

# Dialects of English in Fantasy Films and Videogames

---

**Androić, Stjepan**

**Master's thesis / Diplomski rad**

**2019**

*Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj:* **University of Zagreb, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences / Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Filozofski fakultet**

*Permanent link / Trajna poveznica:* <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:131:021101>

*Rights / Prava:* [In copyright](#)

*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2021-06-19**



*Repository / Repozitorij:*

[ODRAZ - open repository of the University of Zagreb](#)  
[Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#)



University of Zagreb

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of English

Academic Year 2018/2019

**Dialects of English in Fantasy Films and Videogames**

(Master's Thesis)

Student: Stjepan Androić

Supervisor: Professor Višnja Josipović Smojver, PhD

Sveučilište u Zagrebu

Filozofski fakultet

Odsjek za anglistiku

Akademska godina 2018./2019.

**Dijalekti engleskog u fantastičnim filmovima i videoigrama**

(Diplomski rad)

Student: Stjepan Androić

Mentor: prof. dr. sc. Višnja Josipović Smojver

## **Abstract**

This thesis provides linguistic analysis of English dialects as they appear in fantasy films and videogames. A corpus of three films and four videogames is used, with parallels being drawn between fantasy races and archetypes based on the varieties of English they use. The introductory part of the thesis lays out the goal of the research and its basic principles, as well as a detailed description of the fantasy races/archetypes discussed. The empirical part analyses English dialects found in the corpus and provides commentary. Similarities across different sources are observed, particularly in relation to the sociolinguistic elements of fantasy worlds. Some possible linguistic (dialectological) conventions of the fantasy genre are formulated.

**Key Words:** English dialects, fantasy, films, videogames, linguistics, sociolinguistics, phonetics, phonology

# Table of Contents

<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>2 Corpus Used</b> .....	1
<b>3 Fantasy Races/Archetypes in the Corpus Used</b> .....	2
<b>3.1 <i>The Lord of the Rings</i></b> .....	2
<b>3.2 <i>World of Warcraft</i></b> .....	4
<b>3.3 <i>Dragon Age</i></b> .....	5
<b>3.4 <i>The Witcher</i></b> .....	6
<b>4 Literature/Sources Used</b> .....	7
<b>5 Analysis</b> .....	8
<b>5.1 Men (Humans)</b> .....	8
<b>5.2 Hobbits</b> .....	11
<b>5.3 Elves</b> .....	12
<b>5.4 Ents</b> .....	14
<b>5.5 Dwarves</b> .....	15
<b>5.6 Wizard, Mages, and Sorcerers</b> .....	16
<b>5.7 Orcs</b> .....	18
<b>6 Conclusion and Further Research Questions</b> .....	19
<b>7 References</b> .....	22

## 1 Introduction

Fantasy worlds have for decades been a frequent and popular setting in the anglophone audio-visual media. Apart from great success of popular film/TV titles such as *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *Conan the Barbarian*, *Harry Potter*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *The Lord of the Rings*, many fantasy worlds have also appeared in the medium of videogames, particularly in the genre of computer role-playing games (or RPGs for short), which developed in the 1980s from table-top games of the same name (*Dungeons & Dragons* and al.) (Adams and Rollings 2003: 347). While differing in some respects, these imaginary worlds also bear much resemblance to one another, particularly in the way they portray their races and genre archetypes. This thesis will take a look at one of the most important aspects of this portrayal, namely the linguistic, by analysing various English dialects that used in depiction of fantasy races/archetypes. The introductory part of this thesis will lay out the goal of the research and basic principles behind it, as well as provide a detailed description of the corpus used. The empirical part will analyse English dialects found in the corpus and provide commentary. Similarities between races and archetypes will be observed and pointed out, as well as explained in relation to the sociolinguistic features of different fantasy worlds.

## 2 Corpus Used

In total, three films and four videogames were chosen for the purpose of this research, all of which may be said to belong to the fantasy genre. Although the major theorists in this field – Tzvetan Todorov, Rosemary Jackson, Kathryn Hume, W. R. Irwin and Colin Manlove – all agree that fantasy is about the construction of the impossible, the actual definition of fantasy is rather difficult to pin down, as these theorists rarely use similar definitions (James and Mendlesohn 2012: 2). Thus, for the purpose of present thesis, films and videogames were selected that declared themselves as such in advertisement or, as James and Mendlesohn put it, decided on that title through purely “commercial understandings of fantasy” (2012: 3). The popular review website *Metacritic* offers a detailed overview of all titles that appear in this paper and can be used for further reference.<sup>1</sup>

The films used, in the order of their theatrical release, are: *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002), *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003). The videogames used, by their year of release, are:

---

<sup>1</sup> *Metacritic* is accessible through the following link: <https://www.metacritic.com/> (see *Works Cited* for more detail).

*World of Warcraft* (2004), *Dragon Age: Origins* (2009), *The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings* (2011), *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* (2015). All film examples were taken from their respective DVDs, while all game examples are available through the popular video-sharing service, YouTube. Detailed links to both are available at the end of this paper.

### **3 Fantasy Races/Archetypes in the Corpus Used**

The foremost thing one has to bear in mind when speaking about fantasy dialects is the number and variety of different fantasy races and archetypes that exist in the mainstream media. For this reason, it is necessary to first lay those races/archetypes that appear in the corpus, starting with *The Lord of the Rings*.<sup>2</sup>

#### **3.1 *The Lord of the Rings***

*The Lord of the Rings* (the book) was originally written by British philologist and Oxford professor of Old and Middle English Literature, J. R. R. Tolkien. Due to Tolkien's expertise in these fields, it is thus heavily influenced by elements that typical of both Nordic and, more broadly, Germanic mythology. Principal races that appear in Tolkien's works (including *The Lord of the Rings*) and inhabit his world of Arda are: men, hobbits, elves, dwarves, orcs, goblins, ents, and the Ainur. Aside from these, other fantasy creatures show up as well, including dragons, wargs, spiders, and giant eagles.

Apart from dragons, all of the abovementioned races appear in the cinematographic rendition of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and most of them speak in various dialects of English. Men, hobbits, elves, dwarves do so most often, although other races are quite communicative as well, most notably the orcs, who serve as the principal villains of the trilogy.

Men (or Atani) are, second to hobbits, the most notable protagonists of the films. Tolkien envisioned them as all sharing a common ancestry, however four distinct cultures can be observed: Gondorians, Rohirrim, Southrons, and Men of the East.

Hobbits (or Halflings) are a mortal race that lives in the northern regions of Middle-earth, below the Vales of Anduin. Hobbits are a very insular people, often suspicious of others and

---

<sup>2</sup> All relevant info about fantasy races/archetypes was taken from *Fandom*, accessible through the following link: <https://www.fandom.com/> (see *Works Cited* for more detail). General info about the games and their developers was taken from *Wikipedia* (<https://en.wikipedia.org>).

anything that disturbs the peace. Although culturally more unified than men, hobbits are quite distinct among themselves, as well as in the way they speak.

Elves (or Eldar) are a regal race and considered to be the fairest and wisest of any that inhabit Arda. Like men, elves belong to different cultures, of which three specific variants are shown in the films – Rivendell (Elrond, Arwen), Lothlorien (Galadriel, Celeborn), and Mirkwood (Legolas) elves. Elves' noble character is reflected in their language, which has a tendency toward more elegant pronunciation.

Dwarves (or Khazâd) are an old, hardy race, strong both in body and character. Most dwarves sport thick, luxuriant beards in which they take great pride. Dwarves are usually stubborn, cautious, and fiercely loyal to their comrades and allies. They live in underground kingdoms and care greatly about mining, crafting, gold, and gems. Although several dwarves appear in the first film, only one of their race ever speaks in *The Lord of the Rings* –Gimli.

The Ainur (or the Holy Ones) are prehistoric spirits who exist with Ilúvatar, and who with him created the world. After the creation of Arda, many of the Ainur descended into it to guide and order its growth; of these there were fifteen more powerful than the rest – the Valar. The many lesser Ainur that accompanied the Valar into Arda are in turn known as the Maiar. Although not explicitly stated, three Maiar appear in the film (Gandalf, Saruman, and a balrog), of which two speak (Gandalf and Saruman) and are represented as archetypical wizards (or Istari).

Ents (or Onodrim) are a very old race that appeared in Middle-earth at the same time as the dwarves. Ents are essentially animated trees, created to protect the forests from orcs and other perils. Although the Ents were sentient beings at the time of their creation, they did not know how to speak until the elves taught them.

Orcs are a race of fallen elves, created by the first Dark Lord Morgoth long before the events of *The Lord of the Rings*. Orcs, as Tolkien describes them, are evil, cruel, wicked, hateful, and blackhearted creatures, bent on destroying everything and everyone, particularly if it be orderly and prosperous. They are a violent and warlike race that is in a perpetual state of conflict with itself and others. Despite their repulsive nature, they are not dim-witted but quite clever and oftentimes crafty. Orcs do speak, but their language is as often harsh, somewhat mirroring their outward appearance. This is vividly portrayed in the films, where orcs usually speak brashly, in short sentences, and have a leaning toward ordering one another around.

Most of the races that appear in *The Lord of the Rings* have become part of the mainstream fantasy media in the last half century. This is especially true for the world of



videogames. Because of this, in the next couple of pages, a discussion follows on how they are represented in four videogames that make up our corpus.

### **3.2 *World of Warcraft***

*World of Warcraft* is a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) released in 2004 by Blizzard Entertainment, an American video game developer and publisher based in Irvine, California. It is the fourth title to be released in the Warcraft fantasy universe – universe which in many of its elements echoes Tolkien’s world of Arda. Unlike Arda, however, the universe of Warcraft was not created by a single creative mind, but rather represents a collaborative work of many Blizzard Entertainment employees and storytellers, most notably Allen Adham, Frank Pearce, and Michael Morhaime.

Many races appear in the imaginary world of Warcraft, also known by the name of Azeroth. For the purposes of this thesis, only races similar to those that appear in *The Lord of the Rings* will be considered, starting with the race of men.

Men or humans, as they are known in *World of Warcraft*, are among the youngest races of Azeroth. Although their life spans are generally shorter, humans nevertheless strive to achieve great heights in empire building, exploration, and magical study. Like Tolkien’s men, humans of Azeroth are divided into distinct cultures, of which three are prominently present in the game: citizens of Stormwind, Gilneans, and the inhabitants of Kul Tiras.

Elves of Azeroth are divided into two distinct groups: night elves and blood elves. Like Tolkien’s elves, *World of Warcraft* elves are among the oldest known races in Azeroth. They have a long and intriguing history. Both night elves and blood elves are of the same origin, but belong to different cultures and even live on different continents of Azeroth (Kalimdor and Eastern Kingdoms, respectively). Similar to Tolkien’s Eldar, they are regal creatures, elegant and noble fighters, and their pronunciation tends to be more sophisticated than that of the other races.

The dwarves of Azeroth are an ancient race of robust humanoids who live in an underground kingdom beneath the snow-capped mountains of Khaz Modan. Not unlike Tolkien’s dwarves, they care greatly about mining, crafting, crafts, gold, and gems. Their culture is also quite similar to those of Tolkien’s universe, as they pride themselves on being fierce fighters and intrepid explorers.

The mages of the Kirin Tor are a council of wizards quite similar to Tolkien's Gandalf and Saruman. In simple terms, the Kirin Tor represents a lawful neutral collection of the most powerful mages on Azeroth who dedicate themselves to the study of arcane arts.

Finally, unlike Tolkien's orcs, the orcs of Azeroth represent a race of noble, shamanistic descent. They are not corrupted elves, but rather a race of their own. Nonetheless, they were corrupted by an outside force, known as the Burning Legion, and suffered much because of it. To their enemies, *World of Warcraft* orcs are brutal and fearsome. To their allies however, they are noble and honourable. These two aspects of their character are often reflected in their speech.

### **3.3 *Dragon Age***

The world of *Dragon Age*, or Thedas, was first created by Canadian game developer BioWare in the years leading up to the release of their first game, *Dragon Age: Origins* (2009). Like *World of Warcraft*, the making of the universe of *Dragon Age* was a product of a collaborative effort of many developers, including David Gaider, Mark Darrah, and Mike Laidlaw.

There are four principal races that live in the world of *Dragon Age*: humans, elves, dwarves and qunari. Keeping once again in line with those races that appear in Tolkien's works (as well as in *World of Warcraft*), only three of these will be discussed, namely humans, elves, and dwarves.

Humans of Thedas are the most numerous and dominant of all the races in *Dragon Age*. They come in many diverse varieties and nations, each with its own different customs and traditions. Although several of these nations are represented over three main games of the *Dragon Age* franchise (*Dragon Age: Origins*, *Dragon Age 2*, *Dragon Age: Inquisition*), this thesis will limit itself only to Ferelden – the nation that is the setting of the first game. The humans of Ferelden are descendants of a tribal culture that respects skill and prowess in battle.

Elves of Thedas are slender beings, lightly built, with large eyes and pointed ears. As Tolkien's elves, they are more ancient than humans. Long ago, they had an advanced civilization based on nature and magic. Although once immortal, elves of *Dragon Age* no longer live forever and have, in the meantime, been largely subjected to human rule and despotism. Many elves have come to accept the terms of such rule, living inside human cities

and abandoning their history. Those elves who, in turn, fought against human oppression became the nomadic Dalish elves, who still try to maintain ancient elven traditions.

The dwarves of *Dragon Age* are a short, strong, and stocky race. Like Tolkien's and *World of Warcraft* dwarves, the dwarves of Thedas are underground dwellers and skilled builders that boast a long tradition of courage and martial skill. Unlike the aforementioned however, they live in a social hierarchy that is far more elaborate and rigid than that of a simple monarchy, with a system of complex, interconnected, and rigid castes, similar to those found in India. Social stratification is omnipresent and dwarves who decide to leave these ways are branded as "casteless" or "surface dwarves" and are forever exempt from dwarven society. This social stratification also leads to a more complex system of dialectal varieties, with upper castes keeping their language more standard and lower castes speaking in a variety of less prestigious dialects.

Although they do not represent a race, Thedas mages are also worthwhile mentioning as a common fantasy archetype. Unlike Tolkien's wizards – and more akin to *World of Warcraft* sorcerers – the magi of Thedas are numerous and belong to different races. In most nations of Thedas they belong to the so-called Circle of Magi – an organisation which trains children in the use of arcane arts from an early age. Although mages in *Dragon Age* come in many shapes and forms (including the illicit blood mages), a lot of similarities with their *The Lord of the Rings* and *World of Warcraft* brethren are still observable and will be discussed.

### **3.4 The Witcher**

The *Witcher* series encompasses three videogames developed by a Polish game studio *CD Projekt S.A.* in Warsaw, Poland: *The Witcher*, *The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings*, and *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, of which the latter two were selected as a part of our corpus. All *Witcher* games are based on prose by Polish fantasy author Andrzej Sapkowski (original Polish title: *Wiedźmin*).

In the *Witcher* series three Tolkienian races are depicted as living on the Continent (the name of Sapkowski's fantastical universe): humans, elves, and dwarves. Mages, as a rather common fantasy archetype, are too present and will be mentioned.

Humans, similar to those found in *World of Warcraft* or *Dragon Age* are a race comparatively younger to their elven and dwarven neighbours, varying in their customs, and belonging to different cultures. In *The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings* and *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* three such cultures are observed: the people of the Northern Realms, Nilfgaardian

conquerors, and the inhabitants of Skellige. Humans of the *Witcher* series arrived on the Continent about five hundred years before the events of the games, igniting a series of wars with indigenous elves and dwarves. The humans won these wars and henceforth became a dominant race on the Continent, similar to their *Dragon Age* counterparts.

The non-human races of elves and dwarves, considered by humans to be second-class citizens, now mostly live in small ghettos within human settlements. In this they are similar to *Dragon Age* elves. As with Thedas elves, small numbers of them that are not confined to the ghettos live in the wilderness and other regions not yet claimed by humans. They often act as thieves and/or bandits. Elves and dwarves of the *Witcher* series tend to be more violent than their typical fantasy brethren, and this is often reflected in the way they speak.

Sorcerers of the Continent resemble their Azeroth and Thedas brethren in that they represent a separate class of society – sometimes highly praised, but oftentimes highly feared. They are sometimes grouped into different cabals, although they mostly prefer to live their own, private existence.

Apart from sorcerers, a caste of druids exists in *The Witcher* games, but they have been excluded from this analysis.

#### **4 Literature/Sources Used**

The chief source used in describing the main features of different English dialects encountered in the corpus was Wells (1998). It should be noted straight away that Wells is somewhat critical of the term *dialect*: “In linguistics the term is applied, often in a rather vague way,” he says, “to any speech variety which is more than an idiolect but less than a language,” and so proposes to use the term “varieties of General English” instead (1998: 3). For the purpose of this thesis, however, the term *dialect* was used in just such a vague way, as the main goal is not a theoretical discussion of whether varieties of English encountered in the corpus are *indeed* differing dialects of English, but simply their account according to the criteria established by Wells (1998).

In addition to Wells, an online source *Accents of English from Around the World* by Paul Heggarty et al. (2013) was also used. In most cases Wells’ descriptions take precedence. Where they do not, Heggarty is used and referenced to in the brackets.

Finally, some inspiration for *The Lord of the Rings* dialectal analysis was taken from a podcast by Thompson (2016), which discusses the different accents (Thompson does not use the term *dialect*) found in all three films. Some scenes suggested by the author as

representative of a particular dialect were into account during the analysis, although many more examples were provided independently from the podcast.

All sources are listed in greater detail at the end of the thesis.

## 5 Analysis

The fantasy dialects found in the corpus will now be analysed according to the races introduced in Part 3 (3.1–3.4), taking a separate look at every item of the media mentioned. Similarities and differences will be pointed out according to two main criteria: 1) phonological quality and 2) socio-economical features. Where needed, passing remarks on syntax and vocabulary will also be made.

### 5.1 Men (Humans)

Although the race of men (or humans) turn out to be the most varied fantasy group across the corpus, many similarities have been observed among different media. As a general rule, an almost universal distinction between “upper-class” and “lower-class” human characters seems to exist, with men of noble descent being the most likely candidates to use Received Pronunciation (or its approximations) in their speech, whereas the commoners are more prone to using other varieties of English instead.

A case in point for the upper-class characters in *The Lord of the Rings* is Aragorn, the expatriate king of Gondor. Although his speech fluctuates somewhat due to the actor’s Danish origin, it can still be broadly described as following an RP pattern. Aragorn’s pronunciation is almost exclusively non-rhotic and uses tense monophthongs characteristic of RP such as /ɑ:/ (FotR: Arag, 01:40:09) and /ɔ:/ (RotK: Arag, 01:39:45). Aragorn’s diphthongs are also strikingly similar to those found in RP, such as when he pronounces *fear* as [fiə] during the Battle of the Black Gate (RotK: Arag, 03:20:55).

Another royal character in the story, King Théoden, shows the same tendencies. He too speaks in a way that strongly resembles RP, has a non-rhotic pronunciation, and uses the same monophthongs and diphthongs as Aragorn, e.g. /ɔ:/ in [sɔ:dz] (TT: Théo, 03:14:58) and /iə/ in [fiə] (RotK: Théo, 02:33:50). Théoden’s speech likewise displays a plethora of lax RP monophthongs, such as /ʌ/ in [ˈmʌstə] (RotK: Théo, 01:07:52).

Boromir, one of the main characters from the first film and a Gondorian nobleman, speaks in almost the same way. His speech mirrors that of Aragorn’s and Théoden’s in its quality, especially with regard to the quality of vowels. For example, Boromir’s immortal line, *One*

*does not simply walk into Mordor*, demonstrates a clear tense RP monophthong /ɔ:/ in *walk* (FotR: Boro, 01:42:09). Later in the scene, Boromir pronounces *fire* as [ˈfaɪə] (FotR: Boro, 01:42:29). Finally, his rendition of *folly* is also telling, having an RP-typical /v/ sound – [ˈfɒli] (FotR: Boro, 01:42:40). Although he mostly manages to keep the appearance of strong RP pronunciation, Boromir’s dialect does on occasion slip into a more regional variety. A good example of this is when he omits the fricative /θ/ in *faiths*, pronouncing it as [feɪs] instead of [feɪθs] (FotR: Boro, 01:44:37). This is a known dialectal feature of Yorkshire English (Stoddart et al. 1999: 76), the dialect that Boromir’s actor Sean Bean uses in real life.<sup>3</sup>

While not as consistent in its usage of RP pronunciation among Azeroth nobles, *World of Warcraft* offers a fine example of this tendency in King Terenas, who appears in *Wrath of the Lich King* expansion. In a scene at the very end of *Wrath*, the ghost of King Terenas is seen talking to his dying son. During this conversation Terenas displays many obvious RP elements in his speech, including tense RP monophthongs such as /ɑ:/ ([lɑ:st]), (Y1: Tere, 00:30), lax RP monophthongs such as /ʌ/ ([ˈmʌstə]) (Y1: Tere, 01:02), and a clear lack of rhoticity in words such as [wɜ:lɪd] (Y1: Tere, 01:07).

Noblemen of *Dragon Age* are even more overt in the way they use RP. Two best examples of this are Cailan Theirin, the king of Ferelden, and his wife Anora. King Cailan, who appears during the prologue of the game, uses very obvious RP whenever talking. His speech, apart from being perspicuously non-rhotic, strongly accentuates the RP vowels, thus making his /ɔ:/s (Y2: Cail, 02:45) and /v/s (Y2: Cail, 02:39) sound even more noticeable than any of the other thus far mentioned characters. Queen Anora’s /ɔ:/s and /v/s are as strong as those of her husband, which is especially noticeable when they appear together, such as in the word [ˈkɒnsɔ:t] (Y3: Anor, 02:02).

Royalty and nobility of the Continent show the same pattern, with some slight variations. As a general rule, the stronger the ruler is, the clearer his RP seems to be. For example, Emperor Emhyr var Emreis of Nilfgaard – arguably the top tier ruler in Sapkowski’s universe – speaks with an RP that is both very clear and very standard. His pronunciation of [brɪˈfɔ:] (Y4: Emhy, 00:52) is a case in point, as are his non-rhotic [ˈdeɪndʒə] (Y4: Emhy, 01:17) and [ˈɑ:ftə] (Y4: Emhy, 01:17).

When it comes to King Radovid of Redania, who appears in both *The Witcher 2* and *The Witcher 3*, things change a bit. Since Radovid – according to the lore – is a king of a rougher and “more barbaric” nation than Nilfgaard (a “kingdom” rather than “empire”), his speech

---

<sup>3</sup> An example of Sean Bean’s Yorkshire English can be seen here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RR\\_idi-y-L0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RR_idi-y-L0).

seems to differ somewhat from standard RP, having more Northern English elements. This is most noticeable in his transformation of southern /ʌ/ into northern /ʊ/ in such words as *pumping* and *enough*, i.e. [ˈpʊmpɪŋ] (Y5: Rado, 02:04), [ɪˈnʊf] (Y5: Rado, 03:30).

As for human characters that represent commoners, two types of dialect seem to prevail in the corpus – a broad version of Northern English and London-based Cockney. The preferred dialect varies on the medium in question, however, based on the observations, Cockney takes precedence in videogames, while northern dialects appear to be more common in films. In fact, men in *The Lord of the Rings* never use Cockney at all, as that dialect is reserved for orcs only.

For example, the tavern-keeper at the Prancing Pony in *The Fellowship of the Ring* has what it seems to be a rather telling northern pronunciation of *right* as [ˈɹaɪt] (FotR: Keep, 01:00:48). By comparison, in standard RP, this word would be pronounced with the diphthong /aɪ/, i.e. [ˈɹaɪt]. Moreover, the tavern-keeper also seems to tend to drop his /h/s, such as when he pronounces *hobbit* as [ˈɒbɪt] rather than [ˈhɒbɪt] (FotR: Keep, 00:59:15). This is a known feature in various northern dialects of English, such as in that of Rossendale area (Heggarty et al. 2013). Finally, as is typical of northern dialects in general, the tavern-keeper is non-rhotic, so words like *remember* are pronounced as [ɹɪˈmembə], as opposed to [ɹɪˈmembəɹ] (FotR: Keep, 00:59:38).

In *World of Warcraft*, commoners belonging to the nation of Gilneas use a strong (and rather inconsistent) Cockney-like dialect while speaking. Although hugely erratic in terms of its phonological quality, the dialect of these Gilnean commoners does seem to mirror real-life Cockneys, such as with the use of possessive *me* instead of *my* (Y6: GilC, 02:12) and the dropping of /h/ in the initial position. They also seem to be monophthongising at least some of their diphthongs, such as with *here* being pronounced as [ˈɪː] rather than [ˈhɪə] (Y6: GilC, 02:40). Kul Tireans, descendants of Gilneans, seem to be following a slightly different pattern, with a bit more influence of West Country in their speech, such as in the word [ɜːɹt] (Y7: KTIC, 07:50).

In *Dragon Age* commoners also seem to be using a rough approximation of Cockney as their main dialect. An average merchant, beggar, or scavenger in the game has a tendency to drop his /h/s, as for example, in *him* (so we have [ɪm]) (Y8: DAOC, 02:28), making them quite similar to *World of Warcraft* Gilneans. Furthermore, they seem to like to transform their /θ/s into /f/s in a manner that real-life Cockneys often do, so a word like *everything* ends up being pronounced as [ˈevɹɪfɪŋ] instead of [ˈevɹɪθɪŋ] (Y8: DAOC, 02:08). Soldiers and

mercenaries behave in this way too, with some of them also using double negatives, e.g. *nobody sends me nothing* (Y9: DAOS, 01:17).

In *The Witcher* games things seem to be more in favour of northern dialects of English, which makes them stand out compared to *World of Warcraft* and *Dragon Age*. Most commoners speak in a broad Northern English dialect with vowels and consonants that differ from those typically found in RP. The degree of difference, on the other hand, varies from character to character. For example, Mislav, one of the characters that the player encounters early in the game, pronounces *here* as ['hi:z] rather than ['hiə] rather subtly (Y10: Misl, 11:11). On the other hand, some characters have patently obvious – even overplayed – northern dialects, such as the unnamed “old woman” from the game’s prologue. Her pronunciation of *back* has an unmistakable distinctness in vowel quality to standard RP, so what would normally sound like ['bæk] in RP, in her speech sounds like ['bäk] (Y11: OWom, 05:31). In addition, she often drops her /h/s, such as when she pronounces *heart* as ['a:t] and *him* as ['im] (Y11: OWom, 05:40/41).

Finally, it should be noted that, although British English dominates across the corpus, some examples of American English were found as well. This pertains mostly to *World of Warcraft*, where a significant number of human characters do not speak like denizens of the British Isles, but rather America. Looking at it from an in-game perspective, the citizens of Gilneas and Kul Tiras seem to belong to the first group while the people of Stormwind belong to the latter. Additionally, there seems to be little or no difference between *World of Warcraft* commoners and nobles, as, for example, King Varian Wrynn talks with the same General American dialect as his subjects do (comp. Y12: KVar, 01:08 with Y13: EFGu, 47:19).

## 5.2 Hobbits

The hobbits of the Shire are characters unique to Tolkien’s universe. As mentioned previously, hobbits are quite distinct among themselves and this cultural diversity is clearly reflected in their speech.

Of the main four hobbit characters in *The Lord of the Rings* – Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin – only Frodo uses standard RP. When it comes to other characters, they speak with a variety of dialects found on the British Isles. For example, Sam’s speech seems to be heavily influenced by West Country. It is noticeably rhotic such as in his pronunciation of ['da:rk] (FotR: Sam, 00:42:52). Furthermore, it has obvious differences in diphthong quality



compared to standard RP, such as *I* being pronounced [ɔɪ], rather than [aɪ] (FotR: Sam, 03:17:26).

Merry seems to be using a mixture of Northern English dialects. His pronunciation seems to be rhotic, so the words like *Shire* are pronounced with a /ɹ/, i.e. [ʃaɪɹ] (RotK: Merr, 00:10:03). Moreover, Merry's speech seems to include some Northern vocals as, for example, /ɒ:/ in *your* ([ˈjɒ:ɹ]) (TT: Merr, 02:58:11).

Pippin's English is the most obvious example of a General Scottish dialect in the entire trilogy. It is conspicuously rhotic, as for example in [ˈaftəɹ] (RotK: Pipp, 00:10:25), and has many characteristic Scottish vowels, e.g. the tense /e:/ in *day* ([ˈde:ɹ]) (RotK: Pipp, 00:10:26).

Finally, Frodo's dialect is strong RP with just a slight amount of inconsistencies across the board. The most obvious RP elements found in Frodo's speech are his tense monophthongs: e.g. /ɑ:/ in words like *chance* (FotR: Frod, 02:08:09) and /ɔ:/ in words like *thought* (FotR: Frod, 00:13:58). Frodo is also the only hobbit who uses RP among the general hobbit populace, with the exception of his uncle Bilbo.

### 5.3 Elves

Elves turn out to be a race with two principal dialectal tendencies, with some of them using RP, and others showing a stronger inclination toward other dialects of English.

*The Lord of the Rings* elves are most homogenous in the way they speak, with their only dialect being that of RP English. Three elves will be referenced here as examples, namely Elrond, Legolas, and Galadriel.

Elrond, one of the most ancient elves in Middle-earth at the point when the films take place, is probably the best example of properly spoken RP in *The Lord of the Rings*. Elrond speaks in a calm yet steady manner, with strong accentuation on many of his diphthongs, such as /eɪ/, /aɪ/, and /aʊ/ in the sentence, *the Ring was made in the fires of Mount Doom*: [ðə ɪŋ wɒz meɪd ɪn ðə ˈfaɪəz ɒv maʊnt du:m] (FotR: Elro, 01:41:12). His speech is also more rhythmic than any of the other characters mentioned thus far, having a tendency toward thespianism. As with Aragorn and Frodo, his /ɑ:/ is quite clear in any words that include it, such as when he utters [kra:ft] (FotR: Elro, 01:41:37) and [kɑ:st] (FotR: Elro, 01:41:52) during the Council of Rivendell. Furthermore, Elrond has some of the poshest syntax and vocabulary in the entire *Lord of the Rings*, as for example in the sentence, *It must be taken deep into Mordor and cast back into the fiery chasm from whence it came* (FotR: Elro, 01:41:50).

Legolas, being part of the Fellowship of the Rings, speaks more than any other elf in the trilogy. Legolas' speech is very much similar to Elrond's, with his /ɑ:/s sounding completely the same, such as in [hɑ:t] (FotR: Lego, 02:37:43). Another obvious part of his RP are consistent /ɒ/s, e.g. in ['gɒblɪnz] (FotR: Lego, 02:02:47), ['fɒləʊ] (FotR: Lego, 03:18:39), and [rɒŋ] (TT: Lego, 02:44:44). Lastly, as with Elrond, he is prone to using posh wording such as, *You mean not to follow them* (FotR: Lego, 03:18:37), and, *They run as if the very whips of their masters are behind them* (TT: Lego, 00:27:44).

Finally, Lady Galadriel, played by Cate Blanchett, closes out the trio. As with the other two, key RP vowels are noticeable in her speech, as, for example, /ɑ:/ in [pɑ:s] (FotR: Gala, 02:41:58) and /ɔ:/ in [sɔ:] (FotR: Gala, 02:43:24) and sound exactly the same as Elrond's or Legolas'. Not unlike the two, she also uses plenty of posh wording in her sentences, e.g. *I know what it is you saw, for it is also in my mind* (FotR: Gala, 02:43:22).

It should also be mentioned that *The Lord of the Rings* elves frequently utilise Sindarin and Quenya in the films. These two languages were originally created by J. R. R. Tolkien and serve to portray Middle-earth elves in even more of a noble light.

Moving on from *The Lord of the Rings* to *World of Warcraft*, an obvious change in the quality of elven speech may be observed. Whereas the former was exclusively based on British English and RP, the latter makes a transition into other types of English, namely American. And while such characters as Tyrande, Malfurion and Illidan consistently use what sounds much like RP (Y14), plenty of elves – especially blood elves – have a tendency toward General American (Y15). Some exceptions to the rule exist however, and it is not impossible to hear some *World of Warcraft* elves occasionally pronounce something like *persevere* as [ˌpɜːsɪ'vɪə] (Y15: BE11, 0:12) in addition to [pɜrsə'vɪɹ] (Y15: BE12, 1:35).

As for *Dragon Age: Origins*, firm conclusions as to the common dialect among the elves are hard, if not impossible to draw. While it seems somewhat plausible to conjecture that the game's developers intended to portray a world in which some elves speak in a way similar to their overlords (i.e. using BrE), whereas some use more ancient pronunciation (i.e. AmE), there is, ultimately, no way to prove this theory. This is due to many inconsistencies in the way *all* these in-game elves speak. While it seems at first that city elves have a proclivity toward British English and the Dalish elves toward American English, oftentimes members of both groups will not follow their chosen dialect but slip into the other. A case in point can be found the City Elf Origin story, in which the player character can interact with a pair of city

elves who offer them<sup>4</sup> a sum of money as a wedding present. The female elf in the scene at first seems to be using delicate RP when, referring to the player, she says [wel its ðə 'lʌki bɪəd hɜː'self] (Y16: FElf, 04:13). However, in the very next sentence she immediately drops her RP for unmistakable General American, uttering [hə'loʊ dɪ], instead of logically consistent [he'ləʊ dɪə]. Conversely, in the Dalish camp, most elves will show a tendency toward General American, only to have one of them start randomly pronouncing *of course* as [ɒv kɔːs] (Y17: Sare, 15:55).

Although it goes beyond the scope of subject of the present analysis, it is worth pointing out that the sequel to *Dragon Age: Origins*, *Dragon Age 2*, largely solves this problem of inconsistency by making most elves adopt a Welsh dialect.

In *The Witcher* series elves are slightly different from any of the thus far mentioned. They do not speak General American, nor do they use RP. The real-life dialects that seem to have the most influenced the speech of these elves are those of Northern England. Iorveth, the main elven character from the second *Witcher* game, is a good example of this. His pronunciation of *helpless*, which goes outside typical RP ['helplɪs] seems reminiscent of ['he:lpləs] (Y18: Iorv, 07:17), i.e. with a tense monophthong /e:/, characteristic of the Cornhill area of England (Heggarty et al. 2013). In *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* another elf with like northern dialectal features appears, Vernossiel. She, for example, pronounces the word *brothers* with a bit more roundedness on the /ʌ/ vowel than it is typical in RP, i.e. closer to ['bɪʌðəz] than ['bɪʌðəz] (Y19: Vern, 01:11). This, in turn, is reminiscent of Berwickshire English (Heggarty et al. 2013)

Finally, some elves in *The Witcher 3* also show Norfolk influence in their speech, as is the case with Avallac'h. Avallac'h does not use the monophthong /ɒ/ in words such as *whatnot* (which does not exist in -folk dialects), but supplants it with the monophthongs /ʌ/ and /ɑ/, so ['wɒtnɒt] ends up being pronounced as ['wʌt,nɑt] (Y20: Aval, 03:41).

## 5.4 Ents

The ents, as was mentioned previously, were taught how to speak by the elves of Middle-earth, hence their dialect is logically similar to that of the Eldar, that is, akin to standard RP. Although a number of ents appears in the second film of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the only ent to actually speak is Treebeard.

---

<sup>4</sup> The player can elect to play as both a male and female character in *Dragon Age: Origins*. In our example we reference a female character.

Treebeard's dialect is standard RP that is not only very posh, but also partly heightened. His tense vowels, such as /ɔ:/ in [,eni'mɔ:] are very accentuated (TT: TBea, 00:40:42) and his pronunciation of *tree* reveals a different quality of rhoticity to that of standard RP approximant /ɹ/, using instead what seems like a trilled /r/ (TT: TBea, 00:40:07).

Finally, like to that of the elves, Treebeard's wording is very old-fashioned at times, as for instance in *black are their thoughts* (TT: TBea, 01:11:28) and *strong is their hate* (TT: TBea, 01:11:30), further amplifying the idea that ents were originally taught how to speak by the ancient elves.

## 5.5 Dwarves

Dwarves, unlike the other races, seem to have a unique pattern when it comes to the dialects they use. Almost all of the dwarves we analysed in the corpus seem to be using either a) an idiosyncratic dialect akin to Scottish (or Welsh, in case of *The Lord of the Rings*) or b) General American. The dialect used depends mainly on the medium in question, with *The Lord of the Rings*, *World of Warcraft* and *The Witcher* tending toward Scottish/Welsh and *Dragon Age* heavily favouring standard GA.

The only dwarven character that speaks in *The Lord of the Rings* is Gimli. Gimli's accent is a rough approximation of Scottish with some Welsh elements thrown into the mix as well. The actual distribution depends on the scene in question. At times, Gimli's dialect seems to be more in favour of Scottish English, at times, of Welsh. A good example of this is his pronunciation of *forty-two* in *The Two Towers* (TT: Giml, 03:25:44), which is definitely more Scottish than Welsh, utilising the diphthong /oə/ and a centralised /ʌ:/ vowel (i.e. ['foə.ti.tu:]). For the sake of comparison, standard Welsh pronunciation of the same word would be ['fɔ:ti.tu:]. On the other hand, many of Gimli's rhotic consonants seem to follow more of a Welsh pattern, such as in *pretty* (TT: Giml, 00:32:54), being pronounced with a South Welsh alveolar tap /ɾ/ (i.e. ['pɾiti]) in place of a more common Standard Scottish approximant /ɹ/ (i.e. ['pɹiti]) (Heggarty et al. 2013).

In *World of Warcraft* most dwarves also speak in an idiosyncratic dialect similar to Scottish English, without any Welsh elements. Akin to Gimli, many of these dwarves are inconsistent in the way they pronounce things (i.e. they do not follow a fixed dialectal pattern), however broad Scottish features can be observed, such as /o/ being used in ['boðəɪ] (Y21: Dwa1, 00:10) and /ɔ:/ in [fɔ:ɪ] (Y21, Dwa2, 00:42). Sometimes, a *World of Warcraft* dwarf will round his /æ/s in words like *funny*, pronouncing it more like ['fɛni] as opposed to

standard RP ['fæni] (Y21: Dwa2, 00:47). Finally, they like to use tense Scottish /e:/s, as for example in the word [we:z] (Y21: Dwa2, 00:52).

In *Dragon Age* situation is noticeably different. Most *Dragon Age* dwarves use General American as their main dialect with barely any difference between the characters. American rhoticity and GA-specific vowels are observable across the board, as, for example, in *where*, *perhaps*, *for*, *members*, and *lords*: [weɪ] (Y22: Gori, 01:28), [pəɪ'hæps] (Y22: Gori, 02:30), [fɔɪ] (Y22: Tria, 06:54), ['membəɪz] (Y22: LadH, 19:36), and [lɔɪdz] (Y22: KEnd, 22:43).

Finally, in *The Witcher* a particularly strong Scottish dialect among the dwarves can be observed, especially in the speech of Zoltan Chivay, a close friend of the main player character Geralt.

Zoltan's dialect is actually a play on Edinburgh Scottish (Heggarty et al. 2013), which is a bit different from Standard Scottish, having a stronger pronunciation of /o/ in words like *home* (i.e. [hom]) (Y24: Zolt, 00:54) and of /ɔ:/ and /ä/ in words like *alright* (i.e. [ɔ:ɪ'ɪäɪt]) (Y24: Zolt, 00:58). Zoltan's speech is also characterised by pronunciation of words such as *boot* with an Edinburgh-typical /ʏ/ (i.e. [bʏt]) (Y24: Zolt, 01:02), and words like *six* with a /ə/ (i.e. [səks] instead of [sɪks]) (Y24: Zolt, 02:22). Zoltan's choice of certain words is also noticeably Scottish, as with *arse* being used instead of *ass* (Y24: Zolt, 00:26)

Yarpen Zigrin, another dwarf, speaks in very much the same way. This is most evident in his pronunciation of *right* as [ɪäɪt] (Y25: Yarp, 01:04), perfectly mirroring that of Zoltan's (comp. with Y24: Zolt, 00:58). Another noticeable aspect of Yarpen's dialect is Scottish-typical transformation of the RP /əʊ/ into an /o/, so *ghost* ends up being pronounced as [gost] as opposed to [gəʊst] (Y25: Yarp, 00:46).

## 5.6 Wizards, Mages, and Sorcerers

Wizards and mages in the corpus appear to be the most unified of all the races/archetypes. Their primary mode of speech seems to be that of standard RP, but some of them also use GA. As far as precise distribution of dialects is concerned, wizards of *The Lord of the Rings* use solely RP, while *World of Warcraft* mages use only GA. In *Dragon Age* magic-wielders use predominantly RP, and in *The Witcher* sorcerers and sorceresses RP, with one notable GA exception.

In *The Lord of the Rings* two wizards appear: Gandalf and Saruman. Although they are technically wizards, but rather powerful prehistoric spirits, they are nonetheless included in the category.

Both Gandalf and Saruman speak in clear RP. In fact, like that of Elrond and the other elves, the speech of Gandalf and Elrond has a tendency toward thespianism and strong, proper enunciation. This is noticeable in both the quality of vowels and consonants they use, as well as in the rhythm of their words and sentences. Occasionally, these wizards will also use an ancient Elvish tongue, which gives their entire appearance even more of an otherworldly mystique.

Gandalf's pronunciation of *act quickly* with a strongly accentuated clear /l/ is a case in point (FotR: Gand, 00:47:46), as is his tendency to squeeze his vowel clusters into a single tense monophthong, such as when ['faɪə] becomes [ʃɑ:] (FotR: Gand, 00:47:32). His choice of vocabulary and syntax is also reminiscent to that of the elves – being very posh – as in the sentence, *Until at last I threw down my enemy and smote his ruin upon the mountainside* (TT: Gand, 00:54:19).

Saruman follows the same pattern as Gandalf, on occasion even outperforming him. His RP pattern is superb, and his voice has a more of a rhythmic quality than Gandalf's, making many of his sentences seem like lines taken out of a poem (comp. with FotR: Saru, 00:47:52). His tone is low and surprisingly dark, completely fitting of a villain. Moreover, it is riddled with many interesting phonetical features that just further add to the image of a great wizard turned rogue. As with Gandalf, Saruman tends to transform his vowel clusters into monophthongs, such as when [faʊnd] turns into [fɑ:nd] (FotR: Saru, 00:47:28), and uses fancy vocabulary as in, *You know of what I speak: a great eye – lidless – wreathed in flame. He is gathering all evil to him.* (FotR: Saru, 00:48:15).

In *World of Warcraft* mages speak with GA only, which is especially noticeable amongst the mages of the Kirin Tor. Jaina is perhaps the best example of this. Her dialect, although delicate, is noticeably American, with rhotic features and characteristic GA pronunciation in words such as *brother* (Y26: Jain, 00:58) and *for* (Y26: Jain, 01:59). Same can be said of the character of Rhadgar, who plays a significant role in the *Legion* expansion. His pronunciation is unmistakably equivalent to that of Jaina, especially in rhotic words such as ['ev.ri.wʌn] (Y27: Khad, 01:42) and [ˌɔl'.ɪaɪt] (Y27: Khad, 01:43), where he utilises the same approximant /ɹ/.

In *Dragon Age* mages use RP across the board. This is apparent from the very start of the game should the player opt to play as a mage. First Enchanter Irving is the most obvious example, with his *there* being pronounced as [ðeə] (Y28: FEIr, 1:36) and *armed* as [ɑ:md] (Y28: FEIr, 1:38). Other mages who speak RP in the game include Jowan (Y28: Jowa, 20:17),

Senior Enchanter Sweeney (Y28: SESw, 48:23), Senior Enchanter Leorah (Y28: SELe, 50:42), Wynne (Y29: 04:32), Flemeth (Y30: Flem, 1:25), and Morrigan (Y30: Morr, 1:30).

All in all, *Dragon Age* mages seem to correspond more or less to the Fereldan nobles in their speech, with all of their utterances being free of features that would be considered typical of the commoner class, e.g. Cockney-like dropping of the /h/ or usage of double negatives.

In *The Witcher* most mages use RP while speaking, although one of their number seems to prefer American English, namely Triss Merigold. Triss speaks in a very subtle GA that shows itself most clearly with such words as *before*, *more*, *battle*, and *during* being pronounced as [br'fɔɪ] (Y31: TrMe, 04:34), [mɔɪ] (Y31: TrMe, 04:40), ['bætəl] (Y31: TrMe, 04:41), and ['dʊɪŋ] (Y31: TrMe, 04:50), i.e. different from their RP equivalents: [br'fɔ:], [mɔ:], ['bætl], and ['dʒʊɪŋ]. Another good example of GA in her pronunciation is the sentence, *You're so charming when you try to be funny*, which she utters as, [jʊɪ sʊ 'ʃɑ:miŋ wen ju tɹaɪ tə bi 'ʌni], using a lax [ɑ] vowel in ['ʃɑ:miŋ] instead of a tense one (which would be standard for RP).

Of the RP users, Yennefer is the starkest example. Her speech has an almost one-to-one correspondence to standard RP pronunciation as is evidenced by her pronunciation of words such as *report*, *for*, *suit*, *horses*, and *offer* as [rɪ'pɔ:t] (Y32: Yenn, 05:57), [fɔ:] (Y32: Yenn, 06:02), [sju:t], (Y32: Yenn, 06:11), ['hɔ:sɪz] (Y32: Yenn, 06:42), and ['ɒfə] (Y32: Yenn, 07:20). Moreover, her speech is categorised by strong accentuation of the /l/ consonant in words like ['lɒkiŋ] (Y32: Yenn, 06:00). Other RP users in *The Witcher* include: Philippa Eilhart (Y33), Margarita Laux-Antille (Y33), Síle de Tansarville (Y34), Sabrina Gleivissing (Y35), and Dethmold (Y36).

## 5.7 Orcs

Finally, orcs' speech seem to have two primary dialectal influences. In *The Lord of the Rings* it is Cockney. In *World of Warcraft* it is GA.

Orcs, although they come in many different shapes and forms in *The Lord of the Rings*, definitively follow a Cockney-like pattern in their speech, albeit with a lot more gruffness and harshness in their vocalic production. This, in turn, perfectly complements their role of main villains in the film.

One of the best examples of orcs' dialect can be found in the third *Lord of the Rings* film, where near the end of the film the main characters Frodo and Sam find themselves surrounded

by the orcish horde. Throughout this entire scene the orcs prove themselves to be not only ferocious and vile, but also prominent users of Cockney. They frequently drop the starting /h/ in words like *have* (RotK: OrcC, 03:11:37) and use many Cockney-specific vowel transformations, such as the morphing of an RP /æ/ into an /e/, for example, in *back* (RotK: OrcC, 03:11:54). Additionally, in a scene from *The Two Towers* orcs exhibit their preference for Cockney syntax, as in the sentence, *We ain't had nothing but maggoty bread for three stinking days*, utilising an *ain't* alongside double negation (RotK: Orc, 00:29:06).

*World of Warcraft* orcs are quite different from their *Lord of the Rings* counterparts, although they too are unified in the way they speak. Their preferred dialect is that of GA with almost no variation across the board. As with *Lord of the Rings* orcs, *World of Warcraft* orcs speak harsh and with a lot of gruffness in their voice. A good example of this can be found in a scene from the *Warlords of Draenor* expansion. Two orcs that appear in this scene – Thrall and Garrosh – use the same general pronunciation, perceptibly rhotic and with the same GA pronunciation of words like *your* and *strength*, i.e. [jʊər] and [streŋkθ] (comp. Y37: Garr, 01:47/02:03 with Y37: Thra, 02:37/02:09).

## 6 Conclusion and Further Research Questions

All in all, if summarised per medium and race/archetype, dialects found in the corpus are as follows:

	<i>The Lord of the Rings</i>	<i>World of Warcraft</i>	<i>Dragon Age</i>	<i>The Witcher</i>
Men (Humans)	RP (nobles) and Northern English (commoners)	GA (nobles and commoners) and Cockney (commoners)	RP (nobles) and Cockney (commoners)	RP (nobles) and Northern English (commoners)
Hobbits	RP, West Country English, Northern English, Scottish English	N/A	N/A	N/A
Elves	RP (heightened)	RP and GA	RP and GA	Northern English
Ents	RP (heightened)	N/A	N/A	N/A



Dwarves	Idiosyncratic (Scottish English/Welsh English)	Idiosyncratic (Scottish English)	GA	Scottish English
Wizards/Mages/ Sorcerers	RP (heightened)	GA	RP	RP
Orcs	Cockney	GA	N/A	N/A

Out of the 20 eligible combinations of medium and race/archetype, 11 in total exhibit RP as at least one of the principal dialects, 6 GA, 4 Northern English, 3 Cockney, 2 Scottish English, 2 idiosyncratic English (based on Scottish or Welsh English), and 1 West Country English.

From the shared race/archetype viewpoint, men (humans) use predominantly RP (in 3 out of 4 cases), as do elves and wizards. Dwarves principally use Scottish or an idiosyncratic version of Scottish/Welsh, whereas orcs seem tied between Cockney and GA.

From the point of view of medium, *World of Warcraft* races/archetypes appear to be the most unified, with GA being used 80% of the time (i.e. in 4 out of 5 cases). This is also the only case in the entire corpus where American English dominates over British English. Conversely, in *The Lord of the Rings* races/archetypes use British English exclusively, most often RP. RP is also noticeably present in *Dragon Age*, where it is 75% percent of the time. Finally, *The Witcher* is the most diverse medium, having two British dialects that appear equally often: RP and Northern English.

Looking at the issue from a standpoint of sociolinguistics, it seems reasonable to conclude that different dialects used in fantasy media have various “prestige factors” attributed to them and that these directly correspond to a type of character represented. Whereas noble or wise characters such as human aristocrats, elves, *Lord of the Rings* ents, and wizards/sorcerers use RP almost exclusively, human commoners, hobbits, dwarves, and orcs tend to use regional dialects of British English, including Welsh/Scottish English. This can most likely be attributed to the typical characteristics of said races as described in Section 3, e.g. dwarves being robust people that care deeply for mining and crafting – a feature which can be tied with the historical traditions of mining and metalworking in Wales and Scotland (Thompson 2016 P2: 00:46:04). Likewise, the circumstance that some morally questionable or vile characters (commoners and orcs) should use Cockney while speaking may be explained by the fact that Cockney speakers are occasionally stereotypically perceived as untrustworthy among the

general British populace (*Mail Online* 2013). Both of these brief observations can be used as a starting point for some future sociolinguistic research.

On the topic of significant GA present in the corpus, an explanation can be provided in the way of it being a phenomenon partial to the American media. In fact, of the four media items covered in the thesis, *World of Warcraft* is the only one that was made in the United States, which is most likely the reason why many of its characters do not follow the same patterns as their non-American counterparts. Judging by the rest of the corpus, British English seems to be the norm, even in the Canadian-made *Dragon Age*. This too presents an opportunity for further research, as does the question why certain varieties of English do not appear in the fantasy media, i.e. Australian or South African English.

Finally, a few words should be said on the applicability of these results. With the world of filmography and gaming developing at a rapid pace, the data provided in this thesis could be used in a number of ways, including to help raise awareness of how dialects play a key part in building fantasy archetypes. The results could thus be utilised to assist the creation of novel and engaging fantastical worlds in which the characters do not speak in the same patterned way as in the typical fantasy media. Alternatively, the data could also be used to strengthen the established archetypal portrayals of fantasy races, should such an approach be desired by members of the film and/or gaming industry. A well-versed expert in English dialects and the ways these are typically used in fantasy media could certainly find his place in both of these spheres of entertainment. In fact, we are witnessing that linguistics has been becoming more and more of a prominent factor in the film industry, with titles such as *Arrival* and *Game of Thrones* frequently turning to professional linguists to assist with the realism of their fictional languages. One should also not forget that the varieties of English dialects and fictional languages utilised in the media covered by this thesis were also largely influenced by an advice of linguistic experts, especially in the case of *The Lord of the Rings* (Y38). Without doubt, such trends are bound to continue in the future, and inasmuch as they do, the questions raised and discussed in this thesis will continue to be relevant.

## 7 References

### ARTICLES, BOOKS, FILMS, AND VIDEOGAMES

Adams, Ernest and Andrew Rollings. 2003. *Andrew Rollings and Ernest Adams on Game Design*. Indianapolis: New Riders Publishing.

*Dragon Age: Origins*. Dir. Dan Tudge. 2009. PC DVD. Electronic Arts.

James, Edwards and Farah Mendlesohn. 2012. *The Cambridge Companion to Fantasy Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jenkins, Jennifer. 2008. *World Englishes*. New York: Routledge.

Stoddart, Jana et al. 1999. "Sheffield dialect in the 1990s: revisiting the concept of NORMs" in *Urban Voices*. London: Arnold, pp. 72–89.

*The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. Dir. Peter Jackson. 2001. Special Extended DVD. New Line.

*The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*. Dir. Peter Jackson. 2003. Special Extended DVD. New Line.

*The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. Dir. Peter Jackson. 2002. Special Extended DVD. New Line.

Wells, John C. 1998. *Accents of English 1. An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wells, John C. 1982. *Accents of English 2. The British Isles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wells, John C. 1998. *Accents of English 3. Beyond the British Isles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings*. Dir. Adam Badowski. 2011. PC DVD. CD Projekt S.A.

*The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. Dir. Konrad Tomaszkiewicz et al. 2015. PC DVD. CD Projekt S.A.

*World of Warcraft*. Dir. Rob Pardo et al. 2004. PC CD. Blizzard Entertainment, Inc.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

Heggarty, Paul; Warren Maguire, April McCahon. 2013. *Accents of English from Around the World*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh. Via:  
<http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/research/gsound/Eng/Database/Phonetics/Englises/Home/HomeMainFrameHolder.htm>

*Fandom*. Via: <https://www.fandom.com/>

*Dragon Age Wiki*: [https://dragonage.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon\\_Age\\_Wiki](https://dragonage.fandom.com/wiki/Dragon_Age_Wiki)

*The Lord of the Rings Wiki*: [https://lotr.fandom.com/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://lotr.fandom.com/wiki/Main_Page)

*The Witcher Wiki*: [https://witcher.fandom.com/wiki/Witcher\\_Wiki](https://witcher.fandom.com/wiki/Witcher_Wiki)

*World of Warcraft Wiki*: <https://wowwiki.fandom.com/wiki/Portal:Main>

*Mail Online*. 2013. "Scousers have the 'least intelligent and least trustworthy' accent." Author: Victoria Woollaston. Via: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2433201/Scousers-intelligent-trustworthy-accent--Devonians-friendliest.html>

Thompson, Luke. 2016. *British Accents in The Lord of the Rings (Luke's English Podcast)*. Via: <https://teacherluke.co.uk/>

P1: <https://teacherluke.co.uk/2016/11/30/404-british-accents-in-the-lord-of-the-rings-part-1/>

P2: <https://teacherluke.co.uk/2016/11/30/405-british-accents-in-the-lord-of-the-rings-part-2/>

*Wikipedia.* Via: <https://en.wikipedia.org>

*YouTube.* Via: <https://www.youtube.com/>

- Y1: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAIrj\\_Vqdfc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAIrj_Vqdfc)
- Y2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rY8xwohG610>
- Y3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0sBJkxxoPQ>
- Y4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTOfCOWrdns>
- Y5: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsHwUvmrVIo>
- Y6: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnkAqjEbpJ0>
- Y7: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0PCe-0UvbI>
- Y8: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTx3104-UWk>
- Y9: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmlfM1a1s0M>
- Y10: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNiaUAVvFeA>
- Y11: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bnDFgr--9I>
- Y12: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HerNdsh\\_H-g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HerNdsh_H-g)
- Y13: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loJCGO2MTjc>
- Y14: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YIDdOV7uV0>
- Y15: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyRHyt91nPk>
- Y15: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyRHyt91nPk>
- Y16: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjW8Mq1el3o>
- Y17: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ar2e3ZGvTRc>
- Y18: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-W2xJ9Vm9k0>
- Y19: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKYkfvdVQFg>
- Y20: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iOv9C19hDw>
- Y21: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQJXez-BpL8>
- Y22: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbfEJrgII00>
- Y23: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8fPpjO\\_BQM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8fPpjO_BQM)
- Y24: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDyhWh8PEgI>
- Y25: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxQIrzGiKj0>
- Y26: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wREeahXw1Q>
- Y27: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVb8RuFz6gE>
- Y28: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9AtVtB0ORQ>
- Y29: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwDO8AS4h74>
- Y30: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVHK3FNbI0A>

- Y31: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGU8ApMhlSQ>
- Y32: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBIPKWaYg\\_E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBIPKWaYg_E)
- Y33: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzsx\\_09RZhw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzsx_09RZhw)
- Y34: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3grmoF6xuM>
- Y35: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQ\\_7ctZJF1M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQ_7ctZJF1M)
- Y36: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUqPnISQwzM>
- Y37: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AlnE16-2NI>
- Y38: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zk78CwEoVb0>