

What is a curacy and why haven't I heard of it before?

Some thoughts on pronunciation in English

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Activity 1

- In breakout rooms, quickly discuss the following:
 - Should we teach students a specific accent?
 - If so, which accent?
 - If not, why not?
 - Put your answers on menti.com, using code 9203 1292

Received pronunciation (RP)



Go to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com), using code 4849 6559, and vote on what you think of this accent.

I am confident that my entire circle of friends would consider this accent as entirely ridiculous and indicative of privilege and lacking contact with the real world.

I certainly know places close to me where this accent would probably get you beaten up!

Activity 2

- In breakout rooms, quickly discuss the following:
 - Should we teach students a specific accent?
 - If so, which accent?
 - If not, why not?
 - Put your answers on menti.com, using code 9203 1292



And just for fun, here is a quick tour of the British Isles.



This is real Estuary English. You may know the speaker. Jamie Oliver is a famous TV chef in the UK and around the world.

Singapore English speakers who are used to RP found Estuary English speech, which they are more likely to encounter in England, to be often unintelligible. Deterding argues that pedagogical reliance on prestige models is counterproductive for learners' ability to understand normal speech.

Levis 2005, p. 371

There is a reaction to the assumption that native-speaker is best, students may want to be seen as really good at the language as a non-native-speaker, or they may want to be able to make mistakes of politeness, for example, while having allowances made for them as non-natives.
Luoma 2004, p. 10

Activity 3

- In breakout rooms, quickly discuss the following:
 - What should we focus on when teaching pronunciation?
 - Put your answers on menti.com, using code 6387 0025

While there are good arguments against trying to attain a native-speaker accent, there are also good arguments for accuracy. Hopefully, the arguments for intelligibility are reasonably clear!

Main reasons why pronunciation is important

- Incorrect pronunciation affects all four skills
- Incorrect pronunciation has been shown to affect credibility (Van Den Doel 2006, p. 160-169)
- Many short words in English – minimal pairs
- It is difficult to know which substitutions matter
- Processing difficulties

Examples

- Accuracy/a curacy - 'ækjʊərəsi/ ə 'kjʊərəsi
- Analysis - ə 'næləsis/ ænəl'aɪsɪs
- Personnel/personal - ,pɜ:sə'nel/'pɜ:s(ə)nəl
- Resit/receipt – the receipt is in the file - 'risɪt/ rɪ'si:t
- Thesowers – Finnish pronunciation of thesaurus

What else is important?

- Supra-segmental features
 - May be more important to intelligibility than individual sounds (Hughes 2017, p. 60)
 - Sentence stress
 - Other intonation/stress – contrast, questions
 - Processing difficulties again!

A hospital doctor wanted a patient to take something three times a day and wrote an appropriate note on the patient's notes at the end of the bed. The patient read the note and immediately fled. The Latin for three times a day is "ter die", which, due to the way the patient would pronounce "to", made him think it meant "to die"! Crystal 2003

A high court judge had to apologise because he had written his judgement in the case but left it at his cottage in the country at the weekend. The barrister made a helpful suggestion to “fax it up”, to which he replied, “it does rather”. ([fæks] = fax, the judge heard [fʌks])
Crystal 2003

Summary

- Setting the scene.
- What should our goals be?
- What do we need to focus on?
- What is less important?
- What to do with that student!
- Getting enough practice – voicebook.cloud

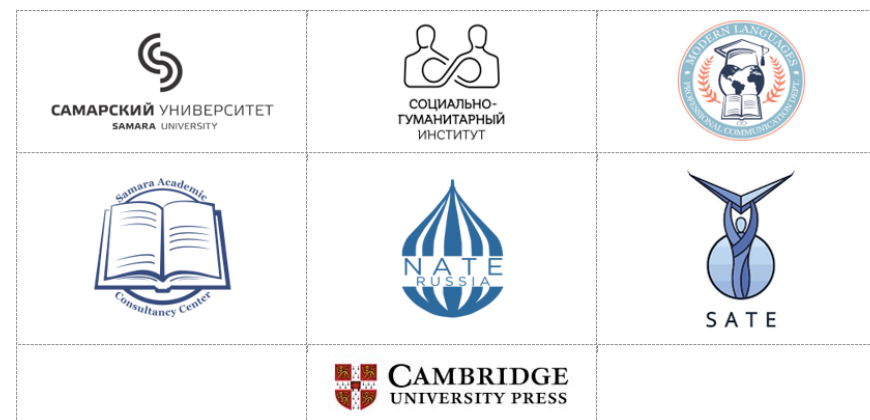
Conclusion

- Focus on accuracy and intelligibility, not accent
- Aspire to be a great foreign speaker, not a native
- What aspects of the L1 are problematic in the L2?
There's an accent shift, on average, every 25 miles in England
— Attributed to David Crystal, Ben Crystal

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References

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- Levis, John M. 2005. 'Changing Contexts and Shifting Paradigms in Pronunciation Teaching'. TESOL Quarterly 39 (3): 369–77.
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Any questions?