



## THE PRINCIPLE TYPES OF ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION AND THE STATUS OF RP IN ENGLISH

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**Annotation:** *The article illustrates the information about the types of English pronunciation as well why RP is important in English.*

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Pronunciation is crucial in English learning and teaching because it directly affects understanding and communication. English is a global language, with people all over the world speaking it as their first or second language. The British and American varieties are widely recognized, but there are several other native varieties as well, such as Australian, Canadian, and South African English. Each has its unique accent, pronunciation, vocabulary, and sometimes even grammar, reflecting the cultural and regional influences on the languages. Understanding these varieties and being exposed to different accents can enhance their listening skills and adaptability. Pronunciation isn't just about getting the sounds right; it's also about rhythm, intonation, and stress patterns, all of which contribute to effective communication and comprehension. Received Pronunciation, commonly abbreviated as RP, is a reputable variety of British English spoken without an identifiable regional dialect. RP has a position in the English language. Received Pronunciation appeared a century ago as well as it rooted in southern English pronunciation however it has developed its own features. RP lacks a regional



characters distinguishing it from other British accents. RP is often associated with the educated and upper classes in England. Many who speak it attended prestigious public schools where they absorbed the accent through social immersion rather than formal teaching. Modern RP differs from "classic" RP due to the influence of regional speech patterns. The document lists specific phonetic changes in modern RP, such as the diphthongization of certain vowel sounds and modifications to the pronunciation of vowels in words like "see" and "who."

RP has been investigated and described more thoroughly than any other types of English pronunciation. Many features of RP have been studied in Russia and other countries. That is why it is RP that is often accepted as the teaching standards in many countries where English is taught as a foreign language.

The person often credited with the first mention of 'Received Pronunciation' is Alexander Ellis. He says in the following quote from his major work called *On Early English Pronunciation* that in the present day we may recognise a received pronunciation all over the country, not widely differing in any particular locality, and admitting a certain degree of variety. It may be especially considered as the educated pronunciation of the metropolis, of the court, the pulpit and the bar. Ellis, however, was not the first person to use these two words together. Walker in his dictionary makes use of this collocation on numerous occasions. For instance, he talks of 'a corrupt, but received pronunciation [of the letter "a"] in the words any, many, catch, Thames, where the a sounds like short e, as if written enny, menny, ketch, Themes'. The major difference between the two lies in the fact that Walker uses the term 'received' to talk of a single sound whereas Ellis extends the use of the term to an entire variety. The meaning is the same for both though: 'received' means acceptable in polite society. The accent is non-localisable, which is a notable shift from how the 'best' accent was defined in the previous centuries, when it was firmly located in the capital. Ellis was well aware



of the fact that the accent he described was far from a homogeneous one: 'in as much as all these localities and professions are recruited from the provinces, there will be a varied thread of provincial utterance running through the whole . And, further, he insists that the accent exists 'all over the country not widely differing in any particular locality, and admitting a certain degree of variety. [1]

There is wide range of pronunciation of any language, the English language as well. The pronunciation of almost every locality in the British Isles has peculiar features that distinguish it from other varieties of English pronunciation. Moreover pronunciation is socially influenced, i.e. it is influenced by education and upbringing. At the same time all these varieties have much more in common than what differentiates them. They are varieties of one and the same language, the English language. The varieties that are spoken by a socially limited number of people only in certain localities are known as dialects.[2]

Due to communication media (radio, TV, cinema), the increased mobility of the population, concentration of the population in the cities, the dialectal differences are becoming less marked. That, of course, does not mean that the pronunciation of a Manchester dialect speaker does not differ from the pronunciation of a London dialect speaker. Dialect speakers are, as a rule, the less educated part of the population. With the more educated people pronunciation generally tends to conform to a particular standard. In present-day English the number of local speech dialects is being reduced to a fewer, more or less general, regional types. Every regional type of pronunciation is characterized by features that are common to all the dialects used in the region. The dialects, in their turn, are marked one from another by a number of peculiarities specific to each of them .

English pronunciation in Great Britain



There are many educated people in Britain who do not speak RP, though their English is good and correct as well. They speak Standard English with a regional type of pronunciation.

D. Abercrombie divides English people by the way they talk into three groups:

(1) RP speakers of Standard English (those who speak Standard English without any local accent);

(2) non-RP speakers of Standard English (those who speak Standard English with a regional accent);

(3) Dialect speakers. [3]

Scholars often note that it is wrong to assume that only one type of pronunciation can be correct. If a particular pronunciation is well-established and current among educated speakers, it should not be treated as incorrect.

The types of pronunciation that are widely used by educated people in Britain, besides RP and Southern English Pronunciation (which have much in common), are the Northern type and the Scottish type of English pronunciation. The Northern regional type of English pronunciation is characterized by features that are common to all the dialect used in the northern part of England. Thus, the main distinctions of the Northern type of English pronunciation, as opposed to RP, are as follows: (a) the vowel /æ/ is more open and more retracted back, as in /a/ (e. g. "back, bad"). (b) /a:/ is fronted compared with /a:/ in RP and it approximates to /æ/ (e. g. "glass, fast, after"), (c) /u/ is used instead of // (e.g. "cup, love, much"), (d) /ou/ is pronounced as a monophthongal /o:/ (e.g. "go, home"),

(e) /e/ or /ɛ:/ are pronounced instead of /el/ (e. g. "may, say, take"). (f) All tones are drawled. [4]



The Scottish type of English pronunciation is based on the dialects spoken in Scotland which vary among themselves in some respects. Some of their common features, which distinguish the Scottish type of pronunciation from RP, are as follows': (a) the use of the rolled /r/ not only between and before vowels (as in "hurry, brown"), but also after vowels (as in "born"); [2]

### CONCLUSION:

English pronunciation varies widely across regions and speakers, with principal types such as Received Pronunciation (RP), General American, and Australian English each bringing unique characteristics to the language. While RP has historically held high prestige in the UK, symbolizing social status and education, its dominance has diminished as attitudes toward regional accents have become more inclusive. Today, RP remains an influential and widely recognized form of British English pronunciation, especially in formal contexts and international English language learning. However, the increasing acceptance and celebration of diverse English accents underscore the language's global adaptability and the importance of understanding multiple pronunciation forms. This shift reflects a broader trend toward linguistic diversity and inclusivity, recognizing that no single accent holds exclusive status in the English-speaking world.

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