Abstract

Nowadays, international communication using English as the medium is a common occurrence. To communicate effectively, English as a second language (ESL) speakers need to possess relevant communicative skills including understanding and being familiar with inner circle accents. This paper seeks to find out ESL learners’ evaluative reactions to four inner circle accents, representing British, American, Australian and New Zealand English varieties, through an accent perception and a survey task conducted on Malaysian undergraduates at a public university in Malaysia. The participants responded to descriptors on speaker attributes categorized into three dimensions: competence, social appeal and accent preference while or after listening to a recorded passage read in one of the four accents by male and female speakers. The learners showed a tendency to prefer certain accents more than others. In general, the best rated accent was the British accent for the male speakers and the American accent for the female speakers. The New Zealand accent was rated the lowest among the male speakers and one of the lowest among the female speakers. The study also found that speaker’s competence, speaker’s
social appeal and accent preference were positively correlated. These findings highlight the importance of listening practices and exposure to various English accents in ESL classrooms to prepare students for international and intercultural communication.

© John Benjamins Publishing Company

Article Type: Research Article

Keyword(s): ESL learners, international and intercultural communication, native English accents, speech perception and spoken English

Most Read This Month

International media framing
Author(s): Won Yong Jang and Edward Frederick

Social support and mental health
Author(s): Eyun-Jung Ki and JooYoung Jang

Introduction
Author(s): Marinus van den Berg

“Doing this kind of linguistics, you do feel like you’re making a difference in the world”
Author(s): Nicola Daly

English within Japanese
Author(s): Hironori Nishi

Most Cited This Month

Adolescent literacy and identity construction among 1.5 generation students: From a transnational perspective
Author(s): Youngjoo Yi

The tangled web: Internet plagiarism and international students’ academic writing
Author(s): Wendy Sutherland-Smith

Identity, investment, and Chinese learners of English
Author(s): Bonny Norton and Yihong Gao

Language learner self-management
Author(s): J. Rubin

https://www.jbe-platform.com/content/journals/10.1075/japc.00035.pil
Harmonies and tensions in Chinese intergenerational communication: Younger and older adults’ accounts

Author(s): Yan Bing Zhang and Mary Lee Hummert