

Re: RP – what a Rehearsal in Pretension !

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Mark Barratt <mark.barratt@enternet.hu> wrote in message news:<2q0j33FougfnU1@uni–berlin.de>...

- >
- > *[cross–posted to sci.lang]*
- > *This post touches upon something which has bothered me for some time,*
- > *namely the definition of "RP" (that's "Received Pronunciation", in case*
- > *anyone doesn't know).*
- >
- > *In the course of making a change in my profession recently (yes, I have*
- > *to hang my head and admit to having become an EFL teacher) I've read a*
- > *number of English linguistics/language works, and I find an*
- > *inconsistency in the usage of this term.*
- >
- > *When I first encountered the description "RP", it was described as the*
- > *"prestige" accent spoken by the royal family and by others who would*
- > *generally be described as "posh", even in southern England. Whilst*
- > *speakers of northern English often refer to any southern accent as*
- > *"posh", there is a marked difference between this "aristocratic" accent*
- > *and what is perhaps better described as "Standard Southern English"*
- > *(SSE). The realization of the /&/ phoneme that Mike Henley complains*
- > *about is perhaps the most noticeable of these differences.*
- >
- > *RP, in early descriptions, is often equated with "BBC English" and I*
- > *think that this was indeed what the BBC looked for in its announcers up*
- > *until about the 60s. If "BBC English" means anything today, however, I*
- > *would say that it means SSE, not RP.*
- >
- > *What is confusing is that some writers appear to use the appellation*
- > *"RP" to refer to SSE.*

They do indeed.

- >
- > *Isn't it about time that we junked this confusing term?*
- >
- > *Aside, there is an old joke which nicely illustrates the difference*
- > *between the pronunciation of /&/ in RP and other English English*
- > *accents. It runs: "That girl is so well brought up that she thinks that*

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> *sex is what the coal gets delivered in*".

Perhaps I need to be more specific.

Speaking of English English, or British English, take someone famous for example; Tony Blair, (or Jack Straw) I have no issue whatsoever with his accent or intonation and in fact I like it; it's a no-nonsense accent. In fact, I have absolutely no problem with the accent of the queen, and I do like it too. An example of the "proper" accent I don't like at all is the Monty Python accent, and no, I know it's a comical show, but I assure you their accents are real or there are real people who talk exactly like that, and it's quite bad that such accent should/could be considered "proper"