

## VARIETIES OF BRITISH ENGLISH ACCENTS SEEN IN A SINGLE LESSON FROM THE TEXTBOOK

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《I.》 A good many Japanese teachers sometimes stop to wonder which variety of English best suits their purpose, American, British or some other English? The writer has often witnessed serious discussions on this subject going on in various meetings and societies among Japanese teachers of English. Those arguments usually lead to the conclusion that nothing better suits their teaching situations than that variety of English most familiar to the individual teacher. However, the writer cannot help feeling that those teachers are arguing about something that is really not existent. Is there a single variety of English called British English, for instance? Some people, even some native speakers in England for that matter, insist that British English sounds much more beautiful than any other variety of English. This comment might be acceptable as long as you listen to the BBC announcers or so-called RP. But try to visit places like East Anglia, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Scotland, and so forth. You are sure to be surprised to find so many people, indeed a greater part of the population, speaking English with accents other than those of RP. As a matter of fact, A. Hughes and P. Trudgill's research reveals that only about three per cent of the English population speak RP. This statistic promptly incites us to ask the following question: what are some of the varieties of British English other than RP? The writer was interested in going one step further to ask how much of those regional accents is easily recognizable in a single lesson of a Japanese junior high school English textbook. In order to give an answer to the above question the writer visited most of the areas with local accents covered by A. Hughes and P. Trudgill in their **English Accents and Dialects**.

《II.》 Before actually analysing the varieties of British English, the differences between accents and dialects must be clarified. The writer uses the term dialects as meaning varieties distinguished from each other in terms of grammar and vocabulary, while accents refer to differences of pronunciation. Hence, it is possible to speak the standard English (which is of course one of the dialects) with varieties of accents. It is taken for granted that the accents with which people speak in ordinary talk are recognizably different from those they use in reading aloud, par-

ticularly when they are conscious of being listened to. It is nevertheless true that their reading cannot be completely free from their own accents.

The writer chose those informants whose life had been restricted to their own speech communities, and had them read "Lesson 7 A Visit to London" New **Horizon** (3) (Tokyo Shoseki). There is no logical reason for the choice of that particular lesson; the only possible reason could be that the lesson offers some phases of English life interesting to the selected readers. Within the same one speech community there can be recognized an unlimited number of varieties of accents, due to such factors as age, class, education, etc. These factors have been taken into careful consideration in selecting each informant from respective speech communities. It must be added to say that the sorts of accents almost unintelligible even to native speakers of English from the other speech communities, such as the black country accents in Birmingham or so-called 'Geordie' in and around Newcastle are deliberately excluded from the data.

A. Hughes and P. Trudgill's findings are the results of the two analyses; one is the analysis of the recordings of people talking with friends in their own homes and the other is the analysis of the reading of a word list designed to bring out the principal differences between British accents. The word list is given below.

A. Hughes and P. Trudgill's analysis is very extensive and highly detailed and the writer believes that it is all the better because the main purpose of this paper is to draw close attention to how much of the accents in one speech area is to be reflected in reading a single lesson of an English textbook from Japan.

A. Hughes and P. Trudgill have chosen in their book ten towns which are linguistically and geographically representative: London, Norwich, Bristol, Pontypridd, Walsall, Bradford, Liverpool, Newcastle, Edinburgh, and Belfast. The writer has recorded the accents of all those towns except Belfast by visiting them, but in this paper he tries to show a list of characteristic accents of only four of them; Walsall, Norwich, Bradford and Newcastle. The locations of these towns are shown on the map below.



## 《III.》 “Lesson 7 A visit to London” New Horizon (3) (Tokyo Shoseki, 1979)

(1)

Keiko, Yoshiko, and Kenji are talking with Mr. Kato, their English teacher, about his visit to London.

*Kenji:* What did you think of London, Mr. Kato?

*Mr. Kato:* Well, London is a great city that is both old and new.

*Yoshiko:* In what way is London old?

*Mr. Kato:* There are a lot of old houses and offices that are made of bricks. The styles of buses and taxis are old, too.

*Keiko:* I see. In what way is London new?

*Mr. Kato:* The clothes young men and women wear are very modern.

(2)

*Yoshiko:* How about hotels?

*Mr. Kato:* The hotel I stayed in was eight stories high and looked old. Everything inside was very modern.

*Kenji:* How was the weather there?

*Mr. Kato:* That's a good question. Englishmen like to talk about the weather, you know.

*Keiko:* Why is that?

*Mr. Kato:* I think it's because the weather there changes very often. It sometimes rains several times in one day.

*Yoshiko:* London isn't hot in summer, is it?

*Mr. Kato:* Well, usually it isn't very hot. There were only a few hot days when I was there this summer.

(3)

*Kenji:* I once read an English poem. It says that English children have to go to bed when the sun is still shining.

*Mr. Kato:* That's right. In summer the sun sets about nine o'clock in the evening. So little children have to go to bed, though they want to play out of doors.

*Yoshiko:* What time do the older people go to bed?

*Mr. Kato:* Well, they usually go to bed after eleven o'clock. They have supper about seven or later.

(4)

*Kenji:* This is St. Paul's Cathedral, isn't it?

*Mr. Kato:* Yes, it is. I have an interesting story to tell you about it. When I went there, some people were standing in front of a large box.

*Keiko:* What were they doing?

*Mr. Kato:* They were giving money. One of them said, "A lot of money is needed to maintain this cathedral. 55 p is needed to maintain it for one minute. Please put some into that box if you wish to help."

*Yoshiko:* How much did you put in?

*Mr. Kato:* The money I gave will maintain the cathedral for one minute.

《IV.》 "The Word List" used by A. Hughes and P. Trudgill

(Note) The phonetic transcription represents the R P pronunciation.

1 pit/pɪt/	19 city/sɪtɪ/	36 fur/fɜː/
2 pet/pet/	20 seedy/siːdi/	37 fair/fɛə/
3 pat/pæt/	21 hat/hæt/	38 nose/nouz/
4 put/put/	22 dance/dɑːns/	39 knows/nouz/
5 putt/pʌt/	23 daft/dɑːft/	40 plate/pleɪt/
6 pot/pɒt/	24 half/hɑːf/	41 weight/weɪt/
7 bee/biː/	25 father/fɑːðə/	42 poor/pʊə/
8 bay/bai/	26 farther/fɑːðə/	43 pour/pɔː/
9 buy/bai/	27 pull/pʊl/	44 pore/pɔː/
10 boy/bɔɪ/	28 pool/puːl/	45 paw/pɔː/
11 boot/buːt/	29 pole/pəʊl/	46 tide/taɪd/
12 boat/bəʊt/	30 Paul/pɔːl/	47 tied/taɪd/
13 bout/baʊt/	31 doll/dɒl/	48 pause/pɔːz/
14 beer/bɪə/	32 cot/kɒt/	49 paws/pɔːz/
15 bear/bɛə/	33 caught/kɔːt/	50 meet/miːt/
16 bird/bɜːd/	34 fir/ɜː/	51 meat/miːt/
17 bard/bɑːd/	35 fern/fsːn/	52 mate/meɪt/
18 board/bɔːd/		

《V.》 Analysis of Four Regional Accents Compared with Hughes and Trudgill's Findings

1. The readers from the four respective towns (all of them were born and have lived all the time in their own towns)

(1) **Walsall**

A. a retired lady; a graduate of a grammar school; many of her relatives are school teachers.

B. a lady in her late forties; geologist.

C. a boy, twenty years of age, working in a factory; a graduate from a comprehensive school.

D. a girl student of College for Further Education.

(2) **Norwich**

- A. a boy, twenty-one years of age, working at a market; a graduate of a comprehensive school.
- B. a girl student of a comprehensive school.
- C. a man, in his early forties, working at a market.
- D. a retired man with little school education.
- E. a lady in her early twenties; a college graduate.

(3) **Bradford**

- A. a girl student, thirteen years of age, of a Catholic school.
- B. an instrument technician, twenty-nine years of age; a graduate of a secondary school.
- C. a man in his early fifties, working for Cartwright Museum.
- D. a retired lady with little school education.

(4) **Newcastle**

- A. a girl student of a comprehensive school.
- B. a retired man with little education.
- C. a shipyard worker in his early thirties.
- D. a boy student of the University of Newcastle.

2. Analysis

- Notes: A. Encircled numbers show that the writer's findings are in disagreement with those of Trudgill.
- B. X<sub>1</sub>, X<sub>2</sub>.....indicate that those items are not referred to by Hughes and Trudgill.

(1) **Walsall**

Hughes & Trudgill's findings	The writer's findings
1. (a) /æ/ is found in words such as <i>dance</i> , <i>daft</i> etc. (b) Pairs of words like <i>put</i> and <i>putt</i> are not distinct, /ʊ/ being the vowel in both.	1. (b) in such words as <i>bus</i> , <i>sun</i> , <i>sometimes</i> , <i>one</i> , <i>money</i> , /ʌ/ is replaced by /ʊ/ but in <i>London</i> and <i>front</i> , /ʌ/ is replaced by /ɔ/.
2. (a) The final vowel of <i>city</i> and <i>seedy</i> etc. is /i:/ (b) The diphthongs /ei/and/ou/are wide, being realized as [æi] and [ʌu].	2. (a) <i>city</i> [siti:] (b) <i>way</i> [wæi], <i>changes</i> [tʃæindʒiz] in <i>great</i> /ei/ becomes /e:/
3. /i:/ is [ɜi]. /u:/ is [ɜu]	
4. /ai/ is [ɔi]	
5. /ɪ/ is very close, [i]	5. <i>city</i> [siti:]
6. /ɜ:/ and /eə/ are merged as [œ:] e. g. <i>bear</i> and <i>bird</i> on the word list.	6. in <i>there</i> , [eə] is replaced by [œ:]
7. /h/ is usually absent.	7. <i>have to</i> [əftə], <i>I have</i> , [áɪv] but

8. -ing is /ɪn/	<i>houses</i> [háuzɪz]
9. Note <i>one</i> is wʊn/ but <i>won</i> is /wʊn/	8. <i>standing</i> /stændɪn], <i>doing</i> [dú:ɪn] <i>giving</i> /gɪvɪn]
10. There are few glottal stops	9. <i>one</i> /wʊn/ but <i>won</i> cannot be found in this text.
	⑩. Glottal stops are recognized in <i>about</i> [əbáuʔ], and <i>that are</i> [ðæʔə]

## (2) Norwich

Hughes & Trudgill's Findings	The Writer's Findings								
1. (a) /ʊ/ and /ʌ/ are both present. (b) /æ/ and /ɑ:/ are distributed as in RP. (c) the final vowel of <i>city</i> etc. is /i/, not /ɪ/ as in RP.	1. (a) <i>looked</i> [lukt], <i>good</i> [gʊd], <i>one</i> [wʌn], <i>summer</i> [sʌmə], <i>sun</i> [sʌn]  (c) <i>city</i> [siti:] <i>money</i> [mʌ(:)ni]								
2. In Norfolk and neighbouring areas /j/ is variably lost after all consonants.	2. <i>new</i> [nu:]								
3. An older English distinction, lost in RP, is maintained. Thus RP homonyms are quite distinct in Norwich. <table style="margin-left: 40px; border: none;"> <tr> <td>/u:/</td> <td>/ou/</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>moan</i></td> <td><i>mown</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>sole</i></td> <td><i>soul</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>nose</i></td> <td><i>knows</i></td> </tr> </table>	/u:/	/ou/	<i>moan</i>	<i>mown</i>	<i>sole</i>	<i>soul</i>	<i>nose</i>	<i>knows</i>	3. /ou/ $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \rightarrow /au/ \{ \text{old, know} \\ \text{older} \} \\ \rightarrow /o:/ \{ \text{clothes} \\ \text{old} \\ \text{poems} \} \end{array} \right.$
/u:/	/ou/								
<i>moan</i>	<i>mown</i>								
<i>sole</i>	<i>soul</i>								
<i>nose</i>	<i>knows</i>								
4. For some speakers, words like <i>moon</i> and <i>boot</i> have the same vowel (/u:/) as <i>moan</i> and <i>boat</i> , such pairs being homonyms.									
5. The RP distinction between /ɪə/ and /eə/ is not present, and so, for example, both <i>beer</i> and <i>bear</i> are pronounced /be:/. 6. While /h/ has been preserved in rural East Anglia, it has been partly lost in Norwich.	5. /eə/ in <i>there</i> → /ɛ:/ but /eə/ in <i>wear</i> remains /eə/.								
7. Certain words which have /ou/ in RP may have /ʊ/, e.g. <i>home</i> and <i>suppose</i> .	6. <i>have to</i> [æftə], but <i>hot</i> [hɔʔ] and <i>hotel</i> [hotél]								
8. Words like <i>room</i> and <i>broom</i> , and <i>roof</i> and <i>hoof</i> , have /ʊ/ rather than /u:/.									
9. Stressed vowels are long, while unstressed vowels are much reduced, giving a distinctive rhythm to East Anglian speech. Associated with the reduction of unstressed vowels is the loss of consonants e.g. the loss of /v/ in <i>side of it</i> .	9. <i>modern</i> [mó:dən] (stressed vowel) <i>money</i> [mʌ:ni], <i>old and new</i> [óuld n nu:] (unstressed vowel) <i>made of</i> { [máidə] (the loss of consonants, { [mæidə]								

- 10. *off* is /ɔ:f/
- 11. The glottal stop [ʔ] variably represents /t/ between vowels, and also accompanies /p/, /t/, /k/, particularly between vowels e.g. *bottom, dirty, city*.
- 12. *-ing* is /ən/.

- ⑪. *hot days* [hɒtʔdæɪz].  
Also the glottal stop [ʔ] often replaces the final /t/.  
*that is* [ðæʔɪz], *is it* [ɪz iʔ].  
*oclock* [ɒklɒʔ], *about it* [əbaʊʔiʔ]
- ⑫. *shining* [ʃáɪnɪn], *doing* [dú:ɪn],  
*giving* [gívnɪn] (-ing → /ɪn/)
- X<sub>1</sub>. /ei/ → /ai/ *way, made, stayed, maintain, rains, day, gave*  
exception, ...*eight* [eɪt] (spelling might matter).
- x<sub>2</sub>. /ai/ is narrowed almost to /a:/  
*styles* [stá:lz].

(3) **Bradford**

Hughes and Trudgill's Findings	The Writer's Findings
<p>1. (a) Words like <i>dance</i> and <i>daft</i> have /æ/. For some Yorkshire speakers, /æ/ and /ɑ:/ are differentiated only by length.</p> <p>(b) There is no distinction between pairs of words like <i>put</i> and <i>putt</i>, both having /ʊ/.</p> <p>(c) The final vowel in words like <i>city</i> and <i>seedy</i> is /ɪ/.</p> <p>2. (a)i. /ei/ is either a narrow diphthong or a monophthong, [e:] (e.g. <i>plate, mate</i>)</p> <p>ii. But for some speakers, words which have <i>eight</i> in the spelling have /eɪ/.</p> <p>(b)i. /ou/ is also a narrow diphthong or a monophthong, [ɔ:]</p> <p>ii. But for some speakers, many words which have <i>ow</i> or <i>ou</i> in the spelling have /ɔu/.</p> <p>3. Pairs of words like <i>pore</i> (which has <i>r</i> in the spelling) and <i>paw</i> are distinguished. Words without <i>r</i> have /ɔ:/; words with <i>r</i> have /ɔə/.</p> <p>4. (a) /ɛ/ is [ɛ] i. e. more open than in southern accents.</p> <p>(b) /u:/ is [u:] as compared with the</p>	<p>(b) <i>bus, young, sometimes, summer, once, sun, supper, some, money.</i></p> <p>(c) <i>city, money</i> [múni]</p> <p>2. (a) ① <i>play</i> (narrow diphthong) <i>great, later</i> [e:] but <i>way</i> [wéi], <i>changes</i> [tʃéɪndʒɪz]</p> <p>ii. <i>eight</i>.</p> <p>(b) i. <i>both, old, clothes,</i></p> <p>3. <i>door</i> [dóə], <i>because</i> [bikó:z]</p>

more central realization of this vowel in Lancashire.

- (c) /ai/ is /æ/.  
 5. In the West Riding (which includes Bradford) and other areas of Yorkshire, /b, d, g/ become /p, t, k/ when they immediately precede a voiceless consonant.  
 6. /r/ is a tap.  
 7. /t/ when final may be realized as a glottal stop [ʔ].  
 8. *-ing* is /ɪn/.  
 9. /h/ is generally absent.  
 10. *make* and *take* are /mek/ and /tek/.

4. (c) *styles* [stáelz], *shining* [ʃæɪnɪn]

6. /r/ is clearly a tap in the phrase *have supper about seven* [-súpəɾabaut]  
 7. *about* [əbáuʔ], *what way* [w(h)æʔwéi]  
 8. *interesting, standing, doing, giving*  
 9. Some pronounced the word *houses* [áuziz] and others [háuziz]. All of the four informants pronounced the words *have to* [hæftə].  
 X<sub>1</sub>. /əə/ is sometimes /ɛ:/ and sometimes /ə:/. *there* is [ðɛ:] or [ðə:] depending on the readers.

#### (4) Newcastle

Hughes and Trudgill's Findings	The Writer's Findings
<p>1. (a) Pairs of words like <i>put putt</i> are not distinguished, /v/ occurring in both.            (b) The final vowel in words like <i>city</i> and <i>seedy</i> is /i:/.            (c) /ei/ and /ou/ may be either monophthongs, [e:] and [o:] or opening diphthongs, [ie] and [uo].</p> <p>2. (a) Words like <i>dance</i> and <i>daft</i> have /æ/.            (b) Words like <i>farm</i> and <i>car</i> have /ɑ:/.            (c) Words which have /ɔ:/ in RP are divided into two sets.            (i) Those which have <i>al</i> in the spelling have /ɑ:/. <i>talking</i>            (ii) Those which do not have <i>al</i> in the spelling have /ɔ:/ <i>morning</i>            (d) Words which have /ɜ:/ in RP have /ɔ:/ in a broad Newcastle accent. e.g. <i>first</i> [fɔ:st]</p> <p>3. (a) Word final <i>-er(s) -or(s)</i> is [ɜ(z)] cf.</p>	<p>1. (a) <i>bus, money, sun, But, summer</i></p> <p>(b) Unlike Trudgill's findings, the writer's informants all pronounced the word <i>city</i> [sɪti].</p> <p>(c) /ei/ → /e:/ <i>day, play, eight</i>            /ou/ → /ɔ:/ <i>old, clothes</i>            In <i>stayed</i> /ei/ is even closer to /i:/</p> <p>2. (c) <i>talk</i> is pronounced [tɔ:k] by all the informants.</p> <p>3. (a) <i>weather</i> [wéðɜ], <i>summer, older, supper.</i></p>



<p>/ɛ/ resembles <u>u</u> in RP <u>but</u>.</p> <p>(b) /ɪə/ is [iɛ].</p> <p>(c) /ʊə/ is [uɛ].</p> <p>4. /ai/ is [ɛi]</p> <p>5. /l/ is clear in all environments.</p> <p>6. /h/ is generally present.</p> <p>7. <i>-ing</i> is /ɪn/.</p> <p>8. Between vowels, /p, t, k/ are accompanied by a glottal stop. <i>city</i> is [sitʔi:].</p>	<p><i>later</i>.</p> <p>4. <i>styles</i> [stéilz], <i>times</i> [téimz]</p> <p>5. <i>London, old, styles, clothes, several</i></p> <p>6. <i>houses</i> [háuziz], <i>have to</i> [hæftə].</p> <p>7. <i>shining, interesting, standing, doing, giving</i></p> <p>8. <i>city</i> [sitʔɪ], <i>supper</i> [sʌpʔə]</p>
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《VI.》 Hughes and Trudgill also present the following facts:

- (1) The accent in Walsall is spoken in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Coventry and a number of other towns in that area (West Midlands).
- (2) The accent of Norwich is spoken in Norfolk and Suffolk, and parts of Essex and Cambridgeshire (East Anglia).
- (3) The accent of Bradford is spoken in Leeds, Huddersfield, Sheffield and in most parts of Yorkshire in general.
- (4) The speech of Newcastle is representative of that of the towns on and around the River Tyne (Tyneside).

The approximate populations of the above four regions are 2,743,000, 1,500,000, 4,043,000 and 600,000, respectively. The number of speakers of those four areas occupy nearly 15 per cent of the whole population of the United Kingdom.

It is a matter of course that all the speakers of those regions do not share every phase of their respective regional accents and that part of the population do not use too broad an accent. All the same it is too evident a fact to ignore that a fairly large part of the British speakers are using English accents greatly distinguished from those of RP. When the accents in other areas are closely observed, it should become very clear that it is wrong to equate British English with the Queen's English or RP, which is actually spoken by a small portion of the people of the United Kingdom.

The writer hopes this paper will cause every English teacher in Japan to give second thoughts to their contention that it is most desirable to persist in the Queen's English alone as the very accent to be taught. Thus it is not too difficult to propose that an English teacher should change his or her teaching attitude if the teacher believes the students are failures in English learning unless they can speak English with the accent of the Queen's English or RP.

The writer would like to conclude this paper by saying that it has brought the fact to light that an amazingly large part of the accents of each speech

community is reflected in reading even a single lesson of a Japanese junior high school English textbook.

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