

Students' Attitudes Towards Foreign Accents: General Motivation, the Attainability of Native-Like Pronunciation, and Identity Issues

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Abstract The study examined attitudes of 372 first-year bachelor Italian university students towards various aspects of foreign-accented speech. The data showed that the respondents have generally positive attitudes towards pronunciation teaching, while the most divisive statements regarded the relative importance of studying L2 phonetics and the sufficiency of comprehensibility in L2 communication. Correlations between these attitudes and the students' biographical data were discussed. The predictor that revealed significant effects most frequently was the students' extrinsic/intrinsic motivation in choosing foreign languages as their major.

Keywords L2 acquisition. Foreign-accented speech. Attitudes. Motivation.

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1 Introduction

In recent years, scientific production focused on foreign language learning has highlighted the existence of a very close link between students' attitudes¹ and their achievement of a more or less native-like phonological competence in foreign languages: as several studies point out (Elliot 1995a; 1995b; Moyer 2007; Verdía 2010), a positive opinion about the native accent in foreign language learning and, more in general, the foreign language itself and classroom pronunciation instruction, seems to support the fulfilment of a native-like pronunciation.

In addition to this, it is worth observing that learners' attitudes towards native and foreign accents play a key role in the teaching process by helping teachers to focus on their students' expectations and to include activities on pronunciation in their teaching programmes (Arroyo Hernández 2020). According to Moyer (2007, 502),

Yet these days, teachers have little hope of finding a standardised approach to pronunciation instruction, and despite decades of research, contradictory findings have uncovered more questions than answers when it comes to explaining the pervasiveness of accent for late second language (L2) learners.

With the purpose of delving into the premises of teaching and learning foreign language pronunciation, the research group *Accento straniero in studenti universitari di lingue straniere* (Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy) carried out a survey among Italian first-year students enrolled in a BA programme in foreign languages. The survey took place in 2019-20 and 2020-21 and provided the members of the research group with information concerning 372 first-year BA students of the Department of Linguistic and Comparative Cultural Studies (Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Culturali Comparati, DSLCC). In particular, the data concern students' biographical pro-

This work was partly supported by the project 'Departments of Excellence' carried out at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. The authors would also like to thank other members of the research group *Accento straniero in studenti universitari di lingue straniere*, in particular, Peter Paschke for his general supervision of the research project and David Newbold for helping us work on the manuscript.

This work (conceptualisation, methodology, data collection and analysis) is the result of a collaboration between the two authors. Nonetheless, Elena Dal Maso wrote §§ 1, 5.1, and 6; Pavel Duryagin wrote §§ 2, 3, 4, and 5.2.

1 In agreement with Arroyo Hernández (2020, 8), in this paper we consider the term 'attitudes' as a general label that includes and summarises a great variety of notions: from objective knowledge to opinions, emotions or desires, including the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that lead a learner to study foreign languages. The notion of attitude is analysed in Ramos Méndez 2010 and Garrett 2010.

files and linguistic backgrounds (Section A of the questionnaire), as well as their opinions about foreign accents in general (Section B), foreign accents regarding the two languages they are learning at university (Section C and D), English as a lingua franca (Section E) and, finally, regional and foreign accents in Italian (Section F).²

Through the analysis of students' answers to the questionnaire, the Venetian research group aspires to contribute to the improvement of foreign language learning and teaching by providing data on university students whose L1 is Italian – which is little researched at the moment. Moreover, only a relatively small number of studies on attitudes towards foreign-accented speech (FAS) have investigated foreign languages other than English; most of the research carried out so far has been centred on English as L2/FL (Arroyo Hernández 2020, 12). In contrast with these studies, the Venetian survey examines students' attitudes towards 13 of the 15 curricular languages included in the BA in Language, Civilisations and Linguistic Sciences (Lingue, civiltà e scienze del linguaggio): Catalan, English, French, German, Greek, Italian Sign Language, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish and Swedish.³

The present study focuses on Section B of the questionnaire and aims at identifying general attitudes towards foreign accent and native pronunciation of foreign languages, as well as possible correlations between these attitudes and students' linguistic and socio-biographical profiles.

In the following section we introduce the state of the art concerning factors affecting general opinions about FAS and judgements of nativeness in pronunciation in foreign languages (§ 2). Later, we describe the methods and the data we used to test our hypothesis (§3), as well as the results stemming from our research (§ 4). Finally, we discuss the findings and implications of our research (§ 5) and infer some conclusions and food for thought for future investigations (§ 6).

2 Factors Affecting the Attitudes and Judgements on FAS. State of the Art

Most of the up-to-date research concerning judgements on foreign accents has investigated how samples of accented L2 speech are evaluated by native listeners within the dimensions of accentedness, comprehensibility and intelligibility (Munro, Derwing 1995). While linguistic proficiency of the speaker (which can be operationalised

² For more information on the questionnaire, see Arroyo Hernández 2021.

³ No data have been collected on two of the languages on offer in the Department – Albanian and Czech – since none of the respondents were learning these languages.

as the number of phonetic errors per unit of time, speech rate, the diversity of the vocabulary, various measurements of prosodic accuracy etc.) naturally correlates with these measures, several individual and social factors tend to come into play when professional language instructors or non-expert speakers of L1 are asked to express their attitudes and evaluations of FAS.

On the speaker's side, various individual characteristics, including sex and age (Gallois, Callan 1981; Kraut, Wulff 2013; Thompson 1991) have been shown to interact with listeners' judgements. The speaker's nationality, or, more precisely, the status of the language that influences the accent, is also a potential source of bias (Dragojevic, Goatley-Soan 2020; Gallois, Callan 1981; Giles 1970; Kang, Rubin 2009; Lindemann 2003; 2005; Rubin 1992).

More importantly for the present study, it is well documented that the foreign accent in many respects lies in the eye and the ear of the beholder (Moyer 2013, 102). As Garrett points out, "If attitudes are learned, then some sources of learning are related to social group membership", as well as "our personal experiences and our social environment" (2010, 16). As a result, more and more studies in the field of FAS perception tend to treat the listener as a fully-fledged participant of communication rather than a mere tool for the evaluation of a given accent (Baese-Berk, McLaughlin, McGowan 2020).

The hearer's gender turns out to be one of these sources of biases. According to Nelson, Signorella, Botti (2016), male raters demonstrate a larger bias against Spanish accent in English than female participants, independently of the speaker's gender. A similar gender effect was found for the judgments on indigenous British accents collected by Coupland and Bishop (2007).

The degree of listeners' expertise affects their evaluations of foreign accents, too. Several studies in the field of language assessment show that trained language instructors tend to be more lenient in their holistic evaluations of accented speech than non-expert L1 speakers (Barnwell 1989; Bongaerts, Mennen, van der Slik 2000; Thompson 1991). The same effect was attested in ratings by undergraduate students with occasional teaching and tutoring experience (Kang 2012).

A large body of research is dedicated to the role of the hearer's familiarity with FAS in general and with specific accents. Since Gass and Varonis' pioneering paper (1984), several studies have investigated the complex effect of previous exposure to L2 speech. Bradlow and Bent (2008) showed that short exposure to excerpts of FAS produced by multiple speakers sharing the same L1 can help native listeners significantly improve their perception of this type of FAS. Baese-Berk, Bradlow and Wright (2013) further demonstrated that this sort of adaptation can be generalised and become accent-independent, since listeners in their experiment performed better in perceiving novel types of FAS after short exposure to multiple varying

foreign accents. Kennedy and Trofimovich (2008), too, found that experienced listeners understood FAS better; however, their ratings of comprehensibility and general accentedness of FAS did not differ significantly from those of inexperienced listeners, thus drawing an important line between intelligibility (the number of erroneously perceived words pronounced with foreign accent, often tested by means of an orthographic transcription task) and subjectively perceived degree of comprehensibility. However, in Kraut and Wulff's study (2013), the participants who reported low familiarity with FAS rated L2 speakers lower on all three parameters tested: the degree of accent, comprehensibility, and communicative ability.

Several studies have compared the evaluations of accented speech by native and non-native judges. Some evidence has been provided that non-native speakers evaluate accented speech more strictly than natives (Fayer, Krasinski 1987), though other studies did not find significant differences between the two groups (Brennan, Brennan 1981; Kim 2009; Major 2007; Zhang, Elder 2011) or observed the opposite effect of nativeness (Barnwell 1989). Gallardo del Puerto, García Lecumberri and Gómez Lacabex (2015) compared evaluations of FAS in English by non-expert native listeners and non-native trained raters and reached the conclusion that the two groups were largely similar in their evaluation of communicative effects of FAS (degree of irritation and comprehensibility) and the degree of the accent itself. The most notable differences were attested in comprehensibility judgements: trained raters who shared L1 with the speakers reported better comprehension of speech samples characterised by familiar accents. Accordingly, since the most familiar L2 accent for any L2 learner is their own, Mitterer, Eger and Reinisch (2020) were able to find evidence that German students rated their own production in L2 English (altered to render the voice unfamiliar) as more target-like than the speech of their peers.

Finally, the effect of listeners' personal traits on attitudes towards foreign accents have been investigated. The most extensively studied potential source of bias against accented speech is ethnocentrism, defined by Garrett as "the tendency to see the world mainly from the viewpoint of one's own culture" (2010, 228; see also Chakraborty 2017 for a review). Neuliep and Speten-Hansen (2013) demonstrated that higher individual ethnocentricity ratings of listeners correlate significantly with their negative evaluations of attractiveness, credibility, and homophily of speakers producing FAS. Recently, less straightforward effects of personality have been shown to come into play. A study conducted by Gaffney and Côté (2020) investigated the Big Five personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) of non-expert raters as independent variables affecting their evaluations of degree of accentedness in FAS. Three of the five traits were correlated signifi-

cantly with foreign accentedness ratings: the L2 speech samples were judged more harshly by raters with high scores of conscientiousness and low scores of extroversion and agreeableness.

To sum up, numerous studies concerning individual factors in perception and evaluation of accented speech, including the active role of both speaker and listener, underline their importance in authentic contexts, such as workplace, courtroom, and academic environment, where biased evaluations and attitudes may lead to harsh repercussions for the non-native speakers. Little is known, however, about how the details of native speakers' backgrounds, their linguistic experience, and personal traits, relate to their general opinions and metalinguistic notions about foreign accent in their L1 and L2. Most of the research on attitudes towards FAS demonstrate strong preference for native-like phonetics (Brabcová, Skarnitzl 2018; Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck, Smit 1997; Nowacka 2012); however, these studies rarely take into account the heterogeneity of the populations examined, i.e., the question of whether subgroups of language learners might significantly deviate from the general pattern.

One step in this direction was made by Waniek-Klimczak, Rojczyk, Porzuczek (2015) who tested the effect of gender and level of the studies (BA vs. MA) of English studies majors from Poland on their responses to four questions concerning attitudes towards FAS. They found two robust results for gender: female participants evaluated more critically their own pronunciation in English; in addition, they declared more concern about their foreign accent. As for the BA vs. MA differences, the study showed that more experienced MA learners of English claimed to care to a lesser degree about not having Polish features in their L2 English. Another paper in which the attitudes were consistently linked to the learners' background information was conducted by Dewaele and McCloskey (2015). The researchers asked a large sample of multilinguals to what extent they agreed with two statements about FAS: "People's foreign accents annoy me" and "It bothers me to have a foreign accent in a foreign language". The data showed that multilinguals reported being more irritated by their own accent than by others'. Additionally, a few significant effects on both agreement rates were revealed. Extrovert, emotionally stable and tolerant to ambiguity participants were less bothered by the FAS of others. As for the irritation towards one's own accent, only the effect of neuroticism was significant. Unexpectedly, the data revealed that the participants who knew more languages and were more proficient in them were more bothered by foreign accents, especially their own. In contrast, those respondents who reported having grown up or currently working in ethnically diverse environments were more tolerant towards foreign accents, as well as older and less educated participants.

In the present study we aim to follow up on this line of research by investigating general opinions and notions about FAS of a relative-

ly homogenous group of Italian first-year students enrolled in a BA programme in foreign languages. Based on the literature we have reviewed, we hypothesise that the variables reflecting the linguistic background of the respondents (nativeness/non-nativeness in Italian, which is the language of the questionnaire and their higher education; bilingualism; everyday usage of foreign languages; usage of regional varieties of Italian; the number of languages studied at school), as well as one personality trait (the prevalence of intrinsic or extrinsic motivations for choosing the foreign languages curriculum at the university), affect their opinions on FAS. We tested whether these variables correlate with their notions about general importance of striving for target-like pronunciation, relative usefulness of classroom instruction on L2 phonetics, attainability of native-like pronunciation, sufficiency of comprehensibility in L2 communication, negative consequences of pronunciation errors, and identity issues emerging when speaking with an accent or training to acquire target-like pronunciation.

3 Methods

To test our hypothesis, we used the data from Sections A and B of the Venetian questionnaire. In these sections of the survey, 372 first-year BA students of the Department of Linguistic and Comparative Cultural Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice were asked to provide information about their linguistic backgrounds (Section A) and express their (dis)agreement with 14 general statements about foreign accents (Section B). The statements in Section B [tab. 1] concerned the main fields of our inquiry: general importance of accent and commitment to correct pronunciation (B01-B04); attainability of native-like pronunciation (B05) and the sufficiency of comprehensibility in communication (B06); communicative benefits of correct pronunciation and negative consequences of accented speech (B07-B10); identity issues that arise while trying to achieve correct pronunciation in L2 (B11-B14). The statements were presented in randomised order in the format of five-level Likert items with numerical labels from 1 to 5 referring to the following options: "strongly disagree", "disagree", "uncertain", "agree" and "strongly agree". In addition, an open-ended question B15 was suggested to the respondents that allowed them to elaborate on their opinions about foreign accents in general or comment on previous statements, the analysis of which data lies outside the scope of the present paper.

To investigate the possible effect of students' background on their attitudes and opinions towards foreign accents, a series of ordinal logistic regression models was fitted in R (R Core Team 2020) by means of the *polr* function from the *MASS* package (Venables, Ripley 2002). For each of the 14 Likert items from Section B, a separate model was

fitted using the students' responses in the format of ordered factors as dependent variables and seven variables extracted from the background questionnaire in Section A as predictors: gender; age of acquisition of Italian; self-declared bilingualism; the number of foreign languages studied at school; self-reported everyday usage of foreign languages; usage of dialects; a coefficient for extrinsic/intrinsic motivations for enrolment to the degree course. No interactions between the independent variables were tested. We summarise below the information on how each of the predictors was coded based on the data from Section A of the survey.

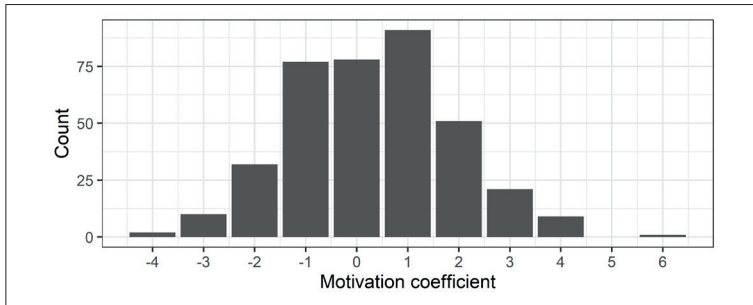
1. Respondents' gender. Out of the total of 372 participants, 327 (87.9%) identified themselves as female and 41 (11%) as male. Four participants chose not to disclose their gender; these data were treated as missing values in regression modelling. Although the imbalance between female and male groups limits the reliability of conclusions about gender effects in our data, it should be noted that the prevalence of female participants is typical for online language surveys (Wilson, Dewaele 2010), and it also reflects the demographics of the students who choose foreign languages programmes in Venice.
2. Acquisition of Italian. The students were asked in question A06 how they had acquired Italian. Three options were offered: "Italian is my mother tongue, first acquired in family and then studied at school"; "In my family I acquired a dialect, and then at school I acquired and studied (standard) Italian"; "Other" (open-ended question). In the present chapter we do not distinguish between the vast majority of students who claim to have acquired the standard variety of Italian at home before school and the 11 respondents who claim to have acquired at home only a regional variety of Italian. We manually analysed the responses to open-ended questions to identify 25 students (6.7% of the general population) who did not speak standard Italian or any of the Italian dialects at least before school. In regression modelling we treat this predictor as binary, coded as "Italian" vs. "other".
3. Self-declared bilingualism. In question A07, the students were asked the following question: "As a child or teenager, did you learn a language other than Italian, that you speak (or used to speak) at the level of the mother tongue or at least with great spontaneity?" 105 respondents (28.2%) answered positively, and in our analysis we operationalise such responses as a self-declaration of their bilingualism in a broad sense.
4. The number of foreign languages studied at school. In sections A08-A15 of the background questionnaire respondents were asked what languages they had studied previously. We manually counted the sum of different languages reported for

- each respondent which varied from 1 to 6, with the median value of 4 languages studied by 160 students (43%).
5. Everyday usage of foreign languages. In section A17 the first-year students were asked: "Excluding foreign language lessons, in everyday life, do you usually speak (or did you speak) a language other than Italian (e.g., at work, on social networks, during a school year abroad etc.?)" 185 respondents (49.7%) answered the question positively. In our analysis we treat the responses to this question as a declaration of some experience in regular usage of foreign languages.
 6. Usage of dialect. The question A18 was formulated as follows: "If you use (or used) an Italian dialect, indicate which one and in which situations". For the purposes of the present chapter, we manually coded all open-ended responses; as a result, 201 respondents (54%) were considered users of some regional variety of Italian (mostly referred to as "Venetian" by the participants), the rest of the respondents (171; 46%) did not report any usage of Regional Italian.⁴
 7. Motivation for enrolling in a department of languages. In section A19 the first-year students were asked what the reasons for their choice of BA programme in languages and cultures were. Thirteen options were available for multiple choice, as well as a field for open-ended feedback. Based on closed-ended responses only, we determined a coefficient for the prevalence of extrinsic or intrinsic motivation in each student's decision to enrol at the DSLCC. The coefficient was calculated as follows: one point was added for the choice of each of the six motivations we considered intrinsic ("because I like literature"; "because I am interested in linguistics"; "because I am curious to know other cultures"; "languages are my passion"; "I'd like to teach languages"; "following a stay in a different linguistic context"), and one point was subtracted for the choice of each of the five motivations we considered extrinsic ("I was good at languages at school"; "by exclusion (e.g. of scientific subjects)"; "because this degree programme is present in Venice, i.e. close to my home"; "because foreign languages give me the opportunity to move abroad"; "good job prospects in the globalised world"). In other words, the greater the prev-

⁴ As Poggi Salani (2010) points out, the Italian linguistic landscape is characterised by the coexistence of numerous dialects and regional varieties of Italian, in addition to the so-called standard Italian, that is a "variety of language subject to regulatory codification, and which serves as a reference model for the correct use of the language and for school teaching" (Berruto 2010). Given the difficulty of establishing clear boundaries between these elements, in this work we consider, on the one hand, standard Italian and, on the other hand, dialects and regional varieties of Italian.

absence of intrinsic motivation in respondent's answers to A19, the more positive value has his/her coefficient (and vice versa for the negative values). As [chart 1] shows, the distribution of resulting coefficients is close to normal with the median value of 0 (no prevalence of extrinsic or intrinsic motivations was attested for 78 participants; 20.9% of the total).

Chart 1 The distribution of 372 observations of the 'motivation coefficient'

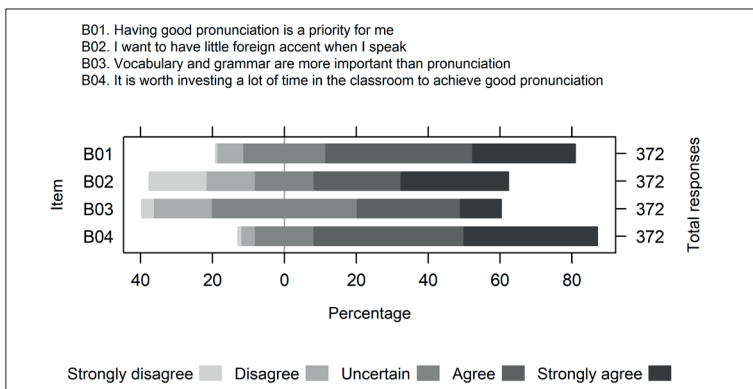


4 Results

The results for each of the 14 Likert items are presented in [charts 2-5]. We summarise the observed statistically significant effects in §§ 4.1-4.4 below and in [tabs 1-4] of the Appendix.

4.1 General Importance and Commitment to Correct Pronunciation (B01-B04)

Chart 2 Likert scaled responses to items B01-B04

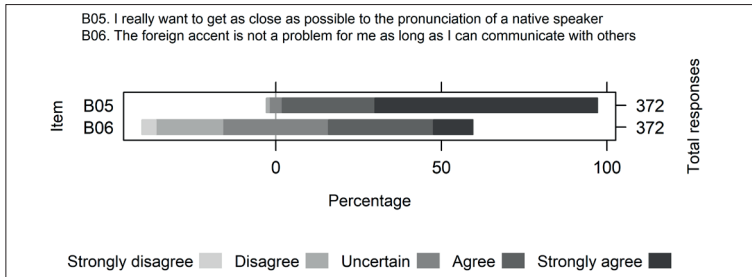


Most first-year students agreed (40.8%) or strongly agreed (28.5%) that having good pronunciation is a priority for them; fewer than 8% disagreed with the statement in B01. Regression analysis of responses showed no significant or marginally significant effects of predictors [tab. 1]. However, when asked whether they commit to having little accent when they speak (B02), the participants were less unanimous. Almost 30% of respondents admitted that they do not commit themselves to reducing accent when speaking foreign languages (13.4% disagree and 15.9% strongly disagree with the statement). The strongest effect found in the data [tab. 1] was the one referring to the number of languages studied ($p = .111$): the students who studied more different languages at school tended to claim that they committed to good pronunciation.

Items B03 and B04 were aimed at investigating students' opinions concerning the relative importance of studying pronunciation in language class. First-year students were highly uncertain (40.6%) when asked whether they consider vocabulary and grammar more important than pronunciation (item B03). Two robust effects are revealed by regression modelling [tab. 1]. First, male respondents tended to agree more than females that other aspects of language education are more important than phonetics ($p = .05$). In contrast, the students who claimed to use or have used regional varieties of Italian were more likely to disagree with the statement in B03 ($p = .052$), that is, the users of dialect are less likely to consider pronunciation inferior in importance to vocabulary and grammar. The item B04 ("It is worth investing a lot of time in the classroom to achieve good pronunciation") was similar to B01 in general agreement among the respondents: 41.6% of first-year students agreed and 37% strongly agreed that spending a lot of time on pronunciation training is worthwhile. One effect of the predictors studied reached the significance level [tab. 2]: more intrinsically motivated students tended to agree more strongly with the statement ($p = .031$).

4.2 Nativelikeness and Comprehensibility (B05-B06)

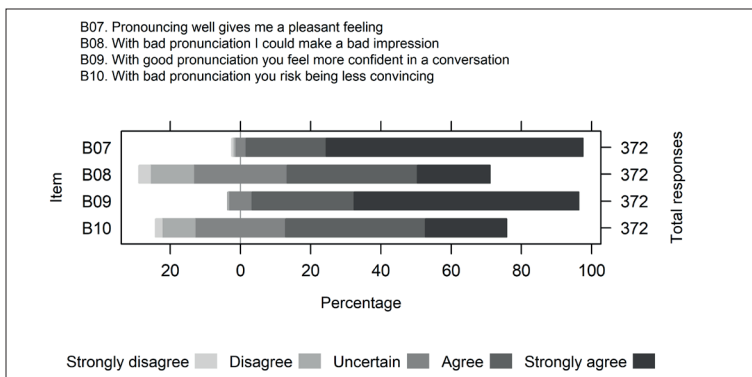
Chart 3 Likert scaled responses to items B05-B06



The purpose of item B05 was to find out whether the students consider achieving native-like pronunciation a valid objective in their learning of foreign languages. A vast majority of respondents share this aim: in total more than 95% of students agree (28%) or strongly agree (67.2%) with this statement (see the regression data with no significant effects in [tab. 2](#)). In contrast, the problem regarding the sufficiency of mere comprehensibility (B06) divided the participants into two comparably large groups. While 43.5% of first-year students do not consider comprehensible accented speech a problem, 24.5% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement in B06. However, regression modelling of these data (summarised in [tab. 2](#)) did not reveal any significant effect of the predictors.

4.3 The Benefits of Good Pronunciation and Negative Consequences of Accented Speech (B07-B10)

Chart 4 Likert scaled responses to items B07-B10



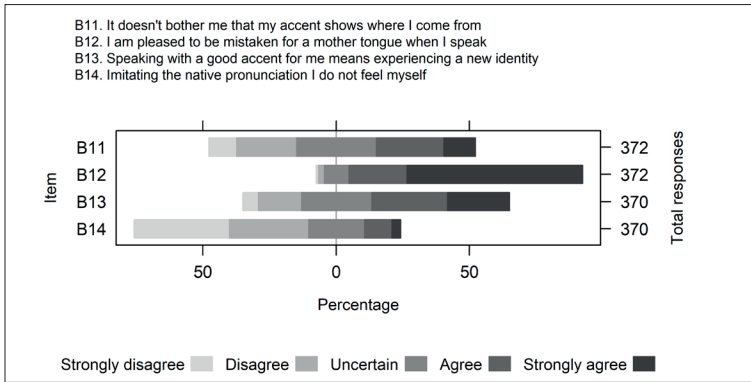
A large majority of respondents reported that they take pleasure in good pronunciation (B07): 22.8% agree and 73.1% strongly agree with the statement in B07. The regression model [tab. 3] indicates that those of the students who claimed to use foreign languages on a daily basis were significantly more likely to choose the option “strongly agree” than the others ($p = .026$). Very similar data were obtained in responses to item B09: the respondents mostly agree (29%) or strongly agree (64%), and once again students who report daily usage of a foreign language agree more with the statement ($p = .028$). For this item, an additional significant effect of gender is observed [tab. 3]: male respondents agree that good pronunciation makes them feel more confident in a conversation, but to a significantly smaller degree than female participants ($p = .006$).

As for the negative consequences of pronunciation errors on the impression that listeners at large may form of them, most students agree that it is a potential source of risk in communication: 37% of respondents agree and 20.7% strongly agree with the statement in item B08. The regression model reveals that the linguistic background of students might possibly influence their judgments in this case: both students who did not acquire Italian at home before school and those who claim to be bilingual agree less with the statement in B08 ($p = .108$ and $p = .074$, respectively). In addition, higher number of languages studied might correlate with stronger agreement on B08 ($p = .098$).

Item B10, similarly to B08, stated that pronunciation errors create a risk of being less convincing. Unsurprisingly, the distribution of responses is very similar to B08 (39.8% agree and 23.1% strongly agree with this statement). One marginally significant effect revealed by regression modelling is that students who studied more than one foreign language at school are more likely to agree that this risk exists ($p = .071$) [tab. 4].

4.4 Foreign Accent and Identity (B11-B14)

Chart 5 Likert scaled responses to items B11-B14



Item B11 divided the respondents into two comparably large groups. While 37% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, 32.5% report that they are bothered by the fact that their accent discloses their L1. Regression modelling [tab. 4] reveals a robust relationship between the use of dialect and the worry about the speaker's origin being discovered. Students who claim to use or have used regional varieties (dialects) of Italian respond more positively to item B11, claiming that they are not bothered by this kind of consequence ($p < .001$). Another predictor that correlates with the judgements of item B11 is the motivation coefficient: the prevalence of intrinsic motivations for the enrolment at the foreign languages programme correlates with the desire to avoid this kind of disclosure ($p = .025$).

The vast majority of respondents claimed that they would like to be mistaken for a native speaker of a foreign language (21.8% agree and 65.9% strongly agreed with the statement B12). A robust effect of the number of languages studied at school is found in the data: students who had had more experience of learning various languages at school were more likely to choose the option "strongly agree" ($p = .025$) [tab. 4].

Responses to item B13 were mostly positive: most first-year students agreed that speaking with good pronunciation to them means experimenting with a new identity: 28.4% agree and 23.2% strongly agree. Regression analysis [tab. 5] did not reveal any significant effect of predictors on B13; the strongest positive effect was attested for the daily usage of L2 ($p = .11$).

Finally, item B14 elicited the largest number of negative responses compared to the other items. Respondents mostly refuted the statement that they "do not feel like themselves" when trying to imitate

native pronunciation: 35.4% strongly disagree and 29.7% disagree. A marginally significant effect of motivation is revealed by regression modelling ($p = .077$): intrinsically motivated students showed a lower degree of agreement. Another group of respondents who more strongly denied feeling “not themselves” were those who report daily usage of foreign languages ($p = .047$) (for the details see **tab. 5**).

5 Discussion

5.1 Students' Attitudes towards Foreign Accents

5.1.1 General Importance and Commitment to Correct Pronunciation (B01-B04)

The first four statements of Section B deal with students' opinions concerning the importance of pronunciation and their commitment to study pronunciation in language classes. As far as B01 is concerned (“Having good pronunciation is a priority for me”), 69.2% of respondents agreed (40.8%) or strongly agreed (28.4%), whereas only 7.4% disagreed and 23.1% were uncertain. In contrast to the high approval of B01, data concerning B02 show a more varied distribution of students' opinions: on the one hand, 53.9% agreed (24.1%) or totally agreed (29.8%) with B02 (“I want my pronunciation to have little foreign accent when I speak”); on the other hand, 16.6% were uncertain and 29.2% disagreed (13.4%) or strongly disagreed (15.8%). It seems, therefore, that a sizable number of respondents (about 30%) does not commit to reducing foreign accent when speaking, despite the widespread tendency, which clearly emerged in B01, to aspire to a good pronunciation. This inconsistency could be due to the meaning associated with the concept of ‘good pronunciation’ (see B01): indeed, many students could possibly identify a ‘good pronunciation’ with a pronunciation which is comprehensible but does not necessarily exclude foreign accent. Moreover, the large percentages of answers 1 and 2 could demonstrate that almost a third of the respondents considers the acquisition of a good pronunciation a difficult goal to achieve (partly due to a lack of phonetic training) and, as a consequence, prefers not to strain to attain a native-like pronunciation when speaking. For these students, to agree with B01 and disagree with B02 is not a contradiction. However, it is worth underlining that those learners who have previously studied languages and those who use a language other than Italian in everyday life are more likely to define a ‘good pronunciation’ as a native or native-like pronunciation; as a result, these students tend to strongly agree with B02.

As regards statement B04 (“It is worth investing a lot of time in the classroom to achieve good pronunciation”), 78.6% of students

agreed (41.6%) or strongly agreed (37%), while 4.5% disagreed and 16.6% chose option 3 (“uncertain”). In contrast to the broad consensus reached in B04, B03 (“Vocabulary and grammar are more important than pronunciation”) showed great indecision: 39.9% of respondents agreed (28.7%) or strongly agreed (11.2%), while 40.5% were uncertain and 19.3% disagreed (16.1%) or strongly disagreed (3.2%). Therefore, it could be deduced that many students, while agreeing on the usefulness of teaching pronunciation in foreign language courses, recognise, more or less consciously (also through indecision), the importance of grammar and vocabulary. Taking into account these data, it could be hypothesised that in B04 at least a part of the respondents chose the two most ‘politically correct’ options, namely 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), in order to satisfy the expectations of the research group who carried out the survey. Alternatively, these data could be interpreted as a confirmation of the students’ awareness regarding the need to introduce phonetics in linguistic courses, even if grammar and vocabulary are still considered important.

Furthermore, regression analysis showed that male respondents are more likely to consider grammar and vocabulary important, while those who use a dialect or declared that they were bilingual seem to be arguing that grammar and vocabulary are as relevant as (or less relevant than) pronunciation. However, data concerning gender and bilingualism need to be considered with caution, since male students and self-declared bilinguals make up only a small part of the sample. In the case of dialect speakers, it could be hypothesised that those who use a regional variety of Italian – Venetian dialect, in most cases – are more aware of the fact that speaking with a regional accent may lead some interlocutors – Italians from other parts of the country, but also listeners who speak a L1 other than Italian – to have a negative opinion of the speaker.⁵ Unexpectedly, the number of foreign languages previously studied by respondents or the daily usage of one or more of these do not seem to affect their responses to B03. These data, together with those previously reported, could confirm, in our opinion, the hypothesis that binds dialect to the speaker’s social image and the consequent desire to acquire a good pronunciation in order to avoid a negative public impression; while regression analysis highlights, in B04, that the fact of having learned Italian (as a second language) at school correlates with a high degree of ap-

5 It is worth recalling that until the first half of the past century most Italians were exclusively dialect-speaking and unable to express themselves in the national language. From the 1970s onwards, Italian spread as a means of communication in public and private communication, thanks to the reforms of the school system. However, it should be emphasised that many families, precisely because of the greater prestige of Italian as Italy’s national language, chose to avoid the use of dialect even in familiar and informal contexts. For more data on this subject, see D’Agostino 2015.

proval towards the statement. Therefore, by grouping B03 and B04, it could be tentatively concluded that those students who use other linguistic codes – be it a foreign language or a regional dialect – attribute greater importance to pronunciation and, as a consequence, are more willing to commit themselves to the study of pronunciation in the foreign language.

5.2 Nativelikeness and Comprehensibility (B05-B06)

The next two statements move into the domain of nativelikeness and comprehensibility. Students' opinions concerning B05 ("I really want to get as close as possible to the pronunciation of a native speaker") reveal that 95.1% of the sample agreed (27.9%) or strongly agreed (67.2%), with only 4% uncertain and 0.8% disagreeing. In contrast with this trend, data from B06 ("The foreign accent is not a problem for me as long as I can communicate with others") are quite surprising: 43.5% of the respondents agreed, 24.4% disagreed and 31.9% were undecided. The apparent inconsistency between B05 and B06 could be explained by considering students' willingness to select the most expected opinion for an academic survey on phonetics. Another possible explanation could consist in the fact that students, while considering the native accented speech as a reference model, realise that they will hardly be able to achieve a native-like pronunciation. For this reason, many of them do not consider the foreign accent a problem as long as it does not hinder communication.

5.2.1 The Benefits of Good Pronunciation and Negative Consequences of Accented Speech (B07-B10)

The following statements delve into the personal and social benefits of a good accent (B07 and B09), as well as the negative consequences of accented speech (B08 and B10). As for B07 ("Pronouncing well gives me a pleasant feeling"), 85.9% of the respondents agreed (22.8%) or strongly agreed (73.1%), with only 3.2% declaring they were uncertain and 0.7% disagreeing. Similarly, in B09 ("With good pronunciation you feel more confident in a conversation"), 92.9% of the sample selected the options "agree" (29%) or "strongly agree" (63.9%), 6.7% were uncertain, and only 0.2% disagreed. In both cases, the daily use of one or more foreign languages has proved to be a factor that may affect students' attitudes, leading them to agree with both B07 and B09. Consequently, it could be hypothesised that the habit of frequently using other languages in addition to one's own L1 may generate a positive opinion about the native-like pronunciation of foreign languages (or, at least, about its imitation), which in

turn contributes to increase speakers' self-esteem and communicative effectiveness. In this case, respondents may have possibly associated good pronunciation and the act of pronouncing well with the idea of nativelikeness.

Questions B08 and B10, focused on the negative effects of the foreign accent, produced similar results. 57.6% of respondents agreed (37%) or strongly agreed (20.6%) with B08 ("With bad pronunciation I could make a bad impression"), while 26.6% were uncertain and 15.5% disagreed (12.3%) or strongly disagreed (3.2%). Similarly, 62.8% agreed (39.7%) or totally agreed (23.1%) with B10 ("With a bad pronunciation you risk being less convincing"), whereas 25.8% were undecided and 11.2% disagreed (9.4%) or strongly disagreed (1.8%). As a result, about two thirds of the sample associated foreign accents with possible negative social and communicative effects. The acquisition of Italian (as a second language) at school and self-declared bilingualism in B08, and the number of foreign languages studied in B08 and B10 seems to have led students to choose options 4 ("agree") and 5 ("strongly agree"). These data seem to confirm the greater importance attributed to pronunciation by respondents who use or can speak foreign languages; at the same time, they emphasise - as we have already hypothesised - that some students may have not agreed with B08 and B10 because they were aware of the fact that it is very difficult to achieve a native-like pronunciation and, consequently, to avoid the negative effects to which B08 and B10 refer.

5.2.2 Foreign Accent and Identity (B11-B14)

The final four statements of Section B focus on the relationship between foreign accent and identity (both individual and social). As for B11 ("It does not bother me that my accent shows where I come from"), 37% of respondents said that they are not bothered (25.2%) or not at all bothered (11.8%) by the fact that their foreign accent reveals their origin, whereas 30.3% were uncertain and 32.4% declared they were annoyed (22.5%) or very annoyed (9.9%). Regression analysis showed that students who do not report using dialect and those who have a higher coefficient of intrinsic motivation tend to be more bothered and, consequently, want to prevent their accent from revealing their origin. Similarly to B06, in B11 an interest in languages not determined by work expectations or practical results seems to produce in students a greater attention towards the achievement of linguistic skills. The role of dialect, on the other hand, could be explained by considering the idea, widespread in Italy, that some Italian regional varieties as not very prestigious.

In contrast with B11, the vast majority (87.5%) of respondents agreed (21.7%) or strongly agreed (65.8%) with statement B12 ("I

am pleased to be mistaken for a mother tongue when I speak”), with only 9.6% undecided and 3% disagreeing (2.5%) or strongly disagreeing (0.5%). This general tendency confirms, in our opinion, the attitude observed in B01 and B05, highlighting that for most students a native accent represents an unavoidable point of reference as well as a model to imitate and pursue when learning a foreign language. In this regard, it is worth emphasising that those who had previously studied more than one foreign language show that they are more in agreement with B12. On the other hand, the data from B11 and B12 could confirm that several students (a little less than 40%), while feeling flattered if in certain situations they are mistaken for native speakers, realise that their foreign accent will reveal their origins and, precisely because of this awareness, they do not feel bothered by B11. Finally, the responses to B12 could be explained by assuming that a part of the respondents may have selected options 4 (“agree”) and 5 (“strongly agree”), as in the case of B04, to satisfy the expectations of the research group who carried out the survey.

The final two statements of Section B show some inconsistencies in the relationship between foreign accent and identity. Responding to B13 (“Speaking with a good accent for me means experiencing a new identity”), 51.5% of students agreed (28.3%) or strongly agreed (23.2%), 26.7% were undecided and 21.6% disagreed (16.2%) or strongly disagreed (5.4%). Thus, for about half of respondents the use of a foreign language with a good accent has positive effects on the speaker’s self-image and seems to encourage the experience of a new social identity linked to a foreign language and culture.

On the other hand, only 13.4% of respondents agreed (10.2%) or strongly agreed (3.2%) with B14 (“Imitating the native pronunciation I do not feel myself”), while 21.3% were uncertain and 65.1% disagreed (29.7%) or strongly disagreed (35.4%). From these data it can be deduced that the majority of students do not seem to perceive differences in personal identity when speaking in a foreign language. However, this inconsistency between data concerning B13 and B14 could depend on a possible interpretation of B14 focused on the mood experienced rather than on identity: in fact, students may have associated the expression “I do not feel myself” with the idea of discomfort or shame that the imitation of an accent can cause. If this were the case, these data would confirm that almost all students do not experience negative feelings when imitating a native accent. In particular, learners with a higher intrinsic motivation coefficient, those who declared that they use foreign language(s) every day, or that they are bilingual, tend to disagree more with B14; this fact seems to confirm our hypothesis concerning students’ different interpretation of B14, as focused on moods and not on identity issues.

5.3 Personal Background Factors Affecting the Attitudes

Turning now exclusively to the results obtained by means of regression modelling, we restate that the present study was also intended to ascertain the presence of correlations between the students' linguistic biographies (including their self-reported usage of L2 and regional varieties of L1, as well as their motivations for the choice of a foreign language curriculum at the university) and their attitudes towards FAS and explicit pronunciation instruction. Our data revealed several intriguing correlations that partly support the initial hypotheses.

Starting from the factors that resulted in a smaller number of significant correlations, gender did not robustly affect most of the responses, except for items B03 and B09. Male participants in our study generally did not differ from females in their evaluation of the importance of good pronunciation and the consequences of lacking native-like phonetics. Our findings do not confirm the existence of stronger biases among male listeners against accented speech occasionally attested in earlier literature (see § 1 in this paper). One possible explanation for the lack of such effects is the unequal distribution of male and female subjects in the sample which means smaller statistical power of the regression analysis which may reveal a smaller number of significant effects.

On the other hand, the data clearly indicate that male participants in the study were more likely to value grammar and vocabulary over phonetics, a finding that is in line with claims that female learners are more oriented towards native-like L2 pronunciation as an ultimate goal while males show greater tolerance towards accented speech (Chan 2018; McKenzie 2008; Polat, Mahalingappa 2010; Waniek-Klimczak, Rojczyk, Porzuczek 2015). In addition, male students differed significantly from females in their beliefs about the connection between target-like pronunciation and confidence in the communication process (B09). We can speculate that male students value the impact of other sources of confidence (supposedly, extralinguistic) more highly and are therefore less prone to attribute confidence and the lack thereof in interlanguage communication to L2 proficiency.

Another group of effects which, contrary to our predictions, rarely turned out to be significant in our analysis, were the factors regarding bilingualism. The students who claimed to speak no Italian before school and those who report speaking a foreign language at a level close to native since their childhood or adolescence ("self-reported bilinguals") did not differ significantly in their responses from the subjects who did not report being bilingual. The only item that elicited a particular reaction from self-reported bilinguals was B08, that is, the claim that non-native pronunciation can be a source of negative image. The data reveal a lower degree of support for this notion among bilingual respondents. Since it is highly improbable that the (self-reported) bilinguals are unaware of well-documented biases against

FAS, we interpret these data as a conscious rejection of this notion among university students. This is in line with several recent studies reporting no apparent downgrading of non-native speakers and even overcorrection tendencies among various groups of raters; see an overview of such findings in Roessel, Schoel, Stahlberg (2020, 90).

It should be noted that the results for sequential bilinguals, as well as gender effects, should be treated with caution, due to the fact that the distribution of subjects in these groups is highly unequal. We suggest that our findings regarding gender and bilingualism can be generalised to male and sequential bilingual students enrolled in university foreign languages curricula, a context in which they typically constitute a minority in the population, and not to the general populations of male and/or sequential bilingual L2 learners.

Conversely, the last two categorical variables considered in our analysis (the use of dialect and the everyday use of L2) divided the respondents into comparably large groups and revealed several significant correlations. As for the regional varieties of Italian, our data show that dialect users were less likely to give higher value to grammar and vocabulary compared to L2 pronunciation. This finding is not surprising given the fact that phonetic features constitute an immediately recognisable integral part of regional varieties of Italian. Another foreseeable finding is that dialect users were less reluctant to reveal their origin while speaking L2. The two results appear at first sight to be in contradiction: dialect users rate target-like pronunciation highly but at the same time are less bothered by the fact that phonetics inevitably reveal their non-nativeness. We suggest that for dialect users L2 phonetics can play a role similar to their L1 vernacular: they might consider it not a trait, but a tool that should be mastered and used not only for integration, but also for self-identification, if necessary.

As for the significant effects of everyday usage of L2 outside the classroom, two of them concern the benefits of good pronunciation. The students who reported speaking foreign languages on a daily basis were more likely to claim that good pronunciation gives them a pleasant feeling and boosts their confidence in communication. Another item that revealed robust differences between the two groups of the survey participants was B14 ("Imitating native pronunciation I do not feel myself"). As mentioned above, we suggest that the students interpreted this item not as regarding the new identity experience (as was initially conceived; see § 5.1.4), but as a declaration of discomfort and annoyance in the L2 phonetics class. Overall, the findings outlined in this section demonstrate a strong correlation between the positive mindset towards the efforts to achieve target pronunciation in L2 (pleasure, confidence, lack of discomfort) and frequent L2 practice outside the classroom.

The significant effects found for the total number of languages studied at school is harder to interpret. The data showed that re-

spondents who are familiar with a larger number of foreign languages were more likely to agree with the statement that they like being mistaken for a native speaker. This finding might be indicative that a higher degree of early exposure to foreign languages and FAS might correlate with the students' eagerness to experiment with their identities through L2. However, further investigations are needed to test this possibility. Two marginal effects attested for these predictors concern negative effects of FAS: the students who studied more languages at school seem to be more alarmed about the impression that strongly accented L2 speech does on listeners in general and, particularly, its convincingness.

Generally, however, we suggest that the mere number of languages studied at school (which might include classical languages) is not a reliable predictor of attitudes towards FAS. Instead, future studies should concentrate on considering proficiency levels of all languages spoken by the respondents.

Some of the most intriguing results to emerge from the data are the significant correlations between the responses to several items and the coefficient for the intrinsic/extrinsic motivation for enrolment in the foreign languages curriculum. First, the intrinsically oriented students claimed significantly more often that they were bothered by the fact that their non-target-like L2 phonetics might disclose their origins (B11). Second, they reported less discomfort in imitating L2 pronunciation (B14). Third and most importantly, students demonstrating the prevalence of intrinsic motivation were more likely to agree that dedicating a large amount of time to pronunciation training in classroom is worth its while. It should be noted that these data do not imply that extrinsically motivated students strongly reject the general importance of learning pronunciation (compare the lack of significant effects for the motivation coefficient in other items and the respondents' general positive bias towards pronunciation training), it merely shows a higher degree of willingness which is in correlation with intrinsic motivations for choosing the foreign languages curriculum.

Our findings are in line with studies of intrinsic/extrinsic motivation in L2 learning (Deci, Ryan 1985; 2002; Noels 2001; 2009; Noels, Clément, Pelletier 2001). This line of research suggests that intrinsic motivation is associated with more positive attitudes towards language learning, lower anxiety, and more effective performance in an L2 classroom. The data of our survey corroborate some of these findings demonstrating that the prevalence of external/internal orientation in the choice of foreign languages curricula by Italian university students is a robust predictor for the determination to work in class in order to achieve the target pronunciation. Whether the motivation coefficient would be a reliable predictor for the eventual proficiency and the objectively measured degree of accentedness in university students' L2 pronunciation, remains an open question reserved for

future studies. However, our findings firmly support the notion that promoting intrinsic motivation may facilitate active involvement of more extrinsically oriented students in pronunciation training and help avoid the anxiety often attested in the L2 phonetics classroom.

6 Conclusions

The study aimed to analyse Section B of the Venetian questionnaire in order to find possible correlations between the sociobiographical and linguistic profiles of the first-year Italian university students who participated in the survey and their attitudes towards foreign-accented speech and native pronunciation in foreign languages.

The data show that the vast majority of respondents considers the native accent a fundamental reference point and is willing to invest time in the classroom to improve pronunciation skills. Moreover, almost all students would like to be mistaken for native speakers when speaking. In contrast with these general trends, some items highlighted the existence of different opinions on some issues: the importance of pronunciation in comparison with grammar and vocabulary, as well as comprehensibility or native-like pronunciation as the main goal of the students and the relationship between participants' origins and foreign accent.

In addition, regression modelling revealed some interesting correlations between students' sociobiographical and linguistic profile and their attitudes: for example, factors such as the number of languages previously studied, the daily usage of foreign languages and the usage of dialects seem to determine greater attention and commitment to correct pronunciation. The predictor that produced significant effects most frequently was the respondents' intrinsic or extrinsic motivation for enrolment in the BA programme in foreign languages and cultures.

Our research contains several pedagogical implications: first of all, it reveals that motivation affects not only students' opinions, but also the aims they want to achieve during the BA programme. On this point, it could be important to rethink the teaching of pronunciation, taking into account the fact that extrinsic motivation does not tend to be oriented towards the acquisition of a native-like pronunciation; as a result, teaching programmes should aim at strengthening intrinsic motivation in students who enrol with mainly extrinsic motivation. It could also be useful to create differentiated BA programmes based on students' expectations and needs, as in part already happens in some Italian universities; beside courses focused on language learning per se, students should have the opportunity to enrol in courses which are more focused on the development of specific professionally or vocationally oriented skills.

Appendix. Regression Data

Regression results for the 14 Likert items are reported below in tables 1-5. 95% confidence intervals are indicated in brackets below the odds ratios' values.

Table 1 Regression analysis summary for Likert items B01-B03

Predictors	B01		B02		B03	
	Odds Ratios	p	Odds Ratios	p	Odds Ratios	p
Intercept 1 2	0.01(0.00-0.01)	<0.001	0.50(0.28-0.90)	0.204	0.02(0.01-0.04)	<0.001
Intercept 2 3	0.15(0.06-0.37)	0.002	1.11(0.51-2.39)	0.852	0.16(0.07-0.38)	0.002
Intercept 3 4	0.86(0.54-1.37)	0.793	2.30(1.45-3.63)	0.128	1.07(0.67-1.69)	0.912
Intercept 4 5	4.94(3.98-6.12)	0.006	6.58(5.33-8.12)	0.001	5.70(4.59-7.08)	0.003
Gender [Male]	0.95(0.52-1.73)	0.863	0.64(0.35-1.16)	0.141	1.87(1.00-3.50)	0.050
Acquisition of Italian [It. L1]	0.87(0.36-2.05)	0.750	1.21(0.56-2.61)	0.622	0.69(0.30-1.64)	0.405
Bilingualism [Yes]	1.34(0.84-2.14)	0.215	1.15(0.73-1.82)	0.550	0.70(0.45-1.11)	0.134
Number of languages studied	1.16(0.94-1.44)	0.180	1.19(0.96-1.46)	0.111	1.08(0.87-1.34)	0.495
Daily usage L2 [Yes]	1.14(0.76-1.69)	0.531	1.34(0.90-1.98)	0.149	0.90(0.60-1.33)	0.587
Usage of dialect [Yes]	1.26(0.86-1.86)	0.234	1.05(0.72-1.52)	0.797	0.68(0.46-1.00)	0.052
Motivation coefficient	1.03(0.91-1.16)	0.619	1.07(0.96-1.20)	0.216	0.95(0.84-1.07)	0.372
Observations	367		367		367	
R ² Nagelkerke	0.060		0.071		0.077	

Table 2 Regression analysis summary for Likert items B04-B06

Predictors	B04		B05		B06	
	Odds Ratios	p	Odds Ratios	p	Odds Ratios	p
Intercept 1 2	0.01(0.00-0.01)	<0.001			0.04(0.02-0.07)	<0.001
Intercept 2 3	0.03(0.01-0.08)	<0.001	0.01(0.01-0.03)	<0.001	0.27(0.12-0.62)	0.019
Intercept 3 4	0.20(0.12-0.31)	0.006	0.08(0.03-0.23)	<0.001	1.09(0.69-1.71)	0.881
Intercept 4 5	1.30(1.05-1.61)	0.653	0.84(0.49-1.44)	0.793	6.32(5.10-7.82)	0.001
Gender [Male]	0.70(0.38-1.31)	0.261	0.73(0.37-1.48)	0.377	1.56(0.85-2.86)	0.151
Acquisition of Italian [It. L1]	0.51(0.21-1.23)	0.139	0.89(0.31-2.37)	0.824	1.02(0.45-2.31)	0.968
Bilingualism [Yes]	1.07(0.68-1.68)	0.784	1.19(0.70-2.05)	0.531	1.08(0.68-1.69)	0.749
Number of languages studied	1.05(0.85-1.30)	0.626	1.18(0.92-1.51)	0.197	0.92(0.74-1.14)	0.442
Daily usage L2 [Yes]	1.06(0.71-1.60)	0.764	1.11(0.70-1.76)	0.656	1.11(0.74-1.65)	0.615
Usage of dialect [Yes]	1.17(0.79-1.73)	0.436	0.94(0.60-1.47)	0.791	1.07(0.73-1.56)	0.741
Motivation coefficient	1.14(1.01-1.29)	0.031	1.03(0.90-1.19)	0.664	0.93(0.83-1.05)	0.249
Observations	367		367		367	
R ² Nagelkerke	0.064		0.048		0.046	

Table 3 Regression analysis summary for Likert items B07-B09

Predictors	B07		B08		B09	
	Odds Ratios	p	Odds Ratios	p	Odds Ratios	p
Intercept 1 2	0.00(0.00-0.01)	<0.001	0.10(0.05-0.18)	<0.001		
Intercept 2 3	0.01(0.00-0.03)	<0.001	0.59(0.26-1.34)	0.334	0.00(0.00-0.00)	<0.001
Intercept 3 4	0.05(0.03-0.10)	<0.001	2.41(1.50-3.86)	0.105	0.05(0.02-0.13)	<0.001
Intercept 4 5	0.52(0.40-0.68)	0.368	13.32(10.79-16.43)	<0.001	0.42(0.24-0.71)	0.175
Gender [Male]	0.87(0.43-1.88)	0.720	1.04(0.57-1.90)	0.887	0.39(0.20-0.76)	0.006
Acquisition of Italian [It. L1]	0.96(0.29-2.77)	0.943	1.94(0.87-4.39)	0.108	1.13(0.42-2.90)	0.796
Bilingualism [Yes]	1.21(0.68-2.23)	0.527	0.65(0.41-1.04)	0.074	0.85(0.50-1.46)	0.555
Number of languages studied	1.04(0.80-1.35)	0.785	1.19(0.97-1.47)	0.098	0.87(0.68-1.10)	0.240
Daily usage L2 [Yes]	1.76(1.08-2.93)	0.026	1.22(0.82-1.83)	0.335	1.68(1.06-2.68)	0.028
Usage of dialect [Yes]	0.90(0.56-1.45)	0.676	0.96(0.66-1.40)	0.831	1.08(0.70-1.67)	0.737
Motivation coefficient	1.03(0.89-1.19)	0.691	0.99(0.88-1.11)	0.898	0.96(0.83-1.09)	0.511
Observations	367		367		367	
R ² Nagelkerke	0.061		0.089		0.085	

Table 4 Regression analysis summary for Likert items B10-B12

Predictors	B10		B11		B12	
	Odds Ratios	p	Odds Ratios	p	Odds Ratios	p
Intercept 1 2	0.07(0.04-0.13)	<0.001	0.08(0.04-0.14)	<0.001	0.01(0.01-0.03)	<0.001
Intercept 2 3	0.48(0.21-1.11)	0.194	0.34(0.15-0.78)	0.056	0.06(0.02-0.17)	<0.001
Intercept 3 4	2.28(1.43-3.63)	0.136	1.25(0.80-1.96)	0.684	0.35(0.21-0.60)	0.121
Intercept 4 5	13.66(11.01-16.95)	<0.001	5.80(4.70-7.15)	0.002	1.37(1.07-1.76)	0.634
Gender [Male]	0.95(0.52-1.72)	0.858	1.23(0.67-2.26)	0.509	0.59(0.31-1.15)	0.115
Acquisition of Italian [It. L1]	1.65(0.72-3.76)	0.236	0.65(0.29-1.49)	0.311	0.83(0.28-2.25)	0.722
Bilingualism [Yes]	0.93(0.58-1.47)	0.743	1.30(0.83-2.03)	0.253	1.03(0.61-1.79)	0.908
Number of languages studied	1.22(0.98-1.51)	0.071	0.90(0.73-1.11)	0.348	1.33(1.04-1.71)	0.025
Daily usage L2 [Yes]	1.18(0.79-1.78)	0.414	1.08(0.73-1.59)	0.698	1.46(0.92-2.32)	0.107
Usage of dialect [Yes]	1.22(0.84-1.80)	0.300	2.00(1.37-2.93)	<0.001	0.91(0.59-1.41)	0.684
Motivation coefficient	1.08(0.97-1.22)	0.170	0.88(0.78-0.98)	0.025	1.07(0.93-1.23)	0.325
Observations	367		367		367	
R ² Nagelkerke	0.077		0.098		0.081	

Table 5 Regression analysis summary for Likert items B13-B14

Predictors	B13		B14	
	Odds Ratios	p	Odds Ratios	p
Intercept 1 2	0.09(0.05-0.16)	<0.001	0.29(0.16-0.54)	0.031
Intercept 2 3	0.46(0.21-1.02)	0.150	1.04(0.43-2.49)	0.951
Intercept 3 4	1.66(1.04-2.65)	0.341	3.66(2.29-5.84)	0.024
Intercept 4 5	6.15(4.99-7.58)	0.001	16.79(13.58-20.76)	<0.001
Gender [Male]	1.13(0.64-2.01)	0.671	1.04(0.56-1.93)	0.896
Acquisition of Italian [It. L1]	0.80(0.36-1.77)	0.583	0.61(0.26-1.48)	0.270
Bilingualism [Yes]	1.28(0.80-2.03)	0.305	0.71(0.44-1.13)	0.151
Number of languages studied	1.13(0.92-1.40)	0.238	1.03(0.83-1.27)	0.791
Daily usage L2 [Yes]	1.39(0.93-2.08)	0.110	0.67(0.45-0.99)	0.047
Usage of dialect [Yes]	1.12(0.77-1.64)	0.543	1.14(0.77-1.67)	0.516
Motivation coefficient	1.09(0.97-1.23)	0.142	0.90(0.79-1.01)	0.077
Observations	365		365	
R ² Nagelkerke	0.095		0.072	

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