**CH07**

**Additional activity**

**Accent attitudes**

[The Speech Accent Archive](http://accent.gmu.edu/browse.php) is a popular database of people’s speech in different accents in English. Creators of the archive asked people from all over the world to read the following passage:

*Please call Stella.  Ask her to bring these things with her from the store:  Six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob.  We also need a small plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids.  She can scoop these things into three red bags, and we will go meet her Wednesday at the train station.*

The archive is mostly used by linguists interested in phonetics and phonology to study how speakers of English in different regions, as well as speakers of English language around the world, produce different sounds. The archive allows users to search by region and by ‘native language’ of speakers.

Since all of the speakers are saying the same thing, the database can also be used to conduct informal studies of people’s attitudes towards different accents.

Choose five speakers from different countries or from different regions of the same country and play them for five of your classmates. Ask them to rank the accents based on how prestigious and how attractive they think they are (on a scale from 1 to 5). See if you can find any patterns among the attitudes they express.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Listener 1 | Listener 2 | Listener 3 | Listener 4 | Listener 5 |
|  | **Prestigious** | **Attractive** | **Prestigious** | **Attractive** | **Prestigious** | **Attractive** | **Prestigious** | **Attractive** | **Prestigious** | **Attractive** |
| Speaker 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Speaker 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Speaker3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Speaker4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Speaker5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Speaker 6 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

After they have made their judgments, ask the listeners why they made the judgements that they did. What do their answers tell you about the relationship between language attitudes and other kinds of attitudes?

**Reference**

George Mason University. The Speech Accent Archive, Available at <http://accent.gmu.edu/browse.php>