

## Bachelor Thesis 2021

*The effects of English proficiency of the listener on evaluations of moderately-accented Dutch and standard British English in an employment setting*

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## **Abstract**

The rise of English as a Lingua Franca in international business made it more common for employers to interview applicants with non-native English accents and having an accent may trigger unfavourable evaluations during job interviews. A potentially important consideration that remains underexplored is how listeners' English proficiency influences evaluations of non-native English speakers. Our study investigated the effects of listeners' English proficiency on speaker evaluations by employing moderately-accented Dutch and native British English speech fragments concerning an international employment setting, evaluated by Dutch listeners with advanced and intermediate levels of English proficiency on perceived comprehensibility, status, dynamism, solidarity and hirability. The study showed that overall, moderately-accented Dutch was evaluated more negatively than standard British English, and listeners' English proficiency did not influence the evaluations. The findings indicate that listeners' English proficiency may have had no effect because the impact of listeners' English proficiency does not apply to moderate accents or listeners with a language background that is closely related to English.

# Introduction

At present, we are living in a highly globalised world in which there is a growing interdependence between cultures, societies and people on economic, political and cultural levels (Liu, Volčič & Gallois, 2019). In this so-called “global village”, an increasing number of people can speak English as a second language and additionally, many businesses are becoming more global and use English as a Common Corporate Language (CCL) because of the emergence of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). A CCL concerns the use of a specific language as the main language of a company, which aims to tackle problems arising from operating in a multilingual environment (Piekkari, Welch & Welch, 2014). ELF can be described as communication in English between non-native speakers of English with different linguistic backgrounds (Seidlhofer, 2005). Consequently, international businesses often adopt English as their CCL to improve communication between employees with different first languages (Tietze, 2008). English has established itself as one of the most dominant languages in the international business context and as a result, it became very common for non-native speakers to regularly interact in this particular language (Piekkari, Welch & Welch, 2014).

Communication in English by non-native speakers involves differences in accentedness and the presence of an accent may affect speaker evaluations and thereby, trigger discrimination (Fuertes et al., 2011). On top of speaker accentedness, English proficiency of the listener also influences the evaluation of speakers. English proficiency regards the extent to which an individual has command of the English language (Vinke & Jochems, 1993). Saito et al. (2019) have shown that listeners with a high level of English proficiency who are experienced in speaking this language with interlocutors from numerous linguistic backgrounds tend to be more lenient towards non-native accents. Additionally, Beinhoff (2014) found that highly proficient listeners tend to evaluate speakers differently on comprehensibility than averagely proficient listeners. Within multinational corporations, there are significant variations in language proficiency across functions and organisational levels (Barner-Rasmussen & Aarnio, 2011), and these corporations may also include a linguistically diverse workforce with different degrees of accentedness and English proficiency levels. Since both accentedness and proficiency appear to influence evaluations, employers are likely to experience these effects during job interviews. However, little research has been conducted on the influence of listeners’ English proficiency on non-native accented speaker evaluations in international employment settings, therefore, the present study will investigate this matter.

### **What is accentedness?**

As previously mentioned, the use of English by non-native speakers also involves different accents with varieties in strength, for instance, moderate or slight. An accent can be defined as a particular manner of speaking that can be linked to specific groups of people, which commonly derives from phonology or intonation variations across geographic regions or social groups (Lippi-Green, 1997). To illustrate, inhabitants of a certain region may have a 'native' accent, which can be distinguished from inhabitants of another region, who speak with a 'non-native' accent. The presence of accents in speech can become strongly associated with economic and social divisions between groups, ultimately leading to social categorisation (Campbell-Kibler, 2007). Moreover, an accent can be a salient piece of information during social interactions and therefore, accents are likely to play an indicating role concerning social categories such as country of origin or ethnicity (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010).

The process of social categorisation is highly related to the Social Identity Theory (SIT), which concerns a person's awareness of belonging to a social category or a group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). A social group consists of a collection of people, sharing a common social identity or perceiving themselves as being part of the same social category (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). The SIT suggests that people make a distinction between the 'ingroup' and 'outgroup' or in other words, 'us' and 'them'. Furthermore, people who are viewed as similar to the self are considered to be a member of the ingroup, whereas people with different characteristics are labelled as the outgroup (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2013). The categorisation of people into 'us' and 'them' is an important determiner of how people interpret their social environment and hence, it affects inter-group behaviour (Tajfel, Billig, & Bundy, 1971). However, in the case of accentedness, ingroup membership does not necessarily lead to positive judgements. For instance, an investigation by Śliwa & Johansson (2014) showed that non-native English listeners adhered to the 'native speaker ideal' and therefore, perceived native English speakers as more competent than themselves. Thus, the outgroup was evaluated more positively than the ingroup, implying that the SIT should be viewed with a nuanced perspective.

### **Non-native accentedness and discrimination**

Since an accent can be detected as soon as a person speaks, it can be regarded as a critical factor in terms of categorising people into a group such as 'outsiders', potentially stimulating the formation of stereotypes and biases related to specific countries or ethnic groups, which

can ultimately cause discrimination in employment settings (Depez-Sims & Morris, 2010). Correspondingly, during job interviews, non-native accents can trigger judgements based on categorisations, dividing people into the ingroup and outgroup and inevitably, influence the treatment of applicants. Because the workplace is becoming increasingly globalised, there is a greater likelihood for employers to interview applicants with non-native accents in the CCL. Research has shown that listeners may negatively evaluate speakers due to a non-native accent and these evaluations can have an unfavourable effect on employability (Depez-Sims & Morris, 2010; Roessel et al., 2017; Fuertes et al., 2011). An interviewer possessing a local accent may tend to perceive an applicant with a non-native accent as dissimilar and not belonging to the norm and consequently, a member of the outgroup. As a result, an applicant with a non-native accent may receive a more negative evaluation, potentially decreasing the probability of being hired (Depez-Sims & Morris, 2013).

In addition to the social categorisation process and the SIT, there are several other aspects involved that lead to unfavourable evaluations of speakers. Firstly, non-native accented speakers are considered to be less comprehensible, meaning that their speech is more difficult to process for listeners (Munro & Derwing, 1995b). Thus, non-native accents can take more time to process than native accents. Additionally, a perceived lack of comprehensibility can cause a speaker to be evaluated as being less fluent in the English language (Munro & Derwing, 1995b). Another issue negatively influencing speaker evaluations is intelligibility, which is how utterances are converted into speech patterns that create words and sentences (Nelson, 2011). A lack of intelligibility may provide legitimate reasons to negatively judge a person's communication skills, potentially causing discrimination since listeners may have difficulties distinguishing between accents and communication skills (Creese & Kambere, 2003). Additionally, concerning comprehensibility and intelligibility of non-native speech generally, experimental studies have demonstrated that both non-native and native listeners experience fewer difficulties understanding native accents than non-native accents, which is due to the so-called 'native speech intelligibility benefit' (e.g. Major et al., 2002; Smith & Bisazza, 1982). However, other studies have found a rather contrasting effect, namely the 'matched interlanguage speech intelligibility benefit', which means that non-native listeners with the same mother tongue as the speaker consider a non-native accent as easier to understand compared to a native accent (e.g. Wang, 2007; Stibbard & Lee, 2006; Bent & Bradlow, 2003).

A final factor playing a significant role in the evaluation of speakers is accent strength since several studies revealed that strongly-accented speakers are evaluated less positively than weakly-accented speakers (e.g. Munro & Derwing, 1995a; Hendriks et al., 2017; Roessel et al., 2017; Dragojevic et al., 2017). Moreover, after investigating German non-native English speaker evaluations by listeners with the same native language in a university employment context, Roessel et al. (2017) found that strongly-accented candidates were downgraded more often than weakly-accented candidates or native English speakers, regardless of the content and argument quality of the speakers' utterances. Consequently, strongly-accented candidates were rated more unfavourably on hirability than weakly-accented candidates and native English speakers. Dragojevic et al. (2017), who assessed whether strongly-accented speakers were evaluated more negatively than slightly-accented speakers concluded that strongly-accented speakers received more negative evaluations than slightly-accented speakers since the stronger accents required more processing time, triggering negative affective reactions. A study by Munro & Derwing (1995a) investigating the effects of foreign-accented speech on processing time showed that native listeners experienced more difficulties understanding stronger non-native accents than weaker non-native accents. Thus, overall, stronger accents are evaluated more unfavourably than weaker accents or native speakers.

On top of the previously mentioned factors, non-native accentedness can also affect attitudinal evaluations of speakers. Furthermore, based on 20 studies, Fuertes et al. (2011) compared non-native English accents and native English accents regarding perceived status (speaker intelligence, competence), solidarity (speakers' similarity to the listener) and dynamism (speakers' level of activity, liveliness), which are the traditional dimensions concerning attitudinal evaluations. The meta-study revealed that native accents were rated more favourably on status, solidarity and dynamism than non-native accents, which suggests that native speaker are perceived to be more highly educated, intelligent and successful than non-native speakers, resulting in higher ratings on aspects such as attractiveness, kindness and trustworthiness. Consequently, it should be considered that there are serious implications for non-native speakers since they are less likely to leave a positive impression compared to native speakers.

### **English proficiency and non-native accentedness**

As mentioned earlier, listeners' English proficiency may affect speaker evaluations regarding accentedness and additionally, within multinational corporations, proficiency levels and

degrees of accentedness can differ greatly, increasing the likelihood of employers encountering the effects of English proficiency and accentedness during job interviews. Previous studies have shown that listeners' English proficiency can influence speaker evaluations, for instance, Beinhoff (2014) studied the effects of non-native listeners' English proficiency on the comprehensibility of different degrees of accentedness. Moreover, the division of listeners' English proficiency was based on different CEFR proficiency levels (as defined in the Common European Framework) that range from A1 (beginner level) to C2 (advanced level) (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001). The investigation by Beinhoff (2014) revealed that a lower level of English proficiency (i.e. B1-level; intermediate) enhanced comprehension of strongly-accented speakers, while conversely, higher English proficiency (i.e. C2-level; advanced) reduced the perceived comprehensibility of stronger accents. Thus, the findings imply that the higher the English proficiency of the listener, the lower the perceived comprehensibility of strongly-accented speakers. In contrast, a study by Hendriks et al. (2018) analysing evaluations by non-native listeners (Dutch and German) of non-native lecturers (Dutch and German) and native English lecturers, showed that a higher level of listeners' English proficiency positively affected the perceived intelligibility, comprehensibility and likability of the speaker. Additionally, the study showed that German listeners provided better ratings on all dimensions for the moderately-accented Dutch lecturers than for the moderately-accented German lecturers, which could be explained by the possibility of German listeners experiencing a sense of indirect shame for speakers of their ingroup who speak with a very noticeable, 'undesired' accent. However, Dutch listeners considered the moderately-accented Dutch lecturers more comprehensible than the moderately-accented German lecturers, possibly because they perceived the Dutch lecturers as part of their ingroup.

One of the aspects addressed by Hendriks et al. (2018) were the effects of listeners' English proficiency on speaker evaluations in an educational context. However, the influence of listeners' English proficiency on speaker evaluations in employment settings remains underexplored. It is interesting to investigate this context since as a result of globalisation, it became more likely for employers to perform job interviews with applicants from various linguistic backgrounds and with different levels of accentedness. Previous studies (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010; Roessel et al., 2019; Fuertes et al., 2011) already showed that accentedness can negatively affect employability, but knowledge on the effects of interviewers' English proficiency during job interviews is still lacking. It is scientifically



relevant to study these effects because within international businesses, there are differences in English proficiency across functions and organisational levels (Barner-Rasmussen & Aarnio, 2011) and thus, there may also be variations regarding interviewers' English proficiency, potentially affecting speaker evaluations. Therefore, the present study will investigate the influence of listeners' English proficiency on speaker evaluations in an employment context. To effectively do so, the current study will focus on advanced and intermediate English proficiency of Dutch listeners and how this affects the evaluations of moderately-accented Dutch speakers and standard British English speakers.

The grounds for selecting advanced and intermediate English proficiency is due to the assumption that these two levels are more likely to occur in the international business context. It is presumed that low English proficiency is not very common, particularly concerning employees who are in a position of conducting job interviews. Additionally, Beinhoff (2014) showed that advanced and intermediate English proficiency can affect the perceived comprehensibility of different degrees of accentedness. The reason for including listeners and speakers with the same language background (Dutch) is to investigate the influence of the SIT (ingroup vs outgroup), which showed contrasting effects in previous studies (Beinhoff, 2014; Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010; Hendriks et al., 2018). Another reason for selecting Dutch listeners is because interaction in English between non-native speakers is becoming increasingly common in the international business context and the Dutch business environment since Dutch businesses are often adopting ELF (Gerritsen & Nickerson, 2009, p. 187). Moderately-accented Dutch speakers have been included since this group of speakers is likely to be represented in a professional context (Nejarri et al., 2012). The reason for selecting a moderate Dutch accent rather than a slight Dutch accent is because previous studies revealed that slightly-accented Dutch is often evaluated similarly to standard British English (Hendriks et al., 2016; Hendriks et al., 2021) and additionally, moderate accents remain underexplored in employment settings. Thus far, mainly strong accents have been investigated (e.g. Roessel et al., 2017). Standard British English was included in the study because it is the most common variety of English that is being taught in Dutch education (Nejjari et al., 2012). Also, the British are one of the largest expat groups in The Netherlands (CBS, 2015) and therefore, Dutch individuals are familiar with this type of accent and both the British and the Dutch possibly apply for similar jobs. Additionally, accents such as standard British English generally influence listeners' attitudes regarding speakers' education, success, social status, attractiveness and similarity to the listener (Giles, 1970).

To investigate the effects of Dutch listeners' English proficiency on the evaluations of moderately-accented Dutch English and standard British English, the following research question has been formulated:

**RQ:** *What is the influence of the English language proficiency of Dutch listeners on their evaluations of moderately-accented Dutch English and standard British English?*

### **Dutch-accented English compared to standard-accented English**

In this regard, it is crucial to know about the existing knowledge of evaluations of Dutch-accented English compared to standard-accented English. Furthermore, a study by Nejari et al. (2012) on the reactions of native English listeners to pronunciations of Dutch-accented English and standard British English through a telephone sales talk, found that all listeners evaluated native English as having a higher status compared to moderately and slightly-accented Dutch. However, the listeners provided similar evaluations of likeability between native English and slightly-accented Dutch. Concerning intelligibility, native English was rated as more intelligible compared to moderately and slightly-accented Dutch, although the non-native accents were perceived as having at least a reasonable degree of intelligibility. Additionally, it appeared that the foreign accent itself rather than the level of accentedness negatively influenced intelligibility. In terms of comprehensibility, the native English accent was judged as more comprehensible than the Dutch accents, meaning that the words used by the native English speakers were easier to understand, however, the study did not find a difference between the Dutch accents regarding comprehensibility. Concerning interpretability, the results displayed that the intentions of native English speakers and the Dutch-accented speakers were understood equally well.

Additionally, Hendriks et al. (2021), investigating how lecturers with slight or moderate Dutch accents or native British English accents were evaluated on comprehensibility, intelligibility and attitudes by Dutch, international and native English listeners, found that slightly-accented lecturers received similar evaluations as lecturers with native English accents. However, moderately-accented lecturers were evaluated more negatively by the Dutch and international students, whereas the native English listeners evaluated all speakers similarly. Concerning comprehensibility, it appeared that the Dutch and international listeners experienced more problems understanding the moderately-accented speakers and this negatively influenced their perceived teaching quality, while for the native listeners, this did not affect this perception. Regarding attitudinal evaluations, Dutch listeners considered the moderately-accented lecturers as having less status than the international and

native listeners, possibly suggesting that listeners are more critical and experience vicarious shame when they share a mother tongue with a moderately-accented speaker and are more familiar with an accent. Concerning familiarity with an accent, Nejari et al. (2012) found that native listeners who were familiar with Dutch-accented English provided lower ratings on status than unfamiliar listeners, potentially because familiar listeners may associate stronger accents with a low educational background and thus, lower status. Generally, the findings of Nejari et al. (2012) and Hendriks et al. (2021) indicate that moderately-accented Dutch often triggers more negative evaluations than standard British English on most dimensions.

Based on the previously presented theory, the following has been hypothesised:

**H1:** *“Moderately-accented Dutch will cause more negative evaluations than standard British English concerning perceived comprehensibility, status, dynamism, solidarity and hirability”.*

**H2:** *“Listeners with an intermediate level of English proficiency will evaluate moderately-accented Dutch as more comprehensible than listeners with an advanced level of English proficiency”.*

**H3:** *“Listeners with an advanced level of English proficiency will evaluate standard British English as more comprehensible than listeners with an intermediate of English proficiency”.*

## Method

Through a verbal-guise experiment, Dutch listeners with an advanced or intermediate level of English proficiency evaluated speech fragments of a moderately-accented Dutch speaker or a standard British English speaker in an employment context.

### Materials

The present study focused on two independent variables, both containing two levels: 1. accentedness of the speaker (moderately-accented Dutch vs standard British English); 2. English proficiency of the listener (advanced vs intermediate). The independent variable ‘accentedness of the speaker’ was operationalised by conducting a pre-test to select the right materials and to ensure that the accents were recognised. A total of 20 Dutch students between 18-25 years old listened to four speech fragments (two for each accent) and then, they completed a questionnaire, which can be found in *Appendix B: Pre-test*. Subsequently, the two most comparable fragments (with similar scores), one for each accent, were selected. It was a within-subjects design because the participants listened to the same speech fragments, however, the order was counterbalanced. The recordings were edited in Audacity (an audio editing programme) to develop speech fragments of similar length and speech rate.

The independent variable ‘English proficiency of the listener’ was operationalised through a Lexical Test for Advanced Learners of English (LexTALE) (Lemhöfer & Broersma, 2012), aimed to divide the participants into two groups (advanced or intermediate English proficiency). LexTALE was employed since the scores can be linked to the CEFR levels used by Beinhoff (2018). The LexTALE can be found in *Appendix E: LexTALE test*. Table 1 explains the proficiency levels included in this study.

*Table 1: Relation of LexTALE scores and CEFR levels based on Lemhöfer and Broersma (2012)*

LexTALE score	CEFR level	CEFR description	Proficiency level
80% - 100%	C1 & C2	Upper & lower advanced user	High proficiency
60% – 80%	B2	Upper intermediate	Moderate proficiency
Below 59%	B1 and lower	Lower intermediate and lower	Low proficiency

## **Subjects**

A total of 125 Dutch university students (age:  $M = 21.40$ ,  $SD = 1.79$ , range = 18-25; gender: 70.4% female, 28% male, 1.6% other) participated in the experiment. The average English proficiency was as follows: self-assessed proficiency (speaking, writing, reading listening)  $M = 5.98$ ,  $SD = .78$ , range = 3.75 - 7; actual proficiency (Lextale)  $M = 80.64$ ,  $SD = 10.82$ ; range = 53.75 – 100).

## **Distribution across accentedness conditions**

An independent samples t-test showed a non-significant difference concerning the age ( $t(112.46) = 0.26$ ,  $p = .795$ ), self-assessed proficiency ( $t(119.02) = 1.24$ ,  $p = .217$ ) and actual proficiency ( $t(114.65) = 1.74$ ,  $p = 0.85$ ) of the participants across the two accentedness conditions. A Chi-square test showed a non-significant relation between gender and the two accentedness conditions ( $\chi^2(1) = 0.001$ ,  $p = .974$ ).

A Chi-square test showed a non-significant relation between participants who followed a course about Human Resources and participants who have never followed a course about Human Resources ( $\chi^2(3) = 1.17$ ,  $p = .280$ ).

A Chi-square test showed a non-significant relation between participants who have experience with hiring employees and participants who do not have experience with hiring employees ( $\chi^2(1) = 1.24$ ,  $p = .339$ ).

A Chi-square test showed a non-significant relation between participants who have ever attended a job interview as a job applicant and participants who never have attended a job interview as a job applicant ( $\chi^2(1) = 0.006$ ,  $p = .938$ ).

## **Distribution across proficiency levels**

An independent samples t-test showed a non-significant difference concerning the age ( $t(121.50) = 0.88$ ,  $p = .381$ ) of the participants across the two proficiency levels. However, a significant difference was found concerning the self-assessed proficiency ( $t(107.18) = 5.53$ ,  $p < .001$ ) of the participants across the two proficiency levels. The self-assessed proficiency of participants was higher in the condition of ‘advanced proficiency’ ( $M = 6.32$ ,  $SD = 5.63$ ) than in the condition of ‘intermediate proficiency’ ( $M = 5.63$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ).

A Chi-square test showed a non-significant relation between gender and the two proficiency levels ( $\chi^2(1) = 2.12$ ,  $p = .145$ ).

A Chi-square test showed a non-significant relation between participants who followed a course about Human Resources and participants who have never followed a course about Human Resources ( $\chi^2 (1) = 0.03, p = .871$ ).

A Chi-square test showed a non-significant relation between participants who have experience with hiring employees and participants who do not have experience with hiring employees ( $\chi^2 (1) = 0.07, p = .793$ ).

A Chi-square test showed a non-significant relation between participants who have ever attended a job interview as a job applicant and participants who never have attended a job interview as a job applicant ( $\chi^2 (1) = 0.14, p = .711$ ).

Two of the 125 participants were excluded from the Chi-square analyses about gender because they responded “other” to the question “what is your gender”.

A significant positive correlation was found between self-assessed English proficiency and actual English proficiency ( $r (125) = .50, p = < .001$ ). Thus, a higher self-assessed English proficiency resulted in slightly better scores on the LexTALE test.

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<sup>1</sup> A Chi-square analysis on all four groups collectively was not possible because of the number of cases. The question “have you ever attended a job interview as an applicant” was excluded due to the number of cases.

## **Design**

The study employed a 2x2 (degree of accentedness: moderately-accented Dutch and standard British English; listeners' English proficiency: advanced and intermediate) between-subjects verbal-guise experimental design in which each student listened to and evaluated one voice recording containing moderately-accented Dutch or standard British English. Additionally, the participants were randomly assigned to the conditions and evaluated the recordings through an online questionnaire.

## **Stimulus**

The participants listened to a moderately-accented Dutch or standard British English voice recording, the content was related to an international employment context and it concerned the position of 'International Communication Officer'. This executive position was selected because it can influence hirability regarding non-native accentedness (Huang et al., 2013). The speakers were two females with a similar tone of voice and speech tempo (harmonized through Audacity), which was necessary to prevent any confounds. Additionally, the text did not provide too much information about the speakers' background, competencies and working experience to maintain neutrality. The text was specifically developed for this study and can be found in *Appendix D: Audio script*.

## **Instrumentation**

Five dependent variables were included to measure the influence of listeners' English proficiency on the evaluations of moderately-accented Dutch and standard British English in an employment setting. The analytical model of the present study can be found in *Appendix A: The analytical model of the present study*.

### *Status*

This variable involved the perception of the extent to which a speaker is 'competent, educated, authoritative, intelligent, cultured' and was measured with these five items on a 7-point Likert scale anchored by 'totally disagree – totally agree' (based on Nejjari et al., 2020). The reliability of the items measuring status was good ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

### *Solidarity*

This variable concerned the perception of a speaker's 'attractiveness, benevolence, the speaker's similarity to the listener and trustworthiness' and was measured with these four items on a 7-point Likert scale anchored by 'totally disagree – totally agree' (based on Śliwa & Johansson, 2014). The reliability of the items measuring solidarity was good ( $\alpha = .73$ ).

### *Dynamism*

This variable included the evaluation of how 'energetic, enthusiastic and confident' a speaker sounds and was measured with these three items on a 7-point Likert scale anchored by 'totally disagree – totally agree' (based on Nejjari et al., 2020). The reliability of the items measuring dynamism was good ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

### *Hirability*

This variable regarded the extent to which the listener would employ the speaker. Firstly, participants responded to a single item "If I were hiring for a position of international communication officer, I would regard this person the following type of candidate for the job": '1. very poor, 2. poor, 3. weak, 4. neutral, 5. good, 6. very good, 7. excellent' (based on Huang et al., 2013).

Secondly, the extent to which the participants would recommend the candidate for the position was measured with a 7-point Likert scale anchored by 'strongly discourage – strongly recommend' (based on Roessel et al., 2017).

Thirdly, the participants' general impression of the candidate was measured with a 7-point Likert scale anchored by 'very negative – very positive' (based on Roessel et al., 2017). The reliability of the items measuring hirability was excellent ( $\alpha = .94$ ).



### *Perceived comprehensibility*

This variable was included since Beinhoff (2014) showed that comprehensibility was influenced by listeners' English proficiency. Perceived comprehensibility concerned the degree to which a speaker was regarded as understandable and was measured with a 7-point Likert scale introduced by 'the speaker is easy to understand', anchored by 'totally disagree – totally agree'; 'the speaker is difficult to understand', anchored by 'totally disagree – totally agree'; 'the speaker is clearly understandable', anchored by 'totally agree – totally disagree' (based on Hendriks et al., 2018; Munro et al., 2006). The reliability of the items measuring comprehensibility was excellent ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

### **Background variables**

#### *Self-assessed English proficiency*

Self-assessed English proficiency involved perceptions of one's own writing, speaking, reading and listening skills and was measured with these four items on a 7-point Likert scale introduced by e.g. 'I think my English writing is' and anchored by 'really poor – really good' (based on Hendriks et al., 2018). The reliability of the items measuring self-assessed English proficiency was good ( $\alpha = .89$ ).

#### *Experience with employment situations*

The participants were also asked whether they had experience with job interview situations, which was examined with the following statements: 'have you ever followed a human resource management course', 'yes – no'; 'do you have experience with hiring employees', 'yes – no', if yes 'in how many job interviews have you been the interviewer'; 'have you ever attended a job interview as an applicant', 'yes – no', if yes 'in how many'.

## **Procedure**

The experiment was conducted via Qualtrics, a cloud-based platform to create and process online questionnaires. The experiment unfolded with an introductory text, which can be found in *Appendix C: Questionnaire*.

Before listening to the recordings, the participants were presented with several demographic questions, followed by questions concerning their experience with the job context. Subsequently, the participants were asked about their self-assessed English proficiency and then, they were randomly assigned to either the moderately-accented Dutch or standard British English condition. The participants were not informed about the actual aim of the study.

After listening to the voice recordings, the participants were asked to complete a questionnaire containing the 7-point Likert scale statements concerning the dependent variables, which can be found in *Appendix C: Questionnaire*. The questionnaire was provided in the participants' mother tongue (Dutch) to prevent the anchor contraction effect (ACE), which means that participants tend to use the extreme ends of the scale when answering questions on a 7-point Likert scale in their second language (de Langhe et al., 2011).

The questionnaire ended by asking the participants to do the LexTALE to verify their self-assessed English proficiency and divide them into two groups based on actual proficiency (advanced or intermediate). LexTALE scores above the median (81.25%) were considered as advanced and below as intermediate. The median LexTALE score is strongly related to the division between the intermediate and advanced levels of the Common European Framework as provided in table 1 (Lemhöfer & Broersma, 2012). After concluding the questionnaire, the purpose of the research was briefly explained, the participants were thanked for participation and were asked to share their contact details if they wanted to win a €20 [bol.com](https://www.bol.com) gift card.

### **Statistical treatment**

To analyse the data, a two-way ANOVA was employed to see how the two independent variables: English proficiency of the listener (advanced or intermediate) and accentedness of the speaker (moderately-accented Dutch or standard British English), affected the dependent variables (perceived comprehensibility, status, solidarity, dynamism and hirability). It aimed to see the mean differences between the four groups.

## Results

The main goal of this study was to investigate the effects of Dutch listeners' English proficiency on the evaluations of moderately-accented Dutch and standard British English speakers concerning perceived comprehensibility, status, dynamism, solidarity and hirability.

### Perceived comprehensibility

A two-way ANOVA with English proficiency level and degree of accentedness as factors showed a significant main effect of degree of accentedness on perceived comprehensibility ( $F(1, 121) = 6.49, p = .012$ ), however, the main effect of English proficiency level on perceived comprehensibility was non-significant ( $F(1, 121) = 2.21, p = .139$ ). The interaction effect between English proficiency level and degree of accentedness was non-significant ( $F(1, 121) = 1.43, p = .233$ ).

The standard British English speaker ( $M = 5.95, SD = 1.19$ ) was perceived as more comprehensible than the moderately-accented Dutch speaker ( $M = 5.35, SD = 1.16$ ).

Table 2: Means, standard deviations and sample sizes for perceived comprehensibility

	Moderately-accented Dutch*			Standard British English*		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Advanced proficiency	5.39	1.12	31	6.19	1.05	32
Intermediate proficiency	5.33	1.20	40	5.61	1.33	22

### Status

A two-way ANOVA with English proficiency level and degree of accentedness as factors showed a significant main effect of degree of accentedness on status ( $F(1, 121) = 33.15, p < .001$ ), however, the main effect of English proficiency level on status was non-significant ( $F(1, 121) < 1, p = .984$ ). The interaction effect between English proficiency level and degree of accentedness was non-significant ( $F(1, 121) = 2.26, p = .135$ ).

The standard British English speaker ( $M = 5.65, SD = .82$ ) was considered as having more status than the moderately-accented Dutch speaker ( $M = 4.68, SD = .99$ ).

Table 3: Means, standard deviations and sample sizes for status

	Moderately-accented Dutch*			Standard British English*		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Advanced proficiency	4.54	1.14	31	5.66	0.84	32
Intermediate proficiency	4.79	0.86	40	5.50	0.78	22

### Dynamism

A two-way ANOVA with English proficiency level and degree of accentedness as factors showed a significant main effect of degree of accentedness on dynamism ( $F(1, 121) = 45.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ), however, the main effect of English proficiency level on dynamism was non-significant ( $F(1, 121) < 1$ ,  $p = .786$ ). The interaction effect between English proficiency level and degree of accentedness was non-significant ( $F(1, 121) = 1.20$ ,  $p = .276$ ).

The standard British English speaker ( $M = 4.81$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) was assessed as having more dynamism than the moderately-accented Dutch speaker ( $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ).

Table 4: Means, standard deviations and sample sizes for dynamism

	Moderately-accented Dutch*			Standard British English*		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Advanced proficiency	3.12	1.36	31	4.94	1.36	32
Intermediate proficiency	3.31	1.09	40	4.62	1.27	22

### Solidarity

A two-way ANOVA with English proficiency level and degree of accentedness as factors showed a significant main effect of degree of accentedness on solidarity ( $F(1, 121) = 4.07$ ,  $p = .046$ ), however, the main effect of English proficiency level on solidarity was non-significant ( $F(1, 121) < 1$ ,  $p = .849$ ). The interaction effect between English proficiency level and degree of accentedness was non-significant ( $F(1, 121) = 3.37$ ,  $p = .069$ ).

The standard British English speaker ( $M = 4.72$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) was evaluated as having more solidarity than the moderately-accented Dutch speaker ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = .99$ ).

Table 5: Means, standard deviations and sample sizes for solidarity

	Moderately-accented Dutch*			Standard British English*		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Advanced proficiency	4.15	1.13	31	4.84	1.14	32
Intermediate proficiency	4.51	0.84	40	4.55	0.78	22

### Hirability

A two-way ANOVA with English proficiency level and degree of accentedness as factors showed a significant main effect of degree of accentedness on hirability ( $F(1, 121) = 17.03, p < .001$ ), however, the main effect of proficiency level on hirability was non-significant ( $F(1, 121) < 1, p = .445$ ). The interaction effect between English proficiency level and degree of accentedness was non-significant ( $F(1, 121) < 1, p = .352$ ).

The standard British English speaker ( $M = 5.22, SD = 1.33$ ) was rated higher on hirability than the moderately-accented Dutch speaker ( $M = 4.65, SD = 1.37$ ).

Table 6: Means, standard deviations and sample sizes for hirability

	Moderately-accented Dutch*			Standard British English*		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Advanced proficiency	4.19	1.40	31	5.39	1.38	32
Intermediate proficiency	4.23	1.13	40	4.98	1.25	22

### Self-assessed English proficiency

A two-way ANOVA with self-assessed English proficiency and degree of accentedness as factors showed a significant main effect of degree of accentedness on perceived comprehensibility ( $F(1, 121) = 6.46, p = .012$ ), status ( $F(1, 121) = 30.50, p < .001$ ), dynamism ( $F(1, 121) = 39.58, p < .001$ ), and hirability ( $F(1, 121) = 17.41, p < .001$ ). However, the main effect of degree of accentedness on solidarity was non-significant ( $F(1, 121) = 3.41, p = .067$ ).

The main effect of self-assessed English proficiency on perceived comprehensibility ( $F(1, 121) = 27.77, p = .099$ ), status ( $F(1, 121) = 2.84, p = .094$ ), dynamism ( $F(1, 121) = .031, p = .860$ ), solidarity ( $F(1, 121) = .111, p = .740$ ) and hirability ( $F(1, 121) = .551, p = .459$ ) was non-significant. Additionally, the interaction effect between self-assessed English proficiency and degree of accentedness was non-significant for all the dependent variables.

*Table 7: The interaction effect*

The interaction between self-assessed English proficiency and degree of accentedness			
	<i>Df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Comprehensibility	1, 121	.000	.992
Status	1, 121	.133	.716
Dynamism	1, 121	.267	.606
Solidarity	1, 121	.060	.808
Hirability	1, 121	.296	.587

## **Conclusion and discussion**

The purpose of the present study was to investigate how Dutch listeners with advanced or intermediate English proficiency evaluate moderately-accented Dutch and standard British English with respect to perceived comprehensibility, status, dynamism, solidarity and hirability. Generally, all listeners evaluated the standard British English accent more favourably on all five dimensions, however, English proficiency did not appear to influence the evaluations.

### **Perceived comprehensibility**

The findings showed that the standard British English speaker was always perceived as more comprehensible than the moderately-accented Dutch speaker, which is in line with Nejjar et al. (2012), Hendriks et al. (2018) and Hendriks et al. (2016), who also found that standard British English was easier to understand than moderately-accented Dutch. This finding is in contrast with the ‘matched interlanguage speech intelligibility benefit’, which implies that non-native listeners experience non-native speakers with the same mother tongue as more comprehensible than native speakers (Munro et al., 2006). Thus, the present study provided evidence for the ‘native speech intelligibility benefit’, meaning that both native and non-native listeners always regard native speech as easier to understand than non-native speech (Major et al., 1982).

However, listeners’ English proficiency not affecting the perceived comprehensibility of the speaker is incongruent with the study of Beinhoff (2014), revealing that less proficient non-native listeners found strong accents more comprehensible than highly proficient listeners. A possible explanation could be that the present study selected moderately-accented Dutch, while in Beinhoff (2014), strongly-accented speakers were included and in turn, strong accents may have more effects on evaluations by participants with different English proficiency levels than moderate accents. Another explanation might be that the mother tongue of the Spanish listeners in Beinhoff’s study is typologically more distant to English than the Dutch language. Moreover, Spanish belongs to the Roman language family, while Dutch, as well as English, are part of the Germanic language family. Thus, listeners’ English proficiency might be less influential when the first language of the listeners is closely related to the language spoken by the speakers.



## **Status**

Our study revealed that the listeners considered the moderately-accented Dutch speaker as having less status than the standard British English speaker, which concurs with Fuertes et al. (2011), who showed that native accents were rated more favourably on status than non-native accents. The Dutch listeners evaluating the moderately-accented Dutch speaker as having less status may be explained by the possibility of listeners experiencing vicarious shame when hearing moderately-accented speakers with the same language background (Schmader & Lickel, 2006), which also occurred in Hendriks et al. (2018). Another plausible explanation could be that the Dutch listeners adhered to the ‘native speaker ideal’ (Śliwa & Johansson, 2014) and therefore, evaluated the outgroup more positively than the ingroup. Additionally, Dutch listeners might be more familiar with Dutch-accented English and thereby, evaluate moderately-accented speakers as having less status, which is congruent with Nejjari et al. (2012), who showed that British listeners who were familiar with Dutch-accented English rated moderately-accented Dutch speakers as having less status compared to unfamiliar listeners, possibly because familiar listeners associate a stronger accent with a low educational background.

## **Dynamism**

The findings showed that standard British English received higher ratings on dynamism compared to moderately-accented Dutch, meaning that the standard British English speaker was regarded as having more energy, enthusiasm and confidence than the moderately-accented Dutch speaker. Our finding conflicts with Nejjari et al. (2020), who found that Dutch-accented English does not negatively affect evaluations of a speaker’s dynamism compared to standard British English. This could be explained by the fact that Nejjari et al. (2020) included listeners with different language backgrounds as the Dutch speakers, whereas in the present study, the listeners had the same language background as the moderately-accented Dutch speaker, potentially causing more negative evaluations on dynamism as a result of vicarious shame (Schmader & Lickel, 2006) or adherence to the ‘native speaker ideal’ (Śliwa & Johansson, 2014).

## **Solidarity**

Generally, the Dutch listeners evaluated the standard British English speaker as more similar to themselves than the moderately-accented Dutch speaker, which was unexpected because the moderately-accented Dutch speaker belongs to the same ingroup as the listeners. Therefore, it was expected that the moderately-accented Dutch speaker’s perceived similarity

to the listener would have been higher. Normally, due to the SIT (Hogg & Abrams, 1988), people are likely to make a distinction between the ‘ingroup’ and ‘outgroup’ based on an accent (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2013), but in this case, it appears that the standard British English speaker was not labelled as the outgroup or that being part of the outgroup was not penalised. Thus, our study shows that the SIT should be approached with a nuanced perspective since ingroup membership did not trigger more positive evaluations.

Listeners’ English proficiency not influencing attitudinal evaluations conflicts with Hendriks et al. (2018), who found that higher English proficiency of the listener can improve attitudinal evaluations. A possible explanation might be that Hendriks et al. (2018) investigated the teaching context, whereas our study concerned an employment setting, which may suggest that the effects of listeners’ English proficiency are more relevant to the teaching context, possibly because the cognitive load in a teaching context might be higher than in an employment setting.

### **Hirability**

The findings revealed that the standard British English speaker was viewed as being more hireable than the moderately-accented Dutch speaker, which is in line with Roessel et al. (2019), who concluded that candidates with stronger non-native accents were evaluated more negatively on hirability than weakly-accented candidates and native English candidates, regardless of the content and argument quality of their utterances. A possible explanation for the finding of the present study could be that the moderately-accented Dutch speaker was evaluated as having less comprehensibility, status, dynamism and solidarity than the standard British English speaker, leading to a reduction in the degree of hirability of the moderately-accented Dutch speaker. Additionally, since the content of the voice recordings concerned the position of ‘International Communication Officer’, it may be that for such a position, candidates are evaluated against the native English pronunciation norm and thereby, are expected to use native-like English.

The present study showed that overall, the standard British English speaker was evaluated more positively than the moderately-accented Dutch speaker regarding perceived comprehensibility, status, dynamism, solidarity and hirability, thus, H1 “*Moderately-accented Dutch will cause more negative evaluations than standard British English concerning perceived comprehensibility, status, dynamism, solidarity and hirability*”, can be supported. However, since English proficiency did not have a significant impact on the evaluations, the remaining hypotheses H2 “*Listeners with an average degree of English proficiency will*

*evaluate moderately-accented Dutch as more comprehensible than listeners with a high degree of English proficiency” and H3 “Listeners with a high degree of English proficiency will evaluate standard British English as more comprehensible than listeners with a low degree of English proficiency”, can be rejected.*

### **Limitations and suggestions for further research**

One of the present study’s limitations is that the non-native speech fragments were limited to Dutch-accented English, possibly ensuring better comprehensibility and attitudinal evaluations since there are suggestions that Dutch-accented English is easier to understand than other non-native accents (Hendriks et al., 2021). Moreover, the Dutch language is typologically similar to English because they both belong to the Germanic language family, meaning that there are similarities concerning their sound systems (Wang, 2007), potentially causing listeners’ English proficiency to have no significant effect on speaker evaluations. Additionally, there may have been less influence of the outgroup effect and thus, for future research, it would be recommended to compare non-native accents that are typologically more distant to English to gain more knowledge on the potential implications for non-native speakers with different language backgrounds, as well as the impact of listeners’ English proficiency in employment settings.

Another possible limitation is that Dutch students are frequently exposed to English via the media and education, increasing the likelihood of regular exposure to the native pronunciation norm (Gerritsen, van Meurs, Planken, & Korzilius, 2016) and thereby, they might be more biased than participants from other countries would be. For future research, it is recommendable to include listeners who have been less exposed to the native speaker pronunciation norm. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the voice recordings in our study involved the position of ‘International Communication Officer’, which may have caused the speakers to be evaluated against the native speech pronunciation norm, potentially disadvantaging the moderately-accented Dutch speaker.

Another plausible limitation could be that the present study included moderately-accented Dutch and this degree of accentedness does not influence evaluations by listeners with advanced or intermediate levels of English proficiency. Furthermore, Beinhoff (2014), who also included advanced and intermediate English proficiency levels, found that listeners’ English proficiency affected the evaluations of strongly-accented speakers. This might imply that strong accents have more effects than moderate accents on speaker evaluations by

listeners with different English proficiency levels. Thus, for further research, it would be advised to also include strong accents.

A final limitation is that the listener group in our study were students without much experience with hiring employees, therefore, for future research, it is advisable to select participants with more experience concerning the employment context.

### **General conclusion**

Similar to previous studies (e.g. Hendriks et al., 2016; Hendriks et al., 2018; Hendriks et al., 2021; Nejari et al., 2012), our study showed that moderately-accented Dutch received more negative evaluations than standard British English, suggesting that the implications for moderately-accented non-native speakers in international employment contexts are quite serious because they might be evaluated against the native English speaker pronunciation norm and thereby, may be considered as less suitable for jobs in which the use of English is required. This finding is relevant in today's globalised world since an increasing number of international businesses are adopting ELF and are often hiring employees who speak English with a non-native accent. Therefore, employers of international businesses should be made aware of the potential implications for non-native speakers of English to prevent unfavourable evaluations during job interviews that jeopardise employability.

However, the present study did not find any effects of listeners' English proficiency on non-native accented speaker evaluations in an employment setting, although Beinhoff (2014) revealed that English proficiency of the listener can affect evaluations of non-native speakers. As mentioned earlier, one of the differences between the investigation by Beinhoff (2014) and the present study is that Beinhoff (2014) included a strong accent, while our study involved a moderate accent. Additionally, the first language of the Spanish listeners in Beinhoff's study does not belong to the same language family as English. To conclude, this implies that further research is needed on the impact of listeners' English proficiency on speaker evaluations in an employment setting, however, to effectively do so, a strong non-native accent, as well as listeners with a mother tongue that is more distant to English, should be included.

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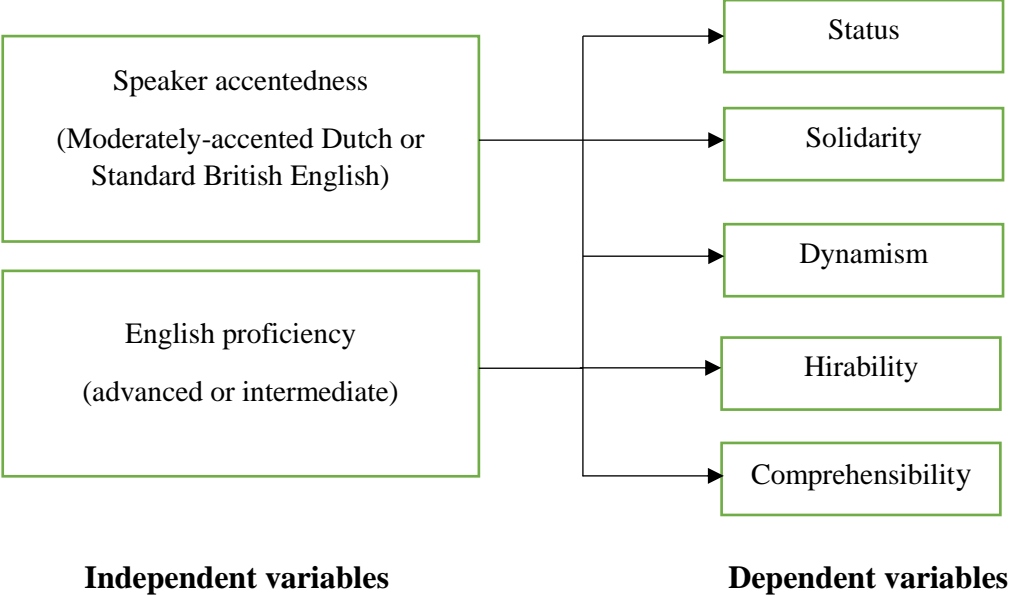
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# Appendix

## Appendix A: The analytical model of the present study



## **Appendix B: Pre-test**

Recognition of the native speakers was measured with a 7-point Likert scale introduced by ‘this speaker sounds like a native speaker of English’, and anchored by ‘completely disagree – completely agree’ (based on Jesney, 2004). Recognition of the moderately-Dutch accented speakers was measured with a 7-point Likert scale introduced by ‘this speaker has a strong foreign accent in English’, and anchored by ‘completely disagree – completely agree’ (based on Jesney, 2004). Additionally, the listeners were asked ‘which country do you think this speaker is from’ using a dropdown menu with numerous answer options (based on Nejjari et al. 2020).

Comprehensibility of the speakers was measured with a 7-point Likert scale introduced by ‘I think the speaker is easy to understand’, anchored by ‘strongly disagree’ – ‘strongly agree’ (based on Munro et al., 2006)

In addition to the recognition of accents, the students answered six questions about the speakers’ voice characteristics, namely: pleasant voice, natural voice, loud voice, dynamism, speaker pace, and speaker age. Pleasant voice, natural voice, and loud voice were measured with a 7-point Likert scale introduced by ‘this speaker has a’, and anchored by ‘completely disagree – completely agree’ (based on Bayard., Weatherall., Gallois., & Pittam, 2001; Jesney, 2004). Dynamism was measured with a 7-point Likert scale introduced by ‘this speaker sounds energetic’, anchored by ‘completely disagree – completely agree’ (based on Nejjari et al. 2020). Speaker pace was measured with a 7-point Likert scale introduced by ‘what is the speaker’s pace’, and anchored by ‘slow – fast’ (based on Jesney, 2004). Speaker age was measured through a multiple-choice menu introduced by ‘how old do you think the speaker is’, containing the options ‘15 – 20, 20 – 25, 25 – 30, 35 – or higher’.

## Appendix C: Questionnaire

Beste deelnemer,

Hierbij bent u uitgenodigd om deel te nemen aan het onderzoek naar de beoordeling van verschillende sollicitanten. Dit onderzoek wordt gedaan door studenten aan de Radboud Universiteit die momenteel werken aan hun scriptie over het zojuist genoemde onderwerp.

Deelname aan dit onderzoek betekent dat u een online enquête zult invullen. De vragen in de enquête zullen gaan over een korte opname van een sollicitant, die u zult beoordelen op basis van verschillende stellingen over deze sollicitant. Daarom is het belangrijk dat het geluid van het apparaat waarmee u meedoet aan dit onderzoek AAN staat. Na de stellingen over de sollicitant, zult u nog gevraagd worden een korte vocabulaire test te maken. Het invullen van de enquête zal ongeveer 10-15 minuten duren.

Daarnaast is het belangrijk om te weten dat u specifiek sollicitanten zult horen voor de positie van een International Communication Officer. Taken die bij deze functie horen zijn onder andere het coördineren van interne en externe communicatie en het behouden van internationale relaties.

De resultaten van het onderzoek zullen worden gebruikt voor onze scripties. Vanzelfsprekend zullen uw antwoorden compleet anoniem blijven en zal er discreet met de resultaten worden omgegaan volgens de richtlijnen van de Radboud Universiteit.

Uw deelname aan dit onderzoek is volkomen vrijwillig. Dat betekent dat u uw deelname op elk moment kan stopzetten tijdens het experiment. Alle data die tot dat punt verzameld is, zal dan later worden vernietigd.

Als dank voor uw deelname maakt u kans op een [bol.com](https://www.bol.com) cadeaukaart t.w.v. €20. Voor verdere vragen kunt u contact opnemen met Yuri Segers ([yurisegers@student.ru.nl](mailto:yurisegers@student.ru.nl)).

Als u de hierop volgende enquête invult, betekent dat u bevestigt dat u:

- 18 jaar of ouder bent
- Vrijwillig deelneemt aan het onderzoek
- Akkoord gaat met de voorwaarden
- Alle informatie hierboven gelezen heeft

Met vriendelijke groet,

Emilija, Femke, Liina, Tamar, en Yuri

1. Ik zou mijn Engelse schrijfvaardigheid beoordelen als

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Zeer slecht	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Zeer goed

2. Ik zou mijn Engelse spreekvaardigheid beoordelen als

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Zeer slecht	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Zeer goed

3. Ik zou mijn Engelse leesvaardigheid beoordelen als

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Zeer slecht	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Zeer goed

4. Ik zou mijn Engelse luistervaardigheid beoordelen als

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Zeer slecht	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Zeer goed

5. Wat is je leeftijd?

---

6. Wat is je geslacht?

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

- Man
- Vrouw
- Zeg ik liever niet
- Anders: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Heb je ooit een vak gevolgd over Human Resource Management?

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

Ja

Nee

8. Heb je ervaring met het aannemen van personeel?

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

Ja

Nee

9. Ik vind de spreker makkelijk te begrijpen

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

10. Ik vind de spreker moeilijk te begrijpen

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

11. Ik vind de spreker duidelijk te begrijpen

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

12. De spreker klinkt competent

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

13. De spreker klinkt geschoold

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

14. De spreker klinkt gezaghebbend

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

15. De spreker klinkt intelligent

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

16. De spreker klinkt ontwikkeld

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

17. De spreker klinkt energiek

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

18. De spreker klinkt enthousiast

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

19. De spreker klinkt zelfverzekerd

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

20. De spreker klinkt aantrekkelijk

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

21. De spreker klinkt welwillend

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

22. De spreker klinkt zoals ik

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

23. De spreker klinkt betrouwbaar

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

24. Als ik iemand zou moeten aannemen voor de functie “International Communication Officer” dan zou ik deze persoon al seen volgende soort kandidaat beschouwen

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Zeer goed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Zeer slecht

25. Ik zou aanbevelen de kandidaat aan te nemen als “International Communication Officer”

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Helemaal niet mee eens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Helemaal mee eens

26. Mijn algemene indruk van de kandidaat was

*Markeer slechts één ovaal*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Heel positief	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Heel negatief

27. Dank u wel voor het meedoen aan dit onderzoek. Het doel van het onderzoek was om in kaart te brengen of het niveau van de Engelse taal van de luisteraar een invloed heeft op het beoordelen van sollicitanten die met een bepaald accent spreken, en of er dus sprake is van discriminatie. Als u kans wilt maken op de [bol.com](http://bol.com) cadeaukaart ter waarde van €20,-, dan kunt u hieronder uw e-mailadres achterlaten. Heeft u geen interesse? Dan kunt u op verder klikken en dan is de vragenlijst voltooid.

---



## **Appendix D: Audio script**

*“It’s my ambition to work as an international communication officer for an internationally operating insurance agency, which provides various forms of insurance to businesses and other organisations. I’m highly motivated to make sure that all communication between the company, the subsidiaries and the clients, domestically as well as globally, runs smoothly. It appeals to me that I often get to travel to other countries, attend meetings, and give presentations. What I like most about this job is its diversity. I believe that every workday is different from the other and that I will regularly get to meet new, interesting people, especially when travelling to other countries. Generally speaking, I really enjoy jobs in which you get to deal with many different types of people, particularly because I’m a very adaptable person, although sometimes, it can be quite demanding. There are always many deadlines that need to be met, which can be really challenging. However, I really like to be challenged since it gives me lots of satisfaction, which is in my opinion, the most essential aspect of a job. I’m convinced that I’m suitable for the position of international communication officer because of my experience in communication, my knowledge about insurance policies, my high degree of adaptability and my hands-on mentality. I’d be honoured if you considered me for the job”.*

## Appendix E: LexTALE test

### Vocabulaire Test

Deze test bestaat uit ongeveer 60 vragen, bij elke vraag zult u een combinatie van letters zien. Uw taak is om te beslissen of deze combinatie van letters een bestaand Engels woord is of niet. Als u denkt dat het een bestaand woord is, dan mag u een X in de kolom “Woord?” zetten, en als u denkt dat het NIET een bestaand woord is, dan laat u de kolom leeg.

Als u zeker weet dat het woord bestaat, al kent u de precieze betekenis van het woord niet, dan mag u nog steeds met ‘ja’ antwoorden/ een X in de “Woord?” kolom zetten. Maar, als u niet zeker weet of het woord bestaat, dan hoeft u GEEN “X” in de “Woord?” kolom te zetten.

In dit experiment, gebruiken we de Brits Engelse spelling in plaats van de Amerikaans Engelse spelling. Bijvoorbeeld, “realise” in plaats van “realize”; “colour” in plaats van “color”, enzovoorts. Laat dit u alstublieft niet verwarren. Het doel van het experiment is toch niet om zulke subtiele verschillen in spelling op te merken. U heeft voor elke beslissing zo veel tijd als u wilt. Dit onderdeel van het experiment kost ongeveer 5 minuten.

Stimulus	Woord?	Stimulus	Woord?	Stimulus	Woord?
platory		spaunch		magrity	
denial		allied		nourishment	
generic		slain		abergy	
mensible		recipient		proom	
scornful		exprate		turmoil	
stoutly		eloquence		carbohydrate	
ablaze		cleanliness		scholar	
kermshaw		dispatch		turtle	
moonlit		rebondicate		fellick	
lofty		ingenious		destription	
hurricane		bewitch		cylinder	
flaw		skave		ensorship	
alberation		plaintively		celestial	
unkempt		kilp		rascal	
breeding		interfate		purrage	
festivity		hasty		pulsh	
screech		lengthy		muddy	
savoury		fray		quirty	
plaudate		crumper		pudour	
shin		upkeep		listless	
fluid		majestic		wrought	

## Appendix F: Statement of own work

Sign this *Statement of own work* form and add it as the last appendix in the final version of the Bachelor's thesis that is submitted as to the first supervisor.

Student name: Yuri Segers

Student number: s1063082

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- b. I also declare that I have only submitted text written in my own words
- c. I certify that this thesis is my own work and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation, whether they be books, articles, reports, lecture notes, and any other kind of document, electronic or personal communication.

Signature:

Place and date: