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Summary

In the article the structural peculiarities of the genre of gratitude are studied on the base of novels by writers – doctors A. Chekhov, V. Veresayev, M. Bulgakov.

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CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS NON-STANDARD VARIETIES OF THE ENGLISH DIALECTS

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The main **aim** of this essay is to provide a general overview of the way in which dialectal issues are handled in England, the place where the English language was born. In order to fulfill this purpose, we shall first of all comment on some general aspects concerning language variation in England. Obviously enough, any account of language variation in this country will inevitably entail referring to such notions as standardness, RP and non-standard varieties. In the course of this explanation, we will realize the extent to which social values may play a role in the way the English language is used and viewed in this part of the world. Once the general framework is set, we will then draw our attention to a brief description of the so-called North-South divide, that is to say, the degree to which the North and the South of England differ from a socioeconomic and linguistic perspective. The last section of this paper will be devoted to a detailed

commentary on one of the most well-known urban dialects of England: Geordie. Although this section will include some linguistic facts, it should be noted that we will be mainly concerned with social aspects, namely the degree of institutionalization and acceptance of this northern dialect.

Languages are not simply cold linguistic systems studied in grammar books, but rather, tools for human communication. Therefore, as a human phenomenon, language is endowed with the spontaneous and ever-changing nature typical of us human beings. It is thanks to this medium that we can establish social relationships with other people, and so perform certain social functions, for there is no doubt that any speech act has a particular function in the context where it is taking place. In addition to the purely communicative function of language, we should not overlook that language is also a powerful source of personal information, in the sense that the way we speak our language is highly influenced by both our social status and our region of origin. Thus, if a given speaker comes from County Durham, for example, he or she will probably use the kind of language spoken by people from that part of the country. If this person is also a middle-class businessman, he will use the kind of language associated with people of this type. Kinds of language of this sort are often referred to as dialects, the first type in the previous example being a regional dialect and the second a social dialect [Trudgill 2007].

Dialect is a concept that tends to be confused with accent; however, it should be explained that dialect has to do with lexical, grammatical and phonetic differences between different language varieties, whereas accent refers solely to pronunciation. Taking the notion of dialect as a basis, I think that it would be convenient to define language as the compilation of all the dialects (or language varieties) of a given linguistic system used worldwide. Accordingly, the English language as a whole would include not only English English, but also American English, Australian English, Canadian English ... From what I have just said, hence it becomes clear that the notion of a unique worldwide Standard English is simply a utopia which is quite far from becoming a reality, for as David Graddol [Graddol 2007: 190] suggests, “a standard variety of English can only actually exist in the shape of one of its regional variations”. In the previous paragraph, we have introduced a concept that surely stands out in any discussion revolving around dialectal issues: Standard English. This is the dialect which is normally used officially, that is, the kind of English to be found in printed books, newspapers, educational contexts, dictionaries, grammar books... However, its obvious importance should not deter us from considering and valuing the existence of unofficial, or rather, non-standard dialects. As we shall see later on, it is when we start talking about standard and non-standard dialects that many social prejudices and misjudgments come into play.

Having made clear some introductory concepts, it should be stated that the remainder of this essay will be primarily concerned with one of the Standard Englishes mentioned above: English English. This term refers to the English language as spoken only in England. Even though “British English” is more commonly used than “English English” to refer to the same reality, we should not forget that the former is reserved to describe the features common to all UK language varieties (English English, Welsh

English, Scottish English, and sometimes Hiberno-English), while the latter is restricted to the kind of English used only in England [McArthur 2003].

As mentioned above, dialects are both regional and social, so it is no wonder that any individual speaker's speech shows traces of his/her home town, his/her upbringing, education ... Peter Trudgill [Trudgill 2007: 23] calls the reader's attention to the fact that there are certain parallels between the development of social varieties and that of regional varieties. He explains that the development of both regional and social varieties has to do with the existence of barriers: geographical, in the case of regional varieties, and social, in the case of social varieties. To provide an example of the first kind of barriers, it has been found that Traditional Dialect speakers in the areas of Britain north of the river Humber still have a monophthong in words like house /hu:s/, whereas speakers south of the river have used a diphthong for several hundred years /haus/. Regional variation is undoubtedly also affected by distance, so the greater the geographical distance between two dialects the more dissimilar they are linguistically.

With regards to social dialects, we may say that they are also affected by the same kind of variables to be found when studying regional dialects: barriers and distance. Nevertheless, social barriers and distance are not as clear-cut as geographical barriers and distance may appear to be, for what comes into play now is not something physical (a river, a mountain) but abstract. In fact, the division of society into various strata is nothing but a fairly blurred and abstract classification based on the notion of privilege, which is a concept determined by power, wealth and status. Trudgill [Trudgill 2007: 23] holds that it takes a long time for a linguistic innovation that begins amongst the highest social groups to spread to the lowest social groups, thus emphasizing the paramount role that social distance may play when it comes to dealing with linguistic matters.

Before turning our attention to more social aspects, we should bear in mind that dialects are not discrete varieties, which means that it is not possible to state in exact geographical and linguistic terms where people stop speaking Cumbrian dialect and start speaking Geordie. Instead, we should refer to what sociolinguists call a dialect continuum, i.e. a range of dialects spoken across a geographical area, differing only slightly between areas that are geographically close, and gradually decreasing in mutual intelligibility as the distances become greater. If we choose to place clear dividing lines between several dialects, basing our decision solely on county boundaries, then we will probably be acting according to socio-political loyalties, rather than linguistic facts. This statement seems to make sense if we consider the distinction drawn between Geordie (Newcastle) and Mackem (Sunderland), a distinction certainly based more on football rivalry and loyalty than on actual linguistic facts.

From what we have said so far, it may be deduced that dialects and accents in England are clearly related to differences of social-class background and prestige. Taking this idea into account, the reader may begin to understand why the terms Standard English (a social dialect) and RP (a social accent) are so controversial and so open to heated debate. Let us first provide some general background on the emergence and subsequent importance of Standard English. The rise of a certain dialect as the standard variety of that language takes place simultaneously with the rise of a given social group as the most

powerful one. It is under such circumstances that the standard variety begins to acquire the social prestige with which we tend to associate the notion of standardness.

In England, the standard variety derived from the south-eastern triangle around London, where the Normans established both their court and the university towns of Oxford and Cambridge. As centuries went by, the South-Eastern variety was gradually imposed from above over the range of regional dialects, thereby trying to obliterate linguistic variation and diversity in favour of what Trudgill [Trudgill 2004: 7] calls a “superposed variety of language”. The arbitrariness associated with the standardization of a certain variety is evident if one conceives the possibility that had the Normans established their Court in the North-East (instead of the South-East), this superposed variety nowadays would have been closer to Geordie. The official nature of standard English has led to its being regarded as the most perfect and accurate variety, against which all other English usage is measured. Contrary to expectations, however, the standard variety is not intrinsically superior to other (non-standard) varieties, for there is nothing linguistically (and hence, scientifically) relevant that proves that a given variety is better than another one. As explained below, judgments of this kind are based not on linguistic facts, but on socioeconomic misjudgments or prejudices.

For many years, Standard English has been closely linked to a particular accent, the so-called RP (Received Pronunciation). This upper-class kind of accent began to be endorsed in the most famous English fee-paying or Public schools at the end of the nineteenth century. From then on, RP came to be viewed as the best English accent, that is, the accent everyone should master or aim at achieving. Due to its social and educational prestige, RP is also referred to as The Queen’s English, or even BBC English (in the early years of broadcasting it was very rare to hear any other accents on the BBC). Surprising though it may seem, this social accent is not necessarily linked to Standard English, which can be spoken with any regional accent.

Despite the widespread foreign (and ESL) belief that everyone in England speaks Standard English with an RP pronunciation, it should be pointed out that according to Melchers [Melchers, Shaw 2003: 47], “only 12 per cent of the population of England are speakers of Standard English; nine per cent speak Standard English with a regional accent”. What these figures suggest is, first and foremost, that the number of speakers of Standard English in England is very small, and secondly, that only 3% of the total population of England speak Standard English with an RP accent.

All things considered, it is paramount that we end this section by examining the interrelationship between geographical variation and social variation in England. In order to fulfill this purpose, we shall refer to Trudgill’s [Trudgill 2007:30-32] pyramidal illustration of these issues. As already mentioned, Standard English is the language variety employed by those who have received a good education; hence, educated middle and upper classes. Since Standard English is not a fully homogeneous variety, it is not at all striking to find some small regional differences among educated speakers of this dialect. Nevertheless, as we proceed downwards in the social scale, we will find that regional differences among speakers increase gradually (precisely for this reason, some working-class dialects are so localized geographically and so difficult to understand).

Concerning accent, we may observe that the rather flattened top of the dialectal pyramid turns into a clearly pointed top or peak. This change in shape may be explained by reference to the unique position of the RP accent; it is such a prestigious and educated accent that regional variation among those who use it (mainly upper class people) is non-existent.

Anyone traveling to England and staying there for some months will easily notice such socio-linguistic idiosyncrasies. As far as my personal experience is concerned, I must say that staying in Newcastle for five months helped me become more aware of the fact that not everyone in England speaks the perfect and accurate Standard RP English that we tend to find in ESL materials. On my first days in Newcastle, I felt completely frustrated, for I could scarcely understand what people said to me whenever I found myself in any kind of usual everyday situation (doing the weekly shopping, going out ...). Quite surprisingly, while it was hard for me to understand the kind of English spoken there in casual (or everyday) situations, I found no difficulty in following the kind of English spoken at university. This seems to point to what we have been commenting on in this section: the use of Standard English by educated speakers and the use of non-standard varieties by uneducated speakers. However, in my opinion, language variation sometimes is not so much a matter of social class, as a matter of social context. What I mean is that depending on the formality of the context in which a communicative interaction takes place, the speaker will use either a more standard or more non-standard (or casual) variety.

I am sure that we have all come across at some time in our lives such misguided and unfair statements as “the way this person speaks is awful/beautiful ...”. We may ourselves have fallen at some time into such misconceptions, but this is not something one should be ashamed of, for keeping in mind the close relationship between language and society, it is not at all surprising to find this kind of aesthetic judgments. By using the word aesthetic, I mean that more often than not language tends to be judged and evaluated in terms of beauty and social prestige, rather than in terms of linguistic objectivity.

Thus, the establishment of a standard variety is a historical process originating not in purely linguistic endeavours and purposes, but in the rise to power of a certain social group. As soon as those in power recognize a certain dialect as the standard variety of that language, all the other dialects begin to be dismissed as non-standard, thus implying that they are deviations from the norm. However, in a country like England, where there is no official Language Academy, how is the norm established? The norm has been set out in the numerous grammar books and dictionaries that have been published over the years around the South East, which from a linguistic and educational viewpoint is governed by Oxford and Cambridge. It should be borne in mind that there is nothing intrinsically linguistic that could have prevented those universities around Newcastle from establishing the norm; it is simply a matter of socio-economic power and prestige.

Prescriptive attitudes as those we presented above are especially vicious and cruel when it comes to dealing with dialectal differences between Northern and Southern dialects. Such linguistic prejudices go back well into the fourteenth century, as we may observe in the following quotation taken from Ranulph Higden, a fourteenth century

writer: “all the speech of the Northumbrians, especially at York, is so harsh, piercing and grating, and formless, that we Southern men can hardly understand such speech” [Kirkpatrick 2007: 44]. This kind of prescriptive attitudes has often led to Northern people being derided as uncouth and backward people.

Focusing now explicitly on RP, it should be stated that for many years this accent was regarded as the best and most beautiful English accent. Anyone who wanted to be socially successful should do his/her best to acquire such a wonderful accent (this situation was deftly portrayed by George Bernard Shaw in his masterpiece: *Pygmalion*). The reasons that were put forward to account for the excellence of this accent were more socially than linguistically-oriented: RP is the most beautiful accent, it is widely accepted and widely understood. With regards to the latter argument, J.C. Wells [Wells 1997:21] remarks that “it would be difficult to demonstrate that RP, although admittedly nonlocalizable, is truly more readily understood in modern Britain than educated Scottish, Irish...”. What Wells means is that we cannot assess the degree to which RP is comprehensible, unless we ask different dialect speakers whether they can easily understand it, for it might well be the case that for some speakers the non-rhotic nature of RP is more difficult to understand than the rhotic nature of, say, Irish English. It thus becomes clear that linguistic overgeneralizations and even stereotypes should be discarded when evaluating or judging language varieties different from the Standard norm.

RP’s former popularity seems nowadays to be on the wane, probably owing to its association with both an upper-class accent and a sign of social domination by Southern England. In order to make up for the gradual disappearance of this educated accent, many people in England are adapting this social accent to their regional accents, resulting in what has been known as modified regional accents and modified RP. The most clear instance of this process is the so-called Estuary English, which is commonly described as a hybrid of RP and South-Eastern accents.

So, the existence of linguistic variation is part and parcel of the on-going process of language change. However hard we try to fix a standard norm, we should never forget that this superposed variety is no more than an abstraction of the multiple ways in which the language can be spoken. These multiple possibilities are neither better nor worse than the Standard variety; they simply represent the natural and inevitable process of language change. Reactions towards language change tend to be negative; in fact, there are some purist organizations (like The Queen’s English Society) that strive to encourage the British population not to deviate from what they consider as the best English. To their dismay, however, it should be explained that there is nothing linguistic in Standard English that makes it superior to, say, Geordie, for both have grammar rules, and both can be developed for use in any communicative situation. If we apply the grammatical criterion that purists pride themselves on using when evaluating dialects, we will realize that, from a purely linguistic viewpoint, the grammatical systems of some non-standard varieties are far more regular than that of the Standard variety (for instance, the lack of third person singular ‘-s’ in some dialects). Consequently, we should all try to avoid being

misled or biased by our social preconceptions when analyzing or evaluating other linguistic varieties contrary to the arbitrary nature of the standard norm.

Trudgill [Trudgill 2007: 148] draws a distinction between rural and urban dialects. He argues that rural dialects are those spoken in rural isolated areas, while urban dialects are those employed in large urban centers. It appears that the linguistic differences between rural dialects are far more substantial than those between urban dialects. Hence, if we take a traditional or rural dialectal sentence like *Hoo inno goin* [Graddol 2007: 204] and contrast it with its urban non-standard counterpart *She ain't going*, we will notice that, despite being a non-standard example, the latter example is easier to understand than the former. The reason for the apparent difficulty of the first instance (as opposed to the second one) lies in the assumption that linguistic innovations often spread from one urban centre to another, and only later spread out into the surrounding countryside. What this statement suggests is that the former lack of communication between rural areas led to them remaining rather immune to language change. With the advent of industrialization, England saw the gradual transformation of its former rural make-up into the highly urbanized country that we know today. This process, together with the creation of new transport links, led to an increasing contact between people from areas that had been formerly isolated. The inevitable urbanization of England brought about not only the improvement of communications, but also an immediate linguistic by-product: what some linguists have called *dialect levelling*. Graddol defines this phenomenon as follows: "Dialect levelling occurs when speakers of different dialects come into regular contact with each other and lose some of the linguistic features of their dialect that are not widely shared with the others" [Graddol 2007: 202-203].

The immediate consequence of this process is the gradual extinction (or death) of many traditional dialects in favour of wider urban varieties. If urbanization was the main factor playing a role in the homogenisation of many traditional dialects, even more important an influence is exerted nowadays by mass media (television, radio ...). Modern mass media have reduced regional differences significantly, to the extent that most British people are currently changing their regional dialect towards a more neutral form of standard English. Another crucial contribution to the current leveling of regional variation in England has to do with the massive input of American English on British television (through American series, shows ...). Bearing in mind the tremendous influence of modern communications on dialectal variation, it is no wonder that, in approximately fifty years' time, regional variation in England will have vanished completely from what we termed above English English (in favour perhaps of a unique non-localized Global English). However, it seems to me that so long as there are people who feel proud of their dialect and continue to use it, dialectal variation will not disappear completely from this country. Precisely, the following section will be concerned with all the attempts that are currently being made to preserve dialectal variation in England [Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. English English].

For many years, non-standard varieties were banned from the public or official life of the country, thus consigning them to official oblivion. As explained above, those who used non-standard dialects were branded as uneducated and rude people who lacked the

glamour associated with the standard variety of the language. As one might expect, this kind of attitudes have, for a long time, been promoted by those at the helm: namely, the mass media and the government. Fortunately, thanks to some recent official initiatives, dialectal variation in this country is no longer officially despised or discriminated against in terms of social prestige. To start with, we will deal with an institution whose role in the implementation of linguistic standardness has been essential for many years: the BBC. With the foundation of the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1922, a Standard English linked to an RP accent was adopted as the language of broadcasting par excellence. The BBC's concern with linguistic standardness was so great that in 1926 an Advisory Committee on Spoken English was set up, in order to make recommendations on the pronunciation of words in compliance with the RP paradigm. One of the members of this committee was the famous phonetician Daniel Jones, compiler of *The English Pronouncing Dictionary* (1917), where he first described RP (or Public School English, as he also called it). In the 1940s, the Advisory Committee on Spoken English was replaced by the BBC Pronunciation Unit, whose purpose was to give guidance to newsreaders and announcers on the pronunciation of place and personal names.

Taking into account the considerable efforts made by these committees to stimulate the use of a Standard RP English, it is not mere chance that the voice of the BBC has been for so long that of educated Oxbridge speakers. This prestigious voice, however, was somehow modified in the 1950s, when the BBC began to use some non-RP speakers in some kinds of broadcasting, such as weather forecasting, sports commentating, discussions of gardening, and entertainment. With the establishment of new regional radio networks and a new commercial television channel (ITV) in the 1960s, BBC English underwent a further relaxation towards non-standard regional varieties. BBC World Service continued the RP tradition, but in the nineties it began to use announcers and newsreaders with a more representative range of accents.

The popularisation of regional dialectal variation among announcers and presenters has recently led the BBC to celebrate what formerly used to be almost abhorred: "the cut-glass accent of home counties Britain is to be banished from the air waves by the BBC in favour of more energetic and vigorous voices from the regions" [Wells, 1997: 19]. This new dialectal fervour has affected not only the BBC, but also all the other English radio stations and TV channels. As an illustration of the previous argument, most English soap operas and shows nowadays include some regional flavour in the way characters speak.

As part of the BBC's celebration of regional variation, in 2006 the BBC launched a huge project to record and evaluate attitudes to the regional varieties spoken across the breadth of the UK. The BBC Voices Survey contains recordings of at least 1,000 interviewees from a wide range of social and regional settings, in the attempt to provide a sample of the many different ways in which the English language can be spoken in this country. Visitors to the BBC Voices website are encouraged to contribute to the project with their own views and attitudes towards their own regional varieties. The BBC Voices Survey has not been the only contribution to the widespread acceptance of dialectal variation in England; it is essential that we also refer to the '*British Library Sounds Familiar?*' project. This project's website allows us to listen to seventy-one sound

recordings and over six hundred short audio clips chosen from two collections of the British Library Sound Archive: the Survey of English Dialects (carried out by the University of Leeds in the early 1950s) and the Millenium Memory Bank (compiled by both the British Library and BBC local radio stations across England in the last years of the twentieth century). Despite the rather clear-cut and complete nature of this project, it should be noted that *Sounds Familiar?* is an unfinished and on-going survey that keeps being enriched thanks to *Your Voices*, a section offering British citizens the possibility of sending their own voice recordings and surveys to the site. Besides all the multimedia resources, this website provides useful information on some general sociolinguistic concepts, such as dialectal variation, language change ...

Last but not least, we should not end this section without mentioning the important role played by some regional organizations in the preservations of their dialects. The so-called dialectal societies encourage the study and recording of various English dialects through literary publications, meetings, regional newspapers ... Hence, their main function lies in the preservation and fostering of the written form of many English dialects. Of all the dialectal societies to be found in England, I will refer to four Northern organizations: the Yorkshire Dialect Society, the Lakeland Dialect Society, the Northumbrian Language Society and Durham and Tyneside Dialect Group.

Thus, we have seen how dialectal variation is not something one should feel obliged to uproot from his/her own public persona, but something one should be proud of. Misjudging a person in terms of the way he/she speaks would imply an overt attack on this person's identity, for personal identity is shaped not only by physical and emotional aspects, but also by linguistic facts. Any attempt to deride other dialectal varieties as awful deviations from the norm clearly goes hand in hand with the harmful influence exerted by society on linguistic issues. Thus, it follows that linguistic opinions should be based only on objective linguistic facts, and not unfair socio-economic values. By stressing the relationship between language and society, we do not mean to say that standardness should be completely removed from the English language (otherwise, we would be going back to Middle English); what we mean is that the standard variety should be imposed not at the expense of other varieties, but in addition to other varieties.

Contrary to popular belief, England is not the close-knit and homogeneous country that is perceived by foreign eyes. If one examines closely the English socio-economic background, one will discover that England is a country divided economically, socially and even linguistically into two main regions: Northern and Southern England. This socio-economic split, which roughly corresponds to a geographical split between North of the river Humber (Northumbria) and South of the river Humber, originates in the concentration of political and economic power in Southern England (around London). David Mcdowall [Mcdowall 2007:12] explains such socio-economic division as one between "core" (London and surrounding areas) and "periphery" (the Midlands, Northern England and Scotland). The periphery, particularly Scotland, and the north of England, has always shown its contempt for anything coming from Southern England. The reason for harbouring such resentment probably lies in the disastrous consequences that deindustrialization had in Northern England. In the two centuries following Britain's

industrial revolution (approximately 1775-1975), the availability of coal led to the growth of large industrial towns and cities in the north (e.g. Newcastle) and Midlands of England. However, with the shutdown of many Northern factories in the eighties (during Margaret Thatcher's government), Northern England sank into a period ruled by poverty and unemployment.

Despite the recent revitalization and resurgence of some Northern cities (the most outstanding in this process being Newcastle), there are still many socio-economic differences between Northern and Southern England, which are worth commenting on. First of all, it appears that the rates of unemployment are higher in the north of England than in the south-east. Besides this, it has been suggested that people in the south-east earn the most and work the shortest week, whereas people in the north of England have the lowest average weekly wages. The clear lack of good employment opportunities in the north has led many people to seek work in the south, thus depriving Northern England of many talented people. An immediate consequence of this economic deprivation is, as McDowall [McDowall 2007:14] claims, that standards of living are much lower in Northern England than in Southern England. Having considered the socio-economic North-South divide, we will now turn to the linguistic North-South divide. As mentioned above, the English language varies considerably as one moves across the island. The most outstanding dialectal differences to be found in this country are those between Southern England and Northern England. From what we have already said, it should be clear by now that such regional differences are closely related to the existence of both geographical barriers and distance. Hence, it is not at all surprising that the river Humber marks the linguistic distinction between Southern and Northern English. Nonetheless, not only does geography play a role in the formation of dialects, but history does also contribute to this process. For example, the fact that the former kingdom of Northumbria (roughly corresponding to Northern England and Southern Scotland) was once settled by Angles (approximately in the sixth/seventh century) and Danes (ninth century) was paramount in the formation of today's northern dialects, in the sense that the languages of these settlers have left important traces on the way the English language is spoken in this area nowadays.

So far, we have only referred to linguistic differences between Northern and Southern England, but we seem to have overlooked the Midlands. The reason for such a failure lies in the fact that the Midlands is an area of transition between these two dialectal areas. Therefore, we may say that Southern Midland dialects are closer to Southern English dialects, while Northern Midland dialects are closer to Northern English dialects. In the same way, it could be argued that Northern English is more similar to Scottish English than to Southern English. The previous statements clearly point to the existence of a dialect continuum, with Northern and Southern English at both extremes, and Midland dialects at a transition point between both.

In the sub-sections that follow, we will provide a general overview of the main linguistic differences between England's four major dialectal areas: South, the Midlands, East Anglia and Northern. Even though we will confine our attention to only the most noticeable linguistic differences between these areas (for the sake of brevity), we should

not forget that reality is much more complex than that. What we mean is that if we were to carry out a survey on regional dialects, we would discover that there may well be some degree of regional variation between two villages which are only a few miles apart. This seems to suggest that English accents and dialects vary widely in Great Britain. As Trudgill [Trudgill 2007: 153] explains, the reason for such linguistic complexity in England has to do with the fact that “English has been spoken in England for 1,500 years but in North America only for 300”.

Lastly, before moving on to the following sub-sections, it is important to state that the most striking dialectal differences tend to be those concerning the pronunciation of vowels. This can be illustrated by considering the most outstanding dialectal difference between Northern and Southern dialects: what Wells calls the “*foot-strut split*”. The “*foot-strut split*” is used to explain that Northern English tends not to have /ʌ/ as a separate vowel; thus, in Northern England, there is no difference in pronunciation between ‘foot’ and ‘strut’ [Melchers, Shaw 2003: 49].

As we know, the upper-class South-Eastern English spoken in and around London was the basis upon which a Standard English was created. Since RP and Standard English are regarded as the English language par excellence, I think it is not worth discussing all the features of Standard English and RP in this paper, for this is the English language we all have studied at school, that is, the variety we are all familiar with. However, for the purposes of a comparison with Northern English, we will mention four decisive Standard pronunciation features:

- 1) observance of the “*foot-strut split*”: /fʊt/ /strʌt/;
- 2) use of a long a /ɑ:/ in such words as *bath* and *cast*;
- 3) words such as *face* and *space* are pronounced with the diphthong /ei/;
- 4) words such as *cat* and *trap* are pronounced with /æ/ [British Library Board. Sounds Familiar? [Electronic resource]].

In addition to Standard English, the South of England is home to two localized or regional dialects: Cockney and the West Country.

Cockney is an urban dialect spoken by working-class London citizens. It is characterized by a number of phonological, grammatical and lexical differences from Standard English, most of which are highly stigmatized (featured in BBC’s soap opera *EastEnders*):

- 1) the dental fricatives /θ, ð/ are replaced with labiodental /f, v/, for example *think* /fɪŋk/;
- 2) like most other regional varieties in England, Cockney has no initial *h* in such words as *hood* and *heart*;
- 3) vocalisation of dark/velar *l* in such words as *people* and *tell* to w;
- 4) use of double negatives;
- 5) words borrowed from various languages: Romany, Yiddish and Arabic;
- 6) use of rhyming slang (e.g. *He went up the apples and pears*: ‘He went upstairs’) [BBC Voices [Electronic resource]].

West Country dialects constitute a family of similar rural (or traditional) dialects covering the counties of Avon, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, and Somerset. For many people in Britain, traditional West Country usage has become stereotyped as rustic and

backward, leading to its being popularly known as Mummerset. West Country dialects may be characterized by the following shared features:

- 1) use of rhoticity by broad rural speakers (the famous *West Country burr*);
- 2) intrusion of a final *l* in words that end in a weak vowel, as in *area* and *cinema*;
- 3) present and past participles are often preceded by *a-*, as in *a-goin*;
- 4) the present tense of the verb *be* regularized and simplified to a single form;
- 5) the negative particle *baint*: *I baint* ('I am not');
- 6) words typical of these dialects: *backalong* ('homeward'), *fardel* ('a burden')...

Although in medieval times, the Midland dialects appear to have had fairly well-defined linguistic and geographical boundaries (approximately covering an area north of the river Thames and south of the river Humber, with the Pennines separating East Midland dialects from West Midland dialects), nowadays such clear-cut divisions seem to have been somewhat blurred or weakened, probably due to the influence of some large cities, such as Birmingham, Wolverhampton... However, despite this lack of definite boundaries, it is still possible to mention some linguistic peculiarities typical of Midland dialects:

- 1) as in the North, most West Midlanders generally do not use a long *a* /a:/ in such words as *cast* and *bath*;
- 2) the West Midlands accent also generally uses the northern short *u*, so *putt* is pronounced the same as *put*;
- 3) people in the North-West Midlands are mildly rhotic in words such as *farm* and *far*;
- 4) the West Midlands accent is often described as having a pronounced nasal quality, the East Midlands accent much less so;
- 5) people in the West are more likely to use /ŋg/ than people in the East: e.g. *singing*, *tongue*;
- 6) Birmingham, the largest city in the West Midlands, has its own urban working class dialect: *Brummie*. It may be generally defined as a non-rhotic, aitchless accent. Broad Brummie includes the use of *them* as a demonstrative (*them things*) and a general non-standard use of verbs (*I seen it*);
- 7) yod dropping, as in East Anglia, can be found in some areas in the East Midlands: e.g. *new* (/nu:/).

East Anglian Dialects is dialectal area which traditionally consists of only the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, but nowadays it could also be said to include some other Eastern England counties, such as Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire. As is often the case, the language variety to be found in this dialectal area's main cities (Norwich and Ipswich) tends to influence the speech of other nearby cities. Some features of East Anglian dialects are:

- 1) traditional East Anglian usage tends to undergo yod dropping: e.g. *dew* (/du:/);
- 2) glottal stops in such words as *cat* and *kettle* are common throughout the area;
- 3) in Norfolk, the diphthong /ai/ in words such as *right*, *buy* and *sky* sounds more like oi;
- 4) in Norfolk, the diphthong /əu/ tends to be pronounced as a monophthong /u/: e.g. *soap* and *boat*;
- 5) in casual speech, the third person singular -s tends to be dropped: e.g. *he go*;

- 6) Scandinavian influence was once strong and can still be found in some words: *becks* ('streams').

Northern English dialects are at the extreme end of a dialectal continuum affected by both geographical distance and the physical presence of river Humber. Unlike some Midlands dialects, Northern dialects tend to be different from all the varieties of southern England, and tend to be more homogeneous. Given the geographical proximity to Scotland, most of these dialects have more in common with Scots than with the dialects of the South Midlands, the South East, and the South West; that's why broad Northern dialects are so difficult to understand. The most noted Northern dialects are Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cumbrian and Geordie, as well as two other less clearly distinguishable dialects: Pitmatic and Mackem. In the paragraphs that follow, we will present some of the features shared by most Northern dialects, as well as those which are more specific to only certain dialects:

- 1) the "foot-strut split" is not followed; hence, *put* and *putt* are homophones in Northern English;
- 2) words such as *cat* and *trap* are pronounced with /a/ (RP: /æ/);
- 3) use of a short a /a/ in words such as *bath* and *cast*. (RP: /ɑ:/);
- 4) the RP diphthongs /ei/ (*face*) and /əʊ/ (*load*) are often pronounced as monophthongs (such as /e:/ and /o:/);
- 5) the historical present is often used. Instead of saying I said to him, many Northerners would say, I says to him;
- 6) Scandinavian influence, arising out of invasions and occupations from the 9th century to 1066, appears in most of these dialects;
- 7) a well-known feature of the Yorkshire dialect is the shortening of the to a form without a vowel, often written t';
- 8) in rural southern Lancashire, aw and (h)oo continue to be occasionally used for I and she;
- 9) Liverpool is famous for having its own urban working-class dialect: Scouse. The Liverpool accent combines features of Lancashire with varieties of English predominantly from Ireland but also from Wales. The reason for this dialectal mixture lies in the large number of Irish and Welsh immigrants into the Liverpool area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One of its most distinctive features is the replacement of an intervocalic *t* by *r*, sometimes shown in print as *rr*, as in 'marra' for *matter*;
- 10) Pitmatic is the dialect used in the counties of Northumberland and Durham. In spite of sharing many features with Geordie, it developed as a separate dialect due to the specialised terms that mineworkers used in the local coal pits;
- 11) Mackem is the dialect used in the Wearside area, or more specifically Sunderland. Despite being treated as a separate dialect, Mackem is almost identical to Geordie. It is quite possible that this term stems from the football rivalry between Newcastle United and Sunderland A.F.C.

Now we will focus our attention on Geordie, one of the most distinctive dialects of Northern England. After having dealt with linguistic variation and linguistic division in

some detail, this section offers a golden opportunity for us to examine the extent to which some of the sociolinguistic concepts may apply to the study of this specific urban dialect. This objective shall be accomplished by considering first of all the historical and linguistic peculiarities of this dialect, after which we shall provide some insights into its growing acceptance and institutionalization. To begin with, the word Geordie refers both to a native of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and to the speech of the inhabitants of that city. This term is often mistakenly applied by outsiders to all the people in the North-East of England and to their speech. Strictly speaking, however, Geordie should only refer to the speech of the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne or its environs, including North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Gateshead. As stated above, Geordie tends to be defined in stark contrast to other surrounding dialects, such as Pitmatic and Makkem. However, making such a dialectal distinction is simply a way of emphasizing local identities, for Makkem and Pitmatic are not so different linguistically from Geordie.

The fact that people outside the North East find it so difficult to perceive clearly the differences between Geordie and other surrounding dialects is not so strange, if one considers the similar historical circumstances under which they all developed. Initially, the collapse of Roman rule in England in the early fifth century led to the North-East (as well as most of central and northern England) being settled by the Angles for some centuries. The languages the Angles spoke evolved into a number of Old English dialects often grouped together under the term Northumbrian. With the passing of time, the ancient kingdom of Northumbria underwent considerable linguistic and geographical divisions. For instance, the Viking invasions of the 9th century initially affected only the areas south of the river Tees, thus leaving the North East isolated from the linguistic innovations that were transforming Yorkshire dialects. Later still, the counties of Durham and Northumberland were not included in the Domesday Book, as both counties resisted Norman control for some time longer. In consequence, we may say that the North East has always kept a strong sense of cultural identity, which has led to its being rather unique from a linguistic viewpoint.

As far as the origin of the term Geordie is concerned, surely the first idea that comes to our mind is to treat this word as a familiar diminutive form of the name George. Besides this obvious explanation, there are two other theories relating the origin of this word to specific historical moments. One of these theories holds that this word was coined during the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. The natives of Newcastle were such firm supporters of king George II that the Jacobites began to call them Geordies. Another explanation for the name is that local miners in the north east of England used Geordie safety lamps, designed by George Stephenson in 1815, rather than the Davy lamps designed by Humphry Davy, which were used in other mining communities.

Just as Brummie and Scouse were the working-class dialects of two large cities (Birmingham and Liverpool), so is Geordie the working-class dialect of another large city: Newcastle. In this sub-section, we will present the most relevant phonological, lexical and grammatical features peculiar to this urban variety. Before proceeding to an outline of these peculiarities, it should be pointed out that, as other dialects show, the speakers of the broadest form of Geordie are always those belonging to the working

classes. Hence, it follows that the purest form of the dialect will weaken as one moves along the social scale, which means that the more educated a speaker is, the more Standard his/her speech will be. Taking this into account, it should be explained that only the broadest speakers of Geordie (working-class people) are those whose speech will show all or most of the linguistic features presented below.

Pronunciation:

- 1) something shared with many other Northern English dialects is the pronunciation of words such as *trap* and *have* with /a/;
- 2) broad Geordie speakers pronounce the /ɒ/ in such words as *lot* and *want* with /œ/;
- 3) something shared with all the other Northern dialects is the lack of the “foot-strut split”;
- 4) broad Geordie speakers pronounce the vowel in words such as *serve* and *bird* with /ɔ:/;
- 5) broad Geordie speakers pronounce /i:/ in such words as *keys* and *feet* with /ei/;
- 6) the RP diphthong /ei/ tends to be pronounced as /ie/ in words such as *face* and *steak*;
- 7) the RP diphthong /əʊ/ tends to be pronounced as /ʊə/ in words such as *home* and *show*;
- 8) commonly there is a long /a:/ in such words as *all*, *talk* and *war*;
- 9) a glottal stop replaces the consonants /p/, /t/, /k/ in syllable-final position and often also in mid-word (e.g. *caper*, *daughter*);
- 10) an uvular r (similar to French pronunciation) is still used by the oldest speakers of this dialect;
- 11) rising intonation patterns are common in statements.

Grammar:

- 1) the first person singular pronoun tends to be spelt *Aa*, as in *Aa doan't know* (‘I don't know’);
- 2) the second person plural pronoun used in Geordie is *youse*, as in *I'll see youse in the woods* (‘I'll see you in the woods’);
- 3) the Standard English conjunction *so* that appears in Geordie as *so as*;
- 4) the form *diven't* is a traditional local alternative to *don't*, as in the double negative *I diven't do nothin'* (‘I don't do anything’).

Vocabulary

- 1) much of the local vocabulary is descended from Old English, but has changed or been replaced in other varieties of English further south. For instance, the Geordie verb *larn* does not mean ‘to learn’, but ‘to teach’ (the meaning it had in Old English);
- 2) Geordie also shows some influence from Danish, as with *hyem* (‘home’);
- 3) this dialect shares many words with Scots and Scottish English, as with: *bairn* (‘child’); *bonny* (‘good-looking’); *hinny* (‘honey’); *hacky* (‘dirty’).

As years go by, it appears that this famous dialect is undergoing a levelling process that could well lead to its disappearance. However, this is quite far from becoming a reality, if one realizes the growing acceptance that this dialect is gaining nationwide. It is true that many traditional Geordie words and expressions have been lost, but, as it

happens with many other dialects, this is a natural consequence of the process of language change, which does not necessarily lead to the loss of linguistic variation. The main reason for such linguistic levelling is obviously related to the fact that the inhabitants of Newcastle (and its environs) are not geographically isolated any more. In the past, the North-East was inhabited by close-knit communities whose livelihood was based on mining and fishing. Nonetheless, with the urbanization and modernization of most of these communities, the dialect words associated with those industries have faded away. On top of that, professional mobility in our present time is far greater than forty years ago; for this reason, today's North Easterners are more likely to spend time living and working away from the region than ever before. The revitalization of the North East (particularly Newcastle) in the last few years has also led many outsiders to move to this area. These factors have had a clear impact on the speakers of this dialect, since many North Easterners have had to make themselves better understood to the outside world, thus somehow standardising their dialect .

The issues already mentioned are not the only ones playing a role in the levelling of this dialect, for it should be remembered that the country's official institutions are in many ways also responsible for the gradual dilution of any dialect. One of the most powerful anti-dialect forces has been schooling and education, with students being discouraged from using their ill-favoured language variety, in favour of the beautiful standard variety. The enormous influence of education on linguistic matters has been for a long time inextricably linked to that exerted by the mass media. Due to the Standard RP English favoured by the BBC, it was not until the seventies that Geordie began to appear on TV screens. From that moment onwards, we may say that there has been a growing celebration of Geordie in the media.

In recent times, the Geordie dialect has featured prominently in the British media. However, it should be noted that , although the dialect appears, it is toned down (or more standardized) for comprehension of the general public. Television presenters such as Ant and Dec and Marcus Bentley (commentator on the UK edition of Big Brother) are now happy to use their local dialect on air. BBC sitcoms such as I'm Alan Partridge and Auf Wiedersehen, Pet have also helped to popularize this Northern dialect. Surprising as it may seem, Geordie has likewise been incorporated into news programmes; particularly, the BBC local news program Look North. Geordie's growing acceptance has been shown in the written media too. For instance, there is a comic magazine called Viz, where the dialect itself is often conveyed phonetically by unusual spellings within the comic strips [Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Geordie [Electronic resource]].

All things considered, we may conclude that even though Geordie has experienced a clear levelling of its most extreme features, there are still many people who feel proud of their local accent and dialect, and who use Geordie as a way of reinforcing their local identity. Consequently, I think that Geordie will not die out completely, so long as it is perceived to be closely linked to some kind of local pride (fed by local traditions and even football rivalry).

To sum up, this essay has attempted to provide the reader with some insights into the influence of social values on dialectal variation in England. In the course of our

research, we have come to some **conclusions**. Unlike many other countries, England is an extraordinary example of the close relationship that there can exist between regional variation and social stratification. For many years, this relationship has been responsible for the misleading assumption that non-standard dialects are unpleasant deviations from the purity and beauty of the standard norm. Nevertheless, from what we have explained in this essay, it should be clear by now that linguistic judgments based on aesthetic values are to be completely discarded from any kind of linguistic discussion. The growing presence of some non-standard varieties in some of England's official institutions (e.g. the BBC) has been extremely beneficial to their widespread acceptance as linguistic varieties in their own right, and not as ungrammatical or incorrect deviations.

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Summary

Dialectal variation in England has been for a long time excluded from all kinds of official contexts, favouring in that way the superimposed or standard variety of the language. Fortunately, this tendency seems to be currently undergoing a change towards a growing acceptance of England's regional voices. This implies that regional dialects are no longer viewed as uneducated and backward varieties of the English language, but as communicative and linguistic tools in their own right. This favourable treatment of dialectal variation would not have been possible, if it had not been for the great efforts made by some official institutions to make the English population more aware of the linguistic richness found in English English. The most noted example of such changing attitudes towards regional varieties is that of the BBC, which in the last few years has replaced its famous Standard RP English with a clear regional flavour in most of its programmes.

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ АБРЕВІАЦІЇ В АНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ ТЕРМІНОЛОГІЇ БІЗНЕСУ

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Найбагатшим джерелом збагачення лексики кожної мови є словотворення, при якому провідну роль відіграє зміна морфологічного складу вже існуючих у мові слів і лексичних основ. Характерною рисою будь-якої мови є її здатність чутливо реагувати на найменші зміни в економічному, політичному, суспільному, культурному й повсякденному житті.

Інноваційні процеси у словниковому складі різних мов продовжують привертати увагу лінгвістів, серед яких Ю.А. Зацний [1, 2], О.А. Стишов [5], Л. Струганець [6] та ін. Мовознавці неодноразово підтверджують закономірність тих змін та перетворень, які відбуваються на лексико-семантичному і