

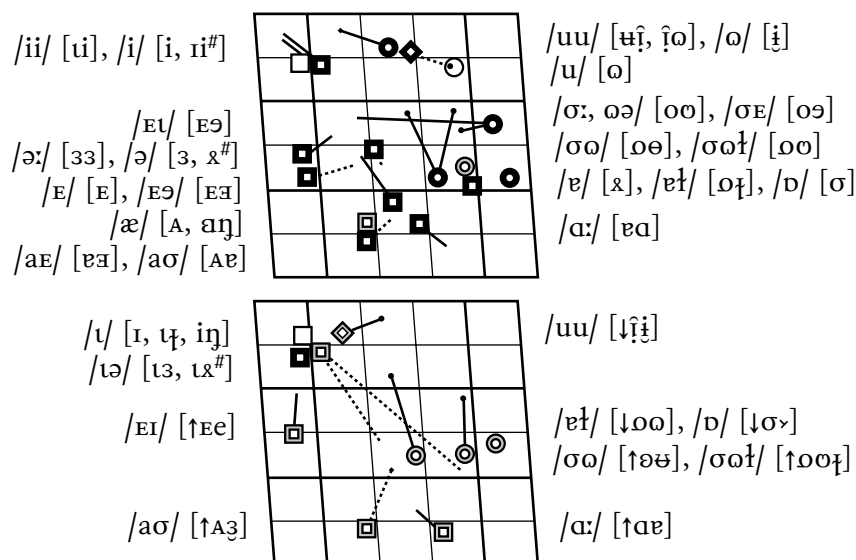
A note on MLE pronunciation: 'multicultural London English'

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The so-called *multicultural* London English (MLE) accent is a 'new' accent emerged in the late 20th century.

It contains influences from the English learners' varieties (particularly the Cockney Jamaican accent), but is not necessarily restricted to particular ethnic or cultural backgrounds, albeit sometimes associated with the working class.

With the decline of the traditional London accent, Cockney (which, nowadays, is more and more restricted to older generations) this accent, along with the mediatic British accent (plus naturally all their possible mixtures) seem to be bound to become its local replacements, although at present still mostly limited to younger people, even if British citizens by descent, often also with typical Cockney parents.



As for the *vowels*, the most striking features are found in the diphthongs: for instance $/eI$, $\sigma\omega/$ ($/\sigma\omega\uparrow/$ [$\sigma\omega$], with $/\uparrow/$ vocalization, in addition to possible [$\uparrow\sigma\omega\uparrow$]) are particularly narrow, especially if compared with the strongly wide Cockney timbres. $/aE/$ is even narrower, [$\partial\ae$], and $/a\sigma/$ is quite peculiarly so, [$A\partial$], while $/\sigma E/$ starts rather closer, [$\sigma\theta$]. The second vocogram shows some milder variants: $/eI$, $\sigma\omega/$ [$\uparrow EE$, $\theta\theta$] and $/a\sigma/$ [$\uparrow A\partial$].

Other vowels are peculiar, too: we have a very front /uu/ [u̥, u̠] ↓[u̠], higher, fronter and half-rounded /o/ [ɔ̠]; /ii/ [i̠], /ɪ/ [ɪ, ɪ̥, ɪ̠], centralised /e/ [ɛ̠], /eɪ/ [oɪ, ↓oɔ], against Cockney [A]), higher /ɒ/ [ɔ, ↓ɔ̠]; narrow diphthongs for /ɑ:/ [eɑ, ↑ɑɛ], /ɛə/ [ɛɛ], /σ:, əə/ [oɔ] (the last two are not to be confused with /ɛɪ, σɔ/ [ɛə, oə]).

In addition, /ə/ is lower [ɜ, ɜ̠] and with no [ɹ] tapophone; /ʊə/ is [ʊɜ, ʊɜ̠], while, as already seen, /əə/ is merged with /σ:/; /æ/ [A, ɛ̠] is less peculiar and /ɛ, ɜ:/ [ɛ, ɜɜ] are the least so. Unstressed /i, u/ are [i, ii̠, ʊ].

As for the *consonants*, we have: /k, g/ preuvular, [q, ɟ], when followed by non-high back vowels; /θ, ð/ [f, v] ↓[t, d]; /s, z/ typically semigrooved, [ɜ, ɜ̠]; /j/ [∅]; in addition, /h/ [h, ↓∅] is kept more often than in Cockney and many British accents; /t/ [t̠, ↑t̠].

Lastly, weak *syllables* can be less reduced than in more typical English accents, while the *intonation* patterns are not much different from those of current London use, but with frequent annoying non-falling conclusive tunes.