

Glossary

***Illustrative examples have been transcribed orthographically.**

Dark /l/ Refers to the sound of 'l' when it follows a vowel in the same syllable, for example in *'feel'* or *'school'*. In these cases, the back of the tongue is drawn towards the roof of the mouth, which gives it a different quality to when it precedes a vowel, e.g. in the words *'leaf'* or *'late'*

Diphthong A long vowel sound formed by combining two vowels together in a single syllable. The first vowel gradually changes into the second, as the tongue moves from one position to another. Consider, for example, the difference between the double vowel sound in *'play'* and the single vowel sound in *'plan'*.

Elision The omission of a sound or syllable in everyday speech that would be present in very careful pronunciation. For example, the common pronunciation of *library* as 2 syllables rather than 3 (*'libry'*), or the loss of 't' in *'mostly'*.

Glottalisation Where a particular consonant is replaced by a sound produced in the throat, in the space between the vocal folds known as the glottis. In British English this often occurs with 't', e.g. when *'butter'* is pronounced like *'bu'er'*. It can also occur with 'k', for example when *'actually'* sounds like *'a'tually'*, as well as with 'p', though this is less common.

H-dropping Dropping the 'h' at the start of words like *'harm'* or *'horse'*. In lexical items such as these, H-dropping is often stigmatised, whereas in function words such as *'he'* or *'her'* it is quite common, and far less stigmatised.

happy-vowel The vowel at the end of words such as *'happy'* is now more commonly considered to be a tense vowel, which would be a long vowel sound like in *'happee'*. Historically, however, a shorter vowel, as in *'kit'* would have been the considered to be the standard pronunciation; thus sounding more like *'happi'*.

L-vocalisation Where the final 'l' in a word like *'pool'* is pronounced more like a 'w'. This makes it sound more like a vowel; i.e. it is *vocalised*

Lexical set A group of words which commonly share the same vowel. Each set is labelled with a keyword that contains the shared vowel; for example, the BATH lexical set would contain all words that are pronounced with the same vowel as the word *'bath'*. The sets enable us to compare vowels in different accents of English.

Monophthongisation Where a vowel sound that would usually be pronounced as a diphthong (see glossary entry for Diphthong) is pronounced with only one vowel sound (i.e. as a monophthong) in a particular accent. For example, where *'my'* is pronounced more like *'ma'*.

Non-agreement of number Where singular and plural forms of verbs and/or nouns are used in a non-standard way, as in *forty year*(instead of *forty years*) or *they was*(instead of *they were*).

Non-release of plosive In English there are six plosive consonant sounds: /p, b, t, d, k, g/. When we make these sounds we bring together the lips or the tongue and roof of the mouth, before releasing a puff of air. Where a plosive is not ‘released’, we start to make the sound but do not release the puff of air that follows.

Non-standard... (e.g. relative pronoun, etc) This is used to highlight where a particular word or construction does not follow the current standard British English grammatical rules. An example would be the use of ‘*what*’ instead of ‘*that*’ in ‘*the people what stood outside*’.

RP or Received Pronunciation A British English accent (mainly of England) that is usually associated with speakers of higher social class and is not restricted to a particular geographical area. This accent is used by linguists as a ‘standard’ reference point when comparing different accents of English.

Re-syllabification Where the boundaries of syllables in a word change, or where additional syllables are inserted, e.g. pronouncing ‘school’ as ‘schoo-wul’.

Rhoticity An accent is referred to as ‘rhotic’ if the speaker pronounces the ‘r’ after a vowel in words like ‘*car*’ or ‘*farm*’. This is a common feature of Scottish English, and American English.

Th-fronting This is where the ‘th’ in words like ‘*think*’ or ‘*brother*’ is pronounced as ‘f’ or ‘v’, respectively.

Word-initial (or -medial, or –final) Indicates whether a particular feature occurs at the beginning, middle or end of a word (or syllable). For example, a ‘dark l’ usually occurs word-finally.

Zero... (e.g. article, etc) Where a word belonging to a particular grammatical category is omitted, e.g. in ‘*I’m going to shops*’ the definite article ‘*the*’ is left out where it would normally be used in standard British English.