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# The Role of Dialect Words in Children's Social Decisions

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The Role of Dialect Words in Children's Social Decisions


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This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.


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**Abstract**

Recent research suggests that young children are capable of distinguishing between phonetically dissimilar spoken accents, yet have difficulty distinguishing between phonetically similar accents (Wagner, Clopper, & Pate, 2013). The present study aimed to determine whether the presence of dialect-specific vocabulary enhances young children's ability to categorize speakers. Participants completed four training trials in which they were familiarized with photos of two children: one of whom used American English labels for test objects and one of whom used British English labels. After training trials, participants completed eight test trials in which they were asked to infer which target child would use either British or American English labels to describe novel test objects. After all test trials were completed, participants were asked to select which target child they would prefer to ask for the name of an unfamiliar object. Participants were also asked to select which target child they would rather play a game with. Participants of all ages were significantly able to correctly categorize speakers based on whether they used dialect specific vocabulary that was familiar or unfamiliar to the participant. Participants showed a significant preference for the target child who used American dialect words. Participants also significantly trusted the American English-speaking target child over the British English-speaking target child to have the correct name for the unknown object. Neither categorization success, preference, nor selective trust differed significantly by age. These interesting results suggest that, when accent differences are too subtle for children to categorize speakers, dialect-specific vocabulary may enhance young children's ability to categorize a speaker. The results of the preference and selective trust questions suggest that children as young as four years use their knowledge of a speaker's vocabulary to guide their preferred social interactions, choosing to interact with others who speak similarly to them.

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**Introduction**

From a surprisingly early age, children exhibit preferences for others with whom they share similarities.  As early as three months of age, infants prefer faces of strangers belonging to their own race over strangers belonging to a different race (Kelly, Quinn, Slater, Lee, Gibson, Smith, Ge, & Pascalis, 2005). Preference for own-race others extends to school-aged children, as elementary students prefer to play games with other children who are of their own race than with children who are of a different race (Kircher & Furby, 1971; Kowalski & Lo, 2001; Shutts, Kinzler, Katz, Tredoux, & Spelke, 2011).  Three-year-old children prefer to learn tasks from other children of the same gender and age as them (Shutts, Banaji, & Spelke, 2010), and the preference for same-gender others remains prevalent as children age, as elementary school children prefer to play with children of the same gender (Martin, 1989; Martin & Fabes, 2001; Martin, Fabes, Evans, & Wyman, 1999).  As children grow and develop socially, they begin to show preferences for others who share more with them than just physical characteristics. Nineteen-month-old toddlers prefer puppets with whom they share toy preferences, regardless of the physical appearance of the puppet (Gerson, Bekkering, & Hunnius, 2017).  The ability to share opinions and preferences is important for developing meaningful social relationships, and as children begin to form their own beliefs about the world, they use these beliefs and preferences to guide their social decisions: six- to nine-year-old children choose to associate with other children with whom they share religious beliefs, as well as general beliefs based on both opinion and fact (Heiphetz, Spelke, & Banaji, 2014).

Language-based preferences among children have only recently become an area of research interest.  The ability to distinguish between spoken languages and to exhibit preferences based on language appears to emerge very early in development.  At just four days old, infants

can distinguish between their own native language and a foreign language (Mehler, Jusczyk, Lambertz, Halsted, Bertoncini, & Amiel-Tison, 1988). By five- to six months of age, infants prefer to look at speakers of their own native language over speakers of a foreign language, and even show preference for recordings of their native language being played regularly over recordings played backward; furthermore, by ten months of age, infants will accept toys from speakers of their native language over toys from speakers of a foreign language (Kinzler, Dupoux, & Spelke, 2007). By seven months of age, infants will show preference for music presented by a speaker of their own native language over music presented by a foreign speaker (Soley & Sebastian-Gallés, 2015), and infants will even accept food from a stranger speaking their native language over a stranger speaking a foreign language (Shutts, Kinzler, McKee, & Spelke, 2009). Preferences for native language speakers also indicate an early ability to recognize familiar speech patterns, facilitating further development of language and communication skills.

Slightly subtler than the race and spoken language of another, the accent one speaks with is another social cue that children use to categorize others, as well as to guide social inferences and to facilitate social preferences. By the age of three, children believe that people who speak in similar accents live in the same place, and by four years of age, children believe that those who speak with similar accents also share cultural norms and beliefs, while those who differ in accent do not share said norms (Weatherhead, White, and Friedman, 2016). Per Weatherhead, Friedman, and White (2017), four-to-six-year-old children infer that strangers who speak in foreign accents live far away, using their knowledge of accent differences to categorize speakers based on where they live. As children age and form more broad social networks, they begin to make judgments about others based on others' accents. In one study, nine- and ten-year-old

children in both a Northern state and a Southern state rated "Northern"-accented speakers as sounding smarter than "Southern"-accented speakers, and rated "Southern"-accented speakers as sounding nicer than "Northern"- accented speakers (Kinzler & DeJesus, 2013).

Young children also reliably use accent as a criterion by which to guide their social preferences. By five months of age, infants tend to show preference for infant-directed speech (speech containing higher registers of voice, exaggerated cadences, and protracted vowel sounds) over adult-directed speech (Schachner & Hannon, 2011). By the age of five, children show preferences for native speakers of their own language over foreign-accented speakers as well as speakers of a foreign language, even when the native speaker was of a different race than the children (Kinzler, Shutts, DeJesus, & Spelke, 2009). Although race is a salient predictor of children's social preferences, Kinzler et al.'s (2009) results suggest that, when faced with a decision between race and accent, children ultimately prefer others who speak like them over those who look like them. In addition to social preference, children are more likely to exhibit trust in others who are like them. Corriveau, Kinzler, & Harris (2013) found that children tend to use a novel name that has been used by a native speaker for an object rather than a novel name that has been used by a foreign-accented speaker. Additionally, McDonald and Ma (2016) found that four-year-old children are more willing to believe a known false testimony when it comes from someone in of a similar race and speaking in their native accent; however, these children express doubt towards the same testimony when it comes from someone of a different race and speaking in a foreign accent. This preference and selective trust for similar-speaking others could be in part due to children's previously mentioned assumption that those who share accents also share cultural norms (Weatherhead et al., 2016). Additionally, this preference for similar sounding others could also be due to an inability of children to understand speakers of different

accents. Many researchers differ in their explanations regarding the development of accent comprehension, but most agree that, when foreign accents are particularly difficult to comprehend, adding context to the spoken words (such as more descriptive sentences or accompanying photos) increases children's ability to understand speakers (vanHeugten & Johnson, 2016; Creel, Rojo, & Paullada, 2016; Barker & Turner, 2015).  Additionally, six- to seven-year-olds' comprehension of a foreign accent is more susceptible to distraction and noise than their comprehension of a familiar accent (Newton & Ridgway, 2015). Because accents differ in their degree of similarity to one another, children's ability to distinguish between accents most likely reflects the similarity between said accents. Infants between five and seven months of age have demonstrated an ability to distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar accents, but not between two unfamiliar accents (Butler, Floccia, Goslin, & Panneton, 2011). These results suggest that infants perceive two or more unfamiliar accents as similar to one another due to a lack of ability to identify phonetic differences.

How different do two accents need to be for children to be able to distinguish between them? Wagner, Clopper, and Pate (2014) found that five- to six-year old children could distinguish between speakers of their native dialect and speakers of a "second-language" variant of their dialect, but could not distinguish between speakers of their native dialect and speakers of a "regional" variant of their dialect.  Wagner et al. (2014) presented children with a puppet show in which two target puppets differed in the dialect they spoke.  The puppets either spoke in an American dialect, which they labeled the "Home" dialect; in a British dialect, which they labeled the "Regional" dialect; or in an Indian-English dialect, which they labeled the "Second-Language" dialect.  A third puppet then appeared, speaking in a dialect that matched one of the two target puppets.  The participants were asked to select the target puppet that matched the third

puppet.  Participants performed above chance at matching the puppets when they had to choose between the American (Home) and the Indian-English (Second-Language) dialects, but not when they had to choose between the American (Home) and the British (Regional) dialects or between the British (Regional) and Indian-English (Second-Language) dialects.  Wagner, et al. concluded that dialects that share a first language possess too many phonetic similarities for young children to distinguish them easily.

Beyond simply categorizing speakers based on their spoken accent, children can infer that speakers of a foreign language or accent are more likely to be associated with unfamiliar items than speakers of a native language or accent.  Hisrchfeld and Gelman (1997) found that young children paired photos of unfamiliar dwellings, unfamiliar clothing, and minority races with speakers of a foreign language rather than with speakers of English. Wagner, et al. (2014) replicated this finding, but with speakers of different dialects.  In this study, children were presented with pairs of photos depicting houses and clothing.  Each pair of photos consisted of one familiar item (e.g. a Cape Cod style house) and one unfamiliar item (e.g. a mud hut).  Each pair of photos was accompanied by a single auditory clip.  Children in the *Home versus Regional* condition heard either sound clips spoken in a *Home Dialect* (American English) or *Regional Dialect* (British English).  Children in the *Home versus Second-Language* condition heard sound clips spoken in either a *Home Dialect* or *Second-Language Dialect* (Indian-English).  Children in a *Regional versus Second-Language* condition heard sound clips spoken in either a *Regional Dialect* or *Second-Language Dialect*. Children were asked to indicate "which photo the sound clip came from."  Wagner, et al. found that children in the *Home versus Second-Language* condition reliably matched familiar items with the *Home Dialect*, and matched unfamiliar items with the *Second-Language Dialect*.  Children in the *Regional versus Second-Language* condition

reliably matched familiar items to the *Regional Dialect* and matched unfamiliar items to the *Second-Language Dialect*. Children in the *Home versus Regional* condition did not reliably match familiar or unfamiliar items to any particular dialect.   However, a major limitation with Wagner, et al.'s (2014) study was their use of the word *dialect* to describe their stimuli, as they appear to only have manipulated the accent of their speakers.  The word *dialect* is used to describe a regional or social variant of language distinguished by features of words and grammatical structures (Crystal, 2008).  Although dialect differences do include variances in accent, the vocabulary specific to a certain dialect can further distinguish that dialect from phonetically similar others.  Very few studies have focused on dialect-specific vocabulary as a distinguishing characteristic of dialect.  Further research is needed to determine whether the presence of dialect-specific vocabulary can enhance children's ability to distinguish between dialects, and whether children show preferences for others who use dialect words that are familiar to them.

An initial study by Myers, Stevens, and Behrend (2015) adapted the methods of Wagner et al. (2013) to test children's ability to use dialect-specific vocabulary to distinguish between speakers of different dialects.  In this study, four- to six-year-old children watched 18 short video clips in which two target sock puppets each spoke one short sentence, followed by one test sock puppet who spoke one short sentence.  In each video clip, the two target puppets differed in the sentences they spoke by accent (*Accent Only* trials), dialect-specific vocabulary (*Words Only* trials), or a combination of accent and vocabulary differences (*Accent and Words* trials).  The test puppet then spoke similarly to one of the two target puppets based on trial type.  Participants were asked to indicate which of the two target puppets the test puppet belonged with.  In the analysis, participants were divided into a younger age group (*n*=18, mean age= 4 years, 7

months) and an older age group (*n*=19, mean age= 5 years, 3 months). The results from this study indicated that children were able to successfully match the test puppets to the correct target puppets on "Words Only" trials and on "Accent and Words" trials, but were not able to successfully match puppets on "Accent Only" trials. Moreover, children were significantly more successful at matching puppets on "Words Only" trials than they were at matching puppets on "Accent Only" trials, and were also significantly more successful at matching puppets on "Accent and Words" trials than at matching puppets on "Accent Only" trials. Children's performance on matching puppets did not significantly differ between "Words Only" trials and "Accent and Words" trials. Additionally, performance on trials did not differ significantly between age groups. The results of this study suggest that children can better distinguish between speakers of different dialects when speakers include dialect-specific vocabulary than when speakers differ in accent only.

There are two major limitations to this study. First, the difference between the two age groups of participants is less than one year. A broader age gap could potentially determine any existing developmental differences in the ability to parse out differences in dialect-specific vocabulary. Second, on the trials that included dialect-specific vocabulary, one could argue that children more successfully matched the puppets by using a simple "word matching" strategy, as the test puppets used the exact same dialect-specific words that their target puppet counterpart used. Further research is needed in order to determine whether children can recognize the use of familiar and unfamiliar dialect-specific words in order to successfully categorize speakers of different dialects. The current research aims to remove the previously-mentioned "word-matching" limitation, and to determine whether the presence of dialect-specific vocabulary can provide children with sufficient information to successfully pair familiar and unfamiliar object

labels with specific speakers.  Broader age gaps between participants will further allow the current research to remove the age group limitation in the previously mentioned (Myers, Stevens, & Behrend, 2015) study.

**The Current Research**

The present study adopted the methods of Wagner, et al.'s (2014) study.  Instead of matching objects to sound clips, however, participants were tasked with matching objects to people.  After a series of training trials in which two photos of children were paired with either familiar or unfamiliar names for objects, children were presented with objects that had either familiar or unfamiliar names and were asked to match the object to the child they believed called the object by that name.  I also asked participants which child they preferred to play a game with, as well as which child they would prefer to ask to obtain the name of a novel object, in order to measure their social preference for as well as selective trust of speakers who use different dialect words.  I hypothesized that the ability to infer dialect-specific vocabulary use improves with age; in other words, children in older age groups will correctly pair the names of objects to the speaker more often than children in younger age groups.  I also hypothesized that older children will be more likely to prefer as a social partner the speaker who uses familiar dialect-specific vocabulary, and that the same children will choose to ask the speaker who uses familiar vocabulary for the name of a novel object.  Further, I hypothesized that the ability to reliably pair the names of objects to the correct speakers will predict participants' preferences and trust for speakers who use familiar vocabulary.

**Methods**

**Participants.**

55 children (30 female) aged 53 to 94 months (M=75.6 months, SD=10.58) participated in the study.  Participants were recruited from private preschools and public elementary schools in Fayetteville, Arkansas.  Parental consent was obtained through signed consent forms previously approved by the Institutional Review Board for the University of Arkansas, sent home with the children recruited from schools prior to the study.  Child assent was obtained through participants' verbal and behavioral willingness to participate in the study.  If at any point a participant refused to complete a part of the study or seemed unwilling to answer questions, he or she was allowed to end their participation in the study.  Participants were tested individually at the school or child development center they attended.

**Stimuli.**

Each participant was shown two target photos obtained from the CAFÉ (Child Affective Facial Expression) set (LoBue & Thrasher, 2015); each photo in each target pair was of a different child, but similar in gender, age, attractiveness, and facial expression in order to prevent participants from forming preferences for a certain photo based on the appearance of the child. Each participant viewed photos of children of their own gender. Each participant also viewed 12 photos of test objects (listed in Appendix) obtained from internet public domain sources.

**Procedure.**

At the beginning of the study, each participant was informed that they would be playing a game where they have to match objects to people.  The experimenter told participants, "People who live in different places may use different words for the same thing.  Even though you may not have heard of some of the words people use for some things, the people are not wrong for

calling something by a different word." The experimenter presented the participant with the two

target photos of the stimulus children, side by side on a computer slide show. The child in one

photo had previously been randomly assigned British dialect words, and the child in the other

photo had previously been assigned American dialect words. Whether each photo had been

assigned American or British dialect words was also counterbalanced between participants. A

photo of one of the test objects then appeared between the two photos of the children. Each

participant first completed four training trials, in which a photo of a test object (e.g., an. elevator)

appeared between the two target photos of the children. The experimenter pointed out one of the

target photos of the children and informed the participants, "This child calls this [points to test

picture] a '_____' (using the British word for the object, i.e. "lift"), and this child (pointing to the

target photo of the other child) calls this a '_____' (using the American word for the object,

i.e. "elevator")." At the end of each training trial, the experimenter asked the participant to

indicate which of the people in the target photos called the test object a(n) "_____"

(elevator/lift), in order to ensure that the participant remembered which target child used a

familiar dialect word for the test object, and which target photo used the unfamiliar dialect word.

If the participant did not respond correctly to the initial prompt, the experimenter led the

participant through the given training trial once more, allowing the participant another

opportunity to respond. Any participant who did not respond correctly to the initial or secondary

prompts on at least three out of the four training trials was excluded from analysis. The order in

which the test objects were presented was randomized between participants.

After the four training trials, each participant then completed eight test trials. On each

trial, the experimenter presented a photo of a common object (e.g. toilet). The experimenter told

the participant, "Some people call this object a '_____' (using the American word for the

object, i.e., "toilet"), and other people call it a '_____' (using the British word for the object, i.e., "loo"). Which child do you think calls the object a(n) '_____' ("loo" or "toilet")?" The use of British and American target words was counterbalanced within participants. Participants' responses were recorded using pen and paper on a data sheet and were later entered into a statistical software for analysis. After each participant had completed the test trials, the experimenter asked the participant, "Which of the two children would you rather play a game with?" The purpose of this question was to gauge whether the participants preferred other children who use dialect words similar to the words they use themselves. The experimenter then presented the child with a test photo of a novel object obtained from an internet public domain source. The experimenter asked the participant, "If you did not know what this object was called, which child would you rather ask to tell you what it was called?" The purpose of this question was to gauge whether the participants selectively trusted other children who use dialect words similar to the words they use themselves over other children who use unfamiliar dialect words. Previous research has found that children show more trust for others who consistently give true statements over others who consistently give false statements (Koenig, Clément, & Harris, 2004). Use of this selective trust paradigm allowed us to determine whether any relationship existed between participants' preferences of and trust in the target children.

After each participant completed all eight test identifications, the experimenter thanked the participant and allowed him or her to choose a sticker as a prize for participation before escorting him or her back to their classroom.

## Results

**Task Performance**

Participants' total correct matches out of the eight test trails were scored and compared. Collectively, participants successfully matched dialect vocabulary to the proper speaker (M=91.1%, SD=1.78) at a rate significantly greater than chance, $t(54)=14.21, p<.001$. In order to investigate any developmental changes in performance, I performed a median split at 72 months that divided participants into two age groups, an "older" group (M=94.5%, SD=1.501) and a "younger" group (M=85.8%, SD=1.98). Within the younger group, participants successfully matched dialect vocabulary to the proper speaker significantly greater than chance, $t(20)=6.61, p<.001$. Within the older group, participants successfully matched dialect vocabulary to the proper speaker significantly greater than chance, $t(33)=13.82, p<.001$. Performance between age groups, however, did not significantly differ, $\chi^2_{(1)}=1.22, p>.05$ (See Table 1).

**Table 1**. Total number of correct matches (out of eight) for each age group (no participants made five correct matches).

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td colspan="3" align="center">**Total Correct Matches**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td><5</td><td>>5</td><td>Total</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Age Group</td><td>Younger (<=72.5 months)</td><td>4</td><td>17</td><td>21</td></tr>
<tr><td>Older (>=72.6 months)</td><td>3</td><td>31</td><td>34</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Total</td><td>7</td><td>48</td><td>55</td></tr>
</table>

**Speaker Preference**

Participants' responses to the question, "Who would you rather play a game with?" were compared. Overall, participants demonstrated a significant preference for the child who used American dialect labels (n=41) over the child who used British dialect labels (n=13), $t(53)=-4.42, p<.001$. Participants' preferences did not significantly differ by age group, $\chi^2_{(1)}=3.70, p=.055$ (See Table 2).

**Table 2**. Preference for American versus British dialect vocabulary by age group

<div align="center"><b>Preference</b></div>

|  |  | American | British | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age Group | Younger (<=72.5 months) | 13 | 8 | 21 |
|  | Older (>=72.6 months) | 28 | 5 | 33 |
| Total |  | 41 | 13 | 54 |

**Speaker Trust**

Participants' responses to the question, "Who would you rather ask to find out the name of this new object?" were compared to evaluate participant trust in each speaker. Overall, participants demonstrated a significant preference for the child who used American dialect labels (n=37) over the child who used British dialect labels (n=17), $t(53)$=-2.905, $p$=.005. Participant trust did not significantly differ by age group, $\chi^2_{(1)}$ =.055, $p$=.815 (See Table 3). Moreover, participant trust did not significantly predict their preference, $\chi^2_{(1)}$ =.387, $p$=.534 (See Table 4).

**Table 3.** Selective trust paradigm choices by age group

<div align="center"><b>Selective Trust</b></div>

|  |  | American | British | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age Group | Younger (<=72.5 months) | 14 | 7 | 21 |
|  | Older (>=72.6 months) | 23 | 10 | 33 |
| Total |  | 37 | 17 | 54 |

**Table 4.** Distribution of participant social preference by selective trust choices

|  | **Preference** | American | British | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trust | American | 29 | 8 | 37 |
|  | British | 21 | 5 | 17 |
| Total |  | 41 | 13 | 54 |

**Discussion**

The aim of this study was to test whether young children are capable of distinguishing between spoken dialects by using dialect-specific vocabulary as cues. The vast majority of participants were able to successfully match the dialect vocabulary test word to the correct target speaker photo on all eight test trials, regardless of participant age. Results demonstrated that children as young as four years of age are extremely proficient at inferring the type of vocabulary a speaker will use after minimal exposure to that speaker's use of familiar or unfamiliar vocabulary. The youngest participants in this study performed just as well on this task as the oldest participants in the study, suggesting that the ability to identify familiar and unfamiliar vocabulary usage emerges at an earlier age than I initially believed. The existing research on children's perception of dialect indicates that the ability to perceive differences in accent emerges between the ages of four and seven years, and even then, is prone to errors when accents are phonetically similar (Wagner, et al., 2014; McCullough, et al., 2017). However, the results of the current study suggest that dialect-specific vocabulary could be a more salient cue than accent to indicate differences in dialect, and that the ability to detect differences in vocabulary usage could emerge earlier than the ability to detect phonetic accent differences. This earlier-emerging ability to detect dialect-specific vocabulary differences could greatly enhance children's ability to differentiate between others who are similar to or different than them if salient accent differences are lacking. Future research should explore the extent to which children rely on dialect-specific vocabulary differences to help them make categorical and social decisions regarding others who speak differently. A possible further study would examine whether, if faced with a choice, young children would use phonetic accent similarities or dialect vocabulary usage to guide their decisions to categorize speakers.

Consistent with my hypothesis, participants significantly preferred the target children who used American dialect words over the children who used British dialect words. When asked why they chose the specific child they selected, many participants responded, "Because he/she talks like me/said words I know." This is consistent with the research that suggests that children prefer others who speak like them (Kinzler, et al, 2007, 2010; Mehler, et al, 1988; Schachner & Hannon, 2011; Shutts, et al., 2009; Soley & Sebastian-Gallés, 2015). As shared language is crucial for efficient communication between individuals, it follows that children recognize that someone who uses words they are familiar with would be easier to talk to and may therefore be easier to play a game with.

Also consistent with my hypothesis, participants significantly chose to ask the child who used American dialect words for the name of the new object over the child who used British dialect words. This demonstrates selective trust in the user of familiar dialect words. This is consistent with the research that suggests that children trust others who speak like them (Corriveau, Kinzler, & Harris, 2013; McDonald & Ma, 2016). If children do not know the name of an object, it makes sense that they would seek out someone who regularly uses words that are more familiar (and therefore more relevant) to the child, over someone who uses unfamiliar words.

An interesting result in this study was the fact that participants' individual responses to the preference question did not predict individual responses to the selective trust question (or vice versa). That is, just because a participant preferred to play a game with one target child did not mean they would choose to ask that same target child the name of a novel object. It is possible that children use different strategies when determining who they would like to socially interact with than when determining who they ask for information, which could explain this

difference.  Further research is needed to explore the reasoning behind the relationship between children's preference for and selective trust of familiar vs. unfamiliar speakers.

The results of this study have potential implications for the field of developmental science, particularly pertaining to language and social development.  Even at a young age, children gravitate toward people who are similar to them, whether that be in language, race, age, or shared mutual interests.  As communication is crucial for humans, language (and by extension, dialect) becomes an important factor when determining whom we interact with.  This study demonstrates that young children use dialect vocabulary as a tool to categorize speakers and to make inferences about their future vocabulary usage, as well as to influence their social decisions.  Further research should explore the extent to which children use their knowledge of dialect-specific vocabulary differences to guide their social decisions, as well as examine the differences between the preference and selective trust paradigms.

A future direction for this research could explore children's attitudes about others who speak differently than they do.  The current study, along with many others cited above, have demonstrated that children show strong preferences *for* others who are similar to them; however, these studies do not fully examine whether this preference for similar others is in part driven by negative attitudes toward dissimilar others.  Future studies should explore in depth young children's attitudes regarding others who speak in unfamiliar dialects/accents.  In a country that is growing more diverse linguistically, it is important to fully understand the extent to which children form opinions regarding other children who may speak differently than they do.  At any rate, the current research suggests that, even when phonetic accent cues are absent, children as young as four years of age can identify, categorize, and show preferences for others based solely on the familiarity (or unfamiliarity) of the dialect-specific vocabulary they employ.

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**Appendix**

**American/British Dialect Vocabulary**

1. Flashlight/Torch

2. Band-Aid/Plaster

3. Man/Bloke

4. Elevator/Lift

5. Bathroom/Loo

6. Cupcake/Fairy Cake

7. Taking a Nap/Taking a Kip

8. Movie Theater/Cinema

9. Rain Boots/Wellies

10. Donut/Roundello

11. Cell Phone/Mobile

12. Chips/Crisps