

Module *The Future of English* – Patrick Boylan

Module L-Lin/12 for 3 credits for THIRD YEAR students of the curriculum *Lingua e Linguistica*,
Corso di Studio in Lingue e Comunicazione Internazionale

DOCUMENTATION for ethnolinguistic field work



VARIETIES OF ENGLISH

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE
Second Edition

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with Peter French and David Langford



1973 LONDON

This documentation will help prepare you to transcribe and analyze naturally-occurring speech in English.

Pages 67-69 illustrate the symbols used to make a phonetic transcription.

You will not have to make a phonetic transcription of the entire conversation that you record and comment. Only when a speaker communicates particular values (ideas, sentiments, wants) through particular phonological features need those features be documented through phonetic transcription.

Pages 76-77 illustrate how to make a CA ("conversational analysis") transcription.

Words are written with their ordinary spelling most of the time (except in the case mentioned above) because the emphasis is on documenting interactional features: when and how people interrupt, assent, etc.

Pages 152-153 give a sample CA transcription.

The transcription is of a 1970 BBC program -- the original "*Big Brother*". TV cameras and microphones were installed for several months in the home of a working-class family in Reading. The fragments presented here involve Mrs. W. (the mother), Marion, Heather and Karen (the daughters), and Tom (Marion's boyfriend). Excerpt 1 is between Mrs. W. and Tom about when Tom intends to wed Marion. The mother seems to be putting pressure on Tom to do so quickly. The second exchange is between Mrs. W. and Heather about Karen (the married daughter); Heather thinks Karen gets special treatment from Mrs. W.

The remaining pages are photocopies of three attempts at ethnolinguistic reporting.

The papers are by students in last year's course in English Linguistics. Observe how they documented and analyzed the conversational exchanges they recorded and note their teacher's comments. Try to improve on their attempts.

4.4.1 How to make a phonetic transcription

List of symbols to transcribe the segmental sounds of RP English

| IPA symbol | RP pronunciation |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Simple vowels</i> | |
| i | bead [bid] |
| ɪ | bid [bid] |
| e* | bed [bed] |
| æ | bad [bæd] |
| ɑ | bard [bɑd] |
| ɒ | cod [kɒd] |
| ɔ | board [bɔd] |
| ʊ | put [pʊt] |
| u | shoe [ʃu] |
| ʌ | cup [kʌp] |
| ɜ | bird [bɜd] |
| ə | about, porter [əbaʊt], [pɔtə] |

IPA symbol RP pronunciation

Diphthongs

| | | |
|----|-------|---------|
| eɪ | pay | [peɪ] |
| aɪ | pie | [paɪ] |
| ɔɪ | boy | [bɔɪ] |
| əʊ | go | [gəʊ] |
| aʊ | hound | [haʊnd] |
| ɪə | beer | [bɪə] |
| eə | bear | [beə] |
| ʊə | cure | [kjʊə] |

Consonants

| | | |
|----|----------------------------|-------------|
| p | pit | [pɪt] |
| b | bit | [bɪt] |
| t | tip | [tɪp] |
| d | did | [dɪd] |
| k | kick | [kɪk] |
| g | give | [gɪv] |
| f | five | [faɪv] |
| v | vine | [vaɪn] |
| θ | thumb | [θʌm] |
| ð | this | [ðɪs] |
| s | some | [sʌm] |
| z | zoo | [zu] |
| ʃ | shoe | [ʃu] |
| ʒ | measure | [meʒə] |
| h | hot | [hɒt] |
| tʃ | charge | [tʃɑːʒ] |
| dʒ | gin | [dʒɪn] |
| m | mouse | [maʊs] |
| n | nice | [naɪs] |
| ŋ | sing | [sɪŋ] |
| l | leaf | [li:f] |
| r | e.g. RP = [ɹ] (continuant) | [ɹʌn] RP |
| | e.g. Scots = [r] (tap) | [rʌn] Scots |
| j | yacht | [jɒt] |
| w | wet | [wet] |

? The glottal stop, which occurs in some people's pronunciation of the medial consonant of words like *butter*, pronounced as *bu'er*, [bʌʔə] or [bʌʔə]. See section 4.6.

* Note for teachers and lecturers - IPA symbol [ɛ]

Some linguists transcribe the RP pronunciation of this vowel as [ɛ]. This can cause problems when, for example, you need to transcribe the Scots vowel in *pen*, a vowel in which the tongue is closer to the roof of the mouth than the RP (and general English) pronunciation of *pen*.

Using [ɛ] for the RP short, more open vowel helps us to distinguish the two sounds in transcriptions - RP [pen] and Scots [pɛn]. (The use of diacritics is an alternative, but perhaps less advisable in an introductory course, e.g. RP [pɛ̃n] or [pɛ̃n] and Scots [pɛ̃n] or [pɛ̃n].)

Difficulty arises among students because of the difference between *phonology* (the study of sound systems) and *phonetics* (the study of the sounds of speech), marked by the linguistic distinction between *phonemes* and *phones*. Phonemes are abstractions, standing for the contrastive sounds in the phonological system of a dialect or language, and when actually spoken as *phones*, may differ in pronunciation as *allophones* of the same phoneme.

Phonemes are conventionally symbolised with diagonal brackets, e.g. /ɛ/. In our transcriptions, we generally indicate actual spoken sounds in a 'broad transcription', conventionally transcribed between square brackets, e.g. [ɛ], but there are occasional references to sounds as items in a dialectal system, i.e. as phonemes, e.g. /ɪ/ in section 4.6 - 'the sound /ɪ/'. This may help to justify the choice of [ɪɛ] for RP *let*, and not [lɛt], which is to be found in standard books on English phonology (e.g. Gimson, Wells), and which we know can cause confusion.

There are two principles underlying this system of sound symbols:

- (i) each symbol has a fixed and stable value, that is, it is used consistently to represent the same sound. For example, although in ordinary spelling the letter <e> sometimes represents the sound in *bet* and sometimes the sound in *be*, in phonetic transcription the sound [e] always represents the vowel in *bet*.
- (ii) one symbol represents one segment in the 'speech chain', with only a very few exceptions. This is simpler than ordinary spelling, where a sequence of two or more letters may be used to represent one sound. For example, the vowel in *through* is represented by four letters, <ough>, in spelling, but with one, [u], in phonetic transcription.

The use of IPA symbols provides a solution to the sorts of transcription problems already identified. In describing the pronunciation of *car*, for example, we write simply that an RP speaker says [kɑː], and a West Country speaker says [kɑː]. Similarly, because the system has a symbol for both of the <th> consonants, we write that RP speakers say [θɪ] and [ðæt], and some West Country speakers say [ðɪ] and [ðæt].

Activity 4.7

Listen to section 8 on the tape, where the sounds relating to the phonetic symbols are illustrated, with particular attention to the vowel sounds. Notice that there are twenty vowels in RP, and learn to distinguish them clearly.

4.5 Practical exercises in broad phonetic transcription

Activity 4.8

Section 9 of the tape contains a passage spoken in RP. Listen to it and make a segmental transcription using phonetic symbols.

5. Spoken English and written English

5.2 Making a transcription

In transcribing speech into writing you have the choices of method discussed in chapter 4: ordinary or phonetic spelling, with or without an indication of certain supra-segmental features. Your choice will depend upon the purpose for which you are making the transcription.

For the dialogue in section 5.3, ordinary spelling, or **orthography** is used, as the chapter focuses on aspects of speech in which segmental features of pronunciation are not important. Features of the spoken language are shown as follows:

- (i) **Pauses** – a momentary break or *micropause* of less than half a second is shown as (.), and a longer pause is shown as a figure in seconds, e.g. (0.5), (2.0). A pause which includes an audible intake of breath is marked <I>.
- (ii) **Capital letters** are used only to mark people's names, abbreviations like TV, the first letter of the first word in a person's speaking turn, or loudly spoken words.
- (iii) **Quietness** is marked by putting a raised <^> before and after the quietly spoken words.
- (iv) **Unfinished words** are marked with a dash <->. *Where*–there is an overlap between the speakers, the places where the overlap begins and ends is marked by brackets < [] >.
- (v) **Stress** is marked by underlining the stressed syllable of the word.
- (vi) **High and low pitch** – for raised pitch put <↑> before and after the relevant words; for lowered pitch put <↓>.
- (vii) **Pitch movement** – put <'> above the vowel of the syllable for noticeably rising pitch, <^> for falling, <v> for rising–falling and <v> for falling–rising pitch.
- (viii) **Pronunciation** which is distinctive or unusual is transcribed using IPA symbols (listed in chapter 4).
- (ix) **Indecipherable text** is marked (*****), each asterisk representing a syllable.

Features that break the flow of speech are quite usual and necessary. Remember that when you speak spontaneously you are doing at least three things at once: planning what to say next, saying what you have planned, and monitoring what you are saying in order to check that it is what you meant to say. It is, therefore, not surprising that ordinary spontaneous speech in conversation is broken up by hesitations, false starts, self-corrections, repetitions, fillers and so on. They have been referred to as **normal non-fluency features** of speech. They are not part of the vocabulary or grammar of language, and by definition cannot be a feature of a written document (except in rough drafts with alterations, which we don't usually let others read).

In the following transcription, the non-fluency features are printed in italics.

(NB The commentary in section 5.3 is deliberately restricted to a discussion of ways in which speech contrasts with writing in its structure. Other important aspects of spoken language related to the functions of intonation, pitch and stress are not discussed here, but in chapter 8.)

5.1 Speech and writing as media for language

We all learn to talk before we learn to read and write. Chapter 6 describes in more detail how children learn to talk. This chapter discusses the principal differences between speech and writing as media for language. That is, we assume that the same language, English, underlies talking and writing, listening and reading. Language in this sense is abstract, something we know. When we use it, it must be made concrete, and transmitted and received by one or more of the human senses.

Consider the alternative realisation of language that is available to the deaf, signing. Like writing, sign language is read with the eye, but uses the human body itself to signify the words. And what is available to those who are both deaf and blind? Communication through the sense of touch alone is possible, as the life of Helen Keller made clear.

Speech consists of sounds, and writing of marks on a surface, and this fundamental difference produces equally marked contrasts in our use of the two media. Some of the differences are the result of the fact that we listen to speech, which is impermanent (unless tape-recorded), and usually we can see who is talking to us. Hence there is always the possibility of feedback between speaker and listener. The telephone is a special case, and produces its own characteristic features of discourse. We must read writing. It is permanent and can be re-read. We do not usually see the writer, so communication is one way only. There is no feedback during the interchange.

These differences of substance (sound or marks on a surface), and of function (what we can do with spoken or written language), result in differences of form and style. Rather than list these differences, we shall look closely at some authentic speech and writing, and help you to discover for yourself what these examples show.

Transcribing speech into writing freezes it in a form that we can study. If speech can be turned into writing, and writing can be read aloud, you may wonder whether there can be any essential differences. There are, as you will find out.

Nevertheless, conversation analysts do regard such forms of talk as *conversational*, in the technical sense that the talk involves participants in the reciprocating roles of speaker and listener, and is spontaneous rather than scripted or planned. Thus the conversation analyst is interested in any talk that involves people who, at various points in the talk, will be both speaker and listener, and who will be spontaneously constructing what they have to say.

Of course, some instances of conversation will be more constrained than others. Compare, for example, the talk of the classroom and talk over lunch. Or compare the talk of an interview with a careers adviser, and the talk of a chat about the future with friends.

The two conversations examined in chapter 5, where the differences between speech and writing were discussed, are not typical of what we think of as normal everyday conversation. They were specially set up and recorded, and constrained in the particular way that the father took on a *directing* role, asking questions and generally keeping the talk going. To get the least constrained and fully spontaneous conversation, the speakers need to be quite uninhibited and unaware of the tape-recorder. This situation is never easy to record, and indeed the problem of how to record fully spontaneous conversation has been called 'the observer's paradox':

...the aim of linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed; yet we can only obtain this data by systematic observation.

(William Labov, *The Study of Language in its Social Context*, 1970)

To record a conversation when speakers are unaware is not acceptable, so you should always obtain permission to record someone's speech. Even if you do, a satisfactory recording of conversation, for purposes of study, is difficult to achieve. A BBC television series in the 1970s came close to overcoming the observer's paradox by filming and recording a working-class family's daily activities over a long period, with the cameras and microphones set up in their home and following them around wherever they went. The members of the family became so used to the presence of cameras that they produced what appeared to be completely normal behaviour and speech - so normal that some viewers objected to the language used from time to time.

We shall use three extracts of recorded conversation from the series to illustrate how the participants deal with the three aspects of talk listed above (p. 151)

1 Tom B. and Mrs W. (cassette tape section 23)

(Tom has been living with Mrs W's daughter Marion, and Mrs W asks him when he intends to get married.)

T ↑Everybody else↑ has been talking about marriage.

(1.0)

but ↑I'm↑ the one that's getting married

(.)

we will get married like you know

(.)

↓we intend↓ (.) /tu:/: get married and that but not just yet

(.)

[I mean
-see I'm not] ↑don't↑ get me wrong

MW

↑I'm↑ not interfering [↑I'm↑ just wondering what you] think
oh no (.) oh yeah

T

about why (.) why you don't want to get [↑married] I mean you're both over

eighteen ↑nothing↑ [I can do] but I ↑don't↑ like seeing Marion hurt

(0.5)

I don't want to get married just yet and that like you know

(0.5)

and I think to myself [well ↑I think↑ you'd find she [↑I mean] wants to be]

married before she moves into that flat

↑Oh↑ I think she:: does yeah

well ↑don't↑ you consider her at all I mean::

(0.5)

Oh yeah but I - I don't want to get married just yet

(1.0)

[you see] well ↑what do you call just yet↑ h.h. [I mean] a few

more ↑months↑ at least I mean I'm not going to rush into marriage in seven weeks' time

(.)

it's as simple as that

(.)

mean I mean Ma- ↑Ma↑rion either takes it or she leaves it

(.)

I'm ↑not↑ getting marr [ried just yet] if she leaves it?

MW

T well it's (.) that's it then ↑isn't it↑

2 Heather and Mrs W. (cassette tape section 24)

(The mother and daughter are talking about a married sister, Karen, who had been living in the house with her husband and child, and who has now moved into her own flat.)

H ↑the first day↑ she moved out she had to come round here

(6.0)

MW your father and I were talking this morning wh- (.) and ↑we said↑ that when ↑you::↑ (.) get married (.) and have a home of your own: (.)

↑you're↑ going to be nice and strong:: (.) you'll be able to ↑cope↑ on your ↑own↑ you'll=

=I will

MW You'll k [eep the place ↑really spotless↑]
[H I will I'll make my friends]

MW [and you'll]

[H I'll make]

make=

H =friends

Roma 01 /03/ 2001

Gabriele Fogli
Isabella Russo
Marco Savigliano

Ethnolinguistic interview

Setting:

Place: a pub in the centre of Rome

Address: Campo de' Fiori square, 20/21

Name of the local: "The Drunkenhip room"

Date and time of event: Thursday night 22 February 2001 from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m.

Situation and main features of the Pub: it was not very ^{well illuminated} lighted and -at first- it was not very crowded. The customers were probably all American people and the waitress was from Detroit. There were six small iron tables in a not very big room. We were sitting at one of them at the end of that room and we ordered something to drink with some chips. There was playing R&B and black music in the background but it was not so loud to obstruct our conversation.

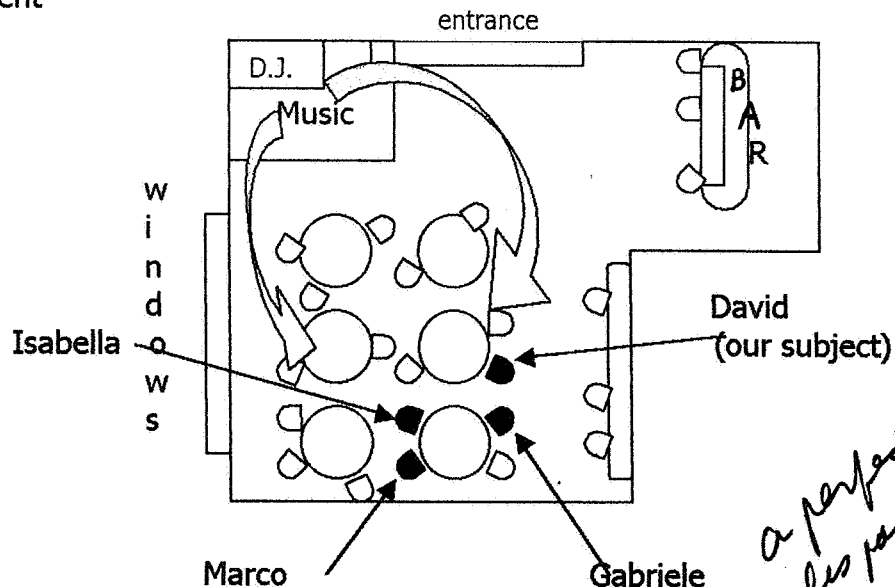
*social
this
can
influence
talk
as*

The room setting

Positions of the participants
of the speech event:

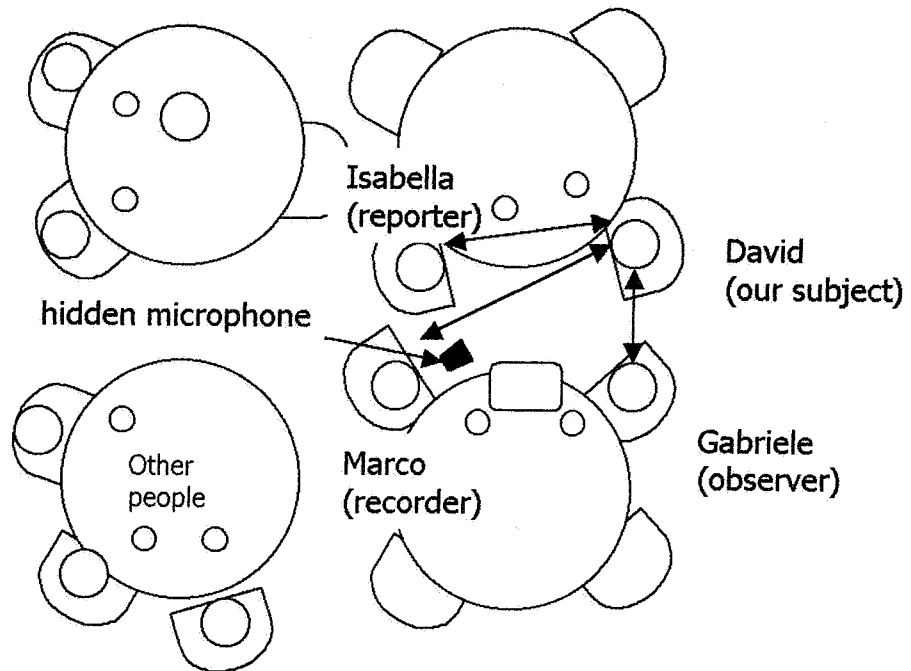
Campo de' Fiori

Initial bodies placement



*a perfect
disposition
contribution*

Body placement after our approach:



Communicative interferences

Background noises: chatting, laughs, clinking of the glasses on the tables, chair movements.

Interruptions of the speech event:

-waitress asked us ~~for~~ ^{to} ordering and then she brought us our drinks;

-a rose ~~seller~~ ^{vendor} came up to us then he left after 5 minutes; *5 min notes! That's a long time...*

-an itinerant photograph [↑] interrupted our conversation for about 5 minutes; " "

-a gipsy kid asked for money and so, he broke off our conversation for further 2 minutes while we were recording;

-the D.J. of the Pub spoke loudly [↑] to the microphone to present the music programme of the night. ~~That~~

The reason why did we choose David as our English speaking person to analyse in the pub.

The main reason is because he ^{sat} seated near our table and he was alone drinking a beer. We thought that a lonely person was more willing to talk to us.

correct. But you have to consider his opinions as possible those of an outsider or marginal figure in his "tribe."

The approach. We waited about fifteen minutes before starting the "interview". We were drinking our drinks as we were normal customers of the pub.

though long!

Then

learning about over informant

Later, Isabella stood up and moved to our man. She introduced herself to him and then Gabriele and Marco too. We didn't tell ~~to~~ him we were recording his speech until we were sure he wouldn't be annoyed by our tape recorder. We just turned our chairs towards him and so Isabella started the "interview" as ~~they~~ can listen in the recorded tape:

be heard on

Isa proposed to have a conversation with him and he replied (recorded section):

David: "Sure!" (smiling)
Isa: "↑ Thank you ↑ /what's your name?"
D: " David(.)What's your name?"
Isa: "Isabella"
D.: " Isa-bel-la (.) nice to meet you" (clipping her name and smiling)
Isa: "nice to meet you(.) where are you from?" (shaking hands with him and smiling)
D.: "Chicago"

Identikit of our English speaking person:

Name: David
Age: 31
Sex: Male
Nationality: American
-Region: raised in Pennsylvania
Living in Illinois (Chicago)
- Ethnicity: white Anglo-Saxon person
Social class: upper class
Job: architect
-Parents education: high education
-occupation:
father: engineer/physicist (he works in a memory chips company)
mother: housewife
Ideology: agnostic (his parents are catholic)
Democratic
Traditionalist (he likes handcraft things and he is very sensitive to the ancient things)

note: he said he was from Chicago because he's living there now. Had moved a Neapolitan living in Rome for a few years respond to the question "Where are you from?" (David's place of birth may not be as important to him as a Neapolitan)

Further notes: he is the second of five sons. His brothers are shared in the USA (one of them is a student in Massachussets, another studies in Colorado)

Stance.

At first he looked very reserved. He had a stare ^{out there,} towards the pub enter looking outside.

His story.

He was born in Pennsylvania. When he was ten he moved to Chicago and then to Missouri; ~~so~~ he went back to Philadelphia (Pennsylvania). Finally he returned to Chicago. He has got a girlfriend (she's 30).

Conversation analysis.

We analysed a little ^{few} ~~essays of~~ speech ^{samples} according to their importance ^{as to} about phonology, pragmatics and ethno-linguistic values.

First essay:

Isabella told him that she worked in a MacDonal'd's and he replied (recorded tape):

David: "MacDonal'd is gross(.) I'm sorry that you worked there"

Isabella don't understand because of the ambient noise

Isa: "↑What?↑"

D: "I'm sorry that you worked in a MACDONALD(.) it's gross / it's disgusting / it's nasty"

Form

Segmental analysis:

He uses the typical ^{American (in this case) (used not in Britain!)} ~~west~~ country [J] in the word "There"

Suprasegmental analysis:

His pronoun^{ce} shown us some typical features of American way of speaking.

We noted that his pronunciation is rather posterior like in the phrase: "I'm sorry you worked there"

He used a clipped cadence to make his sentence clearer or to make sure himself of the correct pronunciation of a foreign word or name (as we have seen when he repeated the name of Isabella: "Isa-bel-la"): "I'm sorry that you worked in a MacDonal'd".

Usually he didn't use it (except in few cases) but -at the same time- the way of his speech was never ~~very~~ drawl. → so his stay in Missouri + Chicago had less influence on the other hand, the intonation of his speech was monotone. ^{on him than his childhood in Penn.}

Function

Pragmatic analysis:

He wanted to provide information of himself by practical examples. He said about MacDonal'd: "[...] it's gross / it's disgusting / it's nasty".

He used a direct style of speech (he didn't use euphemisms ^{to describe the} about the fastfood) restaurant. In fact he was quite exaggerated in describing ^{such a} so famous fastfood like MacDonal'd. ^{as}

Paralinguistic features and stance:

When he spoke he gesticulated all the time. He moved his hands especially when he wanted to help himself to express opposite concepts or when he wanted to explain better his own thought to us. ^{interesting observation}

He smiled often during the conversation and he wasn't annoyed by the camera when we ^{took} take some photos.

^{tech}
Why the exaggeration? Hypothesis: being in a foreign country, he felt he had to defend or condemn the bad parts (MacDonal'd's), dissociate himself from it or show that Americans like good things.

Cultural identity:

himself

He ~~take~~ distance from the way of eating in the American fastfoods. He consider it un healthy and not refined eating in a MacDonald.

Second essay.

Isabella and David talked about their travels abroad, ~~and now he asks to~~ ^{Then} Gabriele where he ~~has been.~~ ~~had~~ ~~revelled.~~

David: " So (.) you've *been* in the United States(.) you've *been* in Florida (*pointing Isabella*) you've *been* in Long Island (*pointing Marco*) and you've *been* (.) (*pointing Gabriele*) where have you *been*?"

Form

Phonological analysis:

We noted that the word *been* (that is written in italic in the transcription above)

-in standard British English is pronounced [bi:n]

-in ~~standard~~ American English is pronounced [bɪn]

General

David, instead, pronounced it as [bɛn]

← That's the midwest (Chicago) influence.

Third essay.

Topic: traditions.

"American people throw away the past"

David gave his opinion about ancient monuments in Italy because they are linked with the past. He referred this topic to the American society.

David: " we reject the past(.) every generation has its past(.) we don't care what they did before(.) we did it better."

Function

Paralinguistic features.

present

David made a little monologue about the American people's values. He spoke about the past in contrast with the ~~and~~ ^{present} and he help himself moving his hands as he was "drawing" in the space a kind of distance between two fixed points to mean that the past is irreconcilable with the present for the American people.

So a solid evidence

He ~~has~~ ^{had} stare to enforce his speech and argumentation (emotional involvement), this ~~forced~~ ^{lead} us to believe that what he said was more important to him than other ideas he expressed before.

He likes Italy because of its ~~old~~ ^{kind} tradition, that he can't ~~found~~ ^{own} in his country. Then, he enforced this idea with similar ~~discourses~~ ^{discourse} about Italian architecture and ~~cuisine~~ ^{cuisine}.

He seemed to us very affective while he ~~shown~~ ^{show} his thoughts, especially when he described American behaviour as a foreign behaviour to him.

illustrating

Fourth essay.

Topic: American way of being.

"I'm not a normal American"

Wow! I hadn't seen the when I spoke about "merging" before

David: "I'm not a normal American (.) that's(.) in * a part so: Ha ha" (*he laughs*)

Gabriele: "ha ha..." (*he laughs*)

Isabella: "You are not normal!"

D: "I'm not /a normal / American"

G: "Why?"

I: "Why?"

D.: "Er:"

I.: "You feel Italian?"

D.: "No(.) I don't feel Italian (.) this is what makes an ABNORMAL American (0.1) Number one..."

I.: "Because you don't like MacDonald ha ha (*she laughs*)"

D.: "ha ha (.) I don't watch a lot of TV"

I.: "You don't drink(.) you drink?"

D.: "I drink?" (*David didn't understand well because of noises*)

I.: "You drink"

G.: "You drink a lot (.) a lot"

D.: "Not a lot"

Function

David ^{did} ~~was~~ not agree with the typical stereotype of Americans behaviour. He tried to persuade us he was a special person as it is shown below:

Fifth essay.

David: "I have a computer(.) I don't have a car (.) I don't have a TV

Isabella: "You have a bicycle (.) *What What do you have?*"

D.: "I walk (.) everywhere" / a very abnormal American!!

Form & function

David said he's not a normal American but anyway his speech is direct, with paratactic features as ~~an American person had done.~~ ^{was}

He tried to tell us he is not a conformist ~~person~~ ^{since} in spite of Chicago (his city) is a big city and usually ~~they~~ ^{people} move by cars there. He stressed that he likes physical activity and a more natural life style.

on the contrary, I heard one sentence that was highly hypocritical - enormously complicated which showed his higher education + his educated family background.

Sixth essay.

Topic: the feeling of revenge.

Isabella and David talked about what is wrong and what is right to do if a person kills ^{someone} ~~one~~ of person you take care. about

Isabella: "Are you agree with the:"

David: "With the [↑] [vændsɔdɔ] [↑]?" "I don't know"

I:"

Yeah"

Form & function.

David said [vændsɔdɔ] to mean the word *vendetta* in Italian. At first it was strange that he didn't use the English word *revenge*. Then he explained us that the word *vendetta* is taken from the Italian mafia's vocabulary. This word has a particular connotation and so it brought us to talk about other arguments like violence and death penalty.

When he said that he doesn't know if he ~~is~~ agree with ~~the~~ *vendetta* he expressed his opposite feelings towards civil violence.

Conclusion.

After the whole conversation and the ^{reflection on} ~~analysis~~ ^{analysis} of the themes, arguments, ideological positions and the way ~~by~~ which David explained his thoughts, we ~~could infer~~ ^{concluded} that there was ~~even~~ a particular intention or, ~~best~~ ^{subject}, line of conjunction which links all the arguments of our conversation. He tried to express his being: an American person who wants to take distance from the conformist way of seeing reality and living in his country to be a more cosmopolite person. He said "I'm not a normal American" and he tried very often ~~tried~~ ^{to} to explain what he really likes. He ~~put in contrast~~ ^{contrast} the countries he visited with USA, where people seem ^{to} only ~~are~~ able to drink a lot of beer, horrible coffee, eat in a fastfoods, watch a lot of TV and to have a car. So, he himself insisted ^{to} talking us about the so called "stereotypes" of American culture but ~~at the same time~~ ^{he} he continued to appreciate something that in USA, according to him, they don't have but in Italy he found ~~it~~ ^{to}: a long (cultural) tradition.

Anyway, the important thing is that we never made direct questions about his American point of view, neither about his ideology which emerged ~~by him~~ spontaneously in his speech.

We tested the Sapir Whorf hypothesis : David, an American person, co-created a system of values while he spoke and his formal linguistic attributes are linked to his cultural mind set which do not correspond, in that case, to the typical American stereotype. David ~~has~~ ^{was} shown us his personal way of speaking.

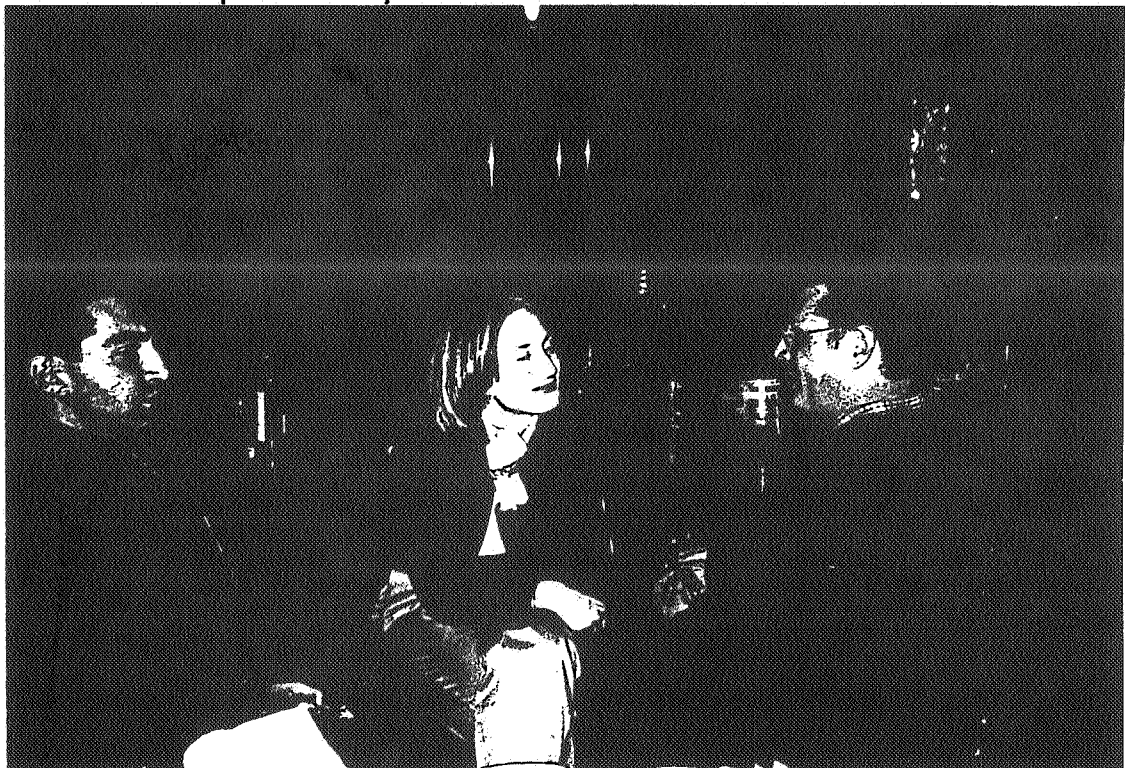
Picture one.

(From left) Isabella Russo, Marco Savigliano, Gabriele Fogli in front of "The Drunkenship Room" an English- American Pub in the centre of Rome Campo de' Fiori square 20/21.



Picture two.

To avoid the ruin of the affection and spontaneusness of our subject during the conversation, we took these pictures only at the end of the interview.



Is Isabella who approached David (the person who wore glasses). She seated in front of him to the beginning until the end of interview. We can see some paralinguistic features: look at David's hands for example. It's possible to see that the pub was not very crowded.

Last picture.

In this picture it's possible to see the chips (or *French fries* as David stressed) that we offered to David to create empathy.

More important particular: the observer (Gabriele) is nearly behind David. David didn't turn his chair because his concentration is attracted by Isabella (the main speaker). Gabriele and Marco (who was recording David's speech) are almost out of the conversation.



Special thanks to God, who allowed us to finish on time this work during a very critical period.

ETHNOGRAPHIC/ ETHNOLINGUISTIC INTERVIEW

01/03/01

a very intelligent & thoughtful report,

MANUELA ARMILLEI

SABRINA CONTI

LAURA RONCI

The first target of this research is to recognize that it's not possible to talk about a standard English because there are many varieties of it which "share common features and have similar cultural mind sets" (Boylan).

In England itself there are numerous regional dialects, also found in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Abroad there's a whole range of other Englishes as well: the ~~standard~~ American variety differs from the British and within Usa there are many regional varieties.

Standard Most countries which were settled or colonized by the English, use English as their first language or as an official variety.

Nowadays "all the evidence suggests that the position of English as a global language is going to become stronger" (D. Crystal-English as a global language).

To achieve our first goal, we looked for an English speaking person, who talked one of these varieties.

The second target of this ethnographic research (whose principal techniques are interviewing and participant observation, which are aimed at discovering the "cultural patterns that make life meaningful to these people", J.P. Spradley-The Ethnographic interview) is to show how cultural values are projected in the language.

While interviewing an informant, we had to pay particular attention to the linguistic level of analysis which considers language as "being".

Aristotle defines man "as a political animal" (Politics, I : 1,2) because he understood that when someone speaks ~~is showing~~ to which linguistic community he belongs.

he shows This aspect of the language, does not exclude language for representing (language is seen as a means of predicating, that is "to associate a word to a real referent assuming the responsibility for this association" (Boylan)), and language for doing (language as a means of doing something in a particular social context provoking a reaction in the others), because when an individual speaks, the three language functions are involved simultaneously. *True.*

You did part. obs. in Ireland & England. in was "first" an ethnographic interview

First of all we had to select a particular cultural scene and then we had to locate our informant ("the person who seem willing and talkative becomes key informant" (J.P. Spradley)).

We decided that the scene of our interview was to be the area around Termini Station because we already knew that it was easy to find an English speaking people as

Irish, Canadian, American, English, Australian people (according to D. Crystal, members of the "inner circle" represented by people who speak English as a mother tongue), and in particular Indian or African people (members of the "outer circle" composed of people who consider English as an important second language).

We were particularly interested in this second group because we intended to find a variety of English which was the more far as possible from the "standard English" that Italian students have always studied at school.

ask We found our informant in a bar near Termini Station. When we located him, he was reading an American magazine, "Newsweek". He was sitting alone having something to eat when we asked him if we could ~~make~~ ask him some questions; we also explained the reason for our interview: a research for our final thesis about the advantages and disadvantages for foreign people of living in Rome.

At the beginning our taperecorder was hidden so that the first part of the interview could be the more relaxed and spontaneous as possible. But the quality of the second part of the interview, that was recorded with the agreement of the informant, is certainly better, and this can be easily explained by the fact that in that bar there was a lot of noise.

The informant we chose became really available and invited us to sit down.

His name is Tarekegne Taka, he's sixty, he's a Christian orthodox who comes from Ethiopia; he has been working with the FAO here in Rome for 35 years and he's also involved in helping the Ethiopian community living in Italy.

Even if Ethiopia is not one of the African countries colonized by the English (this implies that Ethiopian

not only found the informant but also constituted the identity through language

Wow!

he is a good subject because he represents the expanding circle.

culture has not been influenced by the English culture), the interview went on because we discovered some relevant information about Mr. Taka's life: he was born in Ethiopia but he also lived in Kenya (it was a British colony) when he was young; later he got married with an American woman met in USA. They have four children who can speak English, Italian and a little bit of Ethiopian. ^{he} ^{the}

The following passages have been selected from the interview ^{that} lasted for 40 minutes (Our questions are not transcribed):

1) "They have (1. 0) They have the boys have a lot of problems (.) and all this because (3. 0)

because they don't have a ' soggiorno ' (1. 0) they don't have permit to work and so they don't have

insurance, ↑health↑ insurance (.) (ehm) they don't have guarantee for their work (.)

so all this problem (.) ↑these are↑ the (ehm) working problem, work problems"

Some of the features that mark Mr. Tarekne Taka are 'SEGMENTAL, that is they have to do with the way he produces the vowels and consonants' (Freeborn). Some of his vowels and consonants are different from an RP speaker's (received pronunciation): the speaker replaces the sound [s] with [z] (because); in words like ' work '

in the sentence " they don't have guarantee for their work ", the letter <r> does not have the / r / in RP but a rhotic accent ('rho is the Greek name for the letter <r>', Freeborn).

The vowel in the word ' boys ' is represented by < vowel of cod >. In the word ' guarantee ' the vowel of the final syllable is pronounced by the speaker as [I] instead of [i :].

According to Freeborn there are other features called SUPRA - SEGMENTAL: the speed (or tempo) and the rhythm of the speaker's delivery, the placement of stress and the fluctuations in the pitch and loudness of his voice.

In our case the tempo is rather slow. The pitch of his voice is not rising and falling like an RP speaker's might but is kept relatively low apart from some particular cases.

His speech is not characterized by long , unbroken tone-units but there are some ' false starts ' (" They have..the boys have") self-corrections ("insurance, health insurance") repetitions (" because because", " they have , they have") hesitations (" ehm..").

The informant may have used the Italian word "soggiorno" for two reasons: he was not sure about the English

translation or being an immigrant himself, he also faced this problem.

Considering that the communication act can't be limited by some categories which can be used only to create

stereotypes (because "a person's expression is always more subtle than categories", Boylan), at least they are useful

for a first approach to the 'forma mentis' of the informant. ^{connotative} ^{denotative} (sorry!)

At the beginning Mr. Taka's stance (in a ^{connotative} meaning it means how one's positions himself in a particular setting) was quite neutral, without sudden changes; he didn't show any attempts of shortening the distances.

In this first passage he didn't tend to speak loudly maybe because of some initial shyness.

The content in this case can only suggest that instead of concentrating the discussion on his own experience

he focused on the Ethiopian community in general.

2) "The girls (2. 0) are (ehm) are ↑young↑ this is the time, they are like you you know

(1. 0) time for have a boyfriend, to ...to be engaged to have a children maybe (laughing)

because th th they live without (.) you know having a boyfriend or getting married or

old organize ^{ing} things in their lives (.) but this you know the time passes they become
 (*) women (laughing) so all kinds of social problems (.) ↑some↑ of them also give
 (ehm) maybe they have an Italian boyfriend (*) ^{wants to have} having a good time some some (
 doesn't (3. 0) become pregnant (3. 0) and the boyfriend you know he had his fun so he
 give a damn so all kind of social problem."

Concerning the segmental features, again in this passage the speaker replaces the sound [s] with [z] ("some some become pregnant"); there is another case of rhoticity in the first sentence "the girls are". The vowel in the word "having" (in " having a boyfriend") is represented by [æ]. *So? what's the point? /æ/ is standard in the UK and the USA.* In the sentence "having a good time" there's an example of assimilation("the merging of one sound to another", from "Variety of English") because the [t] sound remains unreleased and the [d] is sounded. Analysing the supra-segmental features it is possible to say that in a case (" some, some of them also..") the speaker tended to speak loudly and in a faster tempo not just because of the noise around him but because the interviewers tried to interrupt him. In this second passage the atmosphere is more relaxed; the speaker tries to involve the other participants of the discussion addressing them directly(" they are like you, you know") and laughing with them. Even his gestures are less rigid and the distances are shortened. His stance(in this case the term is used in its connotative meaning: his attitude, which is an expression of his personality) is more affective since the informant is really involved in what he is saying, showing openly his emotions.

3) " Language is difficult for them (2.0) the Italian society is very closes (1. 0)
 you don't have (*) she's not like in America (2. 0) even in England you know where there
 is a lot of ↑here it's nice↑ here there are also advantages you know (.) because
 the (2. 0) the Italian are not one hundred per cent racist recist you know the they not but
 they are also racist is very difficult (1. 0) if you are ricco you know if you are if you have
 (ehm) permesso you know if I've a job if I have everything (***)
 and the poor ^{I have all kinds of problems} but between the rich
 (laughing)."

!! Every part!

The vowel [schwa] in the word "difficult" tends to be pronounced as [the vowel in cod]. The word "rich" in the sentence "but between the rich and the poor..", has an unusual pronunciation compared to the RP's. The speaker does not seem sure about the pronunciation of the first vowel in the word "racist": first he pronounced it as [æ], then as [vowel of bed]. (This part of the speech is fragmentary because there are some false starts ("you don't have..she is not like"), self-corrections ("if you are...if you have permesso"). The sentence "here it's nice" is made relevant by a high pitch because he wants to explain in a better way

what he meant avoiding misunderstandings.
Again there's much affectiveness than in the first part; when he starts talking about the Italian society he tries to be careful with his words not to offend anybody.

The following passages are reported as well because they are significant in order to understand the main contents of the interview (features of the spoken language are not signaled) :

to "So for the Italian is also difficult it is not cattiveria really because they want
be bad Italian are kind and also their way of living is tolerant."

about " So but the people the people because most of the young people I told you
to they come here only (*****) they don't intend to stay here most of them go
have America, Canada but they like here (laughing) when they go there they
more simpatia you know more simpaty for life (**) although is not the best
life but relax crime is very little but their future they have no future here
that's the problem."

" Tradition is very strong it doesn't let you goes it doesn't you don't become
you can't change what you have been you doesn't change your name your
language also.....they can adapt without losing their identity you know."

" Siductive you know what I mean? Siductive it changes you it attracts you
siductive it's seduces you the language is like that because it's very nice is
not like English English is very difficult language you know."

This recording would have been useful to observe the kind of English spoken by someone who has been influenced both by the African and American culture. *yes*
By the way Mr. Taka spoke, it should have been clear to which linguistic community he belongs to But we failed in this part of our research because we haven't recognized the English cultural patterns in this person's way of being.
This can be due to the short time we could spend with the informant or to the inadequacy of the object of the interview. Indeed the questions made, were too general, although they seemed to interest the speaker, and they could have been different: more specific and aimed to make the conversation lively, allowing him to express his "will-to-be" (his own desire to be different from anyone else). ← *no*

→ his desire to establish his identity

True... but only to a point. The most striking feature is his use of English. He speaks like an American with some British colonial influence or accent. He is a wise man who evokes the states. His style is British colonial influence or accent.