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Sociolinguistic Analysis of a Nonstandard Accent and Dialect in G. B. Shaw's *Pygmalion*

Sociolingvistička analiza nestandardnog dijalekta i akcenta u *Pygmalion*u G. B. Shawa

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Abstract:

Accent represents a distinct emphasis given to a syllable or word in speech by stress or pitch, therefore a proper accent gives importance to what you say and engages the respectful attention of your hearer. (Talking and Debating, 1856, as cited in Mugglestone, 2003) Accent variation is often most noticeably carried in the vocalic elements of pronunciation, and in the glides (/j/, /w/) and liquids (/r/, /l/) that are sort of 'semi-vowels'.(Stockwell, 2003) Accent can often tell us where someone comes from, their age, gender, level of education and their social class. Dialect covers the word choices, syntactic ordering, and all the other grammatical choices a speaker could make. (Stockwell, 2003) Based on how people talk, they are classified into social classes. According to Stockwell (2003), most language communities, however, have a hierarchy of wealth and power defined in relation to economics and prestige that can be covered in term class. When it comes to the social classes, we can talk about upper class, middle class and lower or working class in which the main determiner of social stratification is economic status and level of education. According to Bruner (1957) lower socioeconomic groups have a different linguistic structure from higher groups that's why they speak with different non-standard dialects.

The aim of this research is to understand the relations between lower and upper social classes and to find out how the way of speaking affects the social position taking into consideration social classes and their attitudes about language in the early 20th century. This paper will try to give answers to the following research questions:

a) "How do negative attitudes towards non-standard dialects affect people from lower social classes?"

b) "What is the relation between language and social class?"

George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* written in 1913 will be used as a corpus for this paper. This piece represents the relations between phonetician Henry Higgins and Cockney speaking flower girl. Manner of speaking, accents and dialects significantly affect the way people will be perceived in society. For that reason, negative attitudes of upper class toward the people using non-standard accents and dialects in English will be the focus of this paper. Non-standard accent and dialect of Eliza Doolittle and the way society is treating her will be observed. This play presents what is necessary for certain someone to climb the social ladder and became a part of a certain social class. The reason I choose George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* is because the

discourse used clearly represents the differences between the social classes in which the usage of the "standard" gives its speakers prestige making the differences between the users of standard and non-standard variant.

Qualitative method will be used for the purposes of this paper which will be based on the principles of the narrative approach. This approach aims to examine the purpose(s) of narratives, how narrators represent or interpret the world, how they represent self and others and how they construct their – gendered, ethnic, or class identities. This approach both enables as to analyze speaker's perceptions about the world around them and to define social identities as shown in the George Bernard Shaw's play "*Pygmalion.*"

Key words: accent, dialect, standard, non-standard, *Pygmalion*

Apstrakt:

Akcent predstavlja isticanje pojedinih slogova u riječi jačinom i visinom glasa, stoga odgovarajući akcent daje značaj onome što se govori te zaokuplja pažnju slušaoca. (Talking and Debating, 1856, citirano u Mugglestone, 2003) Varijacija u akcentu je najčešće primjetna u izgovoru vokala te kliznih (/j/, /w/) i tekućih (/r/, /l/) suglasnika odnosno poluvokala. (Stockwell, 2003) Akcent se smatra oznakom društvene prihvatljivosti te nam obično može reći odakle neko dolazi, njihovu dob, spol, nivo obrazovanja i ukazati na nečiji društveni status. Dijalekt predstavlja izbor riječi, redoslijed sintaktičkih elemenata u rečenici i sve druge gramatičke izbore koje govornik može napraviti. (Stockwell, 2003) Na osnovu načina na koji neko govori, ljudi se klasificiraju u društvene klase. Prema Stockwellu (2003), skoro sve jezičke zajednice imaju hijerarhiju moći koja je usko povezana sa ekonomijom i prestižom. Kada je riječ o društvenim klasama, možemo govoriti o višoj klasi, srednjoj klasi i radničkoj klasi, pri čemu se kao osnovni determinator društvene stratifikacije uzima ekonomski status i nivo obrazovanja. Prema Bruneru (1957), niže socioekonomske grupe imaju različitu jezičku strukturu od viših grupa te govore raznim nestandardnim dijalektima.

Cilj ovoga istraživanja je razumijevanje odnosa između niže i više društvene klase te otkrivanje kako način govora utiče na položaj u društvu, uzimajući u obzir društvene klase i stavove o jeziku ranog dvadesetog stoljeća. Ovaj rad će pokušati dati odgovore na sljedeća istraživačka pitanja:

a) „Kako negativni stavovi o nestandardnim dijalektima utiču na pripadnike nižih društvenih klasa?"
b) „Koji je odnos između jezika i društvene klase?"

Korpus ovog rada sačinjavat će dramski tekst Georgea Bernada Shawa *Pygmalion* napisan 1913. godine. Ovaj komad prikazuje odnos fonetičara Henrija Higginsa i prodavačiće cvijeća Elize Doolittle koja se služi Cockney akcentom. Govor, te akcenti i dijalekti znatno utiču na način na koji će ljudi biti percipirani u društvu. Stoga ćemo se u ovome radu fokusirati na negativne stavove više klase prema ljudima koji koriste nestandardne akcente i dijalekte u engleskom jeziku. Posmatrat će se nestandardni akcent i dijalekt Elize Doolittle te način na koji se društvo ophodi prema njoj. Ovaj komad prikazuje šta je potrebno da bi se određena osoba uzdigla u društvu i postala dio određene društvene klase. Razlog zbog kojeg je kao korpus izabran

Pygmalion Georgea Bernarda Shawa jeste taj što diskurs koji se koristi u njemu jasno prikazuje razlike između društvenih klasa gdje se kroz upotrebu standardardne varijante govornicima pridaje prestiž praveći razliku između govornika standardne i nestandardne varijante.

U svrhu istraživanja koristit će se kvalitativna metoda istraživanja koja će se bazirati na principima narativnog pristupa. Ovaj pristup ima za cilj da analizira značaj narativa, odnosno kako govornici prikazuju ili interpretiraju svijet, kako prikazuju sebe i druge te kako drugi konstruišu svoje rodne, etničke ili klasne identitete. Ovaj pristup smo odabrali zato što nam omogućava analizu govornikove percepcije svijeta oko sebe kao i određivanje klasnih identiteta prikazanih u komadu Georga Bernarda Shawa *Pygmalion*.

Ključne riječi: akcent, dijalekt, standard, nestandardni govor, *Pygmalion*

Contents

1. Introduction

The subject of this thesis is the analysis of a nonstandard accent and dialect in G. B. Shaw's *Pygmalion.* This paper consists of eight parts out of which there are four chapters related to the theoretical part of this thesis. The abstract includes basic information about the type of research and the subject of the research, as well as the focus and research questions.

Before going into the theory of this thesis, the focus of the chapter *Theoretical background* will be a brief summary of its subchapters. Firstly, a definition of Standard English is going to be given, being followed by the Origins of Standard English where we are going to go back to fourteenth century in order to understand the roots of Standard English. Later on, this work will give an insight into the Pronouncing Dictionaries of the time and rules people had to follow in order to speak properly. In the Doctrine of Subjective inequality, the subjective perceptions of people who do not speak the Standard will be shown. Later on, social stigmatization and prestige are going to be explained.

Secondly, the subchapter Received Pronunciation is going to be explained with its three main forms of variability which are given a separate subchapter. After the brief introduction of Received Pronunciation and its variable forms, the Characteristics of Cockney along with its rhyming slang will be described.

Thirdly, symbols of social divide such as long a:, R-dropping and Intrusive R, H-dropping, and G-dropping will be briefly illustrated along with the perceptions of people of the eighteen century.

Finally, the chapter Theoretical background will be closed with the Ladylike Accents and Pronunciations of the eighteen century, as there were different rules for women in using the Standard.

This thesis is going to be led by two research questions to which the answer will be given in the analysis.

a) "How do negative attitudes towards non-standard dialects affect the people from lower social classes?"
b) "What is the relation between the language and social class?"

In the analytical part, the play and the movie adaptation *My Fair Lady* (1964), directed by George Cukor, will be used. The process of analysis will include looking at dialogic exchanges primarily between Professor Higgins and Eliza Doolittle. The focus of the analysis will be to examine Eliza Doolittle's non-standard speech and society's view of her as a non-standard speaker. By using the qualitative method, it was determined that people's linguistic prejudices have an effect on non-standard speakers. The final section of the research contains the results of the analysis.

2. Theoretical background

According to John C. Wells (1982) the term "accent" represents a pattern of pronunciation used by speakers whose native language is English or by the community or social grouping to which an individual belongs. According to Lynda Mugglestone (2003), accent represents a distinct emphasis given to a syllable or word in speech by stress or pitch. However, Hughes and Trudgill (1997) refer to accent as any variation in pronunciation. Since accent often tells us where someone comes from, their age, gender, level of education and their social class, it is important to be familiar with these notions in order to illustrate the situation Eliza Doolittle from *Pygmalion* is coming from.

The term "dialect" covers the word choices, syntactic ordering, and all the other grammatical choices a speaker could make. (Stockwell, 2003)

A dialect is a linguistic variant differentiated from others by differences in grammar and vocabulary, according to Hughes and Trudgill. (1997) Nowadays, UK Standard English (UKSE) is the most prestigious dialect in Britain. It was originally a southern dialect of English which became the form used in most printed media, law and education.

However, the focus of this thesis will be Received Pronunciation (abbreviated RP), which is the prestigious accent in British English. According to Hughes and Trudgill (1997) the term "received" here refers to being "acceptable in the most genteel circles of society," as it was defined in the nineteenth century. It is the accent of those at the top of the social scale, as assessed in terms of education, income, and occupation, or title. Even though nonstandard dialects do not have the same prestige as RP attached to them, according to Trudgill (1999), they have a grammar system that is internally consistent. They can be linked to a certain vocabulary set and spoken in a range of accents, styles, and registers. Since *Pygmalion* portrays the relations between the upper and lower class, it was important to describe the differences between standard and non-standard dialects in order to represent how speakers of the standard perceive the speakers of a nonstandard dialect which will later be shown in this thesis.

Lynda Mugglestone's book *Talking Proper: The Rise of Accent as Social Symbol,* gives us some insight into the development of the accent known as Received Pronunciation and into various

points of view of people from upper classes regarding speakers of nonstandard dialects, specifically, Cockney.

Another book used to form the theory of this thesis is *The Cambridge Handbook of Sociolinguistics* which was edited by Rajend Mesthrie and used for the *Social Stratification* subchapter. This book gives as extensive information about how language and social class are related as well as the connection between gender and language.

Accents of English by John Wells provides us with a systematic review of all the different accents of English. For the purposes of this thesis, the chapters on Received pronunciation and Cockney were used. The book *The Muvver Tongue* by Barltrop & Wolveridge (1980) was used in explaining the particular manner of behavior exhibited by Eliza Doolittle. Cockney speakers have a distinct mode of conduct, mostly misunderstood by the upper class which is described in the analysis section of this thesis.

2.1 Definition of Standard English

In English-speaking countries, Standard English (SE) is the variety of English that has undergone substantial regularisation. According to Huddleston & Pullum (2005, p.1), a brief definition of Standard English cannot be given. However, a few remarks about its special status can be made. This variation is used in writing, education (grammar books and dictionaries), the court, the church, newspapers, the media, and for official purposes. It establishes a set of grammar, syntax, and lexis norms for the English language. Despite the fact that standard English is widely used in public and official communications and settings, there are a variety of registers (stylistic levels) for journalism (print, television, internet) and academic publications (monographs, academic papers, internet). (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005, pp. 2-3) There is also a contrast between the spoken and written forms of SE, which are distinguished by degrees of formality.

2.2 Origins of Standard English

The sociolinguistic situation in England between the Norman Conquest and the first half of the 14th century could be roughly described as follows: there existed a set of English dialects, none of which were more prestigious than the others; the functions that are now the domain of Standard English were largely carried out by dialects of Latin and French.

In the 14th century, English was fundamentally considered 'rude and barbarous' and those who wanted to emphasize their superiority over the uneducated sought to speak the language of the court — French. In his *Polycronicon*[1], Ranulph Higden (14th century) states:

"Children in school, contrary to the usage and custom of other nations, are compelled to drop their own language and to construe their lessons and other tasks in French, and have done so since the Normans first came to England. Also, gentlemen's children are taught to speak French from the time that they are rocked in their cradles and can talk and play with a child's toy; and

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[1] Polycronicon was written by Ranulph Higden in Latin in the mid -14th c. It was translated into English by John of Trevisa c.1387, and afterwards printed as *Description of Britayne , & also Irlonde taken out of Policronicon* by William Caxton in 1480.

provincial men want to liken themselves to gentlemen, and try with great effort to speak French, so as to be more thought of." (1387, c. XV)

The establishment of status relied upon the choice between two different languages rather than between different ways of pronouncing the same word in one and the same language. The presence or absence of standardisation was a major difference between the 14th and 19th century conceptions of language, linguistic choice and language variety. All regional varieties of language had spoken and written forms due to the fact that there wasn't a dominant non-localised or superordinate variety. This situation began to alter in the late fourteenth century, when a number of standardised varieties of English began to appear in writings, a tendency that culminated in the widespread appearance, by 1470, of the 'Chancery Standard,' which served as the ancestor of the later standard dialect. Literature of the 14th century was mostly written in the dialect reflecting the writer's location.

"Chaucer selected London English in which to write poems, such as the *Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde,* this was largely because, just as Trevisa's selection of the idioms of the south-west, it was the form language current in the area where he lived." (Mugglestone, 2003, p. 9)

This variety was also used by educated Londoners of the day in Westminster. Once a standard variety emerges, perceptions of dialect, status, and appropriate usage will change accordingly.

"After a speach is is fully fashioned to the common vnderstanding, & accepted by a consent of a whole countrey & nation, it is called a language." (Puttenham, 1589, p.120)

Regarding the written language, by the late 17th century, a sense of 'standard' English was in existence. However, this was seen as deficient in the rules by which a standard should accurately be used. Hallmarks of the era of codification — an important stage in the process of standardisation — were Joseph Addison's plea in 1711 for 'Superintendents' to curtail aspects of change deemed 'incorrect' and Jonathan Swift's 1712 proposal for an official academy which was to regulate such matters. (Mugglestone, 2003, p. 10)

Haugen (1966, pp.922-35) has defined four stages in the standardisation process. During the selection process, one dialect was chosen over all others. The dialect was then largely codified through the educational system. Then, elaboration increased the code's functionalities and variety

of applications, and the dialect had to be approved as the "standard" version by the community at large.

2.3 Pronouncing dictionaries

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century, pronunciation was not indicated in dictionaries, until a small number of experts in various regions of Britain started to write about preferred ways of pronouncing certain words. It was by such means that the 'minimal variation of form' deemed essential to a standard, and standardized language might itself be achieved. Robert Lowth[2], for example, preferred a single form instead of using multiple forms.

"Why should both less and lesser be tolerated when a single norm would surely — and rationally — be better?" (Mugglestone, 2003, p.10)

Over the course of the 18th century, many writers attempted to put together rules by which 'proper' English might be regulated. Many writers, like Edmund Coote in his 1596 English Schoole-Maister, published glossaries of "hard" words, but none of them amounted to a dictionary.

Earlier dictionaries had rarely given indication on pronunciation until Nathaniel Bailey[3] in his second edition of *Universal Etymological Dictionary* (1731), who marked the position of main stress (aban'don, a'ntichamber). (Mugglestone, 2003, p.29) The marking of the stress represents an advance in lexicographical practice from the neglect with which pronunciation had been treated before. In the Preface, Bailey states

'forasmuch as many Persons…are frequently apt to accent Words wrong" (1731).

Bailey offered to direct his readers' attention by placing marks right after the stressed vowel. In his *New Dictionary of the English Language* (1773), William Kenrick[4] not only followed

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[2] Robert Lowth is the author of one of the most influential textbooks of English grammar *A Short Introduction to English Grammar.*
[3] Nathan Bailey (q691 - 1742) was an English philologist and lexicographer. He was the author of several dictionaries, including his Universal Etymological Dictionary, which appeared in some 30 editions between 1721 and 1802.
[4] William Kenrick (c. 1725 – 1779) was an English novelist, playwright, translator and satirist.

Bailey's marking of stresses, but he was also the first to provide entire pronunciations for almost all of his entries. He accomplished this by placing numbers directly above ambiguous letters and explaining their pronunciation with a set of keywords.

Sheridan was the first writer to combine this approach in his more comprehensive two-volume *General Dictionary of English Language* (1780) with the systematic respelling of the entry word. Sheridan used superscript numbers over vowels, (e.g. echo]e^{1}k'ko^2[, eavesdropper]e^3'vzdro^{1}p-pu^{1}r[), introducing a method later adopted by many writers such as John Walker and Benjamin Smart over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.30)

Many people in Britain and Ireland tried to nurture the metropolis and royal court's way of speaking during this time period, and as a result became supporters of pronunciation lexicographers. When John Walker produced his *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language* in 1791, he became the supreme caterer to these people who wished to 'avoid provincialisms.'

"The rapid sale of the Second Edition of this Dictionary called upon me for a Third, at a time of life, and in a state of health, little compatible with the drudgery and attention necessary for the execution of it." (Walker, 1847, p.11)

Walker included only a few definitions, but paid close attention to their pronunciations, using superscript numbers similar to Sheridan's.

Grammarian Benjamin H. Smart published the book *Walker Remodelled: A New Critical Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language* in 1836, wherein he used a narrower, more prescriptive approach. In contrast to Walker, Smart would advocate certain pronunciations over others. For example, he described the way of pronouncing words such as fast and bath with the long /ɑ/ as improper and vulgar, advising readers to avoid it. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.80)

"Pronouncing dictionaries were often to become essential tools in educational institutions as elementary pupils were drilled in the requisite proprieties of speech whilst they learnt to read." (Mugglestone, 2003, p.34) Francis Newman[5] portrays the idea of a non-localized accent as an

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[5] Francis William Newman (1805 – 1897) was an English classical scholar and moral philosopher, miscellaneous and writer.

egalitarian one. As 'provincial' and 'substandard' pronunciations were seen as inherently vulgar markers of negative social status, a non-localized accent would allow one to mask their lack of status and "transcend indications of their place of birth." While this did have the desired effect, the issue was not completely eliminated — the social markers shifted from origin to level of education. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.40)

2.4 Doctrine of subjective inequality

In his influential essay on language, William Enfield[6] (1809, p.5) stated,

"A standard is that by which we ascertain the value of things of the same kind; so a standard weight is that of which we try the justness of all other weights."

According to common perception, this was to be the purpose of a standard dialect — to be the mechanism we use to determine the "correctness" of speech. In practice, however, this has little to do with language alone, and much more to do with extralinguistic notions of elegance, propriety, politeness and refinement, as well as class and status. These evaluations tend to take on the form of a social response, fusing with society's preconceptions of good and bad.

The 'doctrine of subjective inequality,' as sociolinguist Richard Hudson points out, is a principle that purposely abdicates objective (and verifiable) standards of linguistic inequality, such as the lack of suitable communication skills or discoursal responses. In contrast, the idea of subjective inequality is based on linguistic attitudes, or what people believe about each other's speech. Hudson (1980) states that in some societies, people are credited with varying degrees of intelligence, friendliness, and other such virtues based on how they speak. As a result, whatever virtues are highly prized, certain speakers are seen to have more than they actually do merely because they speak in the "correct" style, while others are seen to have less because their speech gives the wrong impression.

For example, speakers with rural accents, regardless of their actual personality traits, are frequently assumed to be more friendly, sympathetic, and good-natured, as well as less

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[6] William Enfield 1741 –1797 was a British Unitarian minister who published a bestselling book on elocution entitled The Speaker (1774)

authoritative. In terms of standardising ideology, writers in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries attempted to codify both the principles and stereotypes of this system. According to eighteenth century prescriptivists, certain accents reflect negative personality traits. By presenting non-standard accents as vulgar, they hoped to elicit the desired changes in pronunciation. As Börje Holmberg (Holmberg, 1964, as cited in Mugglestone, 2003, p.51) points out, vulgarity was used as a primary prescriptive weapon, typically used to varieties that were considered with disfavour within prevailing concepts of correctness for one reason or another. Pronunciation "distinguishes the educated reader and speaker from the vulgar and unpolished one." (Vandenhoff, 1862, p.22). Provincial articulations are considered to be 'awkward' for Sylvester Douglas[7], but the capital's 'best' speech is characterized as redolent of refinement and ease. In a similar vein, John Murdoch[8] highlights the importance of his stated 'standard' of speech, as well as its 'politeness,' emphasizing its function as 'an integral aspect of a genteel and liberal education.' But on the other hand, the 'provincial' was portrayed as utterly repulsive. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.52)

This prescriptive approach also had the result of speakers of localized dialects being presented as ignorant, uneducated, or illiterate regardless of their actual educational background or any indicator of intelligence. The fact that social connotations were imparted, whether intentionally or unintentionally by the styles of speech used, is brought to prominence in much writing on pronunciation from the late eighteenth century onwards. (Mugglestone, 2003, p. 54)

Sheridan attempted to disseminate a localized standard that could be "acquired only by conversing with people in polite life" (1762, p. 30) According to Benjamin Smart,

 "There are two pronunciations even in London, that of the well-bred, and that of the vulgar; and the difference does not consist merely in the various manner of pronouncing particular words, but often with the latter in a corruption of fundamental sounds. In short, it is owing to the one being cultivated, and the other neglected. The cultivated speaker employs a definite number of sounds which he utters with precision, distinctness, and in their proper places; the vulgar speaker misapplies the sounds, mars or alters them." (Smart, 1810, p. 9)

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[7] Sylvester Douglas, 1st Baron Glenbervie, (1743 −1823) was a British lawyer, politician and diarist. He was Chief Secretary for Ireland between 1793 and 1794.
[8] John Murdoch (1747 − 1824) most sigificant writer and teacher.

Uncultured speakers distorted or misapplied particular sounds attempting to appear like educated speakers, whereas skilled orators made far fewer mistakes when pronouncing specific words since they trained their abilities of elocution.

Enfield, Sheridan, and Smart all alluded to the socially normative methods in which the planned standardization of spoken language, particularly pronunciation, was to be carried out. Retaining regional markings was thought to be detrimental to gentlemanly standing, much as adaptation to the traits of the 'best' London speech was thought to imply inclusion among the 'received'. Each utterance becomes, in fact, an act of identity within the frameworks of much prescriptive writing and the attitudes to the language that they embody, situating the user within social space by way of the variables utilized. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.57)

In this way, a non-regional accent was promoted as a symbol of social status, a link that was well-established by the mid-nineteenth century. According to Walter Bagehot[9] (1867) economic progress was shown to be insufficient in confirming social progress. Accordingly, manners, including those of language, became more important. Wealth was not as significant as manners were. No matter how affluent a person was, if they lacked proper demeanour, they were considered vulgar rather than gentleman. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.58)

'The wealthy man, great in his accumulation of riches, if he be not in possession of knowledge sufficient to command respect, and if he speak ungrammatically, is not considered a gentleman' (Davis, 1865 pp.16-17)

As this implies, language was to be used as a primary marker of the social divide, imaging social identity, whether real or aspirational. It was class, rather than ethnicity, that became the proclaimed basis of these divisions. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.60)

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[9] Walter Bagehot (1826 – 1877) was a British journalist, businessman, and essayist, who wrote extensively about government, economics, literature and race.

2.5 Social stratification

The classification of people in a society into socioeconomic tiers based on characteristics such as wealth, income, race, education, and power is known as social stratification. (Lumen Learning, 2008) The term "stratification" has been taken by sociologists from geology. There it refers to the successive layers or strata of rock and other materials that have formed the earth's crust over millennia.

„The concept of stratification has been adapted to refer to the different 'layers' or strata of social groups which are thought to be arranged, one on top of the other, in various human societies" (Saunders, 1990, p.1)

Social stratification is said to be based on four principles. First, rather than individuals, social stratification is socially defined as a quality of a society. Second, social stratification is passed down via the generations. Third, while social stratification is universal (present in all societies), it is also variable (differs across time and place). Fourth, social stratification involves not only quantitative inequalities, but also qualitative perceptions about social standing. (Ritzer & Ryan, 2010, pp. 622-624)

Gender, race, and ethnicity are three key social characteristics that have an intervening influence on social rank and stratification in most regions around the world. (Collins & Hill, 1998, pp. 231-247) In almost all English-speaking countries, there is a strong link between language and social class. Speech stratification correlates with social stratification. (Wells, 1982, p.13)

2.5.1 Social class and language

Individuals in all human communities differ from one another in the way they speak. A social class is a set of concepts in the social sciences and political theory that are based on models of social stratification that exist in class societies, in which people are divided into a hierarchy of social categories where the high, middle, and lower classes are the most common. (Grant, 2001, p.161)

The upper class is made up of people who are wealthy, well-born, powerful, or a combination of these things. (Brown, 2009, p.953) The aristocracy and royalty are the upper classes in the United Kingdom, with income having a less crucial part in class position.

The middle class, a vast group of people in contemporary society who lie socioeconomically between the lower and upper classes, is the most contentious of the three divisions. (Stearns, 1994, p.621) The term "middle class" refers to those who have regular occupations that pay much more than the poverty line. Factory employees, salespeople, teachers, cooks, and nurses are examples of these types of jobs.

The lower class (also known as the working class) refers to people who work for low pay and have little financial stability. Low-income people are frequently referred to as "lower class."

Karl Marx is one of the most prominent philosophers on the subject of social class. He linked social structure to an individual's position in relation to the means of production. This theory is grounded in the conditions of mid-Victorian industrial Britain, with its extremes of capitalist exploitation and control. Growing class division in the United Kingdom resulted in a dialect and accent divergence. Working-class connotations were strong in the new urban vernaculars that arose in cities like Manchester and Leeds. There was also the increasingly uniform received pronunciation of the aristocracy which included not only capitalists but also traditional landowners, senior managers and civil servants. (Mesthrie, 2011, p.161)

The fundamental dynamic of human history, according to Marx, is class conflict. Classes are groups of people that have similar economic interests and are characterized by their common role in the economy. (Mesthrie, 2011, p.161) While there is no inherent relationship between a given sound, sign, or syntactic structure and class, the social perception of linguistic distinctions between people is clearly influenced by inequalities in power, status, and class. The "standard" is the clearest example of status inequalities. One of the most profoundly held principles of public ideology in most Western countries is the belief in the presence of some "inherently good" form of language. However, these standard variants are nothing more than the social dialect of the dominant classes. (Mesthrie, 2011, p.162) The existence of class dialects, according to Marxist theory, is a result of class divisions and conflicts.

In his quantitative analysis of New York City data, William Labov found both kinds of stratification: "post-vocalic /r/, and the vocalic variables (eh) and (oh) show relatively fine stratification, while the interdental fricatives are fairly sharply stratified" (Mesthrie, 2011, p.165) According to his research, "stop articulations were overwhelmingly confined to the lower and lower-working classes" (2011, p.165)

2.5.2 Gender and language

The sociolinguistic study of gender and language has usually been divided into three approaches or theories: deficit, difference, and dominance. According to deficit-based theories, women's linguistic usages are inferior to men's, and are frequently indicative of "weakness." Women demonstrate these linguistic weaknesses through "weak" linguistic features such as hedges, tag questions and indirect commands and requests. (Mesthrie, 2011, p.220)

In describing and explaining women's vs. men's language, dominance-based approaches emphasize women's relative powerlessness in comparison to men.

Robin Lakoff's seminal work *Language and Woman's Place* originally published as an article in 1973 and then as a book in 1975, began the modern sociolinguistic study of language and gender. Lakoff identifies lexical and pragmatic characteristics of so-called "women's language," including precise color terms (e.g. mauve, magenta), "empty" adjectives (e.g. divine, cute), high-rising terminal (question) intonation on declaratives (e.g. What's your name? Mary Smith?), and the use of tag questions (e.g. It's hot in here, isn't it?). She also points out that women are more likely to adopt "hypercorrect" grammar, including conventional pronunciations such as going rather than goin' and the avoidance of non-standard forms such as ain't. (Mesthrie, 2011, p.221) The description of women's language as "weaker" than men's is characterized as taking a deficit approach.

Lakoff's work has been criticized for a variety of reasons, including its alleged emphasis on deficit and its reliance on introspective methodology rather than empirical study, with critics quickly demonstrating that not all women use "women's language" and that men use "women's"

linguistic features as well. However, Lakoff's work inspired numerous empirical studies of female-male language differences. (Mesthrie, 2011, p.221-222)

2.6 Prestige

In sociolinguistics, prestige refers to the level of respect accorded to a particular language or dialect within a speech community in comparison to other languages or dialects. As a result, sociolinguistic prestige is an expression of the broader issue of social stratification, particularly social class. A language or dialect connected with the upper class has 'positive prestige,' whereas one connected with the lower class has 'negative prestige.' Prestige languages/dialects are frequently associated with standardised languages/dialects, as the latter is generally regarded as more prestigious within a speech community than a language/dialect that deviates greatly from linguistic norms. Sociolinguistic prestige is particularly noticeable in settings where two or more distinct languages are spoken, as well as in diverse, socially stratified urban regions where speakers of various languages and/or dialects are likely to contact regularly. (World Heritage Encyclopedia, 2018)

Labov differentiates between covert and overt norms. According to Mesthrie (2011, p.173) the high-status variants possess overt prestige. They are connected with upper-class speakers' undeniable social power, they may be required for higher-status occupations and upward mobility, and are promulgated by agents of standardization in society. However, for many working-class and lower-middle-class speakers, the "non-standard" linguistic variables associated with their groups may have a covert prestige.

Members of a speech community may view nonstandard languages or dialects as having high linguistic prestige, which is known as covert prestige. Linguist William Labov coined the term "covert prestige" after observing speakers preferring to speak in a nonstandard dialect in his study of New York City English speakers, despite the fact that it was perceived as inferior. In informal speech contexts, Labov explained that the speakers continued to use the nonstandard dialect in order to develop a sense of group identity.

Peter Trudgill expanded on Labov's findings in his study of English speakers in Norwich, claiming that "covert prestige reflects the value system of our society, and of the different sub-

cultures within this society". (1972, p.194) Male speakers, according to Trudgill, are more disposed toward non-standard, working-class speech varieties, and they are more concerned with attaining group solidarity than with wanting to achieve or appear as if they have a high status, whereas female speakers are the polar opposite.

The importance of various languages and dialects is determined by a variety of factors, including "rich literary heritage, high degree of language modernisation, considerable international standing, or the prestige of its speakers" (Kloss, 1966, pp. 143-144)

These and other characteristics and causes contribute to the perception of a language as having high prestige, whereas a language or dialect with few or none of these characteristics is thought to have low prestige. While some dialect differences are due to geographic factors, dialect differences can also be due to societal factors. Quite frequently, "the public prestige dialect of the elite in a stratified community differs from the dialect(s) of the non-elite strata (working class and other)." (Kroch, 1978, p.17)

2.7 Received Pronunciation

The accent that is regarded with the most prestige in nineteenth century Britain was *Received Pronunciation* often abbreviated as RP. The term Received Pronunciation was coined by Ellis who provided the first formal specifications of RP, stating that

 "[i]n the present day […] we may recognise a received pronunciation all over the country" (Ellis, 1869–89, as cited in Mugglestone, 2017, p.153).

Ellis examined the qualities of speakers who exemplified such usage; if geographic origin markers were missing, other connections, such as those based on education or social standing, were noted. Early twentieth century definitions of RP, for example, engaged with hierarchical and socially evaluative meanings with apparent ease;

"for Wyld (1934: 605), RP was "the best type of English", distinguished by the "marked distinctiveness and clarity of its sounds" and firmly embedded in models of emulation and aspiration: it was "a type of English which is neither provincial nor vulgar, a type which most

people would willingly speak if they could, and desire to speak if they do not".." (Mugglestone, 2017, p.153)

2.7.1 Variability and factors accounting for variability in received pronunciation

Even though RP is classified as a single accent, it has a wide range of variations. There are three main forms of variability in RP: systemic, realisational, and lexical.

When various speakers have diverse sets (or "systems") of phonemes, we speak about systemic or inventory variability. Realisational variability refers to the way in which a single phoneme may have different phonetic realisations. Lexical variability refers to the use of different series of phonemes for the same word. (Hughes, Trudgill and Watt, 2012, p. 40)

Variability within RP is accounted by factors such as age, social class, and age at which a person began to acquire an RP accent. Received Pronunciation, like any other accent, is always changing, so naturally there are differences in pronunciation between younger and older speakers. For example, older speakers may have one additional vowel phoneme than most other speakers of the accent. Younger speakers tend to use more glottal stops than their elders, as well as monophthongs instead of diphthongs. (Hughes, Trudgill and Watt, 2012, p. 41)

The upper classes have characteristics that set them apart from the majority of RP speakers. "In identifying this social stratum, Wells (1982) refers to dowager duchesses, certain army officers, Noël Coward-type sophisticates, and popular images of elderly Oxbridge dons and 'jolly-hockey-sticks' schoolmistresses." (Hughes, Trudgill and Watt, 2012, p.41) For example, in words like *university*, such speakers are likely to have a relatively open final vowel, similar to Cardinal Vowel 3, [ε].

A third factor is the age at which a person began to develop an RP accent. Those who acquire it after childhood are more likely to avoid the regular features of faster RP speech, such as the dropping of unaccented /h/ in pronouns, than those who acquire it before childhood. (Hughes, Trudgill and Watt, 2012, p. 41)

2.8 Cockney

Cockney English is a dialect of English, which is spoken in and around London, primarily by the working and lower-middle classes. Specifically, Cockney speakers are individuals from the East End (Miller, 2011), or, traditionally, people born within earshot of Bow Bells. (Chisholm, 1911, p.627)

Cockney, like RP, is based on a variation of London English. However, unlike RP, this variety is associated with the lower classes of society and should not be used in polite conversation. (Altendorf, 2003, p.37) The first recorded statement about Cockney by Thomas Sheridan shows the perceptions people in the 18th century had regarding this dialect:

"Nay in the very metropolis two different modes of pronunciation prevail, by which the inhabitants of one part of the town, are diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of the other. One is current in the city, and is called the cockney; the other at the court-end, and is called the polite pronunciation. As amongſt theſe various dialects, one muſt have the preference, and become faſhionable, it will of courſe fall to the lot of that which prevails at court, the ſource of faſhions of all kinds. All other dialects, are ſure marks, either of a provincial, ruſtic, pedantic, or mechanic education; and therefore have ſome degree of diſgrace annexed to them" (Sheridan 1762, p.30)

Unlike traditional RP, Cockney has very low social prestige. As Sheridan (1762, p.30) had already pointed out that non-standard dialects "have ſome degree of diſgrace annexed to them", this disgrace is particularly marked in the case of Cockney. Matthews (1972, xi) characterizes Cockney in the preface of his 1938 edition as "the most generally despised and downtrodden of all of the non-standard forms of English".

"Cockney is said to be ugly mode of speech, but when the alleged ugliness is examined it comes back to class." (Barltrop & Wolveridge, 1980, p.5)

The London County Council issued the Conference on the Teaching of English in London Elementary Schools in 1909, stating that:

"The Cockney mode of speech, with its unpleasant twang, is a modern corruption without legitimate credentials, and is unworthy of being the speech of any person in the Empire's capital city." (quoted Matthews, 1972, p.38)

Cockney speakers were seen as 'vulgar' in 18th century England due to their use of 'incorrect' speech patterns that differed from the standard. According to Barltrop & Wolveridge, (1980, p.5) one of the characteristics for which Cockney was looked down upon "is the glottal stop – reducing 't' to a grunt in the back of the throat."

In addition, h-dropping was condemned. "The teacher's case is that 'h' should be sounded on English words because this is the established practice – but not among Cockneys. They know that h's are there and put them into their writing; but to use them in speech is 'talking posh' " (Barltrop & Wolveridge, 1980, p.6). Furthermore, Barltrop and Wolveridge (1980, p.6) state that there is a belief that Cockney adds h's in the wrong places and utter non-gramatical sentences such as: "this hevening Hi'll 'ang these harticles hup in the 'ouse." These authors contend that these lines are absolutely false and that Cockney speakers do not utter such sentences. Prejudices are primarily caused by educated people's views of Cockney language.

2.8.1 Characteristics of Cockney:

In Cockney, consonants undergo a variety of transformations. According to Wells (1986, p.325), T Glottalization is one of the most common features of Cockney dialect. In between vowels and before a pause, Cockney speakers substitute the glottal stop for t in *butterfly* /ˈbʌʔəflaɪ/ and *wet* /weʔ/. (Hughes & Trudgill, 2005, p. 75).

The difference between /θ, ð/ and /f, v/ is lost in a variety of ways due to a process termed as (th)-fronting, which collapses the distinction between labio-dental and dental fricatives. Th-fronting can occur initially as in *thin* /fɪn/, medially as in *Cathy* /ˈkafɪ/ or together /təˈgɛvə/ and finally as in *both* /bəʊf/ or bathe /beɪv/. (Hughes & Trudgill, 2005, p. 75).

Usually, standard accents have /h/ in words such as *hit*, *hammer*, *happy*, *hedge* which is realized as [h] – a voiceless glottal fricative – however, in the working class accents of most of England, H-dropping is present. That is, the [h] of standard accents is absent in words such as *hit* /ʔɪt/*, hammer / ʔæmə/, happy, /ʔapi/* and *hedge / ʔɛdʒ/* begin with a vowel or sometimes with [ʔ] (Wells, 1982, pp. 253-4)

A phenomenon called L Vocalization converts [ɫ] into into a nonsyllabic back vocoid [ɣ], or its rounded equivalent, [o] or [ʊ] for example: *well [wɛʊ], fall /foʊ/* (Wells, 1982, pp. 258-9)

2.8.2 Rhyming slang

Slang can take numerous forms, but they're all essentially informal "secret languages." The Oxford English Dictionary defines rhyming slang as 'a variety of (orig. Cockney) slang in which a word is replaced by a phrase which rhymes with it'.

Cockney rhyming slang is generally believed to have originated in the underworld of London in the middle of the nineteenth century to outwit the inquisitive eavesdropper - a policeman or strange. It is a slang in which a word is replaced by another word or a phrase that rhymes with it, for example, *apples and pears* meaning *stairs.* (Perkins, 1996, p.3)

Although it is widely assumed that rhyming slang encompasses practically the whole Cockney language, its currency in the early 1930s was quite low. Expressions such as 'my old pot and pan' for 'my old man', 'a bull and a cow'for a row, and 'would you Adam and Eve it?' for 'would you believe it?' were used casually and without any special emphasis. They were part of a range of humorous expressions of various kinds, and many Cockneys were not even aware of the term 'rhyming slang' (Baltrop & Wolveridge, 1980, p.28)

2.9 Symbols of social divide:

Many linguists of the eighteenth century tried to codify the rules of correct pronunciation. They noted how different social classes pronounced, or should pronounce, certain words and phrases. Some of the more noteworthy examples are explored in the following section.

2.9.1 Long a:

Many contemporary works on language discussed the proper way in which words such as fast, bath or last were to be pronounced and what the correct pronunciation of *a* should be when it is preceded by the voiceless fricatives /f, s, θ/ or in terms of spelling when followed by <f>, <s>, and <th>.

In the late 18th century, using [ɑ:] was likely to label the speaker as 'inaccurate,' 'vulgar,' or even 'uneducated,' in the words of many linguists. According to John Walker the use of the lengthened *a* was the preserve of inaccurate or vulgar speakers.

"Every correct ear would be disgusted at giving the a in these words the full long sound of the a in father" (Walker, 1791, p.9)

The use of the short [æ], however, was considered 'elegant' 'accurate' and 'precise' when used with words such as *last* and *bath.* Although there was still variation between long and short sounds, John Longmuir[10] notes in his own account of pronunciation in 1864 that the short and fronted [æ] dominated in the usage of those careful speakers concerned with the maintenance of 'correctness' and 'proper' speech. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.81)

An artificial and compromised 'middle sound' – an intermediate between [æ] and [ɑ:] – was created by speakers who adopted the use of short [æ] which was, according to Longmuir a characteristic of careful speakers.

"There is a disposition among literary men and public speakers to unite on some intermediate sound between the entire broadness of the a in father, and the narrowness of the a in fat... In this

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[10] John Longmuir (1803–1883) was a versatile Scottish minister and antiquary, known as a poet and lexicographer.

way, they guard against that undue prolongation of the a which offended Walker" (Longmuir, 1864, p. viii)

According to Ellis and many other writers on the language, this particular form became the domain of the conscious and consciously 'proper' speech in the nineteenth century. But language, society, prescriptive tenets, and the sociolinguistic sensibility of speakers interact in ways that are far more complex than could be assumed at first. Due to the sheer scope and complexity of social and linguistic phenomena, prescriptivism does not always manage to effect the desired linguistic developments. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.82)

In the end, it was the ostensibly 'vulgar' [ɑ:] rather than the iterated 'correctness' of this 'middle' variation that stabilized as one of the primary indicators of RP and the non-regional accent. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.83)

2.9.2 R-dropping and Instrusive R

The 'vulgar,' the 'Cockney,' the 'lower classes,' and the 'illiterate,' according to prescriptive text paradigms, vocalize post-vocalic [r]. The 'elegant, polished, and educated,' on the other hand, were claimed to preserve its use in the accuracy of their cautious, literate speech. The underlying premise, especially in terms of the remedial self-help that was sometimes apparently supplied in contemporary books on language, is that the 'illiterate' can become 'polished' by restoring [r] to its appropriate place in words such as car and part. The discrepancy that can develop between linguistic fact and prescriptive fiction is exemplified once again by attitudes against the loss of [r]. In truth, its vocalization in these locations has been documented in London English since the mid-eighteenth century, with its absence rather than its presence being more typical of the nineteenth-century emergent RP. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.87)

In condemnatory accounts of the loss of post-vocalic [r], the term 'cockney,' a term of abuse that was regularly applied to many linguistic sins of the time, was given particular emphasis, its omission thus being deliberately associated with a social sub-stratum characterized by popular convictions of its complete social and linguistic unacceptability. The disappearance of [r] was linked to the 'provincialists' and the Cockney 'vulgar' of the 'Metropolis' by Hill (1821) and Smart

(1836). In this sense, the term 'Cockney' was employed to connote the inferiority of ungrammatical speakers. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.87)

The presence of [r] in all positions was promoted as a salient part of 'correct speech', however, on the question of the ongoing presence of post-vocalic and final [r] in 'good' speech, Edwin Guest[11] noted "many who insist upon its pronunciation, drop it, immediately their attention is diverted, or their vigilance relaxed" (Guest, 1838, p.313)

Henry Wyld attempted to instil a feeling of linguistic reality in this setting in the early twentieth century, illustrating the widespread and long-term influence of language attitudes in this regard:

"[Ordinary speakers] even go to the length of pretending that they can hear a difference between such pairs as horse-hoarse, Parma-palmer, kernel-colonel... Of course, a distinction can easily be made; pronunciation can be faked to any extent. The point is that in ordinary educated English speech in the South, there is no difference between the above pairs" (Wyld 1906, p.16)

In this way, the use of post-vocalic and final [r] was able to acquire the paradoxical status of being present as a prescriptive rule in the 'best' English, even as descriptive discussion of non-localized pronunciation was obliged to concede its absence in precisely the same positions.

However, attitudes toward the loss of [r] in these positions tended to have additional ramifications, affecting, for example, current reactions to the phenomenon now known as 'intrusive r.' In reality, the vocalization or loss of [r] in final position is tied to the evolution of intrusive [r], a process through which words like *ma* and *mar* became similar in southern English, both being articulated as /'ma:/ (in non-localized—and non-rhotic—accents). However, a word like *mar*, which would normally lose its [r] under these conditions, would keep its [r] if it was followed by another word beginning with a vowel, a phenomenon known as 'linking [r]'. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.91)

As a result, although a construction like *far from* is sounded as /'fɑ: frəm/ (without the final [r]), *far away* will be spoken as /'fɑ:r ə'wei/ (with the [r] restored before the initial vowel of away). The usage of linking [r] in this fashion is a linking phenomenon in that it is employed to avoid a potential gap or hiatus between different sounds, resulting in a smoother transition between, in this case, two adjacent vowel sounds. (Mugglestone, 2003, p. 91)

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[11] Edwin Guest (1800–1880) was a historical writer.

Intrusive [r] appears in identical phonetic environments as linking [r] such as after /ɑ:/, /ɔ:/ and after /ə/ as in *Laura and* would be articulated as /ˈlɔ:rərənd/. The presence of the intrusive [r] is considered 'vulgar' (Mugglestone, 2003, p.92)

As a result, the presence of intrusive [r] manifests itself in a variety of ways, which are frequently severely chastised. Intrusive [r] is "a non-permissive trill" and "the absolute height of vulgarity," according to Alexandar Ellis; it denotes the "uneducated" and the "illiterate." (Ellis, 1881, as cited in Mugglestone, 2003, p.92)

2.9.3 H-dropping

The absence of /h/ in the pronunciation of words like *hat* (rendered as /æt/) in some regional forms of English is what came to be known as h-dropping. (Romaine, 1997, p.699)

In modern English, the use of /h/ has become one of the most important indicators of social identity. Its presence in the initial positions is connected with the 'educated' and 'polite,' while its absence is connected with the 'vulgar,' 'ignorant,' and 'lower class.' As John Wells (1982, p. 254) has pointed out, the dropping of [h] has become "the single most powerful pronunciation shibboleth in England" which became a symbol of social divide.

The loss of [h] is "a mark of inferior education... calculated to produce a great prejudice against the offender in all persons of refinement" (Vandenhoff, 1862, p.16)

In 1869, Alexander Ellis noted that "at the present day, great strictness in pronouncing h is demanded as a test of education and position in society" (Ellis, 1869, as cited in Mugglestone, 2003, p.94)

In Trudgill's (1974) study of Norwich, h-dropping exhibits the sharpest stratification of any of his phonological variables, with a considerable gap between middle-and working-class speakers. It is thought that the phenomenon spread from the middle to the lower classes of society, beginning in urban areas. In the 16th or 17th century, it began to be stigmatized as an indication of inferior education. (Milroy, 2002, p.17) H-dropping occurs in the majority of English dialects in England and Wales, including Cockney, West Country English, West Midlands English, East

Midlands English, the majority of northern England, and Cardiff English. (Collins & Mees, 2002, pp.290-302)

H-dropping is most common in working-class accents in the nations and regions where it is popular. According to studies, it is substantially more common in lower social groups than in higher social groups. Sheridan notes that the best way to 'cure' h-dropping is by "reading over frequently all words beginning with the letter H… in the dictionary, and push them out with the full force of the breath" (Sheridan, 1762, p.35)

By the end of the nineteenth century, only *heir, honest, honour,* and *hour* (and derivatives) remained [h]-less, social sensitivity to its presence having succeeded in redressing centuries of custom with regard to *herb* and *humble, hospital, human and humour*, for example, all of which now contain [h] as well as <h> in non-localized forms of English. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.104)

2.9.4 G-dropping

During the 19th century, another 'dropped letter,' that of <g> in phrases like *walking*, received a lot of attention. The term 'G-dropping' refers to the practice of pronouncing the weak ending -ing as /in/ rather than /iŋ/. Realizations of -ing in present participle forms such as walking were traditionally pronounced 'without the 'g' in [in]. However, according to John Rice (Rice, 1765, p.50),

"[It is] a vicious and indistinct Method of Pronunciation, and ought to be avoided. By these Means, *hearing* may possibly be mistaken for *herein, looking* for *look in*, *getting* for *get in."*

'Dropping the g' results in homophones (looking: look in, getting: get in) that the orthography does not support. Instead of maintaining clarity and efficiency in a properly based language, they would inexorably lead to ambiguity. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.129)

By 1791, John Walker had already established the value of [iŋ] rather than [in] as a marker of propriety and a preferred form of the 'best speakers' in relevant words. By 1836, 'dropping the g' had become associated with the 'vulgar' and statusless, whilst articulation with [iŋ] had become associated with the 'polite' and purposely statusful. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.129)

2.10 Ladylike accent

In the eighteenth century, ladies, just like men, were expected to be schooled in the finer points of language. Girls were being schooled in all the subtleties of manner and behaviour that 'young women' should have at their command, regardless of the walks of life they were to inhabit. Their social education on the necessary skills for polite behaviour could have begun at any time. The responsibilities and vocations that were considered appropriate for these reconstructed 'ladies' of the family eventually shifted. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.135) Ladies were, according to the 1853 diary of Margaretta Gray, frequently to be:

'dismissed from the dairy, the confectionary, the store-room, the still-room, the poultry-yard, the kitchen-garden, and the orchard' (Butler, 1896, as cited in Mugglestone, 2003, p.137)

Gray later on notes that "a lady, to be such, must be a mere lady, and nothing else. She must not work for profit, or engage in any occupation that money can command. . . what I remonstrate against is the negative forms of employment, the wasting of energy, the crippling of talent under false ideas of station, propriety, and refinement." (Butler, 1896, as cited in Mugglestone, 2003, p.137)

Even women at the bottom of the social ladder were not immune to the pressures that resulted. Despite being forced to work by necessity, they were "often judged by the same standards of angelic, sheltered femininity as middle-class and upper-class women." (Murray, 1982, p.170)

The social and cultural conceptions of 'lady' that evolved during the course of the nineteenth century were heavily influenced by language. According to Robert Brewer:

"It is said that in dress the true gentleman is distinguished by faultless linen, and by accurately-fitting gloves. And in education he is distinguished by his unfailing self-possession and by good spelling... he ought never to trip into the vulgarism of mispronouncing his words. They are the faultless linen and the accurately-fitting gloves; the little things that carry with them the 'ring' of true gentility." (Brewer, 1866, p. 75)

The gentleman could be recognized by his perfection in such matters; however, the lady would have to go even further if she was to properly justify her claim to such a title. While high standards of behaviour and morality will inevitably differentiate the gentleman in the set of

attitudes and ideals that have come to dominate public thinking in this area, even higher ones must characterize the lady who desires to take, and indeed to express, her truly gentle standing. (Mugglestone, 2003, p. 138)

'True ladies' must exceed their male counterparts even more in those fine nuances of breeding, carried and imparted by manner, etiquette, and, from the point of view of this book, by language. According to Florence B. Jack:

" 'Manners makyth Man' and woman too, for if good manners are so essential to man, are they not then indispensable to woman, whose great object in life is to please?" (Jack, 1911, p.325)

Women were expected to guard 'manners,' especially those of language, in the same way that they were expected to defend morality, chastising the indecent and unpleasant, the 'vulgar' and the 'improper.' Status, propriety, and purity were qualities that seemed to be ingrained in how people spoke.

"For the lady, the speaking of her native language with purity and elegance of pronunciation, in an agreeable tone of voice," is the only marker that will convey to her audience "the prestige of refinement and high breeding." (Vandenhoff, 1862, p. 1)

Mispronunciations of various kinds, as well as lapses in tone and phrase, were all widely seen as reflecting lower, and less refined, levels of sensitivity than those required of the flawless femininity that was so often dictated in the nineteenth century. As a result, ladies were envisioned as taking on the role of language guardians, with obligations not just for personal norms of use but also for the language as a whole. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.144)

Women "must be educated, in great degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in" (Wollstonecraft, 1989, p. 31)

The use of 'proper' language became a central part of this specifically female education over the next century, having a significant impact on contemporary constructions of the woman in her various social roles as maid, wife, and mother, as well as those broader aspects of social identity that true ladies were expected to convey. The voice was regarded as a particularly prominent aspect among the external signals that were to be used to communicate conceptions of identity to the outside world.

For the woman, using a loud voice was often considered as displaying evident deficiencies in status and it was 'utterly plebeian and repulsive in a lady'. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.146)

Therefore, women were advised to speak in a low and soft tone; harsh and aggressive tones were deemed unladylike and humiliating. As spouses or mothers, proper voice management was typically portrayed as an unquestionable asset in terms of the value it would give. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.146)

In the eighteenth century, reading became another aspect of the vocal propriety depicted as necessary for women. "The art of reading and speaking with propriety" was to be regarded as a prime "department of ornamental education" facilitating "a certain established standard of elegance." (Graham, 1837, p.9)

Language may also have a part in the various social roles that women were expected to play at home, such as wife and mother. The 'good' wife was portrayed as a linguistic and moral role model. In her ideal form, she was to instil in her children the 'correct' and non-regionalized standards of speech, as well as to assist her husband's social advancement with her own undeniably 'correct' use of language. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.153)

2.10.1 Ladylike pronunciations

The avoidance of 'vulgarity,' 'provinciality,' and other linguistic improprieties was emphasized in contemporary constructs of ideal femininity, a feature that makes heightened female knowledge of the shibboleths of [h]-usage more, rather than less likely. In terms of gendered patterns of usage and defining linguistic attitudes in terms of speech behaviour, the use of [h] was not the only phonemic nicety that gained attention. Similar disputes over the 'correct' sound to be assigned to the use of *a* in phrases like fast and bath were also significant in talks concerning the 'appropriate' usage of language. Such nouns were pronounced with a short [æ] in the middle of the 17th century, but the change to the lengthened [ɑ:] sparked debate because it was regarded as a marker of a non-localized accent. It appears that [æ] and [ɑ:] co-existed to some extent among 'polite' and 'vulgar' speakers with both forms becoming connected to constructs of a 'standard' and non-localized norm. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.164)

In the 1836, Benjamin Smart set the 'vulgarity' of [ɑ:] against the 'affectation' of [æ] concluding that a medium between the two extremes is the practice of the best speakers. (Smart, 1836, p.17)

'Educated English women' appear most often, however, in Ellis's comments on the pronunciation of *a* in lengthening position before voiceless fricatives in words such as bath and fast—and particularly in his accounts of female preferences for the use not only of the short [æ] but also of a 'middle sound' in what seems to be [æ:] (Mugglestone, 2003, p.164)

According to Ellis, 'those who do not like broad sounds' (such as [a:]) prefer instead [æ:]; this select company comprises, as Ellis adds, 'especially ladies." (Ellis, 1869, as cited in Mugglestone, 2003, p.165)

Female preferences for more 'delicate' middle sounds are alluded to on a number of other occasions. Ellis states that it is the 'delicate' and 'refined' who avoid the use of [ɑ:] because it is considered too broad. Avoidance of [ɑ:] is connected to the fear of inserting r where it does not belong (e.g. arsk for ask, larf for laugh) because it was considered 'vulgar'. (Ellis, 1869, as cited in Mugglestone, 2003, p.165)

Such aesthetic sensibility toward language use and pronunciation had long been a feature of feminine philosophy. Other nineteenth-century comments appear to confirm the presence of heightened female sensitivities to the use of other stigmatized forms and their 'proper' variants—the 'best' articulation of -ing, the use of [hw] rather than [w] in words such as *which*, or the use of the 'delicate' palatal glide in enunciations of words such kind /kjaind/. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.165)

In *The Sounds of Spoken English* (1906), Walter Ripman notes that [a] and [æ] occur, especially in the speech of ladies,' and goes on to discuss the value judgments and accompanying evaluative paradigms that he argues are at the root of these patterns of variation. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.166)

"It is sometimes found that precise speakers, through an excessive desire to avoid any suspicion of cockney leanings in their speech, substitute [a] for [ɑ]... it is particularly ladies of real or would-be gentility who commit this mistake" (Ripman, 1913, p.55)

3. Methodology

The aim of this study is to critically assess the relationships between lower and upper social classes, as well as to determine how one's manner of speech influences one's social standing in the early twentieth century, taking into account social classes and their attitudes toward language.

The following research questions will be addressed in this paper:

c) "How do negative attitudes towards non-standard dialects affect the people from lower social classes?"

d) "What is the relation between the language and social class?"

This is a narrative-based qualitative research study. The corpus of this paper will be George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* originally published in 1912 and the 1964 movie adaptation *My Fair Lady* directed by George Cukor. This play consists of a Preface followed by Five Acts and a Sequel. For the purposes of this study, certain dialogic exchanges between the characters will be used. The main characters of this play are Eliza Doolittle, Professor Henry Higgins, and Colonel Hugh Pickering. Characters that are of less importance are Mrs Higgins, Mrs Pearce, Alfred Doolittle and Freddy Eynsford-Hill. In the original play, the names of characters are capitalized, therefore this paper will follow the same approach in the data analysis.

This play represents the relations between phonetician Henry Higgins and Cockney-speaking flower selling girl whom he encounters at Covent Garden. The gap in socioeconomic classes was defined by linguistic variance; the upper class speaks Standard English, whereas the economically disadvantaged speak dialects like Cockney. Eliza, who speaks the Cockney dialect — one of London's most prominent working-class accents – overhears a phonetic professor, Henry Higgins, wagering with Colonel Pickering that he can teach her "correct" English and convert her into a duchess. Pickering accepts the wager and Higgins thoroughly instructs Eliza on upper-class manners and language. People's word choices, accents, and dialects have significant influence on how they are seen in society. The focus of this study will be on upper-class perceptions of those who speak English with non-standard accents and dialects. The non-

standard accent and dialect of Eliza Doolittle and the way society is treating her will be observed. Whereas the other characters engage with every aspect of Eliza's personality, Higgins, being a phonetician, sees things almost exclusively in terms of language and particularly pronunciation. This makes the character of Higgins a useful tool for viewing Victorian era class distinctions and relations in terms of language. This thesis will therefore primarily analyze interactions between Higgins and Eliza.

4. Data analysis:

In the play, George Bernard Shaw conceals the names of the characters in Act 1 and introduces them as "THE FLOWER GIRL," "THE MOTHER," etc. letting his readers establish the social status of the characters based on their speech. The distinction between the characters can be noticed in their linguistic usage which reveals their social identity and their economical position. The following discourse is set in Covent garden at 11:15 p.m.

ACT 1:

THE FLOWER GIRL. Nah then, Freddy: look wh' y' gowin, deah.

THE MOTHER. How do you know that my son's name is Freddy, pray? (Shaw, 2005, p.9)

This is the first introduction of THE FLOWER GIRL. The readers do not know who she is, they can only recognize her social background based on her speech. Looking at the language usage, it is noticeable that their social identities are not the same. THE FLOWER GIRL is a Cockney speaker, while THE MOTHER is using the standard. In her speech, THE FLOWER GIRL pronounces the weak ending -ing as /in/ "gowin" rather than /iŋ/ in the word "going". This method of pronunciation, according to Rice (1765, p.50) was to be avoided. The 'dropping of g' was associated with the 'vulgar' and statusless, therefore, situating THE FLOWER GIRL as a vulgar and statusless speaker. The usage of "deah" for "dear" is common for Cockney speakers. According to Barltrop & Wolveridge (1980, p.14) the range of adress-words used by Cockneys is well known: 'mate', 'chum', 'dear', 'love' and others. 'Dear' and 'love' is specifically used by women, where no personal affection is implied, however, the usage of these words convey amiable equality. This amiability can be noticed in the next quote by THE FLOWER GIRL

THE FLOWER GIRL [protesting] Who's trying to deceive you? I called him Freddy or Charlie same as you might yourself if you was talking to a stranger and wished to be pleasant (Shaw, 2005, p.11)

Because of the clash between the classes, THE MOTHER deemed it unacceptable for someone coming from low class to be associated with someone coming from the upper middle class. THE

FLOWER GIRL's politeness was misunderstood by THE MOTHER. Different classes could not mingle and it was deemed unacceptable for a gentleman to be acquainted with people from low classes.

THE FLOWER GIRL. Ow, eez ye-ooa san, is e? Wal, fewd dan y' de-ooty bawmz a mather should, eed now bettern to spawl a pore gel's flahrzn than ran awy atbaht pyin. Will ye-oo py me f'them? [Here, with apologies, this desperate attempt to represent her dialect without a phonetic alphabet must be abandoned as unintelligible outside London.] (Shaw, 2005, p.10)

(Translation: Oh, he's your son, is he? Well, if you had done your duty by him as a mother should, he should know better than spoil a poor girl's flowers and then run away without paying. Will you pay me for them?) (Hardison, 2010)

In this dialogue with THE MOTHER, THE FLOWER GIRL again speaks non-standard English that is full of vague and unclear sentences. This sentence is a clear example of her linguistic performance which indicates her social status and level of education. Her social identity, and attendant social ostracism, is hence determined by the linguistic shibboleths of /h/ dropping and double negation. (Mugglestone, 1993, p.376) In the first sentence /h/ is almost invariably absent. (Hughes, 1997, p.75). THE FLOWER GIRL pronounces the word *he's* as *eez* dropping the h completely. Ellis claimed that a "social suicide" was committed by omission of *h*. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.3) The presence of [h] in initial position was associated with 'polite and educated' and its loss with 'vulgar and ignorant' which were synonyms used for the people coming from the lower class. Another distinction of Cockney is the vowel shift from [ei] to [ai] in her realization of *paying* as *pyin*. In these words, g-dropping can be noticed as well as previously mentioned. Cockney is sometimes said to replace /ɹ/ with /w/ which can be noticed in THE FLOWER GIRL'S pronunciation of *spawl* for *spare*. Peter Wright (1981, p. 135) observed that while this was not a universal trait of cockneys, it was more widespread in the London area than everywhere else in Britain. This description could also be due to mishearing the labiodental R as /w/, despite the fact that it is still a distinct phoneme in cockney. The absence of [r] was connected with a social substratum characterized by popular convictions of its social and

linguistic unacceptability. Avoiding the usage of [r] was a characteristic of 'illiterate', 'vulgar' and of 'lower classes'.

THE NOTE TAKER. A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere--no right to live. Remember that you are a human being with a soul and the divine gift of articulate speech: that your native language is the language of Shakespear and Milton and The Bible; and don't sit there crooning like a bilious pigeon. (Shaw, 2005, p.20)

Here, THE NOTE TAKER imbues speech with spiritual and cultural implications; English, he believes, should be honored since it is the language of great artists and a gift from God. Mispronunciations of various kinds, as well as slips in tone and phrase, were all frequently perceived as showing lower, and less refined, levels of sensitivity than those demanded of the perfect femininity that was so often prescribed in the nineteenth century. Women were expected to speak in a low and soft tone and harsh and aggressive tones were deemed unladylike and humiliating. THE FLOWER GIRL throughout her speech utters such 'humiliating' sounds making people are her perceive her as vulgar and uneducated.

THE NOTE TAKER. You see this creature with her kerbstone English: the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days. Well, sir, in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party. I could even get her a place as lady's maid or shop assistant, which requires better English. That's the sort of thing I do for commercial millionaires. And on the profits of it I do genuine scientific work in phonetics, and a little as a poet on Miltonic lines. (Shaw, 2005, p.20)

In this passage, THE NOTE TAKER does not even perceive THE FLOWER GIRL as fully human, as indicated by his use of the word "creature" in reference to her. THE NOTE TAKER's impression seems to be based almost entirely on his perception of the girl's dialect. According to Crystal (1987, p.17) "We … only have to speak, to provide … innumerable clues about our

personal history and social identity." In *Pygmalion*, these 'clues' are revealed in the speech of THE FLOWER GIRL in which they not only indicate her past and her present but also can determine her future. THE NOTE TAKER sees language as a tool for societal improvement, a subject for scientific investigation, and a medium for artistic expression. THE FLOWER GIRL's 'kerbstone English', whilst graphically describing her present social location, is 'also the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days.' (Mugglestone, 1993, p.376)

In ACT 2 Shaw reveals the names of characters, readers get to know the identities of THE NOTE TAKER who is Professor Higgins (for the sake of this analysis, capitalized name HIGGINS will be used as in the play, the same principle is applied for LIZA) and THE FLOWER GIRL who is Eliza Doolittle. The scene is set at HIGGINS's home who is accompanied by Colonel Pickering. LIZA came to HIGGINS to pay for the English lessons.

THE FLOWER GIRL. I want to be a lady in a flower shop stead of selling at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. But they won't take me unless I can talk more genteel. He said he could teach me. Well, here I am ready to pay him--not asking any favor--and he treats me as if I was dirt. (Shaw, 2005, p.28)

In this excerpt, THE FLOWER GIRL reveals that she wants to work as a flower shop lady, but she will not be hired unless she can talk more genteel. THE FLOWER GIRL is aware of the consequences of her speech. She realizes that even a minor transition to employment in a flower shop is hampered by people's opinions of her linguistic shortcomings. This is a vivid portrayal of how language, particularly pronunciation, can act as both a social determiner and a social determinant, denying 'equal rights and opportunities for all.' (Shaw, 1980, p.182)

 HIGGINS [tempted, looking at her] It's almost irresistible. She's so deliciously low--so horribly dirty— (Shaw, 2005, p.32)

In this passage, HIGGINS' perception of Eliza is entirely based upon her foul pronunciation of English. Rendered by an epithet such as 'deliciously low', its use serves to emphasize the fusion of social and linguistic judgement which had come to prevail by the end of the nineteenth century. (Mugglestone, 1993, p.376)

HIGGINS. To get her to talk grammar. The mere pronunciation is easy enough. (Shaw, 2005, p.37)

It was important for ladies in the Victorian Era to speak properly because they were envisioned as taking on the role of language guardians. As indicated here, this consisted of more than just pronunciation; proper grammar, vocabulary and intonation were all essential. While grammar was the same for both sexes, certain differences in intonation and vocabulary existed. "There is a certain distinct but subdued tone of voice which is peculiar only to persons of the best breeding. It is better to err by the use of too low than too loud a tone." (Aster, 1869, as cited in Mugglestone, 2003, p.145) Speaking loudly was considered too vulgar to be used by ladies. Similarly, it was customary for the ladies to use slightly different vocabulary. For example, *papa* was preferred in place of *father* – The use of papa is hence extolled not because it is a better expression of filial regard but instead by virtue of its inaugural phoneme, a bilabial plosive which gives a becoming pout in its articulation, a position deemed entirely suitable for the appearance of a young lady as she enters a room. (Mugglestone, 2003, p.151). We can observe LIZA's usage of the word *papa* in ACT V, after she has acquired RP. I don't think papa would allow me. Would you, dad? (Shaw, 2003, p.116)

LIZA [pulling herself together in desperation] What am I fit for? What have you left

me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What's to become of me? (Shaw, 2003, p.92)

In ACT IV after winning HIGGINS' bet, LIZA feels frustrated and angry once the HIGGINS' social experiment is over. She is no longer the person she once was, and she is unsure of where she should go or what she should do with her life. She no longer possess her 'kerbstone English' and although having all of the social marks of a 'lady,' she lacks the financial resources to make them social reality. She is unprepared to return 'to the gutter' because her newly acquired status doesn't allow her to. In the Victorian Era, ladies were expected not to "work for profit or engage in any occupation that money can command." (Butler, 1896, as cited in Mugglestone, 2003, p.137) Stripped of her Cockney accent, LIZA can no longer return to Lisson Grove, nor can she continue living like a lady because she is still destitute despite having gained RP. Not only did her language use changed but also her cultural identity, she was no longer a flower selling girl, nor did she belong to the society from which she came from which is evident in the movie adaptation *My Fair Lady* when Eliza decided to go back to Higgins.

4.1 Movie adaptation My Fair Lady (1964)

In the musical *My Fair Lady (1964)* negative attitudes towards non-standard dialects can be noticed in the song sung by Professor Henry Higgins. In the first song of the movie *Why Can't The English* a linguistic prejudice towards the speech of Eliza Doolittle can be noticed.

[SINGlNG] Look at her a prisoner of the gutters

Condemned by every syllable she utters

By right she should be taken out and hung

For the cold-blooded murder of the English tongue (Cukor, 1964, 0:10:16)

Her Cockney dialect is prejudiced against and considered wrong as opposed to Standard English which is seen as the only correct way of speaking. By condemning her speech, professor Higgins condemns not only her cultural background but also all other non-standard speakers deeming their pronunciation as incorrect.

In the same song, *Why Can't The English*, professor Higgins mentions H-dropping which is an unmistakable characteristic of Cockney.

Hear them down in Soho Square

Dropping H's everywhere

Speaking English any way they like

Hey, you, sir, did you go to school?

What do you "tike" me for, a fool?

Well, no one taught him "take" instead of "tike" (Cukor, 1964, 0:10:43)

After Eliza's tutoring by Professor Higgins had begun, he focused on correcting her H-dropping. The exercise consisted of accurately pronouncing the following sentence "In Hertford, Hereford and Hampshire, hurricanes hardly ever happen." While pronouncing the sentence, Eliza pronounced the word *ever* as *hever* which is called hypercorrection. A speaker who hypercorrect their words believes that the form is more "correct," standard, or otherwise preferred due to a misunderstanding of such norms, which is frequently mixed with a desire to appear formal or educated. (Labov, 1972, p.126)

In the song, professor Higgins mocks Cockney diphthong change /eɪ/ which is realized as [æɪ] in *take* [teɪk] → [taɪk]. Furthermore, diphthong change can also be noticed in Eliza's pronunciation of the sentence "The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain." (Cukor, 1964,1:04:05) Words rain, Spain, stays, mainly and plain are realized as [raɪn], [spaɪn], [staɪz], [maɪnly] and [plaɪn]

Another feature of Cockney is having distinct pronunciation of the vowels. The following movie excerpt clearly represents how Eliza (as a representation of the Cockney speaking community) pronounces vowels.

[Professor Higgins] Say your vowels!

[Eliza Doolittle] I know me vowels. I knew them before I come.oooh

[Professor Higgins] Well if you know them, say them.

[Eliza Doolittle] A, E, I, O, U.

[Professor Higgins] Wrong! A, E, I, O, U. (Cukor, 1964, 0:59:37)

Eliza pronounces the vowels as: /ʌ/ → [ɐ], /æ/ which should be [ɛ] or [ɛɪ], /ɛ/ should be [eə], [eɪ], or [ɛɪ], /iː/ → [əi~ɐi], /ɔː/ → [oː] and /uː/ → [əʉ]. (Gomez, Kaizer, Reis, 2019, p.12)

5. Discussion:

In the analysis several dialogic exchanges have been analyzed, along with a few movie excerpts. Throughout the analysis, many instances of linguistic prejudice (that is, prejudice based on someone's accent or dialect) regarding speakers of non-standard dialects were observed. In his play *Pygmalion* (1864), Shaw portrays this linguistic prejudice primarily through the character of Henry Higgins. Not only does he portray the linguistic prejudice, but also he is intolerant of Eliza's cultural background. In his first encounter with Eliza Doolittle, Higgins claims that due to her dialect, she has no right to live. After Eliza comes to Higgins so he can teach her proper English, Professor Higgins devotes himself to eradicating all signs of Eliza's past – and to transforming her into a lady, which he accomplishes mainly through the use of language. Here, we can notice two distinct types of bias: prejudice towards Cockney speakers, i.e., those who are economically disadvantaged, and intolerance shown in Higgins' speech towards Eliza.

In the analysis, both of the research questions have been answered. The first research question "How do negative attitudes towards non-standard dialects affect people from lower social classes?" was answered while analyzing Eliza's desire to become a lady in a flower shop. People coming from lower social strata are usually aware of their position in society and how much (or how little) they can achieve while remaining in the "gutter". When Eliza says "they won't take me unless I can talk more genteel", she is aware of the disadvantages posed by her dialect. These negative views affect the non-standard speakers in a way that they feel unaccepted and untrustworthy. They are perceived as dirty no-good peasants. Due to the bad treatment they receive from upper classes, some people try to imitate their upper class talk and some show a desire to learn the standard in order to become a part of society. As mentioned in the theoretical part, non-standard speakers were perceived as vulgar and uneducated; in order for them to elevate themselves to a higher social class, they must learn the standard dialect of English. Therefore, once the opportunity for Eliza to climb to a higher social class arose, she took it willingly.

As for the second research question, "What is the relation between language and social class?", an answer to this question is found both in the play and in the movie adaptation. According to

Stockwell (2002, p. 13), social class is not an easy concept to define or measure and the stratification of class into different levels varies greatly among nations and cultures. In the play, the distinctions between rich and poor are rigorously defined. The upper-class characters were primarily concerned with maintaining the distinctions and disparities between the classes.

In the movie *My Fair Lady* (Cukor, 1964, 00:08:11), professor Higgins is stratifying bystanders based on their speech. He is able to pinpoint someone's geographical origin based on their accent and/or dialect. In most linguistic communities, there is a hierarchy of wealth and power based on economics and prestige. In 19th century Britain, standard English was considered a language with prestige, and many have "altered their own language or forced others to change their language because of their own attitudes and beliefs." (Stockwell, 2002, p.16) This is perfectly portrayed in *Pygmalion;* Eliza is stripped of her Cockney dialect in order to acquire the language of prestige. Social classes are determined in part based on the way someone speaks, and therefore a strong relation between language and social class is noticeable. Speech is a primary determiner of someone's standing in society.

6. Conclusion

This paper examined the connections between speech and social status, primarily using George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* and his portrayal of non-standard dialects and their effects on the speakers, through the main characters Henry Higgins and Eliza Doolittle. Research shows that speakers of non-standard dialect are likely to be subject to discrimination and exclusion from society, on account of their speech and low social status. As a result, many non-standard speakers strive to learn the essence of the standard, with the hope that this will allow them to become accepted and respected members of society. Eliza exemplifies this in the play, when she shows her desire to become more "genteel" by learning how to speak and behave like people from higher classes. Having mastered the dialect, she managed to blend in with the elites at the ball, succeeding partially in her endeavor. Despite her lack of wealth and education, the change in her speech was enough for the other ball attendees to perceive and treat her as an equal. However, with this new accent, Eliza no longer belonged to the lower class. This, combined with her lack of wealth, placed her in a precarious middle space between the upper and lower class.

Speech has a significant impact on interactions between people. The reverse is also true, however – the speakers, their attitudes and their experiences influence how a variety is used and how it develops. Lower-class speakers are more prone to using nonstandard dialect features because they are more likely to have left education earlier. They tend to have non-professional occupations, and so have no need to associate themselves with a specific lexicon or a "prestige" way of speaking. Whether one has a public role also has some impact on their speech – people who interact with the public as part of their job will modify their speech accordingly. Community-wide norms dictate appropriate terminology and pronunciation for working-class dialects, as well. The use of nonstandard dialect terminology, grammar, and pronunciation diminishes as an individual's education progresses and as their social status and social circles change. While people of all classes have to be aware of the context they're speaking in, this is much more important for higher-class individuals.

Nonstandard dialects are often perceived as being "incorrect" but this is a flawed view of language. A standard dialect is necessary, especially in a country populated by millions of people, to facilitate communication between individuals from various regions and walks of life.

This does not make the standard dialect the 'correct' version of a language, nor does it make all the others incorrect. Contemporary linguists insist that Standard English is in no way superior to any other spoken dialect, and that no dialect has a lower (or higher) linguistic status than any other. Trudgill (1990, p.13) states in *The Dialects of England* that 'it is not even legitimate to claim that it [Standard English] is more "acceptable" than other dialects, unless we specify *who* it is acceptable to'. Nevertheless, the stigma remains for those who retain their linguistic peculiarities, affecting their lives for better or worse.

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