

ГЕРЦЕНОВСКАЯ ОЛИМПИАДА ШКОЛЬНИКОВ ПО ИНОСТРАННОМУ (АНГЛИЙСКОМУ) ЯЗЫКУ 2022/23 г.

ЗАКЛЮЧИТЕЛЬНЫЙ ТУР

Скрипт аудиозаписи

Paul Meier:

My guest this month is eminent linguist David Crystal. Today we talk about the history of Received Pronunciation, RP, also known as the Queen's English, BBC English, and other name. We've heard it in Downton Abbey and just about any other favorite British period drama. David, wonderful of you to spare the time for another podcast. Today we're going to do English accents. What is RP? When did it arise in English and why?

David Crystal:

Most people think that RP has been around in a long time in the sense of hundreds and hundreds of years. In fact, it started towards the end of the 18th century, round about the year 1800 or thereabouts. There are many kinds of RPs, but there are certain signature sounds that people will notice for RP. So, the question is, when did those sounds first start getting recorded in dictionaries and when did people first start teaching them as the sign of an educated accent? And the answer to that is towards the end of the 18th century. So, round about 1800, the growth of the elocution movement, which started to train what was perceived to be an upper-class accent of some sort, was beginning to manifest itself. The growth of the elocution movement began because of the changes in the English class system, as always with the study of accents, indeed, the study of language generally. It doesn't take long before you slip out of linguistics into social history. When you look at the class system of the 18th century, what you find is the traditional upper classes, the aristocracy and so on, and the lower classes between the emergence of a new middle class. Senior middle classes of those days were very important people. These were the people who started the Industrial Revolution. They invented the textile machines and the new ways of making roads, and the locomotives, and things like that. And they made factories and they became very, very rich. And there are lots of stories from the time, sometimes reproduced in novels, but sometimes in letters and diaries, of these people now living in the countryside with a big house and all the servants, and the carriages, and everything. And they get invited to dinner by the local aristocrat around the corner who's got also a big house, but maybe not quite so big, who knows. And they go for dinner. And they come back home and they say, "It were a lovely evening, but they were laughing at us. They were laughing at us. They didn't like the way we spoke." And so, these people say, "We gonna have to do something about that." And so, they go to elocution classes. The growth of the elocution movement is in the second half of the 18th century. Sheridan, the father of the dramatist, made himself a millionaire by going around the country training people to speak the emerging accent of the upper classes of its time. Contrast that with the 19th century. When this new accent started to evolve, it quickly came to be taught in the public schools like Winchester and Eaton, and Harrow, and so on. And these are the schools that taught the civil servants and the upper-class military, and the missionaries, and so on. Now, the 19th century is also the century of the British Empire. And so, these are the people who would go abroad and take RP with them. So, that's the accent that people would've heard in India, Singapore, and so on. As the century progressed, this accent consolidated. When the BBC comes along in 1922 the accent is chosen, quite specifically chosen by Lord Reith as the accent of this new thing because he says it will be most understood by the people of this country who could afford to buy a radio set. So, during the 19th century, RP became the voice of educated Britain, the voice of the aristocracy, the voice of the people who could afford to go to the theater, and so on and so forth.