Accent and Identity, Prejudice and Insecurity

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1. Definitions

Prejudice ‘an unreasonable dislike of, or preference for a person group, group, custom, etc especially when it is based on their race, religion, sex, etc.’ (OALD 8)

Identity – ‘a person’s sense of themselves as an individual in relation to other individuals and groups whose values give them a sense of belonging and self-worth’.

2 Biography

3.1 Prejudices

‘... intrinsically superior to every other type of English speech - the extent to which it is current throughout the country and the marked distinctiveness and clarity of its sounds. (Wyld, 1934, p. 605)’

3.2 Responses to prejudice

A. ‘When you go to grammar school you gotta drop your ‘dohs’ you gotta drop your ‘cors’ because you cor speak like that in grammar school’

B. ‘Don't talk like that, don't talk like yer from Liverpool,’ she said because we'll lose marks

C. ‘It felt like she was ashamed of, of who we are and we shouldn’t be ashamed of like, what our accent is or somethin.’

4. Accents, Identity, Change, Variation

5. Insecurity and self-worth

6. Thriving with non-standard accents

Hear some of these examples at http://www.speechinaction.org/elf/

7. English as a Lingua Franca

8. Final thoughts

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References
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   *Language Teaching*, 42/4, 476-490.
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Lloyd James, A (1931) ‘Talk on English Speech’ British Library. 1 Linguaphone LJIE (1931)

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