

# PRICE Realisations and Phonological Change: Liverpool English

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Knowles (1973) reports a phonological pattern in the PRICE vowel in Scouse. Following Knowles preliminary study there have been a number of references to this pattern (Honeybone and Watson, 2006; Watson, 2007; Berry, 2009). However, there has never been a comprehensive study to confirm this claim.

The current study provides a more-detailed investigation of the range of PRICE vowel variants and their phonological conditioning through a corpus phonology approach using spectral measurements and auditory judgments. Speech samples for 35 informants from Liverpool and Merseyside were taken from three online sources and one pre-existing study Berry (2009).

This investigation finds that there are five possible variants ([əɪ], [aɪ], [aɪ̯], [a:ɪ], [a:]) in three conditioning environments (voiceless obstruents, voiced obstruents, and nasals). Furthermore the results suggest that there is a phonological change in progress in the Liverpool PRICE vowel. Many studies have provided evidence that younger females tend to lead sound change (Labov, 1994; Milroy et al., 1994; Watt and Milroy, 1999). In the present study, the monophthongal variant produced before voiced obstruents are used exclusively by younger female informants (see Fig. 1), which provides evidence that there is a current linguistic change affecting the PRICE vowel in Liverpool English.

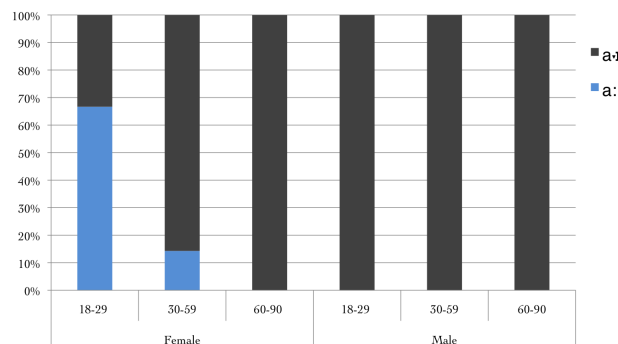


Figure 1: Percentage of speakers producing the monophthongal variant before voiced stops

## References

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