

Advanced Level **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 speakers than 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 people. 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.”

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Regional accents are 'bad for business'

TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true or false:

- a. Non-UK English accents are not good for business presentations.
- b. A survey gauged the extent to which prejudices exist towards accents.
- c. In business in the UK, an Indian accent is preferable to a regional one.
- d. The survey found that prejudices were very popular in Britain.
- e. Speakers of Queen's English are considered to be the most diligent.
- f. People with accents from Liverpool are considered as hardworking.
- g. The survey suggests changing your accent to get ahead in business.
- h. The key is to avoid using localized vocabulary.

SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| a. conducted | accent |
| b. gauge | favorable |
| c. prejudice | contended |
| d. conducive | conscientious |
| e. twang | encounter |
| f. diligent | bigotry |
| g. asserted | measurement |
| h. face | hint |
| i. get ahead | carried out |
| j. key | excel |

PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
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| a. gauge the degree to which | are considered to be more diligent (1) |
| b. non-English accents are more | correct to believe that accents matter (2) |
| c. speakers with even the slightest | ahead in business (3) |
| d. it may not be politically | using localized vocabulary (4) |
| e. popular | prejudices against accents exists (5) |
| f. people with Indian or Asian accents | conducive to commercial success (6) |
| g. people with these accents will face | as if you are from America (7) |
| h. If you want to get | prejudices still exist (8) |
| i. it is better to sound | prejudice in business (9) |
| j. The key is to avoid | twang of a regional variation (10) |