

Voice Talent Speak One Language

We are all a mixture of many cultures, genders and ages, each containing their own dialect. Perhaps you've never thought of Teen Talk as a dialect, but each group of teen also has their own dialect. I find this a great tool when trying to create teen characters. Many talents offer a familiar voice when putting on their teenage hat. Perhaps the teen they currently raise, or even more commonly, the teen they were! Have you ever considered each click or group of teen having their own dialect? There is the up speak teen (which we hear most commonly) referred to as Preppie or Valley Girl in the Eighties. Then you have the Stoners, the Jocks, the nerds and the like. In order to become a teenager, it's important that you know where you fit.

It seems impossible to suggest then that we as a whole have one specific dialect. Each of us speak a combination of many dialects. Coming from Canada I have a Canadian dialect/accent. In the world of voice this is a noticeable accent and in most cases undesirable. I was taught early in my career that following the Generic American Accent was imperative to my success in this industry and anything I was taught, I took seriously. At first I only discovered this through specific words.

It's a great idea to get in the habit of using these words on a regular basis and applying this rhythm to your speech. My kids now tease me because I say the words American and now they notice...but they don't pay my bills.....here is a few to share with you.

Word - OUT

American Dialect *Owt*

Canadian Dialect *Oat* (trust me, this is what most of you say)

Word - House

American Dialect *Howse*

Canadian Dialect *Hoose*

Word - Sorry

American Dialect *Sar-ree*

Canadian Dialect *Sore - ee*

Word - About

American Dialect *A-bow-t*

Canadian Dialect *A-boat or in Britian A-boot*

Word - Process

American Dialect *Praw-cess (most locations)*

Canadian Dialect *Pro-cess*

There are several but this is a small KEY list found in many scripts.

As I studied the American Dialect I found that each state had it's own dialect as well. There is the neutral California accent (which I find the most neutral), the Texan accent, New York Accent (and there are several here as well), Boston and so on. This tells me that it's not only us Canadians and foreigners that have had to accommodate this Generic American accent, but other US natives also have to conform to this ideal voice in our industry.

If you think about it this really makes sense. We as a society thrive off of familiarity. We get comfortable with what we recognize the most. We easily relate to the neutral accent therefore putting this at the forefront when it comes to marketing and sales. We have our dialect trends though as well. For instance the British dialect (despite it's 64 plus variations) is a very popular trend. There is an air of authority with a British Dialect. We as non-British citizens think of primarily one dialect for the British Language, but just as the teen, there are many forms.

I was always very careful when taking on accents. I have worked in radio and witnessed the audience calling in when someone put on a fake accent. Sure enough someone from that dialect or someone who thought they knew that dialect was ready to put down the poor mimic. In a voice class with Bob Bergen I was given permission to allow my characters to have accents. This made all the sense in the world and I went back to adding accents to my character work. I felt it still wouldn't be appropriate to attempt accents on more broadcast type jobs so I stayed away from them for a while, until a class with Pat Fraley. Pat suggests that there really is no such thing as an authentic accent. We're all a mixture of accents at this point. Eureka....so true. Now I am back to playing with accents and booking jobs.

As much as I encourage accents, I do respect that those with authentic accents will book more work in that dialect, and so they should. This is why it's imperative for me to have a fluid American dialect. I was honored when a client told me that they couldn't figure out my accent. What's interesting is that in Canada if you speak American, no one will notice really, nor will they care. A testimony to our laid back attitude I suppose, however when we speak Canadian on a voice project, we truly risk losing the project.



We are all at risk. If you have a strong New York, Arkansas, Spanish, French or any type of strong dialect you need to be aware of when to use it and when to turn it off and turning it off isn't easy. Through some great training and **CONSTANT** practice I've managed to neutralize my dialect. Greats such as Nicole Kidman and more have taken it even further

by truly mastering the American dialect. I'm sure this didn't come easy. My hat goes out to all who take on this MAJOR task.

Each of us speak in a specific rhythm that helps to give away our dialect. The way we say certain vowels, the speed at which we speak, our ending patterns (the way we end our words) and more. It's not enough just to know the right words. You truly must learn the dialect as a whole. There is no one better to teach this to you than Andy Krieger; American Dialect coach to greats such as Jackie Chan and other great celebrities. I recently interviewed Andy and here is what Andy had to say:



http://www.debsvoice.com/MicandMe_files/Speaking%20American%20with%20Andy%20Kreiger.mp3

If this link doesn't work go to the home page of my MicnMe.com website. You'll find a link to this article and to the mp3 file.

Andy has created a fantastic method that will help you in as little as 3 hours, break your dialect habits allowing you to voice on neutral ground and increase your odds of booking. No matter what your dialect, there is hope. Andy is a coach who truly cares and knows just how to see you succeed. His prices are incredible and he can help you no matter where you live. There are only a handful of coaches that I recommend and Andy is at the top of my list. To find out more about Andy and begin your next phase into the Neutral American Dialect: Website: www.AndyKrieger.com Email: andy@andykrieger.com

Until next time everyone
All my best
Deb Munro
My Voice, Your Way!
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