“By order of the Peaky *Bloinders*!”:

Examining the Representation of the Brummie Accent in Television

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Abstract

In film and television, actors are sometimes expected to speak in a particular accent in order to convey their character's identity as accurately as possible. A term in sociolinguistic research fields that describes this connection between identity and language is *indexicality*: it "refers to the way an observable linguistic fact can be indexical of social identities in the same way, for instance, that clothing can. Language features can thus be semiotic signs associated with such identities." (Smakman 2018: 57). Filmmakers make use of this fact when they include a specific dialect in their films: "film uses language variation and accent to draw character quickly, building on established preconceived notions associated with specific loyalties, ethnic, racial or economic alliances" (Lippi-Green 1997: 81). However, as the actors in film may be required to speak in an accent that is different than their own, inaccuracies can occur in their pronunciation, which may lead to linguistic stereotyping, appropriation or even racism. In this thesis, I examined this phenomenon in relation to the Birmingham (or, 'Brummie') accent, which is spoken in the series *Peaky Blinders*. I first established the most prototypical accent features of the Birmingham accent by comparing several sources, after which I analysed the use of these features in the speech of native speakers and actors. I then juxtaposed the differences in frequency and consistency between the pronunciation of the native speakers and actors, and several patterns emerged. These patterns could all be related to four sociophonetic processes detected by Bell and Gibson in a similar study: **selectivity**, **mis-realisation**, **overshoot** and **undershoot** (2011: 568). It was then found that these sociophonetic processes can account for the inaccuracies that may occur in actors' accent use, which ultimately pointed out that there is, in fact, a correlation between dialect use in film and linguistic stereotyping.

Keywords: *dialect use, accent features, language variation, stereotyping, linguistic appropriation, indexicality*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

It should come as no surprise that the job of an actor entails more than just memorising lines; actors are concerned with the job of presenting any character as accurately and authentically as possible. Not only will they try to accomplish this by body movements, but they will also use their voice in order to present the way in which their character speaks. Sometimes, this may involve the ability of acquiring a new accent for a specific character. Classic examples of this are Brad Pitt's portrayal of the Southern American Lt. Aldo Raine in *Inglourious Basterds* (Quentin Tarantino, 2009) or Mel Gibson's impersonation of the Scottish William Wallace in *Braveheart* (Mel Gibson, 1995).

Hodson wrote a book concerning the representation of dialect in film and literature, in which she defines dialect as "a combination of regional pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar" (2014: 2). In the introductory chapter, she claims that the use of a particular dialect in film can be a very useful tool for filmmakers, as it enables the audience to quickly deduce information about the character's background. Lippi-Green suggests this as well, noting that "film uses language variation and accent to draw character quickly, building on established preconceived notions associated with specific loyalties, ethnic, racial or economic alliances" (1997: 81). However, using a dialect in filmmaking may also lead to phenomena such as stereotyping and discrimination. Hodson makes this claim in chapter 4 of her book, in which she describes stereotyping as follows:

> [Stereotyping] occurs when a group of people are characterized as possessing a homogeneous set of characteristics on the basis of, for example, their shared race, gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, appearance, profession or place of birth. Stereotypes take a single aspect of a person's identity and attribute a whole set of characteristics to them on the basis of it, presenting these characteristics as being 'natural' and 'innate'. (2014: 65)

Several other sources claim that dialect use in film results in a realisation of stereotyping, whether positive or negative. But what is it about the representation of a particular dialect that leads to this particular stereotyping phenomenon?

1.1 Literature Review

Among various other researchers who have examined the relation between language and its social context, Beal claims that "specific linguistic variants are associated in the minds of speakers and hearers with particular social characteristics" (2011: 66). Within the field of sociolinguistics, this phenomenon is described by the term *indexicality*, which essentially

describes the connection between language features and identities. Smakman describes indexicality as follows: "from a sociolinguistic perspective, indexicality refers to the way an observable linguistic fact can be indexical of social identities in the same way, for instance, that clothing can. Language features can thus be semiotic signs associated with such identities." (2018: 57). Research has been conducted in order to find out more about indexicality, and important researchers in this field are Labov, Silverstein and Eckert. The general consensus on the basis of their research is essentially that "social meaning is deeply involved in phonological variation" (Eckert and Labov 2017: 491). Silverstein designed a model of the three orders of indexicality in his article 'Indexical Order and the Dialectics of Sociolinguistic Life', which is further interpreted by Johnstone et al. who claim that, as opposed to first and second order indexicality, third-order indexicality involves overt social comment, and may be used in literature and other media (2006: 83). Third order indexicality can therefore be detected in films and series when examining second dialect acquisition for performance: when a dialect coach teaches an actor to speak in a particular accent, that accent inevitably carries existing presumptions of the particular language or dialect it belongs to. Hodson delivered proof for this claim when she performed an analysis on a scene of the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (Mike Newell, 1994) in which she compared the contrasting accents of Hugh Grant and Charlotte Coleman. She concludes that Hugh Grant's RP accent carried the social connotations of a privileged upbringing, an association that the filmmakers were consciously trying to convey (2014: 67).

Research that connects indexicality with stereotyping and racism in film has also been conducted. In *English with an Accent: Language, Ideology and Discrimination in the United States*, Lippi-Green writes that the American Arab Anti-Discrimination committee had complained to Disney, arguing that the film *Aladdin* carries the message that people speaking with a foreign accent are bad or evil. That initiated Lippi-Green to conduct further research into Disney films, in which she ultimately found a pattern: when characters are seen as inherently good or carry positive connotations, they mainly speak in mainstream varieties of English, whereas characters seen as evil or bad are linked to a specific geographical region or a marginalised social group (1997: 80). Another example in which third-order indexicality evokes stereotyping and racism in film is described by Hodson: she writes about how Quentin Tarantino was criticised by African American film director Spike Lee for using the controversial word 'nigger' about fifty times in the film *Pulp Fiction* (Quentin Tarantino, 1994) (2014: 75-6). In sociolinguistics, this phenomenon is known as *linguistic appropriation*, which Smakman describes as follows: "linguistic appropriation refers to a kind of theft or piracy when people borrow words from other varieties. […] The idea is that speakers do not do this because they do not have a word or

expression in their own language, but are 'stealing' some of the rights of the users of the correct form." (2018: 96).

In short, filmmakers make use of pre-existing social connotations that are inherently connected to language features when they make actors speak in different accents for their roles, which may ultimately lead to phenomena such as stereotyping, racism or linguistic appropriation.

1.2 Researching *Peaky Blinders*

For my research, I would like to focus on a series in which a dialect is also used for character building because of its connected social connotations and assumptions. *Peaky Blinders*, a series created in 2013 by Steven Knight, is a relevant example. The series is set in Birmingham in the year 1919, and the general atmosphere of the setting can be described as gloomy, bitter, dirty and rough. The series is about a family who 'own' the streets of Birmingham because of their activities in illegal bookmaking. The plot describes how this family – the Shelby family – get in trouble with other gangs or mafias, and threats, fights and drugs seem to be some reoccurring themes. The Shelbys may also be described as violent: they are called 'the Peaky Blinders', as the little razor blades sewn into their caps are sometimes used in order to cut out the eyes of someone who does not obey their orders.

In this series, the Birmingham (or, 'Brummie') dialect is used by most characters, and it therefore reflects a certain lifestyle; namely that of gloominess, violence, threat and illegality. It can be concluded that the producers of this series have used the city of Birmingham and its pre-existing social connotations in order to establish the characters' backgrounds and identities. Beal stated, "specific linguistic variants are associated in the minds of speakers and hearers with particular social characteristics" (2011: 66); we can see this in that the producers of *Peaky Blinders* have used the Birmingham accent to build on the audience's preconception of the North of England as a grim, gloomy and industrialised working class environment, as opposed to the more sophisticated and privileged South.

Stereotypical elements similar to the ones that Lippi-Green has found in her research into Disney films – for example the finding that villains often tend to speak with a marginalised or foreign accent – can also be seen in *Peaky Blinders*. In the fourth season, a villain and nemesis of the Shelby family is introduced; he goes by the name of Luca Changretta, and speaks with a heavy Italian accent. What I would like to know is how the realisation of a particular dialect may lead to stereotyping in film (or in this case, a series). Why do actors sometimes exaggerate or downplay specific language features, and why does this inevitably seem to lead to stereotyping or appropriation? Labov argues that "under extreme stigmatization, a form may become the

overt object of social comment, and may eventually disappear. It is thus a stereotype, which may become increasingly divorced from the forms which are actually used in speech" (1972: 180). I am going to examine this phenomenon in relation to the Birmingham accent, for which I will use the dialogue spoken in the series *Peaky Blinders*.

All in all, I am going to examine the Birmingham dialect in order to find out how linguistic stereotyping may be a consequence of dialect use in film. I will focus on pronunciation only, and will therefore not consider grammar and vocabulary features in my analysis. I will present a comparison of the realisation of Birmingham English by native speakers and several actors in the series *Peaky Blinders*. Since actors are taught how to speak in this accent, I am going to focus on prototypical accent features, i.e. features that describe a sound change, and are easily 'teachable'. Bell and Gibson have conducted a similar study: they also compared the language of native speakers with actors, and they found four sociophonetic processes in the language of performance:

> **Selectivity** utilises some features of the variety while omitting others (perhaps on the grounds of difficulty, salience, or lack of salience);
> **Mis-realisation** of features, perhaps intentionally, or drawing on stereotypes, or through incapability;
> **Overshoot** of the characteristics or frequency of features of the targeted variety. Qualitatively, a feature may be given an exaggerated phonetic position, while quantitatively a feature which is variable may be produced categorically;
> **Undershoot** of the characteristics or frequency of features of the target variety. A feature may not achieve its targeted pronunciation, or a feature which is categorical may be produced variably. (2011: 568)

I am going to see whether I can find these sociophonetic processes in the Birmingham accent spoken in *Peaky Blinders*, and whether any detectable patterns point towards a correlation with linguistic stereotyping.

1.3 Research Questions

First, I will compare several sources that describe features of the Birmingham accent, in order to find out which accent features are representative of the Birmingham accent. The following research question will therefore be answered in the next chapter:

1. What are the most prototypical features of the Birmingham accent according to several sources?

Then, I am going to analyse the speech of two native speakers of the Birmingham accent, and see how frequently and consistently they pronounce the prototypical accent features established in chapter 2. I will also examine whether there are any accent features that the native speakers do pronounce, but the literature does not describe, and vice versa. Chapter 3 will therefore revolve around research question 2:

2. What are the most prototypical features of the Birmingham accent according to native speakers?

In chapter 4, I will focus on several actors in the series *Peaky Blinders*, and examine which prototypical accent features they apply, and how frequent and consistent they are in doing so. The next research question will be answered in chapter 4:

3. How frequently and consistently do actors in *Peaky Blinders* apply prototypical features of the Birmingham accent?

Finally, in chapter 5 I will be able to compare the pronunciation of the native speakers to the pronunciation of the actors. I will categorise the most remarkable findings according to the four sociophonetic processes detected by Bell and Gibson: **selectivity**, **mis-realisation**, **overshoot** and **undershoot**, and I will examine whether any detectable patterns can offer explanations for how linguistic stereotyping is brought about by dialect use in film. Chapter 5 will therefore focus on research question 4:

4. Can any detectable patterns in pronunciation differences between native speakers and actors explain how dialect use in film may lead to linguistic stereotyping?

Chapter 2: The Literature

This chapter will focus on research question 1:

1. What are the most prototypical features of the Birmingham accent according to several sources?

2.1 Methodology

For this chapter, I have compared three sources, all of which contain their own descriptions of Birmingham's accent features. These descriptions all slightly differ; for example, where one source may claim that /n/ may potentially be realised as [d] resulting in <chimdy> for chimney (Clark 2004: 155), another source may never mention this finding. However, I specifically focussed on the accent features that all three of these sources agree on. These features can then be seen as being prototypical for the Birmingham accent, since there is, apparently, a general consensus about their occurrence. This chapter therefore contains a description of prototypical accent features according to the literature, which we can then use in order to analyse the speech of native Birmingham speakers in our next chapter. I will use the Received Pronunciation (RP) accent to compare the Birmingham accent to, as the writes of the sources that I will be referring to have done the same.

2.2 Material

I have chosen the following sources for my comparison:

- Wells, J. C. (1982). The north. *Accents of English 2: The British Isles* (pp. 349 – 76). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clark, U. (2004) The English West Midlands: phonology. Schneider, E. W., Kortmann, B., Burridge, K., Mesthrie, R., & Upton, C. (2004). *A Handbook of Varieties of English. a Multimedia Reference Tool: Phonology* (pp. 134 – 162). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Clark, U., Asprey, E. (2013). *West Midlands English: Birmingham and the Black Country*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

The first source gives an overview of accent features used in 'the north'. Although Birmingham is technically not situated in the north of Britain, but rather in the Midlands, Wells still refers to Birmingham as being part of the north:

> 'Northern' […] might more precisely be glossed 'midlands or northern'. […] This means that the linguistic north comprises not only that part of England which is ordinarily called the north (i.e. from the Scottish border south as far as a line from the Mersey to the Humber), but also most of the midlands. It includes, for example, the Birmingham-Wolverhampton conurbation, Leicester, and Peterborough. (1982: 349)

This suggests that a general overview of accent features of 'the north' will be relevant when describing features of Birmingham. The data used for the chapter in this work consists of surveys based on substantial fieldwork and Wells' own findings and impressions. The second source gives an overview of accent features in the West-Midlands, which includes Wolverhampton, Birmingham, West Bromwich and Coventry (Clark 2004: 134). The descriptions in this source are based on acquired data for the Black Country Data Project (BCDP), as well as references to other data acquired by Wells in 1982, Lass in 1987, Hughes and Trudgill in 1996, Todd and Ellis in 1992, and Chinn and Thorne in 1991 (Clark 2004: 136). The last source refers to accent features of Birmingham specifically, and this source draws upon data collected as part of four different projects. It refers to other literary sources with their own data collections as well.

2.3 Criteria

The reason for choosing these particular sources for my comparison is that they all focus on a different area applicable to Birmingham: namely the north, the West-Midlands and the Birmingham / Black Country area. A comparison of these features will therefore give us a general, and at the same time reliable, overview of prototypical accent features that belong to the Birmingham accent.

2.4 Findings

Wells, Clark, and Clark and Asprey all agree on the occurrence of the following accent features in Birmingham English:

Table 2.1

Overview of Birmingham's prototypical accent features

RP			Bm		
[ŋ]	*sibli**ng***	[sɪblɪŋ]	[ŋg]	*sibli**ng***	[sɪblɪŋg]
	*Birmi**ng**ham*	[bɜːmɪŋəm]		*Birmi**ng**ham*	[bɜːmɪŋgəm]
[ɹ]	*p**r**ide*	[pɹaɪd]	[ɾ]	*p**r**ide*	[praɪd]
	*ho**rr**or*	[hɒɹə]		*ho**rr**or*	[hɒɾə]
	***r**ope*	[ɹəʊp]		***r**ope*	[ɾəʊp]
[h]	***h**orse*	[hɔːs]	[ø]	***h**orse*	[ʔɔːs]
[l]	***l**ove*	[lʌv]	[ɬ]	***l**ove*	[ɬʌv]
	*ba**ll**oon*	[bəluːn]		*ba**ll**oon*	[bəɬuːn]
[ɪ]	*k**i**t*	[kɪt]	[i]	*k**i**t*	[kit]
[ɑː]	***a**sk*	[ɑːsk]	[a]	***a**sk*	[ask]
[ʊ]	***foo**t*	[fʊt]	[ɤ]	***foo**t*	[fɤt]
[ʌ]	*r**u**n*	[ɹʌn]	[ʊ]	*r**u**n*	[ɹʊn]
[ɛə]	*f**ai**r*	[fɛə]	[ɜː]	*f**ai**r*	[fɜː]
[iː]	*sn**eez**e*	[sniːz]	[ɛɪ]	*sn**eez**e*	[snɛɪz]
[aɪ]	*b**i**ke*	[baɪk]	[ɔɪ]	*b**i**ke*	[bɔɪk]
[əʊ]	*s**oa**k*	[səʊk]	[aʊ]	*s**oa**k*	[saʊk]

RP [ŋ] → Bm [ŋg][1]

A phenomenon that may occur in Birmingham English is that words ending in a velar nasal (for example RP *sing* [sɪŋ]) may end in the velar plosive /g/ (which turns the pronunciation into [sɪŋg]). This may happen before suffixes as well, turning the RP *singing* [sɪŋɪŋ] into Bm [sɪŋgɪŋg][2].

(Wells 1982: 365; Clark 2004: 155; Clark and Asprey 2013: 60)

RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ]

The alveolar tap [ɾ] as opposed to RP's post-alveolar approximant [ɹ] also regularly occurs in the Birmingham accent. Although Wells, Clark, and Clark and Asprey are all not able to explain its phonological distribution (Wells states that it occurs especially intervocalically and in onsets, but Clark claims the syllabicity of a word is of more importance), the three sources do explicitly mention that alveolar tap [ɾ] makes a regular appearance in Birmingham speech.

[1] Explanatory note: 'RP' = Received Pronunciation; '→' = may be pronounced as; 'Bm' = Birmingham

(Wells 1982: 368; Clark 2004: 159; Clark and Asprey 2013: 67)

RP [h] → Bm [ø]

Another feature of Birmingham speech is h-dropping: /h/ in word-initial position is likely to be deleted. *House* would therefore be pronounced as [ʔaʊs], and *hundred* as [ʔʊndɹəd].
(Wells 1982: 371; Clark 2004: 157; Clark and Asprey 2013: 63)

RP [l] → Bm [ɬ]

In Birmingham English, the realisation of /l/ may be heavily velarized in all positions within the syllable. Where Clark and Asprey argue it is a dark /l/, Wells claims that the realisation of /l/ in the northern accent is not necessarily dark, but that northern speech rather does not distinguish between clear and dark /l/, which results in "a middle kind of /l/", which "gives the impression of being dark".
(Wells 1982: 370; Clark 2004: 160; Clark and Asprey 2013: 68)

RP [ɪ] → Bm [i]

The three sources all suggest that in the Birmingham accent, RP [ɪ] may be realised as Bm [i]. Some sources that Clark refers to have found different realisations of Bm [ɪ] among stressed and unstressed syllables, but other data-acquiring projects suggest that there are no specific conditions in which this accent feature occurs.
(Wells 1982: 362; Clark 2004: 142; Clark and Asprey 2013: 34)

RP [ɑː] → Bm [a]

A northern accent such as Birmingham English generally lacks an [ɑː] / [a] distinction. Especially the length of the vowel is of importance here: the RP BATH-vowel [ɑː] is in Birmingham speech shortened to the TRAP vowel, which tends to range from [æ] to [a].
(Wells 1982: 353; Clark 2004: 145; Clark and Asprey 2013: 36)

RP [ʊ] → Bm [ɤ]

In RP, the FOOT and STRUT vowels are contrasting phonemes /ʊ/ and /ʌ/, but this split does not occur across the broad accents of the north of England, which makes *put* and *putt* homophones (Asprey, 41). The West Midlands seem to merge these phonemes: various studies have found the neutralising FUDGE-vowel [ɤ] for RP [ʊ].
(Wells 1982: 351; Clark 2004: 144; Clark and Asprey 2013: 40)

RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ]

The RP STRUT vowel [ʌ] is said to merch with the RP FOOT vowel [ʊ] in Birmingham English – whereas Wells claims the Birmingham realisation of STRUT is [ɒ], Clark and Clark and Asprey suggest [ʊ], but still recognise Wells' claim as accurate: an [ɒ]-type realisation is especially salient before nasals, such as in RP *mum*: Bm [mɒm].

(Wells 1982: 362; Clark 2004: 144; Clark and Asprey 2013: 40)

RP [ɛə] → Bm [ɜː]

All three sources acknowledge that RP [ɛə] is realised as Bm [ɜː] in Northern accents. This makes *pair* homophonous with *purr*, *staring* with *stirring* and *fairy* with *furry*.

(Wells 1982: 361; Clark 2004: 146; Clark and Asprey 2013: 44)

RP [iː] → Bm [ɛɪ]

According to all three sources, an accent feature of the Birmingham area is that RP [iː] may be pronounced as Bm [ɛɪ], as shown by Asprey with the respelling of the RP phrase *New Street Station* to Bm *Noo Strate StayShun*. She claims that in the Black Country, the Great Vowel Shift failed to complete, meaning that "words with the deigraph <ea> in spelling do not have a FLEECE-type vowel but a FACE-type vowel" (45). Clark supports this, as she has found that "Bm speakers' realisation of FLEECE is typically closer to an 'ay' sound".

(Wells 1982: 357; Clark 2004: 147; Clark and Asprey 2013: 44)

RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ]

Birmingham is said to merge the two diphthongs [aɪ] and [ɔɪ], making words such as *line* and *loin* homophones.

(Wells 1982: 358; Clark 2004: 151; Clark and Asprey 2013, 49)

RP [əʊ] → [aʊ]

The diphthong used for RP [əʊ] in the Birmingham accent is suggested to start open, front and unrounded, resulting in [naʊz] for *nose*, where RP would pronounce it as [nəʊz].

(Wells 1982: 358; Clark 2004: 150; Clark and Asprey 2013: 51)

Chapter 3: The Native Speakers

This chapter will focus on research question 2:

2. What are the most prototypical features of the Birmingham accent according to native speakers?

3.1 Methodology

In this chapter, I am going to use the list of prototypical accent features from the previous chapter in order to see whether the accent features according to the literature are applicable to native speakers. Per feature, I am going to check whether it occurs in real speech, and give an indication of how frequently it does so. Examples will be given of phrases or sentences in which the feature occurs, and after examining every prototypical feature, the findings will be presented in a table.

I have picked two speech fragments of approximately 6 minutes in which two people from Birmingham were interviewed. I first transcribed the fragments[3], and then listened to the fragments again while reading the transcriptions; in this way, I knew when to expect a certain accent feature, and I could easily detect whether it occurred. I did not count every occurrence of a specific accent feature, as some words or phrases were unintelligible; instead, I gave an indication of how many times a specific accent feature approximately occurred in the interview, by using one of the terms on the following scale:

Always: this means that a specific accent feature is applied (almost) every single time;
Regularly: this means that a specific accent feature is often applied;
Sometimes: this means that a specific accent feature is sometimes applied;
Never: this means that a specific accent feature is never applied.

When analysing these speech fragments, I assumed that the 6 minutes of both fragments reflected a larger pattern; i.e. if a specific accent feature **never** occurred in the 6 minute long fragment, I assumed that that accent feature would also **never** occur in their speech in general.

[3] Please refer to appendix A and B to find the webpage links and transcriptions of the interviews.

3.2 Data

The speech fragments are taken from a database Internet webpage from the British Library, which contains over 90,000 recordings of music, spoken word or human and natural environments. There is a separate webpage called *Accents and Dialects*, which contains recordings of different accents and dialects from all over the United Kingdom. When searching for the keyword 'Birmingham', the webpage gave 101 search results – on the second page, I found two similar recordings that would be appropriate to use for this research.

3.3 Speakers and Citeria

The two recordings chosen for this research were very similar because:

- Both recordings are interviews;
- These interviews were both recorded in the year 1999;
- Both interviews are approximately 6 minutes long.

The first recording is a 5:38 minute long interview with a woman called Sue, born in 1949, who recounts her youth as she grew up in Small Heath, Birmingham. The second recording is a 6:35 minute long interview with a man called Aubrey, born in 1932, who also talks about his youth, growing up in Erdington, Perry Common and Hall Green, which are also all areas in Birmingham. These two people were appropriate for this research, because they are both born and raised in Birmingham, they are both ordinary Birmingham citizens (in that they grew up in the outskirts and did not receive particular high education), and their accent can immediately be recognised as Birmingham English.

3.4 Findings

RP [ŋ] → Bm [ŋg]

When searching for this accent feature in Sue's speech, I found that Sue often tended to not velarize her pronunciation of [ŋ] at all; she would instead pronounce [ŋ] as [n], as can be seen in the following instances:

S 2:39[4] "It was sixpence of a Saturday ['mɔːnɪ**n**] I can remember that."

morning: RP ['mɔːnɪŋ]

[4] Sue's speech fragments will be marked with 'S', and Aubrey's with 'A'; the number that follows reflects the time stamp of the recording.

S 2:44 "I can remember my parents ['tʰaɪkɪ**n̪**] us to…"

taking: RP ['tʰɛɪkɪ**n̪**]

In Sue's speech, there are therefore very few instances of the RP [ŋ] → Bm [ŋg] accent feature. It occurred only once, in the following utterance:

S 3:07 "It wasn't like ehm… when they were [jɔ**n̪g**]. My parents were [jɔ**n̪g**]."

young: RP [jɔ**ŋ**]

In Aubrey's speech, the realisation of [ŋ] as [n] also occurs more often than the RP [ŋ] → Bm [ŋg] feature:

A 0:00 "How did I get interested in ['dɹʊmɪ**n̪**]?"

drumming: RP ['dɹʌmɪ**n̪**]

A 3:29 "That is really… ['smæʃi**n̪**]."

smashing: RP ['smæʃɪ**n̪**]

Only in the realisation of *Birmingham*, Aubrey seems to apply this feature:

A 0:42 "… when all the parties in ['bɜːmɪ**n̪g**əm] took place…"

Birmingham: RP ['bɜːmɪ**n̪**əm]

Both Sue and Aubrey therefore only **sometimes** apply the RP [ŋ] → Bm [ŋg] feature in their speech.

RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ]

Sue portrays some use of the alveolar tap [ɾ] instead of vowel lengthening or the approximant [ɹ], but quite randomly so. She sometimes uses the alveolar tap, and other times the approximant:

S 2:20 "['fɔː**ɾ**əˌfɔɪv] times a week."

four or five: RP ['fɔː**ɹ̠**əˌfaɪv]

S 1:54 "The [ˌkɒ**ɹ̠**ə'nɛʔts]."

The Coronets: RP [ˌkɒ**ɹ̠**ə'nɛʔts]

Aubrey, however, seems to apply [ɾ] quite regularly and mainly uses it intervocalically:

A 0:31 "…and [məs'tɪə**ɾ**ɪjəsɬi] food […] just... sort of [mə'tʰɪə**ɾ**ɪəɬaɪzd]…
mysteriously; materialised: RP [məs'tɪə**ɹ**ɪjəsli]; [mə'tʰɪə**ɹ**ɪələaɪzd]

There are also instances of [ɾ] appearing after a plosive:

A 3:47 "So I went up, and joined the [ˌbɔɪzb**ɾ**ɪ'gaɪd] .
Boys' Brigade: RP [ˌbɔɪzb**ɹ**ɪ'gɛɪd]

Word initially, there is some tendency towards an alveolar tap, but it is not completely realised, as can be heard here:

A 3:58 "… and [**ɹ**ʊn] home terrified…"
run: RP [**ɹ**ʌn]

In short, Sue can be classified as **sometimes** applying the RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ] feature. Aubrey, on the other hand, **regularly** applies this feature.

RP [h] → Bm [ø]

Quite remarkably so, I have found no instances of h-dropping in Sue's speech; she pronounces the initial [h] in words such as *houses*:

S 1:06 "There were quite a few picture ['**h**aʊsɪz] in the area we lived in."
houses: RP ['**h**aʊsɪz]

Aubrey, however, sometimes drops initial [h] in his speech. He pronounces *hall* in *Hall Green* with initial [h], but when pronouncing *hairs* and *half*, the [h] is dropped:

A 4:19 "…way out in [**h**ɔːɬ] Green…"
Hall: RP [**h**ɔːɬ]

A 2:53 "And that made the [ʔɛːz] on the back of my neck stand up."
hairs: RP [**h**ɛːz]

A 5:31 "And you had to drag this coal for about [ʔɑːf] a mile…"

half: RP [**h**ɑːf]

Sue therefore **never** applies the RP [h] → Bm [ø] feature, whereas Aubrey **sometimes** does so.

RP [l] → Bm [ɬ]

Sue sometimes velarizes her realisation of [l], but there seems to be no clear reasons for when she does so. As can be seen in the following example, she uses [l] in *Sunday lunch*, but [ɬ] in *regularly*:

S 4:16 "We used to go for [ˌsɒndə'**l̪**ɒnʃ] quite ['ɹɛgju**ɬ̪**ə**ɬ̪**ɛɪ]."
Sunday lunch; regularly: RP [ˌsʌndə'**l̪**ʌnʃ]; ['ɹɛgju**l̪**ə**l̪**i]

Aubrey more regularly velarizes his /l/s, and this mostly happens intervocalically:

A 4:06 "Well it seemed [**l̪**aɪk] years, it wasn't ['ɹɪə**ɬ̪**ɛɪ]…"
like; really: RP [**l̪**aɪk]; ['ɹɪə**l̪**i]

Sue therefore **sometimes** applies this feature, whereas Aubrey does so **regularly**.

RP [ɪ] → Bm [i]

Sue and Aubrey both very regularly use [i] for RP [ɪ]. This happens when the syllable in which [ɪ] appears is stressed:

S 1:06 "There were quite a few ['p**i̪**ʔktʃəˌhaʊsɪz] in the area [wi'l**i̪**vˌd**i̪**n]"
picture houses; we lived in: RP ['pɪʔktʃəˌhaʊsɪz]; [wi'l̪ɪvˌdɪ̪n]

A 3:33 "That was ['**i̪**t]. And I was sold from [ˌðɛnɑ'n**i̪**n]."
it; then on in: RP [ɪ̪t]; [ˌðɛnɑ'nɪ̪n]

They therefore both apply this feature **regularly**.

RP [ɑː] → Bm [a]

Sue and Aubrey both always and consistently shorten their [ɑː] to [a]:

S 0:27 "We used to spend [ˌsɒndiʲ**a**ftə'nuːnz] there."
Sunday afternoons: RP [ˌsʌndɛɪj**ɑ̪ː**ftə'nuːnz]

A 0:17 "So, where did the fire come from, [juˈw**a**sk]…"

you ask: RP [juˈw**ɑː**sk]

They can therefore both be classified as **always** applying the RP [ɑː] → Bm [a] feature.

RP [ʊ] → Bm [ɤ]

Remarkably, neither Sue nor Aubrey change their [ʊ] into [ɤ]; [ʊ] is always very much present, as can be seen in the following examples:

S 3:11 "I think it was just [w**ʊ**dn] benches then."

wooden: RP [w**ʊ**dn]

A 3:27 "That's [g**ʊ**d] that is."

good: RP [g**ʊ**d]

They therefore both **never** apply the RP [ʊ] → Bm [ɤ] feature.

RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ]

This feature is very regularly applied in both Sue's and Aubrey's speech. However, rather than changing [ʌ] into [ʊ], Sue uses [ɒ] instead:

S 4:16 "We used to go for [ˌs**ɒ**ndəˈl**ɒ**nʃ] quite regularly."

Sunday lunch: RP [ˌs**ʌ**ndəˈl**ʌ**nʃ]

Aubrey uses both [ʊ] and [ɒ]; the distribution of these vowels seems to be random.

A 0:00 "How did I get interested in [ˈdɹ**ʊ**mɪn]?"

drumming: RP [ˈdɹ**ʌ**mɪŋ]

A 3:47 "So I went [**ɒ**p] and joined the Boys' Brigade."

up: RP [**ʌ**p]

Since no instance was found of the use of [ʌ] in both interviews, Sue and Aubrey can both be classified as **always** applying this accent feature.

RP [ɛə] → Bm [ɜː]

Neither Sue's nor Aubrey's speech show instances of this feature. The following examples show that they retain their [ɛə] vowel rather than changing it:

S 1:08 "There were quite a few picture houses in the [ˈ**ɛə**ɹɪə] we lived in."

area: RP [ˈ**ɛə**ɹɪə]

A 4:03 "And I had these old [ˈp**ɛə**rə] drumsticks for years."

pair of: RP [ˈp**ɛə**ɹə]

They therefore both **never** apply this feature.

RP [iː] → Bm [ɛɪ]

This feature occurs very often in Sue's speech. However, Aubrey's use is less frequent: sometimes he retains [iː], but most times he realises it as [ɛɪ].

S 1:56 "And… [ðiʲˈaɪb**ɛɪ**ˌs**ɛɪ**]"

the ABC: RP [ðiʲˈɛɪbi̯ːˌsi̯ː]

S 1:50 "All on Coventry Road in Small [h**ɛɪ**θ] these were."

Heath: RP [hi̯ːθ]

A 3:18 "…I watched this bloke as he assembled his drumkit, you [s**ɛɪ**]."

see: RP [si̯ː]

A 0:07 "… just about every [stɹ**i̯ː**t] in Birmingham had a party."

street: RP [stɹi̯ːt]

Sue can be classified as **always** applying this feature, whereas Aubrey can be classified as **regularly** doing so.

RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ]

Both Sue and Aubrey always use [ɔɪ] instead of [aɪ]:

S 0:08 "You could go out on your own, as a [tʃ**ɔɪ**ld]…"

child: RP [tʃ**aɪ**ld]

S 2:28 "Funnily enough I think we did have enough money, [ˌæʔðəˈtʰ**ɔɪ**m]…"

at the time: RP [ˌæʔðəˈtʰ**aɪ**m]

A 3:41 "First of all I joined the scouts. [fəɾəˈn**ɔɪ**t].

For a night: RP [fəɹəˈn**aɪ**t]

A 6:09 "And that was my first drum, it was a [ˈtʰ**ɔɪ**ni] little thing."

tiny: RP [ˈtʰ**aɪ**ni]

Sue and Aubrey therefore **always** apply this accent feature.

RP [əʊ] → Bm [aʊ]

Sue and Aubrey both only sometimes apply this accent feature – although only in stressed syllables – as can be seen in the following examples:

S 3:38 "I used to [ˌlɔɪʔˈg**aʊ**ʷɪndɛə]…"

like going there: RP [ˌlaɪʔˈg**əʊ**ʷɪnðɛə]

S 0:08 "You could go out on your [**əʊ**n]…"

own: RP [**əʊ**n]

A 0:45 "We had a big fire in the middle of the [ɹ**aʊ**d]."

road: RP [ɹ**əʊ**d]

A 3:18 "I watched this [bl**əʊ**k] as he assembled his drumkit, you see…"

bloke: RP [bl**əʊ**k]

They therefore **sometimes** apply the RP [əʊ] → Bm [aʊ] feature in their speech.

Other features

When listening to Sue and Aubrey's speech fragments, I discovered that Sue and Aubrey both use an accent feature that was not initially mentioned in the list of prototypical features according to the literature: namely, they both pronounce RP [ɛɪ] as Bm [aɪ]. This happened every time RP [ɛɪ] occurred, as can be seen in the examples below:

S 0:38 "There's so many ['d**aɪ**ndʒəz] about…"

dangers: RP ['d**ɛɪ**ndʒəz]

S 1:53 "There was [ðə'gɹ**aɪ**nʒˌsɪnəmə]."

The Grange Cinema: RP [ðə'gɹ**ɛɪ**nʒˌsɪnəmə]

S 1:14 "Well, there was a picture house ['f**aɪ**sɪn] the road that we lived in…"

facing: RP ['f**ɛɪ**sɪŋ]

A 3:47 "So I went up and joined the [ˌbɔɪzbrɪ'g**aɪ**d].

Boys' Brigade: RP [ˌbɔɪzbɹɪ'g**ɛɪ**d]

A 0:41 "…when all the parties in Birmingham took [pl**aɪ**s]…"

place: RP [pl**ɛɪ**s]

A 0:52 "…pinching people's [g**aɪ**ts] and.. sort of.. sheds got vandalised, you know."

gates: RP [g**ɛɪ**ts]

Sue and Aubrey therefore can both be classified as **always** applying the feature RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ].

3.5 Summary

The findings are presented in the table below. The scale of frequency is presented as follows:

Always: ++
Regularly: +
Sometimes: -
Never: --

The consistency of their use is also presented: in the table, **c** means their use is *consistent* (meaning that they only apply it in particular phonetic distributions, e.g. only in intervocalic positions), whereas **r** means their use is *random* (meaning that no pattern of phonetic distribution could be detected).

Table 3.1

Prototypical features of Birmingham English applied to Sue and Aubrey's speech

Accent feature	Sue		Aubrey		comments
	Frequency	Consistency	Frequency	Consistency	
RP [ŋ] → Bm [ŋg]	-	r	-	r	Both speakers use [n] for [ŋ] in word final positions.
RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ]	-	r	+	c	
RP [h] → Bm [ø]	--	n.a.	-	r	
RP [l] → Bm [ɬ]	-	r	+	c	
RP [ɪ] → Bm [i]	+	c	+	c	
RP [ɑː] → Bm [a]	++	c	++	c	
RP [ʊ] → Bm [ɤ]	--	n.a.	--	n.a.	
RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ]	++	c	++	r	Sue uses [ɒ] instead of [ʌ]; Aubrey's realisation of RP [ʌ] varies between [ʊ] to [ɒ].
RP [ɛə] → Bm [ɜː]	--	n.a.	--	n.a.	
RP [iː] → Bm [ɛɪ]	++	c	+	r	
RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ]	++	c	++	c	
RP [əʊ] → [aʊ]	-	c	-	c	
RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ]	++	c	++	c	This feature did not occur in the list of prototypical accent features.

The features that are marked ++ and c by both speakers (indicating an occurrence of **always** and **consistent**) can be considered as the accent features that are most prototypical according to the native speakers. As can be seen above, those features are:

RP [ɑː] → Bm [a];

RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ];

RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ].

A remarkable finding is that although the RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ] feature can correctly be considered as prototypical, its exact realisation may differ: we have detected that Sue always applies [ɒ] instead of [ʊ], and Aubrey's realisation varies between the two. What can also be detected is that two accent features are never applied by Sue and Aubrey, namely RP [ʊ] → Bm

[ɤ] and RP [ɛə] → Bm [ɜː]. Sue and Aubrey also seem to always and consistently apply the RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ] feature, whereas it was not initially considered as a prototypical feature.

Taking these findings into consideration, the list of prototypical accent features of Birmingham English should be revised, so that it can be an accurate representation of both the literature and real speech. Removing RP [ʊ] → Bm [ɤ] and RP [ɛə] → Bm [ɜː], adding RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ], and altering RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ] therefore gives the following list of prototypical accent features of Birmingham English:

Table 3.2

Prototypical accent features of Birmingham English according to the literature and native speakers

RP			Bm		
[ŋ]	*sibli**ng***	[sɪblɪŋ]	[ŋg]	*sibli**ng***	[sɪblɪŋg]
	*Birmi**ng**ham*	[bɜːmɪŋəm]		*Birmi**ng**ham*	[bɜːmɪŋgəm]
[ɹ]	*p**r**ide*	[pɹaɪd]	[ɾ]	*p**r**ide*	[pɾaɪd]
	*ho**rr**or*	[hɒɹə]		*ho**rr**or*	[hɒɾə]
	***r**ope*	[ɹəʊp]		***r**ope*	[ɾəʊp]
[h]	***h**orse*	[hɔːs]	[ø]	***h**orse*	[ɔːs]
[l]	***l**ove*	[lʌv]	[ɬ]	***l**ove*	[ɬʌv]
	*ba**ll**oon*	[bəluːn]		*ba**ll**oon*	[bəɬuːn]
[ɪ]	*k**i**t*	[kɪt]	[i]	*k**i**t*	[kit]
[ɑː]	***a**sk*	[ɑːsk]	[a]	***a**sk*	[ask]
[ʌ]	*r**u**n*	[ɹʌn]	[ʊ] / [ɒ]	*r**u**n*	[ɹʊn]
[iː]	*sn**ee**z**e***	[sniːz]	[ɛɪ]	*sn**ee**z**e***	[snɛɪz]
[aɪ]	*b**i**ke*	[baɪk]	[ɔɪ]	*b**i**ke*	[bɔɪk]
[əʊ]	*s**oa**k*	[səʊk]	[aʊ]	*s**oa**k*	[saʊk]
[ɛɪ]	*f**a**ce*	[fɛɪs]	[aɪ]	*f**a**ce*	[faɪs]

Chapter 4: The Actors

This chapter will focus on research question 3:

3. How frequently and consistently do actors in *Peaky Blinders* apply prototypical features of the Birmingham accent?

4.1 Methodology

In this chapter, I am going to analyse the pronunciation of several actors from the series *Peaky Blinders*. The aim of this study is to find patterns in consistency and frequency when comparing the actors' speech to the native speakers' speech; therefore, I have only chosen to analyse four prototypical accent features, as this would provide a sufficient amount of information in order to accomplish this. Per accent feature, I will perform intra- and interspeaker analyses. Using this approach may present remarkable patterns, as intraspeaker analyses show variation within the pronunciation of one speaker, whereas interspeaker analyses show variation among various speakers. I have chosen to perform my analyses on the following four prototypical accent features:

RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ], because this accent feature contains a salient sound change; RP [ɹ] is produced with the back of the tongue slightly raised, whereas Bm [ɾ] involves the tapping of the tip of the tongue to the roof of the mouth. This means that whenever an actor chooses to produce [ɾ], it can be easily detected.

RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ] / [ɒ], because the difference between the two Bm realisations of RP [ʌ] is also quite salient: when an actor pronounces the central RP [ʌ], they can either choose to realise this as the higher variant [ʊ], or the lower variant [ɒ]. This difference should therefore also be easily detectable.

RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] and **RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ]** because we have seen in the analysis of the previous chapter that these are one of the most prototypical accent features according to Sue and Aubrey: the occurrence of these features in their speech was marked as **always** and **consistent**. We may find in our analyses that some actors do *not* always and consistently apply these features; examining these two accent features in the speech of actors may therefore present relevant patterns.

I watched the first season of *Peaky Blinders*, and paid particular attention to the pronunciation of these features. Whenever I heard a particularly remarkable realisation of one of these accent features, I recorded the piece of dialogue in which it occurred and uploaded the fragment to my computer. The sentences and phrases from these dialogues will be used in the intra- and interspeaker analyses of this chapter. I will use the same scale as was used in the last chapter when analysing the speech of Sue and Aubrey in order to give an indication of frequency:

Always: this means that a specific accent feature is applied (almost) every single time;
Regularly: this means that a specific accent feature is often applied;
Sometimes: this means that a specific accent feature is sometimes applied;
Never: this means that a specific accent feature is never applied.

I will also indicate whether the use of an accent feature is *consistent* (c) (meaning that it is only applied in particular phonetic distributions, e.g. in intervocalic positions), or *random* (r) (meaning that no pattern of phonetic distribution could be detected).

In the intra- and interspeaker analyses, I assumed that the realisations of certain accent features reflected a larger pattern. This means that when I found that an actor **sometimes** applied a specific accent feature in one specific dialogue, I assumed that this actor would also **sometimes** apply this accent feature in general. At the end of this chapter, I will present a table that is similar to the one presented in the previous chapter, so that Sue and Aubrey's pronunciation can easily be juxtaposed to the actors' pronunciation in the next chapter.

4.2 Data

I only listened to the dialogues of the first season of *Peaky Blinders*, which contains six episodes of each approximately one hour. I did not consider every single dialogue as part of my data – I only recorded fragments of dialogues in which there was remarkable use of a specific accent feature: either it was pronounced, or it was not pronounced, or it was pronounced particularly strikingly (e.g. there was a tendency to pronounce it, but not a full realisation).

4.3 Speakers and Criteria

The speakers I have examined are:

Tommy Shelby, played by Cillian Murphy, from Douglas, Ireland
Arthur Shelby, played by Paul Anderson, from London, England

Polly Gray, played by Helen McCrory, from London, England
Ada Shelby, played by Sophie Rundle, from Newcastle upon Tyne, England
John Shelby, played by Joe Cole, from Kingston upon Thames, England
Sergeant Moss, played by Tony Pitts, from Sheffield, England

I have used these characters because they all speak with a Birmingham accent, and they all have plenty of lines, so there was enough data to consider. The *actor*'s use of the Birmingham accent is analysed in this chapter; however, I will refer to the name of the character rather than the name of the actor for clarity purposes.

4.4 Findings

RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ]

Intra speaker analysis

The alveolar tapped variation of /r/ is regularly used in the series *Peaky Blinders*, but the rules of its distribution are not so easy to discover. Polly Gray, aunt of the Shelby siblings, is one of the characters that regularly uses the alveolar tapped [ɾ]:

Polly[5]: "The Guns, The Chain, The Marquis. All the ones that pay you to protect them. The only one they didn't touch was the ['gæ**ɾ**ɪsən]."
Garrison: RP ['gæɹɪsən]

In the words *Marquis* and *protect* she does not apply the alveolar tap: *Marquis* is a word with in which the /r/ extends the vowel, and inserting an alveolar tap in such a syllable, which is also stressed, does not happen in the Birmingham accent. An explanation for why she uses the approximant in the word *protect* instead of the alveolar tap is either because it is not stressed in this utterance, or because it follows a plosive. In the next fragment it can be seen that Polly uses the alveolar tap whenever it occurs intervocalically, and this time she also uses it when it follows a plosive in the word *spring*, which is stressed in this utterance:

Polly: "Does this poor girl know you're gonna ['mæ**ɾ**iˌhɜː**ɾ**ə] you just gonna [sp**ɾ**ɪŋ] it on [hɛː'**ɾ**ɒl] of a sudden?"
marry her, or; spring; her all: RP ['mæɹiˌhɜːɹɔː]; [spɹɪŋ]; [hɛː'ɹɔːl]

[5] Each fragment mentioned in this chapter can be listened to; please refer to appendix C to find webpage links.

Although Polly seems consistent in using the alveolar tapped [ɾ] intervocalically, the next fragment suggests otherwise:

Polly: "['sɒ**ɾ**i]! I misunderstood [jə**ɹ**ɪn'tʰɛnʃən] when you pushed me against the wall."
sorry; *your intention*: RP ['sɒ**ɹ**i]; [jə**ɹ**ɪn'tʰɛnʃən]

Polly seems to apply the alveolar tap in the word *sorry*, but not in the intervocalic position of the /r/ in the utterance of *your intention*. In the next fragment she also does not apply the alveolar tap although it does occur intervocalically:

Polly: "Don't flatter yourself. [fə**ɹ**'ɛɪdə]."
For Ada: RP [fə**ɹ**'ɛɪdə]

Polly therefore does not seem to be very consistent in her distribution of the alveolar tap: in some utterances she applies it in every situation in which /r/ occurs intervocalically, but in other utterances she seems to use the approximant [ɹ] in intervocalic position. Her use of the RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ] feature can therefore be classified as **regularly** and **randomly**.

Inter speaker analysis

Although word boundaries are not necessarily relevant in phonetic analyses, it seems to be of particular relevance here when studying the alveolar tapped [ɾ] in intervocalic positions. Where Polly mostly uses [ɾ] intervocalically within one word (*Garrison, sorry*), but disregards it where there is a word boundary (*your intention, for Ada*), her nephew John seems to do the opposite:

John: "If anyone calls her a [ˌhɔː**l**ə'gɛɪn], I will push the ['bɛ**ɹ**əl] of my revolver down their throats and blow the word back down into their hearts."
whore again; barrel: RP [ˌhɔː**ɹ**ə'gɛn]; ['bæ**ɹ**əl]

When listening closely to John's first realisation of /r/, it does not really resemble an alveolar tap, but it seems to be closer to a clear /l/. This means that there is some tendency to move the tip of the tongue towards the roof of the mouth, but it is not strong enough to resemble an alveolar tap.

Instances in which the alveolar tap is not applied is at the end of long vowels, which can be seen in John's realisation of *word* and *hearts*. The second instance of the word *their*, however, also has an /r/ after a long vowel, but is followed by another vowel, making it intervocalic. John therefore could have chosen to apply the alveolar tapped [ɾ] in the realisation of *their hearts*, resulting in [ðɛ'**ɾ**ɑːts].

An instance in which the pronunciation of /r/ is left out completely is when it appears at the end of unstressed syllables, such as in *flatter* and *revolver*. John seems to disregard this fact when he pronounces the word *mother* with an approximant [ɹ]:

John: "What the kids need, is a ['mɒðə**ɹ**]."
mother: RP ['mʌðə]

Arthur applies the alveolar tapped [ɾ] in any intervocalic context, as well as after fricatives. In the next fragment it can be heard that the tap even extends into a trill:

Arthur: "What's [**ɾ**ɒŋ] with you? What the fuck is [**ɾ**ɒŋ] with him lately?"
wrong: RP [ɹɒŋ]

Tommy also applies the alveolar tap after fricatives, which can be seen in the next fragment:

Tommy: "[p**ɾ**æps] it's a list of men who give false hope to the poor. The only ['dɪf**ɾ**əns] between you and me, ['f**ɾ**ɛdi], is that sometimes my horses stand a chance of winning."
perhaps; difference; Freddy: RP [pə'hæps]; ['dɪfɹəns]; ['fɹɛdi]

What should be remarked is that it is not a full alveolar tap that Tommy seems to use when pronouncing *difference* and *Freddy*, but a tendency towards one. It can be heard that the tip of his tongue moves slightly up, but it does not touch the roof of the mouth long enough to be an alveolar tap of the same strength as in the word *perhaps*.

In the next fragment, it can be seen that the approximant and alveolar tap variations of /r/ are carefully distributed: Tommy pronounces *rifles* with [ɹ], *glorious* with [ɾ] and revolution with [ɹ] again.

Tommy: "He sees machine guns, and [**ɹ**aɪfl̩s], and ammunition, and some ['glɔː**ɾ**ɪəs**ɹ**ɛvəˌluʃən].
rifles; *glorious revolution*: RP [ɹaɪfl̩s]; ['glɔːɹɪəsɹɛvəˌluʃən]

Tommy could have chosen to use [ɾ] in the pronunciation of *revolution* – his brother Arthur also chose to use the alveolar tap after the fricative /s/ in *what's wrong*. Sergeant Moss also uses the alveolar tap after a fricative when pronouncing *rifles* in the next utterance – the frequency of his use of [ɾ] can also be seen:

Moss: "The men that have [əˈ**ɾ**aɪvd] in [ˈgæ**ɾ**ɪsən] Lane [əˈ**ɾ**ɑːmd] with [**ɾ**aɪfl̩s]."
arrived, Garrison, are armed, rifles: RP [əˈ**ɹ**aɪvd]; [ˈgæ**ɹ**ɪsən]; [əˈ**ɹ**ɑːmd]; [**ɹ**aɪfl̩s]

RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ]

Intra speaker analysis

One of Tommy Shelby's most characterising accent features is that he almost always replaces RP [ʌ] with [ɒ]. In the following fragment, the vowel used for *dump* and *cut* is the same vowel used in *drops* and the first syllable of *fortune*.

Tommy: "Fortune drops something valuable into your lap, you don't just [d**ɒ**mp] it on the bank of the [k^{h}**ɒ**ʔt]."
dump; *cut*: RP [d**ʌ**mp]; [k^{h}**ʌ**ʔt]

In the next fragment, *your* and *pub* also seem to share the same vowel, although the vowel in *your* is longer:

Tommy: "[jɔːˈp^{h}**ɒ**b], you do what you want."
your pub: RP [jɔːˈp^{h}**ʌ**b]

In the next fragment, it can also be heard that Tommy very consistently replaces RP [ʌ] with [ɒ]:

Tommy: "We had some luck. [s**ɒ**mˈbl**ɒ**diˌl**ɒ**ʔk]. It fell off a wagon into our laps. And all you need to know is: it's [**ɒ**s] that has the machine [g**ɒ**nz] now, and it's them that's in the [m**ɒ**d]."
some bloody luck; us; guns; mud: RP [s**ʌ**mˈbl**ʌ**diˌl**ʌ**ʔk]; [**ʌ**s]; [g**ʌ**nz]; [m**ʌ**d]

Tommy can therefore be classified as **always** and **consistently** applying the RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ] feature, although it should be remarked that he uses [ɒ] instead of [ʊ].

Inter speaker analysis

When comparing Tommy's realisation of RP [ʌ] with his sister Ada's, a difference can be perceived:

Ada: "For [**ʊ**s]. For a [ˈh**ʊ**niˌmuːn] that goes on forever."
us; *honeymoon*: RP [**ʌ**s]; [ˈh**ʌ**niˌmuːn]

Ada seems to use [ʊ] for RP [ʌ]:

Ada: "John, wipe the [blʊ̲d] out of his eye."
blood: RP [blʌ̲d]

Arthur and John tend to use [ʊ] rather than [ɒ] as well:

Arthur: "Chinese have [ˈkʰʊ̲təz] of their own."
cutters: RP [ˈkʰʌ̲təz]

John: "You saw Michael before [ʊ̲s]."
us: RP [ʌ̲s]

However, when looking at Sergeant Moss' speech again, deciphering the vowel he uses for RP [ʌ] is more difficult. The vowel he uses for *lumps* is slightly more back than [ʊ], but not as open as [ɒ]:

Moss: "Most of my great [lɔ̲mps] of men served in France too, Sir."
lumps: RP [lʌ̲mps]

What may be most striking about this accent feature, is that all characters always seem to apply it – whether it result in [ʌ] or [ɒ].

RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] and RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ]

Intra speaker analysis

In the following speech fragment, it can be heard that Arthur Shelby uses [aɪ] for RP [ɛɪ]:

Arthur: "But [təˈdaɪ̲], we're gonna stop them."
today: RP [təˈdɛɪ̲]
John: "What about Kimber's men? Thought he had his own protection."
Arthur: "Kimber's let his troops go rotten. They're on the [taɪ̲k] from the Lees to look the other [waɪ̲]."
take; *way*: RP [tɛɪ̲k]; [wɛɪ̲]

When examining Arthur's use of the RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] feature, there are some peculiarities to be found. It seems that he sometimes applies this feature clearly, whereas in other cases he seems to pronounce RP [aɪ] as a mixture that can be perceived as either [aɪ] or [ɔɪ]. In the following fragment, Arthur pronounces RP [aɪ] in the word *like* as [ɔɪ], but the word *eyes* seems to be a mixture between the two:

Arthur: "Said we're ['p**aɪ**tɹiəts], [l**ɔɪ**k] him. Wants us to be his [**ɐɪ**z] and ears."
patriots; *like*; *eyes*: RP ['p**æ**tɹiəts]; [l**aɪ**k]; [**aɪ**z]

Another peculiarity is that Arthur uses RP [aɪ] in the pronunciation of the word *patriots.* He seems to apply the RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ] feature here, although there was not even an RP [ɛɪ] vowel to begin with in the original RP pronunciation /pætɹɪəts/. He simply changes [æ] into [aɪ], which is not one of the prototypical features of the Birmingham accent.

Arthur: "You think we can take on the [ˌtʃ**ɐɪ**'neɪz] and Billy Kimber."
Chinese: RP [ˌtʃ**aɪ**'niːz]

The same mixture between the [aɪ] and [ɔɪ] can be heard in the word *Chinese*; Arthur seems to realise this vowel as neither front nor back, but somewhere in the middle. The fact that he does this is still relevant: as this diphthong is not pronounced as RP [aɪ] but moves somewhat towards a more back pronunciation is relevant here, as it indicates that there is a tendency to use this accent feature. In short, Arthur's use of the RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] feature can be classified as **always,** but **random** – because he sometimes uses [ɐɪ] instead of [ɔɪ] – and his use of the RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ] can be classified as **always** and **consistent**.

Inter speaker analysis

When comparing Arthur's pronunciation of the [ɛɪ], [aɪ] and [ɔɪ] vowels to other characters in the series, differences in pronunciation and distribution can be seen. In the following fragment, Tommy Shelby utters the well-known *Peaky Blinders* line, but does not seem to use the RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] feature in the word *Blinders*:

Tommy: "By order of the Peaky ['bl**aɪ**ndəz]."
blinders: RP ['bl**aɪ**ndəz]

Arthur, however, seems to be fairly consistent in applying the RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] feature. He pronounces the word *I* with an [ɔɪ] vowel, so it could be expected that, as opposed to Tommy, he

would use the RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] feature as well in his utterance of the *Peaky Blinders* line. However, he does not – instead, the same, peculiar mixture between [aɪ] and [ɔɪ] occurs again:

Arthur: "Do you wanna tell him, or should [**ɔɪ**]? This place is under new management. By order of the Peaky ['bl**ɐɪ**ndəz]."
I; blinders: RP [**aɪ**]; ['bl**aɪ**ndəz]

Tommy does not seem to use the RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] feature as regularly as Arthur. In the following fragment, Tommy uses [aɪ] in the pronunciation of *right*, but in the fragment after that, it can be seen that Arthur uses [ɔɪ] in the pronunciation of *alright*.

Tommy: "That's [ɹ**aɪ**t]. They've shown their hand."
right: RP [ɹ**aɪ**t]

Tommy: "I promised Johnny I'd let him have a spin in the car if he lost."
Arthur: "[aˈɾ**ɔɪ**t]"
alright: RP [ɑːˈɹ**aɪ**t]

Going back to the RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ] feature, Tommy does not seem to use it as consistently as Arthur does, and his realisation of [aɪ] is a more subtle (i.e. central) version than Arthur's. In the next fragment, he applies the RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ] feature in the word *way*, but he does not apply it when saying *crate* and *BSA factory proofing bay*.

Tommy: "He looked at me the wrong [w**aɪ**]. It's not a good idea to look at Tommy Shelby the wrong [w**aɪ**]."
way: RP [w**ɛɪ**]

Tommy: "All in a [kɹ**ɛɪ**t], bound for Libya. Stolen from the [ˌbiːɛsˈ**ɛɪ**] factory proofing [b**ɛɪ**]."
crate; *BSA*; *bay*: RP [kɹ**ɛɪ**t]; [ˌbiːɛsˈ**ɛɪ**]; [b**ɛɪ**]

The younger brother, John Shelby, does apply the RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ] feature quite consistently:

John: "The police have just ['ɹ**aɪ**dəd] a rally at the factory. They think you have Freddie Thorne's back."
raided: RP ['ɹ**ɛɪ**dəd]

Up until now, it looks like RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ] feature is used fairly consistently, but the RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] feature is not used as often. However, Sergeant Moss seems to show the opposite. In the following fragments he does apply the RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] feature, but does not apply the RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ] feature:

Moss: "We can only act when a [kɾ**ɔɪ**m]'s been committed."
crime: RP [kɹ**aɪ**m]

Moss: "Most of my [gɾ**ɛɪ**t] lumps of men served in France too, Sir."
great: RP [gɹ**ɛɪ**t]

4.5 Summary

The findings are presented in the two tables below; table 4.1 represents the intra speaker analyses, and table 4.2 represents the inter speaker analyses. The scale of frequency is presented as follows:

Always: ++
Regularly: +
Sometimes: -
Never: --

Consistency is represented as either **c** or **r**, in which **c** stands for consistent use (meaning that the actor applies the feature in a specific phonetic distribution), and **r** stands for random use (meaning that no pattern of phonetic distribution could be detected).

Table 4.1
Intraspeaker analysis

Accent feature	Actor	Frequency	Consistency	Comments
RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ]	Polly	+	r	
RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ]	Tommy	++	c	Tommy uses [ɒ] for the RP vowel [ʌ]
RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ]	Arthur	++	r	Sometimes, Arthur uses [ɐɪ] for RP [aɪ]
RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ]		++	c	

Table 4.2

Interspeaker analysis

Accent feature	Tommy		Arthur		Polly		John		Ada		Moss	
RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ]	+	c	+	c	+	r	-	r	n.a.		++	c
RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ]	++	c	++	c	n.a.		++	c	++	c	++	c
RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ]	--	n.a.	++	r	n.a.		n.a.		n.a.		+	c
RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ]	+	r	++	c	n.a.		+	c	n.a.		-	r

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this chapter I will present a summary of the findings of the previous chapters, which will give answers to research questions 1, 2, and 3. Then I will compare the pronunciation of native speakers and actors and categorise the actor's speech according to Bell and Gibson's four sociophonetic processes, which will be useful in answering research question 4. I will then present the limitations and give suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

1. What are the most prototypical features of the Birmingham accent according to several sources?

In chapter 2, I examined three sources that presented descriptions of Birmingham's accent features (*Accents of English 2: the British Isles* written by Wells; 'The English West Midlands: Phonology' written by Clark; and *West Midlands English: Birmingham and the Black Country* written by Clark and Asprey). By using a method of comparison, I was able to detect which accent features these three sources agree on. The following 12 accent features were then concluded as being prototypical for Birmingham English:

RP [ŋ] → Bm [ŋg] (addition of the voiced uvular plosive);
RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ] (replacing a post alveolar approximant with an alveolar tap);
RP [h] → Bm [ø] (deletion of word initial /h/, resulting in a glottal stop);
RP [l] → Bm [ɬ] (velarisation of the lateral approximant);
RP [ɪ] → Bm [i] (a higher and more fronted realisation of [ɪ]);
RP [ɑː] → Bm [a] (a shorter and more fronted realisation of [ɑː]);
RP [ʊ] → Bm [ɤ] (an open and more back realisation of [ʊ]);
RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ] (a higher and more back realisation of [ʌ]);
RP [ɛə] → Bm [ɜː] (a more centralised and monophthongal realisation of [ɛə]);
RP [iː] → Bm [ɛɪ] (diphthongization of [iː], starting more open);
RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] (starting point of the [aɪ] diphthong is more back);
RP [əʊ] → Bm [aʊ] (starting point of the [əʊ] dipththong is more open).

2. What are the most prototypical features of the Birmingham accent according to native speakers?

In chapter 3, I compared the prototypical features from chapter 2 with the pronunciation of native speakers. Two speech fragments were analysed, and per accent feature, an indication was given of its frequency and consistency. The following accent features were marked with an occurrence of **always** (++) and **consistent** (c), and were therefore concluded as being most prototypical according to the native speakers:

- RP [ɑː] → Bm [a];
- RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ];
- RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ].

When comparing the literature with native speakers, four remarkable findings emerged:

- RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ]: this feature was not initially included in the list of prototypical features according to the literature;
- RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ]: Sue and Aubrey both make use of another Bm realisation of RP [ʌ], namely [ɒ];
- RP [ʊ] → Bm [ɤ]: neither Sue nor Aubrey applied this feature;
- RP [ɛə] → Bm [ɜː]: neither Sue nor Aubrey applied this feature.

The list of 12 prototypical accent features from chapter 2 was therefore revised into the following list of 11 prototypical accent features that would be accurate according to *both* the literature *and* native speakers:

RP [ŋ] → Bm [ŋg] (addition of the voiced uvular plosive);
RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ] (replacing a post alveolar approximant with an alveolar tap);
RP [h] → Bm [ø] (deletion of word initial /h/, resulting in a glottal stop);
RP [l] → Bm [ɬ] (velarisation of the lateral approximant);
RP [ɪ] → Bm [i] (a higher and more fronted realisation of [ɪ]);
RP [ɑː] → Bm [a] (a shorter and more fronted realisation of [ɑː]);
RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ] / [ɒ] (a higher or lower and more back and realisation of [ʌ]);
RP [iː] → Bm [ɛɪ] (diphthongization of [iː], starting more open);
RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] (starting point of the [aɪ] diphthong is more back);
RP [əʊ] →Bm [aʊ] (starting point of the [əʊ] dipththong is more open);
RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ] (starting point of the [ɛɪ] diphthong is more open).

3. How frequently and consistently do actors in *Peaky Blinders* apply prototypical features of the Birmingham accent?

In chapter 4, I examined the pronunciation of several actors from the series *Peaky Blinders*. I decided to perform intra- and interspeaker analyses, as this approach is most likely to offer detectable patterns. The analyses were performed on the following four prototypical accent features of Birmingham English:

RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ], because of the salient difference between these two allophones, and the use of [ɾ] would therefore be easily detectable;
RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ] / [ɒ], because of the salient difference between the two different Bm realisations, and the use of either [ʊ] or [ɒ] would therefore be easily detectable;
RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] and **RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ]**, because the occurrence of these features in Sue and Aubrey's speech was classified as **always** and **consistent**.

The intraspeaker analysis on RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ] suggested that Polly frequently, but inconsistently applied this feature. The interspeaker analysis then suggested that there was quite some variation in pronunciation, frequency and consistency of this feature among several characters. The intraspeaker analysis on RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ] concluded that Tommy very frequently and consistently applied it; however, his realisation of [ʌ] was [ɒ] rather than [ʊ]. Interspeaker analysis on this feature concluded that every speaker was very consistent and frequent in applying it, but the vowel that they applied differed between [ʊ], [ɒ] and [ɔ]. The intraspeaker analysis on RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] and RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ] suggested that Arthur frequently applied both of these features; however, he was not consistent in his realisation of RP [aɪ], as it seemed to vary between [ɔɪ] and [ɐɪ]. Interspeaker analysis suggested that there was variation in frequency and consistency among all characters.

5.2 Discussion

4. Can any detectable patterns in pronunciation differences between native speakers and actors explain how dialect use in film may lead to linguistic stereotyping?

In order to find an answer to this research question, the pronunciation of the native speakers and the actors should be juxtaposed. The following table presents the frequency and consistency of the four analysed accent features in the speech of Sue, Aubrey, and the actors:

Table 5.1

Overview of frequency and consistency of four prototypical accent features

Speaker	RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ]		RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ] / [ɒ]		RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ]		RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ]	
Sue	-	r	++	c	++	c	++	c
Aubrey	+	c	++	r	++	c	++	c
Tommy	+	c	++	c	--	n.a.	+	r
Arthur	+	c	++	c	++	r	++	c
Polly	+	r	n.a.		n.a.		n.a.	
John	-	r	++	c	n.a.		+	c
Ada	n.a.		++	c	n.a.		n.a.	
Moss	++	c	++	c	+	c	-	r

In order to find out whether there is a correlation with linguistic stereotyping, the next step is to relate any remarkable findings to (one of) the four sociophonetic processes detected in a similar study by Bell and Gibson:

> **Selectivity** utilises some features of the variety while omitting others (perhaps on the grounds of difficulty, salience, or lack of salience);
> **Mis-realisation** of features, perhaps intentionally, or drawing on stereotypes, or through incapability;
> **Overshoot** of the characteristics or frequency of features of the targeted variety. Qualitatively, a feature may be given an exaggerated phonetic position, while quantitatively a feature which is variable may be produced categorically;
> **Undershoot** of the characteristics or frequency of features of the target variety. A feature may not achieve its targeted pronunciation, or a feature which is categorical may be produced variably. (2011: 568)

As Labov stated that a stereotype "may become increasingly divorced from the forms which are actually used in speech" (1972: 180), we should look for inaccuracies of the Birmingham accent represented by the actors when compared to the native speakers. Stephanie Marriott suggested that such inaccuracies can be detected in patterns of inconsistency: she studied the British war film *In Which We Serve* (Noël Coward, David Lean, 1942), and found that "[inconsistency] is typical of prolonged attempts to produce vowels which are not the speaker's own" (1997: 178). We can detect this claim in our analysis: namely in Polly's frequent, but inconsistent use of the alveolar tap [ɾ]. Its frequency suggests that Helen McCrory (the actress playing Polly) is aware that [ɾ] should be applied regularly; but its inconsistency suggests that she may forget to produce [ɾ] every now and then, since this variation of /r/ does not occur in her own accent – she is born in London, an area in which [ɾ] is not frequently produced. This finding can be

categorised under **undershoot**. An instance in which she forgets to produce [ɾ] is when she says *your intention* in the next sentence:

Polly: "['sɒ**ɾ**i]! I misunderstood [jə**ɹ**ɪn'tʰɛnʃən] when you pushed me against the wall."
sorry; *your intention*: RP ['sɒ**ɹ**i]; [jə**ɹ**ɪn'tʰɛnʃən]

This inaccuracy may be explained by the fact that this was an emotional scene, in which she was threateningly pushed against a wall, which probably made McCrory lose control over her ability of portraying the Birmingham accent. Hodson describes a similar finding; she performed an analysis on accent use in the film *Howards End* (James Ivory, 1992), in which she concluded that when a character is acting surprised or angered, some features of the actor's 'natural' variety of English may come to the surface (2014: 51).

Another remarkable finding concerning the RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ] feature can be detected in John's speech when he angrily utters the following sentence:

John: "If anyone calls her a [ˌhɔːlə'gɛɪn], I will push the ['bɛɹəl] of my revolver down their throats and blow the word back down into their hearts."
whore again; barrel: RP [ˌhɔːɹə'gɛn]; ['bæɹəl]

We can detect a **mis-realisation** here, when he pronounces the /r/ in *whore again* as neither [ɹ] nor [ɾ]. This mis-realisation can also be attributed to the fact that this was an emotional utterance. Besides, Joe Cole (the actor playing John) does not naturally produce an alveolar tapped variation of /r/ in his own accent as he is from Kingston Upon Thames, which is not known for its frequent use of [ɾ].

A fascinating finding is that we can detect the opposite when looking at Sergeant Moss' pronunciation of [ɾ]. Our analysis shows that he uses this feature even more often than a native speaker of Birmingham English; whereas Aubrey disregards [ɾ] in word-initial positions and uses [ɹ] instead, Moss produces the alveolar tap in every position. When we consider the natural accent of the actor playing Sergeant Moss (Tony Pitts), the fact that he applies [ɾ] so often can be explained: Tony Pitts is from Sheffield, a city in the north of England and part of South Yorkshire. The accent spoken in this area is known for its frequent use of [ɾ], which means that Tony Pitts' linguistic background is of particular relevance for this accent feature, which works in his favour when acting the part of a Birmingham sergeant. Bell and Gibson claim that "it can be that those performing a variety which is a part of their own repertoire may use overshoot for rhetorical or comic effect, or in order to cue audience recognition of the variety" (2011: 568-9), which may explain why Moss applies [ɾ] so often – which characterises this fact as **overshoot**.

Another remarkable finding is that most characters in *Peaky Blinders* always or frequently apply the RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] feature, whereas the actor playing Tommy (Cilian Murphy) does not show any use of this feature at all. Relating Murphy's natural accent to this fact may offer some clarity: he was born and raised in Ireland, and the RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] feature – sometimes also known as the PRICE/CHOICE merger (Clark 2004: 151) – is a feature which may also be applied in the Irish accent. The reason for Murphy to disregard this feature when acting as Tommy Shelby is unknown, but an assumption could be that he consciously omits it, because this feature is similar to his normal accent, which may result in feelings of unnaturalness or uneasiness. If this is the case, this finding could be categorised as **selectivity**.

In conclusion, all four sociophonetic processes established by Bell and Gibson could be found in the patterns that emerged when comparing the speech of native speakers to actors. It can be concluded that an actor's natural accent may influence their pronunciation of the desired dialect, as it can result in selectivity or mis-realisation. Another factor that could influence an actor's pronunciation and render it inaccurate is when emotional scenes take place: actors may forget to apply certain accent features, or features of their natural accent may come to the surface. These factors can lead to an inaccurate pronunciation of the accent required for a specific film or series. Labov's claim that a stereotype "may become increasingly divorced from the forms which are actually used in speech" (1972: 180) can now be related to film, in which language variation is used to "draw character quickly, building on established preconceived notions associated with specific loyalties, ethnic, racial or economic alliances" (Lippi-Green 1997:81). Altogether, patterns in this study have shown that these two separate claims can be connected, and that there is, in fact, a correlation between dialect use in film and linguistic stereotyping.

5.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

Limitations of this research include that I did not count the occurrences of the accent features; rather, I gave a general indication of how frequently and consistently an accent feature was applied. Using a method of counting can present more accurate results, as it could then be concluded whether the use of accent features is significant. Another shortcoming is that I only examined two native speakers, whereas analysing more native speakers of the Birmingham accent would present not only a larger, but also a more diverse dataset. Finally, in this study, I only focussed on pronunciation, neglecting the remaining two elements of a dialect: grammar and vocabulary. When transcribing Sue and Aubrey's speech fragments, I found peculiar and unusual grammar and vocabulary features, such as "*it was sixpence <u>of a</u> Saturday morning I can remember that*", "*<u>oi! Up it</u>*!", and "*<u>we was</u> all round about… thirteen, like…".* Since film scripts

contain carefully written dialogues, a study which investigates grammar and vocabulary features in film dialects could offer an interesting view regarding linguistic stereotyping as well.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Appendix A provides the Internet webpage link and transcription of the interview with Sue. Words or phrases that were unintelligible and therefore not able to be transcribed, are marked as […].

https://sounds.bl.uk/Accents-and-dialects/Millenium-memory-bank/021M-C0900X18603X-0400V1

Sue: When we were young during the fifties.. late fifties. You could.. – eh, you could go out on your own, as a child, with your friends, you could go to the park. You could go to town. We used to go to town quite a lot, of a weekend. To the library, and.. the ehm, art gallery and museum. We used to spend Sunday afternoons there. I don't think I'd let a child of.. nine-ten-eleven do that now. Because y– There's so many dangers about – perhaps there were dangers then, but you just didn't know of them so much. But, we used to go to the park, and we used to go to quite a few parks.. within walking distance. On our o- the bare crowd of us. Or even two of us. And ehm… we used to go to the pictures on our own. There were quite a few picture houses, in the area we lived in.

Interviewer: Where did you go?

Sue: To the pictures? Well, there was a picture house facing the road that we lived in that we used to go to of a Saturday morning especially. And..

Interviewer: What was it called?

Sue: It was called The Kingston. Picture house. Which .. i-in the sixties became ehm, a bingo hall. But I believe now it's an Indian cinema. For a-all.. it may even still b-be a bingo hall, but I think I did hear that it became an Indian cinema. And then we went to ehm, … there was a cinema called The Grange Cinema. These were all.. all on Coventry Road in Small Heath, these were. There was the Grange Cinema. The Coronets. And.. the ABC. Ehm. The ABC we used to get a bus to 'cause it was a bit further to walk. But the other cinemas we could walk to. And then on Stratford Road there was.. the Al Hambra Cinema.

Interviewer: Did they all show the same film?

Sue: No, no. There was always a different film showing so you could go.. to the cinema. Four or five times a week. If i- y-kno-

Interviewer: Did you have enough money?

Sue: Ehm.. Funnily enough I think we did have enough money. At the time, 'cause it was… perhaps it'd be thre… sixpence or.. threepence. No it was sixpence of a Saturday morning I can remember that. And… I can remember my parents taking us to the-ehm, cinema of an evening and it was […] I think.

Interviewer: What were the cinemas like?

Sue: Ehm… don't […], actually. Plush.. the sheets were plush and ... you know. It wasn't... it wasn't like ehm, when they were young. My parents were young, I think it was just eh wooden benches then. [*laughs*]. But ehm, all the cinemas with.. we went to were quite plush.

Interviewer: What are your happiest memories of childhood?

Sue: My happiest memories of childhood? Ehm… Oh. Probably ehm.. when we went to visit my grandma and granddad in Coventry. I used to like going there. We used to get the bus. The ehm... we used to get the Midland red bus which was a bit different to ... everyday bus. And ehm, it seemed as though it was miles and miles away and it.. it isn't really. But that's all relative when you're a child.

Interviewer: When was this, what decade?

Sue: This had been… in the fifties. As I was growing up. And… we used to go there quite often 'cause it was my mum's mum and dad. And ehm… we used to go for Sunday lunch. Quite regularly. But it was just so different to.. at home. For some reason. Although a house wasn't that much better than… When a house was a house ours was a ma-o- we lived upstairs in a maisonette. But ehm… she had a backgarden. A big backgarden. Ehm… it was just… an-i.. I just loved my grandma and granddad and they loved us. And it was just nice.

Interviewer: Did you have any impressions of Coventry in the fifties?

Sue: I can remember walking past… the bombed out cathedral. And if it was dark it- I used to be frightened. And I can remember them rebuilding the cathedral. 'Cause we had to walk past there. When we got off the bus from Birmingham, we always […] had to walk past the.. old cathedral to get.. to the bus. To go to gramp and grandma's. And it was really spooky. The ehm… Because even now this part of the old… eh, cathedral standing […] is a reminder.

Appendix B

Appendix B provides the Internet webpage link and transcription of the interview with Aubrey. Words or phrases that were unintelligible and therefore not able to be transcribed, are marked as […].

https://sounds.bl.uk/Accents-and-dialects/Millenium-memory-bank/021M-C0900X18580X-1600V1

Aubrey: How did I get interested in drumming? Well. When victory in Europe was […], just about every street in Birmingham had a party. And the center – the […] of the party was a big bonfire. So, where did the fire come from, you ask – well, there are things called palings, sheds, gates, a lot of things went missing. And, they were all piled up in the middle of the road and set fire to and mysteriously food disc-just.. sort of materialised.. [*laughs*] all the sharp boys made a fortune when the […] when all the parties in Birmingham took place and of course our own was no different. We had a big fire in the middle of the road. And uh us kids were running around, knocking palings off and.. pinching people's gates and.. sort of.. sheds got vandalised. You know. [*laughs*]

Interviewer: What sort of food did you have?

Aubrey: Oh you name it. We had it. God knows where did it come from. But there was everything we'd never seen before, I went "bananas! For God's sake what are bananas" y'know? Long yellow things y'know! [*laughs*] Oranges! God we used to queue for hours for oranges, in the war! Then all of a sudden there was lots of 'em! All the white boys, you know, the spivs and the drones they'd made a fortune, 'cause people bought 'em, y'know. 'Cause we- we thought everything was gonna- be a'freshen! When the war ended. [*giggles*]. How little we knew. Anyway! Ehm, I was mocking about with all the rest of the gang, like you know, we was all round about… thirteen, like… and ehm, I suddenly noticed this group of blokes with little green jackets on and black trousers and white shirts, and bow ties, you know. Bit nosy, "what's going on" y'know. "Oh that's the band! They got a band?" […] "Yeah! They're gonna have dancing in the streets." "What! Could they?" […] They're gonna do dancing in the streets! Never heard of it like, y'know what I mean? 'Cause I mean, there'd been a black out. And all of a sudden the street would lit up, y'know. But everybody uh, got anything to light: lit it! You know? [*laughs*]. When there was more than one fire […] I'll tell ya! And ehm, so these blokes were getting these shiny instruments out and I was looking, y'know, […] I was a proper little know-all. He says, "that's a trumpet", "that's a saxophone", "that's a drum". I says "I know it's a drum!", you see. When I was turning around, looking at this bloke, with his great big saxophone, as it turned out, I learned later, it was a tenner saxophone, but to me, it was a great big thing, y'know. All of a sudden, I heard this [*makes sounds*], and I turn around, and this bloke putting two cymbals together. One of 'em was upside down, and the other one was resting on it, you see. And that made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. And I thought "ooh, that's a great sound, that" you see. So I went out and I stood by him. And when he was […] I just went up and I just hit it, and went [*makes sounds*]. I thought, "that's great", of course he said "oi! Up it!" y'know, well, I upped it by taking about two paces back, and then I sat there and I watched this bloke as he assembled his drumkit,

you see. And I spent the whole rest of the night watching this drummer. And I thought: "oh, I wanna do that. That's good that is. That is really… smashing. Neat." That was it. And I was sold from then on in. And ehm.. I went up, and ehm… First of all I joined the scouts. For a night. Because they didn't have a band. So I went up and joined the boys' brigade. They had a band. But there wasn't any vacancies for a drummer. So I stole a pair of drumsticks when nobody was looking and run home, terrified. [*laughs*]. In case someone had seen me. And I had these old pair of drumsticks for years. Well it seemed like years, it wasn't really. And eh, I used to be in the air-ra- we had an air-raid shelter at the bottom of the garden, I mean, most people in the outskirts of Birmingham, like Erdington, Perry Common, and… way out in Hall Green in the centre of the city they had communal air-raid shelters but the old Anderson shelters that you see on the […] we had one of those. Nice to be down there, bashing away merrily, not knowing what I was doing, right, but getting very excited. And then, ehm, I remember a drum appeared in our house, from somewhere. And it was years later I found out that ehm… my brother, Dennis, had bought this drum. Off a bloke in a fairground. For half-a-crown. He'd obviously stolen it off one of the side shows, you know, and, my brother bought it off him and gave it to me. […], that when it was the second Wednesday of the month, and the third Wednesday of the month, the two middle Wednesdays, I went down to the coal merchant and got coal, because there was no deliveries. You had to get these […] of coal, in a great big wooden barrel with a wooden wheel. No tyres on it, it was a wooden wheel. I think it was a- African blackwood, because it was as hard as iron. And you had to drag this coal for about half a mile. And the […] was that you had to take the barrel back, because it was half-a-crown on the barrel. So you had to get the half-a-crown by taking the barrel back, you couldn't hold on to the barrel. 'Cause the old lady wanted her half-a-crown back, you see. So I got this drum, providing I did our kids' eh, coal round. But I have to do me own coal round as well. So I was going four times a month. [*laughs*] and he sat back and did nothing! [*laughs*] You see? But I wanted that drum so bad, that I was willing to work for it, you see. And that was my first drum, it was a tiny little thing. Really miniature… that sort of thing you see in-on film, in the fairgrounds, y'know, where the old guys banging away their… about two inches thick, y'know what I mean? And eh, it was one of those drums, that was my first. That was the very first drum I ever owned. And then ehm, I just begged, borrowed and stole whatever I could get 'till I got some sort of drumkit.

Appendix C

Appendix C provides Internet webpage links for all the corresponding sound fragments from *Peaky Blinders*, which are used in chapter 4.

RP [ɹ] → Bm [ɾ]

https://clyp.it/3lptawgl

Polly: "The Guns, The Chain, The Marquis. All the ones that pay you to protect them. The only one they didn't touch was the ['gærɪsən]."

Garrison: RP ['gæɹɪsən]

https://clyp.it/b44ds5yw

Polly: "Does this poor girl know you're gonna ['mæɾiˌhɜːɾə] you just gonna [spɾɪŋ] it on [hɛː'ɾɒl] of a sudden?"

marry her, or; spring; her all: RP ['mæɹiˌhɜːɹɔː]; [spɹɪŋ]; [hɛː'ɹɔːl]

https://clyp.it/2equefoi

Polly: "['sɒɾi]! I misunderstood [jəɹɪn't^{h}ɛnʃən] when you pushed me against the wall."

sorry; *your intention*: RP ['sɒɹi]; [jəɹɪn't^{h}ɛnʃən]

https://clyp.it/4y4ficqw

Polly: "Don't flatter yourself. [fəɹ'ɛɪdə]."

For Ada: RP [fəɹ'ɛɪdə]

https://clyp.it/fl1gpftv

John: "If anyone calls her a [ˌhɔːlə'gɛɪn], I will push the ['bɛɹəl] of my revolver down their throats and blow the word back down into their hearts."

whore again; barrel: RP [ˌhɔːɹə'gɛn]; ['bæɹəl]

https://clyp.it/i2vrsjgu

John: "What the kids need, is a ['mɒðəɹ]."

mother: RP ['mʌðə]

https://clyp.it/nzn21qxd

John: "What's [rɒŋ] with you? What the fuck is [rɒŋ] with him lately?"

wrong: RP [ɹɒŋ]

https://clyp.it/hlpsgzbx

Tommy: "[pɾæps] it's a list of men who give false hope to the poor. The only ['dɪfɾəns] between you and me, ['fɾɛdi], is that sometimes my horses stand a chance of winning."

perhaps; difference; Freddy: RP [pə'hæps]; ['dɪfɹəns]; ['fɹɛdi]

https://clyp.it/ohgehjn1

Tommy: "He sees machine guns, and [ɹaɪfl̩s], and ammunition, and some ['glɔːɾɪəsɹɛvəˌluʃən].

rifles; *glorious revolution*: RP [ɹaɪfl̩s]; ['glɔːɹɪəsɹɛvəˌluʃən]

https://clyp.it/mddm53x3

Moss: "The men that have [ə'ɾaɪvd] in ['gæɾɪsən] Lane [ə'ɾɑːmd] with [ɾaɪfl̩s]."

arrived, Garrison, are armed, rifles: RP [ə'ɹaɪvd]; ['gæɹɪsən]; [ə'ɹɑːmd]; [ɹaɪfl̩s]

RP [ʌ] → Bm [ʊ] / [ɒ]

https://clyp.it/gt5ohkxl

Tommy: "Fortune drops something valuable into your lap, you don't just [dɒmp] it on the bank of the [kʰɒʔt]."

dump; *cut*: RP [dʌmp]; [kʰʌʔt]

https://clyp.it/qxr4d4tw

Tommy: "[jɒː'pʰɒb], you do what you want."

your pub: RP [jɔː'pʰʌb]

https://clyp.it/nca2jckn

Tommy: "We had some luck. [sɒm'blɒdiˌlɒʔk]. It fell off a wagon into our laps. And all you need to know is: it's [ɒs] that has the machine [gɒnz] now, and it's them that's in the [mɒd]."

some bloody luck; us; guns; mud: RP [sʌm'blʌdiˌlʌʔk]; [ʌs]; [gʌnz]; [mʌd]

https://clyp.it/n1jjxtaj

Ada: "For [ʊs]. For a ['hʊniˌmuːn] that goes on forever."

us; *honeymoon*: RP [ʌs]; ['hʌniˌmuːn]

https://clyp.it/qqqz4mxf

Ada: "John, wipe the [blʊd] out of his eye."

blood: RP [blʌd]

https://clyp.it/edx41yis

Arthur: "Chinese have ['kʰʊtəz] of their own."

cutters: RP ['kʰʌtəz]

https://clyp.it/ebqzpdhf

John: "You saw Michael before [ʊs]."

us: RP [ʌs]

https://clyp.it/xwpmes2l

Moss: "Most of my great [lɔmps] of men served in France too, Sir."

lumps: RP [lʌmps]

RP [aɪ] → Bm [ɔɪ] and RP [ɛɪ] → Bm [aɪ]

https://clyp.it/cejzkl0m

Arthur: "But [tə'daɪ], we're gonna stop them."

today: RP [tə'dɛɪ]

John: "What about Kimber's men? Thought he had his own protection."

Arthur: "Kimber's let his troops go rotten. They're on the [taɪk] from the Lees to look the other [waɪ]."

take; *way*: RP [tɛɪk]; [wɛɪ]

https://clyp.it/laef42dz

Arthur: "Said we're ['paɪtɹiəts], [lɔɪk] him. Wants us to be his [ɐɪz] and ears. And I said… […] …I said we'd have a family meeting, and take a vote."

patriots; *like*; *eyes*; *take*: RP ['pætɹiəts]; [laɪk]; [aɪz]

https://clyp.it/c0gky14s

Arthur: "You think we can take on the [ˌtʃɐɪ'nɛɪz] and Billy Kimber."

Chinese: RP [ˌtʃaɪ'niːz]

https://clyp.it/ufqt0lun

Tommy: "By order of the Peaky ['blaɪndəz]."

blinders: RP ['blaɪndəz]

https://clyp.it/52rlwc4y

Arthur: "Do you wanna tell him, or should [ɔɪ]? This place is under new management. By order of the Peaky ['blɐɪndəz]."

I; blinders: RP [aɪ]; ['blaɪndəz]

https://clyp.it/cl1hsj5z

Tommy: "That's [ɹaɪt]. They've shown their hand."

right: RP [ɹaɪt]

https://clyp.it/p45yusff

Tommy: "I promised Johnny I'd let him have a spin in the car if he lost."

Arthur: "[a'ɾɔɪt]"

alright: RP [ɑː'ɹaɪt]

https://clyp.it/ppxnp1o4

Tommy: "He looked at me the wrong [waɪ]. It's not a good idea to look at Tommy Shelby the wrong [waɪ]."

way: RP [wɛɪ]

https://clyp.it/22jzjqyk

Tommy: "All in a [kɻɛɪt], bound for Libya. Stolen from the [ˌbiːɛs'ɛɪ] factory proofing [bɛɪ]."

crate; *BSA*; *bay*: RP [kɻɛɪt]; [ˌbiːɛs'ɛɪ]; [bɛɪ]

https://clyp.it/4fyfayla

John: "The police have just ['ɹaɪdəd] a rally at the factory. They think you have Freddie Thorne's back."

raided: RP ['ɹɛɪdəd]

https://clyp.it/iptvtecg

Moss: "We can only act when a [kɾɔɪm]'s been committed."

crime: RP [kɻaɪm]

https://clyp.it/xwpmes2l

Moss: “Most of my [gɾɛɪt] lumps of men served in France too, Sir.”

great: RP [gɹɛɪt]