Björk Guðmundsdóttir

A Phonological, Phonetic and Sociolinguistic approach

B.A. Essay

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May 2012
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Abstract

The purpose of this essay is twofold. Firstly to describe phonological variation that occurs in the dialects that Björk Guđmundsdóttir uses when speaking English. Secondly to explain the occurrence of these variations according to the different speech communities that Björk has belonged to. A biography is included, in chapter 2, to provide the reader with a brief overview which is intended to set the discussion which follows into the correct chronological context.

Chapter 3 establishes a theory to support the claim that Björk Guđmundsdóttir has two main English dialects, Estuary English and Icelandic-English, by utilizing theories from the fields of phonetics and phonology. Phonetics is “the comparatively straightforward business of describing the sound that we use in speaking” (Roach 2000, 44) while in Phonology “we talk about how phonemes function in language, and the relationship among different phonemes” (Roach 2000, 44). Terms such as language, varieties, dialects and accents are explained and connected to variational features characteristic of Björk’s English speech. Phonological phenomena such as Rhotisity, L-vocalization, Glottal stop, H-dropping, Happy-tensing, Yod-phenomena and TH-fronting are then applied to further support the categorization of her two dialects.

Chapter 4 of the essay follows up on these distinctions with a discussion of why Björk, consciously or unconsciously, code switches. The argument in this section is supported by theories from sociolinguistics, which is “concerned with investigating the relationship between language and society with the goal of a better understanding of the structure of language and of how languages function in communication” (Wardhaugh 1986, 12), such as identity, nationalism, and code choice.

The essay concludes with an analysis of Björk’s choice of codes when speaking to people from other dialect areas. Reference will be made throughout to the biography and examples given from sources via links to videos. It is hoped that this information will assist the reader in better understanding the discussion that follows.
World famous Icelandic singer and composer Björk Guðmundsdóttir has been in the spotlight since she was merely 12 years old. She gained world-wide recognition with her band *The Sugercubes* when they released their hit song *Birthday*. Since *Birthday* endless hits have reached top charts in a vast number of countries, especially after Björk’s solo career commenced. Björk was one of the first Icelandic pop-artist to receive prominence outside of Iceland and since then has been an important symbol for Iceland’s musical identity.

When Björk started touring abroad with bands such as *Kukl* and *The Sugercubes* she of course had to speak English. Björk’s English accents have intrigued many and this essay will describe the features that characterize them. Theories from English, and Icelandic, phonetic and phonological rules will be used to discuss and compare varieties in Björk’s speech. Examples will be given of the presence or absence of features such as rhotisity, *L*-vocalization, Glottal stop, *H*-dropping, HappY-tensing, *Yod*-phenomena and *TH*-fronting. These examples will support an argument that seeks to categorize Björk’s main accents as Estuary English and Icelandic-English, English with Icelandic phonetical and phonological aspects. Additionally, sociolinguistic theories of identity and code choice will shed light on when and why she consciously or unconsciously applies them and in what kind of situations. Björk is well known for her English accent with Icelandic phonetic varieties, though fewer people are aware that she is also capable of speaking with a near native Estuary English accent.

Chapter 2 provides a brief biographical overview intended to set ideas on following theories into perspective. References are made throughout the essay to the biography. Chapter 3 describes Björk’s most used dialects, Estuary English and Icelandic-English. Examples of dialectal features such as rhotisity, *L*-vocalization, Glottal stop, *H*-dropping, HappY-tensing, *Yod*-phenomena and *TH*-fronting will be discussed. Chapter 4 is concerned with sociolinguistic theories such as *nationalism, identity and code-choice*. Chapter 4.1 will give the reader an idea as to why Björk uses either Icelandic-English or Estuary dialects, utilizing ideology from sociolinguistic theories such as identity and nationalism. Chapter 4.2 describes language as code and the impact that speaking to people with other codes has on Björk’s accent.
2. Biography

Björk Guðmundsdóttir was born in 1965 in Reykjavík, Iceland. According to her parents, Björk displayed a passion for music from an early age (Aston 1996, 20), constantly singing wherever she went. This passion undoubtedly played its part in her gaining entrance into a formal music school while she was still young.

She started her music career in 1977, at the age of 12, with the album “Björk”. The album sold 5000 copies in Iceland, which entitled it to gold status. From early on Björk showed eclectic musical taste; she played classical music in music school, and when she tired of that her teacher introduced her to Stockhousen electro music. In Exodus she played jazz-fusion and later recorded a jazz album with “Trió Guðmundar Ingólfssonar”. Björk was also very active in the Icelandic punk scene during her teenage years. She played with bands such as Spit and Snot, Tappi Tíkarass, Kukl and the famous Sykurmolarnir, better known to their international audience as The Sugercubes. The latter two bands recorded their albums in London and toured internationally. It would be a fair claim that exposure to a wide range of different musical genres from a relatively early age has shaped Björk to become the musician she is today.

The Sugercubes disbanded in 1992. According to Björk they split up because she had moved in a different musical direction while the rest of the band wanted to retain their old style, and so Björk decided to follow up on her solo career. “Björk considered Paris, LA and New York but realized that, even though she had never enjoyed London on her numerous visits, it was the only really plausible choice” (Aston 1996, 186). Iceland would have seemed a better place, close to her friends and family, but the implicit limitations were endless. According to Aston (Aston 1996, 186) Björk chose London for several reasons: She had already established some connections, through The Sugercubes, with the record company ‘One little Indian’, with whom she liked working because they had given her complete artistic freedom. Secondly, “London had a cross-current of ethnic and musical culture second to none, including its cutting edge dance scene” (Aston 1996, 186). Thirdly, at 7 years old Sindri had reached school age and his second language was already English. Björk moved to the North-west London suburb of Belsize Park and later to west London suburbs that enjoyed a closer proximity to water and boats.

“Björk’s interests led her to approach Manchester-based producer Graham Massey of 808 State to add beats to songs she had written over a ten-year period”
Graham Massey and Derik Birkett, the founder of One little Indian, helped her settle in and start work on her first ‘proper’ solo album; she had already recorded Björk and Gling-glo\(^1\) but did not feel it was her own work since most of the songs were covers (Aston 1996, 203).

While Björk prepared her album *Debut* she also worked on collaborations with Graham Massey and Nellee Hooper, who produced the majority of the tracks on her first album. Björk, Massey and Hooper continued to work together through the years. They never anticipated the success of *Debut*: “*One little Indian had budgeted for sales of 40,000 records based on the popularity of the Sugercubes, Debut sold many times that within a few months of its release*” (Birkett 2006; Dibben 2009, 16).

In the documentary *Vessel*, Björk states that she decided to form a band formed solely of immigrants with the goal of mixing her music with influences informed by different ethnic identities (Sednaoui 1995). In 1995 she released *Post*. “*Whereas Debut had featured songs written over a ten-year period in Iceland, Björk’s second studio album, Post\(^2\), consisted of songs created within a shorter time period*” (Dibben 2009, 17). Björk’s goal was to get her accumulated songs out of the way, as she believed this would afford her a fresh start. *Telegram*\(^3\), a compilation of remixes from the album *Post*, was released shortly after to less favourable reviews than her previous solo efforts.

In September 1996, a mentally unstable fan sent Björk a letter bomb, before recording his own suicide on video. This ordeal directly informed her decision to move to Spain, where she recorded *Homogenic*\(^4\) (Walker 1997). In an interview with Swedish film-maker Malik Bendjelloul\(^5\), Björk explains that each of her albums represents different years in her life. Her theory is that *Debut* and *Post* are ‘twins’, accumulated songs she wanted to get out of the way before she could continue expanding her musical interest. She also considers *Homogenic*\(^6\) and *Vespertine*\(^7\) to be ‘twins’, as they are imbued with similar themes.

Björk had a busy year in 2001, starring in and composing the music for Lars Von Trier’s film *Dancer in the dark*. She released *Selmasongs*, the soundtrack to the

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1 1991  
2 1995  
3 1997  
4 1997  
5 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLw40vhQ2fI&list=PLA960D26782199342&index=17&feature=plpp_video  
6 1997  
7 2001
film, in the same year as well as writing the material for her next solo album, 
*Vespertine*. “Björk set up camp in New York during summer”\(^8\) and recorded 
*Vespertine*. Björk has recorded and released five albums since *Vespertine*. 
These are: *Medúlla*\(^9\), *Drawing restraint*\(^9\), *Volta*\(^10\), *Voltaic*\(^11\), and *Biophilia*\(^12\).

This brief overview is intended to set ideas on nationalism, linguistic identity, 
and code/dialect switching that will follow in the correct context with relation to a 
relative chronological order. Reference will be made throughout to the biography and 
examples given from sources via links to videos. It is hoped that this section will assist 
the reader in better understanding the information that follows.

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\(^8\) [http://unit.bjork.com/specials/albums/vespertine/](http://unit.bjork.com/specials/albums/vespertine/)
\(^9\) 2004
\(^10\) 2005
\(^11\) 2007
\(^12\) 2009
\(^13\) 2011
3. Dialect and Accent

3.1 Language, varieties, dialects and accents

Björk Guðmundsdóttir moved to England in 1991 to record her solo album *Debut*. Before she moved she had toured with bands such as *Kukl* and *The Sugercubes* all over the world and had undoubtedly learned some English while she travelled. She had also studied English during her school years in Iceland. Björk is an L2-speaker of English. In other words, she is not bilingual in the sense that she does not have two first languages, Icelandic and English; she learned English after she had acquired her first language, Icelandic. As Björk was not brought up in an English speaking environment she had to learn the phonological and grammatical rules of English later in life.

Before heading further into this discussion some basic distinctions on *language, varieties, dialects and accents* should be clarified. According to Wardhaugh, in his book *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (1986), languages are sets of variables. This allows one to distinguish English from French, Latin, Icelandic and so on. “*Variety is defined in terms of a specific set of linguistic items or human speech patterns (presumably sounds, words, grammatical features) which we can uniquely associate with some external factor (presumably, a geographical area or a social group)*” (Wardhaugh 1986, 22).

According to Bell (1976, 147-57; Wardhaugh 1986, 30) a language has to have been *standardized* to be called a language. Standardization means that a language has to have been codified by having its own grammar, dictionary and literature. By associating linguistic variables with geographical areas or social groups we can arrange a language into different *dialects*, or subordinate varieties of a language such as British English, American English, South African English, Australian English and so on. These subordinate varieties are of course all considered English since the people who speak these geographically conditioned dialects have little trouble in understanding each other.

Dialect should not be confused with the term *accent*. As stated by Chambers and Trudgill (Chambers & Trudgill 1998, 5) *accent* refers to the phonetic and phonological variations in a person’s speech while *dialect* refers to grammatical, lexical and sometimes phonological varieties. English is characterized by a number of different accents, all of which have clear regional or social varieties. A person cannot speak a language without an accent.
Björk’s accent was described as “the cutest Icelandic-Cockney accent on earth” by Martin Aston in his book Björkography (Aston 1996, 306). He is referring to when Björk co-hosted Top of the pops with comedian Jack Dee on Christmas day in London. Describing Björk’s accent as Cockney is actually misleading. The fact that she very seldom H-drops and never replaces the dental fricative [ð, θ] with the labiodentals [f] and [v], a dialectal feature called TH-fronting, is evidence enough that her accent is not Cockney. Rather, Wells calls this accent Estuary English, EE, and it shares many phonetic characteristics with Cockney and is “associated with standard grammar and usage” (Wells 1997, 2). The following discussions will explore the different characteristics of pronunciational variation in Björk’s speech and categorize linguistic features according the two different dialects she is prone to use, namely, the Icelandic-English and Estuary English dialects.

3.2 Icelandic-English and Estuary English

This chapter will use terminology from the fields of phonetics and phonology. Phonetics is “the comparatively straightforward business of describing the sound that we use in speaking” (Roach 2000, 44) while in Phonology “we talk about how phonemes function in language, and the relationship among different phonemes” (Roach 2000, 44). According to Pétur Knútsson’s web page, “phonemes are groups of sounds which speakers usually think of as ‘one sound’”. For example /l/ is a phoneme which has two allophones, [l] and [ɾ]. Allophones are in other words physical varieties of a certain phoneme.

The following words are transcribed with symbols from the International Phonetic Alphabet, IPA, via font p0 prepared by Pétur Knútsson, associate professor in the Department of English at Háskóli Íslands. Examples will be given in video form via web links in footnotes as well as the times of the occurrence of the particular accent features under discussion. The relevant word, or sound, will then be transcribed in the main text. Note that all transcriptions are shown in brackets, e.g. stepfather - [stepfa:ðər]. If the reader is viewing this document without the p0 font installed, the letters will not appear in the correct format, unless it is viewed through the ‘.pdf’

14 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2aJp1UQEwY&list=PLA960D26782199342&index=13&feature=plpp_video
15 https://notendur.hi.is/peturk/KENNSLA/02/TOP/phonemes.html
16 The font is accessible from Pétur’s homepage: https://notendur.hi.is/peturk/KENNSLA/02/p0/index.html
format. See Appendix- A for example words containing each of the transcribed vowel used in the following chapters.

The variations that characterize Björk’s accent are considered typical variations for a Cockney dialect and Estuary English, EE, compared with typical characteristics of Icelandic phonology. The Cockney and Estuary English variations are Rhoticity, L-vocalization, glottal stop, HappY –tensing, Yod-coalescence, H-dropping and TH-fronting. The latter two features are characteristic of the Cockney accent only. The following paragraphs will compare these variations and see if Björk uses them consistently through her speech and/or if she mixes them with phonological rules characteristic of Icelandic.

3.2.1 Rhoticity
“The absence (in non-rhotic accents) or presence (in rhotic accents) of /r/ in final position or before a consonant (non-prevocalic /r/), as in hear, work” (Melchers & Shaw 2003, 17). The fundamental difference with regard to this feature in Bjork’s pronunciation of English is that when using her Icelandic-English dialect she displays rhoticity, while when using the Estuary-English dialect, on the other hand, she does not. This can be explained by the fact that Icelandic is a rhotic language while English, except for the varieties of Scotland, North England, South-West England and Ireland, is non-rhotic (Pétur Knútsson 2006, 25).

In English the consonant /r/ is an approximant, meaning that it varies in its articulation in the mouth, but is regularly placed at the post-alveolar region (Appendix-A). Furthermore, the consonant is a retroflex; the tongue does not touch the roof of the mouth during the articulation of this sound (Roach 2000, 62). Björk has a very strong /r/ in her Icelandic-English accent. In Icelandic the sound is articulated closer to the teeth and is described as a dental or an alveolar sound, and not a retroflex (Árnason 2005, 161). The tip of the tongue fluctuates in many cases, making a /r/ sound, called a ‘trill’ (Roach 2000, xi), which Björk displays when she speaks with her Icelandic-English accent (Árnason 2005 160). When she switches to Estuary English, she uses the “correct” non-rhotic English consonant.
Icelandic-English:

1) BJORK INTERVIEW 1988
   01:49 – morning [mɔːrniŋ] - [mɔːrniŋ]
   02:45 – picture [pɪktʃə] instead of [pɪktʃə]

2) Vessel – documentary
   23:30 - I can lock the door – [ðɔːr]
   02:06 – when I start [stɑːrt]

3) Björk & PJ Harvey TV Special, Lola Da Musica Interview 1995 part 1, 2 and 3
   01:12 – First child [fɪrst] instead of [fɪːst]
   01:14 – mother - father [mʌðər] - [fɑːðər]

4) At Planet Rock Profiles 1995
   00:05 – literature [lɪtrətjæər]

5) Short interview 1996
   00:15, 00:20 & 00:21 – for [fɔːr] instead of [fɔːr/ə]

Estuary English:

6) Vessel – documentary
   38:18 – never [nɛvə] instead of [nɛvə]

7) Björk & PJ Harvey TV Special, Lola Da Musica Interview 1995 part 1, 2 and 3
   Part 2 - 03:27 – father, mother - [fɑːðər] [mʌðər]

8) Björk about Tibet - 1996 Backstage Festival
   00:05 – teenager [tɪːnɪdʒə]

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17 http://youtu.be/mjLcelg1Kto
18 http://youtu.be/g_6uQykJGFw
19 Part 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBJHWdRFaEw
   Part 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzJ9q8ofQY
   Part 3 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anDvM1mAqqM
20 http://youtu.be/zWyktScd_Y0
21 http://youtu.be/RWOw30kxEpY
22 http://youtu.be/g_6uQykJGFw
23 Part 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBJHWdRFaEw
   Part 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzJ9q8ofQY
   Part 3 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anDvM1mAqqM
24 http://youtu.be/aLiL5PfkA5c
9) Björk interview loop, year unknown, part 1

01:38 – directors [dairəktəs]
01:46 – teenager [ti:neɪdʒə]

10) Björk Interview with Jonathan Ross

02:05 – affair [əˈfɛːr]
02:22 – virgin [vəˈdʒɪn]
02:38 – numbers [næmbəs]
03:00 – meters [miːtəz] - suddenly she becomes rhotic again

As mentioned above, Björk is very consistent with rhotisity. When she speaks Icelandic-English she consistently pronounces /r/ in final position or before a consonant. Note that Icelandic-English only has strong vowels (Árnason 2005, 128). When she speaks with an Estuary English accent Björk drops /r/.

3.2.2 L-Vocalization

Peter Roach, in his book English Phonetics and Phonology, ascribes two allophones to the phoneme /l/ in RP English - dark [l] and light [l]. Words are pronounced with dark /l/ when they are followed by a consonant or a pause, and with light /l/ when followed by a vowel (Roach 2000, 61). Dialects such as Cockney and Estuary English have gone through a sound change concerning dark /l/. Melchers and Shaw comment on this sound change as follows: “Since the position of the back of the tongue in dark /l/ approximates to [ɔ], a natural phonetic process has resulted in so-called L- vocalization, e.g. [maʊk] for milk” (Melchers, Shaw 2003, 51). Wells adds that “L- Vocalization is a sound change still very much in progress; speakers are by no means consistent” (Wells 1982, 2: 313).

When Björk uses her Icelandic-English accent she usually does not vocalize her /l/. When she is using Estuary English she does this sometimes, but as Wells points out this sound change is new and is not yet consistent. Icelandic phonology includes both the dark /l/ and the light /l/. Light /l/ is much more common than dark /l/(Árnason 2005, 160).

http://youtu.be/YbHeT9ay8ug
http://youtu.be/cj76idQFzU8
no schwa [ə]
Icelandic-English:

11) BJÖRK INTERVIEW 1988
   02:22 – little [lɪttəl] instead of [lɪtʊd]
12) Vessel – documentary
   23:27 - when other people are asleep – [pi:ˈpʊl]
   02:27 – dance culture [kælˈfər] instead of [kʌdˈfə]
   02:31 – do my album [ədbuːm] instead of [ælbəm]
13) Björk & PJ Harvey TV Special, Lola Da Musica Interview 1995 part 1, 2 and 3.
   01:18 – old [əʊld] instead of [ɵʊd]
14) At Planet Rock Profiles 1995
   03:26 – film [fɪlm] instead of [fɪlm]

Estuary English:

15) Björk & PJ Harvey TV Special, Lola Da Musica Interview 1995 part 1, 2 and 3.
   Part 2 - 03:21 – walk [wɔːk]
16) Björk Interview with Jonathan Ross
   02:02 – single [sɪŋəl]
   02:03 – album [ælˈbəm]

As seen in examples 11-14, Björk does not vocalize her /l/ when she speaks with her Icelandic-English accent. As stated above, L-vocalization is a more recent change and language users are therefore not yet consistent in applying it. Björk is no exception when speaking with her Estuary English accent. Examples 15 and 16 above show the different types of variations Björk uses.

28 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjLcelg1Kto&feature=youtu.be
29 http://youtu.be/g_6uQykJGFw
30 Part 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBJHWdRFaEw
   Part 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzJ9q8oiFQY
   Part 3 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anDvM1mAqqM
31 http://youtu.be/2WyktScd_V0
32 Part 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBJHWdRFaEw
   Part 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzJ9q8oiFQY
   Part 3 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anDvM1mAqqM
33 http://youtu.be/cj76ldQFzU8
3.2.3 Glottal stop

“The voiceless plosives /p, t, k/ of London English are typically aspirated, affricated, preglottalized, glottalled, or voiced, or more than one of these, depending in phonetic environment and social factor” (Wells 1982, 2: 322). A glottal stop occurs after the vocal folds are “firmly pressed together so that air cannot pass between them” (Roach 2000, 29). The phonetic symbol for a glottal stop is [ʔ]. “Preglottalization and glottaling are found in many kinds of English. Yet the glottal stop is widely regarded as a sound particularly characteristic of Cockney” (Wells 1982, 2: 323). T-Glottalling is especially common in London English, particularly Cockney.

Icelandic-English:

17) BJORK INTERVIEW 1988

01:58 – all sort of situations [sɔːrt] instead of [sɔːʔ]
02:22 – little [lɪtul] instead of [lɪʔul] or [lɪʔəl]

18) Vessel – documentary

02:06 – when I start [stɑːrt] instead of [stɑːʔ]

19) Björk & PJ Harvey TV Special, Lola Da Musica Interview 1995 part 1, 2 and 3


20) At Planet Rock Profiles 1995

00:57 – poets [pəuɛts] instead of [pəuɛʔs]

21) Short interview 1996

00:10 – important [ɪmpɔːr$tant] instead of [ɪmpɔːʔənt]

Estuary English:

22) Vessel – documentary

38:18 - “live without my ears” – [wɪð ləuʔ]

http://youtu.be/mjLcelglKto
http://youtu.be/g_6uQykJGFw
Part 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBJHWdRFaEw
Part 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsJ9q8oifQY
Part 3 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anDvM1mAqqM
http://youtu.be/zWyktScd_V0
http://youtu.be/RWOw30kxEpY
http://youtu.be/g_6uQykJGFw
When Björk speaks with an Estuary English accent she is very consistent in using the glottal stop. As seen in the documentary Vessel, Björk speaks Icelandic-English throughout the film except for in two instances, when she adopts an Estuary English accent, she says: example 21, “I could never live without my ears”. The pronunciation of ‘without’ [wiðˈauʔ] is to be transcribed with a glottal stop in final position. When Björk uses her rhotic Icelandic-English accent she uses glottal stops differently. Glottal stop occurs often in Icelandic and is in fact “one of the most common sounds in Icelandic” and “occurs in most plosive vowels and at the beginning of a stressed syllable beginning with a vowel” (Árnason 2005, 157).

### 3.2.4 H-dropping

“If air is passed through the glottis when it is narrowed […], the result is a fricative sound for which the symbol is h. […] It is called a voiceless glottal fricative” (Roach 40)

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40 Part 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBJHWdRFaEw
Part 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzJ9q8oifQY
Part 3 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anDvM1mAqqM
41 http://youtu.be/aL5PtkA5c
42 http://youtu.be/YbHef9uy8ug
43 http://youtu.be/cj76fdQFzU8
In working-class accents of most of England, **H Dropping** prevails. That is to say, the [h] of standard accents is absent: words such as hit, hammer, happy, hedge begin with a vowel (or sometimes [ʔ])” (Wells 1982, 1: 253). Dialects such as Cockney and Estuary English have *H*-dropping. When Björk speaks with her Estuary English accent she *H* - drops in most instances. In Cockney and Estuary English ‘*H* “may be missing in words where RP has it, and on the other hand it may occur where it is paralleled by no segment in RP, but never consistently one way or the other”’ (Wells 1982, 2: 322). When Björk speaks with her Icelandic accent she does not *H* - drop. She adds preaspiration in words that have two consecutive plosive consonants in spelling. This is because of the Icelandic length rule; a vowel is long in a stressed syllable when followed by one or no consonants and short when followed by two or more consonants (Árnason 2005, 135; see Práinsson 1995, 82–3 for exceptions to this rule). There are no geminate consonants in English pronunciation; the transcription of *happen* for a native speaker’s pronunciation would be [hapən]. Björk’s pronunciation [hahpen] is likely due to the fact that she interprets the medial plosive as long after the short vowel /a/, as is consistent with her native knowledge of Icelandic phonology.

**Icelandic-English:**

27) **BJORK INTERVIEW 1988**

01:22 – houses [hausis]
03:12 – headaches [hedelks]

28) Vessel – documentary

18:12 – Hello [helou]

29) Björk & PJ Harvey TV Special, Lola Da Musica Interview 1995 part 1, 2 and 3;

Part 1 - 02:06 – house [haus]
Part 1 - 02:09 & 02:21 – hair [h3:r]

30) At Planet Rock Profiles 1995

02:05 – hate [heit] instead of [eit]

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44 http://youtu.be/mjLcelg1Kto
45 http://youtu.be/g_6uQykJGFw
46 Part 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBJHWdRFaEw
Part 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzJ9q8ofQY
Part 3 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anDvM1mAqqM
47 http://youtu.be/zWyktScd_V0
Estuary English:

31) Björk & PJ Harvey TV Special, Lola Da Musica Interview 1995 part 1, 2 and 3.\(^{48}\)
   Part 2 - 03:24 – house [haus] –three times in a row
32) Björk interview loop, year unknown, part 1\(^{49}\)
   02:36 & 03:04 – hits [ıts]
33) Björk Interview with Jonathan Ross\(^{50}\)
   03:50 – hid [hıd]

As examples 27-30 show Björk does not H-drop when she adopts an Icelandic-English accent. As seen in examples 31-33 Björk’s H-dropping varies when she speaks with an Estuary English accent.

3.2.5 Happı-tensing

“The final vowel of happy is traditionally identified in RP with the /i/ of kit (Wells 1982, 2: 294). In Estuary English and Cockney the closed front vowel /i/ has been tensed resulting in the vowel /ı:/ of fleece. This variation is called Happı-tensing and Wells describes it as “using a sound more similar to the [ı:] of beat than to the [ı] of bit at the end of words like happy, coffee, valley.” (Wells 1997, 2). Icelandic also provides a tensed /ı/ sound (Árnason 2005, 142).

Icelandic-English:

34) BJORK INTERVIEW 1988\(^{51}\)
   00:17 – happy [hahpi:] instead of [hapi] – Icelandic preaspiration in [hahpi:]
35) Vessel – documentary\(^{52}\)
   02:19 – Turkey [tərkit] instead of [tə:kit]

\(^{48}\) Part 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBJHWdRFaEw
Part 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzJ9q8oiFQY
Part 3 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anDvM1mAqQM
\(^{49}\) http://youtu.be/YbHeT9aj8ug
\(^{50}\) http://youtu.be/cj76idQFzU8
\(^{51}\) http://youtu.be/mjLcelg1Kto
\(^{52}\) http://youtu.be/g_6uQykJGFw
36) Björk & PJ Harvey TV Special, Lola Da Musica Interview 1995 part 1, 2 and 3.53
   Part 2 –05:24- happy - [hapik]
37) At Planet Rock Profiles 199554
   02:36 – see [si:] instead of [sr]
38) Short interview 199655
   00:17 – Body [boðiː]

Estuary English:

39) Björk & PJ Harvey TV Special, Lola Da Musica Interview 1995 part 1, 2 and 3.56
   Part 2 –05:24- happy - [hapik]
40) Björk about Tibet - 1996 Backstage Festival57
   00:16 – minority [ma:nә trailing]
41) Björk interview loop, year unknown, part 158
   05:55 – story [stәːrɪ] instead of [stәːrɪ]
42) Björk Interview with Jonathan Ross59
   03:25 – easily [iziː trailing]

As seen in examples, 34–42, Björk is very consistent in using a tensed /i/ sound at the end of words in both dialects.

3.2.6 Yod-phenomena

“The only consonants which /j/ follows freely in clusters are /p, b, v, g/ […] it is also common in clusters after /m, f, k/ […]. Where RP has an alveolar stop plus yod, Cockney traditionally exhibits yod-dropping (Wells 1982, 2: 330). Björk does not typically yod-drop in English but she does use a variation called yod-coalescence. In

53 Part 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBJHWdRFaEw
   Part 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzJ9q8oiQY
   Part 3 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anDvM1mAqqM
54 http://youtu.be/zWyktScd_V0
   http://youtu.be/RWOw30kxEpY
56 Part 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBJHWdRFaEw
   Part 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzJ9q8oiQY
   Part 3 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anDvM1mAqqM
57 http://youtu.be/AL5PikA5c
58 http://youtu.be/YbHeT9ay8ug
59 http://youtu.be/cj76ldQFzU8
words like *tune* and *dune* a yod has ‘appeared’ after the plosive dental consonants /t, d/, giving rise to the sounds [tʃ] and [ðʒ] in this environment. This is called yod-coalescence. Even though Icelandic phonology does not possess [tʃ] and [ðʒ], Icelandic only has one sound for the phoneme /s/ (Árnason 2005, 161) while English has five: [ʃ, z, ʒ, ʃ, ʒ] (see Appendix-A). Björk seems to have learned these sounds and is able to produce them like a native speaker of English.

**Icelandic-English**

43) BJORK INTERVIEW 1988

02:50 – watch [woʧ]

44) Vessel – documentary

18:32 – watching [woʧɪŋ]

45) At Planet Rock Profiles 1995

03:53 & 04:05 – structure [strʌktʃər]

**Estuary English:**

46) Björk interview loop, year unknown, part 1

04:44 – nature [neɪʃər]

06:30 – intuitive [ɪntjuɪtɪv] instead of [iːntjuɪtɪv]

Examples 43-45 show that even though Icelandic does not have the [tʃ] and [ðʒ] phonemes, Björk has learned them and is able to use them. The second example in 46 shows her yod-drop, which she does not do consistently.

**3.2.7 TH-Fronting**

TH-Fronting is a common variable of London speech. “*It involves the replacement of the dental fricative, [θ, ð] by labiodentals, [f] and [v] respectively*” (Wells 1982, 2:328). There seems to be a slight difference in the pronunciation of the consonant /v/ between English and Icelandic, the difference being that Icelandic /v/ is more of an approximant, and contains features typical of both fricatives and vowels. Icelandic

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60 http://youtu.be/mjLcelg1Kto
61 http://youtu.be/g_6uQykJGFw
62 http://youtu.be/zWyktScd_V0
63 http://youtu.be/YbHeT9ay8ug
phonology has all four sounds, suggesting that Björk can pronounce them all. Björk does not front her TH.

**Icelandic-English:**

47) BJORK INTERVIEW 1988\(^{64}\)
   02:14 – the thing $[\theta\text{in}]$ uses labio dental fricative instead of dental fricitive
48) Vessel – documentary\(^{65}\)
   02:27 – youth $[\text{j}\epsilon\text{ð}]$
49) Björk & PJ Harvey TV Special, Lola Da Musica Interview 1995 part 1, 2 and 3.\(^{66}\)
   Part 1 - 04:53 – think $[\theta\text{in}k]$
50) At Planet Rock Profiles 1995\(^{67}\)
   01:30 – thought $[\text{ð}\epsilon\text{t}]$
51) Short interview 1996\(^{68}\)
   00:28 – that $[\delta\text{at}]$

**Estuary English:**

52) Björk about Tibet - 1996 Backstage Festival\(^{69}\)
00:12 – thousand $[\text{ðauz\text{e}nd}]$
53) Björk interview loop, year unknown, part 1\(^{70}\)
   02:53 – there $[\delta\epsilon:]$
54) Björk Interview with Jonathan Ross\(^{71}\)
   05:55 – there $[\delta\epsilon:]$

Examples 47-54 show that Björk uses $[\theta, \delta]$ in her speech in both dialects.

\(^{64}\) http://youtu.be/mjLcelg1Kto
\(^{65}\) http://youtu.be/g_6uQykJGFw
\(^{66}\) Part 1 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBjHwdrF3eEw
   Part 2 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tz9q8oiFQY
   Part 3 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anDvM1mAqqM
\(^{67}\) http://youtu.be/zWyktScd_V0
\(^{68}\) http://youtu.be/RwOw30kxEpY
\(^{69}\) http://youtu.be/AL5PtkA5c
\(^{70}\) http://youtu.be/YbHeT9ay8ug
\(^{71}\) http://youtu.be/cj76ldQFzU8
3.3 Summary

Examples have been shown above in order to better distinguish features and variations which identify Björk’s two main accents, Icelandic-English and Estuary English. Björk shows that she is fully capable of using both accents interchangeably. The examples also support the claim that she speaks with an Estuary English dialect rather than a Cockney dialect. When speaking with Estuary English Björk’s grammar is standard and she displays the following dialect-appropriate phonetic variations: rhoticity, L-vocalization, Glottal stop, yod-coalescence, Hatt-tesning, associated with Estuary English. Conversely, she does not H-drop or front her [Θ, ð] to [f] and [v]. Björk’s grammar begins to deviate from the standard when she uses speaks in her Icelandic-English dialect. Possible reasons for Björk having adopted these two dialects will be discussed in the following chapter.
4. Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is “concerned with investigating the relationship between language and society with the goal of a better understanding of the structure of language and of how languages function in communication” (Wardhaugh 1986, 12). Chapter 3 expounded on the two dialects associated with Björk’s pronunciation of English, Icelandic-English and Estuary English. The aim of chapter 4 is twofold; opening with a discussion of why Björk uses these dialects and on what occasions each becomes prevalent, and following with a discussion of why Björk switches to other dialects when speaking to people from other dialect areas. To help explain why Björk switches between these dialects, general theories from the field of Sociolinguistics concerning nationalism and identity will be used to describe Björk’s varied pronunciation of English.

4.1 Nationalism and identity

_The example of the Ngoni of Africa. Most Ngoni no longer speak their ancestral language but use the language of the people they conquered in Malawi. However, they use that language in ways they have carried over from Ngoni, ways they maintain because they consider them to be essential to their continued identity as a separate people_ (Hymes 1974; Wardhaugh 1986, 117).

This chapter will provide the reader with a theory that seeks to explain why Björk wishes to intensify, or sometimes reduce, her accents depending on the kind of situation she is in. Of course these are only speculations and none of the following statements, about Björk’s identity, can be proven.

“Identity is created through culture – especially language – and it can invest itself in various meanings: an individual can have an identity as a woman, a Briton, a Black, a Muslim” (Harrison 1998, 248). Tape Omoniyi and Goodith White explain in the book _The Sociolinguistics of Identity_ (2006) that identity can never be fixed and is constructed within context that may vary from one context to another. These contexts may be linked to social variables and the variables are in turn expressed through languages(s). “[…] the critical reader can acknowledge that there are fragile and complex interrelationships between accent, identity and the manner through which language [in this case, accent] becomes a determinant of identity construction and
individuals manipulate it to exaggerate or downplay their identity” (Jones 2001; Momenian 2011, 1). In many cases when Björk speaks about Iceland, and her own music, she speaks with an Icelandic-English accent, but not in all cases, as she sometimes uses the Estuary English accent. Omoniyi and White continue to explain the dynamic of identities which can be managed if a given context is articulated with more than one identity (2006, 2).

“The way that people speak (accent) reveals who they are (identity)” (Jones 2001; Momenian 2011, 2). Björk speaks English with various accents, the Icelandic-English accent being the one she is most often associated with. She is also capable of speaking with an Estuary English accent and even switches to, among others, an accent typical of Scotland on occasion. At first we are going to discuss the ‘Icelandic-English’ accent and particularly possible reasons why Björk might identify with it.

“Our identities are not “natural facts” with which we are born, rather “things we construct fictions, in effect” (Joseph 2004; Momenian 2011, 3). Björk is a nationalist and cares a lot about Icelandic nature. Many of Björk’s songs are about nature in Iceland.

Lying on the constantly active geological border between North America and Europe, Iceland is a land of vivid contrasts of climate, geography, and culture. Sparkling glaciers, such as Vatna Glacier (Vatnajökull), Europe’s largest, lie across its ruggedly beautiful mountain ranges; abundant hot geysers provide heat for many of the country’s homes and buildings and allow for hothouse agriculture year-round; and the offshore Gulf Stream provides a surprisingly mild climate for what is one of the northernmost inhabited places on the planet (Encyclopædia Britannica 2012).

Nature played a big role in the themes of Björk’s albums, especially her third solo album, Homogenic. S. Hall & P. Gay, the editors of the book Cultural Identities, proclaim that “Music seems to be a key to identity because it offers, so in intensely, a sense of both self and other, of the subjective in the collective.”

According to Momenian accent has the most impact on how people identify with each other. When Björk speaks English with her Icelandic-English accent in interviews she is identifying herself as an Icelandic artist, showing the rest of the world her

72 http://www.grapevine.is/Features/ReadArticle/Letter-From-Bjork-About-Magma-Energy
Icelandic roots. “An important means by which Icelandic identity has been conceptualized historically is through its landscape” (Dibben 2009, 26).

Early in her career, Björk had won Best Breakthrough Act after at the Brit awards and she and PJ Harvey played a duet, Björk was asked what she thought of her position as an unofficial ambassador of Iceland and if she would do anything to promote her country. Björk acknowledged that she was in the position of being an ambassador but that it was not a role she chose, or in her own words, “I automatically became one, not by choice” but she was not ashamed of it and would do her best to answer silly question about Iceland just as she would ask these questions when she first met someone from a place she did not know73. “Every media review of Björk has included some reference to the island of her birth” (Aston 1996, 3). The international press emphasized her connection with Iceland. Dibben states that the media focus strengthened Björk’s nationalistic views and her Icelandic identity in her manner and also in her music (Dibben 2009, 41).

Björk also identifies herself as an immigrant within a British multicultural context. After Björk released her album Debut she organized a band with whom she would play her songs live. The band consisted almost entirely of immigrant musicians. Björk wanted to infuse the band with as much diversity as she could. Björk has done this consistently through her career. In Medúlla she got world famous ‘human beat boxes’, musicians that make beats with their voice and mimic percussion instruments by releasing built up air-pressure in their mouth, the American Rhazel and Japanese Dokaka to play all of the percussion parts on the album. On her Vespertine tour she got a choir from Greenland to sing back-up vocals for her.

But why does Björk change her identity and accent? In order to participate in speech or conversations, within a multicultural city like London, people need, and are bound, to belong to various speech communities and consequently change their identity to match the group. “[...] we have multiple identities which itself stems from two other distinct concepts. One is the fact that we play different roles, parent, teacher, student, boss, friend and so on, in the society, so we change identities as we change the roles and to the number of roles we play in our lifetime we construct different versions of our identity” (Momenian 2011, 3). Wardhough describes the concept of speech communities in his book an Introduction to Sociolinguistics as follows: “Internally,
community must have a certain social cohesiveness; externally, its members must find themselves cut from other communities in certain ways” (Wardhaugh 1986, 116). The communities must have linguistic, cultural, political, and ethnic differentiation from other groups to achieve a group identity. There also needs to be a “regular relationship between language use and social structure” (Wardhaugh 1986, 116). Different dialects can therefore be used to participate, and alienate, in various speech communities.

Can London then be called a speech community? The fact is that big cities such as London and New York are too big to be considered as a single speech community. The numbers of mixed cultures and dialects have started to have an effect on each other and have created various speech communities in London.

An individual must therefore belong to various speech communities at the same time, but on any particular occasion will identify with only one of them, the particular identification depends on what is especially important or contrastive in the circumstance (Wardhaugh 1986, 118).

Instead of using a dialect such as RP English, or Oxford English, Björk chose to participate in a speech community using Estuary English. RP English “is usually associated with a higher social or educational background, with the BBC and the professions, and [is] most commonly taught to students learning English as a foreign language” (Wakelin 1977, 5; Wardhaugh 1986, 43). Björk took singing lessons while she toured with Kukl which, because of a peculiar teacher, turned into speaking lessons. “A year into Kukl’s lifetime, she (Björk) decided to take singing lessons. But a visit to a famous European teacher proved disastrous, and she never tried again. ‘I was very shy, and it had taken me a long time to dare to ask her. And she said, sort of arrogantly, ‘You can’t even speak. You talk like a chicken. How can you expect you can sing?’ And then she spent the whole winter teaching me how to talk, and I was waiting for her to ask me to sing, but she never did” (Aston 1996, 74).

There is a class distinction between dialects in England. “RP speakers are judged more competent, intelligent and industrious, but non-RP speakers are judged to have greater personal integrity, to be better humoured, and to be more socially attractive” (Wardhaugh 1986, 331). Björk chose to be non-RP, which fits better with her line of work as a musician. She wants to be identified both as a foreigner, with her Icelandic-English accent, and avoid being identified as high class, by choosing Estuary English.
Howard Giles, Justine Coupland and Nikolas Coupland editors of the book Contexts of Accommodation introduced the Communication Accommodation Theory, or CAT. The theory consists of two distinct dimensions. "Convergence is a strategy of identification with the communication patterns of an individual internal to the interaction, whereas divergence is a strategy of identification with linguistic communicative norms of some reference group external to the immediate situation” (Giles, Coupland and Coupland 1991).

When Björk uses her Icelandic-English accent she is ‘diverging’ with other speakers by altering her accent further from the speech community. In other words, she seems to be deliberately moving away from the speech community and moving towards her nationalistic identity. When she speaks with her Estuary English accent she is ‘converging’, identifying with the speech community she associates with and participating in it.

In the BBC documentary Modern Minimalist Björk narrates, as well and interviewing minimalist musicians Alasdair Malloy, Mika Vainio, Tommi Granlund and Arvo Pärt. In the introduction of the film Björk speaks with her Icelandic-English accent and introduces her first guest, Scottish glass harmonica player Alasdair Malloy. When speaking directly to Malloy, Björk adopts pronunciation features typical of the Scottish accent. This is an example of code-switching. When people speak to each other with two separate languages, or dialect, it is not uncommon that the speakers will code-switch or code-mix. Chapter 4.2 will discuss this further.

4.2 Code

“When two or more people communicate with each other in speech, we can call the system of communication that they employ a code” (Wardhaugh 1986, 1). As stated in chapter 3.1, a language is a set of variables which can be grouped into geographical areas and can then be grouped as dialects. Different languages can all be classified as separate codes, and different dialects, styles, and registers as sub-varieties of a language (Wardhaugh 1986, 88). According to Wardhaugh, code is a useful concept, better then variety, which can be used to classify different languages and dialects because it is more ‘neutral’. We have already discussed two different codes that Björk uses, Icelandic-English and Estuary English, and the phonetic variations she displays in both dialects (chapter 3), as well as the fact that she chooses to use her Icelandic-English dialect
when identifying with her Icelandic roots and her Estuary English dialect when participating in speech communities in London (chapter 4.1). The following discussion will explore how and why Björk switches between dialects and explain what Björk does when speaking to people who have other dialects then her own.

4.2.1 Code choice
Before heading further a distinction between code choice, code-switching, code-mixing and borrowing code needs to be made. The clearest way to make a distinction between these theories is to associate them with language. To define code choice “We imagine a person who speaks two or more languages and has to choose which one to use” (Fasold 1984, 180). Using a code in one situation and then wanting or having to switch to another code is called code-switching. Code mixing is when a speaker mixes two languages together. Mixing can either be taking single words from another language or taking phrases or longer sentences (Fasold 1984, 180).

Wardhaugh further defines code switching into Situational code switching and Metaphorical code switching. These terms help explain why people code switch in certain situations. “Situational code-switching occurs when the language used changes according to the situations in which the conversants find themselves: they speak one language in one situation and another in a different one. No topic change is involved” (Wardhaugh 1986, 102-103). When Björk goes to Iceland she is in a situation which will make her switch codes, from English to Icelandic and vice versa. Metaphorical code switching takes place when a change of topic occurs and the speaker feels that he must switch code. “The interesting point here is that some topics may be discussed in either code, but the choice of code adds a distinct flavour to what is said about the topic. The choice encodes certain social values” (Wardhaugh 1986, 103). In metaphorical code switching “you change the code as you redefine the situation – formal to informal, official to personal, serious to humorous, and politeness to solidarity” (Wardhaugh 1986, 103). Björk is most likely to switch dialect in order to redefine herself according to social context. For example, in certain situations her Icelandic-English accent is formal or serious, e.g. when she is in an interview, while her Estuary English accent can be informal or humorous.

It is highly unlikely that Björk will code-mix languages outside of Iceland since Icelandic is spoken by very few people. When using single words it can also be called borrowing (Wardhaugh 1986, 103). More complex situations arise when connecting
dialects to this definition. If code choice is solely attached to languages it would mean that a monolingual speaker uses only one code. Let us say this monolingual speaker is born in London, is brought up in a working class Cockney family, and attends a university in Scotland. This speaker will undoubtedly speak differently to his university teacher and peers than to his friends and family in London. In other words, he code switches between dialectal varieties. He will change his dialect and his speech style will vary from formal to informal depending on whom he is speaking to (Wardhaugh 1986, 102).

4.2.2 Reasons for altering code

“Most speakers command several varieties of any language they speak, and bilingualism, even multilingualism, is the norm for many people throughout the world rather than unilingualism. People then, are usually forced to select a particular code whenever they choose to speak, and they may also decide to switch from one code to another or to mix codes” (Wardhaugh 1986, 100).

As stated in chapter 4.1 Björk lives in a multilingual community and must therefore participate in several speech communities. “It is obviously important for anyone involved in cross-cultural communication to be aware of language-use differences [...] the same can also be true of communication between different sub-cultures within a single community” (Fasold 1983, 132). Each speech community has a different code, be it language or a sub-variation. To be able to participate in these communities Björk must choose a code for each situation. According to Wardhaugh, on many occasions people are unaware that they change a code. A number of reasons can be offered that seek to explain why people ‘decide’, consciously or unconsciously, to code-switch. He lists reasons such as “solidarity with listeners, choice of topic, and perceived social and cultural distance” (Wardhaugh 1986, 102). The incentive of the speaker influences his decision to code-switch, code-mix or borrow. Similar to the CAT theory (see chapter 4.1), people are able to converge or diverge by choosing codes, either by choosing a code which will move the speaker closer to the person or choosing a code to move further away. “The code we choose to use on a particular occasion is likely to indicate how we wish to be viewed by others” (Wardhaugh 1986, 110). We will be judged by the code we use, in the same way as it is a marker of our identity (see chapter 4.1). People will form an opinion derived from code-choice. To conclude this chapter a few examples of Björk’s code switching and code borrowing will be discussed.
In the same interview as was discussed in chapter 4.1, at a press conference backstage after the Brit awards. Björk shows examples of code switching twice. The interview starts with questions to Björk, in connection to whether becoming a star has changed her in any way. Björk replies in an Icelandic-English accent that she does not consider herself to be a star. Björk code switches to an Estuary English accent to further explain the positive impact awards can have, explaining that business people, in the music industry, will invest further in her and therefore the next time she gets a “crazy idea”, she will get the funds to go through with it. In the last question of the interview Björk is asked if, and how, she will use her publicity to promote Iceland. Björk code switches again, adopting an Icelandic-English accent. As discussed in chapter 4.1, Björk is identifying with Iceland as she answers the question. Her accent becomes rhotic and her sentence structure becomes simpler.

As mentioned above in the end of chapter 4.1, in the documentary Modern Minimalist, a BBC show broadcasted in 1997, Björk introduces minimalist musicians, Scottish glass harmonica player Alasdair Molloy, Finnish electro composer Mika Vainio, Finnish architect and DJ Tommi Grönlund, and Estonian minimalist composer Arvo Pärt. When narrating the documentary Björk uses her Icelandic-English accent. When speaking to Alasdair Molloy Björk borrows Molloy’s Scottish accent. For example pronunciation water would be better transcribed as [wʌtər], rather than in accordance with the RP norm [wʊtər]. As stated above, Scottish is a rhotic dialect. She also pronounces each like [ɛtʃ], instead of the RP norm [iːtʃ], i.e., uses the Scottish KIT vowel instead of the RP FLEECE vowel. Long Mid Diphthongization is absent from Björk’s pronunciation of Mozart and techno, (see Wells 1982, 2: 407): [moːtsɛt], [tɛknəʊ], instead of the RP norm [məʊtʃɛt], [tɛkŋəʊ].

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74 http://youtu.be/-oQX4858Udw
75 Part 1 - http://youtu.be/MixrSzIa264
Part 2 - http://youtu.be/2QTxvmlA95Q
5. Conclusion

Björk may or may not be conscious of the variation in her accent when she speaks English. However, it is clear that she has control over both varieties, i.e. Icelandic-English and Estuary English, and is able to use them interchangeably. When Björk switches to an Icelandic-English accent it is likely that she is identifying with Iceland. Iceland plays a large role in Björk’s music and she indisputably identifies a great deal with her ethnic roots.

When participating in English speech communities, and especially in London, Björk uses her Estuary English dialect and is also able to code switch, or borrow code, from other speakers if she pleases. Björk code switches in order to create for herself a unique identity and to participate in, or alienate herself from, the speech communities she wishes to identify with. Due to space restrictions, American dialectal variations, which might have had an impact on Björk’s accents after she moved to America, were not considered in this essay. I would also have liked to research any syntactic variation that may occur in Björk’s speech, between the two dialects; hopefully such a study will be carried out at a later date.

Björk is a ground breaking musician who has had considerable impact on the Icelandic music industry. She has also had a vast influence on Iceland’s image abroad, acting as an ambassador for Iceland and promoting the country on her albums and international tours. It will be interesting to see if the variation in Björk’s English accent increases, as long as her main language of communication outside of Iceland remains English.
Appendix

Vowel chart from (Wells 1982, xx)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RP GenAm</th>
<th>1. KIT</th>
<th>ship, sick, bridge, milk, myth, busy ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e  e</td>
<td>2. DRESS</td>
<td>step, neck, edge, shelf, friend, ready ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ æ</td>
<td>3. TRAP</td>
<td>tap, back, badge, scalp, hand, cancel ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o  o</td>
<td>4. LOT</td>
<td>stop, sock, dodge, romp, possible, cancel ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u u</td>
<td>5. STRUT</td>
<td>cup, suck, budge, pulse, trunk, quality ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ æ</td>
<td>6. FOOT</td>
<td>put, bush, full, good, look, wolf ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o  o</td>
<td>7. BATH</td>
<td>staff, brass, ask, dance, sample, calf ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o  o</td>
<td>8. CLOTH</td>
<td>cough, broth, cross, long, Boston ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z: ær</td>
<td>9. NURSE</td>
<td>hurt, lurk, urge, burst, jerk, term ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i: i</td>
<td>10. FLEECE</td>
<td>creep, speak, leave, feel, key, people ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e e</td>
<td>11. FACE</td>
<td>tape, cake, raid, veil, steak, day ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ  o</td>
<td>12. PALM</td>
<td>psalm, father, bra, spa, lager ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ  o</td>
<td>13. THOUGHT</td>
<td>taught, sauce, hawk, jaw, broad ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ø  o</td>
<td>14. GOAT</td>
<td>soap, joke, home, know, so, roll ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u: u</td>
<td>15. GOOSE</td>
<td>loop, shoot, tomb, mute, huge, view ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a a</td>
<td>16. PRICE</td>
<td>ripe, write, arrive, high, try, buy ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ø  ø</td>
<td>17. CHOICE</td>
<td>adroit, noise, join, toy, royal ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ø  ø</td>
<td>18. MOUTH</td>
<td>out, house, loud, count, crowd, cow ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e e</td>
<td>19. NEAR</td>
<td>beer, sincere, fear, beard, serum ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e e</td>
<td>20. SQUARE</td>
<td>care, fair, pear, where, scarce, vary ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ  ø</td>
<td>21. START</td>
<td>far, sharp, bark, carve, farm, heart ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ  ø</td>
<td>22. NORTH</td>
<td>for, war, short, scorch, born, warm ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>æ  ø</td>
<td>23. FORCE</td>
<td>four, wore, sport, porch, borne, story ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ø  ø</td>
<td>24. CURE</td>
<td>poor, tourist, pure, plural, jury ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Keywords from Wells (1982, xviii-xix)
6. Works cited


Birkett, D. 2006. Dibben Personal interview. 4 oktober.


http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_6uQykJGFw


