



ONE VOICE
CONFERENCE

9th-12th
May 2019

Workshop: Expand Your Market with Accents

Toby Ricketts



Workshop
1:30pm – 2:20pm



Toby Ricketts

Work Less, Earn More

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Where are we on the voice journey?

- How many here consider themselves Beginners?
- How many here consider themselves Professional?
- How many people have done accents at parties?
- How many people use accents professionally?
- Who here has an 'accent'?
- Who would like to try on a **new** accent today?



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Who is this guy?

- VO professional with over 20 years in voicing, last 6 full-time. Also Filmmaker, Photographer and volunteer EMT
- Worked as a sound engineer for most of my professional life. Radio and post-production
- Voice in 4 different accents for clients around the world
- Won 4 out of 6 awards at OVAs last year including VO of the year. Nominated for 2 x SOVAs
- Am also a voice coach, run a voice academy workshop in NZ
- Live in New Zealand - 4 hours drive from the nearest city in a house-bus, with a small, custom built cedar studio in a forest.



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What we will cover in this session...

- 1. What is an accent?
- 2. Why bother?
- 3. Accent markers – three different ones to try
- 4. Mnemonics
- 5. Adopting the posture and mindset
- 5. Read along
- 6. Audience participation

What is an accent?

- Seriously – can some one tell me?
- Speaking Differently.
- People who sound the same as each other don't have an accent – the accent is the difference.
- Obstacles (physical and social) create accents. You see them where people are confined or separated. Such as Southern Germany & North Italy – juxtaposition. Also occurs in social strata. UK is probably the most densest concentration of accents in the world.
- It's not just how we speak but it is a mindset, and includes cultural and social elements too. For example How Americans speak vs how RP is spoken:
 - “I'm just going to go and get something from the car”
- Accents are like a new pair of shoes... “They feel uncomfortable to start with, but with use they become comfortable. Once they fit, you can tell instantly when there's something wrong, like a stone in the shoe, or incorrect vowel. It just feels wrong. Soon you don't think about it.



What is an accent?

- There's a new trend in Voiceover for borderless accents.
- Popular with global brands who don't want to regionalize
- This doesn't mean a bad accent!
- More like an accent and a sub-accent
- Like someone who has been living in another country
- A bad accent is still ... A BAD ACCENT!



Why Bother?

- 90% of jobs on pay to play sites are US, so consider learning Standard American
- Get more work through your existing clients
- Because it's a fun hobby!
- Because it keeps you versatile
- Because it helps you develop characters
- It gives you a point of difference
- It impresses people
- It's good at parties!





Accent markers

- Get used to the 'classic' markers. Find out how they 'FEEL' in your mouth. Remember it.

- EVERYONE HAVE A GO! “I had john fix the car”

- US

- AUSSIE

- KIWI

- SOMETHING ELSE!



Your Turn...

- Who here has an accent?
- You! Let's copy your accent.....
 - I had my haircut
 - The teacher made the students work in groups
 - Our boss made us work extra hours
 - He had the mechanic repair the machine
 - She got him to read more
 - Jane let her son go out
 - They let the children play in the yard

Mnemonics

- Very helpful tools for getting into an accent.
- Preferably something highly stereotypical and borderline offensive! Also useful at parties...
- Eg. “Hoity-toity, fiddle de de, potatoe”
- “Oh my Gaaawd, how traumatic!”
- “Like whatever, you know”
- Sometimes it’s rhythmic more than tonal.. i.e Swedish
- “Hurdy gurdy, flutey tutey”
- Learn them and use them





Posture, mindset & impediments

- Posture is very important for voicing in general, also essential for character / accent work
- Minor speech impediments can assist in remembering and maintaining an accent
- Cultures don't just speak in different words they speak in different rhythms and tones. Take Swedish, Italian, South East Asian
- When tonal languages meet non-tonal languages, you get interesting results
- Why does he sound so “Not English”?
- Some other examples of accents with a strong ‘mindset’



Now it is your turn...

- Script:
- 1) The bandage was wound around the wound.
- 2) The farm was used to produce produce.
- 3) The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
- 4) We must polish the Polish furniture..
- 5) He could lead if he would get the lead out.
- 6) The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert..
- 7) Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
- 8) A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
- 9) When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.



- 10) I did not object to the object.
- 11) The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
- 12) There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
- 13) They were too close to the door to close it.
- 14) The buck does funny things when the does are present.
- 15) A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
- 16) To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
- 17) The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
- 18) Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear...
- 19) I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
- 20) How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?



Let's face it - English is a crazy language. There is no egg in eggplant, nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France . Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat. We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig..

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth, beeth? One goose, 2 geese. So one moose, 2 meese? One index, 2 indices? Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? Sometimes I think all the English speakers should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane. In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell?



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How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites? You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which, an alarm goes off by going on.

English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race, which, of course, is not a race at all. That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible.

PS. - Why doesn't 'Buick' rhyme with 'quick' ?

There is a two-letter word that perhaps has more meanings than any other two-letter word, and that is 'UP.'

It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP ?

At a meeting, why does a topic come UP?

Why do we speak UP and why are the officers UP for election and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report?

We call UP our friends.

And we use it to brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver; we warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen.

We lock UP the house and some guys fix UP the old car.

At other times the little word has real special meaning. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses.

To be dressed is one thing, but to be dressed UP is special. A drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP. We open UP a store in the morning but we close it UP at night.



We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP!

To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP, look the word UP in the dictionary.

In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP almost 1/4th of the page and can add UP to about thirty definitions.

If you are UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you may wind UP with a hundred or more

When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out we say it is clearing UP.

When it rains, it wets the earth and often messes things UP. When it doesn't rain for awhile, things dry UP..

One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP,

for now my time is UP



- Key points:
 - Accents take time to develop
 - Don't put yourself out there before you are ready
 - It's free to practice on anyone – strangers are best!
 - Get a voice artist you trust or native speaker to judge if you're ready.
 - Have fun!



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Thank You!

Ways to keep in touch:
toby@tobyicketts.com
www.tobyickettsvoiceover.com
FOLLOW @tobyicketts
Toby Ricketts VO Services
Pillow Fort Studio Gallery

