

**VARIATION WITHIN THE NORM - AN A
ATTEMPT TO CONCEIVE A PRONUNCIATION
STANDARD OF ENGLISH ENGLISH**

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The concept of Educated English English (EEE) is proposed here as a theoretical basis for a pronunciation standard of English English. Basing on the existence of a common core and at the same time open to special features of each variant, the EEE concept follows for variation within the educated norms of a standard, in accordance with the sociolinguistic situation in England today.

Keywords: educated variants, distribution of features, common core, EEE concept, model

ISSUE: AIMS AND METHODS

Under post-War social conditions, upward mobility and the resulting language change from below have in the latter half of the century widened the range of the educated language socially as well as linguistically in a way that RP can no longer be regarded as an equivalent for educated speech. Consequently, educated pronunciation can no longer be measured on its relation to the prestige accent nor be adequately described in terms of the traditional RP-orientated concept. The aim is to develop and establish a realistic concept of educated speech allowing for systematic description and unbiased discussion of current articulatory characteristics and trends in educated speakers of English English.

For the purpose of description and definition, data from radio transmissions by the BBC National and World Service, the former BFBS in Germany (till spring 1996) as well as by Northern and Welsh radio stations have been investigated with regard to characteristic pronunciation features of what Randolph Quirk called "*the living spoken English of educated people*" (Quirk 1972, 98). The articulatory characteristics and their distribution in the educated continuum are going to be discussed in order to define the structure and develop a model of

the proposed concept of *Educated English English* (EEE). According to their sociolinguistic applications, the data are grouped into three variants within an educated continuum: the *socially prestigious*, the *fashionably relaxed* and the *regionally affiliated*. The articulatory characteristics and their distribution in the continuum are analyzed in order to define the structure and develop the model of the proposed EEE concept.

1. VARIANTS OF EDUCATED SPEECH

Changes towards a more fluent society and corresponding changes in the educated system have resulted in the permeation of educated speech by forms other than RP and induced a continuum of educated variants now reaching from the most traditionally prestigious articulation to popular forms on the other end of the scale. On grounds of the sociolinguistic functions of educated speech forms in connection with different social backgrounds, roles and situations, three main variants can be distinguished with the *socially prestigious*, the *fashionably relaxed* and the *regionally affiliated*.

1.1. *The socially prestigious*

To start with the most exclusive branch of today's educated speech is no matter of evaluation but of the historical relevance of what has been called *Received Pronunciation* (RP) - the traditionally outstanding educated accent of English English, promoted by the BBC since the 1920's and still a magnet or an obstacle, depending on social backgrounds, attitudes and aspirations¹. While its most exclusive "*Upper Crust*" characteristics (cf. *U-RP*; Wells 1982, 280 ff.) are strongly London-based, its more neutral uses in most of the straight News of the BBC have been considerably affected by the general post-War influence of regional accents from all parts of England. What has become most stable are the meanwhile generally accepted post-War realizations of single sounds and context forms, e. g. the (originally Northern) open realizations in the range of slightly centralized or retracted [ä] as in *badly damaged*, an extremely closed Southern [ɔ:] in *reports* (with /ɔ:/ derived from under-lying [oʰ], extensive levelling now particularly of /aɪ/, /aʊ/, /ɔɪ/ and the respective triphthongs as in *time* [a:^(ə)], *power* [a:] and *Royal* [ɔ:] (before [ə] or [ɪ] endings) as well as strongly elided forms in words and on boundaries, e. g. *military* ['mɪlɪtri] and *number of* ['nʌmbərəf] (cf. App. 1). Glottalization of plosives, however, remains rare, with only occasional applications in words like *depart[ʔ]ment* but never on word boundaries as in more popular educated speech (cf. 1.2., 1.3.). Quite recently, an obviously Northern Midland-based fashion has reached prestigious speech with the centralization or retraction of /ä/ to [ä̠] or even [ä̠̠] in *government* [ä̠̠] or *results* [ä̠̠] (before [ɪ]), often with deliberate prominence on the vowel. Another popular influence is spreading with the possibly American-based fronting of stresses in words like 'disappearance and 'campaign. Novelities like these are characteristic of the way in which traditionally educated speech participates in the changing fashions of the time, no matter whether they can still be theoretically incorporated in the "*current version of RP*" or may constitute "*a new non-localizable accent*" (cf. Ramsaran 1991, 179) based on its premises. However, the relatively formal style of prestigious speech in BBC News broadcasts still remains within the borders of what A. C. Gimson called *High Acceptability RP* in one of his last publications of the early 80's (cf. Gimson 1984, 50), avoiding the all-too-popular in the same way as the conspicuously upper-class.

1.2. *The fashionably relaxed*

A considerable part of the educated population of today exhibit in their pronunciation a number of widely accepted regionalisms in deliberately unconventional speech. On the radio the fashionably relaxed variant quite regularly appears in the language of anchormen, interviewers and correspondents. Basically, it contains the same features and trends which in post-War time have, to various degrees, become acceptable in prestigious speech (cf. 1.1.), though more advanced in their realizations and on a larger scale of applications. Thus in the anchorman's and commentator's parts (cf. App. 2.1., 2.2.) the realizations of open [ä] in *gaps* and *balance* are carried to extremes, the vowel in *government* [ɔ̃] is further raised and retracted than in the newsreader's presentation, and the glides in *hour* [a:] and *fired* [a:] are completely levelled. In addition to these general features, there are current Northern regionalisms as clear [a] in *ask* and dark [ɫ] in *less* in the anchormen's part, while the correspondent exhibits Southern final -n in *going* [n] and glottal stop for /t/ even before an unstressed vowel in ['sepri?ɪn]. Further, there is fronted Northern [ɛ̃] in *dance*, probably strengthened by American influence among the younger generations, what may in the same way refer to the widening use of retracted [ɔ̃] and the glottalization of /t/. London speech being the most attractive source of innovation (cf. Wells 1982, 301), the relaxed variant often contains Southern regional characteristics like *Cockney* diphthongizations in *BBC* [ʔi:] and *group* [ʔu:], particularly so in male speech, and extremely open onsets or levelling in words like *play* [aɪ] and *players* [ɛ̃] from a sports correspondent on Capital Radio London, where South English educated features are most prominently exhibited.

Beside advanced articulations and characteristic regionalisms, relaxed context forms are among the most outstanding features of the variant. There is a large number of them in *fashionably relaxed* speech, be it in a London museum curator's assimilations and elisions, *rsp.*, in *opportunity* [ɒpə'tʃu:nɪti], *collections* ['klekʃənz] and *effects* [ɪ'fekts], in a cosmologist's glottal stops in various positions within words and on boundaries as in *obviously* [ɒ'vɪjəsli] and *despite* [ʔ] *the fact*, or in an anchorman's *next 60* ['nekʃɪksti] *minutes* and a presenter's *last show* ['lɑʃəʊ]. Generally, the speech rate is rather high, with 16 ph/sec. in the political correspondent's and 17 ph/sec. in the anchorman's part, while a sports reporter reaches 20 ph/sec., all of them following the general trend towards speedy speech among the young generation today (cf. Giles 1991, 199ff). In this connection, hesitation phenomena seem extremely popular, not only in an anchorman's ['ʔə'ʔə'ʔə] *okay* or ['ɜ:'ɜ:] *it was* but also in interviewees of various fields, e. g. a computer specialist's ['ʔə'ʔə'ʔə] *assessing the question*. Apart from these widespread tendencies, there are further characteristic fashions in the language of media, like lengthening of vowels, vocalizations, heightened rhythms and laughs, which have their parallels in the speech habits of the young generation outside (cf. Haslerud, Stenström, 1968, 60f.).

1.3. *The regionally affiliated*

Regionally affiliated speech in its own area of origin has at all times been used by the local educated, particularly so in areas further away from the influence of the Capital (cf. *educated regional*; Gimson 1980, 91). What is new and characteristic of the present situation is the growing frequency and self-assurance with which mild accents are employed, not only in the unconventional style of sports or light music programmes but also in the relatively formal News broadcasts. So easily recognizable regional accents are heard in information broadcasts,

News and commentaries of local radio stations as well as in contributions by highly educated specialists on the BBC, in the same way as they are exhibited in educated speech outside the radio².

As characteristics of the South and South-East are now widespread among younger generations of educated speakers today (cf. 1.1., 1.2.), Southern regionally affiliated speech does not strike the ear as deviating too obviously from the above-mentioned variants. Further up North, however, a number of characteristically non-Southern special features are changing the picture. So local advertising on Radio West Yorkshire (11 July 1996) referred to the *twenty* ['twɔɪni] 8th of July and offered a sale that would *start* [ɔ:] *on Monday* [ɔ] *beside a new travel* [a] *line, a summer* [ɔ] *bargain, a magic* [a] *afternoon* [ɛ], and new sports wear for those who *wanna* ['wɔɪnə] *be up to standard* - all in a deliberately relaxed presentation. On BBC Radio Leeds (12 July 1996) News and Commentaries contained, beside occasional standardized voices, a considerable number of localisms in information on the *Republicans* [ʊ], *somebody the world look up* [ʊ] *to* and something that was *in the way* [aɪ], as well as a clear Northern [a] in *accident* and prominent assimilation in *Tuesday* [tʃ]. In the field of culture, a theatre director was talking of the *public* [ʊ], of *great advantages* [ɛ], of *people struggling* [ʊ] and *things surprising* [ɔɪ], and of a *play rooted in the past* [a] *which goes right* [ɔɪ] *in the heart the way it is done* [ɔ]. An artist in an interview was *doing* [n] a lot, preferred the *red one* [wɔɪn] for *practice* [a] and was convinced that he was *right* [ɔɪ], while his colleague asked people to *come* [ʊ] down and watch (BBC Radio Leeds 11, 7, 1996). A music expert on BBC Radio 3 (cf. App. 3) employed initial dark [ɫ] in *light*, clear open [a] in *atmospheric* and prominent post-vocal and preconsonantal /r/ in his *quarter tones*, *quartett movement* and *harmonies*. The examples show that in the same way as educated English speech today is multi-social, it is necessarily multiregional too in its general outlay.

2. DISTRIBUTION OF FEATURES ALONG THE EDUCATED CONTINUUM

In order to define the articulatory structure of educated speech, the distribution of its characteristic features along the continuum of variants has to be investigated. While certain traits are especially characteristic of one variant, others are distributed with similar frequency, though with varying phonetic realizations and differences in their sociolinguistic implications, over two or even all three parts of the continuum.

2.1. Special evidence and features overlapping

The discussion has shown that there are particular features characteristic of only one variant and generally not transferred to other branches of educated speech. In the first place, these are educated regionalisms of the *regionally affiliated* which have not penetrated into post-War prestigious speech nor become *fashionably relaxed* - in short, those which are still clearly regional without any prestigious or fashionable connotations. They are mainly Northern and Western features like [ɔ] in *Monday*, [ɔɪ] in *right*, and clear [ʊ] in *Republicans* (cf. 1.3.), while Southern and London characteristics have not remained limited to their regional backgrounds but permeated the other educated variants on grounds of the general attraction of the Capital (cf. 1.1., 1.2.). Special features in *fashionably relaxed* speech particularly occur in its most far-reaching branch, the language of media, with its characteristic features: vowels are lengthened

in *yes* [ɛ:] or *and* [ǣ], consonants are aspirated in a sports correspondent's *picking up* and *strike force*; there are vocalizations as in a presenter's *number seven - ah* [ɑ:] or laughs as in *any ideas* - @@@@, and there are heightened rhythms as in a commentary on Copenhagen - a romantic 'city with the touch of the magical - on Capital Radio London (3 May 1995). In many other respects, however, the *fashionably relaxed* is overlapping with both popular traits and prestigious fashions (cf. 2.2.). Through its general openness to novelties of any kind, its own innovative spirit, its focus on young speech, and not least, through its intensive promulgation over the radio, the *fashionably relaxed* has proved the most efficient melting pot for English English features of different social backgrounds, generations and regions (cf. 1.2.). As regards the *socially prestigious*, special features are again perplexingly rare: drawing its roots from Cockney and the South-East, its characteristics are overlapping with popular Southern regionalisms and Southern-based relaxed fashions (s. a.). Special characteristics are mainly to be looked for in the prosody, i. e. in the characteristic intonation pattern of RP, which is more relevant to the recognition of the variant (and also to labels like "*lah-di-dah*" or "*posh*") than its Southern articulatory features. What marks the accent as exclusive are the special articulatory choices made on social and regional grounds, the characteristic mixtures of the traditional and the trendy, and, last not least, its distinctive tone of voice.

Generally speaking, except for special regional characteristics there is little evidence of articulatory features limited to one single variant. The characteristic patterns are based on particular choices from a larger reservoir and modified by the kind and degree of their realizations in the respective variant. Features are crossing borders, some with identical articulations, others with variation in their phonetic realizations. There are overlapping features with different social implications, e. g. Northern regional raised [ɛ⁽¹⁾] in *dance* and short [a] in *ask* as well as Southern [ɪ:] and [ʊ:] in *BBC* and *group* which may as well be heard in *fashionably relaxed* speech (cf. 1.2.). When, quite recently, open onsets are becoming closer in *NATO* [ɛ i], in *homes* [ɔ ʊ] and *Europe* [ʊ²] in prestigious speech, even this basically conservative tradition finds its counterparts in Northern regional accents likewise preserving traditional forms. Again other features are particularly characteristic of two variants but also occasionally found in the rest of the continuum. So final /n/ for -ng in *doing*, which is characteristic of regionally affiliated and fashionably relaxed speech as well, may also be heard in most exclusive U-RP, though not in the more generally acceptable accent of News broadcasts. As regards glottalization of /t/, it is likewise prevailing in the more popular variants, while in prestigious speech it remains comparatively rare (cf. 1.1.). On grounds of their former stigmatization, the glottal stops in a specialist's *subjects* [ʔs] and a disc jockey's *current* [ʔ] *favourites* will, at least for the time being, always have popular connotations and thus remain basically alien to the traditional educated concept. The young of all post-War generations, however, have deliberately applied it in their fashionable *Cockney* pronunciations for decades, before adapting to the traditional norm with advancing age³. Thus social implications may promote trendy fashions, and, at the same time, keep up distinctions of social relevance.

2.2. Common traits and tendencies

The analysis has shown that, beside a relatively small number of special traits in variants, there are a large amount of overlapping features and common trends. In a considerable number of cases, common features are equally distributed over the whole continuum, though with different sociolinguistic implications: Southern regional open onsets as in *later* ['læ:ɪtə] and

year [jɛə] as well as extensive levelling of all kinds in all variants - e. g. in a sports correspondent's *players* [ɛ:], a commentator's *manpower* [a:] and a newsreader's *Royal Family* - are found in all parts of the educated continuum. What is locally affiliated for one speaker may mean social exclusivity or the latest fashion for the other, accompanied by differences in the phonetic realization of the respective tendency: nowhere the glides of [ɛɪ] and [Qʊ] are now as close as in exclusive speech, nowhere the closing of (basically South-Eastern and *Cockney*) [Q:] in *report* is carried further than in U-RP, to mark the exclusivity of the accent. While the newsreader's [ä] in *amnesty* is aimed at prestigious formality, a commentator's *have* [ä] *to happen* [ä] signals fashionable up-to-dateness, and in even more fronted regional [a] in a sports reporter's *come back* [a] signal Northern regional affiliation. With the regard to the fashionable centralization and retraction of the vowel in *result*, there is a phonetic continuum in educated speech from Northern accented [ʊ] over the most influential Midland-based [ɵ] and [ʊ̯] variants governing *fashionably relaxed* speech in words like *culture* and *result* to realizations in the prestigious speech of radio News which do not go beyond centralized [Ä] or [ʊ̯].

The following table contains the most characteristic common features and tendencies of educated speech in England today:

single sounds

[ä] or [a]

[Ä], [ʊ̯], [ɵ], [ʊ]

closer [Q:]

final [i(:)]

open onsets

levelling

annual [ä], *happy* [a]*

Southern [Ä], *results* [ʊ̯],

culture [ɵ]*, *public* [ʊ]*

recording [Q]

monthly [i:]

day [ɛɪ], *play* [æɪ]*, *radio* [aɪ]*

year [ɜ:], *tower* [a:]

words and connected speech

assimilation

elision

/ʔ/ for consonant

/n/ for final -ng

suggestion [sə'dʒeɪ(ə)n], *I've got your*

letter ['gʌtʃə]*

politically ['plɪtɪkəl], *for one reason*

or other ['ri:zn'ʌðə]*

department [ʔ], *good-bye* ['gʊʔ'ba:ɪ]*, *a*

bit of ['bɪʔɒf]*

separatin'

prosodic means

shifting of stresses

high speech rate

*'disappearance, the value 'of it**

14 /phonemes/ sec., or more*

(Most far-reaching realizations in the *fashionably relaxed* and the *regionally popular* are marked *.)

LES COMMUNAUTÉS AFRO-BRÉSILIENNES ISOLÉES: LE CAS DU CAFUNDÓ

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0. INTRODUCTION

L'étude du langage des communautés afro-brésiliennes isolées peut offrir des données importantes pour la compréhension de la configuration et des tendances actuelles de la langue parlée dans la zone rurale brésilienne. Elle présente un double intérêt: d'une part elle peut révéler la distance qui sépare ce langage du portugais standard, et d'autre part, elle peut expliquer la direction des processus de changement. Par ailleurs, cette étude représente une importante contribution au questionnement de la participation des langues africaines à la constitution du portugais du Brésil.

Ces communautés se situent dans les Etats de Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Goiás, Espírito Santo, Ceará, Bahia et São Paulo. A Minas Gerais, Queiroz a étudié la communauté de Bom Despacho (1985). Baxter (1992) a travaillé sur la communauté d'Helvécia, à Bahia. Baiocchi a étudié les Kalunga de Goiás (1991). Dans l'Etat de São Paulo trois communautés de la vallée du Ribeira: Nhunguara, Abobral e São Pedro, (Careno, 1991) et la communauté du Cafundó (Vogt, et Fry, 1996) ont été l'objet d'études linguistiques. Sur les autres régions nous n'avons que d'informations sur l'existence de groupes constitués d'afro-brésiliens.

Cette communicationn présentera les résultats d'une enquête menée auprès de la communauté du Cafundó, petit village situé à 150 km de la ville de São Paulo. La "découverte" en 1978 de ce noyau de descendants d'africains a attiré l'attention de linguistes et d'anthropologues qui ont constaté l'usage secret d'un langage constitué d'un petit lexique d'origine bantu. Les premiers travaux sur ce langage faisaient état d'une langue africaine, mais rapidement les auteurs se sont rendus compte du fait qu'il s'agissait d'un dialecte proche du dialeto caipira - dialecte de la zone rurale de São Paulo, lequel, tout en conservant la structure syntaxique du portugais, avait incorporé un lexique réduit d'origine bantu.

About ten years ago already, J. W. Lewis supposed 80 - 90% of educated speakers to have “fairly recognizable” regional accents (cf. Lewis 1985, 247), and a few years later Peter Trudgill started his description of English dialects with the words “*Nearly all of us have regional features in the way we speak English, and are happy that this should be so*” (Trudgill, 1990, 1).

The *Cockney* pronunciations of post-War public school alumni were described by S. S. Eustace in glottalizations as in like *caravan* ['kɑ?wɑn] and nazalization as in *twenty-four* ['twɛfɔ̃], beside other exclusive fashions of the young (cf. Eustace, 1967, 303f.).

APPENDIX

Newsreader, BBC World Service, 5 September 1995:

NATO forces [Q:] have begun a second round [a³] of air raids against Bosnian Serb military ['mɪlɪtri] targets. There are reports [ðɛri'pɔʔts] that a meeting between the British and Irish Prime Ministers about [a] the Northern [Q:] Ireland [a:³] peace [i] process, which was planned [ä] for tomorrow, is to be postponed although [Q:] both governments ['gʌvmənts] deny this. And President ['prezɪdnt] Chirac has said the number of ['nʌmbɪrəʃ] nuclear tests France is [s] to carry out [a³] in the South [a] Pacific may be reduced.

Anchorman, ib.:

And here are ['hɛrə] the next sixty ['nekʃɪkti] minutes: of NATO ends, the Bosnian Serbs' breathing space, we have [ä] the latest news of the renewed NATO attacks [ä] and ask [a] what might be the political ['plɪtɪkəl] result [ʃ]. Another [ʃ] problem is the ['ɪrə] Northern Ireland peace process, how Ireland [a:³] and Britain are failing to bridge the gaps [ä], and a shift in the balance [ä] of power in ['pɑ:rɪn] Afghanistan. We hear how [a] the government ['gʌvmənt] now [a:] controls even less [tɛs].

Correspondent, ib.:

Serbian military ['mɪlɪtri] sources in Belgrade claim that five rockets were fired [a:] at the communications tower [a:] in the hills near [ɜ:] Tusla, separating ['sepɪreɪʔɪn] links between Parlay and the rest of the so-called Republica Sabska. One [ʃ] UN official said the Serbs were really [ɜ] going [gɜ:ɪn] to be taught [Q:] a lesson this time [a:³].

Music expert, BBC Radio 3, 9th December 1995:

But quarter ['kwɔ:tɪ³r] tones occur [r] in a string quartette [r] movement of 1905 “The Waters [r] of Babylon“, the melodies and harmonies [r] of this atmospheric [a] piece mainly proceeding contrary motion like images [i] reflected [i] upside down in water ['wɔ:tɪ³r]. There is a kind of chorale which moves that way, mostly by semi-tones, but on one [ɔ] occasion the semi-tones divide into quarter [r] tones.

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Speech Data:

- BBC Radio 2, 3, 4
- BBC Radio Leeds
- BBC World Service
- BFBS in Germany
- Capital Radio London
- Radio West Yorkshire