

## Can you understand my accent?

Foreign accents and why we have them

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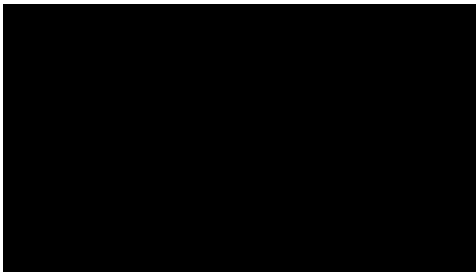


### What's an accent?

- Accent  $\neq$  dialect
- Speech markings that indicate language spoken is not first language
- Having an accent has no ties to intelligence
- What are some things you notice about someone's speech that makes you think "that isn't their native language"?

### What's in an accent?

- Some common markings of non-native speakers include:
  - Word order weird
  - Adding words
  - Omitting words
  - Adding sounds
  - Omitting sounds
  - Changing sounds
  - Wrong verb forms
  - Singular use for plural form (or reverse)
  - Stress or intonation patterns are off



- Language sorting begins in the womb
- Babies can tell mother's language from others
- At 3 days old, baby cries are different from babies exposed to other languages

- Brain hears a foreign language and sorts it
- Baby's brains are faster to make new connections
- Adult brains are less inclined to make new category
- Adult brains already have many categories and use them often

### Let's try something

- The word "purple" no longer exists.
- On the next slide are 6 colored circles.
- Your job is to sort them into red, blue, and pink. Only those words are available. You have two minutes.

### Let's try something



Exhibit A



Exhibit B



Exhibit C



Exhibit D



Exhibit E



Exhibit F

### Phonetics and Phonology

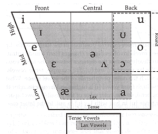
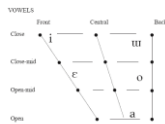
- Every language has a set of sounds it uses
- Languages have sounds that may not be in another language
- Sounds not in someone's native language can be hard to learn
- Substitution is common for new sounds if similar sound present

#### Japanese

#### English

日本語	日本語	日本語	日本語	日本語	日本語	日本語	日本語	日本語	日本語
母音	パ	ヒ	フ	ト	カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ
子音	ヒ	フ	ト	カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ	
母音									
子音									

英語	英語	英語	英語	英語	英語	英語	英語	英語	英語
母音	パ	ヒ	フ	ト	カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ
子音	ヒ	フ	ト	カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ	
母音									
子音									



### Aspirated and Unaspirated Consonants



카 ka  
Like 'c' in "score"



가 ga  
Like c in "score"



까 kka/gga  
Like English g in "game"





- More subtle differences still pose a problem
- /p/ and /b/ in English vs /p/ and /b/ in Spanish
  - Spanish speakers' /p/, /t/, /k/ can be misheard as /b/, /d/, /g/ by English speakers due to difference in vocalization norms in the two languages.

## Tongue twister time!

- Strč prst skrz krk
  - Stick your finger through your throat
- Smrž pln skvrn zvlhl z mlh
  - Morel full of stains got wet from the fog

- Languages have rules for
  - where a sound can occur in a word
  - what sounds can be next to each other
- Consonant clusters in Japanese occur with /n/ or /m/
- English has many allowable consonant clusters
  - Split- /splɪt/
  - Angsts- /'æŋksts/

## “My hovercraft is full of eels.” in Hawaiian

- mokukauaheahe- hovercraft
- o'u- my
- piha'ū- to be full
- he mau- some (plural)
- i- (direct object marker)
- puhi- eel

## Morphology and Syntax

- Languages follow rules for how words combine in a sentence
- Also rules for if and how words can be manipulated
  - Polysynthetic, synthetic, analytic
- Common mistakes
  - Word order
  - Word inflection
  - Subject omission

## Finnish Word Stress Basketball

 emme	 haluan	 kuinka
 oletko	 paljon	 sinulla
 takaisin	 tätä	 tulee

## Prosody

- Languages have intonation, rhythm, and stress
- Hungarian: fixed stress on the first syllable
- Armenian: fixed stress on the last syllable
- English: variable stress
  - Stress placement differs word-to-word
    - There are rules but not always obvious
    - Many rule-breakers
  - Difficult to learn

## English Stress Rules

- 2-syllable noun and adjectives (permit, slender)
- 2-syllable verbs (present, record)
- Words ending in -ic, -ision, -ition (tectonic, corrosion, revelation)
- Words ending in -cy, -ty, -phy, -gy, -al (democracy, dependability, photography, psychology, psychological)
- Compound nouns (blackbird, greenhouse)
- Compound adjectives (bad-tempered, old-fashioned)
- Compound verbs (overflow, understand)

What can we do to help our students with their accents?