

The Article - **Regional accents are 'bad for business'**

A recent survey conducted on business managers in the UK has revealed that certain regional accents can be "bad for business". Professor Khalid Aziz, a specialist in communication for executives and high fliers, carried out the survey to gauge the degree to which prejudices against accents exists. He discovered that non-English accents are more conducive to commercial success in Britain. Speakers with an American, Scottish, Indian or Asian accent, be it in a live presentation or in television commercials, are preferred to speakers with even the slightest twang of a regional variation. Professor Aziz asserts: "Although it may not be politically correct to believe that accents matter nowadays, it is very apparent from our research that popular prejudices still exist."

According to the survey, business people with Indian or Asian accents are considered to be more diligent, trustworthy and reliable than speakers with American or British accents. Professor Aziz reported that only 24 percent of the executives he questioned regarded speakers with accents from the British cities of Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle as being hardworking. He asserted that people with these accents "will face prejudice in business". His conclusion was that: "If you want to get ahead in business and don't speak the Queen's English, it is better to sound as if you are from America, Europe, India or...Scotland than from any English region." He added: "The key is to avoid using localized vocabulary, which others may not recognize."

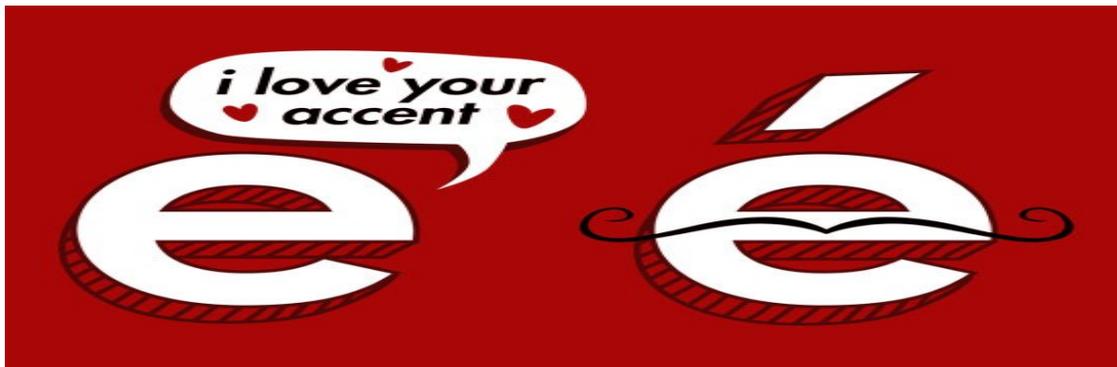
MY ACCENT: In pairs / groups, talk about your accent. Do you like it? Has it changed over the years? Do you think it's a good accent to succeed in business?

WORLD ENGLISHES: In pairs / groups, talk about the following English accents. What are your experiences of listening to these accents? Which do you like or dislike?

- Queen's English
- Regional British accents
- Standard American
- Regional American accents
- Australian English
- Chinese English
- Spanish English
- French English
- Russian English
- Other _____

ACCENT OPINIONS: Talk about the following in pairs/ groups. To what extent do you agree with them?

- a.I want to speak English without any accent from my own language.
- b.Having the right accent is essential for business success.
- c.The Queen’s English accent is much better than an American accent.
- d.In my country, an accent can tell us if someone is intelligent or not.
- e.I would pay big money to be trained to have an accent that will help my career.
- f.There are accents in my own language that I hate listening to.
- g.Accents are one of the most difficult parts of understanding English.
- h.I want to speak with an accent that doesn’t tell people where I’m from.



BUSINESS ACCENT: In pairs / groups, agree on a suitable accent for use in TV commercials that advertise the products in the table. You must choose a different accent for each product. Agree whether it is better for a male or female voice to be used. Agree on the three most important keywords for each product.

PRODUCT	ACCENT	M / F	KEYWORDS
Beer			
An action movie			
A vacation in Tahiti			
Computer software			
Chocolate			
Car insurance			
A diamond ring			