**ESL Diagnostic Assessment**

**Instructions:** There are two sections to this assessment: **(Part 1) Paragraph and Dialog Reading** and **(Part 2) Interview Questions.** Record yourself reading each section out loud. Make sure you are in a quiet environment and that your microphone (phone, laptop, computer, etc.) is appropriately capturing your voice. Please follow the specific instructions for each section.

You may submit one long recording or several short recordings.

**Part 1: Paragraph and Dialog Reading[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Directions**: *Please review the passage below. Rehearse silently once or twice. When you are ready, read and record the paragraph.*

Is English your native language? If not, your foreign accent may show people that you come from another country. Why is it difficult to speak foreign languages without an accent? The answer is complicated, but there are several possible explanations. First, age is an important factor in learning to pronounce a language competently and confidently. We know that young children can learn a second language with perfect pronunciation. We also know that older learners usually have an accent, though some have learned to speak without one.

Another factor that influences your pronunciation is your first language. English speakers can, for example, recognize people from France by their French accents. They can also identify Spanish or Arabic speakers over the telephone, just by listening carefully to them. Does this mean that accents can’t be changed? Not at all! But you can’t change your pronunciation without a lot of hard work. In the end, improving your pronunciation appears to be a combination of three things: concentrated hard work, a good ear, and a strong ambition to sound like a native speaker. And after closer analysis, it turns out that accents aren’t entirely problematic. What’s more important is being communicative.

To improve, you need specific and accurate information about English sounds, effective strategies for practice, lots of exposure to spoken English, and patience. Will you make progress, or will you just give up? Only time will tell, I’m afraid. But it’s your decision. You can improve! Good luck and don’t forget to work hard.

**Dialogue Reading**

**Instructions:** *Please review the dialog below. Rehearse silently once or twice. When you are ready, record and read Ben’s and Liz’s parts using a normal rate of speech.*

Ben: So, how was your meeting with your new advisor?

Liz: Very informative, actually

Ben: Oh, really?

Liz: There’s a good probability that I’ll be a TA for him next semester.

Ben: Oh, that’s great. What’ll you do?

Liz: Grade the homework and be available during office hours if students have questions about the grading.

Ben: Yeah, I think Patty is doing that this semester. You should contact her to see how it’s going.

Liz: OK, I might do that. Thanks for the tip

Ben: Sure. No problem.

**Part 2: Interview Questions**

**Instructions:** *Answer all of the following questions. You may think about your answers before recording, but* ***do not take notes****. We want get a better idea of how well you can answer interview questions and speak without reading from a script.*

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself. What do you study? How did you end up in your field?
2. Tell me about something fun or unusual that you did during your last vacation.
3. What problems do you think you have with oral English (oral communication)?
4. What do you hope to improve this semester?

1. Passage adapted from Teaching Pronunciation: A Course Book and Reference Guide, 2nd ed. by Celce-Murcia, M. et al., pg. 481. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)