"Oh, I like Your Accent": Perceptions and Evaluations of Standard and Non-standard Accented English Speakers

Doris E. Acheme & Ioana A. Cionea

Published online: 20 Feb 2022.

Submit your article to this journal ⬈

Article views: 225

View related articles ⬈

View Crossmark data ⬈

Citing articles: 1 View citing articles ⬈

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Check for updates

"Oh, I like Your Accent": Perceptions and Evaluations of Standard and Non-standard Accented English Speakers

Doris E. Acheme & Ioana A. Cionea (iD)

This study examined the evaluation of standard-accented English (SAE) and non-standard accented English (non-SAE) speakers in the United States. Results of an experiment ($N = 670$) manipulating accent, nationality/L1 introduction, and speaker sex revealed main effects for accent on the evaluation of status, solidarity, and dynamism, and a main effect of speaker sex on solidarity. Additionally, an interaction effect between accent and nationality/L1 introduction on status and dynamism was found, as was an interaction effect of accent and speaker sex on dynamism. These results suggest complexity in the evaluation of non-SAE speakers and are discussed in relation to language attitudes and intergroup communication.

Keywords: Accents; Categorization; First Language; Language Attitudes; Stereotyping

English is one of the most widely spoken languages around the world, allowing for greater contact with other speakers of English who use different varieties (e.g., British English, Standard American English) of the language than was the case in the past. Language is a social force conveying more than verbal meaning (Ćoso & Bogunović, 2017). Linguistic features such as accents (i.e., variations in pronunciation) serve as

Correspondence to: Doris E. Acheme, Department of Communication, University of Oklahoma, 610 Elm Avenue, Burton Hall, Norman, OK 73019 USA. E-mail: dacheme@ou.edu

Doris E. Acheme is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Communication at the University of Oklahoma. Her research interest is in intergroup and intercultural communication. Specifically, she focuses on the role identity plays in psycho-social responses during interactions. Ioana A. Cionea (Ph.D., University of Maryland, 2013) is an associate professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Oklahoma. Her research focuses on phenomena at the intersection of interpersonal and intercultural communication, with a specific emphasis on arguing behaviors.

important cues to social group membership and impact language attitudes and inter-group relations (Shuck, 2004). Investigating language attitudes, particularly in multi-cultural settings such as the United States (U.S. hereafter), has garnered renewed empirical interest (e.g., Birney et al., 2020; Lambert, 1960). Past research has examined processes underlying language attitudes (i.e., social categorization and stereotyping), reporting that listeners first categorize other speakers based on their accents, and then associate speakers with stereotypes attributed to such accents/groups (for a review, see, Dragojevic, 2018).

Language-based stereotypes have been organized along three dimensions: *status* (evaluations of a speaker's intelligence and competence), *solidarity* (evaluations of a speaker's attractiveness and benevolence), and *dynamism* (a speaker's level of activity and liveliness; Dragojevic, 2016; Giles & Billings, 2004). However, research exploring the combined effects of language-based stereotypes and social identities is scant. Specifically, because the social categorization of accents can be inaccurate (Dragojevic et al., 2018), disclosing speakers' nationality and L1 status (i.e., a person's first language, native language, or the language one was exposed to from birth; Yamashita, 2004) not only provides insights into language attitudes but could also control for other salient categories (e.g., being an immigrant/foreigner) that accents may trigger. For instance, Birney et al. (2020) found that, when information about nationality was absent, immigrants were evaluated as more threatening. In daily interactions, when a person detects that an interactional partner's accent is different from theirs, questions of nationality/place of origin often arise because language is used to categorize people into groups (i.e., ingroup or outgroup) and to assign them attributes based on inferred group membership (Dragojevic, 2016). Even though accents signal social group membership/categorization, knowledge about nationality and L1 status, which may be (in)congruent with ideologies about speakers (e.g., a non-native speaker whose L1 is English), could result in (re)categorization, as different categorizations are likely to evoke different language attitudes (Dragojevic, 2016).

Situated in the U.S., the present study examined attitudes toward the standard American English accent (SAE) relative to non-SAE accented speakers. The study compared SAE, Indian, and Nigerian accents on the dimensions of status, solidarity, and dynamism. We also examined whether these evaluations varied depending on social group membership (i.e., nationality and L1) disclosure and speakers' sex. The Indian and Nigerian accents were chosen for comparison for several reasons. Both India and Nigeria are some of the largest sources of Asian and African immigrants to the U.S. (Budiman, 2020; Migration Policy Institute, 2019). An influx of immigrants from India and Nigeria to the U.S. has allowed for more intercultural interactions between U.S. Americans, Indians, and Nigerians in various sectors of society, such as education and healthcare (Congressional Research Service, 2019). Although past research has examined attitudes toward Indian accents (e.g., Dragojevic & Giles, 2014), Nigerian accents have not received attention. This group is increasingly present in the U.S., which suggests research into attitudes toward Nigerians is

worthwhile. Second, when one examines countries where English is spoken, India and Nigeria are noteworthy. English is the official language in both countries (Harvard Political Review, 2021; World Population Review, 2021), implying that Indians and Nigerians speak English either as L1 or L2 (i.e., a person's second language or their non-native language; Yamashita, 2004). Language is a significant cue to social group membership (e.g., English language usage) and signals whether an individual belongs to the same or a different group. Therefore, we contend that social group membership impacts the evaluation of accents. Moreover, interactions involving people with different linguistic styles entail intergroup communication (Dovidio & Gluszek, 2012). Examining language attitudes toward Indian and Nigerian accents can provide insights into the social categorization processes that occur in interactions with U.S. Americans, specifically as they concern knowledge of language use and nationality.

Accents

Accents are variations in the pronunciation of a language (Fuertes et al., 2011), including the impact of suprasegmentals such as pitch, stress, and speech rate (Kang, 2010). Accents are primarily classified as *standard* or *nonstandard*. So-called *standard* accents (or varieties) "are those that adhere to codified norms defining correct spoken and written usage" (Dragojevic, 2018, p. 9), whereas *nonstandard* accents depart from such codified norms in some way. Examples of standard accents include SAE in the U.S. and received pronunciation (RP) in the U.K. Examples of nonstandard varieties in the U.S. include regional (e.g., Southern accent), ethnic (e.g., African American Vernacular English, AAVE), and other non-native accents identified based on nationality rather than specific regions within a country (e.g., Indian and Nigerian accents). Note that regional and ethnic accents are also recognized based on a speaker's nationality. In this study, non-SAE refers to non-native, nonstandard accents.

Research on the evaluative responses of individuals to standard and nonstandard accented speakers (i.e., *language attitudes*) suggests at least two underlying cognitive processes exist in the formation of language attitudes: 1) *social categorization* and 2) *stereotyping* (Ryan, 1983). First, listeners use linguistic cues (e.g., accent) to deduce a speaker's group membership. Second, stereotypes associated with the inferred group are activated and ascribed to the speaker (Dragojevic, 2018). These processes are detailed below.

Social Categorization

Speaking with an accent is a powerful cue in social categorization in that it reveals an individual, psychologically, as a member of a group (Dovidio & Gluszek, 2012). Language-based categorization is a fast and automatic process that often occurs outside conscious awareness (Kinzler et al., 2010). Past research indicates that U.S.

American listeners tend to categorize non-SAE or non-native accents as foreign (i.e., outgroup). For instance, Dragojevic and Giles (2014) found that listeners perceived their accents as more similar to an accented speaker (i.e., American Southern English (ASE) as the interregional reference frame or Punjabi-accented English as international reference frame) when the frame of reference or comparison group was international (i.e., Punjabi speaker) as opposed to interregional (i.e., ASE speaker). In other words, U.S. American listeners rated their accents as more similar to the ASE than the Punjabi-accented English speaker. Thus, social categorization can result in ascribing the SAE accent with a U.S. American identity by U.S. American listeners, and the non-SAE accent as not American (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020). Furthermore, social categorization activates different evaluative reactions. Jørgensen and Quist (2001) found that Danish listeners evaluated other Danish speakers more highly when listeners identified them as native speakers. Similarly, Yook and Lindemann (2013) reported that Korean listeners rated an AAVE speaker less favorably when they were informed of the speaker's ethnicity compared to when they were not.

Vocal features can also cue social group membership. According to the model of impression formation (Brewer, 1988), social categorization will automatically occur based on racial, age, or sex cues, making category-relevant cognitions and affect accessible to influence subsequent information processing (Stroessner, 1996). Person perception research (Ciardo et al., 2021) indicates that social categorization occurs based on an individual's sex. For instance, Hugenberg and Sczesny (2006) found that sex moderated categorization such that happy faces were categorized more quickly and accurately on female faces than male faces. Given that individuals belong to various social groups, we contend that hearing a speaker is also likely to trigger information about their biological sex and impact evaluations. Moreover, social categories are complex and tend to intersect with other categories (Birney et al., 2020) such as nationality or L1, as well as biological sex.

Stereotyping

Once social categorization processes occur, stereotypes attached to such categories are triggered. Language-based stereotypes are organized along the three dimensions of status, solidarity, and dynamism. Stereotypes associated with a group's status reflect perceptions of socioeconomic status—standard accented speakers are typically evaluated more favorably on status than nonstandard accented speakers (Fuertes et al., 2011). Listeners also tend to perceive nonstandard accented speakers as less intelligent, less ambitious, and less comfortable than standard accented speakers (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010b). Furthermore, unlike stereotypes associated with a group's dynamism (which are reflective of the vivacity of the group), stereotypes associated with a group's solidarity reflect group loyalty (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020). The use of ingroup speech styles enhances feelings of solidarity within one's own linguistic community, resulting in the social stigmatization of individuals who

fail to use ingroup speech variety (Giles et al., 1977). Consistent with these explanations, we proposed that:

> H1: Evaluations of speakers with SAE accents are higher on (a) status, (b) solidarity, and (c) dynamism than evaluations of speakers with non-SAE accents.

Because the intersectionality of social categories can affect language attitudes (Birney et al., 2020) and activate different evaluative reactions (Dragojevic, 2018), explicitly stating the nationality and L1 of a non-SAE speaker (as opposed to not mentioning them) could trigger different evaluations of that speaker. Speaking with an accent different from that of a listener is indicative of outgroup status; however, explicitly stating English and L1 may suggest ingroup status to a native English speaker. Thus, stereotypes associated with the non-SAE speaker's social group are likely different when there is no doubt about their origin and L1 as compared to when this information can only be speculated. To examine these possibilities, the following research question was posed:

> RQ1: Is there a difference in evaluations of speakers' (a) status, (b) solidarity, or (c) dynamism depending on whether nationality and L1 are explicitly stated or not?

In addition, explicit information about the background of interlocutors, particularly speakers' sex, may impact communication outcomes. For instance, Linek et al. (2010) found that, irrespective of their gender, learners achieved better learning outcomes when narration was presented by a female rather than a male speaker. In the same vein, Callan and Gallois (1983) reported that female speakers were rated as friendly compared to male speakers. Furthermore, individuals categorize and discriminate between male and female voices from infancy (Lecanuet et al., 1993; Miller et al., 1982). Past research has consistently found that speakers are evaluated differently based on their sex (e.g., Merritt & Bent, 2020), which suggests language attitudes may also differ based on speakers' sex. Therefore, we asked:

> RQ2: Is there a difference in evaluations of speakers' (a) status, (b) solidarity, or (c) dynamism depending on the speaker's sex?

Method

Participants

Participants were 670[1] undergraduate students from a large West South-Central university in the U.S. They ranged in age between 18 and 35 ($M = 19.65$, $SD = 1.75$) years old. Most were White (74.5%), whereas others indicated Asian or Asian-American (7.5%), Black or African-American (5.2%), Hispanic or Latinx (4.9%), a combination of these ethnicities (4.8%), or another ethnic background, such as Native American (3.1%). Approximately 36.9% were male and 62.9% were female. Most participants were first year students/freshmen [sic] (36.4%) and second-year students/sophomores (30.7%), followed by third-year students/juniors (20.4%), and fourth-year students/seniors (11%).[2] Participants' majors included Communication

(17%), Business (15.4%), Health and Exercise Science (10%), Marketing (5%), and Accounting (4.8%).

Accent Stimuli

A verbal-guise technique (VGT; Lambert et al., 1960) in which different speakers produced different accents was utilized. VGT was developed to elicit attitudes toward different languages and is still used in language attitudes research (e.g., Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020). VGT was selected as the appropriate technique over the matched-guised technique (MGT; a technique of eliciting attitudinal responses by presenting participants with a number of speech varieties, all of which are spoken by the same person) because MGT is limited (Garrett, 2010) in terms of its ecological validity (i.e., two of the three accents are mimicked instead of the "natural" accents of a speaker) and authenticity (i.e., inaccuracy in mimicking accents). Besides, in naturalistic settings, bi-/trilingual speakers are unlikely to switch between accents in a single interaction, and listeners evaluate the particular accent used.

Speakers were matched on some demographic features (e.g., age, education). Six audio recordings were produced for SAE (i.e., Mid-Western region), Indian (i.e., South Indian region), and Nigerian (i.e., Middle-belt region) accents. For each accent recording, there was one male and one female speaker, who were graduate students in their 20s. All speakers read the rainbow passage (Fairbanks, 1960; available at https://www.dialectsarchive.com/the-rainbow-passage). Recordings were comparable in length (range: 2:30–2:42 minutes) across stimulus samples.

Procedure

A 3 (SAE vs. Indian vs. Nigerian) x 2 (introduction vs. no introduction of speaker's nationality and L1) x 2 (male vs. female speaker) between-subjects design was employed. Participants were recruited from a departmental research pool to complete an online questionnaire. After reading consent information, participants were randomly assigned to one of the twelve experimental conditions. They listened to an audio recording of either a male or female U.S. American, Nigerian, or Indian speaker. To manipulate the introduction of nationality and L1, speakers in the condition that entailed introducing these characteristics read the following line at the beginning of the rainbow passage: "I am from the United States of America/India/Nigeria and my first language is English. I will tell you about rainbows."

After listening to the recording, participants answered manipulation check questions (which consisted of three multiple-choice questions) asking them to identify the accent of the speaker (i.e., "What accent did the speaker you have just listened to have?" with answer choices of "Nigerian accent," "Indian accent," "Standard American accent," "Another accent," or "I do not know"); the sex of the speaker (answer choices: "male," "female," or "I do not know"); and whether the speaker introduced

their first language or not at the beginning of the audio clip (answer choices: "yes," "no," or "I do not know"). They then rated the speech sample and completed demographic information. Participation took, on average, 15 minutes and participants received course (extra) credit. The research was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the authors' university.

Measures

Speech Evaluation Instrument
Participants evaluated the speaker they had listened to based on Zahn and Hopper's (1985) 30-item scale, using a 7-point semantic differential scale. There were three sub-dimensions: *status*, assessed with 12 items (e.g., "uneducated-educated" or "disfluent-fluent"), *solidarity*, assessed with 11 items (e.g., "unfriendly-friendly" or "awful-nice"), and *dynamism*, assessed with seven items (e.g., "shy-talkative" or "passive-active"). Higher scores indicated audio stimulus speakers were perceived to have higher status ($\alpha = .92$), more solidarity ($\alpha = .93$), and more dynamism ($\alpha = .80$).

Results

We first conducted a cross-tabulation analysis by matching each independent variable with its manipulation check question to determine participants' accuracy in recognizing the independent variables manipulated. For accent [χ^2 (6) = 911.87, $p < .001$)], 93% of those in the Indian accent condition recognized it, 78% of those in the Nigerian condition identified it correctly, and 95.8% of those in the SAE condition identified the accent correctly.[3] For nationality and L1 introduction [χ^2 (2) = 74.66, $p < .001$)], 46.87% of those assigned to the nationality and L1 introduction condition identified it correctly, with another 20.90% indicating they did not know whether the speaker introduced their L1 and nationality or not. Of those assigned to the no introduction of nationality and L1 condition, 57.40% identified it correctly, with another 26.28% indicating they did not know if the speaker introduced their nationality and L1. Finally, for speakers' sex [χ^2 (2) = 252.34, $p < .001$)], 77.81% of those who listened to a female speaker recalled it correctly, whereas 81.90% of those assigned to a male speaker condition correctly identified it.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to test H1 and answer RQ1 and RQ2. H1, which predicted that status, solidarity, and dynamism evaluations of SAE speakers would be higher than evaluations of non-SAE speakers, was partially supported. The multivariate test was significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .62$, $F(6, 1298) = 57.97$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .21$. There was a main effect of accent on status, solidarity, and dynamism. For status (H1a), evaluations of SAE accents were, indeed, significantly higher than evaluations of the Indian and Nigerian accents. For solidarity (H1b), the evaluation of the Indian accent was significantly higher than the SAE accent (contrary to our prediction); the difference between the SAE and the

Table 1 H1 (Accent) MANOVA Results

	Indian accent		Nigerian accent		SAE accent		*F*-test(2, 651)	Partial η^2
	M	*SE*	*M*	*SE*	*M*	*SE*		
Status	5.01$_a$	0.05	4.55$_a$	0.05	5.71$_a$	0.05	124.83***	.28
Solidarity	5.36$_{a,b}$	0.06	5.03$_a$	0.06	5.04$_b$	0.06	9.19***	.03
Dynamism	4.60$_a$	0.07	4.00$_{a,b}$	0.07	4.71$_b$	0.07	31.32***	.09

Notes: Means with the same subscript in the same row are significantly different at $p < .001$. *** $p \leq .001$.

Nigerian accent was not significant. Finally, for dynamism (H1c), the SAE accent was not evaluated significantly different than the Indian accent but was evaluated, as predicted, as more dynamic than the Nigerian accent (see Table 1).

The multivariate test for introduction of nationality and L1 (RQ1) was not significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = 1.00$, $F(3, 649) = 0.54$, $p = .66$, partial $\eta^2 = .00$, meaning there were no significant differences in evaluations based on whether speakers introduced their nationality and L1 or not. The multivariate test for sex (RQ2) was significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .98$, $F(3, 649) = 5.07$, $p = .002$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. Only solidarity differed significantly based on the speaker's sex, with higher scores for female ($M = 5.26$, $SE = 0.05$) than male speakers ($M = 5.03$, $SE = 0.05$), $F(1, 650) = 9.74$, $p = .002$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$.

Although not initially hypothesized, we found a significant interaction between accent and speaker's nationality and L1 introduction on status and dynamism, but not solidarity, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$, $F(6, 1298) = 5.85$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$; with $F(2, 651) = 9.61$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$ for status; and $F(2, 651) = 8.31$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$ for dynamism. For the Indian ($M = 5.08$, $SE = 0.08$) and Nigerian ($M = 4.72$, $SE = 0.07$) speakers, evaluations of status were significantly higher when the speaker introduced their nationality and L1 vs. when they did not ($M = 4.95$, $SE = 0.07$ for Indians; $M = 4.34$, $SE = 0.07$ for Nigerians). This pattern was reversed for SAE speakers (see Figure 1; $M = 5.57$, $SE = 0.07$ when speakers introduced their nationality and L1 vs. $M = 5.84$, $SE = 0.08$ when nationality and L1 were not introduced). Dynamism was also significantly higher when the speaker with a Nigerian accent introduced their nationality and L1 ($M = 4.23$, $SE = 0.10$, compared to no introduction, $M = 3.78$, $SE = 0.10$), but lower when the SAE speaker did the same (see Figure 2, $M = 4.55$, $SE = 0.10$ when nationality and L1 were introduced vs. $M = 5.87$, $SE = 0.10$ for no introduction of nationality and L1[4]).

Additionally, we found a significant interaction effect between accent and speaker sex, Wilks' $\Lambda = .98$, $F(6, 1298) = 2.15$, $p = .046$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$, with $F(2, 651) = 3.03$, $p = .049$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$ for dynamism, but not for status or solidarity. Dynamism perceptions were significantly higher for Nigerian ($M = 4.07$, $SE = 0.10$) and Indian male speakers ($M = 4.66$, $SE = 0.09$), but lower for the SAE male speaker ($M = 4.58$, $SE = 0.10$), compared to the same language female speakers ($M = 3.93$, $SE = 0.09$ for
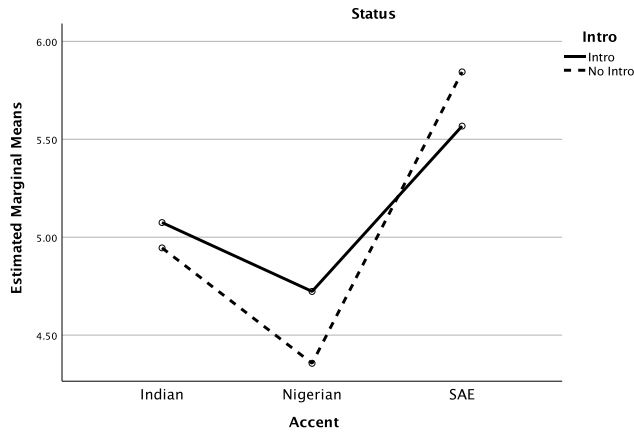
Figure 1 Interaction of accent and introduction of nationality and L1 on status.

the Nigerian female, $M = 4.53$, $SE = 0.10$ for the Indian female, and $M = 4.85$, $SE = 0.09$ for the SAE female; see Figure 3).

Discussion

This study examined language attitudes toward SAE and non-SAE accented speakers (i.e., Indian and Nigerian). Findings indicated that SAE speakers were rated higher on status than non-SAE speakers, which is consistent with previous studies (e.g., Dragojevic & Giles, 2014). These results add evidence that standard language varieties are attributed more status than nonstandard varieties, possibly because of the socioeconomic prestige accorded to standard speakers. Findings suggest that ideologies about correct and incorrect forms of pronunciation, associated with education and media (Dragojevic et al., 2013), may be at work for SAE listeners.
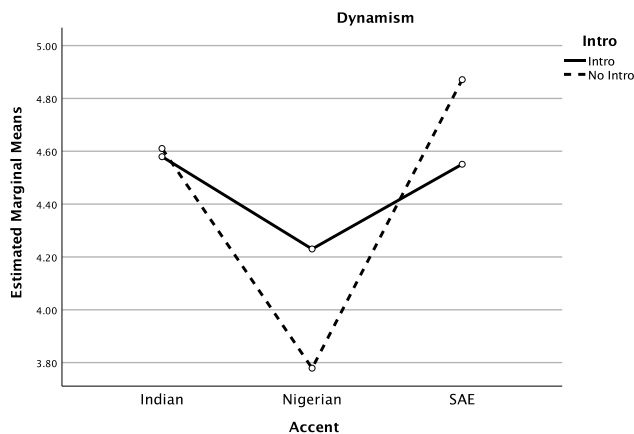

Figure 2 Interaction of accent and introduction of nationality and L1 on dynamism.
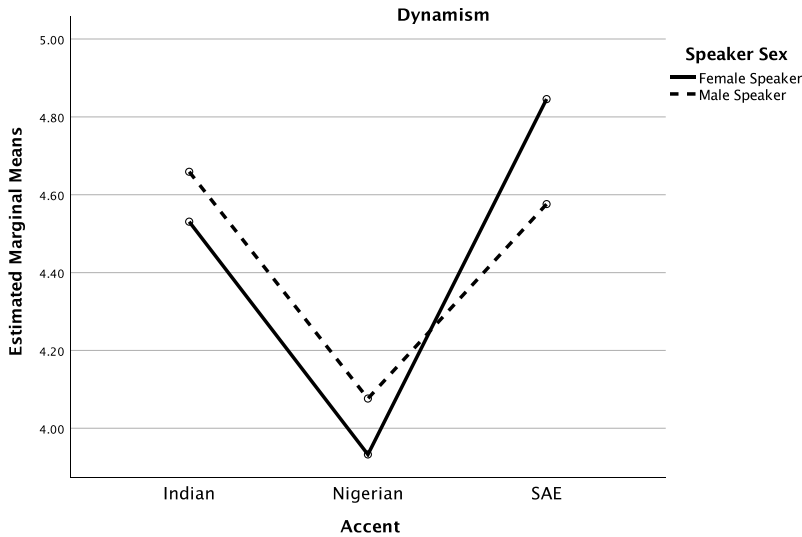
Figure 3 Interaction of accent and speaker sex on dynamism.

The interaction effect we found between nationality and L1 and speakers' accent on evaluations of status and dynamism points toward a more complex picture. For non-SAE speakers, introducing nationality and L1 increased perceptions of status, whereas the opposite occurred for SAE speakers. Since SAE speakers are, by definition, native speakers of English, introducing their nationality and L1 may have sounded awkward to listeners. It is also plausible that, despite their accents, non-SAE speakers were rated higher when their L1 was mentioned because participants may have recategorized non-SAE speakers as ingroup members (i.e., by introducing English as their L1) but did not need to recategorize SAE accented speakers. The common identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2009), which posits that prejudice toward outgroup members can be reduced not by eliminating the categorization process but by redirecting its forces to produce more positive outcomes, can also explain these findings.

Perceptions of dynamism, which examine activeness/expressiveness of a speaker, were particularly interesting in the case of Nigerian accented speakers. SAE speakers were attributed more dynamism than Nigerian accented speakers. So, when examining accents alone, this study confirmed past findings. However, as the interaction effect revealed, Nigerian accented speakers were rated higher when nationality and L1 were introduced than when it was not, whereas the opposite was true for SAE speakers. Thus, something else beyond accent appears to have influenced perceptions of dynamism, especially given that vocal expressiveness has complex effects on perceptions (Lavan et al., 2019). The introduction of nationality and L1 in the case of Nigerian speakers may have cued racial categorization and triggered stereotypes of Black people, particularly in relation to expressiveness. For instance, past research has found that Black-primed biracial participants were rated as sounding more Black than White-

primed biracial participants (Gaither et al., 2015). Therefore, how Nigerian accented speakers are evaluated may also operate in more nuanced ways. The addition of this group in our study constitutes a contribution to literature on language attitudes and suggests interesting dynamics to examine further in future research.

Surprisingly, Indian accented speakers were rated higher on solidarity than SAE speakers, meaning participants found these speakers as more socially attractive than SAE speakers. This is a novel finding and may be due to university students' increased exposure to and familiarity with Indian accented speakers in fields such as STEM (Congressional Research Service, 2019), which may be promoting more social attractiveness. This finding suggests that non-SAE accents are not always necessarily perceived less favorably than SAE accents.

Our results also revealed that female speakers were attributed more solidarity than male speakers, which is consistent with past findings that female speakers were rated as friendly compared to male speakers (Callan & Gallois, 1983). Perhaps the pitch of female speakers, being higher than male speakers and more soothing (Dolliver, 2010), influenced evaluations. However, speaker sex interacted with accent on evaluations of dynamism, suggesting a more refined outcome: male speakers with non-SAE accents were rated higher on dynamism than females, but the female SAE speaker was rated higher on this dimension than the male SAE speaker. Because the dynamism dimension measures how active a speaker sounds, it is plausible that differences in speakers' voice characteristics may have influenced dynamism e-val-u-a-tion. Speakers' personality traits may have influenced the production of speech samples, particularly because we did not control for such traits. Consequently, personality could have affected how active or passive speakers were perceived to be.

Finally, the findings did not reveal significant differences based on the combined categorization of speakers' nationality and L1. Perhaps the operationalization of the ingroup-outgroup distinction was not salient to participants. Respondents in our study had difficulty identifying correctly whether speakers introduced their nationality and L1 or not. Future research could employ a different way of manipulating nationality and L1. We believe it represents an interesting case of discordant information regarding the ingroup (same L1) and outgroup (different nationality) status of non-SAE speakers. However, our design confounded nationality and L1 status, which is an important limitation as it does not allow delineating the effects of each, individually. Thus, future research ought to manipulate these aspects separately.

In addition, our verbal stimuli only used one speaker and sex per accent. Future studies should investigate attitudes toward a wider range of speakers with different accents. Furthermore, relatively familiar nonstandard accents were chosen for evaluation, which may have impacted solidarity results. Participants may have previously interacted with Indian and/or Nigerian accented speakers, resulting in more favorable evaluations of solidarity. Finally, this study relied on university students, which could limit the generalizability of results, as students may have

greater exposure to non-SAE accents via international students and faculty on their campuses.

Our findings generated interesting questions that can be pursued in future research. More investigations could explore the evaluations of regional accents within a geographical location, assessing how these may differ from nonstandard national accents. Additionally, the role of affect should be examined in future research to determine what emotions nonstandard accents trigger and how these emotions impact the evaluation of nonstandard accented speakers. The study's findings also have several implications for intergroup communication. Our findings indicate evaluations of nonstandard accents are not always negative. Glob-al-i-za-tion has likely influenced familiarity with and attractiveness of nonstandard accents. In addition, social categories intersect with and influence language attitudes. Evaluations of non-SAE speakers are not based solely on accent but are also influenced by speakers' sex and the interaction of accent and speakers' nationality and L1, which suggest more complex processes occur when listeners evaluate accented speech. Future research should inquire into other social categories that play a major role, in addition to accents, in the evaluation of non-SAE speakers.

Notes

1. Initial consenting sample was 937, but incomplete responses, duplicate answers, and those that failed attention verification questions were eliminated. A post-hoc power analysis using G*Power 3.1.9.6 for this sample indicated .99 power.
2. Missing data accounted for the remaining percentage up to 100%.
3. Notably, participants had a harder time recognizing the Nigerian accent when no introduction of the speaker's nationality and L1 was provided (69.1% accuracy) vs. when such an introduction was included (85.8% accuracy).
4. The Indian differences were not significant, $M = 4.58$, $SE = 0.10$ for introduction, and $M = 4.61$, $SE = 0.10$ for no introduction.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Ioana A. Cionea ⓘ http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4764-4482

References

Birney, M. E., Rabinovich, A., & Morton, T. A. (2020). Where are you from? An investigation into the intersectionality of accent strength and nationality status on perceptions of nonnative speakers in Britain. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *39*(4), 495–515. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X20932628

Brewer, M. B. (1988). A dual process model of impression formation. In T. K. Srull & R. S. Wyer Jr. (Eds.), *Advances in social cognition* (Vol. 1, pp. 1–36). Erlbaum.

Budiman, A. (2020, August 20). *Key findings about U.S. immigrants*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/08/20/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/

Callan, V. J., & Gallois, C. (1983). Ethnic stereotypes: Australian and Southern European youth. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *119*(2), 287–288. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1983.9922834

Ciardo, F., De Angelis, J., Marino, B. F., Actis-Grosso, R., & Ricciardelli, P. (2021). Social categorization and joint attention: Interacting effects of age, sex, and social status. *Acta Psychologica*, *212*, article 10322. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2020.103223

Congressional Research Service. (2019, November 1). *Foreign STEM students in the United States*. https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/IF11347.pdf

Ćoso, B., & Bogunović, I. (2017). Person perception and language: A case of English words in Croatian. *Language & Communication*, *53*, 25–34. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2016.11.001

Dolliver, M. (2010). How people perceive gender in voiceovers. *Adweek*, *20*(10), 18.

Dovidio, J. F., & Gluszek, A. (2012). Accents, nonverbal behavior, and intergroup bias. In H. Giles (Ed.), *The handbook of intergroup communication* (pp. 87–99). Routledge.

Dragojevic, M. (2016). Language attitudes as intergroup terrain. In A. Maass & H. Giles (Eds.), *Advances in intergroup communication* (pp. 49–66). Peter Lang Publishing. https://doi.org/10.3726/b10467

Dragojevic, M. (2018). Language attitudes. In H. Giles & J. Harwood (Eds.), *Oxford research encyclopedia of communication* (pp. 179–192). Oxford University Press.

Dragojevic, M., Berglund, C., & Blauvelt, T. K. (2018). Figuring out who's who: The role of social categorization in the language attitudes process. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *37*(1), 28–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X17706942

Dragojevic, M., & Giles, H. (2014). The reference frame effect: An intergroup perspective on language attitudes. *Human Communication Research*, *40*(1), 91–111. https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12017

Dragojevic, M., & Goatley-Soan, S. (2020). Americans' attitudes toward foreign accents: Evaluative hierarchies and underlying processes. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–15. Advanced onlne publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1735402

Dragojevic, M., Howard, G., & Bernadette, M. W. (2013). Language ideologies and language attitudes: A foundational framework. In G. Howard & W. M. Bernadette (Eds.), *The social meanings of language, dialect and accent: International perspectives on speech styles* (pp. 1–25). Peter Lang Publishing.

Fairbanks, G. (1960). *Voice and articulation drillbook* (2nd ed.). Harper & Row.

Fuertes, J. N., Gottdiener, W. H., Martin, H., Gilbert, T. C., & Giles, H. (2011). A meta-analysis of the effects of speakers accents on interpersonal evaluations. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *42*(1), 120–133. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.862

Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (2009). A common ingroup identity: A categorization-based approach for reducing intergroup bias. In T. D. Nelson (Ed.), *Handbook of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination* (pp. 489–506). Taylor & Francis.

Gaither, S. E., Cohen-Goldberg, A. M., Gidney, C. L., & Maddox, K. B. (2015). Sounding Black or White: Priming identity and biracial speech. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *6*, article 457. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00457

Garrett, P. (2010). *Attitudes to language*. Cambridge University Press.

Giles, H., & Billings, A. (2004). Language attitudes. In A. Davies & E. Elder (Eds.), *Handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 187–209), Academic Press.

Giles, H., Bourhis, R. Y., & Taylor, D. M. (1977). Towards a theory of language in ethnic group relations. In H. Giles (Ed.), *Language, ethnicity and intergroup relations* (pp. 307–348). Academic Press.

Gluszek, A., & Dovidio, J. F. (2010). The way they speak: A social psychological perspective on the stigma of nonnative accents in communication. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *14* (2), 214–237. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868309359288

Harvard Political Review. (2021). *Redefining colonial legacies: India and the English language.* https://harvardpolitics.com/redefining-colonial-legacies-india-and-the-english-language/

Hugenberg, K., & Sczesny, S. (2006). On wonderful women and seeing smiles: Social categorization moderates the happy face response latency advantage. *Social Cognition*, *24*(5), 516–539. https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.2006.24.5.516

Jørgensen, J. N., & Quist, P. (2001). Native speakers' judgements of second language Danish. *Language Awareness*, *10*(1), 41–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658410108667024

Kang, O. (2010). Relative salience of suprasegmental features on judgments of L2 comprehensibility and accentedness. *System*, *38*(2), 301–315. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2010.01.005

Kinzler, K. D., Shutts, K., & Correll, J. (2010). Priorities in social categories. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *40*(4), 581–592. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.739

Lambert, W. E., Hodgson, R. C., Gardner, R. C., & Fillenbaum, S. (1960). Evaluational reactions to spoken languages. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *60*(1), 44–51. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0044430

Lavan, N., Burston, L. F., Ladwa, P., Merriman, S. E., Knight, S., & McGettigan, C. (2019). Breaking voice identity perception: Expressive voices are more confusable for listeners. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, *72*(9), 2240–2248. https://doi.org/10.1177/1747021819836890

Lecanuet, J.P., Granier-Deferre, C., Jacquet, A., Capponi, I., & Ledru, L. (1993). Prenatal discrimination of a male and a female voice uttering the same sentence. *Early Development and Parenting*, *2*(4), 217–228. https://doi.org/10.1002/edp.2430020405

Linek, S. B., Gerjets, P., & Scheiter, K. (2010). The speaker/gender effect: Does the speaker's gender matter when presenting auditory text in multimedia messages? *Instructional Science*, *38*(5), 503–521. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11251-009-9115-8

Merritt, B., & Bent, T. (2020). Perceptual evaluation of speech naturalness in speakers of varying gender identities. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, *63*(7), 2054–2069. https://doi.org/10.1044/2020_JSLHR-19-00337

Migration Policy Institute. (2019). *Sub-Saharan African immigrants in the United States.* https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/sub-saharan-african-immigrants-united-states

Miller, C. L., Younger, B. A., & Morse, P. A. (1982). The categorization of male and female voices in infancy. *Infant Behavior and Development*, *5*(2–4), 143–159. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0163-6383(82)80024-6

Ryan, E. B. (1983). Social psychological mechanisms underlying native speaker evaluations of nonnative speech. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *5*(2), 148–159. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263100004824

Shuck, G. (2004). Conversational performance and the poetic construction of an ideology. *Language in Society*, *33*(2), 195–222. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404504332021

Stroessner, S. J. (1996). Social categorization by race or sex: Effects of perceived non-normalcy on response times. *Social Cognition*, *14*(3), 247–276. https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.1996.14.3.247

World Population Review. (2021). *What languages do people speak in Nigeria?* https://worldpopulationreview.com/languages/nigeria

Yamashita, J. (2004). Reading attitudes in L1 and L2, and their influence on L2 extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *16*(1). https://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl/item/82

Yook, C., & Lindemann, S. (2013). The role of speaker identification in Korean university students' attitudes towards five varieties of English. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *34*(3), 279–296. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2012.734509

Zahn, C. J., & Hopper, R. (1985). Measuring language attitudes: The speech evaluation instrument. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *4*(2), 113–123. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X8500400203