

intended audience; and, while possible, it is flawed to consider issues such as contemporary democratic politics, social values and the continuing existence of prejudice and social inequalities without reference to the formative influence of journalism.

Given the power and significance of news journalism to contemporary society, it should come as no surprise that the discourse of newspapers has been, and continues to be, scrutinised [5]. In line with the three characteristics of newspaper discourse referred to above, the analysis of how newspapers may (re)produce iniquitous social relations needs to be focused at three levels: on the material realities of society in general; on the practices of journalism; and on the character and function of journalistic language more specifically. Clearly, each of these three levels of analysis is enormous, attracting the attention of many, many scholars.

Practically all the slang words have a very strong stylistic colouring. One word can give the reader the whole amount of information it includes. For example the word-combination “crap barge” shows that the speaker operates with the slang used by the naval forces and that he meant “the ship with inexperienced and undisciplined crew”. “Reporters frequently have little opportunity to include in their own stylistic preferences, and come to rely upon a well-tried range of set phrases and grammatical constructions.” [4]

Journalists have no space and time to express themselves in literary words, and that is why they use slang words which are more expressive. Of course there are people who insert in their speech or articles too many slang word even there is no need in doing this. The

groups of linguists who consider slang to be a valuable part of the vocabulary do not approve predominance of the slang words over the literary ones. “...we would like to point out that slang always tends toward degradation rather than elevation” [5]

## Conclusion

To conclude, it is worth saying that the newspaper discourse above all is to be understood in terms of its capability of exercising power and the political power i.e. the ideology is the highest form of such power. The newspapers are an incredible influence tool in society; they can easily turn on people emotions in favour or against an issue or something. This is because people as readers tend to believe everything that is written in the newspaper even do it might be the wrong information.

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## Estuary English: tomorrow's RP or bastardized Cockney?

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*The article deals with the so called Estuary English (an accent of English which originated near London within the estuary of the Thames – hence its name). Characteristic features of this accent are discussed. Its peculiarities are compared with the characteristic features of Received Pronunciation and non-standard Cockney speech, the dialect of native Londoners. The issue of the Estuary English social status is also discussed, since certain researchers claim that this accent is likely to gain the status of standard English accent, especially taking into account the increasing number of native speakers who defy Received Pronunciation.*

Key words — Estuary English, Received Pronunciation, Cockney, accent, dialect, pronunciation, glottal stop, yod-coalescence.

## The phenomenon of Estuary English

The notion of Estuary English is not very new. At least the term itself was coined as long ago as 1984. Its author, David Rosewarne, an EFL teacher, described it as ‘a variety of modified regional speech’ claiming that EE was something like a mixture of non-regional and south-eastern English pronunciation and intonation [1]. He also maintained that EE was something in between Received Pronunciation and London Cockney accent [1]. As the name suggests, EE became primarily popular among people living along the banks of the river Thames and its estuary. However, later, like RP, it lost its regional

distribution. In the 1990s, EE gained in popularity. In 1993, Paul Coggle, a university senior lecturer, published a book entitled *Do You Speak Estuary?*, which brought about great public interest in EE. According to Neal Ascherson, even upper-class young people adopted EE, which he called 'the faintly Cocknefied accent of the South-east' [1]. Rumour has it, that Queen Elizabeth's youngest son, Prince Edward, and her grandson, Prince William, speak Estuary English.

Despite its rising popularity, EE has been criticized a great deal. Quite a lot of British English speakers do not see it as a form of Standard English, but as a kind of regional accent which has to be dropped if you think of yourself as a well-educated person.

Thus the question arises: what does EE really stand for?

### Key Differences between EE and RP

Like RP, Estuary English is associated with standard grammar and usage. However, most of EE phonetic characteristics are closer to Cockney accent rather than Received Pronunciation.

For instance, let us take a glottal stop. In RP accent, a glottal stop can replace a 't' only before another consonant sound, for example, in 'football'. When this glottal stop is produced, it is accompanied by an alveolar stop, i.e. the tongue touches the alveolar ridge, as if it were making a /t/. In EE a glottal stop is not accompanied by an alveolar stop, and it usually appears at the end of syllables (foot) as well as before consonants (football). I may also appear before weak vowels (water), which is very typical of Cockney [2].

In RP, an /l/ appearing at the end of a syllable will produce a dark /l/ sound /l̥/, which means that the tongue is raised at the back of the mouth. It gives a soft, almost muffled sound. Dark /l/ does not appear in Estuary English. Instead it is replaced by a syllable final /w/ sound. So 'ball' sounds like /bo:w/.

Making use of intrusive /r/ is another key difference between RP and EE speakers. An RP speaker would not add an /r/ sound in order to join two words, placing a pause instead. An Estuary speaker would use intrusive /r/ making all words and sounds join together [1].

In RP, speakers never drop an /h/ sound, even in function words such as 'he', 'her', 'have' etc. On the other hand, Estuary speakers would certainly drop the /h/ in function words, particularly when they appear in the middle of sentences such as 'Where's he gone?' and 'It's in her handbag'.

Happy-tensing is one more thing that distinguishes Estuary English speakers from Received Pronunciation advocates. It is about using a sound more similar to the sound /i:/ of 'beat' than to the sound /i/ of 'bit' at the end of words like 'happy', 'valley', 'coffee' etc. A lot of recent works on English phonetics transcribe this weak vowel as /i/, which can be interpreted in various ways according to the

speaker's accent. In strong syllables (stressed or potentially stressed), it is crucial to distinguish tense long /i:/ from lax short /i/, since 'green' must be distinct from 'grin' and 'sleep' from 'slip'. But in weak syllables this distinction does not apply – the precise quality of the final vowel in 'happy' is not so important [4].

Yod coalescence is also something an RP speaker would never use, but Estuary English speakers, like Cockneys, do a lot. Using a /tʃ/ (a ch-sound) rather than /tj/ (a t-sound plus a y-sound) in words like 'Tuesday', 'tune', 'attitude' is typical of EE accent. This makes the first part of 'Tuesday' sound identical to 'choose'. The same happens with the corresponding voiced sounds: the RP /dj/ of words such as 'duke' and 'reduce' becomes Estuary /dʒ/, making the second part of 'reduce' sound identical to 'juice'.

On the other hand, similarly to Received Pronunciation, Estuary English does not involve th-fronting (using labiodental fricatives /f/ and /v/ instead of dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/), which is favoured by Cockney speakers. H-dropping is also employed by EE speakers only partially. They would drop initial 'h' only in function words, whereas Cockneys do this with all words [6].

### EE: Dialect or Accent?

It is a rather complicated question. It seems that even David Rosewarne himself was not so sure how to define Estuary English. On the one hand, he claimed it was one of the most influential accents. On the other hand, he described not only its characteristic phonetic features, but also its lexical peculiarities. These EE lexical features include using 'Cheers' instead of "Thank you" or 'Good bye'. 'There you go' is more frequently used than 'Here you are'. EE speakers also use a lot of Americanisms and question tags. These examples hardly provide a ground to call EE a dialect rather than an accent [6].

However, in 1995, another linguist, David Crystal, highlighted some grammatical features typical of Estuary English. They included the omission of the -ly ending in adverbials (for example, 'They talked very quiet'), generalization of the third person singular (for example, 'I gets out of the car'), etc [6].

Therefore the questions still remains open, since some linguists maintain that Estuary English could be called a dialect, while their opponents claim that there are no significant lexical or grammatical reasons for calling it one.

### Conclusion

David Rosewarne never actually claimed to have discovered a 'new variety of English'. It is the continuation of a trend that has been going on for five hundred years or more. That is the tendency for features of popular London speech to spread out geographically to other parts of the country and also socially to higher

social classes. The erosion of the British class system and the greater social mobility in the UK today means that this trend is more clearly noticeable than it used to be.

So, whether Estuary English is going to become the RP of the twenty-first century, or whether it will be taken over by yet another 'social leveling' accent, remains a question without a definite answer. However, one thing is certain – British youngsters and even middle-aged people are no longer in favour of Received Pronunciation. Thus we should tune our ears to an old-new 'not posh, not Cockney' accent [4].

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