

## American woman wakes up with British accent

15th February, 2018



An American woman has been diagnosed with the rare Foreign Accent Syndrome. The woman, Michelle Myers, 45, said that in 2015 she went to bed with a "blinding headache" and woke up with a British accent. The accent has remained with her ever since. Ms Myers

said she has woken up speaking a variety of accents before. She was totally perplexed at waking up and speaking with an Australian or Irish accent. These disappeared after two weeks but the UK accent has remained. Myers told journalists that she found her condition, "really difficult to begin with". She said: "It was hard because I was really struggling. I have come to terms with the fact that I might sound like this forever. I realize it's part of me now."

Foreign Accent Syndrome (FAS) is a disorder that typically occurs after strokes or traumatic brain injuries that damage the language center of our brain. It varies in the degree to which it affects someone's language and accent. In some cases, someone's native language sounds like it is tinged with a foreign accent; in other instances, rhythm, stress and pronunciation can completely change. The condition was first documented in 1907 by French neurologist Pierre Marie. It is a relatively rare condition. Only about 60 cases of FAS have been documented over the past century. One of these was a Japanese stroke patient who woke up sounding Korean, even though he had never been to Korea.

Sources:  
washingtonpost.com / livescience.com / nydailynews.com

## Writing

An accent can be a help and a hindrance to us. Discuss. Has your accent helped you?

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

foreign accent / syndrome / headache / perplexed / journalists / difficult / forever / disorder / strokes / traumatic / language center / rhythm / stress / pronunciation

## True / False

- a) Foreign Accent Syndrome is a fairly common condition. T / F
- b) Doctors said a headache was the cause of the woman's British accent. T / F
- c) The woman has also had Australian and Irish accents. T / F
- d) The woman has not yet accepted that her accent has changed. T / F
- e) Foreign Accent Syndrome affects the language center of the brain. T / F
- f) Foreign Accent Syndrome always completely changes someone's accent. T / F
- g) Foreign Accent Syndrome was discovered 200 years ago. T / F
- h) A Japanese man woke up with a Korean accent. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                              |               |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. <b>diagnosed</b>          | a. illness    |
| 2. <b>remained</b>           | b. recorded   |
| 3. <b>perplexed</b>          | c. happens    |
| 4. <b>condition</b>          | d. stayed     |
| 5. <b>come to terms with</b> | e. damaging   |
| 6. <b>occurs</b>             | f. differs    |
| 7. <b>traumatic</b>          | g. identified |
| 8. <b>varies</b>             | h. uncommon   |
| 9. <b>documented</b>         | i. puzzled    |
| 10. <b>rare</b>              | j. accept     |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of your accent?
- b) What do you think of Foreign Accent Syndrome?
- c) What is your favourite accent?
- d) What do you think of the British accent?
- e) Why do we have different accents?
- f) Would you prefer to speak with a British or American accent?
- g) How would you feel if your accent suddenly changed?
- h) What have other people said about your accent?

# BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

## Phrase Match

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. diagnosed with the rare             | a. documented in 1907      |
| 2. went to bed with a blinding         | b. with the fact           |
| 3. she has woken up speaking a variety | c. center of our brain     |
| 4. I have come to terms                | d. brain injuries          |
| 5. I realize it's part                 | e. Foreign Accent Syndrome |
| 6. strokes or traumatic                | f. with a foreign accent   |
| 7. damage the language                 | g. of accents before       |
| 8. sounds like it is tinged            | h. of me now               |
| 9. The condition was first             | i. patient                 |
| 10. One of these was a Japanese stroke | j. headache                |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How proud are you of your accent?
- What do you know about the brain's language center?
- What changes would you like to make to your accent?
- How can an accent affect your lifestyle?
- What's the best way to study pronunciation?
- What do you know about neurology?
- What questions would you like to ask the lady?

## Spelling

- egsnoaidd with the rare Foreign Accent Syndrome
- She was totally erpxelpde
- Myers told juionlssatr
- she found her toocidnni really difficult
- I was really ngtigrqusl
- I learize it's part of me
- a disorder that pillcatyy occurs
- trmaiuocat brain injuries
- tdgnie with a foreign accent
- rmyhth, stress and pronunciation
- French tueslnoogr Pierre Marie
- a ltreeviayl rare condition

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. i	4. a	5. j
6. c	7. e	8. f	9. b	10. h

## Role Play

### Role A – British English

You think British English is the best kind of English. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their kinds of English. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): American English, Australian English or Indian English.

### Role B – American English

You think American English is the best kind of English. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their kinds of English. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): British English, Australian English or Indian English.

### Role C – Australian English

You think Australian English is the best kind of English. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their kinds of English. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): American English, British English or Indian English.

### Role D – Indian English

You think Indian English is the best kind of English. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their kinds of English. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): American English, Australian English or British English.

## Speaking – Accent

Rank these with your partner. Put the best accent at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| • Australian    | • British English  |
| • Irish         | • American English |
| • South African | • Singlish         |
| • Scottish      | • Indian English   |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.