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ARTICLE DE RECHERCHE

L'impact des accents britanniques et américains dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de l'anglais dans les écoles secondaires de la RDC

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Résumé

Cette étude fait allusion à l'Impact des Accents Britannique et Américain dans l'enseignement at l'Apprentissage de l'Anglais dans les Ecoles Secondaires de la RDC, district de la Tshangu. Cette étude a aussi pour objet de découvrir de quelle manière la télévision, l'internet, les films et d'autres médias peuvent influencer l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de l'Anglais. "Pourquoi une langue devient-elle une langue mondiale, ça n'a rien à voir avec le nombre des populations qui la parlent, il faut voir qui sont ces locuteurs" (Crystal 2003:24). Dans cette étude, les données ont été collectées par deux paquets de questionnaires. Le premier paquet était conçu pour obtenir l'opinion des apprenants. Un questionnaire avait été soumis à un échantillon de 169 élèves de quatre écoles differentes. Cet échantillon était conçu pour les classes de deuxièmes années, troisièmes années et quatrièmes années. Après l'analyse des données, le résultat a montré que 14% représentant 1 répondant a répondu positivement que c'est important d'enseigner les accents, 43% représentant 3 répondants ont répondu négativement, tandis que 43% représentant 3 repondants n'ont pas répondu. Néanmoins le résultat a prouvé que 75% représentant 127 répondants apprennent les Accents Anglais dans le cours d'Anglais, 15% représentant 26 répondants ont dit non, tandis que 9% soit16 répondants n'ont pas répondu.

Mots-clés : Accent, Accent Americain, Accent Britanique, Ecoles Sécondaires de la RDC

Abstract

This study deals with the Impact of British and the American accents in Teaching and Learning English in DRC Secondary Schools, Tshangu district. The study aims also at finding out to what extend TV, internet, movies and other media may influence the teaching and learning of accents. "Why a language becomes a global language it has little to do with numbers of people who speak it. It has much more to do with who those speakers are" (Crystal 2003:24). In this study data were selected with a set of two questionnaires. The first set of questionnaire was designed for the learners, it aimed at getting learners' view of accents. A questionnaire has been handed to a sample of 169 students of four different schools. The sample was about second forms, third forms and fourth forms. After the data analysis the result showed that 14% representing 1 respondent responded positively that it is pivotal to teach English accents, 43% representing 3 respondents replied negatively whereas 43% representing 3 respondents did not answer. However the result proved that 75% representing 127 informants learn English accents in the English course, 15% representing 26 informants said no whereas 9% representing 16 informants did not answer.

Keywords: Accent, American accent, British accent, DRC Secondary schools

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1. Introduction

The British and the American accents have differences. The contrast between these two accents is very eminent, yet frequently overlooked and not provided with enough attention. Both the British English and American English have major differences. As G. B. Shaw once said "England and America are two countries separated by the same language" (https://www.goodreads.com/quotes). English learners, at all levels, often state that native speakers speak too fast or sometimes it is really difficult for them to figure out what both native (NS) and non-native speakers of English (NNS) are saying. This may indicate that students are unable to recognize some aspects of connected speech, for instance, the use of contractions (they'll study), some grammar signals such as past tense verbs (worked, learnt, learned) or the importance of stress in pronunciation (Separable). Through the global world influence of native speakers in cinema, music, broadcasting, science and the internet in recent decades, English is now the most widely learned second language in the world. Because a working knowledge of English is required in many fields and occupations, education ministries around the world mandate the teaching of English to at least a basic level. For instance the ministry of Higher Education in the Democratic Republic of Congo has made English a compulsory subject at all levels and fields of study in tertiary education." Five of the largest broadcasting companies in the world (CBS, NBC, ABC, BBC, and CBC) transmit in English, reaching millions of people all over the world" (Mundala 55).

2. Definition of key terms and review of the literature

2.1. Definition of key terms

Accent. Accent is defined as a particular way of pronouncing a language, associated with a country area, or social class (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2002: 6). Accent is a common term to describe the way in which a person pronounces a language, and because languages always have to be pronounced when speaking; everybody has an accent (Anderson &Trudgill, 1990:127). Accent plays a role in the teaching and learning English. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo English is taught as a second language. Both the teachers and the students should be familiar with different accents, that is The British accent and the American accent. Teachers should be aware of accents so they may teach students. Teachers can use accents of English and some online resources to help the students improve both their pronunciation and especially, their listening comprehension skills. How can teachers of English make their listening activities more meaningful for their students to face real life situations? However, nowadays it is much easier to find and to be exposed to virtually almost any accent of English thanks to the Internet. They can go to YouTube and search for any variety of English and they will certainly find it. English teachers should try their best to expose their students to mostly 2 accents on English: Received Pronunciation RP and General American GA.

American accent

The standard American accent is known as the General American. It can be a common problem for students that learn for a long time with one English teacher that they become accustomed to their teacher's voice, accent and speech patterns and rhythms. Then when they communicate with a new English speaker or even a native speaker, they have extreme problems understanding what is being said. Of course, thus this leads to frustration, you may think they have made good progress and their English has developed and then suddenly they cannot understand a single word that someone is saying. It can be disappointing. The unofficial standard accent of the United States is usually called General American (GA) or Mainstream US English (MUSE). This is the accent of much of the Midwest and the West and the most frequent accent for US newscasters, though, interestingly, many of the more recent US Presidents have spoken regional varieties rather than General American. As the prestige accent, it has been encroaching on some regional accents, for example, in the northeast, but at the same time, changes within General American are creating what amount to new accents. One striking example of this is Northern Cities accent, spoken in cities such as Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and Rocherter, and distinct from General American in the pronunciation of lax vowels. Rhoticity

American accent is rhotic or rhoticity, that is the pronouncing of postvocalic /r/ for instance in the word car [k :r]. / o/ _ / / – open back rounded vowel/open back unrounded vowel. General American pronunciation is the unrounded open [l t] (lot), [p lItIk] (politic).

/ / / –open back unrounded vowel In AmE the word is pronounced with the open [b]. /j/ – palatal approximant

Almost all English accents, both British and American, have been subjected to the so called Early Yod Dropping (Wells 1982: 206), which meant the loss of [ju:] after palatal consonants and /r/, so that e.g. threw and through have become homophones. However, in AmE this process went further and resulted in the loss of /j/ after all coronal consonants /t, d, n, ѐ, s, z, l/. The standard Received Pronunciation retains [ju:] after these consonants, so the BrE [dju:tI] is pronounced [du:tI] (duty) in AmE (Wells 1982: 489). T after n in unstressed syllable as in center /senə/ and winter /winə / often is dropped.

British accent

The British standard accent is known as the Received Pronunciation. Received Pronunciation also referred as Oxford English or Queen's English, is the accent heard on BBC. The Received Pronunciation is spoken by as little as 3% of the population. It is an upper class British accent, spoken by the people at the top of the British class system. This accent is learned at Britain's expensive boarding schools such as Eton, where an education costs parents more than £30,000 per year for each child. Since this is also the accent of the highest courts of law, the military elite and the British Parliament, this way of speaking evokes power and privilege. htt///jadejoddle.com/standard-upper-class/

Received Pronunciation is not the only spoken accent in the United Kingdom but there are different accents spoken in the United Kingdom. - For instance Estuary accent is a widely spoken, modern accent. It sounds similar to the Standard British English accent, but with one important difference: when you hear the Estuary English accent, you know that the speaker lives in London. htt///jadejoddle.com/standard-estuary-english. - Cockney Accent is dying Accent. The world famous Cockney accent of working class Londoners is dying out according to accent experts. This means that only a small percentage of Cockney parents are passing the accent on to their children. This shift in the way working class Londoners speak has been caused by changes to the economy which have resulted in new groups of people from all over the world moving to London's East End. htt///jadejoddle.com/standard-cockney-english - Multicultural London accent is a new accent spoken mostly by working class youths in London. The accent is a blend of Cockney and foreign English dialects such as Jamaican. htt///jadejoddle.com/multicultural-london-english

Therefore, the majority of British accents are non-rhotic, meaning that postvocalic /r/ is not pronounced like in [k :] / : / –

half-open front unrounded vowel In the BATH lexical set in the British accents, the pronunciation
In some accents in the north of England though, the vowel is shortened and [l :ftə] becomes [l ftə], or more precisely [l ftər] (laughter), as some northern BrE accents tend to be rhotic rather than nonrhotic (Wells 1982: 353-67). DRC Secondary school
In the Democratic Republic of Congo in secondary schools English is taught from the first to the sixth years according to the former appellation, seventh to the fourth years the new appellation. English is taught following the English National Syllabus. The National English Syllabus of the Secondary Schools was initiated in 1962 and it has been in use until the year 1998. A number of changes have occurred particularly in the general organization of secondary school education. Between 1976 and 1983; the secondary school system underwent an important adjustment, with the creation of the Cycle d'Orientation. In the first major post-independence was (J. Masuaka Kafunda 2000:2). Other minor reforms occurred such as the lengthening of English instruction from two or four years in the secondary school. Later, another programme reforms introduced the optional teaching of English in the first and the second years of Cycle d'Orientation of the secondary school. Thus, the most important innovation was the introduction of an articulate English Programme booklet entitled Programme National d'Anglais in 1976 whose latest issue dates from 2007 (DEPS, 2007) The syllabus divides the Education into two categories. We have General Education and Special Education.
1. General Education are streams in which English is taught for five weekly class periods totalizing twenty hours per week. 1. The Literary stream 2. The Scientific Mathematics-Physics and Bio-Chemistry Stream. 3. The General Pedagogy, Option, General Pedagogy. 4. The Administrative and Technical Commercial Stream (Long Cycle) 5. Feminine technical section, option, Receptionist Hostess
All these streams take six years to complete the teaching and learning of English. Here, the aim is first to enable the pupils to speak, listen, read and write English correctly and to make them aware about the Culture and Civilisation of English speaking countries.

2. Special Education are sections in which English is taught seven hours per week:

1. Artistic stream, plastic arts and dramatic arts Options Plastic Arts, Dramatic Arts, Music 2. Social technical section ; 3. Industry technical sections, all options ; 4. Technical agriculture section, Options ; all options 5. Technical Veterinary section 6. Technical Feminine Section, Option Needle work. 7. Pedagogy stream, physical education Option.
The research question:
What influences do English teachers' accents have in teaching English in DRC? Are teachers familiar with English accents? Are learners aware of English accents?
Hypothesis
The paper is driven by the assumption that both teachers and students do not realize the importance of English accents in teaching and learning English

3. Review of the literature

It is not always necessary to travel abroad to realize how students are unprepared, regardless of their level of English, to understand authentic English, the kind of English they are going to encounter in their daily lives, on radio, television or simply, in a movie. For example, during the classroom students struggle with the listening sections, even though they could understand somehow their teachers' accent. They would still complain about the fact it is more difficult for them to figure out what native speakers say, especially because they thought that those people speak too fast or because their accent is simply harder to grasp. Similarly, some other students mentioned the fact that they felt that the textbooks we were using in class usually contained inauthentic English, i.e. even though, textbooks feature/use native speakers, what they say, does not resemble what happens in real life. For example, some of my students have the chance to talk to native speakers of English and they tell me: "teacher, but no one talks like the people in the book we use" or because they watch TV shows or movies in English. English teachers, tend to expose our students to mostly 1 variety of English that is British English or the British accent "RP". Although, there are many more accents of English, the idea could be that the two varieties are more prestigious than other accents. As pointed out by Levis: "most currently published pronunciation materials are consistent with the nativeness principle. These materials hold that prestige native speaker versions of English are the proper models for pronunciation learning. Although most native speakers of English speak neither General American nor Received Pronunciation, published materials rely on these accents for examples, giving a skewed view of pronunciation that may not serve learners' communicative needs" (p. 371). However, it is not always necessary to travel abroad to realize how students are unprepared, regardless of their level of English, to understand authentic English, the kind of English they are going to encounter in their daily lives, on radio, television or simply, in a movie. For example, during the classroom students struggle with the listening sections, even though they could understand somehow their teachers' accent. They would still complain about the fact it is more difficult for them to figure out what native speakers say, especially because they thought that those people speak too fast or because their accent is simply harder to grasp.

3.1. The role of teachers' background

The teacher's background is crucial for teaching English in secondary schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo. As the unemployment rate is higher in the country many people tend to teach English dough they are not qualified. Such teachers learn English in the centers often with a poor command of English but they are hired in certain schools to teach. Teacher qualification is a crucial factor in the success of the teaching/learning because "classroom decisions and actions are also greatly determined by the teacher's own attitudes, intentions, beliefs and values" (Scrivener, Learning 11). It is relevant for the teachers to be aware of a number of issues besides the command of the subject matter or discipline. These things include the philosophy and principles of teaching a given discipline, selection of materials such as videos, films, computer, radio, clips for instance for teaching accents. Thus, teachers should be qualified, have the knowledge, command of the language and be aware of different accents mainly the American and the British accents. Teachers should be competent in order to enable students to speak English accurately.

3.2. Students Attitudes Towards Accents

As English is now being used as the world's lingua franca (second language) various different accents and dialects can be heard. Students that are unfamiliar with a certain accent or dialect will face inevitable problems in regard to listening comprehension. A lack of knowledge of different accents can leave the students unprepared for real life situations. Overall, it seems most the Congolese students feel that an American English accent is the most important for both understanding and

speaking, yet in general they perceive the need to understand speakers with other accents. They find American English accent beautiful and easy because most of the time they watch English movies in which they hear American accent. In these movies actors speak American English.

3.3. Students' Perceptions about Teachers 'accents

Students reveal that their teachers sound more British than American. Teachers predominantly teach British English than American English, which they consider to be the 'correct' accent or variety of English. Teachers explicitly teach and speak British English or accent than any other accent or variety of English. Teachers do not expose students to different accents in order to interact with native speakers and grasp them. Therefore in this study, most of students said that their teachers have a good accent, speak and teach British English. The issue of accent is especially of significance in EFL contexts where most of the teachers are non-native speakers of that language. In countries like Iran where English is taught as a foreign language subject, foreign accent issue emerges naturally among the learners and teachers of English.. It is important to raise awareness among Congolese students of the different accents of English pronunciation as they live in a world where English crosses national boundaries and, in the context of the Congolese community, English brings people together from different language backgrounds and cultures.
Methodology
In this study data were selected with a set of two questionnaires. The first set of questionnaire was designed for the learners, it aimed at getting learners' view of accents. A questionnaire has been handed to a sample of 169 students of four different schools. The sample was about second forms, third forms and fourth forms. The second set of questionnaire was designed for teachers. It aimed at getting the teachers 'opinion on the influence of English accents in teaching English. The sample of seven teachers of five different schools was made. These teachers have the experience in teaching English. Five teachers were men and two teachers were women. 4. Data analysis (Results)

4.1. Sample Demographics

School Number of % Respondents ISCOM 1 LYC.ST. GER. 2 INST. BAMBOU 2 INST. CBCO MASINA 2 1 LYC. PROF. PREBYST. DE MASINA 1 TOTAL 7
Seven participants selected from five schools.
Institut Bambou, Lycée Sainte Germaine, Institut CBCO Masina 2, Institut Scientifique et Commercial de Masina, Lycée Professionnel Presbytérien de Masina and Institut Scientifique et Commercial. Teachers' education level
Table 1
EDUCATION LEVEL f %
UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE 2 29
BACHELOR DEGREE 5 71
TOTAL 7 100 60 f 40 %

2 5 7 UNDERGRADUATE BACHELOR DEGREE TOTAL DEGREE

Here 5 informants representing 71% have the bachelor degrees and 2 informants representing 39% have the undergraduate degrees.

4.2. Interest variables Data

Item 1: Would you like to sound more native-like when you speak English?
Table 2
Sound more native-like f %
YES 5 71
NO 2 29
TOTAL 7 100 60 f 40 % 20 5 2 7 YES NO TOTAL
It was observed that 71% presenting 5 respondents would like to sound more native-like when they speak English i.e. American or British. It was noticed that 29% representing 2 respondents said no.
Item 2: Is it important to teach English accents?
Table 3
Importance of teaching English accents f % Yes 1 14 No 3 43 Missing 3 43 TOTAL 7 100

60 f
%
1 3 3 Yes No Missing TOTAL The result showed that 14% representing 1 respondent responded positively that it is prominent to teach English accents, 43% representing 3 respondents replied negatively whereas 43% representing 3 respondents left the blank space. Item 3: Are you satisfied with your English?
Table 4
Satisfied English f % QS 1 14.2 VS 3 43 SATIS 1 14.2 UNS 1 14.2 Missing 1 14.2 TOTAL 1 100

60 f %

14,2 14,2 14,2 14,2 20
QS VS SATIS UNS Missing TOTAL
It was reported that 3 informants representing 43% are very satisfied with their English, 1 informant representing 14,2% replied that he is quite satisfied, 1 informant representing 14,2% said he is satisfied, 1 informant representing 14,2% responded that he is unsatisfied and 1 informant representing 14,2% left the blank space. Student population.
SCHOOLS CLASSES TOTAL 4th form 5th forms 6th forms INST. I BAMBOU 23 24 16 63 INST.CBCO MASINA 2 5 12 17 ISCOM 26 1 22 49 LYC.ST. GERMAINE 21 10 9 40 TOTAL 75 47 47 169
Table 5: Students 'age
AGE f % 14-16 63 37 17-18 69 41 19-21 7 4 MISSING 30 18 TOTAL 169 100

180 169 120 100 f 80 63 69 % 37 41 40 30 20 7 4 14-16 17-18 19-21 MISSING TOTAL

It was observed that 37% representing 63 informants 'age vary from 14 to 16 years, 41% representing 69 informants 'age vary from 17 to 18 years, 4% representing 7 informants 'age vary from 19 to 21 years whereas 18% representing 30 informants left the blank space. Item 1: How do you feel when you speak English with a good accent?
Table 4
Speaking with a good accent f %
HAPPY 101 58
PROUD 5 3
UNHAPPY 6 4
VERY HAPPY 57 34
TOTAL 169 100
f 58 %

20 3 4 HP PROUD UNHP VHP TOTAL

It was noticed that 58% representing 101 respondents are happy when they speak English with a good accent, 3% representing 5 respondents are proud when they speak English with a good accent, 4% representing 6 respondents are unhappy whereas 34% representing 57 respondents are very happy when they speak English with a good accent. Item 2: How do you feel when you have mispronunciations?
Table 5

Mispronunciation f % HAPPY 3 2 HUMILIATED 15 9 SHAME 10 6 UNHAPPY 138 81 VERY HAPPY 3 2 TOTAL 169 100

81 100 f 50 2 9 6 2 % 0

The result showed that 2% representing 3 respondents are happy when they have mispronunciation, 9% representing 15 respondents are humiliated when they have mispronunciation, 6% representing 10 respondents feel shame when they have mispronunciation, 81% representing 138 respondents are unhappy and 2% are very when they have mispronunciation. Item 3: What is the perception of your teacher's accent? Table 6 Students' perception towards teacher f % 'accent GOOD 82 49 VERY GOOD 2 1 BAD 5 3 MISSING 80 47 TOTAL 169 100

180 169

82 80 f %

20 2 5 GOOD VERY GOOD BAD MISSING TOTAL

The result showed that 49% representing 82 respondents had good perception towards their teacher's accent, 1% representing 2 respondents had very good perception towards their teacher's accent, and 3% representing 5 respondents had bad perception towards their teacher's accent whereas 47% representing 80 left the blank space. Item 4: Do you study accents in the English course?
Table 7 English accents in English course f % Yes 127 75 No 26 15 Missing 16 9 TOTAL 169 100

180 169 140 127 120 100 f 75 % 40 26 15 16 20 9 Yes No Missing TOTAL

The result showed that 75% representing 127 informants study English accents in the English course, 15% representing 26 informants said no whereas 9% representing 16 informants left the blank space.

Conclusion

English accents have the impact in the teaching and learning English. Accent plays a big role in the education. Learners often say that English is difficult to speak, to write and to understand. It is really difficult for learners to understand what both native and non-native speakers are saying. This may indicate that learners are not aware of English accents. An American teacher and author, Kevin McCaughey, states that: "many students of English eventually travel abroad, where they're shocked to discover how unprepared they are for understanding real speech – whether native or non-native English" (p. 12). To examine the use of listening journals to raise awareness of the diversity of English, Galloway and Rose (2014) compiled Internet-based resources for their students to direct their own learning. They also made digital audio and video recordings of speakers from different L1 backgrounds and countries as alternative resources to increase student exposure to the diversity of English. These ideas can be used by teachers who plan to introduce varieties of English accents and to increase their students' exposure to the diversity of English accents. Jenkins (2013), the creator of modified English as a lingua franca model, when interviewing ESL students enrolled in higher education institutions in the United Kingdom, found that, although the ESL students were initially receptive of the idea of modified English for communication – English as a lingua franca they still wanted to acquire a native-speaker accent. Likely LeVelle and Levis (2014) indicated that some students feel shame at having a foreign accent in the L2. They describe a Korean pastor who felt that his authority with his congregation would be damaged by a noticeable accent in English and thus avoided using English, speaking to his congregation only in Korean in order to avoid the shame. However, teachers should insert the teaching of accents in their pronunciation lessons in order to enable students to talk and grasp native speakers. Teachers may use accents of English and some online resources to help students improve both their pronunciation and their listening comprehension skills. Teachers of English should make the listening activities more meaningful for students to face real life situations. Today it is much easier for teachers to expose students to virtually almost any accent of English thanks to the Internet. They can go to YouTube and search for any variety of English accent and they will certainly find it. Finally teachers ought to use the materials, particularly for the listening activities, that most of the time, provide teachers and students with authentic real life spoken English. Bibliography

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

1. Do you want to sound like native-speaker when speaking English? ……
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2. Is it prominent to teach English accents? ……
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3. Are you satisfied with your English? ……
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Appendix B

Questionnaire

1. How do you feel when you speak English with good accent? ……
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How do you feel when you have mispronunciations? ……
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2. What perception do you have towards your teacher's accent? ……
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3. Do you study accents in the English course? ……
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