

Venture Proposition

Paula Poodwan

University of British Columbia

ETEC 522

Assignment 3

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# REDUCTO

## Instant Accent Reduction Device

### CURRENT PROBLEM

It is common knowledge that anyone who learns the English language after the age of about 12-14 years will speak English with a foreign accent. Speaking English with a strange accent is not a bad thing if it does not interfere with the communication. However, in some circumstance when ESL speakers work in a field where it's essential to have perfect pronunciation, having a strong foreign accent can be a problem. It can cause frustration, poor image, miscommunication, or loss of revenue.

Improving accents is hard work and takes a lot of practice and strong will. Learning to improve a foreign accent is a very complicated process. Dato, P.D. (1996) stated that in addition to linguistic features, there are other factors that contribute to speaking with a foreign accent. To speak a single sound involves using an estimated 100 different muscles in the throat, larynx, mouth, lips, tongue, and lungs.

Many ESL speakers admit that they have a problem when trying to make themselves understood in person. Making themselves understood via talking on the phone or other methods without the help of facial expressions or visual cues is no doubt a harder task.

Below are some of the problems many ESL speakers encounter when speaking English with a foreign accent:

- According to *Outsource to India*, call centres in India are attacked with one frequent complaint that their employees' accents are incomprehensible.
- As the result of globalization, many businesses have partners or do business with clients located in other parts of the world. Therefore, the need for effective communication in English is necessary. Speaking on the phone or having a discussion via online meetings need clearer pronunciation than speaking in person. The representatives who have heavy

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accents will feel a lack of confidence in speaking during the meeting, and quite often when they speak, the listeners will fail to understand them clearly.

- Online ESL students who have to participate in an online discussion may feel intimidated, especially when doing group work with other group members who are native English speaking, or when doing an online presentations with voice work. They will try to talk less or use other mediums in fear that the class will not understand them.

## SOLUTION

Reducto is a headset device that will help ESL speakers all over the world solve their pronunciation problem without years of practice or training to reduce their accent. Reducto aims to help those that do not have English as their first language to be more understood in less time than using the tradition way of training. However, for a better result, the clients can use Reducto together with software that trains and teaches them in a traditional way.

The problem of pronunciation arises when ESL speakers pronounce a word, a phrase or a sentence with incorrect stress, intonation and/or rhythm. Reducto will help modify their words, phrases, and sentences and help with the aforementioned problems.

Using Reducto is guaranteed to improve their North American standard accent and will lead to significant benefits and advantages, including but not limited to:

- An increase in self-confidence
- Enhanced social interactions
- More opportunities for professional advancement
- Reduction of misunderstandings

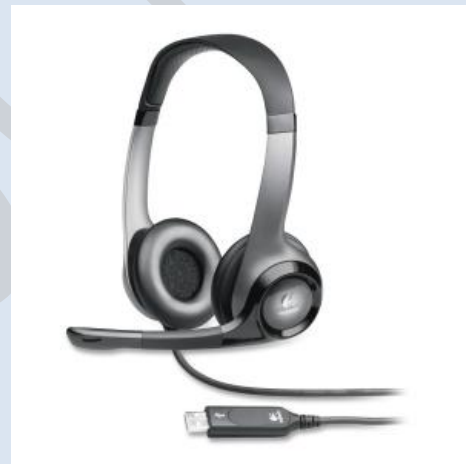
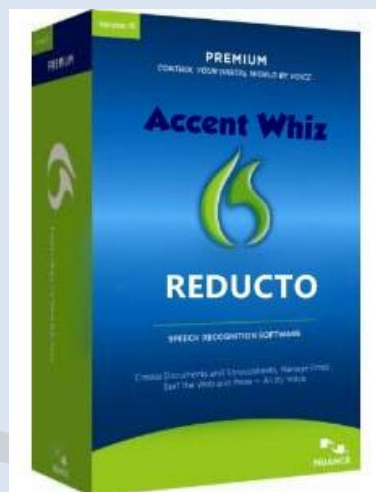
The stronger their confidence level, the more courage they will possess to speak up in important business meetings. This will influence people to become more engaged in what they have to say, as well as influence their superiors to consider them for better. It will make for a better career, and a happier, more confident lifestyle.

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### OUR PRODUCT

Our idea is based on voice modulation which refers to the adjustment of the pitch or tone of the voice, making it clear enough to be heard and understood by the audience (Wikianswer.com). We combine that with the idea of voice recognition where computer technology utilizes the voice for entering data rather than a keyboard. Voice recognition software is designed with an internal database of recognizable words or phrases. The program matches the audio signature of speech with corresponding entries in the database (wiseGEEK.com).

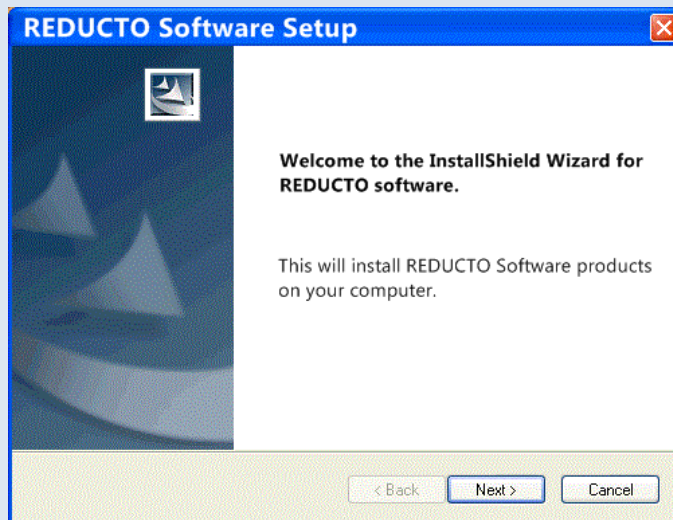
**Product Details:** A headset that comes with a USB Cable, an instruction Manual and a CD.



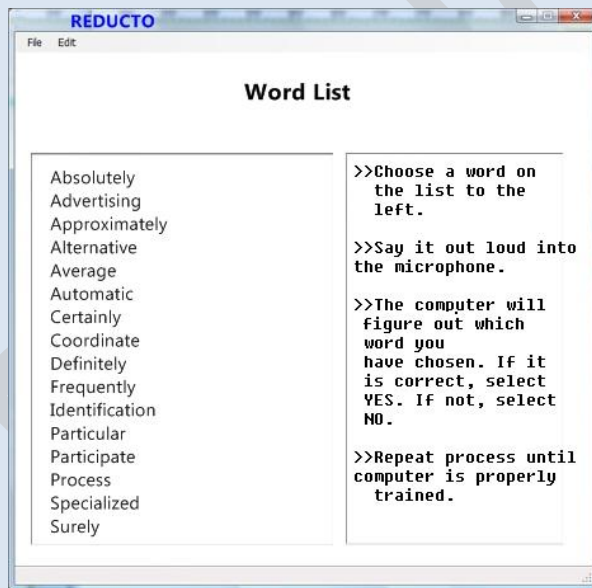
### Instructions for how to use REDUCTO

1. Insert CD.
2. Open the installer (should open up automatically, if not go to the computer panel.)
3. Go through the installation process.
4. Finish installation and open the program.

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5. Plug in USB Cable to computer port and headset port.
6. Open the program.
7. The program will prompt you to choose a word from the list given to you.



8. Say the word out loud.
9. The software will show you the word that it has picked up. It will then ask you if the word matches the one that you have said. The program will later become more and more familiar with your accent each time you use the program. It will usually take 10-20 times depending on how strong your accent is. The program is equipped with a built in dictionary and has voice recognition installed. The machine utilizes both of these to understand your foreign accent and then change it to a North American standard accent.

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10. After the program becomes familiar with your accent, save your work.
11. Close the program.
12. Speak into your headset and your foreign accent should now be changed.
13. People will now understand you online or on the phone, and you will no longer have problems!

## **DIFFERENTIATION and COMPETITORS**

We are different because we have created the only pronunciation device that helps clients reduce their foreign accents in a very small amount of time without any training. As of today, there is no other software or device that provides clients the same functions as REDUCTO. There are some products that help clients reduce their accent in a traditional way through training or coaching programs. There is also software used to modify the voice for gaming and entertainment purposes such as Screaming Bees which help change the client's voice to woman, man, children, or cyborg warrior; etc. But no other company sells software that helps change the client's accent. The users can, however, use both types of accent reduction services. While the physical pronunciation training will help the clients gradually gain a better accent, using our device will give immediate benefit.

## **MARKETING**

The worldwide language industry is a big market. According to the Ambient Insights report in 2012, the global language industry is estimated at \$82.6 billion. We are very confident that our product will be a huge success and well received because of the immediate result and our reasonable price per unit. We aim our product at ESL speakers all over the world, both for individuals and corporation buyers, for personal, educational and business use.

## **FUTURE PLAN**

After launching the software with the North American standard accent, we are planning to launch other types of English such as British, New Zealand and Australian. We are also planning to expand our equipment to be used by Anglophone speakers to help reduce their foreign accent when speaking Spanish, French, and Mandarin, etc. In addition to more language expansions, we are also planning to design a chip that can be embedded into a handheld device such as mobile phone or a small device that users can hold close to their mouth, so they may use it in a face to face conversation.

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## **COMPANY and TEAM**

I have master degrees in Educational Technology and also in Applied Linguistics. I have extensive research experience in second language acquisition. I have also taught pronunciation to ESL students for many years before starting Accent Whiz. As an ESL speaker myself, I have tried many ways to reduce my foreign accent. I have met many ESL students and business people who are frustrated with their accent and have tried every way they know to reduce their accents.

Our company was founded in 2005 and we are now one of the leaders in software for accent reduction business. Our management team currently includes IT support, software specialists, and marketing expertise. We already have many products in the market that bring profits to the company. Examples of our products are:

- Accent Reduction Training (ART) which is available in book format, CD ROMS, and downloadable software.
- Native Accent Program (NAP) which is a voice recognition software program to help train users to pronounce words and phrases like a native speaker.

## **The ASK and RETURN**

We are now expanding our company to the next level and we are very excited about it. We are proudly introducing a new product “ REDUCTO” to our clients. We will need funding to further enhance design and combine the technology of voice modulation and voice recognition together. We need to hire more software developers and programmers, and public relations to help promote our product in the global market. We also need funding to manufacture our newest product. In return for your investment, you can provide us with your strategic support, direction, leadership, sales and marketing, and experience in this business venture. We need \$ 500,000 for 25% of the company. You will be able to realize a positive return after one year of investment with us.

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## **WHY INVEST WITH US?**

Our company is one of the leaders in the accent reduction business since 2005. We are very excited to introduce our innovative device that has never been seen before in the market. We have proof to you of our success from our previous accent reduction products, along with the team of our professional hard working individuals, and with the CEO who brings extensive expertise in linguistics to our company.

With your support, our company will strive to make a difference for ESL speakers around the world who struggle speaking English with their native accents. They will have a better chance to improve their career and opportunities.

Please consider our offer, as we know this is a once in a lifetime opportunity and we will continue to grow together. We are open to discuss your interests in our company, as well as any offers or modifications you would like to make. If at any point you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us directly at [investment@accentwhiz.com](mailto:investment@accentwhiz.com), or call Accent Whiz Investor Relations at 1.888.248.2233.

Thank you

Paula Poodwan

CEO and Founder



## SELF EVALUATION

I believe this technology is very innovative. During my research for this project, I never came across any type of similar product. As an ESL speaker myself, many times I have been faced with the problem of not being understood by the listener. I have taught pronunciation and understand the rules of how to reduce my accent but it is still very hard to achieve the goal of having a clearer accent. I really want to see this type of device in the market and I strongly believe it will sell well. According to Ambient Insight 2012, the market for ESL products is huge which confirms my belief that there is an immense market for REDUCTO. I see the potential of this product and I really want to see this product happen for real.

The weakness that I can see in this product is that it only temporarily solves the problem of having a foreign accent; the users won't retain the target accent. However, it will definitely help solve the problem of miscommunication that may arise during a phone conversation. One of my weaknesses in operating this business is the lack of knowledge in the voice modulation and voice recognition software area. I will need to rely heavily on the software programmers. One of my other concerns is that without a patent, as soon as I launch REDUCTO I'm afraid that there will be other companies wanting to copy my idea.

The strengths of this product are: it is the first accent reduction device in the market, it is very easy to use, it is affordable, and most importantly the clients can see immediate feedback if they are being understood better, or if they felt more confident.

Overall, I had fun creating this venture and elevator pitch. At the beginning of the course I was worried about this assignment because I am not a tech savvy, not creative, and not a business minded person. However after learning stage by stage from this course, I have gained more confidence in how to approach this assignment. It is wonderful to have the opportunity to present and discuss my dream of a device such as this and share it with the class of ETEC 522. I do believe that this device will be very beneficial for ESL speakers around the world.

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