Canadian English: Peculiarities of pronunciation

English is spoken as a native language by some 377 million people around the world. It is spoken on every continent. Like all languages, English varies in the way it is spoken from place to place. These varieties are called dialects; we use the term accent when referring to only the phonetic aspects of a dialect.

In this report we shall give a brief description of Canadian English. For investigating this accent we took the list of traits suggested by H. Rogers. These features are: presence of non-prevocalic /j/; distinction of caught-cot; presence of /j/ after alveolars; distinction of which-witch, etc. some of these traits are identified as criteria for this accent.

Canadian English is very close to General American, it also has some common features with Received Pronunciation. The primary aspect of the Canadian English accent is a feature called Canadian Raising, where diphthongs are raised before voiceless consonants. For example:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{ride} [\textipa{Ja:jd}] – \textit{write} [\textipa{Ja\textbackslash t}];
  \item \textit{lie} [\textipa{la\textbackslash j}] – \textit{like} [\textipa{La\textbackslash k}];
  \item \textit{loud} [\textipa{la\textbackslash wd}] – \textit{lout} [\textipa{La\textbackslash wt}];
\end{itemize}
Because of vowel lengthing before voiced consonants and in open syllable, the unraised vowels are allophonically longer than the raised ones.

Another recently identified feature found among many Canadians is a chain shift known as a Canadian Shift. For people with this shift cot-caught are merged as /a/.

The glide /j/ is lost after consonants / t d n /. For example, the words new, tune and dune are pronounced as [nu], [tun] and [dun]. This loss is common in GA, but almost universal in Canadian English.

In this report we confine ourselves to the description of general Canadian English though it should be mentioned that the island of Newfoundland has its own distinctive dialect of English known as Newfoundland English.