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RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION NOW IN USE ON UK PUBLIC SERVICE

TELEVISION: RISE OR FALL?

Bachelor's thesis

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PREFACE

The topic of the present thesis is the use of Received Pronunciation on contemporary UK television: Rise or Fall?

The paper's aim is to prove through the research of pronunciation used on the UK national public service TV channels that Received Pronunciation is considered prestigious in the society and is widely used in mass media and national public service TV channels in particular. The paper concentrates on the studying, understanding and analyzing aspects of accent and Received Pronunciation on UK public service television.

The paper is divided into four parts. The first part is the introduction, which presents the definitions of "accent", difference between accent and dialect, history of British accents, influence of accent on people's lives. The second section, Chapter 1, presents the description and discussion of different geographical and social variation of English pronunciation in the UK. The following Chapter 2 focuses on the empirical research of pronunciation used in the most popular programs of UK national public service television channels. The main ideas of the present paper are presented in the conclusion, which summarizes the main points of the thesis and gives a summary of the theoretical and empirical parts of the research.

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INTRODUCTION

Everyone speaks with an accent. We may speak Estonian with an accent from a different region in Estonia. We may speak English with an accent because English is not our first language. We may speak French with a Russian accent. In our world today, people move from one region to another, from country to country. One thing that we take with us no matter where we move is our accent.

1.1. What is an “accent”?

Different sources provide various definitions of an “accent”, which are as follows:

Accent – the way in which people in a particular area, country or social group pronounce words. (*Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, 1995).

Accent - the way someone pronounces the words of a language, showing which country or which part of a country they come from. (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 2014).

Accent - a distinctive way of pronouncing a language, especially one associated with a particular country, area, or social class. (*Oxford Dictionaries*, 2014).

It can be concluded that an accent is a kind of pronunciation with an obvious feature which is considered as deviation from the norm. An accent can also tell about our pronunciation and help the listener understand what areas people come from. As a rule, people from the same locality speak with the same accent. As a general rule, people who deviate from the standard pronunciation are often said to be speaking “with an accent”.

Dr. Orville Boyd Jenkins (2004) in his article “Why do people have accents?” notes several aspects that affect pronunciation:

1. As we learn

Jenkins argues that each person is specific in how he/she produces a complex promptness sound that words create a compelling cost. Everyone has an accent, even in their native language. “Our brain and nervous system master the motor skills and cognitive patterns for the language we first hear and learn around us.”

2. Models

No one is born with the ability to speak, but all have the ability to learn any language. The only way we can learn a language - is through listening and imitation of what we hear around. People who live in the same locality are very similar to the dialect, because they teach a language based on what they hear around. This is one aspect of what we call a dialect.

3. Regular variations

It is perceptible and definable characteristics of human speech. These changes can happen to each person. Thus "accent" is just a term that we use to refer to some noticeable differences in communication. The greater the difference, the more difficult for some to hear other speakers. Those who can hear each other, we refer these people to a specific voice group (a specific language or dialect).

“Thus accents are not variations from some metaphysical standard handed down from some divine source, but simply a valid form of production of some set of speech sounds within a recognizable set.”

(Dr. Orville Boyd Jenkins. 2004.)

1.2. Difference between accent and dialect

Dialect is a kind of language variety that differs from other varieties of the same language in grammar, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation, as well as the use of this dialect group of people in some areas. Dialect may have regional variations spoken by large or small community of people in some areas. (*Useful English, 2007-2014*)

Accent is a special way of speaking and pronunciation characteristic of a group of people in some areas. Regional accents are part of the regional dialects. An accent usually has the same name as the dialect to which it belongs.

Dialects and accents are usually called by name and grouped where they are commonly found, for example, British dialects, American dialects, American accents, Australian accents. (*Useful English, 2007-2014*)

1.3. Short history of British accents

English has always been a mixed variety of words, structures and sounds. English has never been the same throughout the country and it is unlikely that it will ever happen.

1.3.1. The earliest history of the British islands

The first population of the British Isles was a non-Indo-European tribe of Iberians, the culture relating to the Neolithic (late Stone Age). The following settlers were Celts - Indo-European tribes who settled in Britain in the 7th century BC - Britons and Gael. *(2007-2014, UsefulEnglish)*

Celtic languages are divided into two main groups - the Gallo-Breton and Gaelic. The Gallic language was spoken by the people of Gaul (present day France). British languages are divided into a) Breton, which has been preserved to our time in Brittany (North of France), b) Cornish, now extinct - the language of the population of Cornwall, c) Welsh, spoken by residents of Wales. *(2007-2014, UsefulEnglish)*

1.3.2. Anglo-Saxons roots

English is derived from a number of German dialects. The Anglo-Saxons came to the British Isles about 1500 years ago as settlers. The Saxons came from present-day northern Germany and settled mainly in the south and west of the country. Their influence in this part of England can be seen in changes in some populated areas such as Wessex, Essex, Middlesex and Sussex. The Angles came from modern Denmark, settled mainly in the eastern part of the country. The Jutes came from the north of Jutland, Denmark, and the Frisians from modern Holland settled elsewhere. *(The British Library Board, 2014)*

All the people who lived in these regions spoke different versions of closely related languages. Thus, we can see that English is derived from a number of different roots and, therefore, we can say that English has never been the same throughout the country as a whole. *(The British Library Board, 2014)*

1.3.3. Old English

Old English or Anglo-Saxon language is the language spoken in England from the fifth century until the second half of the 12th century, although the period of Old English language is often described as lasting until the Norman Conquest in 1066. Old English had a large number of endings, a complex system of declension of nouns and adjectives, flexible syntax and fairly free word order. Words are usually written as they are pronounced. Anglo-Saxon runic alphabet was used almost until the 12th century, when it was largely replaced by the Latin alphabet. *(2007-2014, UsefulEnglish)*

1.3.4. Ancient divisions

For most of the past 1,500 years, these dialects developed in “relative isolation” and, therefore, the differences are preserved and in some cases increased especially when the country began to appear new settlers. Viking invasions which occurred across northern and eastern England from the ninth century, has had a huge influence on the language. Many words and place- names in these areas have Scandinavian origin. *(The British Library Board, 2014)*

In point of fact, the ancient political and social differences are still reflected in regional dialects and accents of spoken English today. In recognizing the different varieties of English spoken in the north of England, the Midlands, East Anglia and the West Country coincide notably close to the borders that divided Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia and Wessex. *(The British Library Board, 2014)*

1.3.5. Middle English

Middle English was characterized by significant changes in vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Its vocabulary has increased dramatically because of the French borrowings after the Norman Conquest. Middle English suffered the loss of most endings and substantial simplification of grammar. Its syntax has become more stringent, and the word order was basically fixed. A series of changes in the quality of long vowels, known as the Great Vowel Shift (Great Vowel Shift), began in the 15th century. *(2007-2014, UsefulEnglish)*

1.3.6. Modern English

Modern English is considered to be English from 1475. In its early period (until the 18th century) there was a further simplification of grammar, and the process of standardization of English spelling and word usage. Works of William Shakespeare (1564-1616) and a dictionary *A Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1755 by Samuel Johnson, rather contributed to the process of standardization of the English language. (2007-2014, *UsefulEnglish*)

Late Modern English (from 1800 to the present) is characterized by the globalization of the English language. New dialects of English have appeared in various parts of the world. English has become the international language used worldwide by native English speakers and those for whom English is not their native language. During this period, a large number of words from different languages came into the English language, making it the largest vocabulary in the world. (2007-2014, *UsefulEnglish*)

1.3.7. Contemporary diversity

The second half of the twentieth century was a period of great social upheaval. Since the end of World War II, the British lived through a much greater social and geographical mobility and enjoyed greater access to education and broadcast media. All this has had a linguistic influence. However, although many people believe that accents and dialects are disappearing, in fact there is still an incredible amount of regional diversity in language across the country today.

While the English language continues to evolve, some parts of the country were affected more sharply than others, and some changes have occurred only at the local level - so we still hear significant differences in speech when traveling in England.

England has also endured a new wave of immigration from Commonwealth countries, speakers bringing fresh dialects and accents that enrich the linguistic landscape of English language. Particularly in urban areas, speakers of Asian and Caribbean have blended their mother tongue speech patterns with existing local dialects to produce new varieties of English, such as London Jamaican or Bradford Asian English.

(The British Library Board, 2014)

1.4. Socio-cultural and regional aspects of accents

A large area of the British Isles often leads people to think that the language spoken in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland is homogeneous, and they are often surprised when they discover that they have difficulty understanding the accent and dialect in the center of a region. Even in England there are a variety of accents at the regional level and at the social.

Trudgill (1999) believes that for the majority of English people it is very important where they came from and where they grew up. Although in the course of time, people can change their style of speaking. She argues that "most people "carry at least some trace" of their accent and dialect origins throughout their lives" (Trudgill,1999:1).

In Great Britain, "people are often able to make instant and unconscious judgments about a stranger's class affiliation on the basis of his or her accent."(Wells,1982:29) The pronunciation of many people reflects the social situation of the person. It has been agreed that in England, the "phonetic factors assume a predominating role which they do not generally have in North America" (*Wells, 1982:13*).

The relationship between social and regional accents can be expressed schematically (see Figure 1).

J. Wells (*1982:14*) in his book describes the scheme as follows:

The pyramid is broad at the base, since working-class accents exhibit a great deal of regional variations. It rises to a narrow point at the apex, since upper-class accents exhibit no regional variation within England - such variation within RP as does exist depends on other factors than geographical ones. Among the lower middle classes the geographical variation is greater than in the upper middle-class, but less than in the working class- or so this model implies, and all the evidence suggests that it is on the whole correct.

1.1 Linguistic and social variability

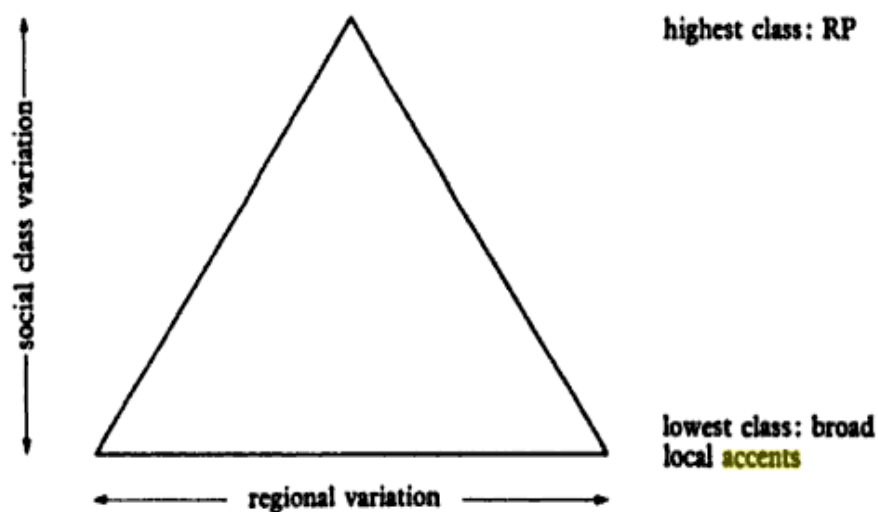


Figure 1. Linguistic and social variability of English pronunciation in the UK

1.5. Aims and hypothesis of the research

The aim of the paper is to research the most popular TV shows on UK national public service television and to examine if they involve received pronunciation or not.

The hypothesis of the research argues that Received Pronunciation is widely spoken on the national channels and is still privileged.

CHAPTER 1. Geographical and Social Variation of English Pronunciation in the UK

2.1. London

London, as is well known, is the capital of the UK, but London is not only a significant city from a political point of view, but is also important in terms of the formation of language. London is also the capital of birth of Received Pronunciation of the English language. However, every year it can be seen that new words appear in English and people pronounce them differently and it becomes the norm, even in such a seemingly conservative country like England. It may appear that the accent of the so-called working class begins to dominate and make the changes in English pronunciation in the English-speaking world.

The traditional accent of the working class in London and neighbouring areas is Cockney. This dialect is closely linked to the hinterland of the East London, the East End-Bethnal Green, Stepney; Mile End, Hackney; Whitechapel; Shoreditch; Poplar; Bow – and the Cockney is supposed to be someone born within the sound of Bow Bells.

For centuries, London has had another focus of the working life south of the river in Bermondsey. In the 20th century London became the extensive city of London for over 60 km. In all thirty-two towns comprising London lived socially mixed population and everywhere an accent of the working class had basic features of Cockney. In the book J.C.Wells (1982) offers to refer to this type of accent as popular London.

The main difference between Cockney accent and ordinary London accent of the working class - a popular London - is the pronunciation of MOUTH words. Whereas the real Cockney uses a monophthong, [mæ:f ~ma:f], a popular London accent “is very slightly closer to RP than the broadest Cockney.”

(J.C.Wells 1982:302)

The main features of Cockney accent: (A.Hughes, P.Trudgill, D.Watt 2005:73)

- Cockney is non-rhotic
- /ʊ/ and /ʌ/ are both present and distinguish between, for example, put and putt
- /ʌ/ is realized as /a/ for example blood
- /a/ and /ɑ:/ are divided as in RP
- different of RP, the final vowel of city is /i:/ not /i/
- /h/ is always missing. If this sound is present it is likely to be stressed
- the glottal stop, [ʔ] is very common in London speech
- Comparison between /θ/ and /f/ is variably lost through so-called TH-fronting:

thin /fɪn/

Cathy /kafi:/

both /bəʊf/

- In a like manner, occur the comparison between /ð/and/v/ is also lost:

together /tə'gɜvə/

bathe /beiv/

- If /ɔ:/ is ending it is realized the same way as the vowel of pore in some RP speech. If /ɔ:/ is not, it is realization closer, at [o:]

- Many diphthongs are noticeably different from RP in their realizations

/eɪ/ is [æɪ]- paper

/əʊ/ is [ʌu]– soaked

/aɪ/ is [aɪ] - inside

/aʊ/ may be [æə] - surrounded

2.2. The South

The South of England is divided into three areas: the Home Counties, East Anglia and the West Country. The Home Counties are the counties that are very close to London and due to which London has expanded its territory, and they can be called villages of London. These include Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hertfordshire, Essex and also part of Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Bedfordshire. They are all dominated both linguistically as well as in other matters by London. Urban speech has a strong belonging to that of London. Many inhabitants of rural villages work in London; they live in new towns that were built in 1945 and were inhabited largely by former Londoners. However, traditional local pattern speech exists in many rural areas in Sussex and Kent, for example, they can be easily recognized by their rhoticity.

East Anglia includes Norfolk and Suffolk, which also includes Cambridgeshire and Essex. East of England consists of large urban centers such as Norwich and Ipswich. In this region, a local accent is non-rhotic.

“Linguistically speaking, the south may be said to extend up as far as the isogloss marking the northern limit of the FOOT-STRUT Split in popular speech. This runs from the Severn estuary in the west to the Wash in the east. Except at its western extremity, a rather similar path is traced by the isogloss marking the northern limit of BATH Broadening in popular speech. Thus in a broad local accent of the south cup is [kʌp~kəp] and glass is [glɑ:s~glɑ:s], whereas further north they are of the types [kʌp] and [glas].”
(*J.C.Wells 1982:335*)

The heart of the West Country, the west side of England, is formed by the cider counties of Gloucestershire, Avon, Somerset, and Devon, with Bristol as the general centre of population. In the south-west, Cornwall stands slightly apart: they do not only own traditions, but a Celtic language, Cornish, which was used in the past. Area of Wessex includes Dorset, Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Oxfordshire. Rhoticity is the most remarkable feature of the West-country accents.

Like everywhere in the UK, people speak here with a wide range of accents, starting from the one closest to the RP, ending with the farthest from the RP. It means that not everyone who was born in the western part of England, for example, pronounce /r/; as well as not everyone who was born in the Eastern part of England has all the features of the Anglo-Eastern accent in speech.

(*J.C.Wells 1982*)

The main features of the southern accent (A.Hughes, P.Trudgill, D.Watt 2005:78)

- /ʊ/ and /ʌ/ are both present
- /a/ and /ɑ:/ are classified as in RP
- the South English differs from the accents of London and the Home Counties in absence of /l/ vocalization
- In Norfolk and surrounding areas /j/ is lost after all consonants
- Words like moon and boot have the sound /u:/ for some speakers
- The differences between /ɪə/ and /eə/ found in RP is not present, for example, beer and bear are pronounced /bɜ:/
- /h/ is conserved in rural East Anglia, although in the South it is lost
- fixed words which have /aʊ/ sound, may have /ʊ/ rather than /u:/
- stressed vowels are long
- off is /ɔ:f/ when in RP it is /ɔf/

2.3. The North

From a linguistic point of view, the population of England is divided approximately equally between the north and the south. If we exclude a small number of speakers with the Received Pronunciation, we can see that about half of the British people speak with a northern accent.

‘Northern’ in this sense might more precisely be glossed midlands or northern. Linguistically, the northern part of England does not only include that part of England which is commonly named as the north, but most of the Midlands. It includes cities such as Birmingham-Wolverhampton conurbation, Leicester, and Peterborough. From the point of view historically-oriented dialectology, northern dialect is the one located on the northern line from Lune to Hamber - a descendant of the Old English of Northumbria, and not Wessex, Mercia and Kent. They concern the dialects from the areas of Manchester and Leeds as North Midlands.

The Midlands includes both the eastern and the western part. East Midlands includes the major cities of Leicester and Nottingham, whose regional accents are very similar to the northern mid-line. West Midlands includes a modern country of the same name in the center of which is Birmingham-Wolverhampton conurbation. The West Midlands also has a north-western transitional area including Stoke-on-Trent and Derby.

The middle north includes the densely populated north industrial zone of straddling the Pennines from Manchester across Huddersfield, Bradford and Leeds to Sheffield. The local accents in this area are those of modern counties of - Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire.

The local differences in dialects and accents as you move from valley to valley or from village to village in the north are more noticeable than in any other part of England.

(J.C.Wells 1982)

The main features of the northern accent (A.Hughes, P.Trudgill, D.Watt 2005:78)

- no split of Middle English /u/ into /ʊ/ and /ʌ/, therefore “put” and “putt” both pronounced /put/.
- lax vowels /ɪ ɜ ʌ ɒ u / generally lower than in RP
- /u/ and /ɒ/ weakly rounded
- different diphthongs before old velar fricative: /ɜɪ/ as [ɜɪ] in “weigh”, but [e:] in «way»
- in the central north (Manchester, Leeds) final –y as /ɪ/ like in RP («happy» [apɪ]), in Nottingham even lower /ɜ/, provincial areas (Birmingham, Newcastle, Liverpool) but with /i:/

2.4. Wales

In Wales, there are places where English has been spoken for centuries - Pembroke area, for example, on the southern coast of Dyfed. Earlier conventional Welsh had some familiarity with the English language since the Middle Ages, but the inhabitants never used it as their native language, until recently. In fact, virtually everyone in Wales now speaks English. But for an essential minority English is a second language only. These are native speakers of Welsh, possibly the most viable of the Celtic languages; despite the invasion, made by English, especially in the last hundred years, they still include something like 20 per cent of the total population of the Principality of about two and three quarters of a million. Many of those who speak English, and they are the majority, also have some knowledge of the Welsh language. In many cases, their parents, or at least their grandparents spoke Welsh. Those who live in Wales cannot help noticing, Welsh around them, regardless of whether they consider it a valuable part of their national and cultural heritage or not. Without a doubt, the main influence on the pronunciation of English in Wales served the phonological system of the Welsh. Geographically, Wales consists mainly of rugged mountainous terrain. Most of the country is quite sparsely populated, mainly with the rural population. The exclusion is the industrial region of South Wales, Vale of Glamorgan and Gwent.

The most striking thing about the Welsh accent for many English people is intonation. It is perceived as a singsong. Another striking feature is the quality of vowels: Welsh English tends to have more monophthongs and thongs, which are usually narrow. This can be regarded as the removal of the capital's most recent influences on English pronunciation.

(J.C.Wells 1982)

The main features of Wales accent (A.Hughes, P.Trudgill, D.Watt(2005:84)

- fall-rise “sing-song” intonation
- avoidance of secondary stress in long words/compounds, without vowel reduction; “Bridgend” as /brɪˈdʒɛnd/ in Welsh English and /brɪdʒˈɛnd/ in RP
- lengthened consonants in intervocalic position: “city” as [sɪtɪ:]
- diphthongs /əʊ/ and /ɜɪ/ as monophthongs /o:/ and /e:/
- “r” usually realized as tapped /r/
- Fronting diphthongs tend to resemble Received Pronunciation, apart from the vowel of bite that has a more centralised onset [æɪ]
- Most other long monophthongs are similar to that of Received Pronunciation, but words with the RP /əʊ/ are sometimes pronounced as [o:] and the RP /eɪ/ as [e:]

2.5. Scotland

Saxons captured Edinburgh in the seventh century, and since then at least part of Scotland spoke in the Germanic language. Nevertheless, the Scottish language was used in court and government at the Stuart monarchy. Using English as a spoken language - Standard English with a Scottish accent, and not Scottish - only began in the eighteenth century, and was not particularly popular until recently.

Anglo-Saxons in Lothian spoke the northern dialect of Old English. It is a linear descendant, with the addition of Scandinavian and Norman-French elements, gradually it began to be used in the entire southern and north-eastern Scotland. Until the fifteenth century it was known as Inglis; in course of time it has become the official language of the Kingdom of Scotland, and was renamed as Scottis or Scots. It was the language of poets Henryson, Dunbar and Douglas.

Since the sixteenth century Scots status has reduced. In the absence of translation into the Scottish language of the Bible, English became the language of religion and serious thoughts. The Union of the Crowns of England and Scotland in 1603, and then The Union of Parliaments in 1707, mentioned that the official written language of all countries should be English. Closer to the eighteenth century, the Scottish members of the British Parliament began to take elocution lessons in English, which made it clear it was easier to communicate in English. Since then, Scots began to drop to the role of the domestic dialect. This trend has not been abolished, even for poets. Official and literary language of Scotland has been Standard English for three centuries – albeit with Scottish accent and several scotticisms in vocabulary. This Scottish English coexists with a Scottish accent and is somewhat comparable to the northern English.

Meanwhile, there has been a variety of languages spoken throughout the northern and western parts of Scotland, in the mountains and islands. It was once predominantly Scottish Gaelic. It is still spoken particularly in the Hebrides, although there is rapidly falling population; revivalist movement has recently made some headway. Like other Celtic languages in the British Isles, this language was retreating for centuries under English pressure - the pressure is much faster in the Highlands of Scotland, the failure of the uprising in 1745 and emigration and also the population clearance. Gaelic today remains as the dominant language only in the Outer Hebrides, in some of the Inner Hebrides, and in the two parishes of Applecross mainland and Ardnamurchan.

Nevertheless, Gaelic left behind an identifiable influence on the English phonetic of the Highlands and Islands, even in those areas where it disappeared as a spoken language.

(J.C.Wells 1982)

The main features of Scottish accent (A.Hughes, P.Trudgill, D.Watt 2005:101)

- Scottish English is a rhotic accent
- /r/ before /l/ is strong
- An epenthetic vowel between /r/ and /l/
- There is a difference between /w/ and /hw/ in word pairs such as witch and which
- /l/ is usually velar
- /p/, /t/ and /k/ are not aspirated.
- Vowel length is generally concerned as non-phonemic
- Vowels (/i/, /u/, and /æ/) are generally long but are shortened before nasals and voiced plosives.
- /θ/ is often used in plural nouns where southern English has /ð/, for example baths; and booth are pronounced with /θ/

2.6. Ireland

Contemporary linguistic situation in Ireland today was formed by three main sources: the English language, as introduced from England, and perhaps, in particular, in the west of England; the dialect of Scots and Scottish-type accent, associated to it and introduced in the north of Scotland; and indigenous Irish language itself - also known as Gaelic, Irish Gaelic and Erse - member of the Celtic branch of the Indo-European family. It is estimated that in the early nineteenth century about half the population of Ireland spoke Irish; but by 1851 only a quarter of the population is left, and only 5 per cent were monoglots without knowledge of English. Nowadays, English in Ireland is the native language of the most 4000000 inhabitants of the island. Several thousand Irishmen, whose everyday language is Irish still live in Ireland; they all know a little in English, but some speak it not very confidently. Most of them live in the Gaeltacht areas that receive additional economic aid from the government in an attempt to prevent the migration from the Irish-speaking areas, with consequent loss of the language.

There were native speakers of English in Ireland approximately since 1200. Nevertheless, by 1600 English was almost extinct in Ireland, even in the Pale region surrounding Dublin. Only written documents survive to witness the old Anglo-Irish dialects Fingal and Forth. Since then Irish English has become more conservative. Neither RP, nor popular accents of England had a noticeable impact on Irish English. There are, however, some educated Dubliners who, consciously or unconsciously, apply different characteristics of RP.

(J.C.Wells 1982)

The main features of Ireland accent (A.Hughes, P.Trudgill, D.Watt 2005:114)

- /a/ pronounced [a], and /a:/ pronounced [a:], are separate and classified much as in RP
- /ɒ/ is pronounced [ɑ] and /ɔ:/ is pronounced [ɑ:]
- /aɪ/ has a back first element [ɑɪ ~ ɒɪ] which is separate from /ɔɪ/
- /eɪ/ and /əʊ/ are mostly monophthongs or narrow diphthongs
- there is a strong tendency for /ʊ/ and /ʌ/ not to be separate in strongly local Dublin accents, for example /ʊ/ in government, but /ʌ/ happen, particularly in more educated speech
- /ɜ:/ does not happen in lower-status accents
- Irish English has /a/ rather than /ɜ/ in any and anyone
- /θ/ and /ð/ are often pronounced not as fricatives but as dental stops [t] and [d].
- /h/ is normally pronounced
- /p ,t ,k/ conduce to be strongly aspirated

2.7. Received Pronunciation

Received Pronunciation, or RP, is the accent of spoken English. Unlike other British accents this accent is not associated with a particular region. RP is usually associated with a particular social group, that of the so-called “upper class” (e.g. nobility, politicians, artists, academics, etc.), although it has a connection to the South of England accent. RP is associated with an educated and formal speech. It has prestige and authority, but is also associated with privilege and arrogance.

There are several benefits to learning this particular accent. First, while it originated in the south-east of England, now it is a regionless accent in the UK, for example, if a person speaks with the RP accent, you cannot tell which part of the UK he/she comes from, while other British accents in this category do not apply. This means that the accent is likely to be understood in the entire country. Second, the RP is an accent that is most commonly used on the radio and television programs in England.

There are also disadvantages of learning only RP. First, the accent is initially used by only 3-5 per cent of the population of England. It means that students who come to England for the first time may have difficulties with understanding the other 95-97 per cent of the population. Second, RP is not a regional accent, but a social accent, especially associated with the upper- middle and upper classes. Third, the RP accent is probably more difficult to learn for many foreigners, than, for example, a Scottish accent, because RP has a large number of diphthongs.

(P.Trudgill, J.Hannah 2002)

The main features of RP accent (*P.Roach 2004:241*)

- Nasals and liquids (/m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /r/, /l/) may be syllabic in unstressed syllables
- Voiceless plosives (/p/, /t/, /k/, /tʃ/) are aspirated at the beginning of a syllable or unstressed vowel follows
- Syllable final /p/, /t/, /tʃ/, and /k/ may be either introduced by a glottal stop
- RP's long vowels are diphthongised
- The short vowel /æ/ becomes longer if it is followed by a voiced consonant
- RP also possesses the triphthongs, for example /aɪə/ in *ire*, /aʊə/ in *hour*, /əʊə/ in *lower*, /eɪə/ in *layer* and /ɔɪə/ in *loyal*

CHAPTER 2. Empirical research of pronunciation used in the most popular programmes of UK national television channels

3.1. Methodology and Sample

The following chapter will present the research of the use of Received Pronunciation on the most popular UK national channels according to “The Guardian” (*The Guardian, 2014*). To conduct a research, there have been chosen three most popular TV shows on the BBC, Channel 4 and ITV. Also, one news programme from the each channel has been selected. The object of the research was the speech of TV hosts. For purpose of the research, the author has familiarized herself with all British English accents to compare and analyze them with Received Pronunciation. The research is basing on the knowledge provided in the theoretical part (see Chapter 1).

3.2. Aims and Hypothesis

The aim of the paper is to prove through the research of pronunciation used on the UK national public service channels that Received Pronunciation is considered prestigious in the society and is widely spoken by TV hosts on national television.

The hypothesis of the research argues that Received Pronunciation is widely spoken on the national channels and is still privileged.

3.4 Analysis of the programs

Channel 4

For the research of the Channel 4, the following programmes have been chosen: “Sunday Brunch”, Channel 4 news, “Unreported World”.

“Sunday Brunch” (entertainment show)

The programme is broadcast every Sunday on Channel 4. The programme’s main features are cooking and talking to celebrities during the show. The show is presented by Tim Covejoy and by Simon Rimmer. For the analyses, five episodes were selected and were being watched during two weeks. The running time of the each episode is about two hours.

The results of the research:

TV hosts speak with non-received pronunciation. Tim Covejoy’s pronunciation is close to Cockney accent and Simon Rimer speaks with patterns of northern accent.

Channel 4 news

A program is broadcast every day on Channel 4. The Channel 4 news is the main news program on the channel. The news is presented by Jon Snow. Five episodes were selected for analysis and were being watched during two weeks. The running time of the each episode which broadcasts from Monday till Thursday is about one hour and from Friday till Sunday the duration of the programme is about half an hour.

The results of the research:

TV host speaks with Received Pronunciation.

“Unreported World” (talk/educational show)

The program is broadcast on Channel 4 and the show is not a national but a foreign affairs programme. There is no constant TV host but a guest presenter. The episodes were selected with only one presenter – Seyi Rhodes. The main idea of the show is to uncover some mystery stories through travelling to dangerous places in the world. Five episodes were selected for analysis and were being watched during two weeks. The running time of the each episode is about 30 minutes.

The results of the research:

TV host speaks with Received Pronunciation.

ITV

For the research of the ITV channel, the following programmes have been chosen: “Britain’s got talent”, ITV morning news, “Daybreak”.

“Britain’s got talent” (entertainment show)

“Britain’s got talent” is a competition talents show. Participants must perform in front of the judges and in front of a live audience with their talent. The show is the most well-known on the British television and in Europe as well. The show is presented by Declan Donnelly and by Anthony McPartlins. Season 7 was selected for the analysis and five episodes from it were watched to analyze the speech of the hosts. The duration of an episodes is about two hours.

The results of the research:

TV hosts speak with non-received pronunciation. Declan Donnelly and Anthony McPartlins have a certain kind of southern accent.

ITV morning news

The programme is broadcast-every morning on ITV. The episodes of the news were selected with the following presenters: Zeinab Badawi, Tom Bradby, because the most number of episodes was found to be with these hosts. Five episodes were selected for analysis and were being watched during two weeks. The running time of the each episode is about 30 minutes.

The results of the research:

Zeinab Badawi has Received Pronunciation and Tom Bradley speaks with a certain kind of northern accent.

“Daybreak” (talk show)

The programme is broadcast every morning. The main feature of the show is news about celebrity life, celebrity interviews, talking about health, entertainment and reports from UK locations. Two TV hosts and one reporter are present on the show. Five episodes were selected for analysis and were being watched during two weeks. For the research, the speech of the two presenters and one reporter (Matt Barbet, Ranvir Singh and Louisa James) was analyzed. The running time of the show is about two hours.

The results of the research:

Matt Barbet and Louisa James have Received Pronunciation.

Ranvir Singh speaks with a certain kind of northern accent.

BBC One

For the research of the BBC channel, the following programmes have been chosen: “The Great British Bake off”, “Hardtalk”, BBC World news.

“The Great British Bake off” (entertainment show)

During the show two judges estimate ten participants in their baking skills by the uniqueness, technicality and design of the baking. The show is presented by Marry Berry and Paul Hollywood. Five episodes from Season 1 were selected for analysis and were being watched during two weeks. The running time of the each episode is about one hour.

The results of the research:

TV hosts speak with Received Pronunciation.

“Hardtalk” (talk show)

“Hardtalk” is the TV programme which has a form of an interview. Its TV host is Stephen Sackur. On the programme, the presenter is talking to well-known persons about important things which are connected with politics and society. The duration of the programme is about 25 minutes. Five episodes were selected for analysis and were being watched during two weeks.

The results of the research:

TV host speaks with Received Pronunciation.

BBC world news

It is news which is broadcast every day on BBC channel. The BBC news is the main news program on the channel. The episodes of the news were selected with the following presenters: Philippa Thomas, Zeinab Badawi. Five episodes were selected for analysis and were being watched during two weeks. The running time varies from 30 minutes to one hour.

The results of the research:

TV hosts speak with Received Pronunciation.

Received pronunciation on UK national public service channels

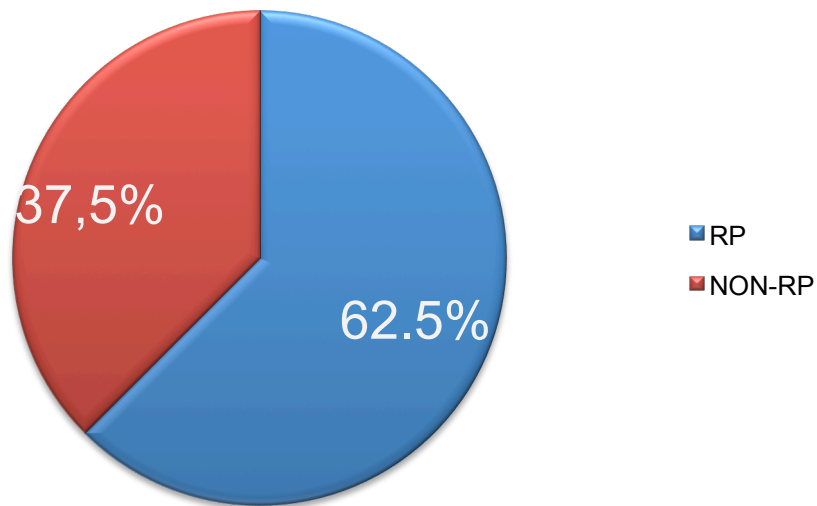


Chart 1. Received pronunciation on UK public television channels.

3.5 Discussion of the results

Having conducted the empirical research into the use of Received Pronunciation on UK national public service channels, it can be concluded that Received Pronunciation tends to predominate on the most popular and the most watched TV programs on UK national channels.

During the research, the speech of 16 TV hosts from three national channels was analyzed and 45 episodes of nine programmes were watched. The speech of some presenters analysed during the research was not only Received Pronunciation, for example, as heard on ITV and Channel 4. As a result of the research, it can be approved that the hosts from the BBC One channel speak predominantly with Received Pronunciation, because BBC channel is considered to be a more conservative channel. At the end of the research, if we look to at Chart 1 which is shown above, we can see that 62,5% from the analyzed TV hosts have received pronunciation and only 37,5% speak with a non-received pronunciation. Basing on such results, we can confirm that the hypothesis proposed above seems to be correct and Received Pronunciation tends to be widely used on UK national public service channels.

CONCLUSION

The present thesis aimed at proving that Received Pronunciation is widely spoken on UK national television. There was conducted a research into the English accents of the TV hosts on the popular national TV channels. In this context, the bachelor thesis concludes that:

1. there are several aspects that affect pronunciation;
2. for many English people it is rather important what part of the UK people come from and grew up;
3. every region of the UK has its own unique speech;
4. RP is an accent that is most commonly used on the radio and television programmes in England;
5. RP is not a regional accent but a social accent;
6. From 16 TV hosts on UK television, 11 of them speak with Received Pronunciation.

It should be noted that this information may not be exhaustive because of the limitations of the present research. However, this work contains the basic provisions and features of accents in the UK both in ordinary life and on television.

Summarizing, it can be concluded that this work, which deals with Received Pronunciation, provides both theoretically and empirically based information on this topic and is believed to be useful for someone who will conduct a research on a similar theme.

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RESÜMEE

Antud töö ülesandeks on näidata Briti häälduste rolli meedia valdkonnas. Töö eesmärgiks läbi Inglismaa populaarsete telekanalite telesaadete vaatamise ja analüüsi tõestada, et inglishääldus ainuvalitseb televisioonil.

Töö koosneb neljast osast. Esimeseks osaks on sissejuhatus, kust on näha valitud teema ajaloolist konteksti ning argumentatsiooni. Sissejuhatavas osas on samuti kirjeldatud uuringu eesmärgid ning hüpotees.

Teiseks osaks on esimene peatükk, mis sisaldab endas põhiliste häälduste tekkimise ning kasutamise ajalugu Inglismaa kindlates piirkondades. Teine peatükk käsitleb standard inglishäälduse analüüsi meedias, Inglismaa populaarsetel telekanalitel ja põhineb läbiviidud uuringu tulemustel.

Kokkuvõte kujutab endast põhilist seisukohta ning ühendab uuringu põhilisi ideeid.

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