

Glossary

Explore the table below to find explanations of some of the technical terms used on the site. Click on the links in the 'Listen' column to listen to relevant recordings. Click on the links in the 'Find out more column' to investigate relevant themes or case studies.

Terms	Definition	Listen	Find out more
accent	pronunciation peculiar to a particular person or place		Phonological variation across the UK Geordie: a regional dialect of the UK Received Pronunciation Minority ethnic English
anticipatory pronoun	construction containing a pronoun or verb phrase used as an emphatic tag (e.g. <i>I play football, me or he's a madman, is David</i>)	Burnley Lissummon	Grammatical variation across the UK
auxiliary verb	finite verb used in compound verbal constructions (e.g. <i>I have done, we are going, did you know</i>)		
broad BATH accent	the use of a long vowel in words such as <i>bath, grass, laugh</i> and <i>dance</i>		Phonological change in the English language Phonological variation across the UK

code-switching	alternating between two or more languages within the same utterance – a common feature of bilingual speakers	Moseley	Asian English
conjunction	word used to connect words, clauses or sentences		Geordie grammar
connected speech processes	the way particular combinations of sounds are pronounced in words or phrases during normal continuous speech		Phonological variation across the UK Geordie connected speech processes Connected speech processes in Received Pronunciation
consonant cluster reduction	the way some consonants are deleted in particular combinations of sounds (e.g. <i>best</i> becomes 'bes', <i>respect</i> becomes 'respeck' and <i>land</i> becomes 'lan')		Caribbean English
definite article	the word <i>the</i>		
definite article reduction	contracted pronunciation of the word <i>the</i> (generally as a <t> sound or as a glottal stop or, when preceding a vowel, as a <th> sound)	Leeds	Phonological variation across the UK
demonstrative pronoun	<i>that, this, (yon), these, those (them)</i>		Geordie grammar
determiner	grammatical function word that appears before a noun (e.g. the, this, my)	Coventry	
dialect	variety of speech differing from the standard or literary language and characterised by local vocabulary, constructions or pronunciations		Regional voices: an introduction to language variation across the UK Geordie: a regional dialect of the UK
diphthong	combination of two vowel sounds	Blagdon Hall London	

Doric	traditional dialect of North East Scotland	Stonehaven	
filler	word or phrase that carries no semantic meaning, but is part of spoken grammar (e.g. <i>like, sort of or you know what I mean</i>)	Withernsea Gloucester Plymouth Stonehaven	
flat BATH accent	the use of a short vowel in words such as <i>bath, grass, laugh</i> and <i>dance</i>		Phonological change in the English language Phonological variation across the UK
Geordie	dialect and/or accent of Newcastle upon Tyne (and Tyneside generally)	Byker	Geordie: a regional dialect of the UK
glottal stop	sound produced by the sudden opening or shutting of the glottis (as in the sound between the two <i>oh's</i> in the exclamation, <i>oh oh!</i>)		
grammar	way in which individual words change appearance according to function (e.g. tense, plurality etc.) and are combined in phrases and sentences		Grammatical variation across the UK Grammatical change in the English language Geordie grammar
high rising terminal	use of a rising intonation on a statement that is not necessarily a question ('upspeak')	Plymouth London	
H-dropping	deletion of an initial <h> in words such as <i>happy</i> and <i>house</i>	Sheffield Hackney Maerdy	Social variation across the UK Caribbean English

historic present	verbal construction used as an alternative to the simple past tense when telling a story or relating a series of connected events in the past (e.g. <i>I says, I goes etc.</i>)		Grammatical change in the English language
historic perfect	compound verbal construction used as an alternative to the simple past tense when telling a story or relating a series of connected events in the past (e.g. <i>I've seen, I've gone etc.</i>)		Grammatical change in the English language
hypercorrection	process whereby a speaker consciously tries to avoid using stigmatised features, and wrongly assigns a prestigious pronunciation to an inappropriate word (e.g. pronouncing the initial <h> in <i>honest</i>)	Sheffield	
indefinite article	the word <i>a</i> (or <i>an</i>)	Sheffield Moseley Coventry	Asian English Caribbean English
interference	use of features of one language while speaking another	Sheffield Moseley Coventry Slough	Minority ethnic English
interrogative	construction used to form a question	Moseley	
intrusive R	insertion of an <r> sound between vowels at a word boundary regardless of spelling (e.g. <i>law and order</i>)		Connected speech processes in Received Pronunciation
language shift	process whereby successive generations of speakers adopt a dominant language in preference to the ethnic language of their parents	Leicester	
lexical set	concept of using a single word to refer to the pronunciation of a particular group of English words (e.g. the BATH set – words such as <i>bath</i> , <i>grass</i> , <i>laugh</i> and <i>dance</i>)		Phonological change in the English language Phonological variation across the UK

			Geordie vowel sounds Vowel sounds of Received Pronunciation
lexis	vocabulary		Lexical change in the English language Lexical variation across the UK
linking R	use of an <r> sound between vowels at a word boundary (e.g. <i>car alarm</i>)		Geordie connected speech processes Connected speech processes in Received Pronunciation
loan-word	word adopted or borrowed from another language	Lerwick	
L-vocalisation	pronunciation of a syllable final <l> (e.g. <i>milk, fall</i> and <i>middle</i>) with a sound more like a vowel or a <w> sound	Hackney	Phonological variation across the UK
metathesis	reversal of two adjacent sounds or syllables (e.g. <i>animal</i> as <i>aminal</i>)	Stoke Newington	
multiple negation	use of two or more negative markers (e.g. <i>I didn't do nothing</i>)	Birkenhead Milland	Social variation across the UK Geordie grammar
negative particle	grammatical function word that serves to negate a verb or sentence (e.g. <i>not, no, nae</i> or <i>none</i>)	Stannington Kniveton Kilmarnock Selkirk	Grammatical variation across the UK Geordie grammar
non-standard grammar	grammatical construction that is peculiar to a location or to informal speech		Grammatical variation across the UK

object pronoun	<i>me, you (thee), him (hine), her, us (youse, ye), them</i>	North Elmham Melksham	
past participle	form of the verb, used in compound constructions with the auxiliary verb have, to express a past event (e.g. <i>have played, has seen, had gone</i> etc.)	Wearhead Welwick	
personal pronoun	<i>I, you (thou), he, she (hoo), it, we, (youse), they, me, (thee), him (hine), her, us (ye), them</i>	Kniveton Melksham Read	
phonology	sounds of speech		Phonological change in the English language Phonological variation across the UK Geordie: a regional dialect of the UK Received Pronunciation
possessive pronoun	<i>my, your (thy), his, her, it's, our, their</i>		Geordie grammar
preposition	grammatical function word that marks the relationship between two words (e.g. <i>in, from</i> or <i>to</i>)	Warmington	
progressive	compound verbal construction, formed with the auxiliary verb <i>be</i> and conveying the sense of continuous action over a period of time (e.g. <i>I am playing, she was walking, we've been swimming</i>)		
qualifier	word attached to an adjective or adverb in order to qualify it		Geordie grammar
quotative marker	word used to indicate that what follows is a quote (e.g. <i>he's like, "No way!"</i>)	Plymouth	

Received Pronunciation (RP)	regionally non-specific accent used by many middle class speakers in England	Blagdon Hall Burnham Thorpe Harrow London Newport Teddington	Received Pronunciation
reflexive pronoun	<i>myself (mysell, mysen), yourself (yoursell, yoursen, thyself, thysen), himself (hissell, hissell, hissenn), herself (hersell, hersen), itself, ourselves, (usselves, oursells, oursens), themselves (theirselves, theirsells, theirsens)</i>		Geordie grammar
relative pronoun	pronoun used to refer to a noun in the previous clause (e.g. <i>the book that I am reading</i>)		Geordie grammar
rhotic	rhotic speakers pronounce the <r> sound after a vowel in words such as <i>start, north, nurse, near, square, cure and letter</i>	East Harting Gloucester Hilton Melksham Read Belfast Edinburgh Birkenhead	Phonological variation across the UK
Scouse	dialect or accent of the city of Liverpool (and Merseyside generally)		

simple past	single-word verb form used to express a past event (e.g. <i>played, saw, went</i> etc.)	Coventry	Grammatical variation across the UK
standard grammar	set of grammatical constructions widely accepted as prestigious		
subject pronoun	<i>I, you (thou), he, she (hoo), it, we (youse), they</i>	Kniveton Norwich	Grammatical variation across the UK
R-tapping	flap or tap sound produced by flicking (tapping) the tip of the tongue against the roof of the mouth – thus making only very brief and rapid contact	Burnham Thorpe Bethesda Glasgow Selkirk	Connected speech processes in Received Pronunciation
tag question	simple question tagged on to the end of a statement to establish whether a listener has understood, or to invite confirmation (e.g. <i>isn't it, don't you, can't I</i>)	Aberhosan	
TH-fronting	pronunciation of <th> as a <f> sound in words like <i>thing</i> or as a <v> sound in words like <i>brother</i>	Hackney Withernsea	
TH-stopping	pronunciation of <th> as a <t> sound in words like <i>thing</i> or as a <d> sound in words like <i>this</i> and <i>that</i>		Asian English Caribbean English
T-glottaling	glottal stop used in place of a <t> sound	Withernsea Harrow London	Social variation across the UK Connected speech processes in Received Pronunciation
T-tapping	flap or tap sound produced by flicking (tapping) the tip of the tongue against the roof of the mouth – thus making only very brief and rapid contact	Harrow London	

trilled R	rolled <r> sound produced by vibrating the tongue rapidly against the roof of the mouth	Selkirk	
T-to-R	word-final <t> is pronounced as a <r> sound in a restricted set of common verbs (e.g. <i>get off, got it, let us, put on, shut up</i>) and non-lexical words (e.g. <i>but actually, lot of, not on, that is, what if</i>) or word-internally with words such as <i>getting, letting, putting and matter</i>		
T-voicing	pronunciation of <t> between vowels as a <d> sound	Belfast	Connected speech processes in Received Pronunciation
unmarked for person	verb form that does not distinguish between 1st, 2nd and 3rd person (e.g. <i>I was, you was, he/she/it was</i>)	Leeds Milland Portesham Moseley	Grammatical variation across the UK
unmarked for plural	noun or verb form that does not distinguish between singular and plural (e.g. <i>I was, we was or one pound, ten pound</i>)	Sheffield Coventry Milland	Grammatical variation across the UK Geordie grammar Asian English Caribbean English
upspeak	use of a rising intonation on a statement that is not necessarily a question	Plymouth London	Connected speech processes in Received Pronunciation
uvular R	<r> sound produced by the uvula at the back of the throat (e.g. the <r> sound used in French and in some German accents)	Aberhosan	Geordie consonant sounds
yod	<y> sound after the initial consonant and preceding an <oo> vowel in words like <i>few, pure</i> and <i>huge</i>		

yod coalescence	blending of the <y> sound with the <t, d, s, z> sound preceding an <oo> vowel (e.g. <i>dune</i> becomes <i>June</i> and <i>tissue</i> becomes <i>tishoo</i>)	Harrow	Phonological change in the English language Connected speech processes in Received Pronunciation
yod retention	pronunciation of a <y> sound after a <t, d, s, z> sound preceding an <oo> vowel (e.g. <i>tune</i> , <i>dune</i> , <i>suit</i> , <i>visual</i>)	Burnham Thorpe	Phonological change in the English language Connected speech processes in Received Pronunciation