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Title	Dialect Speech in David Copperfield
Author(s)	Lyu, Xiaonan
Citation	Hiroshima studies in English language and literature , 65 : 59 - 60
Issue Date	2021-03-30
DOI	
Self DOI	
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## Dialect Speech in *David Copperfield*

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Xiaonan Lyu

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The aim of the thesis is to examine Dickens's use of dialect speech in *David Copperfield* from the philological point of view.

Dickens depicts many forms of regional dialect speech in his works in order to make the story more realistic, to make his portrayal of the characters more vivid and graphic, and to give a sense of the social environment to which the characters belonged at the time. He needs to show us the characters' voices verbatim with written words. One of the most elaborate methods is the representation of dialect speech.

A dialect is a form of a language spoken by a specific group of people, as opposed to a standard language. We can get some geographical information from their local dialect and some social information from their class dialect.

Dickens depicts many forms of regional dialect speech in his works: Yorkshire dialect in *Nicholas Nickleby* (April 1838 to October 1839), East Anglia dialect in *David Copperfield* (May 1849 to November 1850), and Lancashire dialect in *Hard Times* (1 April 1854, to 12 August 1854).

There are a lot of dialect speakers in *David Copperfield*. The main dialect speakers in the work are the Peggotty family members: Clara Peggotty, Ham Peggotty, Daniel Peggotty, Em'ly, and Mrs. Gummidge. David Copperfield and his mother, Clara Copperfield, use some provincial words and their speech includes some grammatical anomalies. In the Peggotty family, Clara Peggotty and Em'ly use much less non-standard English than Ham, Daniel and Mrs. Gummidge.

There are five chapters in the thesis. Chapter I is an introduction to the topic. Chapter II treats the phonology of the dialect. It is divided into three parts: consonants, strongly-stressed vowels and lightly-stressed vowels. Chapter III deals with the vocabulary of the East Anglia dialect. Chapter IV considers the grammar of the dialects.

In Chapter V, I extract the speech of each character, check his or her dialect in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, count these figures, and tabulate them. From this data, I can divide the characters in *David Copperfield* into five groups. The First Group consists of three characters who do

not use dialect: David's cruel stepfather, Edward Murdstone, David's aunt, Betsey Trotwood, and the wealthy widowed mother of James Steerforth, Mrs. Steerforth. The second group includes David Copperfield, our protagonist, and his friend at school, James Steerforth. The third group consists of Mr Murdstone's sister, Jane Murdstone, and David's mother, Clara Copperfield. The fourth group includes the owner of a little shop, a draper, tailor, haberdasher, and funeral furnisher called Mr. Omer, a servant of the Copperfield family, Clara Peggotty, and her niece, Em'ly. The fifth group consists of Daniel Peggotty, Clara Peggotty's brother, a Yarmouth fisherman, Mrs Gummidge, the widow of Daniel Peggotty's partner, and Ham Peggotty, nephew to Mr. Peggotty. Em'ly was a special person in the Peggotty family when David first came to Yarmouth and she was not either substandard or dialectal in pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar. She told David that she wanted to be a lady in the future. I think this is one of the reasons for her standard use of English. Clara Peggotty, as a servant in the Copperfield household, was in daily contact with the Copperfield family and their guests. The nature of her job forced her to use more standard English.

Through the compilation and analysis of the data on the East Anglia dialect in *David Copperfield*, we find that Dickens not only uses the dialect in his work, but also deliberately controls the frequency of the use of it in accordance with each character. Their use of dialect is represented in a way that fits the class and the region to which the characters belong and makes the novel more realistic and vivid.