Pragmatics of Accents

EDITED BY

Gaëlle Planchenault
Livia Poljak

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Pragmatics of Accents

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Edited by Gaëlle Planchenault and Livia Poljak

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Pragmatics of Accents

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Table of contents

Acknowledgments VII

The pragmatics of accents: Making meanings in interaction 1
Gaëlle Planchenault and Livia Poljak

Part 1. Ideologies of accents in national contexts

Attitudes to accents 19
Alexei Prikhodkine

Urban youth accents in France: Can a slight palatalization of /t/ and /d/ challenge French sociophonetics? 41
Cyril Trimaille and Maria Candea

Encountering accented others – and selves – in provincial Japan 63
Edwin K. Everhart

'Could I have an appointment for a viewing?': Language-based discrimination and apartment searches with different accents in Germany 85
Inke Du Bois

Part 2. Accents in second language education teaching and learning

The pragmatic force of second language accent in education 117
John Levis and Shannon McCrocklin

A lack of phonological inherentness: Perceptions of accents in UK education 141
Alex Baratta

English-language attitudes and identities in Spain: Accent variation and the negotiation of possible selves 163
Erin Carrie

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Part 3. Accents in the media and the workplace

From *I'm the One That I Want* to *Kim's Convenience*:
The paradoxes and perils of implicit in-group "yellowvoicing" **189**
Hye Seung Chung

Divine intervention: Multimodal pragmatics and unconventional opposition in performed character speech in *Dragon Age: Inquisition* **205**
Emily Villanueva and Astrid Ensslin

In the ear of the beholder: How ethnicity of raters affects the perception of a foreign accent **229**
Alexandra Besoi Setzer, Elena Nicoladis and C. Lorelei Baquiran

Concluding remarks

From sound to social meaning: Investigating the pragmatic dimensions of accents **247**
Annette Boudreau and Médéric Gasquet-Cyrus

Index **263**

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Acknowledgments

An enterprise such as the edition of a volume is no simple task – however, the confusing and worrying period from 2020–2021 has made such a task all the more challenging. More than ever, it showed us what human generosity and professional dedication can overcome. To all of you who made this publication possible, we want to present our heartfelt thanks.

The editors of this series would first like to thank one another: such a volume cannot be undertaken alone, and at many times during the process we were thankful to have been able to count on one another to stay focused and carry on.

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We would also like to thank Anita Fetzer, editor of the *Pragmatics & Beyond New Series*, for all her patience and understanding during these difficult times. Her support has certainly helped lead us to this finishing point.

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The Editors

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The pragmatics of accents

Making meanings in interaction

Gaëlle Planchenault and Livia Poljak
Simon Fraser University, Canada

> Our accent is the most important index of identity that we've got. Everybody wants to say who they are and where they're from. And the easiest and cheapest and most universal way of doing that is through their accent […] There is no such thing as an ugly accent, like there's no such thing as an ugly flower.
> B. Crystal and D. Crystal (2014)

If we choose to open this edited volume with this citation, it is not because we agree with the way it defines accents. Instead, we believe that it encapsulates the many problems that impede most studies on accents: the rigid affiliation between accents and linguistic communities or individual identities, the omission of personal variations related to the symbolic role that accents play in social interactions, as well as the fact that – because of their emergent characteristics – accents mainly exist in interactions. That which bothered us, perhaps, the most was the way the quoted words supported the ongoing mythology that ignores the fact that accents are as much a social as they are a phonetical reality; and being a social construct, does not make accents, any less real. These are some of the omissions that the studies in this book strive to address.

The basis for this book dates to 2015 and the creation of an international network of researchers,[1] whose statement was to bring to the fore under-researched aspects of accents, such as the relationship between the ideologies of accents and the discriminations that are still prevalent in contemporary societies. Since its creation, the network has presented several panels in international conferences and directed a special issue (*Accents du français: approches critiques*, Candea, Planchenault and Trimaille 2019). Several of its members are participating in this edited volume.

We understand that all accents are not born equal and that some are perceived as less desirable or are more discriminated against than others. For these reasons, our studies question the notion of whether everybody wants to say, "who they are and where they're from", and thus, acknowledge that some speakers may also

1. Accents, Ideologies, Discriminations https://accents.hypotheses.org/

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be advised to erase theirs and to 'pass' for what would be perceived as accent-less speakers, recognising therefore, the ability to vary, and sometimes to perform or stylize accents.

1. To have/to take an accent: What does the context of interaction tell us

For years, accents have been studied as clusters of phonetic features that were characteristic of individuals' – or rather, of an entire community's – speech patterns. The above citation by Crystal perfectly illustrates such expectations. An accent is, therefore, often understood to be a constant and predictable speech behaviour, as well as a readily available symbolic resource to be interpreted in most cases as an index to a geographical or social group. While some people are believed to *have an accent* (note the essentialized link of possession between the individual and the speech behaviour as it is never said – even though it would be more accurate – that his/her speech is perceived as *accented*), others are thought to be without one, a belief which harkens back to what Lippi-Green (1997) famously named "the myth of non-accent".

In this book, our goal is to present a more nuanced approach to accents in which their instability and ambiguity (rather than stability and consistency) are highlighted by the context of interaction, which also brings essential clues to better interpret the presence/performance of these accents.

Contexts matter. To demonstrate this, we start by studying two instances where such accented behaviours take place, leading us to present the theory of Pragmatics that underpins this volume's perspective.

"Taking"/"faking" an accent

The first instance that we study has been understood by many as a voluntary performance of accent. It is usual for such practices, commonly known as 'taking an accent', to be scrutinized or ridiculed. At the beginning of this year, it was the French president himself whose accent became the object of mockery.

Following an incident that took place on the 22nd of January 2020 in Jerusalem's *domaine de Sainte-Anne* (one of four properties of the Holy Land known as the *Domaine National Français*), between the French and Israeli security units, the French president Emmanuel Macron addressed the latter in English: "Everybody knows the rules. I don't like what you did in front of me. Go outside! I'm sorry but we know the rules. Nobody has to provoke nobody. We keep calm!". What the media focused on were not the words themselves or the sudden flare-up but rather the accent that he had pronounced them with: a strong French accent. This reaction

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was especially surprising since most professionals of the media would know that Emmanuel Macron is perfectly bilingual.

In a matter of hours, videos of the incident were tweeted and commented on, and what everyone perceived as a fake accent was mocked on social media. Some wondered whether President Macron was attempting to imitate Jacques Chirac who in 1996, in this exact same place, had also lost his temper with the Israeli soldiers who had been protecting him too closely to his taste and exclaimed "Do you want me to go back to my plane?". Here, president Chirac too, spoke with a strong accent, the difference being however, that it was unintended, and that people knew of the ex French president's limited competence in English. Political opponents from all parties qualified President Macron's accent as "grotesque" and "pathetic". David Cormand (member of the European Parliament, *Europe Écologie Les Verts* party) reported on his Twitter account "a fake accent" and Jean-Lin Lacapelle (member of the European Parliament, National Rally French party) blamed the attitude of "a real comedian. (…) a clown. Incapable to find himself a natural personality and obliged to 'copy'". Among the media articles that were published in the following days, some attempted to shed light on the incident and gave a new explanation for the president's surprising accent: according to his entourage, Emmanuel Macron had spent so much time with Israeli policemen that he ended up imitating their accent "*despite of himself*" (*Le Parisien*).

It should also be noted that the guttural Rs and omitted Hs in Macron's speech are a strong reminder of "French-accented English" (Planchenault 2015), a genre that has been so overused in the media in general, and most particularly in American films, that hearing it never fails to bring a laugh (this helps to understand the references to being a comedian and a clown made in the comment above). If the act of mimicking an accent is a widely shared social practice, and an important form of comic relief used in jokes and parodies, it is also common for such performances to be discussed and evaluated. A quick Internet search, for example, would take you to videos of the worst accents in films (such as 'Worst On-Screen Accents Of All Time' or the 'Top 10 worst fake British accents in movies'). Audiences generally evaluate them along two main lines: competence and legitimacy. According to the former, to *take* an accent, one must know how to imitate it, not just well enough, but with enough fluency that s/he would pass for a natural speaker – unless the accent is stylized (Coupland 2001, 2004) and in this case, what is meant is to create a distance between the speaker and the persona that is performed (a way of saying *don't mistake me for what I am not*). In the second sort of evaluation, what is scrutinized is the speaker's right to take on such an accent: their allegiance to the community that they are imitating. And here, the risk of cultural appropriation is big (see for example the concept of the *wigger*, Bucholtz and Lopez 2011). In such cases, we are led to ask: what happens when

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the community from whom the accent is *borrowed* is the least powerful in a social hierarchy? Or in reverse, if the accent that is performed represents the prestigious/powerful group (class, ethnic group, etc.) and is *taken* to camouflage one's stigmatized accent (see Everhart, Baratta, Chapter 3 and 6)? What is the stance that one takes when one performs an accent? What frame of interpretation is drawn by such a performance? After all, in some cases, speaking with an accent implies the act of taking a linguistic stance and a claim to the right to do so: it constructs a space where official markets are undermined or resisted.

Such considerations bring us to pay close attention to the complexity of the context of interaction, highlighting the need to approach the study of accents with a closer look at the various parameters that have an impact on the discursive dimension of the interaction and therefore the relevance of a pragmatic approach.

"Having"/ "losing" an accent

In contrast to the previous anecdote, *having* an accent (or having speech that is *accented*), is much more likely to be perceived as an essence of the individual's identity. To be told that "one has an accent" can even be a source of bewilderment and shock to the speaker in cases where such an identity is being placed upon them by a listener. As Everhart states (Chapter 3), one may perceive oneself as accent-free, until being told the contrary.

While the former example takes inspiration from events in the media, this next case takes a more introspective look at one of the co-author's own experiences with regards to L2 accent acquisition. As a Hungarian immigrant from Former Yugoslavia who grew up in Vancouver Canada, the concept of an accent was already a contentious one for her. Being members of a smaller linguistic minority in their home country, her family lived with the notion that the only way to fit into the Yugoslav society (in this case, Serbian society) would be to be perceived as not having an accent, i.e. to speak with a standard Serbian accent. This model of linguistic excellence was then taught to her, and though she was very young when she and her family moved to Canada, and for all intents and purposes, grew up speaking English as a first language, she learned to notice and hear the differences between the various dialects and accents spoken around her. Accents, and thus accented speech took precedence over the grammar or even the lexis of the languages she spoke. Being fluent meant *sounding* like or *passing* for a native speaker (see Piller 2002). As opposed to a sense of national pride (Gatbonton et al. 2005), a maintenance of a national identity (McCrocklin and Link 2016) or the belief that accent was, according to Crystal's comparison, akin to a *beautiful* "flower", an accent was something to hide in order to fit into the dominant linguistic community.

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The perceived conflict in this anecdote occurred with her name. It happened in the elementary school library that, upon hearing her – decidedly non-English sounding – name for the first time (Poljak), the librarian pointed out that the name's bearer had an accent, more specifically what sounded like a *foreign* accent to his ears. Though this statement was received as a shock at the time, it is perhaps no longer as surprising. On many occasions, researchers have demonstrated that listeners can attribute accents to speakers on the main basis of their beliefs. From as early as the 1960, through matched-guise formatted research (Lambert et al. 1965; Giles 1970), studies have demonstrated that, upon hearing an accented speaker, listeners would make judgements on the speaker's character that were more in-line with the stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes often closely associated with that given accent, than they were with the actual speaker (Kang and Rubin 2009; Rubin 2011; Piché et al. 1977; Bradac et al. 2001).

Turning to film, media and popular culture, foreign accents are often used as a tool to *other* characters (Planchenault 2015, 2017), and foreign-sounding names (or non-English sounding names in the case of Hollywood) are then associated with their corresponding non-English-sounding accent(s) (Dobrow and Gidney 1998; Kjeldgaard-Christiansen 2015; Gonzales-Cruz 2020). Ultimately, these tendencies further perpetuate the myth that the 'possession' of an accent is inherently tied to an unchanging and preestablished identity, and that this identity forever marks the speaker as 'other' in society (Gonzales Cruz 2020; Udah and Singh 2019).

Thus, names and stereotypes are intrinsically linked to accents (see also Du Bois, Chapter 4), coming further into conflict with what speakers believe about themselves. In the case of the previous personal anecdote, it is worth noting, that, though the topic of the conversation was long forgotten, the memory of it had lasting implications. It created a feeling of being othered, but mostly, because of the fact that the co-author came from a culture that was also biased towards native-sounding accents (or rather, more openly biased than in the Canadian culture), it caused her to feel shame at the mere thought of *having an accent*. For her parents, having a noticeable Hungarian accent when speaking Serbian evoked negative stereotypes (ex: a lack of education/intellect, a rural upbringing, superstitious attitudes, etc.) that they themselves might have held about their own ethnic group – a not uncommon feeling among linguistic minority groups (Forde 1995; Chiba et al. 1995; Dalton-Puffer et al. 1997; Derwing 2003; Bournot-Trites 2007). The conflict was/is, ultimately, an internal one, and is ever more troublesome when considering that it was a product of the co-author's own internalized belief in the native accent bias. It was the context, however, that created it: living in a society where immigration and non-English sounding names and accents are common, while still harbouring a view on accents that would be, for a lack of a better word, 'foreign' to that society.

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Had she been raised to have pride in one's own accent, or had she not been living in a society that shared such discriminatory views on accents, the interaction in her elementary school library might either have never occurred or may have never sparked the desire to go deeper in the meaning of what it is to have 'accented speech'.

2. What is the *pragmatics of accents*?

Defining accent

At this point in the book, it would be customary to enunciate some definitions of accent and pragmatics. However, as it will be made clear in the coming chapters, a single straight-forward definition would undercut the very nature of the pragmatics of accents that we are striving to explore in this volume. Take, for example, the concept of "accent". In agreement with researchers who described it as elusive, finding it problematic on scientific grounds (see Gasquet-Cyrus 2010), some chapters of this edited volume avoid defining the concept in isolation, or even stay away from the term in favour of "voices" (Prikhodkine, chap.1 and Chung, Chapter 8), "pronunciation" (Villanueva and Ensslin, chap.9) or "style" (Trimaille and Candea, Chapter 2). Other contributors of the volume attempt to define the concept in its duality: for example, Prikhodkine (chap.1) first quotes Giles and Rakic to describe accent as "manner of pronunciation associated with particular group memberships, be it social, regional, ethnic, and so on" (2014: 11), before reminding the readers that "non-professional linguists reserve that term for a variety with low prestige, whereas the standard variety is generally not referred to as "accent"." Other contributors who base their definition on the specific type of accents that they research (such the social 'banlieue accent' or second language/foreign accents) also agree that the concept has a dual nature. Levis and McCrocklin, for example, find that "[s]econd language (L2) accents are often described by the combination of pronunciation features that differ from a particular norm or standard" before stating that "L2 accents are indexical to a speaker's perceived place in the L2 community and convey pragmatic information about the speaker's identity."

Defining pragmatics

Pragmatics has been defined through varied ways that reflect researchers' domain and theoretical orientations. We will show that, comparably to the previously discussed examples of accents, what links the pragmatic approach of the authors in this volume is a deliberate focus on the contexts of interaction and on accent's communicative action within these contexts.

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But before we get to the specificity of the volume's approach, we define the concept of Pragmatics with the following often-cited quotes:

> Meaning is not something which is inherent in the words alone, nor is it produced by the speaker alone, nor by the listener alone. **Making meaning is a dynamic process, involving the negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer**, the context of utterance and the meaning potential of the utterance.
> (Thomas 1995: 22)

> Pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects the use of language has on other participants in the act of communication. (Crystal 1997: 301)

In both excerpts, we note the authors' insistence on the process that is involved in the construction (i.e. the making) of meaning in interactions. This meaning-making is another way to state that meaning does not precede interactions but emerges from it and is therefore dependent to its components (i.e. referential to its context and to the participants' communicative intentions). In the vein of Thomas (1995)'s understanding of pragmatics as *meaning in interaction*, other scholars have insisted on the role that the interlocutors play in the co-construction of meaning as well as of its interpretation (Levinson 2000; Arundale 2005). This process goes further than a straightforward interpretation of the words: it is an act of ascribing meaning to what is not only said but is also implied. One central argument of this volume is that in such pragmatic process, meaning is ascribed to words as well to paralinguistic features such as accents.

Pragmatics of Accents: Making meaning in accented interactions

To approach the study of accents through the lens of pragmatics is to step away from the traditional variationist approach, and to take a deliberate practical stance by which studies will highlight the ways accents participate – as a semiotic resource – in the meaning that is co-constructed in interactions and settings, from their production to their perception and interpretation.

Most of the studies presented in this edited volume provide detailed analyses of interactions (real or fictional depending on the object of study) where accents are displayed and interpreted, playing therefore an instrumental part in meaning-making. Other chapters analyse texts in which individuals discuss the impact of accents (theirs' or others') in interactions. Both types look at the micro-level of accents in interaction, as well as the macro-level of structure and social hierarchy where accents play a crucial part.

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As we have alluded to before, the concept of accent is very much twofold: a symbolic resource – a social construction and a part of language ideology, and it is also it is co-constructed in emergence (through the interactions of people); it is within the complexity of the interaction between the two where our interests lie. Pragmatics of accents therefore studies the varying contexts in which speakers and listeners (who often already hold their own beliefs about accent) interact, and how and why the multiple variables that are part of these very tangible interactions subsequently participate in the co-construction of the more symbolic notion of accent.

3. A few key concepts from the Pragmatics of Accents' toolbox

In this last section of the introduction and before we present the volume in more details, we briefly explore some key concepts that constitute the theoretical resources of most studies in this book.

Ideology and attitudes

The link between pragmatics and language ideologies was established early. Woolard (1992) explains it clearly in a special issue of *Pragmatics* when she bases her definition of language ideology on Silverstein (1987)'s cultural conceptions of communicative behaviour as an enactment of a collective order (Woolard 1992: 235). Others since then have argued that ideology is part of the cement that holds together the bricks of discourses: it "penetrates and saturates everyday discourses in the form of common sense and it provides codes of meaning." (Henry and Tator 2002: 21). If as stated by Crystal and Crystal (2014) in the opening quote, accents serve as symbolic resource to express/interpret identities, because they are perceived as an index to associated cultural values in terms of age, social belonging, sex, regional-national association (i.e. they say where individuals are from, geographically but also socially), they pave the way to discrimination. It is this particular use of accents that members of the network *Accent, Discriminations, Ideologies* have focused on in their approach to the study of accents. Among discriminated accents, regional accents suffer from derogatory discourses, even when the latter sound positive. For example, the appreciation of the *marseillais* French accent is defined by positive discourses that describe it as a warm and pleasing accent, which evokes the sunny landscapes of the South of France (*chantant*, *ensoleillé*, *sympathique*, *souriant*) – so much so that in national surveys, it often ranks among the most pleasing accents. However, such appreciations of being quaint or authentic come with a flipside, i.e. negative perceptions, such as being regarded as an accent that is

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not serious. One practical consequence of this is that, most of the time, journalists and reporters who have such an accent are relegated to presenting on sports or on the weather (Gasquet-Cyrus 2012; Boyer 2016). What such an example shows is that ideologies on accent are also ambiguous and ambivalent – and that only a close reading of accents in interaction may shed light on such a complex phenomenon.

Perception and interpretation

The word "interpretation" can be understood in two ways: it refers to a performance as well as a reception (to this, one should also add the final interpretation of the researcher by the way of quantitative or qualitative studies). Which brings us to acknowledge that we constantly interpret accents and the meanings that are associated with them. However, these interpretations are also tightly dependent on the context of interaction – and interpretation:

> Language users everywhere tend to associate particular linguistic forms with specific kinds of speakers or contexts of speaking. (Woolard 2008: 437)

In this volume, the chapters that focus on the perception of accents in varied contexts and types of interactions do so with a focus on attitudes to accents (see in this volume in Chapters 1 to 4: Prikhodkine, Candea and Trimaille, Everhart, Du Bois, as well as Chapters 6 and 10: Baratta and Besoi et al.). They analyse the way such perceptions trigger stereotyped evaluations, that may result in prejudices against local or foreign communities (Japanese rural population, Turkish immigration in Germany, Northern population in the north of England, or doctors of Chinese descent in Canada). In most studies, interlocutors voluntarily engage in an evaluation of accents – sometimes even without realizing it. They do so within a specific social and cultural frame that tells them what standard languages are and allow them to distinguish other varieties that are perceived by contrast with various degrees of legitimacy and prestige. Their interpretation also relies on their take on quality, authenticity and legitimacy, therefore credibility, which consequently has a rippled effect on the way the speakers will be evaluated.

Production and performance

One should never forget that the flip side of the 'perception' coin is 'production', in particular with regards to the way it brings a response to perception and feedback, for example through processes of acculturation and accommodation (i.e. the way one adapts one's speech to (a) better fit an interlocutor's expectations (e.g. in the workplace, as demonstrated by Willemyns et al. 1997 and Ismail 2019) or

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(b) be more appropriate to a given context (see Giles 1973; Giles and Ogay 2007) – a dimension that is addressed throughout this edited volume (see, for example, Chapter 2: Trimaille and Candea, Chapter 5: Levis and McCrocklin, Chapter 7: Carrie, and Chapter 9: Villanueva and Ensslin). If on some occasions, accentedness may be conveyed intentionally, or used as an emblem (see Chapter 2: Candea and Trimaille, as well as Chapter 3: Everhart), on others, speakers may strive to "pass" (i.e. to be regarded as a member of an identity group or category different from their own). Feelings of shame towards one's accent (often as a result of, sometimes spiteful, comments towards its appropriateness in specific situations such as professional contexts – see Baratta in Chapter 6 and Besoi et al. in Chapter 10) may influence speakers' motivation to accommodate and to lose or hide their accent (Boudreau 2014, 2016), resulting in a form of accommodation that is sometimes associated with the notion of 'selling out' (see Bourdieu 2001).

During the process of learning an L2, the matter of what accent is to be acquired and then performed is often seen as a benchmark on the way to becoming a fluent speaker. L2 accent discrimination and the native-accent bias undoubtedly play a crucial part: certain accent types appear to be preferable to some language learners, if, for example, they feel a greater connection with one country's accent over another's, or if speakers fear that an existing accent or dialect might hinder economic advancements (Carrie, Chapter 7). Regarding marginalized linguistic communities, in an effort to highlight one's belonging to the dominant group, a speaker may choose to downplay one's own phonetic differences (Baratta, Chapter 6 and Besoi et al., Chapter 10). On the contrary, an individual who shows no discernible sign of such a stigmatized accent in their own speech patterns may accept to further perpetuate existing phonetic, or even social stereotypes, sometimes to the detriment of the speaker's own national or ethnic community (as seen in Chung, Chapter 8).

To conclude this section, it should also be pointed out that while the perceived legitimate speakers do tend to gain from the dominant markets because of their competence in the normative (*standard*) language, social and regional varieties can also hold micro-hegemonies in other markets – permitting to associate pride with profit (Heller and Duchêne 2012). With regard to (L1/L2) accents in language-learning contexts, as stated by Levis and McCrocklin (chap.5) and Baratta (Chapter 6), the next step may well be to further normalize all accents in language-education programs and curricula.

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4. Overview of this volume

Part I: Ideologies of accents in national contexts

This first section proposes varied approaches to the study of accent in four national contexts: Switzerland, France, Japan and Germany. Such a diversity of contexts reflects on the way social, regional, and migration varieties are perceived as well as categorized in contrast to normative accent(s), and within an ideology of the standard.

In the first chapter that opens the volume, **Prikhodkine** looks at the processes involved in the development of the attitudes to voices and accents. It surveys the different research traditions related to studies in language regard, the recent findings on the complexity and the variability of the responses to language varieties, and critically addresses the agency attributed to social actors in meaning making – exposing the political dimension in the use of language resources and in the attitudes towards them.

In the second paper of this section, **Candea and Trimaille** focus on a pronunciation variant that has been described in research as emblematic of the pronunciation style of young urban speakers in metropolitan France (*accent de banlieue*): the palatalization of /t/ and /d/. It shows that the feature is not specific to urban young people, as it is also used by other linguistic communities where it is associated in different ways according to their social profile. It then examines how caricatural uses in media productions have contributed to its iconization.

In the third chapter, **Everhart** problematizes the question of who has a regional accent in Japan. Drawing on a 17-month participant-observation study, it underscores language user's agency in constructing accent and proposes a close reading of three key moments in which language users negotiate their encounter with accented speech (theirs and others'). Finally, it shows that the identification of accent can be impeded by speakers' strategies of non-participation.

In the following and last chapter of this section, **Du Bois** reports on the effects of foreign accents and names on the likelihood of receiving an apartment viewing in a German city. In her study, almost 300 phone calls were placed in four different city districts in which participants used Turkish, US American and German names and corresponding accents, as well as Turkish names with the Standard German accent. A mixed-method analysis shows intra-urban difference with, for example, Turkish-accented callers having significantly lower chances of receiving a viewing in the more prestigious neighborhood. By applying discourse analysis to apartment application conversations, Du Bois shows how power relations are reproduced on a discourse level and finally concludes that such linguistic profiling participates in the maintenance of ethnolinguistic boundaries within the city.

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Part II: Prominence of accent ideologies in education and Second Language teaching and learning

In this second section of the book, three chapters propose studies of accents and accent ideologies in several educational contexts: teacher training, second language acquisition, higher education. They bring to the forefront the essential role of (L1 or L2) accents in the development and the performance of speakers' identity.

In the first chapter, **Baratta** focuses on the topic of accent preference in the context of teacher training and analyses the views of 32 teachers, mostly trainees, regarding the perceptions of their mentors toward their accents. Using classifications borrowed from Australian socio-economic-linguistic categorizations known as 'broad', 'neutral' and 'general' to describe English varieties used by teachers, Baratta's study shows that it is not merely the regional accents that are being targeted for modification, but that the 'broad' realizations (such as the Mancunian accent) are among those most negatively judged accents, while 'general' and 'neutral' varieties are seen as the ideal accents to use. The chapter discusses the testimonies of trainee teachers whose accents have been pointed out by mentors as needing modification and explains that such *recommended* linguistic accommodations are not always regarded by future teachers as a legitimate change to adapt to a professional context of communication.

Levis and McCrocklin's chapter explores the pragmatic force displayed by learners' second language accent. Basing their study on data collected from language learners and bilinguals, they demonstrate that speakers have complex reactions towards accents. Going beyond the traditional view of second language accent as a cluster of pronunciation features differing from a norm, they argue that L2 accents index speakers' perceived place with regards to the L2 community and convey pragmatic information about the speaker's identity that also has an impact on learners.

Carrie's study explores the English-mediated identities of 71 English-language learners in two Spanish universities. Using questionnaire and paired interview responses, her study highlights the ways in which these university students can recognise various accents of English (more particularly British and American varieties of English), and how they negotiate possible and ideal selves in peer-to-peer interactions. The quantitative data suggests that learners' use of English accent features can be predicted, and the qualitative data demonstrates that learners actively tap into the status and solidarity associations of accent features when using English.

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Part III: The role of accents in media and the workplace contexts

The last section shows how specific ideologies related to accents can be triggered by various frameworks of interpretation depending on where such accents are produced: the media (films, video games) and the professional environment (the doctor's office). It also reflects on how accents related to heritage languages are perceived or stereotypically reproduced by second-generation speakers.

Chung's study highlights the performance of Korean racialized accents in the media and TV. Such linguistic oriental stereotypes in American and Canadian popular culture – also known as 'yellow voices' – rely on vocal and linguistic tactics that have been employed by mainstream cultural producers to personify Asian characters on-screen, such as the confusion between 'l' and 'r', subject-verb disagreements, and the omission of articles. More specifically, Chung examines the "implicit yellowvoice performances" of Asian Americans and Asian Canadians such as Margaret Cho's "Mom" persona in stand-up comic routines and Ins Choi's "Appa" (Dad) character in *Kim's Convenience*. She argues that the excessive use of exaggerated accents constructs 'otherness' and contributes to the perpetuation of racial stereotypes.

In the following chapter, **Ensslin and Villanueva** demonstrate how language ideologies are at play in video games, basing their argument on the study of the game world of BioWare's popular fantasy role-playing game *Dragon Age: Inquisition* (2014), and more specifically on its linguistic differentiation of two lead female characters. The authors argue that the characters' performed accents are reflections on the language ideologies of both the game's creators and its intended audience. Using medium-specific multimodal discourse analysis, the chapter examines how the characters' accents participate in the construction of social and ideological meanings during gameplay. It finally highlights how the dynamic and performative nature of gameplay affects players' perception of these characters.

Besoi, Nicoladis and Baquiran's study tests whether the ethnicity of a rater affects the perceived intelligence of a doctor speaking English with a Chinese accent vs. a doctor speaking with a standard Canadian accent. They argue that, although the immediate assumption would be that foreign accents activate stereotypes as a result of an out-group effect between groups of different ethnicities, it is also true that an in-group effect can be observed as well.

Boudreau, and Gasquet-Cyrus's concluding chapter brings together the many overarching themes covered throughout this edition through an exploration of its authors' experiences as speakers of minority languages and dialects. Their chapter questions the impact of personal experiences in our lives as researchers, and further asks us to consider how we use the concept of 'accent' in both an academic

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and layman lens, further emphasizing the importance of context in our everyday interactions as language users, and in our research inquiries.

Finally, before we end this introduction, we would like to give a heartfelt thank you to all the authors who contributed to our better understanding of accents by participating in this edited volume of the Johns Benjamins' *Pragmatics & Beyond New Series*. Your dedication to the topic is evident and has done much to further our advancement on the study of accents. We would also like to acknowledge the authors who had first agreed to take part in the journey that is *Pragmatics of Accents*, but were ultimately unable to join us, often due to the very strenuous workload, unexpected changes and family responsibilities brought on by the devastating effects of the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020. Though they were not able to complete this journey with us, their works are sorely missed, as they would all have been an incredible addition to our understanding of accents in their social, linguistic, or political contexts, but we have no doubt that we will see their works published in future books and journals.

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PART 1

Ideologies of accents in national contexts

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Attitudes to accents

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This chapter looks at the processes involved in the development of the attitudes to voices. After outlining the main outcomes – and their social issues – of different research traditions related to language regard studies (such as language attitude research, language ideology analysis), it goes on to survey the recent findings that focus on the complexity and the variability of the responses to language varieties. Thereafter, the text discusses to what extent this focus on complexity conforms to the social constructivist turn in social sciences, namely how current research deals with non-essentialist assumptions and non-fixity of meanings. Finally, the chapter critically addresses the agency attributed to social actors in meaning making and examines findings that show the importance of legitimacy issues to the interpretation of attitudes to accents and make explicit the political dimension in the use of language resources as well as in the regard on them.

Keywords: language regard, agency and social structure, context, social determinism and constructionism

1. Introduction[1]

Perhaps more than other notions in the social sciences, the terms attitudes and accents need to be explicitly defined. This is mainly because, for both terms, there are various common-sense and sociolinguists' definitions that coexist.[2] As far as the accent in academic discourse is concerned (cf. Gasquet-Cyrus 2010 for an overview), it has usually been associated with the pronunciation having an indexical value. Giles and Rakic resume it in these words: "Accent refers to a manner of

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2. I am not dealing here with the linguistic definition, in which the accent is a highlighting of one syllable in relation to others in the spoken chain (e.g. International Phonetic Association 1999).

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pronunciation associated with particular group memberships, be it social, regional, ethnic, and so on" (2014: 11). And since the social value of an accent gets confirmed only through the comparison with other accents, indexicality necessarily entails a contrastive perspective. This perspective is also present in common-sense definitions, but it differs in its scope: non-professional linguists tend to introduce a hierarchy – which is usually naturalized – not only between accents, but also between the set of different accents on one side and the standard – which is the absence of accent – on the other (Lippi-Green 2012: 44). Thus, the major difficulty of combining the two approaches (academic and ordinary) lies in their starting viewpoints – descriptivist for the former and prescriptivist for the latter (Preston 1996). However, the main problem is elsewhere: while for researchers in the field, accent is a shortcut for speaking about any linguistic variety, non-professional linguists reserve that term for a variety with low prestige, whereas the standard variety is generally not referred to as "accent".[3] It is because of its ambiguity that the term *accent* cannot function as an analytical category, even though it is immediately available and even useful in certain contexts. For this reason, I will use in the rest of the chapter closely related but more neutral terms, such as *manner of pronunciation*, *manner of speaking* or *voices*, in order to designate a set of features with an indexical value (Eckert 2012).

The particularity of the term *attitude* is of another nature. This term has a long history of conceptualization in social psychology and can be defined as "an individual's propensity to evaluate a particular entity with some degree of favorability or unfavorability" (Eagly and Chaiken 2007: 583). This strong disciplinary grounding has had an impact on the understanding of the concept's analytical potential. On the one hand, it is largely associated with the quantitative perspective and a construct determined by a stable set of factors (e.g., socialization), which is not very conducive to taking into account the elicitation context and the individual's capacity to participate actively in the construction of the belief (I will come back to this later). On the other hand, this concept focuses on the evaluative dimension, but concerns about language may not be evaluative (Preston 2015: 4–5). Thus, in this paper, I will extend the focus of analysis to any trace of reflexivity regarding manners of speaking, whether this trace is explicit (the explicit commentary on a given object) or implicit (the interpretation of linguistic forms in any context of communication) (Coupland and Jaworski 2004). In order to encompass all phenomena related to linguistic reflexivity, I will use the label *language regard* proposed by Preston (2010), which, as we will see, would have the analytical potential not only to include different research traditions, but also to highlight the interaction between the individual and society, or between agency and social structure.

3. It is indeed rare to hear adjectives such as "correct" or "standard" associated with the term "accent".

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2. The social background of language regard

While there are different focuses of studies of the language beliefs of ordinary speakers (language attitude studies, language ideology, perceptual dialectology), there is agreement on the social character of the elaboration and sharing of language regard. The latter is, in fact, part of the social representations that the French psychologist Denise Jodelet defines as "une forme de connaissance, socialement élaborée et partagée ayant une visée pratique et concourant à la construction d'une réalité commune à un ensemble social" (Jodelet 1989: 36).[4] The social grounding of language regard can be illustrated from the functions attributed to social representations (Abric 1994: 15–18):

- *Knowledge function*. Social representations make it possible to understand and explain reality. However, it is not a simple reflection of reality, but rather its interpretation, which depends on the social context in which the individual evolves. The knowledge function enables social exchange, by defining the common frame of reference. It is considered that social communication is facilitated by this, because the representations, since they are shared, do not need to be made explicit during communication. For example, when someone who speaks French with phonetic features attributed to other languages is declared not to be a Francophone, the representation "you have to be a native speaker to be a Francophone" is implicit.
- *Identity function*. Social representations participate, through the processes of categorization and social comparison, in the delimitation and safeguarding of the specificity of social groups. It is certainly this function and the fact that language is considered a salient marker of social identity that explain the success of studies on speech evaluation in social psychology (as early as the pioneering study by Lambert et al. 1960). These studies have not only shown that language variation is a source of stereotypes' inferences about social groups, but also that language regard is based on subjective judgments influenced by power relations between groups.
- *Orientation function*. Social representations guide behavior and practices. Practices can therefore be influenced by changing representations. This function emphasizes the malleability of representations and, given the power relations in society, points to the political risk of having an opinion of a dominant group imposed. In the area of language regard, the imposition of standard

4. "a form of knowledge, socially elaborated and shared, with a practical aim and contributing to the construction of a reality common to a social whole." (my translation)

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language through discourse, naturalizing the value of this variety, is a good illustration of this (Milroy 2001).
- *Justifying function*. Social representations make it possible to justify behavior a posteriori. It is a function that makes it possible to explain the ideological mechanism that serves to perpetuate social differentiation. For example, during the advent of capitalism and the construction of national markets, discourses presenting language as embodying the values of liberal democracy (inclusion, equality) made it possible to perpetuate social inequalities through a symbolic argument (Heller 2011; Heller and McElhinny 2017).

An examination of these functions highlights two constitutive dimensions of language regard. On the one hand, the social background of language regard implies a certain determinism, as if certain beliefs were always available, ready for use and within everyone's reach. On the other hand, the representations on a given object may be multiple (some may be more forcefully imposed) or may be modifiable. Thus, if an individual reports his experiences through pre-constructed thought patterns, this does not mean that he takes them on board or that he cannot propose an alternative meaning. This dynamic character thus highlights the dialectic – at the heart of the notion of representation and language regard – between the individual and society, or between agency and social structure.

3. Study of language regard

In his article "Succeeding waves: seeking sociolinguistic theory for the twenty-first century", Bell (2016) distinguishes two major research paradigms concerned with the debate on the relationship between agency and social structure. The first, which can be called "modernist" or "structuralist", focuses on structure, which would determine, through socialization or even birth, an individual's language practices through a stable set of factors (e.g., being a woman or having an immigrant background). The other paradigm, which can be described as "post-modernist" or "post-structuralist" and which has emerged since the 1990s, rehabilitates, so to speak, the agency of social actors and insists on the contingent nature of social practices. Indeed, within this approach, the social categories that would determine modes of action and reflexivity are no longer considered homogeneous and stable, and social practices are no longer seen as entirely determined by socialization and birth. As a result, language can be used as a resource that individuals or groups can use to negotiate social boundaries.

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3.1 On the side of social determinism

I now propose to look at the research examining language regard on different ways of speaking from the perspective of the interaction between social structure and agency. Perhaps one of the research paradigms that has contributed most to the study of language regard is the social psychology of language, with the pioneering study by Lambert et al. (1960), who investigated attitudes towards English and French speakers in Montreal. The interest in representations of language in this approach can be explained by the importance given to language in the process of social categorization and inter-group relations. Indeed, since language variation is a source of inference for stereotyping social groups, evaluative responses to a variety of language can provide information on attitudes toward social group members associated with the use of that variety. The representations examined in this type of study refer rather to the evaluative dimension and favor the use of the concept of attitude. In terms of data collection, the investigation of representations is mainly characterized by the quantitative perspective and is carried out through standardized forms of data collection in laboratory conditions, which allow statistical processing. Indeed, although the fields of the numerous studies using this approach are varied, the elicitation instrument they use is similar.[5] This is the matched-guise technique (MGT), based on the recording by the same speaker of two speech samples, each in a different language or language variety. Recordings that are subject to evaluation by listeners on several scales. Ryan et al (1982) studied a large number of such evaluations and suggested a general model, according to which speaker attitudes tend to vary mainly along two main axes: prestige or social status, which reflects prescriptive responses, and loyalty or solidarity, which is made up of statements expressing emotional attachment.[6] While the success of MGT is due to the ease of implementation and the control of variables (the impact of voice quality, for example, is levelled), it is nevertheless criticized, particularly with regard to the authenticity of productions made by the same speaker and the control of the social status of registered individuals (Garrett 2010). In response to these criticisms, verbal-guise technique (VGT) was developed, which uses different

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5. However, some studies have been carried out under real conditions and fall within the scope of what can be called practice testing. For example, the research by Purnell et al. (1999) carried out among landlords in San-Francisco (USA) and showing unequal treatment of people on the basis of ways of speaking indexing various ethnic origins.

6. For example, in situations involving diglossic-type relationships (pattern "B" in Ryan et al. model), speakers of dominated varieties tend to characterize speakers of their own variety in the following terms: they are perceived as friendly, honest, sympathetic, but also slow, unintelligent and rude. Whereas speakers of the dominant or standard variety are rather perceived as dishonest, unsympathetic, but also efficient, intelligent and ambitious.

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speakers to illustrate different languages/varieties, "spontaneous" speech and socially defined speakers.

An example of this technique is a large-scale study initiated by Marie-Louise Moreau (2007) and conducted in six French-speaking countries (Belgium, Canada, France, Tunisia, Senegal, Switzerland). By eliciting language regard from speech samples produced by socially determined speakers, the authors made an overall finding that French from France does not enjoy a privileged position in the French-speaking countries of the North, as it is highly competed by local varieties. Thus, when respondents are asked to rate the speakers they hear on several dimensions, they tend to rate their respective local variety just as well, if not better, than French from France. Interestingly, however, this finding is at odds with the results of other studies, which were constructed using the direct approach (another approach widely used within the social psychology of language paradigm). In these studies, it involved asking informants to evaluate linguistic varieties not from sound recordings but from global category names (e.g., local accent, French from France). These studies have found that when reacting to such global category names, Belgian, Canadian or Swiss respondents tend to assign to the French from France a better quality, while the national variety is stigmatized and has a low prestige (e.g. Francard 1993; Maurais 2008; Singy et al. 2004). More generally, these results fit into a pattern identified as "pattern B" within the language preference model proposed by Ryan et al. (see above): Belgian, Canadian or Swiss respondents would prefer their own variety among the group solidarity dimension but not on status, on which they would prefer the French from France. This discrepancy in language regard responses could be a good example of the conflict between the meanings attached to general categories such as *accent* by researchers and non-professional linguists (see Introduction). Indeed, while researchers using these terms, wanted to elicit responses to the whole set of linguistic variation characterizing a geographical space, in folk minds such terms remained negative concepts associated with only highly stigmatized dialectal features of low prestige (Prikhodkine 2015).

However, the main criticism addressed to the various studies falling within this paradigm is that they tend to present the attitude as a stable construct, which pre-exists the survey situation, as it is determined by the socialization of the speaker, and which therefore does not take into account the context or the individual's capacity to participate actively in the construction of the representation (see Potter and Wetherell 1987 for the details).[7] In fact, such a conception of representation is

7. The role attributed to socialization in attitude formation is evident in the following excerpt from Sherif (1967: 2 cited in Garrett 2010: 29): "When we talk about attitudes, we are talking about what a person has learned in the process of becoming a member of a family, a member of a group, and of society that makes him react to his social world in a consistent and characteristic way, instead of a transitory and haphazard way".

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fully in line with the "structuralist" approach, which consists of a rather essentialist reading of social practices (Bucholtz and Hall 2005). Thus, by presenting attitude as a construct determined by a stable set of factors (e.g., socialization), we tend to focus on social structure, minimizing the individual's capacity to contribute to this construct.

3.2 Context and social determinism

Criticisms of the conceptualization of attitude have not gone unanswered. However, this response has been measured: some form of attitude stability has not been questioned. Indeed, as Coupland and Jaworski (2004: 26) note, while there is a consensus on the essential role played by the moment of the interaction (or context), there is also an understanding that "… social interaction is, as well as contextual*izing*, contextual*ized* by prior expectations and assumptions, which must be carried cognitively …". Efforts have therefore been made to try to account precisely for the contextualizing side of social interaction. In this regard, Prikhodkine and Preston (2015) brings together several studies aimed at accounting for the variability of the conditions that elicit language attitudes. Based on the idea that similar conditions between real interaction situations and survey situations generate similar results, Soukup (2015), for example, proposes to recreate, during the survey, the same reference framework as that governing the real interactions. To do this, the researcher applies the SPEAKING grid of Hymes (1972), contextualizing the survey situation through the parameters of Setting / Participants / Ends / Act sequences / Keys / Instrumentalities / Norms / Gender.

In the same vein, a fruitful field of research has been formed around the notion of reverse linguistic stereotyping (Kang and Rubin 2009), whose aim is to account for the impact of social information conveyed by non-verbal indicators. Indeed, within this framework, speech stimuli become objects of stereotypes activated by non-verbal group identification cues. In an experiment assessing the perception of US teaching assistants' language proficiency, Rubin (1992) found that when looking at a photo presenting an Asian speaker, students report hearing an accented speech and their comprehension ability decreases, even though the recorded lecturer is actually a speaker of US Mainstream English. In addition to ethnicity, several other social categories can affect speech perception, such as age, gender, and regional origin. One of the interesting areas is the way in which RLS is activated. There is evidence that social characteristics can be activated by different means. This may be a photograph (Rubin 1992), a toy (Hay and Drager 2010), a proper name (Prikhodkine et al. 2016) or a written social category label (Niedzielski 1999).

In spite of an increasingly detailed consideration of the variability of language regard, one may nevertheless wonder to what extent the frame of reference

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recreated in the experimental situation and that of the actual interaction situation are similar. Thus, for example, in his concluding remarks in a recent volume on the "language attitudes" paradigm, Gallois states that "In taking language attitudes research forward for another fifty years, we must, therefore, give much more attention to context, global and regional as well as local, that we have in the past" (2016: 176–177). While there is always room for improvement, sensitivity to context is still determined by the way the object is constructed and observed. Indeed, in the experimental approach, the context can only be partially recreated, because the process of selecting and defining variables – the number of which is always limited – presupposes that the relevance of certain elements of context that may have an impact on the behavior and language regard is judged beforehand. In other words, "ce que l'on gagne d'un côté en termes de 'robustesse expérimentale', on le perd de l'autre au niveau de l'appréhension de la signification de ce que l'on décrit" (Hambye 2015: 96).[8]

3.3 Social constructionism

The social constructionist or "post-structuralist" turn in social sciences has made it possible to overcome the above-mentioned limits through the conceptualization of language practice and regard "as the emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices and therefore as fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon" (Bucholtz and Hall 2005: 588). As a result, language features can be used as resources that individuals or groups may utilize to negotiate social boundaries, thus rehabilitating, so to speak, the agency of social actors and emphasizing the contingent nature of social practices. Indeed, within the framework of the "post-structuralist" approach, the social categories that would determine modes of action and reflexivity (e.g. identifications) are no longer considered homogeneous and stable: these affiliations are no longer something one would possess at birth or through socialization. As a corollary, social practices are no longer seen as being entirely determined by these two factors, thus positing the principle of the non-fixity of the link between language and social positioning.

This constructivist turn goes hand in hand with the appropriation of the concept of ideology (Borel et al. 2019). And this appropriation is largely achieved through the notion of style, which, as Eckert notes (2012: 98), appeals to that of ideology, insofar as it is the latter that informs the relations between styles in a system of distinction and thus contributes to the production of social meanings.

8. "what is gained on the one hand in terms of 'experimental robustness' is lost on the other hand in terms of understanding the meaning of what is described". (my translation)

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Starting from the dynamic and socially situated character of the interpretative process of language features, Eckert postulates that a linguistic variant does not have a social meaning that is fixed once and for all: it is defined, in fact, within styles, understood as sets of variables that are part of a system of distinction (Irvine 2001). In this regard, Coupland (2007: 23–24) talks about the social meaning of linguistic variants in terms of the potential that can be activated, validated or questioned. In this way, speakers can reinterpret linguistic forms and combine them with others to create nuances of style or new styles, a stylistic practice known as *bricolage* (e.g., Eckert 2012). This notion is based on the active (agentive) role of the speakers, who become agents: "The emphasis on stylistic practice […] places speakers not as passive and stable carriers of dialect, but as stylistic agents, tailoring linguistic styles in ongoing and lifelong projects of self-construction and differentiation" (Eckert 2012: 97–98). Thus, in contrast to the "language attitudes" paradigm, we are witnessing here the enhancement of the speakers' ability to act, who can use different language resources to position themselves in the social space. This paradigm shift is evident in a number of studies questioning the link between language and ethnicity or language and gender. For example, Bucholtz (2004) analyses the case of two American teenage girls who have the same ethnic background (Asian), which would otherwise have led to them being considered as sharing a certain "community of destiny" in terms of a common language and ethnic origin. However, Bucholtz shows that despite this, the two girls present many differences in terms of identifications, identifying with two different styles. Moreover, although their language repertoires present structural similarities, their social interpretation is different depending on the girls' perceived affiliation.

If, as Bell notes (2016: 400), research has benefited from the richness and nuance of the analyses integrating the focus on agency, this shift has been to the detriment of the consideration of social structure. Indeed, while the reflexivity and capacity for action of individuals must undeniably be taken into account, their power to act is circumscribed by factors which, while they may, under certain conditions, be negotiable, are structural and therefore exceed the will of a single individual. Yet, taking these factors into account requires a broader focus of analysis: it is not enough to focus solely on the strategic use of linguistic forms by a social actor and the latter's analysis of the social context. It is also necessary to take into account the social processes that circumscribe the choices of this actor and that enable him to make use of such and such language resources (Duchêne 2016: 76–78). In other words, we should integrate the strictly political dimension of language ideologies, by relating the positioning of the social actor to power relations and thus to the legitimacy of his or her choices regarding the voices defining who counts as a good speaker or a good citizen. Also, from a methodological point of view, investigating ideologies solely through the uses and representations of speakers would have the

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effect of increasing the weight of intentionality in their actions, while reducing the incidence of legitimacy issues, which could only be accounted for by recognizing the role of the social actors who define this legitimacy. In the following section, I will show, based on some results of a recent study conducted in French-speaking Switzerland, that, in the area of geographical variation, the problem of legitimacy arises acutely when persons of immigrant background appropriate local phonetic variants.

4. Foreign accent and local accent: An impossible mixture?

The study reported in this section (see Prikhodkine 2019a and 2019b for further details) was based on the observation that conflicts linked to the hierarchy of languages or language varieties present in a given territory can be invested with new meanings, where language resources once perceived as lacking prestige and expressing regional and social affiliations are beginning to signify new boundaries of an ethnonational type. This is particularly the case in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, where Swiss German, which, together with standard German, forms a diglossia, is not included in the integration measures offered to migrants, especially with regard to language courses, which leads to a paradoxical situation: even though Swiss German promotes social integration through its oral dominance and its value of loyalty, it is not promoted in the context of education for migrants in the German-speaking part of Switzerland (Flubacher 2013). This reinforces the role of Swiss German in the process of differentiation between migrants and "native" Swiss and the feeling that only residents of the majority ethnicity are legitimate speakers. Similarly, Moyer and Martin Rojo (2007) report how, in Barcelona, Castilian-Catalan bilingualism is ideologically invested to represent migrants as *Others*: Castilian – the official language throughout Spain – seems reserved for communication with migrants, while Catalan – the co-official language in Catalonia – remains the language used among "native" Catalans.

Under the conditions of the socio-demographic transformations of recent decades (increased mobility, diversification of migration), which are reflected in the concept of *super-diversity* (Vertovec 2007), linguistic variation can be interpreted to reflect the gap between legal citizenship and cultural nationality (Brubaker 2010: 73), i.e. situations where one can become a citizen of a state without being admitted to the category of nationals, even though nationality and citizenship should be intrinsically linked in an ideal nation-state. In this respect, resources that fall under regional variation are more likely to be invested with ethno-national values referring to majority ethnicity, since, unlike elements marked by officiality, regional features, which have less prestige, generally convey a certain sense of local

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belonging. As no study, to my knowledge, has investigated this dynamic at the level of regional variation, the research presented in this article aims to fill this gap by examining the social significance of a stereotypical phonetic feature of "regional French" in French-speaking Switzerland – the phonetic variant [-eːj] (as in *privée*) – in two types of discourses defined according to the presence or absence of traces of "foreign accent".

4.1 Context of the study

French-speaking Switzerland, which is a relatively homogeneous area structured by the dominant use of French, consists of four officially monolingual cantons (Geneva, Jura, Neuchâtel and Vaud) and the French-speaking parts of three bilingual cantons (Bern, Fribourg and Valais). One of the most important aspects of the current language landscape in French-speaking Switzerland is the lack of contact of French with the regional Gallo-Romanic languages, commonly known as patois (Francard 2001). This brings to a close a long process of linguistic unification which has seen the number of patois speakers eroding relatively quickly to the advantage of French, mainly as a result of the introduction of public education in the first half of the 20th century.

After years of convergence towards French from France, recent studies indicate the emergence of a variety of Swiss prestige (Prikhodkine 2011; Racine et al. 2013). However, this enhancement does not concern all the linguistic features that are generally classified as Swiss regionalisms. Indeed, certain elements continue to be part of diglossic relationships: lacking prestige, they convey values of loyalty and sociability, which ensure their maintenance in the "restricted" language market (Bourdieu 1982).

In terms of pronunciation, the long vowel followed by a slight diphthong at the end of the word – one of the most characteristic features of French used in French-speaking Switzerland – seems to have precisely this diglossic profile. An example of the use of this variant is the morphological marking in *privé/privée* (private), where the last vowel can be made [pʁiveːj]. With regard to its geographical spread, while the length opposition in final syllable (e.g. *bout-boue*, *nu-nue*), which is very stable, seems to be characteristic of the whole of French-speaking Switzerland, the palatalization after lengthening ([eːj]) is a distinctive and well-distributed feature of French in use in some cantons, particularly in the cantons of Vaud and Geneva (Andreassen et al. 2010). The survey by Armstrong and Pooley (2010) provides information on the social significance of this variant. The researchers analyzed the discourse of speakers and news anchors of official broadcasting institutions, considering pronunciation in this context to be legitimate. The findings show that, while vowel lengthening is relatively well present, diphthongized vowels are less

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numerous, especially in the speech of news anchors. The fact that they continue to be used despite a lack of prestige seems to testify to the existence of other values, such as sociability or loyalty to the local community.

In view of all these elements, the variant [eːj] could be a relevant indicator for observing a potential change in the social meaning of regional language resources which, in the context of the growing diversity of the Swiss population, are beginning to signify new ethnonational boundaries.

4.2 Methods

The experiment was divided into two parts. In the first part, informants from French-speaking Switzerland (n = 50) had to evaluate, on an internet platform, short stories read by native and non-native speakers, the latter being represented by Portuguese-speaking speakers living in the canton of Vaud.[9] Each recording contained an item ending by <e> (e.g., *privée*) and the productions with or without lengthening and diphthongs were elicited according to the variant that was produced spontaneously during the first reading. The recordings were then edited (by *cross-splicing*, see Campbell-Kibler 2010 for a description of this procedure) so that they differed only by the prosodic word or group containing the word with <ée>. Informants were asked to listen to each story and rate, on a scale of 1 to 7, the speed of flow, intelligibility, degree of Vaudois accent and suitability for the position of communication manager.[10] The participants had all been resident in the canton of Vaud for at least five years and reported French as their first language. Beyond these few points of similarity, the profiles of the informants varied according to age, gender, education and languages spoken.

The second part of the study consisted of a series of semi-directive interviews conducted with some of the informants (n = 11) who participated in the first phase of the experiment. The aim of these interviews was to observe their representations of the social meaning of the variant [eːj] when used by non-native speakers. The profiles of the interviewees are just as varied as those of the members of the general sample (n = 50). The interviews lasted an average of 10 minutes and were conducted after the participants had completed the first part of the study on the Internet.

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9. Portuguese is the second most spoken language in the canton of Vaud (9%) after French (83%) (data from the Cantonal Statistical Research and Information Service of the canton of Vaud, www.scris.vd.ch).

10. These categorization dimensions as well as the recordings were selected on an experimental basis (see Prikhodkine 2019b for further details).

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4.3 Some results[11]

4.3.1 *Internet* survey

The effect of the diphthongized variant [eːj] was first measured as an independent factor. The data show its impact only for the question on the Vaudois accent ($F(1, 547) = 4.391$, $p = 0.036$): participants tended to perceive the Vaudois accent more strongly when recordings included [eːj]. In general, informants are therefore able to perceive a difference in the speech, which they interpret as a mark of the Vaudois accent. This result thus indicates that the phonetic variant [-eːj] seems to function as a social object or stereotype in the sense of Labov (1972), the effect of which is comparable to that of a whole set of features considered as a particular style or accent. Indeed, the variant [-eːj] is accessible to the awareness of the speaking subjects, is part of a system of distinction and thus participates in the process of differentiation (Irvine 2001).

Let's now consider the effect of [eːj] within the categories of native and non-native speakers. To do this, the mean scores obtained by the two versions of each speaker, with and without the diphthongized vowel, were compared with a t-test for matched samples. For the non-native speakers, two questions had significantly different means: the speed of flow (paired $t(49) = -2.174$, $p = 0.035$) and the perception of Vaudois accent (paired $t(49) = -2.153$, $p = 0.036$). In detail, participants perceive the Vaudois accent more and find the flow slower when non-native speakers use the local variant [eːj]. For native speakers, the answers to two questions also show significantly different means: perception of the Vaud accent and suitability for the position of communication manager. In the case of the Vaudois accent, native speakers have, for the participants, more of Vaudois accent when using the diphthongized variant (paired $t(49) = 3.011$, $p = 0.004$). Native speakers were also considered more suitable for the position when using the diphthongized variant [eːj] (paired $t(49) = 2.379$, $p = 0.021$).

The effect of the local phonetic variant thus tends to vary somewhat according to the context in which it appears (native vs. non-native), and, contrary to expectations, this vowel does not constitute an added value for non-native speakers and does not stigmatize native speakers. This result does not, however, give us exact information on the social meaning attached to this variant: it is not excluded that its social evaluation in two different contexts is not based on the same social meaning. The data from the semi-directive interviews – the second phase of the study – were intended to help fill this gap.

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11. For reasons of space, only some results will be presented here. For a complete overview, see Prikhodkine 2019a and Prikhodkine 2019b.

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4.3.2 *Interviews*

First of all, these interviews show that, for the informants, the variant [-eːj] is fully constitutive of what they call the "Vaudois accent". It is thus enregistered, in the words of Agha (2007), and recognized as belonging to a distinct way of speaking. However, according to Agha (2007: 81), "registering" a language feature to a distinct way of speaking implies that this element is connected to the stereotypical indexical values attached to it. This is precisely what the respondents do, when they associate [-eːj] with low social prestige, precisely with the rural environment of the canton of Vaud (see Excerpts (1) and (2)). These are, in fact, the stereotypical characteristics that are generally attributed to the "Vaudois accent" (Prikhodkine 2011) and which can be described through the acronym NORM (non-mobile, older, rural males) proposed by Chambers and Trudgill (1998).

(1) It might make me think more of people who are not from the city but who are from the, hum, it looks like they're from the country, who are from the country more easily than people you would come across in the city of Lausanne.
Ça me ferait peut-être plus penser à des gens qui sont pas de la ville mais qui sont du, euh, on dirait du terroir, qui sont de la campagne plus facilement que des gens qu'on croiserait dans la ville de Lausanne.

(2) It is more specific to the canton of Vaud. […] It is more striking in the more agricultural, rural environment, in the countryside.
Elle est plus particulière au canton de Vaud. […] Elle est plus frappante dans le milieu plus agricole, plus rural, à la campagne.

However, the fact that the [-eːj] variant is integrated into a speech style with a foreign accent did not surprise the interviewees. For some informants, the acquisition of this accent by migrants seems to be taken "for granted": living in the canton of Vaud, they would adapt blindly to the linguistic environment. Others, however, say that they do not give the same social meaning to [-eːj] when it is combined with foreign accent features. Thus, these informants attribute its use to the influence of the first languages of the speakers (see Excerpts (3) and (4)). The change in the social meaning of a linguistic variable – which can be partly accounted for through the notion of bricolage - is a well-known phenomenon in sociolinguistics (see, for example, Campbell-Kibler 2010 for the English variant (ING)). However, in contrast to the mentioned studies, the change in social meaning uncovered in the present research concerns the perception of language contact situations where first-generation migrants would combine resources of their first language(s) with regional variation in L2. Indeed, for some of the informants, the presence of foreign accent features seems to cancel out the social meaning associated with the variant [-eːj] when it is integrated into a style perceived as "Vaudois accent". In other words, these informants tend to exclude the majority ethnicity trait from the social

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meaning of [-eːj] when it is combined with foreign accent features. These discourses seem to fall under what Irvine and Gal (2000: 39) call "erasure", a semiotic process involving the erasure of certain social groups or linguistic phenomena, the latter becoming invisible or inaudible in the sociolinguistic space. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the statements of some informants who deny the legitimacy of migrants acquiring local accent features (see excerpt 5). Thus, the definition of legitimate speaker here is not limited to language skills but concerns ethnicity ("the Vaudois accent is specific to natives of the country"). By naturalizing the link between an ethnicity and a language feature, these discourses come under the heading of *iconization*, another semiotic process through which linguistic differences appear as iconic representations of the social contrasts they index, i.e. as if they illustrated the very essence of a social group (Irvine and Gal 2000: 37–38).

(3) Nothing special. I think that in her language, she may be using this way of speaking, I think, maybe that's the way it is.
Rien de spécial. Je pense que dans sa langue, elle emploie peut-être cette façon de parler, je me dis, peut-être que c'est comme ça.

(4) It may simply be a pronunciation specific to her native language.
Ça peut être simplement une prononciation propre à sa langue d'origine.

(5) For me, for integration, what is more important is the mastery of French more than the accent. […] I think that the Vaudois accent is specific to native speakers, hum, and that it shouldn't be acquired, because at that point, it's no longer natural.
Pour moi, pour l'intégration, ce qui est plus important, c'est la maitrise du français plus que l'accent. […] Je pense que l'accent vaudois est propre aux natifs du pays, hein, et qu'il n'a pas à être acquis, parce qu'à ce moment-là, ça n'a plus rien de naturel.

At the same time, several informants pointed to recent socio-demographic changes resulting in a mixing of the population and a loss of the local accent. Excerpts (6) and (7) could thus express tensions between the expression of regional belonging and a certain hybridization of affiliations due to globalization (Heller 2011). Under these conditions, it is not unreasonable to make a link between this social change and the desire of some respondents to circumscribe the social meaning of [-eːj] to the majority ethnicity. In this regard, the impact that social transformation can have on the modification of the social meaning of language resources was well demonstrated by Labov in his survey of Martha Vineyard Island (1972). As on this island, we would witness, in French-speaking Switzerland, what Eckert (2012) calls an "indexical move": while this phonetic variant was used to simply indicate that the speaker was a resident of the canton of Vaud, today it would mean a particular type of Vaudois, one who is not of immigrant origin.

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(6) Now, with the mixing of the population…the accents are getting lost. They speak more and more, hum, when you go to western Lausanne, you see that a lot. Young people now talk a bit like the French suburbs. This is not Paris here. So, this local accent is being lost by the fact that there's this mix of, hum, society.
Maintenant, avec le brassage de la population […] les accents se perdent. On parle de plus en plus, euh, quand tu vas dans l'Ouest lausannois, tu vois beaucoup ça. Les jeunes, maintenant, ça parle un peu comme les banlieues françaises. On n'est pas Paris. Donc, cet accent de terroir est en train de se perdre par le fait qu'il y a ce mélange, euh, de société.

(7) The population is so mixed, there's a bit of everything, there are foreigners, there are confederates from different other cantons, and then it's no more like before where there were small villages and then it was, hum, it was even from one village to another, there was another accent.
La population est tellement mélangée, il y a un peu de tout, il y a les étrangers, il y a les confédérés de différents autres cantons, et puis c'est plus comme avant où il y avait de petits villages et puis c'était, euh, c'était même d'un village à l'autre, il y avait un autre accent.

To sum up, the aim of this study was to observe a potential change in the social meaning of regional language resources which, in the context of the increasing diversity of the Swiss population, may begin to signify new boundaries of an ethnonational type. In this article, I have chosen to present only certain data, the analysis of which was intended to demonstrate the importance of accounting for the social recognition of the appropriation of regional variation in a migration context. From this point of view, the results show that even if people of immigrant background invest in a strategic use of local phonetic variants, this use does not go without raising issues of legitimacy. Indeed, the social meaning of [-eːj], when used by non-native speakers, may not convey the majority ethnicity trait. Under these conditions, it must be admitted that the adoption of linguistic elements that allow, a priori, for social integration into the local society is not necessarily perceived as a form of capital (see Flubacher 2013 for a similar observation regarding Swiss German). Consequently, the "local accent" seems to be invested with representations that should enable it to function as a marker of ethnic boundaries.

These results show the need to go beyond partial understandings of language representations. The analysis of several research paradigms concerned with the study of language regard shows indeed that they propose a different – partial – interpretation of the place of the individual and the social in the construction of beliefs on ways of speaking.

On the one hand, in the social determinism approach, which gives pride of place to the social structure, language regard tends to be presented as a stable construct, which pre-exists interaction, because it is determined by the socialization of

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the individual. This explains why we note, for example, a stable self-identification with a way of speaking throughout one's life or a similar evaluation of language features by people with the same social background. Thus, by not taking into account the context and the individual's ability to actively participate in the construction of the representation, the social determinism approach runs the risk of reifying the processes resulting from the social construction. This can be seen, for example, in the overvaluing of the attachment of speakers of minority groups to their language resources that lack prestige, as well as in the insistence on the importance of the identity function in the support of minority resources (see, for example, the Blommaert's critique (2004) of a linguistic rights paradigm).

On the other hand, the social constructionism approach emphasizes the role of individuals' ability to invest the language resources of their choice, to the detriment of an examination of the social constraints on reflexive activity, which are then presented as negotiable and deconstructible. However, as Avanza and Laferté (2005: 137) noted, the risk of such a conception "est alors de considérer que, puisque tout est 'socialement construit', rien n'est essentiel, inévitable, tout est déconstructible, révisable".[12] Thus, accepting the pre-eminent role of agentivity would lead to not questioning the issues of legitimacy in the expression of the language regard and to omitting to specify what limits are imposed on the "choices" of the speakers and who decides on the range of these choices.

5. Conclusion

In this article, I approached language regard from the point of view of the interaction between the individual and the society, or between the agency and the social structure. It has been shown that if the weight of each of these components varies according to the research paradigm, both dimensions are constitutive of representations. Indeed, on the one hand, we need social structure to account, for example, for the persistence of certain social beliefs and practices, such as discrimination. On the other hand, we still see that the world and its representations are changing, which leads us to recognize the role of agency. The question then arises as to how to account for the interaction of these two dimensions. We have seen that the methodological option does not present a solution: none of the approaches (quantitative and qualitative) is better equipped to take into account this interaction. One solution could be to consider, as suggested by Sealey and Carter (2004) in their realist approach, that agentive and structural properties fall under two different

12. "is then to consider that, since everything is 'socially constructed', nothing is essential, inevitable, everything is deconstructible, revisable". (my translation)

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dimensions, the latter being marked by anteriority, sustainability as well as enabling and constraining power. The most important consequence of considering agency and social structure as two independent dimensions would be that the existence and effect of structures may be independent of the knowledge of social actors (Sealey and Carter 2004: 16). Such a conception thus gives an important role to the capacity of individuals to act, but their power to act is circumscribed by factors which, while they may, under certain conditions, be negotiable, are structural and therefore exceed the will and the interest of a single individual.

Thus, such a conception advocates an integrated approach that would take into account both the individual's discourse (self-evaluation of his or her language practices) and social recognition (evaluation of language practices by others). Conceptually, taking these two dimensions into account requires finding a term that has adequate analytical potential. Following the example of Brubaker and Cooper (2000), who, in their article "Beyond 'identity'", criticize the term identity for its conceptual ambiguity and who suggest substituting a series of more unambiguous analytical terms, I suggest doing the same conceptual work with regard to beliefs on language. Indeed, as we have seen, terms such as attitude and ideology are linked to specific research traditions and are therefore dependent on meanings that make it difficult to articulate the dimensions of agency and social structure. From this point of view, the term language regard proposed by Preston (2010) proves useful, not only because it does not claim a kinship with a research tradition, but also and above all because it can account for the interaction between agency and social structure. Indeed, in my opinion, the use of the notion of language regard has at least two advantages. On the one hand, since it implies a process and an activity, it is subject to variation according to the context, which removes the reifying connotations of the term "attitude", for example. On the other hand, it articulates a link and interaction between the two dimensions, assuming, for example, the weight of hetero-evaluations in self-evaluations.

Finally, the challenge is to account for the social anchoring of beliefs on language, which allows actors to position themselves in the social space and to construct their own meanings, while confronting them with the meanings of other actors. In other words, it would mean being able to account for individual dynamics (e.g. *bricolage*) in the construction of manners of speaking and their meanings, but it would also be necessary to be able to account for the fact that these manners of speaking (or *accents*) do not exist in a social vacuum and that they continue to produce inequalities. The notion of language regard could help us understand this dual issue.

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Urban youth accents in France

Can a slight palatalization of /t/ and /d/ challenge French sociophonetics?

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Following previous studies on the production and perception of a type of accent commonly known in France as "accent de banlieue" (Vernet and Trimaille 2007; Devilla and Trimaille 2010; Trimaille, Candea and Lehka-Lemarchand 2012), we suggest that the emblematic palatalization of /t/ and /d/ is not specific to young urban people. We also examine how stereotypical uses in the media display this feature and contribute to its iconization (Irvine and Gal 2000). The complex dynamics of a potential phonetic change requires a mixed-method methodology, which provides partially contradictory results, and addresses complex methodological issues in the field of sociophonetics. We, therefore, develop a pragmatic and critical perspective about indexical relations that link social and linguistic categories, and in so doing, we highlight that such an unstable linguistic category can only provide an illusion of stability, mainly because it relies on stable social categorizations.

Keywords: French language, suburban youth accent, iconization, speech perception, mixed methods, social accent, style

1. Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, numerous studies have focused on the language practices of the working-class suburban youth in France, with particular emphasis being placed on their variational nature and the features that are assumed to characterize them. Among these, a number have been described as constituting a so-called banlieue accent (suburban accent), a notion that has gradually become a reality. The banlieue accent has enjoyed relative success in the media; meanwhile, research on it has been subject to particularly visible ideological and political debates. Fries and

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Deprez (2003) are explicitly surprised by the construction and naming of this native "accent", whose description often tends to be associated with foreign accents and sometimes expresses latent xenophobia:

> France is experiencing the development of a "foreign accent from within", comparable to the Hispanic accent in the United States, because of its function as a marker of identity and also because of its stigmatization in the representations of the general public. This is an astonishing blind spot to be explored.[1]
>
> (Fries and Deprez 2003: 103)

Who are the speakers in France whose pronunciation is categorized with the label "banlieue accent"? Are their communities defined by where they live, by their age or by their social or even ethno-racial affiliation? Is it possible to establish a consistent list of features that constitute this accent?

We will first recall the controversial aspects of the notion of "banlieue" (Hambye 2008) in French (I), before outlining the sociophonetic features that have been described as characteristic of a "banlieue accent". This will allow us to discuss the fact that these features are systematically perceived as characteristic and specific elements of this accent (II). Finally, in the last part, we will focus on one of the features described as specific to the "banlieue accent", namely the palatalization of /t, d/ in front of /i, y/, and we will provide a summary of the current state of our knowledge on the production and perception of what seems to represent a phonetic feature that may spread widely enough to become an ongoing change (III).

We will end with a discussion on the theoretical and methodological challenge posed by efforts to distinguish between what is either a phonetic change in progress or a stereotype in a process of stabilization. This in turn will enable us to outline a broader discussion on the empirical consistency of this "accent", which seems to be better described as a "style" (Candea 2017). This paper also seeks to contribute to future discussions on the role that sociolinguistic researchers play in the processes of iconization and erasure (Irvine and Gall 2000) of pronunciation variants.

1. "*…la France est en train de connaitre le développement d'un « accent étranger de l'intérieur » comparable à l'accent des Hispaniques aux États-Unis, de par sa fonction de marqueur d'identité mais aussi de par sa stigmatisation dans les représentations de la population générale. Il y a là une étonnante zone d'ombre à explorer*." (Fries et Deprez 2003: 103)

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2. "*Banlieue*" and "*jeune de banlieue*": Controversial categories despite their increased recognition

The label "banlieue" (or "suburban neighbourhood") is an ellipsis to designate socially disadvantaged suburbs characterized by a high percentage of social housing. This ellipsis implicitly excludes well-to-do suburban neighbourhoods. The notion of banlieue has been imported, with reluctance, from the media into academic discourse. Not only does the term banlieue hide or erase urban and social diversity, but even when a social/socio-economic clarification is made ("working-class, disadvantaged, impoverished suburban neighbourhood"), it still tends to understate or even mask the ethno-racial (racialized) component to its meaning. The notion of banlieue has in fact served as a basis for the construction of another notion, that of "*jeunes de banlieue*" ("suburban youth"). It has followed the same trajectory from the media to academic discourse (especially since the 1990s), giving rise to increasing debate in the social sciences. Such debate has also affected sociolinguistics, as the essentializing discourse on "*la banlieue*" (the suburb, as if it were a monolithic reality), and then on "suburban youth", has quickly led to the essentializing discourse on "youth language" and the so-called "banlieue accent". A search on the Europresse database (which gathers the archives of 1,500 newspapers of the European press) showed that the first occurrences of *accent de banlieue* (suburban accent) date back to 1996; more precisely a survey by the second author of this chapter, of 80 occurrences in press articles showed that they refer to young men in 95% of cases.

Questioning and criticism from the social sciences has not slowed down the popularization of these expressions. As early as the late 1990s, Conein and Gadet (1998) denounced the tendency to iconize the innovation associated with "youth speech", which masked the sometimes ancient nature of features that were at the time erroneously described as innovations. At the same time, in the sociology of communication, Derville (1997), for example, also denounced the "stigmatization of suburban youth". This criticism was met with little success, and this trend only increased in the media during the 2000s.

In a recent ethnographic survey, Berthaut (2013) studied coverage by television news of "banlieue" issues. His ethnographic study was conducted as close as possible to the everyday practices of journalists, at the national public television channel France 2. Berthaut identified the frequent use of depreciative categories when journalists and technical staff speak about the people who live in the banlieue, as well as the use of stereotypical first names as pseudonyms to refer to the individuals filmed there (i.e. "Mohammed" for men, "Aïcha" for women) and other various discursive and cinematographic practices, leading to a sort of depersonalization that transforms them into simplified figures for the media:

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> *The use of these false names is regularly associated with a* ***stylization of the rough accent associated with young people living in working-class neighbourhoods****, even if the protagonists depicted don't have such an accent. Paradoxically, journalists often point out the good quality of the speech of people they meet there, saying, "We were lucky, you know, because* **jeunes de banlieue** ***are rarely able to speak like this****."*[2]
> (Berthaut 2013: 307)

As this example from Berthaut (2013) shows, the category "banlieue accent" thus functions as a postulate, even a prejudice, which turns into an exception that confirms the rule of speakers whose practices are closer to those of a journalist than to the stereotype of "suburban youth". Using the expression "*accent de banlieue*" thus links the accent to a globally stigmatized territory rather than to a specific group of people, which is tantamount to a technique of masking social factors. Some researchers adopt the expression because of its notoriety, all the while distancing it by putting the term within quotation marks (Lehka-Lemarchand 2011). Meanwhile, others reject it and propose alternatives, such as "working-class youth French" (Fagyal 2003) or "Parisian multicultural French" (Gadet and Paternostro 2013), or periphrases aimed at maximum explanation and ostensible rejection of naturalizing generalizations, such as: "language practices of young people mainly from immigrant and so-called 'working-class' social backgrounds, evolving in the city, in cultural and linguistic spaces characterised by plurality and mixing"[3] (Auzanneau and Juillard 2012: 28-29).

The debate on the risk of homogenization and reification of a great variability of linguistic practices under the label "language", "accent", "variety" or "speaking" is still not closed. Gadet (2003), Trimaille and Billiez (2007), and Auzanneau (2009) have raised concern to the fact that such a risk contributes to processes of stigmatization and to the diffusion of negative prejudices (a good synthesis can be found in Gadet and Hambye 2014).

In the next part of this chapter, we adopt a critical perspective in order to bring into focus the different elements that contribute to the deconstruction of the sociolinguistic category of "banlieue accent". To do so, we attempt to grasp the linguistic and empirical realities that underlie – rightly or wrongly – the perception of an alternative and categorical pronunciation of French.

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2. "*Le recours à ces prénoms d'emprunt s'accompagne régulièrement d'une* ***imitation de l'accent rustre prêté aux jeunes habitants des quartiers populaires****, même si les protagonistes représentés à l'image en sont dépourvus. Paradoxalement, le journaliste pointe pourtant souvent la qualité d'expression des interlocuteurs rencontrés : « On est tombés sur des bons, hein, parce que* ***c'est rare qu'ils s'expriment comme ça, les jeunes de banlieue****».*" (Berthaut 2013: 307).

3. « *pratiques langagières de jeunes principalement issus de l'immigration et de milieux sociaux dits "populaires", évoluant, en ville, dans des espaces culturels et linguistiques caractérisés par la pluralité et la mixité* » (Auzanneau and Juillard 2012: 28–29)

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3. Features perceived/described as constitutive of the pronunciation style of young urban speakers in metropolitan France

Since the 1980s, researchers have described and attempted to isolate features supposedly common to pre-categorized people falling under the "suburban" label. In addition to a special focus on the lexicon, these studies have highlighted forms of pronunciation that affect segmental and supra-segmental aspects. This accent is also mentioned by Vivianne Méla (1997: 27), who notes that "The young probably adopt and exaggerate a 'banlieue accent' which, according to Calvet (1994: 84), is characterized by a very open and very backward articulation of vowels and by a word or phrase stress that falls on the penultimate syllable."[4]

We will begin by attempting to draw an inventory of these elements, based on a few studies conducted since the late 1990s. To do so, we start with the list of features presented by Jamin (2009). Note, however, that we are deliberately choosing not to include the features that this author considers to be a common background shared by "suburban French" with the so-called French "working-class" ("français populaire"), and/or whose production among many speakers is linked to stylistic factors (deletion of liquids in a consonant cluster; failure to make certain connections; deletion of *e caducs*). Here is what remains of this list (based on the work of Jamin 2005, and 2009) containing segmental and supra-segmental features that would be "distinctive of the so-called banlieue language" (Jamin 2009: 94):

- prepausal /R/ glottalization
- voiceless and plosive /R/ production
- high rate of [ɑ] posteriorization
- [ɔ] closure before /R/ and /l/, as in *la mort*
- [ɛ] closure before /R/ as in *j'suis vert*
- palatalization and/or affrication of dental plosives /t/ and /d/ before high vowels /i/ and /y/
- palatalization and/or affrication of velar plosives /k/ and /g/, even in final position
- word stress on the penultimate syllable instead of on the final syllable
- intonation: non-standard rising pattern and sharp fall of the F0 curve on the final syllable.

4. "*[l]es jeunes adoptent et exagèrent sans doute un « accent de banlieue » qui est caractérisé selon Calvet (1994 : 84) par une articulation très ouverte et très à l'arrière des voyelles et par un accent de mot ou de phrase qui tombe sur l'avant-dernière syllabe.*"

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At the segmental level, one of the features that caught the researchers' attention very early on was a non-standard pronunciation of /R/ in the final position. Thus, as early as 1983, Chevrot et al. (1983) (taken up by Billiez, 1992: 120) point to "a voiceless and strong constrictive articulation of [R]", giving it an Arabic colouration, a feature they link to the language of a large, relatively recent, immigrant population. This hypothesis of an influence of contact between North-African Arab varieties and French, particularly but not only among bilingual speakers, has been documented in Billiez et al. (2003), Jamin's (2005) extensive quantitative study, or even more recently in Evers (2020).

Since Jamin established this list, various studies have questioned the strength of the correlation between these features and the "banlieue accent" in several ways: either by further observing the pronunciation practices of groups of people in the "suburban youth" category (Lehka-Lemarchand 2011; Fagyal 2010; Candea 2017), or by deepening their categorical perception, particularly by people from outside the target group (Paternostro 2016). For example, Fagyal (2003) spoke about the lengthening of the penultimate syllable as an innovative vernacular marker of young people with a postcolonial immigration background, but this is actually a very old prosodic marker, produced even in various rural communities. The same is true regarding the deletion of liquids in final position, and for the non-realization of variable liaisons, which are in no way specific to the "banlieue accent". Lehka-Lemarchand (2007) has spoken about the "abrupt rise-fall pattern in pitch" as a stylistic specific marker, with stable social indexicality; however, Paternostro (2016) has shown that the "rise-fall" pattern in pitch could be considered as a continuum with more or less emphatic value. In fact, by proposing to interpret the short rise-falling intonational pattern as a resource for expressing emphasis, when it had been described as a possible marker of "banlieue accent" (Lehka-Lemarchand, 2007; Boula de Mareuil and Lehka-Lemarchand, 2011), Paternostro (2016) challenges pre-fabricated identity categories and emphasizes the relevance of not minimizing agency and the ability to renegotiate interacting identities. His study is, firstly, based on an experimental approach, more precisely a perception test which shows that, out of context, the the participating listeners "are only partially able" to distinguish between an "emphatic intonational pattern" and a "banlieue intonational pattern" (they do so in only 59% of cases; 2016: 99), with a very low rate of agreement between "judges" and "researchers" of 54%.

Furthermore, items that elicit responses with a high inter-rater agreement rate (90–100%) represent only 13% of the examples tested. In other words, the perceptive distinction between these two intonational patterns has proven to be very difficult, if not impossible to determine. To complete this perceptual result, Paternostro (2016) also relies on acoustic analysis, which leads to the same results:

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the two intonational patterns (bi-categorized by the researchers) are, rather, placed on a continuum and are not clearly differentiated; the average trend shows a slightly different polarization of the values of the degree of glissando and the ratio of duration between the last and penultimate syllables.

In conclusion, while media discourse gives the illusion of a consistent and identifiable "banlieue accent", research is struggling to find an empirical basis for the widely shared stereotypes. So far, unfortunately, the notoriety of stereotypes continues to impose itself on researchers, who continue to multiply their insights in order to better describe and understand the heterogeneity of practices (production) mirrored with the homogeneity of discourses on perception. To illustrate the difficulty of constructing observables that can feed convincing hypotheses from such a complex object that are also impacted by different ideologies, we have chosen to describe in detail the state of the art of the research on a feature that we have long observed, using several methodologies, namely the palatalization of /t, d/ in front of /i,j,y,ɥ/.

4. A pronunciation variant described in research as emblematic of the French "suburban youth accent": The palatalization of /t/ and /d/ before /i/ and /y/

When we speak of dental-stop palatalization, we are generally referring to any backward shift in the tongue's point of contact with the palate, from the front to as far back as the velum. The shift may be accompanied by a lengthening of the contact time between the tongue and the place of articulation, as well as by a gradual release with friction. In some languages, place-of-articulation shifts are constrained by the phonological system. For example, in languages that have many minimal pairs opposing /t/, /ts/ and /tʃ/, articulatory confusion between the three positions is avoided either by shift inhibition or shift chains. In the French phonological system (Durand, Laks and Lyche 2009), these pronunciations are free variants, most of which speakers are unaware of. Of course, these variants may be associated with social and/or contextual connotations within a given community at a given time, and may be perceived, for example, as an affectionate, childlike, working-class, or regional pronunciation, etc.

In the history of spoken Parisian French between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries, the backward shift in place of articulation on dental stops has been described as a rural or working-class feature (velarization) (Rosset 1911: 314 quoted by Jamin 2005: 115; Straka 1952: 216; Léon 1993: 204). In fact, velarization of dental stops, sometimes generically called palatalization or metaphorically called *mouillée*

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(wet pronunciation) in French, pertained more specifically to the shift in the place of articulation of /t,d/ before the glide /j/: the tongue's point of contact moved as far back as the velum and the phonemes /t,d/ were pronounced [k,g]. For example, the French word *mortier* [-tje] (mortar) was pronounced *morquier* [-kje], and the words *grenadier* [-dje] (pomegranate tree) and *dieu* [djø] (god) were pronounced *grenaguier* [-gje] and *guieu* [gjø] (Lodge, 2004). In literature (since Molière and some other authors in the 17th century) and also in collections of popular literature (even in the 20th century, e.g., Rictus, 1914), graphic variants such as *guieu* instead of *dieu* were sometimes used to denote velarized pronunciations when the author wanted to suggest the pronunciation of lower-class characters.

In the previously cited studies conducted during the second half of the twentieth century, these velarized pronunciations are generally mentioned as archaic. Contemporary research on French varieties continues nonetheless to mention the palatalization of /t,d/, which seems to have extended its domain of applicability, as it now refers to occurrences before the two close vowels /i/ and /y/ and not solely before a glide. In this case, however, it is no longer a velarized pronunciation but corresponds to an upward shift in the place of articulation, sometimes with a gradual release that produces what is called an affrication. For /t,d/, this amounts to pronouncing these dentals as [tʃ,dʒ] in European French and as [ts, dz] in Canadian French, notably in Quebec. In the following section, we will combine the continuum between palatalized and affricated variants of /t,d/ under the abbreviation "PalAff".

Two competing hypotheses

Concerning the French of France, Fónagy (1989) was the first to speak of dental-stop affrication, hypothesizing that a change was underway. In his 1989 study, revised in 2006, Fónagy demonstrated heavy affrication of these two consonants by certain French speakers. For this purpose, he had Hungarian speakers with no knowledge of French take perception tests and word categorization tests. The participants were asked to listen to, and to note the pronunciation of isolated French words, without knowing if they were variants or different words. Hungarian speakers were used as listeners because /t-tj-tʃ/ and /d-dj-dʒ/ are phonologically distinct in the Hungarian language, and they are thus able to perceive these variants (because of their distinctive function), while French speakers are not since they have not acquired the opposition in the phonological system of their first language. Figure 1 shows the difference between the spectrograms of the French word *nature* pronounced with an alveodental stop (on the right) or an affricated stop (on the left).

Regarding production, the duration of complete occlusion of the affricated dental consonant is equal to or shorter than the simple plosive variant, but the release (fricative noise) of the affricated variant is much longer. In short, the affricated

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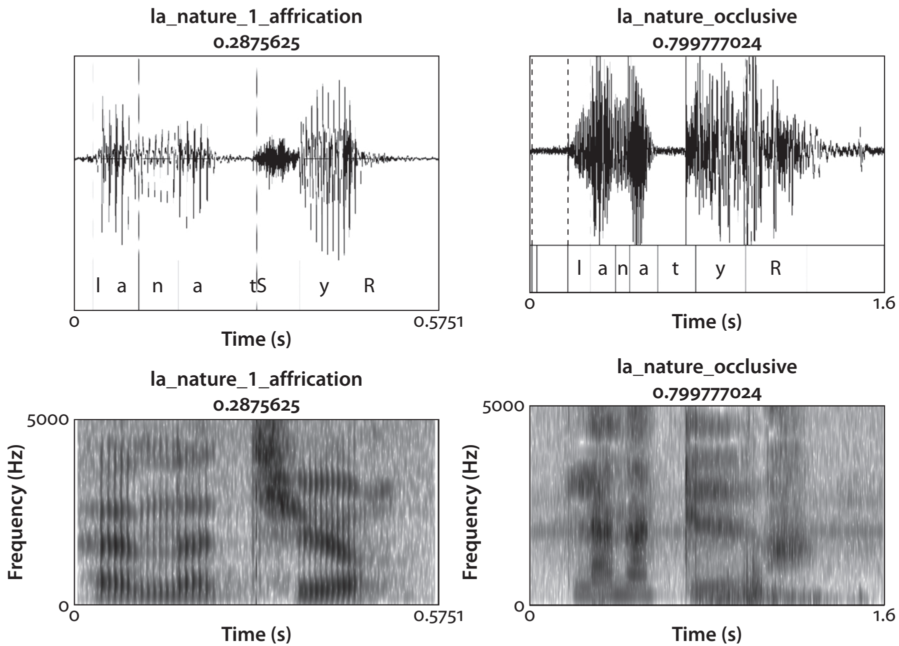

Figure 1. Spectrograms of the pronunciation of /t/ in /lanatyR/: Affricated palatal (left) and alveodental (right)

variant is longer overall and corresponds to more of the tongue in contact with the alveolar ridge. The transition between the consonantal sound and the vowel is slower and more progressive in the affricated pronunciation.

Many findings converge in supporting Fónagy's (1989) hypothesis. It was also defended by Armstrong and Pooley (2010), who contend that the tendency to strongly palatalize dental stops in front of /i,j,y,ɥ/ could in fact be the only "candidate" for a consonantal phonetic change taking place in European French. This hypothesis is compatible with Romano's (2003) remarks (in Billiez et al. 2003) about PalAff variants:

> But while they are particularly salient, these articulatory features are not specific to the adolescents whose productions we are studying here: indeed, they are also present in a corpus made up of productions collected in a more supervised situation (laboratory), from young students and teachers from different regions.[5]
>
> (Romano 2003, in Billiez et al. 2003: 45)

5. "*Mais s'ils sont particulièrement saillants, ces traits articulatoires n'en sont pas pour autant spécifiques aux adolescents dont nous étudions ici les productions : en effet, ils sont également présents dans un corpus constitué de productions recueillies en situation plus surveillée (laboratoire), auprès de jeunes étudiants et enseignants de différentes régions.*"

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It is interesting to note the existence of a similar phenomenon in most varieties of Quebecois French, in which a convergence already seems to be well established. In Quebec, the affricated variants /ts, dz, d̥s / in the same contexts, i.e., before /i,j,y,ɥ/, have been attested among speakers from all social classes, ages and genders, in both formal and informal contexts, with overall rates ranging from 50% to 85%. This phenomenon occurs especially for voiceless dentals, as shown, for instance, in Bento (1998)'s study, in which affrication was correlated consistently with the speaker's city, but inconsistently with the speaker's gender and age (in a sample of people from Quebec City, speakers in general, whether women, men or children, affricated more than those from Chicoutimi, but in a sample of people from Chicoutimi, children and men affricated more often than did women, thereby possibly suggesting more complex variation patterns).

Three more recent studies conducted in three different French cities – Jamin (2005) in Paris; Vernet and Trimaille (2007) in Grenoble; and Jamin, Trimaille and Gasquet-Cyrus (2006) in Marseille – upheld a competing hypothesis: they found clear evidence that affricated pronunciations were most often produced by young male working-class speakers from immigrant families living in an urban setting (see, in particular, Jamin 2005). These studies support the hypothesis of a possible ongoing process of stereotyping.

In the context of the Paris suburbs, Jamin (2005) PhD research first showed that the use of palatalized forms was linked to the following social variables: age, sex, street-culture membership, and ethnic background. Trimaille then found the same kind of social pattern in Grenoble (Jamin, Trimaille and Gasquet-Cyrus 2006). Jamin and Trimaille (2008) then considered the supralocal dimension of the variant and, secondly, viewed it as a case of sociolinguistic convergence within a trend of divergence from the standard form. They interpreted this convergence as the result of a combination of internal factors (assimilatory processes which potentially affect all speakers); external factors such as language contact between French, substrates and adstrates; and extra-linguistic factors such as social or geographical mobility and psycho-social factors such as identity construction and strategies.

Therefore, we can theoretically imagine that strong palatalization or affrication is a phonetic change from below, led by young male urban speakers who are very involved in street culture. Even though the hypothesis of ongoing phonetic change is supported by many observations, it seems impossible to definitively rule out the opposing hypothesis, because "social meaning is highly flexible" (Campbell-Kibler, 2009: 149). Indeed, a possible beginning of an actual stereotyping process was documented by Trimaille, Candea and Lehka (2012), who reported the use of the graphemes *tch, dch* and *dj* instead of *t* and *d* in comics or on posters about comedy acts [Figure 2], thereby testifying to the fact that such pronunciations are

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sometimes salient enough to caricature the speech of immigrants or young speakers from Parisian suburbs with immigrant background. If affrication is undergoing a stereotyping process and thereby becoming an indicator of an "urban working class with a postcolonial immigrant background", then the linguistic behaviour of "legitimate speakers" (i.e. the appropriate person in a legitimate situation, on a given linguistic market, see Bourdieu, 1982) could also evolve into a reaction of avoiding the palatalized variant, which would lead to the latter group of speakers not adopting the feature.

Figure 2. Stylized transcriptions: (left) "*The Secret Life of Young People*"[6] (Sattouf 2007)-(right) Comedy show poster "*Fatima has things to tell you*" (with the comedian Souad Belhaddad, 2011)

These two competing hypotheses are worthy of attention, as they raise challenging questions about methodological issues. Indeed, if a weekly newspaper with a circulation of millions of copies (Figure 3 shows an excerpt from the *Charlie Hebdo*'s issue published after the January 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris) publishes a vignette with a stylized profile of a "young suburban boy" wearing a hoodie and sneakers, and whose pronunciation is noted with "tch" instead of "t" and "dch" instead of "d", it means that the editorial staff of this widely circulated newspaper endorsed the assumption made by cartoonist Sattouf that this stereotypical variant, would be associated with young men from the banlieue. Such assumptions underline the negative reception of the terrorist act among those whose profile could be associated with that of terrorists.

6. "It is not written in the school rules that braided hair is forbidden in the classroom. Plus it's not as if they are dreadlocks, you see, they're little plaits that are so beautiful like that..."

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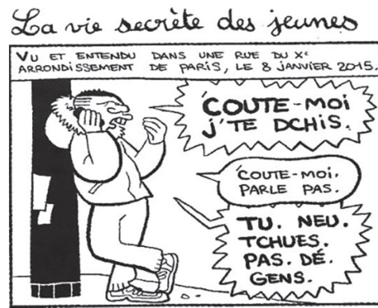

Figure 3. Vignette, January 2015, *Charlie Hebdo*, cartoon by Sattouf[7] (using *tch* and *dch*, instead of *t* and *d*, e.g *dchis* instead of *dis*)

Jamin's study (2005) on production, based on the above-mentioned suburban field recordings, has identified stratification by age and gender. These, combined with the fact that such cartoons are widespread, should, according to traditional variationist methods, sufficiently support the hypothesis that palatalization functions as a marker in the Labovian sense. However, as mentioned above, palatalized/affricated variants have existed for a very long time in the vernacular language (at least since the 17th century – see Rosset (1911: 314) quoted in Jamin 2005: 115), and there is empirical basis for the hypothesis that this is a change in progress (from clear occlusion to spirantization via an entire gradient of a lengthening of the contact time between the tongue and the palate). Can we consider that the indexicality of this mark has changed in such a short time and that it now functions as one of the emblematic features of what is referred to as "banlieue accent"?

We therefore sought to deepen our knowledge on these PalAff variants by carrying out different and complementary research. The first series of research concerns the study of production, while the second investigates perception.

Production

Firstly, if palatalization is stigmatized by a process of widespread stereotyping, we should be able to observe stylistic variation: it should decrease in highly supervised speech, among the same speakers. Regarding such variation, the results of several studies available at this time are rather inconsistent. For example, while the study by Vernet and Trimaille (2007) shows stylistic variation that, in line with the hypothesis, depends on the situation, research by Jamin and Trimaille (2008) has found no significant stylistic variation. Candea (2018) provides detailed analysis

7. «Listen to me. Listen, don't speak. YOU.CAN'T.KILL.PEOPLE. ».

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of interaction indicating stylistic variation, but correlation with meta-linguistic vigilance is not clearly indicated. Secondly, if the palatalization of /t,d/ is being stereotyped, it should inhibit the change that is taking place, and all those who do not wish to affiliate themselves with suburban street culture should be able to avoid this feature. It should be absent or in decline in the dominant media for example, or generally in the speech of legitimate speakers as explained by Bourdieu (1982). Our studies on production data therefore focused on the evolution of these variants in the major media within the past decade, but they did not shed clear light on this issue.

Trimaille's (2008, 2010) results on media data showed that highly palatalized or even affricated pronunciations could be observed in the speech of certain French government ministers at that time, even when interviewed on national radio station broadcast. The rates are different from one minister to another, but two women, Valérie Pécresse and Fadela Amara, stand out for their frequent and strongly marked utterances despite their very contrasting socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, even in a public and formal situation. Another study conducted on a large corpus of media speech (1997–2010) by Candea, Adda-Decker and Lamel (2013) adopted a more massive quantitative approach, automatically selecting 100,000 /t/ and 50,000 /d/ in front of /i,j/, as well as 30,000 /t/ and 60,000 /d/ in front of /y,ɥ/ produced indiscriminately by journalists or non-journalists expressing themselves in the media. The study shows that in the media the rates of palatalized or affricated productions increased during this period, though very slightly, especially for /t/. For the /tj/, for example, which is the most affected, the rate of palatalized or affricated realizations strong enough to be automatically aligned with a [tʃ], went from 4% in 1998 to 8% in 2010, which is still much lower than the rates of between 40% and 80% found by Trimaille and Vernet among adolescents in Grenoble in 2007. This upward trend in the media may suggest a lack of awareness, which would reinforce the argument that palatalization is not, so far, a social marker. But the argument can also be reversed, as the increase is not strong enough within this window of micro-diachrony, and at this pace we will have to wait a long time before we can really talk about pan-social convergence.

Warette's (2020) results in Figure 4, obtained through sentence-reading tasks, show on the one hand that the average percentage is higher among the youngest (ANOVA, one factor, *p value* = 0.003), which may support the hypothesis of change in progress, provided that the group is socially homogeneous (a qualification which could not be controlled). But on the other hand we also observe a surprising evolution of this variable by gender: slightly more among males than females in the older age group, and vice versa in the younger age group (ANOVA, two factors, *p value* = 0.004). This new and interesting result should be verified by replicating the study using a larger and more representative sample, because, if confirmed, it

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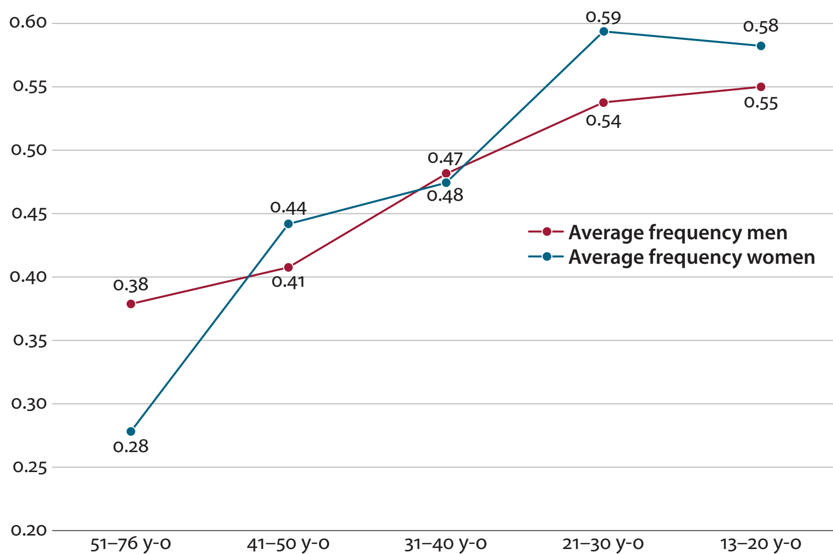

Figure 4. Average frequency of palatalization according to gender and age (adapted from Warette 2020)

would suggest that the beginning of the "street culture" stereotyping noted by Jamin in the early 2000s was "beaten out" by the underlying trend of expansion from below of the palatalized and/or affricated variant, indexing instead a modernity more easily displayed by women.

According to this set of data, one can claim that, today, palatalization of /t, d/ is not a stereotype as defined by Labov (1966). If it was such a consistently stigmatized variant, one can assume that it would not be observed in sentence-reading tasks, in such a wide range of speakers or, even if not massively, in the speech of journalists, ministers, and people of high social and academic levels. Furthermore, another element argues against the stereotype value of palatalization. If palatalized (and a fortiori affricated) variants were stereotypical, it could be assumed that its frequency and intensity would decrease with the occupational integration of speakers, which does not seem to be the case according to Warette's data and analysis.

But how then to explain Sattouf's vignettes and the comedy shows (Figures 2 and 3), which played on the hypothesis of the PalAff /t,d/ variant functioning as a marker? Does perception precede production? Can any of these non-standard variants be salient, yet still continue to spread? Within the continuum of non-standard pronunciations from palatalization to affrication, could some of these variants function as markers in the Labovian sense? Or, in other words, can PalAff realizations be associated with different social meanings linked to other semiotic features, whether linguistic or not?

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Perception

To obtain a clearer picture, studies focusing on the perception of these variants are essential, as complements to production studies. Indeed, without controlled studies on perception, there is a great risk of working on an artefact produced by the distorted perception of researchers whose ears have trained themselves to distinguish the variants within the continuum of realizations ranging from occlusion with a clear and short explosion to a long explosion and with enlarged contact of the tongue to the palate. To address this issue, we will mainly cite here a study carried out in two stages, in 2012 and 2019.

A perceptual experiment conducted by Trimaille, Candea and Lehka (2012) among 15-to-24-year-old high-school and college students in greater Paris, Rouen, Lyon and Grenoble, yielded results supporting the hypothesized lack of salience of affricates for these listeners. Participants in the experiment had to rate the degree to which they felt the pronunciation of a 30-second read dispatch met the standards set for news broadcasts by various types of radio stations. The goal of the perceptual experiment was to determine whether or not affricated variants are used by listeners to evaluate and categorize speakers' performances when they are asked to evaluate speakers' acceptability as appropriate in formal contexts (broadcast news). Two of the questions were: "*If you were a* ***recruiter*** *for a radio channel, do you think that this person* ***could be*** *a newsreader?*" and *"As a* ***listener****, would you consider natural that this person presents the news on: national radio / youth radio / community radio?"*. The speakers read the same passage in a "news broadcast style"; their productions were categorized into three groups according to their rate of PalAff variants. The listeners were asked to answer close-ended questions and to provide some short explanations about their choice, especially through a list of "what should be avoided" to improve pronunciation in order to become a good newsreader. The results suggest that, for the 80 young respondents (50 women, 30 men), affrication of /t,d/ is not part of the main criteria a speaker has to avoid to become a good newsreader. No significant differences were found between positive and negative ratings by region or gender, as the experiment showed considerable convergence of responses on this kind of task.

By analyzing data (collected in 2012 and using the described above methodology) on the perception of palatalization by older judges, Bezborodko (2020) investigated whether there might be a difference in perception and judgements in relation to the age of the judges. Her results also converge on a lack of correlation between the rate of palatalization and the evaluation of oral productions, regardless of the judges' age, which means that the elements that seem to be decisive in evaluating the ability to present information on the radio are not related to the palatalized variant itself.

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To summarize those perceptual studies, we do not currently have clear evidence to reinforce the hypothesis of a growing perceptive salience of the PalAff variants. But these pilot studies are not large enough to reject this hypothesis, especially if the stereotyping process needs more time than allowed for by the micro-diachronic window.

5. Final discussion and conclusion

According to Kerswill and Williams (2002), examining the salience of a feature requires covering many points, such as linguistic properties, sociolinguistic distribution, overt opinion in the society, discourse analysis and experimental investigation. That was our aim for the PalAff variants, and in doing so we came up with two competing hypotheses. On the one hand, the first stage of supralocal convergence of vernacular pronunciations (Devilla and Trimaille 2010) could now be followed by the beginnings of "pan-social convergence", thus possibly corresponding to an ongoing phonetic change, as predicted by Fónagy (1989). On the other, the first stage could be followed by a stereotyping process that leads to the emergence of a new social marker. A third hypothesis could also be formulated, that of a differentiated treatment/perception of the two variants. Given that palatalization and affrication are two variants positioned gradually on a continuum, it cannot be excluded that the degree of perceptual salience varies, depending on the speakers and situations, between these two degrees of variation.

The complexity of the results makes it possible to raise the issue of the specificity of the studied feature (PalAff variants) in relation to the so-called banlieue accent. The more mixed-method investigations are conducted, the more the strength of the correlation between PalAff variants and the "banlieue accent" is questioned. Besides, this kind of problem also arises for the other features identified as markers of the banlieue accent.

For example, focusing on the salience of the prosodic marker short "rise-fall pattern" at the end of a rhythmic group ("contours montants-descendants", Paternostro 2016: 84), which is described as another specific feature and endowed with a certain perceptual salience in its most marked forms (Boula de Mareuil and Lehka-Lemarchand 2011), Paternostro (2016) shows that the perception of a typical "banlieue talk" is by no means automatically aroused by the presence of such an intonational pattern, in the absence of other converging features. Hence this author's proposal to consider that it would be a single basic intonational pattern in French, which would be mobilized most often to express emphasis, and which could be realized with different degrees. If there has been a broad consensus in the media since the end of the 1990s that a "banlieue accent" exists, in sociophonetic research

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there has only been an increasing consensus that there is a lack of consistency of this category which becomes salient only if there is a "halo effect", or a cluster of convergent features (Nisbett and Wilson 1977).

To return to palatalization, the continuity between variants and the persistent difficulty in isolating markers of the "banlieue accent" calls into question the empirical existence of this category as an accent, and thus a certain stability of shared pronunciation practices. In 2005, Jamin identified the degree of insertion into "street culture" as a relevant factor correlated to the frequency of the listed "banlieue accent" markers. He was thus following Labov's, and in the French context, Lepoutre's (1997) hypotheses, which opposed the degree of insertion in "street culture" to that of "school culture". However, it is easy to imagine that this factor concerns only a small percentage of people living in disadvantaged social estates, mostly young men and a smaller percentage of young women. This would explain why:

1. these indexical and partly iconic features show great inter-individual variability;
2. many pupils almost never adopt them, while many others practice them at varying rates depending on the issues at stake (Lehka-Lemarchand 2011);
3. these features are not shared within the different generations of a family, as can be the case, under certain conditions, with features that index a 'regional accent'.

Taking this reasoning to its logical conclusion, we can consider that these pronunciation practices thus contribute, in the same way as other semiotic practices (vocabulary, sounding, choice of clothing, gestures, etc.), to the performance of a style that indexes participation to "street culture", which in turn may be ideologically linked to values of nonconformism and toughness. This calls into question the very notion of accent or in any case totally blurs the boundary between "accent" and "style".

Such an approach is consistent with that upheld by Eckert and Rickford (2001) and many other academics, particularly after Coupland (2007). If we consider that social life is a perpetual and multidimensional process of constructing categories and identities and associating those social phenomena with semiotic means, language constructs the social aspect, and style is one of the resources available for this construction. This perspective contrasts with the view of language as a mere reflection of the social aspect and the view of social life as a difficult navigation by individuals through pre-existing categories that are fixed and immobile (Eckert and Rickford 2001: 6). This better explains the inconsistency of correlations according to the methods adopted, as well as their fluidity over time (even over short periods of time). The definition of linguistic variation changes significantly: it evolves "from marking categories to constituting a more fluid landscape of meaning" (Eckert and Rickford 2001).

If we support the use of multiple methods and theoretical insights, it is both to limit the risk of circular reasoning and to shed light on new phenomena that are

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emerging in/or outside the collective consciousness. On this point we follow Bishop, Coupland and Garrett (2005), who, after a large-scale survey on the perception of (regional) accents in Great Britain, draw attention to the fact that the use of the traditional, already-known pre-categories in a survey could in itself activate the conservative linguistic ideologies associated with these categories, thereby possibly obscuring the results and preventing the emergence, if any, of recent changes that have not yet been translated/mediated into sufficiently recognized official discourse. One can therefore come to question whether the use in discourse of traditional categories (such as the one discussed here, "*accent de banlieue*") – which are more ideological and identity categories than linguistic categories – plays the role of a framework that allows a notion to remain operational in non-specialized discourse and in ordinary interactions, and that performatively enables the perpetuation or even reinforcement of (social) boundaries.

Our fieldwork and our regular reading of the media allow us to point out a high level of porosity between discourse in the media or in Academia and the lay discourse on "banlieue" and "*jeunes de banlieue*", including, of course, the discourse of the young people who live in such areas. The pervasiveness within society of the category "*jeunes de banlieue*" [young people of banlieue] to refer to marginalized individuals as an identity assignment encourages young people, especially those from post-French-colonial descent, to strongly reject this identity, or to strongly conform to it. Regarding this particular point, the general lack of discourse about girls from "banlieue" in both the media and in scientific papers (Billiez and Lambert 2008, Moïse 2002) can act as an advantage because the lack[8] of very common models for these young girls allows for a broader space for constructing different identities in interaction.

Regarding the "banlieue accent" category, we can also point out a very high level of porosity between all kinds of discourses, even though scientific papers tend to favour the use of quotation marks, or expressions like 'the so-called banlieue accent', when referring to it. This plays a decisive role in the identity construction of young people living in the banlieue, because they are encouraged to accept the idea of strong and stable categories with a clear definition – which is inaccurate. Wouldn't then it be time to ask sociophoneticians why we use "so-called banlieue accent" and no other label? What is the status of "so-called", and is this a sufficient modalisation and precaution to expose, validate and circulate a supposedly sociolinguistic but in fact empirically questionable and epistemologically confining category?

8. The context could shift on this point, because in the last decade more and more movies have focused on young women from the projects: *Les roses noires (2012), Bandes de filles (2014), Fatima (2015), Divines (2016), Le Brio (2017)*

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We propose to defend the hypothesis that the "banlieue accent" is a style (such as, for instance, a gendered style) which evolves with street fashion and in interaction with successful artists, who are able to influence indexicality, toward prestige as well as toward stigmatization. Promoting the stylistic approach of variability of pronunciation practices (instead of an approach based on identity categories) can allow for better understanding of the atypical fluidity of the considered features in each context and can also open up interesting political perspectives. If our interpretation of the so-called "banlieue accent" as a set of styles were to spread, it could break the link (which is socially constructed and potentially performative) between territory and social class on the one hand and accent on the other. If the idea that the banlieue accent is only a "style" were to become widespread, students who perform it would feel less pressure to drop it (as a stigma to avoid), and it would be easier and more acceptable for them to practice style shifting (as opposed to the idea of "losing" one's accent). Referring to "banlieue street styles" instead of "banlieue accent" may also highlight the more heterogeneous social landscape in the banlieue, taking into account what we actually observe in our fieldwork.

To sum up, our assumption is that the "banlieue accent" is not a linguistic category. However, it remains, by far, a socially operational instrument of discrimination and intolerance.

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Encountering accented others – and selves – in provincial Japan

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Who has a regional accent in Japan? Now over a century into the project of language standardization, this question remains pressing but difficult to answer conclusively. This chapter addresses distinctive characteristics of the metalinguistics of accent in the Touhoku (northern Honshu) region through local categories, and drawing on participant observation, it also offers a close reading of moments of indeterminacy in which language users negotiate the encounter with accent in themselves and in others. Three cases illuminate how the presence or absence of regional accent is subject to the interactional work of language users, and the identification of accent can be thwarted by a strategy of non-participation. The chapter concludes by reviewing the impact of accent in language users' lives.

Keywords: Japanese accents, regional accents, perceiving subject, agency, situated practices of local languages, accent as an emblem, strategies of non-participation, linguistic discrimination

1. Introduction

How do we know who has an accent? In the Touhoku [note 1] region of northeastern Japan, regional accent and dialect – an indexical link between place and language form – might appear in any interaction. People are likely to use features of language such as vowels or verb endings which we suppose to be local. Just as likely, people might attach a supposition of localness to features of language. In this chapter, I foreground these acts of attachment, of supposition. These acts occur at crucial *moments of indeterminacy*, moments where interlocutors do not share a clear agreement about what is "accented" and what is "not". In these moments, accent is a nebulous category, though the social means by which language users construct accent is clear. It is through such action that a moment of indeterminacy turns into an encounter with accent, and often with an unexpectedly accented language user.

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Such encounters are the microcosm of large-scale enregisterment (Agha 2005, 2007), where the boundaries of any given register are negotiated and applied in the course of interaction. At the scale of an interaction the agency of particular interlocutors comes into focus, and encounters with accent can be broken down into constituent parts. These include the action of both speaking and perceiving subjects (Inoue 2003, 2006, Rosa and Flores 2017) who may not share the same goals or interpretations, but who contribute to and draw from a shared field of semiotic material such as sounds and gestures (Goodwin 2018).

In these moments, what constituent parts are necessary for the identification of an accent (or any other form of linguistic difference)? I find at least three constituent elements worth discussing separately: features of language, ideologies of social difference, and ideologies of language difference. By features of language, I mean the kind of material described as lexicon, phonology, prosody, orthography, etc., such as specific words, sounds, or hand shapes (cf. Gass and Varonis 1984). These features need not be scientifically grounded – a claim like "she sounds nasal" can be precise enough (Preston 1996: 43). While the social category of accent does not depend on the existence of objectively identifiable features, difference in concrete features is an important part of the idea of an accent. By ideologies of social difference, I mean the beliefs and feelings, conscious or unconscious, which help to structure the expectations of interlocutors. These include, for example, ideologies of racialized difference; or in the case of Touhoku, stereotypes about rural characters and regional differences (cf. Evans and Iverson 2007). By ideologies of language difference, I mean beliefs and feelings about language variation, including concept categories such as hougen and namari (cf. Léglise and Migge 2006; Hay and Drager 2010). To produce the referent accent, all three of these constituent parts are necessary. The performer or the perceiver must orient to a minimally concrete piece of language; must have some social meaning to index by highlighting language difference; and must rely on some idea of what it can mean for language forms to be different.

2. Touhoku language and standardized Japanese

The Touhoku region encompasses the six northernmost prefectures of Japan's main island of Honshu. Touhoku (東北, "northeast") was the far northern periphery of Japan until the colonization of Ainu Mosir (Hokkaido) in the late 19th century. The region has gone through periods of impoverishment and oppression, and periods of wealth and power. For the last century, it has been a poor agrarian region, a source of raw materials and labor power for urban centers like Tokyo. In many circles Touhoku and Touhoku language are a shorthand for rural poverty (Bailey 1991; Nakamura 2013).

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The notion of a single "Japanese language" is a recent one (Twine 2001: 103). Until the 1880s, in everyday life, regional linguistic differences were dramatic. Prior to this time, a quasi-feudal system and a forest of border checkpoints made travel impossible for most people (Hane 1982: 9–14), and local language forms grew ever more distinctive. The various domains communicated textually, by means of shared writing systems, and orally through the work of interpreters (Sibata 1999: 184). In other words, early modern Japan was a network of multilingual societies, with institutions and practices that linked many speech communities, though it was far from linguistically egalitarian. For example, no large town would have had only a single dialect, but rather a set of local upper- and lower-class registers (Inoue 2008: 34; Jeszenszkya et al 2019).

While some intellectuals had dreamed of a unified national language before the 1860s, the notable changes began well after the turbulent years surrounding the Meiji revolution (Harootunian 1988). In this period of late 19th century Japan, the state was supporting rapid capitalist development and the adoption of Western-style institutions. These included the project of assembling a uniform national language: a rational and modern language, simultaneously close to spoken language and bearing little regional character. Early language policy was focused on writing, so that only in 1916 did government rescripts begin to require that students learn a standard spoken register (Carroll 2001). With the promulgation of standardized language, local language took on a number of new meanings including a "temporal bifurcation between the past and the present, often understood as a contrast between tradition and modernity" (Inoue 2008: 40).

In other words, with institutional language standardization fully under way in the mid-twentieth century, a temporal bifurcation applied in the realm of language as well. Local language forms, and the differences between them, were now to be understood as disappearing, hopelessly obsolescent (Sato 2015: 178). As examples in this chapter will illustrate, dialects are approached on the one hand with rosy nostalgia, and on the other hand with impatient rejection and even disgust.

After 1945, language standardization was in greater force than ever before (Carroll 2001: 182). Soldiers and many others returned home from the war bearing the knowledge that they had an accent, often an undesirable one. Post-war mobility exposed many more people to that same knowledge and many young labor migrants felt the pressure to assimilate to their new urban surroundings. Radio and television enhanced the allure of the national language and provided greater access to examples of it. And media representations of regional dialect were mercilessly pejorative (Gottlieb 2008: 8).

People now in their seventies and older have described the mid-twentieth century to me as the "era of dialect eradication," using the same framing as contemporary public service announcements proclaiming that we will "eradicate drunk

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driving." Some of those harsh practices were removed in the 1960s and 1970s following a shift in attitudes (Carroll 2001), but the national standard language remained (and still remains) hegemonic in every institution and in most domains of interaction.

3. Recent conditions

I visited Iwate Prefecture in northern Touhoku several times between 2012 and 2017 to pursue a research agenda about the politics of dialect. I joined several community organizations, interviewed hundreds of people, and eventually conducted a year-long ethnographic study among students at Iwate University, in the prefectural capital, Morioka. Over and over again I keep returning to one interview from 2012 with the memoirist Matsumoto Genzou, especially these comments about his children:

> The people who can speak Morioka dialect are all in their seventies or eighties – all old people. … And, my son who just came by, he's one who still understands. … But he doesn't use it himself. (Another child of mine) is in Kyoto and so of course, they use standard Japanese. So yes, but he says that people in Kyoto ask, "Where are you from?" And when he says "Iwate," they say "No wonder," (laughs) he says they say "No wonder!" It really seems like everyone is very different, since, no matter how much you use standard Japanese, he says they figure out where you're from. You get figured out. … They understand him talking but the pitch accent is different. He says the intonation is different, so you get figured out.

For Matsumoto, who was born in the 1920s, his own adult children no longer speak complete Morioka dialect. But local language is still a factor in their lives, in the form of an accent (intonational phonology and other features) that interlocutors can "figure out." Other in Touhoku who are far younger still are facing the same scenario as Matsumoto's children, at the same time. I found that among university students in 2015 and 2016, it was always possible for speakers to be figured out as accented – to identify themselves or others as accented.

4. Linguistic features

Numerous differences in language might be taken to distinguish Touhoku language forms from one another and from standardized Japanese. Teachers, academics, and hobbyists have compiled marvelous glossaries in many parts of the region (e.g. Kurosawa 2001; Nakaya 2010; Takeda 2011; Terai 1986; Yamaura 1985). The table

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below lists some of the common items which multiple local people described to me as features which distinguish central Iwate speech from standardized Japanese and from language in other parts of Touhoku.

Table 1. Common features identified as distinguishing standardized Japanese from central Iwate speech

Distinguishing features in Touhoku, from the perspective of standardized language	**English gloss of an example**	**Touhoku form(s) in romanized script**	**Standardized form(s) in romanized script**	**Standardized phonetic (kana) representation**	**Touhoku phonetic (kana) representation, if different**
Focus marker *-kko*	"tea"	tyakko	tya	ちゃ	ちゃっこ
High vowel (i, u) merger (to ï) after alveolar consonants	"map"	tïzï	tizu	ちず	n/a[12]
Intonational contour variation (determined by place of pitch accent)	[declarative] "not understand"	L HL wa ka ra na i	H L wa ka ra na i	わからない	n/a
In intervocalic contexts (between vowels), voiceless alveolar & velar stops (t, k) are voiced (d, g); and voiced consonants (b, d, z, g) are (pre) nasalized.	(1) "I" (2) "skin"	(1) wadasi (2) handa/ hãda	(1) watasi (2) hada	(1) わたし (2) はだ	(1) わだし (2) はんだ[12]
Distinctive syntactic use of otherwise common elements; in this example, sentence-final use of the term is marked	"you know?" or "that's why…"	dakara	n/a	n/a	だから

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5. Differentiating types of language

The examples above are useful but they represent only a small part of the repertoire that language users bring to moments of indeterminacy around accent or dialect. To be sure, we could approach 'local dialect' essentially as a naturally occurring phenomenon (Bucholtz 2003; Kroskrity 2000: 26), but dialect and accent are also achievements of an ideological process which sorts linguistic production into socially relevant and moral categories. Dialect and accent need not be the only categories. Below I introduce six partially overlapping categories that people in Touhoku use to discuss language difference, following Léglise and Migge's (2006) suggestion to analyze "naming conventions." Each category is infused with ideology and norms about language use and reveals something about the particular features of speech that are noticed. If there is anything distinctive or particularly instructive about language in this part of Japan, it is more likely to be found in these socially weighty metalinguistic categories than in the collection of features provided above. The six categories that I observed are: *akusento, intoneesyon, namari, hougen, gengo,* and *hyouzyungo*. These are not always names of particular registers ("language names"). Sometimes they are scales of difference, classes of register.

Akusento and Intoneesyon. Akusento アクセント (a loan of *accent*) refers primarily to patterns of suprasegmental intonational contour, as in "high accent" or "low accent," which may exhibit regional variation in their placement and realization. Intoneesyon イントネーション, a loan of *intonation*, is sometimes used as a near homonym, though specialists distinguish these terms (Inoue 2008: 331). Akusento refers most strongly to the distinctive intonational contour of lexical items, which is sufficient to distinguish between them (e.g. $ha^{H}si_{L}$versus $ha_{L}si^{H}$). The existence of akusento is not marked on its own, so that speakers do not 'have' or 'speak' akusento; but since its realization differs across regions it is possible to talk about having or speaking with 'akusento which is different' 違うアクセント.

Namari. Unlike akusento, namari 訛り does refer to a class of register, very much like 'accent' in Anglophone usage. For this reason, I have tried to translate namari as 'accent' throughout this chapter. Namari is often pejorative. It bears some of the sense of 'corrupted' – namari is language which is ill-formed, wrong, polluted. Though it is usually a mistake to over-interpret etymologies and orthography when analyzing largely spoken discourse, it is worth pointing out here that the character 訛 could be interpreted as encoding a sense of 'corrupted language.' Its constituent parts, 言 and 化, might be read as "word/speech" and "change/transform," respectively. This term covers a broad range of variation across levels of linguistic analysis: intonational contour, vowel and consonant realization, morphological variation, and sometimes even lexical variation. Namari can be a verb (e.g. past/completed *namatta* 訛った), used to describe speech or speakers who 'are accented' or 'became

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accented.' Speakers may also notice themselves or others 'becoming accented.' For example, one might 'become accented' when talking on the phone with family back home. For some speakers (in their twenties), namari includes all levels of linguistic analysis, such as lexicon.

Hougen and **gengo**. Hougen 方言 and gengo 言語 refer to classes of register, in most ways equivalent to 'dialect' and 'language' (Inoue 2008: 33) though hougen refers exclusively to regional variation. These terms also carry an almost one-to-one correspondence with the register labelling suffixes -**ben** 弁 and -**go** 語, respectively. Typically, these suffixes attach to place names. For example, 'Kesenese' in the sense of 'Kesen dialect' is Kesenben, realized /kesemben/. Meanwhile 'Kesenese' in the sense of 'Kesen language' is Kesengo, realized more like /keseŋgo/ or /keseŋŋo/. Hougen and -ben do not fit each other perfectly, however. While -ben tends to refer to all levels of analysis, hougen only refers to all levels of analysis for scholars. In conventional usage hougen refers mostly to lexical variation, as opposed to phonology, morphology, etc. Perhaps this is because the word is easily parsed as referring to lexicon, for example as (implicitly) "regional words," tihou tango 地方 単語 (語 can be pronounced *go* or *gen* depending on context). Hougen is the object of collection (in 方言集 dialect collections, or dialect glossaries) and can be offered by the handful: "Shall I teach you a few hougen?" 方言をいくつか教えてあげますか. Hougen is the topic of a series of trivia card games (*hougen karuta* 方言かるた), with one hougen item per card (e.g. Hondou 2011). In most circles to ask about hougen is to elicit a word list. For some younger people, hougen refers to a chronolect of their grandparents' time, and a form of language so distant that it is necessarily unintelligible. Hougen is not a separate language; but, as some Iwate University students told me in 2016, "if you can understand it, then it isn't hougen."

Hyouzyungo. Among non-specialists, this register is called *kyoutuugo* 共通語 (common language) or hyouzyungo 標準語 (standard language) interchangeably. The term 'standard language' is older, already in use by 1912 (Ministry of Education 2006: 12–13), whereas the term 'common language' was introduced by academic linguists in 1949 (Sanada 1987). 'Standard' suggests a prescriptive stance, i.e. the belief that a certain register should be the standard for all communication and replace local language wherever it would be more efficient (see also Milroy 2001). 'Common' is intended to suggest a neutral, descriptive stance, i.e. the belief that a certain register is the common language that is shared in addition to local language. Throughout this chapter I use the term "standardized language" for this category. This category is frequently given as the expected, normative, unmarked form of language – and this is just how Matsumoto uses the term to describe his son's language practice in Kyoto.

In addition to these six terms, *nigori* 濁り, while it is not frequently used as a category of language difference on its own, comes closest to structuring perceiving

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subjects' attention in a Whorfian sense. In the context of local language, nigori refers to the characteristic Touhoku voicing of voiceless intervocalic obstruents, since this term can explicitly mean voicing of voiceless segments: voiced sounds are *dakuon* 濁音. In kana phonetic representation, voiced consonants are extremely salient, since they are represented by adding a voicing diacritic to syllables which otherwise default to starting with voiceless consonants, e.g. ka か ga が, ta た da だ. This orthographic convention has powerful consequences for awareness of linguistic variation in Touhoku, giving non-expert speakers a ready frame to describe voicing contrast. Nigori can refer to sounds, entire streams of speech, or even speakers who have 'become voiced.' A more common sense of nigori is clouded or opaque, as in muddy river water or unfiltered rice wine. Given the indeterminacy of the referents 'voiced' and 'muddy,' use of this term may imply that Touhoku language is symbolically unclear, unrefined, even undesirable.

In the following section I present three *moments of indeterminacy*, in which language users actively negotiate local accent within the stream of ongoing talk. All three moments of indeterminacy I discuss below occurred during interviews or other audio-recorded interaction with students at Iwate University. In each case, speakers take stances toward a particular sequence of talk which may or may not be an example of local accent. This analysis focuses on the pragmatics of accent qua accent. Each case demonstrates the interactional processes by which a given linguistic feature becomes a target for attention, marked, a sign of localness. Each case also demonstrates the tension in those processes, as different language users resist, redirect, or otherwise negotiate the status of the linguistic features which have drawn attention.

6. Kumagai's numbers

The first moment of indeterminacy occurred during a one-on-one interview with a student who I will call Kumagai. I came to know Kumagai as a fellow member of one of the student groups I had joined. This group started its sessions with warm-up exercises, which they synchronized with the help of a steady count, from one to eight, spoken by each member in turn. As each member (including me) took a turn at counting, we pronounced the numbers in what I took to be a conventionally standardized style: … rokɯ, ɕit͡ɕi, hat͡ɕi (…6, 7, 8). When it was Kumagai's turn to count, he called out the numbers in a way that I heard as different. As it happens, I had recently seen a video in the genre of post-tsunami reconstruction cheerleading [note 2] which featured the same rhythmic counting from one to eight, delivered in explicitly local style. As a result, I was particularly attuned to variation between

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standardized and regional features in this counting context, and I perceived these sounds in Kumagai's counting: … rogɯ, sɨzɨ, hazɨ.

This pronunciation includes two well-known features of Touhoku speech. One is the merger of high vowels /i/ and /ɯ/ into /ɨ/, in contexts following alveolar or palatal consonants. In this example, /i/ is pronounced /ɨ/ following /ɕ/. Evidently /ɨ/ does not trigger palatalization, so that this initial consonant, which standardized language realizes as /ɕ/, is realized in this Touhoku style as /s/. Another notable feature is the voicing of stop consonants when they occur between sonorant segments (such as vowels). In this example, Kumagai produces a voiced /g/ sound in /rogɯ/, a word which Kumagai's peers produced as /roku/. At other times, listening carefully to Kumagai's speech, I never heard any evidence of these Touhoku style phonological patterns, but I had to ask about the counting.

I invited Kumagai to a one-on-one interview, where we sat across a small table from one another in an empty classroom. After about thirty minutes of other topics, I brought up this matter of the accent. Leaning on my known status as a nonnative speaker of Japanese, I asked Kumagai to explain what this different sound meant. I expected Kumagai might deliver a lengthy rationale for his code-switching. But to both of our surprise this question set off a moment of indeterminacy. Kumagai's face flushed red, and he turned his gaze down to the table, his face in a pained smile (at around line 6 below).

Until this point, between the two of us, Kumagai had never been someone with an accent. Now that I had raised the question of how he pronounced his numbers, the spectre of a Touhoku accent haunted him: would he be considered to have an accent, or could he explain these linguistic features another way? After a few turns of uncertainty, Kumagai was able to exorcise that haunting spectre by moving the conversation to the safety of baseball. I played along, doing my best to faithfully portray the oblivious foreigner, and we left the topic of pronunciation behind.

1 E yoku kazoeru n zyanai desu ka, suuzi wo.
"We count off numbers, right?"
2 K hai.
"Yeah."
3 E soko ni iti, ni, san, si tte, de,
"So it's like "one, two, three, four," [iti, ni, san, si] but"
4 kore ha kumagai san da to idï, nï, san, sï tte
"when you're counting, it's "one, two, three, four" [idï, nï, san, sï]
5 hatuon suru n desu yo ne.
"is how it's pronounced, yeah?"
6 K (laugh) mazi ssu? ssou nattemasita…(laugh)
"Really? Was I like that…"

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7 E nankai ka, sono,
“A couple times, the,”
8 K a, sou nattemasu
“Was it like that…”
9 E nankai ka sou natteru n desu kedo,
“It was like that a couple times, but,”
10 de, kore ha nan desu ka? (laugh)
“um, what is it?” (laugh)
11 K aa demo tabun kazu no kazoekata ha,
“Ah, probably that way of counting off numbers –”
12 E hai
“Yeah.”
13 K anou, tyuugakkou no toki, yakyuu yattemasu kedo,
“Um, in middle school I played baseball, and”
14 E aa, hai.
“Ah, yeah.”
15 K (laugh) sono, sono yakyuu no toki ni nanka,(laugh)
“So in baseball, um,”
16 aa iu koe no dasikata (laugh) wo siteta n de,
“that was how we used to (laugh) talk.”
17 E haa.
“Oh.”
18 K nanka sore ga kuse, kuse tte iu ka kuse ni nattete,
“Uh I guess that became a bad habit, or just like a habit,”
19 (laugh) tabun ima mo (laugh) nokotteru n da to omoimasu ne.(laugh)
“and probably even now (laugh) I think I still have it.”
20 E aa. yakyuu no sekai no koto daa.
“Ah, so it’s sort of a baseball thing.”
21 K (laugh) sou desu ka. iya, kou,(laugh)
“Is it? Or um,”
22 hikakuteki mizikaku, kitte, oto wo dasu mitai na,
“you just kind of cut, the sound relatively short.”
23 E aa
“Ah.”
24 K iya sou iu koe no dasikata wo siteta n de,
“Yeah, we would talk in that kind of voice.”
25 E hm.
“I see.”
26 K sore ga (laugh) tabun ima mo kuse natteta desu ne.
“So that (laugh) is probably a habit I still have.”
27 E aa, hai.
“Ah, yeah.”

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What is notable is that Kumagai immediately recognized, and reacted to, the phonological features I described. But he did not take them up as tokens of accent – he explained this pronunciation as coming from baseball practice, and as being an effect of "cutting the sound short," a sort of "clipped" speaking style. While this is a potentially insightful bit of folk sociolinguistics; and I don't doubt Kumagai's claims about the world of high school baseball, it is also a deft and creative rhetorical technique. It seems that Kumagai, entering this conversation, did not expect his speech to be called *accented speech*, nor (implicitly) placed into the social role of *the accented person*. As a researcher I have come to regret the interpellation, the extreme face threat I posed. Kumagai was clearly uncomfortable: blushing, laughing uncomfortably, turning his gaze away. For my part entering this interaction I was sure that these features could only be described in terms of regional accent, and I was equally sure that Kumagai would have a canned response ready for the topic. But as this moment demonstrates, the presence of accent is an agreed intersubjective reality which must be co-constructed by participants in an interaction, meaning that accent can be entirely subject to interlocutors' action, such as Kumagai's baseball contextualization.

7. Namattenee

The second moment of indeterminacy comes from a July 2016 group discussion with a different set of students at Iwate University. The group of around 25 students was on a weekend retreat to the Mt. Iwate Youth Connection House 岩手山青少年交流の家 youth center for an intensive practice session. After an exhausting day of performance drills, we retired to gender-segregated dormitory rooms. I joined the other eight or nine men who carried on heated gossip and debate late into the night. For a window of 30 minutes each night, they allowed me to propose a focused topic and record the conversation. On the first night, I asked for "differences between your generation and your parents' generation." The men had a lot to say, and happily for me, much of it was about local accent and dialect. Picking up in medias res:

1 A	tugaru no hito tte kotti no hito kara mitemo "You know what's funny is that even to someone from here,"
2 A	namatteru kara omosiroi "people from Tugaru are accented."
3 Group	mm "Hmm." <indicates agreement>
4 B	[kitanee yo na "Yeah, it's so nasty. <overlaps with the following line>

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5 A [demo ore suki da
"But I like it."
6 C ore namattenee gara sa
"Hey, I don't have an accent."
7 Group (laughs)
8 A sou sou sou ta[ppii
"Yeah, yeah! Tappii?"
9 B [tappi
"Tappi?"
10 Group (laughs)
11 C ore zenzen namatte nee hou dayo kore de
"This is me not being accented at all!"
12 3.0s silence
13 A sugoi yo, ko, kotti kara mite mo namatteru mon na
"You know it's amazing, e- even from here that seems accented."
14 D dakara namari tte iu ka mou gaikokugo desu mon ne
"Yeah, it's not even an "accent," it's just a foreign language."
15 Group (laughs)

Line 6, and to a lesser degree line 11 (both underlined), are delivered in a mock Tugaru style. The speaker himself is from central Iwate, not the Tugaru region. In addition to the voiced stop consonant *g* which would be *k* in standardized language, other Tugaru accent features here include a marked intonation contour, and monophthong -*nee* where standardized language would prescribe diphthong -*nai*. Meanwhile, we can interpret lines 8 and 9 as, "Oh, so you're from Tappi?" Tappi is the northernmost point of the Tugaru peninsula, used here either as a metonym for the region overall, or to emphasize the accented speaker's remoteness.

The speakers in this stretch of talk, and many others in Touhoku, consider the language of Tugaru to be the most extreme form of Touhoku regional dialect. Tugaru language stands in as polar opposite to standardized language. The opposition can be linked with other discourses about Tugaru, such as pejorative discourses about backwardness, or celebratory discourses of distinctiveness; and speakers here make use of some of these disparate potentials. Speaker A assumes the role of an Iwate representative, someone "from here." For speaker A, Tugaru speech is distant but inoffensive (lines 1, 13), and possibly charming (line 5). Speaker A locates speakers like himself (in this context, people from Iwate, or perhaps people from the Nanbu dialect region) in an intermediate position between the extremes of accentedness and non-accentedness: though we certainly are accented in Iwate, even to us, Tugaru sounds (more) accented.

After speaker A's initial statement, speaker B aligns firmly against accented speech, and gives a harsh evaluation (line 4, overlapping with speaker A in line 5):

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that Tugaru language is ugly. Speaker C does not directly align with this pejorative evaluation but (in lines 6 and 11) immediately begins a performance of mock language (Hill 2008; Roth-Gordon 2011) [note 3]. In these moments, speaker C might be describing himself, to mean that he is not producing a "complete" Tugaru style. But we must consider the possibility that speaker C is animating a Tugaru character as having said these words. In this case, the audience is invited to imagine a Tugaru speaker who sincerely believes that this style qualifies as standardized language. These utterances are then triple-voiced: in performance they are the words of speaker C; in propositional content they proclaim an absence of accent; and in phonology they proclaim (to this audience, in this context) the presence of an unmistakably strong accent. In other words, speaker C is animating the character of a Tugaru speaker who falsely believes he is competent to pass unmarked as a metropolitan speaker. This character, the unwittingly out-of-date and out-of-touch Tugaru man, is a pre-established type [note 4].

What is accent in this context? First, speaker A shows that accent is relative and subjective. People from "here" – central Iwate – sound accented to outsiders, to people from Tokyo; but as speaker A notes in lines 1 and 13, people from Tugaru people sound accented even to those of us who are already considered accented. Accentedness is a recursive, fractal, telescoping perceived difference which occurs at multiple scales of distance: distance in space, and distance in generational time. Second, accent is clearly subject to the co-operative action of multiple participants. Consider speaker C's triple-voiced lines (6, 11) in mock Tugaru style, and the group's response. Speaker C voices a character who denies having an accent; speakers A and B voice characters who reject this attempt and guess at the first character's place of origin. In this imagined interaction we observe that perceiving subjects (Rosa and Flores 2017) are able to reject claims about accentedness – so that the presence or absence of accent depends on the action of perceiving subjects, as well as the pragmatic action of speaking or signing subjects.

8. Zukku

The final moment of indeterminacy centers on a single word, *zukku*. This moment illuminates some of the complex historical and co-operative process by which language users construct and encounter accent. It also points to the serious consequences of such determinations.

In this instance, I was among another group of students: a 12-person seminar for first-year students, led by a professor who had just moved halfway across the country to start teaching at Iwate University. On this day, the professor had arranged for us all to take a brief field trip to the Morioka History and Culture Museum. Some

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of us went by bus, others by bicycle; the visit was self-paced and self-guided until we all briefly reassembled in front of the museum for an appointed ending time. The professor and a handful of students got there early and milled about in the gift shop. Among the postcards and other souvenir goods stands a three-sided carousel display rack with dozens of keychain ornaments. These are dialect souvenirs: each features text (in kana script), a place name, a gloss in standardized language, and sometimes a simple illustration. Like stickers, pins, cloths, shirts, and other dialect souvenirs, the items featured on these keychain ornaments display lexical items which are ostensibly unique to a particular region. They also include some terms which also exists in standardized language, but written to convey a local pronunciation; and local morphosyntax (such as the -*asaru* verb ending in Iwate). On this day, when I was fortunately making a digital audio recording, the souvenir collection catches the attention of the professor and two students, who begin reading some of these items out loud. In the ten minutes of conversation that ensues, each item becomes an occasion to take a stance vis-a-vis local language, to test one's own knowledge of dialect. As I stand close by and pass in and out of the conversation, the following moment of indeterminacy occurred between one of the students (S) and the professor (P):

1	P	na, zukku ha, kutu no koto dayone. desyo? "So about "zukku," that's a kind of shoes, right? Isn't it?"
2	S	ano, kazoku to aini, a, zukku kaini iku tte ittara "Going to visit family, when I told them I was going to buy zukku <shoes>"
3	S	zukku tte naani mitaina, kutu zyanai no: h iware, "they said, "What's a 'zukku'? Don't you mean 'kutu'"? <shoes>" (laughs)
4	P	aomori zyan. a, anata ha doko dakke. "Isn't that Aomori? Where are you [from] again?"
5	P	– a, iwanakute iinda. ii yo, [-– ken] de yuun da "- Oh, you don't have to say. It's okay, we say it [in– - Prefecture]." (laughs)
6	S	zukku de tou suru. yaa ii na, namari ii zo "Huh, you can understand "zukku." Ahh, yeah… accents are cool"
7		(2.0sec pause)
8	S	h (laughs)
9	P	nakanaka ii zyan "They're pretty neat, you know?"

In the first line, P draws attention to the next dialect souvenir: a keychain ornament with the word zukku. S takes the opportunity to tell a story about her own use of the term, which allows her to both laugh at her own back-country speech and show off her rare command of dialect. In line 4, P then attempts to pinpoint S's place of

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origin, but quickly backpedals with a self-interruption and self-repair in line 5. In line 6, S names the topic of the conversation as namari (accents) which, at least in this conversation, includes lexical variation.

This self-repair reveals the underlying tension around who has an accent, and it is the first item to unpack from this moment of indeterminacy. P is clarifying that S needs not to reveal where she comes from. P seems to feel that his interlocutors should be free from being defined by their hometowns, or that asking a student "where are you from?" is a potential face threat. Asking about hometowns might risk stigmatizing a student as a kind of stereotypical rural figure, like the one ventriloquized by the men in the previous section. Line 5 is designed to cut through this tension. P tries to release S from the obligation to answer his question and tries to defang the alienating question itself by claiming his own personal attachment to zukku. In effect, P is attempting to maintain the ambiguity surrounding a potentially embarrassing item of local language. However, the fact that this item is a piece of dialect cannot be questioned: it is a fully completed object, sold at an authoritative museum. Yet P is still able to obfuscate the connections between zukku, local language, and S herself: we don't need to know where you are from, and this word might come from multiple places.

P's urgent, careful self-repair makes sense as a move to reduce what he perceived as a face threat to S; it makes little sense otherwise. The notion that P would remain ignorant of his students' hometowns was already out of date since the entire seminar class had shared those details at their first meeting. As for a real face threat to S, in line 6 and on other occasions, she comfortably claimed ownership of her accent, and was happy to be recognized as a dialect user.

The other point to unpack from this moment of indeterminacy is the term zukku itself. Where does it come from, and how does it become (a token of) accent? The typical folk philology I heard from many in Touhoku would suggest that after Japanese settlers arrived in present-day Iwate, people created local language through local invention to suit local needs. For example, I often heard the folk linguistic observation that "we talk like this because it's cold here and we don't want to open our mouths very much." In view of this discourse, it is surprising to find among local dialect items this loanword from Dutch. Zukku is related to *doek* (canvas cloth), here in Japan referring to cloth shoes (i.e. sneakers, trainers) (Yamada 1997). The loan might be centuries old; as P suggests in line 5 and as acquaintances from elsewhere in Japan have told me, zukku is widely distributed in the archipelago. It likely became a piece of local dialect because young people stopped using it *during the same period that* young people started shifting toward standardized language more broadly. As a result, someone gathered up zukku together with the other old-people talk. When language shift matches pace with generational turnover, local language (a dialect indexing place) may be indistinguishable from

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elder language (a chronolect indexing era). Once zukku is recorded in a collection somewhere, the rest of the social process to turn it into accent was likely more straightforward: design, manufacture, and distribution. All that remained was for language users to recirculate zukku in discourse, contextualized as a token of accent – as an example of how marvelous accents are.

9. Performance, perception, and co-operation

Accent is not simply a pre-existing natural phenomenon. Rather, accent is a socially relevant categorization of certain language features, language users, and other meanings linked together in an indexical field. Accent can be understood as a register, produced on a large scale – like the highly mediated historical processes by which Received Pronunciation, Pittsburghese, and Japanese Women's Language were produced, according to the accounts of Agha (2005, 2007), Johnstone (2006) and Inoue (2006) respectively. These large-scale processes are linked with more immediate action as well, in which accent is reinscribed in the minds of perceiving subjects (Inoue 2003: 157; Rosa and Flores 2017: 628–629) and within interactions.

As we have seen, accent is partly subject to the action of interlocutors. This action is complex and can be broken up in multiple ways. One type of relevant action is the *performance* carried out by language users (Rampton 1999, Bucholtz 2010), agentively producing and stylizing selves (and sometimes others). In this type of action, accentedness is conveyed intentionally, as an emblem of some kind of identity (Hillewaert 2015: 208).

A second contrasting type of relevant action is *perception*, the action of perceiving subjects (Rosa and Flores 2017) to produce others (and sometimes selves). In this type of action, accentedness is not necessarily conveyed intentionally. Rather, accent is an inadvertent trace (Hillewaert 2015: 205) which the perceiving subject discovers – or invents. Importantly, perceiving subjects can and do perceive linguistic differences such as accent without any hard evidence at all. When this happens, as in the moments of indeterminacy discussed above, the indexical order has been reversed, in what Inoue (2008: 43) calls *indexical inversion*. To simplify the mechanics of indexical orders: in this inverted condition an index pre-exists, and creates its own referent. When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail; and when you expect to hear a Touhoku accent, your ears will find it (cf. Fasold 1984: 150). In short, while language users may assume that their "differentness is… neither known about by those present nor immediately perceivable," (Goffman 1963: 4), it is always possible for a perceiving subject to identify an accent.

The work that produces accent can still be understood as co-operative action: each action "is built by decomposing, and reusing with transformation the

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resources made available by the earlier actions of others" (Goodwin 2018: 1). Both performance and perception describe parts of what Lippi-Green (2012: 71–74) calls the "communicative burden," that is, the work that must be done in order to convey meaning. There are multiple possible agents of this work. But as Lippi-Green emphasizes, it is also possible to reject the communicative burden; and while co-operation does not require a shared goal, it is possible to refuse to contribute resources for others to use. In terms of accent, it is possible to thwart the identification of accent by a strategy of non-participation. For some people in Touhoku, entering a domain where standardized language might be expected, this is a frequent strategy. Speakers of all ages told me how they would find themselves falling silent in big cities. One student I knew well at Iwate University would suddenly become stoic in classroom settings. Rather than provide one's interlocutors with opportunities to find an accent, these speakers withhold all potential evidence of linguistic difference, for a heavy price: drastically limiting their own ability to participate.

10. Conclusion

When accent is invoked, why does it matter? Accent is a weighty term in part because of the particular scale of difference it implies. Returning to the set of categories used to describe language difference, we should note that three of the five concepts – gengo, hougen, and namari (language, dialect, accent) – are used a hierarchical arrangement. According to students' emic conception of these scales of difference, *language* boundaries are the most prestigious, with zero mutual intelligibility; among the most commonly given examples of "different languages" are English, French, and German. Standardized Japanese language is also counted as a language proper in this sense. *Dialect* boundaries bring some unclear degree of prestige (but certainly less than that accorded to languages), in accordance with a lesser degree of mutual unintelligibility. The chief example of "a dialect" is invariably given as Kansai style (including Kyoto, Osaka).

Boundaries between *accents*, and the mutual intelligibility of accents, is far less straightforward. While some students say that accents are always mutually intelligible with the "national standard," others say that accents are always unintelligible. The question of intelligibility here is subjective. Speakers may not necessarily apply their categorization to an entire stream of speech or text. The label of "language" or "dialect," or "accent," may only pertain to those linguistic features which are unknown to the hearer. But putting aside intelligibility for a moment, it is clear that "accents" are the least prestigious class of register. And the chief example of an "accent" is speech from Tugaru – a relatively poor region at the periphery of the

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Japanese state, stereotypically considered culturally backward and economically undeveloped (cf. Nakamura 2013).

Notions of language, dialect, and accent are arranged, then, in a clear hierarchy, a hierarchy which is nominally arranged in terms of intelligibility and objective similarity of features. But it is also a hierarchy of status and prestige, and it maps more faithfully to questions of social value than questions of linguistic similarity. One of those dimensions of social difference has to do with the question of regions' relative wealth. Each register is differentiated as iconic of a place in the (regional) political economic structure, with the political economic structure determining the overall indexical order. Speakers are aware of this ordered hierarchy in terms of language, political power, and everyday material resources. Iwate University students' hometowns and present itineraries represent a diverse range of places in this hierarchy, and conversations with peers reveal regional economic inequality quite clearly. As a representative example, I will refer to the perspectives of students from three places: relatively wealthy Miyagi, relatively poor Tugaru, and the intermediate position of Iwate University itself. When students compared Morioka to their hometowns, the students from Miyagi were surprised by the poor condition of the roads in Morioka ("I wish they would do some maintenance"), infrequent and inconvenient public transit, small buildings, and few stores (e.g. clothing and book stores). Students from Tugaru were surprised by the excellent condition of the roads in Morioka ("I thought the roads were really really well maintained, so many nice lane markings. Because where I live there aren't many of those markings"), the frequent and convenient public transit, and the number and size of stores ("The [mall] in Morioka is too big – and the Aeon [Mall] in Aomori is like a toy"). Wealth and status accrete more to more metropolitan places, out of proportion with population alone. And this fractal hierarchy is replicated in the symbolic status of registers which are associated with such places, partly in the labelling of those registers as either languages, dialects, or accents. While "a language is a dialect with an army and a navy" (Weinreich 1945: 13), a dialect is an accent with well-paved roads and fashionable shops. These are not simply abstract relations: they exist as relationships between people in concrete interaction. To enregister dialect in interaction is to use linguistic production to affix specific people to a pre-existing framework of value.

The label of accent can be either valuing or pejorative. Among students at Iwate University, accent is largely invoked by perceiving subjects, and largely describes local language which is neither desirable nor proper. As stigma toward local language persists, the current generation of young speakers in Touhoku continues to respond in the best ways available to them – often by falling silent.

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Notes

1. At the request of several participants in my study, I use the Nihon-siki (also known as Kunrei-siki or Tanakadate) romanization style, and reserve Hepburn style romanization only for (some) proper nouns. Following the example of the majority of participants in my study, I represent long vowels without using the macron diacritic. For example, I represent 地方 (IPA t͡ɕiho:) as tihou rather than chihō.

2. The video is おらほのラジオ体操, Our Radio Exercises, which was released in September 2011 as a message of support and solidarity for post-tsunami reconstruction in Isinomaki, Miyagi.

3. Speaker D, who comes from outside of Touhoku, is only able to compose a relevant comment after the others have provided sufficient context.

4. A particularly well-known example of this figure is the narrator/protagonist of Yosi Ikuzou's (1984) hit song, *I'm Going to Tokyo* 俺ら東京さ行ぐだ (Yosi 1984). The singer complains about the lack of modern amenities and public services in his remote village. The real joke is his own ignorance of the outside world; he makes plans to start a ranch in a famously dense and expensive city: "When I get to Tokyo I'll save up my money, and raise cattle there in Tokyo" 東京へ出だなら銭コア貯めで、東京で牛飼うだ.

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‘Could I have an appointment for a viewing?’

Language-based discrimination and apartment searches with different accents in Germany

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This paper represents a novel approach to the study of discrimination in the housing market. Beginning with detailed discourse analyses of several excerpts of apartment application conversations, it highlights how Standard German, Standard American and Turkish accents interact and how power relations are reproduced on a micro-level through interruptions and repair initiations. Furthermore, it includes the statistical report of the viewing appointments resulting from almost 300 phone calls placed in four different city districts of the city of Bremen, Germany, with Turkish, Standard American, and German names and accents. The neighborhoods, not the city per se, are a crucial aspect for predicting linguistic discrimination: in the more prestigious neighborhood, Turkish accented callers had significantly lower chances of receiving a viewing. In all but one city district, the Standard German callers received the most viewing appointments, and the American English accented callers had more chances than the Turkish callers speaking Standard German.

Keywords: discourse analysis, mixed methods, conversation analysis, linguistic profiling, high and low prestige accents

1. Introduction

The perception of phonological characteristics of dialects, accents and personal names has long had an effect on groups who are underrepresented in advantaged social contexts (Eckert and Labov 2017; Lambert et al. 1960; Labov 1963; Purnell, Idsardi and Baugh 1999). In recent years, there has been an increasing range of interdisciplinary research on social categorizations (often social injustice) based on names and accents, not only in sociolinguistics (Baugh 2007, 2018, Telep 2015), but also in sociology (Schott et al. 2018, Tuppat and Gerhards 2020), law and education (Birney et al. 2020; Roessel et al 2020).

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Accents, ethnic dialects and personal names can be indicative of in- and out-group identity (Sachdev and Bourhis 1990). They represent linguistic cues that social interactants tend to use to categorize people into different social and ethnic groups (Flege 1984; Purnell et al. 1999; Squires and Chadwick 2006). Based on these categories, social interactions may take on different routes; conversations can be more or less friendly, interactants might be more or less affiliating, accommodating, courting or humorous (Du Bois 2019; Raymond 2018). Social categories, such as ethnic group belonging (Bönkost 2019, Telep 2015), trigger different aspects of speakers' own personal, group and linguistic identities in interaction with the ascribed identities assigned and performed by the interlocutors (Antaki and Horowitz 2000).

According to Sack's (1996), Membership Categorization Devices are social categories which are inference rich. Sack's example of co-membership categories such as "The baby cried; the mommy picked it up" lead to membership categorization analyses (MCA) which has been applied to conversations of members of different ethnic and cultural groups. Though the sustained categorization through linguistic cues (such as accents and personal names) tends not to be discussed (Hansen 2010), the social knowledge that "members of a society have about the society is stored in terms of these categories" (Sacks 1992: 40) and goes along with the members' "expectations, rights, and obligations concerning activities or actions which are expectable of a member of that category" (Mc Ilvenny 1996: 18). While identities are mutually negotiated and co-constructed, by being a member of a social group that is discriminated against on a larger level in a society, one might be assigned and self- identify with an inferior position by default. The reproducing and constituting of power differences in professional and institutional talk have been analyzed and pointed out in several recent studies (Baumgarten, Du Bois and Gill 2019; Holmes, Vine and Marra 2020). To give an example, a Romanian caller applicant had consistently been treated in a less friendly manner than the RP accented British applicant by a real estate agency, even though the outcome (i.e.: the opportunity for viewing a house for purchase) was otherwise the same (Baumgarten, Du Bois and Gill 2019).

Studies on housing discrimination research have hardly focused on detecting conversational elements that are disempowering for speakers of stigmatized and underprivileged groups. Rather, they have applied mainly statistical or conversation analysis methods, but not a mixed methods approach (Ruiter and Albert 2017). Therefore, these micro everyday interactions go unnoticed on a larger scale even though they are reconstituted on a daily basis between members of different groups. Often, negative experiences, resulting from social differences and stereotyping, are plentiful among members of stigmatized groups, and are perpetuated both on a micro- and a macrolevel. The present study explores this phenomenon by focusing

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on the subtle linguistic nuances associated with the differing treatments of speakers with varying names and accents within the same interactional context.

Being a speaker of a language variety (such as a dialect) is linked to the linguistic market value that a variety holds in a given society (Bourdieu 1991, Du Bois 2010, Gal 1978; Lippi-Green 2010; Günthner 2013). In this sense, speakers with foreign accents often face being categorized within the social prestige hierarchy against the dominant standard language (Wiese 2015). In multiethnic contexts which derive from immigration, the economic and political power of a nation might correspond to the linguistic prestige of that language (Blommaert 2009; Heller 2010), where the standard language of a nation carries the highest prestige (Gal and Irvine 1995; Trudgill 1986). Speakers with Turkish names represent the largest immigrant group in Germany. Even though they represent a vital part of German society on all levels, including professions such as medical doctors, lawyers, professors and managers, numerous recent sociological and psychological studies showed that Standard German speakers discriminated against speakers with Turkish names and accents (Hinz and Auspurg 2017, Horr, Hunkler and Kroneberg 2018; Planerladen 2008; Schmid 2015; Zschirnt and Ruedin 2016). These studies, however, have not included in-depth analyses of naturally occurring conversations. With these differences in data and methodology, the present study fills a current research gap.

Linguistic preferences towards certain accents or ethnic dialects vary across neighborhoods within one city or geographic area as previous sociolinguistic research has shown (Baugh and Graen 1997, Breckner, Bührig and Dafateri-Moghaddam 2013, Warnke and Busse 2014). There can be preferred and dispreferred phonological features in urban neighborhoods (Carmichael 2017; Cheshire et al. 2011; Hall-Lew 2010; Labov 2001) and in some neighborhoods new multiethnolect emerge (Wiese 2009, 2018).

Against this backdrop, the present paper, first, provides a micro-analysis of such telephone conversations with a Turkish-accented and an American-accented caller and monolingual German real estate agents, which sheds light on the possible blind spots in gathering statistical data on language-based discrimination. Second, it investigates the treatment of speakers with Standard German, Turkish and US-American sounding names and accents as they apply for apartments in four different neighborhoods in one German city. Then, a second data set tested if Turkish-named callers with a Standard German accent would face less discrimination than Turkish callers with a Turkish accent.

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2. Theoretical background

Linguistic discrimination in social life and housing

The Antidiscrimination Act forbids discrimination against others based on their linguistic or ethnic background Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (AGG), 2013. Nevertheless, numerous studies in experimental (Bilaniuk 2003; Hansen, Rakič and Steffens 2014; Settinieri 2011) and semi-experimental settings (Baugh 2007; Bavan 2007; MacDonald et al. 2016) have shown that linguistic discrimination frequently occurs in gatekeeping situations. Gatekeepers are persons that can decide which commodities or persons may enter a societal system (Lewin 1947). Gatekeeping "is prototypically manifested as an interrogative encounter between someone who has the right or privilege to know and another in a less powerful position" (Akinnaso, Seabrook and Ajirotutu 1982: 119–120). Gatekeeping encounters that have been investigated with a focus on linguistic discrimination include housing applications (Baugh 1997, 2007, Purnell et al. 1999), employability (Tan, Taib and Lin 2017, Lippi-Green 2010, Munro 2003, Purkiss et al. 2006), school grading (Bonefeld and Dickhäuser 2018) and eyewitness testimony (Frumkin 2007).

Linguistic discrimination in housing

Linguistic Profiling in the context of housing applications was identified in a study in the San Francisco Bay Area (Baugh 2007). Placing phone calls in African American, Mexican American dialects and Standard American English with landlords in different cities, Baugh found that discrimination against African-American and Chicano dialects was prevalent in the more prestigious and affluent areas in the Bay area, where callers speaking the dialect had lower chances of receiving a confirmed viewing. Anglo-American callers had overall better chances, except in Oakland and East Palo Alto, which are cities with a high population of African American and Chicanos respectively (Baugh 2007: 337). In a related study in 20 Metropolitan areas, Bavan's (2007) results confirmed Baugh's (2007) findings: the Chicano callers received 941 apartment viewings, African Americans had 1271 confirmed apartment viewings and thus had a little more than half the chances of Standard American-using ("White") callers, who received 2213 appointments over the phone.

The effects of more subtle discrimination on Hispanic names and accents were investigated by Haubert Weil (2009) in the Post-Katrina hurricane housing market. Though there had been no significant difference in caller discrimination between White and Hispanic names when it came to apartment viewings, before or after the events of Katrina, callers with Latino-sounding names were required to provide

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more background checks, especially credit checks. Applicants from minority neighborhoods were more likely to be denied a policy, charged higher prices, or offered less favorable terms and conditions for the policies that were offered. They were required to meet more stringent requirements (e.g., to have the home inspected when non-Latino applicants were not) and were treated in less than favorable ways (Smith and Cloud 1997). They also found that on average the neighborhood question "Which neighborhood do you live in now?" was the third-out-of-four questions for Standard-American callers and the second question for African-American speakers. Additionally, some studies have found that Mexican- and African-Americans in the US (Baugh 2007: 338) pay higher interest rates for mortgages and Turkish Germans pay higher rent than ethnic Germans (Winke 2016). In Sydney, Australia (MacDonald et al. 2016), systematic linguistic and ethnic discrimination in the rental housing market occurred towards Indians and Muslims when compared to White Australians who were consistently offered preferential treatment, additional information about the rental spaces and flexible appointment times. Thus, the minority accented applicants were overall at a constant disadvantage (MacDonald et al. 2016).

On the other hand, being perceived as affiliating with minority dialects can be advantageous in certain urban neighborhoods as well. Supposedly lower social class accents and dialects acquire a new covert prestige such as working class English (Trudgill 1986), African American English (Baugh 2007; Du Bois 2013; Lippi-Green 2010) or German Kiez Deutsch (Wiese 2006, 2018). The covert prestige provides insider access to the infrastructure of the minority or subcultural group and serves as identity re-affirmation among group members (Androutsopoulos et al. 2013, Günthner 2013; Igoudin 2013). While it is disadvantageous within the majority group context of the wider society (Sebba and Wootton 1998), speaking the ethnolect or dialect reaffirms membership in one's own group, and might be advantageous in getting access to commodities in these neighborhoods (Du Bois 2013, Keim 2007).

3. Methodological background

Participants

In the first study, 289 phone calls were placed in four neighborhoods in the city of Bremen, Germany. As part of a student research project, a Turkish-German caller, an US American caller and a German caller with corresponding names and accents inquired about the possibility to view the same apartment on the same day in this order. A total of 72 landlords or real estate agents of German descent (name and

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accent) were called. To minimize other possible correlates such as gender, educational or professional status, we created a basic profile: the callers were female, single and with a similar income working as a nurse or kindergarten teacher. The voice quality of all callers was similar as the callers had young, mid-twenties-sounding, mid- to high-pitched voices. The apartments were found in newspaper ads and online portals over the period of three months. Field notes and research diaries were kept, noting the length of the phone call conversations with real estate agents, the specific parts of the conversations, especially the pragmatic phrases for rejections, as well as the instances that resulted in apartment viewings being accepted. Further, the level of friendliness and responsiveness were also documented. Finally, we received permission from two real estate agencies to record two conversations by stating that we needed them for the applicant's records.

Statistical procedure

A combination of both statistical analysis and discourse analysis can help form a broader understanding of accent and name-related discrimination. In order to analyze the statistical significance of names and accents related to approved/rejected appointments in the four neighborhoods and the overall city of Bremen, ANOVA was carried out using R. First, the results for names and accents were subsumed under the national background as one independent variable and were correlated with the number of appointments in the overall city (independent of the neighborhoods) as well as across the neighborhoods. The second study tested if the Turkish named callers speaking Standard German and the Turkish-named callers with a Turkish accent received more appointments in the city and across neighborhoods.

The request for an apartment viewing and accent

The callers were bilingual speakers of German and Turkish or US American English and all of them were trained to produce phrases with corresponding accents throughout one semester. The structure of the call, which followed the German telephoning conventions pertaining to apartment viewings, was adopted from Baugh (1997).

> Hello my name is (first name, last name) and I am interested in the apartment on X street that you posted/ announced on/in Internet platform/ newspaper Y. Is it still available? Could I have an appointment for a viewing?

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Selected phonological features of Turkish accented Speech

The Turkish accented German the speakers produced corresponds to the description of "Kiez Deutsch", hood German, an ethnolectal youth language which shares phonological and grammatical traits with a Turkish accented German (Wiese 2015). Its phonological features include the optional tensing of the vowel /ɪ/ to /i/ as in "iisch" for "ich" and the coronization of "ich" [ɪç] to isch "[iʃ]", which is notably also found in some German dialects, such as the Cologne or Swabian dialect (Bohnacker 2013; Smith 2007). In certain consonant clusters, the stops [t] and [d] are dropped and contractions occur. Two salient syntactic features of the ethnolect Kiez Deutsch (such as the optional use of bare noun phrases (NP)s in some areas where Standard German would use full prepositional phrases (PP) or determiner phrases (DP) – Wiese 2006, 2015) were also adopted by the applicants.

Selected phonological features of US American accented German

The callers produced the US American accent by implementing a US American postvocalic [r] instead of the German [R]. The vowels were elongated. The German "ich" [ɪç] was realized as [ɪk], while the latter single feature can also be found in the informal Berlin dialect (Smith 2007). The morpho-syntactic features employed were the simplification of the inflected articles in the nominative case and producing bare NPs instead of PPs.

The first part of the study examined the effect of the US-American and Turkish accents and names on the likelihood of receiving an appointment to view an apartment for rent. In consecutive phone calls, non-standard accented German and standard German were used to test linguistic bias. The three selected names were Aysun Gülbeyaz (Turkish), Lena Meyer (German) and Alice McGraw (US). All names were common in the respective nation-states and considered to be highly associated with the ethnic background they represented. In 2013, we obtained permission to record a few of such conversations with the intent to analyze their structures.

4. The German immigration context

Germany is a country in Central Europe with about 81 million inhabitants, of which 19,1 million have a migrant background (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018). People with a migrant background are considered to either have immigrated themselves or have at least one parent who immigrated to Germany after 1949, or whose grandparents immigrated and kept foreign citizenship.

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Turkish migration in Germany

Turkish Germans (including Kurds) comprise 1,5 million of the overall German population (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018). Many of them live in the country as a result of the recruitment treaty that was signed by Turkey and Germany in 1960. At the time, Germany experienced an economic boom and due to a lack of labor, the Turkish (among other nationals, such as Italians or Spanish) were invited to come as so-called "guest workers" (Nünes 2007). The relative poverty in many regions of Turkey during that time, together with the opportunities to work in Germany were so attractive for Turkish workers and their families that they and their descendants now comprise the largest migration group (14%), even after the massive move of asylum seekers and refugees from Syria and Afghanistan during the recent refugee crisis (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018).

US American migration in Germany

In 2017, 163,000 US Americans lived in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018), After the occupation in 1945, Germany had been the largest foreign military base and around 16 million soldiers and their families lived in the country since then.

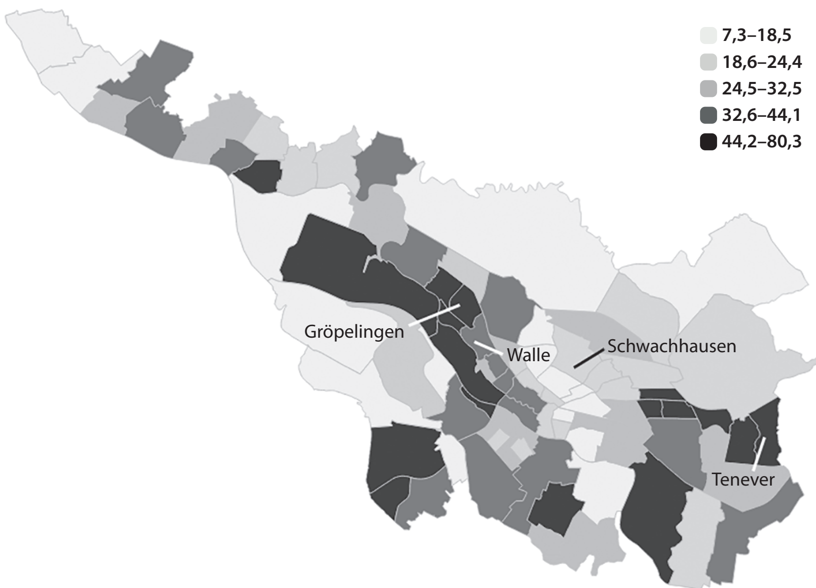

Figure 1. Percentage of population with migration background in the four neighborhoods (Statistisches Landesamt Bremen 2015)

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After 2005, half of the 305 military facilities in Germany were vacated, as the US government restructured its military during that time. Americans who come to Germany to live or work have traditionally been viewed as ‘expatriates’ and US migration is considered as an elite sort of migration, i.e. rather affluent and comprised for the most of skilled white-collar workers (Du Bois 2010).

Bremen demographic information

Situated in the northwest of Germany, Bremen is the 11th largest city with around 550000 inhabitants (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018). Figure 2 below shows its population according to migration backgrounds within the different neighborhoods. With 29%, the population of people with migration backgrounds is more than half as high as the national average.

The neighborhoods Gröpelingen (44.2%), Tenever (64.5%) and Walle (30.1%) have a relatively large migrant population in contrast to Schwachhausen (14.8%). The unemployment rates are rather low in Schwachhausen (4.6%) and are the highest in Gröpelingen (30.5%), but they are also quite high in Tenever (23.4%) and Walle (18.4%). Schwachhausen is the wealthiest of the four neighborhoods, and is located close to the city center, with beautiful architecture. Walle and Gröpelingen are also rather closely located to the harbor and the city center and they host a working-class population. Tenever is located at the outskirts of the city and it is a rather unpopular neighborhood as about 10,000 apartments were built in high-rise buildings in the 70’s. Prices per square meter in rent in 2018 were as following in the neighborhood Gröpelingen: 8,81€, Schwachhausen 10,21€, Walle 9,07 €, and Tenever 7,13€ (Wohnungsboerse, 2018)

5. Results

Upon analysis, the data show a significant correlation between the different accents and names of the prospective tenant callers and the number of appointments received. A one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of name and accent on receiving an appointment for a viewing. The results were statistically significant and indicated that callers with a German accent received an appointment in 86.5% of the cases, callers with an US American accent in 76.1% of the cases and callers with a Turkish accent in 52.1% of the cases, as is illustrated in Figure 2 ($p \leq 0.5$, [$F (2, 6) = 12.8583$, $p = 0.000055$]).

Figure 2 indicates that Standard German- and American-accented callers were invited for a viewing after it was denied to the Turkish callers, even though the Turkish callers called first, Americans second and Germans were the third callers

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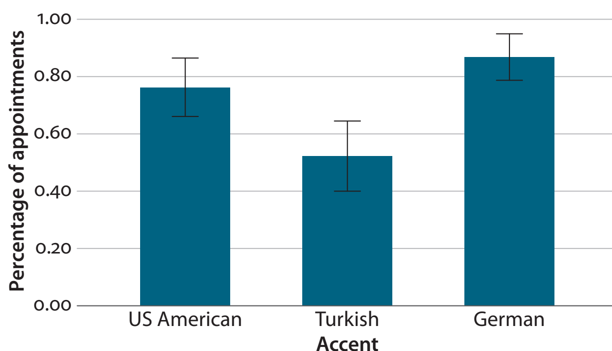

Figure 2. Means of appointments by name and accent in all four neighborhoods

on the same day and it was previously stated it was unavailable or already rented (see Section 7 for a detailed analysis). The "prestige" US American accent had a lower rejection rate.

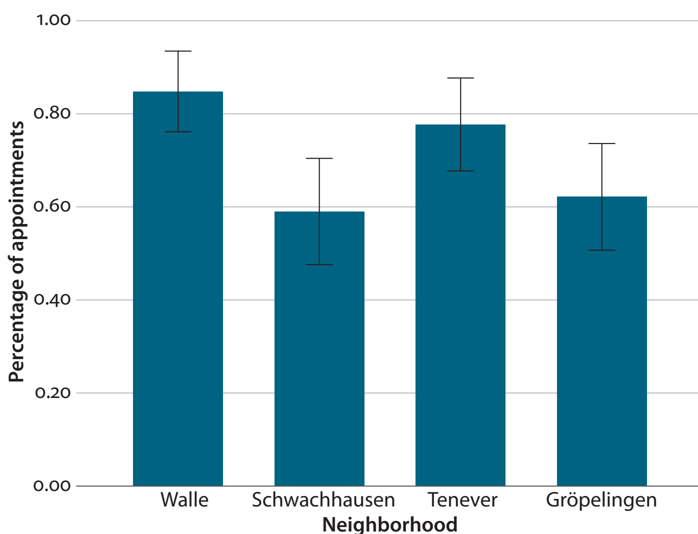

Figure 3. All received appointments for apartment viewings in the four neighborhoods

The neighborhoods varied significantly in the overall chances for an apartment viewing among all speakers ($p \leq 0.5$, [$F(3, 6) = 3{,}0893$, $p = 0{,}02818$]). The chances of getting an appointment were the highest in Walle (83.6%) for all callers. They were lower in Tenever (78.7%) and the lowest in Gröpelingen (64.8%) and Schwachhausen (59.3%). However, the names and accents were either not significant, or were only marginally so for receiving an appointment in the different

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neighborhoods [F(2,6) = 2, 795, p = 0,05707]. Post hoc comparisons indicated that the mean score for the name and accent within the city (M = 2.20, SD = 4,47) was significantly different than when compared with the results from across the neighborhoods (M = 0,36 SD = 2,17).

Figure 4 indicates that callers with a Turkish accent had the highest chances for an appointment in the district Tenever (72%); their chance was as high as that of callers with a US American accent (72%) and the chances for German accented callers were only 11% higher (83%). In contrast, names and accents played a highly significant role in the decision making of landlords and real-estate agents in Schwachhausen, where only 23.5% of the callers with a Turkish accent received an appointment, whereas 94.7% of the callers with a German accent could confirm an appointment. In Gröpelingen, 77.7% of callers with a standard German name and accent received an appointment, as did 64.7% of the US American callers and 44.4% of the callers with a Turkish name and accent. Interestingly, callers with a US American accent had a slightly higher chance in Walle (94%) than German accented persons (89.4%), while Turkish callers had 66.6% chance. In all other city districts German callers had the best chances at receiving a viewing.

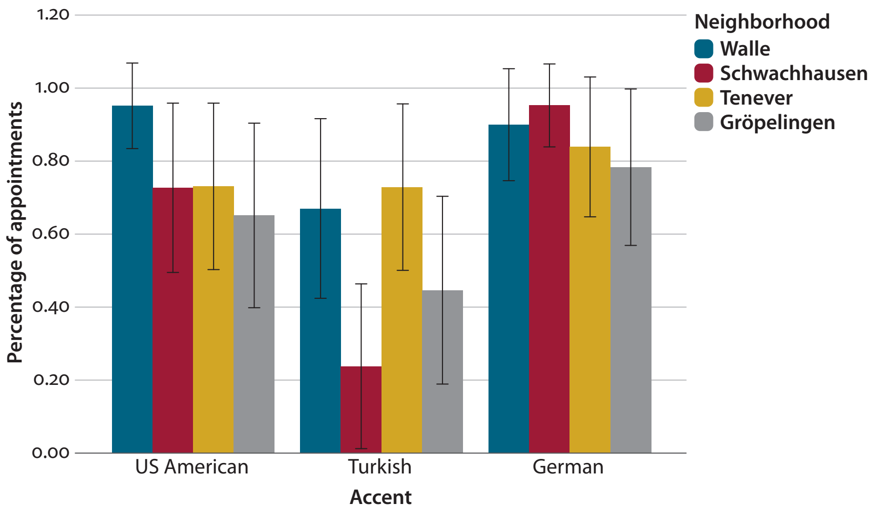

Figure 4. Means of appointments by neighborhood and accent

As Figure 4 illustrates, the discrimination based on foreign accents was most significant in Schwachhausen, the wealthiest neighborhood, but there was no significant accent discrimination in Tenever, which is the most affordable but least attractive neighborhood. A second data set was gathered to test the effects Turkish named speakers applying either Standard German or a Turkish accented German. The

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same amount of phone calls was conducted in the same areas and the Turkish callers identified with a Turkish name and used the standard German variety. Figure 5 shows that callers with a Turkish name speaking without the Turkish accent received more appointments in all four neighborhoods.

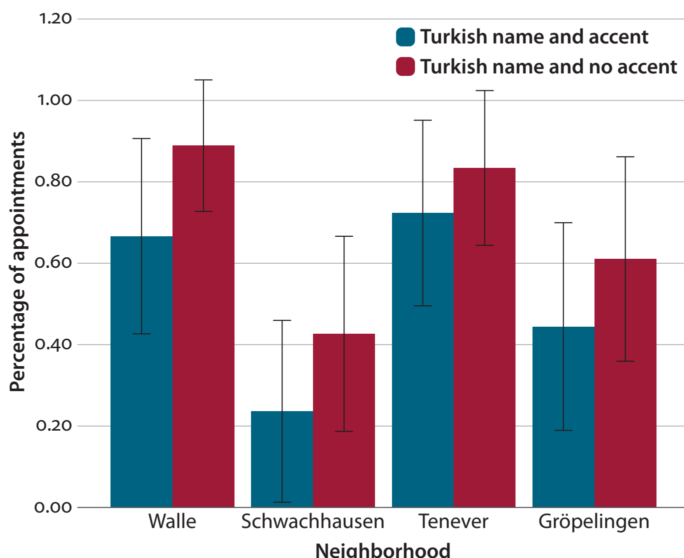

Figure 5. Means of Turkish names and Turkish accent versus Turkish names with Standard German by neighborhood

The Turkish accented German had a significant effect at the $p \leq 0{,}5$ level on receiving an appointment [F (1,3) = 4,64, $p = 0{,}032$]. Also, the neighborhood had a significant effect on all Turkish named callers with or without an accent [F (3,1) = 8,18, $p = 0{,}000047$]. Post hoc comparisons indicated that the mean score for the Turkish accent within the city ($M = 0{,}97$, $SD = 0{,}96$) was significantly different when compared with the results from across the neighborhoods ($M = 0{,}02$ $SD = 0{,}05$). Both groups of Turkish-named callers, the ones speaking Standard German and the groups speaking with an accent received significantly fewer appointments ($p = 0{,}473$e-05). In the neighborhoods of Walle and Tenever, all Turkish-named applicants were the most successful in receiving appointments, followed by Gröpelingen and finally, they had the smallest change of receiving a viewing in Schwachhausen.

Comparing the data sets from study one and study two, we see that US Americans speaking with an American accent had overall fewer chances of receiving an appointment than Turkish speakers speaking Standard German in Tenever (see Figure 6 below). However, it also shows that solely speaking Standard German

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did not suffice in getting the same number of appointments as German or US American accented speakers, especially if the caller had a Turkish name. In this case, in the neighborhoods of Schwachhausen, Walle and Gröpelingen, Turkish callers who spoke Standard German had fewer chances of receiving an appointment than US Americans or Germans.

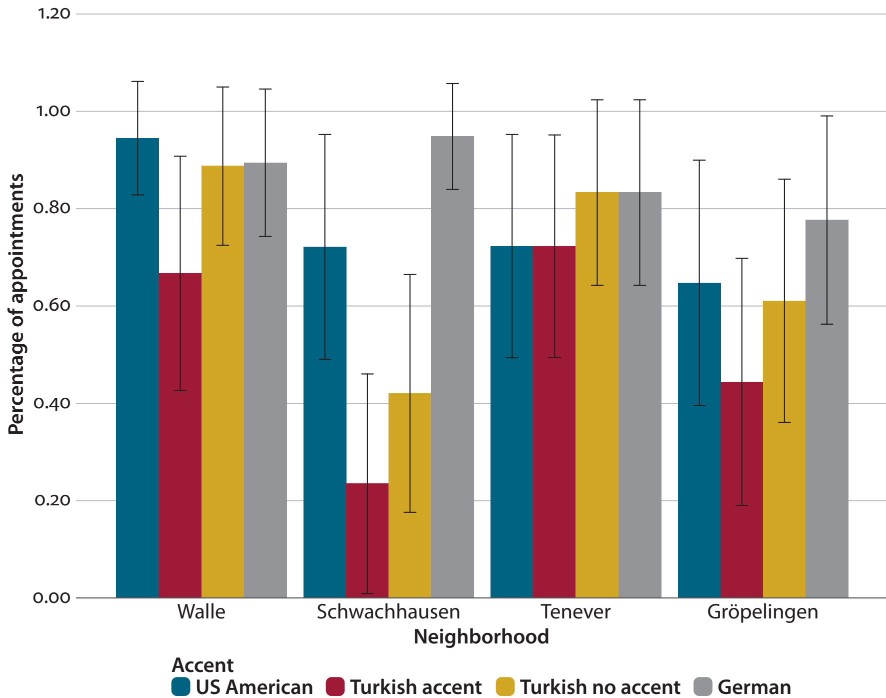

Figure 6. Means of appointments by neighborhood and accent

6. Discussion

The data analyses showed that accent discrimination took place in the city of Bremen overall and occurred most frequently in the most expensive of the four investigated city districts with the largest ethnic German population. Only about 22% of Turkish accented speakers were offered to view apartments whereas 89% of the German-accented speakers received an appointment for apartment viewing. This study interestingly disconfirms the findings of Auspurg, Hinz and Schmidt (2017), where Turkish names were discriminated against more in those neighborhoods that had a high proportion of Turkish immigrants. It suggests social boundaries are set by the host society specifically for certain urban areas, but not so much for

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others. In the more mixed city districts of Gröpelingen, Tenever, and Walle, slight advantages for the standard German callers exist. These findings are consistent with Baugh's (2007) study, where in the predominately Anglo-White area of Palo Alto, African Americans and Chicanos had significantly fewer chances of receiving an appointment whereas in mixed ethnicity areas such as Oakland and East Palo Alto, the discrimination was statistically speaking less significant. Both studies disclosed that in areas, which are already more mixed White Standard American speaking or in this study, ethnic Germans still have advantages, but the discrimination is subtler than in the more secluded parts of town.

As stated above, people recognize native and foreign accents within milliseconds and may react towards them consciously or unconsciously. These reactions appear to depend, at least partly, on the "attractiveness" and/or "prestige" of that accent and the corresponding national/ethnic population.

Analyses of applicant calls

The conversation below represents an example of the phone calls in which an American accented and a Turkish-accented applicant ask a German real estate agent and a landlord for an apartment viewing. The apartment was advertised in the local newspapers. The transcription is based on GAT 2 (Couper-Kuhlen and Barth Weingarten 2011: 7–17).

Transcription conventions

Overlaps:	*[ ]*
Hesitation markers:	*ehm*, *uh*, *uhm* etc.
Pausing:	estimated *(-)* or measured *(0.3)*
In- and outbreaths:	*°h / h°*
Laughter:	*((laughs))*, *hehehehehe*, *hahaha*
Non-linguistic actions:	*((coughs))*
Unintelligible stretches of speech:	*(do i)*, *(xxx xxx)*, *( )*

The following examples present conversations in which repairs, interruptions and signs of powerless speech were found and underline how these instances may have worked to communicate the hierarchical identities between the co-participants. Through Conversation Analysis, no repair initiated by the accented speaker and one repair initiation from the standard-variety speaker, were identified. In this example, the agent "B" (the standard-variety speaker) asks the caller "A" (the American-accented speaker) to repeat her name in order to proceed with the viewing request.

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Example 1. {00:59}

01 B: Aber verRATen Sie mir doch mal eben kurz IHRen NA:men, ich hab das aKUStisch nicht verST[ANden.]
“But please tell me your name shortly, I did not understand it acoustically”
02 A: [Ah] EntSCHULdigung. Miller.
“Ah sorry. Miller”
03 B: (.) M?
“M?”
04 A: (.) E. (.) 1
05 B: Ja.
“Yes”
06 A: ((spelling)) Y.(.)I.(.) R.(.) ähm I:. ähm R.(.) ja. →
“I -R -um I um R yes”
07 B: Ähm Frau Frau Frau MILL!E[R!?]
“Um Yes Ms Ms Ms Miller”
09 A: [Ja] → [MIL!ER!]ja. {01:12
“Yes Miller yes”
09 B: [mhm]
“Mhm”

The native German landlord B. requests a repetition of the name but the accented answer (line 02) is still not sufficiently understood. Consequently, B. initiates a spelling request by asking “M?” (line 03). The applicant A. follows this request. B. summarizes the name, intoning the last syllable very pronounced in Standard German (line 07). This is in turn acknowledged by A. who pronounces the last syllable also Standard German. The repair initiation by the standard-variety speaker indicates that the name and its American pronunciation seem foreign and incorrect in Standard German, which caused the misunderstanding in the first place. The repetition of the name with a German pronunciation after the spelling sequence (line 07) underlines that this kind of pronunciation is the preferred ‘proper’ way in Standard German. By correcting the pronunciation of A., the standard-variety speaker (B) puts his way of speaking in a superior position and devalues the accented pronunciation. By repeating and confirming this German pronunciation of her own name, the accented-speaker acknowledges and accepts the correctness and superiority of the German Standard-variety in this context and devalues her own way of speaking. The hierarchical order of the linguistic identities is thereby communicated in favor of the Standard German variety (Kleine 2018: 13).

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Example 2. {00:27}

10 A: Ick äh:m HAbe in die InterNE:T Eine WOHnung in SchwackHAUSen(.)ein

"I have seen an apartment in Schwachhausen"

zwei-Simmer WOHnung geSEHN.

→ "a 1-bedroom apartment"

11 °h in [die BürgerM[EIS-]

"In the XXX ((Street)"

12 B: [Ja:: sag]en sie mir eben den MIETpreis bitTE:?

"Yes can you tell me the rent price please?"

13 A: < Ja ähm> (.) f? (.)INSgesa:mt {00:40} SECHShundertSEckzig EUro.

"Yes uhm on the whole six hundred sixty Euros"

The Standard German speaking landlord B interrupts the accented speaker three times in the conversation while there is no interruption by the American accented caller. In the first incident in Example (2), the Standard-variety speaker interrupts the accented speaker's description of the flat she is interested in (line 02). A.'s confusion is signaled by the delay and hesitation marker (ähm- uhm), but she replies with the amount of the rent for the apartment she is interested in renting.

The second and third interruption by the Standard German speaking landlord occur in lines 16 and 18 represented by topic shift questions about A's intended move-in date (14), a question for further specification (line 16) and a topical shift by asking what she does for a living (line 18).

Example 3. {01:21}

14 B: Und z- zu WELchem TerMIN weinse- WOllen Sie EINziehen?

"And on which date do you want to move in?"

15 A: < h° A:b nächste Ja:hr > würde das schon GE:hen [(xxx)]

"As of next year it would work already→"

16 B: [ALso ab]dem ERsten ERsten ?

"So as of January first?"

17 A: <<confused> äh ja:> (.) °h wenn das MÖGlich is[t:? h°] →

"Uhm yes if that is possible?"

18 B: [Was] machen Sie denn beRUFlich Frau Miller? {01:31}

"What are you working as Ms Miller?"

19 A: Ick bin KRANKENschwester.

"I am a nurse"

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All three interruptions affect the social hierarchy between the participants in the same way. By interrupting speaker A., B. disregards her utterances and treats her communicative concerns as less important than his own. B. shapes the conversation according to his agenda, thereby promoting himself in a superior position and downgrading A. to a specific social role. A. on the other hand goes along with this hierarchical order by accepting the interruptions and answering B.'s questions promptly. Evidently, these incidents worked to establish hierarchical identities that favor the standard-variety used by speaker B. and discriminate against the concerns of the accented speaker A., putting her in an inferior position as she is not able to direct the conversation according to her agenda. Finally, instances of powerless speech were found more often in the turns of the accented speaker. The transcripts comprise five hesitation markers ("ähm" or "äh") articulated by the accented speaker and only one by the standard-variety speaker (see Example (1)–(3)). The sample of these examples does not comprise all instances of powerless speech within the conversation, but it reflects the general tendency evident in this conversation, wherein the accented speaker uses more hesitation markers while the standard-variety speaker uses few such markers. Moreover, A. uses the phrase "wenn das möglich ist." functioning as a question tag, which aims for a confirmation of her moving in request (Example (4), line 04). This can be seen to reflect A.'s conversational insecurity.

– **Calls of Turkish test applicant and German real estate agent**

Example 4. Turkish accented Caller (AG) and German real estate agent (RA)

01		((crackling)) (3.2) ((beep))
02	RA:	(xxx xxx) Name Agency (xxx xxx xxx) GEE;=
03		=mein name ist xxx xxx ?
		"my name is xxx xxx"
04	AG:	°hh hallo;=isch bin: aysun GÜlbeyaz;=
		"hi I'm Aysun Gülbeyaz"
05		=isch öh ruf an we[gen]
		"I'm calling because of"
06	RA:	[guten T]AG;
		"Good day"

The typical script of German telephone conversations begins with a greeting and a self-identification on the part of the receiver of the phone call in line 2. The real estate agent speaking Standard German states the name of the real estate company and subsequently identifies herself with a German last name. The caller greets and identifies herself with her name Aysun Gülbeyaz speaking with an accent, which

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makes the prospective tenant immediately identifiable as a non-standard German speaker. In line 05, she intends to state the purpose of the call. However, the agent RA interrupts the applicant in line 06. This interruption does not occur during an expected turn transition, thus, despite the friendly high-pitched voice of the agent, it could be interpreted as an indication of trouble. Possibly, the agent is being patronizing by using the formal "Guten Tag" (Good day) by not responding with the more informal "hello" used by the applicant caller. The applicant's name and accent represent the membership category device (MCD) of a different national ethnic group. Thus, the dialect divergence (Willemyns 1997), which is immediately recognizable, possibly influences the course and the procedure of the call (Raymond 2018).

Example 5. Turkish accented Caller (AG) and German real estate agent (RA)

```
26     AG:  ja;=isch w:ollte  fragen ob  isch: äh
26.1        beSICHtigungstermin haben kann?
            "I wanted to ask if I could have an appointment for a viewing"
27          (-)
28     AG:  ähm
29     XX:  ((noise))
30          (-)
31     AG:  ((taps  pen  on  [the  table two  times))]
32     RA:                    [           hm:;=o][KAY. ]
                        "Okay"
33     AG:                    für  die  Wohnung]
                        "regarding the flat…?"
34     RA:  [  das  is]  äh:
            "it is"
            (.)  W:O,=
            "where"
35          =XXX  strasse?
            "XXX street"
36     AG:  (-)  JA;=
            "Yes"
37          =neunun ZWANzisch.
            "twenty-nine"
38          (1.1)
39     RA:  °h  neununZWANzisch–
            "twenty-nine"
```

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In line 26–28, the applicant AG asks for an appointment for an apartment viewing. As the request needs further specification, the agent first signals the reception of the request ("Okay" line 32, falling intonation), prefacing the repair initiation (Drew 1997) that follows (lines 33 and 34). The agent RA requires further specification and formulates an other-initiated repair in form of a turn continuation (26): she leaves the syntactic unit missing for the applicant to fill in. This type of other-initiated repair possibly reconstitutes the power asymmetry in this conversational dyad (Couper-Kuhlen 2012). The applicant specifies the street name and therefore implicitly acknowledges her prior contribution as a repairable in lines 35 to 39. The agent states that she looks at the status of the apartment while the applicant thanks her in line 42. Again, the agent initiates a further repair and asks for specification for the type of apartment in lines 46–47.

Example 6. Turkish accented Caller (AG) and German real estate agent (RA)

```
40  RA:  (o)kay;=isch KUCK ma grade,
         "I'll have a look at that now"
41       (0.5)
42  AG:  DANkeschön,
         "thank you very much"
43       (0.8)
44  AG:  ((laughs))
45  (-)
46  RA:  äh: W:Elche denn,
         "which one then"
47       ZWEI oder VIER zimmer;
         "two or four rooms flat"
48  AG:  (-) äh SWEI simmer;=
         "two rooms"
49       =isch bin alLEIne. hh°
         "I'm alone"
50       (0.5)
51  RA:  (gut) oKEE:;
         good  okay
         "Good okay"
52       kucken wa ma grade hier REIN;=
53       =was da STEHT,_h°
         "let's see what we have here"
54       °h (1.1)
```

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55 hh° (0.8)
56 °hh (0.9)
57 m::h- (2.6)
58 nee tut mer LEID;=
"no I'm sorry"
59 =also; =da gibts schon ZU viele angebote-
"so for that flat there are already too many offers"
60 (-)
61 RA: °hh
62 AG: oKAY;=
"okay"

The agent refuses the request for an apartment viewing in line 58. A long pause of 5.4 seconds in lines 54–57 precedes the refusal and the immediate quickly uttered negation and apology "*Ne tut mir leid, da sind schon zu viele Angebote*" (No sorry, there are too many offers already). The pause can either indicate an indecisiveness on the part of the agent (if she should offer the apartment viewing) or, it can represent a search in the computer for the number of applicants offered a viewing for the apartment. The pause and hesitation could indicate lying and could possibly indicate that the agent might not want the supposedly Turkish woman to receive an apartment viewing and is discriminating against her. However, this cannot be proven, and is rather unlikely, as further investigations revealed.

Example 7. Turkish accented Caller (AG) and German real estate agent (RA)

62 AG: oKAY;=
"Okay"
63 =hätten sie noch ANdere angebote für misch,
"do you have other offers for me"
64 (-)
65 AG: in der NÄ[he,]
"nearby"
66 RA: [°hh] (-) n also was wer MAchen können,=
"We can do it like this"
67 =ich kann sie gerne als mietintressentin hier AUFnehmen,
"I can register you as interested"
68 (-)
69 RA: °hh ähm:: und dann: legen wa_n: wohnungs::;geSUCH an::;=
"and then we can create an apartment search"

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70 =und schaun ob wa dann noch was FINden für sie.
“and then we see if we find something for you”
71 (0.5)

Even though the test caller Aysun Gülbeyaz did not receive a viewing, after a short token of disappointment in line 62 which acknowledges the rejection, she moves on with a “troubles resistance” (Jefferson 1988 in Couper-Kuhlen 2012) asking if the German agent would have another apartment available for her (line 63). This request is now granted in that the agent suggests registering Aysun for her agency’s applicant index (line 67–69). Aysun’s non-native accent and name have possibly influenced the course of the conversation (Raymond 2018) and Aysun’s turns were treated as repairables. These are not overtly lexical items or non-native speaker membership issues (Egbert 2004) but rather the institutional talk procedures, the distributed institutional roles and power relations (Heritage 2012).

The analysis of this example clearly demonstrates how the statistical evaluation of such studies can be fruitfully advanced by qualitative analyses, and it attempted to show how discourse or conversation analysis can shed light on the dynamics and micro maintenance of power relationships in gatekeeping situations.

The real estate agent gave the caller the chance to register for further offers. At the micro-level, however, this short discourse analysis showed that the German agent did not treat the young female accented speaker in a very polite way (lines 5, 32–34), but that she gave her the opportunity to register with the real estate firm in the end and indicated that she would help her to find an apartment (lines 66–71). From a social constructionist view, social actors constitute and construct social reality in social interaction. The discourse analyses showed that the power difference of the Standard German speaking landlord and real estate agent (AG and B) and the American and Turkish and American applicant caller was symbolically reproduced through interruptions and repair initiations. However, refusals of requests for apartment searches do not have to be a means of discrimination, and for real estate agents, acts such as keeping the caller’s documentation in the applicant index of the real estate agency, are an alternative category for statistical analysis.

Feedback with real estate agents

In contacting the agency later, I found that dialect and name-based discrimination was unlikely since almost 60% of the tenants in that apartment building were of Turkish origin. The real estate agencies I contacted with the results of this study were mostly very receptive and they said they are nowadays trained, and discrimination would not take place. Other real estate agents thanked us for the results, but they were not interested in obtaining more details of the study. All, but one, were Standard German speakers.

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7. Conclusion

The German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency states that ethnicity is only one of six grounds for which people can be discriminated against. Among them are religion, sexual orientation, age, gender and disability. Ethnic background is therefore a language-based identity category which is subconsciously and implicitly assigned in stating one's name and speaking with an accent or an ethnic dialect. It does not need to be explicitly stated as a label or membership category such as "Hi I'm German with an Egyptian migration history and I would like to rent an apartment" or "Hello my parents are from Turkey; I am bilingual and I would like a viewing." However, the small phonetic features such as differing sounds of a Turkish accent and their corresponding names carry a significant implicit meaning in apartment searches and ultimately, the ethnographic population in cities (e.g. Auspurg et al. 2017, Horr 2018, Purnell et al. 1999).

Landlords, landladies and real estate agents treated callers differently based on the way they spoke. In all but one neighborhood the Standard German-speaking callers had better chances than the callers speaking with an American English accent. In all neighborhoods, the landlords and real estate agents granted significantly more viewings to Turkish-named German-accented in comparison to the Turkish-named Turkish accented callers. In comparison with the results from American English-accented callers and Standard German-speaking Turkish-named callers, the Americans had a significantly higher chance of receiving an apartment viewing in all neighborhoods. This suggests that American English-accented features in German spark more trust from native Standard German speakers than Standard German when associated with a Turkish name. In other words, the Turkish name of a caller apparently weighs more than the non-accented German in the decision to grant an apartment viewing. Finally, the discourse analysis of a phone conversation with a Turkish test caller shed light on the subtle discrimination of accented speakers. Interruptions and other-repair initiations of the Turkish-accented and -named caller by the Standard German-speaking gatekeeper (the real estate agent) are symbolic of an ongoing practice of doing and accepting asymmetrical power relationships (Couper-Kuhlen 2012; Jefferson 1988; Zimmerman and West 1975). Discrimination does not occur in all neighborhoods of the city, but the findings suggest a correlation between native social class and linguistic discrimination. That is, it is more acceptable for a speaker with a Turkish accent to obtain an apartment viewing in a less desirable neighborhood than in a neighborhood with expensive apartments. It can be assumed that discrimination based on the linguistic features of a foreign name, together with a high or low prestige accent is one cause for ethnic segregation. The statistical analyses of the treatment of different names and accents show how geographical segregation of ethnic groups is not necessarily

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enforced by top-down societal structures such as the higher city authorities, but by the house owners and rental agencies at a lower level. If Standard German-speaking gatekeepers systematically decide against certain migrant populations based on their accents, the reasons for segregation go far beyond the intentional behavior of the latter. If immigrant populations, such as people with a Turkish, Russian or Kenyan background are more accepted in the disadvantaged parts of a city (often with the lowest average income, the highest unemployment rates and lower educational achievement) (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018, Statistisches Landesamt Bremen 2017), there may, in fact be some linguistic bias in all of the social spheres (not only real estate agents, but also teachers and employers), which in turn hinders the actual integration of all immigrants. Yet, this linguistic discrimination also re-enforces the ethnolinguistic vitality and ethnic dialects (Labov 1970) such as Kiez Deutsch (Wiese 2018) through which an insider subcultural prestige capital is reinforced. Even though the antidiscrimination laws (AGG 2018) in Germany (and other countries) may legally protect people with different migration histories, culture and linguistic background from discrimination, linguistic acts are still often discriminatory acts (Perreault and Bourhis 1999; Labov 1970). The exclusion of migrants and their descendants from prestigious neighborhoods leads to a stratification of inhabitants into so-called “migrant neighborhoods” and “native neighborhoods”. Even though migrants often come from highly educated backgrounds, their social class and education go unnoticed in the integration process of a host society (Tuppat and Gerhard 2020). Urban diversity, as this study suggests, seems to exist in neighborhoods with shared social values (Lohse 2019), including positive attitudes towards multiculturalism rather than in the entire city per se. Ethnic and linguistic mixing is characterized by the spatial proximity of people from various backgrounds in daily life within one neighborhood.

The German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency created publications in 8 languages and YouTube videos to empower victims of discrimination (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes 2018, 2020). The German law provides basic conditions for an equal treatment of all populations on the housing market, but its application requires improvement. The danger of language-based discrimination is that it occurs on subtle and implicit levels, therefore it cannot always be proven. Not all victims of discrimination may know that what happens to them is unjust and can be taken to court, just because it is rarely outwardly stated. Also, the results of this study are integrated in the continuing education and diversity trainings of German administrative personnel in ministries, general state attorneys and judges which are conducted by the author to heighten public awareness. Further studies are needed which investigate linguistic acts and social injustice to advance the cause against unfair treatment of certain groups.

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PART 2

Accents in second language education teaching and learning

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The pragmatic force of second language accent in education

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Second language (L2) accents are defined by pronunciation features differing from a particular standard, but listeners perceive more than sound differences when evaluating accents. L2 accents are indexical to a speaker's perceived place in an L2 community and convey pragmatic information about a speaker's identity. Accent thus impacts the ways learners create identities and manage social roles. Such identity creation may be especially important in being heard as a valid speaker of the L2, a prerequisite to identity construction and further language learning. This chapter explores the pragmatic force of L2 accent for learners in educational settings, by using data collected from language learners and bilinguals and examining participants' complex reactions towards accents, and studying the multifaceted goals for their pronunciation.

Keywords: Second language accent, Pragmatic force, Education, International teaching assistants (ITAs), Language teachers

1. Ways of speaking and second language accent

It is an old truism that the way something is said is as important as what is said (Ladd, 1980). The way someone says something can include, among other things, the choice of lexical items (e.g., calling someone "skinny" rather than "slender"), grammar (saying "Mistakes were made" rather than "We made mistakes"), or pronunciation. In this last category, the way something is said includes the speaker's accent. For second language learners, particularly adults, it is common to maintain a noticeable foreign accent even at advanced levels of language proficiency. Yet, despite how common foreign accents are, learners often find that their accents carry a surprisingly strong pragmatic force that impacts how they are perceived (Pennington and Rogerson-Revell 2019). While reckoning with an accent that they may not be able to fully control, language learners must navigate their identity in a new language and possibly a new culture (Yates 2017). This chapter explores the

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pragmatic power of second language (L2) accent, primarily in regard to educational contexts, focusing on the experiences of not only students, but also international teaching assistants and language teachers. In exploring the power of L2 accents, we share the voices of second language learners from previously published and unpublished data (see Levis 2015; McCrocklin 2019).

2. Data collection

Throughout this chapter, we present quotes of language learners whom we have interviewed through the course of our published and unpublished research studies. Two studies in particular are included in this paper:

> **Study 1:** Participants 1–7 were part of a larger study which began with an online survey asking language learners and bilinguals along the U.S.-Mexico border about their beliefs about their accent and identity. A small selection of the 110 total participants in that study also participated in a follow-up interview. While analysis of the bilingual data has been presented (McCrocklin 2019), the larger study is currently unpublished.
>
> **Study 2:** Participants 8–16 were part of a larger study (Levis 2015) in which twelve advanced L2 learners were interviewed about their attitudes toward pronunciation and their own learning following four weeks of individual pronunciation tutoring with graduate students in a course on teaching L2 speaking, listening and pronunciation.

In each section, quotes from learners allow us to extend our discussion from a basic understanding of L2 learning to a deeper connection made possible by the perspectives of individual learners, sharing the ways that learners navigate their language learning experience, particularly in regard to accent.

3. What is an accent?

Accents are a universal feature of first language (L1) and second language (L2) speech that can affect not only how we understand each other but also how we evaluate speakers (Gluszek and Dovidio 2010; Hughes et al. 2013; Labov et al. 2008; Piske et al. 2001; Rakić et al. 2011). Both L1 and L2 accents can be defined as "dynamic segmental and suprasegmental habits that convey linguistic meaning along with social and situational affiliation" (Moyer 2013, p. 11). This definition introduces a number of ways that accent and pragmatics are connected. First, accent is marked by both segmental (individual sounds) and suprasegmental (phrasing,

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tempo, intonation, phrasal and word stress, etc.) features of speech. Within segmentals, speakers of a particular L1 accent share phonemic categories (such as English /l/ and /r/) and similarities in the variations among the ways those phonemes are realized. For example, some English speakers produce a dark or velarized /l/ at the ends of syllables (*fall*, *sale*) while others vocalize the /l/ by keeping the velarized aspect of the pronunciation but not the alveolar connection typical of /l/ (e.g., [fɒw], [seɪw]). These differences are markers of different accents and subject to stereotyping of speakers (Rotter 2019). Suprasegmental features are also markers of accent (such as two-syllable *-ate* words being pronounced with second syllable stress in British English but first syllable stress in American English, e.g., *frustRATE* vs. *FRUStrate*). More subtly, the use of rising intonation of declaratives has been described as more common in the speech of young women (Arvaniti and Atkins 2016; Warren 2016). Together, segmentals and suprasegmentals combine to provide markers that help listeners identify particular language varieties. More importantly, variations in phonemic and prosodic categories signal social and situational affiliation, such as shifts of pronunciation between formal and informal registers of speech, with the pronunciation of words in informal registers often deviating dramatically from citation forms, although not always in predictable ways (Johnson 2004; Shockey 2003).

Moyer's definition of accent above also says that features of accent are *habitual* and *dynamic*, that is, they are both stable yet subject to change. Although accent features shift according to speech registers, with casual speech and vernaculars showing the most consistency in accent features (Labov 1966), accent features are typically stable in the speech of a single individual as they grow older. Accents, however, are subject to change depending on social forces influencing groups of speakers. For example, when John grew up in the Chicago suburbs, his accent was marked by stable monophthong vowels. He moved as a high school student, and in the 40 years since, the Chicago accent of Caucasian speakers has shifted in line with the Northern Cities Vowel Shift (McCarthy 2011). "Chicago" is now pronounced by most Chicagoans with a stressed vowel of [a] rather than the [ɑ] that marks his speech. While his speech has remained stable, in line with the habits of speech developed in his childhood, the monophthong vowels of the variety spoken in Chicago have been dynamically shifting as part of a larger regional shift.

Because speakers of the same language variety have certain pronunciation features in common, those features can then be used to mark those who are inside and outside the speech community. Thus, speakers of Appalachian English, an American variety, have certain features of speech in common, as do speakers of Southern US English, General American, General Canadian, African American Vernacular, or New York English. Of course, each variety also has socially-indexed features that mark social class or other socially-significant differences. For example,

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features of accent can be used to denote dimensions of identity, such as gender (James 1996), race (Bailey 2000), religious affiliation (Levon 2006), and sexuality (Podesva, Roberts, and Campbell-Kibler 2001).

While L1 accents vary according to region, social groupings, formality of the speech register, and context of communication, L2 accents are more diverse. An individual's accent is influenced not only by their L1 and the relationship to the L2 being learned, but it is also affected by individual differences such as language aptitude, motivation, and approach to L2 learning (Moyer 2014). These differences create extensive individual variation that impacts the degree to which the accent is identifiable to listeners and how it is socially evaluated.

A critically important aspect of L2 accents is their indirect connection to intelligibility and comprehensibility. Although accents are strongly associated with linguistic and socially-indexed meanings, and can be associated with difficulty in understanding, research has demonstrated that they are often irrelevant to understanding what the accented speaker is saying. Munro and Derwing (1995) found that listeners could rate accents as being strong and highly noticeable but still understand everything that was said. Thus, there is no direct connection between intelligibility (what is actually understood by a listener) and accentedness (how well listeners judge the degree of difference in a speaker's speech from an expected variety of speech). Many learners recognize this distinction, as is evident in the following transcript.

> Interviewer (I): And if you keep studying [a new foreign language], what would you like to sound like in it? What would you want your accent to sound like?
>
> Participant (P1): I don't know. I wouldn't mind if I had an accent as long as I could have a conversation in it and watch TV in it.

By indicating that she wants to be able to have a conversation in her L2, P1 understands that accent does not determine her success in that activity, but rather that her ability to communicate, that is to be intelligible, is most important.

Research on L2 accents indicates that accents are not primarily judged by their impact on understanding but rather by how they signal listener and speaker perceptions of affiliation. Ultimately, accents are treated as reliable indicators of speakers' regional and social identity, native language background, age, social class, and other socially significant factors. As such, accents have less to do with understanding what L2 speakers are saying than with interpreting the L2 speaker's place in a social context. When the social context involves education through the L2, accents may affect how L2 speakers succeed in making themselves heard, whether they are allowed to function as valid speakers of their L2, and whether they are able to professionally advance in their L2 (Baugh 2005; Kalin and Rayko 2013; Miller 2003).

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4. Influence of age in pronunciation learning

The finding that age plays a role in language acquisition has long been of interest to language teachers and researchers. Initial theories of a critical period were put forward as early as 1959 by Penfield and Roberts. These theories were further developed by Lenneberg in 1967 (Hansen Edwards 2018; Trofimovich, Kennedy, and Foote 2016). Since then, studies have continued to document effects of age on language learning and, in particular, in pronunciation (Granena and Long 2012). Learning the pronunciation of a new language is thought to be harder than any other aspect of language learning for adult learners, and it is rare for adult learners to sound like a native speaker of their L2 (Moyer 2013).

Viman (2015) points to changes in listening skills as one cause of difficulty in changing accents. Using measures such as non-nutritive sucking tests and trained head-turn tasks, researchers have been able to show that infants can perceive sound distinctions that occur across the world's languages (including those outside of their primary language(s) of exposure) (Clark 2016). Infants begin to specialize for their native language immediately (Clark 2016), and between six to twelve months of age infants show noticeable declines in their ability to discriminate sounds in foreign languages (Kuhl, Tsao, and Liu 2003). However, when exposed to a second language early, children expand their phonetic perceptual abilities to match the segmental and suprasegmental needs of the new language (Kuhl, Tsao, and Liu 2003; Moyer 2013). This ability is less evident in adults (Trofimovich, Kennedy, and Foote 2016).

Learners often recognize the limitations they face in learning the pronunciation of an L2 later in life, as shown in statements by P8-P11.

P8: I started learning English since I come to here, yeah here, America. You can see my age is not good for learning.
I: When you hear people from Korea speaking like Americans? Their accent is perfect and everything and they sound very at ease?
P9: Ah I envy…Envy, envy and ah, I wish – I want to pro – ah pronounce like them, but ah – I uh – I have already grown up in Korea too long years
P10: People will think, 'Ah, she, he or she, may might just uh didn't study hard overseas or just uh just waste their time when they study overseas', but I realize that sometimes even you practice hard or study hard, you still can't get rid of those accents.
P11: I use – have a really hard time to distinguish different vowel pronunciation. Like, if I say someone's bad or I want to go to bed, I thought those are the same, but now I understand, but still have to exaggerate [the difference]

These quotes show that participants recognize pronunciation learning to be a particular challenge because they started late. While the first three quotes show a level

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of resignation to the situation, the fourth quote (P11) shows the ways that many participants continue to consciously navigate their pronunciation well into the language learning process.

5. The pragmatic force of second language accent

While accents have no direct correlation with the intelligibility of speech, this does not mean that accents are not important. On the contrary, accents are acoustically and socially salient (Atagi and Bent, 2011; Pietraszewski and Schwartz 2014), and they are pragmatically powerful to both listeners and speakers because pronunciation patterns, the central component of accents, are the face of spoken language (Levis 2018). Moyer (2004) describes L2 accents as "psychologically loaded" (p. 42) because we bring our beliefs to accented speech and evaluate it accordingly (Lippi-Green 2012). Although our evaluations of accented speech are not always accurate (Niedzielski and Preston 2000), accents are among the first things we notice about other speakers, and our ability to notice differences in accent is both remarkable and socially indexed (e.g., Major 2007). Although listeners can more accurately identify native accents than foreign accents (Gnevsheva 2016), listeners are still surprisingly skilled in identifying the presence of foreign accents in speech samples, even those with no identifiable vowels or consonants (Munro 1995) and in speech that is played backward (Munro, Derwing and Burgess 2003). However, listeners show less precision in identifying the sources or provenance of foreign accents (Gnevsheva 2018; Shah 2007). This suggests that even though the salience of accents enables their use in social evaluations of speech, such judgments are likely drawn from features other than accent, and that (perceived) accent may be a proxy for social evaluations of speech and speakers (Baugh 2005).

Although language learners may seek to enact a particular identity in their L2, second language accent does not consistently represent an intentional choice (Derwing and Munro 2009; Sung 2014). For example, many second language learners report wishing to sound like native speakers (Beinhoff 2013; Derwing 2003; Jenkins 2013; McCrocklin and Link 2016; Timmis 2018) to better connect with native speakers (McCrocklin and Link 2016) or because they recognize an advantage to hiding their L2 status (Derwing 2003; Marx 2002). However, most adult L2 learners never obtain a native-like accent (Bongaerts et al. 1997; Cook 1999; Moyer 2013). Although length and consistency of language use are important factors in ultimate L2 pronunciation attainment (Moyer 2013), age of acquisition and social factors also influence both overall attainment and acquisition of particular sounds (Flege 1995; Moyer 2013; LeVelle and Levis 2014). For example, Gatbonton, Trofimovich, and Segalowitz (2011) found that Canadian French learners were

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less likely to incorporate the English sound, [ð], which is frequent but carries a low functional load, if they had strong ethnic group affiliation to speakers of their Canadian French L1.

However, because both native and non-native listeners are able to identify non-native accents of speech quickly and reliably (Flege 1984; Major 2007; Munro 1995; Munro, Derwing, and Burgess 2003), accents are used by listeners to immediately identify that a person is different. Beinhoff (2013), who argues that it is useful to examine accent through the lens of Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, focuses on the concept of groups, which are formed by a minimum of two people who view themselves as linked by a common feature. A person's accent is thus a primary way to indicate group membership (Beinhoff 2013). Baker and Wright (2017) point out that language is "one of the strongest symbols and boundary markers in having a group, regional, cultural, or national identity" (p. 392). In learning a second language, a person may be adding a new possible group membership (for example, at the national level, becoming an American while learning English in the U.S.) and reevaluating or renegotiating their position within their original language or culture group(s). For example, in Gatbonton et al. (2005), French and Chinese L2 learners of English in Quebec evaluated other learners' accents as a reflection of the strength of their affiliation to their home ethnic group.

Language learners that master the pronunciation of their second language, possibly passing for a native speaker, may gain additional options in the ways that they express their identity. As a result, they may confront challenging questions and difficult choices. Existing L1 social ties can also affect their L2 accents in different communicative contexts. Moyer (2013) explains that speakers can use linguistic convergence to minimize social distance or can purposefully exhibit distance through linguistic divergence. Working to pass as a native speaker can be an effort to signal or create group membership (Cutler 2014). Working to retain an accent then may be a strategy to connect with a home community (Cutler 2014) or to maintain distance from the new culture (LeVelle and Levis 2014). For example, Piller (2002) explored the impact of moments of "passing" as native speakers for L2 learners of German. She found that some speakers who reported being able to pass as native became uncomfortable with listeners' perceptions of their accent and the assumption that they were German. One participant decided to maintain a noticeable foreign accent so that confusions about her identity were less likely. She was concerned, in particular, that if interlocutors assumed she was German, they would discuss cultural topics that were unfamiliar to her as a non-German. She worried that those interlocutors would then assume she wasn't intelligent because she didn't know those German cultural facts. To protect her identity as an intelligent woman, she preferred to sound like a non-native speaker. Our own interview data shows similar uncertainty about affiliation.

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P2: If I learned a new language, I would like to be able to use it enough for people to understand, but I don't necessarily need for them to know that I am like them.
P3: If you're speaking with the accent of the language you picked up, that means you're trying to adopt that culture. Using the accent means you want to identify with that language and culture.
P12: I guess I want my Russian accent only for ten percent out of what I have it now and probably that's all. (Levis 2015, p. A49)
–(later)–
I: Why do you want that little bit?
P12: I guess I love my country…I feel that I am pretty patriotic and I know history of my country, my homeland, and I have all of my family in Russia.

While the first quote from P2 shows similarities to P1 in that they are both focused on intelligibility as a primary concern, P2 notes that she is not driven beyond intelligibility (towards a native-sounding accent) because of the ways that her accent ties into her identity. P3 extends this idea by showing that, for him, attempts to acquire a native-like accent show a concerted effort to take on elements of the culture or identity associated with the language. Finally, P12 goes even further, acknowledging that their accent is a signal, and for them it is one way to show a bit of their L1 culture, a part of their identity that they are proud of.

These excerpts suggest a more nuanced view of accent and identity than expressed by many L2 learners we have talked to, who express a desire to pass as native speakers with a nativelike accent. P2, P3, and P12 all want to be understood but not to be heard as native either because of their own affiliation to their background (P3) or because they do not want to take on the burden of identifying with the L2 culture (P2, P3). This indicates that L2 accents are subject to social forces felt by L1 and L2 listeners. L1 listeners may hear that someone does not fit, that they are an outsider, and may thus treat that person differently. For example, in one of our studies (McCrocklin 2019), a participant was asked about their pronunciation in their three different languages (English, Tagalog, and Spanish) and recognized the potential to be caught out as different by their accent.

I: You said that your accent in English is 'good'. What do you mean by 'good'?
P4: If I were to speak to someone else in English, they wouldn't say 'Whoa, you sound weird'.

In this case, P4 indicates that their standard is dependent on the degree to which their accent is identifiable to a listener as different. Indeed, for this speaker, there is a self-perception, perhaps because of some past experience, that their accent was so different that it was perceived as strange. While L2 speakers may feel that they are outsiders and that their ways of speaking expose them as being different, they may also feel that passing as an L1 speaker carries its own challenges.

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There can be great social pressure to adopt a standard language or standard accent. English-only movements in the United States have pushed immigrants to quickly master English and abandon their L1 (Lawton 2013; Moyer 2013). In school, children are often evaluated by and pushed towards particular language standards, ostensibly to provide them with a resource for success (Lippi-Green 2012). Families may also pressure children to master a new L2 quickly to be successful in school while also pushing them to develop and maintain language abilities in their heritage language. Whether this is even possible is unclear, but it has to add pressure to children's loyalty to family and the normal peer pressure that influences language development.

P5: My family would judge me very badly if I had an American accent in my Spanish. My grandparents make it seem like I am less of a person of my heritage because I do not speak Spanish properly.

Similar to P12 above, P5 understood that accent could be a signal of group membership. While P12 wanted to maintain her accent in English to show pride in her L1 culture, P5 is more strongly affected by pressure from others.

Further, when listeners identify a foreign accent, they may assume that not only can they identify where a person is from, but that they can also identify aspects of a speaker's culture or personality, such as friendliness and pleasantness (Beinhoff 2013; Lambert 1968). Harrison (2014) says that "accent, which is highly audible, is indicative of the embodied nature of cultural capital" (p. 263). She explains that accents, by giving away information about cultural background and thus the speaker's likely social position, can determine a person's social standing and authority. Studies of non-native accents regularly find that L2 speakers are rated by native listeners not only as less proficient in the language but also less competent overall (Lindemann, Litzenberg and Subtirelu 2014). Negative judgements of L2 accents do not only come from L1 listeners. Non-native speakers can also be judgmental of L2 accents, and this, unfortunately, sometimes includes L2 English language instructors (Beinhoff 2013; Lindemann and Campbell 2018).

We note that while accent may seem to be only a characteristic of the speaker, the social context of language forces us to also pay attention to the role of the listener. In essence, identity is created not only from the self, but also through the ways that others perceive us (Bailey 2000) such that "any assessment of a speaker's speech performance could very well reflect nearly as much about the listener as about the speaker" (Rubin 2012: 11). Kang and Rubin (2009) displayed the ways that listeners' notions of speaker identity can be predictive of evaluations of speech. In their study, participants thought that they heard more accented speech when shown an Asian guise of a speaker than when shown a Caucasian guise.

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Lippi-Green (2012) notes that society often supports prejudice based on accent and that children are often bombarded with negative associations to non-native accents. She discusses the movie, *Aladdin*, in which the main Arab characters speak English with no noticeable foreign accent, but the minor characters, particularly the villains and unlikeable characters, speak with noticeable foreign accents. She argues that these types of experiences reinforce the idea that non-native speakers are not only different, but also possibly frightening and untrustworthy. In our data, L2 learners sometimes adopt or assume negative stances against their own accent in the L2, as in this comment by P6, who has accepted the view that some forms of accents are "bad", whether that may mean stereotypical or strong.

I:	How would you describe your accent in English?
P6:	I think it's not that bad. Like I only get confused when I think the words in Spanish. When I am talking slowly I think it's good. It doesn't have the bad Mexican accent.

Although a non-native accent is normal for adult second language learners, the prevalence of accents has not led to them always being embraced by the speakers. These ideas can colour learners' own perceptions of their accent, that they should work to minimize their accent or that there are acceptable forms of accent they seek to achieve.

When listeners base assessments of L2 speakers on prejudicial beliefs, issues of discrimination emerge. Derwing (2003) noted that almost a third of her 100 ESL participants reported they had encountered discrimination due to accent. An L2 accent can lead to negative consequences such as lower income or loss of employment due to accent (Davila, Bohara, and Saenz 1993; Derwing, Fraser, Kang, and Thomson 2014). Harrison (2014) describes the ways that accent can be used to discriminate even when laws or regulations otherwise prevent discrimination. She points out that in the modern globalized economy, workers may be expected not only to speak English, but to match the accent the customer desires. Their own linguistic skills with their native language are devalued, and, when workers are unable to meet the demand for a native-speaker accent, employers and managers can decide that the worker lacks sufficient merit for the job. Harrison argues that this allows employers to seem meritocratic while actually engaging in discriminatory practices.

International teaching assistants in North American university classrooms

In educational contexts, the pragmatic power of accent is seen primarily in three ways: the constraints that L2 speakers feel in seeking social interaction, whether in the educational environment or outside of it; in their perceptions of how their accent affects others' reactions to them; and in the kinds of choices that they find themselves making as they progress in the L2. These different factors overlap, as

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in the case of P9, a Korean pastor who avoided speaking to university-affiliated Korean church members in English because he believed they would look down on him. This also caused him to struggle with moving ahead within the larger English-dominant church hierarchy because those higher up made clear that his accent was holding him back. As a result, he felt himself able to only take baby steps to change his spoken English. We will next look at these constraints, perceptions, and choice in relation to three educational contexts: University classrooms and the role of International Teaching Assistants, the restrictions experienced by non-native language teachers, and the effects of accent on the audibility of high school immigrant students.

Issues of accent perception and discrimination in L2 education have been particularly well-documented in research on International Teaching Assistants (ITAs). North American higher education, especially graduate education, is an international venture. Faculty and graduate students come from all over the world to research and teach within their fields of study. While graduate education is strongly internationalized, undergraduate students are primarily local, coming from the states/provinces in which the universities exist. As a result, higher education entails an unavoidable mélange of varied accents, conceptions of educational purposes, and ways of interacting. When these differences become part of the learning environment, they enrich educational opportunities but also create discomfort and conflicts. These conflicts, first known as the "foreign TA problem" (Bailey 1984), in which the use of international teaching assistants (ITAs) to hold office hours or teach was perceived as damaging the academic success of undergraduate students, have been well-documented throughout the past 40 years (e.g., Fitch and Morgan 2003; Kang, Rubin and Lindemann 2015; Plakans 1997). Research has shown that students raise concerns about the quality of teaching provided by non-native English-speaking Teaching Assistants due to accent (Lippi-Green 2012). In one study, Rubin and Smith (1990) found that 40% of students were more likely to drop a class if it was taught by a non-native speaker. Of all aspects of language, accent has been most frequently singled out for scrutiny, leading to legislation in many places that requires ITAs to demonstrate proficiency in spoken and written English (e.g., Smith, Byrd, Nelson, Barratt, and Constantinides 1992).

Although research has investigated criticisms of ITAs on the basis of cultural expectations of roles and discourse structures (Chiang 2011; Tyler 1992), accent is the most criticized element of ITA teaching. Research has shown that this is likely simply due to its salience in speech (Hoekje and Williams 1992). Kang (2010) found that raters of oral ITA language proficiency attended to features of accent, especially the stress and intonation of speech, in their ratings of ITAs. The study concluded that undergraduate students are both sensitive to accent and make judgments about the ITA's ability to teach based on accent, as is evident from P10 in our own data.

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P10: I feel [my accent is] a barrier for me now. Last semester, I was award – I was about to awarded a valuable or outstanding TA [award], but it turns out it's my English as a barrier so they cannot give me that.
I: Do you think that um sometimes they [undergraduate students] blame their lack of understanding on your speech instead of their studying?
P10: Uh it happened in my first semester, especially my first week. Wow, it's a disaster. It was a disaster for me because student complained to my department. They ask if they could sw – switch uh TA

These studies and examples are representative of a deficit approach to understanding, in which accent differences are seen as the cause of problems, ultimately laying blame for non-understanding on the ITA and minimizing the role of the undergraduate student in the success of communication (Subtirelu 2016). ITAs do not even need to experience a public humiliation of their ability, as seen in the previous example with P10. They can simply dread how students will perceive them because of their accents. One ITA we interviewed was assigned to teach in the upcoming semester, but reported not wanting to do so. When asked why, she responded:

P12: I feel like the students should not suffer from my accent…It's harder on them. They have to learn new material plus, on top, they have to understand my accent.

This ITA was not unsure of her teaching ability but rather perceived that listeners would judge her based on her accent, a belief shared by many of the ITAs we talked to. Research suggests that ITAs may be justified in their beliefs. Rubin (1992), in a frequently cited study, asked undergraduate students to listen to the same spoken passage. Some listened while seeing a picture of a Caucasian female, while others heard the same native-accented voice but saw a picture of an Asian female. Those listening in the Caucasian guise understood better, indicating that even the expectation of accent associated with an Asian face was enough to damage understanding. In a more recent study, McGowan (2015) demonstrated that accented speech was understood better when listeners saw a picture of a congruent face (Chinese accented speech with a Chinese face) than with a non-congruent face (Chinese accented speech with a Caucasian face).

Accent and second language teacher education

Accent also plays an oversized role in the opportunities that are afforded second language teachers, despite the overall neglect of pronunciation in L2 classrooms (Foote, Trofimovich, Collins, and Urzua 2016; Morin 2007). In many English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts, there are strong preferences for hiring teachers who are native speakers (Mahboob and Golden 2013), a classification that is based primarily

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on their accents (Buckingham 2014) and, to a lesser degree, race (Amin 2001). Such connections of accent, race, and credibility as a teacher are at least partially a result of colonial attitudes (Amin and Kubota 2004). There is, of course, no evidence that native speaker status is associated with better language teaching, either in general courses (Moussu and Llurda 2008) or even pronunciation teaching (Levis, Link, Sonsaat, and Barriuso 2016), but the specter of measuring up to a mythic native speaker accent hovers over the professional prospects afforded to teachers.

Accent also affects student attitudes toward teacher legitimacy. In a story told by an applied linguist colleague, she reported that when she was learning English in Taiwan, she was attentive to the ways that her teachers pronounced English words. One teacher pronounced a word in a way she knew was wrong, and she decided immediately that she would never listen to anything that teacher said about pronunciation. It is hard to imagine a student expressing the same attitudes toward a teacher with a native accent, even if such an accent was regionally or socially marked. Although L2 students are not very accurate in their identification of foreign and native accents (Kelch and Santana-Williamson 2002), their beliefs about native speaker status can influence how they view teachers. Similar to Kang and Rubin (2009), but with non-native student listeners, Butler (2007) found that Korean students associated an American teacher guise with better pronunciation, greater confidence in speaking, and differences in how the teacher would conduct classes, despite the fact that the Korean teacher guise used the same voice. These kinds of attitudes are deeply embedded within an ideology that privileges native accent as a marker of language expertise (Munro, Derwing and Sato 2006). Many of our own participants have also reported desiring a native speaker teacher in pronunciation training and tutoring, seen in these comments by P11, P13, and P14:

I: So if you had an opportunity to do the tutoring again…
P11: With American student, I would definitely want to do it again.
I: If you had – if you had a chance to do four more weeks and you could have [a non-native] or a native speaker for the four more weeks, what would be your preference?
P13: Um, if I had luck – if I want to – if I want to improve my, my skills?
I: Mm hmm
P13: Of course I would choose native American
I: If you had the option of um doing more tutoring sessions with either uh your same tutor… or with one who was born in the U.S… would you – would you have a preference?
P14: I would like to go for the native speaker.
…
I: Why? Even though you said your tutor… was just like a native speaker
P14: Because you said that if I have a <u>better</u> option. (Levis 2015: A47–48)

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From these excerpts, a clear pattern of a preference for a native-English speaking American tutor emerges. Even a high level of intelligibility and skill with English was insufficient for P14, who saw the American as a "better" option despite having said that her tutor was native-like in her pronunciation.

Not only can accent influence the way that others view the legitimacy and expertise of language teachers, it also affects the ways that teachers view themselves. Moussu (2006) discusses her own unfounded feeling of being a native speaker (NS) imposter when teaching in her Master's degree. Although her students did not notice her non-nativeness, when she began looking for jobs, she was repeatedly met with rejections, a situation she attributed to her non-native accent. A possible reason for this accent bias is that language teachers, both native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS), see themselves as keepers of language standards (Sifakis and Sougari 2005), including the perceived standards of native accentedness. Such beliefs about accent often become an entrenched source of difficulty for well-qualified NNS teachers. Although native accents are rarely achieved by L2 speakers, L2 speakers are likely to be subject to suspicions from others and themselves that they do not measure up. To give a further personal anecdote, in one situation, one of our graduate students was told by a faculty member that she could not help administer oral examinations because of her accent, despite having passed a university-wide test of oral proficiency in English and having served as a successful teacher to classes primarily serving NSs.

Teacher education programs may also reinforce stereotypes about nativeness being the standard against which expertise is measured. Llurda (2005), in a survey of graduate TESOL programs in North America, reported that practicum teachers felt that most NNS teachers would not be well-suited to teaching in a second language context (where the L2 is substantially present), and that if they did teach in that environment, they should be restricted to lower-proficiency classes, presumably on the assumption that beginner students would be less likely to notice the presence of a NNS accent. Such deep-seated attitudes should be addressed explicitly in teacher education, according to Moussu (2006) and Sweetland and Wheeler (2015), for the sake of both NS and NNS teachers. In one example, Golombek and Jordan (2005) present two case studies of Taiwanese teachers in a US graduate program in TESOL. One teacher, in confronting the native accent bias in Taiwan, rebelled against its assumptions, labeling herself "a black lamb", that is, one who stuck out as being different. The alternative was to be "a parrot", creating legitimacy as a teacher through mimicking native-like accent as much as possible. The authors suggest that unexamined beliefs about native accentedness force NNS teachers to live with irreconcilable contradictions.

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6. Finding your voice and establishing an identity in the L2

The fraught relationship that many learners have with their L2 accent affects the ways they negotiate their relationship with, and identity within, the new culture (Derwing and Munro 2015; Marx 2002; Piller 2002). Identity can be defined as "a range of social personae, including social statuses, roles, positions, relationships, and institutional and other relevant community identities one may attempt to claim or assign in the course of social life" (Ochs 1993: 288). Marx (2002) traced six distinct stages in her identity development while working to learn a second language, German. She moved from stages of loss, to focus on construction of an L2 identity and more native-like accent, and finally re-evaluating her L1 identity and accent upon return to her home country. She linked the stages to shifts in her accent, showing that her identity changes were linked to accent development in her second language.

Because accents are always subject to social judgments, it is not surprising that accent can become a barrier in educational contexts. Baker and Wright (2017) argue that L2 learners do not only want to be understood; they want to be accepted, trusted, respected, and appreciated. The context of language use can change how learners behave, as shown by one of our participants:

P7:	In school in Mexico I was the intelligent one; I had the higher grades. And you know, they do the flag and you can get the flag if you are the most intelligent. And, so I was the one getting the flag, but once you get here you notice that you're not because you are starting from the bottom.
I:	Has that impacted your self-esteem?
P7:	Probably yes, I think yes because I didn't want to talk, because I was embarrassed of the people listening to me, so I never tried. I got here in middle school, and I never tried until high school.
I:	How do you feel today if you are talking with someone and they recognize that you have an accent on your English?
P7:	Sometimes worry, and that makes me feel nervous and cut the conversation… or they cut the conversation when they realize. Or if they're not American, then they start talking to me in Spanish because they are looking at me and know
I:	and when those things happen, how do you feel?
P7:	Like I don't meet the (unintelligible) well… like I am not capable of doing it.

P7 shows how views of success can vary radically depending on the context of learning. In an EFL context, in which English was a subject to excel in, the student excelled. In the move to an ESL context, the student no longer felt accomplished or exemplary but rather felt exposed as an outsider, resulting in her being nervous about communicating, her silence ("I never tried") and being subject to stigma and thus feeling unable to speak (cf., Gluszek and Dovidio 2010). Miller (2003)

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described similar experiences in terms of "audibility" (p. 170). She argues that until learners are acknowledged as speakers of the language, they may be unable or unwilling to engage in socially-oriented use of the L2, which in turn prevents additional language practice, as seen in the following excerpts:

P8: [I'm] not so very confident when I speak with the native speakers… I'm not sure I can yeah talk well so I choose – I choose to say no words.
P15: I prefer, for example, I don't like calling on the phone. I prefer to write email. Just because they have problems understanding
P16: Actually, I'm not confident
I: So, if you're not confident do you ever find that you have an opportunity to speak to somebody but don't do it – you avoid it?
P16: Yeah yeah yes… a lot of times.
P10: There's things I want to say when people are talking, but I decide not to do it because I'm afraid they won't understand me.
P9: But I cannot speak in English in (fluently) but the other church members, younger person, or any other persons can speak in fluently so I shut up my mouth because I feel bad, so I – I – I – I feel shame.

These participants show that lack of confidence or anxiety surrounding their pronunciation has led them at times to avoid interactions with others. This is an unfortunate reaction since there are clear connections between amount of language experience, confidence, and acquisition (Flege, Frieda and Nozawa 1997).

For group membership, it may be more important for second language learners in schools to sound alike (use an acceptable accent) than to look alike (have similar ethnic appearance). In her extensive study of immigrant high school students in Australia, Miller (2003) demonstrated that accents were an important factor (though not the only factor) of how successfully L2 learners fit into the social context of the high school. In some cases, L2 speakers were not audible to others, partially because of their accents, and partially because of their own expectations of not being understood, which made them speak more quietly, adding acoustically inaudible speech to their socially inaudible speech. A further consequence of being inaudible was that their contributions were not recognized, resulting in L2 speakers not being able to build an identity in the L2 context. To become part of social groups in high school, they had to be heard as a valid speaker of English, a prerequisite in developing an L2 identity. Students overcame the barrier in different ways (such as sports or humor), but accent continued to be a barrier for others, especially when combined with racial differences.

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7. Conclusion

Accents, marked by habits of segmental and suprasegmental features (Moyer 2013), are an omnipresent feature of speech for both L1 and L2 speakers and can impact the way that speakers are perceived (Gluszek and Dovidio 2010; Hughes et al. 2013; Labov et al. 2008; Piske et al. 2001; Rakić et al. 2011). Accents mark membership in particular speech communities and are socially-indexed features used to display identity markers such as social class, gender, and race (Bailey 2000; James 1996). L2 accents may not represent an intentional choice (Derwing and Munro 2009; Sung 2014), as they are shaped by L1 experiences in childhood (Clark 2016; Kuhl, Tsao, and Liu 2003). Yet speakers can work to sound more accented to show cultural identity or personality or to sound less accented to connect with the L2 cultural group (McCrocklin and Link 2016) or because of the advantages that may come from hiding their L1 status (Derwing 2003; Marx 2002). Accents are a crucial aspect of L2 development as speakers work to negotiate their identity in the L2 culture and become acknowledged as legitimate speakers of the community (Miller 2003).

In educational contexts, L2 accents are a normal consequence of a globalized educational culture in which scholars, researchers, teachers and students from all corners of the world together construct knowledge and understanding, not only within different disciplines, but across cultural divisions. For adult second language learners, accents are natural and often do not impact intelligibility, but listeners may use accents to unfairly judge speakers' social standing and professional competence, and in extreme situations, to justify discriminatory practices, leading to lost opportunities and devaluations of speaker standing. Adult learners rarely manage to achieve a native speaker accent, but they must learn to navigate the creation of their identity in conjunction with the accent that they have. This can be a challenging process in any context but is especially challenging within educational contexts because of the high stakes involved.

What does this mean for those within educational contexts? We need to talk about accents being an unremarkable and enriching feature of educational life, about where accents come from, and about why accents cannot and should not be reduced or neutralized. Discriminatory attitudes towards L2 accents and L2 speakers gain much of their power from unspoken assumptions about potential negative consequences of difference and diversity, while the positive consequences of educational diversity, partially reflected in the accents of its participants, are all too rarely discussed both in the academy and outside of it. Talking about accents will also mean that we create institutional ways to talk about them, including L1 listener

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training (Derwing, Rossiter and Munro 2002), equitable spoken language testing (Isaacs 2018), and community-centered educational opportunities (Wolfram 2016). All of these, however, start with a commitment to talking about accents and the speakers who have them.

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A lack of phonological inherentness

Perceptions of accents in UK education

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This paper addresses accent preference in the context of UK teaching. From this, there are instances of trainee teachers being told to reduce their accents. The views of 32 teachers were collected and the paper focuses on two specific points. First, it is not the sounds per se that characterise accents in terms of positive or negative evaluations; rather, it is the societal connotations. Second, it is not merely regional accents as such that are targeted for reduction but instead, more broad realisations of such accents. Thus, in the context of teaching, notions of professionalism are sometimes understood differently between teachers and mentors when viewed from a linguistic perspective, with broad accents often the target for change.

Keywords: accent, teaching, trichotomy, reduction

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the speech of teachers and accent-based attitudes in the UK teaching profession. Though this topic has been covered in some detail in the US context, notably with the work of Haddix (2008, 2010, 2012), there is comparatively little coverage in the UK, specifically on the subject of teachers' accents. This is a gap that I have started to address (Baratta 2016, 2017, 2018; Donnelly, Baratta and Gamsu, 2019), drawing upon the findings of research conducted between 2013 and 2015 comprising three separate studies, in which I gathered and analysed the views of 32 teachers. The first study focused on accent reduction in the UK, obtaining ninety-two responses from participants from a variety of professions. Of these, six participants were teachers, four already established in the profession, one being a trainee teacher, and another recounting a previous interview for a PGCE.[1] Given

1. Postgraduate Certificate of Education: a qualification taken within Higher Education as part of teacher training in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, lasting one to two years and allowing teachers to work in state schools.

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that the six teachers overall revealed quite negative accounts regarding the ways in which their accents had been commented on within their career, this provided a key rationale for the two studies that followed. For the latter, I decided to direct the focus on trainee teachers, who would be the best-placed to provide their insights as they are training to become fully-fledged teachers.

While identity is referenced within this paper, it is not a specific focus. Rather, my intention is to investigate the perception of accent in specific contexts of education in which certain accents may, or may not, be deemed appropriate. I will do this by first highlighting the societal evaluations of UK accents (positive and negative), then categorise them as part of a trichotomy. Having done so, I will then illustrate the pragmatic implications for *broad* accents (a term that I will later explain in my paper) within the UK teaching profession. Thus, the overall purpose of this contribution is to shed light on the use of regional accents within a profession in which one's speaking voice is of great relevance, and yet, negative perceptions toward regional British accents are a reality (see Coupland and Bishop 2007). The speakers of such accents, however, may nonetheless feel no desire to change. Thus, in the teaching profession, there might indeed be differing viewpoints between teachers and mentors regarding what constitutes a 'professional' accent, and herein lies the basis for my paper's contribution.

2. Contextualisation of the study: Sociocultural attitudes to accents and a suggested trichotomy of UK accents

A lack of inherentness in accents

The purpose of this section is to discuss accents, specifically in terms of what makes certain accents, broadly speaking, 'attractive' or 'unattractive'. Ultimately, it is suggested that it is not sounds per se that connote positive or negative feelings but instead societal connotations that are associated with the accent and subsequently, the group who use it. Such societal connotations tie in with folk linguistics, in that the connotations attributed to accents are reflective of largely-held societal beliefs, and prejudice, often leading to snap judgements made of the speaker. Jackendoff (2003), for example, cites such beliefs, pertaining to the notion of there being a singular correct form of English seen with the standard form (so that dialects would be regarded as 'inferior' or 'wrong') and language change (e.g. involving abbreviated speech and new words) equating to language decay. Such beliefs can easily be applied to accent, suggested by notions of accents being 'sexy', 'educated' and 'trustworthy', for example.

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Montgomery's work (2012) on perceptual dialectology is also highly relevant to this section, given that it explores perceptions of British accents. Such perceptions are based on the region of origin for the interlocutor and how it impacts on their ability to identify certain accents and crucially, *how* such accents are perceived. In Montgomery's study, for example, participants are clearly aware of the accents that are associated with Newcastle, Liverpool and Birmingham, and there is recognition for language varieties tied to 'stigmatised dialect areas' (2012: 658), reflecting in this case the identification of certain accents based on their stigmatised status. Stigmatised features can also be a reflection of the societal perceptions of broad accents (Coupland and Bishop, 2007; Cardoso et al, 2019; Strycharczuk et al, 2020), as will be discussed in the following section.

As an illustration, the accent of Received Pronunciation (RP) is associated with the upper classes in Britain and was once considered the de facto standard British accent (Giles 1971, Coupland 2000, Snell and Andrews 2016, Lindsey 2019). The connotations associated with the upper classes might be: a higher education, wealth, the moral archetype of the *gentleman*, a form of politeness that is perceived as social etiquette and so on. However, such connotations are not tied to the phonological make-up of RP, and the British upper classes could have spoken with an entirely different accent. Moreover, current connotations of RP can also include notions of arrogance and snobbery (Trudgill 2002; Hughes, Trudgill and Watt 2012). It is *in the ear of the beholder* that the connotations are, and such connotations are then passed on to the speaker of the said accent in the form of social judgement, often involving stereotypes. Given the way accent, and language in general, acts as a proxy for social categories such as race, class and ethnicity (Dehghani et al. 2014; Donnelly, Baratta and Gamsu 2019), should any of such categories be stigmatised, so too would the accent and in turn the speaker.

Seen from this point of view, the Northern English vowel sounds as in *bath* and *bus* are not viewed positively or negatively because of their actual phonological make-up; rather, it is the fact that they broadly connote 'Northern-ness' that then leads to judgements about the speaker, initially via his/her accent. To some, being from the North of England reflects being friendly and down to earth (Hughes and Atkinson 2018); to others, it might suggest being 'common' and working-class (Montgomery 2015; Baratta 2016).

It might be argued, however, that there is an inherentness to phonemes if they remind the listener of certain 'dispositions' (I cannot think of a better word, in this instance), a reference again to reflections of folk linguistics and what can involve snap judgements made of speakers with certain accents. Known as *sound symbolism* (Elsen 2017), this can be seen on a basic level with onomatopoeia of course. But in terms of accent and voice quality, the sound heard in (broad) Liverpool English

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within the word *back* would involve the same sound as heard in the Spanish *j*, and is realised thus: [bax]. This particular sound (a voiceless velar fricative) might be suggestive to some of clearing one's throat, and Belchem (2000: 33) refers to the Liverpool accent as sounding to outsiders like the speaker has "some congestion in the upper respiratory tract". This is not a crude reference but is in fact based on the practice of velarisation (involving the articulation of consonants in which the back of the tongue is raised toward the soft palate in the mouth). In this instance, the negativity some outsiders might have toward the Liverpool accent could be attributed purely to phonetics, and not societal judgements based on the city's negative stereotypes: association with crime, unemployment and poverty (Honeybone 2001) and further stereotypes of thievery, often as part of humour made at Liverpudlians' expense (Belchem 2000). Nonetheless, the argument here is that societal attitudes are a more common indicator of feelings toward accents, without necessarily taking sounds per se into consideration but instead, focusing on the associations made toward the group in question. Moreover, would the same sound as heard in Spanish elicit comparative negativity?

In closing, while socio-phonetic studies can shed light on accent perception from a purely phonetic-based perspective, the larger issue is tied to how listeners perceive the speakers of the accent, based on the speakers' race, ethnicity and other such broad identities. The accent – or language – in question is perceived as an index to such identities but is not a defining characteristic of these identities. Identity, however, is a two-way street. Individuals may have very clear perceptions of themselves in part based on their language use, and listeners' perceptions of the speakers might be equally clear. Such 'clarity' can nonetheless involve discrepancies, in which an individual who regards his/her accent as signalling origins of which they're proud – such as regional pride and/or being working-class – can be perceived by listeners as less desirable (e.g. 'common') and thus for certain professions such as teaching, unprofessional (Lippi-Green 1997; Kerswill 2009; Liberman 2010; Baratta 2018). This chapter addresses this potential linguistic disjuncture in a context yet under-researched: the UK teaching profession.

A trichotomy of UK accents

This section focuses on the terminology applied to accents of Southern Hemisphere English, a geo-linguistic area that includes Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Within these countries, the accents are largely discussed in terms of three main variants: *cultivated*, *general* and *broad* (Lass, 1995), though Lass references the fact that South African English and its accents are respectively referred to as 'conservative', 'respectable' and 'extreme'. Tellingly, Lass acknowledges that the latter two terms are "nasty creations" (p. 94). Such terms offer a clue, however, to

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societal perceptions regarding accents. While this trichotomy of accents is used for the Southern Hemisphere, I have applied it to a single nation, the United Kingdom, as it proves relevant to the regional varieties heard within a given area of this country. Thus, I argue that it is not sufficient to refer to regional UK accents in a singular manner (e.g. "the Manchester accent") but that instead we might approach each regional variety with this suggested trichotomy in mind, in order to be more precise as to which accents may be flagged as in need of reduction in certain professional contexts.

While certain accents within the UK are sometimes regarded negatively (see research on Birmingham and Liverpool accents, Coupland and Bishop 2007) and are rated low in terms of attractiveness and social prestige, it is important to realise that regional accents in the UK are not monolithic. Therefore, I argue that it is *broad* realisations of accents, the sort that would be found in some varieties of the Mancunian accent for example, that elicit negative attitudes. This is precisely because broad accents are those that are most readily identifiable as deriving from a geographical location. As a result, the connotations associated with a sub-group of inhabitants (e.g. working-class Cockney individuals from London) from a given region (be they positive or negative), are also readily available.

Given that broad varieties of UK accents are much more immediately identifiable as deriving from a specific city (if not a region within a city), it is these accents that are more likely to be met with immediate judgement. This is reflected in indexicality (Labov, 1972; Silverstein, 2003), referring to the ways in which certain speech forms are attributed to a specific group in society (e.g. the working-classes) and the judgements that are subsequently made of the speakers, as part of social enregisterment (Agha, 2005). My focus on phonological giveaways, to be discussed, as a reflection of both Agha's and Silverstein's work, also ties in with Labov's (1972) discussion of *stereotypes*. This refers to linguistic features that can function as marked forms, again often reflecting stigmatised features (Jensen, 2016). However, it is important to point out that accents associated with any particular social group can be open to judgement, for positive or negative. Nonetheless, within contexts where power relations are present, here teacher training, then it may well be that accents can be raised as an issue, in this case broader varieties which are stigmatised in society (Archangeli et al, 2010; Garner, 2013; Baratta, 2017).

As such, more general accent varieties might be preferred. These accents would involve more time on the part of the interlocutor to identify the speaker as belonging to a more definable area (see a discussion of General Northern English by Strycharczuk et al, 2020). More relevant to the discussion, however, is the fact that because such varieties might not otherwise display the specific features that mark them as broad, then the stereotypes attributed to the accent by the listener can be different also, to include connotations of more middle-class speech

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being ascribed to the speakers (Trudgill 2002; MacFarlane and Stuart Smith 2012; Haddican et al. 2013; Baranowski and Turton 2015). In this sense, a teacher with a less broad Liverpool accent, for example, is still (eventually) identifiable as being from Liverpool. However, his speech lacks the (broad) phonological features that would be subject to scrutiny based on the potentially negative stereotypes associated with a broad variety. There are of course positive images that are associated with Liverpudlians and their accent, such as "collective solidarity (and) fatalist humour" (Belchem 2000: 33). It all depends on who is doing the listening and broadly reflects covert and overt prestige, with individuals who share a stigmatised accent often celebrating it even if society at large does not (e.g. Becker 2009).

This raises the point that the connotations that are held toward accents might be relatively fixed in terms of societal attitudes, but that they can also differ significantly. Thus, it is possible that an accent can be judged negatively by some, but that for others (including those who share the accent and those who do not), it is embraced in wholly positive terms. This offers some insight into why teachers can come into conflict with their mentors, creating a linguistic tug of war.

In this paper, I avoid the use of the word 'cultivated' to refer to UK accents. This is because it has negative class-based connotations, in what is still a class-conscious society. Instead, I use the word 'neutral' (Ramsaran 2015; Baratta 2018), though I concede that this term in itself is hardly ideal. As I previously argued, no accent is inherently one thing or another. Accent refers merely to a series of sound patterns found in specific contexts and therefore, no accent can be inherently 'sexy', 'trustworthy', 'thick' or indeed, 'neutral'; these are sociocultural labels, not linguistic ones.

I now complete this section with a focus on this suggested trichotomy – neutral, general and broad – using the Mancunian accent as an example, generally associated with the Northwest city of Manchester in England.[2] The trichotomy is illustrated using the word *Saturday*:

Neutral – [satədeɪ]
General – [satəde] [satədɪ]
Broad – [saʔədɪ] [saʔdɪ]

While the above diagram might suggest five separate accents, albeit tied to a given region, I would instead argue that it pertains to degrees of broadness. This then

2. Some might take issue and feel that this explanation is too broad, and the Mancunian accent cannot just be tied to the city per se (and if so, where are the city's boundaries?), but should also include the region of Greater Manchester as a whole and the outside cities that share the same, or similar, accent features. There are also class issues to deal with. However, I hope this brief disclaimer will suffice, as a means to address the lack of detail against the realities of a lack of space to cover such.

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raises the question: what exactly is it that makes an accent identifiable as broad (or general/neutral)? In phonological terms, I have argued that UK accents perceived as broad are those that exhibit what I refer to as *phonological giveaways* (Baratta 2018) – specific sounds in specific contexts which can lead to immediate recognition of the speaker's origins, be they national or regional. For example, the low front unrounded vowel /a/ as heard in the word *bath*, ensures that the speaker is recognised as being from the North or perhaps the Midlands of England (Hickey 2015), but not from the South where *bath* would be pronounced thus: [bɑːθ]. This is a wide giveaway, as being from the North of England could mean that the speaker may come from a multitude of cities, thus this one phoneme does not, immediately at least, tie the speaker to a more specific region/city of origin. However, there are certain phonological giveaways that pertain to a city region. One of them is the phoneme /ɛ/ – a short e sound – which is a recognizable feature of Liverpool English in contexts such as *player*, which would be transcribed thus: [pleɪjɛ].

So what makes a broad Mancunian accent? The use of a glottal stop, though hardly a feature tied solely to the North of England (Baranowski and Turton 2015), plays a part. When combined with the monophthong /ɪ/ in word-final position (e.g. as heard in 'city'), however, then this is more identifiable as broad Mancunian. General varieties may avoid glottal stops, though still retain the monophthong of /e/ or /ɪ/ in the example above, thus distinguished from a neutral variety which otherwise employs a diphthong /eɪ/ and avoids glottal stops. This leads to a second point made with regard to the neutral-general-broad distinction, namely that the more a given accent employs elision in certain contexts, the more the accent can be perceived as broad (Baratta 2018). Therefore, a change from /eɪ/ to /e/ or /ɪ/ involves elision, as heard in general and certainly broad varieties of the Mancunian accent. In turn, such elision could arguably be a particular example of a phonological giveaway. In this case, a giveaway tied to accents heard further North in England, such as those from Yorkshire. Given that society can sometimes, certainly with English, regard elision as belonging partly to more informal registers (Bybee and Hopper 2001; Barras 2015), accents which employ it might also be taken less seriously in formal contexts of communication, including teaching.

Therefore, for teachers who display such features during teacher training, what might the implications be? Simply put, but not to oversimplify, the negative connotations in the minds of some listeners – notably those in power such as mentors – might mean that teachers have to reduce their accent, whether they like it or not. Arguably, the broader the accent, the more likely that it will be perceived as reflecting a lower-class level, which might not be compatible in a profession often associated with the middle-classes (see Donnelly, Baratta and Gamsu 2019). As Kerswill (2009: 7) points out, "for many, other people's negative attitudes are too high a price to pay for keeping their working-class accent".

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Therefore, I suggest that the ideal accent within the UK in terms of overall positive reception is one which, while not completely extinguishing its regional origins, does not accentuate them either. This is a point also made by Ramsaran (2015: 182–183), who argues that "educated speakers of English do not speak with the broadest (or purest) forms of their local accents" further suggesting that "regionally neutral" (ibid) accents are the linguistic ideal. This might suggest that the general varieties of UK regional accents, from Manchester to Newcastle and beyond, are those perhaps regarded, unofficially at least, as 'standard' (Baratta 2018), if not neutral varieties more so. Such varieties, by ridding themselves of more local features, also possibly rid themselves of the negative stereotypes associated with given regions. This could reflect why certain individuals, such as teachers, might seek to reduce a broad accent, or be told to do so, to produce a 'general' variety, avoiding therefore the negative connotations associated with broad accents and gaining as a result in linguistic capital (see Brady 2015; Baratta 2017; Donnelly, Baratta and Gamsu 2019).

Clearly, the proposed trichotomy does not necessarily exist for each and every word, but in the context of a full conversation, the use of specific sounds in specific placements would lead the interlocutor to make a judgement of the accent and in turn, of the speaker (Blommaert 2005; Coupland 2010; Barras 2015). Therefore, the accents of teachers in the UK can be a point of discussion – and judgement – and while the Teachers' Standards[3] only reference the need for teachers to use Standard English, this variety can of course be spoken in any accent. However, the standards also reference the need for teachers to demonstrate 'articulacy'; this word can potentially act as a means for mentors to decide what is or is not phonologically 'articulate', but without any specific regulations to justify their decision on accent (and likewise, no recourse necessarily available for teachers to justify their decisions regarding their own accents).

For the purpose of this paper, I have chosen to focus on the results of three teachers. The discussion is entirely focused on what they report regarding their accent within their role as teachers, and how two teachers perceived this particular aspect as problematic. This was because the accent reduction that they were told to adopt by those in power – here an interviewer for enrolment on a PGCE course, and a mentor – was not in agreement with their own views on what being a professional teacher meant. For another teacher, however, the accent modification adopted for his role as teacher was met with overall acceptance (Baratta 2018). In all instances,

3. The Teachers' Standards in use in England and set by the Department for Education outline the qualities that teachers must embody. In terms of *linguistic* qualities, the standards only state the following: 'demonstrate an understanding of, and take a responsibility for, promoting the high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teachers specialist subject'; there is no mention of accent at all.

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these teachers' accents could be classified as broad. With regard to the specific sounds that they were instructed to remove from their speech, I argue that these represent the aforementioned linguistic giveaways denoting broad accents. This suggests that broad varieties of regional accents might be regarded by some as less desirable, if not incompatible, in the UK teaching profession.

3. Previous studies on accent reduction

My research comprised three separate, but related, studies (conducted from 2013–2015) with the details of each presented below, and which combined to address the singular focus on accent and identity in teacher training.

Study one participants

The first study, carried out between mid-2013 and the spring of 2014, collected participants' views on accents through questionnaires. The focus was specifically on individuals who come from the UK, given that I wanted to investigate accent reduction within the context of this specific geographical location. The purpose of this first study was to understand in what contexts of interaction participants felt a need to reduce their accents – thus move away from broader accent realisations – and why. Given that all the teachers in this study admitted to reducing their accent during their teaching (though T1 and T6 had been told to do so), the results inspired the subsequent studies that focused solely on UK teachers. T1's account of his experience follows. Another notable example was T6's, an EFL teacher, who was told at a job interview that her accent was "too Northern" and would "create the wrong impression" (Baratta 2018). This might be a reference to EFL students perhaps being more familiar with RP than Northern English accents (Baratta and Halenko 2021) and offers a clue as to what kinds of accents might be desired by mentors and senior staff (and sometimes teachers themselves) in teaching.

Table 1. Participants' backgrounds from study one

Teacher	Self-described accent	Age	Sex	Taught subject and level
T1	Rossendale	45	M	Primary-level English
T2	Manchester	19	F	Primary level, all subjects
T3	Glaswegian	34	F	University, Architecture
T4	Stockport	44	M	University, Sociology
T5	Barnsley	47	F	University, English Language
T6	Rochdale	46	F	EFL

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Study two participants

Study two took place in the first semester of the 2014/15 school year. For this study, I recruited eleven trainee teachers from two Northern universities in England and given the proximity to their schools, I used semi-structured interviews to collect data face to face. As in all three studies, I asked participants to share their thoughts on accent reduction in the teaching profession, i.e. if mentors had ever instructed them to modify their accents and if so, how and why (i.e. what was the rationale for this practice)?

Interviews

Of the eleven trainee teachers who came forward for this study, there were five men and six women, with an age range of 20–40. The trainee teachers' self-described accents included Northern Irish for one teacher, with the remainder being from England (i.e. seven from the North, such as Manchester and Liverpool; two from the Midlands, including Nottingham; and one teacher from the South, from Portsmouth). While eight taught at primary level, three taught at secondary level. Six primary teachers taught a full range of subjects; one primary teacher taught Maths and Drama; and another taught Computing and Geography. The remaining secondary teachers taught French and Spanish (one), and English (two) (the full tables from studies two and three can be found in the appendix).

Study three participants

For the final study, I recruited fifteen participants from two Southern universities. The decision was made to use a questionnaire that was sent electronically to participants. This study took place in the second semester of the 2014/2015 school year: a period of training for the teachers who were therefore able to provide responses which were current to the training that was in session.

From this study, there were twelve female teachers and three males. Eight teachers taught primary, all subjects; secondary Art (two); secondary English (one); Religious Education secondary (one); French and Italian secondary (one); Politics and Government secondary (one); and Drama secondary (one). Self-described accents comprised Republic of Ireland (three); Northern Ireland (two); one Northern English (i.e. Newcastle); Midlands (one); with the remainder described as RP (three); London (one); Medway (one); Estuary English (one); standard English (one); and Southern (one).

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In terms of overall results, of the 32 participants, four trainee teachers chose to reduce their accent, and nineteen were given language-based directives to do so by their mentors, with the exception of two teachers from this latter group who were told to reduce their accents by the PGCE interviewers. In addition, the directives to reduce accent pertained largely to teachers from the North/Midlands of England, a total of twelve teachers (though this regional group formed the majority of participants), with only four teachers from the South being given any directives to reduce their accents (one of whom is discussed in the next section). We might also consider that the teachers are already teaching largely in their region of origin. This suggests that, for the most part, the teachers will come into contact with students who themselves have similar accents. Nonetheless, if broad accents are seen as inappropriate within the context of teaching, and teachers are, to an extent, expected to act as linguistic role-models, then perhaps they are encouraged to display accents that, while regional, are not *too* regional.

Interestingly, T15, a teacher from the South who teaches in the North, was specifically told by teaching staff *not* to reduce her accent, given the possible perception of it as being "posh" (she is from the South, but described her accent as "not quite posh enough for RP"). This is the only instance, however, of a teacher who was given this advice and yet, wishes to reduce her accent. This is precisely because, as she explained to me, an accent perceived as posh, amidst a large cohort of working-class children with broad Northern accents, makes her feel self-conscious. T15 further reported a desire to be closer to the children, and yet her accent, she believes, marked her as being separated from them. This was exemplified with a student who was reported to have said, "Miss, you sound strict". Clearly, a 'posh' accent can have connotations such as this, precisely what T15 desires to be free of and instead, be regarded as more "approachable".

4. Discussion of the results: Three cases of teachers' accent reduction

The case of T1: A desire to retain one's working-class roots through accent

T1 was, at the time of participation, working on a PhD. However, his account is historical, explaining the issues he came up against in an interview for a PGCE course. T1 is from Lancashire in the North of England, and having also met him at a conference, I can confirm that his accent was indeed broad. This is exemplified by the phonological giveaways, heard in words such as *go* and *face*, realised as [gəː] and [feːs].

In the following excerpt, T1 explains in detail how his accent was raised as an issue:

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> A couple of minutes into the interview, the man interviewing me said he was stopping the interview. He told me that I was applying for a job teaching English but I wasn't speaking it properly myself! He said no one would give me a job if I couldn't speak Standard English […] I'd worked all over the country with senior managers and my accent had never been raised as an issue.

The reference to Standard English is misleading, as there is no 'standard accent' in Britain per se, though historically this might have been the designation given to RP (Brady 2015; Snell and Andrews 2016). Arguably, however, the standard referred to might exist as standard *accents* (Baratta 2018), that is neutral, or at least general varieties, of regional UK accents. Thus, varieties which are perceived as both socially and geographically neutral. Clearly, the interviewer had some notional standard in mind which differs from the Lancashire-based accent of T1. The interviewer's rationale for instructing T1 to modify his accent is based perhaps on the need to be understood by students or more so, based on a need to use an accent for English teaching that is deemed to be 'professional', whatever that might mean from a purely phonological perspective. The ways in which T1 adjusted his accent for the interview involved "adding aitches where they didn't belong" (Interview T1, 2013–2014), thus a case of hypercorrection.

Arguably, the larger, unspoken issue is one that is tied to class. T1 had said that he believed his accent marked him as a member of the working class, the positive implications of which are that he sees himself as "straightforward…a hard-worker". He went on to explain that he is "proud to have had to work hard for a living and this is part of the identity signalled through my accent when I'm at university". From his account, I suggest that a central aspect of T1's self-perception of his accent is that it defines him as genuine, "practically minded" and unpretentious. How this is enacted, at least from a linguistic point of view, is based entirely on retaining his otherwise 'natural' accent because to not do so might mean that he is subsequently weakening a core aspect of how he sees himself. However, T1's desire to keep it *real* was seen by the interviewer as unprofessional.

T1 ended his account by saying that on his way home, he "felt disgusted… for attempting to appease this man's bigotry – but [he] felt like it was something [he] had to do to get on his course". This final statement could be regarded as T1's conception of having sold out, a reminder of Bourdieu's concept of *cleft habitus* (2002) that describes the sense of unease based on the dual feelings that individuals may experience when they give up set dispositions to adapt to a new milieu, in large part due to social mobility. On the other hand, the willingness to be true to one's linguistic roots can be understood in terms of a linguistic double-edged sword (Lippi-Green 1997) as to do so could also be a liability in certain contexts, such as the workplace.

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Having proven himself to be competent within a variety of professional roles, as he had explained to me (and none of which had otherwise required a change in accent), perhaps T1 regards an authentic working-class accent as not in any way a mismatch in a professional setting (though he did concede that his accent was perhaps not expected within the context of higher education). Arguably, if he had previously been able to be himself (linguistically speaking) and get on with the job, then perhaps T1 did not expect to come up against such hostility, perceived though it might be, during an interview.

The case of T7: Agreement on what constitutes a 'professional' accent in teaching

T7 is a primary teacher from Yorkshire and admitted that during teacher training his mentor had told him to modify his accent for teaching. In the case of T7, directives to modify his accent were fully accepted. T7's account derives from my second study which focused solely on trainee teachers from two Northern English universities. T7 referenced the "home me" and the "teacher me", with the expression *go home*. In his otherwise unmodified accent – which he used for the interview – these words are realised with the broad 'o' sound heard in Yorkshire, [gə: hə:m]; for the teacher me, the words are realised as [goʊ hoʊm].

T7 overall expressed his desire to be fully understood by his students, for example by avoiding glottal stops, and further stated that he was "respected" by his students because he used a reduced accent which he believed was more suitable for teaching. T7 did not admit to his students that he reduced his accent for teaching, and so this could suggest that as far as his students are concerned, the 'teacher accent' *is* his 'real' accent. The students may indeed expect this particular accent for the classroom in the first instance, as broad varieties might be regarded negatively, even by some students, or at least be regarded as 'marked'.

Because T7 agreed with the directive he was given to reduce his accent when teaching, as the modification reflected T7's desire to present himself to his students as a professional, he expressed no resentment for the change. T7 explained that "in front of a class there is a persona that you have…and it can be switched, such as when talking with mates versus teaching". T7 went on to say that the teacher and home identities "have two totally different voices" and yet, they are both seen as real. I thus argue that this is an example of *real me's* (Baratta, 2018), a reference to the fact that identities can be pluralistic and involve vastly different uses of language, although identities which are otherwise different may all be perceived as real by the individuals who enact these identities.

T7 further provided some background, explaining that he had previously worked in a call centre, as well as having taught EFL in Finland; both experiences led him to value the importance of being completely understood. He admitted

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that "you have to be strong on it" (i.e. speaking "clearly" for the students, as T7 explained). If we assume that T1 is not devaluing the need to be understood, nor that T7 desires any less than T1 to keep it 'real', then why do we have a completely different perspective to accent reduction for the context of teaching? The answer could lie not in vastly different self-perceptions for these two individuals, both of whom admitted to having working-class backgrounds. Rather, we might suggest that how individuals *interpret* their working-class origins will subsequently affect how they perceive themselves in a professional work-based context.

Contrary to T7's acceptance to adopt a reduced accent, T1 expressed a deep-rooted desire to signal his working-class origins through his accent and in doing so, communicate that being proud of them, he feels no need to mask them in the context of higher education. T1's life's journey of having worked in factories "for a few years" and having initially left school with no qualifications was a large part of a personal trajectory that involved being a member of the working class: a background that he desired to reveal, as opposed to hiding it with a reduced accent (one regarded as sounding less 'working-class'). T7, on the other hand, did not reference or imply a desire to retain his otherwise natural accent for teaching, as to him, it was an accent deemed perfectly acceptable, but not for the context of teaching. Thus, while both T1 and T7 might share similar values tied to being true to their origins and being a role model for their students, their different interpretations of what this might mean is a factor in their differing attitudes toward the linguistic enactment of being a teacher.

The case of T20: Linguistic pride

T20's account is taken from the final study. T20 is a high school Art teacher who described her accent as "strong South London". She further described herself as being from Croydon, from "the ghetto" (see quote below), suggesting a working-class background and perhaps an accent that reflects this origin. T20 reported that during training, her mentor had referred to her accent as "unprofessional", to the extent that he instructed T20 to write the word 'water' with a capital 't', in order for her to avoid the use of glottal stops, as heard in the Cockney pronunciation of *bottle* – [bɒʔəl]. For T20, the use of her 'strong' accent,[4] replete with glottal stops, allows for "a bit of reality" (Baratta 2018). T20 explained:

4. While this is a specific reference to a female teacher, the teachers' sex did not come up in any way within the discussions they provided. This is not to suggest it is not important or even relevant to them, but from the reports the teachers provided, identities related to regional- and class-based origins, and the accents forged from such, were clearly key in their minds. Likewise, only one teacher, T27, referenced himself as the only non-white participant, being a black British individual; but race was not referenced at all in terms of his accent modification.

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> I am very proud I am from Croydon, from the 'ghetto' as the kids call it and consequently, I am proud of my accent […] I can very easily relate to students and I have gained great professional relationships through my teaching and it is because I speak differently to their [i.e. the students'] normal teachers. It's because I sound more like them. I am not sure why my mentor in my previous placement was on such a crusade to change me but in the end it just made me feel sad for the students at his school and how they are unable to experience diversity through accents here in the UK.

As with T1, T20 expresses a desire to be true to her roots, in this case reflecting her regional and class-based origins. Clearly, T20 feels that to modify her accent is essentially an attempt to deny the fact that she is from a working-class milieu in Croydon (with the relevant values, norms and dispositions as part of this): she wishes to celebrate this through a broad accent. Likewise, her displeasure at the perceived lack of accent diversity, in her school at least, offers another clue as to why she perhaps desires to retain an accent that is under-represented in her school.

Does this suggest, however, that T7's willingness to modify his accent for teaching is in any way reflective of a feeling of shame regarding his class-based or regional origins? There was nothing in his responses to suggest that this is the case. Rather, T7's interpretation of being the best teacher possible is perhaps reflective of his personal and moral values (Boegershausen, Aquino and Reed 2015), as is the case with T1 and T20. Or, it could be said that T7 is, subconsciously at least, aware of societal attitudes toward broad regional accents as not being ideal for teaching. For T1 and T20, I suggest that being a professional teacher partly involves not pretending to be someone they are not. Thus, they did not agree that there was a need to change their accents. For T7, there was a need to modify his accent, based on a desire to be a (linguistic) "role model", as he put it, of a different kind to his students.

Thus, while T20's mentor referred to the need for her to use "professional language" (as indicated on a written evaluation), T20's desire to be true to her roots *was* professional in her mind, albeit hers was a different conceptualisation of professionalism. From her perspective, an unmodified accent signals to her students that she is approachable precisely because she refuses to put on linguistic *airs and graces*. Interestingly, unlike T1 and T7, T20 is teaching Art at a secondary school. This might suggest a very different context of communication for two possible reasons: first that phonics would not be relevant to her teaching, and second that Art might not be regarded, unlike English, as a subject for which a less broad accent is necessarily desirable. This pertains to educational attitudes that go beyond the simple fact of being a teacher, but extend to the academic level of one's taught subject, as well as to the subject itself. Nonetheless, from T20's mentor's point of view, the teaching profession *in toto* is one in which there are linguistic standards pertaining to accent.

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However, as she explained in the previously quoted excerpt, T20 strongly believes that by not reducing her accent, the students related to her better. In additional comments, she went further to say that she provided a linguistic contrast to the “normal” teachers with “middle-class” speech. In this way, T20 is seen by the students as authentic, and this could act as a powerful means to subsequently find her more approachable. If so, then this would equate to ‘professionalism’ for T20: a professionalism forged from building good relationships with her students.

5. Implications of the study for UK teaching

It is clear from these accounts and the overall results of the studies, that in the UK teaching context, accent can be raised as a relevant topic in professional development. While T20’s mentor referred to her use of a glottal stop as “unprofessional”, all other instances in which mentors instructed trainees to modify their language was based on a need to be understood by the students; this was what most of the participants recalled in their responses, in terms of the mentors’ justification for accent reduction (e.g. T7, T9-T11, T14). It should be pointed out again, however, that it was largely Northern- and Midlands-accented teachers who were told to modify their accents, even if teaching in their home region.

It could be argued, then, that accent reduction is based on a purely practical need, and not prejudiced notions of a standard accent. However, in view of many of the teachers’ reactions, accent reduction, certainly as communicated by some of the mentors, is less about being understood and more about conforming to some kind of notional linguistic standard. From the overall results, this is based on the removal of regional features that identify accents as being particularly broad, as part of the suggested trichotomy, and again reflects linguistic deferral to those in positions of power (Ahearn, 2001) such as mentors in teacher training or job interviewers, here seen within a UK context.

Moreover, taking all the results into consideration, there are some clear implications for accent and teaching in the UK. First, the accent features identified as ‘broad Northern’ suggest that default accents are those which, if not tied to Southern models (e.g. Estuary English), at least do not accentuate Northern features. The main linguistic culprits based on the overall results are monophthongs such as [e:], [o:] and [ʊ], as heard respectively in words such as *face, home* and *bus*. Instead, the modification involves respective sounds such as [eɪ], [oʊ] and [ʌ]. The latter phoneme, as heard in words such as *fun* /fʌn/, is clearly Southern in this context. While purely speculative, it is possible that there is some kind of default move to the South for accent standards, certainly if teaching phonics in that region (indeed, a Midlands teacher who resides in the South was told that if she could not teach

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phonics with Southern pronunciation as in *bath* and *bus*, then it was "best to go back to where (she) came from"). This is also the case for Northern teachers who were told to adopt Southern pronunciation in words such as *bath*, thus defaulting to [bɑ:θ] and not [baθ]. However, does the reverse apply to Southern teachers who teach phonics in the North?

In the absence of official guidance on accent standards, mentors are largely free to determine what is or is not a 'professional' accent. The Teachers Standards only reference the need for teachers to use Standard English, as previously mentioned, but this says nothing at all about the accent employed to use this variety of English. With that in mind, any phonological features (e.g. glottal stops) which mentors, or even teachers, deem to fall outside of a societal notion of accent standardness, would be met with proscription, albeit justified by mentors with a rationale for the teachers to be understood. In the case of T20 in particular, her judgement of her own accent was very different to that of her mentor. While the mentor deemed her use of glottal stops to be unprofessional, T20 clearly viewed such language in positive terms.

I therefore suggest that the negative connotations of broad accents in the UK are perhaps seen as incompatible for the teaching profession, partly based on its associations with middle-class aspiration and social mobility. As such, perhaps the PGCE interviewer expected a middle-class accent, one which I would characterise as a general variety, if not neutral, of a regional accent. Thus, for the working-class individual, identified as such by a broad accent, a move into the teaching profession may well involve linguistic mobility (Donnelly, Baratta and Gamsu 2019), seen with a reduction in accent; this may or may not be an easy transition. Brady (2015: 150) in fact references "the oppression of working-class identities through the derision of language". This may not reflect the PGCE interviewer's views necessarily, but arguably reflects those of T1.

However, I recognise that being told how to behave, act or speak in certain contexts (e.g. customer service positions) need not be regarded by the individual negatively, let alone involve a schism to one's habitus. Individuals may fully accept any changes that need to be made to their outward behaviour if they perceive them as advantageous (e.g. a possible job promotion). Evans (2015: 679) states that "demanded professionalism becomes enacted professionalism", and even 'demands' need not be disagreed with, but simply be regarded as part of the job. In other cases, however, there is the potential for an ideological clash, as was described by the account of T1.

In light of these findings, I argue that there are notional accent standards that exist in the minds of some mentors within UK teacher training; neutral varieties of regional accents, if not for some, RP itself. The implications for these personal notions of standard accents, as reported in this paper, are threefold: first, trainee

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teachers may be expected to modify their (broad) accents, voluntarily or not, for the teaching profession; second, this modification comes at a cost for some teachers who then feel untrue to their personal values (on the basis of their regional and/or class background as expressed through their accent); third, power plays a key role in this professional context, with the trainee teachers having to defer to their mentors in terms of language accommodation.

More work is needed on a larger scale, involving the voices of all relevant parties – teachers, mentors, pupils and even parents. What kind of accent(s) is deemed acceptable overall for the teaching of students, both primary and secondary, in the UK? The Teachers Standards don't say, but perhaps it is time they did, albeit informed by a thorough discussion on this matter in the first instance.

6. Conclusion

This paper has sought to provide a look into the UK teaching profession on the subject of teachers' accents, to see if there are instances where certain accents are regarded as contextually inappropriate. From the overall results, accent is indeed raised as an issue, though for some teachers it is not regarded as problematic. Clearly, broad Northern accents, still indicative to some of a social origin that is inappropriate to teaching (e.g. being common, working-class, uneducated), are the main target for reduction, Southern accents less so. As a result, it has been seen how some teachers and mentors might become engaged in a linguistic struggle, caught between differing ideals as to what it is to be linguistically 'professional'. This can have further implications for teacher training, perhaps even to the extent that a discussion can begin as to whether or not the Teachers' Standards might reference accent in some way, including a new approach toward regional accents in the UK from the perspective of the proposed trichotomy that would allow for more clarity and nuance.

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Appendices

Table 1. Participants' backgrounds from study two

Teacher	Age	Sex	Self-described accent	Taught subject/level
T	30	M	Huddersfield (Yorkshire)	All subjects/primary level
T8	21	M	Stoke-on-Trent	All subjects/primary level
T9	23	F	Mancunian (specifically, from Eccles)	All subjects/primary level
T10	21	F	Broad Mancunian	All subjects/primary level
T11	32	F	Derbyshire-Yorkshire mix	All subjects/primary level
T12	20	M	Warrington, so a Manchester-Liverpool mix	Computing and geography/primary level
T13	21	F	Nottingham	Maths and drama/primary level
T14	40	F	Rochdale	All subjects/primary level
T15	24	F	Self-described as 'not quite posh enough for RP' (T11 is from Portsmouth)	French and Spanish/secondary level
T16	23	M	Liverpool	English/secondary level
T17	27	M	Derry, Northern Ireland	English/secondary level

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Table 2. Participants' backgrounds from study three

Teacher	Age	Sex	Self-described accent	Taught subject/level
T18	21	F	Midlands	Primary, all subjects
T19	20	F	Medway	Primary, all subjects
T20	26	F	South London (quite strong)	Art, secondary
T21	29	F	Irish, Dublin	English, secondary
T22	45	M	Estuary English –Kent	Citizenship, History, Religious Education, secondary
T23	21	F	RP/Lancastrian	Primary, all subjects
T24	27	F	Standard English	French, Italian, secondary
T25	22	M	A mixture between Cockney and Irish (Southern)	Citizenship, Sociology, Politics and Government, secondary
T26	28	F	Mostly RP with a bit of Estuary English	Primary, all subjects
T27	21	M	A happy medium between Estuary English and RP	Primary, all subjects
T28	25	F	Mild Belfast (Northern Ireland)	Drama, secondary
T29	21	F	Southern	Primary, all subjects
T30	20	F	Northern Irish now with a slight English twang/well- spoken Northern Irish	Primary, all subjects
T31	25	F	Irish, but not strong	Primary, all subjects
T32	29	F	Newcastle	Art, secondary

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English-language attitudes and identities in Spain

Accent variation and the negotiation of possible selves

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Language attitude research has increasingly focused on English-language learners' evaluations of various accents and their ability to recognise them. However, little academic attention has been paid to the links between language attitudes and use, or language attitudes and identities. Contextualised within two Spanish universities, this chapter explores learners' English-mediated identities via questionnaires and interviews, and the ways in which they negotiate possible selves within paired interactions. Quantitative data suggest that attitudes can predict use to some extent, but qualitative data provide much deeper insights into the negotiation of identity using rich sociolinguistic repertoires. The chapter concludes with some reflections on the nature of the relationship between language attitudes, language use and second-language identities.

Keywords: accent, attitude, identity, theory of planned behaviour, Received Pronunciation, General American, English, Spain

1. Introduction

Second-language (L2) learning entails a process of identity negotiation whereby learners acquire social and cultural knowledge (to varying degrees) along with the L2 and make use of their sociolinguistic repertoires to enact aspects of their identities. In this chapter, I explore the ways in which English-language learners at university in Spain make use of accent variation to negotiate possible selves in the L2. I present data elicited via questionnaire from a sample of students at the Universities of Salamanca and Valladolid (*N* = 71), as well as paired interview data from a subset of participants (*n* = 6). These data are used to interrogate the links between language attitudes, use, and identities. More specifically, I investigate

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the extent to which learners' accent choices in English are consistent with their evaluations of, and identification with, Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GenAm) speech and speakers. I briefly present the findings of a quantitative analysis of attitude-use relations for which I employed a social-psychological model (Ajzen 1985, 1991, 2005). I then move to an identity-based analysis using the framework of possible selves (Markus and Nurius 1986; Dörnyei 2009). Towards the end of the chapter, I reflect on the usefulness of these models and frameworks, and the ways in which they shape our understanding of the relationship between language attitudes, language use and L2 identities.

2. Theoretical background: Attitudes and identities in L2 learning

Attitude-behaviour relations in language

Language attitudes have been investigated since the 1960s, primarily by researchers taking social-psychological approaches to language, and, similarly, language use has been a primary focus of sociolinguistic research over the same period. Attitudes are often used for explanatory purposes in studies of language variation and change, yet few studies have sought to directly test this relationship despite repeated calls to do so (Ladegaard 2000; McKenzie 2010). In my research, I have attempted to bridge the gap between these disciplines and to address "the notorious question of the low level of correlation between attitudes and actual behaviour" (Agheyisi and Fishman 1970: 140). Focusing on the language attitudes and language use of English-language learners, I sought to determine whether their accent evaluations were linked to their accent choices.

Given the low level of correlation between attitude and behaviour more generally, there has been a marked move in recent decades towards a "systems approach" (Baker 1992: 20), in which attitudes are only one element in a complex system of factors influencing behaviour. Arguably, the most influential of these models is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen 1985, 1991, 2005). It posits that an individual's behaviour is a function of their intention, which is, in turn, a function of their attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norm (the perceived social pressure to engage or not in the behaviour), and perceived behavioural control (the perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour). When applying this model to language-learning, these factors can be measured by eliciting learners' own attitudes towards accents of English, their normative beliefs or the opinions of important others (along with their motivation to comply), and their control beliefs regarding the ease or difficulty of using certain accent features (and the power of

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these control factors). These can then be processed through the model to reach a measure of behavioural intention; i.e., a prediction of learners' language use in the L2. The adapted model used in this study is represented in Figure 1.

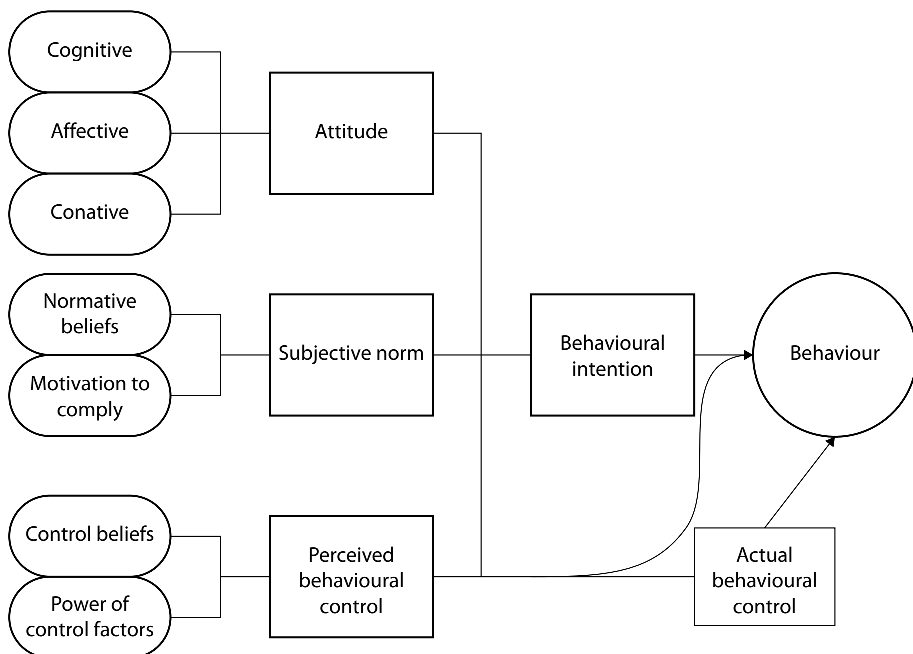

Figure 1. Theory of Planned Behaviour model (adapted from Ajzen 2005)

Despite its complexity, the TPB model does not account for another construct that is intricately linked with language use: identity. It has become one of the principal endeavours of sociolinguists in recent decades to demonstrate the many ways in which we construct and enact our identities through our use of language. Speech is a human behaviour and we vary our speech to position ourselves in the world, using styles or varieties that index social meanings. Thus, while the TPB model can be used to investigate (attitudes towards) certain ways of speaking, it does not facilitate our understanding of the complex identities being continually constructed and negotiated by speakers.

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L2 learner identities

Identity is approached here from poststructuralist and social constructionist perspectives; i.e., as "dynamic, contradictory, and constantly changing across time and place" (Norton 2006: 503) and as emergent, positional, relational and partial, involving indexical processes (Bucholtz and Hall 2005). Language learners, as all language users, are performing "acts of identity" (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985) when using the L2; in other words, doing identity work to position themselves and others in relation to the L2, and to index social meaning through the L2. Accent is a resource for doing this type of identity work, since "[p]ronunciation in another language […] indicates social identity and communicative stance" (Moyer 2014: 12). While identities are understood to be co-constructed within social interactions rather than to exist within individuals (Bucholtz and Hall 2005), the notion of the self is still relevant. We use linguistic, and other symbolic, resources to express "who we are, where we come from, and who we would like to be" (Moyer 2014: 12). The concept of "possible selves", originally proposed by Markus and Nurius (1986: 954), and later developed by Dörnyei as part of his L2 Motivational Self System, refers to individuals' ideas of "what they *might* become, what they *would like* to become, and what they are *afraid of* becoming" (Markus and Nurius 1986, cited in Dörnyei 2009: 11; emphases in original). These possible selves include the "ideal self" (an individual's representation of attributes they would like to possess) and the "ought-to self" (their representation of attributes they believe they ought to possess) (Dörnyei 2009: 13).

Possible selves are real insofar as they are constructed by individuals both discursively and interactionally with others. They are thought to guide behaviour because of the human "psychological desire to reduce the discrepancy between our current and possible future selves" (Dörnyei 2009: 4) and, as such, are also referred to as "future self-guides" (Dörnyei 2009: 13). Indeed, Drummond (2012) demonstrated the relevance of future plans in L2 accent variation. His findings on Polish speakers of English in the UK and their use of ING indicated that "the intention to return to Poland encourages the use of an ING variant, [ɪŋk], that signals this allegiance to the L1 identity" (Drummond 2012: 107). It is the ideal self (e.g., the images these Polish speakers held of themselves having returned to Poland) that typically performs this guiding function (Dörnyei 2009: 13) but it would not be surprising if the ought-to self, based on the expectations of others (family, friends, etc.), also exerted a guiding influence.

The L2 learners involved in this study, then, may be expected to use linguistic features to index language varieties or styles that form part of their ideal or ought-to selves. They may adopt features of enregistered varieties, such as RP or

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GenAm, or may blend features from their extended repertoires to create their own styles (Piller 2002; Rindal 2010). The process of "self-translation" (Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000), or renegotiation of the self, in another language typically involves "ventriloquation" (Bakhtin 1981), whereby learners draw on existing L2 voices in developing their own.

Importantly, "L2 learners have individual goals when it comes to pronunciation" (Moyer 2014: 11) and will not necessarily aim for a particular variety of the L2 or, even, towards any L2 norms. Learners' speech in the L2 may be heavily influenced by the L1, not through an inability to pass for an L1 user but through a lack of desire to do so. As McKenzie noted in his study of Japanese learners of English, L2 speech that is heavily influenced by the L1 can be "a salient marker of in-group identity" (2008: 75) and, in terms of social attractiveness, L1-accented speech can be judged more positively than L2-accented speech. Moyer (2014: 19) rightly points out that being an authentic user of the L2 does not entail sounding "native"; in fact, she notes, "authenticity may be more about sounding *not-quite-* or even *not-at-all* native; not everyone is willing to give up their own identity and history in an effort to blend in with their L2 community". It is also important to consider this type of bidirectionality in relation to the concept of identity, since "identities are constituted not only by what we are but also by what we are not" (Wenger 1998: 164).

Language ideologies in Spain

The status and functions of the numerous language varieties used in Spain has been, and continues to be, a contentious issue. Like in many other national contexts, there is a prevalent standard language ideology, and the historical promotion and dominance of *castellano* (Castilian) continues to shape its population's beliefs about hierarchies of language. It is important to acknowledge the potential influence of this ideology on how Spanish learners of English relate to both their L1 and L2.

Castellano emerged in the powerful medieval kingdom of Castile and spread through the northern regions of the Iberian Peninsula, partly by political force and partly as a lingua franca for people facing great political and social change (Moreno Fernández 2005: 80). The political and economic growth of Castile was reflected in the increased use of *castellano* and the variety's rise in prestige. In fact, the term *castellano* came to be used synonymously with *español* (Spanish) and, in 1924, the *Real Academia Española* (Royal Spanish Academy) substituted *castellano* with *español*; as such, promoting a state-wide, nationalist Spanish linguistic ideology and identity. Founded in 1713, the academy aimed to boost the prestige of *castellano* to the status of the already standardised French and Italian languages. Consistent with a standard language ideology, its original objectives were to *"fijar las voces y*

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vocablos de la lengua castellana en su mayor propiedad, elegancia y pureza" ("to determine the words and terms of the Castilian language in its most correct, elegant and pure form") and to achieve a language that was "*limpia, fija y da esplendor*" ("pure, normative and magnificent").[1]

3. Methods and procedures

In order to explore L2 attitudes, use and identities in Spain, data were elicited by means of questionnaire and paired interviews from a sample of 71 undergraduate students at the Universities of Salamanca (n = 53) and Valladolid (n = 18) in Castile and Leon. The majority of participants identified as female (n = 52) and a small proportion as male (n = 19). Of those participants selected for a more detailed and nuanced analysis (n = 6), four were studying in Salamanca and two in Valladolid, and three identified as female and three as male. More details are provided about this subset of participants in Section 5.

The online questionnaire comprised three main sections: (1) demographic and background information, (2) a verbal guise experiment (the results of which are reported in Carrie 2017, and Carrie and McKenzie 2018), and (3) a theory of planned behaviour component, the results of which are reported in Section 4 of this chapter. The items included in the questionnaire are summarised in Appendix A.

Upon completion of the questionnaire, participants were invited to attend interviews in pairs. The interview data were gathered using a first-wave sociolinguistic approach (Labov 1972), comprising a formal reading task and a casual conversational task. The first task contained thirteen sentences to be read aloud, and the second required participants to select two to three topics from a choice of six to guide their discussions (copies of each task are provided in Appendix B). The topics in the conversational task included (1) weekend activities, (2) travel, (3) media preferences, (4) the usefulness of English, (5) learning English at university, and (6) the themes of the questionnaire.

I chose to focus on learners' language attitudes and use in relation to only two varieties of English speech: RP and GenAm. While this oversimplifies the L2 English learning experience substantially, I consider it to be justified in the sense that learning from the L1 context typically results in limited awareness of and exposure to accents beyond RP and GenAm. These varieties are widely promoted through language teaching and learning resources and – ideological constructs

1. According to the *Real Academia Española* website (www.rae.es), accessed 24th June 2020. My translation.

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though they may be – serve as linguistic beacons towards which learners are drawn and/or guided.

Both when creating the stimuli to be used in the verbal guise experiment and when analysing learners' speech, I focused on four linguistic variables with distinguishable variants in RP and GenAm. There are clearly limitations to reducing accents to only a small set of features and similar studies including other variables may not reach the same findings. The features selected for investigation are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Linguistic variables selected for investigation

Linguistic variable	GenAm variant	RP variant	Examples
intervocalic /t/	[ɾ]	[t]	*attitude, city, it is*
postvocalic /r/	[ɹ]	[ø]	*speaker, verse, share*
LOT vowel	[ɑ]	[ɒ]	*lot, poppy, response*
yod retention/deletion	[uː]	[juː]	*due, nuclear, stew*

My preliminary analysis involved 6 tokens of /t/, 10 tokens of /r/, 6 tokens of LOT, and 8 tokens of yod retention/deletion in the reading task for each of the 71 participants. This was complemented by an analysis of the first 10 tokens of each variable in the conversational data for each of the 71 participants where sufficient tokens were produced. The total number of valid tokens in the conversational data was: 669 tokens of /t/, 710 tokens of /r/, 580 tokens of LOT, and 70 tokens of yod retention/deletion. Following this preliminary analysis, I revisited three interviews to further analyse the speech of six participants. This resulted in the analysis of an additional 166 tokens of /t/ and 281 tokens of /r/ from their conversational data. Throughout, tokens of word-final /t/ followed by a vowel were not counted if there was a pause between word boundaries. Tokens of pre-pausal, word-final /r/ followed by a vowel were counted, since pauses provided the phonetic environment for [ø] rather than linking /r/.

4. Findings on attitude-behaviour relations in language

An adapted TPB model was employed in this study to interrogate the link between language attitudes and language use. Here, I briefly summarise my findings relating to each component of the model – attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and behavioural intention – and discuss the extent to which learners' intention scores were predictive of their use of the aforementioned linguistic variables.

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Attitude scores were computed by weighting learners' cognitive (thoughts), affective (feelings) and conative (behavioural tendencies) scores by the importance they placed on each. Overall attitudes towards RP (M = 65.66, SD = 18.120) were more positive than towards GenAm (M = 62.90, SD = 17.414) but the difference was not statistically significant.

Subjective norm scores were calculated by weighting learners' normative belief scores by their motivation to comply with various referents (i.e., important others): (1) future employers, (2) L1 users of English, (3) English teachers, (4) family, (5) friends, and (6) other learners of English. Comparison of the mean scores demonstrated that future employers, L1 users of English, teachers and family were all thought to be significantly more likely to exert a preference for RP compared to GenAm ($p < 0.01$). Thus, pressure to use RP is perceived as coming from those who are perceived to be in positions of authority, linguistically or otherwise. Participants were significantly more motivated to comply with authoritative figures (teachers, future employers and L1 users of English; $p = .001$), except for family with whom they were significantly less likely to comply compared to all other referents ($p = .002$). The difference between overall subjective norm scores for RP (M = 117.49; SD = 57.344) and GenAm (M = 87.94; SD = 47.644) was statistically significant ($p = .000$), suggesting that learners generally perceived a greater pressure from others to emulate RP in their speech.

Perceived behavioural control was measured by eliciting participants' control beliefs. These include learners' perceptions of their ability to adapt their own speech in English in general, and to use RP and GenAm features in particular. The benefit of including this factor is that it accounts for (perceived) physiological constraints on producing features of L2 accents, which may exert an influence on learners' accent choices beyond any issue of identity. The overall perceived behavioural control scores for RP (M = 4.11; SD = 0.923) and GenAm (M = 4.15; SD = 1.058) did not differ significantly, suggesting that learners generally perceived themselves to have similar levels of control in relation to both language varieties.

Behavioural intention was measured by weighting participants' attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control scores by the importance they placed on each. The difference between mean behavioural intention scores for RP (M = 975.99; SD = 435.791) and GenAm (M = 833.18; SD = 336.238) was statistically significant ($p = .000$), suggesting that participants were more likely to aim towards RP speech. Those participants with higher scores for RP were categorised as 'GB aimers' (n = 49; 69%), and those with higher scores for GenAm as 'US aimers' (n = 22; 31%), in line with Rindal's (2010) categorisations.

Learners' language use in the reading and conversational tasks was then analysed and compared across GB and US aimers. While there was a general pattern of GB aimers using the RP variants and US aimers using the GenAm variants more frequently for /t/, LOT and yod retention/deletion, the differences were mostly

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negligible. The only significant difference was in production of /t/ by aimer status in the reading task, with GB aimers producing significantly more alveolar stops than US aimers ($p = .003$) and US aimers producing significantly more alveolar taps than GB aimers ($p = .002$). It is worth noting that the /r/ variable patterned differently to the others, with a clear overall preference for the GenAm variant, and a similar distribution for both GB aimers and US aimers.

The findings reported here, albeit informative, led me to question the usefulness of the TPB model for evidencing a link between language attitudes and language use. The fact that it accurately predicted /t/ production in the more formal reading task is certainly worthy of note but its inability to predict use of /t/ conversationally, or any of the other variables, suggests that, at the very least, the model needs to be further refined to account for other mediating factors. What the quantitative analysis did reveal, though, was a stark contrast in production patterns for intervocalic /t/ and postvocalic /r/. I decided to explore this further taking a less rigid and mechanical approach, and moved to investigating the ways in which learners used their sociolinguistic repertoires to negotiate their L2 identities interactionally.

5. Findings on identity and the negotiation of possible selves

Here, I report the findings of an identity-based analysis of selected participants' use of /t/ and /r/. I employ Dörnyei's (2009) possible selves framework to focus on specific cases, similar to Lamb (2009) and Kim (2009). A case study approach, much like ethnographic approaches, enables us to better "understand the importance of social factors in pronunciation acquisition and the pronunciation choices made by L2 users" (LeVelle and Levis 2014: 98). I then explore learners' production of these two variables during the interviews, allowing me to ascertain the extent to which they were using accent variation to index the attributes of their possible selves and social meaning in the L2 more generally. Three interviews, i.e. three pairs of participants, were selected for this more nuanced analysis of L2 identities in interactional contexts. These six participants were of interest, as their accents were noticeably more L2-oriented than all other participants in the larger sample. All six were assigned pseudonyms: Ana (female, US aimer) and Bernardo (male, GB aimer) from interview VLL002; Carmen (female, GB aimer) and Dani (female, GB aimer) from interview SLM007; and, lastly, Enrique (male, GB aimer) and Fernando (male, GB aimer) from interview SLM013. They are mostly GB aimers, as were the majority of participants in the larger sample. In two of the interviews (SLM007 and SLM013), participants matched for gender and aimer status, while participants in the other interview (VLL002) did not match on either factor. All participants had selected their own interview partners and constituted friendship pairs.

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Table 2. Tokens of each linguistic variant across task 1 (reading) and task 2 (conversational)

Participant	Task 1				Task 2			
	[t]	[ɾ]	[ø]	[ɹ]	[t]	[ɾ]	[ø]	[ɹ]
Ana	1	5	4	6	8	12	11	29
Bernardo	6	0	0	10	53	5	4	82
Carmen	4	2	0	10	5	8	0	16
Dani	5	1	5	5	7	7	11	9
Enrique	6	0	3	7	33	3	21	41
Fernando	4	2	4	6	14	11	26	31

Table 2 shows these six learners' use of /t/ and /r/ across the two tasks. It is noteworthy that none of the participants – except for Ana, the US aimer – consistently produced higher frequencies of the /t/ and /r/ variants linked to their aimer status. Moreover, none of the participants – not even Ana – produced exclusively those variants associated with their aimer status. All participants employed all four variants, albeit to varying degrees.

In the following sections, I discuss each pair of participants in turn and their use of accent variation in English to construct and negotiate their L2 identities. Throughout the discussion, I demonstrate the role of prevailing ideologies of the standard and the native speaker in shaping these learners' attitudes, use and identities. I also compare learners with regard to agency, or the extent to which they assume an active or passive role in the performance of L2 speech.

Ana and Bernardo: The ought-to self and the search for authenticity

Ana and Bernardo are, by far, the most contrasting pair of participants. Ana is a US aimer who consistently opts for GenAm variants of /t/ and /r/, whereas Bernardo is a GB aimer with near-categorical use of RP /t/ and GenAm /r/. While Ana's production of /t/ and /r/ is consistent with her aimer status, Bernardo appears to be a wholesale adopter of individual sounds ([t] and [ɹ]) from his L2 repertoire.

When reflecting on her speech during the interview, Ana indicates that her "pronunciation has been changing to American English" (lines 335–336) despite the fact that she has taken long trips to England every summer since she was a child. In doing so, she sets herself on a trajectory towards American English, and goes on to orientate herself away from British English speech entirely by saying "I've never had a mmm Bri[t]ish pronunciation although I travelled to to England befo[ɹ]e coming to unive[ɹ]si[t]y" (lines 338–340), notably using [t] twice in these assertions.

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Ana explains this transition towards American English by positioning herself and others in her class as passive learners, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

> *no[ɾ] all the students in ou[ɹ] class has chosen it because they wanted* but because for example when we sta[ø]ted unive[ø]si[t]y eh the fi[ø]st yea[ɹ] [.] eh the phone[ɾ] ic class we had it w- eh *the teache[ɹ] spoke American English* […] I think *it has influenced us very very much* (lines 315–322; my emphases)

> eh *the pronunciation the teache[ɹ] used* was tha[t] and I think 'til now that we have been three yea[ø]s at unive[ø]si[t]y (lines 326–328; my emphasis)

> I think *almost every teache[ɹ] with some exceptions em have spoken to us in in American English* (lines 330–331; my emphasis)

In doing so, Ana highlights the influence of her teachers at university on her accent and suggests an implicit expectation to use American English in the classroom. This nurtures her ought-to self; or a version of Ana that possesses the attributes that others deem important.

Interestingly, though, Ana's use of /t/ and /r/ varies in the above excerpts; RP variants are produced when she is reflecting on her time at university in general, whereas GenAm variants are used when specifically referring to the teachers and students in her class. If we consider this alongside her use of the alveolar stop when reflecting on childhood travel, Ana seems to employ features of RP when performing a past self. Her use of GenAm, on the other hand, seems bound to an ought-to self. She also shows her awareness and concern with the opinions of others when she later says:

> when you travel anywhe[ɹ]e whe[ɹ]e mmm the majori[t]y of people is Bri[ɾ]ish o[ɹ] speak Bri[ɾ]ish English that when you speak American English they can't help laugh (lines 342–345)

Once more, she orientates away from British English speakers and, this time, implies a negative reaction towards her American English speech. Although she goes on to evaluate this scenario as "funny" (line 348), her preoccupation with the views of others is evident. Ana plans to use English mainly for career purposes and is considering a career as an English-language teacher; thus, it is no surprise that she places great value on the opinions of others regarding her use of English – in particular, her own teachers. She is guided by her ought-to self and the competing views of her teachers at university and the imagined community of British English speakers are likely to explain the overall variation in her use of RP and GenAm forms.

Bernardo, on the other hand, positions himself as a GB aimer by distancing himself from those in the class who use American English:

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> so bu[t] I think that m- most of *them* eh have chosen the American option because I I think *they* consider it mo[ø]e [.] *they* consider it easie[ø] [.] I think bu[t] I'm not really su[ø]e *fo[ø] me I* think the Bri[t]ish accent is is mo[ø]e difficult
> (lines 272–275; my emphases)

He also mentions, here, that American English phonology is believed to be easier than British English phonology. Interestingly, he consistently produces RP variants of /t/ and /r/ throughout this section, despite explicitly discussing the difficulties he encounters with British English.

This duality of ease versus difficulty continues to be a theme for Bernardo throughout the interview, and his discourse centres around /t/ and /r/, as the next excerpt illustrates:

> i[t] is also true tha[t] it's a bi[t] easie[ø] to lea[ø]n eh mmm the American accent because of mainly because of the Rs because the American people a[ø]e mo[ø]e mmm coherent I think in te[ø]ms of pronouncing all the Rs tha[t] i[t] is I think easie[ø] for us because to make the schwa every time there is a an R it's it's a very difficult but the American people also have eh the tap on the Ts "la[ɾ]e[ɹ]" [.] "unive[ɹ]si[t]y" eh that's a bit difficult (lines 292–304)

It is noteworthy in this excerpt that Bernardo uses mostly RP variants, except for when he is explicitly referring to the variables or performing GenAm speech. The first mention of "the Rs" is produced as [ði aɹs], whereas the second mention aligns with his pronunciation of /r/ more generally: [ði ɑːs]. His return to the [ɹ] variant in the final section can be explained by its linking function and its use in the performance of GenAm speech.

Bernardo's pronunciation goals are not based exclusively on ease or difficulty of production, though. His responses indicate his ideological stance towards accents in the L2. He states:

> I find the American accent easier to understand and to speak, but sometimes I extrapolate the fact that for me American Spanish is a bit unpleasant and I do not like it, so to be coherent sometimes I think that I should choose the British accent as being the "real" and original English accent.

Here, Bernardo draws on the standard language ideology of his L1 (see section 2.3) when positioning himself in relation to the L2. In doing so, he outlines "historical authenticity" (Carrie and McKenzie 2018) as an attribute of his ideal self. This can be described as the desire to use a variety of the L2 which has long been promoted as the high-status variety and which represents the perceived birthplace of the language. This phenomenon of English English (and RP as its figurehead) being perceived to be the purest has been observed by other researchers in Spain (Mompeán-González 2004) and Austria (Dalton-Puffer et al. 1997).

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Bernardo continues to construct an authentic ideal self by referring to the related attributes of someone who speaks "good" (line 379), "neutral" (lines 363 and 384) and "standa[ɹ]d English" (lines 357–358), the last of which he juxtaposes with an "American accent" (line 356). He uses [ɹ] in "standa[ɹ]d English" despite being a GB aimer and clearly using the term in reference to British English speech. There appears to be a discrepancy here between an ideal self that is centred around RP and a current self that experiences difficulty in producing [ø] for /r/. Furthermore, an additional attribute of Bernardo's ideal self is coherence; he mentions it when attempting to reconcile his views about linguistic variation in Spanish and English, and again when evaluating American phonology. His blended production can, therefore, be interpreted as a struggle to align his possible selves. He constructs an authentic self that is an English-language teacher and orientates towards RP, as well as a coherent self that communicates with ease and blends use of [t] for /t/ and [ɹ] for /r/.

In summary, Ana and Bernardo are guided in different ways by their possible selves. Ana does not take an agentive stance towards her own language use; instead, she constructs an ought-to self around the expectations of others, especially her teachers. Bernardo, on the other hand, takes greater ownership of his accent choices. These are influenced partly by his own linguistic preferences and partly by the prevailing standard language ideology in Spain, creating a degree of tension between his coherent and authentic ideal selves. This notion of authenticity is explored further in the next section where both learners draw on standard-language and native-speaker ideologies when negotiating their L2 identities.

Carmen and Dani: Sounding well-polished, sounding like a native speaker

Carmen and Dani are both GB aimers but classifying them in this way disguises what is a quite fluid and varied use of RP and GenAm features. Carmen, perhaps attentive to the formality of each task, uses more [t] when reading and more [ɾ] when conversing but is a categorical user of [ɹ] throughout. Dani leans towards RP variants but has balanced use of /r/ when reading and /t/ when conversing. Both learners orientate towards British English language and culture but in noticeably different ways and to varying degrees.

Carmen, when discussing her media preferences, positions herself as a consumer of British music and takes a negative affective stance towards American music:

> I always hea[ɹ]d to Bri[t]ish music [...] I have some American groups bu[t] only a few songs I don't I don't quite like [...] American music (lines 133–137)

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Later, when discussing future travel, she resumes this negative stance by saying that she does not find the United States "appealing" (line 200) as a destination "because it hasn't a lo[ɾ] of history it's […] rela[t]ively new" (lines 202–204). Carmen's preference for places with "a lo[ɾ] of history" (line 194) suggests a similar preoccupation with historical authenticity to Bernardo (interview VLL002) and, as I will go on to demonstrate, this search for authenticity is once again accompanied by a discourse that perpetuates a standard language ideology.

Carmen's ideal self is an English-language teacher and she specifies that the most useful accent for achieving this goal would be a British English one. She appears self-conscious about her accent when she notes that: "[her] pronunciation is not well-polished". Carmen's representation of a "polished" pronunciation is based on RP, given that she also evaluated RP users as speaking "smoothly and rounded". Through these comments, she discursively constructs an ideal self that has these attributes associated with RP and a current self that does not. This discrepancy may explain the overall lack of RP variants in Carmen's speech; she positions herself as a less competent L2 user and, accordingly, orientates towards variants that are closer to the production of /t/ and /r/ in the L1.

While Carmen assumes the position of an outsider (or, at the very most, peripheral member) with respect to the L2, Dani carefully constructs an identity rooted in the L2 culture through her use of L2 variants. She does this primarily through discussion of her media, literature and music preferences, as shown in the following excerpts.

> 'cause I like to watch movies and TV series in English but now um She[ø]lock Holmes as well now I'm trying to listen to Bri[t]ish TV sh- shows so tha[ɾ] I can get the accent […] bu[ɾ] um I usually watched um American shows so I kind of like Friends and How I Met You[ɹ] Mother as well […] but now I'm I'm very addicted to Game of Thrones which has been previews the second season has sta[ø]ted this week (lines 79–89)

In this excerpt, there is a move from RP to GenAm variants and back again, which mirrors a move from the mention of a television drama set in England to a series set in the USA and back to one centring around characters with predominantly British English accents. GenAm variants are used when naming *How I Met Your Mother* and on the function words "but" and "that", but RP variants are used consistently in content words. In this excerpt, Dani also highlights her agency by explicitly stating that she watches British television shows to "get the accent".

> um books I dunno I kind of read every kind of genre there is um I like Bri[t]ish novelists like […] Vi[ø]ginia Woolf […] and J K Rowling and […] Tolkien and that stuff bu[ɾ] um I don't have like a preference 'cause maybe I like the the theme and

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> not the autho[ø] […] and I guess it's the same with movies and bands I think at the beginning I used to listen to more American bands 'cause they we[ɹ]e mo[ø]e popula[ø] […] but now I think that the Bri[t]ish influence is ge[t]ing bigge[ø] so now I have like mo[ɹ]e Bri[t]ish music in my ipod (lines 107–123)

There is a focus on British influences in this excerpt and a corresponding predominance of RP features. In providing such detail around her preferences, Dani is actively presenting herself as fully embedded in L2 culture(s).

Dani's comments in the questionnaire reveal that integrativeness and passing for a native speaker are core attributes of her ideal self. She is one of a minority of participants (32%) who prioritised personal communication and interaction with L1 users over learning English for their careers, and she qualifies this by saying "I've always *loved* the language and the culture; I guess it has more to do with *who I am* and *who I want to be in the future* than just for career purposes" (my emphases). This comment confirms her representation of the English language, and its imagined community of speakers, as interwoven with her possible selves. She then makes mention of her orientation towards the UK and its language varieties: "I am very *fond* of the different accents of the country and the way in which they talk" (my emphasis). This psychological identification with the L2 community, which is largely affective (as indicated by "loved" and "fond"), is a core aspect of integrativeness (Gardner 2001).

Dani's GB aimer status aligns closely with the identity that she constructs in her speech and responses. That said, her L2 identity is by no means bound to RP; her ideal self is integrated in the L2 community and sounds like an L1 user of English, regardless of accent:

> To be honest I am more keen of Scottish and Irish accents, but any accent would be ok for me *as long as I do sound as if I were a native speaker*, no matter if it is American, Canadian or Australian English (my emphasis)

Here, Dani presents a range of possible selves with different accents, some of which she considers to be more ideal than others. But, importantly, she makes clear that passing for a "native speaker" takes priority over having any particular L2 accent. As Piller notes, sounding native is often a measure of high achievement for learners themselves, stemming from an ideology that authenticates and privileges so-called "native speakers" based on perceived linguistic heritage and expertise (2002: 181).

What unites Carmen and Dani is an orientation towards RP but what distinguishes them is the extent to which they are invested in the L2 and in that particular variety. On the one hand, Carmen's ideal self is centred around RP but she positions her current self as embedded in the L1 culture and, thus, far from achieving her goal accent. On the other hand, Dani's ideal self is fully integrated into the L2

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community and passes for a "native speaker". By making use of her linguistic repertoire and showcasing her cultural knowledge, Dani actively negotiates her L2 group membership; as Marx notes, "[w]hile a person is learning to act as a legitimate community member (at the periphery), she is concurrently participating in that community, and thereby becoming a member of the community" (2002: 267). This high level of agency is not present in the next case, where I argue that the learners' language use conforms to social norms owing to the fact that their ideal selves are not constructed around linguistic attributes.

Enrique and Fernando: Normative conformity and the lack of a linguistic ideal self

Enrique and Fernando have more in common than the participants in the previous interviews, in terms of both being GB aimers and leaning towards the RP variant of /t/ and the GenAm variant of /r/. The difference between these two learners and their L2 identities lies in their motivations for learning English, including their future career plans. Enrique is learning English mainly for personal communication and interaction with native speakers, while Fernando is learning mainly for career purposes. Fernando is considering a career as an English-language teacher, whereas Enrique shows no interest in this career path. Both maintain that British English is the most useful variety for achieving their personal or career-based goals.

At the very beginning of the interview and in response to the first question, Enrique establishes a consistent pattern of using [t] and [ɹ]:

> I like ge[t]ing up la[t]e but not very la[t]e and I spend most of the time on the inte[ɹ]ne[t] and talking to friends on Facebook or or if I have time and I'm not ti[ɹ]ed to look for any series on the inte[ɹ]ne[t] I watch Gossip Gi[ɹ]l (lines 87–91)

Both speakers continue with this distribution of features throughout the interview, but there are two instances of Enrique adopting RP-only or GenAm-only features when assuming certain roles.

Firstly, Enrique assumes the role of interviewer and directs the same question towards Fernando twice. In lines 191–192, he asks:

> what do you think about the abili[t]y to speak English will be useful in the futu[ø]e?

Either in an attempt to reword the question or to get Fernando's attention, Enrique then asks:

> how do you think the abili[t]y to speak English will be useful to you in the futu[ø]e? (lines 199–200)

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On both occasions, Enrique uses exclusively RP variants of /t/ and /r/. I interpret this as him drawing on the variety that he associates with educational contexts when taking an authoritative and directive stance towards Fernando and their interaction.

Later in the interview, Enrique seeks to demonstrate his awareness of and knowledge about American and British accents of English. When he assumes the voices of American and British speakers, he adapts his speech accordingly:

> because Americans always say "responsibili[ɹ]ies" that's why I got […] "responsibili[ɹ]ies", "a[ɹ] all", it's "like this and like tha[t]" and […] like "take i[ɹ] easy" […] bu[t] English a[ɹ]e mo[ø]e "like this and like that" (lines 335–345)

What is interesting here is that, contrary to his production elsewhere in the interview, almost all tokens of /t/ in this excerpt are performed as [ɹ]. This could be to do with L1 transfer, given that [ɾ] is an allophone of /r/ in Spanish (Carr 2020: 196). But, given that it only occurs in this excerpt, it is more likely that Enrique (as with other participants) perceives similarities in the production of [ɾ] and [ɹ] and purposely shifts the place and manner of articulation to distinguish this assumed American voice from his own speech in the L2. Intriguingly, he achieves a similar effect by lowering his pitch in the second "like this and like that", distinguishing a British voice from both the American voice and his own. Enrique appears to be ventriloquating at this point in the interview; in other words, appropriating the voices of others to enable the construction of meaning in the L2 and to facilitate the emergence of his own L2 voice (Marx 2002: 270). Generally speaking, Enrique takes an uninvested stance towards English and towards the interaction as a whole, encapsulated by statements such as "I don't have a favouri[ɾ]e anything" (lines 70–71), "I have responsibili[t]ies bu[t] I flout them" (line 108), and "I haven't finished my studies because uh I don't uh I can't find a goal" (lines 263–264). He positions himself with the minority of participants (13%) who show no interest in language teaching by stating that he is studying English "only fo[ø] [travel] because uh I don't want to be an English teacher o[ø] wha[ɾ]eve[ø]" (lines 240–242). Enrique does not actively and discursively construct an ideal self during the interview but this does not mean that he is not doing important identity work. As noted earlier, identities are constructed around both what we are and what we are not (Wenger 1998). By positioning himself as someone who does not want to become an English-language teacher and whose language-learning is not orientated towards a particular goal, Enrique constructs a non-committal, transient persona. His blended use of RP and GenAm can also be interpreted as non-committal, and any moves towards one or other variety as highly contextualised performances of specific roles.

Fernando, however, actively and discursively constructs various possible selves during the interview. He talks about having studied, played and taught music and the fact that he "would like to wo[ø]k in an o[ɹ]chestra" (lines 269–270). He then goes on to state that "it's not time fo[ɹ] cultu[ɹ]e" (line 273) and that he is,

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therefore, considering “teaching Spanish o[ɹ] wha[ɾ]eve[ɹ] bu[ɾ] abroad no- not here” (line 276). He is also considering a career as an English-language teacher. As such, his ideal self has a career involving music but he presents Spanish- and English-language teachers as possible and, perhaps, ought-to selves, in the sense that he may have no other choice.

Fernando regularly refers to the utility of English, describing it as “useful” (line 201) and emphasising that it helps you to “ge[ɾ] a job” or when “travelling” (line 211). He also describes it as “popular [.]” (line 209), hinting at a perceived pressure to conform to established norms by learning the language. A key attribute of his possible selves is using English, either for work or travel purposes, but these selves do not seem to use a particular variety. Fernando, like Enrique, has blended use of variants with a higher overall frequency of [t] and [ɹ]. Again, this may be interpreted as taking a non-committal stance but with less agency, given that speaking English is merely an attribute of a possible and, perhaps, ought-to self.

Unlike the participants in interviews VLL002 and SLM007, Enrique and Fernando do not present ideal selves with language-based attributes. They largely conform to normative beliefs and practices, in that they claim to prefer and pursue British English, to which they have been more exposed through education. Their discourse is consistent with the prevailing standard language ideology of English as an L2 within Spanish and other contexts, representing British accents as “neutral” (Enrique) and “clearer” (Fernando) compared to American accents, which sound “different” (Enrique). At the same time, their more frequent use of [ɹ] for /r/ aligns with the practice of other learners (e.g., Bernardo in interview VLL002) who find this variant easier to produce. Enrique and Fernando’s aimer status is indicative of their conformity to established linguistic ideologies and norms, and their blended use of the variants is indicative of their ideal selves lacking any linguistic attributes and, therefore, not exerting a notable influence upon their language use.

6. Conclusions and reflections

This research into English-language attitudes and identities in Spain and the ways in which learners in this context use accent variation in the L2 to negotiate possible selves has shown that L2 identities are highly individual and contextualised. The case studies outline the language use of six learners, each of whom varies in their level of agency when speaking in English and each of whom is guided by standard-language or native-speaker ideologies to a greater or lesser extent. For some learners, sounding like their teachers or like L1 users takes priority. For others, using a high-status, historically authentic, standard variety takes priority. For yet others, not committing to any particular variety takes priority.

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The research has also highlighted some key theoretical and methodological issues. Firstly, we cannot assume that learners of English desire to pass for L1 English users or orientate towards RP or GenAm specifically. The participants in this study blended variants from their repertoires and, in the process, assigned new meanings to these variants within the L1 context, as Rindal's (2010) participants did in Norway. Stylistic practice varied in subtle ways between speakers, as illustrated in Section 5. Secondly, the TPB model predicted learners' use of /t/ and, with further refinement, may prove to be useful in predicting learners' speech more generally. However, the findings reported here suggest that expectancy-value models such as these wrongly assume that L2 learners all follow similar patterns and they conceal the complex identity work being done within language-learning settings. For example, we may encounter two learners who hold similar attitudes, feel similar pressures, and have similar levels of competence but it is who they want to be in the L2 (or not, as the case may be) that ultimately guides their language use. Future studies could benefit from investigating the discursive construction of L2 identities using data elicited by means of semi- or unstructured interviews and observations of language use across time and contexts. The identity-based analysis presented here is merely a snapshot based on a few learners at a particular point in time, but offers some useful insights and a point of comparison for other work on L2 identities.

When dealing with language attitudes, language use and (L2) identities, the concept of identity must be situated at the core of any analyses. Language varieties and styles, through various indexical processes, come to represent identities within our societies and cultures (e.g., RP as the well-polished, smooth, neutral speech of people who we may choose to describe in similar ways). Individuals form attitudes towards their representations of these identities (i.e., what they think an RP speaker *sounds like* or *is like*) and may adapt their language use accordingly through convergent or divergent "acts of identity" (Le Page and Tabouret-Keller 1985). In other words, individuals construct their identities by drawing on the variety, or style-specific identities that exist in wider society. In turn, this identity work being done at an individual level also contributes to the ongoing construction and negotiation of varieties – and style-specific identities – at a societal level.

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Appendix A. Summary of questionnaire items

Demographics	**Verbal guise experiment**	**Theory of planned behaviour**
Name	**Block 1 (female RP speaker)**[a]	Conative rating 3
Gender	*Cognitive ratings*[b]	Conative rating 4
Birth year	*Variety recognition*	Conative rating 5
Home town/city	*Affective ratings*[c]	Conative rating 6
Nationality	*Conative rating 1*	Subjective norm 1
Mother tongue	*Conative rating 2*	Subjective norm 2
University	*Direct behavioural intention 1*	Subjective norm 3
Qualification	**Block 2 (male RP speaker)**[a]	Subjective norm 4
Year of study	*Cognitive ratings*[b]	Subjective norm 5
Degree subject	*Variety recognition*	Subjective norm 6
Years learning English	*Affective ratings*[c]	Motivation to comply
Learner orientation	*Conative rating 1*	Control factors
Variety for fulfilling orientation	*Conative rating 2*	Power of control factors
Intention to become English teacher	*Direct behavioural intention 1*	Direct control 1
Variety for becoming teacher	**Block 3 (female GenAm speaker)**[a]	Direct control 2
Level of English (CEFR)	*Cognitive ratings*[b]	Direct control 3
English-language media exposure	*Variety recognition*	Direct control 4
English-language media preference	*Affective ratings*[c]	Direct control 5
Visits to GB and/or USA	*Conative rating 1*	Direct behavioural intention 2
Time spent in GB and/or USA	*Conative rating 2*	Direct behavioural intention 3
Contact with L1 English speakers	*Direct behavioural intention 1*	Direct behavioural intention 4
Nationality of L1 English speakers	**Block 4 (male GenAm speaker)**[a]	Weighting (model components)
Variety taught/spoken by teachers	*Cognitive ratings*[b]	
	Variety recognition	
	Affective ratings[c]	
	Conative rating 1	
	Conative rating 2	
	Direct behavioural intention 1	
	Valence of traits	
	Weighting (attitude components)	

a. All blocks in this section of the questionnaire were randomised.
b. Cognitive traits included responsible, serious, confident, arrogant, calm, gentle, kind, intelligent, boring.
c. Affective traits included liking, trust, boredom, identification, relaxation, interest, irritation and feeling overwhelmed.

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Appendix B. Paired interview tasks

Reading task **(emphases on the linguistic variables included in the analyses)**:

1. English is spoken in a l**ot** of different countries.
2. Unive**r**si**t**y is the best place to study languages.
3. I**t** is essential to have a good a**tt**it**u**de when studying a language.
4. I like languages, bu**t** I think they'**re** difficult to study.
5. I am interested in othe**r** subjects, too.
6. St**u**dents have no resp**o**nsibili**t**ies, so they can travel.
7. The people you really need to have around you a**re** you**r** friends.
8. Fo**r** me, going out to ba**r**s with friends is fun.
9. **O**n T**ue**sdays and Thu**r**sdays, my friends and I sing in karaoke c**o**mpetitions.
10. I kn**ew** my friends would be happy when I appea**r**ed at the nightclub last weekend.
11. iT**u**nes sells p**o**pula**r** music.
12. YouT**u**be makes it p**o**ssible to view and post videos.
13. The n**ew**s said that Google is d**ue** to release a n**ew** iPhone app in 2012.

Conversational task:

1. What do you like to do at weekends?
2. If you could travel anywhere, where would you go and why?
3. How do you think the ability to speak English will be useful to you in the future?
4. What do you like and dislike about learning English formally at university?
5. Which topics in the questionnaire were particularly relevant to you?
6. What are your preferred television series / programmes / shows, books, movies / films, video games, bands / groups / DJs / artists, and why do you like them?

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PART 3

Accents in the media and the workplace

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From *I'm the One That I Want* to *Kim's Convenience*

The paradoxes and perils of implicit in-group "yellowvoicing"

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In this chapter, I examine the "implicit yellowvoice performances" by Asian American and Asian Canadian performers as well as the racial implications of such performative acts. In particular, I pay close attention to Margaret Cho's "Mom" persona in stand-up comic routines and Ins Choi's "Appa" (Dad) character in *Kim's Convenience* (played by Paul Sun-Hyun Lee in CBC's sitcom adaptation of the play). Ultimately, I argue that while accents play a key role in dramatizing generational and cultural differences between immigrant parents and their assimilated children, the excessive use of exaggerated accents (faked by native speakers, members of speech outgroup) contributes to perpetuating "employment discrimination, anxiety about miscegenation, the necessity of misrecognition, mocking humor…and Orientalist cultural imaginings" (Ono and Pham, 2009).

Keywords: yellowvoice, Asian identity in media, Asian American performance, in-group/out-group, humor, Margaret Cho, Ins Choi, *Kim's Convenience*

1. Introduction

In *Orientals: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*, Robert G. Lee argues that "John Chinaman," an archetypal figure in 19th century minstrelsy theater, was defined by "cultural excess" in three areas: language, food, and hair (1999: 36–41). While contemporary representations of Asians or Asian Americans – on stage on in films and television series – lack the antiquated images of exotic foodways and the hairstyle known as the queue, characters' pidginized English and foreign accents continue to define the mediated identity of this minority group in the United States; an ethically diverse yet demographically reductive community that has been

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simultaneously envied (for their educational and economic success) and blamed (for their perpetual foreignness and excess of culture). This contradictory attitude toward Asian Americans as an ethnically assimilable yet racially excludable identity has delimited the range of big and small screen roles available to them, relegating many talented performers to stereotypical parts such as Madame Butterflies, dragon ladies, prostitutes, maids, servants, Fu Manchus, kung fu masters, and foreign exchange students.

Henry Yu's *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern Americas* includes an intriguing Hollywood anecdote attributed to Beulah Ong Kwoh who, under the stage name Beulah Quo, filled a long career with supporting actress roles after being hired as an Asian dialect coach for Henry King's *Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing* (1955) to help Jennifer Jones sound more "Chinese" for her Eurasian doctor part. In 1990, she received the Association of Asian/Pacific American Artists (AAPAA)'s lifetime achievement award for her contributions to notable films such as *The Sand Pebbles* (1966) and *Chinatown* (1974). Despite that community recognition, Quo (playing a Chinese maid) had only one speaking line in the latter film, directed by Roman Polanski. Yu describes her fleeting appearance in this way:

> At the climax of the movie, as [Jack Nicholson's character Jake Gittes] is frantically looking for [Faye Dunaway's character Evelyn Cross Mulwray], he enters the house where Quo is working and asks for [her]. In response to Nicholson's query, Beulah Ong Kwoh, born and raised in Stockton, California, an English literature major with a master's degree in sociology from the University of Chicago, answers in accented English: "She no here". (Yu 2001: 172)

This and many other examples of ingroup yellowvoicing – a reference to the complex dynamics in which accent-free, native-speaker Asian American performances are hired to imitate stereotypical foreign accents of "fresh-off-the-boat" (FOB) Asian immigrants for the sake of professional survival – present a critical conundrum to scholars across multiple disciplines (e.g., ethnic studies, media studies, sociology, etc.). As someone with a vested interest in the primary role of language in the construction of racial otherness and exclusion, I often ask myself: When does yellowvoice stop being yellowvoice? Is it when actors of Asian descent (instead of Caucasian actors in yellowface) are doing it? Does "correct casting" in appearance provide an alibi for one speech group (native speakers) to substitute for another (second-language speakers)? In *Asian Americans and the Media*, Kent A. Ono and Vincent N. Pham define implicit yellowface as "both stage and social actors looking, sounding, and acting according to some notion of normativized, authentic standard of Asianness." In attempting to create this "pre-determined and arbitrary notion of authenticity," implicit yellowface performers are forced to "downplay their own

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existential identities and experiences" as exemplified by Beulah Quo's performance in *Chinatown* (Ono and Pham 2009: 54).

In this chapter, I examine "implicit yellowvoice performances" by Asian American and Asian Canadian performers as well as the racial implications of such performative acts. In particular, I pay close attention to Korean American comedian Margaret Cho's "Mom" persona in her stand-up routines and Korean Canadian playwright Ins Choi's "Appa" (Dad) character in his 2011 play *Kim's Convenience* (as played by the original cast member Paul Sun-Hyun Lee in CBC's sitcom adaptation of the play). I argue that, while accents play a key role in dramatizing generational and cultural differences between immigrant parents and their assimilated children, the excessive use of exaggerated accents (faked by native speakers, members of a speech outgroup) further perpetuates "employment discrimination, anxiety about miscegenation, the necessity of misrecognition, mocking humor…and Orientalist cultural imaginings" (Ono and Pham 2009: 53). As Gaëlle Planchenault argues in another linguistic, national context (ethnic voices in French films), stylized cinematic performances of accented language by second-generation children of immigrants allow them to "deny affiliation" with and "distantiate themselves" from their foreign-born parents (2015: 98). Cho's stand-up comedy and Choi's play take different approaches to accented speech. In the former, the mother's FOB accent and mannerisms are a conduit through which the queer-identifying Korean American comedian's bonding with her LGBTQ fan base and fellow native English speakers is solidified. Choi's play elevates the accented first-generation immigrant to the status of a classic archetype of an everyday hero while his vernacular speech is, to a certain degree, dignified as the language of commerce. However, both characters – impersonated by accentless performers – are implicitly affiliated with regressive ideologies (homophobia, racism, and patriarchy), which function to stigmatize the accent as a marker of unassimilable alterity in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

2. To do or not to do: Asian accents performed by native speakers

The institutional pressure on native-English speaker actors of Asian descent to impersonate derogatory yellowvoice to make ends meet as struggling part-time or temporary laborers residing on the bottom rungs of the entertainment industry's star system is well-documented not only in oral histories and popular journalism but also in self-representing narratives of Asian American media. In Canadian Chinese filmmaker Mina Shum's indie drama *Double Happiness* (1994), Jade (Sandra Oh), a 22-year-old aspiring actress who is caught between traditional family expectations and her individual aspirations, auditions for a small waitress part.

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A Caucasian male producer reacts to her standard English reading, stating, "Nice. Very nice. So Jade…Why don't we try something different this time. Maybe with a bit of swing. Try with an accent." Taking the potentially offensive demand humorously, a smiling Jade flippantly imitates a French accent, "Ah…what kind of accent do you want me to do? A Parisian accent?" When her joke is met with the cold blank stares of the audition team, Jade becomes somber and replies in yellowvoice to her listeners' nodding approval, "Yes, a very good Chinese accent I can do for you." As Edward R. O'Neill aptly puts it, "Because Jade looks Asian, she'd be expected to sound it, too" (1997: 58). This reality of discriminatory casting is far removed from Jade's career ambition, which is, as she confesses to her friend, "to win the Academy award." "I get nominated for a really dramatic part," she says, adding, "Something really hard and *real*." During an earlier scene before the audition, in her bedroom Jade tellingly imagines herself as Blanche DuBois, the tragic Southern belle heroine in Tennessee Williams' play *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), a part unlikely to be given to a minority actress in real life.

A quarter-century after the release of *Double Happiness*, the situation for Asian American actors has, unfortunately, not improved very much. In an episode of Netflix's *Master of None* (2015–17) titled "Indians on TV" (1.04), the show's creator and star, Aziz Ansari, dramatizes a similar audition scene drawing upon his autobiographical experience. Ansari's alter-ego Dev Shah auditions for an "unnamed cab driver" part in a police procedural show. After Dev reads two lines in standard English, a Caucasian female producer requests, "I want to try it again, but this time we need you to do an accent." The New Yorker is visibly uncomfortable and reluctantly inquires, "You mean like an Indian accent? Uh, you know, I'd rather not. I just feel kind weird doing that voice. It that okay?" The producer is insistent, justifying her demand, "You know, Ben Kingley did an accent in *Gandhi* and he won the Oscar for it, so…" Dev responds, "But he didn't win the Oscar just for doing the accent. I mean it wasn't an Oscar just for Best Indian Accent." He walks away from the audition burdened with the knowledge that he will not get the part due to his unwillingness to compromise, to conform to the industry's yellowvoice stereotypes.

With the sour taste of that experience still in his mouth, Dev joins another Indian American actor, Ravi Singh (Ravi Patel) who just auditioned for the same role with an accent, for a coffee break. The two men discuss their shared conundrum and debate the idea of in-group complicity in Asian stereotyping and misrepresentation. Ravi defends faking an accent, arguing, "It's super easy, man. I just do an impression of my Uncle Madu. I don't always do it, but [the audition role was] a cab driver. I don't think it's a big deal." Dev vents to his friend, "Yeah, but isn't it frustrating so much of the stuff we go out for is just stereotypes? Cab driver, scientist, IT guy." He further questions why there cannot be an Indian on screen who

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is "an architect, or who designs mittens or does one of the jobs Bradley Cooper's characters do in movies." Ravi is sympathetic to Dev's grievances, but he also adopts a more practical attitude about the situation, saying, "I just can't wait for that. I got to work." As Shilpa S. Davé points out, "Ultimately, the practice of an Indian accent is a form of cultural inflection: a variation on cultural citizenship that depicts South Asian Americans as racialized foreigners regardless of their status or occupation in the United States" (2013: 6). An accent matters insofar as it becomes a counterpoint to a non-accent, to the "'normal' or standard English" that remains beyond the reach of so many native speaker performers of colour. As such, it plays a crucial role in "the process of 'othering'" its speakers as perpetual foreigners regardless of their citizenship status (Davé 2013: 3). Dev and Ravi demonstrate two radically different interpretations of in-group performance of an Indian accent: the former "[feels] weird doing that voice," implying that he sees it as a racial insult to his own ethnicity, while the latter models his reel accent on a real accent – that of his own uncle – and thereby demonstrates his tactical acceptance of linguistic otherness as a form of verisimilitude, an authentic conveyance of immigrant experiences as well as an integral part of his acting career. This storyline derives from a real-life casting episode in the actors lives: Ravi Patel played a call-center employee with a stereotypical Indian accent in Michael Bay's *Transformers* (2007) after Aziz Ansari turned down the role.

> In his November 2015 interview with *Entertainment Weekly*, Aziz Ansari confesses,
>
> When I first started acting, I did have to deal with things like going to auditions and them asking that I do an accent, and me feeling a little uncomfortable about that, and having friends that were Indians actors that *did* do accents. And it wouldn't be me really judging people who do accents, but kind of being even more frustrated. Sometimes a minority actor, that's all you are thought of. It's like, "Well, if you need some Indian, we'll call that guy". (Rahman 2015)

In other words, yellowvoice is a powerful tool for mainstream media to sustain and perpetuate the false cultural narrative of Asian Americans as people characterized by their "ASIAN" status, to borrow Kent A. Ono and Vincent N. Pham's acronym for "All Seems Identical, Alike, No Different." The ASIAN mentality of white cultural producers (discernable in *Double Happiness* and *Master of None*), as Ono and Pham note, "encourages audiences to view Asians and Asian Americans as inhuman, trivializes their lives and experiences, and facilitates the reproduction of institutional and structural processes of disempowerment and disenfranchisement" (2009: 55).

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3. Margaret Cho's "Fresh-off-the-Boat" mom accent and the fluidity of the in-group

The choice that Ravi Patel and many other Asian American actors make to imitate an Asian accent to land parts in mainstream films and television programs is perhaps not difficult to understand from an economic perspective (as Patel's character says in the "Indians on TV" episode, "[He] got to work," and rejecting a role as a form of protest only means that another actor will get it). More complicated, and contradictory, is for Asian American performers to incorporate yellow or brown accents as a component of in-group humor. One of the most humorous yet troubling examples of in-group yellowvoice impersonation can be found Korean American comedian Margaret Cho's stand-up routines and concert films, when she plays the role of her own heavily accented mother.

In voicing her immigrant mother Cho Young-hiu on stage for laughter, the American-born Cho uninhibitedly adopts what Elaine W. Chun calls "Mock Asian" speech, which often neutralizes the phonemic distinction between "r" and "l" as well as between "w" and "r"; alveolarizes voiceless dental non-sibilant fricative "th" to "s"; alternates high and low intonation each syllable; adds epenthetic "ee" at the end of a word; neutralizes nominative-accusative case distinction for first person singular pronoun; and reduplicates two words among other among other characteristics (2004: 264). Moreover, Cho's yellowvoicing of her own mother (paralleling Ravi Singh's strategy of imitating Uncle Madu when asked to impersonate an Indian accent in the *Master of None* episode discussed above) is accompanied by performative yellowfacing of sort. As described by Scarlet Cheng, "When she does her Mommy persona, Cho squints her eyes, drops a corner of her mouth, presses back her neck and speaks in a sputtering Korean accent. In real life her mother is neither squinty nor sputtering, although if given half a chance the real Mrs. Cho clearly loves to spin anecdotes" (2002). The mom routine is Cho's most popular gig, which garners the most raucous feedback (applause and laughter) from her live audiences. In fact, the Korean American comedian has gotten her mother's blessing to mock her as Mrs. Cho is reported to have said to her daughter, "I have to talk to you very often, otherwise you'll be out of material!" (Cheng 2002).

However, neither Cho's Korean ethnicity nor her mother's consent exonerates implicit in-group racism attending her excessive and deliberate Mock Asian performances. As Chun puts it, "Not unlike the use of Mock Asian by non-Asians, [Margaret Cho's] humor at least partially derives from an implied comical character of Asian Americans who cannot speak English without a 'foreign accent'" (2004: 273). The audience's acceptance of her yellowvoice as "legitimate mockery" is problematic precisely because "their appreciation of Cho's humor hinges upon the crucial assumption that an acceptable American must speak 'without an accent'

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[and recent immigrants] are taken as being not acceptable Americans, but rather acceptable targets of mockery" (Chun 2004: 276). In-group yellowvoicing is therefore a double-edged sword that facilitates linguistic bonding across the racial divide of performers and audiences by excluding and debasing accented immigrants as perpetuators of what Jane H. Hill calls "linguistic disorder…in White public space" (1999: 681–682).

Margaret Cho's live concert film *I'm the One That I Want* (2000), set in San Francisco's Warfield Theater, is probably her most complex text, explicitly critiquing white racism against Asian Americans while implicitly advancing in-group racism against Asian immigrants through yellowvoice. Cho's first "mom" impersonation starts at the twenty-four-minute mark, with the standup comedian contorting her face into a squinty mien before mocking her mother's voicemail message:

> Are you gay? Are you gay? Pick up the phone? If you don't pick up the phone, that mean you gay. Only gay screen call. You are gay. Why don't you talk to mommy about it? You can talk to mommy about everything. You have a cool mommy. Mommy is a so cool. And mommy know all about the gay. I know all about the gay. There are so many gay all over the world. But not Korea, not Korea. But everywhere else. So many gay. You know I think you gay when you born. Ya, you born and I say 'she so beautiful, hmm, what a dyke, what a big dyke. Yes you are. You are so dykey.' Maybe one day you grow up to be PE teacher.

Although Cho is married to a man, she openly identifies herself as "truly bisexual" (Villarreal 2018) and frequently employs queer jokes and subject matter in her stand-up routines. In fact, the first twenty minutes of *I'm the One That I Want* is saturated with gay jokes, and at one point, Cho proudly declares, "I love the word 'faggot', because it describes my kind of guy. I am a fag hag. Fag hags are the backbone of the gay community." As Brian Lewis notes, "Cho encourages her queer audience to think about their world in more positive ways, such that 'queer' becomes a source of pride rather than shame" (2004). In an off-stage interview preceding the concert film, Cho's three loyal gay fans go as far as to declare, "We only love three things: ass, Judy Garland, and Margaret Cho."

Queer pride might contrast the Korean shame that Margaret Cho's in-group mocking has triggered. Her raunchy comedy was criticized by some community leaders and activists for circulating negative images of Asians and Asian Americans. After the ABC sitcom based on Cho's stand-up comedy, *All-American Girl* (ABC, 1994–95), debuted, one Korean American viewer wrote a response to a Los Angeles-based community paper: "I read an article on Margaret Cho and her show and how it's supposed to be a role model for KAs. I would be so disappointed if any kid were to look up to her and want to be so irreverent, rude, and rebellious to her mom. How evil! Not even American kids do that to their parents if they were brought up right" (qtd. Chun 2004, 279). To quote Cho's own recounting in *I'm the*

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One I Want, a twelve-year-old Korean American girl named Karen Kim sent a letter to her local newspaper editorial section, stating, "When I see Margaret Cho on television, I feel deep shame." Cho's profanity and sexual promiscuity (on top of her academic underachievement as a high-school dropout) could have contributed to this community rejection and as singled out by the above-quoted commentator, her irreverent jokes about her mom particularly do not comport well with the decorum of filial piety deeply entrenched in Koreans' cultural imaginary of the family.

While Lewis lauds the comedian's stand-up routines for bringing together immigrant and queer communities through "the innocent expressions of Cho performing her loving (yet naive) mother" (2004), one can also argue that her "lovingly mocking" yellowvoicing contributes to further stigmatizing and infantilizing accented immigrants with amplified FOB stereotypes. For example, Cho's mocking of another of her mother's voicemails goes:

> I have to tell you something. Grandma and grandpa gonna die. I don't know when they gonna die, but sometime. So then mommy just tell you now. So when they die, you not surprised. Don't be surprised when they die, but you don't have to tell them. Don't tell them, "Mommy say you gonna die." Don't say this. That's not nice and they know already. But mommy know that you gonna come home to pray the comedy crow in two weeks, so mommy hope may they die before you come home. Just so you don't have to make two trip.

This scene not only contains the most habitually stereotyped marker of Mock Asian speech – neutralizing the difference between "r" and "l" ("pray" instead of "play" and "crow" instead of "club") – but also portrays an accented speaker as being childish, simple-minded, and even silly. Such representation is in line with how Cho's sitcom surrogate Margaret Kim's grandmother character Young-hee is portrayed in *All-American Girl*.

The septuagenarian matriarch, who is played by South Dakota-native Amy Hill (then a stand-up comedian in her forties in aging make-up), is habitually seen watching television along with children – her youngest grandson Eric and his best pal Casey – and speaking in fortune cookie-style proverbs embellished by infantilizing yellowvoice. From the very opening scene of the pilot episode, "Mom, Dad, This is Kyle" (1.01), Grandma Kim serves as a counterpoint to her Americanized family in her manner of speech, beliefs, and attire (traditional Korean hanbok). After dozing at the dinner table, she snaps awake and sassily responds to her mild-mannered son's suggestion for a nap, "Oh, I get plenty of sleep soon enough. Eternal sleep with ancestor. I hope I don't run into Auntie Junie. She cranky when she arrive [alive], she gonna be impossible dead." Two episodes later, in "Who's the Boss?" (1.03), a superstitious grandmother suggests to her family, "Trouble in school, trouble in business, trouble with cars. Can only be one thing, bad Feng Shui….I am putting vase where family spends the most time. Black brings good ruck [luck]." When the

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neighbor girl Casey visits the family, seeking "career advice," Grandma mistakes the word "career" as "Korea" and claims herself to be an expert on the subject. The native-speaker child has to correct the linguistically challenged old woman, clarifying, "No, not Korea, grandma. *Careers*, jobs."

While it is true that both Margaret Cho's mom and Grandma Kim are lovable characters, they are the butt of yellowvoice jokes that amuse speakers of standard American English across racial and sexual lines. Regardless of their citizenship status and length of stay in the United States, their Mock Asian speech (exaggeratedly imitated by American-born native-speaker performers) designates them as perpetual "FOB" foreigners who do not share the titular "all-American" identity to which their offspring lay claim. Their failure to acculturate into linguistic, cultural norms of mainstream U.S. society is baggage that their American-born children and grandchildren must bear by association. One of the funniest jokes of *I'm the One That I Want* highlights how Margaret Cho was asked by a morning show host (during her promotional tour of *All-American Girl*) to announce for his viewers in her "native language" that their local station was transitioning to an ABC affiliate. Wearing a solemn expression on her face, Cho directly addresses the offscreen theater audience, "So I looked at the camera and I said, 'They are changing to an ABC affiliate,'" a line greeted by thunderous laughter and applause. This scene clearly reaffirms the language-based bonding between the Asian American performer and her audience who identify themselves as native speakers of standard American English. Cho's "mom" skits further consolidate this identification among the linguistic (but not racial or ethnic) in-group at the expense of "FOB" others whose difference is safely ridiculed through the mediation of an Asian American performing body/voice and what Elaine Chun refers to as "ideologies of legitimate mockery" (2004: 266).

4. Appa's trade language and political incorrectness in *Kim's Convenience*

Like its CBC television adaptation (which premiered in 2016 and has recently been renewed for fifth and sixth seasons), Korean Canadian writer Ins Choi's successful play *Kim's Convenience* (which debuted at the 2011 Toronto Fringe Festival and was revived by Toronto's Soulpepper Theater Company in 2012) approaches the issue of accented speech in a slightly different way while remaining equally problematic in terms of its cross-lingual representational politics of casting fluent speakers of English as first-generation immigrants. Described by the playwright as a "love letter to [his] parents and to all first-generation immigrants who call Canada their home," *Kim's Convenience* takes place almost entirely in a downtown Toronto variety store run by an aging, thickly accented immigrant couple lovingly hailed as "Appa" (Korean for "Dad") and "Umma" (Korean for "Mom") by their

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thirty-year-old photographer daughter Janet. Remaining offstage until the final part of the play is a fourth member of the family, the couple's son Jung who ran away from home at the age of sixteen after fighting with his stubbornly traditional father. Initially, Appa comes across a brusque, absurdly nationalistic character who harbors deep resentment for his home country's former colonizer Japan and is against all things Japanese, including a Honda illegally parked in front of his store. Janet even accuses him of racism when Appa profiles his customers along racial and gender lines: "He is black guy, jean jacket. That combo is steal combo. You don't know how to run store, I teach you….Every customer, have to know. Steal or no steal. See that girl? She is no steal. She is black girl, fat. Fat black girl is no steal. Fat white guys, that's steal. Fat guy is black, brown shoes, that's no steal. That's cancel-out combo" (Choi 2012: 43–44). Appa responds to Janet's accusation and insists that his commentary is "not racist" but rather a "secret survival skill" (Ibid.: 44). Ultimately, Appa is the heart and soul of the play who forgives his prodigal son when the latter returns to ask for a job in the store (during the play's denouement). Despite having received a generous buyout offer from his real-estate agent friend, which will ensure comfortable retirement for him and his wife, Appa offers his son to take over the store. A surprised Jung asks, "Store's probably worth a lot of money. You could sell it and retire. Why do you want to give it to me?" Appa replies, "What is my story? What is story of Mr. Kim? My whole life I doing store. This store is my story? No, My story is not Kim's Convenience. My story is you. And Janet. And Umma…You understand?" (Ibid.: 102).

Unlike Margaret Cho's yellowvoice acts, which facilitate a bond among her "other" in-groups (such as the LGBT community and native speakers of English), Choi's accented immigrant hero is positioned as the direct recipient of audience identification and empathy. In his Foreword to the published play, Albert Schultz, the artistic director of Soulpepper Theater Company, writes:

> [*Kim's Convenience*] feels *very* Canadian. Ins [Choi] has managed to take the most mundane… institution of our daily life and show us its beating heart. For anyone who has watched this play, it will be impossible to pick a litre of milk at the corner store without wondering what story is unfolding behind the cash register. Every time we hear the electronic doorbell announcing our departure, we will think about the lives we have left behind. (Ibid.: 4)

Paul Sun-hyun Lee who plays Appa both on stage and in the small-screen adaptation (which currently encompasses 52 episodes), echoes this sentiment, "I'm grateful to Ins Choi for creating a world that is so authentic, so real, so recognizable that it echoes my own life in a way that I never, ever thought would be told on stage or on screen, and for letting me play a character so rich in life and love and allowing me to make his voice my own" (Ibid.: 120).

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As a fluent English speaker (who immigrated to Canada at the age of three), Lee reportedly based his performance of Appa's accent on the voice of his own first-generation immigrant father who ran a convenient store like his character. The actor explains the process in his October 2016 interview with *Maclean's*:

> As soon as I started reading [*Kim's Convenience*] – and I've told this story a million times, everyone's sick of it – it was like a key being turned in my head, a door being opened, and my dad's voice just started coming out. So I use my dad's accent – that's my dad's voice that I use on stage. But a lot of the time it's a modified accent, because if I went full Korean accent people wouldn't be able to understand a lot of what I'm saying. So there are times where I'll cheat, I'll pull back, and it's not 100 per cent consistent, and I realize that….Over the years it's morphed into this whole Appa speak I have. But sometimes the accent isn't 100 per cent there. (Lee 2016)

Despite this blended approach to accent (both being authentic and modified), the actor passionately defends its use, citing positive community responses:

> I hear a lot of people saying that it sounds like their dad. I've had Korean families whose fathers have passed away, they're in tears, and they say, 'You sound just like our Appa did.' They hadn't heard his voice in years. And it's incredibly moving…. The accent – the accent isn't the joke. It's part of who he is, but it isn't the joke…. Appa is not just a voice. He's not a stereotype. A stereotype is the end of a character. Appa is an archetype – they take his mould, they use that as a basis, and they build that up into a three-dimensional character. (Ibid.)

While it might not be fair to compare Cho's stand-up comedy with Choi's dramatic play, it is worthwhile to consider Lee's defense that Appa's accent is not a joke and that its verisimilitude resonated deeply with Canadian Korean audiences despite the performer's creative modifications to accommodate native speakers' ears. Furthermore, in Choi's narrative universe, Appa is not an infantilized character and his instinct turns out to be accurate if not unproblematic. Although Mr. Kim's ostensible racism demonstrated in "steal or no steal" profiling mortifies his Canadian-born daughter, the father is proven right when he confronts Mike, a Jamaican immigrant customer, and retrieves unpaid packs of razors and toothpaste hidden in his pocket after twisting the arm of the petty thief with his hapkido (Korean martial art) move. Unlike Cho's mother who leaves a voicemail for her daughter asking her not to marry a white man, Appa exhibits tolerance for Janet's love interest Alex, a black police officer and Jung's childhood friend, and tells his daughter, "Alex is not Korean but if you want marry him, that's okay with me." Before giving this blessing, he shares a moving story of black-Korean alliance during the 1992 Los Angeles Riots when his friend Mr. Chae's store was protected by his loyal African American customers (to whom his friend loaned small amounts of money, free of interest, as a favor) from looters. As Colleen Kim Daniher points out:

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> In some ways, it is hard not to see *Kim's Convenience* as a textbook case study in the social phenomenon of racial triangulation. The play traffics in familiar racial tropes wherein hard-working Asian immigrant merchants are juxtaposed against a less-developed backdrop of Black urban life. However, to say that the play can be usefully illuminated by a theory of racial triangulation is not to say that *Kim's Convenience* is racist or commits anti-Black racism full-stop. On the contrary, I find the play's representations of Black masculinity to be quite nuanced, and not in spite of but because of the quadruple-casting device of the four Black characters in the play. (Daniher 2018: 20)

By having Appa interact with four black characters played by the same actor – two customers, his friend Mr. Lee, the real estate agent who offers a deal on the store, and Alex – the play integrates him fully into the multicultural scene set in downtown Toronto's Reagent Park, a middle- to low-income neighborhood made mostly of recent immigrants. However, as noted by Daniher, the play deflects Mike's question to Mr. Kim – "Cuz me black, y'accusing me of teefin?" – which "hangs in the air, pointedly and poignantly left unanswered" (Ibid.8: 18).

This potentially controversial "steal or no steal" plotline is tamed and transformed for primetime home viewing in the opening sequence of CBC Television's *Kim's Convenience*'s pilot episode "Gay Discount" (1.01). In the first scene of the episode, a gay couple, Kevin and Roger, enters the titular store, seeking Mr. Kim's sponsorship in promoting a Gay Pride week parade by displaying their poster on the storefront. Appa criticizes the poster's design, which in turn offends Roger who goes on accusing the Korean man of discriminating against gays. The shopkeeper clarifies in a yellowvoice accent, "No, I have no problem with the gay but I have problem with parade. Traffic, garbage, noise. If you is the gay, why can't you be quiet, respectable gay, huh? Like Anderson Cooper, y'know? Neil Patrick Harris, y'know? They is all the gay but they don't yelling to me they is the gay." An enraged Roger calls Mr. Kim "homophobic" and threatens to report him for committing a hate crime. The cornered store owner cleverly saves himself from landing in hot water by improvising a business deal: "I'm not homopebek. If I am … homopeebeek, then, why I, why do I give a Gay Discount, mmm? 15% Gay Discount only for the Gay Pride Week." An intrigued Roger's partner Kevin asks Mr. Kim, "How do you know if someone is gay?" Appa responds confidently, "I can tell…I have gaydar. 100% guarantee." The couple smiles with visible satisfaction, offering that they will spread the word of the gay discount.

Although the racial identity of Roger, who is engaged in an interracial relationship, is black, the scene shifts the focus from race to sexuality, while humor deflects a potentially serious, painful situation of homophobia and discrimination. Despite his heavy accent and linguistic deficiency, Mr. Kim establishes himself as

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a quick-witted, competent businessman capable of turning a crisis situation into an entrepreneurial opportunity. In the context of his successful commerce skills, Appa's practical vernacular is reminiscent of what Robert G. Lee defines as "Canton English," which was one of many variants of English spoken in nineteenth century California by Chinese merchants and was recognized as a legitimate "trade language, with its own linguistic and symbolic codes, syntax and vocabulary rules" (1999: 36). While the scene does not mock or ridicule Appa's trade language, which is apparently effective with his native speaker customers, yellowvoice is mobilized here as an alibi for the merchant's homophobic demand that his customers should be "quiet, respectable" gays like Anderson Cooper or Neil Patrick Harrison. It is hard to imagine that a Caucasian protagonist without such marked verbal features uttering the same lines in a pilot episode' first scene (the TV audience's introduction to the character). The speaker's presumed foreignness (lack of acculturation to the superficially polite culture of restraint and self-censorship) is what makes the scene all the more comical. It is that same foreignness which exonerates the character from the charge of homophobia. Like Mike's question accusing Mr. Kim of racism, Roger's complaint of discrimination is sidestepped and circumvented when the conversation shifts to identity-based commercial benefits, a win-win situation for both the merchant and customers. The television episode further softens the content of the "steal or no steal" scene in the play by changing the target of Appa's suspicion of petty theft from a black customer to his own daughter when his cash balance is short due to the "gay discount" (which he forgets to keep track of).

5. Immigrant vernacular and a standard language ideology

In his blog, Chinese American photographer Christopher Huang shares his initial misgiving about the accents in *Kim's Convenience* and his ultimate re-evaluation:

> I was worried when I heard their accents. I had a feeling that the actors who play Appa (Paul Sun-Hyung Lee) and Umma (Jean Yoon) speak perfect English and were faking the accents, and after hearing a few interviews with them, confirmed that. These are really great characters: they are complex parental figures, with hopes and dreams, who struggle with expressing love, communicating, but occasionally do convey so much. They just happen to have accents…. Accents represent so much beauty and intelligence. Learning a 2nd language is difficult, shows commitment/resilience/determination, and for immigrants, they represent the bold decision of leaving family/home and trying to build a new home and life elsewhere.
>
> (Huang 2019)

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Perhaps this is true in the context of Asian American reception as children and grandchildren of first-generation immigrants have personal connections to accents and their signification of sacrifices and struggles in their family history. To out-group viewers, accents might signify something entirely different such as perpetual foreignness and linguistic disorder. As Rosina Lippi-Green's study reveals, language plays a crucial part in gatekeeping and policing citizenship. "A standard language ideology," according to the author, marks vernacular English as "ugly, unacceptable, incoherent, illogical" and contributes to its speaker's "perpetual devaluation of…social self" (Lippi-Green 2012: 69). If used properly, accents can and do signify the "authenticity" of immigrant characters. In one of the most moving passages of Choi's play, Appa speaks with a dignified accent, "You was fourteen years old, school project: "What I am most proud of.' You write story how we begin store. Then you take picture of me in front of store. That is my most happy memory, Janet…I want you live life best way you choosing" (2012: 94). There is simple beauty in Choi's artistic rendering of the accent as vernacular immigrant speech. In another context, accents create barriers, mocking and delegitimizing "FOB" speech exaggeratedly performed by native speakers of Asian descent. The mocking use of Mock Asian accents could generate in-group backlash, as was the case with Margaret Cho's earlier comedy.

As Ella Shohat and Robert Stam remind us, the representation of the oppressed community is a contested terrain precisely because of its "allegorical" function of "synecdochally summing up a vast but putatively homogenous community" unlike that of dominant groups which is seen as "ungeneralized examples of life itself" (2014: 183). In light of this extra burden of representation concerning minority groups, the realism defense of yellowvoice (i.e. there are Asian immigrants who speak with such accents) can go only so far. Outside of media representation, one can argue, as Lippi-Green has, that "when speakers of devalued or stigmatized varieties of English consent to the standard language ideology, they become complicit in its propagation against themselves, their own interests and identities" (2012: 68). In other words, Margaret Cho's and Paul Sun-Hyung Lee's implicit in-group yellowvoicing can be construed as a challenge to this ideology by foregrounding disruptive forces of vernacular English of non-native speakers, albeit in the form of mimesis. In the sphere of media reception, though, one should not only ask for whom accents are performed and to what ends but also be mindful that in any media production catering to the masses (be it Soulepepper Theater's most commercially successful stage production or CBC/Netflix's hit sitcom based on it), the ideology of the dominant audience is already implicitly inscribed.

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Divine intervention

Multimodal pragmatics and unconventional opposition in performed character speech in *Dragon Age: Inquisition*

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Videogames often take place in fictional worlds, yet the performed accents of game characters are real reflections of the language ideologies of a game's creators and intended audience. This chapter demonstrates how these ideologies are at play in BioWare's fantasy role-playing game *Dragon Age: Inquisition* (2014), through its linguistic differentiation of two characters, Cassandra and Leliana. Although largely presented as counter to one another, both are othered from the majority of in-game characters by way of their accented English. Videogames contain unique, medium-specific affordances; thus, using multimodal discourse analysis and procedural rhetoric, this chapter examines how Cassandra and Leliana's accents construct social and ideological meaning, and how the performative nature of gameplay affects players' perception of these characters.

Keywords: multimodal pragmatics, performed accents, language ideologies in videogames, procedural rhetoric

1. Introduction: Language ideologies and performed accents in fantasy role-playing games

In videogames, performed accents reproduce language ideologies that perpetuate stereotypes in both the virtual and real world. The goal of this chapter is to identify the language ideologies underlying the accented English of two of the fantasy role-playing game *Dragon Age: Inquisition's* (DAI) main female characters, Cassandra and Leliana, and to examine the ways in which social and ideological meanings are constructed for their characters using pragmatic performativity. Although the *Dragon Age* (DA) series takes place in a fictional world, the performed accents of its characters reflect the language ideologies of the game developers,

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the voice actors, and the intended audience (Ensslin 2010; Goorimoorthee, Csipo, Carleton, and Ensslin 2019; Thurlow and Mroczek 2011). While on many levels of representation Cassandra and Leliana are counter to one another, both are linguistically othered from the majority of in-game characters by way of their accented English, which falls outside of the predominant in-game accents: Received Pronunciation (RP) and Standard North American (SNAm).[1] Their accents instead combine varied, marked phonological features associated with different cultural and regional communities (Ensslin 2011). Videogames allow players several medium-specific affordances absent from other media, such as choice, agency and interactivity, giving players the opportunity to shape their own narrative. Thus, using medium-specific multimodal discourse analysis (Ensslin 2012; Hawreliak 2019) and the concept of procedural rhetoric (Bogost 2007), this chapter aims to examine the ways in which Leliana and Cassandra's accents participate in the construction of social meanings during gameplay, and how the dynamic, performative nature of gameplay affects players' perception of these characters. Through reflexive, critical gameplay, audio analysis, and written discourse analysis, this project will provide a nuanced understanding of the ways in which verbal and non-verbal communication are used in *DAI* to create unconventional oppositions.

The ideas explored in this chapter will contribute to pragmatics and new media sociolinguistics, a field that Thurlow and Mroczek (2011) delineate into four interrelated components of digital communication: discourse (language in use), technology (mediums of communication), multimodality (meaning-making through multiple semiotic modes and their combinations), and ideology (an individual or group's system of values and beliefs). New media sociolinguistics is an emergent field in media studies with an emphasis on digitally-mediated discourse that is roughly organized around the technological, situational, and linguistic variables at play in acts of digitally-mediated communication (Herring 1996, 2001, 2004). By examining the complex ways in which videogames make use of multimodal discourse to create meaning in interaction, this study deepens our understanding of the role of performed accents in videogames. We will begin with an analysis of sociolinguistic theories regarding language in media, and unconventional opposition, followed by a description of *DAI* storyline and narrative structure. A brief overview of past research on the *DA* series will demonstrate a focus on sex, gender and race, and a gap regarding the role of language ideology in our understanding of the stories and characters. We then outline our methods of data

1. These predominant accents still come with their own set of stereotypes and archetypal characters. RP is often used in DA to represent rigid, upper-class members of the Chantry (e.g. Grand Chancellor Roderick), whereas SNAm is associated with dwarves, and connotes a more confident and headstrong character (e.g. Varric).

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collection and analysis, which included three months of reflexive, critical gameplay, written discourse analysis of forum posts related to *Dragon Age* characters' accents, and a phonetic analysis of audio clips where Cassandra or Leliana were the primary speakers. Our analysis will first discuss our own initial understanding of the characters, followed by an exploration of fan opinions from online forums on the characters' accents and an analysis of three phonetic components of each character's speech. Finally, we will discuss how the perception of Cassandra and Leliana is tied to their accented speech and pragmatic performativity as intended by the game creators, using multimodal analysis and the data collected as evidence to support these arguments.

2. Theoretical framework: Language ideologies in videogames and character opposition

Language ideological theory focuses on the study of belief systems as they relate to language, as well as the adherence to or deviance from the prescriptive rules and norms of language (Blommaert 1999; Kroskrity 2000; Schieffelin et al. 1998). Lippi-Green (2012) tackles this deviance through the concept of standard language ideologies, which bias inauthentic and idealized versions of a spoken language imposed by a hegemonic power structure. This standard also propels the myth of the non-accent, which marks people as 'other' if their accent does not fall within the range of the standard language middle-class (Lippi-Green 2012). Pragmatics builds on this and further prioritizes the importance of context, noting that choices in language use, whether explicit or implicit, contribute to how we are viewed and understood by ourselves and others (Woolard 1998). Additionally, Irvine and Gal (2000) have identified three semiotic processes that relate linguistic form to social reality: *iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure*. Erasure is particularly relevant when talking about videogames and works in tandem with iconization and recursivity to ignore all information outside of the chosen narrative through the simplification of nuanced language (Andronis 2003). Erasure often results in tired tropes derived from the oversimplification of characters and cultures. This not only creates a false binary value system, it projects these values onto the players, which can affect players' assumptions and ideologies regarding a character and their representation (Ensslin 2010).

Language ideologies as presented through videogames are especially interesting due to their narrative embedding. Narrative videogames, including those of successful videogame franchises such as *Mass Effect* and *Bioshock* (Juul 2005), combine rules and fiction in order to tell an interactive story. Despite their medium-specific interactivity and multilinearity, they often follow cinematic plotlines and rely on

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character archetypes and cutscenes to further the story. Another commonality with movies is the use of stereotyped characters that reflect and perpetuate language ideologies. In film, there are two main stereotyping issues related to dialogue: character stereotyping and linguistic stereotyping (Hodson 2014). One feeds into the other, so much so that Hodson (2014) notes a relationship between the use of certain language influences and the audience's perception of a character. This leads to assumptions about characters that eventually turn into broad, sweeping stereotypes about certain types of people (Hodson 2014). Lippi-Green (2012) found that foreign accents in Disney animated movies were often associated with negative stereotyping; a well-known example of this is Jafar, the antagonist in *Aladdin* (Clements and Musker 1992), who has a British accent and is portrayed in a stereotypically Semitic fashion, while Aladdin and Jasmine the princess have Standard North American accents.

While there has been extensive research into character speech and accents in film (see Hodson 2014; Planchenault 2015, 2017), minimal videogame research focuses on in-game character speech. The work that has been done has focused on comparative representations of RP and SNAm accents in games like *Black and White 2*, *Fable*, and *Wizard101* (Ensslin 2010, 2011). Videogames are uniquely multimodal media, and this warrants further sociolinguistic research in two main areas: procedural rhetoric and the role of player agency and immersion (Zagalo 2019). Bogost's (2007) concept of procedural rhetoric refers to how games communicate cultural processes and values through rules and encoded player behaviour (i.e. motivation and reward, punishment). It uses these processes to persuade the player about the realities of a game world and about the values and behaviours required to succeed in it. Thus, procedural rhetoric accentuates the medium-specific importance of play and interactivity vis-à-vis audiovisual representations. The affordances and restrictions placed upon players tell them *truths* about the ludofictional world,[2] and guide their decisions and actions through the game's narrative (Bogost 2007). Role-playing games (RPGs) give players the opportunity to create their own personas in the game world and dictate their own version of the story. This process of re-embodiment and the affective connection it creates between player and character enables a level of immersion and abstraction lacking in other media (Bogost 2007; Ensslin 2011). This immersion can heighten a player's response to, and investment in the game and its characters, and the subtle messaging embedded in the

2. What a player can or cannot do within the confines of the ludofictional (in-game) world provides them with a set of parameters that are indicative of the game creators' intentions for the game. For example, if a player drives in the wrong direction in *Mario Kart* for more than a few seconds, the game will automatically reset their car to face the right direction, indicating that there is a correct and incorrect way to drive during a race.

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representation or stereotyping of characters' accents can bleed over into a player's real life (language) ideologies.

Multimodality and procedural rhetoric will be used as lenses to examine the mechanics of gameplay in *DAI*. As stated by de Saint-Georges (2004), "multimodality notes that utterances are only a moment in the continuous process of communication and ... there is no necessary priority of language over other modes of meaning making in social actions." (p. 83) Similarly, videogames are more than the sum of their parts, and their high modal density is seen through choices in visual representation, audio, dialogue, and player interaction (Ensslin 2011; Solarski 2017). These are all ways that game developers communicate meaning and character identity to the players, whether verbal or nonverbal. Character classes are mostly nonverbal forms of communication, in which both the developer and the player ascribe or associate different character traits with different character appearances. While videogames use verbal (oral and written) and nonverbal cues to communicate information to their players, this chapter focuses on oral communication, as the creators of *Dragon Age* have demonstrated how language ideologies can signal implicit meaning to an audience through accented speech.

Additionally, in this chapter we draw on stylistic theories of unconventional opposition (Davies 2007; Jeffries 2010; Jones 2002) to examine how videogame characters are framed in contrasting oppositions despite their many similarities. Game designers often use conventional and unconventional semantic oppositions to create a simplistic model of good and bad, relying on the binary Manichean allegory to reinforce stereotypes (JanMohamed 1995). The multimodal nature of videogames lends itself well to this stereotyping, and designers can pair moral binaries with sociolinguistic opposites to create links of relation between them. Multilayered Manichean binaries are common in videogame design (Ensslin 2010),[3] and the linking and stereotyping of specific characters or behaviours reinforces binary ways of thinking, especially as they relate to morality, race, class and gender.

3. Manichean binaries rely on simplistic moral dualities to create contrast. Videogames frequently layer these binaries to create stark oppositions between right and wrong, or good and bad (i.e. The videogame *Black and White 2* juxtaposes the "good" character (an older, white, angelic character with an RP accent) with the "bad" character (a dark-skinned, demonic character with a New York metropolitan accent).

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3. Dragon Age

The game

Dragon Age: Inquisition (BioWare 2014) is the third major instalment of the *DA* franchise, following *Dragon Age: Origins* (BioWare 2009) and *Dragon Age II* (BioWare 2011). *DAI* is a dark fantasy RPG set in the fictional world of Thedas, where the player character's main mission is to close a tear in the sky called the "Breach," which has been releasing demons into the world. While *Dragon Age: Origins* has been the focus of past research relating to character design and player immersion (Jørgensen 2010; Waern 2011), *DAI* has not received the same attention. Existing work focuses on the roles of sex, gender, the male gaze, and romance in the series (Greer 2013; Lööf 2015; Navarro-Remesal 2018); one study on consent, race, and colonialism found *DAI* to be a largely colonial work, in which the player character embodies a colonialist on a mission to gain allies and claim lands for the Inquisition during a civil war (Beyer 2019).

DAI is a single- and multiplayer action role-playing fantasy game that was chosen for this study because of its strong focus on character development, narrative structure, and voice-over dialogue, which lends well to sociolinguistic analysis. As a part of the well-established *DA* franchise, *DAI* comes with its own lore, social structure, and history. However, certain aspects of the ludofictional world are more fleshed out than others, an intentional choice that will be further discussed in Section 5, where the characters of Cassandra and Leliana are compared. The player character's journey is filled with hundreds of lines of dialogue from characters belonging to a multitude of cultural groups within the game, making it a valuable focus of study for performative accents and the attitudinal ideologies they perpetuate. The game employs both spoken and written dialogue, and the multiple-choice dialogues in *DAI* enable morally ambiguous choices in communication, which in turn help to establish a character's personality (Bogost 2007; Ensslin 2011).

In the fictional, human-designed world of *DAI*, language ideologies underlie the speech of all characters. Intentionally or not, a number of visual and auditory stereotypes are employed throughout the game to create rifts between people and communities, and to portray class differentiation more subtly. The game uses both pragmatic and metapragmatic devices to enhance these differences. As pragmatics focuses on the role of context in the construction of meaning in interaction, it is important to take into account the multimodal, medium-specific nature of videogames. Lore, character backstory, physical appearance, accent and patterns of speech, and interaction between characters are all used as devices within the game to provide players with context for the speech of Cassandra and Leliana.

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Additionally, SNAm and RP accents are normalized throughout the game through linguistic signaling and implicit metapragmatics (Woolard 1998), thus alienating non-standard in-game accents.

There has been no prior research identified that has examined how *DAI* makes use of verbal and non-verbal cues to construct character identities from a sociolinguistic, pragmatic perspective. Our chapter aims to address this shortcoming by examining how two leading *DAI* characters are constructed as unconventional opposites through multimodal and narrative discourse.

4. Analysing characters' accented speech and players' comments

Data collection and analysis

For this project we combined methods of reflexive, critical play, collection of audio data (6:32 minutes of audio in five speech excerpts), phonetic analysis of character speech accents, and discourse analysis of players' written social media comments (46328 words). The collected data was intended to illustrate the representations of Cassandra and Leliana as characters in *DAI*, and the way these representations serve to create or reinforce language ideologies.

The reflexive, critical play method involved a full play-through of *DAI*, which was performed by a researcher who had not been exposed to the *DA* series before. Their reflections on character representations were thus unaffected by prior exposure. Importantly, the game designer's intent can only be understood through the active process of gameplay, making play a critical component of analytical game studies. Through gameplay, it became clear that Cassandra and Leliana were uniquely situated in the game and differed greatly from the general population of voiced characters, the vast majority of whom speak with RP or SNAm accents.

This was followed by the collection and phonetic analysis of *DAI* audio clips. Five short excerpts of speech (1:32, 0:50, 2:08, 1:23, 0:39 minutes) were recorded from YouTube videos of cutscenes featuring Cassandra or Leliana. One representative speech sample was selected and transcribed for each character in which they were the primary speakers, and in which at least three phonological features of their accents could be heard. Using the International Phonetic Alphabet in addition to Meier's (2012) *Accents & Dialects for Stage and Screen*, these components were examined to contextualize the characters' accent markers. As detailed below, we found that Cassandra's speech uses phonological features associated with RP and German, whereas Leliana's speech dynamically switches between aspects of French-accented English and RP.

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Forum-based, written discourse analysis was the final component of data collection and analysis. Fan reactions and perceptions are critical to the success of a videogame, and there are numerous online discussion boards for the *DA* franchise that illustrate players' difficulty in determining accents for many of the games' characters, as well as the passionate stances they convey in debating and negotiating these accents and their social meanings (Tarnarutckaia and Ensslin 2020).

Python was used to collect posts from a number of forums that discussed Cassandra's and Leliana's accents (Reddit, GameFAQs, Fextralife, Dragon Age Wiki, and YouTube). The forum threads were divided into two categories: Leliana-centred and Cassandra-centred. The data analysis software Atlas.ti was then used to conduct a word frequency count for each character; this provided a qualitative and quantitative overview of the language used in fan posts related to the characters' accents. Following this, a close reading of the forum posts was conducted to identify discursive patterns in posts, as well as to explore the wide range of beliefs that fans held about the accents from a player's perspective (i.e. the pleasantness or realism of the accent, personal connections to the accent, etc.).

Our ensuing analysis will discuss how critical play, as well as the audio, textual, and phonetic data collected all contribute to represent Cassandra and Leliana as enigmatic forces within the *DAI* game world, and how their varied and inconsistent accents feed into their perception as 'other' during gameplay.

Characters' accents and multimodal analysis

Cassandra and Leliana have two of the most distinct accents in *DAI*. While the majority of accents in the game fall within standard British and American accents, these characters are outliers that display similarities and differences in their representations.

Cassandra

Upon first playing *DAI*, Cassandra was the character that stood out the most due to both her appearance and her accent. She is the only speaking character in *DAI* from the nation of Nevarra in the game world of Thedas. Physically, Cassandra has a look that is stereotypically masculine and differs from the other female characters. Her hair is very short, and her face is angular and scarred. She wears the most substantial armour of any of the game's female main characters, giving her the appearance of a warrior. Our understanding of her character is one of isolation and devout piety.

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Figure 1. Front views of Cassandra (left) and Leliana (right).
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Leliana

In contrast, Leliana is portrayed as quiet and mysterious through her style of speech, physical appearance, and narrative role, which immediately creates a multimodal juxtaposition between her and Cassandra. In *DAI* she is the spymaster for the Inquisition, and she dresses in a long chainmail robe and a scarf that covers most of her orange hair. She is presented in a more stereotypically feminine manner than Cassandra, with longer hair, softer features, and less armour. Her accent is mixed, and she represents someone caught between two worlds: Orlais (a powerful nation in Thedas with French inspiration) and Ferelden (a younger and smaller kingdom in Thedas with British inspiration).

Cassandra's accent combines elements of British English, Germanic, and Slavic accents. The excerpt referenced below in transcript 1 is from a scene in *DAI* where Cassandra is having a heated argument with Varric, a dwarven companion character. In this scene she displays several accent features that seemingly overlap with

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Figure 2. Cassandra (left) and Leliana (right) during gameplay in *DAI*.
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one another, common to British, German, and Russian accents. In line 2, Cassandra uses non-rhotic colouration associated with RP when saying the word 'first' [fɜ:st] (Meier 2012: 103). She uses the intrusive [j] phoneme in line 1 (for example in 'new' [njü]), which Russian speakers often insert after consonants like [m, n] and is also found in many British and Canadian dialects (Meier 2012: 321). During her argument, Cassandra pronounces "Hawke", as [hɒk] in lines 1 and 3. Again, the [ɒ] vowel can be associated with both RP and German-accented English (Meier 2012: 104, 292). Further Germanizing aspects of her speech are the light versus velarized [l], accentuated plosives and fricatives, pronounced vowels in preposition words ('for' pronounced as fɔː in line 2), and a tendency to pronounce every syllable in a staccato manner (Meier 2012: 292).

Transcript 1. Excerpts: Cassandra, Varric, and the Inquisitor

Cassandra:	You knew where Hawke was all along!
1	juː njü weə hɒk wɒz ɔːl əˈlɒŋ!
	We needed someone to lead this Inquisition. First, Leliana and I searched for the hero of Ferelden,
2	wiː ˈniːdɪd ˈsʌmwʌn tuː liːd ðɪs ˌɪnkwɪˈzɪʃən. fɜːst, lɛliɑːnʌ ænd aɪ sɜːʧt fɔː ðə ˈhɪərəʊ ɒv fərɛldɪn,
	but she had vanished. Then, we looked for Hawke, but he was gone too.
3	bʌt ʃiː hæd ˈvænɪʃt. ðɛn, wiː lʊkt fɔː hɒk, bʌt hiː wɒz gɒn tuː.

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As detailed below during the discussion on fan comments, players on *DA* forums and websites have hotly debated Cassandra's accent, claiming that British voice actress Miranda Raison invented Cassandra's Nevarran accent and making biased, essentializing statements about Cassandra's character based on her blended accent. Cassandra is othered by virtue of her accent, which provides her with no tangible ties to any people or places, and her ambiguity only serves to further separate her from the other characters.

On the other hand, Leliana's accent is the result of a blended French and RP accent. While the combination of accents used is clear, each time Leliana speaks, the features of her accent and her pronunciation of the vowels seem to change. This inconsistency makes it difficult to choose constant phonetic features of her speech, as those features might differ between cutscenes. For the sake of this project, three features were selected from the transcript 2 excerpts below where Leliana is confronting Sister Natalie in Valence. In line 3, Leliana uses the French voiced uvular fricative [ʁ] (Meier 2012: 276) and the French and RP open mid-back rounded vowel [ɔ] (Meier 2012: 103, 281) when saying Morelle [mɔ.ʁɛl], a place name in Orlais. French uses the trilled uvular [R], which often becomes [ʁ], a fricative scrape heard in connected speech that is not found in most dialects of British or North American English (Meier 2012: 276). Leliana also uses the [ɑː] vowel in line 2 that is associated with RP when saying the word "start" [stɑːt] (Meier 2012: 103). It should be noted that although Leliana switches accents frequently, her French accent is always much stronger when speaking of and to Orlesians. When speaking with individuals who are not from Orlais, her accent becomes much less pronounced.

Transcript 2. Excerpts: Leliana talking to the Inquisitor and Sister Natalie

Leliana:	I'm protecting us. They never sing the Benedictions here on Fridays, Natalie. Something so simple…and
1	aɪm prəˈtɛktɪŋ ʌs. ðeɪ ˈnɛvəʁ sɪŋ ðe benəˈdikʃən hɪər ɑn ˈfraɪdeɪz, na.ta.li. ˈsʌmθɪŋ səʊ ˈsɪmpəl…ænd
	you got it so wrong. I wanted to believe, but you were lying from the start.
2	ju gɒt ɪt səʊ rɒŋ. aɪ ˈwɒntɪd tə bɪˈliːv, bət ju wə ˈlaɪɪŋ frəm ðə stɑːt.
	…talking about the sun rising through the breach. It all points to a single place. Morelle in the Dales, Grand
3	ˈtɔːkɪŋ əˈbaʊt ðə sʌn ˈraɪzɪŋ θruː ðə briːʧ. ɪt ɔːl pɔɪnts tʊ ə ˈsɪŋgl pleɪs. mɔ.ʁɛl ɪn ðə deɪlz, grɑnd
	Cleric Victoire's bastion. She sent you, didn't she? Victoire was always an opportunist.
4	ˈklɛrɪk viktwaʀz bastjɔ̃. ʃi sɛnt juː, dɪdnt ʃiː? viktwaʀ wəz ˈɔːlweɪz ən ˈɒpətjuːnɪst.

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Leliana's voice actress, Corinne Kempa, is a French-born woman who lives in the United Kingdom, so this fading French accent could be an intentional or unintentional result of the actress' move from France to the United Kingdom. An example of this blending of accents occurs above in transcript 2, line 1. Leliana pronounces the word 'never' with a strong French inflection [nɛvəʁ], ending with the fricative scrape [ʁ] that is common in French and French-accented spoken language; however, later in the same line she says the word 'here' with a typical British inflection [hɪə], deemphasizing the final [r] phoneme. Either way, this blended and fluid accent fits the narrative of Leliana as a child of mixed Orlesian and Ferelden heritage. She is seen as someone belonging to two worlds, and not fully identifying with either.

Written Discourse Analysis

To complement our audiovisual analysis, we used computer-mediated discourse analysis of player written comments in fan forums to identify player sentiments and assessments of the characters' performed accents (Herring 1996, 2001, 2004). All of the included commenters have had their usernames changed for the purposes of this study. In order to gain a better understanding of how fans feel about accents in *DAI*, and specifically about the accents of Cassandra and Leliana, forum threads that specifically mentioned their names and accents were brought into this analysis. This included threads from Dragon Age Wiki, Reddit, GameFAQs, Fextralife, and YouTube. The immersiveness of videogames makes their fans particularly invested in their characters and storylines (Bogost 2007; Pedraça 2015), and many fans feel entitled to own authoritative information about the game or feel a sense of power over the characters and their lives (see Ensslin 2012). For example, this fan comment from Fextralife by Commenter 19 suggested the *DA* franchise get rid of performed accents all together: "The accents are getting silly and messed up enough that I kind of wish they'd just forget about them." Like Commenter 19, fans often use evaluative language when posting about videogame characters (Ensslin 2012; Giles 1970; Tarnarutckaia and Ensslin 2020), demonstrating not only a sense of ownership over the material, but the idea that there is one correct way for the character to speak or act. Word frequency counts helped us determine which languages were most associated with Cassandra and Leliana, followed by a content analysis of the forum posts. Our discourse analysis of the forum posts concluded with an examination of the evaluative language used by fans to gain insight into players' beliefs about the two characters' accents.

Player comments on Cassandra were particularly enlightening due to the sheer range of responses and opinions regarding her accent. Accent attributions ranged from real countries to fictional worlds, and over 20 different languages and

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nationalities were given to explain the origin of her accent. The most commonly found language-words in her threads were French (124), followed by German (78), English (61), Italian (44), and Orlesian (41). Less frequent natural language labellings included Romanian (18) and even Farsi (1). Less well defined, fictional and/or historically rooted accents included Orlesian (41) and Prussian (31). These vastly differing attributions echo the general confusion Cassandra's ambiguous accent has caused fans. While many fans thought she sounded French, others described her voice as "rough" and staccato, "like she's biting off the end of the words" (Commenter 1, Fextralife) – thus using terms of aggression and coarseness to match her general character. Many fans seemed to agree on the German influence of her accent, emphasizing its perceived "brutish and heavy" (Commenter 4, Reddit) nature. Others vigorously disagreed, calling it "as ungerman [sic, meaning un-German] as possible" (Commenter 6, Reddit). Strikingly, few fans provided any phonetic, or folk-phonetic evidence corroborating their stance. The strong representation of "Prussian" as made-up accent suggests the willingness or even a need amongst players to situate the game's representational meanings in a fictional world that combines aspects of historical nostalgia and fantasy romanticism. More examples of these fan comments can be found in Table 1. Ultimately, there is anything but consensus about Cassandra's accented speech, which reinforces her enigmatic status both within and outside of the game.

Leliana's written discourse analysis demonstrated a very different phenomenon than Cassandra's. Leliana-centred forum threads showed the top language-related words to be French (391), English (203), Orlesian (142), and Ferelden (109), a fair representation of what is generally known about the character from the game itself and meta-information on the Dragon Age Wiki. In line with other characters from Orlais, Leliana's speech primarily sounds French. That said, the inconsistency of her accent, as well as its gradual fade over time, has drawn ire from some fans, and praise from others. Commenter 20 from GameFAQs commented that in *DAI* Leliana "magically dropped her Orlesian (French) accent for an English sounding one," noting that it affected their immersion in the game. This connects back not only to the idea of immersion as a fundamental component of RPG's, but also to the player's sense of ownership and ability to make evaluative judgments about Leliana's speech, based on their preconceived notion of what she should sound like. Speaking on the accent's inconsistency, another fan commented that "the voice actress doesn't seem to be able to SETTLE on an accent" (emphasis in original), claiming that at times it has sounded British, French, Slavic, Russian, and even American (Commenter 22, GameFAQs). The capitalized representation of "settle" likely represents dismay or another form of outrage over this perceived cognitive weakness, suggested by the epistemic modality of "able to." On the other hand, positive

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Table 1. Fan comments about Cassandra's accent by language of origin and word frequency

Language (*n* = frequency)	Example comments
French (124)	**Commenter 1:** "I don't think it sounds french/orlesian either. It sounds a bit too… rough for that? It's like she's biting off the end of the words to me." (Source: https://fextralife.com/forums/t272699/cassandras-accent/) **Commenter 2:** "It's a fictional accent I believe. A mix of Russian/ Eastern European and French is what it sounds like to me." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/comments/2tojkl/ what_kind_of_accent_does_cassandra_have/) **Commenter 3:** "It's definitely not French, whatever it is. "Vaguely European" at best. I feel like it's elements of a few accents mashed together. A hint of German in there, perhaps, though it's definitely not a straight-up German accent either." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/ comments/5ps5gr/no_spoilers_cassandras_accent/)
German (78)	**Commenter 4:** "Cassandra – Germanic maybe Slavic – Very brutish and heavy." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/comments/2pmn6g/ what_is_cassandras_accent/) **Commenter 5:** "I find that her accent has some German influence. The way she pronounces vowels are much akin to a German accent. Like when she says "don't" or "what", the o and a are elongated much like how a german would pronounce them." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/ comments/652r7c/no_spoilers_where_is_cassandras_accent_from/) **Commenter 6:** "I am from Germany, and Cassandra's accent would certainly not be considered German here. It sounds as "ungerman" as possible." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/comments/5ps5gr/ no_spoilers_cassandras_accent/)
English (61)	**Commenter 7:** "Yea [sic], the way she sounds reminds me of a German who has lived in Britian [sic] along time and speaks perfect English but never fully adopted English pronunciation, add a few regional quirks from both languages and it can sound pretty unique." (Source: https://www.reddit. com/r/dragonage/comments/2pmn6g/what_is_cassandras_accent/) **Commenter 8:** "Cassandras [sic] accent is Northern English (like her Voice Actress) trying to put on some weird Franco-German accent." (Source: https://fextralife.com/forums/p3346841/accents-of-thedas/)
Italian (44)	**Commenter 9:** "We haven't seen many Nevarran characters yet, but the Necromancer trainer seems to have an accent that sounds sort of like Italian? So I guess the actress was given direction to give a Italian/ French accent mix?" (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/ comments/652r7c/no_spoilers_where_is_cassandras_accent_from/) **Commenter 10:** "I see Nevarra as a mix of Italy, Greece, Swiss, and Germany." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/ comments/2tojkl/what_kind_of_accent_does_cassandra_have/)

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Table 1. (*continued*)

Language (*n* = frequency)	Example comments
Orlesian (41)	**Commenter 11:** "What? You hear Orlesian/French in her accent?" (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/comments/5ps5gr/no_spoilers_cassandras_accent/) **Commenter 12:** "I don't hear any Orlesian in her accent at all. It sounds more German/Austrian/Dutch to me." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/comments/5ps5gr/no_spoilers_cassandras_accent/) **Commenter 13:** "I don't understand why everyone thinks Cassandra sounds French/Orlesian.. She sounds a touch Slavic to me really." (Source: https://fextralife.com/forums/t272699/cassandras-accent/)
Prussian (31)	**Commenter 14:** "Prussian influenced is a good guess for Nevarra I think, and her accent to me sounds more like modern Austrian. Especially on "-tion" words like inquisition, location, etc." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/comments/2tojkl/what_kind_of_accent_does_cassandra_have/) **Commenter 15:** "I've always interpreted Nevarra as a sort of Habsburgish Holy Roman Empire. You know, bit of Spanish, bit of Portuguese, bit of Austrian, bit of Prussian, Bavarian and so forth." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/comments/2tojkl/what_kind_of_accent_does_cassandra_have/)
Romanian (18)	**Commenter 16:** "Yes to Old Prussian, though I saw some people saying Romanian, and I thought that sounded reasonable." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/comments/4fn4mk/no_spoilers_earth_thedas_connections/) **Commenter 17:** "Yeah she sounds like the Baroness to me too, although I thought the Baroness sounded kind of… Transylvanian? So Romanian then." (Source: https://fextralife.com/forums/t272699/cassandras-accent/)
Farsi (1)	**Commenter 18:** "Sounds like an Arab/Farsi based accent to me, at least the little I heard of it." (Source: https://fextralife.com/forums/t272699/cassandras-accent/)
Other (N/A)	**Commenter 19:** "The accents are getting silly and messed up enough that I kind of wish they'd just forget about them." (Source: https://fextralife.com/forums/p3346841/accents-of-thedas/)

comments on Leliana's accent in the forums call it realistic and subtle, making it much more believable than the "over-the-top bad French accents" (Commenter 21, Reddit) of the rest of the game's Orlesians. Here, again, evaluative judgement of the quality of accented French conveys purist, or at the very least prescriptivist tendencies in fans. More examples of these fan comments can be found in Table 2. Notably, though, in both characters' cases, fans display confusion due to the perceived sociophonetic ambiguity and inconsistency.

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Table 2. Fan comments about Leliana's accent by language of origin and word frequency

Language (*n* = frequency)	Example comments
French (391)	**Commenter 20:** "…However, I am very thrown off in Inquisition because Leliana magically dropped her Orlesian (French) accent for an English sounding one. Was this a decision by Bioware because people complained about her accent, or was there an actual story behind it? Whatever it was, it kind of breaks the immersion for me a bit, because why would they change a fundamental aspect of a character like that?" (Source: https://gamefaqs.gamespot.com/boards/718650-dragon-age-inquisition/70608112) **Commenter 21:** "From what I've read, it seems like the devs deliberately wanted to use over-the-top bad French accents just for laughs with some characters, though aping the culture is obviously deliberate and well-done." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/comments/2ag1r1/accents_in_dragon_age/)
English (203)	**Commenter 22:** "Okay, but back to my topic. I like Leliana's character, and her voice acting is good.....but the voice actress doesn't seem to be able to SETTLE on an accent. Sometimes she's got the typical fantasy British accent.....then she'll start to sound French.....then sort of Slavic or Russian. There was one moment that I SWEAR a [SIC] American Southern drawl crept in. I still like her, but I'm forced to wonder what her accent is SUPPOSED to sound like, because it's a real mish-mash. Not bad, but distracting at times! Maybe the voice actress needed a better accent coach?" (Source: https://gamefaqs.gamespot.com/boards/950918-dragon-age-origins/52096999) **Commenter 23:** "She doesn't sound French to me at all. Her accent is very unique and I'd say it has some of the overpronouncing tendencies of French accents, but it really stands apart. Almost like she lost most of her French accent but didn't quite end up with a true English one." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/comments/57nyu4/spoilers_all_french_players_of_dragon_age_how_do/)
Orlesian (142)	**Commenter 24:** "When you hear Orlesian as French, it is merely the writer (BioWare) presenting a particular language in a way that makes sense to us. Thus Orlesian is not *really* French English, nor is Antivan *really* Spanish English or Fereldan [SIC] *really* British English. It's just BioWare using familiar frames of reference. Since it is just a device to create clear boundaries between different in-universe languages, having Orlesians use such a caricatured French actually serves the purpose perfectly. The goal with the representation isn't accuracy." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/comments/2ag1r1/accents_in_dragon_age/)
Ferelden (109)	**Commenter 25:** "Why does Leliana speak Feralden [sic] with an Orlaision [sic] accent? The accent must be an affectation but what purpose does it serve?" (Source: https://fextralife.com/forums/t111823/lelianas-accent/) **Commenter 26:** "I believe that's exactly what they were going for. She was born in Ferelden and spent her young years there before being taken back to Orlais and spending much of her younger adult years there. The voice of Leliana has a similar dual English/French background having come to London at 15 to pursue her acting." (Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/dragonage/comments/57nyu4/spoilers_all_french_players_of_dragon_age_how_do/)

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5. Discussion

The normalization of SNAm and RP accents in the *Dragon Age* universe through linguistic signaling and implicit metapragmatics creates the illusion that there is a hierarchy of accents in the *DAI* game world, and the ideologies that contribute to this hierarchy can bleed into real life. Cassandra and Leliana, whose accents differ from the majority, are thus imbued with different social roles and status, with Cassandra's accent firmly situating her as an outsider, whereas Leliana's ties to both Ferelden and Orlais provide her with relative insider status and bi-cultural literacy. Irvine and Gal's (2000) concept of fractal recursivity can explain how, in players' mental representations of the game, this can easily create a hierarchy between differently accented characters. Orlais, which is partially inspired by French culture, is known as a cultural hub in the game world, and a stronghold of the Chantry (Thedas' dominant religious order). Speaking with an accent associated with Orlais, Leliana's persona can easily be aligned with the cultural capital of Orlais. That said, Orlais is also known for its opulence, showcased by a series of pompous characters who speak with satirically overblown and stereotypical French accents. This duality in cultural meaning assigns Leliana an ambivalent social status from the outset and may explain partly why she chooses to blend in sociophonetic elements associated with hegemonic Ferelden.

As a result of the game creator's normalization of SNAm and RP accents above all others in *DAI*, Cassandra and Leliana are othered simply on the basis of their accents not fitting the norm. The myth of the non-accent and the "standard language" alludes to the generally shared belief that there is a correct way of speech, and a normal accent to have, and neither of the studied characters fit within these standards (Lippi-Green 2012). This reproduction of standard language ideology in a fictional universe evokes real-world linguistic power imbalances, where social capital is displayed sociolinguistically through both accent and communication styles; however, through the framing of Cassandra and Leliana as "good guys," sociophonetic othering adopts the positive connotations of rebellious heroines that will lead the player to victory. This effect is reinforced by negatively connoting normalized standard language: the stereotypically pretentious RP speech of Grand Chancellor Roderick of the Chantry, for example, corroborates his authoritarian status and creates a vital contrast with the positively connoted "rogue" characters Cassandra and Leliana.

Enactment of the semiotic modes outlined by Irvine and Gal (2000) plays a large part in the othering of Cassandra and Leliana. Due to her accent, Cassandra is a linguistic anomaly in *DAI*, and this creates a semantic opposition between her and the other characters. Semantic oppositions can be conventional or unconventional (Davies 2007; Jeffries 2010; Jones 2002), and in videogames they are frequently combined to create associations between conventional and unconventional types

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of differentiation (Ensslin 2010). Game designers often rely on these combinations to enforce a simplistic and binary construction of good and bad – also known as Manichean economy (JanMohamed 1995). In such Manichean combinations of conventional and unconventional oppositionality, language and sociocultural phenomena are co-deployed to constitute the social group they relate to. These fractally recursive processes (Irvine and Gal 2000) essentialize the relationship between linguistic and social differentiation to create clearly delineated, rigidly structured character classes and cultures. By pairing moral binaries with artificially constructed, sociophonetic opposites, these inbuilt biases suggest that characters who speak a certain way will look a certain way, or characters that fulfil a certain role will speak differently than those in another role.

The phonological otherness displayed by Cassandra's speech marks her in contrast to the other characters in the game world, situating the majority as normal and her as abnormal or different. In contrast, Leliana's opposition is not against other characters, but within herself. Leliana represents duality, and her accent communicates her mixed background to players through her blending of French and British phonetic features. When comparing these characters, it becomes clear that they have been contrasted in their verbal and non-verbal communication in order to create an unconventional opposition. This is further proven by their positions as the Right and Left Hand of the Divine. Cassandra is pious and righteous to the extreme, living and serving the Divine above all else. Bound to justice, Cassandra will fight for the Inquisition in the name of God, and her steadfast dedication to the Divine gives her a sense of self-assuredness that makes her qualified to be the Divine's "right hand man," so to speak. This strength is reflected in her armoured appearance as well as her staccato speech and Germanic accent, which both exude an air of confidence and power that is clear to the player. Leliana is inconsistent and chaotic in both her personality and her speech, making her appear more "human" than Cassandra. While both characters are on the side of the Inquisition and fighting for the same cause, Leliana is more uncertain in her devotion to the Divine. Positioning theory, which posits that identity is constructed through individual communication acts, can help explain this opposition further (Harré and van Langenhove 1999). Cassandra has been positioned by the game designers through speech, stature, and appearance as a strong and just soldier, and is treated as such by the other player and non-player characters. On the other hand, Leliana has been positioned by the game designers as uncertain. She is portrayed as cunning and smart, but her instability betrays her, and as corroborated by fan comments, this has negative effects on her credibility.

The emphasis on narrative language in videogames plays into the sociolinguistic understanding of Cassandra and Leliana as characters. Videogames exist in a liminal space, half-real in the way they combine player agency and possibility

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to interact with fictional worlds (Juul 2005). In *DAI* Cassandra is the first companion character for the Inquisitor and remains playable throughout the game. In comparison, Leliana is not a playable character, and often does not even speak when she is present during a scene. This medium-specific contrast reinforces the differences in representation of these two characters, as Cassandra is able to openly interact with other party members, while Leliana the spymaster remains in the shadows. Cassandra's role as a soldier and a leader is reinforced by her authoritative Germanic accent, while Leliana's more subdued French accent evokes mystery and secrecy.

Fictional worlds are incomplete and leave players to imagine the world beyond their frame of reference. They imagine through visuals, audio, text, cutscenes, and rules, and the way characters are designed and represented impacts the ways in which players imagine their unspoken stories (Bogost 2007; Juul 2005; Schrier and Gibson 2010). All of these factors play into stereotyping, in which imagined or exaggerated differences become linked to groups or types of people. Not only do these 'foreign' characters have negative personality traits, and are often cast as villains, they are also given physical traits that other them from the 'standard' accent characters and solidify the connection between linguistic and visual stereotyping. While Cassandra and Leliana are well established, rounded characters and do not fall victim to the worst of these stereotypes, it can be argued that many Orlesians, who speak with satirically overblown French accents, are profiled this way.

As medium-specific features of videogames, procedurality and player interaction add to the effects of more conventional representational modes, such as animation and sound. In this respect, procedural rhetoric can be thought of as the means by which a game's rules and parameters guide players' actions in the game world (Bogost 2007). The game world is one of possibility, but procedural rhetoric looks closer at these possibilities in order to determine the reasons behind certain affordances or restrictions, the reward systems, and the rules. In this context, procedurality should be viewed as a semiotic equal to other established modes of communication such as text, image, and music (Bogost 2007; Hawreliak 2019). In *DAI*, procedural rhetoric is used to demonstrate the differences between Leliana and Cassandra in terms of trustworthiness and credibility. While Cassandra remains righteous and steadfast in her faith and cause throughout the game, Leliana is portrayed as wavering in her faith. This dichotomy is echoed by the fact that Leliana has a character-specific subplot. This storyline is ongoing throughout the game, and can either emotionally harden or soften Leliana depending on dialogue choices made during the Inquisitor's interactions with Leliana. The emotionally turbulent journey of Leliana's character is not only showcased through her inconsistent accented speech and personality, but through the ludo-narrative structures of the game.

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By understanding the semiotic, narrative and pragmatic affordances of videogames as a medium of interaction and mode of discourse, we can see how technology shapes players and the way that they interact with videogames, as well as what we can learn from videogames. The multimodality of new media opens a world of opportunities for understanding the propagation of language ideologies through media, and while videogames may adopt representational practices from other media such as film, the incorporation of procedural and haptic forms of expression is one that is lacking in the study of contemporary pragmatics (Thurlow and Mroczek 2011).

6. Conclusion

BioWare is known for its inclusivity in the *DA* franchise, most notably winning a GLAAD Media Award for its representation of LGBTQ+ characters and storylines (Kane 2014); however, this diversity is not found in all aspects of the game. While cultural and linguistic diversity is abundant, many of the characters' accents rely on linguistic stereotypes, like the regal British upper class and the "exotic" Spanish merchants (Bleichenbacher 2008; Goorimoorthee, Csipo, Carleton, and Ensslin 2019). Videogames are a mirror of society, regardless of the fantastic worlds they may take place in, and game designers should account for this. They reinforce dominant ideologies through the promotion of the status quo and the devaluing of the 'other' through choices in character design, speech, and narrative perspective. In this chapter, we have used the accented English of Cassandra and Leliana, two of *DAI*'s main characters, as a case study to examine the pragmatic construction of social meaning through speech in mediated context. We also examined the role of performed accents in player immersion. The multimodality of videogames is mediated by both textual and paratextual information, and the combination of these forms of communication creates an understanding of the pragmatics of the game. This is reflected in our analysis of both in-game speech acts and paratextual fan discourse.

In contemporary audiovisual culture, it is critical that both players and game designers become more aware of the subtly politicizing effects of human speech in character design. Videogames are prime tools to evoke and reproduce hegemonial thought about assumed normative appearances and behaviour. This means that videogames have the power to either reinforce or deconstruct these dominant ideologies. Our aim is for this research to facilitate a deeper understanding of how social binaries and subtle processes of othering are constructed and perpetuated in videogames by way of conventional and unconventional oppositions, and to bring to the fore the previously overlooked importance of speech accents and voice design in these pragmatic and multimodal processes.

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In the ear of the beholder

How ethnicity of raters affects the perception of a foreign accent

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In the present study, we tested whether a foreign accent activated different stereotypes, depending on the listener. Here, we explore whether ethnicity of a rater affects the perceived intelligence of a doctor speaking English with a Chinese accent vs. a doctor speaking English with a standard Canadian accent. As predicted, the results show an interaction between the ethnicity of the rater and the accent of the doctor: Chinese Canadians attributed lower intelligence to a doctor speaking with a Chinese accent than with a standard accent and, conversely, English Canadians perceived both doctors to be highly intelligent – which is consistent with previous research. We finally discuss how these stereotypes might be related to bias and interpersonal relations.

Keywords: foreign accents, stereotypes, prejudice, Chinese Canadians

1. Introduction

On September 19, 2019, Queens Bench Justice Terry Clackson in Lethbridge, Alberta overturned the previous conviction of David and Collet Stephan for not having provided the necessities of life for their 19-month son, Ezekiel. Ezekiel passed away from a serious illness that his parents had attempted to treat using naturopathic medicine (Graveland 2019). In his justification of his decision to overturn the conviction, Justice Clackson raised concerns about the testimony of the original pathologist on the case, Dr Bamidele Adeagbo. Dr Adeagbo's testimony had been key to the original jury's decision to find the couple guilty. Clackson, however, questioned Dr Adeagbo's competence, describing him as "hard to understand" because of "his garbled enunciation; his failure to use the appropriate definite and indefinite articles; his repeated emphasis of the wrong syllables; dropping his H's; mispronouncing his vowels; and the speed of his responses" (Ogunyemi 2019).

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Additionally, Clackson commented on Dr Adeagbo's actions and appearance stating that: "Dr Adeagbo demonstrated all of the following behaviours and attitudes over the six days of his testimony. He was calm, rational, reasonable, arrogant, petulant, exasperated, combative, argumentative and angry. Those attitudes were demonstrated not just verbally but also in Dr Adeagbo's movements, body language and physical antics" (Ogunyemi 2019). Given Justice Clackson's doubts, Dr Adeagbo was replaced by another pathologist. The retrial resulted in a non-guilty verdict of the Stephans.

Dr Adeagbo is a black man, originally from Nigeria, and speaks English with a non-standard accent. The questioning of Dr Adeagbo's competence based on his accent and mannerisms demonstrates the effect of stereotyping (see similar results in Frumkin and Thompson 2020). Stereotyping is defined as an overgeneralized belief about a particular category of people (Hinton 2000; Nelson 2009). In this example, the overgeneralized beliefs held by Clackson about black people could be that people who have emigrated from Nigeria are aggressive, lacking in warmth, and professionally incompetent (Ogunyemi 2019). Stereotypes can be negative (as in incompetent Nigerians) or positive (Kil, Noels, Lascano, and Schweickart 2019). An example of a positive stereotype among Canadians is that Jamaicans are warm and friendly (Kil et al. 2019). Research has shown that accents are one cue among others (such as race, gender, age, etc.) that activates stereotypes (Ryan, Carranza, and Moffie 1977, Gluszek and Dovidio 2010), although accents can be more powerful than other cues (Hansen, Rakić, and Steffens 2017). For example, Baquiran and Nicoladis (2019) found that a doctor who spoke English with a Chinese accent was rated as less competent than a doctor with a standard Canadian accent. This result held true of both English Canadian and Chinese Canadian listeners. In the present study, we reanalyzed the data in the Baquiran and Nicoladis (2019) study to focus on a new variable: intelligence. We predicted that the ethnicity of the listener might make a difference in how intelligent the doctor was rated.

Among English Canadians, the stereotype of Chinese Canadians includes being highly intelligent and hard-working (Kil et al. 2019). While the stereotype "highly intelligent and hard-working" could be considered positive, both positive and negative stereotypes have the capacity to lead to prejudice (Kil et al. 2019). In this case, Chinese Canadians who do not meet this aforementioned 'standard' could experience prejudice due to not being as 'hard working' as they are meant to be (Costigan, Hua, & Su 2010). Chinese Canadians are often characterized as being "model minorities", meaning that they work hard and succeed both in school and in the workplace (Awale, Chan, & Ho 2019; Paek & Shah 2003; Shim, 1998). These stereotypes may have a history in rationalizing bringing Chinese labourers to Canada in the 19th century to build the Canada Pacific Railway (Awale et al. 2019). While a number of studies have shown that success does not necessarily follow all

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Chinese Canadians in all domains (Costigan et al. 2010; Wang and Lo 2005; Wong and Wong 2006), the stereotype persists.

Chinese Canadians themselves struggle with the stereotype of being model minorities (Costigan et al. 2010; Costigan, Su, and Hua 2009). One aspect of the challenge to Chinese Canadians is how they acculturate to both the Chinese and the Canadian cultures (Chia and Costigan 2006). Acculturation refers to the adoption of a particular culture, including physical appearance and dress, mannerisms, behaviours, ways of thinking, beliefs, and how people talk (Hansen, Rakié, and Steffens 2018; Russo, Islam, and Koyuncu 2017). East Asian Canadians can be quite critical of other East Asian Canadians who are perceived as insufficiently acculturated to Canada (Kil et al. 2015). They can refer to each other as too "fresh off the boat" or "FOB". Conversely, East Asian Canadians also criticize each other for being insufficiently acculturated to their Chinese heritage, or "whitewashed' (Kil et al. 2015). In other words, among Chinese Canadians, there can sometimes be a narrow range of acceptable behaviours, neither too "FOB" nor too "whitewashed". An important point for the present study is that Asian Canadians recognized that being too "FOB" was worse than being too "whitewashed" (Kil et al. 2015).

Among both English Canadians and Chinese Canadians, accented speech may activate these stereotypes. Accented speech can activate many connotations about the speaker, including the socioeconomic status of a person, how long they have been in a certain region, and identification with a particular cultural or ethnic group (Doise, Sinclair, and Bourhis 1976; Pyke and Dang 2003; Rakić, Steffens, and Mummendey 2011). Studies have consistently shown that standard accents are preferred over non-standard accents for prestigious jobs (Ahmed, Abdullah, and Heng, 2013). Speaking with a non-native accent has been linked to being less likely to be promoted (see review in Kim, Roberson, Russo, and Briganti 2019).

The purpose of this article is to (1) examine the cognitive and affective experiences of both native and non-native English speakers when they interact with one another and illustrate how language diversity can affect intergroup dynamics in organizations and (2) provide recommendations and interventions to global leaders and managers on how to create a productive and inclusive environment for both native and non-native language-speaking employees at the individual, team, and organizational level.

In the present study, we asked both Chinese Canadians and English Canadians to rate the intelligence of an East Asian doctor who was giving a diagnosis to a patient in English. Previous research has shown that listeners infer attributes like warmth and intelligence on the basis of speakers' accent (Dailey, Giles, and Jansma 2005). Half of the participants heard a Chinese-accented doctor and half a standard-Canadian-accented doctor. We predicted that English Canadians would rate the doctor highly intelligent, regardless of accent, since Chinese immigrants

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to Canada are perceived as highly intelligent (Kil et al. 2019). In contrast, Chinese Canadians might judge the doctor less intelligent when speaking with a Chinese accent than with a standard Canadian accent, since the Chinese accent would be indicative of a low degree of acculturation to Canada (Kil et al. 2015, see also Bruchmann and Evans 2019). This study uses data collected for Baquiran and Nicoladis (2019) but not analyzed in that publication.

2. Methods: Evaluating the perception of a Chinese accent in a medical environment

Participants

161 undergraduate students from the University of Alberta participated in this study (*mean age* = 19.40; *SD* = 2.14): 81 Chinese Canadians and 80 English Canadians. 101 participants were female and 60 male. The participants were all enrolled in an introductory psychology course and received one course credit for their participation.

Materials

All participants were shown a still photo depicting an East Asian female doctor (see Figure 1). Previous research has demonstrated that simply viewing a picture of East Asian elicits stereotypes of a high degree of competence (Hansen et al. 2018).

Figure 1. Picture of doctor presented to participants

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There were a total of eight audio recordings, each one approximately two minutes long, simulating the doctor's presentation of a diagnosis to a patient (the scripts are in the Appendix). The audio was recorded with a Canon EOS Rebel T5i camera and edited with iMovie. Each audio recording lasted approximately two minutes. In four audio recordings, an East Asian female spoke with a standard Canadian accent. In the other four audio recordings, an East Asian female with a high degree of English fluency spoke with a Chinese accent. Currently in Canada, more young doctors are female than male (Glauser 2018). This is the reason why a female voice was chosen to be representative of doctors. Within each of the accented sets, the diagnoses were broken down into good news or bad news about cancer and good news or bad news about cholesterol. We originally predicted that the disease and/or the diagnosis might affect participants' ratings (Baquiran & Nicoladis 2019). A first-pass analysis of the data showed no effects of the disease. We present the results of the positive/negative diagnosis in the results section. Two examples of these scripts are as follows and all four scripts can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1. Scripts: Good new about cancer / Bad news about cancer

Good news about cancer (no cancer diagnosis) Hi, how are you? If you remember, I asked for your blood test a couple of weeks ago. One of the greatest concern I had was that the growth could represent a cancer. Cancer occurs when a cell develops mutations in its DNA. The mutations make the cell continue growing and dividing when healthy cells would normally die. When cells accumulate, a tumour forms. Cancer cells can invade nearby healthy tissues and spread to other parts of the body. One type is called carcinoid tumours. They are a type of slow-growing cancer that can arise in several areas throughout your body. Carcinoid tumours begin in the digestive tract or in the lungs. Factors that increase the risk of carcinoid tumours include older age. Women are also more likely than men to develop carcinoid tumours and a family history of multiple endocrine neoplasia also increases the risk of carcinoid tumours. Surgeries and medications are used to treat carcinoid syndrome. I've got the results of the tests back and they are looking good. The tests do not show signs that you have a carcinoid tumour. Your blood does not contain high levels of hormones secreted by a carcinoid tumour or by products created when those hormones are broken down by the body. We are not going to put you on medications, there is no need for that. Just make sure that you continue to eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.
Bad news about cancer Hi, how are you? If you remember, I asked for your blood test a couple of weeks ago. One of the greatest concern I had was that the growth could represent a cancer. Cancer occurs when a cell develops mutations in its DNA. The mutations make the cell continue growing and dividing when healthy cells would normally die. When cells accumulate, a tumour forms. Cancer cells can invade nearby healthy tissues and spread to other parts of the body. An uncommon type of cancer is called carcinoid tumours. Carcinoid tumours are a type of slow-growing cancer that can arise in several areas throughout your body. Carcinoid tumours begin in the digestive tract or in the lungs. Factors that increase the risk of carcinoid tumours

(*continued*)

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Table 1. (*continued*)

include older age. Women are also more likely than men to develop carcinoid tumours and a family history of multiple endocrine neoplasia also increases the risk of carcinoid tumours. Surgery and medications are used to treat carcinoid tumours. I've got the results of the tests back and they are not looking so good. The tests show that you have a carcinoid tumour. Your blood contains high levels of hormones secreted by a carcinoid tumor or byproducts created when those hormones are broken down by the body. We are going to have to start putting you on medications immediately. The common side effects of medications used to treat carcinoid tumours include fatigue, flu-like symptoms, abdominal pain, and diarrhea.

In order to ensure that participants would be able to understand the audio recordings, three lab members and ten participants were asked to determine if the accent and the language used by both doctors were comprehensible for the purposes of the study. They were also asked to determine if the target accent was accurate and authentic. They all agreed that the audio recordings were comprehensible and authentic-sounding.

Participants were asked to rate the doctor on a 7-point Likert scale (from "not at all" to "very much so") on the following adjectives: *good, intelligent, reliable, honest, powerful* and *competent* (questionnaire in Appendix B, adapted from Genesee, 1984).

Procedure

As per standard procedure, when the participants arrived for the study the procedure and informed consent were presented to them. Participants had the opportunity to opt out of the study if they did not agree with any part of it at any time and would not receive a penalty to their course credit. Additionally, if before the study began, participants felt that they did not want to participate, an alternative assignment was presented to them with no penalty to their obtaining their course credit. Participants were informed that they would be evaluating the language use of a doctor from four short audio recordings. Participants were encouraged to put themselves in the place of the patient in order to form an opinion about the doctor.

Participants were randomly assigned to listen either to the four audio recordings of the doctor with the standard Canadian accent or the four audio recordings of the doctor with the Chinese accent. The order of the four audio recordings was randomized for every participant. After each recording, participants rated the doctor on all six adjectives before listening to the next audio recording. After listening to all four audio recordings, participants were provided with a short funny cat video in order to alleviate any feelings of sadness or anxiety following hearing bad news about cancer (see similar methodology in Webber, Zhang, Schimel, & Blatter 2016).

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Analysis

In this study, the dependent variable is the degree of perceived intelligence, the rating of this scales from *"not at all"* to *"very much so"*. The ethnicity of the participants (either English Canadian or Chinese Canadian) was the main independent variable. We also included the diagnosis (i.e., the four different audio recordings) as an independent variable to test whether it made a difference in participants' ratings.

3. Results: A main effect of ethnicity in rating intelligence

We analyzed the results with a 2 x 2 x 4 [Ethnicity x Accented-Condition x Diagnosis] ANOVA, with the Diagnosis as a repeated measure across each vector. There was no main effect of Diagnosis, $F(3, 465) = 1.19$, $p = .31$, eta-squared-partial = .008, and Diagnosis did not interact with Ethnicity, $F(3, 465) = 1.05$, $p = .37$, eta-squared-partial = .007, Accented-Condition, $F(3, 465) = 0.63$, $p = .60$, eta-squared-partial = .004, nor was the three-way interaction significant, $F(3, 465) = 1.24$, $p = .30$, eta-squared-partial = .008. There was a main effect of Ethnicity that was observed, $F(1, 155) = 85.90$, $p < .001$, eta-squared-partial = .356, due to the Chinese Canadians scoring the doctors lower than the English Canadians in intelligence. A main effect of Accented-Condition also emerged, $F(1, 155) = 10.82$, $p = .001$, eta-squared-partial = .065, with the ratings of the Chinese-accented doctor lower than the standard-accented doctor again for intelligence.

Of particular interest to our study, the analysis revealed a significant interaction between Ethnicity and Accented-Condition, $F(1, 155) = 4.71$, $p = .03$, eta-squared-partial = .030. This interaction between Ethnicity and Accented-Condition is depicted in Figure 2. As can be seen by this Figure, there is little difference for

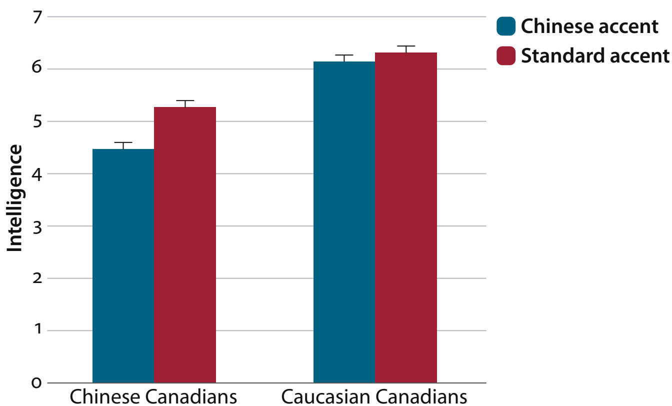

Figure 2. Means for intelligence ratings by ethnicity and accented condition

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the English Canadians for the accent between the participant reports on intelligence. Chinese Canadians, however, rated intelligence significantly higher for the standard-accented doctor in comparison to their Caucasian Canadian counterparts. Error bars depict standard error

4. Discussion: Effects of stereotypes and accents on out-groups

Foreign accents have the potential to activate stereotypes about their associated ethnic groups. Although the immediate assumption would be that these stereotypes are activated as a result of an out-group effect between groups of different ethnicities, this study reveals that an in-group effect can be observed as well (Hansen and Dovidio 2016). Among English Canadians, Chinese immigrants to Canada are often stereotyped as model immigrants: highly intelligent and willing to adapt to Canadian culture (Awale et al. 2019). In contrast, Chinese Canadians can hold negative stereotypes of other Chinese Canadians who are too "fresh off the boat", i.e., not fully adapted to Canadian culture (Kil et al. 2015). In this study, we tested whether the ethnicity of a rater affects the perceived intelligence of a doctor speaking English with a Chinese accent vs. a doctor speaking with a standard Canadian accent. The results showed an interaction between the ethnicity of the rater and the accent of the doctor. Chinese Canadians attributed lower intelligence to a doctor speaking with a Chinese accent than with a standard accent. The Chinese Canadians displayed a similar pattern of results when asked about the competence of the doctor (Baquiran & Nicoladis, 2019). The results for English Canadians were different: they perceived both doctors to be highly intelligent, regardless of accent.

These results are consistent with the argument that foreign accents elicit stereotypes (Hansen and Dovidio 2016). For the English Canadians, the ethnicity of the doctor alone may have been sufficient to activate the stereotype of highly intelligent Asians. For Chinese Canadians, the Chinese accent may have activated "fresh off the boat" stereotypes while the standard accent may have activated stereotypes of highly acculturated Asians. Kil et al. (2015) found that Asian Canadians judged that being too "fresh off the boat" was worse than being too "whitewashed". These stereotypes may have unintended consequences (Hinton 2000). Stereotypes can be a driving force for certain acts of prejudice and discrimination (de Souza et al. 2016; Nelson 2009). These biases can result even from positive stereotypes, such as the one seen among English Canadians toward Chinese Canadians with or without accent in this study. In some cases, stereotypes can alleviate tensions and insecurities people may have towards persons in a particular group and make them seem less of a threat (Vezzali et al. 2019). However, even positive stereotypes about an out-group can lead to feeling threatened (Hansen and Dovidio 2016), particularly among those in

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a position of privilege (Konitzer et al. 2019). For example, in recent years, English Canadians have started to raise the alarm that Asians are occupying "too many" university spots and are so successful that there is little room for anyone of any other ethnicity to be successful (see discussion in Ho 2014). Following that logic to the extreme, Asian Canadians will never be fully able to self-actualize because they are not considered equal (Cooley and Payne 2019).

As for Chinese Canadians, they often struggle with how their identity fits the stereotype, particularly when they face academic or workplace challenges (Costigan et al. 2010; Costigan et al. 2009). If an individual is placed on a hierarchal scale of privilege based on a stereotype that triggered a discriminatory or prejudiced perception, it can become difficult to within this hierarchy or identify in it without deviating to acculturation (Rosette and Tost 2013). Within the workplace, if the Chinese Canadian deviates from the stereotype of hard-working, they may face harsher consequences than that of their peers (Costigan et al. 2019; Costigan et al. 2009). One way to cope for Chinese Canadians with these identity struggles is to identify with Canadian culture (Kil et al. 2015; Pyke and Dang 2003). This identity choice could help alleviate prejudice and discrimination from Caucasian Canadians (Doise, Sinclair, and Bourhis 1976). According to Membership Categorization Theory, humans identify themselves as members of groups and, as a result, feel a general sense of belonging (Berard 2009). In order to be part of the membership category, there is a required understanding of the actions, language, culture and behaviour, or 'buy in', that can be generalized to the entire group. For this study the Chinese Canadian participants rated the doctor speaking with a Chinese accent as having lower intelligence than the Caucasian accented doctor, suggesting that they may have 'bought in' to the membership category of being Chinese Canadian without an accent.

In buying in to Canadian identity, many Chinese Canadians may also distance themselves from people who speak English with a Chinese accent, stereotyping a Chinese accent as unintelligent. Indeed, Arndt et al. (2002) found that people were likely to distance themselves from other members of their in-group if there was an outstanding negative stereotype. Previous research has shown that Asian Canadians criticize other Asians who have not sufficiently adopted Canadian ways, including accent (Kil et al. 2015; Pyke and Dang 2003). To the extent that Chinese Canadians denigrate their Chinese identity, they can lose access to their heritage and feel dissonance with their heritage community (Zhang, Noels & Lalonde 2018). This loss of connection to the heritage culture and community can lead to feelings of isolation and depression, among other challenges to their health and well-being (Eisenchlas and Michael 2019; Kim, Wang, Deng, Alvarez, and Li 2011; Konitzer et al. 2019). Future research can address the question of how the attitudes among Chinese Canadians affect social relationships with other Chinese Canadians.

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The results of the present study add to the growing literature that accents are one cue that humans use to place themselves and others in a hierarchy of privilege (Ryan, Carranza, and Moffie 1977; Gluszek and Dovidio 2010). The stereotypes activated by accents can contribute to (however unconsciously) justification of prejudice and discrimination (Hansen & Dovidio, 2016). Foreign accents can be a contributing factor in the institutionalized racism faced by foreign-born engineers (Wong and Wong 2006), doctors (see Baquiran and Nicoladis 2019, for review), among others, as well as overt and covert racism toward minority ethnicities (Adebayo, 2019; Beagan 2003; Samuel and Burney 2003; Samuel and Wane 2005).

Limitations and future directions

One important limitation of the methodology adopted in this study is that Caucasian Canadians have internalized the message that it is bad to be racist (Zinga and Gordon 2016). In order to avoid being perceived as racist (Stevens and Abernathy 2018), the Caucasian Canadian participants in this study may have rated the Chinese Canadian doctor high in intelligence (cf. Baquiran and Nicoladis 2019). Although, the participants' information is anonymous, the internal moral pressure of feeling racist could be enough to affect the participants' responses. Future studies could include more implicit measures of attitudes to test for that possibility (as in Ottaway, Hayden, and Oakes 2001).

Another limitation to keep in mind is that the only foreign accent we tested in this study was a Chinese accent in English. It is important to repeat this study and examine if the effects generalize to other foreign accents, along the lines predicted by stereotypes (Kil et al. 2019). Future studies can further test how members of minority groups perceive each other, as well as how the degree of acculturation to the majority culture affects attitudes of members of the majority group. Future research can also test the generalizability of the present findings to other cultures.

5. Conclusion

Canada has adopted a federal policy of multiculturalism, with the direct intention of celebrating the cultural diversity that makes up Canada (Dewing and Leman 2006). Nonetheless, as this study has shown, Canadians still have stereotypes about members of ethnic and cultural groups. One way in which these stereotypes are activated is by the accent of a speaker. Caucasian Canadians perceive Asians to be highly intelligent, regardless of accent, while Chinese Canadians perceive a speaker to be more intelligent when speaking with a standard Canadian accent than with a Chinese accent. We have argued that accent is one cue that listeners use to place

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people on a hierarchy of privilege by means of discrimination and prejudice (Rosette and Tost 2013). These attitudes likely feed into the everyday and institutionalized racism faced by minorities (Beagan 2003; Samuel and Burney 2003; Samuel and Wane 2005). These processes have real and important consequences. Recall that at the outset of this chapter, we discussed how Justice Clackson dismissed the evidence presented by Dr Adeagbo, a highly educated pathologist, at least in part because he spoke with a foreign accent. This is but one incident, but just one among many that illustrates how much work we have to do.

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Appendices A. Scripts

Good news about cancer (no cancer diagnosis)

Hi, how are you? If you remember, I asked for your blood test a couple of weeks ago. One of the greatest concern I had was that the growth could represent a cancer. Cancer occurs when a cell develops mutations in its DNA. The mutations make the cell continue growing and dividing when healthy cells would normally die. When cells accumulate, a tumour forms. Cancer cells can invade nearby healthy tissues and spread to other parts of the body. One type is called carcinoid tumours. They are a type of slow-growing cancer that can arise in several areas throughout your body. Carcinoid tumours begin in the digestive tract or in the lungs. Factors that increase the risk of carcinoid tumours include older age. Women are also more likely than men to develop carcinoid tumours and a family history of multiple endocrine neoplasia also increases the risk of carcinoid tumours. Surgeries and medications are used to treat carcinoid syndrome. I've got the results of the tests back and they are looking good. The tests do not show signs that you have a carcinoid tumour. Your blood does not contain high levels of hormones secreted by a carcinoid tumour or by products created when those hormones are broken down by the body. We are not going to put you on medications, there is no need for that. Just make sure that you continue to eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.

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Bad news about cancer

Hi, how are you? If you remember, I asked for your blood test a couple of weeks ago. One of the greatest concern I had was that the growth could represent a cancer. Cancer occurs when a cell develops mutations in its DNA. The mutations make the cell continue growing and dividing when healthy cells would normally die. When cells accumulate, a tumour forms. Cancer cells can invade nearby healthy tissues and spread to other parts of the body. An uncommon type of cancer is called carcinoid tumours. Carcinoid tumours are a type of slow-growing cancer that can arise in several areas throughout your body. Carcinoid tumours begin in the digestive tract or in the lungs. Factors that increase the risk of carcinoid tumours include older age. Women are also more likely than men to develop carcinoid tumours and a family history of multiple endocrine neoplasia also increases the risk of carcinoid tumours. Surgery and medications are used to treat carcinoid tumours. I've got the results of the tests back and they are not looking so good. The tests show that you have a carcinoid tumour. Your blood contains high levels of hormones secreted by a carcinoid tumor or byproducts created when those hormones are broken down by the body. We are going to have to start putting you on medications immediately. The common side effects of medications used to treat carcinoid tumours include fatigue, flu-like symptoms, abdominal pain, and diarrhea.

Good news about cholesterol (normal cholesterol diagnosis)

Hi, how are you? If you remember, I asked for your blood test a couple of weeks ago. One of the greatest concern I had was that your cholesterol levels are too high. Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in the fats in your blood. Cholesterol is needed for building healthy cells, however when cholesterol is high this can increase your risk of heart disease. This can happen because when cholesterol is high, fatty deposits can develop in your blood vessels and make it difficult for enough blood to flow through your arteries. When this happens, your heart may not get as much oxygen-rich blood as it needs, which can cause heart attack. Decreased blood flow to your brain can cause a stroke. This is often the result of unhealthy lifestyle choices which also means that it is preventable and treatable. Life changes such as eating a healthy diet, exercising, and medications are used to treat high cholesterol. I've got the results of the tests back and they are looking good. The tests show that you have a desirable cholesterol level. The desirable level for a patient's total cholesterol is below 5.2 mmol/L, 5.2–6.2 mmol/L is borderline high, high is about 6.2 mmol/L. Your total cholesterol is about 4.5 and that's the desired level. We are not going to put you on medications, there is no need for that. Just make sure that you continue to eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.

Bad news about cholesterol

Hi, how are you? If you remember, I asked for your blood test a couple of weeks ago. One of the greatest concern I had was that your cholesterol levels are too high. Cholesterol is a waxy substance found in the fats in your blood. Cholesterol is needed for building healthy cells, however when cholesterol is high this can increase your risk of heart disease. This can happen because when cholesterol is high, fatty deposits can develop in your blood vessels and make it difficult for enough blood to flow through your arteries. When this happens, your heart may not get as much oxygen-rich blood as it needs, which can cause heart attack. Decreased blood flow to your brain can cause a stroke. This is often the result of unhealthy lifestyle choices which also means

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that it is preventable and treatable. Life changes such as eating a healthy diet, exercising, and medications are used to treat high cholesterol. I've got the results of the tests back and they are not looking so good. The tests show that you have a high cholesterol level. The desirable level for a patient's total cholesterol is below 5.2 mmol/L, 5.2–6.2 mmol/L is borderline high, high is about 6.2 mmol/L. Your total cholesterol is about 6.5 mmol/L, and that's high. We are going to have to start putting you on medications immediately. The common side effects of medications used to treat high cholesterol include muscle pains, stomach pain, constipation, nausea and diarrhea.

Appendix B. Questionnaire

On the following scales, with 1 being "not at all" and 7 being "very much so", please indicate by circling one number the extent to which the doctor is:

Good:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Nice:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Intelligent:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Friendly:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Honest:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Comfortable:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Competent:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Relaxed:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Confident:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Trustworthy:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Respectful:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extraverted:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Powerful:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reliable:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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Concluding remarks

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From sound to social meaning

Investigating the pragmatic dimensions of accents

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This concluding chapter is written by two francophone researchers who, for years, have tackled the notion of accents through different angles, different standpoints and above all, different experiences. For they are not only scholars specialized in the field of accents, but also people whose entire lives are embedded in accent matters. Whether it is about themselves, people close to them or the subjects encountered in their surveys and fieldworks, they live in a kind of constant state of 'participant observation', wherein they continuously scrutinize the diversity and complexity of accents under their linguistic, social and pragmatic aspects. Hence why they were assigned to write the final chapter of this book, which is not a conclusion nor a synthesis, but a focus on the pragmatic aspects of accents through specific and situated points of views.

Keywords: accent, accentism, pragmatics, critical sociolinguistics

1. Introduction

Before being a scientific subject, accent is a human reality, involving real people, and not anonymous sound producers. As a speech-based phenomenon, it is naturally studied by several branches of linguistics, yet its existence exceeds linguistic units or patterns, a fact that has been demonstrated throughout this volume.

One of the authors of this paper is from Canada, the other is from France, which to this day remains a strong symbolic reference for francophones in Canada, while the latter is often perceived as a periphery of the Francophone world. But speakers from both countries are shaped by ideologies and attitudes about French language and French speakers that are interconnected, even if their practices vary according to their social and political means of production. In Canada, the essentialized vision claiming that speakers from France all speak a highly prescriptive norm, understood as the standard or '*le bon français (de France)*', still holds, and although discourses on language variation and diversity are mainstream, the reality

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of practices is otherwise. On another scale, in France, there is still a deep-rooted belief according to which a unique (standard) version of French would be legitimate. The cliché of '*la langue de Molière*' is vivid and contributes to sketch a hierarchy of varieties: the good or pure French at its top, while a lot of other accents and dialects are still minorized and considered as funny, exotic or plainly wrong. At the same time, regional and sometimes stigmatized accents are used as counter norms to challenge central/Parisian French.

Since the early 1990s, Annette Boudreau has studied discourses on French Canadian accents to further our understanding of linguistic insecurity, focusing closely on accent, as the first and most frequent element by which *sameness* and *otherness* are constructed. Médéric Gasquet-Cyrus has been working on/with accents since 2000. Primarily interested in the wide range of accents beyond the stereotyped 'southern' French accent, he became a specialist of accent discrimination.

Before we comment on the volume's chapters and acknowledge that all studies of accents are generally 'situated', it is important for us to show *from where we speak, where we come from* and *where we stand* since *stance* (Jaffe 2009) and biographical elements are linked to interpretation and analysis (Busch 2017). We follow Walter Mignolo in his assumption: *I am where I do*, where he claims:

> To say that knowledge is situated in and of itself doesn't take us too far. It amounts to saying that "reality is constructed". Sure. But once we have beaten the essentialist claim that reality exists, the next step and the most important one is to ask how is it constructed, by whom, why, what for, and whose interest does it serve if we construct reality in A or B manner? And what are these constructions saying to those who are affected by the construction for reality without the ability to participate in such construction. (Mignolo, 2011: 100)

Annette: I was born and raised in Moncton, New Brunswick, the only province officially bilingual in Canada (since 1967), albeit the bilingualism practiced in everyday settings is very asymmetrical and far from equal: 70% of francophones are bilingual while only 15% of anglophones are, which means that francophones often switch to English when speaking with anglophones.

I identify myself as a French Acadian and I speak French in most of my encounters. I grew up in a family where discussions concerning language rights were constant, with both my parents being involved in different advocacy groups aimed at providing educational, medical and press services in French, all of which are now available, although the French minority still struggles to obtain resources in their language in certain areas.

After finishing high school, I studied French Literature at the Université de Moncton, which was followed by my *Licence ès lettres* at Laval University in Québec city. I then received a scholarship from the French government (Bourse France-Acadie) and studied literature at the Université d'Aix-Marseille before studying in

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sociolinguistics further on. It was in France that I became aware that I spoke French *differently*, a difference that felt alienating, accompanied by unease, and sometimes shame when I spoke in the public sphere, because I would always anticipate getting comments on my accent or my Canadian expressions. The experience of discomfort was multiplied by the fact that I had always thought of myself as being a francophone, and to acknowledge that I often did not have the 'right' words or 'right' ways of speaking in given situations was painful.[1] I chose to be silent whenever possible. I did not have the theoretical knowledge to question my assumptions about language: the very notion of variation was at that time (in the 1970s) quite rare, especially in literature, and if present, very limited to the study of grammatical and phonetic features isolated from larger social and political aspects.

My interests in sociolinguistics were sparked many years later, while teaching French for first year students at the Université de Moncton, when I first saw how linguistic insecurity impacted the student's lives: some of them, especially those from bilingual regions, hesitated to speak or did not speak at all, convinced that they were illegitimate because of repeated discourses on their "bad" French, on their mixed language, etc. Some felt illegitimate in English, and others yet felt deficient in both languages. They appeared as victims of mainstream discourses that portrayed them as such, discourses that cluster in what Jonathan Rosa calls the *Ideology of Languagelessness* (Rosa 2019). These behaviors loudly resonated with me, and when I was granted a sabbatical leave, I studied sociolinguistics, again in France, where my doctoral work focused on linguistic insecurity, its causes and consequences. I studied the shame and guilt felt by speakers, but also the strategies to emancipate themselves from rigid norms and the creative aspects that accompany them. And it was later on that I understood how studying accents could lead the way to broader studies of ideologies and representations. It is when I examined some of the roots of negative representations on accents, by combing through almost 200 years of articles published in the French daily provincial newspaper in New Brunswick, that I discovered how colonial, gender and nationalistic ideologies were linked, and how the ideology of the *one and only language, the standard form* highly impacted language representations and people's lives (Boudreau 2021, to appear).

Médéric: I was born and raised in Marseille, France and in my youth, I was rather oblivious to how family, friends, colleagues, or others around me tended to use language, or speak. Later, while at university, where I studied literature, I took

1. See Boudreau (2016) for this significant anecdote: « *Mon médecin aixois me faisait répéter mon nom "Boudreau" en me montrant à grasseyer le "R" de mon patronyme, estimant que je "roulais trop" ; je n'ai jamais retenu cette "leçon"* » (Boudreau 2016: 39, note 2). ("My doctor from Aix had me repeat my last name 'Boudreau' emphasizing the need to use an uvular 'R' in my surname, as he felt I tended to roll my 'R's too much; I never memorised this 'lesson' ")

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a linguistics course involving some fieldwork. This is when I started to study my linguistic environment: a variety of French with a lot of internal variation contrasting with standard French, waved like a flag to signify a powerful local identity. From then on, I never stopped studying these aspects (accents, lexicon, grammar, expressions, language-based local humor, etc.).

My fieldwork research in my hometown led me to distinguish several local accents beyond the nationally well-known and stereotyped *accent marseillais*. The intersection between metalinguistic discourses and differently distributed linguistic features construct at least three Marseillais 'accents': the so-called '*vrai' accent marseillais*, considered as popular and authentic; the bourgeoisie accent, considered as stiff and close to the Parisian accent but still sounding local; and the northern-district accent, associated with young speakers of immigrant families (especially from Maghrebi backgrounds) in working-class estates or suburban areas of the city (Gasquet-Cyrus 2004). Later, I conducted surveys and interviews about language discrimination with people originating from different areas in the south of France (Gasquet-Cyrus 2012).

Since 1999, I have also hosted a daily radio chronicle[2] about the local language and accents. I remember the reaction of some members of my family after one of the first recording sessions when the show was not live. Some of them laughed at me and judged my accent as unnatural '*pointu*' or Parisian (which can be locally considered as an insult), as if I had betrayed the local identity. I realized that, indeed, probably influenced by the medium, I switched my naturally light local accent with a more neutral or legitimate variety. I felt quite bad and immediately decided to 'control' my accent more, but the result was, on the contrary, a sort of weird exaggeration of the regional accent while mine is, as I said above, quite light. Not enough or too much. I was a bit puzzled, and it took years to realize that my feeling of linguistic insecurity was quite unfair. I decided, then, to assume that it was illusory to think that my accent had to be 'natural', because the existence of a natural accent was, itself, illusory. I realized that, when speaking in a radio show, I was somehow a character playing a role, with expectations from the audience, and that I was performing another role with my colleagues at university, and yet still another role with my family (my accent is indeed stronger when I talk to my father or brother) and so on. The *roles* that we perform in our daily interactions, in a Goffmanian sense, helped me to understand that they could be associated with different accents or ways of speaking. And that it is not an ethical issue if you have to change, to switch, to adapt, to converge depending on the *context*. But if it is ethically understandable, it is not always 'technically' nor socially possible to do so: people who converge or play with accents are more likely to be those with legitimate

2. "*Dites-le en marseillais*", France Bleu Provence

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accents, whereas otherwise it is difficult and rare to see people from working class backgrounds being able to change depending on the context (see below for further reflections on this social inequality).

Nevertheless, this personal experience helped me consider accents differently; not as a set of linguistic features assigned to static identities, but as symbolic and dynamic resources which are displayed according to contexts and social interactions.

In my own research, I started to deal with accents when I primarily worked on the description of Marseillais French. Despite the strong national stereotype of the '*accent marseillais*', which has been popular since the 1930's (partly due to its exposure in Marcel Pagnol's movies), it was obvious that locally – through their metalinguistic discourses – people distinguished between several local accents. But for years I was almost never able to remove the quotation marks when I mentioned the word 'accents'. Even when I use(d) the word in oral presentations, I use(d) gestures (or a specific prosodic tone) to mention that the term 'accent', as we have seen throughout this book, is not well defined, that it is a vague or an umbrella term to talk about something more complicated. But what is so complicated in this notion? Why did I have so many problems in defining what an accent is? It is maybe because, for a long time, I was trying to catch an *object*, a stable structure, or a well-defined linguistic variety, while accent is something in motion, more *interactional* and more relevant if you consider it through its pragmatic dimensions and its social meaning. I place myself here within the framework of "*sociolinguistics of mobility* [which] focuses not on language-in-place but on language-in-motion, with various spatiotemporal frames interacting with one another" (Blommaert 2010: 5).

Looking at our life journeys and professional careers, we see that we both experienced several social dimensions of what the phrase 'having an accent' means. These experiences are echoed throughout the chapters of this book and have served to highlight the fluid nature of 'accent' along with its reliance on context in the daily lives of speakers and listeners. There is no doubt that these experiences and chapter topics have helped us all in our journey to building a stronger definition of accents. But before we discuss the contemporary theoretical perspectives about accents, let's see how the notion's definition evolved from one field to another.

2. Accent: An undertheorized notion

One of the most fascinating things in science is that it is always (and it *has* to always be) in motion. A scientific object is rarely a forever and defined-for-good object. Its shape, boundaries and contents are permanently and across times reviewed, resketched and redefined by observations, experiences, analyses, discoveries, theories, debates, etc. We see this here – fortunately – with the notion of *accent*: a quite simple

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word used by everyone for a more complex notion than expected. It is quite rare to encounter linguistic terminology in everyday life. Except specialists, no one has to deal with *phonemes*, *morphemes*, *syntax*, *allophones*, *diglossia*, etc. And except, perhaps at a linguist's dinner table, there is little chance to hear definitive judgments and or aesthetic debates about *velars, topicalization* or *grammaticalization*. But language in itself is at the core of daily conversations and, through metalinguistic discourses, everyone is allowed to give their opinion or aesthetic comments about *this* particular language, or *that* particular dialect. And of course, in almost all cultures around the world, it is common practice to, for example, talk about a person's or a group's accent and in doing so, make judgements about accents in general, as seen throughout this volume: "singing", "beautiful", "funny" (Carrie, Chapter 7), or "harsh", "ugly", "unprofessional" (Baratta Chapter 6; Everhart Chapter 3; Besoi, Nicoladis and Baquiran, Chapter 10).

Yet, apart from *language*, the word *accent* seems to be an exception, because it is a quite common word potentially used by everyone, while also being a linguistic notion (Prikhodkine, in this volume, mentions "common-sense and sociolinguists' definitions that coexist"). To be more precise, *it has to be* theoretically constructed as a linguistic notion because it lacks theoretical foundations. But the problem is: if you want to define what accent *is*, *does* and *means*, you cannot ignore its use in daily conversations and its common meaning even if the latter is quite a blur.

As mentioned by some other authors throughout this volume, accent can be considered a particular pronunciation: "A way of pronouncing a language that is distinctive to a country, area, social class, or individual", as stated in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Several authors in this volume start their studies from this basic definition; see for instance Levis and McCrocklin (Chapter 5), or Baratta (Chapter 6) for developed reflections about the phonetic and pragmatic definitions of accents.

Naturally associated with phonetics, one can however hardly find a satisfactory definition of the concept of accent in this field. It is not that phoneticians are unable to describe what a *pronunciation* is. But rather, the issue is that accent is not (only) a question of pronunciation. For instance, in the field of prosody, accent is quite a common notion, but it is only treated as a phenomenon of emphasis or prominence: "Accent has proved to be one of the most controversial of the prosodic features, generating a considerable amount of theoretical debate" (Fox 2000: 114; Chapter 3, "Accent", 114–178). In many lexicons or glossaries of (general) linguistics, it is under this technical aspect that accent is presented.

As evidenced by the multitude of definitions throughout the volume's chapters, or even by some authors' unwillingness to define 'accent', an open inquiry into the theoretical construction of the term is not always part of the researchers'

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objectives.[3] Let's give a clear example: the international project 'Phonologie du Français Contemporain' (PFC ; https://www.projet-pfc.net/) has carried on since the beginning of the 2000's, and a huge amount of data has been collected, compiled, archived, labeled, etc., providing very precious material for scholars of different fields (phonetics, phonology, syntax, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, conversational analysis…). In one of the first papers emanating from the project (Durand et al. 2002), the word "*variétés*" (varieties) is chosen, and there is no trace at all of accents, the word is not even coined.

Phoneticians and phonologists are, of course, valuable partners in the study of accents. They can help to describe some characteristics of an accent, but their tools, categories and concepts shape the description, both, of what an accent *is*, and, of what an accent *does*. It is not their goal, nor their (theoretical) problem. Once you understand that you cannot reduce an accent to a list of phonetic features, you stop trying to find a robust definition of accent. So accent can no longer be the prerogative of phoneticians (in fact it was never really considered as a relevant issue in this field).

In dialectology and sociolinguistics, while 'dialect' concerns grammatical variations, 'accent' is just about phonetical variations. But it is still a question of features, as if an accent could be defined by internal, structural or linguistic properties. Of course, the basis of accents is sketched by linguistic differences. Thus, an accent is not only a pool of features, but also the combination of production and reception in a specific context: "Accent is not simply a pre-existing natural phenomenon. Rather, accent is a socially relevant categorization of certain language features, language users, and other meanings linked together in an indexical field" (Everhart, Chapter 3). Accent also depends on the listener, as it is often in *the ear of the beholder* as coined by Baratta (Chapter 6), a theme that we will get back to later in this chapter. We could also quote the Canadian writer, singer and musicien Plume Latraverse : « L'accent, c'est pas dans la gorge des uns, c'est dans l'oreille des autres »[4] (Plume Latraverse, *Contes gouttes ou le pays d'un reflet*, 1987).

3. In Gasquet-Cyrus' lab, for example, where a lot of phoneticians and prosodists relentlessly scrutinize very thin aspects of phonetical productions and perceptions, it was almost impossible to have theoretical discussions about *accents* because this point is not in their research agenda. However, these colleagues very often deal with, or manipulate accents (for example when they compare speakers associated with Standard French and those associated with a "Southern accent"). For these researchers, an accent is more or less a combination of prosodic/phonetic features, and they rarely question the boundaries of the accents, or the pre-established categories that they use, or the social meaning of accents. Of course they can measure the length of vowels, pitch, stress, time reactions, and so forth. But these features are only a part of what an accent is.

4. "Accent is not in the throats of some, it is in the ears of others."

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Going further, if we take into account how accent is perceived by non-specialists, a broader definition has to be considered. Because very often in our and other researchers' interviews, for many people, accent is not only about pronunciation: it encompasses speech patterns, rhythm, words, expressions… that is to say, *ways of speaking* (or *manners of speaking*, see Prikhodkine, Chapter 1). It overflows the traditional, technical but narrow definition of accent, yet it is closer to reality.

It all depends, as we have mentioned here, and throughout this volume, on the context. To give a simple example, the accent of Marseille is more or less mocked at a national level, even if sometimes it can be described as 'funny', 'singing', 'sunny', etc. In a national linguistic market (in Bourdieu's words) it does not fit with a legitimate variety. Nevertheless, at a local scale, things are quite different. Of course, the effects of the national French market are still fully at work; but locally, and in some social settings, having an accent is the norm while having a Parisian / standard accent is considered a weird way of speaking. The covert prestige of the accent of Marseille can lead some people to overtly mock the standard accent, which is generally dominating the market. So even if the (phonetic) productions are identical, the social meaning and the social effects of what accents index are definitely not the same and do not involve the same interactions between the agents. It is why, in this volume, the pragmatic approach has been taken in a broad way, with "a deliberate focus on the contexts of interaction and on accent's communicative action within these contexts" (Planchenault and Poljak, Introduction).

We have just seen that the very notion of accents has evolved considerably ever since sociolinguists have extended their scope of interest on the subject beyond the study of phonetic features which often amounted to a certain reification of the concept. It is now commonplace to examine *ways of speaking* in their broader social and political settings and to study accents as part of that particular *way of speaking* (Gasquet-Cyrus 2012). Accents can therefore be studied as resources with different values that give or deny access to social, political and economic capital.

3. Accent, identity, norms and power

It is obvious that accent is a very strong and powerful identity marker. Either it goes unnoticed, or it appears strikingly different. Perceptions or appreciations of a "good or not so good" accent are imbedded in social beliefs (see Prikhodkine or Besoi et al., Chapter 1 and 10) and language ideologies that are so ingrained that they appear natural and not to be contested, which explains in part that discriminations regarding accents tend to be normalized, even more so because the speakers evaluating others usually benefit from a strong legitimate linguistic capital. Representations of language practices and judgements are up to the listener

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as Baratta (Chapter 6, p. 224) rightly states, while speaking of mentors to future teachers in the UK: “it is *in the ear of the beholder* that the connotations are, and such connotations are then passed on to the speaker of the said accent in the form of social judgement, often involving stereotypes”. This could also be seen in the case of real estate agents in Germany (Du Bois, Chapter 4), or with the doctor “who spoke English with a Chinese accent and was rated as less competent than a doctor with a standard Canadian accent” by other Chinese Canadians (Besoi et al., chap.10). The fact that Southern accents of France are supposed to evoke sun, cicadas and holidays has nothing to do with sounds, but is dependent on the stereotypes of the *people*, which in turn are triggered, by the accents.

The status of these beholders plays a role in cementing language judgments and can be rooted in historical and structural processes that Jonathan Rosa and Nelson Flores explore in what they call a “raciolinguistic perspective” where the racial component adds to the understanding of how categories of speakers are constructed. Accordingly, they state that raciolinguistic ideologies explore “how the linguistic practices of racialized populations are systematically stigmatized regardless of the extent to which these practices might seem to correspond to standardized norms” (Flores and Rosa 2017: 623). This view is summarized by Monica Heller and Bonnie McElhinny: “It is not enough to speak the legitimate language; you must also be a legitimate speaker” (Heller and McElhinny, 2017: 251), implying that speaking with the “right” accent is not enough to stay away from discrimination, as shown and analyzed throughout this volume where race and language collide.

An idea that reinforces the belief that anyone can be a legitimate speaker by willpower is that having the “required” accent in a given moment is a question of choice, a belief that remains mainstream and that is linked to the ideology of the standard as Rosina Lippi-Green puts it : “In spite of all the hard evidence that language must be variable and must change, people steadily believe that a homogeneous, standardized, one-size-fits-all language is not only desirable, it is truly a possibility” (Lippi-Green 1997: 44). This essentialized vision of a uniform accent (one size fits all) ends up delegitimizing a great number of speakers – see Lodge (1993) for multiple examples of how prescriptive attitudes tend to disqualify speakers, going as far as to say that those who do not comply with the right way of speaking can be said to be less intelligent. It also leads to different forms of discrimination and can be seen as connected to this idea of choice often put forth as easy and natural in certain interactional or conversationalist theories, where the *here and now* are the only data being accounted for at the detriment of other meaningful forces, such as power relations between the speakers, the speaker’s social backgrounds, the type of situation, agency, etc.

In his study, Pridkhodkine (Chapter 1) chose to approach language “from the point of view of the interaction between the individual and the society, or

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between the agency and the social structure". Agency has to do with the stylization of discourses, and the agents can display different speech styles according to the context, the interaction, the theme, etc.: "The emphasis on stylistic practice […] places speakers not as passive and stable carriers of dialect, but as stylistic agents, tailoring linguistic styles in ongoing and lifelong projects of self-construction and differentiation" (Eckert 2012: 97–98, quoted by Prikhodkine, Chapter 1). If one has to recognize "the capacity of individuals to act", "their power to act is circumscribed by factors which, while they may, under certain conditions, be negotiable, are structural and therefore exceed the will and the interest of a single individual" (Prikhodkine, p. 27). In order to link the structural social constraints and the owner of agency, Prikhodkine uses the notion of *language regard* (from Preston, 2010), which offers two advantages: "On the one hand, since it implies a process and an activity, it is subject to variation according to the context, which removes the reifying connotations of the term "attitude", for example. On the other hand, it articulates a link and interaction between the two dimensions, assuming, for example, the weight of hetero-evaluations in self-evaluations." (Prikhodkine, p. 36).

We have stated that ideas about languages or accents are imbedded in larger political and social ideologies, having real effects on people's everyday lives, and that accents are products of different conditions of production linked to given areas to be examined as such, that is as variable and heterogeneous. If the use of a certain accent was a choice and speakers could easily adapt their pronunciation accordingly, then there would be no discrimination, no prejudices – while all articles in this volume show otherwise – and it would be only up to the individual to speak as needed in particular circumstances. Considering that what counts as a legitimate accent in a certain space at a given moment is arbitrary, it seems obvious that having or performing the accent required in different circumstances is not a matter of "choice" but is related to class, power relations, racism, other political issues and even biological factors, such as gender, age of language acquisition or language aptitude (see, for example, Piske et al., 2001; Zhang, 2009); it is not as easily changed or controlled as some may claim, except for those who study and learn how to perform a large array of accents (actors, broadcasters, etc.).

For example, those who tend to vary their accents may be those whose practices are seen as illegitimate, be they immigrants, second language learners or speakers whose practices are devalued. The ones who do not have the resources to be flexible and vary their accent can only choose to stay silent. The *choice* to stay silent is often a strategy to escape shame, a way to protect oneself from, for example, offensive comments (see comments by Boudreau earlier in this chapter and Everhart conclusion, this volume), as they anticipate a negative reaction to a certain way of speaking. We are not talking of free choice here, but of a constrained one. It all

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depends on the social and political forces at work and also on a personal level, on the speakers' own abilities in mastering a given accent, or on the stance that they wish to take: using a particular linguistic form or accent is often a move by which speakers make a statement, as we have seen in this volume. For example, Besoi et al. state that "Chinese Canadians are often characterized as being 'model minorities', meaning that they work hard and succeed both in school and in the workplace" (chap.10, p. 230), adding that to be a "model" is not an easy task for it raises questions of ethnicity, or how to become a part of a larger group (here the Canadians) without completely erasing characteristics of what is perceived as their first culture (here Chinese); they are in the uncomfortable position of wanting to preserve their culture without being completely "whitewashed". This example illustrates how some would prefer to navigate on different markets without having to choose, but whatever the case, it is not an easy task since accents are part of a social structure. Agency and individual skills in accent performance or stylization are not simple subjects and should lead to further research.

Accents can be regarded as part of Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, not in a fixed and determined way, but as embodied in social structure: "*le corps est dans le monde social mais le monde social est dans le corps*"[5] (Bourdieu 2003: 218), and the author adds that language attitudes are part of that structure: "*Les rapports au langage me semblent être très proches de ce que sont les rapports au corps*"[6] (Bourdieu 2002: 132), which implies that speakers' voices are grounded in political and historic stories that influence their ways of speaking on different linguistic markets. Bourdieu distinguishes between two main markets, the first being "official" (formal situations) where what is considered the legitimate language is valued and acquires "profits", a sort of symbolic capital, while the other is called the "*marché franc*" where the local and regional vernaculars are privileged, a space where *la connivence* and familiarity is permitted and even expected. Both markets have specific sets of rules, and speakers who do not follow them can be excluded. Bourdieu explains that speakers are not equal when they circulate on those markets, especially on the official one, where power relationships are often present, and where those who do not have or think that they do not have the "right" way of speaking put forth different strategies for trying to fit in, but not without consequences. Some will be shamed for not attaining the expected linguistic forms and feel diminished, others contest dominant norms

5. "The body is in the social world but the social world is in the body" (our translation).

6. "Relations toward language seem very close to those cultivated toward the body" (our translation).

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by refusing to adapt and yet others can choose to stay silent as we have just seen (also see Bourdieu 2002: 121–137).[7]

Speakers who defy conventional norms by displaying local or regional accents in certain formal settings do not pay the same social cost. For example, artists who do so are exempt from a negative backlash as they are expected to break rules in the name of creativity,[8] while it is quite another story for workers in a call center who could lose their job for doing so (Chung, this volume for showing the ups and down of "sounding like"). The consequences for the two groups are quite different. The first will be applauded, the second could be penalized. Similar observations can be drawn out considering 'foreign' accents. While an English accent in French can be perceived as 'charming', or 'sexy' in France, people with Maghrebi-French accents suffer much more discrimination.

One question that arises from these examples is, again, the one concerning choice. This is particularly visible in the case of l'Acadie in Canada, a peripheral bilingual space, where francophones living in areas where they are the minority, have been characterized as speaking "bad" French, the vernacular called *chiac*, mainly because of the mixture of English forms integrated at different levels and in different degrees in their vernacular. Yet, Acadian artists tend to deliberately perform this chiac in songs, essays, theatrical plays, unequivocally stating that "chiac is cool and beautiful", reversing the stigma and victimization in order to make a statement (that language variation is ok) and also to perform their authenticity, this authenticity being both an identity marker and a way to stray from ideologies that deny linguistic variation, trading shame for pride on the cultural market (Goffman 1963; Boudreau 2016; McLaughlin 2013). Pride and shame are often two sides of the same coin depending on profits gained or lost on different markets, as Baratta shows in this volume with the example of a working-class speaker torn between his desire to speak "real" while not wanting to be seen as unprofessional (see also Duchêne and Heller 2012; Bourdieu 1982; Planchenault 2015).

Most papers in this volume deal with the official market, but the same is true on the "marché franc". If a person lives in a space where language and identity are tightly woven and a symbol of national or regional cohesiveness, then the speaker

7. The circulation on these different markets is much more fluid than suggested by this dichotomy especially now when boundaries are being questioned and contested but offer a snapshot of how linguistic power relations play out in different settings.

8. For Médéric, performing the accent of Marseille in his daily radio chronicle is a part of the show, an expectation from the audience, a sort of *added value* in a media in which local accents are not so frequent (partly due to the mobility of journalists and presenters in the national network of the radio, resulting in a levelling of speech styles and accents).

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coming from that region that gives up his local accent can be seen as a stranger and in extreme cases as a traitor, especially by people who also come from that region. Changing one's accent can be costly. As James Milroy puts it: "just as there is strong institutional pressure in formal situations to use varieties approximating to the standard, so also effective sanctions are in force to promote "vernacular" use in non-standard domains" (Milroy 1992: 210). In their study, Gasquet-Cyrus and Wharton (2019) show how in Marseille the locals can express quite severe judgments and forms of discrimination towards speakers who don't speak with the local accent.

To summarize, we can say that some speakers proudly display their local or regional accents by refusing to adapt and choosing to boldly illustrate their vernacular, while others try to erase features that identify them as "different, strangers, newcomers or marginal" precisely because they know, consciously or not, that certain accents are more valued than others, and want to benefit from the profits associated with them. The same dilemma holds for those whose vernaculars are stigmatized, devalued or are victims of negative discourses, and choose to display or perform these features as a way of rebelling against dominant discourses, sometimes obtaining profits from those performances, as in the example previously cited regarding cultural and artistic spheres where "Irony, mockery, and hybridity, valued in the contemporary era, have become a resource for multilingual identity and practices" (Kelly-Holmes and Sari Pietikäinen 2013: 223). If however, branding a regional accent is a relatively easy task (phonetically speaking), performing *another accent* is out of reach for many speakers. As we have stated earlier, the same actions do not have the same consequences.

The dynamic of *same and otherness,* of *erasure* and *display* (Levis and McCrocklin, Chapter 5), frequently equated to the figure of the "stranger" or the "immigrant", is bonded to linguistic racial ideologies that materialize in various forms of discrimination regarding accents. Ideologies based on hierarchal differences do not appear spontaneously. They are rooted in the reproduction of structures of power that play a central role in the appreciation of different language practices, where the standard is given an important symbolic capital, and although this view is being challenged by globalization and social mobility (Blommaert 2010; Coupland 2010; Donelly et al. 2019), it is often regarded as the only form of language acceptable.

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4. Conclusion

The notion of accent has been for too long undertheorized, or underestimated. An accent is not only a set of features or the sound variation in a language, but a far more complex phenomenon, exceeding phonetic aspects. From sound to social meaning, research about accents has evolved to take into account the social, interactional and pragmatic dimensions of accents, but also the "trans-super-poly-metro movement" (Pennycook 2016), which places linguistic heterogeneity as the rule, not the exception. Thus, accents can no longer be considered as linguistic "varieties", but as ways of speaking which vary according to contexts, social interactions and moving identities, in a global world framed by the mobility of agents.

Even if we are "experts" in the study of accents and are, of course, aware of the potentially discriminative effects of accents, as humans and as social agents embedded in our own backgrounds, ideologies and deep-rooted stereotypes, we are not exempt from some embarrassing prejudices that we have to fight against. Annette still admires how French people (seem to) have a certain 'fluency' (while she is a native Francophone), thus betraying a certain feeling of linguistic insecurity, while Médéric confesses that he can be amused when he hears people speaking with a regional accent. Annette tries to bring to light the pervasiveness of linguistic prejudices, regarding different ways of speaking by showing how and why certain accents are regarded as prestigious and others not, while being fully aware that these explanations do not erase social hierarchies regarding language use, or our feelings towards them; nevertheless, understanding the social and political processes imbedded in them helps one cope with these issues. Sharing the same concerns, Médéric, in his courses, papers, radio chronicles or conferences, advocates for a better recognition of accents as flexible, moving, dynamic ways of speaking and not stable identities.

Throughout this volume on the pragmatics of accents, the various chapters have deemed it important to stress the social disparities concerning the abilities to move fluently in one's repertoire. Not everyone has developed skills to play with accents or to display different aspects of their repertoire. Not all speakers have the choice to navigate between different markets when needed while at the same time adhering to the laws of those markets which can be quite rigid. For instance, it may seem generous or thoughtful for a person with a high linguistic capital to use a less prestigious accent in certain interactions, but the speaker from a popular milieu or from a stigmatized region who tries to speak a sort of "standard" may be mocked or looked down upon. Language use in different markets, and indeed contexts, obeys social norms, and speakers do not move from one market to the other without consequences. This does not mean that they are strictly determined and defined in their speech by geographical and social boundaries, but by rules that spur in certain

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interaction settings, although they can go unseen or unnoticed. It is then clear to us, and all the authors of this volume, that the complex variable of context, shows that a) accent rises between individuals in interaction; b) accent can be used as a symbolic resource; and c) accent has several social meanings. As such, this notion must be investigated beyond structural or variationist paradigms. We hope, then, that the many themes throughout this book have demonstrated why all scholars should favour interactional and pragmatic approaches, as we have done, and will keep doing, on the road to further our understanding of the pragmatics of accents.

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Index

A
Acadie 14, 248, 258, 261
accent 1–6, 19–21, 64, 118–120 166, 191, 247, 250, 251–254
  Banlieue 6, 11, 41–47, 52, 56–61
  discrimination 10, 95, 97, 111, 248
  foreign 5–28–29, 42, 98, 117, 122, 190, 208, 229, 236, 238
  L1 119, 120
  L2 6, 117–118, 120, 122–25, 131, 133
  legitimate 250–251, 256
  low prestige 156, 192
  Mancunian 12, 145–147
  Medway English 150, 162
  native 105, 122, 123, 125–126, 129–130, 231
  non-standard 91, 230–231
  reduction 141, 148–151, 154, 156
  Southern 158, 255
  standard 152, 157, 231
  standardness 157
  stigmatized 10, 248
  see also Myth of the Non-Accent
acculturation 9, 201, 231–232, 237–238, 241
adstrate 50
affrication 45, 48–51, 54–56, 62
allophone 179, 252
alveolar 49, 67, 71, 119, 171, 173
  Alveodental stop 48
American
  African – Vernacular English (AAVE) 119
  Standard North 206, 208
  see also GenAm
  see also Korean American
ANOVA 53, 90, 93, 235
Antidiscrimination Act 88
  see German
appa 13, 189, 191, 197–202
Articulacy 148
Asian Canadian 13, 189, 191, 231, 240 *see* Canadian
Association of Asian/Pacific American Artists 190
audibility 127, 132

B
behavioral intention 170
bilingualism 28, 248
BioWare 205, 210
Blommaert, Jan 35, 259
bricolage 27, 32, 36

C
Canadian
  culture 5, 231, 236–237
  see also Asian Canadian
  see also Chinese Canadian
  see also Korean Canadian
Canton 29–30, 32–34, 39–40, 201
capitalism 22, 38, 261–262
Castile 167–168
Caucasian guise 125, 128
Charlie Hebdo 51–52
Chicano 88, 109
Chicoutimi 50
Chinese Canadian 229–232
  see Canadian
Cho, Margaret 189, 191, 194–199, 202–203
cleft habitus 152
colonization 64
community
  dominant linguistic 4
  L2 6, 117, 167, 177
comprehensibility 120, 138
congruent face 128
conversational analysis 253
critical gameplay 206
culture
  see also multiculturalism

D
declarative 67, 119
deficit approach 128
degree of broadness 146
depersonalization 43
depreciative category 43
dialect
  Kesen 69
  stigmatized 24
  Swabian 91
  see also perceptual dialectology
diglossia 28, 252
diphthong 29, 74, 147
discourse
  analysis 90, 105–106, 205–207
  digitally-mediated 206
  medium-specific multimodal 206
Dragon Age
  Inquisition 13, 205, 210, 225–226

E
elision 147
emphatic intonational pattern 46
English
  Appalachian 119
  Canton 201
  EFL 131, 139, 149, 153, 159
  ESL 15–16, 126, 131, 135–136, 138, 182
  Northern 145, 161
  South African 144, 160
  Southern Hemisphere 144
  Southern US 119
  Standard 148, 152, 157, 192–193

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 5:02 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

enregisterment 64, 81–82, 158
equitable spoken language
 testing 134
erasure 33, 42, 207, 225, 259
Europresse 43

F
face threat 73, 77
Federal Anti-Discrimination
 Agency 106–107
 see German
first-pass analysis 233
folk 73, 77, 142–143, 217
fractal recursivity 207, 221
French
 Acadian 248, 258, 262
 European 37, 48–49, 59
 Français Populaire 60–61
  see also Francophone
  see also Phonologie du Français Contemporain (PFC)
francophone 21, 37–38, 247, 260 *see* French
fresh off the boat (FOB) 190, 194, 231, 236
Fu Manchu 190
future self-guide 166

G
Gallois 16, 26, 38, 112
Gallo-Romanic language 29
gameplay 205–206, 209
GAT 2 98
gatekeeping 88, 105, 108, 202
GenAm 164, 167–179, 181, 184
 see American
German
 Standard 85, 93, 99, 100–101, 105–107
 see also Antidiscrimination Act
 see also Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency
 see also Kiez Deutsch
glottal stop 147, 153–154, 156–157
Goffman, Erving 78, 82, 258, 262
Grenoble 50, 53, 55, 59–60

group
 in- 13, 167, 189, 192–195, 197–198, 202, 236–237
 out- 13, 189, 202, 236
 social 21, 23, 33, 86, 120, 132, 145, 222
 solidarity 6, 19, 123, 132, 178

H
hesitation marker 98, 100, 101
hetero-evaluation 36, 256
homophobia 191, 200–201
hybridity 259
Hymes, Dell 25, 38
hypercorrection 152

I
iconization 11, 33, 41, 42, 207, 225
ideal self 166, 174–180
identity
 function 21, 35
 L2 131–132, 164, 171–172, 175, 178, 180, 181
 style-specific 181
 see also Social Identity Theory
ideology
 standard language 167, 174–176, 180, 201–202, 221
iMovie 233
index 8, 12, 19–20, 52, 54, 57, 64, 144–145, 165, 166
ING 32, 37, 166, 182
institutionalized racism 238–239
intelligibility 30, 122
interlocutor 7, 9, 123, 143, 145, 148
international phonetic alphabet 81, 211
international teaching assistant (ITA) 118, 127–128
intervocalic obstruent 70
Irvine, Judith and Susan Gal 33, 221

J
Japanese
 akusento 68
 gento 68–69, 79
 hougen 64, 68–69, 79, 82
 hyouzyungo 68–69, 83
 intoneesyon 68
 Women's Language 78
 namari 64, 68–69, 74, 76–77, 79
 nigori 69–70
 zukku 75–78
John Chinaman 189
justifying function 22

K
Kiez Deutsch 89, 91, 107
 see German
knowledge function 21
Korean American 191, 194–196
 see American
Korean Canadian 191, 197
 see Canadian
Kwoh, Beulah Ong 190

L
Labov, William 31, 33, 54, 57, 85, 133, 145
Lambert, Wallace 23, 85
language
 aptitude 120, 256
 heritage 13, 125
 ideology 8, 19, 21, 27, 112, 205–211
 market 29
 pride 154
 regard 11, 19–24, 26, 34–36, 39, 256
 standard 9, 66, 69, 87, 125, 174–176, 180, 221
 see also Langue de Molière
 see also linguistic insecurity
 see also linguistic profile
 see also linguistic signaling
 see also linguistic variety
 see also paralinguistic feature
 see also reverse linguistic stereotyping
Langue de Molière 248
 see language
Lausanne 32, 34
LGBTQ 191, 224
liberal democracy 22
linguistic insecurity 248–250, 260 *see* language

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 5:02 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

linguistic profile 11, 85, 113, 134
 see language
linguistic variety 20, 251
 see language
Lippi-Green, Rosina 2, 79, 87–88, 126, 202, 207, 208, 255
Liverpool 143–147, 150, 159–161
local phonetic variant 28, 31, 34
Lyon 55, 60, 62

M
main effect 12, 145–147, 235
Manichean economy 222
manner of pronunciation 6, 20
manner of speaking 20
marché franc 257–258
Marseille 254, 259
MCA 86
meaning
 in interaction 7, 206, 210
 -making 7, 206
Meiji 65
metapragmatics 211, 221
 see pragmatics
Mexican American 88, 135
 see American
middle-class speech 145
migrant 28, 32, 33, 65, 107
minimal pairs 47
Mock Asian 194, 196–197, 202–203
model minority 230–231, 257
modernist 22
Mohammed 43
moment of indeterminacy 63
Moncton 14, 248–249
Morioka dialect 66
morpheme 252
 morphosyntax 76
mouillé 47
multiculturalism 107, 238
 see culture
multiethnic 87, 112
multilayered Manichean binary 209
multimodality 206, 209
Muslim 89
Myth of the Non-Accent 207, 221 *see* accent

N
narrative embedding 207
national market 22
Netflix 192, 202
New Brunswick 248–249
non-congruent face 128
non-mobile, older, rural males (NORM) 32

O
old-people talk 77
orientation function 21
othering 193
ought-to self 166

P
palatalization 42, 45, 47, 52–57, 71
 dental-stop 47
 PalAff 48–49
paralinguistic feature 7
 see language
Paris 14, 34, 37–39, 50, 51, 55, 59–62, 112
passing 4, 123
patois 29, 62
patriarchy 191
perceived behavioural control 164–165
perceptual dialectology 21, 143, 160 *see* dialect
Phonologie du Français Contemporain (PFC) 253
 see French
phonology
 giveaway 145, 147
Polish 166, 182, 183
positioning theory 222
posteriorization 45
postgraduate certificate of education 141
post-modern 22
post-structural 22, 26
pragmatics 6–8, 14
 approach 4, 6, 254
 of accents 7–8
 see also metapragmatics
prepausal /R/ glottalization 45
procedure
 procedural rhetoric 205–206, 208–209, 223
 procedurality 223
pronunciation
 non-standard 46, 54
 standard 46, 54
 see also Received Pronunciation
prosodic category 119
Python 212

Q
quasi-feudal system 65
queer 195, 225

R
R 90
real me's 153
Received Pronunciation 143
 see pronunciation
reflexivity 14, 20
register 64, 65, 120
 Pittsburghese 78, 82
repairable 103, 105
reverse linguistic stereotyping 25, 136 *see* language
role-playing game 13, 205, 208
Romanian 86, 217, 219
Rouen 55, 61

S
segmental 45, 46, 118–119, 121, 133
social
 actor 22, 26, 105, 190
 attractiveness 167
 category 25–26, 64
 psychology 20–21
 science 19, 26, 40, 43
 socialization 22, 24
Social Identity Theory 123
 see identity
socio-phonetic 144
Spanish
 Castilian 28, 167–168
 Catalan 28, 226
speaker
 legitimate 255
 native- 121
 non-native 123, 125–127
stabilization 42
stereotype
 negative 5, 144, 146, 148, 230, 236–237

EBSCOhost - printed on 2/10/2023 5:02 AM via . All use subject to https://www.ebsco.com/terms-of-use

structuralist 22, 25–26, 136
style 26–27, 42, 57, 59, 70–71
  see also stylized transcription
stylized transcription 51
  see style
substrate 50
symbolic resource 2, 8, 261
systems approach 164

T
Tajfel, Henri 123
teacher legitimacy 129
TESOL 130
test of oral proficiency 130
theory of planned behaviour 164–165
Touhoku 64, 66–68
trichotomy 144–146
triple-voiced 75

V
variable
  dependent 235
  independent 90, 235
variety
  broad 146
  general 147–148, 157
  migration 11
  neural 147–148, 157
  regional 145
  standard 6, 20, 23, 180
Vaud 29–33
velarize 47, 119
ventriloquating 179
vernacular marker 46
voice
  ethnic 191
  L2 167, 179
  quality 23, 90, 143
  Yellowvoice 13, 189–198, 200–202
  voiceless dental 50, 194

W
whitewash 231, 236, 241, 257
working-class (accent) 147, 153–155

X
xenophobia 42

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What impact do accents have on our lives as we interact with one another? Are accents more than simple sets of phonetic features that allow us to differentiate from one dialect, variety or style, to the other? What power relationships are at work when we speak with what those around us perceive as an 'accent'? In the 12 chapters of this volume, an international group of sociolinguists, applied linguists, anthropologists, and scholars in media studies, develop an innovative approach that we describe as the 'pragmatics of accents'. In this volume, we present a variety of languages and go beyond the traditional structural description of accents. From ideologies in national contexts, to L2 education, to accent discrimination in the media and the workplace, this volume embraces a new perspective that focuses on the use of accents as symbolic resources, and emphasizes the importance of context in the human experience of accents.

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