Attitudes to English-English Accents: An Examination of Their Formation

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Abstract

This project examines the formation of accent attitudes, focusing on the generation of attitudinal lexicon, the components comprising accent attitudes, the attitude holders' awareness of those components, as well as the social construction of accent overall. Sociolinguistics studies have extensively investigated what the attitudes toward accents are (e.g. friendly-unfriendly and intelligent-unintelligent) (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Giles, 1970), but the factors that participate in the formation of accent attitudes have not been thoroughly investigated.

The project uses minimally restrictive techniques in an attempt to elicit novel scalar accent-evaluative adjectives within the sociolinguistic context of the UK. Those adjectives are then used in evaluative scales of subsequent studies. The accents under examination are Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Standard. Along with the collected evaluative adjectives, the project uses written messages to determine whether accent attitudes are formed based on cognition (knowledge/beliefs) or affect (emotions/feelings). The written messages contain accent-attitudinal discursive elements from media like newspapers to test whether the argument that media meta-language influences accent ideology (Mugglestone, 2007) is reflected in the data. The participants' meta-attitudinal awareness of the contextual formative influences on their own accent attitudes, inclusive of the written messages and evaluative adjectives, is examined through semi-structured interviews. In the context of the aforementioned studies, the social construction of accent and the use of the term 'accentism' are discussed.

Results show that accent attitudes seem to be formed socio-contextually. Particularly, the use of minimally restrictive elicitation techniques (contextual influence) prompted the emergence of novel accent-attitudinal lexicon. Further, media meta-language appeared to have an impact on accent attitudes, as the media-like messages significantly affected the attitudes to the varieties: the attitudes to the Standard accent were significantly influenced by the cognitive messages and adjectives, and the attitudes to the Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, and Newcastle accents were significantly influenced by the affective messages and adjectives. The more knowledge-based attitudes to the Standard accent can find direct parallels to the standardist ideology in education, a knowledge-based domain. In turn, the participants were aware of the influence of the messages, the adjectives, and other socio-contextual factors, such as collective accent attitudes and personal relationships, on their accent attitudes. As these results support the social construction of accent attitudes (e.g. Giles, Bourhis, Trudgill & Lewis, 1974), the features that make accent itself a social construct (akin to ability, gender, and race, among others) are scrutinised, and more frequent use of the term 'accentism' (akin to ableism, genderism, and racism, among others) by sociolinguists is advocated to increase public awareness regarding that form of discrimination. The findings of this project contribute to our understanding of how accent attitudes are formed (i.e. based on cognitive and affective, contextual and social sources) and, by extension, how accentist attitudes are formed, which can advance the public recognition and problematisation of accentism.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Copyright Statement

Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Background

This project developed from an interest in examining how accent attitudes are formed. From the 1960s onward, much sociolinguistic research has focused on reporting what the attitudes toward different accent/language varieties are (Brown, Giles, & Thakerar, 1985; Campbell-Kibler, 2010; Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Giles 1970; Hall-Lew & Stephens, 2012; Kristiansen, 1998; Lampropoulou & Cooper, 2021; Thorne, 2005; Watson & Clark, 2015), but the way accent attitudes are formed remains largely unexplored. Since the 19th century, the field of social psychology has been instrumental in our understanding of attitudes (see Allport, 1935) and, due to its importance in attitudinal research, this project was initiated by an investigation into the ways social psychologists have scrutinised and conceptualised the formation of attitudes over the years. This investigation, in turn, informed the early objectives of my sociolinguistic research into the formation of accent attitudes. In what follows, I discuss attitudinal theories and methods in social psychology and link them to the accent-attitudinal theories and methods in sociolinguistics.

Attitudes, which are defined in this project as evaluations toward an attitude object (Fazio, 2007; Haddock & Maio, 2004; Potter, 1998), have been analysed in social psychology through the tripartite model, which posits that an attitude toward an object is formed based on one, two, or all three of the following parts: cognition, affect, and/or behaviour (Eagly & Chaiken, 2014; Haddock & Zanna, 1998a; Katz, 1960). Researchers have used various words to describe these three components (e.g. Crites, Fabrigar & Petty, 1994; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). Specifically, cognition has been described as the thoughts, beliefs, or knowledge about an attitude object; affect has been described as the emotions or feelings toward an attitude object; and behaviour has been described as the past, present, or intended actions toward an attitude object. The cognitive part of an attitude is associated with information about the attitude object, while the affective part of an attitude is associated with the emotions of the attitude holder or the emotional attributes of the attitude object. Unlike the purely mental nature of the cognitive and affective attitudinal components, the behavioural component has been treated as both mental and physical. Particularly, past and intended behaviours are mental processes in that the former is, essentially, memories of past actions toward an object, while the latter is predictions of

future actions. Present actions, on the other hand, constitute the physical part of behaviour. As Eagly and Chaiken suggest “past behavior […] affects behavior […] by contributing to intentions, which subsequently guide behavior” (p. 760). In other words, past, present, and future actions toward an object form the behaviour toward that object. And while past, present, and future thoughts and feelings toward an object may also influence the formation of one another, they do so at a purely mental level.

The three attitudinal components can be illustrated through the following example: while reading a book, the reader evaluates it as ‘exciting’ and ‘useful’, and considers recommending it to a friend. The evaluation ‘exciting’ contains an affective element. In other words, the book prompts the reader to feel excited. On the other hand, the evaluation ‘useful’ does not consist of an affective element but, instead, refers to an information-based attribute of the book. Its usefulness may prompt a positive affective evaluation in the reader, such as a feeling of satisfaction due to having read a ‘useful’ book, but the evaluation ‘useful’ itself does not allude to the feelings of the reader. Further, the reader purchased the book before reading it. The purchase of the book is a past action toward the book, the reading of it a present action, and the possible recommendation to a friend an intended action. Due to the mental-physical duality of the behavioural components of attitudes and the difficulties associated with measuring behaviour holistically (i.e. past, present, *and* intended), the present project focuses only on the two mental components of attitudes.

It is worth noting that the two adjectives used in the tripartite example above, i.e. exciting and useful, were not picked at random. Instead, they were picked based on their high affective and high cognitive scores in the *Evaluative Lexicon 2.0* (*EL 2.0*) database which was created by psychologists Rocklage, Rucker, and Nordgren (2018). The *EL 2.0* contains the emotionality, valence, and extremity ratings of over 1.500 English words. These words were gathered from over 9 million online reviews written on Amazon, TripAdvisor, and Yelp across a decade; 1 million tweets; and over 10,000 U.S. movie and TV scripts from 1900 to 2007. The words’ emotionality, valence, and extremity were rated by more than 600 native-English speakers. The ratings range from 0.00 to 9.00. Cognitive adjectives have an emotionality score below the midpoint, and affective adjectives have an emotionality score above the midpoint. Positive adjectives have a valence score above the midpoint, and

negative adjectives below the midpoint. Extreme adjectives have a valence score far from the midpoint, and non-extreme adjectives have a valence score close to the midpoint.

A plethora of social-psychological studies have compared the contribution of cognition and affect to attitude formation (Haddock & Zanna, 1998b; Lavine, Thompsen, Zanna & Borgida; 1998). Depending on the attitude object, on certain characteristics of the attitude holders, and/or on the attitude valence (positive and/or negative), findings suggest that one of the two components contributes more to attitude formation, or that both components contribute equally. For instance, attitudes toward snakes, literature, and maths are based more on affect (Crites et al., 1994), and attitudes toward marijuana and alcohol are based more on affect among experienced users of the substances (Simons & Carey, 1998). On the other hand, attitudes toward capital punishment are based more on cognition (Crites et al., 1994), or on either cognition or affect depending on whether the participants are "thinkers" or "feelers", respectively, i.e. whether they place more emphasis on thoughts or feelings in their everyday evaluative decisions (Haddock & Zanna, 1998b, p. 329). Moreover, attitudes toward presidential candidates are based more on affect when the participants' thoughts and feelings are ambivalent or on both components when their thoughts and feelings are univalent (Lavine et al., 1998). In other words, if the participants have *both* positive and negative thoughts as well as *both* positive and negative feelings (ambivalence) toward presidential candidates, their feelings contribute more than their thoughts in their attitudes toward the candidates. On the other hand, if the participants have positive *or* negative thoughts and feelings (univalence), their thoughts and feelings contribute equally to their attitudes toward the candidates. Lastly, attitudes toward the church are both cognitive and affective (Crites et al., 1994).

The contrast between cognitive and affective attitude formation in social-psychological research led to sociolinguistic literature that has measured the contribution of one of the attitudinal components, affect, on accent attitudes. Specifically, affect has been operationalised as the following emotion-inducing stimuli: white noise in Standard American English (SAE) recordings and non-standard Spanish-accented English recordings (Sebastian, Ryan, Keogh & Schmidt, 1980); white noise in SAE recordings and non-standard Punjabi English recordings (Dragojevic & Giles, 2016); aggressive speech in SAE recordings and (dis)fluent non-standard Japanese-accented English recordings (Cargile & Giles, 1997); mild

and heavy accent strength in non-standard Mandarin- and Punjabi-accented English recordings (Dragojevic, Giles, Beck & Tatum, 2017); and arguments for or against the English Only Movement in the USA in SAE and Hispanic-accented English recordings (Giles, Williams, Mackie & Rosselli, 1995).

Besides Cargile and Giles (1997) who found that the presence of the affective stimuli (aggressive and disfluent speech) did not significantly alter the attitudes toward any of the two accents, the rest of the studies found that the participants' influenced emotions played a significant role in their accent attitudes, but in differing ways. Sebastian et al. (1980) found that affective stimulus (white noise) significantly influenced the listeners' accent attitudes overall, but did not prompt significant differences between the attitudes toward the two accents. On the contrary, Dragojevic, Giles, Beck, and Tatum (2017) found that their affective stimulus (accent strength) influenced the listeners' attitudes toward the two non-standard accents. Similarly, Dragojevic and Giles (2016) found that their affect-inducing stimulus (white noise) significantly influenced the attitudes toward the non-standard accent and not the standard one, as opposed to Giles et al. (1995) who found that their affective stimuli significantly influenced the attitudes toward the standard accent and not the non-standard one. Overall, then, accent-attitudinal literature shows that affect plays a significant role in accent attitudes and, in some cases, it elicits an evaluative dichotomy between standard and non-standard accent varieties.

To my knowledge, there has been one theoretical account that compares the impact of cognition and affect in language attitudes. Cargile, Giles, Ryan, and Bradac (1994) argued that, at times, language attitudes "may be largely, or even entirely, affective in nature" because if a variety is not identifiable by the listener, they will be unable to have thoughts it, so their attitudes toward it will not be cognitive, but they will still have an emotional reaction to it (p. 222). In other words, the hearer will not be able to evaluate information-based attributes of the variety, but they may affectively evaluate it as irritating or pleasant. While Cargile et al.'s (1994) theoretical account considers both components, their discussion on the comparison between the impact of cognition and affect on language attitudes is limited to the listener's ability to identify the variety, and it could be argued that, even when a variety is unidentifiable by the listener, they may (sub)consciously discern certain phonetic

features that they recognise from their own variety, or from another known variety, and cognitively evaluate them.

Due to the experimental lack of comparison between the contribution of affect and cognition on accent attitudes, this project initially set out to examine whether the formation of attitudes toward accents is based more on cognition, or on affect, or on both components equally. To operationalise cognition and affect and, subsequently, be able to measure their impact on attitudes toward accents, I investigated the methods used in social psychology. The reason for investigating social psychological methodologies instead of sociolinguistic methodologies was twofold: firstly, the aforementioned sociolinguistic studies did not compare the role of affect in accent attitude formation to the role of cognition, and secondly, they largely used affective stimuli that were not relevant to accent attitudes themselves (e.g. white noise). In contrast, social psychological studies compared the contribution of the two attitudinal components using cognition- and affect-inducing stimuli in the form of written cognitive and affective messages, which can be rendered relevant to accent attitudes. Specifically, social psychological researchers induced positive/negative cognitive and positive/negative affective attitudes toward unknown, novel, or fictional objects, and then examined the attitudes toward those objects through cognitive and affective word-choice tasks or evaluative scales with cognitive and affective adjectival labels, such as beneficial-harmful and delightful-saddening, respectively (e.g. Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). The novel objects included Chinese ideographs for participants who did not know Chinese, a new beverage (Edwards, 1990), and lemphurs, a fictitious animal (Crites et al., 1994; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). The induction of cognitive or affective attitudes toward those objects occurred through priming, which involves the presentation of a prime stimulus in order to influence the perception of a target stimulus (Cameron, Brown-Iannuzzi & Payne, 2012). The expectation was that the cognitive (or affective) prime stimulus would prompt cognitive (or affective) scalar or word-choice evaluations.

The prime stimuli in those studies often took the form of explicit (supraliminal/conscious) cognitive or affective written messages, about the target stimuli, i.e. one of the novel attitude objects (Crites et al., 1994; Edwards, 1990; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). Since they have been frequently used in studies, the

lemphurs are a useful example of a target stimulus through which the cognitive and affective priming messages can be gauged. The cognitive messages about the fictitious animal were in “the form of an encyclopedia entry” containing “a brief description of the animal as well as information concerning its habitat, behavior, diet, and reproduction”, while the affective messages comprised “little factual information about the animal” and were instead “in the form of a short narrative” about “an encounter with the animal” presented as a “vivid series of events” (Crites et al. 1994, p. 630). In other words, the cognitive messages contained information about the animal in a clinical manner, whereas the affective messages contained personal stories.

The cognitive positive messages described the lemphurs as: “swift and graceful swimmers” (Crites et al. 1994, p. 630), as “remarkably adaptive animals” that “can be found in ocean waters as far north as Alaska and as far south as Antarctica”, as “social animals” that “closely care for their offspring”, which helps them “survive to adulthood” (Haddock, Maio, Arnold & Huskinson, 2008, p. 773), and as “a source of material for both clothing products and nutrition” (Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). On the other hand, the affective positive messages described a swimmer “frolicking” (Crites et al. 1994, p. 630; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015, p. 218) and “soaring through the water” with the animal (Rocklage & Fazio, 2015, p. 218), and they also included the narrator’s first-person perspective as well as their positive evaluation of their experience with the animal: “a beautiful sound that reminded me of a kitten’s purr” and “truly an amazing experience with the most wonderful animal” (Haddock et al., 2008, p. 773).

In contrast to the positive messages, the cognitive negative messages described the animals as “slow and ungainly swimmers” (Crites et al. 1994, p. 630); with “unpredictable temperament in the wild” and an “adverse impact on the fishing industry” (Fabrigar & Petty, 1999, pp. 375-376), as they “tend to deplete fish near coastal communities that are dependent on fishing” (Rocklage & Fazio, 2015, p. 217). The cognitive negative messages also mentioned that “products derived from lemphurs are extremely expensive” and “high in cholesterol” (Fabrigar & Petty, 1999, pp. 376). The affective negative messages, on the other hand, recounted “a graphic description” of the animal “hunting, brutally killing, and then eating a swimmer” (Fabrigar & Petty, 1999, pp. 375), inclusive of the mutilation and dismemberment of the swimmer (Rocklage & Fazio, 2015, p. 218).

These studies found that the cognitive messages primed the cognitive evaluative tasks more than the affective ones, while the affective messages primed the affective evaluative tasks more than the cognitive ones. In other words, the participants who were exposed to the cognitive (or affective) message, and thus, whose attitudes were primed by, or based on, cognition (or affect), chose more cognitive (or affective) words to evaluate the attitude object (Crites et al., 1994; Edwards, 1990; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). Thus, the participants whose attitudes were cognitive (or affective) provided cognitive (or affective) attitudinal evaluations, which indicates that the influence of priming stimuli can point to the basis of an attitude toward an object. The rich literature on the cognitive and affective attitudinal bases, thus, informed the cognitive and affective structure of the priming messages in my project, and provided a standardised rating system, *EL 2.0*, from which to draw the cognitive and affective scores of the scalar adjectives I would use to examine accent attitudes.

It should be noted that the aforementioned affect-inducing, accent-attitudinal studies also used priming, albeit without naming it as such, since they examined whether exposure to a prime stimulus (e.g. white noise) would influence the perception of a target stimulus (i.e. the accents). In fact, priming has been thematised in numerous occasions in sociolinguistics without being named. In their study, Giles, Bourhis, Trudgill, and Lewis (1974) found that, because the British participants had not been exposed to societal attitudes toward two unknown, recorded Greek accents they were asked to rate, they were unable to differentiate between them. Consequently, contrary to the inherent value hypothesis, according to which language varieties are evaluated based on innate language features, Giles et al. (1974) validated the imposed norm hypothesis, which posits that language varieties contain no inherent features and are instead evaluated based on social norms. In other words, exposure to social norms (prime stimulus) influences the perception of accents (target stimulus).

In conjunction, mass media, such as the television, the radio, and newspapers have often been considered to be the conduits through which meta-linguistic, accent-attitudinal discourse is circulated among, and in turn, re-produced and internalised by, the wider public (Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Dragojevic, Mastro, Giles & Sink, 2016; Milroy, 2001; Milroy & Milroy, 2012; Mugglestone, 2007). Mass media may influence accent attitudes through the

exclusion or inclusion of certain accents in the media, or through the association of television characters and radio shows with specific accents (Coupland, 2009). For instance, working-class characters in soap operas set in the north of England tend to be associated with non-standard accents, popular radio show hosts with non-standard accents, and serious radio show hosts with standard accents (Coupland, 2009). Even outside the British context, similar situations have been described. On Danish radio, for example, presenters with non-standard accents are allocated to "'less serious' sections of weather forecast and sport" (Kristiansen, 2004, p. 115). Associations between accents and specific types of characters/shows as well as the overall exclusion or inclusion of certain accents in the media may prime accent attitudes implicitly (subliminally/subconsciously). The continuous exposure of audience members to non-standard-accented, northern-English characters, for instance, may subconsciously influence their attitudes toward northern-English accents. However, accent attitudes may also be consciously influenced through explicit accent-attitudinal meta-discourse appearing in media such as newspapers, illustrated by the following British newspaper article titles:

- Brummie accents rated as least intelligent (Rosemary Bennet, *The Times*, 13 January 2015)
- Essex and London accents deemed less intelligent, researchers find (Laurence Cawley, *BBC News*, 10 January 2021)
- Scousers have the 'least intelligent and least trustworthy' accent – while Devonians have the friendliest (Victoria Woolaston, *Mail Online*, 26 September 2013)

These three article titles contain numerous accent-attitudinal features. In Woolaston (2013), for instance, there is no verbal marker for indirect speech, making the evaluation seem factual, unlike Bennet (2015) and Cawley (2021) where the verbs "rated" and "deemed" are used, respectively. While Woolaston marks direct speech through the quotation marks, the title does not contain the author of the attitude, while Cawley's title contains the discursive hedge, "researchers find", thus marking the source of the attitude. These features indirectly contribute to the already-explicit accent attitudes contained in the evaluative words 'intelligent' and 'trustworthy. Interestingly, these articles were written

over a period of 8 years and they all report on different studies examining attitudes toward different accents (Birmingham, Essex and London, and Liverpool), but they all contain the same adjectival evaluation, less/least 'intelligent'. This example of consistent public circulation of the same evaluative adjective for different accents prompted me to consider the scalar adjectives I would use in this project to examine the cognitive and affective bases of accent attitudes. Particularly, I considered the potential lexical priming (Rocklage & Fazio, 2015) that attitude holders may undergo when they are repeatedly exposed to the same evaluative lexicon; i.e. a reader who is exposed to the same word being used to evaluate four different accents – regardless of the intensifiers preceding the word and, thus, modifying its valence (e.g. 'most intelligent' vs 'least intelligent') – may increase their use of that word in their own evaluations of accents.

Since these newspapers were reporting on sociolinguistic studies, I investigated the ways scalar-adjectival lexicon has been collected in accent-attitudinal sociolinguistic studies. This investigation gave rise to study 1, whose function was twofold: first, it served as an adjective-elicitation study, allowing me to collect the cognitive and affective adjectives needed to examine the aforementioned cognitive and/or affective formation of accent attitudes (study 2); secondly, it reviewed the adjective-elicitation techniques that have been used in sociolinguistics over the years and modified some of their features to assess their influence on the (lexical) formation of accent attitudes.

Early accent-attitudinal studies did not tend to conduct studies to collect the adjectives used in evaluative scales, as can be seen in Giles (1970), Lambert, Giles, and Picard (1975), Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, and Fillenbaum (1960), Sebastian, Ryan, Keogh, and Schmidt (1980), and Strongman and Woosley (1967). Instead, the scales and their adjectival labels were constructed by the researchers themselves or were occasionally borrowed from other studies; e.g. Giles (1971) and Giles, Baker, and Fielding (1975) borrowed Strongman and Woosley's (1967) scales. In the 1980s, Zahn and Hopper (1985) created a 'universal' evaluative scale based on a meta-analysis of scalar items in prior studies, including many of the aforementioned ones. This universal scale was, in turn, used in subsequent studies (e.g. Dixon, Mahoney & Cocks, 2002). While Zahn and Hopper (1985) produced a standardised evaluative vocabulary, the scalar items included in their meta-analysis originated from researcher-made or borrowed evaluative discourse. In more recent

years, researcher-made scales tend to be avoided, but researchers often borrow lexicon from prior studies due to its evaluative significance over the years (e.g. Fabricius, 2006; Watson & Clark, 2015).

When preliminary studies are conducted to gather the evaluative scalar lexicon, the most common elicitation tasks ask participants to write a certain number of adjectives (usually, three to five) (e.g. Grondelaers & Van Gent, 2019) or to choose a certain number of adjectives from an already-formed list, whose content usually comes from prior studies (e.g. Hiraga, 2005). Such evaluative prompts influence the formation of accent attitudes since they limit the participants' output to a specific number of monolectic adjectival words. As such, exposure to lexically-restrictive prompts can prime the participants' perception of the accents since such prompts specify what words are 'allowed' to be used to evaluate the accents. Similarly, the phrasing of the evaluative prompt can prime the participants' attitudes toward accents when an attitude object is specified. Typically, accent-attitudinal prompt contain 'accent' or 'speaker' as the attitude object (e.g. 'is the speaker/accent friendly?'). The phrasing of evaluative prompts is especially important as it has been shown to influence responses (Loftus & Palmer, 1974), and in the case of 'the speaker' as an attitude object, it is unknowable which aspect of the speaker's performance is being evaluated (e.g. tone, pitch, accent, or a combination) as the participants are not able to specify their attitude objects themselves. Therefore, accent evaluations may be primed due to the limited lexical choices offered to the evaluators and/or due to the specified attitude objects in the prompt.

Not only are non-linguist participants in sociolinguistic studies influenced by the limiting prompts, but linguists themselves may also be primed by the constant exposure to the same evaluative lexes appearing in prior studies. This, coupled with the aforementioned public accent-attitudinal discourse, leads to potentially substantial lexical priming of accent attitudes for both linguists and non-linguists. I argue that, by priming the participants' accent evaluations with more minimal restrictions, new evaluative lexicon may emerge, thus, foregrounding the influence of scalar-elicitation techniques on (lexical) accent-attitude formation. The minimal restrictions I employed in this study were an unspecified attitude object in the evaluative prompt and an open-ended question format.

With study 1 examining the lexical formation of accent attitudes and collecting the cognitive/affective adjectives for the scales of study 2, and study 2 itself examining the cognitive and affective components of accent attitudes through cognitive/affective priming messages and cognitive/affective adjectival scales, I became interested in exploring whether non-linguists are aware of the lexical, cognitive, and/or affective elements that may influence the formation of their accent attitudes. This gave rise to study 3, which investigated the ways in which a portion of participants from study 2 discursively constructed the factors that influence their scalar accent evaluations.

As aforementioned, non-linguistic or folkloristic attitudes toward accents have been a frequent subject of examination in sociolinguistics. The two main ways of investigating accent attitudes have been scalar (quantitative) and discursive (qualitative). In scalar studies, participants are exposed to recordings and/or labels of different accents (e.g. 'Liverpool accent'), followed by numerical adjectival scales on which they accents are evaluated (Bishop et al., 2005; Brown, Giles, & Thakerar, 1985; Campbell-Kibler, 2010; Giles 1970; Kristiansen, 1998; Lambert et al., 1960; McKenzie & Carrie, 2018; Speelman, Spruyt, Impe & Geeraerts, 2014). A common finding in these studies is that the standard accents gather, overall, more positive evaluations than non-standard ones (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Dixon & Mahoney, 2004; Dixon, Mahoney & Cocks, 2002; Giles, 1970; Giles, Baker & Fielding, 1975; Hiraga, 2005; Watson & Clark, 2015). This finding is in accordance with the aforementioned affect-inducing sociolinguistic studies since the dichotomy between standard and non-standard accent attitudes is thematised in both types of studies. Therefore, the standard-nonstandard accent dichotomy permeates sociolinguistic research, regardless the exact type of accent-attitudinal examination (e.g. attitudinal vs. affect-inducing attitudinal).

Besides scalar attitudinal studies, discourse-based studies tend to examine the meta-language of non-linguists (Bucholtz, Bermudez, Fung, Vargas & Edwards, 2008; Campbell-Johnstone & Kiesling, 2008; Kibler, 2012; Lampropoulou & Cooper, 2021; Rodgers, 2016). In other words, they examine how non-linguists describe and discuss (Graedler, 2014), or qualitatively evaluate, accents. Hall-Lew and Stephens (2012), for instance, looked at how residents on the border of Texas and Oklahoma conceptualise Texoman 'Country Talk', of which they see themselves as speakers, and found that it is associated with notions of

rurality. Cooper (2009) examined non-linguists' meta-language concerning Yorkshire English, and found that one Yorkshire accent in particular, Barnsley, is described (and performed) as the broadest and most distinct Yorkshire accent. Usually, in discoursal studies, one variety/dialect is the focus, as opposed to the comparative nature of scalar studies where the evaluations of various accents are contrasted with each other and an evaluative hierarchy is constructed by the researchers, from the highest to the lowest evaluations.

While scalar and discoursal studies provide insight into a non-linguist's attitudes, i.e. how they evaluate a variety, they do not provide insight into a non-linguist's meta-attitudes, i.e. how they evaluate their own evaluations of a variety. Most discourse-based studies contain a portion of meta-attitudinal discourse where the participants justify or explain their own evaluative statements, but the participants are not explicitly asked to consider their attitudes in order to deliberate about them, nor are the interviews preceded by scalar accent evaluations, about which the participants can deliberate during the interview. Following the folk linguistics tradition of examining non-linguists' awareness and accounts of accents, i.e. whether non-linguists are aware of phonetic varieties and features and how they talk about them when aware (Niedzielski & Preston, 1999; Preston, 1996; Preston, 2019), study 3 expands this project's investigation into the formation of accent attitudes by exploring the ways in which non-linguists discuss and/or justify the formation of their own scalar accent evaluations (as submitted in study 2). By shedding light on the ways in which non-linguists conceptualise the factors that contribute to the formation of their accent attitudes, much can be learned about the way accent attitudes are (perceived to be) formed.

Study 1, therefore, investigates the lexes used in accent attitudinal discourse. Study 2 investigates the cognitive and/or affective elements of accent attitudes, and study 3 the participants' awareness of the factors that contribute to the formation of their own accent attitudes. From the (perceived) formation of accent attitudes in studies 1-3, the last study of this project, study 4, discusses the formation of accent attitudes as well as accent itself. To my knowledge, descriptions of accent as a social construct within sociolinguistics (e.g. Planchenault & Poljak's, 2021, p. 1) tend to include investigations of the social construction of accent *attitudes* (Brown & Lambert, 1976; Giles, Bourhis & Davies, 1979; Lippi-Green, 2012; Mugglestone, 2007) rather than the social construction of *accent* itself. In study 4, I

discuss the features that render accent a social construct and argue that accent should be thematised as a social construct more frequently within sociolinguistics. Since sociolinguistic studies are often reported in newspapers, like the aforementioned ones (Bennet, 2015; Cawley, 2021; Woolaston, 2013), the treatment of accent as a social construct by sociolinguists can create a parallel between accent and other social categories which are already perceived as socially constructed in parts of public discourse, like ability, age, gender, race, and sexuality (e.g. Baldy, 2021; Gray, 2020). Consequently, public awareness of accent as a social construct could increase. In conjunction, I advocate for the regular use of the term 'accentism' in attitudinal sociolinguistic studies so as to also raise awareness of that form of discrimination – which is not as widely unacceptable as other forms of discrimination like ableism, ageism, racism, sexism, and bi/homo/transphobia (Kinzler, 2021; Milroy, 2007). Study 4, therefore, thematises the social contribution and impact of this project by focusing on the formation of accent(ism).

Due to the fact that studies 1-4 investigate different aspects of accent (attitude) formation and utilise different prior research and methodologies, this project has been structured in journal format, with each study being presented separately in chapter 2. Despite the separate presentation of the studies, each one contains explicit links connecting its content and findings to the rest. The studies in chapter 2 appear in the following order: (study 1) accent-attitudinal scalar lexicon elicitation; (study 2) cognitive and affective accent attitudes; (study 3) folkloristic accent meta-attitudes; (study 4) the social construction of accent(ism). In what follows, I discuss the methodology of the project in detail (section 2), followed by an overview of the project (section 3), the studies themselves (chapter 2), and my conclusions about the project as well as future directions (chapter 3).

2. Methodology

2.1 Pilot Study: Accent Recordings

This study provided the accent recordings used in subsequent studies. Vocal accents (i.e. recordings) over conceptual accents (i.e. labels like 'Liverpool accent') were used for evaluation (see Giles, 1970, for examples of both) to increase the natural validity of subsequent experiments, as non-linguists arguably hear accents more often than they hear or read *about* accents. In other words, hearing non-linguists listen to the speech of different

speakers daily, but they do not hear or read explicit meta-linguistic discourse about accents as frequently.

2.1a Procedure

The study was advertised at The University of Manchester via email which listed the eligibility criteria (see section 2.1b) and asked the volunteers to confirm those criteria in their response email. The recordings took place in a sound-attenuated room on a *Zoom H4N Pro* recorder, using a lapel microphone. Upon arrival, the participants were given the study's participant information sheet to read and/or take with them as well as a consent form to sign. The participants were then presented with a short questionnaire which confirmed their eligibility by asking for their gender, age, accent origins, as well as the places where they have resided (along with the length of each residence) and their caretakers' accent origins.

After completing the questionnaire, the participants were presented with the script, which was a telephone conversation between two people (see section 2.1d), and they were asked to pretend they were speaking casually on the phone to someone with whom they feel comfortable enough to use their natural accent, like a friend. The script lines of the fictitious interlocutor were in parentheses, and the lines of the participants were emboldened. The interlocutor's lines were present to semantically de-fragment the dialogue for the participant-speakers. The participants were offered 1-2 minutes to familiarise themselves with the dialogue. Some participants read it in their heads, others articulated it, and a few asked me to step out of the room to rehearse after I had offered to do so. The participants were also informed that they would be recorded two or three times to make sure the recording sounded as natural as possible, and after that, if any lines needed to be uttered again, due to potential misreads, they would be recorded in isolation from the rest of the dialogue, since they could be edited into the rest of the recording.

2.1b Participants

To be eligible, the participants needed to be female, native English speakers, born and raised in England, students at The University of Manchester, between the ages of 18-30. Their accents needed to have originated from specific English cities (see section 3 for the selection of accent varieties), and their caretakers needed to be monolingual (English-

English). The gender type of the speakers was chosen randomly. Further, the study was conducted at The University of Manchester and, as is common in the field (Labov, Ash, Baranowski, Nagy & Ravindranath, 2006; Levon & Buchstaller, 2015; Smarkman, 2012), university students were used to facilitate participation. Consequently, the age range of the participants was picked in conjunction with the study's higher education setting (i.e. young adulthood is a common age category for UK university students). These eligibility criteria allowed for a certain amount of control over some social macro-constructs like gender (female), age (18-30), education (university), educational institution (The University of Manchester), national identity (born and raised in England), accent (English-English), and familial accent influence (monolingual caretakers). The control over these social variables contributed to the speaker-recording technique I employed in this project, i.e. the Verbal Guise Technique (VGT; e.g. Allport & Cantril, 1934), which uses different speakers to record each accent variety; as opposed to the Matched-Guise Technique (MGT; Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner & Fillenbaum, 1960), which uses the same speaker to record all accent varieties. The VGT can reduce a project's internal validity due to the varied features in the speech of different individuals (e.g. variability in speech volume), as those features can influence the way experimental variables are measured (in this case, the way one's accent is evaluated). Therefore, controlling for the aforementioned macro variables counteracted some of the reduction in internal validity. Despite this disadvantage, VGT participants are not asked to mimic a variety that is not their own, which is a rehearsed and demanding activity, so they are able to devote all their efforts to sounding as casual/natural as possible (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2018), which increases a project's ecological validity. Additionally, with the use of the VGT, potential phonetic stereotypes in the performance of various accents by a single speaker (MGT) can be avoided (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2018).

2.1c Accent Selection

Due to the fact that the accent varieties were vocal and not conceptual, in choosing the varieties for evaluation, I considered past studies where attitudes to English-English vocal accents were the focus, in order to have substantial attitudinal background data for this study. I also considered whether my project would examine direct or indirect accent attitudes in order to use the appropriate literature to choose which accents to record. An

accent-attitudinal study is considered direct when the attitude object is clearly mentioned in the study information sheet and/or the evaluative prompt. For instance, 'does the accent sound friendly?' directly refers to the attitude object, the accent. Indirect accent-attitudinal studies, on the other hand, do not make reference to 'accent' at all and, instead, use seemingly unrelated attitude objects. For instance, 'does the speaker sound friendly?' indirectly refers to the attitude object, the accent, as 'the speaker' (see Pharao & Kristiansen, 2019, for a discussion on the in/direct types of language attitudes). The link between accent and speaker is based on the premise that an accent can prompt attitudes about the speaker's personality (Cargile, Giles, Ryan & Bradac, 1994).

I chose to examine indirect accent attitudes for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to test whether minimally restrictive techniques, such as the use of unspecified indirect attitude objects in evaluative prompts, would facilitate the emergence of novel accent-attitudinal lexicon within the context of the UK (study 1). Secondly, direct accent-attitudinal discourse in the cognitive and affective priming messages (study 2) would have prompted the participants to readily realise the influential purpose of the priming messages, thus potentially resulting in inefficient priming. According to Schwarz (2011), when individuals attribute their feelings to secondary sources, they tend not to rely on them. Therefore, by choosing to examine indirect accent attitudes, rather than direct, I endeavoured to avoid the possible lack of affect- or emotion-based attitudes which could have resulted from the participants' suspicion that a secondary stimulus (the written messages), and not the main stimulus (the accents), was responsible for their evaluation of the accents.

Consequently, in subsequent studies (studies 1-3), the information sheets did not mention accents or attitudes at all. Instead, the study's aim was described as the 'collection of auditory-data evaluations'. Further, the evaluative prompts were phrased indirectly, asking the participants: *What are your evaluations of what you just heard?*[1] Instead of a specified indirect attitude object, like the speaker, I chose a completely unspecified indirect object (*what you just heard*) to create as much of a minimally restrictive prompt as possible. The priming messages, too, comprised indirect material in the form of short descriptions of (un)successful telephone interviews with job candidates from specific places in the UK (see

[1] In study 1, instead of evaluations, the word *impressions* is used in the prompt (see more in section 2.2e).

more in section 2.3d), thus implying – without explicitly revealing – that the outcome of the interviews was heavily influenced by the (geographical) accents of the candidates.

Due to the indirect examination of attitudes in this project, then, in deciding the English-English accents for recording and evaluation, it would have been ideal to consider only prior studies that scrutinised indirect, vocal attitudes to English-English accents. However, that would have resulted in the exclusion of direct studies (e.g. Giles, 1970) that included various English-English varieties. Therefore, it was mostly, but not entirely, indirect accent-attitudinal studies that were considered in choosing which accents to record (e.g. Dixon, Mahoney & Cocks, 2002; Giles, 1970; Giles, Baker & Fielding, 1975; Giles & Sassoon, 1983; Hiraga, 2005; Watson & Clark, 2015). Studies which focused on single accents or single evaluative traits (e.g. Thorne, 2005, on the Birmingham accent and guilt) were considered, too.

I looked for the accents with the most extreme evaluations and rankings (highest and lowest), assuming they would carry some of the most salient (noticeable) phonetic features and would, thus, prompt diverse evaluations in this project. In searching for the accents with the highest and lowest attitudes, I considered the general attitudes toward them and not those based on each trait dimension (aesthetic/attractiveness/solidarity, status/prestige, dynamism, and other such factorial groups), since this project ran its own scalar elicitation study with cognitive and affective dimensions in mind (study 1). The highest-ranking varieties, in general, were the standard ones, or in the UK setting, what many researchers call 'Received Pronunciation' (RP; e.g. Giles, 1970), or the Cambridge variety in Watson and Clark (2015), who described it as their "the standard guise" (p. 46) and the closest variety in their sample pool to Standard Southern British English.

Opposite the standard varieties stand the Birmingham, Liverpool, Newcastle, and London (Cockney) accents as the most lowly-rated varieties. The Manchester accent has not generally been ranked at the scalar extremities, but it was added to this project because, phonetically, it is treated as north-west midlands, according to Hughes, Trudgill, and Watt (2013).[2] Therefore, Manchester and Birmingham, which they categorise as north-west and

[2] Hughes et al. (2013) do not explicitly justify why Manchester is grouped under 'north-west midlands', but at the same time, there is no other option for Manchester, as there is no 'north-west' category in their list of subdivisions of north and south England (p. 70). One of the features that they describe as shared among Manchester and Birmingham seems to be a potential reason as to why they categorise Manchester and

west midlands, respectively, represented the midlands accent group in this project. Newcastle and Liverpool represented the north accent group (north-east and Merseyside, respectively), and London (Cockney) represented the south accent group. In total, the accent varieties selected for this project were six: Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Standard.[3]

I use the term 'standard' instead of 'RP' in this project to refer to the normative English variety in my accent pool. This is done in order to encompass concepts relevant to the folk-sociolinguistic scape of the United Kingdom, such as RP itself, queen's English, correct, posh, proper, supraregional, and accentless. 'Non-standard', on the other hand, is associated with concepts such as regional and foreign, although foreign accents are not relevant in this project. There are several reasons for using the term 'standard' to encompass these notions. Firstly and most importantly, the standard-nonstandard accent dichotomy has been prevalent in accent-attitudinal sociolinguistics studies, as aforementioned (see section 1). Many accent-attitudinal researchers have (in)directly promoted this dichotomy by referring to the normative variety in their accent pool as 'standard' and the non-normative varieties as 'non-standard', and ultimately, by framing their study and results based on this dichotomy (e.g. Cargile & Giles, 1997; Watson & Clark, 2015). As such, some of the expectations and hypotheses in this project were formed based on the standard-nonstandard accent binary (see section 3), thus encouraging my use of the term 'standard' over the term 'RP'.

Secondly, the standard English accent has been directly synonymised with RP; e.g. "Standard accents, such as Standard British English (i.e., also called the 'Queen's accent,' 'BBC accent,' and in the literature 'Received Pronunciation accent' or RP) […]" (Fuertes, Gottdiener, Martin, Gilbert & Giles, 2012). In conjunction, there have been various theoretical discussions and experimental studies linking standardness, RP, correctness, poshness, and prestige (Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Milroy, 2007; Mugglestone, 2007; Watson & Clark, 2015). Some of these associations are also reflected in qualitative

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Birmingham as (north-west and west) midlands. That feature is the velar nasal plus: <ng> as [ŋg] in words like <long>.

[3] To differentiate, when referring to the project's speaker accent, the word is capitalised ('Standard accent'). In general references to the accent and in references to the standard-accented listeners, lower case is used ('standard accent').

evaluations in this project, in study 1 (see chapter 2, study 1, section 4.4), study 2 (see chapter 2, study 2, section 3.7), and study 3 (see chapter 2, study 3, section 4.3). In these sections, the participants use "posh",[4] "middle class", "upper class", "received pronunciation", "RP", "queen's English", "neutral", "generic", and/or "plain" to evaluate either their own accent or the Standard accent recordings. Consequently, the third reason I am using 'standard' is to establish an umbrella term for the notions which are used by the non-linguist participants in this project and which include "RP" and "received pronunciation", but not 'standard'. In other words, the fact that the non-linguist listeners in this project do not use the term 'standard', while using the term 'RP' alongside other inter-related evaluations, renders the former appropriately encompassing as an umbrella term for this accent. It should be stressed that I do not accept (non)standardness as an innate language feature, but use it to represent the distinction between acceptable/normative and unacceptable forms of language that exist in England in the accent-attitudinal reality of non-linguists (and oftentimes, linguists).

Five big city accents (Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle) and a supra-local accent (Standard) meant that the English-born and raised listener-participants in subsequent studies would have already been exposed to them many times throughout their lives and, thus, they would be aware of the six accents, regardless of whether they would be able to (in)correctly identify them. In other words, accent awareness, irrespective of degree, would be constant for all participants, across all six accents. Further, like the speaker-participants, the listener-participants were also university students (see sections 2.2f, 2.3g, 2.4a), which means that the "more diffuse social environment" in universities (Giles, 1971, p. 187), and especially large (inter)national universities like The University of Manchester, would have facilitated their continued exposure to the accents.

To recruit speakers with those six accents, in the study advertisement, I asked for volunteers whose accent originates in Birmingham, Cambridge, Liverpool, London, Manchester, or Newcastle. I expected that requesting volunteers with accents originating in London and Cambridge would attract some standard-accented speakers (the Cambridge-

[4] While 'posh' can also be accompanied by a demonym (e.g. 'posh northerner'), thus indicating local poshness, too, none of the participants paired 'posh' with a demonym. Due to this, their 'posh' evaluations were taken to reference supra-locality.

related expectation was based on Watson & Clark, 2015). I also expected that requesting volunteers with an accent originating in London would attract some London-accented (Cockney) speakers. As aforementioned, the volunteers were asked to respond to the study advertisement by confirming that they meet the eligibility criteria and stating the city from which their accent originates so I could receive written confirmation of their accent. Interestingly, most volunteers responded by providing the place they are from, instead of the accent they have. Some volunteers clarified that they were raised in one place, but their accent originated from another, in which case, they specified their accent.

Table 1 contains some phonetic features and the typical realisations of these features in Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and standard accents (Bailey, 2019; Baranowski & Turton 2015; Hughes et al., 2013; Levon & Fox, 2014; Watson & Clark, 2015). Since this project utilised six English-English accents, the listener-participants in subsequent studies were expected to (sub)consciously compare the recordings as they heard them. Therefore, Hughes et al. (2013) heavily informed the list of phonetic characteristics presented in table 1 as they consistently compare the numerous accents they examine, due to the fact that they survey the production of multiple accents and do not focus on just one. The phonetic realisations in table 1 have also been found to be salient to British listeners in studies that use real-time reactions/processing techniques; e.g. th-fronting (Levon & Fox, 2014), [x] in <book>, [r] in <during>, [ʊ] for the STRUT vowel, and [ɛː] for the SQUARE vowel (Watson & Clark, 2015). The salience of specific phonetic realisations was expected to prompt diverse evaluations in this project, similar to the aforementioned assumed salience of the accents based on the extreme scalar evaluations they have received over the years. Due to their production-based and perceptual importance, these realisations determined the content of the recorded script (section 2.1d) and functioned as reference points in examining the realisations of each recorded speaker (section 2.1e). It should be noted that these phonetic realisations are not exhaustive and point only to some of the potential salient differences among the accents of this study. Further, some associated accents appear under more than one realisation of the same phonetic feature, which showcases that accents are not realised monolithically.

Table 1: Phonetic Features and Phonetic Realisations in Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Standard English Accents.

Phonetic Feature	Phonetic Realisation	Typically Associated Accent
STRUT vowel	[ʊ]	Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle
	[ʌ]	London, standard
BATH vowel	[a]	Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle
	[ɑ:]	London, standard
FACE vowel	[e:]	Newcastle
	[eɪ]	Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, standard
SQUARE vowel	[ɛ:]	Liverpool
	[eə]	Birmingham, London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard
<r> in <during>	[r]	Liverpool
	[ɹ]	Birmingham, London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard
<k> in <book>	[x]	Liverpool
	[k]	Birmingham, London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard
<h> in <how>	[Ø]	Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester
	[h]	London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard

<ng> in <long>	[ŋg]	Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester
	[ŋ]	London, standard
<th> in <other>	[v]	London, Manchester
	[ð]	Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, standard
<th> in <thing>	[f]	London, Manchester
	[θ]	Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard
/j/ in <news>	[Ø]	London
	[j]	Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard

Since the accents were not performed by the same speaker, two speakers were recruited for each accent variety to allow me to confirm that the listeners' attitudes targeted the accents, and not any speaker idiosyncrasies, by comparing the evaluations within each accent pair in study 1 (see study 1, section 4.4). The Cambridge listing attracted an Oxford speaker, and their accent represented one of the Standard accents, while the other Standard variety came from one of the London speakers, as expected. The categorisation of those two accents as Standard was based on the features in table 1 and the listeners' evaluations in study 1 (see study 1, section 4.4). Therefore, the following speakers were recorded: two with a Birmingham accent, two with a Liverpool accent, two with a London accent, two with a Manchester accent, two with a Newcastle accent, and two with a Standard accent. Two more speakers with Mancunian and London accents, who were not born in the UK, were recorded.[5] Their recordings were used in the practice trials of subsequent studies (see study 1, sections 3.2 and 3.4; and study 2, sections 3.2 and 3.5).

[5] The Mancunian speaker arrived in the UK from Pakistan at the age of 4, and the London speaker arrived in the UK from Spain at the age of 10.

2.1d Recording Script

The recording was a telephone conversation, containing little-to-no discernible information about the background of the speaker. In studies 1-2, a train ride was chosen as the experimental setting and, as the recordings were being played, the following italicised text remained on the screen: *The passenger next to you is on the phone…* (for more details on the train context, see sections 2.2b-2.2c). The fact that the speakers were presented as train passengers in studies 1-2 meant that they could belong to almost any class, professional group, and age group, by UK standards. As Hilton and Jeong (2019) found, for the majority of linguistic features they examined, the less information the listeners knew about a speaker, the more the linguistic feature under examination contributed to their attitudes toward it. Besides the little-to-no discernible information about the speakers in the recording script and their status as train passengers in studies 1-2, no other information about the speakers was provided throughout the project. Below is the recording script, inclusive of the fictitious interlocutor's utterances in parentheses. The emboldened segments in the script are tokens of the nine phonetic features listed in table 1 above, and they were picked to examine the speakers' realisations. Only one token per feature was examined for every speaker for consistency and because a more detailed phonetic analysis was beyond the scope of this study. For the phonetic features that appear more than once in the script, specific tokens were picked because their positionality rendered them more salient for the listeners and more discernible for analysis. For instance, I chose phrase-final or sentence-final segments, at times, to avoid the effects of phonological assimilation; e.g the line-final position of the SQUARE vowel in *fair* (line 5) over the mid-phrase *care* (line 7), and the phrase-final position of <ng> in <long> (line 15) over the mid-phrase <thing> (line 11).

(1) Yes. So I told him to t**a**ke it because I could only look for one of them. Did you call?
(2) (Yes.)
(3) Right. **H**ow did it go?
(4) (It went well. She said we should go on.)
(5) We'll keep going then. That seems f**air**.

(6) (Will you call him?)

(7) No, I can't right now. I need to take care of something else.

(8) (I will call him then. Don't worry.)

(9) It may help when he comes back in a few m**o**nths, but I'm not sure.

(10) (Are you busy tonight?)

(11) Yeah, I will be going to that thing at eight, but I **th**ink I'll leave early; probably about nine.

(12) (Alright).

(13) Did you hear the **new**s?

(14) (I did.)

(15) Yeah, it won't l**a**st lo**ng**. I saw it yesterday at four du**r**ing our meal.

(16) (Did you read it by the way?)

(17) The boo**k**?

(18) (Yes.)

(19) I did. It is much better than the o**th**er one.

2.1e Participant Accent Features

Table 2 shows the in-script realisations of the aforementioned phonetic features (table 1) for each speaker in this study. The underlined speaker accents signal the deviations from the typical phonetic realisations of those accents, and in instances where both variants are possible but the two speakers have differing realisations, both speaker accents are underlined. Specifically, the /h/ realisation for the Birmingham speakers and one of the Liverpool speakers deviated from the typical realisation. With /h/ being realised with what is considered a more standard-like feature, it is likely that the speakers were, perhaps inadvertently, using their reading accent (see Meyerhoff, 2016). The following features also deviated from the typical realisations, or were realised differently between the two speakers of an accent: the SQUARE vowel deviated from the typical realisation for one of the Liverpool speakers; the <th> in <other> and the /j/ in <news> were realised differently between the two London speakers; and the <th> in <other> was realised differently between the two Manchester speakers. As such, there was only one case where both speakers of an accent group deviated from the typical realisations (h-retention in

Birmingham). The remaining three cases were differences between speakers of the same accent groups (Liverpool, London, and Manchester). The effect of any differences between the speakers of the same accent group were subsequently examined by comparing the valence (positive or negative) of qualitative and quantitative evaluations toward the two speakers of each of the six accent groups. No substantially differing accent evaluations between the two speakers of each accent group were found (see chapter 2, study 1, section 4.4).

Table 2: Phonetic Features and Phonetic Realisations in Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Standard English Accents (the underlined speaker accents mark deviations from the typical phonetic realisations, and differences between the two speakers of one accent).

Phonetic Feature and Token	**Phonetic Realisation**	**Typically Associated Accent**	**Speaker Accent**
STRUT vowel in <months>, line (9)	[ʊ]	Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle	Birmingham1, Birmingham2 Liverpool1, Liverpool2 Manchester1, Manchester2 Newcastle1, Newcastle2
	[ʌ]	London, standard	London1, London2 Standard1, Standard2
BATH vowel in <last>, line (15)	[a]	Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle	Birmingham1, Birmingham2 Liverpool1, Liverpool2 Manchester1, Manchester2 Newcastle1, Newcastle2
	[ɑ:]	London, standard	London1, London2 Standard1, Standard2
FACE vowel in <take>, line (1)	[e:]	Newcastle	Newcastle1, Newcastle2
	[eɪ]	Birmingham, Liverpool, London,	Birmingham1, Birmingham2 Liverpool1, Liverpool2 London1, London2

		Manchester, standard	Manchester1, Manchester2 Standard1, Standard2
SQUARE vowel in <fair>, line (5)	[ɛ:]	Liverpool	Liverpool1
	[eə]	Birmingham, London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard	Birmingham1, Birmingham2, Liverpool2 London1, London2, Manchester1, Manchester2, Newcastle1, Newcastle2 Standard1, Standard2
<r> in <during>, line (15)	[r]	Liverpool	Liverpool1, Liverpool2
	[ɹ]	Birmingham, London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard	Birmingham1, Birmingham2 London1, London2 Manchester1, Manchester2 Newcastle1, Newcastle2 Standard1, Standard2
<k> in <book>, line (17)	[x]	Liverpool	Liverpool1, Liverpool2
	[k]	Birmingham, London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard	Birmingham1, Birmingham2 London1, London2 Manchester1, Manchester2 Newcastle1, Newcastle2 Standard1, Standard2
<h> in <how>, line (3)	[Ø]	Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester	London1, London2 Liverpool2, Newcastle1, Newcastle2
	[h]	London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard	Birmingham1, Birmingham2 Liverpool1, Manchester1, Manchester2 Standard1, Standard2

<ng> in <long>, line (15)	[ŋg]	Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester	Birmingham1, Birmingham2 Liverpool1, Liverpool2 Manchester1, Manchester2
	[ŋ]	London, Newcastle, standard	London1, London2 Newcastle1, Newcastle2 Standard1, Standard2
<th> in <other>, line (19)	[v]	London, Manchester	London1, Manchester2
	[ð]	Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard	Birmingham1, Birmingham2 Liverpool1, Liverpool2 London2, Manchester1 Newcastle1, Newcastle2 Standard1, Standard2
<th> in <think>, line (11)	[f]	London, Manchester	
	[θ]	Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard	Birmingham1, Birmingham2 Liverpool2, Liverpool2 London1, London2 Manchester1, Manchester2 Newcastle1, Newcastle2 Standard1, Standard2
/j/ in <news>, line (13)	[Ø]	London	London2
	[j]	Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, standard	Birmingham1, Birmingham2 Liverpool2, Liverpool2 London1 Manchester1, Manchester2 Newcastle1, Newcastle2 Standard1, Standard2

2.2 Study 1: Accent-Attitudinal Scalar Lexicon Elicitation

This study investigated the influence of minimally-restrictive elicitation techniques on the lexical formation of accent attitudes, and provided the scalar labels that were used in subsequent studies to evaluate the accent recordings.

2.2a Procedure

The study was advertised across different departments at The University of Manchester in the form of an email that contained the eligibility criteria and a link to the study information sheet. Upon arrival to the laboratory, the participants were provided with the study information sheet to (re)read and/or take with them and a consent form to sign, after which, they entered a computer booth where they were instructed to wear a headset with volume control and follow the instructions on the computer monitor. While an approximate study duration of 40 minutes from consent to completion was stated in the study description, due to the open-ended nature of the questions, duration deviations were expected. The shortest sessions lasted around 30 minutes and the longest ones around 60 minutes.

2.2b Experiment Structure

The study consisted of three blocks: two practice trials (practice accents), twelve main trials (main accents), and a questions block. The purpose of the practice trials was to allow participants to get accustomed to the experiment. As well as that, the expectation was that the practice recordings would be evaluated based on the content as well as the accent and that, toward the third recording (the start of main trial), the participants would begin to evaluate based on the accent alone, as they realised the content remained the same. To avoid the disparity between the evaluations in blocks 1 and 2, the data from block 1 were not analysed. In the questions block, the participants reported what they thought the purpose of the study was, and the majority (36 out of 47) mentioned accents as the subject of examination, while none of them mentioned the content of the recordings. Below is a short representation of an accent trial and the questions block.

A. Trial format

1. Continuous train engine sound in background.
2. Randomised accent recording (see script below), with accompanying text on screen: *You are on the train and the passenger next to you is on the phone…*
    - Yes. So I told him to take it because I could only look for one of them. Did you call?
    - Right. How did it go?
    - We'll keep going then. That seems fair.
    - No, I can't right now. I need to take care of something else.
    - It may help when he comes back in a few months, but I'm not sure.
    - Yeah, I will be going to that thing at eight, but I think I'll leave early; probably about nine.
    - Did you hear the news?
    - Yeah, it won't last long. I saw it yesterday at four during our meal.
    - The book?
    - I did. It is much better than the other one.
3. *What are your impressions of what you just heard? Try to be as descriptive as possible*.

    [open-ended answer; fill-in text box]
4. *Is there anything else you would like to add to your impressions of what you just heard?*

    [open-ended answer; fill-in text box]

B. Questions block

1. *What do you think this study is about?*

    [open-ended answer; fill-in text box]
2. *What is you gender?*

    [multiple-choice answer: female; male; non-binary]
3. *What is your age?*

    [multiple-choice answer: 18-30; 31-40; 41+]
4. *List all the places where you have resided and the length of residence in each place in chronological order, from least recent to most recent*.

[open-ended answer; fill-in text box]

5. *Which place(s) does your accent originate from? Please, be as descriptive as possible. If you do not associate your accent with one or more specific places, explain why.*

[open-ended answer; fill-in text box]

2.2c Immersive Setting

As can be seen in A1-A2, a train ride setting was chosen for the whole experiment to elicit situational immersion and increase ecological validity. A train engine was heard on a loop throughout the first two blocks, and a train whistle was heard before each accent recording was about to start in order to maintain or recapture the listeners' attention. The acoustic stimuli were borrowed from the International Affective Digital Sounds (IADS; Bradley & Lang, 2007). The IADS contains the ratings of several standardised audio stimuli on pleasure/valence (unhappy to happy), arousal (relaxed to excited), and dominance (in-control to dominated). The ratings range from 0.00-9.00. The train sound in this study was picked from the most neutrally-rated sounds across all three dimensions (scores of 4.50-5.50) in order not to draw the participants' attention away from the recordings.

Besides being passengers on a train, no other information about the speakers was provided, and the fact that they were presented as train passengers meant that they could belong to almost any class, professional, or age group by UK standards. Further, the recording content itself, one side of a telephone conversation, revealed little-to-no information about the speaker's identity. As Hilton and Jeong (2019) found for the majority of linguistic features they examined, the less information the listeners knew about a speaker, the more the linguistic feature under examination contributed to their attitudes toward it. To allow the listeners to rest, breaks that were also accompanied by train-related written messages took place. There were five fifteen-second breaks interspersed among the fourteen accent trials – one after the two practice trials, and one after every three main trials – with the following text on-screen: *For a while, you can only hear the train engine…*.

2.2d Accent Recordings

Each recording (A2) lasted 40 seconds and was heard once by the participants. As aforementioned, the accent varieties selected for this project were Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Standard (see more in sections 2.1c-2.1e).

2.2e Evaluative Prompt

The evaluative prompts in this study (A3-A4) were open-ended and contained an unspecified attitude object ("*what you just heard*") so as not to restrict the participants' evaluative discourse. The word "*impressions*" was used in A3-A4 in order to somewhat control the unpredictable duration of open-ended responses. Specifically, the word 'impressions' represents a more primal stage in the attitudinal process (e.g. the ordinal 'first' is conventionally collocated with 'impressions' and not with 'evaluations'); therefore, while the first prompt asked the participants to be "*as descriptive as possible*" to avoid prompting monolectic answers, the word 'impressions' implicitly suggested that they do not spend too long on their answers. The purpose of the second evaluation prompt (A4) was to collect any remaining evaluations. The answers from the second prompt, where present, were combined with those of the first prompt for data analysis.

2.2f Questions Block and Participants

Data from the questions block (B) were used to validate the study's eligibility criteria and gather more information to be used during analysis where relevant. All participants had to be native English speakers, born and raised in England, between 18-30 years of age, and studying at The University of Manchester in subjects other than Linguistics, to minimise inter-subject discrepancies in responses to sociolinguistic matters (e.g. linguistics students might be more likely to provide strictly non-prescriptive accent evaluations). Similar to the eligibility criteria of the recorded speakers, these eligibility criteria also guaranteed a certain amount of control over social macro-variables like age (18-30), education (university), educational institution (The University of Manchester), and national identity (born and raised in England). The study was conducted at The University of Manchester and, as is common in the field (Labov, Ash, Baranowski, Nagy & Ravindranath, 2006; Levon & Buchstaller, 2015; Smarkman, 2012), university students were used to facilitate

participation. Consequently, the age range of the participants was picked in conjunction with the study's higher education setting (i.e. young adulthood is a common age category for UK university students). As well as that, the university setting for the English born and raised participants worked toward increasing the likelihood of exposure to the six selected accent varieties, since university environments are more socially diverse and, thus, are host to a plethora of accents (Giles, 1971). Consequently, the participants would be aware of the six accents, regardless of whether they would be able to (in)correctly identify them. In other words, accent awareness, irrespective of degree, would be constant for all participants, across all six accents.

In total, 15 participants took part in the study, but one response was discarded because the participant was born and raised in Wales. The relatively small number of participants in this study was due to the fact that it was mostly a methodological study that (a) tested minimally restricted scalar-elicitation techniques and (b) provided the scalar adjectives for subsequent studies. The study-awareness question (B1) appeared before the demographic questions (B2-B5) because the latter questions, and especially the own-accent question (B5), could have indirectly revealed the purpose of the study. Twelve out of the 14 participants were aware that the purpose of the study (B1) was to evaluate people's accents, and thus, it can be assumed that 'accent' was the attitude object they were evaluating.

Similar to the pilot study, the regions and accents that the participants provided in B4-B5 were phonetically categorised for the purposes of this project, based on the categories of English-English accents by geographical zones in Hughes et al. (2013), and were then reduced to fewer groups to be used in analysis (e.g. the London accent/region was categorised as south English/England). Not every city, town, or village that the participants mentioned in their region and accent responses was explicitly phonetically categorised in Hughes et al. (2013). However, the maps available throughout the book facilitated the approximation of the geographical locations. Tables 3-4 show the participants' gender, region, and accent information, and their frequencies, after the categorisation of region and accent.

Table 3: Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Region	Accent
1	Female	South England	Standard
2	Non-binary	South England	Standard
3	Male	South England	Standard
4	Non-binary	North England	North English
5	Female	South England	Standard
6	Female	South England	South English
7	Female	North England	North English
8	Female	South England	Standard
9	Female	South England	South English
10	Female	South England	Standard
11	Female	South England	South English
12	Female	North England	North English
13	Female	South England	Standard
14	Male	South England	South English

Table 4: Participant Demographics Frequencies

Gender	**Frequency**
female	10
male	2
non-binary	2
Region	**Frequency**
north England	3
south England	11
Accent	**Frequency**
north English	3
south English	4
standard	7

A participant's region was operationalised as the place in England where they spent most of their life – i.e. 5 years or more than any other place mentioned in their answer. For

the majority of participants, a 5-year difference existed between the two places with the longest residency periods. In two instances, a 5-year difference did not exist between the two longest residences, so the residences were examined to determine whether they belong in the same phonetic county/region, which was the case in both instances. Regarding participant accent, it should be noted that the level of accuracy in their self-reported accents is not relevant in this project. Non-linguists' attitudes to other people's accents are partly influenced by their perception of their own accent, regardless of how accurate that perception is, by linguistic standards. In three instances, more than one accent was listed in one response, so the accent described as primary by the participant was picked for phonetic categorisation. In four instances, primacy of one accent over the rest was not mentioned, so other answers by the same participant were considered in order to narrow down the categorisation. For example, if one of their listed accents coincided with one of their listed regions, that accent was picked as primary. There were also two instances where the participants described both their own evaluation of their accent as well as other people's evaluation of their accent, indicating that their own attitudes toward their accent were also influenced by other people's attitudes toward it. In those instances, the two evaluations tended to differ, and the participants' own evaluation, which always appeared first, was picked as the primary accent description since the participants' self-identifications were the focus of this question. When the participants used terms such as "posh", "received pronunciation", "RP", "queen's English", "neutral", and/or "plain" to describe their accents, or any other feature discussed in section 2.1c, their accents were labelled as 'standard'.

2.2g Analytical Approach

The software used to analyse the data was *NVivo* (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2020). *NVivo* is a software package for qualitative data analysis. Through various queries (e.g. search queries and frequency queries), *NVivo* allows qualitative data to be organised, linked, and modelled. I conducted a word-frequency query on the qualitative data from questions A3-A4. To determine the scalar lexicon for study 2, the data from the frequency query were filtered against a set of selection criteria. The majority of these criteria were based on the objectives of study 2, as the scalar lexicon was going to be used in study 2. Below is the exhaustive list of the criteria for replicability purposes (Tagliamonte & Pabst, 2020). The

lexes that fulfilled criteria (a)-(g) were placed in semantic fields. Overall, to determine which lexical types belonged to each semantic field, I considered the co-occurrences of their tokens in participant responses (Gliozzo & Strapparava, 2009). In other words, I examined whether the tokens of different types appeared in close proximity to one another and grouped them under one semantic field when they did. Words from these semantic fields were chosen as labels for the evaluative scales in study 2, if they fulfilled criteria (h)-(l). Although all study results are located in chapter 2, it is important mention the emerging scalar words, at this point, as they are relevant to rest of chapter 1. The emerging scalar words were: refined, gentle, friendly, comfortable, calm, and happy.

(a) Tokens which did not evaluate attitude objects that were related to the accent, the speaker of the recording, or the recording as a whole were excluded from consideration for study 2 as the study examined accent attitudes.
(b) Tokens which evaluated the pronunciation of specific words were excluded from consideration for study 2 as the study examined attitudes holistically – i.e. study 2 did not look at real-time reactions but, instead, asked participants to evaluate the recordings after they were fully heard.
(c) Tokens which evaluated the content of the recording (e.g. a specific word, or a specific phrase) rather than its sound were excluded from consideration for study 2 as the study focused on the sound of the recordings and not their lexical content.
(d) Tokens which evaluated the accents geographically/nationally/racially were excluded from consideration for study 2 as the study did not examine the geographic/ethnic placement of accents by listeners.
(e) For a type to be included in a semantic field, its tokens had to be in a monolectic or a hyphenated-compound form because the *EL 2.0* contains monolectic and hyphenated-compound entries only.
(f) For a type to be included in a semantic field, its tokens could not be in comparative or superlative forms as comparisons between accents would be inappropriate when multiple accent recordings are evaluated (study 2).
(g) For a type to be included in a semantic field, its tokens had to be congruent with the rest of the types in that field, i.e. their valence had to be either positive or negative.

The purpose of this parameter was to maintain scalar consistency in study 2 and avoid scalar lexes contradicting each other due to the potentiality of antonymy. Depending on the valence of the most popular evaluative type, all semantic fields were chosen to contain either positive or negative types.

(h) Only the type with the most tokens in each semantic field was considered for study 2 so as to ensure semantic variety in the evaluative scales of study 2.

(i) The tokens of all types under consideration for study 2 had to be found in the answers of at least two participants and toward at least two different accents so that an amount of evaluative generalisability could be claimed.

(j) All types under consideration for study 2 had to be listed in the *EL 2.0* in order to provide the cognitive, midpoint,[6] and affective scores needed for study 2. Types that were not listed in the *EL 2.0* were excluded.

(k) All types under consideration for study 2 had to be either exclusively monolectic or exclusively hyphenated compounds to maintain scalar consistency. The most popular form among the types under consideration dictated the form of the scalar lexes for study 2.

(l) An equal amount of cognitive, midpoint, and affective types would comprise the scalar lexicon of study 2 for consistency.

I also examined whether the inter-speaker evaluations within each accent group (Birmingham pair, Liverpool pair, London pair, Manchester pair, Newcastle pair, Standard pair) were congruent – i.e. whether they were both positive or both negative for each listener – in order to verify that inter-speaker variation did not play a significant role in the evaluation of the accents. Entire participant responses were coded for their valence on *NVivo* and then compared with each other within each accent pair. If a response contained both positive and negative discourse (e.g. “They seemed friendly but maybe superficial”), the valenced instances were counted against each other and the valence with the majority

[6] In Rocklage, Rucker, and Nordgren (2018), adjectives with scores close to the midpoint of the emotionality scale were treated as either affective or cognitive, depending on the direction. While this binary coding makes for easier calculations, an adjective with a 2.5 score differs from one with a 4.4 score, although they would both be categorised as cognitive by the researchers. In this study, the two near-midpoint adjectives were treated as neither cognitive, nor affective.

of instances prevailed as the response's valence. If the valenced instances were ambivalent (both valences equally), they were discarded from the total count (Tagliamonte & Pabst, 2020) and did not receive a valence judgment. Further, if the responses were neutral (no discernible valence) they were also discarded without a valence judgment. Many of the neutrally-valenced instances were descriptions of the content of the recording (e.g. "They discuss the news, the same as before: 'I saw it yesterday at 4, during our meal'") and geographical accent placements (e.g. "Could be a Lancashire voice. They did not pronounce the t at the end of but. The g at the end of thing had an emphasis. The t's were not pronounced in better, sounding instead like beh'a" – while an implicature analysis of this evaluative response may have placed it on the negative side of valence, the response does not contain explicit markers of positive or negative valence). I also looked at whether the phonetically-based categorisation of the London and Oxford accents into the Standard accent group (see sections 2.1c and 2.1e) agreed with the listeners' evaluations. To do so, I investigated the evaluations of all the accents for features discussed in section 2.1c, with the expectation that only the London and Oxford accents will contain those features. Finally, I used the quantitative attitudinal data from study 2 (i.e. the scalar ratings of the six adjectives that emerged in this study) to further scrutinise the evaluative (in)consistency between the two speakers of each accent group.

2.3 Study 2: Cognitive and Affective Accent Attitudes

This study examined the cognitive and affective formation of attitudes toward the six English-English accents.

2.3a Procedure

Email advertisements of the study were circulated in different departments at The University of Manchester. The email contained the eligibility criteria and a link to the study information sheet. The experiment was designed using the *E-Prime 3.0* software (Psychology Software Tools, Inc., 2016), and was distributed online via the *E-Prime Go* add-on (ibid,

2020).[7] Upon expressing their interest and confirming they meet the eligibility criteria, the participants were sent instructions on how to access the experiment online. Specifically, the participants were asked to visit a secure website, download the experiment file, and run it on their computer in one session, without distractions, using a headset or headphones. The consent form was located at the start of the experiment. Upon completing the experiment, the participants were asked to upload their results file on the same website from which they downloaded the experiment file and to confirm they completed the experiment in order to receive compensation. A total of 49 responses were received, but two were discarded (see section 2.3g). From consent to completion, the experiment did not last longer than 40 minutes.

2.3b Experiment Structure

Similar to study 1, this study consisted of same three blocks: two practice trials (practice accents) to allow participants to get accustomed to the experiment; twelve main trials (main accents); and a questions block. Data from block 1 were not analysed. Below is a short representation of a main trial and the questions block.

A. Main trial format
    1. Continuous train engine sound in background.
    2. Randomised written messages (a-d below: cognitive positive, cognitive negative, affective positive, and affective negative, respectively), preceded by the text, *You are on the train and you are reading the following text on a webpage:*
        a. *… "Flawless" is how 21% of the interviewers described telephone interviews with candidates from particular places in the UK, a study shows ... The lack of visual bias can have a positive influence on the outcome of a phone interview … In the same study, 54% of the interviewers characterised phone interviews with people from specific areas of the UK as "noteworthy" …*

[7] Study 2 was originally designed to take place in the laboratory, but it was interrupted and moved online due to COVID-19.

b. *… "Uninteresting" is how 21% of the interviewers described telephone interviews with candidates from particular places in the UK, a study shows ... The lack of eye contact can have a negative influence on the outcome of a phone interview… In the same study, 54% of the interviewers characterised phone interviews with people from specific areas of the UK as "pointless" …*

c. *… "Terrific" is how the interviewer described their personal experience of telephone interviews with candidates from particular places in the UK … The lack of visual bias can have a positive influence on the outcome of a phone interview … Another interviewer expressed that their own calls with applicants from specific areas of the UK are "uplifting" …*

d. *… "Insufferable" is how the interviewer described their personal experience of telephone interviews with candidates from particular places in the UK ... The lack of eye contact can have a negative influence on the outcome of a phone interview … Another interviewer expressed that their own calls with applicants from specific areas of the UK are "exhausting"…*

3. Randomised accent recording (see script below), with accompanying text on the screen: *The passenger next to you is on the phone…*

— Yes. So I told him to take it because I could only look for one of them. Did you call?

— Right. How did it go?

— We'll keep going then. That seems fair.

— No, I can't right now. I need to take care of something else.

— It may help when he comes back in a few months, but I'm not sure.

— Yeah, I will be going to that thing at eight, but I think I'll leave early; probably about nine.

— Did you hear the news?

— Yeah, it won't last long. I saw it yesterday at four during our meal.

— The book?

— I did. It is much better than the other one.

4. *What are your evaluations of what you just heard?*

   [six randomised 6-point rating scales with the following labels: *Not Refined – Refined*, *Not Gentle – Gentle*, *Not Comfortable – Comfortable*, *Not Friendly – Friendly*, *Not Calm – Calm*, *Not Happy – Happy]*

   [or a *No Answer* option]

B. Questions block

1. *When you answered the 'What are your evaluations of what you just heard?' questions, what exactly were you evaluating?*

   [open-ended answer; fill-in text box]

2. *What do you think this study is about?*

   [open-ended answer; fill-in text box]

3. *What is you gender?*

   [multiple choice: male; female; non-binary]

4. *What is your age?*

   [multiple choice: 18-30; 31-40; 41+]

5. *List all the places where you have resided and the length of residence in each place in chronological order, from least recent to most recent*.

   [open-ended answer; fill-in text box]

6. *Which place(s) does your accent originate from? Please, be as descriptive as possible. If you do not associate your accent with one or more specific places, explain why.*

   [open-ended answer; fill-in text box]

2.3c Immersive Setting

Like in study 1 (see sections 2.2b-2.2c), a train ride setting (A1-A3) was chosen for this study with train sounds from IADS (Bradley & Lang, 2007). Further, the participants did not know anything about the speakers except that they were passengers on a train, and there were five breaks to allow the participants to rest. The difference with study 2 was the

text that preceded the prime messages (A2) which, besides signalling the train ride setting, alluded to contemporary, web-based, skim reading (see Kovač & van Der Weel, 2018), thus adding to the natural validity of the experiment. The allusion was discursively reinforced by the ellipses at the start, the middle, and the end of each message.

2.3d Written Messages

Below are the two written messages of the practice trials. One of the practice-trial messages was positive in valence with both cognitive and affective sections, and the other was negative with both cognitive and affective sections. Cognition and affect were combined in each practice-trial message so that the participants would not be primed either exclusively cognitively or exclusively affectively during the practice trials.

a. Positive Practice-Trial Message

… "Uplifting" and "flawless" is how the interviewer described their personal experience of telephone interviews with candidates from particular places in the UK ... The lack of visual bias can have a positive influence on the outcome of a phone interview … In a study, 54% of the interviewers characterised phone interviews with people from specific areas of the UK as "noteworthy" and "terrific" …

b. Negative Practice-Trial Message

… "Uninteresting" and "exhausting" is how 21% of the interviewers described telephone interviews with candidates from particular places in the UK, a study shows ... The lack of eye contact can have a negative influence on the outcome of a phone interview … An interviewer expressed that their calls with applicants from specific areas of the UK are "insufferable" and "pointless" …

On the other hand, the four messages of the main trials (henceforth, messages) comprised a Cognitive Positive Message (CogPosM), an Affective Positive Message (AffPosM), a Cognitive Negative Message (CogNegM), and an Affective Negative Message (AffNegM) (A2a-d). The messages appeared in a randomised order, like the accent recordings (A3) and the evaluative scales (A4), in order to make all ordering possibilities

equally likely across all participants and, thus, minimise any possibilities of rating biases from fixed ordering effects. Each participant was exposed to both valences and components to replicate the variety of stimuli in real-life contexts.

The messages contained cognitive and affective discourse from the aforementioned social-psychological studies (Crites, Fabrigar & Petty, 1994; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). The encyclopaedic/knowledge-based (cognitive) message content in those studies was alluded to in the references to statistical study results in the present study's priming messages, and the emotional/personal (affective) narratives in the personal experiences of the interviewers. The message content was also influenced by accent-attitudinal discourse from British newspaper article titles. The purpose of this was to examine whether the media's influence on language ideology (Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Dragojevic, Mastro, Giles & Sink, 2016; Milroy, 2001; Milroy & Milroy, 2012; Mugglestone, 2007) was, in some way, reflected in the influence of the messages in this study. From newspaper article titles such as "Brummie accents 'worse than staying silent', study shows" (Hannah Furness, *The Telegraph*, 16 July 2015), the present study's priming messages utilised the discursive hedge "a study shows" and the quotation marks surrounding the evaluative sections (for more newspaper article title examples, see Bennet, 2008; Birmingham Bottom of the List in UK 'Hierarchy of Accents', Study Finds, 2019; Dobson, 2002; Lavelle, 2019; Luu, 2017; Woolaston, 2013). The discursive hedge was added in the cognitive messages, and the two evaluative words in each message were placed in quotation marks.

The quoted words themselves were taken from the *EL 2.0* based on their emotionality (low/cognitive to high/affective) and valence (low/negative to high/positive) scores. Table 5 below shows the scores of each word. In all the messages, the highest in emotionality of the two words appeared first for consistency. The quoted words and the middle sentence in each message carried the valence of the message. The presence of both positive and negative versions of the cognitive and affective messages determined which component was more influential. Simply put, if an accent was evaluated significantly higher after a CogPosM than after a AffPosM, the CogPosM was deemed more influential since positive stimuli prompt higher evaluations. Contrastingly, if an accent was evaluated

significantly lower after a AffNegP than after a CogNegM, the AffNegP was deemed more influential since negative stimuli prompt lower evaluations.

Table 5: Emotionality Scores, Positions, and Valence Scores of Quoted Cognitive and Affective Words in Messages

Adjective	Emotionality Score	Position	Valence Score
Flawless	3.50 (cognitive)	1st	8.24 (positive)
Noteworthy	2.90 (cognitive)	2nd	6.96 (positive)
Uninteresting	3.34 (cognitive)	1st	2.25 (negative)
Pointless	2.67 (cognitive)	2nd	1.72 (negative)
Terrific	6.07 (affective)	1st	7.32 (positive)
Uplifting	5.62 (affective)	2nd	7.89 (positive)
Insufferable	6.07 (affective)	1st	2.11 (negative)
Exhausting	5.70 (affective)	2nd	1.73 (negative)

The reference to "*candidates from particular places in the UK*" in the messages served to evoke (regional) accents since telephone conversations rely heavily on sound-based cues. The accent reference and, by extension, the evaluative references were indirect; the words 'accent(s)' and 'attitude(s)' were not mentioned throughout the experiment. The decision to examine indirect accent attitudes was made because participation in a deliberate experiment with direct references to accent attitudes could have indicated the written messages' influential purpose, which could have potentially resulted in inefficient priming. According to Schwarz (2011), when individuals attribute their feelings to secondary sources, they tend not to rely on them. Therefore, by choosing to examine indirect accent attitudes, rather than direct, I attempted to minimise the lack of affect-based attitudes which could have resulted from the participants' suspicion that a secondary source (the messages), and not the primary source (the accents), elicited their attitudes.

2.3e Accent Recordings

As aforementioned, the accent varieties selected for this project were Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Standard (see more in sections 2.1c-2.1e).

2.3f Evaluative Prompt, Scales, and Adjectives

In accordance with the rest of the study, the evaluative prompt (A4) was indirect in that it did not reference 'accent' as the attitude object. In fact, although in indirect accent-attitudinal studies it is commonplace to include a specified object, the speaker,[8] the prompt in this study did not specify an attitude object in order to allow for open-ended evaluations, unabated by the definitiveness of an attitude object. Only 14 out of 47 participants reported that they were evaluating accents in B1, but the majority of participants (36 out of 47) identified the purpose of the study (B2) as accent evaluative. Therefore, it could be argued that those who identified the study purpose as accent-attitudinal but reported they did not evaluate accents (23 out of 36) were uneasy about (admitting to) evaluating someone's accent.

The scalar responses to the evaluative prompt were labelled with cognitive and affective adjectives (A4), which were chosen based on a set of selection criteria in study 1, including their emotionality and valence scores in the *EL 2.*0, in order to ensure a consistent and controlled pattern of cognition, affect, and valence. Table 6 below shows the scores of each adjective. *Refined* and *gentle* were cognitive (CogAdj); *friendly* and *comfortable* were midpoint (MidAdj); and *calm* and *happy* were affective (AffAdj); and all six were positively valenced. To avoid same-word priming (Rocklage & Fazio, 2015), the six scalar adjectives were excluded from the selection of the cognitive and affective words in quotation marks in the written messages. The adverb *not* was used to indicate the low/negative end of the scale to avoid multiple interpretations of antonymic affixes or words (e.g. unhappy/sad – *happy*) (McKenzie & Carrie, 2018).

Table 6: Emotionality and Valence Scores of Scalar Adjectives

Adjectives	Emotionality Score	Valence Score (Positive)

[8] The link between *accent* and *speaker* is based on the premise that an accent can prompt attitudes about the speaker's personality (see Cargile, Giles, Ryan & Bradac, 1994).

Refined	3.11 (cognitive)	6.48
Gentle	4.15 (cognitive)	7.19
Friendly	4.86 (midpoint)	7.88
Comfortable	4.87 (midpoint)	7.08
Calm	5.07 (affective)	7.13
Happy	7.41 (affective)	7.89

The lower end of the evaluative scales (left) was associated with negative valence or adjective absence, and the higher end (right) with positive valence or adjective presence (e.g. *Not Happy – Happy*). Consequently, the higher the rating of the adjective, the more influential its component (cognition, affect, or neither) on the accent attitude. For instance, if an accent received significantly higher (lower) evaluations on the *happy* scale than the *refined* scale, the attitude toward that accent would be more affective (cognitive) than cognitive (affective) since higher (lower) ratings equal adjective presence (absence). Further, for an accent attitude to be both cognitive and affective, one of the two CogAdj would have to be evaluated significantly higher than one of the two AffAdj, and the other AffAdj would have to be evaluated higher than the other CogAdj. On the other hand, for an accent attitude to be neither cognitive nor affective, both MidAdj would have to be evaluated significantly higher than all the CogAdj and AffAdj.

Due to disagreement in the literature about the exact representational meaning of a midpoint in bipolar scales (Breckler, 2004; and Schneider, Harreveld, Veenstra, Schwarz & Koole, 2016), as well as to avoid central-tendency biases, a midpoint was excluded from the scales. Discussions surrounding the complex meaning of scalar midpoints primarily involve the notions of neutrality and ambivalence (Breckler, 2004; and Schneider, Harreveld, Veenstra, Schwarz & Koole, 2016). Neutrality refers to an *absence* of both positive and negative attitudes toward an object. For instance, one may have a neutral attitude toward a chair. Neutrality has also been associated with indifference toward an object (Breckler, 2004). Ambivalence (two valences), on the other hand, refers to the *presence* of both positive and negative attitudes toward an object, and it is the opposite of univalence (one valence). For instance, one may have both a positive and a negative attitude toward

chocolate because it tastes nice (positive) but increases thirst (negative). Therefore, a scalar midpoint can represent two contradictory meanings, neutrality and ambivalence.

In this study, then, instead of a scalar midpoint, the participants were given the choice not to answer: on the right side of every scale, there was a *No Answer* option. Whereas a scalar midpoint can be interpreted in neutrally or ambivalently, a *No Answer* response more clearly indicates the participant's unwillingness to submit a rating. Out of a total of 3384 scalar responses across the 47 participants, 42 responses (1.24%) by four participants were *No Answer*. Besides 2 *No Answer* responses which were submitted for the adjectives *happy* and *gentle*, 40 were submitted for the adjective *refined* across all four of the participants. It should be noted that no distinction was found across the recorded accents. Specifically, each accent received a minimum of three *No Answer* evaluations for *refined* across the four participants who submitted *No Answer* responses.

The focus of *No Answer* responses on *refined* could be explained through the meta-attitudinal findings of study 3 (see chapter 5, study 3, section 4.2) where the majority of participants expressed that they struggled to evaluate and self-define *refined*. This semantic struggle could have led the four participants to choose *No Answer* for some of the *refined* scales in this study. These *No Answer* responses were excluded from analysis as their role and meaning are beyond the analytical scope of this paper. The rest of the data from those participants were not discarded, however, as they were not indicative of participant fatigue or any other reason that would have compromised the entirety of their responses; instead, they were fixated on a specific adjectival scale.

2.3g Questions Block and Participants

Like in study 1, data from the questions block (B) were used to validate the study's eligibility criteria and gather more information to be used during analysis where relevant. The eligibility criteria for participation were also the same as study 1. Out of a total of 49 responses in this study, two were discarded; one of the participants was not born in England and the other conducted part of the experiment twice due to an error in their first attempt. The accents and regions that the participants provided in B5-B6 were phonetically categorised in the same way as in study 1, but there were some differences in the data. For the majority of participants, the categorisation of region was straightforward as there was a

5-year difference between the two places with the longest residency periods. In five instances, however, there was no 5-year difference between the two longest residences, so both places were examined to determine whether they belong in the same phonetic county/region. When they did (one instance), that phonetic region was picked. When they did not (four instances), other answers by the same participant were considered in order to narrow down the categorisation. In one instance, for example, between the residences of Lancashire (10 years) and West Yorkshire (8 years), the former was selected since it coincided with the participant's response about their accent, which was described as "Lancashire".

With regards to participant accent, in six instances, more than one accent was listed in one response, so the accent described as primary by the participant was picked for phonetic categorisation. In four instances, primacy of one accent over the rest was not mentioned, so other answers by the same participant were considered in order to narrow down the categorisation. For example, if one of their listed accents coincided with one of their listed regions, that accent was picked as primary. There were also seven instances where the participants described both their own evaluation of their accent as well as other people's evaluation of their accent, indicating that their own attitudes toward their accent were also influenced by other people's attitudes toward it. In those cases, the two evaluations tended to differ, and the participants' own evaluation, which always appeared first, was picked as the primary accent description since the participants' self-identifications were the focus of this question. When the participants used terms such as "posh", "received pronunciation", "RP", "queen's English", "neutral", and/or "plain" to describe their accents, the accents were labelled as 'standard'. In eight instances, the participants described their accents using one or more standard-denoting terms alongside geographical descriptors (e.g. "My accent is a combination of Mancunian and received pronunciation"); those accents were labelled as 'standard-ish' because the participants tended to place more weight on the standard features of their accent rather than the non-standard ones. The term 'near-standard' was consciously not chosen for these cases because I did not wish to convey that the standard is the linguistic goal (i.e. nearing the standard variety). Table 7 shows the participants' gender, accent, and region frequencies after the categorisation of accent and region.

Table 7: Participant Demographics Frequencies

Gender	**Frequency**
female	30
male	14
non-binary	3
Accent	**Frequency**
north English	19
south English	13
standard-ish	8
standard	7
Region	**Frequency**
north England	24
south England	23

2.4 Study 3: Folkloristic Accent Meta-Attitudes

This study investigated the accent meta-attitudes of some of the participants of study 2.

2.4a Procedure and Participants

The quantitative study that was conducted in the laboratory (the attitudinal section) and was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic was followed by interviews (the meta-attitudinal section) which were recorded on a *Zoom H4N Pro* recorder. The study advert email and the information sheet mentioned that, after the auditory-data evaluations, the participants may or may not be interviewed. Upon arriving at the laboratory and before giving their consent, the participants were informed whether they would be interviewed or not. Ten out of the twelve participants that took part in the laboratory study were randomly chosen for an interview. The eligibility criteria for participation were the same as in studies 1-2, and the participant accents and regions were categorised in the same way. Similar to study 2, some participants described their accents using one or more standard-denoting

terms alongside geographical descriptors; e.g. “I have rather an RP accent. Having grown up in Liverpool, however, i definatly (sic) feel that i have some scouse undertones”. In those cases, the accents were again labelled as ‘standard-ish’ because the participants tended to place more weight on the standard features of their accent rather than the non-standard ones. Tables 8-9 show the participants’ gender, region, and accent, and their frequencies, after the categorisation of region and accent.

Table 8: Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Region	Accent
1	Female	North England	Standard
2	Non-binary	North England	North English
3	Female	South England	South English
4	Female	North England	North English
5	Male	South England	South English
6	Female	South England	South English
7	Female	South England	Standard-ish
8	Male	South England	South English
9	Male	South England	Standard
10	Female	North England	Standard-ish

Table 9: Participant Demographics Frequencies

Gender	**Frequency**
female	6
male	3
non-binary	1
Region	**Frequency**
north England	4
south England	6
Accent	**Frequency**
north English	2

south English	4
standard-ish	2
standard	2

The participants were re-exposed only to the first four main trials of the quantitative section so as to reduce participant fatigue, which would have been caused from another round of twelve (mains) trials. Consequently, the participants were re-exposed to all four messages (CogPos, CogNeg, AffPos, AffNeg) and to four out of the twelve main accent recordings, which were randomised during the attitudinal section and, thus, in a different order for each participant. Therefore, during the interview, different participants were re-exposed to different recordings. It should be clarified that the differing accents, and order thereof, across participants did not affect the results of this study because the focus was on the participants' accent meta-attitudes in general, and not on the comparison of their meta-attitudes across different accents. After each message-recording sequence, the interviewees were asked to talk about their adjectival ratings, which they could see on a computer screen. The interviews were semi-structured in that the participants were asked to discuss their evaluations, but they could choose which aspect of their evaluations they discussed as well as the duration of their turns. At the end, the participants were asked if there were any general comments they wanted to add before concluding the interview. The shortest interview lasted 7 minutes and 22 seconds, and the longest 12 minutes and 48 seconds.

2.4b Analytical Approach

According to Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2009) and Rodgers' (2017) typologies, discourse-based attitudinal studies have conducted content- or topic-oriented analyses (e.g. Cooper, 2019; Hall-Lew & Stephens, 2012; Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998), in which explicit references to related themes are grouped together and are discussed as topical/thematic sets; turn-internal or rhetorical analyses (e.g. Preston, 1994; Rodgers, 2016), which focus on the structural and functional development of intra-speaker discourse; and interactional analyses, which focus on elements of conversational (inter-speaker) discourse. Rodgers categorised two more types of discourse-based attitudinal analyses: the linguistically-oriented one (e.g. Johnstone & Kiesling, 2008) that explores (marked) linguistic performance

in expressions of self and other identities; and the cognitively-oriented one (e.g. Preston, 1994; Winter, 1992) which focuses on the epistemological patterns underlying attitudinal discourses.

Since the present study was an exploratory discourse-based, meta-attitudinal study, out of those five analytical approaches (topical, rhetorical, interactional, linguistic, and cognitive), a topic-oriented approach was deemed the most appropriate. To somewhat minimise the limitation of examining only one layer of discourse (topical) and allow for a more holistic discursive analysis (Rodgers, 2017), linguistic patterns and rhetorical development were occasionally examined within each topical unit. The interactive and cognitive approaches were not considered because the interactions between the interviewer and the participants were minimal and the participants' implicit knowledge schemata were beyond the scope of this paper.

The data were transcribed and thematically coded on *NVivo 12 Pro*. During data transcription and familiarisation (Goldsmith, 2021), four topics emerged. There was an expectation that the interviewees will thematise the messages and adjectives from study 2 as influences on their accent attitudes. This expectation was met and the deductively emerging topics were thematically coded as 'priming messages' and 'adjectival semantics'; i.e. accent-attitudinal influences from the participants' immediate context (see chapter 2, study 3, sections 4.1-4.2). To develop the emergent codes and to index more data (Goldsmith, 2021), manual and software-based text searches were conducted, targeting the content of the messages (e.g. "flawless"), any words referring to the messages (e.g. *message* and *text*), and the six evaluative adjectives.

Since there were no other prior expectations, the second pair of topics emerged inductively. They were thematically coded as 'collective accent attitudes' and 'personal factors'; i.e. external influences on the participants' accent attitudes (see chapter 2, study 3, sections 4.3-4.4). To develop these codes, manual and software-based text searches targeted third-person words like *they*, *them*, *theirs*, *it*, *everyone*, *others*, and the existential *there*, as well as first-person words like *I*, *my*, *me*, *mine*, due to the first- and third-person agencies that were involved in the discursive construction of these topics.

2.5 Study 4: The Social Construction of Accent(ism)

In this study, results from studies 1-3 were considered in thematising the social construction of accent attitudes, and by extension, of accent itself. Further, accentism as a legitimate form of discrimination was discussed. Weinberg's (2014) description of 'social construction' was used to create a parallel between accent and other, more well-known social constructs like age, class, disability, gender, race, and sexuality. In conjunction, a brief search for 'accentism' and 'accentist' (and even 'accent bias') in Twitter posts between December 9, 2021 and November 9, 2021, was conducted to showcase the general lack of discourse surrounding accent discrimination.

3. Project Overview

To recapitulate, this project examines the formation of accent attitudes from lexical, cognitive and affective, meta-attitudinal, and social constructionist perspectives. The constant exposure to the same pool of evaluative adjectives in accent-attitudinal studies (e.g. Fabricius, 2006; Watson and Clark, 2015) as well as in media discourses (e.g. Bennet, 2015; Cawley, 2021) arguably primes non-linguists and linguists to continue to use the same adjectives in their own evaluations and studies, respectively, thus, potentially halting the emergence of new accent-attitudinal lexicon. Study 1, therefore, investigates the (possible) emergence of novel accent-attitudinal lexicon. I use minimally restrictive scalar elicitation techniques – i.e. an unspecified attitude object in the evaluative prompt and an open-ended question format – to examine the lexical items used in the evaluations toward six recorded English-English accents (Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Standard) and to collect the scalar lexicon for studies 2-3. The expectation is that the minimally restrictive techniques will prime the participants' accent evaluations and result in the emergence of novel evaluative lexicon, thus pointing to the contextual conditioning of accent-attitudinal lexicon.

Besides the impact of the recirculation of evaluative adjectives on the lexical formation of accent attitudes, three components have been found to contribute to the formation of attitudes as a whole: cognition, affect, and/or behaviour (Eagly & Chaiken, 2014; Haddock & Zanna, 1998). Social-psychological studies have found that cognition and

affect contribute differentially to attitude formation depending on the attitude object in question (e.g. Crites et al., 1994). In conjunction, it has been found that, when an attitude toward an object is (primed to be) cognitive or affective, the adjectives chosen by the attitude holders to evaluate that object are cognitive or affective, too (e.g. Crites et al., 1994; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). In sociolinguistic studies, only the contribution of negative affect on accent-attitude formation has been investigated (e.g. Cargile & Giles, 1997; Dragojevic & Giles, 2016). Consequently, study 2 investigates the cognitive and affective influences on the formation of accent attitudes. I use the cognitive/affective adjectives from study 1 as labels on six-point evaluative scales, as well as cognitive/affective written messages, in order to prime the attitudes toward the aforementioned six English-English accents. The written messages are stylised after newspaper discourse to also examine the influence of media meta-language on accent attitudes. The expectation is that the cognitive messages and adjectives will prime the participants' attitudes toward some of the accents, and the affective messages and adjectives will prime the participants' attitudes toward the rest of the accents, thus indicating which accent attitudes are formed based on cognition and which are formed based on affect. Effective priming could reflect the media's meta-linguistic influence on accent attitudes, and the differentiation between knowledge-based and emotion-based accent attitudes could point to certain social institutions that transmit accent ideologies (e.g. education).

Whether non-linguists are aware of the influences on the formation of their own accent attitudes is another lacuna in sociolinguistic literature. Although it has been theoretically argued that non-linguists are not usually aware that their language attitudes are conditioned by social ideology (Milroy, 2007), attention has not been placed on whether they are, in fact, aware or not. There are several qualitative attitudinal studies that focus on the participants' meta-linguistic attitudinal discourse toward a single language/accent variety (e.g. Cooper, 2019; Johnstone & Kiesling, 2008), but the participants' meta-attitudinal discourse has not been scrutinised. Participants, in other words, have been asked to talk about a variety (attitudinal), but not about their attitudes toward a variety (meta-attitudinal). Study 3 investigates the awareness of non-linguists about the factors that influence the formation of their own accent attitudes. I re-expose some of the participants from study 2 to some of the messages, accent recordings, and adjectival evaluations, and

ask them to talk about their own adjectival evaluations (i.e. to engage in meta-attitudinal discourse). Deductive and inductive analyses are conducted, and the expectation is that participants will discuss various priming influences on their accent attitudes, inclusive of, but not limited to, the cognitive/affective messages and adjectives from study 2. Meta-attitudinal discourse can reveal much about how non-specialists conceptualise accent-attitudinal influences, especially since some of those influences may be impossible to capture through non-folkloristic methods.

Even though the social construction of accent attitudes is an established idea within sociolinguistics (e.g. Coupland, 2009) and there is a general acceptance that accent itself is a social construct (e.g. Lippi-Green, 2012), the specific elements that make accent a social construct – akin to ability, gender, race, and others – have not been extensively discussed. Moreover, the term 'accentism' does not tend to be used in studies about accent biases, unlike terms like 'ableism', 'genderism', and 'racism' in relevant studies (e.g Gray, 2020). Since these points are not thoroughly addressed in sociolinguistics, they are also not publicly disseminated though the media (e.g. newspapers), and thus, they rarely appear in public discourse (cf. gender discourse on Twitter as discussed in Palomino-Manjón, 2022). Study 4 discusses the social construction of accent (attitudes), and the use of the term 'accentism' through Weinberg's (2014) description of 'social construction' and a brief search of Twitter posts, spanning one month, for the terms 'accentism' and 'accentist'. More elaborate sociolinguistic discussions on the elements that make accent a social construct, and more frequent use of the term 'accentism' in sociolinguistic studies could increase public awareness (through the dissemination of studies in the media) regarding accent as a social construct and accentism as a form of discrimination.

Overall, therefore, this project investigates the socio-contextually driven formation of accent-attitudinal lexicon, accent attitudes, and accent itself. More specifically, the project, examines the (possible) emergence of novel accent-attitudinal lexicon; the cognitive and/or affective influences on the formation of accent attitudes; the awareness of non-linguists about the factors that influence the formation of their own accent attitudes; and the social construction of accent, the use of the term 'accentism'. Acquiring a deeper understanding of the formation of accent attitudes facilitates a deeper understanding of the formation of accentist attitudes, and thus, a greater potential to problematise and combat

the latter. In what follows, I present the four studies (chapter 2) and my conclusions about the project as well as future directions (chapter 3).

Chapter 2. The Studies

Study 1: Accent-Attitudinal Scalar Lexicon Elicitation

Study 2: Cognitive and Affective Accent Attitudes

Study 3: Folkloristic Accent Meta-Attitudes

Study 4: The Social Construction of Accent(ism)

Pagination flows throughout the thesis. Section, table, figure, and footnote numbering resets at the beginning of each study. The contents of the Reference list in each study are also included in the References at the end of the thesis.

Study 1. Accent-Attitudinal Scalar Lexicon Elicitation

Abstract

This study examined the evaluative discourse of non-linguists toward six English-English accents to explore the potential of novel evaluative lexicon and determine the evaluative lexes of study 2. In early attitudinal studies, the lexicon of evaluative scales was not piloted (Giles, 1970; Lambert, Giles & Picard, 1975), and more recently, it has been largely borrowed from prior studies (Fabricius, 2006; Watson & Clark, 2015). Further, the evaluative prompt in attitudinal studies specifies an (in)direct attitude object, like the accent or the speaker. Such practices hinder/slow down the folkloristic creation and circulation of new accent-attitudinal lexicon, which this study aimed to investigate by employing different methodological techniques: a pilot study with open-ended evaluative questions, which would allow for the use of any kind of evaluative discourse, and an evaluative prompt with an unspecified attitude object, which would allow the listeners to construct their own object(s) in their answers. The participants (14) listened to six English-English accents (Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Standard) and were asked to write their impressions of what they just heard. The data were analysed through word-frequency and semantic-field analyses as well as a set of selection criteria to determine the most popular evaluative lexes for study 2. It was found that the adjectives *refined*, *gentle*, *comfortable*, *friendly*, *calm*, and *happy* were the most popular evaluative tokens, which lends support to the argument that new evaluative lexicon (*refined*, *gentle*, *comfortable*, and *calm*) may spring from minimally restrictive techniques for collecting evaluative items. As there were two speakers per accent, any contrasts between the evaluations of the accents in each group are also discussed, and quantitative data from study 2 is also used for these inter-speaker comparisons.

1. Introduction

Attitudes have been a subject of examination in sociolinguistics for decades.[1] Most commonly, attitudes toward accent varieties are quantitatively measured through evaluative scales with adjectival labels (e.g. Giles, 1970; Sebastian, Ryan, Keogh & Schmidt, 1980; Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Watson & Clark, 2015). Those scales are constructed either by the researchers themselves, especially in early attitudinal studies (Giles, 1970; Strongman & Woosley, 1967), or they are borrowed from prior studies (e.g. Fabricius, 2006; Watson and Clark, 2015). On the other hand, when scales are constructed through a pilot study, they tend to be limited to a specific number of adjectives the evaluators are asked to write (e.g. Grondelaers and Van Gent, 2019) or to a specific number they can pick from an already-constructed list (e.g. Hiraga, 2005). A consequence of such collection methods for scalar lexicons is that, when attitudinal studies are reported in the media (e.g. Woolaston, 2013), non-linguists get repeatedly exposed to the same evaluative vocabulary which prompts them to consistently use it when evaluating accents.

I argue that static evaluative lexicon used by linguists is recirculated, which can hinder the use of new accent-attitudinal discourse. To speak to this issue, the present study explores the ways listeners evaluated six English-English accents when they were minimally restricted by methodological techniques. Since this study functions as a preliminary study to study 2, it also provides the most popular evaluative items for the scales of study 2. In what follows, I discuss in more detail the methodological and social impact of scalar attitudinal studies. I then describe and employ a minimally restrictive methodological approach, and I set out the criteria for picking the most popular evaluative items for study 2, before turning to a discussion of my findings.

2. Background

2.1 Scalar-Lexical Circulation in Sociolinguistic Literature

Early accent-attitudinal studies did not tend to include the preliminary collection methods of the lexicon in their nominal or numerical evaluative scales, as can be seen in Giles (1970), Lambert, Giles, and Picard (1975), Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, and Fillenbaum

[1] Attitudes are generally defined as evaluations toward an attitude object (Fazio, 2007; Haddock & Maio, 2004; Potter, 1998).

(1960), Sebastian, Ryan, Keogh, and Schmidt (1980), and Strongman and Woosley (1967). The evaluative scales in those studies were constructed by the researchers themselves and, occasionally, they were borrowed from others, like Giles (1971) and Giles, Baker, and Fielding (1975) who borrowed Strongman and Woosley's (1967) scales. Zahn and Hopper (1985) conducted a meta-analysis of 56 semantic differential items from several studies, including many of the aforementioned ones, by subjecting them to factor analysis. They created a 'universal' evaluative measurement scale, which in turn, has been used by others (e.g. Dixon, Mahoney & Cocks, 2002). While Zahn and Hopper (1985) produced a standardised evaluative vocabulary, the scalar items included in their meta-analysis originated from researcher-made evaluative discourse or from borrowed evaluative discourse.

In more recent attitudinal studies, researcher-made scales tend to be avoided, but researchers may borrow lexicon from prior studies due to its evaluative significance over the years (e.g. Fabricius, 2006; Watson & Clark, 2015). This may occur in cases where the study focuses on specific evaluative features and, thus, a pilot that determines the scalar lexicon is not needed (e.g. Labov et al., 2006, and Levon & Fox, 2014, examined the professionalism of the speakers). It may also occur when studies do not focus on the content of the scales to analyse attitudes but on new methodologies. For example, when implicit-explicit attitude types are the object of examination and implicit association tests are the focus of the study, borrowed scalar lexicon, such as 'positive-negative' and 'true-false', is used (Adams, 2019; Speelman, Spruyt, Impe & Geeraerts, 2013).

When a pilot study is conducted to gather the evaluative scalar lexicon, the most common elicitation tasks ask participants to write a certain number of adjectives (usually, three to five) (e.g. Grondelaers & Van Gent, 2019) or to choose a certain number of adjectives from an already-formed list, whose content usually comes from prior studies (e.g. Hiraga, 2005). Such tasks are limiting because they prime[2] the participants' accent-attitudinal lexicon – and by extension, their accent attitudes – to be counted, adjectival, and monolectic. Therefore, the participants are unable to express their attitudes holistically by

[2] In psychology, priming involves exposure to a stimulus which influences the perception of a subsequent stimulus (Cameron, Brown-Iannuzzi & Payne, 2012). In this case, the limited tasks prime the perception of the accents.

writing full sentences. Similarly, the phrasing of an evaluative prompt is especially important as it has been shown to influence responses (see Loftus & Palmer, 1974). Particularly, specified attitude objects, like the speaker[3] or the accent, which are the normative attitude objects in sociolinguistic attitudinal studies, can prime the participants' attitudes by interfering with the respondents' unfiltered and self-regulated attitude toward the accent to which they are exposed. For instance, it is unknowable which aspect of the speaker's performance the listeners evaluate (e.g. tone, pitch, accent, or a combination) as they are not allowed to specify their own attitude objects themselves. Therefore, accent evaluations may be limited due to the lexical choices offered to the evaluators or due to the specified attitude objects in the prompt.

2.2 Scalar-Lexical Circulation Outside Academia

The issues with borrowed scalar content, or with scales that were piloted using restrictive tasks and prompts, is that they become salient socially, too, due to the circulation of accent-attitudinal study results in public domains. Unlike the explicitly prescriptive meta-language on British accents in the 18th- and 19th-centuries (for elaborate accounts, see Agha, 2003, and Mugglestone, 2007), contemporary meta-linguistic discourse produced by linguists is (expected to be) descriptive, but it frequently becomes – inadvertently or not – prescriptive when it repeatedly appears in public media, like British newspapers (for discussions on the influence of contemporary media meta-language, see Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Dragojevic, Mastro, Giles & Sink, 2016; Milroy, 2001; Milroy & Milroy, 2012; Mugglestone, 2007). The following three titles are from articles in *The Times*, *BBC News*, and *Mail Online*, reporting on accent-attitudinal studies.

— Brummie accents rated as least intelligent (Rosemary Bennet, *The Times*, 13 January 2015)
— Essex and London accents deemed less intelligent, researchers find (Laurence Cawley, *BBC News*, 10 January 2021)

[3] In indirect accent-attitudinal studies, the most common indirect prompt contains the *speaker* as the attitude object (e.g. 'is the speaker friendly?'). The link between *accent* and *speaker* is based on the premise that an accent can prompt attitudes about the speaker's personality (see Cargile, Giles, Ryan & Bradac, 1994).

— Scousers have the 'least intelligent and least trustworthy' accent – while Devonians have the friendliest (Victoria Woolaston, *Mail Online*, 26 September 2013)

Besides the plethora of discursively-constructed, accent-ideological features in these titles (e.g. in Woolaston's, 2013, title there is no verbal marker for indirect speech, making the evaluation seem factual, unlike the other two titles where the verbs "rated" and "deemed" are used), the word "intelligent" is explicitly and ubiquitously associated with an accent, regardless of its valence. While such accent-evaluative lexicon has been found in use since the 18th-19th centuries, as aforementioned, it is important to stress the role that linguists play today when their studies are reported in the media. Particularly, the repetitive exposure of non-linguists to the same accent-evaluative vocabulary primes them to use it in (implicit or explicit) accent-evaluations in their everyday lives or when participating in attitudinal studies. Similarly, linguists are also primed by the constant exposure to the same evaluative lexes appearing in prior studies and in study reports in the media. This creates a circle whereby linguists may utilise a fixed attitudinal vocabulary in their studies without piloting it, or by piloting it using restrictive tasks like adjective lists, which also utilise the same vocabulary. When those studies are reported in the media, thus reaching non-linguistic audiences, the circle is sustained. Consequently, new evaluative lexes do not emerge and the same characterisations, like (un)educated, (un)intelligent, (un)friendly, circulate ad infinitum (e.g. the article titles above span a period of 8 years but report on the same accent characterisation, "intelligent"). The implications of a stagnant evaluative lexicon, therefore, are methodologically relevant, as described in section 2.1, but also socially relevant, and may hinder the emergence of novel attitudinal lexicon.

The present study aims to minimise these drawbacks through the use of minimally restrictive methodological techniques. I argue that, by priming the participants' accent evaluations with minimal restrictions, new evaluative lexicon may emerge, thus, foregrounding the importance of carefully considered scalar-elicitation pilot studies. I use open-ended questions and a prompt that contains an unspecified attitude object to examine the evaluations of six English-English accents. My analysis of the data through a word-frequency query and semantic-field categorisation includes several selection criteria that cater to the second purpose of this study, which is to provide the evaluative scalar lexicon

for study 2. Further, each of the six accent varieties was performed by two speakers to allow for the evaluations toward the recordings of each accent pair to be contrasted. The last section of this paper is dedicated to investigating whether inter-speaker variability significantly impacted listener evaluations and whether the two accents which were identified as Standard by me – based on their phonetic features – were also evaluated as such by the listeners.

3. Methodology

3.1 Procedure

Upon arrival to the laboratory, the participants were provided with the study information sheet and a consent form to sign, after which, they entered a computer booth where they were instructed to wear a headset with volume control and follow the instructions on the computer monitor. The shortest sessions lasted around 30 minutes and the longest ones around 60 minutes.

3.2 Experiment Structure

The study consisted of three blocks: two practice trials (practice accents), twelve main trials (main accents), and a questions block. The purpose of the practice trials was to allow participants to get accustomed to the experiment. To avoid any disparity between the evaluations in blocks 1 and 2, the data from block 1 were not analysed. In the questions block, the participants reported what they thought the purpose of the study was, and the majority (36 out of 47) mentioned accents as the subject of examination, while none of them mentioned the content of the recordings. Below is a short representation of an accent trial and the questions block.

A. Trial format
    1. Continuous train engine sound in background.
    2. Randomised accent recording (see script below), with accompanying text on screen: *You are on the train and the passenger next to you is on the phone…*
        — Yes. So I told him to take it because I could only look for one of them. Did you call?

— Right. How did it go?

— We'll keep going then. That seems fair.

— No, I can't right now. I need to take care of something else.

— It may help when he comes back in a few months, but I'm not sure.

— Yeah, I will be going to that thing at eight, but I think I'll leave early; probably about nine.

— Did you hear the news?

— Yeah, it won't last long. I saw it yesterday at four during our meal.

— The book?

— I did. It is much better than the other one.

3. *What are your impressions of what you just heard? Try to be as descriptive as possible*.

   [open-ended, fill-in text box]

4. *Is there anything else you would like to add to your impressions of what you just heard?*

   [open-ended, fill-in text box]

B. Questions block

1. *What do you think this study is about?*

   [open-ended, fill-in text box]

2. *What is you gender?*

   [multiple choice: male; female; non-binary]

3. *What is your age?*

   [multiple choice: 18-30; 31-40; 41+]

4. *List all the places where you have resided and the length of residence in each place in chronological order, from least recent to most recent*.

   [open-ended, fill-in text box]

5. *Which place(s) does your accent originate from? Please, be as descriptive as possible. If you do not associate your accent with one or more specific places, explain why.*

   [open-ended, fill-in text box]

3.3 Immersive Setting

As can be seen in A1-A2, a train ride setting was chosen for the whole experiment to elicit situational immersion and increase ecological validity. A train engine was heard on a loop throughout the first two blocks, and a train whistle was heard before each accent recording was about to start in order to maintain or recapture the listeners' attention. The acoustic stimuli were borrowed from the International Affective Digital Sounds (IADS; Bradley & Lang, 2007).[4] Besides being passengers on a train, no other information about the speakers was provided. Further, the recording content itself, one side of a telephone conversation, revealed little-to-no information about the speaker's identity. As Hilton and Jeong (2019) found for the majority of linguistic features they examined, the less information the listeners knew about a speaker, the more the linguistic feature under examination contributed to their attitudes toward it.

3.4 Accent Recordings

Each recording (A2) lasted 40 seconds and was heard once by the participants. The recorded speakers were female native English speakers who were born and raised in England and were students at The University of Manchester, between the ages of 18-30, and whose accents originated from specific English cities. These eligibility criteria also allowed for a certain amount of control over social macro-variables like age (18-30), education (university), educational institution (The University of Manchester), and national identity (born and raised in England). The Matched-Guise Technique, where one speaker performs all accent guises (Lambert et al., 1960), was not used in this study in order to further increase its natural validity and avoid the potentially stereotypical performances of various accents by a single speaker.

The practice recordings were of two speakers whose accents were from London and Manchester but who were not born in England. The speakers in the twelve main recordings were born and raised in England and their accents were from Birmingham (2), Liverpool (2),

[4] The IADS contains the ratings of several standardised audio stimuli on pleasure/valence (unhappy to happy), arousal (relaxed to excited), and dominance (in-control to dominated), ranging from 0.00-9.00. The train sound in this study was picked from the most neutrally-rated sounds across all three dimensions (scores of 4.50-5.50) in order not to draw the participants' attention away from the recordings.

London (3), Manchester (2), Newcastle (2), and Oxford (1). Based on the features of the Received Pronunciation listed in Hughes, Trudgill, and Watt (2013), the recordings of one of the three speakers from London and the speaker from Oxford were the closest representatives of the Standard accent,[5] which was further validated in this study (see section 4.4).[6] These accents have received the most extreme ratings and rankings (highest and lowest) in prior studies (Dixon, Mahoney & Cocks, 2002; Giles, 1970; Giles, Baker & Fielding, 1975; Hiraga, 2005; Watson & Clark, 2015), thus offering a substantial attitudinal background to this study.

3.5 Evaluative Prompt

As aforementioned, the evaluative prompts in this study (A3-A4) were open-ended and contained an unspecified attitude object ("*what you just heard*") so as not to restrict the participants' evaluative discourse. The purpose of the second evaluation prompt (A4) was to collect any remaining evaluations. The answers from the second prompt, where present, were combined with those of the first prompt for data analysis.

3.6 Questions Block and Participants

Data from the questions block (B) were used to validate the study's eligibility criteria and gather more information to be used during analysis where relevant. All participants had to be native English speakers, born and raised in England, between 18-30 years of age, and studying at The University of Manchester in subjects other than Linguistics, to minimise inter-subject discrepancies in responses to sociolinguistic matters (e.g. linguistics students might be more likely to provide strictly non-prescriptive accent evaluations). In total, 14

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[5] When referring to the project's speaker accent, specifically, the word is capitalised ('Standard accent'). In references to the project's standard-accented listeners and in general references to the accent, lower case is used ('standard accent').

[6] In this paper, the term 'standard' encompasses concepts relevant to the United Kingdom's folk-sociolinguistic scape, such as received pronunciation, queen's English, correct, posh, proper, supraregional, while 'non-standard' is associated with concepts such as regional and foreign, although foreign accents are not relevant in this paper. These associations are reflected in the qualitative evaluations of the Standard-accent recordings in this study (see section 4.4) and in various theoretical discussions and applications of the term 'standard' (see Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Dragojevic & Giles, 2016; Milroy, 2007; Mugglestone, 2007). While I do not accept (non)standardness as an innate language feature, I use it to represent the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable forms of language that exists in the accent-attitudinal reality of non-linguists (and oftentimes, linguists).

responses were analysed. Twelve out of the 14 participants were aware that the purpose of the study (B1) was to evaluate people's accents; thus, it can be assumed that 'accent' was the attitude object they were evaluating. Table 1 shows the participants' gender, accent, and region information.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Gender	**Frequency**
Female	10
Male	2
Non-binary	2
Region	**Frequency**
North England	3
South England	11
Accent	**Frequency**
North English	3
South English	4
Standard	7

3.7 Study 2

As data analysis was aimed at determining the scalar vocabulary of study 2, it is worth briefly mentioning the purpose and format of study 2 to make sense of the coding criteria mentioned below (section 3.8). Study 2 examined whether attitudes toward the six English-English accents are formed from cognition/belief or affect/emotion.[7] To that end, I designed priming messages that contained cognitive or affective information to see which one would influence the attitudes toward each accent variety and, thus, determine the basis (cognitive or affective) of each accent attitude. To determine this, the scalar items had to be cognitive or affective themselves since the expectation was that the priming adjectives

[7] The distinction between cognitive and affective attitudes is based on the social-psychological tripartite model of attitudes, according to which, attitudes are created based on cognition (thoughts, beliefs, or knowledge) about, affect (emotions or feelings) about, and/or behaviour (past, presented, or intended actions) toward an attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken, 2014; Haddock & Zanna, 1998; Katz, 1960).

would significantly interact with the messages. Simply put, it was expected that the cognitive messages would elicit more cognitive scalar evaluations toward some accents, thus indicating that those accent attitudes are based more on cognition; and the affective messages would elicit more affective scalar evaluations toward other accents thus indicating that those accent attitudes are based more on affect (Crites, Fabrigar & Petty, 1994; Edwards, 1990; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). Consequently, criterion (j) below (section 3.8) takes into account the cognitive and affective scores in the *Evaluative Lexicon 2.0* (*EL 2.0*; Rocklage, Rucker & Nordgren, 2018)[8] to arrive at a balanced amount of cognitive and affective evaluative vocabulary for study 2.

3.8 Analytical Approach

The software used to analyse the data was *NVivo 12 Pro* (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2020). I ran a word-frequency query on the qualitative data from questions A3-A4 and filtered the results against a set of selection criteria in order to determine the scalar lexicon for study 2. The majority of these selection criteria were based on the objectives of study 2, as the scalar lexicon was to be used in study 2. Below is the exhaustive list of the criteria for replicability purposes (Tagliamonte & Pabst, 2020). The lexes that fulfilled criteria (a)-(g) were placed in semantic fields. Overall, to determine which lexical types belonged to each semantic field, I considered the co-occurrences of their tokens in participant responses (Gliozzo & Strapparava, 2009). In other words, I examined whether the tokens of different types appeared in close proximity to one another and grouped them under one semantic field when they did. Words from these semantic fields were chosen as labels for the evaluative scales in study 2, if they fulfilled criteria (h)-(l). The criteria are elaborately discussed and exemplified in sections 4.1-4.3. Specifically, criteria (a)-(d) are examined in section 4.1; criteria (e)-(g) are examined in section 4.2; and criteria (h)-(l) are examined in section 4.3.

[8] The *EL 2.0* contains the emotionality (low/cognitive to high/affective), valence (low/negative to high/positive), and extremity (low = close to the valence scale midpoint; high = far from the valence scale midpoint) ratings, from 0.00 to 9.00, of over 1.500 English words, provided by more than 600 native-English speakers. The words were gathered from over 9 million online reviews, 1 million tweets, and over 10,000 movie and TV scripts.

(a) Tokens which did not evaluate attitude objects that were related to the accent, the speaker of the recording, or the recording as a whole were excluded from consideration for study 2 as the study examined accent attitudes.

(b) Tokens which evaluated the pronunciation of specific words were excluded from consideration for study 2 as the study examined attitudes holistically – i.e. study 2 did not look at real-time reactions but, instead, asked participants to evaluate the recordings after they were fully heard.

(c) Tokens which evaluated the content of the recording (e.g. a specific word, or a specific phrase) rather than its sound were excluded from consideration for study 2 as the study focused on the sound of the recordings and not their lexical content.

(d) Tokens which evaluated the accents geographically/nationally/racially were excluded from consideration for study 2 as the study did not examine the geographic/ethnic placement of accents by listeners.

(e) For a type to be included in a semantic field, its tokens had to be in a monolectic or a hyphenated-compound form because the *EL 2.0* contains monolectic and hyphenated-compound entries only.

(f) For a type to be included in a semantic field, its tokens could not be in comparative or superlative forms as comparisons between accents would be inappropriate when multiple accent recordings are evaluated (study 2).

(g) For a type to be included in a semantic field, its tokens had to be congruent with the rest of the types in that field, i.e. their valence had to be either positive or negative. The purpose of this parameter was to maintain scalar consistency in study 2 and avoid scalar lexes contradicting each other due to the potentiality of antonymy. Depending on the valence of the most popular evaluative type, all semantic fields were chosen to contain either positive or negative types.

(h) Only the type with the most tokens in each semantic field was considered for study 2 so as to ensure semantic variety in the evaluative scales of study 2.

(i) The tokens of all types under consideration for study 2 had to be found in the answers of at least two participants and toward at least two different accents so that an amount of evaluative generalisability could be claimed.

(j) All types under consideration for study 2 had to be listed in the *EL 2.0* in order to provide the cognitive, midpoint, and affective scores needed for study 2.[9] Types that were not listed in the *EL 2.0* were excluded.

(k) All types under consideration for study 2 had to be either exclusively monolectic or exclusively hyphenated compounds to maintain scalar consistency. The most popular form among the types under consideration dictated the form of the scalar lexes for study 2.

(l) An equal amount of cognitive, midpoint, and affective types would comprise the scalar lexicon of study 2 for consistency.

I also examined whether the inter-speaker evaluations within each accent group (Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Standard) were congruent – i.e. whether they were both positive or both negative for each listener – for each listener to verify that inter-speaker variation did not play a significant role in the evaluation of the accents. Entire participant responses were coded for their valence on *NVivo* and then compared with each other within each accent pair. If a response contained both positive and negative discourse (e.g. "They seemed friendly but maybe superficial"), the valenced instances were counted against each other and the valence with the majority of instances prevailed as the response's valence. If the valenced instances were ambivalent (both valences equally), they were discarded from the total count (Tagliamonte & Pabst, 2020) and did not receive a valence judgment. If the responses were neutral (i.e. no discernible valence; neither positive, nor negative) they were also discarded without a valence judgment (e.g. "Could be a Lancashire voice"). As well as that, I looked at whether the phonetically-based categorisation of the London and Oxford accents into the Standard accent group (see chapter 1, sections 2.1c and 2.1e) agreed with the listeners' evaluations. Finally, I used the quantitative attitudinal data from study 2 (i.e. the scalar ratings of the six adjectives that emerged in this study) to further scrutinise the evaluative (in)consistency

[9] In Rocklage, Rucker, and Nordgren (2018), adjectives with scores close to the midpoint of the emotionality scale (0.00-9.00) were treated as either affective or cognitive, depending on the direction. While this binary coding makes for easier calculations, an adjective with a 2.5 score differs from one with a 4.4 score, although they would both be categorised as cognitive. In this study, the two near-midpoint adjectives were treated as neither cognitive, nor affective.

between the two speakers of each accent group. In section 4, I present examples of excluded and included evaluative tokens for study 2; the inter-speaker congruency results; the standard-accent evaluations; and the inter-speaker scalar evaluations from study 2.

4. Findings and Discussion

This accent-attitudinal study employed open-ended evaluative questions with prompts containing an unspecified attitude object to examine whether such minimally restrictive format would elicit the emergence of new evaluative lexicon. Moreover, the study served as a preliminary study to study 2, so a set of selection criteria was imposed on the data in order to provide the evaluative lexicon for the scales in study 2. The significance of inter-speaker variation within each accent group (two speakers per group) was also investigated. In what follows, I present textual evidence of the selection criteria listed above (criteria a-l), culminating in the evaluative lexes of study 2 – some of which are novel, to my knowledge – as well as the results from the comparisons between the listener evaluations of each accent group.

4.1 Attitude Objects (criteria a-d)

(a) Tokens which did not evaluate attitude objects that were related to the accent, the speaker of the recording, or the recording as a whole were excluded from consideration for study 2 as the study examined accent attitudes.

(b) Tokens which evaluated the pronunciation of specific words were excluded from consideration for study 2 as the study examined attitudes holistically – i.e. study 2 did not look at real-time reactions but, instead, asked participants to evaluate the recordings after they were fully heard.

(c) Tokens which evaluated the content of the recording (e.g. a specific word, or a specific phrase) rather than its sound were excluded from consideration for study 2 as the study focused on the sound of the recordings and not their lexical content.

(d) Tokens which evaluated the accents geographically/nationally/racially were excluded from consideration for study 2 as the study did not examine the geographic/ethnic placement of accents by listeners.

Due to the unspecified nature of the attitude object provided in the evaluation prompts of this study, the listeners were given the agency to structure their evaluations in a way that does not limit them to characterise only the speaker, as in other indirect accent-attitude studies (e.g. Watson & Clark, 2015), or only the accent, like in direct studies (e.g. Coupland & Bishop, 2007). Therefore, although the analysis of such open-ended responses can be time-consuming, the participants could construct and evaluate the speaker, the accent, and/or the recording as a whole, if desirable. Results from the frequency query showed that the following recording-related attitude objects were used multiple times and by multiple participants: *she*, *accent*, *person*, *conversation*, *speaker*, *voice*, *tone*, *woman*, and *girl*. Below are some examples (1-8). Due to the relatively unrestricted question format, some participants chose to write in full sentences like in (1), while others provided their evaluations in bullet points or telegraphically like in (5). As is evident, *she*, *person*, *speaker*, *woman*, and *girl* refer to the interlocutor, so the interlocutor was the most popular attitude object. Other attitude objects were also found but were rarely used: *delivery* (3 tokens; 2 participants), *pace* (1 token; 1 participant), *pitch* (3 tokens; 1 participant), *volume* (1 token; 1 participant), *individual* (2 tokens; 1 participant), *chat* (3 tokens; 2 participants), and *version* (7 tokens; 1 participant).

(1) She seemed friendly and approachable.
(2) I believe she is from Birmingham, it's not a pretty accent.
(3) casual conversation.
(4) the speaker sounds a little more formal, maybe bored.
(5) low voice.
(6) The speaker has a serious tone.[10]
(7) The woman on the phone is quite well-to-do.
(8) the girl here seems a lot nicer.

It was often unclear whether *tone*, *voice*, *delivery*, *pace*, *pitch*, *and volume* were related to the accent or to a speaker idiosyncrasy that superseded their accent, so

[10] Here, it is the speaker's tone that is directly described as "serious", not the speaker themselves.

evaluative tokens toward those objects were excluded from consideration (criterion a). While *speaker* (*she*, *woman*, *girl*, *speaker*, *individual*), *accent*, and *conversation*/*chat*/*version* could also contain speaker idiosyncrasies, the data did not point to that. Evaluations of *conversation*, *chat*, and *version* were not excluded because these attitude objects referred to the recording as a whole, which was relevant to criterion (a). There were also instances where no attitude object was mentioned due to subject omissions (e.g. "seems purposeful-more confident"). Those instances, too, were included for consideration since they also seemed to provide a holistic evaluation of the recordings.

It is important to note that the tokens of a type were excluded or included, but not the type itself. For instance, while "calm" in "Original calm tone does return by end" evaluates "tone" and was thus excluded from consideration, the other tokens of *calm* were not (con)textually related to *tone*, so they were not excluded from consideration. However, when the majority of tokens of a type did not meet the criteria, the type was excluded altogether. An example of that was *interested* which had 16 tokens in total, across 5 participants, but 9 of its tokens did not meet the selection criteria, so the word type was discarded altogether.

Examples (9-11) below show instances of excluded evaluative tokens as they did not meet selection criteria (b-d). It is important to stress that contextual, (inter)sentential relations were at the core of this study (see Gliozzo & Strapparava, 2009, for a discussion on the importance of language-in-use in structuring semantic fields and domains[11]). In other words, to examine the meaning and valence of a token and include or exclude its type into or from a semantic field, the co-occurrences in its surrounding textual environment were taken into account. In (9), the participant evaluates the accent as "quite easy to listen to" in spite of the existence of "some words" and "sounds" which deviate from "southern english". The evaluative token, therefore, directly addresses specific words that deviate from "southern english" and sounds and does not meet criterion (b). Relatedly, in (10), the participant evaluates the speaker ("they") as sounding "unimpressed", but only with regards to a particular segment of the recording ("'the news'") and not with regards to the entire

[11] It should be noted that Gliozzo and Strapparava (2009) discuss how lexical co-occurrence patterns should be examined across an entire corpus in order to construct 'semantic domains' (their version of 'semantic fields'). This would be equivalent to the domain of (LANGUAGE) ATTITUDES in the present study. However, I treated at (LANGUAGE) ATTITUDES as an umbrella domain with sub-domains/fields (see section 4.2).

recording, i.e. it does not meet criterion (c). Finally, in (11), the participant evaluates the accent by geographically placing it. The geographical identification of accents was not examined in this project, so any such evaluative tokens were excluded from consideration (criterion d).

(9) she also shortens some words rather than enunciating every syllable, and their 'a' sounds pronounced as 'ehh' sounds. It's a melodic accent and despite the changes from southern english is quite easy to listen to.
(10) they sound quite unimpressed with 'the news'.
(11) possible North East/Northumbria/Newcastle accent.

4.2 Semantic Fields (selection criteria e-g)

(e) For a type to be included in a semantic field, its tokens had to be in a monolectic or a hyphenated-compound form because the *EL 2.0* contains monolectic and hyphenated-compound entries only.
(f) For a type to be included in a semantic field, its tokens could not be in comparative or superlative forms as comparisons between accents would be inappropriate when multiple accent recordings are evaluated (study 2).
(g) For a type to be included in a semantic field, its tokens had to be congruent with the rest of the types in that field, i.e. their valence had to be either positive or negative. The purpose of this parameter was to maintain scalar consistency in study 2 and avoid scalar lexes contradicting each other due to the potentiality of antonymy. Depending on the valence of the most popular evaluative type, all semantic fields were chosen to contain either positive or negative types.

Examples of monolectic and hyphenated compound tokens (criterion e) can be seen in the samples above (see 7 for a hyphenated compound). There were no non-adjectival monolectic tokens (e.g. 'this accent is vibes') in the data. Moreover, instances like (9) above were discarded because phrasal evaluative tokens like "easy to listen to" cannot be taken apart and stand as monolectic evaluative units. Further, intensifier tokens, like "quite" in (9), were not considered because study 2 contained its own 'intensifiers', i.e. the numerical

scales. Types could also not be comparative or superlative like in (12) below (criterion f), because the participants in study 2 would not know with which of the previous accents to compare the one they were evaluating, nor would comparative and superlative evaluative lexes be appropriate for the first accent recording in a row.

(12) Although she possibly has the strongest accent so far she enunciated much better than some others.

To determine whether the semantic fields would carry positive or negative valence, for consistency in study 2 and so as to avoid contradictory lexes in the scales (criterion g), the valence of the most popular monolectic adjective or adjectival hyphenated compound was examined. Results showed that the most frequent adjective token was the monolectic adjective *friendly* with 9 tokens across 5 participants. Decontextually, *friendly* is a positive adjective with an *EL 2.0* valence score of 7.88 out of 9.00, the latter value being the most positive. In this study, too, *friendly* always carried a positive valence based on its (inter)sentential context, like in (1) above and (13) below. As *friendly* was the most used adjective type with a (de)contextual positive valence, the rest of the adjectives that would be included in semantic fields also had to carry a positive valence.

(13) They seem bubbly and friendly, I think they'd be good fun to be around.

Although quite frequently used, the types *posh*, *middle-class*, and *upper-class* were not considered due to their contrasting valences in different contexts in the UK. For instance, 'posh' can be used (neutrally or positively) to describe individuals as middle-class or upper-class. However, 'posh' can also be used negatively to mean "'snobbish'" (Trudgill, 2001, p. 6) or "'snob'" (Garret, Coupland & Williams, 2003, p.193). In this project, for instance, 'posh' was used overtly negatively by a participant (see study 3, section 4.2). Similarly, besides (neutral) descriptions of socioeconomic status, 'middle' and 'upper' class characterisations have been associated with notions of 'pretentiousness' in the UK (Archer, 2012).

Based on the aforementioned criteria (a-g) and on the close proximity of the remaining eligible types, six semantic fields were created. Below are the types included in each field with their token counts in square brackets. Numbers rather than names were assigned to the semantic fields as detailing the nomenclature of semantic fields was beyond the scope of this study.

1: gentle [1], soft-spoken [1], soft-sounding [1], soothing [1]
2: calm [2], rational [1]
3: approachable [1], casual [5], colloquial [1], conversational [2], friendly [9]
4: comfortable [1], relaxed [3]
5: refined [1], well-spoken [2], well-to-do [1]
6: bubbly [1], cheerful [2], chirpy [1], happy [3], pleasant [1]

In cases where the relationship between two tokens was not made immediately clear despite appearing in close proximity, I searched for other instances of the same tokens or meanings. Starting with semantic fields 1-2, while some of the types in them may be near-synonyms in some cases, in this study they were not used as such. Particularly*, calm* was connected to "No obvious emotion" and "rational" like in (14-15) below, whereas *gentle* was related to "soothing" through the use of a forward slash between the two words (16). Similarly, although the types in semantic fields 3-4 may be related semantically in some cases, they did not co-occur in this study. Instead*, friendly* was used interchangeably with tokens such as *casual*, like in (17), while *relaxed* was connected to *comfortable*, like in (18). After all, even in a decontextualised sense, comfortability does not entail friendliness. Sentences (19-20) contain examples from semantic fields 5-6, respectively.

(14) No obvious emotion she seems calm and put together.
(15) quite calm and rational individual.
(16) easy to understand and soothing/gentle.
(17) less casual/friendly.
(18) she is relaxed and comfortable with whomever she is on the phone with.
(19) I would also state that she is middle-class because her accent is quite refined.

(20) sounds chirpy and happy!

4.3 Scalar Lexicon for Study 2 (selection criteria h-l)

(h) Only the type with the most tokens in each semantic field was considered for study 2 so as to ensure semantic variety in the evaluative scales of study 2.

(i) The tokens of all types under consideration for study 2 had to be found in the answers of at least two participants and toward at least two different accents so that an amount of evaluative generalisability could be claimed.

(j) All types under consideration for study 2 had to be listed in the *EL 2.0* in order to provide the cognitive, midpoint, and affective scores needed for study 2. Types that were not listed in the *EL 2.0* were excluded.

(k) All types under consideration for study 2 had to be either exclusively monolectic or exclusively hyphenated compounds to maintain scalar consistency. The most popular form among the types under consideration dictated the form of the scalar lexes for study 2.

(l) An equal amount of cognitive, midpoint, and affective types would comprise the scalar lexicon of study 2 for consistency.

From the types within each semantic field, the following had the most tokens (criterion h), where applicable; were used by more than one participant (criterion i), where applicable; and were listed in the *EL 2.0* (criterion j): *gentle* from semantic field 1, *calm* from semantic field 2, *friendly* from semantic field 3, *relaxed* from semantic field 4, *refined* from semantic field 5, and *happy* from semantic field 6. In semantic field 1, all items had the same amount of tokens (criterion h) and were not used by more than one participant (criterion i), but *gentle* was the only item that was listed in the *EL 2.0* (criterion j) and was, thus, picked. In semantic field 5, *refined* did not fulfil criteria (h-i) and *well-spoken* did, but the latter item was not listed in the *EL 2.0* – and neither was *well-to-do* – so *refined* was picked (criterion j). This replacement also meant that all the types were uniformly monolectic (criterion k).

From cognitive to midpoint to affective, the *EL 2.0* scores (0.00-9.00) of the six evaluative types were: *refined* (3.11) and *relaxed* (3.81); *gentle* (4.15) and *friendly* (4.86); and *calm* (5.07) and *happy* (7.41). On the affective end, *calm* and *happy* were well-spread

with 2.34 points between them, but on the cognitive end, *refined* and *relaxed* were scored very close to one another with only 0.70 points between them. Due to this inconsistency, I replaced *relaxed* with *comfortable* (4.87) from semantic field 4, since *refined* could not be replaced by another type from its set. *Comfortable* had fewer tokens than *relaxed* and was used by one participant only, but the importance of a balanced set of cognitive, affective, and midpoint scales in study 2 superseded criterion (i). Therefore, *comfortable* would serve as another midpoint entry alongside *friendly*, and *gentle* would join *refined* on the cognitive side (criterion l). Table 2 below lists the final six entries for the evaluative scales of study 2.

Table 2: Emotionality and Valence Scores of Scalar Evaluative Adjectives

Adjectives	Emotionality Score	Valence Score (Positive)
Refined	3.11 (cognitive)	6.48
Gentle	4.15 (cognitive)	7.19
Friendly	4.86 (midpoint)	7.88
Comfortable	4.87 (midpoint)	7.08
Calm	5.07 (affective)	7.13
Happy	7.41 (affective)	7.89

Friendly and *happy* have been used in accent-evaluative scales of previous studies. *Friendly* has been used to evaluate English-English accents in multiple studies (Fabricius, 2006; Montgomery & Moore, 2018; Watson & Clark, 2015), and has been mentioned in newspapers articles (e.g. Cawley, 2021; Parry, 2021; Woolaston, 2013). However, the only study I am aware of where *happy* was used to evaluate accents is Lambert et al.'s (1975) who examined French Americans' attitudes to French accent varieties (Canadian, European, and Madawaskan French), Madawaskan English, and non-regional English. Therefore, that study did not exclusively concern the UK context or UK language ideologies. Moreover, *calm* and *comfortable* have been used in prior studies, but only to evaluate the listeners' mood (see Cargile & Giles, 1997, and Giles, 1970, respectively).[12] Consequently, *refined*, *gentle*,

[12] Similar to Lambert et al. (1975), which was not set in the UK context, Cargile and Giles' (1997) study concerned language ideologies in the USA. Other studies that have used *comfortable* and *calm*/*gentle* to evaluate accents are Setzer, Nicoladis, and Baquiran (2021) and Carrie (2017), respectively, the former of which was set in Canada and the latter of which was set in Spain.

comfortable, and *calm* have not been used to evaluate English-English accents.[13] Decontextualised synonyms, near-synonyms, or related words, however, have been used, like "kind" in Dixon et al. (2002). Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that novel evaluative vocabulary can emerge when accent evaluations are primed by minimally restrictive scalar elicitation techniques, i.e. unspecified attitude objects in the evaluative prompts of pilot studies and unrestricted production of evaluative content.

4.4 Interspeaker Accent Comparison

In the last section of this study, I compared the valence of the evaluations toward the two recordings of each accent variety to verify that accent similarities supersede speaker-specific idiosyncrasies. The evaluations of the accents within each accent pair and each listener had to be congruent. For instance, if the evaluations of a listener toward both Manchester accents were positive, the evaluations would be considered congruent (same valence). In contrast, if the evaluation of a listener toward one Manchester accent was positive and the evaluation of the same listener toward the other Manchester accent was negative, the evaluations would be considered incongruent (opposite valences). Ambivalent evaluations toward one or both accents in each accent pair did not receive a valence judgment (Tagliamonte & Pabst, 2020). I also looked at whether the evaluations toward the two Standard accents contained similar evaluative discourse with each other and different discourse from the evaluations toward the other accents, to confirm that the participants perceived those accents as the 'standard' ones. Lastly, to further validate the inter-speaker comparisons for all six accents, I examined the quantitative scalar ratings from study 2.

Both Birmingham accents were evaluated negatively by nine participants (e.g. "The girl sounds meaner and more dismissive") and positively by three (e.g. "The speaker sounds relaxed"). Two participants provided ambivalent evaluations (e.g. "They seemed friendly but maybe superficial"). Both Manchester accents were evaluated negatively by five participants, positive by one, and incongruently by three (e.g. a participant provided the following evaluations toward the two Manchester accents: "I think she sounded a bit hostile" / "seemed straight-talking which I like"). Five participants provided ambivalent

[13] Even *well-spoken* and *relaxed*, which were replaced by *refined* and *comfortable*, do not appear in evaluative scales within the UK context, to my knowledge.

evaluations. Both Liverpool accents were evaluated negatively by three participants and incongruently by one. Ten participants provided ambivalent evaluations. Both London accents were evaluated negatively by two participants, positively by five, and incongruently by one. Six participants provided ambivalent evaluations. Both Newcastle accents were evaluated positively by three participants, and incongruently by two. No participant evaluated the Newcastle accents negatively. Eight participants provided ambivalent evaluations. Finally, both Standard accents were evaluated negatively by two participants, positively by five, and incongruently by three. Four participants provided ambivalent evaluations. Therefore, overall, the evaluations of the accents in each pair were mostly congruent for each participant.[14] The small portion of incongruent evaluations within each accent pair could be due to the recordings being heard in a randomised order – to avoid fixed order biases – which meant that the participants' evaluations toward the two accents from the same group could have differed depending on which accents were heard between them, if any.

Regarding the use of standard-accent evaluative discourse across the two phonetically Standard accents (London and Oxford), *southern* was the only identical evaluative lexis, but there were several tokens of standard-language ideology, unlike in the evaluations toward the rest of the accents. Examples (21-23) below contain evaluations toward the London accent, and (24-26) contain evaluations toward the Oxford accent.

(21) This speaker definitely comes from either the south-east of England or a more upper-middle-class area outside of that region. It is difficult to determine the tenor of her voice because of her highly received pronunciation.

(22) she was very well spoken, very clear, no accent. Potential middle class. She doesn't have a London accent, but sounded Southern, maybe from somewhere surrounding London.

[14] The focus in this section is on the evaluative congruency within each accent pair and each listener and not across accent pairs and listeners. However, it is worth mentioning that, across accents and listeners, the evaluations were mostly negative toward the Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool pairs, and mostly positive toward the Newcastle, London, and Standard pairs. This evaluative differentiation is in accordance with prior research (e.g. Dixon, Mahoney & Cocks, 2002; Giles, 1970; Thorne, 2005; Watson & Clark, 2015).

(23) The way she spoke made me think she was upper class or from a background without much hardship.

(24) No accent again.

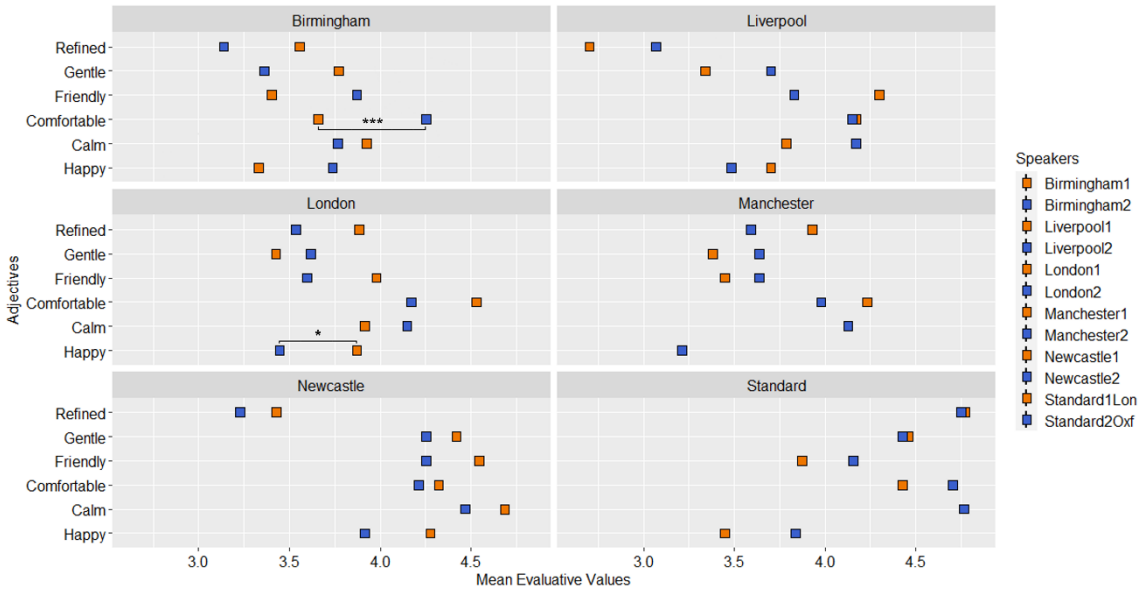
(25) Somewhere Southern/generic accent.

(26) I would argue a city home for the speaker as they have quite a general English accent with no real defining features that alert any definite origin.

The middle/upper classes (21-23), the label 'received pronunciation' (21), the accent absence (22, 24), the accent genericness/generality (25-26), the supra-regionality (26), and at the same time, the geographic association with the south(east) of England (21-22, 25) are heavily featured in standard(ist) English-English accent ideology (see Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Dragojevic & Giles, 2016; Milroy, 2007; Mugglestone, 2007). Therefore, the phonetically-based placement of the London and Oxford speakers in the Standard accent group coincided with the qualitative evaluations of the two accents in this study.

Both the inter-speaker congruency results and the results specific to the labelling of the two Standard accents were further corroborated by data collected in study 2. Specifically, I compared the mean values of each of the six adjectives (*refined*, *gentle*, *friendly*, *comfortable*, *calm*, and *happy*) within each accent pair, as provided by the 47 listener-participants, on six-point scales, in study 2. Figure 1 shows the mean adjectival evaluations of each accent within an accent group. Each of the six panels represents an accent group. Within each panel, the mean evaluations of both accents of the group are shown for each of the six evaluative adjectives. Significant differences are indicated with asterisks. In three cases (i.e. Manchester-*happy*, Manchester-*calm*, and London-*calm*), the mean adjectival ratings toward the two speakers of the accent overlap entirely, so only one mean value point per adjective is visible.

Figure 1: Evaluations by Speaker Accent and Evaluative Adjective (significance signs: 0 '****' 0.001 '***' 0.01 '**' 0.05 '*')



As can be seen, there were only two significantly different adjectival ratings between the speakers of the same variety: the ratings of *comfortable* for the two Birmingham speakers (p = 0.0095), and the ratings of *happy* for the two London speakers (p = 0.0496). Although these differences were significant, their occurrences do not mark a consistent pattern. Firstly, only two significant adjectival rating differences occurred out of the 36 instances where significant differences could have occurred but did not (six adjectives per each of the six accent groups). Secondly, both significant differences concerned different accent groups (Birmingham and London) and different adjectives (*comfortable* and *happy*), so they were not consistent for only one accent group or one adjective. Therefore, based on (a) the valence results of the qualitative evaluative comments in this study, (b) the tokens of standard-language ideology in the two Standard-accent evaluations, and (c) the quantitative adjectival ratings of study 2, the evaluations toward the two speakers of each accent group did not diverge notably.

5. Conclusion

The present study used minimally restrictive methods – i.e. open-ended questions and prompts with no specified attitude objects – to explore the potential emergence of novel evaluative lexes and determine the evaluative lexicon for study 2. The use of

alternative methods of scalar elicitation was prompted by the constant circulation of the same scalar lexicon across various attitudinal studies and media outlets reporting on those studies, and the lexical priming that results from – and, simultaneously, instigates – that circulation. Evaluations toward six English-English accents were analysed through a word-frequency query and semantic field categorisation and were filtered through a set of selection criteria. It was found that four out the six scalar items that were picked for study 2 have not been used in prior English-English accent-attitudinal studies, thus, highlighting the need for carefully considered scalar-elicitation pilot studies. This shows that with minimally restrictive methods, novel evaluative vocabulary can emerge. It was also found that, for the most part, the evaluations toward the accents in each accent pair were evaluated congruently for each participant. In conjunction, the evaluations toward the two accents that were phonetically deemed to be the Standard accents by the researcher shared standard-language evaluations that were not found in the evaluations of the other accents. The mostly congruent inter-speaker evaluations and the similar evaluations toward the two Standard accents were further corroborated by the primarily non-significant differences between the adjectival ratings toward the speakers of each accent group, as collected in study 2.

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Study 2: Cognitive and Affective Accent Attitudes

Abstract

The study examines the formation of accent attitudes. According to the social-psychological tripartite model, attitudes are formed from the cognition (beliefs), affect (feelings), and/or past, present, or intended behaviours towards an attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken, 2014; Fazio, 2007). The impact of affect and cognition on attitude formation has been extensively examined in social psychology (e.g. Crites, Fabrigar & Petty, 1994), but within sociolinguistics, besides Cargile, Giles, Ryan, and Bradac's (1994) theoretical contribution, there has been no contrastive examination of the components' influence on accent attitudes. To examine whether attitudes toward six English-English accents are cognition- or affect-based, this study looks at the influence of affective and cognitive persuasive messages and evaluative adjectives on the attitudes. Specifically, the participants (47) were exposed to trials of the following format: a cognitive or affective persuasive message, followed by an accent recording, followed by cognitive and affective evaluative adjectival scales. Results indicate that the cognitive messages and adjectives influence the attitudes toward the standard English-English variety, while the affective messages and adjectives influenced the attitudes toward the non-standard English-English varieties. Therefore, primarily cognitive or affective accent-attitudinal formations may depend on the (non)standard status of the accents. The association among cognition, affect, and (non)standardness is discussed in the context of public domains that have an impact on language ideology (e.g. education).

1. Introduction

Attitudes have been generally defined as evaluations toward an attitude object (Fazio, 2007; Haddock & Maio, 2004; Potter, 1998), and in social psychology, the formation of those evaluations has been thematised through the tripartite model, according to which, attitudes are created based on cognition (thoughts, beliefs, or knowledge about), affect (emotions or feelings about), and/or behaviour (past, present, or intended actions) toward an attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken, 2014; Haddock & Zanna, 1998a; Katz, 1960). Specifically, attitudinal social-psychological studies have examined whether attitudes toward various attitude objects are primarily cognitive, affective, or behavioural (e.g. Crites, Fabrigar & Petty, 1994; Lavine, Thompsen, Zanna & Borgida, 1998; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). Unlike social-psychology, in attitudinal sociolinguistics, the contribution of the three components to language/accent attitudes has not been examined. Although some studies have investigated whether negative emotions contribute to the formation of accent attitudes (e.g. Dragojevic & Giles, 2016; Dragojevic, Giles, Beck & Tatum, 2017), the relationship among the three components has not been investigated.

The present study aims to explore the impact of the two purely mental components,[1] cognition and affect, on the formation of attitudes toward six English-English accents. Specifically, I examine whether attitudes to (some of) the six English accents are primarily based on thoughts/knowledge or emotions/feelings. To do so, I use theories and methodologies from both social psychology and sociolinguistics. In what follows, I discuss in more detail the social psychological and sociolinguistic research on the cognitive and affective bases of attitudes, and I present the hypotheses of this study. I then illustrate my findings and discuss their significance in the context of public discourses that contribute to language ideology, like education and mass media.

[1] Behaviour is not examined due to its duality. Behaviour comprises past, present, and intended behaviours. Past and intended behaviours are mental processes in that the former is, essentially, memories of past actions, while the latter is predictions of future actions. Present behaviours, on the other hand, constitute the physical part of behaviour, but are harder to capture because they require observational methods. Consequently, the purely mental components, cognition and affect, are the focus of this paper.

2. Background

2.1 Attitudinal Components in Social Psychology

Several studies have examined the contribution of cognition, affect, and behaviour to attitude formation (e.g. Breckler, 1984; Lavine & Snyder, 2000), but special attention has been given to cognition and affect (Haddock & Zanna, 1998b; Lavine et al., 1998). Depending on the attitude object or on participant-specific features, studies have found that an attitude may be based primarily on affect, or on cognition, or on both components equally. It was found, for instance, that attitudes toward marijuana and alcohol among experienced users were based more on affect (Simons & Carey, 1998), similarly to attitudes toward snakes, literature, and maths (Crites et al., 1994). On the other hand, attitudes toward capital punishment were found to be based more on cognition (Crites et al., 1994), or on either component depending on whether the participants placed more emphasis on feelings or thoughts in their general evaluative judgments (Haddock & Zanna, 1998b). Attitudes toward presidential candidates were found to be based more on affect if the participants' emotions and beliefs were ambivalent, i.e. when both components were positive and negative; or they were found to be based on both components if their emotions and beliefs were univalent, i.e. when both components were either positive or negative (Lavine et al., 1998). Lastly, attitudes toward the church were cognitive and affective (Crites et al., 1994).

To further examine the influence of cognition and affect on attitudes, researchers induced cognitive or affective attitudes toward unknown, novel, or fictional objects, and then measured the attitudes toward those objects. Such novel objects included Chinese ideographs for participants who did not know Chinese, a new beverage (Edwards, 1990), and lemphurs, a fictitious animal (Crites et al., 1994; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). The conditioning of cognitive or affective attitudes occurred through priming, which involves the presentation of a prime stimulus in order to influence the perception of a target stimulus (Cameron, Brown-Iannuzzi & Payne, 2012). The prime stimuli often took the form of explicit (supraliminal) cognitive or affective written messages, containing factual information (encyclopaedic) or emotional information (personal narratives), respectively, about the target stimuli, i.e. one of the novel attitude objects (Crites et al., 1994; Edwards, 1990; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). The influence of the cognitive or

affective messages on the perception of, or attitudes toward, the objects was measured through scalar or word-choice evaluations that were cognitive (e.g. beneficial-harmful and useful-useless) or affective (e.g. delightful-saddening and relaxed-angry). The expectation was that the cognitive (or affective) message would prompt cognitive (or affective) scalar or word-choice evaluations.

It was found that the cognitive messages primed the cognitive evaluative tasks more than the affective ones, while the affective messages primed the affective evaluative tasks more than the cognitive ones. For instance, the participants who were exposed to the cognitive (or affective) message, and thus, whose attitudes were primed by, or based on, cognition (or affect), chose more cognitive (or affective) words to evaluate the attitude object (Crites et al., 1994; Edwards, 1990; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). In other words, the participants whose attitudes were cognitive (or affective) provided cognitive (or affective) attitudinal evaluations. Thus, research showed that the influence of priming stimuli can indicate the basis of an attitude toward an object.

2.2. Attitudinal Components in Sociolinguistics

Unlike the extensive social psychological research into the affective and cognitive components of attitudes, in attitudinal sociolinguistic studies, the components' influence on accent attitudes has not been experimentally contrasted. Instead, only affect has been operationalised as emotion-inducing stimuli, such as white noise in standard and non-standard accent recordings[2] (Dragojevic & Giles, 2016; Sebastian, Ryan, Keogh & Schmidt, 1980); aggressive speech in standard accent recordings and in (dis)fluent non-standard accent recordings (Cargile & Giles, 1997); mild and heavy accent strength in non-standard accent recordings (Dragojevic, Giles, Beck & Tatum, 2017); and arguments for or against the English Only Movement in the USA in standard and non-standard accent recordings (Giles,

[2] In this paper, the term 'standard' encompasses concepts relevant to the folk-sociolinguistic scape of the United Kingdom, such as received pronunciation, queen's English, correct, posh, proper, supraregional, while 'non-standard' is associated with concepts such as regional and foreign, although foreign accents are not relevant in this paper. These associations are reflected in the qualitative evaluations of standard accents in study 1 (section 4.4) and in various theoretical discussions and applications of the term 'standard' (see Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Dragojevic & Giles, 2016; Milroy, 2007; Mugglestone, 2007). While I do not accept (non)standardness as an innate language feature, I use it to represent the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable forms of language that exists in the accent-attitudinal reality of non-linguists (and oftentimes, linguists).

Williams, Mackie & Rosselli, 1995). Besides Cargile and Giles (1997) who found no statistical significance, the rest of the studies found that the participants' emotions significantly primed their accent attitudes, and thus, that affect in general played a role in accent-attitude formation.

Despite the relative scrutiny of the influence of affect on accent-attitude formation, to my knowledge, only Cargile, Giles, Ryan, and Bradac (1994) have discussed the influence of both cognition and affect. Specifically, they argued that, at times, accent/language attitudes "may be largely, or even entirely, affective in nature" because if a variety is unknown to the hearer, they cannot hold any thoughts about that variety, so their attitudes toward it will not be cognitive, but they will still have an emotional component; for instance, they may evaluate it as irritating or pleasant (p. 222). In conjunction, they claimed that thoughts about a variety rarely occur without the presence of feelings. While Cargile et al.'s (1994) theoretical account considers both components, no sociolinguistic attitudinal study has operationalised and compared the impact of cognition and affect on the formation of accent attitudes.[3]

Although the influence of thoughts and emotions have not been experimentally juxtaposed in sociolinguistic studies, the priming of accent attitudes by social stimuli has been thematised. In their study, Giles, Bourhis, Trudgill, and Lewis (1974) found that, because the British participants had not been exposed to societal attitudes toward two unknown, recorded Greek accents they were asked to rate, they were unable to differentiate between them. As such, contrary to the inherent value hypothesis, according to which language varieties are evaluated based on innate language features, Giles et al. (1974) validated the imposed norm hypothesis, which posits that language varieties contain no inherent features and are instead evaluated based on social norms. In fact, mass media, such as newspapers, television, and radio have often been considered to be the conduits through which meta-linguistic, accent-attitudinal discourse is circulated among, and in turn, re-produced and internalised by, the wider public (Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Dragojevic,

[3] In Giles et al. (1995), the recording was meant to be affect-inducing, but the participants were asked to write both their feelings as well as their thoughts toward the content and speaker of the recording. However, no significant pattern was found with regards to the participants' thoughts. Due to this, only the participants' emotions were discussed by the authors and no comparison between affect and cognition took place.

Mastro, Giles & Sink, 2016; Milroy, 2001; Milroy & Milroy, 2012; Mugglestone, 2007). Mass media may prime accent attitudes implicitly (subconsciously) through the exclusion or inclusion of certain accents in news shows, or through the association of television characters (e.g. working-class characters) and radio shows (e.g. popular shows) with specific accents (e.g. regional accents) (Coupland, 2009). However, accent attitudes may also be primed explicitly (consciously) through public media such as the following British newspaper article titles:

- British is the world's sexiest accent for men to have, reveals survey (Rachel Hosie, 2017, *Independent*, 5 December 2017)
- Scousers have the 'least intelligent and least trustworthy' accent – while Devonians have the friendliest (Victoria Woolaston, *Mail Online*, 26 September 2013)

The evaluations "sexiest" (Hosie, 2017) and "friendliest" (Woolaston, 2013) contain affective qualities, according to the cognitive and affective scores in the *Evaluative Lexicon 2.0* (*EL 2.0*; Rocklage, Rucker & Nordgren, 2018),[4] while "intelligent" (Woolaston, 2013) contains cognitive qualities. Since it has been argued that accent-attitudinal discourse in the media can influence individual accent attitudes, the cognitive and affective components of that discourse would be expected to prime cognitive and affective accent attitudes. In fact, the social conditioning of cognitive and affective attitudes has been thematised in social psychology: according to Simons and Carey (1998), cognitive attitudes are obtained from sources like the "media, school, [and] friends", and affective attitudes are obtained from "immediate, experiential information" (p. 728). Both attitudinal bases, then, are conditioned by one's environmental stimuli. Therefore, the social priming of (accent) attitudes has been explored within attitudinal sociolinguistics, but without references to the influence of the cognitive and affective attitudinal components.

[4] The *EL 2.0* contains the emotionality (low/cognitive to high/affective), valence (low/negative to high/positive), and extremity (low = close to the valence scale midpoint; high = far from the valence scale midpoint) ratings, from 0.00 to 9.00, of over 1.500 English words, provided by more than 600 native-English speakers. The words were gathered from over 9 million online reviews, 1 million tweets, and over 10,000 movie and TV scripts.

As cognitive and affective accent attitudes have not been experimentally contrasted, the present study aimed to investigate whether the attitudes toward six English-English accents are primarily based on cognition or affect. To examine this, participants were exposed to cognitive and affective written messages (akin to social-psychological studies) containing indirect accent evaluations (akin to newspaper discourse), and they were asked to evaluate the six English-English accents on cognitive and affective adjectival scales. The study hypotheses were as follows:

- Hypothesis 1: The cognitive and affective evaluative adjectives were expected to influence the accent attitudes differentially. In other words, some accents would be evaluated significantly higher on a cognitive adjective scale than an affective adjective scale, and vice versa.
- Hypothesis 2: The cognitive and affective written messages were expected to influence the accent attitudes differentially. In other words, some accents would be evaluated significantly higher after an affective message than after a cognitive message, and vice versa.
- Hypothesis 3: The influential adjective was expected to concur with the influential message for each accent attitude. In other words, the accents that would be evaluated significantly higher on a cognitive adjective scale would have been preceded by a cognitive message. In contrast, the accents that would be evaluated significantly higher on an affective adjective scale would have been preceded by an affective message. Essentially, hypothesis 3 is the amalgamation of hypotheses 1-2 in that it posits that the influential adjective (H1) will be of the same type (cognitive/affective) as the influential message (H2) for each accent attitude.

3. Methodology

3.1 Procedure

The experiment was designed using the *E-Prime 3.0* software, and was distributed online via the *E-Prime Go* add-on. The participants were sent instructions on how to access the experiment online. A total of 47 responses were analysed. From consent to completion, the experiment did not last longer than 40 minutes.

3.2 Experiment Structure

Similar to study 1, this study consisted of the same three blocks: two practice trials (practice accents) to allow participants to get accustomed to the experiment; twelve main trials (main accents); and a questions block. Data from block 1 were not analysed. Below is a short representation of a main trial and the questions block.

A. Main trial format
    1. Continuous train engine sound in background.
    2. Randomised written messages (cognitive positive/negative and affective positive/negative; the negative content is presented in square brackets for brevity), preceded by the text, *You are on the train and you are reading the following text on a webpage:*
        a. *… "Flawless" ["Uninteresting"] is how 21% of the interviewers described telephone interviews with candidates from particular places in the UK, a study shows. The lack of visual bias [eye contact] can have a positive [negative] influence on the outcome of a phone interview … In the same study, 54% of the interviewers characterised phone interviews with people from specific areas of the UK as "noteworthy" ["pointless"] …*
        b. *… "Terrific" ["Insufferable"] is how the interviewer described their personal experience of telephone interviews candidates from particular places in the UK. The lack of visual bias [eye contact] can have a positive [negative] influence on the outcome of a phone interview … Another interviewer expressed that their own calls with applicants from specific areas of the UK are "uplifting" ["exhausting"] …*
    3. Randomised accent recording (see script below), with accompanying text on screen: *The passenger next to you is on the phone…*
        — Yes. So I told him to take it because I could only look for one of them. Did you call?

— Right. How did it go?

— We'll keep going then. That seems fair.

— No, I can't right now. I need to take care of something else.

— It may help when he comes back in a few months, but I'm not sure.

— Yeah, I will be going to that thing at eight, but I think I'll leave early; probably about nine.

— Did you hear the news?

— Yeah, it won't last long. I saw it yesterday at four during our meal.

— The book?

— I did. It is much better than the other one.

4. *What are your evaluations of what you just heard?*

   [six randomised 6-point rating scales with the following labels: *Not Refined – Refined*, *Not Gentle – Gentle*, *Not Comfortable – Comfortable*, *Not Friendly – Friendly*, *Not Calm – Calm*, *Not Happy – Happy]*

   [or a *No Answer* option]

B. Questions block

1. *When you answered the 'What are your evaluations of what you just heard?' questions, what exactly were you evaluating?*

   [open-ended, fill-in text box]

2. *What do you think this study is about?*

   [open-ended, fill-in text box]

3. *What is you gender?*

   [multiple choice: male; female; non-binary]

4. *What is your age?*

   [multiple choice: 18-30; 31-40; 41+]

5. *List all the places where you have resided and the length of residence in each place in chronological order, from least recent to most recent*.

   [open-ended, fill-in text box]

6. *Which place(s) does your accent originate from? Please, be as descriptive as possible. If you do not associate your accent with one or more specific places, explain why.*

   [open-ended, fill-in text box]

3.3 Immersive Setting

As can be seen in A1-A3, a train ride setting was chosen for the whole experiment to elicit situational immersion and increase ecological validity. A train engine was heard on a loop throughout the first two blocks, and a train whistle was heard before each accent recording was about to start in order to maintain or recapture the listeners' attention. The acoustic stimuli were borrowed from the International Affective Digital Sounds (IADS; Bradley & Lang, 2007). Besides signalling the train ride setting, the text preceding the messages (A2) alluded to contemporary, web-based, skim reading (see Kovač & van Der Weel, 2018), which added to the natural validity of the experiment and was reinforced by the ellipses at the start, the middle, and the end of each message. As well as that, the recording content itself, one side of a telephone conversation, revealed little-to-no information about the speaker's identity. As Hilton and Jeong (2019) found for the majority of linguistic features they examined, the less information the listeners knew about a speaker, the more the linguistic feature under examination contributed to their attitudes toward it.

3.4 Written Messages

The four messages of the main trials (henceforth, messages) comprised a Cognitive Positive Message (CogPosM), an Affective Positive Message (AffPosM), a Cognitive Negative Message (CogNegM), and an Affective Negative Message (AffNegM) (A2a-d). The messages appeared in a randomised order. Each participant was exposed to both valences and components to replicate the variety of stimuli in real-life contexts.

The messages contained cognitive and affective discourse from the aforementioned social-psychological studies (Crites, Fabrigar & Petty, 1994; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). The encyclopaedic/knowledge-based (cognitive) messages in those studies were alluded to in the references to statistical study results in the present study's priming

messages, and the emotional/personal (affective) narratives in the personal experiences of the interviewers. The message content was also influenced by accent-attitudinal discourse from British newspaper article titles. From newspaper article titles such as "Brummie accents 'worse than staying silent', study shows" (Hannah Furness, *The Telegraph*, 16 July 2015), the present study's priming messages utilised the discursive hedge "a study shows" and the quotation marks surrounding the evaluative sections (for more newspaper article title examples, see Bennet, 2008; Birmingham Bottom of the List in UK 'Hierarchy of Accents', Study Finds, 2019; Dobson, 2014; Lavelle, 2019; Luu, 2017; Woolaston, 2013).

The quoted words themselves were taken from the *EL 2.0* based on their emotionality and valence ratings. Table 1 below shows the scores of each word. In all the messages, the highest in emotionality of the two words appeared first for consistency. The presence of both positive and negative versions of the cognitive and affective messages determined which component was more influential. Simply put, if an accent was evaluated significantly higher after a CogPosM than after a AffPosM, the CogPosM was deemed more influential since positive stimuli prompt higher evaluations. Contrastingly, if an accent was evaluated significantly lower after a AffNegP than after a CogNegM, the AffNegP was deemed more influential since negative stimuli prompt lower evaluations.

Table 1: Emotionality Scores, Positions, and Valence Scores of Quoted Cognitive and Affective Words in Messages

Adjective	Emotionality Score	Position	Valence Score
Flawless	3.50 (cognitive)	1st	8.24 (positive)
Noteworthy	2.90 (cognitive)	2nd	6.96 (positive)
Uninteresting	3.34 (cognitive)	1st	2.25 (negative)
Pointless	2.67 (cognitive)	2nd	1.72 (negative)
Terrific	6.07 (affective)	1st	7.32 (positive)
Uplifting	5.62 (affective)	2nd	7.89 (positive)
Insufferable	6.07 (affective)	1st	2.11 (negative)
Exhausting	5.70 (affective)	2nd	1.73 (negative)

The reference to "*candidates from particular places in the UK*" in the messages served to evoke (regional) accents since telephone conversations rely heavily on sound-based cues. The accent reference and, by extension, the evaluative references were indirect; the words 'accent(s)' and 'attitude(s)' were not mentioned at all throughout the experiment. The decision to examine indirect accent attitudes was taken because participation in a deliberate experiment with direct references to accent attitudes could have indicated the written messages' influential purpose, which could have potentially resulted in inefficient priming (Schwarz, 2011).

3.5 Accent Recordings

Each recording (A3) lasted 40 seconds and was heard once by the participants. The recorded speakers were female native English speakers who were born and raised in England, were students at The University of Manchester, were between the ages of 18-30, and whose accents originated from specific English cities. These eligibility criteria allowed for a certain amount of control over some social macro-constructs like gender (female), age (18-30), education (university), educational institution (The University of Manchester), national identity (born and raised in England), and accent (English-English). The practice recordings were of two speakers whose accents were from London and Manchester but who were not born in England. The twelve main accent recordings were Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Standard.[5]

3.6 Evaluative Prompt, Scales, and Adjectives

In accordance with the rest of the study, the evaluative prompt (A4) was indirect in that it did not reference 'accent' as the attitude object. Instead, the prompt did not specify an attitude object in order to allow for open-ended evaluations, unabated by the definitiveness of an attitude object. Only 14 out of 47 participants reported that they were evaluating accents in B1, but the majority of participants (36 out of 47) identified the purpose of the study (B2) as accent evaluative. Therefore, it could be argued that those who

[5] When referring to the project's speaker accent, specifically, the word is capitalised ('Standard accent'). In references to the project's standard-accented listeners and in general references to the accent, lower case is used ('standard accent').

identified the study purpose as accent-attitudinal but reported they did not evaluate accents (23 out of 36) were uneasy about (admitting to) evaluating someone's accent.

The scalar responses to the evaluative prompt were labelled with cognitive and affective adjectives (A4), which were chosen based on their popularity in study 1 as well as their emotionality and valence scores in the *EL 2.0*. Table 2 below shows the scores of each adjective. The adverb *not* was used to indicate the low/negative end of the scale to avoid multiple interpretations of antonymic affixes or words (e.g. unhappy/sad – *happy*) (McKenzie & Carrie, 2018).

Table 2: Emotionality and Valence Scores of Scalar Adjectives

Adjectives	**Emotionality Score**	**Valence Score (Positive)**
Refined	3.11 (cognitive)	6.48
Gentle	4.15 (cognitive)	7.19
Friendly	4.86 (midpoint)	7.88
Comfortable	4.87 (midpoint)	7.08
Calm	5.07 (affective)	7.13
Happy	7.41 (affective)	7.89

The lower end of the evaluative scales (left) was associated with negative valence or adjective absence, and the higher end (right) with positive valence or adjective presence (e.g. *Not Happy – Happy*). Consequently, the higher the rating of the adjective, the more influential its component (cognition, affect, or neither) on the accent attitude. For instance, if an accent received significantly higher (lower) evaluations on the *happy* scale than the *refined* scale, the attitude toward that accent would be more affective (cognitive) than cognitive (affective) since higher (lower) ratings equal adjective presence (absence). Further, for an accent attitude to be both cognitive and affective, one of the two CogAdj would have to be evaluated significantly higher than one of the two AffAdj, and the other AffAdj would have to be evaluated higher than the other CogAdj. On the other hand, for an accent attitude to be neither cognitive nor affective, both MidAdj would have to be evaluated significantly higher than all the CogAdj and AffAdj.

A midpoint was excluded from the scales due to disagreement in the literature about the exact representational meaning of a scalar midpoint (see Breckler, 2004; and Schneider, Harreveld, Veenstra, Schwarz & Koole, 2016). Instead, the participants were given the choice not to answer: on the right side of every scale, there was a *No Answer* option. Out of a total of 3384 scalar responses across the 47 participants, two *No Answer* responses were submitted for the adjectives *happy* and *gentle* by two participants, and 40 *No Answer* responses were submitted for the adjective *refined* by four participants (inclusive of the two participants that submitted *No Answer* for *happy* and *gentle*).[6] The *No Answer* focus on *refined* could be explained through the meta-attitudinal findings of study 3 (section 4.2) where the majority of participants expressed that they struggled to define and evaluate *refined*. This semantic struggle could have led the four participants to choose *No Answer* for 40 of the *refined* scales in this study.

3.7 Questions Block and Participants

The demographic questions (B3-B6) were used to validate the study's eligibility criteria and gather more information to be used during analysis. All participants had to be native-English speakers, born and raised in England, between 18-30 years of age, and studying at The University of Manchester in subjects other than Linguistics, to minimise inter-subject discrepancies in responses to sociolinguistic matters (e.g. linguistics students might be more likely to provide strictly non-prescriptive accent evaluations).

[6] It should be noted that no distinction was found across the speaker accents. Specifically, each speaker accent received a minimum of three *No Answer* evaluations for *refined* across the four participants who submitted *No Answer* responses.

Table 3: Participant Demographics

Gender	**Frequency**
female	30
male	14
non-binary	3
Accent	**Frequency**
north English	19
south English	13
standard-ish[7]	8
standard	7
Region	**Frequency**
north England	24
south England	23

4. Results

The data were analysed and visualised using R (R Core Team, 2021), and the following R packages: ordinal (Christensen, 2020); rcompanion (Salvatore, 2022); RVAideMemoire (Hervé, 2022); emmeans (Russell, 2022); and tidyverse (Wickham et al., 2019). The data were subjected to mixed-effects, ordinal logistic regression modelling (ordinal R package). The dependent variable (the numerical evaluations) was treated as categorical ordinal instead of continuous interval, as its levels, the six scalar points, were ordered, but the distances between them were arbitrary and semantically meaningless (i.e. non-interval) (see Jamieson, 2004). The fixed independent variables, i.e. the message, speaker accent, adjective, listener gender, listener accent, and listener region, were treated as categorical nominal, with four, six, six, three, four, and two levels, respectively. Speaker (twelve levels) was included as a random variable to count for the effect of having two

[7] When the participants described their accents using one or more standard-denoting terms alongside geographical descriptors (e.g. “My accent is a combination of Mancunian and received pronunciation”), their accents were labelled as ‘standard-ish’ because the participants tended to place more weight on the standard features of their accent rather than the non-standard ones. The term ‘near-standard’ was consciously not chosen for these cases because I did not wish to convey that the standard is the linguistic goal (i.e. nearing the standard variety).

recordings/speakers per phonetic variety. Table 4 shows the random and fixed independent variables and their levels. The regression model was stepped down from a six-way interaction model, as it was overspecified and would not converge. Six-, five- and four-way interactions were gradually removed, and all three-way interactions remained, apart from listener gender, for which only two-way interactions with speaker accent, message, and adjective were included. The model was tested against simpler models with fewer variables. Goodness-of-fit measures indicated that this model was the most appropriate (rcompanion R package).

Table 4: Variables and Levels

Speaker	**Message**	**Speaker Accent**	**Adjective**	**Listener Gender**	**Listener Accent**	**Listener Region**
Birmingham1	CogPos	Birmingham	Refined (Cog)	Female	North English	North England
Birmingham2	AffPos	Liverpool	Gentle (Cog)	Male	South English	South England
Liverpool1	CogNeg	London	Friendly (Mid)	Non-Binary	Standard-ish	
Liverpool2	AffNeg	Manchester	Comfortable (Mid)		Standard	
London1		Newcastle	Calm (Aff)			
London2		Standard	Happy (Aff)			
Manchester1						
Manchester2						
Newcastle1						
Newcastle2						
Standard1						

Standard2						

Table 5 shows the main and interaction effects from the regression model (RVAideMemoire R package). Since the study hypotheses concerned the interactions among the two carriers of cognition and affect (i.e. the written messages and the evaluative adjectives) and the speaker accents, the sections that follow focus on three significant interaction effects from table 5. Specifically, hypothesis 1 (the cognitive and affective adjectives were expected to influence the accent attitudes differentially) was examined through the interaction between speaker accents and adjectives (section 4.1). Hypothesis 2 (the cognitive and affective messages were expected to influence the accent attitudes differentially) was examined through the two 3-way interactions among messages, speaker accents, and listener accents, and messages, speaker accents, and listener regions (section 4.2). Since no interaction between messages and adjectives was found to be significant, hypothesis 3 (the influential adjective was expected to concur with the influential message for each accent attitude) was examined through the comparison of the interactions in hypotheses 1-2 (section 4.3); i.e. speaker accents and adjectives; messages, speaker accents, and listener accents; and messages, speaker accents, and listener regions.[8] Overall, results supported the hypotheses. The priming adjectives and messages influenced the attitudes toward the speaker accents differentially, with the cognitive adjectives and messages priming the Standard-accent attitudes, and the affective adjectives and messages priming the attitudes toward the rest of the speaker accents.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance of Mixed Effects Regression Model

Main and Interaction Effects	**Chi Square**	**Df**	**p-value**	
Message	9.201	3	0.027	.
Speaker Accent	25.135	5	0.000	***

[8] Significant interactions between listener genders and speaker accents were beyond the scope of this paper. Although gender interacted significantly with message, the interaction was not relevant to the hypotheses of this paper as it occurred among female participants only and was primarily driven by message valence instead of component (i.e. among female participants, evaluations following the CogPosM were significantly higher than those following the CogNegM and AffNegM).

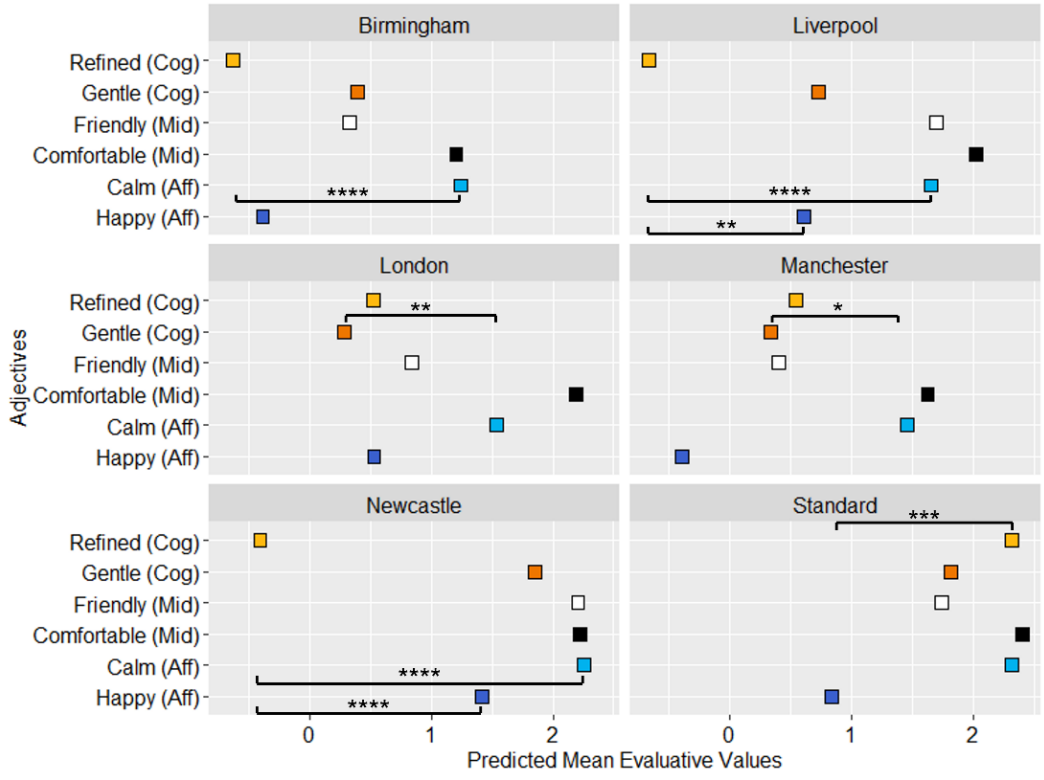
Adjective	202.963	5	0.000	***
Listener Gender	69.926	2	0.000	***
Listener Accent	19.873	3	0.000	***
Listener Region	0.174	1	0.677	
Message:Speaker Accent	48.797	15	0.000	***
Message:Adjective	6.936	15	0.959	
Message:Listener Gender	28.014	6	0.000	***
Message:Listener Accent	17.849	9	0.037	.
Message:Listener Region	13.069	3	0.004	*
Speaker Accent:Adjective	147.160	25	0.000	***
Speaker Accent:Listener Gender	38.398	10	0.000	***
Speaker Accent:Listener Accent	21.273	15	0.128	
Speaker Accent:Listener Region	25.705	5	0.000	***
Adjective:Listener Gender	17.731	10	0.060	
Adjective:Listener Accent	19.731	15	0.183	
Adjective:Listener Region	9.657	5	0.086	
Message:Speaker Accent:Adjective	46.456	75	0.996	
Message:Speaker Accent:Listener Accent	179.602	45	0.000	***
Message:Speaker Accent:Listener Region	63.723	15	0.000	***
Speaker Accent:Adjective:Listener Accent	71.500	75	0.593	
Speaker Accent:Adjective:Listener Region	24.829	25	0.472	
Message:Adjective:Listener Accent	35.855	45	0.833	
Message:Adjective:Listener Region	14.426	15	0.493	
Significance signs: 0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’				

4.1 Hypothesis 1: Speaker Accent and Evaluative Adjective

The interaction between speaker accents and evaluative adjectives was examined in relation to hypothesis 1 which posited that the CogAdj and AffAdj would influence the accent attitudes differentially. In other words, some accents would be evaluated significantly higher on a CogAdj scale than an AffAdj scale. Hypothesis 1 was supported since the CogAdj and AffAdj did not have the same impact on the attitudes toward every accent.

Figure 1 shows the predicted mean evaluations[9] of each speaker accent on the CogAdj, MidAdj, and AffAdj scales (tidyverse R package for data visualisation). Each of the six panels presents the predicted mean evaluations of a speaker accent for each of the six evaluative adjectives. Significant differences are indicated with asterisks (emmeans R package for predicted mean comparisons). None of the accent attitudes were found to be primed by both the CogAdj and the AffAdj, or by the MidAdj alone, so the focus of this section is on the significant differences between the influence of the CogAdj and the AffAdj.

Figure 1: Evaluations by Speaker Accent and Evaluative Adjective (significance signs: 0 '****' 0.001 '***' 0.01 '**' 0.05 '*')



Specifically, the Birmingham speaker accent was evaluated significantly higher on an AffAdj scale (*calm*) than on a CogAdj one (*refined*); the Liverpool speaker accent was

[9] The figures in this paper show the predicted (or estimated) mean values of the participants' evaluations in the x axis as the plots are based on data from the regression model, which contained six fixed variables and one random, as aforementioned. The interaction effects from those variables cannot be accounted for in plots with mean values that are based on raw/unmodelled data. Further, for the purposes of this paper, it is not the evaluative mean values themselves that are important, but the significant differences between the evaluative mean values that were prompted by the variables.

evaluated significantly higher on both AffAdj scales (*calm* and *happy*) than on a CogAdj one (*refined*); the London speaker accent was evaluated significantly higher on an AffAdj scale (*happy*) than on a CogAdj one (*gentle*); the Newcastle speaker accent was evaluated significantly higher on both AffAdj scales (*calm* and *happy*) than on a CogAdj one (*refined*); and the Standard accent was evaluated significantly higher on an CogAdj scale (*refined*) than on an AffAdj one (*happy*). Table 6 contains a summarised representation of the data. Therefore, the attitudes toward Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, and Newcastle were primed significantly more by affect than cognition, and the attitudes toward Standard were influenced significantly more by cognition than affect.

Table 6: Significantly Influential Adjectives on Speaker-Accent Attitudes

Adjective	Speaker Accent
AffAdj	Birmingham
both AffAdj	Liverpool
AffAdj	London
AffAdj	Manchester
both AffAdj	Newcastle
CogAdj	Standard

4.2 Hypothesis 2: Message, Speaker Accent, and Listener Variables

The interactions among messages, speaker accents, and listener accents, and messages, speaker accents, and listener regions were examined in relation to hypothesis 2 which posited that the cognitive and affective messages would influence the accent attitudes differentially. In other words, some accents would be evaluated significantly higher after an affective message than after a cognitive message. Hypothesis 2 was supported since the CogM and AffM did not have the same impact on the attitudes toward every accent. Figures 2-3 show the mean evaluations of each speaker accent, by each listener accent group, following the CogPosM and AffPosM (figure 2) and the CogNegM and AffNegM (figure 3). Each of the six panels in each figure presents the predicted mean evaluations of a speaker accent after each positive/negative message, for each of the four listener-accent groups. Significant differences are indicated with asterisks.

Figure 2: Evaluations by Speaker Accent, Positive Message, and Listener Accent (significance signs: 0 '****' 0.001 '***' 0.01 '**' 0.05 '*')

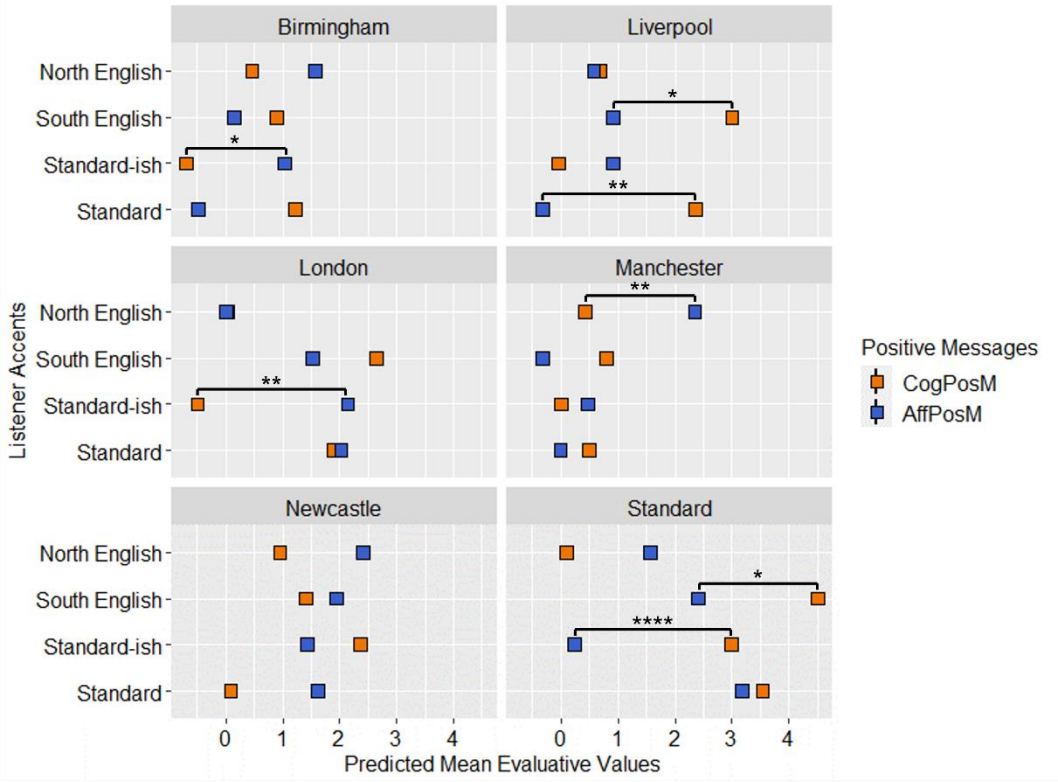
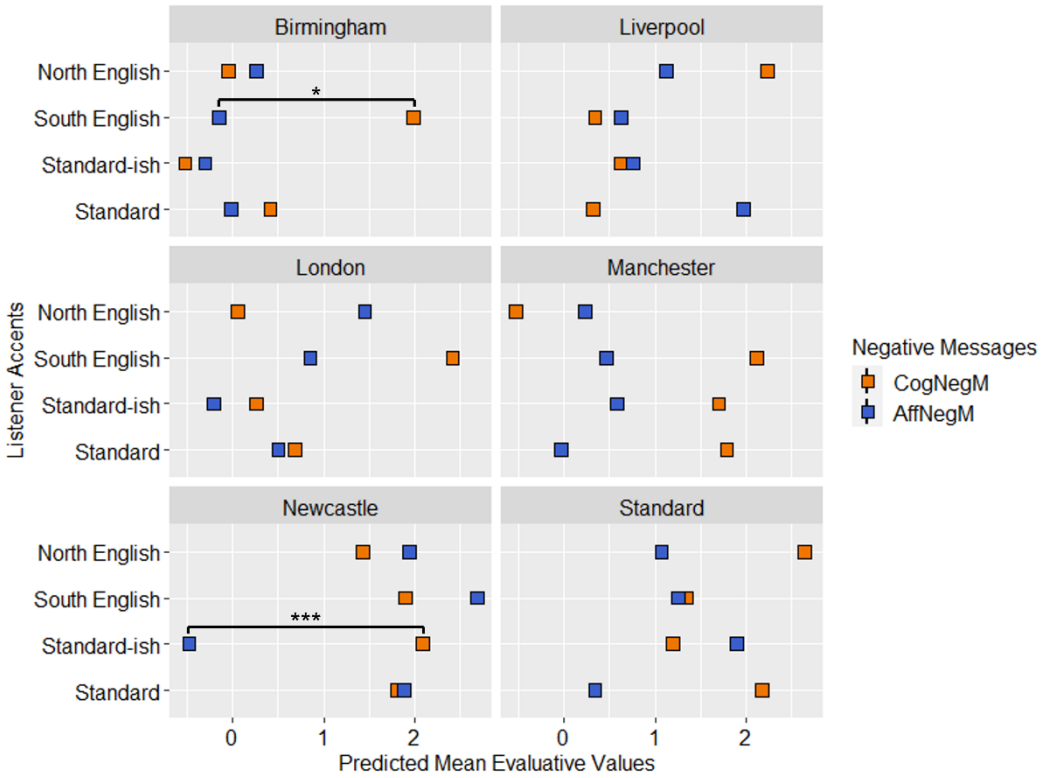


Figure 3: Evaluations by Speaker Accent, Negative Message, and Listener Accent (significance signs: 0 '****' 0.001 '***' 0.01 '**' 0.05 '*')



As can be seen in figure 2, the Birmingham, London, and Manchester speaker accents were evaluated significantly higher after the AffPosP by listeners with standard-ish, standard-ish, and north English accents, respectively. On the other hand, the Liverpool and Standard speaker accents were evaluated significantly higher after the CogPosP by listeners with south English and standard accents, respectively. Newcastle evaluations did not show any significant differences. The significant differences in figure 3 were limited to the Birmingham and Newcastle speaker accents being evaluated significantly lower after the AffNegP by listeners with south English and standard-ish accents, respectively. Table 7 contains a summarised representation of the data. Therefore, the attitudes toward Birmingham, London, Manchester, and Newcastle were primed significantly more by affect than cognition, and the attitudes toward Liverpool and Standard were influenced significantly more by cognition than affect.

Table 7: Significantly Influential Messages on Speaker-Accent Attitudes by Listener Accents

Message	Speaker Accent	Listener Accent
AffPosM	Birmingham	standard-ish
AffNegM		south English
CogPosM	Liverpool	south English
		standard
AffPosM	London	standard-ish
AffPosM	Manchester	north English
AffNegM	Newcastle	standard-ish
CogPosM	Standard	south English
		standard-ish

Figures 4-5 show the mean evaluations of each speaker accent, by each listener region group, following the CogPosM and AffPosM (figure 4) and the CogNegM and AffNegM (figure 5). Each of the six panels in each figure presents the predicted mean evaluations of a speaker accent after each positive/negative message, for each of the two listener-region groups. Significant differences between the means are indicated with asterisks.

Figure 4: Evaluations by Speaker Accent, Positive Message, and Listener Region (significance signs: 0 '****' 0.001 '***' 0.01 '**' 0.05 '*')

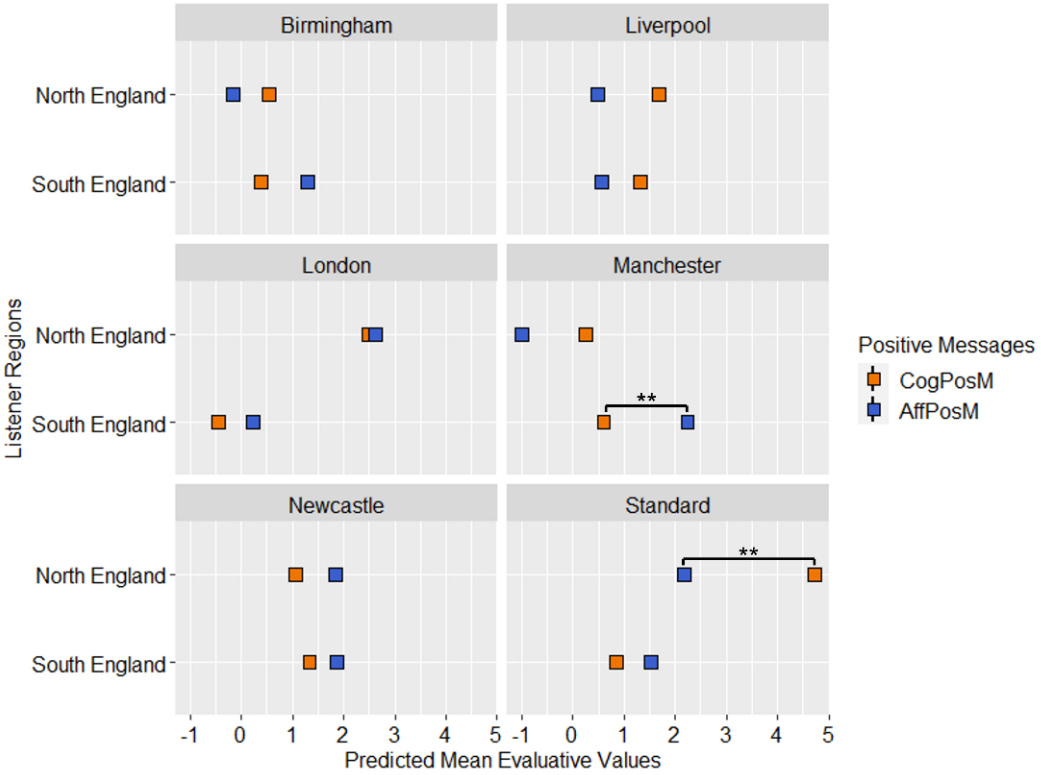


Figure 5: Evaluations by Speaker Accent, Negative Message, and Listener Region (significance signs: 0 '****' 0.001 '***' 0.01 '**' 0.05 '*')

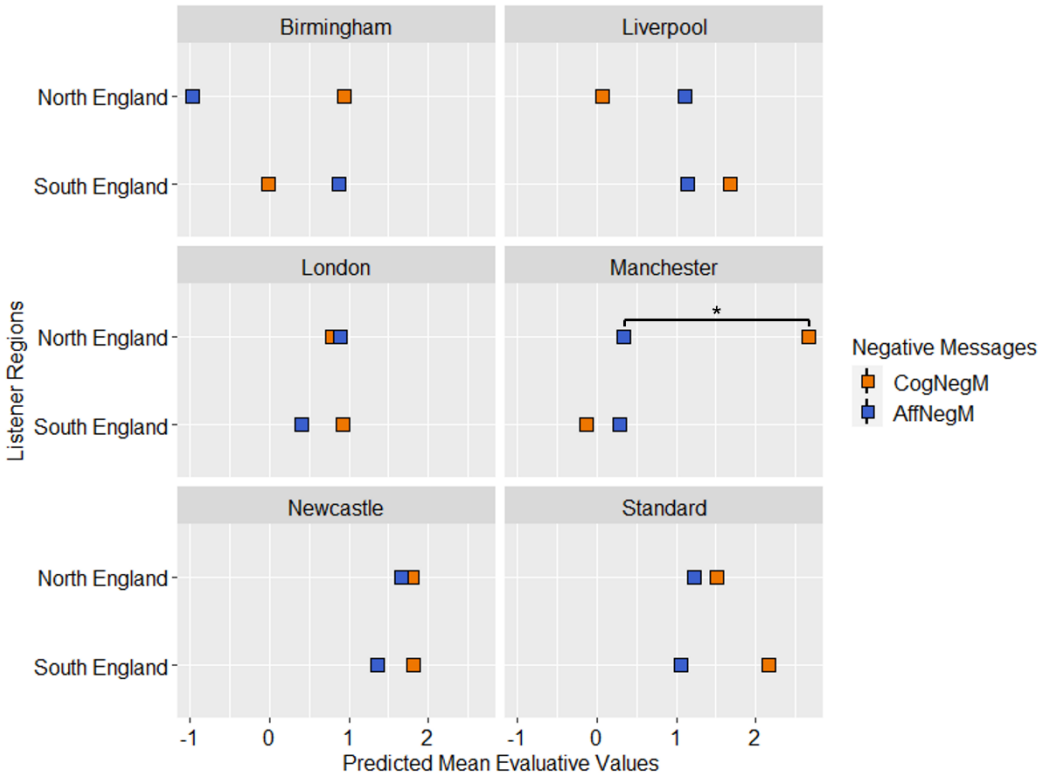


Figure 4 shows that the Manchester speaker accent was evaluated significantly higher after the AffPosP by listeners from south England. Contrastingly, the Standard speaker accent was evaluated significantly higher after the CogPosP by listeners from north England. Figure 5 shows that the Manchester speaker accent was evaluated significantly lower after the AffNegP by listeners from north England. Table 8 below contains a tabular representation of figures 4-5. The attitudes toward Manchester, then, were primed significantly more by affect than cognition, and the attitudes toward Standard were influenced significantly more by cognition than affect.

Table 8: Significantly Influential Messages on Speaker-Accent Attitudes by Listener Regions

Message	Speaker Accent	Listener Region
AffPosM	Manchester	south England
AffNegM		north England

CogPosM	Standard	north England

4.3 Hypothesis 3: Adjective and Message Priming Congruency

In order to examine hypothesis 3, i.e. whether the cognitive and affective components of the messages and the adjectives primed the accent attitudes in the same way, tables 6-8 above were compared. It is evident that, apart from the attitudes toward Liverpool, all other accent attitudes were based on the same component across conditions: the affective adjectives and/or messages primed the attitudes toward Birmingham, Liverpool, London, and Manchester, and the cognitive adjectives and/or messages primed the attitudes toward Standard. With regards to Liverpool attitudes, they were based on both cognition and affect: two AffAdj were more influential than one of the CogAdj, but the CogPosM was more influential than the AffPosM for the listeners with south and standard English accents. Despite this inconsistency, however, there was an affective attitudinal tendency toward Liverpool. On the one hand, both AffAdj (*calm* and *happy*) were more influential than one CogAdj (*refined*). On the other hand, the CogPosM was more influential than the AffPosM, but the CogNegM was not significantly more influential than the AffNegM. Thus, it seems that adjectival cognition and affect and message cognition and affect primed the attitudes toward the same accents overall, which lends support to hypothesis 3.

5. Discussion

The present study looked at whether the attitudes toward six English-English accents were primarily cognitive or affective by examining the influence of cognitive and affective written messages and evaluative adjectives on those attitudes. Findings supported all hypotheses since the cognitive and affective adjectives and messages primed the attitudes toward different accents differentially (hypotheses 1-2) and their priming patterns concurred (hypothesis 3). Adding to the corroboration of hypothesis 3 is the fact that the priming messages consistently contributed to the formation of accent attitudes across listeners with different English-English accents and from different regions in England (tables 7-8). Particularly, the cognitive and affective attitudes toward Standard, Liverpool, and Birmingham were provided by listeners with various accents (table 7), and in the case of

attitudes toward Standard, they were also provided by listeners from the north of England (table 8). It is well-known that regional Birmingham and Liverpool accents have been ranked among the lowest in prior scalar research into attitudes, while more standard-like varieties have been ranked among the highest overall (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Giles, 1970; Watson & Clark, 2015). The evaluative 'popularity' of those accents may explain why the impact of message cognition and affect on attitudes toward the Standard, Liverpool, and Birmingham accents in this study was significant for multiple listener groups; those with different accents and those from the north and south of England. Similarly, the Manchester speaker accent was also evaluated affectively by both north-English-accented listeners (table 7) and those from the north and south of England (table 8). Overall, it seems that listener accent and region did not prompt any attitudinal patterns that superseded those prompted by the cognitive and affective messages, thus corroborating accent-attitudinal studies in which participant variables were not found to influence accent attitudes (Giles, 1970; Hiraga, 2005; Thorne, 2005). Regardless of the listener variables (accent or region), then, the message component which contributed to the listeners' accent attitudes remained the same.

Cognition and affect, then, contributed to accent attitudes through different stimuli (messages and adjectives) and across different listener variables (accents and regions) in the same way, which makes their impact consistent, and thus, more substantial. However, the attitudes toward the six English-English accents were not exclusively cognitive or exclusively affective. Table 9 shows the primary bases of attitudes toward each accent, as concluded in this study. I argue that the differentiation between cognitive and affective accent attitudes is based on a perceivably distinguishable accent feature: (non)standardness. Particularly, the divide between cognitive and affective attitudes is for the accents that are considered standard and those that are not; i.e. the attitudes toward the Standard accent are cognitive and those toward the non-standard accents (Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, and Newcastle) were affective. This attitudinal distinction corroborates the findings of prior social-psychological studies that cognitive and affective attitudes depend on the attitude object under examination (e.g. Crites et al., 1994; Simons & Carey, 1998).

Table 9: Attitude Type per Attitude Object

Attitude Type	Attitude Object
Affective	Birmingham accent
Affective (Cognitive)	Liverpool accent
Affective	London accent
Affective	Newcastle accent
Affective	Manchester accent
Cognitive	Standard accent

In sociolinguistics, the contribution of emotion on non-standard accent attitudes supports Dragojevic and Giles' (2016) finding that the attitudes toward the non-standard accent in their experiment were significantly influenced by their affect-inducing stimuli, while the attitudes toward the standard accent were not. Although the affect-inducing stimulus, the presence of white noise, was not relevant to (attitudes to) accents, their study showed a similar pattern to the present study with regards to emotion-based attitudes toward non-standard accents. Nonetheless, other studies have found that affect-inducing stimuli did not significantly influence any accent attitudes (Cargile & Giles, 1997), or that they influenced only the attitudes toward the standard accent (Giles et al., 1995). As such, in the present study, the significant contribution of affect to non-standard accent attitudes, as opposed to standard ones, could stem from the presence of another attitudinal component, cognition, which has not been examined in prior studies. The cognitive attitudes toward the Standard accent may allude to the fact-oriented and knowledge-based educational systems that perpetuate and prescribe linguistic standardness (standardism), while vilifying non-standardness (Cushing, 2021; Milroy, 2007; Mugglestone, 2007; Lampropoulou & Cooper, 2021; Snell & Cushing, 2022). The association between cognition and standardness, in other words, may originate from the association between knowledge and standardism in education. The link between cognition and education is also found in Simons and Carey's (1998) argument about the cognitive attitudinal component being acquired from the media and school, among other distant sources.

The cognition-affect divide in this study further demonstrates that the attitudes toward the majority of accents were based on affect, which alludes to the theoretical claim

by Cargile et al. (1994) that language attitudes may be more affective than cognitive since attitudes toward an unknown language would rely mostly, or solely, on affect because the listener does not know the language and, thus, cannot hold any beliefs about it. In this study, it is almost certain that the participants had been exposed to the six big-city accents before, as they were all born and raised in England. Consequently, instead of linguistic ignorance, the primacy of affective attitudes in this study may reflect the real-life contrast between the plurality of non-standard English accents and the singularity of the standard English accent. No glaring generalisations can be made about the component on which most accent attitudes are based, of course, due to the small number of accent varieties in this study, as well as the fact that there was only one pair of speakers who represented the standard variety. Nevertheless, the affective primacy tendency was noteworthy.

With the results of the present study in mind, it is worth revisiting some of the meta-linguistic media discourse which has been thematised as the carrier of linguistic ideology (e.g. Agha, 2003) and on which the structure of the priming messages was partly based (see section 3.4). The titles of the sample newspaper articles below contain evaluative lexes (e.g. “softening”, “smarter”, “worse”, “least”, “intelligent”, and “friendliest”) whose valence and emotionality scores (or the scores of their inflectional/derivative forms) can be found in the *EL 2.0*. Except for “worse” and “less”, they all carry positive valence scores, and except for “friendliest”, they are all cognitive. Accordingly, therefore, the title in Woolaston (2017) associates the Liverpool accent with the absence of the cognitive evaluation “intelligent” since it is modified by “least”, and the Devon accent with the affective evaluation “friendliest”. Similarly, in Lavelle’s (2019) title, accent reduction is called “accent softening” (*softer* has a cognitive *EL 2.0* score), thus associating cognitive evaluations with accent absence, which is often a perceived characteristic of the standard accent (Lippi-Green, 2012; Mugglestone, 2007). The cognitive and affective attitudinal influences of media meta-language on accent attitudes, then, can find a parallel in the influences of the cognitive and affective messages and adjectives of this study.[10]

— Brummie accent is perceived as ‘worse than silence’ (Rosemary Bennet, *The Times*, 4 April 2008)

[10] It is worth noting that the media’s influence on accent attitudes as a whole in this study provides further support for study 1 where I argued that the media influence the use of accent-attitudinal lexicon.

— The rise of ‘accent softening’: Why more and more people are changing their voices (Daniel Lavelle, *The Guardian*, 20 March 2019)
— Does your accent make you sound smarter? (Chi Luu, *BBC Worklife*, 23 May 2017)
— Scousers have the ‘least intelligent and least trustworthy’ accent – while Devonians have the friendliest (Victoria Woolaston, *Mail Online*, 26 September 2013)

6. Conclusion

The present study examined whether attitudes toward six English-English accents were primarily cognitive or affective, as this is an unexplored area in attitudinal sociolinguistics. The participants were exposed to priming stimuli that carried cognitive and affective components in order to discern which component affected their accent attitudes the most and, by extension, which component contributed to their attitude formation the most. The priming stimuli were in the form of written messages and evaluative adjectives. The messages preceded the accent recordings and contained indirect cognitive and affective accent evaluations, akin to content from prior social-psychological research and meta-linguistic discourse from British newspapers. Following the accent recordings were the cognitive and affective adjectives, through which the participants evaluated the accents. It was hypothesised that the cognitive and affective priming stimuli would influence the attitudes toward each accent differentially (hypotheses 1-2) but that their influence would concur for each accent (hypothesis 3). In other words, attitudes toward each of the six accents would not all be exclusively cognitive or exclusively affective, but both priming stimuli would prompt the same attitudinal influence on each accent.

The study hypotheses were supported. Particularly, it was shown that accent attitudes were differentially and consistently conditioned by the cognitive and affective adjectives and messages, with minor influences from participant-specific variables, like accent and region. Both priming stimuli influenced the standard English-English accent attitudes cognitively and the non-standard accent attitudes affectively. Due to this sharp distinction, the formation of cognitive and affective accent attitudes was arguably dependent on whether the accents were perceived as standard or non-standard, respectively. Of course, the speaker-accent pool contained only one pair of standard-accented speakers, so it would be fruitful to examine how cognition and affect would

influence attitudes toward a wider pool of accents, or how they would influence attitudes toward standard-accented speakers without the presence of non-standard accents, and vice versa.

Despite these limitations, however, the findings have strong implications for cognitive and affective attitudinal structures beyond the experimental setting of the study. Firstly, the knowledge-based attitudes toward standard accents seem to be related to the promotion of standard language in educational institutions. Secondly, the messages in this study were partly modelled after newspaper accent-attitudinal discourse which, along with other media discourse, has been claimed to be a conduit for language ideology; therefore, the cognitive and affective influences of the priming messages are reflected in the influences of media discourse. Examining the cognitive and affective structures of accent attitudes and, by extension, associating them with social institutions that transmit accent ideologies can contribute to the problematisation and combating of accentist and wider language-discriminatory attitudes (e.g. deconstructing cognitive/fact-like attitudes toward the standard accent can highlight the social construction of accent attitudes).

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Study 3: Folkloristic Accent Meta-Attitudes

Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the ways in which non-linguists engage in accent meta-attitudinal discourse, i.e. how they talk about their accent attitudes. In examining accent attitudes, quantitative scalar studies (e.g. Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Giles, 1970) and discursive meta-linguistic studies (e.g. Campbell-Kibler, 2012; Hall-Lew & Stevens, 2012) tend to examine how non-linguists evaluate a variety but not how they evaluate their evaluations of a variety, which is the focus of this study. To examine the meta-attitudinal discourse of non-linguists, ten native English-English speakers were interviewed. The interviews were preceded by a quantitative attitudinal experiment (study 2) where the participants were exposed to accent-attitudinal persuasive messages, followed by recordings of six English-English varieties, followed by six adjectival rating scales (the attitudinal part). During the interviews, the participants were re-exposed to the recordings of the first four trials, and after each recording, they were asked to talk about their ratings (the meta-attitudinal part). A primarily topical analysis was performed, focusing on the main themes emerging from the meta-attitudinal data. Results showed that the non-linguist interviewees discursively constructed various stimuli as influences on their accent evaluations, ranging from immediate ones, such as the persuasive messages, to more external ones, such as collective accent attitudes. The participants also tended to position themselves relative to the influence of those stimuli. Within the context of a carefully considered meta-attitudinal interview, the ways in which non-linguists perceive and discuss the formative influences on their accent attitudes can have implications for how accent attitudes in general are (perceived to be) formed.

1. Introduction

Meta-language, i.e. the evaluation of language, has been the focus of several sociolinguistic attitudinal studies and it is conventionally examined via numerical scales or via qualitative, oral or written, questions (e.g. Bishop, Coupland & Garrett, 2005; Hall-Lew & Stephens, 2012; Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner & Fillenbaum, 1960). The scales tend to be used in order to compare the attitudes toward various accents, and are labelled with adjectives that are considered pertinent to accent-attitudinal discourse within specific national contexts (see Milroy, 2001, for a non-intersectional discussion on the different language ideologies in the UK and US). The qualitative questions, on the other hand, tend to focus on one accent variety, and are open-ended in that, the participants can choose their own evaluative vocabulary. Such studies, therefore, focus on numerical and discoursal accent attitudes, but not on meta-attitudes, i.e. the evaluation of one's evaluation of language. The present study explores the accent meta-attitudes of non-linguists after participating in a scalar attitudinal study. In what follows, I discuss in more detail the methods and results of scalar and qualitative attitudinal studies, while highlighting the gap in literature that this study aims to fill. I then briefly present the structure of the scalar attitudinal study preceding the meta-attitudinal interview, and I discuss my findings and their relation to accent-attitude formation and accentism.

2. Background

In sociolinguistics, non-linguistic or folkloristic attitudes toward accents have been a frequent subject of investigation. The earliest and most common types of studies involved the examination of attitudes across different accents, by exposing participants to recordings and/or labels of different accents (e.g. Liverpool accent), followed by numerical scales on which the accents were evaluated (Bishop et al., 2005; Brown, Giles, & Thakerar, 1985; Campbell-Kibler, 2010; Giles 1970; Kristiansen, 1998; Lambert et al., 1960; McKenzie & Carrie, 2018; Speelman, Spruyt, Impe & Geeraerts, 2014). In the British English context, specifically, it has been found that standard accents gather, overall, more positive evaluations than non-standard ones (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Dixon & Mahoney, 2004; Dixon, Mahoney & Cocks, 2002; Giles, 1970; Giles, Baker & Fielding, 1975; Hiraga, 2005;

Watson & Clark, 2015).[1] Additionally, from the non-standard accent pool, certain varieties, like those from Birmingham and Liverpool, have been consistently downrated (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Giles, 1970; Hiraga, 2005; Watson & Clark, 2015). Except for standardness, participant macro-variables such as age, gender, region, and social class have occasionally played a significant role in accent evaluations (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Giles, 1970), but not always (Giles, 1970; Hiraga, 2005; Thorne, 2005).

Besides the aforementioned quantitative, inter-varietal attitudinal studies, discourse-based studies have examined attitudes through interviews and other non-quantitative data, like open-ended written questions. Discoursal studies tend to focus on the participants' attitudes toward one variety by analysing the participants' meta-language – i.e. their "description and discussion of language" (Graedler, 2014, p. 300). In American-English and English-English contexts, attitudes to varieties such as Ohioan English (Campbell-Kibler, 2012), Texoman "Country Talk" (Hall-Lew & Stephens, 2012), Liverpool English (Juskan, 2018; Lampropoulou & Cooper, 2021), Barnsley English (Cooper, 2019), Oklahoman "twang" (Rodgers, 2016), Californian English (Bucholtz, Bermudez, Fung, Vargas & Edwards, 2008), and Pittsburghese English (Johnstone & Kiesling, 2008) have been meta-linguistically associated with race (Campbell-Kibler, 2012), class (Bucholtz et al., 2008; Juskan, 2018; Rodgers, 2016), broadness (Cooper, 2019; Lampropoulou & Cooper, 2021), rurality (Campbell-Kibler, 2012; Hall-Lew & Stephens, 2012), and regionality/localness (Hall-Lew & Stephens, 2012; Johnstone & Kiesling, 2008).

Similar to the quantitative scalar evaluations, then, meta-linguistic discourse studies look at a non-linguist's attitudes, i.e. how they evaluate a variety. While this is an important focal point in accent-attitudinal studies, it does not provide insight into a non-linguist's meta-attitudes, i.e. how they evaluate their own evaluations of a variety. Whereas most aforementioned qualitative accent-attitude studies contain a portion of meta-attitudinal

[1] In this paper, the term 'standard' encompasses concepts relevant to the folk-sociolinguistic scape of the United Kingdom, such as received pronunciation, queen's English, correct, posh, proper, supraregional, while 'non-standard' is associated with concepts such as regional and foreign, although foreign accents are not relevant in this paper. These associations are reflected in the findings of the present study (see section 4.3), in study 1 (section 4.4), in study 2 (section 3.7), and in various theoretical discussions and applications of the term 'standard' (see Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Dragojevic & Giles, 2016; Milroy, 2007; Mugglestone, 2007). While I do not accept (non)standardness as an innate language feature, I use it to represent the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable forms of language that exists in the accent-attitudinal reality of non-linguists (and oftentimes, linguists).

discourse where the participants justify or explain their own evaluative statements, the participants are not explicitly asked to consider their attitudes in order to deliberate about them, nor are the interviews preceded by scalar accent evaluations, about which the participants can deliberate during the interview. In most cases, in a participant's discourse, explicit or implicit causal relationships occur of the participant's own accord and are, thus, not the focus of the research. For instance, when asked "And would you say you had a Southern accent?" in Hall-Lew and Stephens (2012, p. 40), the participant's answer ("Um, no. Only because I have family from Mississippi and their accent to me is much more Southern than ours") contained an explicit causal conjunction ("because") that is prompted by the interviewee themselves. In a written survey by Bucholtz et al. (2008), the participants were explicitly asked to justify their answers: "Where in California do you think people speak the best [and worst]? Why?". However, the two questions concerned only one evaluative binary (best-worst), they were not limited to accents ("speak" can be perceived lexically and/or phonetically), and they were not preceded by recordings of accents, which meant that the participants rarely referred to Californian accents per se. Therefore, the way participants discuss their own (scalar) accent attitudes, when explicitly asked to do so, remains unexplored in accent-attitude studies.

This study aims to investigate the meta-attitudinal interview discourse of non-linguists in order to shed light on how accent attitudes are (perceived to be) formed. In focusing on the ways in which non-linguists discuss and/or justify their own scalar evaluations of accents, much can be learned about the various stimuli that contribute to, or influence, the formation of accent attitudes. It is expected that participants will explicitly discuss (perceived) formative influences on their scalar accent attitudes. Following the folk linguistics tradition of examining non-linguists' accounts and awareness of accents (Niedzielski & Preston, 1999; Preston, 1996; Preston, 2019), this study focuses on the accounts and awareness of accent attitudes; i.e. on the explicit discussion of accent attitudes and their formative influences. These insights can have implications for wider discussions surrounding accentism, which in itself encompasses harmful attitudes toward one or more accent varieties. It should be noted that, in this paper, *attitude* is defined as any evaluation toward, or evaluative discourse about, an attitude object (Fazio, 2007; Haddock & Maio, 2004; Potter, 1998). This all-encompassing definition of attitudes is

appropriately captured by the social-psychological tripartite model according to which, attitudes are based on cognition (thoughts/beliefs), affect (emotions/feelings), and/or past, present, or intended behaviour toward an attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken, 2014; Haddock & Zanna, 1998; Katz, 1960). While the tripartite model itself did not play a major role in the analysis of the interview data, the scalar section preceding the interview was developed based on the tripartite model's cognitive and affective components (see section 3.2 for more information).

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Ten native speakers of English-English were interviewed. They were born and raised in England, between 18-30 years of age, and students at The University of Manchester, in subjects other than linguistics in order to minimise inter-subject discrepancies in responses to sociolinguistic matters; e.g. linguistics students might be more likely to provide strictly non-prescriptive (meta)attitudes. Table 1 shows the participants' gender, region, and accent.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Gender	**Frequency**
female	6
male	3
non-binary	1
Region	**Frequency**
north England	4
south England	6
Accent	**Frequency**
north English	2
south English	4

standard-ish[2]	2
standard	2

3.2 Experiment Structure

The quantitative scalar part of the study (study 2) is not the focus of this paper, but it is briefly described here due to its significance regarding the interview data. In short, the scalar part (the attitudinal section) comprised twelve trials. Each trial had the following format: one randomised written message, followed by one randomised accent recording, followed by six evaluative scales with adjectival labels. In total, there were two cognitive (positive and negative) and two affective (positive and negative) written messages; twelve accent recordings (see Appendix A) of female speakers, merged into six accent varieties for analysis (Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Standard[3]); and six 6-point scales with cognitive, affective, or midpoint adjective labels. The aim of the attitudinal part of the study was to examine whether the attitudes toward the six English-English accents were cognitive or affective, based on whether they were primed more by the cognitive or affective written messages and evaluative adjectives, respectively. The priming technique involves the presentation of a prime stimulus in order to influence the perception of a target stimulus (Cameron, Brown-Iannuzzi & Payne, 2012). The messages and adjectives functioned as the priming stimuli in this study and the accents as the target stimuli.

Table 2 below contains the positive written messages used in the attitudinal part of the study, with the negative variants in square brackets. The messages contained cognitive and affective discourse from social-psychological studies (Crites, Fabrigar & Petty, 1994; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). Table 3 contains Crites et al.'s (1994, p. 630) descriptions of that discourse. The encyclopaedic/knowledge-based (cognitive) content was alluded to in the references to statistical study results in the present study's priming

[2] Similar to study 2, some participants described their accents using one or more standard-denoting terms alongside geographical descriptors; e.g. "I have rather an RP accent. Having grown up in Liverpool, however, i definatly (sic) feel that i have some scouse undertones". In those cases, the accents were again labelled as 'standard-ish' because the participants tended to place more weight on the standard features of their accent rather than the non-standard ones.

[3] When referring to the project's speaker accent, specifically, the word is capitalised ('Standard accent'). In references to the project's standard-accented listeners and in general references to the accent, lower case is used ('standard accent').

messages, and the emotional/personal (affective) narratives in the personal experiences of the interviewers.

Table 2: Priming Messages

Cognitive Message	Affective Message
"Flawless" ["Uninteresting"] is how 21% of the interviewers described telephone interviews with candidates from particular places in the UK, a study shows. The lack of visual bias [eye contact] can have a positive [negative] influence on the outcome of a phone interview. In the same study, 54% of the interviewers characterised phone interviews with people from specific areas of the UK as "noteworthy" ["pointless"].	*"Terrific" ["Insufferable"] is how the interviewer described their personal experience of telephone interviews candidates from particular places in the UK. The lack of visual bias [eye contact] can have a positive [negative] influence on the outcome of a phone interview. Another interviewer expressed that their own calls with applicants from specific areas of the UK are "uplifting" ["exhausting"].*

Table 3: Descriptions of Cognitive and Affective Priming Messages

Cognitive Message	Affective Message
"in the form of an encyclopaedia entry" containing "a brief description of the animal as well as information concerning its habitat, behavior, diet, and reproduction".	"in the form of a short narrative that described an encounter with the animal" and contained "little factual information about the animal but described a vivid series of events".

Apart from social-psychological studies, the messages were influenced by accent-attitudinal discourse from British newspaper article titles. The purpose of this was to examine whether the media's influence on language ideology (Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Dragojevic, Mastro, Giles & Sink, 2016; Milroy, 2001; Milroy & Milroy, 2012; Mugglestone, 2007) was, in some way, reflected in the influence of the messages in this study. From

newspaper article titles such as "Brummie accents 'worse than staying silent', study shows" (Hannah Furness, *The Telegraph*, 16 July 2015), the present study's priming messages utilised the discursive hedge "a study shows" and the quotation marks surrounding the evaluative sections (for more newspaper article title examples, see Bennet, 2008; Birmingham Bottom of the List in UK 'Hierarchy of Accents', Study Finds, 2019; Dobson, 2002; Lavelle, 2019; Luu, 2017; Woolaston, 2013). Both the quoted words in the messages and the priming scalar adjectives were selected based on their emotionality and valence scores in the *Evaluative Lexicon 2.0* (*EL 2.0*; Rocklage, Rucker & Nordgren, 2018).[4] The priming adjectives were: *refined* and *gentle* (cognitive), *friendly* and *comfortable* (midpoint), and *calm* and *happy* (affective).

It is worth noting that the study examined indirect accent attitudes because participation in a deliberate experiment with direct references to accent attitudes could have indicated the written messages' priming purpose, which could have potentially resulted in inefficient priming (see Schwarz, 2011, for a discussion on the role of attributing feelings to primary and secondary sources). Accordingly, the accent attitudes in the priming messages were indirect – "*candidates from particular places in the UK*" served to evoke (regional) accents; the description of the entire study in the information sheet was very minimal, referencing only auditory-data evaluations; the evaluative prompt was indirectly phrased (*What are your evaluations of what you just heard?*); and the words 'accent(s)' and 'attitude(s)' were not written anywhere, or uttered by the researcher, but instead, the words "recordings" and "evaluations"/"ratings" were used.

The attitudinal part of the study was followed by the interview (the meta-attitudinal section), which was recorded on a *Zoom H4N Pro* recorder. The participants were re-exposed only to the first four trials of the quantitative section so as to reduce participant fatigue, which would have increased from another round of twelve trials. Consequently, the participants were re-exposed to all the messages and to four out of the twelve accent recordings, which were randomised during the attitudinal section and, thus, in a different

[4] The *EL 2.0* contains the emotionality (low/cognitive to high/affective), valence (low/negative to high/positive), and extremity (low = close to the valence scale midpoint; high = far from the valence scale midpoint) ratings, from 0.00 to 9.00, of over 1.500 English words, provided by more than 600 native-English speakers. The words were gathered from over 9 million online reviews, 1 million tweets, and over 10,000 movie and TV scripts.

order for each participant. Therefore, different participants were re-exposed to different recordings. The differing accents, and order thereof, across participants did not affect the results of this study because the focus was on the participants' accent meta-attitudes in general, and not on the comparison of their meta-attitudes across different accents. After each message-recording sequence, the interviewees were asked to talk about their adjectival ratings, which they could see on a computer screen.

3.3 Analytical Approach

According to Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2009) and Rodgers' (2017) typologies, discourse-based attitudinal studies have conducted content- or topic-oriented analyses (e.g. Cooper, 2019; Hall-Lew & Stephens, 2012; Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998), in which explicit references to related themes are grouped together and are discussed as topical/thematic sets; turn-internal or rhetorical analyses (e.g. Preston, 1994; Rodgers, 2016), which focus on the structural and functional development of intra-speaker discourse; and interactional analyses, which focus on elements of conversational (inter-speaker) discourse. Rodgers categorised two more types of discourse-based attitudinal analyses: the linguistically-oriented one (e.g. Johnstone & Kiesling, 2008) that explores (marked) linguistic performance in expressions of self and other identities; and the cognitively-oriented one (e.g. Preston, 1994; Winter, 1992) which focuses on the epistemological patterns underlying attitudinal discourses. Since the present study was an exploratory discourse-based, meta-attitudinal study, out of those five analytical approaches, a topic-oriented one was deemed the most appropriate, with occasional linguistic and rhetorical analyses within each topical unit.

The data were transcribed and thematically coded on *NVivo 12 Pro*. During data transcription and familiarisation (Goldsmith, 2021), four topics emerged. Two topics were thematically coded as 'priming messages' and 'adjectival semantics'; i.e. accent-attitudinal influences from the participants' immediate context (see sections 4.1-4.2). To develop the emergent codes and to index more data (Goldsmith, 2021), manual and software-based text searches were conducted, targeting the content of the messages (e.g. "flawless"), any words referring to the messages (e.g. *message* and *text*), and the six evaluative adjectives. Two more topics were coded as 'collective accent attitudes' and 'personal factors'; i.e. external influences on the participants' accent attitudes (see sections 4.3-4.4). To develop these

codes, manual and software-based text searches targeted third-person words like *they*, *them*, *theirs*, *it*, *everyone*, *others*, and the existential *there*, as well as first-person words like *I*, *my*, *me*, *mine*, due to the first- and third-person agencies that were involved in the discursive construction of these topics.

4. Findings and Discussion

No noteworthy patterns were found with regards to interviewee features, as participants of different genders, from different regions, and with different accents engaged in the same meta-attitudinal discourses. Although this aligns with results from quantitative attitudinal studies where social macro-variables were not found to play a role (Giles, 1970; Hiraga, 2005; Thorne, 2005), it must be noted that the finding could be a result of the small sample size. Occasionally, a participant's region or accent seemed to play a role in the formation of their meta-attitudes, but only to the extent of that particular participant's discourse, and not of every other participant from the same region or with the same accent. Such instances concern the influence of a macro-variable on each participant's meta-attitudes, rather than the influence of a macro-variable overall, and they are mentioned below where relevant.

Due to the nature of the main prompt of the interview, i.e. asking the interviewees to talk about their evaluations, most of their discourse centred around the (in)direct influences on those evaluations. This study focuses on four major topical influences that emerged from the participants' explicit meta-attitudinal discourse. Those influences were: the accent-attitudinal messages; the semantic struggle with and definition of the scalar adjectives; collective accent attitudes; and personal factors. It is important to point out that, for the purposes of this study, it is not relevant whether these influences did, in fact, influence the participants' accent-attitudinal decisions by quantitative standards. Instead, the ways in which the participants explicitly discussed them during the interview is the focus. In that sense, this paper employs a constructionist view of discourse (e.g. Hall-Lew & Stephens, 2012; Potter, 1998) where interlocutors actively construct their meta-attitudes in and through their discourse.

Consequently, when I discuss the participants' conscious awareness of the aforementioned influences, what is pertinent is that the participants reported (i.e.

constructed) those stimuli as influential, not that the stimuli were somehow proven to be influential through quantitative measures. It is worth noting, however, that two of the major interview topics were linked to the independent variables (i.e. the cognitive and affective messages and adjectives) that were found to influence the outcome of the dependent variable (i.e. the accent-attitudinal ratings) in the quantitative section of the study (see study 2, sections 4-5). In the sections that follow, each topic is discussed separately as well as in conjunction with the rest, and while generalisable meta-attitudinal patterns are the focus, individual variations within each topic are also explored.

4.1 Accent-Attitudinal Priming Messages as Influences

The attitudinal priming messages were overtly perceivable, and seven out of ten participants explicitly constructed them as influences on their ratings (see Appendix B for transcription conventions). It must be noted that the participants were not asked by the researcher to talk specifically about the messages or any other of the meta-attitudinal topics. Instead, they mentioned the influence of the messages of their own accord during their re-exposure to the messages, and/or after their re-exposure to the recording, and/or during any general comments they made at the end of the interview. Examples 1-3 are from the latter two contexts only, as they were the most popular.

(1) “often i would not-i would notice myself thinking of those things as i was trying to assess what they were saying yes i tried not to do that but i found it fairly difficult because some words would s-really stand out like you know like terrific would really stand out or fifty four percent statistics’d stand out yeah” <Participant 1>

(2) “you were saying xxx uh they find them insufferable they find them so uplifting i was like i was like okay well i know-i was aware of what you were doing but it still i don’t know if i don’t know if that affec-in my head it didn’t affect me but looking back on it like i did rank the one two and you know when i was doing it-it was based on the specific kind of accent on the way or how harsh they were sounding or whatever but i think i was probably impacted by the words subconsciously even though i was-we

were in a test environment and i still knew that-that's something you might be trying to do" <Participant 5>

(3) "with the t-is the text that you read before supposed to influence xxx?" <Participant 9>

Although the cognitive-affective message distinction was found to be significant in the quantitative section of the study (i.e. the attitudes toward some accents were significantly more influenced by the cognitive messages than the affective ones, and vice versa), during the interview, the participants did not explicitly differentiate between the different message types. However, the messages' influence across accents was explicitly constructed through the participants' direct references to them like "those things" in (1), and "the text that you read before" in (3), as well as the accurately quoted single words and numbers: "terrific", "insufferable", "uplifting", and "54 percent" (1-2). It is notable that the message references were accurately quoted since, as aforementioned, (1-3) were not performed during re-exposure to the messages, but during the discussion of the evaluations and the general commentary at the end of the interview. Consequently, the accuracy of the quoted references from memory in (1-2) further substantiates the overall influence of the priming messages on the participants' accent evaluations.

The three quoted adjectives ("terrific", "insufferable", and "uplifting") are affectively-scored in the *EL 2.0*, and the statistics reference ("54 percent") is from the cognitive section of the messages (see table 2). While this is not a large sample of cognitive and affective discursive tokens, the fact that it is affective and cognitive message sections that are directly quoted – and not non-affective or non-cognitive parts of the messages – signals the magnitude of the affective and cognitive influences on the participants' ratings. However, the higher frequency of affective quotes over cognitive ones suggests a higher salience of affect meta-attitudinally. In other words, the participants' discourse indicates that affective cues are explicitly constructed as more salient than cognitive ones. Similarly, in the quantitative section of the study, it was found that the attitudes toward five out of the six English-English accents were affective. The affective primacy could potentially point to a (perceived) stronger affective influence on accent attitudes, which alludes to Cargile,

Giles, Ryan, and Bradac's (1994) claim that affect, and not cognition, is the primary component in accent-attitude formation as the former can contribute to attitude formation without the latter, while the opposite rarely occurs. Cargile et al. (1994) based their claim on the fact that, when someone is not familiar with a language, they do not have any beliefs (cognition) about it, but they do have an emotional (affect) reaction to it (e.g. they may evaluate it as irritating or pleasant). It should be noted, nevertheless, that in the quantitative section of the present study, the affective attitudes were toward the five non-standard accents, whereas the cognitive attitudes were toward the standard accent. Therefore, the affective primacy finding may be due to the smaller representation of standard accents in this study, as opposed to non-standard ones.

Besides the general references and quotes, the participants meta-attitudinally constructed the messages' influence and, in most cases, their position relative to that influence. In (1), the participant's explicit desire to be unaffected by the messages ("I tried not to do that") and their difficulty in achieving that ("I found it fairly difficult") showcase their meta-attitudinal awareness of the messages' formative influence on their attitudinal decisions and their desire to resist that influence. In (2), the participant constructs the messages' dual influence: "in my head it didn't affect me […] but I think I was probably impacted by the words subconsciously". This duality is a juxtaposition between the conscious ("in my head") and the implicit ("subconsciously"), and it is explicitly performed via the discourse marker (Schiffrin, 1987) "but". The conscious impact is discursively constructed as not influential ("in my head it didn't affect me") whereas the subconscious impact is constructed as influential ("probably impacted by the words subconsciously").

Since the priming messages are constructed as consciously ineffective, the participant presents other influences on their attitudes: "the specific kind of accent on the way or how harsh they were sounding or whatever". In other words, the participant's evaluations are constructed as having been consciously influenced by the speaker's accent, harshness, and perhaps other features ("or whatever"), but not by the messages. However, the messages are eventually perceived ("looking back on it") as subconsciously influential. This meta-attitudinal perception of the messages is not constructed without resistance as the participant's knowledge of the purpose of the study ("I know-I was aware of what you were doing" and "I still knew that-that's something you might be trying to do") is presented

as contradictory to ("even though") the messages' subconscious effectiveness. In other words, in presuming to know the purpose of the messages, the participant attempted to resist their impact. The meta-attitudinal construct of resistance to the messages' influence is similar to the participant's resistance in (1), albeit less directly expressed than in (1).

Much like (1-2) in (3), there is an explicit construct of the influence of the priming messages, but it is indirectly performed in the interrogative mood, and the participant does not refer to their position relative to that influence explicitly. In a previous trial, during re-exposure to the message text, the participant claimed to "understand something now" about the messages, thus indicating that their constructed realisation regarding the messages occurred meta-attitudinally and not attitudinally. That is not to say that the messages did or did not influence the participant's evaluations, but that the participant explicitly realised that influence during their meta-attitudinal deliberation. The individual variation in the discursive message constructs reveals the different types of perception of the messages. For instance, in (1-2), the participants discursively construct their position opposite the messages' influence as they express their resistance to that influence, while in (3), no explicit position relative to the messages' influence is constructed. However, all the participants who meta-attitudinally referred to the messages constructed them as influences on their accent attitudes.

Although the influence of affective prime stimuli (e.g. white noise) on accent attitudes has been quantitatively examined in sociolinguistics (Cargile & Giles, 1997; Dragojevic & Giles, 2016; Sebastian, Ryan, Keogh & Schmidt, 1980), the influence of the kind of priming messages used in the present study (i.e. affective and cognitive, with indirect accent-attitude discourse akin to British newspaper discourse) has not been explored in either quantitative, or qualitative attitudinal studies. Considering the messages' accent-attitudinal content, the theoretical claims about the influence of public, meta-linguistic discourses on individual accent attitudes (Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Mugglestone, 2007) are, arguably, reflected in the carefully considered meta-attitudinal discourse of the interview. Particularly, some participants constructed the influence of the priming messages, emphasising the affective elements, on their own accent attitudes, and most participants also discussed their (counter)position relative to that influence. The indirect, accent-attitudinal content of the messages was not explicitly thematised by the participants,

but based on how easily they recalled information from the messages, it could be argued that non-linguists may be(come) aware of, and possibly attempt to resist, the influence of (in)direct, public meta-language on their own accent attitudes. Of course, the extent to which the awareness of the messages' influence is reflected in everyday contexts that lack deliberation cannot be gauged in this study. In other words, the association between indirect, experimental, accent-attitudinal stimuli (e.g. newspaper-like priming content) and direct, public, accent-attitudinal stimuli (e.g. actual newspaper content) is limited due to the interview environment itself, which allowed the participants to meta-attitudinally deliberate about the influence of the messages on their attitudes. Nonetheless, the ways the non-linguist interviewees meta-attitudinally constructed the priming messages as influences on their own accent attitudes is indicative of their perception that their accent attitudes were partially formed based on (accent-attitudinal) stimuli in their immediate environment.

4.2 Adjectival Semantic Struggle and Definitions as Influences

Besides the priming messages, seven out of ten participants meta-attitudinally constructed their struggle with the meaning of some scalar priming adjectives and, as a result, provided their own adjectival definitions. Similar to the accent-attitudinal messages, the scalar adjectives were also in the participants' immediate environment and were carriers of affect and cognition. As can be seen in examples (4-7), the most cognitive adjective, *refined*, was the most thematised across all accents, which is also explicitly expressed (5): "f-with all of them", i.e. all the accents/recordings. This finding relates to the quantitative scalar section of the study where it is was found that most *No Answer* responses in the scales concerned *refined*. Therefore, a general unwillingness to evaluate the *refinement* of accents, (partially) springing from the struggle to self-define it, was found. After *refined*, *comfortable* (midpoint) was the only other adjective whose meaning was problematised, once in the whole dataset ("comfortable-I didn't know if that meant do they sound comfortable? or is it comfortable listening to?" <Participant 8>).

(4) "i guess it's less it's more difficult to kind of decide what *refined* really means like i think it's a lot easier to have an idea of what like sounds *friendly* and what doesn't but *refined*'s kind of-i wouldn't really know how to quantify that?" <Participant 4>

(5) “so f-with all of them i find it quite difficult to think about *refined*” <Participant 1>

(6) “like ref-no to be honest it was quite refi-i didn’t really know what refined meant” <Participant 9>

(7) “i struggled with the definition of refined again if i may go back to that” <Participant 8>

As can be seen in examples (4-7), the meta-attitudinal utterances of adjectival semantic struggle contain one or more of the following, semantically-relevant lexemes: “know” (4, 6), “difficult” (4, 5), “mean” (4, 6), and/or “struggled” (7). In (4), the “difficult” to “quantify” *refined* is compared with the “easier” to conceptualise *friendly*. Through this comparison, the participant marks the semantic difficulty of *refined*, and contrasts it with the semantic ease of another scalar adjective. In the rest of the examples, the participants explicitly construct their semantic struggle with *refined* by referring to: their difficulty to “think about *refined*” (5), not knowing “what *refined* meant” (6), and having “struggled” with its “definition” (7). Therefore, the semantic struggle is meta-attitudinally constructed through instances of epistemic absence. Even though the participants did not explicitly express that their attitudes were influenced by the semantic struggle, it is clear that the absence of meaning for a scalar adjective can influence one’s scalar attitude. Although no overgeneralisations can be made regarding the semantic struggle with *comfortable* because of its single data point, the difference between the multiple instances of *refined* and the one instance of *comfortable* is the sheer difficulty associated with constructing a meaning for *refined*, as opposed to *comfortable* which prompts the participant’s indecisiveness in choosing between two semantic options rather than prompting the participant to construct the absence of its meaning altogether.

These findings indicate that such semantic nuances cannot emerge in quantitative attitudinal studies that use decontextualised evaluative scales and are unaccompanied by meta-attitudinal methods. In other words, the influence that the semantic struggle has on the participants’ scalar accent attitudes cannot be detected without a meta-attitudinal

interview. The semantic struggle with adjectival interpretation was also found in Campbell-Kibler's (2012) topic-based, discursive attitudinal study. Specifically, Campbell-Kibler (2012) found that "accentless speech" was a concept which people struggled to describe (p. 290). For instance, one participant described a region as talking "normal", but claimed they did not know how to explain that (ibid). As is evident, unlike quantitative attitudinal studies, the discursive nature of Campbell-Kibler's (2012) interview allowed the participants to express their struggle as they were experiencing it. However, it is impossible to know whether all the participants' semantic struggles were (fully) revealed, since the participants were not explicitly asked to talk about the attitudes they expressed in their discourse, nor could they be asked to talk about each of their attitudes immediately after expressing them. Therefore, the examination of meta-attitudes after scalar or discursive attitudinal sections can reveal accent-attitudinal influences which are related to semantic opacity and may not be fully captured by attitudinal-only data.

As a consequence of semantic obscurity, the majority of participants who explicitly expressed their struggle with adjectival meanings, as well as other participants (nine out of ten in total), constructed their own adjectival definitions. Similar to the meta-attitudes on semantic struggle, the most cognitive adjective, *refined*, was by far the most defined across all accents (see examples (8-11)). A possible explanation for the persistent meta-attitudinal constructions of *refined* could be the discomfort that some participants may have felt due to the status-like associations of that adjective, as opposed to the rest of the adjectives. Further, *comfortable* (midpoint) was the only other adjective for which a definition was constructed once ("I-I write comfortable in terms of how comfortable they sounded rather than like how comfortable they were to listen to" <Participant 5>). As can be seen, in the definition of *comfortable*, the same two options are constructed as in the aforementioned struggle with *comfortable*, and the participant makes a choice between them. Both the *comfortable* and *refined* definitional discourses did not address specific recordings/accents but was generalised to all of them, like the semantic-struggle discourse.

(8) "refined i sort of did refined in terms of how well spoken they were?" <Participant 5>

(9) “does it mean clear? [how did you interpret it?] i’m-i just took it to mean like clarity so-but i decided that more as i went on i was like ‘*refined* i’m just gonna take it to mean clear’“ <Participant 9>

(10) “um well for refined i sort of took that how not posh but like how posh it was” <Participant 2>

(11) “outside of this that is what i would think is-*refined* equals posh like i say a minute ago to me that isn’t necessarily a good thing like a lot of people would use that as a compliment” <Participant 8>

Nonetheless, unlike the agreement between the content of the semantic struggle with *comfortable* and the content of the definition of *comfortable* across two participants, the constructed definitions of *refined* are not as unanimous, as there is also a lot of individual variation in (8-11), highlighted by the extensive use of first-person subjects, in the meanings they assign to the priming adjective. In (8-9), *refined* is interpreted as “well spoken” and “clear”, and in (10-11), as “posh”. In (11), specifically, the participant constructs the valences of “posh” as part of the definition of *refined*. The valence of “posh” is constructed as not positive (“to me that isn’t necessarily a good thing”), but the participant also acknowledges that for other individuals, “posh” is positive (“like a lot of people would use that as a compliment”). Later in their meta-attitudinal discourse, the participant makes reference to their background: “coming from where I come from *refined* slash posh they are synonymous but it-it-it has yeah other connotations to me”. The reference to their personal background, which the participant describes as “Irish Traveller”, alludes to Johnstone and Kiesling’s (2008) claim that “[i]t is people’s lived experiences that create indexicality” (p. 29). In other words, linguistic features signal different meanings depending on the interlocutors’ experiences, and in this case, the valence of “posh” – and by synonymisation, the valence of *refined* – is (partly) shaped by the participant’s background. While the rest of the participants did not refer to their background within this meta-attitudinal topic (cf. discourse on familial/regional affiliations in section 4.4), it can be argued that the variety of definitions of *refined* (partly) emerges from the participants’ various backgrounds. Although

the participants did not explicitly state that their own adjectival definitions were influential on their accent attitudes, one's own interpretation of evaluative words undoubtedly shapes (part of) one's evaluation.

This definitional discourse was also found in Bucholtz et al.'s (2008) written survey where participants were asked, "Where in California do you think people speak the best [and worst]? Why?", and they responded based on factors such as education, cultural diversity, and wealth. Unavoidably, then, their evaluations were determined, in part, by the meaning(s) they assigned to the evaluative superlatives "best" and "worst". Similar to Campbell-Kimber (2012), the meta-linguistic and meta-attitudinal nature of the written survey allowed the participants to indirectly indicate their definitions of "best" and "worst". For instance, in the utterance, "because most around that area are educated & rich", it is clear that the participant perceives education and wealth as part of the meaning they assign to "best" in the context of the prompt, while in "because I'm from there", their regional background functions as the basis for the meaning they assign to "best". The semantic variation in Bucholtz et al.'s (2008) not-accent-specific, geo-label study shows that through meta-attitudinal discourse, participants are able to indirectly provide their definitions of evaluative lexicon, as opposed to the limitation of having to interpret standalone scalar adjectives in quantitative-only attitudinal studies.

Besides meta-attitudinally constructing their own definitions of *refined*, the interrogative and contradictory utterances in (8-9) and (10), respectively, suggest that the participants directly (8-9) and indirectly (10) questioned their definitional constructs, unlike the semantic struggle discourse (4-7) which was always in declarative mood. This could be indicative of the certainty of epistemic absence, on one hand, and the uncertainty of meaning creation as well as the personal responsibility that that entails, on the other. In (8), the syntactically declarative utterance ends with an interrogative intonation, and in (9), the participant directly asks the interviewer about the meaning of *refined* before offering their own declarative definitional construction. It is worth repeating that the participants were never asked to provide their interpretations of the adjectives, except in cases such as (10) where the researcher, to avoid answering the participant's question, asks for their interpretation of it instead. The participant further states that it was not taken to mean "clear" until later in the attitudinal section ("i decided that more as i went on"), which points

to persistent semantic uncertainty. Moreover, the contradictory phrasing in “not posh but like how posh” (10) indicates a meta-attitudinal indecision about the meaning of *refined*. Therefore, the meta-attitudinal discourses on adjectival semantic struggle and definitions showcase how non-linguists negotiate the meaning of immediate influences (priming scalar adjectives) on their own accent attitudes. Such semantic negotiation calls into question the reliability and validity of scalar-attitudinal methods since, in quantitative-only studies, meta-linguistic terms (scalar labels) are produced by the researcher and received by the participants without confirmation of their meaning. Similarly, attitudinal discursive methods cannot control for all the participant-produced meanings of attitudinal discourse. If quantitative and discursive attitudinal studies are accompanied by meta-attitudinal sections, however, adjectival meanings can be controllably thematised. Therefore, the meta-attitudinal discourses on semantic struggle and definitions in this study underline the need for a combination of attitudinal and meta-attitudinal methods so that semantic-based complexities and influences can emerge and be scrutinised.

4.3 Collective Accent Attitudes as Influences

Unlike the immediate context of the influences of the priming messages and adjectives, the meta-attitudinally constructed influences of collective accent attitudes on the listeners’ attitudinal evaluations represent more distant and external priming influences, which were not present or measured in the quantitative study. Further, while the message and semantic discourses concerned every accent, the participants (seven out of ten) engaged in meta-attitudinal discourse about specific accents in their construction of collective accent attitudes. It should be noted that, unlike the quantitative section which focused on how the evaluations of the six accents were influenced by the messages, adjectives, and demographics, the interview section did not focus on meta-attitudinal comparisons across accents due to the fact that, as aforementioned (see section 3.2), each interviewee was re-exposed only to the first four message-accent trials to reduce participant fatigue, and since the accents were in a randomised order, different participants were re-exposed to different accents. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that, overall, all accents

except Manchester were thematised in this topic[5]. As can be seen in (12-15), the participants explicitly construct enregistered (Agha 2003, 2005) collective attitudes toward some of the accents as influences on their own attitudes toward those accents, and their discourse also contains their position relative to those influences.

(12) "with this one i think *refined* is high but the sort of intention behind that was sort of almost saying this accent that probably most people don't see as *refined* is *refined* because it's good in these ways do you know what I mean it was like my weird s-so it's like tryna i don't know it sounds bad but like tryna stand up you know I don't know how to word it but um [stand up for the nonstandard?] exactly exactly" <Participant 8; discussing their high evaluation of *refined* for the Birmingham accent>

(13) "with-with that i obviously the first thing well i say obviously but the first thing that sort of pops up is-is a scouse or near scouse accent which is obviously the one that everyone that and birmingham again my focus was on the accents I guess but-but with those it's the accent that everyone says oh that's uneducated that's this that's that that's this yeah so-so perhaps that influenced that (points at their high evaluation of *comfortable*) a little bit" <Participant 8; discussing their high evaluation of *comfortable* for the Liverpool accent and discussing the Birmingham accent too>

(14) "everything she was-everything she was saying was well spoken but i guess there might be a bias towards like the queen's english or whatever" <Participant 5; discussing their low evaluation of *refined* for the London accent>

(15) "i think it was just that the-the fact that it was a geordie accent like i-it comes with associations of like friendliness and yeah" <Participant 2; discussing their high evaluation of *friendly* for the Newcastle accent>

[5] The Manchester accent was not thematised in this meta-attitudinal topic, and the London accent was not thematised in the topic developed in section 4.4. I do not have a speculation about the reason these omissions occurred. It is likely that they were chance omissions.

One of the prominent linguistic features in (12-15) is the use of third-person nouns and pronouns in subject positions, instead of first-person ones, signalling the third-person agency of the collective accent-attitude construct. The use of the noun phrase “most people” in (12) and the repetitive use of the indefinite pronoun “everyone” in (13) (“the one that everyone” and “everyone says”) indicate the copious (“most”) and comprehensive (“everyone”) amount of attitude holders that are not the participant themselves. In (14), the dummy subject in “there might be a bias” and in (15), the third-person pronoun subject in “i-it comes with” further demonstrate the third-person agency that is prevalent in this meta-attitudinal discourse.

In addition to the plethoric attitude-holder constructs, the participants explicitly construct the collective attitudes and, in most cases, the influence on their own attitudes. In (12), the utterance “this accent that probably most people don’t see as *refined* is *refined* because it’s good in these ways” marks the collective negative attitudes toward the Birmingham accent as not-*refined*. Similarly, the utterance “that’s uneducated that’s this that’s that that’s this” (13) demonstrates the variety of explicit negative evaluations toward the Liverpool and Birmingham accents, through the repetitive and alternate use of the indicative pronouns “this” and “that” and the implication that those pronouns refer to many more, equally negative, evaluations. The participant also overtly constructs the influence of the collective attitudes on their own by concluding that the collective negative evaluations are likely to have prompted their high score for *comfortable* (“so-so perhaps that influenced that […] a little bit”).

In (14), when discussing the low evaluation of *refined* for the London accent, the participant’s utterance “there might be a bias towards like the queen’s english or whatever” contains an explicit meta-attitudinal construct of positive collective attitudes toward more standard-like varieties (“queen’s English or whatever”), which explicitly oppose (“but”) the implied collective attitudes toward the accent under evaluation. In (15), “i-it comes with associations of friendliness” contains a construct of the collective enregisterment of the Geordie accent as indexical of friendliness. Here too, like in (13), the participant explicitly states that the collective friendliness construct prompted their high evaluation of *friendly* (“it was just that the-the fact that”).

Not only were the collective accent attitudes construed as influential, but the participants meta-attitudinally positioned themselves relative to their priming. In (12), it is clear that the not-*refined* collective attitude is rejected by the participant as they meta-attitudinally "stand up" for the nonstandard variety through their high scalar evaluation of *refined*. The term "nonstandard" is used by the interviewer in an effort to alleviate the participant's wording difficulty and, while the participant may have agreed with it due to social desirability factors, the agreement is actualised through an emphatic repetition of the confirmatory adverb "exactly exactly". The participant, therefore, positions themselves against the collective attitude in their meta-attitudinal discourse. A similar attitudinal rejection of the negative collective attitudes toward the Birmingham and Liverpool accents ("that's uneducated that's this that's that that's this") is constructed in (13), through the participant's paralinguistic pointing at the high evaluation of *comfortable*.

As such, the participant's (meta)attitudinal stances seem to be combatively construed against normative/prescriptive accent ideologies. While this assertion springs partially from the interviewer's use of the word "nonstandard" and the participant's agreement with it (12), it is clear that the participant's explicitly defensive meta-attitudinal discourse in (12-13) alludes to combating normative accent ideologies, according to which, non-standard accents are perceived as illegitimate or incorrect (Milroy, 2007; Mugglestone, 2007). Further, within the British-English context, such normative ideologies have often resulted in accents from Birmingham and Liverpool being systematically ranked (among) the lowest across various evaluative scales (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Giles, 1970; Hiraga, 2005; Watson & Clark, 2015). While I am not interested in whether the participants' meta-attitudinal discourse on collective accent attitudes is considered accurate by quantitative standards, there is evident agreement between the participant's collective-attitude discourse and the results from quantitative attitudinal sociolinguistic studies.

Similar to (12-13), (14-15) also contain the participants' stance for and against the collective accent attitudes they construct, in agreement with the results of quantitative accent-attitude studies. In (14), the collective "bias toward the queen's english" reflects the legitimisation of a high-class standard for accents (e.g. Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Milroy, 2007), indexed through the class-based phrase "the queen's english". The allusion to a normative standard is similar to (12), but unlike the participant's rejection of the collective-

attitude construct in (12), the participant in (14) adheres to the influence of the collective-attitude construct as they discuss their low evaluation of *refined* for the London variety. Interestingly, however, the participant also meta-attitudinally constructs their own evaluation ("everything she was-everything she was saying was well spoken") and places it in overt opposition to the collective-attitude construct, through the use of the discourse marker "but". Therefore, in (14), there is a disparity in the participant's meta-attitudinal discourse. It is likely that the admittance to being primed by a negative collective evaluation prompted the participant to provide a positive personal evaluation of it, too, due to social desirability or feelings of guilt. In contrast, in (15), the influence of the positive collective perception of the Geordie accent as *friendly* is adhered to in the participant's discussion of their high evaluation of *friendly*. This collective perception of Newcastle accents as *friendly* is reflected in Coupland and Bishop's (2007) label study where the Newcastle variety was rated significantly higher on the attractiveness/pleasantness scale than the prestige scale, the former of which alludes to the adjective *friendly* in this study.

While in quantitative sociolinguistic studies, accent attitudes have been found to be influenced by collective/social accent ideology (e.g. Giles, Bourhis, Trudgill & Lewis, 1974) which is circulated by public accent-attitudinal discourses (e.g. Agha, 2003), the folkloristic awareness of, and position relative to, that ideology have not been problematised so far. In fact, unlike Milroy's (2007) theoretical claim that "speakers are not usually conscious that they are conditioned by these ideological positions" (p. 133), the collective accent attitude constructs in this study show that, within the context of a carefully considered accent meta-attitudinal interview, non-linguists are aware that social accent ideologies prime their own, and they position themselves for and/or against (the influence of) those ideologies. On par with the explicitly constructed influence of the attitudinal messages and adjectival meanings, then, references to the influence of the collective accent attitudes indicate a meta-attitudinal awareness of, and position relative to, the stimuli that contribute to individual accent attitudes, whether those stimuli are situational (accent-attitudinal messages and adjectival meanings and definitions) or social (collective accent attitudes).

4.4 Personal Factors as Influences

Eight out of ten participants also constructed personal factors as influences on their accent attitudes and positioned themselves relative to those influences. Like in the collective-attitudes discourse, the discussion of this topic does not focus on inter-accent comparisons, since not every interviewee was exposed to every accent to reduce participant fatigue, but it should be noted that, overall, all accents except London were thematised in this topic. While both the collective-attitude and the personal-factor discourses are external to the interview, they are also in relative opposition to one another, with the former existing in the public/social sphere and the latter existing in the private/individual sphere. This can be seen in the various first-person pronouns that mark the personal agency in this meta-attitudinal topic (see (16-19)), in contrast to the third-person referents in the collective accent-attitude discourse. Examples of first-person pronouns to describe personally-driven meta-attitudes are included in: “i could tell it was more southern” (16), “i must admit i sort of uh pictured a person with this one” (17), “this is just a bias with me” (18), and “i’m from liverpool (laughter) so i knew i’d be very biased” (19).

(16) “well i could tell it was more southern (laughter) which may be why *friendly* went down (laughter)” <Participant 2, discussing their lower evaluation of *friendly* for the Standard accent>

(17) “that one in particular sounded particularly sort of familiar not cause it’s similar to my accent but because of some people i am friendly with or what have you and uh uh i must admit i sort of uh pictured a person with this one more than with the other ones if you know what I mean so i kind of maybe ascribe certain things to that picture in my head of this kind of person” <Participant 8; discussing their high(er) adjectival evaluations of the Birmingham accent>

(18) “i maybe didn’t rank it as low on other things even though the rates are still low but in terms of kind of friendly and stuff cause-and this is just a bias with me (laughter) that-cause I have-most of my family are scouse” <Participant 5; discussing their high(er) adjectival evaluations of the Liverpool accent>

(19) “i’m from liverpool (laughter) so i knew i’d be very biased on this one as soon as it came up (laughter)” <Participant 10; discussing their high(er) adjectival evaluations of the Liverpool accent>

As well as the first-person pronouns, the participants constructed the personal factors and their influence on their own attitudes. In (16), the participant explicitly presents their own ability to geographically place the accent (“i could tell it was more southern”) as the potential reason for their low rating of *friendly*, through the relative clause (“which may be why”). As aforementioned, no general effects of participant region and accent were found, but it is worth noting that the participant in (16) is from the north of England and has a northern English accent. Although no other participants from the same region and/or with the same accent constructed a similar meta-attitude, this participant’s northern English identity seems to have played a role in their discourse since the implication in (16) is that, if the speaker’s accent were not identified as southern, the rating of *friendly* would not have been as low. Further, judging by the participant’s region and accent as well as their meta-attitude in (15), there is another implication: if the accent were identified as northern English, the rating of *friendly* would have been higher. The latter implication alludes to studies where the explicit evaluations of northern English participants favoured northern English varieties over southern English ones (e.g. McKenzie & Carrie, 2018), but in the current study, the roles of participant region and accent are found at an individual level. In other words, the participant’s meta-attitudinal discourse points to the manifestation of the macro-variables of region and accent for the individual participant, and not for all the participants who share one or both those variables. Like (11), the finding is related to Johnstone and Kiesling’s (2008) argument that language indexes different meanings for different interlocutors.

Besides the geographical placement of the accents, the most frequent personal factor that was meta-attitudinally constructed as an influence on the participants’ attitudes was their affiliations. In (17), the participant refers to “some people” who they are “friendly with” and explains that they “sort of uh pictured a person with this one”, thus explicitly constructing the contribution of the interpersonal influence on their own attitudes. In (18),

familial connections (“my family are scouse”) are presented as the reason (“cause […] cause”) for their higher evaluations of the Liverpool accent. Similarly, in (19), a regional affiliation to Liverpool (“i’m from liverpool”) is also meta-attitudinally presented as the reason for the participant’s higher evaluations of the Liverpool accent. Concerning (18-19), it is worth noting the participants’ regions are south England (East London) and north England (Liverpool), respectively, and their accents are south English and Standard-ish, respectively, so their demographics differ even though they engage in the same meta-attitudinal discourse about Liverpool. Such micro-level nuances, where personal circumstances are found to contribute to attitudes toward accents (Johnstone & Kiesling, 2008), cannot be captured in quantitative-only studies. Additionally, while references to personal affiliations have been found in discoursal, meta-linguistic studies (Campbell-Kibler, 2012; Hall-Lew & Stephens, 2012; Johnstone & Kiesling, 2008), they tend to occur as a way for the participants to justify their meta-linguistic discourse about a variety, i.e. a way to explain their exposure to and knowledge of a variety through their personal relations with its speakers. In this study, on the other hand, the participants’ meta-attitudinal constructs of personal affiliations are explicitly constructed as influences on their accent attitudes.

Although the participants adhered to the influence of the personal factors during the meta-discussion of their evaluations, they occasionally restricted that influence, too. For instance, the utterances “that one in particular” and “more than with the other ones” (17) and “on this one” (19) clearly demarcate these meta-attitudinal instances from the rest of the discourse. The limitation on the influence of the personal factors may be due to the participants’ desire to reduce the amount of individual responsibility that is unavoidably contained within personally-driven influences. The element of individual responsibility was not found in the meta-attitudes of the accent-attitudinal messages, the adjectival semantics, and the collective accent attitudes as neither of them originates from the participants’ private sphere.

The restriction of the influence of the personal factors was reinforced by the participants’ resistance to their influence. In (17), the discursive obligation (“i must admit”) suggests that the participant may not have been willing to be primed by their personal relationship with a speaker of the accent. Similarly, in (18) and (19), the use of “bias” and “biased”, respectively, and the two instances of laughter indicate a meta-attitudinal

resistance to, or unease about, the influence of personal affiliations. This can also be seen in (16), where the laughter and the uncertainty of "may be" seem to signal a discursive resistance. It is interesting that in (18), the participant intercepts the causative clause ("cause […] that cause I have-most of my family are scouse") with the clause "and this is just a bias with me (laughter) that", as this interception further highlights the interference of familial factors with the participant's own attitudes. Unlike studies where the participants' personal relationships validate their meta-linguistic knowledge (Campbell-Kibler, 2012; Hall-Lew & Stephens, 2012; Johnstone & Kiesling, 2008), in this study, personal relationships are meta-attitudinally constructed as potential obstacles to unbiased attitude production. Like the influence of the immediate accent-attitudinal messages and adjectival semantics as well as the external and public collective accent attitudes, the external but private personal factors comprise another construal of accent meta-attitudinal discourse that further elucidates how non-linguists conceptualise the formation of their own accent attitudes.[6]

5. Conclusion

This study examined how non-linguists engage in meta-attitudinal discourse, i.e. how they talk about their own scalar attitudes toward accent recordings that are preceded by affective and cognitive priming messages. It was found that the participants' meta-attitudinal discourse comprised topical units of the influences on their scalar accent evaluations. These formative influences were: the accent-attitudinal priming messages preceding the accent recordings, with a slight emphasis on their affective elements; the participants' semantic struggle with, and definitions of, the scalar priming adjectives following the recordings, with an emphasis on the cognitive adjectives; collective accent ideologies; and the participants' personal factors, like their affiliations. Further, the participants frequently constructed their position relative to those influences, resisting

[6] It is worth noting that, while this study looks at explicit topical units, in (16-19), the knowledge of collective attitudes seems to be presupposed, but is not explicitly performed. The discussions on the higher evaluations of the accents, which were prompted by the meta-attitudinal personal affiliations, seem to exist in opposition to the presupposed negative collective attitudes toward those accents. In other words, if there was no identification of the accent as southern (16), of personal affiliation (17), of familial affiliation (18), or of regional affiliation (19), the participants' own evaluations might have been akin to the positive (16) and negative (17-19) collective attitudes toward those accents.

and/or adhering to them. Therefore, when asked to carefully consider their accent attitudes, non-linguists tend to be(come) aware of contextually immediate (messages and adjectives) as well as more distant stimuli (collective attitudes and personal factors) that condition their accent attitudes.

The findings of this study have important implications for sociolinguistic methodology. Specifically, they show that attitudinal methods should be employed in tandem with meta-attitudinal qualitative methods, as neither the immediate, nor the external discoursal topics found in this study could have been considered in scalar- or metalinguistic-only studies. It is certain that the quantitative section played an important role in shaping the meta-attitudinal section, as the presence of the messages and adjectives in the former prompted the discourses about their influence in the latter. However, although the influence of the affective and cognitive messages and adjectives on the participants' scalar attitudes was considered and measured in the quantitative section of the study, the awareness of the messages' influence and the semantic struggle with, and definitions of, the scalar adjectives could have only been thematised and analysed during the meta-attitudinal interview. Correspondingly, none of the external stimuli – i.e. the collective accent ideologies and the personal factors – could have been measured in the quantitative section. Additionally, a discourse-based attitudinal study alone could not have extensively targeted meta-attitudes about immediate and external influences in the way the present study did.

Besides combining attitudinal and meta-attitudinal methods, the findings of this study have implications for sociolinguistic theory concerning the formation of accent attitudes. Even though it is not possible to ascertain to what degree the meta-attitudinal immediate and external influences contributed to the participants' accent attitudes, it can certainly be argued that, since the participants did perceive them as influences, they must have been, to some extent, influential. Consequently, the ways in which the non-linguists perceived and constructed those formative influences can contribute to our understanding of how accent attitudes are (perceived to be) formed. In conjunction, the researched communities themselves could benefit from interviews with meta-attitudinal deliberation as they may be prompted to realise what conditions their attitudes toward different accents and potentially even problematise accent biases and discrimination. It is possible, for

example, that a portion of the meta-attitudes during the interview were consciously produced and perceived by the participants for the first time, like the realisation of the messages' influence in (3). Therefore, in investigations of language ideology, meta-attitudes should be considered. Understanding how non-linguists meta-attitudinally conceptualise accent-attitudinal influences can inform critical sociolinguistic discussions on how to challenge accentist, and wider language-discriminatory, attitudes.[7]

[7] For discussions on critical sociolinguistics, accentism, and linguistic discrimination in general, see Albury (2017), Beal (2006), and Kinzler (2021).

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Appendix

Appendix A

Recording Content (one side of a telephone conversation)

— Yes, so I told him to take it because I could only look for one of them. Did you call?

— Right. How did it go?

— We'll keep going then. That seems fair.

— No, I can't right now. I need to take care of something else.

— It may help when he comes back in a few months, but I'm not sure.

— Yeah, I will be going to that thing at eight, but I think I'll leave early; probably about nine.

— Did you hear the news?

— Yeah, it won't last long. I saw it yesterday at four during our meal.

— The book?

— I did. It is much better than the other one.

Appendix B

Transcription Conventions

a. Declarative or interrogative utterances that were performed by the listener/interviewer within the speaker's/interviewee's turn are shown in square brackets. Other listener input, like encouraging interjections (e.g. "mhm"), are not transcribed in this paper.
b. Non-vocal language by the main speaker of a turn is shown in parenthesis "(laughter)", following the word after or during which the non-vocal performance occurred. Non-vocal language by the main listener of a turn is not transcribed in this paper.
c. Words that were not clearly interpretable by the transcriber, even after multiple hearings, are indicated with "xxx".
d. Syllable, word, or phrase repetition/interruption, or sudden changes in syntactical formation, are indicated with a dash (e.g. "i-it"; "the-the"; "de-you know deal or something"; "everything she was-everything she was saying"; " cause I have-most of my family are scouse").
e. Quotes from, or references to, the prime messages, the recordings, and the evaluative adjectives are shown in *italics*.
f. Direct-speech performance is shown in single quotation marks (e.g. "I was like 'ooh maybe this is some kind of business de-' you know 'deal or something'").
g. Interrogative utterances are indicated with a question mark (e.g. "i sort of did *refined* in terms of how well spoken they were?"; "does it mean clear?")

Study 4: The Social Construction of Accent(ism)

Abstract

This study draws on results from two accent-attitudinal studies[1] to discuss accent as a social construct as well as accentism. The first study looked at the impact of cognitive and affective persuasive messages and evaluative adjectives on the formation of individual attitudes toward six English-English accents. The messages contained elements of accent-attitudinal newspaper discourse to examine whether the influence of media discourse of accent attitudes (e.g. Agha, 2003) was reflected in the study. It was found that the messages and adjectives influenced the accent attitudes significantly. The second study focused on how aware the participants were of any influences on the formation of their accent attitudes. Results showed that the participants were aware of the impact of the messages and adjectives from the first study as well as personal factors and collective accent attitudes. Therefore, accent attitudes were shown to be constructed based on contextual/social factors. I argue that, besides the social construction of accent attitudes, the features that make accent itself a social construct should be scrutinised in sociolinguistic studies, whose dissemination in public media (e.g. Woolaston, 2013) may prompt the recognition of accent as a social construct among the wider public. Relatedly, the term 'accentism' should be used more frequently in accent-attitudinal studies in order to raise awareness of that form of discrimination and advance the addition of accent to the Equality Act as a protected characteristic.

[1] These studies are study 2 and study 3, renamed here 'study A' and 'study B' (see section 2). This is to avoid ordering confusion because study 1 (renamed 'pilot study' here; not to be confused with the recordings pilot at the start of chapter 2) is not presented first, as it is not as important for this paper as studies 2-3 are.

1. Introduction

The impact of domains such as the mass media on individual accent attitudes has been the subject of much sociolinguistic discussion within the UK context. In media like the television, the radio, and newspapers, the circulation of accent(ist) attitudinal discourse and its influence on individual accent attitudes have been thematised (e.g. Milroy, 2001; Mugglestone, 2007). Accentist attitudes in the UK have been traced back to 19th-century English public schools where the birth of the 'standard' English accent (Agha, 2003; Milroy, 2007), and by extension, of standard-accent ideology, took place. Since then, the endorsement of standard English – a variety which, within the UK's sociolinguistic scape, has been synonymised with notions of correctness, poshness, supra-regionality, prestige, and wealth, among others (e.g. Mugglestone, 2007) – and the vilification of non-standard English have been ongoing.[2]

Despite the human constructedness of attitudes toward accents – through the linguistically-arbitrary promotion of one type of accent and the rejection of others – accent itself does not tend to be treated as a social construct, unlike the constructs of ability, gender, sex, sexuality, and ethnicity/race, among others; e.g. these constructs are consistently referenced in Burr (2003) and Weingberg's (2014) discussions on social constructionism, but accent is not. In sociolinguistics, accent has been described as a social construct (e.g. Planchenault & Poljak, 2021, p. 1), but to my knowledge, the features that make it a social construct have not been extensively analysed. Instead, references to the social construction of accent tend to involve discussions on the social construction of *attitudes* toward accent (e.g. Lippi-Green, 2012; Mugglestone, 2007). In conjunction, language/accent biases are not illegal forms of discrimination in the UK unlike ableism, homophobia, racism, sexism, and transphobia (see Beal, 2006), among other types of discriminatory attitudes. In this paper, I examine how the results of two accent

[2] In this paper, the term 'standard' encompasses concepts relevant to the folk-sociolinguistic scape of the United Kingdom, such as received pronunciation, queen's English, correct, posh, proper, supraregional, while 'non-standard' is associated with concepts such as regional and foreign, although foreign accents are not relevant in this paper. These associations are reflected in study 1 (section 4.4), study 2 (section 3.7), study 3 (section 4.3), and in various theoretical discussions and applications of the term 'standard' (see Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Dragojevic & Giles, 2016; Milroy, 2007; Mugglestone, 2007). While I do not accept (non)standardness as an innate language feature, I use it to represent the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable forms of language that exists in the accent-attitudinal reality of non-linguists (and oftentimes, linguists).

(meta)attitudinal studies contribute to the discussion of socio-contextually conditioned accent attitudes, and I argue that the elements which make accent itself a social construct should be thematised in sociolinguistic studies, whose circulation in public media (e.g. Bennet, 2015) could elicit the wider recognition of the social construction of accent. Additionally, an increase in the use of the term 'accentism' in accent-attitudinal studies could raise awareness of that form of discrimination within the social and legal domains. In what follows, I briefly describe the two studies (and a preceding pilot), and based on their results and on prior literature, I discuss accent as a social construct and the social and legal statuses of accent(ism).

2. The Studies

2a. Study A: Cognitive and Affective Accent Attitudes

Study A examined the formation of attitudes toward six English-English accents, i.e. Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Standard. According to the social-psychological tripartite model, attitudes are formed from the cognition (beliefs/fact-like knowledge), affect (feelings/emotions), and/or past, present, or intended behaviours towards an attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken, 2014; Fazio, 2007). The impact of affect and cognition on attitude formation has been extensively examined in social psychology (e.g. Crites, Fabrigar & Petty, 1994), but within sociolinguistics, besides Cargile, Giles, Ryan, and Bradac's (1994) theoretical contribution – according to which language attitudes are primarily, or entirely, affective – there has been no contrastive examination of the components' influence on accent attitudes. Shedding light on whether accent attitudes are formed from fact-based or emotional components can inform sociolinguist discussions on accent(ist) ideologies.

To examine whether attitudes toward six English-English accents were cognition- or affect-based, study A used the priming technique which involves the presentation of a prime stimulus in order to influence the perception of a target stimulus (Cameron, Brown-Iannuzzi & Payne, 2012). The use of priming was based on prior studies which found that whether an attitude is cognitive or affective can be indicated by which primes (cognitive or affective) influence it more (e.g. Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). In study A, persuasive messages and scalar evaluative adjectives functioned as the priming stimuli, and the accents as the target.

Specifically, the participants (47)[3] were exposed to trials of the following format: a cognitive or affective persuasive message (Appendix A), followed by an accent recording (Appendix B), followed by evaluative scales with cognitive and affective adjective labels (*refined*, *gentle*, *friendly*, *comfortable*, *calm*, and *happy*). Besides cognitive and affective content from social psychological studies (Crites et al., 1994; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015), the messages consisted of indirect accent-attitudinal discourse, akin to newspaper article titles (e.g. Furness, 2015). The purpose of this was to examine whether the media's influence on language ideology (e.g. Coupland, 2009) was, in some way, reflected in the influence of the messages.

Results indicated that the cognitive messages and adjectives influenced the attitudes toward the standard English-English variety, while the affective messages and adjectives influenced the attitudes toward the non-standard English-English varieties. Therefore, primarily cognitive or affective accent-attitudinal formations may depend on the (non)standard status of the accents. Further, connections were drawn between accent attitudes and education and the media. Firstly, the knowledge-based (cognitive) attitudes toward the standard accent allude to the knowledge-based domain of education which advocates standardness and rejects non-standardness. Secondly, the influence of the cognitive and affective priming messages, which were partly modelled after newspaper accent-attitudinal discourse, reflects the influence of meta-linguistic media discourse on accent ideology. These connections are discussed further in the following section.

The scalar evaluative adjectives in study A, were gathered in a pilot study where I argued that the emergence of novel attitudinal lexicon may be hindered because the same scalar evaluative lexicon is constantly circulated in sociolinguistic literature – due to restrictive scalar elicitation techniques (e.g. Grondelaers & Van Gent, 2019) – and by extension, in the media that report sociolinguistic findings (e.g. Woolaston, 2013). The aim of the pilot study, then, was to contextually prime the participants' accent evaluations through minimally restrictive scalar elicitation techniques (i.e. unspecified attitude object in

[3] All participants were native-English speakers, born and raised in England, between 18-30 years of age, and studying at The University of Manchester in subjects other than Linguistics, to minimise inter-subject discrepancies in responses to sociolinguistic matters (e.g. linguistics students might be more likely to provide strictly non-prescriptive accent evaluations). These criteria allowed for a certain amount of control over social macro-variables like age (18-30), education (university), and national identity (born and raised in England).

evaluation prompt, and open-ended written response format) to test whether novel attitudinal lexicon (within the UK context) would be elicited. Results showed that accent-attitudinal lexicon can be contextually primed since novel attitudinal adjectives (e.g. *refined*) emerged.

2b. Study B: Folkloristic Accent Meta-Attitudes

Study B explored the ways in which non-linguists engage in accent meta-attitudinal discourse, i.e. how they talk about their accent attitudes. In examining accent attitudes, quantitative scalar studies (e.g. Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Giles, 1970) and discursive meta-linguistic studies (e.g. Campbell-Kibler, 2012; Hall-Lew & Stevens, 2012) tend to examine how non-linguists evaluate a variety but not how they evaluate their evaluations of a variety, which is the focus of this study. Investigating how accent attitudes are (perceived to be) formed can shed light on the various influences which contribute to their formation and cannot be discerned solely through attitudinal methods. To examine the meta-attitudinal discourse of non-linguists, ten participants were interviewed following study A. The participants were re-exposed to the first four messages, recordings, and adjectival evaluative scale sets, and they were asked to talk about their evaluations. A primarily topical analysis was performed, focusing on the main themes emerging from the meta-attitudinal data.

Results showed that the non-linguist interviewees discursively constructed various stimuli as influences on their accent evaluations, ranging from immediate ones, such as the persuasive messages and evaluative adjectives, to more external ones, such as personal factors and collective accent attitudes. The participants also tended to position themselves relative to the influence of those stimuli. Therefore, when asked to carefully consider their accent attitudes, non-linguists tend to be(come) aware of contextually immediate as well as more distant stimuli that condition their accent attitudes. Results are discussed in more detail in the following section.

3. Accent (Attitudes) as Socially Constructed

The circulation and influence of public meta-language on individual accent attitudes through the British media have been extensively discussed (Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009;

Dragojevic, Mastro, Giles & Sink, 2016; Milroy, 2001; Milroy & Milroy, 2012; Mugglestone, 2007). As Coupland (2009) argues, for instance, television characters and radio-show hosts are stereotypically associated with certain types of accents; e.g. working-class characters in soap operas set in the north of England are associated with non-standard accents, popular radio show hosts with non-standard accents, and serious radio show hosts with standard accents.[4] Even outside the British context, similar situations have been described. On Danish radio, for example, presenters with non-standard accents are allocated to "'less serious' sections of weather forecast and sport" (Kristiansen, 2004, p. 115). Besides television and the radio, the influence of accent-attitudinal discourse in newspapers has also been problematised (Agha, 2003; Milroy & Milroy, 2012; Milroy, 2001). Therefore, the media contribute to the construction of accent attitudes. Sentences (1)-(5) below are examples of British newspaper headlines containing attitudinal discourse.

(1) Brummie accent is perceived as 'worse than silence' (Rosemary Bennet, *The Times*, 4 April 2008)
(2) Brummie accents 'worse than staying silent', study shows (Hannah Furness, *The Telegraph*, 16 July 2015)
(3) Birmingham bottom of the list in UK 'hierarchy of accents', study finds (*Express & Star*, 27 November 2009)
(4) The rise of 'accent softening': Why more and more people are changing their voices (Daniel Lavelle, *The Guardian*, 20 March 2019)
(5) Does your accent make you sound smarter? (Chi Luu, *BBC Worklife*, 23 May 2017)

As aforementioned, elements of newspaper discourse were utilised in the messages of study A (i.e. the hedge "study shows" and the quotation marks around evaluative lexes), and it was found that the messages were influential in the formation of the participants' accent attitudes, which lends some experimental support to the influence of newspaper discourse on the construction of accent ideology (as well as on the use of accent-attitudinal

[4] It should be noted that, although Coupland (2009) discusses accent biases/stereotypes in British media, they also discuss the improvements seen in British media with regards to accent ideology, such as the increased inclusion of non-standard-accented actors and characters on television.

vocabulary, as shown in the aforementioned pilot study). It is worth deconstructing some of the article titles above to highlight points of potential accent-attitudinal priming. Titles (1-3) are similar in that they report study results through the use of quotation marks and/or discursive tags like “study shows” (2). However, there is an important difference between (1) and (2), both of which refer to the same study: In (1), the verb “perceived” is used before the quote, whereas in (2), there is no verb before the quote. It can be readily assumed that the missing verb in (2) is the verb ‘to be’ – its omission being common in “headlinese” (Moncomble, 2018, n.p.) – which adds a degree of factuality to the ensuing quote, while “perceived” in (1) adds evaluative qualities. Despite their differences, in both (1) and (2), it is a negative attitude toward the Birmingham accent that occupies the title of the article. While (4-5) are not reporting study results, they also contain accentist discourse. In (4), “more and more people” engage in the euphemistically-termed practice of “‘accent softening’“, thus indicating a preference for the practice, and in (5), one’s accent could be connected to one’s smartness. It should be noted that some of these articles discuss, and even show support for, anti-standardist views, but the article titles themselves are not indicative of that content. Such accentist newspaper discourse is reminiscent of Milroy and Milroy’s (2012) claim that discourse on the issues of prescriptivism in newspapers often “degenerates into open expressions of ill-informed prejudice” (p. 87). Although the authors of the articles themselves do not overtly express any negative attitudes toward non-standard accents in (1)-(5), their article titles carry accentist discursive elements.

In study B, the cognitive and affective persuasive messages and evaluative adjectives were thematised by the participants as influences on their accent evaluations. Specifically, the participants discussed the messages’ general influence as well as the struggle with the meaning of two adjectives and the creation of their own definitions of those adjectives. The participants also thematised personal factors and collective accent attitudes as influences on their accent attitudes. For instance, having family in Liverpool prompted positive evaluations of the Liverpool accent (personal factor); and the Newcastle accent being collectively perceived as friendly prompted positive evaluations of that accent, or the Birmingham accent being collectively perceived as uneducated prompted positive evaluations of that accent as a sign of resistance (collective attitudes). In other words, the participants thematised influential personal factors and collective attitudes as well as their

stance toward them. As such, the participants showed awareness of the various contextual and social stimuli that influenced their accent attitudes (i.e. the cognitive and affective messages and the adjectives as well as the personal factors and collective accent attitudes), which supports that accent attitudes are (consciously perceived to be) contextually and socially constructed (Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Milroy, 2001).

The folkloristic awareness of accent-attitudinal influences is strongly related to the status of the accents under examination in the two studies. In the UK context, the six English-English accents are what Labov (2010) describes as "stereotypes", in that, they have "risen to a sufficiently high level of social awareness" that they have been "subjected both to folklorization and to stigmatization" (p. 186). Based on Labov's characterisation of stereotypes as folklorised (or involved in public meta-language) and stigmatised, then, the participants in study B provided meta-attitudinal commentary on the folklorisation and stigmatisation of the accents. In other words, in discussing their own accent attitudes, the participants meta-attitudinally thematised the biased, public meta-language concerning the accents. It should be noted that, in this paper, the term 'biased' is preferrable to Labov's 'stigmatised' as the latter carries connotations of only negative attitudes, while the former carries both positive and negative connotations, which is more accurate since there are both positive and negative accent biases/stereotypes. Positive as well as negative biases were found in the data of study B; e.g. the perception of Newcastle accents as friendly is a positive bias, in contrast to the negatively biased perception of Birmingham accents as uneducated.

The two studies, therefore, showed that the social conditioning of accent attitudes was reflected in their experimental conditioning (study A) and that non-linguists tend to be aware of both kinds of conditioning (study B). The studies lend evidence to the social construction of accent attitudes, and by extension, I examine the ways in which accent itself is socially constructed. To my knowledge, descriptions of accent as a social construct within sociolinguistics (e.g. Planchenault & Poljak's, 2021, p. 1) tend to include investigations of the social construction of accent *attitudes* (Brown & Lambert, 1976; Giles, Bourhis & Davies, 1979; Giles, Bourhis, Trudgill & Lewis, 1974; Lippi-Green, 2012; Mugglestone, 2007) rather than the social construction of accent itself. As such, attention has not been placed on the features that make accent a social construct. According to Weinberg (2014, p. 4):

> the term ‘social construction’ is usually meant to convey that something that has been widely considered beyond the scope of social influence is actually the product of specific sociohistorical or social interactional processes. Hence, social constructionism thrives particularly vigorously among social scientists interested in the study of such matters as beauty, gender, morality, pathology, race, science, and sexuality. Whereas it was once widely believed that these phenomena were determined by fixed natural or metaphysical laws and therefore were sociohistorically invariant, social constructionists have repeatedly demonstrated the extent to which their characteristics are, in fact, culturally relative or historically specific.

Weinberg (2014) does not refer to language or accent as examples of social constructs, but some of the social-construct examples that are mentioned, like gender, sexuality, and race/ethnicity have been frequently found to be linked to attitudes toward accent varieties. Among several accent-attitudinal studies, for instance, it has been found that the listeners’ gender significantly contributed to their attitudes toward accents (Coupland & Bishop, 2007); that the listeners’ attitudes toward female-male, femininity-masculinity, and straightness-gayness contributed to their attitudes toward accents (Campbell-Kibler, 2011; Levon, 2014); and that the speakers’ race/ethnicity as well as accent contributed to the listeners’ attitudes toward the speakers’ employability (Segrest Purkiss, Perrewé, Gillespie, Mayes & Ferris, 2006). As such, one’s accent attitudes can be influenced by their – and their interlocutor’s – gender, sexuality, and/or ethnicity. As Milroy (2007, p. 135) has pointed out, “language stands proxy for these other social categories”. Although Milroy (2007) does not argue that language or accent are social constructs themselves, they indirectly point to their intersection with some of Weinberg’s (2014) construct examples. To that end, I argue that it is more appropriate to overtly treat accent as a construct that intersects with other constructs, rather as a mere proxy to other constructs, as the latter treatment can minimise the role and influence of accent on people’s attitudes. In other words, when a certain accent is used by individuals from specific socially-constructed categories (e.g. ethnolect, a dialect/accent associated with an ethnicity, in Eckert, 2008), any

attitudes toward that accent will also be directed toward, and influenced by, these socially-constructed categories, and vice versa, due to the intersection between the accent and the categories.

Despite the association between accent and social constructs, however, discussions about the social status of accent in the UK have only occurred with regards to the standard accent being a 'social' accent, as opposed to the non-standard accents being regional accents. For instance, Agha (2003) claimed that while "locales" are used as the typical labels of regional accents (e.g. Newcastle accent), the standard accent is treated as one whose labels are only social, i.e. "indexical of speaker's class and levels of education" (p. 233). Agha (2003) restricted the social qualities of 'accent' only to references to the supra-local, standard accent. However, all accents, whether non-standard or standard, geographical or non-geographical, are social. Although geographical labels alone may not directly denote social properties, geographical regions tend to be associated with certain social qualities or stereotypes. For example, some northern regions are associated with the working class due to the multitude of factories in the north of England during the industrial era (see Milroy, 2001, p. 62). By extension, some northern English accents are associated with the working class, too.

Associations between social qualities and regionally-named accents were found in study B. The meta-attitudinal discourse examples concerning the influence of collective accent attitudes on individual accent attitudes involved: education, a frequent indicator of class, for the Birmingham and Liverpool accents; and friendliness for the Newcastle accent. Thus, education and friendliness were used to describe the collective attitudes toward the three accents which, by name alone, evoke only a locale. It is also worth noting that the standard-English accent has geographical associations, besides social ones, mostly based on its area of origin (see Agha, 2003; Mugglestone, 2007). The following evaluation of the standard-accent recording in the pilot study exemplifies the locale-based association: "This speaker definitely comes from either the south-east of England or a more upper-middle-class area outside of that region. It is difficult to determine the tenor of her voice because of her highly received pronunciation" (see more in study 1, section 4.4). The participant's evaluation contains a clear association between south-east England and accent standardness (expressed here as "upper-middle-class" and "received pronunciation").

Therefore, both non-standard and standard accents signal the geographical as well as social aspects of accent. Additionally, the social constructionist features described by Weinberg (2014) can be readily applied to accent: within the UK, the accentist dichotomy between standard and non-standard English-English accents was the result of "specific sociohistorical or social interactional processes" (Weinberg, 2014, p. 4) involving the emergence of the standard accent – and its promotion over all other accents – in 19th-century English public schools, the educational spaces of upper-class males (Agha, 2003; Milroy, 2007).

Notwithstanding the social constructionist features of accent, however, the belief in the fixedness and invariance of the way social constructs were once thought to be, according to Weinberg (2014), still pertain to accent by and large. Specifically, the existence of a standard accent itself fortifies attitudes of accent "uniformity or invariance", and implies that accent should not vary across speakers or across time (Milroy, 2007, p. 133). Accent is perceived, in Weinberg's (2014) terms, as "sociohistorically invariant" (p. 4). In rejecting accent variation and change through standardist values, then, accent is promoted as a monolithic entity that is "fixed" (using Weinberg's, 2014, terminology, p. 4). Further, even though a standard accent is chosen arbitrarily by linguistic standards alone, its proponents perceive that choice as "linguistic fact" (Milroy, 2007, p. 135) – i.e. what Weinberg (2014) calls "natural" (p. 4). As aforementioned, in study A, the attitudes toward the standard accent were found to be mostly based on fact-like knowledge/belief (cognition), which alludes to the fact-driven domain of education and its promotion of standard English (e.g. Cushing, 2021; Lampropoulou & Cooper, 2021; Snell & Cushing, 2022). Unavoidably, the perceived factuality of the standard accent presupposes that accents have innate properties. Consequently, the essentialist fixedness and invariance that Weinberg describes as past attitudes toward social constructs ("it was once widely believed") are still central in accent ideology: prescriptivism and, specifically, standardism and accentism are relevant in the present. The discriminatory ideologies rooted in accent essentialism, combined with the lack of comprehensive sociolinguistic analysis on – and, thus, the lack of media coverage of – the social construction of accent, contribute to the general lack of public perception of accent as a social construct, in contrast to the more established, or widely known, social constructs (e.g. ability, class, gender, race, sexuality) that are part of (non)academic discourses (Baldy, 2021; Burr, 2003; Gray, 2020; Palomino-Manjón, 2022;

Weinberg, 2014). Detailed discussions on the social construction of accent should be foregrounded within sociolinguistics in order to be disseminated more widely.

4. Accentism

Related to the acknowledgement of accent as a social construct is the acknowledgement of accentism. Within sociolinguistics, accent-based discrimination is conceptually acknowledged, but the term 'accentism' itself is rarely used. Instead, the periphrastic 'accent biases' tends to be used (e.g. Levon, Sharma, Watt, Cardoso & Ye, 2021). Alternatively, the all-inclusive 'language/linguistic biases' (e.g. Dragojevic & Giles, 2016) or 'linguicism'[5] (e.g. Uekusa, 2019) are used, denoting general language-based discrimination and not accent-based discrimination specifically. Outside of academia, accent discrimination is not as acknowledged, or as unacceptable, as other forms of discrimination, and relatedly, the term 'accentism' (or 'accent biases'[6]) is rarely used. In comparing biases against language and accent to biases against other constructs, Milroy (2007) states that "[a]lthough it is now unacceptable to discriminate openly against someone for reasons of ethnic group, social class, religion, or gender, it is still acceptable to discriminate openly on linguistic grounds" (p. 135). Similarly, more than a decade later, Kinzler (2021) touches upon the same issue: "Expressing linguistic bias is not as culturally taboo as are many other forms of bias" (p. 257). Both researchers emphasise the need for linguicism and accentism to also become socially unacceptable.

The general acceptance of accent discrimination, as opposed to other forms of discrimination, inevitably contributes to, and is triggered by, the rare use of the term 'accentism' in public discourses, in contrast to terms like 'ableism', 'racism', 'sexism', and 'transphobia', which are relatively popular (Baldy, 2021; Gray, 2020; Palomino-Manjón, 2022). That is not to say that the existence of the latter forms of discrimination is recognised by every individual. However, a large portion of members of the public are aware of, and use, that terminology, regardless of whether they do so to argue for or against the existence of those biases. For instance, a search for 'accentism' and 'accentist' in Twitter posts

[5] The term 'linguicism' was coined by Skutnabb-Kangas (1989).
[6] The periphrastic 'accent biases' is not considered further as I am attempting to draw a parallel between accentism and other known -isms and -phobias.

(hashtags and text) from December 9 to November 9, 2021, returned 0-3 posts per day,[7] whereas searches for 'homophobia', 'racism', 'sexism', and their agentive derivatives returned substantially more than 3 results per day (the total amount is unaccountable without the paid services of social-media monitoring software). Although this is not an exhaustive search for the popularity of the terms, nor is Twitter the only popular social-networking platform, such stark differences in the usage of the terms offers a general indication of the difference between the current use of accentism and other forms of discrimination.

Considering the aforementioned media reach of accent-attitudinal research, the increased use of the term 'accentism' in accent-attitudinal studies could increase the public use of the term itself and, by extension, the recognition of that form of discrimination. It would thus be helpful for the term to be used more often in studies, when relevant (see use of term in Dryden & Dovchin, 2021), and to be promoted in media reports of the studies. In addition, the term could be used more frequently in the presence of participants – when the studies do not examine indirect/implicit attitudes – so that the researched communities themselves can become familiar with the (nomenclature of) that form of discrimination.

The social recognition and terminological use of accentism could contribute to the advancement of its protected status legally, as the social and legal domains are inextricably linked. Similar to Milroy (2007) and Kinzler's (2021) aforementioned criticism of the relative social acceptance of accentism, as opposed to other forms of discrimination, Beal (2006) objects to the fact that accent discrimination is "still rife" in "countries such as the UK and the US that have legislation to outlaw discrimination against job applicants on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race and sexual orientation" (p. 31). In the UK, the Equality Act 2010 provides legal protection for people discriminated against – in the workplace, in public functions, in education, and in wider society – as a result of having a protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Several years after Beal's (2006) remark, accent is still not a legally protected construct. Both socially and legally, then, accentism is not a recognised form of discrimination.

[7] Interestingly, a search for 'accent bias' on Twitter, between 9 December and 9 November 2021, returned the same results as 'accentism' and 'accentist', i.e. 0-3 tokens per day.

Nonetheless, the Equality Act Review campaign is advocating for the addition of accent and other characteristics, such as weight and hair, to the Equality Act. Specifically, Bi's (2021) report, *Equality Act 10 Years On*, contains accent-attitudinal research (presented by sociolinguists Levon, Sharma, and Watt) to highlight the reality and consequences of accent biases. Accentism, as a term, is missing from the report and the phrases "[d]iscrimination on the basis of accent", "bias against particular accents", and "accent bias" are used instead (Bi, 2021, pp. 65-66). Nevertheless, the synergy among academic, social, and legal discourses could lead to the eventual acknowledgement of that form of discrimination by the wider public. Although the public recognition of accent as a social construct and its legal status as a protected characteristic will not eliminate accentism, they can contribute to its reduction and, crucially, limit the harm it inflicts.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I showed that the impact of public accent-attitudinal discourse on individual attitudes is reflected in the results of two studies, I examined the ways in which accent is socially constructed, and I argued that the term 'accentism' should gain academic and public ground. Specifically, the studies showed that non-linguists were aware that their accent attitudes were conditioned by social factors (i.e. messages that were structured after accent-attitudinal media discourse, and collective accent attitudes). Since accent attitudes were shown to be socially constructed, as per prior research (Brown & Lambert, 1976; Giles et al., 1979; Giles et al., 1974), I scrutinised the features that make accent a social construct, as they have not been thoroughly investigated in sociolinguistics, despite the acknowledged intersection between accent and recognised social constructs like gender, race, and sexuality (e.g. Campbell-Kibler, 2011). In conjunction, although accent biases are conceptually recognised in sociolinguistics, the term 'accentism' is not popularly used. By extension, neither the concept, nor the term, are present in public discourse. Correspondingly, in the legal domain, accent has not received protected status in the UK under the Equality Act. A fruitful next step would be to examine the popularity of, and discourse surrounding, the terms 'accentism' and 'accentist' on popular social platforms, like Twitter, in order to thoroughly gauge the level of public recognition and treatment of that form of discrimination. Elaborate discussions about the social constructedness of

accent and more frequent use of the term ‘accentism’ in sociolinguistics could increase public awareness regarding accent as a social construct and accentism as a form of discrimination, as well as contribute to the advancement of accent as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Cognitive and Affective Messages

a. Cognitive Positive Message

   … "Flawless" is how 21% of the interviewers described telephone interviews with candidates from particular places in the UK, a study shows ... The lack of visual bias can have a positive influence on the outcome of a phone interview … In the same study, 54% of the interviewers characterised phone interviews with people from specific areas of the UK as "noteworthy" …

b. Cognitive Negative Message

   … "Uninteresting" is how 21% of the interviewers described telephone interviews with candidates from particular places in the UK, a study shows ... The lack of eye contact can have a negative influence on the outcome of a phone interview… In the same study, 54% of the interviewers characterised phone interviews with people from specific areas of the UK as "pointless" …

c. Affective Positive Message

   … "Terrific" is how the interviewer described their personal experience of telephone interviews with candidates from particular places in the UK … The lack of visual bias can have a positive influence on the outcome of a phone interview … Another interviewer expressed that their own calls with applicants from specific areas of the UK are "uplifting" …

d. Affective Negative Message

   … "Insufferable" is how the interviewer described their personal experience of telephone interviews with candidates from particular places in the UK ... The lack of eye contact can have a negative influence on the outcome of a phone interview … Another interviewer expressed that their own calls with applicants from specific areas of the UK are "exhausting"…

Appendix B

Recording Content (one side of a telephone conversation)

— Yes, so I told him to take it because I could only look for one of them. Did you call?

— Right. How did it go?

— We'll keep going then. That seems fair.

— No, I can't right now. I need to take care of something else.

— It may help when he comes back in a few months, but I'm not sure.

— Yeah, I will be going to that thing at eight, but I think I'll leave early; probably about nine.

— Did you hear the news?

— Yeah, it won't last long. I saw it yesterday at four during our meal.

— The book?

— I did. It is much better than the other one.

Chapter 3: Conclusion

This project examined the formation of accent attitudes through social-psychological, sociolinguistic, and sociological lenses. Whereas much has been discovered with regards to whether attitudes toward various accents are positive or negative among different dimensions (e.g. solidarity, status, and dynamism) (Grondelaers & Van Gent, 2019; Dixon, Mahoney & Cocks, 2002), the way accent attitudes are contextually formed has not been investigated. Study 1 examined the priming of accent-attitudinal lexicon within the British-English context. The evaluative adjectives that fit the selection criteria were assigned to the evaluative scales in study 2 where the cognitive and affective components of accent attitudes were examined, through exposure to cognitive and affective priming stimuli. Study 3, then, examined how aware non-linguists were of the various priming stimuli that influence the formation of their own accent attitudes, including the stimuli from study 2. Lastly, study 4 considered the results from studies 1-3 and presented a discussion on the social construction of accent attitudes and accent itself.

More specifically, in study 1, I argued that the constant exposure to the same pool of attitudinal lexicon in prior accent-attitudinal studies (e.g. Fabricius, 2006; Watson and Clark, 2015) as well as in meta-linguistic media discourses (e.g. Agha, 2003; Mugglestone, 2007), such as newspapers (e.g. Bennet, 2015; Cawley, 2021), can prime (non)linguists to use it in their own accent evaluations or their accent-evaluative experiments. Study 1 attempted to address the lack of novel evaluative vocabulary through the use of minimally restrictive scalar elicitation techniques. Particularly, to collect the evaluations toward six English-English accents (Birmingham, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and Standard) and the scalar lexicon for studies 2-3, study 1 did not specify an attitude object in the evaluative prompt, and the format of the prompt was open-ended. The expectation was that the minimally restrictive techniques would prime the participants' accent evaluations and result in the emergence of novel evaluative lexicon. After the data were filtered through a series of selection criteria tailored to the scalar requirements of studies 2-3, findings showed that, within the British sociolinguistic context, new accent-evaluative scalar lexicon did emerge: *friendly* is the only adjective that has been used to evaluate accents before (e.g. Montgomery & Moore, 2018; Watson & Clark, 2015), but the rest of the resulting adjectives (*refined*, *gentle*, *comfortable*, *calm*, and *happy*) have not.

In study 2, the cognitive and/or affective formations of accent attitudes were examined, which is an unexplored area in sociolinguistic research with only a handful of studies investigating whether negative affect influences accent attitudes (e.g. Dragojevic & Giles, 2016; Cargile & Giles, 1997). The examination of the cognitive and/or affective formations of accent attitudes was prompted by the social-psychological tripartite model of attitudes, according to which attitudes are based on cognition (thoughts, beliefs, or knowledge), affect (emotions or feelings), and/or behaviour (past, present, or intended actions) toward an attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken, 2014; Haddock & Zanna, 1998; Katz, 1960). Several social-psychological studies have found that attitudes are based on different components depending on the attitude object under examination (e.g. Crites, Fabrigar & Petty, 1994; Simons & Carey, 1998). Additionally, it has been found that when attitudes toward an object are cognitive (or affective), the evaluative adjectives chosen by the evaluators are cognitive (or affective) too (e.g. Crites et al., 1994; Rocklage & Fazio, 2015), based on their cognitive or affective scores in the *EL 2.0* (Rocklage, Rucker & Nordgren, 2018). I used persuasive cognitive and affective messages that mimicked messages in prior social-psychological studies and some of the accent-attitudinal discourse in newspaper article titles (e.g. Hosie, 2017; Woolaston, 2013). The messages appeared before each accent recording, which was followed by the cognitive and affective evaluative adjectives collected in study 1. The expectation was that the cognitive priming messages and adjectives would similarly influence the attitudes toward some accents and the affective priming messages and adjectives would similarly influence the attitudes toward other accents, indicating which accent attitudes were formed based on cognition and which were formed based on affect.

Overall, results showed that the attitudes toward the standard accent were influenced by the cognitive messages and adjectives, while those toward the five non-standard accents were influenced by the affective messages and adjectives. Firstly, five out of six accent attitudes in this study were based on affect, which demonstrates the important role of emotion in the formation of accent attitudes, similar to the results of affect-inducing sociolinguistic studies (Dragojevic & Giles, 2016; Dragojevic et al., 2017; Giles et al., 1995; Sebastian et al., 1980). In conjunction, with five (non-standard) accent attitudes being affective and only one (standard) accent attitude being cognitive in this study, the primacy

of affective over cognitive attitudes supported Cargile, Giles, Ryan, and Bradac's (1994) claim that language attitudes are more affective than cognitive. Moreover, I argued that the cognitive-affective attitudinal distinction was prompted by the perceived non-/standard statuses of the accents. This distinction corroborated the findings of prior social-psychological studies that cognitive and affective attitudes depend on the attitude object under examination (e.g. Crites et al., 1994; Simons & Carey, 1998) – i.e. the non-standard and standard accents in this case. Based on the affective-cognitive attitudinal distinction, I drew a link between the prescriptive domain of education/academia and the cognitive attitudes toward the standard accent, as the knowledge- or fact-based (attitudinal cognition) domain of education is known to promote standardist ideology that validates the standard variety, while vilifying non-standard varieties (Cushing, 2021; Milroy, 2007; Mugglestone, 2007; Lampropoulou & Cooper, 2021; Snell & Cushing, 2022). Beyond education, since the priming messages were somewhat modelled after accent-attitudinal newspaper article titles, the influence of media discourse on accent ideology (Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009; Dragojevic, Mastro, Giles & Sink, 2016; Milroy, 2001; Milroy & Milroy, 2012; Mugglestone, 2007) was also reflected in this study. Accordingly, the media's influence on accent attitudes as a whole provided further support for my argument in study 1 about the media's influence on the use of accent-attitudinal lexicon.

In study 3, the non-linguists' awareness of the factors that contribute to the formation of their accent attitudes was examined using meta-attitudinal interviews. To my knowledge, meta-attitudinal discourse has not been the focus of any sociolinguistic study. Instead, qualitative attitudinal studies tend to examine the meta-language/attitudinal discourse of non-linguists, i.e. their knowledge of, and attitudes toward, phonetic varieties or features (Bucholtz et al., 2008; Campbell-Kibler, 2012; Johnstone & Kiesling, 2008; Lampropoulou & Cooper, 2021; Rodgers, 2016; Johnstone & Kiesling, 2008; Niedzielski & Preston, 1999; Preston, 1996; Preston, 2019). Following the attitudinal section (study 2), the participants were re-exposed to the messages, recordings, and adjectival evaluations of each of the first four trials and were asked to discuss their evaluations. The expectation was that participants will discuss the factors that contributed to their accent attitudes, inclusive of the messages and adjectives from the attitudinal section. Results indicated that the participants explicitly constructed segments of the messages, the meanings of some of the

scalar adjectives, collective accent attitudes, and their personal relationships as influences on their attitudes to the accents, and they sided for or against them. Concerning the priming messages specifically, the participants quoted more affective segments than cognitive ones when discursively constructing the messages' influence on their attitudes – which was reflected in the attitudinal affect-over-cognition primacy found in study 2. Additionally, most participants struggled to self-define the scalar adjective *refined*, similar to studies where the meaning of words like 'accentless' by non-linguists was blurred (Campbell-Kibler, 2012). This finding suggested that the decontextualised nature of scalar labels, which are typically used in quantitative accent-attitudinal studies, may elicit problems with scalar-attitudinal methods since the meaning of the meta-language of scalar methods (i.e. the meaning of the scalar labels) may be understood differently by different participants. Beyond the expected thematic units, participants also constructed a meta-attitudinal awareness of the influence of collective accent attitudes on their own attitudes, in opposition to the treatment of non-linguists as unaware of the social influences on their accent attitudes (e.g. Milroy, 2007). Instead, the participants' construction of collective accent attitudes alluded to non-folkloristic studies that have found support for the influence of collective/social accent ideology on individual accent attitudes (e.g. Giles, Bourhis, Trudgill & Lewis, 1974) as well as studies that have thematised the conduits of that collective/social accent ideology, i.e. the public accent-attitudinal discourses scrutinised in studies 1-2 (e.g. Agha, 2003).

The formation of accent attitudes through the influence of media discourse, which was thematised throughout this project, culminated in study 4, where the results of studies 1, 2, and 3 (renamed 'pilot study', 'study A', and 'study B', respectively) were considered within a wider discussion of the social construction of accent attitudes and accent itself. Although accent attitudes are considered to be determined by social norms (Giles et al., 1974), to my knowledge, the features that render accent a social construct have not been scrutinised in sociolinguistics. Instead, typically, *accent* is discussed as a social construct only as an extension of accent *attitudes* being discussed as socially constructed (Brown & Lambert, 1976; Giles, Bourhis & Davies, 1979; Giles et al., 1974; Lippi-Green, 2012; Mugglestone, 2007; Planchenault & Poljak, 2021). By using Weinberg's (2014) description of social constructionism, I elaborated on: the features that make accent itself a social

construct, i.e. the social qualities of all accents, inclusive of regional ones (see Milroy, 2001, on the link between northern accents and working class); the intersectionality of accent with other constructs (cf. Milroy's description of accent as a mere "proxy" for other constructs, p. 135); and the sociohistorical processes that led to the construction of standard accent norms, emerging in 19th century English public schools (Agha, 2003; Milroy, 2007).

Since the socially-constructed nature of *accent* is not explicitly examined in sociolinguistic studies and since the theoretical discussions on the influence of the media (e.g. Agha, 2003; Coupland, 2009) were reflected in the findings of studies 1-3, I argued that the current lack of explicit public/folkloristic discourse on the social construction of accent (similar to that of gender and race, among others), may be due to the lack of sociolinguistic discussions about it. In other words, the absence of the social construction of accent from sociolinguistic literature means that it is not disseminated in public forums, like newspapers and social media, and thus, it is not accessible by non-academic audiences. At the same time, the term 'accentism' is not a high-frequency term within sociolinguistics, or outside it, especially when compared to other terms of discrimination like sexism and racism. As such, sociolinguistic researchers should increase their use of the term (see use of "accentism" in Dryden & Dovchin, 2021) in order to raise the awareness of the wider public around accentism as a form of discrimination. Increasing public awareness of accentism may also promote the legal recognition of *accent* as a protected characteristic under the UK's Equality Act 2010, which is a matter that is still debated (Bi, 2021; Beal, 2006).

Overall, the findings of this project indicated that attitudes to English-English accents are (lexically) formed via socio-contextual, cognitive and affective factors, of which non-linguists are aware, thus, highlighting the social construction of accent and the need for the circulation of that construction in public discourse. To recapitulate, minimally restrictive scalar elicitation techniques primed novel accent-attitudinal lexicon, unlike the lexicon that has been circulating in prior sociolinguist studies and the media. Furthermore, accent attitudes were primed by cognitive and affective stimuli that somewhat resembled accent-attitudinal media discourse. The attitudes toward the perceived standard accents were cognitive – primed by cognitive messages and cognitive evaluative adjectives – and the attitudes toward the perceived non-standard accents were affective – primed by affective

messages and affective evaluative adjectives. The non-linguist participants were aware of the priming influences of the messages and adjectives on their attitudes toward the accents as well as of other priming influences, i.e. collective accent ideology and their personal relationships. The socio-contextual construction of accent attitudes – both regarding the priming of attitudinal lexicon (study 1) and the priming of cognitive and affective attitudes in general (study 2) – as well as the non-linguists' awareness of accent attitudes as socially-driven (study 3) contributed to the discussion on accent (attitudes) as a social construct alongside other social constructs (e.g. ability, age, gender, ethnicity/race, religion, and sexuality) and on accentism as a form of discrimination that should be more widely recognised than it currently is (study 4).

The listener-participants in this project (studies 1-3) shared some of the same characteristics: age (18-30), education (university), educational institution (The University of Manchester), and national identity (born and raised in England). This was in an effort to allow for a certain amount of control over some social macro-variables and create a homogenous participant sample. It is worth thematising, however, the potential impact of this relatively narrow population sample. Some accent-attitudinal studies have found that listener-participant characteristics such as gender have a significant effect on accent attitudes (Coupland & Bishop, 2007; Campbell-Kibler, 2011; Levon, 2014), while others have found no significance (Giles, 1970; Hiraga, 2005; Thorne, 2005). As such, listeners with different characteristics to the ones in this project may, or may not, have had different attitudes to the six accents. Nonetheless, this project does not investigate accent attitudes, but instead focuses on accent-attitude formation. To my knowledge, no prior study has examined the effect of listener characteristics on the formation of accent attitudes. As well as that, in study 2 of this project, I found no difference in the cognitive/affective formation of accent attitudes between listeners from different regions or between listeners with different accents (see chapter 2, study 2, section 5). Similarly, in study 3, I found no noteworthy differences between the meta-attitudes of listeners of different genders, from different regions, or with different accents (see chapter 2, study 3, section 4). By extension, therefore, listener-participant age, education, educational institution, and national identity may not play a (large) role in the formation of accent attitudes. Based solely on the results of this project – due to the lack of prior literature – listener-participant features in general

may not be as prominent in discussions of accent-attitudinal formation as they are in discussions of accent attitudes. However, it would be fruitful for future studies to examine the relationship between accent-attitude formation and participant-specific characteristics more closely.

Similarly, the recorded speakers in the pilot study shared the same features: gender (female), age (18-30), education (university), educational institution (The University of Manchester), national identity (born and raised in England). This was also in an effort to allow for a certain amount of control over some social macro-variables besides the English-English accent of each speaker. In general, attitudinal sociolinguistic studies have shown that speaker features are influential on the accent attitudes of the listener. For instance, Fabricius (2006) found that speakers of different genders received different accent evaluations, and intersectionally, Segrest Purkiss, Perrewé, Gillespie, Mayes, and Ferris (2006) found that the speakers' race/ethnicity and accent contributed to the listeners' attitudes toward the speakers' employability (Segrest Purkiss, Perrewé, Gillespie, Mayes & Ferris, 2006). Based on prior accent-attitudinal results, it is likely that speakers with different characteristics would have evoked different patterns of accent-attitude formation in this project. It is again important to acknowledge that speaker characteristics have not been examined in relation to accent-attitude formation, specifically, so future research could focus on whether and how different speakers affect the formation of accent attitudes.

Concerning the speakers of this project, the choice of the VGT (e.g. Allport & Cantril, 1934), over the MGT (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner & Fillenbaum, 1960), i.e. multiple speakers instead of one, was made in an effort to increase the project ecological validity and avoid stereotypical accent performances by a single speaker (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2018). Nonetheless, the use of VGT also reduced the project's internal validity due to the various features in the speech of different individuals. To counteract this, I controlled for some of the speakers' macro variables, as aforementioned, but future accent-attitudinal-formation studies should also use the MGT in order to compare the results with those of this project.

Some fruitful next steps toward generalising the project's results (within or outside the UK context) would be to include more speaker accents (five non-standard accents and one standard accent in study 2) as well as examine how attitudes are formed when all the

speakers are standard-accented only or non-standard-accented only. For instance, would there be a cognitive-affective differentiation in those two cases, possibly based on how much each speaker saliently diverges from the normative standard? Or would all the attitudes toward the accents be only cognitive or only affective, respectively? It would also be beneficial to gather more lexical-elicitation and meta-attitudinal data (14 participants in study 2, and 10 interviewees in study 3), and conduct an attitudinal interview immediately followed by a meta-attitudinal one. In this project, it was a scalar study that preceded the meta-attitudinal interview, so it would be useful to investigate how interviewees justify their qualitative attitudinal discourse when explicitly asked to. It would also be compelling to examine direct accent attitudes, instead of indirect, as well as accent labels, instead of recordings. For example, the priming messages in study 2 could contain direct accent-attitudinal discourse and the attitudinal prompts in studies 1-2 could contain a direct attitude object (i.e. accent). Lastly, a search for, and analysis of, the terms 'accentism', 'accentist', and 'accent bias' in various social media over a long period of time (cf. short-term search on Twitter in study 4) would allow engagement with accent(ist) discourses on different platforms.

This project offers insight into sociolinguistic studies that deal with language/accent variation and change (e.g. Baranowski & Turton, 2015) because it can inform the phonetic production of non-linguists, since accent perception informs accent production, and vice versa. Specifically, the knowledge- or emotion-based attitudes toward different accents could potentially point to slower or faster changes in production. In study 2, I argued that the cognition-based accent attitudes toward the Standard accent in this project allude to the standardist discourse at schools, which are knowledge-based environments (Cushing, 2021; Milroy, 2007; Mugglestone, 2007). The standardist discourse at schools has been ongoing for decades with little-to-no change (Lampropoulou & Cooper, 2021; Snell & Cushing, 2022), so it is possible that cognitive/knowledge-based accent attitudes change slowly and, thus, prompt slower or faster change in the related accents. For instance, if a phonetic feature is evaluated negatively and the evaluation is formed based on cognition, the change toward a more 'acceptable' feature may be faster, since the cognitive accent attitude may be more permanent. This project did not scrutinise features such as attitudinal strength or endurance/duration (Fazio 2007; Grant, Button & Noseworthy, 1994), but it

would be a fruitful avenue for future studies to consider those attitudinal features. The data from the meta-attitudinal interviews could also benefit accent variation and change research. Particularly, in study 3, a participant constructed the negative collective attitudes toward Birmingham English as their motive behind submitting a high scalar evaluation of that accent. It is not unreasonable to think that, if a large cohort of listeners were aware of the negative collective attitudes toward a feature of Birmingham English and used that knowledge as their reason to evaluate Birmingham positively, the feature's production could be found to be on the rise. Consequently, further investigation of accent-attitude formation may inform research into accent variation and change within sociolinguistics.

Against the backdrop of public accent-attitudinal discourses, like the media and education, this project addressed the topic of accent-attitude formation from varying points of view: the emergence of novel accent attitudinal lexicon through minimally restrictive elicitation methods; the cognitive-affective distinction between attitudes to standard and non-standard English-English accents; the meta-attitudinal awareness of non-linguists; and, ultimately, the social construction of accent(ism). These differing points of view highlight the role of the sociolinguist in combating standardist and accentist ideologies. Particularly, since sociolinguistic studies are publicised in the media and, arguably, prime (non)linguists' accent attitudes, the accent-attitudinal lexicon used in those studies should be piloted by the researchers while taking the lexical restrictions of conventional evaluative prompts into consideration. Moreover, knowledge of the cognitive/fact-like attitudes toward the standard English-English variety and their connection to prescriptive accent ideology within education can propel critical sociolinguistic discussions about accent equality and dispel notions of language innateness from accentist discourses in schools (e.g. Cushing, 2021; Lampropoulou & Cooper, 2021) – similar to, for instance, gender equality and the dispelling of notions that gender roles are biologically-driven (Weinberg, 2014). As well as that, sociolinguistic researchers can raise awareness about accent biases through meta-attitudinal interviews with non-linguist communities, as talking about one's own accent attitudes can potentially externalise subconscious biases. Lastly, extensive research on the social construction of accent and more frequent usage of the term 'accentism' in sociolinguistic literature could increase public understanding of the social dimension of accent (attitudes) since it can readily be parallelised with other, conceptually and

terminologically, more widely known forms of discrimination, like ableism, ageism, biphobia, genderism, homophobia, racism, sexism, and transphobia, among others.

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