

Innovative Late Middle English dialectology of the preposition and adverb *beyond*

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The aim of the present study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the diachronic dialectology of the preposition and adverb *biyōnd(e)* ‘beyond’ as used in the most neutral/natural context in the Middle English period and to demonstrate its innovative Late Middle English dialectal distribution. Hence, prose texts, which are unbiased by such poetic factors as e.g., rhyme and rhythm, have been selected as the examined material.

The method selected for the analysis is corpus linguistics methodology. A specific tool/corpus that meets the aims of the present study is the *Innsbruck Corpus of Middle English Prose (IC)*; version 2.4) compiled by Manfred Markus (2010). Moreover, the analysis is supplemented with the data from *A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English (LAEME)* and *An electronic version of A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English (eLALME)*, the *Middle English Dictionary online (MED)* and the *Oxford English Dictionary online (OED)*.

Moreover, the word *biyōnd(e)* is investigated in terms of its other qualitative and quantitative features. Regarding the qualitative aspects, the paper introduces the etymology of *biyōnd(e)* as well as the semantic features it exhibited in Middle English prose. Moreover, the context and some syntactic features of *biyōnd(e)* will be provided. As for the quantitative data, the number of tokens of the preposition and adverb recorded in particular Early and Late Middle English texts and dialects is calculated in terms of both the absolute data and relative frequency. The analytical part of the study is illustrated with maps, figures and tables.

So far, the most interesting findings of the analysis regarding the dialectology and frequency of *biyōnd(e)* are that (1) the Late Middle English dialectal distribution of *biyōnd(e)* is completely innovative as compared to the Early Middle English one (2) the frequency of the use of *biyōnd(e)* in prose texts changes very dynamically between Early and Late Middle English.