

# Non native speakers



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Native speakers of English are a speaker who used English as a first language or mother tongue. Usually native speakers of English are people from English-speaking countries like the USA, Great Britain, Australia, Canada, Ireland, etc. Anyone may acquire the native speaker status by virtue of being just as proficient as a genetic native speaker of a language. In Singapore, where English has been the medium of instruction since 1987 and where, by now, there are many users of English whose proficiency levels are comparable to or even surpass the levels of their native English - speaking counterparts. The individual that the first language used was something other than English, or someone who speaks English fluently, but the first language used was something else. It may be used to refer to someone with little or no knowledge of the English language. An analysis of TELF data (the Tübingen English as a Lingua Franca corpus and database, found that non-native speakers often struggle with the diametrically opposed forces of wishing to fully express themselves on the one hand, and not being able to do so on the other (cf. Albl-Mikasa, 2009). Pronunciation is an essential part of language. According to Fries (1945), the main problem in learning a new language is not the vocabulary but it is instead the mastery of the sound system, which is to understand the stream of speech and to hear distinctive sound features. Pronunciation is important to avoid misunderstandings when communicating. It is seen as a prerequisite for the development of speaking skill (Celce-Murcia & Goodwin, 1991). Pronunciation, according to Microsoft Encarta 2007, means “ the way in which a sound, word, or language is articulated, especially in conforming to an accepted standard”. According to Hinofotis and Bailey (1981, as cited by Celce-Murcia and Goodwin, 1991), one will not be able to communicate orally with bad pronunciation of words.

**PROBLEM 1: PRONUNCIATION** 1. Incorrectly learning the pronunciation of English either by transferring the phonological rules from their mother tongue into their English speeches or through implementing strategies similar to those used in primary language acquisition. Create innovative pronunciations for English sounds which cannot be found in the speaker's first language. Example: The Japanese do not have the sound of 'r' in their language. Thus, they have to use an alternative sound which is available in their language according to their convenience. As they pronounced the sound 'r', they pronounce 'l' sound. **HOW TO OVERCOME IT?** E. g.: learn how to pronounce the words correctly from native English speakers. MOE had conducted a Native Speaker Program which brings in the native English speakers to each school in order to teach the non-native English speaker of the school.

**PROBLEM 2: ACCENT** Include their first language accent as they speak. Strong accent sometimes makes the listeners cannot understand the words that they are saying. E. g.: Malay English teachers who use Malay language as their first language have the possibility to speak English language with a strong Malay accent. Strong accent could diminish English understanding of some words. **HOW TO OVERCOME IT?** Speak the words slowly in order to make it sound clear for the listeners. **Result:** listeners could understand the English words even though our accent was influenced strongly in those English words.

**PROBLEM 3: GRAMMAR** E. g.: Cannot understand on how the English language really works. English grammar is totally different from 'Malay grammar'. In Malay sentence, we cannot use the plural verb with the plural subject. **HOW TO OVERCOME IT?** Ask help from any native speakers who could correct us in case we are using the wrong grammar as we stated a sentence. E. g.: As the teacher in school has

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become a native English speaker, we could ask help from that teacher

PROBLEM 4: FLUENCY E. g : used to talk in native language lack of confidence to speak that language tendency to make mistakes make the non-native speakers afraid to talk HOW TO OVERCOME IT? Non-native speakers could practice very hard as practice makes perfect E. g: Practices using cassettes, or tapes and listen to those things frequently