

Pronunciation of <th> in spoken Maltese English (MaltE)

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The first aspect that was analyzed is the position of <th> in different words. First of all, we have discovered that when the sound <th> takes place at the beginning of words, the standard English sound /ð/ becomes very similar to the sound /d/. For example: "this", "the", "that", "they".

Secondly, we have examined whether and how pronunciation changes when <th> plays the role of an ending. In words like "fifth", "tenth", "birth", the received English sound /ð/ also transforms to /d/.

In addition, it has been discovered that there is an interesting case of pronunciation transformation when <th> is settled in the middle of the word. For instance: in "weather", "father" and "other", the sound follows the same pattern as mentioned above. Despite this, there is an exception. Similar to standard English, the sound <th> in "author" is pronounced like <t>.

Moreover, additional exceptions have been found. According to the audio recording that we used to collect data, an interesting phenomenon caught our attention. In the following words: "three" and "thirty", <th> resembles the sound /t/. In addition to this exception, in words like "fiftieth" and "fortieth", the sound changes again, and becomes similar to the standard English variation.

The second aspect that we took into account was the combination of <th> with vowels and consonants. For example: in "tenth" and "birth" the pronounced sound is /t/ while in "this" and "the" the sound is /d/.

In conclusion of our research, no steady patterns were found. However, several assumptions have been made. Due to the short duration of the recording, as well as the particular features of speaker's pronunciation, the results of this research should be considered as a hypothesis. There is much more to discover further in this field.