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Representation of Scouse in the movies compared to linguistic
description

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Contents

Abstract	1
Sažetak	1
1 Introduction	2
2 The history of Scouse	3
3 Linguistic representation of Scouse	6
3.1 Northern English features	6
3.2 Distinct Scouse features.....	9
4 The Scouse stereotype	15
5 Representation of Scouse in the movies.....	17
5.1 Educating Rita	17
5.2 The 51 st State	22
5.3 Nowhere Boy.....	27
Conclusion.....	31
References	32
Movies	35
Dictionaries	35

Abstract

Being among the most influential means of communication and information, media are often responsible for establishing and reinforcing stereotypes of a particular group and its language. One such language is Liverpool English or Scouse, which has always suffered disparaging remarks due to many negative stereotypes associated with it. The aim of this thesis is to examine to what extent the representation of Scouse in the movies matches the representation found in linguistic descriptions, and whether the stereotypes connected with this variety influenced its representation. The first part of the thesis consists of the theoretical research, with the emphasis on the historical events that influenced the creation of Scouse and the overview of its linguistic features. Additionally, there is a mention of the stereotypes created around the variety, which are assumed to have influenced the representation in the movies. The second part contains qualitative research of Scouse features conducted on a selected corpus from the scripts from three different movies, all of which were selected based on several criteria that were considered necessary for the analysis.

Key words: Scouse, Liverpool, linguistic features, representation, stereotypes, movies

Sažetak

Kao jedan od najutjecajnijih načina komunikacije i prenošenja informacija, mediji su često zaslužni za stvaranje i održavanje stereotipa o određenoj grupi i njenom jeziku. Takav jezik je i liverpulski engleski ili Scouse, koji je oduvijek trpio omalovažavanje zbog mnogih negativnih stereotipa o njemu. Cilj ovog rada jest utvrditi u kojoj se mjeri predstavljanje Scousa u filmovima podudara s opisom u lingvističkim radovima te utječu li stereotipi povezani s tom varijantom na njegovo predstavljanje u filmovima. Prvi dio rada sastoji se od teorijskog istraživanja, s naglaskom na povijesne događaje koji su utjecali na stvaranje Scousa te pregleda njegovih lingvističkih obilježja. Spominju se također i stereotipi nastali u sklopu varijante, za koje se pretpostavlja da su utjecali na njene oblike predstavljanja u filmovima. Drugi dio sastoji se od kvalitativnog istraživanja lingvističkih obilježja Scousa provedenih na odabranom korpusu tekstova iz tri različita filma. Filmovi koji su služili za obradu korpusa izabrani su sukladno određenim kriterijima potrebnima za izvođenje ovoga istraživanja.

Ključne riječi: Scouse, Liverpool, lingvistička obilježja, predstavljanje, stereotipi, filmovi

1 Introduction

Liverpool English or *Scouse* is a variety of English spoken in the region of Merseyside, in the north-west part of Britain. Although the variety itself exists for quite some time, due to its complicated and somewhat blurred historical origin it was always considered to be just a mixture of different dialects and has only recently become the subject of linguistic research as a possible new variety of the English language. It was primarily its uniqueness and difference from other Northern English varieties that raised interest among linguists and nowadays many of them, as for example Honeybone, confirm that “Liverpool English is not quite like its neighbours” (2007: 1). Moreover, its phonological features are one of the most prominent characteristics that differentiate it from the surrounding Northern English varieties that follow the pattern of the northern dialect continuum. Unlike them, Scouse’s uniqueness lies in the fact that, while it obeys some of the rules typical of the northern pattern, it defies the others. Precisely this mixture of features found in Scouse had set it apart and eventually raised linguistic interest. However, while linguists consider it a unique and interesting variety, other people mostly adjudge it as “the least intelligent and trustworthy”, according to the pool published in *Mail Online* (Woollaston: 2013). Beside personal opinions, this attitude can be attributed to some extent to the influence of the media. It is this type of influence that creates and reinforces stereotypes, always associating some specific characteristics with the same group, regardless of their veracity. Movies are the type of media where this practice is most common. Thus, not only does the character’s personality and background evoke typical stereotypes of a particular group, but the representation of the variety usually consists of exaggerating only few particular features that seem to be enough for the audience to recognize it and connect with the stereotypical characterization presented in the movie. Moreover, movies probably do most of the damage to a particular linguistic variety since they remain a permanent mark of its derogative representation, condemning the variety to constantly cope with prejudice and generalization. The following work will try to examine whether Scouse experienced the same treatment in the movies throughout the years.

2 The history of Scouse

Liverpool started as a small fishing village and port on the North West coast of England. Due to its favorable geographical location, it was often an unavoidable place to go from Ireland and other northern inland countries. Moreover, desirable raw materials from surrounding areas, such as coal from Lancashire and Cheshire, textile from Manchester and pottery from north Midlands, made Liverpool a perfect trading centre (Crowley, 2012: 2). Because of this, a large number of people were constantly passing through the city. However, Liverpool started to grow only in the 18th century, when British trade moved from Europe to the Atlantic Ocean. Liverpool joined in the slave trade and this “complex political and cultural legacy of slavery has dominated the narrative of Liverpool’s rise” (Crowley, 2012: 3). This kind of wealth started to attract many people from the surrounding areas because “the vast increase in trade meant that the docks became the major employer in Liverpool” (Honeybone, 2007: 7). Therefore, this could be considered as the first important historical event that influenced the development of the city and, although there is no evidence that it had direct influence on the language, it was an important factor in the following historical occurrences which formed what today is known under the term Scouse, including both people and the language. The name Scouse is of a foreign origin, as well as the people who influenced its formation, the fact that perfectly describes the variety in question. The word originates from Scandinavian word *Lobskaus* that was sailor’s stew made of meat and vegetables. According to the *Online Etymology Dictionary*, the meaning was transferred to the inhabitants of Liverpool in 1945 and to the variety in 1963.

By the time Liverpool gained the city status in 1880, it had already grown into an important urban centre and “the single most important port of the British Empire” (Honeybone 2007: 6). More and more people were constantly passing through town and many of them even stayed in the city. According to the data taken from census reports which Neal (1988: 2) presents in his work, between 1801 and 1911 the population of Liverpool increased from 77, 653 to 746,421. Neal (1988:10) also comments that “the census of 1841 was the first to record the place of birth of the enumerated population”. Before that, it was difficult to define the origin of immigrants, even though it can be assumed that most of them were from Wales, Scotland and Ireland, considering their connection with Liverpool. In his research, Honeybone (2007:12) confirms the existence of the groups from Scotland and Wales that formed the communities within Liverpool. According to his study, “a significant section of the population had been born in Wales” and Liverpool was for a long time jokingly called “capital of North

Wales". He offers a similar description of Scots, adding that the Scottish community in Liverpool was "the second largest in England, after Newcastle upon Tyne". Even Belchem (2000: 40) states that there was a large influx of people to Liverpool from Scotland and Wales.

However, the biggest influx to Liverpool undoubtedly came from Ireland. Because of its proximity and as the main connection with the rest of Britain and the world, Liverpool served to the Irish either as a staging post on their further travel or as a destination. The Irish were always fluctuating through the city of Liverpool in search of work. That work was usually seasonal and it was mostly related to the lowest department of manual labor. With time, as Belchem (2000: 30) argues, "seasonal migration merged into sojourns and permanent settlement" which led to an increase in population. He states that the census from 1841 shows that the Irish-born in Liverpool made "some 17.3 per cent of population". (Belchem 2000: 30) Nevertheless, the largest number of Irish people settled in Liverpool during the Irish Famine that struck Ireland in the 1840's. As Honeybone (2007: 8) notes, during those years the population increased by "around 100,000 people in successive ten year periods". And from the data that Knowles (1973: 23) presented, by the year 1861 "49 per cent of the population were immigrants and no fewer than 24.5 per cent from Ireland". In the times of the Irish Famine, Liverpool was filled with Irish paupers and thieves, who presented a great burden to Liverpool's economy.

Clearly, this is by many considered as the most important historical event of Liverpool's rise and, consequently, the creation of Liverpool English or Scouse. Many experts writing about Scouse agree that it probably emerged around the 19th century in Liverpool. Honeybone (2007: 1) asserts that in that century "the available evidence indicates that the variety came into being" because it was the time "when speakers of a number of dialects were mixing in the area. " Although it is the undeniable fact that the Irish language had the biggest influence on the language and culture of Liverpool, some linguists disagree on the exclusive importance of its influence, considering there were other communities in the city as well. Many linguists developed different theories about the creation of Scouse in their research. Knowles (1973: 16) claims that "when the port of Liverpool was just a little town on the Lancashire coast, its inhabitants spoke with a Lancashire accent". This is plausible, bearing in mind that Liverpool was once a part of Lancashire's county. However, further in his research he came to the conclusion that Scouse mostly comprises "the transplanted Anglo-Irish of working-class areas near the city centre" (Knowles 1973: 14). In line with his conclusion,

many linguists simply accepted the fact that Scouse is just a Lancashire dialect with the Irish accent. Unlike them, Honeybone (2007: 10) presented a somewhat different theory. He agrees with Knowles' claim that Liverpudlians spoke the Lancashire dialect before the emergence of Scouse. Nevertheless, he disagrees with the theory that Anglo-Irish was simply transplanted to Liverpool and he argues that this new variety emerged from the dialect mixture, since there were many other communities situated in the city that could contribute to the creation of Scouse. He claims that, although "a substantial section of the population had been born in Ireland", they were only located in specific areas of the city, so it was highly unlikely that "their speech would swamp the dialects of immigrants from other areas" (Honeybone, 2007: 11). He investigated Trudgill's theory of new-dialect formation, claiming that the situation in Liverpool "has much in common with the cases typically discussed under the heading of new-dialect formation" (Honeybone, 2007: 12). He elaborates the theory of the development of Scouse by dividing it into three stages. During the first stage, which he roughly puts before the 19th century, Liverpool still spoke the South Lancashire dialect. In the second stage around the mid-19th century "a recognizable 'Liverpool English' emerges" which, after the process of koineisation, formed the basis of Liverpool English as we recognize it today (Honeybone, 2007: 10). According to Honeybone, the third stage of this process is still ongoing because the language continued to change after it had been created in the 19th century, when the second stage finished.

These two possible theories show that the creation of a new variety is a very complicated process and that its history can never be completely explained. Moreover, taking into consideration that Scouse has only recently been recognized as a new variety, one can hardly find sufficient amount of information about its social and historical circumstances. Therefore, following the linguistic practice, it would be best to search for answers within the language itself, that is, in its linguistic features.

3 Linguistic representation of Scouse

In terms of linguistic, Scouse belongs to the Northern English group. The division on Northern and Southern English is one of the best-known differences between the varieties of English in Britain. These two terms represent a label for a group of more local varieties that share specific linguistic features by which they differ from other groups. Two of the most salient features that distinguish these two groups are the FOOT – STRUT Split and BATH Broadening (Wells, 1982: 349). These features are also present in Scouse, which is why it forms part of the North. However, while Scouse belongs to the Northern English group, it is also quite different from its northern neighbors. As Knowles (1973: 15) states in his work: “In language, as in history and tradition, Liverpool and Merseyside are in the North of England but not of it“. This uniqueness is the result of numerous dialects from various parts of the country and the world that influenced the variety. Indeed, just as the dish according to which it was named, Scouse can be considered as a sort of stew, a mixture of different dialects and their linguistic features. For a better overview of all these different features of Scouse, the following part will be divided into the Northern English features that remained in the variety and distinct Scouse features that were either brought from other dialects, or even, as Honeybone (2007: 2) argues “have undergone endogenous, autonomous changes” and are now unique features of Scouse. Scouse is marked mostly at the phonological level, as well as peripherally involving the lexical and morphosyntactic levels. Due to the broad linguistic area of its features, this thesis will only focus on the description of the most relevant phonological features of Scouse, whereas other morphological and lexical features will be mentioned and analyzed according to their appearance in the movie analysis.

3.1 Northern English features

One of the most salient features of Northern English is the absence of the FOOT – STRUT Split. Wells (1982: 351) explains this feature as a “lack of phonemic opposition” between the words from these lexical sets. Therefore, while the south of England, Wales and even Scotland have a “six-term system of lax vowels”, the linguistic North has preserved “a five-term system” and it does not have the lax vowel /ʌ/. Instead, these words are pronounced using the vowel /ʊ/. However, different social classes present certain variations of this feature. Hughes et al (2005: 60) state that in Northern English, middle-class speakers that are

influenced by Received Pronunciation (RP) pronounce a vowel that is “between /ʊ/ and /ʌ/ in quality” and they describe this vowel as somewhere “around /ə/”. The same variation occurs in Scouse. Apart from the speakers that use /ə/, Knowles (1973: 284) notices that many others pronounce these words with what he calls the Scouse /o/. His examples include the words *up* and *drum* but also *gloves*, *rubber*, *bulb*, etc. (Knowles, 1973: 286). He claims that this happens because the “phonetic quality” of the RP phoneme /ʌ/ highly resembles the Scouse /o/. Both phonemes are “back of centre, half-open and unrounded”, so it is very difficult to discern “whether the speaker is using a Scouse /o/ or what for him is an /ʌ/”. (Knowles, 1973: 284) Clearly, these variations of the phoneme /ʌ/ refer to the words from the STRUT lexical set, although it is not uncommon that in cases of speaker’s hypercorrection even the words from FOOT lexical set are pronounced with /ə/ or /o/ in case of Scouse. The example would be the mispronunciation of *good luck* as [gʌd lok] (Knowles 1973: 286).

In connection with these vowels, there is yet another type of variation that could be found in Scouse, as well as in other Northern English varieties. In some words that even the South pronounces with the phoneme /ʊ/, the North goes one step further, changing the phoneme /ʊ/ into a longer vowel /u:/. This variation is restricted to the pronunciation of graphemes /oo/ before the consonant /k/ as in the examples *look*, *book* and *cook* (Honeybone and Watson, 2006: 6). Again, Knowles (1973: 290) found out that some speakers lean toward the pronunciation of /o/ instead of /u/ in these words. Although this feature was relatively salient in the time of Knowles’ research, Watson claims that today “this feature is recessive, occurring less frequently in younger people” (2007: 358).

Another salient feature that distinguishes Northern from Southern English is the BATH Broadening (Wells, 1982: 353). Again, as the FOOT – STRUT Split, BATH Broadening is absent from Northern English. In the south, the vowel /a/ was lengthened and became /ɑ:/ before the voiceless fricatives /f, s, θ/ and some consonant clusters with initial /n/ or /m/ (Hughes et al., 2005: 61). The North, Scouse included, continued to use only the lax vowel /a/ in words from both BATH and TRAP lexical set. This also presents another difference “because /a/ does not occur at all in RP” (Knowles, 1978: 84). Instead, TRAP lexical set in RP contains the phoneme /æ/. Despite this fact, in Scouse and some other Northern English varieties, the tense vowel /ɑ:/ exists in some other words. It appears in words from PALM and START lexical sets, but it is more front than the corresponding phoneme in the linguistic south (Wells, 1982: 360). As for variation in middle-class speakers of Scouse, who aspire to RP pronunciation, Knowles

discovered that their pronunciation of the phoneme /ɑ:/ is “too retracted to sound like /a/ and too lax to sound like /ɑ:/” and he marks this sound with the “symbol A”. (1973: 288).

Next linguistic feature, that is common in many varieties of Northern English, is the consonant cluster /ŋg/. In Scouse and some other parts of the linguistic north “/g/ is sometimes retained after /ŋ/” when in the word-final position, such as in the words *sing*, *thing*, and before the vowel, as in the example *singer* (Knowles, 1973: 293). The phoneme /g/ is normally omitted when found in the middle of the word, as in the example *rings*. Nonetheless, Knowles (1978: 85) argues that specifically in Scouse “g-deletion can be carried out at more than one level”. Comparing the length of the realization of /ŋ/ between the words *thing* and *think*, Knowles concluded that /ŋ/ is longer before /g/ and that /g/ is “short and indistinct, and has little voicing if any” (Knowles, 1973: 293). Therefore, in some cases the lengthening of velar nasal can lead to g-deletion, which would make, for example, the word *sing* pronounced as [sɪŋ:] (Knowles, 1978: 85). However, because of the audible release of the final nasal, the word can also be pronounced as [sɪŋ:^g], which makes it very difficult to distinguish from [sɪŋ:g]. Because of this, Knowles (1973: 294) concludes that in Scouse the variation of consonant cluster /ng/ can be determined by two sound patterns: “the presence or absence of phonological /g/, and the phonation of final nasals”. If perceived as a part of the same cluster, some variations concerning the suffix – *ing* should be mentioned. According to the available linguistic descriptions, there are three ways of pronouncing this suffix in Scouse. Under the brief description of the variety of Liverpool, Hughes et al. (2005: 99) only mention that the – *ing* form is realized as /m/. Still, Honeybone and Watson (2006: 11) offer two additional realizations, whereas the word *humming* can be pronounced both [hʊmɪŋ] and [hʊmən], and they even claim that the later pronunciation /ən/ is “very often pronounced in Liverpool English. “

There are certainly more features of Scouse that could be listed under the features of Northern English, given that they do exist even in some other Northern English varieties. Instead, they will be treated as distinct Scouse features either because they are not present in the immediate surroundings of Merseyside or a given feature is not so extensively used in other northern varieties as it is in Scouse, which makes the variety in question be defined as unique.

3.2 Distinct Scouse features

Probably one of the most distinct and unique phonological features of Scouse that set it apart not only from its neighbors but from the rest of the England as well, is the phenomenon called *Liverpool lenition*. It has been claimed that some forms of lenition occur in other varieties, such as in Hiberno-English varieties and Welsh (Honeybone 2007: 19). However, Honeybone also argues that, although “there are related features in some of the input varieties which likely contributed to its development”, the same feature found in Scouse continued to develop further “endogenously”, since no other variety exhibits the feature to this extent. (2007: 19) The term *lenition* represents a process which affects the articulation of phonemes, primarily voiceless plosives. As Watson (2002: 196) explains in his work, this process could simply be described as a “reduction of strength of a phonological segment”. Affected by this weakening, the affected consonants are “articulated with a more sonorous manner of articulation or with less marked structure” (Lavoie, 2001: 6).

The range of allophones used instead of the plosives is vast and it presents a unique aspect of Scouse. Moreover, in Scouse, all six underlying plosives /p, b, t, d, k, g/ can be “subject to lenition in certain prosodic and melodic environments”, although voiceless plosives /t/ and /k/ are the most salient and, therefore, much more discussed in linguistic research (Honeybone, 2001: 236). Due to the fact that each plosive is affected differently, the term includes several different processes that are often considered lenitional in nature, as they exemplify the weakening of the involved segment. Some of them, also present in Scouse, include: *spirantization, debuccalization, rhoticization and glottalization* (Watson, 2002: 196). Both Watson (2002) and Honeybone (2001) include the process of *affrication* as well, as one of the lenition processes that occur in Scouse. According to their theory, the process of affrication can be seen as the first step in a lenition trajectory that further leads to the lenition process of spirantization (Honeybone, 2001: 228). Nevertheless, other authors, as for example Lavoie, argue that the “strength of the consonant depends on the status of its various phonetic components, including duration, intensity, voicing and degree of formant structure” (2001: 6). Because of that, affricates are considered to be phonologically ambiguous, since they can represent either weakening or strengthening of the affected consonant, depending on the environment (Lavoie: 2001). Although Parker (2011: 1178) includes affricates in his attempt to make a complete sonority hierarchy, he also claims that “the placement of affricates between stops and fricatives is a controversial issue, remaining open to disagreement”.

Because of this uncertainty whether the affrication represents a process of lenition or fortition, it was excluded from this analysis as a part of Liverpool lenition.

Spirantization is the most frequent process of lenition which consists of changing the stops to fricatives. The plosives are affected by lenition in intervocalic and word-final position (Watson, 2007: 353). Spirantization mostly occurs in the voiceless plosives /t/ and /k/, but there are also some examples of spirantization of /p/ and /d/. The spirantization of /p/ is briefly mentioned by Honeybone (2001: 236), who gives examples where plosive /p/ changes to bilabial fricative /ɸ/ in word-final position as in the word *shop* and in the intervocalic position as in the word *Liverpool*. The realization of /d/ as dental fricative /ð/, which usually appears in word-final position, can be seen in the examples *could* and *lad* (Honeybone and Watson 2006: 12). The phoneme /k/ is often realized as velar fricative /x/ or palatal fricative /ç/, depending on the preceding vowel (Marrota and Barth, 2005: 395). As stated by Honeybone (2001: 241) the spirantization of the phoneme /k/ is possible in several places within the word. Therefore, the change of /k/ to /x/ is noted in word-final position as in the example *book*, in the intervocalic position either pre-stress as in *market* or post-stress as in *education*, and also in pre-consonantal environment as in the word *respect* (Honeybone 2001: 241). Some exceptions occur when the plosive forms part of /sk/ cluster and after the phoneme /ŋ/, when the plosive /k/ remains the same. Finally, the voiceless plosive /t/ changes to dental fricative /θ/, as in the words *port* and *better*, although there are a few cases where the pronunciation is closer to /s/, as in the words *shot* and *water* (Honeybone 2001: 238). It should be noted that the process of spirantization of /t/ and /k/ is much more complicated, but a more detailed explanation would require much more space than the present work allows. Therefore, this brief explanation of the most common examples found in the variety should suffice as a general guideline for the later analysis of the representation of Scouse in the movies.

Another realization of plosives in Scouse is the process called debuccalization. This is a separate process which turns the plosive /t/ into the voiceless glottal fricative /h/. Unlike other types of lenition, the conditioning environment for this realization is very restricted. As Watson (2002: 198) explains, “for debuccalization to [h], the /t/ must be word-final, and the environment must be pre-pausal”. Debuccalization was initially found only in “monosyllabic function words, with short vowels” such as *what*, *but*, *that* and *it* (Honeybone 2001: 239). However, in his research, Watson (2002: 199) discovered that even some polysyllabic words can be affected by this process, although “under tightly constrained phonological conditions”.

He concluded that, besides being in word-final or, more precisely, utterance-final position, “the final syllable must end in /ət/” such as in the words *pilot* and *budget* as pronounced in Liverpool English and that the final syllable must be unstressed (Watson, 2002: 200,201).

Finally, the processes of glottalization and rhoticization are enlisted as part of the lenition process. Nevertheless, the process of glottalization, that is, the realization of word-final plosives as a glottal stop /ʔ/, is reported to be very rare in Scouse. It is more common that, in word-final position, when followed by a consonant, phoneme /t/ elides completely, as in the example *budget news* (Watson, 2002: 201). Yet, if the plosive /t/ is in a word-final position and it follows a vowel in the utterance, it can be realized as a rhotic approximant /ɹ/ or tap /ɾ/. Watson (2002) calls this process rhoticization, although it is also known under the term *T-to-R Rule* (Wells, 1982: 370). This feature is not unique to Scouse and it occurs in some other English and American varieties as well. The only difference is that, while the rhotic approximant /ɹ/ is more common in other Northern English varieties that have this feature, it has been noted that Scouse more often uses the tap /ɾ/ when applying this rule (Clark and Watson, 2011: 530). As well as the other processes, the patterning of this rule is not random but is realized under certain environmental conditioning. As Wells (1982: 370) implies, the change mostly occurs in the word-final /t/, which is realized as rhotic when preceded by a short vowel and followed by a vowel-initial word. Nevertheless, there are also cases where the rule is applied word-medially as, for example, in the word *whatever* (2011: 530).

The following two linguistic features that are found in Scouse are present in some other northern varieties of English as well. However, they are not present in the immediate surroundings of Liverpool and will be, therefore, discussed as the features that make Scouse different from its neighbors. These features are *TH-Stopping* and *non-rhoticity*.

TH-Stopping is not a unique feature of Scouse, but it only exists in small number of varieties, none of which are geographically close to Merseyside. Honeybone (2007: 14) stresses that the feature was most likely taken from some varieties of southern Hiberno-English, since it was not found in any variety in England, Wales or Scotland. Considering the historical connection between Liverpool and Ireland, the feature could easily be attributed to the Irish influence. TH-Stopping is described as the loss of dental fricatives /ð/ and /θ/ which can instead be realized either as dental stops or alveolar stops. This leads to the loss of contrast between the words *thin* and *tin*, which can be noticed in some speakers of Scouse, mostly from the working-class (Honeybone, 2007: 13). This feature can occur in various

phonological environments, either word-initially, medially or finally, as in the examples *that* and *month* (Knowles, 1973: 323). Nevertheless, depending on the phonological environment and the frequency of a word, the pronunciation of dental fricatives /ð/ and /θ/ can still occur in some words.

Non-rhoticity is another feature that distinguishes Scouse from other Northern English varieties. What makes non-rhoticity in Scouse special is the fact that the surrounding varieties and the varieties that had the most influence on Scouse, such as those from Ireland and Lancashire, have remained rhotic. In his work, Honeybone (2007: 15) gives two possible explanations for this situation. Non-rhoticity is a newer invention in English, which emerged around the 17th and 18th century in London and it spread across the England in the 19th century, just about the time of the creation of Scouse. Therefore, Honeybone claims that Scouse either “never became rhotic when it was being formed” or it was rhotic at first but then became non-rhotic. (2013: 16) Additionally, he argues that the first situation is more plausible because there is no record of rhoticity ever being present in Scouse, so the most likely explanation is that the feature is the input from some non-rhotic varieties of English that “won out in the mix of features when the koine was being focused” (2007: 16). As a non-rhotic variety, Scouse does not retain a post-vocalic /r/ in words like *car*, *farm* and *park*, (Watson, 2007: 352) or when the word starts with /r/, as in the word *red* and *right* (Watson, 2006: 58). However, there is a distinctive way in which phoneme /r/ is pronounced within some words. Where RP would use an alveolar approximant /ɹ/, Scouse often uses an alveolar tap /ɾ/. This realization is most common in intervocalic position, as in the words *very* and *sorry*, or in the utterance *pair of shoes* (Wells, 1982: 368). Furthermore, alveolar tap /ɾ/ can also be realized when /r/ “follows a syllable obstruent”, as in the examples *strip* and *free* (Watson, 2007: 352). Wells gives even more detailed explanation, saying that in Scouse this variation mostly occurs when /r/ is preceded by a dental fricative /θ/, as in the word *three*, by a labial, as in *breathe*, by the phoneme /g/, as in *grass*, and following a /sC/ cluster, as in the words *sprout* and *scratch*. (1982: 372)

As for the realization of vowels, the most distinct feature present in Scouse is the absence of contrast in the NURSE and SQUARE lexical sets. While RP makes a distinction between the vowel /ɜ:/ in NURSE and /ɛə/ in SQUARE lexical set, Scouse has the same realization of the vowel in both lexical sets. There are also some other varieties, mostly in the north-west part of England, which have no distinction between these two sets, pronouncing both using the central vowel /ɜ:/ (Honeybone and Watson, 2013: 319). However, in Scouse,

the most typical realization is the front vowel /ɛ:/ and it is the unique feature of this variety, since it appears only in parts of the Merseyside area. Due to this feature, there is a lack of distinction between words such as *fur* and *fare*, with both words pronounced as [fɛ:] (Honeybone, 2007: 17). Clearly, there are some other variations of the vowels, depending on the speaker's social class or age. As it could be suspected, most working-class speakers make no distinction, producing the front vowel /ɛ:/ in both lexical sets.

Nevertheless, Knowles (1973: 295) argues that many middle-class speakers tend to “make some sort of difference between the /ɜ:/ and /ɛə/” and he even discovers four possible realizations of /ɛə/. The first three variations are already mentioned. The first one is the RP realization /ɛə/, the second one is the central vowel /ɜ:/, as pronounced in other north-west parts of England, and the third is the common Scouse realization /ɛ:/. The last one is the realization of the vowel, “which is more retracted than /ɛ:/ and sufficiently central to sound like a variant of /ɜ/” and Knowles marks this sound as /ɛ̃/ (Knowles, 1973: 297). However, this variant is more conservative and is usually heard only among older-generation speakers. In one of his later works, Knowles (1978: 84) mentions the modern variant of a more centralized vowel /ɛ̈/ for which he claims is the characteristic Scouse vowel, together with more conservative /ɛ̃/. Finally, Watson (2007: 358) discovers even the possibility of reproducing this vowel as a close, front variant /ɪ:/. In his research, one such example could be heard in the word *first*.

As in any other variety, there are many more features that are present in Scouse that vary from Standard English or have a distinct realization restricted to a specific area. The majority of linguistic features found in Scouse are phonological in nature. Still, there are a few grammatical and lexical features that vary from Standard English. Considering their broadness, in this work it would be impossible to mention and describe all the features that are present in Scouse. Nevertheless, there are additional two features that should be mentioned as part of the overall description of distinct linguistic features of Scouse, since they are among the most representative suprasegmental features that attribute to the uniqueness of Scouse.

The prosodic features, more specifically, intonation and voice quality, are the ones that most clearly distinguish Scouse from all the other varieties. The combination of these features “make a Liverpudlian sound like one immediately he opens his mouth” (Knowles, 1973: 1). Firstly, the intonation patterns that occur in Scouse are different from RP. In many declarative sentences Scouse speakers use a rising intonation instead of a falling one, which is typical of

RP (Barbera & Barth, 2007: 57). This kind of intonation is present in other northern varieties as well. However, intonation patterns in Scouse, with a range of rising and falling tones, are not typical of other northern varieties. Knowles (1978: 87) argues that, beside simple rise and fall tones and complex fall-rise and rise-fall tones present in RP, Scouse has another intermediate type of tones. Instead of smooth transitions from fall or rise intonation, the intermediate type “skip suddenly from one pitch level to another” (Knowles, 1978: 87). Secondly, the voice quality is another distinct feature of Scouse. The articulatory settings, that is, the settings of the jaw and velo-pharyngeal mechanism, contribute to the unique Scouse voice. In Scouse, as Knowles (1978: 89) describes, the tongue is raised backwards toward the soft palate, the pharynx is tightened and the larynx is moved upwards. The lower jaw is positioned close to the upper jaw, even during the realization of open vowels. The effect of the jaw moves the tongue back to the restricted space where it loses “much of its natural mobility” (Knowles, 1978: 89). These settings permit a “limited, but constant air-flow from the nasal cavities” because of which the Scouse voice quality is often described as “nasal” or “adenoidal”(Barbera & Barth, 2007: 63).

4 The Scouse stereotype

In the 19th century, Liverpool was a great sea port and a prominent city of the British Empire. The multitude of people and the wealth accumulating in the city gave it the deserving title of “second metropolis” (Belchem, 2000: 32). However, because of the common rivalry between the North and the South, Liverpool never fully gained its proper status, but it was, as many other northern cities, “adjudged provincial by the cultured Londoners” (Belchem, 2000: 48). Beside the rivalry, the constant immigrations of poor Irish presented a great burden to the economy of Liverpool and influenced the decline of the city. As Belchem (2000: 51) points out, the situation additionally stirred up during the WWII when, while being bombed, the mention of Liverpool in the media could only be found in the context of the “north-west”. The fact of being ignored for all those years forced Liverpool to distinguish itself from other cities and create its own identity. Its unique language and the particular verbal wit became the central characteristics of the Scouse culture. As Belchem (2000: 32) claims, even the term Scouse itself, which was introduced in the late 1950’s, came as “a cultural response to the city’s decline”. Nevertheless, the following years, marked by the political extremism and the crime, violence and drug use, fractured the unity and decency of the Scouse culture, finally leading to numerous stereotypes about contemporary Liverpool, still seen as the country’s most working-class industrial city.

When using stereotypes, one creates an opinion about a specific group by selecting a few of their traits that accentuate differences. These differences can be either positive or negative, although the negative ones are much more common. The most powerful dimension of identity is the accent. Through the process of metonymy, the linguistic manifestations evoke the corresponding social stereotype (Kristiansen, 2001: 142). The linguistic stereotype is formed by a combination of several features of a variety that are “perceptually and cognitively distinct” (Kristiansen, 2001: 141). In the case of Scouse, the accent seems to be the most distinguishable label of identity as well. All of its distinct features can be used to form linguistic stereotypes, although the most distinct one is probably related to the voice quality. And indeed, as Barbera and Barth (2007: 2069) point out in their work, owing to its distinct voice quality, Scouse is often perceived as “ugly” and “unfriendly”. Moreover, based on the pool published in the article in *Mail Online*, Scouse accent is perceived as “least intelligent” and “least trustworthy” accent (Woollaston: 2013).

The biggest influence on the creation of these stereotypes came from the media. The media are often responsible for establishing and reinforcing the stereotypes of a particular group, and Scouse is no exception. For the last 50 years, numerous news reports from the London-centric media have been portraying Liverpool and its inhabitants in derogatory and demeaning ways. Moreover, there were many TV series and comedians that reinforced the stereotypical image of Liverpool. However, one sketch in particular inflicted the most damage to Scouse culture and created the most stereotypical image attributed to Liverpudlians. It was the sketch from the Harry Enfield Television Programme BBC comedy show from early 1990's called *The Scousers*, which depicts Liverpool and all of its inhabitants by highlighting and exaggerating the most negatively viewed aspects of Scouse. The characteristics presented in the *The Scousers*, such as the thick exaggerated accent, the violence and even the haircuts and the dress senses of the characters remain to this day as stereotypical images of Liverpudlians. Kristiansen (2001: 138) states that "stereotypes form fixed and enduring mental constructs, which are relatively resistant to change". Consequently, Liverpool is still struggling with ongoing bad publicity and negative place imagery, despite numerous efforts to show positive sides of the city and its people.

5 Representation of Scouse in the movies

The following analysis examines to what extent the representation of Scouse in the movies matches the representation found in linguistic descriptions, and what are the possible reasons for the existing discrepancies. The analysis is based on the hypothesis that the non-standard English varieties are often poorly and negatively represented in the movies. Moreover, if there is an existing stereotype connected to a particular variety, there is a tendency to particularly exaggerate the stereotyped features of the variety in the movies. The central idea of this thesis is to demonstrate the extent to which the media, especially the movie industry, stereotypes Scouse, either by exaggerating its particular features or by diminishing the variety in general. The corpus used in the analysis comprises the scripts from three different movies that have at least one character speaking Scouse. The selection of the movies for the analysis was based on several criteria. The first one was that the year of production of each movie should be different to determine whether there have been any changes in the representation of the variety throughout the years. The second criterion was that at least one Scouse-speaking character in the movie is played by an actor who is not a native Liverpudlian, so that there could be a discussion on how much effort was put in the adequate pronunciation of the variety. The third important criterion was that the movie directors are not all Liverpudlians in order to examine whether different attitudes toward the variety influenced the production of the movie. Each movie is analyzed separately and provides examples of some features that appear in the movie and their comparison with the linguistic description, as well as a discussion on the existing stereotypical representations.

5.1 Educating Rita

The movie *Educating Rita* was written in 1983 by a Liverpudlian writer Willy Russell. The movie is about a young hairdresser Rita, who decides to enroll in a course at the Open University in Liverpool and tries to achieve self-identification and self-realization through education. Throughout the movie, Rita acquires education with the help from her tutor, Frank Bryant. The movie follows the journey of the characters and life changes they both go through.

The language forms a very important part of the movie. Rita's character represents a working-class Liverpudlian. Therefore, her language should represent a genuine Scouse.

However, what makes this analysis of the Scouse representation particularly interesting is the fact that Rita's character was portrayed by Julie Walters, an actress from Birmingham, making the quality of the representation of this variety largely dependent on some extralinguistic factors, such as the expertise of the dialect coach, the actress's ability to articulate the variety and the interest of the filmmakers to faithfully portray it. Although the analysis is focused on Rita's language, there are also some examples of the language of other characters that serve to accentuate the differences between the varieties. On the one hand, Rita's tutor Frank speaks Standard English, the fact which additionally highlights the linguistic contrast of the two varieties, evident in their conversations. On the other hand, the dialogues with her husband Denny serve to compare the differences in the pronunciation of the same variety.

One of the immediately recognizable Scouse features in this movie is the distinct Scouse intonation. The highly accented, rapid speech is a unique Scouse feature. Thus, in the analysis of Rita's language one can easily notice many movie examples consistent with the linguistic description:

- 1) "I don't want to *sit down*." (00:17:53)
- 2) "We've been dead busy in the shop *this week*." (00:29:01)
- 3) "You, like, feed me without expecting anything *in return*." (00:35:06)

As described in linguistic description, Scouse often ends a declarative sentence with a rising intonation and the examples of Rita's language show a similar pattern. In the first example *sit down*, the pitch reaches its peak on the accented vowel /ɪ/ in the word *sit*. However, instead of the fall that would normally follow in RP, the pitch remains here on the same level through the final /t/ and onto the next word *down*, making a slight skip down in the final phoneme /n/, although not enough to indicate it as a falling intonation. The other two examples follow the same pattern.

The following feature, which can also be often heard in Rita's language, is the representation of the Scouse front vowel /ɛ/. The following sentences are only some of the examples in which this feature is present:

- 1) "*Me first name?*" (00:05:55)
- 2) "Reference to other *works* will impress the examiners, you said." (00:18:17)
- 3) "He's wondering where the *girl* he married has gone to." (00:35:51)

The word *work*, like in the second example, is often repeated throughout the movie, either as a verb or a noun, and Rita's pronunciation of the word matches the linguistic description, pronouncing it as [wɛ:k]. Other examples also accurately present the Scouse feature, pronouncing the word *first* as [fɛ:st] and *girl* as [gɛ:l].

Another pronunciation that is well presented in the movie is the T-to-R Rule. Since the T-to-R Rule is not only restricted to Scouse, but is also present in Birmingham, the hometown of the actress, one can easily assume that this feature is adequately presented in the movie. Nevertheless, the following examples are analyzed in order to additionally support the claim from the linguistic description, that this rule requires certain environmental conditions:

- 1) "But I'm not a Susan anymore." (00:06:13)
- 2) "What of?" (00:08:25)
- 3) Rita: I haven't *got it*.
Frank: You haven't done it?
Rita: I said I haven't *got it*. (00:33:42)

The sentences serve as the evidence that the change mostly occurs when the word-final plosive /t/ is preceded by a short vowel and followed by a vowel-initial word. Therefore, the first example is pronounced [bərəm] and the second one as [wɔɹɔf]. The last example is particularly interesting, because the pronunciation leads to the misunderstanding between the characters. The first time, Rita utters the phrase *got it* applying T-to-R Rule, thus she pronounces it as [gɔɹɪt]. However, her professor hears the phrase as *done it*. To clarify what she actually said, she repeats the phrase, stressing the final /t/ in "got" and pronouncing it as [gɔɹts̩ it].

When it comes to the processes of spirantization and debuccalization, they are rarely presented in the movie. Previously mentioned examples of Rita's language, where the final /t/ in the phrase *got it* is realized as affricate /ts̩/, can be considered a representation of the process of affrication that appears in Scouse. Bearing in mind the other processes, there are only two examples where only the process of spirantization is present:

- 1) "See ya next *week*." (00:13:28)
- 2) "I should be so *lucky*." (00:57:45)

In these two examples, the process affects the voiceless plosive /k/ and changes it to velar fricative /x/. In the first sentence, spirantization occurs in word-final position and the word

week is pronounced as [wi:x]. In the second example, the process affects the plosive in intervocalic position and the word *lucky* is pronounced as [lʊxi]. Apart from Rita's language, there are few examples of Liverpool lenition present in Denny's language:

- 1) "I thought we were going down the Bierkeller *tonight*." (00:23:10)
- 2) "I think we'd better get you to a *doctor*." (00:24:23)
- 3) "*What*?" (00:22:39)

The first two examples once more demonstrate the process of spirantization. Therefore, the word *tonight* is pronounced as [tənaɪs] and *doctor* as [dɒxtə]. Finally, the last sentence is the only example in the entire movie where the process of debuccalization can be noted and the word from the third example is pronounced as [wəh].

The next feature exhibited in the movie is not restricted only to Scouse and is common in many English varieties across Britain. The feature is called *H-Dropping* and it often serves as an indicator of a lower-class variety. As a member of a working-class, Rita often exhibits this feature as well:

- 1) "*Haven't* you read it?" (00:06:23)
- 2) "Well, that's his *hard* luck, isn't it?" (00:18:28)
- 3) "Denny, looking *happy*. He'd just got a few days' *holiday* from work. (00:47:48)

All these examples are from the first part of the movie and the words in italics are pronounced as follows: 1) [ˈʌvənt], 2) [a:d], 3) [ʌpi], [ˈɒlədi]. However, as Rita gets educated, this feature subsides from her language, although there are still some examples where the /h/ sound is not pronounced. Those inconsistencies in the representation of the feature can be attributed to the gradual change of Rita's language toward Standard English. Nevertheless, since similar inconsistencies can also be found in the first part of the movie, while she is just beginning her course, it could be argued that these deviations are actually mistakes in the pronunciation of the feature. While there are several parts in the movie where these errors can be found, the following example is the most obvious one, since the erroneous pronunciation immediately follows the adequate one:

Denny: I thought we could make these two rooms into one through lounge. Improve the *house*.

Rita: There's only one way you could improve this *house* - by bombing it. (00:22:22)

The example is taken from the dialogue between Rita and her husband Denny, both of which represent the working-class Liverpoolians and, therefore, their pronunciation of Scouse should be similar. However, in the example, the word *house* is pronounced in two different ways. First, Denny pronounces the word as [aʊs], while Rita, repeating just after him, pronounces it [haʊs].

Apart from the phonological features, there are some lexical items in Rita's language that additionally distinguish her from the rest of the characters. Her vocabulary is full of slang words she frequently uses, not only at home, but when talking to her professor as well:

- 1) "It's that stupid *bleeding* handle on the door. (00:05:24)
- 2) "Well, *sod* you." (00:42:28)
- 3) "It's a book, you *prat*." (00:23:03)
- 4) "He gets dead *narked* if I work at home and I can't be bothered arguing with him." (00:29:08)

The slang used in this movie is a general British slang and is not typical of Scouse. First, the word *bleeding*, which is excessively used throughout the movie, is a less offensive replacement of the word *fucking*. Also, the phrase *sod off*, or in this case *sod you*, is one of a milder profanities signifying *fuck you*. The name *prat* is used to insult someone, usually denoting him as stupid. Finally, if someone is *narked*, it means that he is in a bad mood. As it can be noticed from the examples, the slang words that Rita uses in the movie are mostly profanities. Moreover, none of the words are representative of Scouse as a distinct variety. Therefore, it is obvious that the use of slang in this movie served only to imply particular attitudes of the character to the audience. These attitudes primarily describe Rita as an ill-educated woman who, unlike other students at the University, lacks proper manners when talking to her professor. This can be noticed already in the first scene in which Rita appears, when entering the professor's office. The first example, containing the word *bleeding*, is one of the first sentences she utters. If one would relate this to the fact that Rita is the main representative of the Scouse culture in this movie, it could be argued that this is a clear evidence of stereotyping.

Another aspect of the Scouse representation in the movie, which can be adjudged as stereotypical, is the change of Rita's language. Education influences Rita's life, but more importantly, it also influences her language. By becoming more educated, Rita's language changes toward Standard English. This change could be adjudged as stereotypical, because, in a way, it suggests that Scouse is spoken only by uneducated people. However, it is not only

Rita's social aspirations that influence her to change the way she speaks. The following example clearly states the attitudes of the society toward Scouse:

“I have merely decided to *talk properly*. You see, as Trish says: There's not a lot of point in discussing beautiful literature with *a ugly voice*.” (01:06:03)

There has already been a mention of people's attitudes toward Scouse and one of them was denoting it as ugly. This opinion has mostly been formed because of the nasal voice quality that is present in Scouse. The same feature can be heard in Rita's language throughout the movie as well. It is clear from this example, that the society only accepts Standard English as a variety spoken by educated people and that it is the only way to “talk properly”. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this representation of Scouse could be interpreted as an example of defending the variety, rather than additionally supporting negative attitudes toward it. Since the writer, Willy Russell, is from Liverpool, it is possible that this was meant to be a message to the audience how people should not be judged based on the variety they speak. In fact, in this example, it is actually Rita's attempt to speak Standard English that could be described as ugly, which was, most likely, the writer's intention.

5.2 The 51st State

The 51st State is a movie about an American chemist Elmo, who comes to Liverpool to sell his formula for a powerful drug to a local drug lord. However, nothing goes as planned and he ends up being chased by the former American boss, the hired killer and the police. With the help of the “local fixer” Felix, Elmo tries to find a new potential buyer for his formula.

There were several factors that influenced the selection of this particular movie for the following analysis. First, the filmmakers form an interesting duo that includes a British writer of Greek origin, Stel Pavlou, and a Chinese-American producer, Ronny Yu. Since none of the filmmakers is from Liverpool, it enables the investigation of how others perceive Scouse. Moreover, none of the major actors, whose representation of Scouse is analyzed in this work, is from Liverpool. The so called “local fixer” Felix is played by Robert Carlile, a Scottish actor. The Welsh actor Rhys Ifans plays the role of a drug dealer, Iki. And a hired killer, Dawn, is played by Emily Mortimer, an actress from London. Finally, the movie was made in the year 2001, which sets it 18 years apart from the previously analyzed movie

Educating Rita and which, therefore, offers an opportunity to investigate whether the attitudes toward Scouse changed during those years.

Right at the very beginning of this analysis and simply by overlooking the major points and themes of this movie, one can conclude that many stereotypes connected with Liverpool and its people are evident in it. First of all, the main themes are drugs and violence, which were for many years one of the main associations with the city of Liverpool. What makes the representation even worse is the addition of several scenes, including the skinheads and the corrupted police, which only seem to depict Liverpool in the derogatory way and have little to do with the plot of the movie. Lastly, the character of Felix represents yet another typical stereotype associated with Liverpool. Felix is an eager Liverpool football fan and he would do anything to get a ticket to the game, as it can be seen in the following excerpt:

Look, you see that? Manchester United versus Liverpool. And that's tomorrow. Blokes are shagging their fucking mothers-in-law to get tickets for that. And I'm getting two from Mr. Durant. (00:16:06)

It seems like every myth ever created about Liverpool found its way to this movie. It could be argued that the purpose of such derogatory representation is only to enhance the comical aspect of the movie. However, the representation gives yet another support to the creation of negative stereotypes about Scouse. This is a clear evidence of how the media can create a specific image of the nation based on myths and how these myths are constantly reinforced through the movies like this one.

Turning now to the representation of the language in the movie, one can assume that little attention was given to the adequate pronunciation of Scouse, due to the negative, excessively stereotyped representation of the city. Although few of the Scouse features can be found in the language, their representation is vague and some of the examples could still be adjudged as stereotypical. One of these features is Liverpool lenition, which can be observed in the following examples:

- 1) Iki: Now he's a dead *pillock*. (00:45:39)
- 2) Iki: Twenty million sounds *fantastic*. (00:46:28)
- 3) Dawn: This was a *mistake*! (00:48:31)
- 4) Dawn: I've shouldn't come *back*. (00:49:55)

All of the examples illustrate the process of spirantization or, more specifically, changing the plosive /k/ to velar fricative /x/. Therefore, the words are pronounced as follows: 1) [pilɒx], 2)

[fantastɪx], 3) [mɪstɛɪx], 4) [bax]. The same feature can also be found in the language of the third character, Felix. However, his examples are listed separately because one can also encounter some inconsistencies in his pronunciation of this feature:

- 1) Where the *fuck* have you been? (00:17:35)
- 2) Maybe you fancy a bucket of fried fucking *chicken*? (00:23:30)
- 3) *Look*, I've delivered your man. I'll have me tickets, and I'm off. (00:27:28)

Again, all the sentences contain an example of changing the plosive /k/ to a velar fricative /x/. Nevertheless, while the words in italics are the examples of standard-like Scouse pronunciation, the underlined words represent cases in which the same feature should have been represented but it was not. Therefore, the word *fuck* from the first example is pronounced as [fɒx]. In the second example the word *chicken* is pronounced as [tʃɪxən], but the word *bucket* is pronounced as [bʊkət], exhibiting only the general Northern English feature, the absence of the FOOT – STRUT Split. In the third example, the word *look* is pronounced as [lʊx], but the word *tickets* is pronounced as [tɪkəts], once more without the change of /k/ to /x/. Beside these examples, Felix continues to exhibit this feature throughout the movie only in the words *look* and *fuck*, although there are many more words in the movie that should exhibit the same feature. Moreover, all of the examples demonstrate only one process of lenition, that is, changing the plosive /k/ to velar fricative /x/. This could lead to the conclusion that stereotypes did influence the representation. The Liverpool lenition is one of the most recognizable phonological features connected with Scouse. And since it is a unique feature, it often serves as a quick recognition of the variety. Therefore, it can be claimed that the pronunciation of this feature in the movie is used solely to brand the variety as Scouse and, adding the previously analyzed representation, it only additionally imposes the stereotypes created around the variety.

Other features found in the movie are not restricted only to Scouse, but are also present in other northern varieties, the fact that could again be considered as neglect toward the adequate and complete representation of Scouse by simply using only general Northern English linguistic features. However, since they form a significant part of Scouse, some of them should be analyzed.

The first such feature is the T-to-R Rule which is present throughout the movie. The examples could be found in the language of all three characters:

- 1) Felix: Go back and *get him*. (00:18:13)

- 2) Dawn: *Get out* the bloody way, Felix. (00:30:10)
- 3) Iki: Always was a *bit* of a pillock, Leo Durant. (00:45:37)

All the characters pronounce the feature in the given examples, changing the word final /t/ to the alveolar tap /ɾ/. Considering the fact that the characters of Iki and Felix are played by a Welsh and Scottish actor respectively, it can be assumed that this pronunciation was natural to them, since the same feature could be found in their native varieties. Nevertheless, some credit should be given to the actress that plays the character of Dawn. In the previous example she also exhibits this feature, although she is from London, where the feature is not present. Furthermore, there is one peculiarity present in the first example. Normally, the T-to-R Rule would not be applied in the example “get him” because, according to the rule, the word that follows does not begin in a vowel. Nevertheless, there is another feature present here which enables the pronunciation of the T-to-R Rule. All characters represent a working-class and it is common, although again stereotypical, that all such characters have the feature of H-Dropping in their language. Therefore, without the pronunciation of the initial /h/ in “him”, the plosive /t/ precedes the short vowel /ɪ/ and changes to alveolar tap /ɾ/, leading to the pronunciation of the first example *get him* as [geɾɪm].

Lastly, there should be a mention of yet another feature found in the movie, which seemed relevant for this analysis. Scouse is a non-rhotic variety and the phoneme /r/ is pronounced as the alveolar approximant /ɹ/. However, the characters Iki and Felix often pronounce the alveolar tap /ɾ/, even in the words in which linguistically it would not be present, as in the following examples:

- 1) Felix: It's not too *far*. (00:23:37)
- 2) Iki: Get them *rogering* the dancing girls! (00:25:10)
- 3) Felix: *For* the old times' sake or the company I keep? (00:58:38)
- 4) Iki: *Riddles, riddles*. I love *riddles*. (01:13:25)

The first and the third example demonstrate the pronunciation of the word-final phoneme /r/ as the alveolar tap. In the first example the phoneme /r/ is followed by the pause and in the third example by the consonant and none of the environments is linguistically acceptable in non-rhotic varieties for the articulation of the alveolar tap. The second and the fourth examples have the word-initial phoneme /r/ which, again, would not be pronounced as an alveolar tap. When adding this to the rest of vaguely presented features of Scouse in this

movie, this representation contributes to the assumption that the whole representation of the variety was *taken for granted*.

To conclude the analysis, quite a lot of attention was given to the vocabulary present in the movie. Once more, as in *Educating Rita*, a general British slang was used and there were no specific Scouse words which would benefit the promotion of this variety. Unfortunately, they do again contribute to the negative stereotypical image created around Scouse, since the language of the characters is full of profanities. Broadly speaking, it could be said that the amount of swear words used in the movie almost exceeds the number of all the other words in the script. The following example shows how many swear words were used in a very short part of the script:

Felix: *Fucking* Yanks. The trouble with the *fucking* Yanks is they have no *fucking* sense. Some *dick* in Los Angeles actually asked me where I learned English. English! *Fuck*. (00:14:12)

Apart from the overly excessive use of the word *fuck* and all of its derivatives, there are also many other swear words from the British slang that are present in this movie:

- 1) Felix: I've got one great big, fat, swollen fucker of a problem with America, *twat*. (00:14:29)
- 2) Felix: So, how much are they paying you to wear that skirt? *Fag*? (00:26:25)
- 3) Iki: Well *bugger me* sideways, Felix DeSouza, you misguided *wanker*. I'm already number one. Always was bit of a *pillock*, Leo Durant. (00:45:31)

The meaning of the word *twat* from the first example is used to denote someone as “stupid”. Beside the use of the slang, the second example presents an interesting word play, given the differences between British and American English. In Britain, the word *fag* signifies “a cigarette” but in America, the word *fag* is used for “a homosexual male”. In this scene, Felix offers Elmo a cigarette, but what makes the connotation of the second meaning is the previous comment on Elmo’s skirt. The third example contains several slang profanities. The first one is the verb *to bugger*, which is one of the numerous synonyms for the verb “fuck”. The other two words from the example have similar meanings, both referring to insulting names for a person.

5.3 Nowhere Boy

The *Nowhere Boy* is a biographical movie about the early life of John Lennon. The movie focuses mainly on Lennon's relationship with his aunt Mimi, who raised him, and his mother Julia, who re-enters his life after abandoning him when he was a child, but it also deals with the beginning of his journey to becoming a successful musician.

The movie seems to be the obvious choice for the analysis, given that *The Beatles* were one of the most popular rock-and-roll bands from Liverpool. However, there are other relevant factors that influenced the choice of this particular movie for the analysis as well. From the linguistic point of view, the movie offers many different representations of Scouse. According to the biographical facts, as well as their representation in the movie, each character comes from a different background, which largely affects the way they talk. Therefore, one can analyze the differences between John Lennon's middle-class, softer Scouse, up to the working-class, thick Scouse of the "Cunard Yank" from the docks. Unlike the other two movies, this movie includes some native, as well as some non-native Liverpool actors and their respective linguistic features. Due to this fact, one can gain a better insight into the comparison of the two Scouse representations, and not only the mere linguistic description. All these additional components present in the movie provide numerous examples of different Scouse features. Finally, it appears that the movie really tried to accurately represent Scouse. To account for this claim, one has to turn to the linguistic analysis of the variety.

As one of the most prominent and unique features of Scouse, this analysis will firstly examine the use of Liverpool lenition in the movie. The following sentences contain several examples of Liverpool lenition, which can be found in the language of different characters:

- 1) Uncle George: Don't be *late*. (00:01:13)
- 2) Stan: It's getting *dark*. (00:15:17)
- 3) Cunard Yank: Have some *respect* boys. *Music* is *music*. (00:19:55)
- 4) Bobby: Who's gonna *look* after the girls? (00:35:11)

The first example demonstrates the process of spirantization of the plosive /t/, thus the word *late* is pronounced as [leɪθ], while the second example shows the process of spirantization of the final plosive /k/ to a velar fricative /x/, and the word is pronounced as [da:x]. What is interesting in these two examples is that this feature is found in the language of the Smith's family, uncle George and cousin Stan. Although from the same household, neither Mimi nor John have this feature in their language. It is not unusual that Mimi is lacking this kind of

feature, since she has been described as a characteristic middle-class member that aspires toward the RP pronunciation. However, one can only assume the reason behind the absence of this feature in John's language, because there are very few records of his language from that time. A possible explanation could be found in the fact that his version of Scouse was modified under the influence of his aunt Mimi's RP pronunciation. The other three examples are all from the working-class characters and, although their roles in the movie are irrelevant, their language characteristics are notable, such as the previously mentioned feature. Again, their examples contain the process of changing the plosive /k/ to a voiceless velar fricative /x/ in words *respect*, *music* and *look*.

As an important indicator that there was an effort to make an accurate representation of the variety, there is another distinct Scouse feature present in the movie. It concerns the absence of the contrast between the NURSE and SQUARE lexical sets and a specific Scouse pronunciation of the front vowel /ɛ:/ that can be heard in these examples:

- 1) Uncle George: *First* lesson. (00:01:11)
- 2) John: The *fair* is on. (00:28:47)
- 3) John: She won't find out, I *swear*. (00:29:27)
- 4) Bobby: For the *girls*. (00:35:52)
- 5) Cunard Yank: No man's band *deserves* to be tossed in the *drink*. (00:19:58)

Oddly enough, while this feature could not be found in the language of any of John's friends from school, John seems to have retained it in his language. Due to the fact that it is present in the language of his uncle and even his mother's partner Bobby, it can be claimed that, unlike in the previous case, the influence of their varieties overruled in this feature. Moreover, as the true representative of the variety, Cunard Yank exhibits it in his language as well. In addition, this particular example demonstrates the use of some British slang words, which can be found in the language of various characters in this movie, as it was present in the first two movies. The word *drink* from his example is referring to the word *sea*.

Furthermore, there are even some examples of a distinct Scouse intonation in the movie, although that characteristic is present only in the language of Cunard Yank and Pete Shotton, as in the following sentences:

- 1) Pete: He thinks he's *hard*, *you know*. (00:01:46)
- 2) Cunard Yank: Got a record in me cab that's not even *out here yet*. (00:20:13)

The intonation follows the typical Scouse pattern that ends declarative sentences with a rising intonation. The rise begins on the words *hard* and *out*, reaching its peak on the accented vowels. Then, the pitch remains high up until the final words *know* and *yet*, where it skips downwards, but still remains high. Since Cunard Yank was a person from the docks, but his role was small, it was necessary to include as many distinct features in his language as possible. However, the possible reason why the rising intonation is also present in Pete's language, but not in the language of the others, is because his character is played by Josh Bolt, the actor from Liverpool. Therefore, when comparing the quality of these two characters' representation, one has to commend the effort of the actor from Birmingham, who is playing the Cunard Yank, for the accurate representation of Scouse. Moreover, there is another language characteristic present in these two examples, as well as in numerous others throughout the movie, the *H-Dropping*, which is evident in the examples *hard* and *here*.

Finally, to conclude this analysis, there should be a mention of the representation of two distinct forms of pronouns, typical of Scouse. The first one is the use of the possessive pronoun *my* in form of *me* as in the following examples:

- 4) John: They are in *me* pocket.
- 5) Marie: He's *me* cousin.
- 6) John: I can do it *meself*, you know.
- 7) Julia: John, be serious or I'll phone Mimi *meself*.

This particular feature is actually a common feature of many northern varieties and it is a frequently used feature in Scouse. It was in fact present in the previous two movies as well, but it is analyzed only now, since it becomes prominent here, alongside with another form of more specific Scouse pronoun, exhibited only in this movie: *yous*.

This second form of pronoun represented in the movie is restricted to a smaller number of varieties in Britain, including some Irish varieties from which the feature was probably transferred to Scouse. The pronoun *yous* is the plural form of the personal pronoun *you* and was used in the movie in the following examples:

- 1) Cunard Yank: *Yous* are rock n' rollers, right? (00:20:09)
- 2) Pete: Where are *yous* going? (00:22:28)
- 3) John: And if you don't come, I'll batter the lot of *yous*. (00:41:34)

Apart from demonstrating only the use of the pronoun, these examples also exhibit some differences in the pronunciation. For example, while Cunard Yank and John pronounce the pronoun as [ju:z], Pete's pronunciation is closer to [jəz]. Although both pronunciations can be used, the most likely reason for this discrepancy lies in the fact that actors come from different linguistic areas. While Pete is played by an actor from Liverpool, the other two characters are played by actors who originally did not use this feature in their varieties, but had to learn it.

Conclusion

When it comes to language, linguistics tends not to be judgmental of what society constantly puts into hierarchical relations. People have a psychological need for identification, the process which normally occurs by differentiating what they are from what they are not. Since society reflects its values on the language, it easily becomes one of the most significant differentiators between groups and individuals. Consequently, differences can create intolerance toward “the others”. This kind of behavior encourages creation of particular extralinguistic elements, which often negatively affect the use of certain language and even create negative attitudes toward it, especially through stereotyping.

Scouse as a linguistic variety seems to be a perfect example of such language treatment. It must be its uniqueness, the impossibility of placing it into a rigidly determined “box of features”, that served as a fertile ground for its submission and devaluation. Moreover, the media’s use of propaganda additionally influenced its presentation, leaving the permanent mark of the disparaging treatment in one of its most influential forms – the movies.

However, the analysis of the movies and their representation of Scouse presented in this thesis leaves one with ambiguous results. Although the work partially confirms the hypothesis that the stereotypes created by the media largely influence one’s representation of the variety, it has been demonstrated that there is a certain effort of properly presenting the chosen variety as well. Moreover, the examples show that the representation largely depends on several other criteria, such as the origin of actors and producers, as well as the genre and the topic of the movie, which have a great influence on the way the language will be used.

While it can be concluded that not all movies use only stereotypical images of Scouse in their representation, those that do, tend to have a negative impact on the attitude to the variety. Therefore, until the movie industry does not change its approach of using non-standard varieties as a simple solution for representing a certain stereotypical behavior, Scouse, as many other varieties, will have to continue to cope with the prejudice and stereotypes that were imposed on it.

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