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## «Territorial Varieties of English Pronunciation»

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**1. Functional stylistics and dialectology**

The problem of the work is concerned with varieties of English in different regions of Britain and various countries of the world. It is quite clear of course that dialectology is inseparably connected with sociolinguistics, the latter deals with language variation caused by social difference and differing social needs; it studies the ways language interacts with social reality.

We propose now a definition of this field of science: Sociolinguistics is the branch of linguistics which studies different aspects of language – phonetics, lexic and grammar with reference to their social functions in the society. The aim is to explain language phenomena in connection with factors outside the language faculty itself in terms of large-scale social structure and in terms of how people use language to communicate with one another.

Though in the past fifteen years Sociolinguistics has come of age and is a fast expanding and increasingly popular subject it should be fair to mention here that language has always been viewed as a social phenomenon, the most important means of human intercourse. So it is evident that language is indissolubly linked with the society; in it we can see a faithful reflection of the society in which people live.

It is quite clear, of course, that such fields of science as linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics are inseparably linked in the treatment of various language structures. For example, the subject matter of ethnolinguistics gradually merges into that of anthropological linguistics and that into sociological linguistics and that into stylistics, and the subject matter of social psychology.

Some scholars consider functional stylistics to be a branch of Sociolinguistics since it studies the distinctive linguistic characteristics of smaller social groupings (such as those due to occupational class, age and sex differences) (38, 68).

In the case of English there exists a great diversity in the spoken realization of the language and particularly in terms of pronunciation. The varieties of the language are conditioned by language communities ranging from small groups to nations. Now speaking about the nations we refer to the national variants of the language. In then – treatment we follow the conception of A.D. Shweitzer. According to him national language is a historical category evolving from conditions of economic and political concentration which characterizes the formation of a nation. In other words national language is the language of a nation, the standard of its form, the language of a nation's literature.

It is common knowledge that language exists in two forms: written and spoken. Any manifestation of language by means of speech is the result of a highly complicated series of events. The literary spoken form has its national pronunciation standard. A «standard» may be defined as «a socially accepted variety of a language established by a codified norm of correctness».

Today all the English-speaking nations have their own national variants of pronunciation and each of them has peculiar features that distinguish it from other varieties of English.

It is generally accepted that for the «English English» it is «Received Pronunciation» or RP; for «The American English» – «General American pronunciation»; for the Australian English – «Educated Australian» (we shall speak about it in detail later in the book).

Standard national pronunciation is sometimes called an «orthoepic norm». Some phoneticians, however, prefer the term «literary pronunciation».

Though every national variant of English has considerable differences in pronunciation, lexic and grammar, they all have much in common which gives us ground to speak of one and the same language – the English language.

It would not be true to say that national standards are fixed and immutable. They undergo constant changes due to various internal and external factors. Pronunciation, above all, is subject to all kinds of innovations. Therefore the national variants of English differ primarily in sound, stress and intonation. It is well-known that there are countries with more than one national language, the most common case being the existence of two national languages on the same territory. For this Canada will be an example, where two different languages – English and French – form the repertoire of the community. In this case scholars speak about bilingualism in contrast to monolingualism typical of a country with one national language. Here arises the problem of interference, that is «linguistic disturbance which results from two languages (or dialects), coming into contact in a specific situation»[[1]](#footnote-1).

It may be well to state that every national variety of the language falls into territorial or regional dialects. Dialects are distinguished from each other by differences in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. We must make clear that, when we refer to varieties in pronunciation only, we use the word «accent».1 So local accents may have many features of pronunciation in common and consequently are grouped into territorial or area accents. In Britain, for example, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire accents form the group of «Northern accent». We must admit, however, that in most textbooks on phonetics the word «dialect» is still used in reference to the regional pronunciation peculiarities, though in the latest editions both in this country and abroad the difference in terms «dialects and accents» is generally accepted. As we see, those terms should be treated differently when related to different aspects of the language. It is, however, true that there is a great deal of overlap between these terms. For certain geographical, economic, political and cultural reasons one of the dialects becomes the standard language of the nation and its pronunciation or its accent – the received standard pronunciation. This was the case of London dialect, whose accent became the «RP» («Received Pronunciation») of Britain.

It has been estimated that the standard pronunciation of a country is not homogeneous. It changes in relation to other languages, and also to geographical, psychological, social and political influences. In England, for example, we distinguish «conservative, general and advanced RP».

As a result of certain social factors in the post-war period – the growing urbanization, spread of education and the impact of mass media, Standard English is exerting an increasing powerful influence on the regional dialects of Great Britain. Recent surveys of British English dialects have revealed that the pressure of Standard English is so strong that many people are bilingual in a sense that they use an imitation of RP with their teachers and lapse into their native local accent when speaking among themselves. In this occasion the term diglossia should be introduced to denote a state of linguistic duality in which the standard literary form of a language and one of its regional dialects are used by the same individual in different social situations. This phenomenon should not be mixed up with bilingualism that is the command of two different languages. In the case of both diglossia and bilingualism the so-called code-switching takes place. In recent years the effect of these forms of linguistic behavior is studied by sociolinguists and psychologists.

As was stated above, language, and especially its oral aspect varies with respect to the social context in which it is used. The social differentiation of language is closely connected with the social differentiation of society. Nevertheless, linguistic facts cannot be attributed directly to class structure. According to A.D. Shweitzer «the impact of social factors on language is not confined to linguistic reflexes of class structure and should be examined with due regard for the meditating role of all class-derived elements – social groups, strata, occupational, cultural and other groups including primary units (small groups).» (38)

Western sociolinguists such as A.D. Grimshaw, JF.Z. Fisher, B. Bernstein, M. Gregory, S. Carroll, A. Hughes, P. Trud[[2]](#footnote-2) gill and others, are oriented towards small groups, viewing them as «microcosms» of the entire society. Soviet sociolinguists recognize the influence of society upon language by means of both micro – and macro-sociological factors.

Every language community, ranging from a small group to a nation has its own social dialect, and consequently, its own social accent.

British sociolinguists divide the society into the following classes: upper class, upper middle class, middle class, lower middle class, upper working class, middle working class, lower working class.

The validity of this classification is being debated in sociolinguistics. The problem of social stratification and of group theory has only recently been tackled by the science of sociology. The serious study of social dialects must be proceeded\*, or at least accompanied by significant advances in sociology and especially in the more precise definition of the notions, such as class, nation, nationality, society, language community, occupation, social group, social setting, occupational group, and so on.

It is well worth to understand that classes are split into different major and minor social groups (professional, educational, cultural, age, sex and so on). Correspondingly every social community has its own social dialect and social accent. DA. Shakhbagova defines social dialects as 'Varieties spoken by a socially limited number of people.»

So in the light of social criteria languages are «characterized by two plans of socially conditioned variability – stratification, linked with societal structure, and situational, linked with the social context of language use.» (38, p. 6)[[3]](#footnote-3)

Having had our main terms straightened we may speak now of the «language situation» in terms of the horizontal and vertical differentiations of the language, the first in accordance with the spheres of social activity, the second-with its situational variability.

It is evident that the language means are chosen consciously or subconsciously by a speaker according to his perception of the situation, in which he finds himself. Hence situational varieties of the language are called functional dialects or functional styles and situational pronunciation varieties – situational accents or phonostyles.

It has also to be remembered that the language of its users varies according to their individualities, range of intelligibility, cultural habits, sex and age differences. Individual speech of members of the same language community is known as idiolect.

Now in conclusion it would be a perfectly natural thing to say that language in serving personal and social needs becomes part of the ceaseless flux of human life and activity. Human communication cannot be comprehended without recognizing mutual dependence of language and context. The mystery of language lies, if nowhere, in its endless ability to adapt both to the strategies of the individual and to the needs of the community, serving each without imprisoning either. This is what makes sociolinguistics as a science so important. In this book, though, we shall focus our attention on territorial modifications of English pronunciation viewing them as an object of sociolinguistic study.

**2. The main part**

**2.1 Spread of English**

It is common knowledge that over 300 million people now speak English as first language. It is the national language of Great Britain, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada (part of it).

English was originally spoken in England and south-eastern Scotland. Then it was introduced into the greater part of Scotland and southern Ireland. In the 17th and 18th centuries it was brought to North America (mainly from the West of England). Later in the 18th and 19th centuries English was exported to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa owing to the colonial expansion. A flow of emigrants who went to invade, explore and inhabit those lands came mostly from the south-eastern parts of England.

English became wide-spread in Wales at about the same time. Welsh English is very similar to southern English, although the influence of Welsh has played a role in its formation. Then in the 20th century American English began to spread in Canada, Latin America, on the Bermudas, and in other parts of the world. Thus nowadays two main types of English are spoken in the English-speaking world: English and American English.

According to British dialectologists (P. Trudgill, J. Hannah, A. Hughes and others (61, 78) the following variants of English are referred to the English-based group: English, Welsh English, Australian English, New Zealand English; to the American-based group: United States English, Canadian English.

Scottish English and Irish English fall somewhere between the two being somewhat by themselves.

On the whole this division seems rather reasonable and the «English» types of English will be treated first in this book, though it is safe to say that English, Welsh English, Scottish English and Northern Ireland English should be better combined into the British English subgroup, on the ground of political, geographical, cultural, psychological unity which brought more similarities than differences for those variants of pronunciation.

To our regrets, the lack of space gives us no chance to describe all the territorial and national variants of English pronunciation.

**2.2 English-based pronunciation standards of English**

**2.2.1 British English**

As was mentioned before, BEPS (British English Pronunciation Standards and Accents) comprise English English, Welsh English, Scottish English and Northern Ireland English (the corresponding abbreviations are EE, WE, ScE., NIE).

Table 1 British English Accents

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English English | Welsh English | Scottish English | Northern Ireland English |
| Southern | Northern |  | EducatedSc. Eng. | Regional Varieties |  |
| 1. Southern | 1. Northern |  |  |  |  |
| 2. East Anglia 3. South-West | 2. Yorkshire 3. North- |  |  |  |  |
|  | West |  |  |  |  |
|  | 4. West |  |  |  |  |
|  | Midland |  |  |  |  |

**2.2.2 English, English**

In this chapter we are going to look in greater detail at the Received Pronunciation (RP) and at the regional non-RP accents of England.

Roughly speaking the non-RP accents of England may be grouped like this: 1. Southern accents.

1) Southern accents (Greater London, Cockney, Surray, Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire);

2) East Anglia accents (Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire;

3) South-West accents (Gloucestershire, Avon, Somerset, Wiltshire).

2. Northern and Midland accents.

1) Northern accents (Northumberland, Durham, Cleveland);

2) Yorkshire accents;

3) North-West accents (Lancashire, Cheshire);

4) West Midland (Birmingham, Wolverhampton).

It has long been believed that RP is a social marker, a prestige ac-cent of an Englishman. In the nineteenth century «received» was understood in the sense of «accepted in the best society». The speech of aristocracy and the court phonetically was that of the London area. Then it lost its local characteristics and was finally fixed as a ruling-class accent, often referred to as «King's English». It was also the ac-cent taught at public schools. With the spread of education cultured people not belonging to the upper classes were eager to modify their accent in the direction of social standards.

We may definitely state now that RP is a genuinely regionless accent within Britain; i.e. if speakers have it you cannot tell which area of Britain they come from; which is not the case for any other type of British accents.

It is fair to mention, however, that only 3–5 per cent of the population of England speak RP. British phoneticians (Ch. Barber (44),[[4]](#footnote-4) A.C. Gimson (57), A. Hughes and P. Trudgill (61) estimate that nowadays RP is not homogeneous. A.C. Gimson suggests that it is convenient to distinguish three main types within it: «the conservative RP forms, used by the older generation, and, traditionally, by certain profession or social groups; the general RP forms, most commonly in use and typified by the pronunciation adopted by the BBC, and the advanced RP forms, mainly used by young people of exclusive social groups – mostly of the upper classes, but also for prestige value, in certain professional circles.

«This last type of RP reflects the tendencies typical of changes in pronunciation. It is the most «effected and exaggerated variety» of the accent. Some of its features may be results of temporary fashion; some are adopted as a norm and described in the latest textbooks. Therefore, it is very important for a teacher and learner of English to distinguish between the two. RP speakers make up a very small percentage of the English population. Many native speakers, especially teachers of English and professors of colleges and universities (particularly from the South and South-East of England) have accents closely resembling RP but not identical to it. P. Trudgill and J. Hannah call it Near-RP southern. So various types of standard English pronunciation may be summarized as follows: Conservative RP; General RP; Advanced RP; Near-RP southern.

Changes in the Standard

As was stated above, changes in the standard may be traced in the speech of the younger generation of native RP speakers. These changes may affect all the features of articulation of vowel and consonant phonemes and also the prosodic system of the language.

Considerable changes are observed in the sound system of the pre-sent-day English, which are most remarkable since the well-known Great Vowel Shift in the Middle English period of the language development. It is a well-established fact that no linguistic modification can occur all of a sudden. The appearance of a new shade in the pronunciation of a sound results in the coexistence of free variants in the realization of a phoneme. The choice between permissible variants of [w] or [М] in words is an illustration of what is meant by the process of variability and free variants. In Russian we observe free variants of the pronunciation of the words of энергия, темп type: non-palatalized and palatalized vertions of [H] – [H'] and [T] – [T']. The degrees of variability are different. The most perceptible and stable changes are described in the works of British linguists and have been investigated by Soviet phoneticians. The RP of recent years is characterized by a greater amount of permissible variants compared to the «classical» type of RP described by D. Jones, L. Armstrong, I. Word.

The phenomenon is significant both from the theoretical and practical viewpoint. The variability concerns mainly vowels. Most of English vowels have undergone definite qualitative changes. The newly appeared variants exhibit different stability and range.

The qualitative distinctions manifest new allophonic realizations of the vowel phonemes. Ch. Barber comes to the conclusion that a definite trend towards centralization is observed in the quality of English vowels at present. (44)

Changes of Vowel Quality

1. According to the stability of articulation. 1) It is generally acknowledged that two historically long vowels [i], [u:] have become diphthongized and are often called diphthongoids; the organs of speech slightly change their articulation by the very end of pronunciation, becoming more fronted. Ch. Barber tries to draw a parallel with the Great Vowel Shift which took place in Middle English, where diphthongization was just one part of a complete change of pattern in the long vowels. He claims that there is some resemblance to this process today and other phonemes may move up to fill the places left vacant.

2) There is a tendency for some of the existing diphthongs to be smoothed out, to become shorter, so that they are more like pure vowels.

a) This is very often the case with [ei], particularly in the word final position, where the glide is very slight: [ta'dei], [sei], [mei].

b) Diphthongs [ai], [au] are subject to a smoothing process where they are followed by the neutral sound [ə]:

Conservative RP: [tauə], [faiə]

General RP: [taə], [faə]

Advanced RP: [tα:], [fα:]

c) Also diphthongs [oə], [uə] tend to be leveled to [o:]. Thus the pronunciation of the words pore, poor is varied like this:

older speakers: [poə], [puə]

middle-aged speakers: [po:], [puə]

younger speakers: [po:], [po:]

It should be mentioned, however, that this tendency does not concern the diphthong [iə] when it is final. The prominence and length shift to the glide, this final quality often being near to []; dear [diə] – [di].

2. According to the horizontal and vertical movements of the tongue. Very striking changes occur in the vowel quality affected by the horizontal movements of the tongue. In fact the general tendency is marked by the centering of both front and back vowels:

a) the nuclei of [ai], [au] tend to be more back, especially in the male variant of the pronunciation;

b) the vowel phoneme is often replaced by [a] by younger speakers: [hv] – [hav], [nd] – [and];

c) the nucleus of the diphthong [] varies considerably, ranging from [o] among conservative speakers to [] among advanced ones:

Conservative RP: [so], [fon], [not];

Advanced RP: [s], [fn], [nt].

This tendency is so stronp that the transcription symbol has been recently changed in many British books: [o] – [].

d) Back-advanced vowels [], [] are considerably fronted in the advanced RP: but [bt] – [bət], good [gd] – [gəd].

It should be mentioned here that there is a tendency for all short vowels to be made nearer the centre of the mouth, that is to move towards [ə], especially in unstressed position: honest [αnist] – [αnəst].

Thus the horizontal changes in vowel quality may be listed like this:

Centering of short vowels:

More back pronunciation of the nuclei of diphthongs: [ai] –» [ai], – [a] – [a]

More advanced pronunciation of the diphthong: [o] – [].

More fronted pronunciation of the diphthongoids: [i] – [i(j)], [u] – [u(w)].

Vertical changes in vowels may be traced in [e] and [o:] which tend to be closer in advanced RP. It has also been stated above that the nuclei of diphthongs [ei], [ea], [oa], [ua] become more open when these phonemes are being leveled, particularly the diphthong [ea] which is characterized by a great opening of the first element: careful [kəfl] – ['k:fl]. The first element of the diphthong [ə] can be lowered considerably. Thus several words with [ə] are given a shade pronunciation by some advanced RP speakers: poor, sure [pə] [ə] – [pə, ə].

3. Combinative changes. It is general knowledge that when sounds are in company they influence each other. These changes are called combinative. They take place only in certain phonetic contexts. In a diacritic study, however, there is no sharp boundary between isolative and combinative changes.

1) Changes in [j + u:], [1 + u:]. Words like suit, student, super, bulletin may be pronounced either [sju:t] or [sat], [stju:dant] or [stu:dnt], [sjuipa] or [su:pa]. The tendency is for middle-aged and younger speakers to omit the [j] after [s] before [u:]. Word-internally [j] tends to be retained as in assume [asju; m]. There is also fluctuation after [1]: word-initially lute [lu:t] is normal, but it is possible to pronounce [ilju:n] in illusion, for example. These recent developments in combinative RP changes bear remarkable resemblance to American Standard pronunciation.

2) Change of [:] to [α] before [f, s]. Where orthographic «o» occurs before the voiceless fricatives [f, s, ] older speakers pronounce the vowel [o:]: loss [lots]. This pronunciation is currently dying out in RP and being replaced by [α]: [lαs].

Words like salt and ault still may be pronounced with [:].

4. Changes in length.

It is an accepted fact that English vowels vary in length according to the phonetic context – the consonant they are followed by (voiceless, voiced), syllabic border, the degree of stress, the types of nuclear tone and so on.

Actually nowadays there are changes in vowel length that are influenced by other factors. There is, for example, a strong tendency for the so-called short vowels to be lengthened, and it is interesting to note that this lengthening can be heard sporadically in many words in any position.

The lengthening of [i] is often heard in big, his, is; of [u] in good; [] in come. It should also be mentioned that [i] is often lengthened in the final syllable, i.e. very, many: [veri], [meni;].

Short vowels [e, ae] are also very frequently lengthened in yes, bed, men, said, sad, bad, bag and so on. This tendency has considerably increased in the past few years.

Changes in Consonant Quality

1. Voicing and Devoicing. As is well known, there is no opposition of final RP consonants according to the work of the vocal cords. They are all partially devoiced, particularly stops. Such devoiced sounds are clearly heard after long vowels and diphthongs as in deed: [did]. How-ever, these partly devoiced consonants are never identical with their voiceless counterparts, because the latter are pronounced with strong breath-force.

This tendency for devoicing now seems to be on the increase. As soon as the opposition of voiced – voiceless is neutralized in the final position, the fortis/lenis character of pronunciation has become the relevant feature of consonants.

The voiced/voiceless distinction of the minimal pairs [sed] – [set], [dαg] – [dαk] may seem to be lost. Actually it does not take place. The weak consonants are never replaced by their voiceless counterparts, they never become strong, the stops [b, d, g], though devoiced, never acquire aspiration. More than that. The interrelation of final consonants and the preceding stressed vowels is very close. The instrumental investigation of E. Kurjatnikova, showed that the duration of the vowel before the traditionally called voiced consonant is 1.5 times larger than that before the voiceless consonant. Cf.: He saw his cap. – He saw his cab.

Describing the positional allophones of the English stops A. Gimson characterizes the initial lenis [b, d, g] as partially devoiced, final lenis [b, d, g] as voiceless.

The sound [t] in the intervocalic position is made voiced, e.g. better [betə] – [bedə], letter [letə] – [ledə].

2. Loss of [h]. In rapid speech initial [h] is lost in form words and tends to die out from the language. Even most highly educated people subconsciously drop it completely. So instead of: He wants her to come [hi – wαnts h tə, km] one hears:

[i wants 3 tə km]. It is evident, of course, that the loss of [h] in stressed syllables sounds wrong.

3. Initial «hw». Some conservative RP speakers pronounce words like why, when, which with an initial weak breath-like sound [h] – [M]. The general tendency is, however, to pronounce [w].

4. Loss of final. The pronunciation of [in] for the termination [i] has been retained as an archaic form of the RP: sittin', lookin'. These occasional usages are not likely to become general.

5. Spread of «dark» [l]. This tendency is evidently influenced by the American pronunciation and some advanced RP speakers are often heard saying [l] instead of [1] as in believe, for example. There is no threat in spreading it widely yet but it is quite common for pop singers now. It should also be mentioned that sometimes final [I] tends to be vocalized as in people, for instance, but is not likely to become a norm.

6. Glottal stop. In RP the glottal stop [?] can appear only in the following two environments: a) as a realization of syllable-final [t] before a following consonant as in batman [btman – [b? mn] or not quite [nαt 'kwait] – [nα? 'kwait]; b) in certain consonant clusters as in box, simply [bα? ks], [si? mpli], where it is known as «glottal reinforcements». The use of glottal stop by advanced RP speakers produces a «clipped» effect on a foreigner.

7. Palatalized final [k’] is often heard in words week, quick, etc.: [wik’], [kwik'].

8. Linking and intrusive [r]. It has been estimated that all English accents are divided into «rhotic» or «r-full» and «non-rhotic» or «r-less». Rhotic accents are those which actually pronounce [r] corresponding to orthographic «r». RP is a non-rhotic accent but most speakers of it do pronounce orthographic «r» word-finally before a vowel: It is a far away country. It is known as linking «r». Failure by students to pronounce it does not usually affect comprehension but may result in their sounding foreign.

As a further development and by analogy with linking «r», «r» is inserted before a following vowel even though there is no «r» in spelling. This «r» is known as intrusive «r». The actual situation is that younger RP speakers do have it after [a] as in idea of, China and,

It is said that nowadays in colloquial fluent speech there is a strong tendency towards elision, reduction and assimilation. This tendency is reflected in the pronunciation of the young generation: tutor [tu:tə], second year [sekəndia], perhaps you [pə'hpu:], gives you [givu:], as you know [əju: 'n]; in the transcribed texts of British textbooks: him [im], he [i:], her [3], his [iz], can [kn], from [firm], than [n], them [m], some [sm], suppose [spz], have to [hafta], usually [ju:wəli], last time [la:staim], and there was no one [ən ər wz'n wn]; even in the traditional spelling: C'm on, baby, Sorry 'bout that Oh, le'mme see. Oh, I dunno. Must’ve put’em all together. Why d'you ask? What d’ja think? Alright!

9. Combinative changes. Sound combinations [tj, dj, sj] are pronounced as [t, d,] respectively, e.g. actual [ktjual] – [ktjual], graduate ['grdjeit] – [grdeit], issue ['isju:] – [iu:].

In the clusters of two stops, where the loss of plosion is usually observed, each sound is pronounced with audible release, e.g. active [ktiv] – [ktiv], sit down [sitdan] – [sit 'dan].

Non-systematic Variations in RP Phonemes

Some free phonemes have appeared under the influence of the written image of words, their spelling.

Unstressed prefixes ex – and con – have gained orthographical pro-nunciation: excuse [iks'kju:z] – [eks'kju:z], exam [ig'zm] – [eg'zm], continue [kəntinju:] – [kan tinju;], consent [kən sent] – [kan'sent].

The days of the week: Sunday [sndi] – [sndei], Monday – [mndei].

Note also free variants in often: [afən] – [aft(ə) n].

Other cases: economics [ika'namiks] – [eka'namiks].

Now by way of conclusion we would like to state that not all the changes are recognized as a norm by most affected advanced RP speakers. Some of these changes are quite stable, some tend to disappear. The language is a living body and its oral aspect is most vitally changeable. But one should realize the importance of most recent developments, which, in opinion of many prominent phoneticians, may lead to radical changes in the whole inventory of vowel and consonant phonemes.

Regional Non-RP Accents of England

As was stated above, we grouped regional accents of England into southern and northern ones. This division is very approximate of course, because there are western and eastern accents but their main accent variations correspond either with southern or northern accentual characteristics. Thus we would like to point out here the main differences between southern and northern accents.

In vowels

One of the main differences between these groups of accents is in the phoneme inventory – the presence or absence of particular phonemes. Typically, the vowel [A] does not occur in the accents of the north; e.g.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | South | North |
| blood | [bld] | [bld] |
| one | [wn] | [wαn] |
| but | [bt] | [bət] |

We can also note that many northern speakers while they do not have [A] have [u;] rather than [u] in words such as hook, book, look. They therefore distinguish pairs like book and buck, which in the south sound [buk] and [DAK], in the North as

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | South | North |
| Book | [bu:k] | [buk] |
| Buck | [bk] | [buk] |

Another well-known feature which distinguishes northern and southern accents concerns the vowels and [a].

Before the voiceless fricatives [f, , s] and certain consonant clusters containing initial [n] or [m], is pronounced in the north instead of [a].

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | South | North |
| path | [pa:] | [p] |
| dance | [da:ns] | [dns] |

Note: Speakers with more strongly regional southern substandard accents may not have the contrast or, at most, have a contrast that is variable.

In the south, however, [K] is often pronounced as [a]:

A = in path

B – [a] in path

C = [a] contrast absent or in doubt

One more major north-south differentiating feature involves the final [i:] like in words city, money, etc. In the north of England they have [i]. In the south of England these words are pronounced with [i] e.g.

South North

city [siti:] ['siti]

money [mni:] [mani]

In consonants

It has been mentioned above that some English accents are «rhotic» or «r-ful» and other are non-rhotic or «r-less». Rhotic accents are those which actually pronounce [r], corresponding to orthographic «r» in words like bar and farm. This [r] sound is post-vocalic and is most often heard in Scotland, Ireland and in the southwest of England. The map on p. 222 shows the spread of post-vocalic [r] (A = post-vocalic [r] present, B = post-vocalic [r] absent).

In most regional accents the glottal stop is more widely used than in RP. In some areas, especially the north-east of England, East Anglia and Northern Ireland, the glottal stop may also be pronounced simultaneously with the voiceless [p, t, k], most strikingly between vowels: pity [pit? i:]

Many non-RP speakers use [n] in the suffix «– ing» instead of; sitting [sitin]. In an area of western central England which includes Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool they pronounce [g]: singer [sige], wing [wig].

Now about [j] – dropping. In most accents [j] is dropped after [t, s]: student [stjudənt], suit [sat]. In parts of the north the change has progressed a good deal further, it has been lost after []: enthusiasm [an'u:ziəzm].

In large areas of eastern England [j] is lost after every consonant. In London [j] is lost after [n, t, d]: news [nu:z], tune [tu:n].

Southern English Accents

We now turn to an examination of regional non-RP accents of England and we shall first give a brief outline of the group of Southern accents.

As was stated above, educated Southern speech is very much near-RP accent whereas non-standard accents are very much near Cockney. Therefore we shall focus our attention on the rather detailed description of uneducated London accent – Cockney.

Cockney accent. It has been long established that Cockney is a social accent – the speech of working-class areas of the Greater London. Here are some pronunciation peculiarities of it.

In vowels

1. [] is realized as [i]: blood [bd] – [blid];

2. is realized as or [i]: bag [bg] – [bg], [big];

3. [i] in word-final position sounds as [ij: city [siti] – [siti:];

4. when [o:] is non-final, its realization is much closer, it sounds like [o:]: pause [po:z] – [po:z]; when it is final, it is pronounced as [o:ə]: paw [po:] – [po:ə];

5. the diphthong [ei] is realized as [i] or [ai]: lady [leidi] – [lidi:], [laidi:];

6. RP [3] sounds as []: soaked [skt] – [skt];

7. RP [a] may be [ə]: now [na] – [nə],

In consonants

1. [h] in unstressed position is almost invariably absent;

2. [?] is widely spread in Cockney speech: paper [pi? pa], butterfly [b'təflai];

3. The contrast between [] and [f] is completely lost: thin [in], booth [bu:f];

4. The contrast between [] and [v] is occasionally lost: weather [weva];

5. when [] occurs initially it is either dropped or replaced by [d]: this [dis], them [(d)əm];

6. [1] is realized as a vowel when it precedes a consonant and follows a vowel, or when it is syllabic: milk [mivk], table [teibv]; when the preceding vowel is, [1] may disappear completely;

7. is replaced by [n] in word-final position: dancing [da:nsin] or it may be pronounced as [ik] in something, anything, nothing: [nfik];

8. [p, t, k] are heavily aspirated, more so than in RP;

9. [t] is affricated, [s] is heard before the vowel: top [trap].

Northern and Midland Accents

Midland accents, Yorkshire, for example, West Midland and North-West accents have very much in common with Northern ones. Therefore they are combined in this book into one group; peculiar realization of vowels and consonants will be marked, of course, when each subgroup is described separately.

The counties of northern England are not far from the Scottish border, so the influence of Scotch accent is noticeable, though there are of course many features of pronunciation characteristic only of northern English regions. The most typical representative of the speech of this area is Newcastle accent. It differs from RP in the following:

In vowels

1. RP [] is realized as [u]: love [lv] – [lv];

2. RP final [i] sounds like [i:]: city [siti] – [siti:];

3. words like dance, chance which in RP have [a] are pronounced with: [dns], [tns];

4. [ei], [] are either monophthongs, or much narrower diphthongs than the ones in the south of England, or they may even sound as opening diphthongs [le], [o]: bay [be:], [bie], plate [ple:t], [phet], boat [bo:t], [bo t];

5. words that have «al» in spelling – talk, call, all, are pronounced with [a]: [ta:k], [ka:l], [a:l];

6. RP words with [3:] are pronounced with in a broad Tyneside accent: first [fist], shirt [f:t]; so first, forced; shirt, short are homonyms;

7. [ai] is [i]: right [rit];

8. words which in RP have [au] may have [it], e.g. about [abut].

In consonants

1. [1] is clear in all environments;

2. [h] is usually present in all positions;

3. – ing is [in]: shilling [ilin];

4. [p, t, k] between vowels are accompanied by glottal stop [?]: pity [pit? i:];

5. in parts of Northumberland and Durham [r] may be uvular (in its production the tongue and the uvular, not the tongue and the alveolar ridge take part),

Yorkshire accents

Yorkshire and Bradford accents are identical with northern vowel features in points 1, 3, 4 (only many speakers pronounce words which have «ow», «ou» in spelling with [au]: know [nau]; with northern con-sonant features in point 3.

Now having accomplished the description of regional non-RP ac-cents of England we would like to say that we didn't attempt to give a detailed account of all the regional differences in accents of remote ru-ral areas. Rather we concentrated on urban accents which can be heard when one travels throughout the country and which are most likely to be encountered by foreign tourists. International features were not dealt with.

Welsh English

As everyone probably knows Wales is a bilingual area. This speech situation in linguistics is known as exoglossic. In Wales English dominates over Welsh in urban areas, in the west and north-west of the country the balance being in favor of Welsh, where English is learnt at schools as a second language. At the moment nationalistic feelings are rather strong in Wales and we are witnessing a movement in favor of the revival of the Welsh language and its spread in all areas of Wales.

However, Welsh English at the level of educated speech and writing is not much different from that of English. Most differences are found at the level of more localized dialects.

In this chapter we shall give a brief outline of Welsh English pronunciation standard.

The principal phonological differences between WE and RP are the following:

In vowels

1. The distribution of [] and [a] is as in the north of England. Last, dance, chance, etc. tend to have rather than [a].

2. unstressed orthographic «a» tends to be [se] rather than [a], e.g.: sofa [so:f];

3. there is no contrast between [] and [a]: rubber [rəbə];

4. [i] at the end is a long vowel: city [siti:];

5. in words like tune, few, used we find [iu] rather than [ju:]: tune [tiun];

6. [ei], [] may become monophthongs: bake [b:k], boat [bo:t];

7. the vowel as in girl is produced with rounded lips approaching [o:];

8. the vowels [iə], [ə] do not occur in many variants of Welsh English: fear is [fi:jə], poor is [pu-wə].

In consonants

1. W. Eng. is non-rhotic, [r] is a tap, or it is also called a flapped [r]. Intrusive and linking [r] do occur.

2. Consonants in intervocalic position, particularly when the preceding vowel is short are doubled: city [siti].

3. Voiceless plosives tend to be strongly aspirated: in word final position they are generally released and without glottalization, e.g. pit

4. [1] is clear in all positions.

5. Intonation in Welsh English is very much influenced by the Welsh language.

Scottish English

We must first make clear that the status of Scottish English is still debated. Some linguists say that it is a national variant. Others say that it is a dialect.

English has been spoken in Scotland for as long as it has been spoken in England. In the Highlands and Islands of northern and western Scotland, however, Gaelic is still the native language of thou-sands of speakers from these regions. A standardized form of this language, known as Scots, was used at the court and in literature until the Reformation. Then it was gradually replaced by English. Incidentally a number of writers and poets of the likes of R. Burns retained their native language.

Nowadays educated Scottish people speak a form of Scottish Standard English which grammatically and lexically is not different from English used elsewhere, although with an obvious Scottish accent. We must admit, however, that non-standard dialects of Scotland still resemble Scots and in many respects are radically different from most other varieties of English. It is very difficult to understand them for students who learn RP.

At the moment there is currently a strong movement in Scotland for the revival of Scots. Nevertheless Scottish Standard English is still more prestigious and in this book we concentrate on Scottish English as used and spoken by educated urban Scots.

As for the status of Scottish English, in this book it will be treated as a dialect though it is fair to say that there is much in favor of calling it a national variant of English.

Vowels

1. Since Sc. Eng. is rhotic, i.e. it preserves post-vocalic [r], vowels such as RP [iə], [3:], [ə], [uə] do not occur:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | RP | Sc. Eng. |
| Beer | [bra] | [bir] |
| Bird | [b3:d] | [bird] |
| Hurt | [h3:t] | [hrt] |
| Bard | [ba:d] | [ba:rd] |
| Moor | [mə] | [mr] |

2. Length is not a distinctive feature of Scottish vowels. So pairs like pool-pull, palm-pam, cot-caught are not distinguished. It should be noted, however, that vowels are longer in final stressed open syllables than elsewhere.

3. Monophthongs are pure, there is no trace of diphthongization with the exceptions of [ai – ei], [ao – eu] and [01].

4. The RP [a(a)] distinction doesn't exist: hat [hat], dance [da:ns].

5 – [i], [u], [] [ə] may be central.

6. In non-standard Sc. Eng. accent [u:] often occurs when RP has [au]: house [haus-hu:s]

7. It is interesting to mention that [TO] and [su] may be not contrasted.

8. In very many regional accents *do, to* are pronounced as [də], [tə].

9. In some accents words such as arm, after, grass may have [e] rather than [a:] after [ftə].

Consonants

1. Sc. Eng. consistently preserves a distinction between [w]: which [vit] – witch [wit].

2. Initial [p, t, k] are usually non-aspirated.

3. [r] is most usually a flap.

4. Non-initial [t] is often realized as glottal stop [?].

5. [fl is dark in all positions.

6. The velar fricative [x] occurs in a number of words: loch [lux].

7. – ing is [in].

8. [h] is present.

9. A specific Scottish feature is the pronunciation of [r] as [r]: through [ru;].

Northern Ireland English

It should be stated first of all that English pronunciation standards in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Eire are different. The explanation lies in history.

In the Middle Ages almost the whole of Ireland was Irish speaking. Nowadays, however, native speakers of Irish are few in number and are confined to rural areas even though Irish is the official language of Ireland and is taught in schools. The English language in Southern Ire-land was originally introduced from the West and West Midlands of England and still shows signs of this today. This kind of English has spread to cover most of the Irish Republic. Naturally the pronunciation of these areas retains features of western parts of England.

The English of northern parts of the island with its centre in Belfast has its roots in Scotland, as large numbers of settlers came to this part from the south-west of Scotland from the seventeenth century onwards. Now speaking about Northern Ireland, it is true to say that English here is not homogeneous. Areas of the far north are heavily Scots-influenced. Other parts are marked by less heavily Scots-influenced varieties of English. It is, of course, obvious that the language distinction is not coterminous with the political division of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, some areas of the Republic, Donegal, for instance, speak N. Ir. Eng. (Northern Ireland English), while some of the northern provinces speak S. Ir. Eng. (Southern Ire-land English).

In this chapter we shall deal with Northern Ireland English pronunciation.

Vowels

The vowel system is similar to that of Scottish accents, post-vocalic retroflex frictionless sonorant [r] being used as in Scotland.

[i]: pit [pit], fir [fir], bird [bird], city [siti], fern [firn], fur [fir];

[i:] bee [bi:], beer [bi:r], seedy [si:di], meet [mi:t], meat [mil];

[e] pet [pet], bed [bed];

 [] but [bt];

[a] pat [pat], bard [bard], hat [hat], dance [dans], half [haf];

[] put [pt], boot [bt], pull [pl], pool [pl], poor [pr];

[o] boat [bot], board [bord], pole [pol], knows [noz], nose [noz], pour [por], pore [por];

 [α]: cot [k α t];

[ai]: buy [bair], tide [taid];

[au]: bout [baut];

[oi]: boy [boi].

The following notes on vowels should be read in association with the list above.

The actual realization of a vowel may vary considerably according to the following phoneme:

1. in words like bay, say the vowel is a monophthongs [e], preconsonantally it may be a diphthong of the type gate [giət];

2. [i], [u] are fairly central;

3. [o:] and [»] contrast only before [p, t, k];

4. [ai], [au] are very variable;

5. realization of [a] may vary considerably.

**Conclusion**

The American variant of English has been very thoroughly described by many prominent scholars both in this country and in the USA. In this book, however, we shall try to follow the conception introduced by A.D. Shweitzer in his sociolinguistic approach to the treatment of contemporary speech situation in America (38).

The sociolinguistic situation in the United States is very complicated. It is molded by certain linguistic, cultural, historic, demographic, geographic, political and other factors.

Generally speaking, the situation in the USA may be characterized as exoglossic, i.e. having several languages on the same territory, the balance being in favor of American English.

It is true, of course, that the formation of the American Standard underwent the influence of minorities' languages, but its starting point was the English language of the early 17th century. However, time has passed, American English has drifted considerably from English though as yet not enough to give us ground to speak of two different languages. Thus we speak of the national variant of English in America.

American English shows a lesser degree of dialect than British English due to some historical factors: the existence of Standard English when first English settlers came to America, the high mobility of population, internal migrations of different communities and so on. As regards pronunciation, however, it is not at all homogeneous. There are certain varieties of educated American speech. In the USA three main types of cultivated speech are recognized: the Eastern type, the Southern type and Western or General American.

1. The Eastern type is spoken in New England, and in New York city. It bears a remarkable resemblance to Southern English, though there are, of course, some slight differences.

2. The Southern type is used in the South and South-East of the USA. It possesses a striking distinctive feature – vowel drawl, which is a specific way of pronouncing vowels, consisting in the diphthongization and even diphthongization of some pure vowels and monophthongization of some diphthongs at the expense of prolonging («drawling») their nuclei and dropping the glides.

3. The third type of educated American speech is General American (GA), also known as Northern American or Western American spoken in the central Atlantic States: New York, New Jersey, Wisconsin and others. GA pronunciation is known to be the pronunciation standard of the USA. There are some reasons for it. GA is the form of speech used by the radio and television. It is mostly used in scientific, cultural and business intercourse. Also in two important business centers – New York and St. Louis – GA is the prevailing forms of speech and pronunciation, though New York is situated within the territory where Eastern American is spoken, and St. Louis is within the region of Southern American. In this chapter we shall give an outline of GA accent. We will then point to differences between this accent and RP.

1. There is no strict division of vowels into long and short in GA, though some American phoneticians suggest that certain GA vowels are tense and likely to be accompanied by relative length: [i:] in seat, [u:] in pool

They also admit that a slight rise in tongue position during the pronunciation of tense vowels leads to a diphthongal quality of tense vowels which contrasts to a monophthongal quality of lax vowels.

2. Classification of vowels according to the stability of articulation is the most controversial subject in GA. Some diphthongs are treated in GA as biphonemic combinations. The inventory of GA diphthongs varies from three to twelve phonemes. Following DA. Shakhbagova we distinguish here five diphthongs in GA: [ei], [ai], foi], [auj, [ou].

3. Another very important feature that causes different interpretations of diphthongs and vowel length in GA is the pronunciation of [r] sound between a vowel and a consonant or between a vowel and. a silence: turn [t3:rn], bird [b3:rd], star [star].

It has been estimated that 2/3 of American population pronounce [r] and 1/3 omit it. Thus GA is rhotic in words like far, core, etc. (when [r] follows the vowels and ends the word), this sound is consonantal and non-syllabic according to Ch. Thomas. It involves the characteristic hindering of the free flow of breath which we associate with consonants. The sound [r] in far closes the syllable more definitely than in British Received Pronunciation of the word [fa]. On the other hand, there is a vocalic, or vowel-like and syllabic [r], that occurs in words like bird, murmur (after a vowel and before a consonant). Ch. Thomas writes that in such cases we should better transcribe the words bird and murmur like [brd] and [mrmr]. In such cases [r] is responsible for the characteristic vowel-like quality within the syllable; it

is responsible for syllabic quality as well. That's why Ch. Thomas says that [r] syllabic in bird and [r] non-syllabic in far should be transcribed differently. According to V.A. Vassilyev it is still the vowel of the word that forms a syllable ([3;] in bird, [o:] in corn, etc.), not the syllabic [r] sound. He mentioned although that all the vowel sounds in pre – [r] position sound more like [a], [r] gives the preceding vowel a retroflex coloring. It means that the tip of the tongue glides to the retroflex position without, however, staying there long enough to produce a full-fledged retroflex [r] sound, [r] also prolongs the vowel a little. V.A. Vassilyev uses the term «[r] – compensating» vowels (suggested by AX. Trakhterov) for the vowels in such words in British Received Pronunciation.

4. One more peculiar feature of pronunciation of vowels in American English is their nasalization, when they are preceded or followed by a nasal consonant (e.g. in such words as take, small, name, etc.). Nasalization is often called an American twang. It is incidental and need not be marked in phonemic transcription.

5. GA front vowels are somewhat different from RP. Vowels [i], [i] are distributed differently in GA and RP.

In words like very, pity GA has [i] rather than fij. In word final position it is often even diphthongized.

Vowel [e] is more open in GA. It also may be diphthongized before [p], [t], [k]: let [leat].

6. There are four mixed or central vowels in GA: [3], [ə], [], [a]. They differ markedly from RP vowels in articulation and distribution.

7. The three RP vowels [α], [a] correspond to only two vowels in GA – [a]. This combined with the articulatory differences between RP [α] and GA [a] and a difference in vowel distribution in many sets or words makes it very complicated. The following chart vividly shows it.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | RP | GA |
| Dad | [] | [] |
| dog | [α] | [a] |
| path | [α:] | [] |
| dance | [α:] | [] |
| half | [α:] | [] |

Besides, word distribution of [α] in RP and GA is completely different. GA is intermediate in quality between the RP and [α]. In its production the lips are considerably less rounded.

8. Now to the qualities of GA diphthongs.

a) the diphthong [ei] is closer in GA as opposed to RP;

b) very front realization of [] such as in RP is not found in GA;

c) the nucleus of [a] tends to be more advanced in GA;

d) since GA is a rhotic accent with non-preyocalic [r], it has the consequence that the following RP vowels (derived historically from vowel + [r]) do not occur in GA: [iə] in dear – GA [dir], [ə] in dare – GA [deir], [ə] in tour – GA [tur].

1. The RP allophonic differentiation of [1] does not exist in GA. In all positions [IJ is fairly dark.

2. Intervocalic [t] as in pity is most normally voiced. The result is neutralization of the distribution between [t] and [d] in this position, i.e. latter, ladder. The original distinction is preserved through vowel length with the vowel before [t] being shorter.

In words like twenty, little [t] may even drop out. Thus winner and winter, for example, may sound identical.

3. GA [r] is articulated differently from RP one. The impression is one of greater retroflexion (the tip of the tongue is curled back further than in RP).

4. The «wh» spelling is represented in GA by [M] sound (or some-times transcribed as [hw]. So most American speakers make a clear distinction between «wh» and «w» words: where – ware, which – witch.

5. The sonorant [j] is usually weakened or omitted altogether in GA between a consonant (especially a forelingual one) and [a-] as in the words: news [nu:z], Tuesday [tuzdi], student [studant], suit [sat], tube [tab], stupid [stu:pid], during (du:ri).

A. 1. Many differences involve the pronunciation of individual words or groups of words.

2. Words apparatus, data, status can be pronounced with either [ei] in GA, but only with [ei] in RP.

3. Words like hostile, missile, reptile have final [ail] in RP. In GA they may have [əl].

1. In words of French origin GA tends to have stress on the final syllable, while RP has it on the initial one:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | GA | RP |
| ballet | [bas'lei] | [baelei] |
| beret | [ba'rei] | [ben] |

3. Some compound words have stress on the first element in GA and in RP they retain it on the second element: weekend, ice-cream, hotdog, New Year.

4. Polysyllabic words ending in – ory, – ary, – many have secondary stress in GA, often called «tertiary»: laboratory flaebrs.ton], dictionary fdikfa.nen], secretary [sekrə.teri], testimony [testimouni].

GA intonation on the whole is similar to that of RP. But there are, of course, some differences that should be mentioned here.

1. In sentences where the most common pre-nuclear contour in RP is a gradually descending sequence, the counterpart GA contour is a medium Level Head:

I don't want to go to the theatre.

4. The Fall-Rise nuclear tone is different in RP and GA: Really?

These comparisons show that the main differences in intonation concern the direction of the voice pitch and the realization of the terminal tones. In GA the voice doesn't fall to the bottom mostly. This explains the fact that the English speech for Americans sounds «affected» and «pretentious» or «sophisticated». And for the English, Americans sound «dull», «monotonous», «indifferent».

It should also be mentioned that the distribution of terminal tones in sentence types is also different in both variants of English.

1. GA «Yes, No» questions commonly have a falling terminal tone; the counterpart RP tone would be a rising one:

Shall we stay here?

2. Requests in RP are usually pronounced with a Rise, whereas in GA they may take a Fall-Rise: Open the door.

Its emphatic variant in Mid-wavy-level Head:

2. The usual Medium or Low Fall in RP has its rising-falling counterpart in GA: Come and see me tomorrow.

3. Leave-takings are often pronounced with a high-pitched Fall-Rise in GA: Good night.

3. The rising terminal tone in RP in GA has a mid-rising contour: Do you like it?

Or it may have a level tone in GA:

In conclusion we would like to say that American phoneticians use a pitch contour system to mark intonation in the text: It's a Wery 'cold, day.

««Will you, come? Will you come?

It is certain that we have not covered here all the cases of different intonation structures used in RP and GA. Recently there have appeared in this country several papers and books on the subject, so for further information see those books.

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1. Learners of a foreign language often use the word "accent" to describe pronunciation features in a foreign language influenced by the mother tongue, in other words, a foreigner may be easily recognized by an accent [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Швейцер А.Д. Социальная дифференциация в английском языке в США-М., 1983 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Швейцер А.Д. Социальная дифференциация в английском языке в США-М., 1983. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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