

## P. Strelskaya

### THE SCOUSE ACCENT

Scouse which is formally known as Liverpool accent is one of the most distinctive regional accents in England. Although its speakers are considered to be friendly and welcoming, Scouse is consistently voted one of the least popular accents in the UK. Native speakers find it difficult to understand Scouse accent as it affects both consonants and vowels.

The plosive consonant [t] is pronounced with fricative [s] to make an affricate [tʃ], thus such words as *talk*, *part*, *witty* are pronounced as [tʃɔ:k], [pɑ:tʃ], [wɪtʃɪ]. If [t] appears between two vowel sounds it can be pronounced as a voiced tap [ɾ], for example, a phrase *Get a job* sounds as [gɛrədʒɒb].

In short words with the final letter *t*, like *it*, *not* the final [t] can turn into [h]: [ɪh], [nɒh]. When [k] appears in the end of a syllable in Scouse, it can be pronounced as a fricative [x]: *kick*, *look* are pronounced as [kɪx], [lɒx]. This fricativization may be related to the distinctly velar setting of Scouse which describes how the back of the tongue is generally raised throughout the articulation process.

The accent is non-rhotic, meaning [r] is not pronounced unless followed by a vowel. When it is pronounced, it is typically realised as a voiced tap [ɾ] particularly between vowels or as a consonant cluster. Accordingly, words *ferry*, *rock* become [fɛrɪ], [rɒx].

The dental fricatives [θ] and [ð] under Irish influence are replaced with dental [t̪] and [d̪], mostly in the beginning of the words. *Thin*, *then* are pronounced as [t̪ɪn], [d̪ɛn].

Words like *ring* and *bring* are pronounced with [ɪŋg], that is, with a final [g] sound. However, in ‘ing’ endings it’s silent: *wait*[ɪn], *work*[ɪn].

Like in other Northern English accents, the distinction between [ʌ] and [ʊ] is not found in Scouse. Thus, words such as *foot*, *put*, *bus* and *putt* all have [ʊ].

The vowel sounds [ɜ:] and [eə] are made with the tongue further forward and the lips a bit rounded turning into a front variant such as [œ:] or [ɛ:]. Words *there*, *hair*, *bird*, *girl* are pronounced as [t̪œ:], [hœ:], [bɪ:d], [gɪ:l].

Scouse doesn’t have the trap-bath split, so words like *bath*, *staff* are pronounced with short [a] instead of a long [a:].

In words that end with the long vowel sounds [i:] or [u:], the sound starts with an [ɪ]: *bee* and *new* sound as [bi:], [nju:]. This also occurs before [l], so *Liverpool* has a distinctive [ɪu:] sound in the last syllable.

Another feature that differs Scouse from other accents is its prosody. While in RP speakers end declarative sentences with a falling tone, speakers of Scouse often use rising intonation. The Scouse melody has a wide pitch range and a lot of high, flat tones after the main stresses.

Nowadays, Scouse accent can be heard in Liverpool and the surrounding county of Merseyside, thus still having variations in the north and the south of the region.