object of study, whereas the development of other varieties and other types of written language received less attention. In fact, standard textbooks that approach the history of the English language as a development from Old English to present-day Standard English are still commonplace, which reflects that the development of Standard English is described as a rather linear process from non-standard to standard, whereas, in reality, English as a language did not simply converge into one single standard variety. In recent years, this issue has been addressed by language studies “from below”, which take an alternative perspective on language history and, for instance, investigate the use of lower classes and non-literary language (cf. Elspaß 2005; Elspaß et al. 2011; Rutten & van der Wal 2014). Systematic studies on linguistic standardisation, then again, are not as common; instead, the focus still tends to be on prestige factors that may have given rise to the adoption of a national standard, which describes the rise of a standard ideology rather than linguistic

standardisation (cf. Linn & McLelland 2002⁵; Deumert & Vandebussche 2003).

Related to the notion of ‘historicity’ of a language is what Bergs (2012: 84) refers to as “constructional” or “ideational” anachronism. This type of anachronism accompanies the indiscriminating application of the uniformitarian principle (e.g. what is possible or impossible now, also applies to past stages). Put differently, the types of anachronism that are referred to here involve the tendency to place ideas, ideologies or concepts in past times, while we cannot possibly know for sure if they were valid at that time. Furthermore, it often concerns concepts that cannot be measured; rather, the concepts are constructed or modelled on the data that we find. These data are at best incomplete and thus liable to personal interpretations. Although Bergs (2012: 96) for the most part demonstrates the danger of anachronism by investigating the applicability of concepts such as class, gender and social networks, his findings may well be illustrative of the way the history of Standard English is often viewed:

[t]he actual concepts and functions of class, gender, networks, and, most importantly, norms, standards, and prestige, differ radically in different communities. To assume that we find the rules and mechanisms of modern English in other communities or language periods leads easily to anachronism.

Again, in the case of standard language, we have to be careful when applying our present-day notion of what a standard language comprises, or even a whole language for that matter. The way in which language and language features were evaluated may differ starkly from the way they are viewed today. As will become clear in Section 3.5., which deals with the origins of Standard English, this realisation becomes especially relevant; after all, the origin of Standard English is

⁵ However, see Deumert (2002), Elspaß (2002), Vandebussche (2002), Zheltukhin (2002) in this edited volume. These authors focus more on the linguistic element of standardisation in Afrikaans, Flemish, German, and Swedish respectively and study the sociolinguistic processes that are involved in the diffusion of supralocal forms, as well as convergence processes.

often extrapolated from a small amount of texts and often attributed to a single variety. These were texts that were created and read by a very small minority of society, as compulsory education was not introduced before 1870 and mass literacy was not the case before that time, nor can it be said that there was mass education and communication as we know it now, thus making it tricky to apply present-day notions about standardisation. It is also a matter of interpretation whether scribes took up their pens with the awareness that they were using a 'standard', or whether they tried to aim at a certain prestigious variety; various other factors therefore need to be considered.

It seems to be common practice in traditional textbook accounts of the history of Standard English to explain the emergence and particularly the emanation of the standard by the means of prestige (Fisher 1977; Richardson 1980; Burnley 1989; Smith 1992; Blake 1996). Although it is a popular assumption that the standard is the most prestigious variety, it cannot automatically be assumed that this was the case in the past, leaving aside the question whether what we identify as a standard was perceived as a variety of any kind by contemporaries. The general assumption is that at least from the twentieth century onwards Britain consisted of a very class-conscious society and the prestige associated with higher classes was thus often a way to explain language change, but as Bergs has rightly pointed out, the evaluation of class may have been very different in, for instance, the Late Middle and Early Modern English period (Bergs 2012: 96). Yet, traditionally, prestige is often identified with the social group of the highest echelons of society and standard language has often been regarded as the variety used by this highest social group. However, as Milroy (1999: 37) notes,

it is by no means clear that the 'standard language' at any given time is a direct product of the language of the highest status groups (this often seems to be recessive) and the identification of the standard language with the highest prestige language clearly needs further analyses. To start with, it may be suggested that the standard language originates in the need for the wide spread communication in written form and that,

although the highest prestige forms may affect it, the forms adopted are adopted primarily because they are the ones that are most likely to be widely accepted or understood in writing.

To this could even be added that prestige may follow a change, but it is very hard to empirically prove that it may precede and instigate the widespread adoption of a feature.

The sections above have illustrated the underlying ideologies and concepts that affect our views of the history of standard languages and will form a critical framework to scrutinise the accounts that have been given over the past years of Standard English (see Sec. 3.5. below). I also hope to have demonstrated the importance of a careful discrimination between the linguistic processes and the societal processes including attitudes and ideological conceptions that are associated with standardisation.

3.5. The origins of Standard English

Stepping aside from the question whether a standard variety can be said to exist as an “empirically verifiable reality” (Milroy & Milroy 1999: 18), I will give a concise overview of how traditional accounts describe the development of Standard English. Although it may be difficult to identify a single internally regular variety of English, it cannot be denied that in the language of English texts that span several centuries, a linguistic process of regularisation and reduction of variation can be observed. The general consensus is that from the fifteenth century onwards, most written English became so uniform in its appearance that it became impossible or difficult to link it to any local dialect (Strang 1974; McIntosh et al. 1986; Baugh & Cable 1993; Blake 1996). By the end of the seventeenth century, the linguistic standardisation process seems to have halted and little is said to have changed since then. However, it is not always clear whether this only concerned spelling, or also morphology and syntax. Often the impression is given that it concerns the language as a whole, while a closer look reveals that spelling may be uniform, but morphology and syntax show considerable variation. Nor can it be said that the written language is not changing anymore. Indeed, ‘the standard’ in the modern

ideological sense is reluctant to accept changes, but presently it can be observed that certain changes are accepted, one of which is the previously mentioned abandonment of *whom*. Nevalainen (2000: 333) points out that spelling may have regularised rapidly, while variation in morphology and syntax, which has less often been considered in the context of standardisation, may display considerable variation.

Traditionally, it has thus been argued that the written standard emerged and developed over the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries (Samuels 1963; Fisher 1977; Bourcier 1981; Nevalainen 2003). The literature describes the occurrence of what is referred to as 'incipient' standards as early as the fourteenth century. For instance, Bourcier (1981: 177) notes about incipient standards: "The fourteenth century saw several types of dialect taking it in turn to appear as written standards, each type being represented by a fair body of extant materials." These incipient standards are based on Samuels' study (1963) of four dialects that were believed to function as standards:

Type I: The empirical basis mainly consists of Wycliffite manuscripts and shows Central Midlands dialect features (Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire, and Bedfordshire), although the texts are not clearly localisable. Amongst other things, it consists of Wycliff's sermons and tracts, earlier and later copies of the Lollard Bible, but also religious works that did not spring from the Wycliffite movement (Samuels 1963: 84-85). Samuels (1963: 85) argues that the adoption of a Central Midlands dialect by the Lollards was a strategic one: The midlands dialect was the most widely understood.

Type II: This type was found in a group of seven fourteenth-century manuscripts (the latest from 1370). Based on linguistic features, this type is thought to originate from the Greater London Area, showing Essex features (Samuels 1963: 87)

Type III: The linguistic features of type III differ sharply from type II even though texts from both types are believed to originate from London. Since the texts of type III follow the period of the type II texts, Samuel (1963: 88) suspects that the London dialect changed drastically and rapidly in the fourteenth century. The orthography is highly

heterogeneous and there are individual differences; the texts by the court poets Chaucer and Gower, for instance, differ considerably. This led Samuels (1963: 88) to conclude that variation was accepted at court and that “no strict norm can yet have existed”. This type cannot be referred to as a standard, but it should rather be considered a group of texts representative of London at that time.

Type IV: This is what Samuels (1963: 88) refers to as the Chancery Standard, and what according to Samuels was the “basis of modern written English”. The group of texts dates from 1430 onwards, and they are linguistically quite different from the texts of type III, albeit that this is concluded based on the contrast with Chaucer’s texts. Accordingly, this is the type that was “adopted by the government offices” (Samuels 1963: 89) and subsequently came to dominate over the other varieties. As stated by Samuels, the Chancery standard was an amalgam of “spoken London English and certain midland elements” (Samuels 1963: 93).

The Chancery type will be discussed in more detail in the next section as this is the type that has widely come to be referred to as the predecessor of present-day Standard English. It has to be emphasised that the term standard here seems to be applied loosely and it refers to varieties that are used locally only and that are still relatively variable (Takeda 2001: 34). As Nevalainen (2003: 334) points out, it might be more appropriate to refer to these incipient ‘standards’ as focussed (Smith 1996: 70) or levelled varieties that allowed for a greater variability than ‘fixed’ standard varieties and that resulted from “a sort of mean toward which scribes tend” (Smith 1996: 67). In the Late Middle English period we cannot expect that there was such a strong notion of ‘standardness’ and a general desire to fix the language into a certain direction (cf. Takeda 2001: 18, 53, 34-38).

Many accounts of Standard English, especially the ones found in students’ textbooks (see illustrations below), seem to be based on the assumption that Standard English has sprung from a single source, or at least from clearly localisable sources, originating in London (Wright 1996, 2000). In this view, the present-day Standard can thus linearly be traced back to a certain place and point in time.

Nonetheless, the accounts concerning the exact birthplace of Standard English are diverging. These different explanations can be somewhat confusing. Wright (1996: 99-103) has selected some textbook definitions and she found that, depending on which textbook one refers to, the following explanations will be given:

1. Despite the fact that most authors acknowledge that the variety is highly mixed and shows many different dialect features, it seems that the East Midland dialect was considered the main contributor and/or predecessor of Standard English. Different arguments are supplied for the role of the East Midland dialect but one important element is the role of migration into London and prestige of the immigrants who spoke the most influential dialects. (cf.; Barber 1972; Strang 1974; Leith 1983; Baugh & Cable 1993)
2. Others say that Standard English sprang from the Central Midlands dialect which was brought to London via mass migration. Another argument for the prevalence of this dialect is that it was the most widely understood variety. (cf. Strang 1974; Leith 1983; Crystal 1995)
3. The standard emanated from the writing practices of the Chancery clerks. The writings of the Chancery showed Midland dialect elements too (Samuels 1963; Strang 1974; Crystal 1995).

The most commonly accepted view seems to be that a national standard developed from the Chancery. It is useful to further investigate where the hypothesis hails from and to establish how this standard was defined.

3.5.1. A national Chancery Standard?

Especially Samuels (1963) and Fisher (1977) have been very influential with regard to the Chancery Standard theory. As already pointed out above, Samuels (1963) was one of the first to introduce the Chancery as a possible predecessor of present-day Standard English. The term

Chancery standard is introduced in a brief article from 1963, along with the other types that were discussed above:

Type IV (which I shall call 'Chancery Standard') consists of that flood of government documents that starts in the years following 1430. Its differences from the language of Chaucer are well known, and it is this type, not its predecessors in London English, that is the basis of modern written English. (Samuels 1963: 88)

It seems that Samuels (1963: 89) posits the Chancery standard as the predecessor of Standard English because it contains features "approaching standard English". However, the evidence provided mainly concerns spelling variation, whereas grammatical variation is not addressed. Furthermore, there are also texts from monasteries of the Home Counties that have similar Standard English features, but they are not considered as an example of the incipient standard because they have a "Middlesex or Surrey basis with a sprinkling of the features from the main types", i.e. the incipient standards (Samuels 1963: 89). It is questionable whether it is correct to describe a variety as the predecessor of Standard English just because it contains features of the present-day standard, especially because the features are also to be found in texts from other areas that do not fit Samuels' proposed 'standard' types. In the light of a sociolinguistic approach to variation and change, it seems unlikely that a single variety that developed in one location was simply and in its entirety the constitutor or predecessor of a national written standard. Rather, it can be expected that forms from different regions became supralocal forms under the influence of contact. These forms were diffused through social networks over the country in different stages and in a multidirectional way, i.e. diffusion took place in several places and to and from several places at once. The fact that some of the 'standard' features identified by Samuels also appear in other texts from other locations that otherwise look more local in terms of linguistic features may be an indication that some forms had in fact supralocalised. I propose that some forms that happened to be part of what we now refer to as Standard English already enjoyed a wider national currency,

the spread of which should be considered as the result of levelling and supralocalisation processes, rather than the result of the development of a single incipient variety. I will discuss this hypothesis in more detail in Section 3.7. below. Undoubtedly, due to its size and economic and political importance, London was the greatest generator and transmitter of supralocal forms, but the process of supralocalisation was not unique to London, and it should be taken into consideration that similar processes took place simultaneously in other places, with a similar linguistic outcome.

Most likely, however, it was Fisher's (1977, 1979) study of the written language produced by the Chancery that promoted the view that Chancery English was the predecessor of a national written Standard (Takeda 2001: 69). Fisher's account of the emergence of Standard English deals particularly with the re-emergence of English as an administrative language during the fifteenth century, and, more specifically, the written English that was produced by the administrative body that was most prolific during the fifteenth century; the Chancery (Fisher 1977: 870). Fisher (1977: 891) states that Standard English developed "[i]n the absence of any other national model for writing in the vernacular, and in view of the enormous prestige and ubiquitous presence of Chancery writing, it is not surprising that the Chancery set the fashion for business and private correspondence." Fisher establishes that the texts written by the chancery clerks were more "regularised" and closer to Modern English, albeit that there were also scribal differences (Fisher 1977: 883-884). Nonetheless, he also acknowledges that official civic records of guilds are considerably less Chancery-like, but it appears that in Fisher's view, it was only a matter of time before most other types of business writing would 'evolve' towards a variety that was closer to the Chancery standard, since this was the most prestigious variety.

Even though Fisher's view has been widely adopted (Leith 1996: 130), there are compelling arguments against it. For instance, Wright (1996: 108-109) points out that Fisher does not take into account variation in individual texts, which may give a distorted view as to how regular the writing systems actually were, as individual texts could be relatively more variable, and possibly use a 'standard' form

only sporadically. Furthermore, based on the popular belief that French and Latin had almost universally dominated as a written language in the centuries before the 1400s, Fisher pinpoints the shift from Latin and French to English as the most important factor in the development of a standard written variety. This makes it seem as if there was quite a sudden break from Latin and French to English. However, there is evidence that there had been bilingual or even trilingual administration systems for a century, which suggests a much more gradual process in the switch from Latin and Norman French to English (Wright 2013).

Another point of criticism is that what Fisher identifies as Chancery records are those records that are labelled as such by the public record office. This is tricky since the function of the Chancery changed over time; documents that previously were classified as being part of another office were later classified as chancery documents, so there is a chance that many of the texts that Fisher studied were not originally produced by chancery clerks (Wright 1996: 109). The popular assumption that the written standard developed from the so-called Chancery standard, is also contested by Benskin (1992). He points out that the chancery was only a part of the governmental official body that mainly used Latin and maintained doing so long after other bodies had adopted English as the administrative language. What is more, the English that occurred in the Chancery context was mostly copy work of English texts produced by the King's secretaries, Privy seal offices, or it concerned texts that did not originate from the government in the first place:

In so far as chancery clerks wrote English in state documents, they did so mainly as copyists either (i) of documents originating from the Signet (King's Secretary's) or Privy Seal Offices, or (ii) of documents sent in to the chancery from outside government altogether. (Benskin 1992: 79)

In other words, if there was a Chancery Standard at all, the influence of the Chancery's writings on the development of a national standard needs to be questioned.

3.5.2. *Haugen's model and the history of English*

More recent accounts on the development of Standard English use Haugen's four-step model of selection, acceptance, elaboration and codification to explain the emergence and development of Standard English (cf. Leith 1983; Nevalainen 2003). As discussed in Section 3.3., the application of the model to the past should be carried out with caution so as to avoid the danger of "ideational" anachronism. It is also important to bear in mind that Haugen's model and definitions are applied more loosely than Haugen had initially defined them, but when interpreted with care, this approach may provide a flexible framework to explain the standardisation processes that were involved in the emergence of a written standard.

As for the *selection* process, different scenarios have been proposed. Leith (1983: 38) considers the selection process unequivocally as a process in which one dialect variety served as the basis for the standard. According to Leith, this dialect was the East Midland dialect that was presumably spoken by the London merchant class and which was a class dialect from as early as the fourteenth century onwards. Then, by the end of the fourteenth century, there was what Leith refers to as an East Midland "embryonic written standard" that due to different origins of the merchants who used it was still variable and consisted of multiple standards. By 1430, one dominant variant crystallised from these varieties and was used in government official documents, which reportedly accelerated the emanation of this standard. This is highly hypothetical and there is no clear empirical basis to back up this hypothesis. It seems to be an attempt to describe the development of Standard English as a "linear, unidirectional development" (Wright 2006: 6). In other words, the development of a national standard variety is assumed to have developed in a single location from which it then spread to the rest of the country. However, as discussed earlier, this possibility is rejected here.

Nevalainen (2003: 132) also identifies London as the breeding ground where the standard developed and emanated from. She underlines King Henry V 's (1387–1422) decision to conduct most central administration in English as a crucial step towards the spread

of a supralocal norm. As touched upon in Section 3.3., the *selection* process, however, is in Nevalainen's (2000: 338) view, not so much the selection of one variety in particular, but a more polycentric process in that it concerns a sociolinguistic process in which certain variants are adopted and spread in the context of social networks, i.e. language convergence was facilitated by innovators who were part of loose-knit social networks and thus more prone to adopt innovative forms. Important factors that gave rise to an increase of this type of network are urbanisation and (social) mobility, which characterise the Early Modern period, but which had already started to play a role in the Late Middle English period. Nevalainen's explanation of the selection process fits in with the sociolinguistic approach that is taken in this study and will, for the most part, be accepted as a plausible explanation. However, it needs to be questioned if King Henry V's decision was the trigger that instigated the spread of supralocal linguistic norms, since, as will be explained in more detail in Chapter 5, there had already been an ongoing shift to written English before Henry's decision. Furthermore, I argue that there are insufficient grounds for the assumption that London was the sole contributor to the development of a linguistically standardised variety and that it was the only place from which linguistic norms subsequently spread.

As for the *acceptance* process (acceptance of the norm by the speech community and its applicability to different functions), for Nevalainen (2000) acceptance relates to the stage in which the forms that are introduced by innovators within social networks are accepted and adopted by other members of the network, and eventually by the speech community as a whole. Leith (1983: 41) pinpoints the adoption of the standard variety as a literary norm as a sign that the norm was accepted:

In the course of the sixteenth century, the growing sense of a literary norm is reflected in the numerous attempts to represent the speech of foreigners, the linguistic characteristics of Welsh, Scottish, and Irish people, and the speakers of other dialects of English. It is now that we begin to see the social stereotyping of such speakers [...]. Acceptance of

the standard, therefore, occasions rejection of kinds of English that are felt to be outside the norm.

Although dialect representations in texts were nothing new, Leith (1983: 41) argues that this time the non-standard dialect representations came to be associated with a certain sense of simplicity and coarseness. It is, however, not clear whether this is empirically verifiable in linguistic terms and what the norm was exactly, other than that literature had become non-dialectal. All that can be concluded on the basis of these literary practices is that there must have been a rejection of certain forms amongst the elites. They may have been based on differences in social classes and refer to different sociolects rather than the notion of standardness versus non-standardness. It appears that Leith (1983) views language standardisation mostly in terms of the emergence of a language ideology, whereas Nevalainen (2000) focuses more on the linguistic aspects.

Another stage of language standardisation is the *elaboration of function*, or maximal variation of function (Haugen 1966). During this process, the standard variety becomes “omnifunctional” and develops vocabulary and structures suitable for all kinds of domains (Leith 1983: 44). By the fifteenth century, English started to fulfil roles that were previously predominantly performed by French and Latin. Government administration and law texts increasingly began to be written in English, as well as the Bible and other religious texts. I will discuss this transition in more detail in Chapter 5. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also saw a rise in the establishment of grammar schools that were often intended for merchants’ children. Here too English increasingly became the medium of instruction (Leith 1983: 48; Orme 1989). According to Leith, the establishment of the norm in all domains was preceded by the inkhorn debates taking place in the course of the sixteenth century. These discussions involved the debate as to how many Latinisms were to be accepted in the domains newly conquered by English. Arguably, this does not say a great deal about what happened linguistically, but it was a sign that there was a growing awareness of English as a national language in the ideological sense, i.e. English as a national variety started to become a reality in the

public mind. In Nevalainen's (2003) account, it seems that elaboration of function took place simultaneously with the selection and acceptance of linguistic norms within the social networks and the speech community as a whole. The variety that emerged due to mobility and subsequent dialect contact was adopted by authorities and its function expanded from the vernacular domain to the administrative domain. This was not a process but rather "a set of processes which occur[red] in a set of social spaces, developing at different rates in different registers, in different idiolects..." (Wright 2000: 6).

The *codification* process marks the point where the 'standard ideology' became fully entrenched in society (Nevalainen 2003: 137). It can be characterised by prescriptive tendencies as to what the standard language should look like and which forms were to be stigmatised. Where some countries have established language academies to regulate and stipulate a standard, England never accomplished this and the task was taken up by 'language guardians' who individually advocated the preservation and improvement of English (Milroy & Milroy 1999: 28). Typical of the codification process is that it resists the natural tendency of language to vary and change. The language guardians who were mostly elite scholars took it as their mission to evaluate variants, to fix them and eliminate undesired variants. Their evaluations were often justified by arguments that seem arbitrary (Leith 1983: 49; Milroy & Milroy 1999: 47-59). The language guardians generally seemed to focus on particular areas. What is more, the codification seems to have taken place in stages. According to Nevalainen (2003: 138), the codification of orthography and spelling has taken place in the course of the sixteenth century. Men like John Hart, Sir John Cheke (1514–1557), Sir Thomas Smith (1513–1577), Richard Mulcaster (1532? -1611) and William Bullokar (1530? -1609) were particularly concerned with spelling reforms (Nevalainen 2003: 138). At the time, printers were generally not actively involved in the discussion, but they seemed to have had their own individual printing practices (Nevalainen 2003: 138; Tyrkkö 2013). By 1650, however, most printed works had a fairly uniform orthographic system (Nevalainen 2003: 138.) During the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries, the codification of lexis was initially characterised by an expansion of the vernacular vocabulary by the borrowing of Latin and French words. The focus was on specific fields such as law and science, as in these fields it was often felt that English was not adequate as a written medium (Nevalainen 2003: 140). Dictionaries at the time were often bilingual with the intention to explain difficult (mostly French and Latin loan) words. One of the first monolingual and best-known dictionaries that listed English words with their spelling and meaning was the one written by Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), which was published in 1755. Johnson's dictionary was also prescriptive in that it proscribed and advised the use of certain words. The English vocabulary, or those words that in Johnson's eyes represented a 'proper' English vocabulary, were dictated by his dictionary (Nevalainen 2003: 140). Alongside dictionary makers, the eighteenth century also saw the heyday of grammarians who tried to codify the English language (see Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2006, 2008b, 2010 for more information about the increase of grammar books at the time). One of the first grammars to be written on the English language was William Bullokar's (1530?-1609) in 1586 (Nevalainen 2003: 142). John Wallis's (1616-1703) grammar, which appeared in 1653, was the first extensive grammar that was based on actual usage and intended for learners of English. Although the earlier grammars were often prescriptive in that they advised best usage, eighteenth-century grammars are often said to have been more normative and they explicitly prescribed and condemned certain forms (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2006, 2008b, 2010; Yáñez-Bouza 2014). Especially the latter half of the eighteenth century was marked by an enormous rise in the publication of prescriptive grammar books (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008: 5).

All in all, the process of standardisation in English can be captured in Haugen's model, both in terms of the birth of standard ideologies and linguistic standardisation processes. However, my contention is that in the context of the present study the model is potentially confusing in that almost all of the terms inherently indicate deliberate language planning processes, or relate to overt language attitudes that cannot always unequivocally be linked to what happens

linguistically. Nevalainen's linguistic approach to the process of selection and acceptance is to a certain extent empirically verifiable, but, as stated earlier, the terminology seems to be somewhat unfortunate to describe linguistic standardisation of a time when there was no strong evidence that there was a standard ideology that called for the rise of a national standard (cf. Takeda 2001). Furthermore, it has never been convincingly established if London was indeed the single source from which a standard variety emerged, i.e. analyses are based on texts that were written in or around London and London's role in the rise of a standard variety are based on the fact that these texts show similarities with present-day Standard English. As shown in Chapter 2, it is worthwhile to consider the role of other places where text production was high and to consider more data, since conclusions about the origin of Standard English are drawn on the basis of the results from two studies that only include a small amount of data (Samuels 1963; Fisher 1977). In the fifteenth century, the speech community in England as a whole was still relatively diffuse and it can be expected that there were local or regional norms, based on local practice, under the influence of dominant local urban centres (see also Takeda 2001, Chapter 4, who provides compelling arguments for this approach). As suggested by Nevalainen's interpretation of the codification process, it was not until 1650 when orthography appeared to be fully codified and nationally uniform, and it was not until the sixteenth century that we see signs of what may tentatively be interpreted as standard ideology.

As was suggested in Chapter 2 on the basis of Benskin's (1992) study on provincial towns, these places being important centres of communication and contact for a wider region, the levelling out of local forms and the maintaining of forms that had a wider currency were a natural consequence. Since these processes may have taken place in several urban centres at the same time, it may well be that many of the written varieties that emerged in those urban centres looked similar to the extent that they could have been assumed to have sprung from a single source, even though this may not have been possible. Furthermore, the levelling out of strictly local features may have prepared the way for the adoption of supralocal forms, which

could explain the occurrence of forms that also occurred in what has traditionally been identified as the predecessor of written Standard English. In the sections that follow I will further explore this avenue.

3.6. The alternative to the single source and location approach

Challenging the notion that London was the sole source from which present-day Standard English emerged, the question remains how and why regional characteristics disappeared from most fifteenth-century texts, while other supralocal forms appeared and replaced local forms. This question is also poignantly reflected in the quote by Lass (1993: 81, quoted in Takeda 2001: 92) below:

The term 'standardisation' is widely used, and everybody I suppose agrees that from around the late fourteenth century on, gathering momentum into the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, whatever 'standardisation' was had begun to happen to English, and was more or less completed by around 1800 or so. But the nature of the process is somewhat obscure, and there are some very interesting indeterminacies that ought to affect our judgement of what is actually happening at any given time.

Wright (1996) provides further convincing evidence that there is more to the standardisation story than has previously been proposed by Samuels and Fisher, and similarly to Nevalainen, approaches standardisation as a linguistic process. In her survey (1996) of late fourteenth-century guild certificates from London, she considers variation in individual texts and individual scribes. There is no pattern in the rates of individual usage by the different scribes, but the degree in which the individual scribes varied was stable. Wright therefore proposes that the texts she examined did not represent a particular London dialect but rather that the scribes had their own "stable writing habits" (1996: 112); that is to say, the ratios at which they chose a different variant were the same whereas the form chosen was unpredictable. In the light of this, one may want to argue that standardisation has more to do with a scribe's tendency to reduce his

individual variation ratio rather than the selection and elimination of a variant alone (Wright 1996, 2013). In another study, Wright (2013) investigates London bridge accounts from the 1400s and 1500s. Here she finds that the pattern as described above has changed. When only looking at the majority as opposed to minority variants (in terms of spelling), there is still considerable variation in the 1500s. However, each scribe individually employs a considerably smaller repertoire of variants and tends to use one majority form. Yet, the majority form need not be the same for each scribe, explaining the fact that there is still considerable variation when one looks at majority and minority forms of all the scribes together (2013: 65-66). To Wright, one of the first stages of linguistic standardisation of English is thus a process of elimination and not, as is often suggested, the selection of one dominant form, as this seems to have been a different one for each scribe. This leads Wright (2013: 66) to conclude the following:

The actual whittling-down process to one supreme variant used by everybody happened well after 1500, and thus after the period of 'Chancery Standard'. To state this categorically, the fifteenth century was not one of selection, but one of elimination. To put it in simplistic terms, Chancery spellings (by which is meant the spellings which were numerically dominant in a text, because Chancery spellings were variable) are not the forerunner of standard spellings.

The end of the fourteenth century was marked by a change in trading patterns and economic growth. Wright (2013) argues that precisely the change in trading patterns may have contributed to the linguistic standardisation of English. London's catchment area extended to the South and East Midlands and a part of Norwich in the early fourteenth century, which implies that there must have been dialect contact with people from those areas. By the end of the fourteenth century, interaction with people from different dialect areas had increased immensely, as well as London's catchment area (Wright 2013: 66-72). More precisely, London had become the international hub of trade, and most trade, be it national or international, took place via London. What is crucial in relation to the economic change is that trade and

economies in the provincial towns had become less autonomous and more dependent on London for their economic growth (Wright 2013: 67-69). In the sixteenth century, the most important trade current was between North and South; the subsequent dialect contact that must have taken place might explain the presence of Northern features that were found in Southern texts. Well-known examples are the third person present singular inflection *-s*, and the use of *are* as opposed to the older form *ben* (Wright 2013: 71). For a long period, both Southern and Northern forms co-existed in the South and it took several generations before some of the Northern forms ousted the Southern ones (Wright 2013: 69). Wright suggests that what has often been identified as a standard is actually the result of extensive dialect contact, which was intensified precisely in the period when texts become harder to localise (Wright 2013: 73). Indeed, much of the properties of what we identify as Standard English show signs of simplification such as dialect levelling and regularisation, which are phenomena that typically take place in extensive dialect contact situations (Trudgill 1986). Examples of simplifications in Standard English are the general lack of different variants of one variable, in particular with regard to spelling, e.g. there used to be several variants for the digraph <th> (Wright 2013: 73; see also Chapter 9 of the present study).

As shown in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.3., Benskin's (1992: 75) findings too warn against the tendency to over-simplify standardisation processes. As stated earlier, he argues that it is unlikely that a standardised variety developed in one place, as a solidly identifiable unit that subsequently spread all over the rest of England and that was adopted as the national standard. Nor can it be assumed that provincial towns produced texts in pure local dialect before a national standard was adopted. In his view, local standards existed long before one could speak of a national standard.

3.7. Towards a working definition of standardisation: supralocalisation and regional dialect levelling

As argued in the sections above, it is debateable whether a national standard variety can be said to have developed in one single location,

at a specific point in time, or from one clearly identifiable source-dialect. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that there was such a thing as a standard language ideology and a corresponding abstractly identifiable fixed standard as early as the fifteenth century; rather, it seems more appropriate to speak of the emergence of a focussed or standardised variety, e.g. in linguistic terms, the written language was to some extent regularised, but there does not appear to have been a fixed standard (see also Takeda 2001). There was public concern about variation as regards spelling and orthography as early as the sixteenth century. Although this may be considered a sign of the existence of a standard ideology, in terms of linguistic standardisation, the situation was still relatively diffuse, and printing houses, as well as different institutions appeared to have had their own specific practices (Takeda 2001: 54). The point at which a standard variety existed in both linguistic and ideological sense appears to be from the seventeenth century onwards, when prescription, proscription, and stigmatisation of certain variants became part of public debate (Nevalainen 2003). Moreover, this was also the period when literacy and education increased significantly, as well as the production of printed works. It is likely that in this period the printing press played an important role in the diffusion and fixing of a written standard in that the mass production and mass exposure of a certain variety increased. As Nevalainen points out (2000: 338), “[t]he availability of multiple copies of the same text makes it accessible to a large number of people simultaneously, spreading certain messages and conventions, and ignoring or suppressing others”. In this period, then, a standardised/focussed variety became part of a standard ideology and was identified as a standard variety.

Based on what Benskin (1992), Wright (1996, 2013), and Nevalainen (2000b) have observed, I propose that the suppression of local dialect features that is clearly perceivable in texts dating from the fifteenth century is the result of regional dialect levelling and supralocalisation processes. I hypothesise that these processes took place simultaneously in different focal areas, which in turn resulted in a written variety that enjoyed a wide currency and later came to be

accepted and fixed as ‘the standard’⁶ (see Nevalainen & Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2006 for similar observations). I will use regional dialect levelling and supralocalisation as two distinctive processes to describe the linguistic standardisation processes. I define supralocalisation in accordance with Nevalainen and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2006: 288), who use it as “an umbrella term to refer to the geographical spread of linguistic features beyond their region of origin”, which means that the diffusion of a certain form may be an “innovation diffusion” when it exceeds the region of its origin (Britain 2010: 195). In historical data, it should be possible to trace the diffusion of such a form from its original area over a wider area where it previously did not occur. The spread of the Northern third person singular –s inflection may be a good example of this. Regional dialect levelling refers to the process in which strictly local features are replaced by forms with a wider regional currency and in which different dialects that come into contact converge (Trudgill 1986: 98; Kerswill 2003: 223). Levelling can be linked to accommodation (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1.), which ultimately describes the process in which speakers converge. More precisely, language users employ forms that they have in common and suppress forms that are not part of their common repertoire. Alternatively, convergence can be unidirectional in the sense that one language user may converge more toward another than vice versa. Notably, the extent to which both interlocutors converge is conditioned socially, as well as by the extent of the contact they have (short-term and long-term accommodation) (Trudgill 1986: 1-8; Kerswill 2003: 223). Linked to the notion of supralocalisation is the term geographical diffusion (Kerswill 2003: 223), which specifically refers to the spread of features from “[...] a populous and economically and culturally dominant centre”. Since there were several provincial urban centres that saw a growth in terms of economic trade and population, it can be expected that in the Late Medieval period, when

⁶ I have placed ‘the standard’ between quotation marks as it concerns an ideologically fixed standard. However, I accept that a living language will always be subject to variation and change and thus cannot exist in a fixed state. Nonetheless, language ideology is something to be reckoned with and as illustrated earlier, it interacts with the linguistic reality in that it may, for instance, inhibit change.

the linguistic community of England as a whole tended to be relatively diffuse, several regionally levelled written varieties existed under the influence of frequent trade and long-and short-term migration contacts. Most likely, regional urban centres were the focal points from which these varieties emanated and were diffused, since communication between different dialect areas, as well as the input of different dialects and possibly also of different languages were most prominent in those places. This is indeed what is suggested by Benskin's case study of six provincial towns (see also Chapter 2). It makes sense that as soon as a variety became less regionally bound and thus gained a wider currency, it was also open to the adoption of new supralocal forms that had an even wider national currency. Britain (2010: 195-196) explains this as follows:

There may be a sense, though, in which the rapid diffusion of innovative forms may well be particularly vigorous and less constrained in communities where processes of levelling have been highly active. It is often argued that in fluid, highly mobile communities of the kind that are pre-disposed to levelling, social networks in the local community tend to be relatively weaker than in more stable communities.

The question is then how certain forms transcend their locality and become part of a non-regional variety. This question will be further explored in Section 3.7.1. below.

3.7.1. The geographical component of social diffusion

In Chapter 2, I have explained how socially differentiated variation may lead to change. However, it is also important to realise that a change cannot spread vacuously in social space, as hinted at when introducing the term *geographical diffusion* above. Language change is also affected by spatial factors, which influence the direction of a change in geographical space. To be more precise, in sociolinguistics it is well known that members of loose-knit networks are often the potential adopters and diffusers of an innovation because they are more mobile, both economically as well as geographically. To this can be added that

spatial factors may determine where these potential linguistic innovators would move to and with whom they would communicate.

With regard to the geographical dimension, Britain (2010) proposes that social practices can also be related to spatial practices. By this he means that apart from physical geographical space there is also a social conception of space, which is reflective of how people occupy and manipulate physical space. In other words, space is the stage on which social practices are carried out, but space may also affect and be affected by these social practices (Britain 2013). Furthermore, another important factor is the way in which space is demarcated and manipulated by people. For instance, national borders are a physical reality, often because of physical geographical factors, but they are also determined by cultural identity and they are politically controlled. The way we occupy and manipulate space is an on-going process, which is affected by the larger societal movements that take place. If space is considered in this multi-dimensional way, it follows that social practices and thus also linguistic practices are shaped by spatiality. In some cases, then, places that are physically distant from each other may overcome that distance under the influence of changes in the landscape and infrastructure, as well as societal changes. Britain (2013: 481) states that

[p]hysical, social and perceptual factors (mountains, marshes, motorway, lack of roads, or public transport, employment blackspots, shopping malls, xenophobia or external negative perceptions of place) can all minimise or maximise that distance in the eyes (and mouths) of speakers, and, thereby the actual effect of a place A will have on others.

It follows from the latter quote that changes in Late Medieval infrastructure, trade routes, the location of market places, and other socio-economic and demographic changes affected the way in which geographical space was occupied. In traditional historical dialectology, it was often assumed that supralocal forms were diffused in a gradual wave-like fashion, more or less linear in space from one starting point to surrounding areas, and from those areas to other surrounding areas, while weakening in intensity as distance increased; hence this

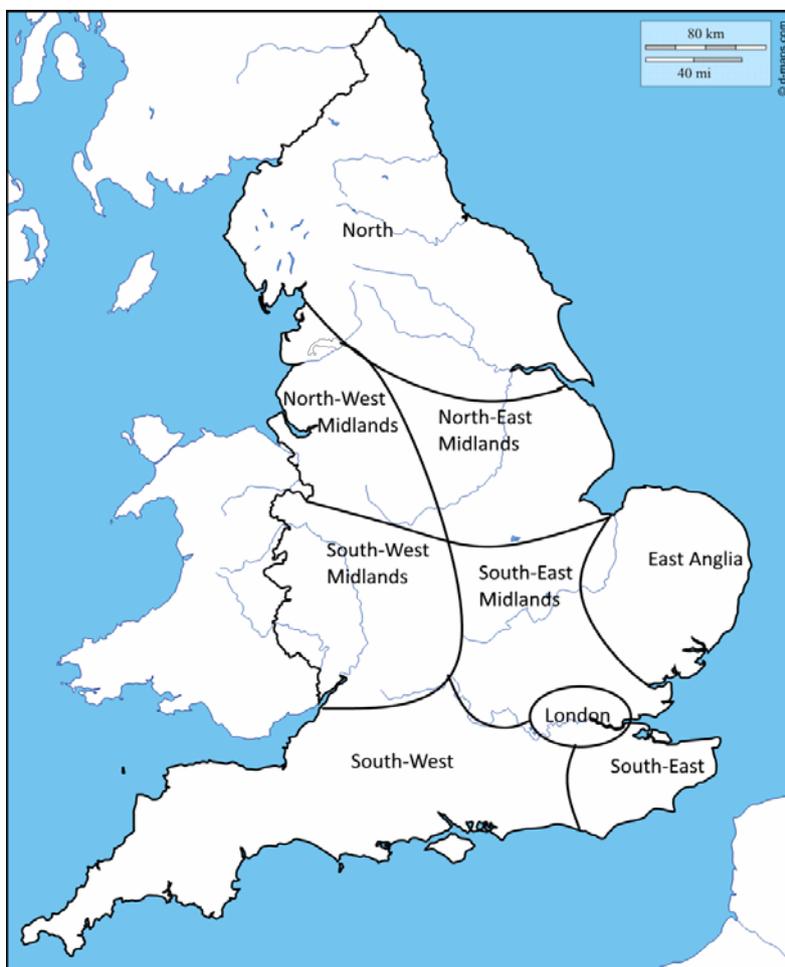
type of linguistic diffusion is also called contagion diffusion (Bailey et al. 1993: 379-380). However, this model could not explain how a supralocal form could appear in areas at a greater distance from the place of origin, while skipping intervening areas. By way of illustration, in the Late Medieval period, the Northern third person singular *-s* was adopted by London before East Anglia, which should have adopted it first, if it had been a wave-like diffusion (Nevalainen 2000: 348; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2000: 305-322). A more likely pattern for this type of supralocal diffusion is that of hierarchal or cascade diffusion, which is typically found in present-day Western urban societies (cf. Trudgill 1983; Bailey et al. 1993; Hernández-Campoy 2003). Cascade diffusion proceeds from a very prominent large city to smaller ones, and from smaller cities to towns and so forth, until it eventually spreads to villages and the countryside (Britain 2013: 478). Obviously, urban centres can be expected to play an important role in spatiality, since they fulfil all kinds of social and economic functions for the areas surrounding them. They are the places where larger concentrations of people come together and where interaction between different groups from other localities will be most prominent. Insight into demographic patterns such as (trade) migration, as well as trade routes can thus provide valuable information about the nature of the communication between people of different places and the connections between urban centres, as well as the areas surrounding them, which in turn might give us insight into linguistic standardisation processes such as supralocalisation and regional levelling. So, returning to Benskin's observation with regard to the relevance of communication with outsiders, knowledge about the demographics relating to an urban centre, as well as knowledge about the social and economic importance of an urban centre, may give insight into the nature and extent of communication with outsiders, i.e. other urban centres, and other places. Although Late Medieval and Early Modern England may not have been as heavily urbanised as the country is now, it can be assumed that larger cities such as London, Bristol, York and Coventry played a pivotal role in the adoption and spread of supralocal forms, since they fulfilled important social and economic functions and thus provided ample opportunities

for all kinds of communication and contact, i.e. regional produce was traded at markets and shipped or transported to and from other centres.

Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy (1999, 2002, 2005) make a strong case for the inclusion of spatiality in the investigation of the emergence of a supralocal written variety in Late Medieval and Early Modern England. They carried out a number of interesting geo-linguistic studies on the geography and demographics of Late Medieval English towns and cities in order to quantify their potential for the diffusion of linguistic supralocal innovations, as well as to establish their potential position in a hypothetical hierarchal diffusion model (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2002, 2005). Although these studies can only be based on estimates, as there are no exact demographic numbers for this period, they provide a useful insight into the potential influence of Bristol as a generator and diffuser of supralocal forms at the time. Furthermore, it may also give an idea about the directions from which Bristol may have received innovative forms, as well as the potential influence of Bristol on other areas. Ultimately, the supralocalisation processes will bring us a step closer to illuminating linguistic standardisation processes. In short, Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (1999, 2002, 2005) have calculated the population density and population distribution within the different Late Middle English dialect areas, the geographical distance between the most densely populated areas, and the linguistic similarity or distance in the respective areas (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2005: 105). On the basis of these calculations, they could establish which urban centres were most important in terms of size, but also in terms of their functional importance in the regions over other centres, as well as the extent of the communication flows between the different gravity centres. This then gives an indication of how supralocal forms spread in a hierarchal fashion. An additional factor to the diffusion patterning is that similarity or dissimilarity between linguistic systems may inhibit or facilitate the diffusion of a linguistic feature (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2005: 106). In other words, features that closely resemble those of the affected dialect are more readily accepted than features that are very different.

Taking these three factors into account, Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (2002, 2005) reconstructed a hierarchy of provincial urban centres along which supralocal linguistic features may have been diffused from London. In the case of Late Medieval England, London was undoubtedly the most dominant centre with the largest “sphere of influence” on which most other urban centres depended (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2005: 120). On the basis of its importance in terms of population size and economic importance, London is thus taken as the primary centre of gravity from which most innovations emanated and on which other provincial towns depended to a greater or lesser extent. Using the historical data that were available, Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre first established the population size of places and their relative and physical distance from each other, in order to establish which centres could have functioned as “the central places or gravity centres” in the different Middle English dialect areas (see Map 3.1 below) (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2002: 156)⁷. In terms of physical distance, they calculated the distance from centre to centre over the main roads that have been postulated to have existed on the basis of the Gough map (c. 1360) (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2002: 159).

⁷ These are based on Russell's (1948) estimations who used tax polls to calculate the numbers.



Map 3.1. Middle English Dialect areas according to Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (adapted from Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2005: 121) (Original unedited map from: d-maps.com)

These data were then used to calculate a *population potential index (PPI)*, which, simply put, expresses the potential importance of an urban centre within a network of different urban centres. In addition, the functional importance of an urban centre was factored in. By way of illustration, some Medieval towns such as Bristol were located in positions that were more favourable towards population and communication flows because they had access to the sea or other

water routes that extended over large areas. Other towns such as Coventry were situated at important junctions of the road system leading to larger urban centres and hence attracted larger population flows. Lastly, monasteries that could potentially attract a large number of pilgrims, such as Bury St. Edmunds, were also factored in. Table 3.1. below shows the *PPI* indexes of the different provincial urban centres, as well as the added value when their functional importance is factored in. The towns and cities marked in grey had the highest *PPI*s in the respective dialect areas and should be considered the urban centres that “could have behaved as gravity centres” (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2002: 157-159, 2005: 122). As can be seen in Table 3.1., Bristol was by far the most important centre of gravity in the South West Midlands, and the second most dominant centre of the whole country next to York.

| AREA | TOWN/ CITY | POPULATION | PPI | SEA-PORT | PRIMARY RIVER | SECONDARY RIVER | MAIN ROAD | PILGRIM'S ROUTE | TOTAL |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|-----|----------|------------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|-------|
| EAST ANGLIA | Cambridge | 2,853 | 3.7 | | 1.5 | | 1.6 | | 11.47 |
| | Romney | c.1,500-2,000 | 2 | 2 | | | | | 4 |
| | Sandwich | c. 1,500-2,000 | 2.2 | 2 | | | 1.6 | | 7.92 |
| SOUTH EAST | Canterbury | 3,861 | 4.2 | | 1.5 | | 1.6 | 1.3 | 18.48 |

| SOUTH WEST | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|--------|----------------|----------|-------|---------|---------|-----------------|------------|-------|
| | Exeter | Reading | Yarmouth | Lynn | Norwich | Ipswich | Bury St Edmunds | Colchester | Ely |
| | 2,340 | c. 1,500-2,000 | 2,912 | 4,691 | 5,928 | 2,260 | 3,668 | 4,432 | 2,583 |
| | 2.7 | 2 | 3.7 | 5.3 | 6.7 | 3.2 | 4.6 | 5.1 | 3.5 |
| | 2 | | 2 | 2 | | 2 | | | |
| | 1.6 | 1.7 | | | 1.5 | | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| | | 1.6 | | | 1.6 | | 1.3 | | 1.3 |
| | 9.72 | 6.6 | 7.4 | 10.6 | 20.77 | 6.4 | 13.34 | 7.65 | 9.8 |

| | SOUTH EAST MIDLANDS | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|-------|------------|---------------|----------|
| | Northampton | Leicester | St. Albans | Salisbury | Wells | Winchester | South-hampton | Plymouth |
| Oxford | | | | | | | | |
| 3,536 | 2,216 | 3,512 | c. 1,500-2,000 | 4,839 | 1,352 | 2,160 | 1,728 | 7,256 |
| 3.8 | 2.7 | 3.7 | 2 | 5.2 | 1.7 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 7.4 |
| 1.7 | | | | | | | 2 | 2 |
| 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.5 | | 1.5 | | | (1.6) | 1.6 |
| 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | | 1.6 | | |
| 12.54 | 8.37 | 11.47 | 5.8 | 16.12 | 1.7 | 4.32 | 8.28 | 26.64 |

| SOUTH WEST MIDLANDS | | NORTH EAST MIDLANDS | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------|----------|--------|---------|-------|----------|
| | Shrewsbury | Newark | Notting-ham | Stamford | Boston | Lincoln | Derby | Coventry |
| Ludlow | | | | | | | | |
| 1,758 | 3,123 | 1,767 | 2,170 | 1,827 | 4,307 | 5,354 | 1,569 | 7,226 |
| 2.3 | 3.4 | 2.5 | 2.7 | 2.2 | 4.7 | 5.8 | 2 | 4.6 |
| | | | | | 2 | | | |
| | 1.7 | | 1.7 | | | 1.7 | | |
| 1.5 | | 1.5 | | 1.5 | | | 1.5 | |
| | | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | | 1.6 | 1.6 | 2 |
| 3.45 | 5.78 | 7.75 | 8.91 | 6.82 | 9.4 | 19.14 | 6.2 | 9.2 |

| | NORTH | | NORTH WEST MIDLANDS | | Worcester | Hereford | Gloucester | Bristol |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|---------------------|--|-----------|----------|------------|--------------|
| York | Newcastle | Chester | Lichfield | | | | | |
| 10,872 | 3,970 | c. 1,500-2,000 | 1,536 | | 2,336 | 2,854 | 3,358 | 9,518 |
| 11.3 | 4.2 | 1.8 | 1.7 | | 3 | 3.4 | 4 | 9.8 |
| 1.7 | 2 | 2 | | | 1.7 | | 1.7 | 2 |
| 1.6 | (1.6) | | 1.6 | | 1.6 | 1.5 | 2 | 1.6 |
| 37.29 | 15.12 | 3.6 | 2.72 | | 9.9 | 10.54 | 14.3 | 35.28 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|---------|-----|-----|-----|
| Kingston | 2,336 | 3.3 | 2 | 6.6 |
| Scar-borough | c.3,500 | 4.1 | 2 | 8.2 |
| Beverly | 3,994 | 4.8 | 1.5 | 7.2 |

Table 3.1. Population potential index of Late Middle English urban centres (adapted from Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2005: 122)

It is important to realise that the *PPI* only gives an indication of the relative importance of a place and its potential to attract people, whereas it does not give insight into the potential extent of the interaction, be it written or spoken, between people from the different gravity centres and the potential route that linguistic innovations may have taken. The *interaction* and *linguistic influence potential index* in Table 3.2 below expresses the extent to which gravity centres in the respective dialect areas may have received and exerted influence. The important factor that is considered here is the effect of the size of a given gravity centre on given other centres that may be smaller or larger. The IPI is especially relevant with regard to the spread of linguistic innovations as it sheds light on the extent of the potential linguistic contact that may have taken place between people of the different urban centres. This largely relates to the potential of face-to-face contact and not to written communication. However, it will be assumed that linguistic innovation as the result of contact will indirectly have an effect on written language as well. Furthermore, it can be assumed that other forms of communication and the exchange and information can be directly related to the potential amount of contact between urban centres.

| rank | urban centre | dialect area | interaction raw data | potential percentage |
|------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | London | Middlesex | 11.6 | 21.30% |
| 2 | Coventry | South East Midlands | 4.41 | 8.10% |
| 3 | Bristol | South West Midlands | 3.81 | 7.00% |
| 4 | K. Lynn | East Anglia | 2.99 | 5.50% |
| 5 | Oxford | South East Midlands | 2.86 | 5.30% |
| 6 | Leicester | South East Midlands | 2.84 | 5.20% |
| 7 | Boston | North East Midlands | 2.83 | 5.20% |
| 8 | Cambridge | East Anglia | 2.68 | 5.00% |
| 9 | Bury St. Edmonds | East Anglia | 2.38 | 4.40% |
| 10 | Lincoln | North East Midlands | 2.35 | 4.30% |
| 11 | Norwich | East Anglia | 2.3 | 4.20% |
| 12 | York | North | 2.23 | 4.10% |
| 13 | Gloucester | South West Midlands | 2.15 | 3.90% |
| 14 | Salisbury | South West | 1.96 | 3.60% |
| 15 | Canterbury | South East | 1.83 | 3.40% |
| 16 | Plymouth | South West | 0.99 | 1.80% |
| 17 | Newcastle | North | 0.92 | 1.70% |
| 18 | Exeter | South West | 0.81 | 1.50% |
| 19 | Chester | North West Midlands | 0.29 | 0.50% |

Table 3.2. Interaction and linguistic influence potential of Late Medieval English urban centres (adapted from Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy 2002: 165)

Unsurprisingly, London can be identified as the place that had the highest influence potential, which means that it had the highest degree of connections and interactions with the highest rate of other urban centres (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2003: 166). The linguistic implications of this may be that London dwellers were structurally exposed to the greatest degree of linguistic variation and were thus most likely to adopt innovative forms (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2003: 166-167). What is more, the newly adopted forms were also most likely to be transmitted from London. Although

London has by far the highest index, both Bristol and Coventry have significantly high rates in comparison to other gravity centres, which suggests that these places too were subject to extensive contact between other localities and had a great potential for the diffusion of supralocal forms.

As pointed out earlier, linguistic (dis)similarity may also be a factor that facilitates or inhibits the diffusion of an innovation. Since London is seen as the most dominant centre of all, Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy (2002) corrected the *IPI* for linguistic similarity between London and the other urban centres, based on the different dialect features of the dialect areas in which the respective urban centres were situated. They used 10 phonological and morphological variables and indexed similarities across the different dialect areas by giving each dialect area a score of 1, 0.5, or 0, depending on whether the dialect area in question had the same variant as London (Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy 2002: 167-170). On the basis of the scores, they gave each urban centre a score from 1-10 to express similarity to the linguistic system of London (see Table 3.3 below). What I find problematic with this approach, however, is that compatibility is not easily quantified or measured. To illustrate this, one of the variables that is used for comparison is the third person singular verb inflection, which used to be *-eth* in both London and Bristol. However, because Bristol and London have different variants for many other variables, or more than one variant per variable (such as *-ende*, and *-inge* for the present participle ending in the South West Midlands, whereas London only has *-inge*) the compatibility score is quite low. The point is that in this model there is no clear indication or contra-indication as to why a change in a certain shared feature such as the existence of *-eth* in both London and Bristol is more likely to be adopted in London or Bristol, even though the two systems as a whole may be qualified as quite different.

| dialect area | main urban centres | linguistic similarity |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Middlesex | London | 10 |
| South East | Canterbury | 5 |
| East Anglia | Cambridge | 7.5 |
| | Norwich | 7.5 |
| | Bury St. Edmunds | 7.5 |
| | King's Lynn | 7.5 |
| | Exeter | 5.5 |
| | Plymouth | 5.5 |
| | Salisbury | 5.5 |
| South East Midlands | Oxford | 8 |
| | Coventry | 8 |
| | Leicester | 8 |
| North East Midlands | Lincoln | 5 |
| | Boston | 5 |
| South West Midlands | Bristol | 3 |
| | Gloucester | 3 |
| North West Midlands | Chester | 3 |
| North | York | 3 |
| | Newcastle | 3 |

Table 3.3. Linguistic similarity to London (Adapted from Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy 2002: 170)

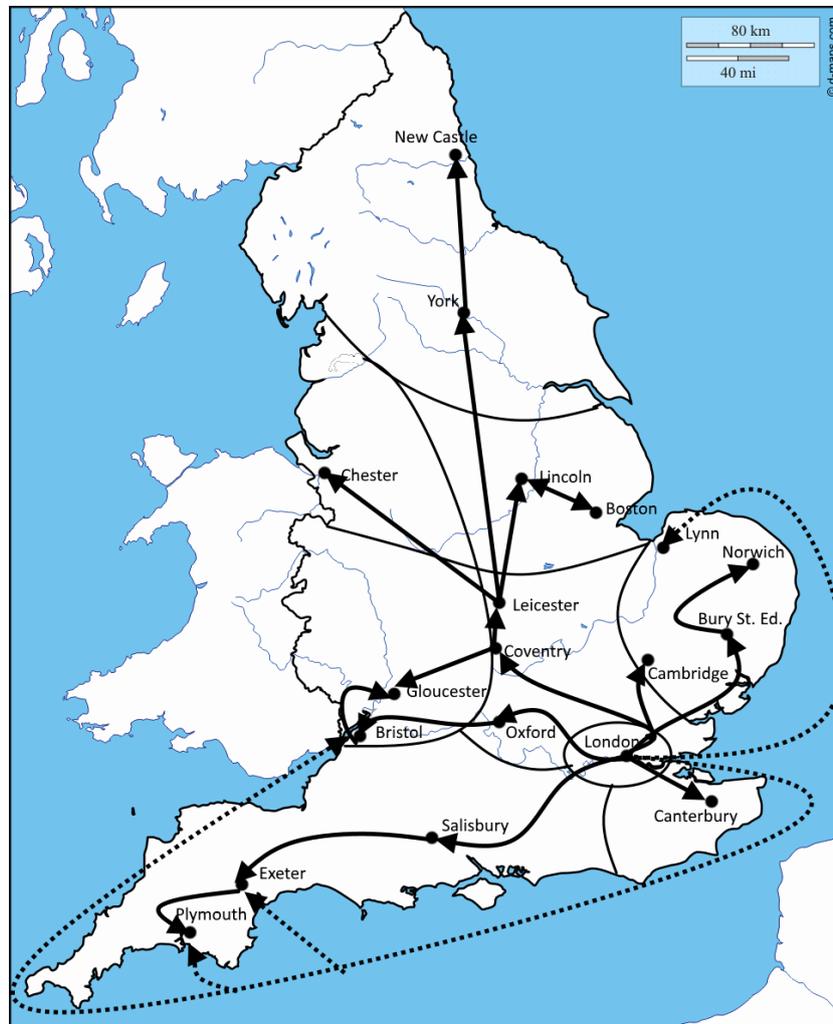
Thus, compatibility should be considered for each individual variable. Furthermore, it could be tricky to assume without any empirical evidence that certain linguistic variants are more or less compatible due to observable dissimilarity in form, since similarity or dissimilarity may not necessarily imply that a form is perceived as compatible or incompatible by speakers, or more difficult to produce or adopt. To illustrate, if one dialect has both uninflected forms and inflected forms in its verbal inflection paradigm, and another only has

uninflected forms, it can be speculated that it may be easier for the dialect speakers with both uninflected and inflected forms to converge toward the paradigm of the dialect that only has uninflected forms, whereas it may be more complicated the other way around. Also, the linguistic (dis)similarity between the different urban centres is not taken into account in this model. Even though London may be considered as having a high influencing factor, this does not have to be the reason why it should serve as the base-line against which linguistic (dis)similarities are measured; it cannot be ruled out that interactions between other provincial towns also play an important role.

Though the results need to be interpreted with caution in the light of what was discussed above, the percentages in Table 3.4 below showing the potential for influencing and being influenced give some indication as to how supralocal forms from London may have spread to Bristol. Additionally, Map 3.2 shows the potential hierarchal diffusion patterns. Bristol's relatively high percentage for being influenced suggests that supralocal forms from London may have come to Bristol directly, i.e. they were diffused hierarchally as opposed to the slow wave-type diffusion. This is very plausible as it was relatively easy to reach London from Bristol via sea. That there was intensive contact both in terms of face-to-face and written communication is also borne out by the more detailed socio-economical history of Bristol in Chapter 4. Furthermore, the percentage for Bristol's potential to influence other places is also considerable and suggests that it played an important role in the transmission of innovations in the South West (Conde-Silvestre & Hernández Campoy 2002: 170).

| potential for influencing | | | potential for being influenced | |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1 | London | 51.25% | Oxford | 8% |
| 2 | Coventry | 9.40% | Cambridge | 7.70% |
| 3 | Lynn | 4.90% | Coventry | 7.60% |
| 4 | Norwich | 4% | Leicester | 7.20% |
| 5 | Leicester | 4.40% | Canterbury | 6.70% |
| 6 | Bristol | 3.20% | Bury St. Edmunds | 6.10% |
| 7 | Oxford | 3.20% | Lynn | 5.90% |
| 8 | Boston | 3.10% | Bristol | 5.70% |
| 9 | Bury St. Edmunds | 3% | Boston | 5.30% |
| 10 | Lincoln | 2.80% | York | 5% |
| 11 | Cambridge | 2.70% | Norwich | 4.70% |
| 12 | Salisbury | 1.80% | Salisbury | 4.30% |
| 13 | Plymouth | 1.50% | Gloucester | 4.10% |
| 14 | York | 1.10% | Lincoln | 4% |
| 15 | Gloucester | 0.90% | London | 3.70% |
| 16 | Newcastle | 0.84% | Exeter | 1.60% |
| 17 | Canterbury | 0.83% | Plymouth | 1.30% |
| 18 | Exeter | 0.50% | Newcastle | 1.20% |
| 19 | Chester | 0.05% | Chester | 0.70% |

Table 3.4. Potential for influencing and being influenced based on linguistic similarity and PPI (adapted from Conde-Silvestre & Hernández Campoy 2005: 125)



Map 3.2. Potential patterns of the diffusion of linguistic innovations from London (adapted from: and Hernández Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2005: 125) (Original unedited blank map from: d-maps.com)

To sum up, the geolinguistic data provided by Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy add an extra geographic dimension to the distribution of a linguistic innovation in social space. Their outline of communication networks between urban centres, though highly hypothetical, give an indication of where potential adopters and transmitters of innovative forms were concentrated and how larger numbers of people from different backgrounds came into contact. The hierarchal model of change in addition to the wave-model approach provides a solution to the problem of the heterogeneity that historical dialectologists encountered when they looked at urban texts (see the discussion about historical dialectology in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.). It also shows the relevance of taking into account trade routes and functional roles of other urban centres, including changes in those patterns, as these factors may have affected the dynamics of towns and cities. Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy (1999, 2002, 2005) have also demonstrated that Bristol deserves to be studied in its own right, since it was a force to be reckoned with in terms of its potential to diffuse linguistic innovations and to exert influence on other places. Returning to Benskin's (1992: 83-84, see also Chapter 2, Section 2.4.3.) observation that the existence of "colourless varieties" and thus the development of supralocal varieties had something to do with communication with outsiders, it can now be said that Bristol due to its function as an important gravity centre, was a place where communication with many different outsiders was likely.

3.8. Concluding remarks

The aim of this chapter was to provide an overview and discuss critically what standardisation and standard languages are. It has become clear that in linguistic terms, it would be more appropriate to speak of standardisation only, since it is an on-going process. Milroy (2001) links standardisation primarily to the process in which a language ideology is perpetuated through social and cultural institutes and attitudes. For the Late Middle English period and parts of the Early Modern period, this may have been different, however, since there did not yet exist a strong standard ideology. However, from a purely

linguistic perspective, written language at the time became more uniform and less variable and certain supralocal forms that are now seen as features that are part of present-day written Standard English came to prevail over local written forms. Traditionally, it had been assumed that present-day Standard English could be directly traced back to one single variety that was based in London and at some point, selected by the elite as the standard variety, but in light of the sociolinguistic and geo-linguistic studies that I have discussed, this position is no longer tenable. More likely, there was a long process of what Nevalainen (2000), based on Haugen (1966), refers to as 'selection' and 'acceptance' of linguistic variants that took place in several urban centres simultaneously and symbiotically. It appears that standardisation, that is linguistic standardisation, can be viewed as a complex process, or rather, a set of complex processes. The important linguistic processes that lie at the heart of it may have been regional dialect levelling and supralocalisation. These processes of dialect levelling and supralocalisation were in turn affected by social factors and demographic factors. It may thus be clear that a multidisciplinary approach is called for, if we seek to explain these processes. Moreover, findings of social history as well as geo-linguistics are important pieces in the standardisation puzzle and help us explain how supralocal forms were diffused and became part of a supralocal written variety. Also, they help identify the places that were most the prominent focal points of communication and which were thus places in which regional dialect levelling and processes as the reduction of optional variation were most likely to take place.

Chapter 4. Socio-historical background c. 1400-1700⁸

4.1. Introduction

Knowledge about the socio-historical context is a prerequisite to the study of historical sociolinguistics. After all, as stated in Chapters 2 and 3, we want to be able to situate our linguistic findings in their social context and to relate social factors to linguistic variation. In order to prevent the danger of “ideational anachronisms” (Bergs 2012; see also Chapter 3, Section 3.4.), it is important to gain a thorough understanding - as far as this is possible - of what the social structures were like in the period under investigation. Even though we can assume that language variation and change were affected by social forces, we cannot automatically assume that the social situation in the past was the same as today (Bergs 2012: 84). So, first of all, this chapter will explore what the social structure looked like in the period 1400-1700, and how it changed over time. The aim of this chapter is to investigate how urban life was structured in terms of social hierarchy and government. In doing so, a scene will be set in which urban text production took place. Secondly, as argued in Chapter 3, the communication streams between urban centres and other areas may provide useful clues with regard to the diffusion of supralocal forms. A substantial part of this chapter will hence deal with Bristol’s economical history. Trade patterns reveal what Bristol’s regional function was and what communication and trade connections existed and developed over time. Thirdly, since Bristol was the hub of social, cultural and economic activity in the South West, it can be expected that it attracted people from various areas who may have had an influence on the development of the written language of Bristol. Therefore, this chapter will also look into Bristol’s demographic past. However, before diving deeper into Bristol’s past, some methodological issues that are involved with the study of social structure and trade and migration patterns need to be addressed (see

⁸ I am indebted to Peter Fleming for insightful conversations about the Welsh in Bristol and for providing me with access to one of his works that was not published at the time of my research.

Dresser & Fleming 2007; Fleming 2013). The censuses in the period from 1400-1700 are not as elaborate as seen today and information can only be gathered from documents that have survived, which means that gaps in information supply are inevitable. There is also the risk that certain groups are not represented because they do not show up in the records. This is certainly true for the poorer masses of society as they had little or no possessions worthy to be recorded, nor did they have a say in politics, and very few, if at all, could write (see Dresser & Fleming 2007; Fleming 2013). It has to be recognised that a large majority of the population remains an evasive group with regard to detailistic information and often only broad generalisations can be made. Nonetheless there are some invaluable documents that can provide information: firstly, custom records are very useful when it comes to trade contacts: they list in- and out coming goods from overseas, and often names and origins of the merchants (Sacks 1985; Beetham-Fisher 1987; Fleming 2013). Unfortunately, though, custom accounts do not seem to exist for trade with Wales or any inland trade (Beetham-Fisher 1987; Bowly 2013). Secondly, licenses for aliens granting permission to reside in England and tax records imposed on aliens reveal more about the different migrants that came into Bristol (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 25-41). Marriage records from parishes provide insightful information about intermarriage (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 35). Furthermore, in some cases, wills reveal something about a person's origin or at least affiliation with a location, as they may bequeath goods to people or charities and churches in their native place, request to be buried there or list lands they still held in their native place (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 35). However, this information has to be treated with caution as references to other places may not necessarily mean that a person was born there. Another way of establishing origins of persons is by toponymic surnames (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 20). This comes with its problems too, since it can merely be an inherited name and in the case of Gaelic Irish- and Welsh-speaking people it was common to anglicise names (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 20). In combination with other information, e.g. taken from wills, it is at least possible to convincingly establish connections with a person's native place. Other very useful sources are apprenticeship

indentures (see Sacks 1985; Dresser & Fleming 2007; Fleming 2013; Bowly 2013). They often provide information about where the indentured came from. However, inevitably, the focus will be on the people from the higher echelons of society since it is primarily their lives that can be traced in the records. In the case of Bristol, this means that most information will concern the lives of the elite merchants who were generally also in charge of the town's government. As will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, this was also the group that was directly and indirectly involved in text production in the vernacular, as well as in most of the texts that will be studied in this thesis.

This Chapter begins by sketching the social situation in Late Medieval and Early Modern England in Section 4.2. Section 4.3. is concerned with Bristol's civic structure and helps situate the context in which civic records were produced. This is particularly relevant because a large set of the data used for the present study are civic records. Section 4.4. explores possible trade patterns that can be related to Bristol, which, as will become clear, are closely related to the migration patterns, and which will be discussed in Section 4.5. In Section 4.6., I will highlight the main points that were discussed in this chapter.

4.2. Social structure in Late Medieval and Early Modern England: setting the scene

Hierarchal distinctions were a natural part of Medieval and Early Modern English society (Goldberg 2003; Wrightson 2013). These distinctions were clearly reflected in dress and way of address, but also in daily social conduct, for instance, in the, Early Modern period, seating in church and at dinner tables went according to rank (Wrightson 2013: 25). Urban economy and social structure were markedly different from that of the countryside, but at the same time strongly connected with it. Bristol was an urban centre with a great pull factor for people and surplus produce from the countryside. Studies of freemen records and toponymic surnames suggest that around 1400, in most large towns, roughly one third of its population was drawn from neighbouring villages in the countryside (Dobson 2000: 284). Controversy exists as to whether England was a society

that based its hierarchies on possessions and wealth or whether it was rather built on social function and heritage (Wrightson 2013: 25-26). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss this issue elaborately, but it can be argued that the system of hierarchy was relatively flexible and also dependent on location, i.e. there were differences to be found between towns and the countryside, but also across region (Wrightson 2013, Chapter 1). Moreover, the two different motivators of social status are not mutually exclusive. Similarly, the concept of social mobility can be approached from these two different perspectives. One view is that an increase in wealth and possession is the main factor that determines upward social mobility in a society (Sacks 1991: 103-104). The other view is that wealth is not the prime determiner for a person's social status, but the rank he or she was born into, or a person's education and profession (Sacks 1985: 656). In this case, moving up on the social ladder is a matter of marrying someone from a higher rank, or having a career that will allow a person to become part of a higher rank, for instance, in the form of an honoured office (Sacks 1991: 103-104). In the first case, a person would automatically climb the ladder after acquiring wealth, regardless of his or her origin, social function or education. It follows that there is a close link between being part of a higher rank and having access to wealth, as wealth gives access to resources and connections that might improve a person's social status (Sacks 1991: 103-104). It may thus be somewhat crude to strictly keep the two different motivators apart. In a commercial city such as Bristol these two motivators were even more intertwined than in the countryside where there was mostly still a manorial hierarchy and which was probably more driven by status, rather than by wealth (Sacks 1991: 103-104). In Bristol, generally speaking, the groups that enjoyed status were those that had access to sources of wealth. This did not mean, however, that wealth could easily be acquired independently from hierarchy. In Sack's (1985: 677) survey of the apprenticeship rolls it comes to the fore that, especially in seventeenth century, apprentices were only apprenticed in the relatively lucrative trades when their fathers were from the same trade and thus had connections in that particular trade. In other words, an apprentice in the prosperous soap industry generally came

from a successful soapmaker's family. The elite merchant class tended, however, to take apprentices who came from the gentry or parish clergy, or from another important highly lucrative trade, such as goldsmiths (Sacks 1985: 678).

4.2.1. The landed elite

Although there are a number of differences in the social order between towns and the countryside, it is vital to pay attention to both structures because the social structure of Bristol and the surrounding area were interdependent, as was the case with most urban centres. For instance, the merchant class had close connections with the landed gentry and some of the gentry became prominent merchants, whereas some well to do merchant elites often intermarried with the landed gentry (Sharpe 1987: 160). The landed elites, also referred to as the aristocracy which in turn consisted of the higher regarded nobility –barons, earls and dukes– and the 'lesser' gentry –knights, esquires and gentlemen– was by far the most prominent social group of England up until the Early Modern period (Sharpe 1987: 152; Goldberg 2004: 114). The status of the nobility and gentry was primarily based on the notion that hereditary origin and social function were the main determiners for social status (Sharpe 1987: 160). The wealth and status of the nobility was expressed by the possession of land and blood. Estate holding was not always their only source of income, however, especially not in the course of the Early Modern period, when a capitalist system was developing (Sharpe 1987: 160). The landed gentry were often involved with urban trade and it was not uncommon for the gentry's offspring to be apprenticed to a rich urban merchant (Sacks 1985: 501).

4.2.2. The urban elite

The social hierarchy of Medieval Bristol can be loosely ordered according to status and corresponding political power. As Bristol was a self-governing town that was not dependent on an overlord, the highest rank was the ruling elite which consisted of affluent merchants, lawyers and multiple property owners (Britnell 2003: 55).

Craftsmen and “self-employed traders”, the freemen and householders belonged to the second rank (Britnell 2003: 55). The rank below them consisted of the non-freemen and tenants. It could be argued that the largest division was between those who were freemen and those who were not. Freemen were generally passed on from father to son and gave a person the right to participate in the government of the town and to have freedom of trade (Fleming & Costello 1998: 32-33). The non-freemen, who were labelled ‘strangers’ irrespective of their native place, were dependent on wages, or were restricted to petty trade (Fleming & Costello 1998: 32-33). The only way for a non-freeman to become part of the freemen was either by redemption, which means that he had to pay a large sum of money, or by becoming an apprentice to a burgess, or by marrying a widow or daughter of a burgess (Fleming & Costello 1998: 32-33). Redemptioners did not only have to pay a large sum of money, but they also needed two sponsors from the burgess and approval of the mayor, the sherriff and common council (Fleming & Costello 1998: 32-33).

In Bristol, the merchant elite existed of overseas merchants but also mariners and merchants who dedicated themselves to internal trade in the Severn valley (Sacks 1985: 474). Bristol, like most older urban centres of England, had a dominant merchant elite oligarchy, which means that only a very small top layer of the freeholders had access to civic office (Sharpe 1987: 180). An important figure in Bristol’s merchant past is William Canynges (1399) who, at some point, owned 10 ships with a total carrying tonnage of 3000 (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 43). This was remarkable, compared to what most other merchants owned. Even the very wealthy Duke of Warwick had no more than 2300 tons (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 43). Canynges probably provided employment for at least 600-800 men (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 43). For a Medieval town, Bristol was unique in that most estates, tenements and messauges were owned by merchants and not by the church; once again a sign of the powerful position of the merchants (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 228). The merchant elite could to a large extent be considered the urban equivalents of the landed elite (Sharpe 1987: 181). Like the landed elites, the members of the merchant class

strongly believed in a hierarchy that determined who ruled and who was to be ruled. Their lifestyles were similar to that of the gentry too; wealth and status were abundantly displayed by dress and consumption style (Sharpe 1987: 181-182). By the early eighteenth century, the lifestyles of elite merchants were almost identical to that of the gentry of the close-by countryside. It was not uncommon for elite merchants to have their portraits painted, or to become a patron to an artist (Sharpe 1987: 181-182). That the mercantile elite was not necessarily a threat to the established gentry is also shown by the close connection that both groups maintained; merchants provided the gentry with loans, men from the gentry were in their turn involved in entrepreneurship and their sons were apprenticed to rich merchants (Sharpe 1987: 181-182). This was also the case for the Smythe family, whose letters will be studied in the case studies of Chapters 7-9; starting out as merchants in the fifteenth century, the family quickly accumulated wealth and status through intermarriage and land investments. By the seventeenth century, the men of the family followed career paths that were the same as that for the gentry (see also Chapter 6, with references)

4.2.3. *The professions*

In the course of the late Medieval and Early Modern period, a new social group was emerging. This group enjoyed a relatively high social status due to their learnedness and the living they could earn with their knowledge and services. This included “lawyers, men of learning, financial experts, physicians, master masons, illuminators and scribes” (Dobson 2000: 288), but also shopkeepers, well to do artisans, and lesser merchants (Hunt 1996: 15). This group became especially prominent in urban centres during the Early Modern period and consisted of people who “[...] were beneath the gentry but above the level of the labouring classes; most of them worked for a living, although a growing number lived wholly or partially on rental income and other investments” (Hunt 1996: 15). The term *middle class* has been used to refer to the newly rising social group, but it is a controversial term for social historians (for a full discussion see Wrightson 2013; Sharpe 1987). As Hunt (1996: 15) points out,

especially in larger urban centres such as Bristol the wealth that this social group accumulated could be high and sometimes exceeded that of the average aristocrat, which makes the term *middle class*, at least in terms of income, inappropriate. The term *middle class* shall thus be avoided. Instead I will refer to the *trading class* and *commercial classes* or *professionals*. It is noteworthy that there was also a profession that was already highly developed and that was that of the clergy (Sharpe 1987: 183). In general, the higher clergy earned its high status in society from their high moral standards and learnedness (Sharpe 1987: 188).

4.2.4. *The lower classes*

Next to the powerful and affluent merchant class and craftsmen who were freeholders, there existed also a group of lesser traders who were not freeholders, but had some very limited trade rights (Fleming & Costello 1998: 34). This generally concerned people who sold food and often came from the countryside to sell produce at town markets (Fleming & Costello 1998: 34).

The gap between poor and rich was enormous in late Medieval England, and poverty increased in the course of the sixteenth century to the seventeenth century. As England's population almost doubled over this time, food prices rocketed, while demand for labour decreased. At the same time, wages did not increase with the food prices, giving rise to a large class of labouring poor, who were not property holders and had no political or trade rights (Griffiths 2000: 204-205). This poor-rich divide was also strongly present in Bristol. Simply put, Bristol's society was divided between freeholders and the rest. At the same time, the diversity and number of crafts that were present in Bristol offered employment and thus attracted labourers from all over the country (Sacks 1985: 468).

4.2.5. *Women*

Women seem to be almost non-existent in most social history accounts as their position was generally a subordinate one. Interestingly, towns tended to attract more women than men, as there

were generally more job opportunities for women (Sharpe 1987: 80). The women that worked in towns and cities were often from the lower strata and were employed as domestic servants (Sharpe 1987: 80). As for the higher ranks of society, some married women were allowed to practice trade as *femmes soles*, which was a right granted by borrows and which allowed a woman to oversee her husband's business when he was away for longer periods of time, or to carry on business after his death (Goldberg 2004: 7). In the mercantile business, a wife who could assist in the trade was undoubtedly valuable, especially when the merchant was involved with overseas trade and had to travel far distances (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 321-327). It seems likely that many of the merchant wives could write as they had to observe business when their men were away for trade. For example, the Bristolian merchant's widow Alice Chester is known to have been literate, and to have carried on her late husband's overseas trade between 1475 to 1485. She exported cloth from Wales and England to Lisbon and imported iron and wine (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 321-327). She was probably involved in her husband's trade when he was still alive, which allowed her to carry it on after his death. Interestingly, after 1363, men were ordered by law to have one trade only, whereas women were not. The fact that women were not so restricted made them important in the merchants' households. Most of the women were involved with the lesser trade, but Alice Chester illustrates that women could also be involved in the important wholesale trades. Some of the women's wills reveal that they sometimes even had apprentices who worked for them in overseas trade. As many as 56 names of women are found in custom accounts for exporting and importing goods over the period 1350-1500. Some of them were *femme soles*, others were merchants' widows and some traded together with their husbands (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 321-327).

4.3. Local government of Bristol

Before 1373, i.e. the year when Bristol became the first provincial town to be granted official county status, it had long been a self-governing royal borough (Rigby & Ewan 2000: 298). As a borough, the town had freedom from toll across England, Wales and Normandy, and

in addition, the power to limit the trade rights of strangers (Sacks 1985: 21). These rights allowed the borough to become a powerful and rich authority, with its own elected mayor and two bailiffs (Ralph 1973: 5; Sacks 1985: 22). Considering that the merchant guild was already the most prominent and wealthy guild from earlier onwards, the council and other civic rulers were probably largely represented by the merchant guild (Ralph 1973: 5; Sacks 1985: 22). With the borough's flourishing economy and growing power, a demand for more independence from the crown gradually grew, so that in 1373 the burgess sent a petition asking the king to grant Bristol county status, which was granted with the Great Charter of Liberties (Ralph 1973: 5). The county status of Bristol meant that the town acquired even more political, economic and social importance in the South West region (Lee 2007: 14). Bristol was also granted rights to elect two people from the burgess to be representatives in parliament (Ralph 1973: 5). The charter positively affected Bristol's political unity. Before the charter, Bristol was geographically as well as politically divided; the North side of the river Avon fell under the jurisdiction of the county of Gloucestershire and the South side fell under Somerset (Sacks 1991: 22; Lee 2007: 14). So, at that time the people of different parts of the town had to go to separate courts for legal matters. Similarly, tax levies were also divided over the two different counties (Sacks 1991: 22; Lee 2007: 14). As an independent county, it was now responsible for its own taxation (Sacks 1991: 22). Moreover, as a county, it obtained its own legal identity with a sheriff and its own court system (Ralph 1973; Lee 2007). The town had an elaborate court system and created at least three new courts when it obtained county status (Lee 2007: 62-63).

Another charter was issued by Henry VII in 1499. This charter did not change the town's constitution as was laid out by the 1373 charter but rather it seemed to re-enforce the powers that were granted with the 1373 charter (Sacks 1985: 47). Some new offices were mentioned in the new charter that extended the council's government; there were to be two sheriffs instead of one and an additional board of six aldermen, one for each of Bristol's five wards and one was to be the recorder (Sacks 1985: 47; Lee 2007: 216). This

charter formed the basic constitution of Bristol's government up until the reform of municipal corporations in 1835 (Ralph 1973: 6; Sacks 1985: 46)

4.3.1. Common Council

The common council consisted of the mayor, the sheriff and forty councillors who were chosen by the mayor and the sheriff and, after the 1499 charter, by the mayor and two aldermen of the mayor's choice (Ralph 1973: 5; Sacks 1985: 56). Choosing members seemed to have been a primarily elitist prerogative. Members could only be chosen from the burgess, and generally councillors were members of the wealthier merchant circles (Fleming & Costello 1998: 31). The main function of the council was to regulate the town's crafts and to "organize the government of the city" (Lee 2007: 206) This involved the assessment and the collection of tallages and the issuing of by-laws regulating the council itself, the courts, crafts and guilds (Ralph 1973: 7; Sacks 1985: 37). The most important task, however, seemed to have been the protection of the burgesses' privileges and rights by regulating the town's markets, as well as the manufacturing and trade of goods in the town (Ralph 1973: 7; Sacks 1985: 36). These rights were carefully stipulated in the council ordinances that were, amongst others, enrolled in the *Little and Great Red Books of Bristol*.

4.3.2. The mayor

The mayor was the prime political authority of the town and after the 1377, charter the mayor was officially a royal escheator and a justice of peace (Ralph 1973: 6). He was elected annually. He had the final say in official decisions and elections and was the head of the council and the aldermen. In addition, he was judge at the mayor's court and staple court.

4.3.3. The aldermen

Although there are some earlier references to the existence of aldermen, the 1373 charter makes no mention of it and it is not until

the 1499 charter that more about their function is revealed (Lee 2007: 213-217). They possibly formed an “inner circle” in the council of forty before that time, or held a very unofficial office as advisory board that was thus not mentioned in the official 1373 charter (Sacks 1985: 47). An alderman could only be chosen by the remaining aldermen and the term of service was unspecified, but it seems to have been common practice to hold long terms, possibly even a lifetime (Lee 2007: 215-217). Little else is known about their function, but it is likely that they had supervision over a ward with some limited powers (Lee 2007: 215-217). In the sixteenth century, Bristol had five wards: Trinity, St. Mary le Port, St. Mary Redcliffe, All Saints and St. Ewen (Lee 2007: 215-217). Unlike other prominent cities such as York, Norwich and London, Bristol’s ward structure is unclear and poorly documented, and the wards thus seemed to lack the function of units that exerted social and political control; this was primarily carried out by the mayor and his sheriffs (Lee 2007: 217). There are, however, some references implying that wards had constables or sergeants who had to maintain order and keep peace. This probably concerned very informal offices which are thus not stipulated in any of the records (Lee 2007: 217).

4.3.4. The sheriff

The sheriffs were initially involved in the monthly county court, receiving writs and bills from the crown, and the maintenance of the gail (Lee 2007: 213). The Sherriff was the most important office holder next to the mayor, but after the official introduction of the aldermen, some of his judicial tasks were taken over by the latter (Sacks 1985: 62).

4.3.5. The bailiff

The role of the bailiffs is an unclear one and is hardly specified in any of the town’s charters or records (Lee 2007: 207). It seems that they had responsibility over financial matters such as collecting rent from the town’s properties and distributing payments for civic office holders (Lee 2007: 205). Sacks (1985: 63) suggests that with the 1499 charter, when the sheriff no longer had judicial tasks, the office of sheriff was

conflated with that of the bailiff and that they were from then on referred to as Sheriffs.

4.3.6. *The recorder*

The task of the town's recorder was to record pleas and hearings, to regulate laws and to act as an arbitrator (Lee 2007: 113). He was sometimes also of legal assistance to the parishes of Bristol. One of the first recorders that we know about is William de Colford who started the keeping of the *Little Red book of Bristol* (Lee 2007: 113), some of the texts of which will be used for the present study. A recorder was typically well schooled and often a professional lawyer and thus also had an important function as the city's legal adviser (Lee 2007: 113). In most cases the recorders were London lawyers, which made them strategic assets in parliament, knowing all ins and outs of the government and the king's court (Ralph 1973: 8). The only recorders that are known to have been Bristolians are Thomas Jubbes and David Broke. Thomas Jubbes, who was elected recorder in 1552, was required to stay connected to and mostly work at Westminster (Lee 2007: 113). However, this did not necessarily mean that the non-Bristolian recorders were complete outsiders to Bristol. They kept town houses in Bristol and were involved in the town in various other ways (Lee 2007: 113). It is not clear if they also wrote the civic records such as the ordinances found in the *Great and Little Red Books*, both of which provide data for the present study. There are texts that are signed by the recorders, but this is of course no guarantee that they also wrote the rest of the text. Bevan (2013: 142-143) notes that the signatures by the recorders sometimes differ from the hand in the rest of texts and suggests that the texts may have been written by an apprentice, or a sub-town clerk and that a signature by the recorder or the town clerk "[...] reflects evidence of a sort of quality of the work".

4.3.7. *The town clerk*

The town clerk was involved in daily administration and legal matters. He functioned as legal adviser and was of vital importance to the city (Lee 2007: 225-226). This is reflected in the ordinance of the council

that states that he should be resident in Bristol and that he was not to leave the town without a special license (Lee 2007: 226). Most of the town clerks were from the mercantile elite and had a prominent social position in Bristol's society (Lee 2007: 226). In the later Tudor period, the town clerk also played an increasingly important role in legal matters that had to be dealt with on a daily basis (Lee 2007: 226). As Bevan (2013: 17) points out, town clerks were often skilled in the languages (French, Latin and English) and written conventions of the law, which made them important "legal intermediaries" for those who were not literate in the legal language. As will be further discussed in Chapter 5, they were important agents in the shaping of "civic literacy" (Rees Jones 2014).

4.3.8. The chamberlain

The chamberlain was responsible for the financial administration of the city. He kept accounts for the council and the mayor. Other duties were the admission of freemen, administration of apprenticeships, and the maintenance of city buildings (Ralph 1973: 10; Sacks 1985: 72-75).

4.3.9. Guilds and crafts

By 1450, Bristol had at least 20 craft guilds (Fleming & Costello 1998: 19). Their function was to regulate their own particular trade, to provide quality standards and member privileges, to limit competition, to represent members' interests to outside bodies, and, very importantly, to support its members and their families in the event of death or sickness (Fleming & Costello 1998: 19). Each craft generally had a guild or fellowship that issued its own ordinances. Ordinances were considered very important and most of the societies had regulations in the form of meetings where the ordinances would be read out aloud to familiarise its members with them (Lee 2007: 172). This is an important observation in the light of the present study since ordinances will be part of the linguistic investigation; the ordinances were public documents that were meant to be read or heard by an audience. Given the importance that was attached to the ordinances,

the texts may have been formal in nature. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3., following the model of Koch and Oesterreicher (1985), the level of formality is often affected by the publicness of a text.

In pre-Reformation times, the guilds were closely connected with the church (Bettey 1983: 5). Some guilds were entirely religious in nature. The Guild of Kalendars, for instance, involved the clergy and laity and was there to provide masses for its members and to organise charitable events (Bettey 1983: 5). The craft and merchant guilds were mostly connected to one of the parish churches of Bristol and contributed to their maintenance, or even established their own chantries and chapels (Bettey 1983: 5). After the Reformation, the crafts and guilds were no longer connected to the church since many of the religious activities were abolished (Bettey 1983: 15). However, the general structure and function of the guilds remained similar throughout the late Medieval period to the early seventeenth century (Sacks 1985: 128). The structure of the guild system consisted of masters, journeymen and apprentices. The masters had their own businesses, and could take on apprentices after having completed their own apprenticeship successfully (Lee 2007: 172). They administered their craft and could issue ordinances and exact fines if they were violated, so they were (in)directly involved in the production of the ordinances that will be investigated in the present study. The masters were also confided to elect wardens who can be compared with the mayor's sheriffs. They monitored the quality and production of the goods of the crafts, communicated information with its members and kept accounts of the guilds (Lee 2007: 172). Not much is known about the journeymen. They worked for masters and seemed to have been apprentices who had just completed their apprenticeships and who still needed to make more money and find resources to set up their own business (Lee 2007: 172).

4.3.10. The church

The role of the church in Bristol's society saw drastic changes after the Reformation and the consequent dissolution from 1536-1539. In pre-Reformation times, however, the church had an important regulatory

role and formed an integral part of the government of the town (Bettey 1983; Skeeters 1993). Civic and church ceremonies were often intertwined, emphasising the close relationship of power (Bettey 1983: 7; Skeeters 1993: 30). For instance, after the new mayor had taken his oath, he and the council took part in a series of ceremonial parish visits and important processions (Bettey 1983: 7; Skeeters 1993: 30). This power relationship was not always a harmonious one, however, and even in pre-reformation times there seem to have been occasional power struggles between the church and the town (Fleming 1996: 6). A conflict over jurisdiction arose in Bristol as early as the 1490s, when the corporation (the civic body formed by the mayor, office holders and council) had a dispute with the abbot of St. Augustine's. As this abbey claimed not to be liable to the town's jurisdictions, it was accused of being a safe haven to criminals, and of circumventing tax levies and tolls. The dispute gave rise to the *Great White Book* which recorded all legal documents relating to the disputes and other squabbles following it (Fleming & Costello 1998: 49)⁹.

⁹ Bristol was also one of the major centres of Lollardy between the fourteenth and the middle sixteenth century (Knightly 1975: 217; Sacks: 1986; Thomson 1967; Ryrie 2005: 7). The success of this movement in Bristol may partially have to do with the cloth industry that was dominant in Bristol. The cloth industry was structured in such a way that it lent itself for the easy and wide spread of the Lollard doctrines; not only were there several cloth guilds that bound craftsmen together in terms of religion and trade organisation, weavers often worked in groups making communication easy and swift amongst those groups (Sacks 1986: 166). The influence of the Lollards was exerted far beyond Bristol and was found in surrounding cloth trading areas too. Since Bristol was a cloth trade centre for the West Country, it attracted other cloth craftsmen who supported Lollardy from its hinterland. Cloth people who were also Lollard supporters could regularly meet other cloth craftsmen at Bristol cloth markets; via trade networks; the religious networks were tied together (Sacks 1986: 165-167). In the earlier period, the Forest of Dean appears to have been an important connection and later the Lollard movement in Coventry linked with Bristol too (Thomson 1967; Ryrie 2005: 7). It was possibly also via these trade networks that Lollard literature was circulated amongst communities. Some Lollards were involved with book trade as well (Jurkowski 2011: 273). English translations seem to have circulated even amongst the burgess in Bristol (Knightly 1975: 237). Though it is beyond the scope of this study, an interesting future sociolinguistic study could be the investigation of

There were thirteen city parishes and four suburban parishes in Bristol. Until 1542, when the Bristol diocese was created, the ecclesiastical administration was divided by the river Avon; the North and Western parts belonged to Worcester and the South and East to Bath and Wells (Lee 2007: 214). The town's parishes had important secular functions as well; they played a role in the assessment of civic rates and national taxes for urban corporations and could function as judicial bodies (Lee 2007: 141). They also served practical purposes; a couple of parish churches were responsible for the water supply of their parish (Bettey 1983: 5). Another way in which the church exerted influence on Bristol's inhabitants was by way of the ecclesiastical court system (Bettey 1983; Skeeter 1993). These courts were primarily concerned with social control and dealt with cases involving matrimonial matters, sexual misconduct, morals and heresy, church attendance, but also will probations and tithes. The church courts remained important after the Reformation, but could then more easily be overridden by secular authorities (Skeeters 1993: 122).

4.4. Migration and trade c.1400-1700

4.4.1. Bristol's trade economy: overseas trade

Bristol's economic success in the early period can be attributed to several factors. One factor is Bristol's geographical position. It is situated closely to the Severn channel and both the Avon and Frome run through Bristol (Carus-Wilson 1962: 2; Beetham-Fisher 1987: 2-5). The extreme differences in tide allowed for swift navigation and at the same time made it difficult for invaders to enter the town by water (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 2-5). With its port facing West, Bristol had a great advantage over other port towns in England in that it had access to trade routes that were different from other port towns in England and the continent, whose trade was centred on the Mediterranean Sea, the Baltic sea, and the North Sea (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 14-17, 23; Fleming 2013: 131). The town thus also suffered less from

Lollard literature in the context of the Bristolian networks in which they were produced.

competition of the Hanse and Italian merchants than other towns in England (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 2-5). In the earlier days, c.1100-1400, Bristol mainly traded in self-manufactured cloth and cloth that came in from the Midland areas, particularly from Cotswolds and Coventry. Up until the 1400s, Bristol was the main cloth exporter of England (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 15-20). By then, Exeter took over this position. However, Bristol remained the second largest cloth exporter (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 16). Interesting to note is also that in the case of London the cloth trade was primarily in the hands of alien merchants, whereas in Bristol, it was mainly in the hands of cloth merchants native to the town or from surrounding areas. Furthermore, in contrast to the London merchants who were mostly specialised in one particular type of trade, the Bristol merchants often dealt with multifaceted import as well as export and were not restricted to cloth only (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 16-18). This may explain why Bristol still maintained a steady economic position when there was a general decline in cloth export across England halfway the fifteenth century, as its trade could easily be shifted towards other goods. Initially, Bristol's main overseas trade routes were towards Ireland, Wales, Gascony and the Iberian Peninsula (Carus-Wilson & Lobel 1975: 12; Beetham-Fisher 1987: 16-18). Ireland provided Bristol with life necessities such as fish, hides, cattle, corn and timber. In turn, Ireland was a great export market for Bristol's cloth (Carus-Wilson 1962: 2-3; Bowly 2012: 157). The trade between Bristol and Ireland was characterised by frequency and not necessarily by high value, which is an indication that there was extensive contact between the two countries on a very regular basis (Bowly 2012: 166). In the 1400s, trade with Iceland supplemented the Irish fish import with the import of dried and salted fish (Carus-Wilson & Lobel 1975: 12). There is also some evidence that in the early fifteenth century quite a number of children from Iceland were brought back to be servants in Bristol households (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 30-31). Wales was one of the larger wool providers for cloth production in the West Country, and by the late sixteenth century, Welsh dairy products became an important import product for Bristol (Dyer 2000: 437). Bristol was probably the principal urban centre for South Coast Wales, rather than the bigger

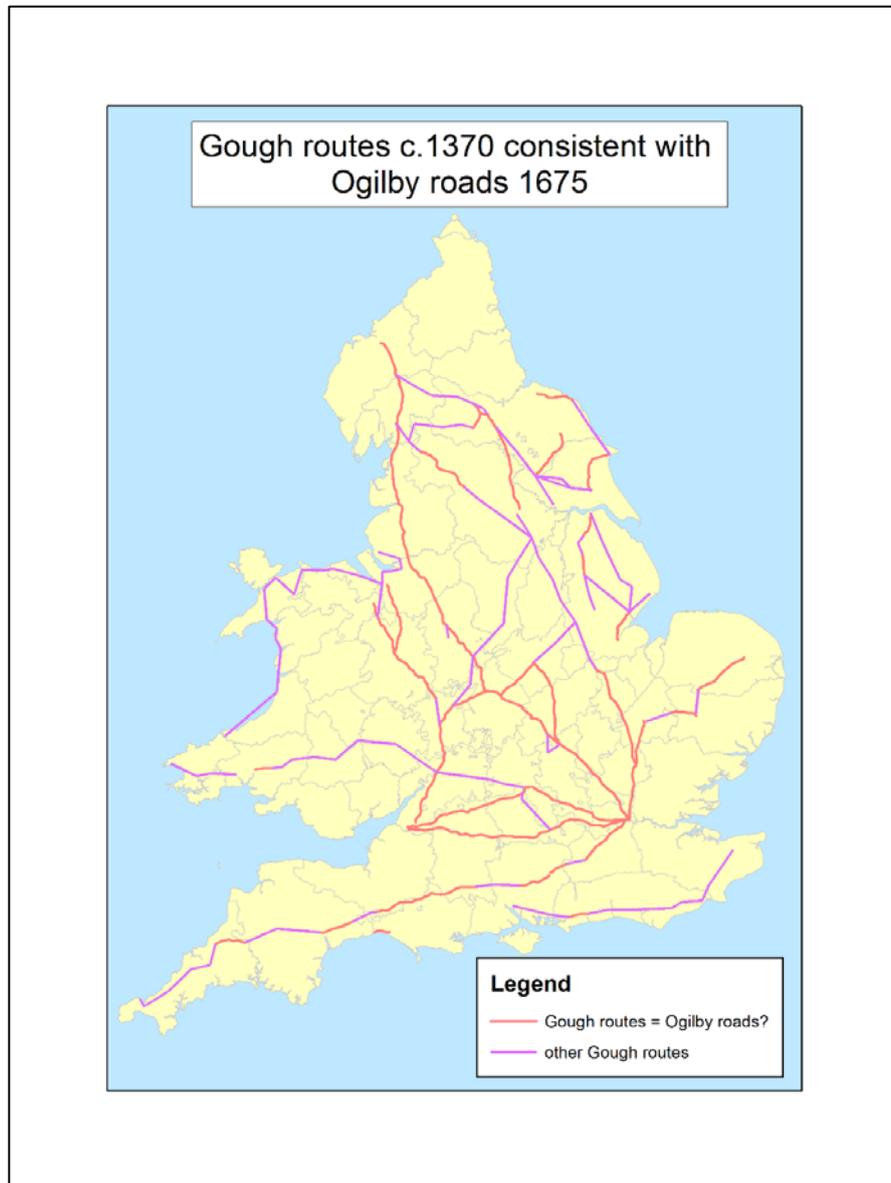
Welsh towns, to such an extent that the trade economy of South Wales was very likely interdependent with that of Bristol and other English border towns such as Chester and Shrewsbury (Griffiths 2000: 683-684, 712). In the earlier period, Bristol imported wine, woad and luxury products from the British provinces Bordeaux and Gascony, to which it exported tanned hides alabaster and cloth (Fleming & Costello 1998: 12-14). At the end of the hundred years war, when Gascony was no longer part of England, this trade shifted towards the Iberian Peninsula (Beetham-Fisher 1986: 23; Fleming & Costello 1998: 12). Although Bristol was no longer the largest cloth producer by the fifteenth century, it remained the principal trade centre for West Country cloth (Beetham-Fisher 1987). Nonetheless, when the cloth export declined by the end of the fifteenth century. Bristol's trade slowly shifted towards imports of luxury goods and a search started for new import places in particular (Sacks 1991: 332). A well-known example of this quest is John Cabot's expedition in 1497. Cabot was sponsored by Bristol merchants to find a route to "the riches of Asia" (Sacks 1991: 35). Initially, the first expeditions to the New World were purely of commercial interest; there was a need for more fishing grounds and new export and import markets, which were found in Newfoundland (Sacks 1991: 35-36). Yet, it was not until the early Stuart period that trade really shifted from what was previously dominated by the Iberian Peninsula and Gascony to new trade markets such as the transatlantic, the Netherlands and the Baltics (Sacks 1991: 41-43). The shift to the transatlantic trade was possibly due the Spanish war, which made trade with the European continent difficult (Sacks 1991: 208). Bristol's transatlantic trade with Newfoundland was intensified and extended to Virginia, and the West Indies (Carus-Wilson & Lobel 1975: 15). Newfoundland was no longer used as fishing ground only but was settled permanently by Bristol merchants and primarily people from the West Country (Sacks 1991: 49). Colonial trade became the major source of Bristol's economic wealth and made it the second wealthiest port next to London (Carus-Wilson & Lobel 1975: 15). By the 1650s, goods such as sugar, tobacco, cotton, timber and rum became the

main import products. In turn, the colonial settlers created a demand for manufactured goods (Carus-Wilson & Lobel 1975: 15)¹⁰.

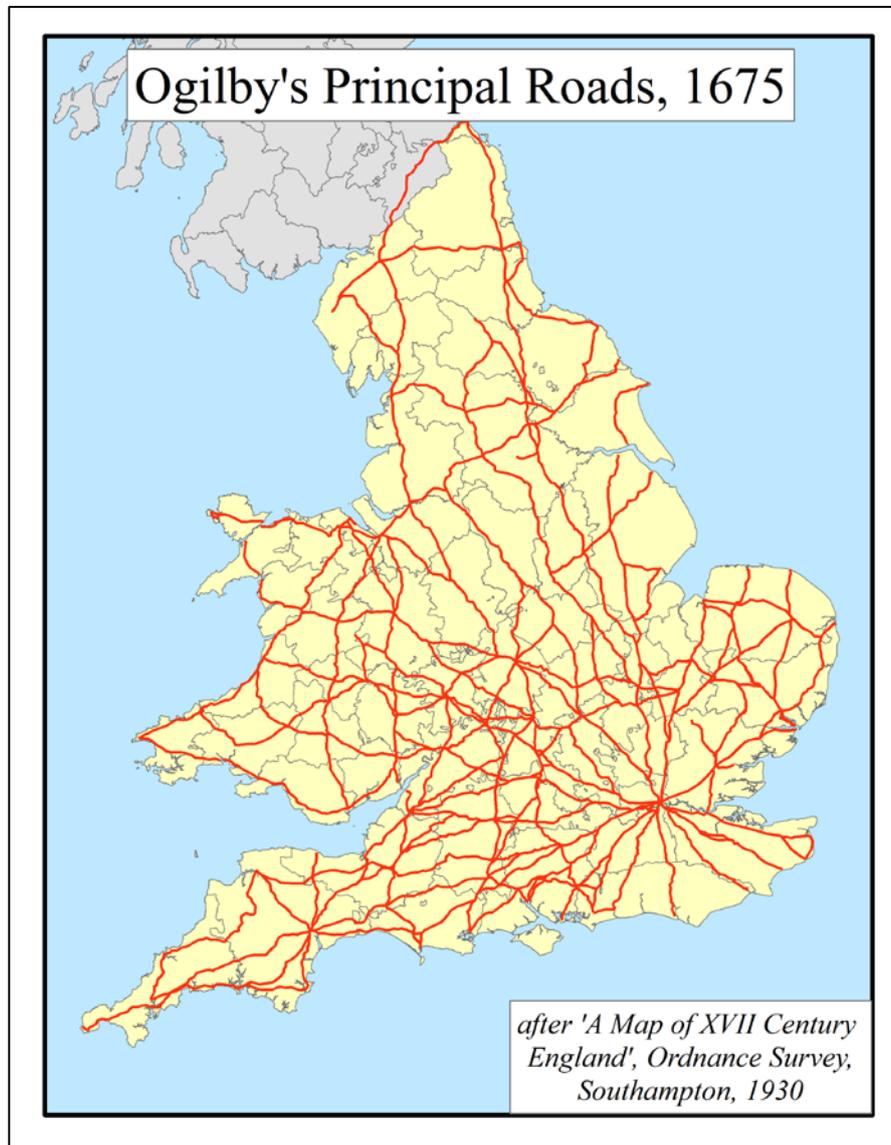
4.4.2. *Inland trade*

As stated before, very few records exist that reveal more about inland trade (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 25). Nevertheless, it is possible to estimate and to outline the port's hinterland. The hinterland includes "that part of the port space which comprises the tributary area on the landward side of the port from which exports are collected and to which imports are distributed to" (Bowly 2013: 10). Although there are not many records to show what Bristol's hinterland could have been, it can be deduced on the basis of geographical factors, such as Bristol's waterways and land roads, average speed of travelling at that time, and the influence of other competing urban centres in Bristol's proximity. Basically, the area within a 30-mile radius of Bristol can be assumed to have been its primary hinterland (Bowly 2013: 71). The *Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure* has created schematic maps of England's road and water networks, based on Cough's and Ogilby's routes, that give some indication as to via what routes Bristol could have transported trade goods. What can be gathered from Map 4.1 and Map 4.2 below is that main roads leading from Bristol to London and to the Midlands were established as early as 1370 and continued to exist into the Early Modern period. The towns from which Bristol could have experienced some competition were, for instance, Gloucester, Coventry, Exeter, Oxford and Salisbury. Their hinterland could have restricted or overlapped with Bristol's hinterland (Bowly 2013: 71).

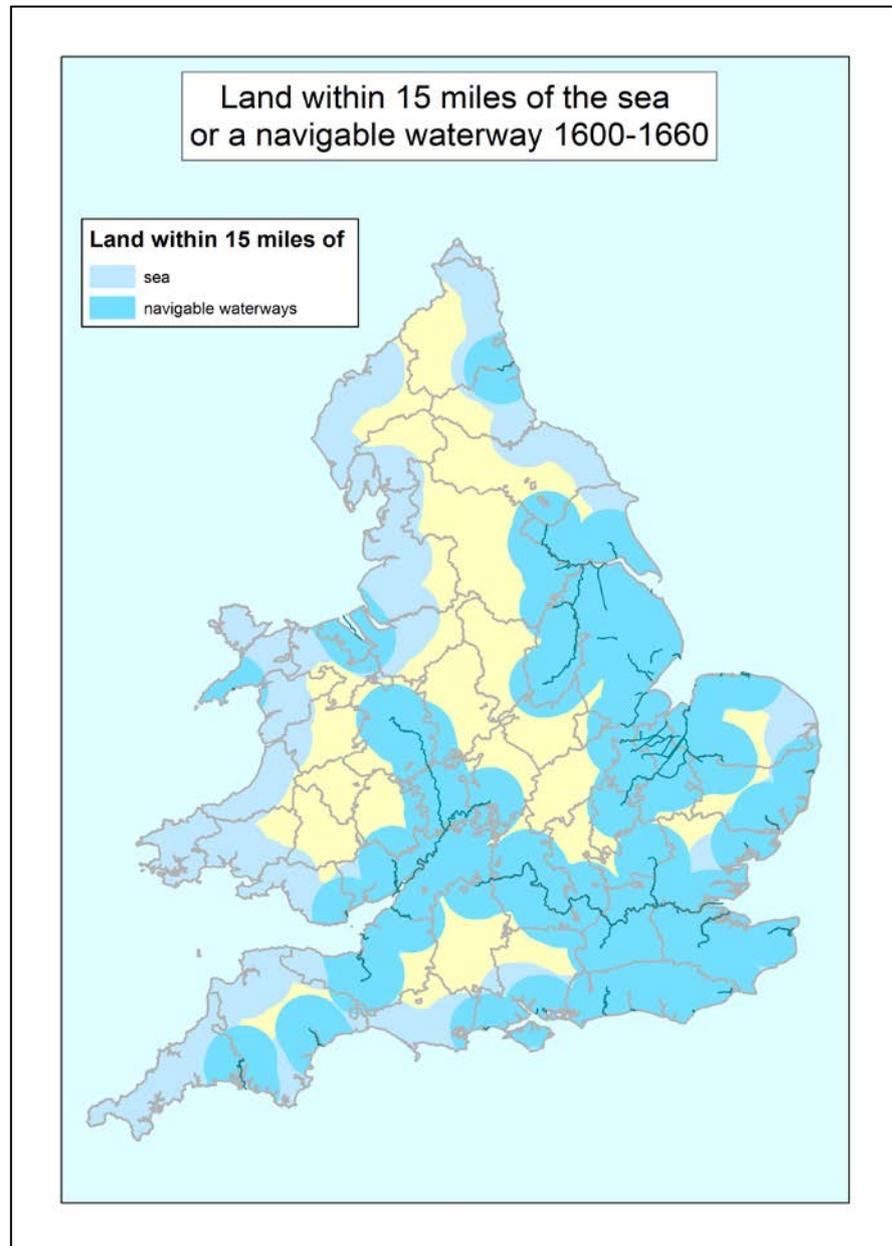
¹⁰ An issue that is not mentioned in this chapter is the rise of transatlantic slavery from the 1650s onwards. Since Bristol's role in this only became a very significant one in the eighteenth century, which extends beyond the period of this chapter, a discussion of it will be left aside (see Clay 1984; Dresser 2001; Coward 2012 for detailed account).



Map 4.1. The Gough map, Main roads c.1370 (taken from the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure website)



Map 4.2. Ogilby's principle roads (taken from the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure website)



Map 4.3. Navigable waterways (taken from the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure website)

The river system of the Usk, Wye and Severn, on the other hand, extended Bristol's hinterland beyond the 30-mile radius (see Map 4.3 above for an overview of navigable waterways in the Early Modern period). This would include Chepstow, the Cotswolds, parts of the Midlands, North and East Devon, the lead mining areas of the Mendips and the tin counties of Devon and Cornwall (Bowly 2013: 10). The Bristol Channel gave access to Cornwall and the South of Wales. Gloucestershire and Worcestershire were part of Bristol's secondary hinterland as this area was overlapping with the catchment areas of competing towns (Bowly 2013: 71-72). What is known of the earlier period is that wheat, rye and barley came in via ships on the Severn and Avon from Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 25-26). The fish that was imported from Ireland was also an important product for the area surrounding Bristol (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 27-28). Wool, hides and cloth were imported from Wales, from Milford Haven, Tenby, Haverford West, Newport, Chepstow and Tintern (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 30-31). Cheaper russet mostly came from Wales and was imported via the river Wye to Chepstow and from there to Bristol to be exported again or to supply for Bristol's own needs (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 31-32). By the fifteenth century, Bristol had become the main exporter of Welsh russet cloth (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 31). It should also be noted that smuggling was a wide-spread phenomenon and that many of the traded goods were not registered anywhere and can no longer be traced (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 33). It might thus well be that Bristol's trade with Wales, for instance, was more intensive than suggested by the records. There is also some evidence that some of the cloth and rye, wheat and barley from Bristol was exported to Southampton and London as well in the mid-fifteenth century. In return, luxury goods that were imported from the continent were transported to Bristol (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 31).

Other evidence of inland trade contacts is provided by the proceedings of the staple court. This court dealt with "local commercial disputes" (Fleming 2013: 120) and other issues related to incurred trade debts. Since the place of residence of the involved creditors and debtors is often mentioned in the proceedings, this

information may reveal something about the regular trade contacts that existed between Bristol and the rest of the country. The proceedings of 1509-1513 as investigated by Fleming (2013: 121) show that “[t]he largest number of non-Bristolian parties came from Somerset, Gloucestershire, London and Wales, but outsiders could come from as far afield as Spain and France.” Although the survey is only based on a small sample, it further confirms that the above-established trade routes were the most important ones. However, the presence of London in the staple court proceedings deserves more explanation. By the sixteenth century, the competition of London was felt in Bristol and many Bristol merchants sought their fortunes in London (Sacks 1991: 30-32). Interestingly, there were quite a few merchants that had their mercantile businesses in London, but still shipped and imported their goods via Bristol trade routes (Sacks 1991: 31). This suggests that the merchants did not always completely sever their ties with Bristol, which is also reflected by the Bristol merchant Robert Thorne, who lived in London but bequeathed money for the establishment of a free school in Bristol (Sacks 1991: 31). Furthermore, Fleming (2013: 117) notes that, on the basis of a study of 330 Bristolian wills covering the period 1400-1500, about 10 per cent of all the 179 testators referring to a location outside of Bristol bequeathed goods to Londoners. This further emphasises the importance of London as a trade centre and the ties that existed between the two urban centres from the fifteenth century onwards.

Next to cloth, soap production was important; Bristol black soap was widely sold in the West Country, and in the early sixteenth century, the Bristol soap makers were supposedly the main suppliers of the whole of England (Sacks 1985: 470). By the end of Elizabeth’s reign, Bristol was overtaken by London again (Sacks 1985: 470). The metal industry of Bristol had access to the lead of the Mendip mines, and the tin and copper mines in Cornwall and Devon, and iron from the Forest of Dean (Sacks 1985: 480). The pin-making industry became a modestly important trade branch in Bristol and remained so up until the 1630s (Sacks 1985: 480). The leather industry was also rather important in the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries. The largest quantity of leather products to be exported was first imported from

Wales though (Sacks 1985: 482). Glovers also produced on a large scale in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and primarily traded with London middlemen (Sacks 1985: 482).

4.5. Population and migration patterns

In order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of migration waves to and from Bristol, I will briefly explore theories of migration. Two well-known approaches to explain migration are Ravenstein's laws and Lee's pull and push factors. The list below describes the laws of Ravenstein. It has to be pointed out though that Ravenstein's laws are general tendencies that can typically be observed in Western societies rather than strict universals and many but not all laws have been proven to be valid (as cited in Grigg 1977: 42-43; Bowly 2013: 210):

1. Most migrants only go a short distance
2. Migration proceeds step by step
3. Migrants going long distances generally go by preference to one of the great centres of commerce or industry
4. Each current of migration produces a compensating counter current
5. The natives of towns are less migratory than those of rural areas
6. Females are more migratory than males within the kingdom of their birth, but males more frequently venture beyond
7. Most migrants are adults: families rarely migrate out of their county of birth
8. Large towns grow more by migration than by natural increase
9. Migration increases in volume as industries and commerce develop and transport improves
10. The major direction of migration is from the agricultural areas to the centres of industry and commerce
11. The major causes of migration are economic

Lee's (1966) argument is that, briefly summarised, there are push factors that drive migrants away from their native home, which may be adverse economic factors, as well as political factors, or natural disasters, and there are pull factors that pull migrants to a place, which again may be attractive economic or political factors. The interplay between these factors at different locations may determine what directions most people will migrate to and from (Lee 1966). More recent studies as carried out by *the Cambridge group for the history of population and social structure* (see Wrigley & Schofield 1989; Smith 1990) have found that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries people were highly mobile and it was more common to move out of a birthplace than to stay in the same place for life, albeit most people moved short distances only (Coward 2012: 20-27). People from the upper and lower strata tended to move longer distances; affluent merchants, land owners and people from the professions were often attracted to London and its employment and trade opportunities, whereas very poor labourers travelled great distances in search for work (Coward 2012: 28). Within these migratory movements, a distinction can be drawn between subsistence migrants and betterment migrants (Coward 2012: 20). Subsistence migrants were those who were forced to move around to find sustenance elsewhere because the area they came from no longer offered employment. They were often attracted to urban centres and or ports because these places offered better poor law schemes or opportunities to migrate to other places (Coward 2012: 27). Subsistence migrants travelled further distances to reach a major urban centre (Coward 2012: 27). Betterment migrants moved by deliberate choice, often to do an apprenticeship, or marry someone that would improve their economic or social position. They were of the middling ranks and covered smaller distances than subsistence migrants and generally came from the more "well to do backgrounds" (Coward 2012: 20). Wealthier literate immigrants, on the other hand, tended to travel further distances (Coward 2012: 27). Those were for instance gentlemen's sons apprenticed to affluent merchants, or merchants with the desire to expand their business, and people of the professions, as was common

amongst Bristol's recorders who often came from or resided in London (Coward 2012: 27).

Towns had to draw immigrants in order to sustain their population and growth. Not in the least because mortality rates were high. Due to poor living conditions and overcrowding, larger towns were ridden with diseases. As Dobson (2000: 276) aptly puts it, "[i]t may not indeed be too melodramatic to envisage London and the major provincial British towns as the most lethal 'death-traps' of late medieval society as a whole". Estimates are hard to give for the Late Medieval and Early Modern periods because there are very few documents that can help establish figures. However, based on the scant evidence that can be found, it can be said that average life expectancy as well as mortality rates fluctuated. There were mortality crises when the lowest national average life expectancy was around the age of 28, notably in the periods 1561 and 1681, whereas this would normally be around 30 to 40 during the period 1400-1700 (Houlbrooke 2000: 6-8). Mortality rates were particularly high in infancy; about one in six of new-borns died within a year. In densely populated areas such as London and the provincial towns, child mortality rates were higher, which could be as high as a quarter or a third of all babies that were born (Houlbrooke 2000: 8).

In Early Modern times, roughly a half to two third of the populations of most English larger towns were immigrants from around a 25-mile distance on average, and they were rarely reported to come from further than a 40-mile radius (Souden 1987: 156). As pointed out earlier, it is difficult to find out where most of those migrants came from, as the largest majority consisted of poor labourers and paupers whose lives were barely documented and almost left no trace behind that can be researched.

In several ways, Bristol can indeed be identified as a centre that had a great pull factor for migrants from early times onwards. By the late fourteenth century, it was one of the major port towns only to be exceeded by York and London in its wealth and importance, a position it maintained well into the sixteenth century (Carus-Wilson & Lobel 1975; Dyer 1991). The town saw a growth in its population that cannot possibly be accounted for without greater scale immigration. In 1377,

Bristol's population is estimated to have been as large as 12,000, and while there was a drop to roughly 8,000 in 1524, probably due to outbreaks of the plague in the second half of the fifteenth century and economic setbacks, its population had grown again to 10,000 in the 1550s, to 11,000 in 1600 and then doubled to 20,000 by 1650 and once again increased to 25,000 by 1700 (de Vries 1984: 270; Dyer 1991: 22-23).

4.5.1. Migration to and from Bristol

Trade and migration are of course in many ways intertwined, especially with the introduced migration models in mind. In both models, it is clear that economic factors are the main motivators to migrate. Since Bristol had a thriving mercantile economy that reached its heyday in the eighteenth century, it can be expected that migration was often trade-related. In the course of the seventeenth century, more and more trade-related crafts emerged (Carus-Wilson & Lobel 1975: 15-16; Sacks 1991: 350). In order to sustain Bristol's economic growth, it became a necessity to attract people outside of the town walls. In order to better understand the different migration patterns, a distinction between short-term migrants and long-term migrants will be made. This difference might also have implications for the nature of dialect and language contact that may have taken place. Although spoken features may not be directly traceable in written language, it could still be the case that frequent short-term contact also affected the written vernacular. Especially if short-term migrants were merchants who maintained contacts through the written medium with Bristolians and vice versa.

As for short-term migrants, they can be expected to have been less integrated in the town (Bowly 2013: 271). This could, for instance, have been merchants from Ireland and Wales and Bristol's hinterland who came to do trade and left after business was settled. This movement also took place in the opposite direction; Bristol merchants went to Wales, Ireland, Bristol's hinterland, London and further overseas. Important events were the fairs that took place several times a year (Sacks 1991: 39, 77-78). In Medieval times, there were as many as eight fairs a year (Sacks 1985: 78). In Early Modern times,

there was one important fair in the summer and one in the winter (Sacks 1991: 78). Not only people from Bristol's direct hinterland, but also traders from London, as well as Wales and Ireland were attracted to the winter and summer market fairs:

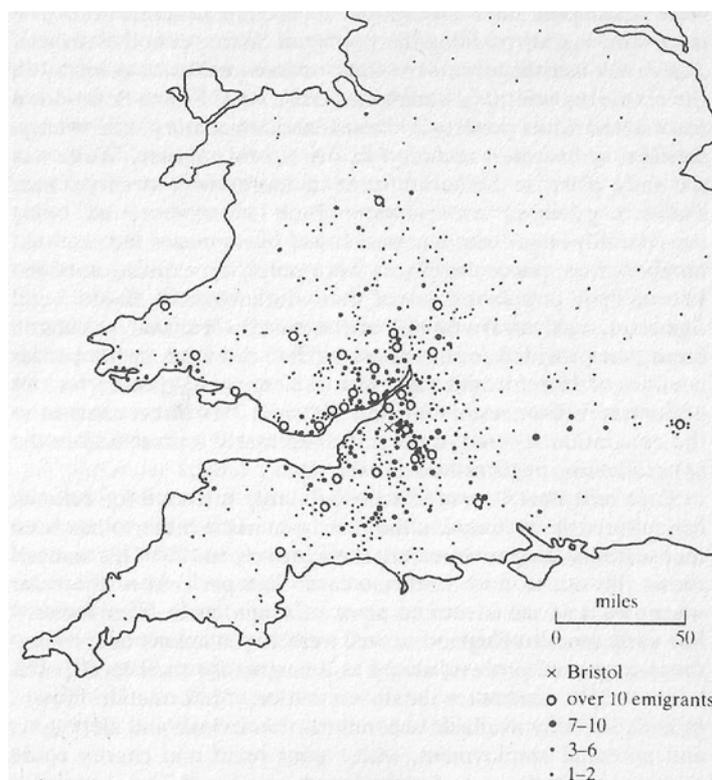
Together these fairs gave a distinct seasonal rhythm to inland trade. They provided two established periods, some six months apart, during which merchants from all over Southern and Western England congregated to place orders, pay debts, and settle accounts. In consequence, the fairs became financial as well as mercantile institutions, used as convenient clearinghouses not only by Bristolians but by merchants of the Midlands, the West Country, South Wales, Ireland, and London, who maintained continuous ties with each other year in and year out. (Sacks 1991: 78)

Although this was forbidden by law in the early period, very often the trade was based on pre-arranged deliveries (Sacks 1991: 78-83). This way the seller would be sure to sell everything he brought to the market and the buyer would be sure to obtain all the goods he wished (Sacks 1991: 78-83). This trade was often based on credit which again indicates that relationships must have been based on trust and long acquaintance (Sacks 1991: 78-83). In this type of trade, we can thus see that there must have been extensive contact between Bristol and Ireland, Wales and its hinterland, as well as London. Moreover, during war or political upheavals, with France and Ireland in particular, the monarch would charter the ships of Bristol merchants and ship soldiers through Bristol (Lee 2007: 37). Undoubtedly, the port must have been swarming with soldiers at times. In the earlier period, in the fifteenth century, Bristol was also a popular place for pilgrims to begin their journeys towards Santiago the Compostella and Jerusalem (Fleming 2013: 91). When from the second half the seventeenth century onwards Bristol's trade with America intensified, not only Merchants and shipmasters sailed back and forth; more than 10,000 indentured servants sailed from Bristol to Virginia, Maryland, Newfoundland, New York and Pennsylvania to find jobs in the colonies (Carus-Wilson & Lobel 1975: 15; Souden 1987: 152). Together with London, Bristol was

the most important departure port to the colonies (Souden 1987: 152). Indentured servants worked “in return for their passage, keep, and a payment upon gaining their freedom” (Souden 1987: 151). During the seventeenth century, hundreds of thousands indentured servants were sent out to the Colonies of Britain to work on colonial plantations. Evidence of those indentured servants is found in *a register of Bristol’s port Servants to foreign plantations, 1654-1679* and contains the names and details of more than 10,000 indentured servants that left Britain via Bristol (Souden 1987: 152). As the ordinance ordaining the registration of indentured servants suggests, the large scale “inveigling, purloining, carrying and stealing away Boys Maides and other persons and transporting them Beyond Seas”¹¹ (as cited in Souden 1987: 152) in the period preceding the years of the register gave rise to a more rigid administration. So, very likely, much more than 10,000 indentured servants sailed from Bristol to the New World. It can also not be ruled out that many were still recruited illegally and escaped registration (Souden 1987: 152-153). As pointed out above, studies have found that people of Early Modern England were highly mobile, but generally most immigrants came from within a 20-mile radius of a large urban centre, and no further than 40 miles. However, as one of Ravenstein’s laws states, greater centres of commerce tended to attract immigrants over greater distances. Souden’s (1987) survey of the indentured servant’s records, confirms this tendency; his study covers the period from 1654 to 1662, as only this period contains lists that are detailed enough to study social and geographical distribution. This entails a total of 5,138 registered indentured of which registrations 3,568 provided enough information as to where the migrants came from. In 70 per cent of the cases, county origin was listed and in 68.9 per cent of the cases, place of origin was given. In total, 38.5 per cent came from outside the 40-mile radius (Souden 1987: 154). South Wales and the border counties of the Severn valley accounted for large numbers, but also a considerable number came from London. Souden (1987: 156-157) found that the largest group of migrants clustered along the main roads and coastal

¹¹ Ordinance can be found in: Apprentices - Registers of Servants to Foreign Plantations (1654 – 1662). Ref: 04220 (1). BRO.

counties. The latter suggests that quite a few made their way to Bristol via the sea. Most migrants were of humble origin, which patterns with behaviour of subsistence migrants who tended to cover large distances. As can be observed in Map 4.4 below, the indentured servants came from all over the country.



Map 4.4. Places of origin indentured servants, 1654-1660 (Souden 1987:159)

It might also be instructive to consider the short-term outward migration because this may reveal more about the extent of relationships between Bristol and other places. As hinted at earlier, London is particularly interesting, as this increasingly became the place to do business in (Keene 2000). Although Bristol had its own court systems, legal business matters with merchants from all over the country and beyond were often settled in London, and, as stated

before, some merchants, a few of whom had previously been mayors of Bristol, moved permanently to London. Robert Thorne (1416-1519) and George Monox (1465-1544) moved to London to become leaders of London's merchant community, but they also kept ties with Bristol, as was shown in their wills and by their trade (Sacks 1991: 30-32). In terms of trade, London merchants predominantly became creditors to Bristolians and increasingly so over the period 1400-1500, which again suggests that there must have been frequent contacts between the two urban centres (Keene 2000: 104; Fleming 2013: 121-154)¹². Another interesting form of short-term migration that has been established especially in the earlier period of the time studied, are the ties of religious houses with Wales and Ireland. For instance, the Franciscan custody had its headquarters in Bristol but also had friaries in the South West of England and South Wales. This involved movement of the clergy between those places (Bowly 2013: 153).

As for long-term migrants, those migrants that stayed in Bristol permanently, or for a longer period of time, apprenticeship was an important reason to come to the city. This was an essential part of Tudor English education, and all guilds in Bristol would accommodate a large number of apprentices (Vanes 1982: 18). It was common to send children resident in Bristol elsewhere, whereas the largest proportion of apprentices that were indentured in Bristol came from outside Bristol (Bowly 2013: 213). The proportion of apprentices coming from elsewhere could be as high as 80 per cent (Bowly 2013: 213). An apprenticeship took at least seven years, but often longer, and during that time, the apprentice became part of the master's household (Vanes 1982: 19). Most apprentices were between nine and 16 years old (Vanes 1982: 19). In the period from 1532 to 1552, a total of 3,139 apprentices were registered in Bristol's apprentice books (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 36). This was a considerable amount of Bristol's total population, which was around 8,000-10,000 by this time (de Vries 1984: 270; Dyer 1991: 22-23). In the period 1532-1552, most apprentices came from the countryside, with Gloucestershire and Somerset representing the largest groups (Bowly 2013: 212-226).

¹² This is based on study of Staple court records and common plea rolls roughly covering period from 1400-1510.

However, about 19 per cent of the non-Bristolian apprentices came from Wales, most of whom from the South of Wales (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 36). A survey of the 1626-35/6 apprenticeship roll shows that only about 35 per cent came from Bristol. The largest groups were again from Bristol's immediate hinterland; Gloucestershire, Somerset, but a substantial amount came from the Cotswolds and the Frome valley. Others came from the Welsh borders, and also from Ireland and Northern counties (Sacks 1985: 499-503). Compared to the earlier apprenticeship rolls, the Welsh input slightly declined (Sacks 1985: 503). Interestingly, what comes to the fore with the earlier apprenticeship roll is that Welsh masters tended to contract Welsh apprentices (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 36). This may be taken as evidence that the Welsh inhabitants of Bristol maintained strong ties with Wales. That the Welsh were a prominent group in Bristol is not only reflected in the apprenticeship records but also in surname evidence; Welsh surnames show up in all layers of society in both the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 25-26, 34). Some of Bristol's most prominent merchants were Welsh (Beetham-Fisher 1987; Griffiths 2000: 712). In fact, in Beetham-Fisher's study (1987), which includes a survey of surnames of the merchant class from 1350 to 1500, most merchants that could be identified as non-Bristolians had names of Welsh origin. Names such as Joyce, Bailly, Griffith, More, Vaughan, Yonge, Thomas and Apmerik are names that strongly indicate Welsh roots (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 141-145). Henry Vaughan (late fifteenth century) was a very successful merchant and probably of Welsh descent (Fleming & Dresser 2007: 27). He was bailiff, sheriff and thrice mayor. The Welsh were generally well represented among high civic office holders. From 1390 to 1525 roughly 10 per cent of the office holders appear to have been of Welsh descent (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 25-26)¹³. In the later centuries, this slightly declined, possibly Welsh names became less visible due to Anglicisation. However, the proportion of Welsh names remained to be seven to eight per cent throughout the period (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 34-36). Records from the seventeenth century onwards show

¹³ This is based on surname evidence and persons known to have been of Welsh descent.

that intermarriage between Welsh persons and Bristolians was also very common and took place across all layers of society. In most cases it was the groom who was of Welsh origin, hailing from South East Wales, and Cardiff and Monmouthshire in particular (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 35). Throughout the period 1400-1700, the Welsh constituted the largest group of non-English inhabitants. It has been estimated that around 1696 about 20 per cent had a Welsh surname, which highlights the interrelatedness between Bristol and Wales (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 59). What is interesting about the Welsh in Bristol is that they seem to have been an integral part of Bristol. They are not mentioned in tax levies for strangers or any laws excluding strangers, which suggests that they were not treated as such. This contrasts sharply with the treatment of the Welsh in, for example, Chester, which was also an important trade town and that was closely situated to the Welsh border (Fleming, personal conversation October 2013).

The Irish, probably the second largest non-English immigrant group of Bristol, enjoyed a much less fortunate position and were subject to explicit laws excluding them from guilds and the burgess (Dresser & Fleming 2007). From the 1440s onwards, the government imposed alien subsidies on the Irish, who were classified as aliens. The returns of those subsidies reveal that Bristol had quite a substantial proportion of Irish inhabitants. The returns from the period 1440 to 1441 show that roughly eight per cent of about 10,000 inhabitants of Bristol were born outside England or Wales, most of whom were likely of Irish descent (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 24-25). In the apprentice books of 1532-1552, about six per cent is of Irish descent (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 36). Only few Irish men were reported to have been part of Bristol's more prominent merchants. That being said, Bristol's relationship with Ireland goes back a long way. Bristol had supported English rule in Ireland and assisted with shipping troops to Ireland. This support was in 1171 rewarded by Henry II: "Confirmed to my men of Bristol my city of Dublin to inhabit [...] with all the free customs which the men of Bristol have at Bristol and throughout all my land" (qtd. in Bowly 2013: 108). Essentially, Dublin was given to Bristol and although there is some evidence of Bristolians settling there, Bristol's greatest

influence was to be found in the Southern coastal strip of Ireland, with Wexford and Waterford as the most important places, also regarding trade (Bowly 2013: 108). Charters there were often based on Bristol's models and granted Bristol trade privileges (Bowly 2013: 108). Before the fifteenth century, there was migration out of Bristol to the newly invaded areas of Ireland, but by the fifteenth century, this movement was reversed due to political upheaval and crises in Ireland (Bowly 2013: 111-120). Most names listed in tax polls from the fifteenth century are Anglo-Irish, and presumably the ancestors of those people once came from Bristol and surrounding areas (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 32). According to Beetham-Fisher's study (1987), there were some prominent Irish merchants that immigrated to Bristol in the period from 1350 until well into the fifteenth century. Custom accounts reveal names of merchants that only shipped to and from Ireland, most of whom most likely resided in Ireland and maintained close contact with Bristol (Beetham-Fisher 1987: 146-147). For most of the period 1400-1700, it is difficult to establish how great the numbers of Irish immigrants were because most of them were extremely poor (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 38). The poor immigrants are very likely underrepresented in the records. They probably resided in Bristol illegally since they could not afford to pay any taxes or to buy exempt licences. However, at the beginning of the first half seventeenth century, they must have come in such great numbers that the city felt threatened enough to implement laws in an attempt to dam the migration waves. Many of the Irish migrants had reached England via London, but they were often sent back to Ireland through Bristol (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 37-38).

Unlike London, Bristol did not seem to attract as many foreigners. In Beetham-Fisher's (1987) study, which looks at merchants' lives over the period 1350-1500, out of the 100 merchants of whom she could establish the origins, only two merchants seem to have come from abroad. One came from Spain and the other from Gascony. Alien subsidy returns from 1455 and 1458 list the names of 42 aliens, most of whom came from the Low Countries (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 28). Strangely, there is almost no evidence for the presence of French, Spanish or Portuguese inhabitants, in contrast to

what would be expected considering Bristol's trade connections with these countries (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 29). The tax returns of the 1520s, 1540s, 1571 to 1590 again show the names of very few aliens. However, this time, there are some French and Portuguese names, albeit in very small numbers (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 41-43). By the 1680s, around 400 to 500 Huguenots are known to have sought shelter in Bristol, which was again a very small proportion of Bristol's population, which had about 20,000 inhabitants by then (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 52).

A database which can provide some further insights about foreigners (other than Welsh and Irish) is the online *England's Immigrants 1330-1350* database, which allows the user to search for immigrants by occupation through a range of documents that contain information about immigrants. These documents include alien subsidy returns, but also letters of denization and many other records that provide information about immigrants (see *England's Immigrants 1330-1550* for more details). Though the numbers need to be treated with care as it is not always possible to rule out that a person is mentioned more than once in different documents, the results give some indication about what nationalities were represented. The database contains a total of 1,364 records that relate to immigrants residing in Bristol, covering the period 1390-1520. The specific records for Bristol include 1,308 tax assessments, 28 licences to remain, 26 oaths of fealty, and a letter of denization. Unfortunately, only in 277 of the records the nationality¹⁴ of the immigrants is mentioned. Figure 4.1 below shows the distribution of the nationalities over the period 1390-1450 and 1450-1529. The database reveals that there is also a substantial number of French immigrants. Strikingly, in the second half of the fifteenth century, there is a relatively high number of Icelanders as well as French immigrants. The presence of the Icelanders seems somewhat surprising. Even though there had been trade connections between Bristol and Iceland throughout the period, it is not clear how the Icelanders ended up in Bristol. Fleming (2013: 109) provides an interesting explanation for their presence:

¹⁴ This concerns the function "filter by modern state nationality" in the database.

In 1425 the Danish governor, or hirðstóri, of Iceland, Hannes Pálsson, was kidnapped by English sailors and brought to England, where he wrote a long list of complaints against the English. Among these was the claim that they had forcibly abducted many boys and children from Iceland, or had duped their foolish parents into selling them, and had taken them to England where they were employed as servants and led miserable lives, with the result that Iceland had in parts been depopulated.

It may thus be that the Icelanders were not always brought to Bristol voluntarily. Not all records provide information about their occupations, but in all of the 48 cases where an occupation is mentioned, it is revealed that they were servants and all 72 are registered as non-householders, which suggests that their social status was not very high. As concerns the occupations of the French immigrants, there is not a lot information available, but 25 of the total were registered as house owners and 29 as non-householders, which suggests that some of them were at least wealthy enough to possess a house. There is not much information about the occupations of the other larger foreign immigrant groups, the Dutch and the Belgians, but they also seem to have been in a better position than the Icelanders, as at least 15 of them owned a house as opposed to 13 who were non-householders.

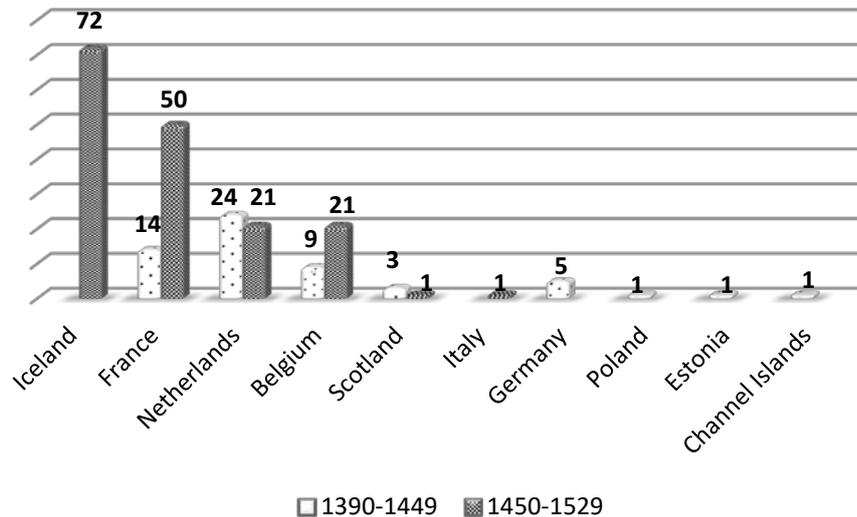


Figure 4.1. The distribution of nationalities over the period 1390-1450 (based on data of England's Immigrants 1330-1550 database)

To sum up, based on the different records that have been discussed, after the immigrants from Bristol's direct hinterlands, notably Somerset, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, the Welsh and Irish were probably the most prominent migrant groups. They constituted a large proportion of Bristol's population throughout the period investigated. Given the long trade as well as migration history between Wales, it can be expected that Welsh English and Welsh were spoken in Bristol. In fact, there is anecdotal evidence that Welsh was spoken in Bristol; a 1549 court case reveals that one of the witnesses, a shoemaker, spoke English and could at least understand Welsh, as he received information in Welsh from the wife of another Bristolian (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 34). In another court case in 1651 a Bristolian tailor had to act as an interpreter for a Welsh speaker from Monmouth who had to testify for one of the city's courts (Dresser & Fleming 2007: 35). As for the Irish, the records seem to suggest that most immigrants were Anglo-Irish who would have spoken Hiberno-English, although it may also be the case that Irish speakers are just underrepresented as

they may have been part of the pauper immigrants that are poorly recorded, or it could also be that the names in the records were deliberately anglicised (Fleming, p.c. October 2014). If there were to be any traces of language contact induced variation of any of the immigrant groups in Bristol's written vernacular, Welsh would be the most likely influence since the Welsh and Bristolian community seemed to have been almost intertwined throughout the period. The Welsh were also highly represented in the higher governing ranks of the urban hierarchy, making them part of the community that was most likely literate and involved in text production.

4.6. Concluding remarks

This Chapter set out to investigate the social structure in Bristol. It has been established that the urban hierarchy in Bristol was strongly dominated by the elite merchant class throughout the period investigated, both in terms of hierarchy and civic identity. In the course of the Early Modern period, their life styles became very similar to that of the gentry, which, as we shall see in Chapter 6, is also reflected in the lives and correspondence of the merchant family that will be studied in the present thesis.

As for Bristol's civic structure, by the beginning of our period under investigation, the town started to develop its own autonomous civic identity. With the establishment of its own court and civic administration, record keeping also became an essential part of the town. An important part of the administrative record keeping involved the protecting of the merchant elite's trade and craft guilds. The ordinances issued by the council and the guilds were an important means to secure rights as well as to exert power and importance.

As regards influence on and importance for its surrounding areas, it has amply been demonstrated that Bristol was the hub of trade and cultural activity. Contact with Bristol's hinterland must have taken place extensively throughout the period, by means of trade at the fairs and import and export trade over the river system, but also via apprenticeships and, later in the period, via people travelling to the New World. By the second half of the seventeenth century, Bristol had become the most important port town next to London. Not only was

it the principal trade centre for the West Country, it was also the gateway to the New World. This attracted merchants but also labour migrants such as servants, pilgrims, and other migrants that aimed to settle, or work in the New World. The population grew significantly during this time and as Ravenstein's law (Grigg 1977) predicts, the town attracted migrants from far beyond a 40-mile radius. In terms of longstanding language and dialect contact, it can be assumed that apart from the dialects of its direct hinterland, Welsh, Welsh English and possibly Irish and Hiberno-English were an integral part of Bristol's society.

Notably, despite its relatively far distance from Bristol, as concerns trade, London seems to have been important and possibly the contacts between London and Bristol intensified towards the Early Modern period. The importance was, however, to some extent unidirectional in that London provided credit to Bristol and that Bristol merchants set up their trades in London, whereas the reverse was less common (Fleming 2013) This is not to say that Bristol was completely dependent on London though. Fleming (2013: 153-154) eloquently sums up the relationship between Bristol and London in the long fifteenth century:

Bristol was in many ways under London's shadow. Even over a distance of a hundred miles, it was still within the sphere of influence of the metropolis, and their economies were intermeshed. To Bristol, as to much of the rest of England and Wales, London was a source of finance, specialist and luxury goods, a market for produce or imports, a place where news could be exchanged and marriages made, and a place to which the enterprising or desperate went to seek their fortunes. However, Bristol also had these functions, but on a smaller scale and within a more restricted region: it was part of London's network, but in turn it was at the centre of its own, and this extended through much of the West Country, the West Midlands, South Wales and southern Ireland. (Fleming 2013: 153-154).

This amplifies the observations that were made in Chapter 3; although London may have been influential and should, also with regard to supralocalisation processes, be considered as a force to be reckoned with, Bristol had an important role to play too with respect to its cultural and economic importance, as well as the population it hosted and the migrants it attracted.

Chapter 5. The people behind the data: literacy in Medieval and Early Modern England

5.1. Introduction

The role of literacy often receives less attention in sociolinguistic research, while the history of the English language of the Middle and the Early Modern periods is almost inevitably a history primarily based on written data. In Chapter 2, I have touched upon the fact that literacy levels affect the representativeness of historical written data. I would like to argue, however, that in order to fully understand and to interpret the data that we are working with, it is also important to consider the historical context in which reading and writing practices have developed. Over time, various historical events, for instance, the rise of commerce in the later Medieval period and the development of more complex law systems gave rise to an increase of literates, as well as the emergence and development of different text types such as court rolls, depositions, accounts, and guild ordinances. It is noteworthy that literacy and communication through the written media was not always a given, neither was it the case that the written medium covered as many different communication acts as it may do today. For example, there are relatively few extant letters from the earlier Medieval period, possibly partly because very few people were literate, but also because the available materials to write a letter with were very expensive at the time. What is more, committing matters to paper was simply not the norm; most affairs were conducted in the spoken mode. It follows then that when we carry out sociolinguistic research on written data, and particularly data from the past, the above considerations become very relevant and have implications for the way in which the data must be interpreted. The question arises as to what social factors such as sex, social standing and education might come into play when studying linguistic variation in the texts. It is thus important to have an insight into what layers of society had access to the written medium and who was able to write texts, but, additionally, it is equally important to consider how literacy as a cultural concept was embedded in society at the time. For instance, the development

of different text types can shed light on possible stylistic differences, but they may also give an indication about what the social background of the author may have been, e.g. we can speculate about the social standing and education of the author of a business letter, or an ecclesiastical record written by a member of the clergy. All in all, an overview of the history of literacy can provide a wealth of information about the general social background of the people behind the texts, as well as provide insight into the important communicative function of different urban centres; as will become clear later on, literacy, that is, the development of a literacy culture, was an essential means for urban centres to establish their importance and autonomy.

The objective of this chapter is thus to address the question of what the surviving texts that are studied for this dissertation represent, or more importantly, who they represent and what they tell us about the role of literacy in urban centres. Who was able to write in the Medieval and Renaissance period? How large a proportion of the entire population was this? What kinds of texts did the people write? How were they trained or educated to write? What is the development and increase in literacy and training over the course of the centuries investigated, and on what are these numbers based? To what degree was the instruction of reading and writing organised and what social layers of society had access to it? Lastly, can we say anything about the role of literacy in Bristol in particular? For whom were the writings that a city produced intended? In Section 5.2., I will first define the term 'literacy'. Sections 5.3. and 5.4. provide a brief overview of the development of literacy and education in England in the earlier Middle ages. Section 5.5. focuses on the linguistic aspect of literacy, which was relatively complex after the Norman Conquest, as there were at some point three written languages in use. Part of this linguistic complexity had to do with the expansion of literacy, both in a cultural sense and in terms of literacy rates, the implications of which will be discussed in Section 5.6. In Section 5.7., I will dwell on lay education in the period 1400 up until the Reformation. The Reformation had its effect on (literacy) education, which will be discussed in Section 5.8. Section 5.9. explores the social stratification of literacy and literacy rates in Tudor and Steward England. In Section

5.10., I will go back to the questions I have asked at the beginning of this chapter and try to answer them in view of what has been presented in this chapter.

5.2. Types of literacy

The concept of literacy is approached differently in various disciplines, e.g. the fields of literary history and history of reading focus more on the act of reading and the composition of texts whereas codicologists and palaeographers are more concerned with the textual material and writing (Briggs 2000: 409). What the disciplines have in common, however, is that literacy as a cultural concept provides a framework in which their analyses can be contextualised. I would like to argue that in the case of historical sociolinguistic research, it is important to not only know who wrote the texts, but also to have an understanding as to who read the texts, in what social context they were written, and with what intention. As I have briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, the ‘publicness’ of written material may have affected the degree of variation in the texts, as texts intended for wider audiences may contain more supralocal forms than a private letter, for instance (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2. for more details).

The term literacy should not unequivocally be understood to simply mean the ability to read and write. First of all, the ability to read and write comes in degrees and varies in the individual, but is also dependent on the role literacy plays in a given society, as well as in a given context. Briggs (2000: 398) argues that reading, writing and literacy should be interpreted as three distinct terms, which are nevertheless inextricably tied up. As he aptly points out, “[...] literacy amongst the early Christians is not exactly the same thing as the literacy of the late medieval universities. Thus, if literacy is, on the one hand, an individual skill, it is also a historically contextualised mentality”. Literacy in a broader contextual sense then refers to a set of “literate habits and assumptions” (Clanchy 1993: 185), e.g. the practice of keeping a written record but also, as Stock (1983) observed, the presence of a shared cultural practice that relies on texts and assigns authority to a written text. Literacy then, or “literate

mentality" (Clanchy1993: 2) can vary over time, space and social groups (Clanchy 1993; Briggs 2000).

Parkes (1991: 775) usefully describes three modes of literacy that existed in the Medieval English period, namely 1. professional literacy (associated with scholarly monastic culture and later with men of the professions), 2. cultivated literacy (associated with the Anglo-Norman aristocratic interest in romance literature), and 3. pragmatic literacy (associated with the rise of commerce and the reading and writing skills that were needed to keep accounts) (Parkes 1991: 775; Briggs 2000: 400).

In this chapter, the term literacy is used to refer to literacy as a cultural concept, but, when specified, it is also used in a narrow sense to refer to literacy rates, i.e. the number of people that had the ability to read and write. In what follows, I will give a brief overview of the development from an oral to a literate culture in England in terms of its cultural importance within society, in terms of education, as well as in terms of literacy rates.

5.3. Early literacy: from the Anglo-Saxon period to the Middle Ages

Literacy has not always occupied the same degree of importance in society as it does now. Even up until the Early Modern period, a large proportion of society was illiterate and could perform their everyday tasks without ever having to read or write during their entire lives (Cressy 1980: 2). Society was simply not structured in such a way that affairs needed to be put to paper. Bonds, deals and oaths were committed to memory, knowledge and learning were transmitted orally. So, when the written mode started to become part of society, this implicated a cultural shift as well (Clanchy 1993: 187).

As far as the Old English period is concerned, the revival of Christianity in the sixth century was a turning point in terms of literacy. Up to that point, education and Anglo-Saxon culture were primarily, though not exclusively, based on oral traditions (Wormald 1977: 113; Orme 2006: 18). With the arrival of the Irish missionaries in the North, as well as St. Augustine and his missionaries in Kent, native converts that were trained to be priests were introduced to the Latin alphabet and literature (Lawson & Silver 1973: 9; Wormald 1977: 99; Orme

2006: 18). The teaching of the Latin alphabet in monasteries and churches was an important means to secure and spread Christianity in England, as it was through the Bible and the works of Church fathers that the newly converted clergy was trained (Wormald 1977: 99). However, the effects of early Christianity on the extent of literacy rates must be seen in perspective, i.e. it was only of a minor scope as it only affected those who became members of the elite clergy. For many among the clergy, it sufficed to have knowledge of Latin and maybe to have some ability to read Latin (Orme 1989: 2-3). Only a few could probably also write. The training that was provided can hardly be considered a centralised and institutionalised attempt by the church to educate the population (Orme 1989: 2-3). While there is mention of one school that was established in 631, there is scarce evidence for more schools outside monasteries up until the twelfth century (Orme 1989: 2-3). In accordance with the educational charters and documents that were investigated by Leach (1915), there were about 20 episcopal and monastic schools with the purpose to train monks and priests in the eighth century (Lawson & Silver 1973: 11). Up until the twelfth century, most of the teaching was done in the monasteries by monks (Orme 1989: 2-3). Generally, it was only the higher clergy that was taught to write, whereas others only acquired some basic Latin reading skills (Lawson & Silver 1973: 11). The Latin alphabet that was taught eventually came to be adopted, with some adaptations, for writing in Old English (Orme 1989: 2; Upward & Davidson 2011: 18). Some runic graphs, *thorn* and *wynn*, which had been in use among Anglo-Saxon runographers, were initially incorporated, as were the graphs introduced by Irish missionaries; *yogh* and *eth* (Upward & Davidson 2011: 22-23).

Literacy schooling was most likely based on the traditions of a local monastery in which reading and writing were taught. In the light of this, it makes sense that at the time written English showed local features, in terms of orthography as well as linguistic features, to such an extent that they could easily be identified as coming from a specific area, as writing practices were bound to specific monasteries.

Early literacy was thus a practice typically associated with the (elite) clergy. There may have been some noble men in the early days

who were taught to read and write by a priest, but the large majority of the population was illiterate and lived according to primarily oral vernacular traditions (Lawson & Silver 1973: 11). Section 5.4. below describes how this changed in the eleventh century.

5.4. *After the Norman Conquest -1300*

The twelfth century was marked by a transition in literacy that started to take root in lay culture, whereas in the four centuries before it had primarily been part of clerical culture (Parkes 1991: 36; Clanchy 1993: 226). This by no means suggests a significant increase in terms of literacy rates, but there was a gradual change in who was literate; the traditional roles of the clerk who was to be learned and literate as opposed to the knight whose main concern was to fight and not necessarily to be literate had become less clearly demarcated (Clanchy 1993: 226). The Norman Conquest contributed to this change in literacy culture. According to Parkes (1991: 275), lay literacy, that is, the reading and the cultivating of Anglo-Norman literature, was part of Anglo-Norman aristocratic culture. The arrival of the Normans not only promoted writing in Anglo-Norman French but it also introduced more wide-spread Latin literacy, as the conquerors brought with them a tradition of Latin bureaucracy (Clanchy 1993: 18). This meant that (Latin) reading and writing was no longer a domain dominated by monks but also started to become the domain of laymen. While monks used reading as a “spiritual exercise” (Parkes 1991: 36), the literacies of bureaucracy and cultivation generated different types of reading, which also called for different writing styles and representations of the texts (Parkes 1991: 36). That the introduced bureaucracy also gave rise to the proliferation of texts is evidenced by the abundance of surviving legal and administrative documents such as “court rolls, accounts, rentals, and deeds” (Lawson & Silver 1973: 24), as well as the administration of manors, boroughs and the government. As Lawson and Silver (1973: 25) point out, the amount and sophistication of text production in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries “[...] could scarcely have taken place without a significant increase in schooling. Writing in Latin ceased to be an amateur skill possessed by monks”. The professionalisation of writing came with the development of a new

group of professional writers who performed different types of writing tasks; they could be highly skilled copyists who copied decorated works, using “the gothic book hand”, or they kept records for merchants, lawyers and lords alike, using “the new cursive court hand” (Lawson & Silver 1973: 25). It has to be pointed out that the development and the expansion of literacy for administrative and business purposes, thus pragmatic literacy, did not see a very significant growth amongst laymen until two centuries later. It was only by the fourteenth century that commerce, and the complexification of the bureaucracy associated with it, started to develop in England (Parkes 1991: 278; Clanchy 1993: 237).

The question may be posed where and how this newly rising group of professional writers was trained. Considering it was still mostly the clergy that had access to the learning of Latin, and that most extant texts were written in Latin, it is likely that this body of professional writers were of the minor clergy who did not seek to climb the ecclesiastical ladder and had to find their livelihoods elsewhere (Lawson & Silver 1973: 25). There is evidence that in some cases, clerks of the minor orders were apprenticed by sheriffs and received training in legal administration so that they could take over some of the administrative tasks (Bevan 2013: 82). This would primarily be the case in or near towns or cities; after all, it was only in the economically busy urban centres where the demand for administrative documents was great. Also, most cathedrals provided some schooling for pupils who aspired to become clergymen. Apart from eight monastic cathedral schools, there were nine secular cathedrals in England, each of which had a school attached to it. By 1300, there were approximately 50 grammar schools at churches (Lawson & Silver 1973: 23). Although some churches acquired a reputation for the teaching they provided, at most churches, schools only existed intermittently, and the schools that existed were largely concentrated in towns. The teaching was primarily intended for the education of minor clergy, as well as for almonry boys and choristers. As regards the latter two groups, it is open to debate how literate they were. In most cases, it was sufficient for them to be able to read some Latin (Orme 1989: 243-244). Other forms of education were available, but this was mostly informal,

provided by individuals, mostly priests or clerks, and occasionally laymen, who provided some education for a fee (Lawson & Silver 1973; Orme 1989). The pupils were chiefly boys who wanted to become “priests, monks, administrative clerks or literate laymen” (Orme 1989: 4). Women were, if at all, home-schooled and most likely literate in the vernacular rather than Latin, which was either (Anglo-Norman) French or English (Orme 1989: 4).

In terms of education, the fourteenth century saw the rise of the university towns of Oxford and Cambridge (Lawson & Silver 1973; Cobban 1988; Orme 1989). Although both towns had offered some type of advanced education from an earlier period onwards, one can only speak of “fully-fledged” universities from the early thirteenth century onwards (Cobban 1988: 26). They were then called *studium generale* and offered further study for the more privileged members of the clergy in theology, liberal arts, medicine and canon and civil law (Cobban 1988: 3, 8). The growth of the universities was enhanced by the development of colleges in the respective university towns (Lawson & Silver 1973: 52). Oxford and Cambridge increasingly held the domain of subjects such as arts, medicine, theology and canon law, which were subjects that were hitherto taught separately in cathedral schools in Lincoln, Hereford and York (Cobban 1988: 29-30; Orme 1989: 8). Along with the university of Paris, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were the only institutes in fourteenth-century Europe that were authorised to grant theology degrees. This thus suggests that both universities enjoyed national and international prestige (Cobban 1988: 30). In turn, grammar and cathedral schools became places where children were prepared for education in theology and canon law at one of the universities. The grammar schools traditionally provided education in the form of the seven liberal arts, which were sub-divided into two different parts: the *Trivium*, which encompassed Latin grammar, dialectic and rhetoric, and the *Quadrivium*, which consisted of arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy (Watson 1968 [1908]: 1; Miner 1990: 134). The *Trivium* came to be the division of the grammar schools, and in particular Latin grammar, since this was what one needed in order to study the scriptures. The universities focused more on logic, rhetoric and the *Quadrivium* (Lawson & Silver

1973: 5; Miner 1990: 134). The students who wanted to further themselves in education had to move towards one of the university towns. Especially the University of Oxford was placed strategically, as it was situated centrally and on the intersection of main routes to the major urban centres of London and Bristol, as well as the important towns Bedford, Winchester, Buckingham and Warwick. The University's relatively short distance to the South coast made it accessible from the Continent (Cobban 1988: 35). To illustrate the importance of University of Oxford, Rashdall (2010 [1895]) conjectures on the basis of contemporary accounts that Oxford had about 1500 students around the beginning of the fourteenth century, which amounted to almost the same size as that of the town's inhabitants at the time (Lawson & Silver 1973: 304; Rashdall 2010 [1895]: 383-384). The students who attended the universities were mostly boys between the age of 14 to 15 and sons of knights, successful yeomen, merchants and tradesmen (Lawson & Silver 1973: 30). From the late fourteenth century onwards, residence in a university hostel or hall had become compulsory for university students, which meant that pupils lived together and thus spent a large proportion of their time together (Cobban 1988: 148). Once they had graduated, they became functionaries in the higher ecclesiastical hierarchy, teachers, lawyers and administrators (Lawson & Silver 1973: 31). It is interesting to note that the pupils lived together and went to university together, as this may indicate that they constituted some type of community of practice, which also may have had sociolinguistic implications.

So far, I have only focused on the role of literacy in society, but not so much on the linguistic complexity that is involved with the development of literacy. Section 5.5. below will deal with the different languages that were used in writing and how their usage changed over time.

5.5. Writings in the vernacular and the transition from Anglo-Norman to English 1300-1400

It is important to realise that Medieval literacy practices in England cannot be compared to present-day practices, as "[...] in modern received English the hiatus and disjuncture between spoken and the

written word is not usually obvious” (Clanchy 1993: 206). This means that in present-day England, written modes can easily be transmitted orally and vice versa. Generally, in present-day situations there is no question as to which language is used, nor is the language perceived as being essentially different, whether it is oral or written. In Medieval England, however, a royal writ could be written in Latin, but in order to convey information to the public, the same text was probably proclaimed in English (Clanchy 1993: 206). In order to discuss this important difference between earlier times and today, a brief excursus back to pre-Norman Conquest times is necessary. In the Anglo-Saxon period, Latin was primarily used as the language of record and religion (Görlach 2000: 462). To a lesser extent, different varieties of Old English dialects were also written down (Görlach 2000: 462). This included some royal documents, but mostly literary texts. As touched upon earlier, society was at the time based on a largely oral tradition (Görlach 2000). However, after 1066, the Norman conquerors introduced bureaucratic literacy, using Latin as the language of record (Clanchy 1993: 197). The Norman aristocratic elite that established itself in England brought along another spoken variety, namely Norman French. Being literate in that period thus meant that a person was literate in Latin, while the language that a person used in oral settings was either Anglo-Norman French, or, as was the case for the majority of the population, some dialect of English. Apart from some sermons and devotional works, English was relatively rarely written down (Lawson & Silver 1973: 34).

By the end of the twelfth century, literacy practices became more complex. Anglo-Norman French was attributed the status of a literary language under the patronage of Anglo-Norman aristocrats (Clanchy 1993: 201). By the end of the thirteenth century, Anglo-Norman French was competing with Latin as a language of record (Clanchy 1993: 201; Görlach 2000: 462).

It seems paradoxical that Anglo-Norman French became dominant as a written language almost two centuries after the Norman Conquest, while there is little evidence that it became a widespread native spoken language. It is more likely that the majority of the Anglo-Norman French-speaking elite had assimilated to the

English-speaking majority within a century after the conquest (Rothwell 1982: 282; Clanchy 1993: 214; Ingham 2012: 27). However, there is evidence that before Anglo-Norman French emerged as a written language, it was maintained as a second (taught) language that was spoken in specific settings (Rothwell 1968; Clanchy 1993; Ingham 2012). On the basis of linguistic analyses, Ingham (2012) suggests that until the first half of the fourteenth century, there must have been a vernacular Anglo-Norman variety that was passed on to children from an early age onwards. Amongst the aristocrats, French was a hallmark of their Norman heritage and was maintained as “the badge of ancestral superiority” (Ingham 2012: 32). The learning of French was an essential part of the upbringing of an aristocratic boy. Moreover, there is evidence that until the first half of the fourteenth century (at least), French may have been the medium of teaching in grammar schools; this means that children who wanted to attend grammar school had to learn French at an early age, notably before they went to grammar school at about the age of seven (Rothwell 1968: 44-45). This might explain how non-aristocratic clerks acquired high proficiency in French and were able to write French texts for their aristocratic clientele.

As regards the linguistic complexity that is tied up with literacy practices, Clanchy (1993: 206-210) provides a striking example of the complex linguistic situation in the fourteenth century. The example relates to the Justices of Kent’s visitation in 1313-1314 of which the procedure was as follows: the jurors had to read the judge’s questions in French or Latin writing; then they had to reply orally, which was most likely in English, while their answers were again recorded in Latin by a clerk. At the arrival of the justices, the chief clerk had to read out and translate into French the answers that had previously been written in Latin by the clerk. Another spokesperson representing the jurors had to present this to the bar in English yet again. The French and English oral presentments had to be accepted by the court and were subsequently submitted to the plea roll in Latin again. What this procedure implies is that although French had not yet surfaced as a written language, it had long been used as a spoken language in official settings. It also illustrates the complexity of literacy practices of the

fourteenth century. However, the French used in law settings should be considered as linguistically quite distinct from the Anglo-Norman French that was traditionally spoken by the Anglo-Norman aristocracy. The French used in court was acquired during legal training and was based on a rather artificial jargon (Ingham 2012: 25). Like Latin, it was thus a language variety used in very specific settings. In addition to that, in the fourteenth century, French enjoyed international prestige as language of cultivation, which must have also promoted the use of it as a written language (Bevan 2013: 179).

5.5.1. The rise of English

The loss of Normandy in 1204 is often seen as the turning point when French declined and English acquired its status as a national language (Blumenthal & Kahane 1979: 186; Baugh & Cable 1993: 127-130, 141). While this was indeed the point where England and the Anglo-Norman aristocracy lost political ties with France, as pointed out above, texts written in French actually became more frequent well after this period. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Anglo-Norman French was still a language spoken in the court and by the higher nobility (Lawson & Silver 1973; Coleman 1981; Clanchy 1993). The existence of instruction books for the acquisition of French in the second half of the fourteenth century mark the period in which French became an instructed language and no longer seemed to be acquired casually (Ingham 2012: 30-32). This indeed coincides with the period when more and more texts appear in English, and French appeared to be making room for English (Ingham 2012: 30-32). This is evidenced by the emergence of literature written in English by authors such as Chaucer and Gower, but also by the translation of French works into English (Coleman 1981: 20, 38). The question arises as to why the decline of French took place. A possibility is that the urban merchant elite that was emerging in the fourteenth century, which was generally not of an aristocratic ancient Norman pedigree, created a demand for writings in the English vernacular for recording business transactions, as well as vernacular literature (Coleman 1981). English Bible translations started to appear, as well as English verses in church sermons (Coleman 1981: 23-24). The rise of an urban elite also meant

that there was a shift in power; the merchant elite increasingly became part of the ruling elite, exerting their influence over the nobility and court and requiring access to and knowledge of (law) texts that were primarily written in a language that was only used by a small group of educated men (Coleman 1981: 24). The desire to have access to governmental documents, as well as the need to exert newly established power may well have played a role in the transition from French to English literacy. As Coleman (1981: 24) points out,

[t]he blossoming of English poetry and prose in the fourteenth century is most easily intelligible, in fact, as the reflection of a changing social structure and its changing ideals: a broadening of the middle range of society, its greater participation in government and its increasing demand for literature read for information, for pleasure and for spiritual edification.

By 1362, a statute was issued which stated that English had to replace French as the language of pleading in court (Parkes 1991: 287). English was, however, already a spoken language in court procedures before this time, as was previously illustrated in the example of the Kent visitation, but it had probably also always been the language of pleading in the lesser courts (Ormrod 2003). Yet, the statute did not mean that English immediately became the language of central government administration (Ormrod 2003: 783). According to Ormrod (2003: 782),

[t]he Crown's notable conservatism in this respect may be in part attributable to the fact that it had well-established traditions of on-the-job training for its clerical staff and therefore had no problem perpetuating specialist skills that may have been in shorter supply elsewhere in the realm.

What is more, as mentioned earlier, it was not uncommon for official texts to be proclaimed and transliterated in another language than they were written. In general, however, private and non-governmental writings, were increasingly written in English (Ormrod 2003). Arguably, official writings in English was resisted against, precisely because of

the emergence of subversive English vernacular writings such as the writings produced by the Lollards. Increasingly, English vernacular literacy may have posed a threat to the “divinely ordained hierarchy” of the government and church (Ormrod 2003: 783). The use of French and Latin was a safeguard to maintain that order as literacy in French and Latin was an elite affair. The shift from French to English should thus not solely be attributed to political governmental affairs such as the cutting off of ties with France. The Hundred Years’ War is also frequently mentioned in student textbooks as a socio-political factor that may have affected the status of French in England (see for instance Baugh & Cable 1993: 141). However, it did not seem to have affected the status of French amongst the aristocrats who continued using the language during and after the period (Ingham 2012: 32). Similarly, the decision of King Henry V (1387–1422) to adopt English for official correspondence is often cited as an event that promoted the status of English as a national language of record (Fisher 1996: 20-23; Nevalainen 2003: 132). Yet, while the king’s Signet adopted English after the king’s decision, the privy seal was still rather slow in shifting to English (Ormrod 2003: 785). For most of the fifteenth century, the Chancery maintained French and increasingly Latin as the language of record. In light of this, the term ‘Chancery Standard’ for the appearance of a written English Standard seems somewhat misleading as English appeared not to have been used by the Chancery until the end of the fifteenth century (cf. Fisher 1977, 1979, 1996, as well as Chapter 3, Section 3.5., of this thesis). Again, this suggests that overt language policies had little to do with the initial standardisation of written vernacular English.

Ingham (2012: 31) provides yet another plausible and empirically based date and explanation for the demise of French and the rise of English, and it has to do with the Black Death that raged in the period 1349-1360s:

With its heavy incidence in main population centres, it [the Black Death] struck hard at the school system, since grammar schools were generally located near cathedrals or churches in major towns (Orme 1976). It is also known to have taken a heavy toll among the clergy, required by their calling to attend

to those sick and dying of the plague. Soon, the church was having to ordain aspirants to the clergy whose Latin was not up to pre-Black Death standards, and who are unlikely to have been proficient in A-N [Anglo-Norman]. Since teachers were members of the clergy, the consequence in many places was that the use of A-N as a vehicle language in school could hardly be sustained. The transmission system of Anglo-Norman had collapsed, and its disappearance from the scene in England (except in law) was not long delayed.

A comment by Trevisa dating back to 1385 suggests that in most schools English had become the language of instruction to explain Latin grammar (qtd. in Parkes 1991: 30): “so, that now, the year of Our Lord 1385, in all the grammar schools of England children leave French and construe and learn in English”.

To sum up, in the light of what has been observed by Clanchy (1993), Ormrod (2003) and Ingham (2012), one should be careful with assigning too much weight to governmental decisions in what consequently might seem a rather abrupt transition of French to English. The rise in status of English as a written language seemed to have been a more gradual process that was most likely enhanced and sometimes hampered by political events, but less likely driven by those factors alone. The change in status emanated from general social changes, rather than top-down decisions, and, as proposed by Ingham (2012), demographic changes may have played an important role as well. The increase of literacy amongst non-aristocrats and the laity in general also played a role in the increase of writings in English, which will be further explored in Section 5.6. below.

5.6. Laity and the expansion of literacy 1300-1400

As record keeping and writing became a more essential part of society, there was an expansion and increase in literacy amongst the population as a whole. From the 1290s to the 1360s, the king’s court had developed into a complex judicial system requiring its own apparatus of professionals and administrators (Ormrod 2003; Dimmock 2014). As indicated in Section 5.5. above, in the course of the

twelfth and thirteenth centuries, trade gradually became more complex (Dimmock 2014). For many European countries, this was the time where a distinct merchant elite arose and where the nature of trade had changed; successful merchants managed their businesses from home and had factors abroad who took care of their foreign trade. This change subsequently necessitated an elaborate system of record keeping and the writing of letters, which in turn gave rise to an expansion of pragmatic literacy (Hyde 1979; Briggs 2000: 402-403). In the case of England, this development did not take place until the fourteenth century (Clanchy 1993: 237; see also Dimmock 2014 for a more extensive account). To put things into perspective, Lawson and Silver (1973: 38) guesstimate that by 1300, roughly three per cent, but more likely less than that, of the three million people that populated England at the time, was literate. In addition to that, the levels of literacy were unevenly distributed, with the highest concentrations in London and other larger urban centres, as well as in some monasteries, whereas most of the rural dwellers were illiterate (Lawson and Silver 1973: 38). It is only possible to give a rough estimate as to the number of literates for this period since the keeping of records was not very common then. For this reason, the method that is commonly used to estimate literacy numbers, the counting of signatures and marks, is not feasible (Cressy 1980). The assumption that literacy increased is based on indirect evidence, such as the amount of texts available, written comments by contemporaries and access to education¹⁵.

By the end of the fourteenth century, economic and social changes gained momentum. In England too, an urban merchant elite had emerged (Dobson 2000: 280). Overseas commerce required the sending of letters, as well as more complex record keeping and administration. This urban elite was generally also in charge of a town's government and responsible for the town's bureaucratic administration (Dobson 2000: 280). These changes coincided with an increase of the writings in the English vernacular, and the

¹⁵ Lawson and Silver's estimation is based on the premise that by 1300 it was still primarily the clergy that was literate and thus derive the extent of literacy from what is known about the amount of clergy members.

diversification of text types, e.g. ordinances, accounts etc. The amount of texts that survived from this period is greater in number, which suggests that text production was higher overall. The availability of material that was cheaper than vellum or parchment also must have boosted production (Coleman 1981: 37).

What is more, official documents were increasingly trilingual (Coleman 1981: 46-48). This suggests that clerks and scribes had to be skilled in three languages rather than in Latin alone. It also tells us that the documents were not only to be read and issued by the few who were schooled in Latin, but also by lay people and merchants who were more pragmatically schooled and were mostly literate in the vernacular (Bevan 2013: 15). The expansion of the middle ranges of society and the shift in power that came with it were thus on a par with the expansion of (vernacular) lay literacy.

5.6.1. The rise of civic literacy

Partly, the expansion of literacy and the rise in the number of literates was necessary to record the increasingly more complex business transactions, as well as to administer the more and more elaborate law system, but also partly because a growing number of the middle ranges of society became part of the governing elite. Exemplary of this new balance in power were the urban guild crafts. Many of the urban guilds became largely responsible for the municipal government of their cities. The guild's freemen became mayors, sheriffs, or aldermen of their cities, and in this role they could produce charters and levy fees to control trade and civic life (Coleman 1981: 52). The role of town clerks and recorders in this should also not be neglected, as they were often influential members of the urban community. As they had access to and knowledge of the languages of the law of the government, they were invaluable interpreters for the ruling elite that consisted of merchants who were mostly not schooled in Latin or French (Bevan 2013: 15). Town clerks and recorders were responsible for the keeping of the civic records and were at the pinnacle of what Rees Jones (2014: 220) calls "civic literacy". Civic literacy relates to the literacy culture that arose from self-governing urban centres for the production of records and archives. Particularly from the fifteenth century onwards,

civic record keeping had become an important means to establish an urban identity, as well as a sense of community and coherency (Rees Jones 2014: 220). In a way, town clerks and recorders also determined what was recorded and archived, which placed them in a powerful position (Bevan 2013: 15). That the shaping of an urban identity was important is suggested by the fact that some town clerks or recorders wrote a civic history in the form of a chronicle or a diary, which may be seen as a means to establish and promote the status of their town. For example, John Carpenter, who was town clerk of London from 1417-1438, and Roger Burton, town clerk of York from 1415–1436, wrote civic histories and customs for their respective towns (Palliser 2014: 201; Rees Jones 2014: 221). From a Bristol perspective, Roger Ricart is noteworthy. Ricart was elected town clerk in 1479 and wrote *The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar*; this volume describes Bristol's civic ceremonies and customs, but also contains a chronicle of Bristol (Toulmin Smith 1872). Civic records were written for posterity, so as to assure that successors had access to and knowledge of the liberties of the town and could protect these (Bevan 2013: 165). With the governing ranks opening for non-nobility and non-clergy members, it is not surprising that English as a written language increasingly became part of civic literacy too. The development and rise in civic literacy may also be an important factor with respect to standardisation and supralocalisation processes, as it may be clear now that civic records were produced with the intention to make them accessible to a wider audience. It seems plausible that town clerks and recorders may sometimes have deliberately opted for linguistic variants that were more widely understood.

To sum up, given the increase in text production and the expansion of pragmatic literacy, it can be assumed that overall literacy, thus the ability to read and write, had increased. There was a change in the distribution, in that it was no longer the prerogative of the clergy only, but also of lay people involved in trades and crafts. Furthermore, possibly as a result of the spread of literacy to the lay community, the vernacular became more and more prevalent in the written medium. The spread of lay literacy was on a par with changes in the social order of society and the increasing complexity of (urban) government and

trade, which necessitated a more elaborate and complex administration system.

5.7. Lay education from 1400 to the Reformation

The question as to how and by whom lay people were schooled remains difficult to answer. It is known that especially the Benedictine houses provided some education in the form of song schools and grammar or almonry schools. The first mainly concerned the teaching of chant and possibly some reading; the latter was intended to teach Latin grammar. Writing was not necessarily part of the curriculum though (Lawson & Silver 1973: 62). The teachers were sometimes monks, but sometimes a secular schoolmaster was hired to teach reading and Latin (Lawson & Silver 1973: 62). The schools were mostly intended for the supply of new clergy. Boys who attended these schools were from the local gentry, sons of wealthy yeomen and tradesmen (Lawson & Silver 1973: 62). During the 1400s and up until the reformation, grammar schools provided education. Although some of the schools provided education free of charge, this did not mean that poorer people benefited from this. First of all, literacy was not something that was sought after and needed in the lower rank occupations and secondly, most families could not afford to keep their children away from work or to board them elsewhere. Moreover, in the early fifteenth century, access to school was often restricted by manorial lords because their peasants had to ask them permission to attend school. This permission often included the payment of a fee (Orme 1989: 13). Free attendance only truly applied to the choristers, clerks and deacons. Schooling thus largely remained restricted to the sons of free-holders, officials and the gentry (Lawson & Silver 1973: 48).

The children who went to grammar schools but who did not intend to become priests may have attended school to prepare themselves for university or to be apprenticed within a craft that required the knowledge of Latin, such as the craft of scribes, apothecaries and copyists (Lawson & Silver 1973: 48). In terms of reading and writing instruction, most schooling probably took place at people's homes by private tutors who were often chaplains or secular

priests by profession. Elementary schooling was thus still largely informal and non-institutional (Lawson & Silver 1973: 47).

Typical of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was the foundation of an increasing number of chantries. Sometimes the founders of the chantries paid the chantry chaplains to supplement their religious services with teaching as well (Lawson & Silver 1973: 44). The chantry teachers provided reading lessons, probably in English, for popular religious instruction, singing, Latin grammar, and occasionally writing (Lawson & Silver 1973: 69, 72; Moran 1985: 82). The teaching was generally carried out by priests and chaplains who did not have a university degree (Moran 1985: 82). However, this type of education too was ephemeral and subject to availability of means and finance. It is therefore hard to establish how many chantry schools existed. Some early chantry schools founded in the South West were in Chipping Campden (c. 1441), Newland (c. 1445) and Cirencester (1457) (Orme 1976: 16).

Guilds and fraternities also started to play a greater role in lay education. Because of the increasing complexity of trade transactions, more and more crafts required some degree of literacy for the keeping of accounts and letter writing (Orme 2006: 243). The guilds sometimes supported a school or paid for the appointment of a schoolmaster. In the South West, one of the earliest known schools supported by a guild was at Stratford-on-Avon. In 1423, the St. John Baptist and Holy Cross guild paid for a teacher who taught in a house of the guild and in 1420 the guild invested in a school building and a teacher to provide free education for local boys (Orme 1976: 243; Rosser 2015: 210). Over the course of the fifteenth century, several of these schools were established, especially in smaller countryside towns (Rosser 2015: 210). In most cases, it was the guild priest who was responsible for the teaching (Orme 2006: 243). The rise of endowment grammar schools and colleges in the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries made education more accessible to the lay community and its less affluent members (Lawson & Silver 1973; Orme 1989; O' Day 2007). The college school founded in Winchester (1382) was one of the first schools that provided more formal and institutional elementary education. The college was loosely associated with a college of priests,

but was more autonomous than most other schools in that it had its own complex of buildings to provide all facilities that were required to teach a group of more than 70 boys. Schooling at this college was intended for poor boys and was free of charge (Lawson & Silver 1973: 45-46). A similar college was later founded in Eton (1440) (Orme 1989: 14).

During the fifteenth century, the universities still mostly hosted a large number of aristocratic boys who were to become priests, but an increasing number of boys from aristocratic families were sent there for their general development and education, without the intention to pursue an ecclesiastical career (Orme 1989: 14). Later, around the 1450s, the Inns of Court at London became important educational institutions for the aristocracy as well, as knowledge of common law was more useful to them than the canon and civil law that was taught at the universities. The Inns of Court were the domain of the common lawyers, a body of learned laymen, who were living as “corporate societies” in Inns situated in London and Westminster. The training of the common lawyers was based on a master-apprenticeship model (Lawson & Silver 1973: 75; Baker 1990). Knowledge of the common law that was practiced at the Inns equipped boys of the landed gentry with practical skills that helped them with managing and protecting their estates. The boys rarely enjoyed schooling at the Inns of Court with the intention to graduate, but rather to acquire the practical knowledge they needed and then leave. The group of gentry boys was increasingly supplemented by the sons of affluent urban merchants, who tended to accustom themselves to the lifestyles of the gentry (Lawson & Silver 1973: 75-76; Orme 1989; Baker 1990).

The second half of the fifteenth century saw a brief depression in the support for education due to the Wars of Roses and general political unrest (Orme 1989: 15). However, the sixteenth century started with a period of political stability and general economic growth and an increasing interest for the establishment of endowment schools (Orme 1989: 15). Wealth increased amongst a growing group of affluent merchants and tradesmen, allowing them to invest in schools in their hometowns.

5.7.1. *The scribes*

Another way to master the skill of writing was to become apprenticed to a scribe. As pointed out earlier, with the expansion of text production in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, writing had become a profession of its own and trades such as copiers, stationers, administrative clerks or secretaries had developed. From the fourteenth century, onwards, the scribe's craft emerged to fulfil the need for an ever-expanding variety of document types that needed to be produced rapidly and frequently (Bevan 2013: 40). This included the writing of letters for clients, but scribes also had to have extensive knowledge of legal administration in order to draw up and compose bonds, deeds and wills (Lawson & Silver, 1973: 70; see Bevan 2013 for an extensive account on the role and lives of scribes). In urban centres, it was often scribes who held the important position of the town clerk. Considering that the texts that are analysed for this thesis are also texts most likely written by or under the supervision of town clerks, it is important to have some idea about the training they may have enjoyed. As pointed out earlier, scribes were more than just scribes or copyists; they had to have extensive knowledge of law and legal formulae, and in the function of a town clerk the provision of legal advice to the municipal government was part and parcel of the job. Scribes were also skilled in composing legal documents in Latin, French and English (Bevan 2013: 30). Although some scribes had enjoyed an education at the Inns of Court in London, this was by no means the case for all of them. Steer (1973), who is one of the few who studied the history of the London Scribes Company, attributed London the main role in the supply of trained scribes (Bevan 2013: 39). The assumption was that all scribes were apprenticed to London scribes, after which some of these London-trained scribes moved to other provincial towns (Steer 1973: 36, 39, 68; Bevan 2013: 39). However, there is little evidence supporting this, and Bevan (2013) makes a strong case against this London-centric view by providing ample evidence that scribes were trained locally rather than in London. Firstly, basic schooling in Latin was available in larger provincial towns in the form of grammar schools or by masters teaching for a fee. This was certainly

the case in Bristol (see Orme 1976 for a history of education in the South West). More advanced education was provided by business schools in Oxford (Bevan 2013: 201). These schools, the masters of which were often scribes themselves, specifically trained boys in business methods such as account keeping, letter writing and legal administration (Bevan 2013: 201). Here, pupils learned how to read and write French, but also how to “hold lay courts, to plead in court and also to write letters and conveyances according to the appropriate rules and conventions of these types of documents” (Bevan 2013: 202). The York scribe’s guild ordinance contains stipulations concerning an apprenticeship which suggests that some scribes were trained locally in the form of an apprenticeship. Other evidence is found in pleas relating to apprenticeships of scribes in towns outside of London (Bevan 2013: 204). Knowledge about the craft thus seemed to have been passed on locally from predecessor to successor.

All in all, the period from 1400 until the Reformation saw a growing interest in school education. Education opportunities expanded and different types of education for laymen emerged. Similarly, education opportunities for the less affluent were in existence, albeit on a smaller scale. Writing increasingly became a part of education; this development is in line with the increasing importance of the production of texts. However, this did not necessarily mean that all layers of society could afford to send their children to school, nor can it be assumed that there was a great incentive to obtain a school education or reading and writing skills (O’Day 1982: 31). In urban centres, then again, there was a higher demand for skilled readers and writers, and a school education could open up opportunities for an urban occupation (O’Day 1982: 33). It can still be safely assumed that the majority of those who could read and write lived near an urban centre, or had the means to obtain boarding at a town and therefore enjoy a school education. However, it is clear that in the course of the fifteenth century the group of those who could afford an education and who required one had definitely extended from the nobility and clergy to an ever-expanding elite group of well-to-do merchants, tradesmen, professionals and craftsmen.

5.8. The Reformation and after

The period of 1530-1560 was marked by the widespread conversion to the Protestant religion and the dissolution of the ecclesiastical houses (Lawson & Silver 1973: 91). This development affected education in direct and indirect ways; it was directly affected in that the dissolution of religious houses, chantries and religious guilds also meant the disappearance of some of the schools attached to these organisations. However, many schools were replaced in some other form, new initiatives arose, and other schools continued as secular institutions. In the case of Bristol, this meant that in 1542 a new school was established as the town had become a cathedral city. Subsequently, the city had a cathedral and a cathedral school that offered free education (Orme 1976: 42). The period after the Reformation was also the heyday of the humanist movement, which put emphasis on the personal development and enlightenment of man on earth, rather than on the afterlife. Whether and to what extent the humanist movement may have affected literacy rates is hard to tell, but at the time there was definitely a great range of books and texts available for education, the proliferation of which was facilitated by the printing press (Yamey 1975: xx; Charlton & Spufford 2003). Although the printing press had already made its appearance in the fifteenth century, it was only in the sixteenth century that it finally started to make its mark on education; the quick, cheap and large-scale reproduction of standard works was now possible (Orme 1989: 18). Orme (1989) makes the interesting observation that the printing press came to be an important tool of control for the church during the Reformation. As the laity became more literate and started to challenge the position of the church, the church in turn tried to assert and maintain its position by controlling what was taught in schools. In other words, the Church, which was under state control by this time, started with "imposing common practices" (Orme 1989:18-19).

In this period during and after the reformation, the government implemented the use of several standard works. In 1539-42, Henry VIII prescribed the same uniform Latin grammar book at every cathedral school, and prohibited the use of other books. It concerned the works by Lily and Colet, *An introduction of the eyght*

partes of speche (1542), and *Institutio compendiaris totius grammaticae* (1540), which were intended for advanced learners (Orme 1999: 469). Edward VI (1547) and Elizabeth I (1559) prescribed *A Shorte Introduction to Grammar*, by William Lily (1468–?1523) (Charlton & Spufford 2003: 44). The increased state control also led to the foundation of more cathedral schools and the transfer of chantry endowments to charity schools (Orme 1989: 18-19).

Traditionally, the Reformation was attributed the main role in the movement towards more widespread literacy, since print was considered the most important means to spread the Protestant doctrines (Charlton & Spufford 2003: 19). However, the expansion of commerce in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the subsequent demand for literacy skills was probably the most important incentive to acquire reading and writing skills (Charlton & Spufford 2003: 19). By the 1570s, there were printed copy books and letter writing manuals to cater for the increasing demand for writing and accounting skills (Lawson & Silver 1973; Edwards 2009). Most of these books originated from London-based writing teachers who often ran private schools for children of the middling sorts, e.g. the sons of shop-keepers, artisans, civil servants, manufacturers and merchants (Heal 1962 [1931]: 123; Edwards 2009: 242-243). The Reformation allowed for a further growth of the middling ranks of society. During the Reformation, the state had confiscated lands that were previously in the hands of the ecclesiastical institutions. By making clever investments in these confiscated lands, merchants, yeomen and successful tradesmen could more easily climb the social ladder by acquiring wealth and social status obtained from their investments in these lands (Lawson & Silver 1973: 93). This is also the case for some of the letter writers of the letter collection that will be used for the linguistic analyses in the current study. The Smythes of Ashton Court were a merchant family that rose to wealth through the purchase of dissolution lands (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.4. for details).

The second half of the sixteenth was a period of philanthropy amongst the middling sorts, the gentry, clergy, professionals, and successful merchants and tradesmen. Most of these charities were motivated by a general desire to reform society by means of

education. The motives for these reforms varied. Some philanthropists were inspired by Renaissance scholars who sought to reform society and who believed that classical schooling was the way to achieve that (O'Day 1982: 25). Also, after the reformation, some members of the clergy were concerned with re-establishing the religious doctrines, as were the philanthropists advocating the puritan school of thought (Lawson & Silver 1973: 103; O'Day 1982: 25-26). Education and literacy thus became important vehicles to propagate new ideas and religious doctrines. Especially merchants appeared to have been enthusiastic school founders. The foundation and the attachment of a merchant's name to a school furnished him with prestige, but it undoubtedly served a practical purpose too: "[...]to supply literate apprentices for the growing range of skilled occupations on which commercial enterprise depended: bookkeeping, surveying, cartography, navigation, ship-building and so on" (Lawson & Silver 1973: 103). In Bristol, the famous merchant Robert Thorne had initiated the establishment of a grammar school as early as 1532. The school was established by his executors after his death in 1532 and was one of the first recorded schools in Bristol to provide free education (Orme 1976: 42). Most of the schools that were established during the period 1560-1640 were grammar schools, which were largely, though not exclusively, available for the few people who did not belong to the mass of paupers. While grammar and cathedral schools provided education for just about 10 or 12 students before the Reformation, after the Reformation, some grammar schools provided education for as many as 100-150 pupils. Most of the boys that were sent there were sons of yeomen, well-to-do husbandmen and artisans, clergymen and professionals such as scribes, lawyers and apothecaries (Lawson & Silver 1973: 116). The teaching staff at the grammar schools often consisted of a schoolmaster who was often, but not always, university-educated, and sometimes there was an usher who was responsible for elementary teaching (Lawson & Silver 1973: 117).

In Bristol, as in other urban centres, there were teachers who provided tuition for a fee. Schoolmasters were highly mobile in that they had to travel to places where education was in demand, which was mostly in larger towns like Bristol. Some teachers were local to the

town, but more were from elsewhere or had gone away to enjoy their education at university (Orme 1976: 32). Likewise, pupils were attracted to Bristol to receive tuition. Some came from Bristol, but others came from the wider West country area and were boarded in Bristol.

5.8.1. The puritan movement and literacy education for the poor

Petty schools provided elementary schooling for the poorer layers of society. Advocacy of the spread of literacy amongst the poor was the hallmark of the Puritans, who strongly believed in the ethics of self-improvement and development. The individual and his or her private devotion were important aspects of the Puritan doctrine. Being able to read the Bible was the route to self-salvation and illiteracy was equal to sin to some puritans. Being able to write allowed people to practice their faith more interactively, as it allowed people to make notes in their Bibles (Cressy 1980: 3-6). Yet, to what extent these new ideas affected the popular mass needs to be considered critically. First of all, the petty schools were rarely completely free and petty fees had to be paid for the use of education materials (Cressy 1980: 28). Secondly, there was in many cases little or no incentive to acquire literacy. Especially in the rural areas, people could easily live their lives without having to read and write a single word, as business was still conducted on the basis of oral transactions. Thirdly, if children were sent to school at all, this was for a very brief period and dependent on the family's means. Generally, family members were part of the workforce from a young age onwards, which means that a child could only attend school if it could be spared from work (Cressy 1980: 28-29).

It has to be kept in mind that writing was also not the main priority in the petty schools and subject to the capability of the teacher (Lawson & Silver 1973: 113). Also, education in smaller rural communities was much more limited and haphazard. More privileged children were often boarded elsewhere or had private tutors to prepare them for further education. Those tutors could be university graduates in search for a job who would prepare a boy for grammar school or university.

Women were still largely excluded from educational institutions. However, in the light of humanist ideas, attitudes towards the acquisition of literacy of women was slowly changing (Lawson & Silver 1973: 121). By the 1600s, boarding schools near London that were intended for girls of the aristocracy had gradually emerged. The curriculum consisted of reading, writing, music, dancing and housework skills, but also included the learning of languages such as French and Latin (Lawson & Silver 1973: 122).

5.8.2. The universities and the Inns of courts

The universities of Oxford and Cambridge saw a rise in student numbers during the 1560s-1640 too. In 1610, they hosted 4000 students, i.e. an impressive amount if one considers that the total population of England is estimated to have been around four million at the time. (Lawson & Silver 1973: 126). As stated earlier, many of the elite urban merchants and landed gentry went to university for one year and then went on to the Inns of Court at London. Typical of the gentry's lifestyle was that the men became justices of the peace, members of parliament, or obtained some other administrative function. As stated earlier, knowledge of the common law was a good preparation and the Inns provided a good basis for the establishment of connections with important people. Foreign travel also increasingly became part of a gentleman's education, as knowledge of other languages and cultures became important for governmental functions (Lawson & Silver 1973: 129). It is interesting to note that some of the boys of the Smythe family of my corpus also went to Oxford and returned to the Bristol area to pursue careers as Justice of the Peace and to manage their estates.

5.8.3. Literacy education and standardisation

As there was an increasing number of books relating to elementary teaching from the late sixteenth century onwards, it is possible to catch a glimpse of what may have been taught in schools. This in turn may also provide an insight into the extent to which education may have influenced standardisation, or the emanation of a standardised

written variety. What becomes clear from works like that of Kempe (1588) and Coote (1596) is that reading and writing were taught as separate modules and thus as separate skills (Salmon 2000: 17). The books also reveal that pupils first learned to read by memorising and saying the alphabet out loud and then to read syllables. This method seemed to have been characteristic of the period and was probably used in petty and endowment schools, but also by private tutors (Cressy 1980: 20). In addition to that, pupils had to spell a word out loud, but they did not have to write it down.

It is hard to tell whether there were any spelling standards for English and if and how spelling variation was dealt with. Coote was only concerned with certain spelling variants that reflected the speech of 'country people' and had a list of proscribed spellings such as *hell* and *mell* for *hill* and *mill* (Salmon 2000: 17). In the latter half of the sixteenth century, there was a growing concern about spelling amongst some grammarians (Salmon 2000: 32). For example, in 1573-4, Baret provided a list of English words and their advised spellings, followed by Richard Mulcaster, who published a spelling book in 1582 and particularly wrote it for school teachers (Salmon 2000: 32). The question remains how influential these books were and who used them for teaching. It is known that Mulcaster's list of homophones and their different spellings was found in many other works until well into the seventeenth century (Salmon 2000: 32-36). Another book that might have been influential is Nowell's catechism which had become mandatory reading after 1571, and which was probably used to practice reading, spelling and religion at the same time (Cressy 1980: 21). Once the reading skills were sufficiently mastered, a pupil went on to learn how to write. It seems that writing was considered a mechanical skill that did not need knowledge of grammar or language. The exercises of writing mostly consisted of the copying of graphs, syllables and words. The emphasis seems to have been mainly on the copying of graphs and segments, rather than on the writing of whole words as is common in present-day schools. Spelling thus did not seem to have been of major concern in the case of writing. Yet, it is possible that the spelling of words was already memorised during the reading exercises (Cressy 1980: 21-23).

5.9. The first steps towards mass literacy: a survey of literacy rates

The expansion and increase in the provision of school education and the enormous expansion of printed works in the seventeenth century suggest that there also must have been an expansion in the rate of literates, but it is difficult to establish the real scale and impact it had on the population as a whole. Cressy (1980) was able to make a rough estimation of the extent of literacy in Tudor and Stuart England by looking into the rate of signatures and marks. Although Cressy admits that this approach is beset with methodological problems and caveats, the rates of the signatures and marks can at least give some indication as to how many people were literate and if there was a proportional increase over time. Briefly, the assumption is that when a person is literate he or she will use a signature to sign a document, whereas illiterate persons use a mark to sign a document. By counting signatures and marks on, for instance, probated wills, deeds and depositions, it is possible to give estimates of literacy rates. The signature counts can also inform us about the social and possibly also geographical stratification of literacy. Based on the signature counts, it appears that literacy remained socially stratified. The gentry, clergy, and professionals showed the highest rates and were followed by yeomen and merchants, where the majority used a signature rather than a mark. Next were the commercial trades and craftsmen. For these social groups, literacy skills had become an essential part of their jobs (Cressy 1980: 124-129). Men of crafts that required manual labour and men of the less commercial trades used considerably fewer signatures. Unfortunately, there are no specific data for Bristol because there were no useful extant documents for signature counts. However, when looking at other urban centres, the proportion of literacy was relatively high in urban settings amongst all ranks of society. Cressy (1980: 176-177) estimates that in the timespan from 1500-1700, the illiteracy rate went down from 90 per cent by the reign of Henry VIII to 55 per cent by the reign of George I, which thus means an increase of literacy levels by 40 per cent.

5.10. Concluding remarks

Over the centuries, literacy rates increased, notably with a rather gradual change up until the sixteenth century. Over the course of the period investigated, there was a transition from literacy that was exclusively the reserve of the clergy and that served as a tool to practice religion, to literacy that was widely adopted by the lay community and served a more pragmatic purpose. The laicisation of literacy also involved a transition from Latin to the vernacular, first Anglo-Norman and later English. All of these transformations were inextricably bound up with social and economic changes in society that were taking place at the time. New movements and thoughts, but also economic opportunities and necessities were all factors affecting and motivating the development of different types of literacy, as well as an increase in literacy rates.

How does this relate to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter? It has become clear now that literacy was the prerogative of the more privileged people in society throughout the period, but the composition of the ranks changed and expanded from elite clergy and nobility, to the wealthy commercial class. It can be postulated that administrative texts dating back to the early fifteenth century could most likely only have been written by a select group of literate people who may have had some connection with an ecclesiastical institution, and who were clerks in the ecclesiastical sense as well as secretarial sense. However, in urban settings, a scribe could also have been trained by a scrivener and have been paid to provide his services by putting regulations, memoranda, accounts etc. on paper, or, as was the case with Bristol in this period, the town council was oligarchic in nature and the administration was carried out by someone from the merchant elite who received professional training at the Inns of Court in London. Around this time, a civic scribe was likely to have knowledge of Latin, French and English, as well as the law.

From the sixteenth century onwards, there is an abundance of English texts, as well as a variation in text types. Extensive knowledge of Latin was no longer a requirement. It is from this time onwards that more and more personal and private correspondence can be found. In

the case of Bristol, this concerns the correspondence of merchants and professionals. The correspondence of one Bristol merchant family, the Smythe family, shows that they met all the criteria of the socially mobile group. Starting out modestly in the fifteenth century, the family became prominent members of the Bristolian elite within three generations. This included the adoption of the gentry's lifestyle and education; the later generations went to Oxford and spent time at the Inns of Court (Betley 1982: ix-xxii, see also Chapter 6).

There seems to be little evidence for highly institutionalised education throughout the period. Little is known about the exact content being taught, nor about the effectiveness of the few policies that were sometimes introduced. Although access to education was subject to location and availability of educational and financial means, the people taking part in it were not restricted to location. In the earlier period, monasteries and friaries exchanged pupils and knowledge. Schoolmasters travelled to places where education was in demand and students boarded and travelled to the places where there was supply. Urban centres such as Bristol typically served a wider regional area in terms of literacy and education, attracting pupils as well as teachers from different parts of the country. For further education, many of the more privileged Bristol boys moved elsewhere to become an apprentice, or they went to one of the university towns and the Inns of the Court in London. At these places, they met other young men from other urban centres as well as other parts of the country. In sociolinguistic terms, it is thus very interesting to see that the men who most likely wrote most of the data that will be studied here, may have followed similar trajectories to most men that came from other urban centres. Most importantly, this means that they came into contact with one another and received similar training. At some point, these Bristol boys may even have returned to Bristol to become teachers, or scribes themselves. Thus, even though education was not highly institutionalised, certain routes were followed that are in turn illustrative of the general dynamics and movements between urban centres.

Chapter 6. Corpus and method

6.1. Introduction: Bristol as a part of the Emerging Standards project

In Chapter 3, I have hypothesised that the emergence of a relatively uniform non-localisable written variety did not simply develop in one place or one particular point in time. This would suggest that the investigation into linguistic standardisation processes should shift to more and different localities than London. Although this has generally been recognised by for instance Benskin (1992), Wright (1996, 2000, 2013), Nevalainen (2000), Conde-Silvestre & Hernández-Campoy (2002), and Fernández-Cuesta (2014), there are very few studies that have hitherto systematically investigated the role of other major urban centres than London. Furthermore, it was also argued in Chapter 3 that standardisation involves a complex set of continuous processes. Granted that the emergence of a supralocal written variety was and is an ongoing process, the diffusion of different supralocal forms should be tracked over a longer time span in order to fully understand the development of a supralocal variety. As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, the present study is part of an overarching project that seeks to take a systematic approach to the development of supralocal forms of written English. The overarching project *Emerging Standards: Urbanisation and the Development of Standard English, c. 1400-1700* aims to contribute to existing research on the topic by studying the written language as produced in four major urban centres. These were chosen for their importance as regional centres and their potential high exposure to supralocal forms as well as their potential to diffuse them (see Chapter 3). What is more, due to their importance as regional centres, it can be expected that literacy levels were high and that they provided a sufficient amount and variety of texts that can be studied. Each selected regional centre is placed in a different Middle English dialect area (in terms of broad sub-division): North (York), South West (Bristol), West Midlands (Coventry), East Anglia (Norwich). This allows the project to draw on existing historical dialectology research and to identify local as opposed to supralocal forms. By tracing the development of supralocal forms in the four respective urban centres, as well as the disappearance and preservation of

regional forms, a more complete picture can be drawn of the development of a supralocal variety as a whole and the role of the four major urban centres in particular. As explained in Chapter 2, the project is couched within the framework of historical sociolinguistics and aims to apply sociolinguistic methods.

Like the other sub-projects, which investigate York, Coventry and Norwich, the current study of Bristol aims to investigate language variation and change using both qualitative and quantitative methods. This means that innovative linguistic forms will be traced in terms of their frequency and related to both internal linguistic, as well as external social factors such as social standing, text type and types of literacy, geographical factors, demographic factors and time. The ultimate aim is to compare the final results of this project with what has so far been found in similar studies that focus on London, as well as the results of the sub-projects that look at the other urban centres, in order to provide new insights into the transmission and diffusion of supralocal forms and the eventual development of a standardised written variety.

In order to obtain a better understanding of linguistic standardisation processes, I will both scrutinise the occurrence of new supralocal forms in the Bristol data, as well as the occurrence and disappearance of local forms. Furthermore, as has been established by for instance Nevalainen (2000) and Fernández Cuesta (2014), spelling features may be more prone to normative pressures and possibly also more subject to the deliberate replacement by supralocal forms, whereas morphological and (morpho)syntactical features tend to be more resilient to supralocalisation pressures. The three chapters that follow after this one, are thus devoted to the study of variation and change on three different levels: (a) morpho-syntactic variation in the relative pronoun system, (b) morphological variation in third person indicative present tense markers and (c) spelling variation: the replacement of <þ> and other forms by <th>. I will give a more detailed description of the specific methodological approaches for each linguistic feature in the relevant chapters. In the present chapter, I will give an overview of the more general methodological issues, i.e. what data are used and how they are prepared for empirical research. In the

following sections, I will explain what approach I have taken with regard to the linguistic analyses, and highlight some of the challenges and solutions that are involved with this approach. The central question is: how can the frequencies of features be traced in historical data? An important first step towards the investigation of linguistic variation and change in historical sociolinguistics is the collection and selection of data in the form of written texts. As a second step, the original manuscripts and documents that have been selected need to be rendered into some kind of digital format in order to make the swift queries for several linguistic features possible, i.e. a so-called corpus of texts has to be created. As a third step, it is also important to acquire as much extra-textual knowledge about the respective texts as possible so as to take into account external factors that may affect language use. Furthermore, in order to be able to include social factors such as sex and age, but also birthplace and social rank of the authors of the texts, the aim is to acquire as much background information of the producers of the texts as possible.

Corpus linguistics provides a very useful means or methodology to carry out empirical sociolinguistic research and will be employed as a method for the current project, hence this chapter will set out with a brief section on what corpus linguistics entails in Section 6.2. Section 6.3. provides a general overview of the corpus compilation of the *Emerging Standards project*. Section 6.4. presents the corpus of the current sub-project and provides historical background of the texts and, when possible, of the authors who wrote them. Section 6.5. is concerned with the data preparation and describes the transcription process and the *Emerging Standards project* corpus design. The intention of the *Emerging Standards* corpus is that it becomes available to a wider research community and that it caters for different types of linguistic and/or historical research. The corpus development process was thus an important part of the present sub-project, since it had to be designed with shareability and different research goals in mind. Therefore, it was deemed justified to give a relatively detailed account about the design process. In Section 6.6., I will briefly dwell on the quantitative approaches that are involved in the present study and finally in Section 6.7., I will summarise and highlight issues that are

discussed in this chapter and explain what the implications are for the study of my data.

6.2. Corpus linguistics as a means to quantitative studies

In short, a corpus is a collection of written texts that are in some way representative of the linguistic variety that a linguist wants to study¹⁶. The important basic underlying assumption is that language is best studied in usage and in a naturally occurring communicative setting (Cheng 2012: 4). The challenge is to build a corpus that is “maximally representative of the variety under examination, that is, which provides us with as accurate a picture as possible of the tendencies of that variety, including their proportions” (McEnery & Wilson 2001: 30). This means that different text types are needed, as well as texts written by different authors, to obtain a complete picture (in as far as this is at all possible), since it can be expected that different registers are employed by different authors, in different contexts and text types. In the case of historical data, this poses an extra challenge since written data tend to be less abundant the further we go back in time.

When referring to a corpus, this nowadays almost automatically implies that it concerns an electronic corpus that consists of machine-readable text, which will mostly contain either written language, or transcriptions of spoken language, but that may also consist of other modes of communication such as videos containing sign language (cf. Johnston & Schembri 2012; see also McEnery & Wilson 2001: 31). The obvious benefits of electronic machine-readable corpora are that large amounts of text can be analysed relatively quickly and accurately by using corpus tools or by carrying out automated computer searches. For instance, a concordance tool can produce a list of all the words that occur in a corpus, or a given word or set of words, and provide the frequencies

¹⁶ There are different views on whether corpus linguistics is (1) a field rather than (2) a methodology, i.e. in the first instance the corpus data are seen as the basis from which linguistic theory is derived, whereas in the second case the corpus data form the empirical bases to inform and validate existing theories or hypotheses (Gries 2009; McEnery & Hardie 2012: 6). The view taken here is that it is a methodology.

in which they occur, as well as the context in which they can be found. Furthermore, a corpus can be annotated, i.e. the data are enriched with metadata such as indications of parts of speech, which makes it possible to search for specific linguistic features such as nouns, or particular clauses or clause structures with corpus linguistic software (Cheng 2012: 5).

Corpora are usually classified by the amount of words they have and they exist in many shapes and sizes. Some corpora require larger amounts of words than others. For instance, they can be compiled with the aim to represent a language as a whole and its usage in general; hence this type of corpus is referred to as 'reference' or 'general' corpus. Other corpora may be 'specialised' and are compiled with the aim to represent a specific language register such as academic writing, or Business English (Cheng 2012: 5). Another important distinction that should be made is that of a 'monitor corpus' and a 'static corpus' (McEnery, Xiao & Tono: 2006: 12). A 'static' corpus is also referred to as a sample corpus and will often be specialised in that it seeks to be representative of a specific type of language use or speech community, within a specific time span (McEnery & Hardie 2012: 13). The sub-corpora that are compiled for the *Emerging Standards* project are a good example of this, as they are intended to capture written language in specific text types and in four specific urban centres over a specific period of time, notably c. 1400-1700. A monitor corpus tends to be large in size and will be expanded over time, i.e. new and various materials will be added continually. A well-known corpus of this type is BoE (*Bank of English*), which has become part of the Collins corpus, and which is used, amongst other things, as the basis for the development of Collins Cobuild dictionaries. The corpus exists of about 4.5 billion words and provides insight into how English is used day to day (Collins 2007). Due to the ever-expanding size of monitor corpora, the proportionate size of the different materials within the corpora are often considered to be of less concern than in a static corpus, as it is believed that sheer size will correct unevenness in the distribution of texts and text types and or communicative settings that are represented in the corpus (McEnery & Hardie 2012: 12-13). With static or sample corpora, however, the

number of words is generally restricted. In order to be representative, the corpus ideally needs to be a balanced sample of the variety that it aims to be representative of. However, the question is how representativeness is defined and achieved when there is only a limited amount of data available, as is often the case with historical data. I will address this problem in Section 6.2.1. below.

6.2.1. *The issue of representativeness*

The aim of the *Emerging Standards* project is to compile comparable sub-corpora of the above-discussed urban centres, York, Bristol, Coventry and Norwich, as far as this is possible. This allows for a comparison of the distribution pattern of a given linguistic feature of each sub-corpus and makes it possible to identify potential similarities or differences in each sub-corpus. Furthermore, it will take a diachronic perspective because it is intended to observe language change over a longer time-span. This is not as straightforward as it may sound, as in corpus linguistics the aim is to create corpora that are representative and balanced. Within the field of corpus linguistics, there are varying conceptions about what representativeness means. According to Biber (1993: 243), “[r]epresentativeness refers to the extent to which a sample includes the full range of variability in a population”. As pointed out earlier, in order to achieve this, different text types should be included so that the corpus can be seen as a representative sample of the population under investigation. As Gries (2009: 1231) points out, “ideally not only should all parts of which a variety consists be sampled into the corpus but also [...] the proportion with which a particular part is represented in a corpus should reflect the proportion the part makes up in this variety and/or the importance of the part in this variety”. By way of illustration, if we knew that x% of the written language consisted of court records in the fourteenth century, the proportion of court records should also be x% of the corpus as a whole, i.e. the corpus should be balanced in order to be representative (Gries 2009: 1231-1232). The question is how this applies to a very specialised corpus like that of the *Emerging Standards* project, but also how feasible this is in practice, i.e. generally speaking. As McEnery et al. (2006: 16) point out, “while balance is often a *sine*

qua non of corpus design, any claim of corpus balance is largely an act of faith rather than a statement of fact as, at present there is no reliable scientific measure of corpus balance. Rather the notion relies heavily on intuition and best estimates". When dealing with historical diachronic corpora, it may even be harder to come up with "best estimates" as to what was representative of the population at the time, since we cannot possibly know how many texts existed and hence it is also impossible to know to what extent surviving texts are representative. Also, there is the added complication that genres and text types newly developed, changed and disappeared over time, which makes the achievement of balance and representativeness in historical diachronic corpora a difficult task. The problem is that we are inevitably dependent on the knowledge of who was literate and could produce texts (mostly men) and what data survived over time (Kytö & Pahta 2012: 125). While this indicates some challenges, it does not mean that it is impossible to work with historical data; instead, one should always be wary of the extent to which a corpus of historical data can be possibly representative of something. In our case, the Bristol civic records are representative of (most likely) male scribes who worked in Bristol. Therefore, we should be careful when using these data to make generalisations about English as a whole, or for the written language in Bristol in this case. Nevertheless, the field of historical corpus linguistics is still developing and expanding, and with the compilation of more and more new corpora, the pool of different text types and authors will become larger and thus present an increasingly representative picture of past stages of English. Reference corpora that have been compiled and used for historical linguistic research are, for instance, the *Helsinki Corpus of English texts 710-1710* and *A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers (1650-1990)* (ARCHER). Examples of specialised corpora are *the Corpus of Early English Medical Writing (1375-1800)* (CEEM), *the Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC), *Corpus of English Dialogues (1570-1800)* (CED), *the Old Bailey Corpus (1674-1913)* (OBC) and *the Corpus of Historical American English* (COHA) (for more examples and details about the corpora, see Kytö & Pahta 2012: 129-131). In particular studies that used data of the Helsinki Corpus and the CEEC

will provide a body of existing research on which the present study will build.

6.2.2. *Text type versus genre?*

An important issue relating to representativeness is the inclusion of a variety of different text types or genres in a corpus. The classification of texts into types and genres provides a significant context in which language variation can be studied, since the type, degree and extent of linguistic variation is affected by genre or text type conventions (Taavitsainen 2001: 139). Unfortunately, a generally accepted definition of the terms *text type* and *genre* does not exist to date; some scholars use the two terms interchangeably (cf. Stubbs 1996; McEnery et al. 2006), while others make a distinction (cf. Biber 1989; Taavitsainen 2001). Also, the terms are applied differently depending on the discipline in which they are used (see Taavitsainen 2001; Lee 2001; Moessner 2001 for detailed descriptions of the different definitions). In linguistics, when a distinction is being made, *genre* classification is based on external non-linguistic criteria, whereas *text type* classifications are based on internal linguistic criteria (Biber 1988: 70, 170; Swales 1990: 58). In this context, a *genre* is characterised by the social conventions and practices from which it developed and includes parameters such as “intended audience, purpose, activity type” (Lee 2001: 38), or more generally, “communicative function” (Moessner 2001: 132). *Text type*, on the other hand, is established on the grounds of linguistic properties that are shared by a group of texts but that do not necessarily belong to the same genre (Lee 2001: 38). By way of illustration, both baking recipes and computer manuals may make use of short imperative sentences and possibly share other linguistic characteristics that allow us to assign them to the same text type, but they can be assigned to two different genre labels, i.e. *recipes* and *manual*. Arguably, these distinctions may at times be rather intuitive, since it has not convincingly and unequivocally been established what set of linguistic features precisely make a text type distinct from another, and the criteria that are used in studies often vary (cf. Lee 2001: 38-40 for a more elaborate discussion). Since my study is not directly concerned with the identification of text types on

linguistic grounds, I have decided to use the terms interchangeably and to leave aside the discussion as to whether or not the two terms should be used distinctively. What is relevant with regard to the discussion, however, is the notion that linguistic variation cannot be detached from its social context and that different texts were produced in different social situational contexts which gave rise to different linguistic practices. As Taavitsainen (2001: 139) puts it, “[l]inguistic realisations of texts vary, as the conventions reflecting social practices of communication may be strict or allow a great deal of variation”. Although we may not always know precisely what the situational context was of certain texts in the past, it is necessary and possible to at least make broad classifications on the basis of external factors, e.g. we may not know all the details about the social significance of a text, but we can, in most cases, infer from its lay-out and contents that, for instance, an ordinance had an entirely different communicative function than a private letter. I will thus use very generic genre/text type labels for my data in order to be able to account for different linguistic outcomes that might have been affected by genre conventions.

6.3. *The Emerging Standards corpus*

As pointed out earlier, the aim of the *Emerging Standards* project is to compile corpora that are diachronic and comparable (as far as this is possible). This allows us to track what local forms occurred, how local forms may have given way to supralocal forms and when supralocal forms appeared in the written repertoires of scribes and authors of York, Coventry, Norwich and Bristol respectively. In this way, the project contributes to the field of historical corpus linguistics and complements the existing pool of publicly available historical corpora. The material that is selected covers the time-span 1400-1700, as this is the period in which a supralocal written variety seems to have developed (see also Chapter 3, Section 3.5. on standardisation of English). The project strives to include as many different text types as possible in order to create a corpus that is as representative as possible.

The first step of the corpus compilation was to identify what text types existed in the period of 1400-1700, what text types were typically written in urban centres and which existed in amounts that were big enough to manifest a wide enough variety of linguistic features. The second step involved the visiting of archives in the different regional centres, e.g. the Borthwick Institute in York, the York City Record Office, the Archive of the York Merchant Adventurers' Hall, the Herbert Coventry History Centre, the Norfolk Record Office and the Bristol Record Office, to take photographs of the material. The different text types that have been collected for the project so far are:

- ordinances
- accounts (of guilds, cathedrals, parishes etc.)
- various civic records
- court leet documents
- depositions
- wills
- plays (mystery plays)
- letters (private, business)
- diaries

In the selection process of the material, the main criterion was that a text was produced in one of the project's cities. In contrast to projects like LALME, the *Emerging Standards* project is not directly concerned with texts that were produced by an author or a scribe who was bred and born in one of the urban centres and who could for example potentially produce more authentic Bristolian language. The aim is to capture written language as it was used in an urban setting, as it is believed that this provides a better insight into the development and diffusion of supralocal forms, and also reveals the extent of the variation that was present within the literate urban community.

In the case of civic records, the selection process was generally straightforward, since in the texts it was often indicated that they were written in the relevant urban centre and also clearly intended for the urban community. In the case of correspondence, matters were more complicated as locality was often more fluid; an author could have written a letter in Bristol, for instance, but only have been there for

one day and the letter was directed to an addressee in another place. Can this be qualified as and be representative of language that Bristolians were exposed to? In the case of the letters, more careful considerations had to be made. For the current project, I have mostly included letters of writers of whom I could reasonably assume that they lived in the Bristol area at the time of writing and who had connections with people in the city. I based this assumption on the content of the letters or on autobiographical information when this was available. In some cases, I used letters written by Bristolians who (temporarily) lived elsewhere. I will provide more details about the data that I used for the Bristol corpus in Section 6.4. below.

The third and very important step was the transcription of the manuscript material into digital format. I will describe the mark-up and digitisation process of the corpus in more detail in Section 6.5.

6.4. The Bristol data

All of the material that I have collected so far was collected in the Bristol Record Office. The Bristol record office holds a wealth of records, with the earliest record dating back to the twelfth century, showing a long history of record keeping (Pilkinton 1997: xlv). I collected several text types and photographed a substantial amount. Table 6.1 below provides an overview of all the material that I have photographed so far. The collections marked in bold have been transcribed and digitised and were used for the data analyses of the present study. Some of the material was too fragile to handle; in these cases, there are only photographs of microfiche images. Furthermore, especially the earlier volumes of texts primarily contained Anglo-Norman French and Latin texts, of which I only photographed those parts of text that contained more than five lines of English. Some of the material that was collected also exists in editions, but none of these editions are intended for linguistic and philological research, e.g. the language of the original texts is sometimes heavily edited and modernised. Furthermore, the edited texts are mostly only available in paper or pdf format, which makes them unsuitable for electronic corpus research. For this reason, the material was transcribed anew

and digitised from the photographs that were taken at the archive and then checked against the edition.

| Time-span | collection | genre | shelf mark |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1344-1574 | Little Red Book of Bristol (1 volume) | ordinances | (0)4719 (microfiche) |
| 1380-1546 | Great red Book of Bristol (1 volume) | ordinances | (0)4718 (microfiche) |
| 1506-1598 | Common Council ordinances of Bristol | ordinances | (0)4272 |
| 1479-1899 | Ricart's Maiores Kalendar and The Lord Mayors Calendar | calendar | (0)4720 (microfiche) |
| 1496-1587 | Great White Book of records | miscellaneous | (0)4721 (microfiche) |
| 1380 - 1633 | Great Orphan Book and Book of Wills | wills | JOr/1/1 (microfiche) |
| 1546-1657 | Diocese of Bristol | wills | Microfiche/F |
| 1546-1582 | Consistory court | Depositions | EP/J/1-2 |
| 1643-1666 | Deposition book | depositions | J/X/1-4 |
| 1548-1711 | Ashton Court | correspondence | AC/ |
| 1665-1717 | Southwell papers | correspondence | 44785/1-3 |

Table 6.1. Inventory of collected material for the Bristol corpus

The current corpus consists of material from three volumes of council ordinances, covering the period 1344-1598, and of a selection of letters from the Ashton Court collection and the Southwell papers covering the period 1548-1717. Although the other materials that are listed in the table are of great value for linguistic research, I had to make a selection of the collected material that I could feasibly prepare for data analyses within the time and means that were available,

since the transcription and digitisation process is time-consuming. One of the first considerations to prioritise some materials over others was that they capture written English language of the earlier stages of the period under investigation. This is a very important stage in which linguistic standardisation is said to have manifested and in which regional dialect levelling processes may have been more prominent than in later stages (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5. with references). Another criterion was that the material provides sufficient linguistic structures that allow for the study of three different linguistic features. Text types such as accounts or wills tend to be shorter texts that contain more formulaic language and a smaller range of variation in terms of linguistic forms and structures. This is not to say that they cannot be used, but a potentially larger amount needs to be transcribed to be able to investigate all of the linguistic features of this study, which would have slowed down the transcription process significantly. Also, the aim is to investigate linguistic developments within a specific text type over a longer time-span, so text types that cover a long time-span are of more interest than text types that only cover a short time-span. The Calendar and The Great White Book were, therefore, not a first choice because they contain material that is extremely diverse in terms of text types and the time-spans they cover is also variable. Moreover, the aim was to include a more formal genre and a less formal genre, as well as a genre that reflects a different type of literacy. Finally, there was also a practical consideration and that was if the material existed in an edition or not, since even though the editions are not always suitable for linguistic research, they allow for a faster transcription-checking process, the details of which will be discussed in Section 6.5. below.

I have included the ordinances in my corpus because they provide presumably more formal English writing styles from the earlier part of the period under investigation (fifteenth century), which has also been identified as the period in which standardisation seems to have become noticeable in written texts all over England. These texts thus provide an invaluable source for the study of the earlier stages. Furthermore, they cover a long time-span and most of the council ordinances consist of a relatively wide range of linguistic forms, which

makes them attractive for the study of several linguistic features. I have included letters in the corpus because it is a different genre that is potentially less formal and closer to spoken language in nature (cf. Koch & Oesterreicher 1985; Elspaß 2015), and, in terms of representativeness, provides a very important extra dimension to the study of standardisation, since it gives insight into a different type of literacy, i.e. all other text types that I have been able to collect are civic records and mostly reflect features of civic literacy, whereas correspondence provides insight into a more pragmatic type of literacy. Letters as a text type could thus not be excluded in the present corpus. Furthermore, the social background of the letter writers is quite well documented, which makes it possible to include more social factors than for the civic records, in which case we do not know anything about the individual scribes. Unfortunately, since there appears to be no Bristolian English correspondence from the period before 1548, this means that the corpus is admittedly unbalanced in that the ordinance data and letter data are complementary rather than contrasting. There are later volumes of council ordinances in the record office, but they do not exist in editions, which means that the transcription process of this material is considerably longer. The transcription of these documents was simply not possible within the time and means available for the current project, but the inclusion of the material will be the first step in future research. The main priority for the current project was to include texts from the earlier periods of the time period under investigation, as well as texts that are associated with a different type of literacy. The earlier council ordinances and the letters were, therefore, naturally the first choice, and when treated with care, the data do allow for an insightful overview of linguistic variation over a longer time-span, notably 1400s-1700s. Furthermore, comparison to previous studies of similar data in similar time periods will also partly counter the imbalance.

6.4.1. The Little Red Book of Bristol 1344-1574 (ca.16,695 words)

The *Little Red Book* was a register and book of record of the commonalty, primarily written during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. There exists an older edition by Francis Bickley, which was

published in 1900. This edition is not suitable for corpus linguistic research for the reasons given in Section 6.4. above, which means that all of the material had to be checked against the originals and re-transcribed in a digital format. Table 1 in Appendix II lists the 16 texts that I have used for my linguistic analyses, as well as the word count for each of the texts. These texts were chosen on the basis of availability in the record office, and because they were dated, written in Bristol and in English as opposed to Latin or French. There is one English ordinance in the edition that I was not able to retrieve on microfiche in the record office, and there were three texts that were not dated and of which it was impossible to establish the date on the basis of extra-textual factors, so these are not part of my corpus. Furthermore, there were two texts that were not dated, but Bickley (1900) was able to provide a date on the basis of the content of the texts; the names of the persons who were mayors at the time are mentioned in the texts. To my knowledge, I have included all other English and dated ordinances, memoranda, oaths and petitions that exist in the original. The LALME team has also used some of the texts from the *Little Red Book* for their mapping survey, but LALME only provides an overview of the features that the texts were surveyed for, and transcriptions of the original texts are not provided. The *Middle English Grammar corpus* contains transcriptions of two short texts from the *Little Red book*, but this corpus makes use of a different mark-up system, which is why I have chosen to make new transcriptions of these two texts as well. The *Little Red Book* provides some of the earliest Bristolian records written in English, and it is hence deemed a very valuable source for the compilation of a diachronic corpus. As Bickley (1900: ix) sums up, the book contains several documents:

The inception of the book is due to William de Colford, the recorder, who, in the year 1344, caused all the ordinances, customs and liberties of the town to be recorded and entered, together with certain laws, other memoranda and divers necessary things, for a perpetual remembrance.

The material is diverse indeed, but most texts are written in Latin or French. The entries are not in chronological order and seem to be

grouped by subject rather than by date (Bickley 1900: x). However, the English texts are less miscellaneous as most of them are ordinances of the trade guilds or ordinances that concern general regulations relating to the town and the corporation. As illustrated in example¹⁷ (1) below, ordinances generally start with some introductory part that states the relevance or the need for a certain ordinance, or a statement about who agreed with the issuing of the ordinances, often followed by a set of paragraphs starting with *Item it is ordained that [subject]+ shall / first it is ordained that [subject]+ shall /Also that [subject]+ shall /that [subject]+ shall*:

- (1) Item hit is ordeyned that the Baylifs her aftyr fhall make no maner man ne woman Portman ne Portwoman within the laid town of Briftow to haue no fferther ne lenger privilege [...]
(Ordinances for the port of Bristol 1449-1450, f.18, BRO: 04718)

Apart from ordinances, some other English texts that are included in the corpus are memoranda, oaths and a petition. In terms of structure, function and content, the memoranda appear to be very similar to the ordinances. They generally seem to be memoranda of ordinances that were amended or stipulated at the guildhall and often list ordinances in the same way as they are in the original ordinances. As illustrated in example (2), the memorandum starts with a date line, followed by a statement about who were involved in the event and a list of ordinances:

- (2) Memorandum þe xxvi day of Auguft the yere reignyng of Kyng Herry þe Sixt aftur þe conquerte xxxvii the right worthi and reuerent firs william Canyng Mayre of Briftowe and William damme Sherfe of þe same And all þe right wife and

¹⁷ Examples (1) and (2) are taken from the *Great Red Book* because these examples consist of relatively short sentences and were deemed more reader friendly, whereas the ones in the *Little Red Book* contain longer sentences and are less reader-friendly. Since both volumes contain the same type of documents, these examples are illustrative of the corpus' different civic text types in general.

discrete Counfell of þe feid Town ffor grete vrgentt and
 neccessary caufes theym mevyng/ And for þe gode
 gouernaunce and the grete tranquillite prosperite and
 Availe of þe feid Town of Briftow to ben had and kept in þe
 crafte and miftyer of pewterers haue ordeigned sett
 Inacted establiſhed and be enrolled þe ordinance and actes
 þat here aftur foloweth
 ffirft hit is ordeigned Inacted and stabeliſhed þat [...]
 (Memorandum of the Pewterer's ordinance 1457, f.149b,
 BRO: 04719)

As illustrated in example (3), petitions also mostly include a list of ordinances which is preceded by a brief request that they be enrolled and granted by the common council:

- (3) To the Right Worſchupfull and Reuerent the maire Scheryf
 and Baillifes of the Towne of Briftowe And all the Notabill
 perfons of the Commyn Councell of the feid Towne Mekely
 byſechith vn to youre grete wyldomes and diſcreffions
 youre burgeyſes Artificers of the Craftis of fferroures
 Smythes Cotelers and lokyers of theTowne of Briſtowe
 [...].Whereby Dyuers of the Kynges liege people as for the
 gode Rewle and Governawnce to be had in the Seid Craftis
 to graunt vn to the feid Artificers The Ordynaunces and
 articles that Folowen And thaym to be Enactyd and Enrollyd
 In the Yeldhalle In manere and ffourme as other
 Ordynaunces of Craftis So been enrolled Theſe been the
 Ordenaunces and the Eftablyſhmentis y made ordeyned
 enactid and to be enrollyd In the yeld hall of the Towne of
 Briftow [...]
 (Petition of farriers, smiths, cotelers and lokkyers 1455,
 f.26, BRO: 04718)

Arguably, oaths (see example (4) below) could be categorised as a different genre, but I have decided to include them because the data for the fifteenth century are otherwise scant, and they can still be clearly classified as civic records, which means that they belong to the

same genre in terms of broader categories. Also, there are only two oaths that are dated, so they do not make up a large proportion of the total:

- (4) 3he schal be gode and trewe to Kyng Henry þe sexte and to his heirs and to the Mair and Comonaltee of this towne and 3he 3chal helpe the 3ame towne atte 3hour power and kepe the counfell of the towne And 3he 3chal come to the maires 3omonce what tyme 3he bethe somoned or warned to the 3heldhalle to the counfelhous and to all other places within this ffraunchife [...]
- (Oath of the Town Council, 1422, fly leaf, BRO: 04719)

6.4.2. *The Great Red Book of Bristol 1380-1546 (ca. 18,458 words)*

The largest bulk of texts in the *Great Red Book of Bristol* consists of fourteenth-, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century deeds, wills, and licenses to trade, most of which are written in Latin and Anglo-Norman. However, there are a number of English guild and council ordinances. It seems that they were a continuation of the records in the *Little Red Book* as they almost all postdate the ordinances in the *Little Red Book* (Veale 1933: 3). There is a series of edited volumes of the book by Veale (1931-1953) but these editions are not suitable for linguistic corpus research. LALME also used texts from the *Great Red Book* for their mapping surveys, but as explained above, LALME does not provide transcriptions. Hence, I have made new digitised transcriptions of the texts as well. Table 2 in Appendix II provides an overview and word count of the 21 texts that were transcribed and included in the Bristol corpus. I included English ordinances, petitions and memoranda that were dated, written in Bristol and that were available on microfiche. Based on the texts that are listed in the edited volumes, there are circa 23 more ordinances, petitions and ordinances that were not included in this corpus. Some of these texts could not be used because they were not dated. The other texts mostly covered the latter half of the fifteenth century, which, in the present corpus, is already quite well represented compared to the first half of the fifteenth century (see Appendix I, Table 2 for more details).

Similarly to the memoranda and the petition in the *Little Red Book*, the structure and contents of these texts are not very different from the ordinances. It was therefore not deemed necessary to treat them as a separate genre, and I will for the sake of convenience refer to all of these texts as ordinances in my results sections.

6.4.3. *The Common Council ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598 (ca. 32,590 words)*

The council ordinances of Bristol are contained in a volume that appears to be a continuation of the *Little and Great Red Book of Bristol* in that it consists of ordinances and memoranda from the sixteenth century. As the latest entry in the *Great Red Book* dates back to 1485 and the first entries in the Council ordinance volume do not occur until 1506, a volume containing ordinances of the intermediate 25-year time period may have existed but is now missing. The ordinances and memoranda conventions seem to differ somewhat from those of the earlier volumes. They are more numerous but also shorter and they appear to address a wider array of practicalities and regulations, rather than a set of ordinances issued by a specific craft. The brief entry in (5) below refers to a motion:

(5) XVIIIO DIE DECEMBRIS ANNO REGNI DOMINE NOSTRE ELIZABETH XXVIIIO 1585

There was motion made in the Counfell howfse for a Somme of money to be lente by the perfons then affembled for the provifion of Corne for the poore Inhabitanes of the Cytie in that tyme of dearthe and scarcety which Somme of money Was there vpon freely Lente by the perfons then affembled to be repayd at the ffeafte of St. Iohn Baptifte then following

(Memorandum of a motion, 1585, f.55b, BRO: 04272)

Furthermore, they are always preceded by a separate date line in Latin and often followed by a list of names of those who agreed with the ordinance that was entered in the book or other memorable decisions that were listed in the memoranda. In total, I included 97 entries of

the volume in the Bristol corpus, which run up until 1595. (see Table 3 in Appendix I for more details). There are about 10 more folios with entries, but they all cover the years 1596-1598, so I decided not to include them in order to maintain some balance with regard to the time periods that are covered by the rest of the volume. I included all English texts that were ordinances, memoranda, petitions, and that were dated and written in Bristol.

As with the *Great and Little Red Book of Bristol*, there is an edited volume of the council ordinance volume by Stanford (1990), which was printed by the Bristol Record Society. Although this is a more recent edited volume than those of the *Great and Little Red Book*, it is also not suitable for digital corpus linguistic research. For this reason, this volume too was re-transcribed and checked against the photos of the original manuscript. Most of the entries are in English, except for the date lines, which are almost always in Latin. I included these in the transcriptions, as they provide important information as to the possible date when the entry may have been written down. The entries sometimes contain lists of names, which were also included in the transcriptions. Unfortunately, it was not possible to exclude them from the word counts. As a consequence, the lists of names and the Latin date lines make the total amount of words relatively high, while the data that serve as the basis for the investigation of linguistic features is smaller. This is not a major problem since I will mostly use descriptive statistics (see section 6.6. below for the statistical methods that were employed for this study).

Stanford (1990: xviii) points out that at the time it was customary to write down daily business, which was “recorded roughly in one book and later a fair copy was made, in separate volumes”. She argues that there is a possibility that the ordinances with earlier dates in the volume are actually fair copies of earlier entries that were written down later; in fact, there is a gap between 1526 and 1551 in the list of entries while there is evidence that the council actively passed ordinances in that time as well (Stanford 1990: xviii). Robert Ricart’s *The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar* makes mention of an ordinance that was enrolled in an ordinance volume that covered the period 1526-1551, which now seems to be missing. Furthermore, a

1551 entry was written on the reverse folio of an earlier 1526-7 entry. It seems that the earlier entries were copied into the volume, whereas there is a gap between 1526 and 1551 because the draft version went missing. According to Stanford, this is significant because the earlier entries are concerned with important matters and changes related to the town, e.g. it became a cathedral city during this period, and it may thus be the case that earlier entries were copied into the book because of their importance at the time, whereas the missing part from 1526-1551 could never be copied into the book. Stanford further argues that if they were indeed later copied into the book, there is a note that suggests that it must have happened before 1570:

A deletion in 1570 may give some indication of when the earlier part of the book was in existence. In that year, William Yate was fined for boiling tallow to make soap. This is heavily crossed out and a note in the margin reads: 'M r. Wm. Yate being maior Stroke out this.' He was mayor in 1596 and so it seems likely that the first part of the book, possibly up to the Table of Contents, had already been copied by then. (Stanford 1990: xix).

Furthermore, the layout appears to be very consistent up until the 44th folio, i.e. the year 1581, while the entries after the contents list has a different and more variable layout. This may thus indicate that the language written down was written at a later date than the date given in the text, which may have implications for the linguistic findings in these texts, as the language may actually have been produced or copied at a later stage. For the present study, this is generally not a problem, since it will mostly be concerned with broad 100-year time-periods. In many cases, it can still be said that a text was produced in the sixteenth century. I will, however, also look at data in sub-periods of 50-year time periods. In these cases, I am careful with drawing any strong conclusions as regards the diachronic distribution of variants.

6.4.4. *The Bristol letters 1548-1711 (c. 30,975)*

As for the letters, the present study draws on the correspondence of two collections: The Southwell papers and the Ashton Court collection. As regards the Ashton Court collection, the letters that were included are the ones of which reasonably could be assumed that they were written by a person who lived in the Bristol area, that is, on the basis of the content in the letter, or on the basis of the historical information that is available. For the Ashton court letters, this means that there is a total of 88 letters from as early as 1548 to as late as 1716, but most letters date from the first half of the seventeenth century. As for the Southwell collection, 10 letters that were written in the second half of the seventeenth century are included. Table 6.2 below provides an overview of the distribution of the amount of words according to time period and sex (see also Table 3 in Appendix I for a detailed inventory with the word counts and dates of each letter). As Table 6.2 below shows, most of the words were written in 1600-1650, of which the largest percentage is written by women:

| periods | men | % | women | % | total | % |
|------------------|------------|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|
| 1548-1600 | 2,699 | 100% | - | - | 2,699 | 9% |
| 1600-1650 | 8,420 | 39% | 13,354 | 61% | 21,774 | 70% |
| 1650-1716 | 5,995 | 92% | 507 | 8% | 6,502 | 21% |
| total | 17,114 | 55% | 13,861 | 45% | 30,975 | 100% |

Table 6.2. Amount of words per sub-period and sex, letters

The Southwell collection contains papers relating to the Anglo-Irish Robert Southwell (1635–1702), his son Edward I (1671-1730) and his grandson Edward II (1705-1755). The Southwells owned property in Kingsweston, just outside of Bristol (Barnard 2004). The location was convenient for travel between England and Ireland, as the family maintained strong political ties in both countries (Barnard 2004). The collection consists of ten volumes of which the first two volumes contain letters written in the late seventeenth century in Bristol and that are addressed to the Southwells. The other volumes contain other

types of documents such as charters and contracts, or letters that were written after the time-period 1400-1700. The letters that are included in the present corpus were included on the basis that the letters were written by a person who lived in Bristol. In total, I included 10 letters of the volume. Four of these letters are written by John Romsey (also referred to as Rumsey) (fl. 1660-1688), a collector of customs in Bristol, who was married to Anna Smyth, widow of Sr. Hugh Smyth (Zook 2008). An interesting detail is that Romsey was involved in the radical Whig movement and part of a failed up-rise that was to take place in Bristol in 1682 (Zook 2008). The other six letters are written by John Romley, of whom we can only gather some information by the letters he wrote. All of his correspondence is written in Bristol, and it appears that he was involved in some port business at Bristol's port. He took care of business at the port for Robert Southwell, as most of his letters involve some report of shipment requests made by Mr. Southwell. He also seems to have maintained contacts in Bristol for Southwell when he was away for business in Ireland. Romley frequently mentions the names of the Smyth family and Henley, a Bristol ship-owner and importer, whom he seems to have met on a frequent basis. He also gives account of the day-to-day business in the Bristol area. On the basis of this information I have assumed that he lived in Bristol. To my knowledge, there is no edition that contains any of the letters of the Southwell collection, which suggests that the transcriptions in my Bristol corpus are possibly the first.

The Ashton court collection contains correspondence by and to the Smythe family, who, starting out as merchants, became extremely wealthy and influential in the Bristol area through clever land investments and intermarriage with prominent families of the landed gentry as well as nobility that had close ties with the royal court. In the early sixteenth century, hooper and merchant Matthew Smyth came to Bristol from Aylburton in the Forest of Dean and married a merchant's daughter in Bristol. They lived in a house on Corn Street and they had two surviving children John and Elizabeth (Vanes 1974: 2). Elizabeth married Thomas Phelips who was the son of M.P. Richard Phelips (Vanes 1974: 2). This was one of the first recorded marriages that affiliated the Smyth family with higher social ranks. The earliest

surviving letter in my corpus is written by Elizabeth's brother John Smyth, but most of the correspondence is written by his descendants. The family's history is quite well documented and described (cf. Vanes 1974; Bantock 1982; Bettey 1982, 2004). Bantock (1982) and Bettey (1982) have published works in which they provide summaries of some of the letters, and in some cases snippets of transcriptions of the letters. The snippets and phrases that are cited in their works have been edited and sometimes spellings were modernised. For the present linguistic study, these editions were not very useful.

In contrast to the letter writers of the Southwell papers, there is some more detailed historical background available of the Ashton Court letter writers. In what follows below, I will provide background about the individual letter writers of the correspondence that I have used of the Ashton Court collection, for as far as background information was available. This inevitably means that most of the information is biased towards the most prominent Smyth family members, since it is their live stories that have been well-documented, whereas in other cases information is scant at best.

In describing the lives of the Smyth's and the people who were connected to them, the history of the rise of the Smyth's as a prominent family will unfold. What is more, it will become clear that they were extremely mobile, even though they remained connected to the Bristol area for centuries. Not all letter writers are family members, but they are all in some way connected to the Smyth family and the correspondence is addressed to family members of the Smyth family. The letters were again selected based on the fact that their authors came from and were still connected to Bristol in some way or still resided in Bristol.

John Smyth (d.1556)

(1 letter)

John followed his father Matthew and became a very affluent merchant, successful enough to take up the costly office of Sherriff in 1532, and twice the office of mayor in 1547 and 1554 (Vanes1974: 3; Bettey 2004). He meticulously kept a ledger of his trade during the period 1538-1550, which provides a unique insight into Bristol's trade at the time. The original is held in the Bristol record office, alongside

an edition by Vanes and Angus (1974). John acquired wealth by exporting Gloucestershire woollen cloth, leather, timber, wheat and lead from the Mendips and by importing wine, iron, woad, alum and oil from Spain and France (Bettey 2004). By 1545, John had acquired so much wealth that he could afford to invest in a house and an estate at Ashton court in Long Ashton just outside the city boundaries of Bristol. Although John continued to live in a house on Small Street in Bristol, Ashton Court remained in the family until after the Second World War when the Bristol Corporation bought it (Bettey 1982: ix). John also profited from the dissolution after the reformation and acquired many lands that were former chantries and monasteries in South Gloucestershire and North Somerset, and he purchased additional houses in Bristol. The newly acquired possessions put the merchant family on a par with the landed gentry. Together with his wife Joan, he had two surviving sons, Hugh and Matthew.

David Brook (Broke) (c.1500-1559)

(1 letter)

David was an acquaintance of John Smyth. He was a son of John Broke of Bristol, sergeant-at-law, and Jane, the daughter of Richard Americk, a sheriff of Bristol (Baker 2008). David was sent to the inner Temple in London for his education and became a bencher in 1535. After being a treasurer of the Inn from 1539-1540, he became Bristol's recorder until 1545 (Baker 2008). In his early career, he was a deputy to the Sheriff of Bristol (1522), and from 1529, he represented the city as an M.P. In 1531, he was J.P of Gloucestershire. He also appears to have had connections in Wales where he served as a judge from 1541-1551. In 1551, he established his career at court as a sergeant to the king and later as chief baron of the exchequer. In 1553, he was knighted. Although from 1554 his main country residence was Horton manor in Gloucestershire, he maintained properties in Bristol and Somerset countryside. He was buried in Bristol at St. Mary Redcliff, which suggests that his ties with Bristol were never completely severed.

Hugh Smyth (1530-1580)

(5 letters by Hugh Smyth)

Hugh and his brother Matthew (1533-1583) were the surviving sons of John Smyth. When Hugh was 15 and Matthew 12 years old, they were sent to Oxford for five years. They did not obtain a degree, but instead went to the Inns of Court in London, which at the time was a trajectory typically taken by wealthy gentlemen's sons (Bettesy 1992: 141). Hugh started at the Inner Temple, but after three years, he went back to the Bristol area to make Ashton Court his home and to marry Maud Bycombe, a member of the country gentry (Bettesy 1982: xiii; 1992: 141). With this marriage, the Smyth's added more lands to the family's possessions in West Somerset (Bettesy 1982: 142). Hugh also invested in extensive lands and housings in and surrounding Bristol. He became justice of the peace for Somerset and he performed governmental tasks in Bristol (Bettesy 1982: 142). He was a violent man and his reputation suffered from the many and sometimes violent quarrels in which he was involved (Bettesy 1992). He had one surviving daughter, Elizabeth, who was married to Edward Morgan of Llanternham of Monmouthshire.

Hugh's brother Matthew stayed in London as a barrister in the Middle Temple, but took up residence in Ashton Court with his family after Hugh's death in 1581. Since Hugh did not have a male heir, all his lands and the estate went to Matthew. However, Matthew soon followed his brother and died in 1583. He had one son, also named Hugh and a daughter who was married to Maurice Rodney of Rodney Stoke, a member of a prominent Somerset gentry family (Bettesy 1982: xv).

Elizabeth Smyth (née Gorges) (1578)
(27 letters by Elizabeth)

In 1596, Matthew's son Hugh (1574-1627), son of Matthew Smyth, married Elizabeth Gorges. I have no letters written by Hugh, but Elizabeth's history is an interesting one and deserves mentioning since a large part of the correspondence in my corpus is written by her. Elizabeth's mother, Helena of Snakenborg (1549) was born into a Swedish noble family. Helena came to England at the age of fifteen, in the company of Princess Cecilia to whom she was a maid of honour (Harrington 2008). When Princess Cecilia left England again in 1566, Helena remained at the English court where she became maid of

honour to Queen Elizabeth (Harrington 2008). Through the marriage to the Marquess of Northampton, William Parr, she became a marchioness. When the marquess died shortly after their marriage, she remarried Sir Thomas Gorges of Wraxhall in Somerset with whom she had her daughter Elizabeth (1578). Even though Helena temporarily fell out of favour with the Queen because of the queen's disapproval of Helena's marriage to Thomas, she maintained strong ties with the Court. Hugh Smyth's marriage to Helena's daughter thus meant that the Smyth family acquired affiliations with the court (Harrington 2008). Hugh and Elizabeth further extended the family's assets, as they bought yet another property called the Great House in central Bristol in which they lived for a part of each year (Betsey 2004). They had one son, Thomas, and a daughter, Mary. When Elizabeth's husband Hugh died, she married her cousin Sr. Ferdinando Gorges with whom she lived at lower court in Long Ashton and in the Great House in Bristol (Betsey 1982: xviii). Almost all her letters are addressed to her son Thomas with whom she corresponded about life in Bristol and at Ashton Court.

Mary Smyth, daughter of Hugh and Elizabeth, sister of Thomas Smyth (15 letters)

Very little is known about Mary Smyth. She was married to Thomas Smith of Cheshire who was mayor of Chester in 1622 and Sherriff of Chester in 1623 (Burke & Burke 1838: 492). Based on the letters Mary wrote, it seems that she was close to her brother as well as her parents, and she appeared to pay them regular visits at Ashton Court. Her letters reveal that she lived in a house in Chester with her husband, but they also stayed in London for a while, where they rented lodging in Drury lane. Almost all her letters are addressed to her brother Thomas.

Thomas Smyth (1609-1642), son of Hugh and Elizabeth (15 letters by Thomas)

Thomas enjoyed a true gentleman's education. At the age of 13, he was sent to St. John's college in Oxford, where he was tutored by Thomas Atkinson (Betsey 1982: xvii). Thomas was to stay in Oxford until he was 17. When he turned 18 in 1627, he returned to the Bristol

area and married Florence Poulet, daughter of Lord Poulet of Hinton St George in Somerset (Bettey 1982: xvii-xviii). Their marriage further consolidated the Smyth's alliance with the country gentry as the Poulet family was a very wealthy and prominent family in Somerset (Bettey 1982: xviii). Thomas and Florence had two sons, Hugh and Thomas, three daughters Anne, Florence and Helena (Bantock 1982: 2; Bettey 2004). In 1628, at the age of only 19, Thomas became an M.P. for Bridgewater. In the 1630s, Thomas was a justice of the peace for Somerset and he was treasurer of several hospitals. In 1640, he became an MP for Bridgewater again, and it can be gathered from the correspondence in the collection that he was in London regularly, probably to take care of business in the House of Commons (Bettey 1982: xviii-xxii). The family always maintained strong connections with Bristol, which is confirmed by the fact that Thomas was concerned with the management of Ashton Court and that he enjoyed the freedom of the city. Thomas died in 1642 of smallpox while he was in Cardiff, where he had to retreat after an unsuccessful fight for the Royalist cause at Shepton Mallet (Bettey 2004). The widowed Florence married the affluent Irish Colonel Thomas Piggott. It appears that they maintained their residence at Ashton Court near Bristol, as letters addressed to Florence were sent there.

John Edwards

(3 letters)

John Edwards was Thomas Smyth's Bailiff and managed all the estates and business affairs at Ashton Court when Thomas was away from home to conduct his business.

Thomas Smyth (1642), son of Thomas and Florence, brother of Hugh and Florence

(3 letters)

Thomas was born shortly after his father Thomas Smyth had passed away in 1642. All of his letters are addressed to his remarried mother Florence (née Poulet) Piggott at the Long Ashton estate near Bristol.

Florence Hook (née Smyth) (d. 1692), daughter of Thomas and Florence, sister of Hugh and Thomas

(2 letters)

Florence became the wife of Humphrey Hook, a Bristol merchant who represented the city in parliament, and who was mayor and alderman of Bristol. They took up residence in Kingsweston, four miles outside of Bristol, but Hooke maintained a connection with Bristol (Todd 1938; Ferris 1982)

*Sir Hugh Smyth first Baronet (1632–1680), son of Thomas and Florence
(1 letter)*

Not much is known about Hugh's upbringing and education, except that he had a private tutor at home at Ashton Court from as early as the age of nine (Bettesy 1982: xx). Hugh married Ann, the Daughter of John Ashburnham of Ashburnham in Sussex who was close to the late king (Bettesy 2004). During the Restoration in 1660, he pursued a political career and became the first baronet of the family. He was an M.P. for Somerset and involved in "all aspects of local affairs both in Somerset and in Bristol" (Bettesy 2004).

*Charles Smyth, son of Hugh and Ann
(7 letters)*

Hugh and Ann had three sons and one daughter. The Bristol corpus includes correspondence of one of their sons, Charles, whose writings reveal that he worked abroad as a merchant in Smyrna (now Izmir, Turkey).

*Robert Skinner (1591-1670)
1 letter*

Robert Skinner was the Bishop of Bristol from 1637 to 1641.

6.5. Transcription process and corpus mark-up

The transcriptions of the original texts were carried out with great care and followed by careful correction rounds. In the case of the letter material, I was responsible for the first transcriptions, after which they were checked by a project member. The corrected transcriptions were then checked by me again, after which they went to another team member who did a final check. These final corrections were then checked by me one more time so as to eliminate as many transcription

mistakes as possible, as well as to decide on as many uncertain readings as possible. The civic records of the Bristol corpus and parts of the letters exist in editions, but as stated earlier, some important features such as original orthography were not maintained in the editions. For this reason, I re-transcribed the material from the photographs and then carefully checked my transcriptions against the editions and the photographs one more time.

A large part of my research project was taken up by the preparation of the transcriptions and the design of the electronic corpus. When rendering historical texts into a digital format, a number of choices have to be made and challenges have to be overcome. I would like to address some of these issues and provide some details about how the *Emerging Standards* team tackled some of these problems. By describing the corpus design and mark-up, as well as the challenges the team encountered and the solutions that it came up with, I hope to contribute to the practice of corpus building in the field of historical corpus linguistics.

6.5.1. From photograph to digital format

As mentioned earlier, the transcriptions are based on photographs of the originals. In order to be able to search the texts for linguistic data, the texts have to be rendered into a digital format. Since the *Emerging Standards* project team is concerned with all kinds of linguistic variation, including orthographic variation, the aim is to transcribe the texts as truthful to the original as possible and to maintain original spelling and punctuation. At the same time, the digital transcriptions have to be in a format that is compatible with existing corpus tools and which is easily convertible into other formats, e.g. an HTML web page, or a simple text file. For this reason, the team uses XML (Extensible Mark-up Language), according to XML TEI specifications. The TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) is a consortium that provides guidelines and a large set of XML tags that can be used to encode texts with a wide range of typographical features, as well as annotations (TEI 2013). The great advantage of using TEI encodings is that they make use of a widely applicable mark-up language to represent texts in a digital format. This enhances shareability, as well as compatibility with other tools

designed for TEI/XML text-encodings. By way of illustration, expansions of brevigraphs for *and* in the original text are marked with the following TEI XML mark-up: `<expan>and</expan>` (see Figure 6.1 below).



Figure 6.1. Example of an expansion in TEI

Because the same encoding for expansions is used by all TEI users, programmers of a text search tool can, for instance, program the tool to avoid everything that is tagged with `<expan> </expan>`, since this may not be of interest to a researcher. Likewise, a tool that converts a TEI encoded text into an HTML text can be programmed to display each piece of text between the tags in italics. TEI also provides many possibilities to associate meta-data with a text, e.g. social variables such as social status, name, sex, occupation and age of the author, text type, date and place of the production of the text etc. Considering that the team aims to render the transcriptions with a rich set of encodings, including meta-data, extensive typing of XML tags has hitherto been involved in the transcription process. In order to speed up the process and to minimise errors, the team uses a TEI XML editor called Oxygen (Syncrosoft). However, initially, the tags still largely had to be typed manually into the editor, which meant that the process was very labour-intensive. Moreover, since the encoded text is interlarded with many complex tags, the editing and reading of the transcribed text is difficult (see Figure 6.2 & Figure 6.3). In order to speed up the tagging and transcription process, the programmer of the *Emerging Standards* team designed an open source framework for the Oxygen editor which is specifically tailored to the project's requirements and research goals. With this framework, named HisTEI (Olson 2014), texts can be transcribed in a word-processor-like view. This means that complex XML tags or sets of XML tags can be inserted by using a single button. Furthermore, with HisTEI, the transcribed text can be displayed in a

view where the encoding tags are not visible in the form of typed tags, but instead the tags are displayed using colour-coding, italics, bold or superscript (see Figure 6.4). For instance, abbreviations of the original text that are expanded in the digital transcription, are marked up with the XML tags as shown in Figure 6.1 above. In the author view, the expanded letters are displayed in italics, while the underlying tag is made invisible. This makes the reading and checking of transcriptions significantly less strenuous.

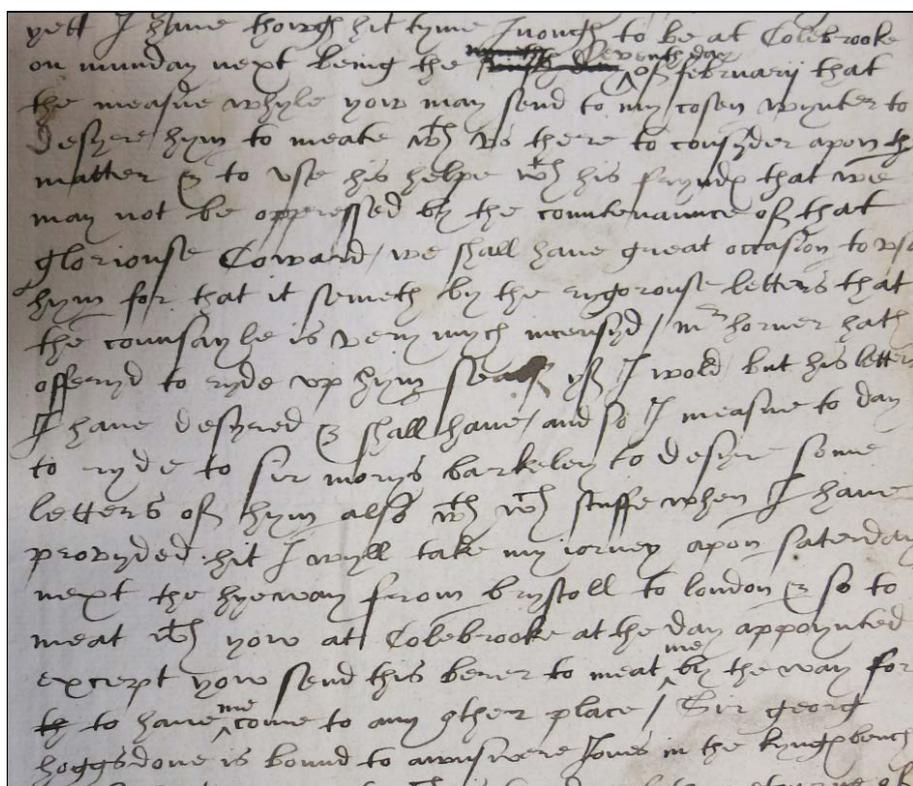


Figure 6.2. Image of original text. Letter by Hugh Smyth, Bristol, 31 January 1563 (BRO: ac/c7/3) (Auer, Gordon & Olson 2016: 27)

```

80 <del>yet I haue though
81 hit tyme Inough to be at Colebrooke<lb break="yes"/>on munday next being the
82 <del>unclear reason="rubbing"><del>unclear="rubbing"/></unclear</del>
83 <add place="above"><gap reason="rubbing"/></add>
84 <del>day</del>
85 <add place="above">seventh day</add> of february that<lb break="yes"/>the <w
86 <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing">meafne whyle</w> yow may fend to my cofen wynter to<lb
87 break="yes"/>defyre hym to meate <w>expant</w> vs there to confynder
88 upon the<lb break="yes"/>matter <w>expant</w> to vfe his helpe
89 <w>expant</w> his frynde<w> that we<lb break="yes"/>may
90 not be opprefed by the countenance of that<lb break="yes"/>glorioufe Coward/
91 we fhall haue great occafion to vfe<lb break="yes"/>hym for that it femeth by
92 the rygoroufe letters that<lb break="yes"/>the counfayle is very mych incenfyd/
93 <abbr>chi</abbr> <sup>re</sup> <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing">horner hath<lb break="yes"
94 />offeryd to ryde vp <w> <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing">hym</w> <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing"
95 </del></unclear</del> <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing">I wold/ but his letters<lb break="yes"/>I haue defyred <w>expant</w> fhall haue/ and fo
96 I meafne <w> <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing">to day</w> <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing">to ryde to fir
97 morys barkeley to defyre fome<lb break="yes"/>letters of hym alfo
98 <w>expant</w> <w>expant</w> <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing">ftuffe when I haue<lb break="yes"
99 />provyded hit I wyll take my iorney apon faterday<lb break="yes"/>next the
100 hyeway from bryfoll to london <w>expant</w> fo to<lb break="yes"/>meat
101 <w>expant</w> yow at Colebrooke at the day appoynted<lb break="yes"
102 />except yow fend this berer to meat <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing">by the way fo<lb
103 break="yes"/>to haue <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing">me</del> <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing">me</del> <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing">me</del> <del>unclear="unclear reason="rubbing">me</del>
104 come to any other place/ Sir georg<lb break="yes"/>hoggdome is bound to

```

Figure 6.3. Screen shot of TEI transcription in Oxygen's text view (Auer, Gordon & Olson 2016: 27)

yett I haue though hit tyme Inough to be at Colebrooke-
 on munday next being the ~~first~~ ^{seventh} day of february that
 the meafne whyle yow may fend to my cofen wynter to-
 defyre hym to meate ~~with~~ ^{vs} there to confynder apon the-
 matter ~~and~~ ^{with} his frynde that we-
 may not be opprefed by the countenance of that-
 glorioufe Coward/ we fhall haue great occafion to vfe-
 hym for that it femeth by the rygoroufe letters that-
 the counfayle is very mych incenfyd/ ~~m~~ ^r horner hath
 offeryd to ryde vp ~~hym~~ ^{hym} ~~if~~ ^{if} I wold/ but his letters-
 I haue defyred ~~and~~ ^{and} fhall haue/ and fo I meafne to day-
 to ryde to fir morys barkeley to defyre fome-
 letters of hym alfo ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~which~~ ^{which} ftuffe when I haue-
 provyded hit I wyll take my iorney apon faterday-
 next the hyeway from bryfoll to london ~~and~~ ^{and} fo to-
 meat ~~with~~ ^{with} yow at Colebrooke at the day appoynted-
 except yow fend this berer to meat ~~me~~ ^{me} by the way fo-
~~th~~ th to haue ~~me~~ ^{me} come to any other place/ Sir georg
 hoggdome is bound to awnfwere lones in the kynges bench-

Figure 6.4. Customised author mode in Oxygen (Auer, Gordon & Olson 2016: 28)

Since the framework contains features that cater for the transcription of historical texts in general, it has been successfully adopted and adapted by other projects using historical data as well (cf. the *Medieval*

Irish Bilingualism project (Schrijver et al.) and the *Aberdeen Registers (1398-1511)* project (Armstrong et al.).

6.5.2. Transcription practices

As regards the rendering of the precise lay-out features of texts, it had to be considered whether it was economically feasible to render a feature into a digital format and whether these features would facilitate linguistic research. This means that it was decided, for instance, that illuminated graphs, decorations and pictures were not to be rendered into digital format, while original page breaks, paragraphs, line-breaks, and headers are maintained. For the same reason, it was also decided to transcribe certain special orthographic features that are particularly relevant for our research. However, we only render those special orthographic features that are available in Unicode (*æ ð ƒ þ Ʒ*), whereas other variants of graphs and brevigraphs that are not available in Unicode are transcribed using present-day variants. For instance, this means that brevigraphs for *and* are expanded and spelled as *and*, and that variants of <r> are spelled using present-day <r>. Variants of <th> (*y*) (*b*) (*ð*) and <s> (*ʃ*) and the graphs <ʒ>, <æ>, <þ> are maintained. In addition, alternations between u/v and i/j are maintained. So, when *vessel* is spelled *uessel* and *John* as *lohn*, they are transcribed as such. Capitalisation is also maintained, as consistently as possible as it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a particular graph is lower case or upper case. Furthermore, text in superscript, sub-script, bold, italics or underlined in the original is encoded for these features in the transcriptions. Emendations made by the author such as strikethroughs, insertions and notes are encoded too. Also, uncertain readings and illegible parts of the original text are encoded. The reason for an unclear reading or a gap is also provided, which is especially helpful in the editing and checking process. For instance, the editor can easily extract gaps and uncertain readings that were marked as such for specific reasons, i.e. something was deemed difficult to read due to a hand that was difficult to decipher, an overwriting or damage (see examples in Figure 6.5 - Figure 6.8)

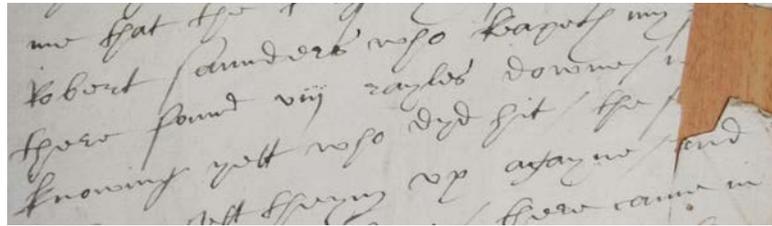


Figure 6.5. Excerpt from letter by Hugh Smyth, Bristol, 28 June 1579 (BRO: AC-C18_1) (Auer, Gordon & Olson 2016: 32)

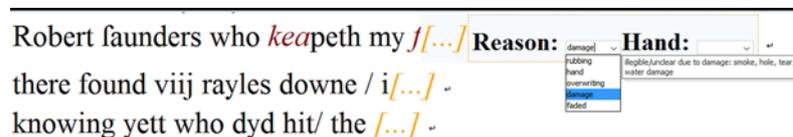


Figure 6.6. Transcription of excerpt above, showing uncertain readings and reason for a gap in the text. (Auer, Gordon & Olson 2016: 32)

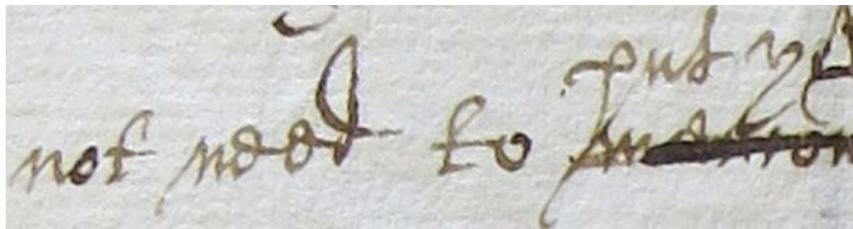


Figure 6.7. Excerpt from letter by Thomas Smyth Bristol, 16 March 1639 (BRO: 36074-153) (Auer, Gordon & Olson 2016: 32)

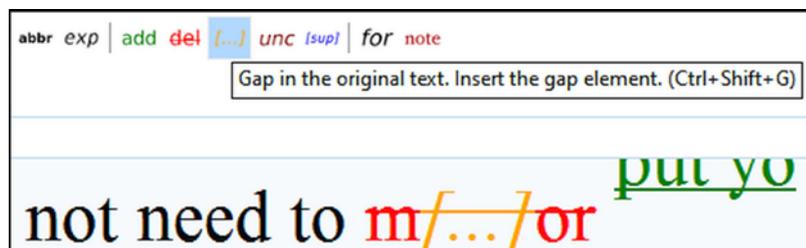


Figure 6.8. Transcription of excerpt above, showing a strike-through and a part deemed illegible by transcriber, due to a strike-through. (Auer, Gordon & Olson 2016: 32)

Abbreviations, brevigraphs, suspension and contraction marks are expanded, apart from very commonly used abbreviations such as titles (*Mr, Ms, Sr* etc.). The expansions are encoded as expansions, so that they can be excluded in the case where spelling variation is relevant and when they could thus lead to false positives. By way of illustration, this is especially relevant when looking at spelling variation in plural forms. In the later Middle English period,  was a commonly used brevigraph for *-es, -is, -ys* endings. An expansion by the hand of the transcriber would inevitably result in a choice that is open to debate. Also, as will become clear in Chapter 9, the fact that a word is an abbreviation may be a relevant factor in orthographic variation and thus may be an independent variable in itself.

In addition to general text-encodings, HisTEI also allows for the rapid insertion of some annotations such as the marking up of formulaic language for phrases or fragments of texts that are considered formulaic and that are hence of less interest for linguistic variation or change, or that at least should be considered separately from other types of language use. For this reason, in letters, salutations, addresses and post scripts are marked-up as different segments. The tool provides buttons for the annotation of words, phrases, clauses, supplied punctuation, i.e. many of these features serve to facilitate parsing tools. The tool also has a built-in tokeniser, which makes it possible to create wordlists and to calculate word counts and frequencies. It has to be added, however, that word counts in historical texts are open to interpretation since the divisions between words differ from present-day standards, and it is therefore sometimes difficult to tell if two words are joined or written separately. To illustrate this, one of the authors in the Bristol letter corpus writes *nevertheless* as *never thelesse* and *agreadele* for *a great deal*. Similarly, in some of the Late Middle English texts, the definite article is contracted and attached to the noun when it starts with a vowel: *the apple* becomes *thapple*. Generally, the present-day standard word divisions have been superimposed and *agreadele* was marked as consisting of three separate tokens, but it has to be recognised that this is in some cases a subjective choice.

6.5.3. TEI headers: social variables and other extra-textual data

In addition to text-encodings, there are also extra-textual data that are associated with each text. This includes information regarding the exact place where the original is held, direct links to the facsimiles, as well as revision descriptions that provide information about what changes were made by whom during the transcription and editing process. Most essential, however, are the external variables that help us determine the nature and extent of linguistic variation and change within and across texts. This concerns information about the production of a text, i.e. text type, place, date of production, and details about the author: name, life dates, sex, education and occupation. All of this information is provided by headers that precede a text or a set of texts that are typically associated with the meta-data in the header. Since there are different text types in the *Emerging Standards* corpora, the meta-data that are associated with them may differ somewhat, i.e. in the case of the ordinances we do not have information about the authors, but we may have information about the organisation that issued the ordinance, whereas in the case of letters, information about where a letter was sent to and from may be relevant. In order to ensure consistency of practice within the team and to avoid labour-intensive typing, templates containing headers and text type-specific lay-out features were designed. In this way, the transcriber can choose the appropriate template and fill out all the required fields in HisTEI. Figure 6.9 below shows the header of a template for letters. The other text type that is included in the Bristol corpus, the ordinance, requires less complex header information, which largely overlaps with that of the letter headers in terms of content. Therefore, I will use the header of the letter template to highlight some choices that were made with regard to the capturing of extra-textual data.

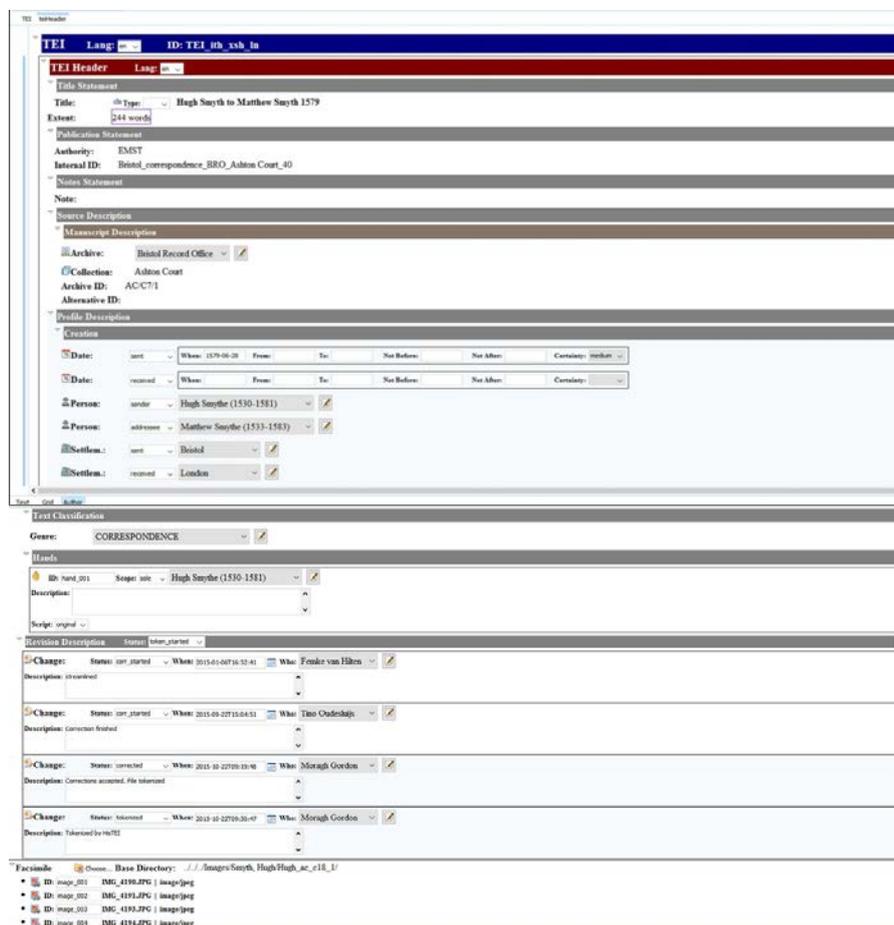


Figure 6.9. The header of a letter template

Title statement

The first line of the header consists of a title statement which contains a descriptive title of the text (see Figure 6.10 below). In the case of the letter template, this title consists of the name of the sender and the recipient and the date of the letter. For the ordinances, the issue date and the topic of the ordinance are given in the 'Title statement'. The term 'Extent' refers to the approximate amount of words that the text consists of. As pointed out in Section 6.6.2., the word counts are approximations, as it is sometimes debatable whether a word can be

interpreted as one or more units. Moreover, numbers and abbreviations are also part of this word count.

The screenshot shows a form titled 'Title Statement'. It contains two main fields: 'Title:' and 'Extent:'. The 'Title:' field has a 'Type:' dropdown menu set to an empty state, followed by the text 'Hugh Smyth to Matthew Smyth 1579'. The 'Extent:' field contains the text '244 words'.

Figure 6.10. The title statement

Source description

The source description (see Figure 6.11) contains a manuscript description section which provides archival details, e.g. the name of the archive that holds the original, the name of the collection which it is part of and the shelf mark. The archive can be chosen from a drop-down menu, which again ensures efficiency and consistency. A list of all the archives is stored in a separate file which also provides more details about the different repositories. The header merely contains a reference that points to the relevant archive in that list. In HisTEI, the reference is automatically inserted when an archive is chosen from the drop-down menu. This way, multiple files can be associated with information that is stored in one place. The benefit of this is that if the information in the list will be changed, all the files that are associated with this information are updated instantly as well.

The screenshot shows a form titled 'Source Description'. Underneath, there is a section titled 'Manuscript Description'. It contains three fields: 'Archive:' with a dropdown menu set to 'Bristol Record Office' and an edit icon; 'Collection:' with the text 'Ashton Court'; and 'Archive ID:' with the text 'AC/C7/1'.

Figure 6.11. Source description

Profile description

The profile description (see Figure 6.12.) contains information about the most essential extra-linguistic variables that are of interest for the study of linguistic variation.

The screenshot shows a 'Profile Description' window with a 'Creation' section. It contains several fields for defining the text's origin and timing:

- Date:** A dropdown menu set to 'sent' with a date field containing '1579-06-28'. It also includes 'From:', 'To:', 'Not Before:', and 'Not After:' fields, and a 'Certainty:' dropdown set to 'medium'.
- Date:** A dropdown menu set to 'received' with empty date and time fields, and a 'Certainty:' dropdown.
- Person:** A dropdown menu set to 'sender' with a selection box containing 'Hugh Smythe (1530-1581)' and an edit icon.
- Person:** A dropdown menu set to 'addressee' with a selection box containing 'Matthew Smythe (1533-1583)' and an edit icon.
- Settle.:** A dropdown menu set to 'sent' with a selection box containing 'Bristol' and an edit icon.
- Settle.:** A dropdown menu set to 'received' with a selection box containing 'London' and an edit icon.

Figure 6.12. The profile description

Dates

(see Figure 6.12.)

First of all, in the creation section of the profile description, the date of the text is listed. The dating of texts is not always as straightforward as it may seem. In the case of the letters for the Bristol corpus, it has been assumed that the date given by the author in the date line was also the date when the text was written and sent. In some cases, the recipients made notes as to when they received the letter too; there is thus also a field in the header for filling in the received date. The letter collection also included undated letters, but in most cases, it was possible to make an estimate as to when the letter could feasibly have been written, e.g. based on the life dates of the author, or events mentioned in the letters. Hence, it is possible to state in the date box that a letter was not written before and not after a certain period in order to indicate the approximate period in which a text was produced. It is also possible that a text covers a certain time-span, which can be indicated in the *from/to* boxes. Additionally, the degree of certainty about the exact date is also indicated by choosing *high/medium/low/unknown*. In the case of ordinances, the dating may indeed be uncertain, as the indicated issuing date in the texts does not always correspond with the date when the ordinances were actually

entered into the ordinance books. For the purpose of my corpus, I have assumed that in most cases the issue date that is provided in the text was the same or very close to the date when it was entered into the ordinance book, unless there were signs that indicated otherwise, e.g. a script that is too modern for the period. As noted in Section 6.4.3., there is a possibility that parts of the texts in the council ordinances volume may be a later fair copy. In this case, I have maintained the dates given in the text since it was most likely a copy of a text that was originally written down at that date. As pointed out earlier, it is, however, something that has to be kept in mind when analysing linguistic variation within the texts as writing conventions may have changed over time and may thus have influenced the way a scribe copied the older text.

Persons and settlements

(see Figure 6.12 above)

The section on *Persons* is specific to the letter template and it typically lists the sender and recipient. The names can be selected from the drop-down menu and like the repository list, the names and other details about the people are stored in a separate person file. In the person file, all available information about a person is stored such as life dates, birth place, place(s) of residence, occupation, sex, social status, marital status, religion, and even organisational affiliation can be listed. It is important to note that the sender of the text need not be the author. Issues related to authorship will be discussed in more detail below. In the case of letters, the settlements that are listed are the places where a letter was sent from and received at. In the case of ordinances, it is often impossible to tell what person was involved directly in the creation of a text. However, it is possible to state which organisation was involved in the creation of the ordinance, for instance the city council or a guild craft. Furthermore, it can be stated where the document was produced:

The screenshot shows a software interface titled "Profile Description" with a sub-section "Creation". It contains three rows of input fields:

- Date:** A dropdown menu set to "written", followed by "When: 1439", "From:", "To:", "Not Before:", "Not After:", and "Certainty: medium".
- Settle.:** A dropdown menu set to "written", followed by a dropdown menu set to "Bristol" and a small edit icon.
- Org.:** A dropdown menu set to "author", followed by a dropdown menu set to "Bristol City Council" and a small edit icon.

Figure 6.13. Creation section ordinance header

Text classification

Text type is also an important external variable. This information is stored in the header under “text classification” (see Figure 6.14. below). As explained in Section 6.2.4., the classification of text types of the Bristol corpus is based on relatively broad categorisations. Although a more sophisticated fine-grained classification may be desirable, this is difficult to achieve. Firstly, especially for legal documents, there does not appear to be an extensive body of research and literature that specifies the different forms and functions of Late Medieval text types (Stenroos & Thengs 2011: 5). Secondly, as pointed out by Stenroos and Thengs (2011: 5), “documents which perform the same function and have the same effect do not always show the same formal characteristics and phrasing”. This is particularly true for the memoranda in my data, which may have the form of a memorandum but largely appear to perform the function of an ordinance. So far, the team of the *Middle English Grammar Corpus* (henceforth MEG-C) (Stenroos et al. 2011) has carried out the most extensive work on text classifications, which is based on the function of a text rather than form and which seems to be the most useful approach for now. Therefore, the text classification is largely based on that of MEG-C, albeit with some additions, as the *Emerging Standards* corpus has some genres that are not covered by MEG-C. For the additional genres, the project team relied on dictionary definitions (see Appendix III for the full list, see also Görlach 2004: 24-88 for an extensive list and inventory of text types). As with the archive, place, and person files, there is a separate file for the different text types which lists and describes all the genres that are and will be part of the *Emerging Standards* corpus. In the header, the transcriber can choose the appropriate genre from the drop-down menu. A pop-up window will

appear and provide a description of the relevant genre, so as to make sure that all transcribers follow the same practice and definitions.

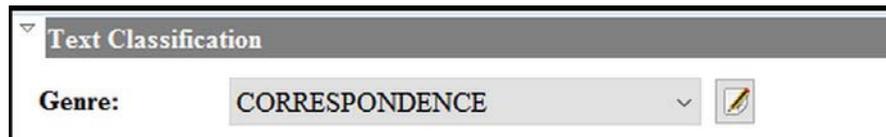


Figure 6.14. Text type as indicated in the header

Hands

As pointed out above, the persons involved in the creation of the text need not be the authors of that same text. In other cases, the text may have been copied by another author. The “hands” section (Figure 6.15 below) in the header provides detailed information about the script. Each hand that occurs in a text is given a unique ID and, when possible, is linked to a person in the person file. Additionally, it is indicated under *scope* to what extent an author is responsible for the creation of the text. He or she can be the *sole* author, or have written a *major* or a *minor* part of the text. When a text is written by more than one hand, this is also indicated by a symbol in the text which links each part of the text to the responsible author. Furthermore, under *script* it is indicated whether the text is a *copy* of a pre-existing text or the *original* version. Arguably, it cannot always be certain whether we are dealing with an original version, but sometimes, as is the case with the council ordinances of the Bristol corpus, there are signs that it concerns a copy, which is then always indicated in the script section. A text is marked as original when there is no indication that it may concern a copy.

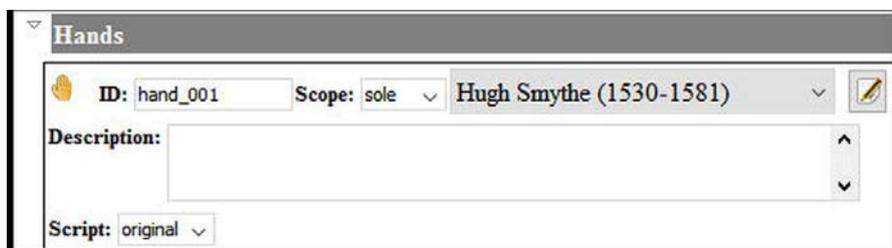


Figure 6.15. The hands section

As for the question regarding authorship of texts, it is not always certain who wrote a text. Even a person's signature in a letter, or at the end of an ordinance does not necessarily guarantee that the text was also written by the person who signed it, as it was common to have an amanuensis who wrote the text in the name of the person who ultimately signed the text. This may have consequences as there is a risk that the social variables that are attributed to the author are based on the person who signed the letter and not on the amanuensis who actually wrote the text. Interestingly, however, a study by Bergs (2015) suggests that scribes were flexible, linguistically speaking, and tended to reflect the linguistic repertoire of the author rather than their own. This was especially the case on the level of morphosyntax. In the case of the Bristol project, for the letters, there is no reason to assume that they were written by an amanuensis since each author appears to be represented by one unique hand that is consistently used, regardless of the time and place they sent their letters from. Moreover, sometimes they make comments on their own hand writing. For instance, Mary Smyth states in her letter "I am weary you may fe by my writing" (Mary Smyth, 30 March 1630s, BRO: ac/c/53).

In the case of the ordinances, it was not possible to identify a specific author, nor was it feasible to identify specific different hands. The texts were instead analysed per entry in which there never occurred more than one unique hand.

Facsimiles

The facsimile section contains a link to the photos of the original text. In the transcription, page breaks are indicated and a link to the photo

of the original physical page is inserted as well. In this way, it is possible to view both the transcribed page and the image of the original page at the same time. This is convenient for the transcription and transcription checking procedure, but also useful for the data analyses as it is possible to relatively quickly look at the original text.

6.6. Analysing the data: challenges and prospects

When describing my data, I have decided to use descriptive linguistics only. This means that I will not use inferential statistic and only give statistic summaries in the form of cross tabulations containing raw figures and percentages. As mentioned earlier, there are many unknown social factors that could act as hidden variables when applying statistical tests. Furthermore, the data sets are unevenly distributed and relatively small, which makes most inferential statistical tests unreliable methods. A problem is that there does not seem to be a common consensus as to what are the most reliable statistical tests that can deal with the gaps that historical data present (Vosters 2011: 218-222; Nobels 2013: 52-53). In quantitative sociolinguistics, versions of VARBRUL (variable rule analyses) (Cedergren & Sankoff 1974) and GoldVarb (Rand & Sankoff 1990) are commonly used to establish the extent in which independent variables affect the occurrence of a certain variant or set of variants. However, this method has been met with some criticism (Johnson 2009; Vosters 2011; Tagliamonte & Baayen 2012). As Vosters (2011: 219) points out, one of the major problems is that the method does not deal with collinearity very well, i.e. both text type and the place in which a text was produced, as well as authorship of a text may together affect the use of a certain linguistic variant, while, when each independent variable is tested separately, the effects may not appear to be of major significance. Also, the method tests the significance of presupposed independent variables, but it does not identify possible independent variables, which makes it harder to account for hidden variables. Furthermore, the method does not account for individual variation. According to Tagliamonte and Baayen (2012: 142), this has to do with the fact that the traditional VARBRUL method can only handle fixed-effect factors, i.e. the effect is controlled for by the sample that is used

and is a constant across the population that is tested. For example, as soon as the sample that is analysed contains both male and female informants, the predictor *sex* is reliably tested by the model because all possibilities are exhausted, and the results can be considered representative of the speech community under investigation. However, it is often the case that the data are also affected by random-effect factors, i.e. only a subset of all the possibilities of a predictor are presented in the data. Individual variation is an example of a random effect that may affect the generalisability of the data set as a whole (Tagliamonte & Baayen 2012). In other words, when we assume that sex and social class are the main predictors for the use of a given variant and we group our data accordingly, there is still the possibility that a person has his or her own set of factors that may affect their choice for a variant. This especially becomes a problem as soon as more than one token per individual is used in the data analysis, since individual variation will then take effect (Tagliamonte & Baayen 2012). Particularly with smaller data sets, it is very likely that more than one token per individual is used and only a sub-set of all the possible types of predicting factors for individuals is represented. As noted earlier, the corpus for the present study is relatively small and unevenly distributed, i.e. some individuals may provide only one token, whereas others may provide several. As soon as the random effects are analysed as fixed effects, the sample used is no longer a representative sample, because the method does not take into account the fact that the data only represent a sub-set of all the possibilities that may occur within the linguistic community in question (Tagliamonte & Baayen 2012: 142-144). What is more, the results may obscure the relevance of those individuals that deviate from the group-mean, i.e. important social factors that may completely block the use of a certain variant may go by unnoticed when the individual is not considered (Tagliamonte & Baayen 2012: 142-144). It follows then that the traditional sociolinguistic statistical methods are not reliable for the analyses of the present corpus.

Recently, new and more sophisticated statistical methods have been proposed (see Vosters 2011; Tagliamonte & Baayer 2012). Especially, "Random Forests" (Strobl et al. 2009; Breiman, Friedman,

Olshen & Stone, 1984; Breiman 2001) appears to be a promising method in that the tool can account for co-linearity and it can deal with individual variation in smaller and unevenly distributed data sets (Vosters 2011; see Tagliamonte & Baayer 2012 for a detailed explanation). However, since it is a relatively recent development within the field of historical sociolinguistics, the method has not yet been widely applied within the field, which also means that there are few user-friendly tools and studies that allow for a straightforward adoption of the method. Furthermore, the method requires a very strong computer, as well as a significant amount of time to compute even the smallest number of tokens. For the current study, it was felt that the application of this method was better left aside for future research as at present there is insufficient time to acquire the expertise as well as equipment to reliably use this promising method.

6.7. Concluding remarks

In the previous sections, I have given a detailed description of the data that I will use for my case studies and I have explained the way in which I have prepared them for the data analyses.

As discussed in Chapter 2, one of the major challenges of historical sociolinguistics is that knowledge about the social background of the linguistic informants is often lacking or limited at best. My data are no exception to this and, although I have relatively detailed information about some of the letter writers, there will always be information and data gaps. The issue of representativeness also plays a role in my data in that, especially in the case of the letter data, some authors and time periods are underrepresented. Namely, there is no material from writers of the lower ranks of society and, as can be gathered from Table 6.2 in Section 6.4.5. above, a large proportion of my letter collection is written by two female authors, Elizabeth and Mary Smyth, whose writings are mostly from the period 1630-1642. This is in itself remarkable as men are generally overrepresented in historical texts. A solution would have been to exclude some of the material by these authors, but since the data collection is small and letter material of Bristol from this period is scarce, I decided to include all of their material. However, this means that the traditional sociolinguistic

variables such as sex, occupation and social standing are not useful in the analyses of linguistic variation in my data, since the social group that will be studied in the case studies is rather homogenous. Since I will use qualitative methods in addition to quantitative analyses, this is not necessarily a major impediment for the current study; by studying the lives and the language use of some particular letter writers in detail, a better understanding will be gained of how an individual may adapt to his or her sociolinguistic surroundings. For instance, we may not know the precise social network of a person, but based on their life stories we know that they were socially and geographically mobile and were most likely part of a loose-knit social network. A qualitative study can therefore help identify how individuals within a certain type of network may typically behave, and how these individuals contribute to the changing and shaping of a written variety. What is more, the history of the Smyth family is well documented, and there are letters of more generations within the family, which makes it possible to look at different generations of the family. As previously pointed out, the Smyth family and their social network are exemplary of an urban merchant elite family that rose to wealth and acquired a genteel life style. Their history and life style is representative of many merchant families in urban centres (see also Chapter 4, Section 4.2.), who may have been important agents in the development of supralocal written varieties (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2005). In the case of the council ordinances, information about the scribes can only be based on broad generalisations that are inferred from general historical accounts about scribal schooling. Nonetheless, we can consider variation in individual texts and see if there may be individual tendencies. Furthermore, the data can and will be compared to the results of previous studies that include similar text types, which will allow for insights into civic literacy, as well as pragmatic literacy in the case of letters. Although research on linguistic variation in Bristol, or the South West in general, is scant for the period 1400-1700, it is possible to compare the results of the case studies to other studies that consider variation and change of the same linguistic features in larger regions

of England and London, as well as studies that consider regional variation in the South West in the period after 1400-1700.

In Chapter 2 (specifically Section 2.3.), I have also explained that historical sociolinguistics has a broader application than quantitative sociolinguistics. Historical sociolinguistics seeks to consider language use in a wider socio-historical context that goes beyond the traditional sociolinguistic quantitative paradigms. In my case studies, I will consider the role of different types of literacy and the sociolinguistic practices that can be related to them. More specifically, civic literacy, which is associated with the council ordinances, and pragmatic literacy, which is associated with letter writing, both had different functions in society, which is expected to be reflected in the linguistic variation in the texts (see also Chapter 5). The aim of the present case studies is to create a linguistic snapshot of Bristol, as it were, and to present how the three different features, the supralocal variants of relative pronouns, third person present tense markers, and <th> developed on a more general level over a long time-period, as well as on a micro-level in individuals and in different literacy contexts.

Chapter 7. Relativisation in Bristol texts

7.1. Introduction

The relative clause has received a fair amount of scholarly attention within the field of historical linguistics (see Curme 1912; Reuter 1937; Mustanoja 1960; Andrew 1966; Rydén 1966, 1983; Kivimaa 1967; Romaine 1982, 1984b; DeKeyser 1984; Rissanen 1986, 2000; Traugott 1992; Ball 1996; Fischer 1992; Bergs 2003, 2005, 2015; Evans 2015) and other fields such as linguistic typology (see Keenan & Comrie 1977; Hawkins 1999), descriptive grammar (see Quirk et al. 1985; Huddleston, Pullum, & Bauer 2002), dialectology (see Ihalainen 1980; Poussa 1991; Herrmann 2003; Wagner 2004). In the field of historical linguistics, relativisation is of interest because the relative pronoun system underwent drastic changes in the course of the Early Middle English period, i.e. a development which continued into to the Early Modern period. This development thus took place in the same period that is covered by the *Emerging Standards* project, 1400-1700. Furthermore, especially interesting is the development *which* and *who*; they were innovative forms that could be found all over England and that have become part of the present-day written standard, which makes a case study of the development of relative markers relevant in the context of the project.

The Old English inflectional demonstrative pronoun *se*, indeclinable *þe*, or a combination of the inflectional and indeclinable form (*se þe*) were used as markers to introduce relative clauses (Traugott 1992: 224-227). The inflectional relative pronouns were usually inflected for the case of the relativised noun phrase. The sentence in (1) below is an example of indeclinable *þe*, and example (2) shows a relative construction with a combination of inflectional *se* and indeclinable *þe*:

(1) þa beoð eadige þe gehyrað Godes word

[They are blessed *who* obey God's word]

- (2) He lifode mid þam Gode *þam* (DATIVE) *þe* he ær
þeowode (DATIVE)

[He lived with that God *whom* he earlier had served]
(Baker 2012: 47)

Sometimes the inflectional relative pronoun could also be inflected for the case of the antecedent, so-called case attraction:

- (3) heriað forði Drihten (ACCUSATIVE), *þonne*
(ACCUSATIVE) ðe eardað on Sion

[praise therefore Lord, *whom* lives in Sion]
(Bede 2 9.132.26 in Traugott 1992: 223)

Similar examples of case attraction are also found in later stages of English:

- (4) baronet Hell hath also baried his lady, she was deliuered
of a Sonne that liues, which wilbe some thinge out of
her sisters waye, **whom** it is sayd was newly married to
Haris a litel befor this hapined (Elizabeth Smythe, 1630,
BRO: ac/c48/15)

By the Early Middle English period, the more complex inflectional Old English system had given way to a less complex system in which indeclinable *that* became the most common form to introduce a relative clause with different types of antecedents (Fischer 1992: 296). However, from the twelfth century onwards the relative pronoun system became more complex again with the introduction of the *wh*-forms *which/whom/whose* and around the fifteenth century also *who*. Previous studies have shown that the variation and change of the respective relativisers pattern along the clines of restrictiveness of a clause and the animacy of the antecedent (Fischer 1992: 296; Rissanen 2000: 293-298). *That* came to be preferred in restrictive clauses whereas the *wh*-forms started to replace *that* in non-restrictive clauses (Romaine 1982; DeKeyser 1984; Rydén 1966; Fischer et al. 2000; Bergs 2005). The forms *who(m)(se)* were

introduced primarily with human antecedents, e.g. usually noun phrases that have a human referent:

- (5) That there fhalbe *one honeft difcrete burgelle of this Citie* chofen, *who fhalbe namyd the father of Orphanes* (Common Council ordinances of Bristol, f.22b 1567, BRO: 04272)

To date, few studies give insight into the geographical diffusion of the developing relativisation pattern. Some studies do of course pay attention to regional use (Romaine 1982; Raumolin-Brunberg 2000; Bergs 2005) as the written material that was used for these studies can be linked to certain regions. For instance, the Cely letter collection (1475-1488) in Raumolin-Brunberg (2000) can be linked to London, and the Paston collection (1422-1509) in Bergs's study can be linked to East Anglia. However, as previously mentioned, none of the studies based on historical data that I am aware of seem to have looked at regional distribution systematically. While the previously mentioned studies shed some light on the regional development of relative patterns, little is known about the historical development of relative constructions in the South West of England. There are some present-day dialect studies that look at dialect variation, but they do not include Bristol (see Ihalainen 1980; Herrmann 2003). The aim of the present case study is to look more systematically at relative constructions in texts that originated in the Bristol area. By comparing data from Bristol to existing studies, light will be shed on Bristol's role in the adoption and possible spread of supralocal written forms.

This chapter will be structured as follows: In Section 7.2., I will discuss in more detail what a relative clause is and what relative constructions are. In Section 7.3., I focus on the historical development of relative markers and in doing so, I will summarise previous research that has been carried out on the history of English relative markers. This will then serve as the basis for the interpretation of my empirical research. Section 7.4. introduces the empirical part of this chapter and explains the method that I have employed for this case study. Section 7.5. deals with the results of the case study and considers the development of relative markers with regard to several factors that

have been proven important in the previous research that I discuss in Section 7.3. In Section 7.6., I will briefly zoom in on the relative marker *as*. This is a relative marker that has not been studied extensively, but it deserves attention because it may be a regional form. For the sake of comparability with other studies, the survey for *as* was carried out separately and not included in the study of the extensively studied main variants *which/who/whom/whose* and *that*. Section 7.7. will summarise the results and consider the implications of the findings for the present study in the context of supralocalisation.

7.2. Relative clauses and relativisers: setting the scene

A more elaborate and at the same time precise definition of what is a relative clause is required before delving deeper into the historical accounts on relativisers and relative clauses. It has to be pointed out that different terms and definitions exist, depending on the different grammatical frameworks and interpretations in which the linguistic feature has been studied. The aim of this section is to provide a set of definitions and terms that have been proven useful in the description of the development of the English relativisers (see Rissanen 2000: 292-293). In some cases, this means that an in-depth discussion of alternative definitions will be avoided because it does not necessarily provide a useful framework for comparison with other historical linguistic studies.

A relative clause, sometimes also referred to as an adjectival clause, is a type of subordinate clause, although, as will be explained in more detail below, syntactic subordination does not always imply semantic subordination, e.g. especially in older stages of English, some subordinate constructions can be interpreted as being semantically of a more coordinative nature (Rissanen 2000: 282). Prototypical relative clauses modify a (pro)noun or a noun phrase of a main clause (Quirk et al. 1985; Huddleston, Pullum & Bauer 2002). The underlined clause in example (6) below modifies the proper noun *Sr Robert Southwell*. The relative clause provides specific information about the modified noun:

- (6) I haue been this day to wait on Sr Robert Southwell hoe prefernts his feruice unto you
(Charles Smyth, 1679, BRO: ac/c/81/1)

In present-day Standard English, relative clauses are introduced by a relativiser which could be a *wh*-relativiser (*which/who(m)(se)*), *that*, or the relativiser is omitted, which is often referred to as *zero relativiser* (Quirk et al. 1985; Huddleston, Pullum & Bauer 2002). There are also relative adverbs such as *when/where/why*, but they will be left aside in the present discussion since the development of *that* and the other pronominal relativisers are the main focus of the present case study. There is some debate as to whether *that* should be classified as a relativiser, solely as a complementiser, or a subordinator. The main argument for a different analysis is that *that* as a relativiser does not seem to share the same grammatical properties as the other relative pronouns (cf. Auwera 1985; Huddleston, Pullum & Bauer 2002). For the sake of convenience, it will be analysed as a relativiser in this study since it is traditionally analysed as such in the literature of historical linguistic studies (see Curme 1912; Reuter 1937; Mustanoja 1960; Rydén 1966, 1983; Rissanen 1986, 2000; Traugott 1992; Ball 1996; Fischer et al. 2000; Bergs 2003, 2005, 2015).

In example (6), the entity *Sr Robert Southwell*, which the relative pronoun *who (hoe)* refers to, is called the antecedent or head. The co-referential relationship between the antecedent and the relativiser is referred to as an anaphoric relationship; the relativiser refers back to the antecedent. In present-day Standard English, the animacy of the antecedent plays a role in the choice of the relativiser; *who(se)(m)* are favoured with human antecedents, whereas *which* is preferred with non-human antecedents. Relativiser *that* is preferred in restrictive relative clauses, but *who(m)(se)* can occur with human antecedents in this context (Quirk et al. 1985; Huddleston, Pullum & Bauer 2002). Additionally, relative clauses can be classified according to the different types of antecedent they take. The first most common and prototypical one is the *adnominal* relative clause, which has a (pro)nominal antecedent, as shown in example (6) above. The second type (see example (7)) is the *nominal* relative clause, which is a somewhat less prototypical relative clause in that it has no clearly

identifiable antecedent, hence this type of relative clause is often referred to as *free*, *independent* or *headless* (Quirk et al. 1985: 1059; Rissanen 2000: 292). Another term that is often used for the nominal type is *fused relative*. This is because the relativiser seems to have a dual function, as it is both the antecedent and introduces a relative clause (Huddleston, Pullum & Bauer 2002: 1070). Example (7) below shows a *free* relative. As can be seen, the relativiser *what* does not have an overt antecedent. This type of relative closely resembles, and may even overlap with, indirect interrogatives, as is illustrated in (8) below.

- (7) I really liked what she wrote
- (8) I can't help wondering what she wrote
(Huddleston, Pullum & Bauer 2002: 1070)

Another closely related subtype of the *free* relative clause that should be mentioned here is the *generalising* relative clause (cf. Mustanoja 1960: 461; Huddleston, Pullum & Bauer 2002: 1072; Bergs 2005: 134). Examples (9) and (10) below can be interpreted as a *generalising* relative clause:

- (9) He accepted what she offered
- (10) He accepted whatever she offered
(Huddleston, Pullum & Bauer 2002: 1072)

Admittedly, it is sometimes hard to distinguish *generalising* relative clauses from *free* relatives. Relativisers that contain *-ever*, such as the relativiser in (5), are almost always generalising. However, example (4) can be interpreted as either free or generalising. The difference is dependent on the intended meaning. Thus, if the relative clause can be translated as (a), it would be a *free* relative, whereas when it conveys the meaning of (b), it is generalising:

- a) He accepted that which she offered
b) He accepted all the things she offered

A third type is the sentential relative clause. Here the antecedent does not consist of a noun phrase, but of an entire clause, sentence, or predication (Bergs 2005: 134). In example (11), the underlined relative clause refers back to the act of coming back into the country, and not to a noun phrase in particular:

- (11) I would not haue you thinke of remouing vntill I come into ye country which will bee att ye first rising of ye Parliament (Hugh Smythe, 1679, BRO: ac/c/78/3)

Closely related to the sentential relative clause is the continuative relative clause. Like the sentential relative, it has no identifiable noun phrase as its antecedent, but rather loosely refers to a statement made previously in the discourse. However, the difference is that the anaphoric relationship between the antecedent and relativiser is weak. Rather, this type of relative clause seems to “advance the discourse by adding new information” (Romaine 1982: 83) or “often serve[s] as a summing up of previous thoughts” (Fischer 1992: 304). Arguably, continuatives are more coordinative in nature than subordinate, and thus could also be classified as clause connectors. In example (12) below, the relativiser in bold could easily be replaced by *and* without changing the meaning that is conveyed:

- (12) and tis sayde he will put in a tenante in to our farme at our lady day. **which** if he doe he can but forfet a band of .216. £ which he hath allredy done by leteing the grounds with out consente (Elizabeth Smythe, 1640, BRO: ac/c48/24)

As mentioned earlier, another important distinction that can be made with regard to relative clauses concerns what is commonly referred to as *restrictive* and *non-restrictive*. Other terms that are used are “defining versus non-defining, integrated versus supplementary, lax versus tense” (Denison & Hundt 2013: 41), but their definitions are in most respects similar. The difference between the two types of relative clause are best illustrated by an example of a clause in restrictive (13) and non-restrictive use (14):

- (13) The necklace which her mother gave to her is in the safe
- (14) The necklace, which her mother gave to her, is in the safe (Huddleston, Pullum & Bauer 2002: 1058)

In (13), the relative clause restricts or defines one referent that is part of a potentially larger number of referents; of all the potential necklaces that are around, the one that was given by mother is in the safe. Since this type of clause refers to a noun or noun phrase in particular, *free*, *sentential* and *continuative* relative clauses are non-restrictive by definition, i.e. these clauses do not refer to a noun or a noun-phrase (Bergs 2005: 134). In (14), the relative clause only adds extra information and it does not delimit a set of potential entities: there is only one necklace, it is in the safe and it so happens that it was a gift from mother. The clause is enclosed by commas to express the difference in meaning, but it also reflects a difference in prosody. The commas further show that the clause is “related only loosely to the surrounding structure” (Huddleston, Pullum & Bauer 2002: 1058), whereas in example (13), the relative clause is more tightly incorporated in the syntactic construction and it is semantically essential. As may be gathered from examples (13) and (14) above, the interpretation of restrictive versus non-restrictive is potentially ambiguous. Although non-restrictive clauses are often set apart by punctuation, and restrictive clauses are generally not, this is by no means a hard and fast rule. This especially goes for historical data where restrictive clauses are sometimes introduced with a comma, whereas non-restrictive clauses occur freely without punctuation. Although, presently, the relativiser *that* is rarely used with non-restrictive clauses and *which* is rarely used with restrictive clauses, studies on present-day usage show that this is by no means a categorical rule either (Biber 2000; Huddleston, Pullum & Bauer 2002; Denison & Hundt 2013). Furthermore, *who(se)(m)* occur with human antecedents in both types, albeit that restrictive clauses strongly favour *that* over any other relativiser, regardless of the animacy of the antecedent (Hinrichs, Szmrecsanyi, & Bohmann 2015). *Zero* relativisers mostly occur in restrictive relatives when the omitted relativiser is in non-subject function. (Traugott 1992: 236). However,

as will be explained in more detail in the following sections, in older stages of English, a relativiser was sometimes also omitted in subject position (Fischer 1992; Traugott 1992). In fact, this is also a feature of some present-day dialects, notably in it-cleft sentences (Herrmann 2005: 64). The sentence in (15) below is an example from Somerset:

- (15) It was J.H. \emptyset lived in there. Her father raised in that house next, it was A.H. \emptyset lived in there (CSW FRED Som_012, as cited in Herrmann 2005: 64)

Obviously, the choice of relativiser is an even less reliable indicator for restrictiveness when it comes to the analyses of historical texts, since the *wh*-relative markers were not used categorically. Luckily, in most cases, it can be gathered from the context of the discourse whether the information provided in the relative clause is set-delimiting and essential to the meaning of the matrix clause or not. Yet, Bergs (2005), as well as Denison and Hundt (2013), point out that it is not always possible to make a “clear-cut binary distinction” (Bergs 2005: 135), between restrictive and non-restrictive, especially in historical data. Sometimes the restrictiveness of a relative clause is highly ambiguous, even within the context provided. Arguably, one should speak of a cline of restrictiveness which places ambiguous cases between restrictive and non-restrictive (Bergs 2005, following Jacobson 1965). An example from Bergs (2005) shows that sometimes a clause can be interpreted as either restrictive or non-restrictive:

- (16) And I send you a copy of the warrant that they were a-restyd by, &c (Bergs, 2005: 136)

This sentence could mean that the warrant caused people to be arrested, but it could also be the case that it was the copy of the warrant that caused people to be arrested. Denison and Hundt (2013) argue for a gradient model that consists of a more fine-grained set of overlapping categories, which includes aspective¹⁸ and continuative clauses.

¹⁸ Aspective clauses resemble the form of restrictive clauses in that they are deeply embedded in the syntax, but semantically they are additional rather than set-

Apart from restrictiveness, Ball (1996: 236) points out that antecedents that have a demonstrative, a quantifier, or are ordinal are slightly skewed towards *that*. Yet another factor that is mentioned in the literature are adjacency of the relative gap and the antecedent, i.e. a greater distance seems to give rise to the use of a *wh*-form (see Quirk 1957: 105; Ball 1996: 236; Bergs 2005: 174). The degree to which material intervenes between the antecedent and the relative gap determines the adjacency. In example (17), the antecedent and gap are adjacent, whereas they are further removed from each other in (18):

(17) The *girl* **who** trained the dog

(18) The *girl in the red dress with the blue dots* **who** trained the dog

In the literature, definiteness of the antecedent has also been found to be a factor (Romaine 1982; Bergs 2005). Following Bergs (2005: 166), definite antecedents are antecedents that are noun phrases preceded by a definite article, demonstratives, (proper) names, or personal pronouns. Indefinite antecedents are antecedents that are indefinite pronouns, or noun phrases with an indefinite pronoun, or indefinite pronouns. Bergs (2005: 166) found that definite antecedents most commonly occurred with *that*, while indefinites only showed a slight tendency towards *which*. One problem with this definite/indefinite distinction might be that particular indefinite pronouns are found to prefer *that* as well, e.g. some quantifiers are indefinite, but because they are quantifiers they may be preferred with *that* (see paragraph above and Ball 1996; Johansson 2012; Rissanen 2000). The question is thus how useful this distinction

delimiting. Yet the information they add is essential to the noun they refer to in the matrix clause. In the example below, the antecedent *father* is unique and thus non-restrictive by default, but, as Sigley (1997: 127) argues, the information introduced by the relative clause is highly essential to the antecedent and thus not merely an addition to the discourse that can be left out (Denison & Hundt 2013: 142):

She thanked my *father, who had saved her life*. (example cited by Sigley 1997:125, from Rydén 1974: 542)

between definite and indefinite is, as it seems that the type of (pro)noun may play a larger role than definiteness. Bergs (2005: 168) took into account the number (plural/singular) of the antecedent too, but found that it was of little significance; rather it seems that the type of (pro)noun is more important.

7.3. The historical development of relativisation

As mentioned in the introduction, the relative system in English underwent some significant changes in the period that is investigated in the present study. Therefore, in order to fully understand and interpret the results of the present study, it is necessary to zoom in on the historical development of the relative system. In this section, I will consider both internal and external linguistic factors. To summarise the relevant main points that were discussed in Section 7.2. above, in present-day (Standard) English, the relativisers that are available are invariable *that*, *which*, *zero*, and the variable relative pronoun *who(m)(se)*. The choice of the relativiser is largely dependent on whether the antecedent is human or not, and if it concerns a restrictive relative clause or not. A human antecedent gives rise to the use of *who* or the inflected forms *whose* and *whom* as a relative marker. Invariable *which* is mostly used with non-human antecedents in non-restrictive contexts. Invariable *that* is almost exclusively used as a relative marker in restrictive clauses and is strongly favoured with non-human antecedents, but also often replaces human *who* in this context. Lastly, in present-day Standard English, the relativiser can be omitted when the relative clause is restrictive and the grammatical role of the absent relativiser is object, indirect object, or prepositional object (Fischer 1992: 101). Another important not previously mentioned property of present-day Standard English relativisers *that* and *zero* is that if their grammatical role is that of the prepositional object, the preposition has to be stranded, e.g. the preposition cannot precede the relativiser and stays adjacent to the verb, whereas this is possible with *wh*-forms, as shown in example (19) and (20) below:

(19) The house (that/∅) he lived in

(20) The house in which he lived (Traugott 1992: 230)

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, in Old English both the invariant form *þe* was used as a relative marker, as well as an inflectional form, which was the demonstrative *se (masculine)/seo (feminine)/ þæt (neuter)*. A combination of inflectional *se* and indeclinable *þe* also occurred. According to Traugott (1992: 224), there seems to have been a tendency to use the combined form when the antecedent was not modified by a demonstrative pronoun or a quantifier. Indeclinable *þe* was favoured in object and subject function and when the antecedent was singular and modified by a demonstrative, or when it was accompanied by certain quantifiers. Interestingly, the declinable neuter form *þæt*, from which present-day *that* appears to have developed, was sometimes also used in place of the invariable relative marker. Like present-day English *that* and the Old English invariable *þe*, *þæt* also seemed to have required preposition stranding when it was used as an invariable form (Traugott 1992: 230). However, unlike present-day English, restrictiveness of a clause played a less important role in the choice of relativiser, although there seemed to have been a slight tendency towards the use of invariable relativisers in restrictives (Traugott 1992: 223). The human/non-human antecedent distinction did not play a role either. However, the rich gender inflection established a strong and clear connection between the antecedent and the relativiser (Fischer 1992: 69). *Zero* relative markers were rare in Old English and mostly only occurred with predicates containing stative verbs (Traugott 1992: 228).

There is some debate (cf. Mustanoja 1960; Romaine 1982; Fischer 1992; Rissanen 2000; Bergs 2005) as to how the *wh*-forms became part of the relative marker system. In Old English, the related *wh*-pronouns *hwa* and *hwilc* were not used as relativisers, but as interrogative pronouns. It could be that the heavy functional load of *that* gave rise to the development of new variants that slowly developed specific functions within the relativiser paradigm (Rissanen 2000: 295). The development of the *wh*-relativisers is thought to have been triggered in ambiguous contexts. Contexts that have been identified as environments in which relative *wh*-constructions could

have developed are indirect questions and free and /or generalising relativisers (Fischer 2000: 298-299). Sentence (21) below is an unambiguous example of an indirect question. In example (22), however, the construction looks much like that of a free relative and the *wh*-pronoun does not seem to have a strong interrogative force:

(21) I asked who went to the cinema

(22) They saw who ate it

This use of *wh*-pronouns in Early Middle English also occurred with verbs such as *know*, *wonder*, and *see* (Fischer 2000: 298). Another triggering factor, or perhaps the next stage in the development, could have been the use of *wh*-forms in generalising relative constructions (see example (4) and (5) above). As explained earlier, the *wh*-forms carry the meaning “whichever or whatever” in these constructions (Mustanoja 1960: 192). As mentioned before, generalising relatives are quite similar to free relatives and indirect interrogatives. The final step to the emergence of a prototypical relative clause, from a present-day point of view, was thus that the *wh*-pronoun also started to refer to an identifiable antecedent. The fact that the first instances are attested in non-restrictive contexts supports the hypothesis that ambiguous contexts may have been a promoting factor, since the relationship between the antecedent and the relative clause tends to be relatively loose.

The question remains when and how the Old English relativisation patterns came to resemble present-day usage. By the Middle English period, invariable *þe* had started to disappear, while the inflectional *se*, *seo*, and *þæt* were replaced by invariable *þat/that*. A study by Kivimaa (1967) on Early Middle English texts shows that the invariant relative marker *þat* was first attested in North East Midland texts (Fischer 2000: 296). By the thirteenth century, invariant *þat* had become the predominant variant in texts from all dialect areas, except for the South West and South West Midland texts, in which invariable *þe* and *þat* were competitors for a longer period of time (Fischer 2000: 296). In the course of the early Middle English period, there was finally only one dominant form that was used invariably in restrictive and

non-restrictive clauses, both with personal and non-personal antecedents (Traugott 1992; Fischer 2000; Rissanen 2000). The *wh*-variants, apart from relative marker *who*, started to make their first appearance in the twelfth century, mostly in non-restrictive clauses. However, they were generally still rare. It took another 200 years before they became more common (Traugott 1992; Fischer 2000; Rissanen 2000). Moreover, according to Bergs (2003: 94), the different relative forms emerged as competitors consecutively rather than simultaneously. The first variant to compete with invariant *þat/that* was invariant *which*. It was used with human (example (23)) as well as non-human antecedents and was often preceded by a preposition (example (24)). This is interesting in light of the fact that the invariable relativiser *that* required preposition stranding; relativiser *which* allowed for more flexibility in that respect (Fischer 2000: 300).

- (23) Item for almuch as many tymes to for this tyme Dyuers peple **which** hath nat be apprentices fervantes nor maifters of þe fame (Dyer's Ordinance, 1439, f.145b, BRO: 04719)
- (24) Also we fynd that the laid Chantre preftes hath A noyer tenenement in **which** lohn Branvile Cooke newe dwellith (Tenement's memorandum, 1470, f.133b, BRO: 04719)

There seemed to have been a slight preference for the use of *which* in a non-restrictive context and with sentential antecedents by the end of the Middle English period (Mustanoja 1960: 197; Rissanen 2000: 293). The variants *whose* and *whom* were preferred with human antecedents, but also occasionally occurred with non-human antecedents (Rydén 1966; Rissanen 2000; Bergs 2005). As pointed out earlier, initially, the forms were favoured in non-restrictive contexts. Curiously, the variant *who* was to appear much later, around the second half of the fifteenth century, while case inflected *whom* and *whose* had been there since the first introduction of the *wh*-variants (Rydén 1983; Rissanen 2000; Bergs 2003). By the sixteenth century, the *wh*-relativisers were “well-established in all types of non-

restrictive relative clauses” (Rissanen 2000: 293). Furthermore, the forms *whom*, *whose* and to a lesser extent *who* were increasingly found in restrictive clauses as well (Fischer 1992: 306). Rydén’s (1966) study on early sixteenth-century relative constructions shows that, initially, *who(m)(se)* were preferred with (proper) nouns. Similarly, Johansson (2012: 789) observes this tendency for sixteenth century *who* in particular. Rissanen (2000: 293-294) suggests that this is because indefinite and personal pronoun antecedents tend to have a tighter semantic link with the relative clause, and thus the relativiser *that* is sufficient to establish the link, whereas with (proper) noun antecedents the relationship tends to be weaker. A human *wh*-relativiser establishes a stronger link between the antecedent and the relative clause, thus giving rise to the adoption of this form in the latter contexts (Rissanen 2000: 293-294). However, in texts that are associated with colloquial language such as witness depositions and informal letters, *that* and *zero* still prevailed over the *wh*-forms (Dekeyser 1984: 62; Johansson 2012: 789). Johansson (2012: 789) found that *who* as an alternative to *that* in subject position was not frequent in colloquial language until the eighteenth century. At the same time, the use of *which* with human antecedents declined rapidly.

The *zero*-relative construction also underwent an interesting development. In the course of the Middle English period, it became more frequent. However, in contrast to present-day English usage, it was still more common in relative clauses where the finite verb was stative, existential or copula-like and where the omitted relativiser was in subject position (Fischer 1992: 306). By the sixteenth century, *zero* became more common, especially in non-subject function (Rissanen 2000: 299).

All in all, based on the studies summarised here, by the end of Early Modern English period, the relativisation pattern in written language started to resemble the pattern that is recorded for present-day Standard English; more precisely, the use of *that* in non-restrictives decreased, *zero* became especially common in object position, and *which* became less and less associated with human antecedents, while personal *who(m)(se)* started to gain ground in both

restrictive and non-restrictive contexts (Rydén 1966; Dekeyser 1984; Rissanen 2000; Johansson 2012).

So far, only internal linguistic explanations have been provided for changes within the relative system. As for other factors that may have played a role, a much-debated question is whether and to what extent French and/or Latin had an influence on the development of the *wh*-relativisers (Mustanoja 1960; Bergs 2005). The assumption that Latin and French may have been influential is based on the observation that the relative markers frequently occurred with translations of the Latin equivalents *quī*, *quae*, *quod* (cf. Mustanoja 1960; Romaine 1984b; Fischer 2000, for a fuller discussion of arguments for and against this hypothesis). As Mustanoja (1960: 192) points out, it may well be the case that the influence of Latin and French reinforced a tendency that had already been present. Romaine (1984b: 104), who looked at the development of relativisation in Scots from a historical sociolinguistic perspective, proposes that the emergence of *wh*-forms was a change from above, e.g. the new variants were adopted for stylistic and prestige reasons. She found that the *wh*-variants were most frequent in formal styles and she argues that the prestige of Latin in formal styles were of major influence. I will return to Romaine's observation in Section 7.3.1. below, as it will become relevant in the light of the findings that will be discussed in that section.

7.3.1. The lag of relative marker who; an exploration of explanations

As pointed out earlier, *who* did not become part of the relative system until long after the inflected forms had been introduced. This has long puzzled scholars (see for instance Rydén 1983; Dekeyser 1984; Romaine 1982, 1984b; Bergs 2003). As stated previously, *that* was most resistant in subject position, which is also the position in which uninflected *who* is the expected form with personal antecedents. One of the explanations from a functional point of view is that the need for inflected forms *whose* and *whom* arose sooner because of a gap in the paradigm; their inflection for non-nominal case ruled out ambiguity, whereas the nominal forms *that* and *which* were sufficient for subject position (Rydén 1983; Auwera 1985). In Romaine's (1982, 1984b) data,

as well as in Rydén's (1966) data, the *wh*-forms first made their way into the system in functions that were less frequently relativised; prepositional objects, indirect objects, and direct objects, while it took a lot longer for *wh*-variants to gain ground in subject position (Dekeyser 1984; Rissanen 2000; Johansson 2012). Romaine explains the lag by means of the implicational scale proposed by Keenan and Comrie (1977). They observe that “languages do not vary randomly with respect to the relativisability of N[oun] P[hrase]s in certain syntactic positions” (Romaine 1982: 105). Keenan and Comrie’s (1977) so-called accessibility hierarchy is based on a typological (synchronic) study of 50 different languages and results in the following implicational scale:

SU > DO > IO > OBL > GEN > OCOMP
(Keenan & Comrie 1977: 66)

The hierarchy represents the order in which the different syntactic functions (subject, direct object, oblique object, genitive, object of comparison) are most accessible (Keenan & Comrie 1977: 67). The scale predicts that subject relatives are most frequent in all languages that make use of relativisation strategies, and when a language has relativisers in oblique position, it always has access to the other preceding positions too. The scale also reflects the degree of syntactic complexity of a position, with the subject position being the most frequent and least complex structure, while every syntactic function following increases in complexity and thus, in psycholinguistic terms, also makes them harder to process. Interestingly, it is precisely in subject function where *that* was most resistant to change and thus also to the replacement by *who*. This led Romaine (1982: 234) to conclude that the introduction of *wh*-relativisers was a change from above the level of consciousness. Her reasoning behind this is that because the forms were first introduced in the complex and more difficult to process positions, the use of the forms reputedly required more conscious effort. However, another plausible explanation for the lag of *who* in subject position comes from the field of psycholinguistics. As Keenan and Comrie's (1977) Accessibility Hierarchy implies, relativisation in subject position is most frequent and the least

complex structure to process. It is the relative construction that is most likely to be present in a language, and that is acquired first and most easily by (first) language learners (O'Grady 2003: 46). In other words, subject position relativisation is most likely well established and engrained in the speaker's mind, while the more complex and less frequent syntactic functions may be less stable and less strongly embedded in the speaker's mind and thus be more susceptible to change (Keenan & Comrie 1977; Hawkins 1999). To illustrate the differences in complexity of the syntactic positions that are relativised, examples (25) and (26) below demonstrate what is referred to as relative *gap*, to which a corresponding *filler*, e.g. the antecedent, can be assigned:

- (25) Subject relative: the truck_i that [_i pushed the car]
- (26) Direct Object relative: the truck_i that [the car pushed _i]
(O'Grady 2003: 46)

In short, for English, this means that the subject gap in (26) and the corresponding filler are adjacent, which possibly makes parsing easier, and a neutral uninflected relativiser such as *that* suffices to establish the link. What is more, a subject gap is structurally less deeply embedded, which makes the information load relatively light and easy to process too. For the direct object relative, the opposite is true; here the gap is linearly further away and structurally more deeply embedded, e.g. all other grammatical roles need to be parsed and identified first, which increases the speaker's memory load. An inflected form will help to establish a stronger connection between filler and gap. At the same time, due to the heavier processing load, the more complex structure will be less stable in the speaker's mind, thus making the more complex constructions more open to variation, whereas the more easily processible and thus more stable subject constructions will probably be more resistant to change (see Hawkins 1999; see also O'Grady 2003 for an in-depth description of filler-gap dependencies and Bailey 1973 on the directionality of change).

Why and how then was relative *who* eventually introduced? As explained above, there was no direct 'need' for a new variant in that

there was no syntactic paradigmatic pressure that gave rise to the adoption of a new form. What is more, as Bergs (2003: 95) points out, “the first occurrences of relative *who* have very little to do with indirect question and generalizing relatives”, while the other *wh*-forms first occurred in these contexts. Relative *who* was first attested in letter closing formulae, mostly with a deity as antecedent:

- (27) with *godys* grace, **who** preserue you
(Paston, 1475, quoted in Bergs 2003: 95)

Because the form first occurred with God as the antecedent and later with other respected persons, Bergs (2003: 96) proposes that pragmatic and socio-psychological factors motivated the introduction of *who* as a relativiser. Gradually, the form came to be generalised as a form associated with human antecedents:

- (28) That there fhalbe one *honeft discrete burgefle* of this Citie choſen, **who** fhalbe namyd the father of Orphanes (Common Council ordinances of Bristol, f.22b 1567, BRO: 04272)

7.3.2. Other variants

Although the aim of this chapter is to focus primarily on the historical development of relativisers *that*, *which* and *who(m)(se)*, it is worth mentioning some other variants that were used and/or developed in the course of the Middle English period. It is noteworthy that the relative pronoun *which* occurred in the form of *the which*:

- (29) Item more ye copy of a dede conferring the church of longailton and landes aperteyning to ye fame **the which** fir lohn chock knight with others gave to ye vicker of longailton and to others (John Smythe, 1548, BRO: ac/c2/1)

According to Mätzner (1873), the form was an Old French loan translation of *liquels*. However, there is little evidence that can support this interpretation, e.g. the first attestations are found in texts from

areas where Old French was of minor influence and importance, and in translations of French texts the form was also used when *liques* was not present in the French text, nor was *liques* always translated with *the which* (Curme 1912; Fischer 1996: 303). Other scholars (see Curme 1912; Reuter 1937) propose that it was a native form that was derived from Old English *se þe* and *swa hwylc swa*. It is likely that *the which* may be a remnant of the demonstrative pronoun *þe* and does not so much relate to the definite article *the*, and thus also not French *liques*. *The which* is especially common in prose and was first attested in texts from the North dating from around the fourteenth century (Fischer 1996: 303). It seems to have been preferred with human antecedents, and when the antecedent and relative marker were relatively far apart, which is most commonly the case with continuative and sentential relative clauses (Fischer 2000: 303-304; see also Mustanoja 1960: 198-199). Raumolin-Brunberg (2000) found similar grammatical patterns in her study of letters from the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC), but her results show that the form was not associated with a certain text type, rather it seems that the use of the form varied per individual. Interestingly, she found little evidence that may point to dialectal variation. However, women tended to use the form more often than men. Then again, Bergs (2005: 163-166) observes an important difference between his and Raumolin-Brunberg's data that may be attributed to dialectal variation; whereas the Cely family, a London wool merchant family, used *the which* frequently in their letters, the Pastons, an East Anglian gentry family, mostly used *which*. Though arguably differences in social ranks may play a role too. The form rapidly declined in the sixteenth century and had disappeared by the second half of the century (Rissanen 1986: 297; Fischer 1992: 302; Raumolin-Brunberg 2000).

Additionally, *which* could be followed by a noun, which is referred to as non-pronominal determiner *which* (Rissanen 2000: 296), or dependent *which* (Mustanoja, 1960: 195). This type of *which* was especially frequent in Late Middle and Early Modern English. It was used to introduce non-restrictive and often continuative relative clauses and was most likely the preferred form to connect two otherwise loosely connected clauses:

- (30) he fhall well behave hymfelfe in the fame **office whiche office** is at this put in the occupacion of Iohn maunfell.
(Memorandum of office, 1553, f.12, BRO: 04272)

A variant that may be of particular interest with regard to South West dialect features is the use of *as* as a relative marker (see also Ihalainen 1980; Poussa 1991; Peitsara 2006). One of the explanations for the use of *as* is that it is derived from Middle English *swich...as* (present-day English *such as*) (Fischer 1992: 305). Alternatively, it is suggested that the variant might be of Scandinavian origin (Poussa 1988). Interestingly, the *Survey of English Dialects* reveals that the form is still used in some modern West and Central Midland dialect areas. What is more, the Survey of Anglo-Welsh dialects “adds outliers in North Yorkshire, most of North Devon, and a patch of South Wales directly opposite” (Poussa 1991: 299). Because these areas are on the outer fringes of what once were Germanic-Brittonic contact areas, Poussa (1991) hypothesises that the form could also be an old Brittonic-Germanic contact form. From the modern survey, it appears that the form is still found in spoken data, but is rarely found in written data. Considering Bristol’s proximity to South Wales, as well as the long trade and migration history with the area, it is well worth to investigate possible uses of relativiser *as* in the Bristol texts. As explained in the introduction, Section 7.6. will explore the presence of *as* in the Bristol texts

7.4. Methodology

In the current study, the focus will be on the development of *that*, *(the) which*, *who(m)(se)*, but *zero* will also be considered. The main aim is to establish how these forms developed and patterned in texts originating from the Bristol area and how this patterning relates to what has been observed in other studies (Rydén 1966; Romaine 1982, 1984b; DeKeyser 1984; Ball 1996; Bergs 2005; Johansson 2012), notably in relation to the historical development of the relativisers and in terms of supralocalisation processes and the specific developments in Bristol. As mentioned earlier, the relative marker *as* will also be discussed, but this will be left aside for now, as the methodology and

results of this feature will be discussed in a separate section. First of all, in order to study relativisation in Bristolian texts, the numerous different spellings of the relative markers available in the corpus had to be identified¹⁹. This was necessary because the transcribed texts of the corpus are currently only encoded at a basic level, e.g. expansions, abbreviations, deletions etc. are encoded, but spellings are not yet normalised. Also, because the data are not tagged for parts of speech yet, it was not possible to simply extract sub-clauses and / or relative clauses. For reasons of time and space, it was therefore most efficient to manually extract all different variants by using the find and replace function in the Oxygen XML editor. This find and replace function allows for relatively complex searches (e.g. x-path searches, regular expressions, XML search options) and allows you to search specific directories. The only linguistic feature that required actual reading of the corpus was the *zero* relative, so for this feature I read the corpus and extracted possible cases of *zero*. For the different spellings of relative markers *that*, *who(m)(se)* and *which*, the following spelling variants were included in the search. (Certain XML tags had to be typed in as well to include expanded abbreviations of *which* and *that*):

Who(se)(m): who, (w)hoe, (w)hou, whose, whole, whom(e), wham(e)

which: w<expan>(h)ich</expan>, w(h)ich(e), w(h)yeh(e)

That: that, þat, þ<expan>at</expan>, y<expan>at</expan>, yat

The search was carried out using regular expression so that all variants could be entered as one search entry. This resulted in a list of matches for all variants. The next step was to establish for each match if it functioned as a relative marker rather than, for instance, as an interrogative (31), demonstrative (31), subjunctive *that* (33) or solely as a complementiser (34).

¹⁹ In addition to the different spellings provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, I have also based myself on what spellings occurred in my corpus. *Hoe* for *who* was not listed in the OED, for instance.

- (31) *Which* dress do you like? /*Who* is going to the cinema?
- (32) Look at *that* dog.
- (33) And *that* it shalbe leefull to euey Bruer of Briftowe
After xij at klok fmyten At Seint Nichlis to biege maltin
the faid market (Brewer's ordinance, 1479, f.29b, BRO:
04718)
- (34) I Leave this world, but [I] cannot but Lett you know *that*
at present [I] haue Little or no thoughts of ever
retourning to my native Country (Charles Smythe, 1698,
BRO: ac/c/83/2)

Once it was established that a token was indeed a relative marker, the whole matrix clause, or relevant context and the relative clause were exported to excel. Then, the token was encoded for linguistic and extra-linguistic features. Extra-linguistic features included (a) year of writing, (b) source, (c) text type, and (d) name, life dates and sex of the author, if known.

As for linguistic features, several factors have to be taken into account to gain more insight into the development of relativisers in Bristolian written texts. As explained earlier in this chapter, the two main factors that influence the choice of relativiser in present-day Standard English are restrictiveness and animacy of the antecedent. However, as pointed out above, there are more factors to be considered (see also Ball 1996 for a comprehensive summary of factors that have been found influential). First of all, the different types of relative markers were identified and encoded. The encodings are loosely based on Bergs's (2005: 145) list of abbreviations:

- RC1= *that*
 RC2= *which*
 RC02= relativiser + noun phrase: *which office*
 RC3= *who*
 RC4= *whose*
 RC5= *whom*
 RC6= double relativisers *which that*

RC7= *zero*

RC8= *the which*

RC08= *the which* + noun phrase

RC9= undetermined, ambiguous cases, adverbial type constructions:
until the time that, that is to say

After the relative marker was coded, the relative clause was classified as either restrictive (1) or non-restrictive (0). As discussed earlier, it is not always easy to make a binary decision when it comes to restrictive clauses. In ambiguous cases, I decided to discard them. However, they were marked *RC9* so that they could still be included in the statistics. Other cases that were discarded and marked with *RC9* were formulaic or idiomatic uses of relative markers. Typically, these are relative clauses that refer to time. In almost all cases they are introduced by *that* and preceded by a preposition: *until the time that, by the time that, during the time that, after the time that* etc. Another very frequent fixed phrase is *that is to say/that is to wit*, which is often used to specify information that is mentioned previously in the text. In this case *that* should arguably be analysed as a demonstrative pronoun rather than as a relative pronoun. Since the above-mentioned types of relative clauses behave quite differently syntactically, they were not taken into further consideration in the current study, e.g. their function is not evidently that of a relative marker, but is rather more demonstrative, adverbial or conjunctive in nature (see also Rydén 1966: 205).

It has also been shown that the grammatical role of the relative gap plays a role (see Keenan & Comrie 1977; Romaine 1982; Ball 1996; Hawkins 1999; O'Grady 2003). The grammatical role of both the antecedent and the relative gap were identified. This could be subject (SU), direct object (DO), oblique object (OB) for both indirect and prepositional objects, and predicate complements (COMP). Genitive *whose* was analysed according to the grammatical role of the noun phrase that it was part of:

(35) The woman [whose husband_{SUBJECT} worked at the Mill]

(36) The woman [whose husband_{DIRECT OBJECT} I saw at the Mill]

(Herrmann 2003: 131)

As for some types of antecedent, it has been explained that in some cases they can be sentential. This means that they do not consist of a noun phrase that can be attributed a particular grammatical role. These cases were labelled as sentential (SE). Free relative clauses were treated as a separate class altogether because they do not refer to an antecedent, but rather contain the antecedent themselves as explained in Section 7.2. above. Since they should be studied in their own right, using different parameters, they were not included for further research. Most importantly, antecedents were marked as human (1) or non-human (0). Antecedents were also marked for definiteness and type of (pro)noun, e.g. personal name, possessive pronoun, quantifier etc. As regards the definiteness of an antecedent, Bergs (2005: 148) points out that definiteness can be analysed purely from a syntactic point of view, where determiners define definiteness, or from a semantic point of view, where specificity is the main factor that determines definiteness. For the current study, I have used Lyon's (1999: 1-153) standard definitions that are based on syntactic analyses. For instance, definite articles, possessive / personal pronouns, demonstratives, and definite quantifiers make a noun phrase definite, while indefinite articles, indefinite pronouns, and indefinite quantifiers make a noun phrase indefinite.

Although adjacency has been shown to play a role in relativiser choice too (Quirk 1957; Bergs 2005), for the current study it was deemed sufficient to take into account the grammatical roles of the antecedent and especially the relative gap with regard to structural adjacency, and to leave linear adjacency aside for further future research.

To summarise, to allow for comparison with other studies, this study takes into account the factors that have been included in most of the previous studies and that have been proven to be robust linguistic variables that affect the choice of relativiser. These factors are restrictiveness of the relative clause, animacy (human or non-human) of the antecedent, type and definiteness of the antecedent, and lastly the grammatical roles of both the antecedent and the relative gap.

7.5. Results

As described in Chapter 6, the materials used for the case studies consist of civic and guild ordinances, covering the period 1404-1596, and letters covering the period 1548-1711. I will discuss the results in the following order: first, I will discuss the results for the ordinances and then I will zoom in on the letter corpus. In order to be able to consider the different text types separately, as well as to observe changes over time, I have divided the data and results into three sub-corpora and sub-periods. The council ordinances cover period I: 1404-1493 and period II: 1506-1596. The letter corpus covers period III: 1548-1711:

| time periods | source | word count |
|------------------------------|--|------------|
| period I: 1404-1493 | the Great and Little Red Book of Bristol | 35,153 |
| period II: 1506-1596 | the Council Ordinances of Bristol | 32,590 |
| period III: 1548-1711 | Bristol letter collection | 30,975 |

Table 7.1. The sub-corpora as used in the relative marker case study

Furthermore, to make the tables with the results clearer and easier to survey, percentages are rounded off to the nearest whole number. Especially with the smaller numbers this may mean that the total exceeds that of 100%.

7.5.1. Relative markers in the council ordinances: period I (1404-1493): the Little Red Book and the Great Red Book of Bristol

For the first sub-corpus under investigation (ordinances, c. 35,153 words), 329 clauses were analysed as relative clauses, of which 26% (87) had to be excluded from further analyses²⁰. The relatively large

²⁰ I did not normalise the data for my sub-corpora as it mainly concerns the distribution of the different relativisers in different contexts and not so much the

number of excluded clauses is mostly due to the high frequency of adverbial type relative markers as discussed in section 7.4. above, and not so much due to cases that were hard to classify, or that were ambiguous in one way or another. A first glance at the totals in Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.2 below reveals that relativiser *that* is the most prevalent relative marker (43%), followed by *which* and all its different forms (27%). *Who* is not used at all, *whose* and *whom* are only used marginally. As for double relative markers (*which + that*), there is only one occurrence in period I (1404-1493) and none in period II (1506-1596), and III (1548-1711). This form will hence not be discussed in any of the sections.

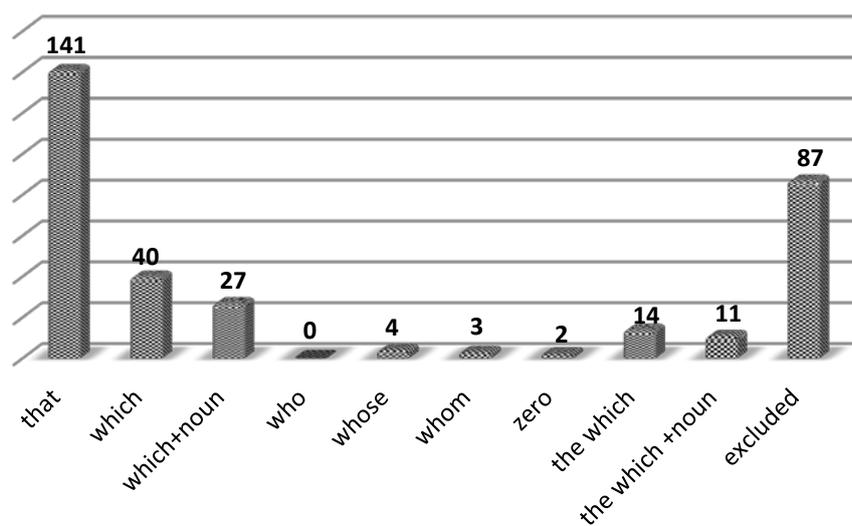


Figure 7.1. Totals of relative markers, period I (1404-1493)

total frequency of relative markers that is of interest here. Normalisation would not control for the different factors that affect relative choice.

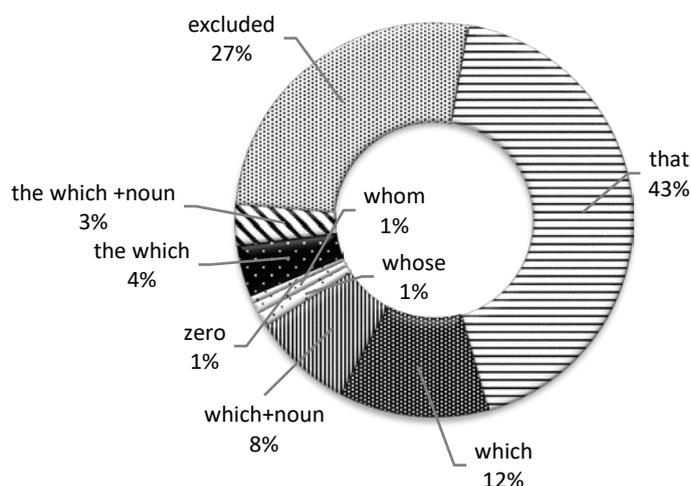


Figure 7.2. Percentages of the relative markers, period I (1404-1493)

All in all, the percentages are very similar to those found in Bergs's (2005) study, which is based on the letter collection of the Pastons (1421-1503). One difference, however, is that *who* is marginally attested in the Paston letters (1%), while *who* is absent altogether in my sub-corpus of period I (1404-1493). Be that as it may, it has to be pointed out that a considerably larger data set (2,364 relative clauses) was used for Bergs's study. Moreover, in his study, most of the earlier attestations of *who* are found in closing formulae of correspondence. This suggests that the use of *who* was genre-specific in the early fifteenth century, and that it was not commonly used in civic records yet, or more precisely, in ordinances. Whether the geographical factor also plays a role here remains to be seen (cf. parallel studies currently being carried out as part of the *Emerging Standards* project).

Although the focus of this survey is on a range of relativisers, it is worth noting some interesting observations concerning *zero* forms. With only two unambiguous instances, the *zero-relative* marker is rare in this period. In the Paston letters, the *zero* form seems slightly less rare and makes up for about 1% of the relative markers (Bergs 2005: 151). Interestingly, however, in my sub-corpus of period I (1404-1493), there are quite a few coordinate relative constructions where the

relative marker is not repeated in the conjoined clause, see example (37) below:

- (37) They maken cloth of fflokkes and thrummes **which** is deceyvable and \emptyset may endure to the grete hurte and decaye alwell of the good men of the laid crafte of weuers as of other the kynges lieges (Weaver's petition, 1490, f.129, BRO: 04719)

Examples like this have not been marked as *zero* relative clauses since this type of relative marker deletion is different from what is referred to as a *zero-relative* marker proper; rather, this is a case of symmetrical co-ordination of two clauses where the subject is elided in the conjoined clause. Arguably, the second example (38) looks a lot more like a *zero* construction. However, examples like this were discarded too since they are still part of co-ordinate structures, and do not look like *zero* constructions proper.

- (38) Item [...] that every maifter of þe seid Crafte of dyers when he hath dyed eny cloth and \emptyset after fuch dyeyng is putte to þe towker to be rekked (Dyer's ordinance, 1439, f.145b, BRO: 04719)

See Also Rydén (1970) for a more detailed description about co-ordinative relative constructions.

7.5.1.1. Restrictive versus non-restrictive in council ordinances, period I (1404-1493)

Of the 242 clauses investigated for period I (1404-1493), in total, there were 158 restrictive clauses and 84 non-restrictive clauses. *That* is primarily used in restrictive clauses (97% of all cases of *that*), while *which* and all its variants are predominant in non-restrictive contexts (81% of all cases of *which* occur in non-restrictive context). *Whose* and *whom* also appear to be preferred in non-restrictive contexts, which is in line with previous findings, e.g. Mustanoja (1960), Traugott (1992), Fischer (1992), Bergs (2005).

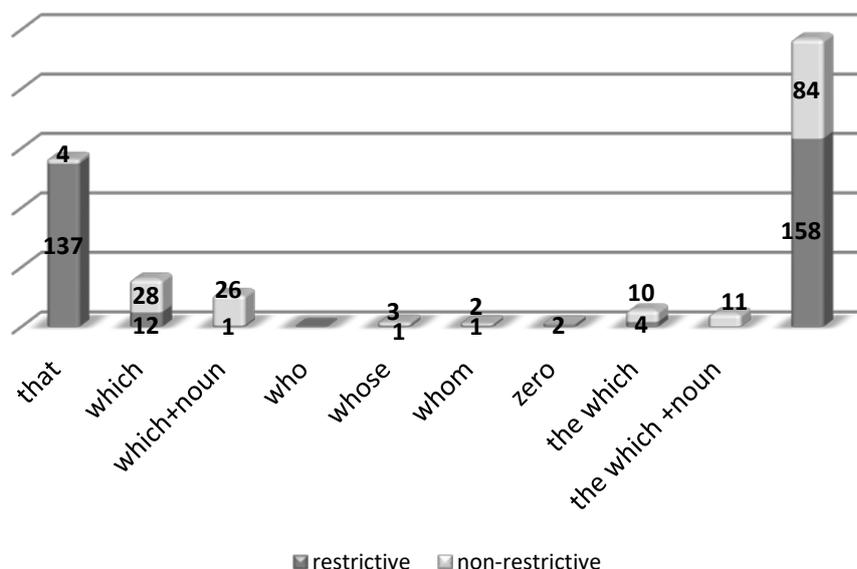


Figure 7.3. Distribution of relative markers: restrictive vs. non-restrictive, period I (1404-1493)

Taking all of the current results together, the patterning found for the ordinances in period I (1404-1493) is similar to that of the Paston corpus that was studied by Bergs (2005). When contrasting *that* against the *wh*-forms in restrictive and non-restrictive contexts, a very clear pattern emerges. For the sake of comparability with Bergs's data, the *wh*-forms only comprise *(the) which*, *who(m)(se)*, so *(the) which + noun* and *zero* cases are not included here. Table 7.2 below shows the distribution of both forms in the Paston letters and in the current sub-corpus.

| period I: (1404-1493) | that | % | wh-forms | % | total |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------|-----------------|----------|--------------|
| restrictive | 137 | 88% | 18 | 12% | 155 |
| non-restrictive | 4 | 8% | 43 | 92% | 47 |
| total | 141 | 70% | 61 | 30% | 202 |
| Pastons: (1421-1503) | | | | | |
| restrictive | 1219 | 83% | 244 | 17% | 1463 |
| non-restrictive | 57 | 10% | 530 | 90% | 587 |
| total | 1276 | 62% | 774 | 38% | 2050 |

Table 7.2. wh-forms vs. that in the council ordinances (1404-1493) and the Paston letters (1422-1509) (Bergs 2005: 151)

Even though the sizes of the corpora differ greatly, the percentages are very similar. It is thus clear that restrictiveness is an important factor in the Bristol data as well. If *(the) which + noun* were added, this effect would even be more significant, as all but one of the cases are used in non-restrictive context.

7.5.1.2. Relative markers and their antecedents: human vs. non-human in council ordinances, period I (1404-1493)

The second factor that has been shown to be of major relevance is the animacy (human or non-human) of the antecedent (cf. Curme 1912; Rydén 1966; DeKeyser 1984; Bergs 2005). Evidently, the figures refer to adnominal relative clauses only, since sentential and continuative clauses do not take a nominal noun phrase as their antecedent. For period I (1404-1493), there are 115 (55%) relative clauses with human antecedents and 96 (45%) relative clauses with non-human antecedents:

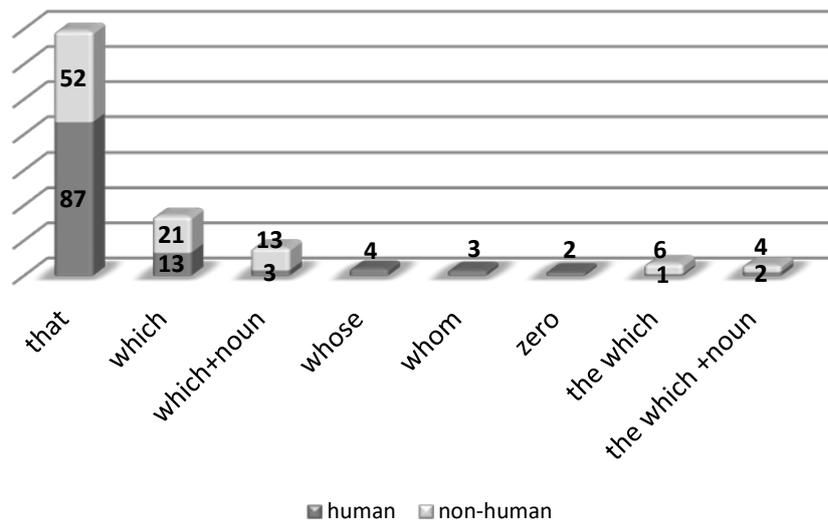


Figure 7.4. Human vs. non-human antecedents, period I (1404-1493)

In order to obtain a more complete picture, however, restrictiveness should also be taken into account, since it is known that restrictive clauses favour *that* over human *who(se)(m)*, while *wh*-forms generally occur in non-restrictive contexts. Table 7.3 below shows the distribution of human and non-human antecedents in restrictive and non-restrictive contexts in both the sub-corpus of ordinances (period I 1404-1493) of this study and the Paston (1421-1503) corpus:

| restrictive | Pastons 1421-1503 | % | period I: 1404-1493 | % |
|-----------------|-------------------|------|---------------------|------|
| human | 677 | 34% | 103 | 65% |
| non-human | 1328 | 66% | 55 | 35% |
| total | 2005 | 100% | 158 | 100% |
| non-restrictive | | | | |
| human | 216 | 40% | 12 | 23% |
| non-human | 329 | 60% | 41 | 77% |
| total | 545 | 100% | 53 | 100% |

Table 7.3. Distribution of antecedents: human vs. non-human in the council ordinances, period I (1404-1493) and the Paston letters (1422-1509) (Bergs 2005: 151)

Especially in restrictive clauses, the distribution of human and non-human antecedents is proportionally different from the Paston letters. This might be due to a difference in text type. In the letters, most human entities that are introduced tend to be known, and so are non-restrictive entities (Bergs 2005: 152). In the ordinances, however, the human entities are often explicitly relativised to define a specific subgroup of people. Relativisation seems an important means to emphasise and disambiguate the group of people or person that is intended:

- (39) Provydyng alwey þat þe mony Comyng of fuch ftrangers and vjd for vj fondayes in þe hervelt aforefaid by þe maiftreys of þe seid/ Craft. Among pouer peple schal be deftributed and *he þat* faileth or contrarieth in eny of þe feid ordinaunces as often tymes as he faileth schal pay to þe Commynalytie of þe feid toune (Barber's ordinance, 1439, f.128b, BRO: 04719)

Animacy in restrictive clauses

Figure 7.5 below shows the distribution of human and non-human relative markers in restrictive contexts. It appears that restrictive *wh*-forms are rare, but when they are used in a restrictive context, there

seems to be a preference to use them with human antecedents. *Which* is also used freely with human antecedents, a tendency that has been observed in the Paston letters (1421-1503) as well (Bergs 2005: 153). However, it is clear that relative marker *that* is the preferred form with both personal and non-personal antecedents in a restrictive context.

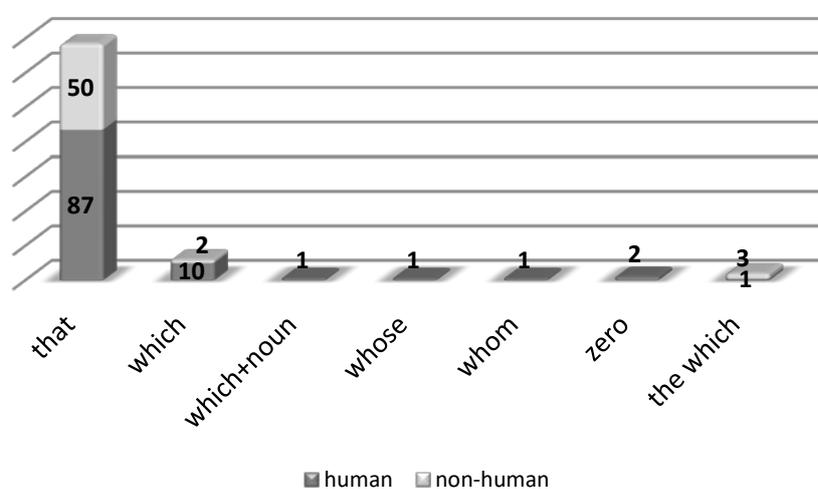


Figure 7.5. Restrictive clauses: human vs. non-human, period I (1404-1493)

Animacy: non-restrictives

When looking at the distribution of the relative markers in a non-restrictive context (Figure 7.6 below), we see that relative marker *that* is only attested twice, and with non-human antecedents only. It is clear that *which* prevails in the non-restrictive context. Most forms of *which* are used with both human and non-human antecedents, so here the pattern differs from what has been established for present-day Standard English, where it is reportedly used with non-human antecedents only. It should be pointed out, however, that especially in present-day dialects of Somerset, *which* is used with human antecedents as well (Ihalainen 1980).

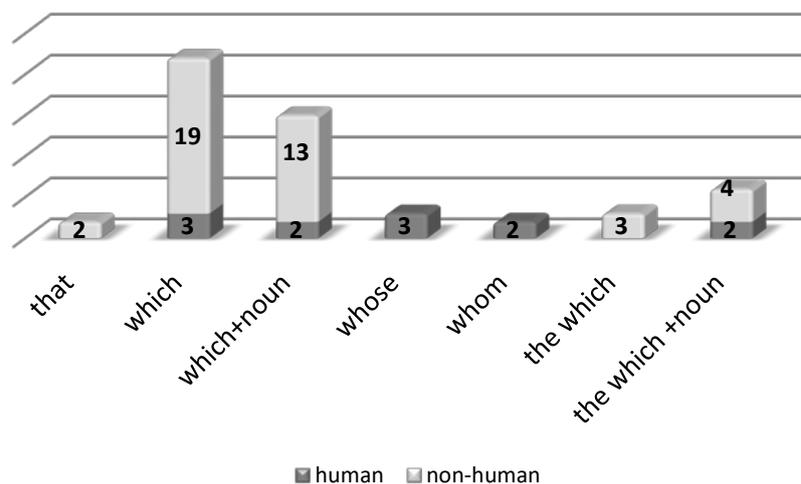


Figure 7.6. Non-restrictive clauses: human vs. non-human, period I (1404-1493)

Thus far, it appears that restrictiveness is the strongest variable that determines the choice of *that* over a *wh*-form. The forms *whom* and *whose* (five in total) seem to be competing with human *which* (seven in total), whereas *who* is not attested at all. It may be the case that the grammatical function of the relative marker plays a role here too; it could be that *which* is the preferred form in subject position, while *whom* and *whose* occupy the other grammatical positions. This will be investigated in more detail in Section 7.5.1.4.

7.5.1.3. Definite and indefinite antecedents in council ordinances, period I (1404-1493)

As pointed out in the methodology section, the definiteness of the antecedent noun phrase may also be a factor in the choice of relativiser. More specifically, definite antecedents may prefer *that* over other forms. Since relative clauses with sentential and continuative antecedents do not have noun phrases as their antecedents, they were excluded from this survey. As for the distribution of definite and indefinite antecedents, the pattern partly

concur with that found for the Paston letters (1421-1503) (Bergs 2005). The pattern they have in common is that definite antecedents are most frequent, and that *that* is the form most frequently found with definite antecedents. However, as can be seen in Table 7.4 below, *that* is also the most frequent form with indefinite antecedents, although there seems to be a more even distribution of *wh*-forms and *that* in indefinite contexts. For the sake of comparison with Bergs's (2005) data, *whom/whose* and *zero* were not included in the definiteness analyses:

| | that | % | which forms | % | total |
|-------------------|-------------|----------|--------------------|----------|--------------|
| definite | 100 | 74% | 35 | 26% | 135 |
| indefinite | 39 | 58% | 28 | 42% | 67 |
| total | 139 | 69% | 63 | 31% | 202 |

Table 7.4. Distribution of relative markers: definiteness, period I (1404-1493)

Arguably, it is extremely difficult to establish what role definiteness plays in my data since 98 of 100 *that* clauses with definite antecedents are also restrictive (see Table 7.5 below). There is thus a possibility that restrictiveness gave rise to the adoption of *that*, and definiteness may have little to do with it, which seems likely considering that in non-restrictive contexts the *wh*-forms are prevalent with both antecedent types. The only thing that can be observed is that the only two cases of *that* in non-restrictive context occur with definite antecedents.

| restrictive | that | % | which forms | % | total |
|------------------------|------|-----|-------------|------|-------|
| definite | 98 | 91% | 10 | 9% | 108 |
| indefinite | 39 | 85% | 7 | 15% | 46 |
| total | 137 | 89% | 17 | 11% | 154 |
| non-restrictive | | | | | |
| definite | 2 | 7% | 25 | 93% | 27 |
| indefinite | - | - | 21 | 100% | 21 |
| total | 2 | 4% | 46 | 96% | 48 |

Table 7.5. Distribution of definite and indefinite antecedents: restrictive vs. non-restrictive, period I (1404-1493)

An analysis of the distribution by the different types of antecedents, e.g. noun phrases with indefinite and definite determiners, quantifiers, personal pronouns, indefinite pronouns and demonstrative pronouns did not yield any clear patterns. This is possibly the case because the data set is relatively small, which makes it less suitable for fine-grained categorisations. There might be one tentative exception and that is *the which (+noun)*; all cases (16) refer to full noun phrases, as opposed to a proper noun or (indefinite) pronoun. Interestingly, this pattern for *the which* has also been observed in the Paston (1421-1503) letters, which contrasts with Raumolin-Brunberg's (2000) results, on the basis of which she argued that the form seemed to be a free variant that freely alternated with simple *which* (Bergs 2005: 167).

7.5.1.4. Grammatical role of the relative marker in council ordinances, period I (1404-1493)

As predicted by Keenan and Comrie's (1977) accessibility hierarchy, the subject relative gap (SU) is the most frequently relativised position, in both restrictive and non-restrictive contexts. However, there seems to be a difference between non-restrictive and restrictive contexts in that the oblique object (OB) position (comprising both prepositional and indirect objects) is considerably more frequently relativised than

the direct object position (DO). Yet, this difference does not necessarily contradict Keenan and Comrie's (1977) prediction because their hypothesis is based on restrictive relative constructions with definite noun phrases as antecedents. Non-restrictive relative clauses may behave quite differently syntactically in that they can take non-nominal antecedents, and as Huddleston, Pullum and Bauer (2002) point out, they are syntactically less strongly embedded within the matrix structure (see also Section 7.2. above).

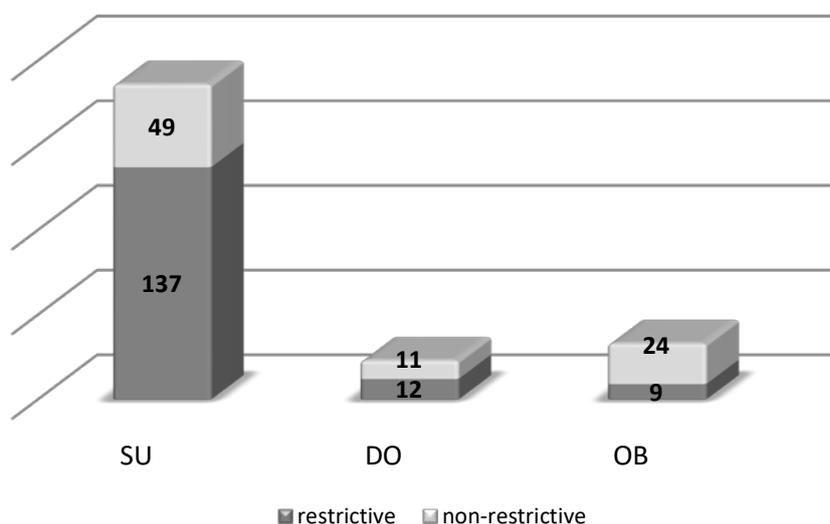


Figure 7.7. Grammatical role of the relativisers, period I (1404-1493)

Grammatical role of the relative marker: restrictive context

Since it is clear that restrictiveness is such an important factor, I shall make a distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive contexts. As mentioned earlier, in total, there were 158 restrictive clauses and 84 non-restrictive clauses. Furthermore, 97% of all cases of *that* occur in restrictive contexts, while 81% of all cases of *which* occur in non-restrictive contexts. Figure 7.8 below shows the distribution of the grammatical role with the different relative markers in restrictive contexts. When the relative marker functions as the subject of the

relative clause, *that* is used in 90% (122) of the times, 9% (14) is reserved for *which*-forms, and 1% (one) for *zero*.

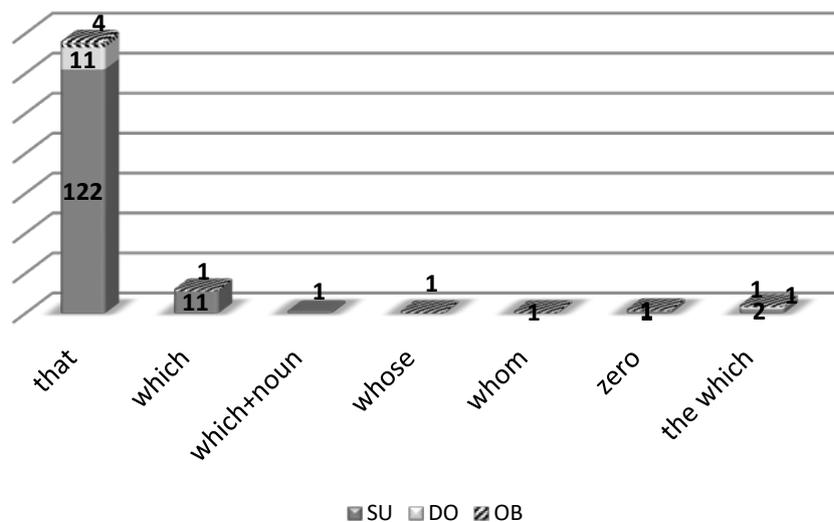


Figure 7.8. The grammatical role of the relativisers in restrictive contexts, period I (1404-1493)

More than half of the instances of subject position *that* refer to human antecedents. Of all the 14 instances of (*the*) *which* in subject position, 12 have personal antecedents. However, as can be seen in Table 7.6, the possible effect of animacy does not appear to be very strong. Restrictiveness is clearly the most important factor. At the same time, however, when a *wh*-form is used in subject position, it mostly refers to a human antecedent. Table 7.6 below shows the distribution of subject relatives *that* and *which* in relation to personal and non-personal antecedents. The percentages suggest that there may be a slight tendency to use *which* in human contexts.

| | that | % | which forms | % | total |
|-----------|------|-----|-------------|-----|-------|
| human | 84 | 87% | 12 | 13% | 96 |
| non-human | 38 | 95% | 2 | 5% | 40 |
| total | 122 | 90% | 14 | 10% | 136 |

Table 7.6. Restrictive context: animacy effect in subject position, period I (1404-1493)

Although it is impossible to say anything conclusive on the basis of the small numbers presented here, it could be that *which* performs the task of present-day *who*. Notably, Ball (1996: 234) mentions that in present-day English, there is an effect of animacy in restrictive subject positions. In other words, *who* is preferred with personal antecedents and *that* is preferred with non-personal antecedents in restrictive subject position, whereas this human versus no-human distinction is less strong in other positions in restrictives. So, even though *wh*-forms are primarily reserved for non-restrictive contexts in present-day English, a *wh*-form (*who*) is favoured in restrictive contexts when the antecedent is human and the relative marker in subject position. This seems similar to the pattern that I have tentatively observed in Table 7.6 above. The only difference is that *which* is used instead of *who*. Although this may be regarded as a tentative finding on the basis of a significantly smaller dataset in comparison to bigger corpora, it may well be that this effect of animacy in restrictive subject position was already present in the fifteenth-century data, albeit not very strongly.

In direct object and oblique object function, *that* is found with human antecedents two (40%) out of five times. The other three human cases are with *whose*, *zero* and *whom*. For the non-human antecedents, there are three cases with (*the*) *which* (19%) and 13 (81%) with *that*. Example (40) below shows one of the two human non-subject cases of *that*. Interestingly, example (41) shows a subjective *that* and an oblique object *whom* for the same personal antecedent.

- (40) Item that no maner of perfone of the seide Crafte
perloigne entyce withdrawe excite receiue ne occupie
no mannys feruaunt Apprentice ne lournay man fro the

feruice of the perfone; that [he is in Couenant with $_i$]
 (Shearer's ordinance, 1483, f.32, BRO: 04718)

- (41) Item hit ys ordeyned etc that euery efranger $_i$ that [$_i$
 cometh to this towne with any Corfes herynge white or
 Redde to wham [hit apperteyneth $_i$ to haue an hooft
 for sale and deliueraunce of their heryng]
 (Chamberlayne's ordinance, 1433, f.93, BRO: 04718)

Grammatical role of the relative marker: non-restrictives

In non-restrictive contexts, subject relative marker *that* is rare and does not refer to human antecedents at all. As is suggested in previous studies (Romaine 1982; Rydén 1983; Rissanen 1986; Bergs 2005; Johansson 2012), relative marker *that* seems to be most resilient in subject position, but it has definitely given way to *wh*-forms in non-restrictive contexts. There are no instances of *that* in the other grammatical functions, which confirms that it is the subject position where *that* is most resilient. Assuming that one can speak of an ongoing change where *wh*-forms are taking over from *that*, it can be expected that *that* will eventually also become less frequent in subject position at a later stage. This is something that will be discussed in Sections 7.5.2.4. and 7.5.3.4.

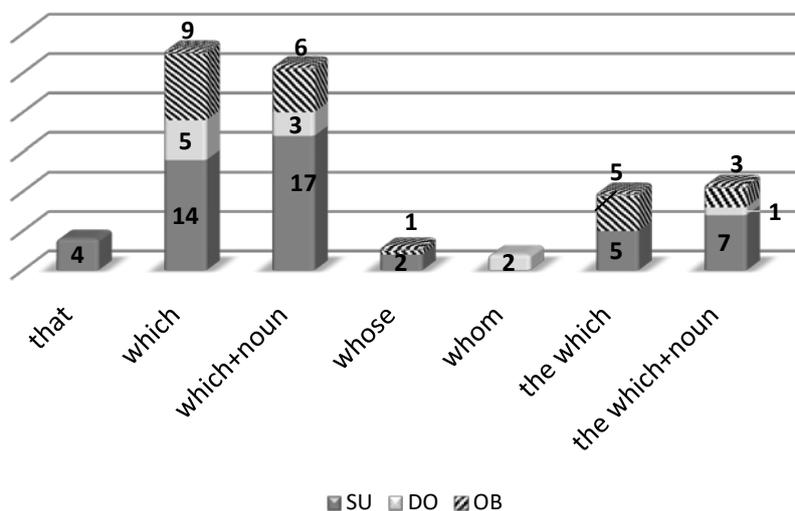


Figure 7.9. Grammatical role of relative markers in non-restrictive relative clauses, period I (1404-1493)

Leaving aside the sentential antecedents, the *which*-forms in subject position refer to both human and non-human antecedents, but the majority, i.e. 24 out of 33, have non-human antecedents. In the other grammatical functions, all of the *which* forms (15) have non-human antecedents, whereas the only three human antecedents take *whose* or *whom*. In non-restrictive contexts, it seems that non-restrictiveness is the main motivator for the selection of a *wh*-form, whereas animacy plays a role in the non-subject contexts, in that the few cases *whose* and *whom* both refer to human antecedents, while all other *wh*-forms only refer to non-human antecedents. It is noteworthy that the two cases of *whom* occur in formulaic sentences relating to God.

- (42) Werbie by certayne tyme hath growyngret loftes and preiudice to the Kyng our foueraign lorde now beyng and to the moft noble Prince of bleffed memoyre the Kyng his ffadur **whom** God alloille (Wool trader's ordinance, 1437, f.96, BRO: 04718)

- (43) a place vpon the backe of Briftowe called Spicers halle wheryn fum tyme dwelled a ful notable Worhipful Marchaunt of the faide Towne called Robert Sturmy **whom** God late hath taken to his mercy (Wool trader's ordinance, 1437, f.96, BRO: 04718)

7.5.2. Relative markers in the council ordinances: period II (1506-1596)

For the second period, covered by the volume of the Bristol council ordinances, in total, there are 213 relative clauses (ca. 28,000 words) that are introduced by *zero*, *that*, *(the) which*, or *who(m)(se)*. The number of relative markers is slightly lower compared to the number that was found for the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493), where there was a total of 319 relative clauses. This partly may be because the word count is slightly lower, but it might also partly be due to the higher number of another relativiser, i.e. *such as*, the details of which will be discussed in Section 7.6. For the sake of comparability with other studies, in this section the focus will remain on *that*, *(the) which*, and *who(m)(se)*. Again, a large proportion of the relative clauses (15%) was not used for further analyses. Similarly to the results from period I (1404-1493), most of these clauses function as adverbials or as conjunctions rather than relative clauses, e.g. mostly phrases relating to time such as *during the time that*, *until the time that* and the phrase that is arguably more demonstrative in nature: *that is to, say/wit*. Noticeably, *that* is no longer as prevalent as it was in the previous period. Furthermore, there is quite a high number for simple *which*, whereas the other variants of *which* appear to have become rarer. The form *who* makes its appearance too, and *whose* and *whom* have become more frequent, but all in all, it seems that *which* is the one form that appears to be more dominant as a relative marker, compared to period I (1404-1493).

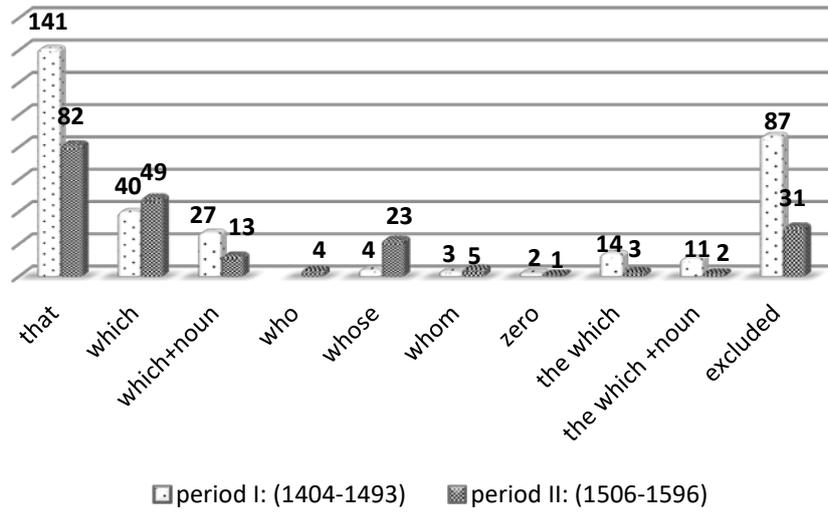


Figure 7.10. Totals of relative markers in the council ordinances, period I (1404-1493) and period II (1506-1596)

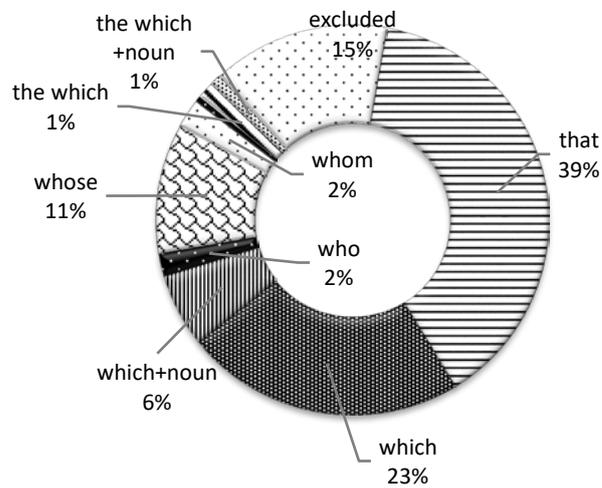


Figure 7.11. Percentages of the relative markers in the council ordinances, period II (1506-1596)

Dekeyser (1984) also looked at data from the Early Modern English period, notably a corpus of drama and prose that covers the periods 1520-1560 and 1600-1649. This partially covers the same period as my sub-corpus and hence is suitable for comparison. However, caution is needed since the size of the two corpora differ greatly, as well as the text types. In Table 7.7 below, the totals of most *wh*-forms are compared. For the sake of comparability, *(the) which + noun* was not included. The percentages *zero* and *that* are rather similar, but *(the) which* seems to be relatively more common in Dekeyser's data, while the percentage for *who(m)(se)* is higher in the Bristol corpus. As will be shown in Section 7.5.2.1., the higher percentage for the Bristol data is mostly due to the occurrence of *whose* in fixed expressions.

| | who(m)(se) | | (the) which | | that | zero | | total | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----|-------------|-----|--------|------|-----|-------|--------|
| | | % | | % | | | % | | |
| period II: 1506-1596 | 32 | 19% | 52 | 31% | 82 | 49% | 1 | 1% | 166 |
| EMODE corpus 1520-1560 | 2,442 | 9% | 13,253 | 44% | 14,038 | 46% | 456 | 1% | 29,734 |

Table 7.7. Overall percentages in Dekeyser (1984: 64) and the council ordinances, period II (1506-1596)

7.5.2.1. Relative markers: restrictive versus non-restrictive in the council ordinances, period II (1506-1596)

In total, there are 114 restrictive relative clauses and 68 non-restrictive clauses. Relative marker *that* is still the most frequent form in a restrictive context but seems to experience more competition from *which*; in period I (1404-1493), *which* accounted for only 8% of the restrictive relative markers as opposed to 87% of *that*. Now, *which* accounts for 25% of all the restrictive relative markers and *that* for 69%. These percentages are quite similar to those of the Dekeyser (1984: 66) where *that* makes up for 70% and all *wh*-forms account for 25% of all the restrictive relative markers. One difference is that *zero*

is more frequent (5%) in Dekeyser's data, while there is only one instance of *zero* in restrictive context in my sub-corpus of period II (1506-1596).

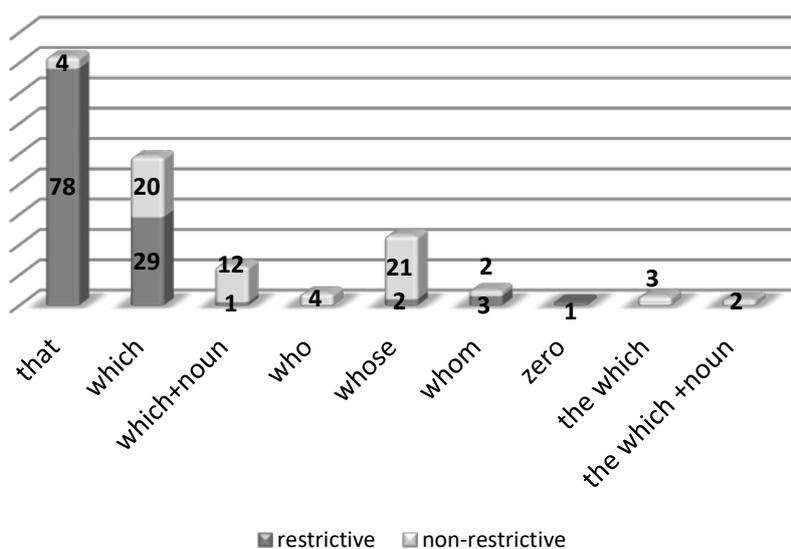


Figure 7.12. Restrictive vs. non-restrictive, period II (1506-1596)

Also, in Dekeyser (1984), *who* is marginally present in restrictive contexts (3%) and more common in non-restrictive contexts, whereas in the council ordinances of period II (1506-1596) the form is only marginally found in non-restrictive contexts:

- (44) that there be noe duple meafures suffred to remayne in this cytie and that there fhalle ij or honeft and credible perfons chofen by Mr Maior and Aldermen of this citie **who** fhalle fworne trulie to vewe and ferch all the buffhelles waightes and meafures thorowgh all this. (Measurement ordinance, 1574, f.35 BRO: 04272)

The which and *(the)which + noun*, are on the decline and, except for one case, occur in non-restrictive contexts only. *Whose* has become much more common compared to period I (1404-1493), but it has to be added that it almost always occurs with *names*, which gives the impression that it is used almost formulaically:

- (45) by the whole confent and agreement of *all and euery of the wurshipfull persons of the counceill of this citie of Briftowe* **whole names** be subfcribed that no man fhall be henfforth maior of the faid Citie more then twife (Memorandum of election, 1583, f.13b, BRO: 04272)

There are only two cases where the form is used restrictively, and only one does not relate to names:

- (46) *euery of their husbandes* **whole** wiffes fhall do the contrarye, fhall forfeite the like fomme for their wives as is provided for them felffes for not wearinge fkarlett at tymes for them appointed (Dress code ordinance, f.28b, 1571, BRO: 04272)

All cases of *whom* are objects of prepositions, have a human antecedent, and occur in both restrictive and non-restrictive contexts. In contrast to the previous period (1404-1493), the antecedents are not associated with religion or a deity in any way. *Who* is used with personal antecedents and in non-restrictive contexts only.

7.5.2.2. Relative markers and their antecedents: human vs. non-human in the council ordinances, period II (1505-1596)

Animacy: restrictive relative clauses

As was the case in period I (1404-1493), human antecedents (66%) are more frequent than non-human antecedents (34%) in restrictive contexts. *That* is still clearly the preferred form with non-human as well as with human antecedents. Sententials and continuatives are again excluded from this analysis.

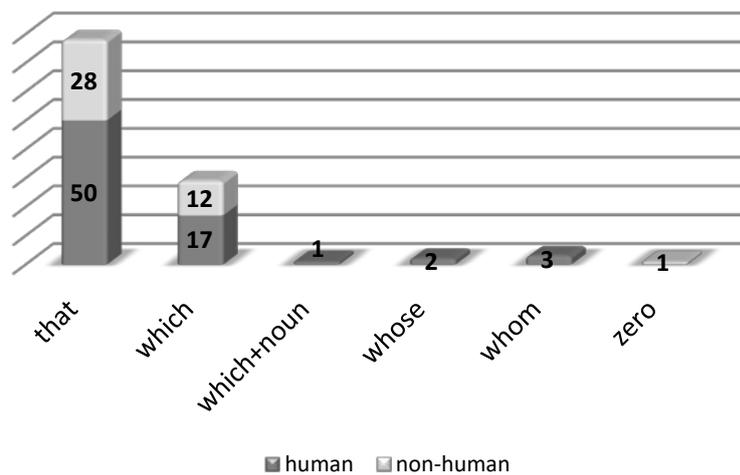


Figure 7.13. Restrictive clauses: human vs. non-human, period II (1506-1596)

However, when comparing the percentages of relative markers with human antecedents in period I and II (Table 7.8 below), it appears that *which* is now more strongly present, and *whom* and *whose* are establishing their place with human antecedents.

| | period I: 1404-1493 | % | period II: 1506-1596 | % |
|---------------------|------------------------|------|-------------------------|------|
| that | 87 | 84% | 50 | 68% |
| which | 10 | 10% | 17 | 23% |
| which + noun | 1 | 1% | 1 | 1% |
| whose | 1 | 1% | 2 | 3% |
| whom | 1 | 1% | 3 | 4% |
| zero | 2 | 2% | - | - |
| the which | 1 | 1% | - | - |
| total | 103 | 100% | 73 | 100% |

Table 7.8. Human antecedents in restrictive relative clauses, period I (1404-1493) and II (1506-1596)

When taking a closer look at the distribution of the relative markers with non-human antecedents (see Figure 7.13 and Table 7.9), another difference can be noted; whereas in restrictive contexts *which* most frequently occurred with human antecedents in period I (1404-1493), the form is now quite frequently found with non-human antecedents in restrictive contexts as well (see Figure 7.13).

| | period I: 1404-1493 | % | period II: 1506-1596 | % |
|------------------|------------------------|------|-------------------------|------|
| that | 50 | 91% | 28 | 68% |
| which | 2 | 4% | 12 | 29% |
| zero | - | - | 1 | 2% |
| the which | 3 | 5% | - | - |
| total | 55 | 100% | 41 | 100% |

Table 7.9. Non-human antecedents in restrictive relative clauses, period I (1404-1493) and II (1506-1596)

This is what Dekeyser (1984: 71) refers to as the “the dehumanization” of *which*. He states that the sixteenth century is the implementation phase in which this process takes place. The process seems to have been completed in the seventeenth century (Saito 1961: 84). In the council ordinances of period II (1506-1596), it appears that *which* is generally encroaching on *that* and at the same time seems to be less strongly associated with human antecedents. As indicated earlier, in present-day English, it is in restrictive subject positions that the animacy factor is particularly strong (Ball 1996). A closer look at the distribution in accordance with the grammatical role of the relative marker may therefore reveal a clearer pattern.

Animacy in non-restrictive relative clauses

In total, there were 33 non-restrictive relative clauses with human antecedents and 30 with non-human antecedents. Sentential antecedents were again excluded in this survey. As can be seen in Figure 7.14 below, *which* rarely refers to human antecedents.

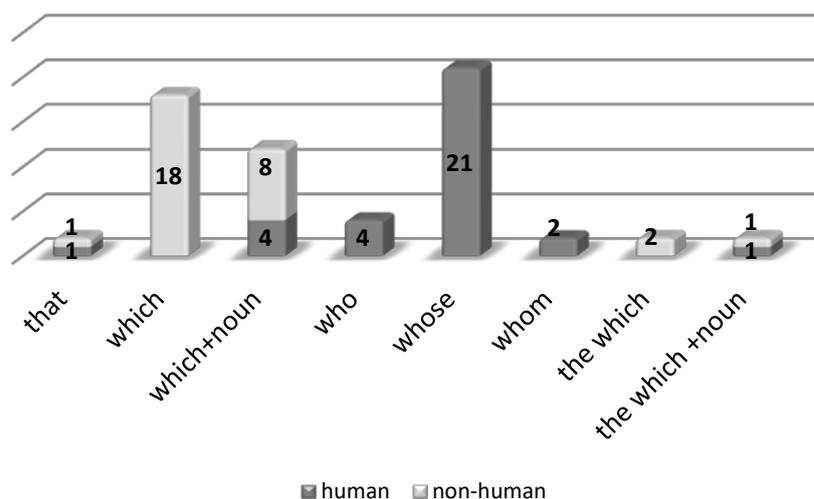


Figure 7.14. Non-restrictive clauses: human vs. non-human, period II (1506-1596)

The lack of human *which* suggests that this marker is indeed less and less associated with human antecedents. As observed in the section on animacy in restrictive contexts above, this tendency is, to a lesser extent, also visible in restrictive contexts. In non-restrictive contexts, it seems that *who(m)(se)* have become the preferred forms to refer to human antecedents.

All in all, it appears that at this stage non-restrictiveness almost always warrants the choice for a *wh*-form, while human antecedents favour *who(m)(se)*. In restrictive contexts, the situation has become more complex; *that* is the preferred form, but as tentatively has been stated in relation to period I (1404-1493), animacy may also interact with restrictiveness and sometimes gives rise to the use of *which* with human antecedents in restrictives, especially when the relative marker is in subject position. In the council ordinances of period II (1506-1596), *which* generally seems to be less strongly associated with human antecedents, and the form is more frequently found with non-human antecedents in restrictive contexts.

7.5.2.3. Definiteness in the council ordinances, period II (1505-1596)

As Table 7.10 below demonstrates once again, definiteness does not seem to show any strong effects. The forms *who*, *whose* and *zero* were excluded from this survey; *whose* because it is mostly used in fixed expressions and thus does not reveal much about possible variation, and *who* and *zero* are excluded because they are still very infrequent. Definite antecedents are more common than indefinite antecedents.

| | that | % | which forms | % | total |
|------------|------|-----|-------------|-----|-------|
| definite | 64 | 57% | 48 | 43% | 112 |
| indefinite | 16 | 50% | 16 | 50% | 32 |
| total | 80 | 56% | 64 | 44% | 144 |

Table 7.10. Definite vs. indefinite, period II (1506-1596)

The percentages in the table suggest that there is a preference for a *wh*-form to occur with indefinite antecedents and for *that* to occur with definite antecedents. However, as was noted for period I (1404-1493), the effect of definiteness is difficult to establish because restrictiveness appears to be such a strong factor. Since 78 of the 80 instances of *that* occur in restrictive contexts, it is hard to tell whether definiteness gave rise to the choice of *that*, or whether definiteness plays a role at all. There was also no clear patterning with regard to the different types of antecedents, e.g. noun phrases with indefinite and definite determiners, quantifiers, personal pronouns, indefinite pronouns and demonstrative pronouns. However, the finding of Bergs (2005) that *the which* seems to be preferred with full noun phrase antecedents is once again corroborated here; all four cases of *the which (+noun)* take full noun phrases as their antecedents.

7.5.2.4. *Grammatical role of the relative marker in the council ordinances, period II (1505-1596)*

As in period I (1404-1493), relative markers are most frequently found in subject position followed by direct objects and oblique/prepositional objects. Again, there are slightly more relative markers in object position than in direct object positions in non-restrictive contexts.

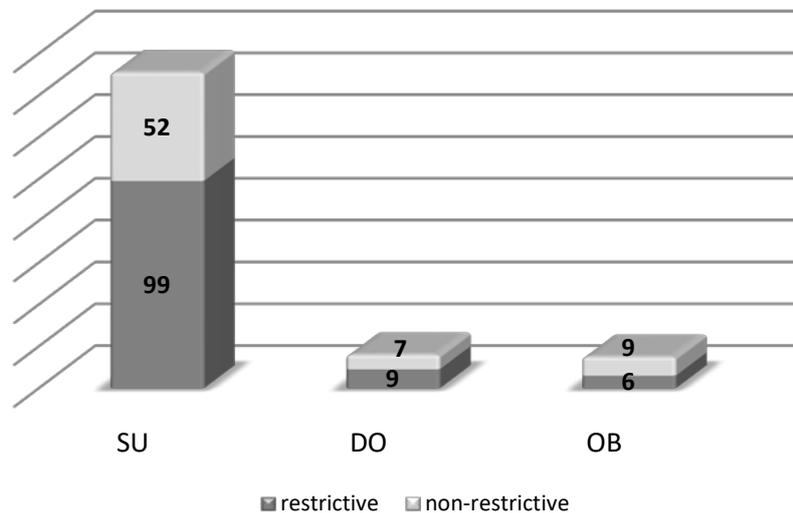


Figure 7.15. *Grammatical role of relativisers: restrictive vs. non-restrictive, period II (1506-1596)*

Grammatical role in restrictive contexts

As shown in Figure 7.16 below, *that* (69) is predominant as a subject in restrictive clauses, but the number for *which* (27) is also relatively high:

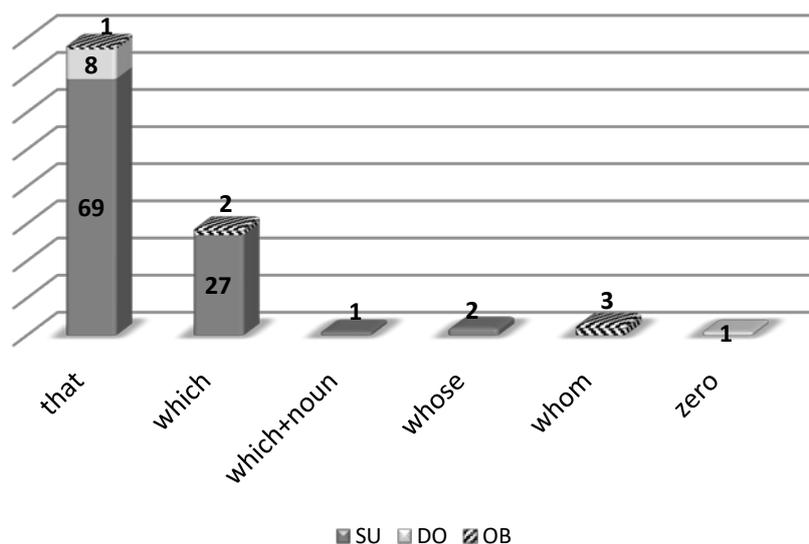


Figure 7.16. The grammatical role of the relativisers in restrictive context, period II (1506-1596)

To compare, in period I (1404-1493) *that* was used 87% of the times, and *(the) which* forms covered the remaining 13% in subject position, as opposed to 75% for *that* and 25% for *which* forms in period II (1506-1596). For period I, it was also observed that *(the) which* forms predominantly referred to human antecedents (86% of all *which*-forms) in subject position. In period II (1506-1596), 61% of the *which*-forms occur with human antecedents in restrictive subject position: In Rydén's corpus of written Early Modern English (1520-1560) (1966: Table III and X in appendices), the distribution of *which* is even more in favour of non-human antecedents; only 34% of all *which* cases in subject position takes human antecedents, as opposed to 61% of *which* for human subject antecedents in the data of period II (1506-1596). It needs to be pointed out that Rydén's data only allow for a comparison with noun antecedents in restrictive contexts because he split the results up for pronoun and noun antecedents, and he did not

provide a table for the distribution of relative markers with pronoun antecedents in restrictive and non-restrictive contexts.

| period I: (1404-1493) | that | % | Which forms | % | total |
|------------------------|------|-----|-------------|-----|-------|
| human | 84 | 87% | 12 | 13% | 96 |
| non-human | 38 | 95% | 2 | 5% | 40 |
| total | 122 | 90% | 14 | 10% | 136 |
| period II: (1506-1596) | | | | | |
| human | 50 | 75% | 17 | 25% | 67 |
| non-human | 19 | 63% | 11 | 37% | 30 |
| total | 69 | 70% | 28 | 30% | 98 |

Table 7.11. Restrictive context: animacy in subject position, period I (1404-1493) and period II (1506-1596)

However, if personal pronoun antecedents were excluded in the Bristol data, the percentage for human *which*-forms would be 52%, instead of 61%, which is still relatively high. The overall distribution of human *which*-forms versus *that* in subject position in Rydén's data is 19% (478) for *which*-forms and 81% (270) *that*. When pronouns are not included in the Bristol data, the ratio is 22 % (12) and 78% (42) for *which*-forms and *that* respectively. So, in the Bristol data, human *which*-forms seem slightly more popular, though this is difficult to say with certainty on the basis of a much smaller data set.

When the distribution of non-human *which* and *that* in subject position are compared to Rydén's data, the percentages are also slightly different from the percentages shown in Table 7.11 above: 70% (2166) for *that* and 30% (940) for *which*-forms, as opposed to 63% for *that* and 37% in the council ordinances of period II.

Another difference is that in Rydén's (1966) corpus, subject *who* is marginally present in restrictive contexts, whereas, apart from two cases of genitive *whose*, *who* is not present at all in this context in my sub-corpus of council ordinances of period II (1506-1596).

In restrictive direct and oblique/indirect object contexts, *that* is not found with human antecedents, and *which* only refers to a

human antecedent once. *Whose* and *whom* are used with the remaining human antecedents.

It seems thus that *which* competes with *that* in restrictive contexts, specifically in subject position. In other grammatical functions, it appears that *that* is rarely found with human antecedents in both period I and period II. *Whose* and *whom* seem to be the preferred forms in human non-subject contexts. Based on the data presented here, it appears that *whom* and *whose* are ousting human *which* and *that* in non-subject functions, while *that* is the preferred form with both human and non-human antecedents in subject function. It thus seems that the animacy effect in subject position is not particularly strong, whereas animacy appears to be more relevant in restrictive non-subject positions.

Grammatical role non-restrictives

As regards the distribution of non-restrictive *that* and *which* in the council ordinances of period II (1506-1596), this is surprisingly similar to that of period I (1404-1493). The relative marker *that* is very rare, refers to a human antecedent once and only occurs in subject position, which is indeed expected as it has been observed that subject positions seem to be most resilient to change and to favour *that* over *wh*-forms. When all forms of *which* are taken together, they form the largest group of relative markers in all grammatical functions.

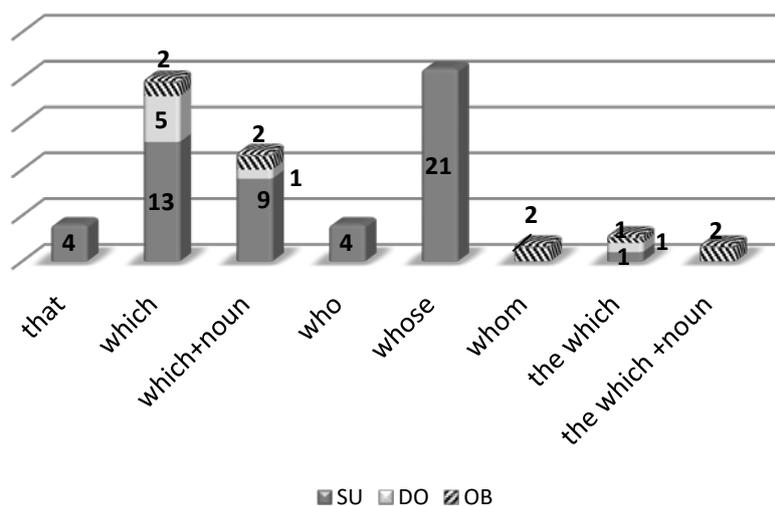


Figure 7.17. Grammatical role relativisers in non-restrictives, period II (1506-1596)

The big difference with period I (1404-1493), however, is the appearance of *who* in subject position (see also example 47) and the increase of *whose* in subject noun phrases (example 48), although the latter form mainly seems to occur in fixed phrases. Nonetheless, *who(se)* seems to have become a more serious contender in non-restrictive contexts since it starts establishing itself in subject gaps too (47):

- (47) Mr Thomas Colfton and Mr William Byrde **whoe** fhall keepe an Accompte of the beftowinge thereof (Soldier's ordinance, 1585, f.56, BRO: 04272)
- (48) Yt ys nowe ordred and enacted by the righte wourfhipfull Iohn Robartes Maior of this cytie the wourfhipfull his bretherne the aldermen and the comon cownfaill of the fame nowe affembled **whos** names are vnderwrytten (Memorandum of major's office, 1555, f.41, BRO: 04272)

Interestingly, apart from one case, human antecedents do not occur with *(the) which* anymore, but almost exclusively with *who(m)(se)*. It thus seems that simple *which* has completely lost its association with animacy in non-restrictives, while *who(m)(se)* are on the increase.

7.5.3. Period III (1548-1711): relative markers in the letters

In total, 328 relative clauses were extracted from the letter corpus. Of all the relative clauses, 9% (26 clauses) had to be excluded from further analyses, in most cases because it was impossible to establish if they were restrictive or non-restrictive.

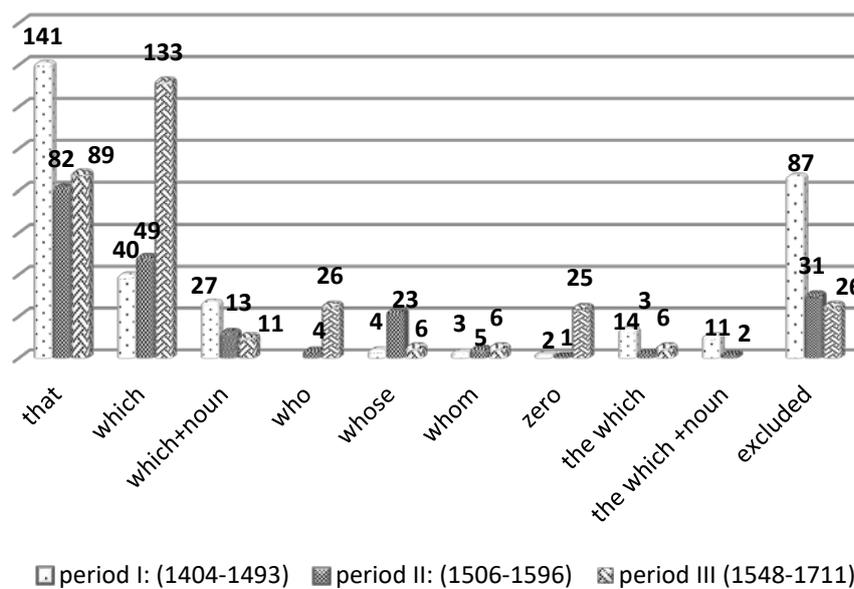


Figure 7.18. Totals of relativisers in period I (1404-1493), period II (1506-1596), and period III (1548-1711)

In other cases, it was clear that a relative marker was used, but it was extremely difficult to classify it, e.g. it was purely used as clause connector that did not seem to refer to any type of antecedent, nor did the relative marker seem to have a clearly identifiable grammatical

function. In line with the latter observation, Ihalainen (1980) mentions the use of *which* as a clause connector in modern Somerset dialects²¹:

- (49) Well, rather than he'd sell those apples to a cider merchant..., *which* a lot of people are against cider, he'd let his cows have the apples (Ihalainen 1980: 190)

As illustrated by example (12) above, and examples (50) - (52) below, similar constructions occur in my data. An interesting difference, however, is that here *which* occurs with conjunctions (*in regard (that), before, in case*):

²¹ Herrmann (2003: 169) proposes a different analysis to this type of clause connector in the modern spoken dialects of the South West. She argues that most cases can be analysed as relative clauses involving stranded preposition elisions (1), resumptives (2) or new starts (3). The latter means that after the relative marker is introduced, the speaker pauses and abandons the relative clause construction and reverts to a paratactic construction (Herrmann 2003: 170-173):

- (1) And, er, you had a great big chap up in between the hooves. [**Which** the cow did go crippled ~~from/by~~]
 (2) They sold this and some at Cary and I jumped in and bought **this**, [**which** I were lucky in a way [to get **it**]], you know, had it, being a tenant you did get it cheaper, you see?
 (3) And they had addresses and I ran around, I went to get a job at the pit, [**which**] er I had no more sense so I'm glad now that I didn't get on.

Arguably, in example (50), *which in regard* could be reconstructed as *in regard of which* and thus could indeed be analysed as a case of preposition elision. With the other examples, it is harder to see how they fit into these analyses. Given the fact that the relative clauses in (51) and (52) are introduced with semi colons, it could be that they are “new starts”, with the semi colons functioning as a pause. Arguably, the “new starts” analysis is not all that different from a clause connector since they both refer to paratactic structures. Regardless, all these features are strongly reflective of spoken modes in that the speaker has a less monitored style and more easily clips/changes a construction and makes use of paratactic constructions. It could therefore be that the letter writers who used these features employed more oral registers.

- (50) Laft yeare you gaue mee no Supple of dooe rabbettes **which** in regard your keeper tould mee the yeare was to farr spent to take them without greate preiudice (Humphrey of Bristol, 1628, BRO: ac/36074/121)
- (51) I goe forward in difpofinge-my poore houfhold; **wich** before I act, I humbly defier you to be-pleafed to let mee knowe yf it may stand with your goodwill that I place Christian Talker in the lower roome (John Edwards, 1540, BRO: ac/c48/13)
- (52) That the guardians oughte not Either in difcretion or Equity to Couenant any thinge for the warde to performe heereafter; **which** in cafe hee fhoulde not, our Owne Eftates muft bee liable to make it goode vnto you (Thomas Smythe, 1640, BRO: ac/36074/154)

From the percentages of the relative markers, it appears that *which* (40%) is the most commonly used relativiser in the letters under investigation, followed by *that* (27%). Whereas *that* was the most frequent form in the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493) and II (1506-1596), it seems that *which* is the most dominant form in this sub-corpus. However, as will become clear when we zoom in on the effect of other variables, the story is more complex. The forms *who*, *whose* and *whom* are not very frequent, but *who* (8%) has become more common, when compared to what Bergs (2005) has found in the Paston letters about a century earlier, where *who* only accounted for 1% of the total of relative markers. *The which + noun* cases do not occur in the data. In general, *the which* and *which+noun* have become rare. Yet, *the which* is found as late as 1630, so even though rare, it has not disappeared from the all of the letter writers' registers. As can be seen, *zero* also makes a more frequent appearance in the letters of this period, which contrasts sharply with the low number of *zero* in the ordinances of period I (1404-1493) and II (1506-1596). In the letters, the first instance of *zero* is found in 1579, but the form becomes more frequent only from 1624 onwards and is produced most frequently by two letter writers, namely Elizabeth Smyth and her son Thomas Smyth.

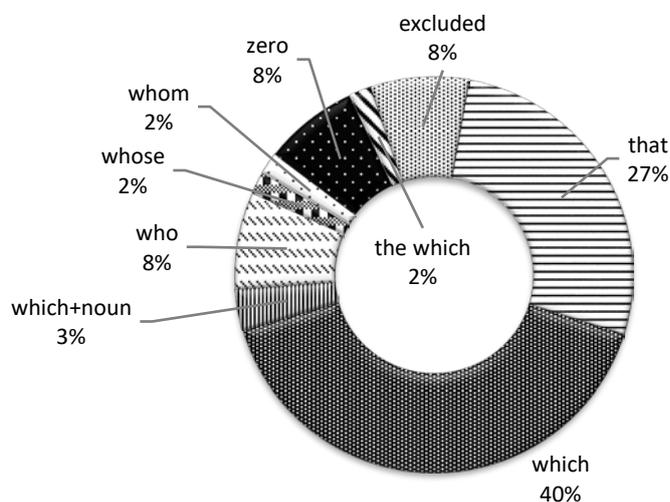


Figure 7.19. Percentages relativisers, period III (1548-1711)

7.5.3.1. Relative markers: restrictive versus non-restrictive in the letters, period III (1548-1711)

In total, there were 115 restrictive relative clauses and 187 non-restrictive relative clauses. The predominance of non-restrictive clauses in the letters under investigation is striking, compared to what was found for the council ordinances in period I (1404-1493) and II (1506-1596), where the restrictive clauses were a clear majority; but also when compared to what has been found in Johansson's (2012) corpus of trials and drama (1516-1719), where only 22% is non-restrictive. This difference could be due to the high number of sentential clauses, which make up 23% of all non-restrictive clauses, and the use of *which* is more typical of spoken styles. As explained in Chapter 2, private letters are closer to the oral mode of expression, which suggests that a difference in text type plays a role here. Furthermore, as can be seen in Figure 7.20 below, all of the *wh*-forms are most common in non-restrictive contexts while *that* prevails in the restrictive contexts.

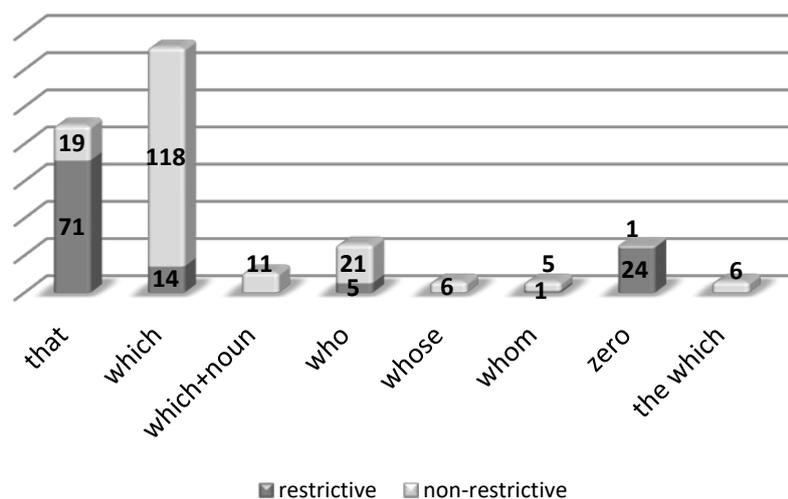


Figure 7.20. Restrictive versus non-restrictive, period III (1548-1711)

Again, it has to be mentioned that 58 (23%) of all non-restrictive cases of *which* have sentential antecedents, while *that* almost always has a noun phrase as antecedent (83%) in this context. This thus also partly explains the high percentage of *which* in general, since sentential antecedents almost always occur with *which*. Relative *zero* almost exclusively occurs in restrictive contexts, as only one of the 25 *zero* cases is non-restrictive.

Table 7.12 and Table 7.13 below show the diachronic distribution of relative markers in non-restrictive and restrictive contexts. This includes the data of Johansson's (2012) study of trial records and drama (a corpus of Early Modern English speech related texts, henceforth SpEmodE). A word of caution is needed for the comparison with the previous periods, as well as Johansson's data, since some differences may arise from the difference in text type, e.g. the effect of different levels of formality and writing styles may play a role here. In the letter corpus, which covers period III (1548-1711), *that* is slightly more prevalent in non-restrictive contexts than in the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493) and II (1506-1596). However, the

percentage is lower than that of what Johansson (2012) found for SpEmodE (1516-1719). In contrast to periods I and II, in non-restrictive contexts, simple *which* seems to be more strongly preferred over *the which* and *(the) which + noun* constructions:

| | period I: (1404-1493) | | period II: (1506-1596) | | period III: (1548-1711) | | SpEmodE: (1516-1719) | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|----------------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|
| | | % | | % | | % | | % |
| that | 4 | 5% | 4 | 6% | 19 | 10% | 40 | 16% |
| which | 28 | 34% | 20 | 29% | 118 | 63% | 137 | 53% |
| Which+ noun | 26 | 30% | 12 | 18% | 11 | 6% | - | - |
| who | - | - | 4 | 6% | 21 | 11% | 46 | 18% |
| whose | 3 | 4% | 21 | 31% | 6 | 3% | 17 | 6% |
| whom | 2 | 2% | 2 | 3% | 5 | 3% | 17 | 6% |
| zero | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1% | - | - |
| the which | 10 | 12% | 3 | 4% | 6 | 3% | - | - |
| the which +noun | 11 | 13% | 2 | 3% | - | - | - | - |
| total | 84 | | 68 | | 187 | | 257 | |

Table 7.12. Relative markers in non-restrictive contexts over time, period I (1404-1493), period II (1506-1596), period III (1548-1711,) including Johansson's (2012: 49) SpEmodE data (1560-1719)

The high percentage of *whose* in period II (1506-1596) stands out, but as mentioned earlier, most of these instances are found in very particular contexts only, as all except two cases occurred in the following form:

- (53) Memorandum that the laft daye of may in the yeres aboue written it was decreed and ordeyned by all the wurfhipfull perfons of the cuncell of this Citie of Briftowe **whofe names hereafter followeth** (Common Council ordinances of Bristol, 1560, BRO: 04272)

The most striking differences to period I (1404-1493) and II (1506-1596) are the relatively frequent occurrence of *who* and *zero* (see Table 7.12 above and Table 7.13 below). In contrast to the previous periods, *who* is now also found in restrictive contexts (see Table 7.13 below):

- (54) you see how perplexd it now remaynes, by ye advantages ase taken against you, for ye overfloweing exprefions of your good Nature. so frequently offred unto fome body, **who** I doubt in the upshott of this businense will appeare to haue befreinded another fomebody, **who** will report ye other very little more after his owne ends are atcheiued (Thomas Smythe, 1639, BRO: 33074/133d)

Also, in contrast to what was observed for the council ordinances in period II (1506-1596), *which* seems less dominant in restrictive contexts of the letter corpus of period III (1548-1711), while *zero* and *who* take a more prominent place.

| | period I: (1404-1493) | | period II: (1506-1596) | | period III: (1548-1711) | | SpEmodE: (1516-1719) | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|----------------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|
| | | % | | % | | % | | % |
| that | 137 | 87% | 78 | 68% | 71 | 62% | 532 | 58% |
| which | 12 | 8% | 29 | 25% | 14 | 12% | 100 | 11% |
| which+ noun | 1 | 1% | 1 | 1% | - | - | - | - |
| who | - | - | - | - | 5 | 4% | 42 | 5% |
| whose | 1 | 1% | 2 | 2% | - | - | 30 | 3% |
| whom | 1 | 1% | 3 | 3% | 1 | 1% | 16 | 2% |
| zero | 2 | 1% | 1 | 1% | 24 | 21% | 193 | 21% |
| the which | 4 | 3% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| total | 158 | | 114 | | 115 | | 913 | |

Table 7.13. Restrictive contexts over time, (1404-1493), period II (1506-1596), period III (1548-1711) including Johansson's (2012: 779) SpEmodE data (1560-1719).

| period I: (1404-1493) | that | % | wh- forms | % | zero | % | total |
|------------------------------------|------|-----|--------------|-----|------|-----|-------|
| restrictive | 137 | 87% | 19 | 12% | 2 | 1% | 158 |
| non- restrictive | 4 | 5% | 80 | 95% | - | - | 84 |
| total | 141 | 59% | 99 | 41% | 2 | 1% | 242 |
| period II: (1506-1596) | | | | | | | |
| restrictive | 78 | 68% | 35 | 31% | 1 | 1% | 114 |
| non- restrictive | 4 | 6% | 64 | 94% | - | - | 68 |
| total | 82 | 45% | 98 | 54% | 1 | 1% | 182 |
| period III: (1404-1493) | | | | | | | |
| restrictive | 71 | 62% | 20 | 17% | 24 | 21% | 113 |
| non- restrictive | 19 | 10% | 170 | 89% | 1 | 1% | 241 |
| total | 89 | 29% | 188 | 62% | 25 | 8% | 302 |
| SpEmodE (1516-1719) | | | | | | | |
| restrictive | 532 | 58% | 188 | 21% | 193 | 21% | 913 |
| non- restrictive | 40 | 16% | 217 | 84% | - | - | 257 |
| total | 572 | 49% | 405 | 35% | 193 | 0% | 1170 |

Table 7.14. Diachronic overview restrictive vs. non-restrictive: *that* and *wh*-forms, (1404-1493), period II (1506-1596), period III (1548-1711, including Johansson's (2012: 779) SpEmodE data (1560-1719)

Altogether, *who* and *zero* are establishing themselves as variants amongst the Bristol letter writers and the percentages shown here are surprisingly similar to what Johansson (2012) established for the trial and drama (SpEmodE) corpus, apart from the fact that *whose* and *whom* are slightly more common in Johansson's corpus. Based on

both the letter corpus of period III (1548-1711), as well as Johansson's data, it is quite clear that *zero* strongly favours restrictive contexts (see also the cross tabulations in Table 7.14 above).

7.5.3.2. Relative markers and their antecedents: human versus non-human in the letters, period III (1548-1711)

Restrictive clauses

In total, there are 115 restrictive adnominal clauses in the letter corpus, of which the large majority (72%) has non-human antecedents. Figure 7.21 below shows that in the letter corpus restrictive relative marker *that* remains the most common form with human antecedents.

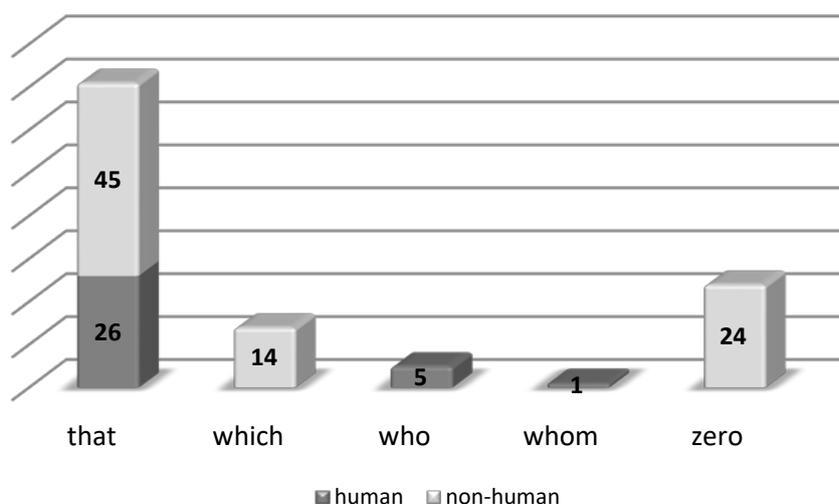


Figure 7.21. Restrictive clauses: human vs. non-human, period III (1548-1711)

As Table 7.15 shows, the percentage for *that* seems unexpectedly high, but it may be that the number of relatives in subject position is relatively high, which, as mentioned earlier, is the position where *that* is most resilient. The most noticeable difference between the letter corpus of period III (1548-1711) and the council ordinances of period I

(1404-1493) and II (1506-1596) is that *which* no longer seems to be associated with human antecedents in restrictive contexts at all.

| | period I: (1404- 1493) | % | period II: (1506- 1596) | % | period III: 1548- 1711 | % |
|---------------------|------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|
| that | 87 | 84% | 50 | 68% | 26 | 81% |
| which | 10 | 10% | 17 | 23% | - | - |
| which + noun | 1 | 1% | 1 | 1% | - | - |
| who | - | - | - | - | 5 | 6% |
| whose | 1 | 1% | 2 | 3% | - | - |
| whom | 1 | 1% | 3 | 4% | 1 | 3% |
| zero | 2 | 2% | - | - | - | - |
| the which | 1 | 1% | - | - | - | - |
| total | 103 | 100% | 73 | 100% | 30 | 100% |

Table 7.15. Human antecedents in restrictive relative clauses, period I (1404-1493), II (1506-1596) and III (1548-1711)

As can be observed in Table 7.16, in the letters of period III (1548-1711), *that* and *which* are less prevalent with non-human antecedents than in the council ordinances of period II (1506-1596). The number of *zero* relatives is higher and exclusively occurs with non-human antecedents. Johansson (2012: 786) mentions that *zero* is especially frequent with stranded prepositional constructions in her corpus of Early Modern drama and trial records. In my data, only five of the 25 instances occur with prepositional constructions, all of which are stranded prepositions.

| | period I: (1404- 1493) | % | period II: (1506- 1596) | % | period III: (1548- 1711) | % |
|---------------------|------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|------|
| that | 50 | 91% | 28 | 68% | 45 | 54% |
| which | 2 | 4% | 12 | 29% | 14 | 17% |
| which + noun | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| zero | - | - | 1 | 2% | 24 | 29% |
| the which | 3 | 5% | - | - | - | - |
| total | 55 | 100% | 41 | 100% | 83 | 100% |

Table 7.16. Non-human antecedents in restrictive relative clauses, period I (1404-1493), II (1506-1596) and III (1548-1711)

Animacy: non-restrictives

As regards the non-restrictive adnominal clauses in the letters, there were 86 relative clauses with human antecedents and 43 with non-human antecedents. Only four instances of all non-restrictive *which* forms (5%) refer to human antecedents, while 73 (95%) instances of non-restrictive *which* refer to non-human antecedents in the letters investigated, which again suggests that this variant is less strongly associated with human antecedents. *Who(m)(se)* are the preferred forms with human antecedents in non-restrictive contexts. Interestingly, almost all instances of *who* refer to antecedents with personal names, whereas with other types of human antecedents *that* and *which* are used as relative markers. This tendency also has been observed in Johansson's (2012) trial records and drama corpus.

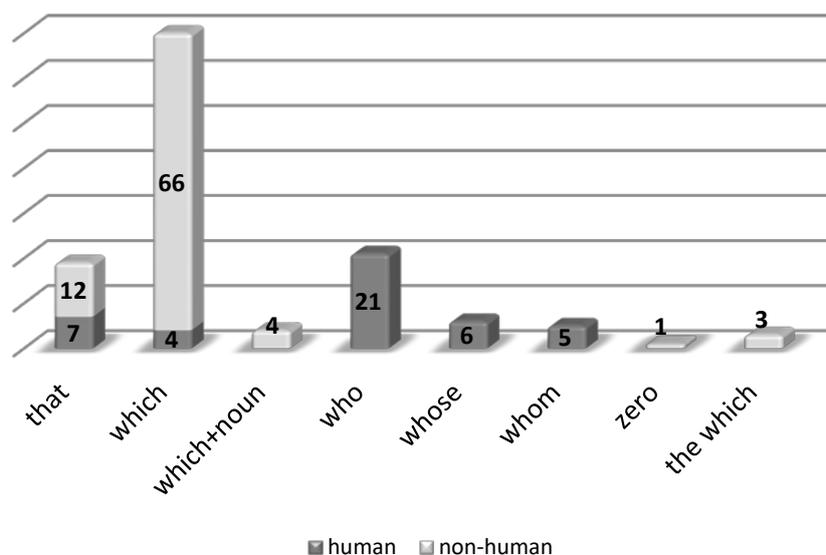


Figure 7.22. Non-restrictive clauses: human vs. non-human, period III (1548-1711)

7.5.3.3. Definiteness in the letters, period III (1548-1711)

As noted in Sections 7.5.1.3. and 7.5.2.3., it is difficult to establish the effect of definiteness of the antecedents because restrictiveness and animacy appear to be stronger factors. For period III (1548-1711), again, there do not seem to be many clear patterns with regard to definiteness, not even when restrictive and non-restrictive clauses are considered separately. One clear pattern that can be established is that *who(m)(se)* are mostly preferred with definite antecedents, but this comes as no surprise since they tend to refer to personal pronouns and personal names. Therefore, the type of noun phrase plays a role, rather than definiteness. There is possibly one relative marker that may be triggered by definiteness to some degree and that is *zero*; this form almost categorically occurs with definite antecedents; 22 of the 25 instances take a definite antecedent. In the previous two periods, *the which* occurred with full noun phrase antecedents. For this period,

it only turns out to be true for three of the six instances, the other three take sentential antecedents. Typically, all but one of all cases of *the which* is preceded by a preposition. One of the full noun phrase types is from early in the period, i.e. 1548. Two of the full noun phrase cases are from 1630 and occur in closing formulae of letters:

- (55) I muft confesse I can noe way fuffciently expresse my thankefullnesse to you, for this uifit, *amongft many former testimones of your loue to me and mine*, **for the which**, the height of my ambition fhall be to deferue the continuance, that morninge William young came (Mary Smythe, 1630, BRO: ac/c53/13)
- (56) and by this time I Imagine (as well as my felfe) fhe doth long to see you safely returned. **For the which** (in the Interim) I fhall not ceafe to offer up my dayly prayers vnto God for your long life and happy returnes (Thomas Smythe, 1623, BRO: ac/c/43/1)

This suggests that in period III (1548-1711), the form is definitely dying out in written language and is only rarely found in fixed prepositional expressions.

7.5.3.4. Grammatical role of the relative marker in the letters, period III (1548-1711)

The general frequencies of the different grammatical roles in the letters show a similar distribution to that of the previous two periods; in restrictive contexts, subject relative markers are most frequent, followed by direct object and indirect/oblique objects. Also, again, in non-restrictive contexts, the frequency of indirect/oblique objects is higher than that of direct objects.

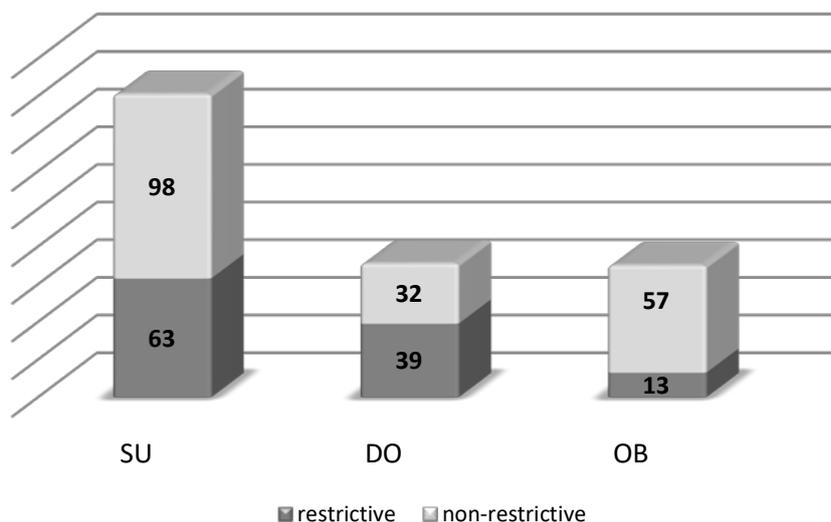


Figure 7.23. Grammatical role of relativisers: restrictive vs. non-restrictive, period III (1548-1711)

Grammatical role restrictives

The distribution in restrictive contexts is similar to the previous two periods in that the relative marker *that* is by far the most commonly used relativiser in subject position (79%), and preferred with both human and non-human antecedents. However, where there was an increase of *which* in subject position in the council ordinances of period II (1506-1596), the relative marker now accounts for only 8% of all the relative markers in restrictive subject position.

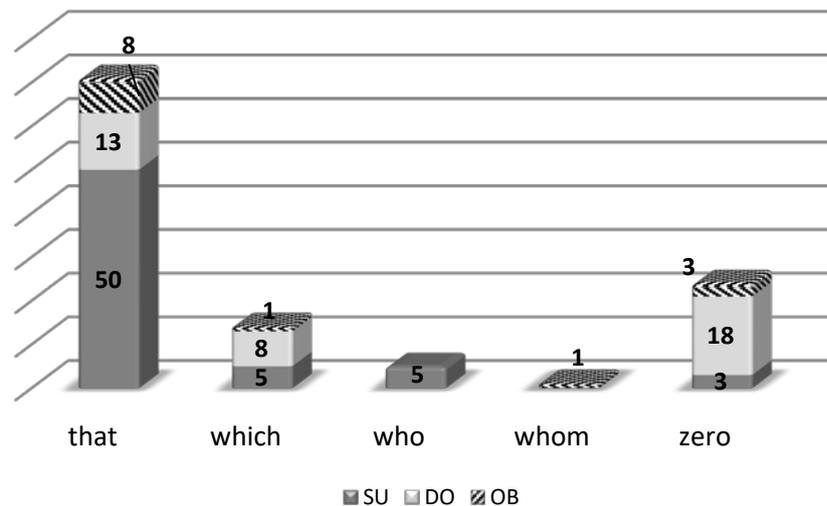


Figure 7.24. Grammatical role relativisers restrictive clauses, period III (1548-1711)

In the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493), there was a slight tendency for *which* to refer to human antecedents in restrictive subject contexts, while in period II (1506-1596) *which* was less strongly associated with animacy, and seemed to compete with *that* in subject position in general. In the data of the letter corpus of period III (1548-1711), *which* is less dominant in subject position. Moreover, the few cases of *which* that appear refer to non-human antecedents only. Most importantly, personal *who* is also marginally found in subject position, while in period I (1404-1493), the form was not present at all, and in period II (1506-1596), it only occurred in non-restrictive contexts. *Zero* does not refer to human antecedents and is almost exclusively found in restrictive contexts, but rarely in subject position; the majority is found in direct object position:

| period I: (1404-1493) | that | % | who | % | which forms | % | zero | % | total |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------------|----------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|----------|----------------|------------|
| human | 84 | 87 % | - | - | 12 | 13 % | - | - | 96 |
| non-human | 38 | 95 % | | | 2 | 5% | - | - | 40 |
| total | 122 | 90 % | - | - | 14 | 10 % | - | - | 136 |
| period II: (1506-1596) | | | | | | | | | |
| human | 50 | 75 % | - | - | 17 | 25 % | - | - | 67 |
| non-human | 19 | 63 % | | | 11 | 37 % | - | - | 30 |
| total | 69 | 71 % | - | - | 28 | 29 % | - | - | 97 |
| period III: (1548-1711) | | | | | | | | | |
| human | 24 | 75 % | 5 | 25% | - | - | - | - | 29 |
| non-human | 26 | 76 % | - | - | 5 | 15 % | 3 | 9 % | 34 |
| total | 50 | 79 % | 5 | 8% | 5 | 8% | 3 | 5 % | 63 |

Table 7.17. Restrictive context: animacy in subject position period I (1404-1493), period II (1506-1596), and period III (1548-1711)

All things considered, it is again confirmed that especially in subject position *that* is the preferred form with both human and non-human forms. In the case of the letter corpus of period III (1548-1711), relative marker *which* is not as popular in restrictive contexts as it was in the council ordinances of period II (1506-1596). Furthermore, *zero* is more common than *that* in direct object position, while in the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493) and II (1506-1596), this form was extremely rare in general. However, it cannot be ruled out that this large difference is due to a difference in text type. After all,

previous studies (DeKeyser 1984; Rissanen 2000; Johansson 2012) have established that *zero* is more common in colloquial texts such as letters, drama, trial records and witness depositions than in prose.

Grammatical role non-restrictives

Surprisingly, in contrast to the previous two periods, *that* is relatively frequent in non-restrictive contexts. In period I (1404-1493), *that* made up 5% of all non-restrictive relative markers, and in period II (1506-1596), this was 6%, while for this period 10% of the non-restrictive relative markers are *that*. However, the highest number is found in subject position, which suggests that the grammatical role affects the relatively high rate of *that*. Nonetheless, similarly to the previous periods, *which* is the preferred form in all grammatical positions.

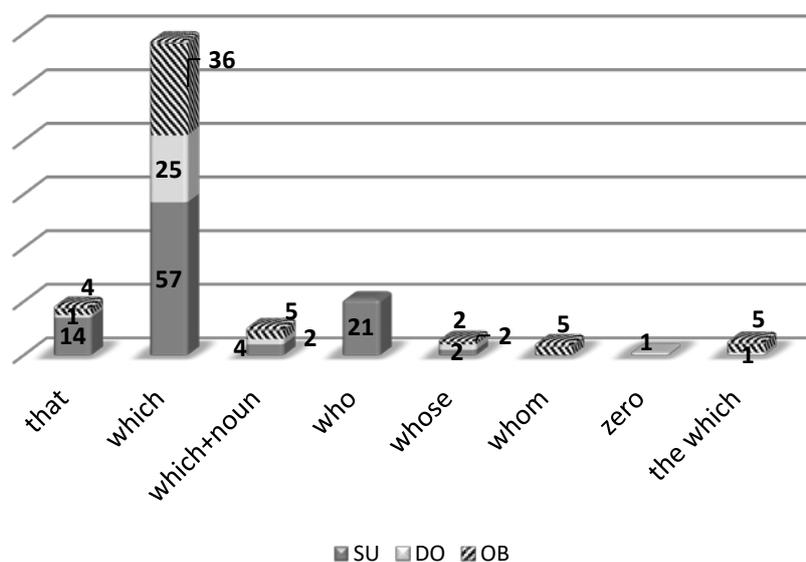


Figure 7.25. Grammatical role relativisers non-restrictive clauses, period III (1548-1711)

In subject position of adnominal relative clauses, *that* occurs equally with human (five) and non-human (six) antecedents. Only two human antecedents have *which* in subject position, which again confirms that the form is more strongly associated with non-human antecedents. Instead, *who* is now predominantly found with human antecedents in subject position.

| period III: (1548-1711) | that | % | who | % | which forms | % | total |
|----------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|----------------|-----|-------|
| human | 6 | 21% | 21 | 75% | 2 | 4% | 29 |
| non-human | 5 | 15% | - | - | 29 | 85% | 34 |
| total | 11 | 17% | 21 | 33% | 31 | 49% | 63 |

Table 7.18. Non-restrictive context: animacy in subject position, period III (1548-1711)

In the other grammatical roles, it is also mostly *whose* and *whom* that introduce human antecedents. Of the 14 human antecedents in direct object and oblique object position, only two have *which* and two have *that* as relative markers. Thus, in a non-restrictive context, *who(m)(se)* are firmly established as human relative markers in all grammatical roles, and appear to have ousted *which* as a human relative.

All in all, the most noticeable about the results of the letter corpus is that *who* and *zero* are more common than in the civic records. *Who* occurs from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards and *zero* more frequently occurs from the 1630s onwards. *Which* is rarely associated with human antecedents anymore.

7.6. Relative marker *as*: a brief excursion

A relative marker that has rarely been investigated systematically in historical linguistics is *as*. The form has, however, been investigated to some extent in dialectology (see for instance Ihalainen 1980; Poussa 1988, 1991; Herrmann 2003). As touched upon earlier, it might be a

feature of interest with regard to written Bristol material since the relative marker *as* is still attested nowadays in dialect areas close to Bristol. Little is known about the origin of this form. It is frequently mentioned in historical accounts as a form that was occasionally used in the Late Middle and Early Modern English period, especially in combination with *such* and *same* (Mustanoja 1960: 202; Rydén 1966: 210). The form is said to have derived from Middle English *swich...as*, which in turn was derived from the Old English form *alswa* (Poussa 1991: 297; Fischer 1992: 305). The first attestations of *as* are from the twelfth century (Rydén 1966: 210), but they have always remained rare in written language, and seldom occur without *such* (Mustanoja 1960: 202). Poussa has proposed a possible Scandinavian (1988) or Welsh (1991) origin. The Scandinavian hypothesis assumes that the form is derived from Old Norse *es*, which would explain why it is now found in Anglian England. For the occurrence of the form in the West, Poussa later (1991) proposed a Welsh origin. Because the *as* areas coincide with areas that have Celtic river names rather than Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian ones, while all dialect areas that have *what* as a relative clause marker typically coincide with Germanic areas, Poussa (1991: 300) assumes that in these areas, there must long have been a Brittonic-Germanic bilingual continuity, i.e. to such an extent that Welsh names were maintained and the Celtic language possibly exerted a more extensive influence on English than in the rest of England. Poussa (1991: 299) further hypothesises that “AS was naturally selected because of its simplicity, in a language contact situation”, e.g. there is a tendency to opt for pronouns that lack case coding in language contact situations. Indeed, on the Survey of English Dialects map, *as* proves to be the most dominant invariable relative marker in the West Midlands and the central South West. Since the form is not generally found in most parts of Wales, apart from the border areas, Poussa proposes that *as* must have been derived from a Welsh relative particle from an earlier stage of Brittonic. The adopted form must have disappeared from Welsh and was therefore not adopted in more recently English-speaking areas in Wales. A possible Welsh source could be the ancestor of the Middle Welsh relative marker *ys* or *as*, which was occasionally found as a relative marker in

early Welsh poetry (Evans & van Hamel 1970: 173). So far, relative *as* has only rarely been attested in historical written language. The written language of Bristol would be an interesting point in case, since, based on the Survey of English Dialects maps, it seems to be placed precisely in the border area of the *as* area. Typically, modern dialect studies (Ihalainen 1980; Herrmann 2003) have found that East Somerset and Gloucestershire have speakers that use *as*, while West Somerset has *what* as a more dominant form. Herrmann (2003: 74) notes, “[w]hen comparing my results of the Central South-West to those of previous investigations, it becomes clear that in the past, *as* reached as far south as Gloucestershire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, and Eastern Somerset”. This actually places Bristol right at the heart of the *as*-speaking area. In the historical background chapter (Chapter 4), it was shown that Bristol had longstanding trade contacts with Wales and the Welsh borders. Moreover, based on surname evidence, it is clear that Bristol was home to people of Welsh origin, and without a doubt there was extensive contact with people in the areas that are now still predominantly *as*-using areas, if it was not part of the *as* area itself in the late Middle English period. As pointed out earlier, the literature relating to Late Middle and Early Modern English relativisers states that the form *such...as* is rarely found in written records and the use of *as* independently is even rarer. The question is if this is also the case for Bristol, since it can be safely assumed that it was part of the *as*-speaking area at some point. Assuming that the form was indeed an early development of which we can still find traces nowadays, it can be expected that there are some signs of that in my data.

7.6.1. Relative marker *as* in the Bristol corpus

Council ordinances period I (1404-1493)

A search for *such...as* and *as* in the ordinances of period I (1404-1493) resulted in 15 matches, all of which are of the *such...as* relative construction type²². Admittedly, it was sometimes hard to tell if they

²² The search entry included the following spelling variants: *as/ass/aff/ase/afe*. Collocated *such* forms could easily be tracked once sentences with *as* tokens were extracted, so there was no need to include *such* in the search term.

functioned as prototypical relative clauses that were absolute equivalents of the forms *that*, *which*, or *who*. Sometimes they function more like adverbial conjunctions that express degree or manner. Also, even when they do function as a relative marker with a clearly identifiable antecedent, their function is not always entirely equivalent to *that* or the other relative markers. In example (57) below, the *such...as* construction expresses something along the lines of: *to the degree that*, or *the kind of thing/person that*:

- (57) And þat þe faide lorneymen fhall gadre Amongift þere felawes fuhe money **as** fhall be þought good and honeft for þe finding of þe faide light (Memorandum of ordinances, 1451, f.18, BRO: 04719)

Nonetheless, *as* could be replaced by *that* or *which* in these context and *such ...that/which* have been attested in previous studies (Mustanoja 1960; Rydén 1966). Yet, in period I (1404-1493) of the council ordinances, *that* and *which* never occur with *such*, so it seems that *as* is specifically reserved for the *such...as* construction. They exclusively occur in restrictive contexts and most frequently in object position (7) and subject position (7). Four cases refer to a human antecedent.

All in all, with 15 hits, *such...as* was not extremely common, but if the number were to be added to the other relativisers that were analysed for period I (1404-1493), they would make up 9% of the restrictive relative markers.

Council ordinances period II (1506-1596)

In period II (1506-1596), there are 50 matches for *such...as*, and 3 matches for *as*. They all exclusively occur in a restrictive context and their distribution is relatively evenly divided across human and non-human antecedents. There are 12 instances that do not have a clear antecedent-relativiser relationship. This is mostly the case with expressions of time, where they function as adverbial conjunctions. The large majority of the relative markers are found in subject position (81%), followed by direct objects (19%). This poses a problem to what was stated about the directionality of a possible change in terms of the

accessibility hierarchy that I discussed in Section 7.3.1., i.e. a change is most resistant in the subject position. Then again, this form is not innovative as a relativiser, but it just appears to increase when the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493) and period II (1506-1596) are compared. It could therefore be that it essentially concerns a stylistic development where the *as...such* construction fulfils a clear pragmatic/semantic role. Similarly, Cheshire et al. (1993) and Herrmann (2003), who studied the development and spread of the restrictive personal relative marker *what* in modern English dialects, found that the form is first adopted in subject position and then trickles down to the more complex functions of the hierarchy. Herrmann (2003: 140) bases herself on Romaine's claim that the initial introduction of the *wh*-forms in Middle English were a change from above, in terms of prestige as well as in terms of the level of consciousness, and proposes that changes beginning in the less complex positions may be reflective of less consciously monitored and informal spoken styles:

Being a hallmark of present-day Standard English, the *wh*-pronouns crept into the Middle English REL[ative] marker system by the low positions [complex structures] on the A[ccessibility] H[ierarchy] in formal and complex written language (Romaine 1982: 234; see also Dekeyser 1984: 76). By contrast, the nonstandard REL[ative] marker *what* introduces itself into the AH via the top end [subject position], because it is part of an informal straightforward spoken code, which has greater affinity to the simpler positions of the AH (cf. Cheshire et al. 1993: 70).

My hypothetical contention, however, on the basis of the psycholinguistic explanation that I discussed in Section 7.3.1., is that the initial introduction of the *wh*-forms in Middle English was a change from below the level of consciousness, while the introduction of *what*, as well as *who*, may actually be a change from above the level of consciousness, precisely because the subject position has been proven so resilient to change in restrictive contexts. As mentioned earlier, this resilience can be attributed to the fact that this position is the most

common, and the easiest to process in terms of co-referentiality between the antecedent and relative marker. It is possible that, as Bergs (2003: 96) proposed for the introduction of *who*, pragmatic and sociopsychological factors may have given rise to the introduction of the form in restrictive positions. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a satisfying answer as to whether and how this also applies to the occurrence of *(such)...as* in the council ordinances of Bristol.

Strikingly, the council ordinances of period II (1506-1711) *that* and *such...as* seem to be more equivalent in function than they were in the ordinances of period I (1404-1493); while in period I (1404-1493), constructions of the type in examples (58-59) below only occur with *such...as*, they occur with *that* and also *which* in period II (1506-1596):

- (58) Item that no burges of this cite fhall buy any kynde of marchantdifes or other wares within the liberties of this cite or els where for any ftranger or forrener other then **fuch burqefes that** be able them felves to pay for the fame (Dress code ordinance, 1571, f.28b, BRO: 04272)
- (59) fromhenfforth the fhriffes of this cite for the tyme being fhall geve **fuch lyveryes** to the officers of this cite **which** fhالبة for the worh Hipp of the fame cytie (Cloth liberties ordinance, 1577, f.40, BRO: 04272)

There are also examples where both *that* and *as* occur as relativisers and where almost all nouns and thus also the antecedents are modified by *such*:

- (60) But that **fuche Clothes** be fhone oonly by **fuche parfons** **that** be of the crafte of Shormen and in their houfes vpon payne of .xl. s to be forfeyed at euery tyme that any other parfons then **fuche as** be of the laid crafte is founde with fhering of any maner clothe in his houfe contrary to this ordynance (Memorandum of cloth shearing, 1506, f.1, BRO: 04272)

Occasionally *such* occurs on its own with *as*, e.g. *such* does not modify a noun, but functions as a demonstrative pronoun on its own, see example (60) above and (61) below. This is functionally very similar to the structure in example (62) below, which also expresses something along the lines of *the kind of thing/person that*:

- (61) [...] And doe appointe a coffer with foure lockes and kayes there vnto belonging whereof mr Maior for the yere beinge fhall haue one, and the other three to be deliuered to iij of the Counfaill *such* **as** fhalle thought mofte convenient and diligent perfons (Memorandum of chamberlains, 1560, f.19, BRO: 04272)
- (62) the firfte to be named by Mr Mayor for the tyme beinge the feconde by the Aldermen and by *thofe* **that** haue ben Mayors (Memorandum of money for hospital, 1571, f.29b, BRO: 04272)

Interestingly, *such...as* is now also found in adverbial expressions of time, which, in period I (1404-1493), typically only occurred with *which* or *that*:

- (63) *until suche time as /at suche time as*

Overall, the relatively high number of *such...as* relative constructions in the council ordinances of period II (1506-1596) suggests that it was a form that was on the rise in the civic records of Bristol. Given the functional equivalence it developed with *that*, it may have competed with *that*, which might explain why the count for *that*, *which* and *who(m)(se)* for period II (1506-1596) in Section 7.5.2. seemed relatively low when compared to findings from period I (1404-1596). It remains to be seen if the rise of *such...as* was something specific to a particular scribe, or the text type of ordinances, which is a possibility, since, stylistically, the language used in ordinances is emphatic. The *such...as* construction lends itself very well for this because it precisely delimits and specifies what type of thing or person is referred to, so in a sense, it is the extreme form of a restrictive relative *that* clause, and stylistically, it may serve as a tool to establish

a very tight and explicit anaphoric relationship between the antecedent and the relative marker.

The question is if *such...as* and simple *as*, the way it is found in modern dialects, are related in any way. More data from different genres are needed to say anything conclusive, but from what I can gather from my data, I speculate that *as* may indeed be a reflex of the older form *such...as*. I think the key lies in the fact that *such...as* and *that* became functionally more equivalent, and the fact that *as* started occurring with *such* as an independent pronoun, rather than as a modifier of a noun, which made it more similar to *those that* structures, as shown in example (62) above. At the same time, *such* is also no longer used in a close connection with *as* anymore, as can be seen in example (60) above, where *such* is used repetitively in one sentence. Also, it is now found with *that* and *which*, as shown in examples (58) and (59). Because relative marker *that* and *such...as* seem to overlap in function in some cases, it would make sense to start using *as* on its own by way of analogy with the other uses of *that*:

- (64) Item thife vj perfons vndernamed be chofen to be affitent and helping to the mayor in the ordering ofthe ponyfhement of all thofe as been Confederates vnto willyam Dale Shriffe-(Baker's ordinance, 1518, f.7, BRO: 04272)
- (65) Excepte oonly Cartes or waynes as bring ffuell for bakers bruers or Dyers or with tymbre to hoopers and other Craftes men concernyngtheir Craftes (Memoranda of council, 1515, f.4, BRO: 04272)

If this line of reasoning were to be accepted, it seems unlikely that the modern dialect variant was of Celtic origin. Further evidence that suggests a possible link between *such...as* and *as* is provided by Ilhalianen (1980). His survey of the modern Somerset dialect reveals that *as*, like *such...as* and *as* in the current study, only occurs in restrictive contexts, and primarily in subject and object function. Also, he notices that the quantifier *all* often occurs as a modifier of the antecedent. In my data, there are only 12 cases that occur with a

quantifier as a modifier. However, all 12 of them have *all* as a quantifier:

- (66) Also where it hathe byn complayned that the bruers of this Towne haue vfed herebefore to take whome agayne to their houfes from their Cufomers beyng Tapfters within this Towne *all fuche Ale as* hathe byn founde turned fuyftie dede and vnhabable to be drunken (Memorandum of cloth shearers, 1506, f.1b, BRO: 04272)

Admittedly, this does not necessarily mean that they are related, but the parallels that are established here warrant further research on the subject. This is also not to say that the form cannot be linked to the Welsh variant at all. It may well be possible that the relative prevalence of both *as* and *such as* in the South West can be attributed to their similarity to the Welsh equivalent, in function as well as in form. In other words, the similarity between the English and the Welsh relative markers triggered bilingual speakers to use the English form that was not only equivalent in function, but also in form. This is what Selinker (1992: 43) refers to as a diaform, which is a form that is “identified consistently as same in translation and function from the source language to the target. The smallest dialinguistic unit is the ‘diamorpheme’ and the largest is the ‘diasentence’”. Assuming that Welsh English bilingualism was prominent in Bristol as well as contact between English and bilingual English speakers, it can be speculated that *as* was an example of a diamorpheme.

Letters, period III (1548-1711)

Surprisingly, there are considerably fewer instances of *such...as/as* in the letter corpus of period III (1548-1711). In total, there were 24 hits for relative *such...as*, of which only 15 could be classified as relative constructions with clearly identifiable antecedents. There is only one case where relative *as* is used without *such*. The other cases are ambiguous in that they function more like adverbial constructions, or the antecedent is difficult to identify. A possible explanation could be that relative marker *as* was a form that was not typically used in letter

writing, while it was more typical of council ordinances, which registers seem to be characterised by express and emphatic language that was possibly employed to rule out ambiguity. As can be seen in example (67) below, *such* seems to emphasise and intensify the importance of the referent. The relative construction also makes explicitly clear that it concerns one particular type of person:

- (67) But that *fuche Clothes* be thorne oonly by *fuche parfons* **that** be of the crafte of Shormen and in their houfes vpon payne of .xl. s (Memorandum of cloth shearing, f.1 1506, BRO: 04272)

So, the form does occur in letters too, albeit in lower frequencies. Simple *as* is rare in all of my sub-corpora. It could also be that the form was slowly disappearing from written registers or from the language altogether. However, since *as* is still present as a relativiser in some Modern English spoken dialects of the South West, my tentative conclusion will be that *such...as* was preferred in written registers, and particularly in council ordinances, while simple *as* was more reflective of spoken language, to such an extent that it was also a rare form in the more oral genre of private letters. It also needs to be borne in mind that most of the letter writers of the corpus were geographically quite mobile, which in turn may have led them to use supralocal forms rather than strictly local ones. Hopefully, further study with regard to text types and different geographical distribution will shed more light on the matter.

7.7. Overall conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to assess how relativisation patterns developed in written text types from Bristol in relation to the emergence of supralocal forms, particularly with regard to the forms that have become part of present-day Standard English. Returning to this question, it is now possible to state that the adoption and development of supralocal relativisation patterns in Bristol was, broadly speaking, on a par with the patterns established in the other studies that were used for comparison in this study, notably Rydén

(1966), Dekeyser (1984), Bergs (2005), Johansson (2012). The relevance of restrictiveness, the grammatical role of the relative marker, and animacy of the antecedent are clearly supported by the current findings. However, there were some significant differences too:

In the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493), restrictiveness was the most important factor that determined the choice of relative marker: invariable *that* was the dominant form in restrictive clauses, while *which* was firmly established as a non-restrictive relative marker. *Whom* and *whose* were also starting to make their appearance in non-restrictive contexts with human antecedents, but it was mostly *which* that was used with both human and non-human antecedents, whereas *who* was not attested at all. In the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493), the effect of animacy was more clearly visible in non-subject position in non-restrictive contexts than in restrictive contexts, but it has also been speculated in this study that if the relative marker was in subject position in restrictive contexts, there was a slight tendency to use *which* with a human antecedent. In this respect, the Bristol pattern was different from what was found in Bergs's (2005) data of the same period, where *who*, *whom* and *whose* were more strongly established in both restrictive and non-restrictive contexts.

In the council ordinances of period II (1506-1596), the *wh*-forms, and in particular *which*, started to make their way into restrictive contexts. Another remarkable process that seems to have taken place in this period is that *which* was "dehumanizing" (DeKeyser 1984: 71) and thus came to be less strongly associated with human antecedents. While *which* receded with human antecedents, *who(m)(se)* advanced as human relative markers. This was again most visible in non-restrictive contexts, but also started to become more relevant in restrictive contexts. This too was recorded in Dekeyser's (1984) data of the same period. There were also some important aspects in which the Bristol council ordinances of period II (1506-1596) differed from Dekeyser's (1984) and Rydén's (1966) findings for the same period. Firstly, in the ordinances of period II (1506-1596), *which* was also starting to "dehumanize". However, in restrictive subject

positions, *which* was relatively frequent with human antecedents, whereas *whom* and *whose* were the most common forms with human antecedents in non-subject position. Secondly, in my corpus *who* was not attested in restrictive subject positions, whereas it was for Rydén's data. So, generally speaking, in council records of period II (1506-1596), the choice was still only *which* or *that* in restrictive subject position.

In the letter corpus of period III (1548-1711), *which* was ousted by *who(m)(se)* with human antecedents. Human *which* was no longer found in restrictive subject position, whereas human *who* made its way to restrictive subject positions. Another striking difference with the data of the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493) and period II (1506-1596) was the occurrence of *zero* in restrictive direct object position.

The pattern of change that was observed for the three different periods and text types taken together in this study are in line with what has been observed in the previous literature (cf. Romaine 1984b; Dekeyser 1984; Bergs 2005); the different *wh*-forms established themselves consecutively, that is, *which* enters the stage first, followed by *whose* and *whom*, each first started to establish themselves in non-restrictive contexts from the more complex grammatical positions to subject position and then trickled into restrictive contexts, again from the more complex structures to subject position. As expected, the subject position was most reluctant to the adoption of new forms, especially in restrictive contexts. Nonetheless, the animacy factor exerted its influence here too, which in the case of Bristol possibly gave rise to the use *which* in the council ordinances, while in the letters of period III (1548-1711), *who* was the preferred form in addition to *that* from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards.

One of the more significant findings of this study of Bristol in relation to the development of supralocal relativisation patterns is thus that *which* relatively slowly dehumanised in the council ordinances of period II, particularly in restrictive subject position, while the adoption of *who* seemed to lag behind compared to the findings in the data of similar time periods. This could be a difference

resulting from a difference in text types as the studies that were used for comparison (Rydén 1966; Dekeyser 1984) involved prose and drama texts. Alternatively, it could be that Bristol was later in the adoption of subjective *who* because scribes were adhering to a more regional norm. After all, as Ihalainen (1980) has shown, human *which* is still quite common in the Somerset area. This could be because the form never completely dehumanised in the spoken language of the area. In the letters of period III (1548-1711), on the other hand, the form *who* was more firmly established. As discussed in Chapter 6, the letter writers were all very mobile; they were often trained and schooled elsewhere and their communication networks extended far beyond the Bristol region. In their case, it would make sense that they were exposed to the supralocal form and that they were part of social networks that enforced the use of the new form. As for the authors of the ordinances, we do not know who wrote them, but as pointed out in Chapter 5.7.1., the scribes may have been trained locally. Furthermore, the council ordinances were possibly also intended for regional use, and scribes may have adhered more to local practices or norms. This could also partly explain the more frequent use of *(such)...as* forms in the council ordinances. In the letters, relative use of *(such)...as* was rare, as were other forms of *which*, suggesting that the variant pool for relativisers was relatively smaller. What is more, the letter corpus also largely covers a time-span during which Bristol expanded economically as well as in terms of population size, which implies that the city acquired wider supra-regional importance. The ordinance corpus covers a time span during which Bristol's expansion was more modest compared to the seventeenth century and when Bristol was the centre of communication within a relatively smaller catchment area. In light of the geolinguistic theory that was discussed in Chapter 3, this could mean that supralocalisation and levelling pressures were also more prevalent in the period covered by the letter corpus. Further study of the distribution of the form in other urban centres could shed more light on this hypothesis.

A limitation of the current case study is that the small sample size did not allow for fine-grained distinctions so as to establish the possible effect of definiteness, different types of noun phrase

antecedents or adjacency. Nevertheless, it has been sufficiently shown that it was possible to establish some clear patterns in the broader and most important categories, e.g. restrictiveness, grammatical role and animacy. Another limitation was that it could not always be ruled out that some differences in the patterning of my data were due to the difference in text types. Hopefully, the parallel studies that are currently carried out on York and Coventry as part of the Emerging Standards project will provide more background and insight into the possible text type-related differences and/or differences that can be attributed to geographical distribution. Furthermore, because of the small sample sizes, it was impossible to look at the distribution over smaller time periods, or to consider distribution patterns in the individual texts. Hence, the scope of this case study was limited in terms of the inclusion of the role of individual writers and other social variables, as the focus was mostly on the internal linguistic factors in the development of relative patterns. In the chapters that follow, I will be able to take into consideration individual variation in more detail.

Chapter 8. Third person present tense markers in Bristol's council ordinances and letters

8.1. Introduction

The third person present indicative tense markers, and in particular the spread of the *-s* inflection and the corresponding decline of *-th*, has been studied extensively within the field of historical (socio)linguistics (cf. Holmqvist 1922; Bambas 1947; McIntosh 1983; Stein 1987; Percy 1991; Kytö 1993; Ogura & Wang 1996; Moore 2001; Wright 2002; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003; Gries & Hilpert, 2010; Cole 2014; Evans 2015). This morphological change is of particular interest with regard to studies in supralocalisation, since it was the Northern variant *-s* that came to prevail in written English texts from all localities, including the South. In traditional accounts (see for instance Holmqvist 1922), the spread of the Northern feature was attributed to mass migration from the North into London, from where it then spread further across the South. London has thus often been taken as the primary centre from which this supralocal form was transmitted. The question is how this form may have spread to other parts of England. The aim of this chapter is to shed light on the spread of the *-s* form into the South West, by taking Bristol as a potential regional centre that could have played a role in the transmission of the form in the South West. I will investigate the emergence of the supralocal *-s*, as well as other third person inflection patterns in Bristol in order to obtain as complete a picture as possible of the development of the supralocal form in this locality.

In the Late Medieval and Early Modern periods, the inflectional verb suffix for the third person singular present indicative existed in the form of three main allomorphs; *zero*, which, as illustrated in (1), consists of the verb stem without inflection or an *-e*. As illustrated in (2) and (3), the two inflectional forms are *-th*, and *-s*, the use of which implies an inflectional vowel that in itself involves variation, e.g. *-is*, *-es*, *-ys*, *-eth*, *-ith*, *-yth*. In what follows, I use the simplified forms *zero*, *-th*, *-s* to describe the different inflections for the sake of readability:

- (1) But of them I think **he** *make* no mencion (John Smythe, 1548, BRO: ac/c/2/1)
- (2) Euery **ffreeholder** that *oweth* fuyte to the lawe dayes holden in this citey (Common Council Ordinances of Bristol, 1570, BRO: 04272)
- (3) **Hugh** *craues* your bleseinges which he will doe with his owne hand shortly (Elizabeth Smythe, 1641, BRO: ac/c48/29)

Zero, *-th* and *-s* also occurred with third person *plural* subjects, the occurrence of which has often been linked to Northern Middle English dialects (cf. Mustanoja 1960, McIntosh 1983, Montgomery 1994). In the North, the plural *zero* and *-s* inflections may pattern according to a specific set of subject constraints, as well as according to the syntactic adjacency of the subject to the verb. This phenomenon is referred to as the Northern Subject Rule (henceforth NSR), the precise implications of which will be discussed in Section 8.2.3.

The spread of *-s* and the subsequent decline of *-th* are of particular interest with regard to supralocalisation processes in Bristolian texts, since, although a relatively large body of existing literature gives us insight into the more general spread and diffusion of the third person singular form (e.g. Kytö 1993; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003; Gries & Hilpert 2010), few historical studies focus on how this development may have played out in the South West of England. Furthermore, the focus has mostly been on the occurrence of *-th* and *-s* with third person *singular* subjects, while there are indications that the forms also occurred with *plural* subjects in non-Northern areas, including the South West (Schendl 1994; Cole 2014; Wright 2015).

The aim of this chapter is thus, first of all, to gain more insight into what inflectional third person singular and plural indicative forms occurred in Bristolian texts over the period 1400-1700. Secondly, the aim is to establish when and how other form(s) were replaced by *-s*,

and to establish how this relates to what has been found in previous studies.

This chapter is structured as follows: In Section 8.2., I will discuss the historical background of the third person indicative present tense markers in more detail, as well as previous studies that provide data for comparison for my study of Bristol. Sections 8.3. and 8.4. will deal with the study of Bristol and the results and interpretation of the Bristol data. I will first give an overview of the results of the different periods and then also pay extra attention to individual letter writers. The irregular verb *to be* is a special case in Bristol because the third person indicative form was also inflected with *-th* and later replaced by the originally Northern *are*. Because it is a special case in that it does not involve a regular paradigm, the development of this form will be discussed separately from the other results in Section 8.4. Section 8.5. will summarise and consider the results that are presented in this chapter in light of supra-localisation processes.

8.2. Historical development of the third person indicative present tense markers

The first attestation of the *-s* form was found in tenth-century Northumbrian texts and is believed to be a typical Northern feature, as reflected in the Middle English Northern dialect (Miller 2000: 354)²³. The first non-Northern instances of the *-s* form were found in the Middle English period. By the fourteenth century, instances of *-s* were occasionally found in London texts (Kytö 1993: 115). In Southern Middle English texts, *-th* was also found as a third person indicative *plural* marker, which was most likely a retention of the Old English third person plural inflectional marker *-(i)ap*, and which became indistinguishable from Old English third person singular inflection *-ep* due to vowel reduction in unstressed syllables (Lass 1992: 134-138; Cole 2014: 24). In East-Midland texts, *-en* endings (with variant inflectional vowels) were typically third person plural indicative markers. In Late Middle English Northern texts, *-s* was categorically

²³ For a discussion about the possible origin of *-s* in Northern texts, see Miller (2000).

used as an inflectional marker and occurred with both third person indicative *plural* and *singular* subjects (Stein 1987; Kytö 1993; Schendl 1994; Lass 1992, 1999)²⁴. However, in the sixteenth century, the Southern *-th* briefly competed with *-s* in the North (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 178). By the second half of the fourteenth century, the third person indicative plural marker *-en* also appeared in the South, or more precisely, in London texts, where the form came to prevail over the third person plural marker *-th* by the fifteenth century (Lass 1992: 137). By the Late Middle English period, *zero* was also used as a third person present indicative form (Lass 1999: 160-162). This means that in Late Middle English and Early Modern English, the following inflections could typically be found for third person *plurals* (*-th*, *-en*, and *zero* respectively) in Southern texts:

- (4) The boys drinketh
 - (5) The boys drinken
 - (6) The boys drink
- (adapted from Schendl 1994: 144)

Thus, texts from the Late Middle and Early Modern English periods present us with a fairly complex set of third singular and plural inflections: *-s* and *-th* could both appear as third person *plural* and *singular* markers, in the North and in the South.

The *-th* and *-en* third person *plural* inflections had practically disappeared (in written form) by the 1640s, and the *zero* form had become the supralocal form for all plurals, as is the case for present-day Standard English. The third person singular *-s* eventually won out over the *-th* singular suffix (Kytö 1993; Lass 1999). The *-s plural* form is still found in some regional dialects, for instance in the North of England (Pietsch 2003, 2005), but also closer to Bristol, in Devon (Lass 1999; Godfrey & Tagliamonte 1999). As pointed out earlier, subject type constraints may play a role and will be briefly discussed in Section

²⁴ Although *-en* was also found as a plural suffix (Fernández-Cuesta & Ledesma 2007: 126-127; Cole 2014).

8.2.2. below (Kytö 1993; Schendl 1994; Godfrey & Tagliamonte 1999; Wright 2002)²⁵.

8.2.1. *Previous studies on third person singular inflections*

As touched upon in the introduction, the replacement of *-th* by *-s* in third person singular indicative verb inflections has been addressed extensively (cf. Holmqvist 1922; Bambas 1947; McIntosh 1983; Stein 1987; Kytö, 1993; Ogura & Wang 1996; Moore 2001; Wright 2001; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003; Gries & Hilpert, 2010; Cole 2014; Evans 2015). However, some matters are only partly addressed or remain unsolved up until now.

First of all, it is still open to debate as to whether the *-th* ending was pronounced as *-s* long before the actual *-s* spelling was adopted (cf. Holmqvist 1922: 185). Since it was assumed that language change proceeded in a wave-like fashion, from one dialect area to another, it was hard to explain how a Northern feature could show up in early fifteenth-century London, while there was reportedly no sign of it yet in the intervening dialect areas that were close to London (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 81). The only explanation then would be to assume that it had indeed spread from the North in a wave-like manner, but that it was not reflected in written language until much later (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 81). Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg (2003: 81) make a strong argument against this spoken versus written dichotomy by saying that “it is difficult to understand how people who were barely able to write could have made grammatical analyses before putting words into writing”. One would at least expect to see some hyper-correct *-th* forms in nouns with *-s* suffixes, for instance. These have, however, not been attested yet. They hypothesise that the form probably found its way to London by means of “dialect hopping” (ibid: 178), i.e. the large number of Northern immigrants to London brought *-s* into the capital. Indeed, apprenticeship records of the time suggest that there was a considerable influx of Northern migrants (Keene 2000). They further

²⁵ In addition to that, there are also modern dialects in the South West where *-s* is used for all persons (see Godfrey & Tagliamonte 1999; Wagner 2012).

argue that by the time comments of contemporaries were made about *-th* and *-s* spellings, the *-s* had already become the regular form, whereas the *-th* was mainly found as a relic form in archaic texts (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 81).

Second, regional variation has not always been taken into account in the analyses. Either all areas were lumped together in the diachronic analyses (Kytö 1993; Griess & Hilpert 2010), or the main focus was on data from London as opposed to other towns and/or areas in the South (see Fisher 1977; Lass 1992; Wright 2000, 2002; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003), partly also because London is by many believed to have been the prime source of the spread of a supralocal norm. In the case of the *-th/-s* form, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) use London data as data representing the South and compare it to data from East Anglia and the North. However, as they acknowledge themselves, the data from London can hardly be considered representative of the South in general. Considering London's role as a major town of commerce and its explosive growth, it can be expected that effects of language and dialect contact are more prevalent than in other areas. This indeed seems to be true in the case of the spread of *-s*. As pointed out earlier, the earlier non-Northern occurrences of *-s* have been recorded in London, whereas East Anglia showed no sign of the *-s* variant at the time (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 81).

In terms of chronological development, evidence from the multi-genre Helsinki Corpus²⁶, as investigated by Kytö (1993), shows that the *-s* form was rare until the 1570s but became the dominant form between the 1640s and 1710s. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003), whose study is based on letter data, add to this that although initially there was a stage in Late Middle English where *-s* was indeed increasingly used in London, it was followed by a drop in which there was a century where even the North applied the *-th* more frequently. By the 1580s, the *-s* form made a strong comeback (see Figure 8.1 below). Arguably, the prevalence of *-th* before the 1580s could be explained by supralocal diffusion from the South, since,

²⁶ The genres included were, business and private correspondence, diaries, trial records, sermons, and history accounts (Kytö 1993: 117).

according to Moore (2002) and Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003), the North also adopted the Southern *-th* form.

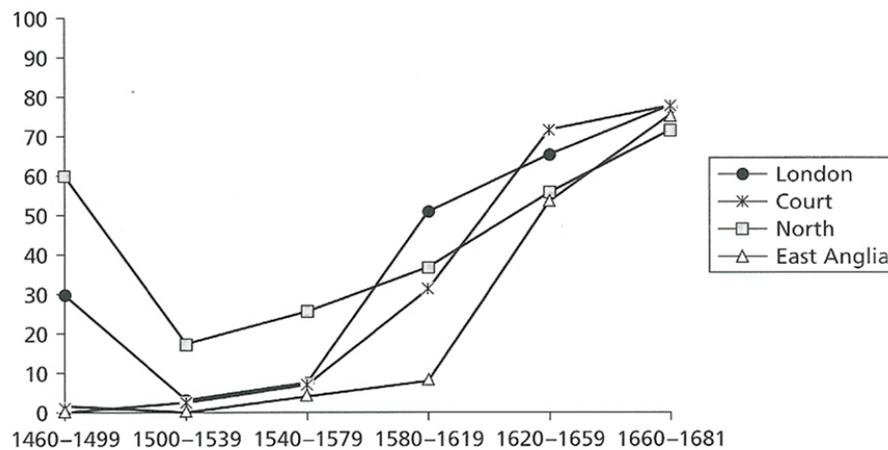


Figure 8.1. The replacement of *-th* by *-s* in verbs other than *have* and *do*. Regional distribution of *-s* (adapted from Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 178)

Social factors such as gender and class have also been considered in Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg's (2003: 123) study on correspondence and it has been shown that the adoption of *-s* was a so-called "change from below in the social spectrum", i.e. in the sense that it was first used by lower ranks and then later adopted by higher ranks. It was also a "change from below" in the Labovian sense in that it was a change that spread from less monitored styles to more formal registers, below the level of conscious awareness (Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 123). Women appear to have been in the lead and used *-s* more frequently in the earlier stages (Kytö 1993; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003). The levels of formality of texts also appear to correlate with the rate of *-s* use; in the course of the process of change, informal texts such as letters and diaries had higher rates of *-s*, whereas formal texts followed later (Kytö 1993; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003). The effect of the level of formality seems to have disappeared by the 1640s (Kytö 1993).

Language-internal factors that may have slowed down or promoted the adoption of *-s* are different verbal stem endings. Stem final sibilants tended to retain the older form (Kytö 1993: 130; Gries & Hilpert 2010: 294). Gries and Hilpert (2010: 296, 314) have also found that the onset of the word following the verb showed effects, i.e. *giveth thanks* tended to trigger the adoption of *-s* over *-th*. The explanation for this tendency is that it was to avoid the sequence of the same consonant as this might be harder to parse (process or pronounce). *Gives thanks*, on the other hand, would create a convenient contrast. Additionally, effects of priming were found to be significant (Gries & Hilpert 2010: 308). However, it is obvious that these language-internal effects must have ceased being effective at some point as the *-th* form has fully been replaced by *-s*. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) suggest that syncope in inflectional suffixes may also have played a role. They found that in the early London texts, there were alternations between *-s* and *-th* whereas in the later, more rapid wave starting round the 1600s, the alternations tended to be between a syncopated *-s* and an unsyncopated *-th* ending.

Lastly, all studies discussed above (Kytö 1993; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003; Ogura & Wang 1996; Gries & Hilpert 2010) show that the high frequency auxiliary verbs *have* and *do* lagged behind significantly in adopting *-s*. By way of illustration, in example (7) below, the verb *deserve* is inflected with *-s*, whereas auxiliary *have* is inflected with *-th*:

- (7) an escape as *hath* bine *deserues* thanckes giueing
(Elizabeth Smythe, 1630s, BRO: ac/c48/11)

Kytö (1993: 120-122) also considered the distribution in different text types, which included business and private correspondence, diaries, trial records, sermons, and history accounts. She found that *-s* inflected *do* and *have* only started to become majority forms in the period between 1640-1710, as opposed to 1570-1640 for other verbs. The earliest instances of *has* and *does* are attested in correspondence and trial records, whereas in sermons *hath* was used throughout until the end of the seventeenth century (Kytö 1993: 121). Assuming that

correspondence and trial records are closer to less formal and oral modes of expression, whereas sermons may be considered highly formal, it seems that level of formality affected the prolonged use of *hath* as opposed to *has* (Kytö 1993: 126). The verb *say* also tends to lag behind, but mostly so in formulaic expressions and particularly in formulaic expressions used in trial proceedings (Kytö 1993: 122).

8.2.2. *The development of third person plural markers, with a special focus on subject constraints*

The occurrence of the *-th* form with plural subjects has received less attention in previous literature (studies dealing with plural subjects and *-th* inflection are for instance McIntosh 1983; Bailey et. al 1989; Schendl 1994), but, interestingly enough, the syntagma was especially frequent in the South West according to *LALME* (Benskin et al. 2013). Moreover, modern dialect studies of the South West have found that *-s* and *zero* variably occur with both singular and plural subjects and that the variation pattern partly seems to adhere to the NSR (Godfrey & Tagliamonte 1999; Peitsara 2002; Cole 2014; Wright 2015). In brief, the NSR implies that the third person plural inflection is *-s*, except when the subject is a pronoun and directly adjacent to the verb (Cole 2014: 35). In the latter case, the verb has *zero* inflection, as illustrated in example (8) below. In example (9), the verb is inflected with *-s* because the adjacent subject is non-pronominal. In example (10), it can be observed that the verb adjacent to the pronominal subject has *zero* inflection, whereas the non-adjacent verbs are inflected with *-s*:

- (8) **Thay** *keepe* thaire wynges clene
 [They keep their wings clean]
 (The Bee and Stork, Thornton, Lincoln Cath. 91, f.194)
- (9) **Twa Thynges** *makes* our delyte pure
 [Two things make our delight pure]
 (Desyre and Delit, Thornton, Lincoln Cath. 91, f.196b)
- (10) Swa **þay** *hafe* vndirstandyng, and *fastses* and *wakes*
 and *seme* haly to mens syghte

[So they have understanding and fast and wake and seem holy to men's sight]

(The Bee and Stork, Thornton, Lincoln Cath. 91, f.194, 14th century)

(Examples adapted from Cole 2014: 35-36)

Though this feature has been described as a typically Northern pattern that started to be frequently found in texts from the Middle English period²⁷, there is evidence that similar subject constraints may have operated throughout England. Particularly the subject-type has proven to be a strong factor; full noun phrases tended to be inflected, whereas pronouns tended to occur with *zero* inflection (Cole 2014: 37, 48-69; see also Poplack & Tagliamonte 1989: 58). Furthermore, Cole (2014) has demonstrated that in Old Northumbrian, the NSR may apply to different types of morphological material. What is more, the constraint may not even necessarily involve variation between inflected and uninflected forms, but can involve the alternation between two different morphological forms. For instance, Cole (2014) found that in Old Northumbrian, *-s* and *-ð* alternations were governed by the above-discussed subject constraints. Also, in the Middle English texts of the North West and North East Midlands, and parts of the East Midlands, *-n/zero* and *-s* alternated according to the same subject constraint, as well as *-n/zero* and *-th* (Cole 2014: 39; McIntosh 1989; de Haas 2011). In Later Middle English Northern texts, *-th* also occurred as a variant of third person plural *-s*, which, as discussed in Section 8.2.1., coincides with the period in which the third person singular *-th* was competing with *-s* in both the South and the North (Moore 2002; Fernández-Cuesta 2014).

That the NSR was not necessarily restricted to the North in the Late Middle and Early Modern English periods is borne out by studies carried out by Schendl (1994), Bailey et al. 1989 and Wright 2002, 2015. Schendl (1994), who carried out a study on the occurrence of –

²⁷ See Cole (2014) for the presence of subject constraints in earlier stages of Northern English. One of her most important findings was that in Old Northumbrian, *-s* and *-ð* alternated in accordance with the NSR. Though these alternations were tendencies rather than categorical alternations, this suggests that the constrain was present from an early date onwards.

–*th*/–*s* third person inflections in Early Modern English texts of a selection of London authors, observed that –*th* or –*s* tended to occur less often with adjacent personal pronouns, whereas in other cases *zero*, –*s* and –*th* variably occurred. Wright (2002), in her study of London court witness depositions, found similar tendencies and observed a tendency for *zero* to occur with the adjacent subject pronoun *they*, and for *zero*, –*s*, –*th* and –*n* to variably occur in other contexts. Bailey et al. (1989) also found pronoun subjects versus noun phrase subject effects in third person plurals and singulars in the letters of the London-based Cely family (1472-1488) and noted that this also applied to the verb *to be* (see also Cole 2014: 70 for earlier examples of subject constraints on *to be* forms). Even though the subject constraints were not always found to be categorical in these studies, it is, nonetheless, interesting to note that at least by the Late Middle English period, subject constraints similar to the NSR were present in the South. According to Schendl (1994: 156), “the origin of the 3pl present in –*s* (possibly also that in (e)*th*) in the emerging EModE standard variety must be sought in linguistic contact, more specifically, in intersystemic analogy along the lines of the N[orthern] P[resent] T[tense] R[ule]”. It is not clear what EModE standard variety Schendl is referring to exactly, but it seems that he presupposes that it was a London-based variety that changed under the influence of linguistic contact. Thus, the argument goes that there must have been a mixed system, where typical Southern –*th* inflection came to follow a Northern pattern, which can be linked to language contact due to large-scale immigration from the North to the South. However, subject constraints have also been found in South Western dialects, Irish English, in the Middle English North East Midland dialect, as well as in other Germanic languages (Cole 2014). As Cole (2014) convincingly argues, the prevalence of the constraints cannot be attributed to the effects of migration from the North alone and suggests that the competition between number and subject type agreement should not be seen as specific to Northern varieties, but rather as a tendency inherent to English in general, though the surface morphology may look differently and the strength of the constraints may vary. The effect of these subject constraints may come to the surface when the

linguistic system is affected by forces that may change the existing inflectional paradigm. More precisely, when different inflectional forms start competing with one another, the competition between the forms may be affected by subject type rather than by grammatical number. This observation may thus be particularly relevant in the light of supralocalisation and regional levelling processes, which also involves the competition between new incoming forms as well as the levelling out of regional variants.

So far, I have abstained myself from the much-debated question as to whether the NSR may be the result of Scandinavian influence or a Brittonic sub-stratum influence. The reasoning behind the theory for either hypotheses is that both languages show similar subject constraints (cf. Klemola 2000; de Haas 2008; Filppula et al.; 2008; Benskin 2011; Cole 2014). As Cole (2014: 214) suggests, the prevalence of the constraint in a wide variety of dialects throughout England, as well as its occurrence in other Germanic languages, up until today, suggest that it was primarily a language internally motivated process. Nonetheless, it could still be the case that contact with a variety that shows similar constraints may have reinforced subject constraint effects in Brittonic and English contact areas such as the South West of England.

As for the presence of subject constraints in the South West of England, there are not many studies on historical data to corroborate this. However, there is one study by Bailey and Ross (1988) which investigates the English as used in Early Modern English ship logs, many of which were written by West Country men. Their data show that there was a slight preference for *-s* with full noun phrases and a slight preference for *zero* with pronoun subjects (Cole 2014: 56; Bailey & Ross 1988). Interestingly, they also record two cases of plural *-th*, one of which occurs with a non-adjacent pronoun and the other has a non-adjacent noun phrase (Cole 2014: 57; Bailey & Ross 1988: 200, 206). Wright (2015) carried out a more recent study on present indicative third person markers in the correspondence written by a nineteenth-century servant who hailed from West Oxfordshire. This servant, William Tayler, used periphrastic *do* as a third person present

tense marker, as well as *-s* and *zero*²⁸. Wright notes that even though *zero* is not extremely frequent (21%), pronoun subjects favour *zero*. Furthermore, auxiliaries *have* and *do* also favour *zero*, which is in line with what Cheshire (1970) observes for the contemporary Reading dialect, where the grammatical use of auxiliaries triggers *zero*, whereas inflectional forms variably occur in the lexical variants of *do* and *have*.

Notably, studies carried out by Godfrey and Tagliamonte (1999) and Tagliamonte (2009) show that subject constraints play a role in spoken dialects of contemporary Devon and Somerset. Inflectional *-s* variably occurs with all persons, including second and first person singular and plural, but there are certain contexts in which *-s* is more strongly favoured over other variants; there is a strong tendency for *-s* to occur with noun phrase subjects, while this effect is less significant with pronoun subjects. The distinction is thus specifically between pronoun and non-pronoun subjects, whereas adjacency does not seem to be a factor. One other context in which

²⁸ Wright (2015) also proposes an interesting hypothesis with regard to the existence of a complementary distribution pattern between periphrastic *do* (see example (1)) and generalised *-s* in modern dialects of the South West, i.e. in the more Western parts (Devon, Somerset Gloucestershire) periphrastic *do*, *zero*, and *-s* are common as third person present tense markers, while in other parts, where periphrastic *do* is not common, generalised *-s* is more frequently found and *zero* less so. She hypothesises that periphrastic *do* was more common over a wider area in earlier stages of English and that there must have been a stage in the nineteenth century where *do* receded. As periphrastic *do* receded, *zero* (2) became more common, probably because that was the bare form that was left after the deletion of *do* (2). This was then followed by a stage where *s* started to be introduced:

- (1) she does walk
- (2) she walk
- (3) She walks

So, the letter writer William Tayler wrote at a stage when *do* was receding, giving rise to *zero*, while at the same time *-s* started to be introduced. However, this took place under the constraints of the subject rule, which resulted in higher *zero* rates with adjacent pronouns.

–s is preferred is when the verb expresses habitual behaviour. This effect is particularly strong with third person singulars:

- (11) I go to museum Wednesdays. I *goes* down the museum.
(Godfrey and Tagliamonte 1999: 106)

Cole (2014: 58) points out that in the light of the above-discussed studies, the presence of the subject rule in Southern Ireland may provide further indirect evidence of the historical origin of the feature in the South West. Whereas the North of Ireland, and in particular Ulster, was for the largest part colonised by Scottish settlers, the South of Ireland was primarily colonised by settlers from the North of England, and the South West in particular. As discussed in Chapter 4 of the present thesis, there were also strong ties between Bristol and the South of Ireland. Though McCafferty (2004) ascribes the presence of the constraint to the influence of Northern migrants, a Southern influence is also plausible. Likewise, the contemporary dialect of Newfoundland may provide indirect evidence for the historical presence of subject constraints in the South West as well. As discussed in Chapter 4, this was a very important settlement for the South West during the Late Middle and Early Modern English periods, but it was also populated by settlers from the South of Ireland (Cole 2014: 59). Although subject constraints do not show a strong significant effect in Newfoundland English, there seems to be a preference for –s with full noun phrases, while pronoun subjects *we*, *you*, and *they* show lower rates of –s (Cole 2014: 59; Clarke 1997: 235-236). Since Bristol was the most important urban centre of the South West at the time, it would indeed be interesting to see if there are signs of subject constraints in the Bristol data as well. Furthermore, the question may be raised as to whether and how supralocalisation processes may have interacted with possible subject constraints.

8.3. Study of the Bristol data

8.3.1. Method

For this case study, I used the sub-corpora that are listed in Table 8.1 below:

| time periods | source | word count |
|-----------------------|--|------------|
| period I: 1404-1493 | the Great and Little Red Book of Bristol | 35,153 |
| period II: 1506-1596 | the Council Ordinances of Bristol | 32,590 |
| period III: 1548-1711 | Bristol letter collection | 30,975 |

Table 8.1. Sub-corpora, grouped by time-period and text types

Since the corpus is not tagged for parts of speech, reading the corpus and extracting all cases manually turned out to be the most efficient way to collect all third person singular and plural forms. All sentences containing third person present indicative plural and singular verbs were imported into an excel spread sheet and marked for year, author (if available), source, type of subject (pronoun, noun, personal name), person (plural or singular), inflection (*zero*, *-th*, *-s*, *-en*), auxiliary *have* or *do* (yes or no), and onset of the word following the verb (vowel or consonant). Other auxiliaries and modal verbs that do not inflect for person and number, such as *shall*, *may*, *must*, *will*, *ought* were not included. The copula and auxiliary verb *to be* is a special case because in addition to the present-day Standard English forms *is* and *are* there are *-th* forms of this verb in some of the texts. I will treat the forms separately since it does not concern the competition between *-th*, *zero* and *-s* but the competition between *-th* and a different (irregular) paradigm, and thus should be considered as a different case altogether.

In some rare cases, it was hard to determine whether *zero* inflection is due to the subjunctive nature of an expression (which generally gave rise to *zero/e(n)* inflection), or whether it is an

indicative sentence that had *zero* inflection. Sentences like example (12) below are especially frequent in the ordinance corpora and occur in specific contexts. An ordinance is often introduced by a paragraph starting with *it is ordained/assented/agreed that...* and followed by paragraphs starting with *item that...*, subsequently followed by a sequence of sentences starting with *and that...*, thus making the whole structure subjunctive in nature. This type of subjunctive is referred to as a *mandative subjunctive* and often expresses “that a certain action (should) be performed or a certain state be achieved” (Moessner 2002: 151). Mandative subjunctives can be recognised by the use of a verb in the matrix clause that has a mandative force (*ordain, intent, command, determine, enact, provide, assent, agree*) and a dependent *that*-clause that has a subjunctive verb, a modal verb, or that is an infinitive construction (Moessner 2010: 151, 154; Fillbrandt 2006: 142; see also Fillbrandt 2006; Hundt 1998 for more information about the mandative subjunctive).

- (12) ffurft it is Ordeigned and Affentid that two Able and Honeft perfones of the faide Crafte of Shermon' be chosen [...] And that no perfone that **haue** not be prentice vij yere in Briftowe to the faide crafte take vpon him to fett vp Shop and crafte til he make a fyne (Shearer's ordinance, 1483, f.32, BRO: 04718)

It could be argued that the *zero* form in bold in example (12) is an indicative form as part of a relative clause, but since it is embedded in a subjunctive matrix clause, it cannot be ruled out that the subjunctive nature of the matrix clause gave rise to *zero*. Ambiguous cases like this were discarded. Furthermore, other *zero* forms that were considered subjunctives and were thus discarded were conditional clauses introduced by *if, as if, as though, so, as, so*, or constructions expressing hypothetical conditions such as *provided that, except, whether, unless* and clauses expressing a wish, doubt, or a request (Rissanen 1982: 285; Wright 2002):

- (13) Prouided alwey that no brewer of Briftowe ne no perfon for hym At no tyme within the Toune of Briftowe nothir

without for dyuers confideracions biege no maner of
Otys (Brewer's ordinance, 1479, f. 29b. BRO: 04719)

Although temporal clauses are mostly indicative, Fischer (1992: 356) and Rissanen (1982: 311) note that there are cases in which the clause can be subjunctive in Middle English. Notably, these are clauses that refer to time in the future. Typically, these clauses are introduced by *(un)till, before, or after*:

- (14) where the mair will affigne thayme Tyll *the mair* ffor the tyme beyng **have** Szend ij or iiij perfonas (Tolsey court ordinances, 1463, f.97b, BRO: 04718)

Other cases that had to be discarded were instances where it is difficult to determine if the subject of the verb is to be interpreted as plural or singular (syntactically). This is sometimes difficult because *-th* occurs as a third person marker with both singular and plural subjects in Late and Early Modern English, while *zero* and *-en* are also possible plural markers. Furthermore, Early Modern English subject-verb agreement differs slightly from present-day Standard English, especially with co-ordinated singular subjects (Schendl 1994: 146). This means that coordinated singular noun phrases such as examples (15) and (16) below often gave rise to singular inflections in Early Modern English, whereas the verb tends to have plural inflection in present-day Standard English. Thus, in some cases it was impossible to tell whether a subject had to be considered as plural or singular from a syntactic perspective and whether the inflection was intended as a plural or singular *-th*, as there is sometimes no distinction between third person singular and plural marking:

- (15) hire hath bine the lord harbourd and Sr Iohn beron. (Elizabeth Smythe, 1629, BRO: ac/48/14)
- (16) whereas before this tyme great inconvenyence and detryment hath ryfen and growen. (Memorandum of soap maker's ordinance, 1567, f.23, BRO: 04272)

8.3.2. Overall results

Table 8.2 and Table 8.3 below show the general distribution of the third person singular and plural inflections over 50-year time-spans. Some caution needs to be taken when interpreting the figures, as the totals of two different text genres, correspondence and ordinances are taken together. Also, the *-th* forms of *be*, and grammatical *do* and *have* are not listed separately here. Furthermore, as explained in Chapter 6, there are some indications that the texts of 1500-1550 concern copies that were actually copied in the sub-period 1551-1600. A more detailed overview of the different types of verbs and genres will be given in the sections that follow. Nonetheless, the overall results provide some useful general insights.

Based on the texts that were studied here, it appears that the third person singular *-th* was used categorically until the 1600s, both in the letters and the council ordinances (see Table 8.2 below). Then, in the period from 1600 to 1650, the *-s* inflection increased rapidly, and in the period from 1651 to 1700 *-th* seems to have disappeared altogether. As stated earlier, in the CEEC corpus, *-s* started to establish itself in the fifteenth century in London, followed by a decline of *-s* in the sixteenth century, and then again followed by a rapid come-back of *-s* by the end of the sixteenth century. Bristol appears never to have taken part in the first wave of *-s* that was reported for London in the fifteenth century, whereas the second wave of *-s* in London (see also Figure 8.1 above) coincides with the time period in which *-s* is also establishing itself in the Bristol area. Singular *zero* inflection was also marginally present and shows a spike in the period 1500-1550, but the increase seems to be author- and genre-dependent, as will be discussed in more detail further on.

| sub-periods | sg.-th | % | sg.-s | % | sg.zero | % | total |
|------------------|--------|------|-------|-----|---------|-----|-------|
| 1400-1450 | 76 | 99% | - | - | 1 | 1% | 77 |
| 1451-1500 | 70 | 100% | - | - | - | - | 70 |
| 1500-1550 | 20 | 71% | - | - | 8 | 29% | 28 |
| 1551-1600 | 52 | 98% | - | - | 1 | 2% | 53 |
| 1601-1650 | 101 | 47% | 114 | 53% | 2 | 1% | 217 |
| 1651-1700 | - | - | 46 | 98% | 1 | 2% | 47 |
| total | 319 | 65% | 160 | 33% | 13 | 3% | 492 |

Table 8.2. Totals of third person indicative singular present tense inflections

The general distribution of third person plural inflections in Table 8.3 is also interesting. In the first period, 1400-1500, *-th* was the preferred form, followed by *zero*, while *-en* never seems to have been a majority form. By the sixteenth century, *zero* seems to have become the dominant form, although *-th* still occurred in the seventeenth century. Plural *-th* appears to have become rarer from the 1451s onwards, whereas plural *zero* increases. Interestingly, plural *-s* briefly occurs as a contender of *zero* in the period 1600-1650. This coincides with the period where *-s* as a tense and or number marker was introduced in the third person singular too. This raises the question of whether the older singular/plural *-th* was simply replaced by *-s*, while at the same time *zero* was gradually taking over as a plural form. A closer look at possible subject constraints, the role of different authors and genres in the following sections should shed light on this question.

| sub-periods | pl.- th | % | pl.- en | % | pl.zero | % | pl.- s | % | total |
|--------------|------------|-----|------------|-----|---------|------|-----------|-----|-------|
| 1400-1450 | 47 | 71% | 6 | 9% | 13 | 20% | - | - | 66 |
| 1451-1500 | 43 | 55% | 9 | 12% | 26 | 33% | - | - | 78 |
| 1500-1550 | - | - | - | - | 18 | 100% | - | - | 18 |
| 1551-1600 | 6 | 5% | - | - | 51 | 95% | - | - | 57 |
| 1600-1650 | 3 | 6% | - | - | 29 | 62% | 15 | 32% | 47 |
| 1651-1700 | - | - | - | - | 4 | 100% | - | - | 4 |
| total | 99 | 37% | 15 | 6% | 141 | 52% | 15 | 6% | 270 |

Table 8.3. Totals of third person indicative plural present tense inflections

8.3.3. Results period I (1404-1493): the Great and Little Red Book of Bristol

As regards period I (1404-1493), Table 8.4 below shows that the distribution of third person singular indicative present tense markers varies little in the ordinances, as *-th*, apart from one case, is used almost invariably. Even though there is only one case of *zero*, it is interesting to note that it occurs with grammatical *have*:

| sub-periods | verbs | sg.-th | % | sg.-s | % | sg.zero | % | total |
|------------------|-------|--------|------|-------|---|---------|----|-------|
| 1400-1450 | DO | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | HAVE | 19 | 95% | - | - | 1 | 5% | 20 |
| | OTHER | 57 | 100% | - | - | - | - | 57 |
| 1451-1500 | DO | 1 | 100% | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| | HAVE | 8 | 100% | - | - | - | - | 8 |
| | OTHER | 95 | 100% | - | - | - | - | 95 |
| total | | 180 | 99% | - | - | 1 | 1% | 181 |

Table 8.4. Third person indicative singular present tense inflections, period I (1404-1493)

As Table 8.5 below reveals, the distribution of third person plural markers deserves a closer examination. In the non-grammatical category, the old Southern plural *-th* is surprisingly common and the majority form in both sub-periods, albeit that *-en* is more prominent in the second half of the fifteenth century. Although the numbers are small, it is noteworthy that the only two cases of lexical *zero* in the sub-period 1400-1450 are with adjacent pronouns *they*. As regards the inflection in grammatical *have*, the distribution pattern is strikingly different from the distribution of lexical verbs, as *zero* is the preferred form instead of *-th*, particularly in the second sub-period. Subject constraints do not appear to be relevant, as both auxiliary *-th* and *zero* occur with pronouns and full noun phrase subjects alike. Lass (1992: 137) points out that, in London texts, *-th* was increasingly replaced by *-en* as early as the second half of the fourteenth century, and only remained as a minority form in the indicative during the *fifteenth* century²⁹. He proposes that *-en* was either brought to London via Midland influence, or the native Southern *-en* past inflection or subjunctive *-en* inflection were adopted as a present tense plural marker. Based on my data, it appears that Bristol differed from London in that the older Southern *-th* was retained as a majority form in lexical

²⁹ *-th* did remain in the imperative however (Lass 1993: 137).

verbs until the sixteenth century. However, the *-en* form seems to increase, whereas *zero* remains stable in the lexical verbs.

| sub-periods | verbs | pl.-th | % | pl.-en | % | pl. zero | % | total |
|--------------|-------|--------|-----|--------|-----|----------|-----|-------|
| 1400-1450 | DO | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | HAVE | 7 | 35% | 2 | 10% | 11 | 55% | 20 |
| | OTHER | 28 | 82% | 4 | 12% | 2 | 6% | 34 |
| 1451-1500 | DO | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | HAVE | 1 | 4% | 2 | 8% | 23 | 88% | 26 |
| | OTHER | 32 | 76% | 7 | 17% | 3 | 7% | 42 |
| total | | 68 | 56% | 15 | 12% | 39 | 32% | 122 |

Table 8.5. Third person indicative plural present tense inflections, period I (1404-1493)

Lass (1992: 137) points out that, in London texts, *-th* was increasingly replaced by *-en* as early as the second half of the fourteenth century, and only remained as a minority form in the indicative during the *fifteenth* century³⁰. He proposes that *-en* was either brought to London via Midland influence, or the native Southern *-en* past inflection or subjunctive *-en* inflection were adopted as a present tense plural marker. Based on my data, it appears that Bristol differed from London in that the older Southern *-th* was retained as a majority form in lexical verbs until the sixteenth century. However, the *-en* form seems to increase, whereas *zero* remains stable in the lexical verbs. According to Lass (1999: 165), *zero* developed from the Midland *-en* plural inflection, as a result of *n* and finally also *e* deletion. This process started as early as the fourteenth century. It is not clear how this applies to Bristol, since, based on the data presented here, the

³⁰ *-th* did remain in the imperative however (Lass 1993: 137).

-en form does not appear to have been a majority form. A possible explanation could be that the form was introduced at a stage when we can already observe variation between *-en* or *-e*. Strikingly, when looking at all the *zero* plural forms of the period 1400-1500, 35 out of the in total 39 *zero* inflections concern the verb *have*, which functions as an auxiliary 34 of the times. Of all the *-th* plurals, only eight instances are *hath*. This is interesting, as previous research has shown that in singulars *-th* was much more resistant with auxiliary *have*. This seems to be true for the Bristol data, since, in the third person singular, grammatical *have* occurs with *-th* 25 times out of the 26 cases. I can only speculate as to why this seems to be the opposite in plurals. Possibly, this has to do with number marking, which, for some reason, is more relevant in auxiliary *have*, so that *zero* (*have*) is used for plurals and *-th* (*hath*) for singulars, while in lexical verbs, *-th* seems to be preferred for both plural and singular. Example (17) below shows plural *zero* for grammatical *have*, and plural *-th* for the lexical verb *use*:

- (17) Memorandum that ffor as mucche as diuerfes perfonnes
of the Craft of sutours And Cordewaners of Briftowe
mony tymes here be fore **have** vfed and yett **vleth** to
sowe shon And Botes the saturday aftour nonne vn till
darke nyght
(Cordwainer's memorandum, 1477, f.148, BRO: 04719)

As pointed out earlier, there are also two instances of singular *zero*, one of which is also with grammatical *have*, and the other occurs with grammatical *do*:

- (18) Prouided all wey that this acte shall nott extende to any
burgeyfes son ne to no othour *perfone* born within the
londe of Inglond or Walys which **hath** Maried any
burgeifes doughter or Wyff or **haue** been apprentice to
a burgeife
(Chamberlain's ordinance, 1433, f. 93, BRO: 04718)

As shown in Table 8.4 above, the large majority of the singulars contains *-th* in both grammatical verbs and lexical verbs though. Nevertheless, the high frequency of *zero* in plural grammatical verbs

suggests that they may behave differently in terms of number marking. As discussed in Section 8.2.2., it is interesting to note that auxiliary and lexical verb distinctions with *do*, *have*, and *be*, have been attested in contemporary South Western dialects, as well as in the writings of the nineteenth-century West Oxfordshire servant letters (Cheshire 1982; Wagner 2008, 2013; Wright 2015).

8.3.4. Results period II (1506-1596): the council ordinances of Bristol

Again, in this period (1506-1596), the third person singular indicative is almost invariably inflected with *-th* in the council ordinances. Note, however, that there is again one auxiliary that contains *zero*:

| sub-periods | verbs | sg.-th | % | sg.-en | % | sg.zero | % | total |
|--------------|-------|--------|------|--------|---|---------|-----|-------|
| 1500-1550 | DO | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | HAVE | 10 | 100% | - | - | - | - | 10 |
| | OTHER | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - | 4 |
| 1550-1500 | DO | 4 | 80% | - | - | 1 | 20% | 5 |
| | HAVE | 24 | 100% | - | - | - | - | 24 |
| | OTHER | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - | 6 |
| total | | 48 | 98% | - | - | 1 | 2% | 55 |

Table 8.6. Totals of third person indicative singular present tense inflections, period II (1506-1596)

As for the third person plurals in Table 8.7 below, the *-en* form does not occur at all, and the plural *-th* has clearly given way to *zero*. Note, however, that the data set is small and, unfortunately, unevenly distributed in that the large majority of the plural verbs are grammatical verbs, which preferred *zero* over *-th* in the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493), whereas a low frequency of *zero* in lexical verbs was also recorded in period I:

| sub-periods | verbs | pl.-th | % | pl.-en | % | pl.zero | % | total |
|------------------|-------|--------|-----|--------|---|---------|------|-------|
| 1500-1550 | DO | - | - | - | - | 1 | 100% | 1 |
| | HAVE | - | - | - | - | 11 | 100% | 11 |
| | OTHER | - | - | - | - | 5 | 100% | 5 |
| 1550-1500 | DO | 1 | 7% | - | - | 14 | 93% | 15 |
| | HAVE | 3 | 12% | - | - | 21 | 88% | 24 |
| | OTHER | 1 | 8% | - | - | 12 | 92% | 13 |
| total | | 5 | 7% | - | - | 64 | 93% | 69 |

Table 8.7. Totals of third person indicative plural present tense inflections, period II (1506-1596)

8.3.5. Results period III (1548-1711): the Bristol letter collection

As was the case with the council ordinances of period II (1506-1596), the third person singular *-s* is not present in the letters in the sub-period 1550-1600. Then, in the sub-period 1600-1650, the third person singular *-th* is no longer the dominant form with the lexical verbs, and mostly only occurs with the auxiliaries *have* and *do*. In the sub-period 1650-1700, *-th* is not present at all. Based on the data presented here, the shift from *-th* to *-s* appears to be relatively rapid. However, it also needs to be kept in mind that the data set for this period is overrepresented by two authors, which is why I will also consider the individual patterns in Section 8.3.6. below.

| sub-periods | verbs | sg.-th | % | sg.-s | % | sg.zero | % | total |
|--------------|-------|--------|-----|-------|------|---------|-----|-------|
| 1550-1600 | DO | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | HAVE | 9 | 69% | - | - | 4 | 31% | 13 |
| | OTHER | 10 | 71% | - | - | 4 | 29% | 14 |
| 1600-1650 | DO | 13 | 87% | 2 | 13% | - | - | 15 |
| | HAVE | 67 | 97% | 2 | 3% | - | - | 69 |
| | OTHER | 21 | 16% | 110 | 82% | 2 | 2% | 133 |
| 1650-1711 | DO | - | - | 2 | 100% | - | - | 2 |
| | HAVE | - | - | 11 | 92% | 1 | 8% | 12 |
| | OTHER | - | - | 33 | 100% | - | - | 33 |
| total | | 120 | 41% | 160 | 55% | 11 | 4% | 291 |

Table 8.8. Third person singular inflections in the letter collection, period III (1548-1711)

In the sub-period 1600-1650, where *-s* started to be used, there does not seem to be a discernible pattern as regards the possible effects of the following onset of a word. As for the effect of stem-final sibilants in the period 1600-1711, there does not seem to be evidence to show that they favoured *-th* over *-s*, since there were only eight verbs with stem-final sibilants, of which three take *-th* as inflection and five take *-s*. As for inflectional syncope, in the sub-period where *-s* starts to be used (1600-1650), it appears that syncope is extremely rare with *-th* inflections, but as regards syncope in *-s* inflections, the majority of verbs (47%) that would have syncopated inflections in present-day written Standard English is syncopated. This confirms what Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) have found in their study and suggests that syncope might indeed have something to do with the adoption of *-s*. It is clear that auxiliaries are most resistant to the adoption of *-s*, which also confirms previous findings (Kytö 1993; Ogura & Wang 1996; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003). It is difficult to tell if *-th* was

also preferred with the verb *say*, since there are only four occurrences of the verb of which two are inflected with *-th* and two with *-s*. In addition to *-th* and *-s* inflections, there are also instances of *zero*, of which more details and examples will be provided in Section 8.3.6. below.

As concerns third person plural inflections, *-th* and *-s* are occasionally found in auxiliaries, but the majority of the plurals are *zero*. For sub-period 1550-1600, the data are small and unevenly distributed. That is to say, there is only one lexical verb with *zero*, which occurs with adjacent pronoun *they*. Most of the auxiliaries have *zero*. However, due to an uneven distribution, it is impossible to say if these patterns may be significant in any way.

| sub-periods | verbs | pl.-th | % | pl.-s | % | pl.zero | % | total |
|--------------|-------|--------|------|-------|-----|---------|------|-------|
| 1550-1600 | DO | - | - | - | - | 1 | 100% | 1 |
| | HAVE | 1 | 20% | - | - | 4 | 80% | 5 |
| | OTHER | - | - | - | - | 1 | 100% | 1 |
| 1601-1650 | DO | 2 | 100% | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| | HAVE | 1 | 5% | - | - | 18 | 95% | 19 |
| | OTHER | - | - | 15 | 58% | 11 | 42% | 26 |
| 1651-1700 | DO | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | HAVE | - | - | - | - | 2 | 100% | 2 |
| | OTHER | - | - | - | - | 2 | 100% | 2 |
| total | | 4 | 7% | 15 | 26% | 39 | 67% | 58 |

Table 8.9. Third person plural inflections in the letter collection, period III (1548-1711)

It is interesting to note that there are *zero* singular instances and both *-th* and *-s* inflections in the plurals. As explained in Section 8.2.2., previous studies (McIntosh 1983; Bailey et. al 1989; Schendl 1994; Wright 2002; Cole 2014) have revealed that plural in the Late Medieval Early Modern period *-th* sometimes alternated with *zero* in a pattern

that is in accordance with the NSR. Furthermore, in my data, two authors appear to specifically favour *zero* with auxiliary *have*, in both third person singulars and plurals. Another author alternates between *zero*, *-th* and *-s* in a pattern that sometimes is in accordance with the NSR, or, in any case, similar to the patterns found in London by Schendl (1994) and Wright (2002). A closer look at the patterning of the distribution of the plural and singular forms might thus be very instructive. This will be discussed in more detail in Section 8.3.6. below, where I will focus on some of the individual letter writers.

8.3.6. A closer look at the individual letter writers

The letter of John Smythe (c.1500–1556)

Although John Smythe provides us with only one letter, it is worth mentioning that he shows some interesting variation in his writing. The letter is also the earliest piece of correspondence in my letter corpus, which covers the period 1548-1711. John Smythe's letter contains only two plural subjects, which are both with auxiliary *have*. The singular subjects have verbs either inflected with *-th* or *zero*:

- (19) of them I think he make no mencion
- (20) fuch money as he hath forniffhid for ye cofte
- (21) he meaneth to yntitle the king of hit
- (22) his Cofyn hewgh brooke haue a chapell in afhton
- (23) mr ken haue a chappell in ye fame parifhe
(John Smythe, 1548, BRO: ac/ c2/1)

As shown in Table 8.10 below, eight out of the 13 verbs that have third person singular subjects have *zero*. Three of the five adjacent pronoun subjects have verbs that are inflected with *-th*, whereas the other two take adjacent subjects take *zero*. So, there appears to be no strong pronoun constraint that gives rise to *zero*, nor does adjacency seem to play a major role, but it is interesting to see that there is variability.

Furthermore, six out of the eight auxiliaries have *zero* inflections, both with plural and singular subjects.

| John | verb | sg.-th | pl.-th | sg.zero | pl.zero | total |
|--------------|-------|--------|--------|---------|---------|-------|
| 1548 | DO | - | - | - | - | - |
| | HAVE | 2 | - | 4 | 2 | 8 |
| | OTHER | 3 | - | 4 | - | 7 |
| total | | 5 | - | 8 | 2 | 15 |

Table 8.10. Third person markers in John Smythe's letter, 1548

From what can be gathered of John's life (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.5.), he was a hard-working merchant who quickly rose to wealth. In contrast to his offspring, it appears that he lived in Bristol most of his life, and he did not seem to move around as much as his sons and grandchildren did, nor is there any evidence that he enjoyed an education in Oxford or London, whereas his sons and grandson Thomas did. It would therefore make sense that his writing reflects some written Bristol features. As in the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493) and period II (1506-1596), there seems to be a particular preference for *zero* with auxiliary *have*. However, *zero* is also extended to lexical verbs in John's case. Strikingly, there is one similar instance of *zero have* in one of John's great-grandchildren's letters, Thomas Smythe, who uses *-s* with the other third person singulars. Unfortunately, there are no instances of third person plurals in his letters for comparison:

- (24) my Aunt Chomly have desir'd mee to come and be with her some parte of this long=vacation (Thomas Smythe jr. 1661, BRO: ac/70/2)

The letters of Elizabeth Smythe (née Gorges) (c.1578–1659)

As can be gathered from Elizabeth's biography (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.5.), she came from a family of high social standing. Furthermore, she had ties with Wiltshire, London, and eventually Bristol when she married the affluent Bristolian merchant Hugh Smythe and resided at

Ashton Court in Bristol until her death. Her father, Sir Thomas Gorges, was a courtier who was originally from Somerset, but had settled in Salisbury (Wiltshire). Her mother Helen (née Snakenborg) was a member of the Swedish nobility and came to England when she was around the age of 15, where she became maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth. She first married the Marques of Northampton William Parr and after his death married Sir Thomas Gorges of Langford in Wiltshire. Both Elizabeth's parents had ties with London and the court, but they had a property in Wiltshire, in addition to a town house near London. Elizabeth was most likely born in London, but it seems probable that she spent time in both London and Wiltshire from a young age onwards.

Elizabeth is a letter writer who varies considerably in terms of third person singular and plural inflections. Interestingly, with the lexical verbs with third person plural subjects, she appears to use *-s* more frequently than *zero*, while *-s* does not occur with third person plural auxiliary *have*:

| verbs | sg.-th | pl.-th | sg.-s | pl.-s | sg.ze ro | pl.zero | total |
|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| DO | 85% (11) | 15% (2) | - | - | - | - | 13 |
| HAVE | 79% (46) | 2% (1) | - | - | - | 19% (11) | 58 |
| OTHER | 14% (13) | - | 62% (59) | 15% (14) | 2% (2) | 7% (7) | 95 |
| total | 42% | 2% | 36% | 8% | 1% | 11% | 166 |

Table 8.11. Third person markers in Elizabeth Smythe's letters (1620s-1640s)

As examples (25) - (28) below show, Elizabeth uses *-th*, *-s*, and *zero* inflections, both with plural subjects and singular subjects:

- (25) your sisters dothe the like to your selfe and him
(Elizabeth Smythe, 1624, BRO: ac/c/48/2)

(26) your sisters comends them (Elizabeth Smythe, 1630s, BRO: ac/c/48/2/3)

(27) they haue a grime ground (Elizabeth Smythe, 1630s, BRO: ac/c/48/2/9)

(28) tomorow I will send R. roger to see the horse he speake of (Elizabeth Smythe, 1620, BRO: ac/c/48/2/10)

The pattern of examples (25) - (27) above seems to be much in line with what has been described for the Northern Subject Rule, e.g. an adjacent pronoun has a *zero*-inflected verb (see (27) and (28)), and adjacent non-pronoun subjects are inflected with either *-th* or *-s*. This seems, in Elizabeth's case, to be true for both third person singular and plural subject pronouns. Caution should be heeded though, and it has to be pointed out that the pattern does not categorically adhere to the NSR, since there are also *zero* plural inflections with non-pronoun subjects that are adjacent to the verb (29), as well as adjacent *singular* pronouns that have *-th* or *-s* inflected verbs and (30):

(29) the Doctors finde no such infermity in you (Elizabeth Smyhte, 1622, BRO: ac/c/48/1)

(30) she caries it wifely and ther wisdoms is such. that they may doe it out of ther discretions (Elizabeth Smyhte, 1620, BRO: ac/c/48/10)

Notwithstanding, all of the six third person *plural* adjacent pronoun subjects occur with *zero*, while none of the 12 *-s/-th* third person plural inflections occur with personal pronoun subjects. This suggests that there might be a subject type constraint at work. Furthermore, of the 12 third person plural *zero* instances that do occur with noun phrase subjects, eight cases are with auxiliary *have*. So, it could even be that the *auxiliary* distinction may also play a role in *zero* selection, which was a tendency that was most clearly observed in the council ordinances of period II (1506-1593). Thus, it could be that in Elizabeth's third person plurals, both a subject constraint operated, as well as an auxiliary constraint, i.e. there are two contexts in which *zero* is

triggered; with an adjacent pronoun, or with auxiliary *have*. Cole (2014: 60) hypothesises that the development of subject constraints may be triggered “[...] in scenarios where morphological variants compete for grammatical function”. It could thus be the case that both lexical *zero* and innovative and supralocal *-s* started to compete with *-th* in plurals and that the selection of the competing forms were conditioned by subject constraints.

Example (31) below shows another interesting feature that also occurred in Wright’s (2015) data of the nineteenth-century West Oxfordshire man William Tayler. Wright (2015: 125) notes that “co-ordinated verbs flock together”, resulting in patterns *zero+ -s*, *-s*, etc. or *-s + -zero*, *-zero*, etc. This seems to be the case for Elizabeth too, although she uses both *-s* and *-th*. The latter form had virtually disappeared in William Tayler’s time, stopping variation in inflectional endings in his writing. It could also be that auxiliary *have* triggered *zero*, however, as Elizabeth seems to have had a preference for *zero* auxiliary *have* with third person plural subjects:

- (31) those that haue made so much monies and filles it vp
with fine liues dothe not intend to bey for her other
sonnes (Elizabeth Smythe, 1628, BRO: ac/c/48/5)

As for the general distribution of *-th* and *-s*, Elizabeth demonstrates a pattern that can be described as the transitional phase in which *-s* is taking over from *-th*. In the auxiliaries, *-th* is still used categorically, while *-s* is the majority form in the lexical verbs.

| sub-periods | verbs | -th | % | -s | % | total |
|--------------|-------|-----|------|----|-----|-------|
| 1620s | DO | 5 | 100% | - | - | 5 |
| | HAVE | 12 | 100% | - | - | 12 |
| | OTHER | 4 | 19% | 17 | 81% | 21 |
| 1630s | DO | 1 | 100% | - | - | 1 |
| | HAVE | 26 | 100% | - | - | 26 |
| | OTHER | 6 | 14% | 38 | 86% | 44 |
| 1640s | DO | 3 | 100% | - | - | 3 |
| | HAVE | 9 | 100% | - | - | 9 |
| | OTHER | 3 | 14% | 18 | 86% | 21 |
| total | | 69 | 49% | 73 | 51% | 142 |

Table 8.12. Elizabeth Smythe: distribution of third person plural and singular *-th* and *-s* (1620s-1640s)

There seems to be considerably less variation in the letters of the other writers of my corpus, but there are three other authors who sporadically vary with third person inflections. Elizabeth's daughter Mary uses *-s* with a third person plural once. Unfortunately, there are only two tokens for third person plurals in her texts. Hence, it is impossible to say to what degree the forms vary in her writings. All third person singular verbs are inflected with *-s* or *-th*:

- (32) I fhall long to hear from you how matters goes in your quarters (Mary Smyth, 1630s, BRO: ac/c/53/10)
- (33) He has the Kings euill
(Mary Smyth, 1630s, BRO: ac/c/53/12)

The letters of Thomas (1609-1642) and Mary (1600s) Smythe

The letters of Elizabeth's children, Thomas and Mary, date from the same period as Elizabeth's letters, but it is interesting to see that there is a generational difference and possibly also a difference in usage between Thomas and Mary. Thomas went away to St. John's College in Oxford, and later to the Inns of Court in London. Not much is known about Mary's life and education, but her correspondence reveals that she resided in London for a while, and moved to Cheshire, where her

husband came from. She also regularly stayed at the family estate near Bristol. Not all of Mary's letters are dated, but it can be postulated by the topics she writes about that they must have been written in the 1630s, as are the other dated letters. Table 8.13 below shows that Mary used *-s* more often than her mother Elizabeth and, in contrast to her mother, she also occasionally used *-s* in her auxiliaries.

| sub-period | verbs | -th | % | -s | % | total |
|--------------|-------|-----|-----|----|-----|-------|
| 1630s | DO | 1 | 33% | 2 | 67% | 3 |
| | HAVE | 7 | 88% | 1 | 13% | 8 |
| | OTHER | 1 | 6% | 15 | 94% | 16 |
| total | | 9 | 67% | 18 | 33% | 27 |

Table 8.13. Mary Smythe: distribution of third person plural and singular *-th* and *-s* (1630s)

Thomas used *-th* once in lexical verbs in his early years, when he was around the age of 13 and just moved to Oxford to go to College. In the letters of his adult years, *-s* is the only variant in lexical verbs, while *-th* appears to be the only variant in his auxiliaries. The numbers are too small to say anything conclusive, but it is interesting to see that Mary appears to be the most progressive in her use of *-s* in auxiliaries. Other instances of *-s* auxiliaries are not found until 1674. As for Thomas, it seems that he abandoned lexical *-th* in his adulthood, but strongly maintained *-th* in his auxiliaries.

| sub-periods | verbs | -th | % | -s | % | total |
|--------------|-------|-----|------|----|------|-------|
| 1620s | DO | 1 | 100% | - | - | 1 |
| | HAVE | - | - | - | - | - |
| | OTHER | 1 | 25% | 3 | 75% | 4 |
| 1630-40s | DO | - | - | - | - | - |
| | HAVE | 6 | 100% | - | - | 6 |
| | OTHER | - | - | 14 | 100% | 14 |
| total | | 8 | 32% | 17 | 68% | 25 |

Table 8.14. Thomas Smythe: distribution of third person plural and singular *-th* and *-s* (1620-40s)

8.4. The third person inflections of *to be*

A feature that seems to be particular to the ordinances of period I (1404-1493) is the occurrence of *beth* in the third person indicative. In order to demonstrate the relevance of the occurrence of this form, some explanation as to the history of the different forms of *be* is in order. The present-day paradigm of *be* is the result of a complex set of developments based on a large number of historical forms. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to give an elaborate account of the development of this paradigm, so for the purpose of this chapter it suffices to explain that in Old English there were two different paradigms for the present tense, the *s-stem* and the *b-stem*. For the third person singular indicative this meant that the form could be *is* (*s-stem*), or *bith* (*b-stem*). For the third person plural indicative this was *sindon/sint/aeron* (*s-stem*), or *beoth* (*b-stem*). The plural form *aeron*, which eventually became the present-day Standard form *are*, was originally Anglian and spread to the Southern dialects during the Middle English period, although another form, *ben*, also commonly came to be used as a third person plural marker in the Late Middle English period, with the Northern texts favouring *are* and the Southern *ben* (Lass 1992: 139-140). The sixteenth century *be* forms started to be replaced with *are* in the South and both forms could be found to compete in texts (Forsström 1948: 103; Barber 1976: 246; Kilpiö 1997: 101; Nevalainen 2000b: 342). Nevalainen (1996; 2000b) investigated the rise of *are* in CEEC and found that *are* only became a dominant form in the seventeenth century (see also Figure 8.2 below) (Nevalainen 2000b: 342).

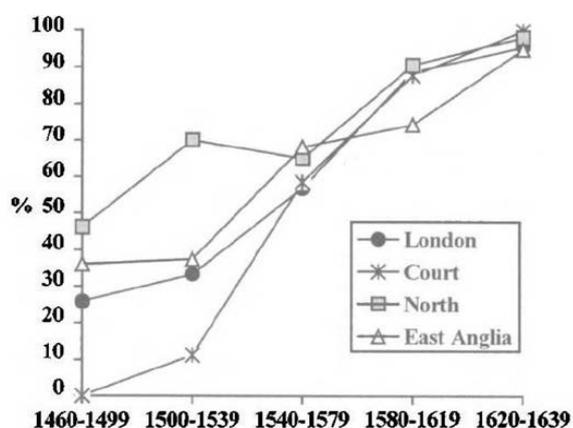


Figure 8.2. The frequency of *are* in different regions and the court (CEEC 1998; means of individual scores) (adapted from Nevalainen 2000: 348)

As for the ordinances of Bristol in period I (1404-1493), Table 8.15 below shows the distribution of third person singular and plural indicative *be* forms. There are also a number of uninflected *be* forms, but they are all ambiguous in that they could be interpreted as subjunctive forms and they were hence discarded. There appears to be a distinctive number distribution as regards the forms; *is* is clearly preferred with third person singulars, while the third person plural takes *ben* or *beth*. Based on the data presented here, the form *are* thus seems not to have reached Bristol at this stage then.

| period I | BETH | | IS | | BEN | |
|-------------|-------------|----------|--------|---------------|---------|----------|
| sub-periods | plural | singular | plural | singular | plural | singular |
| 1400-1450 | (10) 59% | - | - | (130) 100% | (7) 41% | - |
| 1450-1500 | (12) 80% | (1) 1% | (1) 1% | (92) 99% | (3) 20% | - |

Table 8.15. Distribution of *BE* forms in the Great and Little red book of Bristol, period I (1404-1493)

In period II (1506-1596), the picture looks quite different; *beth* and *ben* are no longer present and *are* is the most common plural form, although *be* occurs too, so this form possibly replaced *beth*. It should also be added that the instances of *be* may be underrepresented here, since it was sometimes difficult to decide whether *be* was a subjunctive or an indicative form.

| period II sub- periods | BE | | IS | | ARE | |
|------------------------------|---------|----------|--------|--------------|---------|----------|
| | plural | singular | plural | singular | plural | singular |
| 1500- 1550 | (12) 5% | - | (2) 1% | (207) 87% | (18) 8% | - |

Table 8.16. Distribution of third person BE forms in the Council Ordinances of Bristol, period II (1506-1596)

According to Nevalainen (2000b: 356), “the supralocalisation of *are* can be identified as a case of regular dialect diffusion that progressed over the centuries”, since the spread seems to have proceeded from the North to the Midlands, to East Anglia and the South consecutively. In light of this observation, it is surprising that there is almost no sign of a stage in which innovative *are* and the older forms occur interchangeably in the ordinances of Bristol. However, since there is a chance that the earlier texts of period II are later copies, it may be that the data of period II are representative of the 1570s onwards, leaving quite a large time gap between that of the data of period I (1404-1493).

With regard to possible subject effects, previous studies (Montgomery1994; Cole 2014) have shown that *is/was* and *are/were* can alternate in accordance with subject constraints, i.e. *is/was* tends to be preferred with full plural noun phrases, while *are/were* are more likely to be found with pronoun subjects (Cole 2014: 68). Interestingly, there are also third person plurals with *is*, albeit rarely:

- (34) whole names ys before written
(Memoranda of the council, 1553, f.12b BRO: 04272)

However, there do not seem to be any clear patterns in terms of possible subject constraints effects, i.e. *are* and *is* occur with pronoun subjects and full noun phrases alike.

The letter collection showed considerably less variation with regard to third person singular and plural forms of *be*. In most cases, *is* is used with third person singular subjects and *are* is used with third person plural subjects, although *is* is used with plural subjects twice. The earliest letter writer, John Smythe, uses *be* once. However, it could be argued that this is a subjunctive form. In example (35), *is* is used with what appears to be a plural subject, but as explained earlier, two co-ordinated singular subjects often followed singular agreement in Early Modern English. Yet, see example (37) where Elizabeth uses *is* for a plural noun phrase subject:

- (35) I vnderftand yat he meaneth to yntitle the King with my too chappells in afhton and with lxxiijc der of lead yat coveryd noon of them/ which chapells and lead *be* myne as membres of ye church of longaifton (John Smythe, 1548, BRO: ac/c/2/1)
- (36) which howfe and garden *is* now in the terme and ocupacion of on Iohn Sparke (John Smythe, 1548, BRO: ac/c/2/1)
- (37) ther wisdoms is such. that they may doe it out of ther discretions (Elizabeth Smythe, 1620, BRO: ac/c/48/10)

Although the forms *beth*, *ben* and *be* for third person indicatives no longer seem to be present in the written language of the later letter writers, it is interesting to note that the use of invariant *be*, and in some cases *is*, are dialect features that were still attested in 1877 (Elworthy 1877) and are still found in older rural speakers of the Somerset dialect (Ihalainen, 1991). Ihalainen reports cases where *is* is used with non-personal pronoun plural subjects (38) and also cases of *be* (39) and forms of *ben* in negations (40).

- (38) All horses *is* gone
(Ihalainen 1991:108)

- (39) They *be* thirsty
(Ihalainen 1991: 112)
- (40) *Ben em?* (aren't they)
(Ihalainen 1991: 108)

My tentative conclusion is that the forms of the *b*-Stem of *be* remained the most important variants for a relatively long time, especially in comparison to the South East Midland dialects, where *are* ousted other forms of *be* a lot earlier (the late fourteenth century) (Lass 1992: 140). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to comprehensively treat *be* variation. Nonetheless, the data suggest that the verb behaves differently from the other verbs that have been investigated in this chapter. In the letters dating from 1600 onwards, the paradigm looks much like that of present-day Standard English. However, as was observed for third person plural and singular agreement in other verbs, the story is somewhat more complex. In general, there seems to have been a constant tendency towards the levelling of number marking in the verbs, which meant either a *-th/-s* ending for both plural and singular subjects, or alternatively *zero* for both plural and singular subjects, while at the same time verb type and subject type constraints affected the selection or reduction of an inflectional ending.

8.5. Concluding remarks

Returning to the singular *-th* and *-s*, it appears that Bristol did not see an early occurrence of *-s*, as was the case in London. However, it has to be pointed out that the differences could potentially rise from the different text types that have been used to study the respective towns; the London data as studied by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) include early correspondence, whereas my Bristol data of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries largely consists of council ordinances. Nonetheless, the difference is very likely to hold for all text types, given the diverging migration histories of Bristol and London: London did indeed see a large influx of Northern immigrants in the period when *-s* was first recorded in the fifteenth century, whereas

Bristol appears mainly to have attracted immigrants that were from its closer hinterlands during that time, so it would make sense that Bristol was not exposed to *-s* at the time. Based on my Bristol data, it appears that *-s* did not find its way into the written language of the South West until the seventeenth century, since there is not a single instance of *-s* in the period 1400-1600. This goes for the council ordinances as well as the letters. In the period 1600-1650, which roughly coincides with the period when Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) found the steepest mid-range of the *s*-curve to be (see Figure 8.1 above) for third person singular *-s*, the picture changes drastically, as from that period onwards, *-s* prevails over *-th* in the letters from Bristol too. It is, however, hard to tease out factors such as the effects of level of formality and text types, e.g. the time-spans covered by the letter corpus and the ordinances only partially overlap, while it could be that text type plays a role here, and that scribal practices involving civic records had a more preservative function as opposed to letters. A comparison between different text types across project towns will hopefully reveal more about possible effects such as genre, level of formality and social factors. The question is whether we can relate possible external factors to the distribution of *-s* and *-th*. When Bristol's economy was in decline in the 1500s, many merchants moved to London and the population in Bristol decreased. However, many of the merchants who moved to London maintained ties with Bristol, as the city was still a good outlet market and departure port for specific trade routes (see Chapter 4, with references). By the 1600s, Bristol's economic growth gained momentum; the population at the time had already doubled from 10,000 to 20,000 (de Vries 1984: 270) by the 1650s and trade expanded significantly too. Also, postal services and connection routes with London had improved. Written and spoken communication with London was probably more extensive than before. This is shown by the correspondence and the lives of the merchant family studied in this study, as well as by the correspondence from other merchants. Additionally, there was also a change in the types of literacy: in the earlier period, scribes of civic records were likely schooled locally and according to local writing practices, whereas the letter writers of my corpus travelled around a

lot and were often schooled elsewhere (see Chapters 4 and 6, with references), which brought them into contact with supralocal writing practices.

The results of this study on third person singular present tense markers confirm a number of findings from previous studies. In the letters, we have seen that the auxiliaries *have* and *do* lag behind in the adoption of third person singular *-s*, and that *-s* inflections tend to be syncopated, while *-th* inflections are almost always unsyncopated (Kytö 1993; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003).

It has proven rewarding to take into account third person plural inflections as they reveal patterns possibly specific to Bristol and/or the West Country that otherwise might have gone by unnoticed. It has also proven important to make a distinction between auxiliaries and lexical verbs, as it turns out that most notably in the period from 1400-1600, auxiliary *have*, in particular, favoured *zero* with plural subjects, whereas other verbs tended to be inflected with *-th*, both with singular and plural subjects. This tendency was also still present in other periods, albeit less significantly so. The reason for this could be that *zero* started to compete with plural *-th* in lexical verbs by this time.

Furthermore, it appears that the adoption of present-day Standard English *-s* does not necessarily mean that verb agreement was in accordance with present-day Standard verb inflection paradigm too, i.e. *-s* did not simply replace third person singular *-th*, nor did *zero* simply replace plural *-th*. As reflected in Elizabeth's writing, when *-s* and lexical *zero* started to compete with older plural and singular *-th*, their selection was conditioned by subject type and verb type constraints, most notably so with third person plural subjects. Another feature that seemed specific to the data of the period 1400-1600 is the use of various inflections of the copula *be*. Although older *b-stem* forms appear to have disappeared in written language, uses of uninflected *be*, as well as older *b-stem* inflections are still found in modern-day rural dialects of the South West (Ihalainen 1991). Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this study to look at *be* variation in more detail, but it is a subject that certainly deserves more attention in future research.

Finally, the question is what the patterns found in this case study tell us about the general supralocalisation processes. When simply looking at distributions of third person singular *-s* versus third person singular *-th*, on the surface, it may appear as if the innovative form simply replaced one for the other and that the written language was 'standardised' in terms of verbal inflection. However, when both singular and plural inflections are considered and verb type and subject constraints are taken into account, we can see that the supralocalisation as well as the regional dialect levelling process is more complex. The variable distribution of third person singular and plural *-th/-s/zero* reveals that a new supralocal form may be adopted as the surface form, but at the same time, it appears that the selection of the new variants may be constrained by subject type effects, as well as by effects that may have a local origin, i.e. *zero* for auxiliary *have* in plurals.

As pointed out in Chapter 6, Elizabeth always had ties with the South West, but she most likely also resided in London during her childhood. Eventually, however, she returned to the South West to marry Hugh Smythe, which suggests she and her parents maintained strong connections with the South West. The other Smythe family members were also highly mobile, but they too maintained links with the Bristol area and returned on a regular basis, or as was the case with John Smythe's sons, and Elizabeth and her son Thomas, they re-settled in the Bristol area again at some point in their lives. Arguably, Elizabeth's geographical fluidity was thus to some extent also reflected in her writing.

Chapter 9. Supralocalisation and orthographic variation: *þ, y and th*

9.1. Introduction

In English historical linguistics, the study of orthographic variation has a longstanding tradition. For the most part, variation was studied as a means to investigate phonological variation, i.e. spelling was directly related to pronunciation (cf. Wyld 1936; Dobson 1957). It is only recently that orthographic variants themselves are starting to be considered “as a unit of sociolinguistic study” (Rutkowska & Rössler 2012: 214). Notably, the work of LALME and studies carried out by Stenroos (2004, 2006) show that orthographic variation can be studied in terms of geographical variation and Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (1999, 2005) showed that orthographic variation is a rewarding subject for the study of supralocalisation and standardisation processes in England. Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (1999, 2005) specifically noted that in correspondence from the Late Middle and Early Modern English periods, socially mobile members of loose-knit social networks, such as urban merchants, tended to use the forms that later came to be supralocal forms (2005: 126). In a more recent study, Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre (2015) correlated social factors such as age and gender to the use of <th> versus <þ> in texts from the Early Modern English period. The old runic *thorn*, <þ>, and its variants are orthographic features that also lend themselves well to the investigation of the development of supralocal written forms, since it is possible to observe the decline of <þ> and the rise of <th> in all of England. In the Old English period, <th>, <t>, <d>, <ð>, <þ>, and later, a graph similar or identical to <y> were all used to represent what we nowadays refer to as the interdental fricative <th> (Stenroos 2004; Laing & Lass 2009). For instance, the initial digraph in *through* could additionally be spelled *trough*, *drough*, *ðrough*, *þrough*, and *yrough*³¹ by Middle English

³¹ This is a somewhat simplified list, as in reality, most of the other graphs in this word had other variants too. Furthermore, the variants of <th> presented here

scribes (Stenroos 2006: 14). What is interesting is that in the Middle English period, Northern and Southern texts showed a regionally bound distribution of spelling variants (McIntosh 1974; Benskin 1977; Stenroos 2004, 2006). However, during the Late Middle English and the Early Middle English period, all variants were gradually replaced by one variant, the digraph <th>, and distinctive local practices started to disappear. Although Stenroos has investigated the distribution pattern of the <th> variants in the South, little is known about the development of the form in the South West and in urban settings in particular.

The aim of this chapter is firstly, to investigate what variants occurred in Bristol texts, and secondly, to shed light on how, when, and in what contexts these variants were replaced by the digraph <th>. The chapter is structured as follows: in Section 9.2., I provide some historical background and insights from previous research about the different <th> variants. Section 9.3. deals with my survey of the Bristol data, and Section 9.4. summarises the findings and the implications they may have in terms of levelling and supralocalisation processes.

9.2. Historical background

In Old and Middle English texts, one comes across a wide variety of graphs that represent dental fricatives, both the voiced variant /ð/ (as heard in the present-day Standard English pronunciation of that) as well as the voiceless /θ/ (as heard in the present-day Standard English pronunciation of think)³². In the earliest extant texts, which date from the early eighth century, the roman graphs <d> and <th> were most frequently used to represent both sounds, especially in Northern texts. From the late eighth century onwards, *eth* <ð>, which was possibly a graph introduced by Irish missionaries, and runic *thorn* <þ>, started to appear in the texts. Like the other forms, they were used

were sometimes also followed by an <h>. This means that spellings like *yhrough* and *þhrough* also occurred (see Stenroos 2006: 14 for a list of all variants).

³² In Old English, the contrast between the voiced and voiceless fricatives was not completely phonemic, which is why there was no need to distinguish this in terms of spelling (Lass 1992: 59).

interchangeably for both voiced and voiceless dental fricatives, although there was a tendency to use <þ> word-initially, whereas <ð> occurred more freely in all positions (Hogg 1992: 76). By the ninth century, <d> and <th> came to be less commonly used, particularly in English texts, the digraph <th> was often maintained in Latin texts, especially in English vernacular names and loan words with a dental fricative (Benskin 1982: 19; Hogg 1992: 77). By the thirteenth century, <ð> had almost completely been replaced by <þ> (Lass 1992: 36). Thus, by this time, <þ> had become the prevalent form. However, at the same time, the digraph <th> made a comeback in English vernacular texts and gradually started to replace <þ> (Lass 1992: 36). It is very likely that the renewed use of <th> was reinforced under the influence of Latin, which had become the main language of administration under Anglo-Norman rule (see also Chapter 4). In the Latin writing tradition, <th> was commonly used for English vernacular names with /θ/ and /ð/, as well as other non-Latin loanwords with dental fricatives (Benskin 1977: 506-507, 1982: 18; Hogg 1992: 77; Lass 1992: 36; Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2015: 25-26).

In the later Middle English period, variation became more complex again due to the merging of the graphemes <þ> and <y>, which meant, for some scribes, that the representation of both <y> and <th> had virtually become the same and generally indistinguishable from one another (Benskin 1982: 13). Occasionally, <yh>, <ð>, <þh>, <zh>, <z> occurred in texts, as well as medial <d>, <dd> and final/medial <tth>, <tht>, <zt> (Stenroos 2004: 264). The digraph <yh> was only attested in Northern texts, and <z> mostly in texts originating from East Anglia and the East Midlands (Stenroos 2004: 265). In my Bristol texts, however, there appears to be one example of the former use. Unfortunately, the text has not been dated, so it will not be used for further analyses:

- (1) This here *yhe* mair sherif and gode men (Recorder's oath, ca 15th century, f.5, BRO: 04719)

As for word-medial spellings <d> and <dd>, there is an added complication relating to sound changes and corresponding spellings. During the Middle English period, Old English words with intervocalic

/d/ came to be pronounced with fricative /ð/ (Lass 1992: 64). This mostly concerned words ending with *-er*, e.g. words such as *father* (OE *fader*), *mother* (OE *modor*), *gather* (OE *gaderian*) were originally spelled with the letter <d> and pronounced as /d/. This sound change was likely still underway in the fifteenth century. There is thus a possibility that the <d> in medial position in Later Middle English texts may reflect actual pronunciation as /d/. In other words, it could be that <d> at this time was not another graphemic variant of <th>, but, rather, it may represent an older pronunciation. According to Stenroos (2004: 264), the occurrence of medial <d> in the Later Middle English period is restricted to certain regions; it is mainly attested in texts from the North East Midlands, the North, the South East and the South West, specifically with *whether*, *either*, and *other*. The question remains if these <d> spellings reflect actual pronunciation or whether they are back-spellings³³. Alternatively, they could also just have been conservative Older English spelling variants of <th> (Stenroos 2004: 264).

As illustrated above, during the later Middle English period, contemporary texts contained a wide variety of graphs for present-day <th>, but the most common forms were <th>, <þ> and <y>. Related to this, McIntosh (1974) and Benskin (1982) established that the variation of the three main variants <th>, <þ> and <y> was conditioned regionally, that is to say, there appeared to be a distinctively Northern system and a distinctively Southern one. Benskin (1982: 14) describes three different ways in which the different variants were used:

- 1) <þ> and <y> are merged into one graph and thus cannot be distinguished from each other. This practice typically occurred in texts from the North and parts of the East.

³³ This means that a graph is inserted in a place where it was etymologically never present. For example, in some dialects in the sixteenth century, there is spelling evidence for *th*-fronting (the pronunciation of [θ] became more like [f]). The graphs <f> and <th> both came to represent [f], hence back-spellings like *threvoles* for *frivolous* were found (Wyld 1936: 291; Milroy 2003: 216). Similarly, <d> spellings for *wether* (OE *hwæðer*), *either* (OE *æghwæðer*), *other* (OE *oðar*), could be hypercorrect in analogy to older *father* (OE *fader*) spellings.

- 2) <þ> and <y> are two distinct graphs and they are used distinctively to represent present-day <th> and <y> respectively. This system was used in texts originating in the South, the West and the East Midlands.
- 3) <þ> and <y> are two distinct graphs, but they are used interchangeably to represent present-day <th>. Vice versa, <þ> is in some cases also used to represent <y>, e.g. *yong* (young) could be spelled *þong*. This system was found in texts from the border areas where the systems described in (1) and (2) above occurred.

Interestingly, before 1350, merged <y> as used in system 1), also occurred in the South (Benskin 1982: 25). How and when this feature came to be strictly Northern remains an unsolved question.

It should be pointed out, however, that Benskin's (1982: 16) analysis is based on texts that are "markedly local". Namely, he did not consider Southern texts that did not contain clearly identifiable local dialect features. The less "markedly local" texts probably showed more supralocal or non-local features. To illustrate how this can be problematic, as Benskin notes himself, in the Northern texts that did not show "markedly local" language, <þ> was used according to the system as described in (3) above. This type of usage occurred in texts from the 1440 onwards and was primarily found in legal and administrative texts (Benskin 1982: 25). In other words, the texts that are not clearly dialectal may reveal patterns of change that otherwise may have been left unnoticed.

As regards the spread of digraph <th>, in the Northern dialects, the form initially seems to have been preferred in specific contexts, namely with word final voiceless dental fricatives, and later, this tendency was extended to voiceless contexts in other positions, which resulted in spellings that corresponded to phonological differences, e.g. *think* was spelled with <th>, whereas words with voiced dental fricatives, such as *they*, *there*, *them* were spelled with either <þ> or

<y> (Benskin 1977: 506-507; Stenroos 2004, 2006)³⁴. Thus, with regard to system 1), digraph <th> mostly implied the presence of a voiceless dental fricative, whereas <y> and <þ> mostly referred to a voiced dental fricative. In systems 2) and 3), there was no such phonological distribution and all three variants could occur with either a voiced or a voiceless dental fricative. However, even though the distribution of spelling variants in Southern texts did not reflect phonological differences, Stenroos (2004: 274) notes that there seem to have been some constraints on the variation of the forms:

1. <th> was used as a capital of lower case <þ>
2. Although both forms could co-occur in the same text or document, either <þ> was the clear majority form, or vice versa. This might be reflective of a generational change as described by Hernandez-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre (2015), i.e. the texts with <þ> as a majority form might be written by older scribes, whereas <th>-full texts are the product of younger scribes, who adopted the innovative form.
3. In some rare cases both variants occur at roughly the same rate, but there may have been lexical conditioning.

As already indicated above, text type also appears to have been an important factor in relation to the distribution of the forms. More specifically, documentary texts, e.g. legal and administrative texts, show higher rates of <th> than literary texts (Stenroos 2004: 276). This suggests that the adoption of <th> emerged within a specific group of legally trained scribes (Benskin 1989, 1992; Stenroos 2004: 281). In the case of Bristol, it can thus be expected that there will be a relatively high rate of <th> in the council ordinances since it is known that town

³⁴ Interestingly, Bergs (2013: 250-256) found some earlier evidence for pronunciation related spellings in the Anglo-Saxon Peterborough Chronicles (entries 1132-1154 CE), where one scribe in particular seemed to prefer <th> for the voiced fricative in medial positions. This suggests that scribal practices were much more geographically diffused, allowing for a wide variety of individual scribal patterns.

clerks and recorders very often had a legal training (Bevan 2013: 82). This is not to say that they were always the scribes who wrote down the ordinances, but it can be imagined that they made their mark on local writing practices. As pointed out in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.7. and Chapter 5, Section 5.7.1., civic scribes played an important role in the legal administration of Bristol since they had knowledge of legal language and procedures and they may have supervised and trained the scribes who wrote legal texts.

As for the chronological development of digraph <th> in the South, Stenroos (2004, 2006) established that in the fifteenth century, the digraph only occurred as a majority form in some individual texts. Overall, <p> remained the majority form up until the end of the fifteenth century (Stenroos 2004: 273-274). Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (2015), in their study on the distribution of <p> and <th> in the Paston letters (ca. 1425-1496), describe a transitional stage in which both variants co-occurred, as is expected with a change underway, i.e. there is a stage where forms compete, which means a great degree of variability, followed by a stage in which variability decreases and one variant becomes the dominant form. The transitional stage for the letters seems to have been already present before 1425, since <th> was already the majority variant by that time (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2015: 27). Also, the change seems to have taken place gradually over the different generations of the Paston family history because the older family members showed lower rates of innovative <th> than the younger ones, with increasing rates in succeeding generations (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2015: 28).

In the course of the Early Modern English period, <th> replaced all other graphs. The only remnants that are occasionally found are <y> spellings in the determiners *ye* and *yat* (Stenroos 2004: 264). Local practices thus had disappeared by then and <th> can be said to have become the form that was preferred supralocally. Most studies have focused on how the form spread over larger dialect areas (Benskin 1982; Stenroos 2004, 2006), or they focused on the particular development within a family (Hernández-Campoy & Conde-Silvestre 2015). The aim of the current study is again to consider the role of

urban centres, and Bristol in particular. The first step of the current case study is thus to investigate how the development of <th> may have played out in Bristol.

9.3. A survey of <th>, <þ> and <y> in Bristol

9.3.1. Method

To establish the development of <th> in Bristol, I investigated all of my sub-corpora for the main variants <th>, <þ> and <y>. Although the focus will be on the competition between the main variants, I also looked for the variants that Stenroos (2004; 2006) listed as additional minority forms; <yh>, <ð>, <þh>, <ʒh>, <ʒ>; medial <d>, <dd>; final/medial <tth>, <tht>, and <ʒt>. A preliminary survey on the less common forms revealed that <ð>, <ʒ> or any of the combinations with <ʒ>, as described above, did not occur. The only minority forms that occurred were medial <d>, and <tth>, most of which had only single attestations. I will briefly discuss the minority forms in the results section as well, since they may reveal something about local practices in Bristol.

As for the main variants <th>, <þ> and <y>, they were collected by means of two XML-compatible concordance tools, one of which is available online on the Text Analysis Portal for Research (Rockwell et al. 2005) and the other, AntConc 3.3.4. (Anthony 2014), is software that can be downloaded. With these tools, word lists were created as well as corresponding word frequencies, from which words with <th>, <þ> and <y> could be selected by means of a simple search. The selected words were entered into an excel sheet and encoded with the following labels; source/author, year, word, frequency of the word in the corpus, variant (<th>/ <þ>/ <y>), position of the variant (initial/medial/final). Additionally, common abbreviations such as *y^e* for *the*, and *y^t* for *yat* were labelled as abbreviations, since it is

expected that conventional forms tended to be used in abbreviations long after <th> had taken over from <p> and <y> in other contexts³⁵.

9.3.2. Results

As with the other case studies, the material for this case study comprises council ordinances (period I 1404-1493 and period II 1506-1596) and letters (period I 1548-1711):

| time periods | source | word count |
|-----------------------|--|------------|
| period I: 1404-1493 | the Great and Little Red Book of Bristol | 35,153 |
| period II: 1506-1596 | the Council Ordinances of Bristol | 32,590 |
| period III: 1548-1711 | Bristol letter collection | 30,975 |

Table 9.1. The sub-corpora as used in the orthography case-study

I will first discuss the results of period I (1404-1493), followed by period II (1506-1596) and lastly period III (1548-1711). Per period, I will also zoom in on the development of the <th> forms over 50-year time spans. Percentages are rounded off to whole numbers. It should also be pointed out that the figures only include statistics of the majority forms <th>, <p>, and <y>. When minority forms are discussed, numbers and percentages will be given in the texts.

9.3.2.1. Period I (1404-1493): the Little Red Book and the Great Red Book of Bristol

As for the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493), in total, there were 6,248 words spelled with a <th> variant. The totals for all texts

³⁵ Although this turned out not to be directly relevant to this study, I also marked a special use of the definite article *the*. In some cases, when the definite article modified a noun that started with a vowel, *the* was reduced to <th>/<p> and attached to the noun. For instance, *the aldermen* was written as *thaldermen*.

investigated are shown in Figure 9.1 and are divided up into two sub-periods of 50 years (1400-1450 and 1451-1500). For period 1400-1450, there were 2,470 words spelled with a <th> variant, and there were 3,778 <th> variants for period 1451-1500. Compared to what Stenroos (2004) observed for the chronological development of <th> in the South in general, it appears that Bristol was relatively early in adopting <th>. Whereas <þ> remains the majority form up until the end of the fifteenth century in Stenroos (2004: 273-274), the graph in Figure 9.1 below shows that in Bristol <þ> was a minority form as early as the first half of the fifteenth century, and it declined rapidly in the second half of the fifteenth century.

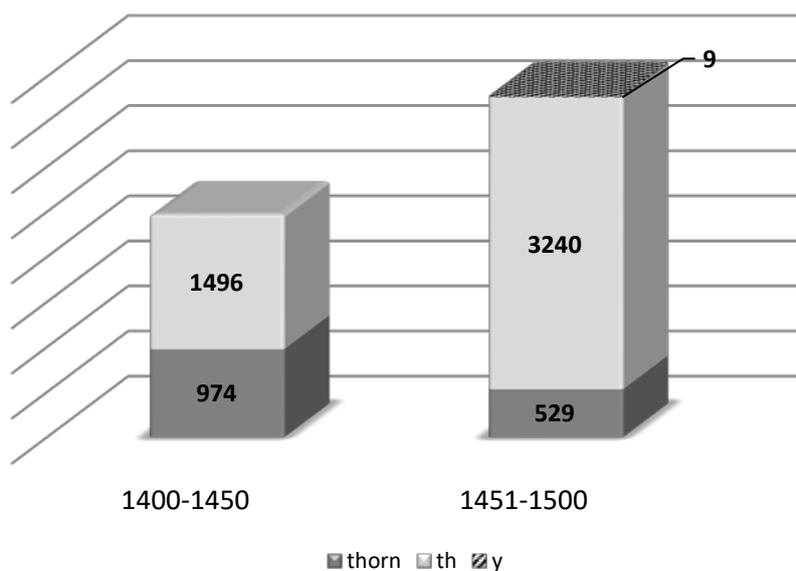


Figure 9.1. Totals of <th> and <þ> distribution in period I (1404-1493)

Since I have no other, non-documentary, texts from this period, it is impossible to say if the early increase of <th> is due to a difference in text type. However, the numbers for documentary texts in Stenroos (2004: 277, Fig. 10) are more similar to the ones reported for Bristol in Figure 9.1; in the first half of the fifteenth century, the percentage of

<th> in Stenroos's (2004) data is close to 60%, and <þ> is around 38%. As for Bristol's council ordinances in the first half of the fifteenth century, the ratio is 40% for <þ> and 60% for <th>. In the second half of the fifteenth century, the council ordinances of Bristol even seem to lag behind compared to Stenroos's (2004) percentages, as Stenroos's (2004) percentage for <th> in documentary texts is almost 100%, whereas for the Bristol data of period I, the ratio is 15% for <þ> and 85% for <th>.

As regards the minority forms that have not been included in the overall results, especially the occurrence of medial <d> for present-day <th> spellings are worth mentioning. Even though they are infrequent, they occur in spellings that are different from the ones Stenroos (2004) found in her data (*either*, *whether*, *other*). While there was not a single instance of medial <d> in *either*, *whether*, or *other*, there were four instances for *together* (OE *togædere*) and for *gather* (OE *gad(e)rian*), two for *mother* (OE–ME *modor*), one for *brethern* (OE *brōðor*, West Saxon *brēþere*), *father* (OE *fader*), and *further* (OE *furðra*). Another medial <d> spelling occurred with *thither* (OE *ðider*) four times³⁶. Medial <d> spellings in *mother*, *father*, *together*, *thither* and *gather*, may reflect older English pronunciations and/or spellings, but medial <d> in *further* and *brethern* (example (2) below) are not etymological spellings, that is, on the basis of the Old English spellings that are provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary*. However, the medial <d> in these cases occurs in the context where the sound change from /d/ to /ð/ took place, which was with /d/ in a postvocalic position, followed by a syllabic /r/ or /ər/ (OED 2016). Likely, the unetymological <d> spellings are examples of back-spellings, given the low frequencies of the <d> spellings and the more frequent occurrence of <th> and <þ> with postvocalic /d/ and syllabic /r/ or /ər/. The etymological cases of medial <d> are then most likely examples of fossilised Old English spellings.

- (2) Alfo we fynd howe þat þe priour of the Kalendares wyth his *Brederne* hath A tenement in the hie ftrete in wiche

³⁶ The Old English spellings are based on the etymological forms that are provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

John Lemfter Cooke nowe duellith in hath An herth
(Memmorandum of tenements, 1470, f.133, BRO:
04719)

There were also eight cases of <tth>, seven of which occurred in one text and in one particular lexical item: *bitth* (third person plural and singular inflection of *to be*). The other instance also occurred in a verb, namely *hatth*. It is possible that <tth> was preferred in verbal inflections. However, all but one of these variants occurs in the first half of the fifteenth century, which suggests that the form was on its way out. Interestingly, the interactive dialect map of LALME includes the mapping of variants of *be*, and this map reveals that *bitth* only occurs in the *Little Red Book of Bristol*, and in none of the other sources that they used for the dialect survey. This may mean that <tth> was a typical Bristol feature, or at least the writing habit of one of the Bristol's scribes in particular.

As Stenroos (2004: 274) points out, variation in individual texts tended to be limited, that is to say, either <th> was the majority form, or <þ>. It may thus be rewarding to zoom in on the distribution patterns in the individual documents, as opposed to the overall figures for all documents as shown above. It is important to bear in mind that I did not make a distinction between the different hands that occurred in either the *Little Red Book of Bristol*, or the *Great Red Book of Bristol*, rather, texts are analysed per entry, i.e. a set of ordinances written on a certain date, under the same header. In other words, by an individual text or document is meant an entry in the manuscript, and not so much a single individual hand. Nonetheless, in all of the cases, this meant an individual document was written by one hand rather than by several different hands. Thus, in some cases, two different documents may have been written by one scribe, but it can still be assumed that each document is representative of one instance of a written utterance and each document should thus yield an individual's pattern of usage in that particular document. Generally speaking, of the 37 individual texts that were investigated, the last text that had <þ> as a majority form dates from the 1460s, but the texts with <th> as the prevailing form dated from as early as 1433. Most of Stenroos's (2004, 2006) observations are confirmed by my data: the texts always have one

clear majority form. However, in terms of variability, all the texts that have <p> as a majority form show rates of <th> that range from 19% - 40%, whereas the 27 texts that have <th> as the main form show rates that are close to categorical use, i.e. 15 of the 27 texts have 100% <th>, and a further nine range between 1%-6% of <p>. Only three texts have a range of <p> that lies between 23%-40%.

Based on Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre's observations regarding the variation and change patterns in the Paston (ca. 1425-1496) letters (2015), the onset of the transition stage must have been before the period investigated, since none of my texts show categorical use of <p>, whereas <th> is used categorically in quite a few cases. Of the 37 texts, only 10 texts have <p> as the majority form. Figure 9.2 below shows the percentages of texts that have <p> or <th> as the majority form. As demonstrated in Figure 9.2 below, the largest percentage of texts with <p> as the majority form is concentrated in the first half of the century.

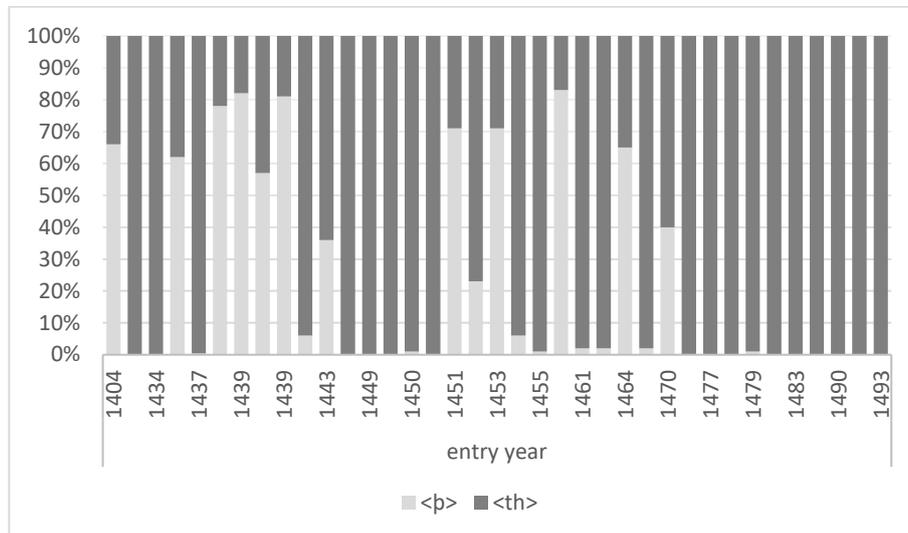


Figure 9.2. Percentages of the individual documents with <th> or <p> as a majority form, period I (1404-1493)

When zooming in on the lexical diffusion of the different variants in the texts, it becomes clear that even in the earliest texts, the use of <þ> appears to be lexically conditioned to a greater or lesser extent, that is to say, there was clearly a tendency to use <þ> in function words, such as highly frequent determiners *the, that, this*, personal pronouns *they, them, their*, prepositions *with, within, without*, and adverbs *there, therein*, while <th> spellings were used in a much greater variety of lexical items, including verbs and content words.

| | function | % | content/ verbs | % | total |
|--------------|----------|-----|-------------------|-----|-------|
| <þ> | 1478 | 98% | 28 | 2% | 1506 |
| <th> | 4078 | 89% | 514 | 11% | 4592 |
| total | 5556 | 91% | 542 | 9% | 6098 |

Table 9.2. Distribution of <þ> and <th> function words and verbs and content words, period I (1404-1493)

Interestingly, in four texts, <þ> only occurs once or twice, and all of these occurrences except one appear at the end of a line with a superscript *e*, or they were inserted inline when space was lacking. As can be seen in examples (3) and (4) below, <th> is used in all other underlined words, while <þ> appears to be preferred at the end of a (longer) longer line

- (3) or Appert. But that they haue An Obyn Place be Syde
the high Croffe
of the feid Towne of Briftowe Or In thaire howfis
opynlycch and noone oþ^{er} place vppon payn to pay to
the vfe of the Comunyaite of Briftowe
(Farrier's ordinance, 1455, f.26, BRO: 04718),
- (4) terme forefaide And that he be no Rebelle of Irelande
nor Alyen But

liegeman boren to the Kyng oure souueraign. lorde. And
 whate man of b^e
 fame Craffte do the Contrary of this. and therof
 conuicted to fore the
 (Fletcher's ordinance, 1479, f.27b, BRO: 04718)

Here the use of appears to be strictly functional, as if it was only to be used for the sake of space. This suggests that some of the scribes of the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493) were aware of a norm and only used the non-standard form in exceptional situations. As predicted by Stenroos (2004), <y> was extremely rare and only occurred once in a text from 1479, which strikingly also occurred at the end of a line in the form of an abbreviation.

9.3.2.2. Period II (1506-1596): the council ordinances of Bristol

In the council ordinance corpus of the period 1506 to 1596, <th> was used categorically, with two notable exceptions: there is one occurrence of <y> in a council ordinance from 1560, close to the end of a long line with superscript <e> to represent *the*, and one in similar circumstances in a document from around 1567, so again graphs other than <th> appear to be used in exceptional circumstances:

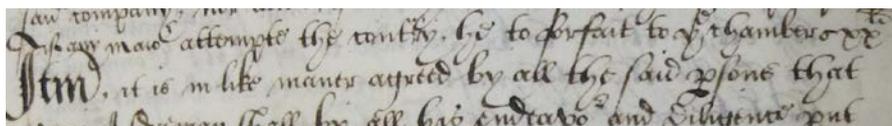


Figure 9.3. <y> near the end of a longer line (1st line), ordinance of the chamberlain, 1560, f.19, BRO: 04272

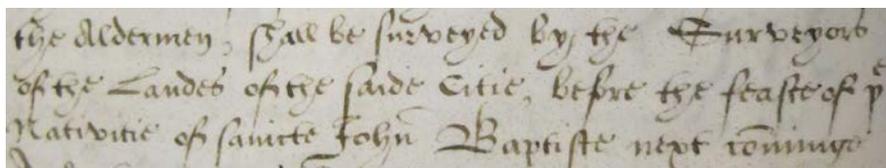


Figure 9.4. <p> at the end of a longer line (2nd line), memorandum of tenements, 1568, f.24b, BRO:04272

This suggests that the change to the categorical use of <th> was probably not simply a generational change, but it appears that some scribes made a conscious choice as to what variant they used in what context.

9.3.2.3. Period III (1548-1711): the letters

The letters ranging from the year 1548 to 1711 show a slightly different pattern to the one observed in the council ordinances. There is not a single occurrence of <p>, which is in line with the development that Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (2015) observed. Although they studied a corpus of letters that cover a period (c.1425-1504) preceding my letter corpus, they noted that <p> was clearly on its way out in the early 1500s, since by that time, only the older generations of the Paston family used the older form occasionally, whereas some of the younger family members showed innovative <th> rates of 100% (2015: 28). The letter writers from my period III (1548-1711) sub-corpus were from the same generation as the younger generation of the Pastons in 1504, or the next generation. Thus, it seems that the innovation of <th> among the letter writers from Bristol was on a par with the pattern as found for the Paston family, since the older <p> form seems to have disappeared by 1548, and <th> is used categorically. What is puzzling is that <y> is quite commonly used for <th> (8%). The form is found throughout the period, i.e. in the earlier letters dating back to 1548 as well as in letters from as late as 1711. They were only used with the high frequency words *that*, *the*, *this*, *them* and often in the form of an abbreviation (18% of the <y>

spellings), whereas there is only a single occurrence of <th> in an abbreviation:

| | <y> | % | <th> | % | total |
|--------------|-----|-----|------|-----|-------|
| the | 219 | 49% | 228 | 51% | 447 |
| that | 57 | 36% | 102 | 64% | 159 |
| them | 2 | 7% | 25 | 93% | 27 |
| this | 1 | 1% | 77 | 49% | 78 |
| total | 279 | 39% | 432 | 61% | 711 |

Table 9.3. <y> vs. <th> in high frequency words *the, that, them, this*, period III (1548-1711)

The <y> forms appear to be author-specific in that they are used by eight authors out of the total of 16 authors. All of the <y> users, except Romsey, were members of different generations of the Smyth family:

| | | the | that | them | this |
|-------------------------|----|-----|------|------|------|
| John 1548 | y | 58% | 100% | - | 10% |
| | th | 42% | - | 100% | 90% |
| Elizabeth-1640s | y | 5% | 9% | - | - |
| | th | 95% | 91% | 100% | 100% |
| Thomas-1640s | y | 61% | 61% | 36% | - |
| | th | 39% | 39% | 64% | 100% |
| Thomas jr.-1660s | y | 67% | 15% | - | - |
| | th | 33% | 85% | 100% | 100% |
| Romsey 1670 | y | 1% | 6% | - | - |
| | th | 99% | 94% | 100% | 100% |
| Florence -1680s | y | 71% | 50% | - | - |
| | th | 9% | 50% | - | - |
| Hugh -1680s | y | 92% | - | - | - |
| | th | 8% | - | - | 100% |
| Charles-1710s | y | 84% | - | - | - |
| | th | 16% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Table 9.4. Distribution of <y> amongst the different authors, period III (1548-1711)

There is little information about Romsey's background. Table 9.4 above reveals that he only occasionally used <y>. As described in Chapter 6, John is the grandfather of Thomas and the great-grandfather of Thomas junior, Florence, and Hugh. Elizabeth was the mother of Thomas and grandmother of Thomas Junior, Florence, and Hugh and thus was John's daughter-in-law. Charles was the son of Hugh and thus Elizabeth's great-grandchild. As mentioned in Chapter 6, Thomas enjoyed an education at St. John's College in Oxford, after which he returned to Bristol. He was involved in local as well as national politics and lived a geographically mobile life. Less is known about the other family members. However, it is clear that they all seemed to have been quite mobile and to have had a social network that extended as far as London and beyond. This was especially true for John's (great)-grandsons. As can be seen in Table 9.4 above, it is especially those men who show high rates of <y>, whereas the women show relatively low rates. In fact, Thomas's sister Mary does not use <y> at all. It could thus be that the form was part of a supralocal norm, which the women, due to their different life styles, were less subject to. However, when looking at the lexical distribution of <y> in Table 9.4 above, it appears that the use of <y> was receding, as, with the later letter writers, the form seems to occur as a variant only in the very frequent definite article *the*. Interestingly, there also was a single attestation of a medial <d> spelling in *further* (*furder*), which was written by Mary as late as 1630.

9.4. Conclusion

Based on the data presented here, it appears that period I (1404-1493) was a period in which the transition from <th> to <þ> was already quite far underway since, from the earliest texts onwards, it is clear that <þ> was largely restricted to high frequency words, even in the texts that had <þ> as their majority form. This development is in line with what has been found in relation to documentary texts in particular (Stenroos 2004), although Bristol seems to have been slightly more conservative compared to the development in the South in general. The patterning of the individual texts points towards a generational change, although this is impossible to prove without any background

knowledge relating to the scribes. By the 1470s, <þ> had all but disappeared from the documentary text genre. However, occasional single occurrences up until the 1570s suggest that the form had not completely disappeared from the scribes' repertoires. Moreover, since the records were more or less public documents, it can be surmised that the form was familiar and acceptable to the readers too. It may be the case that the form was still relatively current in other types of texts, whereas it was no longer common practice to use <þ> in documentary records. It would thus be interesting to investigate more and different text types to see if this is indeed the case.

The relatively frequent occurrence of <y> in the letters from an early period onwards is quite surprising, since <y> hardly occurred in the council ordinances of period I (1404-1493), or the council ordinances of period II (1506-1596). Unfortunately, Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (2015) did not study the occurrence of <y> in their data, and it is therefore impossible to tell if the use of <y> in the letters was typical of Bristol, or whether the use of <y> was generally more common in letters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It could be that this is an indication of a genre difference. As discussed in Chapter 5 on education and literacy, the reason why <y> is found in letters, but rarely in the council ordinances, may arise from the different types of literacy that had developed over time. The ordinances that were composed for the *Great and Little Red Book of Bristol* were most likely written by schooled scribes who were in most cases also skilled in Latin and French, and who had knowledge of legal procedures. They may have been trained in London at the Inns of Court, but as explained in Chapter 5, they could have been trained locally, in Bristol, or another urban centre, in the form of an apprenticeship (Sections 5.4. & 5.6.1., Chapter 5). It can thus be speculated about whether legal texts were composed by scribes who were trained in the context of long standing (legal) writing traditions, with their own norms and practices in terms of orthography. As is suggested by the single occurrence of <y> in the council ordinances in the 1570s, scribes may have had knowledge of the graph, but it was not common practice to use <y> in council records, which suggests that conscious attempts were made towards orthographic uniformity.

As for the letter writers who use <y>, we know that most of them were affluent merchants, or the wives or children of affluent merchants. Their literacy was very likely of a different, more pragmatic kind. They may have been trained according to specific letter writing conventions that were provided by the letter writing manuals that started to make their appearance in the second half of the sixteenth century (Edwards 2009). Alternatively, they could have been schooled by a private tutor, and it is known of some that they received schooling at Oxford, where letter writing was also part of the curriculum (Daybell 2012: 57). Although it can only be speculated what and how the letter writers were taught to write, it is almost certain that they learned to write in a different context than the scribes who composed the civic ordinances (cf. Fitzmaurice 2002b; Nevalainen & Tanskanen 2007; Dossena & Tieken-Boon van Ostade (eds.) 2008). Furthermore, the letter writers used their skills in a different context than the scribes and scriveners of the ordinances too. In that light, it is not surprising that the Bristol letter writers may have used different forms that were not or rarely attested in legal texts. As suggested in Section 9.3.4., the <y> forms were mostly used by the persons who most likely were part a loose-knit social network that extended over a large geographical area. It could thus be that <y> was part of a wider, supralocal writing practice. There is also a possibility that <y> briefly competed with <th> in the South West in general, and that it had become relatively frequent in council ordinances too from the seventeenth century onwards. Unfortunately, the council ordinances in my corpus only cover the period up until the sixteenth century, so a future study that includes seventeenth-century council ordinances is recommended to further answer this question.

As for Bristol's role in the adoption and transmission of supralocal forms, and <th> in particular, based on the previous studies discussed, it is clear that the development is on a par with the South in general. However, more research on the role of other urban centres, including London, is needed in order to be able to provide a more definite answer. A comparison of the different centres could possibly tell us more about the route that the supralocal form may have taken. Further studies in other urban centres could also shed light on the

unexpected frequent occurrence of <y> in Bristol in the seventeenth century, as according to Benskin (1982) and Stenroos (2004), it was not typically a Southern form in the Later Middle Ages. Although further research is needed to give any conclusive answers about its more frequent appearance in the Early Modern period, it is clear that Bristol's inhabitants adopted and were exposed to forms that were not necessarily typically Southern. At the same time, it could be observed that other minor variants (<tth>, <yhe>, <dd>) disappeared from an early period onwards, which led to a reduction in optional, and possibly more local, variation. Both the adoption of supralocal <th> and the levelling out of other variants suggest that the processes of regional dialect levelling and supralocalisation in orthography were well underway in the second half of the fifteenth century. This was particularly true for the council ordinances, whereas in the letters, <y> remained a relatively frequent variant in functional words. This also confirms that it is impossible to speak of the existence of a single Standard English variety, rather, orthographic regularisation processes appear to have been dependent on text types and corresponding writing practices.

Chapter 10. Conclusions

10.1. Introduction

Having discussed the theoretical aspects as well as the data of the case studies presented, I will now revisit the main findings and their implications for standardisation histories of the English language. Section 10.2. provides an overview of the main objectives and findings of this thesis. In Section 10.3., I will discuss the main points of all the chapters and relate them to the empirical findings of the study. Section 10.3.1. discusses the main finding of the linguistic case studies, and Section 10.4. assesses the limitations and the prospects of the present study.

10.2. Central argument: a holistic approach towards the standardisation question

This study set out to explore how a written supralocal variety developed in an urban setting over the period 1400-1700. By using Bristol as a case study and by investigating the development of supralocal features on a (morpho)syntactic level as well as on the level of orthography, the aim was to identify the processes that are involved in linguistic standardisation in an urban setting other than London. The reason for this 'alternative' approach has to do with the fact that London has mostly been the focal point of study with regard to the development of written Standard English. As explained in Chapter 3, student textbooks that deal with the history of English often attribute the development of a national written variety to overt prestige factors such as the emergence of English as the language of record within the government and the prestige of the elite of the capitol (cf. Barber 1972; Strang 1974; Fisher 1977; Leith 1983; Nevalainen 2003). In the present study, it was argued that it is very unlikely that standard ideologies in the form of cultural institutions existed in the period 1400-1700 and that it would thus be inappropriate to speak of a 'standard language' that was shaped by overt prestige or overt language planning. Instead, the linguistic convergence, which can undeniably be observed in the written language of the period 1400-

1700 should be sought in processes of supralocalisation and regional dialect levelling processes that were thrust by social factors and demographic movements, i.e. trade, migration, and communication between different urban centres, which boosted high levels of literacy and text production. It was also pointed out that, even though it has long been recognised that a standard written variety cannot have emerged from a single source or event (Lass 1976; Benskin 1992; Nevalainen 2000; and Wright 1996, 2000 (ed.), 2013), most of the studies on linguistic standardisation that do take into account other (covert) factors such as trade, migration and dialect and language contact are mainly concerned with how these processes played out in the capitol (Wright 1996, 2013). Based on smaller studies carried out by Benskin (1992) and Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (2002, 2005), I argued that other urban centres also played a pivotal role in the development and spread of supralocal written varieties. In the present study, it has been shown that Bristol, being the hub of economic and cultural activity in the South West of England, had its own dynamics in terms of communication patterns between other urban centres and its hinterland. Furthermore, Bristol had its own specific urban identity in that the town had an important regional function and developed its own tradition of record-keeping with regard to the town's administration, which in turn indicates that the town had the opportunity to develop its own writing practices and traditions over time. In terms of linguistic standardisation processes, it has also been borne out by the present study that the diffusion of different supralocal forms each developed at a different pace. More specifically, spelling features seemed to have levelled out towards a supralocal form relatively rapidly and early in the period investigated, whereas the diffusion of (morpho)syntactic features interacted with internal linguistic factors and remained more variable throughout the period. What is more, it has been shown that linguistic standardisation cannot be the result of overt linguistic prestige alone and that it can be linked to a complex set of processes involving internal linguistic factors as well as external factors. As for the external social factors, these are notably factors that can be placed in a broader societal context such as the development of literacy in the vernacular, the

development of different types of literacy, as well as the increase and change in the distribution of literates, and the communication streams between urban centres and London in particular, but also on a micro-level, as could be observed in the letters of the Smyth family who were a typical example of the rising merchant elite during the period 1400-1700. Their life styles and educational paths were similar to those of many other merchant elites; they were geographically mobile and their networks extended far beyond their native areas or their place of residence. There is no doubt that their social networks were rather loose-knit and not restricted to a single locality, or to a single social layer of society, which promoted the adoption of supralocal forms that had a wide national currency.

10.3. Looking back: a chapter overview

The objective of this study was to take a holistic approach towards the exploration of standardisation processes in that it included empirical linguistic research, but it also explored the extra-linguistic context in which the studied linguistic features developed. Chapters 2-5 were thus concerned primarily with theoretical considerations, whereas Chapters 6-9 were dedicated to the empirical component of the investigation of standardisation processes.

In Chapter 2, I discussed how the existence and increase of loose-knit social networks gave rise to the adoption and diffusion of supralocal forms. It was noted, in a previous study by Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (2005), that, in the Late Middle English period, contacts with the legal professions in London played a role. This may also still have been relevant in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as was reflected in the use of supralocal features in some of the most geographically and socially mobile Smythe family members. Though the data sets were small for the earliest Smythe family members, it could be observed that John Smythe, who remained in Bristol for most of his life, notably used *-th* spellings for third person inflections, as well as a subject verb agreement that was most likely typical of the South West, whereas his sons and grandsons who climbed the social ladder and who were geographically mobile and some of whom had enjoyed an education at the Inns of Court and thus

had contacts with the legal professions, adopted supralocal forms. What is more, their verb subject agreement systems were also more similar to present-day Standard English inflectional patterns. Furthermore, it was mentioned in Chapter 5 that in the case of the civic records, it is very likely that the scribes had some legal training and, as discussed in Chapter 4, the recorders and town clerks often had contacts with the courts in London, which could explain why supra-local <th> was adopted rapidly and early in the civic records of Bristol. Also, I argued in Chapter 2 that publicity and formality of texts may also have played a role in the spread of written supralocal varieties in that semi-public texts had to be accessible to a wider region that extended beyond urban boundaries, which in turn may also have given rise to the levelling out of local dialect features and the adoption of forms with a wider regional currency, as was reflected in the semi-public civic records that were investigated in the present study. As was argued in Chapter 3, it is precisely notions of publicness and processes of supralocalisation and dialect levelling that were important processes underlying linguistic convergence and standardisation. These processes were particularly prominent in urban centres that functioned as foci for communication in all sorts of forms, i.e. migration, trade, provision of cultural and economic services to a wider region. In Chapter 4, I demonstrated that Bristol fulfilled many important communication functions in the South West and beyond. Thus, we can postulate that accommodation processes were prominent and have stimulated dialect levelling and or the use of supralocal forms. In Chapter 4, it was also revealed that the merchant elite largely formed the ruling elite, which implies that they were directly and indirectly involved in administrative text production. It also came to the fore that, for most merchants, London remained a very influential place throughout the period investigated and extensive contact between London and Bristol, both in written and spoken form, must have taken place. In contrast to the metropolis, Bristol attracted mostly long- and short-term immigrants from its closer hinterlands, as well as Ireland and Wales. However, in the latter part of the period investigated (1600s), Bristol expanded significantly and became a centre of economic and cultural activity that had a

catchment area over a much wider region and which attracted people from further afield. This may also explain the relatively rapid diffusion of supralocal forms that was observed from this period onwards.

As argued in Chapter 5, in order to more fully grasp what underlies written linguistic standardisation, it is important to not only consider the factors that thrust supralocalisation and dialect levelling, but also to consider the context in which written language was produced, by whom and for whom. As previously mentioned, the rise of the merchant elite contributed to the development of different literacy types as well as the writing in the English vernacular as opposed to Latin and (Anglo-Norman) French. Furthermore, by the sixteenth century, although the schooling of writing was far from institutionalised, many of the urban merchant elite and gentry pursued similar educational paths; they went to university for a couple of years and then enjoyed some legal education at the Inns of Court in London. These educational institutions were most likely key foci points where supralocal writing practices emerged and diffused.

10.3.1. The linguistic case studies

Chapter 6 introduced the empirical part of the study and was mostly concerned with the methodological approach towards the empirical research of the study. By studying the variation and change patterns in a corpus of written data of civic records and letters written in the Bristol area, it was possible to gain insight into the development of specific supralocal forms, notably *wh*-relative markers, third person present indicative inflections, and the replacement of <þ> and other forms by <th>. An important part of this study was also to gain insight into what patterns may have been local to Bristol in order to trace the development of supralocal forms.

10.3.2. Relative markers

Chapter 7 zoomed in on the development of supralocal *wh*-relativisers *which* and *who(m)(se)*. These forms competed with *that*, but their patterning was affected by the animacy of the antecedent, restrictiveness and the grammatical function of the relative marker.

Though similar, the patterning in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century civic records was, compared to other studies (Rydén 1966; Dekeyser 1984; Bergs 2005), slightly more conservative; *which* was longer preferred with personal antecedents, whereas this form was found to be increasingly disfavoured with human antecedents in other studies; the other studies did not consider regional variation, apart from Berg's (2005) study which concerned a study of the letters of the London-based Paston family. Furthermore, especially the personal subject form *who* did not occur in the civic records over the period 1400-1550, and only occasionally from the 1570s onwards, whereas the form did more frequently occur in other studies from the fifteenth century onwards. Interestingly, the use of *which* with personal antecedents is a typical feature of modern regional spoken Somerset dialects, so it could be that human *which* remained a resilient feature in spoken language. Another interesting feature was the relatively frequent occurrence of *(such) as* as a relative marker in sixteenth-century civic records. Especially the form *as* is associated with Brittonic and English language contact, which is interesting in relation to Bristol's long-standing connection with Wales, though only a study based on more data will be able to shed more light on the matter. The form seemed to have had a specific syntactic pragmatic function in that it served to emphasise the co-referential relationship between the antecedent and the relativiser. All in all, the civic records showed a development towards a supralocal pattern, but as shown by the specific features highlighted above, there were also patterns that were possibly more typical of the civic records in Bristol, suggesting that the writing practices were more regional rather than supralocal in these respects. Interestingly, the letter corpus showed a pattern that was more in line with the general supralocal pattern; *which* was rarely associated with human antecedents and the form *who* occurred from the second half of the seventeenth onwards. Given the geographical mobility of the letter writers who used the form, it was to be expected that they used more supralocal forms; after all, they were more likely to be exposed to the forms and to be part of loose-knit networks. Furthermore, the letter data cover a period in which Bristol expanded significantly and

thus also came to play a larger role in the urban communication network, as proposed in Chapter 3.

10.3.3. Third person indicative present tense inflection

Chapter 8 investigated third person present indicative forms and in particular the replacement of the inflectional *-th* ending by supralocal *-s*. At the beginning of the period under investigation, i.e. 1400-1700, third person inflection *-s* was still an innovation in the South of England, whereas it had become a supralocal written form by the end of the period in all of England. The results of this case study on third person *singular* present tense markers confirmed the finding from previous studies that when *-s* started to compete with *-th*, auxiliary *have* and *do* lagged behind in the adoption of third person singular *-s* (Kytö 1993; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003). Based on the data presented in this study, the introduction of the innovative form in Bristol was relatively late compared to what was found for London by Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003). In the capital, the form made its appearance in the fifteenth century, whereas it was not attested in the Bristol data until the seventeenth century. In the period 1600-1650, which coincides with the period in which Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2003) found that third person singular *-s* started to take over from *-th* in London, the picture changes drastically, as from that period onwards, *-s* started to prevail over *-th* in the letters from the Bristol area too. It was noted, however, that the time-spans covered by the letter corpus and the ordinances that were used for the study, only partially overlapped, while text type may have played a role in the promotion of or resistance to the adoption of the supralocal form. Nonetheless, in the period where the data of both the civic record and letter corpus overlapped, the inflectional pattern was similar in both data sets in that *-s* was not present in the last half of the sixteenth century of the civic records either. Similarly to supralocal *who*, *-s* started to establish itself in the Bristol data when the city expanded in terms of population and economic activity. There may also have been patterns that were unique to the South West region. Especially in the data of 1404-1596, it was noted that in particular auxiliary *have* favoured *zero* with plural subjects, whereas other verbs

tended to be inflected with *-th*, both with singular and plural subjects. This tendency was also still present in other periods, albeit less strongly. Furthermore, an interesting observation with regard to linguistic standardisation processes was that the adoption of present-day Standard English *-s* did not always imply that verb agreement was in accordance with the present-day Standard verb inflection paradigm, i.e. *-s* did not simply replace third person singular *-th*, nor did *zero* simply replace plural *-th*. As was most notably reflected in Elizabeth's letters, when *-s* and *zero* started to compete with older plural *-th*, their selection was conditioned by subject type and verb type constraints, i.e. auxiliaries favoured *zero*, as did personal pronouns, whereas *-th*, *-s* and *zero* variably occurred with other plural subject types. In terms of the surface form, Elizabeth adopted the supralocal form, while there was considerable variation on a morphosyntactic level.

Although it was beyond the scope of the chapter to give a detailed account of third person present indicative forms of *to be*, I was able to make some interesting observations with regard to the use of the copula in the period 1400-1550; there were occurrences of stem *be* as well as older *b-stem* forms such as *ben* and *beth*. Although these forms have disappeared from the written language that was investigated in this study, they are still found in spoken varieties of the South West (Ihalainen 1991).

10.3.4. *The spread of <th>*

In Chapter 9, I focussed on an orthographical feature and investigated the replacement of <þ> and other forms by supralocal <th>. Noticeably, in contrast to the (morpho)syntactic variables, the development of the supralocal <th> as a majority form was well under way at the beginning of the period that was under investigation in this study. The period 1404-1493 could be marked as a final transitional phase since from the earliest texts onwards, it was evident that <þ> was largely restricted to high frequency words, even in the texts that had <þ> as their majority form. By the 1470s, <þ> had almost disappeared from the civic records. There were a couple of instances up until the 1570s, which suggests that the form had not completely

disappeared from the scribe's repertoire. However, as pointed out in Chapter 6, the civic records covering the period 1500-1570 may have been copies that were copied from the original in 1570. It is therefore possible that the number of <þ> was higher in the original text. Nonetheless, the civic records of the fifteenth century strongly suggest that the form must have been on its way out by 1500. It was noted that <y> as a variant of <th> was extremely rare in the civic records during the period 1400-1600, while it was relatively frequent in the letters from 1548 onwards. The observation by Benskin that this was typically a Northern variant was no longer true from 1548 onwards as the data in the present study clearly show. The question remains whether the use of <y> was generally more common in letters in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. In the sixteenth century civic records, there was only one instance of <y> and <th> was used in most other cases. In Chapter 9, it was suggested that these differences are reflective of a difference in text type. The genre differences may have in turn developed from the different types of literacy and writing practices that were involved in the production of the texts. It was speculated that the civic records were composed by scribes who were trained in the context of long-standing (legal) writing traditions, with their own norms and practices in terms of orthography. The single occurrence of <y> in the council ordinances in the 1570s suggested that scribes may have had knowledge of the graph, but conscious attempts were made towards orthographic uniformity. This tendency towards uniformity was also implied by the rapid disappearance of other optional variants of <th> such as <tth>, <yhe>, <dd>. As for the letter writers, the <y> forms were used by the people who were most likely part of a loose-knit network that extended over a large geographical area. It is also possible that the form was briefly part of a written supralocal norm and <y> competed with <th> in the South West during the period 1548-1700 in general. Since the spread of <y> is understudied, it was difficult to provide a satisfying explanation. I proposed therefore that a comparison of the results of the study of different urban centres could possibly tell us more about the diffusion of <y>. The differences found in the two text types investigated also demonstrated that there was no single Standard English variety, since

even though optional orthographic variation appeared to have been decreasing over time, variation was still possible and very likely dependent on genre.

10.3.5. The linguistic findings and their implications for the study of standardisation processes

One of the aims of the present study was to examine if one could speak of a Bristol written vernacular with its own typical linguistic features during the period 1400-1700, as my starting point was to trace the development of supralocal forms and the processes of regional dialect levelling by approaching the data in this way. Although there is scant pre-existing evidence for Bristol or the South West in general that could serve as a base-line to identify possible local features in the period investigated, there were definitely some features that seemed specific to the written language of Bristol. Notably, the preference for zero inflections in auxiliaries, the use of b-stem forms, the use of which as clause connectors as well as subject type effects in third person plural and singular inflections are all features that have been documented features of modern South Western spoken dialects (Ihalainen 1980, 1991; Godfrey & Tagliamonte 1999; Hermann 2003; Wagner 2004; 2012; Tagliamonte 2009; Wright 2015). Similarly, the occurrence of relative markers *as* and the relative high frequency of *such... as* in the sixteenth-century civic records suggests that this feature may have been a South Western feature that disappeared from the written language but that remained in the spoken vernacular up until today (Poussa 1988, 1991). As for spelling variants of <th>, it was also noted that a certain variant of <th>, namely <tth> was typical for Bristol, as, based on LALME data, there were no other occurrences of this form in other texts from other areas in the fifteenth century. The next question then was if we could observe a tendency towards the adoption of non-regional forms over regional ones. Furthermore, the aim was to see if there were differences with regard to the development of different linguistic features that were investigated in this study, since it was hypothesised that linguistic standardisation is an ongoing process of in-coming and out-going supralocal forms and the levelling away of optional variation and local forms. Based on the

data presented in this study, this was indeed the case and it seems that linguistic standardisation processes took place at different stages on different linguistic levels. The orthographic feature <th> had rapidly become the dominant form in the course of the fifteenth century, while the developments in the relative pronoun system were ongoing and extended over the entire period of 1400-1700. What is more, the use of different supralocal forms may also have been dependent on text type. In the case of the spread of supralocal <th> and the presence of other optional variants, based on the data studied here, it was clear that the extent of optional variation appeared to be increasingly limited from the period 1400 onwards, and optional minority variants disappeared by the second half of the fifteenth century. This seemed particularly true for the civic records, whereas in the letters, two variants were used from the second half of the sixteenth century, i.e. <th> and <y>. It may be the case that <y> was an innovative form in the South West, and possibly one that was most prominent in letters only, which suggests that linguistic standardisation processes were indeed an ongoing process and not, as aptly formulated by Lass (1976: xi), a “single-minded march towards Standard English”, but rather a process of in- and out-coming supralocal forms, the distribution of which was to a greater or lesser extent constrained or promoted by text type conventions. A further study of the spread and occurrence of <y> in other urban centres, as well as more and different text types, could address the question if this form may indeed also have been part of a supralocal variety. As for the morpho-syntactic features, the processes were more complex in that internal linguistic factors played a role in the distribution of incoming forms. In the case of the relative markers, restrictiveness played a role, as well as the animacy of the antecedent. It appeared that Bristol was relatively late in the adoption of *who* and that it took even longer before the form appeared in restrictive contexts. As regards the third person inflection –s, as well as *zero*, it was also noted that when they started to make their appearance in the Bristol data, they were, in the case of the civic records, constrained by verb type, as well as by subject type, as was observed in Elizabeth’s writing. Strikingly, the third person –s seemed to have spread relatively rapidly, compared to the emergence *wh-*

relative markers, the slow development and increase of which could be observed over a 200-year time period, while the –s form seemed to have established itself in the period 1600-1650. The increase of –s coincides with the period in which Bristol expanded significantly and, as mentioned earlier, the letter writers who used the form were from a social group that could be characterised as geographically mobile and that consisted of members that were part of loose-knit social networks. It is thus possible that the socio-economic situation accelerated the supralocalisation process in Bristol in that more people of this social group were attracted to the city.

10.4. Limitations and recommendations for future research

One source of weakness in this study was that the different text type corpora that were developed and investigated for the present study were complimentary rather than parallel in that only a 50-year time span overlapped between the two corpora, which made it sometimes difficult to rule out text type-related differences and to compare and contrast results. Although this problem could partially be addressed by the use of other studies for comparison, further study that includes more civic records that parallel the letter corpus is needed to provide more conclusive evidence relating to text type-related differences. There are still plenty of texts waiting to be explored, but they could not possibly be prepared and included in the corpus within the scope of the study, given that the transcription process and the development of the data into an electronically searchable corpus are (and were) immensely time-consuming. The corpus has not been marked up with parts of speech tags and normalised spelling, which makes the searching process still quite complex and labour-intensive. The extension of the corpus with parts of speech tagging would open up a whole set of new possibilities with regard to the investigation of different linguistic features. Furthermore, adding a layer of normalised spelling would make simple string searches easier and it would guarantee that all different spelling variants are retrieved. Nonetheless, the present study has tried to make an important contribution to the field of historical sociolinguistics by exploring new data and the design of a historical linguistic corpus.

Studies that are being carried out in the parallel sub-projects of the *Emerging Standards Project* will also shed more light on what route supralocal forms took and how linguistic standardisation processes played out in other urban settings. The present study has demonstrated that the study of different historical urban vernaculars is a fruitful area of research that can help us explain the complex processes that are involved in the emergence of a written supralocal variety.

Appendices

Appendix I: Conflated Linguistic profiles of texts located near Bristol on the basis of eLALME

| No. | Item | Variants |
|-----|------------|--|
| 2 | THESE: | thes, thise, these, þese |
| 5 | HER: | Hur |
| 6 | IT: | hit ((hitte, hitt)), (ht), it |
| 7 | THEY: | thei, they, thai ((the)), þey, þeiy |
| 8 | THEM: | tham, ham, them, thayme, thaym, them, hem, thaim, ham, theim (þam) |
| 9 | THEIR: | her, hir, here, thaire, ther (theire, thair) ((thare, their, har, hure, thaire, theyre, þar, þair, þer)) þeire |
| 10 | SUCH: | suche, sucche, succh, such |
| 11 | WHICH: | þe-whiche, the-which, the-whicch, which, whiche |
| 12 | EACH: | everich, everych, iche, eche |
| 13 | MANY: | many |
| 14 | MAN: | mann, man |
| 15 | ANY: | eny, any, eany |
| 16 | MUCH: | muche, moche, moch |
| 17 | ARE: | biþ, bith, beþe, beþ, beth, '(beyth)', ben, bitth, been, beeth, bethe |
| 19 | IS: | is, ys |
| 21 | WAS: | was |
| 22 | SHALL sg: | schal, schall, schalbe, shal |
| 23 | SHOULD sg: | schold, shuld, schulde |
| 24 | WILL sg: | will, woll ((wyl)) |
| 28 | FROM: | fro (frome) |
| 29 | AFTER: | after, aftour, aftir, after-þat, after-that, aftyr, aftur |
| 30 | THEN: | þen, than, þan, then, thenne |
| 31 | THAN: | then, than, þen (thanne) |
| 32 | THOUGH: | thogh |

| | | |
|------------|---------------|--|
| 33 | IF: | yef, ʒif, yff ((ʒiff, yiff, yf, yif)), if |
| 36 | AGAINST: | ayenste, a-yenst, a-yenste, ayhenst, aʒhenis, ayhenste |
| 37 | AGAIN: | a-ʒeyn, a-yen |
| 38 | ERE conj: | ar-that, er-þat |
| 41 | WHILE: | whiles |
| 42 | STRENGTH: | strengthe |
| 43 | LENGTH: | lengþe |
| 44 | WH-: | wh- |
| 46 | NOT: | not (nat, noʒt), '((nowʒt))', nott, noht |
| 47 | NOR: | ne, noþer, nothir, nor (nother, nore, nothur) ((ner, no)) |
| 51 | WORK sb: | worke, work-, werke, werk |
| 52 | THERE: | ther-, þer-, there, there, ther (þere) |
| 53 | WHERE: | where-, where-, wher- |
| 54 | MIGHT vb: | myght |
| 55 | THROUGH: | thurgh, thorgh, thorow, '-þorgh, -thorgh, ?-thogh' |
| 56 | WHEN: | when, whanne |
| 57 | Sb pl: | -s '-es -is, '-t+ʒ, ''-s, '-s, '(-ys)', '(-l+x, -is, -es, -eʒ, -ʒ, -t+ʒ) ((-esse-s, -ys))' |
| 58 | Pres part: | -yng, '-i'+eng, '((-y+eng))', '-yng, -ynge, -ing (-inge)'' |
| 64 | Str pt pl: | -en (-yn) |
| 80 | ASK vb: | axe, ask- |
| 90 | BEYOND: | by-yende, beyhond, be-yende |
| 94 | BOTH: | boþe |
| 97 | BURN pres: | brenn- |
| 100 | BUT: | but, butt |
| 104 | CAME sg: | com |
| 108 | CHURCH: | churche |
| 126 | EVIL: | evell |
| 133 | FETCH vb: | feccheth<3sg> |
| 135 | FILL: | fillē |
| 136 | FILTH: | felthe |
| 138 | FIRST undiff: | furst, furste, fyrste, first |
| 140 | FLESH: | flessh |

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 155 | GOOD: | goode ((gode, godde)), good |
| 160 | HAVE pres: | haue, have |
| 162 | HEAR vb: | hire, here |
| 167 | HENCE: | hens |
| 168 | HIGH: | high (hygh, hye-) |
| 177 | HUNDRED: | hundred, hundryd |
| 178 | I: | I |
| 179 | KIND, MIND, DINT, STINT: | kynd, mynde |
| 183 | LAND: | londe, lond-, englund |
| 187 | LESS: | lasse, lesse |
| 187 | LESS: | lesse, lasse |
| 191 | LITTLE: | litill, lityll |
| 211 | NEITHER..NOR: | nothir+ne, nother+ne |
| 216 | NO-MORE: | no-more |
| 221 | OR: | or ((ore, othir, other)), oþere, (ar) |
| 226 | OWN adj: | own, owne |
| 232 | READ pt/ppl: | radde, redde |
| 233 | RUN pres: | renne |
| 235 | SAY pres: | say, sey, seye |
| 238 | SELF: | self, selfe |
| 265 | THITHER: | thyddyr |
| 268 | TOGETHER: | to-gedyr, to-giders, to-gederes |
| 275 | TWO: | two (tuo) |
| 277 | UNTIL: | in-to-the-tyme-that, vn-to, vn-to-the-tyme, till, tyll, vnto-tyme-that, vnto ((vn-to-the-tyme-that)), vnto, till-pat |
| 280 | WEEK: | wike, woke |
| 283 | WHAT: | whate, what |
| 285 | WHETHER: | whethir |
| 288 | WHOM: | wham |
| 289 | WHOSE: | whos |
| 292 | WIT vb KNOW: | wet-, witte |
| 295 | WITHOUT pr: | wythoute, wt-owte, wtout, with-out, with-oute, withoute, wtoute, withoute, withouten, whithoute, wiþ-owte |
| 302 | YIELD pres: | yheld, yeld |

| | | |
|---------------|------------------------|---|
| 302 | YIELD pres: | yheld |
| 312 | -ER: | -ere, -our, -yr, -er (-ir, -er) |
| 317 | -LY: | -lich (-lych) ((-ly)), '((lycch))', '-ly, -lyche |
| 103-30 | CALLED ppl: | y-clepid, l-clepid, clepid |
| 103-30 | CALLED ppl: | cleped |
| 112-20 | DAYS: | dayes, daijs, daies |
| 112-20 | DAYS: | -dayes |
| 115-30 | DOES 3sg: | doth, dooth |
| 138-30 | FIRST weak adj: | the-first, the-firste, the-fyrste |
| 149-20 | GATES: | yatis, yates |
| 153-40 | GIVEN: | yeve, yoven, yevin, yeven |
| 154-90 | GO cf: | goth<pl> |
| 155-20 | GOODS: | goodes<pl> |
| 160-20 | HAVE inf: | haue, have |
| 160-60 | HAD sg: | had |
| 162-30 | HEARD pl: | herd |
| 183-20 | ENGLAND: | Ingland, ynglond, england |
| 183-30 | IRELAND: | yreland, irlond |
| 22-30 | SHALL pl: | schal, schall, schulle, shalle, schull |
| 236-60 | SEEN ppl: | seyen, forseyn, seyn, '-seye, sayyn, seie |
| 238-20 | SELVES: | selfe, selfes |
| 24-30 | WILL pl: | will, woll |
| 297-20 | WORSHIP vb: | worschip, worschip-, worschupp-, worschyp-, worschippe, |
| 51-10 | WORK pres stem: | wirche, worch-, werk, wirk-, worche, wyrch, wirch, werche |
| 54-30 | MIGHT pl: | myght |
| 85-21 | BEFORE adv- undiff: | afor' - '((to-fore))', to-fore, a-fore'-afore- (afore, a-fore), a-fore, be-fore, a-for-, by- for, a-fore- (bi-fore) |
| 85-30 | BEFORE pr undiff: | a-fore, to-foore, to-fore, a-foore, be- ffore, by-foore, by-ffore (be-fore) ((afoyr)), to-fore, to-fore, afore, a-fore ((afore)) |
| 97-40 | BURNED ppl: | brent |

Appendix II: Inventory of corpus texts

| Titles of Little Red Book | Date | First folio | genre | words |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Farrier's ordinance | 1404 | f.148b | ordinance | 838 |
| Council's oath | 1422 | fly leaf | oath | 230 |
| Cordwainer's ordinance 2 | 1438 | f.144b | ordinance | 906 |
| Barber's ordinance | 1439 | f.138b | ordinance | 1842 |
| Dyer's ordinance | 1439 | f.145b | ordinance | 1544 |
| Hooper's ordinance | 1439 | f.142 | ordinance | 1818 |
| Cordwainer's ordinance | 1443 | 147b | ordinance | 296 |
| Mariners ordinance | 1445 | f.150 | ordinance | 2154 |
| Chantry's ordinance | 1453 | f.157 | ordinance | 2428 |
| Coryver's memorandum | 1453 | Insert: f.127 | memorandum | 214 |
| Pewterer's ordinance | 1457 | f.149b. | ordinance | 580 |
| weaver's ordinance | 1461 | f.130 | ordinance | 776 |
| major's oath | 1464 | f.63 | oath | 620 |
| tenement's memorandum | 1470 | f.133 | ordinance | 748 |
| Cordwainer's memorandum | 1477 | f.148 | memorandum | 299 |
| Weaver's petition | 1490 | f.129 | petition | 1402 |
| Total words | | | | 16,695 |

Table 1. Texts from the Little Red Book that are included in Bristol corpus

| Titles of Great Red Book | Dated | folio | genre | words |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Chamberlain's ordinance | 1433 | f.93a | ordinance | 1673 |
| Dyer's ordinance | 1434 | f.94b | ordinance | 699 |
| Bailiff's ordinance | 1435 | f.95a | ordinance | 756 |
| Wool trader's ordinance | 1437 | f.96a | ordinance | 1520 |
| Town clerk's ordinance | 1449 | f.12b | ordinance | 325 |
| Steward's ordinance | 1449 | f.13 | ordinance | 1397 |
| Stranger's memorandum | 1450 | f.16 | memorandum | 429 |
| Memorandum of Saint Jones' fest | 1450 | f.14 | memorandum | 435 |
| Port's ordinances | 1450 | f.18 | ordinance | 456 |
| Memorandum of ordinances | 1451 | f.18 | memorandum | 979 |
| Farrier's ordinance | 1455 | f.26 | ordinance | 828 |
| Marshes ordinance | 1463 | f.97b | ordinance | 1006 |
| Tolsey court ordinance | 1465 | f.98b | ordinance | 2470 |
| Brewer's ordinance | 1479 | f.29b | ordinance | 763 |
| Fletcher's Ordinance | 1479 | f.27b | ordinance | 1743 |
| Towker's ordinance | 1479 | f.31 | petition | 874 |
| Shearer's ordinance | 1483 | f.32 | petition | 1295 |
| Memorandum of election | 1485 | f.58 | memorandum | 231 |
| Memorandum of election 2 | 1485 | f.67 | memorandum | 160 |
| Memorandum major's election | 1491 | f.67 | memorandum | 219 |
| Council's ordinance | 1491 | f.73 | memorandum | 200 |
| Total words | | | | 18,458 |

Table 2. Texts from the Great Red Book that are included in Bristol corpus

| Titles of Council Ordinances of Bristol | Dated | folio | genre | words |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Memorandum of cloth shearing | 1506 | f.1 | memorandum | 795 |
| Wine ordinance | 1506 | f.2b | ordinance | 826 |
| Council's ordinances | 1507 | f.3 | ordinance | 193 |
| Tax ordinance | 1512 | f.3b | ordinance | 77 |
| Memorandum of grant | 1512 | f.3b | memorandum | 39 |
| Memoranda of council | 1515 | f.4 | memorandum | 1290 |
| Major's ordinance | 1516 | f.6 | ordinance | 171 |
| Memorandum of Sherriff | 1517 | f.6b | memorandum | 62 |
| Brewer's ordinance | 1518 | f.6b | ordinance | 105 |
| Stranger's ordinance | 1518 | f.6b | ordinance | 275 |
| Baker's ordinance | 1519 | f.7 | ordinance | 583 |
| Brewer's ordinance 2 | 1522 | f.8 | ordinance | 77 |
| Trade ordinance | 1522 | f.8 | ordinance | 165 |
| Office ordinances | 1525 | f.8b | ordinance | 354 |
| Import trade ordinance | 1526 | f.9 | ordinance | 428 |
| Broker's ordinance | 1551 | f.9b | ordinance | 645 |
| Ship ordinances | 1551 | f.10b | ordinance | 819 |
| Memorandum of office | 1551 | f.12 | memorandum | 184 |
| Memoranda of the council 2 | 1553 | f.12b | memorandum | 906 |
| Memorandum of election | 1554 | f.13b | memorandum | 248 |
| Memorandum of major's office | 1555 | f.14 | memorandum | 77 |
| Memorandum of town clerk's office | 1557 | f.14b | memorandum | 651 |
| Memorandum of liberties | 1559 | f.16 | memorandum | 341 |

| | | | | |
|---|------|-------|------------|-----|
| Memorandum of election keeper | 1558 | f.16b | memorandum | 214 |
| Memoranda of Water bailey and freemanship 1558 | 1558 | f.17 | memorandum | 613 |
| Memorandum of the Tolley court | 1560 | f.18 | memorandum | 482 |
| Memorandum of chandlers | 1560 | f.19 | memorandum | 713 |
| Memorandum of freemanship | 1561 | f.20 | memorandum | 152 |
| Memorandum of Sherriff's office | 1564 | f.20 | memorandum | 201 |
| Memorandum of coroners | 1564 | f.20b | memorandum | 481 |
| Memorandum of council meeting | 1565 | f.21 | memorandum | 309 |
| Office duties ordinance | 1566 | f.21b | ordinance | 124 |
| Memoranda misc. | 1567 | f.22 | memorandum | 873 |
| Memorandum of soap makers | 1567 | f.23 | memorandum | 396 |
| Memorandum of cloth money | 1567 | f.24 | memorandum | 143 |
| Memorandum of lands owned | 1567 | f.24 | memorandum | 281 |
| Memorandum of tenements | 1568 | f.24b | memorandum | 207 |
| Memorandum of various ordinances | 1569 | f.25 | memorandum | 183 |
| Memorandum of Butchers | 1569 | f.25 | memorandum | 837 |
| Election's ordinance | 1570 | f.26b | memorandum | 802 |
| Glover's ordinance 1570 | 1570 | f.27b | ordinance | 161 |
| Memorandum of dress code | 1570 | f.27b | memorandum | 117 |
| Memorandum of drapers | 1570 | f.28 | memorandum | 393 |

| | | | | |
|---|------|-------|------------|-----|
| Memorandum of council vote | 1571 | f.28 | memorandum | 132 |
| Dress code ordinance | 1571 | f.28b | ordinance | 267 |
| Carpenter's ordinance | 1571 | f.28b | ordinance | 313 |
| Memorandum of money for hospital | 1571 | f.29b | memorandum | 159 |
| Election of major ordinance | 1571 | f.29b | ordinance | 393 |
| Tax ordinance | 1572 | f.30 | ordinance | 84 |
| Memorandum of accounts 1572 | 1572 | f.30 | memorandum | 395 |
| Memorandum of brewers | 1571 | f.31 | memorandum | 309 |
| Tucker's ordinance | 1572 | f.31b | ordinance | 133 |
| Memorandum of hoopers | 1573 | f.32 | memorandum | 646 |
| Warehouse ordinance | 1573 | f.32b | ordinance | 546 |
| Memorandum of poor relief | 1573 | f.33 | memorandum | 580 |
| Ordinance of tuckers and Shearmen 1574 | 1574 | f.34 | ordinance | 318 |
| Soapmaker's ordinance | 1574 | f.34b | ordinance | 390 |
| Ordinance of cloth liveries | 1574 | f.34b | ordinance | 306 |
| Measurement's ordinance | 1574 | f.35 | ordinance | 282 |
| Memorandum of misconduct | 1574 | f.35v | memorandum | 336 |
| Reinstatement of freemanship ordinance | 1575 | f.36 | ordinance | 137 |
| Memorandum appointment town clerk | 1575 | f.36b | memorandum | 355 |
| Jurisdiction ordinance | 1575 | f.37 | ordinance | 467 |
| Court ordinance | 1576 | f.37b | ordinance | 493 |
| Feoffee ordinance | 1576 | f.38b | ordinance | 585 |

| | | | | |
|---|------|-------|------------|-----|
| Oath ordinance | 1576 | f.39 | ordinance | 248 |
| Memorandum of expelling freemanship | 1577 | f.39b | memorandum | 152 |
| Cloth liberties ordinance | 1577 | f.40 | ordinance | 867 |
| Memorandum of a fine | 1577 | f.41 | memorandum | 84 |
| Memorandum of recorder's act | 1577 | f.41 | memorandum | 107 |
| Memorandum of void ordinance | 1578 | f.41 | memorandum | 60 |
| Memorandum of commission | 1578 | f.41b | memorandum | 212 |
| Memorandum of chamber 1579 | 1579 | f.41b | memorandum | 142 |
| Memorandum of recovery of ship | 1579 | f.42 | memorandum | 747 |
| Memorandum of act for fine | 1579 | f.42b | memorandum | 201 |
| Fee ordinance | 1580 | f.43 | ordinance | 180 |
| Memorandum of town clerk's office 1581 | 1581 | f.43b | memorandum | 174 |
| Ale price ordinance | 1581 | f.44 | ordinance | 575 |
| Thatched roof ordinance | 1582 | f.45 | ordinance | 398 |
| Curfew ordinance 1583 | 1583 | f.51 | ordinance | 365 |
| Juror's fee ordinance | 1583 | f.51b | ordinance | 241 |
| School survey ordinance | 1583 | f.51c | ordinance | 172 |
| Hospital deeds ordinance | 1583 | f.51c | ordinance | 130 |
| Cloth money ordinance | 1584 | f.52 | ordinance | 168 |
| Hospital feoffees ordinance | 1583 | f.52 | ordinance | 81 |

| | | | | |
|---|------|-------|------------|-------|
| Meal market survey ordinance | 1584 | f.52b | ordinance | 113 |
| Repeal ordinance | 1585 | f.53 | ordinance | 364 |
| Market ordinance | 1585 | f.53b | ordinance | 359 |
| Preacher fee ordinance | 1585 | f.54 | ordinance | 251 |
| Rent ordinance | 1585 | f.54 | ordinance | 372 |
| Memorandum regulations stewardship | 1585 | f.55 | memorandum | 233 |
| Voting ordinance 1585 | 1585 | f.55 | ordinance | 189 |
| Memorandum of a motion | 1585 | f.55b | memorandum | 75 |
| Town clerk and Steward's ordinance | 1585 | f.55b | ordinance | 225 |
| Soldier's ordinance | 1585 | f.56 | ordinance | 233 |
| London court case ordinance | 1596 | f.56 | ordinance | 95 |
| Poor relief collector's ordinance 1595 | 1595 | f.56v | ordinance | 158 |
| Total words | | | | 32590 |

Table 3. Texts from the Great Red Book that are included in Bristol corpus

| Authors of letters | Date | Shelf mark | words |
|---|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Hugh Smythe to his brother Mathew Smythe | 1579 | AC/C/18/1 | 244 |
| Hugh Smythe to his brother Mathew Smythe | 1579 | AC/C/18/2 | 144 |
| Hugh Smythe to his brother Mathew Smythe | 1579 | AC/C/18/3 | 126 |
| John Smyth to commissioner of the chantry 1548 | 1548 | AC/C2_1 | 1027 |
| David Brook to John Smyth | 1552 | AC/C3 | 322 |

| | | | |
|--|------|------------|-----|
| Mayor of Bristowe from the Lords of the Council (copy; possibly an enclosure to AC/C/7/2) | 1564 | AC/C/7/1 | 219 |
| Hugh Smythe to Matthew Smythe | 1563 | AC/C/7/1 | 345 |
| Charles Smyth to father Hugh Smyth | 1679 | AC/C/81/1 | 106 |
| Charles Smyth to father Hugh Smyth | 1679 | AC/C/81/2 | 199 |
| Charles Smyth to John Smyth | 1688 | AC/C/83/1 | 400 |
| Charles Smyth to Sister | 1698 | AC/C/83/2 | 269 |
| Charles Smyth to sister | 1711 | AC/C/83/3 | 133 |
| Charles Smyth to brother John Smyth | 1716 | AC/C/83/4 | 268 |
| Charles Smyth to John Smyth | 1716 | AC/C/83/5 | 329 |
| Elizabeth Smyth to Thomas Smyth | 1622 | AC/C48/1 | 234 |
| Elizabeth Smyth to Thomas Smyth | 1620 | AC/C48/10 | 483 |
| Elizabeth Smyth Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C48/11 | 373 |
| Elizabeth Smyth to Thomas Smyth | 1628 | AC/C48/12 | 233 |
| Elizabeth Smyth to Thomas Smyth | 1629 | AC/C48/13 | 220 |
| Elizabeth Smyth to Thomas Smyth | 1629 | AC/C48/14 | 337 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C48/15 | 219 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C48/16 | 451 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to Thomas Smyth 1632 | 1632 | AC/C48/17 | 387 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to Thomas Smyth | 1635 | AC/C48/18 | 187 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to Thomas Smyth | 1637 | AC/C48/19 | 268 |
| Elizabeth Smyth to Thomas Smyth | 1624 | AC/C/48/2 | 280 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C48/20 | 293 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C48/21 | 465 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to Thomas Smyth | 1640 | AC/C48/22 | 302 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to her son Thomas Smyth | 1640 | AC/C48/C23 | 182 |

| | | | |
|---|------|-------------------|-----|
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to Thomas Smyth | 1640 | AC/C48/24 | 814 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to her son Thomas Smyth | 1641 | AC/C48/25 | 291 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to her son Thomas Smyth | 1641 | AC/C48/26 | 209 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to her son Thomas Smyth | 1640 | AC/C48/27 | 504 |
| Elizabeth Gorges (Smyth) to her son Thomas Smyth | 1641 | AC/C48/29 | 351 |
| Elizabeth Smyth to her son Thomas Smyth | 1620 | AC/C/48/3 | 435 |
| Elizabeth Smyth to Thomas Smyth | 1628 | AC/C/48/5 | 532 |
| Elizabeth Smyth to Thomas Smyth | 1628 | AC/C48/6 | 380 |
| Elizabeth Smyth to Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C48/7 | 322 |
| Elizabeth Smyth to Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C48/8 | 554 |
| Elizabeth Smyth to Thomas Smyth | 1620 | AC/C48/9 | 400 |
| Hugh Smyth jr to his sister Florence | 1679 | AC/C/78/3 | 247 |
| Florence Smyth to her brother Hugh jr Smyth | 1678 | AC/C/78/1 | 234 |
| Florence Hooke to her brother Hugh Smyth jr. | 1678 | AC/C/78/2 | 273 |
| Henry Lewys to George Norton 1572 | 1572 | AC/C/12 | 272 |
| Humphrey Browne of Bristol to Thomas Smyth | 1628 | AC/36074/12 1 | 125 |
| John Edwards to Thomas Smyth | 1640 | AC/36074/a | 371 |
| John Edwards to Thomas Smyth | 1640 | AC/36074/14 0b | 862 |
| John Edwards to Thomas Smyth | 1641 | AC/36074/14 0c | 539 |
| John Hele to Thomas Smyth | 1637 | AC/36074/13 5 | 120 |
| John Romsey | 1674 | 44785/1 | 964 |
| John Romsey and Romley to Robert Southwell | 1677 | 44785/1 | 400 |

| | | | |
|--|------|-----------|-----|
| John Romsey to Robert Southwell | 1676 | 44785/1 | 304 |
| John Romsey to Robert Southwell | 1675 | 44785/1 | 123 |
| Mary Smyth to father Hugh Smyth | 1626 | AC/C53/1 | 97 |
| Mary Smith to her brother Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C53/10 | 354 |
| Mary Smith to her brother Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C53/11 | 363 |
| Mary Smith to her brother Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C53/12 | 140 |
| Mary Smith to her brother Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C53/13 | 313 |
| Mary Smith to her brother Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C53/14 | 302 |
| Mary Smith to her brother Thomas Smyth | 1630 | AC/C53/15 | 287 |
| Mary Smith to father Hugh Smyth | 1630 | AC/C53/2 | 375 |
| Mary Smith to her brother | 1630 | AC/C53/3 | 123 |
| Mary Smith to her brother | 1630 | AC/C53/4 | 191 |
| Mary Smith to her brother | 1630 | AC/C53/5 | 139 |
| Mary Smith to her brother | 1630 | AC/C/53/6 | 235 |
| Mary Smith to her brother | 1630 | AC/C53/7 | 167 |
| Mary Smith to her brother | 1630 | AC/C53/8 | 227 |
| Mary Smith to her brother | 1630 | AC/C53/9 | 335 |
| Bishop of Bristol Robert Skinner to Frances Dodington | 1637 | 36074/162 | 233 |
| Romley to Robert Southwell | 1677 | 44785/1 | 146 |
| Romley to Robert Southwell | 1677 | 44785/1 | 130 |
| Romley to Robert Southwell | 1675 | 44785/1 | 146 |
| Romley to Robert Southwell | 1675 | 44785/1 | 149 |
| Romley to Robert Southwell | 1675 | 44785/1 | 162 |

| | | | |
|--|------|-----------------------|------|
| Romley to Robert Southwell | 1675 | 44785/1 | 206 |
| Romley to Robert Southwell | 1675 | 44785/1 | 271 |
| Thomas Smyth to Alexander Popham 1639 | 1639 | AC/36074/13 3d | 179 |
| Thomas Smyth to his father Hugh Smyth | 1626 | AC/C/43/3 | 320 |
| Thomas Smyth to his father Hugh Smyth | 1624 | AC/C/43/2 | 183 |
| Thomas Smyth to his father Hugh Smyth | 1623 | AC/C/43/1 | 243 |
| Thomas Smythe to Richard Flamsted | 1630 | AC/36074/15 s 7 | 293 |
| Thomas Smyth to John Edwards | 1641 | AC/36074/15 6b | 361 |
| Thomas Smyth to Lady Teringham | 1640 | AC/36074/15 5 | 299 |
| Thomas Smyth to Edward Bayneton | 1640 | AC/36074/15 4 | 442 |
| Thomas Smyth to ? | 1639 | AC/36074/15 3 | 276 |
| Thomas Smythe to John Coventry | 1638 | AC/36074/15 2 | 1723 |
| Thomas Smythe to his cousin arthure Dodington | 1638 | AC/36074/15 1b | 169 |
| Thomas Smythe to ? | 1636 | AC/36074/15 1a | 145 |
| Thomas Smyth to Thomas Meantys | 1636 | AC/36074/14 9 | 509 |
| Thomas Smyth to Henry Cantloe | 1636 | AC/36074/14 8 | 249 |
| Thomas Smythe to? | 1636 | AC/36074/14 7 | 287 |
| Thomas Smyth to Alexander Popham | 1640 | AC/336074/1 33e | 287 |
| Thomas Smyth to Francis Popham | 1639 | AC/33074/13 3d-1 | 205 |
| Thomas Smyth jr to his mother Florence Pigott | 1650 | AC/C/70/3 s | 399 |
| Thomas Smyth jr to his mother Frances Pigott 1662 | 1662 | AC/C/70/2 | 281 |

| | | | |
|--|------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Thomas Smyth jr. to his mother Florence Pigott (formerly Smyth) | 1661 | AC/C/70/1 | 363 |
| Total words | | | 3097 5 |

Table 4. Letters that are included in Bristol corpus

Appendix III: List of text classifications as used by MEG-C

(Stenroos & Thengs 2011: 5-6) (with some additions (in bold))

| Text type definitions |
|---|
| ACCORD |
| a private or extrajudicial arrangement, esp. one of reconciliation |
| AFFIDAVIT |
| a statement made in writing, confirmed by oath and intended to be used as judicial proof |
| AGREEMENT |
| an arrangement between two or more persons as to a course of action |
| ASSIGNMENT |
| a document by which a lessee transferred the unexpired portion of his/her term to a third party, who assumed all the obligations of the original lessee |
| ATTESTATION |
| a document by which witnesses swear that the transaction recorded in the deed really occurred. The same label is also used for documents whereby witnesses swear that a transaction has NOT occurred. |
| AWARD (ARBITRATION) |
| the settlement of a dispute by an arbitrator |
| BOND |
| a private undertaking „to pay a specified sum of money by an appointed day“ (Pugh 1947: li) |
| BOUNDARY SURVEY |
| a document outlining the boundaries of a piece of land |
| CHARTER |
| “a written document delivered by the sovereign or legislature: granting privileges to, or recognizing rights of, the people, or of certain classes or individuals” (OED). |
| CHRONICLES |

| |
|---|
| “a detailed and continuous register of events in order of time; a historical record, esp. one in which the facts are narrated without philosophic treatment, or any attempt at literary style.” (OED) |
| COMMISSIONING AGREEMENT |
| a document by means of which one person commissions another for a particular piece of work |
| COMMITMENT TO ARBITRATION |
| an agreement by the parties in a dispute to submit to arbitration by one or more named arbitrators |
| COMPLAINT (PLAINT) |
| a document expressing a complaint |
| CONDITION OF OBLIGATION |
| a condition added to an obligation |
| CORRESPONDENCE |
| written communication between persons |
| COURT ROLL |
| a document which records the judgement of a court |
| DECLARATION |
| a formal statement or announcement |
| DEPOSITION |
| “the giving of testimony upon oath in a court of law, or the testimony so given; spec. a statement in answer to interrogatories, constituting evidence, taken down in writing to be read in court as a substitute for the production of the witness.” (OED) |
| DIARIES/JOURNALS |
| “a daily record of events or transactions, a journal; specifically, a daily record of matters affecting the writer personally, or which come under his personal observation” (OED). Or: “A book prepared for keeping a daily record, or having spaces with printed dates for daily memoranda and jottings; also, applied to calendars containing daily memoranda on matters of importance to people generally, or to members of a particular profession, occupation, or pursuit” (OED). |
| ENACTMENT |
| a document by the force of which a law is enacted |
| EXCHANGE |

| |
|--|
| a document by which two parties exchange interests of supposedly equivalent value |
| GIFT / ENFEOFFMENT |
| a document that conveys an immediate title to a corporeal hereditament (land, houses etc.) |
| GRANT |
| a document that conveys incorporeal hereditaments (intangible property) |
| INQUEST |
| a record of a formal inquest |
| JURAMENT |
| the oath required by the practitioners of a particular profession or the people appointed to a particular post |
| LEASE |
| a document by which a landlord conveys his/her property to a person for the duration of their life, or for a limited number of years. The lessee normally paid rent to the lessor |
| MARRIAGE SETTLEMENT |
| a document which sets out the intentions of the different parties to a planned marriage and the steps they will take to effect them |
| MEMORANDUM |
| a document in which the terms of a transaction or contract are embodied; a formal note of something to be remembered |
| MINUTES |
| “a record or brief summary of events or transactions” (OED) |
| OATH |
| “a solemn or formal declaration invoking God (or a god, or other object of reverence) as witness to the truth of a statement, or to the binding nature of a promise or undertaking; an act of making such a declaration. Also: the statement or promise made in such a declaration, or the words of such a statement” (OED). |
| OBLIGATION |
| a document that commits a person to carry out a payment or other action; a written contract or bond |
| ORDINANCE |
| an established set of principles or rules for a community or group |

| |
|---|
| PARTITION |
| a document that effects a division into several shares of an estate held in co-ownership |
| PEDIGREE |
| a document presenting an ancestral line |
| PETITION |
| a formal written request or supplication, appealing to an individual or group in authority (as a sovereign, legislature, administrative body, etc.) for some favour, right, or mercy, or in respect of a particular cause |
| POWER OF ATTORNEY |
| document or clause appointing a person to act as another's representative in legal or business matters |
| SURETY |
| document that guarantees the security of a contract, right or possession |
| SURRENDER |
| a document by which a possession is terminated for the benefit of one who had previously enjoyed nothing but an expectancy |
| USE |
| a document by which a vendor conveys his/her land to feoffees for the advantage of a third party |
| WILL |
| a document by which a person states how his/her property should be disposed of after his/her death |

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Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift beoogt taalvariatie en taalverandering te onderzoeken in de geschreven taal van de Engelse stad Bristol gedurende de late middeleeuwen en de renaissance. Vaak wordt de standaardtaal vormgegeven en voorgeschreven door officiële instanties of instituten zoals de media en uitgevers. Dit is echter lang niet altijd het geval. Een voorbeeld hiervan is het geschreven Engels van de late middeleeuwen. Vroegmiddelenegse teksten (1200-1400) in England vertoonden veel variatie en er lijkt geen wijdverbreide consensus te hebben bestaan over spelling, vocabulaire en grammatica. In de teksten is dan ook vaak een hoge mate van variabiliteit te vinden en hetzelfde woord werd bijvoorbeeld vaak op vele verschillende manieren gespeld door dezelfde schrijver. Het is ook vaak mogelijk om vast te stellen in welk dialectgebied de tekst geschreven was aan de hand van de variatie in het taalgebruik. Laatmiddelenegse teksten (1400-1500) daarentegen, vertonen aanzienlijk minder lokale kenmerken en leggen daarbij ook aanzienlijk minder variatie in de spelling en het vocabulaire aan de dag. Hoe was het mogelijk dat er zich een relatief uniforme supra-lokale variëteit ontwikkelde bij de ogenschijnlijke afwezigheid van nationaal georganiseerde scholing, of nationale instituten en instanties die bepaalde normen voorschreven?

Het project *Emerging Standards Urbanisation and the Development of Standard English, c. 1400-1700*, waar dit proefschrift deel van uitmaakt, werpt zich op de vraag over hoe Engelse geschreven variëteiten van de late middeleeuwen en renaissance hun lokale kenmerken verloren en een supra-lokaal karakter kregen. De focus van het onderzoek ligt op het identificeren van de onderliggende processen die de convergentie van de verschillende geschreven variëteiten tot stand brachten, om zo inzicht te krijgen in hoe standaardtalen kunnen ontstaan. Het is opvallend dat de teksten van de late middeleeuwen veel gelijkenissen vertonen met het

hedendaags geschreven standaard Engels. Dat wil zeggen, net als in de hedendaagse geschreven standaard was de variabiliteit steeds meer beperkt en met name de orthografie, het vocabulaire en sommige morfologische aspecten zijn ook nu nog terug te vinden in de hedendaagse standaard. Om die reden wordt er vaak verondersteld dat de hedendaagse geschreven standaard zijn oorsprong vindt in de supra-lokale variant die in de late middeleeuwen verscheen. Eerder gepubliceerde studies met betrekking tot de ontwikkeling van het standaard Engels hebben zich vaak beperkt tot het onderzoeken van het taalgebruik in een gering aantal teksten die geschreven waren in Londen gedurende de late middeleeuwen. Dit betreft met name teksten die geschreven werden door de ambtenaren van de Kancelarij. De teksten bevatten veel vormen die vandaag de dag ook courant zijn in het geschreven standaard Engels. De aanname die vaak gemaakt wordt op basis van de eerdere publicaties is dat de Kancelarij een belangrijke normbepalende functie had, ten eerste omdat zij onderdeel van de machthebber was en ten tweede omdat zij met de metropool geassocieerd werd. Veelal wordt de hoge status die de metropool en de Kancelarij uitdroegen als de belangrijkste factor gezien in de verspreiding van een variëteit die niet langer aan een specifieke locatie verbonden kon worden en die sterke gelijkenissen vertoonde met de hedendaagse geschreven standaard. Uit recentere studies is echter gebleken dat de aanname dat de supra-lokale standaardvariëteit zijn oorsprong in Londen vond te simplistisch is. Ten eerste omdat het slechts om een gering aantal teksten gaat en ten tweede omdat de kanselarijteksten slechts op een paar vlakken te vergelijken zijn met het hedendaags standaard Engels. Tevens is er weinig aantoonbaar bewijs dat de veronderstelde prestige en status die de Londense variëteit met zich meedroeg een directe invloed hadden op het geschreven taalgebruik in de rest van Engeland. De meeste voorgaande studies hebben weinig aandacht besteed aan de mogelijke rol van andere belangrijke steden waar de tekstproductie

hoog was alsook het aantal geletterde inwoners. Het mag dus duidelijk zijn dat in een poging om een completer beeld te creëren omtrent de ontwikkeling van het standaard Engels het essentieel is dat de aandacht niet alleen verschuift naar andere steden in Engeland, maar ook dat er systematisch naar het taalgebruik in een grotere hoeveelheid en verscheidenheid van teksten gekeken wordt.

Dit proefschrift bestaat uit twee delen. Het eerste deel, bestaande uit de hoofdstukken 2,3,4 en 5, houdt zich bezig met de theoretische aspecten van het onderzoek. Het tweede deel, bestaande uit de hoofdstukken, 6,7,8 en 9, behandelt het empirische gedeelte van dit onderzoek.

In het eertse deel behandel ik het theoretische kader waarin mijn onderzoek geplaatst kan worden: de (historische) sociolinguïstiek. Deze benadering vertrekt vanuit de observatie dat taalvariatie en taalverandering vaak gedreven worden door sociale factoren. Tevens bespreek ik de uitdagingen die gepaard gaan met taalhistorisch onderzoek.

Ook kijk ik kritisch naar eerdere publicaties die het ontstaan van het geschreven standaardengels onderzoeken. De traditionele opvatting is dat het geschreven Engels zich op een specifieke plek en tijd ontwikkelde en van daaruit verspreidde naar de rest van Engeland. Vaak worden prestige en impliciet ook het bestaan van een standaardideologie als de hoofdfactoren gezien voor de verspreiding van standaard Engels. Echter, op basis van recenter onderzoek stel ik voor dat de standaardisatie van het geschreven Engels in eerste instantie plaatsvond in de afwezigheid van een sterke standaardideologie. Ik benader het beginstadium van standaardisatie dus van een taalkundig perspectief en stel voor dat de belangrijkste processen die taalkundige standaardisatie tot stand brachten te maken hebben met supra-lokalisatie, het verspreiden van lokale vormen over een groter gebied, en dialectnivellering, het elimineren van lokale varianten en het gebruik van varianten die een groter

spreidingsgebied kennen. Deze processen worden op hun beurt weer gestuurd door sociale en demografische factoren en zijn vaak prominent in steden waar veel mensen van verschillende dialect- en taalgebieden bij elkaar komen. Ik stel in dit proefschrift voor dat deze processen gelijktijdig plaatsvonden in verschillende steden waar tekstproductie prominent was en waar de uitwisseling van mensen en communicatie met economisch belangrijke plaatsen omvangrijk was.

Om inzicht te krijgen in welke sociale en demografische factoren een rol gespeeld hebben, wordt er in het theoretische deel een beknopt overzicht gegeven van de sociale en demografische situatie in Bristol in de periode van 1400-1700. Een van de belangrijkste bevindingen is dat het bestuur van de stad, en dus ook de productie van documenten, in handen was van de handelselite. Het waren de welvarende kooplieden die bepalend waren voor de culturele identiteit van de stad. Verder laat de economische geschiedenis zien dat Bristol een zeer belangrijke economische positie innam: in de tweede helft van de zeventiende eeuw was het de belangrijkste stad naast Londen. Dit betekent dus ook dat de stad een relatief groot aantal migranten aantrok en vele handelscontacten onderhield in een groot gebied. De meest belangrijke handelscontacten vonden plaats in de omliggende districten rond Bristol, maar er was ook intensief contact met Ierland, het zuiden van Wales en Londen. De grootste groepen migranten kwamen dan ook vooral uit de omliggende gebieden, alsmede Ierland en Wales. Het kan dus verwacht worden dat supra-lokalisatie- en dialectnivelleringsprocessen plaats hadden in Bristol, gezien de verscheidenheid aan dialecten en talen (Welsh en allicht ook Iers) die in Bristol gesproken werden, maar ook de verscheidenheid aan dialecten en talen waar Bristols handelaren mee in aanraking kwamen. Een interessant detail is dat vooral dat sommige immigranten uit Wales een hoge status genoten en deel uitmaakten van het

stadbestuur. Dit maakt het waarschijnlijk dat zij ook betrokken waren in de productie van bestuursteksten.

In het laatste hoofdstuk van het theoretische deel bespreek ik een thema dat vaak onderbelicht wordt in historisch sociolinguïstisch onderzoek: alfabetisering en de daarmee gepaard gaande overgang van een orale traditie naar een geschreven traditie. Over het algemeen kan gesteld worden dat de kleine elitegroep die kon schrijven overwegend uit mannen bestond. De voornaamste ontwikkeling die zich aan het begin van de vijftiende eeuw voordeed was dat de handelseconomie dusdanig gecompliceerd werd dat documentatie van transacties en wetten noodzakelijk werd. Dit droeg bij aan een toename van de productie van teksten en de verscheidenheid van teksten, maar bracht ook een verschuiving teweeg. Waren teksten voorheen vooral geschreven voor en door geestelijken of de regerende elite, de teksten werden nu voor en door de handelselite geschreven. Tevens werden er steeds meer teksten in de volkstaal geschreven en niet in, wat voorheen meer gebruikelijk was, het Frans of Latijn. Engels werd dus een belangrijke nationale geschreven voertaal. Wat verder opvalt is dat vanaf de zestiende eeuw de stedelijke handelselite landelijk gezien veelal dezelfde scholing genoot aan een beperkt aantal universiteiten en de Inns in Londen. Dit suggereert dat deze plaatsen als belangrijke focusgebieden fungeerden waar supra-lokale schrijftradities ontstonden en van waaruit supra-lokale vormen hun weg vonden naar andere plaatsen.

Hoofdstuk 6 luidt het empirische deel van mijn dissertatie in en beschrijft het corpus dat speciaal voor dit proefschrift is samengesteld, alsmede de methode die is toegepast om de data te analyseren. Om taalvariatie en taalverandering in geschreven bronnen uit Bristols verleden te kunnen bestuderen, was het verzamelen van teksten uit Bristol uit de periode 1400-1700 een essentieel onderdeel. Het doel was om tekstsoorten te kiezen die geproduceerd zijn in verschillende schrijftradities en die voldoende tekst leverden om kwantitatieve

analyses op uit te voeren. Daarnaast was het ook van belang dat het tekstsoorten waren die een relatief lang tijdsbestek overspanden, zodat verandering over een lang tijdsbestek bestudeerd kon worden. De teksten die het best aan deze criteria voldeden waren twee tekstsoorten: raadsbesluiten van het stadsbestuur, geschreven over een periode van 1400-1600, en brieven waarvan het voornaamste deel geschreven is door leden van een elitehandelaarsfamilie gedurende de periode 1548-1711. Om sociale factoren in de analyse op te kunnen nemen presenteer ik in dit hoofdstuk ook zoveel mogelijk relevante achtergrondinformatie over de teksten en, waar mogelijk, hun schrijvers. In het geval van de raadsbesluiten betekent dit dat er slechts een globaal beeld geschetst kan worden, omdat we zeer weinig weten over de individuen die de teksten schreven, terwijl er in het geval van de brieven soms gedetailleerde informatie beschikbaar is over de individuele briefschrijvers. Van de meeste briefschrijvers weten we bijvoorbeeld dat zij zeer mobiel waren, zich dus veel door het land verplaatsten en dat hun correspondentienetwerk ook mobiel was en zich wijdverspreid over het land bevond.

Hoofdstuk 7 presenteert een casus van de ontwikkeling van betrekkelijk voornaamwoorden in de geselecteerde teksten uit Bristol. Hierbij is in het bijzonder gekeken naar de opkomst van supra-lokale *wh*-vormen (*who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*), maar ook naar de aanwezigheid van mogelijke lokale gebruiksvormen. Uit de analyse blijkt dat het ontwikkelingspatroon in Bristols vijftiende en zestiende-eeuwse raadsbesluiten gelijkenissen vertoont met wat er in eerdere studies in teksten uit Londen en andere plaatsen gevonden is: de *wh*-vormen waren in competitie met de oudere vorm *that*, maar tegelijkertijd werd de keuze voor de vormen bepaald door het soort antecedent, de grammaticale functie van het betrekkelijke voornaamwoord, en of de betrekkelijke bijzin beperkend was of niet. Over het algemeen werd *that* vooral geprefereerd in beperkende betrekkelijke bijzinnen en vaak ook wanneer het betrekkelijk

voornaamwoord als onderwerp fungeerde. De *wh*-vormen werden vooral geprefereerd in niet beperkende bijzinnen, waarbij *which* en varianten ervan de meest gebruikelijke waren, maar ook *whose* en *whom* werden soms met persoonlijke antecedenten gebruikt. Echter het patroon in Bristols raadsbesluiten wijkt ook af op een paar punten. Volgens eerdere studies die meer naar landelijke ontwikkelingen keken, of specifiek naar Londen, werd, in de loop van de zestiende eeuw, het soort *wh*-vorm eveneens steeds meer bepaald door het type antecedent, waarbij een persoonlijk antecedent steeds meer geprefereerd werd met *whose* of *whom* en *which* met niet persoonlijke antecedenten. Dit proces leek iets langer op zich te laten wachten in de teksten van Bristol en er kan pas gesproken worden van een duidelijke splitsing van persoonlijk en niet persoonlijke antecedenten tegen het einde van de zestiende eeuw. Opvallend is dat *which* nog steeds voorkomt met persoonlijke antecedenten in hedendaagse dialecten in het Zuidwesten van Engeland. Een ander belangrijk verschil met de resultaten van eerdere publicaties is de relatief lange afwezigheid van de vorm *who* in de Bristol teksten. Waar deze vorm vanaf de vijftiende eeuw verschijnt in brieven uit Londen, is deze pas een enkele keer aanwezig vanaf 1570 in de Bristolteksten. Een ander opvallende bevinding op basis van de gegevens uit Bristol is het frequente gebruik van de betrekkelijke voornaamwoord constructie (*such*) *as*. Deze vorm is vooral frequent in de zestiende-eeuwse raadsbesluiten. Vooral de opzichzelf staande vorm *as* is interessant omdat deze vorm geassocieerd wordt met taalcontact tussen Welsh en Engels. Dit is opmerkelijk met het oog op de migratie en handelsgeschiedenis die Bristol deelt met Wales, echter meer data zijn nodig om hier sterke conclusies aan te kunnen verbinden. Over het algemeen kan gesteld worden dat de bestuursteksten steeds meer een supra-lokaal patroon vertoonden met betrekking tot het gebruik van betrekkelijk voornaamwoorden, hoewel er dus ook aanwijzingen zijn dat er een aantal lokale gebruiksvormen waren die de teksten een

meer regionaal karakter gaven. Wanneer we naar de andere tekstsoort uit Bristol kijken, de brieven uit de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw, is het opmerkelijk dat het ontwikkelingspatroon meer gelijk oploopt met het algemene supra-lokale patroon dat beschreven is in eerdere publicaties. Dat wil zeggen, *which* werd nooit met personen gebruikt en *who* was ook een veelvoorkomende vorm. Dit is niet verassend, gezien dit patroon vooral zichtbaar is in de brieven van schrijvers die zeer mobiel waren. Het is dus waarschijnlijk dat zij contacten onderhielden met netwerken die verspreid waren over het land en zo dus ook blootgesteld werden aan supra-lokale vormen. Tevens moet daarbij opgemerkt worden dat de meeste brieven uit de vroege zeventiende eeuw dateren toen Bristol economisch gezien aanzienlijk groeide en in populatie toenam, wat suggereert dat Bristol toentertijd een belangrijke communicatieschakel vormde in het stedennetwerk en het kan dus ook verondersteld worden dat processen van dialectnivellering en supra-lokalisatie toen prominent waren in Bristol.

Hoofdstuk 8 houdt zich bezig met derde persoonsvormen in de tegenwoordige tijd indicatief en in het bijzonder met de opkomst van de supra-lokale *-s* als werkwoordvervoeging en het verdwijnen van *-th* als werkwoordvervoeging. Aan het begin van de periode 1400-1700 was de derde persoons inflectie *-s* nog een innovatie in het Zuidwesten van Engeland, maar tegen het einde van de periode was deze vorm de meest voorkomende in het gehele land en was het gebruik van *-th* een zeldzaamheid. De resultaten van mijn analyse bevestigen de bevinding in vorige studies dat zodra *-s* in de derde persoonsvorm enkelvoud in competitie was met de oudere *-th*, de hulpwerkwoorden *have* en *do* vaak nog geprefereerd werden met de oudere vorm. Aan de hand van de data die bestudeerd zijn in deze studie lijkt het erop dat de innovatieve vorm relatief laat zijn weg naar Bristol vond. Immers, in de hoofdstad was de *-s*-vorm al in teksten gevonden vanaf begin vijftiende eeuw, terwijl in de Bristoldata de

eerste *-s*-vormen pas gevonden worden in brieven vanaf de zeventiende eeuw. In de Bristolse brieven uit de periode 1600-1650, is er een drastische verschuiving waarneembaar: de derdepersoon enkelvoud *-s* heeft zijn intrede gedaan en is al frequenter dan de oudere *-th* vorm. Opvallend is dat de literatuur vermeldt dat het gebruik van *-s* dan ook exponentieel toeneemt in Londense brieven. Het kan echter niet uitgesloten worden dat de schijnbare plotselinge verandering in het geval van Bristol te wijten is aan het verschil in tekstsoort. Dit heeft te maken met het feit dat de subcorpora slechts gedeeltelijk overlappen wat betreft de tijdsperiode die zij overbruggen. Desalniettemin blijkt dat zowel de brieven van voor de zeventiende eeuw en de raadsbesluiten van dezelfde periode nog geen enkel teken van het gebruik van de *-s* vorm vertonen. Vergelijkbaar met opkomst van het betrekkelijk voornaamwoord *who*, doet *-s* zijn intrede in de periode waarin Bristol aanzienlijke economische groei zag. In de teksten van vóór de zeventiende eeuw zijn er ook aanwijzingen dat de schrijvers meer lokale gebruiksvormen hanteerden. Met name in de raadsbesluiten van de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw valt het op dat hulpwerkwoorden in de derde persoon meervoud niet geïnflecteerd worden, terwijl lexicale werkwoorden in de derde persoon enkel- en meervoud in de regel met *-th* geïnflecteerd worden. Deze tendens was, weliswaar in mindere mate, ook waarneembaar in de brieven van de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw. Een andere opmerkelijke bevinding met het oog op standaardisatieprocessen is dat de hedendaagse standaard Engelse *-s* vorm misschien wel zijn intrede deed, maar de werkwoordvervoeging was (nog) niet in navolging van de hedendaagse standaard Engelse werkwoordvervoegingen. Dat wil zeggen, in het hedendaags standaard Engels wordt *-s* alleen gebruikt bij de derde persoonsvorm enkelvoud en nul inflectie wordt gebruikt voor derde persoon meervoud. In de Bristolteksten verschijnt de *-s* vorm wel, maar in een non-standaard congruentiepatroon. Dit is vooral goed waar te nemen in het taalgebruik van een van de

brievenschrijvers, waar de keuze voor *-s*, *-th*, en nul inflectie afhankelijk is van het type werkwoord en het grammaticale subject. Net als in de raadsbesluiten worden hulpwerkwoorden met nul inflectie geprefereerd. Dezelfde tendens is zichtbaar voor lexicale werkwoorden die een persoonlijk voornaamwoord als grammaticaal subject hebben. In andere gevallen werden *-th*, *-s* en nul inflectie afwisselend toegepast, zowel in het enkelvoud als in het meervoud. Hoewel het voorbij ging aan het doel van deze dissertatie, was er ook interessante variatie waarneembaar in de werkwoordsvormen van het sterke werkwoord *to be*. Met name in de raadsbesluiten uit de periode 1400-1550 kwam dit werkwoord voor in de stamvorm, of de oudere *b-stam* vormen *ben* en *beth* in plaats van de hedendaagse supra-lokale vormen *is* en *are*. Deze oudere vormen zijn niet waarneembaar in de teksten uit de periode na 1550, maar ze worden nog wel gevonden in hedendaagse gesproken variëteiten in het Zuidwesten van Engeland.

In hoofdstuk 9 analyseer ik orthografische variatie en verandering en onderzoek ik hoe <þ>, <y> en andere varianten plaats maken voor de supra-lokale vorm <th>. Het is opvallend dat, in tegenstelling tot de (morfo)syntactische supra-lokale gebruiksvormen, de opmars van <th> al vanaf het begin van de periode vergevorderd is. Op basis van de teksten die voor deze dissertatie bestudeerd zijn, kan er gezegd worden dat de vijftiende eeuw de transitieperiode was waarin <th> alle andere varianten verving. Dit is op te maken uit het feit dat deze vorm al sterk in de meerderheid was en dat het gebruik van <þ> beperkt was tot veelvoorkomende functiewoorden. Rond 1470 is <þ> zo goed als verdwenen uit de raadsbesluiten en zijn er slechts nog enkele gevallen te vinden tot ongeveer 1570. Wat betreft de aanwezigheid van andere varianten valt het op dat <y> erg zeldzaam is in de raadsbesluiten uit de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw, terwijl de vorm vrij frequent wordt gebruikt in de brieven uit zowel de tweede helft van de zestiende eeuw, als de brieven uit de zeventiende eeuw. In bestaande literatuur wordt <y> typisch omschreven als een

vorm die vooral in het Noorden van Engeland voorkwam. Het is dus niet duidelijk waarom deze vorm toch vrij veel voorkomt in het taalgebruik van brieven-schrijvers uit het Zuidwesten. Verder onderzoek kan misschien uitwijzen of de vorm in het algemeen veel gebruikt werd in zestiende- en zeventiende-eeuwse brieven en dus ook onderhevig was aan supra-lokalisatie. Het is goed mogelijk dat de verschillen in het gebruik van <y> afhankelijk is van het teksttype. In de brieven wordt de vorm vooral gebruikt in afkortingen, wellicht dat het een brieven-schrijversconventie was om zo efficiënt mogelijk te schrijven. Opvallend is dat de vorm vooral gebruikt wordt door de mobielste briefschrijvers. De vorm komt een enkele keer voor in de raadsbesluiten, wat suggereert dat de vorm wel bekend was bij de tekstschrijvers, maar dat het gebruik simpelweg niet paste in de tradities van het schrijven van raadsbesluiten. Allicht werd er bewust een poging gedaan om uniform taalgebruik te hanteren. Dit blijkt ook uit het feit dat andere optionele varianten zoals <tth>, <yhe> en <dd> al in een vroeg stadium verdwenen zijn. Ik stel in dit hoofdstuk daarom voor dat een vergelijking van de onderzoeksresultaten in de verschillende steden van het *Emerging Standards* project ons misschien meer inzicht kan geven over de verspreiding van de <y>. De verschillen in het gebruik van <y> demonstreren dat er misschien niet van een enkele standaard of supra-lokale variëteit gesproken kan worden, want ook al lijkt het erop dat optionele variatie beperkt was, er was nog steeds variatie mogelijk binnen de verschillende tekstgenres.

In het slothoofdstuk blik ik terug op de hoofddoelstellingen van mijn proefschrift en sta ik stil bij de resultaten van de data-analyses en wat mijn bevindingen betekenen in het algemeen. Een van de hoofdvragen die gesteld werd was of er gesproken kon worden over taalgebruik dat specifiek geassocieerd kon worden met Bristol en het Zuidwesten in het algemeen. Dit was noodzakelijk om zo inzicht te krijgen op supra-lokalisatie- en dialectnivelleringsprocessen. Ondanks

het feit dat er zeer weinig bestaand onderzoek is naar het taalgebruik in het Bristol van de late middeleeuwen en renaissance, was het aan de hand van de verschillende casussen mogelijk om vast te stellen dat er wel degelijk aanwijzingen zijn dat sommige gebruiksvormen kenmerkend voor Bristol waren. Hiermee heeft mijn onderzoek een belangrijke bijdrage geleverd bij het opvullen van bestaande leemtes in het onderzoeksveld.

Een van de andere hoofdvragen was of we een algemene tendens naar het gebruik van supra-lokale vormen konden waarnemen en hoe die tendens zich manifesteerde met betrekking tot verschillende typen variabelen. De verwachting was dat dit procesmatig gebeurde en dat elke variabele een unieke ontwikkeling doormaakte. Dit blijkt inderdaad het geval te zijn voor de data die in deze studie geanalyseerd zijn. Gedurende de periode 1400-1700 lijkt er een verzameling processen gaande te zijn waarbij sommige vormen verschijnen en andere juist verdwijnen. De orthografische vorm <th> was al sterk in opkomst vanaf het begin van de vijftiende eeuw, terwijl de ontwikkelingen en veranderingen in het gebruik van de persoonsvormen en betrekkelijk voornaamwoorden over de gehele periode plaatsvonden en werden geconditioneerd door interne linguïstische factoren. Er zijn ook aanwijzingen dat het gebruik van supra-lokale vormen afhankelijk was van de tekstsoort, zoals duidelijk het geval leek te zijn met <y>. Het linguïstische standaardisatieproces kan dus gezien worden als een verzameling van processen waarbij tekstsoortconventies, interne linguïstische factoren, en externe sociale factoren een rol spelen.

Curriculum vitae

Moragh Gordon was born in Dreumel, the Netherlands on 20 April 1984. She received a BA in English Language and Culture (2011) and an MA in Linguistics (2012) from Utrecht University. During her MA program, she was involved in *the Language of the Labouring Poor* project as an intern, where she worked on the creation of an electronic corpus of Late Modern English pauper letters. Following her graduation, Moragh Gordon was a research assistant for Prof. dr. Auer and carried out research in historical sociolinguistics and corpus linguistics. In May 2013, she obtained a PhD position at Utrecht University under the supervision of Prof. dr. Schrijver and Prof. dr. Auer. Her PhD project was completed in 2017 and was part of the externally funded project *Emerging Standards: Urbanisation and the Development of Standard English, c. 1400-170*, which is directed by Prof. dr. Auer. This dissertation is the result of Moragh Gordon's PhD research.