



The Accent Coach Agrees With Findings on Study Related to Children's Cartoons

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VERO BEACH, FL, UNITED STATES, February 16, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A study was recently conducted on the use of accents in children's cartoons with a focus on how the villains in the story speak. The initial study was conducted by an associate professor in child study and human development from Tufts University and a senior lecturer at the university. The results show that the majority of the villains were given foreign accents even when the rest of the characters spoke American English. The [Accent Coach](#), Claudette Roche, a [business speech coach](#), feels this situation leads to many unintended consequences for children.

In the study, 323 TV characters were studied. All were animated and various aspects were included in the data, including their physical appearance, gender, ethnicity and whether they were a hero or villain. The results of the study showed that language was used to define specific character traits and personality. In the study, only two of the heroes had accents while most of the villains spoke in a different accent. British English was the most commonly used accent for villains followed by German and Slavic. Those characters who assisted the villains also spoke with an accent, though it was more likely to be ones associated with a lower economic status, such as Italian-American. Funny characters were found to almost never use British English which is often viewed as more refined and educated. Instead, they would use another foreign accent.

The study also indicated that the characters have not changed in recent years. These are the same accents used in the same way as what was popular decades ago, indicating an age-old view of the world rather than an intentional creation for today. However, Roche finds the study disconcerting for viewers today. "It creates a distinction of 'them' versus 'us' even if that's not the intention," she explains. If the good characters speak like the majority of viewers and the bad characters speak differently, she believes it sends a subtle message to kids. With the increased diversity in schools, it can lead to cliques and exclusion of people who speak with an accent.

She sees this trend evidenced in the adult world as well with people who have an accent finding it difficult to obtain employment. They may struggle to be hired because others have a stereotype about the accent even if it is not intentional. Roche works as an [accent reduction coach](#) to help people learn how to enunciate and speak more clearly in spite of having an accent. With some clients, she makes the accent almost nonexistent. However, she stresses the importance for others to not place too much emphasis on one's accent because they may be overlooking an excellent employee based on a superficial characteristic. She hopes this study on animated cartoons and foreign accents leads to a greater awareness of stereotyping and that it will result in changes to the messages being sent to children even if they are unintentional. She believes the consequences will go far beyond the playground and school rooms into the workforce as people are recognized for who they are and not how they sound.

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