

Abstract

The starting point of the present study was the idea that all the talk about Estuary English produced in the last few decades could not be ignored. The focus of the research, however, did not lie on the description of Estuary English and its ongoing development; it rather tried to concentrate on the use of this supposed middle-ground variety by speakers who, due to social factors, are generally not meant to speak it. Politicians, members of the Royal Family and BBC journalists are generally considered RP speakers; however, they sometimes shift towards less standard varieties. In this regard, questions have been asked in order to understand whether they consciously or unconsciously use Estuary English features and to investigate the place, the time and the manner for them to recur. Thus, a diaphasic perspective has been added to the prevailing diastratic relevance of the variety. The study has provided an empirical observation of the linguistic attitudes of the speakers belonging to the selected categories. Furthermore, it has verified that the Estuary English-as register-hypothesis, as proposed by Altendorf (2003), can function and represent a stylistic option for speakers who want to accommodate and converge towards wider speech communities.