

Tyneside English

Dominic Watt

School of Language & Literature
University of Aberdeen
d.watt@abdn.ac.uk

William Allen

School of English Literature, Language & Linguistics, University of Newcastle
w.allen@nwcl.ac.uk

Tyneside English (TE) is spoken in Newcastle upon Tyne, a city of around 260,000 inhabitants in the far north of England, and in the conurbation stretching east and south of Newcastle along the valley of the River Tyne as far as the North Sea. The total population of this conurbation, which also subsumes Gateshead, Jarrow, North and South Shields, Whitley Bay, and Tynemouth, exceeds 800,000. The transcription is based on the speech of a 24-year old speaker who has lived all of her life in the Tyneside area, mostly in the Walker area of Newcastle. It should be noted that there is considerable phonetic variation in TE as a function of speaker age, sex and socioeconomic class, such that some of the features discussed in this illustration do not apply to the speaker in question; conversely, the speaker uses certain pronunciations which are not necessarily representative of the TE-speaking community as a whole (see Docherty & Foulkes 1999, Watt & Milroy 1999, Watt 2000).

Consonants

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d			k g	
Affricate					tʃ dʒ			
Nasal	m			n			ŋ	
Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			h
Approximant				ɹ		j	w	
Lateral Approximant				l				

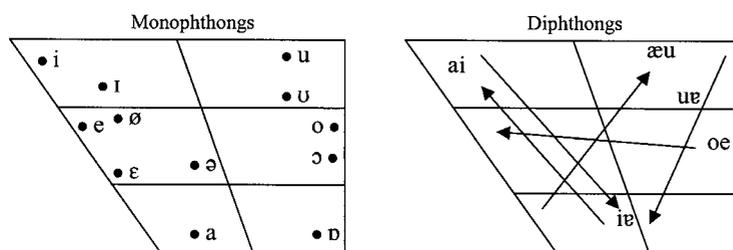
p	'pie'	t	'tie'	k	'kite'
b	'buy'	d	'die'	g	'guy'
m	'my'	n	'nigh'	ŋ	'hang'
f	'fie'	θ	'thigh'	h	'high'
v	'vie'	ð	'thy'	tʃ	'chin'
		s	'sigh'	dʒ	'gin'
		z	'zoo'	ʃ	'shy'
w	'why'	ɹ	'rye'	ʒ	'azure'
		l	'lie'	j	'you'

[p, t, k] are aspirated in word-initial position, except where preceded tautosyllabically by [s], as in *spy, sty, sky*. They are also aspirated where they appear in the onsets of word-internal stressed syllables, as in *appear, attend, occur*. In intervocalic positions, as in *happy, pop out, city, get off, sticker, stick up*, however, a range of more localised pronunciations may be heard.

[p, t, k] in these contexts often involve a combination of an occlusion at the appropriate place of articulation and ‘glottalisation’, usually manifested as a short period of laryngealised voice before and/or after and often also during the stop gap (e.g. in words like *carter*, in which the medial consonant has traditionally been transcribed [ʔt] or [tʔ], but might better be transcribed [d̠]; see further Docherty & Foulkes 1999). For many TE speakers the timing of this double articulation is such that the release of the oral occlusion is masked by the presence of the glottal gesture. As many analysts have pointed out (e.g. Wells 1982: 374), this is auditorily one of the most distinctive features of the accent. [p, t, k] in intervocalic positions may also be fully voiced, though the speaker in our recordings generally avoids pronunciations of this type. Contrary to the patterns observed in many contemporary urban varieties of British English, use of [ʔ] rather than [t] in words like *carter* or *kite* is rare in TE, although the speaker can be heard to use it in, for example, *disputing*. [ʔ] is used almost exclusively for [t] where it precedes [l], as in *bottle*. Incomplete closure of [t] is fairly common, especially among female TE speakers, resulting in a quality similar to the Hiberno-English ‘slit-t’ reported by Pandeli et al. (1997). The articulation of [d] is also often characterised by incomplete closure. Such pronunciations of [t] and [d] are more common in word-final positions than in word-medial ones. Additionally, among younger women word- and utterance-final [p, t, k] (as in *loop*, *white*, *kick*) is frequently preceded by a period of ‘pre-aspiration’. Pronunciations of this sort are somewhat variable in terms of the spectral properties of the fricative noise preceding the stop closure, however, such that some would not accord fully with conventional accounts of pre-aspiration (for discussion see Docherty & Foulkes 1999, Docherty 2003).

[b, d, g] are rarely fully voiced in TE, but may be voiced where they occur between voiced sounds. Unlike many other urban accents of England, TE features neither [h]-dropping (except in unstressed function words such as pronouns) nor ‘TH-fronting’ (the substitution of [f] and [v] for [θ] and [ð], respectively, in words like *thirsty* or *either*). Allen (forthcoming) and Kerswill (2003) report evidence that the latter is becoming more frequent in the English spoken in the region, however. [l] is traditionally ‘clear’ in all contexts (cf. *later* and *solve*) though it may be noted that our informant habitually produces a velarised quality in syllable-final positions (e.g. *fatal*) and even uses a vocalised [ʊ] in *bottle*. The informant is somewhat atypical for a TE speaker in that rather than using [ɪ] in *red*, *wrapped*, etc., she uses [v], and at times even a quality close to [w]. Use of [v] appears to be on the increase among young Tyneside women, but is only very rarely used by older or male TE speakers. It can thus almost certainly be regarded as an incipient sound change in the variety, since it has been shown to be a recently-adopted innovation in other urban accents of northern England (Williams & Kerswill 1999, Foulkes & Docherty 2000). TE is a non-rhotic accent of English, meaning that [ɹ] is not realised in post-vocalic positions (e.g. *cart*, *doctor*) unless it is followed by a vowel, as in *very*, *Murray*, *colour is*, etc. So-called ‘intrusive’ [ɹ], as in *comma in*, is used by the informant where a word-boundary intervenes, but is generally absent in more traditional TE, in which [ʔ] is frequently inserted in these contexts (see Foulkes 1998). Indeed, insertion of [ʔ] to ‘break up’ any V = V juxtaposition across a word boundary (not just those which trigger intrusive [ɹ] in other non-rhotic British accents) is characteristic of TE.

Vowels



Because it is undergoing change (see Watt 2000), the system of vowel contrasts used in TE varies markedly between speakers, and so it is difficult to posit a single vowel system or set of phonemic contrasts for the variety. For example, it is perhaps misleading to state that the vowel of *boat* is [o:] in this accent, when in fact this is only the most frequent of several possible pronunciations of the vowel, some of which are markedly divergent from this quality and which would perhaps stand as better exemplars of the vowel in this variety than [o:] does because they are more localised. The stereotyped TE pronunciations [ʊə] and [ə:] are examples of this, as are the archaic [a:] and [aʊ], which among older speakers occur sporadically in words like *snow* [sna:] and *soldiers* [ˈsaʊldʒəz]. Other pronunciations, such as [ni:] *no* and [stɪən] *stone*, serve to cloud the picture further. The distribution of vowel qualities across the lexicon in TE should therefore not be assumed to adhere to the same patterns found even in neighbouring accents, let alone in British Received Pronunciation, and still less so in the English accents of other parts of the world. The space limitations imposed by this Illustration necessitate a rather simplistic and incomplete view of the TE vowels, then, but fuller descriptions of TE phonology may be found in Viereck (1966), Watt & Milroy (1999), Trousdale (2000) and Allen (forthcoming).

i:	bead	ɒ:	bard	ai	buy
ɪ	bid	ɔ:	board	oe	boy
e:	bayed	o:	boat	æu	cow
ɛ	bed	ʊ	bud	iə	pier
e:	pair	u:	bood	uə	poor
a	bad	φ:	bird		
ɒ	pod	ə	about		

The distinctions between [ɛ] and [e:] and between [ɒ] and [ɒ:] in TE are arguably only of length for many speakers, though some speakers may use a more standard-like [ɑ:] rather than [ɒ:] in words like *farm*, *card*, etc. It will also be noticed that there is no contrast between e.g. *put* and *putt*, as per the [ʌ] ~ [ʊ] distinction found in accents of English outside northern England. [i] and [u] are typically closer than in other varieties, and [u] – at least in more conservative TE – is less prone to the fronting observed in many other accents, retaining a quality quite close to Cardinal Vowel 8. [i] and [u] are diphthongs in morphologically open syllables, such that *freeze* [fɹi:z] and *frees* [fɹeiz], or *bruise* [bɹu:z] and *brews* [bɹəʊz] are not homophonous. Instrumental evidence (Paul Foulkes, p.c.) indicates that when produced as a monophthong [e:] (rather than as a centring diphthong [ɪə] or a closing diphthong [eɪ]), the vowel of *face* is often fronter than that of *fleece*, especially among younger women. These speakers also frequently front [u] to a quality in the region of [ɯ]. The pronunciation of *bird* may be anything from [bɔ:d] to [bø:d] or [bɪ:d] depending upon the age and sex of the speaker, while *boat* and *bought* are indistinguishable in the speech of many female TE speakers. Some TE speakers exhibit length/quality alternations which are strongly reminiscent of the Scottish Vowel Length Rule (e.g. Scobbie et al. 1999), in that, for instance, the diphthong of *knife* is shorter in duration and has a fronter, closer onset than that of *knives* (see Milroy 1995). Lastly, the quality of schwa is highly variable in TE, and is typically fairly open; [ɐ] is a frequent pronunciation. Schwa is also often longer in duration than the vowel of a preceding stressed syllable, even if the latter is a phonologically long vowel (e.g. *butter*, *water*, *meter*, etc.; see the following section).

Stress and intonation

Stress patterns in TE follow those found in other British accents quite closely. As noted above, however, stressed syllables are often shorter in duration than unstressed ones, and are frequently produced with lower F0 as well (e.g. in words like *water*). The use of rising

intonation patterns on declarative utterances is a feature TE shares with the accents of other northern British cities (Cruttenden 1997, Grabe et al. 2000). There is a tendency among TE speakers not to reduce the vowel in some unstressed syllables, e.g. ones containing [ʊ], as in the recorded speaker's pronunciation of *confess*.

Transcription of recorded passage

Two transcriptions are given, the first being a broad phonemic transcription using the symbols in the charts above, and with vowel length and primary stress marked. Interpretation of this transcription should be made bearing in mind the comments made about variability in preceding sections. The second transcription is a narrow phonetic transcription which aims to capture the pronunciation of the passage by the speaker recorded for this purpose.

Broad transcription

ðə 'nɔ:θ 'wind ən ðə 'sʌn wə dɪs'pjʊ:ɪŋ 'wɪtʃ wəz ðə 'stɪŋgə wen ə 'trævələ 'ke:m əbŋ ɪ'æpt ɪn ə 'wɔ:m 'kɔ:t ðeɪ ə'gɪ:d ðət ðə 'wɒn hu: 'fɔ:st sʌk'sɪ:dəd ɪn 'me:kɪŋ ðə 'trævələ 'te:k hɪz 'kɔ:t ɒf ʃʊd bi: kɒn'sɪdəd 'stɪŋgə ðən ði 'ʊðə ðen ðə 'nɔ:θ 'wind 'blu: əz 'hɑ:d əz hi 'kʊd bʊt ðə 'mɔ: hi 'blu: ðə 'mɔ: 'klo:slɪ dɪd ðə 'trævələ 'fɔ:ld hɪz 'kɔ:t ə'raʊnd hɪm ənd ət 'lɑ:st ðə 'nɔ:θ 'wind 'geɪv ʊp ði ə'tempt ðen ðə 'sʌn 'ʃɒn æt 'wɔ:mli ənd ɪ'mɪ:dʒətli ðə 'trævələ 'tʊk ɒf hɪz 'kɔ:t ənd sɔ: ðə 'nɔ:θ 'wind wəz ə'blaɪdʒd tə kɒn'fes ðət ðə 'sʌn wəz ðə 'stɪŋgə əv ðə 'tu:

Narrow transcription

ðə 'nɔ:θ 'wind ə ðə 'sʌm ə dɪs'pjʊ:ɪŋ 'wɪtʃ wəz ə 'stɪŋgə wen ə 'trævlə k^he:m əbŋ 'və'pt ɪn ə 'wɔ:m 'k^ho^ht^h ðeɪ'gɪ:eɪd ðət ðə 'wɒn hu: 'fɛ:sək'sɪ:dɪd ɪn 'me:kɪŋ ðə 'trævlə 't^hɛ'ɪ?kɪz 'k^ho^uɪt ɒf ʃɪb:i k^hɒn'sɪdə 'stɪŋgə dʒɪn 'ɪðɛ ðen ðə 'nɔ:θ wɪm 'blu ɪz 'hɑ:d ɪzɪ 'k^hɔf bɪd ə 'mɔ: fi 'blu ðə 'mɔ: 'klɔ:slɪ dɪd ə 'trævlə 'fɔ:ld ɪz 'k^hɔ:ðəvəʊnd hɪm ənd ɪ? 'lɑs θ 'nɔ:θ 'wɪŋ 'gɪəv ʊp ði ə't^hɛmt 'ðen ɪ 'sʌn 'ʃʌn ɛʊ? 'wɔ:mli nə'mɪ:dʒəɪ ðə 'trævəl 't^hʊk' ɒf ɪs 'k^hɔ:ht^h ɪ sɔ ðə 'nɔ:θ 'wɪn wəz ə'blæɪs k^hɒm'fɛs: ɛ? ðə 'sʌm ʊz ð 'stɪŋgəvɔ? ðə 't^hu:m

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