A Sociophonetic Study on the English Accent Varied among Three England National Footballers

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ABSTRACT

English accents have been under discussion by many researchers. It seems that English native speakers still lack cohesion in terms of phonetic features. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the English accents that varied among England's national footballers to find out what sounds are practiced and how they are categorized socially. Three of them, namely Harry Kane, Luck Shaw, and Harry Maguire, and their interview videos were used as instruments in this study. The data gained were analyzed qualitatively to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge. To help analyze and generate the findings, Estuary English, Received Pronunciation, and Cockney accents were also highlighted here in this study. The findings revealed that these three players happened to share a prestige accent, namely Estuary English, which contains RP and Cockney accents. It is confirmed when the three of them share the most common phonetic features, such as t-glottalization and th-glotalization. For the l-vocalization, it was difficult to determine which accent they belonged to because it was not used often. For h-droping, neither of the speakers used h-dropping. However, it is also found that each player still has a regional accent.

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, to get to know British English accents, we do not need to go overseas to discover the accents varied among the speakers in the country. For instance, internet platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc., can enable us to expose ourselves to the different accents of the English language through videos that people upload on these platforms. These platforms are helpful in the sense that people can experience different accents. Kim and Kim(2021) found in their study that YouTube can be used to understand cultural and linguistic ranges. It means that YouTube can help improve cross-cultural sensitivity, build content in L2, and refine information on worldwide language accents.

Correspondingly, in this study, the researchers would like to use YouTube channels to identify English accents practiced by three England national footballers. Because as foreign English teachers and learners, we might think that British people only speak one standard English accent within the country. However, British people themselves have varieties of English pronunciations that distinguish them into several accents. As I listened to the interviews of England National footballers, I discovered several differences in the accents they used. For instance, England footballers, namely Harry Kane, Luck Shaw, and Harry Maguire, represent a variety of accents in the United Kingdom. I come to realize that they speak very different English accents.

Considering these accents made by the players mentioned implies that there are many variations in English Pronunciation across the country. Brenda (2020) stated that there is no single accent in the UK because there are more than thirty-seven dialects spoken across the country. As a result, it shapes people's accents when it comes to the matter of speaking. The accents include Received Pronunciation (RP), Cockney, Brummie,

Scottish, etc. Northbrook (2018, 1:44) also stated that British people have a lot of accents because of the influence of history, which has developed English into different accents in different regions and states in the UK.

Accent refers to a way of Pronunciation of words in a language that shows which country, area, or social class a person comes from (Oxford Dictionary). Hughes et al.(2012) explained that accent refers to "variations in pronunciation." Similarly, Trudgill and Watt(2012) stated that an accent is known as a change in Pronunciation. It means that English Pronunciation can be different in the way or manner of pronouncing words.

Similarly, Hughes et al.(2012) stated that British people speak different accents, as we may notice possibly from the pronunciation, grammar, and some vocabulary changes. It probably happens because the UK is composed of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, where each state has its dialect that may influence the use of English in each region.

Therefore, this study aims to find out different accents made by England National footballers by listening to their interviews on YouTube. The researchers would like to conduct this research first to raise teachers' awareness that English has a variety of accents. As teachers, they have to embrace the differences to understand and to be understood. Second, this study is valuable for teachers not to judge students for making mistakes in speaking because even native speakers do not have the same accents. It shows that there is still a lack of phonetic cohesion among native speakers in the UK. Third, this study is also helpful for the students to expand the horizon of their knowledge about English accents varied in the UK to improve their pronunciation. Talenta (2022) concluded that students need to know and apply British accents in conversation with their classmates and people around them to have a sense of balancing their dialects into English pronunciation.

The study aimed to identify and distinguish the Pronunciation made by English footballers and which English accent these footballers belong to. There are a lot of linguistic variables in Pronunciation, especially vowels and consonants. However, to limit the scope of the study, the main focus is to find consonant variables that are pronounced differently by the three players mentioned previously. These consonant variables are "th-glottalization, T-glottalization, L-glottalization, and H-dropping." The researchers observed that these different pronunciation features are commonly practiced by the three footballers in their interview videos. Therefore, this study wishes to answer the following questions:

1. What sound feature was found among the three footballers?
2. How do the sounds characterize these three footballers?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, before presenting the accents varied among England National Footballers, it is essential to define and understand first the concept of accent. The researchers then present a brief history of each English accent in the country, including the differences among these accents.

Accents are one of the critical elements representing the linguistic identity of regional origins (Donnelly, Gamsu, Baratta, 2022). She further explained that accents help construct the identities of other people. Hughes, Trudgill, and Watt (2013) defined that accent is different from dialect. Dialect is distinguished as a language that has differences in terms of grammar, phonology, and vocabulary, while the accent is varied in Pronunciation. Similarly, Wells (1982) defined dialect as the language variety that refers to grammatical, lexical, and phonetic features. Therefore, Yule (2006) stated that accent is limited to the description of phonetic features that reveal a speaker's social and geographic origins. It means that accents refer to the Pronunciation, which differs from someone's identity. It can be interpreted that accent is part of dialect, but

it's not dialect itself. Accent, according to Roach (1991), is divided into two parts, which can be different from phonetic and phonological. It simply means that there is the same number of phonemes; however, they are pronounced differently. Here are some standard accents used in the UK:

Estuary English

It is a type of English spoken in southeast England that is a mixture of standard English and London English (Cambridge Dictionary Online). The term Estuary was first defined by David Rose warne in 1984. He defined Estuary English as a speech variety regionally modified. He further explained that Estuary English is "a mixture of non-regional and local south-eastern English pronunciation and intonation." It is a mixture of RP and Cockney accents. Estuary English has its phonological characteristics as follows:

L- vocalization, which is described as vocalized "L" sounds. Estuary used of /w/ /ʊ/ or /o/where RP uses /l/ sounds.For example, in words like "milk," pronounced as /o/, the sound would be /mɪok/.

T- glotalisation is the use of glottal stop [ʔ] to replace the [t] sounds in RP. As in the word "department," in Estuary English, people would say "depaʔment." Another example is in the word "plaet," pronounced as /pleɪʔ/. They try to omit the t-sound.

Th-glottalization is also used in Estuary English. As an example, speakers from EE would pronounce the word "think"when they change the /th/ sounds to /f/.

Brunsvik Eriksen (2015) conducted a study on Estuary English aiming to investigate the nature of five consonant variables used in EE. The researchers used YouTube interview videos as the source of data. The findings revealed that there are substantial pronunciation differences between speakers concerning t-glottalization, intervocalic t-glottalization, l-vocalization, and th-fronting. The study further explained that all speakers practice T-glottalization. Bonness (2011) found that Estuary English features have spread to different regions in the UK. She further mentioned that EE is no longer confined to London only; it spreads to states, for example, Northampton.

Received Pronunciation

The term Received Pronunciation has been in use for nearly one hundred years. British English isa widely known accent in the UK that functions as a standard language (Trudgill, 2011). It is a social accent that most of the people from the upper and middle classes use daily across the country.

Received Pronunciation is the accent known as the British accent, which is mostly used in education and filmmaking (Cristal, 2014, as cited in Johansson, 2016). It is considered to be the standard English accent in England. Tom(2020, 1:35) notes that the RP accent is a pronunciation that is correlated to education and privilege in England. It means RP pronunciation is recognized to be used in the teaching and learning process and is also known as a high-class English accent.

Received Pronunciation, typically abbreviated as RP is a prestigious sort of British English spoken without an identifiable local dialect. It is also referred to as British-obtained Pronunciation, BBC English, or the Queen's English. There are some characteristics of RP accents.

t-glottal stop

 The RP speakers produce a "glottal Stop" sound of the letter /t/, whether in the middle of the last of the word as can be seen in words like "put" pronounced as /pʊ/. They would replace "t" with /ʊ/. Also, the word "pool" is pronounced as /pu:/. Another word, such as "bite," will be pronounced as [baɪʔ].

L-vocalization

The phonological variation known as "L-vocalization" occurs in English when the /l/ sound is spoken as a vowel-like sound, such as a schwa or /w/. Numerous English dialects, including ones spoken in the UK, exhibit this phenomenon. The English language in the United Kingdom varies due to several variables, including dialect (Watson, 2017).Brunsvik Eriksen(2015) stated that "L-vocalization refers to the process where dark [ɫ], meaning velarised l-sounds that occur before consonants or in syllable-final position, are vocalized into something sounding more like [ʊ] or [o]."This sound occurs when the/l/ sound is pronounced as a /w/ or /o/. A word like "full" is pronounced as /fʊl/, but in Cockney is /fʊo/. Another example is a word like "milk," which would be pronounced as /miok/.

Cockney

Cockney' is used to explain the London English accent, which is associated with each social. Class and the geographical region the speaker belongs to (Wells 1982).The accent is the non-standard English spoken. It is considered to be a traditional dialect used in London. Tom (2020, 4:58) explained that "Cockney is the traditional working-class accent of London originally found in the East End of the city." As an example, Cockney speakers mostly try to use glottal T sounds in words like "water"; the /t/ will be dropped.

Th-fronting

Other well-known phonetic difference present in some English dialects, such as Cockney, is th-fronting. Pronouncing the /θ/ and /ð/ sounds as /f/ and /v/, respectively, is known as "th-fronting." This variance impacts certain phonemes and may have an effect on how English is spoken and understood generally in various geographical areas (Haddican et al., 2013).Th-fronting is assumed to be a feature distinct from Cockney's speech. It refers back to the realizations of the fricatives [f] and [v] in place of, respectively, /θ/ and /ð/ in most cases. As in words like "think,""three," and "thought". The Pronunciation would be like /fi:n/, /Fri:/, and /fo:/

h-dropped

Cockney speakers will drop the /h/ sound in words like "hospital" they would pronounce as "hospital." Another example is the word "holiday"; it would become "oliday".

Some previews research

Tollefsrød et al.(2021) conducted a study on Estuary English, which intended to investigate the variety of accents of Estuary English. The analysis of the thesis concentrated on three different accents: Estuary English, Received Pronunciation, and Cockney accents. Considering phonetic features of the accents like t-glottalization, intervocalic t-glottalization, l-vocalization, and th-fronting. The findings revealed that some feature accents increased in use compared to the past studies. For example, t-glottalization has been used in Estuary English and RP for years.

Moreover, the study showed that this feature of accent is still powerfully used in Estuary English. Intervocalic t-glottalization and l-vocalization are somewhat more unclear; however, the use of these accents still increases in their use. It implies that Estuary English is a combination of accents from RP and Cockney.

Sato(2004) found out in his research that l-vocalization is not a new phonetical feature in London. He further defined that there are two forms of realization in l-vocalization: /ʊo/ and ʊ: in such words as*bull* and *owl*. It happens mainly in final words with consonant /l/.It implies that the l-vocalization is dropped, so the phoneme

/l/ is articulated as a vowel sound. This finding is correlated to Wells (1982),who stated that this l-vocalization is also found in words with /l/middle context, such as *half* and *calm*. The /l/ sound is dropped or silent, therefore.

Roberts (2006) conducted research on t-glottalization in English, and the findings showed that this phonetical feature is found in speakers of all ages, and the t-glottal stop mostly happens in Cockney English.

METHOD

The method applied in this research was the documentation research method. It isa qualitative research which is known as computer-based or internet-transmitted research, Bowen (2009). The data for this research were investigated and analyzed in order to extract insights, comprehend, and provide empirical knowledge. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, as cited in Lapele, 2019).

The documents used in this research contain video forms that were taken from the YouTube channel. To gather the data, the researchers downloads the videos that entail the collection of interviews among England National footballers. Then, the researchers listened to the video and identified the different accents found in the video. Then, list down words that are pronounced differently among these footballers. To support the findings, the researchers also listens to other interview videos and comments related to the intended topic.

Three prominent people were used as the source of data. Their accents, namely Harry Kane, Marcus Rushford, and Harry Maguire were analyzed. These three people are England National Footballers. Their accents seem to be different from one another. Therefore, the researchers demonstrated the findings that consisted of phonetic features and also how the accents characterize or distinguish them.

Data collection

The resources used in this study were taken from YouTube channels. One main video contains three different people interviewed. The video used in this research is applauded by three different YouTube channels, namely Beanyman Sports 2, Hayters TV, and Daily Football Clips. Tom (2018) also uploaded a collection of videos containing the three footballers. His video is also used in this study. He is an English Teacher who teaches modern British English through a YouTube channel. His job is to help everyone learn English and love English. The researchers considered YouTube videos to be the easiest way to get the data. Moreover, these three footballers are famous, so their interview videos are available on YouTube.

The data gained from these players will be analyzed one by one. First, the researchers listened to the interviews and transcribed the speeches from every person. Second, the researchers carefully watched the videos again to check all the data transcribed.

Instruments

To answer the research questions, the three footballers' backgrounds and origins were also mentioned in this research. Their biographies and geographical information are reported here in this section.

1. Harry Edward Kane

Harry Edward Kane was born on July 28th, 1993. He grew up in Walthamstow, North London. He is a professional footballer. Kaneison the England National Football Team and also in a Premier League club, Tottenham Hotspur football, as a striker. The video of him used for the data analysis is based on an

interview as a player. Beanyman Sports2 released the video on December 10th, 2022, before the quarter-final of the World Cup against France.

2. Marcus Rashford

Marcus Rashford was born on October 31st, 1997, in Manchester, North West England. He is a professional footballer who plays as a forward. He is currently playing at Manchester United Club and England National Team. The video was taken from his interview as an England National footballer. Hayters TV uploaded the video on November 27th, 2022.

3. Jacob Harry Maguire

Harry Maguire was born on March 5th, 1993, in Sheffield, South England. He is also a professional player. His position in the England National Team and Manchester United club as a centered-back. The video that is used in this research is taken from one of his interviews as an England National Player after the defeat against France on December 11th, 2022. Daily Football Clips uploaded the video.

FINDINGS

In this section, the researchers presented the findings from the videos used in this study. The phonetic features presented here such as the-glottalization, T-glottalization, L-glottalization, and "H-dropping." The presentation follows each video of the players mentioned in this study.

T-glottalization: The three participants use t-glottalization in the middle syllables and also in the final syllables of the words mentioned below.

Speakers 1: Harry Edward Kane

As the researchers listened carefully to Kane's interview, it was found that Kane has t-glottalization sounds in words like *mentality, disappointed, but, lot, getting, that,* and *get.* These words are pronounced with /t/ glottal sounds as in word *mentality,* and it sounds like /menˈtæl.ə.ʔi/. As in the word *disappointed,* it is pronounced as /dɪs.əˈpɔɪn. ʔ/. The t-glottal sounds occur in the middle and the last syllable of the words listed.

Speaker 2: Marcus Rashford

Similarly, Marcus Rashford has the t-glottalization sounds. He uses some amount of t-glottalization syllables in words such as *opportunity, little, quality, but, that, football, difficult, important, getting, and lot.* Rashford significantly uses t-glottalization in the speeches he makes in the video. For instance, the word *opportunity* is pronounced as /ˌɒp.əˈtʃuː.nə. ʔi/. The /t/ sound is turned to glottal sounds. It happens to the words with /t/ sounds in the middle and at the last syllable of the word as in *little* pronounced as /ˈlɪʔ.əl/ and the word *that* is pronounced as /ðæʔ/. Similarly, Kane pronounced the word *but* as /bəʔ/ and *lot* as /lɒʔ/ *by* dropping the /t/ sound and replacing it with the/ʔ/ sound in his Pronunciation.

Speaker 3: Jacob Harry Maguire

Data from Maguire' interview, the researchers found that Maguire also uses t-glottalization, as we can see in words such as *recently, dominated, favorites, criticized, and unfortunately.* He pronounces the listed words with t-glottal sounds as it happens in words*recently;* hepronounced as /ˈriː. sənʔ.li/. The /t/ sound in the middle is replaced with an /ʔ/ sound. Also, in the word *criticized,* he pronounced it as /ˈkrɪʔ.ɪ.saɪz/.

Th-glottalization –The th-glottalization is also known as the-fronting sounds. As can be seen, these players

used th-fronting features in some specific words as follows:

Speaker 1: Harry Edward Kane

Kane does change the sound /θ/in words such as *think, through,* and *with.* As we can see, Kane would pronounce the word *think* as /fɪŋk/,*with* pronounced as /wɪf/ and*, through as /fruː/* instead of /θruː/. The pretty interesting thing we can observe here is that th-glottalizationis a dental sound; however, the speakers changed it to the labiodental sound /f/.

Speaker 2: Marcus Rushford

Rasford is the participant who consistently uses the th-glottalization sounds. We can see this in words like *with, something, thank, things, everything,* and *thought*. For instance, Rashford pronounces the word as /wɪf/, *something* pronounced as /sʌm.fɪŋ/, *thank* as /fæŋk/, *things* pronounced as /fɪŋs/, *everything* as /ˈev.ri.fɪŋ/ and the word *thought* as /fɔːʔ/.

Speaker 3: Jacob Harry Maguire

Interestingly, Maguire uses the-fronting sounds not in all words with /th/ sounds. However, it is observed in the selected video that he uses th-fronting sounds only in such words as *thought,* which he pronounced as /fɔː/. In the same video, Maguire happens to pronounce the word *think* as /θɪŋk/. So, the /f/ sound is not used here in this word *think.*

L-vocalization

It is found that Maguire has L-vocalization in words such as *will.* He pronounces it as /wɪʊ/. Kane also pronounces the word *well* with the/ʊ/ sound at the end. So, he pronounces *well* as /weʊ/. However, Rushford pronounces will and well as / wɪl/ and / wel/, which is standard English according to the Cambridge Dictionary.
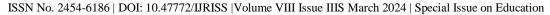
H-dropping

One of the features that did not occur among the three footballers is the h-dropping feature. None of them dropped the /h/ sound in all the selected video recordings. The researchers expected that Harry Kane, who is a Londoner, should drop the /h/ sound because this sound feature is considered to be Cockney and is mostly spoken in London. It might happen because of the formality situation where Harry Kane was interviewed or maybe his social mobility, which affects him not to drop the /h/ sound in his entire Pronunciation.

DISCUSSION

The research aimed to find out the accents used by the three different footballers. More specifically, the researchers wanted to know phonetic variations, particularly on consonant variables such as T-glottalization, the-glottalization, L-glottalization, and H-dropping.

Regarding this, many studies have shown that t-glottalization belongs to Estuary English and Received Pronunciation (Altendorf, 2016; Przedlacka, 2001; Trudgill, 2002). The findings of t-glottalization show that all three players use this feature. As an example, Kane uses Glottal T in words such as *getting.* According to Knight (2012:30),T-glottal sound is the sound where the /t/ sound is replaced by an air constriction of the vocal cords, for example, *mentality* pronounced as /menˈtæl.ə. ʔi/. Knight further explained that t-glottal stop is commonly used in other phonetic environments as well. As we can see, Rashford and Maguire also used t-glottal stops in words, for example, *little* as/ˈlɪʔ.əl/ and *recently* as /ˈriː. sənʔ.li/. Therefore, it can be inferred

that people use it not only in Cockney but also in other accents. As Docherty and Foulkes(2005) found in their study that "t-glottalization is found in many environments." Similarly, Trudgill (2008) claimed that interaction with different kinds can impact even prestige accents and suggest that the biggest explanatory factor involved here is surely demography." It implies speakers from other accents are also affected by many contacts with others.

The th-glottalization is known as changing the /θ/ sound at the beginning of words, Knight (201 and Handke (2012). The findings illustrate that two speakers, Kane and Rushford, use a th-glottal stop in words, for example, *think* and *thought*. Both speakers pronounced them consistently as /fɪŋk/ and /fɔ:/. Maguire only uses the th-glottal sound once in word *thought* as /fɔ:/.Handke (2012) stated that "the fronting belongs to Cockney but not Estuary English."In this case, Harry Kane uses the-fronting because he is actually from North London, and therefore he speaks Cockney accents. However, the data shows that even people outside of London also use th-fronting, as we can notice from Rushford, who is from Manchester, and Maguire from Sheffield, South England. It means that the glottal sound is spreading out of London. Before that, th-fronting was mostly used by Cockney speakers; however, the data shows that even Rushford, who is from a Multicultural accent, and Maguire, who is from Yorkshire, can use th-fronting (see findings on th-glottal). Altendorf (2003) found in her study that "th-fronting is on its way into Estuary English."

L-vocalization refers to an l-sound that occurs before a consonant or at the end of a word or syllable, which is pronounced like /ʊ/ or /o/. (Trudgill & Watt, 2012) stated that "l-vocalization is common in mainstream RP."However, Harry Maguire, who is from Sheffield, which they are known with Yorkshire accents, has a l-vocal sound in words like *will*.It probably happens because he is playing in Manchester with different teammates from other accents like RP, which is considered to be prestigious in England. Harry Kane uses the l-vocal sound because this accent belongs to the London accent. As Wells (1982) stated, "London /l/ is very susceptible to vocalization in syllable-final positions." This finding correlates with Hughes (2012), who states that people can change their accents consciously or unconsciously when they move and find jobs or study at universities. He also emphasized that at present, people move away from their hometowns, but they still keep some regional accents they belong to. They do not need to adopt prestigious accents like RP.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to find out what sounds the three players have and how they categorize them in terms of accents. It is clear from the findings and discussion that the three football players—Jacob Harry Maguire, Marcus Rashford, and Harry Edward Kane-show different phonetic traits in their speech. The research found patterns of t-glottalization, th-glottalization, l-vocalization, and the lack of h-dropping throughout their discourse.

T-glottalization, as seen in the pronunciation of words like *mentality*, *disappointed*, and *opportunity*, was constant across all three speakers. This phenomena, commonly linked with Estuary English and Received Pronunciation, demonstrates the impact of various linguistic settings on accent variance. The findings indicate that interactions with other speech communities contribute to the broad use of t-glottalization outside of its typical geographical borders.

Th-glottalization, involves replacing the /θ/ sound with a glottal stop. It was evident that Harry Kane and Marcus Rashford were notable examples of replacing the /θ/ sound with a glottal stop. While historically linked with Cockney accents, its presence among speakers from other places such as Manchester and Yorkshire demonstrates its spread beyond dialectal lines. This pattern highlights the dynamic nature of language change, which is impacted by sociolinguistic factors like social mobility and interregional interaction.

L-vocalization, as demonstrated by the pronunciation of words like *will* and *well* with /ʊ/ sounds, differed

among speakers. While Marcus Rashford and Harry Kane displayed this characteristic, Jacob Harry Maguire used a more conventional pronunciation. The occurrence of l-vocalization in people from various language backgrounds highlights the importance of social networks and professional environments for accent adjustment and maintenance.

In contrast to expectations, neither of the speakers used h-dropping, a characteristic often associated with a Cockney accent. This absence could be linked to situational factors like formality in speaking contexts or personal speech patterns influenced by schooling and identification.

With this finding, it can be concluded that each of these three England National players has their accents; however, they still share a common accent like Estuary English, which entails RP and Cockney accents. It happens most likely because of the changes in each accent over the years and also due to the social and regional interactions. As people move across varied linguistic environments, their speech reflects an intricate relationship of regional, social, and situational influences, adding to the rich pattern of linguistic variation.

To conclude, it is also important to consider that the findings display challenges for Teachers and English learners who are learning English based on the English Dictionary, where native speakers have their pronunciation styles exclusively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since the study was limited to three speakers only, for future research, it is better to see more details by collecting more materials for the analysis.
2. For phonetic features, future research can find out more about vowel features. It is observed that there are many differences in producing vowel sounds.
3. Since language is dynamic, therefore, changes in consonants and vowels can be identified based on age groups. So, it is recommended that in the future, research can be done, including the differences among age groups when it comes to language features.

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Links to the YouTube Videos Used in this Research

Speakers 1: Harry Edward Kane:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzA0Mrny29Y

Speakers 2: Marcus Rashford:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uJPryKEnvQ&t=200s

Speaker 3: Jacob Harry Maguire:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34FgE1TEL9c