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Diploma thesis

The Voice of a Woman in Three Versions of Pygmalion:
Sociolinguistic Analysis

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I declare that I wrote the diploma thesis independently and that I used only the primary and secondary sources listed in Works Cited.

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Šárka Trojanová
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Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, PhDr. Klára Matuchová, PhD., for her help, suggestions and mainly for reading my lines even though she was on her maternity leave that time.

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Abstract

This diploma thesis focuses on the sociolinguistic analysis of the language of female characters in a play, musical and film. The theoretical part summarizes sociolinguistic literature and it also scrutinizes the current findings of the influence of gender, social class and identity on language. These concepts are discussed both from linguistic and sociological point of view. The practical part is aimed at the analysis of woman’s language in George Bernard Shaw’s Pygmalion and its two adaptations, the musical My Fair Lady and the film Pretty Woman. It deals with the change of the main characters that become representatives of upper social class. The change is discussed diachronically in terms of language, especially pronunciation, lexis, grammar and style, but also in terms of identity and social class.

Key Words: sociolinguistics, gender, women’s language, identity, social class, Pygmalion, My Fair Lady, Pretty Woman

Resumé

Tato diplomová práce je sociolinguistickou analýzou jazyka žen v divadelní hře, muzikálu a filmu. V teoretické části se uvádí odborná literatura a dále se podle současných výzkumů dopodrobna popisuje vliv genderu, sociální třídy a identity na jazyk. Tyto koncepty jsou diskutovány z lingvistického i sociologického hlediska. Cílem praktické části je analýza ženského jazyka ve hře Pygmalion, jejíž autorem je George Bernard Shaw, a jeho dvou verzí, to znamená muzikálu My Fair Lady a filmu Pretty Woman. Ve středu zájmu stojí změna hlavních postav, které se stávají představitelkami vyšší sociální třídy. Tato změna je diskutována z diachronního úhlu pohledu a je sledována z hlediska jazyka, především výslovnosti, slovní zásoby, gramatiky a stylu, ale také z hlediska identity a sociální třídy.

Klíčová slova: sociolinguistika, gender, ženský jazyk, identita, sociální třída, Pygmalion, My Fair Lady, Pretty Woman
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Introduction

The diploma thesis is called *The Voice of a Woman in Three Versions of Pygmalion: Sociolinguistic Analysis*. According to an old Greek legend, Pygmalion was a sculptor, who created a statue of a woman, and it was so beautiful that he fell in love with it. Aphrodite brought the statue into life and the statue woman became Pygmalion’s bride. Some of the adaptations of the legend are studied in this thesis.

As the title says, the main focus is given on the sociolinguistic analysis. Both the written and spoken text is studied and the findings are applied to sociolinguistic context. The language source is found in three versions of *Pygmalion*, and it is the play *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw, the comedy first published in 1912 and introduced on stage in 1913, then *My Fair Lady*, the musical presented many times on different kinds of world stages and made into several films and finally the film *Pretty Woman*, which presents the most up-to-date adaptation. All the works feature the main characters – women – who come from the low social class and thanks to this characteristic they offer a great opportunity to examine both their social background and language.

These three versions also feature the change of women from lower social classes and the process of entering the higher class. Considering this knowledge, the main hypothesis to explore is that the upward social mobility of the heroines will be a result of a class-conscious change reflected in their use of language and personal identity negotiation. The assumption is that their identity will be lost at some point before they come to terms with the new one. Their language will be transformed especially in the terms of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and style.

Although there is a lot of linguistic literature dealing with sociolinguistic issues, there are not many papers dealing with language of characters portrayed in cultural works, such as books, theatre plays or films. Most of these works are written by university students as their diploma or bachelor theses, therefore this paper should be considered the extension of sociolinguistic analysis of women’s speech in plays and films.

The basic method used for the research is the analysis of the texts and scripts, the language is seen from the diachronic point of view in the sociolinguistic context and it is
studied on the basis of language structures, such as phonetic and phonological layer, lexical, and stylistic layer.

The thesis is divided into two main parts – theoretical and practical. Each part consists of chapters. In the theoretical part, abstracts and key words in English and Czech are present. The thesis continues with the introduction and all the aspects that are important for understanding the issue. The commentary is given on the literature which deals with sociolinguistic topics, especially the concepts of human identity, how it is formed in society and the construction of social classes. The specifics of female language are scrutinized and the general concepts of regional and social dialects, accents and social stratification are also shortly discussed.

In the practical part, all three versions of Pygmalion are introduced in details. I comment on characters, setting and plot, which is important for understanding the change of female heroines. However, the main scope of the practical part is focused on the linguistic analysis – what are the typical features of their language before and after the transformation, and how the language change affects the characters socially. Finally, the comparison of the versions is made and the table of the main language changes is present.

In conclusion, I look back at my hypothesis and evaluate whether I was right in it or not. I also sum up my findings and think about the possibility of such transformations in the real world. The final part of the paper consists of Works Cited, where both primary and secondary sources are listed.
Chapter 1

Language and Gender

Language is a powerful tool which is able to express people’s individualities, as well as their social standings. It is shaped by the society in the same way as language shapes where exactly in the society we stand. This paper focuses on female speakers; therefore it is important to comment on gender differences in men and women’s speech and language specifics of women.

1. 1. Gender

Gender is basically the complex of social characteristics distinguishing men and women. It is an opposite term to sex which characterizes the biological differences between men and women. Each culture features certain patterns of behaviour that are connected with one or the other sex and people in it are ruled by gender system or gender conceptions. These conceptions are connected with the behaviour of men and women, as well as their relationships and standings in society. However, these notions are mostly stereotypical and cannot be applied on people in general. They come from historically rooted social roles which are changing constantly. The stereotypes are then skilfully used for example in the media, especially advertisements, but may be found in all the kinds of media, such as books, films, theatre plays, etc.

1. 2. Gender Stereotypes

The typical gender stereotype of a man is the man who plays the dominant role to a woman; he is the superior one, breadwinner father, he has got the good financial potential, great career and he is also intelligent, reasonable and successful. Woman, on the other hand, is characterised by inferior roles, she is seen as emotional, caring, and flexible, she has to be attractive and she should be the good housewife.

This is only a small list of stereotypes that put social pressure both on men and women. It is not easy to meet such social conceptions and a lot of people are not even
interested in meeting them. But who is completely different from others, is often put outside the society.

Of course, the stereotypes cannot be applied to all societies. For example, in the Czech Republic, women worked as hard as men in the 20th century, so the social differences were not so huge as in the United Kingdom, where the tradition of a woman – housewife was very strong.

Several institutions that try to bring the term gender in public and eliminate the negative results of gender inequality have been established in recent years. In the Czech Republic, it is for example Gender Studies, o.p.s., in the UK, there are especially well functioning institutes at universities and colleges.

The issue of social roles from the gender point of view is more the question of sociology than sociolinguistic. However, sociolinguistics deals with the differences between men and women’s language in the terms of style, register or politeness.

1. 3. Sociolinguistic Literature Dealing with Gender and Language

There is quite strong base of literature published on the topic of gender. American professor of linguistics, Deborah Tannen, who lectures at Georgetown University in Washington DC or at Princetown University, wrote one of the most popular books that is called You Just Don’t Understand. Women and Men in Conversation. According to Tannen, men and women come from different worlds, which makes their communication difficult. This publication is popular both with linguists and the general public. John Locke, the professor of linguistics at Lehmann College, City University in New York, also deals with the differences between male and female communication in his book Duels and Duets: How Men and Women Came to Talk So Differently. From more general contributions on the topic, the publication that is also worth mentioning and deals for example with gender demonstration in media, is Rezetti and Curran’s Women, Men, and Society.

Apart from these publications of bigger extent, there are a lot of shorter papers that are written mostly by university teachers and published in linguistic journals or they are the part of various linguistic compilations, such as the introductions to
sociolinguistics. It is for example *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society* by Peter Trudgill, which was first published in 1974 and it deals with the issues such as language and society, sex, nation, social class, ethnic groups or social interaction. Also *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* by Janet Holmes which was first published in 1992 deals with similar issues and serves as a great guide especially for students of sociolinguistics. The other introductory works that should be mentioned are for example *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* by Wardaugh or *Sociolinguistics* by Hudson. Even though these publications serve more as the course books, there are several chapters about women’s language, gender or dialects that are valuable for the thesis.

1. 4. Gender Manifestations in Language

Although gender is manifested both in men and women’s language and language portraits both sexes, I will deal especially with the language of women and women’s portrayal in the English language, considering the fact that this thesis focuses on women.

C. M. Renzetti and D. J. Curran (2005, 209) point out sexisms in language. They understand sexisms as: “ways by which language presents the members of one sex as inferior”. Holmes explains (2001, 305) that “sexist language conveys stereotyped attitudes to women and men.” Inferiority of the sexes is manifested by negative connotations. It is interesting that sexist words were originally neutral in their meaning, but when they were applied on women, they gained the negative connotation. Such example may be seen in a lot of animal expressions that are often used for people imaginary. The word *cow* has got the negative meaning when we use it to talk about women, not mentioning really insulting word *bitch*. Most of these words even have sexual implications. On the other hand, the word such as *stud*, which is used to refer to men, is in its meaning positive. The process during which originally neutral word gains vulgar and offensive meaning when it is used for description of one sex is called semantic derogation.

Gender is deeply coded in language. In addition to sexisms, we can mention also generic masculine words. These are especially generic pronouns, generic words describing humans in general and job titles. The pronoun *he* and the noun *man* are often used as generic forms. Especially the word *man* was questioned in several researches
with its meaning human being or humanity. Many job titles have got one form that is used both for men and women, but most people do not imagine the woman behind the job at all, which is the example of language causing one sex’s invisibility. These are for example words *doctor* or *lawyer*. Considering the fact that generic forms are common both in English and Czech, I would like to mention the survey made by Czech linguist Valdrová, who asked 50 respondents whether they associate men, women or both sexes with certain words. The words such as *student* or *pensioner* were seen as describing both sexes in most cases. However, what is really interesting, words which refer to socially higher functions were associated only with men at almost 80% of respondents. These were words such as *lawyer, expert, boss* or *deputy* (Valdrová, 26-38; [http://www.feminismus.cz/fulltext.shtml?x=1901407](http://www.feminismus.cz/fulltext.shtml?x=1901407)).

There are several ways to balance the inequality and invisibility in language. Most professions have got their male and female equivalents; we can use the words such as *policeman* or *policewoman, actor* or *actress*, etc. Instead of generic pronoun *he*, pronoun *they* is mostly used. Instead of generic *man*, we mostly use *humanity* or just *people*.

### 1.5. Women’s Language

Apart from gender manifestations in language, there are the ways women use language differently from men. One of the first researchers of women’s language was Robin Lakoff. She introduced several linguistic points which distinguish women’s speech from men’s in her work *Language and Woman’s Place*. Most of her notions were then studied again by various sociolinguists and it was found out that they cannot be applied in all cases, because the context of communication (from the textual point of view, field and participants, as well as the place of communication) plays an important role in speakers’ choice of style.

However, her findings are still valid in general and were adapted also by Tannen or Locke. Holmes listed Lakoff’s main features in *Introduction to Sociolinguistics* and they are following. Holmes states that female speech features more

a) “Lexical hedges or fillers, e. g. *you know, sort of, well, you see.*

b) Tag questions, e. g. *she’s very nice, isn’t she?*
c) Rising intonation on declaratives, e. g. *it’s really good?*

d) ‘Empty’ adjectives, e. g. *divine, charming, cute.*

e) Precise colour terms, e. g. *magenta, aquamarine.*

f) Intensifiers such as just and so, e. g. *I like him so much.*

g) ‘Hypercorrect grammar, e. g. consistent use of standard verb forms.

h) ‘Superpolite’ forms, e. g. indirect requests, euphemisms.

i) Avoidance of strong swear words, e. g. *fudge, my goodness.*

j) Emphatic stress, e. g. *it was a BRILLIANT performance.*” (2001)

As was already mentioned, men and women’s communication differs especially in the terms of style. Conversational styles of people depend on their character, their regional, ethnic and class background, as well as their age or profession. Gender is then another important feature. Tannen explains that when we can speak about different dialects, we can also speak about the fact that men and women speak different genderlects (42). While male conversational style is more centred to their status and independence, female conversational style is more centred to connection and intimacy. Independence and freedom in decision-making is very important for men in general, while women are more submissive in it.

Tannen also describes the different conversational styles in the way men and women respond to troubles. When women discuss troubles, they give more questions to the communication partner, they show the understanding. They also often try to look for similar experience in their own life that they offer as an example of solving the trouble, because similarity is appreciated in women’s world. On the other hand, men appreciate independence which may be seen in the fact that they do not ask so many probing questions – by this act, they probably respect their partner’s independence (59).

By other words, women prefer good rapports with their communication partners, but men prefer report. That explains why women feel the desire to speak about their days, experiences and everything they find important for the good relationships with their
husbands or life partners. When they are at home, they feel comfortable and want to establish good rapports by talking. A lot of men do not share this desire and they do not talk so much or may be perceived that they even do not listen to women. They desire to say as much information as possible in the fewest number of words.

Women often do not like speaking in public, because they have the feeling that they cannot speak freely, whereas they do not have this feeling in private places. Men, contrastingly, do not mind speaking in public at all.

As the result of men and women’s different interactional habits (based on their conversational preferences), these two sexes often tend to fall into unequal patterns. Even though a woman has got some discussed information, she sometimes hides her knowledge so that her partner would feel better while explaining it to her. Men usually do not do that. Some conversations then turn to a kind of lecture, where man is a lecturer and woman a listener.

Class differences play also very important role. Tannen gives the example of sociologist Mirra Komarovsky who

“in her classic study Blue Collar Marriage, found that the more middle class a couple was, the more the husband and wife considered each other friends. Among high school graduates, there was an expectation that a husband should talk to his wife. Among those who had not graduated from high school, wives who wanted their husbands to talk to them were thought to be inappropriately demanding. The expectation was that wives should talk to their female relatives and leave their husbands alone” (141).

It is clear that different styles may cause misunderstanding. It was already mentioned that women usually use more fillers than men. When women listen to someone, they say for example ‘yeah’ a lot, but the meaning of ‘yeah’ is to signal the other party that they follow or understand them, it is once more the sign of establishing good rapport. But when men say ‘yeah’, they mean that they agree with the second party. In this case, it is only logical that they use this filler less often than women.

Considering styles, the differences may be found in making proposals as well. While women use a mild way of proposing with the phrase ‘let’s’, men propose something by using a simple command, which they find more effective.
The difference is also in interrupting the conversation. While in woman to woman communication, the interruptions equal in number, in man to woman communication, men do most of interrupting without even noticing it.

However, even though these notions are confirmed by numbers of researches, the style of language may be still very individual and we cannot apply these features to every woman or every man.
Chapter 2
Language and Social Class

2. 1. Social-class Dialects

It was pointed out previously that people do not speak in the same way. The differences between the usage of language by different speakers are mostly caused by some kind of distance. This can be geographical distance (in the case of regional dialects and accents) or social distance. There are certain features in people’s language that can draw our attention to the speaker’s origin. These features are mostly connected with grammar or pronunciation, but differences in lexis are also possible to spot.

Generally speaking, every human with enough language experience is able to assess the social background of other speakers. Trudgill gives an example of two speakers, when speaker A says: “I done it yesterday or He ain’t got it.” Speaker B says: “I did it yesterday or He hasn’t got it” (34). We can notice immediately that speaker A uses wrong grammatical structures, therefore we may deduce that he or she comes from the lower social surrounding than Speaker B, because there is the general assumption that people from upper class use the language correctly. In this sense, we speak about social-class dialects or social dialects.

Social dialects are caused by social distance. That is to say, people from lower social classes usually do not have access to higher degrees of education; they usually do not attend specific cultural events such as theatre performances or exhibitions. They mostly meet people from the same social circles and as a consequence of it their social networks are not so wide. And most importantly, the language innovations originate in upper social classes, among the most educated people and they enter the lower classes last.

But what exactly is social class. To answer this question, we must consult sociology. Social class is the abstract term designating the social groups or “aggregates of individuals with similar social and/or economic characteristics” (Trudgill, 35). Stratification into social classes is typical of western countries. However, it is very important to mention that the classes are not precisely cut, their borders are not always
strict and people from different classes may mingle. This fact causes that the language study might be difficult and not so precise every time.

2. 2. Tradition of Social Classes in the United Kingdom

Social stratification in the United Kingdom has got a long tradition. Most frequently there is three-degree model of social classes in the UK. The model distinguishes working, middle and upper social class. The distinction of these three classes may be seen in the picture in attachment 1.

2. 2. 1. Historical Tradition and the Modern View

Stratification of British inhabitants originated in 1851. The classification was based mainly on occupation and industry and served for statistic reasons, especially to show mortality levels in the UK across the classes. The first model was the same as the one mentioned above – working, middle and upper social class. However, transitive intermediate groups between the classes were also established. The classification was revised several times in the 20th century. The factor of culture was added into the scheme of distinguishing among the classes, as other important indicator of mortality. However, the prestige of occupations and the skills needed for the jobs have remained the main feature of the classes up to present. Of course, there is the issue of subjectivity and individuality in the decisions about the status of occupations. The classification is controlled by Population Census and many kinds of social researches.

Although this tradition is historically rooted, recent research showed that this model is old-fashioned and thus it is not possible to apply it to current British society. The research was made in 2013 by BBC Lab UK which cooperated with Professor Mike Savage of the London School of Economics and Professor Devine. More than 161 000 people took part in it. “The BBC Lab UK study measured economic capital - income, savings, house value - and social capital - the number and status of people someone knows” (Huge survey reveals seven social classes in UK). As the result, seven social classes were established. According to the web BBC, the classes are following:

- **Elite** - the most privileged group in the UK, distinct from the other six classes through its wealth. This group has the highest levels of all three capitals.
• **Established middle class** - the second wealthiest, scoring highly on all three capitals. The largest and most gregarious group, scoring second highest for cultural capital.

• **Technical middle class** - a small, distinctive new class group which is prosperous but scores low for social and cultural capital. Distinguished by its social isolation and cultural apathy.

• **New affluent workers** - a young class group which is socially and culturally active, with middling levels of economic capital.

• **Traditional working class** - scores low on all forms of capital, but is not completely deprived. Its members have reasonably high house values, explained by this group having the oldest average age at 66.

• **Emergent service workers** - a new, young, urban group which is relatively poor but has high social and cultural capital.

• **Precariat, or precarious proletariat** - the poorest, most deprived class, scoring low for social and cultural capital” (*Huge survey reveals seven social classes in UK*).

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2.3. **Tradition of Social Classes in the United States of America**

Social stratification is common also in the USA. Americans use very similar model to the British one. The classical model has got three degrees too – people may be divided into the upper class, middle class and lower working class. The hierarchy is based especially on “wealth, educational attainment, occupation, income or membership in a subculture or social network” (*Class Structure in the U.S.*).

Even though a lot of sociologists offer that there are more classes than these three, no huge research as in the UK has been made recently to get the precise results of society stratification nowadays.

In general, at present people prefer the model based on education and incomes, which can be seen in the Attachment 2.
2. 4. Mobility in Classes

The issue, which is important for this thesis, is the mobility in classes. The female characters that stand in the centre of interest (Eliza in Pygmalion and My Fair Lady and Vivian in Pretty Woman) all undergo the change of the social class. However, most of the surveys show that the society is not so mobile in this sense. Most children who are born within working class families stay in working class even in their adulthood. The reason is simple – their parents are not able to pay for private education which could help them to enter the middle class.

Also considering marriage, most people marry partners from the same or only a little bit different social backgrounds. When there is the person who marries his or her partner from the lower class than they belong to, there is almost always the big disapproval of their family. One of the most famous examples could be seen in British royal family. It was not completely without problems when Prince William wanted to marry his former classmate from university Catherine Elizabeth Middleton who was born to middle-class family. However, it has been seen lately that it was the good step because the Duchess of Cambridge, which is her title after the marriage, became very popular among people all over the world. Even though it might be very difficult to move up the social ladder, it is sometimes possible, as this example from present time shows. However, the person has to adapt to the new social organization to fulfil the new social status and role and it comes together with the change of identity which is followed by the adaptation of language, style of clothing, etc.

2. 5. Social Class and Language

The study of language of social classes is rather difficult, because the language has got many variations within the same social class. As was said previously, even the stratification of society does not make sure that the language within one class is the same for each representative. People in classes have got only similar characteristics, not the same.

In general, it is easier to describe the language of upper classes – as far as English is concerned, the most educated people usually use standard forms. It means that
their language does not vary enormously. However, the lower we move through social classes, the more variations (especially grammatical and lexical) we find.

Although we may describe the features of social dialects, we must still bear in mind that in each class, the idiolects of individual people are present. It means that not every person from for example working class uses the same variations. Consequently what we recognize as the common features of each class are only the average results.

When we simplify the findings, we are able say that speakers from working and middle social classes use more often non-standard forms such as no – s ending in the third person singular of verbs in Present Simple, or double negation (that is made mostly by the negation of a verb and the use of a negative pronoun at the same time).

The situation with social-class accents is even slightly more difficult, because the accents vary in the way which is difficult to measure. The biggest variations are found in intonation or voice quality. Nevertheless the features that are possible to measure can be also found and this is especially the pronunciation of some vowels or consonants (their presence or absence in specific words or their quality). The example can be seen in Norwich accent (typical of the county of Norfolk in England), where the pointers of lower classes are higher amount of glottal stops in front of the consonant -r, for example the word butter is not pronounced as [bʌtə] but as [bʌʔə] or more dropped hs at the beginning of the words such as hammer [æmə] as opposed to standard [hæmə]. However, even here, the speakers sometimes use one variation and sometimes the other.
Chapter 3

Language and Identity

We have already discussed social variables such as gender and social class that among others influence the language. Another variable to explore is identity.

3.1. Identity

The concept of identity is studied not only by linguistics but it is also in the focus of general sociology. As far as linguistics is concerned, identity is one of the main issues of linguistic anthropology nowadays. There are more definitions and possible classifications of identity; various linguists might see slight differences in its interpretation. Bonny Norton, the lecturer at the University of British Columbia, is one of the most productive linguists considering this topic. She defines the identity as “how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space and how people understand their possibilities for the future” (in Dyer, 101).

The relationship between language and identity is tight. When we speak we expose our identity to the society. As Dyer mentions with respect to Norton, we make negotiations of our identity with respect to our sex, ethnicity, class, gender and others every time we speak (103). Language is also modified through our relationship to society. It may change in relation to the people’s social networks. Our family, friends, acquaintances, as well as interests, schools, jobs, etc., it all must be taken into account considering the fact how we use the language.

3.2. Identity and Language Variation

We know that language of individuals varies; it is what we call interspeaker variation. However, intraspeaker variation also plays an important role, because even individuals do not speak in the same way all the time. When we know that language negotiates our identity, we may assume that skilful speakers can change their identity through the change of their linguistic varieties. Generally speaking, when people hear
someone’s speech, they make assumptions about the speaker. For example, when we hear someone speaking with a village accent, there is the possibility to assume that the person is uneducated or uninteresting and common. On the other hand, when we hear someone speak with the Received Pronunciation, we may assume that he or she comes from upper or upper-middle classes and we will consider this person to be interesting, extraordinary, educated and powerful.

To sum up this notion, it is possible to influence people’s opinion of us by modulating the language and accommodating it to a specific social occasion or even class, especially while style-switching. As far as grammar and lexis are concerned, some structures that are considered to be incorrect in Standard English (such as double negation or the wrong forms of the verb to be) might function as indexes. On the one hand, the index may point to the speaker’s origin, social status or the current state of mind, on the other hand it can be a pointer to his or her identity.

3.3. Grouping

People naturally tend to create social groups. Such groups are formed on the basis of similarities. By other words, people of similar identities tend to group together. That explains the fact why people from upper classes do not interact so often with people from lower classes or the other way round – their identities differ too much, because they are shaped by different social backgrounds. Inside the group, the group is not driven by the similarity afterwards, but by the power and hierarchy within the group.

But since the groups are formed according to the similarity at the start, we can perceive the identity as that it is connected with the specific groups. In this sense, the identities of poor, rich, black, homosexual people, etc. are formed. The speech of people from these groups consists of similar features typical of their category, mainly considering the style.

3.4. The Change of Identity View

Identity has been in the centre of linguistic anthropology, sociology and other fields for a long time now. Whereas the first opinions of identity described this concept as
stable and unitary, based on social categories, more current views see identity as “the product of situated social action, identities may shift and recombine to meet new circumstances” (Bucholtz, Hall, 376). This dynamic view points out that identity is created under the circumstances of social situations and not in people themselves. Therefore we may also assume that our female heroines from plays and films undergo the change of identity, hence they are exposed to different social surroundings in which they have never been before.

3.5. Language Accommodation

The linguistic practice shows that people’s activities are important in forming identity considering the fact that language speakers come to various situations during the day. They accommodate their appearance, clothes as well as the language, for example pronunciation or style according to the situation.

When someone’s identity is reflected as high considering social status, it does not have to be necessarily a good thing for the person. Speakers across social spectrum are able to use such communicative varieties to take advantage of the person with high status for their own purposes; they are intentionally polite, when they want to achieve their personal social goals.

3.6. Identity and Culture

Identity cannot be discussed fully without mentioning cultural impact. As Bucholtz and Hall mentions “identity is not simply the source of culture but the outcome of culture” (382). Cultural background influences forming of identities similarly as other aspects discussed earlier. Unfortunately, not much research has been done considering language, identity and culture.

Chapter 1, 2 and 3 offered some of the basic social characteristics that have the important influence on language. These social variables influence the grammatical, lexical, phonetic and phonological and stylistic aspects of language users. However, it
does not mean that they influence each speaker in the same way. Speakers themselves often choose different varieties according to the topic of communication, the participants of conversation, social situation and mainly according to their intentions. We must not generalize these concepts globally; on the contrary individual differences must be taken into account, including the usage of varieties within one speaker.

Following chapters scrutinise the impact of gender, social class and identity of female speakers in *Pygmalion* and its adaptations and comment on the fact how their language is changed on the background of new social reality.
Chapter 4

Pygmalion – Eliza Doolittle

4. 1. Pygmalion as Drama

Pygmalion is one of the most popular plays by George Bernard Shaw. It was written in 1912, it went on theatre stages in 1913 in several different cities and the book was first published in 1915. Even though Shaw contributed to the world of theatre by a lot of plays, it was only Pygmalion that became an instant success.

Considering various versions, this study analyses the original written play and it does not refer to any theatre adaptation.

As the play, the book has its genre specifics. The literary form is defined as drama and it is meant to be played on the stage in front of the audience. It has got a typical structure, the text is written in the form of a script. As a prosaic text, it has got the plot, setting and characters and there are a lot of pieces of additional information. There is the list of characters with their basic description at the beginning. The text consists of the notes written in italics which contain the setting and the stage directions. The main part is then composed especially of dialogues of characters; we may only occasionally find the longer monologues. The whole text is divided into acts.

Pygmalion is a romantic social comedy which consists of the preface, five acts and the final contribution of the author, where the playwright confesses that the rest must be seen on the stage and he plays with the idea of how the story continues.

4. 2. The Main Characters

The main male character is Henry Higgins, professor of phonetics from London, who bets his friend Pickering that he will transform the street girl with a terrible accent to a lady with the pronunciation of the upper social class.

The main female character that stands in the centre of the thesis is named Eliza Doolittle. She is a flower girl, she comes from the working social class and her speech is
defined by the accent and dialect Cockney. Cockney English is mostly used right by working-class people around London.

Other characters also play part in the story, but they are not so important for Eliza’s transformation. It is Mrs. Eynsford-Hill with her daughter Clara and son Freddy, Henry Higgins’s mother and his housekeeper Mrs. Pearce.

4. 3. Preface to Pygmalion, A Professor of Phonetics

The preface explains the main idea behind the story. Shaw writes that “what the reformer England needs today is an energetic phonetic enthusiast” (1972; 3).

One of the most important statements which are included in the Preface to Pygmalion expresses the idea which is typical also of Henry Higgins’ belief and it is that “the English have no respect for their language, and will not teach their children to speak it. They spell it so abominably that no man can teach himself what it sounds like. It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman hate or despise him” (1972; 3).

Shaw also mentions here that the change of Eliza Doolittle is “neither impossible nor uncommon” (1972; 5) and can happen in the real life.

4. 4. The Plot

The short commentary on the plot is important for understanding the conversational analysis of this chapter. When needed, the more detailed description is given within the particular lines of characters.

The comedy is divided into five acts. Eliza Doolittle is introduced on a rainy day in Covent Garden in Act I. Shaw describes her as a rather ugly and dirty girl whose clothes are shabby and even though her features are not bad, in general she is not attractive at all. She tries to sell her flowers to the people from the middle and upper classes. Other characters are introduced too. The readers can read about the group of people standing in a shelter, protecting themselves from the rain. Among them there are also Eliza, Henry Higgins, the Professor of Phonetics, and Pickering. Higgins listens to
Eliza’s speech and transcribes it to his notebook. When he starts to guess the people’s origin, he attracts the attention of Pickering, the author of *Spoken Sanscrit*, who studies Indian dialect. Higgins is very self-confident and he says to Pickering that

“in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador’s garden party. I could even get her a place as lady’s maid or shop assistant, which requires better English” (Shaw: 1975, 11).

The plot in Act II is opened at Higgins’s laboratory in Wimpole Street. Higgins is there with Pickering and shows him his machines and techniques to record and study different kinds of sounds and accents. Meanwhile Mrs. Pearce, Higgins’s housekeeper, comes to inform him that there is a young lady at the door who wants to speak to him. She introduces her as a common girl and queer person with dreadful accent.

The girl is Liza Doolittle, the flower seller, who wants Higgins to teach her appropriate accent so that she could sell flowers in a shop. Pickering would like to see whether Higgins will be able to change this young girl as he promised the day before and offers to pay for the lessons when he is successful. Higgins is tempted and agrees.

Act III is set at Mrs. Higgins’s home. Henry’s mother is a respectable woman who likes to invite guests when she is at home. We do not know the exact time of the act; however we know it is a few months after the plot in Act II.

Henry comes to say to his mother in advance that he invited a foreign girl as a test how she is able to talk in higher society. The following scene contains the interesting situation in which all the people from Covent Garden from Act I come together again. It is Mrs. Eynsford-Hill with her daughter Clara and son Freddy. Pickering also comes and the final guest to arrive is Eliza. Their conversation is discussed in the following linguistic sections in more details.

Act IV takes place in the Wimpole Street laboratory. It is the summer evening and Higgins, Pickering and Eliza come home from what they call a long and tiresome day – they were at the garden party, a dinner party and the opera. The whole day was the final test for Eliza and the men celebrate their victory, because she passed the test in a brilliant way. However, Eliza does not share their happiness; on the contrary she feels desperate. She does not know how she could continue with her life – she was totally changed and
yet she has nothing, she will be left on her own in a socially different position. Here, she utters some of the famous lines:

“What’s to become of me? You don’t care. I know you don’t care. You wouldn’t care if I was dead. I’m nothing to you – not so much as them slippers” (Shaw: 1975, 63).

“What am I fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What’s to become of me?” (Shaw: 1975, 64).

The act ends when Eliza says good-bye to Higgins who still thinks that she will come back to Wimpole Street.

The play ends with the final contribution of the author. George Bernard Shaw explains the ending of the play in it. He does not understand why some authors feel the need to end their stories with a happy-ending. He leaves his story quite open at first but then he narrates how it all ended. His end is based on the idea that Eliza lives with Freddy and opens the flower shop with him thanks to the financial help of Pickering.

4.5. Gender, Social Class and Identity of Eliza Doolittle

What we surely know about Eliza Doolittle at the beginning of her story is that she is young, approximately 20 years old. She is a poor girl who sells flowers in the streets for living. She is a typical representative of London working class in the 20th century. Her social origin is defined by her economic status, the job, behaviour and manners, language and appearance. Henry Higgins is conscious of these variables, so when Eliza comes for his help, he wants to burn her clothes, buy her new ones and most importantly – he wants her to live in his house and do everything he tells her to do for the period of six months.

Eliza’s decision to change her life is the starting point of her identity negotiation. She saw an opportunity in Mr. Higgins and she put everything she had into the chance to get a better job and make the better future for herself. She even offered him all the money that she could to pay for the lesson.

From the gender point of view, Eliza plays submissive role to Henry. He treats her as a thing, as something low. Henry even calls her “deliciously low and so horribly dirty”
or a “draggletailed guttersnipe” (Shaw: 1975, 20). When Pickering calls Eliza Miss Doolittle, she is excited because no one has ever called her this way.

After some time at Higgins’ home, she is able to speak in a proper way without her Cockney accent. However, other features of her personality still prevent her from entering the upper class as can be seen in her initial test at Mrs. Higgins’s home. After this test, Higgins wants to know his mother’s opinion. And she comments on her:

„You silly boy, of course she’s not presentable. She’s a triumph of your art and of her dressmaker’s; but if you suppose for a moment that she doesn’t give herself away in every sentence she utters, you must be perfectly cracked about her” (Shaw, 1975: 51-52). This quotation perfectly shows the importance of the language as the whole with all its aspects (especially stylistic and pragmatic). The fact that Eliza has mastered the phonetic part of language does not guarantee her the entrance to the upper class.

The end of the book is defined by Eliza’s struggle to find her new identity. She plays with the idea of being without Higgins and earning for living as the teacher of phonetics.

In the play itself, her identity negotiations are not resolved. Only the final contribution of the author offers the idea of her being with Freddy, having their own flower shop, which would characterize her as a lady from the middle or upper-middle social class.

4. 6. Phonetic and Phonological Layer

While meeting Eliza in Act I, we do not know a lot of pieces of information about her. She is characterized especially by her pronunciation. Thanks to it we know that she was born in Lisson Grove and left for London to make her life better. She may be identified especially according to her strong Cockney accent.

When Eliza turns to Higgins to read what he has been writing about her in Covent Garden in Act I, she cannot understand his notes because he transcribed her speech phonetically. He reads aloud, with her exact pronunciation:

“Cheer ap, Keptin; n’baw ya flahr orf a pore gel” (Shaw: 1975, 7).
It is her utterance which meant: So cheer up, Captain; and buy a flower off a poor girl. The specifics of this statement are found in Cockney accent. Its typical features such as broad /ɑː/ in the verb buy are employed in it.

Eliza’s cockney is further discussed in Chapter 5, because the musical *My Fair Lady* gives better option to analyse it since it is the film adaptation with the audio side.

While practising her pronunciation with Henry, she is getting better very quickly. During her first test at Mrs. Higgins, she approaches the hostess to greet her with the polite greeting:

“How do you do, Mrs. Higgins?” (Shaw: 1975, 47)

Shaw describes her pronunciation as pedantically correct and with great beauty of tone. She is careful especially of the pronunciation of the initial –h which is not pronounced in cockney dialect.

As the events continue, Eliza is so used to her new pronunciation that she is not able to return to her original Cockney accent. When Pickering offers her that she could slang back at Higgins, she says:

“I can’t. I could have done it once; but now I can’t go back to it. Last night, when I was wandering about, a girl spoke to me; and I tried to get back into the old way with her; but it was no use. You told me, you know, that when a child is brought to a foreign country, it picks up the language in a few weeks, and forgets its own. Well, I am a child in your country. I have forgotten my own language, and can speak nothing but yours. That’s the real break off with the corner of Tottenham Court Road. Leaving Wimpole Street finishes it” (Shaw: 1975: 80).

At this point, she can speak better than most of people from the highest circles of society.

4. 7. Grammatical Layer – Morphology and Syntax

Besides the grammatical features that are common in Cockney dialect and some others too, Eliza often uses the grammatical constructions that are considered to be wrong in the Standard English. It is mainly the wrong usage of forms of tenses, such as using
past participles instead of past forms of the verbs or wrong constructions of Present Continuous forms.

In the beginning, Eliza makes a lot of mistakes of this kind. During her studies, she realizes where exactly she makes them and tries to be more conscious of her speech. In the end, she uses the grammatical constructions flawlessly and only when she is emotional, she makes the mistakes but corrects herself immediately, as in the following example:

“I want a little kindness. I know I’m a common ignorant girl, and you a book-learned gentleman; but I’m not dirt under your feet. What I done what I did was not for the dresses and the taxis: I did it because we were pleasant together and I come – came – to care for you; not to want you to make love to me, and not forgetting the difference between us, but more friendly like” (Shaw: 1975, 86-87).

From the mentioned Cockney features, especially double negation is present:

“I don’t want no gold and no diamonds. I’m a good girl, I am” (Shaw: 1975, 24).

The usage of the contracted vernacular forms of auxiliary verbs ain’t is very common not only in Cockney. The example may be seen in the sentence:

“But I ain’t got sixty pounds” (Shaw: 1975, 19).

Ain’t stands for the negative form of auxiliary verb have (got).

4.8. Lexical Layer

From the lexical point of view, Eliza’s speech is recognizable primarily thanks to her typical word-stock. Social varieties of slang words are present, as well as the informal or even colloquial expressions. She also uses a lot of words with emotional load.

We can find pointers in her speech that show her social origin even after some time of practising with Higgins, for example her exclamations with the word bloody or the phrasal verb do somebody in are both highly informal. The exclamation not bloody likely means certainly not and it is typically used when the speaker is irritated. It is considered to be taboo British English and many people find this swear word very
offensive. Eliza uses it in her ‘test conversation’ at Mrs. Higgins’s home after Freddy wants to walk her home. Eliza exactly says:

“Walk! Not bloody likely. I’m going in a taxi” (Shaw: 1975, 50).

This statement leaves the company breathless.

4. 9. Stylistic Layer

The language that is analysed here is spoken and as such has got some typical features. Formality scale does not have to be the same all the time and the way of speaking can move from formal to informal or even familiar style. Most of the sentences that are studied in this chapter are the part of dialogical conversations and that is why the participants of the conversation must be taken into consideration.

When Eliza comes to Wimpole Street to pay for the lessons, her social status is lower than the status of the professor. She does not know very well how to behave which may be seen from the fact that she is constantly admonished by Mrs. Pearce or Higgins himself. Mrs. Pearce often keeps her in her place by saying

“Don’t talk like that’ or “Do as you’re told” (Shaw: 1975, 18).

Higgins, who has got the higher social status, acts as if she were a thing, not a person with feelings. With his arrogance, he calls her ‘baggage’ when he turns to Pickering saying:

“Shall we ask this baggage to sit down or shall we throw her out of the window?” (Shaw: 1975, 19).

He also considers her “deliciously low and so horribly dirty” or to be a “draggletailed guttersnipe” (Shaw: 1975, 20).

Liza tries to protect herself, wanting him to be sensible but most often she is only able to weep and do the sound “Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-oo”. She is not strong enough to stand against Higgins at this point.

As the plot moves on, Eliza starts to understand the social barriers in conversations; however, she is not able to act according to them. At Mrs. Higgins’, the
The hostess starts the conversation with one of Henry’s allowed topics, which is the weather. She asks whether Eliza thinks it is going to rain. Eliza answers this question in completely inappropriate way:

“The shallow depression in the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation” (Shaw: 1975, 48).

Freddy starts to laugh at this speech, he considers Eliza funny. The conversation moves to influenza and Eliza starts to talk again – about her aunt who supposedly died of influenza, but she does not believe in that. She believes that they “done her in”. The guests do not understand this expression, so Higgins explains that it means to kill someone and that it is one of the new expressions of a new young generation. When Eliza continues talking about men who drink alcohol and women who like when men drink because then it seems that they love them more, Higgins stops the conversation and Eliza apologises that she must go. But in the remaining time she manages to shock her company again when she exclaims “not bloody likely” after Freddy’s offer to walk her home.

Nevertheless, although we do not know the exact events of the final test at the garden party, we know that Eliza was absolutely stunning and made no mistake. That is why we may assume that she mastered the language also in its stylistic layer.

4. 10. The Summary of Eliza’s Transformation

We learn a lot about the progress of Eliza’s learning in Act IV. During the garden party test, she is described as a real lady. She wears the beautiful evening dress and a lot of expensive jewellery; she looks very attractive and formal. Her appearance is completely different from the beginning of the story. Her manners also changed - she does not start screaming at Higgins even though she is angry and desperate at first. At the same time, we know that she was able to behave and speak better than most of other women from the higher society at the garden party. It is obvious that Eliza mastered not only the appropriate form of language, but also the suitability of form to subject matter.
However, as a person, as individuality, she is lost. She does not know what she will do, where she will go or who exactly she is now. She is sure that she cannot go back to sell flowers in the streets as she used to, because she does not belong to such place anymore.

When we look at the definition of identity by Norton we exactly see the impact on her. Norton defines identity as: “how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space and how people understand their possibilities for the future (in Dyer, 101). In this sense, Eliza is unsure in all points of the definition. She is left with uncertain future, knowing that Higgins does not care.

She also mentions that being a lady does not mean to speak and behave properly but it means to be treated properly. She thanks Pickering that he has been always nice to her and treated her like a lady from the complete beginning.

Eliza is very considerate about the whole process of change. She puts in words her feelings and opinions, she wants respect from other people because what she has done was not easy at all and she finally has respect for herself too. At the same time, she knows that social class distinction is artificial; the borders between classes are not irreversible.
Chapter 5

My Fair Lady – Eliza Doolittle

5.1. My Fair Lady as a Musical

*My Fair Lady* is one of the closest adaptations of *Pygmalion*. The script and lyrics were written by Alan Jay Lerner and music by Frederick Loewe. It went on stage on 15 March in 1956 at the Mark Hellinger Theatre and became immediate success. A lot of other productions and revivals followed in the second half of the 20th century, especially in New York and London. The film version was also very successful – it was shot in 1964 and George Cukor directed it. It won eight Oscars during Academy Award ceremony and this film adaptation is also the source of the analysis in this chapter.

What is typical of this film version is that the spoken lines are followed by songs. The lyrics of the songs contain some lines from original *Pygmalion* but they are mostly changed because of the rhyming reasons.

5.2. The Main Characters

The main characters remain the same as in *Pygmalion*. There is still Eliza Doolittle as the main female character and Henry Higgins as the main male character. Eliza is portrayed by Audrey Hepburn and Henry by Rex Harrison.

In contrast to *Pygmalion* new supporting roles are introduced. There is a new scene at the ball, which was not present in *Pygmalion*, and for example the character Zoltan Karpathy, the man who tries to guess Eliza’s origin, is introduced. Some of the scenes are changed; for example the first Eliza’s test is set at horse race and not in the Wimpole Street.

5.3. The plot

Because of the fact that the plot is basically the same as in *Pygmalion*, there is no need to comment on it in this section. In the case of added scenes, the commentary on the plot is given in the analysis itself.
5. 4. Gender, Social Class and Identity of Eliza Doolittle

The social categories of gender and social class which among others describe the character of Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady* do not differ from these which describe Eliza in *Pygmalion* too much. However, unlike *Pygmalion*’s written form, the viewers are able to watch the visual part of the musical with Eliza’s transformation from the working-class poor girl to the lady with representative behaviour, refined taste and fine language of elite society.

Together with her social class, her new gender role and identity are built through the change of her language during the plot of the musical. The language change is manifested by the following features.

5. 5. Phonetic and Phonological Layer

The features of phonetic layer of Eliza’s speech are prevailing in her language change. It was already mentioned in the previous chapter that Eliza is a Cockney girl. Her accent predestines her to be the part of the London working class. The viewers of *My Fair Lady* can hear Eliza speaking immediately in the first scenes which are set outside the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden.

When Freddy and Eliza bump into one another, Eliza is wailing:

“Look, where you’re going, look, where you’re going! Two bunches of violet trod in the mud! A full day’s wages.”

There are some of the typical sounds of Cockney pronunciation in these statements, for example diphthong alterations such as the alteration from /eu/ to /ai/ in “wages”. The plural noun wages is standardly pronounced [wedʒɪz] in Received Pronunciation, while Eliza pronounces it as: [waɪdʒɪz]. The other example is found in the noun day which Eliza pronounces as [daɪ] instead of [deɪ].
We may find these alterations in the following conversations too. When Eliza turns to Mrs. Eynsford-Hill, she says:

“Oh, he’s your son, is he? Well, if you’d done your duty by him as a mother should, you wouldn’t let him spoil a poor girl’s flowers and then run away without paying.”

The alteration to /ai/ is present in the verb pay.

Other examples might be found in the following Eliza’s utterances:

“Oh, he’s your son, is he? Well, if you’d done your duty by him as a mother should, you wouldn’t let him spoil a poor girl’s flowers and then run away without paying.”

“I won’t be called a baggage when I’ve offered to pay like any lady!”

Cockney is a non-rhotic accent, which means that especially final –r in words is not present in pronunciation. Therefore for example the word flower is always pronounced with final schwa.

Another typical feature is the frequent use of glottal stop. Eliza uses the glottal stop instead of /t/ in the word duty as in:

“Well, if you’d done your duty by him as a mother should…”

H-dropping must be mentioned too. Eliza pronounces Henry Higgins name without the initial h. In one of the songs, she sings:

“So just you wait, ‘enry ‘iggs, just you wait!”

Unlike Pygmalion, the creators of My Fair Lady shot the scenes in which Mr. Higgins teaches Eliza how to speak properly. These scenes basically show the most frequent features of Cockney accent. Mr. Higgins starts to teach Eliza the correct pronunciation of vowels. He insists on the different pronunciation than Eliza has. Her pronunciation of the vowel a, for example, is described as “ahyee”.

The scene in which Eliza repeats the sentence “The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain” became well-known. She actually says: “The rine in spine sties minely in the pline.” The aim of this exercise is to remove the diphthong alteration that was mentioned earlier in this chapter.
Another practice focuses on already mentioned h-dropping. Eliza should say:

“In Hertford, Hereford and Hampshire, hurricanes hardly even happen.”

However, what she actually says is: “In ‘ertford, ‘ereford and ‘ampshire, ‘urricanes ‘ahdly ‘ever ‘appen!”

Later on, Eliza is able to pronounce everything correctly and Henry decides to test her at the horse race. They meet Mrs. Higgins and the Eynsford-Hill family there. Eliza is doing well in the conversation that they are having considering the pronunciation. She speaks slowly and clearly and there is no sign of Cockney accent in her speech. However, she fails in other areas of language. She uses inappropriate words and also the content of her speech is questionable. The choice of her words is more discussed in section 5.7. and 5.8.

5. 6. Grammatical Layer – Morphology and Syntax

From the complete beginning, we hear the frequent use of vernacular negative form of the auxiliary verb to be ain’t. Although this form is possible to find in many dialects in all English speaking countries, it is also one of the main signs of Cockney. Linguists see it as the pointer to economically low social classes; speakers from higher classes of society use it only in the most informal surroundings. Here, Eliza uses it several times in the first half of the musical, as we can see in the following sentences:

“He’s no gentleman, he ain’t, to interfere with a poor girl.”

Ain’t functions as the negative form of the third person singular he is not.

“Well, I ain’t come here to ask for any compliment.”

The auxiliary verb do should be used here normally as I do not come.

“I ain’t done nothin’ wrong by speakin’to the gentleman!”

In this utterance, ain’t functions as the first person of auxiliary verb have in Present Perfect form I haven’t done.
Other sign of Cockney is present in Eliza’s speech too and it is double negation. In the following example, it is the double negation by using negative verb and negative pronoun at the same time.

“I ain’t got no parents.”

The last use of ain’t have not been discussed yet and it is its usage instead of have not (got). The statement also features double negation again.

During the conversation between Eliza and her father, who wants to borrow some money from her, she tells him:

“Well, I had a bit of luck meself tonight.”

Using the personal pronoun me instead of the possessive pronoun my signals morphological irregularity typical of Cockney speakers.

Other grammatical features do not precisely identify Eliza as a Cockney girl, but they definitely put her into low places in social hierarchy. These include the incorrect forms of the verb to be in Past Simple, such as in the sentences:

“Aooooow! One would think you was my father.”

Or the wrong forms of Present Continuous forms are present:

“I’m come to have lessons.”

5. 7. Lexical Layer

Lexical layer of language is used in an interesting way in My Fair Lady. Eliza’s speech consists of some slang words or other informal words which are not common in Standard English. The musical brought fame to the word lovely which is used both as a noun and an adjective. Unusual compound words are also created. The example of both is in the lyrics of Eliza’s daydream in the first quarter of the film:

“Oh, so lovely sittin’ absbloominlutely still

I would never budge till spring”
As soon as Eliza’s speech improves, she visits the race in Ascot. During the conversation with Mrs. Higgins, Freddy and his mother, she uses slang and highly informal words (do sb in for kill sb, pinch for steal). The company is perplexed so Henry tries to save the situation and explains it to the company as the new small talk.

5.8. Stylistic Layer

When Eliza confronts Freddy’s mother in Covent Garden at the beginning of the film, we witness her impolite conversational style:

“Oh, he’s your son, is he? Well, if you’d done your duty by him as a mother should, you wouldn’t let him spoil a poor girl’s flowers and then run away without paying.”

It is impolite speech considering the fact that these two women met for the first time and Eliza is speaking to a lady with higher social status, which is immediately seen thanks to their different clothes. Eliza basically offends Mrs. Eynsford-Hill that she has not been a good mother.

In the scene of horse race, the participants of conversation are confused by Eliza’s speech about her aunt especially because of the way she is speaking about her. It is a shocking idea of the situation that Eliza describes:

“They all though she was dead; but my father, he kept ladling gin down her throat. … Gin was mother’s milk to her. Besides, he’d poured so much down his own throat that he knew the good of it.”

Eliza is too direct for the company. They watch her with their mouths open and do not understand exactly what she is saying not only because of her choice of words that they do not know but also because they are not used to such conversational style. Women usually do not like speaking in public, but Eliza feels comfortable and she is not ashamed. Nevertheless, even though she wears the finest dress and hat, looks absolutely beautiful and speaks with precise pronunciation, people around her may notice her low social origin according to her style and direct behaviour.

The scene culminates when the company watch the race. Freddy gives Eliza his race ticket with a bet on Dover. Everyone is quiet and still except Eliza who leans
forward and screams: “Come on, come on, Dover!” This time ladies and gentlemen start to stare at her. She continues: “Come on, Dover! Move your bloomin’arse!”

These vulgar words are shocking for the visitors and Lerner writes in the script that “the moment she says it she realizes what she has done and brings her hand to her mouth as if trying to push the words back in. Several women gracefully faint, and are caught by their escorts” (152).

Although the first test did not end exactly according to the expectations for Eliza and Higgins, the final test at the Embassy ball ended great. Higgins is really happy that his former student Zoltan Karpathy did not recognize Eliza’s true origin. The viewers do not hear almost any conversations between Eliza and the visitors of the ball but they can see that she is doing very well there, she shows her good manners. All the visitors look at her admiringly and with respect.

5.9. The Summary of Eliza’s Transformation

There are the scenes in the musical which shows Eliza’s low origin. The example may be a bathing scene. Eliza has not seen a bath before and she thinks that her clothes will be washed in it. Then she refuses to put off her clothes and sit in it herself.

On the other hand, in the scenes of the Embassy ball and then the argument with Higgins, we see her transformation. She is able to control her feelings and emotions on the one hand and at the same time she is able to express them when she has got the urge to do it. She does not know what is to become of her but she is not so submissive any more.

After the argument with Henry, she goes to the Covent Garden which may be seen as the example of questioning her identity. She returns to the place of her origin, but she does not feel there at home any more, people do not recognize her and act differently. At the end of the film, she appears again in Higgins ‘study.
Chapter 6

Pretty Woman – Vivian Ward

6. 1. Pretty Woman as a Film

*Pretty woman* is an American film and it is still very popular with current women even though it has been 26 years now since the film came out. The script was written by Jonathan Frederick Lawton and the film was directed by Garry Marshall. It was shot under the production of Touchstone Pictures.

There is strong resemblance between Shaw’s *Pygmalion* and *Pretty Woman*. Even director Marshall said in an interview that *Pygmalion* inspired him. That is why I chose it as the third version. The main difference from the original text is in other setting and characters, but the basic idea of a young low class heroine who is getting to the higher society is present here too.

From the genre point of view, *Pretty woman* is a romantic comedy that focuses on the improbable love between a wealthy businessman and a prostitute. It is divided into scenes that follow one another in the chronological order.

The plot is set in Los Angeles and the viewers get to know both the rich surroundings in which the male character is at home and the streets where the main female character spends her time earning money.

6. 2. The Main Characters

The main male character is Edward Lewis. He is a rich businessman in middle age, his job is to buy companies in troubles and sell them piece by piece so that the profit would be as big as possible. In the film, his character is played by actor Richard Gere.

The female heroine is named Vivian. She is young and beautiful, she comes from middle class family, but after falling in love with bad men repeatedly, she ended up alone and started to work as a prostitute. Her character is played by actress Julia Roberts.
Supporting characters play an important role in the story too. It is for example Vivian’s best friend and flat-mate, Kit, also a prostitute. From Edward’s surroundings, it is his colleague, lawyer and friend Philip Stuckey.

One character that is important for Vivian’s transformation is hotel manager Barnard Thompson.

6. 3. The Plot

The plot is based on the love story between a wealthy businessman and a poor young prostitute. Edward Lewis pays Vivian a huge amount of money so that she would spend one week with him at the hotel. They visit different kinds of social occasions together; he buys her new clothes and spends the quality time with her. At the end of the week, Vivian finds out that she is in love with him. Although Edward does not want to be involved with her after the week is over, the story ends with the happy end when they are reunited.

6. 4. Gender, Social Class and Identity of Vivian Ward

The opening scenes of the film show the viewers two completely different worlds. The first scene introduces Edward who is at a party in a luxurious villa with a lot of other people in formal clothes from the upper social class. He is very busy there; he discusses the business and later on leaves the party in an expensive Philip’s car.

In the following scene, the video camera shifts and shows us Vivian’s world – the world in which people are considered to be the lowest part of the society, it is the world of people addicted to alcohol and drugs, prostitutes and their pimps. Here, we meet Vivian for the first time – we see the small room with a young girl - there is the focus on her slim body in underwear. She wakes up, puts on her clothes, a lot of cheap bracelets, a lot of make-up on her face, she repairs her high boots with a black felt-tip pen and then leaves the room. Vivian looks for her friend Kit, who stole the money for rent because of drugs. She asks Kit surprisingly whether she wants to leave this place one day or not, so it is clear that she is not happy with her life and she would like to change it.
These opening scenes describe Vivian’s social background. We may basically state that she could not get any lower than she is right now. However, from the complete beginning, she questions her identity – the current state of her is just temporary.

Help comes with her Pygmalion; in this case it is Edward Lewis who provides her with money and opportunities for better future. He falls in love with her, takes her to the events of upper classes and she continually learns how to react and what kind of language use according to the context of situation.

While being with Edward, she questions her identity especially after the polo event, where Edward told his colleague that Vivian was a prostitute. Vivian is really angry at Edward and explains it to him, shouting: “You know what? Just tell me one thing. Why did you make me all dressed up? What I mean is, if you were gonna tell everybody I’m a hooker, why didn’t you just let me wear my own clothes, okay? I mean, in my own clothes, when someone like that guy Stuckey comes up to me, I can handle it, I’m prepared. I’ve never had anyone make me feel as cheap as you did today.”

6. 5. Phonetic and Phonological Layer

From phonetic and phonological point of view, Vivian is defined especially by her exaggerated intonation with a lot of rising tones and highlighted stress on words when the emphasis is not needed.

She has not got any particular accent, does not make any mistakes in pronunciation either. Her social origin is spotted especially in the following language layers.

6. 6. Grammatical Layer – Morphology and Syntax

From the grammatical point of view, specific grammatical features of Vivian’s speech are especially informal grammatical abbreviations such as gonna or wanna that are commonly used in spoken English.
6.7. Lexical Layer

Vivian’s word-stock is possible to define with the frequent use of social varieties, such as slang words (used in the world of prostitution) and informal and colloquial words and phrases in general.

When Vivian meets Edward for the first time, she offers him her services asking:

“Hey, sugar, you lookin’ for a date?”

She calls him sugar even though she sees him for the first time, which is extremely familiar.

While driving to the hotel together, Vivian admires the car:

“Man, this baby must corner like it’s on rails!”

Edward does not understand what it means and he asks formally:

“I beg your pardon?”

This conversational exchange is the example of the huge gap between them from the lexical point of view.

While being in the hotel room the first evening, Edward offers her to stay the whole night and she is genuinely surprised, saying:

“Are you sure you want me to stay for the entire night? I mean, I could just pop you good and be on my way.”

The verb pop sb may be considered the pointer to her social background, as well as her reaction to being able to tie a tie:

“Well, I screwed the debate team in high school.”

Slang words are not the only expressions that characterise Vivian’s word-stock. She likes using ambiguous lexis, as in the following example. Vivian mentions that she takes 100 dollars per hour. Edward is surprised by this amount and comments on it as that is “pretty stiff”. When Vivian catches the word, she touches his penis with the statement:

“Well, no, but it’s got potential.”
When she refers to her profession, she always uses the word *hooker*, which is an informal expression used for a prostitute especially in North American English.

Edward does not understand several slang expressions that Vivian uses even after several days with her. It is reflected in the following conversation that they are having in the street while walking.

Vivian says: “I’m starving. There’s a snap dog vendor over there. Do you have any money?”

Edward answers: “I have money. I don’t know what a snap dog is, but I have money.”

Vivian reacts: “Well, I’m gonna give, um, you’ll buy a snap dog; we’ll cop a squat under a tree somewhere.”

However, Edward’s reaction is only: “Cop a what?”

6. 8. Stylistic Layer

There is the clear difference between Vivian’s speech and Edward or the hotel manager’s speech on the scale of formality. When Edward offers Vivian to go to the hotel with him, he uses formal (almost rigid) language constructions:

“Well, if you don’t have any prior engagements, I’d be very pleased if you would accompany me into the hotel.”

She does not play the game of formality and answers in her familiar way: “You got it” with a strong stress on the verb got and flirting intonation.

When they enter the hotel, she comments on it: “Holly shit.”

She is genuinely surprised at the luxurious surroundings that she has never been to before.

One of the most important scenes from the stylistic point of view takes place in a restaurant, where Edward is having the business lunch with two other men, who are related together; they are a grandfather and a grandson. When Vivian gets up from the table, she is surprised that all the men get up too, but she is able to put herself together
and apologise that she is leaving for bathroom. Edward asks her whether he should order her. She starts to react in her natural way, in an exaggerated gesticulation with the word “yeah”, however she realizes soon that this is not appropriate and answers: “Please do so. Thank you.” Her reaction shows that she is well aware of good manners.

Vivian has got the hard time because of the forks on the table during the first meal. The old man who watches her is polite, when he takes the toast to his hand to eat it and he explains that he never knows which fork he should use. The next meal is escargot, which is a French word for snails. Vivian has got the hard time again when she does not know how to eat it at all. They use special tongs for it and when Vivian takes the snail, it slips through it and flies over the restaurant where a waiter catches it. Her reaction is inappropriate and at the same time funny for the rest of the table because she says: “Slippery little suckers.” However, the waiter’s reaction is: “It happens all the time.”

When an old man at the table starts eating with his hand he behaves according to the politeness principle and goes against the cooperative principle because what he says is not obviously true, considering his social status. But he acts nice. Also the waiter, who catches the escargot, behaves according to the politeness principle. No one also comments on Vivian’s utterance about slippery little suckers. Sucker is a word from American slang used to emphasise a person or a thing and it is not definitely used during such occasions.

Similarly, the stylistic inappropriateness is seen also in the scenes at the opera. The couple is leaving for an opera to San Francisco. Vivian wears long red evening dress and rented, very expensive necklace. The hotel guests are turning round to see her and their looks are now admiring.

Vivian is overwhelmed by the performance. When the opera ends, a lady from the loge asks Vivian if she enjoyed it. Vivian who is taken over by it, answers:

“Oh, it was so good; I almost peed in my pants.”

The lady is surprised by this reaction and shockingly asks “What?” with her mouth open. Edward corrects Vivian’s utterance and says:

“She said she liked it better than Pirates of Penzance.”
6. 9. The Summary of Vivian’s Transformation

When Vivian and Edward are in Edward’s penthouse, they start to communicate about what they are going to do. The misunderstanding resulting from her insufficient knowledge of higher social surrounding comes when a porter brings champagne to the room. Vivian comes to get it, but the porter is looking at her and she feels threatened: “What are you lookin’ at?” She asks him, and then turns at Edward: “What is he lookin’ at?” Edward goes and gives the porter a tip. Vivian feels embarrassed, because she did not know the social situation that she was suddenly in. At the end of the story, she knows exactly how to behave in such situations and this example can be used to describe her continual change from a prostitute to a young self-confident woman who is able to react in different kinds of social occasions.

Her language was changed especially in the ways of intonation, tone, loudness and quickness of speech. She does not use expressive or offensive expressions so much and the only thing that will probably stay with her is the reactions that are inappropriate in some situations, however, they come from her spontaneous nature.
Chapter 7

Three Versions of Pygmalion – Comparison

The versions that were discussed in previous chapters are different pieces of work. *Pygmalion* is the play, *My Fair Lady* is the musical and *Pretty woman* is the film. The genre of all might be defined as romantic comedy. Of course that *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady* are the most similar versions, because *My Fair Lady* is a direct adaptation of *Pygmalion*.

The female heroines share very similar characteristics. Both Eliza and Vivian come from the low classes. Eliza is a typical representative of London working class with her appearance, occupation and language. Vivian originally comes from middle-class family, but ended at the complete bottom of society, when she started to work as a prostitute.

All female characters achieve the higher value in society, when they change their previous lives. As we can see in the example of Eliza, it is a long-term process, which lasts for half a year. On the contrary, it is very fast in the example of Vivian, when her transformation lasts only one week.

The women had to go through difficult time and completely changed their appearance, behaviour and manners and last but not least the language. The biggest change in language is seen in Eliza. She was so called Cockney girl and being Cockney is not only about the language but also about the way of living. Both her dialect and accent were influenced by Cockney and it was a big pointer to her social origin. Mr. Higgins trained her in language every day and in the end she achieved the perfection. Especially in *Pygmalion*, the author emphasised the role of another man too, Colonel Pickering. Whereas Mr. Higgins taught Eliza good pronunciation, Colonel Pickering taught her good manners without even knowing it. The role of Pickering is not so highlighted in *My Fair Lady*, probably because of the different ending. There was only one important man who influenced Vivian in *Pretty Woman* and it was Edward Lewis. Henry Higgins and Edward Lewis function as the women’s Pygmalions and are the reason for their change. When we think about it from the gender point of view, the female characters play a submissive role to men – they would not be able to change their lives without the men who supported them financially and mentally.
What is different about Eliza and Vivian at the beginning of their stories is their identity. Eliza is satisfied with her life at first and when she was thrown to the new world in which she was a lady, she lost her identity and could not find the new one. Everything she knew was different then and she did not know how to continue, as can be seen in her sentences: “What am I fit for? Where am I to go? What’s to become of me?”

On the contrary, Vivian was lost in the beginning. She was not satisfied with her life, but she did not see any way out. When Edward showed her another way of life, she immediately knew what she could do.

To comment again on language, there are several linguistic features that were prevailing in their speech and they had to divest of them. However, some of the linguistic forms were kept and became characteristic of their nature and youth. I summed the forms up in a table for the clear arrangement. Because Pygmalion and My Fair Lady consist of many same lines, I use the character of Eliza only once in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eliza</th>
<th>Vivian</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning of the story</td>
<td>At the end of the story</td>
<td>At the beginning of the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-standard grammatical forms: mistakes in tenses double negation, wrong word order, wrong usage of pronouns</td>
<td>None of these forms are present in her speech</td>
<td><strong>Non-standard grammatical forms:</strong> Leaving the auxiliary verbs, wrong (informal) word order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexis:</td>
<td>Cockney words and phrases</td>
<td>Lexis: Vocabulary connected with prostitution</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal phrasal</td>
<td>Only occasionally informal phrasal verbs or other expressions (such as</td>
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<tr>
<th>verbs</th>
<th>Ambiguous allusions</th>
<th>cool)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swear words</td>
<td>Informal phrasal verbs</td>
<td>Swear words</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Expressions of genderlect:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Expressions of genderlect:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Pronunciation:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Style:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on fillers</td>
<td>No exaggerated emphasis</td>
<td>Received Pronunciation</td>
<td>None of these features are present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quality intonation and voice</td>
<td>Acting in language is deliberate and calm</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Pronunciation:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Pronunciation:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Pronunciation:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Style:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cockney accent</td>
<td>American English</td>
<td>Only typically</td>
<td>Choice of words and their meanings, together with intonation and grammatical structure creates specific style of a prostitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exaggerated intonation when surprised</td>
<td>Exaggerated intonation when working</td>
<td>American pronunciation remains</td>
<td>Completely new style of speech with deliberately chosen words, clear pronunciation and calm intonation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High pitch voice</td>
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<th><strong>Style:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very fast way of speaking with vocabulary influenced by Cockney Exaggerated acting and shrieks</td>
<td>None of these features are present Acting in language is deliberate and calm</td>
<td>Choice of words and their meanings, together with intonation and grammatical structure creates specific style of a prostitute</td>
<td>Completely new style of speech with deliberately chosen words, clear pronunciation and calm intonation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the women changed their appearance and language, their priorities in life were also changed. And more importantly, people changed their attitudes towards them. Eliza was very low person for Henry Higgins in the beginning, which is clear from the way he was treating her while calling her *baggage* or *draggletailed guttersnipe*. Vivian had similar unpleasant experience in a shop when the shop assistants refused to serve her.

To conclude it, social mobility in classes is possible in these pieces of literature and film industry. However, hard effort is needed and it might be accompanied with
identity questioning. Language plays approximately similar role in the mobility to appearance, behaviour and manners, as well as finances and social networks.
Conclusion

In this diploma thesis, I analysed the language of the three versions of Pygmalion. Specifically, I focused on conversational exchanges that reflect the alteration of identity and temporary upward social mobility of the heroines.

My analysis was based on the following hypothesis: the temporary upward social mobility of the heroines will be a result of a class-conscious change reflected in their use of language and personal identity negotiation. The hypothesis was confirmed in both of the analysed cases.

By far the biggest change can be seen in the development of Eliza Doolittle’s character both in Pygmalion and My Fair Lady. The slight differences between these two versions taken aside, her transformation within six months is the transformation to a new woman. She changes from a shy and submissive girl to a strong and independent woman. As Shaw says in the sequel of Pygmalion, such change is relatively plausible in real life, too. Eliza, who sold flowers in the streets, spoke only Cockney dialect but at the end of the story she is able to speak Received Pronunciation and no one can recognize her true social origin.

Pronunciation was the biggest challenge for Eliza but it emerged that grammatical mistakes remained with her for the longest. However, she was described as a quick learner in Pygmalion, she eliminated all the Cockney features from her speech, such as using unnecessary glottal stops, h-dropping at the beginning of the words, vowel lowering, omission of letter t in words and mainly diphthong alterations. The vernacular grammatical features such as double negation, the usage of pronoun me instead of my, frequent usage of ain’t or incomplete tense structures were also removed. She could control the use of colloquial, informal and swearing words. Stylistic aspects of conversations were also challenging for Eliza, however, she learnt how to use the suitable language forms according to the field (subject matter) and tenor (participants) of conversation in the end. She was able to speak and act like a lady or even Duchess at the garden party, which served as the final test in Pygmalion, as well as at the embassy ball in My Fair Lady. We may certainly say that Eliza is able to represent the upper social class at the end of her story, but without further help of Mr. Higgins or Pickering, this social mobility would be only temporary and she would have to negotiate her identity again.
This ending is eliminated in *My Fair Lady*, where Eliza only returns to Henry and her identity negotiation is not resolved.

While it took six months in *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady* to teach Eliza how to use the language properly, Vivian in *Pretty Woman* needed only one week. This huge difference proposes the contemplation why there is such temporal gap. One explanation can be based on the fact that the story of *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady* has got the linguistic potential (Henry Higgins is the Professor of Phonetics), therefore it is science based and the author understood that such learning needs time, but *Pretty Woman* may be considered only the popular film which is made to entertain the viewers, especially women, by quite simple love story and nothing more. However, we cannot compare *Pygmalion* and *Pretty Woman* in all features, because the director of *Pretty Woman* was only inspired by the general concept of Pygmalion (the legend) and some of the *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady* scenes (such as the scene of horse races). Also the temporal and spatial setting differs; Vivian’s world is the world of the late 20th century in America, Eliza is the girl living at the beginning of the 20th century in London.

Another explanation can be based on Vivian’s social status as a child. She came from the middle-class family and her social background was probably more stimulating that it was in Eliza’s working class family. She did not need to change her language to such extend, because as she mentioned she had finished eleven classes. Her way of speaking is influenced by being a prostitute; we may characterize it as the informal language which is commonly found in spoken contexts. When Vivian got into higher circles of society, she could accommodate her language quite easily. Her identity was not challenged in such extend as with Eliza. No one had to teach Vivian how to speak; she only needed to be reminded of her body language and nonverbal communication in general. However, Vivian and Eliza share the problematic stylistic aspect of conversation. Vivian often chooses her word-stock inadequately concerning the participants of communication, especially their age and social status, as can be seen in the restaurant or opera scenes.

The men play an important role in the social mobility of heroines. They basically provide the heroines with the resources that are needed for any alteration of this type.

This sociolinguistic analysis is based on the fictional characters. In my opinion, further research on this topic should be done by linguists and students of linguistics,
because it shows the understanding of social variables and language in the public. Even better situation would be if we were able to find real language users who moved the social class at some point in their life, but the diachronic point of view would prevent us from getting enough valid language material before the change.
Works Cited

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


The picture shows the typical model of British social stratification of the 20th century.

The second picture may be seen as more up-to-date model.
The table shows the stratification of American social classes according to the model based on education and income.