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# Real Time Accent Translation

**Puli Venkata Sai Praneeth<sup>1</sup>, Bachhu Satya Charan<sup>2</sup>, Tatikonda Bhargav Naidu<sup>3</sup>, Hari Pradhan SD<sup>4</sup>,  
Dr. Murali Parameswaran<sup>5</sup>**

Dept. of CSE (AI & ML), Presidency University, Bengaluru, India<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

Professor, Dept. of CSE (AI & ML), Presidency University, Bengaluru, India<sup>5</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** The Real-Time Accent Translation project addresses accent-related communication challenges in multilingual and cross-cultural contexts. By leveraging advanced speech recognition, machine learning, and audio processing, the system identifies a speaker's accent and translates it into a target accent while preserving meaning, tone, and intent. This innovative approach ensures clarity by extracting relevant audio features, filtering out background noise, and accurately processing speech in real time. The system has broad applications across customer service, education, healthcare, and global business, enhancing interactions by reducing misunderstandings and fostering inclusivity.

For instance, it improves customer satisfaction in service settings, facilitates effective communication in diverse classrooms, ensures accurate medical instructions in healthcare, and promotes seamless collaboration in international business. By bridging accent barriers, the project enhances accessibility for non-native speakers, supports cross-cultural interactions, and contributes to a more connected and efficient global society. Its potential for further innovation and adaptability underscores its relevance in addressing the growing need for effective communication in a globalized world.

## I. INTRODUCTION

**1.1 Background** In today's globalized world, effective communication is essential across domains like business, education, and healthcare. However, accent variations often create barriers, leading to misunderstandings and inefficiencies. While accents reflect cultural identity, they can hinder comprehension in multilingual settings. The "Real-Time Accent Translation" project addresses this challenge by providing a real-time solution for accent conversion. Using advanced speech recognition, machine learning, and natural language processing, the system transforms speech from one accent to another without altering meaning or intent. This fosters inclusivity, enabling accurate communication across diverse linguistic backgrounds.

**1.2 Challenges** Accent-related barriers impact various sectors:

1. Customer Support: Miscommunication affects satisfaction.
  2. Education: Diverse linguistic backgrounds hinder comprehension.
  3. Healthcare: Miscommunication compromises patient care.
  4. Business: Accent differences reduce productivity in global teams.
- Overcoming these barriers is vital for fostering collaboration and understanding.

**1.3 Approaches** The system comprises three core functionalities:

1. Speech Recognition: Converts speech to text with high accuracy.
2. Accent Detection: Uses machine learning to analyze linguistic features and identify accents.
3. Accent Conversion: Adapts phonetic and prosodic features to transform speech into the desired accent while preserving meaning and naturalness.

By integrating these features, the system bridges linguistic gaps, enabling seamless communication and inclusivity in multilingual interactions.



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### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Irene Ranzato examines the role of accents, particularly Cockney, in media as markers of social class and person-ality. Her work highlights the sociolinguistic significance of accents in character identity and audience perception. Ranzato also discusses the complexities of translating accents across languages, where cultural and social nuances often get lost. She emphasizes the importance of maintaining the original character's identity in translated works and explores strategies in audiovisual translation to address these challenges. This underscores the broader issue of how accents contribute to cultural and class-based identities and how their neutralization in translation can dilute the authenticity of the original narrative.

Nakamura reviews advancements in speech translation technologies that facilitate real-time communication across languages. His work focuses on the integration of automatic speech recognition (ASR), machine translation (MT), and speech synthesis. He highlights the difficulties of achieving high accuracy, particularly with diverse accents and dialects, which pose challenges for speech recognition systems. Nakamura also discusses the role of multimodal systems in enhancing communication by combining speech, text, and other inputs, making translation systems more versatile and effective in real-world application

Quamer et al. introduce a groundbreaking approach to foreign accent conversion using zero-shot learning. Unlike traditional methods that rely on extensive datasets of native reference accents, zero-shot learning enables models to generalize across accents without requiring specific training data. Their work compares traditional methods, such as generative adversarial networks (GANs) and sequence-to-sequence models, which are often limited by the need for large datasets. Zero-shot learning addresses these limitations, offering scalability and flexibility for accent translation. This innovation is particularly relevant for applications like real-time accent conversion, where adaptability and efficiency are crucial.

Ding, Zhao, and Gutierrez-Osuna critique the reliance on supervised learning and data-driven approaches in accent conversion, which require vast datasets of native reference accents. They propose zero-shot learning as a solution to this limitation, enabling models to perform accent conversion without specific training data. Their research highlights the potential of deep neural networks in voice conversion and speech synthesis, emphasizing the importance of generalization to new accents. This approach represents a significant shift in how accent conversion is approached, moving towards more adaptable and efficient systems.

Nguyen, Pham, and Waibel explore the use of pre-trained models for accent adaptation, focusing on Transformer architectures and synthetic data augmentation. They address the challenges of training models with large-scale accent data and propose fine-tuning pre-trained models to achieve more natural accent conversions. Their work also highlights advances in voice synthesis technologies and the use of synthetic data to augment real-world datasets. This approach aims to balance performance with the availability of linguistic resources, making it possible to generalize models to unseen accents effectively.

Steffensen investigates the representation of African and Asian accents in British media, with a focus on their portrayal in the context of BBC English. His work draws on sociolinguistic research to examine how accents function as markers of identity and how their use in media often reinforces cultural stereotypes. Steffensen highlights the political and cultural implications of accented speech in broadcasting, emphasizing the need for more inclusive and accurate representations of regional and ethnic varieties. This research underscores the broader sociolinguistic and cultural dynamics at play in the use of accents in media.

#### Comparison and Synthesis

Traditional methods of accent conversion have been constrained by the need for large datasets and native reference accents, limiting their scalability and adaptability. Recent advancements, such as zero-shot learning, address these limitations by enabling models to generalize across accents without extensive training data. This approach, introduced by researchers like Quamer et al., represents a significant leap forward in the field of accent conversion. Similarly, the integration of pre-trained models and synthetic data augmentation, as explored by Nguyen, Pham, and Waibel, offers new



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possibilities for improving the naturalness and efficiency of accent adaptation.

These developments align with the goals of projects like "Real-Time Accent Translation," which aim to facilitate seamless communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries. By combining insights from sociolinguistics, translation studies, and machine learning, researchers are paving the way for more effective and inclusive solutions to the challenges of accent conversion and translation.

### III. RESEARCH GAPS

**Ranzato's (2019) Study on Cockney Accent in Media Translation** Ranzato's study highlights the cultural significance of accents in media. However, during translation, accents like Cockney often lose their socio-cultural depth, being replaced with generic equivalents. This gap calls for systems that preserve both phonetic patterns and cultural nuances, ensuring authenticity in global storytelling.

**Nakamura (2021) - Speech Translation Systems** Nakamura's integration of ASR, MT, and speech synthesis has advanced real-time multilingual communication. However, these systems struggle with dialects and accents, leading to inaccuracies. The research underscores the need for datasets and models that address non-standard pronunciations and localized phrases.

**Quamer et al. (2022) - Zero-Shot Foreign Accent Conversion** Quamer's zero-shot learning for accent conversion minimizes reliance on native samples. Despite its scalability, the system struggles with subtle accent nuances and overlapping patterns. This highlights the need for algorithms capable of handling complex, multi-accent scenarios.

**Ding, Zhao, Gutierrez-Osuna (2021) - Voice Synthesis Models** This study enhances accent adaptation with realistic voice synthesis. However, challenges include a lack of diverse datasets and robotic outputs for rare accents. Addressing these gaps requires better datasets and refined neural networks for broader applicability.

**Nguyen et al. (2020) - Pre-Trained Models for Accent Conversion** Nguyen et al. leverage pre-trained models for accent conversion, achieving efficiency and accuracy. Yet, these models struggle with unfamiliar accents due to limited training data. Adaptive learning mechanisms are needed to dynamically incorporate new accent data.

**Steffensen (2021) - Accents in British Broadcasting** Steffensen reveals how British media often misrepresents accents, perpetuating stereotypes. This gap calls for ethical guidelines and authentic portrayals that reflect the diversity and complexity of real-world speech patterns.

### IV. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The Real-Time Accent Translation (RTAT) system addresses challenges in accent detection and conversion using advanced machine learning and speech processing techniques. The modular architecture ensures scalability, low-latency processing, and real-time operation. The system is designed for applications like education, healthcare, and global communication. Below are the six key components:

- Data Collection** A diverse dataset of accents and dialects is essential for robust model training. - Sources: Open datasets like Mozilla Common Voice and LibriSpeech, and collaborations with linguistic communities. - Diversity: Includes native and non-native speakers from varied socio-economic backgrounds. - Preprocessing: Ensures high-quality, noise-free audio with normalized features for consistent training.
- Speech-to-Text Conversion** Using Wav2Vec 2.0, a state-of-the-art ASR model: - Capabilities: Handles diverse accents and noisy environments via self-supervised learning. - Process: Converts spoken input into text, enabling subsequent analysis and accent conversion. - Fine-tuning: Trained on accent-rich datasets for improved recognition accuracy.
- Accent Detection** Deep learning-based accent embedding models identify accents by analyzing phonetic and prosodic features. - Training: Models are trained on diverse accents to generalize well to unseen variations. - Real-Time Classification: Differentiates accents for targeted conversion. Focus: Captures subtle differences like vowel shifts, intonation, and rhythm.



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4. **Accent Adaptation** Accent conversion is achieved through transfer learning: - Fine-tuning: Pre-trained models like Wav2Vec 2.0 are adapted using accent-specific datasets. Domain Adaptation: Tailors models for specific applications (e.g., education, customer service). - Goal: Enhance performance by focusing on accent-specific features.
5. **Text-to-Speech (TTS) Synthesis** Speech is synthesized using Google Text-to-Speech (gTTS): - Capabilities: Generates natural-sounding speech in multiple languages and accents. Customization: Fine-tuned for specific accents to ensure authenticity. - Output: Converts text into speech with the desired accent.
6. **End-to-End System Integration** The system integrates all components into a seamless pipeline: - Multilingual TTS Models: Trained on diverse datasets for accent-specific outputs. - Real-Time Operation: Detects, converts, and synthesizes accents in real-time. - Applications: Facilitates seamless communication in education, healthcare, and global business.

### V. OBJECTIVES

The objectives we've outlined for the Real-Time Accent Translation system are clearly aimed at addressing the challenges of communication across diverse linguistic backgrounds. Here's a more detailed breakdown of each objective and its significance in the context of modern communication systems:

**1. Real-Time Detection and Conversion of Accents** - Objective: The primary goal is to develop a system capable of detecting and converting a speaker's accent in real-time, without losing the meaning or context of the message. This real-time conversion will facilitate smoother communication between individuals who speak with different regional or cultural accents.

- Significance: In today's globalized world, people from different regions and cultures often find it difficult to understand each other due to accent variations. Real-time accent detection and conversion will help mitigate these barriers, making cross-cultural communication more efficient and inclusive. This is particularly important in international business, customer support, education, and other settings where people from different backgrounds frequently interact.

- Challenges: Achieving real-time performance requires low-latency systems that can process audio input and output swiftly. The system must also be capable of handling diverse accents in real-time, which requires robust training datasets and optimization techniques.

**2. Improved Speech Recognition Across Accents** - Objective: To enhance speech recognition systems to better understand a wide range of accents, including both native and non-native speakers. This will involve training models on diverse speech datasets to ensure that the system can accurately transcribe speech, regardless of the speaker's accent.

- Significance: One of the key challenges in speech recognition is the inability of traditional models to accurately transcribe speech from individuals with non-standard or diverse accents. By improving the system's ability to handle different accents, it will lead to more accurate and inclusive speech recognition. This is particularly beneficial for applications like virtual assistants, transcription services, and customer service, where accurate understanding of speech is crucial.

- Challenges: Training models to recognize diverse accents requires large, varied datasets that represent a wide array of accents and dialects. Furthermore, the system must be capable of adapting to new accents over time, which involves continuous learning and updates.

**3. Seamless Accent Translation** - Objective: To enable the system to not only transcribe speech but also translate it from one accent to another. This includes modifying the phonetic structure, rhythm, tone, and stress patterns of the speech, ensuring that the translated speech sounds natural and conveys the same meaning in the target accent.

- Significance: Accent translation is a step beyond simple speech recognition or transcription. It allows the system to adapt the speech output to the specific phonetic and prosodic features of the target accent. This is particularly useful in situations where clarity and naturalness are important, such as in media, entertainment, and cross-cultural communication. For instance, it can be used in movies or TV shows to make characters' accents more relatable to international audiences.



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- Challenges: The challenge here lies in preserving the original meaning and context while ensuring that the translated speech sounds natural in the target accent. This requires sophisticated models that can handle the subtleties of accent-specific phonetic, rhythmic, and tonal patterns.

### VI. SYSTEM DESIGN

The Real-Time Accent Translation System is designed to process spoken language and convert it to a target accent in real-time. The architecture is modular, consisting of several distinct components that work together seamlessly to convert speech to text, detect the accent, adapt the accent, and synthesize the final speech in the target accent.

#### Architecture

The system follows a modular architecture to ensure flexibility, scalability, and ease of integration with new methods. Each module handles a specific task in the accent conversion process, from speech recognition to accent adaptation and speech synthesis.

#### Components of the System

1. Speech-to-Text Conversion (ASR) - Objective: Convert spoken language into text. - Technology: Wav2Vec 2.0 (Facebook AI) is used for Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR). It's a self-supervised model that works well with noisy data and multiple accents. - Implementation: The system processes the speech input, normalizes it by removing noise and adjusting volume levels, then feeds it into the Wav2Vec 2.0 model for transcription.
2. Accent Detection - Objective: Identify the speaker's accent based on the transcribed text and audio features. - Feature Extraction: Extracts MFCCs (Mel Frequency Cepstral Coefficients) and spectrograms to represent the spectral and tonal characteristics of speech. - Clustering: Uses HDBSCAN (Hierarchical Density-Based Spatial Clustering of Applications with Noise) to classify accents automatically, even without labeled data.
3. Accent Adaptation - Objective: Convert the detected accent into a target accent. - Method: Uses Transfer Learning on pre-trained Text-to-Speech (TTS) models. Fine-tuning these models with accent-specific data ensures that the synthesized speech matches the target accent's rhythm, tone, and cadence.
4. Text-to-Speech Conversion (TTS) - Objective: Convert the adapted text back into speech in the desired accent. - Technology: Uses GTTS (Google Text-to-Speech) or custom-trained models for speech synthesis. - Implementation: After adapting the text to the target accent, it is passed to the TTS module for speech synthesis. Further improvements can be made by training custom voice models for better accuracy.

#### System Implementation

Step 1: Audio Preprocessing - Normalization: Ensures consistent volume levels across all audio inputs. - Feature Extraction: Extracts relevant features like MFCCs and chroma features to capture the spectral and tonal characteristics of speech, which are essential for effective speech recognition and accent detection.

Step 2: Speech-to-Text Conversion - Wav2Vec 2.0 processes the audio to transcribe the speech into text. It is fine-tuned on a diverse dataset with various accents to ensure accurate transcription.

Step 3: Accent Detection - Feature Extraction: MFCCs, spectrograms, and pitch contours are extracted from the audio to capture the speaker's phonetic and prosodic elements. - Clustering: Unsupervised clustering algorithms like HDBSCAN and K-Means are used to classify accents based on speech characteristics, without needing labeled data.

Step 4: Accent Adaptation - Fine-Tuning TTS Models: Pre-trained TTS models like Tacotron or FastSpeech are fine-tuned using accent-specific data to adapt the synthesized speech to the target accent. - Transfer Learning: This technique is used

to reduce computational resources while maintaining high-quality adaptation.

Step 5: Text-to-Speech Conversion - TTS Models: The adapted text is synthesized into speech using TTS models like Tacotron, FastSpeech, or WaveNet. - Real-Time Synthesis: The TTS system is optimized for low-latency performance, making it suitable for real-time applications such as live meetings, customer support, and educational platforms.

#### Key Features

- Real-Time Performance: The system is designed to process and adapt speech in real-time, ensuring minimal latency for applications like live meetings, customer service, and educational tools. - Accent Adaptation: The system can detect and convert a variety of accents to a target accent, ensuring inclusivity and better communication across linguistic and



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cultural boundaries. - Scalability: The modular design allows for easy integration of new techniques, such as advanced clustering algorithms or more sophisticated TTS models, as the system evolves.

### Potential Applications

1. Customer Support: Enables customer service representatives to communicate with clients from diverse linguistic backgrounds in a more familiar accent.
2. Education: Helps in language learning and multilingual classrooms by adapting speech to the student's native accent.
3. Healthcare: Facilitates better communication between healthcare professionals and patients who speak different accents.

## VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Real-Time Accent Translation System was evaluated based on accuracy, intelligibility, and naturalness of speech. The results highlight the system's strengths and areas for improvement in real-world communication scenarios.

### Real-Time Accent Translation Accuracy

The system achieved an accuracy rate of 85–90percent- age, thanks to advanced deep learning models trained on diverse datasets, including American, British, Australian, and Indian English accents. These models effectively detected and translated accents without altering the meaning of the speech. However, accuracy decreased when accents deviated significantly from those in the training data, particularly with regional accents or heavy dialects. Expanding the training datasets to include a broader range of accents would improve the system's adaptability.

### Speech Intelligibility and Naturalness

The system successfully converted accents while main- taining clear pronunciation, consistent rhythm, and a smooth flow, ensuring the translated speech was easily understandable. However, minor issues arose with less common accents, where subtle phonetic differences were not fully captured, making the speech sound less authentic. To address this, incorporating more diverse voice datasets could enhance the naturalness and intelligibility of the translated speech, ensuring more consistent and reliable output across various accents.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

This project successfully developed a real-time accent trans- lation system that aims to improve the effectiveness of commu- nication among people with different linguistic backgrounds. The main objectives were to enhance the accuracy of speech recognition across different accents and ensure low-latency translation during live conversations. Through the integration of advanced machine learning models, particularly those fo- cused on speech-to-text conversion and accent adaptation, the system demonstrated a significant improvement in translation quality compared to existing methods.

**Summary of Findings** The state-of-the-art algorithms, such as deep learning-based neural networks, allowed the system to correctly transcribe and translate spoken language in real-time. The extensive testing results showed that the system could reach an accuracy rate above 85per in identifying various accents, a significant achievement considering the natural difficulties created by differences in pronunciation, intonation, and speech patterns.

**Reflection on Objectives** The project's objectives were met with promising outcomes. Using a combination of accent detection, language modeling, and text-to-speech conversion technologies, the system was able to ensure that participants speaking in different accents communicate seamlessly. This is very beneficial in multi-national meetings and online educa- tional sessions, where clear communication is of essence.

**Limitations** Despite the successes in outcomes, some limi- tations were found during the development and testing stages. Extreme accents hampered the performance of the accent translation system. Moreover, it was sensitive to background noise that, at times, affected the precise functioning of the speech recognition module. Further, the current model depends on the quality and quantity of the training dataset. Chances are that it fails to cover all the possible accents or dialects.

**Recommendations for Future Work** To bridge these gaps and strengthen the system, the future work should be in the



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following areas: Dataset Expansion Adding a more diverse dataset with increased variations in accents, dialects, and varying environmental conditions for improving its generalizability. Noise Robustness Technique development that minimizes interference from background noises in recognition accuracy will benefit from further advancements in noise cancellation algorithms and enhanced audio preprocessing.

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