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Harry Potter and Rubeus Hagrid: A Comparative Study of Linguistic Variables

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SUMMARY IN NORWEGIAN

Denne bacheloroppgaven tar for seg analysen av to utvalgte karakterer i den første Harry Potter boken, *Harry Potter og De Vises Stein*, skrevet av J.K. Rowling; nemlig karakterene Harry Potter og Rubeus Hagrid, og disse karakterers bruk av ulike former av lingvistiske variabler, avhengig av deres samtalepersoners alder. Lingvistiske variabler er her forstått som to eller flere måter å si én ting på [forskerens oversettelse](Kiesling, 2011, p.13). Forskningen er avgrenset til analysen av kun den første boken i serien grunnet oppgavens formelle krav om lengde.

Forskningsmetoden er kvantitativ, og oppgavens innhold inkluderer tidligere lingvistiske teorier og forskning, relevante litterære og lingvistiske begreper, en metodologidel med beskrivelse av studiens fremgangsmåte og en diskusjonsdel der resultatene er presentert i tabeller og grafer, med videre sammenlikning mellom Hagrids og Harrys bruk av ulike former av lingvistiske variabler. Resultatene fra denne forskningen viser en betydelig forskjell mellom disse to karakterenes bruk av standard og ikke-standard former av lingvistiske variabler, med alder som en viktig, men ikke avgjørende faktor. Forskningen åpner dessuten for flere fremtidige studier av Harry Potters og Rubeus Hagrids bruk av lingvistiske variabler grunnet et stort antall variabler som er tilgjengelige, som forskeren i denne oppgaven ikke hadde mulighet til å analysere.

PREFACE

To my wonderful partner Øystein and my best friend Mars-

I would not be here without you.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of the thesis

The aim of this thesis is to examine how linguistic variables contribute to character construction in the first Harry Potter book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J.K. Rowling, by comparing the language of two of its characters, Harry Potter and Rubeus Hagrid, and exploring whether their variables vary based on the age of theirs interlocutors. A linguistic variable is an abstract feature that is realised by two or more variants (Meyerhoff, 2018, p. 10-11). An example of this would be the word 'swimming' as a variable, realised by two variants – swimmi[ŋ] and swimmi[n] – depending on the speaker.

Some variants are close to Standard English, i.e. the variety of English that is defined by grammars and dictionaries (Melchers, Shaw & Sundkvist, 2019, p. 33), while others differ greatly from the Standard English, and are often referred to as non-standard English forms. The use of standard and non-standard variants is connected to certain attitudes and perceptions of class. While some varieties that closely resemble Standard English can be thought of as pleasant and give the speakers a certain type of prestige, varieties that use non-standard forms can however be stigmatised and perceived as 'ugly' or 'low-class' (Melchers et al., 2019, p. 32). By analysing the linguistic variables used by Harry Potter and Rubeus Hagrid, the researcher will therefore be able to indicate whether or not Harry Potter's and Rubeus Hagrid's use of linguistic variables show them in a certain stereotypical way, which in turn can affect how the readers perceive them as characters. The differences in the way Harry and Hagrid speak can therefore provide information about what kind of characters they were meant to be portrayed as.

1.2 Why Harry Potter?

The Harry Potter book series is not only extremely popular, but it is also one that many are familiar with and have knowledge of. It tells the fantasy tale of an eleven-year-old boy named Harry who discovers that he is a wizard and goes on adventures with his two friends at a magical school for wizards and witches called Hogwarts, a school at which Hagrid is the gatekeeper of. Harry finds himself facing dangers and discovering the many wonders that the wizarding world has to offer.

In the aftermath of the book series being officially finished, re-visiting the first book with a focus on linguistic variables opens new possibilities for analysis and interpretation. A literary analysis of the main character in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* shows how, thanks to its author's writing style, he is portrayed as honest, sincere, and good-natured (Maza, 2012, p. 428), and the current study will contribute to knowledge about how the characters of Harry Potter and Rubeus Hagrid can be interpreted based on and the language that they use, focusing specifically on their variables. By investigating whether certain linguistic variables portray the characters in stereotypical ways, the study will contribute to a new and expanded understanding of an otherwise well-known series.

1.3 Research questions and structure

The questions that this thesis will focus on are as follows:

1. A. What kinds of linguistic variables are used by Harry Potter and Rubeus Hagrid?
   B. Does the use of linguistic variables change depending on the age of Harry and Hagrid's interlocutors, and, if so, in what ways?
2. Do the linguistic variables used by Rubeus Hagrid and Harry Potter contribute to show these characters in a certain stereotypical way? If so, what associations can the readers have to these two characters based on their use of variables?

The thesis will first cover relevant literary and linguistic terms. Secondly, it will explain previous studies that have been found on the topic, and describe the methodology. Following this, an introduction of the characters of Harry Potter and Rubeus Hagrid will be presented, with an explanation as to why these two characters were selected. Subsequently, results will be covered and discussion of findings of the different linguistic variables that these two characters use will be discussed. Finally, answers to the research questions mentioned above will be provided, as well as a conclusion to summarise the findings of the study. By researching the linguistic variables of Hagrid and Harry based on the age of their interlocutors, the study will provide information about whether or not the use of standard or non-standard variables changes with certain groups of interlocutors. Language used with older interlocutors can be vastly different from language used with younger interlocutors (Castro & James, 2014, p. 222) because children and adults have different ways of understanding and using language, so the analysis should provide more information on how age influences the variables that are used.

2.0 THEORY

2.1 Stereotypes and fictional characters

In order to understand the research that will be conducted, the terms stereotype and round and flat character need introducing. Stereotype is a cognitive representation of social groups, incorrect generalisations that are rigid, oversimplified, and biased; undesirable permanence (Bar-Tal, Graumann, Kruglanski & Stroebe, 1989, p. 4). Both real people, as well as fictional characters can be stereotyped. In a study of two fictional characters, for instance, the way that they are written can influence the way that the readers stereotype them. In this study, the character of Harry fits a 'round character' description- a character that is too complex to be described with any adequacy as a person in real life, and like real persons, capable of surprising us, while the character of Hagrid is a 'flat character' that is built around "a single idea or quality" and is presented without much individualising detail, and can therefore be described in a single sentence or phrase (Abrams, 2013, p. 33).

2.2 Linguistic terms

Linguistic variables are "two or more ways of saying the same thing, where 'the same thing' refers to what is donated by an utterance" (Kiesling, 2011, p.13), as introduced by Labov's (1963) study of variation conducted on the island of Martha's Vineyard (Kiesling, 2011, p. 13). Linguistic variables can both be free, as well as constrained. Free variation means that some variants alternate with each other without any reliable constraints on their occurrence in a particular context or by particular speakers (Meyerhoff, 2018, p. 12), meanwhile constraint(s) indicate that the distribution of variants is neither random nor free, and shows correlations with independent factors [such as class, religion, gender, age, occupation or ethnicity]; these factors can be said to be the constraints on the variable (Meyerhoff, 2018, p. 12). In other words, linguistic variables do not change their meaning even though they are realised differently, and the realisation of variables can either occur spontaneously, or be bound, or rather constrained, by certain factors.

Differences between linguistic variables used by people can also vary. In interspeaker variation, the differences in variation is measured between different speakers (Meyerhoff, 2018, p. 20), while in intraspeaker variation the differences are present in the way a single person speaks at different times, or with different interlocutors (Meyerhoff, 2018, p. 20).

Characters in books can use 'Standard Language', which implies language that is formal, language produced in standard varieties where spelling is regulated by authoritative dictionaries (Melchers et al., 2019, p. 14); a variety that is recognised as more correct and acceptable than other varieties (Hudson, 1996, p. 8). It is the variety used by the professions, the media, etc., it has greater prestige than dialects and non-varieties; it is used as a written language and used in important functions in the society such as the government, courts, education, literature, etc. (Hudson, 1996, p. 9). If the characters are written in English, the Standard, correct version of the language will be Standard English, a variety of English defined by a set og grammatical and lexical features which are regarded as correct, defined by the elite publishers and journalists (Melchers et al., 2019, p. 30-31).

Some characters can speak a non-standard type of language, using various dialects and accents. With dialects the researcher means varieties of a language that have a codified written form, and the dialectal differences concern all of pronounciation, grammar and vocabulary, whereas accent differences concern only differences in pronounciation (Melchers et al., 2019, p. 12-13). Some characters can use slang- a restricted set of new words and new meanings of older words, mixed with linguistic items with a much larger social distribution (Hudson, 1996, p. 2), which makes the characters more relatable due to them representing an actual group of speakers. Social dialectology helps study dialects. Social dialectology is the study of linguistic variation in relation to speakers' participation or membership in social groups, or in relation to other non-linguistic factors" (Meyerhoff, 2018, p. 18). Using social dialectology in literature helps portray the characters as dialectally realistic as possible to ensure creation of complex characters.

2.3 Previous research

Previous studies within linguistics have investigated listener sensitivity to the -ing variable (Vaughn & Kendall, 2018), and the sociolinguistic construction of character diversity in fictional television series (Reichelt, 2018). These studies have found that listeners display different attitudes towards different forms of the -ing variable (Vaughn & Kendall, 2018) and that speakers react with surprise to variants that they don't perceive as the norm (Vaughn & Kendall, 2018). The perception of the characters in Harry Potter also differs among different cultural groups (Stening & Stening, 2020). One study of the readers' perception of the character of Harry found for instance that English speakers perceived Harry Potter as being

lower on extraversion and agreeableness than Chinese speakers, who ranked him higher in the same categories (Stening & Stening, 2020, p. 297, 300-301).

Analysing both of the characters, Hudson's *Sociolinguistics* states that the suffix *-ing* in the English language, with its two choices of pronounciation, has different social distributions, where the first, standard form *ing* is a typical pronounciation, whereas -in is a typical non-standard pronounciation (Hudson, 1996, p. 2). By saying 'standard', the researcher means a norm that is recognised as correct or acceptable (Hudson, 1996, p. 8). Historically, for many hundred years the suffix -ing was realised with [n] in all parts of the English society (Hudson, 1996, p. 11), and it wasn't before 18th century that the middle class started using the [ŋ] realisation, and later, the lower class. Today, the [ŋ] pronounciation has been adopted by the upper class, while the [n] pronounciation is regarded as "careless" and as belonging to lower class (Hudson, 1996, p. 11). A study conducted by University of Oregon also found that when it comes to words such as *anything* and *everything*, the [n] realisation of these words were rated most surprising in the study (Vaughn & Kendall, 2018, p. 61).

Other studies included the use of glottal stop in Harry Potter (Bjelaković, 2018) and how the use of standard language by the characters can be due to them being role models for young children (Bjelaković, 2018). When it came to multiple sociolinguistic variables, one study found that speakers handle multiple sociolinguistic variables differently, associating some variants with prestige, and others with lower class (Gregory, 2013). Variables belonging to dialects were however considered pleasant, as showed in the study of Hagrid's use of West Country dialect (Santika, 2016). To determine which dialect Hagrid's speech could resemble, a study of regional Englishes was used (Coupland & Bishop, 2007). The study of Hagrid's dialect highlighted that the [t] dropping in Hagrid's words such as 'jus' and 'fir', [d] dropping in prepositions such as 'an', the [n] realisations of the -ing variable and the 'yeh' form of 'you' all are features that resemble West Country dialect (Santika, 2016).

One study criticised the celebrity culture of Harry Potter, with Harry belonging to a superior race (Parry-Giles, 2011), while another aimed to determine whether or not reading Harry Potter books improves attitudes towards stigmatised groups (Vezzali, Stathi, Giovanni, Capozza & Trifiletti, 2015). The study on attitudes towards stigmatised groups concluded that the readers' attitudes could, in fact, improve as a result of exposure to stigmatised groups in literature (Vezzali et al., 2015). The study, *The Greatest Magic of Harry Potter: Reducing Prejudice*, writes for instance that the world of Harry Potter is characterised by strict social hierarchies that can result in prejudices, with obvious parallels with our society (Vezzali et al.,

2015, p. 106-107). The study could be supporting the idea that based on the portrayal of the characters as well as their use of linguistic variables, the readers, due to the contact with stigmatised characters such as Hagrid, could stigmatise them, as well. However, the findings of that study concluded with an opposing idea. It found that both the readers who identified with Harry Potter's character and those who didn't had improved attitudes towards stigmatised groups after reading the novels (Vezzali et al., 2015, p. 115).

 A study on *The Impact of Cultural and Linguistic Background on the Perception of Characters in Harry Potter* states that "the characters [in Harry Potter] can be treated as similar, or close to, the complexity of level of real people" (Stening & Stening, 2020, p. 286), and that "with the key characters of the novel being teenagers, chronological change is expected, as the characters age and mature". Their complexity, along with a linguistically consistent character's dialogue supports the overall construction of a character identity (Reichelt, 2018, p. 257). Therefore, the distribution of linguistic features across characters is able to guide characterisation in different ways (Reichelt, 2018) since they are as complex as real people.

The researcher has not found, however, any sources where linguistic variables of both Harry Potter and Rubeus Hagrid were compared, which is how this thesis came to be. There were sources focusing on the protagonist of the series and his psychology, and sources analysing the character of Hagrid, but no research about comparing the two characters could be found. This presented an opportunity, a linguistic comparison that no other researcher has previously worked with.

3.0 METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS

3.1 Methods

In this study, the researcher chose to apply a quantitive method, which consists of information that can be put into numbers, figures and graphs, and processed by using statistical procedures, counting how much or many there is/are of whatever we are interested in. In linguistic research this implies counting the occurrence of a particular phonological or syntactic feature in a person's speech (Rasinger, 2013, p. 10). The method was chosen because it allows for a broader study, with more objective results. The different variables that were chosen for this study were the different forms of the -ing variable, the different forms of

'you' and 'your', prepositions, omission of letters, as well as slang and personal language, such as 'Godswallop' or 'Crikey'- unique words that the characters use. These specific variables were chosen due to the many ways in which they could be realised, especially the 'you and your' and 'was and were' variables. Choosing slang and personal language as a variable could also provide a more personal outlook on the internal complexity of the characters' language and provide information on how they choose to use the slang forms, and when. Personal pronoun variables additionally guaranteed a high count of variables, since the words 'you' and 'your' tend to be used frequently in literary works, regardless of genre. In 'slang and personal language' category, due to few instances of personal language, these two categories were merged.

First, with the help of an introduction to quantitative research in linguistics, the different forms of variables, standard and non-standard, were counted separately based on who the interlocutors of Hagrid and Harry were, and the researcher wrote down the interlocutors' names. The interlocutors were then divided into groups based on their ages and grouped according to whether they were younger or older than the two selected characters. As the researcher counted each instance of linguistic variables, sometimes one variable had to be counted twice as the character of Harry could for instance use the variable with two interlocutors of different ages at the same time. One example of this was the sentence "D'you think he'll leave you and your families alone if Gryffindor win the house cup?" (Rowling, p. 290) where the instances of 'd'you', 'you' and 'your' needed to be counted twice as Harry was asking that question to both Hermine, who is a few months older than Harry, and to Ron, who is a few months younger than him.

3.2 Character selection

The characters of Harry Potter and Rubeus Hagrid were chosen primarily because of how different they are in relation to each other. Harry Potter being the book's protagonist and hero, most described, and whose internal thoughts are most known to the readers. Rubeus Hagrid, on the other hand, is a side character, important yet replaceable, and both of them differ significantly in their roles, social status, occupation, age, physical characteristics, ways of speaking, personality and education. Both are incredibly unique in their story, and their use of linguistic variables seems to be drastically different.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Rubeus Hagrid

Variable	Younger interlocutors		Older interlocutors	
	Non-standard forms	Standard forms	Non-standard forms	Standard forms
-ing	96	4	14	0
You and your	171	28	6	2
Was and were	3	1	0	1
Prepositions	226	32	20	4
Omission of letters	84	28	10	2
Slang and personal language	93	3	8	0
Total:	673	96	58	9

Table 1. Standard and non-standard linguistic variables used by Rubeus Hagrid with younger and older interlocutors.

Out of all the linguistic variables that Rubeus Hagrid used, the non-standard linguistic forms of prepositions and non-standard forms of 'you and your' were most frequent. As Table 1. shows, the character used non-standard forms more than standard forms overall, and out of the younger and older interlocutor groups, he used more non-standard forms with speakers who were younger than him. As for slang and personal language, the character frequently used words such as 'sorta', 'lotta', 'oughta', which the researcher counted as slang words, whereas words such as 'Godswallop', 'Blimey' or 'Crikey' were added as instances of personal language. The most frequent non-standard forms of variables 'you and your' were words such as 'yeh' and 'yer', and the letters that were dropped in 'omission of letters' were predominantly the last letters in words, and only in a few instances letters were omitted from the middle of words, such as in 'myst'ry', 's'pposed' or 'diff'rent'.
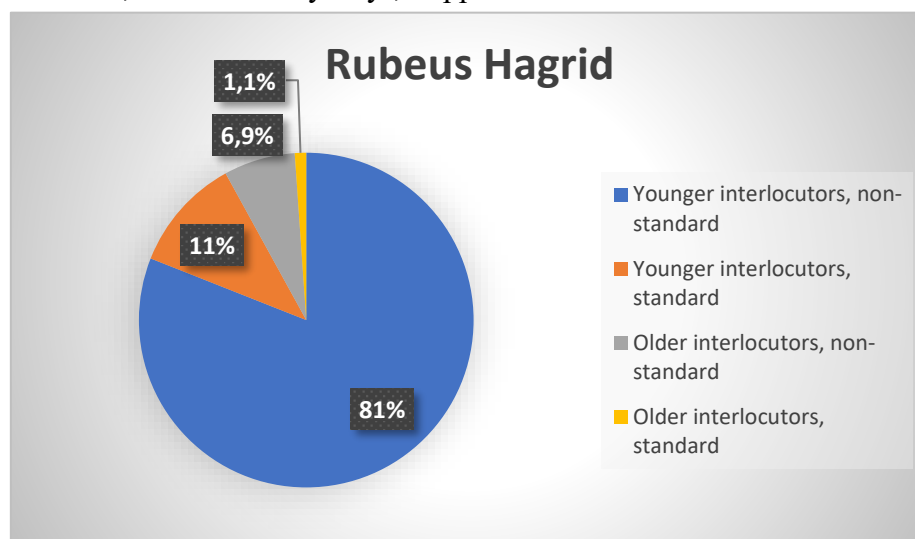

Figure 1. Standard and non-standard linguistic variables used by Rubeus Hagrid with different interlocutor groups, in percentage of total.

Eighty-one percent of Hagrid's speakers were younger interlocutors, with Hagrid using predominantly non-standard forms when talking to them, and in the 'older interlocutors' category, Hagrid used standard forms in only 1,1% of instances (Figure 1). Since the study was conducted on one Harry Potter book only, where most of Hagrid's interlocutors are younger than him, the division of the percentage of linguistic variables per age group could be more alike if the researcher chose to analyse more Harry Potter books in the study. However, it is worth noting that most of the dialogues and action in several of the Harry Potter books take place at Hogwarts school of witchcraft and wizardry where most of the attendees are children, and thus are younger than Rubeus Hagrid. From both Table 1 and Figure 1, the numbers indicate that the character of Hagrid predominantly uses non-standard forms of linguistic variables regardless of the age of his interlocutors.

4.2 Harry Potter

Variable	Younger interlocutors		Older interlocutors	
	Non-standard forms	Standard forms	Non-standard forms	Standard forms
-ing	0	52	0	86
You and your	0	58	0	75
Was and were	0	3	0	7
Prepositions	0	98	0	154
Omission of letters	0	34	0	58
Slang and personal language	2	33	5	109
Total:	2	278	5	489

Table 2. Standard and non-standard linguistic variables used by Harry Potter with younger and older interlocutors.

In Harry Potter's instance, non-standard forms, regardless of the age of his interlocutors, were used a total of seven times only. The only non-standard forms of linguistic variables that the researcher could identify were the words 'dunno', 'til' and 'd'you'. Since the character of Harry Potter is eleven years old in the first book, most of Harry's interlocutors are older than him, and thus the number of standard forms of linguistic variables is higher in the 'older interlocutors' group. The linguistic variables that were most frequently used by the character were the 'prepositions' variable when talking to interlocutors older than him, as well as the 'slang and personal language' variable.
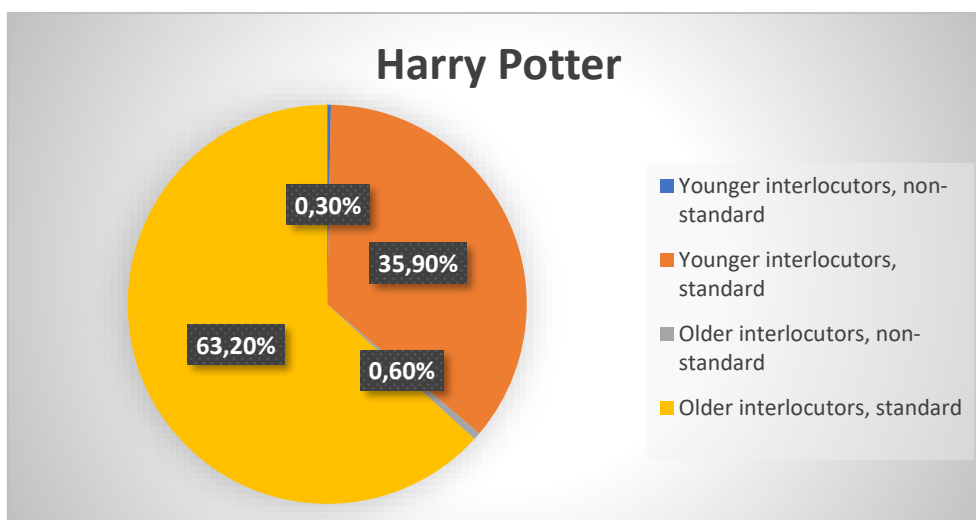
Figure 2. Standard and non-standard linguistic variables used by Harry Potter with different interlocutor groups, in percentage of total.

As Figure 2 shows, non-standard forms of linguistic variables, regardless of age of Harry Potter's interlocutors, made out less than 1% of the total variables counted. Since most of Harry's interlocutors at Hogwarts school of witchcraft and wizardry are teachers, the conversations often take place in formal settings. Thus, it is possible that his use of variables is influenced by the formal environment that he is in. This hypothesis, however, would require additional studies to confirm or deny.

4.3 Comparison of the characters

Rubeus Hagrid	Variables	Percentage	Total
Younger interlocutors:	Non-standard:	81%	
	Standard:	11%	
Older interlocutors:	Non-standard:	6,9%	
	Standard:	1,1%	100%
Harry Potter			
Younger interlocutors:	Non-standard:	0,3%	
	Standard:	35,9%	
Older interlocutors:	Non-standard:	0,6%	
	Standard:	63,2%	100%

Table 3. Rubeus Hagrid and Harry Potter's use of variables based on the age of interlocutors, with percentages.

Name of character	Non-standard forms	Standard forms	Total
Rubeus Hagrid	731 (87,9%)	105 (12,1%)	836 (100%)
Harry Potter	7 (0,9%)	767 (99,1%)	774 (100%)

Table 4. Number of standard and non-standard linguistic variables used by Rubeus Hagrid and Harry Potter in total.

Hagrid's non-standard linguistic forms were directed at interlocutors younger than him (92%), and the non-standard forms while talking to interlocutors that were older than him were not used much (8%)(Table 5). In contrast, of the standard forms used by Harry Potter, a significant number of them were directed at interlocutors who were younger (36,2%), and a big part of the standard forms that were used while conversing with interlocutors who were older (63,8%)(Table 5). The findings point to a definite contrast between the characters in relation to the use of linguistic variables and provide an opportunity for a great comparison analysis.

Rubeus Hagrid	Non-standard forms: 731	Out of all non-standard forms: 738	99,1%
	Standard forms: 105	Out of all standard forms: 872	12%
	Non-standard, younger int.: 673	Out of all non-standard Hagrid's forms: 731	92%
	Non-standard, older int.: 58	Out of all non-standard Hagrid's forms 731	8%
Harry Potter	Non-standard forms: 7	Out of all non-standard forms: 738	0,9%
	Standard forms: 767	Out of all standard forms: 872	88%
	Standard, younger int.: 278	Out of all standard Harry's forms 767	36,2%
	Standard, older int.: 489	Out of all standard Harry's Forms 767	63,8%

Table 5. The highest instances of non-standard and standard forms of linguistic variables usage of Rubeus Hagrid and Harry Potter, with percentages.

To analyse and discuss the different numbers of linguistic variables and their forms that Harry and Hagrid use with different interlocutors, the researcher will first focus on the first research question, discussing each of the variables separately. Next, a closer look on how the use of the linguistic variables changes depending on the age of Harry and Hagrid's interlocutors will be provided. If the use of the linguistic variables depending on the age of the interlocutors does vary, the researcher will examine how much that happens, as well as in what ways said use of variables changes. In the second part of the discussion, the second research question will be answered, where the researcher will discuss how the use of Harry's and Hagrid's variables contributes to how the readers might perceive them as characters, and whether or not these characters' use of variables shows them in a certain stereotypical way.

4.3.1 Linguistic variables and age

When it comes to the first variable that the characters of Rubeus Hagrid and Harry Potter use, the -ing variable, also known as the velar nasal fronting (Vaughn & Kendall, 2018, p. 58). In Hagrid's case, most -ing variables that were realised with the non-standard [n] were verbs, but seven instances had the [n] realisation in words such as *nothing* (four times), *anything* (twice), and *everything* (once). Given the findings in Vaughn and Kendall's (2018) study, where the participants rated the realisation of [n] in words such as *anything* and *everything* as most surprising, this indicates that the [n] realisation in these words is a unique character trait for Hagrid, especially when comparing with Harry Potter's use of variables, when most of the realisations are with [ŋ]. The -ing realisation is often considered 'correct', and -in realisation is considered non-standard (Hudson, 1996).

The 'you' and 'your' variables used by Hagrid were almost always realised as different forms of 'yeh' and 'yer': 'yeh've', 'yeh'll', and 'yeh'd', while most of the same variables in Harry's case were realised in standard forms – 'you' and 'your' respectively. Based on the specific and systematic choice of the 'yeh' form by Hagrid, it is worth comparing that realisation to UK dialects to determine whether or not it is supposed to represent a feature of a specific dialect or not. This will be examined further in relation to the next research question. In the 'was and were', prepositions, omission of letters, and slang and personal language variables, 'was and were' variables were seldom used, and most of the forms were standard, both in Hagrid's and Harry's case. For Hagrid, there was a sense of predictability when it came to forms of prepositions that he chose: the consistent features were either slightly changing the form of the word to something new- for instance in 'fer', 'ter' and 'teh', as well as omitting the last letter, for example in 'an' and 'o'. The same was observed in the omission of letters variable, where the last letters were omitted, such as in 'didn', or 'firs'. In comparison, Harry didn't use any non-standard forms in either prepositions or omission of letters category. In the last variable, the 'slang and personal language' variable, Hagrid used the common slang variants such as 'outta' or 'lotta', whereas Harry was consistently showed to prefer standard forms. Hagrid's personal language included words such as 'Godswallop', 'Crikey', and 'Blimey', whereas Harry only used slang, although seldom, and had no instances of personal language.

Age-wise, the variables used by Hagrid and Harry differed depending on the age of the interlocutors, although a summarised overview of the findings showed that Hagrid tended to use considerably more non-standard forms than standard ones, no matter the age group.

Conversely, the analysis of Harry's use of variables showed that he used more standard forms with both younger and older interlocutors, although the number of standard forms was higher with older interlocutors. As mentioned in subsections 4.1 and 4.2, this is not surprising since most of Harry's interlocutors at Hogwarts are older, and most of Hagrid's are younger. It is important to add that in Harry's case, the only instances of slang were observed when he was conversing with friends that he knew very well, and who were older than him. Although Harry is a lot younger than Hagrid, the age difference between Harry and most of his friends differs only by months. Even though most of his interlocutors in the first book are his friends, he only uses slang at the end of the book, with friends that are perhaps 'best friends', those selected few that he trusts.

One theory which could explain why Harry mostly uses standard variables might be that the author of the book, J.K. Rowling, possibly wrote the character envisioning the books being portrayed into films one day. Having child actors who use standard forms of linguistic variables, according to the study of *Harry Potter and the glottal stop: Glottal Replacement and T-Voicing in Contemporary RP*, could make "the actors potentially very popular EFL [English as a Foreign Language] pronounciation role models, at least for those learners who have Standard British pronounciation at target" (Bjelaković, 2018, p. 138). Choosing to write a character who uses standard forms regardless of age of his interlocutors could help children learn as they read and learn through accompanying Harry and his friends on his adventures. Another reason for such a character choice could be that J. K. Rowling aimed to create a character that was realistic. This means that the standard language forms could have been given to the character of Harry for the purpose of him developing his language as he grows, his language becoming more complex and varied. Creating a role model character who is both realistic and shows linguistic growth required the author to possibly start with standard language forms, and then introduce the reader to more diverse forms in later books. Additional research would have to be conducted to confirm this theory.

On the other hand, the character of Hagrid's persistent choice of non-standard linguistic variables independently of the age of his interlocutors could be due to the fact that, based on his backstory from the first book, he was expelled from Hogwarts as a young boy and never had a chance to finish his education. The only instances where the researcher saw Hagrid's non-standard variables change to standard with older interlocutors was in instances where he was in formal social settings, for instance in the Wizarding bank. There, as well as with people who didn't know him very well, he used more standard forms, for instance the

standard form of the variable 'about' instead of his regular 'abou'. This could be because Hagrid perhaps wants to seem more competent in formal situations. His non-standard forms create a static, yet unique character that is perhaps unlikely to be forgotten by a mind of a child, and it might easier to feel welcome as a reader with a character that is well-established and predictable, a sort of guide to the ever-changing world that Harry Potter experiences. Based on both Hagrid's and Harry's variables, the researcher would suggest that their variables are both free and constrained, and that the variation that occurs is both interspeaker and intraspeaker based (Meyerhoff, 2018, p. 20). Both characters' variables differ, and although one specific realisation can seem like a dominant feature for that character, it is not always that that feature is used by them in all instances. Sometimes the characters' variable might differ due to the different situations that they're in, while other times they might be bound to factors such as social class or age.

4.3.2 Linguistic variables and character portrayal

Based on Hagrid's use of the non-standard form of the -ing variable alone, the character could perhaps be associated as belonging to lower class. Given that English speakers explicitly condemn pronouncing the -ing suffix with /n/ (Gregory, 2013, p. 63), some readers might associate Hagrid with lower class, yet at the same time, as shown in the previous sub-sections, not all instances of Hagrid's use of linguistic variables have non-standard forms, which opens for a diverse character interpretation. As the study *The Cognitive Coherence of Sociolects: How Do Speakers Handle Multiple Sociolinguistic Variables* states, speakers tend towards the high status of the social spectrum for one variable while simultaneously displaying lower status of another, which presents a challenge for the development of cognitive models of the social influences on speakers' production and perception of language (Gregory, 2013, p. 70). It is not easy to know how the characters of a book might be perceived when they use both standard and non-standard forms, and the interpretation of said characters might vary significantly depending on the reader.

If the readers observe all the different forms of Hagrid's variables, a pattern can be identified, which, according to the study conducted by Santika (2016), points to Rubeus Hagrid's non-standard forms reflecting some of the characteristic features of UK's West Country dialect. By a dialect, the researcher means a geographical variety of a language spoken in a certain area, that is different in some linguistic items from other geographical varieties of the same language (Hudson, 1996, p. 4) Additionally, according to the *Ideologised Values for British*

Accents' (2007) study where different UK dialects were ranked according to social attractiveness and prestige, West Country dialect was rated as 9th in social attractiveness, and as 15th in prestige, out of 34 possible dialects. West Country dialect was right after Cornish and Queen's English. Based on this, it can be argued that Hagrid's non-standard forms can be perceived as pleasant, and as being socially attractive, and portray the character in a positive way.

If Harry is to be understood as a heroic character, celebrity and hero, image and reality, fake and authentic, as suggested by Parry-Giles (2011, p. 307), it could be argued that he uses standard, prestigeous linguistic variables because as a hero, J.K. Rowling wanted to give him a higher social status than the other characters, such as for instance Rubeus Hagrid. Another aspect of Harry's and Hagrid's use of standard and non-standard forms could be because as characters, Harry could be classified as a round character- complex, difficult to describe with adequacy as a person in real life (Abrams, 2013, p. 33). Hagrid, on the other hand, is a flat character, and two-dimensional (Abrams, 2013, p. 33). Harry as a more complex, deeper character, has the opportunity to evolve over time, thus the linguistic forms that he uses begin with standard forms in the first book. However, since the current study has not analysed other books in the series, it is not known whether these two eventually evolve.

Based on the definition of social stratification, which states that people in a society are categorised into groups based on socioeconomic factors like for instance race, education or gender (Hudson, 1996, p. 10), the characters of Hagrid and Harry Potter belong to a class society, a society in which many people can 'climb' the class hierarchy ladder and change their social status by changing their language (Hudson, 1996, p. 10). The society in Harry Potter has strict social hierarchies that can therefore result in prejudices, yet one study found that exposure to stigmatised groups in literature can actually improve readers' attitudes towards said stigmatised groups (Vezzali et al., 2015).

In the Wizarding society, Harry Potter is a wizard, whereas Hagrid is additionally regarded as half-giant. In the physical descriptions in the book, Hagrid is portrayed as 'wild' (Rowling, 2014, p. 51), and one of the aspects that are criticised in the book is the bigotry against the outsider in the Wizarding society (Groves, 2017, p. 27-28), the oppression of house-elves, the prejudice against half-breeds, and the way that Hagrid is made to suffer when people realise his 'otherness' (Groves, 2017, p. 27-28). Based on Hagrid's wild and untamed appearance, in combination with his non-standard forms of linguistic variables, some readers could therefore perceive him as less than human and societally inferior. However, perceptions of characters

differ among different cultural groups, and a character that is thought to be kind by one country's societal norms can be perceived as rude and inappropriate in another, as demonstrated by Stening and Stening (2020). Everything depends on the cultural background of a person (Stening & Stening, 2020), as well as the stereotypes that they believe in, thus, ultimately the readers' interpretation of the characters will depend on their cultural background and associations.

Therefore, it might be possible that portraying Harry with standard linguistic variables and Hagrid with non-standard ones could shed some light on the social groups that these two characters belong to, and therefore positively influence the readers' opinions towards stigmatised groups. This supports the idea that a character can never be perceived the same way. Additionally, a linguistically consistent character's dialog creates solid character identity (Reichelt, 2018).

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study used a quantitive method in order to analyse the different forms of linguistic variables that the characters of Rubeus Hagrid and Harry Potter use in the first Harry Potter book, with focus on if they differ based on the age of their interlocutors. Instances of variables and their forms were counted and presented as descriptive statistics, and the two characters of Hagrid and Harry were compared. The study found that the variables used by Hagrid and Harry differ only slightly depending on the age of their interlocutors, but that in most instances, Hagrid uses predominantly non-standard forms, whereas Harry uses standard forms. The forms of variables that these characters use differ based on the age of their interlocutors only in instances where Hagrid is in formal situations and converses with people that are older than him, and in instances where Harry talks to very good friends of his who are younger.

The different forms of linguistic variables used by Hagrid and Harry may present these characters in a stereotypical way based on Harry's consistent use of standard forms as a hero in the story and a pronounciation role model for children, and based on Hagrid's lower education status and non-standard forms of -ing that are perceived as lower class. However, Santika's (2016) study found that Hagrid's variables resemble those of West Country dialect,

which is perceived as pleasant according to a UK study (Coupland & Bishop, 2007). Hagrid can be interpreted as predictable, whereas Harry can be perceived as constantly changing and growing. Harry and Hagrid can be perceived differently by readers depending on their culture (Stening & Stening, 2020). Although the Wizarding society is presented as that of clear social hierarchies (Vezzali et al., 2015), the readers don't have to agree with the social statuses assigned to these characters, and can ultimately judge for themselves who they think these characters are. Reading Harry the Potter books additionally proved to improve attitudes towards stigmatised groups (Vezzali et al., 2015).

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