# Engaging the Senses: A Sensory-Based Approach to L2 Pronunciation

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## ABSTRACT

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**Suzanne Cerreta**

This case study examined the possible benefits of a sensory-based learning approach for teaching L2 pronunciation to actors, and attempted to address the unique learning goal of nativelike speech, or North American commercial standard speech for acting purposes. In line with Gibson's (1969) definition of sensory learning, or linking new concepts to previous knowledge through sensory engagement, curriculum materials were designed and adapted from Celce-Murcia, Briton, and Goodwin (2010) and the theatrical voice methods from Knight (2012). Focusing on two French Canadian actors (Marianne & Sebastian) over a 10-week instructional period, samples from monologue and scene performances before and after instruction were rated for six global and linguistic measures of speech (e.g., accent, comprehensibility, vowel and consonant errors) by 10 linguistically trained listeners, and for two performance measures by 10 advanced acting students. Linguistics listener ratings revealed a significant improvement in accent for Marianne and greater comprehensibility for both actors after instruction. However, qualitative data from weekly surveys and exit interviews showed a divergence in learning preferences. Marianne prioritized sensory-based activities, whereas Sebastian preferred more traditional language-focused instruction. These results suggest that theatrical methods of learning, such as sensory-based activities, can be beneficial for some L2 learners for overall improvement in accent and comprehensibility. This study highlights the importance of sensory-based activities as a supplement to form-focused pronunciation instruction and calls for theatrical voice curricula to promote practicing language in similar contexts to its intended use.

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## Contribution of Authors

As the first author of the manuscript version of this thesis, Suzanne Cerreta was responsible for conceptualizing and creating the pronunciation curriculum, implementing that curriculum throughout 10-week instruction, collecting data, such as sound samples and listener ratings, organizing the coding of data, and writing up the results. Pavel Trofimovich provided advice throughout all stages of the project, taking the primary role in assisting with analyses of quantitative data.

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# Chapter 1

As a result of globalization, English has become the most widely used and taught language in the world (Crystal, 2012), playing a key role in international education and business communication and inciting a surge in English second language (L2) pronunciation research. From this research, two opposing pronunciation paradigms have emerged: the nativeness and intelligibility principles (Levis, 2005). The nativeness principle follows the idea that nativelike, nonaccented L2 speech is a desired learning and teaching outcome; whereas the intelligibility principle allows for accented speech and suggests that the learner's message must simply be understood by his or her interlocutor in L2 communication (Levis, 2005; Munro & Derwing, 1999).

Over the past 15 years, researchers interested in L2 pronunciation have mainly focused on the intelligibility principle as the guiding paradigm, designing methodologies that promote comprehensible and intelligible L2 pronunciation outcomes. Defined by Varonis and Gass (1982) and later refined by Munro and Derwing (1999), the construct of comprehensibility refers to the perceived ease or difficulty involved in understanding an utterance, while intelligibility describes the amount or degree to which a listener understands the speaker's utterance. That is, comprehensibility is operationalized as the amount of effort, typically rated in a 7- or 9-point scale, that a listener puts forth in order to understand an utterance. In contrast, intelligibility is measured through text comprehension or word recognition to determine how well the utterance is actually understood (Munro & Derwing, 1995, 1999). Accentedness, another global measure researchers use to determine listeners' perceptions of L2 speech, can be defined as the extent to which a listener (e.g., a native speaker of the target language) finds a speaker's utterance to

deviate from the target pronunciation (Munro & Derwing, 1995). In this sense, accentedness has been used as a measure of nativeness of L2 speech.

Investigating the relationship between accent and comprehensibility/intelligibility, for example, Munro and Derwing (1999) showed that listeners often found even highly accented utterances to be comprehensible and intelligible, supporting the principle that an L2 speaker need not produce nativelike speech in order to succeed in L2 interaction. Put simply, it is possible to be accented and still understandable. Additionally, research carried out within the intelligibility principle has looked at the factors influencing comprehensibility and intelligibility of L2 speech, showing that lexical and grammatical accuracy (Derwing & Munro, 2009), fluency (Anderson-Hsieh & Koehler, 1988; Derwing, Munro, & Thomson, 2008; Trofimovich & Baker, 2006), and pronunciation of segmental and suprasegmental features (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe, 1998; Field, 2005; Hahn, 2004; Kang, Rubin, & Pickering, 2010; Munro & Derwing, 1995, 1999; Trofimovich & Baker, 2006) all contribute to comprehensible and intelligible speech. These elements, when attended to in the L2 classroom may be beneficial when the desired outcome is ease of communication within everyday interactions. However, what if the desired outcome is not just intelligible speech, but nativeness, or lack of perceived foreign accent?

For many learners and teachers around the globe, nativelike speech is still the pronunciation goal. For example, when interviewed by Jenkins (2005), some nonnative ESL teachers reported that while they promoted intelligibility over nativelike speech in their L2 English classrooms, they themselves would prefer to sound like a native-speaking "model," as that would mean they had "a good command of the language" (p. 538). For these teachers, when critiquing their own speech, nativeness remains paramount. Similarly, Derwing (2003) asked

ESL learners from different first language (L1) backgrounds if they preferred speaking English with nativelike pronunciation to their accented English, and an astounding 95% strongly agreed. Thus, the message put forth by researchers working within the intelligibility principle that L2 accented speech is a reasonable learning goal, has yet to be fully adopted by L2 learners and teachers.

Foreign accent, like comprehensibility, is operationalized through listeners' perceptions and rated on a scale (Munro & Derwing, 1999). Degree of perceived foreign accent is affected by multiple factors (Piske, MacKay, & Flege, 2001). For example, Flege (1988) found that the length of residence (LOR) by L2 English speakers in an English-speaking environment only affected their L2 pronunciation in the initial stages of residency. In fact, Flege found that Taiwanese L1 speakers of English had the same degree of perceived foreign accent whether they were living in the US for 5.1 years or 1.1 years. Thus, there appears to be a tapering off of pronunciation learning—at least as measured through accentedness ratings—after the initial first year of residence (see also Flege & Liu, 2001). Additionally, in regards to the factor of age of L2 learning (AOL), the Taiwanese L1 speakers who began speaking English before the age of 12 were still perceived to have a noticeable foreign accent in English (see also Flege, Yeni-Komshian, & Liu, 1999; Saito, 2013). Moreover, while the Taiwanese speakers began learning English around the age of 12 years old, they arrived in the US after the age of 20, and only continued to speak English in the working context, speaking Chinese with friends and family more regularly. Thus, although AOL is usually an important factor influencing the degree of foreign accent of a learner's utterance, with an earlier AOL associated with less accent in L2 speech (Piske et al., 2001), it appears that learners' motivation to continue practicing and using the L2, their integration in social networks, and patterns of their L2 use may also contribute to

improvement in L2 accent over time (Jia & Aaronson, 2003; Moyer, 2011; Derwing & Munro, 2013). Despite the strong influence of age on L2 accentedness ratings, some adult learners can and do acquire near-native L2 speech. For example, Bongaerts (1999) found that five out of 11 L1 Dutch speakers of L2 English were perceived to sound nativelike on five out of six sentences in a read-aloud task, and three of those five were rated nativelike on all six sentences. Though these occurrences are uncommon, these adult learners, with a mean age of 42, show evidence of adults being capable of acquiring nativelike speech later in life.

As mentioned above, motivation can greatly influence the degree to which a learner acquires an L2 (Gardner, Masgoret, Tennent, & Mihic, 2004; Moyer, 1999). L2 English actors (at least in North America) have a unique motivation and pressure to speak with a standard (North) American accent (referred to in this thesis as commercial standard) in English as their employability relies on how well they can adapt their artistic choices, physicality, and their vocal abilities to suit the characters they want to portray (Barnes, 2011). Taking a closer look at motivation and its effect on attaining more nativelike pronunciation, Polat (2010) had 121 Kurdish L1 learners of Turkish read a basic paragraph with speech samples rated by five native speakers of Turkish. Background questionnaires were administered to determine the level of learners' motivation, based on four levels of extrinsic motivation, each with increasing amounts of self-determination, or internally driven motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Polat found that learners whose motivations were known to be integrated regulation, or the highest level of self-determination, were rated the most nativelike in their pronunciation of Turkish. In other words, when learners' motivation was linked to more autonomy and personal satisfaction in reference toward their goal, their L2 speech was rated closer toward nativelikeness.

L2 English actors' internally driven motivation to speak with a commercial standard, or non-regional accent in English, are influenced by their voice and speech training early on in their careers. For example, after surveying professors of voice and speech in top theatre schools across Canada and the US, Barnes found that 76% of the teachers responded that they were teaching their theatre students a form of standard speech. Additionally, Barnes found that out of the 76% that responded "yes" to teaching a standard, 71% used phonetic transcription to aid in teaching that standard and 26% still used a text based on listen-and-repeat methods and an outdated style of pronunciation, such as *Speak with Distinction* by Edith Skinner (Knight, 2000). Very few teachers reported using methods which were more in line with actors' training and performance techniques, such as sensory memory (Barnes, 2011). In other words, in most cases, acting students are expected to use commercial standard and work towards this goal through practice relying solely on rule-based learning, transcription, and rote practice (Knight, 2000).

Knight, a proponent for experiential over prescriptive learning of speech, acknowledges that using rote practice may leave actors "cut off from the immediate passionate verbal response because everything [is] filtered through the requirement to observe a particular form" (p. 48). That is, prescriptive methods for teaching standards of speech (e.g., rote drills and explicit phonetic forms presented first) rather than experiential methods (e.g., listening exercises and drawing attention to how articulators feel in pronunciation) might make the process of acting, or being immersed in the character, story, and objectives within the scene, more challenging and disconnected (Knight, 2000). Thus, Knight proposes that future theatrical speech curricula should begin with perception practice and move into experiential practice, such as using the senses, for more efficient transfer of knowledge from practice to performance. Sensory-based methods of learning are unique in that they are directly in line with the actor's skill set (Hagen,

1991) and allow the actor or learner to experience the mechanics of speech through tactile approaches, feeling muscular shifts rather than memorizing rules. Influenced by Knight (2000), the current study evaluated a curriculum containing perception exercises and sensory-based activities in order to facilitate swift access to these target features within performance. Because previous researchers have proposed theatrical and drama-based exercises as beneficial for L2 acquisition (Dodson, 2002; Miccoli, 2003; Stern, 1980, 1993), the sensory curriculum in this study may also benefit non-actor L2 learners in more targetlike pronunciation.

Though previous research has determined that a realistic goal for the teaching and learning of pronunciation is intelligible and comprehensible (but not necessarily nonaccented) L2 speech, no study has to date looked at the unique context of pronunciation for performance purposes and the actor's need for commercial standard speech. The following chapter, presenting the current study in manuscript format, aimed to address the adult L2 actor's needs by proposing a curriculum in line with, and drawn from, a sensory-based method used in theatrical training (Hagen, 1991). The sensory method, drawing learners' attention to pronunciation features through their senses and sensory recall, presents a new way of teaching pronunciation which not only might be relevant to theatrical curricula and L2 actors' needs but also might be applicable to other contexts where L2 pronunciation is taught and learned.

# Chapter 2

## Introduction

Most current second language (L2) pronunciation research follows the intelligibility principle, focusing on methodologies that promote L2 speech that is both intelligible and comprehensible (easy to understand) to interlocutors, often despite being accented (e.g., Levis, 2005; Munro & Derwing, 2008). However, many L2 teachers and learners around the globe hold nativeness (lack of foreign accent) as the desired learning and teaching goal (e.g., Takagishi, 2012; Tokumoto & Shibata, 2011). For example, most Japanese EFL teachers surveyed by Takagishi felt that their L2 speech would suffice as an English model only if it were considered native, featuring minimal influence from their native language (L1). And among the 50 Japanese students studied by Tokumoto and Shibata, 34 chose sounding native, rather than being able to convey a message, as the priority in their English interaction. Although it is worth emphasizing to both teachers and learners in various learning contexts that "[they] need to accept that having an accent is a normal aspect of L2 learning" (Munro, 2003, p. 48), it would also be important to address the needs of learners who require nativelike pronunciation, especially those in specific occupational contexts. To date, several studies have explored the learning of L2 pronunciation in the high-stakes occupational context of air traffic controllers (e.g., Aiguo, 2008) and international teaching assistants (e.g., Wennerstrom, 1992). However, no research has focused on the L2 pronunciation needs and outcomes for such language users as professional actors, for whom pronunciation accuracy may determine employability.

When working with pronunciation for specific purposes, such as depicting a native English-speaking character in television or film, actors are often required to sound nativelike (Schiffman, 2004), which for the purposes of this study, refers to a North American commercial

standard of speech and includes native speech varieties represented in North American television commercials and popular television series and feature films (Schiffman, 2004). For example, French-speaking Quebec actors who had traveled to New York City to work with a pronunciation therapist in the hopes of acquiring native pronunciation in English reported losing jobs to less experienced actors, being told that "they don't sound right for the part" (Fine, 1999, p. 1). A focus on native speech, at least among US filmmakers, likely reflects the practice that "accents in a movie have traditionally been used as part of a character's identification and thus are only around if they are part of the plot" (Gasher, cited in Fine, 1999, p. 2). It is important to note that the speech demands of actors in television and film differ from those required for stage; however, for the purposes of this study, all performance speech is included in the learner goal of commercial standard. Although Hollywood is reaching out to include diverse locations and stories in its film and television scope, it fails to reflect the "multi-accented reality alive on the streets of major cities, be they [Los Angeles] or Montreal" (Fine, 1999, p. 2). Thus, as local communities in North America become increasingly multilingual and diverse (Banks, 2006), actors are still being asked to conform to a commercial standard (Knight, 2000).

The focus on nativeness in film and television will likely continue until the industry standard changes to reflect the wide cultural spectrum of the society it represents, meanwhile leaving L2 actors dependent on pronunciation instruction to further their career goals. Unfortunately, most theatre voice and speech programs incorporate practices from the language-focused or audiolingual method of teaching pronunciation (Knight, 2000). Since the early 1950s, Edith Skinner's book *Speak with Distinction* has infiltrated acting conservatories and theatre speech classes, promoting the teaching of "Good American Speech" through rote-drill instruction, with a lack of meaningful practice or experience that mirrors the students' use of the

target features (Barnes, 2011; Knight, 2000). Thus, L2 actors face the dual challenge of the pressure to acquire native L2 pronunciation to succeed in their careers and the lack of instruction that could help them accomplish such goals (Knight, 2000). Therefore, the overall goal of this study was to describe and evaluate an alternative way of teaching pronunciation to L2 actors (a method based on the sensory approach to learning), with the idea that this method would be compatible with actors' professional skillset and would help them address their pronunciation needs. In this longitudinal case study, we followed two professional L2 English actors in their acquisition of L2 speech through a sensory-based approach. The actors' learning experiences and outcomes were documented through qualitative instruments (questionnaires, surveys, and interviews) and through analyses of their speech recorded before and after instruction.

## Literature Review

### Theater and Drama Techniques in L2 Pronunciation Teaching

Much like a language learner, an actor must convey a message in a believable and comprehensible way. Actors also spend more time on communicative and speech techniques than is afforded to the L2 classroom, allowing actors to explore pronunciation within meaningful dialogue and scenes (Archibald, 1987). However, actors have not benefitted from acting-centered voice and speech instruction in their conservatory and theater training, which has generally followed the audiolingual approach based on rote repetition (Knight, 2000). In fact, it is classroom L2 learners who have often enjoyed the benefits of theatre and drama techniques. Beginning with Stern (1980), language researchers and teachers, drawing from theatrical training, began incorporating drama activities into the L2 classroom (Dodson, 2002; Gaudart, 1990; Miccoli, 2003; Stern, 1980, 1993). The theatrical context allows learners to suspend their ego and take on unfamiliar characteristics. This context is nonthreatening, due to its make-

believe nature, is highly collaborative and communicative, and gives learners freedom of expression without fear of negative consequences (Berry, 1993; Stern, 1980, 1993).

For these reasons, theatrical contexts and drama exercises have been readily adapted for the teaching of L2 pronunciation (e.g., Archibald, 1987; Galante & Thomson, 2016; Hardison & Sonchaeng, 2005; Stevens, 1989; Thirsk & Solak, 2012). For example, proposing contextualized framework using theatrical voice techniques for pronunciation teaching, Hardison and Sonchaeng (2005) structured their approach around eight main techniques, which included preparatory activities (e.g., relaxation, breathing), language focused activities (e.g., prosodic features), and implementation, where students incorporate what they have learned into performance (e.g., in dialogues and monologues). Before the performance stage, the authors suggested the use of mirroring and shadowing activities, where students would emulate actors in video recorded TV shows or films, marking the script (much like actors do) for "actable" phrasing, stress, prominence, and mimicking the scene in a meaningful way (Goodwin, 2001, 2005, 2012). The framework proposed by Hardison and Sonchaeng is thorough and clearly articulated for the dramatically untrained ESL teacher to implement in a classroom, yet it has not been empirically tested with L2 learners.

One of the only studies to date that has implemented drama exercises in an L2 teaching context with reported statistical findings comparing speech samples before and after instruction comes from Galante and Thomson (2016). The researchers created a semester-long curriculum consisting of drama-based activities, culminating in a final rehearsed performance. The drama condition was implemented in two L2 English classes, and speech samples from pre- and post-instruction were compared to two control group classes. Focusing on fluency outcomes, the researchers found that students in the drama-based group made significant improvement in their

overall fluency, compared to the control group. Though this is a significant contribution to research, the target drama exercises and practice activities were taken from theatre practitioner handbooks, such as Spolin's (1986) *Theatre Games for the Classroom*. Thus, the materials were adaptations of drama techniques for language learners, with the consequence that such materials might not be relevant to the needs and interests of professional actors, for whom acquiring L2 pronunciation has direct implications for job performance and career advancement.

One of the only studies proposing the use of theatrical methods as opposed to drama activities as a way of relating to pronunciation comes from Copeman (2012). He reported on a theatrical curriculum for L2 pronunciation instruction implemented in an ESL class. The curriculum included a system of vocal warmups and a focus on articulatory settings or "articulatory kinesthetics," based on the assumption that actors have the advanced ability to "use external, kinesthetic cues to help them conceptualize the mental and emotional structures and physical attributes of the characters they portray" (p. 22). Although this project represented an extensive (three-year) study and involved innovative ways of implementing drama into the classroom, the published report included no empirical data or qualitative findings from the learners' perspective (see also Aufderhaar, 2004; Miccoli, 2003).

**Sensory Training for Teaching L2 Pronunciation to Actors**

One of the most common worries an actor has after a successful performance is the impending failure to repeat it, "Can it be done again? Can I sustain these emotions, intonations, intentions, word stress?" (Stanislavsky, 1967; Strasberg, 2010). The actor aims to be understood in conveying a message and believable in carrying that message out. Similarly, the L2 learner, after working on a pronunciation feature in the classroom, hopes that he or she can replicate the successful interaction in everyday L2 conversation (Archibald, 1987). To repeat a successful

performance in a fresh and believable way, an actor must rely on the full capacity of their physical and emotional skills. For example, the creators of Method Acting (also known as sense memory acting) Stanislavsky and later Strasberg believed that the "talent of the actor lies in their degree of sensitivity" (Strasberg, 2010, p. 3). In essence, by utilizing sensory memory and associating it with a physical and/or dramatic action, the actor enforces the episode in which the action is taking place, increasing the chances of it occurring again. This type of learning, which relies on sensory memory and which is compatible with the actor's skillset (Hagen, 1991), is defined as engaging different body sensations through cues in order to link new concepts to previous experiences, which is believed to enhance memory for the new concept (Gibson, 1969).

The principles of sensory-based learning, as defined by Gibson (1969), were first applied to the teaching of voice and speech to native-speaking theater and drama students, largely as a response to Skinner's (1942) outdated audiolingual approach. Knight (1997, 2012) assembled a new way of teaching accent and voice skills in theatrical speech training by drawing on the sensations created when articulatory muscles were arranged in a particular way at the moment of articulation. In essence, Knight drew students' attention to how the vocal tract and articulators felt as they interacted with each other in order to shape and create sound. He operationalized this through a nonsense language called Omnish, consisting only of the sounds and prosody (as perceived by the student), with no lexical or grammatical content. Within voice and speech classrooms, Omnish can be used to emulate any accent as a way to perceive the sound system of a given language, aiding the actor in acquiring any accent in English. In this case, for instance, Omnish would sound like gibberish but with English-like rhythmic cadence and intonation, interdental fricatives, retroflex /r/, and open vowels produced with a relaxed jaw. As students try to produce Omnish, they would begin to internalize specific speech patterns by attending to the

physical sensations of subtle differences in the shape of their vocal tract, compared to the way they normally sound (and feel) while speaking. It was Knight's belief that by "allowing ourselves to rediscover the physical basis of individual speech actions, […] we gain the skills of shaping sound" (Knight, 2012, p. 35).

To date, the uptake of sensory-based techniques for the training of actors has been minimal (Barnes, 2011), and outside the context of theatre and conservatory programs, sensory learning has been applied only to child educational studies in cases of learning disorders and disabilities (e.g., Lovaas, Schreibman, Koegel, & Rehm, 1971; Polatajko, Kaplan, & Wilson, 1992). The principles of sensory-based learning have also not been adapted to or evaluated for the teaching of pronunciation. In fact, like Galante & Thomson (2016), most prior studies using drama-based techniques in L2 instruction have focused on the "what" (i.e., specific activities) rather than the "how" (i.e., learning method) of teaching. Although Copeman (2012) mentioned the use of kinesthetic responses in his drama-based teaching, citing the need for learners to exact the skill of conceptualizing the sound within the body (Fraser, 2001), he defined "conceptualization" of sounds by relating them to similar sounds. For instance, to acquire English /ɛ/ (as in *bed*) for learners who are producing /æ/ (as in *bad*), they must replace all /æ/ segments with /ɪ/ (as in *lip*), finally bringing in /ɛ/ when they are ready. In essence, then, this use of kinesthetic responses has more to do with aural-oral sound substitutions than with the use of sensory memory for teaching. Moreover, the added step of sound substitution likely sidetracks learners from the target sound and its sensory memory, adding to the cognitive load and distracting them in performance or interaction. Kinesthetic responses, so defined, are also nonessential to drama activities, as learners can make aural-oral substitutions outside drama-based tasks. Thus, it remains to be seen how effectively learners—and especially actors who are

already familiar with the concept of sensory learning—can use sensory-based instruction as part of L2 pronunciation training.

## The Current Study

Though Knight (1997, 2012) inspired sensory-based learning for accent and voice training by native-speaking actors, researchers have yet to examine the use of sensory-based techniques in the teaching of pronunciation, especially for L2 actors. Indeed, using active associations, such as senses, in pronunciation training for actors may be more beneficial in helping them transfer learned pronunciation patterns into performance, where speech flow is important and anxiety is high. Put differently, L2 actors' pronunciation will benefit from linking an L2 pronunciation feature to a sensory cue, directing learners' attention to use their senses to relate to sound, word stress, or intonation and away from technical jargon (metalanguage). Conceptualized in this manner, the pronunciation training would encourage L2 actors to use the tools they are already accustomed to using on a daily basis in dramatic interaction (i.e., their senses) and link them to articulation.

Therefore, this study focused on the pronunciation learning of two L2 actors (L1 speakers of Quebec French) as they experienced instruction through a 10-week sensory-based curriculum focusing on aspects of individual sounds, prosody, and fluency as the targets of instruction. The instruction was based on authentic material from films, TV, and plays incorporated into the learning activities, such that a practice environment would resemble as closely as possible the context in which language would eventually be used and performed. The instruction specifically targeted connected speech, word stress, intonation, and the seven English segments (/i/, /ɪ/, /u/, /ʊ/, /ə/, /ð/, and /θ/). The vowel contrasts /i-ɪ/ and /u-ʊ/ are challenging for French speakers of L2 English to perceive and produce (Iverson & Evans, 2007; Iverson, Pinet, & Evans, 2012), and

word stress, intonation, and vowel reduction (e.g., substituting the tense vowels such as /i/ and /u/ with /ə/) pose persistent challenges for the speakers of syllable-timed French (Trofimovich & Isaacs, 2012), all contributing to the perception of accentedness (Crowther, Trofimovich, Saito, & Isaacs, 2015). The English /θ-ð/ contrast does not carry a high functional load (Catford, 1987; Munro & Derwing, 2006); however, these consonants, usually substituted in the speech of Canadian French speakers for /t-d/ (Kang, 2008), are markers of accentedness in French speakers of English, as they can be challenging due to the absence of these phonemes in French and syllable structure constraints (Méli, 2013).

The primary objective of this study was thus to examine the benefits of a sensory treatment for attaining nativelike production of segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation by L2 actors. Consistent with prior research, nativelikeness was operationalized in terms of listeners' global accentedness ratings as well as listeners' judgments for specific linguistic dimensions of speech, including vowel and consonant errors, word stress, intonation, and fluency (Crowther et al., 2015; Munro & Derwing, 1995, 1999; Riney, Takada, & Ota, 2000; Riney, Takagi, & Inutsuka, 2005; Saito, Trofimovich, & Isaacs, 2015; Thompson, 1991; Trofimovich & Baker, 2006, 2007). The secondary objective was to evaluate additional benefits of sensory-based instruction, namely, whether it could also facilitate improved comprehensibility, greater speaker confidence, as well as actors' marketability and performance effectiveness in relation to the English-language acting market in North America. These dimensions would be particularly relevant to L2 users who embrace intelligible, comprehensible, and confident performance as learning and teaching goals, and to L2 actors who strive to succeed in an English-speaking market. Comprehensibility was operationalized as listener-based judgments of listeners' effort in understanding L2 speech (Crowther et al., 2015; Munro &

Derwing, 1995, 1999; Saito et al., 2015; Trofimovich & Baker, 2006). Actors' self-perceptions of performance were used as measures of speaking confidence (de Saint Léger & Storch, 2009), and performance effectiveness and marketability in regards to acting, though never rated before in an empirical study, were operationalized as listeners' perceptions of actors' level of performance and their ability to be considered for a broad range of English-speaking acting roles.

## Method

### Participants

The participants included two professional Quebec actors, Sebastian and Marianne (both pseudonyms), aged 25 and 31, respectively. They were part of a voice and speech course given by the first author (a professional actor with extensive experience in voice and accent coaching). The course originally had four participants (also actors); however, two were eliminated from analysis because they were absent from many course meetings and both had already high, near-native oral skills in L2 pronunciation. The two actor participants graduated from the *Conservatoire d'Art Dramatique de Montreal* (a three-year French acting program) prior to beginning the course. Marianne studied acting for a total of four years, and Sebastian a total of five years. Both actors began studying English formally in the fourth grade, and reported receiving no specific instruction on pronunciation in those classes. However, Sebastian noted speaking English with some English-speaking relatives in the years prior to primary school. In the background questionnaires, actors were asked to self-rate their proficiencies in English speaking, comprehension, writing, and reading on a 9-point scale (1 = *extremely poor*, 9 = *extremely advanced*). Marianne rated herself at an 8 on all proficiency measures. Sebastian rated his comprehension and reading at a 9 and 8, respectively, while his speaking and writing were lower at a 7 and 6, respectively.

Marianne's reported motivation to engage in pronunciation learning was to "to feel comfortable enough to be able to have auditions in English because it would diversify [her] acting career." She also expressed a strong desire for accent-free L2 speech, so that she "could sound like a native speaker of English because [she was] a perfectionist." Sebastian's goal was "to be a better actor in general… to better [his] confidence and to learn to appreciate the way [he speaks] in English." Thus, Sebastian wanted to feel confident in his pronunciation so that he could use the language believably on stage, unlike Marianne, who mostly wished to conform to the English-speaking industry standard. Though they expressed somewhat different motivational perspectives, both actors seemed highly motivated to improve their English pronunciation.

**Teaching Approach**

The sensory-based curriculum to teaching L2 pronunciation to actors was developed by the first author, based on Knight's (2012) "vocal posture" approach to pronunciation and various suprasegmental activities from Celce-Murcia, Goodwin, and Brinton (2010), following Gibson's (1979) definition of sensory and multisensory learning, which states that learners may benefit from associating previous sensory experience with new concepts (for a sample of teaching materials, see Appendix A). Each unit, which typically covered one week of instruction at 2.5 hours per week, began with vocal and physical warmups, similar to those presented by Hardison and Sonchaeng (2005). Vocal warm-ups, as a general voice and speech practice and as defined in Hardison and Sonchaeng (2005), quite literally warm-up the muscular components of speech (e.g., intercostal muscles, lips, tongue), while increasing awareness of the vocal tract and the processes of speech (e.g., increasing breath capacity, releasing any muscular tension in neck and shoulders). The vocal warmups concentrated on breathing exercises adapted from Fitzmaurice (2003), aiming at increasing breath support of the voice, vocal resonation, and bringing actors'

attention to articulators (See Appendix A). Next, actors listened to a passage of dramatic text (e.g., a monologue or poem) embedded with the target, in order to stimulate perception.

The main sensory treatment, which always followed a listening task, was used to present each pronunciation target. Word stress was presented and practiced using the rubber band technique, described in Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), where actors varied the expansion and contraction of the rubber band to mimic primary and secondary stresses within a word. Actors were asked to *feel* the differences in vowel length and syllable reduction, as opposed to using notations within their text. Intonation was presented and practiced by asking actors to *feel* pitch rises and falls by using physical gesture, such as mimicking an upward or downward intonation in the sentence with an upward or downward movement of the arm (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Connected speech phenomena, such as linking consonants (e.g., from the alveolar stop to the voiced interdental, as in *and_then*, *hold_these*) were presented, practiced, and reinforced by calling actors' attention to the *feeling* of the gliding tongue. For instance, actors were instructed to feel the change in tongue position from the alveolar ridge to the space between the front teeth by noticing the gliding feeling, while emphasizing and mimicking the movement with a gesture.

Individual segments were presented using a two-part treatment adapted from Knight (2012). In the first step, actors mimicked the sound system of English through Omnish by creating the general rhythm of word stress, cadence of intonation, and vocal qualities of North American English, avoiding the use of lexical items and simply focusing on how they perceived the sounds of English. Actors then commented on the differences they felt in articulation between Omnish and French. They pointed out the extreme use of their lips when speaking in the English Omnish as well as a high, forward tongue, a more nasal sound, and a wider opening or a smile of the lips. In the second step, actors related these qualities of English speech to their own

sense memory or sensory cue. For example, when focusing on a high front vowel (i.e., /i/), actors related the highly raised arch of their tongue to the feeling of scratching the sides of their tongue with their upper teeth. This was used by one of the actors to remind herself of the *feeling* of producing an /i/. These cues, as actors came up with many, were then reiterated by the teacher within performance practice. All targets were presented initially following the outlined sensory method. However, if actors requested more detailed explicit information, such as phonetic transcription, notations of stress and intonation, or rule- or theory-based content, sensory-based treatment was followed up by more explicit, form-focused explanations. For example, after one student asked for explicit rules targeting connected speech phenomena, half of one class period was dedicated to presenting the theory and rules of connected speech.

After a clear sensory cue for the target was established in each unit, actors began the "Popcorn Practice." This section consisted of controlled practice of authentic lines from theatrical texts containing the current target, as well as targets from the previous units. Actors would read the line quickly to themselves, would memorize it and then express it to a partner. Once the "Popcorn Practice" was completed, actors were reminded of the sensory cue before beginning the "Cold Reading" practice. This practice consisted of short scenes between two characters from authentic scripts that featured the lesson's target. In these activities, actors (working in pairs) would read a line of the text silently to themselves, forming a spontaneous opinion on the line and retaining it in their short-term memory (Guskin, 2003). Taking their time, they would then look at their partner and deliver the line of text as though they were acting in a performance, fully expressing the line to the other actor without looking down at the text. The slower pace of the dialogue allowed actors to reestablish the sensation of the target, enabling them to connect to the meaningful text.

Finally, each unit ended with a fluency section consisting of audition practice. For example, actors could opt for working on an authentic commercial script, a monologue, or a scene, all of which featured the target in varying environments. They also chose one set of audition materials to prepare for the following week, record it, and send to the instructor in order to receive notes before the following class. The following week, actors presented their audition material in front of the class, as though they were auditioning for a part. Those observing the mock audition took notes about the target for that week, audition technique, and believability of performance. After each audition, actors received teacher-moderated peer feedback.

**Materials and Procedure**

The sensory-based course took place over 10 weeks, with sessions scheduled once a week in a university classroom. At the start of instruction, actors filled out a background questionnaire and were presented with four monologues and six scenes from which they chose one favorite monologue and one scene to focus on throughout the course. Monologues were dramatic or comedic speeches (2 minutes in length) taken from contemporary American plays. Each monologue contained many instances of each target and showcased a wide range of emotionality. The scenes contained two character roles (i.e., male/female pairing) per scene, comedic and dramatic elements, and tokens of all targets (2 minutes in length). One monologue and one scene chosen by actors during Week 1 of instruction (T1) were audiorecorded on personal digital recorders in front of the entire class as a baseline for comparison. The same chosen monologues and scenes (i.e., practiced materials) as well as one new monologue and one novel scene (i.e., unpracticed materials) were recorded again at the end of instruction on the same personal digital recorders, during Week 11 (T2); however, due to time constraints, the actors were paired-up and recorded scenes and monologues with a partner privately in a separate room, so that recordings

could take place simultaneously. The monologues and scenes were practiced in class only once, where students received feedback in a mock audition context, otherwise all (familiar) recorded material was practiced outside of class on the students' time, and unfamiliar scenes and monologues were never practiced. All performances recorded and used for evaluation were read-aloud to mimic authentic audition conditions, where actors would be reading or referring to scripts held in their hands.

After each session, actors filled out a short online questionnaire through SurveyMonkey™ used to determine (a) which topic of instruction they found most beneficial after each class (e.g., sensory cue, suprasegmentals, connected speech, theory as presented by the teacher), (b) their pronunciation confidence for that week, and (c) the amount of time they practiced outside of class. Example questions included "What was the one thing from class that was the most helpful to you in your pronunciation this week?" and "How confident do you feel in your pronunciation this week?" (for full questionnaire, see Appendix B). Additionally, at the end of instruction, actors filled out an exit questionnaire to document possible changes in self-reported language proficiency and use. During Week 11, the instructor also conducted individual exit interviews (10–15 minutes) in English which gave actors a chance to summarize their experience as a whole, express their opinions on the cold reading technique used each week, and expand on their overall confidence level at the end of instruction in regards to their pronunciation.

**Speech Rating**

One monologue and one scene recorded by each actor at T1 ($n$ = 4) and two monologues and two scenes recorded by each at T2 ($n$ = 8, two practiced and two unpracticed per actor), along with 18 distractor recordings (featuring monologue and scene recordings from the course

by all four class participants) were normalized for amplitude and then shortened to include the first 45 seconds of performance, excluding initial dysfluencies. The 30 recordings were presented for rating to two groups of listeners who, in keeping with a focus on nativeness, were all native English speakers. The first group consisted of 10 linguistically trained students in MA and PhD programs in applied linguistics at an English-medium university in Montreal. The raters ($M_{age}$ = 31 years, *range* = 27–44), reported normal hearing, familiarity with foreign-accented English (*M* = 8.4, *range* = 6–9) on a 9-point scale (1= *no familiarity*, 9 = *extremely familiar*), and experience teaching English (*M* = 5.9 years, *range* = 2–12.5). The second listener group comprised 10 fourth-year students enrolled in an undergraduate degree in fine arts, with a specialization in theatre (4) or graduates currently working in English performance (6). These raters ($M_{age}$ = 23 years, *range* = 21–27) reported high familiarity with foreign-accented English (*M* = 7.5, *range* = 5–9) and extensive acting training (*M* = 8 years, *range* = 4–17).

The linguistically trained listeners used 1,000-point scales programmed in custom software *Z-Lab* (Yao, Saito, Trofimovich, & Isaacs, 2013) and displayed on a computer screen to evaluate each speech sample for six dimensions: accentedness (1 = *extremely accented*, 1000 = *no accent at all*), comprehensibility (1 = *a lot of effort to understand*, 1000 = *no effort to understand*), vowel and consonant errors (1 = *frequent errors*, 1000 = *absence of errors*), word stress errors (1 = *frequent errors*, 1000 = *absence of errors*), intonation (1 = *unnatural*, 1000 = *natural*), and flow (1 = *extremely disjointed speech*, 1000 = *natural and fluid speech*). The theatre listeners used the same interface to evaluate each sample for two dimensions: marketability, which was defined as the actor's ability to be considered for acting roles across the English-speaking market (1 = *not at all marketable*, 1000 = *extremely marketable*) and performance effectiveness, defined in terms of how engaging, honest, and well performed the

monologues and scenes sounded to the listener (1 = *not at all effective and engaging*, 1000 = *extremely effective and engaging*). Only the endpoints were labeled on each scale, with no numerical values shown, and the raters were told to use the entire range of the slider to record their judgment.

All listening sessions were conducted individually in a quiet location using high-quality stereo headsets, with the samples presented to each listener in a unique randomized order. In those samples where two actors spoke in the same clip (scenes), in order to cue listeners to the target speaker to rate, the volume of speech by the target speaker was kept intact while the volume for the secondary speaker was lowered. Listeners were thus instructed to rate the louder speaker; however, the secondary speaker was still audible, such that the target speaker's performance was fully contextualized. Before each rating session, listeners were trained on the rating criteria by using definitions of each construct with examples; they then performed practice ratings using the samples not included in the target set. The linguistically trained listeners performed the ratings in two blocks (45 minutes each), first evaluating all samples for accentedness and comprehensibility (with both scales appearing on screen) and then rating all samples (presented in a different randomized order) for the four speech dimensions, with all scales visible on screen simultaneously. Consistent with prior research (e.g., Saito et al., 2015), listeners were not allowed to replay each file but could proceed to the next sample at their own pace. The theatre listeners performed both ratings in a single block (45 minutes), with both scales available on the computer screen.

**Data Analysis**

The overall consistency within each group of listeners, calculated using Cronbach's alpha, was acceptable and in many instances high for the six linguistic measures: accent ($\alpha$ =

.66), comprehensibility ($\alpha = .62$), vowel and consonant errors ($\alpha = .64$), word stress ($\alpha = .79$), intonation ($\alpha = .77$), and flow ($\alpha = .80$); and for the two theatre measures: marketability ($\alpha = .77$) and performance effectiveness ($\alpha = .78$). Nevertheless, to capture listener-specific variability, the ratings given to Marianne and Sebastian were retained as listener-based scores and averaged across each actor's speech samples, separately at T1 and T2, to derive a single mean by-listener rating. The ratings from practiced and unpracticed materials at T2 were combined to reflect the natural circumstances that actors face in an audition context, with materials that are both prepared beforehand and those that are given to the actor at the time of the audition and are read "cold." Because the ratings were based on a limited set of speech samples, based on a small speaker set, these by-listener data were analyzed using nonparametric statistics (Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, Spearman correlations).

The qualitative data from the weekly surveys and exit interviews were coded by two trained coders (with graduate degrees in applied linguistics) according to the following categories that emerged from themes within the actors' comments: "sensory," "theory," "suprasegmentals," "curriculum exercises," and "confidence," because these were deemed to capture most of the thematic content of the curriculum (see Appendix C for definitions of coding categories). Any mention of segments was coded under the sensory category, as they were presented exclusively through the use of Omnish and with reference to sensory cues; therefore, any comments related to Omnish, vocal posture or positioning, articulation, segments in relation to feeling the articulatory processes, or other comments with explicit allusion to sensory work were coded as sensory. Additionally, any mentions of sensory exercises in relation to word stress (e.g., using the rubber band, feeling the stress), intonation (e.g., using movement in order to feel intonation shifts), and feeling connected speech transitions were also coded as sensory. A

comment was labeled as theory if it dealt with the teaching of explicit rules, phonetic notations or diacritics, or any aspect of focus on form during instruction. Any mentions of word stress, connected speech, or intonation were labelled as suprasegmentals, and any comments citing specific activities within the curriculum were labelled as curriculum. Actors' confidence was coded only when it was mentioned explicitly, and whenever actors noted an increase or decrease in confidence within open-ended comments. Both coders completed coding independently. Intercoder reliability (Cohen's $\kappa \geq .85$) exceeded the .70 benchmark for high agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

## Results

### Accentedness and Comprehensibility

The first analysis targeted the ratings given by the linguistically trained listeners to determine if there was a difference in actors' accentedness (nativelikeness) and if such a difference was also accompanied by improvement in comprehensibility (ease of understanding). Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics for these measures. Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, used to compare the accent and comprehensibility ratings for the two actors across time (T1 vs. T2), indicated that there was a significant positive change in accent for Marianne ($Mdn_{T1} = 641$, $Mdn_{T2} = 736$), $Z = 2.09$, $p = .037$, but no difference for Sebastian ($Mdn_{T1} = 791$, $Mdn_{T2} = 792$), $Z = 1.07$, $p = .29$. In terms of comprehensibility, both actors made positive gains from T1 to T2, but this difference did not reach significance, either for Marianne ($Mdn_{T1} = 883$, $Mdn_{T2} = 923$), $Z = .15$, $p = .88$, or Sebastian ($Mdn_{T1} = 836$, $Mdn_{T2} = 874$), $Z = .53$, $p = .59$. Therefore, though both actors received higher ratings for accent and/or comprehensibility at T2 than at T1, only Marianne made significant gains in accentedness over the course of instruction.

Table 1

*Listener Ratings from Time 1 (T1) and Time 2 (T2) for All Rated Categories*

| | Marianne | | | | Sebastian | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | T1 | | T2 | | T1 | | T2 | |
| Rating category | *Mdn* | *IQR* | *Mdn* | *IQR* | *Mdn* | *IQR* | *Mdn* | *IQR* |
| Accentedness | 641 | 220 | 736 | 270 | 791 | 430 | 792 | 220 |
| Comprehensibility | 883 | 90 | 923 | 120 | 836 | 140 | 874 | 190 |
| Vowels & consonants | 844 | 90 | 869 | 70 | 846 | 120 | 921 | 90 |
| Word stress | 828 | 100 | 827 | 120 | 920 | 120 | 926 | 130 |
| Intonation | 775 | 170 | 765 | 160 | 909 | 100 | 918 | 170 |
| Flow | 858 | 170 | 835 | 90 | 903 | 110 | 952 | 140 |
| Marketability | 306 | 170 | 320 | 220 | 458 | 320 | 472 | 260 |
| Performance effectiveness | 443 | 270 | 400 | 320 | 587 | 360 | 552 | 170 |

*Note. Mdn* = median, *IQR*= interquartile range (nonparametric measure of variability).

**Linguistic and Theatrical Measures**

The next analysis targeted possible improvement in linguistic and performance measures, to establish whether changes in accentedness and comprehensibility were associated with these rated dimensions of actors' speech (also summarized in Table 1). Similar Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were performed to compare the four linguistic measures (rated by linguistically trained listeners) and two theatrical measures (rated by theater listeners) for the two actors across time (T1 vs. T2). These tests yielded only one significant difference across time, namely, for Sebastian in his accuracy of vowel and consonant production ($Mdn_{T1} = 846, Mdn_{T2} = 921$), $Z = 2.19$, $p = .028$. Thus, Marianne's gain in accent could not be linked to a change in a specific

linguistic or performance measure, whereas Sebastian appeared to improve in his consonant and vowel production, without a concurrent significant change in either accentedness or comprehensibility.

In terms of performance effectiveness scores, both Marianne's and Sebastian's ratings decreased from T1 to T2. As this is the first study, to our knowledge, eliciting ratings for performance measures in regards to acting, it is important to point out that these ratings may have decreased over time due to the actors' attention to pronunciation accuracy over quality and engagement in the acting task. Had the instruction period been longer, there may have been a consequent increase in such ratings, as after more repetition, familiarity, and confidence gains, attention may have eventually shifted back to performance quality and elements related to craft.

**Weekly Surveys**

Marianne completed all 10 weekly surveys and reported practicing an average of 45 minutes per week outside of instruction, while Sebastian completed seven out of 10 surveys and recounted practicing an average of 15 minutes per week. Responses to the weekly surveys revealed that Marianne found the sensory cue to be most memorable and beneficial, reporting 10 positive instances in the 10 weeks of instruction, with one negative comment, totaling 11 sensory comments. Theoretical elements were mentioned the least by Marianne, with just two instances. Conversely, Sebastian found theoretical aspects of the curriculum to be the most beneficial, mentioning theory 10 times, and the sensory cue to be the least beneficial, mentioning it only twice. Table 2 depicts the actors' coded responses of the weekly survey, listed by week. It should be noted that Marianne's mention of sensory-based work in week two was a negative comment (e.g., *Its hard for me to think about the placement with the kiwi trick and pronounce accurately*), where the actor noted that she had some difficulty with the concepts presented.

Table 2

*Total Coded Responses from 10 Weekly Surveys*

| Week | Marianne | Sebastian |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 (S) | 1 (S), 2 (C), 1 (T) |
| 2 | 1 (S), 1 (C) | 1 (C), 1 (T) |
| 3 | 2 (S) | 2 (C), 1 (T) |
| 4 | 2 (C) | X |
| 5 | 2 (C) | X |
| 6 | 1 (S), 1 (C) | 1 (S), 2 (T) |
| 7 | 1 (S), 1 (C) | 1 (C), 2 (T) |
| 8 | 1 (S), 1 (C) | 2 (T) |
| 9 | 1 (S), 1 (C), 3 (Sup) | 2 (Sup), 1 (T) |
| 10 | 1 (S), 1 (C), 1 (Sup), 1 (T) | X |

*Note. (S) = sensory, (T) = theory, (C) = curriculum, (Sup) = suprasegmentals*

The following comments, all from actors' responses to open-ended questions, exemplify the contrast in their reactions to the course, with Marianne focusing on the sensory cues and Sebastian prioritizing theoretical aspects of instruction.

- The positioning of the tong [tongue] is very helpful for me. Taking my time to pronounce is helping a lot too, instead of going very fast and thinking no one will notice (Marianne; sensory; Week 3).
- I realize how important it is to concentrate on how I place my mouth when I speak English (Marianne; sensory; Week 8).
- I feeling more and more confident, and the further we go into theory the more I am able to establish the similarities and difference with French pronunciation (Sebastian; theory; Week 6).

- I feel like I am really beginning to understand the theory behind the pronunciation, and that my pronunciation is that much stronger (Sebastian; theory; Week 8).

Actors also found the curriculum beneficial, Marianne making 10 comments, mostly related to the warmup exercises and the mock audition context, and noting the cold reading exercise in three comments. Sebastian expressed six comments, all related to the mock audition context, scene work, and the cold reading exercise. Suprasegmentals were also found to be beneficial by the actors. Marianne mentioned stress and intonation in four instances within the 10-week survey, while Sebastian noted suprasegmentals twice. Most of the comments on stress occurred within the last three weeks of teaching across both participants, suggesting a shift toward improved integration of the concepts, as illustrated in the following excerpts.

- I feel like trying to know where the stresses are in a word or in a sentence start to become a second nature for me cuz I do it in my everyday life when I read English (Marianne; suprasegmentals; Week 9).
- [The most important part of instruction this week was…] to know that once you find the stress, it simplify the pronunciation of the word, and of the sentence (Sebastian; suprasegmentals; Week 9).

Additionally, when asked to rate their confidence level in each weekly survey, Sebastian rated his confidence level at "very confident" four times and "neutral" three times in 10 weeks. Three of those four "very confident" ratings came in the last four weeks of instruction. Sebastian was either absent or neglected to fill out the survey for the three remaining weeks. Marianne reported her confidence to be "neutral" twice at the beginning of instruction; "very confident" six times throughout the middle of instruction, and "extremely confident" twice near the end of instruction. In sum, the weekly journals revealed actors' different approaches and learning

tendencies. Sebastian tended to comment on the theory-based aspects of the curriculum, citing it as beneficial, whereas Marianne showed a preference for the sensory-based and the suprasegmental aspects of instruction.

**Exit Interviews**

Much like the weekly surveys, most of Sebastian's exit comments focused on theory. He noted theoretical aspects five times throughout the interview. When speaking about his experience with the cold reading exercise, he mentioned the ease in which he was able to integrate the theory into his performance. Additionally, he mentioned the technical way of seeing the stress by drawing different sized circles above syllables as being beneficial, in contrast to Marianne's preferred way of finding stress through the rubber band method, where actors felt the expansion and contraction of the sound in their hands. Sebastian's orientation towards theory is clear in the following excerpts from his interview.

- I really enjoyed the cold reading exercise in general, because it was really fun to act and to play. So you would get the theory without noticing it. And um it could, like, like… like the cold reading but applied directly to a sound. So that, yeah the cold reading was my favorite part (Sebastian; theory; Exit).
- But my realization… Its all about the theory. At first it was really hard for me to hear where it was, the stress. And with the little circles and the big circles it really helped me to identify it and learn and now it comes really really easier (Sebastian; theory; suprasegmentals; Exit).

Marianne made two comments noting stress and intonation as being beneficial to her pronunciation overall, and one comment about segmentals and the sensory-based approach. In

the following comments, she is responding to the question, "What did you find the most helpful throughout the instruction?"

- Uh well, maybe putting the emphasis on the stress, and um the placement of the mouth [using a sensory cue], and uh, yeah that's about it (Marianne; stress; sensory; Exit).
- [An example of a helpful part of instruction… the placement of the mouth for the sound ee (Marianne; segmentals; sensory; Exit).

She concludes with a comment about stress and intonation in response to the question, "What has surprised you most about your pronunciation?"

- …it still surprises me, yeah it surprises me since the beginning since last January I feel like when I'm when I'm speaking my sentences are different they aren't just one tone there's fluctuation. Because I know where to put the stresses and uh yeah it kind of comes by itself and and yeah as I was telling you the other day when I read now, when I read a sentence I'm like oh okay so this stress would be here you know and I don't have to do that, and yeah like reading a sign, and yeah that's new it just comes by itself and its surprising and its great (Marianne; suprasegmentals; Exit).

Much like their commentary in the weekly surveys, the exit interviews affirmed actors' specific approaches to the instruction. Moreover, their specific learner tendencies—Marianne aligning with a sensory-based tendency and Sebastian preferring a theoretical perspective—informed how they approached every aspect of instruction.

## Discussion

The main goals of this case study were to examine the benefits of sensory-based instruction for actors' L2 English pronunciation, more specifically, for the development of nonaccented, nativelike speech across several dimensions (vowel and consonant accuracy, word

stress, intonation, and fluency). A secondary objective was to evaluate whether this type of instruction also facilitates improved comprehensibility and greater speaker confidence as well as actors' marketability and performance effectiveness in relation to the English-language acting market in North America. Listener ratings and qualitative data revealed that one of the actors (Marianne) made significant gains in her accentedness scores, with such gains attributed to this actor's overall focus on the sensory cue as the most helpful aspect of instruction. The other actor (Sebastian) did not show a significant improvement in accentedness, but improved significantly in his accuracy of producing English vowels and consonants, as rated by linguistically trained listeners. Both actors improved in their already high comprehensibility, albeit not significantly, and grew in confidence when speaking and acting in English. In terms of performance ratings, both actors made slight but nonsignificant gains in their marketability scores, while their performance effectiveness ratings actually decreased slightly across the two testing times, suggesting that improvements in global and linguistic dimensions of speech may not readily translate to perceptible change in performance ratings.

This study showed that pronunciation instruction within a classroom context facilitated accentedness and (to a limited extent) also comprehensibility gains in actors' L2 speech, consistent with prior classroom-based research (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Derwing et al., 1997, 1998; Couper, 2003, 2006, 2011; Saito & Lyster, 2012; Trofimovich, Lightbown, Halter, & Song, 2009), especially with instructional periods of at least 10 weeks in length (Champagne-Muzar et al., 1993; Couper, 2003, 2006, 2011; Derwing et al., 1997, 1998; Sardegna, 2011) and with contextualized instruction targeting segmental, suprasegmental, and fluency targets (Champagne-Muzar et al., 1993; Galante & Thomson, 2016), as was the case here. Additionally, the current findings highlight that a pronunciation-specific class can be beneficial for adult

learners looking to improve such global dimensions of L2 speech as accent and comprehensibility for a professional purpose. This finding is noteworthy because research on L2 pronunciation for specific purposes is currently lacking.

**Accent as a Learning Goal**

However, unlike most current pronunciation research, the instruction described here aimed at improved accent over comprehensibility, in keeping with the needs of the target learner group for whom nonaccented, nativelike speech is generally preferred over accented, yet comprehensible performance (Fine, 1999). Although both actors made improvements in their accentedness scores (see Table 1), neither actor reached their ultimate learning goal, which was to sound nativelike in English. Given that both learners were professional actors (highly motivated to pass for native speakers for professional reasons) and were evaluated using highly practiced, read-aloud content, the difficulty of the two actors with attaining nonaccented L2 speech further highlights that this is a particularly challenging and possibly unrealistic objective (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Levis, 2005), at least within the confines of a 10-week, custom-designed course. However, future research looking at L2 speech with a longer instructional period focusing on attaining nativelike pronunciation on practiced, memorized, and performed text – the context most likely to resemble an actual audition or performance – could be beneficial.

It is, of course, possible that the actors' speech performance reflected the specific tasks used to evaluate their speech (read-aloud scenes and monologues). Reading aloud is precisely the medium through which actors would be auditioning for roles (e.g., reading scenes or performing prepared texts), unlike other learners who need to use their L2 pronunciation in a spontaneous way. It is possible that if spontaneous speech, such as improvisational scenes, had been elicited,

Marianne's accent scores may have seen a greater increase toward more nativelike speech. For example, Levis and Barriuso (2011) note that reading aloud is a specific skill, drawing on spelling proficiency and associated phonological forms. These researchers compared speech samples from 12 English L2 learners speaking in spontaneous and read-aloud contexts, showing that a greater percentage of vowel errors occurred in read-aloud than in spontaneous contexts, and that consonant errors were relatively equal across both conditions. They attributed this difference to the issue of 15 or more vowel sounds in spoken English being assigned to only five written forms. Thus, due to the occurrence of unrecognizable words or spellings, read-aloud conditions may be more challenging for learners, and it may be beneficial, moving forward, to test learners in both spontaneous and read-aloud tasks (Levis & Barriuso, 2011; Munro & Derwing, 1994).

However, regardless of assessment condition, improvements in accentedness ratings are actually atypical (Derwing et al., 1997, 1998; Derwing, Munro, Foote, Waugh, & Fleming, 2014; Foote, 2016; Saito, 2012). For example, in Derwing et al. (1998), native-speaking listeners rated L2 English speech samples before and after three instructional conditions. One group received nonspecific instruction, with no particular focus other than traditional grammar, reading, and writing instruction. The second group targeted segmental pronunciation, and the third group had a global focus on suprasegmentals, such as intonation, speech rate, rhythm, and stress. Though both the segmental and global groups made significant improvement in their overall accent ratings after instruction, only the global group was able to transfer those significant gains to the narrative tasks requiring spontaneous output. A more recent workplace study, looking at seven L2 English speaking factory workers in Canada, Derwing et al. (2014) found that after administering a needs assessment for pronunciation instruction and implementing the

instructional treatment, learners improved in accent on the factory safety talk task; however, on the suitcase description task, their accent scores actually worsened. Thus, Marianne's significant accent improvement, where she focused on the suprasegmental, intonation, stress, and fluency aspects of instruction, in addition to some focus on segments, all delivered through a sensory-based method contribute to the rare outcome of accent improvement.

**Different Learning Paths**

An important theme that emerged from qualitative data concerned different approaches that the two actors took throughout the instruction. One actor (Sebastian) tended to adopt theory-based learning while the other (Marianne) embraced the sensory-based approach. The theory-based teaching in this study was akin to form-focused instruction, as defined in Saito and Lyster (2012) and Ellis (2001). Such instruction involves an explicit focus on specific aspects of pronunciation and phonological form (such as the /ɹ/-/l/ distinction in English), together with corrective feedback, all within meaningful practice. For example, focusing on the production of English /ɹ/ by Japanese learners, Saito (2013) found that explicit phonetic instruction embedded within meaningful practice resulted in more learning gains and greater generalization to unpracticed materials, compared to meaningful instruction alone.

The sensory method differs from form-focused instruction in that there is no specific focus drawn to one form, but an articulatory structure derived from learners' perceptions is applied to a given pronunciation target exclusively through reference to a sensory cue or exercise. The sensory method, so defined, is compatible with Couper's (2011) teaching approach, where learners were asked to describe their own conceptions of perceived differences in articulation of sounds between their L1 and L2. For example, to draw learners' attention to the pronunciation targets, in his case focusing on the elimination of vowel epenthesis in a word-final

syllable, Couper led short discussions with learners, allowing them to draw differences between L1 and L2 production by verbalizing the different qualities of the sounds produced. Couper found that such socially constructed metalanguage helped learners create new concepts for the target sounds through group discussion and awareness-building activities. In the sensory-based approach, as implemented here, actors were also encouraged to create personal conceptions for each pronunciation target. However, they accomplished this not by means of explicit L1-L2 comparisons but through engaging their senses and linking such sensory experiences to the articulation of each target.

The materials in this study, though focusing broadly on accent and not on one specific pronunciation feature, had elements in line with various types of teaching. For example, each targeted feature was introduced through a perception task, then explained through a conceptually new way of relating the senses to that feature, often followed by explicit explanation (at the request of actors), and with controlled and semi-controlled practice and corrective feedback throughout instruction. Sebastian appeared to have embraced the form-focused elements of the instruction, preferring explicit presentation, notation, and practice of phonetic forms and rules. In fact, he was the student (out of the four actors) who regularly asked for explicit rules behind word stress, connected speech, and used a standard vowel chart and IPA symbols in the case of segmentals. Sebastian's self-reported previous experience with the French phonetic system likely steered him to focus on phonetic forms within the section of the class devoted to explicit teaching. In other words, Sebastian might have been "primed," through prior experience with phonetics and a general propensity for theory-based learning, to attend to the aspect of instruction focusing on explicit teaching of segmental forms rather than on the sensory cues associated with segmental targets.

On the other hand, Marianne integrated the sensory work with ease and frequently commented on these elements of instruction, including the use of different personal sensory cues. The focus on the sensory cues likely gave Marianne the kinds of tools she needed to help her approximate the production of English segmentals and suprasegmentals, leading to an improvement in her overall accent ratings. In addition, Omnish-based exercises, which were a significant part of sensory teaching, aimed at affecting the quality of L2 output in a broad sense, eliciting a vocal posture and targeting general muscular articulatory differences between the French sound system and that of English. In regards to intonation and word stress, Marianne also remarked weekly on the kinesthetic and gestural exercises as being the most helpful to her. In essence, sensory-based teaching likely targeted a constellation of features related to L2 articulatory settings, or voice-quality settings, which characterize L2 speech broadly, drawing learners' "attention to the general characteristics of accent" (Esling & Wong, 1983, p. 90). Thus, at least for Marianne, it was likely the sensory-based work which generally targeted her overall speech patterns across a broad range of linguistic targets (i.e., segmentals, connected speech, and stress), facilitated her improvement in accentedness, with no single linguistic aspect of speech detected as being relevant to this improvement.

**Sensory Instruction for L2 Pronunciation**

While the use of sensory-based methods in theatrical speech programs is currently underrepresented (Barnes, 2011), it is conceivable to see these exercises integrated into future curricula. The sensory approach, which is derived from Knight's (2000, 2012) sensory-based experiential method and whose main aspects were targeted in the instruction described here, is gradually finding its way into university speech classes, yet its effectiveness has never been tested empirically. This study provides preliminary empirical evidence for the effectiveness of

sensory-based pedagogy, compatible with the techniques used for theater and speech students, by highlighting its benefits for L2 actors using global linguistic measures of speech, such as accentedness and comprehensibility. However, teachers might express concerns about the utility of sensory-based activities and the ease of their implementation in the language classroom. Teachers often rely heavily on corrective feedback (typically in the form of recasts, or reformulations of erroneous utterances) in their treatment of pronunciation in communicative classrooms (Foote, Trofimovich, Collins, & Urzúa, 2016), and may be wary of introducing pronunciation as a complement to instruction or incorporating new methods of learning into existing curricula. However, Knight's Omnish technique and the use of sensory cues do not require training, as the teacher acts as facilitator (Knutson, 2003), asking simple guiding questions (e.g., What new sounds did you notice from your "fake" English? What new sensations did you feel regarding articulation?) to help students build an internalized and personal sense memory that they can later draw from (see Appendix D for more examples).

Sensory learning can be used in mixed-level classes or classrooms with learners from heterogeneous L1 backgrounds, as sensory activities do not require high levels of metalinguistic or specialized knowledge to implement and do not depend on a common set of pronunciation issues across learners. Put differently, all learners—regardless of their L1 background or the makeup of their pronunciation difficulties—can create and use *personalized* sensory cues to associate with the pronunciation of various aspects of the target language, all within meaning-oriented instruction. Sensory-based cues can also be practiced as self-study, outside of the classroom in daily interaction, as a compliment to the L2 curriculum.

The physical, sensory-based exercises included in this study are akin to broader types pronunciation activities focusing on learners' kinesthetic, gestural, or whole-body experiences,

such as, for example, activities targeting gestural expressions in teaching intonation in haptic-integrated pronunciation instruction (Acton, Baker, Burri, & Teaman, 2013) and physical activities involving the use of a rubber band for teaching word stress perception (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Gilbert, 2012). Just as these already well-known activities, sensory-based instruction could be incorporated into vocabulary, dialogue/roleplay, and conversation practice. And considering the previous findings about the roles of form-focused instruction (Saito & Lyster, 2012; Saito, 2013) and awareness-building and cognitive phonetics activities (Couper, 2011) in pronunciation teaching, and given the current results about the value of using other tools available to the learner, including the senses, it may be beneficial for pronunciation curricula to include more than one teaching approach. In other words, by incorporating sensory-based exercises into pronunciation instruction, teachers might have a better chance of reaching students with different learning styles and learning needs.

## Limitations and Further Research

Because this research was conceptualized as an exploratory study targeting a novel approach to teaching pronunciation, the sample size of learners was necessarily small. Thus, it may be difficult to generalize any learning effects to other L2 actors or learners in a broad sense. Moreover, actors may have unique abilities, such as proficiency in movement, singing, or muscular memory, that predispose them to sensory learning over other L2 learners, and which could act as moderating variables, contributing to possible learning gains. Additionally, the actor who preferred sensory learning over theory-based instruction was female, and the actor who prioritized form-focused instruction was male. McGuiness and Pribram (1979) noted that females, compared to males, have a higher threshold for touch and tactile sensitivity and greater auditory ability in infant to toddler development, while male children have a higher threshold for

visual acuity. Additionally, Major (2004) found that when reading sentences aloud, females performed with a greater tendency toward careful pronunciation over their male counterparts. Gender biases may thus have contributed to the actors' choice of instruction types and performance in the read aloud scenes. Perhaps a larger sample size could reveal whether actors' preferences toward different methods of instruction are gender neutral. The scope of the curriculum, which included multiple segmental, suprasegmental, and fluency targets and featured various types of practice, also made it difficult to determine which aspect of the instruction had the most positive impact on actors' L2 pronunciation. In future research, it might be interesting to isolate the effect of different instructional targets and practice activities on various aspects of learners' performance, such as both read-aloud and spontaneous speech.

Methodologically, it may have been a limitation that the weekly surveys and interviews were conducted in the actors' L2 (English), as opposed to their L1 (French). Perhaps eliciting their perceptions of instruction in their L1, where their lexical description would have been richer, could have yielded a more robust qualitative data set.

The consistency of listeners' ratings was lower than desired, with two linguistically trained listeners giving drastically lower scores for all measures, which downplayed the extent of actors' improvement over time. To avoid any further data loss and to preserve all listener-based variability as part of by-listener scored data, no outlier data were removed; nevertheless, low rating reliability remains a limitation. One of the listeners also noted that this study was this rater's initial experience using a 1,000-point rating system, voicing concerns of being uncomfortable evaluating L1 French speakers for lack of experience speaking French, thus revealing a possible bias stemming from raters' (in)experience with L1-accented speech (Carey, Mannell, & Dunn, 2011). Another listener reported this study to be this rater's first experience

rating linguistic measures. Saito et al. (2015) and Thompson (1991) point out that linguistically experienced raters, compared to inexperienced ones, are more reliable when assessing global and linguistic measures of L2 performance. Though all non-theatre listeners had previous training in applied linguistics, they were not well-versed in rating speech samples, which might have affected their rating severity. Another possible reason for the lower than desired rater reliability could have been due to the emotional content of the sound samples. The samples the listeners rated were of dramatic interpretations of theatrical texts. To our knowledge, this is the first study that has ever used acted material for rating purposes. As linguistic raters may not have ever rated acting performances, the emotionality of the voices could have caused irregular perceptions on linguistic measures. Moreover, most studies have only rated samples of speech containing one speaker, whereas some samples in this study contained dialogue with varied volume. It is possible that listening to two speakers, even with volume variations, created a comparison effect, where the rater inadvertently compared the target speaker to the background speaker.

Exit questionnaires completed by theatre listeners revealed that almost all 10 listeners expressed difficulty in rating performance effectiveness. Many mentioned its subjective nature, and observed that much of the information used to judge a performance is derived from the visual image, in addition to the auditory experience. In future research, therefore, it would be important to carefully control rater background and experience variables, as well as to finetune performance measures to include visual information, so that the consistency of assessments used to evaluate actors' performances could be improved.

## Conclusion

The overall objective of this case study was to describe and evaluate a new approach to pronunciation teaching based on sensory-based techniques and designed for L2 actors whose

learning goal primarily involves reducing the degree of accent in their speech. The featured instructional materials combine the teaching of muscular and sensory awareness from theater and voice training (Knight, 2012) with a focus on segmental and suprasegmental aspects of L2 pronunciation through controlled and semi-controlled practice activities (e.g., Celce-Murcia et al., 2010) to create a usable, relatable, and context-transferrable curriculum for pronunciation training. To our knowledge, this is the first study that reports findings from a sensory-based curriculum for actors and applies this curriculum to the teaching of L2 pronunciation. Thus, theatrical methods of learning, not only drama-based activities, can facilitate improved L2 pronunciation and increase speaker confidence. Additionally, as one of the few studies focusing on L2 pronunciation for specific purposes, this study highlights the need to include instructional materials and practice contexts that match learners' intended use. Put simply, learners with specific language needs should have opportunities to practice the language features in the same way they intend to use them in their private and professional lives.

## Chapter 3

The findings of this study suggest that sensory learning, an approach taken from acting methods and compatible with experiential learning (Knutson, 2003), may be beneficial to actors' speech training and the development of L2 learners' accentedness. Second, this method, when incorporated into a curriculum with practice exercises that match learners' intended contexts of language use, can help facilitate improved speaker confidence. This study also supports previous research that proposes a contextualized curriculum both in content, involving aspects of segmental, suprasegmental, and fluency instruction (Levis, 2005; Munro & Derwing, 1999; Zielinski, 2015), and in format, targeting explicit and sensory-based instruction (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010; Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 1988; Holme, 2012; Knight, 2000, 2012). Finally, this study was the first to look at pronunciation for performance purposes, where the learner goal is nativeness. Neither actor achieved nativeness at the end of instruction, supporting previous research that suggests nativelike speech to be a challenging learning goal (Munro & Derwing, 2009; Levis, 2005). Thus, this chapter will take a closer look at the historical influences of commercial standard speech, beginning with the outdated speech standard and practices put forth by Edith Skinner. Next, it will examine how commercial standard speech has influenced the media (e.g., television, film, theatre, and radio), language learning and nonnative actors. Finally, it will discuss how the media are shaping L2 learners' and the general public's attitudes toward accented speech. This closer look is important, in order to understand how standard speech influences L2 learners' preference to sound nativelike and the relationship between performance voice and speech and L2 pronunciation instruction goals.

Derwing (2003) pointed out the well-known example from *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw where Eliza Doolittle's status hinges on her ability to learn a more prestigious

form of English pronunciation. In the film, Audrey Hepburn accomplishes this task in a matter of 90 minutes, giving the impression that by making a few small changes, her speech, physicality, manners, status, and desirability will improve easily. However, many L2 speakers do not achieve this (Derwing, 2003), and yet both native-speaking and nonnative actors are supposed to emulate this kind of seamless transformation (Knight, 2000). In order to fully understand the influence of the media and to identify where the industry of film and television currently stand with respect to standard speech and where the industry is moving, the issue needs to be contextualized from a historical perspective (Knight, 2000).

As outlined in Knight (2000), William Tilly, an Australian born actor, began studying under Henry Sweet, the man known as the real Henry Higgins and the "inventor" of transcription and IPA. Tilly was the founder of a prestigious English language school in Germany in the 1890s. He began obsessively focusing on the proper way to speak English, championing a very narrow form of phonetic transcription (Knight, 2000). After battling critics in the US, Tilly developed what he and his main disciples, Margaret Prendergast, Windsor P. Daggert, and Edith Skinner, called the World English Standard (WES) and brought it to New York City. After Tilly's death, Daggert introduced the WES to the theatre, began pushing Tilly's speech work throughout the industry, and in his weekly column for *The Billboard* publication, declared that "[t]he stage, then, was to serve as a model for the speech of Americans generally" (Knight, 2000, p. 42). Daggert, Prendergast, and Skinner became speech teachers at the then most prestigious acting schools in the US. Their WES resembled the mid-Atlantic speech of a time long gone, yet some teachers in prestigious speech programs still teach this standard (Barnes, 2011; Knight, 2000). A rebellious camp spurred from the structure and rigidity of the WES. Professor John Kenyon, author of *American Pronunciation*, was one of the first to speak out against Daggert,

stating that the standard was not representative of any variety of English spoken by actual people. A battle between Tilly's camp and the scholarly camp ensued. Scholars denounced Tilly's method as cultish and unrealistic, and when they published a study of surveys from phoneticians and linguists rejecting WES, one of Tilly's followers, Letitia Raubicheck, fervently conducted her own study, surveying teachers within NYC institutions where the WES was predominantly taught. Raubicheck's results swayed heavily toward WES, and since the 1940s, WES has infiltrated theatre speech programs as the primary pronunciation goal, continuing the great debate as to which camp is right (Knight, 2000).

Barnes (2011) conducted an online survey with speech trainers from MFA, BFA, BA, private practice, and prestigious acting programs to better understand what voice and speech teachers were actually teaching in their theatre classrooms. Barnes structured the questionnaire with a yes/no format, followed by elicitations of open-ended explanations. Of those surveyed, 76% admitted they taught some form of a standard speech, with 40% claiming they taught a General American Standard. Long-form responses revealed a lean toward a nonregional sound. One teacher went as far as to say that the language taught was one of "[a] basically neutral American accent… [and] that 'neutral' is very misleading and actually implies straight, white, educated, Christian, Midwestern, upper-middle-class – which is not neutral at all" (Barnes, 2011, p. 226). This teacher begins to recognize the stereotype that "neutral" speech connotes and acknowledges that there likely is no neutral, but rather individual variation of speech (Knight, 2000, 2012; Lippi-Green, 1987).

Barnes grouped instructors' reasons for teaching a standard form of English as the ideal speech into three categories: (a) it offers a pronunciation *baseline*, (b) it is "desired for stage and media work" (p. 227), and (c) it develops perception, muscular, and language skills. These

categories reflect Daggert's original line of thinking and teaching and the influence the Tilly camp continues to have on theatrical speech programs, which was to make WES pronunciation the model speech in the stage or performance arena. Other instructors had promising responses, stating, for example, "I do not teach [my students] standard speech patterns. The benefit of mastering the making [of] any sound is the ability to transform one's speaking to match the needs of the play and character" (Barnes, 2011, p. 229). While this respondent denounced a standard speech model, expressing allegiance toward serving the dialect of a given play, TV program, or film, this instructor is still in the minority. Stereotypes continue to blossom in the media, in the hands of directors, writers, and casting directors the majority of whom still uphold standard speech (Bleichenbacher, 2012; O'Cassidy, 2005).

Hollywood, with its global market for English-language film and television, is one of the leading contributors of English-based culture and arts products to nonnative speakers of English, or speakers of English as a lingua franca (Crystal, 2004). Many nonnative speakers of English, living in foreign-language contexts rely on English media as a source of L2 and cultural input (Yong & Campbell, 1995) and can be susceptible to the influence of language, culture, and accent stereotyping (Lippi-Green, 1997). In many cases, film, TV, and sometimes theatrical, and live productions augment the belief that standard American speech is the desired and "correct" pronunciation of English by positioning as "other" both nonnative English speech and speech from native dialects English deviating from the standard (Berg, 2002; Lippi-Green, 1997). When Lippi-Green (1997, 2012) surveyed accents found in Disney animated movies, she found that 20% of the US English-speaking characters were portrayed in negative roles, while 40% of the nonnative English-speaking characters were seen as evil. The author goes on to observe that many of the nonnative characters tended to be racially profiled (e.g., portrayals of characters in

roles depicting "nefarious Asians… smart-mouthed, lazy, disrespectful African Americans"), and urges further research to look at all facets of linguistic profiling within the entertainment industry.

Berg (2002) points out the "vicious cycle" of stereotyping in films. For example, according to Berg, Joaquim de Almeida's Columbian drug lord antagonist in the movie *Clear and Present Danger* (1994) could be seen as an acceptable portrayal of a Latino character if it were a seldom occurrence. However, the depiction of Latinos in gang-related images is habituated by Hollywood, creating a normalcy effect, where the stereotype becomes the representation (Berg, 2002, p. 19). Looking at dialect and image discrimination of the people of West Virginia and their representation in film, O'Cassidy (2005) surveyed 10 films that contained characters from West Virginia. She observed that instances containing characters with a heavy West Virginia dialect correlated strongly with instances of stereotype. She also noted that most of the characters in the 10-film sample were represented as having low-paying jobs and lacking in education. These are just a few examples of the observed and documented instances of Hollywood minimizing cultures and accents that deviate from the standard English speech.

Researchers have collected learners' perceptions of accented speech, reporting student claims that television, films, and media impact their opinion (Lindemann, 2005; Tardo & Fernandez, 2016). In Lindemann (2005), university undergraduates were asked to write descriptive words pertaining to their perception of each country or region on a blank world map. One student wrote over the Middle East and India that the accent was really hard to understand and three noted that it reminded them of Apu, the owner of the Quickie Mart in the animated primetime program *The Simpsons*. In a similar map task study, Tardo and Fernandez (2016) presented an exploratory paper at a recent conference of the *American Association for Applied*

*Linguistics* where the authors surveyed preservice ESL teachers in the New England area. The student teachers were asked to fill in a map of the New England area, including Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire, with adjectives they felt were accurate descriptions of the dialects for each area. Some comments included referring to Vermont's dialects as "crunchy granola," Boston's sound as "more lower class," and the area north of Boston as a better way to speak. These comments were collected from ESL teachers in their final year of education, before entering the school systems in the very areas they remarked upon. Further comments revealed more than a handful of references to media influence, when teachers were asked where they may have developed these perceptions. Tardo and Fernandez reflected on the need for an accent tolerance component in the ESL teachers' curriculum, in order to raise consciousness for teachers and their future students.

In this study, the actors were asked to score their resentment in having to change their accent in order to work in the English TV, film, and theatre industry on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). At the beginning of instruction, Marianne rated her level of resentment at a 1, which meant that she was fully open to changing her accent, whereas Sebastian rated his at a 7, being strongly opposed to it. At the end of instruction, Marianne rated her resentment at a 7 and Sebastian a 1. Sebastian was absent twice and rarely did the homework asked of him, whereas Marianne put in the maximum amount of effort of all four students. Perhaps the amount of effort it takes to acquire a nativelike sound, which we know from previous research is a nearly impossible task (Munro & Derwing, 1999), influenced Marianne's perception of resentment at the end of instruction.

In a wide-reaching industry, such as the entertainment industry, it is important to understand just how much influence Hollywood has in proliferating the standard model of

speech as a learning goal in L2 classrooms. Raising accent awareness should not just take place in a small-scale format in language classrooms, it should take place on a broader scale in responsible business and entertainment entities, such as the film and TV industry. Future research would benefit from understanding the expectations and perceptions of the stakeholders currently situated in Hollywood's stronghold, such as casting directors, directors, writers, and producers. Barnes (2011) concluded with promising statistics that more university speech instructors are moving in the direction of promoting "clarity, understanding and versatility" over correct speech (p. 233), and with the growing inclusion of different cultures and races in prominent roles, these instructors believe that "it will become more necessary for audiences to not only see actors with whom they can relate, but also to *hear* actors with whom they can relate" (p. 233).

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**Appendix A**

Sample Unit

# IH

”Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I’m not sure about the universe.”
–Albert Einstein

# LISTEN

Lie down on your back or sit in a comfortable position with your eyes closed. Listen to the following passage three times. During the first time through, simply notice where you might hear the speaker use "IH". How is it emphasized within the sentence? How is it connected to other sounds? On the second pass, breathe with the phrasing and the rhythm. During the third listen, see if you can also notice the previous sounds we have covered, allowing yourself to sense how the tongue shifts from one sound to the other. [10 minutes allotted]

If even you inherit what you thought was indignation,

Then he did not live in vain. No, he lifted you from your own boredom of existence, and reached within your heart, and found a reason there to live. Your father was a man. That's all. In a word, a man.

# WARM-UPS

- **Face, Lips, & Tongue**
  - 5 x's Make your face as big as you can and as small as you can
  - Pretend you are chewing a big piece of gum with closed lips, moving them around
  - Stick your tongue out and in, then do five circles to the right then left
  - Make sure you are isolating each articulator and not moving the jaw.
- **Lip trills**
  - Relax your lips and pretend they are the motor on a boat. Breath in and blow out air, making them vibrate, sounding like a motor boat.
- **3 x's WEE-WAH-WOE WEE-WAH-WOE WEE-WAH-WOE**
  - Exaggerate the movements of the lips when saying the sounds
- **3 x's Either Ether Tether Den Either Ether Tether Den**
- **3 x's LEE LEE LEE LEE LEE – LIH LIH LIH LIH LIH- NIH NIH NIH NIH NIH**
- **3 x's Ten Times Down The Path and Then Down There**
- **P/B; T/D; K/G**

- Practice these in a rhythmic pattern getting faster: P, P, P, P; (then double time) P, P, P, P, P, P, P; (then faster putting the emphasis on the first P in the quaruplet) Puh, p, p, p, Puh, p, p, p, p, Puh, p, p, p, Puh, p, p, p, Pah
- Repeat this with all of the voiced and voiceless stops, P, B, T, D, K, G.

- **TOPEKA TOPEKA TOPEKA**
  **BODEGA BODEGA BODEGA (repeat once)**

  **Topeka Bodega Topeka Bodega Topeka Bodega Topeka**
  **Bodega Topeka Bodega Topeka Bodega Topeka Bodega**

## TONGUE TWISTER! [For a variation, have the students circle up and take one line of the tongue twister and "toss" it off to the next student to finish the next line. Similar to pop-corn. 10 min]

About Socks

Give me the gift of a grip-top sock, A clip drape shipshape tip top sock. Not your spinslick slapstick slipshod stock, But a plastic, elastic grip-top sock. None of your fantastic slack swap slop From a slap dash flash cash haberdash shop. Not a knick knack knitlock knockneed knickerbocker sock With a mock-shot blob-mottled trick-ticker top clock. Not a supersheet seersucker ruck sack sock, Not a spot-speckled frog-freckled cheap sheik's sock Off a hodge-podge moss-blotched scotch-botched block. Nothing slipshod drip drop flip flop or glip glop Tip me to a tip top grip top sock.

Dr. Seuss

- Will You William [5x's] – Brilliant Italian William [5x's]

- Lemon Liniment [5x's] – Abominable Abdominals [5x's]

## OMNISH:

1. Find a private or semi-private space in the room.
2. Close your eyes, if you feel more comfortable, and begin to exaggerate your impression of how English sounds. Remember not to use words, but the sounds you hear in English in TV or Film.
3. After one minute, stop and reflect on what you feel. Where is your tongue? What different feelings from your first language do you notice within your mouth? How do your lips feel? What sounds feel different or the same? Do your articulators work harder in some places?

## SENSORY CUE:

1. Hold the vocal posture that you just found with the Omnish language.
2. Close your eyes and feel the sensation that this position elicits.
3. Relate this feeling to an image or feeling that you can relate to. Does it feel like a yawn? Like you are licking an ice cream cone? This is your own personal sensory cue or image.

Does your tongue look and feel like this when you say the sound IH as in PIN?

## Pop-Corn Practice

Take turns jumping into the circle (hense the popcorn…) and practicing pieces of text. Choose a piece of text that is meaningful to you, and begin merging the structure of the "IH" sound into your intention and expression of the text. Remember to have a point of view on each sentence.

1. I'm an Exhibitionist! – *Orpheus Descending*
2. Richard, it profits a man nothing to sell his soul for the whole world…But for Wales? – *Richard III*
3. I need my keys, Sheila . I can't get into <u>things</u> without my keys! – *The Boys Next Door*

4. Aeschylus did not invent theatre to have it end up a bunch of chorus kids standing around wondering which one of them is getting into kitty-cat heaven. – *Six Degrees of Separation*
5. I swear, if you existed… I'd divorce you. –
6. I have no rational, hopeful, intelligent thing to say to you honey, except that it's horrible, and it stinks. – *Raft of the Medusa*
7. I can't fix the world! – *Keely & Du*
8. I will! I will dream on! –*Women of Manhattan*
9. We're sitting in the booth, the air is oozing with grease, there's a baby in the corner screaming like it's got an arrow sticking out of it, and there is syrup everywhere. – *Best Half Foot Forward*
10. You know, I should take it as a compliment that guys want to watch me jiggle! – *How I Learned to Drive*
11. One gets used to it. Habit is everything. – *Saint Joan*
12. When in disgrace with fortune and mens' eyes, I all alone beweep my outcast state. – *Sonnet 29 Shakespeare*
13. Basically, it's like this, if you go and get yourself killed, there is no you and me. Capishe? – *Fratelli Brothers*
14. I've been trying to remember when I introduced him to you. I take I did introduce him to you? I simply can't remember. – *Betrayal*
15. Is it? Is it interesting to you? That I might be having your baby? – *Back of the House*

[Remember your sensory cue. Go back to how your mouth felt in the sensory exercise]

**PAIR IT UP!** [Teacher's note: Still sitting in the circle, put students into pairs or allow them to pair up for cold scene readings. Each short excerpt will emphasize the [ɪ] sound at some point within the scene. Refer back to diagram and springboard for placement. The point here is to connect the meaning, feeling, and sound of [ɪ] with a partner. Acting notes should also be incorporated here. Time for peer feedback can be taken here. 45 minutes] With a partner, choose a scene, and read it cold in front of the class. Take the line into your short term memory, feel what it means to you, and say it to your partner. Connect the feeling, meaning, and sound of [ɪ] to the action. *Remember you have now to incorporate previous sounds. How do they differ?

**SCENE 1:** M/F Enchanted April

Fred: What did you tell her?
Caroline: I told her to add you to dinner. My mother didn't send you did she Florian?
Fred: Oh no, on my words, Caroline.
Caroline: I wanted to have a month that was perfectly blank.
Fred: And now I've interrupted?
Caroline: It's silly I know, but I feel all jumbled.
Fred: Perhaps it good I came then, brighten things up?

**SCENE 2:** M/F The Years

**El:** They lost my dress.

**Andrew:** What?

**El:** The seamstress was supposed to have it delivered and somehow they delivered it to the worng address and they can't track it down. I can't get married like this.

**Andrew:** Why don't you sit? Do you want some Brandy? I'll get you some brandy. I think I could use some brandy.

**El:** Why? You're not getting married.

**Andrew:** You're right. No. I've got no work, no wedding, no income, and no future. Cheers.

**El:** Cheers. Do you think I shouldn't be dressed like this, since it's my second wedding?

**Andrew:** Well, I can hardly imagine a bride in boxer shorts at her first wedding. (beat) Isabella thinks I'm a wash-up.

**El:** No, she doesn't.

**Andrew:** She does. My work doesn't pay well, or at all, I guess. I don't have a girlfriend, and my apartment is squalid. I'm living in squalor. Who would've predicted? I used to read about people living in squalor, but I never thought I would be among them. I always thought they lived in other countries, other continents.

**El:** You're not living in squalor.

**Andrew:** Apparently I am.

**El:** Well, even if you are temporarily living in a very minimal kind of squalor, you certainly aren't a wash-up. You're Andrew. You're… my Andrew.

**SCENE 3:** M/F Spike Heels

**Edward:** How did you two meet anyway?

**Georgie:** What is it? I mean, am I on trial here-

**Edward:** You have something to hide?

**Georgie:** NO, I- shit. We met at the mailboxes. We live in the same building. I mean, it's not unusual-

**Edward:** What, did he try to pick you up?

**Georgie:** I hardly think so.

**Edward:** You tried to pick him up?

**Georgie:** Is there a point to this? 'Cause, I got to tell you, you're kinda wrecking the mood here; you're like doing a demolition job on my hormones.

**Edward:** I just want to know how you two met. He never told me.

**Georgie:** He gave me a book. We were standing by the mailboxes, and he handed me this book and said, here, I think you'll like this. That was it. He gave me this book.

**Edward:** He gave you a book?

**Georgie:** Yes.

**Edward:** You didn't think that was a pick-up?

**Georgie:** No, I thought he was a Jehovah's witness.

**Edward:** What?

**Georgie:** I thought he was a Jehovah's witness!

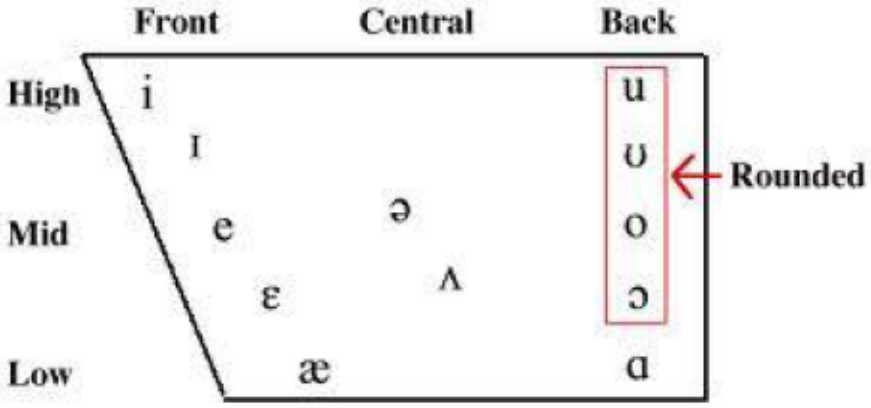
**Edward:** You actually buy those?

**Georgie:** Yeah-well-I got a whole shelf of them. What? They just get to me okay? (pause) You can borrow that if you want. You might like it. Some of it's very hopeful.

[Teacher's note: This is a good place to have a discussion and reiterate any extra review of placement/ issues. 5-10 minutes. Using the previous weeks' scenes can help the lesson by bringing back texts they already know and like.]

## [ I ] Phonetic

## Look at the Chart




**IH** Can also be written as **/I/** as in the above chart. As you can see the location of the symbol means that the tongue arched position is a bit back from the EE, [i] sound.

# Audition Lab

[Teacher's note: You can have students choose between these, do all of them, or assign the ones appropriate for your class. This is meant to be a mock audition. Students should leave and enter the room ready to audition. Peer feedback is important here. 30 min.] **Now, bring this into an audition/ performance scenario. Prepare an audition using the materials below. Remember your positioning and your sensory cue. Feel the articulators in the mode you discovered in the Omnish exercise.**

**OPTION 1: Commercial Copy/ VO** [This would be good to record for the SoundCloud Activity]

AVO: Celebrate every tiny win. Like delicious, low-calorie Crystal Light. A sip in the right direction.

**OPTION 2: F United States of Tara Monologue:**

TARA
Anyway, right now I'm feeling massive amount of guilt. Fear, even. Two transitions in two days-- I mean, the last time that happened was when Marshall broke his tailbone figure skating. I had an excuse then. Now anything can set me off. Like, the Fishman's are having their Solstice Pig Roast next week and I'm already afraid that something will happen. I'm setting myself up for a freak-out.

in, serious.

TARA (CONT'D)
I honestly thought life would be easier when the kids got older and Max and I had been married forever. But it's not. The more time passes, the more I forget who I am. And then it's easier to be *them.*

**OPTION 3: Scene United States of Tara M/**

**(see next page)**

Kate shivers on a street corner, checking her watch. She pops a breath mint and huddles into her down vest.

A pair of headlights illuminate her face and she smiles. It's her boyfriend, BENJAMIN LAMBERT, pulling up in a souped-up Honda. He wears Goth clothes and looks a little too old for Kate. He rolls down the window.

KATE
You're a little late, babe.

BENJAMIN
Me and Trevor were working on our Rurouni Kenshin costumes for TokyoCon.
(sizing her up)
You're looking very *kawaii* tonight, Katie-chan.

KATE
Thanks.

She climbs into the front seat. Benjamin puts the car in park and drapes his arm around Kate, practically suffocating her.

BENJAMIN
So why didn't you text me back earlier?

KATE
Oh. Um, things were kind of freaky at home. You know how I was telling you about my mom, and how she has multiple personalities?

Benjamin nods, dubious.

KATE (CONT'D)
Well, she transitioned. One of her alters--her personalities--is like my age. She's calls herself T. She's a total burnout, but we get to do whatever we want.

BENJAMIN
(disgusted)
So your mom actually goes around acting like she's a teenager?


SOUND CLOUD: [Teacher's note: This next activity can be given for homework or done in class. Students will listen to the clip. Practice the sensory cue they have created, or go back to the original Omnish exercise. They will then record the same passage and submit it for notes. 1-hour homework]

**RECORD:**

**COMMERCIAL COPY**

1. Read the specifications of the commercial audition.
2. Recall your sensory cue, or repeat the Omnish exercise. Read and record once for homework just focusing on the pronunciation.
3. Record again for homework focusing on WHO you are talking to, who YOU are in the commercial ad, and the tone of the commercial.

HAMPTON INN

AVO:

Male, 30s. Warm and friendly, but still masculine, and can express subtle humor. Unselfconscious, unstudied delivery. Contemporary and bright.

or

Female, 30s. Warm and friendly with a bit of gravel/interest in her voice. Can express subtle humor. Unselfconscious, unstudied delivery. Contemporary and bright.

**We know it's your most important video conference of the day. That's why the free wifi and hot breakfast are something to smile about.**

**Business trips add up to family time. Earn a ton of extra points with the Double Your HHonors promotion.**

**The great thing about our many breakfast options is… they're right next to our many other breakfast options.**

# Appendix B

Actor Weekly Survey

*** 1. Name**

*** 2. How strongly do you feel you grasped the information in this week's lesson?**

| Not Strongly at all, I didn't get it. | Somewhat strong, I am still processing. | Relatively strong, I understood. | I feel I really grasped the material. | I feel I excelled at the material. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

*** 3. How confident do you feel in your pronunciation this week?**

| Not at all confident after this week's class | Slightly confident, but mostly not confident | Neutral | Very confident. | Extremely confident. I am excited to use what I learned in everyday speech. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

*** 4. What is the one thing you remember the most from the lesson this week?**

*** 5. What is the one thing from class that was the most helpful for you in your pronunciation?**

*** 6. How much time did you practice pronunciation outside of class this week?**

*** 7. Please briefly describe your thoughts, experiences, things you've noticed regarding your pronunciation thus far.**

## Appendix C

Qualitative Coding Explanation

| Code Category | Explanation |
|---|---|
| Sensory-based Method | Any mention of articulator placement, Omnish, tongue placement, English mode, placement of segmentals, or any comments relating to the sensory aspects of instruction (e.g., rubber band exercise) were coded as sensory. |
| Theory | Any mention of notations of stress and intonation, connected speech rules, explicit rules, and transcription were coded as theory. |
| Suprasegmentals | Any mention of word and sentence stress and intonation was coded as suprasegmentals. |
| Curriculum | Any mention of the specific exercises (e.g., cold reading exercises) or materials (e.g., monologues, scenes, audition materials) or the sequence of materials were coded as curriculum. |
| Confidence | Any mention of an increase or a decrease in confidence was labelled as confidence. A (+) or (-) was added to signify the upward or downward change in confidence. |

## Appendix D

Teacher Guide for Sensory Method

1. Ask the students to find a corner of the room or spread out enough to be able to have their own small private space.
2. Ask the students to name some of their favourite English speaking characters in television shows or films. Or, ask students to think of an English speaker in their life or on TV that they could imitate.
3. Then, ask students to mimic their impression of this speaker or impression of English without using actual words. The teacher could mimic this exercise to show them that they just need to pronounce the sounds of English as though they were an English actor in their favourite TV show. This fake language is called Omnish. Depending on the comfortability of the students, they may prefer to have their eyes closed. They may also prefer to to do this at home first as homework to explore in the privacy of their own home.
4. After 1 minute, ask the students to stop. Questions to ask:
    - What did you notice about the sounds you made in your "fake" English?
    - What sounds did you do quite a lot?
    - What differences did you feel from how you speak your first language?
    - What did you notice about your tongue position?
5. Repeat the Omnish again in order to see if they notice the differences or can go even further with the accent without words.
6. Ask the students to stop after another minute or two. This can also be repeated as a warm-up for articulators.

7. Ask students again what they feel in their mouth. Whatever the class comes up with as far as the differences of their articulators becomes their personal articulatory starting point.
8. Ask the students what it feels like. Give examples of: Does the tongue position feel more forward? Does it feel like licking an ice cream cone? A lollipop? Starting to yawn? Whatever they come up with will become their personal sensory cue to remember and bring them back to their vocal quality.
9. Have them write down or practice repeating this feeling by using this position in dialogue right after the sensory exercise.

## Appendix E

Actor Background Questionnaire

**SECTION I – Background Information**

1. Name: …… 2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

3. Date of birth (DD/MM/YY): …… 4. Birthplace (city, country): ……..

5. What do you consider to be your native language(s)? ……..

6. Were you exposed to this (these) language(s) since birth? ……

7. At what age did you start learning English? ……

8. Where and in what context (example: immersion school) did you learn English?……
……

9. Did you have a focus on pronunciation in your English classes? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Please explain the role of English pronunciation in your previous English classes/ training.
……
……
……

11. Please rate your ability to speak, comprehend (listen/ understand), read, and write English. Circle the appropriate number according to the directions.

| Extremely Poor | Very Poor | Moderately Poor | Slightly Poor | Average | Slightly Fluent | Moderately Fluent | Very Fluent | Extremely Fluent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** |

| Speaking | Comprehending | Reading | Writing |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 |

12. About what percentage do you use English per **week**? Please circle the amount below.

a. 0% b. 10% c. 20% d. 30% e. 40% f. 50% g. 60% h. 70% i. 80% j. 90% k. 100%

13. What are you hoping to accomplish by taking this pronunciation course?

……

……

……

**SECTION II – Individual Abilities**

In the following section, please rate your abilities using the same criteria as before. Circles the number that corresponds to your rating.

| Extremely Poor | Very Poor | Moderately Poor | Slightly Poor | Average | Slightly Advanced | Moderately Advanced | Very Advanced | Extremely Advanced |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Ability to **mimic** | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** | 10. Ability to focus on more than one task at a time. | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** |
| 2. Ability to **sing** | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** | 11. Ability to use senses in acting/sense memory | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** |
| 3. Ability to play an instrument. | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** | 12. Ability to repeat/sing a song after hearing it | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** |
| 4. Ability to memorize | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** | 13. Ability of muscular memory | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** |
| 5. Ability to visualize how something will look or feel. | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** | 14. Ability to move and speak at the same time | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** |
| 6. Ability to move/dance | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** | 15. Ability to do dialects in my native language | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** |
| 7. Ability to remember what someone has said word for word. | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** | 16. Ability to articulate in my native language. | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** |
| 8. Ability to become a character/suspend the self. | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** | 17. Ability to quickly understand what I am reading | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** |
| 9. Ability to quickly understand what has been said to me. | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** | 18. Ability to come up with many ideas without rehearsal | **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9** |

**SECTION III – Beliefs and Opinions on Pronunciation**

In the following section, please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by circling the number that corresponds to your answer. Use the criteria listed below.

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Somewhat disagree | Neutral | Somewhat agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. English pronunciation is an important thing to learn. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 2. I don't like speaking and pronouncing English. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 3. I will only use my English pronunciation for acting purposes. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 4. I find English to be an ugly language. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 5. I enjoy hearing spoken English in general. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 6. I only enjoy hearing spoken English by native speakers of English. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 7. I think people who speak English with a non-native accent are unattractive. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 8. I like the sound of my speech in English. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 9. I don't believe that pronunciation training will help me with my speech. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 10. I have resentment that I would have to change my speech to work in the English speaking market. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 11. When I speak English, people have a hard time understanding what I am saying. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 12. When I speak English, people are always asking me to repeat what I have said. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 13. I feel more comfortable speaking to native speakers of English. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 14. I feel more comfortable speaking to other non-native speakers of English. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 15. When I am speaking English, I tend to judge the way I sound. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 16. My English pronunciation sometimes stops me from conversing in English because I feel embarrassed. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 17. I feel confident to audition right now for an English-speaking role. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 18. I believe the only way I will be considered for a role in the English market is if I have "perfect" pronunciation in English. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 19. I enjoy practicing English texts and reading out loud. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 20. It is important to know the phonetic alphabet, not just the pronunciation. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 21. Native English speakers from the U.S., Canada, Australia, and U.K. pronounce English in the correct way. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 22. It is more important for me to feel confident in my pronunciation over sounding like a native speaker. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 23. It is hard for me to focus on acting and my pronunciation at the same time. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 24. I choose not to change my pronunciation, because it might change my identity. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 25. If I change my pronunciation of English, I won't recognize myself. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

**SECTION IV – Other Thoughts and Experiences**

1. In your opinion, what are the main challenges you experience when pronouncing English?

……

……

……

……

……

……

2. In your previous experience, if you did receive pronunciation training in English, and you answered yes in SECTION I, please explain the aspects that you found helpful in your previous training. Please also explain the aspects that were not helpful.

……

……

……

……

……

3. In your opinion, what is the best way in which to practice pronunciation? (Ex., sitting and repeating words, listening, reading, etc.)

……

……

……

……

……

4. What is your end goal in learning English pronunciation? Why?

……

……

……

……

……

5. Is there anything else you would like to tell the researcher regarding your experience or thoughts on pronunciation training or this survey?

……

……

……

……

……

## Appendix F

Rater Background Questionnaire

**Participant Name _____**

**Background Questionnaire**

1. Birthplace (City, Province/State): _____

2. Age: _____ (years)

3. Which of your parents are first language English speakers? Mom Dad Both

4. Current Degree/ Major/ Year of study (if applicable):
_____ (e.g. MA/ Applied linguistics/ 2nd year)

5. Last Degree you earned/ Major: _____

6. Is your hearing normal as far as you know? a. Yes b. No

**Language Use and Background**

7. What is your native language (from birth)? _____

8. What language did you do your schooling in? Please specify if "other."

- Elementary school: a. English b. French c. Other: _____
- High school: a. English b. French c. Other: _____
- CEGEP: a. English b. French c. Other: _____
- University: a. English b. French c. Other: _____

9. Approximately what percent of the time do you speak English (as opposed to other languages) in your daily life?

0% 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100%

10. Approximately what percent of the time do you listen to the English language media (as opposed to the media in other languages)?

0% 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100%

11. Of the time that you spend speaking English, approximately what percent of the time do you interact with native English speakers (as opposed to non-native speakers)?

0% 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100%

12. Which other languages do you know? _____

Of these languages, which would you say that you are proficient in?

_____

13. Have you ever taken any linguistics classes (especially phonetics/phonology)? If yes, what kinds of classes?

_____, _____, _____, _____,
_____, _____, _____, _____,
_____, _____,

14. How familiar are you with foreign accented English? (1 = not at all familiar; 9 = very familiar)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

15. Which accents would you identify as being most familiar for you?

_____
_____
_____

**Experience in Teaching**

16. Where and how long have you taught English?
    _____ (location) _____ (duration)

    _____ (location) _____ (duration)

    _____ (location) _____ (duration)

    _____ (location) _____ (duration)

    **In total** _____ (duration)

17. Have you ever received any training on pronunciation teaching? (yes, no)

18. If yes, what kind of training have you done (please describe briefly)?

_____

_____

_____

**Appendix G**

Example of Rater Training Materials

# YOUR TASK (Part A)

Listen to each sound sample (45 seconds per token), and rate the perceived ACCENTEDNESS and COMPREHENSIBILITY

***Remember*:** Each recording will stop at 45 seconds, and this may be in midsentence. Please do NOT take this sudden stop into consideration when making your rating.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Accentedness** | The degree to which (or how much) the speaker's English pronunciation is affected by their native language and/ or "other non-native features" |
| **Comprehensibility** | This refers to the amount of effort it takes to understand the speaker. If it takes little effort, then the speaker is highly comprehensible. If a lot of effort is required, then the speaker has low comprehensibility. |

## BEFORE YOU BEGIN…

1) You will hear each recording once, and only once.

2) Only after you finish hearing the entire sample, can you move on to the next one.

3) Ensure that you use the correct scale for each category:

***The left side ☹ represents a low score while the right side ☺ a good score***

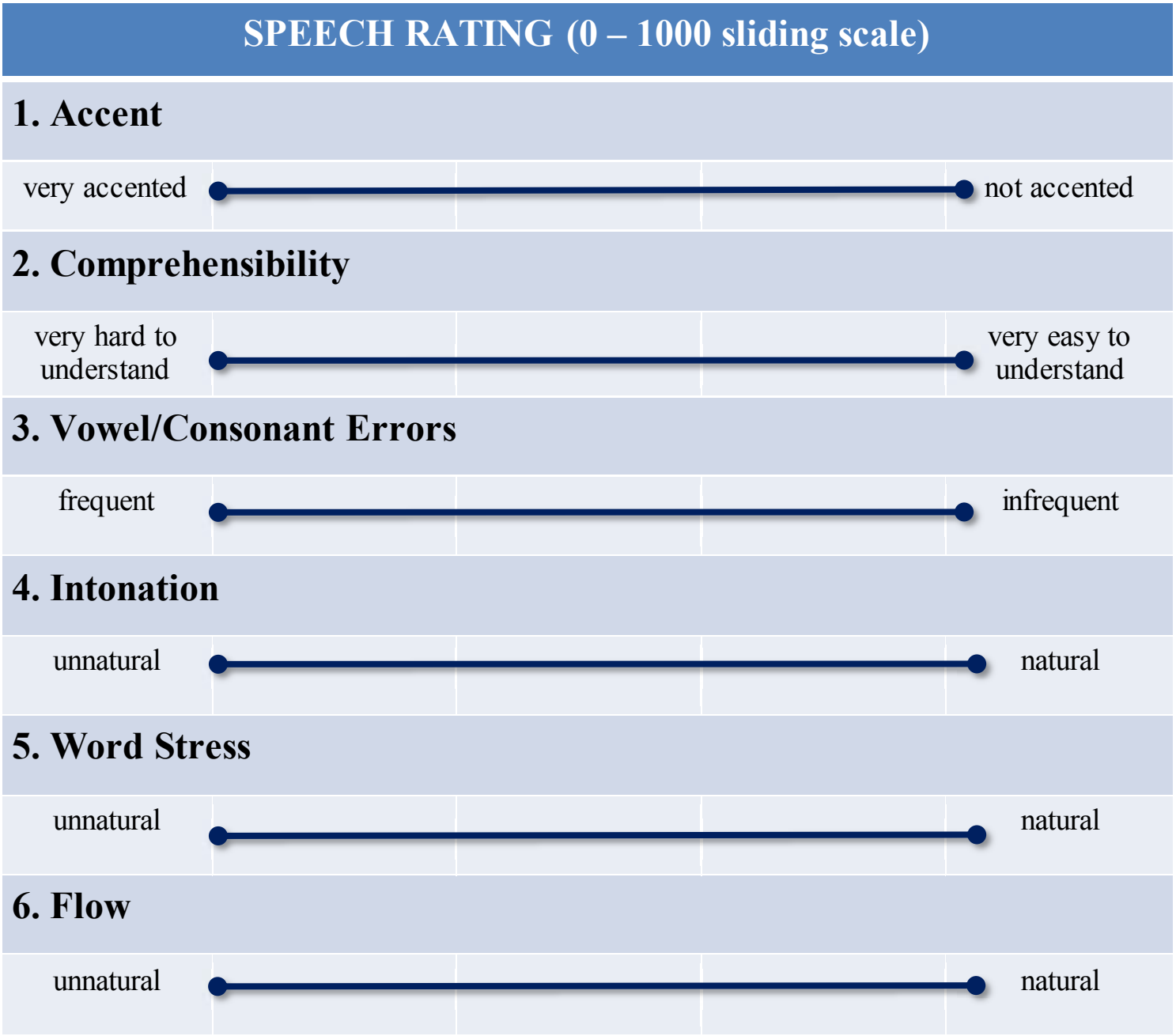
4) Please use the entire scale (left to right: 1 to 1000) as much as you can.

5) You can adjust your rating at any time during the recording and before you click submit.

6) When you are finished, click submit.

**Appendix H**

Example of Rater Interface



## Appendix I

Example of Rater Exit Questionnaire

**Participant Name _____**

## Exit Questionnaire

**Please rate how well you understood each construct on a nine-point scale. In other words, if you understood it completely, please circle 9. If you didn't understand it at all, please circle 1.**

**ACCENTEDNESS**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9**
**Did not understand Completely Understood**

**COMPREHENSIBILITY**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9**
**Did not understand Completely Understood**

**VOWEL/CONSONANTS**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9**
**Did not understand Completely Understood**

**WORD STRESS**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9**
**Did not understand Completely Understood**

**INTONATION**

**1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9**
**Did not understand Completely Understood**

**FLOW**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Did not understand** | | | | | | | | | | **Completely Understood** |