

# ACCENTuate the Positive

Perception of Accent and Authority among Classroom Instructors at Queen's University

**Accents believed to be more respected:** British, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Scottish, Irish, American (excluding Southern US).

**Accents believed to be less respected:** Chinese, Indian, Arabic, Japanese, South American, African, Eastern European.

Survey Participant: "There is a culture in Canada that gives authority to British accents (whether explicitly or implicitly) likely because of imperial history. I believe there are mythologies of authenticity relegated to accents based on listeners' assumptions about the world. Many people assume authority based on the relation between accent and content."

## Why are some accents more respected?

### Understandability:

"I believe they are less respected or viewed as less authoritative based on how easily they can be understood by the students. If the students can't understand a person's accent they might be less likely to respect them." Survey participant

### Unconscious Biases:

"Some people have racialized opinions of people based on their accent...Canadians are taught to Anglo-American-European accent because of a history of colonialism and imperial order." Survey Participant

## Understandability or Bias?

Listening is everyone's responsibility.

"Everyone's accent is foreign to a certain percentage of the audience, as everyone has an accent" Survey participant.