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# Theoretical Phonetics

— Lecture 9 —

Territorial and Social Varieties of the  
English Pronunciation

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# Outline

1. Pronunciation based standard of the British English
  2. Dialectology of the BrE
  3. American based standard pronunciation of English
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# English

is spoken as a native language by more than 300 million people most of them living in North America, the British Isles Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean and South Africa.

is also a second language in many countries where only a small proportion of the people have English as their native language most of these countries are former British territories

is a neutral language that is politically acceptable at least at the national level for administrative and legal functions and as international language for science and technology, it's desirable for higher education

# 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 (A.D.Shweitzer)

The literary spoken form has its national pronunciation standard that means it's socially accepted variety of a language established by a codified norm of correctness.

# Every national variety of the language

falls into *territorial and regional dialects*.

Dialects are distinguished from each other by differences in pronunciation, grammar and the vocabulary. Varieties in pronunciation are called **accent** ( that is the way sounds, stress, rhythm and intonation are used in the given language community). For certain geographical, economic, political and cultural reasons one of the dialects becomes the standard language of the nation and its pronunciation becomes **the Received Pronunciation standard**.

# National standards

- "English English" - "Received Pronunciation" (RP)
- the "American English" - "General American",
- the "Australian English" - "Educated Australian".

National pronunciation standards are associated with radio and TV newsreaders and public figures

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# Britain

## Regional accents

Southern

Northern

Welsh

Scottish

Northern Irish

Regional standards are used by most educated people in the region, and show a certain degree of deviation from the national standard.

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# The US

**Southern, Western and Eastern**

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1. *The conservative* - is used by the older Received Pronunciation speakers

2. *The general Received Pronunciation* is heard on the radio and television

3 *The advanced Received Pronunciation* is used by the younger RP speakers

Received Pronunciation is referred to as a prestige accent and as the “Queen’s English” or “BBC English

3-5 %

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## 1. diphthongization of /i:/ and /u:/

*/s i:/ > /sij/ /hu:/ > /huu:/*

## 2. Monophthongization of /ai/ and /au/ when followed by schwa

*/tauə/ > /taə/. /faia/ > /faə/*

## 3. Centering of formal / o ʊ/ - /ə ʊ/ A.C. Gimson calls this the most striking features of all

*/n ou'v e m b ə/ > /n εʊ'v e m b ə/*

## 4. A greater **weakening of vowels** in weakly stressed syllables which results in the use of neutral /e/ in unstressed positions like: */b ə li:v/ > /bɪli:v/*

## 5. **Assimilation** of the following sound clusters:

*/sj/ > /ʃ/ issue ; /zj/ > /ʒ/ crozier*

*/tj/ > /tʃ/ situation ; /dj/ > /dʒ/ education*

RP

The modern changes that have recently taken place

- The use of the **intrusive /r/**. Normally /r / shouldn't be pronounced: *Idea of it / aidiə r əv it/*
- [eɪ] is becoming shorter or more like a pure sound [e]: *said [sed], again [ə'gen]*;
- the diphthong [ʊə] tends to be [ɔ:]: *sure [ʃɔ:], poor [pɔ:];*
- [æ] is often replaced by [a]: *have [hav], and [and]*;
- in rapid speech [h] is lost in the pronouns and the auxiliary "have": *her [ɜ:], he [i:], had [æd]*;
- palatalized final [k] is often heard: *weak [wi:k'], Dick [dɪk']*;
- the sound [t] in the intervocalic position is made voiced: *better ['bedə], letter ['ledə]*;
- the dark [ɨ] is used instead of [ɪ]: *believe [bi'li:v]*;
- [j] is lost following [l, s, z, n]: *suit [su:t], illuminate [ɪ'lu:mɪneɪt], exuberant [ɪg'zu:b(ə)r(ə)nt], neutral ['nu:tr(ə)]*
- [tʃ, dʒ] become affricates: *fortune ['fɔ:tʃu:n], duty ['dʒu:tɪ]*
- pre-consonantal [t] becomes a glottal stop: *don't come [dɔʊn? 'kʌm]*.

RP

The modern changes that have recently taken place

It is evident that language means are chosen consciously and unconsciously by a speaker according to his perception of the situation

**Diglossia** - 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.

**Idiolect** - individual speech of members of the same language community

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# Local varieties of English

Lowland /Scottish/

Northern

Western

Midland

Eastern

Southern

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# SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN ACCENTS

## Northern

the vowel /ʌ/ does not occur, many northern speakers does not have sound /ʌ/

/blʌd/ > /bləd/

- /ʌ/ > /ʊ/      /blʊd/
- /ʊ/ > /ʊ:/    /bʊk/ > /bʊ:k/
- /ɑ:/ > /æ/    dance, chance, path
- /ei/ > /e/    may /me/    take /tek/
- /əʊ/ > /ɔ:/    boat /bəʊt/ > /bɔ:t/
- /æ/ > /ɒ/    bad /bæd/ > /bɒd/

## Southern (Cockney) see further

- /æ/ > /ɑ:/      bad /ba:d/
- /ʌ/ > /æ/      blood /blæɪd/
- /ɪ/ in an unstressed position as /ɪ:/

/sɪtɪ/ > /sɪtɪ:/    /pɪtɪ/ > /pɪtɪ:/

- Some **English accents are rhotic** or in the other words R- full - actually pronounce / r/ corresponding to **Orthographic r**  
*/fa:rm/ / ba: r/*
- This / r/ is post vocalic and is most often heard in Scotland Ireland and south west of England.
- And in most regional accents the glottal stop is more widely used than in RP in an areas including Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, they pronounce  
*/n g/ > / sing/*
- In most accents / j / is dropped after the consonants / t / s /  
*Student / stju:dənt/ > / stu: /*  
*Suit / sju:t/ > / su:t /*
- In some parts of the north this change has progressed further / j/ has been lost after /θ/  
*enthusiasm /ɪnθju:ziæzəm/ > / θu: /*
- In large area of Eastern / j/ is lost after every consonant, in London area / j/ is lost after / t, d, n /  
*What's the news / nu:s / ?*
- Southern dialects are spoken in greater London (Essex, Wessex, Surrey, Hertfordshire)

# Cockney

- Non-rhoticity
- Raised vowel in words like trap and cat so these sounds like “trep” and “cet.”
- Trap-bath split
- London vowel shift
- Glottal Stopping
- L-vocalization
- Th-Fronting

- /ʌ / > / eɪ / blood > / bleɪd /
- /æ / > / ɛ /, /o/, /ɜɪ / - e.g what a nice bag /bɜɪg /
- /ɪ / in final position is prolonged / ɪː / - e.g /s ɪ t ɪ / > /s ɪ t ɪː /
- /e ɪ / is realized as / aɪ / or / æɪ / - e. g. Lady /l aɪ d ɪ / or /l æ ɪ d ɪ /
- /eu / > / æ u / sold /s æ u l d /
- /au / > / æ u / now / n æ u /
- h / in unstressed position is absent - e. g hello / e l æ u /
- There is no contrast between / θ / and / f / - e. g thin / f l n / - fin / f l n /
- Between /ð / - / v / - e. g. Weather /weðər / / wevər /
- /ð / in the initial position may be either dropped or replaced by /d / - e.g this is / dis ɪ z / I told them / aɪ t æ u l d e m /



# Estuary English

The phonetic features  
(in between RP and cockney)

- Non-rhoticity
- Wholly-holy split
- T-glottalisation
- L-vocalisation

the use of [w] where RP uses [ɪ] in the final positions or in a final consonant cluster: *faulty* = [fawti]; *all full* = [awfu]l;

glottal stop for [t] and [d]: *Scoʔland*, *neʔwork*;

elision of [j] after “n, l, t, s”: *news* [nu:z], *tune* [tʃu:n], *absolute* [ˈæbsəlu:t], *assume* [əˈsu:m];

[ɪ] is prolonged in the final position and may tend towards the quality of a diphthong: *very* [ˈveri:], *city* [ˈsɪti:];

triphthongs [aʊə] and [aɪə] smooth into one long [a:]: *hour* [a:], *tired* [ta:d].

[tj] > [tʃ] in initial position Tuesday /tʃu: sdai/  
[ɔ:] [l] > [ɒ w] alter [ɒ w t ə]

[i:] > [ei] sea [sei]

[u:] > [əu] blue [bləu]