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THE INTERSECTION OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL
HIERARCHY IN BRITISH ENGLISH: EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN ACCENT AND STATUS

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Introduction

Language and society are inherently interconnected, with linguistic diversity often reflecting and perpetuating social hierarchies. In recent years, there has been growing interest in the relationship between accent and social hierarchy in British English, as researchers have sought to understand how linguistic diversity intersects with social inequality. This master's thesis seeks to explore the complex relationship between linguistic diversity and social hierarchy in British English, specifically examining how accent plays a role in determining social status.

The relevance of this topic lies in its potential to shed light on the ways in which language use impacts social relationships and perceptions of identity. Furthermore, as British English is a widely spoken and diverse language, understanding the various accents and dialects and their social implications is crucial for effective communication and societal integration.

This research aims to investigate the relationship between accent and social status in British English, addressing the following research questions:

1. How are British accents perceived in terms of social status?
2. How important is accent for determining social status in British society?
3. Does accent-based discrimination exist in contemporary British society?
4. How do individuals perceive the relationship between accent and social status in British society, as evidenced by attitudes towards changing accents to fit in and preserving accents?

By using various theoretical frameworks for understanding the relationship between language and social identity, this study will analyze how accents can be linked to specific social classes and perceptions of status. The research will explore the social implications of accent variation in British English and the ways in which linguistic diversity and social hierarchies intersect to shape perceptions of identity and status.

The object of the study is the intersection of linguistic diversity and social hierarchy in British English, with a specific focus on the relationship between accent and status.

The theoretical and methodological framework for this study includes the analysis of sociolinguistic academic materials, as well as non-experimental descriptive research. By using a multi-faceted approach to data collection, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between accent and status in British English.

The novelty and practical significance of this study lie in its use of modern quantitative techniques to shed light on the relationship between accent and social hierarchy in British English. While previous research has explored the association between accent and social status, this study adds to the existing literature by providing more precise and accurate data than previous studies that may have relied on less advanced data collection methods. This methodology allows for a more systematic and rigorous examination of the topic, contributing to the development of a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between accent and social hierarchy in British English. This study's findings can have implications for various fields, including education, business, and media, by raising awareness of the potential biases and discrimination that people may face based on their accents.

The structure of this thesis. This thesis consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, a summary, a list of literature, and sources. **The total volume** of the thesis is 100 pages, with 81 pages dedicated to the main text. The table of contents is included at the beginning of the thesis, providing a clear overview of the content and structure of the work. The thesis includes concise conclusions at the end of each chapter. In addition, the overall conclusions at the end of the thesis provide a comprehensive summary of the findings and implications of the study.

Chapter 1 has two sections and 12 subsections. This chapter provides a contextualization of the linguistic diversity and social hierarchy in British English. Chapter 2 has two sections and five subsections. It focuses on the methodology and data collection techniques used in this study. Chapter 3 has three sections and presents the findings and analysis of the data, as well as limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 1. CONTEXTUALIZING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL HIERARCHY IN BRITISH ENGLISH

1.1. An overview of the linguistic diversity in British English.

Language is a crucial aspect of human communication and identity, shaping the way we interact with others and the world around us. In the context of British English, there is significant linguistic diversity, with different varieties of English spoken across the country. This chapter aims to provide an overview of the linguistic diversity in British English, including the different dialects and accents, as well as the social and cultural factors that have influenced their development.

However, before we delve into the linguistic diversity of British English, we believe it is important to mention that there has been some controversy and debate within the field of linguistics regarding the distinction between accent and dialect. Some linguists argue that accent and dialect are inseparable aspects of language variation, and that drawing a clear distinction between them is artificial and unhelpful. They point out that differences in pronunciation are often closely linked to differences in grammar, vocabulary, and usage, and that the boundaries between accents and dialects can be blurry or difficult to define. For instance, John Honey wrote about the inseparability of accent and dialect in his book "Language is Power: The Story of Standard English and its Enemies", first published in 1997. In this book, Honey argues that the distinction between accent and dialect is artificial, and that language variation is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a simple binary distinction. He also explores the history of the English language and the social and cultural factors that have shaped its development over time. [45]

Another linguist who suggested that accent and dialect cannot be separated or understood independently of each other is William Labov. In his book "The Atlas of North American English: Phonetics, Phonology, and Sound Change" (2006) he presents the results of a large-scale study of the phonetic and phonological features of North American English, and he argues that accent and dialect are complex and interconnected phenomena that cannot be understood in isolation from each other. He also emphasizes the importance of considering the social and historical factors that

shape language variation, and he advocates for a more nuanced and sophisticated approach to the study of accent and dialect. [59]

Other linguists, however, maintain that it is important to distinguish between accent and dialect, as they represent different aspects of language variation that are shaped by different factors and have different social and cultural implications. A. Hughes, P. Trudgill, and D. Watt in their book “English Accents & Dialects” discuss the distinction between the terms “dialect” and “accent”. According to them, a dialect is a language variety that differs in grammar and vocabulary from other varieties, while accent refers only to variations in pronunciation. The authors, however, note that some people use the term dialect to refer to a characteristic combination of phonetic features, which is what they define as an accent. The book emphasizes the importance of using the terms correctly and not mixing them up. [47]

Despite this ongoing debate, many language researchers continue to use the terms "accent" and "dialect" as distinct categories, and to study how they intersect and overlap in different language communities.

In this thesis, we define the term “accent” as the way in which words are pronounced by a speaker or a group of speakers, including the way that individual sounds or vowels are pronounced, as well as intonation, stress, and rhythm. We believe that accent can vary according to regional, social, or cultural factors, and it can be influenced by a speaker's native language, age, gender, or education, among other things. Since in this thesis the focus is on the relationship between accent and social status, we will explore how an individual's accent can be influenced by their social background and how accent can be used as a marker of social identity and class. Specifically, we will examine the ways in which certain accents are associated with particular social groups, and how these associations can impact an individual's opportunities and experiences in society.

Having examined the issue of accent definition, attention will now turn to the linguistic diversity of the UK. British English can be divided into a range of dialects and accents that vary according to geographic location, social class, and other factors. There are many different accents of British English, as the language has evolved over

time and has been influenced by various regional, social, and historical factors. In this chapter, we will delve deeper into the particularities of some of the most distinctive accents in British English. From the vowel sounds of the West Country accent to the glottal stops of Cockney, each of these accents has its own unique features and cultural associations.

1.1.1. Received Pronunciation

Given its historical and cultural significance, the accent known as "Received Pronunciation" (RP) will be discussed first. RP is often considered the "standard" or "neutral" accent of British English, and it is associated with educated, upper-class speakers in southern England. Since RP has a rich historical and cultural significance, having been associated with the upper classes and educated speakers in Britain for centuries, it is an important part of the country's linguistic and social history. RP has been used as a model for standard English pronunciation in many contexts, such as in education and broadcasting. RP is a complex and multifaceted accent of British English that has been the subject of extensive research in linguistics and sociolinguistics.

One of the most well-known studies of RP was conducted by John Wells in 1982. In his book "Accents of English" Wells examined the historical development of RP, tracing its roots back to the speech of the upper classes in the 18th and 19th centuries. He argues that RP originated in the late 18th century as a way for upper-class Britons to distinguish themselves from the lower classes, and was originally known as "Public School English" because it was primarily taught in elite boarding schools. According to him, RP gained widespread acceptance in the 19th century when it became associated with the British Empire and the idea of "proper" English. It was seen as a symbol of education, refinement, and social status. RP has been the accent of choice for British actors since the early 20th century, and it is often associated with characters who are intelligent, sophisticated, and posh. This has helped to perpetuate its status as a prestigious accent. J.C. Wells also mentions that despite its association with social status, RP has also been criticized for being elitist

and exclusionary. It has been accused of perpetuating class divisions in British society and contributing to discrimination against people with regional accents. [84]

Another important contribution to the understanding of the connection between RP and the upper class in British society is David Rosewarne's 1984 work "Received Pronunciation and the RP Accent". While J.C. Wells, in "Accents of English", focuses on the historical development of RP as a way for the upper class to distinguish themselves from the lower classes, David Rosewarne, in "Received Pronunciation and the RP accent", highlights how RP has been used to perpetuate social class distinctions in British society. Rosewarne argues that RP has played a significant role in perpetuating social class distinctions in British society. He notes that the use of RP is still associated with education and social status, and that people who speak RP are often perceived as more intelligent and sophisticated than those with regional accents. This, in turn, contributes to the marginalization and discrimination of people with non-RP accents, particularly in the workplace and in the media and entertainment industries.[70]

Peter Trudgill's "Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society" is another important work that explores the connection between RP and social class in British society. Trudgill's perspective on RP is similar to that of Wells and Rosewarne, but he offers some unique insights and perspectives. He argues that RP is not simply a marker of social class, but also a means of social control. He notes that RP has been used to maintain the status quo in British society, by creating and reinforcing social hierarchies based on accent and pronunciation. Trudgill also highlights the importance of "accent prejudice" in British society, where people are judged and discriminated against based on their accents.

Trudgill's work also emphasizes the changing status of RP in British society. He notes that in the past, RP was seen as the "correct" way to speak English, but that this view has become increasingly outdated in recent years. Trudgill argues that the rise of regional accents and the increasing diversity of British society have contributed to the decline of RP as a symbol of social status. [80]

While Trudgill's work is similar to that of Wells and Rosewarne in its exploration of the connection between RP and social class, it offers some unique perspectives on the role of RP in maintaining social hierarchies and the changing status of RP in British society.

However, some researchers have explored the social significance of RP, examining how it is perceived and used in different contexts. For instance, Jennifer Jenkins wrote about attitudes towards RP among English speakers from different countries in her book "The Phonology of English as an International Language: New Models, New Norms, New Goals". Jenkins argues that RP has lost its status as the dominant variety of English due to the growth of English as a global language. She also suggests that English language teaching should take into account the diversity of Englishes spoken worldwide, rather than privileging a single standard. [48; 123]

Another researcher who has questioned the cultural and social power dynamics that underpin the use of RP is Adrian Blackledge. In his book "Linguistic Capital and Language Policy in England". According to him, "RP continues to function as a powerful linguistic symbol of social and cultural capital. It is not merely a linguistic marker of social class, but is implicated in the reproduction of social inequalities, as the cultural and linguistic domination of RP reinforces existing power structures and marginalizes speakers of other accents and dialects". [9; 81] In the book, Blackledge examines how language policy in England has contributed to the maintenance of social and linguistic hierarchies, and explores the potential for language policy to challenge these hierarchies and promote linguistic diversity and social justice.

In her article, "Mobility, contact and an accent norm: The Case of Received Pronunciation," A. Fabricius notes that the Received Pronunciation (RP) accent has historically been associated with high social status, with individuals who speak RP being perceived as more educated and cultured than those who do not.

The author also notes the systematic ambiguity of the term RP, which covers both the vernacular of individuals for whom RP is their native variety and the more or less conscious and consistent construct of pronunciation norms and accent attitudes.

She emphasizes the importance of keeping these two concepts separate, as construct RP tends to fall behind in terms of linguistic change compared to native RP.

One interesting finding of Fabricius' review is that the relationship between RP and social status has shifted over time, with the accent losing some of its prestige in recent decades. The author attributes this change to the increased mobility and contact between different regions and social classes in Britain, which has led to the emergence of new accents and dialects that challenge the traditional dominance of RP. [34]

One more research that we find particularly interesting is E. Levon, D. Sharma, D. Watt and C. Perry's project "Accent Bias in Britain. Attitudes to Accents in Britain and Implications for Fair Access", which surveyed 827 individuals in the UK to rate 38 accent labels for their prestige and pleasantness. This study found that people evaluated job candidates who spoke in a Received Pronunciation (RP) accent as more informed and suitable for professional employment, regardless of the content of their answers. Another part of their research consisted of asking a group of 1062 participants who work in the law industry to listen to mock job interview answers and rate the speaker's suitability for a job in a law firm. While the general population viewed the Received Pronunciation (RP) accent positively, lawyers rated it slightly lower in terms of likability. The authors suggest that "This slightly lower rating of RP may indicate high status but low solidarity associations or a higher expectation of quality answers for RP speakers – a variety stereotypically associated with higher levels of education." [60; 20]

All in all, Levon et al.'s study highlight the pervasive influence of accent on perceptions of professional suitability in Britain. The results suggest that the RP accent is still considered the most prestigious and suitable for professional employment, but its status is not universal, as it is viewed less positively by those in the law industry. The authors argue that these findings may reflect the stereotype of RP as a variety associated with higher levels of education and expertise, but one that also lacks solidarity and warmth.

We must conclude that despite the controversies surrounding RP, it remains an important and widely recognized accent of British English. Its use and perception continue to be the subject of research and debate among linguists, sociolinguists, and cultural commentators.

1.1.2. Estuary English

As we have previously explored the topic of Received Pronunciation (RP), it is pertinent to further delve into the development of a relatively recent accent, referred to as Estuary English. John C. Wells proposed his definition of Estuary English in "Accents of English", where he examined the phonetic features of different varieties of English. In this book, Wells coined the term "Estuary English" to refer to a variety of English spoken in the southeast of England, which he identified as a distinct accent characterized by several phonetic features, such as the use of glottal stops, the replacement of the "th" sounds with "f" or "v" sounds, and the fronting of vowels. Wells argued that Estuary English was emerging as a new standard of English, replacing Received Pronunciation as the prestige accent in many contexts. [84]

David Rosewarne defined "Estuary English" in an article he wrote for "The Times Educational Supplement" in 1984 as "a new variety of English which has developed in the southeast of England over the past decade or so" and characterized it as "non-regional and not identifiably local, but distinct from RP". [69; 27]

Dominic Watt and Carmen Llamas in their book "Language and Identity" in 2010 described Estuary English as "a variety of English characterized by the loss of certain RP features, such as rhoticity, and the adoption of features associated with local dialects, such as glottaling and the use of the vowel /æ/ in certain words where RP has /ɑ:/" [83; 58]

Estuary English has gained increasing recognition in recent years as a distinct accent and speech pattern in the southeast of England.

In her book "Estuary English: Levelling at the Interface of RP and South-Eastern British English", Ulrike Altendorf, professor of English Linguistics at Leibniz Universität Hannover, analyzed the linguistic features of Estuary English. She identified several key features of Estuary English, including the use of glottal

stops, the replacement of /θ/ with /f/ or /v/ in certain words, and the pronunciation of certain vowels in a more centralized manner. Altendorf also discussed the social and cultural factors that have contributed to the emergence and spread of Estuary English, including its association with youth culture and the media. Altendorf's work is significant because it provided a detailed analysis of the phonological features of Estuary English and its relationship to Received Pronunciation and Southeastern British English. It is important to note that her research focused on the ways in which Estuary English serves as a levelling of the linguistic features of RP and Southeastern British English, and provided evidence that this variety of English is becoming increasingly widespread in southeast England. This work contributed to a better understanding of the emergence of Estuary English as a distinct accent and its role in shaping the linguistic landscape of contemporary Britain. [1]

Despite its distinct features, the definition of Estuary English remains somewhat contentious, with some linguists questioning its coherence as a distinct accent or variety. Nonetheless, its recognition as a distinct variety has important implications for our understanding of language variation and how language is used to signal identity and social status.

One study that has explored the perceptions of Estuary English is that of David Britain and Jenny Cheshire in their article "Social Dialectology: In Honour of Peter Trudgill " (2003). They argue that Estuary English is a highly stigmatized variety that is often associated with negative stereotypes and viewed as "lower-class" or "non-standard." Their study found that speakers of Estuary English often reported feelings of stigmatization and negative social evaluations based on their accents. [12]

The emergence of Estuary English as a recognized variety highlights the importance of studying language variation and the social implications of linguistic differences. Estuary English is a fascinating area of research that sheds light on the complexity of language change and the relationship between language and social identity.

1.1.3. Cockney accent

The Cockney accent is a topic of significant interest and relevance in the field of linguistics. This accent has gained widespread recognition due to its historical and

cultural significance, distinctive phonetic features, social and regional variation, and global influence. Given these aspects, an in-depth examination of the Cockney accent is imperative, as it offers a rich opportunity for exploring the interplay between language, culture, and social identity.

Peter Trudgill has conducted extensive research on the Cockney accent of British English. One of his most influential studies was published in 1974 and titled "The Social Differentiation of English in Norwich". In this study, Trudgill analyzed the pronunciation features of working-class and middle-class speakers in Norwich, a city in the east of England. He found that working-class speakers in Norwich were more likely to use features associated with Cockney, such as glottal stops and non-rhoticity (the omission of the "r" sound in certain positions). He also found that the use of these features was more common among younger speakers, suggesting that Cockney-influenced pronunciation was spreading among the working-class population.

Trudgill's research showed that there was a clear social differentiation in the pronunciation of English in Norwich, with middle-class speakers using more standard pronunciation features, while working-class speakers used more non-standard features associated with Cockney.

According to Trudgill, the Cockney accent is a variety of English spoken in the East End of London, characterized by distinctive phonetic features and social and cultural associations. [74; 61]

In the book "English Accents & Dialects", A. Hughes, P. Trudgill, and D. Watt mentioned that Cockney has often been stigmatized as a marker of low social status, and there has been a trend towards the homogenization of English accents in recent years. However, they also note that in recent years, the appreciation for the diversity and richness of regional accents and dialects has been growing. [47; 124]

Another researcher who has written extensively about English accents and dialects, including the Cockney accent, is David Crystal. One of his works in which he discusses Cockney is "The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language". In this book, Crystal notes that the Cockney accent is one of the most famous and recognizable accents of English. It is characterized by several distinctive features,

including the use of glottal stops in place of some consonants (e.g. "bottle" pronounced as "bo'al"), non-rhoticity (i.e. the absence of the "r" sound after vowels represented by the spellings ar, er, ir, or, and ur, where the "r" is not pronounced after the vowel, and the vowel may be lengthened or modified as a result), and th-fronting (i.e. the substitution of "f" or "v" sounds for the "th" sound in certain words, e.g. "think" pronounced as "fink"). Examples of non-rhotic words include car (pronounced [ka:]), butter ([bʌtə]), bird ([bɜ:d]), door ([dɔ:]), and work ([wɜ:k]). He also describes Cockney rhyming slang, a form of slang in which a phrase is substituted for another phrase that rhymes with it (e.g. "trouble and strife" meaning "wife"), noting that it is often misunderstood and overused in popular culture. Additionally, Crystal discusses the social and cultural factors that have influenced the development of Cockney, including the history of East London, migration patterns, and the influence of media and popular culture. Overall, Crystal's discussion of Cockney in "The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language" provides a comprehensive overview of this iconic English accent. [29]

On the whole, the Cockney accent has been extensively researched in the field of linguistics due to its prominence as one of the most recognizable and well-known accents of English. The use of Cockney features has been influenced by a variety of social and cultural factors, encompassing the dynamic socio-economic, demographic, and cultural changes, the influence of media and popular culture, and the changing perceptions of language and identity.

1.1.4. Geordie accent

The subsequent accent to be examined is Geordie. This is an accent spoken in the northeast of England, particularly in and around Newcastle and surrounding areas. It is characterized by several phonological features, such as the use of a raised vowel in words like "trap" and "bath," which are pronounced as [tʃɪæ:p] and [bɑ:θ] respectively.

Additionally, the Geordie accent is non-rhotic, which means that the "r" sound is only pronounced when it precedes a vowel, while it is not pronounced when it comes at the end of a word or before a consonant.

Another characteristic of the Geordie accent noted by A. Gralinska-Brawata in her article "Speech as a marker of social identity – Geordie English" is "the presence of the sound /ʊ/ in places where in Standard English one could hear //ʌ//." For example, in Standard English, the word "cut" is pronounced with the vowel sound /ʌ/, but in the Geordie accent, it is pronounced with the vowel sound /ʊ/, as "coot". Similarly, the word "love" is pronounced with the vowel sound /ʌ/ in Standard English, but in the Geordie accent, it is pronounced with the vowel sound /ʊ/, as "luv". [41; 110] This is also known as the "Goose vowel" or "oo" substitution, where /ʌ/ is replaced by /ʊ/. The term "Goose vowel" was first used by J.C. Wells in "Accents of English" (1982). [84]

Joan Beal has written extensively about the Geordie accent and its use of glottal stops. In her book "English in Modern Times: 1700-1945", she notes that glottal stops are a feature of the accent that is used in place of /t/ and /d/ sounds in certain positions.

Beal observes that in Geordie English, glottal stops are often used in place of /t/ and /d/ sounds that occur between vowels, as well as at the end of a word before a pause. For example, the word "bottle" may be pronounced with a glottal stop in place of the /t/ sound, so that it is pronounced as "bo'al". She also notes that the use of glottal stops is not unique to the Geordie accent and is found in many other varieties of English. However, she argues that the frequency and distribution of glottal stops in the Geordie accent are distinct from other accents, giving the accent a unique character. [3]

Other features of the Geordie accent include the use of the fronted "u" sound, pronounced as [ʊ:], in words like "bus" and "sun" and the use of the voiced dental fricative [ð] instead of the voiceless dental fricative [θ] in words like "bath" and "bother", so that they sound like "bað" and "boðer".

The Geordie accent has been the subject of several linguistic studies. For example, in his book "Accents of English," John C. Wells describes the Geordie accent as having a "distinctive and well-defined regional character". [84; 388] Wells notes that the Geordie accent has a "broad" variant, which is associated with working-class speakers, as well as a "less broad" variant, which is associated with middle-class speakers.

Similarly, in the book "The Handbook of Language Variation and Change" J.K. Chambers notes that the Geordie accent has distinctive features that distinguish it from other dialects of English. He highlights the use of the raised "a" sound and the non-rhotic "r," and notes that these features are particularly prevalent in working-class speech. [16; 335]

Sebastian Nickel's work "The Geordie Dialect: On Language Identity and the Social Perception of Tyneside English" discusses the social perception and identity of the Geordie dialect, particularly as it relates to working-class communities in the North East of England. Nickel argues that the Geordie dialect is strongly associated with working-class identity and is often stigmatized by those outside the community. He also notes that there is a connection between the use of the Geordie dialect and perceptions of regional identity, particularly in terms of the dialect's association with Newcastle and the surrounding Tyneside area. [65]

It is important to note that in recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the cultural value of the Geordie accent and an increased awareness of the negative effects of linguistic discrimination. Many people from the region now take pride in their accent and its distinctive features, and there is a growing movement to celebrate and promote the use of local dialects in the UK. [15; 55]

On the whole, the Geordie accent is a well-documented dialect of English, with numerous studies exploring its phonological features, history, and social associations.

1.1.5. Yorkshire accent

The Yorkshire accent is a regional accent of the English language spoken in the county of Yorkshire in northern England. It is particularly interesting because it is

one of the most distinctive and recognizable accents in the country. This accent has a unique set of phonetic and grammatical features that set it apart from other accents in England.

J. C. Wells has written extensively on English accents, including the Yorkshire accent. In "Accents of English", Wells provides a detailed description of the phonetics of the Yorkshire accent, including its vowel system and consonant sounds. He notes that one of the most prominent features of the accent is the use of a flat "a" sound, which can be heard in words like "bath" and "dance." This sound is produced with the tongue positioned lower in the mouth than in standard English. [84; 134]

According to the phonetician Dominic Watt, another notable feature is the use of a raised "u" sound, which can be heard in words like "up" and "cut." This sound is produced with the tongue positioned higher in the mouth than in standard English.[82; 17]

In their 1999 work, "Dialectlevelingg: change and continuity in Milton Keynes, Reading and Hull", Ann Williams and Paul Kerswill examined the phenomenon of dialect levelling, which refers to the process by which distinct regional accents and dialects of a language gradually become more similar to one another over time. The authors compared three different regions in England: Milton Keynes, Reading, and Hull, and analyzed how the local accents and dialects in these areas had changed over time. [86]

Regarding the Yorkshire accent, the authors found that there had been some evidence of dialect levelling occurring in this region, particularly in urban areas such as Hull. They noted that younger speakers of the Yorkshire accent were less likely to use traditional regional features, such as the distinctive "flat a" sound in words like "bath" and "grass", and were more likely to use features that were associated with more standard varieties of English. However, they also noted that the extent of levelling varied depending on the specific features being analyzed and that some traditional Yorkshire features were still present among younger speakers.

The sociolinguistic implications of the Yorkshire accent have also been studied. One study found that the accent is associated with social class, with people from

lower socioeconomic backgrounds being more likely to use the accent than those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Another study found that the accent is associated with regional identity, with people from Yorkshire using the accent as a way of identifying themselves as part of the local community.

Overall, the linguistic and sociolinguistic literature on the Yorkshire accent provides a rich and nuanced understanding of this distinct regional accent. From its distinctive phonetics to its grammar and sociolinguistic implications, the Yorkshire accent has been the subject of extensive study and continues to be a fascinating area of research.

In "Language is Power: The Story of Standard English and Its Enemies," John Honey notes that the Yorkshire accent is generally perceived as being associated with working-class speakers, and that it is often stigmatized or dismissed as being "uncultured" or "uneducated." He argues that such attitudes reflect broader social prejudices against working-class people and their language varieties. He notes that the Yorkshire accent is a diverse set of dialects, which vary depending on factors such as region, social class, and age. He also points out that many of the linguistic features associated with the Yorkshire accent, such as the use of double negatives or the omission of the "h" sound in certain words, can be traced back to older forms of English and are not necessarily markers of poor education or intellect. [45]

1.1.6. Scouse accent

The Scouse accent is a dialect of English that is primarily spoken in the city of Liverpool and its surrounding areas. As one of the most distinctive regional accents in England, the Scouse accent has garnered significant attention from linguists and researchers alike.

Gerald Knowles' 1973 PhD thesis on the Scouse accent provides an in-depth analysis of the phonetic characteristics of the Liverpool accent. The thesis examines the vowel and consonant systems of Scouse, as well as stress, intonation, and rhythm.

Knowles notes that Scouse is characterized by several distinct vowel sounds, including a monophthongal realization of the diphthongs /aɪ/ and /aʊ/, as well as the

use of a vowel that is somewhere between /ɛ/ and /æ/. Scouse also features a distinctive realization of the "short u" vowel as a front vowel, often transcribed as /ö/. [54; 38-41]

P. Honeybone in "New-dialect formation in nineteenth century Liverpool: a brief history of Scouse. Liverpool" mentioned the phonetic characteristic known as TH-stopping as one of the most important characteristics of the Scouse accent. It refers to the replacement of voiced and unvoiced dental fricatives ([ð] and [θ]) with a dental or alveolar stop consonant ([t] or [d]). For instance, the word "thin" [θɪn] can be realized as "tin" [tɪn], and "then" [ðɛn] can be pronounced as "den" [dɛn]. [46; 106]

In his study "Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism" J. Belchem mentions that "Scousers articulate a constant stream of prosodic patterns and segmental features which distinguish them unmistakably as Liverpudlians." [6' 141] He also demonstrates unique characteristics of the Scouse accent by comparing the pronunciation of the word 'back' in RP and Liverpool accents. He notes that in RP, the word is transcribed as /bak/, while in Scouse, it is transcribed as /bax/. Belchem highlights that although both accents use a short-a sound, Liverpudlian speakers use a voiceless, velar fricative phoneme represented by [x], which can be described as an aspirated 'h' made in the throat, similar to the sound of the Spanish 'j'. This phoneme is rarely used in English, except in Liverpudlian and some Scottish English accents.

Intonation is another key characteristic of the Scouse accent. According to linguistic and sociolinguistic research, Scouse has a distinctive melody and intonation pattern, with a rising tone at the end of statements and a falling tone at the end of questions, which is different from other British accents (e.g., RP). Scousers also tend to use rising intonation for emphasis and to express surprise or disbelief. Furthermore, the Scouse accent is known for its use of glottal stops, which are a type of consonant made by stopping the airflow in the throat. These stops are used in place of some sounds, such as the /t/ sound in the middle or end of words, which is another distinctive feature of Scouse intonation. [68]

Peter Trudgill has written about the relationship between the Scouse accent and social class in his book "The Dialects of England". Trudgill notes that the Scouse

accent is associated with working-class identity and is characterized by several phonological features, such as the fronting of the vowels in "goat" and "goose" and the use of a glottal stop in place of the "t" sound in certain words. Trudgill argues that these features are more common among working-class speakers of Scouse than among middle-class speakers, suggesting a connection between the accent and social class. [75]

A 2005 article "The Origins of Scouse" by Paul Coslett published on the BBC website explored the Scouse accent and how it is perceived by different people. The author notes that this accent has been stigmatized in the past, with negative perceptions of its association with working-class people and a lack of education. However, the Scouse accent has become more widely accepted and celebrated in recent years, particularly with the rise of popular cultural figures from Liverpool such as The Beatles and footballer Steven Gerrard. [21]

1.1.7. Brummie accent

Brummie is an accent spoken in Birmingham and the surrounding areas, and it is characterized by features such as the pronunciation of "a" as "ay," the use of "bab" as a term of endearment, and the tendency to "glide" between certain vowel sounds.

Several linguists have explored the connection between the Brummie accent and social class. For example, in the book "Language in the British Isles," edited by David Britain, Paul Kerswill notes that the Brummie accent is often associated with working-class speech, particularly in its traditional form. [13; 52] Similarly, in the book "The Handbook of Language Variation and Change" by J.K. Chambers and N. Schilling, authors discuss the social and historical factors that have influenced the development of the Brummie accent, and notes that it has often been associated with working-class communities in the region. [16; 350]

Another sociolinguist who has conducted research on the Brummie accent is Jenny Cheshire. In her book "English Around the World: Sociolinguistic Perspectives," she discusses the distinct features of the Brummie accent and how they are used by different social groups. Cheshire notes that the Brummie accent is

characterized by features such as the use of the vowel sound in "bus" for the word "up," and the substitution of the "th" sound with an "f" or "v" sound in certain words, such as "fink" for "think" and "vick" for "thick." She also notes that the use of these features varies by social class, with working-class speakers using them more frequently than middle-class speakers.

Cheshire has conducted research on the use of non-standard grammatical constructions in the Brummie dialect, such as the use of double negation and the absence of the copula verb "be" in certain contexts. She has found that these constructions are also more prevalent in working-class speech.

Additionally, Cheshire has argued that the perception of the Brummie accent as uneducated or unintelligent is misplaced, and that such attitudes are often based on prejudices rather than objective linguistic facts. [17]

It is important to mention that the Brummie accent has often been stigmatized and considered less attractive than other British accents. For example, a survey conducted by YouGov in 2013 found that only 37% found the Brummie accent attractive. The survey was conducted on 42 accents and dialects, and the results showed that the British public has a clear preference for certain accents. According to the survey, the Brummie accent from Birmingham was found to be the least popular, followed by the Scouse, Mancunian, and Cockney accents. [88]

Furthermore, the study by J. Dixon, B. Mahoney and R. Cocks "Accents of Guilt: Effects of Regional Accent, Race, and Crime Type on Attributions of Guilt" investigated the effects of regional accent, race, and crime type on attributions of guilt in a simulated criminal case. Specifically, the study aimed to examine whether speakers of different regional accents (including Brummie and RP) were perceived differently in terms of guilt depending on the race of the speaker and the type of crime committed. It was found that participants were more likely to attribute guilt to a suspect when they spoke with a Brummie accent compared to a standard British accent. [31]

Another study that describes the perception of the Brummie accent in British society is the one conducted by OnBuy.com in 2020. Over 2,000 people were

surveyed in order to investigate the trustworthiness of regional accents in the UK, and found that the Brummie accent was ranked the least trustworthy by the majority of respondents. Participants cited reasons such as the accent sounding uneducated, lazy, and lacking intelligence. [68]

The negative perception of the Brummie accent can be attributed to its association with the Midlands region of England, which has a historically working-class background. According to K. Malarski, “The bias against the Birmingham accent could be because it has traditionally been an industrial city with a large proportion of inhabitants coming from lower socioeconomic classes.” This has led to assumptions that the accent is indicative of lower socio-economic status, thereby becoming a marker of social class. Such perceptions are often reinforced by media portrayals and entertainment, which have perpetuated negative stereotypes and encouraged negative attitudes toward the Brummie accent.

In recent years, there have been attempts to celebrate and promote the Brummie accent as a unique and valuable part of British cultural heritage. While negative perceptions of the Brummie accent still exist, there are signs that attitudes towards it are becoming more positive, and that it is gradually being recognized as an important and distinctive part of British linguistic heritage.

1.1.8. West Country accent

West Country is an accent spoken in the southwest of England, including in areas such as Devon, Cornwall, and Somerset. It is also known as the Southwest dialect, and is one of the most distinctive and well-known accents in England. Despite its popularity and recognizable features, the West Country accent has been the subject of much debate and discussion among linguists.

One of the main characteristics of the West Country accent is its use of a non-rhotic "r," which means that speakers drop the "r" sound at the end of words and after vowels. This feature is often cited as one of the most notable aspects of the accent, and it can be heard in words such as "car" and "bar", which are pronounced as "cah" and "baa," respectively. However, it should be noted that not all speakers of the West

Country accent use this feature consistently, and it can vary depending on several factors such as age, social class, and geographical location.

A linguist and Professor of English Language at the University of Sheffield, UK Joan Beal in her book "Language and Region" discusses the dialects and accents of various regions in the UK, including the West Country. In the book, Beal notes that the West Country accent is often characterized by its distinctive intonation patterns and other distinctive features. One of the most notable features is the use of a non-rhotic "r," which is common in other southern British accents as well. Additionally, the West Country accent has several unique vowel sounds, such as the "ah" sound in "baa" instead of "bar" and the "oy" sound in "boy" instead of "buy." She also discusses the historical and social factors that have influenced the development of the accent, such as migration patterns and contact with other dialects. Beal notes that the region has a long history of being geographically isolated from the rest of the country, which has contributed to the preservation of unique linguistic features. Additionally, the West Country has been a predominantly rural and agricultural area, which has shaped the accent and vocabulary in ways that differ from urban areas. [4; 117]

Peter Trudgill in his book "The Dialects of England" discusses the relationship between the West Country accent and social class, noting that it has traditionally been associated with working-class speech. Trudgill's observations on the relationship between the West Country accent and social class are based on his extensive research on language variation and change. In his book "Sociolinguistic Variation and Change," Trudgill delves deeper into the complex interplay between language, identity, and social factors, highlighting how these factors can shape linguistic features such as accent, dialect, and vocabulary. Trudgill's research shows that social class can play a significant role in determining linguistic variation, as people from different social classes tend to have distinct linguistic patterns and preferences. He argues that social class is not the only factor that affects language use, however, and that other factors such as age, gender, and ethnicity also play a role. By exploring these issues in depth, Trudgill's work sheds light on the complex relationship between

language and society and highlights the importance of understanding linguistic variation as a key aspect of social identity. [75]

Other linguists who have written about this topic include Kate Fox, who explored the relationship between the West Country accent and social identity in her book "Watching the English: The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour". She notes that the accent is often associated with rural areas, and that it can be seen as a marker of authenticity. However, she also notes that the accent can carry negative connotations in certain contexts, particularly in more formal or professional settings. [37]

Despite its distinctive features, the West Country accent has often been stigmatized and associated with negative stereotypes. This may be due in part to its association with rural, working-class communities, which have historically been marginalized and viewed as less educated or sophisticated. However, attitudes towards the West Country accent are becoming more positive and it is gradually shedding its negative connotations. The accent is becoming more widely accepted and appreciated, particularly among younger generations.

1.1.9. Scottish accent

The Scottish accent is one of the most distinctive and recognizable accents in the world. It is spoken throughout Scotland and its variations can be heard in different regions of the country.

Arthur Hughes, Peter Trudgill, and Dominic Watt's in "English Accents & Dialects" provide an overview of the different accents and dialects found throughout England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. In their discussion of Scottish accents, they note the variety of dialects found within Scotland and the various social factors that influence language use. According to them, one of the most notable features of Scottish English is the presence of a "rolled R," where the "r" sound is pronounced with a distinctive trill. This feature is particularly prominent in Scottish English and can be heard in words like "car" or "far." Other Scottish accent characteristics include the "ch" sound in words such as "loch" and "bach" and shorter

vowels in certain words, such as "kit" instead of "keet" and "pin" instead of "peen", which is known as the "Scottish Vowel Length Rule". [50; 153-161]

A German linguist Bernd Kortmann and an English linguist specializing in dialectology and sociolinguistics Clive Upton wrote in their book "Varieties of English 1. The British Isles" that Scottish English is known for its distinctive intonation patterns, with rising intonation at the end of declarative sentences and falling intonation at the end of yes/no questions. [55; 148] These are other distinctive features of Scottish English that can help identify the accent.

The Scottish accent has a long and complex history, with many different influences shaping its development over time. One important factor in the evolution of the Scottish accent is the historical linguistic contact between Scotland and other languages, such as Gaelic and Scots. This contact led to the development of a distinct phonology that is unique to Scottish English.

In terms of regional variations, the Scottish accent can vary significantly depending on the region of Scotland in which it is spoken. For example, the Glaswegian accent is known for its distinctive vowel sounds and the use of certain idiomatic expressions, while the Edinburgh accent is known for its more refined and formal tone. The Highlands accent, on the other hand, is known for its use of Gaelic influences and its distinct intonation patterns.

Studies on the Scottish accent have explored a variety of topics, including its history, phonology, and social perceptions. In chapter 3 of "The Handbook of World Englishes" named "English in Scotland" Fiona Douglas mentions that "In the spoken mode, SC (Scottish) has covert prestige as a strong in-group identifier for certain social group". Fiona also notes that a study by BBC Voices Survey showed that "a "not too strong" Scottish accent is also perceived as desirable. [32; 48]

However, research has shown that the Scottish accent is often associated with intelligence and education, particularly in the United States where it is often romanticized. One example of such research is a study conducted by the University of Chicago, which found that American listeners rated Scottish accents as more

trustworthy and intelligent than other accents, such as Southern American or New York accents. [64]

In recent years, the Scottish accent has gained more recognition and respect both within and outside of Scotland. This can be seen in the increased representation of Scottish accents in popular media, as well as in the growing pride and celebration of Scottish culture and identity. Overall, the Scottish accent remains a unique and valued aspect of the English language and continues to play an important role in Scottish identity and culture.

1.1.10. Mancunian accent

The Mancunian accent, also known as the Manchester accent, is a distinct regional accent of English spoken in and around the city of Manchester in England. The accent has been the subject of much linguistic study, with researchers examining its phonology, syntax, and social status.

The book "Urban Voices: Accent Studies in the British Isles" by P. Foulkes and G. Docherty highlights that The Mancunian accent is known for its distinct phonological features, such as the use of the vowel sound /ʊ/ in words like "book" and "look," which is often pronounced as /ö/. It also features the use of the fronted /ou/ diphthong in words like "go" and "home," which is pronounced as /əu/. Additionally, the Mancunian accent is characterized by the use of glottal stops in place of /t/ sounds, as in the word "water." [35]

Hughes, Trudgill and Watt in "English Accents & Dialects" describe the Mancunian accent as having "t-glottaling" (pronouncing "t" as a glottal stop), which is a common feature in many urban accents in England. They also note that it has distinctive features such as the "foot-strut split," which means that words like "put" and "strut" are pronounced differently.

Another important point mentioned by the authors is that the Mancunian accent has been influenced by the local Irish community, which has contributed to the use of the "f" sound instead of "th" in words like "think" and "this." [47; 118]

The Mancunian accent has traditionally been associated with the working-class population of Manchester. However, in recent years, it has become more widely accepted and even celebrated as a symbol of Manchester's cultural identity. The Mancunian accent is also associated with the city's music scene, with bands like Oasis and The Stone Roses featuring prominent Mancunian accents in their lyrics.

In terms of social status, the Mancunian accent has been the subject of conflicting views. Some studies have suggested that the accent is associated with lower social status and negative stereotypes. However, other studies have found that the accent is becoming more socially acceptable and even associated with positive attributes, such as authenticity and friendliness.

In his PhD dissertation "Sociolinguistic Variation in a Second Language: the Influence of Local Accent on the Pronunciation of Non-Native English Speakers Living in Manchester", a British linguist Rob Drummond describes a sociolinguistic study he conducted using interviews and recordings of non-native speakers from different linguistic backgrounds living in Manchester, with a particular focus on how they adopt and adapt to the local Mancunian accent.

Drummond notes that this accent is distinctive and recognizable, and that it can be difficult for non-native English speakers to understand and imitate. He suggests that exposure to the Mancunian accent can have an impact on the pronunciation of non-native English speakers, and that this impact can be influenced by a variety of social and linguistic factors. He finds that many non-native English speakers in Manchester are influenced by the Mancunian accent, and that this influence can be both positive and negative. On the positive side, exposure to the Mancunian accent can help non-native English speakers to improve their pronunciation and fluency. However, Drummond also notes that the Mancunian accent can be difficult to understand, and that it can lead to miscommunication and misunderstandings for non-native English speakers. [33]

The study finds that non-native speakers tend to adopt features of the Mancunian accent, but the extent of adoption varies depending on their linguistic background and social networks. The work provides insights into the role of local

accents in shaping the pronunciation of non-native speakers and highlights the importance of considering sociolinguistic factors in language teaching and learning.

1.1.11. Welsh accent

The Welsh accent, including both South Wales and North Wales accents, has been the subject of much linguistic research over the years. Research has shown that the Welsh accent is distinguished by several distinct phonological features. One of the most notable is its use of a distinct "sing-song" intonation pattern, characterized by a rising and falling melody. According to Coupland, this intonation pattern is particularly prevalent in the speech of women in Wales. [24; 136]

Another distinctive feature of the Welsh accent is its use of a fronted "u" sound in words like "sun" and "fun." This is known as the "fronted u" or "Welsh u" and is often described as sounding more like the English "ee" sound. In addition, the Welsh accent is known for its use of the "rolled R," where the "r" sound is produced with a trill or vibration of the tongue. [25; 271-285]

Research has also explored the sociolinguistic aspects of the Welsh accent, including its social and regional variation. According to Trudgill and Hannah, the Welsh accent is strongly associated with Welsh identity and national pride. In fact, the Welsh accent has been identified as a marker of Welshness, with its use often seen as a way to assert one's Welsh identity and distinctiveness. [77]

In terms of regional variation, the Welsh accent differs significantly between North and South Wales. In South Wales, the accent is often described as being more musical and melodious, with a strong intonation pattern and a distinct rhythm. In contrast, the North Wales accent is often described as being more staccato, with a sharper and more abrupt rhythm. [63]

Another important aspect of the sociolinguistic variation in the Welsh accent is its relationship to social class. According to Foulkes and Docherty, the Welsh accent is strongly associated with working-class identity and is often seen as a marker of solidarity and resistance against dominant English culture. [35]

The study by Creber and Giles (1993) examined language attitudes towards Welsh and English accents in Wales, and found that the Welsh accent was generally perceived as being more friendly and sincere than the English accent. However, the Welsh accent was also perceived as having lower status and being less intelligent than the English accent, particularly in formal settings. This suggests that the Welsh accent may face negative stereotypes and attitudes in certain social contexts. [27]

Overall, the Welsh accent is a complex and multifaceted linguistic phenomenon that has been the subject of much study and analysis over the years. Its phonological and sociolinguistic characteristics reflect the rich history and cultural diversity of Wales, and its use is often seen as a way to assert Welsh identity and distinctiveness.

1.1.12. Irish accents

Irish accents have been the subject of academic literature for many years, and the research on the topic covers a broad range of areas, including phonetics, sociolinguistics, and psychology.

One key finding from research on Irish accents is the variability and diversity of accents across Ireland. Different regions and social groups have distinct accents, and these accents can vary in pronunciation, intonation, and grammar. Some studies have identified a clear north-south divide in Irish accents, while others have found more subtle regional differences.

Karen P. Corrigan is a British linguist who has written extensively on Irish English. Her research focuses on the history, structure, and social functions of Irish English, as well as its relationship with other varieties of English. One of Corrigan's key works is "Irish English, Volume 1: Northern Ireland" (2010), which provides a comprehensive overview of the linguistic features of Northern Irish English. The book examines the history of the Northern Irish accent and explores how it has been influenced by political and social factors, including the Troubles and the relationship between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It also discusses the phonology, grammar, and vocabulary of Northern Irish English, and provides examples of how these features are used in everyday speech. [19]

Corrigan has also written extensively on the social functions of Irish English, particularly about identity and the construction of regional and national affiliations. In her book "Irish English, Volume 2: The Republic of Ireland" (2013), she examines the different varieties of Irish English spoken in the Republic of Ireland and discusses how these varieties are used to signal regional and social identity. She also explores the role of Irish English in constructing national identity and its relationship with Irish Gaelic. [20]

Overall, Corrigan's work on Irish English provides valuable insights into the linguistic, historical, and social factors that shape this complex and multifaceted variety of English. Her research highlights the importance of studying the variation and diversity of English, and demonstrates the crucial role that language plays in constructing and maintaining social identities.

Studies of the phonetics and phonology of Irish accents have identified a range of distinctive features, such as the "broad" versus "slender" vowel distinction, the use of palatalized consonants, and a particular intonation pattern known as the "Irish rising tone." These features can vary across different regions and social groups. For instance, Irish linguist Raymond Hickey in his 2007 book "Irish English: History and present-day forms" provides a comprehensive overview of the phonological characteristics of Irish English, highlighting its distinctiveness and complexity as a variety of English.

He highlights the non-rhoticity of Irish English and vowel systems. According to him, Irish English has several distinct vowel systems, which can vary regionally. For example, in some regions, the vowel in "goat" is pronounced with a more open quality than in standard British English, while in others, the vowel in "trap" may be realized with a more central quality.

Hickey also notes that in some varieties of Irish English, the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ (as in "thin" and "this") are replaced with dental stops [t̪] and [d̪], respectively. This feature is known as "th-fronting" and is also found in some other varieties of English.

The linguist comments as well on the intonation, noting that Irish English is characterized by distinctive intonation patterns, including a tendency towards a rising intonation at the end of declarative statements, which can give the impression of uncertainty or hesitancy.

Another observation Hickey makes is about yet another important characteristic of Irish English - lexical stress. Like many varieties of English, Irish English typically places stress on the first syllable of multisyllabic words. However, he notes that there are some exceptions to this pattern, particularly in place names and personal names. [43]

Research has also explored social attitudes towards Irish accents, both within Ireland and in other English-speaking countries. For example, Peter Trudgill explored this topic in his work "Accent, Dialect, and the School" (1975), where he discusses the role of accents in education, particularly in relation to social class and regional identity.

In his work, Trudgill notes the significant regional variation in Irish accents, including the distinction between Northern and Southern Irish accents. He also discusses the role of the Irish accent in the construction of social identity, both in Ireland and in other English-speaking countries.

Trudgill notes that Irish accents are often associated with positive stereotypes, such as warmth and humour, but they can also be subject to negative stereotypes, particularly in the context of social class. He argues that accents can play a role in reinforcing social inequalities, with certain accents being seen as more prestigious or desirable than others.

Trudgill also discusses the influence of English on Irish accents, noting that the Irish accent is a hybrid of Irish and English features. He notes that the influence of English has been particularly strong in urban areas and among younger generations.

Overall, Trudgill's work on Irish accents highlights the complex relationship between language, identity, and social class, and the way that accents can play a role in reinforcing or challenging social inequalities. [78]

1.2. The intersection of accent and social identity: a review of sociolinguistic literature

The relationship between accent and social status has long been a topic of interest to sociolinguists. This is because accent, as a marker of social identity, can reveal a great deal about an individual's social background, education, and cultural affiliations. Many sociolinguists have explored the connection between accent and social status in their research, often examining how accent use varies across different social contexts and how it can influence perceptions of individuals and social groups.

There have been many researchers who have studied the relationship between accent and social status and have found that those with accents associated with higher social status are often perceived as more educated, intelligent, and competent than those with regional or non-standard accents.

Many prominent scholars, such as William Labov, Peter Trudgill, Pauline Jones, William McMillan, Alan Ross, James Bradac, Randall Wisegarver, Klaus Scherer, Howard Giles, Nikolas Coupland, Hywel Bishop, Jairo Fuertes, William Gottdiener, Helena Martin and Tracey Gilbert, have conducted extensive research on the intersection of accent and social identity.

One of the ground-breaking studies on the topic is "The Social Stratification of English in New York City" by William Labov, which explores the relationship between social class and language use in a particular geographic area.

Labov's study of the New York City department store in the 1960s found that employees who spoke with a more "standard" accent were more likely to be promoted to higher-paying jobs. Labov's work has been widely influential in sociolinguistics, and has paved the way for further research on the relationship between language use and social status. However, his study focused primarily on the speech of white New Yorkers, and did not fully account for the speech patterns of African American or other minority groups in the city. Despite that, Labov's study remains a seminal work in sociolinguistics, and has inspired a wealth of research on language and social inequality. [58]

Another prominent sociolinguist who has conducted groundbreaking research on language variation and change is Peter Trudgill. His seminal work on this topic has greatly contributed to our understanding of how language is used and how it evolves over time. One of his most important works is his book "Sociolinguistic Variation and Change," which outlines the main results of his experiments on language variation and change. In this book, Trudgill explores how language is influenced by social factors such as class, gender, and ethnicity. One of the main findings of the research is that language variation is strongly correlated with social class. He found that speakers from higher social classes tend to use more prestigious forms of language, while speakers from lower social classes use more vernacular forms of language. This is known as the "class dialect hypothesis". Trudgill's research also showed that language change can be influenced by social factors such as migration and urbanization. Trudgill's research on the use of regional accents in the UK showed that individuals who spoke with a standard or "received" accent were more likely to be perceived as socially and economically successful. The main thesis of Trudgill's work is that language is a social phenomenon that is shaped by a variety of social factors. He argues that language variation and change are not random processes, but are instead the result of systematic patterns of social interaction. [76]

Peter Trudgill's "The Social Differentiation of English in Norwich" is a classic study in sociolinguistics that explores the relationship between social class and language use. The study was conducted in the 1960s in Norwich, a city in eastern England, and examined the speech of individuals from different social backgrounds.

Trudgill's study found that there was a clear correlation between social class and the use of certain linguistic features. In particular, he found that individuals from higher social classes were more likely to use "standard" English, with fewer non-standard grammatical constructions and regional features, while those from lower social classes were more likely to use non-standard forms of English. [74]

One of the most notable findings of Trudgill's study was that individuals could shift their speech patterns in order to fit in with different social groups. For example, some working-class individuals would use more standard forms of English when

interacting with middle-class individuals, in order to signal their social aspirations and increase their chances of social mobility.

Trudgill's work has been influential in shaping our understanding of the relationship between language use and social class, and has inspired further research in this area. However, it is important to note that Trudgill's study focused too heavily on linguistic features, and did not fully account for other social factors that may influence language use, such as education or occupation. Another aspect that could be criticized in this work is that he used a binary social class system to categorize the participants in his study into two main groups, the working class and the middle class, based on their occupation, education, and income. The usage of a binary social class system oversimplifies the complex social stratification of English society at the time. Many sociologists argue that a binary system fails to capture the nuances and variations within each class, and it may perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices about individuals based on their class position. For instance, Pierre Bourdieu, in his book "Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste" (1979), argues that social class is not just a matter of economic capital, but also of cultural capital, which includes knowledge, skills, and cultural tastes. He suggests that a binary classification of class as either working class or middle class ignores the differences within each group and fails to capture how cultural capital is used to reproduce class inequality.

[10]

Despite these limitations, Trudgill's work made an important contribution to the field of sociolinguistics, by demonstrating the relationship between language use and social class and highlighting the need for a more nuanced approach to studying social class and language.

In "Sociolinguistic Patterns in British English" Trudgill examined the connection between accent and social class in the UK and found that there is a strong correlation between an individual's social class and their accent.

Trudgill's research shows that people from lower social classes tend to use more non-standard grammar and pronunciation, while those from higher social classes tend to use more standard grammar and pronunciation. For example, he found that

working-class people are more likely to drop their "h" sounds, say "ain't" instead of "isn't" or "aren't," and use double negatives, whereas middle and upper-class people tend to use standard grammar and pronunciation. [79]

In this work, Trudgill argues that accent is a significant marker of social class in British society, with people often using an accent to determine someone's social status. He also suggests that the relationship between accent and social class is not fixed but can change over time, as people from different social backgrounds interact and cultural norms evolve.

Overall, Trudgill's work highlights the important role that language and accent play in social stratification and highlights the need for a better understanding of how language reflects and shapes social class identities.

Scholars P. Jones and W. McMillan in their 1973 study "Speech Characteristics as a Function of Social Class and Situational Factors" investigated the relationship between social class and speech characteristics in different situational contexts. The study was conducted on a sample of 100 male university students from three different social classes - upper, middle, and lower. The researchers found that there were significant differences in speech characteristics between the social classes. The upper-class students tended to speak with a more formal, standard dialect, while the lower-class students tended to use more nonstandard dialects. The middle-class students fell somewhere in between.

Additionally, the study found that situational factors, such as the presence of an authority figure or a potential listener, also influenced speech characteristics. In situations where there was an authority figure or a listener, all three social classes tended to use a more formal dialect.

Overall, the study suggested that social class and situational factors both played a role in shaping speech characteristics, and that individuals may modify their speech based on the context and the social class of the people they are interacting with. [51]

While the study by P. Jones and W. McMillan provides valuable insights into the relationship between social class and speech characteristics, there are several limitations to the study that should be taken into account.

Firstly, the study was conducted on a sample of only 100 male university students, which may not be representative of the larger population. Moreover, the study did not account for the diversity within social classes, such as variations in ethnicity, culture, and regional dialects.

Secondly, the study was conducted in a specific context (university students), and the findings may not be generalizable to other contexts, such as different age groups, genders, or socioeconomic backgrounds.

Thirdly, the study framed nonstandard dialects as "less formal" or "deficient" compared to standard dialects, which may perpetuate stereotypes and stigmatization of nonstandard dialect speakers. The study did not take into account the social and cultural values associated with different dialects and how they may serve important communicative functions within specific communities.

Overall, while the study provides a useful starting point for understanding the relationship between social class and speech characteristics, it is important to take into account its limitations and refrain from making value judgments about different dialects or social classes based on linguistic features alone.

The issue of upper-class and non-upper-class speech was examined by Alan S.C. Ross in his 1956 study "U and Non-U (An Essay in Sociological Linguistics)" where he analyzed the speech patterns and language use of the upper class in England, particularly during the mid-twentieth century. The author argues that there is a distinct language variety used by the upper class, known as "U English," which is characterized by certain words, phrases, and grammatical structures. Ross argues that language use is an important marker of social identity and that the use of U English is a way of signaling one's social status. The book sparked a debate about the role of language in social stratification and has had a significant impact on the study of language and social class. [71; 91-106]

Another sociolinguistic research we find important is "Ascribed Status, Lexical Diversity, and Accent: Determinants of Perceived Status, Solidarity, and Control of Speech Style" by James J. Bradac and Randall Wisegarver, which investigates the relationship between various factors and the perception of status, solidarity, and

control in speech style. The article focuses on three main factors: ascribed status, lexical diversity, and accent. The authors conducted a series of experiments and found that these factors do influence how people perceive others' speech styles. Specifically, they found that higher ascribed status, greater lexical diversity, and non-standard accents are all associated with lower perceived status and control, but higher perceived solidarity. The article provides insight into the complex ways in which social and linguistic factors interact to shape perceptions of speech style.

These findings suggest that social and linguistic factors interact in complex ways to shape how people perceive speech style and the speakers who use it. The study highlights the importance of understanding how language use can signal social identity and power dynamics.

This work is important to sociolinguistics because it contributes to our understanding of how language use is linked to social identity and power dynamics. It highlights the ways in which ascribed status, lexical diversity, and accent can influence how people perceive speech style and how speakers use language to signal their social identity and assert their power. The study also provides insight into the role of linguistic features in shaping social interactions and relationships. [11]

Another relevant book in the field of sociolinguistics is "Social Markers in Speech", edited by Klaus R. Scherer and Howard Giles, which explores the relationship between language use and social identity. The book consists of a collection of essays by various scholars that examine how social markers such as accent, dialect, gender, and social class are used to signal social identity in speech. According to the authors, accent can be used to signal regional, social, and ethnic identity, and different accents are associated with different social classes and can be used to signal social status. Moreover, authors note that accent can be used as a marker of social exclusion, with non-standard accents being associated with lower social status and discrimination. Another important issue this book brings up is that speakers often modify their accents in order to fit in with a certain social group or to achieve social mobility. The book emphasizes the complex relationship between accent and social identity/social class, highlighting the role of accent in signaling

social status and exclusion. The book provides important insights into the ways in which language use is shaped by social context and the social dynamics of communication. [72]

The next article that provides a valuable contribution to the sociolinguistic literature on the intersection of accent and social identity is "Conceptual accent evaluation: Thirty years of accent prejudice in the UK" by Hywel Bishop, Nikolas Coupland, and Peter Garrett. The authors provide a comprehensive overview of three decades of research on accent prejudice in the UK, highlighting the persistence of accent-based discrimination and the complex relationship between accent and social identity.

One of the most interesting findings of this research is the pervasive nature of accent prejudice in the UK. Despite some progress in reducing overt discrimination against certain accents, accent bias continues to exist in various domains of social life. The authors argue that this bias is rooted in a broader social hierarchy that values certain accents over others and associates them with specific social groups. For example, they discuss how the prestige attached to the Received Pronunciation (RP) accent reinforces its association with certain social classes and occupations.

Another notable aspect of this article is its examination of the social and psychological factors that underlie accent prejudice. The authors highlight the role of stereotyping and social categorization in accent evaluation, as well as the impact of individual differences in personality, attitudes, and experiences on accent perception. [8]

Similarly, Coupland and Bishop (2007) in their study "Ideologised values for British accents" found that British accents are associated with particular social and cultural meanings, which are linked to ideas about social status, education, class, and regional identity. The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining data from a national survey of attitudes towards accents in Britain and qualitative interviews with a subset of survey participants. The survey asked 5010 participants to answer the questions such as "How much prestige do you think is associated with this accent?", and "How pleasant do you think this accent sounds?". As a result of this survey,

Received Pronunciation (RP), also known as "Queen's English", was found to be the most prestigious accent in Britain. The study shows that RP is associated with ideas of education, intelligence, and prestige, and is considered the most attractive and authoritative accent. Participants in the study rated RP as the accent they would most like to have, and the one that best represented the ideal of Britishness. The study suggests that RP is still associated with traditional notions of class and elitism, and that its continued use and prestige may be seen as outdated and exclusionary by some segments of British society.

When comparing the rankings of accents for social attractiveness and prestige, it is found that many accents are viewed similarly in both dimensions. A standard English accent and an accent similar to the listener's own are highly favoured in both categories. Birmingham English, Black Country English, and Asian-accented English are ranked the least prestigious and least socially attractive. Southern Irish English, Newcastle English, and Afro-Caribbean English are rated higher for attractiveness than prestige, while London English, North American-accented English, South African-accented English, and German-accented English are ranked higher for prestige than attractiveness. The study suggests that national language varieties can attract positive prestige without necessarily being perceived as attractive.

The study found that different British accents are associated with particular social and cultural meanings, and that accent discrimination can have negative consequences for individuals. The study contributes to our understanding of how accents are evaluated in British society and how these evaluations are linked to social and cultural values. [26]

A research article by Jairo N. Fuertes, William H. Gottdiener, Helena Martin, Tracey C. Gilbert, and Howard Giles "A meta-analysis of the effects of speakers' accents on interpersonal evaluations" examines the impact of accents on interpersonal evaluations. The study analyzes data from over 40 years of research on the topic and provides a comprehensive overview of the effects of accents on evaluations of credibility, attractiveness, and competence. The study found that speakers with non-standard accents were generally evaluated less positively than those with standard

accents, particularly in terms of competence and credibility. However, the effects of accents varied depending on a number of factors, including the listener's own accent and familiarity with the speaker's accent.

The article "A meta-analysis of the effects of speakers' accents on interpersonal evaluations" provides evidence that accents can have an impact on how individuals are evaluated, particularly in terms of social status and class. The study found that speakers with non-standard accents were generally evaluated less positively than those with standard accents in terms of competence and credibility. [38]

Furthermore, this suggests that accents can serve as markers of social status and class, with standard accents being associated with higher social status and non-standard accents being associated with lower social status. These findings are consistent with previous research on accent evaluation and highlight the role of accent prejudice in perpetuating social inequality.

The study's findings have important implications for understanding the impact of accent prejudice on interpersonal evaluations, as well as for developing strategies to reduce its negative effects. The authors suggest that increasing awareness of accent diversity and promoting positive attitudes towards different accents could help to reduce accent-based discrimination and promote a more inclusive society.

Overall, this meta-analysis provides a valuable contribution to the field of accent evaluation research and highlights the need for continued efforts to promote linguistic diversity and reduce accent prejudice.

All in all, the topic of accent and social status remains an important area of research in sociolinguistics, as it offers insights into the complex relationships between language, identity, and social power. By studying the relationship between accent and social status, sociolinguists can gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which language reflects and shapes social inequality, and can work towards creating a more equitable society.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have provided a comprehensive overview of the linguistic diversity in British English and a critical review of the sociolinguistic literature on the intersection of accent and social identity.

The diversity of British accents is an important aspect of the country's linguistic landscape, and a subject of much research within the field of sociolinguistics. The complexity and variability of accents reflect the social, cultural, and historical diversity of the UK, as well as the ways in which language is used to construct and communicate social identity.

The literature on British English accents highlights the importance of understanding the social and cultural contexts in which they are used. Accents are not simply a matter of pronunciation, but are also influenced by factors such as ethnicity, gender, social class, and geographical location. For example, the use of accents associated with certain regions or social groups can be an important marker of social identity, reflecting both the speaker's sense of belonging and their social aspirations.

Furthermore, accents can also play a role in the communication of power and authority. In many contexts, particular accents can be associated with expertise and authority, while other accents may be seen as less prestigious or less credible. This can have significant implications for individuals from certain regions or social backgrounds who may be perceived as having less authority or expertise based on their accent alone.

Despite the importance of accent variation in British English, there has been a tendency to privilege certain accents over others, particularly those associated with the south of England and middle-class or upper-class social groups. This has led to a situation in which certain accents are seen as more prestigious or desirable than others, creating a hierarchy of accents that reinforces social inequalities.

The linguistic diversity in British English is closely tied to social and cultural factors and different dialects and accents are often associated with specific regions or social classes. Studies we have reviewed have shown that individuals from higher social classes are more likely to use RP or other non-regional accents, while those

from working-class backgrounds may use accents that are associated with their local area. This association between language and social class has been the subject of extensive research in sociolinguistics. However, the tendency to privilege certain accents over others can reinforce social hierarchies and create linguistic inequalities. Recognizing the importance of linguistic diversity and challenging linguistic prejudice and discrimination can promote a more inclusive and equitable society, in which all accents are valued and respected.

The chapter has also highlighted the importance of understanding linguistic diversity and accent variation, as they play a significant role in the construction and communication of social identity, particularly in the UK where social stratification is deeply ingrained in society.

The survey of literature revealed that British English is a diverse and complex language, with a multitude of regional accents and dialects spoken throughout the country. This diversity reflects the long and complex history of language contact, immigration, and cultural exchange in the UK. The literature has also shown that the use of accent is a key marker of social identity, with accent reflecting not only regional and social variation but also ethnic, gendered, and class-based identities.

Furthermore, the review of literature has emphasized the intricate and multifaceted nature of accent and social identity. It was highlighted that social context, situational factors, and individual variation can all influence the use and perception of accent, and that social identity is not solely determined by accent alone but rather by a complex interplay of linguistic, social, cultural, and historical factors.

In summary, British English is a diverse and complex language, shaped by a range of social, cultural, and historical factors. The different dialects and accents of British English reflect the country's rich linguistic heritage and understanding the linguistic diversity of British English is crucial for exploring the relationship between language and social identity.

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY FOR EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCENT AND STATUS IN BRITISH ENGLISH

2.1. Research design

The chapter on research design serves to provide a detailed account of the approach taken to answer research questions. According to Creswell, "Research design is the overall plan for obtaining answers to research questions, where the plan includes the study's overall strategy, the method(s) of investigation, and the techniques of data collection and analysis to be used". [28; 18]

Creswell notes that there are different types of research designs, including experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental designs. Experimental designs involve the manipulation of an independent variable to observe its effect on a dependent variable, while quasi-experimental designs use pre-existing groups and observe the effect of the independent variable. Non-experimental designs, on the other hand, do not involve the manipulation of an independent variable and rely on observation, surveys, or interviews. As the main objective of this study is to investigate the perceptions of different accents among participants, the research design chosen for this study is non-experimental. According to Babbie, non-experimental designs are used to gather data on variables in their natural setting without any manipulation of those variables, and the main goal of non-experimental research is to describe phenomena as they naturally occur, rather than to examine causality. [2; 27]

In this study, the focus is on examining the relationship between accent and status in British English. Therefore, a non-experimental research design is appropriate for this study as it allows for the collection of data on naturally occurring variables, such as participants' perceptions of different accents, without manipulating any variables.

The type of research used in this thesis is descriptive research as it is based on a survey. According to Kothari, "The major purpose of descriptive research is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present." [57; 2] The survey explores

the participants' perceptions of accents, their personal experiences, attitudes towards accent, and their thoughts on the role of accent in determining social status.

This study aims to examine the relationship between accent and status in British English. To achieve this goal, a survey was conducted to collect data from a representative sample of participants. This approach was chosen because it allows for the collection of large amounts of data from a diverse range of participants from different parts of the United Kingdom.

The survey consisted of a series of questions designed to elicit information about participants' perceptions of different accents and their attitudes towards accent in various social contexts, as well as their personal experiences with accent-based discrimination and their own accent identity. The questions were in the form of multiple-choice and checkbox-type of questions, and participants were instructed to select the most appropriate response for each question.

There were three main sections: demographic information, perception of accents, and attitudes toward accents. The first section gathered basic demographic information from participants such as age, gender, occupation, ethnicity, education level and region of origin in the UK. The second section aimed to capture participants' perceptions of accents, including which accents they associated with high or low social status, and whether they believed certain accents resulted in discrimination or different treatment in British society. The third section explored attitudes towards accents and whether accents should be preserved or changed to fit in with society.

2.1.1. Quantitative approach

The current study adopts a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between accent and status in British English. This approach is used to collect and analyze numerical data that can be used to draw statistical inferences and generalizations. [56]

Given the objectives of this research, it was decided to use a quantitative approach in order to obtain reliable and quantifiable results. Unlike qualitative

research which mainly relies on words and textual data for analysis, quantitative research uses numerical data to describe and explain phenomena. Moreover, while qualitative researches make use of words and text as responses from the research participants, quantitative researches are numerical representation and manipulation of the observations and findings obtained from the participants that are mainly applied for the purpose of explaining or describing the phenomena that those observations represent. [73] According to Earl Babbie, “Quantitative analysis is the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect.” [2; 443] This approach enables researchers to collect and analyze data in a structured and standardized manner. By collecting responses in numerical formats, researchers can apply statistical analysis methods to identify trends and patterns in the data. Overall, the quantitative approach provides a rigorous and systematic means of conducting research, which is crucial for achieving the objectives of this study.

The study employs a non-experimental descriptive research design, which aims to describe the relationship between accent and social status in British English without manipulating any variables.

The primary data collection tool for this study is a survey, which was administered online to a sample of participants. The survey includes questions related to perceptions of accent and social status in British English. The questions are designed to capture information about the perceived social status of different accents in British English and the factors that influence these perceptions. The survey consists of closed-ended questions, which require respondents to choose from a list of predefined answers. This approach is used to ensure that the data collected is easily quantifiable and can be analyzed using statistical techniques. The survey will be administered using various online platforms, and data was collected over a period of 3 weeks.

In addition, the use of surveys as the main data collection tool in this study is consistent with the quantitative approach, as surveys are known for their ability to provide a large amount of data in a relatively short amount of time. [14]

Overall, the quantitative approach was found to be the most appropriate method for examining the relationship between accent and social status in British English.

2.1.2 Survey design

According to Creswell, “A survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population”. [28; 18] To investigate the relationship between accent and social hierarchy in British English the survey was designed as a cross-sectional study and employed a non-experimental research design. The survey consisted of 15 questions that aimed to collect demographic data as well as attitudes toward accents and their impact on social status. Moreover, we employed a structured questionnaire design. The questionnaire consisted of a predetermined set of questions that were presented in the same order and wording to all respondents.

The survey was conducted online and consisted of closed-ended questions, providing fixed alternative responses to limit the range of answers. The decision to use closed-ended questions was made based on several advantages that this type of question offers over open-ended questions.

Firstly, closed-ended questions allow for a quicker response rate and easier data collection process. Participants can quickly and easily choose from a set of predetermined responses, which in turn simplifies the process of collecting and analyzing data.

Secondly, closed-ended questions offer more standardized and uniform responses, which helps to reduce the potential for biased interpretations of the data. By using the same response options for all participants, the data is more easily comparable across individuals and groups. [6]

Thirdly, closed-ended questions are more easily quantifiable than open-ended questions. Closed-ended responses can be counted, coded, and analyzed statistically, making it easier to draw conclusions and identify patterns in the data.

Finally, closed-ended questions are less prone to misunderstanding or misinterpretation than open-ended questions. Because the response options are clearly defined, participants are less likely to provide ambiguous or unclear answers, and researchers are less likely to misinterpret the data. [42; 82]

All in all, closed-ended questions offer several advantages in survey research, including quicker response rates, standardized and uniform responses, quantifiable data, and reduced potential for misunderstanding or misinterpretation. These advantages were considered in the decision to use only closed-ended questions in the survey conducted for this study.

The order of questions is another aspect of a survey that can have a significant impact on the responses obtained from participants. Research has shown that the order of questions can influence the interpretation of subsequent questions, particularly when the questions are related. [36; 59] Therefore, careful consideration was given to the order of questions in a survey to ensure that they are presented in a logical manner, and to minimize any potential biases that may arise from question order effects.

Firstly, basic demographic questions were asked, including age, gender, educational background, ethnicity, and region of origin. Then, the subsequent questions focused on the participants' experiences with accents in their daily life, their attitudes towards different accents, and the perceived impact of accents on social status. Notably, the survey also included questions that aimed to assess the participants' personal experiences with accent discrimination and their own sense of identity in relation to their accent.

Furthermore, the sequence of questions was intentionally structured in a coherent and cohesive manner, to ensure logical progression and ease of respondent comprehension, with questions gradually moving from general to specific. The survey questions were drafted with a focus on clarity and concision, with an intentional avoidance of jargon and technical terminology. Specifically, the wording of the questions was carefully chosen to minimize the potential for bias or leading the

participants towards a particular response. The survey was anonymous, and participants were encouraged to answer all questions truthfully.

2.2 Sampling and data collection

For this study, a non-probability sampling technique was employed to collect data from participants. Specifically, the survey was distributed online among British individuals, who were invited to participate in the study voluntarily.

Non-probability sampling techniques are often employed in research studies due to their practicality and cost-effectiveness. Unlike probability sampling, non-probability sampling does not rely on a random selection of participants from the population of interest. Instead, it involves selecting participants who are available and willing to participate in the study. While this approach may result in a biased sample, it can also offer several advantages. [18]

The main advantage of non-probability sampling we focused on is its ability to reach populations that may be difficult to access through other sampling techniques. This was particularly important for our research as it is based on a hard-to-reach population.

Another advantage of non-probability sampling is that it can be a more practical and cost-effective approach to data collection. [53] This type of sampling can be implemented quickly and with few resources, which also played a role in our research.

Data collection was conducted using a Google Form, designed to gather information on the relationship between accent and social hierarchy in British English. The survey consisted of 15 questions aimed at collecting demographic data as well as attitudes towards accents and their impact on social status.

To ensure confidentiality, participants were informed at the start of the survey that their responses would be kept anonymous and used solely for research purposes. Additionally, the survey was designed to avoid collecting any personally identifiable information.

Although non-probability sampling can result in a biased sample, it was chosen for its practicality and cost-effectiveness. By distributing the survey online, the study was able to reach a larger and more diverse sample than would have been possible with a traditional probability sampling technique.

Overall, the non-probability sampling technique used in this study allowed for the collection of valuable data on the relationship between accent and social hierarchy in British English. However, it is important to note that the results of the study may not be generalizable to the entire population of British English speakers due to the limitations of the sampling technique.

2.2.1 Population and sample selection

The population of interest for our study was British individuals who are native speakers of English and reside in the UK. This choice was made due to the specific focus of our research, which aimed to investigate the relationship between accent and social hierarchy in British English. By selecting a population with experience and exposure to the various accents present in the UK, we could gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of accent on perceived social status. Additionally, as language and social identity are intertwined, it was essential to select a sample of participants who were fluent in English and understood the nuances of British English accents. Therefore, we chose British individuals who are native speakers of English and reside in the UK as our population of interest for this study.

To ensure that our sample was representative of the population of interest, we used a non-probability sampling technique, specifically convenience sampling. This technique involved selecting easily accessible and willing individuals to participate in the study. [39] In our case, the survey was distributed online through various social media platforms and online forums. Online surveys offer various advantages, such as accessibility, cost-effectiveness, time efficiency, and a broader reach. Conducting surveys online is faster and more cost-effective than traditional methods, as it eliminates the need for printing and distributing paper surveys. Furthermore, online surveys allow researchers to easily reach a large and diverse audience, as they can be distributed via email, social media, or other online platforms. [87]

The sample size for our study was 118 participants, which was deemed sufficient to achieve the desired level of precision and statistical significance. To ensure that the sample was diverse and representative of the population of interest,

we stratified the sample by age, gender, educational background, ethnicity, and region of origin.

The present study collected data from participants from 12 different regions of the UK, including Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, North East England, North West England, Yorkshire and the Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, London, South East England, and South West England. The selection of these regions was based on the desire to obtain a diverse sample that represents a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds across the United Kingdom.

The inclusion of participants from these 12 regions is advantageous because it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between accent and social hierarchy in British English. By including individuals from different regions, the study can capture the variation in accents and social attitudes that exists within the United Kingdom. This approach increases the external validity of the study and enhances its generalizability to other regions with similar sociolinguistic characteristics.

Additionally, the inclusion of a diverse sample from various regions helps to overcome the limitations of previous research that has been restricted to a particular region or demographic group. [61] For instance, research conducted solely in London would not reflect the attitudes and perceptions of individuals from other regions. Therefore, the inclusion of participants from a variety of regions provides a more accurate and representative picture of the relationship between accent and social status in British English.

It must be highlighted that this study benefits from the inclusion of participants from 12 different regions of the UK, as it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between accent and social hierarchy in British English.

We ensured that the participants were aware of the purpose of the study and their rights as participants. At the start of the survey, we informed the participants about the study's nature, scope, and objectives, and assured them of the

confidentiality of their responses. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

2.2.2. Recruitment of participants

Recruitment of participants is a crucial step in any research study, and there are various methods that can be used to recruit participants depending on the research design and target population. In our study, we used online recruitment through social media platforms, which, according to Hine, has become increasingly popular in recent years. [44] Online recruitment has several advantages, including convenience, cost-effectiveness, and access to a wider pool of potential participants. One more important advantage of this type of recruitment is that “Respondents, who are not easily approachable, can also be reached conveniently.” [57; 316]

Additionally, online recruitment has been found to be effective in recruiting diverse samples. [40]

To maximize the effectiveness of online recruitment, we used advertising on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Previous studies have demonstrated that it is an effective way to reach specific populations. [52] The survey was also distributed on other social media platforms and forums, such as Reddit and Quora.

We used snowball sampling, where participants were asked to share the survey through their social networks, which has also proved to be effective in recruiting hard-to-reach populations. [7]

To ensure the ethical considerations of participant recruitment, we included a statement in our study invitation explaining the purpose of the research and the voluntary nature of participation, as well as a consent form that participants were required to read and agree to before participating.

It must be mentioned that the online recruitment method was successful in attracting a diverse sample of participants for our study. The use of targeted advertising and snowball sampling allowed us to reach specific populations, and the inclusion of ethical considerations ensured that the study was conducted ethically.

2.2.3 Data collection instruments and procedures

As mentioned earlier, in this study, the data was collected through an online survey that was distributed among the British people. The survey was conducted using a Google Form and was created to investigate the relationship between accent and social hierarchy in British English. Google Forms is an effective tool for conducting online surveys due to their ease of use, accessibility, and ability to collect and organize data conveniently. [81] The most important aspect for us is that the platform allows for the creation of various question types, including open-ended and closed-ended questions. Additionally, Google Forms allow for the collection of anonymous responses, ensuring participant privacy and potentially increasing response rates. The ability to easily share the survey link via email or social media also enables researchers to reach a wider audience and potentially obtain a more diverse sample. [49] Therefore, the use of Google Forms in research provides an efficient and cost-effective means of collecting data, while also allowing for customization and flexibility in survey design.

The survey was designed as a cross-sectional study and employed a non-experimental research design. The survey consisted of 15 questions that aimed to collect demographic data as well as attitudes towards accents and their impact on social status.

Before beginning the survey, participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of their responses. They were also assured that their personal information would not be collected and that their responses would be used solely for research purposes. Participants were then asked to provide their informed consent to participate in the study. Taking into account that the survey was anonymous, participants were encouraged to answer all questions truthfully.

To ensure the representativeness of the sample, the survey was distributed among a wide range of British people from different regions and backgrounds. The survey was advertised on social media platforms, such as Reddit, Facebook, and Instagram, and shared among various online communities and groups.

The data was collected over a period of three weeks, from March 15th to April 5th, 2023. During this period, a total of 118 responses were collected, which were then processed and analyzed.

Conclusions

This chapter has outlined the methodology for examining the relationship between accent and status in British English. The research design includes a non-experimental descriptive research approach with a survey design as the primary data collection tool. The survey was carefully designed to ensure that it captures the necessary information related to perceptions of accent and social status. The sampling process involved a careful selection of the population and sample, and the recruitment of participants was done using various online platforms.

The data collection procedures are an essential component of research methodology, and they can significantly impact the accuracy and reliability of the findings. In this study, the data collection procedures were carefully designed to ensure that the data collected is accurate, reliable, and valid. The first step was to identify the appropriate population and sample selection criteria. The study's population was defined as individuals who reside in the United Kingdom and who have English as their first language, and the sample was selected using a non-probability sampling technique. The representativeness of the sample was ensured by distributing the survey among a wide range of British people from different regions and backgrounds. The recruitment process included the use of online advertisements and social media platforms.

Finally, the data collection procedures were implemented. The data was collected through an online survey, which consisted of closed-ended questions. The survey was designed to ensure that the questions were clear, concise, and unbiased. The participants were given clear instructions on how to complete the survey, and they were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality.

The present study used a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between accent and social status in British English. This approach allowed for the collection and analysis of numerical data, providing reliable and quantifiable results that can be used to draw statistical inferences and generalizations. The use of a structured and standardized approach enabled us to collect and analyze data in a rigorous and systematic manner, achieving the objectives of this study. The survey

method was employed as the primary data collection tool, using closed-ended questions to capture information about the perceived social status of different accents in British English and the factors that influence these perceptions. The use of surveys is consistent with the quantitative approach, as it enables the collection of a large amount of data in a relatively short amount of time. Furthermore, the non-experimental descriptive research design employed in this study aimed to describe the relationship between accent and social status in British English without manipulating any variables.

In conclusion, this methodology provides a robust approach to examining the relationship between accent and status in British English, and the subsequent chapter will present the findings and analysis of the data collected.

Chapter 3: RESULTS FROM A SURVEY ON THE INTERSECTION OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL HIERARCHY IN BRITISH ENGLISH

3.1 Response rate and characteristics of the sample

According to Dillman et al. (2014), "The response rate is the number of completed interviews or surveys divided by the number of eligible cases in the sample". [30] Similarly, Groves et al. define response rate as "the proportion of completed interviews or surveys to the number of eligible units in the sample". [42] These definitions indicate that response rate is a measure of the proportion of participants who completed the survey or interview out of the total number of eligible participants in the sample. The response rate and characteristics of the sample are essential considerations in any research study, as they can affect the generalizability and reliability of the findings.

As stated in chapter 2, the target population for our study were individuals who are native speakers of British English and who reside in the United Kingdom. To obtain a representative sample, we used a non-probability sampling technique known as convenience sampling. Specifically, we recruited participants through various online platforms, including social media and online forums. The survey was open to participants over a period of three weeks, during which we received a total of 118 responses.

The response rate for our study was 81%, which is considered a very reasonable response rate for online surveys. [22; 472] Although we were hoping for a somewhat higher response rate, we believe that our sample size is adequate to draw meaningful conclusions about the relationship between accent and social status in British English.

Next, we will provide a detailed analysis of the demographic information collected in the survey, such as age, gender, occupation, education level, and region of origin.

In terms of the characteristics of the sample, our participants were diverse in terms of age, gender, education, and ethnicity. Specifically, 63.2% of our participants

were male, 35.9% were female, and one participant (0.9%) identified as non-binary, as shown in fig. 3.1.

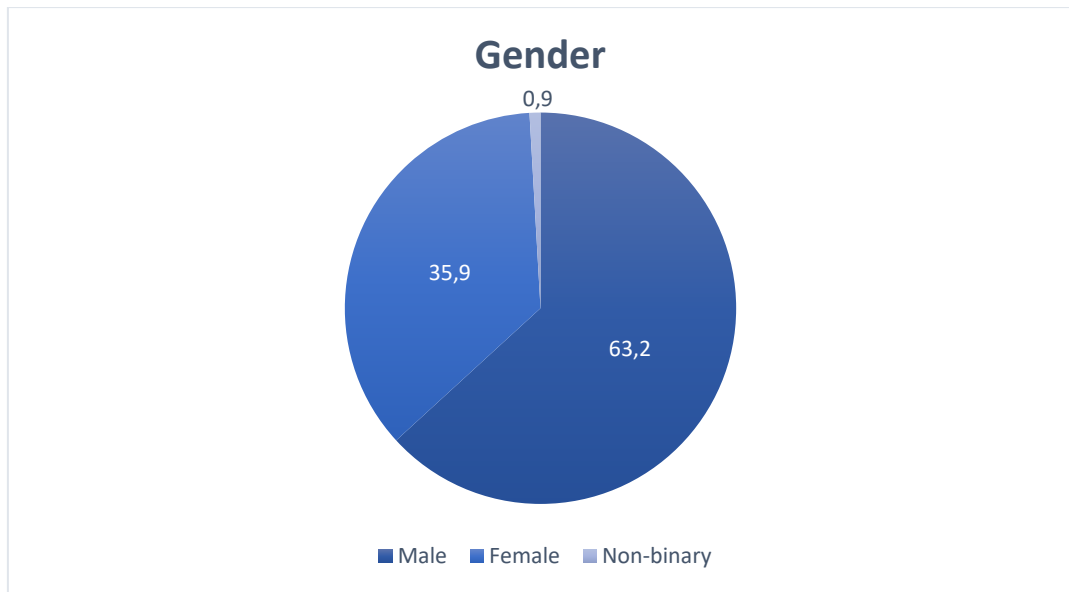


Fig. 3.1 “Gender Sample”

The majority of participants in our study were aged between 18 and 65, with a concentration of respondents falling between 26 and 40 years old. In addition, the sample included participants under 18 years old and those aged 65 and above.

The biggest age group was 26-40 years old which is 53,4% of the participants, the second-largest group was 41-64 years old which is 20,3%. The age split of the participants can be seen in tab. 3.1.

Age Range	No. of participants	% of participants
Under 18	6	5,1%
18-25	22	18,6%
26-40	63	53,4%
41-64	24	20,3%
65+	3	2,5%

Table 3.1. “Age split of participants”

In terms of education, our study found that 42.4% of the 118 participants had a bachelor's degree, while 22.0% had a master's degree. The option "college or trade school" was chosen by 15.3% of participants, while 11.0% had a high school diploma or equivalent. A smaller percentage of participants, 6.8%, had a doctoral degree, and only 2.5% had less than a high school diploma, as shown in fig. 3.2.

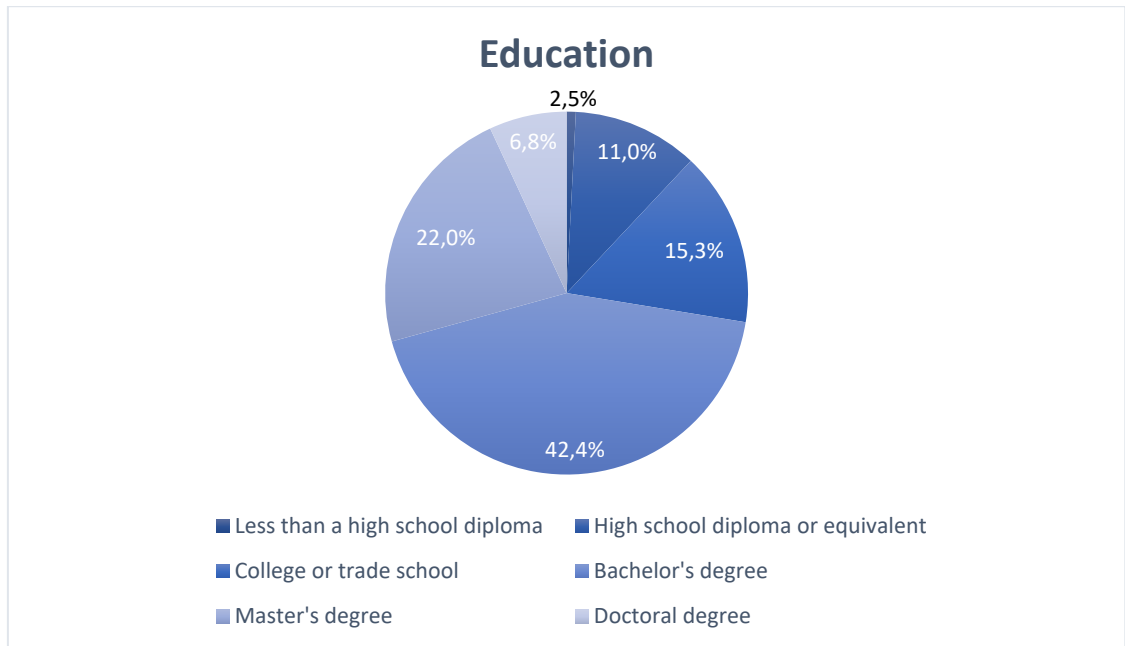


Fig. 3.2. "Educational Background of the Sample"

In order to provide a better understanding of the education levels of the participants in our study, we compared our sample to the education levels of the general population of the UK. According to the Office for National Statistics, as of 2022, approximately 33.5% of individuals aged 16-64 in the UK had a bachelor's degree or higher, while 26.5% had a high school diploma or equivalent. [66]

In comparison, our study had a higher percentage of participants with a bachelor's degree, at 42.4%, and a lower percentage with a high school diploma or equivalent, at 11%. Additionally, our sample had a notable percentage of participants with a master's degree, at 22%, and a smaller percentage with a doctoral degree, at 6.8%.

These results suggest that our sample may be more highly educated than the general population of the UK. It is important to consider this when interpreting the findings of our study and applying them to the larger population.

In terms of ethnicity, the majority of participants (91,5%) were White / Caucasian. 4,3% were African / Caribbean, 1,7% were Asian, and 2,6% identified as Mixed, as shown in fig. 3.3.

In this survey, a majority of participants identified as White/Caucasian, with 106 out of 118 respondents falling into this category. Two participants identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, three chose the "Mixed" ethnicity option, and four identified as African/Caribbean. This indicates an overrepresentation of White/Caucasian participants in the sample.

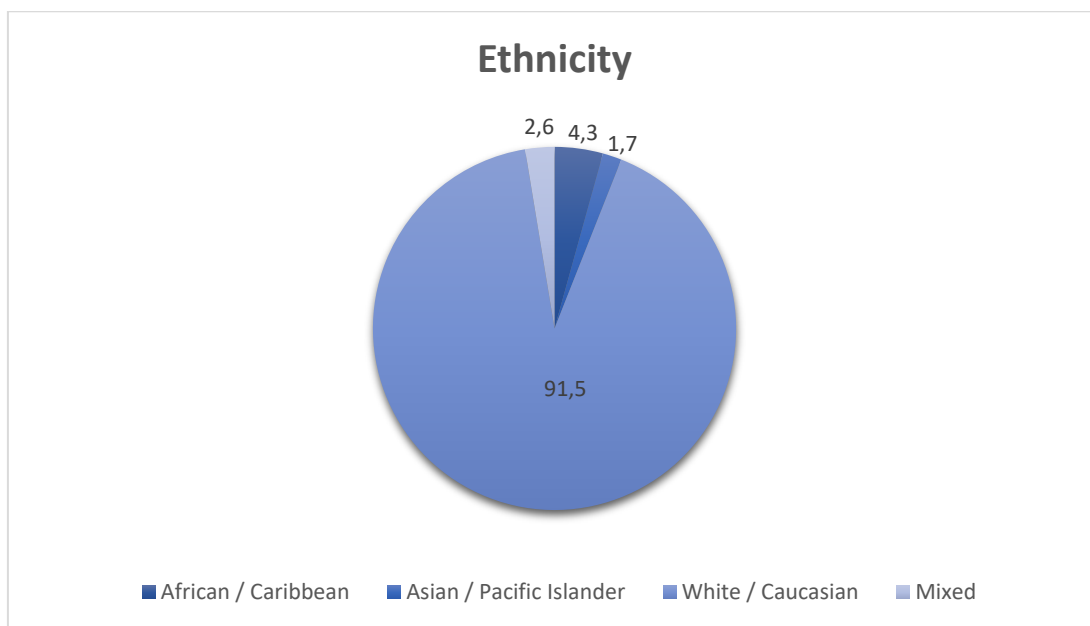


Fig. 3.3 “Ethnicity of the Sample”

The region of origin is an important demographic characteristic of the sample as it provides insight into the geographical distribution of the sample. In our study, participants were recruited from various regions across the UK. The highest percentage of participants, 36.4%, were from Northern Ireland, followed by 11.0% from South East England and 10.2% from London. The North West England and Scotland regions had 9.3% and 8.5% of participants, respectively. The remaining

regions had smaller percentages of participants, with South West England at 5.1%, Wales and Yorkshire and the Humber both at 4.2%, East of England and West Midlands both at 3.4%, North East England at 2.5%, and East Midlands at 1.7%. The distribution of participants by region of origin is shown in tab. 3.2.

Region of Origin	No. of participants	% of participants
Northern Ireland	43	36.4%
South East England	13	11.0%
London	12	10.2%
North West England	11	9.3%
Scotland	10	8.5%
South West England	6	5.1%
Wales	5	4.2%
Yorkshire and the Humber	5	4.2%
East of England	4	3.4%
West Midlands	4	3.4%
North East England	2	1.7%
East Midlands	2	1.7%

Table 3.2. “Sample Composition by Region”

On the whole, the sample used in this study is diverse in terms of age, gender, and geographical location. It was important to have a diverse sample to ensure that the results of the study are representative of the British population as a whole. The sample includes participants from various regions of the United Kingdom, including England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Additionally, participants of different ages and genders were included in the study to capture a wide range of perspectives. The diversity of the sample is a strength of the study as it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied. Furthermore, the

inclusion of a diverse sample increases the generalizability of the findings, making them applicable to a broader population.

3.2. Research findings

In this chapter, we will analyze the results of the survey conducted to examine the perception of accents and their relationship with social hierarchy in British English. The chapter will also analyze the responses to the questions related to the perception of accents, personal experiences with accent discrimination, attitudes towards accent, and the importance of accent for social status.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of our survey on the association of British accents with social status.

Given the nature of our research, it was important to understand how often our sample is exposed to different accents in their daily lives. This information can provide insights into their level of familiarity with different accents and the potential impact on their attitudes and behaviors towards individuals who speak with those accents.

Research has shown that exposure to different accents can lead to increased familiarity and acceptance of those accents. [23] In a study by Munro and Derwing (1995), participants who had higher levels of exposure to an accent had more positive attitudes towards it and were more successful in understanding it. [64]

Given these findings, understanding the level of exposure to different accents in daily life can provide valuable information for our research. Therefore, asking participants about their level of exposure to different accents is an important question in research related to language and communication.

According to the results of the survey, 117 participants out of 118 responded to the question "How often do you hear different accents in your daily life?". The majority of participants, 51 respondents (43.6%), reported hearing different accents "very often," while 32 participants (27.4%) reported hearing them "often." Another 30 participants (25.6%) reported hearing different accents "occasionally," while only 4 participants (3.4%) reported hearing them "rarely", as shown in fig. 3.4.

These results suggest that the majority of participants in the survey were exposed to a variety of accents in their daily lives. However, the prevalence of hearing different accents "very often" and "often" may be attributed to a number of factors, including geographic location, cultural diversity, and exposure to media from around the world.

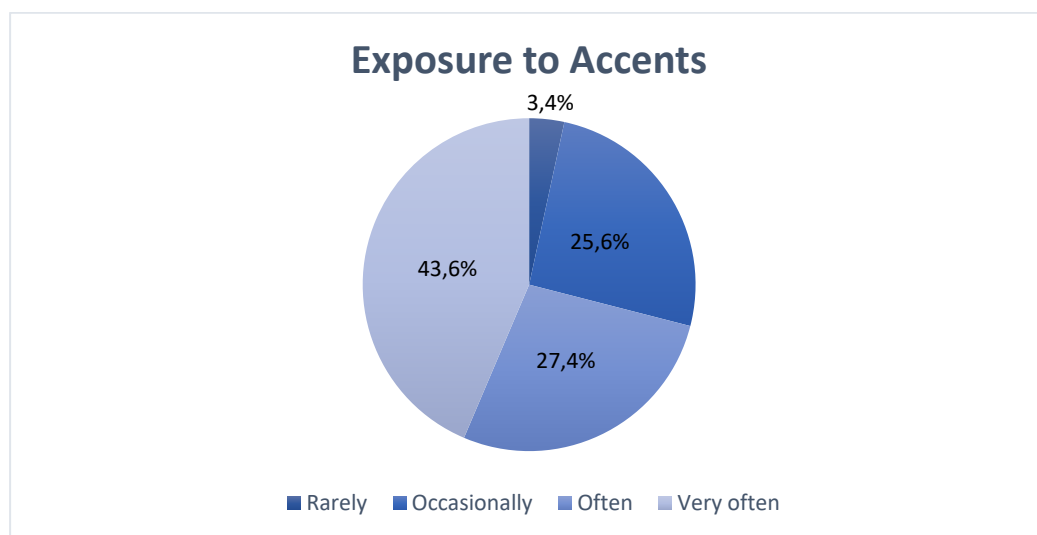


Figure 3.4. "Participants' exposure to different accents"

Now that we have established that the majority of our sample encounters different accents often in their daily lives, we can proceed to address our first research question: "How are British accents perceived in terms of social status?"

In one of the 15 questions of our survey, participants were asked to indicate which British accents they associated with high social status and which accents they associated with low social status. Participants were given a list of 12 most distinct British accents and could choose more than one option as this was a check-box type of question.

Our survey revealed that there is a clear association between certain British accents and social status.

Based on the results, it is evident that certain British accents are associated with high social status while others are associated with low social status. The majority of participants (81.4%) associated Received Pronunciation (RP) with high

social status. Other accents that were associated with high social status included Estuary English (33.1%), Irish (10.2%), West Country (5.1%), and Yorkshire (5.1%). Only a small percentage of participants associated Scottish (3.4%), Welsh (1.7%), Cockney (1.7%), Scouse (0.8%) and Geordie (0.8%) with high social status. Interestingly enough, four participants (3.4%) selected the option "None". Tab. 3.3 presents this information.

Accents	No. of Participants	% of participants
1. RP	96	81.4%
2. Estuary English	39	33.1%
3. Irish	12	10.2%
4. West Country	6	5.1%
5. Yorkshire	6	5.1%
6. None	4	3.4%
7. Scottish	4	3.4%
8. Welsh	2	1.7%
9. Cockney	2	1.7%
10. Scouse	1	0.8%
11. Geordie	1	0.8%
12. Brummie	0	0%
13. Mancunian	0	0%

Table 3.3. "Accent Associations with High Social Status (Descending Order)"

In response to the question "Which accent(s) do you associate with low social status?" in our survey, the majority of participants associated the Scouse accent with low social status, with 79 participants out of 112 respondents (70.5%) selecting it as such. Other accents associated with low social status included Cockney (76 respondents, 67.9%), Brummie (70 respondents, 62.5%), Geordie (64 respondents, 57.1%), and Mancunian (38 respondents, 33.9%). None of the participants associated RP with low social status.

Out of the accents listed, Estuary English was chosen by 17 participants (15.2%), Irish by 20 (17.9%), Scottish by 20 (17.9%), Welsh by 12 (10.7%), West Country by 22 (19.6%), Yorkshire by 27 (24.1%), and 4 participants (3.6%) chose "None". This data is available in tab. 3.4.

According to the survey data, the response rate for the question under consideration was 94.9% (n=112), with six participants choosing not to respond.

Accents	No. of participants	% of participants
1. Scouse	79	70.5%
2. Cockney	76	67.9%
3. Brummie	70	62.5%
4. Geordie	64	57.1%
5. Mancunian	38	33.9%
6. Yorkshire	27	24.1%
7. West Country	22	19.6%
8. Irish	20	17.9%
9. Scottish	20	17.9%
10. Welsh	12	10.7%
11. Estuary English	17	15.2%
12. None	4	3.6%

Table 3.4. “Accent Associations with Low Social Status (Descending Order)”

The purpose of this study was to investigate how British accents are perceived in terms of social status. The survey revealed that there is a clear association between certain British accents and social status. Moreover, the majority of participants associated Received Pronunciation (RP) with high social status, which confirms previous studies that suggest RP is perceived as the accent of the upper class. Additionally, Estuary English was also associated with high social status by 33.1% of participants, which might indicate a shift towards a more modern and diverse society, where accents associated with the South East of England have gained prestige. Other accents associated with high social status included Irish, West Country, and Yorkshire. Scottish, Welsh, Cockney, Scouse, Geordie, Brummie and Mancunian

were not associated with high social status by the majority of participants. The fact that 3,4% of participants chose "None" indicates that they did not associate any specific accent with high social status.

When it comes to accents associated with low social status, Scouse was the most commonly selected option, followed by Cockney, Brummie, Geordie, and Mancunian. It should be highlighted that RP was not associated with low social status by any of the participants.

The response rate for the question "Which accent(s) do you associate with low social status?" in our survey was 94.9%, with six participants choosing not to respond. While this high response rate indicates a generally engaged and interested sample, it is important to note the potential implications of those six missing responses.

The omission of an answer in a survey can be difficult to interpret due to a number of reasons, such as the question being perceived as too sensitive, difficult to understand, or simply not relevant to the participant. Furthermore, the absence of a response may also reflect a lack of knowledge or familiarity with the accents listed in the question.

In the context of our study, the six missing responses to the question about accents associated with low social status may indicate that some participants did not have a strong opinion or clear associations with the accents listed. Alternatively, it is possible that some participants found the question difficult to answer or did not want to risk making a negative or controversial statement.

Overall, the survey results show that certain British accents are clearly associated with social status, with RP being the most prestigious accent and Scouse being the least prestigious. These findings are important as they highlight the impact of language and accent on social perception and provide insight into the stereotypes and prejudices associated with certain accents. The results of this study could be useful in various fields, such as education and employment, where accent discrimination can have negative consequences.

It is important to note that the survey had a diverse sample, which increases the generalizability of the findings. However, the results should still be interpreted with caution, as the sample was not representative of the entire British population.

All in all, this study provides evidence that certain British accents are perceived as more prestigious than others in terms of social status. The findings have implications for understanding the impact of accent on social perception and highlight the need for greater awareness of accent discrimination in various fields.

The next research question we will address is “How important is accent for determining social status in British society?”

As part of our research on the perception of British accents and their association with social status the survey included the question "How important is accent to your sense of identity?". The results showed that a majority of participants, 68.7% (combining "Very important" and "Somewhat important"), considered accent to be at least somewhat important to their sense of identity. Specifically, 22.9% of participants rated accent as "Very important", while 45.8% rated it as "Somewhat important". In contrast, 20.3% of participants reported that accent was "Not very important" to their sense of identity, and 11% of participants reported that it was "Not at all important", as shown in fig. 3.5.

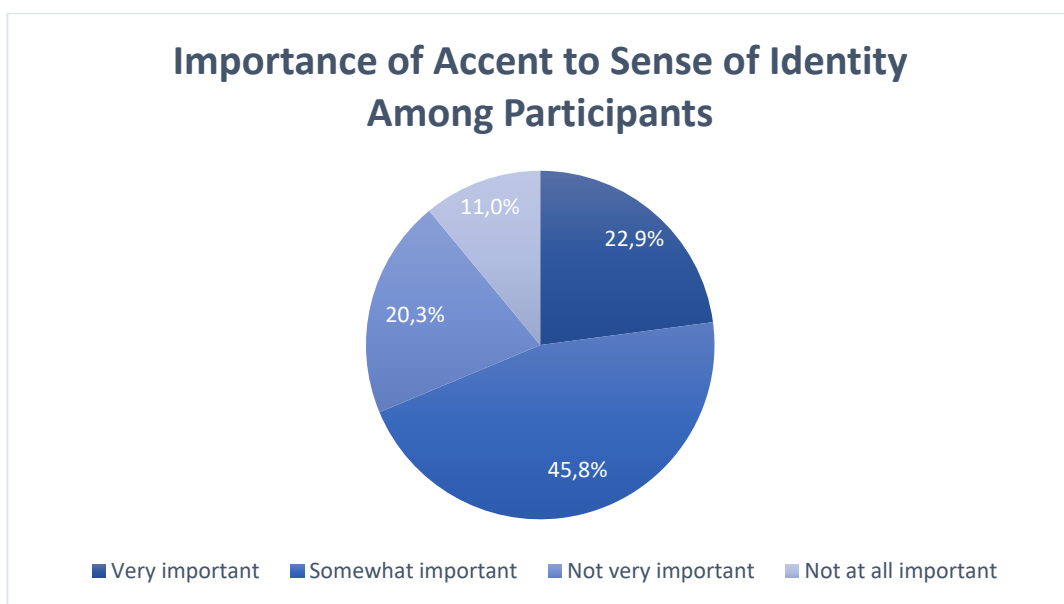


Figure 3.5. “Importance of Accent to Sense of Identity Among Participants”

It must be noted that the majority of participants placed some importance on accent as a component of their identity, with more than two-thirds of respondents indicating that it was at least "Somewhat important". This suggests that accent plays a role in shaping how people perceive and present themselves, and that it may have implications for social interaction and communication.

The fact that a significant minority of participants did not consider accent to be important to their sense of identity is also noteworthy, as it indicates that there is considerable variation in how people relate to their accent. However, it is important to interpret this finding with caution, as the survey did not provide additional context about the participants' backgrounds, experiences, or attitudes towards accent, which may have influenced their responses.

This question aimed to investigate the extent to which individuals identify with their accent and whether it plays a role in their sense of identity. The responses to this question provide important insights into the relationship between accent and identity, which can have implications for social perception and communication.

Understanding the importance of accent to individuals can help us to better understand the impact of accent discrimination and the potential psychological and emotional effects it can have on those who are affected by it. Moreover, the responses to this question can also provide insight into the role of accent in interpersonal relationships and social interactions.

This question is relevant to answering our research question "How important is accent for determining social status in British society?" because it provides insight into how individuals perceive their own accent and its importance in shaping their sense of self. This understanding is crucial because individuals who place a high value on their accent may be more likely to associate certain accents with high social status and others with low social status.

The responses to this question can also shed light on how individuals might perceive others based on their accents. For example, if an individual places a high value on their own accent, they may be more likely to perceive individuals with a

similar accent as having high social status, while perceiving individuals with a different accent as having low social status.

The next survey question answered by the participants was “How important do you think accent is for determining social status in British society?”. The results show that 11.9% of the respondents consider accent to be very important for determining social status, while 53.4% of the participants think that accent is somewhat important. On the other hand, 20.3% of the participants believe that accent is not very important, while 14.4% of the respondents think that accent is not at all important for determining social status in British society, as shown in fig. 3.6.

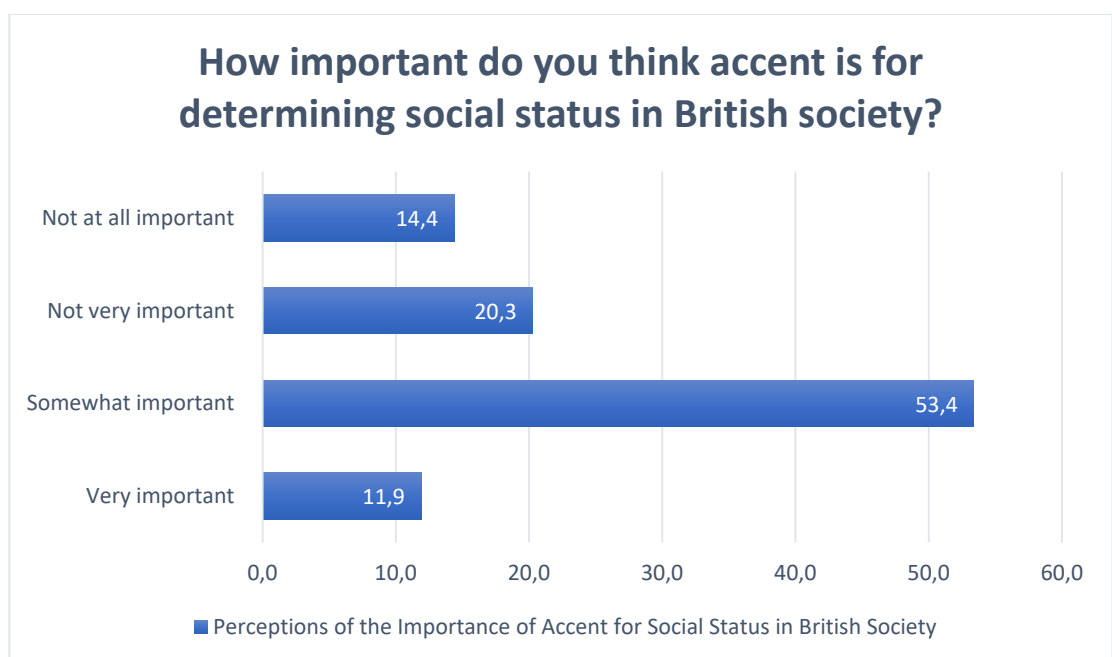


Figure 3.6. “Perceptions of the Importance of Accent for Social Status in British Society”

These results provide insight into the perceived importance of accent in relation to social status, which can have implications for social interaction and communication.

The results of the survey question on the importance of accent for determining social status in British society suggest that a majority of respondents consider accent to be at least somewhat important in this regard. Specifically, 53.4% of participants indicated that accent is somewhat important for determining social status, while 11.9% of participants believe that it is very important.

These findings are significant because they indicate that accent is perceived as a factor that can influence social status in British society. This perception may be

influenced by a number of factors, including historical and cultural associations between certain accents and social class, as well as individual experiences of accent discrimination and stigmatization.

Furthermore, the finding that a significant proportion of respondents (14.4%) do not consider accent to be important for determining social status highlights the diversity of perspectives on this issue. This suggests that there may be individual and cultural factors that influence how accent is perceived in relation to social status.

Overall, these results contribute to our understanding of the role of accent in British society and highlight the need for continued research into the social and cultural factors that shape the perception of accents and their association with social status. Additionally, these findings may have implications for how we approach issues related to accent discrimination and the need for greater awareness and sensitivity around the impact of accent on social perception and communication.

Moving forward, we will examine the following survey question regarding the impact of one's accent on social status or perceived social status.

The question of how one's accent affects their social status or perceived social status is crucial to understanding the intersectionality of linguistic diversity and social hierarchy in British society. This inquiry aimed to explore whether there is a relationship between one's accent and their perceived social status, and whether this relationship is influenced by factors such as ethnicity, gender, and educational background. It is particularly important to ask this question in the context of British English because of the significant social and cultural importance placed on accents in this society.

According to the survey results, 28.8% of respondents believe that their own accent positively affects their social status or perceived social status, while 23.7% believe it has a negative effect. However, the majority of respondents (42.4%) reported that their accent has no effect on their social status, and only 5.1% were unsure, as shown in fig. 3.7.

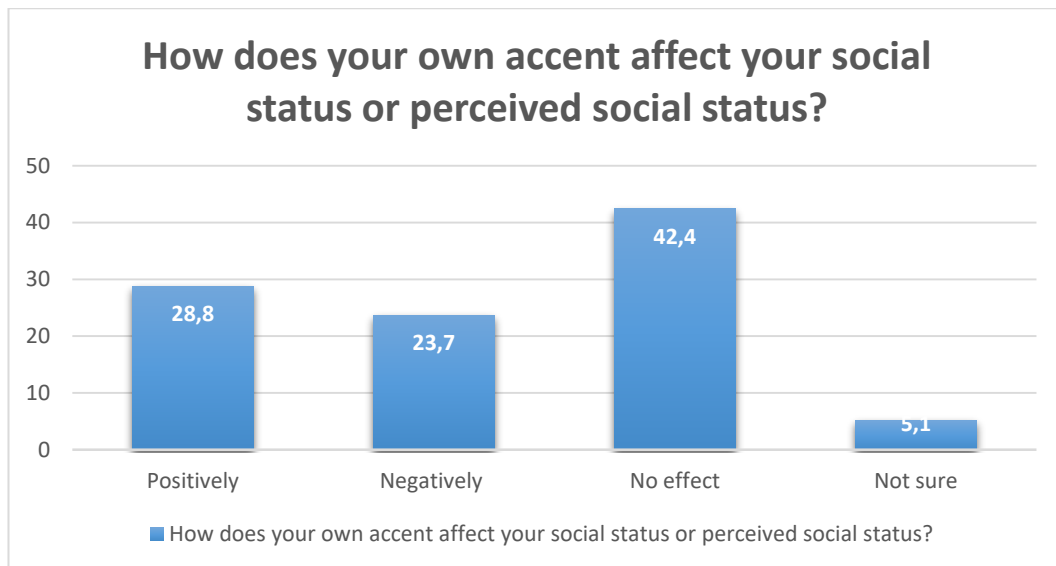


Figure 3.7. “Perceived Impact of Accent on Social Status”

These results suggest that the impact of one's accent on their social status or perceived social status is not strongly felt by the majority of respondents. Over 40% of respondents reported that their accent has no effect on their social status, while 28.8% reported a positive impact and 23.7% reported a negative impact. This indicates that while accent may play a role in some individuals' experiences of social hierarchy, it is not a universal factor affecting social status. The small percentage (5.1%) of respondents who reported being unsure about the impact of their accent on their social status may reflect a lack of awareness or self-reflection on this topic. However, it is important to note that this survey only captures self-reported experiences and perceptions, and does not necessarily reflect objective social status.

The data shows the percentage of respondents who answered "negatively" to the question of how their own accent affects their social status or perceived social status based on their region of origin. Out of the total 28 respondents who answered negatively, the majority (42.9%) were from Northern Ireland, followed by North West England (14.3%). The other regions had smaller percentages, with Scotland and West Midlands having 10.7% each, and Yorkshire and the Humber, South West England and Wales having 7.1% each. This data is shown in tab. 3.5.

Region of Origin	No. of Participants	% of Participants
Northern Ireland	12	42.9%

North West England	4	14.3%
West Midlands	3	10.7%
Scotland	3	10.7%
South West England	2	7.1%
Yorkshire and the Humber	2	7.1%
Wales	2	7.1%

Table 3.5. “Regions of Origin of Respondents Who Answered "Negatively" to the Question: How Does Your Own Accent Affect Your Social Status or Perceived Social Status?”

These results suggest that respondents from Northern Ireland were more likely to feel that their accent has a negative impact on their social status compared to respondents from other regions. However, it is important to note that out of the total 118 participants, 43 (36.4%) were from Northern Ireland, which means that the data might be slightly skewed towards this region. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the characteristics of the sample when interpreting the results.

Furthermore, out of the total 28 respondents who answered negatively, a higher proportion were men (75%) compared to women (25%), as shown in tab. 3.6.

Gender	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Women	7	25%
Men	21	75%

Table 3.6. “Gender of Respondents Who Answered "Negatively" to the Question: How Does Your Own Accent Affect Your Social Status or Perceived Social Status?”

Tab. 3.7. shows the number and percentage of participants who answered "negatively" to the question "How does your own accent affect your social status or perceived social status?" in different age groups. Out of the total 28 participants who answered negatively, 3 (10.7%) were between the ages of 18-25, 13 (46.4%) were between the ages of 26-40, 7 (25%) were between the ages of 41-64, and 1 (3.6%) was over 65 years old. Additionally, 4 (14.3%) respondents were under 18 years old.

The majority of respondents who answered negatively fell into the age range of 26-40 years old, followed by the age range of 41-64 years old.

Age	No. of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Under 18	4	14.3%
18-25	3	10.7%
26-40	13	46.4%
41-64	7	25%
65+	1	3.6%

Tab. 3.7. “Age Split of Respondents Who Answered "Negatively" to the Question: How Does Your Own Accent Affect Your Social Status or Perceived Social Status?”

In terms of ethnicity, out of the 28 participants who answered “Negatively” to the question about the impact of their accent on their social status, the majority (96.4%) identified as White (27 participants). Only one participant (3.6%) identified as African/Caribbean. However, it is important to note that this sample may not be representative of the larger population, and that the results may be influenced by the demographics of the participants.

Based on the survey results provided, it can be concluded that a significant portion of participants consider accent to be important to their sense of identity, with 68.7% rating it as at least somewhat important. Furthermore, a majority of participants (64.3%) also believe that accent is either very or somewhat important for determining social status in British society.

However, it is important to note that while a considerable number of respondents believe that accent is important for determining social status, the majority (42.4%) believe that their accent has no effect on their social status, and a smaller proportion (23.7%) believe it has a negative effect.

In terms of regional and demographic differences, respondents from Northern Ireland were more likely to feel that their accent has a negative impact on their social status compared to respondents from other regions, and a higher proportion of male

respondents (75%) reported a negative impact on their social status compared to female respondents.

Overall, the results suggest that accent may play a role in determining social status in British society for some individuals, but its significance may vary depending on factors such as region, gender, and personal beliefs about the importance of accent.

The next research question we will explore is whether accent-based discrimination exists in contemporary British society.

The survey included a question asking participants whether they believed people with certain accents were treated differently in British society. There were three answer options provided, and respondents were able to select more than one option as this was a check-box type of question. Out of the 118 total participants, 72 respondents (or approximately 61% of the participants) felt that people with certain accents were more likely to be discriminated against, while 86 respondents (or approximately 73% of the participants) felt that people with certain accents were more likely to be seen as less intelligent or competent. Only 7 participants (or approximately 6% of the participants) felt that accent did not have any impact on how people were treated. This data can be seen in fig. 3.8.

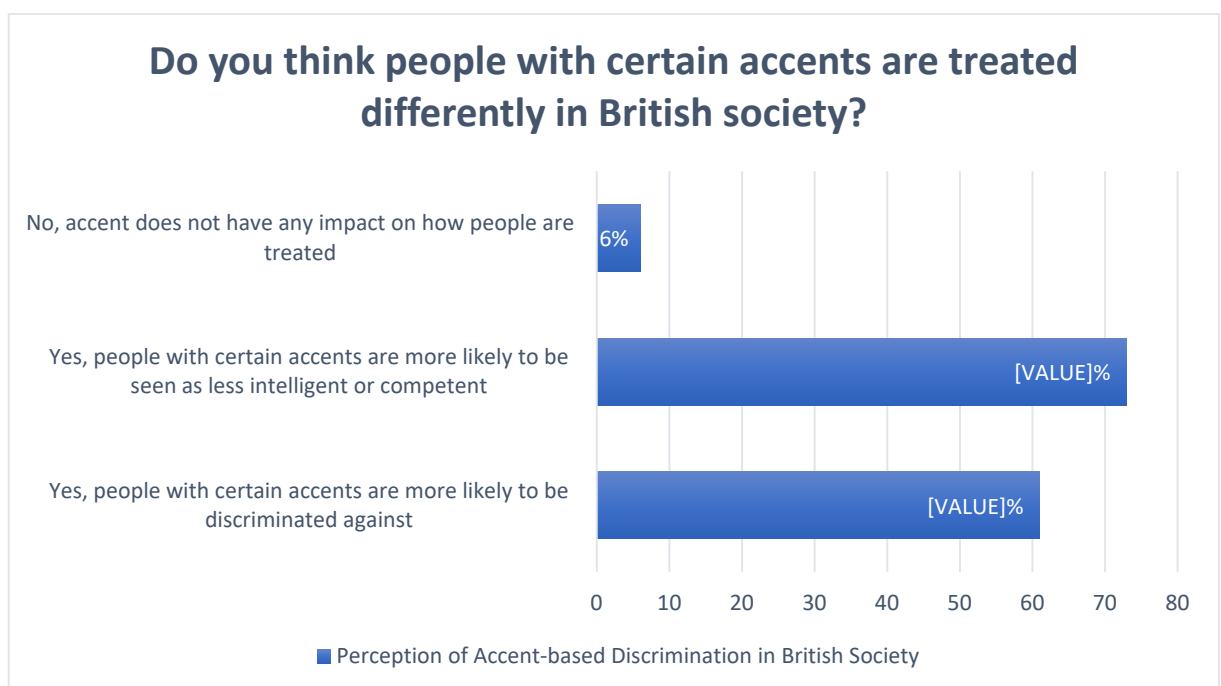


Fig. 3.8. “Perception of Accent-based Discrimination in British Society”

It appears that a significant number of respondents believe that people with certain accents are treated differently. The majority of respondents (61%) felt that people with certain accents were more likely to be discriminated against, while an even larger majority (73%) felt that people with certain accents were more likely to be seen as less intelligent or competent. This suggests that accent-based discrimination may be a prevalent issue in British society, and that individuals with certain accents may face barriers or biases in various areas of life. However, it is also important to note that a small number of participants (6%) did not believe that accent had any impact on how people were treated, indicating that not all individuals may perceive accent-based discrimination as a significant issue.

Continuing from the previous discussion, another question that was included in the survey asked participants if they had ever experienced discrimination due to their accent while living in the UK. Out of the 117 respondents who answered this question (one person abstained), 61 respondents (52.1%) reported that they had been discriminated against or treated differently because of their accent, while 56 respondents (47.9%) reported that they had not experienced such discrimination, as shown in fig. 3.9.

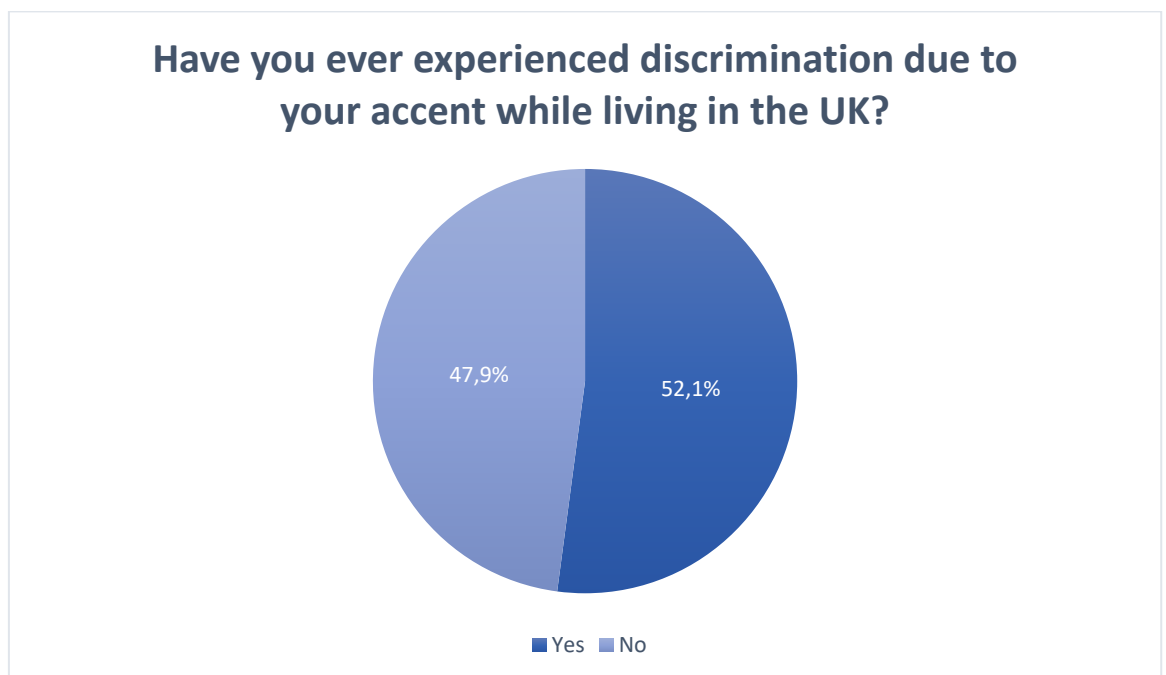


Figure 3.9. "Participants' Experiences of Accent-Based Discrimination"

These results suggest that accent-based discrimination is a relatively common experience in British society as a significant portion of the surveyed population has given a positive answer. However, it is worth noting that this question did not ask about the specific types of discrimination or treatment experienced, nor did it specify the context in which such incidents occurred. It must also be mentioned that this survey was not designed to capture the extent or severity of such discrimination, but rather to gauge the prevalence of this phenomenon

The next research question we will explore is how individuals perceive the relationship between accent and social status in British society, which will be examined through attitudes towards changing accents to fit in and preserving accents.

To gain insight into attitudes towards accent and social status, participants were asked whether they had ever changed their accent to fit in or be better understood. Out of the 118 total participants, 72 respondents (approximately 61% of the participants) reported having changed their accent, while 46 respondents (approximately 39% of the participants) reported not having changed their accent. This data is shown in fig. 3.10.

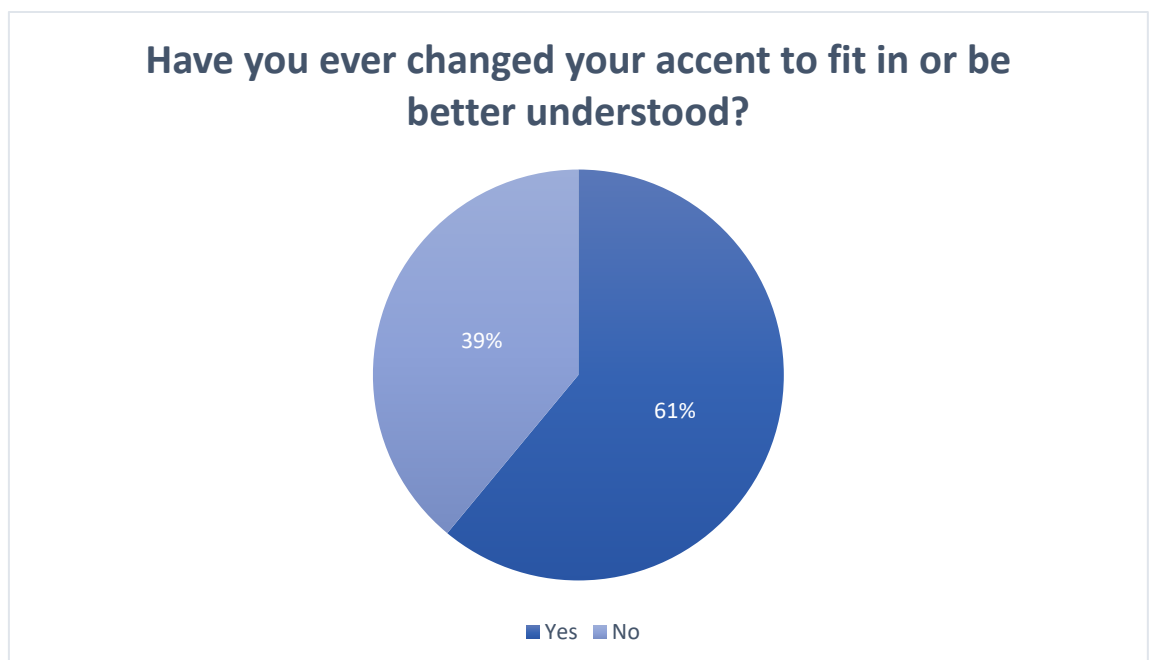


Figure 3.10. "Participants' Accent Modification Experiences"

Another question that was included in the survey asked participants about their attitudes towards accent modification. Specifically, participants were asked whether they believed accents should be preserved or changed in order to fit in with society. Out of the 117 participants, 112 (or approximately 95,7%) felt that accents should be preserved, while only 5 participants (or approximately 4,3%) felt that accents should be changed. One person abstained from answering the question. This data is shown in fig. 3.11.

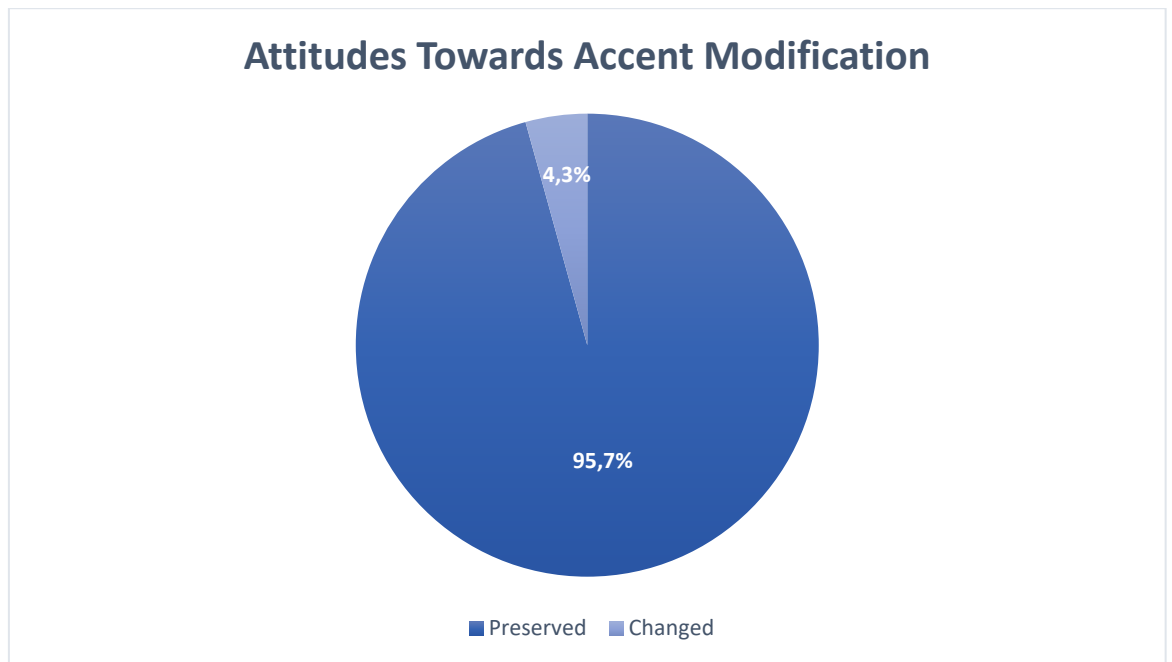


Figure 3.11. “Participants’ Attitudes Towards Accent Modification”

Based on the findings of this research, it appears that a majority of participants have changed their accent at some point in order to fit in or be better understood. This suggests that individuals may feel pressure to conform to certain linguistic norms in order to be accepted in society.

However, the overwhelming majority of participants also expressed a belief that accents should be preserved rather than changed to fit in with society. This could indicate that while individuals may feel pressure to change their accent, they do not necessarily believe that such changes are desirable or necessary. This data provides a starting point for understanding the ways in which individuals navigate their linguistic identity in relation to social expectations and pressures.

Overall, these findings suggest a complex relationship between accent and social status in British society. While individuals may feel pressure to conform to certain linguistic norms, they also value linguistic diversity and believe that accents should be preserved. Further research could explore the underlying factors that contribute to these attitudes and the potential implications for social inclusion and exclusion

3.3. Limitations and suggestions for future research

One limitation of this study is the limited sample size. The survey was conducted with 118 participants, which may not be representative of the entire population. Moreover, the study is limited by several factors.

First, the sample may not be representative of the broader population, as the majority of participants were aged between 18 and 65, with a concentration of respondents falling between 26 and 40 years old. This age group represented 53.4% of the sample, while the second-largest group was aged 41-64 years old, comprising 20.3% of the sample. Therefore, the sample may not be diverse enough to capture the attitudes of individuals outside these age ranges.

Second, the study found that the majority of participants were white/Caucasian (91.5%), which may limit the generalizability of the findings to individuals from other ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, the study included only a small number of participants who identified as African/Caribbean (4.3%) or Asian (1.7%), and only 2.6% identified as Mixed. Therefore, the study may not be able to capture the attitudes of individuals from these ethnic groups.

Third, the study found that the majority of participants had a bachelor's degree (42.4%) or a master's degree (22.0%). This may suggest that the sample was skewed towards individuals with higher levels of education, and may not be representative of the broader population.

Fourth, the study found that the highest percentage of participants (36.4%) were from Northern Ireland, followed by 11.0% from South East England and 10.2% from London. The North West England and Scotland regions had 9.3% and 8.5% of

participants, respectively. The remaining regions had smaller percentages of participants. This geographic concentration may limit the generalizability of the findings to individuals from other regions of the UK.

It should be acknowledged that the non-probability sampling technique may have introduced some bias in our sample, as the participants may not be a perfect representation of the population of interest. However, given the constraints of time and resources, convenience sampling was the most practical approach to obtaining a sample of an adequate size.

All in all, the present study is limited by the lack of diversity in the sample, overrepresentation of certain categories, and a potential lack of generalizability to the broader population. Future research should aim to address these limitations by using a more diverse sample and including participants from a broader range of demographic categories.

Another limitation is the self-reported nature of the data. The data collected in this study is based on participants' self-reports of their experiences and attitudes towards accent modification. This approach may be susceptible to social desirability bias, where participants may provide answers that are socially acceptable rather than truthful. Future research could mitigate this limitation by using multiple sources of data, such as interviews, observations, and objective measurements.

Furthermore, this study focused only on British English accents and did not examine the intersection of linguistic diversity and social hierarchy in other English-speaking countries. Future research could expand the scope of the study to other English-speaking countries to compare and contrast the findings and draw more generalizable conclusions.

To address the limitations of this study, future research can explore several areas. Firstly, a longitudinal study could be conducted to track changes in attitudes towards accent modification over time and identify the factors that contribute to these changes. Secondly, it would be valuable to investigate how accent affects social status and mobility in various socio-economic and cultural contexts. Thirdly, the role of media in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards accents and accent

modification could be examined. Finally, research could focus on the attitudes of non-native English speakers towards accent modification, exploring the relationship between language proficiency and accent modification and the factors that influence attitudes towards accent modification among non-native speakers.

In conclusion, while this study sheds light on the relationship between accent and social status in British society, it is not without limitations. Future research should address the limitations of this study and expand the scope of the research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the intersection of linguistic diversity and social hierarchy in English-speaking societies.

Conclusions

This chapter explored the response rate and characteristics of the sample for the survey on the intersection of linguistic diversity and social hierarchy in British English. The findings revealed that the response rate was high, indicating a high level of interest in the topic. Additionally, the sample was quite diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and education level, providing a broad range of perspectives on the relationship between accent and status.

After analyzing the survey data, it is clear that some accents are associated with high social status while others are associated with low social status. The survey data indicates that the majority of participants associated Received Pronunciation (RP) with high social status, while other accents like Estuary English, Irish, West Country, and Yorkshire were also associated with high social status, but to a lesser extent. In contrast, only a very small percentage of participants associated Scottish, Welsh, Cockney, Scouse, Geordie with high social status.

The survey results showed that the majority of participants associated Scouse, Cockney, Brummie, Geordie, and Mancunian accents with low social status. RP, on the other hand, was not associated with low social status by any of the participants. Out of the other accents listed, Yorkshire, West Country, Estuary English, Irish and Scottish, and were associated with low social status by a lesser amount of participants.

Furthermore, the survey revealed that the majority of participants believe accent plays a role in determining social status in British society to some extent and perceive their accent as somewhat important to their identity. While the majority of respondents reported no effect of their accent on their social status, 28.8% reported a positive impact, and 23.7% reported a negative impact. Respondents from Northern Ireland were more likely to feel their accent has a negative impact, and men were more likely to report a negative impact than women. Out of the 28 participants who reported a negative impact, the majority were aged 26-40 and identified as White.

The survey results indicate that accent-based discrimination is perceived as a prevalent issue in British society, with the majority of respondents (61%) feeling that

people with certain accents are more likely to be discriminated against, and an even larger majority (73%) feeling that people with certain accents are more likely to be seen as less intelligent or competent. However, a small number of participants did not believe that accent had any impact on how people were treated. In addition, over half of the respondents reported experiencing discrimination due to their accent while living in the UK. A majority of participants reported changing their accent to fit in or be better understood, but most (95.7%) also felt that accents should be preserved rather than changed to fit in with society.

Overall, the survey results suggest that accent-based discrimination is a significant issue in British society. The association of certain accents with high or low social status may contribute to this discrimination, with accents like RP being viewed as prestigious while accents like Scouse and Cockney are viewed as working-class or low-status. Additionally, the fact that a majority of respondents reported changing their accent to fit in or be better understood highlights the pressure that individuals may feel to conform to dominant linguistic norms in order to be accepted in society.

Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the study is limited by the overrepresentation of certain age and ethnic groups in the sample, and may not be generalizable to the broader population. Future research should aim to use a more diverse sample and include participants from a broader range of demographic categories, as well as expand the scope to other English-speaking countries, and conduct longitudinal studies to examine changes in attitudes towards accent modification over time.

CONCLUSIONS

The literature review conducted in the first chapter proved to be instrumental in informing our research on the relationship between accent and social identity in contemporary British society. Through our examination of the linguistic diversity in British English, we gained an understanding of the various dialects and accents spoken across the country, and how these variations are shaped by social and cultural factors. We also delved into the intricate and multifaceted nature of accent and its significance in constructing social identity. The review highlighted the influence of factors such as ethnicity, gender, social class, and geographical location on accent, and how certain accents can convey power and authority, while linguistic prejudice and discrimination can be perpetuated by preferences for certain accents over others. These insights were crucial in guiding our research and investigating the complex interactions between language use and social hierarchy.

By understanding the linguistic diversity of British English and the complexities of accent, we were able to explore the relationship between accent and social identity in later chapters. Our research aimed to provide further insights into the ways in which accent can be used to construct, convey, and reinforce social hierarchy in contemporary British society.

Based on the research findings presented in this thesis, it is clear that accent plays a crucial role in determining social status in British English. The study explored the perceptions of British accents in terms of social status, the importance of accent in determining social status, the existence of accent-based discrimination, and attitudes towards accent change and preservation. The results indicate that Received Pronunciation (RP) is overwhelmingly associated with high social status, while other accents such as Estuary English, Irish, West Country, and Yorkshire are also associated with high status, but to a lesser extent. In contrast, Scottish, Welsh, Cockney, Scouse, and Geordie are associated with low social status.

The study also found that a majority of participants believe accent plays a role in determining social status in British society to some extent, and many perceive their accent as important to their identity. However, the majority of respondents reported

no effect of their accent on their social status, but a significant number of participants reported both positive and negative impacts. Moreover, the study indicates that accent-based discrimination is a prevalent issue in British society, with a majority of participants reporting experiencing discrimination due to their accent while living in the UK.

The research highlights the need for greater awareness of linguistic diversity and the importance of valuing all accents and dialects, regardless of their social status. Additionally, the findings suggest that accent bias may play a role in areas such as education and employment.

Overall, this study contributes to our understanding of the complex relationship between language and society in British English. It underscores the importance of accent as a marker of social identity, reflecting the interplay of linguistic, social, cultural, and historical factors. Future research could explore the relationship between accent and other factors, such as gender and ethnicity, and investigate ways to promote linguistic diversity and combat accent-based discrimination in British society.

The present study's findings on the relationship between accent and social identity in British society hold potential implications across multiple academic and practical domains. In the educational sector, the outcomes could inform policies and practices aimed at encouraging linguistic diversity and eradicating accent-based discrimination. Educators and instructors may undergo training to enhance their consciousness of accent prejudices and to cultivate more inclusive teaching methodologies and resources. Similarly, employers may leverage the study's results to sensitize themselves to accent-based biases and establish unbiased recruitment procedures. Moreover, the study holds significance in the fields of linguistics and sociology, as it provides further insights into the intricate and multifaceted nature of language use and social hierarchy. Finally, policymakers and governmental agencies could draw upon the findings of this study to promote diversity and inclusivity within society.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

1. What is your age?

- Under 18 years old
- 18-25 years old
- 26-40 years old
- 41-64 years old
- 65+

2. How would you describe your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Other (please specify):

4. What is your educational background?

- Less than a high school diploma
- High school diploma or equivalent
- College or trade school
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Other (please specify):

5. Which region of the UK do you come from originally?

- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Wales
- North East England

- North West England
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- East of England
- London
- South East England
- South West England

6. Please specify your ethnicity

- African / Caribbean
- Asian / Pacific Islander
- Hispanic
- White / Caucasian
- Mixed
- Other (please specify):

6. How often do you hear different accents in your daily life?

- Rarely
- Occasionally
- Often
- Very often

7. Which accent(s) do you associate with high social status?

- Brummie
- Cockney
- Estuary English
- Geordie
- Irish
- Mancunian

- Received Pronunciation (RP)
- Scouse
- Scottish
- Welsh
- West Country
- Yorkshire
- Other (please specify):

8. Which accent(s) do you associate with low social status?

- Brummie
- Cockney
- Estuary English
- Geordie
- Irish
- Mancunian
- Received Pronunciation (RP)
- Scouse
- Scottish
- Welsh
- West Country
- Yorkshire
- Other (please specify):

9. Do you think people with certain accents are treated differently in British society?

- Yes, people with certain accents are more likely to be discriminated against
- Yes, people with certain accents are more likely to be seen as less intelligent or competent
- No, accent does not have any impact on how people are treated
- Other (please specify):

10. Have you ever experienced discrimination due to your accent while living in the UK?

- Yes
- No

11. Have you ever changed your accent to fit in or be better understood?

- Yes
- No

12. How important is accent to your sense of identity?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important

13. Do you think accents should be preserved or changed in order to fit in with society?

- Preserved
- Changed

14. How important do you think accent is for determining social status in British society?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important

15. How does your own accent affect your social status or perceived social status?

- Positively
- Negatively
- No effect
- Not sure
- Other (please specify):

SUMMARY

This master's thesis aims to explore the complex relationship between linguistic diversity and social hierarchy in British English, specifically examining how accent plays a role in determining social status. The research questions address how British accents are perceived, the importance of accent for determining social status, the existence of accent-based discrimination, and how individuals perceive the relationship between accent and social status. The study uses theoretical frameworks for understanding the relationship between language and social identity and a multi-faceted approach to data collection. The thesis's structure includes an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, a list of references and appendices. The methodology used allows for a more systematic and rigorous examination of the topic, contributing to the development of a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between accent and social hierarchy in British English. Chapter 1 provides a contextualization of the topic through the survey of sociolinguistic literature, chapter 2 focuses on the methodology and data collection techniques, and chapter 3 presents the findings and analysis of the data, as well as limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the linguistic diversity in British English, including the different dialects and accents, as well as the social and cultural factors that have influenced their development. There has been some controversy and debate within the field of linguistics regarding the distinction between accent and dialect. Some linguists argue that accent and dialect are inseparable aspects of language variation, while others maintain that it is important to distinguish between the two, as they represent different aspects of language variation that are shaped by different factors and have different social and cultural implications. In this thesis, the term “accent” is defined as the way in which words are pronounced by a speaker or a group of speakers. The focus of this chapter is on the relationship between accent and social status, exploring how an individual's accent can be influenced by their social background and how accent can be used as a marker of social identity and class. The chapter also examines 12 of the most distinctive British accents, including Received

Pronunciation, Estuary English, Cockney, Geordie, Yorkshire, Scouse, Brummie, West Country, Scottish, Mancunian, Welsh, and Irish accents. The literature review highlights the complexity of the relationship between accent and social status in British society. It identifies how Received Pronunciation (RP) has traditionally been viewed as the "prestige" accent in the UK, associated with high social status and education. However, recent studies have challenged this notion and suggest that other accents, such as Estuary English and Yorkshire, are also associated with high social status. The review also explores the negative social connotations attached to certain accents, such as Cockney, Scouse and Brummie, which are associated with low social status and lack of education.

Additionally, a survey of sociolinguistic literature on the intersection of accent and social identity is presented, including works of scholars such as William Labov, Peter Trudgill, Pauline Jones, William McMillan, Alan Ross, James Bradac, Randall Wisegarver, Klaus Scherer, Howard Giles, Nikolas Coupland, Hywel Bishop, Jairo Fuertes, William Gottdiener, Helena Martin, and Tracey Gilbert. The chapter provides a comprehensive literature review of existing research on the relationship between accent and social status. The literature review covers a range of topics including the history of accent variation in British English, the social significance of accents in different regions of the UK, the perception of accents in terms of social status, and the impact of accent on identity and social mobility. The review also discusses the linguistic landscape of the UK, including the prevalence of different accents and dialects across the country.

In the second and third chapters of this thesis, we examined the relationship between accent and social status in British English by conducting a survey and analyzing the resulting data. Regarding the first research question, the survey results indicated that some accents are associated with high social status while others are associated with low social status. Received Pronunciation (RP) was overwhelmingly associated with high social status, while other accents like Estuary English, Irish, West Country, and Yorkshire were also associated with high social status but to a

lesser extent. In contrast, Scottish, Welsh, Cockney, Scouse, and Geordie were associated with low social status.

The survey also revealed that the majority of participants believe accent plays a role in determining social status in British society to some extent and perceive their accent as somewhat important to their identity, answering the second research question. While the majority of respondents reported no effect of their accent on their social status, a significant number of participants reported both positive and negative impacts.

Regarding the third research question, the survey results suggest that accent-based discrimination is perceived as a prevalent issue in British society. A majority of participants reported experiencing discrimination due to their accent while living in the UK. The association of certain accents with high or low social status may contribute to this discrimination.

Finally, the survey results suggest that individuals perceive the relationship between accent and social status in complex ways, as evidenced by attitudes towards changing accents to fit in and preserving accents, answering the fourth research question. While most participants reported changing their accent to fit in or be better understood, most also felt that accents should be preserved rather than changed to fit in with society.

These findings are consistent with previous research on accent perception and social hierarchy, which has shown that accent can serve as a marker of social identity and influence people's perceptions of individuals and their status. The present study contributes to this body of research by specifically examining the relationship between accent and social status in the context of British English. By using modern quantitative techniques and a multi-faceted approach to data collection, this research provides more precise and accurate data than previous studies, enabling a more systematic and rigorous examination of the topic.

The findings of this study have important implications for issues related to language and social justice. The fact that Received Pronunciation is still associated with higher social status raises questions about the role of accent bias in areas such as

education and employment. Furthermore, it highlights the need for greater awareness of linguistic diversity and the importance of valuing all accents and dialects, regardless of their social status.

In conclusion, this thesis has demonstrated the importance of accent in determining social status in British English and the ways in which linguistic diversity intersects with social hierarchy to shape perceptions of identity and status. This study has provided a foundation for future research in this area, including the need for longitudinal studies and investigations into the relationship between accent and other factors, such as gender and ethnicity. Overall, this thesis has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the complex relationship between language and society in British English.