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***From Received Pronunciation to Estuary English:
a shift from diastratic variation***

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*This thesis is dedicated
to the memory of my father Beniamino.
I miss him every day and hope he is proud of me.*



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Introduction

The topic of the present study is a controversial linguistic phenomenon termed Estuary English. Since the appearance of the term in 1984, Estuary English has elicited an increasingly debated opposition between laymen and professional linguists. Estuary English has been proposed as a new accent, sometimes as a new variety, staying in the middle ground and being ever-increasingly used by speakers who want to move upward or downward in the continually evolving British society. Discussion about Estuary English has aroused people's and academics' interest due to the huge relevance that accent has always had in the United Kingdom. Although it has been claimed by many that Estuary English is not a new variety and it does not own the overall peculiarities to replace Received Pronunciation in the United Kingdom, research studies concerning its supposed variables, geographical spread and social diffusion have come in succession over the last two decades. Even though the phenomenon has raised researchers' and academics' interest and it is central to the public opinion's debates, both on newspapers and on Internet blogs, and although it is a recurring issue, Estuary English seems to stay in a limbo, debated and contested, sometimes undefined, even disbelieved.

The starting point of this study is the idea that so much talk about Estuary English, its variables, its spread and use cannot be ignored and a place should be found in the linguistic panorama of the English language for such a relevant phenomenon. The focus of the present study, however, does not lie on the description of Estuary English and its ongoing development; it rather tries to concentrate on the use of this supposed middle-ground variety by speakers who, due to social factors, are not meant to speak it. With regard to these speakers, questions



will be addressed in order to understand whether they consciously or unconsciously use Estuary English features and to investigate the place, the time and the manner for them to recur. For this reason the idea of an Estuary ‘pool of features’ has been borrowed by Altendorf’s proposal of an Estuary English-as register-hypothesis (2003).

A preliminary overview of present-day English both inside and outside the English-speaking countries displays a changing linguistic and social scenery in the United Kingdom, where the close-knit relation between accent and social prestige, together with the ‘talking proper’ obsession seems to have broken and progressively made room for a new role-play. Accent has partially lost its power to divide in favour of a major convergence among speech communities. Three main factors have been taken into account throughout the study as fundamental key points for the evolving situation:

- The continual social mobility started after World War II;
- The leading role of young people in promoting linguistic innovation and change;
- Factors internal to language naturally promoting levelling.

Estuary English has resulted to place at the intersection of these factors, in an unstable position. Indeed, a background synchronic description of Estuary English and its variables, its geographical and social spread through an overview of the literature about it, has produced an overall picture of a variety in which speakers mix phonological realizations and syntactic structures partially borrowed from Cockney and Received Pronunciation. An overall description of the phonological, morpho-syntactic and lexical features identified as Estuary English will be provided. However, not all the variables described have been selected as part of speakers’



‘pool of features’ and a selection of the following has been made:

- T-glottalling in word final position;
- T-glottalling in intervocalic position;
- L-vocalisation;
- Th-fronting;
- H-dropping.

Difficulties in placing Estuary English on the accent continuum with Received Pronunciation and Cockney at the two ends, where it fluctuates both downward and upward, and problems in identifying it as a variety to all intents and purposes lie on its gradience and lack of strict boundaries. This is still further accentuated by the wide process of geographical dialect-levelling, studied by Kerswill that seems to absorb it from many sides, making the outline of Estuary English even more blurred, swinging between standard and non standard, ‘overt’ and ‘covert’ prestige up to stigma, social recognition and disapproval. From a sociolinguistic perspective, Estuary English functions as a linguistic wild card to be played on occasion, which perfectly fits into the contemporary British society where Received Pronunciation is no longer a credit and sometimes becomes even a drawback. Thus, doubts about a conceivable replacement of Received Pronunciation with Estuary English have been fostered and evidence has been found that RP speakers select some Estuary English variables to be used and mixed in their ‘standard’ speech. They consciously and variously construct their ‘pool of features’ to be used on occasion according to diastratic and diamesic factors and the pragmatic purposes of each communicative act.

Thus, the following study does not concentrate on the definition of Estuary English as a variety or as merely an accent – as these matters have long been debated; it rather tries to investigate the possibility for Estuary English to represent a



means of socio-linguistic convergence through a trend of accommodation in which, in a diaphasic perspective, it plays a central role especially for RP speakers.

The observation and the subsequent analysis have focused on public figures that, for various reasons, spend their lives in the public eye. In order for them to be respected and appreciated, or even to become models and idols for the members of different social categories, the construction of an Estuary ‘pool of features’ can sometimes represent the passport to success. Categories analysed as case studies in the third chapter belong to areas in which the construction of a successful image is extremely important:

- *Politics*. In politics discursive and oratorical skills play a fundamental role. In the last decades, thanks to the innovative approach set in motion by Tony Blair, even phonological traits have assumed an impressive relevance in approaching people, being relied on and getting votes. Tony Blair does not represent an isolated case and other politicians will be taken into account.
- *Royal Family*. Although many have claimed that Princess Diana has been a figure moving within the Estuary English space, her figure will be taken into account here only as the promoter of a new way for the Monarchy to approach its subjects. She was an innovator in this respect, but she only influenced the young generations of Royals. Prince William, indeed, shows off a consistent and reiterated detachment from the Conservative RP of his father and grandparents, and the construction and use of a consistent Estuary ‘pool of features’. On the contrary, his commoner wife, Catherine Middleton retains a high level of Received Pronunciation, strongly clashing with her fiancé’s pronunciation.
- *BBC*. As the national broadcasting company, the BBC plays a twofold fundamental role: on the one hand, it is responsible for the promotion of the



national language; on the other hand, it records the social transformations at any level. Simon Reeve, the journalist whose accent will be proposed as a case study within this category, is only one among the many Estuary voices at the BBC.

- *Pop stars*. The public relevance of pop stars and the degree of ‘coolness’ they try to get are the main factors promoting the use of a non standard accent. Although pop stars – and artists in general – are not generally identified with Received Pronunciation, shifts towards non standard accents have been recorded more than once. Examples from the past will be provided in the chapter with regard to two of the most successful British groups: *Beatles* and *Rolling Stones*. As far as the contemporary trend in accent shift is concerned, examples will be provided through the music and speech habits of pop singers Lily Allen and Adele. They embody a detachment from their original accent and a shift respectively downwards and upwards, justified by an increased opportunity of being considered ‘cool’ and successful.

Each speaker, thus, embodies a different attitude towards accent shift.

It is the aim of this study to provide an empirical observation of the linguistic attitudes that speakers belonging to the above mentioned categories put into action. Furthermore, it aims at supplying a detailed description of the Estuary ‘pool of features’ forged by each speaker and an investigation of the time, place and manner for the variables to recur in each communicative act. It also intends to verify whether the Estuary English-as register-hypothesis could function as a reasonable approach to the thorny matter of the existence and spread of Estuary English.



Chapter One

An overview of contemporary English

*You cannot stop language. You may not like it;
you may regret the arrival of new forms and the passing of old ones;
but there is not the slightest thing you can do about it....
Language change is not a single thing which happens overnight,
across the board. It is a fashion, which takes time to catch on.
One section of the society introduces a change, and another slowly pick it up.
Women may use it more than men. Young people more than old. One region more than another...
What is happening here is change, change, change,
but the language is not getting worse as a result of it.
It is keeping pace with society, as it always must,
sometimes changing slowly, sometimes rapidly.
Today, with so much social change about, especially as the result of increasing ethnic diversity,
the spread of English as a global language and the effect of the Internet technology,
we find the language changing more rapidly and widely than ever before
(Crystal 2006:89-90)*

1.1 The status of English inside and outside the English-speaking countries

Discussion about the English language is the order of the day for linguists and sociolinguists, but also for common people who ever-increasingly face with new forms and varieties of this language. Actually, the English language is experiencing the paradoxical situation of trying to keep and preserve its structure, while the transformations it is experimenting because of its worldwide use are gradually and inevitably crumbling its borders.



Since the period of the British territorial expansion, the English language has been subject to a continuous flow of mixing and contamination; at first, when the English language was exported to the colonised countries and came into contact with the indigenous languages which inevitably influenced it; then, when an indefinite number of modified 'English languages' were re-imported into the United Kingdom, or even in the period of the migratory movement from the ex-colonies and the arrival into England of people who, maintaining their mother tongues, tried to preserve their cultural identity. The resulting onward interaction and reciprocal influence is not the sign of the decadence of the English language, as some linguistic specialists and journalists state highlighting the losses in grammatical correctness and syntactic creativity, but only the inevitable process of change affecting all languages of the world – even those spoken within very little communities - with a faster evolution for the ones most widely used, as English is, since it has been raised to the status of privileged means of international communication.

The traditional depiction of the English language as subdivided according to the relationship of the speakers with the United Kingdom and the other English-speaking countries, led to the construction of many models illustrating functions and uses of the English language around the world, as in the world map by Stevrens (1980) (fig.1), the circle model by Görlach (1988) (fig.2) and the three circles model by Kachru (1992) (fig.3), all of which based on the tripartite model constructed in 1980s by Quirk and Leech. According to their original model, the role and functions of English can be described through the distinction among:

- **ENL** (English as National Language) – referring to the use of English as a mother tongue;

- **ESL** (English as Second Language) – including those speakers for whom English is the official language used in institutional milieus;
- **EFL** (English as Foreign Language) – comprising all those speakers that have no relationship with the English-speaking countries, for whom English is a language to be taught at school and learnt as a useful means of communication in fields as business and tourism.

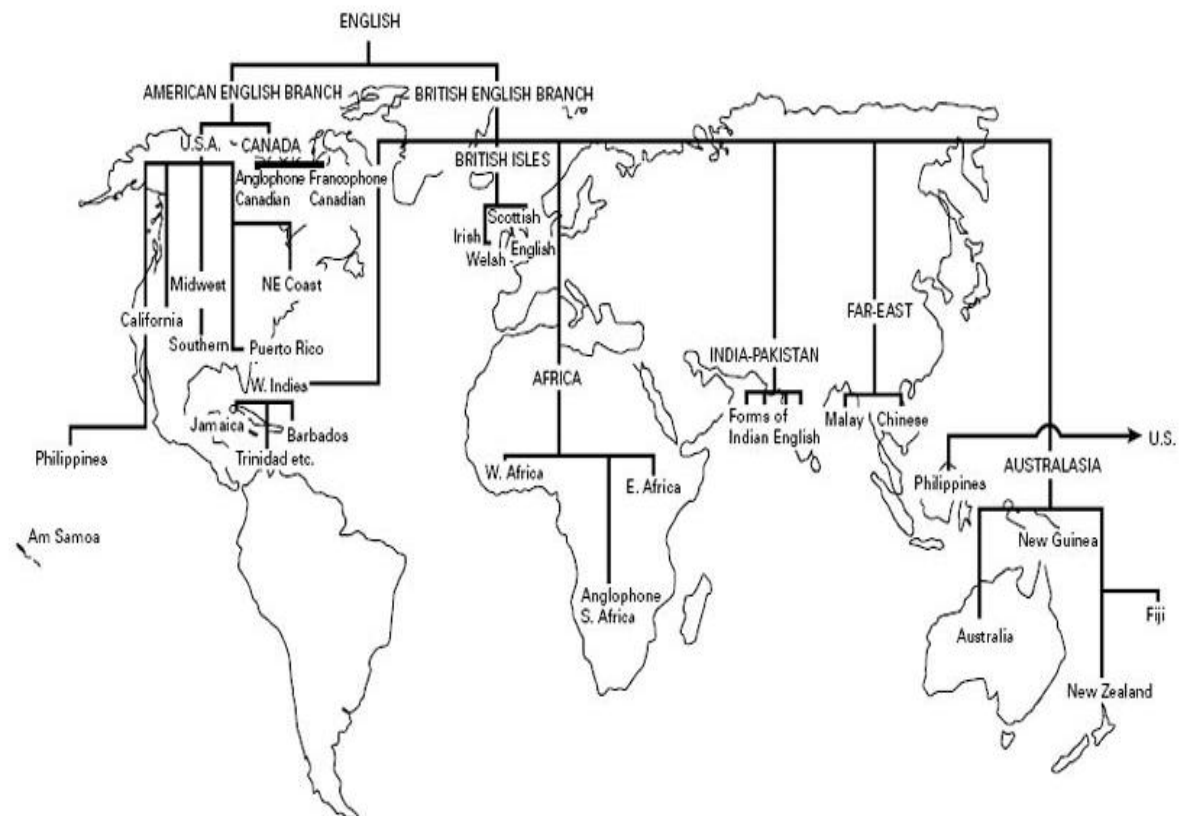


Figure 1: *The world map of English by Stevns (1980)*

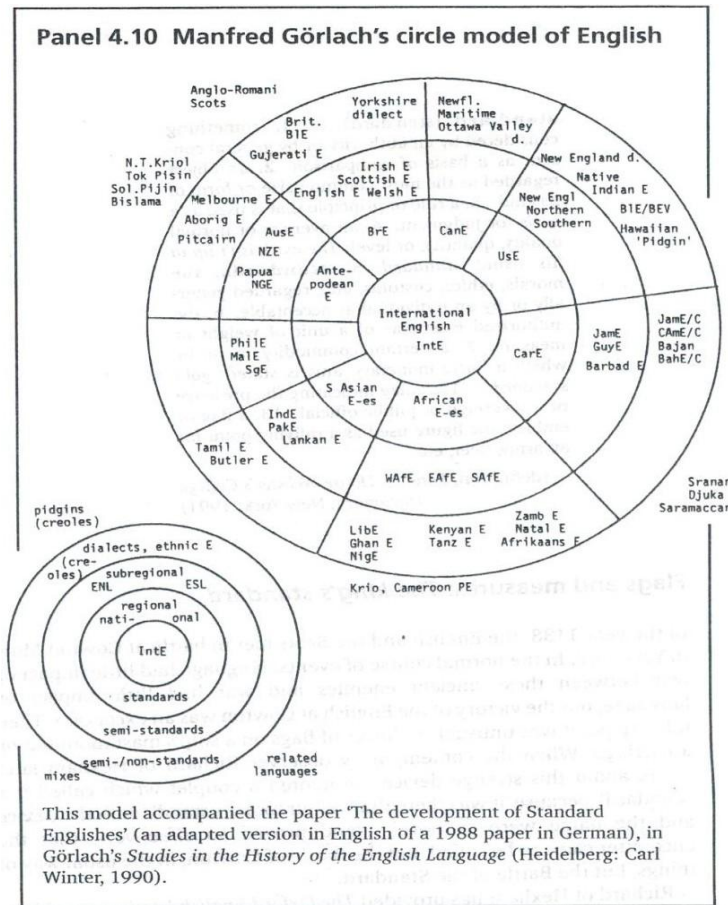


Figure 2: The circle model by Görlach (1988)

According to Kachru's model, the inner circle is constituted by the ENL countries, which are norm-providing; the outer circle is constituted by ESL countries, which are norm-developing; the expanding circle is constituted by the EFL countries, which are norm-dependent.

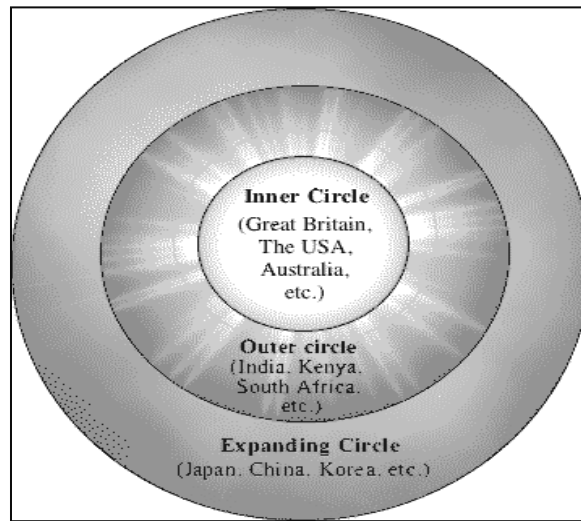


Figure 3: *The three circles model by Kachru (1992)*

However, this distinction is no more sufficient to describe the present situation, since English has been raised to the special position of means of communication worldwide, and its further involuntary expansion has led to a proliferation of its forms, both spoken and written ones. It is not only a matter of places where English is spoken or whether its speakers are mother tongue speakers or not; attention has to be paid to the functions and the contexts in which this language is used. As a result, many other acronyms have been created over time to describe the role of this language: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), for the kind of English used in business, academic and other professional fields; English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), to highlight the enormous expansion of use reached by English as a global language for communication; English as an International Language (EIL), for the kind of language used as a means for international communication. Many other acronyms could be mentioned in order to highlight the growing and diversified use of the English language that is concurring, along with the internal factors promoting its natural evolution, to a real transformation.



This fast and increasing development of the English language both inside and outside the English-speaking countries, has led to a controversial debate about the role, aspect and position of this language.

1.1.1 English outside the English-speaking countries

Issues concerning English outside the English-speaking countries, are related to its use as either a second language or an international language. As far as the former is concerned, the creation of the plural forms “Englishes”, “New Englishes” and “English languages” points out that this language is multiplying into a myriad of slightly differing forms under the impulse of speakers who use both English and their native mother tongues in their countries. The latter, on the contrary, refers to the pressure exerted by non native speakers using English as a means of communication in international contexts. Those speakers are equally and relentlessly influencing the English language, as the creation of blends like ‘Spanglish’ and ‘Franglais’ confirms.

A further kind of influence due to contact between English and other languages is represented by pidgins and creoles¹, varieties originated in geographical areas either totally or partially influenced by the English language. Thus, although not directly and with diverse roles, even these languages are involved in the process of change affecting the English language.

¹ A pidgin is a system of communication originated to provide linguistic help for the interaction among people who do not share a common language. It has no native speakers and is characterised by a limited vocabulary – generally circumscribed to the words useful to the purpose – reduced grammatical structures to allow an easy way of communicating, and a narrow range of functions. Among the English-based Pidgins, Tongolese Pidgin English, Tok Pisin and Bamboo English can be listed. A creole, instead, is a pidgin that has become the first language of a community, so that the original plain language has experienced an expansion in its linguistic resources, improving its vocabulary as well as the functions it can perform. Hawaiian and Gambian are English-based creoles.

1.1.2 English inside the English-speaking countries

The matter of the multiplying roles and the changing aspect of this language within the English-speaking countries is concerned with the coexistence of many different cultures into those territories where English holds the status of national language and the influence they have on its standard forms. Problems of interaction

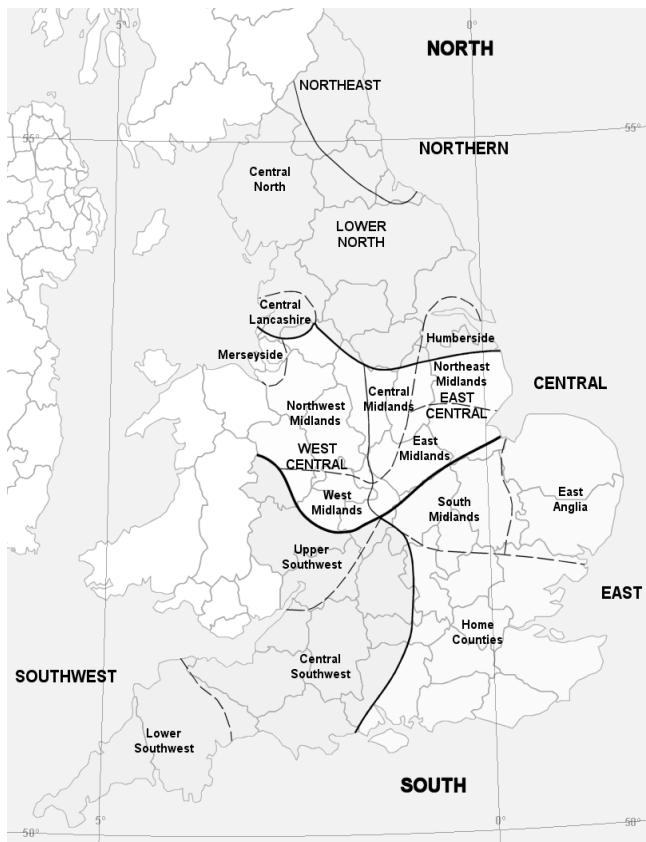


Figure 4: Accent groups of the British Isles

and mixing of people belonging to different and far away ethnic, social or age groups, result in the creation of varieties detaching, more or less consistently, from the standard, as in America, where African American Vernacular English (AAVE) being a dialect in itself, represents the way of identifying a specific ethnic group. A further example can be represented by the English dialects in the United Kingdom,

² Recent studies on Multicultural London English (MLE) (Cheshire, J., Kerswill, P., Fox, S. and Torgersen, E., 2011) provide evidence that young speakers in London are adopting a new form of English



However, these are quite simplistic examples of the status of the English language in the English-speaking countries, which is much more complex, including many other dialects existing outside the United Kingdom and America, generally indicated as the English-speaking countries of reference. The map (fig.4) taken from Trudgill (1979:70), only partially shows the extreme complexity of the situation with exclusive reference to the diatopic overview of the accents in the United Kingdom, since further detailed distinctions should be made in order to take account of the many other dialects and accents in the country.

1.2 The sociolinguistics of standard and non standard forms of a language

1.2.1 Accents and dialects

The distinction between accents and dialects is a crucial point in the linguistic as well as the sociolinguistic description of the English language. The word accent is exclusively used to refer to the phonological realization of a language, while the word dialect is used to refer to the combined use of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation of a variety of a language. Examples from the English-speaking world can be useful to illustrate this distinction.

whose main features are being studied and analysed. MLE, “the (supposedly) ethnically neutral way of speaking which still contains many 'ethnic' features” is the way young people express solidarity between people of the same age but different social and ethnic backgrounds. An example of MLE is the use of the expression *this is+speaker* (e.g. *this is me*) to report direct speech, which is not reported in any adult speaker involved in the study. Furthermore, young speakers belonging to both the 12-13 year-olds and the 16-19 year-olds groups, use the quotative almost exclusively to introduce reported direct speech (e.g. *this is her* ‘that was my sister’), while the 8-9 year-olds use it to introduce both direct speech and non-lexicalised sound and gesture (e.g. *this is me* <followed by an action>) (Fox:2011)



Differences among dialects are concerned with choices in the morphological, syntactic and semantic fields. They can include:

- Morphology. An example can be provided by the differences in the past tense of some irregular verbs allowing for both regular and irregular forms, e.g. the verb “to learn” has both the regular *learned* and the irregular *learnt* in BrE, while it only covers the regular form in AmE;
- Syntax. In Caribbean English questions in the continuous form are marked by intonation as in “You going home?” rather than using the auxiliary *to be*, as in the British English question “Are you going home?”
- Semantics. It refers to the use of different words to indicate the same objects, as in the word “garbage” (AmE) instead of the word “rubbish” (BrE)

Differences at the phonological level, concern the field of accents. An example is the pronunciation of the word ‘star’ with a rounded and raised vowel, which transforms /stɑ:ɹ/ into /stɔ:ɹ/, approximating this South African pronunciation to the British word ‘store’; or the central vowel /ə/ which replaces /ɪ/ in unstressed syllables of Australian English words, such as in /hɒspɪtl/ becoming /hɒspətɪl/.

These examples of differences at various linguistic levels within the English ‘inner circle’ (Kachru 1992), display how dialects and accents can be either very similar or very different from each other, sometimes becoming unintelligible even for speakers of the same language³.

³ A representative example of differences and similarities among dialects can be the linguistic situation of the Italian language, where a distinction has been made between ‘dialetti primari’ and ‘dialetti secondari’. ‘Dialetti primari’ are those dialects which existed before the raise of the standard form of the Italian language, and which are very different from each other. Speakers of these dialects sometimes do not mutually understand each other when speaking their own dialect, as it happens to people coming from Milan, rather than Naples or Venice, since any of the dialects spoken in these places has had its own evolution and process of change which is not connected to the evolution of the Italian language, rather to that of Latin. On the contrary, ‘dialetti secondari’ are easily comprehensible for their speakers, as they consist of the standard Italian language pronounced with a dialectal and regional inflection.



1.2.1.1 Differences among accents and dialects: the dimensions of variation

Until now any distinction concerning accents and dialects has been based on diatopic factors with exclusive reference to regiolects⁴, local dialects in use within a more or less wide geographical area. Differences between BrE and AmE, or between Caribbean and South African English, are all concerned with diatopic variation of the English language. However, any written or spoken variety can be described making reference to further factors. It is especially true for the English language in the British Isles, where dialects and accents are mainly defined in terms of social use, as stated by Hudson (1996):

[...] a speaker may be more similar in language to people from the same social group in a different area than to people from a different social group in the same area. Indeed, one of the characteristics of the hierarchical social structure of a country like Britain is that social class takes precedence over geography as a determinant of speech, so that there is far more geographical variation among people in the lower social classes than there is amongst those at the 'top' of the social heap (Hudson 1996:42.)

Varieties evaluated in this respect are referred to as sociolects⁵ that is a social speech variety spoken by a particular group, generally identified with a speech community. The notion of speech community is of special relevance to sociolinguistics, thus it will be illustrated in details in § 1.2.1.1.1. A sociolect does not necessarily convey any information about the geographical provenance of its speakers, since it must not necessarily be spoken within a unique geographical area, but it can group together people with the same age, gender, socio-economic status, educational background

⁴ The word regiolect is derived from the German *Regiolekt*.

⁵ The word sociolect is derived from the German *Soziolekt*.



and ethnicity. Differences in the use of language according to these factors belong to the diastratic dimension of variation.

Both the notions of diatopic and diastratic variation were introduced by Coseriu in 1973. They are concerned with the active role of users in the process of communication, since using a regional or social variety rather than another, is meant to identify oneself with a specific regional or social group.

However, diatopic and diastratic dimensions are only two of the many perspectives pinpointed by research studies aimed at the analysis of a language. In 1912, Ferdinand de Saussure introduced the notions of:

- *synchronic variation*, revealing differences in the language of different individual speakers or speech communities at the same time – an example of synchronic analysis is the observation, in a limited period of time, of the way young and adult people speak (e.g. studies on MLE);
- *diachronic variation*, concerning the historical description of the linguistic evolution of a language – any history of language is an example of such a kind of analysis.

Furthermore, linguistic differences can be also observed and studied by further perspectives concerned with the use of the language rather than with users and their role in the communication. They include:

- *diaphasic variation* – a further concept emphasised by Coseriu in 1973 – depending on such notions as style and register related to the purpose of communication and the function of the message;
- *diamesic variation* – traceable back to Mioni (1983) – closely connected to the medium used in communication, including the choice between written and



spoken language, as well as the use of information and communication technologies.

Any dialect and accent can be described in respect to one of these dimensions or more than one simultaneously.

Language variation can also be identified through a bidimensional perspective based on either language use or language user. Language use perspective pertains to the use any speaker does of language, while the language user perspective describes aspects relating to the user who participates in a given language event. Language variation is not only an important aspect of the geographical, temporal, social and idiolectal details related to the users of the language in a given speech act, but it also plays an important role in determining the social (field), communicative (mode) and relational (tenor) functions of the speech act itself.

1.2.1.1.1 Speech communities

The notion of speech community is a fundamental one in sociolinguistic studies. Many definitions have been given in order to describe it and define it and its members. However, a speech community is a notion to categorize things rather than a reality. With the words of Hudson (1996) the speech community misleads “by implying the existence of ‘real’ communities ‘out there’” while what it does exist is just the micro level individual dimension.

The many definitions of a speech community given in the first half of the 20th century were mainly based on the idea that a speech community is made up of a group of people theoretically identified by the linguist and socially admitted by



those people who observe them from outside. According to this point of view, for instance, adolescents as constituting a community sharing a language – that is youth speech – represent a speech community because linguists and adults recognize them as such. Since the definition given by Labov in 1972 on, the speech community has been defined taking into account the feeling of belonging expressed by those who recognize themselves as members of a speech community. According to Labov's definition, the members of a speech community do not theoretically decide which elements of the language must be used, but they feel a sense of participation to a set of shared norms. Members of a speech community can choose these norms according to either their social value or specific communicative needs.

However, the true innovation in the definition of a speech community – although not defined in these terms – was brought by Robert Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) who identified a multi-dimensional space where individuals could move according to their will and feeling.

Each individual creates the systems for his verbal behavior so that they shall resemble those of the group or groups with which from time to time he may wish to be identified, to the extent that

- 1. he can identify the groups;*
- 2. he has both opportunity and ability to observe and analyse their behavioural systems;*
- 3. his motivation is sufficiently strong to impel him to choose, and to adapt his behavior accordingly;*
- 4. he is still able to adapt his behavior.*

(Le Page cited in Hudson 1996:26)

Belonging to a speech community, as Le Page pointed it out, does not necessarily imply the sharing of a language, but refers to the sharing of a 'set of



norms and rules' as Romaine stated in 1994:

a speech community is a group of people who do not necessarily share the same language, but share a set of norms and rules for the use of the language. The boundaries between speech communities are essentially social rather than linguistic (Romaine 1994:22).

1.2.2 Standard and non standard varieties of English

Each dialect is a language in itself and behaves as any other language: it changes, produces, borrows over time. However, the natural evolution of human languages during history brought some dialects to acquire a more prestigious role than others due to historical, political and economic reasons. The quotation that “A language is a dialect with an army and navy”, mainly attributed to the Yiddish linguist Max Weinreich, superbly explains it. This happened in Italy, where the dialect of Florence was chosen to become the Italian language, mainly because Florentine was similar to Latin, and moreover because Florence had been and still was a central city in the political, cultural and economic life of Italy; this happened in France, where the langue d’oil was accepted by the most powerful people and evolved into the French language, mainly because it was the accent spoken by the establishment and the Capetian Royal Family; it happened in England, where the dialect of the South-East triangle Cambridge – Oxford – London was raised to the status of model of reference of the English language, mainly because these towns were the centres of culture and economy in that country. Thus, linguistic factors have a slight relevance in the transition from a dialect to a language, which is especially due to other reasons. “The acceptance as a standard of one type of speech



over another is based not upon linguistic considerations but rather upon political, cultural, and economic factors” (Marckwardt 1942:309). The dialects prevailing over the others have since then become the object of a process of spread and acceptance which transformed them into the standards of reference for the speakers who found them in print, and were taught them at school. As the examples of the growth of Italian, French and English as standard languages in Italy, France and England demonstrate, “a standard language is a variety of a language that is socially and culturally predominant and is generally accepted as the most proper form of language” (Millward 1989:297).

Although it is true for any language that social prestige is one of the main factors to promote a dialect into a standard, this connection is even more glaring in England than in any other place since Standard English, also called Standard Written English⁶, is especially considered a class-dialect more than a local dialect, as the following definitions emphasize:

- *[...] the language...of the most learned and polite persons in London, and the neighbouring Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.*

(Beattie 1788 in McArthur 1998:120)

- *[...] the dialect of educate people throughout the British Isles. It is the dialect normally used in writing, for teaching in schools and universities, and heard on radio and television*

(Hughes and Trudgill 1979)

- *The variety of the English language which is normally employed in writing and normally spoken by ‘educated’ speakers of the language.*

(Trudgill and Hannah 1982 in McArthur 1998:129)

⁶ Standard Written English is the model of reference for grammar, syntax and vocabulary in English. It does not directly concern pronunciation, as it can be spoken with either a regional accent or Received Pronunciation. On the contrary, Received Pronunciation can be only associated with Standard English. Standard English associated with Received Pronunciation represents the most prestigious form of the English language.



- *Standard English can be characterized by saying that it is that set of grammatical and lexical forms which is typically used in speech and writing by educated native speakers.*

(Trudgill in McArthur 1998)

- *[...] a variety of English – a distinctive combination of linguistic features – of a rather special kind. [...] It is the variety of English which carries most prestige within the country.*

(Crystal 2003:110)

All the quotations imply that the prestige accorded to the variety referred to as Standard English is exclusively social prestige, because no linguistic reason exists to claim that a dialect is intrinsically better than others, even though many people think so.

As Standard English was raised to the status of standard of reference for the written language, Received Pronunciation – also defined Oxford or BBC or Queen’s English – gradually became the frame of reference in pronunciation. This accent originated in the south-east of England and is “currently a social accent associated with BBC, the Public Schools in England and with members of the upper-middle and upper classes” (Trudgill and Hannah 1982 in McArthur 1998:129). Indeed, the term ‘received’ meant accepted in the most polite and exclusive circles of society. To determine the role of this accent, set to be the standard of English pronunciation in the United Kingdom⁷, the same criteria were decisive as the ones involved in the rise of the London-Cambridge-Oxford dialect to the position of Standard English. Indeed, quoting the definition in *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language* (4th edition, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), Received Pronunciation is “a pronunciation of British English, originally based on the speech of the upper

⁷ In American, standard written English is referred to as American English, while the standard spoken form is known as General American.



class of southeastern England”. However, even greater social connotations have been attached since then to the spoken standard form, stating with major evidence the social belonging of any English speaker. Professor Higgins, the phonetician protagonist of George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion*⁸ (1912) could state if people came from a rich or a poor area of the capital city, only paying attention to their accent

You can spot an Irishman or a Yorkshireman by his brogue. I can place any man within six miles. I can place him within two miles in London. Sometimes within two streets.

Apart from the celebration of his abilities as a phonetician, Professor Higgins, whose character was based on the contemporary phonetician Henry Sweet, was the representative of a common way of thinking at the British society as deeply divided into classes, and at classes as strongly distinguished according to the way their members spoke. Actually, in the process of development of the English language, Received Pronunciation soon became the language used to identify a specific social group, the one made up of people who could afford a prestigious education in Public Schools. For this reason, Received Pronunciation progressively became the accent that enjoyed an overt prestige⁹, and “notions of elegance, propriety, politeness and refinement were regularly ascribed to its use as well as extended to its users” (Mugglestone 1995:58). Speaking with an RP accent meant to have access to the most exclusive milieus and the best-paid jobs. In actual fact, the ideal connected to the use of an RP accent has not changed over the years, although it must come up

⁸ George Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion*, portrays the linguistic situation of the United Kingdom at the beginning of the 20th century. The male protagonist, phonetician Professor Higgins, as a supporter of the Received Pronunciation as the highest expression of the English language, runs into Eliza Doolittle, a Covent Garden flower girl, who has no idea of what RP is and represents, on the contrary, a non standard speaker of the ‘worst rank’, a Cockney. In the whole play the ‘fight’ between standard and non standard accents recurs, and the social stigmatization to which Cockney is subject fills it.

⁹ The notions of overt and covert prestige and stigma will be examined in § 1.2.3.



against the real situation, as asserted by Trudgill in 1974 (2002: 171-2) that only 3% of the population spoke with an hyperlectal RP accent, while the remaining 97% used a language standing on the continuum and corresponding to the acrolectal and mesolectal varieties represented on the line proposed by Honey (fig.5). The BBC reported that according to more recent surveys, the percentage of people speaking with an hyperlectal RP accent has still decreased to 2%.

The above mentioned description can lead to the conclusion that standard forms are the result of a “direct and deliberate intervention of society” (Hudson 1996:32), an intervention taking account of the social structure and group dominance more than language. To become a standard of reference a language must undergo an articulated process involving human behavior and social choices: it must be selected by the speakers – the ones having much cultural, economic and political power; it must be fixed in written forms and grammars in order to become the reference to all the speakers; it must fit all the functions associated with powerful people and must be accepted by the majority of the population, as the one shared by the whole community. From this perspective, every form of the language detaching from the norm is a non-standard one. So, non-standard does not mean incorrect, inappropriate or vulgar, it just means deviating from the standard, even though having all the characteristics of the standard, except institutional recognition.

[...] all languages, and correspondingly all dialects, are equally 'good' as linguistic systems. All varieties of a language are structured, complex, rule-governed systems which are wholly adequate for the need of their speakers (Trudgill 2000:8).

In order to spotlight the correctness in terms of phonological, morphological and syntactic traits, the fundamental role of non standard varieties in the linguistic



overview of the country has been over and over reiterated. Non standard varieties of the English language have been demonstrated to be the main source of change and “several recent studies have in fact shown indications that non standard varieties are coming to exercise more and more influence on variation and change” (Foulkes and Docherty 1999:11), due to geographical factors connected to the increasing mobility of speakers enhancing linguistic contact as well as to social factors like the will to distinguish an individual and a speech community from other individuals and speech communities. Given that even Standard English spoken with a regional accent is considered non standard, it is almost obvious that non standard speakers are more in number than standard ones and thus more likely to influence the standard and promote change. The widespread use of non standard features in the language, however, allows the liveliness of the standard which, otherwise, would be a monolith. Non standard varieties in English can be distinguished according to either geographical and social factors, and are respectively regional and social dialects. Regional dialects are mainly defined according to a geographical division of the United Kingdom, so that linguistic boundaries can be drawn on territorial ones. However, within the same geographical area, many non standard subvarieties can be found. This kind of non standard forms usually have historical roots in that geographical area and are entrenched in people’s life. As far as social dialects are concerned, their boundaries cannot be drawn on a map because they correspond to the degree of identification of a speaker to a particular social group. Regional dialects are the object of study of dialectology, while sociolinguistics investigates social dialects.

However, non standard varieties are a deeply-rooted fact in the British linguistic description.



1.2.3. Prestige and Stigma

Standard English and Received Pronunciation, to which the highest degree of prestige has been accorded over the years, were not born theoretically but were local varieties which enjoyed a wide acceptance and went through standardization. Indeed, there is general belief that a language is more prestigious than a dialect and that some languages are more prestigious than others, as well as some linguistic variants are attached a positive value while others are attached a negative one. These beliefs are subject to human, social factors rather than linguistic criteria. Instead, there are no linguistic reasons why a linguistic form should be judged as better, more appropriate and prestigious than another, but social reasons. Some forms are evaluated as socially prestigious because they are associated with the most prestigious groups in the society, so that the high-status of the speakers is reflected on the language they use (Hudson 1996). Alike, some linguistic forms are evaluated as socially stigmatized due to their use by low-status groups. The notion of prestige, thus, has great relevance to determine the choice of a language by speakers who adopt it, both consciously and unconsciously. As the studies conducted by Labov (1966) in the city of New York displayed, the social connotations attached to a linguistic variety are the main influential parameter when people choose to adopt it. Thus, Labov highlighted that people usually move towards the forms that are considered most prestigious, that is, they use the social power of language in order to move upward in the society. Unquestionably, the standard is the highest-status linguistic form in any society. Indeed, the standard form of a language enjoys what Labov named “overt prestige”, that is the superior value accorded to a variety over the others because of widespread public recognition, which is generally attached to ‘prestige based on norms set by the upper classes’ (McMahon 1994:246). The overt



prestige enjoyed by one form over all the others lies in a unified acceptance of the social norms. Again, the reasons for the superiority are not intrinsic to the linguistic features of that variety, because no language can be considered better than any other. Sometimes, however, non standard forms, generally subject to social stigmatization, start enjoying a position of prestige, first within a restricted speech community on a local level – such as young people and men¹⁰ – then, extending to other speech communities.

Careful consideration [...] has led us to posit the existence of an opposing set of covert norms, which attribute positive values to the vernacular (Labov 1970:75).

This process is referred to as “covert prestige” and can be defined as the prestige accorded to non standard varieties or to some non standard variants which is usually not overtly expressed and leads to the preference of a stigmatized form instead of a standard one. Covert prestige is considered as fundamental in language change, since, without it, people would all speak in the same way and “language change would presumably take the form of a spiral of hypercorrections” (McMahon 1994:246). Covert prestige is a notion generally attached to the linguistic behaviour of men for whom lower-class, non standard varieties have some kind of prestige. Actually, it has been noted that while male speakers “are more concerned with acquiring covert prestige than obtaining social status” (Trudgill 2000:77), women are more interested in the use of higher-class varieties and variants. As a result of this, male speakers are thought to lead linguistic change from below, and women are thought to be the leaders of change from above.

¹⁰ Labov (2001) highlighted that men have a fundamental role in promoting change from below, thus “Women deviate less than men from linguistic norms when the deviations are overtly proscribed, but more than men when the deviations are not proscribed” (Labov 2001:367).



As a consequence of the continuous fight for social recognition non standard forms are subject to stigma that can thus be described as the negative social evaluation of a variety of language which does not conform to the generally accepted linguistic norms.

1.3 The sociolinguistics of English

1.3.1 Social variation in Received Pronunciation

Until the early nineteenth century people would talk about Received Pronunciation on the one hand, and either social and regional accents, on the other hand, and they exactly knew what they were talking about as the distinction between the two was clear-cut. This distinction was meant to state the deep difference between two social worlds within the same nation: the world “of the fee-paying public schools, students and academics at Oxford and Cambridge universities, the colonial service, teachers, the Anglican Church and the officer class of the Army” (L. Milroy 1999:186) on the one hand, and common people, students of the state-funded schools, illiterate workers living in the suburbs, on the other hand. However, because of continued social change, the distribution of the RP accent has undergone a considerable transformation, becoming in a sense wider and more complex and articulated. While Standard English, due to its written nature, is more stable, thus less subject to variation - be it diatopic rather than diastratic, Received Pronunciation, on the contrary, mainly suffers the repeated pressure of regional and social accents, which modify it or completely deviate from it. The lack of stability in

Received Pronunciation is due to its spoken nature and can be best described by a virtual line where accents lie on a social continuum, as in the model proposed by Honey (1989:82) (fig.5):

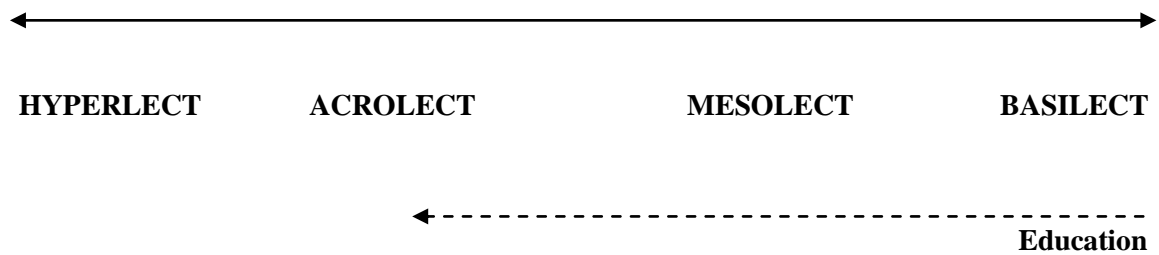


Figure 5: *The language continuum*

The imaginary line drawn by Honey was meant to describe the way the use of spoken English can swing from a more to a less prestigious accent, without any clear-cut borders among them but only a gradience resulting in overlapping features. The education line was meant to emphasize that the degree of standard in pronunciation is directly proportional to the level of education of the speakers. Figure 6 below is intended to depict the correspondence among the virtual varieties on Honey's continuum and their actual realisation within the English language.

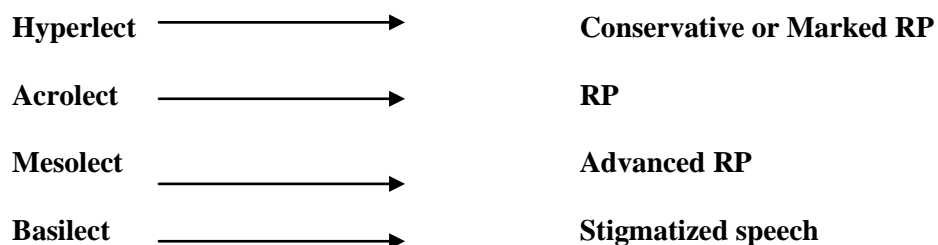


Figure 6: *Correspondence between lects and variation in Received Pronunciation*



The hyperlect is the “special form of RP associated with the very highest category of social privilege and not accessible to the majority by means of education” (Honey 1989:54); the English acrolect corresponds to the dialect which is accorded highest prestige; the English mesolect represents the intermediate stage of the language, which can approximate to the acrolect, when accommodating upward, or to the basilect, when accommodating downward; the basilectal forms of this language represent the broadest mostly stigmatized forms of popular speech. The figure is also intended to show how the influence to which Received Pronunciation is subject, causes its disarticulation into more, newer forms.

Presumably, the percentage of people belonging to the group of RP speakers in all its above-mentioned variants, has paradoxically increased compared to the 3% first proposed in 1974 by Trudgill, in 1999 estimating the number of native speakers between 12-15 per cent of the population. According to Wells (1982:118) “even with the more generous definitions, though, not more than about 10% of the population of England could be considered as RP speakers”. Some conditions have arisen over the years to justify the statement that RP speakers are few, but more numerous than before, as they have gradually spread onto the evolved three different varieties of Received Pronunciation. When in 1916 Daniel Jones first dealt with Received Pronunciation, he defined this variety as ‘that generally used by those who have been educated at ‘preparatory’ boarding schools and the ‘Public Schools’ (Jones 1918:12). He decided to adopt the word Received Pronunciation “for want of a better” – as he stated in his *Outline of English Phonetics* (1918) – because he knew that clear-cut distinctions are impossible to find in phonetics as well as in other linguistic fields. Indeed, Jones was far from stating that Received Pronunciation was the best accent or a monolithic entity; on the contrary, he was aware that languages are subject to gradience and change. This idea became a benchmark with



variationist-oriented linguistics so that Jones' successors started to classify the changes naturally occurring in Received Pronunciation, proposing a series of sub-varieties of the accent, grouped under its name. Wells (1982), Gimson (1989) and Cruttenden (2001) acknowledged that Received Pronunciation had progressively been the subject of such an articulated variation, that it could be simpler to subdivide it into three varieties. As the subdivision is mainly revolved around the observation of the speakers' accent, the three varieties were defined according to non-linguistic criteria, afterwards described phonologically. This spread of Received Pronunciation is the reason why, according to many, RP speakers have increased rather than diminishing, as Received Pronunciation is actually covering a wider range of features than before, their emergence being closely connected to social transformations determining phonological changes.

We are apparently confronted with a situation where there is greater tolerance of variety in British speech. This fits in with the freer moral atmosphere...greater tolerance...greater access to education...social mobility. By this analysis, society and language are following the same democratic path (Kerswill 2001:55).

The more traditional and unidirectional distinction between RP and non-RP speakers has been replaced by an open-ended continuum consisting of modulated varieties of the standard down to the non standard accents. This new perspective found a large agreement among scholars in the academic milieus, but also objection by those who claimed that a modulation cannot exist and that “speakers either have an RP accent or they do not. There are many who have a so-called ‘near-RP’ accent, but this is by definition not an RP accent” (Trudgill 2002:174).



As Wells noted

With the loosening of social stratification and the recent trend for people of working-class or lower-middle class origins to set the fashion in many areas of life, it may be that RP is on the way out. By the end of the 20th century everyone growing up in Britain may have some degree of local accent. Or, instead, some new non-localizable democratic standard may have arisen from the ashes of RP; if so, it seems likely to be based on popular London English (Wells 1982:118).

This quite pessimistic point of view by Wells could refer to either what he named Mainstream RP or Estuary English – that Wells does not mention in his *Accents of English* – which has repeatedly been referred to as the new RP. What Wells observed and described was a continuum sloping from Received Pronunciation to Cockney, passing through London Regional Standard and Popular London English. As it is now well-established among scholars as well as laymen that between Received Pronunciation and either Popular London English or Cockney many subvarieties can be identified – some of which have been deeply studied and fully described – these varieties have been categorised in order to catch the prospective changes of Received Pronunciation and the presumable similarities among them. This is the reason why Wells (1982) distinguished **U-RP (Upper-Crust RP)**, **Mainstream RP** and **Adoptive RP**, Gimson (1989:88) referred to these varieties as **Conservative RP**, **General RP** and **Advanced RP**, and Cruttenden (2001) listed **Refined RP**, **General RP** and **Regional RP**. To this former tripartite distinction, Wells (1982) added a further variety which he defined **Near-RP**

The term Near-RP refers to any accent which, while not falling within the definition of RP, nevertheless includes very little in the way of regionalisms which would enable the provenance of the speaker to be localized within England (Wells 1982:297).



Near-RP included a group of accents which did not share the social stigmatisation of broad varieties (i.e. Cockney), but were, on the contrary, considered ‘educated’ accents, in the middle of the socio-economic scale.

	GENERAL BRITISH			Lewis (1972)
U-RP	MAINSTREAM RP	ADOPTIVE RP	NEAR-RP	Wells (1982)
CONSERVATIVE RP	GENERAL RP	ADVANCED RP		Gimson (1989)
REFINED RP	GENERAL RP	REGIONAL RP		Cruttenden (2001)

Figure 7: Lewis (1972); Wells (1982); Gimson (1989); Cruttenden (2001)

A previous and comprehensive position was expressed by Windsor Lewis (1972) who, being aware – as any linguist should be – that any boundary is subjective and arbitrary, stated that there existed only one variety of Received Pronunciation, which he called **General British**, including all the varieties but Conservative Received Pronunciation.

The above mentioned varieties of RP are not clearly distinct accents with precisely enumerable lists of features, and there are no categorical boundaries among them. They are rather tendencies and represent clusterings of features which vary from individual to individual, in different communicative contexts.

It is here preferred to adopt Gimson’s labels Conservative RP and Advanced RP to indicate respectively the most and the least prestigious varieties on the RP continuum, and Wells’ notion of Mainstream RP for the in-between variety. The labels adopted with reference to the varieties of Received Pronunciation are especially useful when investigating some of the changes occurring within the modern RP in the last decades. Changes concern especially speech habits once



typical of younger speakers that have now become part of Mainstream RP and other conservative forms that have now become obsolete.

1.3.1.1 Conservative RP

The main features of Conservative RP are [ɛʊ] or [oʊ] for [əʊ] in GOAT words, [ɛ ~ eæ] for /æ/ in TRAP, a long /ɔ:/ in CLOTH, very open word-final /ɪ/ and /ə/, and no glottalling of /t/. This variety of Received Pronunciation is also typically accompanied by a special voice quality and manner of delivery. Conservative RP mainly refers to the forms used by the older generations, academics and most privileged social groups, including the aristocracy and the members of the Royal Family. This variety corresponds to the one previously spoken by all educated people, and overlaps with that variety raised at iconic point of reference to the earliest definitions of Received Pronunciation. The most recurring idea concerning Conservative RP is that it has now become a bit obsolete, and people make an even more targeted use of it than before. While in the past it was the natural consequence of people's social belonging, it is nowadays especially used to underline the social distance of its speakers from others, in order to state their different social provenance. However, some studies demonstrate that even in the speech of Queen Elizabeth II, features traceable back to the 'less rigid' varieties have been found, and it is noteworthy in the speech of such a socially relevant personality. Many detailed research studies have been carried out to analyse the vowel sounds from the annual Christmas messages broadcast by Queen Elizabeth II during the period between 1950s and 1980s. All the studies, some of which were carried out by the phonetician Jonathan Harrington (2000; 2006), revealed that the Queen's pronunciation of some vowel sounds has been influenced by the Standard Southern-British accent typically



associated with younger speakers with a lower status in the social hierarchy. The analysis of data, especially concerning the sound change known as happY-tensing – the tensing of the final vowel in words like ‘happy’ – showed that Queen’s [ɪ:] sound was less tense in 1950s than it was in 1980s, gradually shifting in the direction of Standard Southern British or Mainstream RP. This is not to state that the Queen is adopting an accent with a lower position on the continuum. Actually, the Queen as other elder, established members of the community would resist those changes with a marked social significance. This is the reason why, even though Mainstream RP speakers are increasingly replacing the syllable-final /t/ with a glottal stop, this change would not be assimilated in the speech of standard speakers as the Queen. Notwithstanding this, the above-mentioned change can be found in the speech of younger members of the Royal Family, such as Prince William who extensively uses glottal stops in his speech. Thus, it cannot be ignored that even the woman ‘holding’ the English language – RP is often referred to as Queen’s English – is probably softening the main features of Her standard pronunciation towards a Mainstream form.

The changes observed in this paper might be due to changes of speaking style. Thus, the mode of delivery in Christmas broadcasts might have become more casual to match the increasing informality in society in the last 50 years (Harrington 2006:453).

Hence, Conservative RP has an ever-increasingly declining number of speakers, gradually shifting to more democratic varieties.



1.3.1.2 Mainstream RP

Mainstream RP is the term used by the phonetician John Wells (1982) to refer to the form used by many upper- and middle-class speakers, whose accent is mainly identified with that of BBC newsreaders. It is generally referred to as the unmarked, neutral, modern type of Received Pronunciation, the one which has become the most attractive to use, compared with its higher and lower social counterparts. Being socially neutral, that is avoiding any positive or negative connotation, this variety of Received Pronunciation has undergone a significant spread among the speakers who find in it the possibility to hide both their geographical and their social origin. Differently from Conservative and Advanced RP, which are attributed a connotation related to the age of their speakers – being respectively associated to older and younger speakers – none of the scholars has based the description of this variety – be it named Mainstream or General RP – on the age of its speakers. Furthermore, Conservative RP is attached a negative social connotation in terms of social attractiveness of its speakers: Conservative RP speakers are mainly considered posh, affected, high hat. On the other hand, Advanced RP speakers stand on a low social stage and are geographically recognisable because of the presence of some regional features in their accent. Instead, Mainstream RP even though showing some modern features which depart from the original and conservative form, is attributed a neutral judgment, holding more democratic but not strongly marked social and regional features.

Referring to the social continuum of the English language, Mainstream RP could encompass many of the subvarieties representing the mesolectal spectrum of the accents.



1.3.1.3 Advanced RP

Advanced RP can be described as the less rigid form of RP, mainly used by younger people of exclusive groups. The distinction proposed by Gimson (1989) was mainly based on the age of the speakers. According to Gimson, there was a general tendency for older speakers to use a more conservative accent (Conservative RP), and even when slight changes occurred in their pronunciation habits, it was rather toward a mainstream than an advanced form. Younger speakers, on the contrary, rather chose to shift toward an advanced variety. This was due to the fact that people, especially those belonging to the highest- and lowest-status groups would be roughly less likely to change their accents after adolescence.

Although youngsters grown up in rich families have received the same education as their fathers and grandfathers and have been taught and mostly exposed to the same pronunciation, in general they tend to change and adapt their speech habits to those of other young speakers. Indeed, it is often claimed that speakers of in-between varieties of English, as Advanced RP is, can be RP speakers from the younger generations who seem to reject a traditional or conservative type of pronunciation, mainly associated with the 'Establishment' and the privileged school system, in order to avoid the stigma of Received Pronunciation as 'posh'. Their aim is to sound different from previous generations and to be in step with other 'relevant' youngsters, identified in terms of alternative lifestyle models. These speakers use a grammatically and lexically correct Standard English, but they resort to variables of less prestigious social accents, starting the process of dialect-levelling within whom Estuary English has been mainly located.

If it may seem quite easy to distinguish RP speakers according to their age on the continuum – Conservative RP being identified with older speakers and



Advanced RP being identified with younger generations – it is nowadays more difficult to state the relationship between RP speakers and their social class.

1.3.2 Prestige innovations in British English: variables accepted in RP

In this paragraph some phonological features will be described that have been accepted in Received Pronunciation even though derived from non standard accents. The degree of acceptance varies according to the phonological context in which they are used.

1.3.2.1 T-glottalling

T-glottalling, mainly known as glottal stop, more frequently than other linguistic variables is at the centre of controversial viewpoints because of its being recognized as a vernacular, working-class variant, restricted to the London area and characteristic of the Cockney dialect. Despite such a strict social and spatial collocation, this variant is geographically more widespread than it is thought and it does not originate from the South of England. Although it is difficult to specify how old this feature is as it does not exist any alphabetical letter corresponding to its sound, scholars agree that it was first recorded in the 1860s in the western area of Scotland. The fact that it was noticed in the second half of the 19th century, allows to think that it had been previously used and already was a well-established variant at that time. Before being recorded by Jones (1909) as a London pronunciation feature, it had gradually extended from West Scotland to the eastern area (1889), the North of England (1908) and the Midlands (1909). It is also unclear whether this feature,



now overtly stigmatized, has always been attached a negative connotation. At present, it is “widely perceived as a stereotype of urban British speech” (Milroy-Milroy-Hartley 1994:5) consisting of an “ugly and lazy sound” (Wells 1982:35). However, many studies demonstrate that, since the end of World War II there has been general acceptance of [ʔ] in Received Pronunciation and that t-glottalling is an ever-increasingly widespread variant, “one of the most dramatic, widespread and rapid changes to have occurred in British English in recent times” (Trudgill 1999:136). Its use in Received Pronunciation mostly depends on the phonetic environment where it is found, as listed by Wells in 1982 (260), according to whom glottalisation can occur in the following three contexts:

- a. _# true C *quite good*
- b. _# L or S *quite likely*
- c. _ true C *nights curtsey*

that become five in the case of glottal reinforcement. Although it is almost generally agreed that a glottal stop can be found in word-final position, there are some word-internal environments in which glottallings are used with disregard of the social origin of the speakers. Word-internal t-glottalling before a consonant can now be listed as part of Received Pronunciation as demonstrated by Altendorf in 2003. Her research study showed an high percentage of realizations of the glottal stop in word-internal intervocalic context or before a pause, especially in freer interactions, like the Interview Style. This style will be taken into account as it is more similar to casual informal oral communication. Altendorf’s analysis of t-glottalling in the speech of three groups of school students in London displayed that even students of exclusive public schools realized the same percentage of t-glottallings as their “less exclusive” peers in _C context, an higher percentage in _#C context and a lower but

significant percentage (60% and above) in *_#pause* and *_#V* contexts. The percentage changes sensibly for this group in Reading Style, remaining unvaried for the other group.

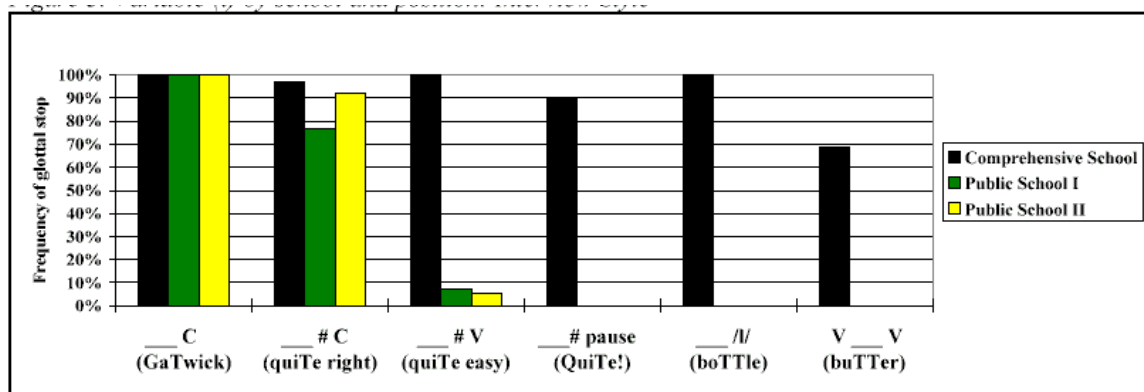
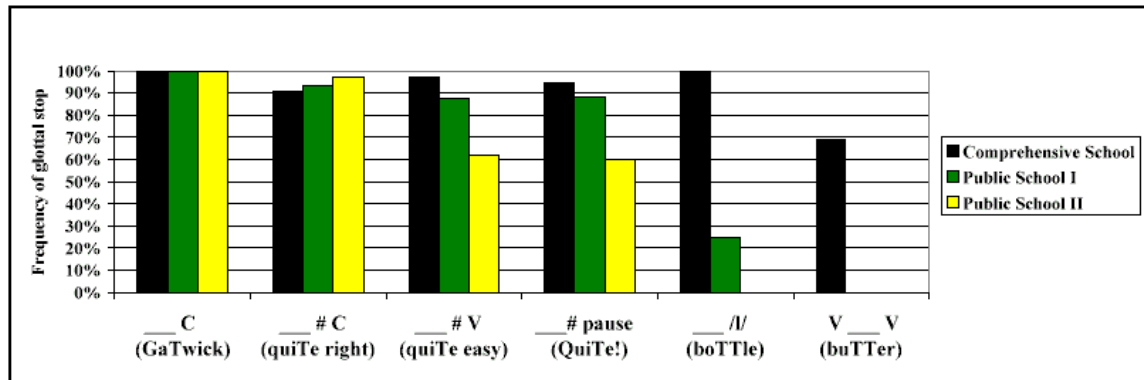


Figure 8: Variable (*t*) by school and position in Reading and Interview Style based on Altendorf (2003)

According to Fabricius (2000), whose findings were socially restricted to upper middle class speakers who had attended or were still attending a public school, there was a substantial uniformity in the use of *t*-glottalling before stops and fricatives, with a percentage overwhelming 65%, and before a vowel or a pause, attested around 36% and 40%. However, a substantial and unexpected high percentage of *t*-glottalling before a liquid or a semivowel was also recorded. This



trend remained unvaried even when analysing the use of t-glottalling in relation to social factors such as sex, regional provenance of the speakers as well as their parents' and their education (i.e. boarding vs. day schools, academic league position, etc.). Fabricius' findings confirmed the importance of London as an influential promoter for linguistic innovation and change and its predominant role in the southeastern area of the United Kingdom. As for the educational factors, "t-glottalling is probably not a variable which can be used to separate 'county primary' from 'independent primary' students, boarder from day students, top league schools from less academic schools" (Fabricius 2000:143). A further interesting result of Fabricius' analysis was the total absence of sex dominance in the development of this variant. Actually it is neither a male-led vernacular nor a female-led prestige variant, as in any phonetic context the average percentage of t-glottalling is almost the same. What the speakers involved in Fabricius' study had in common was their age and their living in London or the Home Counties. Fabricius concluded that t-glottalling "has to some extent lost its stigma, but not yet acquired prestige, in word-final pre-pausal and prevocalic environments" (Fabricius 2000:145), while it is well-established before a consonant.

An in-between variant of the /t/ sound has also been noted and consists of the affrication of the consonant /t/ → [t^s], which may be encountered in initial, intervocalic and final position, so that *tea* is pronounced [t^səi] and *Betty* becomes [bet^səi]. This variant, which derives from the conservative RP pronunciation [t^h], is spreading in some in-between varieties of English, never being used by a Cockney speaker for whom it is too posh and who usually produces a glottal stop in both intervocalic and final position.



1.3.2.2 L-vocalisation

L-vocalisation is a phenomenon affecting coda clusters in pre-consonantal or pre-pausal position, in those dialects showing a clear-dark /l/ dichotomy. L-vocalisation generally applies to those dialects based on the distinction between /l-/ /ɫ/ allophones. This phenomenon consists in the replacement of RP dark /ɫ/ by a semivowel – when /l/ occurs before a consonant as in /miðk/ for [milk] – or a vowel varying from a back rounded /ʊ/ or /o/ to slightly rounded /ö/, to rounded /ɤ/. The difference between clear and dark /l/ and the discussion about their realization are not relevant to the present study and will only be touched in footnote¹¹.

Historic overviews of this phenomenon highlighted that a vocalisation of /ɫ/ was first recorded before labials and velars since the 16th century, when, according to Britain and Johnson (2003) it could be found “after present day /ɑ:/ and /ɔ:/”, while Ihalainen (1994) described it as a feature of Yorkshire English between the 17th and 19th centuries. Although its being associated with London English, l-vocalisation has spread across the south-eastern area of the country very rapidly and “in the 1950s/1960s *Survey of English Dialects*, l-vocalisation was recorded in north-western Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Middlesex (now part of Greater London), south-eastern Essex and southern Hertfordshire” (Ryfa 2003:53). As far as the current trend is concerned, it has been noted that “the current wave of /l/ vocalisation affecting South-eastern England is a fairly recent phenomenon”

¹¹ In Received Pronunciation clear /l/ occurs before a vowel or a /j/, while dark /ɫ/ is expected in any other position. According to Lægefoged (1993) dark /ɫ/ is characterised by both a primary coronal and a secondary dorsal place of articulation, while clear /l/ only has the coronal place of articulation. Halle and Mohanan (1985) describe dark /ɫ/ as having the same place of articulation as its clear counterpart, but being performed with an additional [+back] feature. A further distinction is done within the dark /ɫ/ realization, according to the presence or absence of the tongue-tip contact on the alveolar ridge, which respectively produce a velarized or a vocoid.



(Johnson and Britain 2003:7) and that “precise development now under discussion is probably less than a century old in London” (Wells 1982:259). Wells’ statement is justified by the absence of many recordings attesting its use and consequent spread. Although it was a quite widespread language change in the 1970s, in the same way as t-glottalling, l-vocalisation was socially stigmatized as a London dialectal speech feature, overtly associated with Cockney speakers. In the early 1980s, only losing little of its social stigma, it was noted to have entered the speech of some RP speakers. Its successive spread into the RP accent seems to have been and continue to be so fast and pregnant that in 1994 Wells changed his opinion from “L-vocalisation was now beginning to seep into RP” to “I am beginning to wonder whether my earlier judgment is now in need of revision” (Well 1994:202).

Despite the difficulties in tracing its origin and reconstructing its historical development, many studies carried out in different areas of the United Kingdom, have highlighted the widespread diffusion of the l-vocalisation in the spoken performance of RP speakers.

In his study concerning the l-vocalisation in the London area, Kerswill (1995) took into account four contexts in which the /l/ sound could be realized and the way it changed according to its phonetic context:

V_C as in “called”

V_#C as in “call Susan”

this two cases representing canonical cases of dark /ɫ/, in which velarized or vocalised /l/ is expected. For this reason, they generally result to be more prone to l-vocalisation.

V_V as in “calling”



where the prototypical lateral approximant is recorded and vocalisation cannot be realized

V_#V as in “call Andy”

that is an ambiguous situation in which variation can be observed between velarized or vocalised /l/ and its clear variant.

Many studies have been carried out in order to give a sociolinguistic description of this phenomenon. From Shinji Sato’s study concerning the diffusion of this phenomenon in London, through the analysis of working- and middle-class male and female speakers born and/or brought up in London, divided according to either their or their parents’ job, has emerged that l-vocalisation is more widespread within the working class group of speakers. Contrarily to any expectation, in both social classes women are more prone to use it. This would mean that l-vocalisation is a female-led variant, that is in contrast with its being a vernacular variant, associated to Cockney speakers.

In her sociolinguistic study, Altendorf (2003) has confirmed Wells’ assertion that vocalisation of dark /l/ is a feature of modern Received Pronunciation, as the percentage of upper-middle-class speakers using it establishes at about 70%. According to Altendorf, l-vocalisation “has increased dramatically in all three classes, in particular in the two highest classes” (Altendorf 2003:95). Some differences can also be found in the context of use, where upper-middle-class speakers tend to vocalize after labial consonants but avoid it after /t/ or /d/.

The phonetic contexts in which l-vocalisation underlies the use by upper-middle-class speakers are:

[+labial] _ C as in *bold*

[+labial] _ # (C) as in *ball* or *table*



Advanced upper-middle-class speakers also vocalize /ɹ/ in the following contexts:

[-labial] _ C as in *cold*

[-labial] _ # (C) as in *call*

which are less usual in Mainstream upper-middle-class speakers.

According to Johnson and Britain, l-vocalisation is a feature of London English “spreading radially to engulf progressively more dialects” (Johnson and Britain 2003:7). As a demonstration of the rapid spread of this feature, it has been noted that English children acquiring their language “tend strongly to replace dark /ɹ/ with /w/ or a vowel /u/, even when no vocalisation is apparent in the ambient dialect” (Johnson and Britain 2003:7).

1.3.2.3 Th-fronting

Th-fronting consists in the labiodental realizations of the dental fricatives /ð, θ/, so that *thin* is homophonous with *fin* and both are pronounced [fɪn], while *brother* and *father* may rhyme with *lover*. Th-fronting enjoys a great awareness by people who use it, as they both recognize it as a feature in their interlocutors and are aware of using it. Even though it is often disregarded by scholars as a change in Received Pronunciation, it is the object of metalinguistic thinking through puns based on the fluctuation between /θ/ and /f/ in initial position. Actually, it is considered an “easy” change due to the fact that dental fricatives are rare and often unstable; they have some acoustic similarity to /f,v/, have a low auditory salience, are occasionally failed to be pronounced by speakers, and children learn them late, finding a convenient alternative in the more natural use of the labiodental fricatives.



As a consequence of all these language-internal factors, they are easily replaceable and frequently replaced by labiodental fricatives.

The spread of this pronunciation feature is mainly due to the principle of the least effort, leading speakers to pronounce words with the minimum of articulatory effort. Children, in this case, use [f,v] more naturally than / ð, θ/, and if they keep on using them in a conscious way, even after their childhood – because of peer-group pressure – they give rise to some innovation in pronunciation.

(th)-fronting, therefore, like [h]-loss and [r]-loss, appears to have a history in the language as a long-term pattern of variation, possibly consisting of one or more changes within communities at some particular time or at different times (Milroy 2003:214).

Milroy's assertion demonstrates that th-fronting has had a progressive development in the English language and some words now pronounced using /ð, θ/, were spelt with /v,f/ in the 15th century. Forty years ago th-fronting was considered a "well attested and widely spread phenomenon" by Wakelin (1972:98), who also noticed that, despite being considered a Cockney feature, it could be heard in many areas, even far from London. Actually, even though it is generally recognized as having a London origin, th-fronting is believed to have diffused to many parts of the Home Counties and to urban centres more distant from London. This variable was recorded and analysed in the project *Phonological Variation and Change in Contemporary Spoken British English* (Milroy & others 1999), with special reference to the city of Derby, nearly 200 miles north-west of London, where it has been reported to constitute a young speakers innovation. Analysing formal and casual speech of both males and females belonging to Derby working and middle classes, Milroy and others found out that 8 out of their 32 participants – the younger ones – used th-

fronting in their speech and that 5 out of 8 among them had a percentage of [f,v] realizations overwhelming 50%, with casual speech scoring higher than formal one.

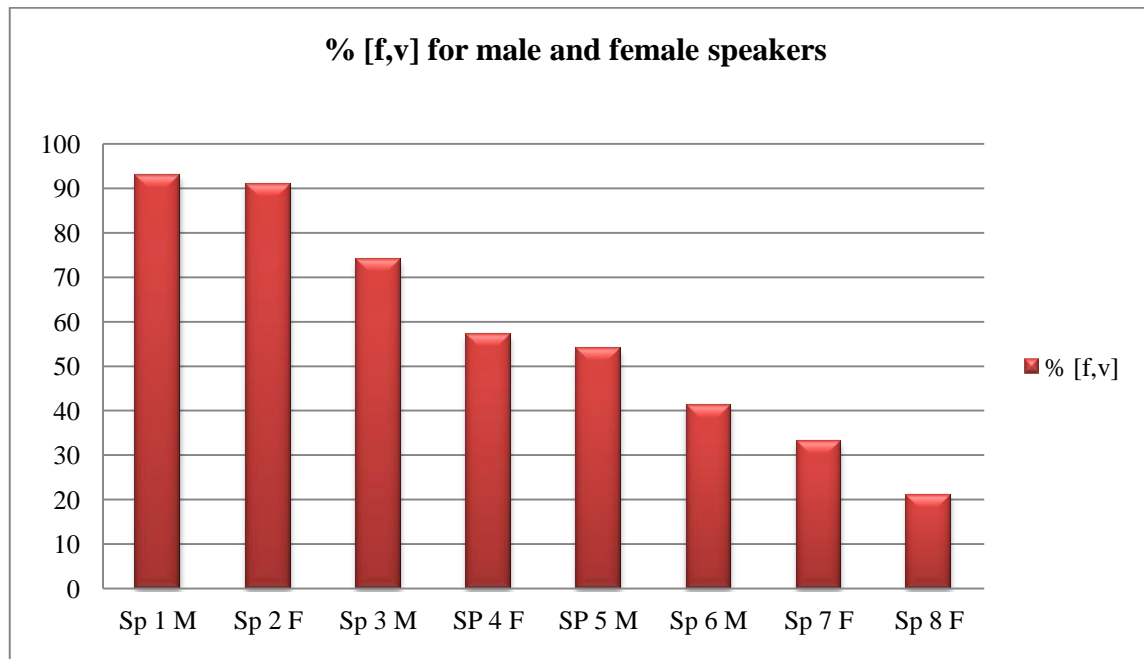


Figure 9: [f,v] realizations for male and female speakers in the project “Phonological Variation and Change in Contemporary Spoken British English”

The most interesting aspect highlighted by the scholars involved in the project is related to the fundamental reason leading to a process of sound change “the pattern of adoption of the [f,v] variants by individuals is related to differences in the intensity of their participation in local peer-networks: the leaders of the change (early adopters) are relatively central members” (Milroy 2003:214).

On the contrary, in his *Accents of English*, Wells did not recognize fronting as part of Received Pronunciation, not even as an advanced variant, but he confined it to a broad Cockney pronunciation. He stated that “dental fricatives are used, at least sporadically, by all native adult Londoners, barring only those with speech defects” (Wells 1982:328).

1.3.3 Social variation in ‘London Speech’

The continuum of varieties identified in the description of Received Pronunciation, is also to be found in the description of ‘London speech’, for which a single variety cannot be defined.

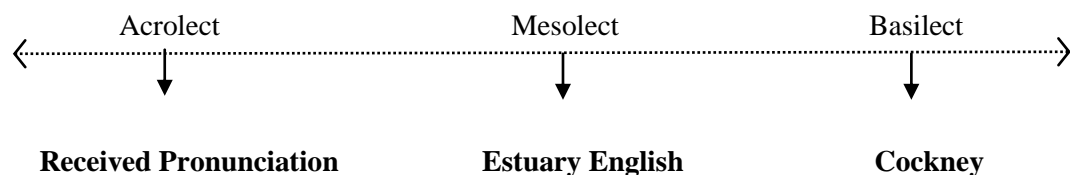


Figure 10: The accent continuum of ‘London Speech’

Between the acrolectal Received Pronunciation and the basilectal broadly marked and stigmatized Cockney accent, many in-between accents can be located, among which Estuary English has been described as holding an in-between floating position between the two ends of the continuum.

It has become customary to use the linear image of a linear continuum in which these three varieties (RP, EE and Cockney) can be located with RP at one extreme, Cockney at the other and Estuary English somewhere in-between (Mompean 2006:1).

[...] the phenomenon has been perceived as more to do with accent than with dialect, and has been described as a continuum of pronunciation possibilities (Crystal 1995:327).



According to the continuum proposed above, Received Pronunciation represents the model to which the speakers should refer, while Cockney represents the basilectal form chosen by common people belonging to lower classes. Estuary English can be located in the middle ground and, according to many, it is only one of the possible labels used to identify the mesolectal forms offered by the English language. Indeed, if further narrowing the sample of accents taken into account, more and more accents would be found until reaching the dimension of individual accents, or idiolects. In respect of the role of Estuary English within the linguistic continuum of the English language, various opinions have emerged over the years: the most believe it to be an umbrella word for the many accents which lie on the continuum between Received Pronunciation and London speech, without referring to any specific social implication related to its speakers; some agree that Estuary English is a floating mesolectal form of the English language which stands in the middle ground, and is the form used by the middle-class speech community; some consider it a factitious label, as there is no linguistic phenomenon to which Estuary English could be traced back; others still think that it is a real emerging trend in English pronunciation, even if it is difficult to define whether it is just a change or a revolution in the English language.

1.3.4 Cockney

Even though the variety of the English language known as Cockney will not be the focus of the present study, a description of its main features will be provided because of its importance in the diffusion and spread of some variables within the standard English pronunciation.



Cockney is a variety in its own right, traditionally identified with London speech. A Cockney speaker, or simply a Cockney – as the term refers to the variety as well as to its speakers – is traditionally a person born within the sound of the bells of St.-Mary-le-Bow church, to the east of St.Paul’s Cathedral. Thus, this variety is geographically confined to the east end of the capital city, while it is socially identified with working class Londoners. These conditions result in a socially stigmatized variety of language.

As an accent, it is mainly characterised by such phonological features as:

- H-dropping - /h/ is almost absent unless it is in a stressed phonological context;
- Th-fronting – the contrast between /θ/ and /f/, /ð/ and /v/ is lost in any phonological context;.
- Glottal stop – it occurs in the same environments as in Received Pronunciation but also in intervocalic position, before a pause and in the realization of /p/ in intervocalic context;
- Vowel shift as follows: the TRAP /æ/ → /ɛ/; the LOT /ɑ / → /ɔ/; the STRUT /ʌ/ → /a/; the THOUGHT /ɔ:/ → /o:/; the CURE /ʊə/ → /ɔə/;
- Diphthongization of RP long vowels.

As a dialect, it has its own special syntax, vocabulary and usage. As far as Cockney syntax is concerned, Hughes, Trudgill and Watt (2005:77-78) noted the following main features:

- the past tense of **come** is variably *came* and *come*;
- the past tense of the full verb **do** is *done*;
- first person singular, negative, of the auxiliary *have* in *ain't*;
- third person singular, negative, of the auxiliary *do* is *don't*;



- the use of *lay* for standard English *lie*;
- *cos* for the standard form *because*.

One of the main and peculiar characteristics of Cockney, however, is rhyming slang, a special vocabulary consisting in the use of a pair of associated words, the second of which rhymes with the word the speaker intends to say. The first word of the associated pair is used to indicate the word originally meant.

Some examples of rhyming slang are:

- *Cat and Mouse* for *House*
- *Patrick Swayze* for *Lazy*
- *Mary Rose* for *Nose*

Very often the rhyming word is omitted, as to produce sentences as follows:

- "Let's have a butchers at that magazine" (*butcher's hook = look*)
- "Are you going to rabbit all night?" (*rabbit and pork = talk*)

1.4 Conclusion

A preliminary overview of present-day English both inside and outside the English-speaking countries has pinpointed that influences on the English language originate from many sides.

The main sociolinguistic notions related to variation phenomena have been defined in order to emphasize the concepts that will be relevant in next chapter.

Finally, a general description of the accent continuum of the English language in the United Kingdom, with special reference to the London area, generally identified as the hub of linguistic innovation and change, has been provided.



Chapter two

Estuary English between dialect levelling and style shift

The emergence of influential non-standard varieties raises important issues concerning the ongoing status of the standard as a reference point for speakers, the social and geographical networks which facilitate influence and contact between varieties and the nature of the contact which is required for influence to take place. What is certainly clear is that we can no longer assume that speakers of non-standard varieties automatically orient themselves towards the standard (Foulkes and Docherty 1999: 11-12).

2.1 Dialect levelling and geographical diffusion of sound change

Since the 1990s considerable attention has been paid to the changes occurring to the English language spoken in the United Kingdom. Trudgill (1974) was the first to point out the need for a social dimension of dialectology, raising the academic awareness that any collection and interpretation of data in a project set up to study language change should take account of the social dimension in which that change takes place. The analysis of sound changes goes further than reporting changes in a synchronic and/or in a diachronic perspective, but it arises the problem of investigating the reasons underlying it, being them either endogenous or exogenous. Indeed, any language is not a static entity, but a changeable one, subject to modification due to both the use by its speakers and to internal processes, together leading to newer forms, structures and uses. A major language internal factor leading to a change in the sound quality of diphthongs in English is the process

identified by Wells as Diphthong Shift (fig.11), consisting of “a set of phonetic changes almost as fundamental as the Great Vowel Shift of half a millennium ago”(Wells 1982:256).

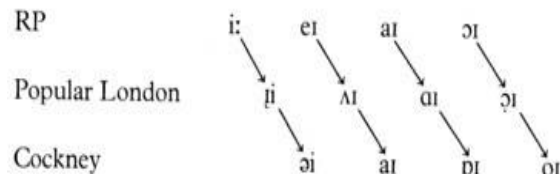


Figure 11: Front closing diphthong shift

According to Well’s study, the Diphthong Shift probably originated in London before the time ancient settlers left for Australia, where it is also recorded. Actually, similar shifts associate Cockney with some local accents of the south of England and the Midlands as well as Australian and New Zealand English. This kind of changes are endogenous in that they produce almost concurrent new forms in many different and far away varieties of the same language. In 1972 Labov had already delineated the vowel chain shifting in English, explaining how dialects shift their vowel systems in a predictable way. Considering vowels as entities occupying phonetic spaces, Labov displayed that when one vowel moves phonetically closer to or further away from an adjacent vowel, the next vowel may shift its phonetic value to maintain adequate distance in relation to the vowel that has moved initially. A whole sequence of vowel rotation may thus be set in motion.

From a variationist sociolinguistic perspective, however, linguistic innovation and change much more frequently are the result of exogenous factors in progress. Following Kerswill, the English language in the United Kingdom is being



subject to the combination of a series of factors – external to the language – leading to a process identified as dialect levelling, that he has defined as

a process whereby differences between regional varieties are reduced, features which make varieties distinctive disappear, and new features emerge and are adopted by speakers over a wide geographical area (Kerswill 2008:487).

The tendency to linguistic change has been found to overlap with regional dialect levelling based on both geographical- and accommodation-based processes²². Geographical diffusion consists in the spread of some linguistic features from highly populated areas characterized by economic and cultural power, such as urban areas, to smaller, more peripheral, rural ones. According to many research studies, this is the process in progress in the United Kingdom where the use of some variables is spreading from the capital city – that is considered by the most as the hub of linguistic innovation – to the surrounding urban areas. However, the definition of dialect levelling given by Kerswill does not only imply the geographical diffusion of the phenomenon, but it especially points out on the reduction of regional traits and distinctive features thanks to the contact established among speakers. According to Kerswill they actively transmit those features to each other while interacting and consciously or unconsciously using them in communication. Thus, regional dialect levelling, in which both geographical and demographic parameters are relevant, is the result of the dialect contact following the ever-increasing mobility of people in and around the hubs of linguistic innovation. Levelling is not a new phenomenon, however its incredibly rapid spread and its being the product of a process of

²² Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) was first developed as Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) (Giles 1973). The shift occurred in 1987 was due to a movement in a more interdisciplinary direction. SAT mostly focused on people's modification of their speech characteristics (e.g., accent, dialect, speech rate, pauses) during interaction with other speakers, in order to achieve specific goals. Speech accommodation theory was renamed as Communication Accommodation Theory in recognition that not only speech characteristics but also nonverbal and discursive dimensions play an important role in the process of interpersonal or intergroup communicative adjustments.



diffusion of less prestigious variables are the striking aspects marking it. Even though the sources for dialect levelling have long been considered to be borrowings from prestige and standard varieties, nowadays it is especially from earlier stigmatized varieties, such as immigrants' and lower classes' that new linguistic trends are developing.

This multifaceted phenomenon is spotting the country with descriptions of unnamed phenomena, among which only Estuary English has received a name. Estuary English will be from here on referred to as a convenient umbrella word to label the wider phenomenon described in the following paragraphs and to better identify the features selected by RP speakers and reasons underlying their phonological choices.

2.2 The rise of Estuary English as an academic phenomenon

2.2.1 The first approach to the issue

The term Estuary English was first coined in 1984 by David Rosewarne, a lecturer in Linguistics at the University of Surrey, who introduced it for the first time as the title of an article appeared in the *Times Educational Supplement*. He described Estuary English as “a variety of modified regional speech. It is a mixture of non-regional and local south-eastern English pronunciation and intonation”. He argued that “If one imagines a continuum with RP and London speech at either end, “Estuary English” speakers are to be found grouped in the middle ground” (Rosewarne 1984). The idea of conceiving Estuary English as an accent which



stands on a point in the middle of the continuum between Received Pronunciation at one extremity, and Cockney at the other one, has been widely shared by almost all the succeeding scholars that have studied and described this phenomenon from that moment onwards. Rosewarne approached the issue in a way as to foresee a major transformation in the English language, explaining that “Estuary English may now and for the foreseeable future, be the strongest native influence upon RP” (Rosewarne 1984). What he was dealing with, did not concern the influence of foreign languages on English, but some considerable changes happening within the English language in the United Kingdom and promoted by those English speakers using this language as their daily means of communication. In his wake, many scholars have wondered whether Estuary English could influence or even replace Received Pronunciation as the standard of pronunciation of the English language, as even people in the public eye, who would stereotypically speak with a standard pronunciation, have been fascinated by its influence.

In his article, Rosewarne also introduced Estuary English through the description of its characteristics as well as the reasons for its spread, both geographically and socially. Actually, what Rosewarne portrayed was a situation in which Estuary English was crossing the geographical borders, which mainly identified it with a London pronunciation, and the social boundaries, mirroring a situation of strong division within the British society according to the way people speak. According to Rosewarne (1984), the geography of this variety was well-established, lying “by the banks of the Thames and its estuary”, although he then widened its extension as “it seems to be the most influential accent in the south-east of England” (Rosewarne 1994). The geographical boundaries of Estuary English, however, are not unanimously accepted by those who, at different levels, have dealt with it. While some have restricted its development to the city of London, others



have described it as a phenomenon involving the Home Counties, and still others have thought of it as an accent spreading in the south-eastern territories of England and even influencing the many other dialects of the country.

As for its social expansion, in his article, Rosewarne pointed out the democratic connotation of Estuary English, which

is to be heard on the front and back benches of the House of Commons and is used by some members of the Lord [...], is well established in the City, business circles, the Civil Services, local government, the media, advertising as well as the medical and teaching professions in the south-east (Rosewarne 1984).

In his following article, published in 1994, Rosewarne named some Estuary English speakers

Despite his age, Lord Tebbit still does it, but he says radio and television presenters do it much more than he ever did. Ken Livingstone M.P. and Tony Banks M.P. are proud they both do it (Rosewarne 1994).

Many other people in the public eye have been later listed as speakers of this variety, such as Tony Blair – ex-Prime Minister – Jamie Shea –Director of Policy Planning, NATO – and the famous British cook Delia Smith, which is surprising, because the education and social belonging of these people would not allow them to move on the continuum but to stay and represent the stereotypical RP speakers. The democratic value of Estuary English has been returned to many times, for the existence of a language which hides the social origin of its speakers is a matter of extreme importance in a country like the United Kingdom, where the way people speak is the main marker of their social more than their geographical provenance and the creation of a classless society is an outstanding issue to be shown off at any convenient time, especially in politics.



Although Rosewarne was the first to describe this phenomenon and to create a new name to identify it, he was aware that Estuary English, with all its geographical and social implications, was not a new phenomenon, but “the continuation of the long process by which London pronunciation has made itself felt” (Rosewarne 1984). It was, according to him, the result of a process started in the Middle Ages, when the speech of the capital started influencing the way nobles and people at Court spoke, producing the rise of Received Pronunciation as the standard model of pronunciation of the English language in the United Kingdom.

Apart from considering the geography, the social value and the historical processes lying underneath Estuary English, Rosewarne also gave a linguistic description of it in terms of phonological features. The phonological characteristics Rosewarne described were as follows:

- **L-vocalisation**, which he described as “the use of /w/ where RP uses /l/ in final position or in a final consonant cluster”.
- **T-glottalling**, that is “the use of a glottal stop [ʔ] in the place of [t] or [d] found in RP”. In describing this feature, Rosewarne highlighted the stigmatization to which it is subject, due to its use by Cockney speakers. This strong social connotation was the reason why he wrote that “an EE speaker uses fewer glottal stops than a “London” speaker, but more than an RP speaker”.
- **Y-tensing**, that is the realization of a longer /ɪ/ in final position than in Received Pronunciation.
- **Yod-coalescence**, typical of Cockney pronunciation, however spreading in Received Pronunciation. It consists on the loss of the /j/ sound after /n, t, l, s/. Rosewarne noted that “the process of shedding /j/s is now established in RP”



(Rosewarne 1984) and that traces of it can be found only in those speakers that use a conservative RP accent. Although many think that this is due to the influence of AmE on BrE, Rosewarne observed that RP speakers are exposed to the influence of Estuary pronunciation, as well as to films and programs in which AmE is the main accent.

- **The pronunciation of R**, which has not been observed by linguists and cannot be found either in RP or in Cockney. The Estuary /r/ is pronounced lowering the tip of the tongue and raising its central part to a position close to the soft palate, without touching it.
- **FLEECE diphthongization**, in which, according to Rosewarne, the /i:/ sound is pronounced like a diphthong.
- **Diphthong shift of FACE, PRICE and GOAT**. According to Rosewarne FACE vowel would be pronounced [aɪ] creating an homophony between *say* and *sigh*; PRICE vowel would become [aɪ]; GOAT vowel would be realized as [ʌʊ]²³.

The rise of Estuary English has caught the attention of many, both common people asking for information about this phenomenon and its social connotation, and journalists. But it is especially in the academic world that many research groups have been carried out to analyse it more deeply, in order to find out if there are scientific basis on which it can be mentioned among the accents of the English language.

²³ Vowel sounds comprising HAPPY-tensing, FLEECE diphthongization and the diphthong shift occurring in the vowel sound of FACE, PRICE and GOAT have been described in order to have an overall description of the phonological features proposed by David Rosewarne. However, vowel sounds will not be further described and analysed in the present study.



2.2.2 A comparative study of the literature on some Estuary English phonological features

The article of David Rosewarne, that started it all in 1984, was followed by another article in which he proposed a more detailed description and analysis of some outstanding characteristics of the issue; however, these two articles were only followed by less effective observations on the phenomenon, as he never conducted a sociolinguistic research in order to verify the diffusion of the supposed variety. Nonetheless, his contribution proved extremely useful for any further research carried out in this field. Some works describing the phonological features of Estuary English will be taken into account in this chapter. Apart from the already mentioned articles written by Rosewarne in 1984 and 1994, Paul Coggle (1993), John Wells (1992), (1994) and (1997), Joanna Przedlacka (2002) and Ulrike Altendorf (2003) have shown some interest in the phenomenon.

The description made by Coggle, in the book *Do you speak Estuary? The new Standard English – How to spot it and speak it* (1993) approaching the issue from a non-scientific perspective proved pleasant to read even for the layman. Coggle introduced the issue in a light-hearted way, aiming at easily explaining the main phonological features of the accent; at the same time, through the description of some morphological and lexical characteristics, he foresaw the possible development of what was mainly described as an accent into a dialect. The perspectives of Przedlacka, Altendorf and Wells are different in that they analyse the issue through their scientific knowledge. Both Przedlacka in *Estuary English?: a sociophonetic study of teenage speech in the Home Counties* (2002) and Altendorf in *Estuary English. Levelling at the interface of RP and south-eastern British English* (2003) made a sociophonetic analysis of Estuary English in order to verify the



spread of its most frequently discussed variables. The study carried out by Altendorf was based on the data used for a sociophonetic analysis conducted in London and the south-east of England in the 1990s. Her investigation involved individuals coming from Colchester, London and Canterbury and belonging to the upper-middle, middle and working classes. The data analysed by Przedlacka involved teenagers from schools in four Home Counties: Buckinghamshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey. Both their analysis included a detailed discussion of data with reference to the use of the variables and their spread by gender, social class and age. After the analysis of the data set, they both reached the conclusion that, if any variety as Estuary English existed, it should be considered part of the more generalized phenomenon of dialect levelling. The phonetician John Wells, who summarized the many points of view about Estuary English in order to verify their scientific validity, thought that Rosewarne, to whom people must be grateful for the introduction to the topic, had not been precise in giving the definition of Estuary English, because he had defined it a Standard variety of English spoken with an accent in which features localizable in the South-east of England were included. Hence, he accepted the idea of Estuary English as an accent spoken in some specific areas of England, but he claimed that Estuary English could not be traced back to other accents as it was different from Cockney in that it used a standard grammar, and generally avoided such stigmatized phonetic characteristics as h-dropping and th-fronting, as well as it was different from Received Pronunciation in that it made use of such phonetic developments as t-glottalling, l-vocalisation, and yod coalescence.

The works proposed, as many others appeared in the 1990s and the 2000s, have been the result of the interest that Estuary English has aroused since its first description, so that many have decided to analyse it in order to verify its existence and spread in some areas of the country, and to give a definition of it. The table



presented below suggests a comparison of some approaches to the issue in order to summarize and explain the ways in which its main phonological features have been treated. It only refers to the treatment of the single features by the above mentioned linguists; any further specific aspect will be analysed later.

	ROSEWARNE (1984; 1994)	COGGLE (1993)	WELLS (1998)	PRZEDLACKA (2002)	ALTENDORF (2003)
L-VOCALISATION	+	+	+	+	+
T-GLOTTALLING	+	+	+	+	+
TH-FRONTING	Not mentioned	+	-	+	+
YOD COALESCENCE	-	+	+	Not mentioned	+
YOD DROPPING	Not mentioned	+	Not mentioned	+	+
Y-TENSING	+	Not mentioned	+	+	Not mentioned
R PRONUNCIATION	+	+	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned

Figure 12: *Estuary English variables according to Rosewarne (1984), Coggle (1993), Wells (1998), Przedlacka (2002) and Altendorf (2003)*

All scholars agreed that l-vocalisation and t-glottalling are stable variables of Estuary English. On the contrary, different outlooks have been adopted for the other features proposed in the table.

2.2.2.1 L-vocalisation

L-vocalisation is one of the features that have been observed by all the researchers mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Rosewarne, described it as a realization made by Estuary English speakers who tend to pronounce a /w/-sound instead of an /l/-sound in final position or final



cluster position. According to the study conducted by Przedlacka in the Home Counties, “the majority of tokens have a vocalic realization, usually back rounded vocoids between close-mid and close ([o] ~ [ʊ])” (Przedlacka 1999:64) In her observation on Estuary English, Altendorf highlighted that the phenomenon had already been recorded in the 17th century and information about it had already been introduced in the first edition of *The Pronunciation of English* (1909) by Jones. Spread in the 1970s as a feature of London English, it is becoming even more widespread, although it is one of the most stigmatized pronunciations and its speakers not always recognize that they are using it. Coggle listed “the positions in which this feature can be found: “end of a word, end of a syllable, before a consonant at the end of a word or syllable” (Coggle 1993:46). In addition, he underlined that “the pronunciation of l with a w-quality extends from Cockney well towards the RP end of the scale” (Coggle 1993:46). Wells, in the end, claimed that the /l/ sounds affected by this pronunciation were the dark ones in traditional RP “namely those which are not immediately followed by a vowel-sound, but rather by a consonant-sound or a potential pause” (Wells 1997:47).

2.2.2.2 T-glottalling

Rosewarne presented intervocalic glottalling as a Cockney feature, taking into account only non-intervocalic glottalling, which he mentioned among the Estuary English characteristics. In her study, Przedlacka demonstrated that glottalling was absent in the data of the speakers involved in her research in word-internal or intervocalic position. More frequently, speakers tended to produce an intervocalic glottalling before a word boundary, as in expressions like “*get_ʔ your hair cut*”. She also realized that a glottal stop was common in the pronunciation of the



personal pronoun “*it*” and when it was followed by a nasal, as in the two words “*Britain*” and “*lightning*”. Altendorf distinguished between glottal reinforcement and glottal replacement, pointing out that glottalling could affect both vowels, as in the former, and consonants, as in the latter. In her research study she only focused on the glottal replacement of the voiceless alveolar plosive /t/, as it was “the primary candidate for glottal replacement” displaying the highest range of glottal realizations. She observed that a glottal stop can be realized in the following positions:

- after a vowel, liquid or nasal;
- in syllable-final position;
- in post-tonic position

Although it is a realization found by many linguists in the dialects of English, and in the late 1970s was quite widespread, Altendorf noted that this variable is still subject to overt stigmatization, as it has always been regarded as a stereotypical characteristic of London English. According to Coggle, however, the use of a glottal stop between vowels is considered not respectable, while “over the last few decades there have been changes in RP and now only more conservative RP speakers continue to tap the /t/ in the mid-word, end-of-syllable position when the next syllable begins with a consonant” (Coggle 1993:40). Wells specified that a t-glottalling is not the same as a completely unpronounced /t/ sound and the most typical realizations of this non-sound are at the end of a syllable or a word or before another consonant sound.



2.2.2.3 Th-fronting

Th-fronting consists in the realization of the dental fricatives [θ] and [ð] by the labio-dental fricatives [f] and [v].

While Rosewarne did not mention Th-fronting among Estuary English features, Przedlacka noted that together with the dental and labio-dental fricatives, a further realization could be found, “the dental fricative, with a labial gesture, i.e. [ð^w]” (Przedlacka 1999:64). This feature was to be consistently found in the speech of two female speakers taking part in her research study. Notwithstanding this, male speakers involved in her study tended to use non standard forms more than female speakers. According to Altendorf, “Th-fronting can apply to voiceless fricatives in all positions, but to voiced fricatives only in non-initial position” (Altendorf 2003:63). The fronting of the th-sound has always been considered a working-class feature, and it still remains a low-prestige variant, associated with London English. However, it is worth highlighting its geographical spread from London to other regional accents of south-eastern England. Coggle included this feature in the group of those that are taken in Estuary “*less readily*”, since it is derived from Cockney and therefore stigmatized. Wells did not include this feature as a characteristic realization of Estuary English, confining its use only to Cockney speakers.

2.2.2.4 Yod coalescence and Yod dropping

The word TUNE is realized as /tʃu:n/ when it is subject to Yod coalescence and as /tu:n/ when it is subject to Yod dropping.

Przedlacka did not mention Yod coalescence in her study, while, according to her data, there was a substantial equality between the pronunciation realized either



with a yod or without it. On a par with Przedlacka's findings, also Altendorf warned that "the results for Yod Dropping and Yod Coalescence must be regarded with some caution" (Altendorf 2003:99) since the occurrence of these realizations was too low. However, a social differentiation must be done between the two, as Yod dropping was confined to the role of a low-prestige variant and geographically restricted to the area of London, while Yod coalescence, on the other hand, was especially realized by members of higher social classes and could be found in other geographic areas, such as in Canterbury – as a middle-class realization (Altendorf 2003).

Coggle, on the contrary, mentioned both Yod dropping and Yod coalescence without making any consistent distinction between the two. Finally, Wells only mentioned Yod coalescence as a feature of Estuary English. He never mentioned the dropping of yod as a characteristic of this linguistic phenomenon.

2.2.2.5 Y-tensing

The Y-tensing feature, described by Rosewarne as an /i:/ longer than in Received Pronunciation, especially in final position, was considered a no-effect variable by Przedlacka, who asserted that "the claim about Estuary English quality of this vowel being a diphthong with a centralised onset is not confirmed" (Przedlacka 1999:72). The three possible realizations /i:/, /i/ and /əi/ were equally divided in the counties, gender and class data sets. Y-tensing was not mentioned among the vowel sounds analysed by Altendorf as well as in Coggle. Wells, besides, mentioned it as one of the phonetic characteristics that Estuary English shares with Cockney.



2.2.2.6 R pronunciation

A special pronunciation of the r-sound, noted by Rosewarne in his 1984 article, was reported exclusively by Coggle, who explained that it “is somewhat closer in pronunciation to the American /r/ than it is in RP”.

2.2.3 Syntactic and lexical features of Estuary English

Although Estuary English has been mainly proposed as a set of pronunciation features, over the time it has been noted that some syntactic structures and lexical choices recur in the speech of Estuary speakers. Since its appearance, it has been noticed that Estuary English borrows some phonological features from Cockney but displays a correctness in syntax which approximates it to Standard English.

The following table by Altendorf (2003:11) displays some of the syntactic, morpho-syntactic and pragmatic features that were noted by Rosewarne (1984) and Coggle (1993)

<i>EE</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Rosewarne</i>	<i>Coggle</i>
<i>was</i> with plural subjects	“ <i>We was walking down the street.</i> ” (Coggle 1993, 34)	0	+
<i>Ain't</i> as negative am/is/have	“ <i>I ain't well.</i> ” (Coggle 1993, 34)	0	+
Multiple negation	“ <i>Lucy hasn't got no money.</i> ” (Coggle, 1993, 67)	0	+
Adjective form with adverbial function	“ <i>She sang real nice.</i> ” (Coggle, 1993, 69)	0	+
More frequent and aggressive use of tags in general and <i>right</i> , <i>inni</i> in particular	“ <i>Nice day, inni'?</i> ” (Coogle 1993, 66)	+	+

Figure 13: Syntactic, morpho-syntactic and pragmatic characteristics of Estuary English according to Rosewarne (1984) and Coggle (1993)



Rosewarne did not mention any of the characteristics highlighted by Coggle (1993) but a frequent use of tags and the recurring ‘*inni*’ form. As far as the multiple negation is concerned, Crystal (2003) highlighted that it is more likely that Estuary speakers use ‘*never*’ rather than multiple negation, since it is still perceived as uneducated.

As far as the lexical features attributed to Estuary English are concerned, in his 1994 article, Rosewarne emphasized the reiterated use of some words and expressions, many of which borrowed from AmE. Indeed, it is a general belief that AmE played an important role in the rise of Estuary English.

The distinctive lexical features mentioned by Coggle (1993) and Rosewarne (1994) were summarized by Altendorf (2003:12) in the following table:

<i>Standard English</i>	<i>Estuary English</i>	<i>Rosewarne (1994, 6)</i>	<i>Coggle (1993, 59-61)</i>
<i>Thank you, good bye</i>	<i>cheers</i>	+	+ (Cockneyism)
	<i>Basically</i>	+	+ (“‘filler’-word”)
<i>Here you are</i>	<i>There you go</i>	+	+ (Americanism)
<i>Sorry</i>	<i>Excuse me</i>	+ (Americanism)	-
<i>(telephone) engaged</i>	<i>busy</i>	+ (Americanism)	-
<i>Who’s speaking?</i>	<i>Who’s this?</i>	+ (Americanism)	-
<i>friend</i>	<i>mate</i>	-	+ (Cockneyism)
<i>Correct, certainly</i>	<i>Right, sure</i>	-	+ (Americanism)

Figure 14: *Lexical features of Estuary English according to Rosewarne (1984) and Coggle (1993).*

A further observation related to the main features of Estuary English concerned its suprasegmental characteristics. According to Rosewarne (1984; 1994)



Estuary speakers tend to give more prominence to elements that are generally unstressed in Received Pronunciation (e.g. prepositions and auxiliary verbs) and to use a rising-falling intonation.

However, since research studies have concentrated more on phonological than on syntactic, lexical and suprasegmental aspects of Estuary English, more detailed information from empirical studies cannot be provided. Nevertheless, Altendorf (2003:12) claimed that both Rosewarne and Coggle were imprecise in their observations since:

- *The lexical EE variants proposed by Rosewarne and Coggle are markers of a modern colloquial speech style which can occur anywhere in England and in all social classes.*
- *The grammatical EE variants proposed by Coggle are non-standard grammatical variants which are widespread throughout the whole England (see e.g. Cheshire et al. 1989). They are at best markers of a social class (i.e. the working class) with which EE is not even primarily associated.*
- *The suprasegmental characteristics proposed by Rosewarne are described in such an imprecise way that it would be almost impossible to test them. Such a test would also necessitate an elaborate design which would go far beyond the scope and interest of this study.*

2.2.4 Controversial debate on Estuary English

The description of the phonological features of Estuary English has gradually become a minor point compared to issues concerning the social and geographical spread of this linguistic phenomenon, and its position within the very English language. The studies carried out since the first appearance of the term highlighted two main controversial aspects related to it, concerning:



- its geographic location. The name Estuary English has raised problems concerning the geographical collocation of this linguistic phenomenon, which Rosewarne located “by the banks of the Thames and its estuary” (Rosewarne 1984);
- its social position and the attitude of its speakers. Rosewarne specified that it is spreading both upward and downward but it is still unresolved if Estuary English represents some more generalised changes in the English pronunciation, as Johanna Przedlacka claimed, or its spread mirrors some considerable changes within the British society.

2.2.4.1 The geography of Estuary English

The geography of Estuary English is a controversial aspect and many have tried to localize the areas of its spread and the diffusion of its main phonological features. It is a challenging matter since some of those features which were traced down to Estuary English, are also typical of other English accents, far from the area of influence of London speech.

According to Coggle, some geographical factors have fostered the rise and spread of Estuary English and they should be traced back in the period immediately after World War II, when large numbers of people had to move out of the capital city. The places they mainly moved to were the Home Counties, especially the Sussex coast, Kent and East Anglia. Moving along, they brought their accents with them and, as they were numerous enough, their behaviour influenced the dialects of the south-eastern territories.



This factor, added to the already strong influence of the capital on the surrounding areas, meant that the accents of the Home Counties came under attack from London and have in many cases been replaced by Estuary English, at least among the young people of these areas (Coggle 1993:24).

Since the beginning of the debate on Estuary English, Coggle was one of the most enthusiastic about it, and for this reason he never challenged its existence and a place within the English language and he was also confident that it would rapidly spread into larger areas of the British territory.

In her detailed study about Estuary English, Ulrike Altendorf, in order to summarize the different positions of proponents of Estuary English about its geographical spread, suggested that there are four “hypothesis” to which those who speculate about Estuary English revert:

- The Thames-Estuary hypothesis;
- The Home Counties hypothesis;
- The South-of-England hypothesis;
- The Plus-Liverpool-Plus-Glasgow hypothesis.

Altendorf used a table to clarify the positions of Rosewarne, Coggle, Wells and the media²⁴. The position of Przedlacka has been added to the original table taken from Altendorf, in order to have a wider portrait of the attitudes towards Estuary English.

²⁴ Since the appearance of the label Estuary English – which was first proposed in a newspaper article – the media have played a fundamental role in the debate about it. Journalists highlighted the changing linguistic habits of English people, mainly supporting it and sometimes being very critical. People used newspapers to express their enthusiasm about a more democratic and modern way of speaking or complaining about a slovenly and lazy pronunciation. In 1994 Maidment reported that a reader of the Sunday Times wrote a letter to the editor arguing that “the spread of Estuary English can only be described as horrifying. We are plagued with idiots on radio and television who speak English like the dregs of humanity, to the detriment of our children” (21 March 1993).



<i>Stage of development</i>	<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Rosewarne 1984, 1994</i>	<i>Coggle 1993</i>	<i>Wells 1998</i>	<i>The media</i>	<i>Przedlacka 1999</i>
<i>1st stage</i>	<i>The Thames-Estuary hypothesis</i>	+	+	+	+	+
<i>2nd stage</i>	<i>The Home Counties hypothesis</i>	+	+	+	+	+
<i>3rd stage</i>	<i>South-of-England hypothesis</i>	Rosewarne 1994	Individual features	0	0	+
<i>4th stage</i>	<i>Plus-Liverpool-Plus-Glasgow hypothesis</i>	0	0	0	+	0

Figure 15: *Hypothesis on the geographical spread of Estuary English. Table adapted from Altendorf (2003:17)*

According to the overview proposed by Altendorf, a substantial agreement about the spread of Estuary English in the areas of the Thames estuary and the Home Counties is blatant. Only the media, in a fit of enthusiasm, believe that the spread of Estuary English has joined the north of the country, while there are individual positions with respect to the diffusion of Estuary English in the whole area of the south east of England, where, according to the words of Rosewarne, “it seems to be the most influential accent” (Rosewarne 1984). Media’s attitude derives from the existence of some phonological features identified as Estuary English in many other accents of the country. Polish sociophoneticist Johanna Przedlacka, in her sociophonetic study of teenage speech in the Home Counties, claimed that “the tendencies observed in the present study are not confined to the Home Counties, their appearance having been reported in other areas of Britain” (Przedlacka 1999:97). However, she rather chose a tentative approach as she asserted that “what is known as “Estuary English” appears to be a part of more general changes” (Przedlacka 1999:97). According to her, there is no phenomenon as Estuary English; at most, there is a generalized



change in the English language which is spreading in many areas of the country, from north to south. In fact, there are no sufficient reasons to demonstrate the spreading northward of this linguistic phenomenon, and the fear that Estuary English could infiltrate some traditional accents like Glaswegian, as Harris noted in 1999, is at least questionable. Glaswegian, as any other accent, dialect or standardized language, will inevitably change, probably adopting th-fronting or other Estuary English features, but these changes must not necessarily be traced back to the fast spread of Estuary English, as also Wells commented. Neither language nor dialect is a monolithic entity, but it has a natural development, which differentiates it from dead languages.

2.2.4.2 The social portrait of Estuary English

If accent can represent a social marker, the social relevance and value of accent is felt in the British society more than in any other place. Here, accents mainly represent the way to identify the geographic origin of a speaker. The social importance of conforming to the standard of Received Pronunciation in the English language was well expressed by Mugglestone when claiming that “How one spoke could, it seemed, be of more importance at times than what one said” (Mugglestone 1995:88); moreover, it is also stressed by the strong split among the accents on the English territory where, more than everywhere else,

accent functions in reality as a social symbol as well as a marker of group membership and as a signal of solidarity, able to operate within the range of social groupings in society, signaling patterns of inclusion and exclusion, of ‘belonging’ and ‘outsiders’ (Mugglestone 1995:50).



However, many of the social connotations and values traditionally attached to Received Pronunciation belong to a mythic vision of language. The fact that people no more speak hyperlectal Received Pronunciation could be the real reason that attracted the interest of many in the issue of Estuary English, as the main representative mesolectal form of the English language, which best accommodates to an image of democracy and sharing of middle-class values. From this perspective, Estuary English really seems to represent the in-between variety.

The portrait of the linguistic overview of the English language displayed that Estuary English, whatever its role within it, is the means of communication of common people and it is considered the best one to choose to give voice to those who either want to share or recognize themselves in the middle-class values, whereas people who speak with an RP accent are exposed to the negative judgment of being ‘posh’ and ostentatious. On the other hand, although

the stereotype assumes that Estuary English marks its speakers as members of the lower strata of British society, Estuary English is now spoken across a very wide social spectrum, and, contrary to popular belief, there are among Estuary English speakers growing numbers of professional people, many of them academically educated and highly qualified (Coggle 1993:73).

This claim by Coggle helps to introduce the proposal made by Altendorf in reference to the social extension of Estuary English. The three hypothesis she referred to were:

- **Middle-ground-accent-hypothesis** which “claims that Estuary English is an intermediate accent spoken by speakers belonging to the middle classes of society ranging from the lower middle to the upper middle class” (Altendorf 2003:18). This hypothesis partly proves acceptable if it is taken into account



the assertion that Estuary English is a middle-ground accent. It is questionable, however, if Estuary English is only thought of as the accent of that specific social group which stands in the middle ground, whereas the continuous social mobility as well as the style shift put into effect by any speaker according to the situation are ignored.

- **New-RP hypothesis**, which asserts that “Estuary English is developing into the new RP” (Altendorf 2003:18). In this perspective Estuary English could be considered as an intermediate accent, enjoying a covert prestige, which is gradually replacing Received Pronunciation. Furthermore, a more enthusiastic approach is to be attributed to Coggle who deals with an hybridization of Received Pronunciation, which is acquiring many characteristics derived from London speech, especially Cockney. In this regard, a substitution cannot be possible, since Estuary English is rather one of the names attributed to a wider phenomenon of dialect levelling involving both Received Pronunciation and other spoken varieties;
- **Estuary English-as-register-hypothesis**, based on the idea that “Estuary English is a register used by speakers of other accents as part of an effort of audience design. These speakers can approach Estuary English from a more marked social or regional accent background as well as from RP-background. Especially the latter case is a favourite with the media and described frequently with regard to prominent speakers in the public eye” (Altendorf 2003:18). The idea connected to this hypothesis is that some people choose to acquire some non standard features in order to move downward on the social scale. The difference with the Middle-ground-accent-hypothesis lies on the relevance assigned to the pragmatic ability of speakers to modulate their register and accent through style shift, that is the “ability to move between two or more



accents which enables the speaker to show his sense of community variously with the educated speakers of RP or with groups who express their regional or class identity by a non-standard accent” (Honey 1989:158).

The idea connected to this last hypothesis is that some people choose to adopt Estuary English as their privileged means of communication as well as communion. However, what distinguishes the linguistic attitude of these speakers, who are usually RP speakers, is a careful and targeted selection of the features identified within Estuary English to move downward on the sociolinguistic continuum, avoiding to go too far downward. The concept of Estuary English ‘pool of features’, that will be central in the following paragraphs, can be defined as the set of non standard linguistic variables identified as Estuary that any speaker, consciously or unconsciously, selects at any different stage of life, in any communicative situation, according to the medium, in order to create the image to offer to the audience. According to Altendorf, the ‘pool of features’ helps those speakers to acquire more credibility among common people and to verge on the values and ideas of a speech community to which they do not belong. This is to say that Estuary English is enjoying a covert prestige which is allowing it to be preferred by the most.

2.3 Style shift from Received Pronunciation to Estuary English: accommodation and group-level association

The Estuary English-as register-hypothesis is based on the idea that RP speakers select a ‘pool of features’ from ‘lower’ varieties in a process of style shift,



that is “shift into and out of different language varieties, and shifts in usage levels for features associated with these varieties” (Schilling-Estes 2004:376). Style shift can be either a conscious process grounded by a deliberate selection and use of linguistic features in order to achieve a specific communicative purpose - or an unconscious behaviour, whereby speakers use features that they do not even realise they are using. Following the Audience Design model²⁵, first proposed by Allan Bell, “people engage in style shifting, not in response to shifts in amount of attention paid to speech, but in response to audience members” (Schilling-Estes 2004:383). Hence, “speakers tend to adjust their speech toward that of their addressees, in order to win their approval” (Schilling-Estes 2004:383) and to signal in-group solidarity or express personal affiliation.

We express who we are with fine nuance and no little grace, selecting linguistic variants contingent upon the setting in which we are speaking and on not only our own class, sex, age, ethnicity, style and much more, but also contingent upon all those things in the people we are speaking to (Chambers 2004:370).

The aims achieved through upward or downward style shifting are very different in terms of addressee’s perception. Therefore, the aware choice to shift up or down along the accent continuum mainly depends on the speech community the addresser wants to turn to and on the outcome it is intended to produce. Indeed, language is a symbolic currency: mastery of the standard language can buy institutional power; mastery of urban language can buy street credibility. According to the empirical literature on the effects of speakers’ accents on interpersonal evaluations, speakers either using or shifting to the standard language are generally perceived as high in

²⁵ Audience Design theory by Bell is based on the idea that speakers design their talk for their hearers. This process can involve both switching from one language to another in bilingual contexts and style shift.



social status, intelligent, competent, self-confident and wealthy, whereas they do not enjoy a good evaluation in terms of social attractiveness, being mainly considered posh and old-fashioned. On the contrary, speakers of non standard varieties have been shown to enjoy a ‘covert prestige’ in that they can, on occasion, be upgraded on solidarity traits and in-group cohesion. Therefore, speakers using or shifting to those variables are attached feelings of friendliness, social attractiveness and trustworthiness.

Increasing behavioral similarity along a dimension as salient as speech is likely to increase a speaker’s attractiveness, predictability and perceived supportiveness, intelligibility and interpersonal involvement in the eyes of the recipient (Giles 1991:18).

Thus, the choice to speak with an accent different from the one the speaker generally uses and with which he/she is identified, falls within the field of sociosituational variation, being it mainly dependent on the setting and the relationship existing or to be established between the addresser and the addressee.

Studies on intercultural encounters provide ample evidence that listeners generally evaluate speakers more by non-content than by content features of the message. In other words, how something is said can convey a stronger impression of a speaker than what the speaker actually says (Giles, Wilson & Conway 1981). Accents are among the strongest non-content verbal cues and the most powerful either, especially in societies with such a social relevance for speakers’ accents.

Although sometimes speakers consciously tend to diverge from their interlocutors’ speech, according to Giles and Coupland (1991), accommodation mainly promotes convergence,

[...] a strategy whereby individuals adapt to each other’s communicative behaviors in terms of a wide range of



linguistic-prosodic-nonverbal features. [...] Thus, convergence through speech and nonverbal behaviors is one of the many strategies that may be adopted to become more similar to another, involving the reduction of linguistic dissimilarities (Giles 1991:7;18).

However, as Giles (1991) noted, convergence – as in the cases that will be analysed within the Estuary English-as-register-hypothesis – may be just the result of an “artifact on occasion”, a parenthesis limited to a single performance in which accommodation to the listener’s accent becomes a useful tool to mark a common ground with the interlocutor. Style shifting is only one of the possible ways to do that, since

There are many ways of performing acts we could deem to be accommodative, many reasons for doing or not doing so, and a wide range of specifiable outcomes (Giles 1991:3).

In a wider, long-term perspective, even this type of “occasional accommodation”, if reiterated through imitation and linguistic contact can result in a trend leading to linguistic innovation and change. Indeed,

differences in accent – perhaps involving simply the differential use of post-vocalic [r’], or word-initial [h], or [t]-glottalling – have the potential to be more decisive than other dialect features such as grammar or lexis, because they may be salient in every social encounter in daily life (Honey 2000:106).

The most pressing reasons leading people to accommodate to the speech of other speakers is identity, the need to feel a sense of communion and belonging to a social group. According to Le Page

individuals create (the use of this word does not imply consciousness or “rationality”) their linguistic system so as to resemble those of the group or groups they wish from time to time to be identified with, or so as to distinguish themselves from those they wish to distance themselves from (Le Page 2000:29).



Speakers' aim when accommodating to the speech of a group is to join a speech community whose linguistic behaviour is considered desirable in social terms. Speaking with an RP accent in the England of the 19th century, for instance, meant to belong to the speech community of wealthy, educated and powerful people. That special position in society could only be reached through money and language. Thus, learning and "performing" an RP accent was fundamental to distinguish a person's social origin and background from that of the others'. As far as the contemporary situation is concerned, the modern trend is to partially adapt to a non standard rather than a standard accent, since many non standard features are actively spreading in the speech of the main promoters of linguistic innovation and change: young speakers. There are at least two main forces behind this behaviour: firstly, in an attempt to sound more modern, desirable and credible, youngsters decide to avoid variants they perceive as particularly indicative of their local roots, social class and origin; they delete any features which could be traced back to the speech of their old-fashioned parents, or the established ruling class; secondly, young speakers – in particular adolescents – are subject to peer group pressure so that "the vernacular takes on a special role: its use becomes symbolic of the construction of identity, a means by which adolescents can align themselves with some speaker groups and differentiate from others" (Foulkes & Docherty 2007:57). In order to state their belonging to a particular "fashionable" group of youngsters, and in order to be completely accepted within it, they modify their speech habits and acquire a new linguistic behaviour.

However, according to the Estuary English-as register-hypothesis, the aware selection of a 'pool of features' to establish a solidarity among the interlocutors, does not imply a complete convergence toward the addressee's linguistic traits, rather the "occasional accommodation" mentioned earlier in the paragraph.



Therefore, the addresser consciously decides which features are more suitable to establish the desired degree of solidarity, avoiding to recur to an overabundant and useless convergence.

2.4 A perceptual study on Estuary English

Since the appearance of the term, the supposed positive evaluations of Estuary English as a ‘democratic’, modern form of speaking have been pointed out and a continuous reference and comparison with the negative evaluations to which Received Pronunciation is subject have been proposed. However, a few perceptual studies have been carried out to demonstrate if and how people actually grant it those values. An empirical study was carried out in 1999 by Haenni, who interviewed a group of 84 people, all non linguists²⁶ from all over the United Kingdom. The study was conducted submitting the participants to three different tasks and was aimed at:

- studying the state of affairs of Estuary English;
- verifying if people have any idea and perception of Estuary English as a variety;
- drawing Estuary English on the map of the English dialects.

A further and more remarkable aim of the study was to verify the impact of Estuary English on English speakers and the feedback it produced, in order to have a deeper

²⁶ Most of the participants were taking part in the National Trust Volunteer Holidays.



insight into people's beliefs about the concept. The first task demanded the respondents to outline the main speech areas of the British mainland on a blank map. The results demonstrated that people had an almost confused idea of the map of regional dialects in Britain, with many imprecise collocations. For this and other reasons, Estuary English was not listed as a geographically precise variety. The second task aimed at having a survey of the perception people had about language, and the way they perceived Estuary English in terms of its similarities and/or differences with Received Pronunciation. Respondents resulted to be unfamiliar with Estuary English as both a dialect and an accent, actually not reporting it on their maps. However, they were familiar with a term that had had an impressive media impact for at least a decade. This was probably due to the ambiguous position of Estuary English on the linguistic continuum, shifting progressively between Received Pronunciation and Cockney features. As a matter of fact, it is noteworthy that many of the respondents in Haenni's study were also unfamiliar with the concept of Received Pronunciation, which, on the contrary, is the standard of reference, with well-defined descriptions in grammars and books.

In Haenni's study, three Estuary English speakers were selected together with two RP speakers, a Cockney and a Birmingham speaker. According to Haenni's description, Speaker 1 (Estuary English) "is very close to the Cockney end of the continuum" (Haenni 1999:77), while Speaker 5 "might well serve as an example of somebody who has deliberately 'downgraded' his accent" (Haenni 1999:77). All the speakers had to be judged in terms of a series of characteristics which had been selected as means to verify not only the status of Estuary English and the perception people have of it, but also if there are any of the conditions to support the idea – especially proposed and sometimes contested by the media – that Estuary English could become the new Received Pronunciation.



	Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3	Speaker 4	Speaker 5	Speaker 6	Speaker 7
	Estuary	Estuary	Cockney	RP	Estuary	Birmingham	RP
Modernity	5.04	4.26	2.44	3.64	4.63	3.28	4.26
Urbanity	5.31	3.70	4.30	4.07	4.93	4.37	4.48
Correctness	3.18	4.47	2.64	5.31	3.75	4.01	4.87
Standardness	3.52	4.39	2.92	4.81	3.76	3.78	4.82
Unaffected	4.49	3.84	4.73	2.81	4.30	3.52	3.88
Unpleasantness	3.35	4.53	3.55	4.29	3.25	3.67	4.44
Animation	4.12	4.76	3.82	3.47	4.87	3.99	4.28
Streetwisdom	4.89	3.79	4.07	3.22	4.86	3.84	4.07
Competence	4.18	4.90	3.24	4.85	4.27	4.03	4.96
Estuary?	5.14	3.13	3.27	2.00	4.20	2.53	2.87

Figure 16: Detailed ratings of voice samples in Haenni's perceptual study on Estuary English (1997)

As far as people's perception is concerned, it is evident that although respondents did not regularly recognize Estuary English speakers, they almost agreed about their perception and evaluation. Speaker 1 was mainly classified by the respondents as a London voice, with some of them locating him somewhere within the Home Counties. On the contrary, Speaker 2 was difficult to locate for many of the respondents who could not place him precisely but in the Home Counties, highlighting his being influenced by broadcasters' BBC accent. Finally, Speaker 5 like Speaker 1, was identified by 39 respondents as "some kind of London voice". Thus, Speaker 2 was rated higher than Speakers 1 in terms of *correctness*, *standardness* and *competence*, finding himself more on the RP side of the accent continuum than Speaker 1. On the contrary, he was rated lower in terms of *modernity*, *urbanity* and *streetwisdom*, even though his rating was in any case



positive (over 3.50). The low score (3.13) in terms of Estuary English identification was the result of an extremely varied series of judgments by the respondents, not completely convinced that he was an Estuary English speaker. Finally, Speaker 5 achieved a rating which was similar to that of Speaker 1 and higher than Speaker 2 in terms of *modernity*, *urbanity* and *streetwisdom*. Speaker 7, classified by Haenni as an RP speaker, whose scores in *modernity* (4.26), *urbanity* (4.48) and *streetwisdom* (4.07) were high compared to those of the other RP speaker (Speaker 4), represented “the perfect balance by combining the key features correctness and modernity without sounding too affected” (Haenni 1999:111), and even though the respondents quite unanimously recognized him as a non-Estuary English speaker, according to Haenni “in general, he sounds ‘less RP’ than #4, therefore, he might serve well to explore the RP-EE boundary” (Haenni 1999:78).

The comparison among Estuary English, Cockney and RP speakers in terms of public perception can be summarized as follows:

- The Cockney speaker had low, negative ratings for both *correctness* and *standardness*, being largely attached all the stereotypes of non standard low-status varieties’ speakers. However, the speaker was rated low in *modernity* although he was recognized as a urban voice.
- The “canonical” RP Speaker 4, was very high in *correctness* and *standardness*, but he was also considered the most ‘affected’. His low-average score in terms of modernity was mainly due to respondents 50+ (4.84) whose evaluation, compared to that of the youngest group of speakers (<29) (2.76) highlighted the gap between the two generations. “For older generations, RP is still the ‘state of the art’ variety, while for younger people, it is definitely a thing of the



past. In terms of correctness and standardness, however, RP is still ‘going strong’” (Haenni 1999:108).

- Although only less than 20% of the respondents had heard the term Estuary English before the interview and their mental map of Estuary English proved quite vague and confused, they described and mainly evaluated Estuary English speakers making continuous reference to the two ends of the continuum, as the following quotations demonstrate “it is less refined than RP”; “[spoken by] someone with a 'good' accent who talks in a slightly colloquial way”; “a weak form of London accent”; “Cockney-type speech”. All these assertions were in line with Altendorf’s statement that Estuary English “comprises features of RP as well as non-standard London English thus borrowing the positive prestige from both accents without committing itself to either” (Altendorf cited in Středová 2007:24). The positive prestige enjoyed by Estuary English in terms of linguistic features and social evaluation has been further confirmed by the gender preferences emphasized in the study. According to Haenni,

Women tended to slightly ‘upgrade’ the non-standard variety, while the two RP voices were slightly ‘downgraded’. [...] it may be indicative of a general trend in which non-standard varieties are increasingly viewed more positively (both women and men rated sample #1 as the most ‘modern’ voice). This would also correspond to Milroy, Milroy and Hartley’s argument that women are actually creating prestige forms by favouring traditionally non-standard forms (Haenni 1999:115).



2.5 The ‘phonological pragmatics’ of Estuary English

Haenni’s study probably gave academic relevance to what, until then, was only a general belief. Respondents, although not familiar with the notion of Estuary English, however confirmed its role as an alternative accent to Received Pronunciation and the “best means of communication” in a urban setting where geographical and social origins are no longer so relevant because of the multilingualism and multiculturalism which characterize it. It could be objected that a variety recognized by the speakers as urban already existed and its phonological traits could be selected to be used in style shift, even more so that the phonological features of Estuary English are derived from Cockney. However, apart from the many differences in the phonological contexts where the variables are used, the negative stereotypes attached to Cockney and its speakers are so deeply entrenched in people’s perception that it would take a very long time to modify them. Thus, since the interrelation between the evaluation of a language and that of its speakers is ingrained in the society, a speaker who would decide to use Estuary English phonological features could enjoy that positive evaluation in the society allowing him/her to be perceived as modern, young and credible. Speakers can “play” with its phonology and enjoy its undeniable covert prestige in order to address to a wide audience, gain resonance and public approval, because

even though an accent is a deeply coded facet of communicative practice, and part of what Boudieu calls the habitus (an ingrained communicative disposition laid down during socialisation), people certainly retain a degree of freedom and control over their own strategic operations through accent. Within limits, a speaker opts to use particular features or styles in preference to alternatives, anticipating



*that his or her performance will have particular sorts of impact
on listeners and on the social situation (Coupland 2009:313).*

Performing with Estuary English variables can be inscribed in the socio-stylistic dimension of language since it is not a variety in its own right, but the use of features ascribable to it varies according to both social and situational factors.

The stylistic choice of a non standard accent in specific socio-situational conditions makes Estuary English become a semiotic resource whose pragmatic effort is the construction of a group-level association. This linguistic behavior could be ascribed to “phonological pragmatics” since the use of phonological features of a non standard accent, by non usual speakers of that accent, follows a precise discursive strategy. The locutionary act takes on an even stronger significance than usual, in that not only what the speaker says, but even more how he/she says it, is addressee-oriented. Thus, behind what could be defined the “phonological strategy” of the speaker, lies a communicative intention as proposed in his early work by Grice (1989). It is social rather than individual and satisfies the following characteristic properties:

- It is always oriented towards some other agent – the addressee
- It is intended to be recognized by the addressee
- Its satisfaction consists precisely in being recognized by the addressee



2.6 Conclusion

The present chapter has demonstrated that Estuary English has been long studied and analysed from different perspectives. However, because many agree that it is a middle-ground variety, it has been mainly identified in terms of diastratic variation. Although its impressive social relevance has been stressed over the years, less attention has been paid to the way it is used by the members of the different social classes according to the situations and contexts. Perceptual studies, moreover, demonstrate that Estuary English, whatever its status, is generally attached positive evaluations by speakers who perceive it as a ‘modern’ and ‘democratic’ way of communicating.

On the wake of the Estuary English-as register-hypothesis, proposed by Altendorf (2003), next chapter will provide case studies of relevant personalities who, with a higher or lower degree of awareness, create and subsequently shift ‘on occasion’ into the Estuary English ‘pool of features’ in order to be attached the same positive evaluation attributed to it. This behaviour moves the perspective from a diastratic level to a diaphasic one.



Chapter three

The ‘pool of features’ theory: some case studies

*Many people who were born to privilege
or have achieved success through education and career
are made to feel that the old class distinctions
that used to operate in their favour
are socially divisive and can now even be disadvantageous to them.*
(Honey 1989:83)

3.1 Introduction

Changes in society, in people’s perception of language in all its varieties and changes in the way social groups interact with each other, have brought to a new linguistic panorama in the United Kingdom. The gradual and continuous social transformation has resulted in a linguistic convergence which has produced and is ever-increasingly producing new mechanisms in the way people both choose their language and operate with it.

This chapter will deal with the way relevant personalities, whose variety is – or at least is assumed to be – Received Pronunciation due to their social origin and afforded education, decide to play with accent and shift towards non standard features, identified as the Estuary English ‘pool of features’. Personalities analysed thereafter belong to those categories that are generally associated with standard



pronunciation: politicians, the Royal Family and BBC journalists, who are in the public eye for most of their life, are observed and judged, but also imitated; thus, theirs is an important role even in the construction of people's personal and linguistic identity.

Although the studied and targeted use of language in politics has been widely emphasized, Tony Blair has marked a turning point for his way of using and adjusting his language, in both pronunciation and discourse construction. Extracts of speeches will be analysed in a synchronic perspective in order to emphasize the main differences between the accent used by Tony Blair and the one used by other relevant figures in politics like conservative Margaret Thatcher and John Major. A diachronic analysis, furthermore, will allow to establish which variables have progressively and consistently entered Tony Blair's 'pool of features' together with the time, space and manner established for their use. Tony Blair's linguistic attempts to create a sense of identity with voters and to be perceived as a person to be relied on does not represent an isolated case. A similar attitude has been recorded in Labour Member of Parliament David Miliband whose linguistic strategies remind those of his predecessor. A diachronic analysis of two extracts of speeches will be the starting point to detect the variables belonging to Miliband's 'pool of features' and describe his progressive shift towards a more 'relaxed' accent.

The Royal Family also constitutes a relevant speech community to be analysed in order to study changes in language towards a more 'popular' variety. An analysis of extracts of interviews involving some members of the Royal Family will display how the slight 'democratising' trend started by Princess Diana in the first half of the 1990s is being followed nowadays by her popular son Prince William whose accent will also be compared to his bride's, commoner Miss Catherine Middleton. The accents of Prince William and Miss Catherine Middleton in the same context – the



interview they granted on 16th November 2010, after the announcement of their marriage – will be confronted in order to investigate the strategies followed by the speakers and the degree of relevance the ‘talking proper’ concept still has in the British society.

BBC journalists, however, are probably the most relevant speakers to be taken into account, as Received Pronunciation is also known as BBC English. Since the recent changes in BBC accent policy, after decades of use of Received Pronunciation, many journalists could be proposed as representatives of the new linguistic trends recorded by the national broadcasting. However, Simon Reeve has been chosen as a sample to be analysed since he shows off a wide ‘pool of features’ and interesting style shift dynamics of inclusion/exclusion.

Compared with the above mentioned categories, an equally prominent role and the same media exhibition also characterize the category of singers. Although artists are not generally associated with Received Pronunciation, singers have a relevant role in the promotion of new trends and sometimes they deliberately choose to detach from their original accent in favour of a more ‘marked’ one. British pop star Lily Allen has been taken into account for both her popularity among young people, who are the main source of linguistic innovation and change, and for her deliberate shift towards a different accent. An equally relevant behaviour is the one recorded in another successful British pop star: Adele. The analysis will demonstrate that the two singers adopt different strategies with a unique common denominator: shift from their original accent towards a ‘cooler’ one.



3.2 Selection of data and linguistic variables

The analysis carried out in this chapter is mainly based on data collected from the web. Extracts have been selected in consideration of:

- Synchronic factors to emphasize the presence/absence of non standard features in the speech of the speakers selected;
- Diachronic factors to verify if the shift has occurred in each speaker over the years;
- Diamesic factors to introduce and better understand the situation and the medium of each communicative act;
- Pragmatic factors to highlight the perlocutionary value of any speech.

The selection of variables for the purpose of this study follows the description of Estuary English (see chapter 2). However, not all the variables have been investigated and a selection of the following has been made:

- T-glottalling in word final position;
- T-glottalling in intervocalic position;
- L-vocalisation;
- Th-fronting;
- H-dropping

The final aim of the analysis is to investigate Estuary English from an uncommon perspective, trying to state evidence that a diaphasic dimension could be taken into account along with diastratic, diatopic and diamesic factors.



3.3 Estuary English in politics

"People in public life -- particularly, perhaps, people in politics -- need always to avoid the impression that they are in a world apart, in a sort of upper crust," said Lord Quirk, a linguist.

"On the other hand, they have to avoid giving the impression that they're talking down and joining in the yobbos, as it were.

It is a very difficult mix to achieve."
(Lyll 1998 on The New York Times)

Politics is a field where language is fundamental in order to win people's appreciation and trust, which will result in votes. In Norman Fairclough's (2000: 3) words, "language has always been important in politics and government. [...] But language has become significantly more important over the past few decades because of social changes which have transformed politics and government". In this respect, Tony Blair represented, with no doubts, the new politician, the one who changed his way of communicating in accordance with the changes in society, and to a narrower extent, to his audience and communicative needs.

3.3.1 Tony Blair: the power of style shift for leadership

Tony Blair has been a revolutionary figure in the political scenery of the United Kingdom for both his politics and his charismatic personality. When in 1997 he presented himself as the candidate for the Labour Party, he took part in a huge project of renewal, since the Labour Party proposed as the New Labour and like



Thatcherism²⁸ before, the Third Way was a response to a new environment, to the social and economic transformation of Britain, to the decline of its traditional industry, to the loss of meaning in the concept of ‘working class’ and to the massive advance of globalisation. Vis-à-vis with this rapidly evolving scenario, Blair could not present himself as just a politician, the umpteenth old style one, and he was not meant to be only a political leader. The multifaceted structure of the country required him to propose as a media personality, to fit the process of ‘mediatisation’ through which even politics and government were going. His aim was to transfer, first and foremost, an idea of change and innovation in a ‘liquid modern’²⁹ society. Although many thought that the landslide victory of the Labour Party would have stopped the development of the neo-liberal politics pursued by Margaret Thatcher, the party in fact took that transformation a step further (see Fairclough 2000; Jessop 2003).

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the main innovation brought by Tony Blair and his New Labour was a logically resulting new language, strongly required by a party that defined itself as new, “openly committed to a radical and modernizing reform of the British state apparatus and its economic and social policies” (B.Jessop 2003:1). Many studies³⁰ have been carried out in order to analyse the discursive strategies used by Tony Blair, the way he addressed the electorate and the recurrence of words and expressions to transmit the idea of a new political force. We report here the one carried out by L’Hôte and Lemmens (2009), comparing the Manifestos of both the Labour and the Conservative parties in 1997,

²⁸ Thatcherism can be considered the period in which Margaret Thatcher ruled the country, as well as the government of John Major, which has been defined “Thatcherism with a grey face”.

²⁹ ‘*Liquid modern*’ is a society in which the conditions under which its members act change faster than it takes for the ways of acting to consolidate into habits and routines. Liquidity of life and that of society feed and reinvigorate each other. (Bauman 2005: 1)

³⁰ Studies on the communicative skills of Tony Blair can be divided according to the interest of researchers on his rhetoric (see De Michelis 2003; van Dijk 2008; Ring 2008 and Engelbert 2012), the construction of discourse related to burning issues like the ‘war on terror’ (see Chantarawandi 2008 and Raicu 2011) or a comparison with other leaders’ discursive strategies .



2001 and 2005. This comparison demonstrated that the percentage of words and expressions related to newness and innovation was higher in the Labour Manifesto than in the Conservative one. The word ‘new’, for instance, occurred 435 times in the former and 152 in the latter; furthermore it did not occur only in combination with the word ‘Labour’, as expected, but it was ubiquitous. “Newness is also expressed through words such as renewal or verbs like introduce, create, reform or modernise, as well as adjectives like modern” (L’Hôte & Lemmens 2009).

On a phonological level, the innovation brought by Tony Blair had a great resonance within the country as well as abroad, and even the foreign press emphasized his use of ‘uneducated’ English. Thus, the *British Independent* noted that “even the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, has lapsed into "Estuary English" by dropping his "Ts" while speaking of a "better Britain"” (Watson-Smyth 1999); the American *The New York Times* asked: “where were the Prime Minister's T's? What happened to his H's? Why, when he tried to say, "They put on a little show for us" did it come out as, "They pu' on a li'l show for us?"” (Lyall 1998); and even the Italian *Corriere della Sera* headlined “Blair tradisce l'inglese colto. Il premier ora parla "Estuary English" e scandalizza i puristi” (Persivale 1998). Furthermore, language purists were absolutely dismayed by this linguistic behaviour, as the American journalist Lyall reported in her article:

I was left screaming: “Tony, you're a public-school, Oxbridge-educated lawyer” Brian Reade wrote in The Daily Mirror. “Why are you patronizing us?” Anne Shelley, vice president of the Queen's English Society, said, “I was very disappointed with Tony Blair” referring to the way he dropped his T's, she added, “His speech was slovenly and the glottal stop was the ugliest of the lot (Lyall 1998).

His progressive shift towards the use of non standard phonological features had an even major resonance as it moved into the heated debate – opened a few years after



Rosewarne's article and continued in the second half of the 1990s – about the existence, influence and spread of Estuary English. The use of the non standard phonological features and the creation of his Estuary English 'pool of features' was unexpected for a public-school-Oxbridge-lawyer with such a prestigious education³¹. From the earliest age he was taught and used to speak Received Pronunciation and after years of speaking it, he started to modify his accent. His shift, however, was situational and characterized him especially when speaking to lower classes and young people. Furthermore, as Wells highlighted in 1998,

Tony Blair's accent is noticeably more glottal when he appears on popular television programmes, such as the Des O'Connor Show, than when he is making a political speech. Tony Blair exhibits flexibility, which is a good thing. Your accent is a badge you wear, which tells people what sort of person you are. If you can be flexible, then you can fit in with many groups
(Wells cited in Rogaliński 2011:19)

His situational accent shift was perceived by some people as a populist attempt to get more votes from people of lower classes, while many considered it as a further and relevant step towards a new idea of politics and country where "what matters is what works". His idea of a politician was that of a common man who was interested in the real problems of real people, detaching from the 'traditional' way of being in politics and the old-fashioned image of a politician, as the following statement demonstrates:

Maybe Blair's dad found that change unsettling, too. But again, it's a generational thing. Here is the youngest prime minister in almost 200 years, the first to have a child born during his Downing Street tenancy since 1849. "Sometimes I forget I'm prime minister," he told the Sun soon after he reached number 10. "To me, I'm just Tony Blair." Even now he sometimes sounds as though he would prefer to keep things that way. Except when he uses a text; and sometimes even then Blair's style is full of attempts to create a sense of complicity. At times

³¹ Tony Blair was born in Scotland and, before studying jurisprudence at St. John's College in Oxford, he had attended Fettes College in Edinburgh.



he is as prone to "you knows" as a Premiership footballer. He likes to warn of hard choices: he may be this friendly bloke, but that doesn't make him a soft touch, a pushover. But here again there is a kind of complicity: "Let me spell out the tough choices ..." (i.e. here is something I'm sharing with you). The warnings are tempered with reassurance: "I know how you feel," says the subliminal message. "Trust me. It won't be that bad." "I tell you in all honesty," he will sometimes say at a crucial moment - a curious tactic, since it might inspire the cynical to wonder about the relative honesty of what he's been saying before. (McKie 2002)

Thus, "in his speeches and interviews there is always a mix between the vernacular language of the normal person and the public language of politics" (Fairclough, 2000:8). Adopting t-glottalling and other non-prestigious features in his speech represented an opportunity for Blair to get the attention of a wider audience to which he could propose his new political project. And it demonstrated successful since, during the 1997 elections he got 13.518.167 votes and 418 seats, respectively 3.917.224 votes and 243 seats more than the Conservative candidate John Major.

3.3.2 New and Conservative: Tony Blair vs. John Major³²

While Mrs. Thatcher's successor, John Major, stuck to a bland if synthetic form of Received Pronunciation, Mr. Blair seems to be the first Prime Minister to have used Estuary English publicly. (Lyal 1998)

Tony Blair's predecessors, Conservative PM John Major, and even more former PM Margaret Thatcher, showed off all their elocution skills during their entire political career. Especially Conservative Margaret Thatcher, daughter of a

³² Although some claimed that John Major was the first to use Estuary English (Cordisco 1998 reported that "John Major è stato ascoltato pronunciare la tanto discussa /l/ vocalizzata. Ecco una sua frase esemplificativa: «*Britain will (will) benefit from this latest fall (fawll) in the pound*»), l-vocalisation is the only non standard feature identifiable in his speech and it is mainly due to phenomena of co-articulation. Thus, it does not seem to be a relevant characteristics of his accent.



grocer, who raised in politics and social prestige thanks to the education she managed to receive studying at Oxford University and taking private elocution lessons, “adapted her accent to the rather posh, marked RP” (Honey 1989:137) people were used to listening to when she was MP (from 1959) and Cabinet Minister (1970). Opposite to Mrs. Thatcher, Tony Blair – son of a lawyer and educated at St. John's College, Oxford, where he himself obtained a law degree (see footnote 15) – made himself the protagonist of an extensive and remarkable shift towards a more democratic language which should have brought to a democratization of society, where class division was nothing more than a distant memory.

In 1997, before the elections, the traditional parliamentary confrontation between PM candidates took place and Blair and Major confronted on a series of subjects. During the debate, Blair could resort to his diaphasic abilities showing off his skills as an orator in order to display both his political distance from the Conservative candidate and the innovative power of his communicative strategy. Since it has been noticed that Blair's shift into Estuary English is mainly concerned with the means of communication and the audience, the diamesic dimension of the extract to be analysed is to be described. The candidates were live on the BBC, addressing to a large audience, but, although they were on TV, the context was formal and their aim was to convince people that the opponent's arguments were not so valid as his owns in order to get voters' approval. In that particular occasion, however, Tony Blair spotted his interventions with some Estuary English features – especially t-glottalling and l-vocalisation both in word final position – that constituted his ‘pool of features’ and that many identified later as his ‘new accent’. The occasional style shift produced by his selection of non standard features was not reiterated in the whole speech and did not affect the same words systematically.



In order to verify the use and recurrence of the Estuary ‘pool of features’ in Tony Blair’s speeches, an analysis of extracts will be provided. The recurrence of each variable will be relevant to define the position Tony Blair fills on the accent continuum. The analysis will follow the transcription of relevant excerpts, where the main non standard variables are used and reported with IPA symbols.

Following is a brief cross-talk between Tony Blair and John Major which will provide a synchronic description of their accent. The phonological transcription will focus only on Tony Blair’s ‘pool of features’ and the realization of every non standard variable in different phonological contexts. Any further alleged variable belonging to other non standard accents will not be taken into account.

John Major: [...] *Behind closed doors he says one thing, in public another. Not the politics of conviction but convenience, saying anything to get a vote. And that is what he applicates to his candidates.*

Tony Blair : *Madam Speaker, yeah, Madam Speaker...If I can...Madam Speaker, the Labour Party pu? its Manifesto to its membership and go? 95% support. I doubt that he could put his Manifesto to his cabinet and get 95% support. After all I was only asking him to agree with what he himself said a few weeks ago. Wew, if he can say that he now expects Conservative candidates to do that. Has he sti^w the vestige of authority and courage left to stand on that dispatch box and say now that at least he strongly urges and seeks to persuade Conservative candidates to stand on his under government’s position?*

The whole speech represented by the above-mentioned illustrative extract allows to infer that John Major stood on the traditional side of politics, proposing conservative ideas in a conservative language – Received Pronunciation – while Tony Blair did



not. However, although there were some noteworthy features traceable back to Estuary English which give evidence that Blair has the Estuary ‘pool of features’, he did not completely yield to it diverging from Received Pronunciation. On the contrary, he rather chose to alternate standard and non standard realizations of the same sound in order to place in the middle, to prove neither too posh nor too grass-roots. Actually, while he used a glottal stop for the verbs *put* and *get* in the first sentence, he did not repeat this realization in the second one, where he pronounced /pʊt/ and /get/. Also the word *that* was not always pronounced with a glottal stop. The same process also involved the words with a dark /ɪ/ in final position: Blair vocalized both *well* and *still* but not *all*. Such a ‘limited’ ‘pool of features’ appearing at intervals in Tony Blair’s speech, as in the excerpt, is indicative of the position he wants to fill: stay in the middle, swinging on the accent continuum to virtually embrace as many people from the electorate as possible.

Moreover, the comparison between the two candidates offers a cue to observe that Tony Blair was more ‘relaxed’ in social terms embodying a new way of being in politics which reflected in his way of handling both ideas and language. His blend of non standard features with Received Pronunciation was the result of a precise communicative strategy aimed at winning people’s appreciation on a large scale, proposing himself as ‘one of us’ instead of ‘one of them’, thus going straight to voters and getting votes. John Major with his perfectly pronounced Received Pronunciation proved an old-fashioned, old-style politician performing the plummy accent of the Thatcher era.



3.3.3 Blair and the media

The interview Blair gave in 2007 to Labourvision³³ suggested a different kind of analysis both diamesically and diachronically. Indeed, the interview was meant to be shown on Youtube³⁴, which determined a completely different channel of communication from the one of the parliamentary confrontation with John Major. The main characteristic of the website, implying an exclusive online broadcasting, especially resulted in a completely different audience compared to the one to which the parliamentary confrontation was addressed: more restricted in age but larger in amount. As far as the diachronic dimension is concerned, the interview took place ten years after the parliamentary confrontation, when many years of government had passed for Tony Blair. While in the talk between Major and Blair the two candidates' locutionary acts were studied and targeted to obtain the consensus of voters, in this occasion the pragmatic aim of Tony Blair was to confirm his popularity even after his resignation.

Being interviewed by John O'Farrell³⁵, Tony Blair again had the opportunity to show off his careful and targeted 'pool of features' that he constantly alternated with standard pronunciation.

³³ *Labourvision* is an online channel created by the Labour Party that joined Youtube in February 2007. On it, Party's supporters and people in general can find videos of speeches and interviews of its members.

³⁴ Founded in February 2005, *YouTube* allows billions of people to discover, watch and share originally created videos. YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original-content creators and advertisers, large and small (from http://www.youtube.com/t/about_youtube).

³⁵ John O'Farrell is a British author, broadcaster and comedy scriptwriter. After starting his career at Radio 4, he has written and presented a number of Tv and radio documentaries for BBC1 and Radio 4. O'Farrell is credited with the idea of making John Major 'permanently grey' in his 1999 book "Things can only get better. Eighteen years in the life of a labour supporter".



John O'Farrel: *Don't you feel nostalgic for that period of your job when people were cross with you for the millennium (...)*

Tony Blair: *You mean only that?*

John O'Farrel: *Exactly.*

Tony Blair: *No, cause what you do is, you know, if you're sensible about it and serious that when you come into power you have these great expectations and hopes and all the rest of that and it is in the nature of politics that it doesn't...*

John O'Farrel: *Disappoint*

Tony Blair: *Well, it works out in a different way and what you've got to do is to be proud of what you've actually achieved and (...) on Friday and just taking it and really getting people to focus back on what it was like in 1997 and the change in living standards, in investment and basic services, you just look at the schools and the new equipment so...*

But I mean..., but the point is that... when you'd ask people now, they don't focus on it in the same way but if you actually took people back to 1997 that was what it was like, and that's a different... and you're just gonna get used to that (...)

John O'Farrel: *Mr Blair what would you say the Labour party's greatest achievement is that for you?*

Tony Blair: *I suppose as a political party, given that party's supposed to win elections, it's winning three elections for the first time in our history but far more substantial achievement is changing the country for the better. (...) we are the only government, I think, since the war that we have left off the crime level than when we came into office.*

As in the previous extract, we have noticed a continuity in the accent strategy of Tony Blair whose linguistic behaviour still consisted in a conscious and studied selection of non standard variables to be part of his Estuary English 'pool of features'. The comparison between the two excerpts emphasized a stability into his



‘pool of features’ to which no variables have been added in the time elapsed between the two. In this extract again, the use of glottal stops was to be found in word-final position, never shifting towards the more stigmatized intervocalic context, and alternated with a standard pronunciation. Blair, actually, never performed a glottal stop in intervocalic position or in the middle of a word, as it could be perceived negatively as an exaggerated downward choice that could even risk to transform him from a ‘popular’ to a ‘populist’ politician. As far as l-vocalisation is concerned, Blair never vocalized the /l/ sound in positions where it was meant to be clear /l/, while both in the words *schools* and *level than* – where a dark /l/ was expected – he resorted to l-vocalisation.

Again, he made a targeted and deliberate choice to use his ‘pool of features’ in one occasion rather than another, even in uttering the same word. Differently from the previous extract we have noticed that the frequency of use slightly increased to fit the situation, age group, medium and function of the message.

Tony Blair has long been considered an innovator because of the way he played with standard accent and non standard features according to the situation, the audience and the aim of any public speech. His Public School English more patently was shown off when the speech was performed through the traditional channels – such as the BBC – and addressed to an audience mainly consisting of adult people. However, his socio-situational accent shift was not only biased by the age of his audience, for he still attempted to resort to a more democratic accent in the effort to express a feeling of sharing of values, ideas and perspectives. The percentage of non standard features democratizing his received accent increased when the means of communication was identified more with young than old generations. Parallel to a change in situation, a different age group audience also required a change in the pragmatics of the message and the way it was performed. When addressing to a



younger audience through the Internet, he aimed at acquiring street credibility and creating in-group solidarity patently dispelling the association with the old-fashioned idea of the Establishment.

Tony Blair's ability to move within the accent continuum has generated opposite reactions comprising critics and appreciation as the following quotation emphasizes: "The obvious explanation is vote-getting: trying to persuade his audience that he is really one of them" Mr. Anderson wrote. "Mr. Blair is a politician who adapts his personality and views to his surroundings to avoid disappointment in the opinion polls" (Lyall 1998). As a politician, in fact, he exhibited a flexibility in the use of language and, through the modulation of his accent and the measured introduction of his Estuary features, he diaphasically managed to broaden and narrow the spectrum of his addressees.

3.3.4 Tony Blair's heritage: David Miliband³⁶

"What Tony Blair did a decade ago, the politician David Miliband is doing today" (<http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/wells/blog0809b.htm>, 24 September 2008) was a comment made by Professor Wells on his blog, dealing with an article published by *The Guardian* about the main linguistic characteristics of David Miliband. The article written by Luan de Burgh (23 September 2008) highlighted how Labour MP David Miliband was following the prints of Tony Blair in both the way to present himself and to address to his audience, gradually modifying his accent as his popularity increased over the years.

³⁶ David Miliband is a British Labour Party politician who has been the Member of Parliament (MP) for South Shields since 2001, and was the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs from 2007 to 2010.



According to de Burgh, between 2002 and 2008 Miliband modified his accent towards a more Blair-like pronunciation. We will not linger over the differences in accent between Tony Blair and David Miliband, although Blair's influence on this younger Labour Party's member will be stressed. We are rather interested in comparing two speeches given by Miliband in the years mentioned in order to diachronically give evidence that a shift has taken place in his accent and that, like Blair, he has built his Estuary English 'pool of features'.

The first excerpt is taken from an interview David Miliband gave in 2002.

“The government has to keep in tune with the populations and articulate their concerns, but I think something slightly different is happening. I think that governments notably in Holland and France stopped offering change to their voters. What we saw in France was two presidential candidates – one for the right and one for the left – both seeming to offer more to status quo. I think that a fair criticism of the Dutch Labour Party in the last 6-9 months has been they haven't articulated a clear vision of where they want to take their very successful records in government; and I think that the lessons for us are that the government here certainly can be complacent and should be proud of his records, but has always got to be moving forward to build on his successes. Because if the left doesn't stand for change, then someone else – be they populists or the right party – will come and offer it instead”.

In 2008 David Miliband gave a speech at the Labour Party Conference. Following is an extract of it.

“We've been good at New Labour at military action, let's be honest about it. The military action we've taken in Kosovo, in Sierra Leone, in



Afghanistan and in Iraq has helped protect people, has helped remove some brutal regimes. But we've not been so good at building the peace after war as we've been at military action itself. We have to be honest about that; we have to be hard on ourselves, and be honest about that. Because, in the end, if you win the war and you don't win the peace, you're gonna get a war again. (...) We have people coming through, they're in their twenties and thirties, who are gonna carry this party forward in a fantastic and dynamic way. And our responsibility, those who have recent positions of influence in the party now, have got to make sure that we never say that we work so hard to get this far, but now we are willing to stand back. The point of working this hard to get this far is not to let it go".

Comparing the two extracts of speeches performed by David Miliband, a progressive shift towards a more relaxed pronunciation can be noticed. His accent, apparently immune to Estuary features in 2002 provided an amount of Blair-like word-final glottal stops and l-vocalisations in 2008. Like Blair, David Miliband did not use non standard features throughout the whole speech, preferring to alternate his 'pool of features' in a more focusing way with a standard pronunciation by and large. In fact, Miliband performed a word internal post-vocalic l-vocalisation in pronouncing the word *building*, while word-final t-glottalling appeared few times in his speech in words like *about* and *that*. His narrow 'pool of features', however, suddenly broadened when, while speaking, David Miliband let slip an intervocalic t-glottalling in pronouncing the word *itself*, whose realization moved Miliband slightly more downward than Blair on the accent continuum. The main difference occurring between the two politicians was concerned with the frequency of use of those non standard features, since Miliband used them less frequently than Blair.



The differences between the two speeches have been noticed especially by the British voice coach Luan de Burgh who wrote:

Listening to a clip from 2002 Miliband is very clear and articulate. Back then, the foreign secretary used all of the consonants. Now, in a speech at the conference and elsewhere, as well as dropping the dark L - so the "L" sound at the end of "people" becomes a "w" sound - he is also dropping "t" from the end of words.[...] He also repeatedly introduces this Blair-like glottal stop (de Burgh 2008).

According to Luan de Burgh, Miliband seemed to have received Blair's lesson even more deeply in that

As well as eliding words and syllables, Miliband also imitates his old boss by saying five or six words and then pausing. His pace used to be fairly fluid. Now, it is too staccato, which can sound patronising, impatient and a little preachy (de Burgh 2008).

The lesson taught by Blair was one that in order to be trusted, appreciated and voted by people, politicians should avoid the use of a “narrow” language, only meant for a restricted audience, as Received Pronunciation is. On the contrary, their language should be sprawling in order to reach a wider public that trusts them and identifies with what they say. It is closely related to the matter of gaining street credibility that has been repeatedly highlighted and that so much importance has acquired in the new structures of the British society.

Miliband's dropping of received pronunciation could be a conscious effort to move away from David Cameron's almost heightened RP as well as copying Blair (de Burgh 2008).



3.4 The Queen's English: the Royal Family and the generational gap

Although the standard pronunciation of the English language has always been labelled King's or Queen's English, denoting its being spoken first and foremost by the Queen and her entourage, since the very beginning of the 1990s some members of that Family have started to use a more 'relaxed' accent than Received Pronunciation in its conservative form. Some proposed that a process of change in the pronunciation habits of the Royal Family could be due to the widening of the royal members' circle of acquaintances that do not necessarily boast royal ancestry. Both Princess Anne's husband, Mark Phillips, and Sarah Ferguson, former wife of Prince Andrew, did not have any royal ancestry. However, the latest and probably most sensational example of melting between a royal and non aristocrat within the Royal Family has been the recent marriage between Prince William, second in line to the British throne, and the commoner Miss Catherine Middleton, now Duchess of Cambridge.

As a general trend, although a tendency to Y-tensing in the Queen's pronunciation between 1950s and 1980s has been noted (§1.3.1.1), the elder members of the Royal Family – the Queen herself, her husband, Prince Philip, and Prince Charles above all – tend to preserve the conservative form of Received Pronunciation, never shifting into its advanced forms. On the contrary, since the revolutionary figure of Princess Diana started a process of change in the relationship between the Crown and its subjects, the younger members of the Royal Family are more prone to shift not only towards advanced RP, but also towards the use of non standard forms of urban speech. A distinction, however, will be made between the effective and the in-law members of the Family, as their linguistic behaviour



displays different strategies in the use of language, as it will be clarified by the analysis of the interview following the announcement of the marriage between Prince William and Miss Middleton.

3.4.1 Princess Diana

Princess Diana has been and still is one of the most beloved members of the Royal Family. She was beautiful, kind, close to needy people and for this reason popular among the British. Some people were simply fascinated by her youthful beauty and celebrity status. For many British people, disenchanted with the Monarchy, she represented the opportunity for the Royal Family to establish a new role in contemporary society. As a young woman – she got married at the age of twenty – she was pressed between the expectations resulting from her public role of wife of the future King of England and her youth, love for fashion and desire to be loved by her people. Thus, on the one hand she had to respect and comply with the rules and protocol of her new Family, on the other hand she tried to live an ‘ordinary’ life and give the public the image of a normal person. These two forces coexisted and fought for her whole life, until her tragic death in 1997.

Princess Diana’s public role compelled her to a formal standard of pronunciation – Received Pronunciation or Queen’s English precisely – which was appropriate and even inevitably obvious due to her aristocratic ancestry³⁷. However, although her accent mostly mirrored the formality required by her role, she also performed an important modernising role that, through her ability to talk to people

³⁷ Diana Spencer was the youngest daughter of Edward Spencer and his first wife Frances Spencer. In 1975 Diana’s father became the 8th Earl of Spencer and she acquired the courtesy title of The Lady Diana Spencer.



and convey them a feeling of closeness, allowed her to ‘play’ with the accent and shift in order to exponentially increase her popularity among Her Majesty’s subjects. Although she belonged to an aristocratic family, Princess Diana did not want to sound too posh as she soon realised that even her accent could represent a further step to be loved by the people. Her sporadic use of non standard variables, mainly found in informal contexts, together with her other countless innate qualities, demonstrated successful in making her an idol and the most beloved member of the British Monarchy.

A valuable role in the construction of Princess Diana’s successful image as the Princess of the people and the hearts was especially played by the press worldwide and the British press in particular. She lived her life under a magnifying glass and any aspect of her personality was analysed, even her language. In fact, the British press, always interested in the use and development of the English accent, constantly stressed the gap between Princess Diana and Prince Charles on that matter, which seemed to contribute to increase the distance between the married couple, as the following quotations demonstrate:

The Charles-Di split, then, is a matter of two different styles of upper-class speech. Prince Charles speaks a marked version of R.P. -- the upper-crust English, oozing privilege, spoken today mainly by senior members of the royal family, old Etonians and aging Oxford and Cambridge dons. R.P. speakers pronounce "cloth" as clawth and talk about the lorst pah of the British Empah ("the lost power of the British Empire").

Princess Diana has swung to the other end of the R.P. spectrum, occasionally assuming a trendy down-market variant, including traces of popular London speech, that approaches cockney. Its most prominent feature is "t-glottalling," which means strangling the final "t" in most words. Expert ears, for example, have detected Diana saying there's a lo' of i' abou' for "there's a lot of it about" (Lohr 1992).

The Queen Mother spoke differently from the way her daughter talks. Princess Diana's speech was different again-closer to the generalised southern accent sometimes called "Estuary English" (The Economist 2002).

Princess Diana's speech is a good example of generational change in pronunciation; the language of Prince Charles, who



is twelve years older than Lady Diana, is much more conservative, and the Queen's pronunciation is even more conservative than her son's (Schmid 1999).

While some pointed out that Princess Diana's accent was only slightly different from her husband's Received Pronunciation, others noted that she was an innovator within the Royal Family as she “was once heard saying: 'There's a lo(?) of i(?) abou(?)’” (Rosewarne 1994). She was in fashion to the extent that she probably led it, but she also followed it, thus she was probably fascinated by the new emerging trend in pronunciation – that was the status of Estuary English when some of its variables were identified in her speech also a few years before her death – and soon became one of the most renowned precursors of the shift into its variables. However, she never shifted into a urban-like accent that would have been unsuitable for her public role.

As an evidence that high-status speakers like Princess Diana do not shift towards non standard features in every speech situation but, on the contrary, make a targeted diaphasic selection in the most appropriate contexts in order not to sound fake and thus unreliable and insincere, two different situations will be taken into account.

First, we will consider and analyse one of the most watched and commented moments in Princess Diana's public life: the interview she gave to *Panorama*³⁸ in 1995 (Appendix 1). On a public level, what was striking about the *Panorama* interview was that it broke the conventions for British Royal appearances. The interview reshaped the usual boundaries between public and private for the British Royal Family and it was perhaps ‘the most powerful image in world popular culture today’ and ‘a case study in the modern cult of celebrity’ talking openly (Paglia cited

³⁸ *Panorama* is a current affairs programme, featuring interviews and investigative reports on a wide variety of subjects. It is based on investigative journalism and broadcast by BBC One since 11 November 1953.



in Wetherrell 2001:14). ‘The programme was watched by many hundreds of millions across the globe and the intensity of this public fascination was confirmed by the extent of the mourning when she died’ (Wetherrell 2005:14). On a personal level, the interview was revelatory about Diana's private life and she seemed to be giving the inside story. It was extremely important in her life because it was meant to rehabilitate her image after the many accusations of adultery and not behaving in a manner proper to her status and public role. For these reasons, the interview had been accurately studied and long prepared in order not to drop any important detail and to preserve the image she had built during the years she was the Princess of Wales. Indeed, when the interviewer asked her why she had decided to give the interview, her answer was “[...] I want to reassure all those people who have loved me and supported me throughout the last 15 years that I would never let them down. That is a priority to me, along with my children.[...] The people that matter to me - the man on the street, yup, because that's what matters more than anything else”. It is self-evident that the interview was her way to continue to be riding high, thus every word, expression, her body language and accent as well were all meant to that purpose.

In almost the entire interview Princess Diana used the expected Received Pronunciation, from time to time shifting into the ‘unmarked’ variety of it, mostly in the pronunciation of vowel sounds and diphthongs, and holding back with some difficulty her will to shift further into the most known non standard variables that were establishing and spreading into the English pronunciation. The analysis of the interview’s excerpt will demonstrate the general trend in Princess Diana’s



pronunciation not highlighting any t-glottalling or l-vocalisation but some slight unpronounced /t/ sounds, as the following extract indicates³⁹:

***Princess Diana:** Uhm, well everybody was thrilled to bits because it had been quite a difficult pregnancy, I hadn't been very **well** throughout it so by the time William arrived there was great relief because it was **all** peaceful again, and I was **well** for a time, then I was **unwell** with a post-natal depression which no one ever discusses, bit of personal depression, you have to read about it, afterwards, and that in itself was a bit of difficult time that you wake up in the morning feeling you don't want to (wanna) get out of bed, you feel misunderstood and you're just very low in yourself.*

The excerpt is illustrative of the general trend followed by Princess Diana in the entire interview in the pronunciation of the /l/ sound which is never vocalized like in the words *well* and *all* reported in bold. Although the general trend in the realization of the /t/sound complied with a marked Received Pronunciation, sometimes Princess Diana shifted towards more unmarked realizations as the words *great* and *want to* indicate. The pronunciation of these words did not correspond to a t-glottalling but rather to a t-dropping, since the sound was not markedly pronounced, contrarily to the pronunciation of *about*, *bit* and *get out*.

The formal and serious atmosphere of the interview imposed Princess Diana to adopt a behaviour – even the linguistic one – complying with the rigid protocol of a public appearance. Nevertheless, the media attention and public prominence of this controversial personality could not be constricted and she did not disdain to be herself, to communicate in the way she used to and to display her closeness to Her Majesty's subjects that so much natural affection had demonstrated to her.

³⁹ In order to distinguish the pronunciation of marked and unmarked /t/ sounds, the former are in bold while the latter are both in bold and underlined.



A different linguistic behaviour she adopted when in more informal contexts. Actually, it has been reported that her unmarked RP was sometimes broken up with l-vocalisations and slight glottal stops (Cordisco 1998). Princess Diana was recorded to have lost the alveolar trait of dark /l/ in the sentence “*They’re aw very wew*” and ventured into a glottal stop in the sentence “*If I ge? back to Kensington Palace*” while chatting with a royal watcher.

Undoubtedly, Princess Diana’s early death in 1997 – only three years after the publication of Rosewarne’s second article about Estuary English and in the very midst of the media and academic debate about it – did not allow her to become a significant figure in the spread of Estuary English features and their pragmatic use through style shift. However, she can be considered the prime mover in the process of modernization of the relationship between the Royal Family and its people; a process that could be also performed through a softening of the rigid rules of Received Pronunciation – an accent that has been reported by many to be ever more perceived as old-fashioned and posh. A process which has not affected the old members of the Royal Family who still continue to secure behind the respect of a rigid protocol and the use of an accent unshared with their people and increasing the social distance between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

Princess Diana’s innovatory heritage has been taken over by her eldest son, Prince William, whose accent is representative of the changes in the English accent spoken by Her Majesty’s subjects and a breaking point between the old and young generations of Royals.



3.4.2 Prince William

The same way as his mother, Prince William is one of the most representative and loved members of the Royal Family, probably the most popular among the British subjects at the moment, thanks to his good fellow's face and gentle manners. Self-evidently, even more than his mother, he embodies the gap between the old and new generations of Royals: parallels and confrontations with Prince Charles are as usual as surveys about the chance for him to replace the Queen on the throne instead of his father. In this regard, Prince William's 'democratic' way of speaking has been highly underlined, deeply commented and sometimes criticized for his strong drifting apart from the Queen's English as if any shift towards non standard accents was a small treason of the Family's tradition and respectability. Press, again, has played a relevant role in the debate about the linguistic habits of the young Royals, stressing the 'inappropriate' use of non standard features and the deviation from Queen's English. Following are two extracts of articles published on the *Online Dailymail* and *The Guardian*, respectively:

Worst of all, what are we to make of Princes William and Harry, both of whom have adopted a middle-class blokeishness of speech that suggests deliberate abandonment of English as spoken by their father and grandfather? (Sewell 2011).

Listen to the Queen and then notice how different her speech is from her grandson's. The Queen has a very clipped, stiff-upper lip delivery, while Prince William uses much more modern pronunciation (Crace 2007).

An important factor to understand Prince William's choices in terms of accent is the degree of attention he pays to the people and the one he receives from the media. He has always been to the fore and since his early ages the press has highlighted and sometimes exaggerated any fact concerning his life. Last in time



was the announcement of his marriage with the commoner Miss Catherine Middleton, that further roused media attention on everything he did. Differently from his parents, both Prince William and his fiancée received the same attention and approval from both people and the press, more interested in the couple than in the individuals. Comparing the two couples it seems that a reversal process is taking place: at the time of the marriage of Prince Charles with Lady Diana Spencer common people imitated the style, manners and even the language of the Royals. Nowadays, on the contrary, Royals imitate common people; thus,

Prince William has adopted the clothing, musical tastes and even Estuary English accent of the ordinary British subject (Saunders 2010).

The first occasion to put the couple under a magnifying glass was the interview that followed the announcement of their marriage.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the interview is revealing of some rapidly spreading transformations affecting the English language in the United Kingdom, especially in the area surrounding the capital city. The use of some non standard variables by Prince William and their gradual development in his speech have been ever-increasingly commented and studied (see Crystal 2002; Crace 2007; Saunders 2010; Sewell 2011); however, it is worth noting that the Prince participates in that widespread common tendency for RP speakers to shift towards the use of less standard forms referable to either regional or social accents with a less prestigious history, many of them localizable into the wider phenomenon of dialect-levelling.

Some short extracts from the interview (Appendix 2) will be analysed in order to notice how the incidence of non standard variables has increased in time and spread upward on the social scale and the way the ‘pool of features’ adopted by RP speakers can widen or narrow according to the communicative needs.



Some background information about the interview will also be useful to better understand its social relevance. The interviewer was Tom Bradby⁴⁰ – friend of Prince William since the time he was a royal correspondent for ITV – which probably determined a more relaxed general atmosphere of the interview. It was meant to be broadcast on the national channel BBC and almost simultaneously on many news channels all over the world and since it was of public interest because of the marriage of a member of one of the most important and powerful Royal Families, the overall context was respectful of the protocol. However, the first thing that jumped out at everyone, both academics, journalists and common people – the impact and attention paid to the event are demonstrated by the many blogs dealing with the matter – was that the tone of the interview was far more than informal and relaxed. Prince William followed the path outlined by his mother in the closeness he wanted to convey to people and the way to propose himself as a ‘normal’ thirty-year-old man.

From a phonological perspective, Prince William constantly used non standard features throughout the whole interview. Evidence is given in the following excerpts:

Tom Bradby: *People are obviously very curious about you, so let's start with the obvious. William, where did you propose, when, how and Kate, what did you say?*

Prince William: *I? was abou? three weeks ago on holi?ay in Kenya. We had a li?le private time away together with some friends and I just decided tha? i? was the right time really.*

[...]

⁴⁰ Tom Bradby is now Political Editor at ITV News.



Tom Bradby: *And you knew you were going to do this from day one of the holiday or you waited until the end?*

Prince William: *I'd been plannin' iʔ for a while buʔ as any guy ouʔ there wiw know it takes a certain amount of motivation to geʔ yourself going. I was planning it and then it just felt really right out in Africa. It was beautiful at the time. I had done a little bit of planning to show my romantic side.*

[...]

Tom Bradby: *And produced a ring there and then?*

Miss Middleton: *Yes.*

Prince William: *I did, yes. I had been carrying it around wiʔ me in my rucksack for abouʔ three weeks before thaʔ and I literally would noʔ leʔ iʔ go, everywhere I went I was keeping hold of iʔ because I knew this thing, if iʔ disappeared I would be in a loʔ of troubw and because I'd planned iʔ, iʔ wenʔ fine. You hear a loʔ of horror stories abouʔ proposing and things going horribly wrong - iʔ went really, really wew and I was really pleased when she said yes.*

Tom Bradby: *It's a family ring?*

Prince William: *It is a family ring, yes. It's my mother's engagement ring so I thought iʔ was quiʔ nice because obviously she's not going to be around to share any of the fun and exciʔment of it aw - this was my way of keeping her close to iʔ aw.*

The analysis of the three extracts highlights that Prince William did a reiterated use of glottal stops in final position in words like *it*, *get* and *lot*, where it is accepted in Received Pronunciation as a prestige innovation. On the contrary, he hardly made use of t-glottalling in intervocalic context, where it is stigmatized because of its being recognized as a Cockney feature. However, it is worth noting the use of a glottal stop instead of the dental plosive /d/ in the word *holiday* as well as the slight



glottalization of the word *excitement*. This though exceptional intervocalic glottalizations bear on his position on the language continuum, although widening the spectrum of his admirers. A special notation should be done with reference to the th-sound in the word *with*, which is subject to glottalling rather than th-fronting, although there are only a few cases in which it has been recorded in the whole interview. A frequent resort to the vocalisation of dark /ɪ/ systematically affecting the words *well* and *all* is also extremely relevant in his speech.

Although it is not the aim of the present study to analyse the use and incidence of vowel sounds in the speakers proposed, a remark on the pronunciation of vowels in Prince William's accent will give evidence of the influence that non standard varieties are exerting on his pronunciation by and large. Soon after the marriage, through the pages of his phonetic blog, Wells noted some changes in the pronunciation of a vowel sound, highlighting the difference in pronunciation between Prince William and the Archbishop of Canterbury during the wedding ceremony:

In the Abbey, as the bridegroom makes his vows, first the archbishop of Canterbury and then Prince William utter the words

... **to have and to hold from this day forward**, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part ...

*The archbishop, as is appropriate for an RP speaker of his age (born 1950), pronounces hold as **həʊld**. William repeats the word, but as **hvoʊld**, which is what is now arguably appropriate for an RP speaker of his age (born 21 June 1982) (<http://phonetic-blog.blogspot.it/2011/05/evidence-of-vows.html>, 3 May 2011).*

This last example demonstrates that the use of some non-RP variables is not simply a matter of style shift, but it is deeply eradicated in his pronunciation.



Further observations also demonstrate that Prince William consistently deviates from Received Pronunciation even in more formal contexts. Comparing his pronunciation with his mother's, it is evident that younger generations have gone further than Advanced RP shifting towards non standard, urban-like pronunciation, to place in the very middle of the accent continuum.

3.4.3. Miss Catherine Middleton

The consistent use of non standard features in Prince William's accent during the interview was contrasted and counterbalanced by Miss Middleton's pronunciation. For both her age and her social origin⁴¹, Miss Middleton is supposed to belong to that bracket of speakers who make a consistent use of variables shifting from Advanced RP to Estuary English⁴². However, because of the still too close link between accent and social class, commoner Miss Middleton could not shift between standard and non standard features; on the contrary, she had to perform into a Received Pronunciation hiding all the persisting social prejudices still alive in the British society. Extensive studies (see Wolfram 1969; Labov 1972; Trudgill 1972; Romaine 1978; Holmes 1997) have demonstrated that, for social reasons, women are more sensitive to, and thus favour the standard forms of a language. They, indeed, need to seek prestige through language due to the social prejudices and

⁴¹*Catherine Middleton* was born to Carole (née Goldsmith), a former flight attendant, and Michael Middleton, who also worked as a flight attendant prior to becoming a flight dispatcher for British Airways. Her parents got married on 21 June 1980 at the Parish Church of Dorney, Buckinghamshire. In 1987, they founded and became owners of Party Pieces, a mail order company that sells party supplies and decorations. As far as her education is concerned, in 1986 she started at St Andrew's School in Pangbourne, where she remained until July 1995. Then, she went on to Marlborough College in Wiltshire. In 2002, Catherine enrolled at the University of St Andrews, Fife, from where she graduated in 2005 with a 2:1 in History of Art.

⁴² Material in which the pronunciation of Miss Middleton in informal contexts could have been analysed and compared to her accent during the interview was not found, thus, a contrastive observation of her way of speaking and possible differences in formal and informal contexts has not been possible. All the resources available concern formal public speeches .



pressure exerted on them by local norms which compel them to use language as a means to “assert their authority and position, a form of symbolic capital for women” (Holmes 1997 cited in Chambers, Trudgill and Schilling-Estes 2004:353)⁴³.

Thus, because of her social origins, but relying on the education afforded, Miss Middleton’s accent perfectly complies with the ‘talking-proper’ concept related to high-status speakers and women. During the whole interview she consistently and strongly marked her Received Pronunciation and carefully distanced from the relaxed pronunciation used by her husband-to-be.

Following is a series of sentences uttered by Prince William and Miss Middleton proving the differences in pronunciation between the two speakers:

Prince William: *I'd been planning iʔ for a while buʔ as any guy ouʔ there wiw know it takes a certain amount of motivation to geʔ yourself going.*

Miss Catherine Middleton: *[...] I think you can get quite consumed by a relationship when you are younger and I really valued that time for me as we† although I didn't think it at the time.*

[...]

Prince William: *It is a family ring, yes. It's my mother's engagement ring so I thought iʔ was quiʔ nice because obviously she's not goin' to be around to share any of the fun and exciʔment of it aw - this was my way of keeping her close to iʔ aw.*

Miss Catherine Middleton: *No, not at† because we were out with friends and things so I really didn't expect it at†. I thought he might have maybe*

⁴³ With regards to the idea that women are subordinate to men in society even when they hold the same amount of education, Hudson (1996:184-199) reports a study about Teheran Persian vowel-assimilation to demonstrate that “for virtually every variable, in virtually every community, females (of every age) use high-prestige standard variants more often than males do” (1996:193). Speakers involved in the study were classified according to their sex and the education received in order to compare only speakers with the same amount of education. Results demonstrated that “the figures for male speakers are nearly all higher (less standard) than those for the corresponding females” (1996:194).



thought about it but no. It was a total shock when it came, and very excited

The observation of the excerpts gives evidence of the lack of l-vocalisation and t-glottalling in the speech of Miss Catherine Middleton compared with the same set of words uttered by Prince William. To his l-vocalisation of words like *well* and *all* corresponds a dark /l/ pronounced by Miss Middleton in accordance with Received Pronunciation. The extracts also display a ‘marked’ pronunciation of the /t/ sound by Miss Middleton, as if she wanted to stress the accent distance between her and Prince William. Actually, she marked this sound even in those words and phonological contexts where t-glottalling is described as a prestige innovation in Received Pronunciation (§ 1.3.2.1), like in the pronunciation of the personal pronoun *it* and in the _ true C context, as in the phrase *get quite consumed*. The distance between the two speakers further increases if we compare the pronunciation of the words *excitement* and *excited* respectively uttered by Prince William and Miss Middleton. Her marked intervocalic /t/ is strongly contrasted by his slight glottal stop. In this respect, their accents find place on the two opposite ends of the accent continuum.

Further observations highlight a few h-dropping and th-fronting realizations in Prince William’s pronunciation. These two features are mainly conditioned by his quickness of elocution although they cannot be ascribed only to factors of co-articulation since they are relevant features sometimes included in the non standard pronunciation of RP speakers.

Prince William: *She's got a really naughty sense of humour, which kind of helps me because I've got a really dry sense of ‘umour, so it was good fun, we had a really good laugh and then tings ‘appened.*



Miss Middleton: I think at the time I wasn't very happy about it, but actually it made me a stronger person, you find out things about yourself that maybe you hadn't realised.

During the entire interview, Prince William did not do an extensive use of h-droppings, which are nonetheless recorded in this excerpt. On the contrary, Miss Middleton strongly aspirated her /h/ sounds in order, again, to mark her received accent. Also th-fronting, as a feature recorded in Prince William's pronunciation in this extract, is never recorded in Miss Middleton.

In the light of the contrastive analysis of the accents used by Prince William and Miss Middleton in that special occasion, and considering the weight carried by accent in the British society, an obvious question inevitably arises: who really speaks and behaves as a middle class?

The interview is indicative of a double path in the royal background: on the one hand, the analysis of Prince William's pronunciation is symptomatic of the changes occurring even in the Queen's English – if we consider it the language as it is assumed to be spoken by any member of the Royal Family; on the other hand, however, the pronunciation of his bride-to-be Miss Middleton suggests the idea that accent is still a matter of prestige. Indeed, Prince William, relying on his prestigious position in society and on the favour accorded to him by both the media and Her Majesty's subjects, can 'play' with his accent shifting up and down the continuum, in no way resulting fake and unnatural but sounding more real and close to the speech of the people. On the contrary, Miss Middleton, as an entering member of the Royal Family is not, consciously or unconsciously, allowed to do the same. The transition from a 'simply' upper-middle class to a 'royal' status imposes her a 'declaration of royalty' that she can realise only conforming herself to the rigid rules of accent, shifting upward in her performance, using, and even more marking the



distance between her accent and her fiancé's. The overall image of Miss Middleton resulting from the interview was an old-fashioned one since her accent has been considered even too posh for a young woman with her education, wealth and confidence. Again, the 'talking proper' obsession is confirmed, as well as the general idea that speaking Received Pronunciation amounts to being considered affected and posh.

3.5 British Broadcasting Corporation: a new accent strategy

*We must be clear and accessible – and that means
using words and ways of speaking which are familiar to ordinary people.
It does not mean that we should use slang, bad grammar, or profanity.
We must aim to write and speak in a good, clear, accurate but conversational English.*
(Hohn, 2007 cited in De Wit 2011:25)

The pair Received Pronunciation – British Broadcasting Corporation has been tight since the BBC started its activities as a television service in 1936, when “it was to function as educator as well as entertainer in matters of language as all else” (Mugglestone 1995:323). In his book *Broadcast over Britain* (1924), the BBC managing director John C.W. Reith observed:

We have made a special effort to secure in our stations men who, in the presentation of programme items, the reading of news bulletins and so on, can be relied upon to employ the correct pronunciation of the English tongue. [...] I have frequently heard that disputes as to the right pronunciation of words have been settled by reference to the manner in which they have been spoken on the wireless. No one would deny the great advantage of a standard pronunciation of the language, not only in theory but in practice. Our responsibilities in this matter are obvious, since in talking to so vast a multitude, mistakes are likely to be promulgated to a much greater extent than was ever possible before”.



An 'official' linguistic policy of the BBC started two years later with the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Spoken English (hereafter ACSE) according to which the most appropriate medium was the accent that one of its members, Professor Daniel Jones, had defined Public School Pronunciation, soon after Received Pronunciation. Indeed, "in the early years, the corporation propagated 'elitist, upper class culture'(Leiter 1982)" (Przedlacka 2002:11). The Committee was suspended at the beginning of the Second World War in 1939. After the war, the official voice of the BBC continued to be the one identified by the ACSE, that in the meanwhile had been replaced by the BBC Pronunciation Unit, a body "of assessors and interprets of educated usage" (BBC Pronunciation Policy and Practice, leaflet, 1974/9). Gradually, in some kind of more 'relaxed' broadcasting (e.g. sports programmes and weather forecast), non-RP speakers were allowed. This gradual shift was mainly due to two factors: on the one hand, the geographical and social distribution of non standard English speakers changed; on the other hand, new independent televisions – like ITV – challenged BBC monopoly of the televised service. Received Pronunciation was geographically non-regional and socially upper-class, qualities which demographic and social changes in Britain made no longer as desirable as heretofore. Thus, the BBC gradually changed its politics of accent and progressively started employing journalists with regional accents. As a consequence of this progressive changes in linguistic policy, nowadays Received Pronunciation is no more a *conditio sine qua non* for a journalist who enters the national journalism.

The introduction of regional accents in the BBC can be deemed as both a consequence and a cause of the changes in pronunciation. As far as the former is concerned, the BBC could have retained its linguistic policy in order to be a point of reference of 'correct' English pronunciation. However, the continuous pressure



exercised on the editors and managers for a language which was less ‘London-centric’ and in which anyone in the country could recognize, has caused a shift towards the use of regional voices. The new strategy has demonstrated even more successful since 2011, when some of the departments were moved from London to Salford. ‘Modern’ BBC is characterized not only by Received Pronunciation in its more advanced forms, but also by regional voices aiming at communicating with people rather than simply informing them. However, this new trend – which has progressively imposed – has also been contrasted by some ‘purist’ media personalities, as football reporter Stuart Hall who has strongly criticized the spread of regional accents in television, claiming that Received Pronunciation was exactly what listeners wanted, “neutral-voices that never detracted or distracted from the material” (Revoir, 2010).

As far as the latter is concerned, an input can be detected to have fostered the spread of regional non standard varieties: soap operas like *Eastenders* and *Coronation Street*⁴⁴, in which both social and regional accents are strongly used. The world depicted in these programmes is one made of ordinary citizens living in urban settings where people interact using their ‘ordinary’ accent rather than an artificial standard pronunciation, inappropriate to the setting. Figures⁴⁵ demonstrate that these programmes are always the most watched by people on BBC1 and ITV1 and that their Appreciation Index has ever-increasingly grown over the last two decades. Thus, with their spectrum of non standard varieties they certainly exert a strong incidence on the large number of spectators. The audience is interested in the programmes and as a consequence gives weight to the language used in it, with inevitable rebounds on their own linguistic habits.

⁴⁴ *Eastenders* is set in the fictional eastern borough of Walford, in London. *Coronation Street* is set in a fictional town in Greater Manchester, based on Salford.

⁴⁵ <http://www.barb.co.uk/report/weekly-top-programmes-overview?>



Thus, the caused and promoted use of non standard varieties is based on the idea that if people's habits in language are changing, why should the BBC take cover in an old-fashioned language that people no more recognize as theirs?

3.5.1 Simon Reeve

Because of the new linguistic policy undertaken by the BBC many examples of non standard voices could be provided and analysed in order to verify the use and incidence of non standard variables on the speech of the journalists of the national broadcasting service.

The journalist Simon Reeve⁴⁶, adventurer and TV presenter, has been selected for this purpose. Native of West London, where he was born and brought up, this young, adventurous and successful man likes presenting himself as a natural, down-to-earth person. As far as his accent is concerned, he can be recognized as an Estuary speaker whose way of carrying out its discoveries and documentaries is generally colloquial and relaxed. His Estuary English is quite marked in that, together with t-glottalling, he also uses h-dropping and th-fronting, which place him toward the Cockney end of the accent continuum. The main characteristic features of his accent are as follows:

- T-glottalling in word boundary context.
- No intervocalic glottal stop.
- H-dropping in word initial position.

⁴⁶ *Simon Reeve* is an adventurer, TV presenter and New York Times bestselling author with a passion for travel, wildlife, history, current affairs, conservation and the environment. Simon is the presenter of the BBC TV series *Indian Ocean* and has been around the world three times for the epic BBC series *Equator*, *Tropic of Capricorn*, and *Tropic of Cancer*. He has travelled extensively in more than 110 countries (from Reeve's website <http://www.shootandscribble.com/sr/1.html>).



- Th-fronting in word initial position.

Following is an extract of the preview of episode 2 of the *Tropic of Cancer* series broadcast by BBC Two. The extract is interesting since it emphasizes not only the non standard features belonging to Simon Reeve's 'pool of features', but also the way he shifts between standard and non standard language significantly reducing the amount of non standard variables when speaking to someone that is not an English native speaker.

Simon Reeve: *We've arrived. Dis is Libya. dis is the Acacous Tourist Hotel. A gentleman behind me, though, is a governmen? minder; he looks like Minyar al-Gaddafi. Anyway, this is where we're staying tonigh? , and then we star? heading east.*

Bloody _ell. I've broken the bloody door, look if dere is any dou? abou? where we are, the man _imself, I'll just fix the door.

[...]

Simon Reeve: *Can I ask you: has anybody told you that you look like colonel Gaddafi?*

Tourist guide: *My grandfather before...*

Simon Reeve: *back*

Tourist guide: *okay back, yes, yes in Mecca, my grandfather and grandfather Gaddafi brothers, yes...*

Simon Reeve: *Not only do you look like colonel Gaddafi but you are related to colonel Gaddafi. Are we gonna go swimming together?*

Tourist guide: *It's very easy Gaddafi. I am and Gaddafi same, same Libyan.*

Simon Reeve: *Same, same, bu? different.*

Tourist guide: *No different, I am Libyan, Gaddafi Libyan, no problem.*

Simon Reeve: *It's good but it's cold. Any crocodiles here? Snakes?*

Tourist guide: *No no no. Very nice.*



Simon Reeve: *Are you sure? That's amazing.*

Tourist guide: *Swim my friend.*

Simon Reeve: *Alrigh?*

Tourist guide: *It's a good country.*

Simon Reeve: *Good country.*

Tourist guide: *Yes. And water and Sahara and my friend, good friend. Thank you my God.*

In the first part of the extract, when Simon Reeve talks to the cameraman directly addressing to his British audience, his accent is full of non standard features. T-glottalling is frequently used in word final position, while it is not to be found in intervocalic context, as the pronunciation of *gentleman* displays. Non standard features reduce notably when he interacts with the tourist guide who accompanies him, a Libyan. During their conversation, Simon Reeve only uses a few glottal stops as in the words *but* and *alright* while many other /t/ sounds in word final position are pronounced in accordance with standard pronunciation. The very word *but* is once pronounced without glottal stop, which is indicative that the journalist has shifted towards a more standard language in order to be understood by a non English speaker. Also th-fronting – in words like *this* and *there* – and h-dropping – in the pronunciation of the word *himself* – only characterize the first part of the preview. The use of these two last variables locates Reeve to the right end of the accent continuum, towards the Cockney end, more than other Estuary voice at the BBC. As far as l-vocalisation is concerned, although it is a phonological trait generally included in the ‘pool of features’ of supposed RP speakers shifting towards Estuary English, it has not been recorded in Reeve’s accent.

The shift carried out by Reeve is indicative of a conscious use and alternation of standard and non standard variables, thus demonstrating a targeted and situational accent shift. When addressing to his audience, he feels at ease using his ‘natural’,



‘native’ accent since he knows that it makes him ‘one of us’ with his audience. On the contrary, the tourist guide is not recognized as a member of any shared community. Since the guide is perceived as an outsider, Reeve arranges his accent towards a more standard variety, closer to the RP end of the continuum.

3.6 Pop stars: speech and singing accents

*“Royal Albert fuckin’ Hall!
I know this is no place for language like tha?
I’w try to do my best.
This is the poshest establishment I know.
I’m so exci?ed!
(Adele, Royal Albert Hall concert 2012)*

A public figure is a person for whom image and popularity are extremely important. That is why pop stars always behave in such a way, that their fans – mostly young people and teenagers – would admire and imitate the way they dress and act, but also the way they speak. As far as pop stars are concerned, the singer’s voice quality and accent are as relevant as songs’ texts and contents, and can make either the success or the flop of a musical career. For this reason, sometimes the pronunciation of singers differs from that of their usual speech due to the effects of abstract and individual emotions or of the socio-political climate of a particular time and place.

Differently from other contexts where language in general, and accent in particular, are evaluated in terms of social prestige, in music it is not a matter of ‘prestige’ if a song is successful. Popularity, especially among young people, is mainly due to the degree of *coolness* associated with an artist. Actually, while the



notion of ‘prestige’ is mainly associated with a vertical movement on the social hierarchy – the higher in society the more prestigious – the idea that something is cool swings horizontally at all levels of social strata, from left to right, and is “anchored to popular trends like fashion, lifestyle and music” (Olafsson 2012:8). Many past examples demonstrate that singers changed their original accent in order to sound more trendy or simply to follow a trend. In the 1950s, when the Rock ‘N’ Roll spread from America all over the world, the dream that was conveyed by that style of singing was just as important as its lyrical substance. As a consequence, British singers tried to imitate the American accent. However, even when imitating the American variety, British singers “retained a great deal of “Britishness”” (Olafsson 2012:10) which produced many unsuccessful attempts. Further examples can be provided referring to two of the major British groups: *Beatles* and *Rolling Stones*. Trudgill (1983:141-160) demonstrated that until 1964, when they became so famous to influence international music, the Beatles were affected by the American models of pronunciation. After 1964, they became responsible for a new trend in music: the use of American features diminished, presumably because British rockers became comfortable in having made the music their own. From the mid-70s they started using phonetic features associated with the working class in the United Kingdom thus promoting the elevation of the Scouse whose use by such a successful group gave prestige to that low-status accent, become so admired and indicative of success that people wanted to imitate it. David Crystal dealing with accents used by singers, wrote on his blog:

A Liverpudlian accent regularly stands out in the Beatles - such as (in 'Penny Lane') customer with a rounded first vowel and words like there and wear (in 'Only a Northern Song') with a central vowel (rhyming with her). I recall Paul McCartney saying (but I can't remember where) that the Beatles did



experiment with singing in an American accent early on, but decided against it because it sounded ridiculous (from <http://david-crystal.blogspot.it/2009/11/on-singing-accents.html>)

Not a natural evolution following consciousness of its own success, but a precise and studied choice to shift towards a non standard accent with a strong social connotation was made by the Rolling Stones shifting from the American model to a working class British accent. The leader of the group, Mick Jagger, was son of a school teacher and himself a former student at the London School of Economics; thus, he was perfectly educated and conscious of how to speak ‘properly’. The choice to adopt a Cockney accent – the one that he thought to speak, as McCrum (1992:5) claimed – represented a deliberate attempt of ‘inverted snobbery’ aimed at joining the lower classes’ cause and expressing anything different from his white, middle class, suburban upbringing. The main feature of Mick Jagger’s Cockney accent was a tensing of vowels while he did not absorb all the consonantal features characteristic of that accent. The only phenomenon concerning the pronunciation of consonants to be recorded in his pronunciation was a word-final t-glottalling. The inhomogeneous way he assimilated low-status Cockney features was indicative that the use of that accent was not a natural accent evolution but rather a studied ‘political’ choice in a period of great social change in the United Kingdom. The success reached by the band in those years was accompanied by an almost natural imitation process put in motion especially by young people who gradually approximated to their idol’s way of speaking.

A trend similar to the one that took place in the 1960s and 1970s is taking place nowadays; singers ever-increasingly detach from their original accents shifting to regional ones, many of which with a strong social connotation, in order to sound more real and urban and to be recognized as cool. According to David Crystal, the



use of an accent in songs is fascinating and mirrors the new state of affairs; “times have changed dramatically. These days, we are largely allowed to be who we want to be, even when elements of our lives conspire to make this difficult” (Rogers 2009). As a consequence, it happens that Cockney singer Adele, born in North London but grown up in the southern boroughs of the capital city, is considered a Cockney speaker by many but in fact exhibits an Estuary English mixed to an American-like pronunciation while speaking and singing, inspired by the American R&B and black music⁴⁷; or even that privately educated Lily Allen takes on a Cockney-like, Estuary accent in order to sound less posh and more urban. Both artists, even though from different social backgrounds (for Lily Allen see § 3.6.1; for Adele see § 3.6.2), started their music career and succeeded thanks to the use of new technologies and social networks. Before becoming popular worldwide and being promoted by a record label, their songs were uploaded and listened to by hundreds of thousands of youngsters on the web through social networks and broadcasting websites like Myspace⁴⁸ and Youtube. The “MeWe”⁴⁹ generation for which their music is meant, is not disposed to be trapped into monolithic trends and old stereotypes. On the contrary, young members of the new generations rather follow inhomogeneous trends and mix brands and styles, are flexible and polyvalent and adapt to various settings, moving between various groups. Their behaviour seems to

⁴⁷ On her MySpace page, Adele has stated that she was mainly influenced by Etta James, Jill Scott, Karen Dalton, Carole King, Ella Fitzgerald, Roberta Flack, Cyndi Lauper, Lauryn Hill, Jeff Buckley, Noisettes, Eva Cassidy, Billy Bragg, Alicia Keys, The Cranberries, Amy Winehouse, Jamie T, Suzanne Vega, Destiny's Child, The Cure, Paul Weller and Erykah Badu

⁴⁸ Myspace LLC is a leading social entertainment destination powered by the passions of fans. Aimed at a Gen Y audience, Myspace drives social interaction by providing a highly personalized experience around entertainment and connecting people to the music, celebrities, TV, movies, and games that they love. These entertainment experiences are available through multiple platforms, including online, mobile devices, and offline events. Myspace is also the home of Myspace Music, which offers an ever-growing catalog of freely streamable audio and video content to users and provides major, independent, and unsigned artists alike with the tools to reach new audiences. The company is headquartered in Beverly Hills, CA and is a subsidiary of Specific Media (from <http://www.myspace.com/Help/AboutUs>).

⁴⁹ The term MeWe generation was coined by Lindgren in 2005 to emphasize that young people in modern age feel both individual and social.



fit perfectly into the idea that Estuary English comes from a mixture of features, as the following quotation highlights:

If one accepts the view that linguistic behavior is a component of social behavior, such a social polyvalence, typical of the postmodern age, can be brought in line with what Maidment (1994) says about the users of EE who follow the trend to pick and mix accents. With an aim to maximise social success, speakers think that mixing these features in the right way can move them down and up socially (Eitler 2006:6).

3.6.1 Lily Allen

In order to understand the extent to which Lily Allen makes a deliberate and studied choice of non standard language and what is the pragmatic function of this shift, some background information will be provided.

Lily Allen was born in Hammersmith, west London, but her parents – the actor Keith Allen and the film producer Alison Owen – soon moved to the posh London borough of Islington. She attended some of the UK's most expensive fee-paying public schools, which did not prevent her from abandoning Received Pronunciation in favour of a highly street credible, urban accent. An editor at the British music weekly NME described her as “young and female, a bit urban and street, but also fashiony”, that is exactly how a public figure, meant to be the teenager's idol, is supposed to be. While, according to many, her jarring accent represents part of her successful image, according to others it is too evident that she feigns a working-class, East-London accent not belonging to her background and resulting in a fake pronunciation. Indeed, her expedient choice of a less prestigious accent is demonstrated by the fact that, since becoming famous she had always proclaimed her council estate roots. However, differently from other speakers analysed in this chapter (e.g. Tony Blair and Prince William) who have never overtly declared their



intention to lower their accent, Lily Allen has more than once made the point that hers was a conscious, studied decision that should not be judged negatively. She once replied to the accusation of using a fake accent underlining that “It’s stupid, because I lived in London my whole life. Other people from England sing in an American accent, and that’s 3,000 miles away. I have a more real accent than they do. East London is five miles down the road”. This claim demonstrates a conscious and intentional shift towards an unexpected accent, an artistic choice due to a general opinion according to which Estuary English and non standard accents by and large are perceived as more fashionable and modern, thus more appropriate for an artist.

Following is an extract of Allen’s debut album’s song “Smile” (Appendix 3), first released in 2006. The transcription of the phonological non standard traits in the song will determine which variables have been chosen by Lily Allen for her ‘pool of features’.

[...]

*Whenever you see me you say that you wan? me back
And I tell you i? don’t mean jack, no i? don’t mean jack
I couldn’t stop laughin’, no I just couldn’t help myself
See you messed up my men?al health I was quite unwew*

*I was so lost ba? then
Bu? with a li?le help from my friends
I found a ligh? in the tunnel at the end
Now you’re callin’ me up on the phone
So you can ‘ave a li?le whine and a moan
And it’s only because you’re feelin’ alone*



[...]

Differently from interviews and speeches, songs are performances fully planned in all the aspects concerning language, rhythm and pronunciation. Thus, the presence/absence or even the alternation of standard and non standard variables is even more significant since it can never be judged an ‘accidental’ event. The extract is indicative of the accent Lily Allen has chosen to use when she sings, notably the same that she uses also in public speeches and interviews. Even though many identify it as Cockney, many of the features of this accent are missing in her pronunciation, so that she can be rather identified as an Estuary English speaker more inclined to the Cockney end of the continuum. Actually, glottal stops are to be found both in word-final position – see the words *want* and *light* – and in intervocalic context, as in *mental* and *little*. This use of intervocalic t-glottalling approaches her more to the basilectal than to the mesolectal end of the accent continuum, reminding one of the most stigmatized Cockney features. A downward trend that is further confirmed by the use of a glottal stop instead of /k/ in the word *back*. This feature, although in word final position, has not been noticed in the ‘pool of features’ of the other speakers analysed in the chapter and is not mentioned among the cases of glottalization in Estuary English while it is rather recognized as a Cockney features together with the glottalization of the /p/-sound. As far as l-vocalisation is concerned, in the extract only the word *unwell* is subject to it, although further observation of Lily Allen’s pronunciation demonstrates that she largely uses it. The excerpt also reveals h-dropping in the realization of the word *have*. However, since it seems to be due to rhythmic reasons some further research should be carried out in order to verify it. Finally, th-fronting is not recorded in the



extract. The lack of these last features tightens Lily Allen's 'pool of features' which cannot be further identified as Cockney.

The analysis of the extract confirms that a shift towards non standard features has taken place in Lily Allen who has also built her own 'pool of features' locating her pretty downward on the accent continuum.

3.6.2 Adele

Also for singer-songwriter Adele some background information will be provided in order to verify the use and incidence of non standard features in her speech and whether she is a pure Cockney – as many state – or rather an Estuary speaker approaching the Cockney end of the accent continuum. Adele Laurie Blue Adkins was born in 1988 and was raised in Tottenham, London, in the borough of Haringey. When she was 11 years old her family moved to south London, specifically Lambeth. She graduated from the BRIT School for the Performing arts and Technology in 2006, and two years later released her first and commercially successful album *19*. When she released her second album *21*, in January 2011, she became one of the brightest stars in contemporary popular music and the first artist since the Beatles to simultaneously hold a top five hit on both the Official Singles Chart and Official Albums Chart. Although her social and educational background did not assume her to speak Received Pronunciation, Adele has become a figure in the public eye in such a rapid and dramatic way that she cannot be ignored as an idol and a personality whose ideas, behaviour and accent would be assumed as models by her fans and could contribute to the spread of some non standard phonological traits.



Adele defines herself and is self-evidently defined a lovely, sincere and emotional Cockney voice by everyone has met her. The following extracts give evidence of how manifest and strong her low-status accent is, even in public occasions like interviews for national and international press:

“I’m lucky,” she cackles, with a gale-force laugh and a London accent that would put the cast of EastEnders to shame (McCormick on The Telegraph, 2011).

She speaks with a Cockney accent that could have come from Albert Square, and her laugh is the most raucous in pop (Thrills on the DailyMailOnline, 2011).

“Don’t like drinking anymore” she says in an accent that falls somewhere between Eliza Doolittle and David Beckham. “I think I got it out of my system. D’yaknowhamean?” (Van Meter on Vogue, 2012)

Being mostly identified as a Cockney, her accent appears to be very strong; however, in some occasions she smoothes it, as the following extract from an interview to USA Today demonstrates:

***Adele:** Hi I'm Adele, this is USA Today. I am in New York in a very hot and sweaty and dark artists room here at Sony. Oh, and yeah, my album's coming out in a few weeks, so I'm just um, putting in the effort, so hopefully lots of you, um, will want to hear it. But don't buy it if you don't like it, don't feel forced to. Just get it if you hear something you like. This one's called 21 and my first one was called 19, and um, it appears to be a running theme [laugh] that I call my albums after my age at the time when I was sort of right in the thick of it, and um, I was 21 when I wrote and recorded and handed in this record. Whether or not I will continue doing it, I don't know, um, when people on my first album were like oh will your second album, your sophomore album, be 21, I was like no I do have an imagination guys.*



The excerpt can be explanatory of Adele's way of speaking in public occasions, like interviews. One of the main features that have been recorded from the analysis of the extract is the exhibition of l-vocalisation that is very much present in her accent in every phonetic context where a dark /ɫ/ would be expected, word internally as in some pronunciations of the word *album* and finally as in the word *will*. T-glottalling also appears deeply ingrained in her speech occurring in almost all cases of word-final and internal /t/, as in *it* and *putting*. It is noteworthy that she also has glottalling of /p, k, b/ in a few places like in the pronunciation of *hopefully*, *like* and *album*. This last word is subject to two different non standard realizations in the extract: the former where a vocalisation replaces the dark /ɫ/; the latter with a glottal stop. A special notation concerns the th-sound in the word *something*, which is subject to glottalling rather than th-fronting, although there are only a few cases in which it happens in the whole interview. The extract also suggests a very slight tendency to th-fronting and no indication of h-dropping, since Adele pronounces /h/ wherever it appears in stressed position. These two last phenomena are at least unexpected in a singer who has repeatedly and insistently been defined Cockney but can be indicative of a shift towards a more studied and accurate choice of the non standard variables to be selected and used in more formal occasions. Indeed, as the quotation at the beginning of the paragraph evidences, Adele does not abandon her main phonological features even when she finds herself in 'the poshest establishment' in London: the Royal Albert Hall.

Adele: *Royal Albert fuckin' Hall! I know this is no place for language like tha?. I w
try to do my best. This is the poshest establishment I know. I'm so
exci?ed!*



An interview given to USA Today rather than to Vogue or even one of the most challenging and emotional performances at the Royal Albert Hall only produce in Adele a 'limited' shift on the Estuary-Cockney continuum. Again, Estuary English demonstrates to be a convenient style to be used by public personalities with a high degree of media relevance 'on occasion' to either acquire a urban spirit or to smooth the excessive harshness of their accent.

3.7 Final observations

The public figures described and analysed in this chapter share a social background or a prominent public image according to which they are supposed to speak or resort to Received Pronunciation. However, as the data reported highlight, due to their age rather than their education, to the medium rather than to the context, they show to be inclined towards the construction of an Estuary 'pool of features' and its subsequent use. The degree of social prestige any speaker enjoys in the society is crucial to determine which variables belong to the 'pool of features' and to what extent the speakers use them. Socially relevant speakers like Tony Blair and David Miliband have resulted to be extremely careful in the selection, since an exaggerated shift downward could transform their successful image into an unsuccessful one. Thus, they either increase or lower their Estuary 'pool of features' and modulate the variables according to diamesic factors. Other relevant figures, like Prince William, are less prone to modulation; he rather uses his Estuary 'pool of features' extensively and naturally relying on both his age and social status; a tendency that strongly contrasts with his wife's who, consciously or unconsciously, avoids the use of non standard features in her language. Natural and consistent has



resulted the ‘pool of features’ of Simon Reeve, one of the many regional voices working at the BBC. However, Reeve’s ‘pool of features’ also functions as a means to determine dynamics of inclusion/exclusion through a shift between more and less standard realizations. On the opposite side, many have noticed that the accent proposed by Lily Allen both while speaking and while singing, as a deliberate choice to acquire more street credibility and urbanity in order to be in tune with her fans, results in an unnatural and artificial pronunciation. Contrary to Lily Allen’s fake pronunciation, Adele’s accent has been investigated and demonstrated, on some occasions, to be more muffled but equally natural and sincere than the supposed Cockney accent people generally attribute to her. All the speakers proposed in this chapter, some for their education, all of them for their public and media relevance, were supposed to propose a Received Pronunciation, though in its advanced form. However, for the most widely varying reasons, in a studied or spontaneous way, they showed off an Estuary ‘pool of features’ placing them on the accent continuum and allowing them to swing from one end to the other.

Most of the research about Estuary English has proposed it from a diastratic perspective, focusing on the possibility for anyone to access it and thus placing in a middle-ground position. However, as the case studies indicate, those speakers enjoying a prominent position in society and high-visibility make a diaphasic use of a selected and targeted group of features, shifting ‘on occasion’ according to factors depending on the degree of acceptability and popularity they want to get.



Conclusion

The investigation carried out in the present study – focused on the sociolinguistics of British English – has gone through a diachronic and critical description of Estuary English, a phenomenon that, since the appearance of the term in 1984, has been the object of intensive research and deep analysis. However, although it is a recurring issue within the debate about the evolution of British English, it has not still acquired a recognized role in the accent continuum and continues to nurture debates around its existence and status. Studies have mainly speculated about whether it could be considered a new variety – some went even further proposing it as the new Received Pronunciation – or merely an accent, focusing on its phonological traits rather than on morphological, syntactic and lexical features. Although the debate seems to be still ongoing, an excursus of the literature on Estuary English produced in the last two decades has highlighted a focus on the social relevance and spread of the traits described as Estuary English, its middle-ground position and its use by an ever-increasingly wide spectrum of speakers, mostly by virtue of the social mobility started after World War II. Strongly pointing out its social relevance as a new, modern and democratic way of communicating, almost any description of Estuary English has proposed it as a diastratic variety that a wide range of speakers both from above and from below the social pyramid uses to move upward or downward on the social scale.

The assumption that Estuary English holds an in-between position on the accent continuum, in conjunction with an analysis of the new linguistic trends in the



United Kingdom, discussion about the rise of a supposed new variety termed Multicultural London English and observation of the wider dialect levelling process, have constituted the starting point of the present study. The combination of all these factors aroused the interest in the selection of some phonological variables by speakers who are not supposed to use them due to their social background, education and/or public relevance in society.

After a preliminary description of the evolving status of the English language and an overview of Estuary English, in the third chapter of the present study, based on the idea of an Estuary ‘pool of features’ proposed by Altendorf (2003) within the Estuary English-as register-hypothesis, we have provided case studies in an attempt to give a new slant on Estuary English proposing it as a diaphasic rather than a diastratic variety. Indeed, speakers whose excerpts of speeches have been analysed, share a prestigious role in society and a relevant media position, and for this reason they are supposed to naturally use Received Pronunciation or resort to it. However, this condition does not always come true. Their use of non standard variables, recorded on many occasions, and the relevance it has on a socio-linguistic level have demonstrated worth being the object of this research study.

The main findings of the research reported in the present study have been encompassed in the following figure (fig.17) resulting from an observation of the excerpts proposed in the previous chapter. In particular, the graph summarizes the use of the Estuary ‘pool of features’ made by the speakers proposed as case studies. It is the result of a score awarded to the individual ‘pool of features’, their use and incidence in the speakers’ accent in the selection of speeches. Presence/absence of those variables and their recurrence have been assigned a grade between 0 and 3.



0	Not recorded
1	Sporadic
2	Occasional
3	Frequent

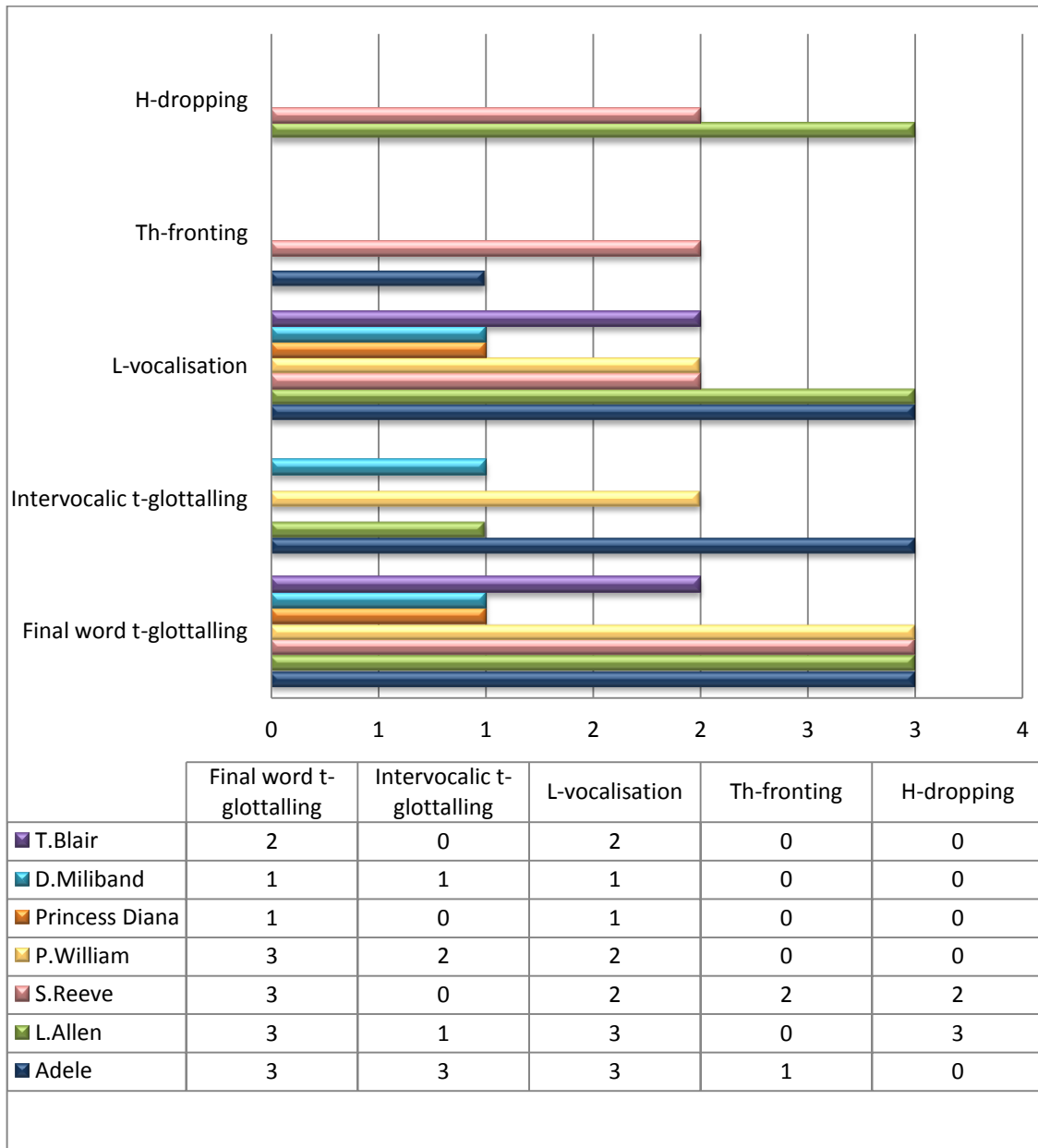


Figure 17: Use and incidence of Estuary English variables



The graph points out that some of the variables – e.g. word final t-glottalling and l-vocalisation – are more eradicated than others and thus recur more frequently and in a more generalized way in the speech of almost all the speakers proposed. On the contrary, a shroud of suspicion still lingers over the use of those variables which have been subject to stigmatization over the years. As a consequence, some of the speakers analysed, consciously or unconsciously remain constricted in the still persisting social evaluation attached to accents, while others venture into the use of variables with an historically more negative social connotation.

As the case studies demonstrate, the selection of a ‘pool of features’ is made with a higher or lower degree of awareness and with a more or less natural outcome, but nonetheless it allows RP speakers to play with notions like “trustworthiness” and “seriousness”, “urbanity” and “street credibility”, “coolness”, “membership” and “solidarity” as opposed to “unreliability”, “snobbery” and “exclusivity”/“exclusion”. Speakers can rely on the social relevance of accents still embedded in the British society to enjoy the covert prestige and positive evaluation currently attached to Estuary English. Swinging on the accent continuum through their ‘pool of features’ enables them to relate with or move within different speech communities and broaden the impact of their public image. Since the selection of features is subjective and determined by diamesic, diaphasic and pragmatic factors, speakers who want to slightly express membership without exaggerating their participation to a speech community but undermining their social relevance, will consciously avoid the use of those features that will drag them towards the Cockney end of the continuum. On the contrary, the use of a greater number of non standard variables suggests that the speaker is trying to widen his/her audience as much as possible and to address to a manifold range of listeners. The Estuary ‘pool of features’ thus reveals the possibility of expressing different acts of identity disclosing in-group solidarity and

public recognition. Indeed, getting the approval of larger groups of speakers, addressing to different speech communities, increases the public prestige of the individuals who aim at becoming public and media personalities to be appreciated and imitated. Shifting from the accent they are supposed to speak – Received Pronunciation – to the Estuary ‘pool of features’, they display their ability to meet the requirements of different audiences and communicative situations.

As a consequence of this attitude to ‘handle’ accents, the notion of prestige generally attached to Received Pronunciation is moving and progressively detaching from the idea of standard. It is no more a matter of alternation between *overt* and *covert* prestige; it is a change from below, promoted by speakers from above, resulting in an undefined ‘middle space’ in which each speaker can move freely. However, according to their own ‘pool of features’ and to their targeted use of the non standard variables, not all the speakers locate in the same position, but they collocate more upward or downward on the accent continuum shifting toward either the RP or the Cockney end (fig.18).

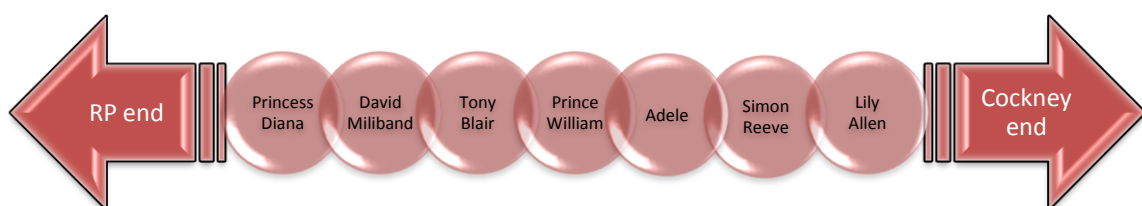


Figure 18: *Position of each speaker on the accent continuum between Received Pronunciation and Cockney*

With a higher or lower degree of non standard, all the speakers move in the same in-between space which can either widen or narrow according to their choices and pragmatic needs.



The observation of their linguistic behaviour, their shift between Received Pronunciation and Estuary English, in some cases moving really close to the Cockney end of the accent continuum, and the individual construction of their own ‘pool of features’ proves that Estuary English is part of a ‘phonological pragmatics’ made up of targeted phonological choices hiding a high degree of social relevance.

On the whole, the results of the present study seem to show that the Estuary English-as register-hypothesis proposed by Altendorf can function in that a ‘pool of features’ really exists and, although many of the variables which constitute it have already entered Received Pronunciation as advanced prestige innovations and their acceptability depends on the phonological context in which they are used, the ‘pool of features’ consists of a group of variables mixed according to the degree of ‘prestige’ and social recognition each speaker enjoys. A relevant role is also played by diamesic factors since the selection those speakers put into effect mostly depends on the different communicative contexts. All the factors mentioned support the idea of a diaphasic relevance of Estuary English.

At this stage, though, it is likely to corroborate the idea that Estuary English is a convenient label for a diastratic phenomenon leading to an evolving and unstable process involving diaphasic and diamesic variation. It is unlikely, on the contrary, to state that Estuary English is going to replace Received Pronunciation *in toto*, as many claimed 25 years ago; the spread of the variables identified as Estuary English is rather going to exercise a modificatory force consisting on the use made by speakers according to the audience and the context, but especially concentrated on the goal to be achieved. Thus, it seems inappropriate to continue to propose Estuary English as a variety, though a diastratic one. The context-oriented use of its variables and the construction of a ‘pool of features’ made by any speaker



individually, as proposed in the present study, more likely suggests that it could be described as a register resulting from a targeted linguistic construction.

In line with Altendorf, it can thus be concluded that Estuary English can fall into the diaphasic dimension of variation allowing speakers to move freely within the Received Pronunciation-Cockney accent continuum ‘on occasion’; ““flirting” with EE in order to endear themselves to their audience whose members – subjects, music lovers and voters – are in the majority not speakers of RP. Their use of EE is a stylistic option which does not necessarily result in any authentic south-eastern accent” (Altendorf 2003:131).



Appendixes

Appendix 1

This is a transcript of the BBC1 Panorama interview with the Princess of Wales, broadcast in November 1995

MARTIN BASHIR: Your Royal Highness, how prepared were you for the pressures that came with marrying into the Royal Family?

DIANA: At the age of 19, you always think you're prepared for everything, and you think you have the knowledge of what's coming ahead. But although I was daunted at the prospect at the time, I felt I had the support of my husband-to-be.

BASHIR: What were the expectations that you had for married life?

DIANA: I think like any marriage, specially when you've had divorced parents like myself, you'd want to try even harder to make it work and you don't want to fall back into a pattern that you've seen happen in your own family. "I want to reassure all those people who have loved me and supported me throughout the last 15 years that I'd never let them down."

I desperately wanted it to work, I desperately loved my husband and I wanted to share everything together, and I thought that we were a very good team.

BASHIR: How aware were you of the significance of what had happened to you? After all, you'd become Princess of Wales, ultimately with a view to becoming Queen.

DIANA: I wasn't daunted, and am not daunted by the responsibilities that that role creates. It was a challenge, it is a challenge.

As for becoming Queen, it's, it was never at the forefront of my mind when I married my husband: it was a long way off that thought.

The most daunting aspect was the media attention, because my husband and I, we were told when we got engaged that the media



would go quietly, and it didn't; and then when we were married they said it would go quietly and it didn't; and then it started to focus very much on me, and I seemed to be on the front of a newspaper every single day, which is an isolating experience, and the higher the media put you, place you, is the bigger the drop. And I was very aware of that.

BASHIR: How did you handle the transition from being Lady Diana Spencer to the most photographed, the most talked-about, woman in the world?

DIANA: Well, it took a long time to understand why people were so interested in me, but I assumed it was because my husband had done a lot of wonderful work leading up to our marriage and our relationship.

But then I, during the years you see yourself as a good product that sits on a shelf and sells well, and people make a lot of money out of you.

BASHIR: It's been suggested in some newspapers that you were left largely to cope with your new status on your own. Do you feel that was your experience?

DIANA: Yes I do, on reflection. But then here was a situation which hadn't ever happened before in history, in the sense that the media were everywhere, and here was a fairy story that everybody wanted to work.

And so it was, it was isolating, but it was also a situation where you couldn't indulge in feeling sorry for yourself: you had to either sink or swim. And you had to learn that very fast.

BASHIR: And what did you do?

DIANA: I swam. We went to Alice Springs, to Australia, and we went and did a walkabout, and I said to my husband: 'What do I do now?'

And he said, 'Go over to the other side and speak to them.' I said, 'I can't, I just can't.'

He said, 'Well, you've got to do it.' And he went off and did his bit, and I went off and did my bit. It practically finished me off there and then, and I suddenly realised - I went back to our



hotel room and realised the impact that, you know, I had to sort myself out.

We had a six-week tour - four weeks in Australia and two weeks in New Zealand - and by the end, when we flew back from New Zealand, I was a different person. I realised the sense of duty, the level of intensity of interest, and the demanding role I now found myself in.

BASHIR: Were you overwhelmed by the pressure from people initially?

DIANA: Yes, I was very daunted because as far as I was concerned I was a fat, chubby, 20-year-old, 21-year-old, and I couldn't understand the level of interest.

BASHIR: At this early stage, would you say that you were happily married?

DIANA: Very much so. But, the pressure on us both as a couple with the media was phenomenal, and misunderstood by a great many people.

We'd be going round Australia, for instance, and all you could hear was, oh, she's on the other side. Now, if you're a man, like my husband a proud man, you mind about that if you hear it every day for four weeks. And you feel low about it, instead of feeling happy and sharing it.

BASHIR: When you say 'she's on the other side', what do you mean?

DIANA: Well, they weren't on the right side to wave at me or to touch me.

BASHIR: So they were expressing a preference even then for you rather than your husband?

DIANA: Yes - which I felt very uncomfortable with, and I felt it was unfair, because I wanted to share.

BASHIR: But were you flattered by the media attention particularly?

DIANA: No, not particularly, because with the media attention came a lot of jealousy, a great deal of complicated situations arose because of that.



BASHIR: At this early stage in your marriage, what role did you see for yourself as Princess of Wales? Did you have an idea of the role that you might like to fulfil?

DIANA: No, I was very confused by which area I should go into. Then I found myself being more and more involved with people who were rejected by society - with, I'd say, drug addicts, alcoholism, battered this, battered that - and I found an affinity there.

And I respected very much the honesty I found on that level with people I met, because in hospices, for instance, when people are dying they're much more open and more vulnerable, and much more real than other people. And I appreciated that.

BASHIR: Had the Palace given any thought to the role that you might have as Princess of Wales?

DIANA: No, no one sat me down with a piece of paper and said: 'This is what is expected of you.' But there again, I'm lucky enough in the fact that I have found my role, and I'm very conscious of it, and I love being with people.

BASHIR: So you very much created the role that you would pursue for yourself really? That was what you did?

DIANA: I think so. I remember when I used to sit on hospital beds and hold people's hands, people used to be sort of shocked because they said they'd never seen this before, and to me it was quite a normal thing to do.

And when I saw the reassurance that an action like that gave, I did it everywhere, and will always do that.

BASHIR: It wasn't long after the wedding before you became pregnant. What was your reaction when you learnt that the child was a boy?

DIANA: Enormous relief. I felt the whole country was in labour with me. Enormous relief.

But I had actually known William was going to be a boy, because the scan had shown it, so it caused no surprise.

BASHIR: Had you always wanted to have a family?

DIANA: Yes, I came from a family where there were four of us, so we had enormous fun there.



And then William and Harry arrived - fortunately two boys, it would have been a little tricky if it had been two girls - but that in itself brings the responsibilities of bringing them up, William's future being as it is, and Harry like a form of a back-up in that aspect.

BASHIR: How did the rest of the Royal Family react when they learnt that the child that you were to have was going to be a boy?

DIANA: Well, everybody was thrilled to bits. It had been quite a difficult pregnancy - I hadn't been very well throughout it - so by the time William arrived it was a great relief because it was all peaceful again, and I was well for a time.

Then I was unwell with post-natal depression, which no one ever discusses, post-natal depression, you have to read about it afterwards, and that in itself was a bit of a difficult time. You'd wake up in the morning feeling you didn't want to get out of bed, you felt misunderstood, and just very, very low in yourself.

BASHIR: Was this completely out of character for you?

DIANA: Yes, very much so. I never had had a depression in my life. But then when I analysed it I could see that the changes I'd made in the last year had all caught up with me, and my body had said: 'We want a rest.'

BASHIR: So what treatment did you actually receive?

DIANA: I received a great deal of treatment, but I knew in myself that actually what I needed was space and time to adapt to all the different roles that had come my way. I knew I could do it, but I needed people to be patient and give me the space to do it.

BASHIR: When you say all of the different roles that had come your way, what do you mean?

DIANA: Well, it was a very short space of time: in the space of a year my whole life had changed, turned upside down, and it had its wonderful moments, but it also had challenging moments. And I could see where the rough edges needed to be smoothed.

BASHIR: What was the family's reaction to your post-natal depression?



DIANA: Well maybe I was the first person ever to be in this family who ever had a depression or was ever openly tearful. And obviously that was daunting, because if you've never seen it before how do you support it?

BASHIR: What effect did the depression have on your marriage?

DIANA: Well, it gave everybody a wonderful new label - Diana's unstable and Diana's mentally unbalanced. And unfortunately that seems to have stuck on and off over the years.

BASHIR: Are you saying that that label stuck within your marriage?

DIANA: I think people used it and it stuck, yes.

BASHIR: According to press reports, it was suggested that it was around this time things became so difficult that you actually tried to injure yourself.

DIANA: Mmm. When no one listens to you, or you feel no one's listening to you, all sorts of things start to happen.

For instance you have so much pain inside yourself that you try and hurt yourself on the outside because you want help, but it's the wrong help you're asking for. People see it as crying wolf or attention-seeking, and they think because you're in the media all the time you've got enough attention, inverted commas.

But I was actually crying out because I wanted to get better in order to go forward and continue my duty and my role as wife, mother, Princess of Wales.

So yes, I did inflict upon myself. I didn't like myself, I was ashamed because I couldn't cope with the pressures.

BASHIR: What did you actually do?

DIANA: Well, I just hurt my arms and my legs; and I work in environments now where I see women doing similar things and I'm able to understand completely where they're coming from.

BASHIR: What was your husband's reaction to this, when you began to injure yourself in this way?

DIANA: Well, I didn't actually always do it in front of him. But obviously anyone who loves someone would be very concerned about it.

BASHIR: Did he understand what was behind the physical act of hurting yourself, do you think?



DIANA: No, but then not many people would have taken the time to see that.

BASHIR: Were you able to admit that you were in fact unwell, or did you feel compelled simply to carry on performing as the Princess of Wales?

DIANA: I felt compelled to perform. Well, when I say perform, I was compelled to go out and do my engagements and not let people down and support them and love them.

And in a way by being out in public they supported me, although they weren't aware just how much healing they were giving me, and it carried me through.

BASHIR: But did you feel that you had to maintain the public image of a successful Princess of Wales?

DIANA: Yes I did, yes I did.

BASHIR: The depression was resolved, as you say, but it was subsequently reported that you suffered bulimia. Is that true?

DIANA: Yes, I did. I had bulimia for a number of years. And that's like a secret disease.

You inflict it upon yourself because your self-esteem is at a low ebb, and you don't think you're worthy or valuable. You fill your stomach up four or five times a day - some do it more - and it gives you a feeling of comfort.

It's like having a pair of arms around you, but it's temporarily, temporary. Then you're disgusted at the bloatedness of your stomach, and then you bring it all up again.

And it's a repetitive pattern which is very destructive to yourself.

BASHIR: How often would you do that on a daily basis?

DIANA: Depends on the pressures going on. If I'd been on what I call an awayday, or I'd been up part of the country all day, I'd come home feeling pretty empty, because my engagements at that time would be to do with people dying, people very sick, people's marriage problems, and I'd come home and it would be very difficult to know how to comfort myself having been comforting lots of other people, so it would be a regular pattern to jump into the fridge.



It was a symptom of what was going on in my marriage.

I was crying out for help, but giving the wrong signals, and people were using my bulimia as a coat on a hanger: they decided that was the problem - Diana was unstable.

BASHIR: Instead of looking behind the symptom at the cause.

DIANA: Uh,uh.

BASHIR: What was the cause?

DIANA: The cause was the situation where my husband and I had to keep everything together because we didn't want to disappoint the public, and yet obviously there was a lot of anxiety going on within our four walls.

BASHIR: Do you mean between the two of you?

DIANA: Uh,uh.

BASHIR: And so you subjected yourself to this phase of bingeing and vomiting?

DIANA: You could say the word subjected, but it was my escape mechanism, and it worked, for me, at that time.

BASHIR: Did you seek help from any other members of the Royal Family?

DIANA: No. You, you have to know that when you have bulimia you're very ashamed of yourself and you hate yourself, so - and people think you're wasting food - so you don't discuss it with people. And the thing about bulimia is your weight always stays the same, whereas with anorexia you visibly shrink. So you can pretend the whole way through. There's no proof.

BASHIR: When you say people would think you were wasting food, did anybody suggest that to you?

DIANA: Oh yes, a number of times.

BASHIR: What was said?

DIANA: Well, it was just, 'I suppose you're going to waste that food later on?' And that was pressure in itself. And of course I would, because it was my release valve.

BASHIR: How long did this bulimia go on for?

DIANA: A long time, a long time. But I'm free of it now.

BASHIR: Two years, three years?

DIANA: Mmm. A little bit more than that.



BASHIR: According to reports in the national press, it was at around this time that you began to experience difficulties in your marriage, in your relationship to the Prince of Wales. Is that true?

DIANA: Well, we were a newly-married couple, so obviously we had those pressures too, and we had the media, who were completely fascinated by everything we did.

And it was difficult to share that load, because I was the one who was always pitched out front, whether it was my clothes, what I said, what my hair was doing, everything - which was a pretty dull subject, actually, and it's been exhausted over the years - when actually what we wanted to be, what we wanted supported was our work, and as a team.

BASHIR: What effect did the press interest in you have on your marriage?

DIANA: It made it very difficult, because for a situation where it was a couple working in the same job - we got out the same car, we shook the same hand, my husband did the speeches, I did the handshaking - so basically we were a married couple doing the same job, which is very difficult for anyone, and more so if you've got all the attention on you.

We struggled a bit with it, it was very difficult; and then my husband decided that we do separate engagements, which was a bit sad for me, because I quite liked the company.

But, there again, I didn't have the choice.

BASHIR: So it wasn't at your request that you did that on your own?

DIANA: Not at all, no.

BASHIR: The biography of the Prince of Wales written by Jonathan Dimbleby, which as you know was published last year, suggested that you and your husband had very different outlooks, very different interests. Would you agree with that?

DIANA: No. I think we had a great deal of interest - we both liked people, both liked country life, both loved children, work in the cancer field, work in hospices.



But I was portrayed in the media at that time, if I remember rightly, as someone, because I hadn't passed any O-levels and taken any A-levels, I was stupid.

And I made the grave mistake once of saying to a child I was thick as a plank, in order to ease the child's nervousness, which it did. But that headline went all round the world, and I rather regret saying it.

BASHIR: The Prince of Wales, in the biography, is described as a great thinker, a man with a tremendous range of interests. What did he think of your interests?

DIANA: Well, I don't think I was allowed to have any. I think that I've always been the 18-year-old girl he got engaged to, so I don't think I've been given any credit for growth. And, my goodness, I've had to grow.

BASHIR: Explain what you mean when you say that.

DIANA: Well, er...

BASHIR: When you say, when you say you were never given any credit, what do you mean?

DIANA: Well anything good I ever did nobody ever said a thing, never said, 'well done', or 'was it OK?' But if I tripped up, which invariably I did, because I was new at the game, a ton of bricks came down on me.

BASHIR: How did you cope with that?

DIANA: Well obviously there were lots of tears, and one could dive into the bulimia, into escape.

BASHIR: Some people would find that difficult to believe, that you were left so much to cope on your own, and that the description you give suggests that your relationship with your husband was not very good even at that early stage.

DIANA: Well, we had unique pressures put upon us, and we both tried our hardest to cover them up, but obviously it wasn't to be.

BASHIR: Around 1986, again according to the biography written by Jonathan Dimbleby about your husband, he says that your husband renewed his relationship with Mrs Camilla Parker-Bowles. Were you aware of that?



DIANA: Yes I was, but I wasn't in a position to do anything about it.

BASHIR: What evidence did you have that their relationship was continuing even though you were married?

DIANA: Oh, a woman's instinct is a very good one.

BASHIR: Is that all?

DIANA: Well, I had, obviously I had knowledge of it.

BASHIR: From staff?

DIANA: Well, from people who minded and cared about our marriage, yes.

BASHIR: What effect did that have on you?

DIANA: Pretty devastating. Rampant bulimia, if you can have rampant bulimia, and just a feeling of being no good at anything and being useless and hopeless and failed in every direction.

BASHIR: And with a husband who was having a relationship with somebody else?

DIANA: With a husband who loved someone else, yes.

BASHIR: You really thought that?

DIANA: Uh,uh. I didn't think that, I knew it.

BASHIR: How did you know it?

DIANA: By the change of behavioural pattern in my husband; for all sorts of reasons that a woman's instinct produces; you just know. It was already difficult, but it became increasingly difficult.

BASHIR: In the practical sense, how did it become difficult?

DIANA: Well, people were - when I say people I mean friends, on my husband's side - were indicating that I was again unstable, sick, and should be put in a home of some sort in order to get better. I was almost an embarrassment.

BASHIR: Do you think he really thought that?

DIANA: Well, there's no better way to dismantle a personality than to isolate it.

BASHIR: So you were isolated?

DIANA: Uh,uh, very much so.

BASHIR: Do you think Mrs Parker-Bowles was a factor in the breakdown of your marriage?



DIANA: Well, there were three of us in this marriage, so it was a bit crowded.

BASHIR: You're effectively living separate lives, yet in public there's this appearance of this happily married royal couple. How was this regarded by the Royal Family?

DIANA: I think everybody was very anxious because they could see there were complications but didn't want to interfere, but were there, made it known that they were there if required.

BASHIR: Do you think it was accepted that one could live effectively two lives - one in private and one in public?

DIANA: No, because again the media was very interested about our set-up, inverted commas; when we went abroad we had separate apartments, albeit we were on the same floor, so of course that was leaked, and that caused complications.

But Charles and I had our duty to perform, and that was paramount.

BASHIR: So in a sense you coped with this, these two lives, because of your duty?

DIANA: Uh,uh. And we were a very good team in public; albeit what was going on in private, we were a good team.

BASHIR: Some people would find that difficult to reconcile.

DIANA: Well, that's their problem. I know what it felt like.

BASHIR: The Queen described 1992 as her 'annus horribilis', and it was in that year that Andrew Morton's book about you was published. Did you ever meet Andrew Morton or personally help him with the book?

DIANA: I never met him, no.

BASHIR: Did you ever personally assist him with the writing of his book?

DIANA: A lot of people saw the distress that my life was in, and they felt it was a supportive thing to help in the way that they did.

BASHIR: Did you allow your friends, your close friends, to speak to Andrew Morton?

DIANA: Yes, I did. Yes, I did.

BASHIR: Why?



DIANA: I was at the end of my tether. I was desperate.

I think I was so fed up with being seen as someone who was a basket-case, because I am a very strong person and I know that causes complications in the system that I live in.

BASHIR: How would a book change that?

DIANA: I don't know. Maybe people have a better understanding, maybe there's a lot of women out there who suffer on the same level but in a different environment, who are unable to stand up for themselves because their self-esteem is cut into two. I don't know.

BASHIR: What effect do you think the book had on your husband and the Royal Family?

DIANA: I think they were shocked and horrified and very disappointed.

BASHIR: Can you understand why?

DIANA: I think Mr Dimbleby's book was a shock to a lot of people and disappointment as well.

BASHIR: What effect did Andrew Morton's book have on your relationship with the Prince of Wales?

DIANA: Well, what had been hidden - or rather what we thought had been hidden - then became out in the open and was spoken about on a daily basis, and the pressure was for us to sort ourselves out in some way.

Were we going to stay together or were we going to separate? And the word separation and divorce kept coming up in the media on a daily basis.

BASHIR: What happened after the book was published?

DIANA: Well, we struggled along. We did our engagements together. And in our private life it was obviously turbulent.

BASHIR: Did things come to a head?

DIANA: Yes, slowly, yes. My husband and I, we discussed it very calmly.

We could see what the public were requiring. They wanted clarity of a situation that was obviously becoming intolerable.

BASHIR: So what happened?



DIANA: So we got the lawyers together, we discussed separation - obviously there were a lot of people to discuss it with: the Prime Minister, Her Majesty - and then it moved itself, so to speak.

BASHIR: By the December of that year, as you say, you'd agreed to a legal separation. What were your feelings at the time?

DIANA: Deep, deep, profound sadness. Because we had struggled to keep it going, but obviously we'd both run out of steam.

And in a way I suppose it could have been a relief for us both that we'd finally made our minds up. But my husband asked for the separation and I supported it.

BASHIR: It was not your idea?

DIANA: No. Not at all. I come from a divorced background, and I didn't want to go into that one again.

BASHIR: What happened next?

DIANA: We, I asked my husband if we could put the announcement out before the children came back from school for Christmas holidays because they were protected in the school they were at.

And he did that, and it came out on December 9th. I was on an engagement up north.

I heard it on the radio, and it was just very, very sad. Really sad. The fairy tale had come to an end, and most importantly our marriage had taken a turn, different turn.

BASHIR: Did you tell your children that you were going to separate?

DIANA: Yes. I went down a week beforehand, and explained to them what was happening.

And they took it as children do - lots of questions - and I hoped I was able to reassure them. But, who knows?

BASHIR: What effect do you think the announcement had on them?

DIANA: I think the announcement had a huge effect on me and Charles, really, and the children were very much out of it, in the sense that they were tucked away at school.

BASHIR: Once the separation had occurred, moving to 1993, what happened during that period?



DIANA: People's agendas changed overnight. I was now separated wife of the Prince of Wales, I was a problem, I was a liability (seen as), and how are we going to deal with her? This hasn't happened before.

BASHIR: Who was asking those questions?

DIANA: People around me, people in this environment, and ...

BASHIR: The royal household?

DIANA: People in my environment, yes, yes.

BASHIR: And they began to see you as a problem?

DIANA: Yes, very much so, uh,uh.

BASHIR: How did that show itself?

DIANA: By visits abroad being blocked, by things that had come naturally my way being stopped, letters going, that got lost, and various things.

BASHIR: So despite the fact that your interest was always to continue with your duties, you found that your duties were being held from you?

DIANA: Yes. Everything changed after we separated, and life became very difficult then for me.

BASHIR: Who was behind that change?

DIANA: Well, my husband's side were very busy stopping me.

BASHIR: What was your reaction when news broke of allegedly a telephone conversation between you and Mr James Gilbey having been recorded?

DIANA: I felt very protective about James because he'd been a very good friend to me and was a very good friend to me, and I couldn't bear that his life was going to be messed up because he had the connection with me.

And that worried me. I'm very protective about my friends.

BASHIR: Did you have the alleged telephone conversation?

DIANA: Yes we did, absolutely we did. Yup, we did.

BASHIR: On that tape, Mr Gilbey expresses his affection for you. Was that transcript accurate?

DIANA: Yes. I mean he is a very affectionate person.

But the implications of that conversation were that we'd had an adulterous relationship, which was not true.



BASHIR: Have you any idea how that conversation came to be published in the national press?

DIANA: No, but it was done to harm me in a serious manner, and that was the first time I'd experienced what it was like to be outside the net, so to speak, and not be in the family.

BASHIR: What do you think the purpose was behind it?

DIANA: It was to make the public change their attitude towards me. It was, you know, if we are going to divorce, my husband would hold more cards than I would - it was very much a poker game, chess game.

BASHIR: There were also a series of telephone calls which allegedly were made by you to a Mr Oliver Hoare. Did you make what were described as nuisance phone calls?

DIANA: I was reputed to have made 300 telephone calls in a very short space of time which, bearing in mind my lifestyle at that time, made me a very busy lady.

No, I didn't, I didn't.

But that again was a huge move to discredit me, and very nearly did me in, the injustice of it, because I did my own homework on that subject, and consequently found out that a young boy had done most of them.

But I read that I'd done them all. Mr Hoare told me that his lines were being tapped by the local police station. He said, you know, don't ring. So I didn't, but somebody clearly did.

BASHIR: Had you made any of those calls at all?

DIANA: I used to, yes, I had rung up, yes.

BASHIR: Once, twice, three times?

DIANA: I don't know. Over a period of six to nine months, a few times, but certainly not in an obsessive manner, no.

BASHIR: Do you really believe that a campaign was being waged against you?

DIANA: Yes I did, absolutely, yeah.

BASHIR: Why?

DIANA: I was the separated wife of the Prince of Wales, I was a problem, fullstop. Never happened before, what do we do with her?



BASHIR: Can't we pack her off to somewhere quietly rather than campaign against her?

DIANA: She won't go quietly, that's the problem. I'll fight to the end, because I believe that I have a role to fulfil, and I've got two children to bring up.

BASHIR: By the end of 1993 you had suffered persistent difficulties with the press - these phone conversations were made public - and you decided to withdraw from public life. Why did you do that?

DIANA: The pressure was intolerable then, and my job, my work was being affected.

I wanted to give 110% to my work, and I could only give 50. I was constantly tired, exhausted, because the pressure was just, it was so cruel.

So I thought the only way to do it was to stand up and make a speech and extract myself before I started disappointing and not carrying out my work.

It was my decision to make that speech because I owed it to the public to say that, you know, 'thank you. I'm disappearing for a bit, but I'll come back.'

BASHIR: It wasn't very long before you did come back, of course.

DIANA: Well, I don't know. I mean, I did a lot of work, well, underground, without any media attention, so I never really stopped doing it.

I just didn't do every day out and about, I just couldn't do it.

You know, the campaign at that point was being successful, but it did surprise the people who were causing the grief - it did surprise them when I took myself out of the game.

They hadn't expected that. And I'm a great believer that you should always confuse the enemy.

BASHIR: Who was the enemy?

DIANA: Well, the enemy was my husband's department, because I always got more publicity, my work was more, was discussed much more than his.



And, you know, from that point of view I understand it. But I was doing good things, and I wanted to good things. I was never going to hurt anyone, I was never going to let anyone down.

BASHIR: But you really believe that it was out of jealousy that they wanted to undermine you?

DIANA: I think it was out of fear, because here was a strong woman doing her bit, and where was she getting her strength from to continue?

BASHIR: What was your reaction to your husband's disclosure to Jonathan Dimbleby that he had in fact committed adultery?

DIANA: Well, I was totally unaware of the content of the book, and actually saw it on the news that night that it had come out, and my first concern was to the children, because they were able to understand what was coming out, and I wanted to protect them. But I was pretty devastated myself. But then I admired the honesty, because it takes a lot to do that.

BASHIR: In what sense?

DIANA: Well, to be honest about a relationship with someone else, in his position - that's quite something.

BASHIR: How did you handle this with the children?

DIANA: I went to the school and put it to William, particularly, that if you find someone you love in life you must hang on to it and look after it, and if you were lucky enough to find someone who loved you then one must protect it.

William asked me what had been going on, and could I answer his questions, which I did.

He said, was that the reason why our marriage had broken up?

And I said, well, there were three of us in this marriage, and the pressure of the media was another factor, so the two together were very difficult.

But although I still loved Papa I couldn't live under the same roof as him, and likewise with him.

BASHIR: What effect do you think it had on Prince William?

DIANA: Well, he's a child that's a deep thinker, and we don't know for a few years how it's gone in. But I put it in gently, without resentment or any anger.



BASHIR: Looking back now, do you feel at all responsible for the difficulties in your marriage?

DIANA: Mmm. I take full responsibility, I take some responsibility that our marriage went the way it did. I'll take half of it, but I won't take any more than that, because it takes two to get in this situation.

BASHIR: But you do bear some of the responsibility?

DIANA: Absolutely, we both made mistakes.

BASHIR: Another book that was published recently concerned a Mr James Hewitt, in which he claimed to have had a very close relationship with you, from about 1989 I think. What was the nature of your relationship?

DIANA: He was a great friend of mine at a very difficult, yet another difficult time, and he was always there to support me, and I was absolutely devastated when this book appeared, because I trusted him, and because, again, I worried about the reaction on my children.

And, yes, there was factual evidence in the book, but a lot of it was, comes from another world, didn't equate to what happened.

BASHIR: What do you mean?

DIANA: Well, there was a lot of fantasy in that book, and it was very distressing for me that a friend of mine, who I had trusted, made money out of me. I really minded about that.

And he'd rung me up 10 days before it arrived in the bookshops to tell me that there was nothing to worry about, and I believed him, stupidly.

And then when it did arrive the first thing I did was rush down to talk to my children. And William produced a box of chocolates and said, 'Mummy, I think you've been hurt. These are to make you smile again.' So...

BASHIR: Did your relationship go beyond a close friendship?

DIANA: Yes it did, yes.

BASHIR: Were you unfaithful?

DIANA: Yes, I adored him. Yes, I was in love with him. But I was very let down.



BASHIR: How would you describe your life now? You do live very much on your own, don't you?

DIANA: Yes, I don't mind that actually. You know, people think that at the end of the day a man is the only answer. Actually, a fulfilling job is better for me. (LAUGHTER)

BASHIR: What do you mean by that?

DIANA: Well, I mean any gentleman that's been past my door, we've instantly been put together in the media and all hell's broken loose, so that's been very tough on the male friends I've had, and obviously from my point of view.

BASHIR: Does that mean that you feel that for the rest of your life you'll have to be on your own?

DIANA: No, I'm not really on my own. I've got wonderful friends, I've got my boys, I've got my work.

It's just by living at Kensington Palace obviously it is a little bit isolating, but, you know, maybe we all feel like that.

BASHIR: How do you feel about the way the press behaves towards you now?

DIANA: I still to this day find the interest daunting and phenomenal, because I actually don't like being the centre of attention.

When I have my public duties, I understand that when I get out the car I'm being photographed, but actually it's now when I go out of my door, my front door, I'm being photographed.

I never know where a lens is going to be.

A normal day would be followed by four cars; a normal day would come back to my car and find six freelance photographers jumping around me.

Some people would say, Well, if you had a policeman it would make it easier. It doesn't at all.

They've decided that I'm still a product, after 15, 16 years, that sells well, and they all shout at me, telling me that: 'Oh, come on, Di, look up. If you give us a picture I can get my children to a better school.'

And, you know, you can laugh it off. But you get that the whole time. It's quite difficult.



BASHIR: Some people would say that in the early years of your marriage you were partly responsible for encouraging the press interest - you danced with people like Wayne Sleep, you seemed to enjoy it, you had a very good and warm relationship.

Do you feel any responsibility for the way the press have behaved towards you?

DIANA: I've never encouraged the media. There was a relationship which worked before, but now I can't tolerate it because it's become abusive and it's harassment.

But I don't want to be seen to be indulging in self-pity. I'm not.

I understand they have a job to do. You could equate it to a soap opera really. It goes on and on and on, and the story never changes.

And each time one enjoys oneself - albeit it's in a different situation - you have to pay for it, because people criticise, which comes with the patch, as I said previously.

But I am a free spirit - unfortunately for some.

BASHIR: But here at Kensington Palace, are you isolated?

DIANA: Well I am by the nature of my situation, yes, but I don't feel sorry for myself in any way.

I've got my work that I choose to do, and I've got my boys, and I've got lots of opportunities coming up in the next year - visits abroad: I'm about to go to Argentina, which I'm very happy with, and hope very much to continue the good relationship that's now been adopted between the two countries. I hope I can be of help there.

BASHIR: What role do you see for yourself in the future?

DIANA: I'd like to be an ambassador for this country. I'd like to represent this country abroad.

As I have all this media interest, let's not just sit in this country and be battered by it. Let's take them, these people, out to represent this country and the good qualities of it abroad.

When I go abroad we've got 60 to 90 photographers, just from this country, coming with me, so let's use it in a productive way, to help this country.



BASHIR: You say you feel that your future is as some form of ambassador. At whose behest is that? On what grounds do you feel that you have the right to think of yourself as an ambassador.

DIANA: I've been in a privileged position for 15 years. I've got tremendous knowledge about people and how to communicate. I've learnt that, I've got it, and I want to use it.

And when I look at people in public life, I'm not a political animal but I think the biggest disease this world suffers from in this day and age is the disease of people feeling unloved, and I know that I can give love for a minute, for half an hour, for a day, for a month, but I can give - I'm very happy to do that and I want to do that.

BASHIR: Do you think that the British people are happy with you in your role?

DIANA: I think the British people need someone in public life to give affection, to make them feel important, to support them, to give them light in their dark tunnels.

I see it as a possibly unique role, and yes, I've had difficulties, as everybody has witnessed over the years, but let's now use the knowledge I've gathered to help other people in distress.

BASHIR: Do you think you can?

DIANA: I know I can, I know I can, yes.

BASHIR: Up until you came into this family, the monarchy seemed to enjoy an unquestioned position at the heart of British life. Do you feel that you're at all to blame for the fact that survival of the monarchy is now a question that people are asking?

DIANA: No, I don't feel blame. I mean, once or twice I've heard people say to me that, you know, 'Diana's out to destroy the monarchy', which has bewildered me, because why would I want to destroy something that is my children's future.

I will fight for my children on any level in order for them to be happy and have peace of mind and carry out their duties.

But I think what concerns me most of all about how people discuss the monarchy is they become indifferent, and I think that is a problem, and I think that should be sorted out, yes.



BASHIR: When you say indifferent, what do you mean?

DIANA: They don't care. People don't care any more. They've been so force-fed with marital problems, whatever, whatever, whatever, that they're fed up.

I'm fed up of reading about it. I'm in it, so God knows what people out there must think.

BASHIR: Do you think the monarchy needs to adapt and to change in order to survive?

DIANA: I understand that change is frightening for people, especially if there's nothing to go to. It's best to stay where you are. I understand that.

But I do think that there are a few things that could change, that would alleviate this doubt, and sometimes complicated relationship between monarchy and public. I think they could walk hand in hand, as opposed to be so distant.

BASHIR: What are you doing to try and effect some kind of change?

DIANA: Well, with William and Harry, for instance, I take them round homelessness projects, I've taken William and Harry to people dying of Aids - albeit I told them it was cancer - I've taken the children to all sorts of areas where I'm not sure anyone of that age in this family has been before.

And they have a knowledge - they may never use it, but the seed is there, and I hope it will grow because knowledge is power.

BASHIR: What are you hoping that that experience for your children - what impact that experience will have on your children?

DIANA: I want them to have an understanding of people's emotions, people's insecurities, people's distress, and people's hopes and dreams.

BASHIR: What kind of monarchy do you anticipate?

DIANA: I would like a monarchy that has more contact with its people - and I don't mean by riding round bicycles and things like that, but just having a more in-depth understanding.

And I don't say that as a criticism to the present monarchy: I just say that as what I see and hear and feel on a daily basis in the role I have chosen for myself.



BASHIR: There's a lot of discussion at the moment about how matters between yourself and the Prince of Wales will be resolved. There's even the suggestion of a divorce between you. What are your thoughts about that?

DIANA: I don't want a divorce, but obviously we need clarity on a situation that has been of enormous discussion over the last three years in particular.

So all I say to that is that I await my husband's decision of which way we are all going to go.

BASHIR: If he wished a divorce to go through, would you accept that?

DIANA: I would obviously discuss it with him, but up to date neither of us has discussed this subject, though the rest of the world seems to have.

BASHIR: Would it be your wish to divorce?

DIANA: No, it's not my wish.

BASHIR: Why? Wouldn't that resolve matters?

DIANA: Why would it resolve matters?

BASHIR: It would provide the clarity that you talk about, it would resolve matters as far as the public are concerned perhaps.

DIANA: Yes, but what about the children? Our boys - that's what matters, isn't it?

BASHIR: Do you think you will ever be Queen?

DIANA: No, I don't, no.

BASHIR: Why do you think that?

DIANA: I'd like to be a queen of people's hearts, in people's hearts, but I don't see myself being Queen of this country. I don't think many people will want me to be Queen.

Actually, when I say many people I mean the establishment that I married into, because they have decided that I'm a non-starter.

BASHIR: Why do you think they've decided that?

DIANA: Because I do things differently, because I don't go by a rule book, because I lead from the heart, not the head, and albeit that's got me into trouble in my work, I understand that. But someone's got to go out there and love people and show it.



BASHIR: Do you think that because of the way you behave that's precluded you effectively from becoming Queen?

DIANA: Yes, well not precluded me. I wouldn't say that. I just don't think I have as many supporters in that environment as I did.

BASHIR: You mean within the Royal Household?

DIANA: Uh,uh. They see me as a threat of some kind, and I'm here to do good: I'm not a destructive person.

BASHIR: Why do they see you as a threat?

DIANA: I think every strong woman in history has had to walk down a similar path, and I think it's the strength that causes the confusion and the fear.

Why is she strong? Where does she get it from? Where is she taking it?

Where is she going to use it? Why do the public still support her? When I say public, you go and do an engagement and there's a great many people there.

BASHIR: Do you think the Prince of Wales will ever be King?

DIANA: I don't think any of us know the answer to that. And obviously it's a question that's in everybody's head. But who knows, who knows what fate will produce, who knows what circumstances will provoke?

BASHIR: But you would know him better than most people. Do you think he would wish to be King?

DIANA: There was always conflict on that subject with him when we discussed it, and I understood that conflict, because it's a very demanding role, being Prince of Wales, but it's an equally more demanding role being King.

And being Prince of Wales produces more freedom now, and being King would be a little bit more suffocating. And because I know the character I would think that the top job, as I call it, would bring enormous limitations to him, and I don't know whether he could adapt to that.

BASHIR: Do you think it would make more sense in the light of the marital difficulties that you and the Prince of Wales have had if



the position of monarch passed directly to your son Prince William?

DIANA: Well, then you have to see that William's very young at the moment, so do you want a burden like that to be put on his shoulders at such an age? So I can't answer that question.

BASHIR: Would it be your wish that when Prince William comes of age that he were to succeed the Queen rather than the current Prince of Wales?

DIANA: My wish is that my husband finds peace of mind, and from that follows others things, yes.

BASHIR: Why have you decided to give this interview now? Why have you decided to speak at this time?

DIANA: Because we will have been separated three years this December, and the perception that has been given of me for the last three years has been very confusing, turbulent, and in some areas I'm sure many, many people doubt me.

And I want to reassure all those people who have loved me and supported me throughout the last 15 years that I'd never let them down. That is a priority to me, along with my children.

BASHIR: And so you feel that by speaking out in this way you'll be able to reassure the people?

DIANA: Uh,uh. The people that matter to me - the man on the street, yup, because that's what matters more than anything else.

BASHIR: Some people might think - some people might interpret this as you simply taking the opportunity to get your own back on your husband.

DIANA: I don't sit here with resentment: I sit here with sadness because a marriage hasn't worked.

I sit here with hope because there's a future ahead, a future for my husband, a future for myself and a future for the monarchy.

BASHIR: Your Royal Highness, thank you.



Appendix 2

This is a transcript of the interview with Prince William and Miss Catherine Middleton, broadcast in November 2010.

TOM BRADBY: People are obviously very curious about you, so let's start with the obvious. William, where did you propose, when, how. And Kate, what did you say?

PRINCE WILLIAM: It was about three weeks ago on holiday in Kenya. We had a little private time away together with some friends and I just decided that it was the right time really. We had been talking about marriage for a while so it wasn't a massively big surprise. I took her up somewhere nice in Kenya and I proposed.

MISS MIDDLETON: It was very romantic (laughs). There's a true romantic in there.

TOM BRADBY:: So you said yes, obviously?

MISS MIDDLETON: Of course, yes.

PRINCE WILLIAM: Absolutely.

TOM BRADBY: And you knew you were going to do this from day one of the holiday or you waited until the end?

PRINCE WILLIAM: I'd been planning it for a while but as every guy out there will know it takes a certain amount of motivation to get yourself going. So I was planning it and then it just felt really right out in Africa. It was beautiful at the time. I just ... I had done a little bit of planning to show my romantic side.

TOM BRADBY: Kate, you'd been on holiday a while so did you see this coming, was he getting a bit nervous and jumpy?

MISS MIDDLETON: No, not at all because we were out with friends and things so I really didn't expect it all. I thought he might have maybe thought about it, but no. It was a total shock when it came, and very excited.

TOM BRADBY: And produced a ring there and then?

MISS MIDDLETON: Yes.

TOM BRADBY: there and then?



PRINCE WILLIAM: I did, yes. I had been carrying it around with me in my rucksack for about three weeks before that and I literally would not let it go, everywhere I went I was keeping hold of it because I knew this thing, if it disappeared I would be in a lot of trouble and because I'd planned it, it went fine. You hear a lot of horror stories about proposing and things going horribly wrong - it went really, really well and I was really pleased she said yes.

TOM BRADBY: And it's a family ring?

PRINCE WILLIAM: It is a family ring, yes. It's my mother's engagement ring. So I thought it was quite nice because obviously she's not going to be around to share any of the fun and excitement of it all - this was my way of keeping her sort of close to it all.

TOM BRADBY: I guess we better have a look at it. What kind of ring is it, are you an expert on what's ...?

PRINCE WILLIAM: I'm not an expert on it at all. I've been reliably informed it's a sapphire with some diamonds. I'm sure everyone recognizes it from previous times.

MISS MIDDLETON: It's beautiful.

TOM BRADBY: Kate, you're going to be the envy of many.

MISS MIDDLETON: Well, I just hope I look after it. It's very, very special.

PRINCE WILLIAM: If she loses it she's in big trouble.

TOM BRADBY: Now it has to be said, you both look incredibly happy and relaxed.

PRINCE WILLIAM: We are. We are. We're like sort of ducks, very calm on the surface with little feet going under the water. But uh no, it's been really exciting because we've been talking about it for a long time so for us, it's a real relief and it's really nice to be able to tell everybody. Especially for the last two or three weeks it's been quite difficult not telling anyone, and keeping it to ourselves for reasons we had to. And it's really nice to finally be able to share it with everyone.



TOM BRADBY: And you obviously have kept it a secret. So when did you ask Kate's dad and what did he say and what did your respective parents say when you told them?

PRINCE WILLIAM: Well, I was torn between asking Kate's dad first and then the realisation that he might actually say 'no' dawned upon me. So I thought if I ask Kate first then he can't really say no. So I did it that way round. And I managed to speak to Mike sort of soon after it happened really and then it sort of happened from there.

TOM BRADBY: Kate, what did your mum say?

MISS MIDDLETON: I think as any mother would be she was absolutely over the moon. And actually we had quite an awkward situation because I knew and I knew that William had asked my father but I didn't know if my mother knew. So I came back from Scotland and my mother made it sort of ... didn't make it clear to me whether she knew or not so both of us were there sort of looking at each other and feeling quite awkward about it. But it was amazing to tell her and obviously she was very happy for us.

TOM BRADBY: One of the things that has been clear for a long time is you very evidently have a close-knit family and family's very important to you.

MISS MIDDLETON: Yes. It's very important to me you know. And I hope we will be able to have a happy family ourselves. Because it's been ...they've been great over the years - helping me with difficult times. We see a lot of each other and they are very, very dear to me.

TOM BRADBY: People are bound to ask you know. It's a bit of an obvious question but, children, do you want lots of children? You, know see what comes? What's your..?

PRINCE WILLIAM: I think we'll take it one step at a time. We'll sort of get over the marriage first and then maybe look at the kids. But obviously we want a family so we'll have to start thinking about that.

TOM BRADBY: When did you first set eyes on each other and what did you think?



PRINCE WILLIAM: Going back to the start because I think people as I say will be very curious about the totality of your relationship. When did you first set eyes on each other and what did you think?

TOM BRADBY: Kate, what did you think of William. I mean it's clearly not quite the same as meeting your average you know university student, or maybe it was, I don't know. But what was your first impression?

MISS MIDDLETON: Well I actually think I went bright red when I met you and sort of scuttled off, feeling very shy about meeting you. But um, actually William wasn't there for quite a bit of the time initially, he wasn't there for Freshers Week, so it did take a bit of time for us to get to know each other but we did become very close friends from quite early.

TOM BRADBY: There's a story that goes around that you had a picture of him on your wall.

PRINCE WILLIAM: There wasn't just one, there was about 20.

MISS MIDDLETON: He wishes. No, I had the Levis guy on my wall, not a picture of William, sorry.

PRINCE WILLIAM: It was me in Levis honestly.

TOM BRADBY: So you lived ... you ended up sort of in the same flat, was that if you don't mind me asking, was before you were going out or?

PRINCE WILLIAM: No we moved in together as friends because we were living together, we lived with a couple of others as well, and it just sort of blossomed from there really. We just saw more of each other, and you know hung out a bit more and did stuff. So um yeah.

MISS MIDDLETON: You liked the cooking.

PRINCE WILLIAM: Well your cooking is alright. (Kate laughs) It's gotten better.

TOM BRADBY: Does William ever cook or indeed do anything useful around the house?

PRINCE WILLIAM: Define useful, Tom. (Laughing)

TOM BRADBY: Let's not go there.



MISS MIDDLETON: No he does actually. He did cook for me quite a bit at university, and he would always come with a bit of angst and a bit of anger if something had gone wrong and I would have to wander in and save something that was going.

TOM BRADBY: So being honest is that a skill that's declining over time or improving?

PRINCE WILLIAM: I would say I'm getting better at cooking. Kate would say I'm getting a lot worse.

MISS MIDDLETON: I don't give him enough chance to practice.

PRINCE WILLIAM: No, that is true. I get quite lazy about cooking because when I come back from work it is the last thing I want to do, really is spend loads of time cooking. When I was trying to impress Kate I was trying to cook these amazing fancy dinners and what would happen was I would burn something, something would overflow, something would catch on fire and she would be sitting in the background trying to help, and basically taking control of the whole situation, so I was quite glad she was there at the time.

TOM BRADBY: Slightly awkward for the other flatmates?

PRINCE WILLIAM: No, to be honest they were used to it, watching things catching fire, they found it very amusing.

TOM BRADBY: But I mean having the two of you going out in the flat, or did they just not bat an eye lid?

PRINCE WILLIAM: I think at first they were a bit surprised that it had happened, then they realized it was really nice and it was good fun and we got on really well, they were good friends of ours as well so we had a good giggle with them as well.

TOM BRADBY: Now I suppose a lot of people are going to wonder, the first meeting with the families, again, not necessarily your average meeting. Kate what was your first impression of the family?

MISS MIDDLETON: Well I was quite nervous about meeting William's father, but he was very, very welcoming, very friendly, so yea it couldn't have gone easier really for me.



TOM BRADBY: Meeting the grandmother, the Queen, again not like your average meeting with a grandmother, were you nervous about that too?

MISS MIDDLETON: I first met her at Peter and Autumn's wedding and again it was amongst a lot of other guests and she was very friendly and no it was fine.

PRINCE WILLIAM: She was very welcoming, she knew it was a big day and everything was going on with Peter and Autumn, she wanted to meet Kate for a while, so it was very nice for her to come over and say hello and have a little chat.

TOM BRADBY: You clearly are tremendously fond of each other's families and I'm guessing that is going to be a big part of your life going forward. Both your lives.

PRINCE WILLIAM: It definitely will, as you know, Kate's family, Kate's got a very, very close family. And I get on really well with them and I'm very lucky that they've been so supportive. Mike and Carole have been really sort of loving and caring and really fun and have been really welcoming towards me so I've felt really a part of the family and I hope that Kate's felt the same with my family.

TOM BRADBY: People are bound to ask, you leave university, you have been going out a bit and you split up, famously, all over the papers, what was all that about, people are bound to want to know.

PRINCE WILLIAM: Well I think to be honest, I wouldn't believe everything you read in the paper but in that particular instance we did split up for a bit. But that was just, we both were very young, it was at university, we were sort of both finding ourselves as such and being different characters and stuff, it was very much trying to find our own way and we were growing up, and so it was just sort of a bit of space and a bit of things like that and it worked out for the better.

MISS MIDDLETON: And I think I at the time wasn't very happy about it, but actually it made me a stronger person, you find out things about yourself that maybe you hadn't realised, or I think you can get quite consumed by a relationship when you are younger



and I really valued that time for me as well although I didn't think it at the time. Looking back on it.

TOM BRADBY: It was a chance to re-centre yourself.

MISS MIDDLETON: Yes, definitely, yea. I wasn't all bad. (Laughing)

PRINCE WILLIAM: Phew! We're over that one.

TOM BRADBY: Did you kind of always have at the back of your minds that you wanted to marry each other. Did that come slowly? Did you suddenly decide a couple of weeks ago, I mean people have assumed you were going to be married for a long time. How did you both come to it in your heads?

PRINCE WILLIAM: Well from my point of view I you know ...when I first met Kate I knew there was something very special about her. I knew there was possibly something that I wanted to explore there. We ended up being friends for a while and that just sort of was a good foundation. Because I do generally believe now that being friends with one another is a massive advantage. And It just went from there. And over the years, I knew things were getting better and better and we went through a few stumbling blocks as every relationship does, but we really picked ourselves up and carried on and you know. From were you had the odd problem when you are first getting to know each other, it has all gone and it is just really easy being with each other, it is really fun and I'm extremely funny and she loves that so it's been good. (Laughing)

TOM BRADBY: Kate, you were obviously upset when you split up but all your friends talk about there being a very substantial love that has built up over a period of time you know that's part friendship and obviously more than that.

MISS MIDDLETON: Well I think if you really go out with someone for quite a long time you do get to know each other very, very well, you go through the good times, you go through the bad times. You know both personally, but also within a relationship as well. And you know I think if you can come out of that stronger and learn as I said things about yourself, it certainly, it's been a good how many years?

PRINCE WILLIAM: Uh, well a lot of time.



TOM BRADBY: He did take his time, it must be said. Did you ever want him to come on...

MISS MIDDLETON: Well we've had our conversations, but I think it was....

PRINCE WILLIAM: We've talked about today for a while, we've talked about this happening so Kate wasn't in the dark at all when we were planning it for at least a year if not longer, it was just finding the right time and that's what most people say about couples, it's all about timing. And I had my military career and I really wanted to concentrate on my flying and I couldn't have done this if I was still doing my training, so I've got that out of the way and Kate's in a good place in terms of work and were she wants to be and stuff and we both just decided now was a really good time.

TOM BRADBY: You are obviously going to enter this family, the most famous royal family in the world. William's mother was this massive iconic figure. The most famous figure of our age, is that worrying? Is that intimidating? Do you think about that a lot both of you, you particularly Kate, obviously?

MISS MIDDLETON: Obviously I would have loved to have met her and she's obviously she's an inspirational woman to look up to. Obviously on this day and you know going forward and things, you know it is a wonderful family, the members who I've met have achieved a lot and you know very inspirational and so, yes, I do.

PRINCE WILLIAM: There's no pressure though. There's no pressure, like Kate said it is about carving your own future. No one is going to try to fill my mother's shoes, what she did was fantastic. It's about making your own future and your own destiny and Kate will do a very good job of that.

TOM BRADBY: This is a life in the public domain to a degree that you can't escape, you both know that. You (William) obviously know it better than Kate does, you are obviously very protective of her.

PRINCE WILLIAM: Massively so. Of course. Her and her family, I really want to make sure they have the best sort of guidance and chance to see what life has been like or what life is like in the



family, and that's kind of almost why I have been waiting this long, As I wanted to give her a chance to see in and to back out if she needed to before it all got too much. Because I'm not trying to learn from lessons done in the past and I just wanted to give her the best chance to settle in and to see what happens on the other side.

MISS MIDDLETON: I'm also glad that I've had the time to sort of grow and understand myself more as well so hopefully do good job.

TOM BRADBY: Part of the reason it has taken you so long is you've both spent a long time contemplating the future, being calm about it, pondering it, thinking about it, is that right?

PRINCE WILLIAM: It is. We've talked about it lots. So it's always been something we've had a good chat about and you know like I said both of us have come to the decision pretty much together, I just chose when to do it and how to do it and obviously being a real romantic I did it extremely well. (Laughing)

TOM BRADBY: Kate, just coming to a close people have you know put some, placed some criticisms of you about your work and so on, does that hurt? How do you respond to people who say those things?

MISS MIDDLETON: Well I think I know I've been working very hard for the family business, and sometimes those days are long days and you know I think if I know I'm working hard and I'm pulling my weight both work and playing hard at the same time, you know I think everyone who I work with can see I am there pulling my weight and that's really what matters to me.

TOM BRADBY: You know your family as you've said that you are very close, does it hurt about what's said or do you let it run off your collective backs on the grounds that's just what you have to live with?

MISS MIDDLETON: Well again I think, if you ... the people around home are very supportive to us and you know those are the people who really matter to us, our close friends and family and I think if sort of they feel you are doing the right thing you can only be sort of true to yourself and you sort of have to ignore a lot



of what's said, obviously take it on board, but you know you have to be yourself really and that's how I have stuck by it really.

TOM BRADBY: It's a massive thing you are going into now, you know obviously marriage is a big thing for everyone, but it's in such a public way, excited? A little bit terrified?

PRINCE WILLIAM: Massively excited, quite happy when the interview's over, (laughter) but no we are hugely excited and we are looking forward to spending the rest of our times, the rest of our lives together and seeing what the future holds.

TOM BRADBY: Kate, for you. You've had a long time to sort of contemplate this moment.

PRINCE WILLIAM: Let's not over rig the long part. (Laughter)

MISS MIDDLETON: It's obviously nerve-wracking, Because I don't know what I'm sort of ... I don't know the ropes, William is obviously used to it, but no I'm willing to learn quickly and work hard.

PRINCE WILLIAM: She'll do really well. Very well.

TOM BRADBY: There are a lot of opportunities obviously within the family, a huge ability to change people's lives for the better, I guess that's something you must have contemplated as well.

MISS MIDDLETON: Yes, well I really hope I can make a difference, even in the smallest way. I am looking forward to helping as much as I can.

TOM BRADBY: Well thank you very much for talking to us. You look as I said at the start, very relaxed, very happy. Good luck.

PRINCE WILLIAM: Thank you.

MISS MIDDLETON: Thank you.



Appendix 3

**Following is the full text of Lily Allen's debut album's song
"Smile", released in 2006.**

When you first left me I was wanting more
But you were fucking that girl next door, what cha do that for
(what cha do that for)
When you first left me I didn't know what to say
I never been on my own that way, just sat by myself all day

I was so lost back then
But with a little help from my friends
I found a light in the tunnel at the end
Now you're calling me up on the phone
So you can have a little whine and a moan
And it's only because you're feeling alone

At first when I see you cry,
yeah it makes me smile, yeah it makes my smile
At worst I feel bad for a while,
but then I just smile I go ahead and smile

Whenever you see me you say that you want me back
And I tell you it don't mean jack, no it don't mean jack
I couldn't stop laughing, no I just couldn't help myself
See you messed up my mental health I was quite unwell

I was so lost back then
But with a little help from my friends
I found a light in the tunnel at the end
Now you're calling me up on the phone
So you can have a little whine and a moan
And it's only because you're feeling alone



At first when I see you cry,
yeah it makes me smile, yeah it makes my smile
At worst I feel bad for a while,
but then I just smile I go ahead and smile

la lalala

At first when I see you cry,
yeah it makes me smile, yeah it makes my smile
At worst I feel bad for a while,
but then I just smile I go ahead and smile

la



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List of websites

I declare that the websites listed below were all accessible on 30th October 2012.

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<http://www.youtube.com/?gl=IT&hl=it>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/theuklabourparty>