

Bachelor Thesis

Hiring by Sound: The Role of Recruiter Personality Traits on Accent Evaluations and Suitability for the Job



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Abstract

This study examined how the personality traits of recruiters—specifically extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness—impacted their assessment of applicants' accents in hiring decisions. 65 Dutch-speaking human resource professionals participated in the experiment by listening to audio fragments of candidates speaking either with a British-English or a Dutch-English accent. Participants then rated the candidates on perceived status, affect, dynamics, and suitability for the job. The personality traits were measured using the HEXACO-60 questionnaire focusing on extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness. Results showed that the British-English accent was evaluated higher in terms of status and suitability compared to the Dutch-English accent. In contrast, recruiters with greater levels of extraversion, openness to experience and agreeableness did not show significant preference for one accent over the other in terms of perceived suitability, suggesting that other factors, such as job type and accent familiarity, may mediate these decisions. Overall, this study contributed to an understanding of how personality traits influence accent-based bias in recruitment processes and sheds light on how recruiters' preferences may affect hiring outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

The rise of globalization has significantly increased migration. More people are moving to other countries in search of diverse opportunities and improved job prospects (Czaika & de Haas, 2014). Globalization has established a need for a global language to promote effective communication and break down language and cultural barriers. Due to its widespread use, English has emerged as a predominant global language. Knowing English, in addition to one's native language, has become increasingly important (Smokotin et al., 2014). As the use of English as a worldwide lingua franca have risen, the range of accents within the English-speaking community has also grown (Marlina & Zu, 2018). People from different linguistic backgrounds incorporate their native phonetic and intonational patterns into their English speech, resulting in a diverse array of accents (Fuertes et al., 2012). As workplaces become more global, organizations are increasingly hiring individuals whose accents may distinguish them from the local workforce (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010). Therefore, it is critical to understand how accents affect the workplace, as they can potentially lead to employment discrimination (Hideg, Shen & Koval, 2024).

According to Fuertes et al. (2012), an accent serves as a type of auditory information that conveys details such as the speaker's national origin. There are currently more non-native speakers (NNS) of English than native speakers (NS), leading to significant changes in the roles and functions of English across various regions of the world (Kaur & Raman, 2014). As the number of English speakers has grown over the world, NNS have also contributed to the emergence of different varieties of English, reflecting fundamental linguistic difference (Leyi, 2020). Nejjari et al. (2012) performed research into the reactions of NS of British English (BrE) compared to Dutch-accented English pronunciations. Dutch speakers of English often have a unique accent that incorporates features from both British and American pronunciations while maintaining elements of their Dutch phonology. Some of the most noticeable traits include r-coloring, devoicing of final consonants, th-stopping, and the absence of a distinction between the sounds /e/ and /æ/ (Collins & Mees, 2003). These linguistic variations in accents, particularly between native and non-native English speakers, highlight the importance of understanding how accents influence perceptions (Richterova, 2013).

People often draw conclusions about a speaker's background based on their accent, shaping judgements about their background, competence, and suitability for a role (Fuertes et al. (2012). However, beyond the accent itself, the personality traits of recruiters also play a

pivotal role in decision-making processes (McGuinness, 2016). Personality traits represent people's distinct patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours (Diener & Lucas, 2025). The Big Five model, commonly referred to as OCEAN, represents a psychological framework outlining five general dimensions of personality: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (Cherry, 2023). For the purpose of this study, the focus is on three specific dimensions of the Big Five model: Openness to Experience, Extraversion, and Agreeableness.

Openness to Experience encompasses traits such as an active imagination, awareness of inner feelings, a preference for variety, intellectual curiosity, and independent judgements (Breuer et al., 2023). Individuals who score low on Openness to Experience are typically more conventional in their behavior and hold conservative views. They favor familiar situations over new experiences. In contradiction to the aforementioned, those who score high on Openness to Experience are generally more receptive to diversity (Soto, 2018). This may be attributed to their inclination to explore various perspectives and experiences, including the cultural backgrounds of others (Salter et al., 2021).

Extraversion encompasses traits such as sociability, assertiveness, activity, and talkativeness. People who score high on Extraversion enjoy being in the company of others, actively out social connections, and find stimulation in interactions with people. They often express themselves as open and enthusiastic (Breuer et al., 2023). It is important to note that extraversion does not inherently ensure an open attitude toward diversity. While extraverts are naturally inclined toward openness and social engagement, their attitudes toward diversity are influenced by personal beliefs, upbringing, and individual experiences (Dodson, 2023).

Agreeableness is also referred to as friendliness in the Big Five personality test. This is the extent to which an individual is accommodating, tolerant, and helpful (Ashton & Lee, 2009). Research has indicated that there is a positive relationship between Agreeableness and attitudes toward diversity, particularly in the context of workplace attitudes (Lall-Trail et al., 2021). This implies that people who score high on Agreeableness may be more inclined to care for and empathize with those who are different from themselves (Salter et al., 2021).

The Big Five personality traits are all relevant for studies on accentedness. Individuals with a high level of Openness to Experience tend to be more accepting of different accents because they are curious about and appreciate new experiences and viewpoints (Salter et al., 2021). Extraverts, while outgoing, may not be naturally more accepting of different accents; their level of acceptance is more likely influenced by their personal views and experiences

(Dodson, 2023). Individuals who score high on Agreeableness are more likely to be empathic and accommodating, which reduces prejudice against non-standard accents (Salter et al., 2021). Understanding these personality traits are important, as they affect decision-making processes (McGuinness, 2016).

While a lot of research has been performed on employment discrimination and accentedness (Adank et al., 2013; Gluszek et al., (2010); Lippi-Green, 1994; Chakraborty, 2017), there is a remarkable lack of research on the impact of recruiters' personality traits on hiring decisions, particularly in the context of different accents (Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010; Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010; Hansen et al., 2016; Hansen et al., 2014). Existing literature often focuses on candidate characteristics or broader biases but neglects to explore the role of individual differences among recruiters, such as their personality traits, in shaping perceptions of candidates with non-standard accents (Pandey & Ganatra, 2024). This gap is important because understanding how individual differences among recruiters contribute to accent-based discrimination could provide valuable insights for improving workplace diversity and fairness in hiring practices (Rosales et al., 2022). Addressing this gap could lead to more effective training programs and recruitment strategies aimed at reducing accent-related biases in the selection process. Building upon the theoretical framework and the identified gaps in the literature, this study seeks to address the following research question:

RQ: To what extent does a recruiter's personality affect their evaluation of a candidate's accent in British-English versus Dutch-English during the initial screening phase, and how does this influence the candidate's perceived suitability for the role?

Research shows that extraverted individuals tend to enjoy social interactions and feel comfortable engaging with others (Naidu et al., 2022). Because they are more likely to communicate openly, these recruiters may respond more positively to candidates with a Dutch-English accent. On the other hand, recruiters who are less extraverted might struggle to connect with diverse accents, resulting in less favorable evaluations of candidates with a Dutch-English accent (Dodson, 2023). Thus, we expect that those with higher extraversion will rate Dutch-English candidates more favorably than British-English candidates.

H1: Recruiters with higher levels of extraversion rate candidates with a Dutch-English accent more favorably than those with a British-English accent, compared to recruiters with lower levels of extraversion.

People who score high on openness to experience are generally more curious and accepting of different cultures and ideas (Salter et al., 2021). These recruiters are likely to appreciate the diversity that comes with different accents. In contrast, recruiters who are less

open may show bias against candidates with a Dutch-English accent, favoring more conventional norms instead (Han & Pistole, 2017). Therefore, we expect that those with higher levels of openness will view candidates with a Dutch-English accent more positively, as it aligns with their appreciation for cultural variety

H2: Recruiters with higher levels of openness to experience rate candidates with a British-English accent more favorably than those with a Dutch-English accent, compared to recruiters with lower levels of openness to experience.

Research indicates that individuals who score high on agreeableness are often more empathetic and understanding towards others (Ashton & Lee, 2009). This trait makes them more likely to appreciate the unique backgrounds that come with different accents (Lall-Trail et al., 2021). Therefore, we believe that recruiters who score high on agreeableness will be more inclined to favor candidates with a Dutch-English accent compared to those with lower levels of agreeableness. Their natural tendency to empathize with diverse backgrounds can promote a more inclusive hiring process.

H3: A higher level of agreeableness correlates with a greater likelihood of hiring candidates with diverse accents.

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology for this study examining to what extent a recruiter's personality affect their evaluation of a candidate's accent in British-English versus Dutch-English during.

respondents

The experiment initially included 106 Dutch-speaking recruiters. The respondents were selected through targeted recruitment from the human resource industry in the Netherlands. All respondents were proficient in English, as they were required to listen and assess candidates speaking with both a British-English accent and a Dutch-English accent. Of the original sample, 33 participants were excluded because their data was inaccessible due to a Qualtrics error, and 8 were removed for providing incomplete responses. As a result, 65 participants were included in the analysis.

The participants' ages ranged from 21 to 62 years ($M = 30$, $SD = 7.6$). Of the 65 respondents, 30 (46.2%) identified as male, 34 (52.3%) identified as female, and 1 respondent (1.5%) preferred not to disclose their gender. In terms of educational attainment, four

respondents (6.2%) had completed high school, eight respondents (12.3%) had completed vocational education, 31 respondents (47.7%) had completed higher professional education, and 22 respondents (33.8%) had completed university education. A total of 32 participants (49.2%) were exposed to the Dutch-English accent, while 33 participants (50.8%) were exposed to the British-English accent.

materials

As stimulus we used two audio recordings. Each recording lasted 30 seconds and featured the same speaker, a native Dutch-speaker, who presented identical qualifications and background information while speaking in two different accents: clip 'A' included the British-English accent, and clip 'B' included the Dutch-English accent. The content of both audio clips was identical in terms of the speaker's qualifications, skills, and experiences to ensure that any differences in evaluation were attributed solely to the accent variations. The audio recordings were derived from a previous study performed by Nejjari et al. (2021). The content of the audio clip contained the following information: "I'm a seasoned Retail Manager strong in developing training programs and loss prevention techniques that have resulted in revenue savings of over 2.3 million during the past 11 years. I would say that my greatest strength is my ability to follow through. I have found that I am most successful when I pay attention to every piece of the product cycle, from the first contact, to the thank you at the completion of the project. My greatest weakness is my tendency to overthink a situation. I sometimes take too much time to strategize on a sale and find in the end that my initial plan was the one that was the best." (Nejjari et al., 2021).

Two independent variables were investigated: (1) the personality of the participant and (2) the accent of the speaker. Participants completed the HEXACO-60 personality questionnaire, consisting of 60 items measuring six major dimensions of personality: Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience (Ashton & Lee, 2009). The current study specifically focused on: Extraversion, Openness to Experience, and Agreeableness. Each of these items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Based on the participants' responses, they were classified as either high or low in each personality trait. Accent was manipulated at two levels: native accent (British-English) accent non-native accent (Dutch-English). Accent perceptions was measured using a 5-point Likert scale adapted from Nejjari et al. (2021) (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The dependent variables Competency, Warmth, and Suitability for the Job were assessed using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low, 7 = Very High) (see Appendix 1).

design

The design of the study was a 2x3 between-subjects design to test how listeners' personalities and speakers' accents jointly influenced the perception of accented speech in an employment context. The independent variables were personality and accent. Each of the 65 respondents was randomly assigned to one of the two accent conditions (British-English accent or Dutch-English accent).

Personality was not manipulated but rather measured through the HEXACO-60 personality questionnaire, which assessed Extraversion, Openness to Experience, and Agreeableness. The study measured participants' perceptions of the speaker based on three dependent variables: Competency, Warmth, and Suitability for the Job. Participants also completed a brief demographic questionnaire (age, gender, education level) to control for the variables in the analysis.

instrumentation

To operationalize the dependent variables in this study, a questionnaire was developed to assess the dependent variables Competency, Warmth and Suitability for the Job through several questions (see Appendix I). Accent evaluation was measured using a 5-point Likert scale based on the research by Nejari et al. (2021) (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), where accent was assessed on eleven characteristics. The Accent Evaluations comprised three items: Status, Affect, and Dynamics. An example of a question for measuring perceived status was: *"To what extent do you consider the person in the audio fragment... competent, attentive, and developed,"* ($\alpha = .89$). An example of a question for measuring affect was: *"To what extent do you consider the person in the audio fragment... pleasant, friendly,"* ($\alpha = .68$). An example of a question for measuring dynamics was: *"To what extent do you consider the person in the audio fragment... energetic, enthusiastic, and confident,"* ($\alpha = .83$).

To measure the Suitability for the position of the candidate, the competence questions from Lee and Fiske (2006) were used. A 7-point Likert scale assessed the Suitability for the Job and perceived Competence (1 = Very Low, 7 = Very High). An example of a question for measuring Job Suitability was: *"I believe the speaker is qualified for the position."* An example of a question for measuring perceived Competence was: *"The speaker is... educated (1) – uneducated (7)."* The personality of the recruiter was assessed through the HEXACO-60 model by Ashton and Lee (2009). A total of 30 questions were asked, with 10 questions per dimension, using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). An

example of a question for Extraversion was: “*I consider myself an ordinary person without anything special*” ($\alpha = .68$). An example of a question for Openness to Experience was: “*I would be bored visiting an art gallery*” ($\alpha = .76$). An example of a question for Agreeableness was: “*I usually forgive other people quickly*” ($\alpha = .76$).

procedure

Participants provided consent before participating in the experiment. The experiment consisted of two main components: a personality questionnaire and a listening test featuring British-English and Dutch-English audio samples. Participants were recruited via email, professional networking sites like LinkedIn, and through in-person interactions. The recruitment message outlined the purpose of the study, the importance of their participation, and the expected duration of the experiment. The study was conducted entirely online, which allowed participants to complete the tasks from any location, at their convenience.

Upon agreeing to participate, the participants received short information about the content of the study’s, their rights as participants, and the confidentiality of their responses. The first component involved participants listening to an audio fragment of either one of the two accent conditions (Dutch-English or British-English). Participants were asked to listen to these samples and answer related questions regarding their impressions of the speaker.

Following the listening task, participants were instructed to complete the HEXACO-60 questionnaire, which assessed the participants’ personality traits. This section took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Participants were instructed to answer each item based on their self-perceptions.

All data collected was anonymous and stored securely. Once the experiment was completed, participants were thanked for their time and contributions. Additionally, they were also provided with a confirmation message indicating that their answers had been successfully recorded.

statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were calculated for the demographic variables (age, education level, and gender).

A multivariate analysis of variances (MANOVA) was performed to compare the evaluations of candidates with British-English accents and those with Dutch-English accents

in terms of Status, Affect, and Dynamics. This helped determining whether there were significant differences in how the accents were perceived in terms of these characteristics.

An independent samples t-tests will be performed to compare the evaluations of candidates with British-English accents and those with Dutch-English accents in terms of Suitability. This test specifically assessed whether the accent type influenced participants' perceptions of the candidate's suitability. This variable represents a different aspect of judgement than the characteristics assessed by the Accent Evaluations. Therefore, Suitability is treated as a separate outcome variable that should not be included in the MANOVA with Accent Evaluations.

A two-way ANOVA will be conducted to examine the effects of the independent variables (recruiter personality traits and accent type) on the dependent variable (perceived hirability). This test will explore how a recruiter's level of Extraversion, Openness to Experience, and Agreeableness influences their evaluation of the candidates with different accents. The reason for selecting a two-way ANOVA is that the test focuses on a single dependent variable (hirability).

For H3, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated to evaluate the strength and direction of a linear relationship between Agreeableness and Accent. If there was a significant correlation, it would suggest that as Agreeableness increases, the likelihood of hiring candidates with a Dutch-English accent increases as well.

To classify the recruiters' personality traits (Extraversion, Openness to Experience, and Agreeableness) as either low or high, the continuous scale scores for each personality trait were split into two groups using the median split method. This approach divided the participants' scores into two categories based on the median value of the distribution for each variable.

Recruiters whose Extraversion scores were above the median (3.55) were categorized as High Extraversion (1), while those with scores below the median were categorized as Low Extraversion (0). Recruiters with Openness to Experience scores above the median (3.70) were categorized as High Openness to Experience (1), while those with scores below the median were categorized as Low Openness to Experience (0). Recruiters with Agreeableness scores above the median (3.90) were categorized as High Agreeableness (1), while those with scores below the median were categorized as Low Agreeableness (0).

Results

This chapter outlines the results for this measuring effects of accent type on status, affect, dynamics, and suitability. Moreover, this chapter analyzes how extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness influences hirability.

participants

A total of 106 participants initially took part in the experiment. Of the original sample, 33 were excluded due to their data being unavailable for analysis because of a Qualtrics error. Furthermore, 8 participants were removed from the dataset due to incomplete responses. In this study, a total of 65 participants were included in the analysis. The participants' ages ranged from 21 to 62 years ($M = 30$, $SD = 7.6$). Of the 65 respondents, 30 (46.2%) identified as male, 34 (52.3%) identified as female, and 1 respondent (1.5%) preferred not to disclose their gender. In terms of educational attainment, four respondents (6.2%) had completed high school, eight respondents (12.3%) had completed vocational education, 31 respondents (47.7%) had completed higher professional education, and 22 respondents (33.8%) had completed university education. A total of 32 participants (49.2%) were exposed to the Dutch-English accent, while 33 participants (50.8%) were exposed to the British-English accent.

1.1 accent evaluations (status, affect, dynamics) and suitability

The results of the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) for the Accent Evaluations (Status, Affect, Dynamics) are shown in Table 1. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) found a significant effect of Accent on Status ($F(1,60) = 21.095$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .260$). Participants rated the British-English accent higher in terms of Status ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.59$) compared to the Dutch-English accent ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.83$). However, the multivariate analysis of variance showed no significant effect of Accent on Affect ($F(1,60) = 1.357$, $p = .249$) and Dynamics ($F(,60) = 1.782$, $p = .187$).

Table 1. The means and standard deviations for Accent Evaluations (Status, Affect, and Dynamics) (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) per accent group (British-English and Dutch English) for all listeners (N=65).

Accent Type	Dutch-English (n=32)		British-English (n=33)		Total (n=65)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Status	3.26	0.83	4.06	0.59	3.66	0.82
Affect	3.19	0.84	3.40	0.68	3.30	0.77
Dynamics	2.99	1.15	3.31	0.80	3.15	0.99

Mean scores (M), standard deviations (SD)

1.2 suitability

The results for Suitability are shown in Table 2. The independent samples t-test on Suitability, with Accent as a between subject factor, showed a significant difference between British-English and Dutch-English speakers. This difference, 1.29, 95% CI [0.73, -1.86], was significant ($t(55.60) = 4.58$, $p < .001$) and represented a strong effect, $d = 1.14$. Participants rated the Dutch-English accent higher in terms of Suitability for the Job ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.31$) compared to the British-English accent ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.93$).

Table 2. The means and standard deviations for Suitability (1 = Very Low, 7 = Very High) per accent group (British-English and Dutch English) for all listeners (N=65).

Accent Type	Dutch-English (n=32)		British-English (n=33)		Total (n=65)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Suitability	3.75	1.31	2.45	0.93	3.09	1.30

Mean scores (M), standard deviations (SD)

2.1 Extraversion (H1)

The results for extraversion are shown in Table 3. A two-way analysis of variance with Dutch-English and British-English (accent) and low or high level of Extraversion (extraversion_group) as factors showed no significant main effect of level of Extraversion on Hirability ($F(1,61) < 1$). Accent was not found to have a significant main effect on Hirability ($F(1,61) = 3.820, p = .055, \eta^2 = .06$). The interaction effect between Accent and level of Extraversion was not statistically significant ($F(1,61) < 1$).

Table 3. The means and standard deviations for Hirability per accent group (British-English and Dutch English) and Extraversion level (Low and High) for all listeners (N=65).

Accent Type	Extraversion_group	M	SD
Dutch-English	.00	1.50	0.52
	1.00	1.45	0.51
British-English	.00	1.20	0.41
	1.00	1.28	0.46
Total	.00	1.35	0.48
	1.00	1.36	0.49

Mean scores (M), standard deviations (SD), .00 = low extraversion, 1.00 = high extraversion

2.2 Openness to Experience (H2)

The results for Openness to Experience are shown in Table 4. A two-way analysis of variance with Dutch-English and British-English (accent) and low or high level of Openness to Experiences (openesstoex_group) as factors showed no significant main effect of level of Openness to Experiences on Hirability ($F(1,61) < 1$). Accent was not found to have a significant main effect on Hirability ($F(1,61) = 3.719, p = .058, \eta^2 = .057$). The interaction effect between Accent and level of Openness to Experiences was not statistically significant ($F(1,61) = 1.118, p = .733, \eta^2 = .002$).

Table 4. The means and standard deviations for Hirability per accent group (British-English and Dutch English) and level of Openness to Experience (Low and High) for all listeners (N=65).

Accent Type	OpenessToEx_Group	M	SD
Dutch-English	.00	1.47	0.51
	1.00	1.47	0.51
British-English	.00	1.20	0.41
	1.00	1.28	0.46
Total	.00	1.34	0.48
	1.00	1.36	0.49

Mean scores (M), standard deviations (SD), .00 = low openness 1.00 = high openness

3. agreeableness (H3)

The results for Agreeableness are shown in Table 5. No significant correlation was found between Agreeableness and Accent ($r = -.017, p = .446, N = 65$). This indicates that the level of Agreeableness did not have a significant relationship with the type of accent (Dutch-English versus British-English). A slight significant negative correlation was found between Accent and Hirability ($r = -.237, p = .029, N = 65$). This suggests that the hirability of the candidate decreased with the accent of the candidate. No significant correlation was found between Agreeableness and Hirability ($r = .017, p = .447, N = 65$), indicating that the recruiter's level of Agreeableness did not significantly influence their evaluation of the candidate's hirability.

Table 5. Pearson's Correlation for Agreeableness, Accent and Hirability (N=65).

		Agreeableness	Accent	Hirability
Agreeableness	Pearson's Correlation	1	-.017	.017
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.446	.447
	N	65	65	65

Accent	Pearson's Correlation	-.017	1	-.237
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.446		.029
	N	65	65	65
Hirability	Pearson's Correlation	.017	-.237	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.447	.029	
	N	65	65	65

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Conclusion and discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how different accents (Dutch-English and British-English) and the recruiters' personality traits (extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeableness) affect the evaluation of candidates' hirability.

The results show that recruiters rated the British-English accent higher in terms of status compared to the Dutch-English accent. These findings support the findings of Nejari et al. (2021), who also found that British-English speakers were considered to have more status. According to Kozlowski (2015), individuals with non-native accents are often perceived as having lower socioeconomic status and are typically associated with low-status jobs. In contrast, people with a native accent are considered as more successful and linked to high-status jobs. An accent, being a crucial component of an individual's identity, functions as a social cue. It provides insights into a person's social class, nationality, and ethnicity (Kinzler et al., 2007). These findings highlight the important role that accent plays in shaping perceptions and underscores the power of linguistic features in social and professional contexts (Raheja, 2019).

In addition, the results for Suitability showed a significant difference between British-English and Dutch-English speakers. Participants rated the Dutch-English accent higher in terms of suitability for the job compared to the British-English accent. These findings contradict the findings of Nejari et al. (2021) and Cargile (2000), given that native-accented speakers (like British-English) are often considered more suitable due to perceived fluency or prestige. However, there are two potential explanations for these results, which may stem from familiarity and language attitudes. Carnicle and Huang (2016) found that accent familiarity can influence perceptions. As the participants in this study are familiar with Dutch-English accents, they might have associated this accent with traits that made the

Dutch-English speakers appear more suitable for the job. A non-native accent can be associated with traits such as effort, diligence, or a willingness to adapt (Cherry, 2024), which can be viewed positively in professional context. In addition, British-English accents can carry a stereotype of being overly authoritative, elegant, and formal, especially regarding Received Pronunciation (RP) (Clarke, 2023; Talenta & Wibowo 2022; British Council Foundation, 2020). Depending on the job, a British-English speakers might have been perceived as less approachable, making the Dutch-English speaker more suitable. These findings highlight the important role that accent plays in shaping perceptions of suitability for a job (Spence et al., 2022), demonstrating that factors such as accent familiarity can significantly influence how an accent is evaluated in professional settings (Cheng et al., 2024).

The results showed no significant difference between British-English and Dutch-English speakers in terms of affect and dynamics. This contradicts the findings of Nejari et al (2021), who found a significant difference in affect between British-English speakers and moderately accented speakers (such as Dutch-English). A possible explanation for this is that the Dutch-English accent used in this study might not be strong enough to be perceived as a barrier to hirability (Hendriks et al., 2023). Previous studies have suggested that the strength of an accent plays a crucial role in how accent is perceived in hiring contexts. According to Fuertes et al. (2012), stronger foreign accents are often more likely to trigger bias. However, a more neutral or non-native accent may not carry the same level of bias. Another possible explanation is that contextual and situational factors influence how people perceive accents (Cargile (2000). According to Talenta and Wibowo (2022), the context in which an accent is heard can affect how it is evaluated. In professional environments, such as hiring contexts, the focus tends to shift towards evaluating candidates based on their qualifications and skills rather than on their accent, reducing the emotional or dynamic reactions that might otherwise emerge in social contexts. The findings underscore the complex role of accent within different situational contexts, highlighting how contexts can influence the way accents are perceived (Giles et al., 1977).

The results for extraversion and openness to experience showed no significant main effect on hirability. While extraversion and openness to experience are associated with some level of cognitive flexibility or openness to diversity (Dodson, 2023; Salter et al., 2021), they may not be directly linked to a preference for a particular accent in hiring decisions. Moreover, even if recruiters score high on extraversion and openness to experience, there may still have underlying biases that are not immediately apparent in their conscious

judgements. These biases are unconscious attitudes or stereotypes that influence how people about others (Amodio & Devine, 2006). Studies have shown that implicit biases can continue even among individuals who are high in traits like extraversion and openness (Devine, 1989; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). These biases shape how recruiters perceive accents beyond their own personality traits, potentially affecting hiring decisions, demonstrating the complex nature of bias in recruitment settings (Kinzler et al., 2007; Munro & Derwing, 1995). These findings underscore the complex interplay between personality traits and unconscious biases.

For agreeableness, the results showed that there was no significant correlation found between agreeableness and accent, and agreeableness and hirability. However, a slight significant negative correlation was found between accent and hirability. Previous research by Ashton and Lee (2009) indicates that individuals who score high on agreeableness are often more empathetic towards others making recruiters more open to diverse backgrounds and accents. However, Behrenz (2001) also indicates that most recruitment decisions are based on multiple factors, not solely based on the personality traits of the recruiter. The slight significant negative correlation between accent and hirability suggest that the accent itself may be influencing hirability ratings, but this effect is not moderated by agreeableness. This negative correlation could indicate that recruiters may still associate non-native accents with certain stereotypes such as lower competence or fit for the job (Nelson et al., 2016). Non-native accents are often linked to perceptions of lower cognitive abilities or reduced competence in the workplace. In many cases, individuals with accents that deviate from the prestigious norm, are viewed as less skilled or professional, despite their actual qualifications or experience (Giles & Watson, 2013; Lippi-Green, 2012). These findings highlight how factors such as stereotypes can influence the way accents are perceived, beyond the recruiter's personality traits, influencing hiring decisions.

Despite the valuable insights this study provides into the influence of personality traits and accent on hiring decisions, several limitations must be considered when interpreting the results. These limitations suggest areas for improvement in future research. One limitation of this study is composition of the sample which included 65 participants with an average age of 30 years. As a result, the results may not be generalizable to older recruiters (Tipton et al., 2017). Older recruiters may have different perspectives or approaches when evaluating candidates with varying accents. Further studies may include a more diverse sample of recruiters (e.g., in terms of age), including those from a broader age range, to better understand how recruitment practices might vary across different age groups.

This study specifically examined three personality traits (extraversion, openness to experience, (and agreeableness) from The Big Five model. While traits are relevant to understand how recruiters might assess candidates, other personality traits, such as conscientiousness or neuroticism, could also influence how individuals perceive accents (Zárate-Sández, 2017). People who score high on conscientiousness strive to achieve high standards, are organized, and deliberate. People who score high on neuroticism are emotionally sensitive, become upset easily and frequently experience negative emotions (Novikova, 2013). These traits could play a significant role in accent perception, potentially influencing recruiters' evaluations in ways that are considered in this study. Future research should aim to broaden the scope by incorporating other relevant personality traits, like conscientiousness and neuroticism, which may offer a more nuanced understanding of how recruiters form judgements based on their personality.

As the HEXACO-60 personality test relies on self-reported data (Ashton & Lee, 2013) another limitation is that the questionnaire allows for social desirability bias (Quantilope, n.d.). Self-report measures can sometimes fail to accurately capture a person's true personality traits. Participants may answer in ways that they believe are more desirable (Latkin et al., 2018). This bias can influence how participants report their levels of traits like extraversion, agreeableness, or openness to experience. As a result, the social desirability bias can influence the results regarding the effect of recruiter personality on accent evaluations and hirability. Future research could consider incorporating behavioural or observational measures of personality, in addition to self-report questionnaires like the HEXACO-60. For example, researchers can observe and record individuals' behaviours in specific contexts (e.g., in group tasks, interviews, or work settings) to identify certain personality traits.

The limitations identified in this study suggest several directions for future research. Addressing these areas will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between personality traits and accent perception.

Appendix 1: Vragenlijst Nederlands

Accentperceptie gemeten op een 5-punts Likertschaal (Nejjari et al., 2021) 1 = helemaal mee oneens, 2 = mee oneens, 3 = neutraal, 4 = mee eens, 5 = helemaal mee eens

1. Competent
2. Aandachtig
3. Ontwikkeld
4. Opgeleid
5. Aangenaam
6. Energiek
7. Heeft autoriteit
8. Vriendelijk
9. Enthousiast
10. Intelligent
11. Zelfverzekerd

Competentievragen gemeten op 7-punts Likertschaal (Lee & Fiske, 2006, aangepaste versie).

1 = erg laag, 7 = erg hoog

Geschiktheid voor de baan

1. Ik heb het gevoel dat de spreker geschikt is voor de baan
2. Ik heb het gevoel dat de spreker de nodige vaardigheden en capaciteiten heeft voor de baan
3. Ik geloof dat de spreker gekwalificeerd is voor de baan

Aannemen

1. Zou je de sollicitant aannemen voor de baan?
 - A. ja
 - B. nee

Waargenomen competentie

1. Geschoold (1) – Ongeschoold (7)
2. Hoge klasse (1) – Lage klasse (7)
3. Intelligent (1) – Onintelligent (7)
4. Witte kraag (Kantoorbaan) (1) – Blauwe kraag (Arbeid) (7)
5. Kansrijk (1) – Kansarm (7)
6. Zelfverzekerd (1) – Onzeker (7)
7. Incompetent (1) – Competent (7)

Waargenomen warmte

1. Van nature goed (1) – Van nature niet goed (7)
2. Warm (1) – Koud (7)
3. Vriendelijk (1) – Onvriendelijk (7)
4. Sympathiek (1) – Onsympathiek (7)

Persoonlijkheidskenmerken via HEXACO-60 op de dimensies: openheid voor ervaringen, extraversie en vriendelijkheid (Ashton & Lee, 2009):

1 = helemaal mee oneens, 2 = mee oneens, 3 = neutraal, 4 = mee eens, 5 = helemaal mee eens

Openheid voor ervaringen

1. Ik zou me vervelen bij een bezoek aan een kunstgalerie
2. Ik ben geïnteresseerd in het leren over de geschiedenis en politiek van andere landen
3. Ik zou het leuk vinden om een kunstwerk te creëren, zoals een roman, een lied, of een schilderij
4. Ik vind het tijdverspilling om aandacht te besteden aan radicale ideeën
5. Ik vind het saai om over filosofie te discussiëren
6. Ik vind het leuk om naar kaarten van verschillende plaatsen te kijken
7. Ik zou me vervelen bij een boek over de geschiedenis van wetenschap en technologie
8. Ik hou van mensen die onconventionele ideeën hebben
9. Ik zou het leuk vinden om een hele dag in een museum door te brengen
10. Ik hou van mensen met ongebruikelijke ideeën

Extraversie

1. Ik vind mezelf een gewoon persoon zonder iets bijzonders
2. Ik vermijd het om in het openbaar te spreken
3. In sociale situaties ben ik meestal degene die de eerste stap zet
4. Als ik in een groep mensen ben, ben ik vaak degene die namens de groep spreekt
5. Ik heb liever een baan waarbij ik veel met andere mensen omga dan een waarbij ik alleen moet werken
6. Het eerste dat ik doe als ik ergens nieuw ben, is vrienden maken
7. De meeste mensen zijn levenslustiger en dynamischer dan ik over het algemeen ben
8. Ik voel me vaak minder waard dan anderen
9. Ik voel me niet erg op mijn gemak als ik voor een groep mensen sta te praten
10. Ik heb de neiging om mezelf op de achtergrond te houden

Vriendelijkheid

1. Ik vergeef andere mensen meestal snel
2. Mensen vertellen me soms dat ik te kritisch ben op anderen
3. Mensen vertellen me soms dat ik te koppig ben
4. Mijn houding ten opzichte van mensen die mij slecht behandeld hebben is “vergeten en vergeven”
5. Zelfs als mensen veel fouten maken, zeg ik zelden iets negatiefs
6. Ik heb de neiging om mild te zijn in mijn oordeel over anderen
7. Ik raak zelden geïrriteerd, zelfs als mensen me behoorlijk slecht behandelen
8. Ik heb de neiging om vrij snel kwaad te worden
9. Zelfs in noodsituaties heb ik geen behoefte om in paniek te raken
10. Als iemand die ik niet mag om een gunst vraagt, dan doe ik het toch

Demografische kenmerken:

1. Wat is je leeftijd?
2. Wat is je gender?
 - a. Man; vrouw; non-binair; wil ik niet zeggen.

3. Wat is je opleidingsniveau?
 - a. Geen diploma, middelbare school, MBO, bachelor (HBO, WO), master (HBO, WO), doctorandus/PhD

Appendix 2: Questionnaire English

Accent Perception Measured on a 5-point Likert Scale (Nejjari et al., 2021)

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

1. Competent
 2. Attention-grabbing
 3. Cultured
 4. Formed
 5. Pleasant
 6. Energetic
 7. Authoritative
 8. Friendly
 9. Enthusiastic
 10. Intelligent
 11. Confident
-

Competency Questions Measured on a 7-point Likert Scale (Lee & Fiske, 2006, adapted version). 1 = very low, 7 = very high

Suitability for the Job

1. I feel that the speaker is suitable for the job.
2. I feel that the speaker has the necessary skills and capabilities for the job.
3. I believe that the speaker is qualified for the job.

Decision to Hire

1. Would you hire the applicant for the job?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
-

Perceived Competence

1. Educated (1) – (7) Uneducated
 2. High class (1) – (7) Low class
 3. Intelligent (1) – (7) Unintelligent
 4. White collar (1) – (7) Blue collar
 5. Promising (1) – (7) Unpromising
 6. Confident (1) – (7) Insecure
 7. Incompetent (1) – (7) Competent
-

Perceived Warmth

1. Naturally good (1) – (7) Not naturally good
 2. Warm (1) – (7) Cold
 3. Friendly (1) – (7) Unfriendly
 4. Sympathetic (1) – (7) Unsympathetic
-

Personality Traits via HEXACO-60 on the dimensions: Openness to Experience, Extraversion, and Agreeableness (Ashton & Lee, 2009):

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

Openness to Experience

1. I would be bored visiting an art gallery.
2. I am interested in learning about the history and politics of other countries.
3. I would enjoy creating a work of art, such as a novel, a song, or a painting.
4. I consider it a waste of time to pay attention to radical ideas.
5. I find it boring to discuss philosophy.
6. I enjoy looking at maps of different places.
7. I would be bored reading a book about the history of science and technology.
8. I like people who have unconventional ideas.
9. I would enjoy spending an entire day in a museum.
10. I like people with unusual ideas.

Extraversion

1. I see myself as an ordinary person without anything special.
2. I avoid speaking in public.
3. In social situations, I am usually the one to make the first move.
4. When I am in a group of people, I often speak on behalf of the group.
5. I prefer a job where I interact a lot with other people rather than one where I work alone.
6. The first thing I do when I am somewhere new is to make friends.
7. Most people are livelier and more dynamic than I am in general.
8. I often feel less worthy than others.
9. I do not feel very comfortable speaking in front of a group of people.
10. I tend to keep myself in the background.

Agreeableness

1. I usually forgive other people quickly.
 2. People sometimes tell me that I am too critical of others.
 3. People sometimes tell me that I am too stubborn.
 4. My attitude toward people who have treated me badly is “forget and forgive.”
 5. Even if people make many mistakes, I rarely say anything negative.
 6. I tend to be lenient in my judgment of others.
 7. I rarely get irritated, even if people treat me quite poorly.
 8. I tend to get angry quite quickly.
 9. Even in emergencies, I do not feel the need to panic.
 10. If someone I do not like asks me for a favour, I still do it.
-

Demographic Characteristics

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
 - a. Male; female; non-binary; prefer not to say.

3. What is your educational level?
 - a. No diploma, high school, vocational training (MBO), bachelor's degree (HBO, WO), master's degree (HBO, WO), doctorate/PhD.

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