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THE BRUMMIE ACCENT

Brummie is the accent spoken in England's second city, Birmingham. Among British accents Brummie is often considered to be the least popular. The accent has become associated with both a lack of imagination and low intelligence. People find it difficult to understand this accent and the key reason for this is its vowels.

The nucleus of the diphthong [aɪ] shifts back and becomes slightly rounded, as a result it sounds similar to the [ɔɪ] sound. For example, the phrase *I quite like it* is pronounced as [ɔɪ kwɔɪt lɔɪk ɪt]. Fairly the same you may hear in most Irish dialects. This could have arisen due to the large influx of Irish that settled in Birmingham over the course of time.

The short and lax vowel [ʌ] is lengthened and often rounded, it is pronounced similar to [u:] sound which creates the biggest problem for those who try to understand the accent. For instance, the words *love, up, above* are pronounced as [lu:v], [u:p], [ə'bu:v].

The treatment of the most common sound – schwa sound – is quite interesting. In Brummie it becomes stronger and leans towards an open [a] sound, like in diphthong [aʊ]. Thus the words like *water, better* will sound like ['wɔ:ta], ['beta].

The first element of diphthong [eɪ] is replaced by this schwa sound. As a result, [eɪ] appears to sound more like [aɪ]. For example, instead of *play, way* we will hear [plai], [wai].

The short, front-retracted vowel [ɪ] will linger a little bit longer, making it lean more towards a long, fully front [i:] sound. Hence the words like *sit, fit* will be pronounced like [si:t], [fi:t]. But when at the end of a word, [ɪ] becomes diphthongized with a noticeable glide from a more central position making it sound like [əɪ]. Quite the same feature can be observed in London and Liverpool accents.

The back, long and tense vowel [ɑ:] is shortened and fronted to [a] (almost as in [aɪ]). So instead of *p[a:]st, f[a:]st*, we'll hear [past], [fast]. The diphthong [aʊ] in Brummie, in comparison with RP, is more open and fronted as well.

Although Brummie cannot boast of the peculiarities of its consonants, there're still some distinguishable features.

Such a phenomenon as elision often takes place in Brummie, i.e. the [h] sounds at the beginning and [t] sounds at the end of a word are dropped.

We also will hear a realized [g] sound after [n]. For instance, the words *song, singer* will be pronounced like [sɒŋg], ['sɪŋga]. But if it's "ing" ending of the verb, [g] sound is dropped and we hear only [ɪn]. Accordingly, *walking, talking* will sound like ['wɔ:kɪn], ['tɔ:kɪn].

Unlike many English accents, Brummie features a downward intonation at the end of each sentence. This causes the accent to lack vibrancy and makes it rather monotonous.

Thus, it was shown that the most noticeable peculiarities of Brummie can be observed in segmental phonetics.