

**On the transcription of the apico-alveolar fricative allophone of /t/ in Irish English in positions of high sonority, intervocalically, as in *city*, or word-finally, pre-pausally, as in *but*.**

The transcription introduced in Hickey (1984) and used since by this author is a [t] with a caret placed under it pointing to the fact that the tongue does not make contact with the alveolar ridge for this realisation of /t/, i.e.:



This transcription importantly shows that this sound is an allophone of /t/, the voiceless alveolar stop of English. The IPA transcription, favoured by Pandeli, Eska, Ball and Rahilly (1997), shows a voiceless interdental fricative [θ] with a subscript line beneath it indicating retraction of the point of articulation (see IPA chart [revised to 2005] > diacritics, > retracted).

The linguistic objection to this transcription is that it implies the slit *t* of Irish English is an allophone of /θ/ which is wrong. In fact, the dental fricative of many other varieties of English, which is phonologically /θ/, is a dental stop in Irish English, i.e. the THIN and THIS lexical sets are generally realised with an initial [t̪-] and [d̪-] respectively.

Note: the slit *t* is not homophonous with *s* in Irish English, i.e. KIT and KISS are not homophones. The /s/ sound has slightly higher friction than the slit *t* and is also slightly longer.

## References

- Hickey, Raymond 1984. 'Coronal segments in Irish English', *Journal of Linguistics* 20: 233-251.
- Pandeli, Helen, Joseph Eska, Martin Ball and Joan Rahilly 1997. 'Problems of phonetic transcription: the case of the Hiberno-English slit-*t*', *Journal of the International Phonetics Association* 27: 65-75.