

Teaching Unit 25: Accent Bias Quiz

Background

This unit introduces students to the notions of accent bias and discrimination through an interactive quiz. The quiz is a fun way for students to test whether accent bias influences their perception of an individual. This teaching unit has been developed by the team responsible for the large-scale research project Accent Bias Britain. Visit www.accentbiasbritain.org for more information!

Discussion points

Accent Bias & Discrimination

We often make judgments about someone based on their accent, such as how old they are or where in the country they're from. It's common, too, for people to develop preferences for certain accents. All humans have these sorts of automatic associations and reactions, which are typically described as types of **accent bias**. People sometimes let these preferences cloud their judgement of an individual. They might use their accent biases to make judgements about non-accent related traits of that individual, such as how good they are at their job or whether they're a trustworthy person. This converts accent bias into a type of **accent discrimination**.

Accent Bias: people's often unconscious preference for aligning a particular accent with a particular stereotype or attribute.

Accent Discrimination: people's reliance on their accent biases to judge unrelated characteristics of a person, such as knowledge, professional competence, or other ability.

In this TU, you can explore one component of the large-scale research project Accent Bias in Britain. Specifically, you will be able to use our interactive quiz to see whether you experience any subtle type of accent bias in evaluating answers given by prospective job candidates in a mock interview situation.

The Quiz

You can access the online quiz by following the [link here](#). The quiz has been developed by the Accent Bias in Britain project team, based on the materials used in the wider project.

The purpose of the quiz is to see whether you can suppress accent bias in determining the quality of an answer. In the quiz, you'll hear a series of 10 mock interview answers. These will be spoken by 10 candidates who speak one of five accents: Urban West Yorkshire English, Multicultural London English, Estuary English, Received Pronunciation, and General

Northern English. (If you are running the quiz with students, there is no need to announce the accents beforehand; you can just let them follow their natural responses when listening.) Your task is to evaluate the candidates' response by clicking the 'thumbs up' to indicate that it's a good answer and the 'thumbs down' to indicate that it's a poor answer. Try to focus on what the candidate is saying, not how they're saying it! At the end, you'll receive a score based on how well you've done.

Accent Bias

Once you've all completed the quiz, it's worth discussing the notion of 'accent bias' more generally. What did students think about the voices in the quiz? Why did some do better than others at evaluating the quality of the answer? How could accent bias affect their own life chances, and what might people be able to do about it?

Further information and discussion ideas can be found on the project website at:
www.accentbiasbritain.org