

Test Your Speaking & Listening Skills

Derbyshire Accent Project – Notes 1

The language is English, but the accent is unique to Derbyshire. It doesn't sound the same as "standard English" (also known as RP – Received Pronunciation).

Accent = how we speak the language – vowel sounds and consonant sounds.

Slang = words and phrases that are known and used in a particular geographical area.

What does a person from Derbyshire do when they speak?

1. They lose the beginning of a word:

- E.g. "because" → "cos".
- In particular the initial "h". E.g. "head" → "ed".

2. They lose the end of a word:

- E.g. "were" → "w". They also drop the last "-g" on gerunds – "doing" → "doin".

3. They use short vowel sounds instead of long vowel sounds:

- E.g. "be" → "bi".

4. They run words together (elision) and miss out words which are not important to the meaning of the sentence:

- They miss out verbs, especially auxiliary verbs. E.g. "I have been" → "Av bin".
- They miss out "to" before an infinitive. E.g. "want to go" → "wanna go".
- They miss out the short space between words. E.g. "got a" → "gotta".

5. They use the wrong word:

- E.g. "there" → "the".
- Use verb "to be" incorrectly. E.g. "I was" → "I were".
- Use the wrong pronoun. E.g. "The girl who..." → "The girl what..."

6. They pause, stumble and interrupt themselves.

7. They don't speak in complete sentences:

- They continue speaking without pausing between sentences.
- They stop suddenly in the middle of a sentence and start a new one.

8. They use slang words and phrases, including words not appropriate in a formal situation, e.g. swear words, words appropriated from TV and popular culture (in particular words from American English), and/or words which are only known locally.

Note: they may do any combination or all of these things. No wonder it can sometimes be difficult for a non-native speaker of English to understand what English people are saying!