4 RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION: UPTON'S MODEL

The model was devised in the 1980's and has been in use in all major Oxford University Press dictionaries published for the native speaker market since the early 1990's. These include the *New Shorter Oxford Dictionary* (starting with the Revised edition in 1993 up until the 6th edition in 2011), the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (9th edition 1995, 10th edition 1999, 11th edition 2006, 12th edition 2011), the *New Oxford Dictionary of English* (1998), and, most importantly, the *Oxford Dictionary of Pronunciation for Current English* (2003). In addition, the *Oxford BBC Guide to Pronunciation* (2006) also makes use of this model, which is a step to be interpreted as an official acknowledgement on the part of the BBC of the need for an updated model of pronunciation.

Before my attention turns to the phonology of Upton's RP, it is necessary to explicate the motivation behind the new model as well as to weigh up its advantages and disadvantages.

4.1 Modern Model of RP

Upton was obviously not alone in his dissatisfaction with the insistence on a rather old-fashioned model, as Gimson's quotation above (p. 72–3) proves it. Upton, however, was the one who undertook the rather controversial job of updating it. Upton's discontent was provoked chiefly by the fact that 'the RP label has undeniably come to be associated restrictively with older middle- and upper-class speakers in the south-east of England' (2000a: 76). To put it another way, the associations surrounding RP were those of a snobbish elite, which, not surprisingly, did not appeal much to people who did not belong to it; hence the recent

reluctance to employ RP speakers in call centres all over Britain and the decision to opt for more regional voices instead (Beal 2008a). Przedlacka (2005), speaking on behalf of the non-native market, equals Upton in the urgency with which she calls for a model that will not be judged outmoded and/or elitist.

When it comes to individual sounds and their inclusion, Upton decided to apply the following criterion: he includes sounds which are 'heard to be used by educated, non-regionally marked speakers rather than [those] "allowed" by a preconceived model' (2000a: 78). Indeed, if one has a never-changing grid and is only ready to accept whatever falls through the grid, no change can ever be observed, as Ramsaran maintains when asking the question: '[i]f one excludes certain non-traditional forms from one's data, how can one discover the ways in which the accent is changing?' (1990: 180).

The most significant impact of Upton's model is undoubtedly the fact that 'a larger group of people can lay claim to possession of an RP accent than has hitherto been acknowledged' (Upton 2000a: 78). Many northerners whose RP status had been doubtful can now claim to be RP speakers, thanks to the inclusion of short BATH [a] (cf. 4.2.1.7).

Non-native speakers of English should find the model beneficial as well. Above all, it should do away with the discrepancy between what they see in their textbooks and what is actually recorded on the accompanying CDs. I work as a teacher at a grammar school in Trebic and I mostly use *Maturita Solutions* textbooks (levels pre-intermediate and intermediate, sometimes even advanced). I consider the recordings that go with these textbooks useful because they introduce students to the rich variety of voices that the English language offers. There are American, Irish, Scottish, Welsh voices as well as voices from the South and the North of England. Admittedly, the regional features are far from strong, but one could hardly expect more pronounced regional accents in materials that target students at these levels. On the whole, they are textbooks aimed at teenagers and they do contain many teenage voices. It is then little surprising that a number of features included in the model of Upton are present in the recordings, too. Most notably these include lowered TRAP, short BATH, intrusive /r/, and monophthongised CURE and SQUARE. Moreover, there are also regional as well as social features absent from Upton's model, most notably /t/-glottalisation. I will now briefly comment on two situations to illustrate the difficulty I sometimes encounter in the classroom.

The first is my own pronunciation of CURE vowels, which is mostly [ɔ:], whilst the overwhelming majority of teachers of English in the Czech Republic keep the [ʊə] form. Sometimes I encounter students who do not understand my *sure* as [ʃɔ:]. I would certainly find it very useful if I did not have to explain to my students that my pronunciation is actually not a mistake; they can't see for themselves in the 'transcripts' page or 'phonetic symbols' list at the back of the book where [ʃʊə] is still shown as the only variant.

Lowered TRAP is the other example. The Czech vocalic system is rather simple—it is so certainly in comparison with English, since it distinguishes only five short vowels, namely /ɪ/, /ɛ/, /a/, /o/, and /u/ (Dankovičová 1999). Czech students who have difficulty pronouncing the TRAP vowel (and, admittedly, the abstruse symbol /æ/ does not help much) basically decide to modify the given pronunciation so as to match a sound they are familiar with from their own phonological system. Unfortunately, their pronunciation, barring a few exceptions, converges with /ɛ/ rather than /a/. Thus *back bat* is then realised as [bɛk bɛt]. It would surely be beneficial for many if, when pressed to make the choice in the first place, they learnt to use /a/, for it is now an established RP sound and certainly does not cause confusion regarding minimal pairs such as *bat/bet*.

Upton makes every effort 'to objectively consider the notion of RP, and to ensure that the description of a late twentieth century version of the accent [...] looks forward to the new millennium rather than back at increasingly outmoded forms' (Upton 2001: 352). The model proposed by him is, however, not devoid of drawbacks. The biggest obstacle to the model being adopted outside the native market is money. Whilst producing updated editions of such a high number of dictionaries would be problematic enough, there is an additional issue connected with the 'embracing of the phonological redescription [which] would also require the revision of very many non-dictionary texts in which pronunciation is discussed and phonetic transcription used' (Upton 2001: 355).

More problems arise when it comes to the actual making of a dictionary. Firstly, few lexicographers seem to be phoneticians as well and they are therefore reluctant to stake out their phonetic choices. Then, as a consequence, issues of phonetics are not dealt with in such a detail as those of semantics or grammar. Finally, it is generally assumed that a great many of users are not familiar with phonetic symbols anyway (Upton 2001: 355). The ELT market is thus strongly conservative and only too happy to stick to the time-proven transcription model.

4.2 The Phonology of RP: Upton's transcription model

Some of the changes Upton made to the model of RP have turned out to be rather contentious and they have come in for their share of criticism. It is nonetheless not the very existence of the changes that is usually debated: the bone of contention lies in whether the changes should be reflected in the model or not. Simplifying the issue a little, there are essentially two ways to go about it. The first is supported by e.g. Wells (2008) and Ramsaran (1990), who prefer sticking to the old model and specifying any necessary alterations when defining the actual quality of a particular symbol. Upton is an advocate of the opposite ap-

proach: he maintains that phonetic symbols are absolutes, and that is why 'their interpretation cannot be altered to suit the new development, so that if anything is to change in the interests of accuracy and clarity it must be the label that is applied to the sound' (Upton 2008: 240).

While each of the vowels is given an entry in the description below, the consonants are treated in groups according to the manner of articulation with only some phenomena related to a particular consonant being discussed in greater detail. Such a system copies the treatment of RP vowels and consonants in Upton (2008). Vowels are much less stable than consonants and only a few of them have not changed since the 18th century. The same cannot be said about the consonants of RP, which have generally displayed a great amount of stability.

4.2.1 RP Vowels

Table 1 presents a clear overview of the vocalic system in Upton's model, highlighting the divergences made from the previous model. Readers are reminded that for Upton 'RP' equals modern RP and 'trad-RP' is traditional RP.

Table 1. The vowels of RP and trad-RP

vowel	RP	shared RP/trad-RP	trad-RP
KIT		ɪ	
DRESS	ɛ		e
TRAP	a		æ
LOT		ɒ	
STRUT		ʌ	
FOOT		ʊ	
BATH	ɑː ~ a		ɑː
CLOTH	ɒ		ɒ ~ ɔː
NURSE	əː		ɜː
FLEECE		iː	
FACE		eɪ	

vowel	RP	shared RP/trad-RP	trad-RP
PALM		ɑː	
THOUGHT		ɔː	
GOAT	əʊ		əʊ ~ oʊ
GOOSE		uː	
PRICE	ʌɪ		aɪ
CHOICE		ɔɪ	
MOUTH		aʊ	
NEAR		ɪə	
SQUARE	ɛː		ɛə
START		ɑː	
NORTH		ɔː	
FORCE		ɔː	
CURE	ʊə ~ ɔː		ʊə
happY		i	
lettER		ə	
commA		ə	

(Upton 2008: 241–2)

In the next section I shall deal with each of the vowels separately. Particular attention is paid to those vowels where there is a difference between the two sets.

4.2.1.1 KIT vowel [ɪ]

According to Wells (1982: 127) it is phonetically 'a relatively short, lax, fairly front and fairly close unrounded vowel'. It is a remarkably stable vowel, too, showing sometimes a tendency to be centralised and/or raised. This is in particular true of unstressed syllables, these are dealt with in 3.2.1.28. Likewise, word final [ɪ], which is now susceptible to much tensing, is not discussed here: this phenomenon, known as 'happY tensing', has a separate entry (3.2.1.25).

4.2.1.2 DRESS vowel [ɛ]

Cruttenden (2014: 116) and Wells (1982: 128) both agree that the RP DRESS vowel is somewhere between cardinal vowels 2 and 3 ([e] and [ɛ] respectively). It is 'a relatively short, lax, front mid unrounded' vowel (Wells 1982: 128). Upton decides to use the latter symbol. Although both Wells (2001) and Cruttenden (2014) admit that the vowel is closer to [ɛ] now, the former insists on the traditional symbol with a view to avoiding an additional symbol that foreign learners might have problems with. He concludes that 'following IPA principles, if we are to choose just one of the two symbols we should prefer the simpler one' (2001). [e] is simpler for Wells since it already exists as the onset in the FACE diphthong [eɪ].

Upton's decision is justified by the disappearance of the traditional opposition between DRESS and TRAP vowels, now that TRAP has lowered from [æ] to [a] (3.2.1.3). With some younger speakers, Upton asserts, 'the DRESS vowel is so open [...] that it can sound like "short a" [= a] to some older speakers' (Upton 2000b: 45).

4.2.1.3 TRAP vowel [a]

This change is one of those that have provoked much reaction. The definition we find in Wells is that of 'a front nearly open unrounded' vowel (1982: 129), for which he duly chooses the ash symbol [æ]. However, a few lines lower he admits that 'it is a striking fact that the current trend in pronunciation of this vowel is [...] towards an opener, [a]-like, monophthongal quality in England' (1982: 129). Further, he speculates that 'it is a change that will carry RP further away from both American and southern-hemisphere accents of English' (1982: 292). Interestingly, Cruttenden (2008: 112) keeps [æ] in his repertoire of RP vowels, although he stresses that '[o]nly tradition justifies the continuing use of the symbol "æ" for this phoneme'. He merely lists lowered TRAP among well-established current changes in RP (2008: 80). But the next edition replaces [æ] for [a], saying that '[t]his change is long overdue in transcriptions of English' (Cruttenden 2014: xvii). He also states that there is a difference between the way this vowel is pronounced in the north and the south: the latter's TRAP is noticeably longer (especially before voiced consonants), thus *badge* and *barge* are almost homophonous (2014: 120).

Traditionally, lowered TRAP has been associated with the North of England since it is the dominant variant in basically all regional varieties there (cf. Beal 2008b: 130). The presence of this sound in most regional accents of English lies, according to Upton (2000a: 79), behind its acceptance into RP. Historically,

however, the phoneme is rather unstable 'being realised by sounds at or between "aesc", i.e. [æ], and primary cardinal vowel (PCV) 4, [a], at various stages in the history of the language' (Upton 2001: 356).

The change from [æ] to [a] is corroborated by sociolinguistic research as well: for instance Harrington et al. (2000), in which they analysed the Queen's Christmas broadcasts from the 1950's to the 1980's and found out that there was a noticeable degree of opening of TRAP. Upton also frequently uses the Royal Family as an example of this change, pointing out the difference between younger and older members and their pronunciation of *Prince Ann* and *Prince Andrew*. While the older members do not use the fully open vowel, their younger relatives use it almost categorically (2000b: 44).

Wells's (2001) objection to Upton's new symbol is based on the fact that it is not necessary to introduce a new symbol, what suffices, according to him, is to redefine older symbols in use. I consider this strict adherence to [æ] not felicitous as doing away with the rather abstruse symbol [æ] would undoubtedly lead to fewer problems in non-native classrooms (as discussed in 6.3.2.1). Furthermore, the swap would be rather straightforward (it would not have to entail dealing with such complexities as in the case of []).

4.2.1.4 LOT vowel [ɒ]

It is a relatively stable vowel, typically realised as a 'fully open to slightly raised rounded back vowel' (Upton 2008: 243). Wells's description nearly matches that of Upton, he only adds that the rounding is often relatively weak (1982: 130). Traditional RP speakers may retain a long quality of this vowel (Cruttenden 2014: 126).

4.2.1.5 STRUT vowel [ʌ]

This sound remains one of the two most salient distinguishers between the North and the South of England. Unlike short BATH, though, raised STRUT [ʊ]is heavily stigmatised and therefore it is not an RP sound.

RP realisation of this phoneme is thus 'a relatively short, half-open or slightly opener, centralized-back or central, unrounded' vowel (Wells 1982: 132). Cruttenden (2008: 115) and Upton (2008: 243) both talk of potential confusion with lowered TRAP. Upton then mentions an innovation 'in which [ʌ] is raised and retracted from the centralized, towards (though not to) a half-close advanced position'. He labels this sound a 'fudge', which is extremely common particularly in south Midlands (2008: 243). This might be interpreted as a way of avoiding the potential clash with lowered TRAP. Upton has also hinted (personal communica-

tion) that this fudge is losing the stigma. If so, this variant might be a potential RP candidate. To my mind, this, however, remains to be seen because at the moment raised STRUT still appears to be rather stigmatised (cf. 5.3.2.5).

4.2.1.6 FOOT vowel [ʊ]

This vowel is typically realised as 'relatively short, lax, fairly back and fairly close [...] usually weakly rounded' (Wells 1982: 133). However, it has recently been subject to considerable fronting and unrounding, as Cruttenden attests (2014: 131). The appropriate symbol would thus be [ɨ] or [ʉ]—a close central (un)rounded vowel; modern RP speakers prefer this sound over the traditional [ʊ] especially in words like *good*, *should*, and *could*.

The lack of FOOT/STRUT opposition in northern varieties of English leads to hypercorrection: northern STRUT [ʊ]-speakers who try to learn RP sometimes produce forms such as [bʌtʃə] for *butcher*.

Historically, the FOOT/STRUT split is a considerably recent phenomenon—Beal (2008b: 131) remarks that the split 'is the result of unrounding of the Middle English short /ʊ/ in certain environments' and notes that by the middle of the eighteenth century the "unsplit" /ʊ/ was already recognised as a northern characteristic. STRUT [ʌ] is thus the norm for Walker's *Dictionary* (1791).

Foreign learners often struggle with seeming homophones like *wood* and *blood*. Of course, these are not homophones at all: the former has [ʊ] while the latter [ʌ]. The explanation lies in what Dobson (1957: 508) calls 'later shortening'. Those words (derived from Middle English /oː/) which in today's RP display the [ʌ] variant were shortened earlier (thus they got caught up in the movement to [ʌ]), while the others with modern [ʊ] were shortened later and missed out on it.

FOOT/GOOSE fronting is discussed below in 3.2.1.15.

Likewise, unstressed FOOT vowel deserves a separate entry and is dealt with in 3.2.1.28.

4.2.1.7 BATH vowel [ɑː ~ a]

Upton admits both the long back fully open unrounded vowel and the short front fully open unrounded vowel, which is very similar to TRAP vowel in his transcription model. BATH vowel is the second characteristic feature that separates the North from the South. Crucially, it does not carry such social stigma as STRUT [ʊ] does. Therefore, Upton (2008: 244) asserts that '[m]any RP speakers, whose accent corresponds with that of other speakers on all other features, diverge particularly on this one variable'. They use [a] in BATH even though they avoid [ʊ] in STRUT at all times. Wells makes the same observation; he, however, insists on

[ɑ:] as the only RP sound possible in this set and labels those speakers with short BATH as 'near-RP speakers' (1982: 354).

If short BATH were not adopted into the inventory of RP, there would not be a single speaker of RP north of the BATH isogloss (cf. Trudgill 1990: 76). This is unacceptable for Upton since he points to the non-localisable nature of the accent and maintains that 'RP is not to be considered as an exclusively southern--British phenomenon' (Upton et al. 2003: xiii). It is then necessary for Upton to define two matched varieties of RP: northern and southern RP, which seems to be the only way of staying regionally unbiased now that northern speakers of RP hold on to their short BATH.

Gimson envisaged such a change about thirty years ago when he called for 'a different set of criteria for defining RP [...] which will result in a somewhat diluted form of the traditional standard' (1984: 53). This is what Upton has achieved. He complains that despite the proclaimed axiom of non-localisability, it is

> 'symptomatic of a south-centric view that today divergence from the southern variant is deemed grounds for RP-disqualification, that RP is thus seen broadly localisable, but in the south. Weight of observational evidence firmly suggests that, allegiances being as they are, the introduction of RP BATH /a/ is wholly logical and desirable'. (Upton 2012a: 65)

I concur with Upton in his decision to include short BATH [a] and to support this I would like to mention a highly interesting comment made by Vilém Mathesius in his short essay called *Výslovnost jako jev sociální a funkční* published in 1940. He compares the Moravian and Bohemian pronunciation of /sh/ word-initial cluster. While in Bohemia (Prague) the cluster is voiceless [sx], in Moravia (Brno) it is voiced [zh]. Regardless of the level of education and speech refinement, both sets of speakers retain their regional variants. Mathesius concludes that it is therefore inevitable that both variants are accepted as standard (1940: 73).

The vowel is of great interest also for historical reasons. Firstly, it displays remarkable inconsistency even in modern southern RP, which has [pɑ:s] for *pass* but [gas] for *gas*. It thus, as Wells notes, 'represents the ossification of a half-completed sound change, which seems to have come to a stop well before completing its lexical diffusion throughout the vocabulary' (1982: 233).

The first evidence for Middle English short /a/ lengthening dates back to the end of the seventeenth century but the change must have been rather slow (hence today's inconsistency between *pass* and *gas*) and Walker warns against the use of long /a/ since 'the pronouncing of the a in *after*, *answer*, *basket*, *plant*, *mast*, etc. as long as in *half*, *calf* etc. borders very closely on vulgarity' (1791: 10). He

is, though, not consistent either and has the long vowel in e.g. *bath*, *father*, and *master*. A sound change was going on at that time and the social value attached to the variants confirm Downes's (1984: 214) observation that 'a language change involves a change in norms'.

In the course of the nineteenth century people were encouraged to avoid both the vulgar [ɑ:] and by then equally provincial [æ]. As a consequence, 'those who aspired to "correct" pronunciation had to steer a very narrow course, avoiding both the "broad" [ɑ:] and the "mincing" [æ]' (Beal 2004a: 141). They found a way out of this by opting for a long front /a/, i.e. [a:]. This very confusing situation continued throughout the century and the victory of [ɑ:] was certainly far from straightforward. In 1906 Ripman still maintains that 'it is sometimes found that precise speakers, through an excessive desire to avoid any suspicion of Cockney leanings in their speech, substitute [a] for [ɑ:], saying, for instance, [faðə] in place of [fɑ:ðə]' (qtd. in Mugglestone 1995: 94). But eleven years later, Jones (1917) chooses [ɑ:] for the BATH set and this was the dominant variant throughout the twentieth century.

It is worth stressing in connection with the story of the BATH vowel that it was [ɑ:] that emerged as the standard variant in RP, i.e. the one that received the biggest amount of criticism for such a long period of time. Such an outcome appears to support Mugglestone's assertion that '[t]he interactions of language, society, prescriptive tenets, and the sociolinguistic sensibilities of speakers are [...] much more complex than might at first be assumed' (1995: 95).

4.2.1.8 CLOTH vowel [ɒ]

The vowel in this set is 'short, fully open, fully retracted and rounded' whilst the older variant [ɔ:] is deemed 'risible by native British English speakers, RP and non-RP alike' (Upton 2008: 244).

Beal (2004a: 142) mentions that in 1917 Jones in his dictionary only allowed long /o/ whereas Gimson in the 1967 edition of the dictionary only offers short /o/. The lengthening of Middle English 'o' enjoyed a similar fate to the one of lengthened BATH. It started roughly at the same time and it was also targeted by elocutionists in the nineteenth century. But, of course, the outcome is quite the opposite, since the short variant finally prevailed.

4.2.1.9 NURSE vowel [ə:]

Upton mentions 'considerable variation in the realization of this central vowel' and then goes on to define it as 'from half open to half close or slightly higher' (2008: 244). One of the benefits of the chosen symbol is, according to Upton, the reduction of the number of symbols in his transcription model.

Wells (2001), despite admitting that there is 'no appreciable difference in quality between the short [ə] in *ago* and the long vowel of NURSE', is critical of this choice giving two reasons: firstly, the symbol 'schwa' is restricted to unstressed syllables, and, secondly, all the other long-short pairs use distinct symbols as well as length marks.

This vowel seems to be subject to much variation and whichever variant is chosen in a given transcription model is not going to attract a great deal of attention or criticism because of a complete lack of social value attached to both variants.

4.2.1.10 FLEECE vowel [i:]

Both Upton (2008: 245) and Wells (1982: 140) agree that this vowel is relatively long, high front and articulated with considerable lips spreading. The vowel is also susceptible to diphthongisation, which is most adequately transcribed as [ɪi]. The realisation with the onset raised and/or centralised [ei ~ əi] is considered regional and therefore non-RP.

4.2.1.11 FACE vowel [eɪ]

The quality of this vowel is purely diphthongal though Wells (1982: 141) talks of a monophthongal variant, 'thus *playing* is realised as [pleːɪŋ]. It seems safe to label this variant a thing of the past as neither Upton (2008) nor Cruttenden (2014) mention it.

It is a closing diphthong with considerable variation as far as the starting-point is concerned. For younger RP speakers the onset is closer than [e], while older speakers may start it in the area of [ɛ] as both Cruttenden (2008: 134) and Upton (2008: 245) observe. If the starting point is lower still, the vowel is redolent of the popular London accent.

For Walker (1791), as has been shown in 2.4.2, the realisation of this set was purely monophthongal. Beal (2004a: 136) cites the year 1809 as the first evidence of a diphthongal realisation of the vowel. She adds that at the beginning of the twentieth century there was a reverse movement which gave rise to the monophthong [eː] again; however, this does not seem to have caught on and is on the verge of disappearing from RP (though it is still very strong regionally, of course, namely in numerous northern accents of English, Beal 2008b: 126).

4.2.1.12 PALM vowel [ɑː]

According to Upton, the realisation is typically 'a fully open, advanced or centralized long spread vowel' (2008: 245). It thus largely matches the description for southern RP BATH (the separate entry in the list of Wells's lexical sets is merited by the different realisation in American English).

Upton also remarks that 'the more retracted the form, the nearer it approaches that of Refined RP' (2008: 245). Moreover, the sound is sometimes used when triphthongs [aɪə] and [aʊə] are smoothed, rendering forms such as *fire* [fɑː] and *tower* [tɑː], although the long monophthong may have a markedly fronter quality as well (Cruttenden 2014: 124).

4.2.1.13 THOUGHT vowel [ɔː]

This vowel is long, mid-open, back and rounded (Cruttenden 2014: 128). This set comprises all the relevant words, except for words where [ɔː] is followed by /r/—these are given different entries, namely NORTH and FORCE.

4.2.1.14 GOAT vowel [əʊ]

The RP [əʊ] is a diphthong 'with a mid central unrounded starting-point [...] moving towards a somewhat closer and backer lightly rounded second element [ʊ]' (Wells 1982: 146). The starting point in American English is [o], which is a realisation shared by traditional RP speakers.

Historically, as Beal (2004a: 138) informs us, the development of this vowel is similar to what happened to the FACE vowel. For Walker (1791) it is a monophthong. At the beginning of the next century there is the first evidence of the vowel being diphthongised. But there is then no smoothing as there was with the FACE vowel. Instead, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the first element becomes centralised in RP. Sweet (1890: 76) considers this 'a character of effeminacy or affectation to the pronunciation'. Further innovations may include the fronting of the second element to [əʉ], or the fronting of the first element to [eʊ ~ ɛʊ]. Both innovations are mentioned in Cruttenden (2014: 147); the latter change is highly indicative of Refined RP.

4.2.1.15 GOOSE vowel [ʉː]

Upton describes this vowel as 'a long high back vowel with lip rounding' (2008: 245). Cruttenden's definition (2014: 133), however, presents a more complicated sound, for it is a close back vowel 'with varying degrees of centralization, lowering and unrounding'.

The set has two important subsets: those words in which the vowel is/was preceded by a palatal semivowel /j/, often called a 'yod' (e.g. *mute*, *duke*, *cube*, *funeral*) and those without the yod (e.g. *proof*, *choose*, *boom*, *move*). The phenomenon of yod dropping is discussed in 4.2.2.5. Also, words in which the vowel is followed by /r/ are given a separate entry: CURE (4.2.1.24).

The vowel is often fronted (particularly with younger speakers of RP), giving forms like *shoot* [ʃʉːt] or even [ʃɨːt], or diphthongised (particularly in word-final positions) to produce *who* [hʊu].

Fronted FOOT/GOOSE is one of the variables selected for the survey (cf. 5.3). Its presence in RP is attested, though not investigated in any great detail. Hawkins and Midgley (2005) and Fabricius (2007) are the exceptions. FOOT and GOOSE are treated as one category since they both display a tendency to be fronted. Also, the length of GOOSE is variable: apart from being fronted, it is often shortened too. As a result, *cool* and *kill* may become near homophones.

Upton (2008: 245) notes that the vowel is 'slightly relaxed from fully raised, and also somewhat advanced, with fronting becoming evident among many speakers, especially the young'.

Cruttenden lists this phenomenon among 'changes well established in RP'. He goes on to point out that fronting is 'in many cases accompanied by unrounding' (2014: 84). Elsewhere, Cruttenden notes that fronting and unrounding is especially common in high frequency words like *good*, *should*, and *could* (2014: 131).

Mees and Collins (2013: 103) also note that in NRP (i.e. non-regional pronunciation: their label for what is termed RP here; cf. the discussion in the Introduction) 'lip-rounding [of FOOT] is typically very weak, FOOT is often unrounded and central, especially in the high-frequency words like *good*''. In GOOSE rounding 'may be minimal or absent' and this vowel has been subject to 'a striking change whereby [it] has become much more fronted and unrounded'. As a result, older traditional RP speakers may have problems distinguishing modern RP '*two-tea* and *through-three* ' (2013: 103).

4.2.1.16 PRICE vowel [ʌɪ]

The change from the traditional diphthong [aɪ] to modern [ʌɪ] was first suggested by MacCarthy (1978). The main point of contention is the starting-point, which, according to Upton (2008: 245–6), 'can in fact be at any point from centralized front to centralized back'. Cruttenden (2014: 144) also notes the enormous variety surrounding the starting-point of this vowel; however, he sticks to the more conservative transcription.

Wells (2001) finds Upton's change in the transcription of this vowel 'very unsuitable', in spite of the fact that he also acknowledges the variable quality of the

starting-point. The most usual realisation for him is the back open unrounded vowel, thus his proposal, if he were pushed to make any change at all, would be [ɑɪ]. Wells adds that 'Upton's notation implicitly identifies the first element of *price* with the vowel quality of *cut*—an identification that accords with the habits neither of RP nor of south-eastern speech (Estuary English)' (2001). In my opinion, whilst the first part of the argument concerning RP is understandable, the latter one concerning south-eastern speech appears to be, on the face of it, extremely baffling. Why should a non-localisable accent accord with the habits of one particular region?

Due to the phonology of their mother tongue, this change is of little importance to Czech learners of English. Personally, I would accept the back quality of the onset, as long as there is no rounding, that seems to remain regional and not acceptable in RP.

4.2.1.17 CHOICE vowel [ɔɪ]

The vowel is 'a wide diphthong with a starting-point which is back, rounded, and approximately half-open, gliding towards a closer and fronter unrounded second element, [ɪ]' (Wells 1982: 150).

Cruttenden (2014: 145) remarks that for traditional RP speakers the starting point is unrounded, raised and centralised. It thus roughly corresponds to [əɪ]. This realisation is, according to him, one of the reasons why traditional RP has the so-called 'plummy' effect typically associated with this variety of RP.

4.2.1.18 MOUTH vowel [aʊ]

The starting-point of this diphthong is close to the front open position (with some possible retraction) and then the glide moves to the vowel of FOOT, actually never reaching it (Upton 2008: 246). Refined RP then shows considerable retraction of the first element approaching [ɑʊ]. The reason is to avoid undesirable associations with popular regional speech, particularly in the London area (Cruttenden 2008: 143).

4.2.1.19 NEAR vowel [ɪə]

Phonetically, this is 'a centring diphthong with a starting-point that is unrounded and fairly close and front, [ɪ], moving towards a mid central [ə] quality' (Wells 1982: 153).

Unlike most of the other diphthongs, this one shows a certain amount of variability in its second element, which is sometimes lengthened and/or raised, ren-

dering forms like here [hɪə:] or even [hɪɑ:]. These variants are 'likely to be singled out as features worthy of caricature' (Upton 2008: 246).

4.2.1.20 SQUARE vowel [ɛ:]

Formerly transcribed as [ɛə] this is another innovation introduced by Upton in his model. He claims that it is 'a long monophthong at a front half-open position, articulated with lips spread' and he adds that though 'there might or might not be some slight off-gliding present, giving [ɛ:ᵊ ~ ɛ:], [...] the dominant effect is of a single sound here' (2008: 246). Upton also claims that the diphthongal quality of this vowel sounds to native speakers 'decidedly old-fashioned or affected' (2000b: 45).

Cruttenden also views the long monophthong 'a completely acceptable alternative in General RP [i.e. modern RP]'; further noticing that 'Refined RP [i.e. traditional RP] keeps the diphthong [which often] has a more open starting-point, giving [æə]' (2008: 151). While Cruttenden (2008) still uses [ɛə] for SQUARE, the latest edition (2014) changes to [ɛ:].

The process of monophthongisation of SQUARE is paralleled to the change of the FORCE vowel: [ɔə] → [ɔ:] (Upton 2001: 358).

Wells's (2001) recommendation is to stick to the traditional transcription despite the unquestionable fact that the vowel is for many a long monophthong. Foreign learners (as well as some native speakers who retain [ɛə]) might find the diphthongal quality helpful when distinguishing pairs such as *shed—shared*. Length, according to Wells, is not enough.

4.2.1.21 START vowel [ɑ:]

In RP this vowel is identical to the one found in 'southern RP' BATH and PALM (see 4.2.1.7 and 4.2.1.12 respectively). The reason it is given a separate entry is its former rhoticity (which is, of course, maintained in American English). The loss of it in RP is discussed in 4.2.2.5.

4.2.1.22 NORTH vowel [ɔ:]

The quality of this vowel is essentially the same as the one found in the THOUGHT set (see 3.2.1.13), because RP is a non-rhotic accent.

4.2.1.23 FORCE vowel [ɔ:]

Like with the NORTH set, the quality of this vowel has already been described in 4.2.1.13. Historically, NORTH and FORCE used to be different, but as Wells

(1982: 161) observes, the merger of the two is now complete in RP but for a few exceptions to be encountered among older speakers of the accent who may still retain the outdated [ɔə].

4.2.1.24 CURE vowel [ʊə ~ ɔ:]

Whilst the long monophthong corresponds in its phonetic nature with the THOUGHT set, the traditional sound is 'a centring diphthong with a starting-point that is weakly rounded, somewhat close and back, [ʊ], moving towards a mid central [ə] quality' (Wells 1982: 163).

The change from [ʊə] to [ɔ:] is explained in Cruttenden (2008: 153) as follows: the first element of the diphthong was lowered and backed to produce [ɔə], this diphthong was later monophthongised and lengthened in the same way as words in the FORCE set.

The traditional diphthong is still alive and to be found in less common words (such as *gourd*) and where minimal pairs need to be kept apart, e.g. *dour/door* or *cruel/crawl* (Ramsaran 1990: 181). Wells, nonetheless, labels the use of the diphthong (particular in words with frequent occurrence) as conservative (1982: 162).

Another possible realisation within this set is a long monophthong [ɜ:], mentioned by Wells (1982: 164), which makes *surely* and *Shirley* homophones. Gimson, however, insists that this is 'an obsolescent affectation' and finds it extremely rare (1984: 49).

In some words in this set, the vowel is preceded by a yod; for this phenomenon see 4.2.2.5.

Monophthongised CURE seems to be an innovation occurring in the course of the twentieth century. It cannot, however, be a very recent innovation because Upton finds evidence for it in Houck's data from Leeds in the 1960's (2001: 38, cf. 2.7.2.1).

4.2.1.25 happY vowel [i]

This vowel is connected with a phenomenon called 'happY-tensing' by Wells (1982: 257–8): 'an increasing tendency throughout the English-speaking world to use a closer quality, [i(:)], and for speakers to feel intuitively that *happy* belongs with FLEECE rather than with KIT'. However, there are still environments where the traditional [ɪ] persists, e.g. when the suffix *-er* is added (Upton 2003: xiv). Thus, Upton's *Oxford Dictionary of Pronunciation for Current English* has *happy* transcribed as [hapi, -ɪə(r)].

What remains questionable is the length of the vowel. Upton insists the vowel is short whereas Cruttenden (2008: 81) prefers to stress its length (thus his transcription is /i:/), listing happY-tensing among 'well-established' changes within RP.

Although Fabricius (2002: 213) claims that the first record of this change is to be found in the 1990 edition of *Longman Pronouncing Dictionary*, the tense happY realisation must have been around considerably longer. Gimson (1984: 50) notices that [i] is the more appropriate symbol for this vowel, adding his prediction that 'it is likely to be a general feature early in the next century'. Given the general acceptance of the new symbol, it is safe to conclude that Gimson's prediction has turned out to be accurate.

Controversy, though, surrounds the source of this feature and its proclaimed novelty. Hughes and Trudgill identify happY-tensing as a 'southern feature':

> [a]nother major north/south differentiating feature involves the final vowel of words like *city*, *money*, *coffee* [...]. In the north of England these items have [ɪ]: /sɪtɪ/ *city*. The dividing line between north and south is, in this case, a good deal further north than in the case of the previous two features [=STRUT and BATH], only Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire and areas to the North being involved—except that, again, Liverpool is in this case southern rather than northern. Tyneside and Humberside too have /iː/ rather than /i/. (1996: 57)

Elsewhere, Trudgill notes that the phenomenon originated in the south and has been 'spreading northwards quite quickly' (1990: 77). Przedlacka (2005: 19) maintains that 'this trend [=happY-tensing] is a fairly recent one'.

First of all, labelling this phenomenon as a marker of north/south differentiation is rather dubious, given the fact that the tense [i] is present in large areas like Liverpool, Humberside and Tyneside (Beal 2000). Moreover, Beal's analysis of Thomas Spence's *Grand Repository of the English Language* (1775) demonstrates the presence of [i] 'as the final vowel in abbacy, abbey and abecedary, providing clear evidence for happy-tensing in Newcastle as early as 1775' (2007: 37). Spence was born in Newcastle with minimal contact with the polite society of London and the south-east. He aimed to provide a model of 'the most proper and agreeable pronunciation' (1775: title page, qtd. in Beal 2007: 34).

The fact that happY-tensing is attested in Newcastle at the end of the eighteenth century casts doubt on the geographical origin of the phenomenon in question as well as its supposed novelty. More evidence of the feature's antiquity can be found in the work of orthoepists in the eighteenth century: both Sheridan and Walker prefer [i] in their dictionaries (Beal 2000). Even though Jones (1917) is categorical in his insistence on [ɪ], this might be accounted for by Jones's own idiolect, which served as the basis for his model (Windsor-Lewis 1990). Windsor-Lewis examines several recordings of RP speakers made at the beginning of the twentieth century and finds remarkable variability as far as the happY vowel is concerned.

It is shown that happY-tensing appears neither recent nor south-eastern in origin. We can conclude with Beal that 'it would appear that there has been

variability since at least the eighteenth century' (2004a: 152) and the evidence is more convincing still if we consider the existence of happY-tensing in most varieties outside England. Since 'it is widespread, if not categorical in, among others, Southern Irish, Welsh, US and Canadian varieties', it seems likely that it is 'a retention of an older variant rather than an innovation' (Beal 2007: 37).

4.2.1.26 lettER vowel [ə]

The quality of the vowel is essentially central in terms of its openness/closeness and its back/front realisation alike (Cruttenden 2014: 137). As RP is non-rhotic, there is no audible /r/, except for linking /r/ that occurs in phrases like *told her off* [təʊɬd ər ˈɒf].

Sometimes the position of the vowel may be lowered to open-mid central. Whilst this is still RP (Cruttenden 2014: 137), any position lower than that is considered regional and not falling within the scope of Received Pronunciation.

4.2.1.27 commA vowel [ə]

As with lettER, the only sound expected in this set is the 'schwa' vowel. In many English accents (including RP), '[r] is used to create a link to a following word beginning with a vowel although, unlike with lettER, this is not supported by the orthography' (Upton 2008: 247). The phenomenon mentioned by Upton here is called 'intrusive /r/' and is discussed in much greater detail in 4.2.2.5.

4.2.1.28 KIT and FOOT vowels in unstressed positions

Whilst traditionally full vowels [ɪ] and [ʊ] used to be present even in unstressed syllables, these are now occupied by [ə] in many instances. Gimson (1984: 50) makes this observation concerning the KIT set when making a pilot study for the fourteenth edition of *English Pronouncing Dictionary* in 1977. The results of the study showed that '/ə/ had indeed made inroads in certain weak syllables where amongst more conservative RP speakers /ɪ/ is more typical' (Gimson 1984: 52). A number of affixes have made the shift: e.g. *re-, de-, pre-, ne-*; *-less, -ness, -ity, -itive, -ate, -ite, -ily,-es, -ed, -et*, etc.

Ramsaran (1990: 186) notes the same thing with regard to the FOOT set in unstressed syllables, giving examples such as *executive* [ɪgˈzekjətɪv] and *manufacture* [mænjəˈfæktʃə]. One can only wonder whether it would not be more accurate now to transcribe the former word as [əgˈzekjətəv].

Since predicting which vowel will appear in unstressed syllables is rather tricky, Upton decided to employ two new symbols in his *Oxford Dictionary of Pronunciation for Current English* (2003), namely the composite symbols [ɨ] and [ʉ]. It seems to be a very inspired solution to this problem because the two symbols indicate the possibility of the full vowels being replaced by the 'schwa'. Thus, to give an example from the dictionary, the word *happily* is given as [hapɨli], and it allows two possible realisations: [hapɪli] or [hapəli] (Upton 2003: xviii).

4.2.2 RP consonants

Consonants are distinguished by the manner and place of articulation. Below, they are discussed according to the former. Whilst some stable consonants only merit a few lines of basic description, there are others that need to be discussed at length because they involve phenomena which carry a wealth of social value.

4.2.2.1 Plosives

Plosives are characteristic by their articulation which consists of three stages: Cruttenden (2008: 158) calls them 'closing, compression and release'. In the first one the organs move together to make the obstruction, the second stage sees the lung action compress the air behind the obstruction, and, finally, the last stage suddenly releases the compressed air.

In English there are three pairs of plosives and one plosive without a pair. The voiceless ones in the pairs are usually given first; they require 'more muscular energy and a stronger breath effort' (Cruttenden 2008: 159), therefore they are called 'fortis' (strong), while their voiced counterparts are labelled 'lenis' (weak). The English pairs of plosives are: bilabial /p, b/, alveolar /t,d/, and velar /k, g/. Furthermore, there is the glottal stop /ʔ/, which admittedly is not to be found in any existing transcription model, but is such a prominent feature in modern British English that any description of RP lacking a comprehensive account of the glottal stop and its use would necessarily be seriously incomplete.

The voiceless plosives /p, t, k/ are often (more or less) aspirated when they are syllable-initial, under accent, and not followed by /s/. Thus *pea*, *tea*, *key* are realised as [pʰi:, tʰi:, kʰi:]; sometimes the aspiration of /t/ is so prominent that it may be labelled as affrication, rendering forms like *tea* [tˢi:]. As Cruttenden (2008: 162) observes, aspiration is a crucial factor in determining word-initial voiced/voiceless plosives. A lack of aspiration in *pin* sounds to the native ear as *bin*.

The voiced plosives /b,d,g/ may sometimes be subject to devoicing, particularly in word-final positions. Their articulation is still lenis, though, which is

something that non-native speakers of English may struggle with, especially if they devoice voiced consonants in word-final positions in their mother tongue. Czech is a prime example: particular attention needs to be paid to maintain the minimal pair opposition between *back* and *bag*. It is helpful to bear in mind the length of the preceding vowel: if the syllable is closed with a voiceless plosive, the vowel is then considerably shorter than if the final sound is a voiced one.

Two phenomena are now discussed in detail. They are highly stigmatised shibboleths of modern British English.

Glottalisation

As regards the manner of articulation, Cruttenden (2014: 182) describes this sound as follows: [t]he obstruction to the airstream is formed by the closure of the vocal cords, thereby interrupting the passage of air into the supraglottal organs. The air pressure below the glottis is released by the sudden separation of the vocal cords'.

In spite of the glottal stop [ʔ] not appearing in any transcription model of RP, it is such a crucial sound in modern English that it merits a detailed analysis in this thesis. The reason for its omission is simple: pronunciation models are phonemic in nature, and the glottal stop merely presents allophonic variation. Moreover, the glottal stop is one of the variables studied here (cf. 5.3) .

Glottalisation is of two essential types: glottal reinforcement (also called preglottalisation) and glottal replacement.

The former only precedes (reinforces) the compression of the voiceless plosive (all three plosives seem to be subject to it) and is present in many English accents including RP; it gives rise to forms such as *I don't like that fat guy* [aɪ ˈdəʊnʔt laɪʔk ˈðaʔt ˈfaʔt ˈgaɪ] (Collins and Mees 2003: 81–2).

The glottal stop also frequently serves 'as a syllable boundary marker, when the initial sound of the second syllable is a vowel' (Cruttenden 2014: 183), thus *co-operate* [kəʊˈʔɒpəreɪt].

Glottal replacement refers to the substitution of a voiceless plosive by the glottal stop. The following table sums up all the possible environments in which glottal replacement may occur:

		/p/	/t/	/k/
(a)	__#true C	stop talking	quite good	look down
(b)	__#L or S	stop worrying	quite likely	look worried
(c)	__#V	stop eating	quite easy	look up
(d)	__pause	Stop!	Quite!	Look!

		/p/	/t/	/k/
(e)	__true C	stopped, capsule	nights, curtsey	looks, picture
(f)	__L or S	hopeless	mattress	equal
(g)	__[m=,n,=N=]	(happen)	button	(bacon)
(h)	__V or [l=]	happy, apple, stop it	butter, bottle, get 'im	ticket, buckle, lick it

(Wells 1982: 260)

In this thesis the abbreviations designed by Wells are kept as a convenient way to refer to the environments in which the glottal stop can occur. There are nevertheless changes to the categories (g) and (h): (g) → _Syl N (syllabic nasal) and (h) → _V or Syl /l/ (vowel or syllabic /l/).

Though glottal replacement is possible for all the three voiceless plosives, in RP it is basically limited to /t/-glottalisation. The other two voiceless plosives, if replaced, are considered regional (popularly associated with Cockney; Cruttenden 2014: 183).

Moreover, RP does not allow glottal replacement of /t/ in all the environments above: Wells (1982: 261) claims that _# true C, _#L or S and _true C all fall within mainstream RP. Ramsaran (1990: 187) agrees with Wells as far as the occurrence of the glottal stop in RP is concerned. She expects to find it 'not only before obstruents but also before sonorant consonants as in phrases such as *fruit yoghurt* [fruːʔ jɒgət], *what now?* [wɒʔ naʊ], *not long* [nɒʔ lɒŋ], and *hatrack* [hæʔræk]'. Cruttenden (1994: 155–6) extends the territory of [ʔ] within RP to include syllabic /n/ (thus RP *cotton* can be [kɒʔn̩]). The same, however, cannot be said of syllabic /l/ (thus *little* [lɪʔɬ] is still non-RP). In the latest edition of *Gimson's Pronunciation of English*, however, Cruttenden (2014: 184) amends his view significantly, claiming that glottalised /t/ before syllabic [n̩] and before words beginning with vowels actually belongs to what he labels as London RGB (London Regional General British; as I understand the label, it could be interpreted as Near-RP based in London).

The glottal stop is missing in Upton's pronunciation model; he nonetheless comments on it elsewhere. In (2008: 249) he gives examples very similar to the ones found in Wells, Ramsaran, and Cruttenden above. In addition, he observes that 'trad-RP makes use of this device too in the break or hiatus created by the avoidance of intrusive /r/, as in *drawing, law and order'*. These speakers avoid intrusive /r/ because they feel it is socially unacceptable (intrusive /r/ is discussed in 4.2.2.5); by avoiding one socially stigmatised feature, however, they make unconscious use of another one (i.e. the glottal stop), which is, incidentally, arguably as stigmatised as the one they try to avoid.

Though popularly believed to be a recent change that originated in London (Estuary English, cf. Rosewarne 1984), the glottal stop is neither as new nor as locally restricted as it might seem. Trudgill has it that glottalisation is 'one of the most dramatic, widespread and rapid changes to have occurred in British English in recent times' (1999: 136). Similarly, Kerswill suggests that 'the feature seems to have diffused to urban centres outside the south-east within the last 30–40 years [...]. The phenomenon is thus considerably older in southern towns than it is in Hull' (2003: 232).

Admittedly, Walker (1791) does not list the glottal stop as one of the cockneyisms careful speakers should avoid. However, Collins and Mees (1996) investigate several very early recordings (including the phonetician Daniel Jones, born 1881, and the philosopher Bertrand Russell, born 1872) made in the 1910's and they find glottalisation to be widespread. In 1921 Jones asserts that the use of the glottal stop is 'a noticeably spreading fashion among educated speakers all over the country', and he goes on to predict that 'in a hundred years' time everybody would be pronouncing mutton as [mʌʔn̩]' (qtd. in Crystal 2005: 417).

Gimson (1962) admits that the glottal stop is present in some environments even in RP (corresponding with those that are mentioned by Wells above). Barber (1964: 70) remarks that [ʔ] is used in place of /t/ in many 'sub-standard [sic!] English accents [...] and it is also heard in educated speech, but only before certain consonants, and only in place of t, never of any other voiceless plosive'. In the post-WWII period there appears the first objections to the glottal stop. For example, McAllister is certain that 'only careless speakers use it [=ʔ]' and she adds that it is 'a degenerate tendency in modern speech [which] detracts from intelligibility' (1963: 34).

Degenerate as it may sound to some ears, the glottal stop has gained so much ground that there are linguists who deem it inevitable to include it in the teaching of English abroad. Trudgill (2002: 179) would 'advocate rather strongly teaching [...] some of the forms of /t/-glottaling at least to advanced students'. A similar opinion had been around for some time: one of the earliest is to be found in Christophersen (1952: 168), who makes a comment about the presence of [ʔ] in younger RP speakers and maintains that 'it [=ʔ] will have to reckoned in the teaching of English as a foreign language'.

The origin of the glottal stop is disputable as well. It has already been briefly discussed on p. 67. Beal provides ample evidence that the feature 'is found in the north of England as early as, if not earlier than in London, [therefore] historical evidence would support a north-south diffusion of glottalisation from western Scotland to the north of England in the late nineteenth / early twentieth centuries' (2007: 39–40). Beal also admits that what Kerswill (see above) notes about the diffusion from London might be true as well. This would mean there have been 'two waves of diffusion involved here' (2007: 40).

The changes involving the glottal stop in the past one hundred years or so are not nearly as straightforward as they might, on the face of it, seem. What seems beyond doubt though is that '[t]he extension to RP noted by Jones, Gimson and Barber is a consequence of social, rather than geographical, diffusion' (Beal 2004a: 166).

/g/-dropping

This feature, like the one discussed above, is stigmatised in British English and it has been so for at least two centuries. Essentially, the main point of objection is the alveolar rather than velar realisation of the final *-ing*, thus *doing* is [duːɪn] and not [duːɪŋ], as is expected in RP. One of the chief reasons for its stigmatisation is its seeming deviance from orthography; hence the label '/g/-dropping' and its frequent spelling form in which the apostrophe replaces the 'dropped' sound: *doin'*. What defies the 'graphemic logic' (as it is called by Mugglestone 1995: 151), however, is the existence of yet another realisation, namely the /ng/ (*doing* [duːɪŋg]), which is common in several regional dialects (e.g. in the West Midlands, cf. Upton 2006). No letter is evidently 'dropped' here; this realisation, nonetheless, carries as much social stigma as the alveolar nasal [n].

Admittedly, this phenomenon could also be treated under nasals; the connection with orthography is thought to be so prominent though that it is discussed here, under velar plosives. This decision is based on the fact that academics usually prefer to call this phenomenon /g/-dropping (e.g.Wells 1982).

Wells (1982: 188) states that the first instances of 'dropped' /g/ date back to around 1600 and are found in educated London English. Alas, he does not reveal his sources; what can be said for sure is that by the mid-eighteenth century [n] as a possible realisation for *-ing* endings was normal: Mugglestone (1995: 150) informs us that Jonathan Swift in 1731 'happily rhymes *doing* and *ruin'*. The perception of this sound would change though, and in the second half of the century frequent mentions of stigmatisation appear. Walker (1791: 48) in his dictionary warns against the embarrassment caused by 'unaccented' /g/ in 'participial termination *ing'*. He goes on to say that

> [w]e are told, even by teachers of English, that *ing*, in the words that *ing*, in the word *singing*, *bringing* and *swinging*, must be pronounced with the ringing sound, which is heard when the accent is on these letters, in *king*, *sing*, and *wing*, and not as if written without the *g* as *singin*, *bringin*, *swingin*. No one can be a greater advocate than I am for the strictest adherence to orthography, as long as the public pronunciation pays the least attention to it [...] and, if my observation does not greatly fail me, I can assert,

> that our best speakers do not invariably pronounce the participle *ing*, so as to rhyme with *sing*, *king* and *wing*. (Walker 1791: 48–9)

It is clear that at the time of Walker's dictionary, the dominance of orthography in the prescriptive paradigm had already been firmly established. The last part of the quote above reveals, however, that even the 'best' speakers were prone to 'mispronounce' the sound. It can therefore be assumed that there was a lot of variation, as there is today still. Trudgill's (1974) survey in Norwich shows /g/-dropping present in all the social classes involved, with the numbers ranging from 3 per cent in the upper middle class to 98 per cent in the lower working class.

The existence of the phenomenon as 'a linguistic stereotype of the "vulgar" and the lower class' is attested throughout the nineteenth century also in the works of literature—it can be found in Dickens, Gissing, Gaskell, Thackeray, Eliot and others (Mugglestone 1995: 152).

In contrast to other shibboleths, /g/-dropping is unique because of upper class people's preference for [ɪn] rather than the proscribed [ɪŋ]. The word-final alveolar pronunciation of stereotypical aristocratic pastime activities such as *huntin'*, *shootin'* and *fishin'* persisted well into the twentieth century (though not without being mocked by outsiders, as Beal 2004a: 161 notes, cf. 1.6.2 here).

The reason why one feature could simultaneously be linked with 'vulgar' lower classes and 'elegant' upper classes is the social security of the latter ones. Upper-class [ɪn] speakers were

> secure in their well-established status, and with no need to seek social or linguistic advice from the many manuals of etiquette; [they] were moreover to remain largely immune to prescriptive control and popular sensibilities, a pattern similarly reinforced in modern sociolinguistic work where groups stable within the social hierarchy are indeed less likely to conform to normative pressures from outside. (Mugglestone 1995: 154)

4.2.2.2 Affricates

This term refers to plosives 'whose release stage is performed in such a way that considerable friction occurs approximately at the point where the plosive stop is made' (Cruttenden 2008: 181).

In English there are two affricate phonemes, namely the palato-alveolar voiceless /tʃ/ and its voiced counterpart /dʒ/. While considerable friction can also be caused by other fricatives or approximants (e.g. /ts/, /tr/ or /dr/), these are not considered English phonemes but rather consonant clusters (Cruttenden 2008: 182). A simple test reveals that a native ear views *trip* as four separate pho-

nemes /t+r+ɪ+p/ whereas *chip* is considered to consist of only three separate phonemes /tʃ+ɪ+p/.

Some native speakers (particularly when on their linguistic guard) tend to avoid affricates in unaccented syllables, pronouncing actual as [aktjʊəl] rather than [aktʃʊəl]. This seems to be connected with the phenomenon generally known as yod-coalescence (4.2.2.5), which has strong social connotations, though particularly when occurring in accented syllables.

Foreign learners need to maintain the distinction between voiced and voiceless affricates. They should be careful not only about the manner of articulation itself, but also about the length of the preceding vowel.

4.2.2.3 Nasals

There are three phonemic nasals in English: bilabial /m/, alveolar /n/, and velar /ŋ/. Whilst the first two 'occur in all contexts, velar /ŋ/ occurs only syllable-finally following checked vowels' (Collins and Mees 2003: 84). The velar nasal is also prone to lose its phonemic status in a number of English accents in which the *-ing* ending is realised as [ɪŋg], thus *clinging* [klɪŋgɪŋg]. In these dialects, [ŋ] is a mere allophone of /n/. Such forms, however, do not fall within the scope of RP.

Nasals are similar to plosives insofar as a complete closure is made within the mouth during the process of articulation; the difference is 'that the soft palate is in its lowered position, allowing an escape of air into the nasal cavity and giving the sound the special resonance provided by the naso-pharyngeal cavity' (Cruttenden: 2008: 206).

Nasals are frictionless continuants (thus not dissimilar to vowels); furthermore they are all usually voiced. They can also perform a syllabic function, e.g. *cotton* [kɒtn̩] or *rhythm* [rɪðm̩].

The substitution of velar /ŋ/ by alveolar [n] (commonly known as /g/-dropping) is dealt with in 4.2.2.1.

English nasals are otherwise remarkably stable sounds and should pose very few problems to non-native learners of English.

4.2.2.4 Fricatives

Fricatives are distinguished by two organs which 'are brought and held sufficiently close together for the escaping airstream to produce local air turbulence' (Cruttenden 2008: 188). There are four paired (voiceless/voiced) fricatives in English: labio-dental /f/ and /v/, dental /θ/ and /ð/, alveolar /s/ and /z/,

and palato-alveolar /ʃ/ and /ʒ/, plus a voiceless glottal fricative /h/. All of them appear in all positions (word-initially, word-medially, and word-finally) with one exception: glottal /h/ does not occur in word-final positions.

Labio-dental fricatives do not show a significant amount of variation among RP speakers. Foreigners need to be on their guard when it comes to distinguishing such minimal pairs as *vest/west*, and they should of course maintain the voiceless/voiced quality word-finally.

Dental fricatives rank among the most difficult for foreign learners of English owing to the fact that they are rarely found in other languages. While they are relatively stable sounds in RP with little variation, they are frequently commented upon in the media as well as in academic circles in connection with the so-called /th/-fronting, which refers to the appearance of labio-dental fricatives in place of dental ones (discussed below).

Alveolar fricatives /s/ and /z/ appear in all the possible environments including consonant clusters. They are connected with lisping, which is a common speech defect whereby alveolar fricatives tend to be realised in a strongly dentalised way, or as dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/.

Word initial clusters /str-/ are often pronounced as /ʃtr-/ in words such as *strong*, *street*, and *stroke*. Cruttenden (2008: 199) explains this phenomenon as 'evidently the influence of the /r/ which retracts both /t/ and /s/'. Whilst it is yet to receive thorough sociolinguistic attention, this feature does not seem to prevent its users from being considered speakers of RP.

Whilst palato-alveolar voiceless fricative /ʃ/ occurs in all environments, its voiced counterpart /ʒ/ is rare in word-final (e.g. *prestige*) and even more so in word-initial positions (only in French loanwords like *genre*).

Word-medial palato-alveolar fricatives are often avoided by certain speakers who tend to prefer alveolar fricatives followed by /j/ or /ɪ/. Examples include words like *issue* [ɪʃuː] or [ɪsjuː], and *appreciate* [əˈpriːʃieɪt] or [əˈpriːsieɪt]. More information is provided in section 3.2.2.5, in which this phenomenon, known as 'yod-coalescence', is discussed in detail.

The two palato-alveolar fricatives are otherwise very stable with little variation not only within RP but also in regional dialects.

The last fricative to be mentioned here is /h/. It is conventionally described as 'a voiceless glottal fricative, but more accurately [...] as a range of voiceless approximants varying with the quality of the following vowel' (Wells 1982: 253). Most importantly though, this particular phoneme is subject to being 'dropped', which is, according to Wells (1982: 254) 'the single most powerful pronunciation shibboleth in England'.

Two phenomena related to fricatives are now discussed in detail, namely /th/-fronting and /h/-dropping.

/th/-fronting

This phenomenon refers to the replacement of dental fricatives by their labiodental counterparts: thus *nothing* becomes [nʌfɪŋ] and *brother* is realised as [brʌvə]. Despite it most certainly not being an RP feature, it is worth a brief comment since it is a hotly-debated issue and possibly one that could even enter RP later (cf. Rosewarne 2009).

Przedlacka asserts that /th/-fronting 'has been spreading rapidly in all directions' and Kerswill (2003) adds that the direction of the change is definitely from south to north; /th/-fronting is thus another feature that is connected with linguistic diffusion from a dominant place to other places in the vicinity and beyond.

Wells (1982: 96) regards 'the prevalence of these pronunciations among adult working-class Londoners [...] as a persistent infantilism', because of the problems that even native speakers have when acquiring dental fricatives. Children often make use of /f/ and /v/ or /t/ and /d/ before they manage to master the 'correct' sounds.

The problem with Kerswill's research is that he takes data from the SED (*Survey of English Dialects*, carried out between 1950 and 1961). This survey shows /th/-fronting in London and other areas close to the capital and shows little if any at all north of the Wash. But, crucially, the data was gathered predominantly in rural parts of Britain and therefore does not say anything about urban centres in the north.

Moreover, Upton (2012b: 395) notes that instances of /th/-fronting were spotted in Yorkshire in 1876. Likewise, Beal (2004a: 198) informs us that the feature cannot be very recent, for it is mentioned in Elphinston (1787), who claims that the 'low English [...] say *Redriph* for *Rotherhithe* and *loph* for *loth*'.

Elsewhere, Beal (2007: 37–9) voices grave reservations concerning the direction of the change: Kerswill's (2003) own follow-up research on the presence of the feature in question shows that children and adolescents use it while adults do not. This, however, could be a case of age-grading, which is a term that sociolinguists use to describe the presence of a phenomenon in the language of children/adolescents that disappears gradually before they reach adulthood. This process seemingly indicates some language change going on, but since it repeats itself generation after generation, no change is, in fact, involved at all (cf. Chambers 2002: 200). Age-grading is all the more likely here since it involves a feature that is present in most (if not all) children's speech before they learn dental fricatives. Beal concludes in her article that 'until there is solid "real-time" evidence of the new variant being maintained into adulthood, we cannot be sure that anything other than age-grading is being demonstrated' (2007: 38–9).

/h/-dropping

This label refers to *hammer* being realised as [amə], often marked in spelling, too, as *'ammer*. It bears marked similarities with /g/-dropping: first, it is socially an extremely salient marker as it shows considerable variation across social classes in a number of sociolinguistic studies (cf. e.g. Trudgill 1974, Hudson and Holloway 1977, Upton 2006), and second, its stigmatisation is a result of the dominance of spelling.

The feature is present in a large number of regional dialects in England and Wales, with the notable exception of the dialects of the north-east of England, rural East Anglia, Scotland and Ireland (Upton 2006: 58–9). Of course, the feature is not absent from RP either, although there are doubts whether the following cases can be regarded as instances of /h/-dropping at all (cf. Wells 1982: 254–5): high-frequency words such as *him*, *her*, *his*, *has*, *have*, *had* are often realised without the initial /h/ in RP. As a result, *give her* [gɪvə] certainly cannot be viewed as non-RP. Cruttenden (2008: 205) adds that 'some older RP speakers treat an unaccented syllable beginning with an <h> as in *historical*, *hotel*, *hysterical*, as if it belonged to the special group *hour*, *honest*, etc., without an initial /h/, e.g. *an historical novel*". The omission of /h/ in these instances hardly ever attracts the attention of pronunciation zealots though. Still, /h/-dropping is a feature certainly worth looking into, for the 'poor letter H', as one of the penny manuals in the nineteenth century calls it, reveals a lot about the processes and mechanisms of standardisation and prescription.

Historically, the feature seems to be of an exceptionally long and complicated pedigree. Mair (2006: 159) remarks that /h/-dropping 'is a natural and expected development for the simple reason that it has been one of the most venerable long-term trends in the history of English pronunciation'. Although Wells (1982: 255) says that 'the fact that H Dropping is unknown in North America strongly suggests that it arose in England only well after the American colonies were founded', other evidence makes this claim rather questionable.

Milroy (1983) holds the opinion that /h/-dropping was originally connected with the French language after the Norman Conquest in 1066, initially as a prestige feature. Beal, however, highlights 'forms with excrescent <h> in the eighth-century Corpus Glossary' (2004b: 340). Instability seems to have always been present as far as /h/ is concerned: Old French loanwords were often borrowed without <h> (spelling) or [h] (pronunciation), for example OF *erbe*. Later, both <h> and [h] were reintroduced under the influence of Latin. To complicate things further still, some words which never contained <h> in Latin were subject to the same process of adding <h> and [h] after they had been introduced into English: e.g. Latin *eremita*, originally from Greek *eremos* (English *desert*) is now present in English as *hermit* (Mugglestone 1995: 110). Another important factor

influencing today's situation surrounding the use of /h/ is the adoption of [h]-less pronunciation for words of Old English origin as well, though it is hard to ascertain when exactly this happened. Be that as it may, variation is well attested in the early fifteenth century: an anonymous writer notes in his concordance that

> a certain man writes a certain word with an *h*, which same word another man writes without an *h* [...] Thus it is with the English word which the Latin word *heres* signifies: some write that word with *h* thus, here, and some thus, *eir*, without *h*. (modern translation, qtd. in Crystal 2005: 411)

While this is a mere observation of variability within a language, later accounts emphasise the social value attendant upon /h/. So uncertain was the status of /h/ in English in the Early Modern English period that there were serious doubts as to whether it is a letter (and a sound) at all: 'H hath no particular formation, neither does it make any sound of it self, but a bare aspiration [...] whether it ought to be call'd a letter or not [...] let everyone enjoy his own opinion' (Cooper 1687, qtd. in Mugglestone 1995: 112).

From the mid-eighteenth century onwards there can be little doubt that /h/ is both a letter and a sound. The first person to voice concern over the loss of [h] is Sheridan who informs his readers that '[t]here is one defect which more generally prevails in the counties than any other, and indeed is gaining ground among the politer part of the world, I mean the omission of the aspirate in many words by some, and in most by others' (1762: 34, qtd. in Beal 2004b: 340). As Mugglestone shrewdly observes, neither the stated prevalence of the feature nor its evident presence in the 'polite' speech of the time (which Sheridan, of course, aimed to establish and codify) were enough to save /h/ from Sheridan's prescriptive zeal (1995: 113–4).

Walker's sentiment on the issue is not dissimilar to Sheridan's. He mentions /h/-dropping as one of the 'faults of the Cockneys', who do not sound /h/ 'where it ought to be sounded, and inversely' (1791: xii-xiii). It is interesting to note that at the end of the 18th century there were still several originally French words in which /h/ was not sounded (e.g. *human*, *humble*, *hospital*). The prescriptive focus was still mainly on the native stock.

Another point worth highlighting here concerns the difference between the works of Sheridan/Walker and the cheap pronunciation manuals that emerged during the nineteenth century. It is the amount of attention /h/-dropping receives: the former find it one of many shibboleths to be aware of and avoid, the latter view it so prominent that often no other shibboleths are discussed. Sociolinguistically, we may observe all the three stages of linguistic change as defined by Labov (1972). Firstly, /h/-dropping was an indicator, showing considerable variation but with no social import. Then, it became a marker, i.e. it became

subject to stylistic variation with 'sharp stratification' (Chambers and Trudgill 1998: 72). Finally, it now sometimes borders on becoming a stereotype: 'a popular and, therefore, conscious characterization of the speech of a particular group' (Wardhaugh and Fuller 2015: 152). Today, one can see an example of such a linguistic stereotype for example when West Ham United football fans are referred to as *'Appy 'Ammers*, (if their team enjoy a win, 'Hammers' being the nickname of the club).

The visual authority of spelling completely dominated the issues of elocution and those who failed to obey the rules were treated with withering contempt. 'Nothing so surely stamps a man as below the mark in intelligence, self-respect, and energy, as this unfortunate habit [=/h/-dropping]' (Alford 1870: 51, qtd. in Gorlach 1999: 58). Those who did not drop /h/ were, on the other hand, taken for educated, cultured and refined. The reasoning was simple: people who committed the fatal error of /h/-dropping were illiterate, hence unintelligent, for if they had known the spelling form, they would have aspirated the /h/. In 1.5.2 it is demonstrated how ill-advised it is to take spelling as the guide that should dictate one's pronunciation.

Nineteenth-century penny manuals were cheap and accessible (not only in terms of money) materials aimed at those socially-aspiring masses who could not afford either elocution lessons or more expensive dictionaries (or other linguistic publications). They add a new perspective to the prescriptive paradigm surrounding the glottal fricative /h/. Its use and 'abuse' became a matter of fashion, and it, in fact, often appeared in magazines of social advice: 'the neglect of [h] was indeed "unfashionable", as well as "rustic" and "provincial", with all the negative status connotations which these epithets contain' (Mugglestone 1995: 122). Therefore, it is possible to liken it to such matters as the shape of a tie or the width of a collar. The only weak point in Mugglestone's observation is, in my opinion, the effervescence of fashion whims (which seem to change in a matter of several years); linguistic fashions seem to persist much longer, as attitudes to /h/-dropping in the past two centuries testify.

The upsurge of interest in pronunciation matters is also connected with the emergence of the newly rich: dropped /h/ served as a reliable shibboleth that distinguished those with breeding from those without it, despite the fact that in terms of wealth they were more or less equal. [h] was regarded as nothing less than a symbol of 'hereditary social honour' (*Poor Letter H* 1866: iv, qtd. in Mugglestone 1995: 125). Mugglestone points out that *Poor Letter H: Its Use and Abuse* was printed three times in the year of its first publication (1854) and in 1866 it had reached no fewer than 40 editions. Other pronunciation manuals like *Harry Hawkins' H Book* (1st ed. in 1879), *Mind Your H's and Take Care of Your R's* (1st ed. in 1866), and *The Letter H. Past, Present, and Future* (1st ed. in 1881) can boast of a similar number of editions and copies sold. What these have in common,

among other things, is the primary (if not sole) interest in /h/. In *Poor Letter H* the letter is anthropomorphised and it appeals to the majority of the nation who still get the letter wrong. It complains to the readership about the unjust abuse that has been heaped on it and in the Preface (1866) it feigns utter surprise at the number of editions that have been published:

> What! issue another edition of Poor Letter H, and from the very precincts of the Royal Exchange itself, the centre and heart of London, aye of England's Life and Commerce. Yea, verily; for the circulation of forty thousand have been but as drops poured into the mighty tide of human life, whereon float hundreds of thousands who don't know an H from an A; and who, when meeting with the one or the other, make the most frightful and cruel mistakes, with these poor innocent sufferers. (*Poor Letter H* 1866: iii)

Humorous anecdotes abound in these penny manuals. The one found in Crystal (2005: 411–2) is originally from *Mr Punch's Cockney Humour* (1841) and it contains a short dialogue between a doctor and his patient 'Arry.

> Doctor: 'I can tell you what you're suffering from, my good fellow! You're suffering from acne!'
> *'Arry: 'Ackney? I only wish I'd never been near the place!'*

On the whole, the manuals helped to provoke an unprecedented amount of sensitisation towards the sound/letter in question, thereby bringing about a similarly unparalleled degree of ideology surrounding its use.

But a similarly ideological stance to the one taken up in cheap penny manuals is found in linguists who normally adopt a much more objective approach. Ellis (1869: 221) notes that 'at the present day great strictness in pronouncing *h* is demanded as a test of education and position in society', and Sweet (1890: 195) likewise regards [h] as 'an almost infallible test of education and refinement'.

Naturally, remedy was sought in the system of education. The prestige accent was regarded as a symbol of education. As far as /h/ is concerned, Murray in his *English Grammar* makes an emotional appeal to those responsible for educating pupils:

> [f]rom the negligence of tutors, and the inattention of pupils, it has happened, that many persons have become almost incapable of acquiring its [that of /h/] just and full pronunciation. It is therefore incumbent on teachers, to be particularly careful to inculcate a clear and distinct utterance of this sound, on all proper occasions. (Murray 1799: 11, qtd. in Mugglestone 1995: 118)

Public schools, as has been explained in 2.6.1, played a pivotal role in establishing and, above all, disseminating the prestige accent. Boys were sent to these schools to achieve not only education but also general sophistication. Needless to say, language was high on the agenda. A case in point is *An English Primer*, written by Edward C. Lowe, the first headmaster of Hurstpierpoint College (West Sussex). Language is merely one of the issues discussed in the textbook; others include for example religion, geography, history, and arithmetic. The very first pronunciation advice concerns /h/: '[t]hough our forefathers seem to have been very careless about it, no educated ear can now tolerate the omission of this letter [...] It is always to be sounded, even in *humble*, and *herb* and *hospital* and *humour*, except in *heir*, *heiress* (but always in *heritage*, *inherit*, etc.), in *honour*, *honesty*, and their compounds, and in *hour*' (1866: 153).

The twentieth century appears to have seen little change in the public attitude to /h/. Wells reports a London schoolteacher reprimanding any child who dropped an /h/, and the child immediately knew what had been committed and would rectify the mistake (1982: 254). The popular stereotypical link between /h/-dropping and the Cockney accent has probably prevented a more frequent occurrence of the phenomenon in Received Pronunciation. Wells lists it among the characteristics of popular accents resisted by RP. He even goes on to suggest that some middle-class speakers often use /h/ even in weak forms like I have [aɪˈhæv], this 'may well be due to a middle-class hypercorrective reaction against non-standard h-dropping' (1994: 2.1).

Social prestige and linguistic perception can hardly manifest their power any stronger than in the case of /h/-dropping. Mair has it that

> the preservation of /h/ in standard English [i. e. in RP; his terminology is rather infelicitous] cannot be seen but as the result of social forces postponing the advent of the very last episode in a thousand-year development. The very fact that in present-day English the loss of /h/ would be such a change probably explains the intensity of educated resistance to it. (2006: 159)

Mair's opinion implies that it is only a matter of time before /h/-dropping becomes an RP feature. The process might not be a simple one though. /t/-glottalisation is, compared with /h/-dropping, a very recent feature and yet it has managed to get a foot in the RP door (see 4.2.2.1). There seems to be no imminent breakthrough of such a kind for the voiceless glottal fricative. In spite of its long and complex history and its presence in an overwhelming number of regional dialects, there has been no change of note lately as far as its social acceptance is concerned. It only demonstrates the might of the educated resistance.

From the sociolinguistic perspective /h/-dropping (or rather '/h/-restoration') is a prime example of a change from above, i.e. 'from above the level of con-

scious awareness' (Chambers and Trudgill 1998: 76). The driving force behind the change is the spelling dictating the restoration of /h/ in a number of words in which /h/ had been lost for many years, or, in fact, had never been present in the first place. Examples of such words include *hospital* or *herb* (the latter, incidentally, is still /h/-less in American English).

4.2.2.5 Approximants

Although the phonemes in this category are so markedly different (both in terms of their acoustic and articulatory characteristics) that they may warrant separate categories, it is customary to treat them together under the heading 'approximants'. As Cruttenden (2008: 214) explains, it is so chiefly owing to their similar distributional characteristics. Approximants in the English language include post-alveolar [ɹ], palatal [j], lateral [l] and labial-velar [w]. They are usually voiced; devoicing is nonetheless common if preceded by a voiceless consonant, e.g. *creek*, *play*, *cute*.

What they also have in common is considerable variability with significant sociolinguistic importance attendant upon them.

The first approximant to be discussed in this section is the lateral approximant /l/. There are two main allophones, namely the so-called 'clear' [l], occurring particularly in word-initial (*lap*, *claw*) and word-medial (*pillar*) positions, and the 'dark' [ɫ] that is present mainly in word-final (*smell*) and preconsonantal (*cult*) environments. The main articulatory difference between the two allophones is velarisation of the latter. It is this 'dark' velarised /l/ that is in some accents of English vocalised.

Another approximant is the post-alveolar /r/, which is in English accents (in Britain and overseas alike) realised in a high number of ways. In RP, though, it is typically a voiced post-alveolar approximant [ɹ]. As Cruttenden remarks, 'this allophone of the RP phoneme [...] is phonetically vowel-like, but, having a non-central situation in the syllable, it functions as a consonant' (2014: 224). Another possible realisation, typically associated with what Wells terms 'U-RP' (traditional RP), is the tapped /r/ [], which is found 'intervocalically after a stressed vowel, as *very sorry* [ˈvɛrɪ ˈsɒrɪ], *far off* [ˈfɑːɾ ˈɒf], and also sometimes in certain consonant clusters, as *three crates* [ˈθɾiː ˈkɾeɪts]' (Wells 1982: 282).

RP is a non-rhotic accent. Consequently, the occurrence of /r/ is, compared to for example American or Scottish English, rather limited. It only occurs in word-initial positions when followed by a vowel (e.g. *red*), word-medial positions (often intervocalic ones like *curry*) and in consonant clusters (for instance *sprain* or *drizzle*). Crucially, /r/ is absent in word-final environments in RP, with the notable exceptions of linking and intrusive /r/ (discussed below).

Apart from linking and intrusive /r/ there are two more phenomena to be dealt with in this part, namely the labiodental [ʋ] and /r/-dropping.

Palatal approximant /j/ is a voiced semivowel with considerable variation according to, above all, the following vowel (heavy lip-rounding before rounded vowels). The phoneme is often referred to as 'yod' (originally from Hebrew, in which it means the palatal approximant [j]). There are two phenomena in which yod plays a vital role, namely 'yod-dropping' (sometimes also called 'yod-deletion') and 'yod-coalescence'.

The last approximant to be discussed in this section is the labial-velar /w/. Its typical realisation in modern RP is a brief vowel glide [ʍ] with heavy lip rounding. Some older RP speakers retain an allophonic variant in <wh> words, namely the voiceless labial-velar fricative, which is often symbolised by [ʍ] and which also appears after accented /t/ and /k/ in words such as *twig* or *queen*. Cruttenden (2008: 230) claims that '[a]mong RP speakers the use of /ʍ/ has declined rapidly (though it is often taught as the correct form in verse-speaking)'.

In the next part, the following phenomena are discussed: /l/-vocalisation, /r/-dropping, linking and intrusive /r/, labiodental /r/, yod-dropping, yod-coalescence, and whale/wale merger.

/l/-vocalisation

Wells (1994: 3.3) defines it as 'the development whereby the "dark" allophone of /l/, [ɫ], loses its alveolar lateral nature and becomes a vowel of the [o] or [ʊ] type'. The precise phonetic quality of the vowel is hard to ascertain; Wells (1982: 258) offers, along with [o] or [ʊ], the unrounded close-mid back [ɤ]. Przedlacka (2001: 41) in her study of young RP speakers' speech unearths immense variation and locates the position of the vowel as follows: [o~ʊ]. In the same study she finds that her respondents use it in no less than 34% of the tokens. Popularly, vocalised /l/ is marked in spelling as 'o' or 'u', thus *milk* is *miok* or *miuk*.

Przedlacka's research only corroborated what linguists had been claiming for some time. Though notably missing in Jones's description of RP (1963), vocalised /l/ is commented upon in Barber (1964: 48), who claims that 'there are slight signs that this tendency is beginning to affect educated speech, even speakers of R.P. sometimes say [ˈʃæu wiː] for *shall we*'. Wells restricts the presence of this feature in RP to a few environments, particularly when /l/ is preceded by a labial, e.g. *table* [teɪbʊ] (1982: 295). Nevertheless, he later concedes that this statement of his 'is now in need of revision' (1994: 3.3). Similarly, Mair (2006: 167) insists that the feature is on the increase and, in spite of some stigma attached to it, 'is spreading into educated usage'. Overall, the phenomenon does not seem to be

more than a century old as it was first mentioned and described in some detail by Jones in 1909 (Wells 1982: 259).

Despite the frequently repeated assertion that it originated in London (and therefore it spreads as a result of the capital's prominence), the change seems to be structural in its character, as is discussed in 2.7.2.1. Be that as it may, there are more and more regions in which vocalised /l/ has been spotted (cf. Foulkes and Docherty 1999) and Wells's (1982: 259) prediction that 'it seems likely that it will become entirely standard in English over the course of the next century' might be accurate. If /l/-vocalisation becomes a standard feature in the future, its impact will not be dissimilar to the one that the loss of rhoticity had (see below), for new diphthongs will thus emerge in the RP inventory, namely [ɪʊ] as in *silk* and [ɛʊ] as in *help*.

/r/-dropping

This label refers to a linguistic process which is now firmly established and without any variability in today's Received Pronunciation. Wells (1982: 218) defines the phenomenon as the elimination of 'historical /r/ except in the environment of a following vowel. This came about in the eighteenth century, when /r/ disappeared before a consonant or in absolute final position'. The presence or absence of /r/ in postvocalic positions is one the crucial distinguishing features of English accents; among others it draws a dividing line between the prestige accents in Britain and America. Uncontentious as it now might be, it is well worth looking into from the historical point of view, since it not only exemplifies in a number of ways the tenets of prescriptivism but also reveals how short-lived prescriptive stances might be. Bailey puts it the following way: 'the history of noninitial *r* in the nineteenth century encapsulates some of the dynamism of sound change characteristic of the period' (1996: 109). Further, it is one of the few linguistic changes that sociolinguists might observe in their entirety; thus it is a change well documented by a wealth of evidence.

Wells is right in pinpointing the main wave of the change in question into the eighteenth century; though Beal (2004a: 154) finds some earlier evidence. Walker's *Dictionary* is most assuredly rhotic but the change had already been under way since Walker remarks that 'it is only a jar, and not a definite and distinct articulation like the other consonants' (1791: 153). Elsewhere, he makes the distinction between the word-initial plus intervocalic /r/ in *red* and *marry* and postvocalic /r/ in *card*. He notes that '[i]n England, and particularly in London, the r in *bard*, *card*, *regard*, is pronounced so much in the throat, as to be little more than the middle or Italian a lengthened into *baad*, *caad*, *regaad*' (1791: 50).

Walker's attitude to /r/-dropping is easily explicable in terms of the seemingly 'missing' letter that the change brought about. Orthography had taken a strong hold of pronunciation preferences at that time. Nothing much was to change for the most part of the nineteenth century. For example, Smart's *The Practice of Elocution* (1842) still maintains that well-educated Londoners were strictly rhotic (qtd. in MacMahon 1998: 474).

Characteristically, those who 'dropped' their /r/s were considered vulgar (often accused of being Cockneys) and uneducated whereas /r/-full pronunciation was considered to be refined and elegant. In this respect, the link between spelling and pronunciation was, once again (as has been demonstrated in the case of /h/), employed as a reliable test of literacy, intelligence and social status.

In 1855 *Poor Letter R, Its Use and Abuse* was published. It was a direct follow-up to *Poor Letter H*, which had been published a year before. Both letters are anthropomorphised in these pamphlets; in the one concerning /r/, the 'poor letter' voices an emotional complaint:

> [l]et me appeal to your good nature and fellow-feeling, under the insults and indignities to which I am continually exposed [...] In public assemblies and in private societies, I am frequently wounded by the ignorance of my character and claims so commonly betrayed. (Poor Letter R 1855: 14–15, qtd. in Mugglestone 1995: 99)

A number of new homophones emerged as a result of /r/-less pronunciations. These were nonetheless looked down on as 'provincial' rhymes. Thomas Hood the younger advises aspiring poets to 'examine [their] rhymes carefully' and warns [them] that such rhymes as ' "morn" and "dawn", "fought" and "sort" are atrocities [that] are fatal to the success of verse. They stamp it with vulgarity, as surely as the dropping of "h" stamps a speaker' (1868: 44, qtd. in Mugglestone 1995: 100). Later, John Keats was admonished for his 'Cockney' rhymes *thorns/fawns*, as has been shown in 1.5.2.

The year 1880 is a notable one because it provides two strikingly contrastive pieces of evidence. Firstly, the highly prescriptive manual *Don't: a Manual of Mistakes* urges its readers not to 'drop the sound of *r* where it belongs, as *ahm* for *arm*, *wahm* for *warm*, *hoss* for *horse*, *govahment* for *government*. The omission of *r* in these and similar words – usually when it falls after a vowel – is very common' (1880, qtd. in Bailey 1996: 107). However, Sweet writes a letter to a Norwegian linguist called Johan Storm, in which he says: 'I make no r-glide in liberty, & judging from the incapacity of Englishmen in general to do so, I doubt whether any of them do so, except provincials' (Sweet to Storm, 23rd Feb. 1880, qtd. in MacMahon 1998: 475). One could hardly find more differing views on the issue of rhoticity: what was totally unacceptable for the writers of the manual was the norm for the linguist. As Beal (2004a: 155) observes, 'rhoticity by this stage was

associated with both the upper classes and with "provincials", but, crucially, the non-rhotic variety was used by those who were at this time defining Received Pronunciation'. Jones was an /r/-less speakers and his description of the accent was thus a non-rhotic one as well.

This sound change can be viewed as an example of a linguistic 'change from below' (i.e. from below the level of conscious awareness, cf. Labov2001: 279). Within little more than a century, the notions of prestige surrounding this phoneme completely reversed, and, 'despite attempts to manipulate pronunciation through schooling and books of linguistic etiquette, change took place, so that *r*-less speech became the norm' (Bailey 1996: 109).

Structurally, the impact of the change was immense because it established four new diphthongs in what would later become known as RP: /ɪə, ɛə, ɔə, ʊə/. Interestingly, the phonemic status of the latter three has come under intense academic scrutiny and in Upton's transcription model (2001) /ɛə/ and /ɔə/ do not appear at all, while /ʊə/, barring words whose currency is not wide, appears to be losing its status, too.

linking and intrusive /r/

The two phenomena are closely linked to one another and are therefore discussed together.

Linking /r/ is a 'retained historical post-vocalic word-final /r/ occurring before a vowel in the following word, [it is] a normal feature of Received Pronunciation' (Upton 2008: 249). In Table 1 it is given as lettER. The word *poor* is pronounced as [pɔː] if followed by a consonant or a pause. However, the phrase *the poor of today* is realised as [ðə ˈpɔː rəv təˈdeɪ]. Although some conservative RP speakers may try to avoid even this /r/, it usually does not attract any adverse comments owing to the fact that it is supported by orthography: the /r/ is 'there' and though it is silent most of the time, it may become sounded to enable liaison between two vowels.

By way of analogy, English speakers insert /r/ to avoid a hiatus in phrases like *law and order* [ˈlɔː rən ˈɔːdə], where it does not accord with the spelling. Likewise, /r/ is inserted word-medially; thus *drawing* is often [drɔːrɪŋ]. Intrusive /r/ is used after /ɑː/, /ɔː/, and, in particular, /ə/ (Upton 2008: 249). We have seen how influential spelling has been in the matters of orthoepy, and it is thus little surprising that this /r/, generally referred to as intrusive /r/, has been proscribed by those who consider themselves to be the guardians of 'proper' pronunciation.

The first to mention the feature is Sheridan, who observes that in Cockney proper names like *Belinda* are often pronounced with a word-final /r/ (1762: 34, qtd. in Beal 2004a: 156). Mugglestone (1995: 156–157) lists a number of negative

reactions to /r/ being inserted in between two vowels. One that is worth an explicit mention here is Ellis, who takes up an uncharacteristically prescriptive stance: he considers the sound 'the very height of vulgarity' (1881: 317, qtd. in Mugglestone 1995: 157) and he also asserts that 'illiterate speakers—those who either do not know how to spell, or ignore the rules of spelling in their speech—usually interpose an (r) between any vowel, as (a, A, ɑ) and a subsequent vowel' (1869: 201, qtd. in Mugglestone 1995: 157).

In contrast, Sweet observes rather more carefully the linguistic realities of his time: 'I know as a fact that most educated speakers of Southern English insert an *r* in *idea(r) of*, *India(r) office*, etc. in rapid speech, and I know that this habit, far from dying out, is spreading to the Midlands; and yet they all obstinately deny it' (1890: viii).

Admittedly, the phenomenon of intrusive /r/ was absent from Jones's description of RP. Its increasing frequency in the speech of the educated could not have been ignored for long though and Barber (1964: 60) notices that 'it is regularly used by B.B.C. announcers, for example, after words like *India* and *Ghana'*. Later, intrusive /r/ becomes an unquestionable RP sound, avoided only by very careful adoptive-RP speakers who 'not being native RP speakers, self-consciously attempt the accent and in consequence produce a mannered and somewhat artificial variety' (Upton 2003: xiii).

Wells (1994: 3.4) claims that intrusive /r/ 'is very prevalent in RP, [which] is evident to any objective observer'. He also makes an interesting observation concerning its prominent position in Cockney, even though it does not necessarily mean that its presence in today's RP can be explained away as direct influence of popular London speech. The phenomenon is at least two hundred years old, as it has been mentioned above. Trudgill even suggests that intrusive /r/ should be taught to advanced learners of English (2002: 179). While Upton's model has been restricted to the native market only, non-native learners of English can come across intrusive /r/ in Wells's *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary* (cf. 7.2), albeit in word-internal positions only.

In spite of all the evidence, the campaign against intrusive /r/ has not finished yet. Apparently, 'some radio broadcasters, anxious to avoid irate letters from listeners, [...] mark up their scripts in advance to identify any problem cases' (Crystal 2005: 468). Burchfield insists that '[i]t is important not to insert an intrusive /r/ between *law* and *and*. Avoid the same fault in other cases: Say *drawing* not *draw-ring*, *idea of*, not *idea-r-of*, *law abiding*, not *law-r-abiding*.' (1996: 444). In sum, 'phonetic realities never persuade those who believe in the power of a shibboleth' Crystal (2005: 468).

labiodental /r/

It is typically realised as a labiodental approximant [ʋ]; in semi-phonetic spelling /w/ is used to indicate the change from the more usual post-alveolar approximant. If present, the phonemic distinction between pairs such as *ring* and *wing* is lost. Essentially, this sound is present in early child language, and if maintained into one's adulthood, it may be viewed as a speech defect. However, this realisation of /r/ seems to be on the increase (Foulkes and Docherty 2000) and it is now used by so many people that a speech defect theory is out of the question.

Cruttenden claims that '[p]ronunciations of this sort were a fashionable affectation in the nineteenth and early twentieth century; and can still be heard as such from some elderly people educated at major public schools' (2008: 221). This has, however, little to do with a seemingly more recent trend which has seen [ʋ] emerge in a number of working-class accents across England. First and foremost, it is strongly associated with London, but the feature has also been reported in, for instance, Derby and Newcastle upon Tyne (Foulkes and Docherty 2000).

Foulkes and Docherty's research discovered 'evidence pointing to the gradual emergence of [ʋ] as a perceived accent feature over the last thirty years or so' (2000: 37). Furthermore, they attribute the presence of [ʋ] in other towns and cities in England to the linguistic process of 'dialect levelling' (cf. Williams and Kerswill 1999), with London being the dominant epicentre exerting profound influence on other regions.

This feature's history appears to be relatively long: in 1844 it says in H. Christmas's edition of *Anecdotes of the English Language* that 'people unable to pronounce *r* invariably substitute a *w*' (1844: 66, qtd. in Jespersen 1909: 354). Jespersen himself observes that 'a great many Southerners habitually round all their [r]s' (1909: 354). In addition, Beal (2007: 42) testifies the presence of labiodental /r/ in nineteenth-century Cockney by means of an anecdotal dialogue from a cheap self-help manual called *Enquire Within upon Everything* (1878), in which expressions like *the Infantwy* or *pwawns* appear. All this evidence indicates that the presence of [ʋ] is not of a recent date.

As far as the occurrence of [ʋ] in the North of England is concerned, it might also be rather more complex than it may initially seem. Foulkes and Docherty (2000) make a connection between labiodental /r/ in London English and Yiddish immigrants in the capital, who would lip-round their uvular [ʁ]. Through dialect contact, they claim, [ʋ] rose to prominence. Incidentally, a very similar uvular [ʁ] is characteristic of Tyneside speech; it is generally known as the 'Northumbrian burr' (cf. Beal 2008b: 140). This 'burr', now a rather outdated feature of rural dialects in Northumbria, is/was also heavily lip-rounded. Kenrick, an

eighteenth-century observer, informs us that 'in northern parts of England, particularly in and about Newcastle, we find the *r* deprived of its tremulating sound, and very awkwardly pronounced somewhat like a *w* or *oau* (1773: 31, qtd. in Beal 2007: 43)'. Beal then goes on to offer the same explanation as Foulkes and Docherty do, with the crucial difference that the sound change is internal (not influenced by the popular London accent): 'as the uvular element [of the Northumbrian burr] is lost, the lip-rounding is retained by some speakers in the north-east' (Beal 2007: 43).

yod-dropping

As has been shown in 3.2.1.15 and 3.2.1.24, words in GOOSE and CURE sets contain a mononphthongal [uː] and a diphthongal vowel [uə] respectively. Some of them retain the yod [j], which developed from an earlier /iu/ (e.g. *boom* and *mute* in the GOOSE set, and *poor* and *pure* in the CURE one). Formerly, the yod-full realisation used to be much more common. Wells (1982) distinguishes two stages of yod-dropping.

'Early Yod Dropping' (Wells 1982: 206–7) applied in general '(i) after palatals (including palato-alveolars), as in *chute*, *chew*, *juice*, *yew*; (ii) after /r/, as in *rude*, *crew*, *shrew*, *grew;* and (iii) after consonant plus /l/, as in *blue*, *flue*, *flew*, *glue'*. Beal (1999) investigates the occurrence of /juː/ and /uː/ after /r/ in four pronouncing dictionaries in the 18th century. The conclusion she arrives at is that the presence of /juː/ increases as one moves away from the capital. This concurs with sociolinguistic research today which confirms yod-dropping in London English even in clearly non-RP environments such as tune [tuːn] or news [nuːz] (Altendorf and Watt 2008: 213).

The examples from London English above fall into what Wells labels as 'Later Yod Dropping', which made /j/ disappear in the following environments: after /t/ *tune*, *student*, *attitude;* /d/ *duke*, *reduce*, *during;* /n/ *new*, *numerous*, *avenue;* /θ/ *enthusiasm*, *Thule;* /s/ *suit*, *assume*, *pseudonym;* /z/ *presume*, *resume;* /l/ *lewd*, *allude*, *solution* (Wells 1982: 247). Though yod-dropping is present in all these environments in several English accents (most notably Cockney and East Anglia), its occurrence in RP is rather limited. Upton (2008: 250) remarks that only after /s/ and /l/ is it more common in modern RP to drop the yod. The yod is still found in traditional RP. There is thus variability among RP speakers in words such as suit ([suːt] and [sjuːt]) and lute ([luːt] and [ljuːt], cf. 6.2).

Historically, there seems to have always been a great deal of variability: for instance, Walker has /uː/ for *brute* and *intrude* whilst he insists on /juː/ in *frugal* and *peruse*. These are examples of 'early yod dropping'. Walker is highly critical, though, of instances of 'later yod dropping', of which he says that '[t]here

is a corrupt pronunciation of it like *oo* chiefly in London, where we sometimes hear dew and new pronounced as if written *doo* and *noo*' (1791: 32). [su:t] for *suit* would therefore have been 'vulgar' for Walker; in fact, it only appears as a less common alternative (to the preferred form [sju:t]) in Jones's *Pronouncing Dictionary* in 1937. A few decades later Barber maintains that

> [i]n words where both forms are heard, the forms with u: are gaining ground at the expense of those with ju: [...] After s, the ju: is still common, but u: is now respectable: suit is frequently pronounced su:t, and from B.B.C. announcers I have heard assume and consume as əˈsu:m and kənˈsu:m. (1964: 44)

These days, the situation after /s/ has reversed in comparison with the one described by Jones in the first half of the twentieth century: [su:t] seems to be the dominant variant with [sju:t] being given as the less common alternative (cf. 6.2).

yod-coalescence

Instead of being dropped, the yod can sometimes coalesce with the preceding consonant. This happens in particular when the yod is preceded by alveolar plosives and fricatives: *tube*, *dune*, *issue*, and *produce* are then realised as palatalised [tʃu:b], [dʒu:n], [ɪʃu:], and [ˈprɒdʒu:s] respectively. The phenomenon often occurs across word boundaries, for instance *this year* and *don't you* are [ðɪʃɪə] and [dəʊntʃu].

Historically, yod-coalescence displays considerable variability. While in the 17th century Cooper (1687) condemns *shugar* as 'barbarous speaking' (qtd. in Beal 2004a: 146), Walker more than a century later has /ˈʃʊgʌr/. Sheridan, Walker's contemporary, was surprisingly tolerant towards this feature and has /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ not only in words like *tune*, *sure*, *duke*, but, curiously, also in words where it does not occur even today: Walker accuses Sheridan of making such mistakes as pronouncing '*suicide*, *presume*, *resume*, &c. as if written *shoo-icide*, *pre-zhoom*, *re-zhoom*' (Walker 1791: 54). Beal goes on to argue that this anomaly of Sheridan's might be accounted for as a trace of his Irish origin (2004a: 147).

In the first half of the 20th century Jones in his description of RP maintains that *tune* is /tju:n/ (1937). Mair (2006: 168) insists that in Received Pronunciation '[f]rom mid-century [i.e. the twentieth century] yod-coalescence established itself before unaccented vowels (as in *perpetual* or *graduate*), and from there it started spreading to stressed syllables (*endure*, *attitude*) and monosyllables (*tune*) from the late twentieth century'. It has been shown that the history of this feature is significantly longer (even in the prestige accent itself), but it generally accords with Ramsaran's assertion that in RP 'the noun *produce* may be heard as [ˈprɒdʒu:s],

whilst the verb *produce* [prəˈdjuːs] far less often exhibits coalescence' (1990: 188). Similarly, Upton (2008: 50) finds traditional RP speakers reluctant to coalesce 'word initially and before stress vowels (*tune*, *reduce*)'. Furthermore, lower-level lexical items seem to show resistance to being coalesced as well, thus 'pendulate is likely to be [ˈpɛndjuleɪt] as well as [ˈpɛndʒuleɪt]' (Upton 2008: 50).

whale/wale merger

Since the loss of distinction between *whale* and *wale* is in 'disharmony' with the spelling, it does not come as a surprise that it caused a great deal of controversy in the past.

Wells (1982: 228) observes that the merger 'seems to have started in the south of England in the Middle English period [...] but for a long time it remained a vulgarism; educated speech retained /hw/. The plain [w] pronunciation became current in educated speech in the course of the eighteenth century, and was usual by 1800'. This is corroborated by Dobson, who comes to the conclusion that /ʍ/ has been rather unusual in mainstream RP for two centuries (1957: §414).

In 1.4.2we have seen that for Walker /hw/ was the norm mainly because he regarded homophonous *while* and *wile* as instances of /h/-dropping. He condemns such pronunciations noting that

> [t]his letter [i.e. /h/] is often sunk after *w*, particularly in the capital, where we do not find the least distinction between *while* and *wile*, *whet* and *wet*, *where* and *wear*. Trifling as this difference may appear at first sight, it tends greatly to weaken and impoverish the pronunciation, as well as sometimes to confound words of a very different meaning. [...] in the pronunciation of all words, beginning with *wh*, we ought to breathe forcibly before we pronounce the *w;* [...] and we shall avoid that feeble, cockney pronunciation, which is so disagreeable to a correct ear. (1791: 46)

However, in the course of the nineteenth century /w/ became the norm. Despite some perturbed voices, e.g. 'W for Hw is an especial disgrace of Southern England' (Newman 1878, qtd. in Crystal 2005: 466), the prevalent opinion, in particular among those interested in linguistic realities rather than in notions of 'beauty' and 'correctness', was in favour of the merger. Ellis, talking of educated people, stresses that 'in London and in the South of England (wh) is seldom pronounced' and he adds that the assumptions that 'to write *wot* for *what* is thought to indicate a bad vulgar pronunciation' are erroneous. (1869: 188, qtd. in Mugglestone 1995: 227). Likewise, Sweet remarks that /hw/ is 'an artificial sound for the natural /w/ of South English' (1877: 112, qtd. in MacMahon 1998: 468).

In the twentieth century Jones (1917) opts for /w/ in his transcription, giving /hw/ as an alternative. Later, Barber claims that 'the general tendency is for hw to die out and be replaced by w; indeed, hw probably persists only because of the spelling, and of the belief in some schools that hw is a more refined pronunciation than w.' (1964: 56).

For Upton the invariable variant in RP is /w/ and commenting upon /hw/ he stresses the 'somewhat rarified and self-conscious status now attaching to the feature' (2008: 250). The same opinion is held by Wells (1982: 229), who admits that '/hw/ is nowadays in England found principally among the speech-conscious and in adoptive RP'.

4.2.3 Word stress

While in other languages the stress pattern is fixed (e.g. Czech: the first syllable, French: the last syllable, Polish: the penultimate syllable), in the English language it is free; potentially any syllable may be the one under stress. The rules governing the position of word stress in English are, however, extremely complex and far beyond the scope of this publication. This section thus only briefly comments on two rather recent phenomena connected with the prestige accent.

In Old English a word stress typically fell on the root syllable but later borrowings from Old French and then Latin and Greek in the Renaissance period radically changed the previously uniform pattern. Since then both backward and forward shifts have been frequent in English. An example from Crystal (2005: 466) is the word *balcony:* before 1800 the word was categorically stressed on the second syllable (betraying its French origin), then between 1800 and 1850 sources show considerable variability, and, eventually, since 1850 the norm has been to stress the first syllable.

Such changes cannot have been ignored by advocates of strict prescriptivism. In the nineteenth century there is a piece of evidence from an 1855 text called *Recollections of the Table-talk of Samuel Rogers*, in which Rogers informs the readers that '[t]he now fashionable pronunciation of several words is to me at least very offensive: *cóntemplate* – is bad enough; but *bálcony* makes me sick' (qtd. in Crystal 2005: 466). The complaint tradition surrounding word stress shifts has survived till the present day though. Howard (1984: 16) gives several examples of angry reactions to such shifts and he draws the conclusion that '[n]othing excites [readers] to write to *The Times*, proclaiming that civilization as we know it is coming to an end, more than the tendency of broadcasters to shift their accents forwards and backwards'.

As far as word stress shifts are concerned, Bauer (1994) identifies two main tendencies operating in English today (and, since they are innovations, there has been considerable resistance to them in RP).

The first and the most important one (particularly from the sociolinguistic point of view) is the 'antepenultimate syllable stress shift'. A number of three-or-more-syllable English words have undergone this change, though in some words the shift has not been completed yet as there are still numerous speakers who insist on the older forms. Bauer (1994: 100) lists about twenty such words; it suffices to give a few examples here (the older variant comes first in each pair): *ˈapplicable/apˈplicable; conˈtemplate/ˈcontemplate; ˈdespicable/desˈpicable; irˈrevocable/irreˈvocable; premaˈture/ˈpremature*. This is a very dominant tendency, as is corroborated by Wells (1999).

The second change involves the tendency 'for the base in a morphologically complex word to remain transparent—more easily recognizable' (Bauer 1994: 101). Sometimes this tendency works along with the antepenultimate word stress shift (e.g. the base form *preˈfer* gives modern *preˈferable* rather than the outdated *ˈpreferable*), but it often goes against it (e.g. the base form *conˈverse* giving *conˈversant* rather than *ˈconversant*, or the base form *ˈillustrate* giving *ˈillustrative* rather than *ilˈlustrative*).

In the case of *kilometre*, we can actually observe the two tendencies in direct opposition. Only time will tell whether the antepenultimate stress prevails (thus establishing *kiˈlometre* [kɪˈlɒmətə] as the norm) or whether it will be the base transparency tendency (enabling *ˈkilometre* [ˈkɪləmiːtə] to survive in the English language).