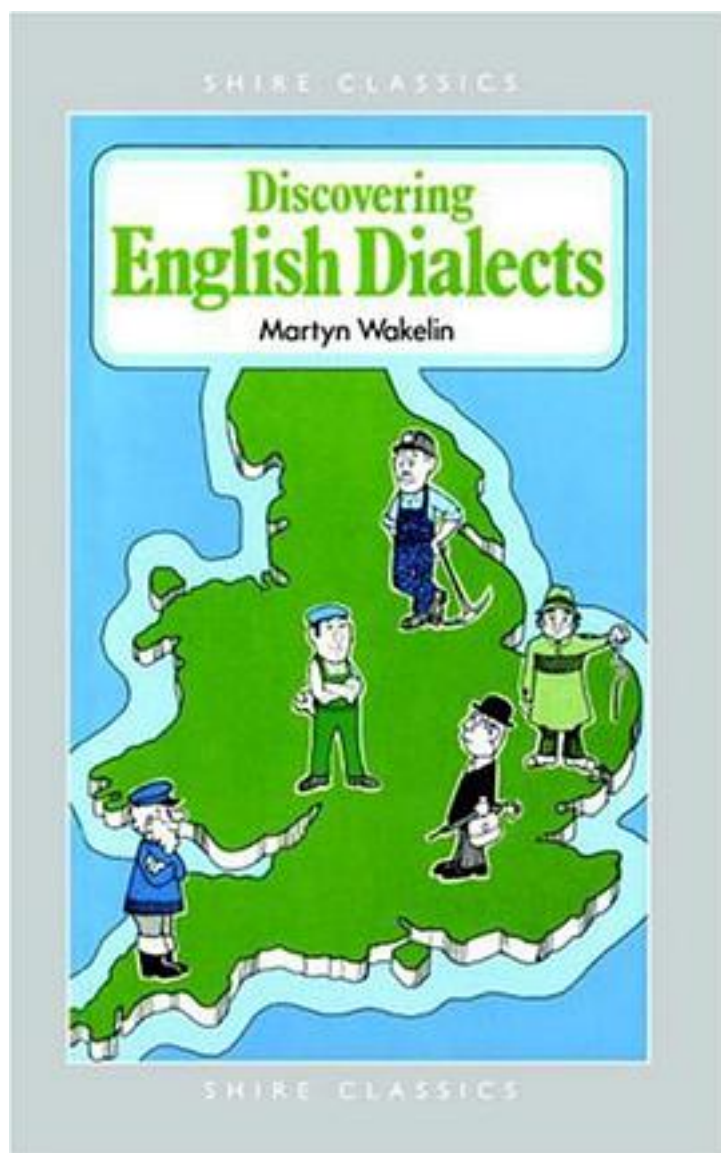# Discovering English Dialects

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As long ago as the 1720's Daniel Defoe was pondering on the eccentricities of English dialects, and three hundred or so years before him John Trevisa had censured 'all the language of the Northumbrians' as harsh and incomprehensible. Variety in English speech is thus of some antiquirty, and the old dialects used in areas like the Yorkshire Dales and rural East Anglia are as substantial a part of the Englishman's living heritage as are his ancient buildings.This book describes the most significant features of English regional dialects, including in its scope the ancient vocabulary of the North, enriched by borrowings from medieval Norsemen, the important north/north midland dialect boundary, old forms of nouns like housen and childer and the remaining traces of extinct Cornish. The complex problems of the 'mixed dialects' of towns also receive attention. A chapter on occupational and specialised vocabularies gives examples of regional terminology associated with such traditional industries as fishing and mining and also bird and plant names and children's language.

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