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LIZENTIATSARBEIT

The Case of Estuary English
–
Supposed Evidence and a Perceptual Approach

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List of Abbreviations

AmE	American English
BrE	British English
C	Cardinal Vowel
cf.	confer
DTW	'Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells' (cf. 2.4.)
EE	Estuary English
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EngE	English English (= British English)
EPD	*English Pronouncing Dictionary* (cf. bibliography)
GB	General British (cf. Windsor Lewis 1990)
GenAm	General American
GLC	Greater London Council
LDOCE	*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (cf. bibliography)
LPD	*Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* (cf. bibliography)
MGT	Matched-Guise Technique
NHS	National Health Service
NLV	New London Voice
NT	National Trust
p.	page
PD	Perceptual Dialectology
R	Respondent
RP	Received Pronunciation
SED	*Survey of English Dialects* (cf. bibliography)
StdEng	Standard English
TES	Times Educational Supplement
UCL	University College London
US	United States
V	Vowel
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
#	'number' (used for the seven voice samples)

1. Introduction

In a crime novel[1] by the Scottish writer Val McDermid, the accent of one of the protagonists is described as follows:

> The accent was Estuary English. It had never been one of Lindsay's favourites, always reminding her of spivvy Tory MPs on the make. Distance hadn't lent it enchantment. (p. 14)

Arguably, the exact nature of this character's accent might have been as much of a mystery to many readers as the actual plot itself. However, this 'Estuary English' is by no means only a figment of this particular author's imagination, as it keeps cropping up in many other places as well, e.g. in a 'lifestyle diary' on the Internet:[2]

> Where I'm currently doing my freelance thing – a government body I'll refer to as the Department of Cushions – is a very male place. […] There are lots of men in their fifties with hair like mad chemistry teachers' and jolly regional accents (*instead of that slovenly Estuary English spoken by everyone under 35*), [etc.]. (my italics)

Or in a CD review:[3]

> Elsewhere 'The Jam Collection' is akin to leafing through someone's old photo album or scrapbook. Petulant teenage traumas turned into ineffectual broadsides, the crippling three-piece chemistry (one loudmouth driving two dullish henchmen) and Weller's valiant struggle to adapt his voice – *posturing, prolish, estuary English* – into a vibrant and soulful entity cloud the songwriting craft. (my italics)

So far, these quotes seem to suggest that Estuary English (or EE, for short) does not rank among the most pleasant accents. There are exceptions to the rule, though: In Hugh Linehan's feature in the *Irish Times* on the screening of the film *Sliding Doors* at the Dublin Film Festival 1998, the term is used much more neutrally:

> […] Peter Howitt's slick, funny romantic comedy Sliding Doors, starring Gwyneth Paltrow as a young Londoner working in public relations. […] Howitt's good-looking if somewhat glib directorial debut is aimed foursquare at the Sleepless in Seattle market, with a touch of Four Weddings and a Funeral thrown in for good measure, although Paltrow, *sporting an impeccable estuary English accent*, is much more likeable than either Meg Ryan or Andie McDowell.[4] (my italics)

The seemingly natural use of the term by all these writers suggests the existence of a distinct accent – distinct enough even to be chosen by an American actress (Paltrow) to convey a certain image. Quite obviously, there is more to EE than merely being another example of voluble 'mediaspeak'. Indeed, „there is a new buzzword going the rounds in England – Estuary English" (Wells 1997)[5]. But what exactly is it?

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[1] McDermid, Val (1997): *Booked for Murder. The Fifth Lindsay Gordon Mystery*. London: The Women's Press.
[2] cf. <http://www.impolex.demon.co.uk/diary/current/december97/021297.html>
[3] Review of 'The Jam Collection' by Gavin Martin ©NME 1996
(cf. <www.skynet.co.uk/~kefansu/the_jam/jamar16.html>).
[4] Linehan, Hugh (1998): 'Painting the social canvases'. *Irish Times*, 10 March 1998.
[5] Many of the articles, essays, etc. quoted in this paper are either taken from the Internet (in particular, from Wells' 'Estuary English' Homepage, cf. below) or have been sent to me by e-mail. In these cases, there is no point in giv-

The term 'Estuary English' was coined in 1984 by the EFL teacher David Rosewarne in an article in the *Times Educational Supplement*. According to the article's subtitle, it describes a „newly observed variety of English pronunciation" in the surroundings of the Thames – thus the name. Later on, Rosewarne published further articles on EE,[6] but his primary focus since has been on lecturing and broadcasting on the subject. The other main source of information is Paul Coggle's book *Do You Speak Estuary?* (1993) – the most extensive work so far and a kind of 'recipe-book' of EE[7] which is aimed at a broad readership.

For a long time, Rosewarne's and Coggle's writings have remained the only substantial publications on EE. Apart from a few occasional comments[8], the academic world has been remarkably silent – or even indifferent. The only exceptions are J.C. Wells and his 'phonetic think-tank' at the UCL who have made considerable efforts to provide a more systematic analysis of EE.[9]

The media, however, exhibited fewer reservations on the subject. Always game for a good story, journalists dwelled on the prospect of embarking on another discussion of language standards. Nearly all major 'broadsheets' in Britain, but also other papers around the world (e.g. *The New York Times* or the *South China Morning Post*[10]) have published one or more articles on EE in recent years.[11] And once the term had been discovered by the media, the public's fierce reaction – against what was thought to be yet another example of the steady decay of society – was not very long in coming. Even politicians felt compelled to join in the public outcry: Gillian Shephard, the former British Education Secretary, called EE „a bastardised version of Cockney dialect"[12] and used it as an opportunity to launch her 'Better English Campaign'.[13]

Such overt stigmatisation of EE stands in sharp contrast to the pioneers' understanding of the concept: Coggle's book is subtitled 'The new Standard English' and Rosewarne

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ing exact page references, as they would be entirely arbitrary. The same applies to the draft versions or printouts of forthcoming papers which were given to me directly by the respective authors. This policy will be maintained throughout this paper.

[6] i.e. Rosewarne (1994a, 1994b and 1996); though Rosewarne (1984) and (1994a) are nearly identical.

[7] cf. Parsons (1998:40).

[8] e.g. Battarbee (1996), Kerswill (1994), Köhlmyr (1996). Schoenberger (s.a.) has merely summarised Rosewarne's ideas without further comments (<http://www.padl.ac.at/luf/e/est01.htm>).

[9] e.g. Wells (1992, 1994b & c, 1997, 1998a & c) and Maidment (1994). Wells has also created an international forum on EE on the UCL's Homepage, a collection of miscellaneous publications and articles on the subject: <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/estuary/home.htm>.

[10] cf. Darnton (1993) and Wallen (1995).

[11] For a general survey, see 'References for Estuary English', <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/estuary/ee-refs.htm>.

[12] cf. Wells (1992 and 1997).

[13] cf. Charter (1996).

argues that „[EE] may displace RP and become the reference accent for British English“ (1996:15). This discrepancy is only one example of the considerable amount of confusion which surrounds EE, as many people in Britain seem to use the term without any particularly clear definition of its meaning.

This paper takes this apparent confusion in people's perceptions of EE as a starting point for a general analysis of the concept's validity. Basically, it is divided into two main parts: As the printed material available on EE is rather scarce and sometimes even conflicting, chapter 2 will lay the groundwork by giving a detailed account of the supposedly constituent features of EE as well as of its geographical and social aspects. It will also make a first attempt to give a broader view on EE by embedding it into other areas of current linguistic research.

In a second part, the concept of EE will be analysed in terms of its perception by the public at large. As there has been only very little research in this area so far (summarised in chapter 3), the present writer carried out a field study which was explicitly designed to gain insight into non-linguists' views of EE, with a particular focus on the following questions:

- To what extent is the term 'Estuary English' already known by the public?
- Is there already a 'mental image' of this variety (comparable to the one of 'Standard English'/'RP' as the undisputedly 'good language')? If so, what does it look like?
- (with regard to the suggestion that EE might one day replace RP:) How are EE speakers perceived, also in comparison with other speakers of standard and non-standard varieties?

The methodological background of this study – i.e. the fields of *Perceptual Dialectology* and *Social Psychology* – will be outlined in chapter 4. Chapter 5 will give a detailed account of the study's design, while its results will be discussed in chapter 6. Eventually, the findings gained from this perceptual study will supplement the analysis of the constituent features of EE and thus allow a more comprehensive assessment and also a more detached view of the concept (chapter 7).

2. Constructing Estuary English

The seemingly effortless assimilation of the term into many people's (and, in particular, journalists') vocabularies suggests that the appearance of 'Estuary English' has come right in time to meet a latent demand: Even professional linguists have increasingly expressed their dissatisfaction with traditional dialectological concepts which many felt insufficient to describe the realities of popular speech. In particular, the long-standing duality between 'the standard language' and 'the dialects' has become generally recognised as outdated as the need for some intermediate category grew stronger:

> […] the scenario in which rural dialectologists have worked is clearly one in which 'the dialects' are opposed to 'the standard' (or Received Pronunciation = RP), with little or no sign of a mediating category between these extremes. (Milroy, Milroy and Hartley 1994:1)

Similar concerns have actually prompted Rosewarne to draw up the concept of EE:

> I felt that existing descriptions of pronunciation varieties made no real mention of accents intermediate between R.P. and localisable British forms. There appeared to be a particularly important gap in the descriptions of accent varieties in London and the South-East of England. (Rosewarne 1994a:3)

However, he may have taken things a bit too far when claiming that „[the type of English spoken by] millions of people in London and the south-east […] did not fit into any existing description." (Rosewarne 1996:13) Even dialectologists working within the traditional framework were aware of dialect-contact phenomena and subsequent changes, although they usually saw them as a result of the influence of Standard English on the individual dialects, such as Wakelin (1972:5):

> […] Standard English has had no little effect on dialects, gradually forcing dialectal forms into out-of-the-way corners of the country, making dialect speakers bilingual […], and generally gaining ground to the disadvantage of merely local forms of speech. The dialects are thus no longer 'pure', if ever they were, but contain a large admixture of Standard English or pseudo-Standard English forms.

On the other hand, Wakelin (1972:98) also noted the spread of localised features such as, for example, „the simplification of [θ] to [f]" which was „characteristic not only of the Home Counties as a whole but of areas further afield" and could even be heard in Leeds. Cautiously, he even acknowledged the existence of some intermediate varieties: „there are in England today a large number of different dialects and–by implication–accents, which range from RP *through various modified forms of local accent* to the traditional local accents themselves […]" (Wakelin 1972:84; my italics)

Years later, the perspective seems to have changed: Now it was no longer the dialects being under the influence of RP, but RP 'under threat' of localised forms:

> Mainstream RP is now the subject of imminent invasion by trends spreading from working-class urban speech, particularly that of London […]. (Wells 1982:106)

With hindsight, Wells even seems to have anticipated the advent of EE when he wrote:

> With the loosening of social stratification and the recent trend for people of working-class or lower-middle-class origins to set the fashion in many areas of life, it may be that RP is on the way out. By the end of the century everyone growing up in Britain may have some degree of local accent. Or, instead, some new non-localizable but more democratic standard may have arisen from the ashes of RP: if so, it seems likely to be based on popular London English. (Wells 1982:118)[14]

Remarkably enough, somewhat similar ideas had already been expressed fifteen years earlier by Eustace (1967) who claimed to have observed an increased use of London-based features in the speech of pupils at Eton College (although his sample, which consisted of five schoolboys only, has to be approached with due care). Eustace interpreted this phenomenon as an indication of major changes in the speech habits of the middle classes due to recent developments in the fabric of society:

> Although the new features often seem to resemble Cockney, their origin is rather to be sought in the English of the middle classes, a vast but ill-documented dialect with which the informants have had an increased contact; as a formative influence, the governesses of a former generation have now vanished, and are replaced by the somewhat wider social range of the infant school. (Eustace 1967:305)[15]

In the light of such statements, EE might indeed look like the key concept to integrate all observations about apparent changes in south-eastern speech made in recent years, whether in terms of an 'erosion' of RP or a spread of localised (in this case, London-based) features. The question now is how useful this concept will prove after a close analysis of its supposed definition, its salient features and its sociolinguistic aspects.

[14] cf. Coggle (1993:93).
[15] cf. Parsons (1998:40).

2.1. Attempts at Definitions of EE and Other General Comments

Most people – and journalists in particular – who use the term 'Estuary English' seem to be working on the assumption that everybody knows what they are talking about. Unfortunately, any such certainty must needs be misguided because „the notion of EE is not well defined." (Wells 1999) This becomes clear if we look at the very few serious attempts at definitions made so far.

Rosewarne's definition, which appears in both his 1984 and 1994(a) articles, reads as follows:

> „Estuary English" is a variety of modified regional speech. It is a mixture of non-regional and local south-eastern English pronunciation and intonation. If one imagines a continuum with RP and London speech at either end, „Estuary English" speakers are to be found grouped in the middle ground. (Rosewarne 1984 and 1994a)

Although the basic drift seems clear, there are still several terms which call for clarification. What is Rosewarne's definition of 'RP'? What exactly does he mean by 'London speech' – broad Cockney (spoken by people born within hearing distance of the legendary 'Bow Bells') or the working-class London accent slightly closer to RP that Wells (1982:302) refers to as 'popular London'? And in particular, what is the recipe for this „mixture of non-regional and local south-eastern English pronunciation and intonation"? Admittedly, Rosewarne proceeds to give a list of essential features of EE (which will be discussed in chapter 2.2.), but in general, his definition allows great latitude for anyone to project his or her own observations onto it.

Coggle (1993) basically adopts Rosewarne's definition and adds a couple of explanatory remarks which have to be seen in terms of his book aimed at a broad readership. According to him, RP „[…] forms the model for teaching British English to foreigners [and] is sometimes called 'Standard English', though this term normally refers more to syntax and vocabulary than to pronunciation." (Coggle 1993:23) He makes it clear, moreover, that Rosewarne's „London speech" indeed refers to „what is commonly known as 'Cockney'" (ibid.), an interpretation supported by Wells (1994c).[16]

Crystal (1995:327) essentially follows Rosewarne and Coggle in his description of EE as „a continuum of pronunciation possibilities, with Cockney at one end and Received Pronunciation at the other." In addition, though, he explicitly stresses the notion that

[16] „Note that Rosewarne seems to use the term 'London speech' to refer to what I call Cockney, since he refers to 'a continuum with RP and London speech at either end', with his Estuary English speakers 'grouped in the middle ground'." (Wells 1994c). Rosewarne (1994b and 1996) later adopted this terminology as well.

„the variety is distinctive as a dialect, not just an accent“ (ibid.) – his list of EE features includes twice as many items for (non-standard) grammar as for pronunciation.

Such non-standard grammatical features, however, are explicitly excluded from Wells' proposed definition of EE which focuses on its being an *accent*[17] rather than a distinctive dialect:

> standard English spoken with an accent that includes features localizable in the southeast of England. (Wells 1998a)[18]

Ruling out all the non-standard grammatical forms traditionally associated with Cockney rids the term of its associations with a lower-class background. As a consequence of this insistence on adhering to standard grammar, „EE can be seen as [the] educated counterpart [of Cockney].“ (Wells 1998a) Another chief point is the localisation of EE in the south-east, thus distinguishing it from RP. Against the backdrop of these assumptions, Wells has published several fundamental papers on the phonetics of EE and its transcription (esp. Wells 1992, 1994b & c) – arguably the only documents available on EE based on a truly systematic rather than a selective or even impressionistic approach.

Wells' new definition is also an attempt to mitigate a long-standing uneasiness about the apparent shortcomings of the concept of 'Estuary English'. Apart from the term's vagueness, he also criticises its „ignor[ing] the stylistic variability of all kinds of English“ (Wells 1999). His colleague Maidment discusses this point in more detail, arguing that the model proposed by Rosewarne (and implicitly supported by Coggle) with regard to the relationship between Cockney, EE and RP is too simplistic. According to Rosewarne's diagram (1994a:4)[19], it has to be imagined as something like this:

[Cockney] [EE] [RP][20]

Maidment criticises this model[21] because it implies the existence of some rigid boundaries between both Cockney and EE and between EE and RP, respectively. If the model was correct, we could always assign any given speaker to one of the three categories with

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[17] By 1999, Coggle seems to have partly fallen in line with Wells' argumentation as well:

> „I tend to agree with Prof Wells that EE is "Standard English with a south-eastern accent". There are very few regional dialects left in England nowadays, but regional accents are still very much present and they play an important role in English society. EE is one of the more significant ones.
> I would perhaps add that there are some lexical features (like "basically") which are present in the standard language but which tend to be more frequently used by EE speakers than by RP speakers. Also, as you get towards the Cockney end of the EE continuum there are some Cockney syntactic features which are found in EE (such as double negatives - "I don't have no money"). It is, however, pronunciation which is the most distinguishing aspect of EE.“ (Coggle 1998 (update))

[18] In a handout for his 1998/99 lecture course on 'English accents', the proposed definition reads: „Standard English spoken with a non-RP, London-influenced accent.“ In both cases, the underlying principles remain the same.

[19] For a reproduction, see the questionnaire, p. vii.

[20] Taken from Maidment (1994). He admits, though, that neither Rosewarne nor Coggle are likely to subscribe to the model as such, although neither has written anything substantial to dispel this impression.

absolute certainty, a claim which does not stand the test of reality. Therefore, Maidment provides a more realistic model which takes into account stylistic and register variation as well:

[I ← Cockney → F] [I ← RP → F]
[I ← EE → F][22]

According to Maidment, this model is „more in touch with the realities of accent variation [because it] recognise[s] that a speaker of a given accent has within his or her competence a range of styles from informal (I) to formal (F) and that any overlap between accents may well be as diagrammed." (Maidment 1994)[23] Just as RP can be spoken in informal situations, Cockney can be used in formal ones. Once this is accepted, the boundaries marking off EE become extremely fuzzy because speakers may move along the continuum as they modify their speech according to the given situation.[24] Strictly speaking (according to the above model), the category 'EE' may even be left out entirely.

The more closely the concept of EE is examined, the more problems arise due to its lack of precision. Perhaps it was this vagueness that made many other linguists evade a more critical treatment of the term. McArthur, for example (in the context of what people perceive to be 'Standard English'), does indeed mention all the relevant terms and concepts, but his merely *en passant* reference to EE does not allow any further specification:

> The upper classes do not usually enter into the discussion (being implicitly included [in what are perceived to be speakers of Standard English]) nor do the public schools, numbers of whose pupils and younger ex-pupils have in recent years adapted their speech and social style 'downwards' towards more demotic London-area norms. These include *an accent-cum-style* of the early 1980s identified by the phonetician David Rosewarne as 'Estuary English', often broadly described as *a compromise between RP and Cockney*. (McArthur 1998:117; my italics)

Wales (1994:6) chooses a similar 'top-down' approach to describe EE:

> Now even mainstream RP is re-asserting its local London origins, and has been dubbed 'Estuary English' by David Rosewarne, and the 'New London Voice' by Tom McArthur. [see below]"

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[21] The following paragraph is largely based on Maidment (1994).
[22] Taken from Maidment (1994).
[23] To a certain extent, this has been confirmed by Rosewarne (1994b:3): „The three forms exist in a continuum, with degrees of overlap associated with level of formality and the relationship of speaker and addressee."
[24] To illustrate this point, Maidment (1994) writes:

> "In a formal style, a Cockney speaker may avoid dropping /h/, while in a very relaxed, informal style an EE speaker may drop the odd /h/. […] If this is the case, then the boundary between Cockney and EE becomes extremely fuzzy unless style of speech is controlled for, especially if the same situation obtains for all the variables which supposedly distinguish Cockney and EE.
> To take another example, this time at the borders of EE and RP, let us look at /t/-glottaling. There is no doubt that in informal styles RP speakers do this. If supposed EE speakers only avoid /t/ glottaling in formal speech, then we have the same situation of fuzzy overlap."

Some commentators focus on the geographical and sociolinguistic aspects of EE (cf. chapter 2.3.), such as Bex (1994):

> Estuary English is a convenient term to describe a variety of English that is chiefly distinguished by its pronunciation. Based on accents that were centred around Greater London, it has spread beyond the Home Counties and is chiefly adopted by the young (although it is also used by older people who grew up in the London area).

And finally, a similar approach can be observed in Milroy (1999:180):

> A concern with class and mobility much more directly underpins public reactions to so-called 'Estuary English', a variety which is currently spreading both socially and geographically as a reflex of Britain's changing mobility patterns and class structure.

Not without reason, Milroy's description alludes to the public reactions to Estuary English which have been pointedly summed up by Wells (1997):

> As it often happens in language matters, the English have got into a muddle.

Whereas many professional linguists approached EE as a 'downgrading' of RP towards London-based forms, the general public chose to look at it the other way round, usually associating it with the Cockney end of the continuum only (or even with Cockney itself!), as the following newspaper extracts show:

> The upper-class young already talk "estuary English", the faintly Cockneyfied accent of the South east. (Ascherson 1994)
> […] the cockney refinement now called estuary […]. (Jenkins 1999)
> Some suspect that RP itself will be replaced by Estuary English, the near-Cockney employed across the whole of the Southeast and generously spread across the nation by the broadcasters. (Morrish 1999)

This prospect of EE taking over the place of RP as the nation's model accent has horrified many, and newspaper headlines such as the *Sunday Times*' „Yer wot? 'Estuary English' sweeps Britain"[25] have called legions of 'language mavens'[26] into action. Here is, for example, a direct response to Rosewarne's 1994(a) article:

> I could not help letting out a whoop of joy on reading in it that Estuary English is given the thumbs-down by speakers and learners outside Britain. […] I think you can describe someone as trying, or as not trying, to use the language well. I should like to offer, therefore, the following proposition or challenge: that speaking Estuary English is incompatible with trying to speak English well. (Bulley 1994)

The underlying assumption, of course, is the old stereotype that non-standard speakers are just not trying hard enough to speak 'properly' due to laziness or even pure recalci-

[25] cf. Hymas (1993).
[26] This term has been popularised by Pinker (1994:370ff.) following William Safire, a newspaper columnist, who called himself a 'language maven', from the Yiddish word meaning 'expert'.

trance.[27] Maidment (1994) offers a whole catalogue of quotes about EE which are similarly disturbing:

- It is not an accent … just lazy speaking that grates on the ear and is an extremely bad example to our children.
- The spread of Estuary English can only be described as horrifying. We are plagued with idiots on radio and television who speak English like the dregs of humanity.
- It may be that the twilight of spoken English – the Wörterdämmerung – is far too advanced. Is the appalling speech that buzzes about our ears today part of the general malaise?
- God forbid that it becomes standard English. Are standards not meant to be upheld? We must not slip into slovenliness because of a lack of respect for the language. Ours is a lovely language, a rich language, which has a huge vocabulary. We have to safeguard it.
- It is slobspeak, limp and flaccid: the mouths uttering it deserve to be stuffed with broken glass.
- It is London of course, but debased London: slack-jawed, somnambulent (sic) London.

Bell's observation that EE „seems to cause increasing offence as it overwhelms the indigenous accents of London and south-east England" (Bell 1999) appears as a gross understatement in view of such drastic and, at least in parts, misanthropic arguments. Nearly all these commentators share the stereotypical equation of the standard accent with 'education', 'intelligence' and 'refinement', while localised accents are commonly associated with 'ignorance' and often 'evil'.[28] Similarly evident is the tenacious view that any change in language reflects a general decline of morals and standards.[29] On this premise, EE must needs appear as a further step towards the impending downfall of society as a whole…

Seemingly immune to all efforts to eradicate them, such prejudices have always been a nuisance for anyone doing linguistic research (although, admittedly, some studies have doubtless thrived on them). Sometimes, unfortunately, they are propagated even by the highest authorities: In 1994, the then Tory Minister of Education, Gillian Shephard, „launched into a denunciation of EE, condemning it as slovenly, mumbling, bastardized Cockney. She claimed that teachers have a duty to do their utmost to eradicate it." (Wells 1997) There can be no doubt that Mrs Shephard misinterpreted the term in a way similar to the above-mentioned voices of the general public and thus contributed to an increasingly confused image of EE.[30]

[27] See, for example, Preston (1998b).
[28] For a detailed analysis of such stereotypes, see Mugglestone (1995).
[29] See, for example, Aitchison (1991), esp. chapter 15. For a highly readable discussion of such (and similar) misconceptions about language, see Bauer and Trudgill (1998).

The situation is further complicated by the name of the phenomenon itself. Although the label is „now well enough established not to be worth battling against“ (Battarbee 1996), it has been criticised frequently because it is just as imprecise as the entire concept. Why do we have to take for granted that the estuary in question is that of the River Thames? (Someone from Bristol or from Kingston-upon-Hull might have a rather different view, it might be supposed.) According to Coggle (1993:23), the term „is an acknowledgement that the first speakers of this variety of language were not restricted to London, but included the inhabitants of North Kent and South Essex.“ However, in his 1984 article already, Rosewarne claims that „it seems to be the most influential accent in the south-east.“ Strictly speaking, the term was already out of date at the time of its coinage. For similar reasons, Maidment (1994) rejects the term entirely, pointing out that „it is not only spoken on or near the Thames estuary. There is no real evidence that it even originated there.“

In the early 1990s, McArthur – who also criticised the term for its geographical vagueness („like calling usage in and around San Francisco Bay Area English“ (McArthur 1994:63)) – proposed the term ‘New London Voice’ to describe the same phenomenon:

> (1) New: Although the accent cluster in question has been evolving for some time, public perception has only recently caught up as NLV speakers have become increasingly prominent in the media. It is therefore new in terms of impact and news value.
> (2) London: Although the cluster is not confined to the metropolis, its focus is London, as Rosewarne concedes[31] – not the adjacent counties, and certainly not the Thames Estuary (which, metonymy apart, is uninhabited).
> (3) Voice: I chose this term because of a distinctive voice quality related to how the mouth is held: much slacker than traditional tight, ‘clipped’ RP.
>
> (McArthur 1994:63)

Points (1) and (2) certainly apply to EE as well, while any comment on the articulatory setting of NLV/EE as in (3) must needs appear impressionistic (see also chapter 2.2.3.). McArthur’s ‘New London Voice’ has indeed achieved some degree of prominence (see chapter 6.3), but if people intend to refer to the phenomenon in question, they are more likely to use ‘Estuary English’.

[30] Needless to say, Shephard’s calls remained unheard: „To cheers at the Tory party conference in 1994, Mrs Shephard denounced „Estuary English“ and pledged to restore the standard of spoken and written language. Nothing happened until next year’s conference […].“ (Charter 1996)

[31] This quote is actually a reply to Rosewarne’s criticism of NLV on the grounds that „the accent variety in question is not New, nor is it confined to London and Voice is an inappropriate word to describe an accent.“ (Rosewarne 1994a:7)

Wells (1994c) offers a couple of other terms:

> I would really prefer to call this variety simply **London English**, although obviously its ambit is much wider than the GLC area, covering at least most of the urban south-east. Other names we could refer to it by might include General London (GL), McArthur's New London Voice, and Tebbitt-Livingstone-speak.[32]

Arguably, the last suggestion is meant to be tongue-in-cheek, since you cannot expect a variety of speech to be modelled on the utterances of two individuals only. As for the other three, they all focus on London which – despite its being rather too specific geographically – is justifiable because it is less ambiguous than 'estuary'. However, any such close association with London is likely to cause any non-south(-east)erner to have serious reservations – to say the least – about ever accepting this variety as 'the new standard English'. As a matter of fact, even the superficially less specific 'Estuary English' has already been regarded as „yet another (if relatively trivial) example of the regional arrogance of the SouthEast within the UK." (Battarbee 1996)

Unwittingly, this view is supported by John R. Stilgoe's book: *Shallow Water Dictionary: A Grounding in Estuary English* (1994) which – cynics may be sneering – is in no way linked to the topic of this paper since it explores (quoting the blurb) „the vernacular language of America's nearly extinct shallow-water regions…". Wells' laconic comment: „A blow for Rosewarne's London-centred view of the universe."[33]

In any case, the name remains unsatisfactory and there is no prospect of a valid alternative: „As with the equally unsatisfactory term 'Received Pronunciation', we are forced to go along." (Wells 1994c)

For want of a workable definition, it seems necessary to summarise what have been regarded as the salient features of EE. Most of them are matters of pronunciation, but, as some commentators suggest that EE is more than just an accent, lexical, grammatical and syntactical features will be taken into account as well. Finally, a brief glance at the suprasegmental features of EE (to the extent that comments on this subject are already

[32] 'General London', of course, alludes to 'General American' (GenAm), while 'Tebbitt-Livingstone-speak' refers to Lord Tebbitt (a former Tory Minister in the Thatcher era) and 'Red' Ken Livingstone (former *Leader of the GLC* and currently a candidate for the post of Mayor of London). Both have repeatedly been singled out as prominent EE-speakers (e.g. Rosewarne 1994a:3, Ezard 1993). Remarkably enough, Jenkins (1999) writes that Livingstone speaks neither Cockney nor Estuary: „[His voice] has a slightly nasal Midlands twang, as of pre-Irish northwest London. Indeed if I were Shaw's Professor Higgins I would place Mr Livingstone as white-collar-London-and-Birmingham-Railway." – further proof of the many different perceptions of EE!

[33] See Wells' Homepage on EE: <http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/estuary/home.htm>

available, of course) will conclude the discussion – a tribute to the increasing acknowledgement of intonation patterns as essential factors in the perception of speech varieties.

The writings of the 'pioneers' of EE, Rosewarne and Coggle, will form the basis of the following compilation. Further observations by various other commentators (especially by Wells) will be included whenever deemed appropriate to give a fuller and more balanced view on the relevant features. As for the phonological analysis, the subject seems to require that Cockney (and, to a lesser extent, RP, as it will be noticed) be used as a reference system. Whenever possible, a particular emphasis will be given to the question of the boundaries between EE and Cockney and between EE and RP, respectively – and thus on the practical value of the individual features as markers of EE.

2.2. The Salient Features of EE

2.2.1. Consonantal Features

T-Glottalling

In almost all writings on EE, the switch from the alveolar to a glottal articulation of /t/ is given as one of the most characteristic features of the 'new' variety.[34] T-glottalling[35] itself is, of course, a well-known phenomenon:

> T-glottalling (in certain phonetic environments) arguably shares with H-dropping the distinction of being one of the two most heavily stigmatised features of BrE pronunciation. (Milroy, Milroy and Hartley 1994:4)

Traditionally, this kind of pronunciation has been held as a shibboleth for the proverbial Cockney speaker, who uses a glottal stop [ʔ] for /t/ in nearly all environments except syllable initial positions. In (mainstream) RP, on the other hand, T-glottalling is accepted – if at all – only in word or morpheme final positions before a consonant (*quite good, quite likely*) or within a word before an obstruent or a nasal (*football, chutney)*.[36] The EE pronunciation would then be somewhere in between:

> […] an Estuary English speaker uses fewer glottal stops for /t/ or /d/ than a „London" speaker, but more than an R.P. speaker. (Rosewarne 1994a:5)

Therefore, an EE speaker would (perhaps variably) use a glottal stop within a word when followed by any consonant other than /r/ and preceded by a vowel (*Gatwick*), but also after /n/ (*gently*) or /l/ (*Cheltenham*)[37]. Moreover, the glottal stop is also accepted in nearly all word-final environments, whether before a vowel (*pick it up, ticket office*) or in absolute final position (*let's star**t***).[38] Intervocalic T-glottalling, however, is still perceived to be a Cockney feature and therefore remains excluded from EE:

> […] it is not yet considered respectable to exchange the *t* for a glottal stop between vowels and say: wa'er, bu'er, hospi'al.[39] (Coggle 1993:41)

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[34] Cruttenden, in his 1994 edition of *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*, includes P- and K-glottalling as well: „Particularly characteristic of this type of Regional RP [i.e. EE] are the replacement of [p,t,k] by [ʔ] before a consonant […] and the use of [ʊ] in place of [ɬ]." (Cruttenden 1994:86) To my knowledge, he is the only one to do so.

[35] In this context, we are dealing only with the complete replacement of /t/ by the glottal stop /ʔ/. Other types of glottalisation, such as the insertion of a glottal stop before final fortis plosives /p, t, k/ and also before the affricate /tʃ/ (known as 'preglottalisation' or 'glottal reinforcement') or the distinct glottalisation phenomenon that Wells (1982:374) has observed in the Newcastle area (and described as [pˀ, tˀ, kˀ]) have not yet appeared in discussions about EE. For further comments on these particular variants, see Gimson (1989:169f.) and Milroy, Milroy and Hartley (1994).

[36] cf. Wells (1982:261).

[37] As will be shown in the next chapter, /t/ is rarely preceded in EE (and Cockney) by /l/, because /l/ in preconsonantal positions is usually replaced by a vowel of an /o/- or /ʊ/-quality.

[38] As in all other accents, it is impossible in EE to use a glottal stop in absolute final positions when /t/ is preceded by an obstruent: so *best* */besʔ/ (cf. Maidment 1994).

[39] Since Coggle's *Do you Speak Estuary?* is aimed at a non-linguists' audience, he does not use any phonetic symbols throughout the whole book. The glottal stop [ʔ] is therefore indicated by the apostrophe; a method that can be observed frequently, e.g. in cartoons (cf. Crystal 1995:329).

One detail calls for clarification: In both his 1984 and 1994(a) articles, Rosewarne claims that /d/ is also subject to the process of glottalisation. Maidment (1994) comments:

> This, I think, is simply an error […]. The only speakers of British English that I have ever heard who replace [d] with [ʔ] come from Yorkshire. This is a consequence of what is sometimes known as Yorkshire Assimilation[40] which changes voiced plosives to their voiceless counterparts at the end of word before a word beginning with a voiceless consonant. […] However, no-one has claimed (as far as I know) there is any connection between EE and the Yorkshire accent.

In order to be fair to Rosewarne, Maidment (1994) also mentions the possibility of [d] being replaced by [ʔ] in the collocation *had to*, a phrase which „many speakers of many British accents" pronounce [hæʔ tuː]. Nevertheless, it remains highly unclear what Rosewarne had in mind.

Things get equally problematic if one wants to uphold the notion of T-glottalling being one of the defining characteristics of EE. The glottal stop is neither a new feature nor is it confined to London and the Home Counties. As Milroy, Milroy and Hartley (1994:3) observe, „the first reports of a 'glottal catch' are from Western Scotland in the 1860s, and by the early 1900s it had been noted also in northern England, the Midlands, London and Kent."[41] In Trudgill's 1974 Norwich study, it is one of the central phonological variables:

> It is a well-known fact that, in many varieties of English, /t/ is realised as a glottal stop in items like *better* and *bet*, particularly but by no means exclusively in urban areas. (Trudgill 1974a:80)

And in his 1977 Glasgow study, Macaulay writes:

> Of all features of Glasgow speech the most notorious is the glottal stop, and it was the feature most frequently singled out by teachers as characteristic of a Glasgow accent. […] (Macaulay 1977:45)

Wells (1982:261) summarises that glottalling for /t/ can be observed „[i]n the local accents of London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, in many rural accents of the south of England and East Anglia, and increasingly in urban accents everywhere in England […]". Today, according to Milroy, Milroy and Hartley (1994:5),

> [t]he spread of the glottal stop is so rapid that it is now widely perceived as a stereotype of urban British speech, and […] it is evident in the casual speech of middle and upper class people, both male and female. It has also spread into the 'prestige' accent RP […].

This is probably the essential point of both Rosewarne's and Coggle's argumentation. To do justice to them, neither of them claims to have discovered a previously unknown

[40] cf. Wells (1982:366f.).

[41] The authors even argue that „in some form glottalisation may have been present in 17th-century Scots before the Ulster plantations" (Milroy, Milroy and Hartley 1994:3). Tracing back the history of the glottal stop, however, must

feature of British speech. Their intention was, rather, to highlight the glottal stop as an example of a 'change from below'[42] as it is characteristic of EE. This phenomenon – the spreading upwards of low status (London) features – is described by Wells (1994a) under the heading *The Cockneyfication of RP*. An essential part of this process is the steadily growing acceptance of glottalised /t/, the formerly stigmatised variable:

> Nevertheless, the increased use of glottal stops within RP may reasonably be attributed to influence from Cockney and other working-class urban speech. What started as a vulgarism is becoming respectable. (Wells 1994a)

Since the use of the glottal stop keeps spreading into various (geographical and social) regions where it has not been found before, it is highly difficult to view it as a defining feature of EE. However, as the degrees of acceptability of its use in different environments are relatively clear, it serves quite well as an illustration of the basic idea of EE as a continuum between RP and Cockney.[43]

L-Vocalisation

A similar change in progress can be observed in the case of L-vocalisation. In EE, the 'dark' allophone of /l/ (i.e. /ɫ/ in preconsonantal/final environments) becomes a vowel of the [o] or [ʊ] type:[44]

> An example of [the general pattern of EE] is the use of *w* where RP uses *l* in the final position or in a final consonant cluster. An "Estuary English" speaker might use an articulation like a *w* instead of the RP *l* as many as four times in the utterance: 'Bill will build the wall.' (Rosewarne 1984)

Both Rosewarne and Coggle (1993:31) use <w> to symbolise this sound, as, for example, in the sentence: „I'uw give you a beuw, Pauw." (*I'll give you a bell, Paul.*)[45] According to Rosewarne, the result of this phenomenon is a set of new homophones which are neither part of RP nor of 'popular London speech' (i.e., Cockney):

> An instance of this [homophony] is an Estuary speaker's utterance I noted down: "Fowty books have been supplied in error which need to be replaced". The speaker's intended message was that *faulty* books had been supplied by mistake, but the native-speaker listener understood that *forty* books had been wrongly delivered. This misunderstanding would have been unlikely had the message been given by an R.P. or a 'popular' London speaker. In Estuary English *awful* and *all full* could be

always remain in the realm of speculation, because „we are disadvantaged by the fact that there is no alphabetic letter for the glottal" (ibid.).

[42] cf. Milroy, Milroy and Hartley (1994:5).

[43] See also Altendorf (1999).

[44] Crystal (1995:327) mentions only the [u]-quality of this sound, Wells (1994a) mentions both [o] and [ʊ]. The most detailed description is the one by Gimson (1989:204f.; cf. below).

[45] As the example shows, it is sometimes necessary to insert an <u> before the <w> as well, in particular after consonants, because **botw* and **gentw*, for example, would not make much sense (Coggle (1993:46), too, gives *bo'uw* for the first item). In the light of such inconsistency, Wells' (1998c) phonetic transcription using [o] seems to be more to the point: *milk bottle* ['mɪok ˌbɒto], *gentle* ['dʒento].

> confusable in rapid speech, as in the possible utterance: "I'm afraid our single rooms are awfuw.". (Rosewarne 1994a:5)

Essentially, though, L-vocalisation is regarded as a 'typical' Cockney feature and has commonly been associated with a different kind of homophony affecting preceding vowels, as Gimson (1989:204f.) explains:

> In some speech, notably that of Cockney, the tongue-tip contact for [ɬ] is omitted, this allophone of /l/ being realized as a vowel (vocoid) in the region of [ö] with weak lip-rounding or as [ɤ] with neutral or weakly spread lips, thus *sell* [sɛö] or [sɛɤ], *fall* [fɔö] or [fɔɤ], *table* ['tæɪbö] or ['tæɪbɤ]. In such speech, the lowering of /iː/ and /uː/ before [ö] is so marked that *meal*, *mill*, and *pool*, *pull*, may become homophonous or distinguished merely by the length of central syllabic vowel element, i.e. [mɪˑö] *v.* [mɪö], [pʊˑö] *v.* [pʊö]; other confusions are likely, e.g. *rail* (RP [reɪɬ], Cockney [ræö]) and *row* (RP [rɑʊ], Cockney [ræö]), *dole* (RP [dəʊɬ], Cockney [dɒö]) and *doll* (RP [dɒɬ], Cockney [dɒö]).

According to Maidment (1994), such cases of vowel neutralisation may serve as a useful means to distinguish between EE and Cockney speakers:

> The effect that [o] has on preceding vowel qualities and on the loss of contrast between vowels may be restricted in EE. The neutralisations which Cockney exhibits before an [o] are much more extensive, it is claimed.[46]

Unfortunately, Maidment does not reveal the basis of this assumption. One might, however, establish a further contrast between Cockney and EE: Wells (1994a) notes that Cockney speakers would use L-vocalisation „across certain word boundaries where RP would usually have the 'clear' allophone, as *for example if*…". It is very likely that EE speakers would also refrain from using vocalised /l/ in this particular context, since this seems to be a feature of the very Cockney end of the continuum.

As for the other end of the scale, it could be argued that RP does not allow any L-vocalisation at all. Unfortunately – at least with regard to a definition of EE –, this is not the case. Gimson (1989:205) writes:

> Realizations of syllabic [ɬ] as a vowel are not, however, confined to Cockney; many RP speakers will uses [ö] for [ɬ] in words such as *beautiful*, *careful*, *people*, *table*, etc.,

[46] Maidment (1994) gives the following examples:

- EE vowel neutralisations before [o]: uː / ʊ (*fool* = *full* = [fʊo], but *foolish* not = *fullish*)
  iː / ɪə (*real* = *reel* = [rɪo], but *fear* not = *fee*)
- Cockney vowel neutralisations probably not part of EE:
  iː / ɪ (*feel* = *fill* = [fɪo])
  e / ɜː (*weld* = *world* = [weod])
  ɒ / əʊ (*doll* = *dole* = [dɒo])
  uː / ʊ / ɔː (*pool* = *pull* = *Paul* = [pɔo])
  eɪ / æ (*veil* = *Val* = [væo])
  aɪ / ɑː (*dial* = *Dahl* = [dɑo])

> i.e. especially when a consonant involving a labial articulation precedes; they will, moreover, not recognize such vocalic allophone as unusual when they hear it.[47]

After other consonants, especially alveolar plosives, an RP speaker will usually avoid L-vocalisation (*little, middle*) because of its being „a childish pronunciation" (Gimson 1989:205). Perhaps this is where a speaker would enter the territory of EE, although RP seems to be increasingly receptive to L-vocalisation, as the following statement by Wells (1994a) indicates:

> I am beginning to wonder whether my earlier judgment (Wells 1982: 295) that "on the whole ... L Vocalization must be considered only Near-RP or non-RP" is now in need of revision.

He may be excused, though, because in the same volume he already predicted (in what today could well be found in a description of EE):

> From its putative origins in the local accent of London and the surrounding counties, L Vocalization is now beginning to seep into RP. It seems likely that it will become entirely standard in English over the course of the next century. (Wells 1982:259)

As in the case of the glottal stop, it is nearly impossible to establish any hard-and-fast rules for L-vocalisation in EE. Again, the EE speakers find themselves in some middle ground between Cockney and RP; they would use vocalised /l/ more often and in a greater number of environments than an RP speaker, but less frequently than a Cockney speaker.

The Pronunciation of Yod /j/ – Yod Coalescence and Yod Dropping

The merging of an alveolar plosive /t, d/ with the following palatal semi-vowel /j/ to a postalveolar affricate /tʃ, dʒ/ is usually called yod coalescence. RP tends to confine it to unstressed environments: *picture* ['pɪktʃə], *soldier* ['səʊldʒə], and – as a more recent development – also *constitute* ['kɒnstɪtʃu:t], *gradual* ['grædʒuəl] and *statue* ['stætʃu:].[48] Moreover, yod coalescence is accepted in some cross-word-boundary sequences (usually involving *you* or *your,* e.g. *would you mind* ['wʊdʒu 'maɪnd], *did you* ['dɪdʒu], *what you want* ['wɒtʃu 'wɒnt][49]).

[47] It seems that L-vocalisation does not bear a stigma to the extent of, let us say, the glottal stop: Gimson (1989:206), for example, explicitly advises foreign learners of English to practice [ɬ] by pronouncing a vowel of the [o] type in words where a labial consonant precedes [ɬ], thus *bubble* ['bʌbo], *people* ['pi:po], *awful* ['ɔ:fo].

[48] cf. Maidment (1994) and Wells (1994a).

[49] If a /t/ is involved, yod coalescence faces a rival in glottalling (cf. chapter 2.2.1.), „in the course of time one development or the other must presumably win out." (Wells 1994a)

In EE, the use of yod coalescence is extended to stressed syllables, thus: *Tuesday* [ˈtʃuːzdeɪ], *tune* [tʃuːn], *student* [ˈstʃuːdənʔ], and *reduce* [rɪˈdʒuːs][50], *duke* [dʒuːk]. Rosewarne (1994a:4f.) concludes:

> Though coalescence to /tʃ/ is characteristic also of informal allegro RP speech, it is the general form in EE. […] The same development is likely with the currently stigmatised /dj/ to /dʒ/ […].

Of course, this extended use of yod coalescence is only relevant in cases where the initial /tj/ or /dj/ is followed by an /u/ sound. Before other vowels, initial /t/ tends to become affricated in EE (cf. p. 23).

To draw a borderline to Cockney seems to be more complicated, because in popular London speech, yod coalescence faces a strong competitor in yod dropping. Rosewarne uses this phenomenon to make a distinction between EE and Cockney:

> Similarly the proverbial "Cockney" would be unlikely to pronounce the phonetic /j/ which is found in RP after the first consonant in such words as "news" or "tune". (Rosewarne 1984)
> To drop the *yod* in these words and avoid coalescence to /tʃ/ typifies Cockney rather than EE, as in /tuːb/ for *tube*. (Rosewarne 1994b:4)

Wells' observations of Cockney, however, give a different picture: In 1982, he wrote that „[…] Yod Coalescence has displaced Yod Dropping as the broad-Cockney norm" (Wells 1982:331) and in 1998, he still claimed that „EE **agrees** with Cockney […] in having (perhaps variably) yod coalescence in stressed syllables." (Wells 1998c) Coggle supports this view:

> It seems, however, that even Cockneys, let alone Estuary English speakers, have recognised Yod-dropping as 'undesirable' and have therefore turned fairly solidly to using Yod – in certain words even more firmly than RP speakers. In combination with *t* or *st* this tends to change *ty* and *sty* into *tsh* and *stsh*. (Coggle 1993:51)

In Cockney speech, there seems to be a battle between yod coalescence and yod dropping in these environments, with yod coalescence as the likely winner. Consequently, Rosewarne's idea of a boundary between Cockney and EE is no longer valid.

In other environments, however, it is clearly yod dropping that seems to be gaining ground in British speech, particularly after /l/ and /s/:

> The process of shedding /j/s is now established in RP. Many speakers of current General RP do not pronounce a /j/ after the *l* of "absolute", "lute", "revolution", or "salute". They would say "time off in loo" rather than "time off in lieu". For many speakers "lieu" and "loo" are now homophones. Similarly it is common not to pronounce the /j/ after the /s/ of "assume", "consume", "presume", "pursuit" or "suit(able)". It could be argued that these are now the established forms of current General RP and that those who pronounce the /j/s in these environments are

[50] cf. also Rosewarne's claim of long /iː/ in *reduce* (cf. chapter 2.2.2.).

> what Professor Gimson would term "Conservative RP speakers".[51] (Rosewarne 1984)

If Rosewarne includes *presume* among his examples, he implies that this process affects /z/ in the same way. According to Gimson, however, the dropping of yod is more widespread after /l/ and /s/ than after /z/ (and /θ/, as in *enthusiasm* [ɪnˈθuːziæzəm]):

> […] /uː/ grows increasingly common in such words[52] being the more common after /l/ and /s/ in a stressed syllable whilst /juː/ remains predominant after /θ, z/. (Gimson 1989:214)

It is likely, though, that all these instances of yod dropping could be heard from an EE speaker. On the other hand, the EE dropping of yod certainly does not extend as far as in East Anglia where nearly every /j/ in a postconsonantal environment is dropped (cf. Wells 1982:207):

> There is no indication, however, that the yods in such words as *beauty, pure* and *few, view* are likely to disappear from EE speech. (Rosewarne 1994b:4)

Thus, yod dropping after labials is excluded from EE. The same is probably true for nasals, although neither Rosewarne nor Coggle refer to it explicitly.

It could be argued that the increasing use of yod dropping after some alveolars (especially /s/ and /l/) was due to the influence of American pronunciation. This, however, would be jumping to conclusions because there is no convincing evidence that BrE as a whole is moving towards GenAm. (Wells, for example, observed a tendency in younger people to say ‘zebbra’ for *zebra*, while Americans prefer ‘zeebra’.[53] See also the paragraphs on ‘Americanisms’ in chapter 2.2.3.)

The Mystery of /r/

Both Rosewarne and Coggle claim to have observed a pronunciation of /r/ that is explicitly confined to and therefore characteristic of EE. Rosewarne writes:

> The Estuary English /r/ is a feature which has not received attention since I first reported it in 1984. This /r/ is to be found neither in R.P. nor "London" pronunciation. It can sound somewhat similar to a general American /r/, but it does not have retroflection. For the /r/ of General RP, the tip of the tongue is held close to the rear part of the upper teeth ridge and the central part of the tongue is lowered. My own observations suggest that in the typical "Estuary" realization of /r/, the tip of the tongue is lowered and the central part raised to a position close to, but not touching, the soft palate. Uttered in clusters by a radio disc-jockey: "That

[51] Or, perhaps, ‘hypercorrect’ Cockney speakers – at least, this is what Coggle had in mind when writing „in certain words even more firmly than RP speakers“ (cf. Coggle 1993:51, quoted above).
[52] Gimson’s (1989:214) examples: *absolute(ly), lute, salute, revolution, enthusiasm, pursuit, assume, suit, suet, suitable, superstition, supermarket, consume, presume*.
[53] cf. Wells (1998b).

> song's recently been rerecorded and will be rereleased very, very soon", the effect is very different from R.P. The speech of the English comedians Paul Merton and Tony Slattery contain clear examples of the Estuary r. (Rosewarne 1994a:5f.)

Coggle, on the other hand, seems to have a slightly different impression of this /r/:[54]

> It seems that the *r* is somewhat closer in pronunciation to the American *r* than it is in RP. In certain Estuary English speakers the *r* goes even further away from RP and is so close to a *w* that it sounds like a speech defect. (It may indeed actually be a speech defect in some instances, but the question then arises as to why this 'funny *r*' is not similarly widespread amongst RP speakers and speakers of other varieties of English.) The nature of the Estuary English *r* is clearly at least in part responsible. Media personalities Jonathan Ross, Derek Jameson and David Bellamy all provide clear examples of this phenomenon.
> For some speakers, then, both the *r* and the *l* tend to take on a w-quality. (Coggle 1993:48)

Only Maidment (1994) offers a detailed analysis of Rosewarne's and Coggle's claims. He states that he „find[s] it difficult to see what Rosewarne and Coggle are getting at". First, this is his (sceptical) reply to Coggle:

> Coggle seems to think that the usual target for EE /r/ is a labiodental approximant. I say seems to think, though he does not actually say so, because he says that EE /r/ sounds like [w] and also lists a number of celebrities: Jonathan Ross, David Bellamy, Derek Jameson, as users of this /r/ variety. At least the first two of these definitely use a labiodental. But, a labiodental approximant is well-known in speakers of all accents as a minor defect. It really is not clear if Coggle is claiming that the large majority of current EE speakers use it. If so, I simply think he is wrong. (Maidment 1994)

And the one to Rosewarne:

> Rosewarne's account of EE /r/ is equally puzzling. [… It] seems to suggest a velar approximant articulation. This again is a well-known "deviant" production of /r/ in speakers of many accents. Rosewarne gives examples of EE-speaking celebrities who use this articulation. At least one of these, Paul Merton the comedian, does not, in my experience, use a velar approximant articulation for /r/. (Maidment 1994)

Thus – according to Maidment – Rosewarne observed a velar articulation of /r/ while Coggle heard a labio-dental one. In any case, the evidence presented by both Rosewarne and Coggle is often rather impressionistic, as neither radio disc-jockeys nor public personalities are *per se* representative of the population.

The replacement of /r/ by some kind of /w/ sound (as allegedly implied by Rosewarne and Coggle) used to be a „fashionable affectation" in England about 200 years ago (Gimson 1989:209, cf. also Crystal 1995:245). In modern British speech, however, it is mainly regarded as a minor speech impediment:

[54] Coggle (1993:48) writes: „Some people (including David Rosewarne, the coiner of the term 'Estuary English') have noted that the pronunciation of *r* has a special quality in Estuary English." Unfortunately, he does not explain who these people are. In the bibliography, he just lists Rosewarne's initial article in the TES and five other newspaper articles which examine Estuary English in greater or lesser detail (one of them his own).

> In some extreme cases, lip-rounding is accompanied by no articulation of the forward part of the tongue, so that /r/ is replaced by /w/ and homophones of the type *wed*, *red* are produced. Such a pronunciation […] is now heard only amongst children who have not yet acquired [ɹ], or as a defective substitution for [ɹ]. (Gimson 1989:209)

Still, it seems more appropriate to accept Maidment's suggestion that this '*w*-quality' mentioned by Coggle is actually supposed to represent a labio-dental approximant [ʋ], a sound which has commonly been excluded from the regular (i.e. RP) inventory of the English consonants. Consequently, Parsons (1998:20) argues that the use of [ʋ] for /r/ might be merely some kind of mannerism,[55] while for Gimson (1989:209), it is another sign of „defective speech".

However, „[…] when a speech defect spreads to a majority of the population it is clearly no longer to be regarded as such." (Trudgill 1988:40) And indeed, there seems to be evidence of a very recent spread of the use of labio-dental /r/:[56] In his 1983 Norwich study,[57] Trudgill observed that „the younger generation has changed over to employing a labio-dental approximant [ʋ]" (Trudgill 1988:40). He further predicted that

> […] this pronunciation will be the norm or at least the majority pronunciation [in Norwich] within the next few decades. Observations suggest, incidentally, that this will be true of very many other varieties of (at least) southern EngE also. (Trudgill 1988:40f.)

This view seems to have been confirmed by recent findings: Hughes and Trudgill (1996:61) consider [ʋ] to be a feature frequently heard from „younger speakers in the south" and Williams and Kerswill (1999) even observe that „labio-dental [ʋ] is common among children and young adults" in Hull, i.e. far beyond the supposed EE territory. In this sense, the status of this feature as a distinct marker of EE is highly questionable, as it rather seems to constitute a so-called 'youth norm'[58] with a clearly supra-regional appeal.

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[55] „Es handelt sich um ein gut dokumentiertes Merkmal, das z.B. aus der Sprache bekannter Politiker wie Aneurin Bevan und Roy Jenkins bekannt ist, wie auch von fiktiven Charakteren wie Hermione in D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*. Wells (1980:303) notiert etwas Ähnliches als charakteristisches Merkmal in der Sprache von Londoner Juden: "a dark [ʋ]"." (Parsons 1998:29) See also Honey (1989:140f.): „This way of pronouncing *r* is not restricted to any social class; it is more often a personal idiosycrasy [sic], though its prevalence among some members of the upper classes has a long history."

[56] cf. Kerswill and Williams (2000a).

[57] A follow-up to Trudgill (1974) in order to „contrast changes in apparent time, as portrayed in Trudgill (1974), with changes in real time" (Trudgill 1988:34).

[58] cf. Williams and Kerswill (1999); also chapters 2.2.3. and 2.4.

Other Consonantal Features of EE

It has been shown (cf. above) that initial /t/ (or rather /tj/) before a stressed /uː/ coalesces to /tʃ/ in EE. Before other vowels, however (and where there is no /j/ sound in between), some speakers produce an affricated /t/ that both Rosewarne and Coggle render as /ts/. This is a well-known feature of southern speech:

> Affrication of plosives, especially of the alveolars, is particularly characteristic of popular London speech. (Gimson 1989:160)
> […] it should be noted that /t, d/ are especially liable to affrication (particularly in the south of England) and even replacement by the equivalent fricative in weakly accented situations, e.g. *time* [tˢaim], *important* [ɪmˈpɔːtˢənt]. (Gimson 1989:164)

This „breathy *t*", as Coggle (1993:43) calls it, as in [tsiː] for *tea*, [tsɒp] for *top* or [tseo] for *tell* is „more a feature of Cockney than of EE" (Rosewarne 1994b:4). If it occurs in inter-vocalic position ([ˈbʌtsə] for *butter*), however, it can be used as a marker of EE because in this case, „a Cockney speaker would use a glottal stop" (Coggle 1993:43).[59] In general, though, this „breathy *t*" is used only by „a minority of EE-speakers" (Rosewarne 1990b:4) and therefore, it is not applicable as a characteristic feature of EE.

Rosewarne further mentions an informant in whose speech „initial /t/ followed by the semi-vowel /w/, is rendered as /tʃw/, as in /tʃwentiː/[60] for *twenty*." (Rosewarne 1994b:4) Given the closeness in quality of /w/ to /uː/ (or [ʊ])[61], the initial /tw-/ sequence in *twenty* is somewhat similar to the initial /tjuː-/in *Tuesday* or *Tuna* which might lead to the insertion of the /ʃ/ sound. However, this articulation might also be some kind of speech impediment – Rosewarne (1994b:4) refers to „one informant" only.

A similar case is the pronunciation of /st/ „in initial and postvocalic medial (but not in final) position" (Rosewarne 1994b:4) as /ʃt/ by a minority of EE-speakers (/ˈʃtaɪʃən/ for *station* and /ˈeʃtʃueəriː/ for *estuary*)[62]. This feature has not been commented on elsewhere, and it might well be that Rosewarne misinterpreted the more retracted pronunciation of /s/ of some speakers – as it is known from foreign speakers of English, in particular Spaniards and Greeks, who tend to confuse /s/ and /ʃ/[63] – as a defining phonetic feature of EE. Interestingly – or, perhaps, inconsistently – enough, in his 1996 essay

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[59] cf. Wells (1982:325), quoting Sivertsen (1960:119): „the alveolar stop, at least when it is strongly affricated in [the environment ˈV_V], is looked upon as being too "posh" for a Cockney to use: [ˈbetˢə] *better* is "posh", [ˈbeʈə] is normal, and [ˈbeʔə] is "rough"."

[60] It has to be noted that, unlike Wells, Rosewarne does not mention nt-reduction (i.e. /ˈtweni/) at all (see below).

[61] cf. Gimson (1989:217).

[62] The given examples are Rosewarne's (1994b:4). The diphthong used in *station* and the final long /iː/ in *estuary* are obviously intended to indicate Cockney/EE speech (cf. chapter 2.2.2.), but the second /e/ in /ˈeʃtʃueəriː/ is probably simply a mistake.

[63] cf. Gimson (1989:189).

Rosewarne gives /estʃuːɑirəiː/ as the EE transcription of *estuary* and /eʃtʃuːaɪrəɪ/ for the Cockney one, while his attempt to use ordinary script gives „eshtuaree“ for both. (Rosewarne 1996:17)

There is a number of well-familiar consonantal Cockney features which are said to have become part of EE as well, such as the „*-think* syndrome“ (Coggle 1993:50), i.e. the pronunciation of *something, anything, nothing* as /ˈsʌmθɪŋk/, /ˈeniθɪŋk/, /ˈnʌθɪŋk/.[64] Wells (1994b), too, mentions this feature as part of EE, but Coggle limits its use to the very Cockney end of the EE continuum: „Needless to say, [the *-think* feature] disappears a bit further along the spectrum.“ (Coggle 1993:51)

Secondly, Wells (1994b) also lists the stylistic fluctuation of the participle/gerund ending *-ing* between /ɪn/ and /ɪŋ/ among the features of EE, thus /ˈrʌnɪn/ or /ˈrʌnɪŋ/ for *running*. Gimson (1989:201) regards this as a feature of popular London speech and its transfer from Cockney to EE seems to be Wells' own interpretation, since both Rosewarne and Coggle do not mention it in their writings at all.

There appears to be unanimity, however, as to which features of Cockney have *not* (yet?) spread into EE, the most obvious of which being H-dropping, of course. The longtime stigmatisation of this feature has been commented on extensively.[65] Nevertheless, it remains as strong a shibboleth of 'uneducatedness' as ever:

> […] candidates scoring the highest grades in the GCSE English exams of 1993 could, for instance, still be accused of 'uneducatedness' if they dropped their [h]s, in ways which are precisely parallel to many of the attitudes to accent expressed in the context of the nineteenth century. (Mugglestone 1995:329f., referring to a letter to the *Guardian* newspaper)

Even EE speakers at the very Cockney end of the continuum would carefully avoid H-dropping. This eagerness often results in hypercorrect forms, i.e. the use of initial /h/ when unnecessary:

> […] many Estuary speakers, particularly younger people, call the letter *h* by the name of 'haitch' in the perhaps not misguided view that the name ought to give some hint of the letter it describes. (Coggle 1993:54)

However, Coggle does not entirely rule out the possibility of finding the occasional dropped /h/ in EE, as his wording suggests:

[64] cf. Gimson (1989:200).
[65] See, for example, Mugglestone (1995) or Milroy and Milroy (1985).

> Like other stigmatised features, the dropped *h* is found at the Cockney end of the Estuary spectrum, but does not penetrate very far along. (Coggle 1993:54)

In general, though, the possibility of dropped /h/ becoming an inconspicuous feature of English pronunciation remains utopian, and therefore, it will essentially remain within the domain of Cockney.

In the case of TH-fronting, i.e. the replacement of *th* /θ/ and /ð/ by /f/ and /v/, respectively (/fɪŋk for *think* and /ˈfɑːvə/ for *father*), the situation seems to be similar at first sight:

> *Fink* and *fahver*, being low in the acceptability hierarchy, are generally not adopted by Estuary speakers with social aspirations. (Coggle 1993:49)[66]

Again, the cautious phrasing of this statement leaves open the possibility of TH-fronting gradually gaining ground in British pronunciation, and the following observations by Coggle – covering a time-span of about five years – suggest that this feature is on the advance indeed:

> I have, for instance, not yet encountered these features [i.e. TH-fronting] in my students despite the current upsurge in the popularity of Estuary English at university. (Coggle 1993:49)
>
> ***
>
> For instance, the "ba:f" for "bath" and "fa:ver" for "father" pronunciation is now fairly widespread amongst primary school children in the SE (from Canterbury to Milton Keynes). I first encountered these features amongst my students 4 years ago (one example only). This year I have heard several students using them. (Coggle 1998)

There is also evidence that this feature is spreading well beyond the south-east:

> [TH-fronting] was formerly confined to London speech, but now covers the whole of the Home Counties and is spreading so fast that younger speakers as far apart as Exeter, Manchester, Sheffield and Norwich have begun adopting this pronunciation in the 1980s. (Trudgill 1990:76)

On the social level, however, TH-fronting still seems to be mainly a preserve of working-class speakers (cf. Altendorf 1999), and its exclusion from EE[67] is therefore justifiable. Nevertheless, the long-term future of this feature deserves to be watched, as it also seems to be one of the currently fashionable 'youth norms'.[68]

Lastly, intrusive /r/. Both RP and Cockney „now have a rule inserting [r] across a hiatus involving a mid or open vowel in the left hand environment" (Wells 1994a); in particular after /ə, ɪə, ɑː, ɔː/: *put a comma*[r] *in, the idea*[r] *of it, Leamington Spa*[r] *and Warwick, I saw*[r] *it happen*.[69] Although this pronunciation is quite natural for the majority of

[66] cf. Crystal (1995:327).
[67] See, for example, Wells (1992) and (1998c).
[68] cf. Williams and Kerswill (1999).
[69] Examples taken from Wells (1994a).

RP speakers, intrusive /r/ remains to some extent the object of overt stigmatisation. Especially its use after /ɔː/ is still frequently frowned upon.[70] Within a word, /r/-intrusion is slightly less common in RP, although the occasional *withdraw*[r]*al*, *saw*[r]*ing* can be heard as well.[71] If the examples given by Coggle (1993:55f.) are interpreted correctly, the use of intrusive /r/ in EE (and Cockney, of course) extends to postvocalic positions before dropped /h/ in both stressed and unstressed environments, as in *I saw*[r] *'im go out* and *draw*[r] *'ands, then*. (These examples would, by the way, give evidence for the occurrence of H-dropping in EE.) Similarly, EE speakers would also pronounce the /r/ before dropped /h/ where it is historically and orthographically justified, as in [ˌəʊvərˈedz] *overheads.* As a defining feature of EE, however, intrusive /r/ is unsuitable, because of its acceptance well across the whole spectrum from Cockney to RP.

Some further features of EE pronunciation have been pointed out by Wells but not referred to by Rosewarne or Coggle:

- EE usually has /n/ for RP /nt/ in the items /ˈtweni/ *twenty* and /ˈpleni/ *plenty*, and for *want* and *went* when prevocalic, thus /ˈwɒnɪd/ *wanted*, /wen ˈæʊʔ/ *went out* - but note that there is no American-style nt-reduction in other items, e.g. *winter* remains /ˈwɪntə/;
- EE prefers /ən/ in various environments where RP would prefer syllabic /n/, thus /ˈsteɪʃən/ *station*. (Wells 1994b)

Nevertheless, no consonantal feature has been successfully singled out as a definitive marker of EE so far. It remains to be seen whether an analysis of the vowel phenomena of EE – the focus of the next chapter – will give a clearer picture.

2.2.2. Vowel and Diphthong Phenomena

Changing Pronunciation of Word-final -y[72] ('*Happy* Tensing')

In EE, the quality of the final vowel in words like *pity* or *heavy* is distinctly different from RP, according to Rosewarne:

> The partial replacement of RP /ɪ/ by EE /iː/ is marked in final post-consonantal position. RP /ˈverɪ ˈprɪtɪ/ for *very pretty* becomes /ˈveriː ˈprɪtiː/. In final position this vowel is clearly longer in EE than RP. (Rosewarne 1994b:5)
> […] vowels in final position in Estuary English such as the /iː/ in „me" and the second /iː/ in „city" are longer than normally found in R.P. and may tend towards the quality of a diphthong. (Rosewarne 1994a:6)

[70] cf. *EPD*14:xxvii and Wells (1994a).
[71] cf. Wells (1994a).
[72] Although this spelling is the most common (*happy, city*), RP final -/ɪ/ can also be represented by *-ie* (*birdie, movie*), *-i* (*taxi, spaghetti*, i.e. loanwords), *-ee* (*committee*), *-ey* (*hockey*) or *-ea* (*Swansea*). (cf. Wells 1982:165ff.)

Several changes are implied here: First, that the EE vowel is closer than the RP one, secondly, that it is longer and thirdly, that it may be pronounced as a diphthong. This latter feature corresponds to Gimson's (1989:104) observation of popular London speech, although he does not entirely agree in terms of length:

> In final, unaccented positions, as in *city*, *Mary*, *lady*, etc., /ɪ/ is increasingly replaced in the speech of the younger generations by a short variety of /iː/. In popular London speech, this final /iː/ will usually be realized as a glide [əi].

Wells (1982:304) also gives a diphthong /ɪi/[73] for the '*happ*Y vowel' (as he calls it) in London speech, while Hughes and Trudgill (1996:70) use /i/ in the same context. Such minor differences occur because – although it may „have indexical and diagnostic value in distinguishing dialects" (Wells 1982:165) – the exact phonetic classification of the vowel in word-final -y is not always easy. Wells does not include the *happ*Y vowel among his lexical sets,[74] because its „phonemic identification with strong vowels will usually be debatable" (ibid.).

The varied nature of the *happ*Y vowel is described in detail in Windsor Lewis (1990) and it will be helpful to test Rosewarne's observations against her findings. Windsor Lewis distinguishes between six types of -y value in General British[75] pronunciation. Not all of them are relevant to EE. At first sight, her *Russellian* category seems to correspond directly to Rosewarne's observations because this type of speaker would – in all environments – pronounce a vowel „much closer than the general … coming nearer to the quality associated with /iː/" (Windsor Lewis 1990:162)[76]. Today, however, this rather extreme category seems to have become irrelevant.[77] It is more likely that speakers produce various -y sounds according to the context – and thus belong to the so-called *Variable* category. Such speakers would „from time to time" and „in varying degree" use /iː/ in pre-vocoid situations only (Windsor Lewis 1990:162). While Wells (1982:165) attributes this „context-sensitive variation" – as he calls it – only to „some English northerners, some RP speakers and some Americans" (ibid.), Windsor Lewis (1990:163) regards it as „probably the largest General British (GB) category".

Rosewarne's argumentation, however, does not involve context-sensitiveness. We need, therefore, a category with consistent use of final /i/. Windsor Lewis' *Close* category

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[73] „Phonetically it ranges from a diphthong [əɪ] in broad Cockney through [ɪi] to a monophtongal [i] in a middle-class local accent." (Wells 1982:319)
[74] cf. Wells (1982:123,165).
[75] „General British" (GB) is Windsor Lewis' suggestion of an alternative term for RP, obviously based on „General American". (cf. Windsor Lewis 1987:140)
[76] Quoting earlier editions of Gimson's *Introduction to the Pronunciation of English* from 1962 and 1970.
[77] „By 1980 [Gimson] appears to have decided that the type had become obsolete because he removed the account of it." (Windsor Lewis 1990:162)

seems to correspond best to Rosewarne's idea of EE final -y because its speakers „mostly produc[e] a clearly closer form and one that is not employed only before a following vocoid."[78] (Windsor Lewis 1990:163) However, it is „not usually diphthongised" (ibid.). Maybe this is also the category that Wells (1982:166) had in mind – although his transcription (in contrast to Windsor Lewis') is phonetic rather than phonemic – when writing „consistent final [i] is found in much of the south of England, as well as in the peripheral north (Liverpool, Newcastle, Hull, Birmingham)." Having traditionally been associated with only Near-RP or non-RP at most,[79] this category seems to be currently spreading and its acceptance increasing:

> […] this *Close* type is not merely free from social sanction but is on the contrary often heard from younger speakers who display other phonetic characteristics which are conspicuously fashionable […].
> At any rate the *Close* value is nowadays commonly heard from media newsreaders and presenters and seems particularly widespread among those born after 1960 or so. (Windsor Lewis 1990:163f.)

Wells' observation is somewhat similar:

> Recently, however, such forms [i.e. ['sɪti] for *city*, ['kɒfi] for *coffee*, etc.] have begun to be heard from speakers who on all other grounds would be considered as speaking RP. (Wells 1982:299)

These sociolinguistic comments about the spreading of /i/ are further evidence for this category being the basis of Rosewarne's considerations. The mentioning of „younger speakers" and the changed behaviour of RP speakers all belong to the vocabulary of a description of EE.

However, Rosewarne also stated explicitly that the EE vowel was long. In Windsor Lewis' list, this is only the case in the *Non-Enclitic* category[80] which refers to the use of a long [i:] vowel for -y, although, according to the author, „what is being identified is not only or even essentially length but strength, that is, primarily degree of rhythmic separation of the final -y from the rest of its word." (Windsor Lewis 1990:164) To take this category to describe the EE vowel is problematic, since „it is the least likely usage to be heard from General British speakers." (Windsor Lewis 1990:165) Moreover, the fact that Rosewarne's example is taken from a TV sitcom[81] does not exactly support his claim because of the often exaggerated use of speech in these programmes.

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[78] The author admits, however, that the weakest forms of these -y sounds are „not necessarily very noticeably different from the traditional [ɪ]" (Windsor Lewis 1990:163). In contrast to the above-mentioned *Russellian* category, the /i/ sound produced by these speakers will commonly „be more retracted" (ibid.).
[79] cf. Wells (1982:299).
[80] And, of course, in the extinct *Russellian* category.
[81] cf. Rosewarne (1994a:6).

We might therefore drop any compulsory quality of length in this vowel and go for the innocuous variant chosen by Wells in his recommended transcription of final -y in EE, namely /i/. He also extends the use of /i/ for /ɪ/ to prevocalic environments within a word, such as in *various* ['veəriəs] or *radiate* ['reɪdieɪt] (Wells 1994a and 1994b), according to the current tendency in British (and American) English to neutralise the distinction between /ɪ/ and /iː/ (cf. *EPD*15:xiv) which is represented by the 'neutral' symbol /i/.[82]

As indicated, this close /i/ is arguably spreading into RP as well:

> […] it appears that recently RP may be beginning to prefer a closer quality, which may come to be identified with the /iː/ of FLEECE rather than with the /ɪ/ of KIT. In particular, speakers of adoptive RP no longer seem to regard ['hæpi], ['sɪti] etc. as regionalisms which should be avoided in cultivated speech. (Wells 1982:294)

It is therefore difficult to view the use of /i/ for /ɪ/ as a definite marker of EE because there is evidence that its influence exceeds the sphere associated with EE. Moreover, it has been in use in BrE pronunciation for a long time. Wells (1982:258) writes cautiously:

> Where and when the [i] pronunciation arose is not certain. It has probably been in use in provincial and vulgar speech for centuries […].

Even if its use had been restricted to 'provincial and vulgar speech' only – and traditionally been associated with Cockney (cf. Wells 1994a) –, it appears that it was never a particularly stigmatised variable – one condition for its ready acceptance into mainstream RP. According to Windsor Lewis (1990:165), neither Sheridan (1789) nor Walker (1791) criticised the close variant of the final /ɪ/ vowel:

> The former (1789:x) said that 'the sound of Y perceived in the last syllable of *lovely* is only the short sound of *e* in beer'. And the latter (§181) distinguishes values of the letter y which include 'its short sound, heard in *system, syntax*, etc.' and 'the unaccented sound … always … like … *e* … thus *vanity, pleurisy* etc.' Both of these authors wrote at length giving advice to those who wished to eliminate Cockneyisms, provincialism or foreign accent but with no suggestion of problems with -y sounds.

The above analysis of word-final -y shows the difficulty of exact classifications of vowels. Even within the speech of one single speaker, the range of fluctuation can be extremely wide because „vowel-quality variation is itself part of the prosodic/paralinguistic element of speech" (Windsor Lewis 1990:166). Therefore, the use of a particular vowel quality as a marker of a certain accent (in this case EE) is very problematic, especially if a vowel exhibits as many fine nuances of pronunciation as word-final -y.

[82] This is, of course, a matter of definition: Roach and Hartman, the editors of *EPD*15, write: „The symbol /i/ is used in this case (though it is not, strictly speaking, a phoneme symbol; there is no obvious way to choose suitable brackets for this symbol, but phoneme brackets // will be used for simplicity)." (p. xiv)

The only definite thing to say is that there appears to be a gradual change in the pronunciation of English from /ɪ/ to /i/ which affects not only EE speakers:

> It is clear, therefore, that a trend towards what we may refer to as ***Happy* Tensing** is currently in operation both in Britain and the United States. (Wells 1982:258)

EE speakers are certainly part of this trend, but the argumentation does not work the other way round: The use of a tense vowel in *happy* does not necessarily indicate an EE speaker!

Decline of Weak [ɪ]

In the pronunciation of the prefixes *re-* and *de-*, Rosewarne has observed a similar trend towards the use of a long /iː/ vowel in EE instead of RP /ɪ/. (In the case of *re-*, we are only dealing with the unstressed prefix which is part of the verb stem, not the productive *re-* meaning 'again'.) Examples given by Rosewarne (1994b:5) include *reduce* [riːˈdʒuːs], *repeat* [riːˈpiːt], and *resist* [riːˈzɪst] for *re-* and *default* [(probably:) diːˈfɔːot] and *deter* [diːˈtɜː] for *de-*. This is definitely a non-RP pronunciation; the (relatively progressive) 15th edition of the *EPD* (1997) does not refer to it at all[83] and Wells gives it only as a non-RP variant in the current edition of the *LPD*.

In other environments, there seems to be a development into a different direction, namely towards the replacement of unstressed preconsonantal [ɪ] by a more central vowel [ə] in words like *secret* [ˈsiːkrət] or *marketing* [ˈmaːkətɪŋ]; the latter being evidence (still /-ɪŋ/ for *-ing*) that not all syllables are affected by this development: According to Wells (1994a), it „is found particularly in the endings *-less, -ness, -ily, -ity* and adjectival *-ate*, and to some extent also in *-ed, -es, -et, -ace*." The pronunciation [ˈkeələsnəs] for *carelessness* has already been dubbed „an acceptable variant" by Gimson in his 1977 revision of the *EPD* (1977:xvi), and Wells judges it the principal variant in the *LPD*.[84] The [ɪ] pronunciation which prevailed in Daniel Jones' days has been under pressure for considerable time; Wells (1994a) regards it „as one of the oddities of RP as seen from a perspective of World English."

The range of influence of this change is therefore by no means restricted to the southern 'heartland' of EE. It is interesting, though, that this supposed feature of EE – in contrast to many others – would not necessarily be found in Cockney as well: „In

[83] *EPD*15 gives unstressed initial /rɪ/ throughout.
[84] The form [ˈkeələsnɪs] is still given as an alternative pronunciation.

Cockney, indeed, [ɪ] is still often to be heard in the endings in question [cf. above].“ Wells (1994a) In this case, EE and RP are gradually adopting a feature which is well-established in other areas, particularly in Essex, but also in North America, Australia and Ireland (cf. Rosewarne 1994b:5 and Wells 1994a).

Changes in the Pronunciation of /ʊ/

In recent transcriptions of RP, /u/ has gradually replaced /ʊ/ as the common symbol to represent the final/prevocalic vowel in weak syllables.[85] Wells (1994b) suggests that this convention could be applied to transcriptions of EE as well, thus: /ˈθæŋkju/ *thank you* or /ˌgrædʒuˈeɪʃən/ *graduation*. Rosewarne (1994b:5) adds that, in word-final positions, this vowel is lengthened (in a way that is similar to the development from /ɪ/ to /iː/ in certain environments):

> A further example of vowel lengthening in EE can be seen in word-final /uː/ as in *you*, where RP would have /ʊ/ or a shorter version of /uː/ than the EE variant.

It is – once again – difficult to accept this lengthened /uː/ in *you* as a marker of EE. After all, *EPD*14 (p.558) gives /juː/ as the „normal form“ in RP (in *EPD*15 this was changed to the „strong form“) . Furthermore, the length and quality of the /u/ sound in *you* depend heavily on the rapidity of speech and (partly as a consequence of this) the degree of stress put on this syllable. Of course, Rosewarne does not rule out the possibility of weakening:

> /jə/ is possible in the rapid speech of both RP and EE. (Rosewarne 1994b:5)

However, this statement is too general to be expressive. At any rate, the use of a weakened vowel in *you* is certainly restricted in RP, as Wells observes:

> Non-standard accents commonly weaken *you* to /jə/. But in RP this form is generally avoided, at least in prominent positions such as utterance-final. (Wells 1994a)

With regard to the concept of a continuum, it is likely that EE would allow more uses of /jə/ than RP. It is thus rather difficult to put up a general rule, as the use of a long vowel in *you* always depends on the degree of prominence of the word within the utterance.

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[85] The second edition of the *LDOCE* (1987), for example, already uses /u/. The same decision has been taken by the editors of *EPD*15, who (p. xiv) refer to the neutralised distinction between /ʊ/ and /uː/ in present-day British and American English (see also the case of /ɪ/ and /iː/ above) and thus consistently use /u/ in the environments mentioned. In *EPD*14, on the other hand, /ʊ/ was still the preferred symbol.
In February 1999, Coggle wrote that the vowels in *book* and *good*, too, gradually moved towards an /uː/ sound (Coggle 1998 [update]). Furthermore, Wells has observed a general trend in BrE pronunciation affecting the vowels of *goose* and *foot* which „are losing their lip-rounding and backness“ (Wells 1998b, cf. below).

Moreover, it is very difficult to think of further examples of Rosewarne's lengthened /uː/ in final positions. Content words like *continue*, *tissue* or *nephew* (and also loans like *caribou* or *marabou*) are commonly transcribed with a long final vowel anyway,[86] so the lengthened pronunciation is neither special nor new. One possibility could be *to* in final positions: *Where are you going to?*; *Well, I simply had to*. However, the spelling /tuː/ is fairly common in these environments as well.[87] And again, the pronunciation of this vowel depends far too much on prosodic features and syntactic context to unambiguously mark any type of speaker. It has to be suspected, then, that Rosewarne based his rule on the pronunciation of *you* only.

Other Vowel Phenomena

In RP, the short front vowel /æ/ is usually placed between C[ɛ] and C[a]. According to Rosewarne (1994b:5), the EE pronunciation is closer and often involves lengthening:

> The /æ/ of RP is less open in EE and is followed by a glide which can be represented phonemically as /æe/. For example, RP *bad* /bæd/ where EE has /bæed/ or /bæɪd/. (Rosewarne 1994b:5)

This trend towards diphthongisation has also been noted by Parsons (1998:24):

> Das /æ/-Phonem ist dort, wo es positionsbedingt gelängt wird, gespannter (und damit etwas geschlossener) und länger im EE als in der RP, und zwar so sehr, daß es oft als [æə] oder [æɪ] realisiert wird; dies ist wahrscheinlich das Merkmal, das neben der Intonation am meisten dazu beiträgt, daß EE „amerikanischer" klingt.[88] (Parsons 1998:24)

Gimson (1989:108f.) has observed this feature in „that type of refined RP (and also popular London) which realises /e/ in the *C*[e] region". In such speech, /æ/ is raised to approximately C[ɛ]:

> In this case, the /e/ - /æ/ opposition is reinforced either by the lengthening of /æ/ already mentioned, or by a diphthongization of /æ/ towards [ə], e.g. *bad, cat* [bæᵊd, kæᵊt]. (ibid.)

Once more, a feature of southern speech seems to be spreading. In RP, however, there is an opposite process at work: In the past decades, /æ/ has gradually moved towards the position of *C*[a] on the vowel chart, in particular in the speech of children and young women, as Gimson (1989:108) notes:

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[86] In fact, the editors of *EPD*15 write: „In word-final position, /ɪ/ and /ʊ/ do not occur" (p. xiv).
[87] Maidment, for example (cf. above, p. 15), gives [hæʔ tuː] for *had to*. *EPD*14 (p. 498) gives /tuː/ as the „strong form, also occasionally used as weak form, esp. in final positions" and *EPD*15 explains that „the strong form /tuː/ is used contrastively […] and sometimes in final position."
[88] cf. chapter 2.2.3. on the suprasegmental features of EE.

> A more relaxed /æ/ – in the region of *C*[a] – is also heard amongst children in the south of England who otherwise have an RP system and who, later in life, adopt the tenser and closer variety of /æ/. Such a lowered /æ/ is maintained by many young women, although /ʌ/ continues to be realized as the low front variety […]. The result can be a confusion of /æ/ and /ʌ/, the meaning being resolved by the context.

Wells regards this opener quality of /æ/ as an attempt by RP to withstand the onslaught of Cockney:

> The mainstream RP realization of /æ/ in *that man* has changed in the course of this century, as has often been noted. The tendency towards an opener quality may be seen as a reaction against the Cockney [ɛ] type, leading to an /ʌ/-like [a] which just happens to resemble variants long associated with provincial accents (northern, Welsh, Scottish). (Wells 1994a)

Parsons (1998:24,41) suggests that these competing tendencies in British speech might lead to an allophonic split /æ/ > [a] and [æ:] in some idiolects.[89] Because of their position in the 'middle ground', some EE speakers might well be exponents of this allophonic split. It is more likely, though, that the closer (southern) variant will eventually get the upper hand – as Rosewarne suggests – because of the general trend in EE to set itself apart from RP by favouring regional and lower-estimated variants.

There is another short vowel approximating the position of *C*[a] on the vowel chart: The symbol /ʌ/, originally a „half-open back unrounded" vowel (Jones 1909:42), has come to represent „a centralized and slightly raised *C*[a] = [ä]" (Gimson 1989:110). The Cockney equivalent of this sound is an even more fronted [a] (Gimson 1989:110 and Wells 1982:132); thus, this phoneme appears to move towards the London variant.[90] The advance of this feature has prompted Rosewarne (1996:15) to give /ʌ/ for both the EE and the RP variant.[91] Coggle argues, however, that the quality of the EE sound is somewhat similar to /æ/:

> […] the Estuary English pronunciation of the *u* sound in words like *cup, love, hut* is much closer to the RP pronunciation of *a* as in *cap, lav, hat.* (Coggle 1993:32)

Furthermore, the long vowels /i:/ and /u:/ – which are only slightly diphthongised in RP, i.e. [ɪi] and [ʊu] – have a much more centralised starting point in EE which corresponds to the Cockney pronunciation (cf. Gimson 1989:102,121):

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[89] Parsons (1998:24) gives *madder* (*'more mad'*) [æ:] – *adder* [a] as an example of a new „near-minimal pair": „Wenngleich dieses Phonem in den meisten Fällen heute als [a]–nah realisiert wird, ist es in einer Position – nämlich vor längenden stimmhaften Konsonanten – eher [æ:] (im EE mit Tendenz zur Diphthongierung: [æə])."

[90] cf. Parsons (1998:23).

[91] This is supported by Gimson's (1989:110) comment that the variety of /ʌ/ he described „is that of general RP as used by younger people, especially in the London area" – the sphere of Estuary English!

> RP /ɪː/ [sic!] becomes a diphthong /əi/[92] in EE, as in *sea*, /səi/. Similarly, the EE equivalent of /uː/ can be represented phonemically as /əuː/, as in /bləuː/, *blue*. (Rosewarne 1994b:5)

In the case of /uː/, Rosewarne's observation is partially supported by Wells' suggestion that a more centralised transcription of the vowel in *goose* (i.e. [gʉːs]) might more accurately represent its realisation in EE (although this idea is later abandoned in favour of a more straightforward transcription). (cf. Wells 1994c)

A similar Cockney influence can be perceived in the pronunciation of /ɔː/:

> In some positions [i.e. word-final, as specified in Rosewarne (1996:15)], /ɔː/ in EE is shortened and centres as a diphthong /ɔə/ as in /ˈdrɔə/ *drawer*. /ɔː/ followed by dark *l* in RP […] becomes /ʊw/ in EE. (Rosewarne 1994b:5)

Disregarding the second statement – the pronunciation /bʊw/ for *ball* is highly unlikely[93] –, this corresponds to Gimson's observations of popular London speech, in which

> […] /ɔː/ is often realized in open syllables as [ɔːwə], both in cases deriving from original vowel + /r/ (*door, four*) and also in those where no [r] has previously existed (*saw, law*); a diphthong of the type [ɒʊ] or [ɔʊ] is often used before a consonant, not only before [ɬ] (*fall, ball*) but also in such words as *caught, daughter, born, horse, talk, board,* etc. (Gimson 1989:117)

These two realisations of /ɔː/ – a closing diphthong before consonants, a centring one at the morpheme boundary – correspond to what Wells (1982:310f.) discusses under the heading of the so-called THOUGHT split. The extension of this phenomenon from Cockney to EE is justified – although only Parsons (1998:42) explicitly says so – with regard to the following sociolinguistic comment by Wells (1982:311):

> In middle-class speech this opposition typically remains at least potentially distinctive. Minimal pairs such as *bored–board* may be considered diagnostic for a 'modified London' accent as against non-regional RP, although the phonetic difference may be very slight, [ɔː] vs. [oː].

Instead of „modified London", one could just as well say „Estuary English". Coggle's comment on the /ɔː/ sound, incidentally, is less specific: he only mentions the closing diphthong in open syllables and puts particular emphasis on its nasal quality:

> Take, for instance, the Estuary English pronunciation of *or/aw/au* as in the words *organise, awful* and *author*. While in RP the mouth remains open during the production of this vowel, in Estuary English the mouth is first open and then comes together to form a *w*. The overall effect is to produce a rather nasal sounding *auw*. (Coggle 1993:32)

[92] Rosewarne (1996:15) gives both /iː/ and /əiː/ for the EE equivalent of RP /iː/.
[93] Rosewarne probably intended to describe the diphthong that Parsons (1998:42) gives as [ɔːʊ].

As a general comment, Parsons (1998:42) suggests that the characteristic features of the EE vowels are lengthening and further diphthongisation.[94] However, the above findings support this claim only partially. Rosewarne's observations of lengthened vowels (esp. /ɪ/ and /ʊ/) must needs raise certain suspicions, and diphthongisation of long vowels – in various degrees – occurs in many varieties of English (including RP and Cockney) and it is certainly not exclusive to EE.

Diphthong Shifts

According to Wells (1992, 1994c and 1998c), the well-known Cockney pronunciations of /faɪs/ for *face* (RP: [feɪs]), /prɑɪs/ for *price* (RP: [praɪs]) and /gʌʊt/ for *goat* (RP: [gəʊt]) operate in EE as well.[95] In his view, there does not seem to be a difference between EE and Cockney in this regard, since he uses the same transcriptions as he did to describe London speech in Wells (1982:306ff.).

Rosewarne, however, makes a distinction between the EE and the Cockney realisations of RP /eɪ/:

> The diphthong /eɪ/ in RP becomes /aɪ/, the altered vowel quality being followed by a lengthened glide as in *say*, /saːi/, which is homophonous in EE with *sigh*. This pronunciation of *say* differs from Cockney /sʌi/. (Rosewarne 1994b:5)

In his 1994 discussion document, *Transcribing Estuary English*, Wells addresses this problem indirectly: He argues that any notation of EE should be made „as similar as possible to that used for RP" (Wells 1994c); therefore, we should continue to transcribe the words in the usual way, because the phonemic transcription of /eɪ/ in *face* „can be permitted to cover a range of possible first elements for the diphthong, from conservative RP [e] to qualities in the area [ɛ ~ ɐ ~ ʌ ~ æ]" (Wells 1994c). With regard to the other two diphthongs, Rosewarne and Wells seem to agree,[96] while Coggle (1993:31f.) mentions the /əʊ/ → /ʌʊ/ shift only.

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[94] Parsons (1998:42) suggests a causal connection between the phenomena of lengthening and diphthongisation because of the difficulty in maintaining exactly the same quality of a long vowel during the whole period of its articulation.

[95] Likewise Maidment (1994): „These [i.e. the diphthongal vowels of FACE, PRICE and GOAT in EE] are also what would be expected of a Cockney speaker."

[96] Rosewarne (1994b:5) contrasts the EE pronunciations of *price* and *goat* with the corresponding RP pronunciation only.

The diphthong /aʊ/, as in *mouth*, is not monophthongised in EE as it is in Cockney (/mæ:f/). Nevertheless, the EE pronunciation is different from RP as well, although Rosewarne and Wells disagree about its transcription. Rosewarne (1994b:5) uses /ʌʊ/[97] to transcribe this sound while Wells (1994b) writes /æʊ/, thus using the same symbol as he did in 1982 to transcribe the 'popular London' pronunciation of RP /aʊ/ as opposite to the Cockney monophthong. (Wells 1982:309)

/əʊ/ Allophony ('GOAT Split')

With regard to the RP diphthong /əʊ/, Wells (1992, 1994c and 1998c) and Maidment (1994) point out that in pre-lateral (and thus pre-[o])[98] environments, it does not become /ʌʊ/ as otherwise in EE/Cockney, but a diphthong of the [ɒʊ] type. Thus, while *row* ('series') becomes [rʌʊ] in EE, *roll* has to be rendered as [rɒʊo]. Under the pressure of morphological regularisation, this allophony has gradually turned into a phoneme split because people started to pronounce *rolling* as ['rɒʊlɪn] instead of ['rʌʊlɪn] (what would have been the appropriate pronunciation because of the clear /l/). This process has led to new minimal pairs, such as *roller* ['rɒʊlə] vs. *polar* ['pʌʊlə], *goalie* ['gɒʊli] (cf. *goal* [gɒʊo])[99] vs. *slowly* ['slʌʊli] or *wholly* ['hɒʊli] (cf. *whole* [hɒʊo]) vs. *holy* ['hʌʊli].

Rosewarne and Coggle, however, do not mention this phenomenon at all. It has to be said, therefore, that Wells actually refers to a development in London speech he already discussed at length in 1982 – the so-called 'GOAT split':

> It is by now well established in all kinds of London-flavoured accent, from broad Cockney to Near-RP. (Wells 1982:313)

It appears that this observation must have been justification enough to include this phenomenon under the heading 'Estuary English' as well.

Other Diphthong Phenomena

In 1994, Rosewarne gave the triphthong /awɪ/ as the EE pronunciation of RP /ɔɪ/ as in *choice* (Rosewarne 1994b:5). Two years later, his notation had changed to /ɒɪ/ (Rosewarne 1996:15), although his intention to describe a somewhat opener pronuncia-

[97] Rosewarne (1996:17), however, even gives a triphthong /eəʊ/to describe this sound, as in the notorious phrase: /heəʊ neəʊ breəʊn keəʊ/ *How now, brown cow?*
[98] cf. chapter 2.2.1.
[99] See, however, Wells (1994c) for a discussion of the problems of this transcription.

tion of this sound remained. Remarkably enough, this runs contrary to the London pronunciation of this diphthong, the first element of which often being much closer than in RP, moving towards the quality of *C*[o].[100] (cf. Gimson 1989:133)

As for the EE realisation of the RP centring diphthongs /ɪə, eə, ʊə/, there is no clear-cut picture either. For the vowel sound in *near*, Rosewarne (1994b:5 and 1996:15) gives the triphthong /ɜɪə/ as the corresponding variant – the diphthongisation of the first element may have to be seen in the context of the above-mentioned trend towards diphthongisation of long /iː/.[101] Similarly, Rosewarne (1994b:5) observes an EE triphthong /eɪə/ for RP /eə/ as in *square*; although the centralised pure vowel /ɛː/ that Gimson (1989:144) accepts as a form of advanced RP is also possible „in rapid EE speech" (Rosewarne 1994b:5). In his 1996 article, however, Rosewarne gives the same phoneme /eə/ for both the RP and the EE sound. (Rosewarne 1996:15). The levelling of RP /ʊə/ (as in *cure*) to /ɔː/, as described by Gimson (1989:146) and Wells (1982:164), is operating in EE as well (Rosewarne 1994b:5). It is more difficult, however, to accept Rosewarne's statement (1994b:5f.) that „the RP /ɜː/ [!] or /ʊə/ of *jury* becomes /uː/ and so is homophonous with the EE pronunciation of *Jewry* [in *EPD*15, both are given as homophones anyway: /ˈdʒʊəri/[102]]." This phonemic identification with /uː/ has previously been assigned mainly to „Scotland, Ireland, [and only] some parts of England and Wales" (Wells 1982:164). It is not clear whether Rosewarne wanted to posit a general rule that /ʊə/ becomes /ɔː/ in open and /uː/ in close syllables, as his examples suggest. But if this was his intention, it will be difficult to justify why, in his 1996 article, he leaves out this sound completely.[103]

As with the consonantal features of EE, the analysis of the supposed EE vowels and diphthongs gives a very complex and sometimes confusing picture. According to their individual outlook on the current changes in British speech, Rosewarne, Coggle and Wells often focus on rather varying features as markers of EE. Moreover, the boundaries between RP, EE and Cockney are hardly ever to be firmly established, as table 1, a (sketchy) summary of the phonetic features of EE, suggests (cf. p. 39).

[100] This is a consequence of the Cockney pronunciation [ɑɪ] for /aɪ/; the closer variant of /ɔɪ/ serves to maintain the contrast between the two diphthongs (cf. Gimson 1989:133).
[101] See p. 34.
[102] /ˈdʒuːri/ is given as second choice for *Jewry* in British English; this is not the case, however, for *jury*.
[103] cf. the list in Rosewarne (1996:15).

Feature	T-glottalling	L-vocalisation	Yod Coalescence	Yod Dropping	EE /ɹ/	*happ*Y-Tensing	Decline of Weak /ɪ/	Developments Affecting /ʊ/	Diphthong Shifts	GOAT Split	Other Selected Features
boundary EE–RP	RP accepts glottalling only in word or morpheme final positions before consonant	increasingly accepted in RP, in particular after labial consonants; avoided after alveolar plosives	RP tends to confine yod coalescence to unstressed environments	process of shedding yod increasingly accepted in RP as well (in particular after /l/ and /s/)	Allegedly found neither in RP…	general trend towards the use of /i/ instead of /ɪ/ currently operating both in Britain and the United States	use of a more centralised vowel [ə] accepted in both RP and EE	In RP (and presumably, in EE as well), /u/ is gradually replacing /ʊ/ in weak syllables	RP: Quality of diphthongs /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /əʊ/ maintained	not part of RP	
boundary EE–Cockney	Cockney-style intervocalic use of glottal stop excluded from EE	possible number of vowel neutralisations before [o] allegedly much higher in Cockney	fuzzy boundary, because traditional Cockney yod dropping after alveolar plosives is gradually replaced by yod coalescence	presumably, yod dropping in EE accepted only after /l/, /s/, /z/, /θ/ (in contrast to extensive, East-Anglian-style use)	… nor in 'London' pronunciation	impossible to be established; diphthongised variant, for example, can occur both in Cockney and in EE	Cockney appears to cling to [ɪ] in certain endings		Cockney-style diphthong shifts >/aɪ/, >/ɑɪ/, >/ʌʊ/at work in EE as well; /aʊ/, however, not monophthongised in EE	allegedly well established „in all kinds of London-flavoured accents, from broad Cockney to Near-RP" (Wells)	generally restricted to Cockney: • H-dropping • TH-fronting (though apparently steadily advancing)
marker of EE?	Unsuitable because of its increasingly wide geographical distribution	proposed boundaries appear too arbitrary (change in progress)	boundary Cockney-EE impossible to establish (competitive change in progress)	difficult to establish a coherent picture; boundary EE-RP extremely fuzzy	if referring to labio-dental [ʋ]: probably rather an example of a supra-regional 'youth norm' than a distinct marker of EE.	not distinctive because part of a larger process	general trend not only affecting the south	part of a general trend (while Rosewarne's mentioning of word-final lengthening seems dubious)	boundary Cockney-EE too fuzzy to be distinctive	boundary Cockney-EE too fuzzy to be distinctive; feature referred to by Wells only	

Table 1: Summary of (selected) phonetic features of EE.

2.2.3. Other Features of EE

Lexical Features

Apart from the phonetic features discussed in the previous chapters, there are also a number of lexical items which supposedly mark the typical EE speaker (although Coggle (1993:59) admits that many of them may not be exclusive to EE). Both Rosewarne and Coggle list a number of expressions,[104] although the items chosen seem to be somewhat incidental at times.

A central shibboleth of the EE vocabulary – it is given prominence by both authors – is the frequent use of *Cheers* instead of *Thank you* and *Goodbye*. This claim has met fierce opposition from Wells (1994c, 1999) who regards this usage merely as a stylistic variation of Standard English:

> Things like *cheers* for *thank you/goodbye* are surely part of contemporary casual RP/StdEng – at least I use them, and no-one has ever suggested that I am a speaker of EE! Some commentators seem not to appreciate that RP can be spoken in informal situations. (Wells 1994c)

Actually, Coggle somehow supports this argument by stating that

> This use of *Cheers!* has nowadays spread beyond Cockney and Estuary English both geographically and socially, particularly among the young. (Coggle 1993:59)

Certainly, not every user of *Cheers* in the circumstances mentioned would immediately qualify as an EE speaker. *Cheers* is often followed by the word *mate* (for *friend*), especially towards the Cockney end of the spectrum (Coggle 1993:60). It is, however, by no means restricted to EE territory; in fact, it is frequently heard in informal speech all over Britain.

A further lexical feature of EE is the (sometimes excessive) use of *basically* as a gap filler extending far beyond its actual range of usage. According to Coggle (1993:61), it has become a hackneyed phrase comparable to the overused expressions *Precisely!* or *Absolutely!* as signs of agreement in upper middle class speech.

Both Coggle and Rosewarne claim that EE speakers are particularly open to the influence of Americanisms.[105] This includes the use of phrases like *There you go* instead of the more common *Here you are* and *Excuse me* for *Sorry*. In the context of the telephone, EE speakers would use *busy* for *engaged* together with *Who's this* for *Who's speaking?* Further-

[104] See Rosewarne (1994a:6, 1996:13f.) and Coggle (1993:59ff.)

[105] In a study by Parsons (1998:41,94), one fifth of all respondents mistook a moderate EE speaker for a 'typical American'. Nevertheless, we have to beware of the generalisation that BrE speech as a whole is moving towards

more, phrases like *It's down to you* instead of *It's up to you* or *different than* for *different from* are said to meet less resistance from EE speakers than from RP ones. Coggle also observed some lexical items having spread from American to British speech which originally have entered American English as Germanisms, such as *hopefully* ('hoffentlich'), *no way* for *by no means* ('keineswegs'), *right* for *correct* ('richtig') and *sure* for *certainly* ('sicher'). Another example – though phonetic rather than lexical – of EE being „more imitative of changes coming from America than of British prestige forms" (Rosewarne 1996:14) is the American-style pronunciation of *either* and *neither* as /ˈiːðə/ and /ˈniːðə/ (cf. Rosewarne 1994b:6).

Coggle tries to explain this enhanced receptivity of EE speakers for Americanisms in psychological terms. Allegedly not exactly being at the centre of the establishment, EE speakers are not in a position to rest on their laurels and defend their social status against all sort of (linguistic) change from below – it is them, actually, who are at the forefront of such change and, consequently, are more open to linguistic innovations:

> If one feels that one has relatively high status and influence, one tends to identify more readily with the established order and to reject linguistic innovations from outside on the basis that these are inferior. Many – though by no means all – Estuary English speakers are doing very well for themselves, but they have in general only 'made it' in economic terms since World War II. They cannot look back to forbears who wielded power for generations. This must have an effect on one's world view. It is perhaps natural that there would be less commitment among such people to conserving the established order, and a greater willingness therefore to accept change. (Coggle 1993:65)[106]

This argumentation is, of course, reminiscent of the Milroys' theory of how linguistic change is diffused around social networks; those speakers whose ties to any social network are weakest are usually most exposed to external pressure for change.[107] After all, many EE speakers are said to have deliberately modified their speech to sound „less 'posh' and more 'cool'"[108]; striking evidence of an increasingly disapproving attitude towards upper class conventions. Since Americanisms often bear a hint of subculture (but at the same time of cosmopolitan worldliness as well), their adoption might be attractive to many.

American English – cf. the younger people's preference of „zebbra" for *zebra* instead of the American „zeebra". (Wells 1998b; cf. chapter 2.2.1.).

[106] Rosewarne's psychological insight into the minds of EE speakers goes even further: „If Estuary English becomes a conduit for American influence on British English, this may be because many financially successful Estuary English speakers feel excluded from high social prestige within the British social system." (Rosewarne 1996:14) One the other hand, it could also be argued that such a sense of 'exclusion' – if this were indeed the case – might just as well induce people to imitate the behaviour of their target group in order to 'fit in'.

[107] cf. Milroy and Milroy (1985b) and Milroy (1992).

[108] cf. 'A fifteen-year-old boy's views' in Schoenberger (s.a.).

The trouble with these supposed lexical features of EE is that many of them are by no means restricted to those who might be called speakers of EE:

> "Hopefully" is widely used in all parts of England and among all social classes, notwithstanding frequent condemnation. […] No one has demonstrated that it is in any way specially characteristic of the southeast of England. "There you go" is certainly an Americanism, and again to be heard quite widely. "Cheers" (thanks) is not American, but widespread in Britain, certainly not restricted to those who might be called speakers of EE. (Wells 1999)

Wells (1999) insists that „these usages are simply characteristic of particular speech styles, not of particular regions of the country." Essentially, his criticism applies to the supposed grammatical and syntactic features of EE as well, therefore, a selection of these will be discussed in the following.

Grammatical and Syntactic Features

In several articles, Wells states that EE, unlike Cockney, is „associated with standard grammar" (cf. Wells 1994c, 1997 and 1998a) and therefore has to be regarded as an *accent*. To others, however, the variety is „distinctive as a dialect" (Crystal 1995:327), because „[…] certain of the so-called syntactic – or grammatical – features of Cockney do also penetrate some way into the Estuary English area of the spectrum." (Coggle 1993:34)

A follow-up to the adoption of Americanisms by EE speakers is their use of *right?* as a tag question at the end of a sentence. According to Coggle (1993:66), this tag is mainly used „to check that the person being addressed is actually listening": *And there I was wai'in' a' the bus stop, righ'? When this car draws up, righ'?*…[Coggle's examples]. This tendency to add tag questions seems to be very common in EE and has been observed by nearly all commentators. Sometimes, entire sentences can be used as tags: *She's really nice. You know what I mean?* Most prominent, however, is the use of *isn't it?*, *don't I?* or *didn't I?* as in *I said I was going, didn't I?* etc. (Rosewarne 1994a:6 and Crystal 1995:327). *Isn't it?* is frequently reduced to *inni'?* and its range of usage extended:

> It seems increasingly to be used as a general purpose tag, meaning *is that not the case?*, where Standard English requires a variety of different tags, such as *aren't they?, don't they?*, etc. (Coggle 1993:66f.)

Consequently, it cannot only be used in sentences like *Nice day, inni'?*, but also in such cases as *Wayne's stupid, inni'?* [Coggle's examples]. The similarly non-standard *ain't I?*, as in *I've got problems, ain't I?*, is mainly used at the Cockney end of the continuum; further along the EE spectrum, people would rather use the more standard *haven't I?*.

Further examples of EE grammar are the use of *There is* as an invariable form in both singular and plural contexts (Rosewarne 1994a:6), a generalisation of the third person singular form, especially in narrative style (e.g.: *I gets out of the car*) and a generalised past tense use of *was* instead of *were*, as in *We was walking down the street.* (Crystal 1995:327 and Coggle 1993:34). This last feature, however, is explicitly ruled out from EE by Wells (1999).[109]

EE speakers might also be somewhat reluctant to omit the *-ly* adverbial ending as frequently as, for example, a Cockney speaker would do. According to Coggle (1993:69), an EE speaker is more likely to say: *She sang really nice(ly)* and not *She sang real nice*. Yet, there are „a number of adjectives which are frequently used as adverbs by Estuary speakers" (ibid.), such as *quick* and *slow*, but also *good* and *bad*: *Don't eat so quick*. *Did you sleep good?* (Coggle's examples; see also Crystal 1995:327).

Furthermore, Crystal (1995:327) refers to „certain prepositional uses, such as *I got* ***off of*** *the bench, I looked* ***out*** *the window*" as markers of EE – something that neither Coggle nor Rosewarne mention. On the other hand, he is less willing to include the use of double negatives – often in combination with *ain't*,[110] as in *I ain't got no money* – (cf. Coggle 1993:34), because it „is still widely perceived as uneducated." (Crystal 1995:327)

Although the degree of acceptance of these features may vary, they are still regarded mainly as elements of Cockney speech and therefore do not extend very far along the EE continuum:

> It does, in fact, seem that these particular features are among the first to disappear when a person moves across the spectrum from the Cockney end towards Estuary English. This would suggest that non-standard syntax is regarded as even less acceptable than non-RP pronunciation. (Coggle 1993:35)

Coggle's wording actually implies – perhaps unintentionally – that these features are *not* part of EE; although this would contrast with the rest of what he has to say about them. It seems clear, though, that mainstream EE speakers would generally tend to avoid such non-standard grammatical features because of the stigma they bear – which seems much stronger than the one of most pronunciation features. In any case, the inclusion or exclusion of these features is crucial to any definition of EE as a mere accent or as a dialect in its own right.

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[109] Wells (1999) gives the use of *you were* (and not *you was*) as evidence for EE , unlike Cockney, following the rules of standard grammar.

[110] The usage of *ain't* as a replacement of Standard English *am not*, *is not*, *have not*, etc. is given by Coggle (1993:34) as a marker of EE as well.

Suprasegmental Features

Despite all efforts in recent years, research on prosody and other para-linguistic features is still an area of neglect in linguistics. Moreover, most of the studies available on English intonation focus on RP only.[111] Not surprisingly, therefore, information on the suprasegmental features of EE is scarce.

Rosewarne (1994a:6) mentions a particular stress pattern as a distinctive marker of EE, i.e. the accenting of prepositions (and auxiliary verbs, although he fails to provide specific examples):

> Estuary English intonation is characterised by frequent prominence being given to prepositions and auxiliary verbs which are not normally stressed in General R.P. This prominence is often marked to the extent that the nuclear tone can fall on prepositions. An example of this would be: „Let us get TO the point" [or] „Totters have been in operation FOR years".

The latter sentence has been included by Rosewarne to indicate the communication problems that might arise due to the mistaking of *FOR years* and *four years* – although the actual number of such problematic cases appears to be rather small.

In recent years, stress shifts – especially within entire words – have been observed frequently in BrE (cf. Wells 1994a).[112] Nevertheless, Rosewarne's claim has met fierce opposition. Kerswill (1994) and Battarbee (1996) have both criticised him for depending on local radio for his data and subsequently treating them as representative of EE speakers in general:

> Some prepositions have always been stressed, particularly those with argumentative functions (eg: despite). The feature which is attracting attention here is the stressing of locative prepositions, since it is more usual to stress the complement in locative prepositional phrases (eg: marked „IN the London region" versus „in the LONDON region". But in any case, altho [sic] the phenomenon of locative-prepositional stress is definitely in existence, it is NOT a feature of Estuary English, but of the register of radio journalism. Outside radio journalism, Estuary speakers do NOT display this feature; conversely, radio journalists speaking other varieties DO use it. (Battarbee 1996)

Similarly, Maidment argues that speakers of many accents of English put nuclear stress on prepositions in certain circumstances, such as in so-called 'counter-presuppositional utterances', e.g.: *Don't phone the fire brigade. The house isn't ON fire*. Moreover, he also criticises that Rosewarne ignores the possibility of a stylistic explanation for this phenome-

[111] According to Parsons (1998:35), only Cruttenden (1997) includes a chapter on 'Comparative Intonation'.

[112] „Thus penultimate-stressed *con'troversy* is taking over from initial-stressed *'controversy*, penultimate stress being preferred by 56% of the LPD poll panel and no doubt a much higher proportion of the general public, though probably a smaller proportion of RP speakers. For *contribute*, 27% of the panel claimed to prefer initial stress, a pattern not admitted by Jones even as a variant." (Wells 1994a). Similarly, Rosewarne (1996:14) observes a stress shift in *temporarily* from the first to the third syllable.

non – public announcements, for example, seem to encourage the use of nuclear-accented prepositions: *The train arriving ON platform 14 is the 16.00 FROM Cheltenham Spa* (cf. Maidment 1994).

When dealing with EE intonation patterns in general, Rosewarne's remarks are nearly meaningless: „There is a rise/fall intonation which is characteristic of Estuary English […]." (Rosewarne 1994a:6) Parsons' attempted clarification is only slightly more substantial:

> Als Anhaltspunkt mag die Beobachtung dienen, daß EE anscheinend eher eine zum Ende einer Aussage hin stetig fallende Intonationskurve bevorzugt und insbesondere eine Hebung auf dem letzten Wort einer Aussage, wie sie die RP kennt und die einen leicht dramatisierenden Effekt hat, abzulehnen scheint. So wird z.B. die Präposition in der Wendung *after all* gern betont, aber nur am Ende einer Aussage. (Parsons 1998:42f.)

The claim of a 'falling' intonation seems to contradict a well-documented[113] phenomenon, which is variously called 'upspeak', 'uptalk' or 'HRT' (for 'high rising terminals') and which is said to have been on a steady increase in recent years. 'Upspeak' etc. refers to the characteristic intonation pattern in which „declarative statements occur with yes/no question intonation" (Chambers 1998:127) – people unaccustomed to this feature often believe that the speaker intends to 'go on'. Usually employed „to emphasize speaker-hearer solidarity and to assist in the cooperative management of talk" (Britain 1992:98)[114], 'upspeak' is predominantly used by young people, and in particular by women.[115] Although this feature seems thus to be indicative of a major current change in progress, no one has so far suggested that it could be part of EE as well.[116] It may be that 'upspeak' is too universal a feature – it has been observed in nearly all English-speaking countries[117] – and, therefore, it is rather to be regarded as an example of a currently fashionable 'youth norm' with no particular regional base.[118]

Rosewarne's other claim about the prosody of EE is equally vague:

> The pitch of intonation patterns in Estuary English appears to be in a narrower frequency band than R.P. In particular, rises often do not reach as high a pitch as they would in R.P. The overall effect might be interpreted as one of deliberateness and even an apparent lack of enthusiasm. (Rosewarne 1994a:6)

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[113] See, for example, Guy [et. al.] (1986), Britain (1992), Hirschberg and Ward (1995) and Chambers (1998).
[114] further specified by Hirschberg and Ward (1995).
[115] cf. Britain (1992:84ff.).
[116] although this possibility was pointed out to Paul Kerswill and me by Prof. Guy Cook (University of Reading) in an informal conversation.
[117] cf. Chambers (1998:127).
[118] cf. Williams and Kerswill (1999), also chapter 2.4.

This ‘flat’ intonation of EE has also been observed by Parsons (1998:34) who draws a parallel between EE and earlier descriptions of American English.[119] Furthermore, the alleged „lack of enthusiasm“ mentioned by Rosewarne may also be a consequence of a reduced horizontal modulation in EE, in particular the minimising of pauses and the (sometimes exaggerated) lengthening of stressed vowels.[120] The result, according to Parsons (1998:34), is an intonation reminding of the well-known ‘drawl’ in (the south of) the United States. It is therefore likely that such intonation patterns have been responsible for the rating of a moderate EE speaker as a ‘typical American’ in Parsons’ study (1998:41,94).[121]

Rosewarne (1994b:6) also makes a couple of remarks about the general articulatory setting of EE, adapting the model introduced by Honikman (1964) which – although this is not explicitly stated – uses RP as a reference system:

> The EE articulatory setting is both more and less ‘English’ than RP. General muscular laxity of the organs of articulation, including the buccinator muscles, is even more marked in EE than RP. EE consonants, having less frequent alveolar contact, make EE less ‘English’ than RP if the Honikman model is applied.

Parsons specifies that it is lenition („Lenisierung“) of consonants which is most characteristic of the articulatory setting of EE:

> Unter Lenisierung versteht man einen Einfluß, der dazu führt, daß ein Konsonant mit weniger Kraftaufwand produziert wird: geringere Spannung, weniger vollständige Schließung der Artikulatoren, geringerer Luftdruck. […] Laut JENNER (1992) ist das hervorstechendste Merkmal der RP eine außergewöhnlich bewegliche Zungenspitze. Im EE scheint das Gegenteil der Fall zu sein; hier werden viele Konsonanten in reduzierter (lenisierter) Form realisiert, weil die Zungenspitze keinen oder geringeren Kontakt mit dem Zahndamm (oder dem Gaumen oder den Zähnen) herstellt, d.h. eine Lockerung des Verschlusses (der "Striktur") zwischen den Artikulatoren stattfindet. (Parsons 1998:49f.)

As long as there will be no thorough quantitative research about the suprasegmental features (as well as the articulatory setting) of EE, any general statement must needs remain vague and impressionistic. Nevertheless, this field of study is not to be neglected. As a matter of fact, it may well be that – in view of the perception of speech in particular – intonation patterns will eventually turn out to be at least as important as segmental differences.[122]

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[119] „[AmE und EE] haben einen relativ geringen Tonumfang und werden oft als *"flat"*, *"boring" oder "bored"* beschrieben. […] Pear (1931:17, 74, 152) spricht von der flachen Intonation vieler Amerikaner, die dazu führt, daß sie für unemotional oder gar unfreundlich gehalten werden. Ähnliche Kommentare werden häufig über das Estuary English abgegeben.“ (Parsons 1998:34 and note)

[120] cf. Parsons (1998:43).

[121] cf. above, note 105.

[122] cf. Parsons (1998:35).

2.2.4. Summary

By now, there can be no doubt that EE is a variety which cannot be easily grasped. The various commentators show significant differences in what they regard as the salient features of EE (e.g. the fluctuation of *-ing* or the GOAT split that are mentioned by Wells only) and they also differ in their perception of the spread of the individual features along the continuum. In this sense, it is extremely difficult to establish any clear 'trichotomy' Cockney–EE–RP. Some boundaries have doubtless a certain legitimation, i.e. with regard to intervocalic T-glottalling (EE-Cockney) or the 'Cockney diphthong shifts' (RP-EE). In general, though, no phonetic feature can be singled out as a marker of EE convincingly.

Furthermore, the notion of a 'typical' EE vocabulary is highly debatable, because the widespread use of many of the items referred to prevents their acceptance as markers of EE. It also depends on one's personal view of EE: If its definition as an *accent* is accepted, all lexical features would have to be excluded anyway and regarded as matters of style and register only. Moreover, non-standard grammatical features are still regarded (and stigmatised) as (near-)Cockney and thus do not extend far along the continuum (if at all). In that sense, they apply to a certain percentage of EE speakers only and, therefore, they have to be ruled out as potential markers of EE as well. Finally, although some aspects seem very promising indeed, no definitive statement about the suprasegmental features of EE can be made without due care.

To do justice to the EE 'pioneers', it has to be said that neither of them claims the variety to be defined by rigid boundaries. This is also admitted by Coggle (1993:70) who stresses the idea of the continuum:

> It should now be clear that Estuary English cannot be pinned down to a rigid set of rules regarding specific features of pronunciation, grammar and special phrases. A speaker at the Cockney end of the spectrum is not so different from a Cockney speaker. And, similarly, a speaker at the RP end of the spectrum will not be very different from an RP speaker. Between the two extremes is quite a wide range of possibilities, many of which, in isolation, would not enable us to identify a person as an Estuary speaker, but which when several are present together mark out Estuary English distinctively. (Coggle 1993:70)

It remains questionable, though, how a bundle of previously non-distinctive variables should suddenly turn into a set of distinctive markers of EE. In any case, the analysis of the constituent features of EE reveals the vagueness and confusion surrounding the concept which leave an enormous scope for various (mis-)interpretations.

2.3. Geographical and Sociolinguistic Aspects

In order to avoid the 'quagmire' of the constituent features of EE, several commentators have chosen to focus on its geographical and sociolinguistic aspects (cf. chapter 2.1.), which seem to play just as important a role in people's perception of the 'new' variety. In general, everybody tends to agree that EE is spreading, although any determination of its dissemination always depends on the particular concept of the variety that one has in mind. As for the geographical spread of EE, there appears to be a consensus in terms of its supposed 'heartland', which is generally held to comprise London and the adjacent 'Home Counties':

> The heartland of this variety still lies by the banks of the Thames and its estuary, but it seems to be the most influential accent in the south-east of England. In the decade since I started research into it, Estuary English has spread northwards to Norwich and westwards to Cornwall, with the result that it is now spoken south of a line from the Wash to the Avon. (Rosewarne 1994a:4)
> […] Estuary English can nowadays be heard throughout London and the Home Counties and well beyond. (Coggle 1993:23)

How far this „well beyond" actually extends, however, is a matter of debate. Rosewarne seems to take it for granted that the West Country is already part of the EE territory.[123] Coggle (1993:27), on the other hand, is more cautious: „it would not yet be true to claim that Estuary English has claimed cities like Bristol."[124] He is actually well-advised to do so, because amongst other distinctive features,[125] the south-west of England is best known as one of the last bastions of rhoticity (i.e. the pronunciation of post-vocalic /r/), a feature which one day used to be the norm in English pronunciation, but has been continuously receding in the course of the past centuries. EE might indeed have „helped to destroy the heavily pronounced *r* of rural accents" (Ezard 1993), since, allegedly, „former strongholds of postvocalic *r*, such as Winchester, Southampton […] and Bournemouth, have more or less fallen" (Coggle 1993:27).[126] Moreover, as „one is more likely to hear post-vocalic /r/s in the speech of older, working-class rural speakers than from younger middle-class urban speakers" (Hughes and Trudgill 1996:59), it may be „only a matter of time before this tendency [to shun post-vocalic /r/] extends to the whole of the West Country." (Coggle 1996:29)

This is actually where the drawbacks of EE lacking a sound definition become evident: There is no doubt that some of the EE features mentioned can occasionally be

[123] This claim is repeated in Rosewarne (1996:14).
[124] If Coggle's sketchy map (p. 28) is interpreted correctly, he seems to leave out Cornwall and Devon entirely, while Dorset, Somerset and Avon are at least partially affected by EE.
[125] e.g. the voicing of initial fricatives /f, θ, s, ʃ/ (cf. Wells 1982:343).
[126] As Wells (1982:341) observes, these cities seemed „to have more variable rhoticity or even none" well before the onslaught of EE.

heard in the West Country as well, but is a native Bristolian who uses a couple of glottals[127] and asks for „*somefink to eat*“[128] already an EE speaker? The same problem holds true with regard to the claim that „Estuary English may spread […] northwards to the Scottish border“ (Rosewarne 1994a:8). To do so, EE would need to overcome an even higher dialect hurdle, namely the so-called ‘*bath* and *love* boundary’.[129] Nevertheless, „there is some evidence to suggest that young people further north are adopting some of the features of Estuary English“ (Coggle 1993:27) and, allegedly, EE is already starting to get its grip on places like Birmingham, Derby or Leicester (cf. ibid.). Some people even claim (and, at the same time, regret) that EE has already spread into Scotland, according to a newspaper article:

> The quickfire Glaswegian patter that has baffled generations of visitors to Scotland's biggest city is being infiltrated by Estuary English. […] Early indications suggest that traditional Glaswegian will struggle to survive. The researchers say that the insidious [–note the tendentious adjective!] spread of Estuary English, which has its roots in Essex and Kent, has been felt in such cities as Derby, Newcastle and Hull. (Harris 1999)[130]

The evidence which has been put forward for this ‘infiltration’ of Glaswegian includes TH-fronting (which is usually excluded from EE!) and T-glottalling. The resulting ‘new’ variety is often referred to as ‘jockney’, a blend of *Jock* 'working-class Scot' plus *Cockney* 'working-class Londoner'.[131] Once again, it seems that EE is (mis-)taken for a synonym for Cockney. It is by no means sure, though, that the observed features actually have their origin in the south-east; the situation in Glasgow is far too complex to simply attribute any changes to an imminent invasion of EE.[132]

Rosewarne, initially, did not only deny a spread of EE into Scotland, but also any possible dissemination of the variety in English-speaking countries worldwide:

> I do not, however, foresee it being adopted in Scotland, Ireland, the United States, Canada, Australia or New Zealand. It is also debatable whether these features will spread to countries where English is spoken as a foreign or official language. (Rosewarne 1994a:8)

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[127] cf. Wells (1982:344).
[128] cf. Hughes and Trudgill (1996:78).
[129] cf. Wells (1982:335), Coggle (1993:27), Crystal (1995:325) and Trudgill (1990). Rosewarne probably refers to this boundary when speaking of „a line from the Wash to the Avon“ (Rosewarne 1994a:4).
[130] The article refers to a current research project at the University of Glasgow, coordinated by Jane Stuart-Smith and entitled *Accent Changes in Glasgow – A Sociophonetic Investigation*.
[131] cf. Wells’ comment to Harris’ article (<http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/estuary/glasgow.htm>) and Parsons (1998:53,69).
[132] As he regards this article as „a typical media-hype exaggeration“, Wells has added a couple of critical remarks (<http://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/home/estuary/glasgow.htm>) including some comments by Dr Stuart Smith which are illuminating. The respondents (generally working-class children) did indeed exhibit TH-fronting (although „with a high degree of variability“), L-vocalisation (the resulting vowel being „much more open“ than in EE) and glottalling („of course“), but, for example, no instance of EE „labial ‘r’“. Moreover, the vowels seemed to be „pretty ‘Scottish’“, so that „these children don’t sound as if they’re speaking Estuary English“.

Two years later, however, all restraint seems to have been shed: „EE (Estuary English) looks set to go international“ (Rosewarne 1996:13), although it is not entirely clear what he means by this. The most likely interpretation is that – being an EFL teacher – Rosewarne is not thinking of EE as the new World Standard English but of its suitability as a model of pronunciation in the teaching of EFL around the world:[133]

> […] this new variety may displace RP and become the reference accent for British English. […] The differences from standard English in grammatical structure and vocabulary are not sufficiently great to act as obstacles to the development of EE as an international variety. As a model for pronunciation, it has advantages for speakers of some languages, particularly oriental ones.“ (Rosewarne 1996:15f.)[134]

The problem with statements like the above is that they always work on the pretence of EE being a homogeneous entity. However, in the light of the incoherent (and often confusing) picture that the variety currently presents – even within England only –, it seems far too early to discuss any possible international prospects of EE.

Apart from the ‘horizontal’ (geographical) spread, EE is also believed to be spreading ‘vertically’, i.e. to nearly all levels of society:

> In practice it is difficult, if not impossible, to find any profession in which Estuary English speakers are not represented. (Coggle 1993:75)

According to Rosewarne and Coggle, ‘typical’ domains of EE include business circles (particularly in the City), the Civil Service and local governments, but also both sides of the House of Commons.[135] As it happens, many of these areas have traditionally been associated with RP, such as the medical professions and the academic world.[136] In the latter, EE is not only widespread among students, but it can be heard right across the academic career structure, i.e. spoken by professors, deans and even vice chancellors:[137]

> The days when practically all English university dons spoke Oxford English are well and truly gone. (Coggle 1993:75)

Another sphere of life in which EE speakers are said to be abounding is the world of TV[138] and radio – apparently with the exception of television newsreaders: „At the moment, RP is the most authoritative vehicle for newsreading.“ (Coggle 1993:76f.) On many

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[133] Incidentally, both Coggle (1998) and Wells (1999) advise EFL speakers to retain (modernised) RP as their model accent.
[134] „The /w/ sound in the EE pronunciation of such words as *little*, *middle* and *still* would be much easier for speakers of, for example, Cantonese, Mandarin, Japanese and French.“ (Rosewarne 1996:16)
[135] cf. Rosewarne (1994a:4f.).
[136] cf. Rosewarne (1994a:5) and Coggle (1993:74).
[137] cf. Coggle (1993:75).

other programmes, however, and on most of the commercial and local radio stations, EE speakers appear to be on the increase.[139] It seems that „Estuary English can appeal more successfully to a certain target audience than an RP accent" (Coggle 1993:78). The same holds true of advertising.[140]

Several public figures have been repeatedly singled out as EE speakers. Not surprisingly, many of them are famous media personalities, such as Janet Street-Porter,[141] Jonathan Ross or the comedian Paul Merton.[142] Others come from the areas of politics,[143] sports and popular culture – Morrish (1999) refers to EE as „the language of footballers, Spice Girls and DJs."[144] Some commentators even claim to have spotted EE speakers within the Royal Family: While the Queen, of course, is immune to it, her youngest son, Prince Edward, has repeatedly been heard using word-final glottal stops and vocalised /l/.[145] The late Princess of Wales is said to have been 'flirting' with it,[146] since her speech contained many of the features associated with EE.[147] In her case, though, the situation is not entirely clear – at least not from an EE point of view –, for she once was dubbed a typical 'Sloane Ranger' – the stereotypical label given to young upper-class women living in the West End of London and SW1.[148] Usually, their speech would come under the heading 'advanced RP'[149], and according to Coggle, 'Sloane-speak' is „increasingly perceived as exclusive and formal" and therefore not part of EE. (Coggle 1993:85) However, Diana later modified her speech towards a more demotic London variety (probably also to distance herself from her in-laws) and this probably gave rise to her being linked with EE.

Another long-term stereotype often heard in context with EE is its association with 'Essex Man' and 'Essex Girl'.[150] Unlike the 'Sloane Rangers', specimens of this category

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[138] cf. Gimson's (1989:86) comments on „[…] the recent more permissive attitude of the BBC (and of the commercial television companies) in their choice of announcers, several of whom now have markedly non-RP or non-British accents."
[139] cf. Coggle (1993:77).
[140] cf. Coggle (1993:78).
[141] Wells (1982:30), however, reports her as being „well-known for her strong Cockney accent".
[142] cf. Coggle (1993:78).
[143] Like the aforementioned Ken Livingstone and Lord Tebbitt.
[144] Given this description, there can be no doubt that Brooklyn, the recently born (4 March 1999) son of 'Spice Girl' Victoria Adams ('Posh Spice') and footballer David Beckham, will grow up to be the epitome of an EE speaker…
[145] cf. Wales (1994:6) and Wells (1997).
[146] cf. Rosewarne (1994a:3).
[147] cf. Ezard (1993) and Bradbury (1994), but also Wales (1994).
[148] cf. Wales (1994:6).
[149] cf. Crystal (1995:365); although a clear distinction between 'advanced RP' and EE has yet to be established.
[150] „*Essex Girl:* This is a derogatory stereotype of a young woman from Essex or the eastern parts of London who might work in a office in the City. She is the butt of jokes which portray her as being stupid, crass, loud and very sexually available. *Essex Man* is, in many ways, the male equivalent of Essex Girl. In jokes and stories he is seen as crass, rather dishonest, badly educated, right-wing politically and an aggressive driver. Whereas a Yuppy [sic] is

are usually rated among the speakers of EE (cf. Rosewarne 1996:13). Many of the negative attributes of this species have apparently been transferred to EE as a whole and contributed to its negative image in some sections of society.[151]

In general, though, the proverbial EE speaker is said to be young, middle (or upper) class, upwardly mobile[152], and – contrary to the belief of many newspaper columnists – in possession of a certain level of education.[153] Apparently, the popularity of EE among these youngsters has its origins in a desire to 'blend in', because EE enhances their 'street-credibility':[154] „A flavour of Estuary identifies them as being more ordinary and less privileged than they really are."[155] (Coggle 1993:86) With the help of their accent(s), they can easily pervade all levels of society. Jenkins (1999), also using Gwyneth Paltrow's performance in *Sliding Doors* as a starting point, illustrates the social polyvalence of this voice (while also suggesting another name for the phenomenon):

> [Gwyneth Paltrow] had studiously attuned [her voice] to that of an upwardly mobile west London career girl. Her "Notting Hill" English was a welding of a debased "Princess Diana" to the diphthongs of working-class London: "I've go'a'geh'on with my work." The voice is that of thousands of young people eager for a voice that can merge into the verbal Muzak of the city. They must pass muster at dinners and weddings, yet they will strangle their vowels and clip their consonants not to seem out of place in a pub or workplace. Tracing these chameleons across the map of London would test even a Henry Higgins.

According to Bex (1994), young people see this variety as „a marker of social identity that sets them apart from their parents and from those other groups from which they wish to distance themselves." Because EE blurs class differences and obscures social origins, it provides a solution to the dilemma many adolescents are facing nowadays: As neither traditionally approved 'mainstream' nor rebellious 'non-mainstream' behavioural patterns seem to be attractive *per se*, varieties like EE provide „a middle ground […] in which there is a desire to succeed along traditional lines but another to display egalitarian

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associated with BMW and Porsche, and Essex Man might drive a high-performance Ford car." (Rosewarne 1996:16)

151 Wells (1997) argues that this also might have been the trap that Mrs Shephard walked into: „Perhaps she had confused 'Estuary' with 'Essex', and with the sociological stereotype of Essex man, the well-paid ex-working-class philistine with more money than taste."

152 cf. Rosewarne (1994a:7).

153 This is also a condition for the acceptance of Wells' definition of EE as an accent following the rules of standard grammar: „Is there a formal style of Cockney that is distinct from EE? Tentatively, yes: Cockney is arguably the speech of the uneducated, who are unable to achieve standard grammar even where it might be called for; while EE speakers are those who can consistently use standard grammar with ease and fluency." (Wells 1994c)

154 cf. Coggle (1993:85) and Rosewarne (1994a:7).

155 Similar observations have also been made by Preston (forthcoming, a) in the United States, which indicates a universal trend towards more demotic varieties:

> „The young southeastern Michiganders […] have similar privilege, and, although we cannot know their various social status backgrounds, we can assume that their university status will have some effect on their later social position. The fact that they prefer a stigmatized variety to their own for affective characteristics suggests that they are not only changing their attitudinal perception […] but

principles, ones which require, on the linguistic front, the (at least partial) use of varieties seen as stigmatized." (Preston forthcoming, a) Such inclinations among young people towards intermediate varieties (flexible enough to be adjusted according to any particular setting) have been observed both in Britain (Rampton 1995) and the United States (Eckert 1989).[156]

This merging of varieties on egalitarian grounds has been interpreted by several commentators as an indication of a possible future classless British society.[157] Bradbury (1994) sees EE as „the classless argot […] or at any rate a language for talking easily across classes."[158] This 'levelling'[159] of dialects – a classic process of accommodation[160] – works from both ends of the spectrum: It is not only RP speakers who are trying to 'downgrade' their speech in order to be identified as 'one of us' rather than 'one of them'; Cockney speakers are similarly modifying their accent „to fit into a new geographic environment or to promote their social mobility." (Coggle 1993:26)[161] Nevertheless, to localise oneself successfully in this 'middle ground' seems to be a subtle process:

> There is a delicate path to tread between avoiding the negative connotations of conservative RP on the one hand and the totally different but equally negative connotations of broad Cockney on the other. A middle-of-the-road Estuary flavour seems to fit the bill. More and more people, and – significantly – more and more young people are finding their way to this middle ground. As Estuary English spreads, both geographically and socially, it may well become the broad meeting place, the common ground for a coming together of British society. (Coggle 1993:87)

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that they are also (potential) borrowers of norms from stigmatized speech communities in their own attempts to achieve a more casual, interpersonal style." (my italics)

[156] See Preston (forthcoming, a):
„In other words, in resolving the adolescent tension between mainstream and nonmainstream behavior, a linguistic option might be the use of "standard" English in settings which require that variety and a mixing of the speaker's native variety with perceived nonstandards in settings which require "casual" use. In short, I do not believe that the use of or preference for nonstandard (or stigmatized) varieties by adolescents is uniquely associated with the "anti-language" interpretation offered by Halliday (e.g., 1976) and apparently embedded in most interpretations of "covert prestige."'"

[157] cf. Rosewarne (1994a:8).

[158] Quoted by Milroy (1999:182).

[159] cf. Kerswill (e.g. 1996).

[160] cf. chapter 2.4.

[161] Similarly, Crystal (1995:327) regards EE as „the result of a confluence of two social trends: an up-market movement of originally Cockney speakers, and a down-market trend towards 'ordinary' (as opposed to 'posh') speech by the middle class."

In the geographical and social spread of EE, a number of factors have repeatedly been singled out as catalysts: The most effective among these is probably the ever-increasing mobility of people (in particular the movement of Londoners out of the capital), accelerated by the rehousing schemes after the Second World War:[162]

> Since World War II large numbers of Londoners have, for various reasons, moved out of the capital. Many took the opportunity of being rehoused when overspill building programmes were carried out after the war. Cockney speakers, particularly Eastenders, were uprooted and transplanted in large numbers to greenfield sites, mainly in the Home Counties, but sometimes as far away as Suffolk. Others left London when they retired and realised a dream of a lifetime by purchasing a bungalow by the seaside. The Sussex coast was favoured, but Kent and East Anglia also took their share of London's elderly. (Coggle 1993:24)

Another factor is the steady growth of comprehensive schools all over the country, gradually easing out the influence of the public schools:

> EE is almost certainly the result of the growth of comprehensive state schools, which were firmly established by the 1970s. From that decade onwards an overwhelming majority of teenage pupils, from all but the upper classes, found themselves studying together. RP-speaking pupils felt uncomfortably posh, while those with broad localisable accents felt rather unsophisticated, particularly the girls. The accent accommodation or levelling process which ensued led to the creation of EE. (Rosewarne 1996:13f.)

Although some of Rosewarne's observations – in particular those about supposed gender differences – seem to be a bit 'off-the-cuff', the levelling effect of the comprehensive schools is not to be underestimated, since peer group pressure as a corrective factor often outdoes the influence of parents and teachers.[163]

However, many non-linguists (and, quite likely, many linguists too) would probably name a different factor for the spreading of EE: It is the media – and television in particular – which are thought to be responsible for the present changes in British speech. 'The media are ruining English' and 'TV makes people sound the same'[164] – two well-known 'language myths' which are evidence for the general overrating of the media's influence on people's speech. In the case of EE, the immensely popular TV soap *EastEnders* is often named as the prime propagator of London features.[165] However, current linguistic research shows that reality is not that simple: Although „it may be that the media diffuse tolerance toward other accents and dialects" (Chambers 1998:129), their actual influence on sound changes (and also on grammatical changes) is negligible. In fact, it all seems to work the other way round:

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[162] See also Rosewarne (1994a:4).
[163] cf. Mugglestone (1995), esp. chapter 6 ('Educating Accents'), but also Trudgill (1975).
[164] These two 'language myths' are – among many others – explored in Bauer and Trudgill (1998).
[165] cf. Harris (1999): „The language of EastEnders has crept into the West of Scotland dialect […]."

> The media are […] linguistic mirrors: they reflect current language usage and extend it. […] Radio and television reproduce the various ways of speaking we hear around, they do not invent them. (Aitchison 1998:18f.)

In the end, it is only „in face-to-face interactions among peers" (Chambers 1998:129) that linguistic changes on a large scale can be conveyed.

The actual origins of such changes, however, are always highly difficult to be determined. Increasing mobility and comprehensive schools as linguistic melting pots might be decisive factors in the spread of the features associated with EE, yet neither of these have to be necessarily regarded as bearing sole responsibility for this process. Maybe it has to suffice to merely refer to a general advance of egalitarian tendencies in Britain and many other countries in the Western hemisphere; and the growing acceptance of more demotic, apparently classless varieties such as EE might simply be a mirror of a larger trend currently affecting society as a whole.[166]

[166] cf. Parsons (1998:67). Examples from other areas of life include the efforts at modernisation made (often involuntarily) by institutions traditionally based on hierarchical structures (such as the Royal Family and the armed forces, but also the universities) and also the growth of new concepts with no or 'flat' structures – the first and foremost of these being the World Wide Web, of course.

2.4. A Broader View on EE – Accommodation Theory and Dialect Levelling

The analysis of both the constituent and the sociolinguistic features of EE has produced a picture which is anything but clear. The lack of consensus about its properties – or, indeed, about its existence at all – is ample proof of the concept's artificiality:

> […] there is no such real entity as EE – it is a construct, a term, and we can define it to mean whatever we think appropriate. (Wells 1999).

The problems become obvious when the concept of EE is applied to individual speakers. The extremely fuzzy boundaries between EE and Cockney and between EE and RP in terms of phonological variables combined with the possibility of style/register variation make it nearly impossible to sort out „whether a particular bit of speech counts as EE or whether a particular speaker generally uses EE" (Maidment 1994). There is no cut-and-dried scheme to unambiguously identify someone as an EE speaker.

The concept of EE itself is only one attempt to come to grips with current developments in south-eastern speech. As undisputed these changes might be, nearly every commentator perceives and subsequently interprets them differently. McArthur's 'New London Voice', for example, has already been mentioned (cf. chapter 2.1.). Others, like Wells (1998b), adopt a larger perspective, observing a general 'downgrading' of RP under the influence of non-standard accents. Of course, Cockney is commonly regarded as the most important source of influence; in this context, Wells (1994a) also talks about a 'Cockneyfication' of RP. A similar 'linguistic dilution' – with a clear emphasis on its sociolinguistic background – is referred to by Gimson (1989:86):

> Moreover, it must be remarked that some members of the present younger generation reject RP because of its association with the 'Establishment' in the same way that they question the validity of other forms of traditional authority. For them a real or assumed regional or popular accent has a greater (and less committed) prestige. It is too early to predict whether such attitudes will have any lasting effect upon the future development of the pronunciation of English. But, if this tendency were to become more widespread and permanent, the result could be that, within the next century, RP might be so diluted that it could lose its historic identity and that a new standard with a wider popular and regional base would emerge.

Gimson's speculations leave open the possibility of a 'new' standard to emerge, in a way that, in broad outline, is reminiscent of EE.

Nevertheless, many people regard the concept of EE as a mere fad. This assumption implies that the use of EE features is simply a conscious affectation which can be directly fought against.[167] If this was the case, Bex (1994) argues that it would take no great efforts to eradicate it:

> If it is a fad, it will wither in the same ways as the mock Liverpudlian accent withered after the Beatles et al.

The other possibility he mentions, however, is probably more like the truth:

> If it represents a more permanent historical shift […], there is nothing [one] can do about it. (ibid.)

Quite certainly, EE has to be seen as part of a larger process affecting (southern) British speech as a whole.[168]

In chapter 2.3., it was mentioned that face-to-face communication is regarded as the main conveyor of linguistic changes.[169] Such interpersonal accommodation processes have been studied extensively:[170] The basic assumption of *accommodation theory* is that speakers can be expected to adjust (accommodate) aspects of their speech styles towards ('convergence'), or away from ('divergence'), those of their addressees.

Trudgill (1986) argues that accommodation theory could well be applied to accents and dialects as a whole:[171]

> From the perspective of the linguist, however, it is clear that accommodation can also take place between accents that differ regionally rather than socially, and that it can occur in the long term as well as in the short term. (Trudgill 1986:3)

EE itself can be viewed as the result of a long-term process of accommodation, whereby speakers shift to a 'middle ground' of pronunciation.[172] As they have to orientate themselves between two reference systems (RP and Cockney), the situation of EE speakers must be regarded as a very complex one – and any study shedding light on the actual processes involved would be warmly welcomed. In general, though, it seems that this 'middle ground' provides the EE speakers with an optimally balanced sphere in which

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[167] cf. Gillian Shephard's views on EE (cf. chapter 2.1.)

[168] cf. also Parsons (1998:72):

> „Es bleibt die Frage der Mode. Die Mode kommt und geht, wie der Minirock und Yod Coalescence, wie G Dropping und Plateausohlen. Ob Estuary English nur eine Mode ist, ein Zeichen der Zeit? Einerseits ist es nicht weit genug entfernt von RP, daß die aktuelle Entwicklung nicht rückgängig gemacht werden könnte. Andererseits handelt es sich nicht um eine sprachliche Marotte einer winzigen Minorität. Es ist südostbritisches Englisch, genau wie RP, und weithin verbreitet und akzeptiert."

[169] cf. Chambers (1998:129).

[170] See, for example, Giles, Howard, Taylor D.M. and Bourhis, R.Y. (1973):, Giles, Coupland, and Coupland, (eds.) (1991a) and Giles and Smith (1979).

[171] While *speech accommodation theory* (SAT) has in time developed into the broader, interdisciplinary *communication accommodation theory* (CAT), thus including non-verbal phenomena as well (cf. Giles, Coupland and Coupland 1991b:7), accommodation between dialects deals with specific linguistic variables only.

they gain best possible social reward (allowing them to fit into whatever social environment they desire) while at the same time keeping the social costs involved (the risk of losing one's identity by denying one's roots and origin) as low as possible.[173]

Such accommodation on a larger scale was named 'dialect levelling' by Trudgill (1986:98ff.) and subsequently applied by Kerswill and Williams[174] in their research on dialect contact phenomena in the 'new town' of Milton Keynes.[175] Apparently, the accent spoken by younger people in Milton Keynes exhibits many of the features claimed for EE.[176] Sometimes, EE has even been referred to as 'Milton Keynes English' (cf. Bradbury (1994) or Ascherson (1994)), thus suggesting that indeed some 'new' variety was emerging in this area.[177] However, the findings of Kerswill and Williams do not support this at all:

> […] it is very difficult to say that there is a distinctive variety growing up.
> (Kerswill 1994)

Rather, the variety spoken in Milton Keynes has to be seen as part of a larger process of dialect levelling across south-eastern England:[178]

> What we are witnessing is the phenomenon of *dialect levelling* and by extension *accent levelling*, a process whereby differences between regional varieties are reduced, features which make varieties distinctive disappear, and new features emerge and are adopted by speakers over a wide geographical area. (Williams and Kerswill 1999)

In the immediate post-settlement period, Milton Keynes inhabitants were confronted with a large stock of variants for a given linguistic unit (phonological, morphological or lexical). In the course of time, the number of such variants has been considerably reduced, with majority forms rather than minority forms being favoured and the use of marked regional forms steadily declining.[179] Broad London vowel features, for example, tend to be disfavoured by younger speakers, which coincides with a gradual decline of the proportion of London-born people amongst the inhabitants of Milton Keynes.[180]

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[172] cf. Rosewarne (1994a:7).
[173] On the concepts of social reward and social costs, see, for example, Giles, Coupland and Coupland (1991b:21f.) and Turner (1987).
[174] e.g. Kerswill, (1996) and Williams and Kerswill (1999). The Milton Keynes project focuses on the speech of four-, eight-, and twelve-year-old children and their caretakers. More recent studies involve the towns of Reading and Hull as well.
[175] The 'new towns' were designated after WW II to house one million people in satellite towns within 20 to 50 miles of the centre of London. Milton Keynes, designated in 1967, is the latest and largest among them.
[176] cf. Maidment (1994). Examples include T-glottalling in intervocalic (though this is supposed to be non-EE!) and final positions, and also labio-dental [ʋ] for /r/. (cf. Kerswill and Williams 2000a)
[177] Apparently, some residents talk about 'Milton Keynes Cockney' themselves (Kerswill 1996:295). In March 1999, Kerswill himself was credited with the term 'Roundabout English' in the Sunday Times to refer to the wonderful new distinct varieties in new towns all over the country. As he told me in an e-mail: „I'd never heard the term until I saw it in the paper! As for those new accents, well, it's the opposite of what I've been saying to them...".
[178] cf. Kerswill (1996:296ff.) and Kerswill and Williams (2000a).
[179] cf. Kerswill and Williams (2000a).
[180] cf. Kerswill and Williams (2000a).

> The result is a range of varieties used by the children – the natives of the new town – that contains fewer geographically marked forms than elsewhere. (Kerswill 1994)

These geographically 'neutral' varieties will undoubtedly be interpreted by some commentators as varieties of EE, although, for example, TH-fronting – which is increasingly favoured by young Milton Keynes speakers (cf. Williams and Kerswill 1999) – has been explicitly ruled out from EE (cf. chapter 2.2.1.). Furthermore, T-glottalling and the use of labio-dental /r/ are both found in many areas of Great Britain and „seem to constitute a set of 'youth norms'" (Williams and Kerswill 1999) rather than being markers of EE.[181] Therefore, the identification of Milton Keynes speech with EE is too simple an equation. Kerswill (1996:299) rejects the association of the Milton Keynes *koiné* with EE on similar grounds:

> It is tempting to suppose that what we have observed in Milton Keynes is a form of Estuary English, since both are geographically levelled forms of speech. This is misleading, since young people native to Milton Keynes between them presumably cover a range of speech types, both nonstandard and standard, that is similar to that found in other towns. If the Milton Keynes nonstandard speakers do sound more Estuary English-like than their compeers elsewhere, this is because of the special sociolinguistic situation here, involving much more intensive dialect contact than in other parts of the south-east. What we see is possibly a sign of future changes in English: new towns are perhaps in the vanguard of the dialect levelling found in England as a whole. (Kerswill 1996:299)

What happens in Milton Keynes (and in many other towns, not only in the south-east) is a mixing of variants of particular linguistic variables, the use of which being guided by a number of principles which have been worked out by Kerswill and Williams (2000a) and which are responsible for the direction any (current) linguistic change is taking.[182]

This is probably where a further relationship with the concept of EE comes in: Speakers of EE and the alleged Milton Keynes *koiné* alike are said to be choosing at will – though not always consciously, of course – from a given set of variants. This suggestion has induced Maidment (1994) to take a different approach to EE (thereby proposing another new name as well):

> An alternative explanation is that the perception of formality and informality has changed and that, in this post-modern age, it is quite acceptable to pick and mix accents. Perhaps, we ought to call this new trend Post-Modern English, rather than Estuary English. This is a suggestion I make with my tongue only slightly in my cheek. (Maidment 1994)

[181] The percentage of TH-fronting in Hull, for example, roughly corresponds to the one found in Milton Keynes, especially among working-class children (cf. Williams and Kerswill 1999). In the context of 'youth norms', see also the paragraph on 'upspeak' (chapter 2.2.3.).

[182] Like, for example, the increasing preference for unmarked, 'neutral' forms (cf. Kerswill and Williams 2000a) which would lead to the 'middle ground' allegedly aimed at by EE speakers (cf. chapter 2.3.).

Similarly, Coggle has been reported as describing EE as „an 'off-the-shelf' mode of pronunciation from which speakers could pick sounds they thought would move them up or down socially."[183]

Nevertheless, a great number of the variants currently preferred have their origin in popular London speech. This central role of London as the main source of influence on south-eastern dialect levelling and British speech in general has been referred to by many commentators (although the Milton Keynes data do not unambiguously support this idea of a one-way traffic). Matthews, for example, stated as early as 1938:

> Cockney […] has been the most important of all non-standard forms of English for its influence upon accepted speech ever since accepted speech emerged. (Matthews 1938:232)

The tendency of features of popular London speech to spread out geographically and socially „has been going on for five hundred years or more" (Wells 1997). „Today's London English is England's English tomorrow" (Jenkins 1999), and EE seems to be merely a continuation of this process (cf. Rosewarne 1984).

The exact nature of the relationship between EE and larger processes of (south-eastern) dialect levelling will probably continue to be a matter of debate. Nevertheless, it is clear that the concept of EE cannot be dealt with in isolation but has to be embedded in a long-standing tradition of dialect change. In this light, the creation of EE as an individual concept appears less an inevitable necessity than a purely arbitrary construct.

The artificiality and vagueness of the concept has given rise to the accusation that EE is just another example of journalistic exaggeration that has eventually created a disproportionate hype. The appeal of EE to the media is an essential part of the concept (although probably neither of its pioneers intended it to be). As a matter of fact, most publications on EE have appeared in the form of newspaper articles. However, the relationship with the media that EE has entered into is an ambivalent one: Although the term has been widely diffused by means of mass communication, the media are also to be held responsible for much of the confusion surrounding the concept. Of course, this is not particularly surprising, as any kind of supposed changes in British speech are always likely to create headlines[184] and, most usually, a subsequent outcry by the public.

[183] cf. Ezard (1993).
[184] cf. the above-mentioned anecdote about 'Roundabout English' (note 177) – a mere journalist's figment of the imagination!

The „strong purist reaction“ (Crystal 1995:327) provoked by EE has been interpreted by Maidment (1994) as yet another severe outbreak of what he calls the ‘Disgusted-of-Tunbridge-Wells Syndrome’:

> For those of you unfamiliar with this, Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells [DTW] is a mythical figure, very probably ex-military or married to such, retired, living in Tunbridge Wells in Kent, a town, so I'm told, amply supplied with inhabitants of this sort. DTW's main hobby in retirement is writing outraged letters to the local and national newspapers, complaining about everything imaginable, or at least everything that might imaginably be tinged with [the] slightest whiff of left wing, or even moderate political views. One thing that DTW is hot on is the purity of the English language. […] Nothing is likely to enrage DTW more than the suggestion that the standard language which he/she holds so dear, the grail of which he/she sees him/herself the guardian, is being usurped by the usage of people who are NOT OUR CLASS.

As any linguist knows, the verbal broadsides delivered by members of this and similar species are entirely unfounded because no linguistic feature carries an intrinsic value. Rather, they mirror a mental image of ‘the good language’ which is looming at the back of most people’s minds.[185] As we have seen, this image is neither coherent nor is it likely to be the same for any two people. Nevertheless, it is usually as powerful as it is tenacious.

In Britain, „everyone […] has a mental image of RP, even though they may not refer to it by that name and even though the image may not be very accurate.“ (Wells 1982:279) Could this statement also hold true for EE? To find out more about this, the second part of this paper will explicitly approach the phenomenon from this angle: As all attempts at defining EE ‘from within’ seem to be unsatisfactory, the focus will be shifted to people’s perceptions of the ‘new’ variety. In short: What does the mental image of EE look like? Will it prove coherent enough to justify the concept?

[185] cf. Preston (1998a).

PART II: PERCEPTIONS OF ESTUARY ENGLISH

3. Perceptual Studies of Estuary English so far

Given the large spectrum between Cockney and RP that EE is said to cover, Rosewarne has observed a surprisingly negative image of EE:

> If the reactions of many members of the British public to articles and programmes on EE are representative, then it is widely regarded as an unattractive and 'lazy' way of speaking. (Rosewarne 1994b:6)

Rosewarne (1996:13) blames the press for this, because it „has generally given a less complete and rather confusing picture" by taking EE as an alternative term for Cockney (cf. above). However, the accuracy of this picture is by no means clear, since neither press reports nor subsequent letters to the editor can be taken as representative *per se.* Most of the comments on the perception(s) of EE are based on anecdotal snapshots like the following account by Coggle (1993:92):

> Unfortunately, Estuary English is sometimes held in low esteem by those who speak it. Examples of self-denigration abound. For instance, I often use those of my students who are native speakers of Estuary English as informants. I explain that I am interested in their accent and, when asked to do so, point out the features which mark them out as Estuary English speakers. Invariably, I am asked for advice as to how they might 'improve' their speech and for more information on what they are doing 'wrong'. There is rarely any feeling of pride in being an Estuary English speaker. In fact, one of my students on hearing the playback of a recording of herself in seminar discussion was shocked and horrified that she sounded so 'common'.

Although such incidental observations might be indicative of certain trends, systematic studies of native speakers' mental images of EE are still lacking.

In the past few years, Rosewarne has carried out a couple of attitude tests on EE[186], but his studies focus on non-native learners and teachers of English exclusively. In general, EE is rated significantly lower than both RP and GenAm (the two main reference accents of English). The methodological basis of Rosewarne's findings, however, is not entirely clear.[187] A different study by Scott, Green and Rosewarne (1997) – reported by Parsons (1998:68f.) – warns that the low estimate in which EE is held internationally might even result in economic repercussions: If EE was indeed to become the *lingua franca* in business communication in Great Britain,[188] business people abroad might

[186] cf. Rosewarne (1994a:8) and Scott, Green and Rosewarne (1997).
[187] Rosewarne (1994a:8) gives the following figures: RP: 83.88, General American: 70.05, Australian English: 59.09, and Estuary English: 57.45. No further information about the design of the study is given at all.
[188] cf. its alleged popularity „in business circles, particularly in the City" mentioned by Rosewarne (1994a:4).

eventually prefer not to deal with their British partners because they do not like their accent.[189]

Parsons' own study – again, carried out with non-native speakers of English only, in this case with EFL learners in Germany – gives a slightly more differentiated picture:

> Hier waren unter den Stimuli vier RP-Sprecher verschiedener Ausprägung und ein (nach Wells typischer) EE-Sprecher. Während insgesamt der Vorzug (gemäßigtem) General American sowie neutraler bis fortgeschrittener RP gegeben wurde, schnitt das, was von englischen Kontrollpersonen als "upper-crust" bezeichnet wurde, in jeder Hinsicht schlechter ab als alle anderen getesteten Varietäten, wie auch eine RP-Stimme vom Typ "commanding voice" zwar hohe Wertungen bei Kompetenz-Merkmalen erzielte, ansonsten aber als sehr negativ wahrgenommen wurde. Der EE-Sprecher hingegen schnitt zwar bei den meisten Merkmalen nicht so gut ab wie die bevorzugten Sprecher der Varietäten, die noch immer als Standard gelten, aber in jedem Fall oberhalb des neutralen Mittelwertes und besser als die markierten Varietäten der RP. Interessant ist, daß dieser EE-Sprecher in bezug auf Ästhetik fast ebenso gute Werte erzielte wie der am besten bewertete RP-Sprecher, weit höhere als die übrigen drei RP-Sprecher. (Parsons 1998:94)

The drawback of this study is that only one EE speaker was selected to be compared to various sorts of RP speakers. With regard to the continuum of EE, it would have been very informative to test the acceptability of EE speakers from various positions on the spectrum. Parsons' study, though, can nevertheless serve as a foil to compare any subsequent findings with.

Due to the lack of material in this area, the study described in the following chapters was designed to explicitly address the concept of EE, thereby focusing on native speakers only. The first aim of the study was to find out to what extent both the term 'Estuary English' and the underlying concept are known among the British population. Secondly, the nature of any kind of 'mental image' of EE should be established. Lastly, speakers were asked to express their attitudes to different kinds of voices, including a number of EE speakers from various positions on the continuum. It was hoped that this procedure would also shed some light on the question of the 'borders' of EE.

Although such a study with an explicit focus on native speakers' attitudes towards EE is probably a novelty, its methodological background is to be found in two well-established (and interrelated) disciplines – *Social Psychology* and *Perceptual Dialectology*. Both

[189] Parsons (1998:69) tells the following anecdote:

> „So unwahrscheinlich das klingt, berichtet doch einer meiner RP-Informanten, der im Zuge seiner Arbeit Telefon-Befragungen mit führenden Vertretern der Industrie in aller Herren Länder durchführen muß, von seiner Entdeckung, daß diese mehr und bessere Informationen liefern, wenn er seinen Akzent etwas mehr markiert ("by articulating more to the front of the mouth")."

of these (insofar as they are relevant for the following study) will be briefly outlined in the next chapter.

4. Methodological Background – Social Psychology and Perceptual Dialectology

The main concern of traditional dialectology has always been the geographical variation of linguistic forms, as manifested, for example, in the *Survey of English Dialects* (SED) and subsequent publications.[190] Although modern dialectology has additionally acknowledged the necessity of taking into account the speakers' social backgrounds as well, the primary focus has generally remained on speakers' output – what Bloch and Trager (1942:40) called the „facts of speech":

> The native speaker's feeling about sounds or about anything else is inaccessible to investigation by the techniques of linguistic science, and any appeal to it is a plain evasion of the linguist's proper function. The linguist is concerned solely with the facts of speech. The psychological correlates of these facts are undoubtedly important; but the linguist has no means – as a linguist – of analyzing them.[191]

For a long time, linguistic research had been dominated by purism of this kind, as no methods to determine the 'psychological correlates' were deemed empirically and statistically valuable. It took the work of social psychologists to renew linguists' interest in the affective dimensions of different speech styles. Lambert [et. al.] (1960) developed a first paradigm to evaluate respondents' attitudes to different languages[192] or their varieties[193] using quantitative methods adapted from sociology.[194] The aim of their *language attitude tests* was „to determine the significance spoken language has for listeners by analyzing their evaluational reactions to [languages or their varieties]" (Lambert [et. al.] 1960:44); in other words, to examine the (social and personal) value judgements respondents make about speakers on the basis of their speech. The prototypical method of this kind of research is the so-called *matched-guise technique* (MGT) in which one speaker imitates all (or at least several of) the varieties in question in order to minimise the influence of para- or non-verbal features.

The MGT has been criticised for several reasons:[195] First and foremost, it has been argued that the fabricated voice samples were merely „gross, stereotypical imitations of varieties" (Preston forthcoming, a) instead of authentic representations of actual speech. Thus exploiting existing stereotypes, speakers might „project a particular type of personality when they assume an accent" (Strongman and Woosley 1967:165) and often include

[190] e.g. Orton [et. al.] (1978), Kolb [et. al.] (1979) or Upton and Widdowson (1996). For a general discussion of linguistic atlases, see Kirk [et. al.] (1985).
[191] quoted by Labov (1966:8).
[192] Lambert [et. al.] (1960) analysed Canadians' evaluational reactions to English and French.
[193] cf. Tucker and Lambert (1969).
[194] cf. Parsons (1998:86).
[195] See, for example, Giles and Ryan (1982) for a summary of the criticism.

not only phonetic, but also supposed prosodic features of the desired variety as well.[196] On the other hand, the desire to exclude all para- and non-linguistic features might (unwittingly) also lead to the alteration (or even ignoring) of certain features which could, eventually, turn out to be essential for any judgements of spoken language.[197] In this respect, researchers might anticipate later findings and even exert considerable influence on them.

Moreover, many language attitude studies do not sufficiently take into account respondents' characteristics (i.e. their social backgrounds and cognitive strategies).[198] As 'accent' is often said to be 'in the listener' only (cf. Spencer 1957) – after all, one of the most tenacious 'language myths' is the belief that 'everyone has an accent except me'[199] –, this omission has sometimes been regarded as a serious drawback of this type of research. The legitimisation of this objection is not to be doubted. However, one should also beware of creating artificial worlds by compiling samples consisting of very specific social groups only. In the end, all kinds of mental images (or stereotypes) of language varieties in any given speech community are eventually based on the perceptions (and judgements) of **heterogeneous** groups of individuals. Therefore, criticism of the above kind should not prevent future research on language attitudes altogether.

In Great Britain, several studies have adapted Lambert's methods. Strongman and Woosley (1967) attempted to explore the north-south divide by comparing the reactions to Yorkshire and London accents, while Cheyne (1970) gave Scottish and English regional accents as stimuli.[200] Both studies observed certain differences in terms of 'status' and 'solidarity' – southerners, in general, were rated more favourably at the former, northerners at the latter. Nevertheless, existing stereotypes were not entirely confirmed, as the differences were not as significant as it might have been expected: „These results do not seem to favour either the Yorkshire or the London speakers." (Strongman and Woosley 1967:167)

The *semantic differentials* employed in these early studies focused on the speakers' supposed personality traits only; the voices as such – e.g. in terms of 'standardness' – were

[196] cf. Parsons (1998:89). Later studies (e.g. Giles 1979) attempted to embed the stimuli in situational contexts in order to achieve 'more natural' conditions.
[197] „It is entirely possible that so-called extraneous variables (e.g. speech rate, pitch and lexical diversity) in accent studies, for example, can alter what may have been erroneously regarded previously as the fundamental social meaning of accents." (Giles & Ryan 1982:210; quoted by Parsons 1998:88).
[198] cf. Parsons (1998:89).
[199] cf. Esling (1998).
[200] Both studies were based on the matched-guise technique. Strongman and Woosley (1967:165) sought to mitigate the possible disadvantages in two ways: „First, a very neutral, factual passage was used. Secondly, the speakers were directed to try to assume the same personality in both instances" – a rather naive hope, it seems.

not explicitly rated.[201] Giles (1970) went one step further by including dimensions of 'aesthetic content', 'communicative content' and 'status content'[202] when analysing the reactions to fifteen different British accents. In general, RP was rated highest in terms of status and aesthetic appeal, although, for example, Cockney was considered more pleasant than a German accent or 'affected RP'.[203] Apart from the voice samples, Giles (1970) also submitted so-called 'conceptual stimuli' to his respondents, i.e. he merely gave them the names of several native and foreign accents ('Cockney', 'Brummie', etc.) to elicit people's 'mental images' of the respective accents. It turned out that there was little correlation between the reactions to the auditory and to the conceptual stimuli. This suggests that the factors determining the conscious and subconscious assessment of speech are extremely complex and therefore difficult to grasp. Kerswill and Williams (2000b) give a list of such factors which emphasises the predominance of the listener's cognition (and not the speaker's production) in the processes of recognition and assessment.[204]

Giles' (1970) analysis of conceptual stimuli is part of a tradition which has often been marginalised by 'mainstream' linguistics: In 1966, Hoenigswald established the term *folk linguistics* to plead for a systematic study of non-linguists' overt beliefs about language and its use.[205] Knowledge of the folk categories of language, it was argued, might not only serve as a valuable complement to language attitude and other dialectological studies, it might also – and in particular – shed further light on (otherwise often apparently unmotivated) processes of language change. (On the lexical level, folk etymology is an acknowledged factor in such change, cf. Wakelin (1972:71ff.) and Aitchison (1991:176ff.).) Hoenigswald's claim, however, went nearly unheeded in linguistics; it only met with a certain response in the ethnography of communication (e.g. Hymes 1974).

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[201] Lambert [et. al.] (1960) used the following categories: 'Height', 'Good Looks', 'Leadership', 'Sense of Humour', 'Intelligence', 'Religiousness', 'Self-confidence', 'Dependability', 'Entertainingness', 'Kindness', 'Ambition', 'Sociability', 'Character' and 'Likability'.

[202] cf. Parsons (1998:87).

[203] cf. Parsons (1998:93).

[204] Although the list given by Kerswill and Williams (2000b) has been drawn up mainly in the context of dialect recognition, the factors mentioned could well be adapted to the process of accent/dialect evaluation too. They are:

1. The life experience of the judges (relating especially to whether they social networks are close-knit or open, and to whether they as individuals have been socially and geographically mobile).
2. The absolute linguistic differences between the varieties being offered for recognition, and the differences between these and other varieties known to the judges. This factor will itself be affected by the *salience* of the features differentiating them or […] their *availability* for perception and comment, and the *accuracy* and *detail* with which they are perceived.
3. The sociolinguistic maturity of the judges (relating mainly but not exclusively to age).
4. The subjective perceived social attractiveness of the speaker due to paralinguistic factors (voice quality, tempo, pitch range, content) which one might presume to be unrelated to the identification of the varieties.

[205] Hoenigswald's approach is summarised in Preston (1993b:334) and Preston (1989a:2).

Labov's studies on Martha's Vineyard[206] and in New York City (1966) give evidence of the importance of people's attitudes as motors of linguistic change.[207] Consequently, as one of the goals of sociolinguistic research, he lists „[…] a record of overt attitudes towards language, linguistic features and linguistic stereotypes" (Labov 1984:33)[208], but he has not pursued it further. Preston (1989a:13) summarises that „in general, although the suggestion has been around for some time, extensive collection of linguistic caricatures, particularly imitations of them in natural settings, [has] not been […] carried out."

Outside the Anglo-Saxon world, however, prototypical methods for analysing non-linguists' taxonomies of regional dialect distribution were suggested by Weijnen as early as 1944.[209] In a dialect survey of the Netherlands, respondents were asked to answer the following questions: '1) In which places in your area does one speak the same or about the same dialect as you do?' and '2) In which places in your area does one speak a definitely different dialect than you do?'[210] The results were subsequently turned into perceptual maps of Dutch-speaking dialect areas (cf. Rensink 1955:22)[211] by means of the *little arrow method* ('Pfeilchenmethode') devised by Weijnen.[212]

Grootaers (1959) carried out a similar survey in Japan which focused entirely on the perceived dialect differences between neighbouring communities.[213] Again, the answers were turned into maps on which dark lines of varying thickness indicated the various degrees of perceived dialect boundaries.[214] Grootaers' findings showed clearly that the factors shaping the subjective dialect consciousness must be sought outside linguistics:

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[206] cf. Labov (1972:1-42).
[207] cf. Crystal (1995:334).
[208] quoted by Preston (1989a:13).
[209] cf. Weijnen (1968:594).
[210] cf. Rensink (1955:20), reported by Preston (1989a:4).
[211] For a reproduction of Rensink's map, see appendix A.
[212] cf. Preston (1989a:5ff.), including a couple of more recent maps by Kremer (1984) illustrating the 'little arrow method'.
[213] The questions asked by Grootaers (1959:356) were:

A. Does the language spoken in this hamlet differ in any way from that of the neighboring hamlet (name here the hamlets in the vicinity, one by one in all directions, going progressively further and further):
   1. no difference
   2. a slight difference
   3. a noticeable difference
   4. almost not intelligible.

B. Are there peculiar words or pronunciations in this place which are wellknown to the neighboring hamlets?

C. Only from hearing somebody speak, can you tell from which hamlet he comes?

[214] See appendix A for examples of Grootaers' maps.

> Our conclusion is that the dialect consciousness of the average speaker has no linguistic fundament. It is based essentially on an elusive feeling fostered by community life, it is of essentially transient nature, because a change in village administration, if lasting approximately for one human life span, suffices to give it a new shape. (Grootaers 1959:384)

According to Weijnen (1968), however, the reason for the discrepancy between subjective dialect boundaries and production dialect findings is partly to be sought in Grootaers' method:

> Grootaers […] mußte auf Grund einer falschen Fragestellung notwendig zu anderen Ergebnissen gelangen als Rensink und ich. […] Man kann einfache Leute nicht sagen lassen, wo Dialektgrenzen in größerer Entfernung laufen; in einem solchen Fall sind Irrtümer unvermeidlich. Und da in ihrer nächsten Umgebung nun einmal immer Unterschiede bestehen, ist die Wahrscheinlichkeit, daß auf die Frage, ob sie Unterschiede mit dem Dialekt des Nachbardorfs heraushören, eine bejahende Antwort erfolgt, erfahrungsgemäß sehr groß. […] Vielmehr soll man die Leute befragen, wo eben übereinstimmende Dialekte gesprochen werden. (Weijnen 1968:595)

It is unlikely, though, that a study of perceived dialect differences will yield results which are significantly different from one of dialect similarities. In any case, the apparent differences between people's mental dialect maps and dialectologists' surveys should not be taken as a cause for regret, but as a challenge for further study.

Contemporary research on dialect perception, however, does not derive from such early linguistic work only. In the 1960s and 1970s, cultural geographers „have come to believe that there is value in folk perceptions of space and have asked respondents to draw their own maps." (Preston 1989a:14) In particular, the work of Ladd (1967) and Orleans (1967) reveals significant differences in the perception of the same geographical areas by different ethnic groups. Other – often less serious – attempts thrive on people's stereotypes and prejudices, as, for example, the Doncaster and District Development Council's caricature of Londoners' perceptions of the North (cf. appendix A).[215]

Since the early 1980s, Preston's work[216] in the United States has established the study of mental maps and related methods as an accepted and increasingly popular field of dialectology. Commonly referred to as *Perceptual Dialectology* (PD), it assembles a number of techniques which aim at complementing traditional linguistics by providing an account of what speakers from different backgrounds overtly believe about linguistic variation:

[215] A collection of mental maps is given by Gould and White (1974). The Doncaster and District Development Council's map of Londoners' perceptions of the North is also reproduced by Preston (1989a:15).
[216] e.g. Preston (1989a,b; 1993b; 1996; 1997 and 1998a).

> I might note that such study […] enhances both theoretical and applied linguistics — the first by making linguists aware of categories and concepts which are real for the folk but perhaps not carefully attended to (if at all) in previous work by scientists; the latter by equipping "linguistic engineers"[217] with a knowledge of the language beliefs of communities in which they work, a surely empowering knowledge (as would be, for example, a doctor's knowledge of folk beliefs about medicine in the community he or she hoped to serve). (Preston 1998b)

The principal methods of PD can be summarised as follows (a more detailed description is given by Preston (1993b)):

1) Respondents are asked to draw boundaries on a blank map around areas where they believe the regional speech zones of any given country to be. Additionally, respondents are encouraged to label these areas with any term they consider appropriate to describe the variety spoken there (e.g. Preston 1989b and Hartley and Preston 1999).
2) Respondents rank the different areas of a given country (e.g. states in the US or counties in Great Britain) on a scale from 1 to 10 in terms of 'correctness' and 'pleasantness' (e.g. Preston 1989b and forthcoming, a).
3) Respondents rank these areas on a scale from 1 to 4 for the perceived degree of dialect difference from the home area (1='same', 2='a little different', 3='different' and 4='unintelligibly different'). (e.g. Preston 1989b and 1996, also Hartley and Preston 1999).
4) Respondents are asked to identify a number of voice samples from different areas, either a) by assigning each voice to the same number of sites given on a map or b) by merely indicating where they believe each voice is from (e.g. Preston 1989b, also Kerswill and Williams 2000b).

(adapted from Preston 1996)

Additionally, non-linguists are interviewed expressly about their overt notions about language (cf. Preston 1994 and 1996). Subsequently, content-orientated analyses of such conversations seek to reveal the underlying patterns of non-specialists' beliefs about language and the dynamic processes governing them. Preston (1998b) distinguishes three types of such „language about language" (ibid.):

- All conscious comments about language, e.g. any direct reference – often in the form of imitation – to other people's use of lexical items, their pronunciation or intonation, but also all kinds of reactions to (and judgements on) others' speech have been given the label METALANGUAGE 1. This includes the previously mentioned elicitation of language attitudes, in particular those „which awaken recognition of a caricaturistic sort". (Preston 1998b)
- METALANGUAGE 2, on the other hand, comprises all utterances which merely refer to the use of language, esp. in reported speech (*Bill said he was hungry*) or in expressions like *in other words*, *can you say that more clearly*, or *do you understand me?*[218] According to Preston (1998b), such utterances „[do] not appear to have the heavy consciousness requirement of *Metalanguage 1*", and the distinction is mainly topical: „In *Metalanguage 1* use, language is what the sentence (or conversation) is about (however briefly); in *Metalanguage 2* use, language is referred to, but it is not what the sentence or discourse is about." (ibid.) Consequently, *Metalanguage 2* plays only a minor role in PD.

[217] Preston (1998a) defines 'linguistic engineers' as „any whose job it is to implement in society projects based on scientific findings", especially teachers.
[218] examples taken from Preston (1998b).

- Investigations of *Metalanguage 1*, however, should eventually lead to the presuppositions which lie behind such use and which are shared by the members of any given speech community: „I will call such shared folk knowledge about language METALANGUAGE 3." (Preston 1998b) Such *Metalinguistic 3* beliefs – e.g. 'Well-educated speakers will speak 'correctly'.'[219] – eventually govern all overt and covert responses to and comments about language.

In such terms, the aim of this paper is the evaluation of the *Metalinguistic 3* concept(s) of EE by analysing *Metalinguistic 1* utterances on British accents and dialects.

While these methods and concepts form the groundwork of PD, recent studies (e.g. Preston 1997) have broadened its scope and refined its methodology. A selection of these are assembled in Preston (forthcoming, b) and Long and Preston (forthcoming), including research on perceptual varieties in Japan, Germany, France or Turkey. In Great Britain, Inoue (1995 and 1996) focuses on the notion of 'dialect image', i.e. the classification of varieties of BrE by means of certain 'evaluative words' (similar to the 'semantic differentials' introduced by Lambert [et. al.] (1960), but without actually providing speech samples) in a technique reminiscent of Giles' (1970) use of 'conceptual stimuli'. Inoue (1996:159) argues that the study of 'dialect image' should become an essential analytical tool in PD, as people's conceptions of dialects are not based on geographical aspects alone:

> Maps can only inadequately show the real structure of a dialect image, which should be understood multidimensionally.

This corresponds, of course, to Preston's plea for intensified qualitative research on respondents' *Metalanguage 1* which should eventually yield to a better understanding of underlying *Metalanguage 3* beliefs.

Such a multidimensional understanding of the concept of EE is also the goal of the study described in the following chapters. Combining the above-mentioned traditions of Social Psychology and Perceptual Dialectology, it aims at giving a more complete picture of EE by including non-linguists' views of the phenomenon as well. Such a 'marriage of convenience' of several approaches is in line with Preston's suggestion of a multi-faceted programme of research on Standard (in his case: US) English which ought to involve:

> (1) descriptions of the structure of varieties used in various areas by well-educated speakers and writers (local "functional-performance" standards);
> (2) ethnographic accounts of nonlinguists' opinions about standard language – its shape, use, origin, and provenience;

[219] Preston's example (1998b).

(3) language attitude surveys of nonlinguists' reactions to a variety of regional standard and nonstandard voice samples;
(4) determination of where respondents believe taped voice samples are from;
(5) determination of nonlinguists' categories of areal language distribution, a "perceptual" rather than production "dialectology"; and
(6) ratings of the "correctness" and "pleasantness" of areas (with no voice stimulus).

(Preston 1989b:329f.)

Items (1) and (2), dealing explicitly with non-linguists' perceptions of 'standard language', seem (in such a general context) to have only minor relevance to EE at this point – although the question of its becoming the future Standard English is, of course, an essential one. However, as we are still at the stage of establishing the nature of the concept, the methodological backbone of this study will be formed by items (3), (4) and (5) – together with Preston's concept of speakers' overt 'metalanguage'.

5. Design of the Study

5.1. The Sample

In March 1999, the author led several group interviews in various places and settings around Britain with a total number of 84 participants. Initial sessions took place at the Department of Linguistic Science at the University of Reading with a total number of seven students.[220] The bulk of respondents, however, consisted (mostly) of non-linguists from all over Britain who at that time took part in so-called 'National Trust Volunteer Holidays'[221] – 73 people in total. A further four respondents were interviewed at the YMCA section in Reading. Unless explicitly stated, their data will usually be added to the ones of the National Trust volunteers'.[222] A general summary of respondents' institutional backgrounds is given in table 2 (the complete list of respondents and their biographical data can be found in appendix B):

	National Trust	YMCA Reading	University of Reading	Total
Male	36	3	1	40
Female	37	1	6	44
Total	73	4	7	84

Table 2: Summary of respondents' institutional backgrounds

Why choosing the National Trust (NT) as a partner for this study? The advantages were many: First of all, visiting these National Trust Holiday Camps promised an efficient way of gathering a substantial amount of data within a relatively short period, as each camp usually hosts between six and twelve volunteers. Moreover, respondents' willingness to take part in the survey could be expected to be quite high – after all, the scheme is called 'National Trust Working *Holidays*' which implies a certain amount of leisure time.[223] As the NT volunteers usually come from all kinds of geographical and social backgrounds, they represent a fairly good cross-section of the British population: Although the majority of the respondents will probably have to be regarded as more or less

[220] Originally, the interviews conducted at the University of Reading were intended to serve as something of a pilot study. However, as the turnout was rather low (not even the offered monetary bribe proved to be enticement enough) and no major snags in the procedure seemed to emerge, it was decided to include these students' data in the final evaluation as well. No subsequent changes were made in the questionnaire.

[221] The National Trust was founded in 1895 as „a guardian for the nation in the acquisition and protection of threatened countryside and buildings." Today, it is a registered charity which owns over 240'000 hectares of land and 575 miles of coastline. Additionally, it looks after more than 200 buildings and gardens. The maintenance of these properties requires a huge amount of manpower, a significant amount of which is being done by volunteers who spend their holidays at one of the sites assisting the local staff (data and quote from the National Trust website).

[222] This was possible because of the small number of respondents and their data not being significantly different from the ones submitted by the National Trust volunteers.

'middle class'[224], they still represent a large variety of occupations – milkmen and teachers, caretakers and civil servants, solicitors and NHS managers, only to name a few. They have one thing in common, though: The simple fact of all these people volunteering for the NT suggests a) at least a basic level of education and b) a general sense of responsibility combined with a good degree of awareness of 'what is going on' – in short, it seemed a most appropriate group to express its views on a concept which is often regarded as a 'media thing' and the dissemination of which is highly disputed.

There is no doubt that the randomness of the sample prevented an exact numerical representation of each social group. Regarding the choice of institutions, it is not surprising that most respondents were either in their twenties or their thirties. Nevertheless, the representation of men and women in the individual age groups is nearly balanced (except for the 20–29 and the 60+ groups). The youngest participant in the study was 17 at the time, the oldest 65:

Age	Male	Female	Total
<19	2	4	6
20–29	7	17	24
30–39	12	10	22
40–49	6	5	11
50–59	8	8	16
>60	5	0	5

Table 3: Respondents' age structure (in total)

Apart from the general biographical data (age, sex and occupation), people were also asked about their geographical backgrounds ('Where did you grow up?', 'Where do you live now?' and 'List any other places where you have lived for some time.'). This information formed the basis of a categorisation of respondents into 'Northerners', 'Midlanders' and 'Southerners'.[225] A few people with a mixed geographical origin (or who had travelled extensively) were not included in this division. The absolute figures are given in table 4:

[223] In the end, only two people refused to take part.
[224] On the other hand, this would exactly be the 'target group' of EE (cf. chapter 2.3.).
[225] A simple two-way split (north-south) would have been inappropriate, as, for example, the BATH and STRUT vowels are quite different in their distributions and the Midland area is a region with its own identity, distinct from both other ends. Of this Midland area, Cheshire, Lincolnshire, Hereford and Worcester and Suffolk were taken as its (arbitrary) corners. I am indebted to Clive Upton for his excellent advice on this matter.

	Male	Female	Total
Northerners	10	13	23
'Midlanders'	7	6	13
Southerners	20	17	37
Classification uncertain	3	8	11

Table 4: Geographical categorisation of respondents

With regard to the numerical imbalance and the division's arbitrariness – it is uncertain to what extent such a categorisation on geographical grounds actually represents people's self-classification –, any evaluations of potential north-south divides will only be made with due care.

Usually, the group interviews lasted between 35 and 50 minutes. The respondents were *not* told until after the completion of Task 1 (cf. below) that the survey's topic was Estuary English; the only information they had beforehand was that 'some Swiss student' was doing a study on 'attitudes towards British accents and dialects'. The basis of the interview was an eight-page questionnaire; a copy of which is given as a supplement to this paper.

5.2. The Questionnaire

Task 1 – Map Drawing

In the first task, respondents were asked to outline the main speech areas of the British mainland on a blank map. Only the county boundaries and the locations of several major cities were given as points of reference.[226] Additionally, people were encouraged to label the areas they had outlined with any particular term(s) they considered appropriate.

The principal goal of this task was to find out whether anyone – without prior elicitation! – would give 'Estuary English' as a separate dialect area and thus use the concept actively. If a majority of respondents had included the term, it would have been proof of EE having indeed become a concept as widely known as the stereotypes which could be expected to occur (e.g. Geordie, Scouse, Brummie, etc.).

Unfortunately, a detailed analysis of all 84 maps (i.e. in the sense of Preston's computer-generated mental maps of US speech regions, cf. Hartley and Preston (1999:221)) would go beyond the scope of this paper; even more so, as „maps based on perceptions from multiple sites are extremely difficult to calculate and read." (Preston 1989a:11) Nevertheless, a general look at the labels used by the respondents will give some insight into the cognitive processes governing such perceptual categorisations – in particular, whether people mainly rely on geographical distinctions or whether they also use qualitative attributes (cf. Hartley and Preston 1999:224ff.) to describe the individual speech areas.

After completion of Task 1 (before proceeding to Tasks 2 and 3), respondents were asked explicitly whether they were familiar with the term 'Estuary English'. It seemed likely that more people knew the term than had actually used it in Task 1, not least because of Maidment's (1994) statement:

> If any of you have read any British newspaper regularly or listened to British radio over the past two or three years, there is a good chance that you have come across the term Estuary English.

[226] These were included in the light of Preston's findings (cf. Preston 1993b:335) that maps devoid of any such aids proved too difficult for most respondents.

Based on respondents' answers, two groups were formed.[227] The 'EE group' (those who declared themselves familiar with the concept) was instructed to proceed with the questionnaire as they had started (following the Arabic page numbers), while the 'non-EE group' was asked to turn the questionnaire back to front and follow the Roman numerals because their tasks were slightly different from the ones given to the 'EE group'.

Task 2 – Rating of Voice Samples

After any initial confusion was resolved, respondents were asked to proceed to the second task ('EE group' on page **3**, 'non-EE group' on page **iii**) – the language attitude test. Seven voice samples were played to the respondents in order to evaluate their reactions to various speakers of EE and related accents (esp. RP and Cockney). It was decided to use 'authentic' speech samples because (apart from the disadvantages of the matched-guise technique already mentioned in chapter 4) it seemed impossible to decide on what a 'typical' EE speaker would have to sound like. Any such decision would have been highly debatable because of the vagueness of EE as a concept, and it would also have significantly influenced the outcome of the study.

Several sources were used for the voice samples: The Cockney speaker and one of the RP voices (#4) were taken from the tape accompanying Hughes and Trudgill (1996). The recordings of supposed EE speakers were kindly submitted by Paul Coggle[228], and an additional RP speaker was taken from one of Paul Kerswill's recordings. Finally – in order to include a voice from outside the supposed EE area –, a mild, but nevertheless recognisable Birmingham accent (taken from a British radio programme) completed the compilation.

It has to be admitted that all seven speakers were men – not for reasons of misogyny, of course, but because not enough voice samples by women were available to arrive at the desired range of accents. This is somewhat regrettable because gender differences in EE seem to be a promising area of future research, as Coggle's observations (1993:86) suggest:

> […] it is certainly true to say that Estuary males tend to have more of the Cockney-end-of-the-spectrum features in their speech than their female counterparts do. For this reason parents who try to 'correct' the Estuary features in their sons

[227] There were no borderline cases. Everybody who said to have heard the term also claimed to have at least a vague idea of what it was all about.
[228] This should ensure that the EE speakers used in this study are indeed representative of the concept as it was originally defined by its pioneers.

have in most cases a tough battle on their hands. They are interfering not only with social class allegiance but also with sexual identity.
Women with an Estuary accent are seen as tougher than women with a conservative RP accent: compare Joanna Lumley and Nanette Newman on the one hand with Janet Street-Porter and Pauline Quirke on the other. Estuary English seems more in tune with the modern concept of woman than conservative RP is.

Nevertheless, it was decided not to mix male and female voices because it would have added a highly complex dimension to a study which aimed at focusing on basic aspects of EE only.[229] Moreover, the number of voice samples would have had to be significantly increased, which in turn might have exhausted respondents' patience and concentration.

The following seven voice samples were played to the respondents (in the order of their arrangement on the tape – a transcript is given in appendix C):[230]

#1: EE SPEAKER
This speaker is very close to the Cockney end of the continuum. He (variably) uses TH-fronting and intervocalic T-glottalling, although he does not drop /h/. The first element of the FACE vowel is very open (cf. *take*) and he uses a high front vowel in *business*.

#2: EE SPEAKER
This speaker exhibits the 'strange' /r/ that is often named as a feature of EE. His diphthongs are less open than in #1, consequently, he sounds 'less London' than #1. He also uses a relatively open vowel in *stamps*. However, /t/ is replaced by a glottal stop in some word-final prevocalic positions.
It was possible that respondents recognised this speaker (TV presenter Chris Packham) which might have influenced their judgement.

#3: COCKNEY SPEAKER
„[This speaker's] accent is quite strong, though certain features, such as the use of /f/ for /θ/, are not so obvious." (Hughes and Trudgill 1996:72) Nevertheless, H-dropping and the diphthong shifts in the FACE, PRICE and GOAT vowels are clearly audible.

#4: RP SPEAKER
This speaker of (mainstream) RP has /i:/ and /ɪ/ variably for the *happy* vowel (cf. *very carefully*). He also has /ɒ/ as the first vowel in *contrasted* and releases plosives in many environments in which other speakers would not (e.g. *upturned gear*); both features probably related to carefulness of speech. Furthermore, he has a noticeably open and back realisation of final /ə/ in *gear*. (after Hughes and Trudgill 1996:50)

#5: EE SPEAKER
This speaker uses several glottal stops (also in prevocalic positions) and vocalises /l/ (cf. *myself*). There is no TH-fronting and no '*-think* feature', but he uses a velar nasal in *asking*. Furthermore, the open vowels in *remotely*, *social*, *over*, etc. are reminiscent of London pronunciation.
This is a recording of the comedian and writer Ben Elton. He might serve well as an example of somebody who has deliberately 'downgraded' his accent, because in the past he would almost certainly have been an RP speaker

[229] For a general account of gender differences in language, see, for example, Coates (1993).
[230] I am indebted to Paul Kerswill for his advice on the most important phonetic features of each voice. However, any imprecision in the following descriptions is entirely my fault.

(his father being a university professor).[231] As in the case of #2, quite a number of people recognised his voice.

#6: BIRMINGHAM ACCENT
The speaker's use of rather broad diphthongs in *pound* and *lookout* and a very high /ɪ/ in *indifferent* and *since* give away his West Midland origins, although, on the whole, his accent is not very strong. Furthermore, the /t/ in *it was* is realised and the /r/ in *pair of* is tapped. He also uses a 'London-ish' open vowel in *sales*.

#7: RP SPEAKER
This speaker has only preconsonantal glottalling which is acceptable in RP (*right wing*, while the /t/ is pronounced in *a lot of us*). He uses a high vowel in *reactionary*, but no broad diphthong in *most*. However, he has a very open vowel in /aɪ/ (*right* and *why*) and a 'south-western' vowel in *now*. In general, he sounds 'less RP' than #4, therefore, his voice might serve well to explore the RP-EE boundary.

For each voice sample, respondents were given a chart (cf. questionnaire) to rate the speech according to nine semantic differentials. The categories deemed relevant for the concept of EE were selectively picked from previous studies on British speech in general (Strongman and Woosley (1967); Inoue (1995)) or on EE in particular (Coggle 1993). In detail, they were:

- Modernity (*modern – old-fashioned*)
- Urbanity (*urban – rural*)
- Correctness (*correct – faulty*)
- 'Standardness' (*standard – non-standard*)
- Affectation (*unaffected – prissy*)
- Pleasantness (*pleasant – harsh/offensive*)
- Animation (*animated/involved – listless*)
- 'Streetwisdom' (*streetwise – naive*)
- Competence (*competent – incompetent*)

'Modernity' and 'Urbanity' were chosen because these two terms are often used as characteristics of EE (cf. chapter 2.3.). 'Correctness' and 'Standardness' are crucial points for any future establishment of EE as 'the new standard English'. It seemed necessary to include both categories because some people might, on the one hand, regard EE as 'not absolutely correct' but, on the other hand, acknowledge that 'this is the way people currently speak'. The category 'Affectation' promised to yield significant results because EE is commonly regarded as a 'less posh' alternative to RP (which is often described as 'stuck-up' or 'prissy'; cf. Coggle (1993:85)). A similar category is 'Pleasantness', included as a counterpart to the notion of 'Correctness' (cf. Preston 1989b and forthcoming, a) and in order to explore the possible range of appeal of EE. The question of 'Animation' seemed relevant because of Rosewarne's claim that the overall effect of EE intonation

[231] This information was given to me by Paul Coggle.

was one of „an apparent lack of enthusiasm.“ (1994a:6) As EE is often said to enhance people's 'street-credibility', the category 'Streetwisdom' was deemed appropriate because it also has a tinge of 'youth' and 'cleverness'. Lastly, the question of 'Competence' is crucial for the acceptance of EE speakers in many social areas and, again, for the future development of EE both nationally and internationally.

For each category, respondents had to tick one out of six boxes according to their judgement, e.g.:

modern ❒ ☑ ❒ ❒ ❒ ❒ old-fashioned

Deliberately, there was no 'middle column', so people were forced to decide between the two descriptors given. If they believed a particular category to be irrelevant for the sample in question, they could tick 'not applicable'. In the subsequent evaluation of these charts, an index was calculated for each category of each sample, adapting the method described in Chambers and Trudgill (1980:61-63).[232] For psychological reasons, higher scores were assigned to the (usually positively connoted) left-hand term: In the above-mentioned category of 'Modernity', for example, a speaker with an index of 6.00 (the highest possible score) would be considered extremely 'modern', while one with an index of 1.00 (the lowest possible score) would be regarded as extremely 'old-fashioned'.

As not all categories could be expected to have the same degree of relevance for every voice sample, respondents were also asked to indicate the one(s)[233] which they thought to be most important for the sample in question, i.e. if someone wanted to say that the 'correctness' of a particular voice was its most striking characteristic, he/she would have ticked that particular circle ( ) to the right of the set.

After each chart, respondents were given the opportunity to make further comments on the voice they had just heard. Furthermore – thus meeting Preston's (1989a:3) demand[234] –, they were asked to indicate where they thought each voice was from. Any information gathered from this question should a) account for many possible distortions of the results (i.e. respondents might activate different mental images when hearing the

[232] i.e. multiplying the number of times each box was ticked with 1, 2, 3, etc.; e.g.:

	❒		❒		❒		❒		❒		❒		in total:
number of times ticked:	8	+	7	+	21	+	14	+	10	+	7	=	67
	x		x		x		x		x		x		
	6		5		4		3		2		1		
	48		35		84		42		20		7	=	236

Subsequently, the result (in this case: 236) is divided by the total number of ticks (67) which gives the index for this particular category (in this case, an average score of 3.52).

[233] People were allowed to tick more than one.

same voice) and b) give evidence of the degree of EE actually 'obscuring origins' (cf. Rosewarne 1994a:7).

Additionally, the 'EE group' was asked to decide whether the voice they had just heard was Estuary English or not. The answers to this question were expected to give clear evidence of the homogeneity of people's mental image of EE.

Task 3 – Further Questions…

The shape of Task 3 was significantly different for the two groups. The 'EE group' (cf. questionnaire, pages **7** and **8**) was asked a number of questions specifically related to EE, e.g. 'What is Estuary English?' or 'How do you recognise an Estuary English speaker?'. It was hoped that such overt comments on EE would afford an insight into people's *Metalanguage 3* beliefs about the concept – in other words, into the 'dialect image' (cf. Inoue 1996) of EE.

The questions for the 'non-EE group' (cf. questionnaire, pages **vii** and **viii**) were mainly aimed at uncovering an underlying knowledge of some 'EE-like' concept without actually referring to it by name. First, people were asked whether they were familiar with the term 'RP' in order to test their general awareness of such (primarily linguistic) concepts. This is of particular interest since, as Parsons (1998:70) argues, RP and EE seem to be mutually dependent:

> Und doch gibt es eine starke Intuition, daß EE nicht RP ist, daß RP erkennbar, unterscheidbar ist, unabhängig von linguistischen Definitionen. Das mag zum Teil auf ständig wiederkehrende Gegenüberstellungen der beiden in der Presse zurückzuführen sein, und es ist Tatsache, daß der Name "RP" erst im Zuge der Popularisierung des anderen, "Estuary English" in der breiteren Öffentlichkeit bekannt geworden ist.

Secondly, people were given a rough description of EE and were subsequently asked whether or not they believed that such a concept was justified. It was also expected that other concepts – such as McArthur's 'New London Voice' – might turn up at this point (if at all). The third question (whether people thought that London features were spreading) was yet another means of getting at the concept of EE in a roundabout way (and it should also shed some light on the question of whether changes in language are actually perceived by the public at large).

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[234] repeated in Preston (1996) and Preston (forthcoming, a).

People were also asked about any elements of speech they would rather avoid when going for a job interview. Any information given here would be an indication of current attitudes to 'good' and 'bad' language. (If Britain were indeed moving towards a 'classless' society, the answers given to this question could be expected to be rather mixed.) Finally, respondents were given the names of six public figures and asked to decide whether they spoke 'Standard English' or not. The focus, of course, was on the (allegedly) 'typical' EE speakers Ken Livingstone and Jonathan Ross and, in particular, on how they would fare in comparison to RP speaker and news presenter Trevor McDonald (the former chairman of Gillian Shephard's 'Better English Campaign'[235]). Prince Edward was included because several EE features had been observed in his speech (cf. chapter 2.3.), and Pauline Quirke and Frank Bruno represented the Cockney end of the continuum (if not Cockney itself). Of course, all these ratings have to be taken with a pinch of salt since the general popularity of these public figures might have heavily influenced people's judgements on their speech.

[235] cf. Charter (1996).

6. Results – Perceptions of Estuary English

The following chapters give an account of the results of the perceptual study presented in chapter 5. In general, the material provided by the respondents is of considerably high quality, as some of the extracts from the answers given will doubtless show. Some of the following findings may be only indirectly related to EE, but they will still give an idea of how non-linguists view the British dialect landscape which, in turn, will provide the framework for a more comprehensive assessment of EE.

After the evaluation of the perceptual maps (in chapter 6.1.) and, in particular, of the labels that people used, chapters 6.2. and 6.3. will summarise the answers of the two groups ('EE group' and 'non-EE group') to the questions asked in Task 3. In this context, one important point needs to be addressed: Any exact quantification of attitudes is always a difficult thing to achieve, and, in particular, a statistically convincing analysis of qualitative information (as gained from the open questions in Task 3) is nearly impossible.[236] The only way to reduce the disadvantages of such an approach is to quantitatively catalogue as much of respondents' information as possible in order to reveal some general underlying trends of people's views.

In chapter 6.4., finally, the results of the language attitude test will provide the possibility to compare people's perceptual views with their attitudes to actual speakers, thus completing the analysis of the concept of EE.

[236] Two possible approaches (although primarily aimed at discourse analysis) are discussed by Preston (1994).

6.1. Drawing Maps: The Mental Dialect Landscape of Britain

The maps produced by the respondents (R) in Task 1 are of a highly varied nature. While, for example, both R36 and R40 make only a rough distinction England–Scotland–Wales[237], R59 outlines a total number of 28 different speech areas (cf. appendix D). Furthermore, while many people – like R59 – cover the whole of Britain, quite a number of respondents (such as R21, cf. p. 136) leave large areas unaccounted for (this phenomenon has also been observed by Preston (e.g. 1998a) in the USA). It seems that many people consider only those areas worth mentioning which have – as one could say – a certain *dialectal prominence*.

EE does not seem to have such prominence: Only two (!) respondents out of 84 (or 2.4%) included the label 'Estuary English' in their maps – a clear indication that EE is far from being a central element in people's mental dialect landscape of Britain.

The cornerstones of respondents' mental maps are to be found elsewhere. Table 5 gives a survey of the labels most frequently used (the figures indicate the absolute number of times the respective label occurs; i.e. 'Geordie' can be found on 67 maps. The complete list is given in appendix E):

Geordie	67	Cornish/Cornwall	26
Welsh	65	Southern/South	25
Scottish	51	Midlands	24
Scouse	43	Lancashire/Lancastrian	22
Brummie	43	East Anglia(n)	22
Cockney	41	Northern/North	22
Yorkshire	41	London	22
West Country	40	Norfolk	20
Glasgow/Glaswegian	39	Birmingham	19
Liverpool/Liverpudlian	32	(Scottish) Highlands	18

Table 5: Most frequently used labels in respondents' maps (in absolute numbers)

Leaving aside the labels for Scotland and Wales (which, in some form or another, occur on nearly every map[238]), an even clearer picture emerges when we reassemble the labels according to speech areas in England (the entry 'Liverpool area', for example, comprises

[237] R40 labels all three accordingly ('English', 'Scottish', 'Welsh'). R36 gives 'Scottish' and 'Welsh' only, while the whole of England remains unlabelled. Only 'Geordie' is written down near the Newcastle area, but without any particular speech region being outlined.

[238] Labels for Scotland include 'Scottish', '(Broad) Scots' and subdivisions, such as '(Scottish) Highlands', '(Scottish) Lowlands', but also 'Grampian', 'Gallovidian', 'Caledonian Valley' and 'Hebridean'. Wales is mostly labelled 'Welsh', but subdivisions like 'North Wales' and 'South Wales' also occur. In Scotland, the Glasgow area is most frequently singled out (39 times), followed by Edinburgh (5 times) and Aberdeen (4 times). In Wales, however, no particular area seems to have outstanding dialectal prominence (except for Cardiff, but even this area is explicitly mentioned by five respondents only).

all kinds of labels assigned to this region, such as 'Liverpool', 'Liverpudlian', 'Scouse', etc.):

Liverpool area ('Scouse')	75
London area ('Cockney')	71
Newcastle area ('Geordie')	69
Birmingham area ('Brummie')	62
West Country[239]	58
Yorkshire area (incl. subdivisions)	57
East Anglia[240]	57
Midlands (incl. subdivisions)[241]	37
Cornwall/Cornish	35
Northern/North (incl. subdivisions)[242]	28
Southern/South	25
Lancashire area/Lancastrian	23
Home Counties	15
Bristol area	13
Cumbria(n) & Lake District	12
Manchester area	11
Essex	11

Table 6: Most frequently outlined speech areas in England

There is no doubt that such a compilation – which ignores geographical accuracy[243] and the sometimes significant dimensional variability because it focuses on labels only – is somewhat arbitrary and has to be treated with due care. Nevertheless, a look at the 'top four' clearly reveals that the shape of people's mental maps is chiefly based on stereotypes. 'Scouse', 'Geordie', 'Cockney' and 'Brummie' – the four terms, which invariably denote working-class city dwellers and their speech, share a long tradition of being singled out for special opprobrium and often ridicule. They are the epitomes of people 'speaking with an accent' – not in a neutral linguistic sense, of course, but meaning 'very different from *proper* speech', 'ill-spoken' and, implicitly, 'ill-educated'.

Similarly, it comes as no surprise that the West Country, Yorkshire and East Anglia have also been singled out very frequently. All three areas share a high dialectal prominence based on distinctive features of speech[244] (which, again, are often exploited for comic reasons as well). Arguably, these are also the areas most commonly associated with 'ruralness' – the West Country, in particular, is often regarded as the very homeland of „unsophisticated farmers, the word 'farmers' itself being the vehicle through which the stereotype is often expressed, with both *r*'s being realised in mocking imitation of West

[239] including 'West Country', 'Somerset' and 'Devon(ian)'; the 'core area' of the West Country (cf. Wells 1982:335).
[240] including 'Norfolk', 'Norwich', 'Suffolk' and other terms denoting this area (e.g. 'Broadland', 'Folk', 'East' or 'Rural').
[241] i.e. 'North Midlands', 'South Midlands', 'East Midlands', and 'West Midlands'
[242] e.g. 'Northwest', 'Northeast', etc.
[243] 'Scouse', for example, is used by R66 to describe the Yorkshire area and by R51 to label Tyne and Wear.
[244] cf. Wells (1982:335ff.) and Hughes and Trudgill (1996).

Country speech.“ (Kerswill and Williams 2000b) However, while the urban working-class accents mentioned above „are often thought to be ugly, careless and unpleasant“ (Trudgill 1974b:20), these rural accents are quite commonly „considered pleasant, charming, quaint or amusing.“ (ibid.) In other words, although all the most frequently outlined areas share a high dialectal prominence because of the accents spoken there being significantly ‘non-standard’, there are nevertheless considerable differences in people’s attitudes towards them.

In the case of Cornwall (and, to a lesser extent, Cumbria), the region’s special linguistic history might have been behind respondents’ decision to give it as a separate speech area. It is not always clear, however, whether they really intended to hint at the Celtic language(s) formerly spoken there or whether people merely wanted to refer to a particular variety of English.[245] (The same applies to ‘Welsh’ – only six people tried to make something of a distinction between ‘Welsh accent (of English)’ and ‘Welsh language’.)

Lancashire, furthermore, probably owes its frequent mentioning to its being commonly perceived as a (former) stronghold of rhoticity (cf. Upton and Widdowson 1996:31). In particular, „Yorkshire people often think of this as a typical distinguishing feature between their own speech and that of their rivals on the other side of the Pennines“ (Wells 1982:367). In the light of the steady recession of R-colouring, however, the popular notion might actually be somewhat misrepresentative of reality (although Hughes and Trudgill (1996:65), for example, still outline a separate – though rather small – ‘Central Lancashire’ area).

As a contrast to the above results, the South(-east) – except for the London area, of course – seems to have much less dialectal prominence. Only 15 people saw the Home Counties as a separate speech area, and Essex – despite the strong stereotype of ‘Essex Man/Girl’ (cf. chapter 2.3.) – was singled out 11 times only. Other areas (e.g. Kent, Sussex, Wiltshire or Hampshire) were mentioned only occasionally; and many people did not bother to label (or even to outline) any southern region at all. Several explanations for this phenomenon are possible: First, it seems that South(-east)erners’ speech is less commonly regarded as an ‘accent’ in the sense that it is less different from what is said to be ‘Standard English’. Secondly, respondents might have felt at a loss for outlining particular speech areas in the south because of the persistent process of dialect levelling going on in

[245] It is further uncertain to what extent both ‘Cornwall/Cornish’ and ‘West Country’ are supposed to describe the whole south-western area, as the majority of respondents merely used one of the two terms. Only eight people gave both ‘West Country’ *and* ‘Cornwall/Cornish’ (and thus expressly outlined two distinct speech areas).

this region (cf. chapter 2.4.)[246] – it is no surprise that the generic term 'South(ern)' achieved a higher score than any other (more specific) area in the South.[247] Thirdly, the ambit of some kind of 'London speech' might have reached such proportions (in people's minds, at least) that it now absorbs any other variety in the area. Either way, there still seems to be some space in people's mental maps for the assimilation of some 'Estuary-English-like' (because London-based) variety which might meander across the whole south-eastern area and possibly even up to the southern Midlands (as a matter of fact, the Midland area itself is regarded by many people as another large dialectal entity with no particularly distinct subdivisions (cf. table 6)).[248]

R59's map is also an excellent example of how political boundaries and geographical divisions are the main factors governing respondents' outlines of dialect areas. Therefore, it is not surprising that *geographical terms* are by far the most frequently employed category of labels. Out of a total number of 1070 labels written down (which, disregarding multiple occurrences, can be divided into approximately 240 individual ones), only 79 are somewhat qualitative.[249] Many of these refer to *class*: 'affluent English', 'Sloney' (probably for 'Sloane') and 'very middle class' are all used to designate southern areas. The adjective 'posh', however, can apparently be applied to all kinds of British speech: There are not only labels such as 'the south, posh' or the rather explicit 'Southern/Home Counties/BBC English/Posh', but also 'Posh Country' (for Devon and Cornwall), 'Posh Scottish' and 'Posh Scouse'.

Labels designating *standardness*, furthermore, are mainly used for southern areas,[250] e.g. 'BBC English', 'Queen's English/Speech' for the Home Counties (esp. Oxfordshire), 'Received English' (with Berkshire as its core area) and 'Standard English' for the South Coast. The speech of the same South Coast, however, is described by another respondent as 'slurred' – the same adjective also being used for the Birmingham accent. Northern varieties, anyway, are particularly likely to be described in terms of certain *speech characteristics*, e.g. 'fast, short words' (Edinburgh), 'fast' (Liverpool) and 'shortened Slang' (Leeds) – all somehow implying deviations from 'proper' speech.

[246] Both R23 and R35 use a question mark ('?') to designate parts of this area; R58 gives 'no distinct accent' for the counties between Oxfordshire and Lincolnshire.
[247] Again – apart from 'London/Cockney', of course.
[248] A possible exception is Worcester(shire); although it was singled out by five respondents only.
[249] In general, the result corresponds to Hartley and Preston's findings in the USA (1999:228) from which some of the categories in these paragraphs are taken.
[250] With the exception of 'Refined Scots'.

The apparent popularity of stereotypes like 'Scouse', 'Geordie', etc. highlights the importance of the category of *identity*. Further specimens are 'Tyke' (a rather derogatory term for Yorkshiremen), 'Jocks' (working-class Scots) or 'Country / Norfolk Yokel'.[251] Rural areas, in particular the West Country and East Anglia, but also Kent, Sussex and Hampshire, seem to be especially prone to tendentious references to their inhabitants, as they are repeatedly described as 'rural', 'country' or 'common' – all these being adjectives which have an overtone of 'poor education' as well. However, the most explicit example of such deprecatory comments refers to a more or less urban area: 'Stupid Midland'.

Some labels reflect people's attempts to indicate *relative differences* within and beyond certain speech areas, e.g. 'very southern', 'particularly Yorkshire' or 'actual Scottish'. A few respondents referred to internal variation which they probably could not otherwise represent on the map: 'Scottish, but there is a difference between Glasgow and Edinburgh', 'Wales, very different even between counties and even between towns 10m apart' or 'even within London, dialects vary'. Others relied on certain specific geographical comparisons, e.g. 'more country, but not as much as the west country' (for East Anglia), 'very distinct from e.g. Kent' (for Devon & Cornwall) and 'not Scottish, reasonably Southern' (for Edinburgh). The particular situation of London as a linguistic melting-pot is evident in comments like 'London most dialects (imported)' or 'lots of lovely speech patterns that aren't 'native' to Britain'.

Some labels hint at respondents' difficulties in finding adequate descriptions for areas in which more than one variety exists or where they are not easily determined: 'mixed', 'mixture of accents', 'no distinct accent', but also 'both' (i.e. Scottish and Geordie) or 'inbetweenish' (Lincolnshire – Cheshire area). As a last resort, three respondents simply used '?'.

The question of *intelligibility*, however, did not seem to be at the forefront of people's thoughts; only one respondent felt the need to state that 'most of Scotland is difficult to understand by the English anyway'.

Finally, a more salient category of labels seems to be formed by *onomatopoeic references* to conspicuous markers of certain varieties. These include: 'Somerset 'ooah'', 'Southerners

[251] 'Yokel', perhaps a blend of *yoke* and *local*, refers to people from a rural environment, probably earning their living from agriculture, having poor education and a strong rural (often rhotic) accent, though not everybody uses the term in such a derogatory way. Apparently, it is often contrasted with 'Grokels', those who have invaded the countryside from the city generally, though it can refer to any outsider who does not understand country ways. (I am indebted to Peter Burleigh (lecturer at the University of Basel) for his kind and highly informative advice on this matter.)

Paath, Graas [sic], etc.' (by a respondent from Merseyside), 'West Country ('Ere, my lover!)' and 'Brummie (yam yam)' – again, mostly areas which have (from one perspective or another) a high dialectal prominence.

Despite its low score so far, it would be far too early to already write EE off. As the analysis of labels has shown, terms like 'Standard English', 'Received English', etc. are just as rarely represented in people's mental dialect landscapes of Britain. Yet, there can be no doubt that these concepts have a significant influence on people's views on language (and, consequently, a high dialectal prominence as well). Therefore, more people might know about EE than had actually included it in their maps. Rather than being a regionally-based stereotype, it could be suggested that EE might have a place in people's minds as a supra-regional concept which coexists well with a great number of other varieties and covers a particular range of formality (cf. chapter 2.3.). The validity of this hypothesis will be analysed in the next chapter.

6.2. Overt Notions of EE

Rosewarne seems to have not the slightest doubt that the expression 'Estuary English' has gained widespread currency by now:

> […] *Estuary English* is now the term in common usage. (Rosewarne 1994a:7)

Allegedly, the popularity of the term has even led to its being regularly subject to abbreviation:

> In the decade since 1984, frequency of use has led people in Britain to refer to this form simply as Estuary. (Rosewarne 1996:13)

It seems, however, that the term's frequent and seemingly familiar use in the media has somewhat blurred Rosewarne's perception of reality. When explicitly asked whether they knew the term 'Estuary English' and felt familiar with the concept, only 15 respondents (or 18%) out of 84 claimed that they did (three of these were students of linguistics). Quite a blow for Rosewarne, especially as the respondents arguably represent a segment of the population with considerable 'awareness'. (cf. chapter 5.)

This 'EE group' consisted of eight women and seven men, all ages were represented. Not surprisingly, twelve respondents lived in the south at the time (with ten of them being southerners by birth). Most of them worked in jobs which require a good level of education, i.e. as solicitors, local government officials or engineers. In Task 3, the members of this 'EE group' were asked about their overt notions of EE.

For the majority of these fifteen respondents, the first contact with EE took place in the past couple of years through some sort of TV/radio programme (preferably on Radio 4) or some newspaper article.[252] Significantly enough, six people remembered that EE was presented in the context of „dropping standards in the pronunciation of English" or of „how badly young people speak" – EE was destined to carry negative prejudices from the very outset.

Legacies of this initial burden are evident in many respondents' comments; either in the cautious „[EE] is considered to be incorrect by some" or in the more straightforward „a sort of lazy way of pronouncing RP", „unpleasant lazy speech" or even „quite an ugly

[252] One respondent claimed to have first heard the term „in a lecture on '80's culture and dealing with financial affairs of the time & modern businessmen". It might well be that the study by Scott, Green and Rosewarne (1997) on the impact of EE on business transactions (cf. chapter 3.) formed the background of this lecture.

accent“. Only one respondent’s observation appears to be less judgmental: „it is becoming more acceptable as a norm.“

Consequently, most people describe EE by its relation to RP (or any other form of Standard English): „it is less refined than RP“, „[spoken by] someone with a 'good' accent who talks in a slightly colloquial way“ and, similarly, „[it is] educated refined language that has been casualised to sound slightly more common“. The other end of the spectrum, however, is rarely referred to: „a slightly refined version of 'common' speech“. The geographical origin of this ‘common speech’ is mentioned by two respondents only: „a weak form of London accent“ or „Cockney-type speech“. Furthermore, the idea of a continuum is reflected in the comments: „a range of accents“ and „a new dialect between RP and different accents + dialects“.

It may therefore be a bit surprising that (apart from T-glottalling) H-dropping and TH-fronting are the features most often named by respondents as typical markers of EE – two features which are normally associated with Cockney only (cf. chapter 2.2.1). Other markers mentioned are the „lengthening“ and „distortion“ of vowels[253] and the „dropping of consonants“, in particular in final positions (R7 mentions the *-in*/*-ing*-feature). One respondent refers to „poor grammar“ in general and another gives a few lexical items: „*yeah* for *yes*, *nah* for *now* [*no*?] and lots of *know what I mean* and *yer know*“.

Only one respondent (a southerner who has lived in Cardiff for the past twenty years) regards EE explicitly as „not a localised dialect“; most others see it (like R24) as „a speech pattern of the urban S.E. England“. This is confirmed by most of respondents’ maps of the geographical spread of EE (cf. questionnaire, page **7**, question c). Nearly all the EE areas outlined on these maps include London, Essex, Kent and Surrey (cf. R18’s map, appendix F), while the Home Counties, in particular Hertfordshire and Berkshire, form part of the EE territory on approximately half the maps. There are significant differences, though: R13, for example, refers only to the area immediately adjacent to the Thames Estuary (probably taking the concept’s name too literally), while other people’s maps show a much larger area (R16, for example, regards the whole area south of a line from Liverpool to the Humber as EE territory, with the exception of East Anglia, West Wales and the very South).

The fact that EE is spreading has been observed and commented on by seven respondents; many, like R20, see it as an „inevitable consequence of mass media“ (see,

[253] R18 gives (‘long a's’) as an example of this feature.

however, chapter 2.3.). Not surprisingly, *EastEnders* is explicitly mentioned by some as a central factor in the dissemination of EE features – one respondent explains that „older generations insist the accents heard on *EastEnders* are not Cockney but a corruption". Among the public figures named as speakers of EE are the aforementioned Ken Livingstone, Ben Elton and Jonathan Ross, but also the prime minister, Tony Blair. One respondent, however, sees the boxer Frank Bruno as a typical EE speaker, although he is commonly regarded as a proverbial Cockney (cf. Coggle 1993:76). Otherwise, people simply refer to „local celebrities", „sportsmen" and „pop stars" in general.

R19's comment explains why some people might have found it difficult to come up with any other than these already rather stereotypical EE speakers; in his view, EE is „not generally a particularly memorable accent as it is so often spoken". Consequently, many respondents write that EE can be heard in all sorts of everyday situations: „I live in the South East of England so hear it constantly", „[in] normal conversation – bus + tube, pub, i.e. not formal conversations". In a similar sense, R6 comments: „Generally, ordinary people speak Estuary English". Furthermore, people seem to agree that EE predominantly appeals to the young because of its modernity: an „up-to-date 'Standard' English accent" (R15) that is spoken „especially [by] young people (under 40)".

Class aspects are mentioned explicitly by R14: „Difficult to decide but possibly it's a working class/upper working class/lower middle class accent." Only R5 seems to take a slightly different approach; he mostly associates with EE „people from London and S.E. who are *educated* (my italics)".

EE's ability to blur social origins is reflected in R16's observation: „[it is] used by people wanting to be seen as coming from a 'cool' area". This social appeal of the variety has also been singled out by two other respondents: „[it is] often used by young people to feel part of their peer group" or „within a situation amongst their own peers where they feel comfortable or as a defence mechanism" – although it is not entirely clear against whom this 'defence mechanism' is directed. Finally, a very nice example of how EE allows people to move freely up and down the social ladder is given by R14 in her poignant description of the kind of people who use the 'new' variety: „Car dealers! Blue collar workers who've become white collar workers maybe."

In general, the above responses of the 'EE group' reflect the rather vague and often inconsistent picture of the concept as it has been described in chapter 2. The analysis of such overt *Metalanguage 1* beliefs has shown that, in every possible sense, the concept of EE is not very well known. In particular, the varied nature of people's definitions of EE and its geographical spread reveal a good deal of uncertainty.

In this context, the relationship of EE with the media quite obviously plays an essential role, although it is as ambivalent as it is important: On the one hand, EE owes its existence (and spread) quite substantially to newspaper reports and radio programmes, on the other hand, people's perceptions of the variety are also largely influenced by the lopsided picture that the media have created from the very start.

It is further evident that the neutral image of EE that Rosewarne and Coggle attempt to purport is illusory. As the mentioning of TH-fronting and H-dropping as well as the reference to Frank Bruno indicate, EE is ever so often seen in close connection to (and very frequently mixed up with) Cockney. Therefore, an unbiased approach to the variety is almost impossible, as one respondent confesses: „I realise that my picture of Estuary English is very judgmental and prejudiced!"

Consequently, although some key associations like 'youth', 'modernity' and 'social flexibility' seem to be undisputed, many other *Metalanguage 3* beliefs about EE tally with the negative stereotypes traditionally associated with urban, working-class speech from the London area. In this sense (and possibly also due to its name), EE is most definitely regarded by the majority of respondents as an explicitly regionally-based variety. The hypothesis that EE is largely absent from respondents' mental maps only because it is seen as a supra-regional concept similar to RP must therefore be refuted.

6.3. Testing the Validity of the Concept – Overt Notions of British Speech by the 'non-EE group'

As it has been mentioned above, more than eighty per cent of the respondents declared themselves unfamiliar with the name and the concept of EE. Nevertheless, the members of this 'non-EE group' might still have made many conscious observations on (changes in) current British speech; some of which might even unwittingly tally with what has been said about EE. Therefore, an analysis of such overt notions will put the validity of the concept to a further test. For this purpose, the 69 members of this 'non-EE group' were asked several specific questions[254] about their knowledge of 'RP', the spread of London features and the perceived importance of 'proper' speech (cf. chapter 5.2.).

Although 'Received Pronunciation'/'RP' is a well-established linguistic term and commonly used in the academic world (despite its obvious drawbacks, cf. Wells 1982:117), it fares not much better than EE in terms of its being known by the public at large: Only 14 members of the 'non-EE group' (or 20.3%) were able to give some explanation of the concept – four of them were students of linguistics. People's image of RP, however, is much more compact than the one of EE (cf. chapter 6.2.): Nearly all respondents (in one way or another) stress its importance as a supra-regional upper-class ('posh') accent which is commonly considered 'proper' and very often associated with the BBC.[255] Nevertheless, linguists (as well as academics of all faculties) are well-advised not to overestimate their sphere of influence and always bear in mind the limits of specialist terminology.

It is very likely, though, that the score would have been much higher if the term in question had not been RP but 'BBC English' or 'Queen's English'. It was therefore necessary to approach the concept of EE without the ballast of academic terminology. In Task 3, question b)[256], respondents were presented with a simplified description of EE and asked whether they believed that such a category actually existed. About half of the respondents agreed that this was the case, with no particular differences between northerners and southerners. One person (not surprisingly, a student of linguistics) even men-

[254] Again, the relatively open questions largely prevent an exact quantification of respondents' answers.
[255] To give a few examples: „Standard English. Most commonly heard on BBC and regarded by many people as 'proper' (also BBC English or Queen's English)" (R1), „speaking English in the correct manner without any obvious dialect. As spoken on BBC" (R85), „considered posh or proper pronunciation of English" (R43). Only R82 gives a more specific description of RP based on its historical roots: „Pronunciation introduced into public (private) schools during period 1850 to 1880 in an attempt to standardise pronunciation for colonial administrators - thus it affects modern Indian English".
[256] cf. questionnaire, p. **vii**.

tioned McArthur's 'New London Voice'.[257] Nevertheless, the results have to be put into perspective. At least six people mistook this concept for an alternative to 'Standard English', as their comments clearly indicate.[258] Moreover, it has to be suspected that several respondents – perhaps induced by the partially suggestive character of the question – simply rephrased the explanation given, thus avoiding a more differentiated comment on the concept's actual validity.

In the end, approximately fifteen respondents can be said to have a somewhat substantial notion of the concept, as their comments contain additional information which could not have been derived from the description given. See, for example, R58's response which already indicates a general trend of people's views:

> This would seem to make sense. RP is not spoken much any more, but not everyone has a regional accent. RP is upper-class/posh and outdated. An intermediate category would be a normal accent, and lack regional stereotypical accents. [It could be spoken by] potentially anyone in England – likely to be professional/middle-class – [and] anywhere – excluding particularly distinct accent centres [such as] Birmingham, Liverpool and Newcastle.

Like R58, many respondents refer to the key associations that have also been mentioned for EE, such as 'middle class' (e.g. R27, 38 and 79), 'youth' (R1, 3 and 29) and 'social flexibility' (e.g. „spoken by people who don't want to be associated with upper class" (R59) or „by people who are trying to lose a 'common' sounding accent or […] living in a 'posher' environment" (R84)). Further correspondences with the concept of EE can be found on the geographical level, as the majority of respondents place the ambit of such an intermediate category somewhere in the south-east (with a tendency to spread to the Midlands) and a particular emphasis on urban/metropolitan areas.

Unfortunately, the situation is not as straightforward as these initial observations suggest. For instance, if it comes to naming particular features of this intermediate category, people seem to be at a loss. Only a few respondents give specific examples: The glottal stop is mentioned by R3 („a feature of the Essex accent") and TH-fronting by R48. Some (northerners) refer to southern vowel lengthening: „[…] elongating words such as *south* to 'sarth' (sarf!) as in 'Darn Sarf' (Down South)" (R48) or „long a's, e.g. Paath, Graass (Parth, Grars), etc." (R83). In R82's view, however, the opposite is the case: „compared

[257] „New London Voice. I hadn't heard of EE, but I have heard of 'New London Voice', which I think is the same. The sort of accent used by Ben Elton and Jonathan Ross" (R3). See also chapter 2.1.
[258] e.g. „Standard English (Queen's)" (R8), „[spoken in] private schools" (R26), „BBC/Broadcasting English - very correct and specific use of words - to hide any dialect" (R74) or „proper English - no accent - generally well-educated people" (R80).

with RP, vowel sounds are shorter“. Such comments are exceptional, though. Most people simply refer to this intermediate category as a blend of various dialects: „features of speech from different dialects“ (R29), „a widespread form of speech involving phrases and pronunciations from many regions and also America“ (R39) or „mixture of dialect words and my understanding of RP“ (R55). With regard to statements like this, it is impossible to unreservedly confirm the existence of some ‘EE-like’ intermediate category in people’s minds.

Things get even more difficult when the answers to Task 3, question c) (‘Do you believe that London features are spreading?’)[259], are taken into account as well. In particular, the following discrepancy raises suspicions: About a dozen respondents who, on the one hand, believe in the existence of some intermediate category between RP and localisable dialects deny, on the other hand, that London features are actually spreading. If respondents, in their answers to question b), had indeed been thinking of some ‘EE-like’ concept in a Rosewarnean sense, this could not have been the case (with the spread of London features being an essential part of EE). More likely, it seems that people were actually describing a more complex, perhaps also rather theoretical construct, the nature of which will be discussed further below.

As to the spread of London features (cf. question c), people’s views are split approximately ‘fifty-fifty’ – again, not a very conclusive picture. The only kind of agreement to be made out is that the north is still perceived as largely unaffected by any ‘southern invasion’.[260] R73 (a caretaker from Hull) writes: „some phrases spread, [but] thankfully, not much London gets up here“. It is thus not surprising that northerners seem to be particularly unaware of any such changes: „I am from the North, & none of these little types of speech have altered up there“ (R9) or „I am from the north of England and so we don’t hear much of these things where I’m from“ (R35). If people, on the other hand, have indeed observed „an increase of 'cockney' variations around [the] country“ (R37), the only feature mentioned repeatedly is – of course – the glottal stop. Otherwise, R48 (a northerner) sees a recession of the FOOT-STRUT merger (if her statement is interpreted correctly): „the exaggeration of other letters such as 'u' pronouncing the word *truck* as 'track'“. R3 believes that „double negatives are becoming more widespread“ and R27 reports certain phenomena in the Leicester area, although not all of them can be viewed in

[259] cf. questionnaire, p. **viii**.

terms of a spread of London features: „people shorten *isn't* to *in'it*. They say *I'm going bed* rather than *I'm going to bed*. They change *yours* to *yorn*."

For many respondents, the infiltration of the commuter belt area seems to be a *fait accompli*: R11, for instance, writes: „Berkshire accent has become more of a cockney style instead of a country *ooh! aah!*" The ongoing process of south-eastern dialect levelling is particularly evident in R29's observation: „the further south you go towards London, the harder it is to detect different dialects".

R56's comment is insofar interesting, as he explains the current spread of (certain) Cockney features by the principle of minimal effort: „I think that in the first examples (bu'er)[261] it is easy to say and people all over the country say it, but still with their own strong local accent. The other example of 'tone' is not spread as it is no easier to say. Words that take less effort to say will be spread […]." Of course, not everybody's views are thus free of any value judgement: In best 'Disgusted-of-Tunbridge-Wells' style (cf. chapter 2.4.), half a dozen of respondents regret that „people are getting sloppy/slovenly in their speech" (R50) due to an apparently increasing 'laziness': „people […] don't care what they sound like" (R26). Positive judgements on the current changes in British speech are looked for in vain and, once more, the media (and *EastEnders* in particular)[262] are primarily held responsible for the alleged deterioration of British speech: „TV is the cause if that [i.e. the spread of London features] is the case" (R38) or „yes, [these features are being] spread by bad grammar through the media". (R72)

A more detached view on the current re-shaping of the British dialect landscape is expressed by R54: „Because people listen to radio and watch TV much more, this exposes them to a wider range of speech patterns and gradual changes occur." Although the actual role of the media in this process is debatable (cf. chapter 2.3.), this reference to an increase in dialect contact and subsequent *accommodation* phenomena is worth pursuing further, as it occurs in a great number of respondents' answers to both questions b) and c). The following examples illustrate the importance that people attach to the effects of growing mobility:

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[260] R4, for example, writes: „I can imagine them spreading some way around London, but not as far as Leeds, Liverpool." The exception – once more – is the glottal stop, according to R56: „[…] bu'er is said in Glasgow and Edinburgh but [people] still sound Glaswegian/Edinburgh".

[261] cf. questionnaire, p. **viii**.

[262] R28: „maybe through media, e.g. EastEnders"; R32: „aided by the media, e.g. EastEnders"; R66: „spread by TV programmes such as EastEnders"; etc.

- All 'local' accents are spreading because everyone is more mobile and more people migrate to different areas both locally and nationally, so that accents and dialects become adulterated with each other. (R83)
- People appear to use speech that they have inherited when they were growing up and are then open to influential speech if they geographically move around. (R30)
- More movement of people nationally, so someone from one area will adopt phrases and phonetic sounds from the new host area and inject their own. (R73)

As a matter of fact, nearly half the members of the 'non-EE group' address the „increase in movement of people around the country [which] leads to a mixing of dialect" (R37) in some form. This appears to be the most promising way to gain access to the nature of the *Metalanguage 3* level of people's views on the current dialect situation in Britain: Quite likely, the above-mentioned 'theoretical construct' that many respondents described in question b) is not a 'new' or 'hybrid' variety of English, but a heterogeneous conglomeration of various forms and styles of speech as a result of the ongoing mixing of dialects throughout Britain. It is therefore no wonder that, as possible labels for this intermediate category, some respondents suggest phrases like „unaffected modern English English"[263] (R82), „just slight local accent" (R56) or simply: „*English* – speech that has no very strong characteristics" (R52).

Apart from geographical mixing of accents and dialects, quite a number of people also refer to situational and register variation:

- People's language, and to a certain extent accent, can change because of the role that they have. It will depend on what is acceptable in that role. (R47)
- I think people can change their speech for different situations now – or at least now they make a choice about doing so. (R40)
- [This intermediate category might be spoken] by someone whose work requires them to communicate with a wide variety of people. (R54)

This also explains why many people view such a kind of intermediate category as an appropriate variety for business people[264] – which contrasts with Scott, Green and Rosewarne's (1997) findings of the unsuitability of EE as a means of international business communication (cf. chapter 3).

It becomes clear that the concept of an intermediate category as presented by Rosewarne's 'Estuary English' does not really fit 'real people's' views.[265] It seems that they

[263] The respondent intended to make a difference between *American* English and *English* English.
[264] According to respondents' views, speakers of this intermediate category might be „working in international environment" (R43), „[…] for nationwide/international corporations" (R86) or „any British person doing business internationally" (R82).
[265] Adopting Preston's (1998a) slightly ironical term: „[…] I should say that 'real people' is meant to be tongue-in-cheek. I mean by it the entire population not involved in the scientific study of language — that is, everybody except linguists. I do not mean that linguists are not real people, but I want to emphasize at the outset that linguists and non-linguists may differ radically in their conceptions of language […]."

simply perceive a general mixing of dialects throughout the country, but not necessarily the spread of some particular variety based on London features of speech. This is also evident in the comments of those respondents who rejected the notion of the intermediate category as it was presented to them:

- [There] cannot be firm boundaries like this. Gradual gradient between these artificial pigeonholes, as reflects the many diverse environments in which people live. (R61)
- A category cannot be ascribed to such a blurred, amorphous range of speech. There is a broad spectrum/palette, not a three stop journey. (R59)
- People speak RP or they have an accent. You can have a slight accent yet still speak RP. I feel you cannot mongrelise English by combining the two. (R45)

Of course, the third statement is yet another example of people's unshakeable belief in a 'good', non-accented language. The overall thrust, however, is clear: Non-linguists do not feel the need to artificially create a 'new' variety, as the mere acknowledgement of the diverse nature of the present-day dialect landscape in Britain (on both a geographical and social/situational level) with all its ongoing changes will do the job as well: „some people have a stronger accent than others" (R44) and „local dialects will probably always exist in some form" (R77).

To a certain extent, these findings are also supported by the results of people's answers to question d) ('Would you pay attention to your speech if you had to go to a job interview?).[266] A couple of decades ago, the outcome would have been clear:

> Before World War II, those who wished to make their way in the world – whether in business, government, the military, the church, or society – had to speak RP. (Algeo 1992:163)

Today, the situation appears to have changed. Only stereotypical varieties with a high level of stigmatisation are singled out as inappropriate for a job interview: R38 simply states: „rural – incorrect", while R3 is more specific: „I would avoid a really strong accent – esp. Essex or Birmingham as many people associate them with working class".[267] On the other hand, only fifteen respondents (among which all age groups are represented) state explicitly that they would modify their speech „more towards Received English" (R47). A few examples:

- I would avoid my local accent and be more precise, i.e. tend to be more like BBC English used to be. (R83)
- [I would] reduce any accent to a minimum. Use correct English. Thick accent gives impression of stupidity – ("thicker the accent, thicker the person"). (R67)
- I speak 'proper' English in all formal interviews and situations. (R39)

[266] cf. questionnaire, p. **viii**.
[267] See also R32's comment: „[I would pay attention to my speech] if I had a 'disliked' accent, e.g. Brummie."

In total, approximately two thirds of the 'non-EE group' answered the question in the affirmative, but people's focus seems to be on voice characteristics rather than on accent: „a good speaking voice always creates a good impression – nothing to do with accent" (R52) or „[I would] need to ensure [that my] voice is clear and confident and not too rushed" (R34).

Very few respondents name particular elements of speech which they would have to watch: „I would not miss letters off words, etc." (R9) and especially: „Yes, I would have to say my t's" (R29). Otherwise, people's advice is fairly general and mainly refers to style and register variation: „avoid slang" (e.g. R72) and, in particular, „no swearing" (R53).

In some northerners' comments, there is clear evidence of *linguistic insecurity*[268]:

- I would speak more slowly and precisely as I have a strong northern accent. (R44 – a person from Cumbria)
- Although I enjoy other's accents, I do not like my own at all. I try at all costs not to accentuate my accent. (R48 – an NHS manager from Wirral/Merseyside)

By contrast, R28 is much more self-confident about her accent, as she would only pay attention to her speech „if I had a strong accent". Quite a remarkable statement, as this respondent grew up in Sheffield…

As indicated, one third of the 'non-EE group' (again, including members of all age groups) categorically rejects the idea of 'upgrading' one's speech in formal situations:

- No. I speak the way I speak. (R11)
- I would be more concerned with <u>what</u> I was saying – I feel it's OK to speak naturally. (R2)
- No, you should not be judged by your accent. (R31)

R77's statement is particular proof of this attitude as he does not shy away from using some interesting variant of the double negative: „I would be myself and I do *not* think that it should *not* effect my interview" (my italics). Six people believe that they do not speak with an accent[269] – further evidence for the popular definition of 'accent' as 'different from Standard English' (cf. chapter 6.1.):

- I think I speak fairly Standard English anyway. (R1)
- I don't believe I have a particular accent. (R4)
- I have a sort of 'nothing' accent that is quite useful. (R63)

And for R45, the question of watching one's accent has, apparently, never been much of a problem: „Never really thought about this – perhaps I ought to!"

[268] cf. Labov (1966); but also Preston (1996) and Hartley and Preston (1999).
[269] cf. Esling (1998) ('Everybody has an accent except me').

Of course, this is only how the respondents view themselves. It would be highly interesting to compare the above information with people's actual performance in situations of different formality. The overall impression, however, is one of a much more relaxed approach towards the importance of accent. Of course, the notion of 'the good language'[270] still looms in the background, but RP is no longer the superior accent that it was some decades ago. It seems that the degree of tolerance towards most kinds of accents and dialects has grown which, quite likely, is a result of the general dialect levelling in Britain. The subsequent 'dilution' of extreme dialectal stereotypes has led to the emergence of an infinite number of dialect varieties (if not to say idiolects) which do not conceal their regional origin (to a greater or lesser extent), but are increasingly viewed as sufficiently appropriate for a great variety of situations. In this context, it is worth recollecting Maidment's alternative explanation for the phenomena summarised under the label EE: Instead of creating a seemingly 'new' variety of English, it would simply suffice to acknowledge the fact that „the perception of formality and informality has changed." (Maidment 1994; cf. chapter 2.4.)

The final task for the 'non-EE group' was the rating of several public figures' speech in terms of 'standardness'. No voice samples were provided, therefore, the results should not be overrated as they simply reflect respondents' ideas of how these people speak and are probably influenced by other aspects of their personality as well. Nevertheless, the individual scores may provide further information on the compatibility of the concept of EE with people's mental image of the British dialect landscape.

For each person, an index was calculated (using the same method as for the language attitude test, cf. chapter 5.2.). The overall results are as follows (the full table is given in appendix G):

1. Trevor McDonald 5.36
2. Prince Edward 4.94
3. Ken Livingstone 3.67
4. Jonathan Ross 2.87
5. Pauline Quirke 2.32
6. Frank Bruno 2.06

As expected, 'news' and 'royalty' came out on top. Quite likely, Trevor McDonald's high score is just as much a result of his own efforts as it is a natural consequence of the media's constantly portraying him as the epitome of 'proper English'. Prince Edward's

[270] cf. Preston (1998a).

slightly lower score probably reflects the intrusion of some more progressive features in his speech as well as his association with a more modern and down-to-earth generation of the Royal Family.

The supposed EE speakers, however, are regarded as rather non-standard, especially Jonathan Ross fares only slightly better than the two Cockney speakers. In the case of Ken Livingstone, his role as a politician might have influenced people's judgements as he is often heard in situations in which he has to monitor his speech. All in all, though, these EE speakers are associated rather with regionally-based, stereotypical (Cockney?) speech than with Standard English.

A closer analysis of the results shows an interesting detail: With the exception of Trevor McDonald (where the difference is insignificant), women tended to give higher ratings than men. In the light of Milroy, Milroy and Hartley's suggestion that „if females favour certain forms, they become prestige forms" (1994:26), this finding might indeed have remarkable implications in the long term. It remains to be seen, however, whether this is just an incidental phenomenon or whether it will also be observed in the language attitude test.

The analysis of the answers of the 'non-EE group' does not support the compatibility of the concept of 'Estuary English' with people's views on the current linguistic landscape of Britain. Most people perceive only a general mixing of dialects and a change in the appropriateness of formal/informal varieties. Therefore, EE will remain an artificial concept and thus prove very difficult to be anchored in people's minds besides the long-term stereotypes. In particular, it will always be conflicted with Cockney and thus immediately face the stereotypical associations of the urban south-east. As the rating of public figures further suggests, it will have to overcome strong and tenacious prejudices if it is ever to become a 'standard' in a Rosewarnean sense.

6.4. Ratings of Voice Samples

The language attitude test (Task 2) was the same for all 84 respondents, except that the 'EE group' had to indicate additionally whether they had just heard an EE speaker nor not. A summary of the indices is given in table 7 (see appendix H for the ratings in detail):

	#1 (EE speaker)	#2 (EE speaker)	#3 (Cockney speaker)	#4 (RP speaker)	#5 (EE speaker)	#6 (Birmingham accent)	#7 (RP speaker)
modernity	5.04	4.26	2.44	3.64	4.63	3.28	4.26
urbanity	5.31	3.70	4.30	4.07	4.93	4.37	4.48
correctness	3.18	4.47	2.64	5.31	3.75	4.01	4.87
'standardness'	3.52	4.39	2.92	4.81	3.76	3.78	4.82
'unaffectedness'	4.49	3.84	4.73	2.81	4.30	3.52	3.88
pleasantness	3.35	4.53	3.55	4.29	3.25	3.67	4.44
animation	4.12	4.76	3.82	3.47	4.87	3.99	4.28
'streetwisdom'	4.89	3.79	4.07	3.22	4.86	3.84	4.07
competence	4.18	4.90	3.24	4.85	4.27	4.03	4.96
Estuary speaker?	5.14	3.13	3.27	2.00	4.20	2.53	2.87

Table 7: Summary of respondents' ratings of the voice samples

For the sake of clarity, the ratings of each voice sample will be discussed separately. Each section will start with the analysis of respondents' geographical placement of the voices which will indicate what kind of dialectal concept (or stereotype[271]) was activated for the subsequent rating. Comments concerning all voice samples and more general conclusions will be provided at the end of the chapter.

Speaker #1 (EE speaker close to the Cockney end of the continuum)

The results of the dialect recognition task give a clear picture: Some 52 respondents believed that #1 was some kind of London voice, while further 20 people stated that the speaker was from the Home Counties or from the south in general.[272] Apart from two obvious blunders („Liverpool/Leeds" or „Manchester"), the number of misplacements was negligible. Coggle's perception of this voice as an example of EE is supported by the fact that nobody explicitly used the label „Cockney" – though one person referred to it as „not quite Cockney". Still, a look at respondents' comments reveals that this must have been the kind of stereotype that people had in mind when rating this voice; one respondent even noticed the instances of TH-fronting: „incorrect pronunciation of *th* –

[271] On the general nature of stereotypes, see Hewstone and Giles (1986) [extract in Coupland and Jaworski (1997), *Sociolinguistics*, pp. 270-283].

sounded *f*". Moreover, the speaker was described as „a city person" being „short of education", „not cultivated" and „a little common" – there were no positive judgements throughout.

As a consequence of this association with Cockney, *urbanity* was judged by 40 respondents to be the 'most important' aspect of this voice; this is also reflected in the extremely high score (5.31) for this category. #1 also achieved the highest ratings of all samples in terms of *modernity* and *streetwisdom*, but comparatively low ones as far as *correctness*, *standardness* and *competence* were concerned (although the index of the latter two is still above 3.50 and therefore within the 'positive' range). The high score for *urbanity* is probably also responsible for the relatively low one in terms of *pleasantness* (cf. Trudgill 1974b).[273] On the other hand, this type of voice is regarded as highly 'unaffected' which might have to be seen in connection with its fairly low score for *correctness* (and, slightly less, also for *standardness*). Quite interestingly, the results of the 50+ group in the categories *unaffectedness* and *standardness/correctness* are almost inversely proportional to the ones of the <29 group (cf. table 8):

	50+ group	<29 group
unaffectedness	5.21	3.95
standardness	3.15	3.90
correctness	3.16	3.55

Table 8: Ratings of #1 by the oldest and the youngest age groups in terms of *unaffectedness*, *standardness* and *correctness*.

This seems to be an indication of an ongoing change: Such – slightly 'upgraded' – urban, working-class varieties are increasingly perceived as 'standard' (and also 'correct' and 'competent') by the younger generations. A corollary of this development, however, is that the more 'standard' (and 'correct') a voice is believed to be, the more 'affected' it is rated.

In terms of EE, finally, people's views (i.e. the ones of the 'EE group') were clear: #1 achieved the highest (5.14) and also one of the most homogeneous ratings (the figures indicate the number of times the respective box was ticked; cf. questionnaire):

EE speaker	5	6	3	0	0	0	non-EE speaker

[272] Some respondents did not answer this question at all.
[273] See also chapter 5.1.

The implication is obvious: A slightly modified (though still in parts stereotypical; cf. TH-fronting!) form of Cockney speech is the most likely variety to be associated with EE.

Speaker #2 (EE speaker)

#2 was much more successful in hiding his geographical origins, as some 29 respondents would not risk a more specific guess than simply placing him somewhere in the „South". A further 14 people opted for the Home Counties, while only seven people believed to have heard a Londoner's voice. Moreover, the range of guesses was much wider: Some ten people placed him somewhere in the Midlands; other suggestions were „West Country/Dorset", „Devon", „Bristol" and „Shropshire", while two respondents even thought that he was from the north of England. Finally, four people felt unable to give a definite statement: „could be anywhere" or „unplaceable".

This insecurity is reflected in people's comments on this voice: There were hardly any judgmental or openly negative comments; quite obviously, people found it harder to activate some particular stereotype in their minds than for #1. Approximately a dozen people referred to the speaker's characteristic realisation of /r/; nearly all of them seemed to regard it as a speech impairment (cf. chapter 2.2.1): „speaker has a lisp", „speaker had slight speech defect" or simply „trouble with 'r'". The other main focus was on the sample being taken from a TV programme, a fact that was regarded as a possible source of influence on the speaker's voice: „Broadcaster's voice clear and precise", „voice adapted for broadcasting/public speaking", „media trained" and even „BBC-type English". The latter comment is further evidence of this voice not being easily nailed down to some particular variety. Other people called it an „undistinguishable accent", „non-descript" or „fairly neutral". One respondent's statement is especially interesting, as it is reminiscent of Rosewarne's and Coggle's view of EE: „Difficult to say – 'standard' voice/accent you'd find in many areas of southern England". Would this be, then, the proverbial EE speaker?

Unfortunately, people do not share this view: In terms of EE, #2 achieved only a relatively low score (3.13). Moreover, the rating in detail shows considerable disagreement; above all, no one was fully convinced that this was an EE speaker:

EE speaker	0	4	3	2	3	3	non-EE speaker

Arguably, this voice was already too distant from a traditional London accent to be unanimously regarded as representative of EE (all members of the 'EE group' placed #2 somewhere in the south(-east), with „Home Counties" as the most specific term).

The ratings of #2 range between 3.70 and 4.90 – all 'positive' scores. Particularly high ratings can be noted for both *competence* and *pleasantness* (which were also singled out as the most important categories), but also for *correctness* and *standardness*. The overall picture is one of an intermediate and polyvalent voice without any particular 'rough edges' which perfectly meets what is expected from a TV presenter. The price for this supra-regional (and thus 'standard'-like) appeal of this voice, however, might be its merely average score for *unaffectedness* (3.84) and the comparatively low ratings for *urbanity* and *streetwisdom*. Lastly, a fairly significant difference can be observed in terms of *modernity*, as the 50+ group rated this sample a great deal more modern (and, less strikingly, also more 'streetwise' and 'unaffected') than the <29 group – a phenomenon that will have to be watched in the following samples as well.

Speaker #3 (Cockney speaker)

The Cockney features of this voice must have been easily recognised: 60 people in some way or another indicated London as the speaker's place of origin (21 of them explicitly referred to „Cockney" or the „East End"). Further five respondents simply gave „South" as geographical localisation. Despite this clear result, there were quite surprising misplacements, such as „north (eastern)" and 'Lake District".

Moreover, although one respondent observed that this voice „sounded very urban", quite a number of people apparently activated a different stereotype and commented on the apparent „ruralness" of this voice. This is reflected in some localisations: „West Country/Dorset/Wiltshire", „Devon" or „Yorkshire rural", but also in statements like: „lived in the rural part of England most of his life" and even: „He's a farmer". Quite likely, this discrepancy is also the cause of this voice achieving only the fifth-highest score in the category *urbanity*. According to the results in detail, northerners bear the main responsibility for this, as their ratings are considerably lower than the ones by southerners or by people from the Midland area. It is likely that they found it harder to unmistakably recognise and place the accent as an explicitly urban one.

It is further possible that the speaker's age played a part in this phenomenon as well, as many respondents found this worth mentioning: „older generation cockney" or „generation away – grandparents era". It may have been out of a certain respect for the aged that comments on the speaker's education were not as numerous as in #1; one respondent certified him to have „lots of character – but it does not sound very educated". Probably induced by the speaker talking about his recovery from an operation, some respondents referred to the ailments of old age: „an elderly man, probably with teeth missing" or simply „got a cold".

Nevertheless, the association with Cockney seems to be the essential one. Not surprisingly, #3 has the lowest scores of all samples in terms of *standardness*, *correctness* and *competence*. Moreover, it is also perceived as highly 'old-fashioned', which is probably another corollary of the speaker's age. Curiously enough, the ratings of the <29 group in terms of *modernity* are slightly higher than the ones of the 50+ group – this might reflect the growing acceptance of Cockney features.

Following the pattern 'non-standard voice = unaffected voice', #3 has the highest rating in this category (4.73). As an urban variety, however, it has only an average score in terms of *pleasantness* (3.55; cf. above, sample #1).

The EE-score of this sample is an average 3.27, but the results in detail are telling:

EE speaker	4	2	1	0	3	5	non-EE speaker

Nearly the same number of people who believed that this was an EE speaker indicated that this was definitely not the case. This is a clear reflection of respondents' unsubstantiated image of the concept: Some people simply take it as a synonym for Cockney, while others explicitly exclude Cockney speech from EE.[274] Moreover, some people might have reminded themselves of the fact that the speaker's age did not fit into the key association of 'youth' that is nearly always a concomitant of EE.

In general, the results correspond to the 'Cockney' stereotype, but the slightly higher acceptance of this voice by the young indicates a gradual change in the perception of such decidedly non-standard varieties.

[274] This difference is manifested in the contradictory answers of two respondents who both gave „Central London" as the speaker's place of origin. One of them, however, ticked the box to the very left while the other ticked the one to the very right.

Speaker #4 (RP speaker)

The supra-regional aspect of RP is reflected in respondents' placements: 28 people referred to it as some kind of „southern" voice (quite rightly, as the speaker is from Milton Keynes), further 23 respondents opted for the Home Counties. Ten people thought that he was from London, and – quite significantly – Oxford was mentioned four times.

There is no doubt that the classic RP stereotype[275] was activated for the rating of this voice: As one respondent put it: „class came across more strongly than dialect"; and no less than ten people wrote „upper class". There was no doubt about the speaker's upbringing: „sounds like an ex-public schoolboy/Oxbridge", „well brought up" and also „landed gentry". One person was convinced that the speaker was „quite well off" (which is likely to have been influenced by the content of his narration). In this light, the subsequent comments were probably unavoidable: „posh", „snobbish", „stuck up" or „very affected". However, the merits of this voice were praised as well: „very proper English", „well spoken", „very precise", etc.

The RP stereotype is also reflected in people's ratings: Not surprisingly, the speaker achieved top scores for *correctness* and *standardness*, but at the same time, it was also considered the most 'affected' voice by far (these three categories were also named as the most salient ones of this voice). It also has a fairly high rating for *competence*, although voices #2 and #7 fared slightly better in this category. Apparently, the perceived affectation of this kind of speech caused respondents to have certain reservations about the speaker's professional reliability – one person wrote: „Wish I didn't judge this voice to be more competent". Northerners, by the way, appear to have been less influenced by such considerations: Their indices for *correctness* and *competence* are considerably higher than southerners'; a result which reveals a good deal of linguistic insecurity.

The speaker's scores for *modernity* and *streetwisdom* (as well as for *urbanity*), on the other hand, are comparatively low. This is particularly due to the younger generations, as a clear age gap can be observed (cf. table 9; the ratings of the 30–49 group are almost exactly in between):

[275] Two respondents explicitly mentioned „Received Pronunciation", one wrote „Queen's English".

	50+ group	<29 group
modernity	4.84	2.76
streetwisdom	4.07	2.87

Table 9: Ratings of speaker #4 by the oldest and the youngest age groups in terms of *modernity* and *streetwisdom*.

Quite obviously, the perception is changing. For the older generations, RP is still the 'state of the art' variety, while for younger people, it is definitely a thing of the past. In terms of *correctness* and *standardness*, however, RP is still 'going strong', as there were no significant differences between the ratings of the three age groups.

There is also a strong agreement among the respondents that this is not an EE voice: #4 has the lowest score of all (2.00), and the rating in detail is nearly homogeneous:

EE speaker	1	1	1	1	1	10	non-EE speaker

The implication of this result is that 'standard' varieties are regarded as in no way related to EE, and, *vice versa*, it is highly unlikely that EE is ever going to be seen as such a 'standard' variety.

Speaker #5 (EE speaker)

The results of the dialect recognition task for #5 are reflected in one respondent's comment: „Not quite Cockney – but London area".[276] For 39 people, it was some kind of London voice, while further nine respondents placed it in some part of the commuter belt area (Kent, Essex, Sussex, etc.). 19 people simply saw the „South(-east)" as the geographical origin of this voice.

On the other hand, eight people found this voice impossible to place. This would support Coggle's view of #5 as „most definitely an EE speaker"[277], especially, as one respondent wrote: „standard – uses correct grammar, etc. […] New London Voice?".

The overall picture of the ratings of #5 is largely reminiscent of #1 (and, again, also of EE): There are high scores for *modernity*, *urbanity* and *streetwisdom*, but comparatively low ones for *correctness*, *standardness* and *competence* (although all are still in the 'positive' range). Again, young people regarded this kind of speech as more 'correct' and 'standard'

[276] Only three people explicitly mentioned „Cockney".
[277] Quoted from Coggle's notes accompanying the transcripts of his voice samples.

than the older generations, while the 50+ group gave slightly higher ratings in terms of *modernity* (and *urbanity*).

Like all other 'Cockney-ish' voices, #5 was seen as rather 'unaffected'. In this regard, southerners' scores were particularly high – as in #1, the perceived similarity ('one of us') might have played a part in this. On the other hand, #5 was also judged the least pleasant of all voices, which is reflected in many people's comments: „irritating", „rather harsh" or „outspoken and loud in his manner". Partly, this might have been influenced by the fact that the speaker was often recognised as Ben Elton (a rather controversial figure in Britain) and by the rather emotional interview situation. (This might also account for this sample's top score in terms of *animation*, which was singled out as the most important feature of this voice.)

As in the case of #1, the predominant association of this voice with London led to a high score in terms of EE – the second highest of all samples (4.20). The verdict in detail is also rather homogeneous:

EE speaker	2	6	3	2	1	1	non-EE speaker

Again, a variety with relatively obvious London features (though at a certain distance from Cockney) is most likely to be associated with EE. As the ratings show, however, the voice – although its overall image is fairly 'up-to-date' and appealing – is too close to London to be accepted everywhere as some kind of future 'standard' variety.

Speaker #6 (mild Birmingham accent)

Quite obviously, #6 must have been fairly difficult to place. Some 24 respondents gave „Midlands" or „Birmingham" for an answer; one person explicitly stated „North Midlands – [but] not Brummie". On the other hand, a similar number of people believed that the speaker came from London or from the south in general (perhaps induced by the fact that all other samples were 'southern'). The combination of these two cornerstones is reflected in the comment: „spoken by a person between main dialect areas, i.e. Birmingham and London". There is also a good mixture of other suggestions, from „Northern England" via „Yorkshire" (mentioned six times) through to the „south coast halfway between Devon and London". One person even claimed to have heard a „standard, posh Oxford" speaker.

This uncertainty is also manifested in a comparatively small number of comments. Also, they hardly express any value judgements at all and mostly focus on the „urban sounding“ nature of the voice and the speaker's age („older generation“). Only a few respondents were more daring; some showing quite remarkable (though contradictory) psychological insight: „pleasant – seemed friendly, easy to talk to“ *vs.* „very rude person – snob – only cares about himself“.

In comparison with the other samples, #6 achieved quite balanced scores – not on a particularly high level, but almost all of them above 3.50 (the exception is *modernity*, but this is likely to be a result of the perceived speaker's age). The overall picture is one of an intermediate variety with no particular conspicuities either way – a fine example of the ongoing dialect mixing throughout Britain (cf. chapter 6.3.). Neither the 'Brummie' nor the Cockney stereotype seem to have significantly biased people's judgements, and in this sense, the ratings are indicative of the more tolerant and 'relaxed' attitude to levelled voices of this sort.

As usual, the strongest critics are to be found at home: the rating for *correctness* by the 'Midlands group' is significantly lower than by the others (2.82 as opposed to 4.10 [northerners] and 4.23 [southerners]) – another clear instance of linguistic insecurity. Moreover – following what seems to be a general trend –, the ratings of the 50+ group for *modernity* and *urbanity* are a good deal higher than the ones given by the younger generations.

As expected, #6 did not get a very high rating in terms of EE (2.53) – Birmingham is still perceived to be outside the supposed EE territory. This is made even clearer by a look at the results in detail:

EE speaker	0	1	4	1	5	4	non-EE speaker

Once more, not a very balanced rating. However, the six respondents who ticked one of the four boxes to the left all believed that #6 was from somewhere in the south (London or Essex). On the other hand, those nine respondents who recognised the Birmingham/Midlands accent all ticked one of the two boxes to the right, thus explicitly denying that this was an EE speaker – further evidence for the rule that the more a voice is perceived to be 'London-ish', the sooner it is regarded as EE.

Speaker #7 (RP speaker)

As this was another type of RP speaker, it will be helpful to compare his results to the scores given to #4. Again, this voice was not very easy to place: 24 people regarded it as some kind of „southern" voice, while 17 people thought to have heard a Londoner or a person from the Home Counties. However, there is also a number of other suggestions, such as „Southwest accent – Devon", „Midlands", „up north" or „anywhere between South Yorkshire and East Birmingham". Moreover, as 17 people gave „anywhere" or „don't know" for an answer, it seems that this voice was regarded as even more supra-regional than #4.

This is supported by several people's comments: „very neutral – no accent as such", „has no specific accent" or „no sign of regional dialect, just middle/upper class". The last statement implies that some aspects of the RP stereotype were still pushing through, though by no means as strongly as they did in #4: „Correct, nicely spoken English – without sounding too proper". Several people referred to the speaker's level of education („probably public school/university, upper class", „educated – authoritative" or „elocution lesson"), but nobody ever used overtly negative terms (e.g. 'posh', etc.) to describe this voice.

This trend is also reflected in people's ratings: In a way similar to #4, this voice achieved top ratings for *correctness*, *standardness* and *competence*,[278] but at the same time, it still got a slightly positive score in terms of *unaffectedness* (3.88 as opposite to #4's 2.81). Moreover, it was also rated much more 'modern', 'urban' and 'streetwise' than #4; mainly due to particularly high ratings by southerners and – again – the 50+ group. Finally, it was also regarded as a very 'pleasant' voice. All in all, #7 seems to strike the perfect balance by combining the key features *correctness* and *modernity* without sounding too affected.

Unfortunately (from an EE perspective), this highly favoured voice was regarded by many respondents as different from EE:

EE speaker	1	4	1	2	0	7	non-EE speaker

The ratings to the left were mainly by respondents who believed that the speaker was from the Home Counties or the south-east, while nearly all the ones denying that this was an EE voice gave „anywhere" or similarly neutral answers in the dialect recognition task – so much for the supra-regional appeal of EE!

[278] These three categories were also singled out as the most important aspects of this voice.

In the overall view, it is not entirely easy to make out some clear and unequivocal trends, as the results are often rather heterogeneous and sometimes even contradictory. This is particularly evident in the dialect recognition task: Only in the case of the Cockney speaker (#3) did a majority of people feel safe enough to make an exact localisation (although some surprising blunders occurred as well). All other samples proved much more difficult to place, as many people simply resorted to generic terms like 'southern'. It seems that the voices did not always allow respondents to immediately activate any well-known stereotypes (see below). This corresponds to an observation made by Inoue (1996) as a corollary of his 'dialectal speech-guessing test' (which, it might be objected, was carried out with students only):

> [Students'] conceptions of actual dialects are vague and incorrect. Students seem to be able to identify only the small number of dialects which are often heard in the mass media. (Inoue 1996:143)

In the context of the language attitude test, such uncertainties may also be responsible for the sometimes uneven – and at times even conflicting – distribution of ratings which allows only subtle differentiations between the seven samples. Any final and seemingly clear-cut categorisation of the individual voices would thus be too rash and simplistic. There is no cause for regret, however, as the results summarised in table 7 merely reflect the manifold views of a heterogeneous group of people, and are therefore much more representative of the complex realities of speech than if the same study had been done with samples fabricated on the basis of existing stereotypes.

Moreover, it is quite remarkable that the number of scores below 3.50 (what would usually denote a 'negative' rating[279]) is comparatively small. This seems to be a sign of an increasing linguistic tolerance and is in line with McArthur's observation that: „[…] the general (and apparently increasing) view in the 1990s throughout the Anglophone world, appears to be 'live and let live'." (1998:118)

The most 'extreme' ratings (some, for example, below 3.00) have been given to samples #3 and #4. Apparently, these are also the voices most directly associated with common stereotypes – in this case Cockney and RP. However, there is also evidence in the ratings of the other samples (especially in #1 and #7) that respondents activated certain stereotypical categories to slot the voices in. In general, the easier a sample could be at-

[279] Of course, in terms of e.g. *urbanity* and *modernity*, the question of 'positive' and 'negative' is likely to be a matter of individual taste.

tributed to a particular stereotype, the firmer people's views became. Kristiansen (1997:291) describes this as a phenomenon that every researcher has to take into account:

> One might suspect […] that a standard procedure in which a researcher asks for some kind of evaluative reaction (in an interview, in a questionnaire, or in a matched-guise experiment) will prompt subjects to reproduce generally-held opinions rather than display their particular 'real' attitudes.

It might even be argued that there are no such 'real attitudes', but that perception and categorisation of accents *in general* are based on stereotypes. According to Parsons (1998:90f.), such a *top-down* approach is indeed the normal procedure applied by non-linguists:

> Während ein ausgebildeter Phonetiker in der Lage ist, [Akzente] mithilfe des *bottom-up* Schemas zu kategorisieren (also induktiv) und detailliert phonetische Merkmale zu erhören, verfährt der Durchschnittsmensch ganz anders und basiert sein Urteil auf unbewußte Kategorisierung und Intuition.

It might be a matter of debate whether phoneticians really are able to always make such fully unbiased judgements.[280] In any case, the results of the language attitude test confirm the findings of the map drawing task (cf. chapter 6.1.) in the sense that people's mental dialect landscapes of Britain are indeed structured around a certain number of tenacious stereotypes.

As a casual remark after the map drawing task, one respondent expressed her surprise at how small the Scouse area actually was – a clear indication that the ambit of such stereotypes in people's minds is in no way proportionate to their actual share of what Milroy (1999:174) calls the „linguistic bran-tub" of Britain (remember, for instance, that only about three per cent of the population speak RP[281]). Furthermore, several respondents uttered their disappointment about all the voices being somewhat 'southern'; apparently, when they agreed to take part in a survey on language attitudes, they subconsciously prepared themselves for much more clichéd accents than they were eventually presented with.

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[280] „Lewis (1985:247) erzählt eine in diesem Zusammenhang interessante Anekdote. Er fragte einmal Professor Abercrombie, ob ein gewisser BBC-Nachrichtensprecher seiner Meinung nach RP spreche. Die Antwort war affirmativ, und als der Autor darauf hinwies, daß

> this reader displayed regularly certain features which would traditionally be described by any English phonetician as non-RP, [Professor Abercrombie] remarked that, listening to him for content rather than as a professional observer of speech, he could well have overlooked such things.

Lewis gibt zu, daß er wie auch jeder beliebige andere britische Phonetiker jederzeit eine ähnliche Fehlkategorisierung machen könnte "without careful attention to the speaker's phonetic characteristics", d.h. ohne (offenbar künstliche) *bottom-up*, analytische Kategorisierung." (Parsons 1998:90f.)

[281] cf. Algeo (1992:162).

In any case, it seems that nearly all the voices were to some extent being rated against the backdrop of one or more stereotypes. The ratings of samples #1 and #5, for instance, are reminiscent of the ones of the Cockney speaker (#3) – i.e. highest ratings of all samples in terms of *unaffectedness*, but comparatively low ones for *correctness*, *standardness* and *competence*. (The Cockney association is also evident in many respondents' comments on these voices.) Nevertheless, there are striking differences in terms of *modernity* and *urbanity*, which might partly be explained by the perceived age of speaker #3 and the stereotype of 'ruralness' that apparently interfered in many respondents' evaluation of this voice.

Likewise, the ratings of samples #2 and #7 show certain similarities to the ones of the RP speaker (#4): All three voices have similarly high scores for *correctness*, *standardness* and *competence*, and all three voices are seen least favourably in terms of *unaffectedness* (in the case of #7, for example, this is the only score below 4.00). Nevertheless, #4 is the only one with a decidedly negative score (2.81 as opposed to #2's 3.84 and #7's 3.88). In the case of samples #2 and #7, the unfavourable aspects of the RP stereotype have apparently been mitigated by other (perhaps more 'non-standard'?) features of these voices.

Finally, the results for sample #6 seem to correspond the least to any particular stereotype. On the one hand, people did not perceive the tinges of 'Brummie' as sufficiently strong as to have had a decisive effect on the ratings (perhaps otherwise, the score for *pleasantness* – to mention only one example – might have been much lower), on the other hand, this voice was also seen as too distant from London for that cliché to have played a significant role. Of all the samples used in this study, #6 is probably the most 'diffuse'[282] variety and thus representative of the general dialect levelling in England as perceived by many respondents (cf. chapter 6.3.). Its ratings support the rule posited above, but from a reverse point of view: The less a certain voice is associated with one particular stereotype, the more tolerantly – even indifferently – it is rated.

In the analysis of the individual samples according to particular social groups (cf. appendix H), it is striking that the 50+ group tends to regard the voices with the highest ratings for *standardness* (i.e. #4, #7 and #2) as significantly more 'modern' and also more 'streetwise' than the younger generations. Apparently, this age group is still faithful to a notion that could be described as 'what is 'proper' must also be up-to-date'.

However, this seems to be merely one of the last rearguard actions of such 'standard' speech in a classical sense: A look at the absolute figures shows that, in the overall view, the 50+ group simply follows the general trend of favouring the supposed EE varieties #1, #2 and #5 in terms of *modernity*.

As far as other 'age gaps' are concerned, the generally-held rule that 'young people tend to favour non-standard varieties' is not always supported by the data. Very often, the ratings of the three age groups all lie between a range of 0.50 or even less. At times, the ratings are even contradictory: The 50+ group regards, for example, the Cockney accent (#3) as more 'standard' than the <29 group does, but in terms of *correctness*, the result is exactly the other way round. Therefore, apart from the few exceptions mentioned in the discussion of the individual voices, it seems justified to say that the three age groups do not significantly differ in their attitudes.

Similarly, there are hardly any differences between the ratings of men and women which go beyond the incidental. The highest fluctuations occurred in terms of *modernity* and concerned the three voices with – arguably – the highest dialectal prominence (cf. table 10):

	men	women
Cockney speaker (#3)	2.13	2.74
RP speaker (#4)	4.03	3.31
RP speaker (#7)	4.76	3.84

Table 10: Gender differences in the ratings of several speakers in terms of *modernity*.

Women tended to slightly 'upgrade' the non-standard variety, while the two RP voices were similarly 'downgraded'. On the one hand, this may reflect women's generally more integrative approach to language, but it may also be indicative of a general trend in which non-standard varieties are increasingly viewed more positively (both women and men rated sample #1 as the most 'modern' voice). This would also correspond to Milroy, Milroy and Hartley's argument that women are actually creating prestige forms by favouring traditionally non-standard forms (cf. chapter 6.3.). However, the results do not always provide a clear picture: In particular, the ratings for *correctness* and *standardness* are too similar (and sometimes conflicting, cf. #1, #3 and #5) to allow any unambiguous conclusions in terms of gender differences.

[282] On the notion of 'diffusion' in general, see, for example, LePage (1978), Trudgill (1986) or Kerswill and Williams (2000b).

The ratings by the students of linguistics from the University of Reading were nearly always higher than the eventual overall scores. Exceptions most frequently concerned the RP samples #4 and #7, which might be due to a certain distrust of supposedly 'standard' varieties. Of course, such observations can only be made with some reservations because of the small number of respondents in that group, but it is to be hoped that this phenomenon is a reflection of the more unprejudiced and impartial academic approach that is a prerequisite for any kind of linguistic research.

Finally, there were a few cases of linguistic insecurity, but otherwise, northerners' and southerners' ratings did not significantly differ. It seems that there has been no major change in this regard since Strongman and Woosley carried out their language attitude tests in 1966:

> The results show that there is no significant difference between the ratings of northern and southern [speakers] on any of the eighteen traits. This finding agrees with the earlier studies where majority and minority groups in the same cultural background have been found to hold common stereotyped views. (Strongman and Woosley 1967:166)

In an age of ever increasing mobility, it is likely that the remaining differences will continue to fade.

What conclusions can now be drawn from the above results with regard to EE? Reflecting the idea of the continuum, the three supposed EE speakers do not show very coherent ratings. The scores of #1 and #5 are somewhat similar, but #2 – who is closer to the RP end of the spectrum – somehow steps out of the line. The main thing they have in common is their high ratings for *modernity* (although, #7's scores are nearly on the same level). This is a clear indication of slightly modified London speech being currently *en vogue* and also a certain legitimisation for the creation of EE as a concept to get a grip on recent linguistic developments.

However, the above results reveal several incongruities between the concept of EE as intended by Rosewarne and Coggle and its perception by non-linguists. For instance, Rosewarne put forward the claim that the overall effect of EE could be interpreted as „an apparent lack of enthusiasm" (1994a:6). This is too general an argument to be upheld, as the EE speakers #5 and #2 are at the head of the table for *animation* with scores of 4.87 and 4.76 respectively. Clearly, aspects of animation or enthusiasm depend too

strongly on the individual speaker and the particular speech situation to be taken as markers of a certain variety.

Another claim that cannot stand uncontradicted is the „shock factor of EE“ mentioned by Coggle (1998): „You can be pretty sure older people will react negatively“. Admittedly, the youngest age group gave slightly higher ratings to samples #1 and #5 for *pleasantness* (by 0.47 and 0.28 points respectively), but in the overall view, all age groups agreed on relatively low scores for the two voices in this category. On the other hand, the voice of EE speaker #2 was even rated the most 'pleasant' of all – and the score by the 50+ group is in no way different from the one by the other age groups.

As a whole, the classification of the samples in terms of their 'Estuariness' by the 'EE group' shows one clear result: Only voices that can be described as 'not-quite Cockney' (e.g. #1) – but also Cockney itself (cf. sample #3) – are most readily taken as examples of EE. This strong regional focus and, as a corollary of which, the close link to the Cockney stereotype also seem to account for the negative image of EE in the public view – both #1 and #5 are considered the most 'unpleasant' of all voices.[283] Only sample #2, with its positive ratings throughout, could partly contradict this, but unfortunately, the ratings of the 'EE group' reveal that this voice was just as often attributed to people's (however shaped) mental image of 'Standard English' as to their idea of EE.

On the other hand, the further we move along the continuum towards RP (cf. sample #4) and, in particular, the more supra-regional a voice is thought to be (cf. sample #7), the less it is associated with EE. In this light, it seems very unlikely that EE – as perceived by the public at large – is soon going to replace RP (or BBC English, or Queen's English, etc.) in its function as a 'standard' variety (cf. chapter 2.1.). There is no doubt that traditional RP is steadily losing people's support (cf. the ratings of sample #4), but the future seems to lie elsewhere: The only samples which have positive ratings throughout are #7 and the aforementioned #2 – both of which with very ambiguous results in terms of their inclusion in EE. It seems, however, that this kind of speech – slightly downgraded and thus 'modernised' RP – strikes the appropriate balance between *correctness*, *modernity* and *pleasantness* to be viewed by a large majority of people as some kind of 'model' accent and to represent best the current change of paradigms in terms of people's attitudes.

[283] This also partly contradicts the results of Parsons' study (cf. chapter 3) in which the EE speaker achieved fairly high scores in aesthetic terms. Quite likely, the 'typical' EE speaker she used in her study was much closer to the RP end of the continuum – probably similar to 'our' #2 who, however, was not regarded as a 'typical' EE speaker at all…

The (establishment of the) concept of ‘Estuary English’ deserves praise for its having drawn attention to recent and current dialect levelling phenomena in south-east England. To adequately and comprehensively deal with the present developments on a wider geographical (and social) scale, however, the concept is inappropriate because of its all too dominant regional focus and its tenaciously being linked with urban, working-class London speech.

7. Coda – Assessing the Case of Estuary English

The analysis of the supposed phonetic and sociolinguistic features of EE (chapter 2) has shown that there is no convincing way to describe (let alone to define) the concept conclusively – an observation which betrays the concept's artificiality. Moreover, the concept of EE is not very well known by the public at large. This is reflected in its low percentage in terms of familiarity (less than 20 per cent of the respondents had heard the term before the interview), but also in people's rather vague and unsubstantiated mental image of EE (cf. chapter 6.2.). Ever so often, EE is seen as merely some form of slightly 'upgraded' and thus 'modernised' Cockney – with an extremely fuzzy boundary in between –, and it tends to be associated with very much the same things as traditional urban working-class speech (cf. chapters 6.2 and 6.4.).

It is thus very difficult to uphold the notion of EE as a distinct variety in its own right. Even more so, it appears rather daring to assign it a place among the most stereotyped (or, at least, the most 'dialectally prominent') accents of Britain, as Milroy (1999:174) has done in an attempt to describe the popular view of '(spoken) Standard English' by means of the principle of elimination:

> In Britain, where consciousness of the special status of RP as a class accent is acute, spoken standard English might […] be described as what is left after we remove from the linguistic bran-tub *Estuary English*, Brummie, Cockney, Geordie, Scouse, various quaint rural dialects, London Jamaican, transatlantic slang and perhaps even conservative RP as spoken by older members of the upper classes. (Milroy 1999:174; my italics)

The analysis of the map-drawing task (cf. chapter 6.1.) has clearly revealed the decisive role of such stereotypes in the shaping of people's mental dialect landscape of Britain – nearly everybody seems to be familiar with these kinds of long-term linguistic clichés. At the moment, however, EE is certainly not one of them.

Nevertheless, there is no reason for accusing Rosewarne or Coggle to have created and propagated a 'mythical beast' purely out of nowhere. Current research on the spread of certain features (e.g. T-glottalling, the use of labial /r/, but also TH-fronting[284]) as well as Kerswill's and Williams' observations on (south-eastern) dialect levelling (cf. chapter 2.4.) suggest that there is definitely 'something going on'. The latter phenomenon is also reflected in non-linguists' views, as the south(-east) – apart from London, of course – is perceived by most respondents as somewhat low on 'dialectal prominence'

[284] See, for example, Trudgill (1988) and Altendorf (1999).

(cf. chapter 6.1.). Secondly, people's frequent references to the process of continuing dialect mixing throughout Britain (cf. chapter 6.3.) suggest that there are also changes on a larger scale to be observed. Finally, the results of the language attitude test show clear indications of a gradual and slow change in people's attitudes towards different varieties, as 'proper' speech in a traditional sense is increasingly regarded as outdated, especially by the younger generations. Modified varieties, whether 'upgraded' urban/regional speech or, in particular, 'downgraded' RP seem to be more in keeping with the times than their more 'extreme' counterparts.

It is, however, doubtful whether EE can indeed serve as an appropriate tool to describe these ongoing changes, as it faces one dilemma in particular: On the one hand, it is nothing but legitimate to attempt to describe a) the apparently emerging 'intermediate categories' between localised dialects and RP (as opaque as they may be) and b) many people's steadily increasing linguistic tolerance towards less conspicuous varieties. On the other hand, Britain is still too accent-sensitive a society that this could be done without provoking fierce resistance from the many self-proclaimed 'language mavens'. Probably more than anyone else's, their linguistic world order is structured around static stereotypes of the most rigid kind, with (U-)RP[285] undisputedly regarded as 'the good thing'. Everything that does not fit into the latter category is immediately stigmatised as 'the other' and this is what happened (and still happens) to EE as well. It seems that Rosewarne and Coggle (as well as other supporters of EE) somehow underestimated this mechanism:

> What [Rosewarne and Coggle] have done […] by giving this purported phenomenon a name and by publicising it in rather simplistic terms is, wittingly or unwittingly (perhaps half-wittingly) built the image of an ogre which threatens the imagined static, pure condition of the English language. Nothing is likely to enrage DTW [cf. chapter 2.4.] more than the suggestion that the standard language which he/she holds so dear, the grail of which he/she sees him/herself the guardian, is being usurped by the usage of people who are NOT OUR CLASS. DTW is not going down without a fight, you may be sure. (Maidment 1994)

In this context, the role of the media is as essential as it is ambivalent (cf. chapter 2.4.): They are an important factor in the dissemination of the concept, but at the same time, they significantly shape the public view – and not only by publishing DTW's letters to the editor. In whatever way the term 'Estuary English' is used in a journalistic item, it nearly always carries a tinge of the negative, as it feeds on the ever-present anxieties about alleged hegemonic tendencies of London and its speech. In particular, it seems to be currently fashionable to explain all kinds of linguistic developments in whatever part

[285] cf. Wells (1982:280).

of the country in terms of EE, even if it is only an increased use of the glottal stop in Glasgow.[286]

Of course, journalists and other writers will continue to use the term 'Estuary English', always assuming that everybody knows what they are talking about. It may therefore be predicted that, gradually, EE will become more widely known and eventually develop into more distinct a stereotype than it is today. It is likely that this will not happen on a clear-cut linguistic basis, but that EE will mainly grow into a social cliché denoting young(-ish) city dwellers in arriviste positions[287] who (variably) use features of speech traditionally recognised as non-standard (and preferably associated, of course, with a London working-class background).

It is therefore unlikely that EE will ever be able to replace RP as the nation's model accent, even if an increasing number of people will be using some of its supposedly constituent features. In this context, Milroy's observation (cf. above) comes in again: If her definition of 'spoken standard English' is not understood in a strict and static sense, but as a continuum of accents which do not immediately fit into one of the stereotypical categories she mentions, it may well serve as a basis for a description of the current linguistic situation in Britain. As a whole, it may be somewhat general, but it is probably as close to a representation of reality as one can get.

As Milroy, Milroy and Hartley (1994:2) suggest, all linguistic variables „operate at different levels of generality in terms of their territorial spread". The features which are usually singled out for EE are no exception at all (cf. table 1), and any attempt to cope with the current British dialect landscape must recognise such „gradations in terms of local and non-local" (ibid.). With regard to EE, this means that there will never be a consensus on where to draw the boundary between south-eastern dialect levelling and nation-wide changes; in particular, as some phenomena have to be seen as affecting the social rather than the geographical level (e.g. the so-called 'youth norms' like 'upspeak'[288]). Maybe it will have to suffice to follow the perception by the public at large and merely acknowledge a general dialect levelling throughout Britain. The result will be

[286] cf. Harris (1999); discussed in chapter 2.3.
[287] cf. Wells (1997).
[288] cf. chapter 2.3.

a 'linguistic cauldron' comprising an infinite number of *diffuse* (or *compromise*[289]) *varieties* which are sufficiently distant from the traditional stereotypes (and their negative stigma) to be acceptable by large sections of society (cf. the ratings for voice samples #7 and #2). Nevertheless, these diffuse varieties will always maintain their recognisable regional roots (although sometimes only vaguely) so that there is no danger that, in the near future, the whole of England will sound the same:

> […] it is unlikely that regional differences will disappear altogether, since language differences have always been part of the armoury human beings use to maintain their own distinct social identities. (Kerswill 1996:299)

It can be imagined that it is nearly impossible to subsume these diffuse varieties under one single terminological roof. One would have to pay tribute to the increasing popularity and the perceived modernity of these varieties, but at the same time avoid any particular regional focus as well as the pretence of a rigid bundle of features serving as unambiguous markers of this kind of speech. Therefore, if the academic urge to find a label for everything cannot be resisted at all, it may be best to choose something as innocuous as possible, like, for example, 'New Millennium English'. Like Maidment's 'Post-Modern English' (1994), this term would account for the 'off-the-shelf' mode of pronunciation that many speakers seem to exhibit, but which is ever so difficult to categorise. (Of course, whether this will suffice to silence the language mavens, is another story.)

Nevertheless, even the most well-meant attempt to label (and thus to isolate) a certain variety of speech cannot obscure the disadvantages of such an approach, as it always suggests the existence of rigid boundaries and the possibility of a workable definition. Moreover, as the example of EE shows only too well, any such creation with only a trace of 'non-standardness' will always cause fierce resistance and even venom. Therefore, it seems to be much more fruitful to focus on the current linguistic changes in Britain in terms of a *process*. In this context, Wells (1994a) takes RP as a system of reference (not in the sense of a monolithic linguistic ideal, of course, but as a flexible concept which is best defined sociolinguistically and thus open to change[290]) and talks about its subsequent 'Cockneyfication'. This is insofar an appropriate term as it is an acknowledgement of the central influence of London speech in this process (cf. chapter 2.4.). On the other hand, the regional focus of this working model also imposes unnecessary constraints because, strictly speaking, any changes of other than Cockney origin would have to be excluded. Moreover, it is also unlikely that the notion of a 'Cockneyfication' of English will be

[289] cf. Kerswill and Williams (2000b): „In Britain, as in other European countries, there has been a steady trend towards the loss of regional dialects, resulting in new, compromise varieties combining some of the original dialect/accent features, some new forms, and some forms adopted from a relevant standard."

greeted with applause the further you go north, as it will be seen as yet another example of London expansionism.

For such reasons, it may be better to speak of the 'democratisation' of RP as suggested by Clive Upton.[291] (A similar terminology can also be found in Wells (1982:118), as he speculates about the rise of a „more *democratic* standard" (my italics) by the turn of the century.) Apart from avoiding the traps of regional stereotypes, this term is also an excellent means to reflect the growing linguistic tolerance in Britain. Furthermore, it does not create the illusion of a 'new' variety – and maybe even DTW will find it harder to object against something that has 'democratic' written on its flag. The notion of a 'democratised' RP might even be extended as far as to absorb many of the key aspects of EE, e.g. many of its constituent features, but also – and in particular – its supposed effects of social levelling. At the same time, it might even go beyond EE in the sense that its social and geographical ambit is less restricted: Gimson (1989:86) writes that a possible new standard emerging within the next century is likely to have „a wider popular and regional base" – EE, as currently perceived by the public at large, would hardly be able to fulfil both of these conditions.

The perceptual study has clearly revealed that the concept of EE as intended by its pioneers is difficult to be embedded in non-linguists' views of the British dialect landscape. Therefore, professional linguists should take heed that their theoretical constructs – even if they are made with the best intentions and based on as objective a basis as possible – do not lose touch with 'real' people's views. This is not only an exclusive problem of EE, by the way: As this study has shown, the case of RP is somewhat similar, as it is about as little known as EE. However, while RP derives its legitimation from its correspondence to people's notion of 'the good language' – a concept which expresses itself through many other clichés as well (Queen's/BBC English) –, EE has no such solid foundation in people's minds. This is probably the main reason for much of the confusion surrounding the concept; and it also supports the demand made by Preston (1989a) and others to take non-linguists' views more seriously. In particular, people's high awareness of accommodation phenomena – referring to interpersonal communication as well as to dialect levelling on a larger scale – is ample proof of the value of such folk-linguistic notions (cf. chapter 6.3.).

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[290] cf. Wells (1999): „I prefer to define RP sociolinguistically, as the pronunciation of people at the upper end of the social scale – whatever that is at any given time. From this perspective, RP gradually changes as it incorporates elements from lower down."

The case of Estuary English is a complex one, with more and more files being constantly opened. During the writing of this paper[292], the number of publications on the subject has steadily grown – if not to say exploded. It is particularly laudable that, after a long period of drought, the academic world has finally found an interest in EE: The papers by Altendorf (1999) and Hüttermann (1999) have enriched the discussion of EE by empirically solid approaches to the spread of certain variables which are usually associated with EE. (It is a curious fact that, so far, all these papers have been produced at German universities[293] – the topic seems to create greater academic interest on the Continent than in its homeland). It can only be hoped that further research will follow, as there are still vast fields untrodden.[294]

In the light of the above findings, however, every researcher must always bear in mind that EE is, above all, a matter of perception. As much as the same glass can be either half-full or half-empty, the same voice can be categorised as either 'EE' or 'democratised RP' (or whatever term one considers appropriate). Therefore, and before anything else, every researcher has to reflect upon his or her own interpretation of the concept. In this sense, general statements like 'EE is invading RP' must never be taken at face value because they work on the pretence of EE being a well-defined entity. Very often, however, such statements are simply based on the analysis of a few selected variables only (preferably T-glottalling and L-vocalisation) and EE is merely taken as a catchy title to summarise the current – and undisputed – trend towards more demotic varieties of English (in the actual performance as well as in its perception). If EE is explicitly declared to be such an auxiliary construct and also treated like this, there is not much cause for objection (but it always has to be asked whether the same kind of research could not be done just as well under the label 'democratisation of RP' and the like). If journalists, linguists and other writers, however, continue to complacently use the term without acknowledging its deficiencies and its low degree of familiarity within the population at large, they might miss one essential thing: the connection with 'real life' – *rigĥ' ma'ɐʔ*.

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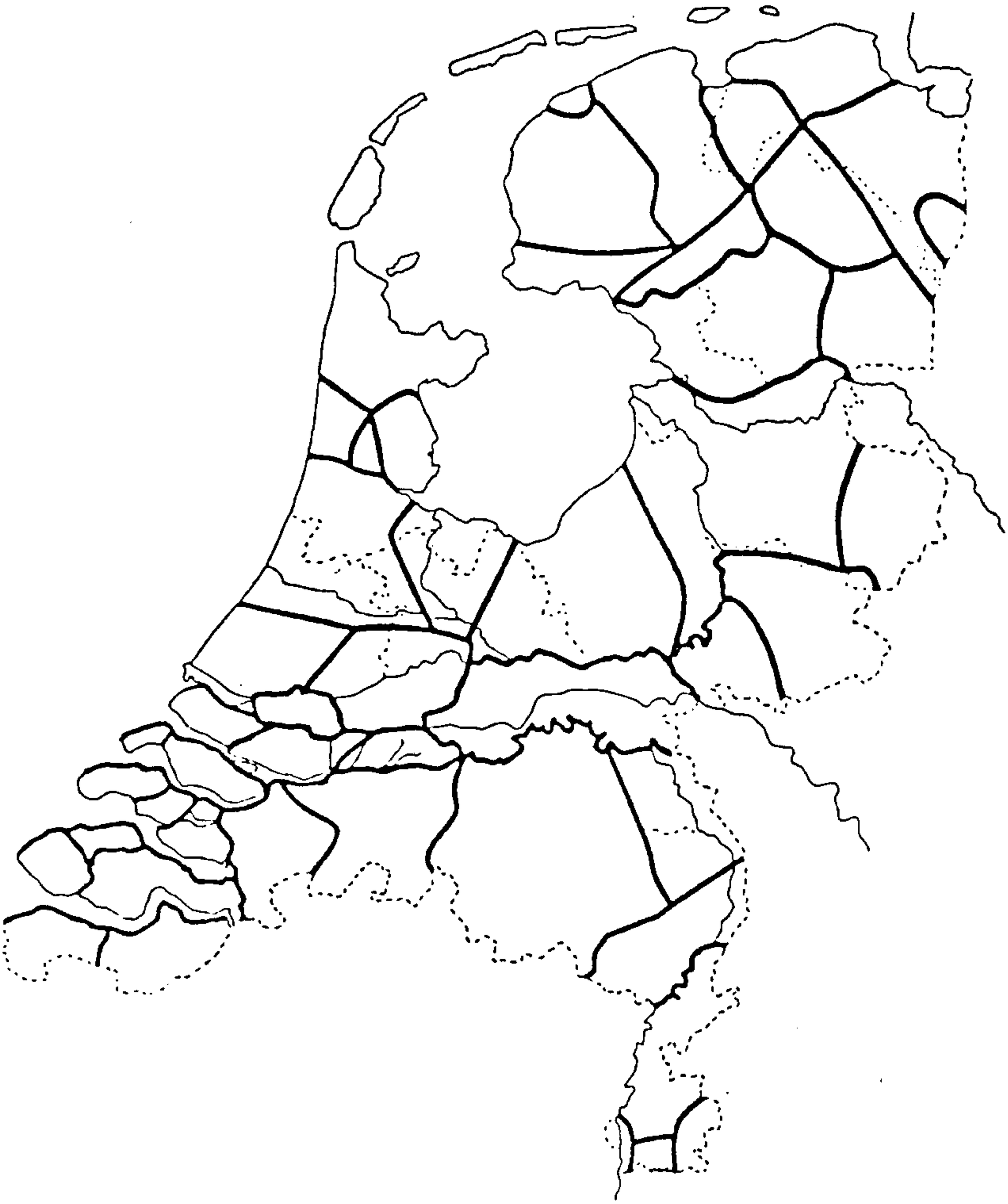
[291] cf. Morrish 1999.
[292] i.e. between February and June 1999.
[293] Parsons (1998), as well, is a 'Magisterarbeit' from the University of Hamburg.
[294] In particular, the spread of the supposed EE features should be analysed on a wider geographical and social scale, as this would also allow further conclusions about the concept's validity. Moreover, the field of gender differences between supposed EE speakers (and of the overt and covert attitudes towards them) still offers ample space for research as well (see, however, Hüttermann (1999)).

Appendix A – Perceptual Maps

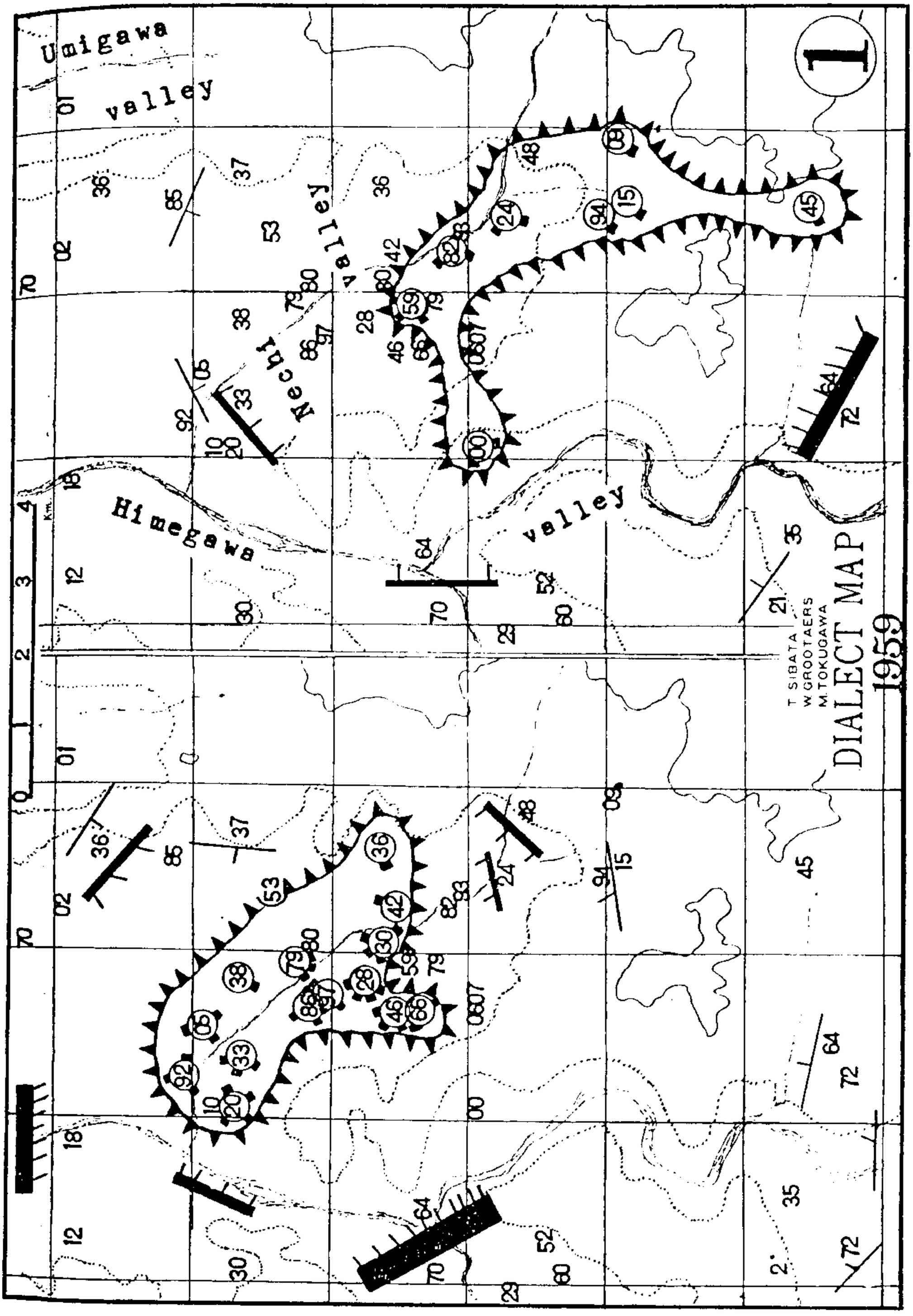
1) A Perceptual Map of Dutch-Speaking Areas



(Rensink 1955:22; taken from Preston 1989a:5)

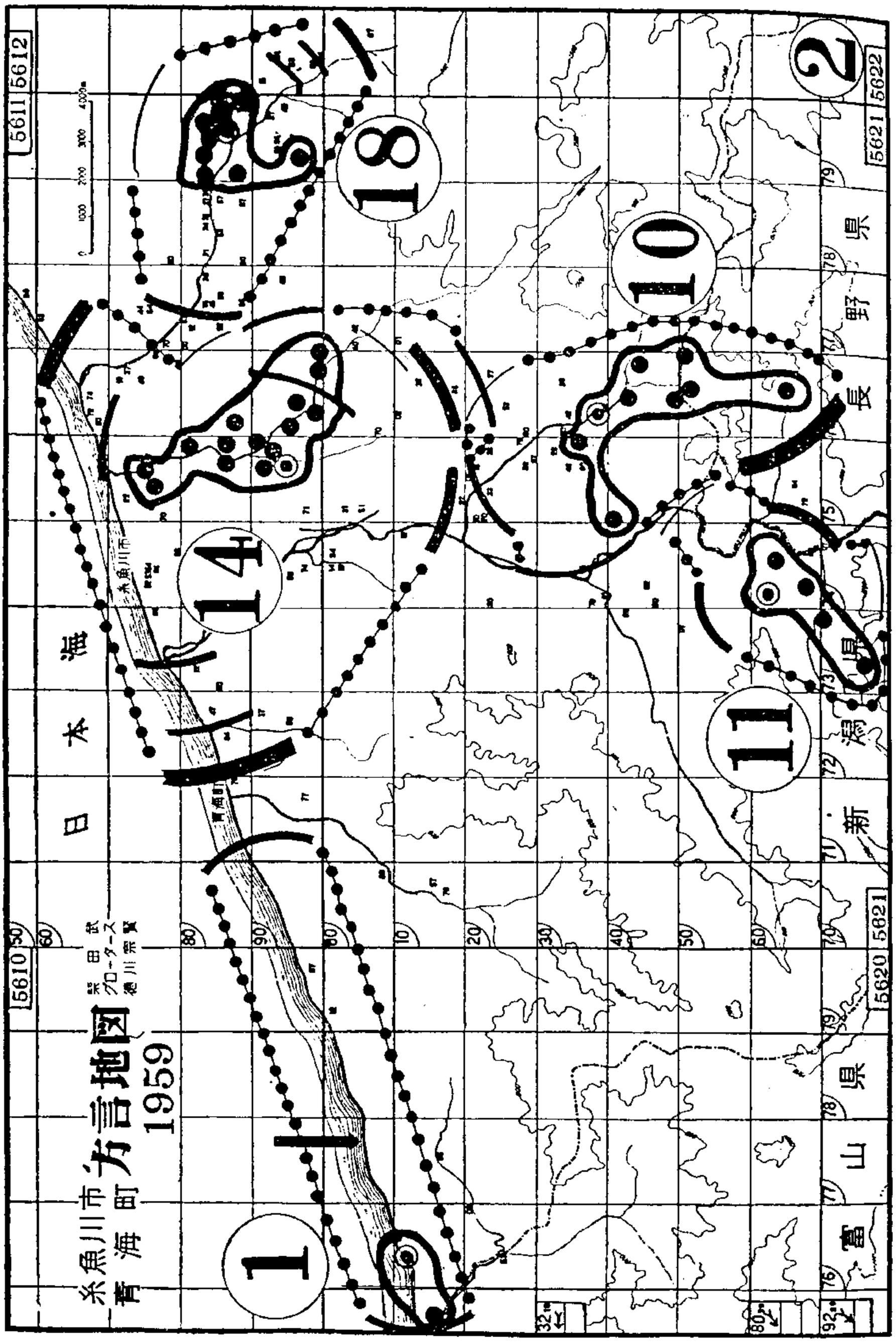
2) Three Examples of Grootaers' Perceptual Maps of Japan

i) The determination of regions in which the perceptions of dialect differences are shared in a small area of Japan [descriptions taken from Preston 1989a):



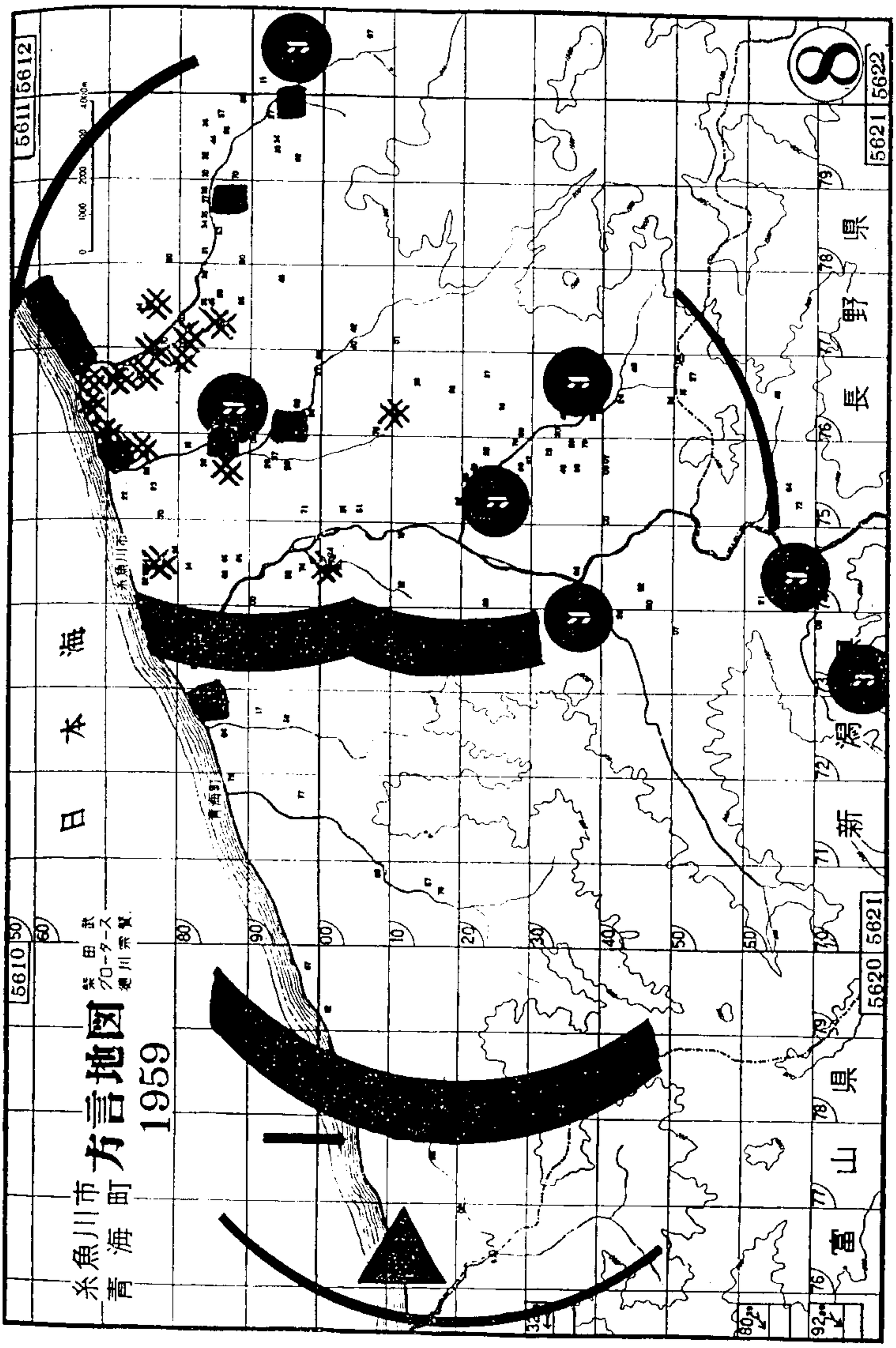
(cf. Grootaers 1959:359)

ii) The inner and outer boundaries of a region (10) in which respondents share perceptions of dialect differences in a small area of Japan:



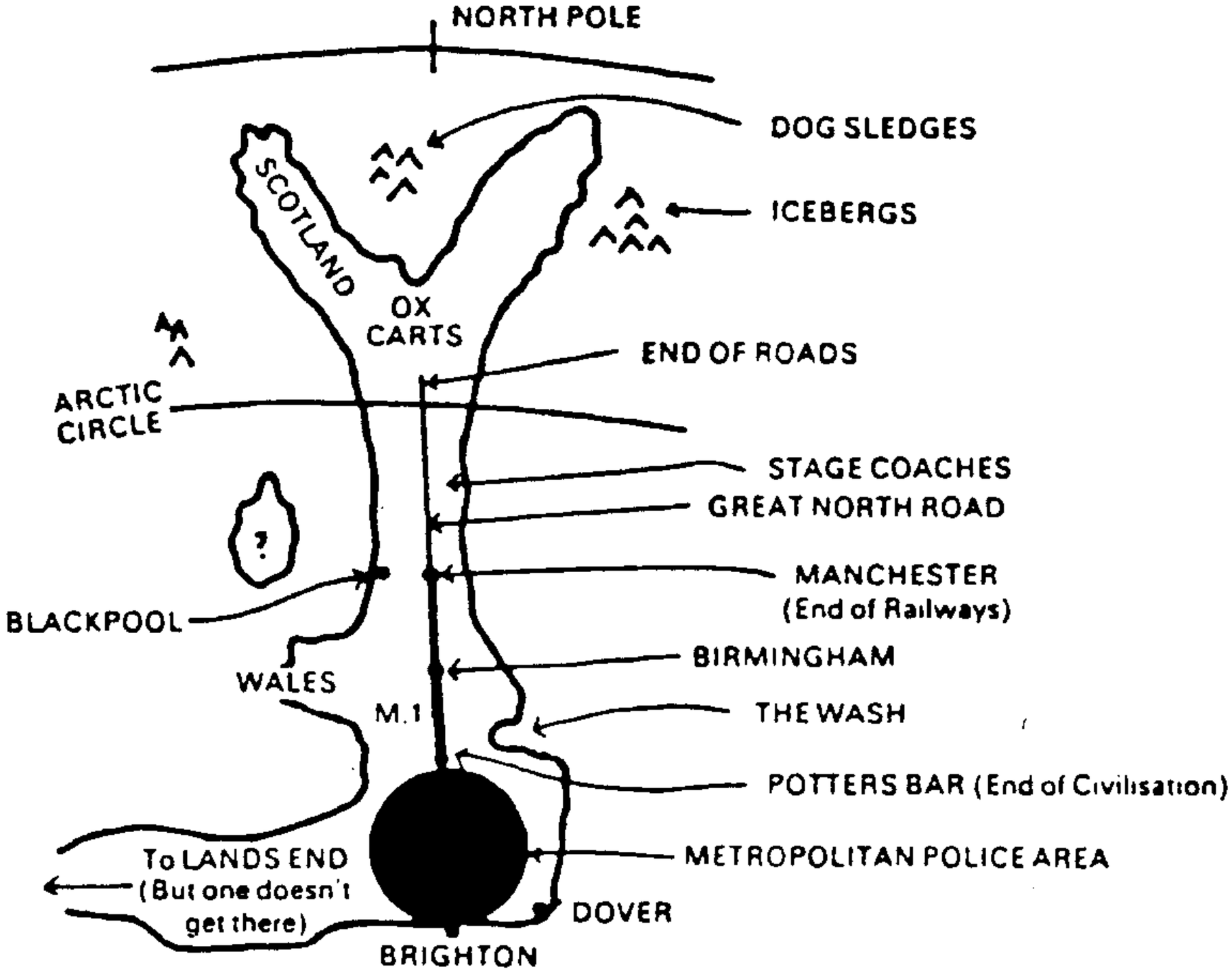
(Grootaers 1959:364)

iii) The boundaries of regions which respondents in a small area of Japan feel use unintelligibly different dialects



(Grootaers 1959: 379)

3) Doncaster and District Development Council's caricature of Londoners' perceptions of the North



How Londoners see the North – at least,
according to the Doncaster and District Development Council

(taken from Preston 1989a:15)

Appendix B: Summary of Respondents' Biographical Data

	University of **R**eading/ **YMCA** Reading/ **N**ational **T**rust	M/F	Age	Grown up in (county only)	Now living in (county only)	Occupation	**N**ortherners/ '**M**idlanders'/ **S**outherners/ **C**lassification **U**ncertain (cf. 5.1.)
R1	UR	F	20	(varying)	Devon	Student	S
R2	UR	F	46	Middlesex	Berkshire	Student	S
R3	UR	F	18	Lancashire	Devon	Student	CU
R4	UR	F	24	Berkshire	Berkshire	Student	S
R5	UR	M	18	Leicestershire	Berkshire	Student	S
R6	UR	F	21	Berkshire	Berkshire	Student	S
R7	UR	F	34	Hampshire	Hampshire	Student	S
R8	YMCA	M	38	Berkshire	Berkshire	Consultant	S
R9	YMCA	F	24	Cleveland	Berkshire	Unemployed	CU
R11	YMCA	M	26	Berkshire	Berkshire	General Builder	S
R12	YMCA	M	25	Bedfordshire	Berkshire	Unemployed	S
R13	NT	F	25	(varying)	London	Freelance Writer	S
R14	NT	F	38	South Glamorgan	Avon	Occupational Therapist	S
R15	NT	F	31	West Yorkshire	West Yorkshire	Solicitor	N
R16	NT	F	45	Devon	Hampshire	Tour Leader	S
R17	NT	F	51	Kirkcudbrightshire	Surrey	Local Government Officer	N
R18	NT	F	55	Middlesex	Hertfordshire	Social Worker	S
R19	NT	M	32	West Glamorgan	West Midlands	Solicitor	CU
R20	NT	M	37	Essex	Cambridgeshire	Computer Programmer	S
R21	NT	M	44	Durham	Tyne & Wear	Local Government Officer	N
R22	NT	M	56	Hertfordshire	Cardiff	Civil Engineering Consultant	S
R23	NT	M	57	Derby	Middlesex	Engineer	CU
R24	NT	M	56	London	London	Local Government Official	S
R25	NT	F	19	North Yorkshire	North Yorkshire	Full-Time NT Volunteer	N
R26	NT	F	19	Durham	Durham	Part-Time Sales Assistant	N
R27	NT	F	19	Leicestershire	Leicestershire	Student	M
R28	NT	F	28	Leicestershire/ South Yorkshire	London	Physiotherapist	N
R29	NT	F	28	Hertfordshire	North Yorkshire	Nurse/Student Midwife	CU
R30	NT	F	26	Kent	North Yorkshire	Registered Nurse/Student Midwife	CU
R31	NT	F	25	South Yorkshire	South Yorkshire	Operating Department Practitioner	N
R32	NT	F	25	London	Cambridgeshire	Retail Manager	S
R33	NT	F	25	Norfolk	Norfolk	Customer Accounts Advisor	M
R34	NT	F	25	Norfolk	Kent	Occupational Health Nurse	M
R35	NT	F	24	Tyne & Wear	North Yorkshire	Town and Country Planning Officer	N
R36	NT	F	22	Hertfordshire	Buckinghamshire	Graduate	S
R37	NT	F	22	Cambridgeshire	Nottingham	Staff Nurse	M
R38	NT	F	22	Berkshire	London	---	S
R39	NT	F	22	Northampton	London	Radiographer	S
R40	NT	F	38	(varying)	Devon	Family Centre Deputy Manager	CU
R41	NT	F	36	Surrey	Surrey	Civil Servant	S
R42	NT	F	35	(varying)	West Yorkshire	Bank Employee	N
R43	NT	F	34	Merseyside	Hertfordshire	PR Manager	CU

R44	NT	F	33	Cumbria	Cumbria	Assistant Buyer	N
R45	NT	F	31	Shropshire	Shropshire	---	M
R46	NT	F	33	Nottinghamshire	Kent	Accountant	CU
R47	NT	F	42	Monmouthshire		Social Services Manager	CU
R48	NT	F	40	Merseyside	Merseyside	NHS Manager	N
R49	NT	F	48	London	West Sussex	Staff Nurse	S
R50	NT	F	59	Northumberland	Northumberland	Retired Teacher	N
R51	NT	F	57	Cheshire	Cheshire	Retired Chemistry Teacher	M
R52	NT	F	55	London	Hertfordshire	Ceramic Artist	S
R53	NT	F	51	London	Avon	Medical Laboratory Scientist	S
R54	NT	F	54	Cleveland	Cleveland	Retired Primary Teacher	N
R55	NT	F	57	Yorkshire	Cleveland	Retired Teacher	N
R56	NT	M	19	Durham	Durham	Student	N
R57	NT	M	29	Hertfordshire	Bedfordshire	Trainee Accountant	S
R58	NT	M	27	North Yorkshire	North Yorkshire	NHS Management Trainee	N
R59	NT	M	26	Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire	Solicitor	M
R60	NT	M	24	West Yorkshire	West Yorkshire	Student	N
R61	NT	M	23	Shropshire	Cambridgeshire	Student	M
R62	NT	M	39	Staffordshire	(varying)	Pharmacist	M
R63	NT	M	39	Inverness-shire	Yorkshire	Nurse	N
R64	NT	M	37	Middlesex	Wiltshire	Site Service Engineer	S
R65	NT	M	33	Avon	Avon	Milkman	S
R66	NT	M	33	Somerset	Somerset	Insurance	S
R67	NT	M	33	Merseyside	Merseyside	Civil Servant	N
R68	NT	M	32	Durham	West Yorkshire	Solicitor/Civil Servant	N
R69	NT	M	31	Middlesex	Middlesex	Printer	S
R70	NT	M	30	Berkshire	Nottinghamshire	Analyst	S
R72	NT	M	43	Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire	Process Shift Supervisor	S
R73	NT	M	48	East Yorkshire	East Yorkshire	Caretaker	N
R74	NT	M	44	Essex	Suffolk	Office Manager	S
R75	NT	M	53	Essex	Essex	Mechanic	S
R76	NT	M	40	(varying)	Oxfordshire	Careers Advisor	S
R77	NT	M	58	Worcestershire	Somerset	Community Worker	S
R78	NT	M	53	West Yorkshire	East Yorkshire	Full Time NT Volunteer	N
R79	NT	M	53	Worcestershire	Worcestershire	Building Surveyor	M
R80	NT	M	52	Derbyshire	Derbyshire	Semi-Retired Schoolteacher	M
R81	NT	M	51	Suffolk	Northamptonshire	Health Service Administrative Officer	M
R82	NT	M	65	Buckinghamshire	Lancashire	Electrical Engineer (Retired)	CU
R83	NT	M	62	Lancashire	Merseyside	Retired Systems Analyst	N
R84	NT	M	61	Essex	Hampshire	Retired	S
R85	NT	M	60	Cheshire	Cheshire	Analytical Chemist	M
R86	NT	M	63	Middlesex	Essex	Retired Teacher/Lecturer	S

- **Bold Print** = members of the 'EE group'
- R10's and R71's questionnaire had to be ignored as large parts were left blank.

Appendix C – Transcripts of Voice Samples

#1: EE speaker:
We did half expect it, so it wasn't a shock, but it's not very nice to see like 20, 30 men come in and basically take over what is our business and has been for the last 30 years.

#2: EE speaker:
The robin. I bet you've seen plenty of these in the last month. They first flew onto Christmas cards in Victorian times, but of course this year they even made it onto the stamps. And I bet a few of them made it into your gardens as well, where they're very obvious, because their especially trusting nature makes them so when they're hungry in the wintertime.

#3: Cockney speaker:
anyway…it was a long while before this doctor come up. It was only, like, the young one, see, weekend one. But anyway, the sister, she was getting a bit worried. She said he don't seem to be coming, so she had a look, and she said, well if it was my decision she wouldn't let me home…and er…anyhow I more or less pleaded with her, I said well they're coming here in a little while, I said, if you'd've told me before, I said, I would have made arrangements and cancelled it…anyway…she was still worried so she went and she found this young doctor. He come along…still laying there, you know, on my bed, sort of thing, surrounded. Eventually he comes ten to twelve…and he has a look and…he's, like, with the nurse there, he wasn't with the sister, but anyway he said, well, he said, you don't seem to be weeping now…he said, I don't think it'll weep any more, he said…erm…he said, well, if I let you go home, he said, he said, they'll have to be dressed twice a day…he said, and he said…twice a day, he said, while it's…comes away a bit wet, he said, and once a day, he said, when it's dry, sort of thing.

#4: RP speaker:
But the second occasion was much worse, er it was a hell of a mess, erm with upturned gear, er all the cupboards opened and the stuff pulled out, erm even in the kitchen, where the stuff is very boring…erm…and everything that had any value at all seemed to me to have been taken…and very carefully, which contrasted with the mess…the hi-fi had all its cabling neatly tacked down, running around the skirting boards. It'd been pulled up incredibly neatly. So not only did they take the gear but also all the cabling as well.

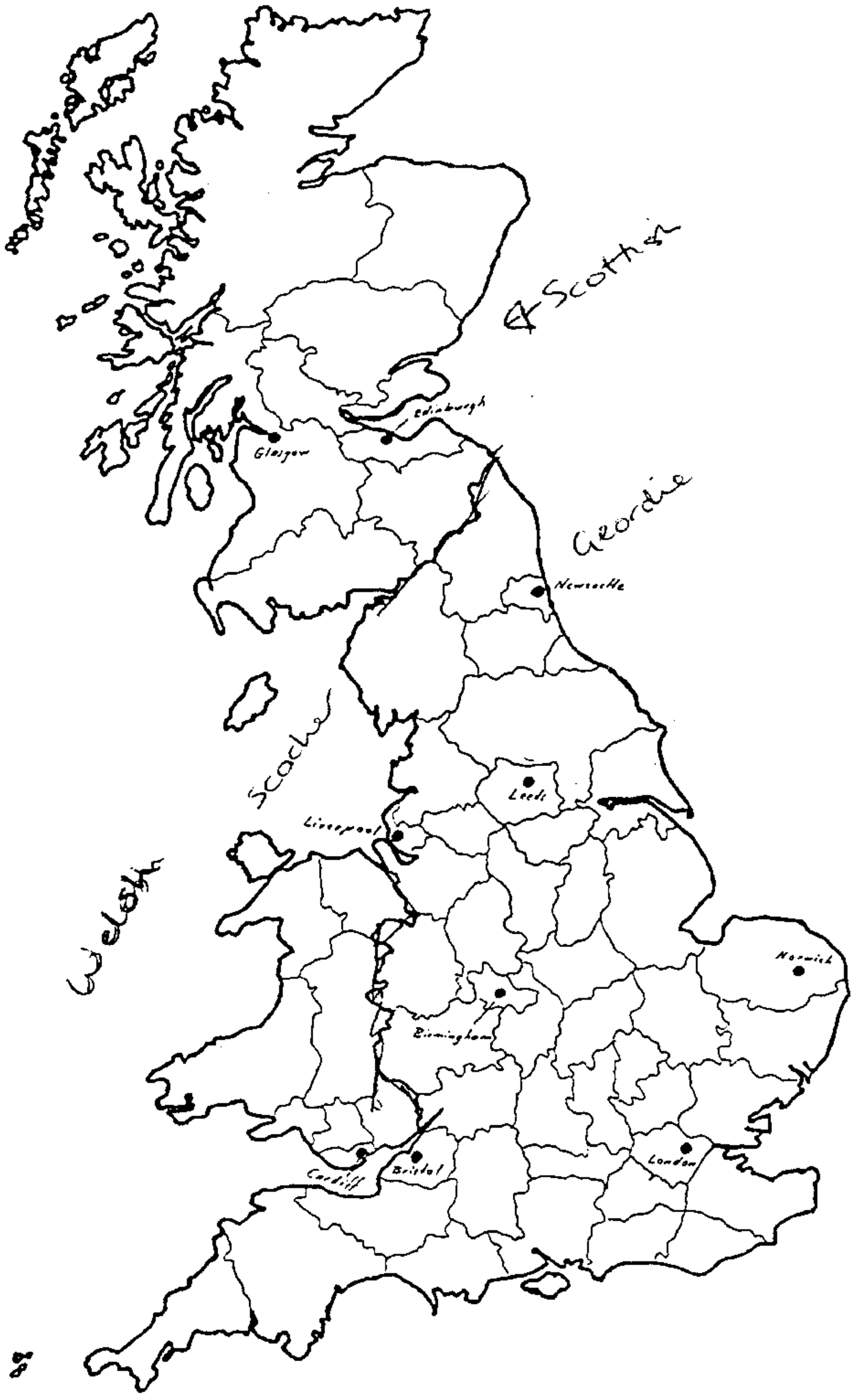
#5: EE speaker:
No. As I've explained before, I don't remotely think of my act as anything other than something I draw from within myself to make people laugh. If social observation which is about politics emerges ... I mean, it sounds like I'm denying it, but it's only because, I have to tell you, you are all asking the same question in a way, over and over, ... is ... you know, "Are you trying to be a politician?" I'm not. If you don't think I'm funny, don't watch it!

#6: Birmingham accent:
I was on the lookout for things from sales, and I saw a rather nice pair of mode Italian real leather shoes, and I just went to a rather indifferent assistant in the shop, paid my eighteen pounds by cheque I think it was, and took the shoes away in a rather natty box, and I've worn them about twice since.

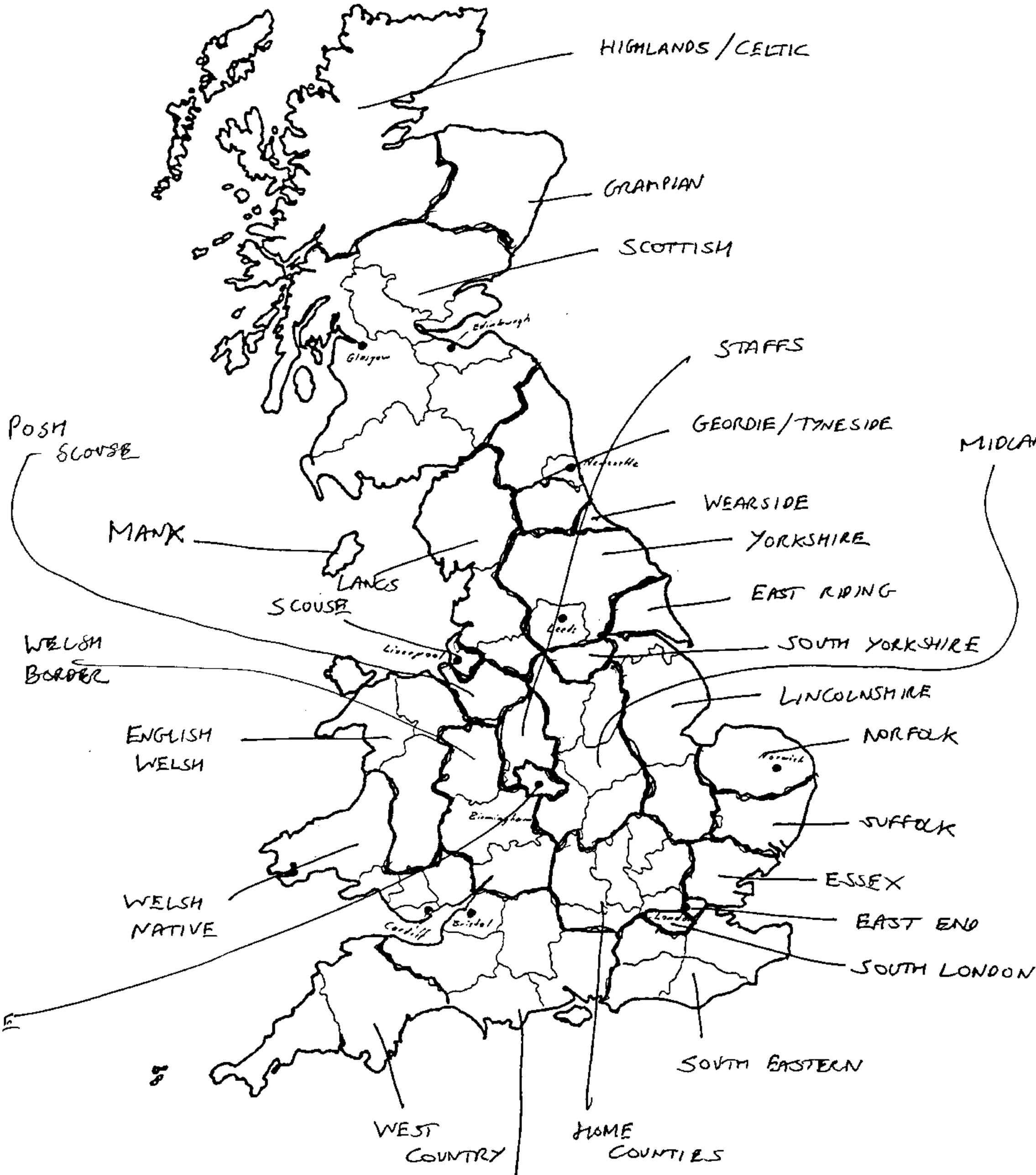
#7: RP speaker:
The question why seventies' culture seems particularly politically incorrect to us now, or to a lot of us now, erm, touches on something very important about this which is that … you can argue, and I think I would, that most humour is reactionary. Errm, it's right wing, it's offensive, it picks on stereotypes.

Appendix D – A few Examples of Respondents' Maps

1) R36 – 22-year-old graduate from Milton Keynes

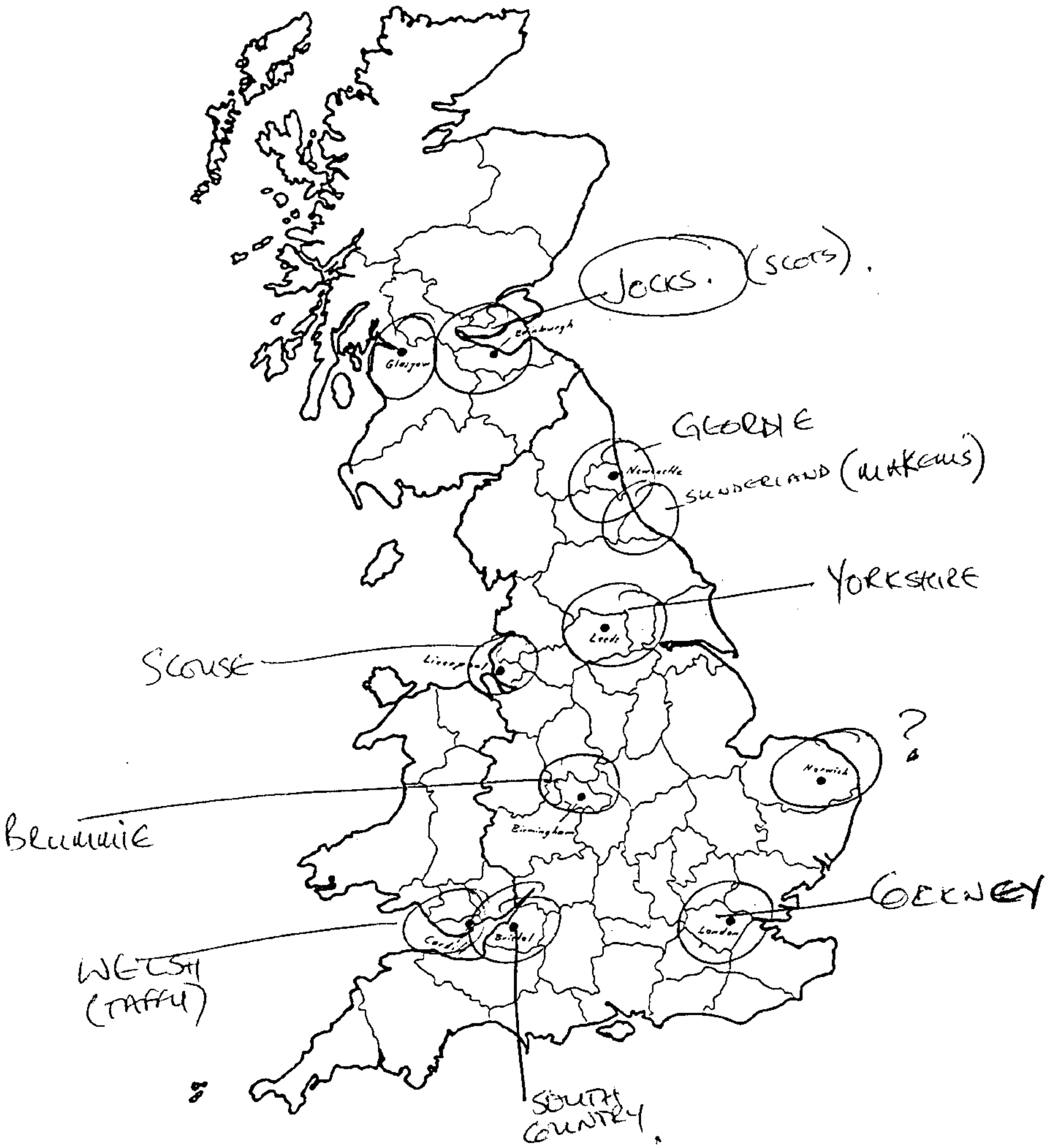


2) R59 – 26-year-old solicitor from Cleethorpes



If you have completed this task, PLEASE DO NOT GO ON YET. You will be given further instructions as soon as everyone has finished.

3) R21 – 44-year-old local government officer from Wallsend



Appendix E: Summary of Labels

("≅" indicates the respective area as outlined by the respondent; numbers in brackets refer to table 5)

1) Labels designating geographical areas

Label	number of occur-rences	Total (per area)
Northern	18	
North	1	
Northern accent	2	
Northern dialects	1	(22)
North East	5	
North West	1	**28**
Northumbrian	2	**2**
Geordie	65	
Geordie accent	1	
Geordie (Newcastle)	1	(67)
Newcastle (Geordie)	2	**69**
Newcastle and Durham	1	
Macam (≅Newcastle/Cleveland)	1	
Sunderland (Makems)	1	
Durham	2	
Cleveland	1	
Tyneside	2	
Teeside	1	
Wearside	1	
Cumbrian	11	
Lake District	1	**12**
Yorkshire	40	
particularly Yorkshire	1	(41)
North Yorkshire	3	
West Yorkshire	4	
South Yorkshire	6	
Broad Yorkshire	3	**57**
Sheffield	1	
Leeds	3	
Leeds (Yorkshire)	1	
Tyke (≅Leeds)	2	
Lancashire / Yorkshire	2	
North Country (≅Yorks + Lancs)	1	
Lancashire	19	
Lancastrian	3	(22)
North Country (≅Lancashire)	1	**23**
Manchester	3	
Mancunian	6	
Mancunian (very minor accent)	1	
Manchester / Lancashire	1	**11**
Hull	1	
Hull / Humberside	1	
East Riding (≅Humberside)	1	
Liverpool	13	
Liverpudlian	14	
Liverpudlian (Scouse)	5	(32)
Scouse	41	
Posh Scouse	1	(43)
Scacher (≅probably Scouse)	1	**75**
Cheshire	1	
Derbyshire	1	
Nottinghamshire/Derby	1	

Label	number of occur-rences	Total (per area)
Nottinghamshire	1	
Staffordshire	1	
Lincolnshire	7	
Brummie	42	
Brummie (yam yam)	1	(43)
Birmingham (Brummie)	2	(19)
Birmingham	17	**62**
Black Country	5	
Coventry	2	
Midlands	23	
Stupid Midland	1	(24)
Middle England	1	
Middle England (Central)	1	
Middle England (Southwestern)	1	
North Midlands	2	
West Midlands	5	
East Midlands	2	
South Midland	1	**37**
Central (East & West)	3	
Inbetweenish (≅Lincs–Cheshire)	1	
Worcester(shire)	5	
Bristol(ian)	10	
Bristol + Swindon	1	
Bristol + Avon	1	
South Country (≅Bristol)	1	**13**
East Anglia(n)	22	(22)
Norfolk	18	
Norfolk /East Anglian dialect	1	
Norfolk Yokel	1	(20)
Norwich	3	
Suffolk	7	
Broadland (≅East Anglia)	1	
East Counties (≅East Anglia)	1	
East (≅East Anglia)	1	
Folk (≅East Anglia)	1	
Rural (≅East Anglia)	1	**57**
Southern	18	
Southern accent	1	
Southern dialect	1	
Southern English	1	
Very Southern	1	
South	1	
The South ‘posh’	1	
Southerners Paath, Graas, etc.	1	**25**
Cockney	40	
Cockney accent/dialect	1	(41)
East London (Cockney)	1	
East London dialect	1	
East End	1	**44**

p.t.o

Label	number of occur-rences	Total (per area)
London	20	
London or R.P.	1	
London most dialects (imported)	1	(22)
North London	1	
South London	2	
London / South East	2	**27**
ESTUARY ENGLISH	**2**	
Essex	11	
Home Counties	12	
Home Counties(Queen's speech)	1	
Hertfordshire	1	
Oxford/Bucks/Berks (not Oxford English which is Acquired Pronunciation)	1	**15**
South East	7	
Kentish	1	
Kent	3	
Rural Kent	1	**5**
Surrey	1	
Sussex	2	
Rural Sussex	1	
South Coast	2	
South coast is slured [sic] but extended	1	
Isle of Wightish	1	
South West	7	
South West Dialect	1	**8**
Wiltshire	3	
Hampshire	1	
Rural Hampshire	1	
Hampshire & Dorset	1	
Dorset	3	
West Country	38	
West Country accent	1	
West Country ('Ere, my lover!)	1	(40)
West Country (Somerset)	1	
Rural (≅West Country)	1	
Somerset	7	
Somerset 'ooah'	1	
Devonian	4	
Devon	4	**58**
Cornish	22	
Cornish dialect	1	
Cornwall	3	(26)
Devon Cornwall	6	
Posh Country (≅Devon and Cornwall)	1	
Devon/Cornish	1	
Keltic (very like Britannie)	1	**35**
English	4	
Manx	2	
Isle of Mannish	1	
Scottish	47	
Scottish accent	1	
Scottish dialect	3	(51)
Scots	5	
Scotland	2	

Label	number of occur-rences	Total (per area)
Jocks (Scots)	2	
Actual Scottish	1	
Course Scottish	1	
Common Scottish	1	
Posh Scottish	1	
Broad Scots	1	
Refined Scots	1	
Rest of Scotland	1	**67**
Highlands	13	
Highland Scots	2	
Scottish Highlands	3	(18)
Lowland Scots	3	
Lowlands	3	
Scottish Lowlands	3	
Southern Scots	1	
East Scots	1	
East Scottish	1	
Scottish East Coast	1	
Scottish West Coast	1	
South East Scottish	1	
West Scots	1	
Glasgow/Glaswegian	39	
Edinburgh	4	
not Scottish, reasonably Southern (≅Edinburgh)	1	
Aberdeen	4	
Caledonian Valley	1	
Grampian	1	
Gallovidian	1	
Fyffeshire	1	
Westmorland	1	
Borders	5	
Hebridean	1	
Islands	1	
Western Isles	3	
Gaelic	7	
Welsh	60	
Welsh accent	1	
Welsh English	2	
Welsh border	1	
Welsh excluding Cardiff	1	(65)
Wales	5	
North Wales	5	
North Walean	4	
South Wales	6	
South Walean English	2	
Southern Welsh dialect	1	
West Wales	1	
West Walean English	2	
Valley (=Wales)	2	
Welsh speaking	2	
Welsh language	2	
Welsh native	1	
prefer Welsh language	1	
Cardiff(ian)	5	

2) Other labels

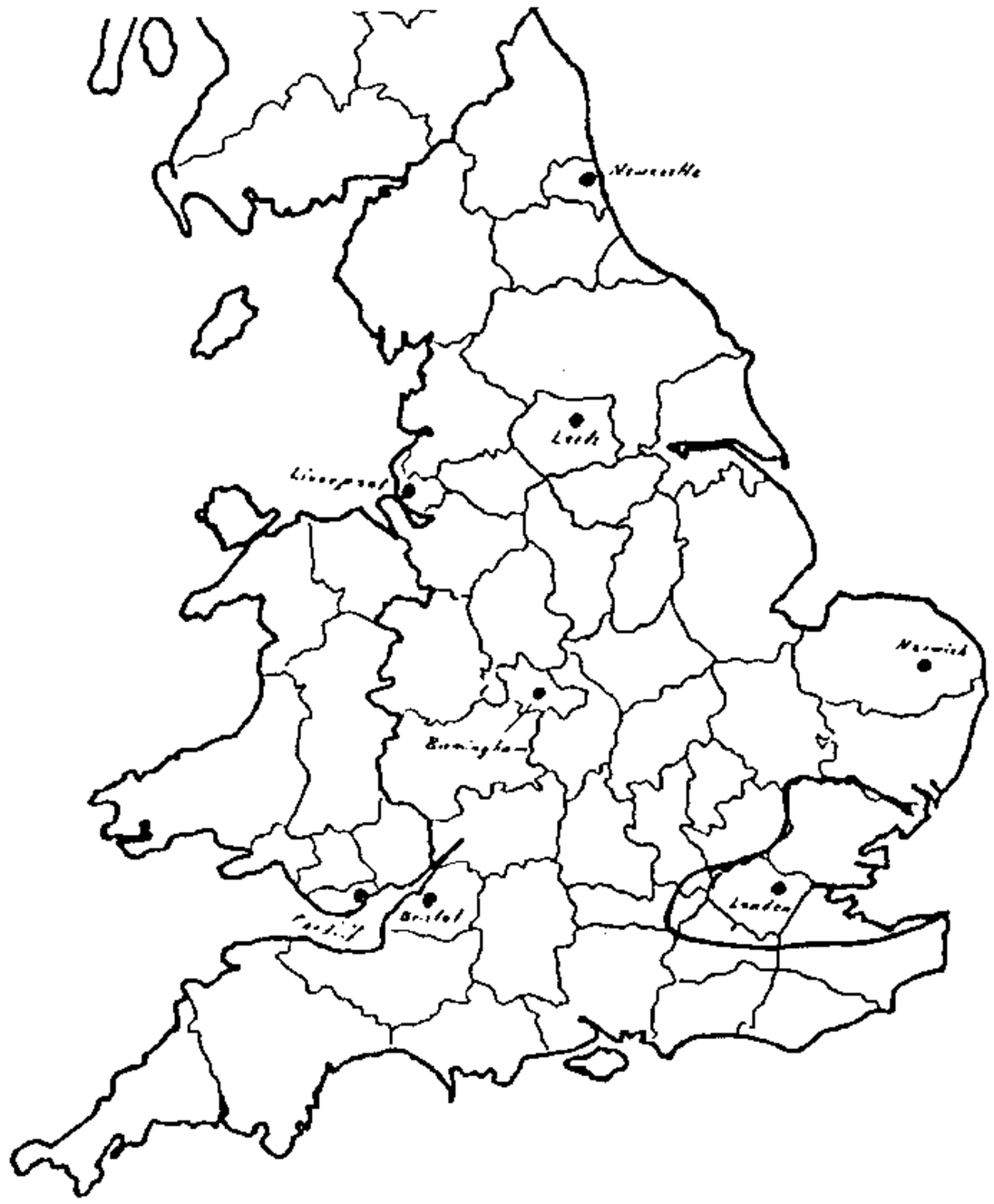
("∅" indicates that the respective label has already been included in the geographical list)

Label	number of occur-rences	Total (per category)
Affluent English (≅Southeast & East Anglia)	1	
Posh Scouse	∅	
Posh Scottish	∅	
Posh Country (≅Devon and Cornwall)	∅	
The South 'posh'	∅	
very middle class (≅South)	1	**5**
London or R.P.	∅	
Received English (≅Berkshire)	1	
Home Counties (Queen's speech)	∅	
Queen's English (≅Oxfordshire)	1	
Queen's English (Broad)	1	
Queen's English (Smoother)	1	
Standard English (≅South Coast)	1	
BBC English	1	
Refined Scots	∅	**9**
Geordie	∅	
Scouse	∅	
Brummie	∅	
Cockney	∅	
Sloney (≅probably Sloane)	1	
Jocks (Scots)	1	**6**
Country yokel	1	
Norfolk yokel	∅	
Macam (≅Newcastle/Cleveland)	∅	
Sunderland (Makems)	∅	
Tyke (≅Leeds)	∅	**5**
Country accents	2	
country / South east	1	
Common Country (≅Somerset & Avon)	1	
Common Scottish	∅	
South Country (≅Bristol)	∅	
Folk (≅East Anglia)	∅	
Rural (≅East Anglia)	∅	
Rural (≅West Country)	∅	
Rural Kent	∅	
Rural Sussex	∅	
Rural Hampshire	∅	**11**
Very Southern	∅	
very Scottish / Gaelic	1	
Some Gaelic / Scottish	1	
particularly Yorkshire	∅	
Broad Scots	∅	
very broad Scottish	∅	

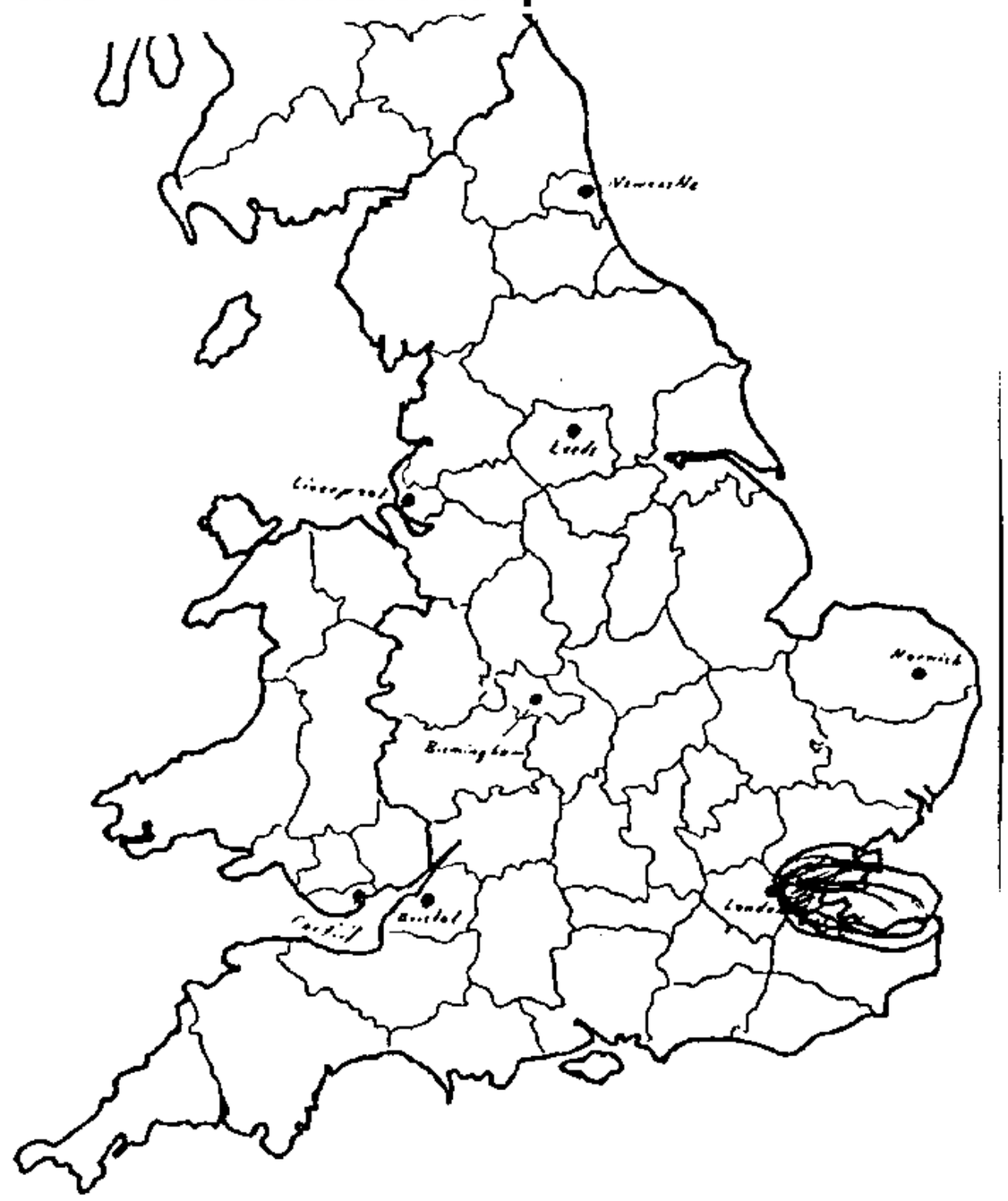
Label	number of occur-rences	Total (per category)
Actual Scottish	∅	
Course Scottish	∅	
Broad Yorkshire	∅	
Devon/Cornwall (very distinct from e.g. Kent)	∅	
more country, but not as much as the west country (≅East Anglia)	1	
not Scottish, reasonably Southern (≅Edinburgh)	1	
Glaswegian - quite strong	∅	
Scottish, but there is a difference between Glasgow and Edinburgh	∅	
Wales, very different even between counties and even between towns 10m apart	∅	**15**
London most dialects (imported)	∅	
lots of lovely speech patterns that aren't 'native' to Britain	1	
even within London dialects vary	1	
very different dialects(≅Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen)	1	**4**
Both (≅Scottish and Geordie)	1	
Inbetweenish (≅Lincs–Cheshire)	1	**2**
Mixed	1	
Mixture of accents (≅mainly central south)	1	
No distinct accent	1	**3**
most of Scotland is difficult to understand by the English anyway	1	**1**
Fast/Short Words (≅Edinburgh)	1	
Fast (≅Liverpool)	1	
Shortened Slang (≅Leeds)	1	
Slured [sic] (≅Birmingham)	1	
South coast is slured but extended	∅	**5**
Somerset 'ooah'	∅	
Southerners Paath, Graas [sic], etc.	∅	
West Country ('Ere, my lover!)	∅	
Brummie (yam yam)	∅	**4**
prefer Welsh language	∅	**1**
Stupid Midland	∅	**1**
?	3	
Don't know this area (≅Lincs and Norfolk)	1	**2**
Onerish (???)	1	**1**

Appendix F: The Geographical Spread of EE (as Perceived by Members of the 'EE group')

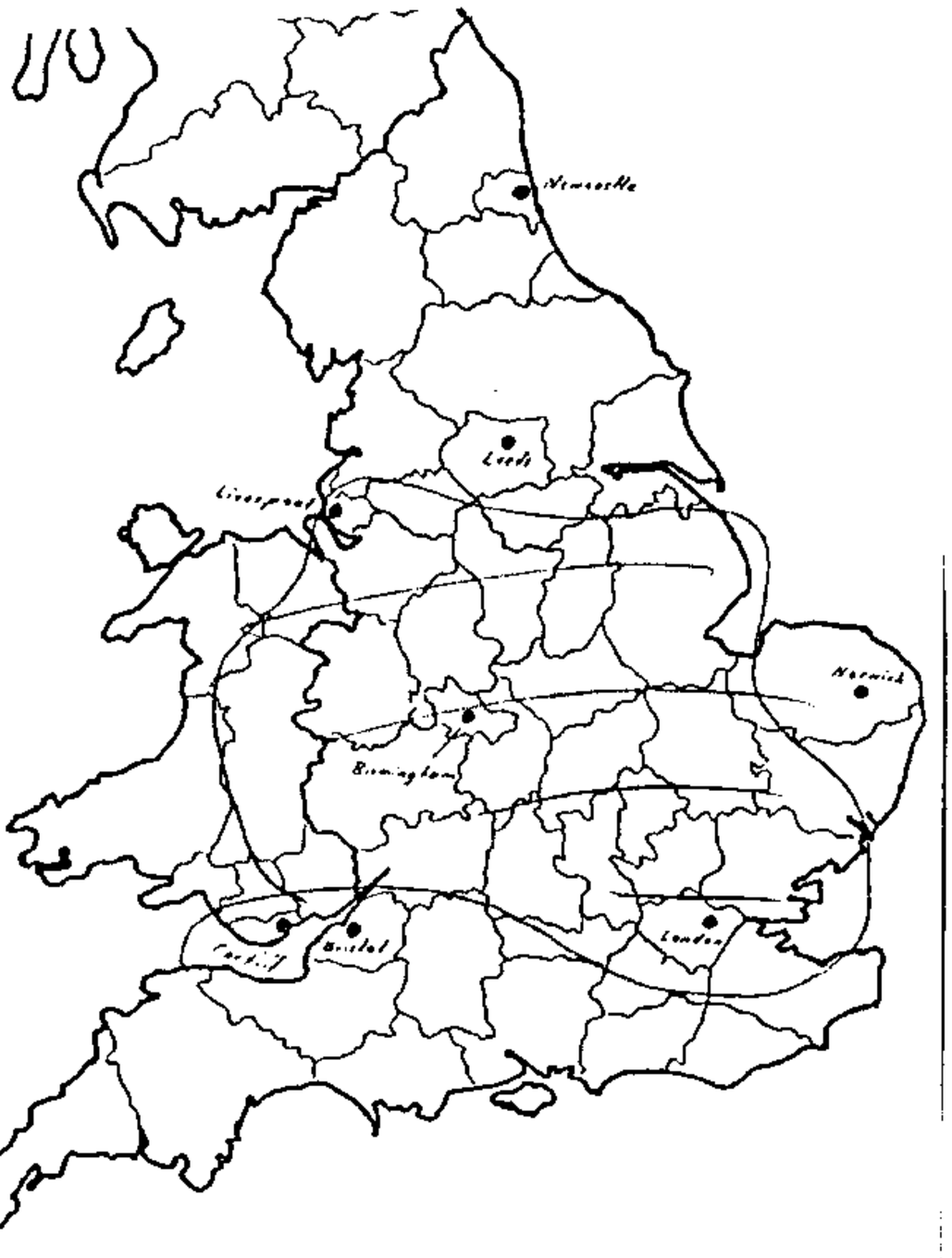
R18 – a 'typical' map:



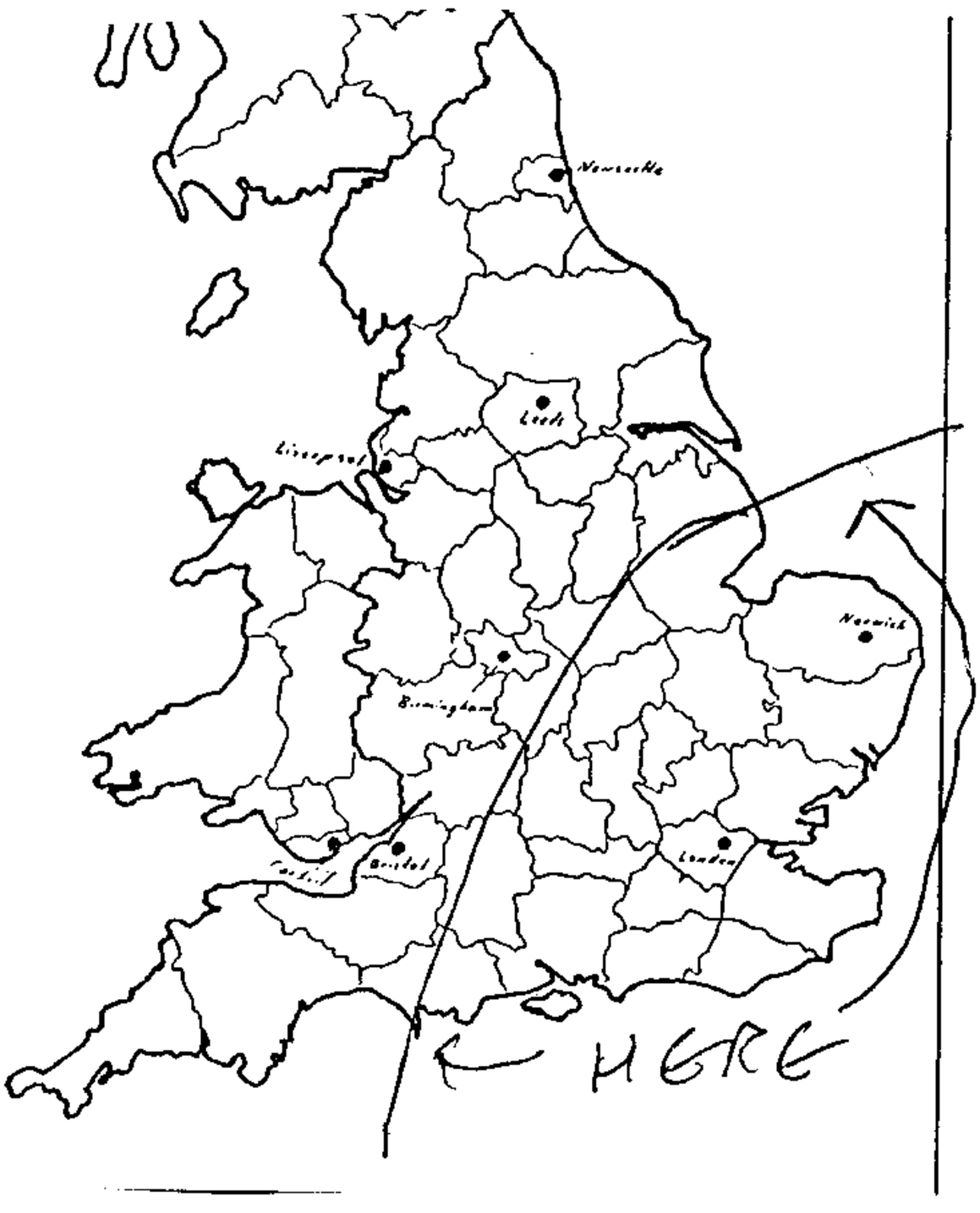
R13 – a 'minimalist' map:



R16 and …



R20 – two 'extreme' versions:



Appendix G: Ratings of Public Figures

	non-EE group	men	women	Uni Reading	YMCA Reading	National Trust	NT & YMCA	Northerners	Midland area	Southerners	< 29	30 - 49	> 50
Ken Livingstone	**3.67**	3.23	4.07	5.00	5.33	3.51	3.62	3.31	4.00	3.62	3.79	3.29	3.81
Frank Bruno	**2.06**	1.96	2.15	2.50	3.33	1.98	2.05	1.95	2.00	2.26	2.20	2.07	1.91
Prince Edward	**4.94**	4.59	5.23	6.00	5.00	4.86	4.87	4.67	5.36	4.88	4.80	5.40	4.79
Trevor McDonald	**5.36**	5.37	5.35	5.75	5.00	5.35	5.33	5.21	5.45	5.40	5.16	5.63	5.39
Jonathan Ross	**2.87**	2.69	3.00	3.67	3.67	2.78	2.82	2.89	2.55	3.09	3.16	2.25	2.87
Pauline Quirke	**2.32**	2.29	2.33	2.33	3.00	2.27	2.31	2.18	1.80	2.68	2.48	2.08	2.30

Voice Sample 1

	TOTAL	EE only	men	women	Uni Reading	YMCA Reading	National Trust	NT & YMCA	Northerners	Midland area	Southerners	< 29	30 - 49	> 50
modernity	**5.04**	5.64	4.95	5.12	5.29	5.75	4.97	5.01	4.90	4.77	5.26	5.07	5.03	5.00
rbanity	**5.31**	5.67	5.23	5.38	5.14	5.00	5.34	5.32	5.45	5.31	5.19	5.28	5.28	5.40
orrectness	**3.18**	3.45	2.94	3.40	4.40	3.50	3.07	3.08	3.00	3.36	3.26	3.55	2.88	3.16
tandardness	**3.52**	3.31	3.63	3.43	4.67	5.50	3.26	3.41	3.47	3.40	3.77	3.90	3.50	3.15
naffected	**4.49**	4.86	4.38	4.60	4.83	3.67	4.50	4.46	4.68	3.78	4.53	3.95	4.43	5.21
leasantness	**3.35**	3.33	3.42	3.30	3.71	4.25	3.26	3.32	3.59	3.08	3.44	3.57	3.32	3.10
nimation	**4.12**	4.33	3.68	4.51	4.71	4.67	4.03	4.06	4.35	4.08	3.82	4.17	4.07	4.10
treetwisdom	**4.89**	5.21	4.70	5.07	5.29	4.25	4.89	4.85	4.73	5.00	4.83	4.93	4.84	4.90
ompetence	**4.18**	4.43	4.06	4.28	4.86	4.25	4.10	4.10	4.29	4.09	4.16	4.32	4.14	4.05
stuary?	**5.14**	5.14	5.00	5.25	5.50		5.08	5.08	5.00		5.22	5.00	5.14	5.20

Voice Sample 2

	TOTAL	EE only	men	women	Uni Reading	YMCA Reading	National Trust	NT & YMCA	Northerners	Midland area	Southerners	< 29	30 - 49	> 50
modernity	**4.26**	4.60	4.34	4.18	4.00	4.75	4.25	4.28	4.24	4.00	4.21	3.96	4.06	5.00
urbanity	**3.70**	4.21	3.70	3.70	4.29	3.00	3.68	3.64	3.67	3.08	3.79	3.73	3.53	3.95
correctness	**4.47**	4.42	4.42	4.51	5.17	5.00	4.38	4.40	4.57	4.50	4.47	4.56	4.30	4.57
standardness	**4.39**	4.50	4.18	4.59	5.50	4.25	4.30	4.30	4.14	4.31	4.50	4.45	4.33	4.40
unaffected	**3.84**	3.87	3.92	3.76	4.00	4.33	3.80	3.83	3.65	3.58	4.09	3.56	3.79	4.30
pleasantness	**4.53**	4.14	4.38	4.68	4.57	4.75	4.51	4.53	4.77	4.67	4.50	4.62	4.39	4.62
animation	**4.76**	4.86	4.46	5.05	5.00	4.50	4.75	4.74	4.74	4.54	4.74	4.87	4.73	4.65
streetwisdom	**3.79**	3.50	3.91	3.69	3.17	4.25	3.82	3.85	3.58	3.70	3.71	3.87	3.56	4.06
competence	**4.90**	4.77	4.81	4.98	5.29	5.00	4.85	4.86	4.95	5.00	4.71	5.15	4.66	4.90
Estuary?	**3.13**	3.13	3.71	2.63	3.67		3.00	3.00	3.00		3.30	3.33	3.43	2.60

Voice Sample 3

	TOTAL	EE only	men	women	Uni Reading	YMCA Reading	National Trust	NT & YMCA	Northerners	Midland area	Southerners	< 29	30 - 49	> 50
modernity	**2.44**	2.60	2.13	2.74	4.00	3.50	2.25	2.32	2.22	2.08	2.72	2.67	2.45	2.10
urbanity	**4.30**	5.21	4.38	4.21	5.00	3.75	4.26	4.23	3.70	4.75	4.40	4.21	4.22	4.55
correctness	**2.64**	2.46	2.57	2.71	3.00	3.33	2.58	2.61	2.52	2.92	2.61	2.84	2.54	2.55
standardness	**2.92**	3.07	3.17	2.70	2.83	3.75	2.88	2.93	2.77	2.92	3.03	2.69	3.00	3.10
unaffected	**4.73**	5.08	4.67	4.79	4.00	3.25	4.89	4.78	4.95	4.42	4.76	4.21	4.96	5.05
pleasantness	**3.55**	3.71	3.78	3.33	3.71	4.75	3.45	3.53	3.86	2.91	3.56	3.73	3.61	3.20
animation	**3.82**	4.23	3.80	3.85	3.83	4.33	3.80	3.82	3.71	3.92	3.77	3.88	3.69	3.95
streetwisdom	**4.07**	4.31	4.00	4.14	4.67	5.00	3.95	4.01	4.00	4.09	4.00	4.25	4.07	3.84
competence	**3.24**	3.50	3.50	3.02	3.86	4.00	3.13	3.18	3.19	3.15	3.39	3.14	3.29	3.33
Estuary?	**3.27**	3.27	2.14	4.25	4.67		2.92	2.92	4.33		3.20	4.33	3.14	2.80

Voice Sample 4

	TOTAL	EE only	men	women	Uni Reading	YMCA Reading	National Trust	NT & YMCA	Northerners	Midland area	Southerners	< 29	30 - 49	> 50
modernity	**3.64**	3.54	4.03	3.31	3.14	2.75	3.76	3.70	3.11	4.17	3.82	2.76	3.62	4.84
urbanity	**4.07**	3.92	3.78	4.32	4.60	3.25	4.08	4.03	3.95	4.09	4.10	3.57	4.39	4.21
correctness	**5.31**	5.20	5.30	5.32	5.83	5.00	5.28	5.26	5.68	5.18	5.09	5.46	5.03	5.52
standardness	**4.81**	4.50	4.82	4.80	6.00	4.50	4.71	4.70	4.63	5.00	4.74	4.85	4.63	5.00
unaffected	**2.81**	2.40	3.03	2.59	3.29	3.25	2.73	2.76	2.86	2.92	2.68	2.85	2.83	2.70
pleasantness	**4.29**	4.07	4.26	4.33	4.86	3.75	4.27	4.24	4.13	4.62	4.20	4.23	4.32	4.33
animation	**3.47**	3.14	3.50	3.44	2.83	3.50	3.52	3.52	3.67	3.31	3.27	3.15	3.63	3.65
streetwisdom	**3.22**	2.80	3.37	3.09	2.33	3.00	3.34	3.32	2.94	3.67	3.21	2.87	3.08	4.07
competence	**4.85**	4.62	4.81	4.88	4.71	3.75	4.93	4.86	5.13	4.82	4.75	4.76	4.73	5.14
Estuary?	**2.00**	2.00	2.14	1.88	1.33		2.17	2.17	2.67		1.70	1.33	2.43	1.80

Voice Sample 5

	TOTAL	EE only	men	women	Uni Reading	YMCA Reading	National Trust	NT & YMCA	Northerners	Midland area	Southerners	< 29	30 - 49	> 50
modernity	**4.63**	4.87	4.51	4.72	5.29	5.00	4.54	4.56	4.55	4.85	4.60	4.69	4.31	5.05
urbanity	**4.93**	4.73	4.97	4.88	5.14	5.25	4.89	4.91	4.86	5.00	4.89	4.79	4.94	5.10
correctness	**3.75**	4.08	3.65	3.84	4.17	4.67	3.66	3.71	3.75	3.67	3.77	4.00	3.58	3.65
standardness	**3.76**	3.71	3.53	4.00	4.33	4.75	3.65	3.71	3.75	3.67	3.85	4.04	3.76	3.43
unaffected	**4.30**	4.50	4.17	4.43	5.17	4.25	4.22	4.22	4.05	3.92	4.50	4.31	4.24	4.39
pleasantness	**3.25**	3.23	3.32	3.20	3.29	3.50	3.24	3.25	3.33	3.23	3.24	3.38	3.23	3.10
animation	**4.87**	5.00	4.89	4.85	5.00	5.00	4.86	4.86	4.91	5.31	4.59	5.07	4.48	5.14
streetwisdom	**4.86**	5.00	4.92	4.80	5.14	5.00	4.82	4.83	4.71	5.00	4.79	4.76	4.94	4.89
competence	**4.27**	4.54	4.30	4.24	4.43	5.00	4.21	4.25	4.41	3.83	4.26	4.36	4.00	4.55
Estuary?	**4.20**	4.20	4.29	4.13	5.00		4.00	4.00	5.00		4.20	4.67	4.43	3.60

Voice Sample 6

	TOTAL	EE only	men	women	Uni Reading	YMCA Reading	National Trust	NT & YMCA	Northerners	Midland area	Southerners	< 29	30 - 49	> 50
modernity	**3.28**	3.57	3.32	3.24	4.00	3.50	3.18	3.20	2.95	3.08	3.61	3.04	3.23	3.72
urbanity	**4.37**	4.73	4.44	4.30	4.57	5.00	4.31	4.35	4.35	4.46	4.37	4.10	4.18	5.05
correctness	**4.01**	4.42	4.06	3.97	4.67	4.67	3.92	3.95	4.10	2.82	4.23	4.14	4.00	3.90
standardness	**3.78**	3.53	3.68	3.93	5.00	4.25	3.65	3.68	3.82	3.54	3.70	3.86	3.71	3.80
unaffected	**3.52**	3.36	3.75	3.27	3.71	3.00	3.53	3.50	3.43	3.50	3.50	3.17	3.66	3.71
pleasantness	**3.67**	4.00	3.74	3.60	4.29	3.25	3.63	3.61	3.70	3.62	3.57	4.00	3.75	3.05
animation	**3.99**	4.07	4.00	3.97	3.17	3.67	4.08	4.06	4.05	4.17	3.94	3.88	4.14	3.89
streetwisdom	**3.84**	3.57	4.11	3.58	3.43	3.25	3.92	3.88	3.91	4.10	3.78	3.52	3.90	4.16
competence	**4.03**	4.27	4.12	3.95	4.23	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.09	3.42	4.13	4.20	3.96	3.90
Estuary?	**2.53**	2.53	2.86	2.25	3.00		2.42	2.42	2.67		2.70	3.67	2.29	2.20

Voice Sample 7

	TOTAL	EE only	men	women	Uni Reading	YMCA Reading	National Trust	NT & YMCA	Northerners	Midland area	Southerners	< 29	30 - 49	> 50
modernity	**4.26**	4.13	4.76	3.84	4.14	3.00	4.35	4.27	3.68	4.46	4.49	3.70	4.52	4.71
urbanity	**4.48**	4.54	4.50	4.46	4.83	2.67	4.53	4.45	4.33	4.60	4.45	4.00	4.66	4.82
correctness	**4.87**	5.08	4.86	4.88	5.67	5.00	4.80	4.81	4.64	4.75	5.00	5.22	4.53	4.90
standardness	**4.82**	4.87	4.86	4.79	5.50	4.75	4.77	4.77	4.76	4.62	4.82	4.96	4.56	5.05
unaffected	**3.88**	3.64	4.14	3.64	3.71	3.25	3.94	3.90	3.55	3.75	4.14	3.63	3.73	4.47
pleasantness	**4.44**	4.58	4.59	4.30	4.60	3.75	4.53	4.49	4.14	4.54	4.58	4.43	4.31	4.68
animation	**4.28**	4.31	4.36	4.21	4.20	3.50	4.33	4.29	4.43	4.00	4.25	4.32	4.10	4.50
streetwisdom	**4.07**	4.00	4.25	3.91	3.67	3.00	4.19	4.11	3.71	4.00	4.10	3.71	4.07	4.63
competence	**4.96**	5.23	5.08	4.86	5.29	3.50	5.01	4.93	5.04	4.77	5.06	5.07	4.80	5.05
Estuary?	**2.87**	2.87	3.57	2.25	2.33		3.00	3.00	3.33		2.60	2.33	3.57	2.20

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