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## Foreign Accent Problem of Libyan Non-native Teachers of English in Elementary Schools in Sebha

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to address the topic of non-native like English accent for Libyan English language teachers (non-native speakers). It also focuses on the factors influencing foreign accent of non-native speakers, that is, phonological, sociolinguistic and psychological features. Furthermore, the study explores the impact of non-native accent on teaching and learning process. One male teacher of English and seven female teachers of English in Elementary Alwahda School participated in the study. Their ages were from 30-42. The study was based on a qualitative approach. Observations and interviews were used to collect the information. The result shows that the majority of the teachers of English experience some difficulties in phonological issues; the reason for not speaking native-like English was also due to psychological and sociolinguistic aspects as well. In addition, it was noticed that lack or not interacting with native speakers caused such a problem to them and to their students as well.

**Keywords:** *Non-native, English Accent, Libyan EFL Teachers, Sebha University*

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### 1. Introduction

The issue of "foreign accent", one of the most noticeable marks of Second (L2) and Foreign Language Learning (FLL) has taken much attention in the literature of L2 acquisition and FLL since the advent of "Audio-lingual Method", which set native speaker fluency as a goal for language learners. One of the reasons why so much attention is given to accent-related issues is because of the fact that there is a growing awareness, among L2 researchers, teachers and teacher trainers of the key role of pronunciation in communication (Munro et al, 2006).

The main discussion in the previous studies and related research mainly covers attitudes of students towards non-native accents of English, factors influencing foreign accent of non-native speakers, the ways of examining perceptions of non-native accent of languages other than English and the ways of minimizing foreign accent (cf. Flege et al, 1995; Piske et al, 2001; Munro et al, 2006; Boyd, 2003; Bannert, 2004). However, most of these studies are based on the accent problem of immigrant students and teachers and

reactions to their accented speech by the native speakers. The number of studies dealing with foreign accents of non-native students and teachers in their own settings is very limited.

In countries like Libya where English is taught as a foreign language subject, foreign accent issue emerges naturally among the learners and teachers of English. Despite this fact, unfortunately, the research on this issue is very limited in Libya. The existing studies focused on the subject in terms of identity and foreign accent, pronunciation problems, disadvantageous of being a non-native teacher, and reactions to teachers' bad pronunciation (Coşkun & Arslan, 2011; Şenel, 2006; Öztürk & Atay, 2010; Demirezen, 1998, 1999, 2007).

To shed light on the current issue, this research paper aims to fill the gap in the literature by particularly exploring the foreign accent problem of non-native teachers by highlighting first the composition of the accent and then factors causing foreign accents, harms of foreign accent and reactions from students and colleagues towards foreign accented-speech.

#### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

It has been noticed that many teachers have pronunciation problems in English at different educational institutes in Sebha when they speak English to their students. Such problems may be due to the influence of their mother tongue (L 1). Therefore, sound production can differ for some certain sounds in the two languages, English and Arabic. However, learners take their teachers as a model to say or repeat exactly what their teachers' say, or speak exactly the way their teachers do. Consequently, the learners may mispronounce many English words and sentence patterns incorrectly and if they pronounce them correctly, they sound non-native. They have some pronunciation errors, for example, where to put the stress, when to syllabify a word and the way to use the correct intonation.

### 1.2 Research Questions

It is wonderful to see Libyan English teachers master the English language perfectly in their classes, in particular mastery of producing the English sounds where their speech sounds very naive-like. This is because such an issue can contribute to help learners achieve better pronunciation and have very near accented English. So the question being raised in this context is what are the linguistic factors and features of L 1 that lead non-native teachers speak non-accented English?

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The researcher has noticed that many Libyan English language teachers speak English with non-accented pronunciation. So the study examines the linguistic factors and features that may affect those teachers who sound very non-native speakers.

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

The importance of this research is to explore the phonological (linguistic), neurolinguistic, psychological and sociolinguistic characteristics that make the non-native teachers, Libyan English teachers, speak non-accented English. So, it would be very significant for the teachers of English in Libya to understand these issues thoroughly and may improve their English through them.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 The Nature of Accent

In this section, the nature of the accent and the definitions of accents from the points of different disciplines are elaborated on. To understand the nature of accents is of high importance to see the real causes of foreign accent problem. Moreover, to avoid terminological ambiguities or misunderstandings in the literature, some

basic terminology is clarified following the composition of accent.

### 2.2 Defining Accent

The issue of accents has also taken up the interest of various branches of linguistics, such as phonetics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, second language acquisition (SLA) and language teaching. Each has handled accent-related issues according to their own theoretical framework and focus of research interest. Since each sub-field handles different aspects of language, their concern for accent and definition of accent differ from each other's.

Macmillan English Dictionary defines the term accent "a way of saying words that shows what country, region or, social class someone comes from" (p. 7). Following this general definition, O'Grady et al (2005) defines an accent in terms of phonetics as a certain type of pronunciation determined by the phonetic characteristics of the speaker's mother tongue transferred to his/her use of another language. Contrary to this narrow definition, Becker (1995) asserts from the point of sociolinguistics that an accent is a part of one's language that helps to recognize the speaker's national/ethnic origin and identity whatever language is being spoken by the person. Finally, from the psycholinguistics view, an accent is related to if someone speaks with an accent, and how this person evaluates his/her own accented speech. It is known that some accents sound more attractive than others. This value of judgment affects how people perceive each other's accent and drives them to form stereotypical associations that frequently describe people's perceptions of foreign accent as abnormal and flawed (Giles & Coupland, 1991).

In this paper, a holistic approach is embraced towards the aforementioned aspects of *accent* in different disciplines to identify the foreign accent problem since they complement one another from various interrelated fields of language learning. Considering that the language learner is a social human being born to a society, equipped with a psychosocial structure and provided with a vocal tract, the foreign accent problem of non-native teachers should be tackled within this broad framework to understand the depth of the issue. For that purpose, the accent issue should not be undermined and limited to one single subfield in foreign language teacher education.



Following this background information on accent, a turn to what influences the degree of a foreign accent might ease the understanding of the source of the problem. The problem often stems from the components of accent mentioned above, which are believed to play a role especially in the judgment of foreign accents (Busà, 2008).

According to Flege (1984), the recognition of foreign accent is related to acoustic differences between native and non-native speakers' segmental articulations and suprasegmental levels, which are the main components of accent. Of these, segmental articulation is concerned with segment-related problems like saying "tree" instead of "three" and segments such as vowel and consonant allophones. Suprasegmental levels, above the level of the segment, are concerning phonological phenomena such as word stress, intonation and tone (Carr, 2008, p. 170).

In addition to these, the critical role of prosody, the study of suprasegmental features of speech, such as word stress, rhythm and intonation, in the production and perception of non-native speech has been demonstrated and it is held that prosody has an impact on judgments about foreign accented-speech (Munro & Derwing, 2001; Chang, 2002; Silipo & Greenberg, 2000). However, Demirezen (2008) points out that prosody and intonation, confused by many people, have to be analyzed carefully, and he elaborates the ingredients of these terms as seen in Figure 1.

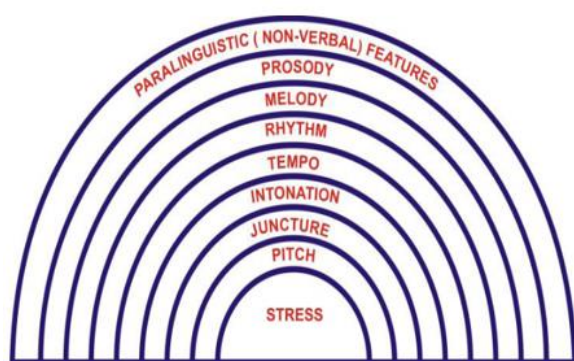


Figure 1: The ingredients of Intonation and Prosody (adapted from Demirezen, 2008)

Such parameters of intonation as prosody, rhythm, tempo, paralinguistic features and melody in a language are unique to each language and make each language different from one another to a greater extent. What makes the learning and teaching of a language a challenging job is these features (Demirezen, 2008).

Figure 1 indicates that the main elements of accents are stress, pitch and juncture as closely situated to inner circle. These are the main compositions of accent. The term "stress" refers to "the force of breath with which sounds are produced; that is, the strength or weakness of the force is determined in relation to other forces of breath in the utterance or utterances of a person" (Nasr, 1997, p. 42). Swan and Smith (2001, p. 198) stated that Arab learners face difficulty in predicting stress in the English language, particularly in word stress. The difficulty of grasping word stress in English may result in altering the meaning of the word. For instance, a learner may pronounce the verb (con'vict) as the noun ('convict) where the stress position is completely different. Since English is a stress-timed language and the stress is not fixed and Arabic is a stress-timed language as well, there is no chance of knowing in advance where the different stress levels will occur in the speech. That makes non-native Arabic teachers sound with a foreign accent.

Pitch, a component of stress, is also an important characteristic of accent, which is related to the frequency of the vibration of the vocal cords. The faster the vocal cords vibrate, the higher the pitch gets. It can distinguish meaning at a suprasegmental level. For non-native teachers, the foreign-accented speech is inevitable due to the pitch range in English.

Juncture, according to Carr (2008), is a boundary or transition point in phonological sequence. Junctures include syllable, foot, morpheme and word boundaries. They are believed to play a role in certain phonological generalizations. Doty and Ross (1973) point out that juncture is a pause in utterance but something more than a sole pause. It is regularly accompanied by slowing the rate and changing the pitch of the voice immediately preceding the voice. For this reason, it functions as a signal of primary accent since a word sounds different depending on whether it is enunciated very carefully as a single word or uttered in the flow of speech (Gramley & Pätzold, 2003). The non-native teachers cannot apply the rules of juncture in their speech; that is why, they fall short of uttering the words in the flow of speech and they sound foreign-accented. The other elements are also markers of foreign accent but when compared to main elements of the accent (i.e., stress, pitch, and juncture), they have a fiddle role.



There is a bulk of research trying to identify the factors that have an effect on foreign accent of speakers. A great amount of previous research has concentrated on immigrant speakers' accent-related issues and how they are perceived by the society in which they live. Researchers like Flege et al (1995), Piske et al (2001), Esteki and Rezazadeh (2009) have summarized the main factors influencing the foreign accent of speakers as age of L2 learning, gender of the speaker, continued L1 use, length and type of instruction, length of residence, language learning aptitude and motivation towards the target language. Since this paper focuses on the foreign accent problem of non-native teachers, only the factors related to the settings in which English is learned and taught as a foreign language are touched upon.

### 2.3 Age of FL Learning

It is widely accepted by researchers and language teachers that the earlier the language education starts, the better fluency and more native-like accent the learners will have. According to Lenneberg (1967) whose Critical Period Hypothesis has contributed a lot to L2 acquisition, foreign accents are almost impossible to overcome after puberty. Hence, foreign accented-production is inescapable if the target language is learned and taught beyond the critical period years due to the neuro-musculatory basis of speech production (Scovel, 1988).

Libyan learners of English start to learn it at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade when they are 11 or 12. This is too late for acquiring a near native-like accent since their vocal tracts lose flexibility to produce certain sounds and their brain lateralization is completed till that time (brain plasticity hypothesis). When these learners come to foreign language teacher education program at universities, they already carry a foreign accent, which is really difficult to get rid of. Even if they make progress in many aspects of target language (e.g., lexical, syntactic, semantic), their speech is marked with a foreign accent due to late start of FLL.

### 2.4 Gender of the Learner

Previous research offers divergent findings about the influence of gender on degree of foreign accent. Some studies (Asher & GarcmHa, 1969; Flege et al, 1995) reported a significant influence of gender whereas others did not (Flege & Fletcher, 1992; Elliott, 1995). Therefore, it is hard to draw a strong conclusion that gender affects the degree of accent. However, there is a

general impression that females are better at learning languages and speaking.

### 2.5 Continued L1 and TL Use

Continued L1 use is a common issue among non-native learners and teachers. In places where there is not much opportunity to correspond with native speaking community, the extreme use of mother tongue, even in language classes by teachers and learners, is unavoidable. As a result of this, the foreign accent issue of non-native teachers emerges as expected. Piske et al (2001) confirmed this assumption with their finding that the amount of L1 use affects the degree of foreign accent.

In Libya, in some universities like Sebha University, English is the medium of instruction for English students. In this respect, the students are thought to be fluent and have a flowing native-like accent. However, several studies found out that mere formal instruction in the target language does not directly influence the degree of foreign accent (Flege et al., 1995; Elliott, 1995). The reason is that the lecturers are Libyan and their speech is already foreign-accented and the students grasp this foreign accent subconsciously since the only source of input is their teachers.

### 2.6 Interlanguage and Transfer-L1 Transfer

"The term "interlanguage" was coined by the American linguist Larry Selinker, in recognition of the fact that L2 learners construct a linguistic system that draws in part, on the learners' L1 but is also different from it and also from the target language" (Ellis, 1995, p. 33). The same is held to be true for FLL. Thus, a learner constructs the knowledge of a new language on the existing one by developing a unique system. According to Selinker (1972), first language transfer is among the five cognitive processes involved in the development of interlanguage. This L1 transfer may play either a facilitative or debilitating role in learning the target language. For example, Libyan learners' mental representation of English vowels is different from their representation of Arabic vowels. It also differs from a native speaker's vowel system. It is somewhere in-between. According to Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (see Lado, 1957), systematic differences should be found between L1 and TL in order to predict the potential sources of errors in terms of accent-related issues.

Another factor that affects foreign accent from the point of transfer is whether the target culture is a "perfect fit language"



or not. In perfect fit languages, each phonetic symbol stands for a different phoneme and each symbol is represented by the same grapheme (Demirezen, 1987). Although Arabic is a language close to perfect fit, English is not. That is why prospective teachers and teachers-on-job tend to articulate some complex words or phrases in the way they do in mother tongue. This negative transfer results in an accented pronunciation and speech. So, these teachers have to learn the relationship between phonetic letters and phonemes in English to minimize their foreign accent.

### *2.7 Affective Factors*

In language learning, affective factors are taken into consideration in order to lower their negative influence on learners and teachers. One affective factor mostly recited in accent studies is motivation. Student interest is one of the main elements of motivation in language learning. When students are interested in integrating with the members of target community, they might also develop a concern for their pronunciation and accent. If students are indifferent to the culture and members of the TL, they are not likely to make an effort to master a near-native like pronunciation due to the lack of motivation.

In the previous research, it has also been investigated whether some non-native learners have an innate capacity (i.e., aptitude, natural ability or skill) or musical talent to learn the pronunciation of a FL better than the others. It was thought that those who have a musical talent could sound more native-like. However, there is not enough evidence showing that musicality or aptitude can affect the degree of foreign accent (Tahta et al. 1981; Thompson, 1991). Another debate is on phonetic intelligence. It is argued that those who have a phonetic intelligence will sound less foreign accented yet there is not enough scientific proof that such an intelligence type exists.

### *2.8 Foreign Accent-Related Problems of Non-native Teachers*

After having highlighted the background information on accent in general and the major factors that influence the degree of non-native teachers' foreign accent, it is time to go deep into the foreign accent-related problems of non-native teachers. To be able to draw an explanatory picture of the issue, the differentiation between native teachers and non-native teachers are to be briefly discussed.

Byram (2004, p. 444) defines the non-native teacher as "a foreign language teacher, for whom the foreign language they teach is not their MOTHER TONGUE; who usually works with monolingual groups of learners; whose mother tongue is usually the same as that of their students." This definition fits well into the situation in Libya. Then, a Libyan teacher who teaches English to a group of Libyan students in Sebha is called a non-native speaker teacher of English; just as his/her English colleague teaching English to the same group is a native speaker teacher of English. However, they are currently referred to as non-native and native teachers. There is a bulk of study dealing with advantages and disadvantages of being a non-native or native teacher (Jenkins, 2005; Medgyes 1994; Llorca 2005). The foreign accent has been found as one of the disadvantages of being a non-native speaker.

### *2.9 Phonological Problems*

For foreign accent, there is not an exact and comprehensive definition which is universally accepted. However, the general consensus is that the term covers the defects in pronunciation of non-native speech compared to the norms of native speech (Gut, 2009). Thus, the non-native teacher with a foreign accent can be claimed to possess deviations in articulation, rhythm, voice and symbolization (Hansen & Arslan, 1995). For example, many Libyan teachers of English have difficulty in the articulation of some vowels and consonants of English like /i:/, /e/ and /p/ and /v/ that are handled under segmental phonology.

In applied linguistics, the foreign accent issue is related to pronunciation teaching. Since it is neglected in foreign language teacher education programs (FLTEP), deviations emerge involuntarily due to negative L1 interference and cause non-native teachers to sound unprofessional and unintelligible. The students, especially those having previous experience with native teachers, expect their language teachers to sound near-native like since they are the mere source of input and only model to imitate in classroom.

Demirezen (2007) reports that foreign accent is the pointer of the inefficiencies of a speaker in the articulation, pronunciation, and intonation of a FL in a native-like habit. Since many non-native teachers speak English in the way they do in their L1, they carry over noticeable qualities of a foreign accented-speech without being aware of this

fact. The biggest danger is that as students of these teachers get familiar with this foreign accent, they internalize it after a while without noticing. The unavoidable result is lots of students with fossilized errors and a heavy foreign accent in their speech, which is not a desirable outcome.

### 2.10 Communicative Problems

Though foreign accent issue is directly connected to the pronunciation, articulation and intonation of the FL, it may cause communicative problems to arise during communication. In Kim's study (2007) students perceived teachers with less foreign accent as easier to understand. In another study by Derwing et al. (2002) difficulty in understanding foreign-accented speech was reported by students. Moreover, the errors in rhythm, stress and intonation patterns can result in serious misunderstandings (Hahn, 2004). The reason is that in English, intonation patterns express both particular functions and pragmatic information. When the listener cannot recognize the intonation pattern, the speaker's intent may be misinterpreted.

The non-native teachers' foreign accent and bad pronunciation negatively affects students since they are more likely to internalize the foreign-accented speech of their teachers. They often have problems making themselves understood in contexts where people speak flow and foreign-accent-free English. For example, exchange students report that they experience communicative problems in their host countries due to their bad pronunciation. This is mainly due to the effect of teachers' deviant speech on students.

### 2.11 Identity Problems

Some non-native teachers deliberately carry a strong foreign accent in their speech to announce their national identity. For this reason, their English is far from being accurate, fluent, and sounds non-natural to the students (Demirezen, 2007). Such teachers are expected to teach the Standard English at schools but they themselves have not learned the Standard English yet. So, how can they teach it?

Levis (2005) also points out that accents, speakers' identity, group membership and social belonging are all connected to each other. Therefore, many non-native teachers tend to carry some characteristics of their mother tongue in speech to imply their national or personal identity. The influence of identity on foreign accent of non-native teachers is as effective as factors like gender and age. Nonetheless,

that should be borne in mind that achieving a near native-like accent does not mean one's betraying or losing his/her own national and ethnic identity.

### 2.12 Harms of Foreign Accents on Non-native Teachers

Foreign accent has much harm on the part of non-native teachers. Such teachers are in great frustration and develop a sense of inadequacy in their profession. Thus, they may become demoralized to a greater degree (Demirezen, 2007). Further, Medgyes (1992) reports that these teachers feel insecure and unconfident using the language they have to teach and they might suffer from Foreign Accent Syndrome (FAS), referring to a fear of speaking in the field of language education. Accordingly, they tend to adopt two kinds of attitudes: pessimistic or aggressive. In Libya, the pessimistic type is the most common one. Teachers of this type are so absorbed in grammar and vocabulary that they pay little or no attention to pronunciation.

### 2.13 How to Minimize Foreign Accent of Non-native Teachers?

One of the real causes of "the foreign accent problem" of non-native teachers essentially lies in our foreign language education (FLE) system. When compared to other countries, especially those developed ones; the starting age of FLL in Libya is too late. In some European countries like Germany, for example, FLE starts at the preschool while they are 4 or 5 years old within the putative period (CP). In contrast, Libyan students start at the age of 11 or 12, when a complete mastery of FL, especially of pronunciation and native-like accent is no more possible or so difficult (Patkowski, 1990). In addition, some researchers and neurolinguists point out that language learning and lateralization, the idea that the two halves of the brain's cerebral cortex -- left and right, execute different functions, are strongly tied up to each other. This lateralization starts around the age of 2 and is completed after puberty (Lenneberg, 1967).

Another cause is that foreign language teacher education programs do not pay much attention to pronunciation teaching and do not offer phonological and phonetic courses to pre-service non-native English teachers. They are exposed to more pedagogical courses and then they cannot meet the needs of their own field of teaching. Even worse, some lecturers at Libyan universities have already been fossilized in terms of pronunciation and



accent, and they transmit their deficient speech to prospective teachers of English.

### **3. Methodology**

#### ***3.1 Research Design***

The method followed in this research to get information was qualitative-based. The objective of this study was to observe the teachers' English pronunciation in one of the elementary schools in Sebha when they speak English with their learners.

#### ***3.2 Participants, Data Collection, Design & Setting***

Since the researcher used a qualitative approach for data collection in Elementary Alwahda School in Sebha, observations and interviews were used in order to achieve the research objectives and produce a descriptive meaningful outcome. The participants in this study consisted of eight teachers of English, one male and seven females, were targeted to be observed and interviewed in order to achieve the research objectives.

### **4. Data Analysis & Findings**

#### ***4.1 Data Analysis***

According to the observations which have been conducted with the teachers of English in Elementary Alwahda School, most of them spoke non-accented English (native-like English or near native English) in their classes to their learners.

For the interviews, the researcher interviewed the teachers in English. Each interview lasted for ten minutes as to check the teachers' pronunciation. Most of them spoke non-accented English (native-like English or near native English).

It was found that there were several factors make non-native teachers do not speak native-like English. According to all participants, phonological, neurolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors are the reasons to speaking non-accented English (native-like English or near native English). Therefore, they said that having accented English can be achieved through listening to native speakers and practicing the language. They also claimed that native-like English or near native English can motivate their learners when they listen to them i.e., it can improve their phonological aspects and linguistic ones.

#### ***4.2 Findings***

After reviewing the information obtained from the observations and interviews, the results show that the majority of the teachers of English experience some difficulties in phonological and neurolinguistic features; and they also attribute the reason for not

speaking native-like English to psycholinguistic aspects. In addition, it was noticed that lack or not interacting with native speakers caused such a problem to them and to their students as well. This is because they are considered to be the only input for their students. Consequently, some teachers felt that having native-like English or near native English can be fun for their learners when they listen to accented speech. Some others saw that having accented speech increases learners' motivation toward learning and increases phonological awareness

### **5. Conclusion**

Foreign accent, in most cases, is accepted as an indicator of being a foreign language learner or L2 learner. The reason lies in the fact that these learners speak with a noticeable accent that carries over the traits of their native speech. It is really hard to claim that foreign accents can be regularly eliminated with some kinds of pedagogy or speech therapy. Coşkun and Arslan (2011) conclude in their study that it is of no use for speakers trying to speak like a native speaker since many speakers use English to communicate with other non-native speakers. However, such a manner is unacceptable for non-native teachers since they are responsible for teaching a Standard English. Further, for EFL learners, it is also recommended and encouraged to have a near native-like accent. That does not mean denying or denigrating the varieties of accents but having a Standard English fluency that eases communication with others and guarantees better pronunciation. Some non-native foreign language teachers think that they have a right to keep their foreign accent as an indication of their personal identity. They are afraid of betraying or even worse losing their national identity by sounding more like a native speaker of English. However, the English they speak with L1 flow is not accurate and natural. While speaking, such teachers not only transfer their intended meaning but also their identity, which is not among the goals of FLE. Therefore, these teachers should give up retaining the characteristics of their mother tongue in their speech. Foreign accents of non-native teachers bring out some harm on the part of students, as well. Such students also fear to sound like their teachers and might develop negative attitudes towards language learning and their teacher. They might prevent students from establishing a good rapport with their



teachers. Even worse, some students can react to bad or wrong pronunciation of their teachers. Accordingly, such teachers lose their professional image in the eyes of their students. To sum up, this paper concludes that foreign accent is a serious issue for non-native teachers. These teachers should, at least, minimize their foreign accent (FA) to the least degree, if they cannot get rid of it completely. For them, there are three kinds of target accents to gain: native accent, native like accent and near native-like accent. Other accents apart from these are labelled as accented speech that is not appreciated for those in language teaching profession. Of these, native-like fluency is almost impossible and near native-like accents requires settlement or high exposure in an English speaking country. However, non-native teachers should gain at least near-native like accent to sound professional and intellectual. Plus, they should determine a Standard English for themselves, either British or American, and be consistent with the use of it. In this way, they will sound more professional, natural and confident in the ears of listeners and students.

### *5.1 General Suggestions to Overcome Foreign Accent Obstacles*

1. Foreign language teaching should start as early as possible at schools in Libya. If possible, it must start at the preschools under the guidance of qualified teachers. The earlier they start the more foreign-accent-free speech they will have.

2. Foreign language teacher education program (FLTEPs) should include phonology and phonetics, and related branches in their curricula as compulsory and selective courses.

3. The examination system of students of English Language Teaching (ELT) should change and the exam should measure the four skills of the candidate's language proficiency as TOEFL or IELTS does.

4. The only medium of instruction should be English in ELT classes and the use of mother tongue by lecturers and students should be eliminated. The lecturers should encourage learners to speak the TL.

5. Lecturers should provide corrective feedback to students' pronunciation errors. While doing this, they should pay attention to students' emotions without hurting their feelings. Also, they should trigger their motivation towards TL pronunciation.

It is true that a major part of the phonology acquisition of TL/FL occurs outside conscious effort of learners. It must not be forgotten that overcoming and

minimizing a foreign accent is possible with conscious effort. Of course, it takes time and effort. However, it is vital for non-native teachers and prospective teachers as well. In addition to the general suggestions above, here are some ways to minimize foreign accent and incorrect pronunciations of students in ELT departments and teachers already on the job.

1. They can make use of exchange programs and participate in language practice with native speakers or at least near native-like speakers. (Erasmus and Comenius)

2. They can join speech clubs that have expert speakers or native speakers of target language outside the classroom. If there is no, they can set up their own speech club and invite lecturers, native speakers at regular intervals.

3. They can supplement their own learning by utilizing text-to-speech software and other tools of computer assisted language learning, available on the Internet (video clips, podcasts, avatars etc.). There are a great number of websites related to pronunciation teaching like [www.englishmedia.lab](http://www.englishmedia.lab).

4. There are also websites that bring together learners and native speakers in the virtual world such as [www.livemocha.com](http://www.livemocha.com). They can sign up and be a member of these websites and exchange conversation with native speakers. A high degree of exposure to TL is necessary to minimize the foreign accent.

There are also some techniques to beautify the pronunciation of non-native teachers, drawn out of ELT methodology. Şenel (2006) explains these techniques as initial teaching technique, remedial teaching technique (AAM), drilling technique and its varieties (ALM) and tongue twisters. Mim-mem method and its techniques can also be added into the list since they help people discriminate the sounds from one another, and foster imitation of the native teachers or a recorded voice. Audio-articulation method, as a remedial teaching, can also be utilized by non-native teachers since it may break their fossilized pronunciation errors and enable them to sound more natural and near native-like

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire

- Dear teacher,  
You have five questions of multiple choice. You need thoroughly read the questions and select only one answer you find appropriate.
- Do you believe of the importance of accented speech of English? -1  
Yes .a  
No .b
- Why do you think Libyan English teachers don't speak native-like English? -2  
Because of phonological characteristics .a  
Because of neurolinguistics and age characteristics .b  
Because of psycholinguistic characteristics .c  
All of the mentioned above .d
- How can Libyan English teachers achieve accented speech? -3  
Through imitation to their university teachers .a  
Through listening to native speakers .b  
Through listening to native speakers and practicing the language .c  
Through reading texts aloud .d
- How can accented speech or speaking like native speakers affect learning process? -4  
It pushes learner's motivation for learning .a  
A learner would find it fun by only listening to the accent .b  
It creates motivation for the learners and get exposed to linguistic features especially the phonological ones .c  
It lowers learner's anxiety .d
- How can accented speech or speaking like native speakers affect teaching process? -5  
It pushes teacher's self-confidence and motivation for teaching. .a  
It help teachers to create good accented learners. .b  
It lowers learner's anxiety. .c  
All of the above