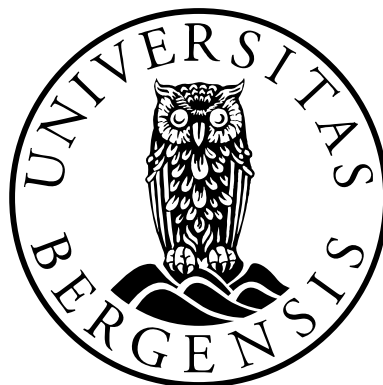


# **Harry Potter and the Different Accents**

**A sociolinguistic study of language attitudes in *Harry  
Potter and Game of Thrones*.**

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## SUMMARY IN NORWEGIAN

Målet for denne oppgaven har vært å se på hvorvidt språkholdninger fremtrer i *Harry Potter*-filmene og i den første sesongen av TV-serien *Game of Thrones*. De åtte *Harry Potter*-filmene er alle adaptasjoner av J.K. Rowlings syv bøker i serien med samme navn. Den første sesongen av *Game of Thrones* er en adaptasjon av den første boken i George R.R. Martins, ikke fullførte, serie *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Oppgavens undertittel kan oversettes på følgende måte: ”En sosiolingvistisk studie av språkholdninger i *Harry Potter* og *Game of Thrones*”.

Oppgaven går ut på å undersøke om det finnes et systematisk mønster mellom karaktertrekk og uttalevarianter (”accents”) i filmene. Et av delmålene er å se om disse mønstrene eventuelt samsvarer for både filmene og TV-serien, og om disse igjen samsvarer med tidligere forskning på språkholdninger.

Av de underliggende hypotesene var det forventet å finne lignende språkholdninger i både *Harry Potter* og i *Game of Thrones* med tanke på kjønn, om karakterene var sofistikerte og sympatiske, og om de var gode eller onde. Det var også forventet å finne forskjeller mellom de to, fordi de har forskjellige målgrupper. *Harry Potter* er i hovedsak rettet mot barn, mens *Game of Thrones* rettet mot et mer voksent publikum. Det var også forventet å finne en viss sammenheng mellom uttalevarianter brukt i *Game of Thrones* og karakterenes geografiske tilhørighet.

Det kommer frem av resultatene at språkholdninger i stor grad er tilstede i datamaterialet, og man ser et systematisk mønster. Når man går i detalj blir det klart at det er forskjeller mellom menn og kvinner, og man ser at kvinner har en tendens til å bruke en mer standardisert dialekt (Received Pronunciation). Et annet funn er at majoriteten av karakterene som er sett på som mer sofistikerte, også snakker en standardisert britisk dialekt. En studie som denne oppgaven i stor grad er basert på, er Rosina Lippi-Greens (1997) studie av språkholdninger i animerte Disney-filmer. Selv om hennes studie er basert på amerikanske aksenter, er det mulig å sammenligne noen av hovedresultatene. I Lippi-Greens studie kommer det frem at mange av hovedkarakterene og heltene snakker en mer standardisert dialekt enn de andre karakterene. I denne studien er vinklingen en litt annen siden ”Received Pronunciation” er representert i alle karakterroller. Lippi-Green fant også at engelsk med utenlandsk aksent i hovedsak ble brukt av karakterer med negative trekk. Igjen er bildet mer nyansert i denne studien ettersom flere sofistikerte og sympatiske karakterer snakker med en utenlandsk aksent.

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Lene Lundervold, May 2013

**‘Differences of habit and language are nothing at all if our aims are identical and our hearts are open’**

**- J.K Rowling, Goblet of Fire -**

## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>SUMMARY IN NORWEGIAN .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES: .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES: .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Aim and Scope.....	2
1.2 Why films and television series? .....	2
1.3 Research questions and hypotheses .....	3
1.4 <i>Harry Potter</i> and <i>A Game of Thrones</i> .....	4
1.4.1 <i>Harry Potter</i> .....	4
1.4.2 <i>A Game of Thrones</i> .....	5
1.5 The categories studied .....	6
1.6 Previous Research.....	6
1.7 The structure of the thesis.....	7
<b>2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Attitudes.....	9
2.1.1 <i>What is an attitude?</i> .....	10
2.1.2 <i>Attitude structure</i> .....	11
2.1.3 <i>Attitudes and behaviour</i> .....	12
2.2 Attitudes to Language.....	13
2.2.1 <i>Language attitudes</i> .....	14
2.2.2 <i>Stereotypes</i> .....	16
2.2.3 <i>Standard language ideology</i> .....	17
2.2.4 <i>The Media</i> .....	22
2.3 Methodology.....	23
2.4 Attitudinal studies.....	27
2.4.1 <i>Societal Treatment Studies</i> .....	27
2.4.2 <i>Attitudes towards English</i> .....	32
<b>3 DATA AND METHOD .....</b>	<b>40</b>
3.1 Data collection .....	40

3.1.1	<i>Written material</i> .....	40
3.1.2	<i>Spoken material</i> .....	41
3.1.3	Character selection .....	42
3.1.4	<i>Selecting the data</i> .....	42
3.2	Linguistic categories.....	43
3.2.1	<i>Received Pronunciation (RP)</i> .....	44
3.2.2	<i>London English – Cockney</i> .....	45
3.2.3	<i>Estuary English</i> .....	45
3.2.4	<i>West Country English</i> .....	45
3.2.5	<i>Northern English</i> .....	46
3.2.6	<i>Scottish English</i> .....	46
3.2.7	<i>Irish English</i> .....	47
3.2.8	<i>Welsh English</i> .....	47
3.2.9	<i>English with foreign accents</i> .....	47
3.3	Non-linguistic categories.....	48
3.3.1	<i>Character role</i> .....	48
3.3.2	<i>Maturity</i> .....	49
3.3.3	<i>Gender</i> .....	50
3.3.4	<i>Level of sophistication</i> .....	50
3.3.5	<i>Other character traits</i> .....	51
3.4	Analysis .....	52
3.4.1	<i>Quality, not quantity</i> .....	52
3.4.2	<i>Limitations</i> .....	52
<b>4</b>	<b>ANALYSIS</b> .....	<b>54</b>
4.1	General overview.....	54
4.1.1	<i>Accents</i> .....	54
4.1.2	<i>Gender</i> .....	55
4.1.3	<i>Maturity</i> .....	60
4.1.4	<i>Level of sophistication</i> .....	62
4.1.5	<i>Other character traits</i> .....	65
4.1.6	<i>Character role</i> .....	70
4.2	Received Pronunciation.....	71
4.3	Cockney .....	74

4.4 Estuary English.....	75
4.5 Northern English.....	76
4.6 Scottish English .....	78
4.7 Irish English.....	78
4.8 Foreign English.....	79
4.9 West Country and Welsh English.....	81
4.10 Unidentifiable .....	82
4.11 Food for thought .....	82
<b>5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>84</b>
5.1 Summary.....	84
5.2 Conclusions – Is there a Game of Attitudes? .....	86
5.3 Limitations.....	90
5.4 Future research .....	91
<b>LIST OF REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>FILMOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>95</b>



## LIST OF FIGURES:

<b>Figure 2.1</b> Status and solidarity table from Hiraga's (2005) study.....	33
<b>Figure 2.2</b> Table with main results from Coupland and Bishop's (2007) study.....	35
<b>Figure 2.3</b> The main results from Ladegaard's (1998) verbal guise test.....	37
<b>Figure 4.1</b> General overview, accents.....	54
<b>Figure 4.2</b> General accent distributions within gender.....	55
<b>Figure 4.3</b> Gender distribution.....	58
<b>Figure 4.4</b> A comparison between children and adults in <i>Harry Potter</i> and <i>Game of Thrones</i> .....	61
<b>Figure 4.5</b> Distribution, level of sophistication.....	63
<b>Figure 4.6</b> Distribution of sympathetic and unsympathetic characters, <i>Harry Potter</i> and <i>Game of Thrones</i> .....	66
<b>Figure 4.7</b> Comparison of good and evil in <i>Harry Potter</i> and <i>Game of Thrones</i> .....	69
<b>Figure 4.8</b> Distribution of character roles in <i>Harry Potter</i> and <i>Game of Thrones</i> .....	70

## LIST OF TABLES:

<b>Table 4.1</b> General overview, accents.....	54
<b>Table 4.2</b> General gender distributions.....	55
<b>Table 4.3</b> Gender distribution, <i>Harry Potter</i> .....	56
<b>Table 4.4</b> Gender distribution, <i>Game of Thrones</i> .....	57
<b>Table 4.5</b> Distribution, children.....	59
<b>Table 4.6</b> Distribution, adults.....	60
<b>Table 4.7</b> Distribution, level of sophistication, <i>Harry Potter</i> .....	62
<b>Table 4.8</b> Distribution, level of sophistication, <i>Game of Thrones</i> .....	63
<b>Table 4.9</b> Distribution of sympathetic and unsympathetic characters, <i>Harry Potter</i> .....	64
<b>Table 4.10</b> Distribution of sympathetic, unsympathetic characters, <i>Game of Thrones</i> .....	65
<b>Table 4.11</b> General distribution of good and evil, <i>Harry Potter</i> .....	67
<b>Table 4.12</b> General distribution of good and evil, <i>Game of Thrones</i> .....	68



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Aim and Scope

The aim of this thesis is first and foremost to see whether or not there are consistent similarities of language attitudes portrayed in films and television. To this, end a *societal treatment study* is carried out and the eight films of the *Harry Potter* franchise and the first season of *Game of Thrones* provide the data material.

The fact that actors use accents to portray different characters is already established and some research has already been done with regard to this cf. for instance Lippi-Green's (1997) study on animated Disney films. The aim of this thesis is to see if there is a systematic correlation between the two franchises under study – in their use of accents. The main hypothesis for this thesis is that such a correlation can be found, and that similarities can be found not only within *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*, but also between the two franchises.

A second aim for this thesis is to see whether or not there are similarities between the results found in this study and previous research done with regard to language attitudes. In order to do this, the main results from three attitudinal studies are included in chapter 2, and the results of these studies are compared with the results from this study to see if the main tendencies are the same. The three studies are, however, not societal treatment studies unlike the present thesis, as no societal treatment studies aimed at British English have been found.

Even though the two main aims of the thesis have been stated, there are several different questions that are relevant to this study. For instance whether more language attitudes, and different ones, are found in *Game of Thrones*, as this television series clearly aims at a more adult audience than *Harry Potter*, whose target group is children and teenagers. Another question in the same vein is if the attitudes come across differently in *Harry Potter* than *Game of Thrones*. This is relevant because there are more children in the films than in the television series. This could have an impact on the findings, as the children might not be able to portray different accents other than their own.

## 1.2 Why films and television series?

Whether or not the attitudes portrayed by popular media have an influence on people is widely discussed, and there is no universal agreement on the topic. Lippi-Green's (1997)

study of animated Disney films largely showed that the stereotypes that already existed in American culture were used to portray different character types in the cartoons showed to children. In her study Lippi-Green writes with regard to the characters using an African American Vernacular English (AAVE):

The stereotypes are intact: the male characters seem to be unemployed or show no purpose in life beyond the making of music and pleasing themselves...  
(Lippi-Green 1997:94)

This study was conducted in 1997 and only films made prior to 1995 were included in the corpus. In her MA thesis Sønnesyn (2011) recreated the study using newer films in an attempt to see whether there were similar findings in a newer corpus. She discovered that although the stereotypes were still represented, there was also an increase in characters speaking General American (GA). She argued that this could suggest that the pressure of being more politically correct might have had an influence on Disney's portrayal of cartoons.

Both the *Harry Potter* films and the *Game of Thrones* series were made recently, indeed the last film in the *Harry Potter* series premiered in 2011, the same year as *Game of Thrones* was first aired. A reason for choosing to research language attitudes in films and television series is therefore to see whether or not stereotypical views are still portrayed in the film and television industry, and if so to what extent.

### **1.3 Research questions and hypotheses**

The research questions for the present thesis are as follows:

- a) Is there a systematic correlation between character traits and accents portrayed in *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* respectively?
- b) Are accents and character traits similarly portrayed in the *Harry Potter* films and the television series *Game of Thrones*?
- c) How do the results from the present study compare to previous research conducted in the area of language attitudes?

The hypotheses for the present study are as follows:

Based on previous societal treatment studies, hypothesis a), b), c) and d) are expected to be confirmed by the present thesis.

- a) A systematic correlation between accent and character traits will be found in both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*.
- b) There will be similarities in *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* with regard to accents and character traits.
- c) There will be a correlation between the attitudes found in the present study and previous studies done on the subject.
- d) There will be some differences between *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* as they are aimed at different audiences.
- e) The traditional gender pattern that female characters will speak with a more standard accent than male characters will be true for the present thesis as well.
- f) Characters with a low level of sophistication will speak with less of a standard accent than characters with a high level of sophistication.
- g) There will be fewer characters that speak with a standard accent in the peripheral characters category, as the accent will serve as a description of their traits.
- h) As *Game of Thrones* covers a wide geographical area, the accents will have some connection with the geographical placement of a character and their accent.

## **1.4 *Harry Potter* and *A Game of Thrones***

### **1.4.1 *Harry Potter***

The seven *Harry Potter* books were written by J.K. Rowling and published by the Bloomsbury Publishing House. The first book was released in 1997 and the seventh in 2007, here listed in chronological order: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (1997), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000), *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2003), *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince* (2005) and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007). Warner Bros Pictures distributed the eight *Harry Potter* films, the seventh book was divided into two films, and the films were released between 2001-2011. The films bear the same titles as the books, and they loosely follow the same plot, although some

changes are made for the films, which in turn affect how much speech time each of the characters get.

The plot of the book series follows the journey of an orphan boy named Harry Potter as he grows up. The first book starts as Harry Potter turns eleven and finds out that he is a wizard and that he has been accepted at the boarding school Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. We follow him, his teachers, friends and enemies throughout the seven years he attends the school. We also watch as he struggles to defeat the dark wizard Lord Voldemort, or as several people in the wizard community usually call him, *He who must not be named*.

### **1.4.2 *A Game of Thrones***

The book *A Game of Thrones* (1996) is the first book in the (not yet finished) series called *A Song of Ice and Fire*, written by George R.R. Martin. This book is written in a different manner than the Harry Potter books, where the story is narrated from Harry Potter's viewpoint. Instead of dividing the book into standard chapters with a plot-related headline, Martin writes each chapter from a different character's viewpoint, and each chapter heading is then a character's name. In this way, we follow the story of different characters throughout the book. The characters are also spread over vast geographical spaces within Martin's universe of the *Seven Kingdoms* and beyond.

For the present thesis I will only focus on the first book, as the first season of the American channel Home Box Office (HBO) series *Game of Thrones* is based on this. Season two of this series, which is based on the second book *A Clash of Kings* has also been released, but as the first season is quite extensive and we meet a lot of characters, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to include the second season.

George R.R. Martin has created a universe that centres on several important families and their alliances and feuds both within and outside their families. The main plot centres on the *Iron Throne*, and the question of who should be king of the *Seven Kingdoms*. The Baratheon family, with Robert as King, holds the *Iron Throne* when we enter the story, but we soon learn that they seized that throne from the Targaryen family some years earlier. The Stark family serves as the Warden of the North, and the head of that family Eddard 'Ned' Stark is a good friend of the king's and he played a part when the throne was taken from the Targaryens. Another family that plays a significant role in book one is the Lannisters. Not

only are they said to be very rich, Cersei Lannister is married to King Robert and is therefore queen. Her twin brother Jamie also serves as captain of the Kingsguard.

### **1.5 The categories studied**

The categories for this study might differ somewhat from other sociolinguistic research, as this study does not aim to go into detail about the different phonological traits of the accents, but merely to establish what accent the different characters use, or try to use, and see if there is any correlation between the non-linguistic categories and the accents. The categories below are presented in more detail in chapter 3, *Data and Method*.

- *Accents*: Received Pronunciation (RP), London English – Cockney, Estuary English, West Country English, Northern English, Scottish English, Irish English, Welsh English and English with a foreign accent.
- *Character role*: major characters, supportive characters, minor characters, and peripheral characters.
- *Gender*: Male and female characters are divided into separate groups.
- *Level of sophistication*: The characters are divided into two groups based on whether or not they are seen as sophisticated or unsophisticated
- *Maturity*: The characters are divided into groups based on their maturity, i.e. whether they are children or adults.
- *Other Character traits*: The characters are divided into two groups based on whether they are sympathetic or unsympathetic. And they are divided into three groups based on whether they are good or evil or mixed. The third group, *mixed* is included for the characters that are too complex to classify as good or evil.

### **1.6 Previous Research**

With regard to previous research there has, according to Garrett (2010), been done a lot of research on language attitudes in general. However, the societal treatment approach, which is the approach used for this thesis, has often been overlooked and he claims that this is an

important tool in endeavouring to discover how attitudes towards language are applied in our society. Lippi-Green is one of the sociolinguists that has conducted a societal treatment study with regard to films. Her study on Disney films released prior to 1995 were included in her book *English with an Accent* that was first published in 1997. The method used in her study is largely the basis for the method used in the present study, but as Lippi-Green's (1997) study aimed at finding language attitudes in animated Disney films where American accents are mainly used, some of her results are not as relevant for this thesis. However, as she used the societal treatment approach this study is highly relevant for the present thesis.

The research that is more relevant for the present thesis, is done by Hiraga (2005), Coupland and Bishop (2007) and Ladegaard (1998)<sup>1</sup>. Hiraga (2005) aimed to find out if there was a correlation in the way British people rated the standard varieties, the rural varieties and the urban varieties against each other, using both British and American varieties. Coupland and Bishop (2007) conducted a large online survey of attitudes towards English through the BBC website [www.bbc.co.uk/voices](http://www.bbc.co.uk/voices). Ladegaard's (1998) study differs from the two previously mentioned, as he conducted an attitudinal study towards English accents in Denmark. The aim of this study was to see whether there were similarities between how native speakers of English rate different accents and how Danish learners of English as a foreign language rate them.

## **1.7 The structure of the thesis**

There are five chapters included in the present thesis. The first chapter is an introduction of the study, which includes the aim and scope, the research questions and the hypotheses, as well as an introduction to the material studied and some of the previous research done on language attitudes. The second chapter consists of a presentation of the theoretical background on language attitudes giving attention to both the concept of attitudes in general as well as attitudes to language. The role of the media is also given some attention. The previous research, which the second research question is based on, is also presented in more detail. In chapter three there is a presentation of the different categories studied, both the linguistic and the non-linguistic. The linguistic categories consist of the British accents that were thought most likely to be seen in the films and series, and the non-linguistic categories

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<sup>1</sup> The main results from all the studies presented here can be seen in chapter 2, section 2.4



consist of the different character traits that were studied. Chapter four presents and discusses the results of the analysis done for the present thesis. And in chapter five there is first a summary of the findings and then the conclusions of the study. There are also some suggestions for future research in the area of language attitudes and for societal treatment studies.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter provides the theoretical framework, which this thesis is based on. As this thesis is a study on language attitudes, it is natural to include some background information on what an attitude is, and how attitudes, both general attitudes and attitudes towards language, influence the daily lives of people. In an effort to go into more detail about attitudes, a section on stereotypes is included in the chapter, as stereotypes can be seen as a way to categorise people based on attitudes. Another aspect that is important in relation to language attitudes is the concept of a standard language ideology, which is also important for this thesis. The media play a role when it comes to creating and maintaining attitudes, and as this thesis deals with films and television series, it is natural to include a section on the media, to see specifically how it can influence people. Lastly, there is a presentation of different methods that are used when researching language attitudes, to get a better understanding of the different approaches, before a section on some of the previous studies done in this field are presented. Some of the studies deal with people's attitudes towards several varieties of British English. There are three societal treatment studies presented in this chapter to get a better understanding of how these types of studies are carried out. There are also three studies on language attitudes presented. The attitudinal studies are helpful when conducting the analysis as they serve as a comparison to the results of the present thesis.

### 2.1 Attitudes

When you look up the word 'attitude' in a dictionary it becomes clear that that the word has several meanings. It can mean a settled way of thinking and feeling about something. One example given is 'he was questioned on his attitude to South Africa'. Or it can mean a position of the body indicating a particular mental state; the example provided here is 'the boy was standing in an attitude of despair'. It can even refer to a ballet position (The Oxford Dictionaries, accessed 25 March 2013). For the purpose of this study the first meaning of the word provided above is the most relevant one, but as there are several meanings of the word it is necessary to gain an understanding of how the term *attitude* is understood by linguists working within the context of language attitudes.

### 2.1.1 What is an attitude?

As seen above, the dictionary provides several different meanings of the word *attitude*, and this is also the case when scholars try to define the meaning of attitudes. There is therefore no universal agreement as to what is the correct definition. But if some of these attitudes are seen together, it becomes clear that all of them include some common aspects in their definition of attitudes.

Thurstone (1931 in Garrett 2010:19)<sup>2</sup> defines an attitude as the ‘affect for or against a psychological object’. This means that an attitude makes people have either positive feelings towards an object or negative feeling towards it. This definition gives a quite narrow definition of what an attitude actually is, because it limits the concept of attitudes to be some sort of emotion for or against an object. Allport (1954 in Garrett 2010:19) defines an attitude as ‘a learned disposition to think, feel and behave toward a person (or object) in a particular way’. If these two definitions are compared, we see that where Thurstone only considers affect in his definition, Allport includes behaviour and thought as well. Allport also mentions that attitudes are something we learn, so they are not something that people are born with. This suggests that external factors can have an influence on people’s attitudes. A third definition by Oppenheim is more elaborate than the two previously mentioned. He defines an attitude as:

a construct, an abstraction which cannot be directly apprehended. It is an inner component of mental life which expresses itself, directly or indirectly, through much more obvious processes as stereotypes, beliefs, verbal statements or reactions, ideas and opinions, selective recall anger or satisfaction or some other emotion and in various other aspects.

(Oppenheim 1982:39)

In this definition Oppenheim defines attitudes as something that cannot be directly observed, because it is something that happen within us as humans, and these processes are only expressed by our behaviour. Because of this we have to infer what kind of attitudes people have from their actions, such as reactions, statements and opinions. Due to definitions such as Oppenheim’s, there have been, and still are, debates about how attitudes can be studied. Allport (1935 in Garrett 2010) says that because attitudes are never directly observed it

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<sup>2</sup> As the sources in Garrett (2010) and Garrett et al (2003) were difficult to acquire, some of these are cited indirectly through the said authors.

becomes not only difficult, but near impossible, to give a satisfactory account of attitudes unless people admit to them. Baker (1995) also says that because people's thoughts and feelings are hidden, attitudes cannot be observed, but they can be seen through behaviour and therefore act as indicators of how people will behave. One example provided by Baker is that 'knowing someone's attitude to alcohol, for example, may sum up likely behaviour in a range of contexts over time' (1995:11).

As there are so many different definitions of attitudes, it can be helpful to go back and find a definition that deals with the core aspect of attitude (Garrett 2010). Sarnoff's statement that an attitude is 'a disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects' (1970:279) is one such definition. This definition uses the word *disposition*, which shows an attitude as having a certain degree of stability and it can therefore be identified. A class of objects can mean both language and political policies, so it is not a limited definition (Garrett 2010:20). Garrett et al (2003) also chose to follow the last definition mentioned, because when attitudes are defined as a disposition it means that they are at least stable enough to be identified and measured (to some degree).

To sum up what an attitude is the quote below seems fitting, as it includes the fact that attitudes are something people learn and react to, and that it is a central concept when people are part of a society.

When we talk about attitudes, we are talking about what a person has *learned* in the process of becoming a member of a family, a member of a group, and of society that makes him [*sic*] react to his social world in a *consistent* and *characteristic* way, instead of a transitory and haphazard way.

(Sherif 1967:2, original emphasis)

### **2.1.2 Attitude structure**

In the definitions of attitudes seen above, the scholars mention that attitudes are something humans believe, feel and react to. This can be translated into *cognition*, *affection* and *behaviour*, and these largely make up the structure of an attitude. According to Garrett et al (2003) attitudes are cognitive because they contain certain beliefs about the world, and they are affective because feelings about the object in question are involved, so this will help people decide whether or not they should react positively or negatively towards an object (Garrett 2010). Lastly, attitudes are behavioural because they can lead to a predisposition to

act a certain way. Baker (1995) calls the behavioural aspect 'readiness for action', in that these three aspects can lead to behaviour, but that this is not always the case. For the present thesis behaviour is considered a part of the attitude structure. But how do these three aspects work together?

The three aspects are exemplified individually, to show how they as attitudes can be linked together. The first aspect is cognition, i.e. what people believe. For example if Norwegians want to learn English, many do so because they believe that this will help them get into the international job market. The second aspect is affection, so Norwegians would because of their beliefs, become more enthusiastic towards the English culture. The third aspect, behaviour, deals with how people react. Norwegians would, then, because of what they believe and feel learn English. Some recent views, however, do warn researchers not to consider these three components as the same as attitudes, but that they can instead be seen more as causes and triggers of attitudes (Garrett 2010).

There are also some challenges determining the interconnectedness of cognition, aspect and behaviour with regard to attitudes. So, to which extent can the three components be expected to always be in agreement (Garrett et al 2003)? The most challenging component is behaviour, which is the component that can be studied.

### **2.1.3 Attitudes and behaviour**

The behavioural aspect of an attitude is, as stated above, that a person may act a certain way because of what they believe and how they feel towards an object. One example of this is that if a person thinks a member of a social group is cruel and acts hostile, this person would then be predisposed to behave more distantly towards the other person (Cargile et al 1994). If the behavioural component is taken to be exactly as described above, that people act purely on the basis of how they think and feel, it can be a problematic relationship. One example of the problematic relationship between attitudes and behaviour is that people may think that if they change a person's attitude towards something, the person's behaviour will change accordingly (Garrett et al 2003). Another belief this may lead to, is that if a person acts in a certain way, we can infer their attitude from that behaviour.

A study that is used in several articles to exemplify this relationship is LaPiere's (1934, in Cargile et al 1994) study on the correlation between American restaurants where a Chinese couple was refused service and how these restaurants then responded when they were

asked if they would refuse service to Chinese people. The couple was refused service in only one of 251 restaurants, but 92% of the restaurants answered that they would in fact refuse service to Chinese people. This study shows that the link between attitudes and behaviour can be weak. Most of the restaurants had the attitude that they would not serve Chinese people, but for whatever reasons, be it politeness or perhaps fear of the outcome, their behaviour did not match their attitude, as they let the Chinese couple get service. Even though this example can make it look as if the connection between attitude and behaviour is very unstable, several researchers have still argued that these two can be interconnected in some ways.

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980, in Garrett 2010) have proposed a theory called the *Theory of Reasoned Action*, where behaviour is considered an intermediate step. When researchers use this method they must first take a look at the attitude towards the actual behaviour and the evaluation of the consequences of carrying out that behaviour. There are also the normative beliefs of how other people would judge and react to that behaviour, for instance if they will approve or not. Lastly, one would consider to what degree these views are taken into account (Garrett 2010). Garrett also provides an example to illustrate this theory, where he outlines four different stages where it is explained how, when the behavioural intentions are considered, instead of only the behaviour, we can see why a certain attitude does not always lead to the expected behaviour.

*Beliefs about consequences:* “My speaking RP on the phone to Mrs Smith, who is inviting me to go to an interview for a job, will increase my chances of getting the job.”

*Evaluation:* “I want this job, so this would be the good thing to do.”

*Normative beliefs:* “My sister who is sitting her in the same room with me will mock my behaviour and call me a slimy posh prat for talking RP.”

*Motivation to comply with their expectations:* “I don’t want to end up like my sister. I need this job, and I’m not going to stick around here much longer anyway, especially if I get it”.

(Garrett 2010:26f)

## 2.2 Attitudes to Language

After defining the term *attitude* and discussing the different challenges that can appear when attitudes are studied, the question becomes how this translates to research on attitudes towards language. In the definitions above, objects are thought to include abstract objects as well,

including languages. Languages are therefore subjected to attitudes just as any other object, but how does this manifest itself and how can this be studied?

### 2.2.1 Language attitudes

When watching the British television programme 'Keeping up Appearances' one cannot help but notice how the main character *Mrs Hyacinth Bucket* speaks, what lay-men would call very posh. She also insists that her surname should be pronounced *Bouquet*, with a French-like pronunciation. This can therefore associate her with the upper class people of Britain. This is an example of how attitudes can be inferred by language, and also what language attitudes can be. The character of *Hyacinth Bucket* speaks very posh, even though it becomes clear throughout the television series that she and her husband probably belong to what the British would define as middle-class.

Milroy and Milroy (1999) talk about how discrimination based on, for instance, gender or religion is not acceptable in present day society, but discrimination based on language is still 'acceptable'. This is shown in the example above where *Hyacinth Bucket* tries to seem more posh than she is by speaking in a different manner than for instance her siblings who speak in what can be described as a working-class accent. Another example is that some people are refused certain jobs because of the way that they speak (Milroy & Milroy 1999). For instance if a person speaks English in a very comprehensible manner, but has H-dropping in words such as *have* or *happy*, or uses double negation, that person may be refused certain jobs that have high prestige in the society (Milroy & Milroy 1999).

According to Cargile et al (1994), language can be seen as a powerful social force in that it does more than give us the information the speaker intends for us to get. We, in part, base our views of other people, for instance their supposed beliefs and capabilities, by our interpretation of their language features. One example is that an American may see a stranger talking with a British accent to be more 'cultured' and 'refined' (Cargile et al 1994).

If we go back to the three aspects of attitudes, cognition, affection and behaviour, and see how they relate to language attitudes, we see that the cognitive aspect relates to language attitudes in that language can serve as a trigger for beliefs about the speaker (Cargile et al 1994). Language attitudes can be affective in that, even if we do not know the variety that is spoken, it may sound 'pleasant' or 'annoying' to us, and it will therefore colour our response. And thirdly, language attitudes can be behavioural in that the beliefs and emotions can lead to

certain behaviours (Cargile et al 1994). To exemplify this we can go back to the example above from the programme 'Keeping up Appearances'. The main character believes that if she pronounces her surname in a French-like manner, she will be perceived to be of a higher class than she is (cognition). She gets very angry if people do not call her *Bouquet* (affect), and consequently corrects those who mispronounce it (behaviour).

As with attitudes in general it is not, however, as straightforward as the example above makes it out to be. There are also three processes that are involved in language attitudes; generation (of content), salience and application (Cargile et al 1994:222). This means that even though a person could develop an attitude towards some sort of language behaviour, they still have to have it become salient, with interaction, for example:

A man may evaluate a "southern" (U.S.A.) accent negatively and believe that it evidences a lack of intelligence. However, when his good friend whom he believes is intelligent talks in such a manner, he certainly would not act on this stereotype and consider information already provided by their interpersonal history.

(Cargile et al 1994:223)

As exemplified above, if there is more interpersonal history between interlocutors there is less of a chance that language attitudes will play a part in deciding the other person's social attributes. The man in the example believes that a speaker of a 'southern' accent is less intelligent, and is therefore predisposed to have negative feelings towards such a speaker. But it does not always lead to behaviour in accordance with these beliefs, in for instance the case that the speaker is a friend.

Another theory, called the *language expectancy theory* (Burgoon and Miller 1985 in Cargile et al 1994), states that as hearers we have certain expectations about how language is used in different contexts. So, if you, for instance, are going to meet a person that you know has a high position in society you would probably expect that person to speak in a particular way. To illustrate this, an example from my own experience is included. When I know I am going to listen to a professor of English I expect this person to speak with a native-like English accent and not speak English with a strong Norwegian accent. If this expectation is not met, I automatically get disappointed.

An important aspect of language attitudes is that there are different outcomes that have to be taken into account, such as direct and indirect outcomes. The direct outcome is when a language attitude directly suggests communication strategies. An indirect outcome is when an attitude encourages an evaluation that leads to a certain strategy and behaviour (Cargile et al



1994). Personal integrity, competence and social attractiveness are three dimensions that Lambert (1967 in Cargile et al 1994) identified when conducting research on first impressions. These dimensions are some aspects that people use to evaluate other people when hearing them speak (possibly) for the first time.

To summarise why attitudes are an important factor when studying language I turn to Baker (1995) who says that a study of attitudes provides both an indicator of how people think and what they believe in the present, as well as how the community is changing with regard to the same issues.

### **2.2.2 Stereotypes**

According to Garrett (2010) stereotypes are when people divide the world into different social groups, so that (individual) people are placed in different groups according to the traits they have in common. Examples of this are when people are placed in groups such as the countries they come from, if they are academics or if they drive cars, or more narrow social groups, such as people that play an instrument or people with particular names. The features these groups are based on can be many; some examples are how trustworthy or lazy a person is, what their interests or occupations are, and their physical appearance (Garrett 2010:32f).

Kristiansen (2001) discusses how stereotypes can be studied in linguistic settings, by including some theories and examples of how this is done. The concept of metonymy is central when stereotypes are discussed. Metonymy is when one part, for instance an object, person or accent, represents a whole, for instance a group of similar objects, a group of people or a geographical area. Another factor that plays a part with stereotypes is exaggeration. Allport (1954:191, in Kristiansen 2001:136) defines stereotypes as ‘an exaggerated belief associated with a category’. Kristiansen (2001:137) then goes on to say that ‘stereotyping, then, is a functional cognitive device by means of which we systematize our social environment, creating distinct and apparently homogenous categories’. In other words people will create stereotypes to function in their social environment, to make the society in which they live easier to understand and systematise. So how can this theory be used when studying language attitudes? Kristiansen (2001) uses an example from Paul Coggle who writes:

Just as upper-class English evokes in many people’s minds an image of Hooray Henry’s and Henriettas, chinless wonders, Land Rovers, green wellies and – in the

case of women - Jacquar scarves and velvet headbands, so Estuary English evokes a similarly stereotypical image of shell suits, beer bellies, Ford Escorts, chunky gold chains, flats in Marbella (at least for those at the dodgy dealings end of the spectrum) and – again in the case of women – white, high-heeled shoes preferably worn with no tights.

(Coggle 1993:85)

Another example is taken from Lippi-Green (1997)<sup>3</sup> who studied various animated films from Disney to see how language was treated there. She found that for instance the characters *Scar* in *Lion King* and *Jafar* in *Aladdin* speak with a British accent and these characters are portrayed as the villains. More disturbing is perhaps the wolf in the film *Three Little Pigs*, who originally spoke with a Yiddish accent. All three of these characters are portrayed as the villain and all three speak with foreign accents.

Both these examples show that stereotypes exist in language as well as all other aspects of life, and that as Lakoff states:

Social stereotypes are cases of metonymy – where a subcategory has a socially recognized status as standing for the category as a whole, usually for the purpose of making quick judgements about people

(1987:71 in Kristiansen 2001:139).

### 2.2.3 Standard language ideology

A concept that is often mentioned in relation to language attitudes, is the *standard language ideology*. The concept of this ideology is that there is a culture in some countries, for instance countries with languages such as English, French and Spanish, where people believe the language they speak exists in a standard form, which is better and more correct form than the others. This will, then, colour people's view of both their own language and languages in general (Milroy 2001).

When linguists talk about language and differences in dialects or accents, they do not talk about how one is better or more correct than others (Milroy & Milroy 1999). Language to a linguist is *descriptive* and not *prescriptive*, in other words a linguist is interested in what is said, not what he thinks should be said, and a linguist does not give rules of 'correctness' to a language or accent (Milroy & Milroy 1999:4). The attitudes of linguists, however, do not

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<sup>3</sup> Lippi-Green's study on Disney films is presented in more detail further down in the present chapter.

have an effect on other people, in the way that people without a linguistic education, lay-men, have looked and still look to dictionaries to find the ‘correct’ usage of their language (Milroy & Milroy 1999).

Before going into detail about the standard language ideology it is necessary to have some knowledge about the usage of the word *standard*. When Milroy (2001:531) refers to the internal structure of language, he suggests a primary definition, which is ‘standardization consists of the imposition of uniformity upon a class of objects’. In this definition we see that the process of standardisation promotes uniformity in objects, which includes abstract objects such as language. Note also that the definition suggests that these objects are not uniform to begin with. This is only one of the meanings used when it comes to the term *standard*. Another usage, which is based on value-judgement, is that standard is a ‘measure of achievement’ (Milroy 2001:532), and this can be applied to standard language ideology. Standardisation has to do with uniformity and invariance, and it places great emphasis on correctness and that one accent is the ‘correct one’ (Milroy 2007, in Garrett 2010).

One category that has not yet been mentioned, but that is often seen in relation to the concept of standardisation, is the category of *prestige*. This is because the meaning of a standard variety has often been linked with the highest prestige variety and not the variety that has the highest degree of uniformity. One has to be aware, however, that even though a standard variety has a high prestige, it does not follow that an object with high prestige automatically becomes a standard (Milroy 2001).

The concept of a standard language ideology is where the main belief is that there is only one correct way to speak a language, which is modelled on the correct written form (Milroy 1999:174). The ideology is described as characteristic beliefs of a language that is typically seen in countries of some wealth, where the process of standardisation has been in operation for a substantial amount of time and has thereby produced an abstract set of norms in both the written and spoken language (Milroy 1999:173). An example of how people who believe in this ideology think, is seen from the quote below, from an audience member on the Oprah Winfrey Show, who said

Well I think there is a certain way of speaking that has been considered the acceptable way of speaking. And because of that this is the type of language you speak when you’re out in the world. If you want to speak Spanish at home that’s fine. If you want to speak black with your friends that’s fine. But don’t insult someone else’s ears by making them listen to it’.

(Milroy 1999:153)

The example above illustrates how people can think that there is one correct way of speaking and that this is how people should speak in public. So how can this type of ideology translate to attitudes about people? An assumption is that if people believe that an accent is ‘sloppy’ or ‘lazy’ it is then easy to see the community where this accent is spoken as ‘sloppy’ or ‘lazy’ (Milroy 1999). Another example is:

We have but room for one language here and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house  
(Crawford 1992:100 in Milroy & Milroy 1999:157).

The quote above illustrates some of the attitudes seen from the ‘English Only’ movement in the United States in the 1980s, where people believed that only the English language was acceptable to use in the American society.

So an ideology like this will contribute to creating stereotypes and attitudes towards social groups, both in lifting these groups up the social prestige ladder and throwing them down.

### **2.2.3.1 Standard English**

So when a standard language ideology is prominent in the English speaking communities, the question then is, what are the standard varieties? What kind of English do people think is inherently better than others? A more detailed phonological description of Standard English, at least the British standard RP, is presented in chapter 3. The focus here is on what Standard English is, and why certain varieties of English have become a standard variety.

According to Trudgill (1999) there is confusion in the English-speaking world as to what Standard English is, especially with regard to differences between the written and spoken language. Trudgill (1999:123-128) differentiates between the two by saying that Standard English spelt with a capital letter <S>, deals with the written language. This entails that what is meant by Standard English is, that even though people speak with different accents, they could still speak the Standard form, as this has nothing to do with phonology. For the present thesis the focus is on the spoken language, and the focus will be on standard

English spelt with a lower case <s> instead of a capital <S>, where the difference in people's pronunciation is of interest.

In Great Britain, the standard variety of English is called Received Pronunciation (RP) some would also call it 'Queen's English' or 'BBC English'. This variety is thought of as the accent of prestige, and is for instance often spoken by people who have been educated within the public school system, which is the more prestigious way to get an education. The accent is not regional in the sense that people who speak RP cannot, for the most part, be placed within a geographical area (Wells 1982). Even though the RP accent is accepted as the standard variety, only a minority of British people have this accent, which makes it different from the American standard General American (GA) (Wells 1982). One point that needs to be addressed when the standard varieties are discussed is, as Mugglestone (1995) points out, that it is difficult to degrade a person's accent without degrading that person as well. So in awarding RP the prestige that it has and by saying that this is the proper way to speak, is then done at the cost of the regional varieties and the people who speak it. What is strange about the RP accent is that only a minority of the British people speak this accent, but it is still well known and accepted as the standard variety, perhaps because of the fact that RP is spoken on the radio and television, and by other people with high prestige (Trudgill 1983).

So why are some accents and dialects deemed better and more beautiful than others? Why do people who speak the English language have a standard language ideology? There are several explanations to this, two theories are explained below.

### **2.2.3.2 Imposed norm - and inherent value hypotheses**

As mentioned above, there is perhaps a tendency to support the standard language ideology, especially in countries that speak English, such as Great Britain and the United States of America. People believe that there is one correct variety of the language, and that other spoken accents are not as correct as the standard form. There are different theories as to why this is. Two of these are presented here, and they are called *the imposed norm hypothesis* and *the inherent value hypothesis*.

The inherent value hypothesis states that people adopt the standard variety of a language based on aesthetic consideration (Giles et al 1979). This would imply that people who do not speak a certain language would automatically prefer the standard variety because it sounds better and more beautiful than the other varieties of that same language. For

instance, a person who does not speak or understand the French language will still choose the standard variety of that language as the ‘best’ accent if he is presented with different French accents. It is therefore natural to conclude that if this hypothesis is valid it would probably be the case that standard varieties of different languages would have phonological features in common. And this makes people find these varieties more pleasing. Similarly the non-standard varieties will have other features in common to make these sounds less pleasant (Giles et al 1979).

The imposed norm hypothesis, on the other hand, states that a powerful group has at some point adopted the standard variety and thus given it some sort of prestige. Spence (1985 in Giles et al 1979), says that the prestige of a standard pronunciation ‘is due directly and solely to the prestige of the class or group which possesses it’. If this is the case, RP will, for example, in Britain have gained its position because people of high prestige spoke this accent. This hypothesis goes hand in hand with Giles’ (2001) claim that a standard variety is often the variety with the most prestige, not necessarily the accent with the highest degree of uniformity.

In the study conducted by Giles et al (1979), where speakers of Welsh English rated different varieties of French, the results seem to support the imposed norm hypothesis. Even though he stresses that this is a preliminary study and that more work had to be done on the subject before making general assumptions. The respondents who did not speak the language (French) did not rate the standard variety any higher than they did the non-standard variety that was presented to them.

Another theory presented by Trudgill (1983) is called *the social connotations theory*<sup>4</sup>. In presenting this theory he argues for the imposed norm hypothesis, but states that there has not been done enough studies as of then to completely reject the inherent value hypothesis. This theory implies that, in addition to cultural norms, an aesthetic judgement of a language or accent is based on complex social connotations. The study by Giles et al (1979) presented above is then proof of this as the British respondents, who had no prior knowledge of the language, rated the three French accents at approximately the same level of pleasantness. This implies that outsiders, i.e. people without knowledge of a language, are in the best position to rate the different varieties based on aesthetic values, but that the inherent value hypothesis comes short when it tries to explain how some varieties are judged to be better and more pleasant than others (Trudgill 1983).

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<sup>4</sup> Evidence supporting this theory is presented in section 2.4.2 in Hiraga’s (2005) study on language attitudes.

## 2.2.4 The Media

Of the two theories that are discussed above, the theory that has been accepted by a lot of linguists is the imposed norm hypothesis. The question becomes, what can help create and solidify these social connotations and cultural norms that make people say one accent is better than others. The media is an answer given as one of the factors for these opinions, and as the present thesis deal with films and television, an understanding of how the media can influence language attitudes is necessary.

In 2002 it was reported that in the United States alone there was almost one receiver (television set) per person and that each person spent almost 1000 hours in front of the TV per year (Crystal 2003). In addition to television there is cinema, DVDs, music and computers with more and more direct access to the Internet. In all these forums language, in particular the English language plays a large role, and people all over the world encounter English on a daily basis. How can this influence the attitudes towards the English language?

Lippi-Green (1997:64f) included the media in what she calls ‘bloc institutions’ where the standard language is promoted, maintained and even imposed on society. One reason, she gives, is that language is seen as the last outlet for discrimination against different races, and as people are not allowed to discriminate against others because of their gender, race, religion or sexual orientation, they tend to focus on language, and how some people do not speak it properly. One example provided by Lippi-Green (1997:65) is that a Mr Kahakua could possibly be denied to speak in a radio programme because the language variety he speaks could be seen in connection with a stereotype, which is ‘unacceptable’ to the general public.

Milroy and Milroy (1999:24f) agree with Lippi-Green (1997) to the extent that many people do indeed tend to blame the media for promoting language attitudes, and certainly for promoting the standard language ideology. But they also point out that even though people have heard RP on the radio, and later on television, for over 70 years, only 3-5% of British people actually speak RP. The mass media is then more of a channel that can give *awareness* instead of promoting *adoption* of linguistic varieties.

People believe that there is a ‘right’ way of using English, although they do not necessarily use the ‘correct’ forms in their own speech. Thus, although radio, film and television may not have had much influence on everyday speech, they are amongst the many influences that promote a consciousness of the standard and maintain its position.

(Milroy & Milroy 1999:25, original emphasis)

Even though there is little evidence to support the claim that the media have a lot of influence over people's adoption of certain varieties, there is evidence for the claim that the media promote already-existing ideologies. For instance, the British standard variety RP is also popularly known as 'BBC English' (Milroy & Milroy 1999). Baker (1995) also states that the effects of the mass media is over emphasised, especially with regard to teenagers. He claims that studies have shown that the mass media are only one outlet, and that there are a lot of other factors that play a part in influencing teenagers; despite the long hours they spend in front of either a television or a computer. Both Chambers (1998) and Aitchison (1998) agree that the media pick up on language changes or new language trends and use these, but that they do not invent them and do not play a part in people adopting these features. Aitchison (1998:18-19) says that the media are 'linguistic mirrors' because they reflect the language changes and extend them, but they are not the inventors of these changes, they only spread them to a wider audience.

To sum up the effect of the media, then; although the general population may feel that the media play a role in ruining the English language (Chambers 1998), there is little evidence to support the fact that the media have an influence on the way people speak. The media do, however, seem to pick up on changes in the language and use these, and therefore quite possibly present language attitudes to their audience.

### **2.3 Methodology**

When studies in the field of language attitudes are conducted, there are several different methods that can be used to obtain the data needed to make the assumptions and conclusions necessary. An introduction to the methodology used in sociolinguistic research on language attitudes is presented here in order to increase the understanding of the studies presented further down in the chapter.

According to Garrett (2010) a lot of the researchers in the field recognise that there are three main approaches to choose when studying language attitudes. These three are called the *direct approach*, the *indirect approach* and the *societal treatment approach*. Garrett (2010) also mentions the area of folklinguistics as a fourth approach, but states that this can also be seen as a variety of the direct approach.

The direct approach is explained as a type of study where the respondents know that they are a part of a study. Examples of such studies are interviews, questionnaires and



surveys, one example is an online survey, such as the BBC study on accents conducted by Coupland and Bishop (2007). The direct approach is the most straightforward of the different methods, because the researcher will either conduct an interview or do the research by getting the respondents to answer some sort of written or oral questionnaire (Garrett 2010). Of the different studies mentioned above, the direct approach is the most efficient, or least time consuming, approach to research on language attitudes (Garrett 2010). When this approach is applied in linguistic research there are some aspects that need to be highlighted. The first of these is the *social desirability bias aspect*, where the respondents are hung up on what they should believe. The respondent's attitudes are, in other words, coloured by external features and they answer accordingly (Garrett 2010). This aspect is stronger in a face-to-face interview where the respondent would typically answer what he or she thinks society, or the interviewer, expects them to say. Another aspect in relation to the questionnaire is the *acquiescence bias*, where people tend to answer for instance "agree" to statements, simply because they believe this to be the correct answer (Garrett 2010). One must also take into consideration the *interviewer's paradox*. According to Garrett (2010) the interviewer's paradox can be said to be the same as the *observer's paradox*, which Meyerhoff defines as:

The double-bind researchers find themselves in when what they are interested in knowing is how people behave when they are not being observed; but the only way to find out how they behave is to observe them.

(2006:38)

Transferring this definition to the interviewer's paradox, the researcher's challenge is that they want to discover the respondent's attitude to certain accents, dialects or languages, but what the respondents answer in an interview might be very different from what they actually believe. The social desirability aspect would for instance be one of the challenges the interviewer must deal with in this type of research.

When the indirect method is used, the respondents do not know exactly what they are being tested in, and the researcher can then test their language attitudes without, to the degree that it is possible, having to worry about the interviewer's paradox or the social desirability bias (Garrett 2010). There are two different methods that researchers can choose from when using the indirect method; these are called *the verbal guise technique* and *the matched guise technique*, both of which have several strengths and weaknesses (Garrett 2010).

With the verbal guise technique, the researcher records actual speakers, i.e. speakers who naturally speak the accent, dialect or language in question, reading the same text for every recording, and then the respondents listen to the recordings and answer questions about and/or rate the accents (Garrett 2010). When different speakers, who each speak with his or her own accent, are used, one increases the authenticity of the recording, but there are differences in voice control. For instance, intonation may differ from speaker to speaker (Garrett 2010). One can try to use many different speakers for each variety and then merge the results as a way to overcome this challenge, but there could still be a lot of differences within the recordings that might colour the results. Another way to use the verbal guise technique is to have the speakers talk spontaneously about the same topic (Garrett 2010). But this can also colour the respondents' views, as they may respond to what is being said, instead of how it is said.

The matched guise technique is, according to (Garrett 2010), much the same as the verbal guise technique in that it is a way to elicit attitudinal responses from people by having them listen to recordings of different varieties. However, in this case the same person reads the text for all the recordings, and therefore mimics other accents. The main difference between the two techniques is that in the matched guise technique only one person is taped speaking several different varieties, whereas in the verbal guise technique several people are taped, each speaking with their own variety. The reason only one person is used to read a text in different language varieties is that this person will probably have the same voice quality, speed and pitch throughout the recordings (Garrett 2010). In this way one can ensure, to the degree that this is possible, that the respondents only rate the accent and not the person speaking it. The respondents, on the other hand, are told that they will be listening to several speakers, but they are not made aware that they are evaluating accents and dialects during the session (Garrett 2010). One of the main challenges that has to be dealt with when this technique is used, is the lack of authenticity. The person speaking on the recordings may be bilingual, which is good, as he or she can read the texts with two authentic varieties. However, as they are often asked to read the text in many different accents, so the question becomes if they really can make these varieties sound authentic (Garrett 2010). This challenge can be seen in many ways with these types of recordings. For instance, because of the fact that only the accents are to be evaluated, the same text is used for all the recordings. So the person that is recorded will have to speak in different accents, but use the same vocabulary, which can again lead to a lack of authenticity (Garrett 2010). For instance, a speaker of Received Pronunciation (RP) and a speaker of the London dialect Cockney will naturally use

different vocabulary. One example of this is that an RP speaker would probably say “ I am not” whereas a Cockney speaker would say “I ain’t”, but in the recordings for a matched guise test the speaker would say for instance “I am not”, but in a Cockney accent (Garrett 2010).

For both methods used in the indirect approach there are some common disadvantages that need to be considered when these studies are applied to attitudinal research. The question of neutrality, for instance, must be dealt with when these methods are used (Garrett 2010). When the text that the speakers will read in the recordings is chosen, it is important to choose one that is neutral, or at least what Garrett (2010) calls “factually neutral”. This means that the text should include nothing that could colour the respondent’s view of the reader, such as political topics and so on. But the use of a factually neutral text is not unproblematic either, according to Garrett (2010) there could be a problem finding or making a text that is neutral to people of all ages, so the same text can be interpreted differently amongst the different age groups, and the speakers are therefore judged differently.

The third approach, which is the approach used in the present thesis, is called *the societal treatment study*, which Garrett defines as:

Studies of attitudes to language as they are evident in sources available in public social domains, such as the media, policy documentation, literature, etc.  
(2010:209)

In other words, when researchers apply this approach they study how language attitudes are treated in our society. There are different ways of conducting research within this method, two of which are the *observational method* and the *participant observation* (Garrett et al 2003). An observational method is used for this study. An example of the participant observation is to spend some amount of time with the people one wants to observe, and therefore hope to achieve some sort of insider status, and see how these people act and speak in a normal situation (Meyerhoff 2006). According to Garrett et al (2003), the societal treatment approach has often been overlooked when it comes to attitudinal research, but it is still an important source of discovering language attitudes towards different varieties. One of the reasons why this research has been overlooked in the past may be that a lot of the studies have been conducted in an informal way, and that researchers believe that this type of study mainly serves as a preliminary study (Garrett et al 2003). McKenzie (2001) however, argues that it may be more natural to use the societal treatment approach when time and space makes it difficult to get a direct access to respondents. McKenzie (2001:41) also states that the

societal treatment approach is often a more qualitative study and that it ‘often included a content analysis of the status and /or the stereotypical associations of languages and language varieties and their speech’.

The fourth approach presented is called folklinguistics, which, as already mentioned, can be seen as a variety of the direct approach (Garrett 2010). When this type of study is conducted, the aim is to find out what perceptions ‘non-linguists’ have about language, so the researcher is interested in not only what ‘ordinary’ people’s attitudes are, but also how they express these attitudes (Garrett 2010). One example of this is simply giving the respondents a blank map of the USA and ask them to plot in how they think people speak, in their own words. Answers may vary from ‘mid-west don’t have accent’ to ‘southern’ (hillbilly) to ‘very whiney Texan’ (Garrett 2010:182f). As there are no folklinguistics studies presented below, however, there will be no more focus on this approach for the present thesis.

## **2.4 Attitudinal studies**

As previously mentioned, societal treatment studies have, if not been neglected, not been the main focus for sociolinguists in the past decades. But there is much more research done on attitudinal studies through the direct and indirect approach. As this thesis is a societal treatment study, some of the previous societal treatment studies are included as background material and the structure of the present thesis is based on these. And as one of the research questions deals with how previous research on language attitudes correlate to this study, research on attitudes towards British varieties of English is also included. The most relevant aspects of these studies are the main methodology and results, and these are included in the presentation of the studies below. Other aspects necessary for a full understanding of the studies these are of course also included.<sup>5</sup>

### **2.4.1 Societal Treatment Studies**

The first societal treatment study that is presented is Lippi-Green’s (1997:79ff) study on the language attitudes presented in various Disney films, called *Teaching Children to*

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<sup>5</sup> Three tables are included from research targeting British English to make comparison easier in chapter 4.

*Discriminate, What we learn from the Big Bad Wolf*. Lippi-Green starts by stating some of the attitudes other scholars have picked up from some of the earlier Disney films, such as the Wolf character in the film *Three Little Pigs*. In a scene included in the original film, the wolf attempts to break in the door while dressing up as a Jew and speaking with a Yiddish accent. In a later release of the film, the scene was changed and the wolf no longer dressed as a Jew, but he still spoke with a Yiddish accent. This was included in the film for several more years, before Disney changed the accent to a 'standard dumb cartoon accent' (Lippi-Green 1997:79-80). Another example is taken from the movie *Aladdin* where the good guys such as Aladdin, Princess Jasmine and her father speak with a General American accent, but the other Arabic characters speak with a heavier accent, again portraying the bad guys with different accents (Lippi-Green 1997:80). Another aspect Lippi-Green (1997:79ff) includes is the fact that these films are intended for children, and for many of them the media, that is television and films, are the only contact they have with people of other ethnicities. If all bad characters are portrayed with different accents, whereas the good guys speak the same way as the children do, this is bound to leave its mark on the children. But she also states that a lot of children learn to distinguish between, and to some extent speak, different varieties without the help of the media, so there are several factors at play (Lippi-Green 1997:79ff).

The hypothesis for the study was as follows:

Animated films entertain, but they are also a way to teach children to associate specific characteristics and life styles with specific societal groups, by means of language variation.

(Lippi-Green 1997:85)

A total of 24 full-length animated Disney films were analysed and a total of 371 characters were included in the analysis. All the films that were analysed had children as the intended target audience, and all films were fully animated. As for the characters, all who spoke more than one word were included in the analysis (Lippi-Green 1997:79ff). When it comes to how the different characters were classified with regard to the accents they spoke, if an actor made an attempt to speak a certain accent, however successful, it was categorised under the accent the actor tried to portray. This was done because it still showed what kind of attitude Disney was going for (Lippi-Green 86-87)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> This is an important aspect for the present thesis as well, see chapter 3 for further discussion.

The results of this study are quite extensive so only the most general results are included below. In the study there are 371 characters; 259 male and 112 female (Lippi-Green 1997:79ff). Not only is there an imbalance with regard to the number of males and females presented, but there is also an imbalance in how the gender roles are portrayed. The male characters are almost always portrayed with their identity outside of the home, in that they are for instance doctors, advisors to kings, thieves, waiters, servants, detectives etc. The female characters, however, are almost always portrayed within the confinement of the home, as mothers, wives and daughters. If they do have jobs they are waitresses, nurses, nannies and housekeepers (Lippi-Green 1997:79ff). Percentagewise 43.1% of the characters speak with some sort of non-stigmatised US English<sup>7</sup>, whereas 13.9% speak with a Southern or urban US accent, and 21.8% speak with some sort of mainstream British accent. The remaining characters speak with a different British English accent, other English accents or a non-native accent of English (Lippi-Green 1997:79ff). Of the 271 characters, 91 are characters that would not logically speak English, but only 34 of these speak with a foreign English accent. One example of this can be seen in the film *Lion King*, where the story takes place in Africa, and only the baboon character of *Rafiki* speaks with an African (Swahili) accent (Lippi-Green 1997:79ff). Of the 72 characters that are defined as evil, 85% are portrayed as native speakers of English. There are 50% speakers of US English, whereas 15% speak with a foreign accent. The remaining characters speak with a British English or other native English accent (Lippi-Green 1997:79ff). Another aspect found is, that there are no romantic leads, either male or female, that speak with a foreign accent. There is also little variation when it comes to native English accents, and less so with the female leads than the males (Lippi-Green 1997:79ff). There are also some characters that speak with an African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Of these, all are presented as animals, whereas of the 161 MUSE characters, 43.1 % are humanoid, 54.4 % are animals and 2.5 % are inanimate creatures (Lippi-Green 1997:79ff). The characters that speak AAVE largely portray the stereotypes already intact, e.g. that the male characters are unemployed or that they have no other purpose in life than pleasing themselves and playing music (Lippi-Green 1997:94). So what do these results mean? Lippi-Green sums it up with this conclusion:

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<sup>7</sup> Lippi-Green (1997) refers to General American (GA) as Mainstream US English (MUSE)

What children learn from the entertainment industry is to be comfortable with *same* and to be wary about *other*, and that language is a prime and ready diagnostic for this division between what is approachable and what is best left alone. For adults, those childhood lessons are reviewed daily.

(1997:103, original emphasis)

The next study that is presented stays in the Disney universe, as Sønnesyn (2011) in her master's thesis set out to analyse animated Disney films from 1995-2009<sup>8</sup>. The aims of this study were to first see if there were a systematic correlation between accents and character traits, but also to see if there had been any changes from Lippi-Green's study (1997). The analysis was carried out the same way as that of Lippi-Green, so there is no detailed description of that here. The results, however, are presented and compared to the former study.

Sønnesyn (2011) found that there has been an increase of General American (GA) and Regional American at the expense of other accents, especially RP and Regional British. Of the 272 characters, 61% spoke with a GA accent and 14.2% spoke with a RP accent (Sønnesyn 2011). One reason for this, Sønnesyn (2011) discusses, is the fact that there is a lot more focus in present day society on behaving politically correct, and emphasis is placed on not stigmatising any groups based on their ethnicity, race, gender, religion and so forth. Still, one of her hypotheses was that there would be more variation than there actually was (Sønnesyn 2011). With regard to gender, the overall picture proved to be quite similar to Lippi-Green's study (1997). One notable exception was that the female characters used Regional British more than the male characters, and these female characters all spoke with a Cockney accent (from East London). They were also found to have common character traits, e.g. that they were all portrayed as unsympathetic, for instance the three fates in the film *Hercules* and Mrs Cratchit and Mrs Dilbert from the film *A Christmas Carol* (Sønnesyn 2011). Even though the use of the RP accent has decreased in the overall results, there is one category where this accent is overrepresented and that is in the category of sophistication, where the majority of the characters with an RP accent were labelled as sophisticated (Sønnesyn 2011). In the characters who were labelled unsophisticated, the New York accent dominated; 47% of the unsophisticated characters that spoke with a regional American accent used the New York accent (Sønnesyn 2011).

The overall results show that there are on-going changes in our society that influence the results of these two studies, so even though both deal with animated Disney films, there

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<sup>8</sup> Lippi-Green (1997) in her study investigated Disney films up till 1995.

are differences in the results. Lippi-Green's study (1997), which focused on films up till 1995, presents a much more varied picture with regard to accent use and stereotypes, while Sønnesyn's thesis (2011) shows that variation with regard to accent use is on the decrease in more modern films.

The last societal treatment study included takes us back to 1998, which is around the same time as Lippi-Green's study. This study is called *The Good, the Bad, and the foreign: The Use of Dialect in Children's Animated Television* and was conducted by Dobrow and Gidney (1998). The study is 'an analysis of visual and behavioural representation of character and dialect in children's animated television programming' (Dobrow & Gidney 1998:105). The sample in this study consists of 323 characters from 12 different cartoons. The 12 cartoons were chosen randomly from a total of 76 shows. These cartoons were aired either on cable, network or the Public Broadcasting Service, and they were shown on television in Boston during the fall of 1996. The shows were also divided into shows that were new that fall, and those that were in syndication. The method used in this study was that a team of trained coders all listened to two episodes of the cartoons individually and several times, before comparing the results, which gave an intercoder reliability of 90 % (Dobrow & Gidney 1998:109).

The main results of this study are as follows: of the 323 characters, 222 were male and only 86 were female, 15 characters were categorised as uncertain (e.g. robots). There was an even 130 characters placed in each of the categories young and old, and 21 were seen as elderly, 42 characters were non-human. With regard to ethnicity, 122 of the characters were classified as Anglo-Saxon and 54 as non-white. 144 were classified as American and 79 as foreign; the non-humans were not coded for ethnicity. With regard to the linguistic results, Dobrow and Gidney (1998:114) placed the characters into three categories, which are:

- Those that do not attempt to correlate language or dialect with character
- Those that use language or dialect to illustrate some quality of the character's personality or disposition
- And those that portray no linguistic diversity

Dobrow and Gidney provides no number of how many characters each category holds, but state that the majority of them fit into the second category, the category where they use language to better portray certain character traits. Examples of this are for instance the villains in the cartoons; most of them use some sort of recognisable foreign English or a non-standard,



variety of American English (Dobrow &Gidney 1998). British English is the foreign variety of English that is most used by the villains. An example of this is the character *Shakata* in the cartoon *Aladdin*, he speaks with a very exaggerated British accent and in some cases he also rolls, or uses tapped /r/, [ɾ], which is a characteristic for very ‘posh’ RP (Dobrow & Gidney 1998:115). Another result from this study relates to gender, where the traditional view of women is supported. The female characters are traditionally seen as more passive than men and also weaker, more peaceful and more dependent than men were also found in this study.

This study largely supports Lippi-Green’s (1997) study in that villains or the ‘bad guys’ tend to speak with different accents than the heroes or the good guys and that women tend to speak with a more standard accent than the male characters.

#### **2.4.2 Attitudes towards English**

The first attitudinal study, which is not a societal treatment study, is a study by Yuko Hiraga (2005), who investigated British attitudes towards six different varieties; three British English varieties and three American English varieties. This study is explained as a critical response to two earlier studies conducted by Giles (1970, in Hiraga 2005) and Carranza and Ryan (1975, in Hiraga 2005). The two studies are explored to some extent in Hiraga’s (2005) study; some of the methods and results are presented here as well, to increase the understanding of the study by Hiraga (2005). Giles’ study focused on British attitudes towards 13 different varieties of English (Hiraga 2005). To better measure the attitudes towards the different varieties, Giles (1970) chose three dimensions and asked the respondents to rate the accents to each of the dimensions, which were ‘aesthetic’, ‘communicative’ and ‘status’ (Hiraga 2005). The 13 accents that were used in this study are RP, affected RP<sup>9</sup>, North American and French, German, S<sup>10</sup>. Welsh, Irish, Italian, N. England, Somerset, Indian and Cockney, Birmingham (Hiraga 2005). Some of the results from this study show that RP got the highest rank in the ‘status’ dimension. While American English and French were rated next highest in the same dimension whereas the accent associated with Birmingham was rated lowest (Hiraga 2005). A point found in both of the studies is that British people rank the urban accents in Great

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<sup>9</sup> Affected RP is according to Giles (1970 in Hiraga 2005) an exaggerated form of RP often associated with the aristocracy.

<sup>10</sup> There is no explanation offered to the abbreviations and comparing of the accents.

Britain the lowest, but as the same varieties of American English were not included in these studies, Hiraga has done exactly that in his study.

Hiraga has used three different sets of methods while doing the study. The first method is that the respondents rated speech samples on semantic scales, the second was a questionnaire and the third method was a debate. However, as the article had limited space, he only included a detailed description of the first method namely the verbal guise technique. He explains why he opted for not using the matched guise technique as the study deals with attitudes towards dialects and not just the accents, so in this case using one speaker reading the same text in different accents would not be beneficial to the experiment. The two dimensions 'status' and 'solidarity' were used and in order to best find the adjectives to match these two dimensions. Hiraga asked 24 respondents to circle the adjectives they associated with their native accent. He provided them with 17 adjectives for the solidarity dimension and the end result was 'sociable', 'friendly', 'comforting', 'sincere' and 'reliable'. The varieties chosen were both from the United States and Britain, What was common for both regions was that the varieties that were supposed to be the standard were chosen, as well as two urban varieties and two rural varieties. All the speakers (for the recordings) were in their 50s and from a working class background, with the exception of the RP speaker and the radio announcer (the standard American variety). The varieties are, then, RP and American English, which is presented by a radio announcer to try to avoid the regional markers in the US, Birmingham, New York, Rural West Yorkshire and Rural Alabama. The respondents were all chosen from the south of England to avoid any of them speaking or identifying with the varieties presented in the recordings. There were 32 respondents and they took part in all three experiments. In the first experiment they were asked to listen to different speech samples, these lasted two minutes and while the respondents listened to these they had to rate the samples on a seven-point scale with the ten adjectives, for instance 'intelligent-unintelligent, 'unreliable-reliable' (Hiraga 2005:297), with 7 being the most positive and 1 the most negative. The main results are as follows:

<b>Status</b>	<b>Solidarity</b>
$F(5,185) = 211.71, p < 0.01$	$F(5,185) = 20.83, p < 0.01$
<u>1 RP (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>)</u>	1 Yorkshire
<u>2 Network American (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>)</u>	2 Network American
3 NYC	3 Alabama
4 Alabama	<u>4 RP (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>)</u>
5 West Yorkshire	<u>5 Birmingham</u>
6 Birmingham	6 NYC

Figure 2.1: status and solidarity table from Hiraga (2005:297)

The main results of the study are shown in figure 2.1, and a table with a more detailed description of how each variety scored for each adjective is also included in Hiraga's article. In figure 2.1 both standard varieties scored highest for the status dimension. What Hiraga notes as interesting is that both the rural and the urban British variety score lowest on the status scale, so this shows that there is little loyalty for these varieties amongst the British respondents. In the solidarity dimension, both the rural varieties and especially the British variety Yorkshire score high, which Hiraga expected as people often associate the rural varieties with the countryside and all its positive traits. Both the urban varieties scored low here, again as Hiraga expected, as people tend to associate these varieties with the hectic and industrial city life. To better show how these varieties can be placed into three different categories Hiraga also includes a ranking of the varieties without dividing the adjectives into two separate categories, which shows that both standard varieties are ranked on top (1 RP, 2 Network American), the two rural varieties second (3 West Yorkshire, 4 Alabama) and the two urban varieties last (5 NYC, 6 Birmingham) (Hiraga 2005).

With these results in mind, Hiraga discusses the *inherent value hypothesis*, the *imposed norm hypothesis* and Trudgill's *social connotations theory* (for a detailed description of these theories see section 2.2.3.2) and how the results of his study can support the imposed norm hypothesis and the social connotations theory. He claims that the imposed norm hypothesis is better to explain the consistency in the judgement of dialects, but it does not provide an explanation for why, for instance, the urban British varieties are ranked lowest by British people, when they are in fact more similar to RP than the rural versions. This is where the social connotations theory comes in, and as mentioned above, more associations play a part when attitudes are evaluated, than prestige and aesthetics, such as the geographical area of the variety. The grouping of the six varieties from standard to rural to urban supports this theory, as they are grouped according to geographical areas in the results.

The next study was conducted by Coupland and Bishop (2007) and consists of 5010 informants from the UK answering a web survey via the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) called *the Voices*. The aim of this study was: ‘... to capture wide-scale and contrastive patterns of attributed social meaning when informants are asked to produce simple, scaled forms of labels alone (Coupland & Bishop 2007:75)’. There were 34 different accents of English included in the survey, the majority were regional varieties from Britain but other varieties were included as well, such as global varieties of English and also some associated with other countries. The informants had to be over 15 years old, and all were asked about their own language use as well as what their general preferences of linguistic diversity were and where they currently lived. Their main task in the survey was however to rate and label the 34 different accents, the result for the dimensions of ‘social attractiveness’ and ‘prestige’ are seen in figure 2.2 below. There are three varieties that should be clarified from this table; the first is ‘accent identical to own’. This is to show how much loyalty the informants have towards their own accent. The other two are in relation to the RP accent; there are two different categories representing the standard accent, the first is ‘Standard English’ and the next is ‘Queen’s English’. The last variety is, for example, more associated with the aristocracy.

		Social attractiveness	Prestige
1.	Accent identical to own	4.87 (2)	4.14 (3)
2.	Afro-Caribbean	3.72 (21)	2.90 (30)
3.	Asian	3.21 (31)	2.74 (33)
4.	Australian	4.04 (13)	3.51 (11)
5.	Belfast	3.67 (23)	3.11 (27)
6.	Birmingham	2.92 (34)	2.70 (34)
7.	Black Country	3.16 (33)	2.81 (32)
8.	Bristol	3.64 (25)	3.22 (21)
9.	Cardiff	3.67 (24)	3.16 (25)
10.	Cornish	4.22 (8)	3.38 (13)
11.	Edinburgh	4.49 (5)	4.04 (4)
12.	French	4.09 (11)	3.74 (9)
13.	German	3.20 (32)	3.21 (23)
14.	Glasgow	3.45 (29)	2.93 (29)
15.	Lancashire	3.90 (15)	3.24 (20)
16.	Leeds	3.73 (20)	3.15 (26)
17.	Liverpool	3.40 (30)	2.82 (31)
18.	London	3.70 (22)	3.89 (6)
19.	Manchester	3.61 (27)	3.22 (21)
20.	Newcastle	4.13 (10)	3.21 (23)
21.	New Zealand	4.37 (6)	3.84 (7)
22.	North American	3.90 (15)	3.80 (8)
23.	Northern Irish	4.05 (12)	3.30 (17)
24.	Norwich	3.81 (18)	3.38 (13)
25.	Nottingham	3.78 (19)	3.39 (12)
26.	Queen's English	4.28 (7)	5.59 (1)
27.	Scottish	4.52 (4)	3.98 (5)
28.	South African	3.51 (28)	3.34 (16)
29.	Southern Irish	4.68 (3)	3.63 (10)
30.	Spanish	3.88 (17)	3.29 (18)
31.	Standard English	4.96 (1)	5.44 (2)
32.	Swansea	3.64 (25)	3.11 (27)
33.	Welsh	3.95 (14)	3.29 (18)
34.	West Country	4.16 (9)	3.36 (15)

Figure 2.2: Table showing the main results from 'social attractiveness' and 'prestige' found in Coupland & Bishop (2007:79). The scale for these results is a seven-point scale where the maximum value is 7.0 and the minimum value is 1.0.

The results, seen in figure 2.2, show the different varieties in alphabetical order, but the number in parentheses show how the respondents rated the accents on the scale. The variety that ended up in 34<sup>th</sup> place in both categories was the Birmingham variety, which is not that surprising as this is also in line with the result shown by Hiraga (2005). The overall results show some support to the theory that urban varieties are rated lower than others consistently; see the ranking of Birmingham, Liverpool and Glasgow. However, the Edinburgh variety

shows that some urban varieties are ranked higher, indeed this variety is ranked as one of the highest in both dimensions. With regard to the two standards, the variety labelled 'Standard English' is the highest in the 'social attractiveness' dimension and the only variety ranked higher in the 'prestige' dimension is 'Queen's English'. This variety does not, however, make it quite to the top in the 'attractiveness' dimension, lending some evidence to the fact that this variety is seen as more 'posh' (Coupland & Bishop 2007).

There are some differences with regard to gender in this study. Coupland and Bishop report that with regard to the 'social attractiveness' dimension, women tend to give more positive values to the accents than the men do. Two exceptions to this are 'Cornish English' and 'West Country English'. The men, however, give more positive values to the 'accent identical to my own'. With regard to the dimension of 'prestige', women, again, tend to give more positive values to the accents than men, the exceptions here is that men give both the 'accent identical to my own' and 'West Country English' more positive values than the women do.

The informants were also asked other questions such as 'to what extent is it important for people to speak properly?'. The overall answer to this had a mean of 5.71, which can be translated into strongly agreeing. There were, however, some differences between the age groups here; the youngest age group, 15-24, had a mean rate of 5.36 and from there it went up through the different groups. The oldest group, consisting of the informants that were 65 and over, had a mean rate of 6.11 (Coupland & Bishop 2007).

The last attitudinal study included as background material for the present thesis is a study from Denmark by Ladegaard (1998). This study is included as a contrast to the previous two studies, that all had British respondents, to see if the stereotypes expressed are the same across countries. The aim of this study was to have

a discussion on language attitudes in relation to social and cultural values. Based on empirical study of attitudes to varieties of English accents in Denmark  
(Ladegaard 1998:253)

In this study there were 96 informants or 'judges' as Ladegaard (1998) calls them, 73 of which attended secondary school and 23 of which were studying English as a foreign language (EFL) at university level. The study consists of both a verbal guise test and a questionnaire with both closed and open questions. The judges were also asked to read a

passage in English to see whether their answers corresponded with their views, but this is not relevant for the present thesis so it is not included in the presentation of the results.

For the verbal guise test all speakers were male and had relevant connection to the places they represented so the recordings became as authentic as possible. The judges were asked to rate the varieties with regard to status and competence (variables 1-5), social attractiveness and personal integrity (variables 6-10) and linguistic qualities (variables 11-15) (Ladegaard 1998:258). The main findings are presented in figure 3 below.

Variables	Speakers				
	RP (A)	Scottish (B)	Cockney (C)	Australian (D)	SA (E)
1.Intelligence	3.64	2.92	2.95	2.95	3.13
2.Education	3.81	2.70	2.44	2.77	3.13
3.Leadership	3.74	2.04	2.49	2.44	2.85
4.Self-confidence	4.10	2.44	2.82	2.63	3.43
5.Social status	3.83	2.76	2.40	2.88	3.23
6.Reliability	2.80	3.25	2.92	3.38	2.93
7.Friendliness	2.68	3.69	3.16	3.41	3.22
8.Helpfulness	2.58	3.43	3.15	3.29	3.12
9.Humour	2.05	2.10	2.30	2.32	2.79
10.Identification	1.90	1.98	1.87	2.01	1.97
11.Fluency	4.19	3.20	2.66	2.91	3.27
12.Communicative efficiency	4.43	3.75	2.29	3.32	3.66
13.Aesthetic quality	4.03	3.13	1.92	2.76	2.85
14.Correctness	4.35	3.42	2.59	3.23	3.19
15.Model of pronunciation	3.45	1.97	1.58	2.66	2.05

Figure 2.3: table of main results from Ladegaard (1998:259) verbal guise test. The scale used here is from 1-5 where 1 is ‘not at all’ and 5 is ‘very much’.

As seen from figure 2.3, these results do not vary much from the other studies outlined in this chapter, which then suggests that the Danish judges evaluate the varieties of English in the same way as the British respondents in the other studies do. RP is rated the most favourable variety in all dimensions, which again lends support to the claim that this is seen as the most prestigious accent of English. As is also seen in figure 2.3, Cockney is rated lowest across the dimensions; this is the urban variety included in this study and again it supports the theories presented in the previous two studies, that urban varieties are ranked lower than other varieties.

One of the questions in Ladegaard’s study was how the Danish judges would rate RP and Standard American (SA), as RP has been the model teachers use in Danish classrooms,

but SA becomes more and more widespread in the media in Denmark. What is shown here are that the judges still rate RP higher than SA.

The judges were also asked to identify the varieties presented and this proved more challenging for them. The varieties most successfully identified were RP and SA, but the Cockney variety, however, was more difficult. This was identified as a working class variety, or a Southern London variety. There were also 14% that identified it as Scottish or Irish. The Scottish variety was identified as Northern England or Irish even, but according to Ladegaard, this is not unnatural as these varieties do have similar traits.

All in all, however, this study largely reports the same findings as the other two studies presented in this chapter, for instance that the urban varieties are normally ranked the lowest, and that the standard varieties, especially RP, are ranked high in the status dimensions. Even though this study was conducted with Danish respondents, it supports the fact that the stereotypes of the English language and the standard language ideology also exist outside Great Britain.

#### **2.4.2.1 Miscellaneous**

Some points that need to be mentioned are that even though all the studies presented in this chapter show the same tendencies, these is only a small part of the language attitude corpus, so even though I compare the findings of these studies with my own findings (see chapter 4), general conclusions cannot be made from such a small corpus.

Another point to bear in mind is that (again) even though the findings of these studies are largely the same, none of the studies, with the exception of Sønnesyn (2011), reports which linguistic variables were included in the analysis. What Hiraga (2005) may categorise as a Cockney accent, Ladegaard (1998) might include in Estuary English for example. There are still grounds for comparison, but this is as mentioned something to bear in mind.



## **3 DATA AND METHOD**

This chapter presents the material that has been analysed for this thesis, followed by an outline of the different accent categories and the most characteristic features in those categories. Lastly, there is a section on the method that was used when collecting the data, and what kind of challenges that were faced while doing so.

### **3.1 Data collection**

This analysis consists of two equally important parts: the first is to find out what accent the different characters use, and the second part is to find out how the characters are portrayed with regard to their traits. When both parts are completed it is possible to place the characters against each other and see if they are similar or different, and if language attitudes already established are shown here. Because of this, the written material (the books) and spoken material (the films and series) are used to get enough information to best carry out the analysis.

#### **3.1.1 Written material**

The written material used for this thesis consists of the seven books in the *Harry Potter* series, written by J.K. Rowling, and of the book *A Game of Thrones*, written by George R.R. Martin. These books are important to the analysis in that they provide a better understanding of the characters in for example character descriptions and the description of certain acts carried out by the characters. By including these character descriptions with the portrayal of the characters from the films, there is a good basis for deciding which categories the characters belong to.

The plots of both *Harry Potter* and *A Game of Thrones* are presented in chapter 1, so there is no detailed description of this in the present chapter. The basis for how the different characters are portrayed in *Harry Potter*, and in some cases how they speak were found in the seven books. One example of this is from the portrayal of the character *Hagrid*. We first get introduced to Hagrid in the book *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, where he says to

Harry ‘a very happy birthday to yeh. Got summat fer yeh here – I mighta sat on it at some point, but it’ll taste all right’ (Rowling 1997:40). This example illustrates how Hagrid speaks, and although it does not automatically become clear what accent he has, we now know that he speaks differently from the other characters, from whom the author does not emphasise in writing that they speak differently.

The book *A Game of Thrones* is used in the same way as the *Harry Potter* books are, in that it serves as background material to complement the portrayal of the characters in the television series. As mentioned in the introduction chapter, there are currently five books released in the series *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Only the first book, and consequently only the first season, are analysed here. The second season of *Game of Thrones*, based on the book *A Clash of Kings*, has been released, but to include it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

It is important to stress that even though the written material plays an important part in this analysis, it primarily serves as a backdrop for the spoken material, and as both the films and the series are adaptations of the books, some changes occur. Because of this there are some limitations to the written material with regard to for instance character descriptions or that certain characters that are portrayed more in the books are not included as much in the films and series, or cut out completely. The spoken material is, then, used to complement the written material with regard to character traits as well as provide the material for the accent analysis.

### **3.1.2 Spoken material**

The spoken material consists of the eight *Harry Potter* films and the first season of *Game of Thrones*, and it has several functions important to the analysis. First and foremost it is by watching this material that the accents the characters use are found. This material is also important when it comes to selecting the characters that are included in the analysis. As mentioned above, both the films and the television series are adaptations of the books. So there are some differences both in how the characters from the books are portrayed, and also which of them are included in the spoken material at all. Where the written material can help with the character descriptions, it is to some extent limited when it comes to character selection. The factor of how much speech time the characters get in the spoken material is also essential when it comes to character selection (for more information on character selection, see section 3.1.3 below).

### 3.1.3 Character selection

One of the challenges when this study was conducted was the issue of character selection. Which characters should be included in the analysis and what should the criteria for excluding characters be?

One way to deal with this challenge has been to have certain criteria clear before starting the analysis. Because the *Harry Potter* franchise consists of eight films and the *Game of Thrones* series consists of ten episodes, and the amount of exposure for the characters are different. It was difficult to find common criteria for how to choose which characters should be part of the analysis. With regard to the *Harry Potter* films all characters who had enough speech time,<sup>11</sup> so it was possible to identify their accent, were included in the analysis. There are, however, some exceptions. As this is a study on language attitudes, there is no point in including characters whose traits do not become apparent either in the books or films and series.

The main criterion with regard to the *Game of Thrones* series was that a character had to appear in two episodes to be included in the analysis; this is because there are several characters that are a part of certain episodes, but only say one or two sentences. These characters may be added to the television series to explain things that happen in the books or just to act as messengers from one character to another. And as these do not get descriptions in the same way as other characters, and much less speech time, they are not as relevant to the study, and are therefore excluded from this analysis.

### 3.1.4 Selecting the data

The approach used for the present thesis is called a societal treatment study, which is introduced earlier (cf. chapter 2), but for the sake of simplicity, the definition of a societal treatment approach is included here as well: ‘Studies of attitudes to language as they are evident in sources available in public social domains, such as the media, policy documentation, literature, etc’. (Garrett 2010:209). Because this study deals with language attitudes in films and television series, it is per Garrett’s definition a societal treatment study.

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<sup>11</sup> A character has to speak enough, that is use enough accent features, so their accent can be correctly identified.

When the data for this thesis was collected, there were two possible methods that could be applied, *acoustic analysis* and *auditory analysis*. When using the acoustic technique of translating speech signals into visual representation, the focus can be on the features that are most interesting to that analysis (Milroy and Gordon 2003). But as the main focus of this study is language attitudes in general, it is not necessary to go into detail about the specific features a speaker uses, therefore the acoustic analysis will not be discussed in any more detail.

The auditory technique proved more suitable for this analysis. This technique consists of repeated listening on the part of the researcher, and through this try to identify the variables needed for the analysis (Milroy and Gordon 2003). I have watched all the *Harry Potter* films and the entire first season of *Game of Thrones* as many times that was needed to identify the accents used by the characters. Several of the characters are, however, difficult to place into specific accent categories, but as I viewed the material several times, my own knowledge about the accent features increased, and I have therefore hopefully correctly identified the accents. Another way of ensuring the consistency of the results is to use a second opinion to the material, and see whether or there is a correlation between the findings. For this thesis some of my fellow students helped with the analysis, as well as my supervisor who was consulted on a selection of the films and the series to ensure that the results are consistent.

After the auditory analysis was completed the characters were counted and placed in the different non-linguistic categories presented below (cf 3.3). These are counted manually and presented in charts. The results of this analysis are presented in the following chapter.

### **3.2 Linguistic categories**

As stated in the introduction chapter, this is a sociolinguistic study on language attitudes, and not a study on specific phonological traits of accents. A detailed phonetic analysis of each character's accent is therefore not needed for the present thesis. There is, however, a need for an understanding of the main features of each accent, so that the characters' accents can be correctly identified and placed into the linguistic categories presented below. In this section the most characteristic features for each of the accents are included. These categories are very broad and there is some variation within them, but these are not included for the present thesis. If no other source is cited, the phonological traits are found in Wells (1982).

### 3.2.1 Received Pronunciation (RP)

This category is probably the inclusive of all the accent categories, and this is the ‘standard’ and non-regional variety in Great Britain. Before the most characteristic features of RP are presented, the four different categories of RP are described. There are several ways of defining RP and the varieties within it, but for this thesis Wells’ (1982) four categories are used to distinguish the different speakers within this category. Wells (1982) talks about *mainstream RP*, *upper-crust RP (U-RP)*, *near RP* and *adoptive RP*. The first two categories are perhaps the most unproblematic ones. Wells (1982) defines mainstream RP as the unmarked, neutral and modern type of RP, one example of mainstream RP speakers is a typical BBC newscaster (Hannisdal 2006). The variety called U-RP is the more conservative and old-fashioned RP often associated with the royal family, aristocracy and ‘posh’ people (Wells 1982, Hannisdal 2006). The two latter varieties, namely near RP and adoptive RP, are a bit trickier to place. Wells (1982) defines a speaker of near RP as a speaker with an RP accent with regional features and, as mentioned above, an RP accent is typically non-regional. Adults who did not speak RP as children use the adoptive-RP variety, that is, they have discarded their native accent and started speaking with an RP accent. There are no set linguistic features for the last two varieties, as speakers of near RP may come from all across England and have different regional features in their accent, and speakers of adoptive-RP may have learned to speak this accent in such a way that there is no way to distinguish them from other speakers of RP (Wells 1982).

As this is the neutral variety of British English, there are many features that could be included here. Some of the more characteristic features of RP, however, are that the accent is non-rhotic and that the realisation of /l/ is clear in general, other than in word final position and between vowels and a vowel and a consonant. With regard to vowels, the BATH vowel is typically /ɑ:/ and the LOT vowel typically has /ɒ/ and some use the /ɔ/. The GOAT vowel typically has a /əʊ/ diphthong.

Some of the features for the U-RP accent are, with regard to consonants is that the /r/ is tapped, [ɾ]. Both the vowels for STRUT, /ʌ/, and for BATH, PALM, START, /ɑ:/, are back, and the GOOSE vowel /u:/ is fully back. The diphthong for PRICE and MOUTH typically have a front-starting point /aɪ/, the diphthongs for NEAR, SQUARE and CURE are also typically very open /ɪə, εə, ʊə/. Lastly, the more old-fashioned U-RP typically have the /ɔ:/ vowel for CLOTH-words instead of /ɒ/ (Wells 1982).

### 3.2.2 London English – Cockney

The Cockney accent is a southern accent typically identified as a working-class accent. The main features with regard to consonants are that the accent is non-rhotic, has H-dropping, T-glottaling, full glottal stops, [ʔ], and L-vocalisation of non-prevocalic /l/, an example of this is that the word ‘milk’ is pronounced [mɪʊk] (Hughes et al 2012). TH-fronting is also a common feature in this accent so the features /θ/ and /ð/ in words such as ‘thin’ and ‘mother’ are pronounced with /f/ and /v/ (Hughes et al 2012). The main features with regard to vowels are diphthongization in the lexical sets FLEECE /ɪi/ and GOOSE /ʊu/ (Wells 1982). There is also a difference in the lexical sets FACE, PRICE, CHOICE, GOAT and MOUTH diphthongs, where they are /æɪ, aɪ, oɪ, ʌʊ, æʊ/ respectively, (Hughes et al 2012). The vowel in THOUGHT, NORTH and FORCE is diphthongal and has the diphthong /ɔə/ instead of the monophthong /o:/ that is more typical of the RP accent (Wells 1982).

### 3.2.3 Estuary English

Coggle (1993) describes Estuary English as being linguistically in the middle of RP and Cockney. Some of the lexical features of this accent are then similar to the Cockney accent, such as T-glottaling, L-vocalisation and also a shift in the diphthongs of the lexical sets FACE, PRICE, GOAT and MOUTH towards /æɪ, aɪ, ʌʊ, æʊ/ (Coggle 1993, Hannisdal 2006: 96-97).

### 3.2.4 West Country English

The West Country accent is rhotic, so for instance the vowels of NURSE and LETTER are r-coloured /ɜ:/ and the phonetic quality of /r/ is a retroflex [ɻ] (Wells 1982). In the lexical sets START, NORTH, SQUARE, FORCE, NEAR, CURE, the vowels are either r-coloured or diphthongs, and where RP typically has short vowels the West Country vowels are lengthened in many environments, one example is that ‘did’ is pronounced [dɪ:d]. The lexical sets TRAP, BATH and START have a [a] vowel rather than [æ] and the LOT vowel is /ɑ:/.

### 3.2.5. Northern English

In the northern part of England there are, according to Wells (1982), two phonological traits that make up the typical difference from the accents of the southern part of England. The first of these is the absence of the FOOT-STRUT split, or a merger of these two, which means that the vowel /ʊ/ is typically used for both lexical sets instead of differentiating for /ʊ/ in FOOT and /ʌ/ in STRUT as is done in the south. The second trait that Wells (1982) describes as a main difference, is the vowel used in the lexical set BATH. In the north BATH words are typically pronounced with a short /a/ which is the same vowel that is used in the lexical set TRAP, so the words ‘gas’ and ‘glass’ rhyme. In the far north, FACE and GOAT vowels are often monophthongs, /e:/ and /o:/ respectively, whereas in RP and the south there are diphthongs (Hughes et al 2012). With regard to consonants there are some areas in the north that are rhotic, but this accent is mainly non-rhotic.

### 3.2.6 Scottish English

The accent of Scottish English is firmly rhotic and the realisation of /l/ is dark for the most part. With regard to vowels, the general rule (Aitken’s law) is that they are always short except when they occur before /r/, voiced fricatives /v, ð, z, ʒ/ and morpheme boundaries. As in the far north of England the lexical sets FACE and GOAT have the close-mid monophthongs /e/ and /o/, but in Scottish English these are short as well, with some exceptions (Aitken’s law). The vowel in LOT, CLOTH and THOUGHT is typically /ɔ/ so the words *cot* and *caught* sounds the same. Another vowel quality is found in the FOOT and GOOSE vowels which is a close central /ɨ/. Because of this, words such as *full* and *fool* becomes homophones. The vowel in the lexical set BATH and also TRAP, PALM and START is the short open front /a/.

### 3.2.7 Irish English

The Irish English accent is, like Scottish, a rhotic accent, but where the /r/ is typically dark in Scottish English, it is typically clear in Irish English (Hughes et al 2012). The dental fricatives /θ, ð/ in words such as *thin* and *this* respectively are typically pronounced with the dental stops [t d] (Wells 1982). The vowels in the lexical sets FACE and GOAT have the /e:/ and /o:/ monophthongs, and the lexical sets BATH, PALM and START typically have the long open front /a:/ (Hughes et al 2012). The vowels in the NURSE, FIRST and HURT lexical sets are typically /ʌr/ and PERCH is /ɛr/ (Wells 1982).

### 3.2.8 Welsh English

The Welsh English accent is typically non-rhotic, and as with the other Celtic languages presented above, the FACE and GOAT lexical sets have the monophthongs /e:/ and /o:/. One of the most typical differences between RP and Welsh English is, according to Wells (1982), that the latter accent has a STRUT-schwa merger, so that STRUT words are pronounced with a mid-central /ə/. The NURSE vowel is often rounded /ɜ:/ and the lexical sets BATH, PALM and START have a /a:/ vowel. And lastly the FORCE and NORTH vowels are distinct from each other, /ɔ:/ and /ɔ:/, respectively.

### 3.2.9 English with foreign accents

In this category there are no linguistic features presented, as the category itself is very broad. There are several characters in both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* that come from foreign countries, and these characters show this in the spoken material with their English accent. In *Harry Potter*, for instance, there is in the fourth book, and film, a competition between three wizarding schools. This competition takes place at *Hogwarts* and the other schools are said to be from the French and Bulgarian area, although it is not stated specifically where they are from. In *Game of Thrones* there are kingdoms beyond what is known as the *Seven Kingdoms* and people from these countries especially the character *Khal Drogo* and his



people, either do not speak English at all or speak very little, and heavily accented, English. All these characters are, as Sønnesyn (2011) did, placed in this category and they are compared to each other to see whether there is a systematic correlation between the accents and the character traits.

### 3.3 Non-linguistic categories

#### 3.3.1 Character role

The characters selected for the analysis are divided into four different categories, with regard to their role in the films and in the series. The four categories are *main characters*, *supportive characters*, *minor characters* and *peripheral characters*. When the characters that should be included in the different categories are selected, how they are featured in both the written and spoken material is looked at, to see how important they are to the story line.

In the first category the most important characters, and consequently those with the most speech time, are included. In *Harry Potter* the most important characters are Harry Potter, who is also the title character, and his friends Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley. But characters such as Professor Dumbledore and Voldemort are also included in this category as they play an important part in the story. Dumbledore is headmaster, and mentor to Harry Potter, and Voldemort is the main villain throughout the story. In *Game of Thrones* there are a lot of characters in focus, so there was some difficulty deciding which characters should be placed in the first category. As there are eight characters that have chapters devoted to their viewpoint in the book, these are placed in the category of main characters.

In the next category, *supporting characters*, the Weasley family (excluding Ron Weasley) and Sirius Black are included. These characters are important to the story, and recur throughout the films, but not enough to be placed in the previous category. In *Game of Thrones*, characters such as Jamie and Cersei Lannister and King Robert Baratheon are vital to the plot, but in the first book they do not have chapters devoted to them, so we do not see the story from their viewpoint, and they are therefore placed in the category of supporting characters.

The next group is called *minor characters*. This group consist of both characters that appear only once or twice and those who appear on a regular basis, but do not have a central role in the plot. Based on the descriptions from the books, and how much the characters are featured in the films/series, I have selected the ones that were deemed more important to the

storyline and therefore important to the analysis. An example of one character from the *Harry Potter* films that belongs in this category is Mundungus Fletcher, who even though, he is not featured often in the books or the films, has a crucial role in certain aspects of the story. An example of a minor character in *Game of Thrones* is Tywin Lannister, who is the father of Cersei, Jamie and Tyrion, and head of the Lannister family. He appears at the end of the series, but it quickly becomes clear he is going to play a larger role in the seasons to come.

The last category, called *peripheral characters*, was added due to the number of characters that would otherwise end up in the previous category and there was a clear division between characters that had a somewhat important role to play, and those who did not have their own storyline as such. For instance Mundungus Fletcher, who is placed in the previous category, and the character Stan Shunpike, also in *Harry Potter* are featured much the same in terms of speech-time and descriptions throughout the films. But Mundungus Fletcher plays a more important role in the film than Stan Shunpike, who is only a facilitator of information to Harry. The characters in this category are not important to the plot in the same way as the other characters, but as they have some descriptions in the books, and it is possible to acquire enough descriptions as well as accent features from them in the spoken material, they are therefore relevant to the analysis.

### **3.3.2 Maturity**

In both the *Harry Potter* films and in the *Game of Thrones* series, children play an important part in the story. It is therefore natural to include the category *maturity* to the analysis, to see whether or not there are similarities or differences between the children and the adults. When it comes to the question of which characters should be viewed as adults and which ones as children, the characters are divided into two separate groups, where the group called *children* include all characters up to around the age of 17, and the group called *adults* include the characters that are older than 17. There are some difficulties with defining the characters as either children or adults, as the age is not always known, but the purpose is to see whether or not the actors have the maturity to use accents as a tool of portraying a character. The actors that are children when first introduced, such as Harry, Draco, Seamus and Hermione are seen as children in the *Harry Potter* films, and Arya, Sansa, and Bran are seen as children in *Game of Thrones*.

In *Harry Potter* the division of children and adults are at the age of 17, because this is when the characters ‘come of age’ and leave school. This is one way to separate the children from the adults, even though it is not a set criterion. One problem with this division is that some of the characters become 17 either mid-way through or at the end of the seventh book, so which group should they be included in? The characters are therefore placed in the group they belong in when we first meet them, as it would be too time consuming to see if there are any changes in their accent throughout the story.

### **3.3.3 Gender**

One of the more traditional patterns found in sociolinguistic research is that women tend to speak with a standard accent, or at least a variety that is more close to the standard, than men do (e.g. Trudgill 1974, Hudson 1996 Lippi-Green 1997). Both Lippi-Green (1997) and Sønnesyn (2011) analysed Disney films, and have found this view to be accurate. Lippi-Green (1997) mentions in her study that Disney often has a very traditional view of gender in the film universe. The category of *gender* is therefore natural to include in the analysis for the present thesis, so a comparison can be made to see whether or not the findings in this category will be similar to or different from the other studies mentioned. Another reason to include this category is that the *Game of Thrones* series has a very traditional view of gender where the men are warriors and the women are married off to bind families together or to build new alliances. The *Harry Potter* films are more modern in their view of women and their role in society. Indeed, Hermione is portrayed as the brightest student in Harry’s class, and often gets the trio out of trouble. A comparison between these two universes is therefore natural to see how male and female characters are portrayed in these universes.

There are some characters, in *Harry Potter*, that are non-humanoid, these are all classified as either male or female depending on the voice they use when they speak.

### **3.3.4 Level of sophistication**

As discussed in chapter two, previous studies on language attitudes have found that people are seen as more sophisticated if they speak for instance RP or GA than if they speak a more regional variety, such as the London accent, Cockney, or the Birmingham accent, Brummie,

in Great Britain or with a southern accent in the United States. This category is therefore included in the present analysis to see whether or not there will be similarities or differences between the previous studies and this one.

Differences in social class can be seen through language in how people speak, both grammatically and phonetically (Trudgill 1974). However, as there is not sufficient information about the characters, with regard to social status, it is difficult to place them in separate social classes. I will, however, try to separate the characters into two groups of *sophisticated* and *unsophisticated*. If a character is classified as sophisticated that character is seen as intelligent, socially apt and possibly more serious than an unsophisticated character. The unsophisticated character is then the opposite, which is less intelligent, not as socially apt and possibly portrayed in a more comical way.

### **3.3.5 Other character traits**

This category includes character traits that mark the characters as either sympathetic/non-sympathetic or good/evil. In most cases the characters can be placed in these categories quite easily, for details see directly below. In the category for good and evil there is a third group called *mixed* included.

The criteria for placement in this category are based on both the written and spoken material. If a character is described as being good and follows this through with actions, then he is classified as a good character, and the opposite if that is the case. If however, a character is described as evil, but through for instance a background story or an action seems to be better, he is placed in the mixed category, as it is not possible to determine the status. There are some characters where it is too difficult to classify as either good and evil, and these are also placed in the third group, mixed.

As the *Harry Potter* films and the *Game of Thrones* series are aimed at different target groups, the first at children and young adults and the latter at adults, there may be differences in how they are classified with regard to characters traits. There could be more clear-cut good and evil characters in *Harry Potter* than in *Game of Thrones* for instance.

## **3.4 Analysis**

### **3.4.1 Quality, not quantity**

The present thesis is more or less a qualitative study, which means that the data collected is not quantified per se. A qualitative study normally does not quantify the data collected or at least the quantification is not the main focus of the study (Dörnyei 2007). This means that even though there is some quantification in the study, this is mainly to support the findings of the researcher; it is not what the researcher bases the conclusions on (Dörnyei 2007). In a typical qualitative study the researcher works with a small sample, so the details of the study become more important compared to a quantitative study, where most of the findings are presented in tables (Dörnyei 2007). This also means that there is more room for explanations and to discover details about how factors come to play a certain role in the sample you study. But it does also mean that the sample is too small to make generalisations, and quantitative studies are therefore necessary to see if the same results apply to more samples (Dörnyei 2007:40-41)

For the present thesis, there are quantification of all the data, in that the findings are grouped together in tables and figures based on a comparison of accents and characters traits. This quantification is done so that a better qualitative discussion can be done.

### **3.4.2 Limitations**

The main limitation of this analysis is the fact that a lot of the research is subjective, as indeed the concept of attitudes is as well. First of all, Dörnyei (2007) says that qualitative research is typically subjective in nature, as the researcher has to interpret the data collected and draw conclusions from this. There are also the different sections within the analysis that become a matter of subjectivity. For instance, when the characters included in the analysis are chosen, this is mostly subjective on my part, even though certain criteria have been made to avoid this as much as possible. Then, placing the character into linguistic categories can also become challenging, and have to be discussed. The categories presented above in section 3.2 are very broad and other linguists may feel they are too broad or that certain features are missing from the accents, and some will then probably place the characters into different or at least more narrow categories. The main step that I have taken to make the results more consistent and

valid are that both fellow students and my supervisor have analysed different characters to identify their accents. And as can be seen above, several criteria for both selecting the characters included in the analysis and how to place them into the different categories, are presented.

Another factor is, that the present thesis does not include the linguistic background of the actors. This could, as some will possibly argue, be of importance to a study on language attitudes because if an actor intentionally changes his or her accent for a character, this could greatly point to the fact that they want to portray something specific about that character. But as there is no reliable way of knowing the specific linguistic background of the actors, this is not a factor included in this thesis. However, even though the linguistic background of the actors cannot be established reliably it is difficult not to do so with some of the actors. One example of this is Dame Maggie Smith who plays Professor McGonagall in all eight *Harry Potter* films. She is a well-known British actor who typically speaks with an RP accent; see for instance her work in the television series *Downton Abbey*. In *Harry Potter* she attempts to speak with a Scottish accent, and does not succeed very well in this attempt, it is therefore natural to comment on this fact to illustrate that she attempts to speak differently for these films. Another factor, with regard to the linguistic background of the actors, is that it is not known how the actors for films and series have been casted. Are they chosen because of their linguistic background, which means that they could be chosen because of their accent, or have they been asked to speak with a different accent? These factors could help find the language attitudes in the material analysed, but again, it is beyond the scope for the present thesis to include this in the analysis.

## 4 ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the analysis of the characters in the *Harry Potter* films and the first season of *Game of Thrones*, with regard to accents and character traits. To make the presentation and discussion of the different categories as clear as possible the first part of the chapter, section 4.1 gives a general overview of the results in both tables and graphs, so that a comparison between the accents and a general comparison between *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* is possible. In sections 4.2 to 4.9 there is a more detailed description of the characters within the specific accent categories. Section 4.10 is devoted to the characters that could not be placed into a specific accent category.

### 4.1 General overview

This section is meant to give a general overview of all the results obtained in the analysis. There are, in total, 124 characters and these are placed in the different accent categories, which are outlined in chapter 3. There are 76 characters from *Harry Potter* and 48 characters from *Game of Thrones*. The characters are also placed in the different non-linguistic categories, which are, again, outlined in chapter 3.

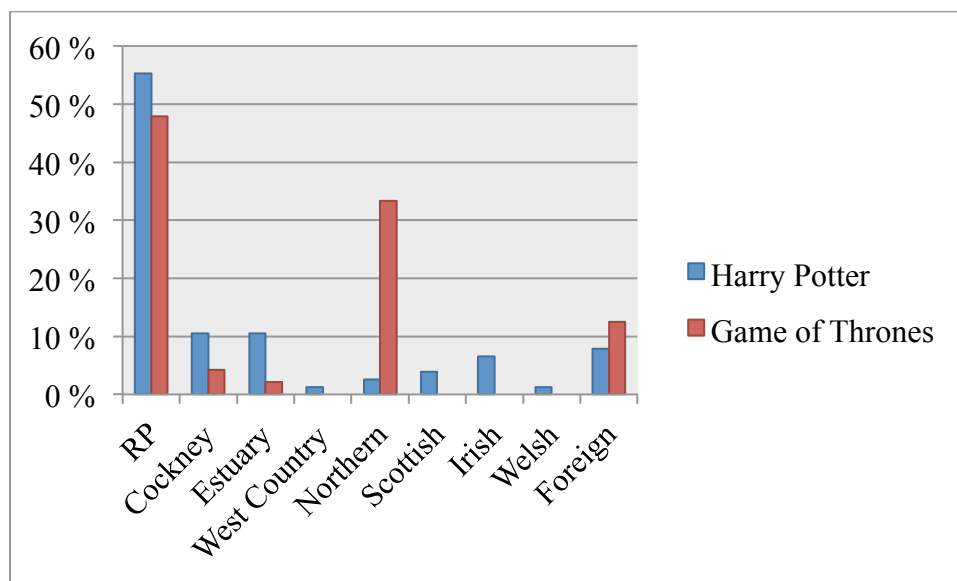
#### 4.1.1 Accents

As described in chapter 3, nine different accent categories were identified during the analysis of the films and series. Eight of these are accents found in Great Britain. These are Received Pronunciation (RP), Cockney, Estuary English, West Country English, Northern English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh. The last accent category is foreign English, and all characters identified as speaking with an accent that is not native to the UK are placed into this category.

In table 4.1 as well as figure 4.1 the general overview of the accents is presented. RP has, in both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*, the highest number of characters, with 55.3% and 47.9% of the total, respectively. There are also greater regional variations in *Harry Potter* than in *Game of Thrones*, as there are none who speak with a Welsh, Irish or West Country accent in the latter. Northern English speakers have, however, a percentage of 33.3% in *Game of Thrones*, and 2.6% in *Harry Potter*.

**Table 4.1** General overview, accents

Kolonne1	Harry Potter		Game of Thrones		Total	
Accents	Characters	%	Characters	%	Characters	%
RP	42	55.3 %	23	47.9 %	65	52.4 %
Cockney	8	10.5 %	2	4.2 %	10	8.1 %
Estuary	8	10.5 %	1	2.1 %	9	7.3 %
West country	1	1.3 %	0	0.0 %	1	0.8 %
Northern	2	2.6 %	16	33.3 %	18	14.5 %
Scottish	3	3.9 %	0	0.0 %	3	2.4 %
Irish	5	6.6 %	0	0.0 %	5	4.0 %
Welsh	1	1.3 %	0	0.0 %	1	0.8 %
foreign	6	7.9 %	6	12.5 %	12	9.7 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>



**Figure 4.1** General Overview accents

#### 4.1.2 Gender

Of the 126 characters, there are 88 male and 36 female. Seven of the male characters, however, are by definition classified as non-humanoid. These characters are the spider Aragog, the house-elves Kreacher and Dobby, the goblin Griphook, the centaur Firenze, the

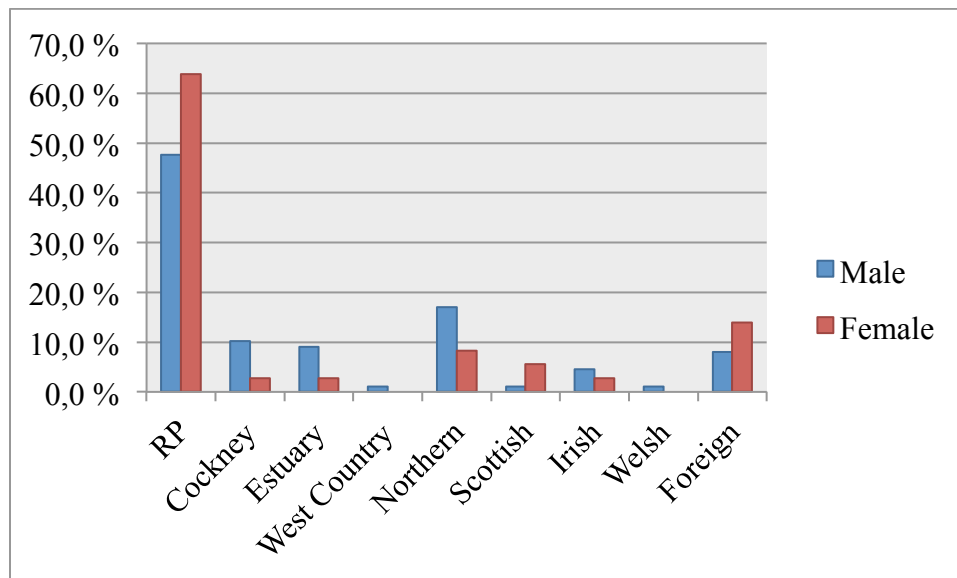


Sorting Hat and the shrunken head in the Knight bus, these are all from the *Harry Potter* films. All of the non-humanoid characters have a male voice and are classified accordingly.

In table 4.2 and in figure 4.2, the distribution of male and female characters is shown. What becomes clear is that there is not an even distribution, as there are more male characters than female. This distribution is consistent with the other societal treatment studies (cf chapter 2), where Lippi-Green (1997), Dobrow and Gidney (1998), and later Sønnesyn (2011) in her master’s thesis, all had an unbalanced sample of male and female characters.

**Table 4.2** General gender distributions

Kolonne1	Male		Female	
	Characters	%	Characters	%
<b>RP</b>	42	47.7 %	23	63.9 %
<b>Cockney</b>	9	10.2 %	1	2.8 %
<b>Estuary</b>	8	9.1 %	1	2.8 %
<b>West Country</b>	1	1.1 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Northern</b>	15	17.0 %	3	8.3 %
<b>Scottish</b>	1	1.1 %	2	5.6 %
<b>Irish</b>	4	4.5 %	1	2.8 %
<b>Welsh</b>	1	1.1 %	0	0.0 %
<b>foreign</b>	7	8.0 %	5	13.9 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>



**Figure 4.2** General accent distributions within gender

In table 4.2 and figure 4.2, the overall accent variation for the different gender categories is shown. Table 4.2 shows that 63.9% of the female characters speak with an RP accent, whereas 47.7% of the male characters do the same. In figure 4.2 it becomes clear that the women only have a higher percentage than men in the two accent categories RP and foreign English. The male characters show more variation, with regard to distribution of accents, than the female characters. For instance, there are no female speakers of either Welsh or West Country, and out of the ten characters with a Cockney accent only one is female. As for speakers with a northern English accent 17.0% of the male characters speak with this accent and only 8.3% of the female characters.

To go back to Hudson (1996:193) and the ‘Sex/Prestige Pattern’ he presents, the present thesis shows that there is evidence for such a pattern, as the female characters do tend to speak with a more standard accent than the males. These results also support the findings in the other societal treatment studies, in that women tend to speak with a more standard accent than men do (Lippi-Green 1997, Dobrow & Gidney 1998, Sønnesyn 2011). Results pertaining to the RP accent are presented in more detail in section 4.2.

**Table 4.3** Gender distribution, *Harry Potter*

<b>Harry Potter</b>				
<b>Accents</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>RP</b>	27	50.9 %	15	65.2 %
<b>Cockney</b>	7	13.2 %	1	4.3 %
<b>Estuary</b>	7	13.2 %	1	4.3 %
<b>West country</b>	1	1.9 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Northern</b>	1	1.9 %	1	4.3 %
<b>Scottish</b>	1	1.9 %	2	8.7 %
<b>Irish</b>	4	7.5 %	1	4.3 %
<b>Welsh</b>	1	1.9 %	0	0.0 %
<b>foreign</b>	4	7.5 %	2	8.7 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

Tables 4.3 and 4.4, illustrate the division between male and female characters in *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*, respectively. In table 4.3, the gender distribution in *Harry Potter* is indicated.

The first thing that should be noted is that there is an uneven number of male and female characters. In *Harry Potter*, there are 53 male characters and only 23 female included in this study, so the general findings for the *gender* category are true for the *Harry Potter* films as well. So, 65.2% of the female characters speak with an RP accent compared to 50.9% of the male characters. There are seven male characters placed in both the accent categories of Cockney and Estuary English, and only one female character in each of the two accent categories. There are four male characters and only one female character classified as speakers of Irish English. In the Scottish English accent category, however, there are two female characters and one male. Consequently there are, in the *Harry Potter* films, more female speakers with an RP accent, while there is more accent variation in the group of male speakers.

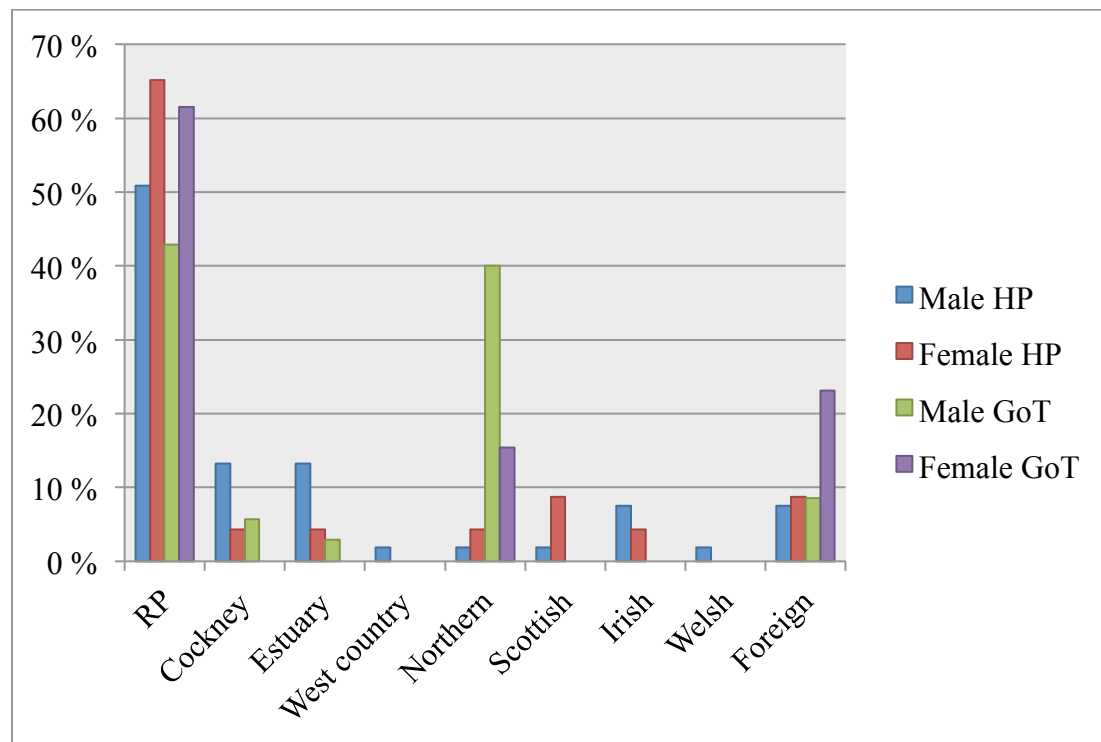
**Table 4.4** Gender distribution, *Game of Thrones*

<b>Game of Thrones</b>				
<b>Accents</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>RP</b>	15	42.9 %	8	61.5 %
<b>Cockney</b>	2	5.7 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Estuary</b>	1	2.9 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Northern</b>	14	40.0 %	2	15.4 %
<b>foreign</b>	3	8.6 %	3	23.1 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

In the *Game of Thrones* series, as in the *Harry Potter* films, there are more male characters than female, and there is also a higher percentage of female characters compared to the male characters, who speak with an RP accent. The difference here is that there is a wider gap between the proportion of male and female speakers of RP. There are 61.5% female characters that speak RP, and 42.9% male characters. There are generally more characters in *Harry Potter* than in *Game of Thrones* that speak RP.

Another finding, which is seen in table 4.4, is that there is very little accent variation among the female characters. Of the 13 female characters in *Game of Thrones*, eight speak with an RP accent, two with a northern accent and three with a foreign accent. For the male speakers, the accent with the highest percentage, after RP, is Northern English at 40.0%. The male characters also include two speakers of the Cockney accent and one speaker of Estuary English. Both the female and male groups include three speakers of foreign-accented English,

but as there are fewer female speakers, and less variation within the female group, the relative number is higher in the female group than in the male one, at 23.1% and 8.6% respectively.



**Figure 4.3** Gender distribution

The two previous tables shows how the male and female characters differ with regard to the accent categories. Figure 4.3 on the other hand, shows not only this, but also how *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* compare to one another with regard to gender.

In *Harry Potter*, then, there are more characters that speak RP. If the male and female characters are compared separately, it becomes clear that there is a greater difference between the male speakers than between the female speakers. This is also true for the Northern English accent, where there is a higher percentage of speakers, especially male, in *Game of Thrones* than in *Harry Potter*. Figure 4.3, also shows that there is more accent variation in both the male and female groups in *Harry Potter*.

A point worth discussing is the fact that in *Game of Thrones* there is an even distribution of RP and Northern English male speakers. This could indicate that this use of the two accents can function to highlight the rivalry between male characters from the North and South. In figure 4.3 we see that for the female characters there is not an even distribution between the two accents, and RP has a significantly higher number of female speakers than

Northern English does. If we take a closer look at the characters, the use of RP and Northern English accents can be used to portray a social distinction, as the two speakers of Northern English as both classified as unsophisticated. There is, then, a difference between male and female speakers, in *Game of Thrones* with regard to RP and Northern English, which can be seen as a way to better portray differences within the gender groups.

### 4.1.3 Maturity

The category of *maturity* deals with the division between children and adults, and aims to see whether there are similarities or differences between these two groups. As mentioned in chapter 3, another aim is to see if there are systematic similarities between accents and character traits in the children's group as well.

In table 4.5, the different accents in the children's group are presented. What becomes clear is that there is less variation in this group as only five of the nine accents are represented. What is also seen is that there are 17 children featured in the *Harry Potter* films and only four in *Game of Thrones*<sup>12</sup>. The four children in the television series all speak with an RP accent, so there is no variation in this group. In *Harry Potter*, on the other hand, the accent with the highest percentage is Estuary English, at 41.2 %. RP is only represented by 29.4% of the characters. Consequently, in this category, RP no longer has the majority of the characters. The Northern English accent has 1 speaker, and the Celtic accents Irish and Scottish English have two speakers each.

**Table 4.5** Distribution, children

<b>Children</b>				
	<b>Harry Potter</b>		<b>Game of Thrones</b>	
<b>Accents</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>RP</b>	5	29.4 %	4	100.0 %
<b>Estuary</b>	7	41.2 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Northern</b>	1	5.9 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Scottish</b>	2	11.8 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Irish</b>	2	11.8 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

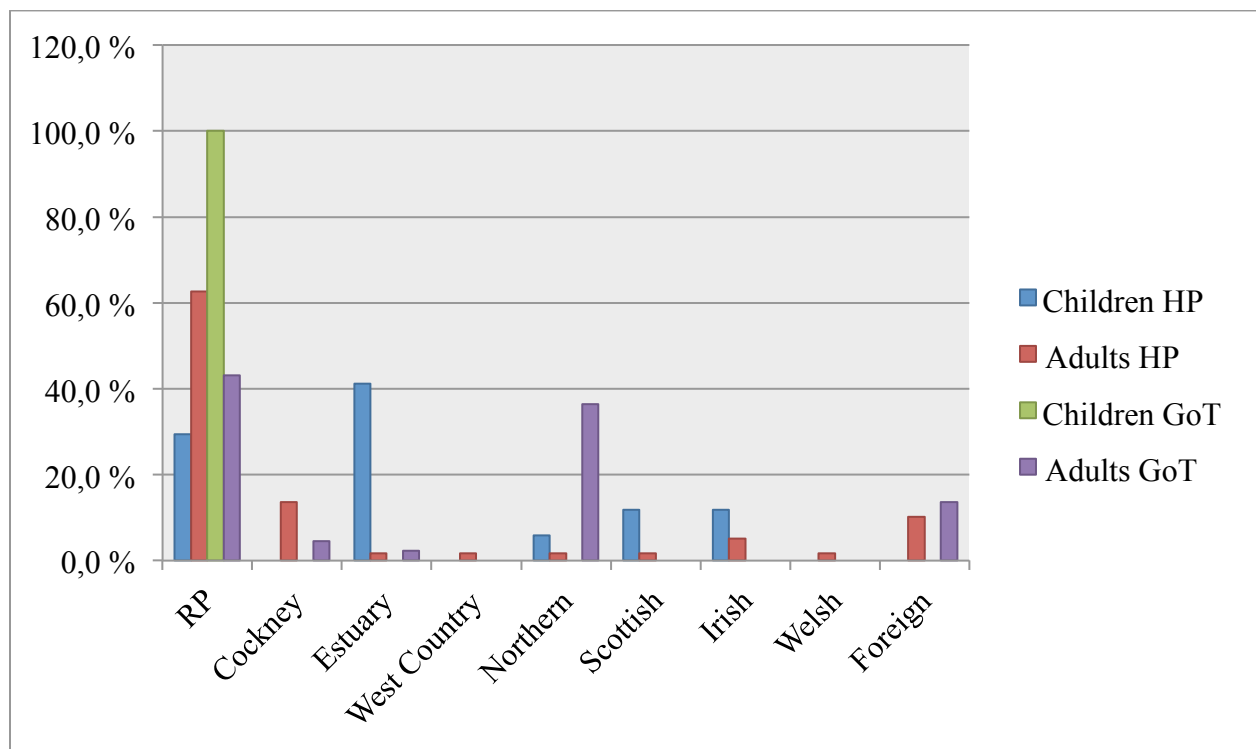
<sup>12</sup> There are several other children in both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*, but they did not meet the criteria presented in chapter 3 and are therefore not included in this analysis.

When it comes to the group of adult characters, the seven non-humanoid characters in *Harry Potter* are placed in the same group as the adult males, as all of these characters are portrayed as adults. In table 4.6, the accent distribution of the adult characters is presented. There is more variation among the characters from *Harry Potter* than among the characters from *Game of Thrones*, which have more speakers grouped together, especially with regard to the accents RP and Northern English, at 43.2% and 36.4% respectively. *Harry Potter* has a higher percentage of RP speakers, whereas *Game of Thrones* has more characters with a northern English accent. This could be due to the geographical areas portrayed in *Game of Thrones*, as many of the characters in season one are from the northern parts of the Seven Kingdoms.

**Table 4.6** Distribution, adults

<b>Adults</b>				
	<b>Harry Potter</b>		<b>Game of Thrones</b>	
<b>Accents</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>RP</b>	37	62.7 %	19	43.2 %
<b>Cockney</b>	8	13.6 %	2	4.5 %
<b>Estuary</b>	1	1.7 %	1	2.3 %
<b>West Country</b>	1	1.7 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Northern</b>	1	1.7 %	16	36.4 %
<b>Scottish</b>	1	1.7 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Irish</b>	3	5.1 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Welsh</b>	1	1.7 %	0	0.0 %
<b>foreign</b>	6	10.2 %	6	13.6 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

Figure 4.4 shows the comparison between children and adults for both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*. As mentioned above, the four children in *Game of Thrones* all speak RP, so the column for GoT children is at 100% for RP. The differences between both the two groups and the two series, with regard to variation, are also shown more clearly here. For instance the London based-accent Cockney, West Country and the Welsh accent are only present in the adult characters in *Harry Potter*. The Irish accent is present in both the children and adult characters, but again only in *Harry Potter*. And lastly, no child characters speak with a foreign-accented English accent.



**Figure 4.4** A comparison between children and adults in *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*

#### 4.1.4 Level of sophistication

For the category *level of sophistication*, the aim is to see how the characters that are placed in the ‘sophisticated’ group speak, and how this is similar to or different from the ‘unsophisticated’ group. Another aim is to see whether the same pattern emerges in both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*. In table 4.7, the distribution of the characters in *Harry Potter* is thus presented. For the RP accent, there is a distribution of 72.3% sophisticated characters and only 27.6% unsophisticated characters. All of the speakers with a Cockney, West Country, Northern English and Irish English accent are classified as unsophisticated. For the characters with a foreign English accent, however, four of the six characters are categorised as sophisticated. Of the 42 characters that speak RP, 34 are classified as sophisticated, whereas for the speakers of Cockney all eight are classified as unsophisticated. There is a clear distinction here, which can illustrate the findings in the previous studies presented in chapter 2 as well as supports the standard language ideology discussed earlier (cf chapter 2). Another finding is that the five speakers of Irish English are all seen as

unsophisticated, whereas the three speakers of Scottish are all seen as sophisticated. This can be due to the fact that the standard Scottish English variety is seen as a prestigious accent (Wells 1982). All the characters of Scottish English and the majority of RP speakers are seen as sophisticated, which can point to the fact that standard accents are seen as more prestigious.

**Table 4.7** Distribution, level of sophistication, *Harry Potter*

<b>Harry Potter</b>				
	<b>Sophisticated</b>		<b>Unsophisticated</b>	
<b>Accents</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>RP</b>	34	72.3 %	8	27.6 %
<b>Cockney</b>	0	0.0 %	8	27.6 %
<b>Estuary</b>	5	10.6 %	3	10.3 %
<b>West Country</b>	0	0.0 %	1	3.4 %
<b>Northern</b>	0	0.0 %	2	6.9 %
<b>Scottish</b>	3	6.4 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Irish</b>	0	0.0 %	5	17.2 %
<b>Welsh</b>	1	2.1 %	0	0.0 %
<b>foreign</b>	4	8.5 %	2	6.9 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

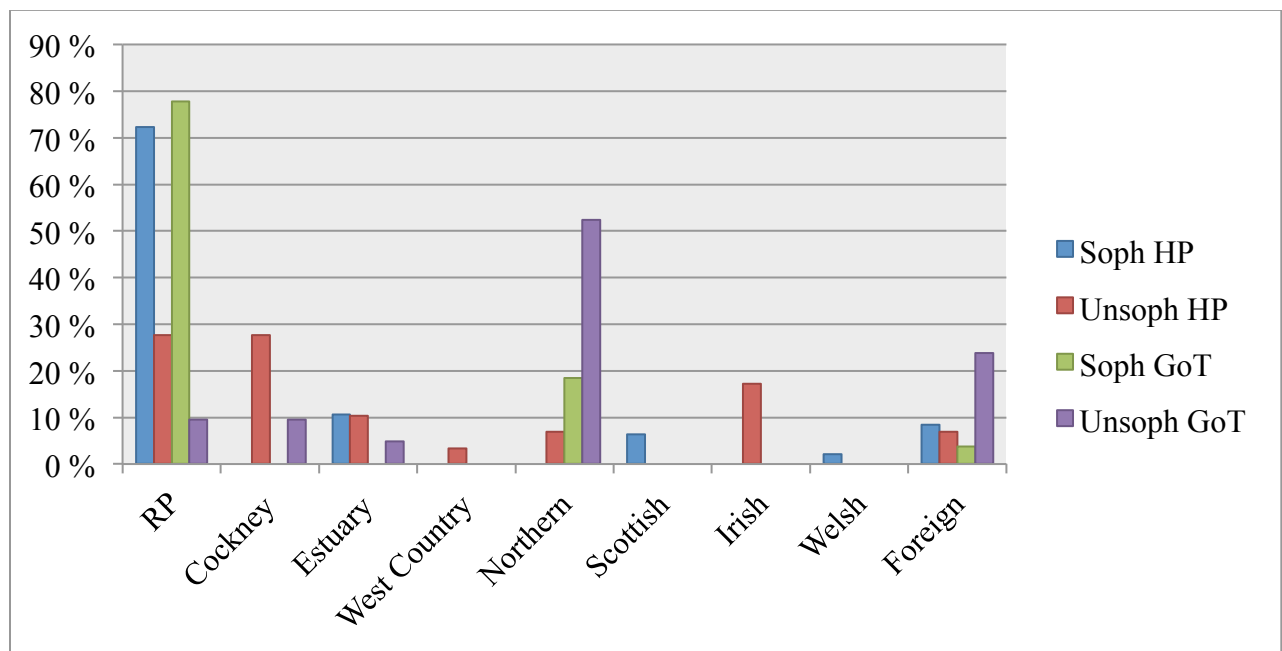
Table 4.8 displays the tendencies for sophistication with regard to *Game of Thrones*, where 77.8% of the characters classified as sophisticated speak with an RP accent. A difference from *Harry Potter*, where the Northern English speakers are seen as unsophisticated, is that some of the Northern English speakers in *Game of Thrones* are classified as sophisticated. Five of the characters with a northern English accent in *Game of Thrones* are included in the sophisticated group. However, the remaining 11 characters with a northern English accent are classified as unsophisticated, so the majority of the characters are in the latter group. When it comes to speakers of RP, only 2 of the characters classified as unsophisticated speak with an RP accent. Of the 23 RP speakers, then, only two are seen as unsophisticated, again a pattern emerges that RP is seen as prestigious and sophisticated, whereas for the speakers of Cockney and Estuary English, none are classified as sophisticated.



**Table 4.8** Distribution, level of sophistication, *Game of Thrones*

Game of Thrones				
Accents	Sophisticated		Unsophisticated	
	Characters	%	Characters	%
RP	21	77.8 %	2	9.5 %
Cockney	0	0.0 %	2	9.5 %
Estuary	0	0.0 %	1	4.8 %
Northern	5	18.5 %	11	52.4 %
Scottish	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
foreign	1	3.7 %	5	23.8 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

In figure 4.5, the comparison of sophisticated and unsophisticated characters of *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* is presented. The results show that there is a high percentage of sophisticated RP speakers from both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*. However, there are more unsophisticated RP speakers in *Harry Potter*, at 27.6%, than in *Game of Thrones*, at 9.5%. Another fact that becomes apparent is that we see that all three characters who speak Scottish English are classified as sophisticated. A point that should be taken into account is, that as there are only three characters that speak Scottish English, so generalisation cannot be made, even though the pattern suggests that Scottish English is seen as sophisticated. With regard to the speakers of Cockney, the ten characters are all classified as unsophisticated.



**Figure 4.5** Distribution, level of sophistication

## 4.1.5 Other character traits

### 4.1.5.1 Sympathetic vs. unsympathetic

Table 4.9 shows the result from the analysis of the characters in the *Harry Potter* films. A total of 42 characters speak RP, and these are evenly distributed between the two categories, as 21 characters are classified as sympathetic and 21 characters are classified as unsympathetic. The difference is within the sophisticated and unsophisticated group. The 21 characters with RP accents that are classified as sympathetic make up 47.7%. The 21 characters that speak RP in the unsympathetic group make up 65.6%.

The four accents West Country, Northern English, Scottish and Irish have no characters placed in the unsympathetic category, whereas the speaker of Welsh English is seen as unsympathetic. Four of the six characters with a foreign-accented English are placed in the sympathetic category.

**Table 4.9** Distribution of sympathetic and unsympathetic characters, *Harry Potter*

<b>Harry Potter</b>				
	<b>Sympathetic</b>		<b>Unsympathetic</b>	
<b>Accents</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>RP</b>	21	47.7 %	21	65.6 %
<b>Cockney</b>	2	4.5 %	6	18.8 %
<b>Estuary</b>	6	13.6 %	2	6.3 %
<b>West Country</b>	1	2.3 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Northern</b>	2	4.5 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Scottish</b>	3	6.8 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Irish</b>	5	11.4 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Welsh</b>	0	0.0 %	1	3.1 %
<b>foreign</b>	4	9.1 %	2	6.3 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

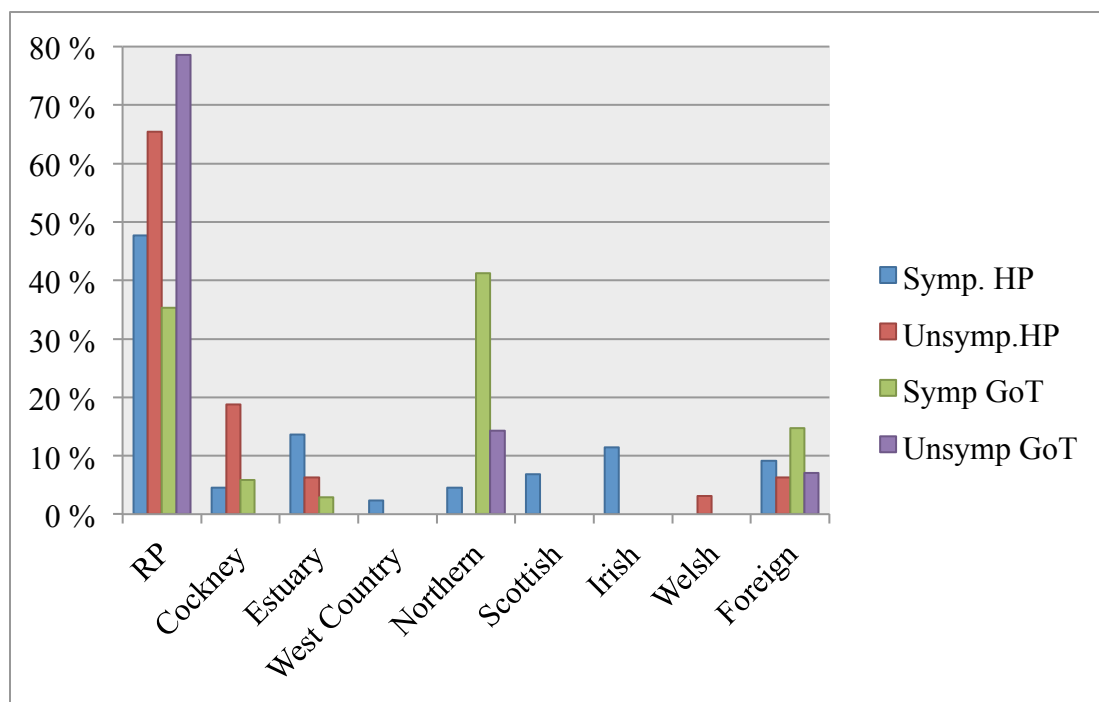
The characters of *Game of Thrones* are presented in table 4.10, and again, even though there is an even distribution of RP-speaking characters in both categories, the eleven characters in the unsympathetic group make up 78.6% whereas the twelve characters in the sympathetic group make up 35.3%. Another result, presented in the same table, is that most of the characters with a northern English accent are placed in the sympathetic category, together

with both speakers of the Cockney accent. Out of the six characters with a foreign English accent, five are placed in the sympathetic category, whereas only one is classified as unsympathetic.

**Table 4.10** Distribution of sympathetic and unsympathetic characters, *Game of Thrones*

<b>Game of Thrones</b>				
<b>Accents</b>	<b>Sympathetic</b>		<b>Unsympathetic</b>	
	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>RP</b>	12	35.3 %	11	78.6 %
<b>Cockney</b>	2	5.9 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Estuary</b>	1	2.9 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Northern</b>	14	41.2 %	2	14.3 %
<b>foreign</b>	5	14.7 %	1	7.1 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

In figure 4.6, a comparison of *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* is presented. For the characters with an RP accent, the results are quite similar, as the speakers of RP classified as unsympathetic make up a higher percentage than the characters classified as sympathetic. The results show that there is a difference with regard to the speakers of the Cockney accent. In *Game of Thrones* both characters are classified as sympathetic, and in *Harry Potter* six of the eight characters are classified as unsympathetic. The characters with a foreign English accent are distributed similarly, but as is seen in figure 4.6, there is a higher percentage of sympathetic characters with this accent in *Game of Thrones*.



**Figure 4.6** Distribution of sympathetic and unsympathetic characters, *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*.

In the previous studies presented in chapter 2, none of the dimensions studied are termed sympathetic or unsympathetic, but in Coupland and Bishop's (2007) study there is a dimension called *social attractiveness*. In this dimension Scottish was rated in fourth place (of 34 accents), and is therefore seen as very socially attractive. This result is supported in this thesis, as all the characters with a Scottish English accent in *Harry Potter* are classified as sympathetic. This differs from RP, in that both are rated high in terms of sophistication, but several of the RP speakers are rated as unsympathetic, where all speakers of Scottish English are seen as sympathetic.

#### 4.1.5.2 Good vs. evil

For the category that looks at *good* and *evil*, a third classification called *mixed* was included, so the characters whose personality and actions were complex, and therefore difficult to classify as either good or evil, could be placed in the third category.

In table 4.11, the characters from *Harry Potter* are placed into the different groups. Of the 76 characters, 52 are classified as good, 16 as evil and eight characters are classified as mixed. One example of a character that is classified as mixed is the house-elf Kreacher, who

we see as evil, unsympathetic and unsophisticated. However, when we learn more about him, we see that he is only become bitter because of the way he is treated, and throughout the course of the seventh *Harry Potter* book the reader may grow to like him, as he changes when Harry treats him in a nicer way.

Of the 52 characters classified as good, 50% speak with an RP accent. In the categories evil and mixed, however, the percentage of RP speakers is 62.5% for the characters classified as evil, and 75.0% of the characters classified as mixed. There is also more variation for the characters classified as good, as all of the accent categories are represented here. For instance, all the five characters of Irish English are classified as good. All of the speakers of Scottish, West Country, Northern English and Welsh English are also classified as good. For the characters with a foreign-accented English there are four classified as good, one as evil and one as mixed.

**Table 4.11** General distribution of good and evil, *Harry Potter*

<b>Harry Potter</b>						
<b>Accents</b>	<b>Good</b>		<b>Evil</b>		<b>Mixed</b>	
	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Characters</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>RP</b>	26	50.0 %	10	62.5 %	6	75.0 %
<b>Cockney</b>	4	7.7 %	3	18.8 %	1	12.5 %
<b>Estuary</b>	6	11.5 %	2	12.5 %	0	0.0 %
<b>West Country</b>	1	1.9 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Northern</b>	2	3.8 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Scottish</b>	3	5.8 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Irish</b>	5	9.6 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Welsh</b>	1	1.9 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
<b>foreign</b>	4	7.7 %	1	6.3 %	1	12.5 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

In table 4.12 the distribution of characters in *Game of Thrones*, with regard to good and evil, is presented. Of the 35 speakers classified as good, 12 speak RP, i.e. 35.3% of the characters portrayed as good. And 85.7% of the characters seen as evil speak RP, and in the mixed group, 71.4% speak RP. The speakers of Northern English are, with the exception of one, classified as good. There are seven characters classified as evil, and six of these speak with an

RP accent. The last evil character speaks foreign English. The speakers of Cockney and Estuary are all placed in the good category.

So, for the characters in *Game of Thrones*, RP is the accent which is most used for the characters portrayed as evil or mixed, the exception being two characters who speak foreign English and one who speaks in a northern English accent.

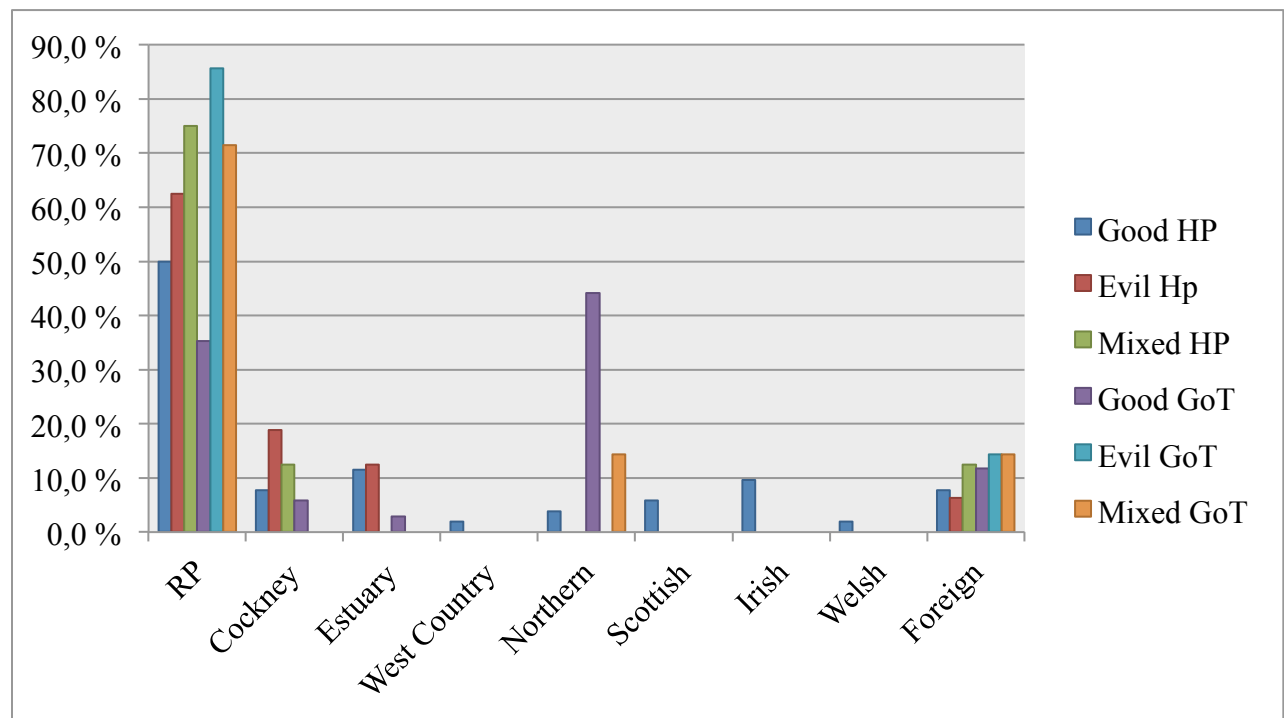
**Table 4.12** General distribution of good and evil, *Game of Thrones*

Game of Thrones						
Accents	Good		Evil		Mixed	
	Characters	%	Characters	%	Characters	%
<b>RP</b>	12	35.3 %	6	85.7 %	5	71.4 %
<b>Cockney</b>	2	5.9 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Estuary</b>	1	2.9 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
<b>Northern</b>	15	44.1 %	0	0.0 %	1	14.3 %
<b>foreign</b>	4	11.8 %	1	14.3 %	1	14.3 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

Figure 4.7 shows the comparison between *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*. With regard to the RP accent, there seems to be a fairly similar distribution for the mixed and evil categories, which both have a high percentage of RP speakers. However, *Game of Thrones* has 35.3% of RP speakers classified as good, and *Harry Potter* has 50.0%. The characters in *Harry Potter* also have more variation in the characters classified as evil, than those in *Game of Thrones*. Most of the characters with a foreign English accent are classified as good.

In Lippi-Green's (1997:103) study, she questions why so many of the characters classified as good speak with a standard accent (MUSE or General American), and she concludes that children learn, from watching these Disney cartoons, 'to be comfortable with *same* and to be wary about *others*'. In *Harry Potter* the target audience are children, and a reason that so many 'good' characters speak with an RP accent could be that children see people with an RP accent as good, or neutral. As pointed out in chapter 2, even though there is only a small percentage of the British people that actually speak with an RP accent, this is widely accepted as the standard, and even the correct, variety of British English (Wells 1982:10). This could also serve the standard language ideology in that children learn to identify with the standard. In *Game of Thrones*, on the other hand, the target audience are adults, and the importance of using the standard variety for the 'good' characters may not be

as relevant. However, in the first season the audience largely identifies the northerners as good, and this partly explains why the percentage of ‘good’ RP speakers is significantly lower in *Game of Thrones*.



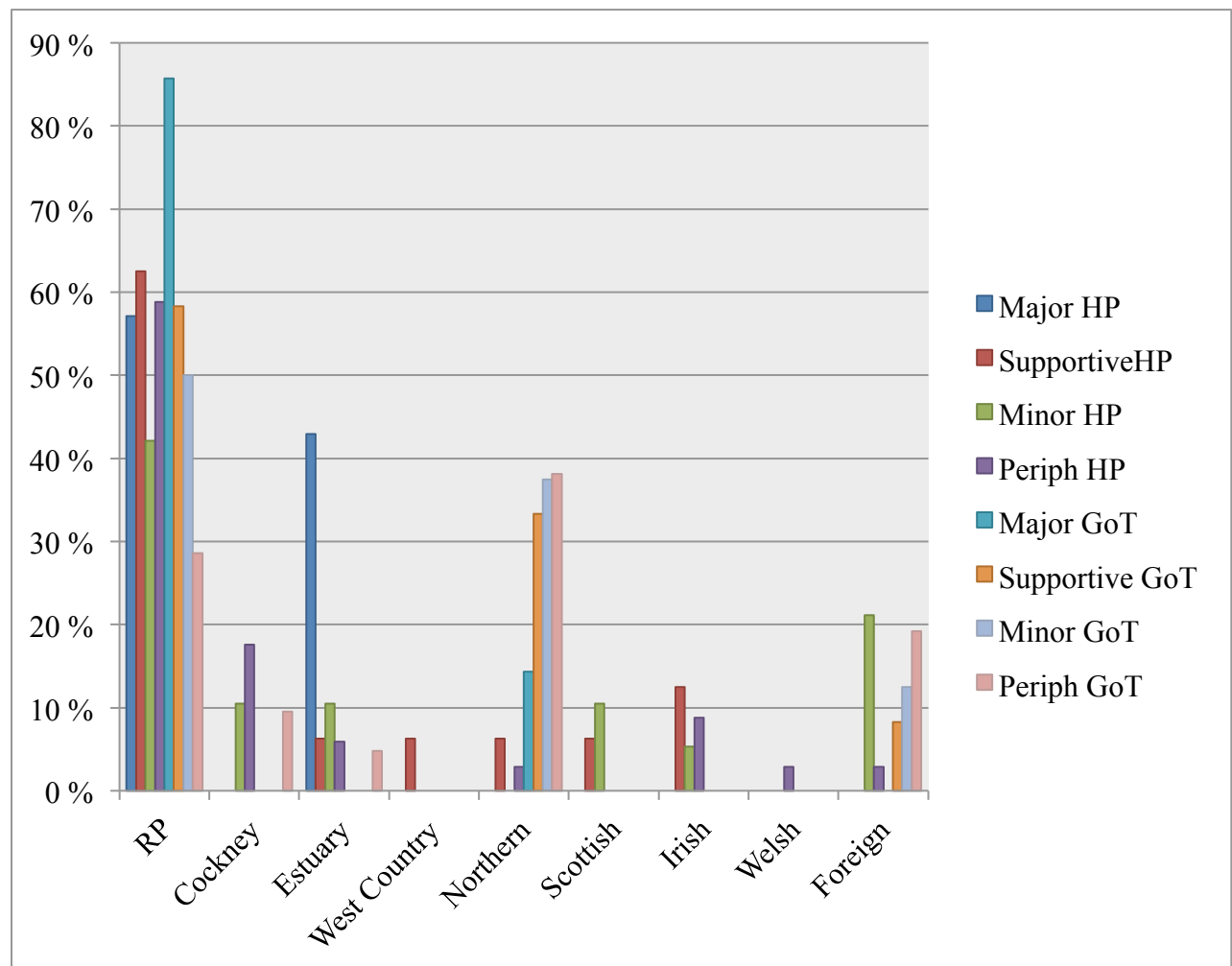
**Figure 4.7** Comparison of good and evil in *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*

#### 4.1.6 Character role

In addition to the character traits presented above, the characters are also placed into four different groups according to the role they have in the storyline. These groups are *main character*, *supportive characters*, *minor characters* and *peripheral characters*. The criteria for these groups are described in greater detail in chapter 3.

Of the characters that are classified as major, most speak RP. The only other accent categories for major characters are Estuary English for *Harry Potter* and Northern English for *Game of Thrones*. With the exception of the peripheral characters in *Game of Thrones*, the accent category of RP seems to have the highest percentages in the rest of the groups as well. The speakers of Cockney, in both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*, are represented, with the exception of two minor characters, exclusively as peripheral characters. As such have

minimal character descriptions in the books, or screen-time in the films and series. The question is whether or not this accent is used to better portray certain stereotypes more easily, and that exaggeration and categorisation, which Kristiansen (2001) discusses in her article is used here as well.



**Figure 4.8** Distribution of character roles in *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*

#### 4.2. Received Pronunciation

In total, there are 64 characters with an RP accent, which is 52.4% of all characters included in this study. In the tables and figures above, the general results for these characters are presented, but some of the characters are discussed, in this section, individually to better highlight the similarities and differences.



In the category *major characters*, there are seven characters included for the *Harry Potter* films, and four of these speak with an RP accent<sup>13</sup>. The character of Hermione Granger speaks RP, while both Harry Potter and Ron Weasley speak Estuary English. In other words, Hermione Granger, who is seen as the brightest student in her class, and also seen as the most intelligent of the trio, speaks with an RP accent, whereas the other two do not.

Of the 42 characters in *Harry Potter*, who speak RP, there are some that speak a more upper-crust RP (U-RP)<sup>14</sup>. The first example of this is the character Cornelius Fudge, who is the Minister for Magic in the first five books. Fudge is described as a little man, who only got the job as Minister for Magic because Dumbledore did not want it. In the fifth book, it is said that he has let the power get to his head, and he makes life very difficult for Harry Potter. Another character with a more U-RP accent is Lucius Malfoy (father of Draco Malfoy, Harry's enemy). He is a rich man, and a follower of Voldemort, who makes generous donations to people he wants something from, and he lies to and threatens people to get his way. A third character with a more U-RP accent is Gilderoy Lockhart, who is a fraud of a teacher in the second book and film *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. All these characters are described in a negative manner. There are also other characters who speak U-RP that are portrayed in a more positive way. These are Professor Flitwick, the ghost Nearly Headless Nick and the wand maker Ollivander. What these latter characters have in common is that they are all described as sophisticated, sympathetic and good, and they are also of the older generation. So, the younger characters with an U-RP accent are seen in a more negative light, whereas the older characters are seen in a more positive light.

The most general result for this category is that 42 of 76 characters (55.3%) in *Harry Potter* speak RP. It is a bit lower for *Game of Thrones*, where 23 out of 49 (47.9%) speak RP. For the gender category, there are indications that the theory that more women speak with a standard accent is supported here, as there is a higher percentage of female RP speakers.

With regard to maturity, there is more variation in *Harry Potter* than in *Game of Thrones*. This is not unexpected, as there are, in *Game of Thrones*, only four characters classified as children (included in the analysis). All of these speak with an RP accent, even the three children Bran, Arya and Sansa Stark, who are from the North and whose father and older brothers speak with a northern English accent. This could support the theory that

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<sup>13</sup> For the characters of Dumbledore and Voldemort, two different actors have played the characters, but for this thesis they are counted as one.

<sup>14</sup> None of the RP speakers in *Game of Thrones* speak U-RP, although some are portrayed as more 'posh'.

women speak RP more than men, as their mother Catelyn Stark also speaks RP. It could also point to the fact that they do not manage to change their accent to speak Northern English, but as we do not know what their native accent is, we cannot make any conclusions here. In *Harry Potter*, there are five children who speak with an RP accent. And as mentioned above, one of these is Hermione Granger, who is classified as a major character and is a part of the main trio of characters in the franchise.

In the category of sophistication there is a large gap between the percentage of characters with an RP accent that are sophisticated, and those that are unsophisticated. For the *Harry Potter* films, 72.3% of the sophisticated characters and 27.6% of the unsophisticated characters speak RP. The gap between sophisticated and unsophisticated RP speakers in *Harry Potter* is quite significant. There is a larger gap for the characters in *Game of Thrones*, where 77.8% of the sophisticated characters and only 9.5% of the unsophisticated characters speak with an RP accent. These results are also supported if we take a look at the distribution within the RP accent. In *Harry Potter* 34 of the 42 RP speakers are seen as sophisticated and only eight RP speakers are classified as unsophisticated. In *Game of Thrones* there are similar results, as 21 of the 23 characters are sophisticated and only two are unsophisticated. A conclusion that can follow is then that the RP accent is largely seen as the more prestigious accent. With the majority of the sophisticated characters speaking RP, is the opposite true for the characters seen as sympathetic and unsympathetic?

In *Harry Potter*, 47.7% of the characters classified as sympathetic and 65.6% of the unsympathetic characters speak RP. In *Game of Thrones* only 35.3% of the sympathetic characters and 78.6% of the unsympathetic characters speak RP. The variation within the RP accent-category is not as distinct here as in the 'level of sophistication' category. In *Harry Potter* there is an even distribution of 21 characters for each category, and in *Game of Thrones* 12 characters are seen as sympathetic and 11 as unsympathetic, so there is an even distribution here as well. So the bias is not a clear, with regard to the RP accent found in this category as in the category of sophistication.

As seen in tables 4.11 and 4.12 above, out of the characters in *Harry Potter* who were classified as good 50 % were also placed in the accent category of RP, 62.5% of the evil characters and 75.0% of the mixed characters also spoke with an RP accent. In *Game of Thrones* there was more of an unbalance, as only 35.3% of the characters classified as good spoke RP, and 85.7% of the characters in the evil category and 71.4% in the mixed category spoke RP. If we take another look at the distribution within the RP accent category, there are similarities in *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* as both have a majority of RP speakers

classified as good. Of the 42 RP speakers in *Harry Potter*, 26 are classified as good, as is 12 of the 23 RP speakers in *Game of Thrones*. This result can be seen to support the assumption that RP, or the standard variety is seen as the good or neutral accent.

In the attitudinal studies presented in chapter 2, Hiraga (2005), Coupland & Bishop (2007) and Ladegaard (1998) all conclude that the RP accent is seen as more prestigious than the other accents included in their respective studies. RP is ranked lower in the social attractiveness dimensions. This is supported by the results of the present thesis as well, as RP is the accent spoken by the majority of the characters and there are considerable differences in the categories of level of sophistication and sympathy.

### 4.3 Cockney

There are ten characters who speak Cockney (London English). They are all adults, and eight of the characters are from *Harry Potter* and two are from *Game of Thrones*. From the general overview above, it is clear that none of the characters with this accent are classified as major, or even supporting characters.

In *Harry Potter*, two of the characters, namely Mundungus Fletcher and Argus Filch who are a thief and a caretaker respectively, are minor characters. The last six characters are placed in the peripheral category. In *Game of Thrones*, the two characters, Pypar and Gendry, are both classified as peripheral. With regard to gender, there is only one of the ten who is female, and this is the character Madam Rosmerta in *Harry Potter*. She is a barkeeper of the bar called *The Three Broomsticks*, and she is the only one, with the exception of the barkeeper Tom, who is seen as sympathetic.

The ten characters are all classified as unsophisticated, and the character traits or their occupations seem to follow the same pattern. In *Harry Potter* there is a thief, two barkeepers, a caretaker, a train conductor, a bus conductor and two Death-Eaters (supporters of Voldemort). Of the two Cockney speakers in *Game of Thrones*, one is a bastard son of King Robert and works as a blacksmith, and the other is forced to go to the wall after committing a crime.

Because a majority of the characters are classified as unsympathetic and unsophisticated, at least in *Harry Potter*, it could be easy to assume that the majority of them would then be seen as evil as well. This is, however, not the case. In *Game of Thrones*, both Cockney speakers are classified as good, and for four of the eight Cockney speakers in *Harry*

*Potter* this is also the case. The train conductor is classified as mixed, simply because even though he appears to be unsympathetic towards Harry Potter a conclusion that he is evil cannot automatically follow, as he only makes a small appearance. The two characters Scabior and Fenrir Greyback (a werewolf) are snatchers and Death-Eaters who support the dark side, the readers may see them as enemies, and they are therefore classified as evil. The caretaker Argus Filch, on the other hand, was more difficult to place as he is seen as evil by the students of *Hogwarts* and therefore by us, but he can also be seen as mixed when we learn more about his past. However, as the reader gets a strong sense of the fact that he is evil this is the category he is placed in.

There are many character traits that are similar for these ten characters as all are unsophisticated, all are adult characters and nine out of ten are male. The differences are in the categories ‘sympathetic’ and ‘good and evil’. It therefore seems that the characters are placed together on the basis that they are unsophisticated adults who portray a minor or peripheral role. As there are few descriptions of these characters in the books, this may point to the fact that this accent is used to portray a certain stereotype.

The Cockney accent is an urban accent based in London, Hiraga (2005) (cf chapter 2) found that the urban varieties included in his study were ranked lowest for both the status and solidarity dimensions. Ladegaard (1998) also found that the Cockney accent was ranked lowest in the dimensions included in his study (cf chapter 2). Bearing this in mind, could it be possible to argue that the Cockney accent is used to portray a stereotypical image in the material analysed here? As mentioned in chapter 2, Garrett (2010) says stereotypes are a way of dividing people into different groups based on qualities they inhere. All of these characters have some of the same qualities, so in that way it is possible to say that a stereotypical image is portrayed here, at least with regard to their work situation and level of sophistication. However, as there are significant differences in the categories of ‘sympathy’ and ‘good-evil’, the stereotypical image is not complete.

#### **4.4 Estuary English**

None of the nine characters that speak with an Estuary English accent use all accent traits (cf. 3.2.3), so it has been a challenging category to place characters in. Eight of the characters are from *Harry Potter*, and seven of these are children. The only adult character is Bill Weasley, Ron’s older brother. He is seen as sophisticated, sympathetic and good, the same as the only

*Game of Thrones* character, Renly Baratheon. Of the seven child characters, Ginny Weasley, Ron's sister, is the only female. She is characterised as sophisticated, sympathetic and good. The main character, Harry Potter, is classified as a speaker of Estuary English. It is, however, necessary to point out that he could be classified as in-between the accents RP and Estuary English. He does not have as many linguistic features characteristic of the Estuary English accent as for instance Ron Weasley. He is also in this category, and is seen as sympathetic and good as his brother and sister are, but he is classified as unsophisticated. So, of the main trio, Hermione, who is seen as the most intelligent, speaks RP. Harry, who is seen as intelligent and brave speaks Estuary English, with a near-RP quality to it. Ron, who is seen as loyal and good, but unsophisticated and not as intelligent as the other two, speaks Estuary English.

Dudley Dursley, who is Harry's cousin, is classified as unsophisticated, unsympathetic and in the reader's eyes evil, although we learn, in the last book, that he is in fact not as evil as first described. Draco Malfoy, Harry's archenemy, is also classified as evil and unsympathetic but as sophisticated.

Of the nine characters who speak Estuary English there are some variation in how they are classified in the non-linguistic categories, but the majority is classified as good. Most of the characters are children, and as discussed above (cf 4.1.3) this might mean that Estuary English is the accent children identify with, instead of RP. There are two adults that speak Estuary English and these are classified in the same manner; sophisticated, sympathetic and good. A point that should be mentioned with regard to the two adult characters, is that none of them speak this accent very broadly, and it could be argued that they attempt to speak with an RP accent and fail to do so to the degree that it is more correct to place them in the present accent category.

#### **4.5 Northern English**

The accent category of Northern English has 18 characters in total, which makes this the category with the second highest number of speakers.

In *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* there are 2 and 16 characters respectively. Thus, there is a significant difference in the number of characters for the two franchises.

In *Harry Potter*, there are two characters that speak Northern English, one adult and one child. The adult character is a woman named Arabella Figg, a peripheral character

classified as unsophisticated, sympathetic and good. The other character is Neville Longbottom, who is a classmate of Harry Potter's. He is seen as the unlucky kid, who always gets into unfortunate situations that could have been easily avoided. Both of these characters are seen as clumsy, and not particularly smart, however, they both prove that they are sympathetic, loyal and brave when it is needed.

In *Game of Thrones*, there are 16 characters who speak with a northern English accent. Most of these are from the northern part of the Seven Kingdoms, and all characters are classified as adults. Five of these characters are seen as sophisticated, and these are largely lords or sons of lords. There are two female characters, both seen as unsophisticated, sympathetic and good. One of the characters is called Osha and is from north of the Wall, so even further north than the northern part of the Seven Kingdoms. She is described as a simple woman, who knows little of the culture and customs of the Seven Kingdoms. The second character is the prostitute Ros (she is not featured in the books, only the series). The nine remaining characters are all classified as unsophisticated, and they are either located on the Wall, or in the service of Eddard Stark, the warden of the north. That is, with the exception of the character Robert Baratheon, who is king of the Seven Kingdoms. In the book *A Game of Thrones* it is explained that he has grown up either in the south or in a place called the Vale, which is still in the more southern part of the Seven Kingdoms. Thus, he speaks with a northern accent even though he has not lived in the north. Most of the characters with a northern English accent are, then, from the north, which supports the hypothesis that there is a geographical distribution of accents in *Game of Thrones*, similar to that of Great Britain. However, there are characters who do not adhere to the distribution, such as the younger Stark children (cf 4.2) and King Robert Baratheon, who do not seem to follow this pattern.

A comparison between RP and the Northern English accent, in *Game of Thrones*, show that there is a difference in male and female speakers. As discussed above (cf 4.1.2) one half of the male speakers use an RP accent whereas the other half speaks with a northern English accent. These characters are largely from the north and south, and there is some sort of rivalry between them. For the female characters, there is a clear distinction between the two accents, as the majority speak RP. The two Northern English speakers are both unsophisticated, which seems to indicate that RP is the accent spoken by the sophisticated female characters.

In this accent category, then, there are several similarities between *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*. The majority of the characters are male, seen as unsophisticated, sympathetic and good, and several of these characters, e.g. Eddard Stark, his children and

servants, come from rural areas. Returning to the previous research, especially Hiraga's (2005) findings support the theories presented that the speakers of rural accents are marked as more pleasant than speakers from urban areas (e.g. speakers of Cockney).

#### **4.6 Scottish English**

There are three speakers of Scottish English in *Harry Potter*, and none in *Game of Thrones*. The three characters are all classified as sophisticated, sympathetic and good. For two of the characters, Cho Chang and Oliver Wood, there is no doubt that they speak with a Scottish accent. For the last character, Professor McGonagall, the decision to classify her as a speaker of Scottish English can be questioned, as the actor seems to be speaking with an RP accent with a hint of Scottish. As mentioned in chapter 3 (cf 3.4.2), it was challenging to place the character Professor McGonagall in the correct category. It is, however, apparent that the actor tries to portray a Scottish English accent, and she is therefore placed in this category. She is described as a very talented professor, as a kind person, but a very strict teacher.

As Scottish English, or at least the standard variety of Scottish English is seen as a prestigious variety (Wells 1982) it is not unexpected that the speakers of Scottish English are all classified as sophisticated. In the previous studies Scottish was ranked in fourth place for 'social attractiveness' and fifth place for 'prestige' (cf Hiraga 2005). Ladegaard (1998) also found that the Scottish accent scored high for traits such as 'intelligence', 'education', 'helpfulness' and 'reliability' (cf chapter 2). These qualities are something the three Scottish English speakers share, and perhaps especially Professor McGonagall, who is a very intelligent, helpful and reliable teacher.

#### **4.7 Irish English**

There are five characters placed in the accent category of Irish English, and all are from the *Harry Potter* films. Two of the characters are children and three are adults. All of the characters are classified as unsophisticated, sympathetic and good. None of these are major characters, but two are seen as supportive characters, namely Professor Moody and Luna Lovegood. Luna's father, Xenophilius Lovegood, belongs in the same accent category. Lastly, the characters Seamus Finningan and Aberforth Dumbledore (not to be confused with

Albus Dumbledore) also speak Irish English. With the exception of Seamus Finnigan, however, none of the characters are portrayed as Irish in the books.

All of the characters are described as eccentric and different from the ‘norm’. Seamus Finnigan, a classmate of Harry Potter’s likes to blow things up and does so without meaning to several times. Luna and her father Xenophilius are seen as ‘weird’ by the other characters, but also as good natured and somewhat misunderstood. Aberforth Dumbledore is described as Albus Dumbledore’s less intelligent brother, and in the fourth *Harry Potter* book it is mentioned that he has been charged with performing inappropriate magic on a goat. The last character, Professor Moody, is an eccentric teacher, who uses what some may call, inappropriate, but effective ways of teaching students.

All of the characters in this category are seen as eccentric or slightly different, but good-natured, kind and some of them as misunderstood. In Coupland and Bishop’s (2007) study (cf chapter 2) there is a distinction between Northern and Southern Irish. These two varieties are not distinguished for the present thesis, however, so a comparison is challenging. On the other hand both Northern and Southern Irish scores fairly high in the ‘prestige’ dimension included in Coupland and Bishop’s study, 17<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> place respectively, so the results for the present thesis do not support the findings of Coupland and Bishop, as all characters with an Irish English accent are seen as unsophisticated.

#### **4.8 Foreign English**

With regard to this category there are several different accents portrayed, and there is a difference between *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*. In the latter, part the plot takes place outside the Seven Kingdoms, and the accents from those places are often foreign-accented English. This could, then, be a way of signalling that these characters are foreign to the Seven Kingdoms. The characters often speak different languages as well as speaking English with a foreign accent.

In *Harry Potter*, there are several different varieties of foreign-accented English. In the fourth book and film, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, we encounter several speakers with a foreign-English accent, as *The Triwizard Tournament* is held at *Hogwarts*. There are two characters from France, namely Madame Maxime and Fleur Delacour, who speak with a



French-accented English<sup>15</sup>. They are both characterised as sophisticated, sympathetic and good. In the book, the French school has both male and female students. In the film, however, it is said to be a school for girls, placing emphasis on the feminine qualities. The second school involved in this tournament comes from northern Europe somewhere, we do not know exactly where, but it is said to be very cold and dark during winter. The two characters Headmaster Karkaroff and Victor Krum speak with an Eastern European accent, and there are only male students from this school, placing emphasis on the masculine. The two latter characters are not described as particularly sophisticated, and Karkaroff is also classified as unsympathetic and evil.

The last two characters are Kingsley Shacklebolt, who speaks with a Caribbean-like accent, and the shrunken head (from the Knight bus). The latter character speaks with a more Jamaican-like accent. Kingsley Shacklebolt is described as calm and intelligent, and in the non-linguistic categories in this study he is classified as sophisticated, sympathetic and good. The shrunken head is not sophisticated and unsympathetic, and is classified as mixed as there is not enough material to determine whether or not he is good or evil.

In *Game of Thrones* there are six characters who speak with a foreign-accented English, and none of these come from the Seven Kingdoms. It is indicated that they come from the southern part of Westeros. Out of the six characters, only one is classified as sophisticated. This is Syrio, who teaches Arya Stark to fight with a sword. He speaks with a Spanish-like accent. There are four characters, all from the Dothraki Kingdom, and the leader of this kingdom is the Khal (king-like) character of Khal Drogo. These four characters speak with an Eastern European accent. That is when they do speak English, as most of them speak in a different language (which is made up for the series). The last character is called Shae, a girl who works for Tyrion Lannister. She is seen as unsophisticated, but she is intelligent in her own way, and she speaks with a Spanish-like accent. All the characters with a foreign English accent from *Game of Thrones* are seen as unsophisticated, the exception being Khal Drogo, who is sympathetic and mixed, at least when seen in relation to the Dothraki culture.

In the societal treatment studies presented in chapter 2, both Lippi-Green (1997) and Dobrow and Gidney (1998) found that the characters who spoke with a foreign-accented English were likely to be classified as evil, or in a more negative manner than other characters. In Lippi-Green's (1997) study none of the male heroes or romantic leads spoke foreign English. The findings for the present thesis are more nuanced, as several of the

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<sup>15</sup> These accents seen as foreign English are impressionistic classifications, and there are no set linguistic features included in chapter 3 for these.

characters are seen as sophisticated, sympathetic and good. However, most of the male characters are seen as unsophisticated, so the findings for the present thesis do support the those made by Lippi-Green (1997) and Dobrow and Gidney (1998).

#### **4.9 West Country and Welsh English**

These two accent categories are grouped together because there is only one character in each category, both of whom are from *Harry Potter*. The character who speaks a West Country accent is called Rubeus Hagrid, and the character with a Welsh English accent is called Rufus Scrimgeour.

Hagrid is probably the character who uses most non-standard accent features when he speaks. He is classified as unsophisticated, sympathetic and good. He is a gamekeeper at Hogwarts, and in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher Stone* we learn that he was expelled from Hogwarts, in his youth, and is therefore not allowed to use magic. He is good to the core, and cares for humans and animals alike. But even though you can trust him, he is also gullible and easy to manipulate.

The West Country accent is in Coupland & Bishop's (2007) study placed in ninth place in the social attractiveness dimension, and in 15<sup>th</sup> place in the prestige dimension (cf chapter 2). This is considerably higher than some of the urban varieties such as Birmingham and Liverpool. Again, this lends support to the theory that rural varieties are seen as more positive than the urban ones.

Rufus Scrimgeour, who speaks with a Welsh English accent, is *Minister for Magic* in the sixth book and the start of the seventh book and films. He comes across as sophisticated, but unsympathetic towards other people. In the end we learn that he died protecting Harry's location from Voldemort, so even though he is unsympathetic, he is classified as good.

The findings are not consistent with the previous research in that Welsh, represented by Cardiff, scores low in both dimensions included in Coupland and Bishop's (2007) study. Whereas the speaker of Welsh English included in this study, is seen as sophisticated. Cardiff is ranked as number 25 (of 34), with regard to the dimension of 'prestige' in the study by Coupland and Bishop (2007).

#### 4.10 Unidentifiable

There are four characters who are featured, enough, in the films and series to be included in the analysis. However, it is not possible to get reliable results from these characters and they are therefore classified as unidentifiable. In *Harry Potter* the two characters not included are Fred and George Weasley. They are twins, and brothers of Ron Weasley. They are classified as unsophisticated, sympathetic and good. The reason they were not included with the rest of the characters is that the accent features they use point to both Estuary English and Northern English, and after repeated listening, I could not manage to place them into an accent-category.

The same is true for two of the characters in *Game of Thrones*. The character Youren is included in two episodes and therefore meet the criteria set forth in chapter 3, but the accent he uses is too difficult to place in only one accent category, as there are some features that fit in with the Irish English category and some that fit better in with the Cockney accent category. The last character is Sandor ‘The Hound’ Clegane, who has some Scottish features when he talks, but seems to try and speak another accent, but I cannot place him in a specific category either. These four characters are, then, not included in the total number of characters presented and discussed in the present chapter, as it was too difficult to place them in the accent categories.

#### 4.11 Food for thought

I would like to bring attention to the fact that in both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* there are several families presented, and families, such as the Lannister family in *Game of Thrones*, where all members of the family are placed in the same accent category. There are, however, some families where this is not the case.

In *Harry Potter*, the Weasley family is central to the story, as they become a second family to Harry Potter. They are described as a happy, but poor family living in the countryside in England (where is not specified). The adults in the family, Mr and Mrs Weasley, both speak RP. Three of the children speak more of an Estuary English accent, unlike Percy, the character who is most ambitious in this family and speaks with an RP accent. The last family members, Fred and George Weasley, are not included in the analysis, but it could be argued that they try, and fail, to speak with an Estuary English accent. So, even

though they are a family living in the same place, the characters speak a variety of different accents.

In *Game of Thrones*, one of the first families we are introduced to is the Stark family from the northern part of the Seven Kingdoms. The father, Eddard Stark, and his two adult sons Jon and Robb speak with a northern English accent, whereas his wife, two daughters and younger son all speak RP. It is, perhaps, more natural for his wife Catelyn Stark to speak RP or at least a more southern accent, as she is from the southern part of the Seven Kingdoms. But for his younger children to speak RP seems unlikely, since they, as their older brothers, grew up in the north. Again the 'Sex/Prestige Pattern' Hudson (1996:193) writes about becomes apparent as all the female characters of the Stark family speak with an RP accent.

## 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to gather the threads of the analysis and to go back to the research questions and hypotheses set forth in the after which follows some conclusions based on the research questions, hypotheses and the discussions earlier on in the thesis. Lastly some of the limitations for the present thesis are commented upon, before a section on how this study can contribute to future research is presented.

### 5.1 Summary

The analysis is a societal treatment study inspired by the study on animated Disney films by Lippi-Green (1997). It looks at the attitudes and the character traits of the characters in *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*. In the following paragraphs there is a summary of the main results of the non-linguistic categories.

**General overview** - There are, in total, 124 characters, where 76 are from *Harry Potter* and 48 are from *Game of Thrones*. The majority, a total of 52.4% of the characters speak with an RP accent. The accents with the most speakers, after RP, are Northern and foreign English. The West Country, Welsh, Irish and Scottish English accents only have speakers from the *Harry Potter* films.

**Gender** - There are more male speakers than there are female, and this is true for both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* although there are more female characters in *Harry Potter*. The findings for this category show that there is a higher percentage of female speakers with an RP accent, and that the male characters consequently have more accent variation. In *Game of Thrones*, the two women that speak Northern English are both seen as unsophisticated; one is a prostitute and the other is from north of the wall, which makes her a *wildling*, and not civilised. Another finding shows that the speakers of Cockney are mostly men. There is only one woman who speaks this accent, and she is a barkeeper in *Harry Potter*. So, the findings largely support the theory that women speak with a more standard accent to be seen as more prestigious, in both that there is a high percentage of female RP speakers, and that some of the women with other accents are portrayed as less sophisticated than the female speakers of RP.

**Character role** – The aim in this category was to see if characters with a more minor or peripheral role spoke the standard variety RP, or other accents with more stereotypical features attached. The hypothesis was that there would be more peripheral characters that spoke with a non-standard accent. As the majority of speakers in this study did indeed speak RP, it is difficult to discover a pattern amongst the peripheral characters. There is one accent category, however, which stands out. All the speakers of Cockney are, with the exception of two minor characters, classified as peripheral characters. They are all seen as unsophisticated, and the majority of them are also seen as unsympathetic. The Cockney accent could then be used to portray more stereotypical roles for the characters that do not have much descriptions.

**Maturity** - For the category of *maturity* the aim was to see how the accents are distributed amongst children and adults, and if these distributions are similar or different. For the children in *Game of Thrones* there is no variation, as all four speak RP. An interesting find is that three of the four children are from the northern part of the Seven Kingdoms, and the rest of their family, with the exception of their mother, speak Northern English. So, the question is why do these three children speak RP and not Northern English? One answer is that two of them, Arya and Sansa, are women and like their mother speak RP to seem more prestigious. Another answer is that the actors were not able to use the Northern English accent and therefore speak in their native accent. But we have no way of knowing what choices the actors made when portraying their characters. In *Harry Potter*, the dominant accent is Estuary English, not RP. This is the only category where RP does not have the highest number of characters. Another main finding regards the main trio Harry, Ron and Hermione. Hermione is described as the most intelligent of the three, she is always studying and her main focus is to do well in school. Hermione speaks RP, the standard accent, which is seen as most prestigious. Harry, on the other hand, is seen as the brave one, he is seen as intelligent, at least when it comes to dangerous situations and missions; he is always the one to get them through by thinking quick and smart. Harry is placed in the Estuary English accent category, but in reality his accent is somewhere on the continuum between RP and Estuary, that is actually quite near RP. Ron, then, is the character that is seen as the least intelligent of the three, but is very loyal and supportive. He speaks Estuary English. So the three characters speak different accents and are seen in various degrees of intelligence and sophistication.

**Level of Sophistication** - The main result for this category is the division between the RP speakers and the rest. For both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* the majority of the RP speakers are classified as sophisticated. The three Scottish speakers are also classified as sophisticated, which could be due to the fact that standard Scottish English is seen as a

prestigious accent. The speakers of Cockney and Irish are all seen as unsophisticated. The Cockney speakers all have jobs, such as barkeepers, bus and train conductors, as well as thieves and snatchers, which support the classification of unsophisticated. All the characters who speak Irish English are seen as eccentric and not quite adhering to the 'norm'.

**Sympathy** - In this category there is not as clear a distribution of RP as in the category summarised above. Here, there is an even distribution of RP speakers as both sympathetic and unsympathetic, with 21 characters for each category in *Harry Potter* and 12 sympathetic and 11 unsympathetic characters for *Game of Thrones*. However, as there is more variation in the sympathetic category, there is a higher percentage of RP speakers in the unsympathetic category. For the speakers of Northern English, the majority of characters are classified as sympathetic. All the characters of Irish English are seen as sympathetic, as is Hagrid, who is the only character with a West Country accent. So, there are many of the characters seen as unsophisticated that are seen as sympathetic.

**Good-evil** - The findings for this category is somewhat more complex than the other, as a third category called *mixed* was added for the characters that are too complex to classify as either good or evil. Percentage-wise the categories evil and mixed have a higher share of RP speakers than the good category. However, there are more RP speakers in the 'good' category, but more variation within the category. All the Northern English speakers, with the exception of one classified as mixed are seen as good. For the RP speakers there are some who speak a more U-RP (U-RP) accent, such as Lucius Malfoy and Professor Lockhart, are seen as unsympathetic and evil. These are the younger characters who speak U-RP and they are seen as evil, whereas the older speakers of U-RP, such as Professor Flitwick, are seen as good.

## **5.2 Conclusions – Is there a Game of Attitudes?**

The main aim for this thesis was to investigate whether or not language attitudes are present and systematic in *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*. Another aim was to see if these results, when compared to each other, are similar or different, and whether or not these attitudes, if present, are similar or different when compared to previous attitudinal research.

The short answer is yes, there are language attitudes portrayed in both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* and these can to some degree be seen as similar to each other and to

previous research. To give a longer and more detailed answer, I will go back to the research questions and hypotheses presented in chapter 1.

The first research question deals with the aspect of a systematic correlation between character traits and accents in both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*. So, are there similarities or differences in *Harry Potter* and in *Game of Thrones* when it comes to character traits or accents? The hypothesis regarding this research question (hypothesis a) is that there will be a systematic correlation between character traits and accents. This hypothesis is supported in the findings for the present thesis. For both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* the majority of female characters speak RP, as do the majority of the sophisticated speakers. In the category of sympathetic and unsympathetic speakers there is an even distribution of RP speakers in both *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*. Another finding, that supports the theory of a systematic correlation between accents and character traits, are the speakers of Cockney. These speakers, eight from *Harry Potter* and two from *Game of Thrones*, are all classified as unsophisticated, and their character traits are very similar to one another (cf 4.3).

As is seen above, there are many of the findings for *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* that are similar, especially with regard to RP. The second research question for this thesis asks if the findings for *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* will be similar to each other. To some extent the results are similar, and some of them are mentioned with regard to the first research question. However, there are also some clear differences: there are 21 children included in this study, 17 in *Harry Potter* and four in *Game of Thrones*. This is perhaps the category where the differences between the two are best presented. All the child characters in *Game of Thrones* speak RP whereas Estuary English has the largest number of speakers in *Harry Potter*. Another difference between the two is that there are several more speakers of Northern English included in *Game of Thrones* than in *Harry Potter*. Although it is not a difference in results, it is worth mentioning that there is more variation with regard to the accents used in *Harry Potter* than in *Game of Thrones*. This makes the task of comparing the two challenging, and for the categories where the speakers are only from *Harry Potter* it is impossible. However, the general results indicate that the language attitudes portrayed in *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* are more similar than different.

The last research question deals with the previous research on language attitudes (presented in chapter 2), and how those results compare to the findings for the present thesis. One finding that seems to be similar is that the female characters tend to speak with a more standard accent (in this case RP) than men do. The societal treatment studies (cf chapter 2) all found that the women spoke a more standard accent than the men. The societal treatment



studies also made a point of noting that there were more male characters included in the studies than female, and again this is true for the present thesis as well.

As mentioned above the RP accent has a significantly higher number of speakers that are classified as sophisticated than any other accent category. As discussed in chapter 4, the previous attitudinal research found that the RP accent is seen as the more prestigious accent, and this is indeed also the case for the present thesis. Hiraga's (2005) study specifically aimed at comparing the standard accents to rural and urban accents. He found that the standard accents were rated highly, but the urban varieties were rated very low. Although a comparison is difficult as there are few speakers of rural and urban accents included in this study, there are indications that a similar pattern can be found in *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* as well. The Cockney accent is rated low for sophistication in this study, and the majority of the Cockney speakers in *Harry Potter* are also rated as unsympathetic. The only West Country speaker included in this thesis, the character Hagrid in *Harry Potter*, is although unsophisticated, seen as very sympathetic and pleasant, which, again, is in correlation with the results in Hiraga's (2005) study.

Some of the hypotheses presented in chapter 1 have already been discussed with regard to the research questions, the hypotheses a), b) and c) are all supported, to the extent that it is possible. Hypothesis e) predicts that female speakers will speak with a more standard accent than male characters, and this is also discussed above. Hypothesis f), which deals with level of sophistication is also discussed in detail above and is supported as the majority of sophisticated speakers have an RP accent. The last three hypotheses are discussed below to give more details to the conclusions.

The hypothesis, d) states that there will be some differences between *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*, as they are aimed at different audiences. So, are there differences in *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones* because one is aimed at children and the other at adults? As discussed in chapter 4 there is the possibility that since children might identify with a more standard, or neutral, accent, they will therefore see this as more positive than other characters. In *Harry Potter* more male characters speak RP than in *Game of Thrones*, where the Northern English accent is more prominent. So, it could be the case that there are more RP speakers in *Harry Potter* so that children can better identify with these. This is also the conclusion Lippi-Green (1997) comes to in her study. Another finding that supports this hypothesis is that there are more Estuary English speakers than RP for the children. This could mean that the children identifies with this accent rather than RP, which can be seen as more 'posh'.

Hypothesis g) predicts that there will be fewer characters that speak with a standard accent in the peripheral characters category, as the accent will serve as a description of their traits. This hypothesis has been challenging to explore, as there are so many RP speakers compared to the other accent categories. However, once again the accent category Cockney is relevant. All the characters in this category, with the exception of two, are classified as peripheral characters. And as these characters have character traits in common, especially with regard to level of sophistication, this can support the hypothesis. In *Game of Thrones* there are several characters classified as peripheral who do not speak RP, as is seen in figure 4.8: This is the category with the lowest percentage of RP speakers, and it has the highest percentage of Northern English speakers.

The last hypothesis predicts that, as *Game of Thrones* takes place in a wide geographical area, the accents will have some connection with the geographical placement of a character and their accent. As discussed in chapter 4 nearly all of the characters with a northern English accent are also said to come from the northern part of the Seven Kingdoms. One character is from north of the Wall, and therefore further north than the other, and she does indeed speak a broader Northern English accent than the other characters. The two Cockney speakers both come from the Southern part of the Seven Kingdoms. The characters with a foreign English accent are also said to be located more south of the Seven Kingdoms, and the fact that they are foreign to the Seven Kingdoms is linked to the accent they speak. Whether this is geographically correct is difficult to say. But as the people north of the Seven Kingdoms speak Northern English this could be an indication that the characters south of the Seven Kingdoms speak with a foreign-accented English to indicate that they are indeed from the South. So, there are several indications that this hypothesis is supported by the findings for the present thesis, there are, however, characters that do not follow this pattern. The three younger Stark children, who all speak RP, and King Robert Baratheon, who is from the South, but speaks with a northern English accent all indicate that though this hypothesis is supported by the majority of the characters, not all speak 'geographically correct'.

Lastly, I would like to give attention to the main trio of the *Harry Potter* films Harry Potter, Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley. These three characters are strong indicators that language attitudes are present in *Harry Potter*, as their use of accents can be linked with their character traits. Hermione the most intelligent speaks RP, Harry the brave and hero of the story speaks a more standardised Estuary English, with several RP-like features and Ron, the loyal but least intelligent of the three, speaks Estuary English.

### 5.3 Limitations

While conducting this study, certain choices have been made, and even though most of these are mentioned in chapter 3, I would once again like to draw attention to them.

The issue of subjectivity is without a doubt the main weakness of the present thesis. The technique used for the analysis is largely based on the researcher. This technique is called the auditory technique and as Milroy and Gordon (2003:151) point out, subjectivity is the main concern, as the researcher only listens to the speech and after this groups it into the different categories. However, as previously mentioned, since this is a study on language attitudes, a detailed analysis of each feature of each character's accent is not needed, and the auditory technique was therefore deemed the best method to use. I have also had help from fellow students and I have consulted my supervisor to get the best results possible.

Secondly, even though the books, and the films and television series, have been helpful, the choice of how to classify the different characters, with regard to the non-linguistic categories has also fallen on my own judgement. Other people may, therefore, classify the characters differently. The non-linguistic criteria and the criteria for character selection provided in chapter 3 were made in an effort to limit the issue of subjectivity.

In total there are 126 characters included in this study, and 65 of these speak RP. So, there are some low numbers for the rest of the accents, and that makes it difficult to generalise the results obtained in this study. The findings may, on the other hand, serve as a point of comparison for previous and future research, and the findings that are similar to other studies can then be said to be evidence for language attitude theories.

In this study several of the characters are children, and I would like to point out that there is no reliable way of knowing whether these children manage to speak with a different accent than the one they already have. Indeed, this is also true of some of the adult characters that try and fail to speak a specific accent. So the results, with regard to the children, may not portray the language attitudes in the same way as with the adults. However, these children are casted for the roles by people with attitudes. So, the attitudes portrayed by children can be linked to language attitudes as well.

This brings me to my final point, which is that for the present thesis the linguistic background of the actors has not been taken into account. The reason why this was not included is that it was beyond the scope for the present thesis to investigate a detailed linguistic background for all 124 actors. It is, however, a point that a better understanding of the language attitudes portrayed here would have been obtained had the linguistic background

of each actor been taken into account, as a comparison of the native accents and character accents could have been made.

#### **5.4 Future research**

The present thesis has, hopefully, in comparing these two franchises and discovering the attitudes portrayed, raised some awareness to the fact that language attitudes are present in society and that there is some correlation between how characters are presented and how they speak.

Hopefully this thesis will inspire other studies in the same field, especially in societal treatment studies of film and television series as this is an area that has, if not been neglected, not been emphasised by sociolinguists studying language attitudes.

This thesis can, hopefully, serve as a pilot study for future research on language attitudes, especially societal treatment studies. As mentioned, one of the limitations of the present thesis is that the linguistic background of the actors has not been taken into account. It would be interesting to see if the findings are different if a more detailed linguistic background is taken into account.

This thesis only deals with two franchises and therefore two universes. There are several film and television series, both mythical such as the two included here, and others that could give a better picture of language attitudes portrayed in popular media. And a comparison between more of these could then lead to more generalisations if the data collected would allow that.

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