

The Impact of Prejudice Control on the Perceptions that Dutch Listeners Have of German-Accented English at Job Interviews

- Bachelor's Thesis -

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Date of Submission: 6 June 2021
Word Count: 7496

Abstract

As a result of globalisation, multinational organisations are increasingly opting for English as their common corporate language. However, accent-based discrimination can lead to, amongst others, negative hiring recommendations of non-native speakers of English at job interviews. To date, little attention has been given to interventions that might reduce such negative biases. Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of introducing a pre-stimulus prejudice control text in a job interview setting. An experimental study with a 2x2 between-subjects design was conducted in which Dutch participants (N = 89) were asked to rate a recording of either a native British English-accented speaker or a non-native German-accented speaker on their intelligibility, comprehensibility, hirability, status, and competence. Results showed that the native speaker was perceived more positively than the non-native speaker in terms of competence, hirability and status. The effect on competence disappeared with the implementation of the prejudice control text. A practical implication for job interviewers is that they are prone to accent-based discrimination and need to be aware that this can lead to biased hiring recommendations. Thus, prejudice control measures are essential and need to be investigated further.

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1. Introduction

Due to globalisation and the resulting requirement of communicating with each other across language barriers, an increasing number of people are adopting English as a lingua franca (ELF) (Crystal, 2003). The growing usage of ELF can also be observed in multinational organisations (MNOs). These organisations are faced with the challenge of effective cross-cultural communication between subsidiaries located in different countries. This often results in the choice of English as a common corporate language (CCL) (Marschan, Welch, & Welch, 1997; Marschan-Piekkari, Welch, & Welch, 1999). It has been found that non-native speakers (NNSs) are consistently downgraded by listeners on various dimensions such as status and competence (for a review, see Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; for a meta-analysis, see Fuertes, Gottdiener, Martin, Gilbert, & Giles, 2012). Such accent-based discrimination is prevalent at job interviews, which can even lead to negative hiring recommendations that are merely based on non-native accentedness (Fuertes et al., 2012; Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; Gluszek & Hansen, 2013). To investigate ways to reduce this bias towards accented speech, this study experimented with the use of a prejudice control text.

1.1. Non-Native and Native English Accents

While there are about 380 million native speakers (NSs) of English, there are almost double as many non-native speakers and merely four per cent of English conversations involve NSs only (Yadav, 2018). Depending on their mother tongue, NNSs usually have recognisable non-native accents in English (Kachru, 1985; 1992). An accent can be defined as “a manner of pronunciation with grammatical, syntactical, morphological, and lexical levels being regarded as more or less commensurate with the standard” (Giles, 1970, p. 3). In other words, even if NNSs have a high language competence (i.e., high range and level of grammar and vocabulary), they can still have a non-native accent. This is largely due to the remaining phonological features of their mother tongue (Kellerman & Vermeulen, 1998; Nejjari, Gerritsen, Van der Haagen, & Korzilius, 2012; Cook, 1999). As listeners often have difficulty separating accentedness from language competence, NNSs are likely to be discriminated against (Creese & Kambere, 2015).

When investigating the scope of this discrimination, studies have mainly focused on the impressions of *native* listeners of English. The majority of findings support the claim that native listeners generally perceive non-native accents less positively than native accents (e.g., Tsalikis, DeShields, & LaTour, 1991; Munro & Derwing, 1995a; DeShields & De Los Santos, 2000;

Bresnahan, Ohashi, Nebashi, Liu, & Shearman, 2002; Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta, & Balasubramanian, 2002; Nejjari et al., 2012; for overviews see Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; Fuertes et al., 2012; Mai & Hoffman, 2014). Significantly fewer studies focus on the perceptions that *non-native* listeners have of NNSs. The studies that do focus on non-native listeners often find that they downgrade NNSs, regardless of whether or not listeners share a mother tongue with the speaker (e.g., Callan, Gallois, & Forbes, 1983; McKenzie, 2010). Studies have investigated several perceptions and attitudinal evaluations that listeners have of NNSs (see Munro & Derwing, 1995a; 1995b for an overview). Those relevant to a job interview setting will be discussed in the following sections.

1.2. Intelligibility and Comprehensibility

When describing the ability to understand language, intelligibility and comprehensibility are two major elements to consider (Kachru & Smith, 2008). Kachru and Smith (2008, p. 61) define intelligibility as “the ability to recognise a word or another sentence-level element of an utterance”. Generally, intelligibility is viewed as a more objective measurement than comprehensibility and many studies agree that even strong accents are usually intelligible for both native and non-native listeners (Munro & Derwing, 1995b; Derwing & Munro, 1997; Weber, Di Betta, & McQueen, 2014; Nejjari et al., 2012). Despite the initially higher processing costs of non-native accents compared to native accents (Munro & Derwing, 1995a; Weber et al., 2014), listeners can quickly adapt to non-native accented speech (Baese-Berk, Bradlow, & Wright, 2013; Clarke & Garrett, 2004; Witteman, Weber, & McQueen, 2014).

The second element, comprehensibility, has been defined as “the contextual meaning of the word in a socio-cultural setting as well as the illocutionary force of an utterance” (Kachru & Smith, 2008, p. 62). More specifically, the ability to recognise both the meaning and intention of specific words. Studies have found contrasting findings for comprehensibility. Some studies found that NSs were perceived as more comprehensible than NNSs by both native and non-native listeners (e.g., Fayer & Krasinski, 1987; Smith & Bisazza, 1982; Major et al., 2002). This is known as the native speech intelligibility benefit. Other studies found that non-native listeners find NNSs with whom they share a mother tongue easier to comprehend than NNSs with a different mother tongue (e.g., Stibbard & Lee, 2006). This is called the interlanguage speech intelligibility detriment. However, other studies have not found these effects, making the findings for the comprehensibility of NNSs by non-native listeners inconclusive (Bent & Bradlow, 2003; Munro, Derwing, & Morton, 2006; Wang, 2007). At the moment, there seem to be no leads on why the findings are inconclusive.

1.3. Status and Competence

In addition to how intelligible and comprehensible accented speech is, research has also investigated the status perceptions that listeners have. A meta-analysis of 20 studies revealed that NSs received significantly higher status ratings than NNSs (Fuertes et al., 2012). A study by Nejjari et al. (2012) found that British English speakers were evaluated more positively in terms of status than Dutch English speakers by native English listeners. Concerning non-native listeners, Hendriks and Van Meurs (2017) showed that German, French, and Spanish listeners perceived a strong Dutch accent to have a lower status than a native English accent.

Concerning competence, a link between accentedness and low competence perceptions is well documented (Fuertes et al., 2012; Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; Roessel, Schoel, Zimmermann, and Stahlberg, 2017). Hendriks and Van Meurs (2017) found that speakers with a strong Dutch accent were perceived as less competent than speakers with a native English accent by both native and non-native listeners. Oftentimes, this low-competence stereotype is connected to low-status associations (e.g., Giles & Billings, 2004; Ryan, 1983). However, Ryan (1983) suggests that it might be a result of an overgeneralisation of low language competence that non-native accents are often connected with.

Numerous studies have found that familiarity with an accent positively influences the intelligibility and comprehensibility of the NNS (e.g., Varonis & Gass, 1982; Fayer & Krasinski, 1987; Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta, & Balasubramanian, 2005; Smith & Nelson, 2006; Wang, 2007). In terms of attitudinal evaluations, Nejjari et al. (2012) found that non-native listeners who were familiar with the non-native accent consistently rated the NNS significantly lower on status than the NS. Due to its possible role as a mediator of listeners' evaluation of accented speech, familiarity with the accent is a meaningful background variable to measure.

1.4. Non-Native Accents at Job Interviews

As previously stated, NNSs are often downgraded. It has been found that accent discrimination occurs most prevalently in work environments (Fuertes et al., 2012; Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; Gluszek & Hansen, 2013). In job interviews, this discrimination has been shown to lead to lower hirability ratings of NNSs than of NSs when evaluated by native and non-native listeners (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010; Roessel et al., 2017). These hiring recommendations are not based on the candidate's actual skills and competence (Fuertes et al., 2012).

Studies have found that the status of the job might influence whether an accent is evaluated favourably or not (e.g., Kalin & Rayko, 1978; Ryan, Carranza, & Moffie, 1977;

Hosada & Stone-Romero, 2010). For high-status jobs such as a foreperson, NSs were evaluated more favourably than NNSs (Kalin & Rayko, 1978). However, for low-status jobs such as a plant cleaner, NNSs were seen as more suitable than NSs (Kalin & Rayko, 1978). Furthermore, the communication demands of the job have also been found to play a role. For instance, in jobs with high communication demands (e.g., human resources manager), NSs are favoured over NNSs (Hosada & Stone-Romero, 2010; Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010).

1.5. Prejudice Control

It has been well established that NNSs are consistently downgraded based on their accent (for a review, see Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; for a meta-analysis, see Fuertes et al., 2012). However, rather little research has focused on reducing listeners' accent-based discrimination. What has been found is that listeners might not be aware of their biased evaluations of NNSs and that even if they are conscious of their bias, they do not alter their behaviour by themselves as they feel no societal pressure to do so (see Giles & Watson, 2013; Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; Ura, Preston, & Mearns, 2015). Although accent-based discrimination is a recognised phenomenon, social norms against it appear to be weaker than against gender or racial discrimination (Giles & Watson, 2013; Ng, 2007). This makes accent-based discrimination less detected and more accepted.

Since perceptions of normative appropriateness and the expression of prejudice have been found to be highly correlated, it is necessary to shift the situational social norms by making the listeners aware of their biased reactions (Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002; Monteith, Arthur, & McQueary Flynn, 2010; Perry, Murphy, & Dovidio, 2015). Roessel et al. (2017) successfully did so by informing the participants about the existence of accent-based discrimination. Subsequently, it was requested that participants should not base their evaluations on stereotypes or feelings that they associated with the accent. Roessel et al. (2017) showed that pre-stimulus prejudice control instructions can significantly reduce discriminatory ratings.

There have been other interventions against accent-based discrimination, such as post-stimulus perspective-taking which asks listeners to imagine a situation from the point of view of the NNS (Weyant, 2007; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Galinsky & Ku, 2004). However, despite this intervention yielding significant results, these findings have been criticised as being influenced by social desirability effects (Hansen, Rakić, & Steffens, 2013).

Hansen et al. (2013) researched yet another approach. In their study, listeners talked to a confederate in a foreign language before the experiment. Experiencing the situation of being

an NNS positively influenced the listeners' perception of the NNS's competence (Hansen et al., 2013). However, it is rather difficult to incorporate a confederate in real-life job interviews. Hence, the practicality of this intervention is low despite its success in an experimental setting.

1.6. The Current Research

A limitation of previous studies is that they focus on the perceptions of native listeners and do not consider the perceptions of non-native listeners (e.g., Nejjari et al., 2012). Furthermore, these studies establish that native and non-native accents get perceived differently, thus they often advise speakers to practise sounding more native (e.g., Hendriks, Van Meurs, & De Groot, 2017). However, this is very difficult to accomplish (Depez-Sims & Morris, 2013). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate how the use of a pre-stimulus prejudice control intervention impacts the perceptions that non-native listeners who do not share an L1 with the NNS have of said speakers.

The setting in which this was investigated is a job interview scenario in an MNO with English as their CCL. Such MNOs are especially common in the Netherlands due to the multicultural and business-oriented working environment ("Information", 2021). Thus, they create an abundance of job opportunities that the local workforce alone is unable to satisfy ("Information", 2021). For the current study, a German speaker (job candidate) was used. The strong cultural relation between Germany and the Netherlands results in a constant exchange between organisations and people, with 25 per cent of international students being Germans who are likely to later be employed in the Netherlands ("Germany and the Netherlands", 2020). As the target language was English, a native English speaker was used for the native accent with which the German non-native accent was compared. The variety of English used was Standard British English as this is also what is being taught at schools and universities in the Netherlands (Nejjari et al., 2012).

A research gap in the literature is that perceptions of non-native listeners have barely been investigated and Roessel et al. (2017) only considered listeners who share a mother tongue with the NNS. Hence, the current study investigated the perceptions that Dutch listeners have of German-accented speakers. Dutch listeners were selected as they are likely to be the largest group of non-native English-speaking employees in an MNO in the Netherlands.

Something that much of the scientific literature (e.g., Roessel et al., 2017; Depez-Sims & Morris, 2013) does not take into consideration is the self-assessed and actual English proficiency of the listeners. According to the similarity attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1997), listeners perceive speakers more positively when they are similar to them and more negative

when they are dissimilar. The perceived or actual (dis)similarity of English proficiency between speaker and listener could lead to more positive (or negative) evaluations by listeners. Thus, these factors were measured in the current research.

This study is relevant as it contributes new theoretical knowledge about the intelligibility, comprehensibility, hirability, status, and competence perceptions that non-native listeners have of NNSs with whom they do not share a mother tongue. The investigation of whether a prejudice control text influences these perceptions is of theoretical relevance. Furthermore, this study is practically relevant due to the insights into whether or not a prejudice control text used in job interviews could reduce accent-based discrimination.

Accordingly, the research question for the current study is “What is the impact of prejudice control on the intelligibility, comprehensibility, hirability, status, and competence perceptions that non-native (Dutch) listeners have of German-accented and British English-accented English at job interviews?”.

2. Method

To investigate the research question, a verbal-guise experiment with a Qualtrics questionnaire was conducted using four different conditions. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

2.1. Materials

The stimulus material consisted of recordings of two middle-aged men with either a British English accent or a Standard German accent when speaking English. Due to gender-based discrimination being especially severe in high-status job applications, male speakers were chosen (González, Cortina, & Rodríguez, 2019). In other words, female speakers could have been downgraded not because of their accent but because of their gender. The male speakers were recorded reading a job interview fragment (see Appendix 2) based on the interview script by Deprez-Sims and Morris (2010). This script was chosen as the interviewee used high levels of self-promotion. It has been found that participants perceive such interviewees as less similar to themselves and hence the similarity-attraction paradigm does not positively influence their evaluations (Howard & Ferris, 1996). Furthermore, the script resembled a moderately qualified applicant which allowed for a wider range of individual differences in the listeners' evaluations and eliminated floor or ceiling effects (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000).

For the current study, the original script was shortened and turned into a monologue as evidence was found that perceptions of interviewer-interviewee similarity impact hirability judgements (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010). For the recording, mistakes made by the speakers were edited out using the audio software 'Audacity'. Furthermore, the peak amplitude was normalised to -1.0dB to ensure that all speakers had the same volume. Lastly, a two-second pause was added to the beginning and end of all recordings. As the recordings were made by the researchers themselves, a pre-test (see Appendix 3) was conducted to test whether the speakers were appropriate for the required accents. While one British English speaker was chosen for the pre-test, the researchers selected two German-accented speakers as NNSs might differ in their degree of accentedness.

Eleven language experts (professors working in the Communication and Information section of the Language and Communication department at Radboud University Nijmegen) were recruited via email to participate in the pre-test. The participants' age ranged from 31 to 59 years ($M = 45.00$, $SD = 10.13$) and there were two males (18.2%) and nine females (81.8%). Four participants were presented with the native English recording, three were shown the first German recording and four listened to the second German recording.

The language experts rated the accentedness of one native English and two German-accented English recordings on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) based on the following questions: “This speaker sounds like a native speaker of English” (reversed) and “This speaker has a strong non-native accent in his English” (based on Jesney, 2004). For these two Likert scales of the speaker, Cronbach’s alpha was good: $\alpha = .99$. Consequently, the composite mean for this scale was calculated, with higher scores indicating higher levels of accentedness. A one-way ANOVA found a significant main effect of actual speaker accent on the perceived degree of accentedness ($F(2, 8) = 132.97, p < .001$). The perceived degree of accentedness was significantly lower for the NS ($M = 1.63, SD = .75$) than for the first NNS ($p < .001$, Bonferroni-correction; $M = 6.67, SD = .29$) and the second NNS ($p < .001$, Bonferroni-correction; $M = 6.88, SD = .25$). There was no significant difference between the two NNSs ($p = 1$, Bonferroni-correction).

To investigate whether the accents could be identified, the language experts were asked to guess the mother tongue of the speakers. All seven participants who listened to either one of the two German recordings indicated the mother tongue correctly. Three out of the four listeners of the native English recording guessed the speaker’s mother tongue correctly, with the fourth person doubting between Dutch and English. Thus, the mother tongue of both NNSs and the NS was clearly identified.

Both non-native recordings differed significantly from the native recording (but not from each other) in terms of their perceived accentedness and mother tongue. Hence, it could be assumed that they both represent a moderate to strong non-native accent. This was the degree of accentedness required as slight accents are often not perceived differently than a native accent in terms of attitudinal evaluations (e.g., Hendriks et al., 2017). The decision to use the second NNS was made because this recording was more similar in length (and henceforth in articulation rate) to the NS recording. The position for which the speakers were applying in the job interview was that of a human resources (HR) manager. This is considered a high status and high communication position (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010). To overcome the potential pitfall of participants not having much experience in hiring HR managers, a job description based on Deprez-Sims & Morris (2010) was included which can be found in Appendix 4. The prejudice control text was based on the description given by Roessel et al. (2017) about their prejudice control and can be found in Appendix 5.

2.2. Subjects

As the current study focused on Dutch listeners only, the subjects were retrieved by the method of purposive sampling. In total, 181 people started the questionnaire, but 92 of them did not complete it and were consequently deselected from the dataset. Extreme outliers in terms of time were included in the dataset as taking breaks was not prohibited. Thus, a total of 89 participants were included in the final dataset. The age of these 89 respondents was $M = 27.55$ ($SD = 11.33$) and ranged from min = 19 years to max = 61 years (range = 42). Out of the participants, 38 were male (42.7%), 48 were female (53.9%), two were non-binary/third gender (2.2%) and one person preferred not to specify their age (1.1%). The most frequent level of education ranging from MBO to WO was WO (70 participants, 78.7%). Concerning work experience, 80 participants did have previous work experience (89.9%) while 9 participants did not (10.1%). A total of 20 respondents had previous hiring experience (22.5%) and 69 people did not (77.5%).

The reliability of ‘familiarity’ and ‘self-assessed level of English’ were good: all α 's > .88. The composite means were consequently calculated, with higher scores indicating higher levels of the variables. The participants who were presented with the German-accented recording had an average accent familiarity of $M = 4.24$ ($SD = 1.45$). For the self-assessed level of English, the mean amongst all participants was $M = 5.78$ ($SD = .87$). For the participants’ actual English proficiency, measured with the Lextale Test, the mean score was $M = 76.90$ ($SD = 12.38$) with a minimum score of 47.50 and a maximum score of 98.75. This mean is representative of a B2 CEFR level (Lemhöfer & Broersma, 2012). For a clearer comparison of the self-assessed level of English and the actual English proficiency, the self-assessed level of English variable was re-scaled ($x/7 \times 100$) with the re-scaled mean being $M = 82.57$ ($SD = 12.43$).

The distribution of relevant characteristics was measured across the speaker accent and prejudice control conditions. The variables education level, gender, and work experience violated the Chi-square assumption of expected frequencies. Thus, the education levels MBO, HBO, and other (Atheneum, Abitur, and VWO) were combined. Since combining groups for gender and work experience could not be done logically, Fisher’s exact was used instead of Pearson’s Chi-square.

Fisher’s exact tests found equal distributions of gender, education level, and work experience across speaker accent conditions (all p 's > .498) and prejudice control conditions (all p 's > .315). A Chi-square test found an equal distribution of hiring experience across speaker accent conditions ($p = .689$) and prejudice control conditions ($p = .572$).

One-way ANOVAs found equal distributions of age, self-assessed level of English, and actual English proficiency across speaker accent conditions (all p 's > .335) and prejudice control conditions (all p 's > .243). Due to familiarity only being presented in the NNS condition, no distribution across speaker accent conditions was measured. However, a one-way ANOVA found an equal distribution of familiarity across prejudice control conditions ($p = .145$).

2.3. Design

The experiment was conducted using a 2x2 between-subjects design with the factors being accentedness (two levels: non-native German accent, native English accent) and prejudice control (two levels: present prejudice control, absent prejudice control). There were four different conditions across which the subjects were evenly distributed.

2.4. Instrumentation

The main dependent variables of the experiment were intelligibility, comprehensibility, hirability, status, and competence. Additionally, a manipulation check for the speakers' accentedness was included for which the following two statements were rated on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*): "This speaker sounds like a native speaker of English" (reversed) and "This speaker has a strong foreign accent in his English" (Jesney, 2004). Furthermore, the participants were asked to indicate the mother tongue of the speaker with an open question.

Intelligibility was measured using a gap-fill text in which the participants were asked to transcribe six words. These were taken from only the first six sentences of the recording so that the listeners could afterwards focus on the content. The words "challenge", "success", "opportunities", "designing", "operators", and "equipment" were chosen based on being important words for the meaning of the entire sentence.

Comprehensibility was measured using questions based on Hendriks, Van Meurs, and Hogervorst (2016). On 7-point Likert scales, the participants were asked to what extent they agree (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) with the following statements: "I have to listen very carefully to be able to understand the candidate (reversed)", "The candidate speaks clearly", "The candidate is barely intelligible" (reversed), "The candidate is difficult to comprehend" (reversed), "I have problems understanding what the candidate is talking about" (reversed), and "I do not understand what the candidate means" (reversed).

The dependent variables status and competence were measured using 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) for the statement “In my opinion, this candidate sounds...” followed by the following descriptions for status: “controlling”, “authoritative”, “dominant”, “has a strong voice”, and “assertive” (Hendriks et al., 2017). For competence, these descriptions followed the initial statement: “reliable”, “intelligent”, “competent”, “hardworking”, and “educated” (Bayard, Weatherall, Gallois, & Pittam, 2001).

Hirability was measured using a slightly adapted version of the scale from Deprez-Sims and Morris (2010). On 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), the following statements were rated: “I would recommend employing this candidate”, “I would feel satisfied if this candidate would be hired”, “I feel favourable towards this candidate”, “I would have the desire to work with this candidate”, “This candidate would be an asset to the company”, “There is a high likelihood of this candidate being hired”, and “This candidate has managing abilities”.

Furthermore, the background questions age (open question), gender (male/female/non-binary or third gender/do not want to specify), and educational level (MBO/HBO/WO/other) were measured. The background variable familiarity with the accent was also measured using three 7-point Likert scales (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*) for the following statements: “I am familiar with German-accented English”, “I often meet people who have a German accent in their English”, and “I regularly talk to people who have a German accent in their English” (Hendriks, Van Meurs, & Reimer, 2018). Although the participants were given a job description, their previous work and hiring experience were measured with a yes/no question to examine whether this possibly influenced their evaluations. Another background variable was the self-assessed level of English for which the participants were asked to rate their level of English concerning the items “speaking”, “writing”, “reading”, and “listening” on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *poor*, 7 = *excellent*) based on Krishna and Alhuwalia (2008). Additionally, their actual English proficiency was measured using Lemhöfer and Broersma’s (2012) Lextale test which uses 60 strings of letters and asks the participants to decide whether they are existing English words.

2.5. Procedure

The experiment was conducted using a Qualtrics questionnaire. After a briefing, the participants were asked to agree to the ethical statement. If the participants agreed, they were presented with the job description and randomly with the prejudice control text or no prejudice control text.

Subsequently, one of the two recordings was displayed. While listening, the participants could work on the gap-fill text measuring intelligibility. The reason for this being a simultaneous task was that otherwise, correct memory and recall would have been measured instead of actual intelligibility. Upon completion of the gap-fill text, the respondents were asked to answer the questions about the comprehensibility, hirability, status, and competence perceptions, as well as the manipulation check. If they were randomly assigned to the non-native recording, they were also asked to answer the familiarity questions. Afterwards, the respondents were presented with the background variables and background questions. Before the end-of-survey screen, the participants got the opportunity to give feedback. The average time spent on the experiment was $M = 1.89$ ($SD = 4.85$) hours. When excluding extreme outliers, the average time dropped to $M = 14.89$ ($SD = 9.73$) minutes which gives a clearer idea of how long participants who finished the questionnaire in one sitting took to do so.

2.6. Statistical Treatment

Two-way ANOVAs were conducted to test the effects of accentedness and prejudice control on the intelligibility, comprehensibility, hirability, status, and competence of the speaker. Significant interaction effects were analysed with independent samples t-tests. All data was processed in SPSS.

3. Results

The purpose of this experiment was to investigate the effect of a native English accent and a non-native German accent when speaking English on Dutch listeners concerning intelligibility, comprehensibility, hirability, status, and competence perceptions. Furthermore, the impact of a prejudice control text on these effects was researched.

3.1. Manipulation Checks

3.1.1. Perceived Accentedness

Perceived accentedness was measured to investigate whether the listeners identified the operationalisation concerning the accentedness of the speakers. The reliability of ‘perceived accentedness’ comprising two items was good: $\alpha = .91$. Consequently, the mean of the two items was used to calculate the compound variable ‘perceived accentedness’, which was used in the further analyses. Higher scores indicated higher levels of accentedness.

A two-way ANOVA was carried out with speaker accent and prejudice control as factors. There was a significant main effect of speaker accent on perceived accentedness ($F(1, 84) = 216.36, p < .001$). The perceived accentedness ratings were significantly higher for the non-native accented speaker ($M = 5.61, SD = 1.10$) than for the native accented speaker ($p < .001; M = 2.16, SD = 1.06$). There was no significant main effect on prejudice control ($F(1, 84) = 1.51, p = .223$) and there was no significant interaction effect ($F(1, 84) < 1$). The results for the two-way ANOVA are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The means, standard deviations (between round brackets), and number of observations [between square brackets] for perceived degree of accentedness in function of speaker accent and prejudice control (1 = low, 7 = high).

Speaker accent	Prejudice control		
	Present <i>M (SD) [n]</i>	Absent <i>M (SD) [n]</i>	Total <i>M (SD) [n]</i>
Native English	2.31 (1.18) [29]	1.92 (0.81) [18]	2.16 (1.06) [47]
Non-native German	5.73 (0.94) [15]	5.54 (1.20) [26]	5.61 (1.10) [41]
Total	3.48 (1.97) [44]	4.06 (2.08) [44]	3.77 (2.04) [88]

3.1.2. Speakers' Mother Tongue

When identifying whether the listeners correctly recognised the speakers' mother tongue, besides German and English, all official language varieties (e.g., Swiss German or Australian English) were coded as correct answers. The reason for this leniency is that this experiment was not about the recognition of specific regional accents. If participants gave two answers out of which one was the right one (e.g., "German or Spanish"), their answer was coded as correct.

Of the 48 participants who listened to the NS, 39 (81.3%) indicated his mother tongue correctly whereas nine (18.8%) were incorrect. Of the 41 participants who listened to the NNS, 29 (70.7%) indicated his mother tongue correctly and 12 (29.3%) did not recognise it correctly. A Chi-square test showed no significant relation between the speaker accent and the correctness of mother tongue indications ($\chi^2(1) = 1.36, p = .244$). Another Chi-square test showed no significant relation between the prejudice control and the correctness of mother tongue guesses ($\chi^2(1) = .04, p = .849$). The results of the Chi-square tests are located in Table 2.

Table 2. Observed count and column percentages of the Chi-square test for speaker accent and prejudice control by correct and incorrect mother tongue indications.

Speaker accent	Mother tongue indication		Prejudice control		
			Present	Absent	Total
Native English	Correct	Count	23 _a	16 _a	39
		Column %	79.3	84.2	81.3
	Incorrect	Count	6 _a	3 _a	9
		Column %	20.7	15.8	18.8
	Total	Count	29	19	48
		Column %	100	100	100
Non-native German	Correct	Count	11 _a	18 _a	29
		Column %	73.3	69.2	70.7
	Incorrect	Count	4 _a	8 _a	12
		Column %	26.7	30.8	29.3
	Total	Count	15	26	41
		Column %	100	100	100
Total	Correct	Count	34 _a	34 _a	68

Incorrect	Count	10 _a	11 _a	21
	Column %	22.7	24.4	23.6
Total	Count	44	45	89
	Column %	100	100	100

Note: Each subscript letter denotes a subset of the prejudice control condition whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

3.2. Understanding the Language

The language understanding that listeners had was measured in terms of intelligibility and comprehensibility. The means and standard deviations for the two-way ANOVAs conducted for these variables can be found in Table 3.

3.2.1. Intelligibility

When coding the gap-fill text that was used to measure intelligibility, spelling mistakes such as ‘desining’ were considered correct but grammar mistakes such as ‘design’ were considered incorrect (correct: designing). In total, there were six gaps in the gap-fill text which resulted in an intelligibility score ranging from zero for no correct answers to six for all correct answers.

A two-way ANOVA was conducted for speaker accent and prejudice control which found no significant effect of speaker accent on intelligibility ($F(1, 85) = 1.20, p = .277$) nor of prejudice control on intelligibility ($F(1, 85) < 1$). The interaction effect was also not significant ($F(1, 85) = 1.10, p = .298$).

3.2.2. Comprehensibility

The reliability of ‘comprehensibility’ comprising six items was acceptable: $\alpha = .75$. Consequently, the mean of all six items was used to calculate the compound variable ‘comprehensibility’, which was used in the further analyses. Higher scores indicated higher levels of comprehensibility.

A two-way ANOVA with speaker accent and prejudice control as factors showed a significant effect of speaker accent on comprehensibility ($F(1, 85) = 5.15, p = .026$). There was no significant main effect of prejudice control on comprehensibility ($F(1, 85) < 1$). The interaction effect between the speaker accent and prejudice control was statistically significant ($F(1, 85) = 6.81, p = .011$).

To analyse the interaction effect, independent samples t-tests were conducted for speaker accent and prejudice control separately. When being presented with the no prejudice

control condition, an independent samples t-test indicated that comprehensibility scores were significantly higher for the NS ($M = 6.19, SD = .67$) than for the NNS ($M = 5.37, SD = .89$), $t(42.96) = 3.37, p = .001$. When being presented with the prejudice control condition, an independent samples t-test indicated that comprehensibility scores for the NS and NNS did not differ significantly, $t(39.44) = .25, p = .778$.

Another independent samples t-test for participants who listened to the NS found no significant difference between the comprehensibility scores when the prejudice control was present or absent ($t(43.27) = 1.95, p = .058$). An independent samples t-test found that the participants who listened to the NNS rated him as significantly more comprehensible when being presented with the prejudice control condition ($M = 5.83, SD = .53$) than when not being presented with the prejudice control condition ($M = 5.37, SD = .89$), $t(38.95) = 2.08, p = .044$. Levene's test indicated unequal variances ($F = 7.16, p = .011$), so degrees of freedom were adjusted from 39 to 38.95.

Table 3. The means, standard deviations (between round brackets), and number of observations [between square brackets] for intelligibility (0 = low, 6 = high) and comprehensibility (1 = low, 7 = high) in function of speaker accent and prejudice control.

<i>Understanding the language</i>			
Speaker accent	Prejudice control		
	Present	Absent	Total
	<i>M (SD) [n]</i>	<i>M (SD) [n]</i>	<i>M (SD) [n]</i>
<i>Intelligibility</i>			
Native English	5.41 (0.95) [29]	5.74 (0.93) [19]	5.54 (0.94) [48]
Non-native German	5.40 (1.68) [15]	5.12 (1.66) [26]	5.22 (1.65) [41]
Total	5.41 (1.23) [44]	5.38 (1.42) [45]	5.39 (1.32) [89]
<i>Comprehensibility</i>			
Native English	5.78 (0.80) [29]	6.19 (0.67) [19]	5.94 (0.77) [48]
Non-native German	5.83 (0.53) [15]	5.37 (0.89) [26]	5.54 (0.81) [41]
Total	5.80 (0.72) [44]	5.72 (0.90) [45]	5.76 (0.81) [89]

3.3. Speaker Evaluations

The speaker evaluations were hirability, status, and competence. Due to all Cronbach's alphas being above $\alpha = .84$, the composite means were calculated for all scales and used in the further analyses. Higher scores indicated higher levels for all variables. The means and standard deviations for the two-way ANOVAs conducted for these variables can be found in Table 4.

3.3.1. Hirability

A two-way ANOVA with speaker accent and prejudice control as factors showed a significant main effect of speaker accent on hirability ($F(1, 85) = 17.45, p < .001$). The hirability score for the NS ($M = 5.38, SD = .86$) was significantly higher than for the NNS ($p < .001; M = 4.51, SD = 1.05$). There was no significant main effect of prejudice control ($F(1, 85) < 1$) and the interaction effect was also not statistically significant ($F(1, 85) = 1.47, p = .229$).

3.3.2. Status

A two-way ANOVA with speaker accent and prejudice control as factors showed a significant main effect of speaker accent on status ($F(1, 85) = 20.84, p < .001$). The NS ($M = 4.72, SD = .90$) was perceived as having significantly more status than the NNS ($p < .001; M = 3.74, SD = 1.17$). The main effect of prejudice control on status was not significant ($F(1, 85) = 1.10, p = .298$) and the interaction effect was not significant either ($F(1, 85) < 1$).

3.3.3. Competence

A two-way ANOVA with speaker accent and prejudice control as factors showed no significant main effect of speaker accent on competence ($F(1, 85) = 1.47, p = .229$) and no significant main effect of prejudice control on competence ($F(1, 85) < 1$). The interaction effect was not significant ($F(1, 85) = 2.08, p = .153$).

Table 4. The means, standard deviations (between round brackets), and number of observations [between square brackets] for hirability, status, and competence in function of speaker accent and prejudice control (1 = low, 7 = high).

Speaker accent	Prejudice control		
	Present <i>M (SD) [n]</i>	Absent <i>M (SD) [n]</i>	Total <i>M (SD) [n]</i>
<i>Speaker Evaluations</i>			
<i>Hirability</i>			
Native English	5.28 (0.83) [29]	5.54 (0.89) [19]	5.38 (0.86) [48]
Non-native German	4.66 (1.07) [15]	4.42 (1.04) [26]	4.51 (1.05) [41]
Total	5.06 (0.95) [44]	4.89 (1.12) [45]	4.98 (1.04) [89]
<i>Status</i>			
Native English	4.65 (0.91) [29]	4.84 (0.89) [19]	4.72 (0.90) [48]
Non-native German	3.56 (1.17) [15]	3.85 (1.18) [26]	3.74 (1.17) [41]
Total	4.28 (1.12) [44]	4.27 (1.17) [45]	4.27 (1.14) [89]
<i>Competence</i>			
Native English	5.48 (0.70) [29]	5.64 (0.79) [19]	5.55 (0.73) [48]
Non-native German	5.53 (1.41) [15]	5.06 (1.13) [26]	5.23 (1.24) [41]
Total	5.50 (0.98) [44]	5.31 (1.03) [45]	5.40 (1.01) [89]

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to compare the effects of a native English accent with a non-native German accent in English on the intelligibility, comprehensibility, hirability, status, and competence perceptions that Dutch listeners had. Additionally, the effect of incorporating a prejudice control text was examined. This study found a significant interaction effect of speaker accent and prejudice control on comprehensibility and significant main effects of speaker accent on hirability and status. All findings will be discussed in detail, compared to previous literature, and attempted to be explained in the following section.

4.1. Literature Comparison and Explanation of Findings

No effects of speaker accent or prejudice control were found on intelligibility which is in line with the consensus that non-native accents usually do not differ significantly from native accents in terms of intelligibility (Munro & Derwing, 1995b; Derwing & Munro, 1997; Weber et al., 2014). Despite non-native accents initially being more challenging to process (Munro & Derwing, 1995b), listeners are flexible and can rapidly adapt to non-native accents (e.g., Baese-Berk et al., 2013; Clarke & Garrett, 2004; Witteman et al., 2014).

For comprehensibility, an interaction effect between speaker accent and prejudice control was found. When no prejudice control was present, the NS was perceived as more comprehensible than the NNS. This finding is in line with the native speech intelligibility benefit which is that native accents are perceived as more comprehensible than non-native accents by both native and non-native listeners (e.g., Fayer & Krasinski, 1987; Smith & Bisazza, 1982; Major et al., 2002). Despite non-native accents usually being intelligible, subjective comprehensibility ratings are often lower than objective intelligibility (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; Munro & Derwing, 1995a). Research suggests that the link between non-native accents and perceptual disfluency (i.e., the ease of processing), to which comprehensibility perceptions are connected (Munro & Dovidio, 1995b), is overgeneralised to cues of non-nativeness (Roessel et al. 2017). This could explain the difference in comprehensibility despite a lack of difference in intelligibility.

However, when the prejudice control text was shown to the participants, there was no significant difference in the comprehensibility of the NS and NNS. More specifically, the comprehensibility ratings for the NS did not change significantly when the prejudice control was present. On the other hand, the comprehensibility ratings for the NNS were significantly lower with no prejudice control text compared to when the prejudice control text was present.

It stands to reason that the prejudice control text affected the listeners' answers. Its effect might have even been amplified as listeners had no trouble transcribing non-native accented speech in the intelligibility task. The prejudice control might have raised the necessary awareness that it would thus be contradicting to rate the NNS as incomprehensible. But for the NS, where there were no cues of non-nativeness, the comprehensibility was not downgraded in the first place and hence, the prejudice control did not result in a significant improvement. However, it is important to note that these are speculations that are not based on previous literature.

In terms of status, the native English-accented speaker was rated as having significantly higher status than the non-native German-accented speaker. This is in line with the meta-analysis of 20 studies which summarised that NNSs are perceived as having less status than NSs both by native and non-native listeners (Fuertes et al., 2012).

Another finding was that the NS was given significantly higher hirability ratings than the NNS, supporting the findings of Deprez-Sims and Morris (2010) and Roessel et al. (2017). Furthermore, research has found that native-accented job candidates are given higher hirability ratings when the position they are applying for is considered as being high-status (Kalin & Rayko, 1978). The current finding that the NS who was seen as having more status than the NNS was also given higher hirability ratings for the high-status HR position is in line with the previously mentioned studies.

Concerning competence, the listeners did not have significantly different perceptions of the NS compared to the NNS. This is not in line with previous research (e.g., De Shields & De Los Santos, 2000; Hendriks et al., 2017; Nejjari et al., 2012; Tsalikis et al., 1991). Several studies (e.g., Giles & Billings, 2004; Ryan, 1983) found a connection between competence perceptions and status perceptions. Thus, the fact that the current study found an effect of speaker accent on status but not on competence was unexpected. Ryan (1983) offers the possible explanation that competence perceptions might not specifically be related to status but are more a result of overgeneralisation of the language competence of the speaker. Creese and Kambere (2015) suggest that listeners have difficulty separating accentedness from language competence and are therefore likely to discriminate NNSs. In a non-experimental setting, accent strength and language competence are often intertwined; the weaker the non-native accent, the better the language competence (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2013). However, in this experimental setting, the speakers read out a script and consequently both used perfect grammar and vocabulary, which indicated high language competence. Hence, the unexpectedly high language competence of the NNS might have led to higher competence perceptions that did not differ significantly from those of the NS (see Ryan, 1983). As this is merely an attempt at an

explanation, more research is needed to investigate whether this explanation can be supported by scientific investigations.

What is noticeable from the findings is that there was only an interaction effect of speaker accent and prejudice control on comprehensibility. Despite the main effects of speaker accent on status and hirability, the presence of a prejudice control text did not influence the listeners' perceptions of status and hirability. This is not in line with the findings from Roessel et al. (2017). In an attempt to explain these divergent findings, it could be helpful to disclose that for variables that are less susceptible to control, initial biases might emerge despite prejudice control interventions (see Maass, Castelli, & Arcuri, 2000; Pantos & Perkins, 2013; Roessel et al., 2017). Possibly, due to the combination of strong biases of the participants and the fact that the prejudice control text was only shown once at the beginning, its effect became insignificant for status and hirability. With comprehensibility being an earlier variable that *was* affected by the prejudice control intervention, future research could use a randomised presentation of main variables. However, with the lacking literature on prejudice control, this explanation is not supported by previously conducted research and therefore needs to be identified as speculation of the researcher.

4.2. Theoretical Contributions and Practical Implications

This study's findings indicate that Dutch listeners are rather negative towards German accents in English given that they downgraded the German speaker on comprehensibility, hirability, and status. However, it seems to be the case that the listeners' perception of the NNS's comprehensibility can be influenced by a prejudice control text. Yet, the prejudice control text did not influence status, competence, and hirability. This was likely due to deeply rooted stereotypes. An insightful finding for job interviews is that listeners have negative biases towards candidates with a non-native accent which, amongst others, negatively influence hiring recommendations. Thus, candidates can always be advised to reduce their non-native accent as much as possible. However, the real problem is accent-based discrimination and hence, prejudice control measures for interviewers are essential.

4.3. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

A limitation of the current study was that 92 respondents had to be de-selected from the dataset. The two biggest groups that account for 82 of these participants are those who did not respond or agree to the consent form or who stopped before listening to the recording. Most likely, the

first group realised that they did not meet the requirements, although all participants had been informed about them in the recruitment text. The second, and largest, of the two main groups were those participants who left before listening to the recording. Possibly, they were not in a quiet environment, did not have headphones to privately listen to it, or were simply not willing to do so. Hence, the recording could have already been mentioned in the recruitment text. To conclude, the majority of participants that could not be used stopped before really starting the experiment. This makes it difficult to suggest how the questionnaire itself could have been improved. The loss of participants led to a smaller sample size than planned, thus increasing the risk of Type II errors.

Despite this study aiming to mimic a job interview context, the experimental setting required the speakers to read out a pre-scripted text. This was needed to prevent aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, or fluency of the recording from causing a third variable problem and damaging the internal validity. Additionally, a voice recording instead of a video recording was utilised to prevent visual cues from influencing the results. However, these choices resulted in a lower ecological validity of the experiment as these are aspects that would have been present in a real-life job interview. Nevertheless, it does allow for future research to investigate other features of non-native speech, which Hendriks and Van Meurs (2017) suggest could be grammar, fluency, or choice of vocabulary. With these being aspects of language competence, future research could also experiment with different degrees of general language competence. In particular, the effects on perceived competence are of interest to test whether language competence can indeed influence perceptions of speaker competence as was proposed in the current research.

While this study used Standard British English as its native English accent, this is not representative of all NSs as they often use dialects. Therefore, future research could include regional accents. Hendriks and Van Meurs (2017) hypothesise that regional accents are perceived as non-standard and are consequently evaluated less positively than a Standard British accent. An approach that has, to the researcher's knowledge, not been taken in any scientific research is using different dialects of the NNS. For example, the current study used a speaker of Standard German. However, besides Austrian German or Swiss German, Germany itself also has numerous dialects which could influence the speaker's accent when speaking English. Thus, future research could experiment with different dialects of both the NS and NNS.

Lastly, the effect of prejudice control measures should continuously be investigated. With prejudice control interventions being introduced either pre- or post-stimulus, the current prejudice control text could also be used post-stimulus. Alternatively, the text could be shown

several times, as possibly showing it only once did not have a strong enough influence for there to be significant effects on all variables. Furthermore, studies could alter the content of the prejudice control text or experiment with a different type of prejudice control intervention altogether to find a way to prevent accent-based discrimination in the workplace.

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Appendix 1: Qualtrics Questionnaire

Note: The bold headings (e.g., “Introduction”, “Ethics statement”, etc.) are included here for clarity but were not in the Qualtrics questionnaire that was distributed to the participants.

Introduction

Hello!

We are four International Business Communication students from the Radboud University in Nijmegen. In this questionnaire, you will be asked to evaluate a job applicant for the position of HR manager. This evaluation is based on a recording that will be presented to you. We would like to clarify that, if at any point you wish not to continue, you are free to exit the questionnaire and your answers will not be recorded. Your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. Although we will ask some basic demographic questions, your personal details, such as your name and (email) address, will not be asked.

We thank you for answering this questionnaire. More practical information on this questionnaire can be found on the next page.

Kind regards,

Luisa, Kim, Hannah, Thijs

Ethics Statement

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research.

Information and Permission

You are invited to participate in a job interview survey. This research is carried out by a group of students as part of their bachelor thesis at Radboud University.

What is expected of you?

Participating in the survey means that you will complete an online questionnaire. The questions relate to a recording of a job interview fragment. Completing the questionnaire takes about 10-15 minutes.

Voluntariness

You participate voluntarily in this study. Therefore, you can cancel your participation at any time during the study. You do not have to indicate why you are stopping.

What happens with my data?

The research data that we collect will be used by scientists for datasets, articles, and presentations. The anonymised research data is available for other scientists for at least 10 years. Therefore, if we share data with other researchers, it cannot be traced back to you.

Do you have any questions or complaints about the study?

If you would like to have more information about the study or have complaints about the study, you can contact Luisa Wolf (email: L.Wolf@student.ru.nl).

Consent

Please indicate your choice below.

By clicking the “I agree” button, you indicate that you:

- ✓ Read the above information
- ✓ Voluntarily participate in the study
- ✓ Are 18 or older
- ✓ Are a native speaker of Dutch

- I agree
- I do not agree

➔ *In a randomised order, the participant will either be presented with the prejudice control or not.*

Before you start the questionnaire, we would like you to carefully read the following instruction:

Prejudice Control

Due to this company's common corporate language being English, the hiring process was also in English which means that most candidates were not speaking their native language during the job interview that you are about to hear. Since research has found that accented speech leads to prejudiced perceptions of the speaker, we kindly ask you to not base your evaluations on feelings or stereotypes that might be evoked by the non-native accentedness of the candidate.

Please read through the job description below. Afterwards, you will be asked to listen to a fragment from a job interview that was conducted for the position of HR manager.

Job Description

An HR manager:

- Plans and carries out policies relating to all phases of personnel activity such as training and development.
- Recruits, interviews, and selects employees to fill vacant positions.
- Plans and conducts employee orientation to foster a positive attitude toward company goals.
- Keeps record of insurance coverage, pension plan, and personnel transactions, such as hires, promotions, transfers, and terminations.
- Investigates on-the-job accidents and prepares reports for insurance carriers.
- Conducts internet survey within the labour market to determine competitive salaries.
- Prepares budget of personnel operations.
- Prepares reports and recommends the procedure to reduce absenteeism and turnover.

Please now listen to the job interview fragment. We advise you to use headphones. **While** listening, please fill in the gap-fill text below in which you are asked to fill in individual words from sentences said in the recording. Even if you cannot keep up with filling in the gap-fill text or want to double-check a response: please do not stop the recording at any point and do not listen to it multiple times.

→ In a randomised order, either the German-accented English recording or the native British recording will be presented to the participant.



Main Variables

Intelligibility

I chose to study human resource management because I find solving problems of how to best utilise workers to the company's advantage a that I am capable of meeting. I believe that human resource management is the area that will determine the of a company and the satisfaction of workers. The combination of is large and very challenging, and these are not only challenges that I want, but challenges I feel I am capable of handling.

While working at Union Carbide I worked with two human resource managers a training program for entry-level machine operators. Typically, new would receive a verbal description of the operation from the supervisor, and then place the new operator on a designated slow line to practice. Prior to my start date, some new had been purchased.

Comprehensibility

I have to listen very carefully to be able to understand the candidate.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

The candidate speaks clearly.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

The candidate is barely intelligible.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

The candidate is difficult to comprehend.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

I have problems understanding what the candidate is talking about.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

I do not understand what the candidate means.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

Hirability

I would recommend employing this candidate.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

I would feel satisfied if this candidate would be hired.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

I feel favourably towards this candidate.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

I would have the desire to work with this candidate.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

This candidate would be an asset to the company.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

There is a high likelihood of this candidate being hired.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

Dynamism (other researchers measured this)

The speaker is...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Shy						Confident

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Restrained						Hardworking

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sad						Cheerful

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Lazy						Hardworking

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Passive						Active

Solidarity (other researchers measured this)

The speaker is...

Dissimilar to you as a listener					Similar to you as a listener	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Ugly								Attractive
1	2	3	4	5	6			7

Unbenevolent								Benevolent
1	2	3	4	5	6			7

Untrustworthy								Trustworthy
1	2	3	4	5	6			7

Mean								Nice
1	2	3	4	5	6			7

Dishonest								Honest
1	2	3	4	5	6			7

Status

In my opinion, this candidate sounds...

Controlling								
1	2	3	4	5	6			7
Strongly disagree								Strongly agree

Authoritative								
1	2	3	4	5	6			7
Strongly disagree								Strongly agree

Dominant								
1	2	3	4	5	6			7
Strongly disagree								Strongly agree

Has a strong voice

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

Assertive

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

Competence

In my opinion, this candidate sounds...

Reliable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

Intelligent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

Competent

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

Hardworking

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

I regularly talk to people who have a German accent in their English.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

Work Experience

Do you have previous work experience?

- Yes
- No

Hiring Experience

Do you have previous experience hiring employees?

- Yes
- No

Self-Assessed Level of English

Please rate your level of English concerning the following items:

Speaking

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Poor						Excellent

Listening

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Poor						Excellent

Reading

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Poor						Excellent

Writing

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Poor						Excellent

Actual English Proficiency

The following part of the questionnaire consists of about 60 trials, in each of which you will see a string of letters. Your task is to decide whether this is an existing English word or not. If you think it is an existing English word, you click on "yes", and if you think it is not an existing English word, you click on "no". If you are sure that the word exists, even though you don't know its exact meaning, you may still respond "yes". But if you are not sure if it is an existing word, you should respond "no". In this experiment, we use British English rather than American English spelling. For example: "realise" instead of "realize"; "colour" instead of "color", and so on. Please don't let this confuse you. This experiment is not about detecting such subtle spelling differences anyway.

You have as much time as you like for each decision. This part of the experiment will take about 5 minutes.

If everything is clear, you can now start the test.

	no	yes
platory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
denial	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
generic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mensible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
scornful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stoutly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ablaze	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
kermshaw	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
moonlit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lofty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
hurricane	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
flaw	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
alberation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
unkempt	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
breeding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
festivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
screech	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
savoury	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
plaudate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
shin	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fluid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
spaunch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
allied	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
slain	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

slain	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
recipient	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
exprate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
eloquence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
cleanliness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
dispatch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
rebondicate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ingeniuos	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
bewitch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
skave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
plaintively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
kilp	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
interfate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
hasty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lenthly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fray	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
crumper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
upkeep	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
majestic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
magrity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
nourishment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
abergy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
proom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
turmoil	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
carbohydrate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
scholar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
turtle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
fellick	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
destription	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
cylinder	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ensorship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
celestial	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
rascal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
purrage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
pulsh	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
muddy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
quirty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
pudour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
listless	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
wrought	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Background Questions

Age

What is your age?

Gender

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

Educational Level

Please indicate your current or highest completed level of education:

- MBO
- HBO
- WO
- Other

If you answered “other” to the previous question, please specify your current or highest completed level of education here. Otherwise, please skip this question.

Remarks

If you have any remarks (such as there being a technical issue or an unclear instruction) feel free to them with us.

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey. Your response has been recorded.

Appendix 2: Interview Script

I chose to study human resource management because I find solving problems of how to best utilise workers to the company's advantage a challenge that I am capable of meeting. I believe that human resource management is the area that will determine the success of a company and the satisfaction of workers. The combination of opportunities is large and very challenging, and these are not only challenges that I want, but challenges I feel I am capable of handling.

While working at Union Carbide I worked with two human resource managers designing a training program for entry-level machine operators. Typically, new operators would receive a verbal description of the operation from the supervisor, and then place the new operator on a designated slow line to practice. Prior to my start date, some new equipment had been purchased. While we were discussing ways to improve productivity, it was suggested that the older machinery could be used to train new operators. I felt this would result in savings in waste and downtime, as well as providing more effective training. We thought that we had come up with a very good idea. We worked hard at it, and after meeting several times with various supervisors and operators, the training program was implemented. The results were positive, saving Carbide a considerable amount of money. Knowing that we were responsible for the success of the training program, I felt really good about the impact my efforts had on the project's success. This experience was extremely valuable, in that it provided me with the opportunity to supplement my knowledge with the realities that human resource professionals are faced with on a day-to-day basis. I also felt that this work allowed me to utilise my skills and abilities at a level where they should be used.

Appendix 3: Pre-Test Questionnaire

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research.

Information and Permission

As part of a language expert panel, you are invited to participate in a survey to evaluate a recording. This research is carried out by a group of students as part of their bachelor thesis at Radboud University.

What is expected of you?

Participating in the survey means that you will complete an online questionnaire. The questions relate to a recording of a job interview fragment. Completing the questionnaire takes about 5 minutes.

Voluntariness

You participate voluntarily in this study. Therefore, you can cancel your participation at any time during the study. You do not have to indicate why you are stopping.

What happens with my data?

The research data that we collect will be used by scientists for datasets, articles, and presentations. The anonymised research data is available for other scientists for at least 10 years. Therefore, if we share data with other researchers, it cannot be traced back to you.

Do you have any questions or complaints about the study?

If you would like to have more information about the study or have complaints about the study, you can contact Luisa Wolf (email: L.Wolf@student.ru.nl).

Consent

Please indicate your choice below.

By clicking the “I agree” button, you indicate that you:

- Read the above information
- Voluntarily participate in the study
- Are 18 or older

- I agree
- I do not agree

Please listen to the following audio fragment and answer the questions on the next page. We advise you to use headphones. You can listen to the recording as often as you like, and you can also go back to it while answering the questions on the next page.

→ *In a randomised order, either the English-accented or German-accented recording is presented to the participant.*



Please rate the speaker based on the following two statements.

This speaker sounds like a native speaker of English.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

This speaker has a strong non-native accent in his English.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

What do you think is the mother tongue of the speaker?

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

What is your age?

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey. Your response has been recorded.

Appendix 4: Job Description

An HR manager:

- Plans and carries out policies relating to all phases of personnel activity such as training and development.
- Recruits, interviews, and selects employees to fill vacant positions.
- Plans and conducts employee orientation to foster a positive attitude toward company goals.
- Keeps record of insurance coverage, pension plan, and personnel transactions, such as hires, promotions, transfers, and terminations.
- Investigates on-the-job accidents and prepares reports for insurance carriers.
- Conducts internet surveys within the labour market to determine competitive salaries.
- Prepares budget of personnel operations.
- Prepares reports and recommends the procedure to reduce absenteeism and turnover.

Appendix 5: Prejudice Control Text

Due to this company's common corporate language being English, the hiring process was also in English. This means that most candidates were not speaking their native language during the job interview that you are about to hear. Since research has found that accented speech leads to prejudiced perceptions of the speaker, we kindly ask you to not base your evaluations on feelings or stereotypes that might be evoked by the non-native accentedness of the candidate.

Appendix 6: Statement of Own Work

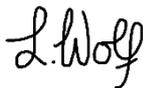
Student name: Luisa Wolf

Student number: s1007196

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DECLARATION:

- a. I hereby declare that I am familiar with the faculty manual (<http://www.ru.nl/stip/english/rules-regulations/fraud-plagiarism/>) and with Article 16 “Fraud and plagiarism” in the Education and Examination Regulations for the Bachelor's programme of Communication and Information Studies.
- b. I also declare that I have only submitted text written in my own words.
- c. I certify that this thesis is my own work and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation, whether they be books, articles, reports, lecture notes, and any other kind of document, electronic or personal communication.

Signature: 

Place and date: Nijmegen, 06/06/2021