

Radboud Universiteit



Non-native accents and their impact on hiring success

Céline Thomas (4705920)

7th June 2019

International Business Communication (Communication and Information Sciences)

Supervisor Berna Hendriks

Second assessor Evelyn Fruit

Faculty of Arts

Radboud University Nijmegen

Non-native accents and their impact on hiring success

Abstract

This study examined the effect of foreign accents in English on hiring success based on American, Spanish and German-accented audio samples of a job interview as evaluated by Dutch participants. As globalisation nowadays leads to more and more organisations being international and thus employing non-native staff, with the corporate language often being English, the study aimed to answer the question as to what extent a non-native accent would negatively impact hiring success. A special focus was also on a more European perspective as previous research mostly focussed on American participants. To answer the research question, Dutch participants were prompted with one out of six audio samples (American, Spanish or German-accented English) of a fictitious candidate in a job interview and were asked to evaluate them on the dimensions of status, solidarity and dynamism while also giving their opinion on the hireability of the candidate. While there was no clear difference between accents regarding hiring recommendation, there were differences in terms of the other factors and the German and Spanish speakers were always evaluated more positively than the American speakers. This was in line with previous findings about non-native speakers being evaluated more negatively due to their accent and thus managers might take this into account when evaluating candidates in job interviews.

Introduction

The world is constantly changing, even more so in the last decades. These days, there is an increased connectedness between people of various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, working and living in different parts of the world, sharing their knowledge about their respective cultures and languages. In this global village (McLuhan, 1997), it is fairly easy to meet people of every possible ethnicity. According to the UN Migration Report (UN, 2017), there are over 250 million people today living in a country other than that of their birth, mostly in Asia and Europe.

In this globalised world, English more or less has become a shared language to communicate across cultures, a so-called lingua franca, due to the language's growing global influence in the past, mainly during the summit of the British Empire (Goodman & Graddol, 1997). Today, most English-speakers are non-native (Mauranen, 2006). Naturally, there are bound to be difficulties in communication.

Through the process of globalisation, a lot of people are living – and therefore also working – in a country other than that of their origin. Many organisations are becoming more and more international, employing people from all over the world for their skill sets. However, even those international firms can be biased when it comes to hiring a workforce with a certain cultural and linguistic background. Russo, Islam and Koyuncu (2016) proposed in their study that non-native accents in general would create a vicious cycle in which managers, amongst other things, would perceive employees as less competent in the corporate language (which mostly is English), which in turn would lead to lower expectations, which again would lead to the distribution of low-level tasks. This, in turn, would lead the employee to feel devalued in their work and reduce their chances to prove themselves to their superiors.

This study will take a closer look at what impact non-native accents have with a focus on the workplace. More specifically, it will examine how a foreign accent might influence the hiring process and whether there are differences between various non-native accents.

Theoretical framework

Not only can miscommunications arise because non-native speakers often still refer to their native language when speaking a second language, thereby retaining part of their first language's intonation (Moyer, 2004) but also because a person's first language is a major part of their social identity (Norton, 2013). Most of the time, a foreign accent will be perceived negatively because of certain stereotypes associated with it (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010) but not exclusively. Whereas Mexico has political and economic issues, especially in connection with the USA (Canally & Timothy, 2007), Germany, for example, is known for its seriousness and effective organisation (Schroll-Machl, 2016). Thus, German-accented people could possibly be seen as more prestigious than Hispanic-accented people when comparing the two side to side. This assessment of foreignness is due to how people create in- and out-groups with other people around them. People with a different accent are seen as different and are therefore evaluated more negatively. Accents are also easily detectable cues and quickly give away a person's origin (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010). People with a foreign accent are usually perceived as less comprehensible in a language that is not their first (Lindemann, 2002) and to have lower skills in this language (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2013). Their speech is also apparently perceived as less pleasant than that of a native speaker (Lindemann, 2003). Furthermore, social identity theory states that people want to belong to their aspired in-group and therefore evaluate out-groups more negatively (Tajfel, Billig & Bundy, 1971). This might lead native

speakers to look for people without an accent, for example when socialising, as this serves as a cue to which group they belong.

In the past, there have already been several studies about the role of accents and language. One of those, a study by Van Vaerenbergh and Holmqvist (2011), found that bilingual customers in Belgium and Finland were more likely to give a generous tip to a waiter if the waiter served them in the customers' native language, even though the customers were perfectly able to communicate in a second language. The respondents in Belgium spoke Dutch as their first language, the ones in Finland Swedish, thus minority but nevertheless official languages of the country. This accommodating behaviour on the waiters' side also had significant influence on the customers' perception of service quality, enhancing quality perception when served in a customer's first language, even though the waiters displayed an accent while doing so. However, they also found out that customers highly invested in politics gave fewer tip due to language being based on political ideologies. This shows that attitudes towards languages and accents are context-based.

A study by Hendriks, van Meurs and Reimer (2018) examined accents of non-native English-speaking teachers for the dimensions of perceived intelligibility, actual comprehension, attitude, familiarity and proficiency. They asked non-native German and Dutch English speakers to evaluate Dutch-accented as well as German-accented lecturers, since they concluded that non-native accents seem to be harder to understand than native accents but also that a different native-language background influences the comprehensibility, or at least the perceived comprehensibility, of the listener. They also took accent strength as an influential factor and referred to an earlier study by Hendriks, van Meurs and Hogervorst (2016) who found that moderate accents were perceived as less proficient in their teaching than less pronounced accents. In the end, Hendriks et al. (2018) concluded in their study that both participant groups were able to distinguish between different levels of accentedness and also mostly succeeded in identifying the country of origin of the teachers. Furthermore, their previous assumption that a strong accent leads to more negative evaluations was confirmed. Their results also showed that a strong accent negatively influences both native and non-native people's perceptions of how well they believe to understand a non-native speaker. It might be interesting to see if this holds true for contexts other than teaching. Therefore, the current study orients itself along some of the dimensions used by Hendriks et al. (2018), namely comprehension, familiarity and attitude. Familiarity because it was found that comprehension can be enhanced when a person is more familiar with hearing it (Varonis & Gass, 1982) and therefore the present study wants to see if this accounts for other contexts as well.

There have also been several studies with this focus applied to the workplace as a consequence of globalisation and therefore many people working in different countries. A study by Deprez-Sims and Morris (2010), for example, examined how a foreign accent influences a person's chance of getting hired in a job interview for the position of a human resource manager. For this purpose, candidates with Midwestern US accents, with French and with Colombian accents were evaluated on the dimensions of similarity, understandability and accentedness. The researchers found that there was not a significant difference in the hiring decision concerning accents but that the French accent was nevertheless evaluated more negatively than the US accent because it was perceived as less similar and also less understandable.

The same authors conducted a similar study with Mexican-accented candidates instead of Colombian (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2013) with slightly different variables next to hiring recommendation: perceived similarity and interpersonal attraction. This time, the applicants with the US accent were considered more suitable to hire than the French participants. The results of both experiments, however, did not yield significant results for the Spanish-accented participants in comparison to the other two accents.

According to these studies, non-native accentedness does not seem to have much impact on hiring success, even though it was perceived as more negative in both studies compared to native speech. However, a study conducted by Hosoda, Nguyen and Stone-Romero (2012) contradicts this by comparing hiring success between American and Mexican-Spanish accented candidates speaking English. Participants were also questioned about a fictitious candidate applying for a high-status position. The study examined the dimensions of job suitability, likelihood of promotion and hiring decision, as well as perceived competence and warmth. Here, the results indicated a disadvantage for Mexican-Spanish accented candidates as they were generally rated more negatively than American-accented candidates. However, even though the former were rated lower on competence, they were rated higher on warmth, implying that they are associated less with skills relevant for the workplace. A possible explanation for the difference in results might be that this study examined work-related dimensions as well as personal qualities, whereas the study by Deprez-Sims and Morris concentrated on the latter. Also, the job position offered was of a much higher status in the Hosoda study than the one used by the other two studies.

A study by Hosoda & Stone-Romero (2010), on the other hand, focussed on the importance of job status, i.e. whether there is a difference in accent rating when a job position is considered of either higher or lower status, as well as communication demands, meaning how important communication is to the position offered. To test this, they asked participants to rate

three accents in English: Standard American, French and Japanese, with the two foreign accents being defined as strong accents. They used four types of job, of which two had a high status and two had a low status. Furthermore, two of the jobs had high communication demands whereas the other two had low demands. The measures in this study were job suitability, hiring and degree of agreement, meaning how participants would think others would agree with their decision. They found that Japanese-accented applicants were generally rated lower than the other applicants on the communication-demands measure, even though they were rated as more comprehensible than the French. The authors suggest this may be due to the stereotypical associations Americans hold about Japanese for them to be bad at communication and leadership. In general, however, they were rated just as favourable as American-accented applicants but French-accented applicants scored higher than both together.

Even though previous studies seem to have had different and oftentimes contradicting results, suggesting that accentedness in connection to stereotypes are more complex, it is interesting to see how stereotypes influence people's general perception of a person's qualities or skills. As can be seen from previous research, there is always some kind of bias against members of other cultures. As mentioned earlier, people do this because they group everyone around them into in-groups and out-groups. Out-groups are usually rated lower than one's own in-group. A second factor are the associations people have when they come into contact with other cultures. Especially in the times of globalisation and mass-media, there are certain mental pictures of every country or ethnic group that have become international stereotypes. In the study by Hosoda & Stone-Romero (2010), it became apparent that Japanese people are associated less with work-relevant qualities and more with interpersonal skills while Deprez-Sims & Morris (2010, 2013) found that Spanish-accented people were assumed to be warmer and friendlier but less suitable for high-performance jobs.

These studies already examined the impact of non-native accentedness in the workplace but with a focus on US-American perspectives. Therefore, the present study concentrates on the Dutch population, with Spanish and German as foreign languages. This was decided upon because the Netherlands are a European country and are believed to reliably represent a European focus which would differ not only in stereotypes about, in this case, German and Spanish speakers, but thereby also in the attitudes towards those languages. Furthermore, English has become a major part of Dutch organisations and business reports are more often done in English (De Groot, 2008). This creates opportunities for more international staff as well. It might be beneficial for employers to be aware of the possible effects foreign accents can have in order to be able to make fair hiring decisions.

It would be also interesting to see if there is a significant difference in how non-native accented people evaluate other non-native accented people, especially because previous research has mostly focussed on how foreign accents are evaluated by English native speakers, primarily in the US. Furthermore, since people use accents to form in-groups and out-groups (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010), there might be a difference in how non-native accented people see their own accents in comparison to other non-native accented people's accents.

German as a language was chosen because the Netherlands are situated next to Germany and the Dutch are assumed to have frequent contact with the Germans, for example because of their close business relationship (DNHK, n.d.). Thus, their familiarity with the German language should be higher than with the Spanish language. Spanish was selected because previous studies found negative associations in this regard but these studies were conducted with American students. This poses two limitations. First of all, there seems to be a strong focus in accent research on stereotypes in the US but Europe seems to have been neglected in that sense. Furthermore, a sample of students is hard to transfer to the general population for several reasons, including missing experience in the workplace and fatigue through a high number of questionnaires and tests. This study uses participants from all ages with Dutch as their first language to find out if they have similar associations with Spanish-accented people as American students.

A study by Sliwa and Johansson (2012) examined, amongst other things, how listeners evaluate non-native English speakers. They based their research on the often-used dimensions of status, solidarity and dynamism. This study adapted these dimensions' sub-categories as compiled and used by Fuertes, Gottdiener, Martin, Gilbert & Giles (2012) who conducted a meta-analysis of 20 studies to examine the effect of accents (standard vs non-standard i.e. foreign) and found that foreign accents had a strong effect on status and dynamism and a moderate effect on solidarity but they also noted that research on this dimension has had varying results and sometimes did not show any effect.

It furthermore orientates itself according to Lambert's (1967) matched-guise technique, which is to date the most used technique in this context, also used by the before-mentioned studies by Deprez-Sims and Morris (2010, 2013), Hosoda, Nguyen and Stone-Romero (2012) and Hosoda & Stone-Romero (2010).

This study chose American English-accented speakers as control group, as research has shown that British English is mostly associated with school and may therefore be rated less favourably than American English (Van der Haagen, 1998). It was also decided to use standard accents for each language (in contrast to regional dialects), as a review by Gluszek

and Dovidio (2010) concluded standard accents to be more pleasant as they would be associated with upper class. They also referred to other studies which reasoned stronger accents to be evaluated more negatively (Nesdale & Rooney, 1996; Ryan, Carranza & Moffie, 1997). Therefore, this study aims at moderate accents to avoid too much variation in the data.

Research question

Based on previous research, this study's main research question will thus be:

RQ: To what extent does a non-native accent in English have a negative impact on a candidate's hiring success?

The research question will be attempted to answer by examining the following hypotheses:

H1: Status will be lower for German and Spanish than for American-accented speakers.

H2: Solidarity will be lower for German and Spanish than for American-accented speakers.

H3: Dynamism will be lower for German and Spanish than for American-accented speakers.

H4: Hiring success will be lower for German and Spanish than for American-accented speakers but will be higher for German than for Spanish-accented speakers.

H5: Comprehension will be lower for German and Spanish than for American-accented speakers but will be higher for German than for Spanish-accented speakers.

H6: Familiarity will be lower for German and Spanish than American-accented speakers but will be higher for German than for Spanish-accented speakers.

Methodology

Materials

The independent variable for this study was accent condition with the three levels German-accented English, Spanish-accented English, and American-accented English as a control group. The samples were recorded by native speakers, who were selected via convenience sampling from the researchers' environment according to the criteria of moderate accent strength and voice similarity. The Spanish speakers were from a Hispanic background, the German speakers from Germany and the American speakers from the United States. The na-

tive speakers were asked to record a pre-written text (see Appendix III) in which they portrayed a candidate presenting themselves in a job interview. Furthermore, it was decided that the speakers should be female in order to exclude the gender variable. Originally, there were nine speakers in total with three per accent condition. However, it was decided to use two speakers per accent condition to test whether there might be a preference for one of the two speakers. Therefore, a pre-test tested for the correctness of the speakers' assumed origin (i.e. Germany, Spain or any other Hispanic country, and the US), medium accent strength and similar voice characteristics for all speakers in order to rule out one per accent condition to achieve a greater chance of equality amongst speakers. This was achieved by consulting language experts from Radboud University who checked the coherence in the material. In the pre-test (see Appendix IV), 6 language experts from Radboud University evaluated three speakers per language condition on the variables of accent strength, native speaker (or American vs British English for the American speakers), pitch, pace and comprehension. They were also asked to indicate where they thought the speaker originated and most guessed correctly (89% for the German as well as for the American accent condition and 56% for the Spanish condition). The aim of the pre-test was to determine the two speakers per accent condition that were most similar and rule out the one that was different. A one-way analysis of variance showed a significant effect of speaker on accent strength ($F(8, 45) = 4.50, p < .001$), as well as on pace ($F(8, 45) = 3.79, p = .002$) and comprehension ($F(8, 45) = 8.39, p < .001$). The differences are shown in Table 1. The speakers who were ruled out eventually were German 2 due to slowest pace, Spanish 1 due to least comprehension and because it was least recognised as Spanish, and American 2. For the latter, there were no quantitative grounds to exclude this speaker. However, one of the language experts provided qualitative feedback saying that there were too many pauses in the audio sample.

Table 1 Means and standard deviations (between brackets) for the evaluation of speaker characteristics for the six speaker conditions (1 = very low, 7 = very high; for American/British 1 = British, 7 = American)

	German			Spanish			American		
1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	
<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	
(<i>SD</i>)	(<i>SD</i>)	(<i>SD</i>)	(<i>SD</i>)	(<i>SD</i>)	(<i>SD</i>)	(<i>SD</i>)	(<i>SD</i>)	(<i>SD</i>)	

Accent strength	3.83 (0.98)	4.33 (1.21)	3.50 (0.84)	4.67 (1.03)	4.33 (1.03)	5.00 (1.10)	3.67 (0.52)	3.67 (0.52)	4.17 (0.41)
Native speaker	3.00 (1.79)	2.17 (1.33)	2.17 (0.98)	1.67 (1.03)	3.17 (1.17)	1.83 (0.75)	-	-	-
American/British	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.50 (0.55)	6.83 (0.41)	5.83 (1.94)
Pitch	3.83 (0.98)	4.33 (1.21)	3.50 (0.84)	4.67 (1.03)	4.33 (1.03)	5.00 (1.10)	3.67 (0.52)	3.67 (0.52)	4.17 (0.41)
Pace	4.67 (1.21)	3.00 (1.26)	6.00 (0.63)	4.17 (0.98)	4.50 (1.05)	4.17 (0.98)	5.17 (0.98)	4.17 (1.17)	4.67 (0.82)
Comprehension	6.67 (0.52)	5.17 (1.60)	5.83 (0.98)	3.33 (1.75)	6.50 (0.55)	5.67 (1.03)	6.67 (0.52)	7.00 (0.00)	6.83 (0.41)

Deprez-Sims and Morris (2010, 2013) adapted their script from Howard and Ferris (1996). However, since the current study decides to use a much shorter script in favour of the participants' attention span, a new script was drafted altogether. It thereby aimed to be as neutral as possible to help the participants concentrate on the accent and perceived appearance of the speaker instead of actual professional qualifications. Therefore, the proposed script (see Appendix III) contained statements that would be expected from an ordinary interviewee. The proposed position was that of a junior marketing assistant. The speaker told a bit about her fictitious education and about her strengths and weaknesses. Occasional vocal cues (e.g. euh) were supposed to aid the speakers in presenting the text in a convincing manner. A fictitious CV was decided against as the script should not contain either names, or other information that might influence the participants' opinion of the candidate. Therefore, the participants had to answer the questions with very little information on the candidate to facilitate focus on the language factors. In the end, participants were assigned one speaker out of six who was chosen randomly by the questionnaire programme.

Subjects

After deleting incomplete responses, the sample consisted of 116 Dutch native speakers of which 38 were students (33%), 72 (62%) employed or self-employed and 6 (5%) unoccupied or retired. Participants were equally distributed across all conditions. Out of all participants, 36 (31%) were male and 80 (69%) were female, aged between 18 and 71 ($M = 35.03$ ($SD =$

14.79). The most frequent educational level participants had was HBO (34%), followed by secondary school (24%), Master's degree (14%) and MBO and Bachelor's degree (11%).

There was a difference in distribution regarding age ($F(2, 113) = 4.03, p = .020$). Participants in the Spanish condition ($M = 39.03, SD = 15.12$) were significantly older than those in the German condition ($p = .019$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 29.67, SD = 12.36$). Gender ($\chi^2(2) = 0.13, p = .936$), profession ($\chi^2(144) = 136.05, p = .669$) and education ($\chi^2(10) = 10.19, p = .424$) were all distributed equally across all conditions. Participants' experience with job interviews, as interviewer ($F(2, 113) < 1$) as well as as interviewee ($F(2, 113) < 1$), English proficiency, i.e. the participants' LexTALE score ($F(2, 113) = 2.14, p = .122$), personal nativeness ($F(2, 113) < 1$) and whether they sound more American than British in English ($F(2, 113) = 1.01, p = .345$), and attitude towards accents, i.e. importance of nativeness ($F(2, 113) < 1$), general liking ($F(2, 113) = 1.11, p = .334$) and preference of American English ($F(2, 113) < 1$) were also distributed equally across all conditions.

Design

The design of this study is a between-subjects design as there was one accent condition per participant, i.e. German, Spanish or American. In the pre-test, which was a within-subject design, there were nine speaker conditions split over the three accent conditions German, Spanish and American, from which remained two speakers per accent condition. The American accent condition served as a control group.

Instruments

Based on Sliwa and Johansson (2012) and Fuertes et al. (2012), there were 4 main variables measured with 7-point Likert scales for the evaluation of the candidate (see Appendix I). The participants were asked to indicate their agreement with each statements (i.e. 'completely disagree' – 'completely agree'). For status, the four statements were 'the speaker is ...' followed by 'intelligent', 'ambitious', 'confident' and 'competent'. For the variable solidarity, there was 'trustworthy', 'benevolent' 'similar to me' and 'attractive'. For the variable dynamism, there were the statements 'the speaker is active', 'lively', 'talkative' and 'enthusiastic'. For hiring success, there were three statements ('I think the speaker is suitable for the position', 'I would hire the speaker' and 'I would recommend the speaker').

Furthermore, there were two additional confounding variables based on Hendriks et al. (2018) that might have an effect on the main variables. They, as well, were measured with 7-point Likert scales. For perceived comprehension and familiarity, there was one statement for

each variable ('I found the speaker easy to understand', and two versions of 'I am familiar with the English accent of the speaker' for which there is a difference between the Dutch words 'bekend' and 'vertrouwd'). The reliability of all variables in terms of speaker evaluation was adequate or better (all α s > .73) with the exception of 'perceived comprehensibility' which comprised only one item ('perceived comprehensibility' will be as of now labelled as 'comprehension').

For the manipulation check, there were three variables measured with 7-point Likert scales: voice characteristics, accent strength and recognition of accent. The first two presented the participants once again with Likert scales: voice characteristics with three items ('the person's speed of speaking was pleasant', 'the speaker had a pleasant intonation' and 'the speaker had a pleasant voice'), accent strength with two items ('the speaker had a strong accent' and 'the speaker sounds like a native speaker'). For the analysis, the second item's values were reversed. For recognition of accent, the participants were presented with a drop-down list of countries to indicate the speaker's assumed origin. The reliability with regard to the manipulation check was adequate or better for all variables (all α s > .79).

The background variables were demographics (i.e. age, gender, profession, highest level of education completed and degree programme), experience of job interviews (two 7-point item Likert scales: 'I am experienced as a job interviewer' and 'I am experienced as a job interviewee'), English proficiency (as displayed on LexTALE, on a scale of 1 to 63 as well as two 7-point Likert scales: 'I sound like a native speaker when I speak English' and 'when I speak English, I), and attitude towards accents ('I think it is important for non-native speakers to sound native when speaking English', 'I like non-native English accents in general' and 'I prefer American English over British English'). For the second item, values were reversed. LexTALE, an online test offered by Radboud University, prompted the participants with a series of words of which they have to indicate whether they are, in this case, an English word or not. The test's accuracy has been tested and found sufficient for this purpose (Lemhöfer & Broersma, 2012). Attitude towards accents was also based on Hendriks et al. (2018). For the background variables, reliability was not adequate (all α s < .30). Therefore, those items were considered separately for the analysis while for all other variables for which reliability was found adequate or better composite means were calculated.

Before listening to the audio, the participants were asked to imagine themselves in a situation in which they would have to decide about whether an applicant will be hired or not. It is hereby important to remark that the questionnaire was in Dutch instead of in English. According to the anchor contraction effect (De Langhe et al., 2011), people display stronger

reactions when they fill in a questionnaire in their second language. Therefore, to prevent this effect, the English questionnaire of this study was translated by a native-Dutch speaker whereas the audio was in English.

Procedure

The procedure of the main study was adapted from Deprez-Sims and Morris (2010, 2013) and was likewise conducted online. Participants were asked to listen to an audio file of about 2 minutes and then answer some questions about it. The procedure took part via the online programme Qualtrics which allowed the participants to receive a random condition out of three, including the two speakers per condition. Participants took about 7 to 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire and were able to listen to the sample once in order to capture their initial and spontaneous impression.

The participants were chosen via convenience sample from Radboud University and the researchers' own private social groups, but also via social media (see Appendix II). The sample considered all ages and genders in order to refer back to the population. However, since it was believed that students might not take this study seriously or might be less willing to participate because of their university environment, a sample predominantly consisting of students was avoided as much as possible. Furthermore, having a sample consist only of students might have made it difficult to refer to the general population.

The participants did not receive a compensation for participating in the study but one of them had the chance to win a 30 EUR voucher for Bol.com via random selection out of those participants who gave their email address.

Statistical treatment

To answer the research question and test the hypotheses, a one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether the different accent conditions had an effect on the evaluation of the speaker and thus on the assumed hiring success, as well as to see whether any of the background variables (e.g. age, gender, education) made any difference in evaluation. Chi-square tests were used to test equal distribution of participant characteristics across all conditions and a t-test was used to check for differences between the two speakers per accent condition.

Results

Difference of speakers per accent condition

Since there were two speakers per accent condition in order to be able to rule one out later if they differed too much, a t-test has been conducted for each of the three accent conditions regarding the variables accent strength and voice characteristics in the manipulation check. An independent samples t-test showed a significant difference between the first American speaker and the second American speaker with regard to voice characteristics ($t(31.76) = 2.78, p = .009$). The first American speaker ($M = 5.73, SD = 0.88$) was evaluated more positively on voice characteristics than the second speaker ($M = 4.67, SD = 1.52$). There was also a significant difference between the first Spanish speaker and the second Spanish speaker with regard to familiarity ($t(35) = 2.13, p = .040$). The first Spanish speaker ($M = 4.59, SD = 1.36$) was seen as more familiar to the participants than the second Spanish speaker ($M = 3.55, SD = 1.57$).

An independent-samples t-test furthermore showed a significant difference between the first German speaker and the second German speaker with regard to status ($t(34) = 2.53, p = .016$), dynamism ($t(34) = 2.78, p = .009$) and voice characteristics ($t(31.87) = 5.55, p < .001$). The first German speaker was always rated lower than the second German speaker.

Since the differences between speakers were relatively marginal, it was decided to conduct the overall analysis with three accent conditions instead of six speaker conditions for the sake of clarity of the analyses.

Manipulation check

A chi-square test showed no significant relation between accent and country of origin ($\chi^2(2) = 3.18, p = .204$). As Table 2 shows with minimal differences, participants mostly guessed the German origin (61%), followed by the American origin (54%) and least frequently the Spanish origin (41%).

Table 2 Percentage of participants' correct guessing of the speakers' country of origin

	American		Spanish		German	
	<i>Count</i>	%	<i>Count</i>	%	<i>Count</i>	%
Correct	23a	53.5%	15a	40.5%	22a	61.1%
Incorrect	20a	46.5%	22s	59.5%	14a	38.9%

A one-way analysis of variance showed a significant effect of accent on voice characteristics ($F(2, 113) = 5.37, p = .006$). As can be seen in Table 3, voice characteristics were more positive for American-accented speakers ($M = 5.21, SD = 1.34$) than for German-accented speakers ($p < .004$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 4.2, SD = 1.28$). The American speakers were thus more pleasant to listen to than the German speakers.

Furthermore, there was a significant effect of accent on accent strength ($F(2, 113) = 69.73, p < .001$). Accent strength was lower for American-accented speakers ($M = 2.87, SD = 1.41$) than for Spanish ($p < .001$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 5.73, SD = 1.18$) and German-accented speakers ($p < .001$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 5.78, SD = 1.17$). Spanish and German-accented speakers were thought to have the same accent strength but American speakers were rated higher than the two.

Table 3 Means and standard deviation (in brackets) for the evaluation of speaker characteristics for the three accent conditions (1 = very low, 7 = very high) for voice characteristics and accent strength

	American	Spanish	German
	$n = 43$	$n = 37$	$n = 36$
	$M (SD)$	$M (SD)$	$M (SD)$
Voice characteristics	5.21 (1.34)	4.72 (1.20)	4.27 (1.28)
Accent strength	2.87 (1.41)	5.73 (1.18)	4.69 (1.88)

Evaluation of candidates

A one-way analysis of variance showed a significant effect of accent on status ($F(2, 113) = 6.18, p = .003$). As table 4 shows, status was lower for Spanish-accented speakers ($M = 5.11, SD = 1.34$) than for American-accented speakers ($p = .033$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 5.71, SD = 0.78$). The American condition was also higher compared to German-accented speakers ($p = .004$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 4.94, SD = 0.91$). American speakers were thus rated highest in terms of, for example, intelligence and competence and German and Spanish speakers lowest.

A one-way analysis of variance showed no significant effect of accent on solidarity ($F(2, 113) < 1, p = .444$) but a significant effect of accent on dynamism ($F(2, 113) = 16.14, p < .001$). Dynamism was higher for American-accented speakers ($M = 5.64, SD = 1.06$) than for German-accented speakers ($p < .001$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 4.01, SD = 1.43$). Span-

ish-accented speakers were also rated higher than German-accented speakers ($p = .006$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 4.95$, $SD = 1.34$). Thus, even though all speakers were rated about the same on, for example, trustworthiness or attractiveness, the American and Spanish speakers were considered most dynamic while German speakers were considered least dynamic.

A one-way analysis of variance showed a significant effect of accent on hiring success ($F(2, 113) = 3.47$, $p = .034$). While the post hoc test showed no significant difference, there was a significant effect of speaker on hiring success ($F(5, 110) = 2.51$, $p = .034$). The first American speaker was more likely to be hired ($M = 5.15$, $SD = 1.32$) than the first German speaker ($p = .044$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.93$). As Table 5 illustrates, participants thought the first American speaker was most suitable for the position whereas the first German speaker was least suitable.

Confounding variables

Table 5 also shows the results of the variables comprehension and familiarity. A one-way analysis of variance showed a significant effect of accent on comprehension ($F(2, 113) = 7.65$, $p = .001$). American speakers ($M = 6.12$, $SD = 1.18$) were better to understand than both Spanish ($p = .004$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.37$) and German speakers ($p = .003$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 5.03$, $SD = 1.73$).

A one-way analysis of variance showed a significant effect of accent on familiarity ($F(2, 113) = 16.05$, $p < .001$). Familiarity was higher for American-accented speakers ($M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.24$) than for Spanish ($p < .001$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 4.03$, $SD = 1.55$) and German-accented speakers ($p = .021$, Bonferroni correction, $M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.52$). It was also higher for German than for Spanish-accented speakers ($p = .020$, Bonferroni correction). Thus, participants were most familiar with hearing the American accent but were also more familiar with German than with Spanish.

Table 4 Means and standard deviation (in brackets) for the evaluation of speaker characteristics for the three accent conditions (1 = very low, 7 = very high) for status, solidarity, dynamism, hiring success, comprehension and familiarity

American		Spanish		German	
$n = 43$		$n = 37$		$n = 36$	
M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)

Status	5.71	(0.78)	5.11	(1.34)	4.94	(0.91)
Solidarity	4.87	(1.00)	4.71	(1.01)	4.59	(0.98)
Dynamism	5.64	(1.06)	4.95	(1.34)	4.00	(1.43)
Hiring success	4.97	(1.19)	4.38	(1.35)	4.32	(1.17)
Comprehension	6.12	(1.18)	5.05	(1.37)	5.03	(1.73)
Familiarity	5.74	(1.24)	4.03	(1.55)	4.90	(1.26)

Table 5 Means and standard deviation (in brackets) for the evaluation of speaker characteristics for the six speaker conditions (1 = very low, 7 = very high) for hiring success

American		Spanish		German	
1	2	1	2	1	2
<i>n</i> = 22	<i>n</i> = 21	<i>n</i> = 17	<i>n</i> = 20	<i>n</i> = 19	<i>n</i> = 17
<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
5.15 (1.32)	4.78 (1.04)	4.65 (1.20)	4.15 (1.45)	4.00 (0.93)	4.69 (1.22)

Conclusion and discussion

This study's purpose was to examine the impact of foreign accents in English on hiring success, with special focus on the evaluation of native and non-native English speakers by non-native speakers. Of further importance was the European perspective achieved by using Dutch participants in addition to previous studies conducted in the United States.

For the main evaluation of the speakers, participants rated German and Spanish speakers lowest and American speakers highest on status, confirming H1. This is in line with the findings of Hosoda, Nguyen and Stone-Romero (2012) as well as with those of Deprez-Sims and Morris (2010, 2013). Both found Spanish speakers to be evaluated high on warmth and low on competence compared to American native speakers of English. The current study confirms this by showing Spanish speakers being evaluated lower on status than American speakers.

In contrast to those previous studies by Hosoda et al. (2012) and Deprez-Sims and Morris (2012, 2013), the current study did not find any meaningful differences in terms of solidarity. In contrast to this, Fuertes et al. (2011) found a significant effect of foreign accent-ness on solidarity but noted also that other studies did not. Therefore, there seems to be

another factor or indeed several factors confounding the results, making the dimension of solidarity slightly more complex than previously assumed.

German speakers were evaluated as least dynamic out of the three while American and Spanish speakers did not differ significantly, confirming H3. This evaluation might have been due to the stereotype of being serious associated with Germans (Schroll-Machl, 2016) which might lead people to assume them effective but nevertheless formal and stiff. Another possible explanation might be the difference in dynamism between the two German speakers as determined in the pre-test. As one speaker was evaluated considerably lower than the other, this might have influenced the overall results. However, it was also hypothesised that American speakers would be evaluated higher than both German and Spanish speakers which was not the case as American and Spanish speakers were evaluated the same. Thus, H3 can only be partially confirmed.

Hiring success did not yield clear results (H4). Even though there was no significant difference between the three different accents, there were differences in terms of their evaluation (as mentioned above). This was also the case for the study conducted by Deprez-Sims and Morris (2013). Furthermore, there were differences between the different speakers as well: the first German speaker received a lower hiring recommendation than the first American speaker. This difference might as well be ascribed to the fact that, as shown in the pre-test, both American and German speakers differed on some of the dimensions. The German speaker was rated more negatively whereas the American speaker was rated more positively. Therefore, H4 was contradicted.

The manipulation check showed a contrast to the study by Hendriks et al. (2018) as only about half of the current's study's participants were able to correctly determine the speakers' country of origin. There were no differences between the three in that sense, but participants nevertheless had difficulties naming the correct country. There were also significant differences between the speakers in terms of voice characteristics and accent strength. Germans were rated as less pleasant to listen to than Americans, and both Spanish and German speakers were seen to have a stronger accent than Americans.

Out of all three speakers, German and Spanish speakers were understood least, confirming H5. This goes in accordance with the fact that they were evaluated to have the highest accent strength. The study by Hendriks et al. (2018) already established this link in a teaching context and the current study shows that this holds also true in other contexts. Furthermore, the American speakers were rated as most familiar (H6) which might have also increased comprehension – something previously theorised by Varonis and Gass (1982). However,

German and Spanish speakers were rated as equally comprehensible even though participants were more familiar with the German accent. The connection between comprehension and familiarity might thus be more complex than assumed as it also includes other factors like, for example, accent strength. H6 can therefore be only partially confirmed.

In an attempt to answer this study's research question, it can be said that there most probably is a bias against foreign-accented people. German and Spanish speakers were always evaluated worse than American speakers and even though the dimension of hiring success did not yield clear results, it is apparent that factors such as perceived status, solidarity or dynamism have an effect on the hireability of a candidate, even though the bias might not be conscious.

Limitations

This study also has several limitations that became apparent during the execution and the analysis. First of all, during the pre-test, it was noticeable that the speakers recording the audio samples varied in their ability to read aloud the given text with credibility and authenticity. Since this was not a variable on which the language experts were asked to evaluate the speakers, it was not possible to rule them out based on this factor. Especially one of the German speakers was reading in a very monotonous voice but was selected nevertheless because she scored high on the designated variables. However, in the later analysis, this speaker differed significantly from the other speakers on several variables. It should be noted at this point that the manipulation check showed differences in voice characteristics which might have also affected the participants' perception of them.

Another limitation was that the text read by the speakers was very simple and did not include many qualities a candidate would normally accentuate in a job interview. This might have prompted participants to guess the aim of this study, thus affecting the results. Furthermore, the speakers were only female. This was to rule out the additional variable of gender to facilitate analysis but there might very well be a difference in perception and evaluation of accents according to gender. The current study's participants were also predominantly female – more than twice as much as the male part – which might have had an effect on the overall results as well.

Another possible issue was that a lot of participants did not finish filling in the questionnaire. This might have had several reasons, the most probable being the length of the survey as well as the inconvenience of having to listen to several audios. Finally, the country of origin has not always been guessed correctly by participants. As this study's assumptions are

based on stereotypes associated with certain countries and therefore the respective language, a misinterpretation of these countries might have led to different stereotypes. For example, Portugal might be associated with different stereotypes than Spain.

Suggestions for future research

Future research offers many possibilities. First of all, based on the limitations mentioned above, the study might be replicated with professional actors providing the audio samples and with a text more authentic. This would make the samples more realistic and would exclude factors like, for example, lack of enthusiasm or stiff reading. The sample might also include both genders to check for variance between them. Furthermore, the study might be replicated with a bigger sample so that unexpected dropouts do not outbalance the distribution. A possibility then would also be to exclude those participants that do not guess the country of origin correctly or differ too much in terms of, for example accent strength and voice characteristics, thereby examining this effect to a greater extent.

This study did not find many differences between the German and Spanish condition. It might be interesting to examine a larger variety of foreign-accented speakers from more countries to closer look at differences between non-native speakers of English, regardless of their comparison to native speakers. In terms of study focus, it might also be interesting to see whether different dialects, for example in German, might impact the overall results. This study focussed on German speakers from Germany and American speakers from the United States. The Spanish sample, however, was from a Hispanic background and the country of origin was not specified. Accents from Spain might differ from, for example, accents from Mexico or Colombia, and there might be regional differences as well (e.g. Catalonia as compared to the rest of Spain). Future research might be stricter with the speakers' origin and split the sample into different countries and/or regions. It was furthermore established that stereotypes can affect, for example, a person's perceived comprehension (Hosoda & Stone-Romero, 2010). However, it might be interesting to see of what nature these stereotypes precisely are. Additionally, comparing perceived and actual comprehension might yield interesting insights.

Finally, this study only focussed on a very general, academic job position. It might be interesting to see how different positions differ in their stereotypes. As mentioned before, Spanish speakers are evaluated higher in terms of warmth and German speakers in terms of efficiency but low on the respective other (Hosoda, Nguyen & Stone-Romero, 2012; Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010, 2013). This might be different for other jobs, for example teaching.

Contribution

This study might give managers of international organisations an insight into the possibility of bias which might affect their hiring decision when evaluating foreign-accented candidates. HR might also offer workshops to raise awareness of this issue. At the same time, it is important to note that bias does not only affect native English speakers (or in fact native speakers of other languages) but non-native speakers might also be biased against other non-native speakers. Therefore, training should pay attention to how both sides evaluate each other and raise awareness to avoid conscious and subconscious discrimination, not only in the hiring process but in all parts of the workplace.

Literature

- Canally, C., & Timothy, D. J. (2007). Perceived constraints to travel across the US-Mexico border among American university students. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 9, 423-437.
- De Groot, E. (2008). *English annual reports in Europe: A study on the identification and reception of genre characteristics in multimodal annual reports originating in the Netherlands and in the United Kingdom*. Utrecht: LOT.
- De Langhe, B., Puntoni, S., Fernandes, D., & Van Osselaer, S. M. (2011). The anchor contraction effect in international marketing research. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 48, pp. 336-380.
- Deprez-Sims, A.-S., & Morris, S. B. (2010). Accents in the workplace: their effects during a job interview. *International Journal of Psychology*, 45(6), 417-426.
- Deprez-Sims, A.-S., & Morris, S. B. (2013). The effect of non-native accents on the evaluation of applicants during an employment interview: the development of a path model. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 21(4), 355-367.
- DNHK. (n.d.). *Marktinformationen*. Retrieved June 7, 2019, from DNHK: <https://www.dnhk.org/beratung/marktinformationen/>
- Fuertes, J. N., Gottdiener, W. H., Martin, H., Gilbert, T. C., & Giles, H. (2012). A meta-analysis of the effects of speakers' accents on interpersonal evaluations. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 42, 120-133.
- 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.
- Goodman, S., & Graddol, D. (1996). *Redesigning English. New texts, new identities*. London: Routledge.
- Hendriks, B., van Meurs, F., & Hogervorst, N. (2016). Effects of degree of accentedness in lecturers' Dutch-English pronunciation on Dutch students' attitudes and perceptions of comprehensibility. *Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5(1), pp. 1-17.
- Hendriks, B., van Meurs, F., & Reimer, A.-K. (2018). The evaluation of lecturers' nonnative-accented English: Dutch and German students' evaluations of different degrees of Dutch-accented and German-accented English of lecturers in higher education. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 34, pp. 28-45.
- Hosoda, M., & Stone-Romero, E. (2010). The effects of foreign accents on employment-related decisions. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 25(2), 113-132.

- Hosoda, M., Nguyen, L. T., & Stone-Romero, E. F. (2012). The effect of Hispanic accents on employment decisions. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 27(4), 347-364.
- Howard, J. L., & Ferris, G. R. (1996). The employment interview context: social and situational influences on interviewer decisions. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 26, 112-136.
- Howard, J. L., & Ferris, G. R. (1996). The employment interview context: Social and situational influences on interviewer decisions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 26, pp. 112-136.
- Lambert, W. E. (1967). A social psychology of bilingualism. *Journal of Social Issues*, 23, pp. 91-109.
- Lemhöfer, K., & Broersma, M. (2012). Introducing LexTALE: A quick and valid lexical test for advanced learners of English. *Behavioural Research Methods*, 44(2), pp. 325-343.
- Lindemann, S. (2002). Listening with an attitude: A model of native-speaker comprehension of non-native speakers in the United States. *Language in Society*, 31, pp. 419-441.
- Lindemann, S. (2003). Koreans, Chinese or Indians? Attitudes and ideologies about non-native English speakers in the United States. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 7(3), pp. 348-364.
- Mauranen, A. (2006). Signaling and preventing misunderstanding in English as lingua franca communication. *International Journal of Sociology of Language*, 177, pp. 123-150.
- McLuhan, M., & Fiore, Q. (1997). *War and Peace in the Global Village*. Wired Books, Incorporated.
- Moyer, A. (2007). Do language attitudes determine accent? A study of bilinguals in the USA. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 28(6), pp. 502-518.
- Nesdale, D., & Rooney, R. (1996). Evaluations and stereotyping of accented speakers by pre-adolescent children. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 15(2), pp. 133-154.
- Norton, B. (2013). Identity and second language acquisition. *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*.
- Russo, M., Islam, G., & Koyuncu, B. (2016). Non-native accents and stigma: how self-fulfilling prophecies can affect career outcomes. *Human Resource Management Review*.
- Ryan, E. B., Miguel, A. C., & Moffie, R. W. (1977). Reactions toward varying degrees of accentedness in the speech of Spanish-English bilinguals. *Language and Speech*, 20(3), pp. 267-273.

- Schroll-Machl, S. (2016). *Doing Business with Germans. Their Perception, Our Perception*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG.
- Sliwa, M., & Johansson, M. (2014). How non-native English-speaking staff are evaluated in linguistically diverse organizations: a sociolinguistic perspective. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 45, 1133-1151.
- Tajfel, H., Billig, M. G., & Bundy, R. P. (1971). Social categorisation and intergroup behaviour. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 1(2), pp. 149-178.
- UN. (2017). *International Migration Report*. New York: United Nations.
- van der Haagen, M. (1998). Caught between norms: the English pronunciation of Dutch learners. *The Hague: Holland Academic Graphics*, p. 137.
- Van Vaerenbergh, Y., & Holmqvist, J. (2013). Speak my language if you want my money. Service language's influence on consumer tipping behavior. *European Journal of Marketing*, 47(8), pp. 1276-1292.
- Varonis, E. M., & Gass, S. (1982). The comprehensibility of non-native speech. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 4(2), pp. 114-136.

Appendix

I. Questionnaire

I. Dutch translation

Evaluation of the candidate:

Based on Giles and Billings (2004), Mulac, Hanley and Prigge (1974), and Zahn and Hopper (1985) as cited by Śliwa and Johansson (2014).

1. Status

Intelligentie

De spreker is intelligent.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

Ambitie

De spreker is ambitieus.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

Zelfverzekerd

De spreker is zelfverzekerd

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

Competentie

De spreker is competent.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

2. Solidariteit

Betrouwbaarheid

De spreker is betrouwbaar.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

Welwillendheid

De spreker is welwillend.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

Gelijkheid

De spreker lijkt op mij.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

Aantrekkelijkheid

De spreker is aantrekkelijk.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

3. Dynamisme

Niveau van activiteit

De spreker is actief.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

Levendig

De spreker is levendig.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

Spraakzaamheid

De spreker is spraakzaam.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

Enthousiasme

De spreker is enthousiast.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

4. Werving succes

De spreker is geschikt voor de positie.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

Ik zou de spreker aannemen.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

Ik zou de spreker aanraden.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

5. Waargenomen begrip

Ik vond de spreker makkelijk te verstaan.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

6. Bekendheid

Ik ben bekend met het Engelse accent van de spreker.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

Ik ben vertrouwd met het Engelse accent van de spreker.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

2. Manipulatie check

2.1 Stem eigenschappen:

De spreek snelheid van de spreker was aangenaam.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

De intonatie van de spreker was aangenaam.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

De stem van de spreker was aangenaam.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

2.2 Accent sterkte:

De spreker had een sterk buitenlands accent in het Engels.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

De spreker klinkt als een moedertaalspreker van Engels.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Volledig mee oneens Volledig mee eens

2.3 Herkenning van het accent:

Waar komt de spreker vandaan? Kies uit de lijst:

3. Achtergrond variabelen:

3.1 Demografische

Leeftijd:

Geslacht:

Beroep:

Hoogst afgeronde opleidingsniveau:

Middelbare school

- MBO
- HBO
- WO bachelor
- WO master

Studierichting:

3.2 Ervaring met sollicitaties

Ik heb ervaring met het afnemen van sollicitaties.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

Ik heb ervaring als sollicitant.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

3.3 Engels kennis

Engels vaardigheid zoals weergegeven op LexTALE:

.....

Ik klink als een moedertaalspreker als ik Engels spreek.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

Als ik Engels spreek, heb ik meer een Amerikaans Engels dan Brits Engels accent.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

3.4 Mening over accenten

Het is belangrijk om te klinken als een moedertaalspreker in het Engels.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

Ik vind buitenlands-klinkende Engelse accenten in het algemeen leuk.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

Ik geef de voorkeur aan Amerikaans Engels boven Brits Engels.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Volledig mee oneens				Volledig mee eens		

II. English original

Pretest

Voice characteristics

The person's speed of speaking was pleasant.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

The speaker had a pleasant intonation.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

The speaker had a pleasant voice.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

Accent Strength:

The person had a strong foreign accent.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

The speaker sounds like a native speaker

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

Recognition of accent

Where is the speaker from? Choose from list

...

Evaluation of the candidate

Based on Giles and Billings (2004), Mulac, Hanley and Prigge (1974), and Zahn and Hopper (1985) as cited by Śliwa and Johansson (2014).

1. Status

Intelligence

The speaker is intelligent.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

Ambition

The speaker is ambitious.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

Confidence

The speaker is confident.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

Competence

The speaker is competent.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

2. Solidarity

Trustworthiness

The speaker is trustworthy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

Benevolence

The speaker is benevolent.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

Similarity

The speaker is similar to me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

Attractiveness

The speaker is attractive.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

3. Dynamism

Level of activity

The speaker is active.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

Liveliness

The speaker is lively.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

Talkativeness

The speaker is talkative.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

Enthusiasm

The speaker is enthusiastic.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

4. Hiring success

I think the speaker is suitable for the position.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

I would hire the speaker.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

I would recommend to hire the speaker,

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

5. Perceived Comprehension

I found the speaker easy to understand.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

6. Familiarity

I am very familiar (bekend = acquainted) with the English accent of the speaker.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

I am very familiar (vertrouwd = close) with the English accent of the speaker.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Completely disagree

Completely agree

2. Manipulation check

2.1 Voice characteristics:

The person's speed of speaking was pleasant.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Completely disagree

Completely agree

The speaker had a pleasant intonation.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Completely disagree

Completely agree

The speaker had a pleasant voice.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Completely disagree

Completely agree

2.2 Accent Strength:

The speaker had a strong accent.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Completely disagree

Completely agree

The speaker sounds like a native speaker

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Completely disagree

Completely agree

2.3 Recognition of accent:

Where is the speaker from? Choose from list

...

3. Background variables:

3.1 Demographics

Age:

Gender:

Profession:

Highest level of education completed:

- High school
- MBO
- HBO
- WO bachelor
- WO master

Degree programme:

3.2 Experience job interviews

I am experienced as a job interviewer.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Completely disagree Completely agree

I am experienced as a job interviewee.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Completely disagree Completely agree

3.3 English proficiency

English proficiency as displayed on LexTALE:

.....

I sound like a native speaker when I speak English.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Completely disagree Completely agree

When I speak English, I sound more American English than British English.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Completely disagree Completely agree

3.4 Attitude towards accents

I think it is important for non-native speakers to sound native when speaking English.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

I like non-native English accents in general.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

I prefer American English over British English.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

II. Introduction text

Dutch original

Beste deelnemer,

Allereerst willen wij u bedanken voor uw deelname aan dit onderzoek. Wij zijn een groepje van 6 studenten in de richting van International Business Communication aan de Radboud Universiteit te Nijmegen. Op dit moment zijn we bezig met het schrijven van onze scriptie waarin we onderzoek doen naar sollicitaties in interculturele context.

U krijgt een fragment te horen uit een sollicitatiegesprek waarin de sollicitant aan het woord is, gevolgd door een aantal stellingen waarmee we u vragen de sollicitant te evalueren als zijnde u de werkgever bent. Het onderzoek zal ongeveer 10-15 minuten van uw tijd in beslag nemen. Er zal betrouwbaar met uw gegevens worden omgegaan en de resultaten worden volledig anoniem verwerkt. We willen er u op wijzen dat u op elk gewenst moment kunt stoppen met het onderzoek.

Mocht u nog vragen of opmerkingen hebben over het onderzoek, kunt u contact opnemen met i.faassen@student.ru.nl.

Nogmaals hartelijk dank voor uw deelname aan dit onderzoek.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Celine, Vera, Carolijn, Camila, Nieke en Iris

English translation

Dear participant,

First of all we want to thank you for participating in this study. We are a group of 6 students in the direction of International Business Communication at Radboud University in Nijmegen. We are currently writing our thesis in which we conduct research about applications in an intercultural context.

You will hear an excerpt from a job interview in which the applicant is speaking, followed by a number of statements with which we ask you to evaluate the applicant as the employer. The investigation will take approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. Your data will be treated reliably and the results will be processed completely anonymously. We would like to point out that you can stop the questionnaire at any time.

If you have any questions or comments about the research, please contact i.faassen@student.ru.nl.

Thank you again for participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Celine, Vera, Carolijn, Camila, Nieke and Iris

III. Script for pre-test

Well, as you probably can see, I finished school five years ago and immediately started university. I followed a programme in Communication science in which I graduated with a bachelor's degree and afterwards I did an internship in that area with a larger organisation. And, well, now I'm on the lookout for a job to get more experience and to further develop myself. I already learned a lot during my study, especially about marketing, corporate communication, and intercultural communication, all those sorts of things.

A little about myself ... I enjoy working with other people a lot. You might say I'm a teamplayer but I can do perfectly fine on my own as well, that's not a problem. My internship has taught me about responsibility and I was actually surprised how ambitious I can be. That doesn't mean I don't care about my colleagues, though. I tend to get along quite well with everyone I come across.

If I had to describe myself in three words, I'd probably say enthusiastic, trustworthy and open-minded. I think I know pretty well where my limits are so I can use that .and also push myself a little further. And whenever I meet a dead end, I try other ways to come up with a solution. That's my creative side. I think that's important ... to think outside the box.

So I think I would be a perfect fit for the position of junior marketing assistant in your organisation. I did a little research and so far I like what I read about you, your values, goals, what you do in general ... I like it a lot and I think I would be a good match.

IV Pre-test questionnaire

Expert instructions

We are currently examining the effects of a foreign accent in English on hiring success. For this purpose, we will present our participants three different accent conditions they will listen to. In order to find reliable samples, we are asking you to listen to three of each of those conditions of which we will rule out one. You will be listening to all three samples and choose the one you would rule out by answering the questionnaire. The foreign accents should be moderate, which means that they are comprehensible, but it is evident from which country they are.

Questionnaire for German and Spanish speakers

1. Where do you think the speaker is from? (open question)

2. Accent Strength

The speaker had a strong foreign accent.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

The speaker sounds like a native speaker

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree				Completely agree		

3. Voice Pitch

The speaker's pitch was

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Low			High			

4. Voice Speed:

The speaker was speaking

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Slowly				Fast		

Questionnaire for American speakers

1. Where do you think the speaker is from? (open question)

2. Accent Strength

The speaker is a native speaker.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely disagree					Completely agree	

3. Voice Pitch

The speaker's pitch was

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Low			High			

4. Voice Speed

The speaker was speaking

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Slowly			Fast			

5. Accent

The accent was more

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
British			American			