

# The Level of Fluency in Articulating American English among Jordanian Arabic Speakers

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## Abstract

This study aims at examining the level of fluency in articulating American English among Jordanian Arabic speakers and investigating their ability to acquire English accent and reach native and native-like level. The study also aims at exploring the main variables affecting non-native speakers' pronunciation acquisition. The study attempts to answer the following questions: What is the level of English fluency in articulating American English among Jordanian Arabic speakers? What are the main factors affecting English pronunciation acquisition? The sample of the study comprised six participants whose mother tongue is Arabic. Their spoken English was individually tape-recorded in natural situations. Subsequently, native speakers of American English were asked to judge if the participants were native speakers of English, native-like speakers of English, or none of the previous two mentioned options. The results showed that the six participants were highly rated as native-like speakers of English, whereas none of them was highly rated as a native speaker of English.

**Keywords:** accent, fluency, native-like, pronunciation, second language acquisition

## 1. Introduction

The study of the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has drawn more and more attention since the 1960s. One of the major conundrums in the SLA is the question of differential success. The factors attributed to the differential success are various including age, learning environment, motivation, aptitude, and learning strategy (Li, 2015).

Pronunciation, which is an integral part of foreign language learning, has a direct effect on learners' communicative competence as well as performance. Poor communication/oral skills can decrease learners self – confidence, restrict social interactions and negatively affect estimations of a speakers' credibility and abilities. Therefore, one of the key elements of language proficiency is to secure acceptable pronunciation for the language learners (Akyol, 2013).

Al-Rifou (2015) indicates that native-like accent acquisition is very sensitive issue due to the consequences and the processes it initiates. Thus, the association between accent and language variations may cause stereotyping, prejudice and make a native speaker to be more suspicious and cautious of the non-native speaker.

Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam (2009) argue that mastering a second language as a native accent is impossible after the Critical Period; a technical term that was first proposed by Lenneberg (1967) and means that the acquiring of the first language must occur during the critical period that ends at the age of puberty.

Long (1993) as cited in Al-Rifou (2015) indicates that the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) predicts that language abilities decline with maturation, therefore, before maturation, children will be superior in acquiring second language 'as well as first'. Birdsong (2005) affirms that "the period of maximal sensitivity to linguistic input, with full attainment of grammatical competence assured, extends through early childhood" (p. 112).

Against the various claims that early childhood has special advantages for second language acquisition, Li (2015) advocates an opposing viewpoint, he argues that greater cognitive maturity and greater learning experience on the part of the older language learners are assets to acquire the second language, including accent. Moyer (2004) agrees that it is an attainable goal to sound like natives at least for a few learners, who work hard and have a strong desire to learn a second language.

As for factors affecting English pronunciation acquisition, Brown (2008) underlines three variables associated with good language learners in pronunciation acquisition: exposure, aptitude, and opportunity. Zhang (2009) indicates that the main factors affecting pronunciation acquisition could be classified into internal (biological, cognitive and psychological), and external (or influenced by the sociocultural and pedagogical contexts of L2 learning).

To conclude, one can notice that pronunciation and the ability to acquire native-like accent are among the key issues in SLA field. Hence comes the importance of a research study that investigates the ability of non-native speakers, mainly Jordanian Arabic speakers to acquire the American English accent and reach native / native-like levels. The study also tries to explore the main factors affecting L2 pronunciation acquisition.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Measuring the level of accent among non-native speakers is one of the main issues in SLA field. Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam (2009) indicate that the incidence of native-likeness in adult second language acquisition is a controversial issue in SLA research.

On the other hand, some teachers and learners complain about difficulties in pronunciation, since pronunciation is one of the most complicated but significant features of L2 teaching and learning. Good pronunciation can promote language learning whereas poor pronunciation can lead to a great hindrance in L2 learning (Zhang, 2009).

Moreover, Al-Rifou (2015) and Jaber (2011) point out that most EFL learners face problems related to pronunciation and accent. EFL researchers pointed out that intelligible pronunciation enables an individual to communicate his/her ideas clearly.

The problem with ESL learners of English is that they have a difficulty in learning pronunciation because teachers usually focus on grammar, vocabulary and reading skills and they sometimes neglect the sounds/words that may be problematic to students (Ismael, et al. 2015 and Al-Zayed, 2017). Thus, the current study comes to investigate the ability of Jordanian Arabic language speakers to attain the American English accent and to reach native and native-like levels and to investigate factors affecting English pronunciation acquisition.

### 3. Questions of the Study

This study aims at answering the following questions:

- What is the level of fluency in articulating American English among Jordanian Arabic speakers?
- What are the main factors affecting English pronunciation acquisition?

### 4. Objectives of the Study

The current study aims at:

- Revealing the level of fluency in articulating American English among Arab speakers.
- Exploring the main factors affecting English pronunciation acquisition.

### 5. Significance of the Study

The findings of the current study could help in showing the level of fluency in articulating American English among Jordanian Arab Speakers and exploring their ability to reach native or native-like accent levels. The study could also highlight the main factors that may affect the ability of non-native speakers to attain native or native-like accent and acquire English pronunciation. Consequently, it is hoped that the results of the study would be of use to teachers, students, curriculum planners and English language development programs to address means to improve the level of pronunciation among EFL/ ESL learners and overcome difficulties related to accent and pronunciation in acquisition in TEFL field.

### 6. Limitations of the Study

The current study, which was conducted over the first semester of the academic year 2017-2018, is limited to investigate the level of fluency in articulating American English among Jordanian Arabic speakers. The study is also confined to exploring the main factors affecting English pronunciation acquisition.

### 7. Literature Review and Related Studies

It is widely thought that pronunciation is one of the most neglected aspects of English language teaching. Harmer (2001) explains:

“Almost all English language teachers get students to study grammar and vocabulary, practice functional dialogues, take part in productive skill activities and become competent in listening and reading. Yet some of these same teachers make little attempt to teach pronunciation in any overt way and only give attention to it in passing” (p. 183).

According to Yates and Zielinski (2009) as cited in Modesti (2016), pronunciation refers to how we produce the sounds that we use to make meaning when we speak. It includes the particular consonants and vowels of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual segments, such as stress, timing, rhythm, intonation, phrasing, (suprasegmental aspects), and how the voice is projected (voice quality).

Furthermore, pronunciation, which is a key ingredient to the development of communicative competence, is believed to have an important social value, which means that it should be related to prestige, such as intelligence, professional competence, persuasiveness, diligence, and social privilege. Pronunciation can provide information about the speaker's geographical and social origin, and in most cases it is the most salient characteristic of non-native speakers (Gelvanovsky, 2002 as cited in Zhang, 2009).

Gilakjani (2016) indicates that pronunciation teaching is of great importance for successful oral communication to take place since it is an important ingredient of the communicative competence. The primary goals of pronunciation teaching are for the learner to develop intelligible speech and to be able to effectively communicate in the target language (Mills, 2000). Due to its complexity, pronunciation has been looked upon as the “Cinderella” of language teaching. Pronunciation includes two major components: segmental features, that is, vowel and consonant sounds, and supra-segmental features, also known as prosody.

With regard to ability to acquire L2 pronunciation, it is argued that speakers of L2 could attain native-like pronunciation in the target language depending on various factors including age, motivation, and individual differences. Such factors as believed to have a strong effect on ability to acquire native-like pronunciation.

As for studies conducted in the field of L2 pronunciation acquisition, Almaqrn and Alshabeb (2017) examined the attitudes of Saudi students of English towards proper pronunciation, and podcasts as a facilitator of proper pronunciation. To achieve this, the previous literature in this area was reviewed an attitudinal questionnaire was distributed amongst 23 Level 3 Saudi EFL learners from the department of English at Imam University. The questionnaire was divided into two parts- one concerning proper pronunciation, and the other podcasts. The data analysis showed that the participants, in spite of the low rate of improvement in their pronunciation, have positive attitudes towards the proper pronunciation of English.

Keeley (2016) examined the neurological, social, psychological and attitudinal factors related to the debate on whether or not it is possible to achieve a native-like accent in a foreign language. The study investigated alleged biological or neurological constraints that are limited to prevent the attainment of a native-like accent in a foreign language. It also addressed social, psychological and attitudinal factors that actually determine success in obtaining a native-like accent in the target language. The findings showed that the main reasons for individual differences encountered in foreign language acquisition, including accent, among people of all ages are related to identity, emotions, motivation, openness, flexibility, and other psychological and affective factors.

Al-Rifou (2015) investigated the ability to acquire a native-like accent amongst Non-Arab language learners learning Arabic in Jordan where Arabic is the native language. The sample of the study included 14 participants whose native language is Malay. Their ages ranged 19 - 20 when arrived to Jordan to complete their university education for 4 years period. The respondents' accents were judged by native speakers of Arabic who were specialized in the area. The findings confirmed the point that it is difficult to have a native-like pronunciation for learners who learn second language after puberty.

Alghazo (2015) examined EFL learners' beliefs about English pronunciation teaching and aims to provide insights into current teaching practices of English pronunciation at both college and university levels. To this end, the study sought to elicit the beliefs of a group of 71 third- and fourth-year EFL learners majoring in English at a university college in Saudi Arabia about crucial aspects of pronunciation teaching. The study utilized a survey containing five-point Likert scale items as well as multiple-choice questions. Open-ended questions were also included in order to gain fuller understanding of students' views. Data were thematically analyzed and consequently categorized into five major areas: course design, language of instruction, learning and teaching style, types of feedback, and nativeness of teachers. It was found that students in this study context are cognizant of the value of learning English pronunciation, and of what they find useful and less useful. Students also proved willing to help improve pronunciation instruction by providing helpful perspectives on the proper way, at least in their views, to present this sub-skill.

Jaber and Hussein (2011) investigated the rating and intelligibility of different non-native varieties of English, namely French English, Japanese English and Jordanian English by native English speakers and their attitudes towards these foreign accents. To achieve the goals of this study, the researchers used a web-based questionnaire which targeted native speakers of English. Data obtained indicated that the Jordanian accent was considered as the most intelligible, followed by the French then

the Japanese English accent. The native speakers also showed significantly more positive attitudes towards Jordanian English than French and Japanese English.

Furthermore, Ayoun (2005) refuted all suggestions about the critical period by contending that the empirical studies have clearly shown so many adult learners who have achieved near-native proficiency, so that if there is a critical period, no adult learner can achieve this native-like proficiency.

Similarly, Abu-Rabia and Kehat (2004) examined the CPH for pronunciation for ten late learners who achieved native-like Hebrew pronunciation. In order to have reliable results, participants were not told the aim of the tasks until they had finished them. Some of the participants were asked to talk about a previous trip they had or to describe their favorite recipe using their second language. Some other participants were asked to do some reading tasks such as reading a passage or reading aloud some sentences and words. Five native speakers of Hebrew judged the speech samples on a five-point scale from very strong foreign accent to definitely native. An intriguing result of this research showed that one native speaker was judged as having a slight foreign accent while some of the non-natives were assessed as native speakers. The findings showed that although some L2 learners were exposed to the target language after puberty, they succeeded in achieving a near-native or a native-like accent.

Bongaerts (2000), on the other hand, used thirty advanced learners of Dutch as a second language. The thirty participants had arrived in the Netherlands between the ages of 11 and 34. Interestingly, the late learners were judged as native speakers of a second language in their pronunciation. The results provided more evidence against the strong version of the CPH.

Bongaerts (1999) conducted three studies on native like speakers in the field of phonology. The three studies consisted of subjects who had not been extensively exposed to input from native speakers of the target language until they were approximately 18 years old. The results of the three studies carried evidence that emphasized "claims concerning an absolute biological barrier to the attainment of a native-like accent in a foreign language are too strong"(p. 154).

Through what has been reviewed in previous studies, it could be concluded that pronunciation is one of the integral parts of L2 teaching process that need to be seriously taken into consideration by EFL teachers. Thus, the current study comes to investigate the level of fluency among Arab speakers in articulating American English. The previous studies also guided the researchers to identify the main factors affecting L2 pronunciation acquisition.

## **8. Research Method and Procedures**

### **8.1 Participants**

The sample of the study comprised six participants whose mother tongue is Arabic. Four of the participants have been living in the United States for different but long periods of time. They moved to live in the States at different ages. Interestingly, two of the participants have never been to any English-speaking country.

The First Participant (P1) has been living in the USA for thirty-five years. He went to live there when he was twenty-two years old. He is married to an American woman.

The Second Participant (P2) is a clerk in an American company. He moved to live in the USA when he was fifteen years old and he has been there for fifteen years now. The participant is married to an American woman, and he is also in direct exposure to the English language.

The third Participant (P3) is a PhD candidate of English Language and Literature. She moved to the USA five years ago, when she was twenty-two years old. This participant has good English language because she grew up in a largely English-speaking household.

The fourth Participant (P4) is an engineer who got his BA from a US university. He moved to the USA when he was nineteen years old and he has been living there for thirty years. The participant is married to an Arab woman who speaks fairly good English.

The fifth and sixth participants, (P5 and P6), have never been to any English-speaking country. Their exposure to English was through their household. The two participants are unmarried and each one has a different background that differs from the other. Further details about the participants are shown in table 1:

**Table 1:** Participants' Bibliographical Information

Participants	Gender	Age	Length of Stay in the USA	The age when moving to the USA
P1	M	57	35 years	22 years
P2	M	30	15 years	15 years
P3	F	27	5 years	22 years
P4	M	49	30 years	19 years
P5	M	38	Never been there	-
P6	F	29	Never been there	-

## 8.2 Instrumentation

The researchers designed a scale to be completed by native speakers of American English language after listening to a recorded conversation by the current study's participants. The scale aimed to determine how accented the listener perceived the speaker to be and how clear the listeners found the speakers.

### 8.2.1 Validity and Reliability of the Scale

The scale was submitted in its initial form to specialized jury members, including university instructors in the fields of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), phonology and sociolinguistics. The experts proposed some modifications, which were taken into account by the researchers.

On the other hand, the reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated using Cronbach Alpha Formula. The estimated value was (0.85), which is considered reliable for the purpose of the current study. The final form of the five-point Likert scale included nine items (see appendix A).

## 8.3 Procedures

The data were collected from the total sum of six Jordanian speakers of English, who were asked to record 5-minute talks about their daily routine using English, and then 10 native speakers of American English were asked to judge and rate the recorded materials collected from the six participants.

The judges comprised three American instructors at the American University of Madaba (AUM), two American researchers at the University of Jordan Language Center (UJLC), three American PhD candidates at the World Islamic Sciences and Education University in Amman and two American journalists working in a news agency in Amman.

Having no previous information about the participants, the native speakers, who were born in the USA, were asked to judge if the participants were native speakers of English, native-like speakers of English, or none of the previous two mentioned options. They were also asked to complete a scale to determine how accented they perceived the speaker to be and how clear the listener found the speaker.

The native speakers were also asked different questions like: Where do you think this speaker is from? What are specific things about the subjects' speech that make them difficult/easy to understand? (see appendix A)

The definitions of the current study's terms were provided to the native speakers in order to help them evaluate and rate the subjects accurately.

The researchers recorded the conversations with two participants (P5 and P6), who live in Jordan, while the other four conversations were made through mobile phone calls, since the participants work and live in the USA.

## 9. Results and Discussion

This section addresses the questions of the study. The results will be shown in line with the order of the questions of the study as follows:

- **The first research question:** “What is the level of fluency in articulating American English among Jordanian Arabic speakers?”

To answer the question, the mean scores of the native speakers’ responses on the scale’s items were calculated for the six participants as shown in table (2):

**Table 2:** Mean scores of the native speakers’ responses on the scale’s items

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Overall means
Participant 1	4.66	3.62	4.4	4.2	3.85	3.8	4.4	4.1	3.53	4.06
Participant 2	5	4.89	4.87	4.89	4.88	4.89	4.89	4.91	4.88	4.9
Participant 3	4.88	4.66	4.87	4.88	4.88	4.66	4.87	4.88	4.51	4.78
Participant 4	4.87	4.05	4.19	4.61	4.66	4.22	4.53	4.4	3.59	4.34
Participant 5	4.87	3.85	4.06	4.01	4.4	4.05	4.19	4.15	4.01	4.18
Participant 6	4.89	4.87	4.87	4.88	4.87	4.61	4.88	4.87	4.67	4.82

The figures in table 2 show that the mean scores of the overall response towards the fluency of the Jordanian speakers of English was 4.06 for the first participant, 4.9 for the second subject, 4.78 for the third, 4.34 for the fourth, 4.18 for the fifth, and 4.82 for the sixth.

These results indicate that the evaluation of the native speakers of the fluency in articulating American English among the Jordanian speakers is generally positive. The results also show that the second subject was rated more positively than the other subjects. This can be related to the fact that he was the youngest subject when he moved to live in the USA.

Moreover, he is married to an American woman, and he is in a direct exposure to the English language. One of the most interesting results is that although the fifth and the sixth participants have never been to the USA or to any English speaking country, they were evaluated positively by the native speakers of English exactly the same as the rest of the subjects who spent much time of their lives in the USA.

Finally, the overall mean scores of all the subjects were close together although two of them have never been to any English-speaking country, as mentioned before.

This can be related to other factors that play role in attaining language fluency such as the motivation, the age, the attitudes, and the individual differences of each participant. However, none of the above mentioned subjects was judged as a native speaker of the English language.

**Table 3:** Evaluation percentage for each participant

Participants	Native Speaker of English	Native-like speaker of English	None of the two mentioned
P1	-	70%	30%
P2	40%	60%	-
P3	-	90%	10%
P4	-	90%	10%
P5	-	80%	20%
P6	-	90%	10%

The percentage of evaluation for each participant according to their native or native-like fluency in American English was calculated as indicated in table 3, which reveals that seven out of ten of the native speakers ranked the first participant, who moved to the US at the age of 22, as a native-like speaker of English, while 30% considered him neither native nor native-like of English.

With regards to P2, the results show that he was evaluated by 40% of the native speakers as a native speaker of English whereas 60% of the judges considered him as a native-like speaker of English and no one commented that he is a foreigner or a non-native speaker of English language.

The rest of the participants (P3, P4, and P6) were highly rated as native-like speakers of English while no one mentioned that any of the three is a native Speaker of the Language. However, 80% of the native speakers ranked the fifth participant as a native-like speaker of English, while 20% considered him neither native nor native-like of English.

The listeners justified their opinions about the participants for being native-like instead of being totally native by mentioning slight pronunciation differences and speaking errors that were unconsciously committed by the speakers. Some of the comments were as follows:

- One of the judges remarked: "The rhythm in speech is different than that of a native speaker and the pronunciation of some vowels, like when she says banana, is not like any American dialect I recognize. She is extremely fluent but does not sound native to me."
- Another native speaker said: "This is a native-like speaker. No US regional dialect or accent that I can detect. She seems like her native language is a South Asian one."
- One spoke about a difference in pronouncing the /t/ sound concluding that "the way he pronounces his t's suggests a South Asian native language."
- Another judge also noticed the glottalized /t/ for one of the participants. He commented: "I noticed he glottalizes final /t/. I thought this was a British idiosyncrasy, but I may be wrong."

Although all of the six participants are extremely fluent in English, the above remarks show that they were judged by the majority of the listeners, who are native speakers of American English, as native-like speakers instead of natives. This can be related to the minor differences that they have in their pronunciation.

Accordingly, it can be hypothesized that these minor differences in pronunciation can be fixed by giving those native-like participants some extensive courses that focus on their pronunciation.

Based on the findings, it can be noticed that the results of the study agree with the findings of Abu-Rabia and Kehat (2004) and Ayoun (2005) which indicated that non-native speakers could attain a near-native or a native-like accent. On the other hand, the findings of the current study contradict with the results Bongaerts (2000), which pointed out that the non-native speakers could reach the level of native speakers in their pronunciation.

- **The second research question:** "What are the main factors affecting English pronunciation acquisition?"

The findings of the current study, the theoretical background and related studies supported the claim that age, exposure to L2, attitude, and instruction are the main variables affecting L2 pronunciation acquisition.

- **Age:**

The findings showed that 40% of the native speakers evaluated participant (P2), who moved to the US at the age of 15 as a native speaker of English, while 60% of the judges considered him as a native-like speaker of English and no one commented that he is a foreigner or a non-native speaker of English language. On the other hand, 70% of the native speakers ranked the first participant (P1) as a native-like speaker of English, while 30% considered him neither native nor native-like of English. Interestingly, this participant is the only one of the six who was referred to as non-native speaker of the language. This may be interpreted by referring to the fact that this participant has moved to the US at the age of 22.

Such results refer to the effect of age on the ability of L2 learners to acquire L2 pronunciation, thus, EFL instructors and curriculum planners are invited to take this point into account while designing EFL curricula and activities. Pronunciation should not be postponed or dealt with as a minor component of the curriculum, since it has a key role in the development of communicative competence



among L2 learners. The researchers believe that pronunciation should be taught at an early stage due to the significant effect of age on pronunciation acquisition.

Such findings agree with findings of Loewen and Reiders (2011), which indicated that age is a strong determining factor influencing foreign language pronunciation.

Thus, the researchers believe that teaching pronunciation from the beginning of foreign language teaching would contribute to helping EFL learners meet the communicative objective of the language.

- **Exposure to L2:**

It is believed that exposure to the target language would positively help learners acquire L2 pronunciation and make them familiar with L2 words and expressions.

Szyszka (2015) underlined the need to encourage L2 pronunciation learners to focus on L2 segmental and supra-segmental aspects outside the classroom, thus maximizing L2 exposure. Learners acquire a second language primarily from the input they receive, which has to be in large amounts and, most importantly, comprehensible (Krashen, 1982).

The findings indicated that all the subjects were close together in their level in fluency in articulating American English although two of them have never been to any English-speaking country. This can be attributed to some factors including exposure to L2. Four of the participants are living in the USA due to their study or work, and they are in a direct exposure to the American English accent. Moreover, two of the participants, (P5 and P6), have never been to any English-speaking country, but they exposed to English through their household and the media.

The researchers believe that EFL learners need to be intensively exposed to input from native speakers of English so as to help them properly pronounce English words. The researchers believe that exposure to L2 could be carried out through direct face to face interaction with native speakers or through making use of technology and specialized online websites designed to help EFL learners master L2 and interact with native speakers.

- **Attitude:**

Elliot (1995) as quoted in Gilakjani, (2012) stated that subjects' attitude toward acquiring native or near-native pronunciation as measured by the Pronunciation Attitude Inventory (PAI), was the principal variable in relation to target language pronunciation.

Findings of many studies asserted that having a positive attitude towards a particular language and its speakers can improve pronunciation (Almaqrn and Alshabeb, 2017).

In other words, if the students were more concerned about their pronunciation of the target language, they tended to have better pronunciation of the target allophones.

Thus, the researchers believe that attitude could be viewed as one of the major variables affecting pronunciation acquisition. Attitude can play a crucial role in the process of language learning in general, as it appears to affect the success or failure of students, consequently, EFL instructors need to help learners develop positive attitude towards English.

- **Instruction:**

The researchers believe that EFL teachers need to use up-to-date and motivating strategies in EFL class so as to help learners improve their language skills in general and pronunciation in particular.

EFL instructors can make use of new technology applications in the class, since many studies proved the effectiveness of using computer programs and online games in improving EFL learners' language skills (Almaqrn and Alshabeb, 2017).

In addition, EFL/ ESL teachers need to promote L2 pronunciation awareness, for instance, this could be implemented through reading reference materials about English pronunciation and making use of language games and activities.

EFL / ESL teachers should view pronunciation as an integral part of foreign language learning, since it highly affects learners' communicative competence. Consequently, the researchers believe that

securing acceptable pronunciation for the language learners is one of the key elements of language proficiency.

## 10. Conclusion

Since the findings clearly show that the participants failed to demonstrate total native English accent, a conclusion could be made that the maximum limit a non-native adult speaker can reach is a native-like level. One intriguing result of this paper is that although two participants have never been to any English speaking country, they were judged as native-like speakers of American English.

Another captivating result is that one of the participants, who moved to the United States at the age of fifteen, has been evaluated by 40% of the listeners as a native speaker of American English, a fact that refers to the role of age in mastering a foreign language accent. The study also shows that age, exposure to L2, attitudes, and instruction strategies are considered the main critical factors affecting second/ foreign language pronunciation acquisition.

## 11. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers recommend:

- The introduction of intensive courses designed to help EFL/ESL learners pronounce English more properly and effectively.
- Teaching pronunciation as a key component of EFL/ESL curricula given its significant role in improving learners' communicative competence.
- Exposing EFL/ESL learners to input from native speakers intensively.
- Conducting further studies on other factors that may affect the ability of non-native speakers to master a second language accent.

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### Appendix A: American English Accent Scale

- After listening to each of the recorded material, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following items:

No.	Item	Strongly agree	agree	uncertain	disagree	Strongly disagree
1-	The speaker is easy to understand.					
2-	The speaker has no accent.					
3-	The speaker is pleasant to listen to.					
4-	The speaker speaks good English.					
5-	The speaker sounds educated.					
6-	The speaker sounds professional in English.					
7-	The speaker sounds confident.					
8-	The speaker sounds clear.					
9-	The speaker sounds similar to mine.					

- Where do you think this speaker is from?

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- If you think the speaker is difficult to understand, are there specific things about his speech that make him/her difficult to understand, such as how he/she says certain words or sounds?

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- If you think the speaker has an accent, are there specific things about his/her speech that sound accented to you, such as the way he/she says certain words and sounds?

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- In general, the speaker could be described as:
  - a. Native speaker of American English.
  - b. Native-like speaker of American English.
  - c. None of the two mentioned.