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**PERCEPTION OF SPANISH-ACCENTED ENGLISH AND ITS EFFECTS ON
STATUS AND SOLIDARITY EVALUATIONS**

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INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, people from any corner of the Earth have the ability to reach out to others, whether for assistance, professional collaboration, or entertainment. All these communicative processes are, for the most part, facilitated by the English language. As an international lingua franca, English serves as an essential tool connecting individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures and enabling smooth communication between them for the most enjoyable cross-cultural experience.

Nevertheless, despite the remarkable advantages it offers, there are factors that can hinder successful communication in English, especially between native and non-native speakers. One of these factors is the accentedness of speech, which stems from the inadequacy of most education systems around the world in terms of teaching English as a second language (ESL), particularly in regard to pronunciation. This often results in non-native speakers struggling to convey their intended message due to their accents. Furthermore, there is a general lack of awareness regarding how accents can affect the overall social perception of non-native English speakers, which can impede their productive interactions and relationships and, subsequently, their progress in the world that values effective communication.

Aside from the educational aspects, personal experiences and political factors can also play a significant role in shaping attitudes toward accented speech. In recent years, for example, there has been heated debate around the issue of illegal migration processes between the United States and Mexico. These political conflicts have sparked discussions not only within these countries but also in the international community. Thus, it may be a source of encouragement for researchers to explore whether such political situations influence the attitudes towards a certain type of accented speech, potentially affecting intercultural interactions and communication on a broader scale. Considering a growing scale of globalization and an increasing number of arising interstate conflicts lately, there is an increasing demand for further research in the field. Therefore, this study is **relevant** as it investigates the linguistic perspective of the

implications of intercultural stereotypes and societal attitudes towards accented speech, particularly in order to shed light on the impact of intercultural preconceptions on communication dynamics between native and non-native English speakers.

The research on the topic of language attitudes is extensive. Some of the linguists who worked within the field are Lambert [35], Giles [43], Agheyisi [3], Cooper and Fishman [20], Ryan [12], etc. These studies vary in terms of the selection of subjects, approaches to attitude evaluations, and, indeed, the findings. Nevertheless, they all played a crucial role in the facilitation of the present study. Most investigations into the influence of speech accentedness on the status and solidarity evaluations that were used within this study were conducted in the 1960s through 1980s. Those were purposefully chosen since contemporary researchers still rely on them in the process of studying language and accent attitudes. Relatively recent studies were also crucial to the current study, especially in tracing the attitudinal tendencies.

The **aim** of the study is to prove a correlation between the degree of accentedness of non-native English speakers and their status and solidarity evaluations by native speakers, i.e., the lower degree of accentedness corresponds with the higher status and lower solidarity evaluations, whereas the higher degree of accentedness correlates to the lower status and higher solidarity evaluations.

The **tasks** of the study are as follows:

1. to introduce the peculiarities of language attitude studies and the concept of foreign accent in English;
2. to create two sets of questionnaires for the two parts of the investigation;
3. to distribute and collect completed questionnaires for the subsequent data processing;
4. to decide on the appropriate data analysis methods and tools for the objective processing of the obtained evaluations;
5. to test the **hypotheses** of the study that are outlined for each part of the investigation specifically in Chapter 2 of the present study.

The **objects** of the study are the Spanish-accented English and the status and solidarity evaluations. The **subjects are** non-native (Spanish and Mexican) and native English speakers.

Sociolinguistic studies are a well-established field of research; therefore, the methodology used within the present study is quite standard among sociolinguists. The **methods** and **tools** applied are sampling, questionnaires, method of observation, qualitative data analysis (coding and content analysis), quantitative data analysis (descriptive statistics and inferential statistics), Google Excel, and Google Forms.

The present study consists of three chapters.

Chapter 1 provides a theoretical framework for this study, outlining the crucial terms and classifications as well as describing the common features of Spanish-accented speech necessary for further data comparison and analysis.

Chapter 2 explains the procedures of the selection, collection, and analysis of the data required for the two studies.

Chapter 3 presents the investigation process in detail and provides visual support, i.e., tables and charts illustrating the findings.

CHAPTER 1. ACCENT IN SOCIOLINGUISTIC RESEARCH

The first chapter of this study offers a comprehensive overview of accent research, focusing on the role of social factors in shaping language attitudes and behaviors. It reviews theoretical approaches, measurement instruments, and categories of accent perception. Additionally, it examines the specific case of the foreign accent in English, analyzing the factors that impact comprehension and features of Spanish-accented English. This chapter aims to provide a thorough introduction to accent research, setting the foundation for the following chapters of the present study.

1.1. Scope of sociolinguistic studies

The most general definition of sociolinguistics may be “the scientific study of the relationships between language and society” [49, p. 2]. While it, undoubtedly, grasps the true essence of the discipline, it does not fully reflect the vast diversity of research directions within sociolinguistics. Being an interdisciplinary field, it covers various types of studies: from more linguistics-oriented to more sociology-oriented. Sociolinguists study the distinctions between language practices of different communities as well as the correlation of language use and social categories (such as class, status, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity) and how rigid they are considered within a particular community. Also, sociolinguists research the connections of language change with various social and linguistic forces and the ways in which language can reveal social relationships, like how people adapt their language to the needs of their interlocutors. Furthermore, sociolinguistics encompasses studies of relationships of different languages within and across communities as well as studies of people’s attitudes towards specific languages and language diversity and how those attitudes are manifested through language policy and planning, particularly in the field of education.

Hymes concurs that the types of sociolinguistic studies are numerous and, thus, difficult to classify in detail. Alternatively, he outlines three main orientations for studies in the realm of sociolinguistics: the social as well as the linguistic, socially realistic linguistics, and socially constituted linguistics [51, p. 68-69]. “The social as well as the linguistic” orientation presupposes that such studies are more concerned

with social issues related to language and its use. This work is seen as a practical application, lacking theoretical content or pursuing theoretical concerns unrelated to normal linguistics. “Socially realistic linguistics” refers to linguistic research that goes beyond existing linguistic theories and incorporates data from the speech communities. Such studies are primarily concerned with two concepts: variation and validity. Additionally, this field of research acknowledges the importance of social context in analyzing meaning and speech acts. And the third orientation, “socially constituted linguistics,” includes studies concerned with the social functions of language and not just its grammatical structure. It challenges normal linguistic theory because its own goals are not acknowledged by normal theory and cannot be attained by “working within the system.” It is concerned with referential and social meaning, as well as with language as part of social action and communicative conduct. Its task is the thoroughgoing critique of received notions and practices from the standpoint of social meaning, i.e., from a functional perspective.

It is important to note that various factors influence a sociolinguistic situation, and different research traditions have been developed to address them [49, p. 3]. These research traditions can vary significantly, and researchers may not always consider all aspects of a situation. For example, sociolinguists examining language status in a country may focus on something other than linguistic details. In contrast, those studying changes in the vowel system of a language may not consider its changing status. Additionally, different subdisciplines may have varying perspectives on what is worth studying and what constitutes valid evidence, which impacts their research methods. The upcoming sections will explore some of these research traditions and methods relevant to the present study.

Famous sociolinguists whose work is relevant to the present study include William Labov, who pioneered the study of linguistic variation and change in American English [55], and Erving Goffman, who explored the relationship between language and social interaction [45]. Another important figure in sociolinguistics is Dell Hymes,

who developed the concept of communicative competence and emphasized the importance of understanding language use in context [50, p. 272]

In the following subsections, we will delve into three topics within sociolinguistics pertinent to this study: linguistic variation and change, social identity theory, and social prestige, bias, and stereotyping. By exploring these topics, we aim to understand better how language is used in different social contexts and how it reflects and shapes people's identities and social structures.

1.1.1. Linguistic variation and change

Linguistic variation and change are fundamental aspects of sociolinguistic research. Linguistic variation refers to the fact that language use varies regionally and socially across communities [22, p. 326]. In general, sociolinguists are interested in examining the social factors that influence linguistic variation, such as age, gender, ethnicity, social class, and geography. This variation can take many forms, such as differences in vocabulary, pronunciation, or grammar, which are not necessarily consistent for all speakers. A simple observation of one's accent can demonstrate the same feature being realized in both 'standard' and 'non-standard' ways. Furthermore, speakers of the same social category are not identical in their speech. These are only some of the factors that affect the outcomes of the sociolinguistic studies dealing with language variation. Therefore, conventionally, the results of such research are presented as averaged statistical values that serve as typical patterns of language variation.

Language change is another critical area of study in sociolinguistics. All languages change over time, and sociolinguists consider language change an integral part and an inevitable result of language use [16, p. 2]. Their main goal is understanding the mechanisms and factors driving these changes. Some changes may be driven by internal factors, such as changes in sound patterns or grammatical structures. In contrast, external factors, such as contact with other languages or social norms and values changes, may drive other changes [4, p. 219]. Sociolinguistic research on language change has identified several factors influencing the direction and rate of

change. One important factor is social status and prestige. In some cases, linguistic changes may be driven by the desire to emulate a higher-status group or to distance oneself from a lower-status group. Gender is another social factor that has been shown to influence language change. Studies have found that women tend to be more linguistically innovative than men and are often at the forefront of language change [96, p. 293]. One more crucial factor is language contact, which occurs when speakers of different languages come into contact and interact with each other. It can occur through various mechanisms, such as borrowing, code-switching, and language mixing, which can lead to the adoption of new words or structures from one language into another or the creation of a pidgin or creole language [66].

Sociolinguistic research on linguistic variation and change has revealed several patterns of language use. One of the most well-known patterns is the notion of a linguistic variable introduced by Labov [54, p. 274]. It is a linguistic feature that can vary across speakers and contexts in line with social (sex, age, ethnicity, and social class), stylistic (formal, careful, and casual), and linguistic parameters (segmental and suprasegmental). Linguistic variables can be encountered at every linguistic level. The most typical are phonological, e.g., (r) may be pronounced as /ɹ/ or /ə/ among the speakers in a community that is transferring from being non-rhotic; morphophonological, e.g., the present participle ending (ing) can be pronounced as /ɪŋ/ (standard) or as /ɪm/ (casual); morphological, e.g., the use of either *dived* or *dove* as the past tense form for *dive*; syntactic, e.g., negated *be* is realized as *ain't* or *isn't*; or lexical, e.g., the use of the words *hero* or *grinder* to refer to a certain type of sandwich [37, p. 28]. Generally, sociolinguists apply quantitative methods to study the distribution of linguistic variables and how they are used in different social contexts.

In essence, the study of linguistic variation and change is a crucial component of sociolinguistics. It has revealed significant findings on how social factors shape language and how it evolves. Furthermore, sociolinguistic research on linguistic variation and change has enriched our understanding of language contact and interaction. By exploring linguistic variation and change further, sociolinguists gain

essential insights into more intricate connections between languages and society. This knowledge may be instrumental in formulating language policies and practices that promote both linguistic diversity and social justice.

1.1.2. Social identity theory

Social identity theory was first established as a theory of intergroup relations, conflict and cooperation between groups [88, p. 35]. As it evolved, it expanded to become a more comprehensive social psychological theory that examines the role of self and identity in various group and intergroup phenomena beyond its initial scope [77, p. 121]. Despite its broadening scope, intergroup relations have remained integral to the theory because the dynamics within a group are closely intertwined and significantly influenced by the dynamics between different groups and vice versa. Thus, social identity theory can be defined as a social psychological theory that explains how people develop a sense of self based on their social group membership and how this identity affects their behavior and interactions with others [82, p. 31].

Although social identity theory is not exclusive to sociolinguistics, it is highly relevant since language appears to be an important marker of social identity and group membership [47, p. 571]. Sociolinguistics often draws on social identity theory to understand how language use is shaped by and reflects social identities as well as how it can reinforce or challenge social inequalities. For example, a study by Dragojevic and Giles [31] examines how the perception and evaluation of language use can be influenced by social identity processes, specifically through the reference frame effect. Thus, it demonstrates how social identity theory can be applied to investigate how language attitudes are formed and maintained within intergroup contexts. Another study, the one conducted by Llamas [60], explores the relationship between language and identity in a border town and how social identity theory can help understand this relationship. It explores how people in this town use language to construct and negotiate their identities in relation to the linguistic and cultural norms of the wider society. Overall, studies of this kind provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between languages and social identities.

In the present study, social identity theory offers a framework for understanding how individuals and groups use language to construct and negotiate their social identities. It explains how linguistic features are frequently employed as markers of group identity and how language use can signal an individual's social status, values, and beliefs. Furthermore, social identity theory highlights the significance of intergroup dynamics in shaping language attitudes and behaviors, which can have important implications for language policy and planning.

1.1.3. Social prestige, bias, and stereotyping

Generally, studies in the field of sociolinguistics aim to examine and resolve certain social issues that affect a particular group of people or interactions between such groups and, thus, to contribute to a more equitable and inclusive society by studying how language use and attitudes are shaped by social factors and how they can be used to promote social justice and equality. Therefore, social prestige, bias, and stereotypes are recurrent topics in sociolinguistic studies.

In the context of sociolinguistics, social prestige refers to the social value or status that is attributed to different languages or dialects by speakers of a particular community. This can affect language attitudes and behaviors, as individuals may use language as a means of expressing their social identity or signaling their affiliation with specific groups. Sociolinguistic research has shown that language varieties that are associated with higher social prestige are often perceived as more desirable and are more likely to be used in formal or prestigious settings. In her 2016 paper [18], Campbell-Kibler discusses the role of cognitive processes in the perception and evaluation of sociolinguistic variation, which includes factors related to social prestige, such as the perceived status or prestige of different language varieties or accents. The author argues that a cognitively realistic model of sociolinguistic variation can help us better understand how social factors, including social prestige, influence behavior and attitudes toward languages.

However, language attitudes are also influenced by biases and stereotypes associated with particular languages or dialects. For example, speakers of certain

dialects may be stigmatized or discriminated against based on their speech, which can negatively impact their social and economic opportunities. Sociolinguistic research has also explored how biases and stereotypes related to language can intersect with other forms of discrimination, such as racism or classism. Wiese et al. [19] conducted a compelling study that aimed to investigate the effectiveness of an anti-bias program in changing teachers' attitudes toward linguistic diversity. The program addressed biases and stereotypes that teachers may hold about language diversity among their students. It intended to promote a more positive and inclusive attitude towards linguistic diversity in the classroom, highlighting the role of education and awareness in combating bias and promoting diversity. This study can be considered a great example of the practical application of prior research findings on bias and stereotyping toward addressing pressing contemporary issues.

Essentially, sociolinguistic studies investigating social prestige, bias, and stereotypes play a critical role in promoting equity and inclusion by shedding light on the complex relationship between language use, social factors, and attitudes. The studies mentioned above exemplify how sociolinguistic research can be applied to solve contemporary language diversity and discrimination issues. The following section of the present study will focus on language attitude studies, which explore individuals' attitudes and beliefs toward language varieties and how these attitudes can shape linguistic behaviors and policies.

1.2. Language attitude studies

Evidently, the core of attitude studies is constituted by the concept of 'attitude'. Since the scope of attitude studies is extensive, it is apparent that various theorists and researchers within almost every branch of the field advanced diverse definitions of the said concept as seen from their viewpoint and applied in their research. Since Allport's 1935 definition of an attitude as a 'mental and neural state of readiness exerting a directive influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations to which it is related' [6, p. 809] and literally, dozens of others following it, the notion has already gone through several stages of evolution, spreading the chaos of contradiction and

dissent within the field. However, this eventually led theorists to establish a much narrower set of views on the matter. Thus, modern attitude studies and behavioral sciences, in general, consider ‘attitude’ based on two major conceptions: *probability conception* and *latent process conception*, with the former equating ‘attitude’ with the ‘probability of recurrence of behavior forms of a given type or direction’ and the latter with ‘an intervening variable operating between stimulus and response and inferred from the overt behavior’ [24, p. 23].

Due to the close relation of language attitude studies to the general field of attitude studies, its own definition of ‘attitude’ underwent very similar transformations. Some sources with detailed descriptions of the processes mentioned earlier are Peter Garrett’s book *Attitudes to Language* [41] and Colin Baker’s book *Attitudes and Language* [8]. Both Garrett and Baker reviewed numerous sources and amassed a lot of various meanings of an ‘attitude’ introduced over the years as well as outlined the ones they considered the most accurate and adequate for further research. Regarding the pivotal definition of our present study, we made a decision to rely on the *latent process conception* of attitudes that mostly resonates with the mentalist theory, which can be traced throughout our whole experiment and research process, which brings us to the next important point in the exploration of language attitude studies – theoretical approaches that can be applied within the field.

1.2.1. Theoretical approaches

As it was already mentioned, language attitude studies have been full of opposing views and ideas for decades. Nevertheless, practically every of those pertains either to mentalism or behaviorism – two major competing theoretical approaches to attitudes and their origin in the field. Most of the time, researchers tend to choose only one of them in their work due to the polarity of the theories and their application, which will be discussed in more detail further.

The mentalist theory appears to be a basis for a majority of works within language attitude studies. It views an attitude as an inner state of a person that actively influences their reactions to various stimuli in different ways depending on the

experiences or knowledge obtained in the past. Among the most honored mentalist definitions of 'attitude' are that by Allport (1935) mentioned above [6, p. 809] and the one by Williams (1974) that reads: 'an attitude is considered as an internal state aroused by stimulation of some type and which may mediate the organism's subsequent response' [94, p. 25]. However, as duly noted by Fasold in his book *The Sociolinguistics of Society* [36, p. 132], the mentalist view on attitudes introduces specific issues into its practical application as, since attitudes are internal states and cannot be assessed objectively from the outside, i.e., by the researchers, there is considerable dependence on the participants' honesty and impartiality while providing answers concerning their attitudes to the objects in question. Indeed, for every issue, there has to exist a plausible solution. In this particular case, researchers put much effort into designing multiple tools and methods to uncover actual attitudes without raising excessive awareness among participants about the research process.

The opposing view of attitudes to the mentalist theory is the behaviorist theory. It is grounded on the idea that attitudes are easily recognizable in people's behavior patterns as the representation of their genuine response to certain social events. Experiments based on this theory lead to unbiased and valid results that consist of objective observation, tabulation, and analysis of the participants' behaviors in the specially devised situations done by the researchers themselves. Nevertheless, Agheyisi and Fishman made a compelling point that there are some limitations to such view of attitudes as well. More specifically, they call attention to the fact that behaviorist-based research results usually turn out not as quite interesting as they would be, provided they were obtained through mentalist-based research, since they are inapt for predicting the future typical behaviors [3, p. 137-138]. This is because an 'attitude has no independence of the specific stimulus situations in which the responses are observed'; thus, 'it cannot be used to explain other behaviors by the same organism' [5, p. 279]. However, despite the listed weaknesses of both behaviorist and mentalist approaches, they are still highly beneficial for different purposes within the studies of language attitudes.

Another distinguishable difference between these two approaches is the viewpoint as to whether attitudes are indivisible or comprised of identifiable subcomponents. Theorists who support the behaviorist theory perceive and study attitudes as single indivisible units. On the contrary, mentalists tend to examine attitudes as more complex units consisting of subparts. The most common model, proposed and popularized by Agheyisi and Fishman in 1970, suggests that attitudes have such subparts as cognitive, affective, and conative, which respectively denote knowledge, feeling, and action components of the attitude [3, p. 139]. Indeed, other scholars also have introduced similar, more or less detailed, and intricately componential models of attitudes. However, our primary focus is not on the attitudes in general but on language attitudes and their potential use for sociolinguistics.

1.2.2. Main categories

Unlike other attitudes, language attitudes, as it can be inferred from the name, address languages and their varieties specifically. Despite the such thematic limitation, there are still various focuses for studies of language attitudes and, according to Agheyisi and Fishman's classification [3, p. 141], there are three main categories:

1. studies of 'language-oriented or language-directed attitudes';
2. studies of 'community-wide stereotyped impressions' toward a certain language or variety (and sometimes its speakers);
3. studies of 'the implementation of different types of language attitudes' [3].

Research of the first category is restricted to exploring the attitudes to the language in question itself. Therefore, the task for the participants of such studies is usually to evaluate a given language according to a set of specific criteria, e.g., whether they think the language or language variety sounds 'sweet,' 'harsh,' 'rich,' 'poor,' etc. Essentially, Agheyisi and Fishman suggested dividing such studies into two groups:

1. Classical/Standard/Official varieties as opposed to Modern/Non-standard/Vernacular respectively
2. Creoles, Pidgins, and Trade languages [3, p. 141].

The second category consists of studies of language attitudes that go into a slightly different direction analyzing the importance of a language or its variety within certain mono- or multilingual communities as well as attitudes towards the speakers of a certain language or variety, which, incidentally, has proved to be quite interesting and thus popular among researchers in the field.

Studies of the third category explore all different types of attitude- or belief-induced behaviors towards a language or variety. Inferring from the mentalist view on attitudes, knowing people's attitudes to a language or dialect aids the theorists in making somewhat accurate predictions about their alleged behavior toward the speakers of the language or dialect in any future communicative encounters. Such studies can be and often are conducted for the purposes of language learning, maintenance and planning, choice, and usage with an intention of developing efficient social interactions and communities.

Conclusively, all these categories have different focuses and aims while researching language attitudes; however, they do not axiomatically exclude each other. As an illustration, while researching attitudes toward a certain language or variety, one can often obtain results that imply the correlation between attitudes toward the language and its speakers. Similarly, the importance of the languages and their speakers inevitably arises from considering language maintenance and planning within multilingual communities. Some examples of such studies are: Cooper and Fishman's study on the influences of language attitudes of a speech community on sound change, i.e., accent change [20], study into how bias and prejudice towards languages affect everyday lives of nonstandard language representatives in general [30], research into the language attitudes as an influential factor in employer's hiring process [80], studies of how language attitudes affect teacher-student and student-student interactions in classrooms conducted by Frender and Lambert in 1973 [40] along with Seligman et al. in 1972 [83] as well as studies on second-language learning and language attitudes [1]. Since it is evident that there is a certain correlation between language attitudes and

social phenomena, language attitudes studies inarguably play an essential part in the field of sociolinguistics.

1.2.3. Data gathering techniques and methods

Considering that language attitude studies have been around for quite a long time, it should not come as a surprise that methods and techniques facilitating data collection and processing for the research are numerous. While some of those are interdisciplinary, others are specifically designed for use in the studies of language attitudes. However, any of them can be classified as either a direct or an indirect method. A completely direct data collection method envisages that the study participants answer the provided questions, which inquire about their opinions about a certain language or a variety. As for a completely indirect method, the focus here is on the participants not knowing they are a part of the experiment. An illustrative example of using the latter method is a study led by Cooper and Fishman [20]. They hypothesized that Hebrew and Arabic languages in Israel are perceived differently in different contexts; namely, Hebrew is more efficient for scientific purposes, while Arabic is more convincing when it comes to communicating traditional Islamic views. Participants of Cooper and Fishman's experiment were told that the study aimed to determine whether or not people would side with the implementation of higher tax rates on tobacco and liquor in order to discourage the use of these substances, while its actual goal, i.e., to test the hypothesis above, was concealed. The results of the study, consequently, proved the main hypothesis about the substantial influence of language attitudes on people's attitudes to scientific or traditional opinions, even though the participants were unaware of this language-attitude component of the study due to the distraction created by the liquor and tobacco tax increase dilemma.

The matched-guise technique

One of the commonly used methods within language attitude studies is the matched-guise technique, first proposed in 1960 by Lambert et al. [35]. Originally, the technique was developed with the intention to study people's attitudes 'toward social, geographical or ethnic language varieties and to the different languages spoken in

bilingual communities' [35, p. 46]. It was grounded on the idea that, by simply asking participants about their attitudes towards a particular thing or phenomenon, researchers might well obtain the results that most likely demonstrate common stereotypes within their communities rather than their own attitudes. The experiment process designed according to the matched guise technique is generally free of participants' cognizant introspection. It is mostly due to the fact that they are presented with previously recorded speech samples of languages or language varieties at issue and, afterward, encouraged to honestly evaluate the speakers on a provided scale according to a set of specific criteria chosen for that specific experiment. However, the most ubiquitously used are those that inquire about the speaker's personality traits, such as intelligence, kindness, likability, ambition, self-confidence, etc.

What provides potentially honest and factual results for experiments based on the matched guise technique is the participants' unawareness that the presented samples have been produced by the same speaker. In order to identify common traits typically associated with one language or language variety or the other, it is imperative that the researched samples be identical in every way except for the languages or language varieties in question. Therefore, the speaker also must be the only one to take on two different guises, i.e., to produce the samples in both languages or language varieties for the experiment [35, p. 48]. Although useful for research of group bias, the matched-guise technique is not the only effective method for studying language attitudes. There are also different types of questionnaires with open-ended, closed, multiple-choice questions, etc., as well as some other methods that are to be discussed further in the paper.

Questionnaires

As data-collection instruments, questionnaires account for a substantial degree of refinement and academic advancement, primarily due to their frequent use within the field of social sciences. The topics and issues for investigation with the aid of questionnaires are manifold. For example, a specifically designed anonymous questionnaire may identify general attitudes toward a particular minority within a team

or toward any management decision without revealing the respondents' names and thus contributing to the accuracy of answers.

Indeed, an essential constituent of any questionnaire is a question. In language attitude studies, let alone attitude studies in general, the most utilized type of is an open-ended question. Due to the absence of restricting factors such as length or vocabulary, such a form of questioning usually encourages respondents to express their opinions and show attitudes more freely. In addition, open questions may help unveil some other existing attitudes that are not hypothesized by the researchers. The critical aspect to remember here is the appropriate choice of questions, i.e., including the questions 'suggested by the dimensions of appraisal' like 'How would you react...' and 'What do you think...' [3, p. 144]. Nevertheless, there are also disadvantages to the open-ended questions. They may be less effective in questionnaires than interviews since respondents can be concerned about their attitudes being documented and stored, while in an interview, they would not get the same feeling due to the oral form of questioning that seems more like casual talk. Furthermore, some respondents can be reluctant to provide a full answer to such questions because of the amount of effort and time they are required to devote to it. Consequently, the researcher may receive the responses that are not valid for the investigation. Lastly, it is obviously challenging to score the answers to open-ended questions since it introduces into the study a certain level of subjectivity on the part of the researcher. Considering the disadvantages listed above, questionnaires with open-ended questions are most likely to be used within the initial stage of data collection and pilot studies, whereas final data are usually collected via questionnaires with closed questions.

By and large, scientists tend to differentiate between three significant dimensions of closed-question items. These are the dimension of appraisal, the focal object, and a series of rating terms that the participants are presented with while answering the questions [3, p. 148]. The rating terms vary in relation to their complexity: some questions involve a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer, some require one to choose an option on a 5-point (most common – Likert scale) or a 7-point (Osgood's

Semantic Differential scale) scale, and some items even require to complete the given sentences. Due to their rich variety of forms and applications, closed questions have to be closely analyzed and carefully fashioned, customarily in line with the results of initial-stage surveys.

Closed-question items in questionnaires are highly effective in removing the issue of respondents aiming attention on the wrong dimension. Letting them choose among several given options also aids in the scoring stage of the research. Another feature of such items that is both an advantage and a disadvantage lies in the ability to construct such questions/statements that inquire within more than one dimension more easily. Although, if they are too simple (e.g., a set of 'yes or no' questions), respondents will be more likely to choose answers randomly; or, if the questions are too complicated, the whole questionnaire may be dubbed overly demanding and time-consuming. Regardless of their disadvantages, questionnaires containing closed questions seem to be one of the most appropriate instruments when it comes to measuring multicomponential concepts [3, p. 149].

One of the approaches most commonly used in surveys with closed-question items is the Likert scale. It was introduced by Rensis Likert in 1932 when his article *A technique for the measurement of attitudes* was published. The paper outlined a straightforward yet effective method of constructing attitude scales that are based on the assumption that one's attitude to a certain issue can be measured by a set of similar questions addressing that issue. Likert illustrated that the summation of the answers to similar questions provided a useful and docile measure of latent attitudes [58, p. 14].

Likert proposed a few different response formats within his scale model. One of them offers five options to choose from: strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree. This very response format may well be the most popular of them all; therefore, it is frequently misidentified as the Likert scale. However, the Likert-type response represents a single answer to a question (Figure 1.1).

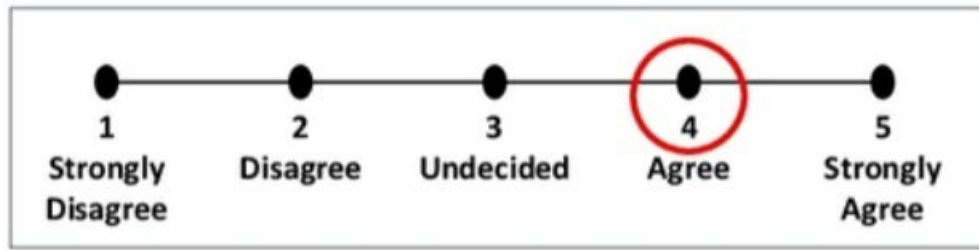


Figure 1.1. An example of a Likert-type response [9]

Likert-type responses are considered as ordered options, but their distance is not uniformly defined. As a result, they represent an ordinal data format instead of an interval one, making it unsuitable for applying parametric statistical techniques [9, p. 33]. Nonetheless, it consequently gives the respondents an impression that they choose from 5 different though related options while there are, in fact, only 3: *disagree*, *undecided*, and *agree*. It is indeed appropriate to unite the approximate responses in such cases since the difference between ‘*strongly disagree*’ and ‘*disagree*’ as well as ‘*strongly agree*’ and ‘*agree*’ is highly subtle and may be disregarded during the final analysis [2, p. 6].

A Likert scale allows one to identify and measure attitudes by summing up all the Likert-type answers to related questions within a given questionnaire. According to Likert [58, p. 14], it is the summation that plays the most crucial part in the process of attitude measuring since it makes the scale susceptible to the usage of parametric statistical techniques (Figure 1.2).

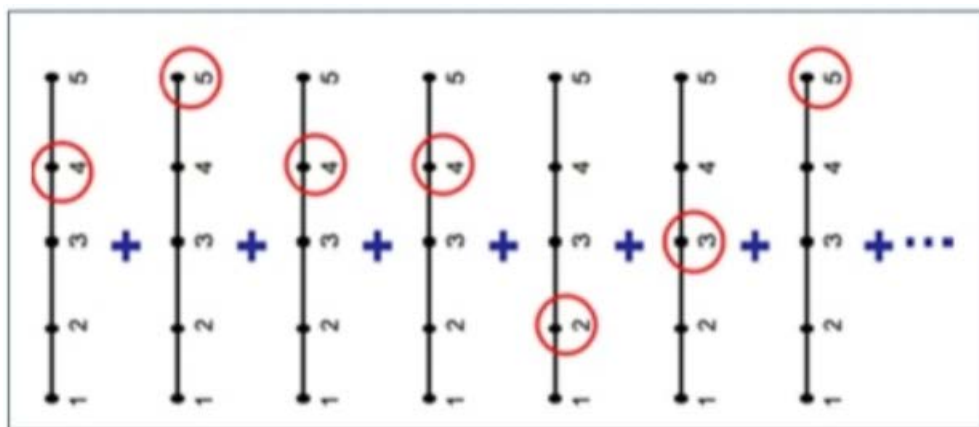


Figure 1.2. An example of a Likert scale comprised of Likert-type answers to the related questions [9]

Nevertheless, one of the disadvantages of the scale is that it is pretty complicated and time-consuming to investigate the proper combination of the questions that construct a true Likert scale. One of the possible solutions to this problem is to utilize the attitudinal scales that already exist and have been proven reliable and valid [10; 15]. They may not be appropriate for every type of studies out there, although researchers can alter them in line with the aims of their investigation.

While the Likert scale requires the respondents to agree or disagree with specific statements, the Semantic Differential scale introduced by Osgood et al. [73] provides for the focal object a set of terms of reference that are presented as opposite extremes on the ends of a 5- or 7- point scale (Figure 1.3).

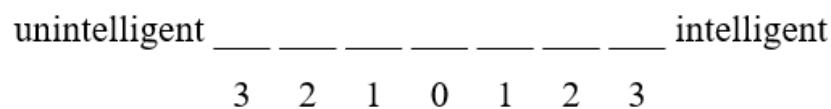


Figure 1.3. An illustration of a 7-point semantic differential scale

Traditionally, the 0 position is tagged ‘neutral,’ the 1 positions – ‘slightly,’ the 2 positions – ‘quite,’ the 3 positions – ‘extremely.’ Such scales simultaneously provide the attitude direction (unintelligent or intelligent) as well as its intensity (slight to extreme) [48, p. 235]. Thus, the effectiveness of semantic differential scaling lies in its ability to categorize natural phenomena into opposing or contradictory positions. Nevertheless, this method has the drawback of restricting the range of responses to a linear format [25, p. 238].

The argument for using this type of scale is that generalized answers usually come from generalized choice, i.e., questions and statements could be misinterpreted if ambiguous, whereas choices in the form of opposite terms of reference, such as personal traits (*friendly-unfriendly*) bring the focal object into focus, which subsequently becomes the only stimulator of the responses. Due to this peculiarity, it is claimed that such responses tend to be more apt for cross-cultural comparison [3, p. 146].

One of the peculiar characteristics of the Semantic Differential scale observed by Osgood et al. themselves is the so-called EPA structure. It is the term describing the three basic dimensions of rating co-variation within bipolar adjective scales. The EPA stands for Evaluation, Potency, and Activity dimensions that incidentally have been confirmed and replicated in a considerable number of studies. Considering pure measurements of the dimensions, which are sometimes used in various research studies without modifications, Evaluation is determined with a good-bad adjective scale, Potency – with a powerful-powerless adjective scale, and Activity – with a fast-slow adjective scale. Such ratings of a concept based on the EPA dimensions are commonly regarded as the concept's profile [48, p. 237].

The semantic differential scale is a commonly used technique for measuring attitudes. Its effectiveness is demonstrated by the diverse range of meaningful outcomes that have been achieved through its application. Moreover, semantic differential measurements have been proven to have a high correlation with measurements on conventional attitude scales. However, there are several issues regarding the use of semantic differential scales for attitude measurement. As an example, if the topic of the study is sensitive or controversial, i.e., respondents may be unwilling to share their genuine feelings toward the matter and are likely to provide socially desirable answers, it is advisable to refrain from using such a direct rating instrument as a semantic differential scale. For the sake of the adequacy of a study, using a less direct rating method or providing anonymity to respondents is recommended. But, arguably, the most significant benefit of using semantic differential scales is that they create a single attitude space for all stimuli. This method enables comparisons, analyses, and insights that were previously challenging or impossible to achieve using traditional attitude measurement instruments.

To sum up, while questionnaires are widely used for collecting data, they have certain limitations that make them less effective for collecting certain types of information. Although they are generally thought of as appropriate for gathering data about attitudinal criteria such as political or religious attitudes, questionnaires are often

insufficient for obtaining data on anticipatory behavior. This was illustrated by LaPiere's work [56], which clearly described some of these limitations.

Interviews

Interviewing is often considered one of the oldest data-collection methods. However, at the same time, there are claims that it has never been developed to the level of the questionnaire. The disadvantages of interviews are expectedly the recording and processing the large amounts of extensive and often vague data. In addition, interviewing seems to be quite expensive, time-consuming, and exhausting. On the part of an interviewer, some researchers believe that an interviewer may consciously or subconsciously affect the course of an interview due to potential personal bias. Speaking of interviewees, it is a lack of anonymity that can influence their predisposition to cooperate and provide honest answers. These disadvantages are not critical when the scale and samples are relatively small; it is when the researcher deals with larger samples that they can become quite problematic. Nevertheless, the advantages of interviewing counterbalance its limitations. For instance, due to personal contact, the interviewer has the ability to redirect the interviewee's attention to the required dimension, adjust the manner of asking questions to mirror the interviewee's mood, paraphrase questions if there is any difficulty with its interpretation, etc. [3, p. 149]. All this contributes to the honesty and accuracy of the responses as well as the interviewee's sense of accomplishment and satisfaction with the interviewing experience. Another significant advantage is the ability of an interviewer or an interviewee to identify and eradicate an error, which, within interviewing, stands for anything that affects the validity and reliability of the results [2, p. 7]. For example, by repeating vague answers back to the interviewee, the interviewer can clarify the information and ensure that they have documented it appropriately or that the interviewee has not misspoken earlier.

Observation

An observation is a basic method for practically all social sciences nowadays. Its primary advantage lies in its directness, i.e., researchers are able to study and

document behaviors as they occur. It allows for the collection of a significant amount of data that is free from factors that may interfere with the subject matter being studied. Moreover, due to the unawareness of the participants that they are being observed, the validity levels of their responses and behaviors are pretty high as the participants are studied in their natural settings. The observational method is beneficial in cases where the comparison and validation of previously obtained verbal responses with the actual behaviors is needed. Therefore, it facilitates the contextual analysis of verbal behavior through the exploration of the environment and how it affects the observed participants [39, p. 140]. Taking into consideration the information mentioned above, it can be affirmed that this method may be beneficial to use for gathering introspective data such as attitudinal data in combination with a more direct method (a questionnaire or an interview), not solely but itself [46, p. 141].

However, a disadvantage to this method is that social behavior in real-life settings tends to be more intricate, unpredictable, and less structured than in a controlled laboratory environment, which makes analysis and scoring more complicated, almost impossible. But, if efforts are made to minimize excessive subjectivity and personal bias and to present the data in more formal and publicly accessible formats, it is possible to apply rigorous scoring, counting, and rating standards to the data collected in such a way. Logically, by the given description, the observational method fits more into the pattern of the behaviorist approach. Within mentalism, observations would serve as an effort to derive attitudes from the observed behaviors.

Sampling

Studying an entire population by surveying each member is a rare occurrence due to the extensive time and financial resources required. The method of sampling, i.e., selecting a limited number of carefully chosen respondents, can definitely provide sufficient information for a given research. Surely, here the challenge lies in selecting representative samples that can be generalized to the entire population. Even if the

samples are selected randomly and carefully, they cannot reflect the entire population perfectly, as they can never be an exact miniature of the population.

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias suggested differentiating between two types of sampling: probability sampling and non-probability sampling [39, p. 215]. Probability sampling envisages that every proportion of the population has an opportunity of being included in the sample. The researchers make a distinction between four designs of probability sampling: *simple random samples*, *systematic samples*, *stratified samples*, and *cluster samples*. The simple random samples entail that each unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected, typically using a lottery system. For the systematic samples, every n^{th} unit of the population is chosen: for instance, if the researcher has to choose 10 units out of a population of 100, the first unit is chosen randomly (e.g., 3), with the following being every 10th individual after that (e.g., 13, 23, 33, etc.). The stratified samples ensure that each group in the population is represented proportionally in the sample. And the cluster samples are commonly applied in large-scale studies. As an illustration, the researcher studying urban households has to choose a sample of cities first, then a sample of districts within every selected city, and eventually a sample of households within every selected district [39, p. 216].

In turn, non-probability sampling does not allow for the selection of each proportion of the population in the sample. As three major designs in this type of sampling, social scientists use *convenience*, *purposive*, and *quota* samples. *Convenience* samples are chosen when the researcher selects any available to them sampling unit. *Purposive* samples or *judgment* samples are chosen by researchers subjectively selecting sampling units that appear representative of the population. *Quota* samples are chosen by selecting a sample that is almost identical to the general population. For instance, if the general population consists of an equal number of males and females, an equal number of both sexes is to be selected in the sample. Subsequently, it is obvious that the only method that permits representative sampling designs is probability sampling.

1.2.4. Accent perception

Any social interaction drives people to form their own opinions and views on certain matters. Continuous series of interactions between various groups of people eventually result in an established set of common beliefs and attitudes towards one another. Therefore, since communication is facilitated for the most part by language and speech, attitudes to a particular group of people subsequently also apply to their languages or language varieties. Due to the tight connection that exists between language varieties and accents, a plausible deduction is that people's attitudes to some language varieties are definitely influenced by the speakers' accents as well. Even to the naked ear, such conclusions seem apparent: German guttural consonants sound so harsh, just like German people in general, and drawled vowels in a speech of US Southerners represent how lazy and laid-back they truly are [76, p. 140]. This correlation was duly summarized by John Edwards: "people's reactions to language varieties reveal much of their perception of the speakers of these varieties" [33, p. 24].

Such attitudes towards any group of people and their language may be quite difficult to identify and measure due to the fact that not many people are willing to admit to and let anyone document their honest, unflattering attitudes (e.g., racism, prejudice, sexism, etc.). Direct data-collection methods definitely would not serve this purpose since the lack of anonymity might cause the respondents to provide socially desired answers to maintain their image. Indirect methods, on the contrary, seem more suitable for such type of research because of their anonymity component or unawareness component that grant the respondents a possibility to express their true opinions about someone or something without the fear of being identified with those. Similar methods have been chosen for the studies by Osgood et al. [73], Lambert et al [35], Giles and Powesland [43], and others. They applied the method of "guises" which meant that the participants were asked to rate something other than a language or an accent on such scales as "good-bad" or "fast-slow." It was not perfect, yet it still led to the emergence of the first generalization of great importance in studies of language attitudes – the "three factor groups" generalization [76, p. 135]. As Lambert

summarized in 1967, during the assessment of speakers' voices, all pairs of opposites were divided into three groups: *competence*, *personal integrity*, and *social attractiveness*. Numerous studies based on this approach concluded that these three constructs seem to be applicable in a majority of cases as well as that speakers with standard accents usually received higher ratings on the competence scale, whereas speakers with nonstandard accents scored higher on the personal integrity and social attractiveness scales. Some period of time and dozens of studies later, the latter two construct groups were united into a *solidarity* group.

However, the process of identifying a group and then assigning attitudes toward that group is not always straightforward. Instead, linguistic features themselves can trigger attitudes without any conscious recognition of group membership. A suitable illustration would be a study of different dialectal groups from Great Britain where respondents were inaccurate in identifying the area from which speakers came but still exhibited statistically significant attitudinal differences towards those speakers. This suggests that attitudes can be triggered by linguistic features alone rather than by a conscious identification of group membership. This phenomenon can be explained by the concept of 'iconicity' [29, p. 30; 51, p. 24]. Milroy and McClenaghan suggested that, essentially, linguistic features become semiotically linked to social attitudes towards groups so that attitudes can be assigned without consciously identifying the group itself. This may be below the level of consciousness for most individuals [68]. Some of the examples of linguistic features in American English that trigger negative evaluations might be "ain't" and multiple negations, which may not require any specific group association to trigger negative attitudes.

1.3. Foreign accent in English

English continues to be one of the most widely spoken languages in the world as well as the most common second language for a great number of non-native speakers. The process of learning any language involves studying the way native speakers pronounce words, phrases, and even whole sentences (i.e., intonation and sentence stress) and striving to reproduce the sounds identically or similarly. While

acquiring native-like proficiency in English pronunciation is possible, it is not always justifiable for most of the learners due to how challenging and time-consuming it may be. Therefore, a majority of ESL learners generally are able to achieve minimally adequate English pronunciation without any special training, even when the primary focus of their studies may be on mastering such aspects as vocabulary and grammar [57, p. 203]. Such an approach to studying ESL leads to the emergence of various foreign accents in English, which can be regarded as both a source of diversity and pride and a reason for judgement and discrimination. In the following subsections, the phenomenon of a Spanish accent in English will be explored with the preconditions influencing its presence and degree.

1.3.1. Second language phonological acquisition

Nowadays, the common view on pronunciation in the field of second language acquisition is that the general improvement of pronunciation teaching may rely on a more profound comprehension of pronunciation learning. Therefore, the most efficient approach to teaching L2 pronunciation would be one that aims to enhance learners' innate abilities and processes while studying a new phonetic system that is different from their native one. Nevertheless, applying such methods to pronunciation teaching may well lead to the development of the "L1 transfer" phenomenon [57, p. 207]. The L1 transfer presupposes that L2 learners apply the L1 sound system to the L2 phonological system, i.e., they hear and reproduce the second language according to the phonetic categories of their mother tongue, which is often examined within the field of cross-language perception studies.

Regarding pronunciation learning, there co-exist two opposing views on whether or not contrasting the sound systems of L1 and L2 is truly beneficial to the learner's phonological progress. While some theorists such as Eckman [32, p.23] suggest that simple contrastive analysis of L1 and L2 helps learners to succeed in mastering the L2 pronunciation by identifying more problematic areas and sounds compared to L1 and paying attention to them, others, like Briere [13] and Nemser [70], disprove this hypothesis with the findings of their own studies. They claim that a simple

contrastive analysis is insufficient for such purposes and that the difficulty of learning phonological categories needs to be based on a comprehensive description of these categories at the phonetic level rather than merely using distinctive features or allophonic membership of phoneme classes. Therefore, researchers need to consider both phonetic and strictly phonological factors when studying transfer. Another issue connected with L1 transfer is that of the transfer of pronunciation at the prosodic level, which, unlike the transfer of phonemes from one language to another, can have serious sociocultural consequences, like those illustrated in Loveday's study of the transfers at the level of politeness- and sex-related pitch patterns [62, p. 76].

Such transfer processes generally build the foundation of 'foreign' accents in second languages that can be easily detected even by inexperienced listeners. Furthermore, it leads to the emergence of stereotypes about foreign accents most commonly used for the purposes of comedy, which, however, may cause L2 speakers to be self-conscious about their accents and discourage them from speaking in the second language altogether.

Some other limitations on achieving proficiency in pronunciation are the amount and duration of exposure to the target language (L2) [27, p. 352], individual neuropsychological characteristics, such as the extent to which a learner's language processing is concentrated in the right hemisphere of their brain [93, p. 51], the ability of L2 learners to accurately perceive spatial configurations inside the oral cavity (i.e., produce sounds by adjusting their speech organs in line with verbally formulated instructions) [61, p. 1262], and, interestingly, attitudes towards the culture and society of the L2. According to Brown [14], attitudes towards the culture of the target language can be a predictor of success in second-language learning, including the pronunciation learning. Sociolinguists have demonstrated that speakers use certain linguistic markers to identify themselves with specific socio-cultural groups, which also applies in case of different language communities. This phenomenon is most evident in naturalistic language learning conditions where the L2 is being learned in the community of its native speakers.

Regarding English learners from both Spain and Mexico in particular, their speaking skills – hence, pronunciation – have long been considered their weak spot in the process of learning English. In her doctoral dissertation [17], Benzies provided an extremely detailed description of the modern state of the Spanish educational system regarding English teaching in general and the challenges of teaching English pronunciation. In line with her research, as well as the study by Henderson, Frost, et al. [90], the main factors influencing adequate English phonological acquisition in Spanish students are an insufficient number of English classes as well as strict curricula that do not allow for additional pronunciation-focused classes, absence of pronunciation practice exercises in the utilized English textbooks, and lack of learners' motivation. According to their teachers, Mexican students face similar challenges with English pronunciation learning; however, there have been mentioned a few other factors: the lack of real-life situations involving speaking in English that would encourage learners to pay more attention to standard pronunciation and political actions of the US towards Mexico and its citizens that actively discourage learners from mastering English in general [11; 28]. It goes as far as 2002, when Dalton described pronunciation as “the Cinderella of language teaching,” thus illustrating how weak an emphasis was placed on this aspect of the English language in Mexico [23]. Unlike Mexican teachers, Spanish teachers defined English pronunciation as one of the most important English skills to learn back in 1999 [92, p. 28] and their opinions have not changed according to the 2012 study [90, p. 12] that demonstrates that Spanish teachers estimated the importance of pronunciation at 4.2 out of 5, which is the highest evaluation among the investigated countries. At the same time, however, the teachers estimated their students' aspirations to achieve native-level pronunciation at 2.6 out of 5, which appeared to be the lowest among others.

Speaking about native-like pronunciation, in line with the collected data, Spanish teachers prefer using standard British accent or RP [90, p. 14] as well as a completely intelligible yet recognizably Spanish accent (mentioned by some primary and secondary English teachers) [92, p. 30]. For Spanish students, the preferred accent is RP as well; however, the number of those who use General American is significantly

higher in comparison with the teachers. There is insufficient information regarding preferred accents for Mexican teachers and students. Although, given the proximity of Mexico and the United States and the fact that many teachers have had the experience of studying as well as living in the USA, the assumption that their preferred accent is General American seems to be justified. As for the specific challenging areas in pronunciation for both Spanish and Mexican learners, those will be discussed in the following subsection.

1.3.2. Factors that affect the comprehension of accented speech

Another significant to this study point to mention is the issues with accented speech comprehension by native speakers and their causes. Derwing and Munro [26] adeptly compiled and summarized existing research on the subject of understanding accented speech. Varonis and Gass [91] conducted a study in 1982 to identify the factors that affect native speakers' listening comprehension when exposed to second-language accents. Their findings showed that grammar and pronunciation interact to influence the overall intelligibility. In a subsequent study, Gass and Varonis [42] investigated the effects of familiarity on native speakers' comprehension of accented speech. They revealed that familiarity with the topic, non-native speech, a particular accent, and a specific speaker all had an impact on intelligibility. Similarly, Wingstedt and Schulman [95] found that familiarity with a particular accent improves comprehension.

Prosody plays an important role in mutual understanding of accented speech. In 1992, Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson, and Koehler [7] compared non-native speakers' errors in prosody, segments, and syllable structure with accent comprehensibility ratings. They found that prosody had a greater impact on perceived accentedness and comprehensibility than other factors. Tajima, Port, and Dalby [89] manipulated temporal variables in native speakers' and non-native speakers' speech samples to make the non-native speakers' speech resemble native speakers' patterns. They found that this manipulation had a beneficial effect on intelligibility, while changing the

native speakers' utterances to reflect the temporal patterns of the Chinese non-native speakers resulted in reduced overall intelligibility.

As for scalar judgments of accent, they were employed in studies such as Flege, Munro, & MacKay [38] and Major [65]. Munro and Derwing [69] investigated Mandarin speakers' English productions, comparing accent, perceived comprehensibility, and intelligibility ratings with phonetic, phonemic, and grammatical errors and goodness of intonation ratings. The results showed that accent ratings were significantly correlated with all error types and goodness of intonation ratings, while phonetic errors dropped in significance when comprehensibility ratings were compared with linguistic measures. Phonetic errors were not correlated with intelligibility scores for any of the listeners. The study found that accentedness, perceived comprehensibility, and intelligibility were interrelated but considered separate dimensions.

The present study was designed to explore the correlation between the degree of accentedness of L2 speech and native speakers' attitudes towards the L2 speakers. Therefore, it is closely connected to the topic of accented speech comprehension issues as those issues constitute one of the factors that define the attitudes.

1.3.3. Features of Spanish-accented English

Previous research on characteristics of Spanish-accented English seems to revolve around contrastive phonological analyses of English and Spanish sound systems. Speaking about European Spanish learners of English, there are scarce resources of information available. However, Benzies' doctoral dissertation has proven to be an exhaustive assortment of the most troublesome areas of English pronunciation for European Spanish speakers that make their speech sound accented [17] as well as Slusarz's paper on non-native speakers' English pronunciations that, among others, summarized the characteristic features of Spanish-accented English [86]; therefore, they were chosen for the purposes of the present research. Comparably, a lot more studies on Spanish-accented English have been conducted with the participation of Mexican learners of English, where their accents were evaluated in contrast to the

standards of American English. The classic studies by MacDonald [63] and Ortega-Llebaria [72] became the foundation for the present study regarding the Mexican learners' struggles with English pronunciation.

The most recurrent features of European Spanish students' English, as Bensies and Slusarz enlist them [17 + 86], are:

- a) English words are pronounced according to their spelling;
- b) no differentiation between long and short vowels;
- c) English sounds /æ/, /a:/, /ʌ/ are all pronounced as Spanish /a/;
- d) English sound /ʌ/ is pronounced as /ɑ/;
- e) English /i:/ and /ɪ/ both become /i/;
- f) English /ʊ/ and /u:/ both sound like /u/;
- g) schwa is pronounced as a full vowel in line with the spelling;
- h) weak and strong forms are not distinguished;
- i) diphthong /əʊ/ is produced with an initial /ɑ/ sound;
- j) schwa in the diphthong /ɪə/ is pronounced as /e/;
- k) schwa in the diphthong /eə/ is pronounced as Spanish /a/;
- l) schwa is pronounced as a full vowel in triphthongs;
- m) no differentiation between /b/ and /v/;
- n) /ð/ is pronounced as /d/;
- o) /ə/ is pronounced as /f/;
- p) no differentiation between /s/ and /z/;
- q) /ʃ/ is pronounced as /s/ or /tʃ/;
- r) /h/ in initial position is omitted or pronounced in a similar way to Spanish /x/ (which sounds like a harsher /h/ sound);
- s) /ʒ/ are sometimes pronounced as /ʃ/ or /s/;
- t) /dʒ/ is pronounced as /j/;
- u) lack of aspiration in /p/, /t/, /k/;
- v) /r/ is pronounced as /r/ or a trill in initial or intervocalic positions;
- w) /r/ is pronounced in all positions where it is present according to the spelling;

- x) the semi-consonant /j/ is pronounced as /dʒ/ and /w/ – as /g/;
- y) /ŋ/ is pronounced as /n/;
- z) an epenthetic vowel /e/ is placed in front of initial clusters;
- aa) regular verbs’ final -ed in past simple and past participle forms are pronounced as /ed/ on many occasions;
- bb) the use of a syllable-timed rhythm instead of a stress-timed one;
- cc) the failure to produce some rise-fall intonation patterns used to express surprise and to form tag questions;
- dd) polysyllabic words are stressed on the wrong syllable;
- ee) nearly every word in a sentence is stressed;
- ff) an epenthetic vowel pronounced similarly to schwa is placed at the end of some words which end in a consonant such as *book, life, test, group, need*.

MacDonald [63] compiled studies of Spanish and Spanish-accented English phonology. Based on studies of three Spanish dialects – Mexican-American, Puerto-Rican-American, and Cuban-American – MacDonald described the characteristics of Spanish-accented English using common features found in all studies. Ortega-Llebaria [72] later reported a hierarchy of the frequency of occurrence of phonological characteristics of Spanish-accented speech, which can cause production difficulties and affect intelligibility for native listeners. She outlined 21 phonological processes that make Mexican speakers’ speech sound accented. The table below demonstrates those with examples and frequencies of occurrence.

Table 1.1

Phonological Process	Example	(%)
Target lax vowels become tense	[lɪft] → [lift] “lift”	44.95
Target /ɑ/ is produced as /ɔ/ and /ʌ/	[klɔk] or [kʌk] “clock”	27.82
Final position: Target voiced obstruents become voiceless	[tʌb] → [tʌp] “tub”	24.82
Final position: Deletion of a consonant of a target cluster	[lakt] → [lak]/[lat] “locked”	17.73

Phonological Process	Example	(%)
Target /ʌ/ is produced as /ɑ/ and /ɔ/	[trʌk] → [trak]/[trɔk] “truck”	15.33
Target /ʌ/ is produced as /æ/	[kæt] → [kat] “cat”	12.07
Addition of an epenthetic vowel in the word-initial position	[snou] → [əsnou] “snow”	8.88
Target /z/ becomes voiceless /s/	[zipə] → [sipə] “zipper”	6.43
Target medial voiced stops are perceived as voiced fricatives, and the affricate as a glide	[rʌbə] → [rʌvə] “rubber”	5.70
Target voiced stops deleted in final position	[tʌb] → [tʌ] “tub”	3.07
Target nasals neutralize to the point of articulation	[drʌm] → [drʌn] “drum”	2.96
Target initial voiceless stops are perceived as voiced	[p ^h aɪ] → [baɪ] “pie”	2.74
Final position: Target voiceless fricatives become voiced	[skarɸ] → [skarv] “scarf”	2.56
Target /tʃ/ becomes /ʃ/	[skrætʃ] → [skræʃ] “scratch”	2.08
Target /dʒ/ becomes continuant	[keɪdʒ] → [keɪʒ] “cage”	2.04
Target /ʃ/ becomes /tʃ/	[ʃɑp] → [tʃɑp] “sharp”	1.97
Target /z/ devoices	[gərəʒ] → [gərəʃ] “garage”	1.86
Target glides become noncontinuant segment	[jɛlo] → [dʒɛlo] “yellow”	1.68
Target /θ/ becomes /t/ or /f/	[θʌm] → [tʌm] “thumb”	1.57
Target /ð/ becomes /d/	[ðɛr] → [dɛr] “there”	1.50
Target /v/ becomes /b/	[vælʌntaɪm] → [bælʌntaɪm] “valentine”	1.35

Phonological processes with examples and their frequency of occurrence (%) in native Spanish speakers' English [72]

By comparing these two sets of phonological features of accented speech of Mexican and European Spanish speakers, a great deal of similarities can be pointed out, such as: sounds /i:/ and /ɪ/ are pronounced as /i/, sound /ð/ becomes /d/, sounds /v/ and /b/ are pronounced as /b/, and others. Although, there are also some differences. For instance, Mexican English specific features are: the target voiceless fricatives become voiced in final position and target /ʌ/ is pronounced as /æ/, /ɑ/, or /ɔ/. While European Spanish English is distinguished by English sound /ʌ/ pronounced as /ɑ/ or Spanish /a/; /ʊ/ and /u:/ both pronounced like /u/; /h/ omitted in initial position or pronounced in a similar way to Spanish /x/ (which sounds like a harsher /h/ sound); /ŋ/ pronounced as /n/; and an epenthetic vowel, that is pronounced similarly to schwa, placed at the end of some words which end in a consonant. Furthermore, among the listed phonological features of European Spanish English, there are also items connected to the pronunciation of schwa in diphthongs and triphthongs, to the stress and intonation as well as to the pronunciation of /r/ sounds, namely that /r/ is pronounced as /r/ or a trill in initial or intervocalic positions and it is pronounced in all positions where it is present according to the spelling. Such features are listed for this specific variant of English probably due to the fact that in Spain, the preferred English variety for learning is the RP or standard British, which are known for omitting the /r/ sounds in certain positions. Another curious and unexpected feature may be that European Spanish speakers pronounce /ə/ as /f/ even though Spanish sound system contains the same sound /ə/ [78, p. 347].

Conclusions to Chapter 1

This chapter demonstrated that the study of accent in sociolinguistics is a complex and multifaceted field that involves examining various social factors, such as linguistic variation and change, social identity theory, social prestige, bias, and stereotyping, as well as exploring language attitudes towards accents. Theoretical approaches to studying language attitudes can be classified as behaviorist or mentalist, and researchers apply various measurement instruments to assess language attitudes towards accents. The comprehension of foreign-accented speech is affected by various

factors, including second language phonology and features of the accented speech itself as well as established stereotypes around a particular foreign accent. Understanding these factors and how they interact with one another is crucial for promoting more equitable and inclusive attitudes towards language and accents in society. In the case of Spanish-accented English, it has been discovered that Mexican and European Spanish speakers exhibit distinct linguistic features while speaking English, which primarily depend on the subtle yet present distinctions of their native sound systems as well as the variety of English they strive to master.

All the aforementioned information is used as a theoretical background to the sociolinguistic investigation that is carried out in the third chapter of this study. In the following chapter of the study, we will delve into the methods and techniques applied while processing and analyzing the data.

CHAPTER 2. STUDY DESIGN

This chapter provides an overview of prior research studies that contributed to the present study as well as a description of the data collection and analysis process.

2.1. Prior studies

Research on language attitudes and accent perception has been ongoing for quite some time. The earliest studies can be traced back to the 1950s and 1960s, with scholars like William Labov [54] and Joshua Fishman [20] pioneering research on language variation and change. In the 1970s and 1980s, there was a growing interest in the role of social factors in shaping language attitudes and behaviors, with researchers like Howard Giles [43] and John Gumperz [46] making significant contributions to the field. During the 1990s and 2000s, accent perception and comprehension received increasing attention with an emphasis on understanding the cognitive processes involved. Additionally, experimental methods were employed to investigate language attitudes. More recently, there has been a shift towards exploring the intersection between language attitudes, accent perception, and social justice issues, such as discrimination and prejudice.

As for the present research, it has greatly benefited from a number of fascinating in-depth studies in the field of language attitude studies. The 1977 study by Bouchard, Carranza, and Moffie [12] provides context and background information on accent perception among Spanish-English bilingual individuals with varying degrees of accentedness and offers relevant methodological approaches, such as the involvement of untrained individuals in the accentedness evaluation process, and findings that can be contrasted with the results of the present study in order to observe the dynamics of attitudinal changes.

Another pertinent study was conducted in 1980 by Ryan and Sebastian [81]. The findings of this research suggest that the perception and evaluation of speakers is influenced not only by their accent, but also by their speech style and social background, i.e., social class. The study reveals the contrasting attitudes towards native

and non-native accents exhibited by the nontrained individuals in the process of investigation. It has led us to the idea of examining accent attitudes in reverse, i.e., how accents affect the perception of non-native speakers' social backgrounds.

One more invaluable study from 1980s supervised by Stewart, Ryan, and Giles [87] offers insights into the role of accent and social class in shaping evaluations and perceptions of individuals. Specifically, it examines how accent and social class affect status and solidarity evaluations, which is relevant for understanding how accents may be associated with particular social identities and stereotypes. This and the previously mentioned study have contributed to the use of status and solidarity evaluations in the present study.

Magen's 1998 research paper [64] explores how non-native accents are perceived by native speakers of a language, focusing on factors such as listener expectations, familiarity with the accent, and the characteristics of the accent itself. These insights have been useful in understanding these factors and in designing the perception part of the present study.

In 2004, Shah presented her paper focused specifically on the production and perception of Spanish-accented English [84]. The study uses acoustic analysis and perceptual testing to investigate the characteristics of Spanish-accented English and how they are perceived by listeners, which is quite innovative for that time period. The findings of this study indicate that the ratings of accentedness correlate with several temporal differences in Spanish-accented English, suggesting that these differences are related to the perception of accentedness by native speakers. Similar study of hers from 2019 has been useful in understanding how listeners perceive and categorize different accents and how accent modification training may potentially target specific acoustic features to improve accentedness ratings [85].

Glutzek and Dovodio's research [44] focuses on perceptions of bias, communication difficulties, and belongingness among individuals with a nonnative accent who live in the United States. It explores the experiences of nonnative speakers

in terms of social interactions, employment opportunities, and other domains, as well as the attitudes and biases that may affect the way they are perceived by others. This study has helped better understand the social and cultural factors that influence the perception of nonnative accents and the ways in which nonnative speakers navigate their social environments. The novelty of the research is in exploring the non-native speakers' feelings and experiences with handling bias and stereotyping while the majority of studies focus on working out the causes for the development of stereotypes.

The review of these and similar studies demonstrated that there is a need for the further detailed research into a) how accentedness evaluations of the same speech samples provided by American native speakers would differ from those by British native speakers; b) what status and solidarity evaluations would reflect if listeners were provided with the speech sample only, without the information on the speakers' social background; c) how samples of spontaneous speech, i.e., recordings that mimic probable real-life social interactions, would be rated by the native speakers; d) what the study findings would be if the listeners included both trained and untrained individuals. Consequently, the objective of the present study is to address the limitations of the prior research and further investigate the aforementioned areas in order to invoke their additional exploration.

2.2. Data selection and collection

Due to the specifics of the present research, its methodology includes two consequent studies: a self-evaluation study and a perception study. The former one involves the participants assessing their own English accent as well as providing one speech sample each while the latter one includes English native speakers that listen to the speech samples provided by the prior self-evaluation study and evaluate their accentedness as well as their potential social traits.

2.2.1. Self-Evaluation Study

Self-Evaluation Study investigated the non-native English speakers' perceptions of their own accent and level of spoken English as well as their perceptions

of stigmatization based on the accentedness of their speech. Individuals from Spain and Mexico completed an online questionnaire specially designed for this study. Furthermore, Self-Evaluation Study aimed to generate quality audio samples of Spanish-accented spontaneous English speech that would further become a basis of another study within this research – the Perception Study.

Our hypotheses about the results of Self-Evaluation Study were:

Hypothesis 1: Non-native speakers would observe higher levels of stigmatization as they consider their accents heavier.

Hypothesis 2: They would report less judgement from their interlocutors in cases when they interact with non-native speakers rather than with native speakers.

Another aspect under investigation was whether the non-native speakers' perception of their own accents as heavy affects their eagerness to communicate in English. Additionally, we were interested in determining whether they perceive their accent as a part of their identity, which could influence their willingness to eliminate the accentedness of their speech.

Subjects: Speakers

A total of 4 individuals (2 male from Spain and 2 male from Mexico (see Figure X)) completed an online questionnaire “Sociolinguistic Survey on English Accents” via Google Forms platform. These samples represent an overlap of convenience and purposive samples: we were targeting specific social groups, although the conclusions were based on what was available once all answers had been submitted. Male only individuals were chosen in order to decrease the number of factors that influence the perception of non-native accents by English native speakers in the Perception Study. The participants are 30, 31, 36, and 53 years old ($M_{age} = 37,5$ years) and highly educated (75% have a postgraduate degree and 25% graduated from a university). All of the subjects are currently employed. 50% estimated that they pertain to the middle class, and 25% – to the upper class, and another 25% – to the lower class. 75% admitted

to speaking in English with others often (e.g., a few times a week) and 25% use it always.

Materials and Procedure

Participants completed a 4-part questionnaire specifically created for this study (see Appendix 1). The first part envisaged recording and uploading of the speech samples according to the provided instructions. The second part consisted of soliciting personal information, e.g., age, country of origin, occupation, etc. The third part focused on the English proficiency, i.e., when they started learning English as a second language and their current level of spoken English as well as how frequently they use English to communicate with others. The last part of the questionnaire contained 6 agree/disagree items that inquire into the perception of their own accents, their attitudes towards them, and their experiences with stigmatization while speaking English with others (e.g., *While speaking to a native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent*).

2.2.2. Perception Study

Perception Study examined the English native speakers' perception of non-native accented speech and their attitudes towards the people with foreign accents as well as the most relevant factors that make the speech sound accented to them in the first place. A specially designed online questionnaire was used to collect the data of native speakers from the UK, the USA, and Canada. They completed the evaluations based on the limited information available, i.e., the only factors influencing their attitudes were the accent and the gender of the non-native speaker that could be derived from the recordings provided by the Self-Evaluation Study.

As for the outcomes of Perception Study, we hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: Native speakers do not differentiate between Spanish- and Mexican-accented speech.

Hypothesis 2: Non-native English speakers would estimate their level of English and accent lower than native speakers.

Hypothesis 3: Those native speakers who travel more or have the experience of living outside their home country would be less judgmental towards accented speech.

Hypothesis 4: American native speakers would demonstrate more negative attitudes than others due to adverse media representation of Mexican migrants in the USA.

Hypothesis 5: Less accented speech would be correlated with the higher social status and competence levels whereas more accented speech would be associated with the lower social status and higher solidarity levels.

Among other investigated aspects were whether there is a difference between female and male native speakers' attitudes, whether foreign language knowledge influences attitudes to accented speech, etc.

Subjects: Listeners

A total of 18 individuals (6 male and 3 female from the UK (Figure 2.1), 7 male and 1 female from the USA (Figure 2.2), and 1 male from Canada (see Figure 2.2)) completed an online questionnaire "Survey on Perception of English Accents" via Google Forms platform. Similarly to the Self-Evaluation Study, the samples were both convenience and purposive. There are both trained and untrained listeners among the respondents of the questionnaire. The average age of the native speakers M_{age} is 33.3 years with the range being from 20 to 59. 22.2% are female and 77.8% are male. All of them are highly educated: 33.3% have a postgraduate degree, 38.9% graduated from university, 16.7% are college graduates, and 11.1% finished high school and currently are studying in the university. Majority of the respondents belong to the middle class (83.3%) with 11.1% classifying themselves as the lower class and 5.6% – as the upper class. Concerning the experience of living abroad, 61.1% indicated that they have had such opportunity. As for their frequency of traveling, 22.2% of the respondents assessed it as 'very often', 5.6% – as 'often', 44.4% – as 'sometimes', 27.8% – as 'occasionally', but none chose the 'never' option. Finally, the question '*Do you*

struggle with understanding accented speech? was answered with 'Yes' by 5.6%, 'No' by 27.8%, 'Sometimes' 61.1%, and 'Very rarely' by 5.6% of the native speakers.

Figure 2.1



Approximate places of origin of the study participants from the UK

Figure 2.2



Approximate places of origin of the study participants from the USA and Canada

Materials and Procedure

Participants of the study completed a 2-part questionnaire devised for the purposes of the study specifically (see Appendix 2). The first part contained questions about the native speakers' age, country of origin, current occupation, accent, completed level of education, frequency with which they travel, etc. The second part dealt with listening to the non-native speakers from the Self-Evaluation Study speaking in English. For convenience, it was divided into 4 parts, 1 speaker each. They had to listen to every speaker separately and estimate their level of spoken English as well as rate the accentedness of their speech and indicate the markers that influence their perception of the foreign accented speech. Afterwards, the native speakers were asked to speculate on the probable country of origin and current occupation of the non-native speaker. Final task was to rate the speakers' competence (intelligent, confident, unsuccessful, unambitious) and solidarity traits (trustworthy, sincere, unkind, unfriendly) [87] on a scale of 1 to 5 judging solely by the accent and the potential profile previously created by themselves.

2.3. Methods and tools for data collection and analysis

The tools and methods of data collection that were used in the present study are Google Forms, questionnaires with Likert-type, Semantic Differential-type, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions (see section 1.2.3), and sampling.

As it was previously mentioned, a questionnaire is an essential part of the data collection process within a lot of sociolinguistic studies as well as questions are a foundation of any questionnaire. Similar types of questions were used for both studies of this research – Self-Evaluation Study and Perception Study. Open-ended questions were designed to enquire about the respondents' age, country of origin, and current occupation (e.g., *How old are you?*, *Where are you from?*). Perception Study's respondents provided answers to such open-ended questions as *Is your accent standard or non-standard?*, *What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)*, *What would you say is their current*

occupation?, etc. Some of the examples of items using Likert scale – when a respondent is presented with the statement that they have to agree or disagree with – are questions within Self-Evaluation Study:

I am proud of my accent. It is a part of my identity.

- Strongly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Neutral*
- Agree*
- Strongly agree*

While speaking to a native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.

- Strongly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Neutral*
- Agree*
- Strongly agree*

Semantic Differential (SD) scale was applied to items from the questionnaire in Perception Study. The principle to this scale is to introduce respondents to a concept and ask them to rate it on a polar scale (e.g., *very good* to *very bad*). An example of an SD item adapted to Google Forms format is as follows:

Table 2.1

Please rate the speaker’s potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “very much”

	<i>1</i> <i>(not at all)</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i> <i>(very much)</i>
<i>intelligent</i>					
<i>confident</i>					
<i>unsuccessful</i>					

	1 <i>(not at all)</i>	2	3	4	5 <i>(very much)</i>
<i>unambitious</i>					
<i>trustworthy</i>					
<i>sincere</i>					
<i>unkind</i>					
<i>unfriendly</i>					

An example of a Semantic Differential inquiry as adapted to Google Forms format

Multiple-choice questions are ubiquitous nowadays; from classrooms to scientific research, they prove to be efficient and thus reliable for data collection [75]. In the present study, multiple-choice items helped to gather the information on such general and universal concepts and topics as a level of completed education or a level of spoken English.

What is your level of spoken English?

- *A1 (Beginner)*
- *A2 (Pre-intermediate)*
- *B1 (Intermediate)*
- *B2 (Upper-Intermediate)*
- *C1 (Advanced)*
- *C2 (Proficiency)*
- *Other*_____

The method of sampling was applied in the Self-Evaluation Study. Specifically, non-probability sampling was utilized to gather the audio recordings of Spanish and Mexican speakers talking in English, which afterwards would become a basis for the Perception Study.

The analysis of the obtained data was conducted according to particular methods and tools such as observation (which within this study serves as an effort to derive the attitudes from the collected data), qualitative data analysis (coding and

content analysis), quantitative data analysis (descriptive statistics and inferential statistics). Google Excel was chosen as a basic tool for data analysis.

Qualitative data analysis encompasses a number of methods that involve the interpretation of non-numerical data like interview transcripts or audio recordings [71]. The common approaches for qualitative analysis of data are coding and content analysis. Coding refers to a process of assigning labels to the data segments that are related to particular topics or interrelated. Such codes helped analyze and identify patterns or trends easier and quicker. Content analysis, so-called quasistatistical approach [71], is usually used to systematically analyze and interpret qualitative data like written or visual media. The analysis of the content of the audio recordings revealed particular patterns and meanings within the obtained data.

Quantitative data analysis refers to the methods that are applied during the processing of numerical data such as survey responses. Some of those are descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics can be defined as the analysis of numerical data according to such measures as central tendency (mean, median, mode) and dispersion (range, variance, standard deviation). Primarily, its utility within this study lied in providing a data overview and in determining patterns and trends [34]. Inferential statistics can be considered as the analysis process following the descriptive statistics since it helps make predictions about a certain population based on a certain data sample, i.e., infer whether or not the phenomena observed in the sample is typical for the population as well [53]. It was used to test the study's hypotheses and make generalizations about different social groups.

Conclusions to Chapter 2

This chapter described the theoretical framework for the present study, its innovations as well as limitations. The process and methods of selection of the research subjects and necessary materials were introduced along with the tools and methods for the subsequent processing of the obtained numeric and non-numeric data, namely, observation, questionnaires, sampling, coding, content analysis, descriptive statistics,

and inferential statistics. Google Forms and Google Excel became the main tools for the data collection and analysis. The aforementioned data processing methods are commonly applied in the field of sociolinguistics and, therefore, play an important role in the research process of the obtained data samples within the present study.

CHAPTER 3. STUDY INTO PERCEPTION AND SELF-EVALUATION OF ACCENTS

This chapter deals with the factors that could possibly influence the language attitudes of both non-native and native speakers. The overview of prior studies investigating those factors is followed by the demonstration of the data obtained within the Self-Evaluation and Perception Studies and the final findings.

3.1. Challenges with political correctness

Political correctness (also abbreviated as PC) is not a new concept; it has been around at least since 1960s. PC envisages paying attention to our language in order to avoid offending or discriminating particular social groups, especially those who historically have been oppressed or marginalized. However, not only the language but also the ways people display their attitudes towards others may be intimidating, e.g., unconscious practices, behaviors, gestures, etc. Conversely, in line with Corbett, being overly cautious and attentive to even the slightest detail of language, body language, and behavior can result in a lack of spontaneity and a fear of expressing oneself freely [21]. Surely, here a balance is crucial. Words carry significant weight and are likely to affect one's self-perception and self-esteem. Nevertheless, mere changes in vocabulary are not enough; they have to be accompanied by genuine commitment and actions. People may use politically correct terms, but their attitude may not align with their words, rendering their language meaningless. In 2013, Mendes and Koslov investigated how people's attitudes towards stigmatized and marginalized groups are affected by the perception of the political correctness concept. The researchers argue that social pressure to comply with political correctness policies may result in positive yet not entirely genuine biases towards stigmatized and marginalized groups [67].

While the political correctness itself is overall a progressive and beneficial incident, it may lead to the emergence of such social phenomena as the reverse discrimination and overcorrection that provoke somewhat mixed feelings. Reverse discrimination entails giving preference or special treatment to those social groups who

traditionally were discriminated against, usually at the expense of those who were in a privileged position. Commonly, it may be viewed as the unfair treatment of social groups who do not belong to the historically oppressed group. In turn, within the context of political correctness, overcorrection encompasses extreme or extra efforts to avoid offending or discriminating minorities that may result in rigid or overly cautious language or behaviors. The 2019 study by Reid et al. explored the topic of the effect of listeners' social attitudes and biases on their judgments of second language speech. The study was based on Canadian English-speaking participants of different ages listening to speech samples recorded by L2 learners of English. The findings showed that listeners' social attitudes and biases, both positive and negative, influenced their judgments of the speech samples. Interestingly, older listeners were more positively biased towards the speakers than younger listeners, and listeners with more positive attitudes towards L2 speakers made more positive judgments of the speech samples [79].

Another example of a study focused on the attitudes to non-native English pronunciation is the one by Lindemann and Subtirelu published in 2013. It investigates the impact of listeners' preconceived biases and expectations about L2 speakers' accents on how they perceive and evaluate the speaker's speech. The researchers suggest that listeners' biases have implications for issues related to accent discrimination and social identity within multilingual societies as well as for second language pronunciation teaching and the language proficiency assessment [59]

The aforementioned processes are widespread and may affect a great number of people. Given the complex American-Mexican context that applies to the present study, these are considered the unattainable factors that may affect the answers, ergo attitudes, of the Perception Study respondents. One of the reasons is that it can be quite complicated to remotely identify whether or not a particular person's attitudes have ever been affected by the described effects of the political correctness policies.

3.2. Issues with self-evaluation of accents

It is important to consider the aspect of self-evaluation of accents within the present study of language and accent attitudes (yet not exclusively) because of the insight it offers into the individual's self-perception of and feelings towards their own speech. Since an accent may be considered a part of social identity, accented speech may thus affect the way those individuals are perceived by others. However, self-evaluation of accents can also demonstrate how individuals view their own accents and what effects it may have on their social interactions and identity. Furthermore, self-evaluation calls attention to the ways individuals may feel self-conscious or, on the contrary, proud of their accents, which directly impacts their communication skills and confidence in various social interactions.

A major investigation into the ESL speakers' self-perception of their own accents was conducted in 2009 by Ostojic [74]. Within her dissertation, she conducted an experiment with thirty non-native speakers of English who rated their degree of accent before and after listening to two recordings: native English speaker reading the passage and them reading the same text. She also asked 80 native English speakers to rate those non-native speakers of English accents. The findings of the study showed that the ESL learners perceive their own pronunciation differently than native speakers, in particular, they are more critical of their accents and, as a rule, characterize their own speech as more accented in comparison to the evaluations provided by the native speakers. Nevertheless, Ostojic indicates that after a certain amount of perceptual training in a target language, i.e., English, the non-native speakers' estimates of their own pronunciation approach those by native speakers.

The aforementioned data show that individuals' self-perception of their accents may impact their communication skills, and confidence. Therefore, as one of the research directions, the present study will examine the non-native English speakers' self-evaluation of their accents and its potential influence on their social interactions. The investigation of this aspect may demonstrate the role self-consciousness of the accent plays in social interactions with both non-native and native English speakers.

3.3. Self-Evaluation Study

The Self-Evaluation Study delves into the self-perception of accent by non-native English speakers and the ways in which these perceptions may impact their communication and social interactions. The section consists of two subsections: 3.3.1 presents the results of the study and 3.3.2 offers a discussion of the validity of the set hypotheses along with the conclusions and assumptions built on the results.

3.3.1. Findings

The results of the Self-Evaluation Study will be presented as follows: first, the presentation of the obtained responses from each speaker separately, and then, the description of the merged data of all 4 speakers necessary for testing our hypotheses (see section 2.2.1).

Speaker 1

Speaker 1 is a 31-year-old middle-class male from the city of Pamplona, Spain who was assigned the label “Spain_31” for the purposes of this study. He claimed to have finished the university and indicated his current occupation, which is Communications Manager. From this, it can be implied that he faces the need to contact and speak to a lot of people almost every day, possibly not only in Spanish but also in English depending on the job specifics.

Interestingly, Speaker 1 is actually a bilingual: as an answer to the question *When have you started learning English?*, he specified that he started learning it “At home as a kid because my dad is English.” Furthermore, he assessed his level of spoken English at C2 (Proficiency) and chose the option *Often (e.g., a few times a week)* to describe the frequency with which he speaks in English. The presence of a bilingual among the participants of the study provides certain diversity and extra interest to the results of the Perception Study.

In the next part of the questionnaire, Speaker 1 provided the following answers (Table 3.1):

Table 3.1

1. In my opinion, I have a strong accent while speaking English.	Neutral
2. I would like to get rid of my accent.	Strongly disagree
3. I am proud of my accent. It is a part of my identity.	Strongly agree
4. I am not willing to communicate in English because of my accent.	Strongly disagree
5. While speaking to a native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.	Disagree
6. While speaking to a non-native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.	Agree

Responses to Self-Perception of the Accent part of the questionnaire provided by
Speaker 1

Considering the first 3 statements together, it can be concluded that Speaker 1 may feel that (1) his accent is not very heavy but present and (2) he definitely would not want to reduce the accentedness of his speech because (3) he considers his accent a part of his social identity. Furthermore, Speaker 1 indicated that (4) his accent does not affect his eagerness to speak English with others. Concerning perceived stigmatization, he specified that he does not feel judged for his accent by native speakers of English (5), unlike by non-native speakers (6).

The paper copy of the questionnaire completed by Speaker 1 on the online platform Google Forms can be found in Appendix 3.

Speaker 2

Speaker 2 is a 53-year-old upper-class male from the city of Barcelona, Spain who, for the purposes of this study, was assigned the label “Spain_53”. According to his answers, he has a postgraduate degree and currently is the CEO of his own

company. The specifics of his occupation suggest that Speaker 2 engages into communication with others (e.g., his employees or business partners) both in Spanish and English quite frequently.

In the part of the questionnaire that enquired into the respondents' English skills, Speaker 2 indicated that for him English learning started in primary school with his current level of spoken English being C2 (Proficiency). As for the frequency of the present use of English for spoken communication, he opted for *Often* (e.g., *a few times a week*).

As to the answers Speaker 2 gave in the Self-Perception of the Accent part of the questionnaire, those are demonstrated in Table 3.2:

Table 3.2

1. In my opinion, I have a strong accent while speaking English.	Agree
2. I would like to get rid of my accent.	Strongly agree
3. I am proud of my accent. It is a part of my identity.	Disagree
4. I am not willing to communicate in English because of my accent.	Strongly disagree
5. While speaking to a native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.	Agree
6. While speaking to a non-native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.	Strongly disagree

Responses to Self-Perception of the Accent part of the questionnaire provided by
Speaker 2

Judging by the statements 1 through 3, we may infer that, in his own opinion, Speaker 2 (1) has a heavy accent in English and (2) is willing to make his speech less accented since he does not view the accent as a significant part of his identity.

Nevertheless, the willingness of Speaker 2 to use English as a means of spoken interaction is not affected by the fact that he admits to having a heavy accent (4). Regarding the perceived stigmatization statements 5 and 6, Speaker 2 shared that native speakers seem more judgmental of his accent to him (5) than non-native speakers (6).

The paper copy of the questionnaire completed by Speaker 2 on the online platform Google Forms can be found in Appendix 4.

Speaker 3

Speaker 3 with the label “Mexico_30” is a 30-year-old male from Zacatecas city in Mexico who belongs to the middle class. Like Speaker 2, he also obtained a postgraduate degree and now works as a freelancer. Without an additional information, it is complicated to infer whether his occupation entails a frequent oral communication with others, but, as a rule, freelancers move from one project to another quite often which involves acquiring a great number of new social connections.

The survey part concerning English proficiency demonstrated that the estimates of his own spoken English skills by Speaker 3 are C2 (Proficiency). Regarding the start of his ESL learning, he claimed to have begun his studies in secondary school. And for the last point, the frequency of current usage of spoken English, Speaker 3 stated that he always needs English for oral communication, which means that he speaks English practically every day.

The last part of the questionnaire, the Self-Perception of the Accent, contained such responses by Speaker 2 as follows (Table 3.3):

Table 3.3

1. In my opinion, I have a strong accent while speaking English.	Neutral
2. I would like to get rid of my accent.	Strongly disagree
3. I am proud of my accent. It is a part of my identity.	Agree

4. I am not willing to communicate in English because of my accent.	Strongly disagree
5. While speaking to a native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.	Strongly disagree
6. While speaking to a non-native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.	Strongly disagree

Responses to Self-Perception of the Accent part of the questionnaire provided by
Speaker 3

The answers to the first 3 statements allow to speculate that Speaker 3 believes that his speech is moderately accented (1), but there is no reason or desire to minimize his accent in English (2). The alleged reason is the speaker's attitude towards his own accent as one of the components that comprise his identity (3). For the statements 4 through 6, Speaker 3 opted for the answer *Strongly disagree*, which may be interpreted as so: the speaker does not feel influenced by the accentedness of his speech while communicating in English (4) as well as judged for his accent by neither native (5) nor non-native (6) speakers of English.

The paper copy of the questionnaire completed by Speaker 3 on the online platform Google Forms can be found in Appendix 5.

Speaker 4

Speaker 4, the last one in the study, is a 36-year-old lower-class male from the town of Tulcingo de Valle, the state of Puebla in Mexico. He subsequently received the label "Mexico_36". As a highest obtained level of education, Speaker 4 indicated that he has a postgraduate degree, like Speaker 2 and Speaker 3. In the field designated for his current occupation, Speaker 4 provided the response "Worker", which most likely refers to a manual worker. Generally, such jobs do not necessarily involve frequent spoken interactions with others.

In the second part of the questionnaire, Speaker 4 estimated his spoken English at a level C1 (Advanced). Curiously, he indicated that he began learning English in college and currently uses it in spoken interactions quite frequently – *Often (e.g., a few times a week)*.

In the last part of the survey that deals with self-evaluation of accent and perceive stigmatization, Speaker 4 gave the following answers:

Table 3.4

1. In my opinion, I have a strong accent while speaking English.	Neutral
2. I would like to get rid of my accent.	Disagree
3. I am proud of my accent. It is a part of my identity.	Agree
4. I am not willing to communicate in English because of my accent.	Strongly disagree
5. While speaking to a native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.	Neutral
6. While speaking to a non-native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.	Neutral

Responses to Self-Perception of the Accent part of the questionnaire provided by
Speaker 4

The answers to the first 3 statements provided by Speaker 4 lead to such probable assumptions: the speaker acknowledges that he has a certain degree of accentedness in his speech (1); however, he is not willing to eliminate those features (2) due to the fact that he is proud of speaking with an accent as it is viewed as an identity and personality feature (3). Therefore, Speaker 4 does not face any difficulties for spoken interactions in English caused by the accentedness of his speech (4). The responses to the statements 5 and 6 indicate that most likely, the speaker is not sure

whether he has ever noticed judgement towards him because of his accent before, either from native (5) or non-native (6) English speakers.

The paper copy of the questionnaire completed by Speaker 4 on the online platform Google Forms can be found in Appendix 6.

The overview of the merged data

All of the speakers are highly educated males who graduated from the university and have a postgraduate degree (Figure 3.1). Their social backgrounds are quite different: 2 of them belong to the middle class, 1 to the lower class, and another 1 to the upper class (Figure 3.2).

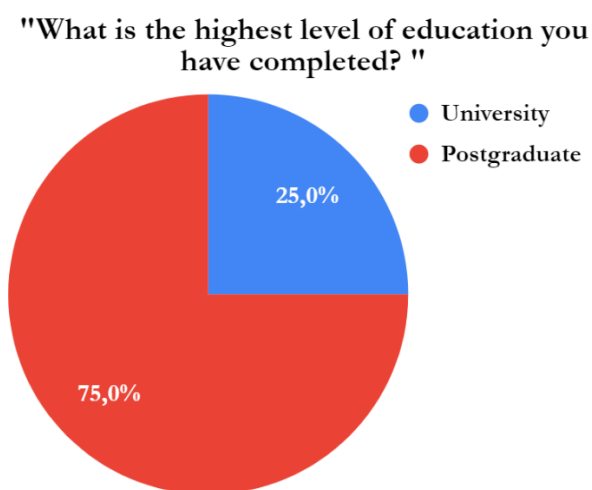


Figure 3.1

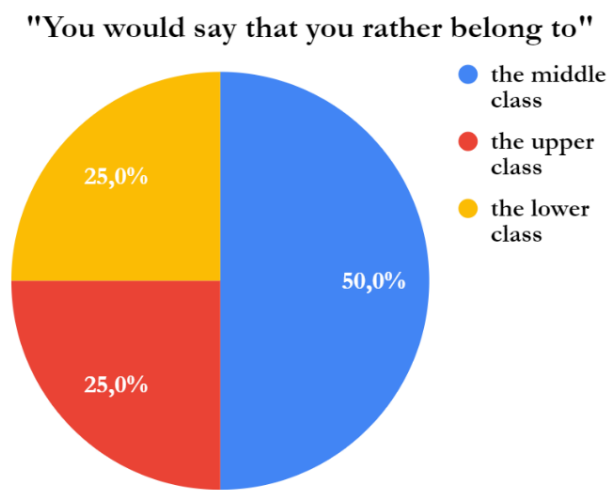


Figure 3.2

3 speakers out of 4 assessed their level of spoken English at C2 (Proficiency) and Speaker 4, who started learning English only in college, opted for C1 (Advanced) (Figure 3.3). Furthermore, 3 speakers out of 4 indicated that they use spoken English for communication often and Speaker 3 claimed to speak English always, i.e., every day (Figure 3.4). The obtained data about the starting point of the speakers' ESL studies suggest that, generally, people from Spain start learning English earlier than in Mexico. The most probable reason is the differences in the educational systems of the aforementioned countries. The information about the self-evaluation of the level of

spoken English by the speakers themselves will be used later for comparison with the data obtained within the Perception Study.

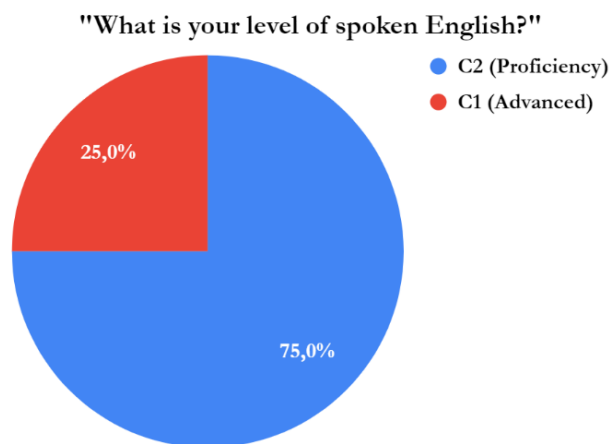


Figure 3.3

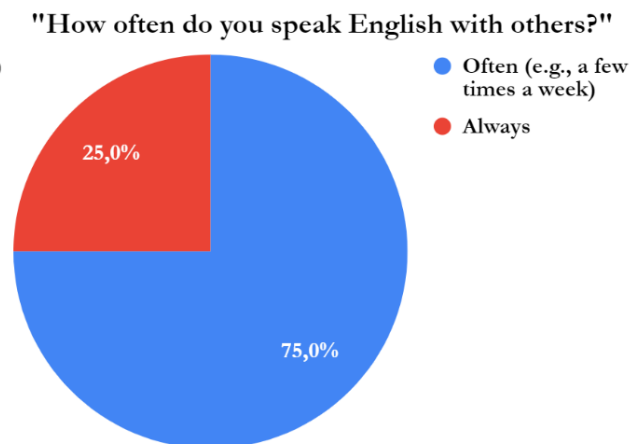


Figure 3.4

Outlining the responses to the 6 statements from the last part of the questionnaire, we modified the data for more accurate representation of the findings. Since options *strongly disagree* and *disagree* as well as *strongly agree* and *agree* refer to the same concept of disagreeing and agreeing respectively (see section 1.2.3), the generalized answers provided by the speakers look as illustrated with the figures below (Figures 3.5-3.10).

Figures 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7 demonstrate the attitudes of Speakers toward their own accents. The findings are highly consistent due to the distribution of speakers' responses: all 3 figures represent the opposition of Speaker 2 to others.

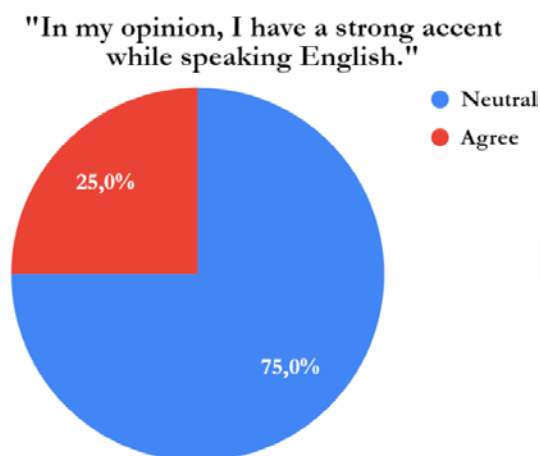


Figure 3.5

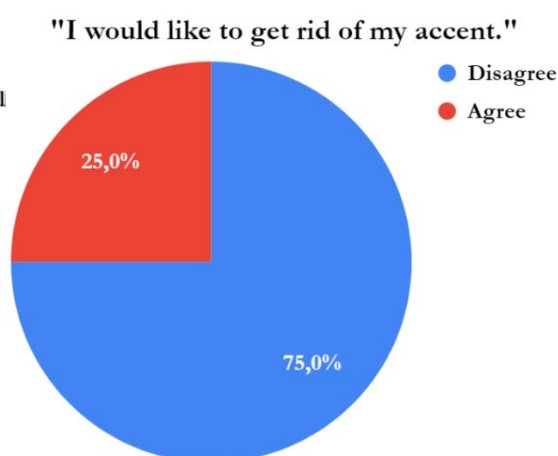


Figure 3.6

"I am proud of my accent. It is a part of my identity."

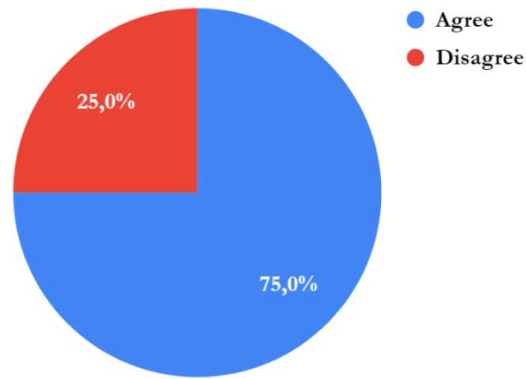


Figure 3.7

Despite the previous division in opinions, all speakers note that the degree of their accent does not affect their eagerness to use English in social interactions with others. Figure 3.8 displays the original unmodified responses due to the unanimity of the speakers in answering the question.

"I am not willing to communicate in English because of my accent."

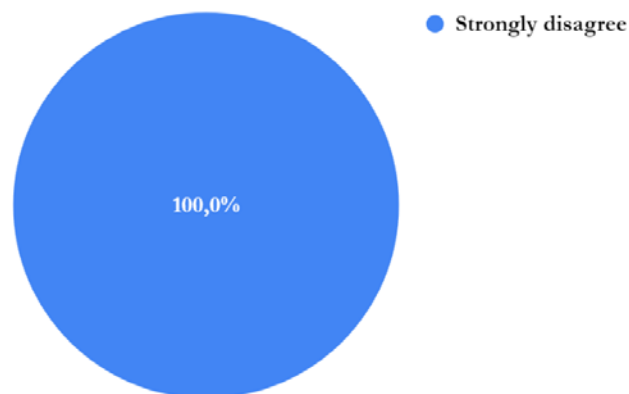


Figure 3.8

The following figures represent the perceived stigmatization ratings given by the speakers themselves (Figures 3.9 and 3.10). Despite the identical percentage distribution of responses, no clear tendencies among the speakers' attitudes can be discerned.

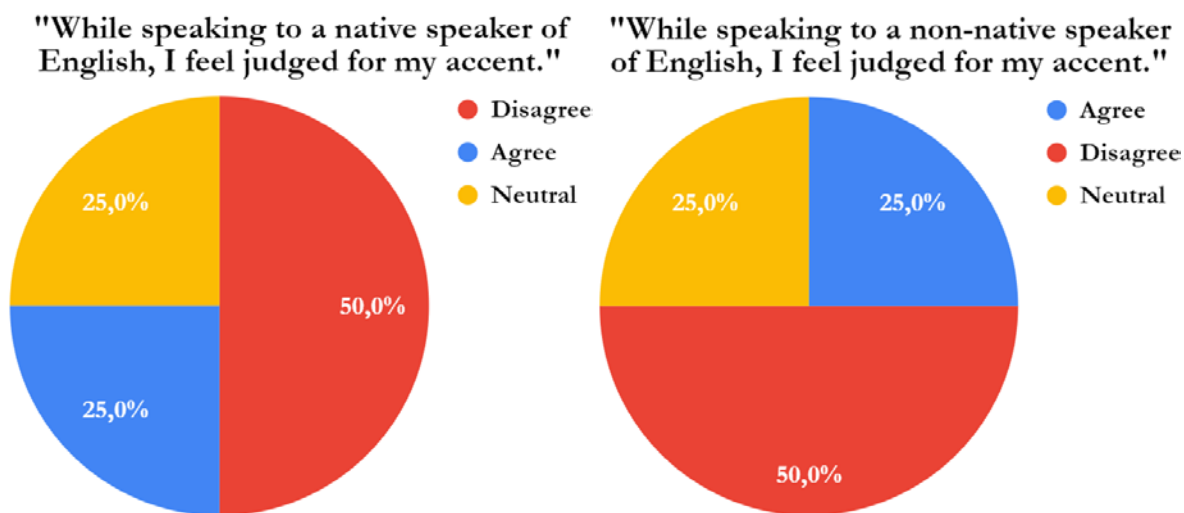


Figure 3.9

Figure 3.10

3.3.2. Discussion

Based on the data displayed in the previous section, we have tested the hypotheses formulated for the Self-Evaluation Study (see section 2.2.1). As a result, we did not prove Hypothesis 1 – that non-native speakers would report higher levels of stigmatization when they perceive their accents on the stronger side. Only Speaker 2 considers his accent heavy while other speakers believe theirs to be moderately heavy, which does not correlate with the answers to the statements *While speaking to a native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent* and *While speaking to a non-native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent* (Figure 3.9 and 3.10): in the Statement 5, 50% of speakers disagreed (Speaker 1 and Speaker 3) with it and 25% agreed (Speaker 2); and in the Statement 6, also 50% of speakers disagreed (but Speaker 2 and Speaker 3) with it and 25% agreed (Speaker 1), i.e., without discernible patterns. Therefore, based on the data obtained from the four non-native English speakers within the study, we may infer that self-perception of their own accents does not correlate with the amount of judgement non-native speakers of English observe towards their accent from others.

Similar assumptions can be made about Hypothesis 2 – that non-native speakers would observe less judgement from non-native speakers rather than from native speakers. This hypothesis was also disproved within this study in line with the

same reasoning: there are no identifiable tendencies and patterns. Compared to the results of the 2010 study by Gluszek and Dovidio [44], which indicates that non-native speakers with noticeable accents generally experience more judgement due to the accentedness of their speech than native speakers or non-native speakers with native-like pronunciation, the findings of the present study demonstrate clearly different results. Surely, the results of the present study apply to a quite specific population and further investigation with the increased number of subjects is needed to explore the topic more thoroughly.

Concerning other aspects observed during the investigation, we discovered that non-native speakers of English are willing to speak English with others regardless of the way they perceive their own accents (Figure 3.8). This may be the case due to the fact that most of them (75%) are quite proud of having an accent and perceive it as a part of their personality (Figure 3.7). Thus, same 75% of them disagreed with the statement 2 – *I would like to get rid of my accent* (Figure 3.6).

3.4. Perception Study

The Perception Study investigates how native English speakers view and assess foreign accents and aims to discover correlations between non-native speakers' social backgrounds and native speakers' attitudes towards them. The Perception Study was created on the foundation of Self-Evaluation Study that preceded it and provided data and materials needed for the Perception Study. The section consists of 5 subsections: 4 of them describe the results on each speaker separately and the last subsection focuses on a discussion of the set hypotheses along with the conclusions and assumptions built on those findings. The copies of questionnaires completed by the native English speakers who participated in the study along with their codes can be found in Appendices 7 to 24.

3.4.1. Speaker 1: Findings

In this section, we present the results of the Perception Study for Speaker 1. As mentioned earlier in section 3.3.1., Speaker 1 participated in the Self-Evaluation Study

and rated his own accent. In addition, he provided a recording of him speaking English that was analyzed by native English speakers (Listeners) within the Perception Study. The recording [97] and copy of the completed questionnaire used in this study can be found in Appendix 3.

3.4.1.1. General Evaluations

As a part of the accent evaluation of Speaker 1, Listeners were asked to rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent on a scale of 1 to 10 with an increment of 1 and specify the markers of accentedness of his speech.

The calculated and rounded final score of the accent heaviness Listeners gave to Speaker 1 is 4.67 (Figure 3.11).

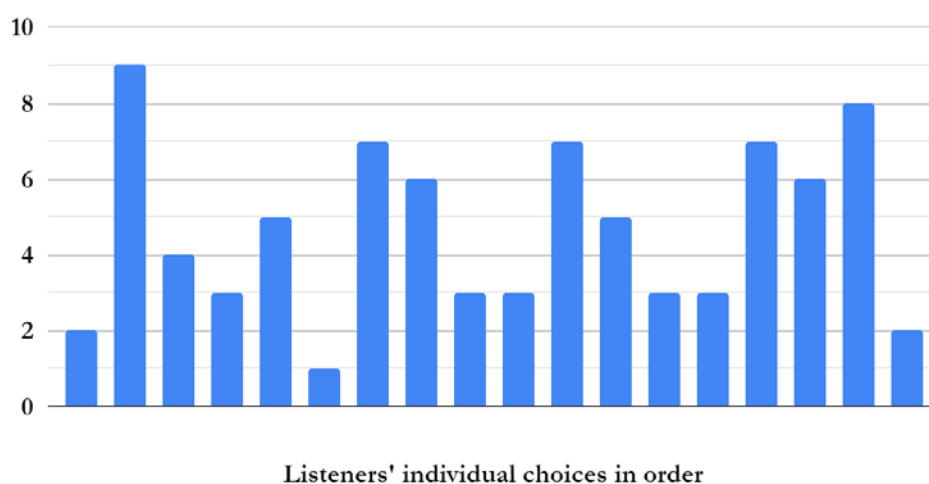


Figure 3.11. Listeners' ratings of the speech accentedness of Speaker 1

In the feedback field following the audio recording, Listeners specified various indicators of the foreign English accent of Speaker 1: pronunciation, stress patterns, intonation, grammar, and vocabulary. 11 out of 18 Listeners noticed non-native pronunciation of some sounds, namely:

- the slight harshness of the /r/ sound;
- the unnatural length of the /ʃ/ sound;
- the unusual pronunciation of the /ʊ/, /əʊ/, and /u/ sounds;

- the peculiar realization of /l/ and /p/ sounds;
- the unusual pronunciation of vowels in general;
- the distinctive pronunciation of specific words like “sport,” “pairs,” “football”.

Interestingly, Listener 13 defined the accent as “slightly off standard, almost Scottish,”

4 Listeners out of 18 mentioned unusual stress patterns as an accent marker, especially in words “something,” “a lot,” and “traveling.” Apparently, for some native speakers, deviations in stress patterns, not pronunciation, are a decisive factor for identifying non-native speech, given that they have had contact with such non-native speakers before. For instance, Listener 16 gave the following feedback: “I think he pronounces a lot of things like he’s from northern England, but also the speech patterns and stresses remind me of Spanish people I have worked with.”

Non-native intonation patterns were noticed by 5 Listeners; however, no examples were provided. As for grammar and vocabulary use, 4 Listeners noticed that Speaker 1 does not always add the “-ing” or “-s” endings when needed and uses inversion too much (which is a distinct feature of the Spanish language) as well as uses slang words unnaturally and, in line with the Spanish pattern, says “...going to the mountain” instead of “...going to the mountains” and “...everything going around the world” instead of “...everything going on around the world”.

Listeners also were asked to share their assumptions on the potential country of origin of Speaker 1. 3 out of 18 Listeners accurately identified it as “Spain.” Given that Speaker 1 is bilingual, as his dad is British, it had been expected that some listeners would mention England as his country of origin. 3 Listeners did specify “England,” and Listener 13 guessed “Scotland,” being influenced by his initial impression of the accent. In general, 15 Listeners assumed that Speaker 1 is from some European country: 3 Listeners – “Spain,” 3 Listeners – “England,” 2 Listeners – “France,” 2 Listeners – “the Netherlands,” 2 Listeners – “Scandinavian country,” 1 Listener – “Scotland,” 1 Listener – Poland, 1 Listener – “Ukraine / Eastern European.” 1 Listener

mentioned “Middle East, perhaps Iran” and one more Listener responded with “South Africa or Holland.” 2 Listeners were undecided on the matter.

Listeners also provided the status and solidarity evaluations of the speech of Speaker 1. The results on a scale from 1 to 5 are illustrated in Table 3.5:

Table 3.5

	Listeners’ ratings
intelligent	4.22
confident	4.17
unsuccessful	1.78
unambitious	1.83
Average:	4.19¹
trustworthy	3.44
sincere	3.78
unkind	1.5
unfriendly	1.39
Average:	4.08

Listeners’ status and solidarity evaluations of the speech of Speaker 1

Listeners also answered questions concerning the potential social class as well as the occupation of Speaker 1 based on his accent. 88.9% of Listeners assumed that he belonged to the middle class, whereas 11.1% deemed him to pertain to the upper class (Figure 3.12).

¹ In all subsequent tables of this kind, we provide the original scores given to Speaker 1 by Listeners. However, for consistency in the results and a more accurate reflection of Listeners’ attitudes, we inverted the ratings of the negative personality traits ratings (*unsuccessful*, *unambitious*, *unkind*, *unfriendly*) when calculating the average values.

"You would say that the speaker could belong to"

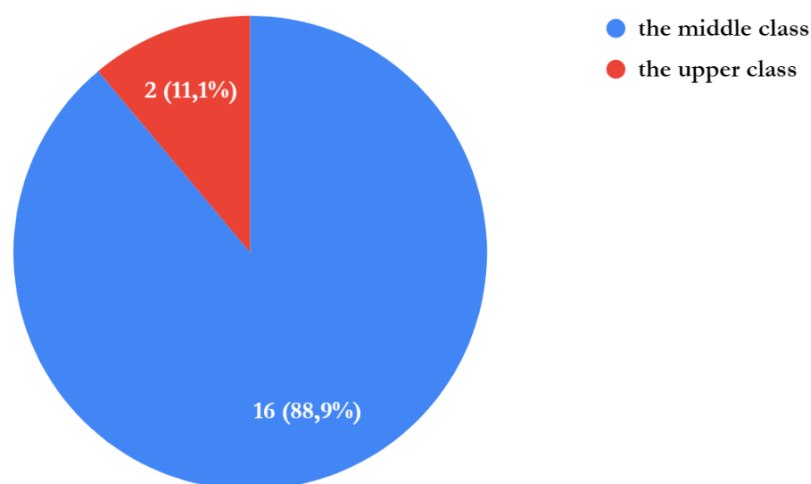


Figure 3.12. Perceived social class of Speaker 1 by Listeners (%)

Speaker 1 indicated that his position is Communications Manager. Regarding the Listeners' presumptions about his occupation, they provided a range of responses, but they mostly fell within the category of office-related occupations. Listener 3 and Listener 5 were closer than others suggesting that Speaker 1 is a "manager/office job" and "a working professional. Maybe an accountant or a white-collar employee", respectively. Other 6 Listeners hypothesized that he works either in business, the banking sphere, the IT sector as a computer programmer, or sales as a sales associate. Among other answers were "tour guide," "paternal leave," "soldier or NGO," and "student." 3 Listeners did not provide an answer.

Speaker 1 evaluated his level of spoken English as C2 (Proficiency), which is how 7 Listeners (38.9%) assessed his spoken language competence as well. Options "C1 (Advanced)" and "B2 (Upper-Intermediate)" were chosen by 4 Listeners each (22.2%), and 3 Listeners (16.7%) estimated his speaking skills at B1 (Intermediate) (Figure 3.13).

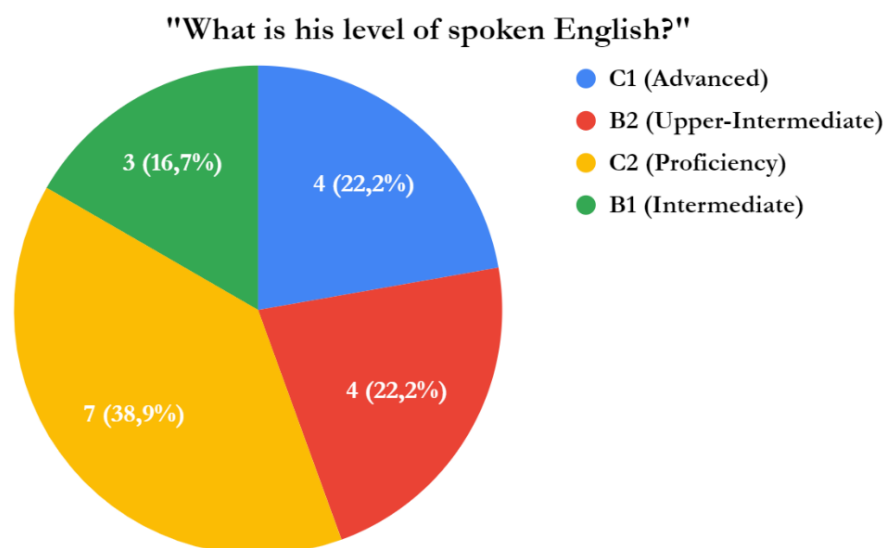


Figure 3.13. Listeners' assessments of the spoken English level of Speaker 1

3.4.1.2. Variable-based evaluations

In this section, we will explore evaluations of the accent of Speaker 1 broken down by different variables. Rather than analyzing data obtained from the Perception Study as a whole as we did in the previous section, we will present the comparison of assessments made by distinct groups of Listeners assembled based on specific parameters.

Variable: experience of living abroad

For this perspective, we divided the Listeners into two groups: those who have lived outside of their home country before (Group 1) and those who have not (Group 2) (Appendix 25). As a result, we obtained groups of 11 and 7 Listeners, respectively. We did not introduce another variable based on traveling experience since present groups more or less reflect the situation similarly (Figure 3.14 and Figure 3.15).

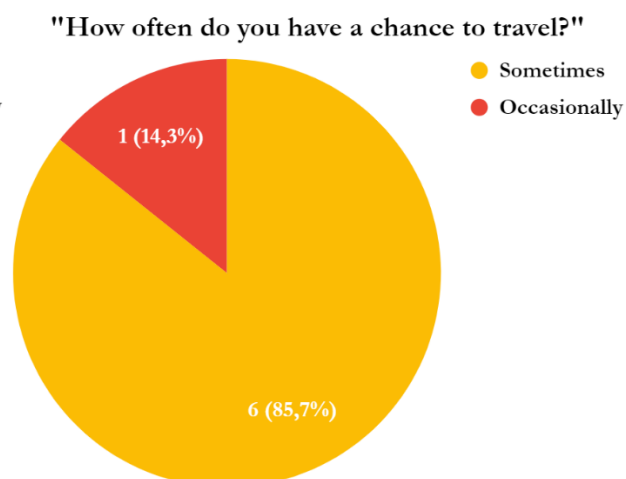
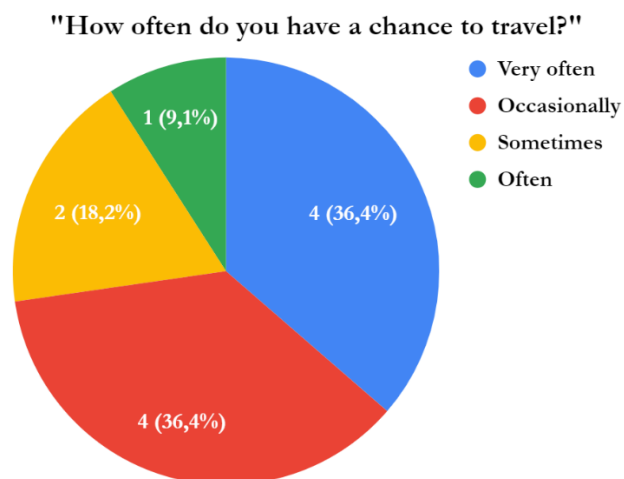


Figure 3.14. Traveling frequency of the Listeners who have lived abroad before

Figure 3.15. Traveling frequency of the Listeners who have never lived abroad before

Regarding the accentedness of speech of Speaker 1, Group 1 assessed it at 4.55 out of 10 and Group 2 – 4.86. We also compared the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 1 provided by the groups (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6

	Group 1	Group 2
intelligent	4.09	4.43
confident	4	4.43
unsuccessful	2.18	1.14
unambitious	2.27	1.14
Average:	3.90	4.64
trustworthy	3.45	3.43
sincere	3.63	4
unkind	1.73	1.14
unfriendly	1.64	1
Average:	3.93	4.32

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 1 by Group 1 and Group 2

Variable: nationality

In order to test Hypothesis 4, we formed two groups of Listeners: participants from the USA (8 Listeners) and from the UK (9 Listeners) (Appendix 26). According to the aggregated data, USA Listeners assessed the heaviness of accent of Speaker 1 at 5 out of 10, whereas UK Listeners estimated it at 4.22.

In addition, we contrasted the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 1 as given by USA Listeners and UK Listeners (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7

	USA Listeners	UK Listeners
intelligent	4.125	4.33
confident	4	4.33
unsuccessful	2.125	1.44
unambitious	2.25	1.44
Average:	3.94	4.44
trustworthy	4	2.89
sincere	4.25	3.33
unkind	1.875	1.11
unfriendly	1.5	1
Average:	4.22	4.03

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 1 by USA Listeners and UK Listeners

Curiously, the 3 Listeners who correctly suggested that Speaker 1 is from Spain belong to the group of Listeners from the UK. Furthermore, no one from this group mentioned England as his country of origin. In contrast to UK Listeners, all the Listeners who assumed that Speaker 1 was from England or Scotland are among USA Listeners. Also, those 2 Listeners who suggested that Speaker 1 belongs to the upper class are from the USA.

Variable: gender

In order to detect any gender-related differences in attitudes towards the accent of Speaker 1, we divided Listeners into Female Group (4 Listeners) and Male Group (14 Listeners) (Appendix 27). The calculations of speech accentedness ratings show that Female Group collectively estimated the accentedness of the speech of Speaker 1 at 2.5 out of 10, whereas Male Group assessed it at 5.29.

For this perspective, we also compared the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 1 provided by male and female Listeners (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8

	Female Group	Male Group
intelligent	4.75	4.07
confident	5	3.93
unsuccessful	1	2
unambitious	1	2.07
Average:	4.94	3.98
trustworthy	3.5	3.43
sincere	4	3.71
unkind	1	1.64
unfriendly	1	1.5
Average:	4.375	4

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 1 by Female Group and Male Group

As for the level of spoken English of Speaker 1, female participants overall assessed it higher than male participants (Figure 3.16 and 3.17).

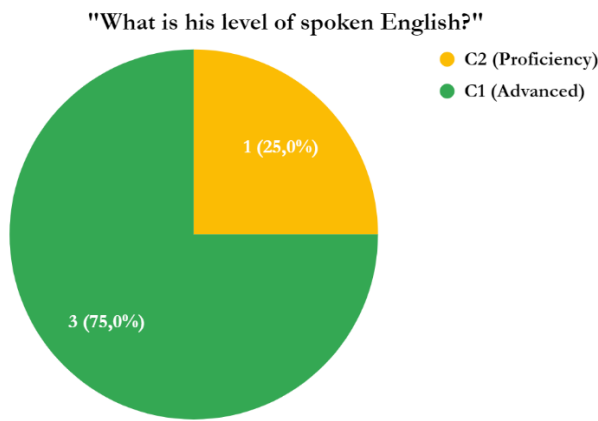


Figure 3.16. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 1 in Female Group

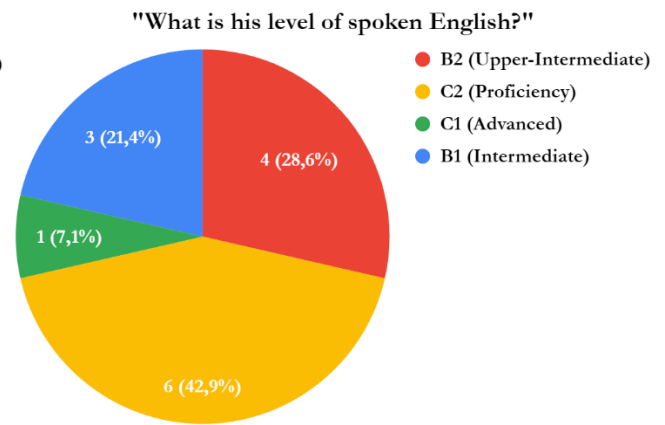


Figure 3.17. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 1 in Male Group

Variable: knowledge of Spanish language

In order to identify how the Listeners' knowledge of Spanish shapes their attitudes to Speaker 1 and his speech, Listeners were grouped according to their responses on the knowledge of foreign languages. Those who indicated that they spoke Spanish (any level) were categorized into Spanish Group (8 Listeners), and others were nominated as Non-Spanish Group (10 Listeners) (Appendix 28). A comparison of speech accentedness ratings also provided by Listeners of both groups revealed that Spanish Group collectively assessed the speech accentedness of Speaker 1 at 5.25 out of 10, whereas Non-Spanish Group estimated it at 4.2.

Contrasting Listeners' status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 1 based on this variable, we obtained the following results for Spanish Group and Non-Spanish Group (Table 3.9).

Table 3.9

	Spanish Group	Non-Spanish Group
intelligent	4.125	4.3
confident	4.25	4.1

	Spanish Group	Non-Spanish Group
unsuccessful	1.875	1.7
unambitious	2.25	1.5
Average:	4.06	4.3
trustworthy	4	3
sincere	4.375	3.3
unkind	1.625	1.4
unfriendly	1.375	1.4
Average:	4.34	3.875

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 1 by Spanish Group and Non-Spanish Group

Variable: age

To discover any age-related differences in attitudes toward the accent of Speaker 1, we decided to form two groups among Listeners: Younger Group (10 Listeners) that comprises 20- to 30-year-old Listeners and Older Group (8 Listeners) that encompasses the ages from 33 to 59 (Appendix 29). Regarding the speech accentedness ratings, Younger Group assessed the heaviness of the accent of Speaker 1 at 5 out of 10, whereas Older Group estimated it at 4.25.

The status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 1 based on this variable were contrasted as well (Table 3.10).

Table 3.10

	Younger Group	Older Group
intelligent	4.1	4.375
confident	4.1	4.25
unsuccessful	1.5	2.125
unambitious	1.9	1.75
Average:	4.2	4.187

	Younger Group	Older Group
trustworthy	2.9	4.125
sincere	3.3	4.375
unkind	1.4	1.625
unfriendly	1.1	1.75
Average:	3.925	4.28

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 1 by Younger Group and Older Group

Within this variable, Older Group assessed the level of spoken English of Speaker 1 higher than Younger Group: 5 Listeners in Older Group opted for C2 (Proficiency) in contrast to 2 Listeners from Younger Group (Figure 3.18 and 3.19).

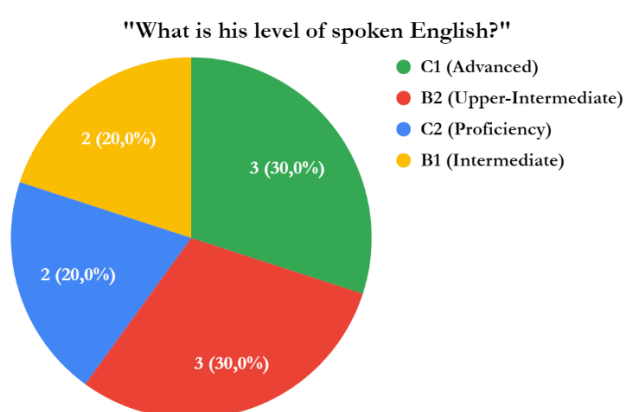


Figure 3.18. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 1 in Younger Group

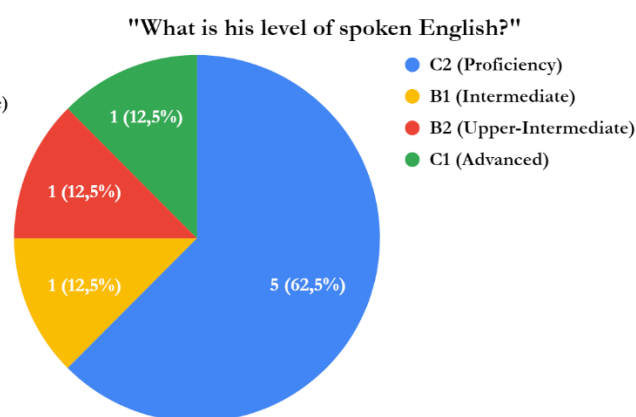


Figure 3.19. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 1 in Older Group

3.4.2. Speaker 2: Findings

In this section, we demonstrate the Perception Study results for Speaker 2 based on the self-evaluation scores and the audio recording he provided within the Self-Evaluation Study. The audio sample [98] and copy of the completed questionnaire used in this study can be found in Appendix 4.

3.4.2.1. General Evaluations

Listeners were asked to evaluate the heaviness of the accent of Speaker 2 on a scale of 1 to 10 with an increment of 1 and define the distinctive features of his speech.

The rounded average score of the accent heaviness Listeners attributed to Speaker 2 is 7.39 (Figure 3.20).

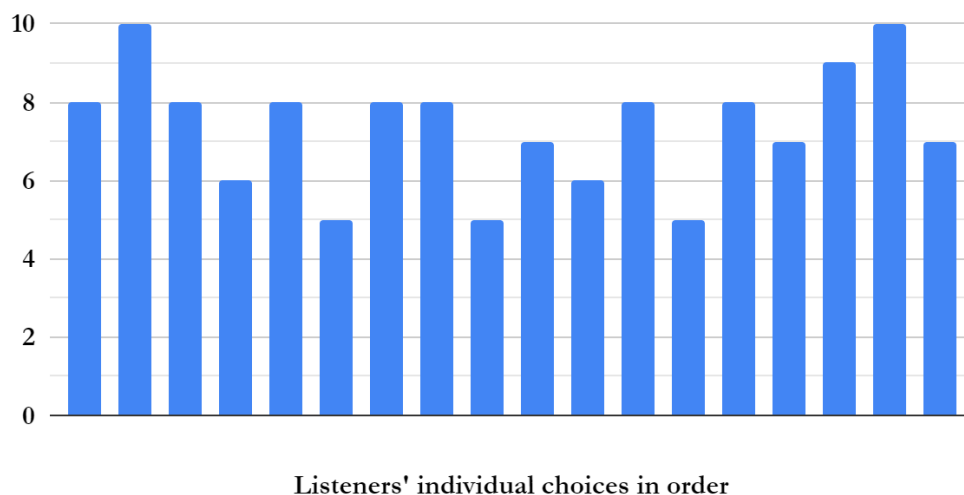


Figure 3.20. Listeners' ratings of the speech accentedness of Speaker 2

In the feedback field following the audio recording, Listeners determined various markers that make the speech of Speaker 2 sound accented to them: pronunciation, stress patterns, intonation, grammar, and vocabulary. 16 Listeners out of 18 noticed non-native pronunciation of sounds. Some of the features that were mentioned are:

- the harshness/depth of vowel sounds and unusual pronunciation of vowels in general;
- the non-native pronunciation of /r/ and /p/ sounds;
- the /ɔ/ and /ɐ/ sounds are pronounced like /ɒ/ and /a/;
- the omission of consonants at the ends of words such as /d/ as well as the much softer realization of the /d/ sound in the middle of the word, closer to the /ð/ sound;
- extra vowel sounds at ends of words to connect them;
- the /s/ sound is not clear;

- the /i/ and /I/ sounds are pronounced similarly;
- pronouncing English letters with their native language equivalent sounds;
- the soft /l/ sound;
- the long sounds after /d/ and /h/;
- the connected speech realized in a non-native manner;
- the use of “umm” instead of “erm” when speaking.

4 out of 18 Listeners mentioned non-native stress patterns as a marker of accentedness for Speaker 2. The intonation seemed odd to 3 Listeners as well as grammar and vocabulary use did not appear native-like to 3 other Listeners. Listeners specified that Speaker 2 occasionally omits “short connective words” and often puts the verb before the noun in a sentence (excessive use of inversion). Additionally, Listener 10 noticed that “the choice of words wasn’t that of a native speaker.” Only one Listener could not provide an answer to the question.

It is essential to acknowledge some Listeners personally in particular. For example, Listener 13 correctly assumed that Speaker 2 was Spanish, specifying that he “sounded as a nonnative Latin language speaker (Spanish or Portuguese).” Moreover, Listener 16 noted that Speaker 2 “sounds much more Spanish than the previous speaker.”

Additionally, Listeners received an assignment to express their opinions on the potential country of origin of Speaker 2. 5 Listeners out of 18 accurately identified it as “Spain,” 1 Listener among those suggested “Spain or South America.” The other 5 Listeners assumed that Speaker 2 was from “Europe” or “Southern Europe,” and 2 of them named specific countries – “Italy” and “Cyprus.” Other suggested European countries are France, Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. In general, 12 Listeners assumed that Speaker 2 was from some European country. Curiously, 4 Listeners considered that he could be from South America, and 1 of them responded with “Mexico.” 2 Listeners wrote “Middle East” in the feedback field, and 1 Listener was undecided on the matter.

In addition to the accentedness assessment, Listeners provided the status and solidarity evaluations of the speech of Speaker 2. The results on a scale from 1 to 5 and their average values are displayed in Table 3.11:

Table 3.11

	Listeners' ratings
intelligent	3.94
confident	3.89
unsuccessful	1.94
unambitious	1.83
Average:	4.01
trustworthy	3.67
sincere	3.78
unkind	1.56
unfriendly	1.44
Average:	4.11

Listeners' status and solidarity evaluations of the speech of Speaker 2

Listeners also shared their assumptions on the potential social class as well as the occupation of Speaker 2 based on his accent. 61.1% of Listeners assumed that he belonged to the middle class, 27.8% deemed him to belong to the upper class, and 11.1% (2 Listeners) thought he was a lower-class representative (Figure 3.21).

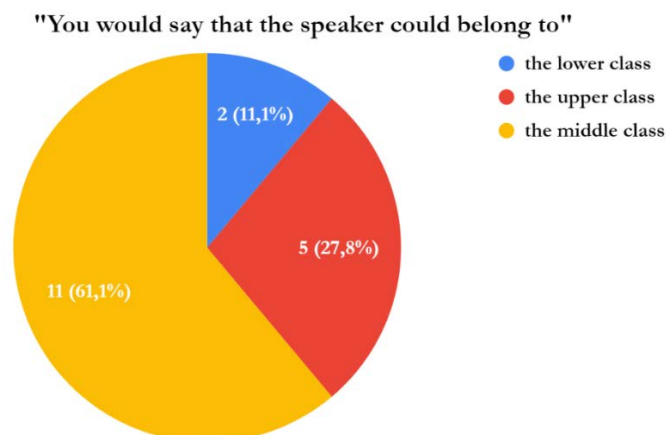


Figure 3.21. Perceived social class of Speaker 2 by Listeners (%)

Speaker 2 indicated that he founded his own company and is currently its CEO. Concerning the Listeners' inferences about his occupation, 11 Listeners out of 18 each provided a response, whereas 7 expressed indecision regarding the matter. Listener 5 and Listener 17 accurately assumed that Speaker 2 was a "business owner" and "a company owner or high-up businessman," respectively. Three other Listeners hypothesized that he works either in business, as a manager, or as an IT manager in the IT sector. Among other answers were "truck driver, builder," "doctor," "NGO or soldier," "professor," "gardener," and "engineer." In essence, there is a wide range of assumptions about the occupation of Speaker 2.

Like Speaker 1, Speaker 2 also evaluated his level of spoken English as C2 (Proficiency), which is how only 1 Listener (5.6%) assessed his spoken language competence as well. 4 Listeners opted for "C1 (Advanced)" (22.2%) and 11 Listeners chose the option "B2 (Upper-Intermediate)" (61.1%), which makes it the most popular opinion. The remaining 2 Listeners (11.1%) estimated his speaking skills at B1 (Intermediate) (Figure 3.22).

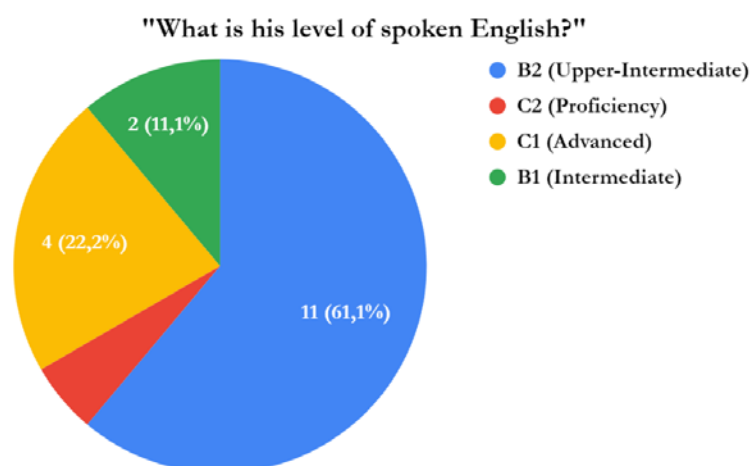


Figure 3.22. Listeners' assessments of the spoken English level of Speaker 2

3.4.2.2. Variable-based evaluations

In this section, we will explore the Listeners' evaluations of the accent of Speaker 2 broken down by different variables. We will analyze the data collected on

Speaker 2 using the identical group distributions of listeners as in section 3.4.1.2. for the consistency (see section 3.4.1.2. for detailed information on the assembled groups).

Variable: experience of living abroad

Group 1 (Listeners who have lived abroad before) estimated the accentedness of speech of Speaker 2 at 7.45 out of 10, and Group 2 (Listeners who have never lived outside of their home country) assessed it at 7.29.

Additionally, we contrasted the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 2 provided by the groups (Table 3.12).

Table 3.12

	Group 1	Group 2
intelligent	3.73	4.29
confident	3.9	3.86
unsuccessful	2.27	1.43
unambitious	2.09	1.43
Average:	3.82	4.32
trustworthy	3.54	3.86
sincere	3.54	4.14
unkind	1.72	1.29
unfriendly	1.64	1.14
Average:	3.93	4.39

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 2 by Group 1 and Group 2

Variable: nationality

According to the analysis of the data based on the Listeners' countries of origin, USA Listeners assessed the heaviness of accent of Speaker 2 at 7.625 out of 10, whereas UK Listeners estimated it at 7.11.

Subsequently, we contrasted the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 2 as given by USA Listeners and UK Listeners (Table 3.13).

Table 3.13

	USA Listeners	UK Listeners
intelligent	4.25	3.67
confident	4	3.78
unsuccessful	2	1.89
unambitious	1.625	2
Average:	4.16	3.89
trustworthy	4	3.33
sincere	4.25	3.33
unkind	1.75	1.33
unfriendly	1.75	1.11
Average:	4.19	4.05

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 2 by USA Listeners and UK Listeners

Curiously, the 3 out of 4 Listeners who assumed that Speaker 2 is somewhere from South America belong to the group of Listeners from the USA. Furthermore, the 3 Listeners out of 5 who correctly suggested “Spain” as his country of origin are also among USA Listeners. As for the occupation of Speaker 2, in contrast to UK Listeners, all the Listeners who correctly suggested that he is a business owner are from the USA. In addition, most of the Listeners who were undecided on the matter of his occupation were from the UK. Additionally, Listeners from the USA expressed higher impressions about the potential social class of Speaker 2, as opposed to Listeners from the UK (Figure 3.23 and 3.24).

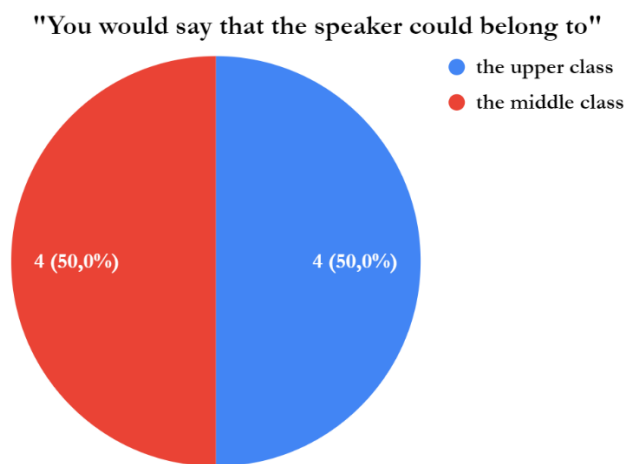


Figure 3.23. Social class assumptions for Speaker 2 among USA Listeners

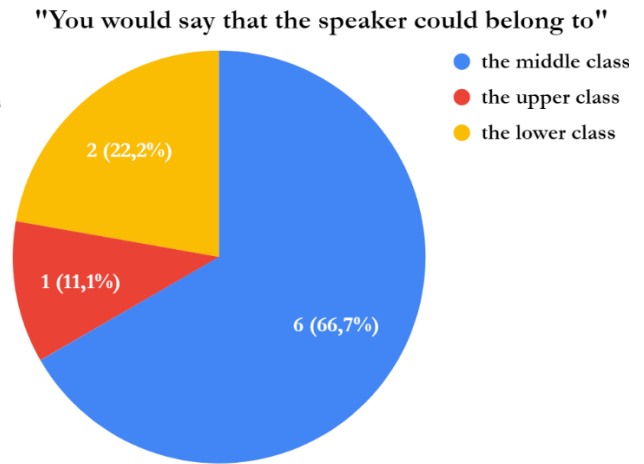


Figure 3.24. Social class assumptions for Speaker 2 among UK Listeners

Variable: gender

The calculations of speech accentedness ratings show that Female Group collectively estimated the accentedness of the speech of Speaker 2 at 6.5 out of 10, whereas Male Group assessed it at 7.64.

From this perspective, we also compared the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 2 provided by male and female Listeners (Table 3.14).

Table 3.14

	Female Group	Male Group
intelligent	4.25	3.86
confident	4	3.86
unsuccessful	1.5	2.07
unambitious	2	1.79
Average:	4.19	3.96
trustworthy	3.25	3.79
sincere	3.5	3.86
unkind	1.25	1.64

	Female Group	Male Group
unfriendly	1.25	1.5
Average:	4.06	4.125

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 2 by Female Group and Male Group

Variable: knowledge of Spanish language

A comparison of speech accentedness ratings provided by Listeners of Spanish Group and Non-Spanish Group revealed that the former collectively estimated the accent of Speaker 2 as strong at 7.75 out of 10, whereas the latter estimated it at 7.1.

Contrasting Listeners' status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 2 based on this variable, we obtained the following results for Spanish Group and Non-Spanish Group (Table 3.15).

Table 3.15

	Spanish Group	Non-Spanish Group
intelligent	4.125	3.8
confident	3.875	3.9
unsuccessful	2	1.9
unambitious	1.75	1.9
Average:	4.06	3.975
trustworthy	4	3.4
sincere	4.25	3.4
unkind	1.5	1.6
unfriendly	1.625	1.3
Average:	4.28	3.975

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 2 by Spanish Group and Non-Spanish Group

Curiously, the 2 Listeners who assumed that Speaker 2 belonged to the lower class are among those who do not speak Spanish, whereas 4 out of 5 Listeners who assumed that Speaker 2 belonged to the upper class are among those who speak Spanish at some level.

Variable: age

Considering the speech accentedness ratings, Younger Group estimated the heaviness of the accent of Speaker 2 at 7.2 out of 10, whereas Older Group assessed it at 7.625.

The status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 2 based on this variable were contrasted as well (Table 3.16).

Table 3.16

	Younger Group	Older Group
intelligent	3.8	4.125
confident	3.8	4
unsuccessful	1.8	2.125
unambitious	1.7	2
Average:	4.025	4
trustworthy	3.6	3.75
sincere	3.5	4.125
unkind	1.4	1.75
unfriendly	1.3	1.625
Average:	4.1	4.125

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 2 by Younger Group and Older Group

It is noteworthy that all 5 Listeners who accurately identified the country of origin of Speaker 2, which is Spain, belong to Older Group.

3.4.3. Speaker 3: Findings

The focus of this section is on the Perception Study results for Speaker 3 based on the self-evaluation scores and audio sample he provided within the Self-Evaluation Study. The audio recording [99] and copy of his questionnaire used for this study are in Appendix 5.

3.4.3.1. General Evaluations

Listeners were asked to listen to the audio recording of Speaker 3 speaking English and estimate the heaviness of his accent on a scale of 1 to 10 with an increment of 1 and specify the distinct speech features.

We calculated and rounded the average score of the speech accentedness Listeners attributed to Speaker 3 is 5.94 (Figure 3.25).

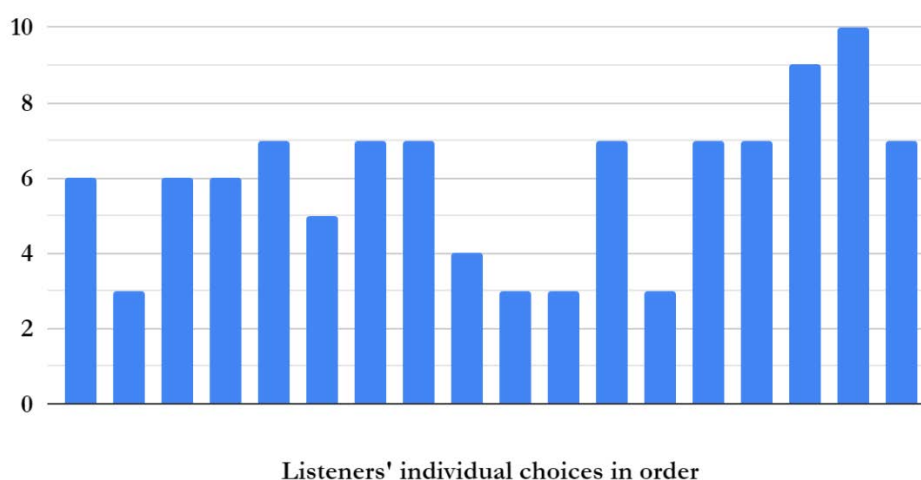


Figure 3.25. Listeners' ratings of the speech accentedness of Speaker 3

In the designated field for feedback beneath the audio recording, Listeners indicated various features that affected their evaluations of the heaviness of the accent of Speaker 3: pronunciation, stress patterns, intonation, grammar, and vocabulary. Out of 18 Listeners, 14 noticed non-native pronunciation of sounds. Some of the markers that were mentioned are:

- the incorrect pronunciation of sounds in general;
- the incorrect realization of the /θ/ and /ð/ sounds;

- the non-native pronunciation of the /l/ and /p/ sounds;
- the use of the voiced alveolar trill – /r/ sound (Listener 3 noted that Speaker 3 “stretches out certain sounds such as /r/”);
- the unusual realization of the /ʌ/ sound, particularly in the word “culture” (mentioned as an example by Listener 1 and Listener 2);
- the omission of consonants at the ends of words;
- the different lengths of /u/ sound like in “around” (Listener 10);
- the instance of diphthongization of a monophthong in the word “hobbies”;
- the considerable number of pauses Speaker 3 makes before speaking.

6 out of 18 Listeners mentioned unusual stress patterns as a marker of accentedness for Speaker 3, especially the stress in function words (Listener 9). The intonation was reported as non-native by 3 Listeners. Regarding grammar and vocabulary use, 4 Listeners noticed that Speaker 3 makes such mistakes as the unusual sentence structure, the misuse of singular and plural nouns as well as non-native choices of vocabulary, like in “all type of readings” (Listener 2). Only one Listener did not respond to the question.

Curiously, 3 Listeners drew attention to the fact that the accent of Speaker 3 sounds American or Americanized: Listener 3 – “stretches out certain sounds such as /r/ in an American fashion,” Listener 4 – “moderately Americanised,” and Listener 16 – “they have an American twang to their accent, but in a way that is learnt rather than naturally American.” However, Listener 13 noted that Speaker 3 “sounded potentially Slavic” to her.

Additionally, Listeners were asked to express their assumptions about the potential country of origin of Speaker 3. No Listeners accurately identified it as “Mexico.” However, Listener 9 suggested “Spain,” and Listener 7 indicated “Portugal or Brazil.” 1 Listener suggested “Europe” along with “France” and “Sweden.” Another Listener assumed that Speaker 3 was from “Italy.” The other 8 Listeners suggested countries of Eastern Europe such as “Romania” (Listener 3 and Listener 5), “Czech

Republic”, and “Poland”. Some other responses were “Dutch” (Listener 10) and “India or Pakistan” (Listener 1). In general, 13 Listeners assumed that Speaker 3 comes from some European country. 4 Listeners did not give pertinent responses to a question.

After the accentedness assessment, Listeners evaluated the status and solidarity traits of Speaker 3. Table 3.17 demonstrates these results on a scale from 1 to 5 and their average values:

Table 3.17

	Listeners’ ratings
intelligent	3.83
confident	3.5
unsuccessful	2.06
unambitious	1.89
Average:	3.85
trustworthy	3.61
sincere	3.72
unkind	1.61
unfriendly	1.5
Average:	4.06

Listeners’ status and solidarity evaluations of the speech of Speaker 3

Listeners also indicated their presumptions regarding the potential social class as well as the occupation of Speaker 3 based on his accent. 77.8% of Listeners assumed that he belonged to the middle class, whereas 22.2% considered him a representative of the lower class (Figure 3.26).

"You would say that the speaker could belong to"

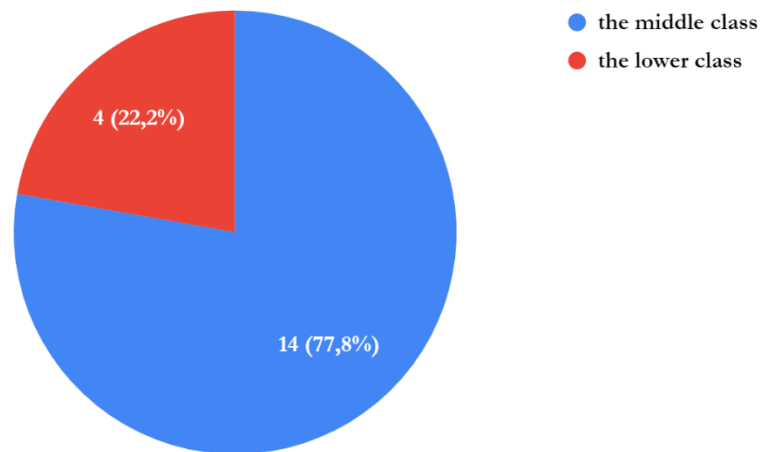


Figure 3.26 Perceived social class of Speaker 3 by Listeners (%)

Speaker 3 indicated that he is currently a freelancer without specifying the field, so we just present the Listeners' assumptions of his potential occupation. 4 Listeners assumed that he might be a student, 3 Listeners mentioned "a teacher" or "a history teacher." 2 Listeners thought that he works in a sphere of services or "runs a coffee shop." Other 2 had an assumption that he is a blue-collar worker like "a factory worker." Only Listener 9 suggested that Speaker 3 may be a "business man." A total of 6 were undecided on the matter.

Like Speaker 1 and Speaker 2, Speaker 3 also estimated his level of spoken English as C2 (Proficiency), which is how 2 Listeners (11.1%) assessed it as well. 3 Listeners chose the option "C1 (Advanced)" (16.7%), and 7 Listeners opted for "B2 (Upper-Intermediate)" (38.9%), which subsequently became one of the most popular opinions. Another one is B1 (Intermediate), which was chosen by the remaining 6 Listeners (33.3%) (Figure 3.27).

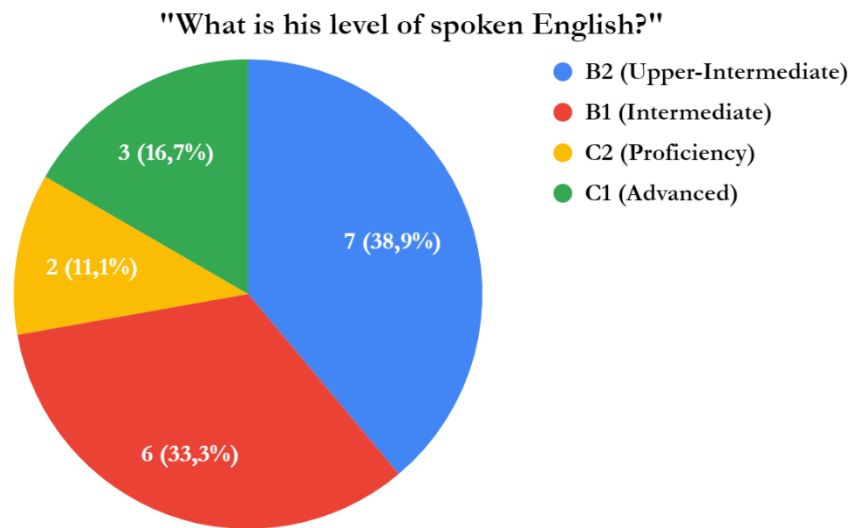


Figure 3.27. Listeners' assessments of the spoken English level of Speaker 3

3.4.3.2. Variable-based evaluations

In this section, we will explore the Listeners' evaluations of the accent of Speaker 3 categorized by different variables. To ensure consistency, we will use the identical group distributions of Listeners as presented in section 3.4.1.2. for the consistency (see section 3.4.1.2. for detailed information on these groups).

Variable: experience of living abroad

Group 1 (Listeners who have had the experience of living abroad before) assessed the heaviness of the accent of Speaker 3 at 5.73 out of 10, and Group 2 (Listeners who do not have such experience) estimated it at 6.29.

Furthermore, we compared the evaluations of the status and solidarity traits of Speaker 3 made by Group 1 and Group 2 (Table 3.18).

Table 3.18

	Group 1	Group 2
intelligent	3.82	3.86
confident	3.54	3.43
unsuccessful	2.36	1.57

	Group 1	Group 2
unambitious	2.18	1.43
Average:	3.7	4.07
trustworthy	3.36	4
sincere	3.45	4.14
unkind	1.9	1.14
unfriendly	1.73	1.14
Average:	3.79	4.46

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 3 by Group 1 and Group 2

Variable: nationality

In line with the collected data after sorting the Listeners based on their countries of origin, USA Listeners assessed the heaviness of accent of Speaker 3 at 6 out of 10, whereas UK Listeners estimated it at 5.78. Afterward, we contrasted the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 3 as provided by USA and UK Listeners (Table 3.19).

Table 3.19

	USA Listeners	UK Listeners
intelligent	3.75	3.89
confident	3.25	3.67
unsuccessful	2.62	1.56
unambitious	2.125	1.67
Average:	3.56	4.08
trustworthy	3.625	3.56
sincere	3.875	3.56
unkind	2	1.22
unfriendly	1.875	1.11
Average:	3.91	4.19

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 3 by USA Listeners and UK Listeners

Interestingly, Listener 7 and Listener 9 whose assumptions were quite close to the actual country of origin of Speaker 3 language-wise (“Spain” and “Portugal or Brazil”) belong to the group of Listeners from the USA. Additionally, 37.5% of USA Listeners, as opposed to 11.1% of UK Listeners, assumed that Speaker 3 was a lower-class representative (Figure 3.28 and 3.29).

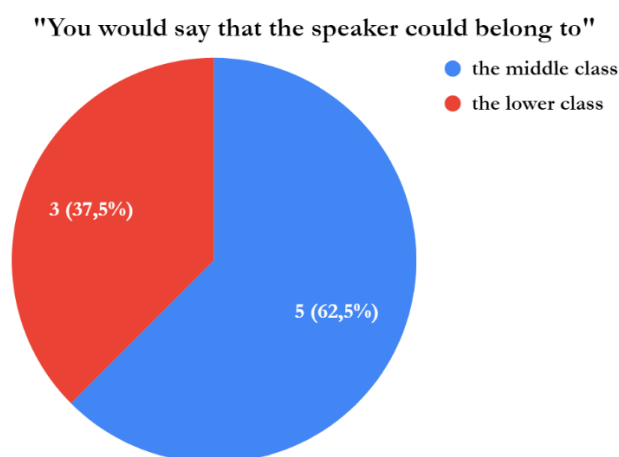


Figure 3.28. Social class assumptions for Speaker 3 among USA Listeners

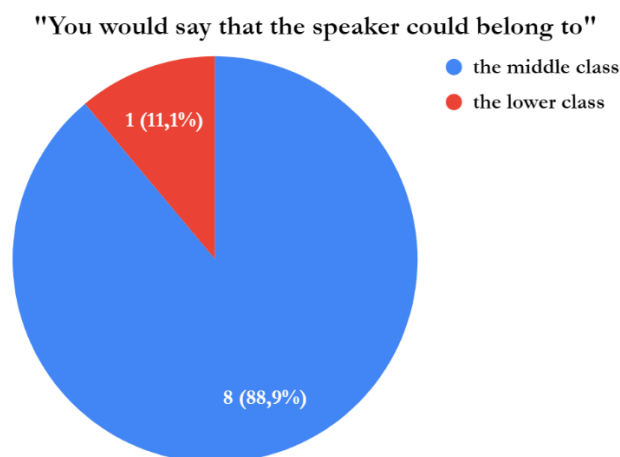


Figure 3.29. Social class assumptions for Speaker 3 among UK Listeners

Variable: gender

The calculations of speech accentedness ratings of Speaker 3 show that Female Group collectively estimated the accentedness of the speech of Speaker 2 at 5.25 out of 10, whereas Male Group assessed it at 6.14.

For this perspective, we also compared the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 3 by male and female Listeners (Table 3.20).

Table 3.20

	Female Group	Male Group
intelligent	4	3.79
confident	4	3.36
unsuccessful	1.5	2.21

	Female Group	Male Group
unambitious	1.25	2.07
Average:	4.31	3.71
trustworthy	3.75	3.57
sincere	3.75	3.71
unkind	1.25	1.71
unfriendly	1	1.64
Average:	4.31	3.98

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 3 by Female Group and Male Group

As for the level of spoken English of Speaker 3, the most popular option among female participants (75%) was B2 (Upper-Intermediate), whereas 42.5% of male participants chose the option B1 (Intermediate) (Figure 3.30 and 3.31).

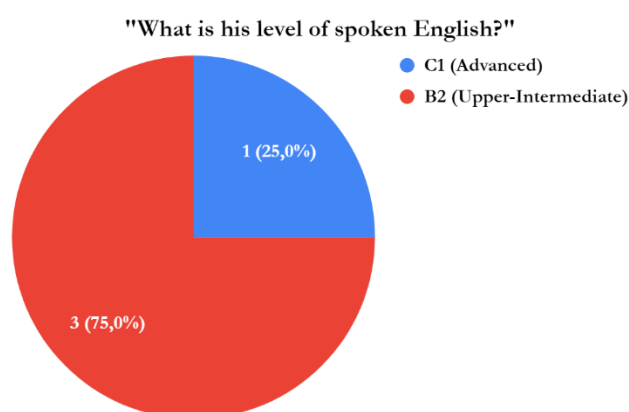


Figure 3.30. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 3 in Female Group

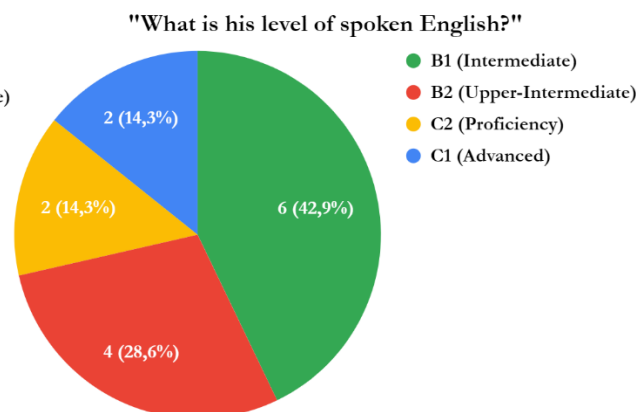


Figure 3.31. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 3 in Male Group

Variable: knowledge of Spanish language

In line with the comparison of speech accentedness ratings provided by Spanish Group and Non-Spanish Group, we identified that the former assessed the heaviness of the accent of Speaker 3 at 5.875 out of 10, whereas the latter estimated it at 6.

Based on this variable, we made a comparison of the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 3 by Spanish Group and Non-Spanish Group and obtained the following results (Table 3.21).

Table 3.21

	Spanish Group	Non-Spanish Group
intelligent	3.625	4
confident	3.25	3.7
unsuccessful	2.5	1.7
unambitious	2	1.8
Average:	3.59	4.05
trustworthy	3.75	3.5
sincere	4	3.5
unkind	1.75	1.5
unfriendly	1.625	1.4
Average:	4.09	4.02

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 3 by Spanish and Non-Spanish Group

Interestingly, 50% of Listeners in Spanish Group, as opposed to 100% of Listeners from Non-Spanish Group, accurately assumed that Speaker 3 was a middle-class representative (Figure 3.32 and 3.33).

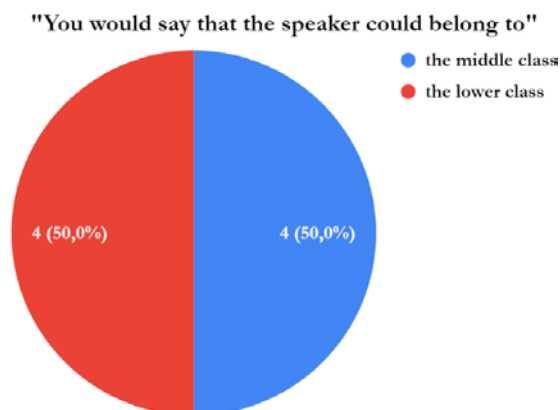


Figure 3.32. Social class assumptions for Speaker 3 in Spanish Group

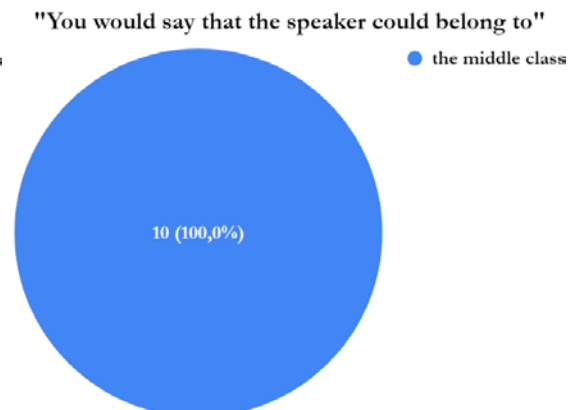


Figure 3.33. Social class assumptions for Speaker 3 in Non-Spanish Group

Variable: age

As to the speech accentedness ratings, Younger Group estimated the accent of Speaker 3 as strong at 5.3 whereas Older Group assessed it at 6.75 out of 10.

Based on this variable, the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 3 were contrasted as well (Table 3.22).

Table 3.22

	Younger Group	Older Group
intelligent	3.29	3.71
confident	3.11	3.57
unsuccessful	2.43	2.5
unambitious	2.33	3
Average:	3.41	3.446
trustworthy	3.5	3.33
sincere	3.56	3.33
unkind	2	2.33
unfriendly	2	2.5
Average:	3.76	3.458

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 3 by Younger Group and Older Group

Curiously, Listener 7 and Listener 9 whose assumptions were quite close to the actual country of origin of Speaker 3 language-wise (“Spain” and “Portugal or Brazil”) belong to Older Group. Additionally, Listeners from Older Group assessed the level of spoken English of Speaker 3 higher than Listeners from younger Group (Figure 3.34 and 3.35).

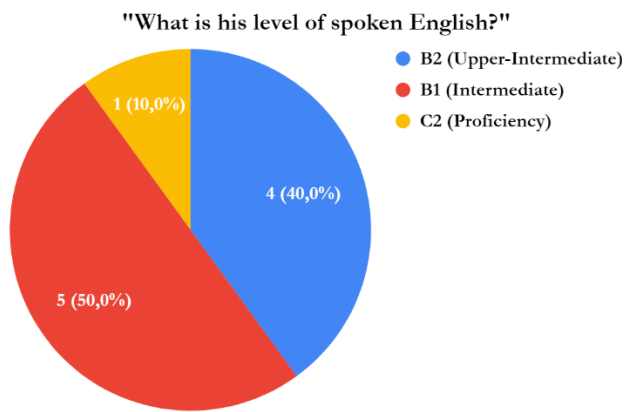


Figure 3.34. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 3 in Younger Group

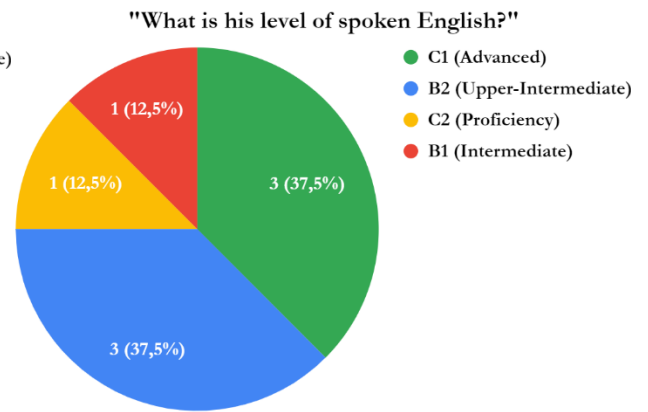


Figure 3.35. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 3 in Older Group

3.4.4. Speaker 4: Findings

In this section, we demonstrate the Perception Study results for Speaker 4 based on the self-evaluation scores and an audio sample he produced within the Self-Evaluation Study. The audio recording [100] and copy of the completed questionnaire used in this study can be found in Appendix 6.

3.4.4.1. General Evaluations

Listeners were asked to evaluate the heaviness of the accent of Speaker 4 on a scale of 1 to 10 with an increment of 1 and define the distinct markers of his speech. The rounded average score Listeners attributed to the accent of Speaker 4 is 6.28 (Figure 3.36).

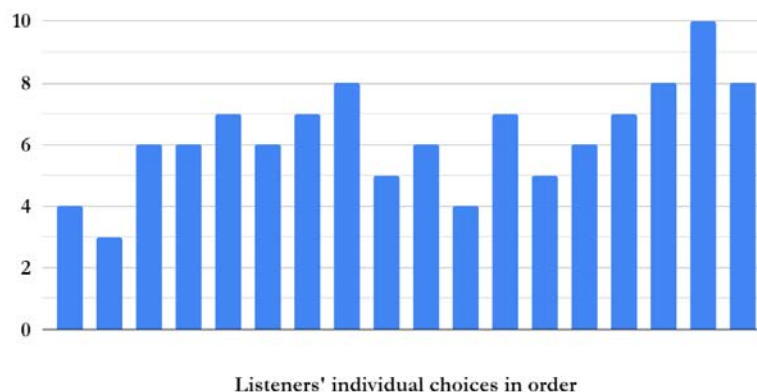


Figure 3.36. Listeners' ratings of the speech accentedness of Speaker 4

In the feedback field after listening to the audio recording, Listeners determined various markers that make the speech of Speaker 4 sound accented to them: pronunciation, stress patterns, intonation, and vocabulary. Keeping in mind that Listener 6 did not specify any features, a total of 17 Listeners out of 18 noticed non-native pronunciation of sounds. Some of the features that were mentioned are:

- the non-native pronunciation of vowel sounds, i.e., elongated vowels like in “to”, “go”, “movies”, and “photos”;
- difficulties in pronunciation of with some consonant clusters;
- mispronunciation of some words, like “superhero”;
- the soft /s/ sound that sometimes is also pronounced as /z/;
- the occasional realization of /θ/ and /ð/ sounds as /t/ and /d/ or /r/;
- the use of voiced alveolar trill as in “genre”;
- the soft /l/ sound;
- the unusual nasality of speech;
- the slow speed of the speech with a lot of pauses (Listener 17 – “very thought out”);
- the segmented speech;
- the repetition of the said phrases in order to correct pronunciation mistakes.

Listener 5 noted that Speaker 4 makes a lot of pauses but seems “not heavily accented with sounds” to him. As for Listener 16, he reported that there was “one phrase I had trouble understanding at the beginning.”

4 out of 18 Listeners mentioned non-native stress patterns as a marker of accentedness for Speaker 4. Listener 3 noticed that some words have wrong stresses, e.g., the word “literature” was stressed on the second syllable. The intonation seemed odd to 4 Listeners as well. Choice of vocabulary and even lack of vocabulary did not appear native-like to 2 more Listeners. Additionally, Listener 13 noted that Speaker 4 has a “distinct accent.” As mentioned earlier, only one Listener could not answer the question.

Subsequently, Listeners were given a task to express their opinions about the potential country of origin of Speaker 4. 2 Listeners suggested “Spain” and “Italy, Portugal, Spain,” which are quite close to the truth in terms of languages spoken in those countries as contrasted to Mexico. 5 Listeners assumed that Speaker 4 is from some European country like “Denmark,” “Greece,” “Croatia.” “Germany,” or “the Netherlands.” Curiously, 7 Listeners assumed that Speaker 4 might come from Eastern Europe, specifically from Ukraine or Poland. In general, 12 Listeners suggested that Speaker 4 is from Europe. Also, 3 Listeners hypothesized that he might be from the Middle East, like Israel or Afghanistan, or from India. 1 Listener was undecided on the matter.

In addition to the accentedness assessment, Listeners provided the status and solidarity evaluations of the speech of Speaker 4. The results on a scale from 1 to 5 and their average values are displayed in Table 3.23:

Table 3.23

	Listeners’ ratings
intelligent	3.78
confident	3.28
unsuccessful	1.83
unambitious	2
Average:	3.81
trustworthy	3.78
sincere	3.89
unkind	1.67
unfriendly	1.61
Average:	4.1

Listeners’ status and solidarity evaluations of the speech of Speaker 4

Also, Listeners shared their assumptions on the potential social class as well as the occupation of Speaker 4 based on his accent. Half of Listeners assumed that he

belonged to the middle class, and another 50% deemed him to pertain to the lower class (Figure 3.37).

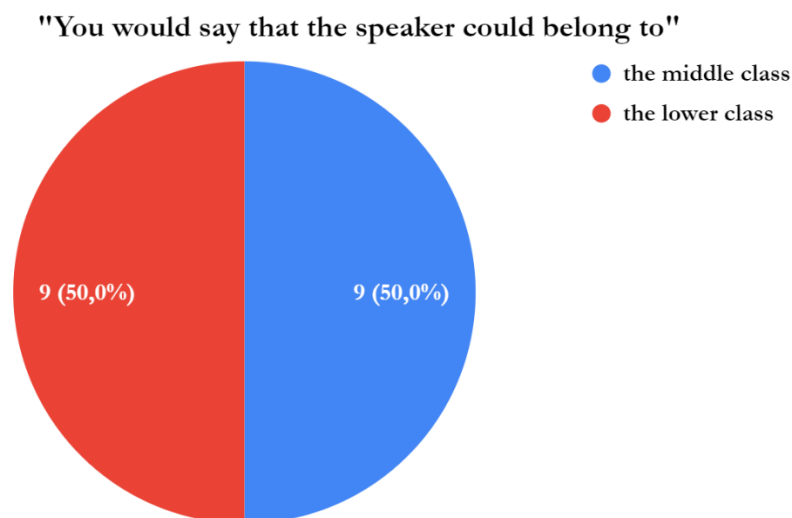


Figure 3.37. Perceived social class of Speaker 4 by Listeners (%)

Speaker 4 indicated that he is a blue-collar worker. Concerning the Listeners' inferences about his occupation, 11 out of 18 Listeners each provided an answer, whereas 7 expressed indecision on the matter. No Listener suggested a blue-collar job. Instead, 4 Listeners assumed that Speaker 4 was a white-collar worker like an accountant or a midlevel employee at a business. The other 4 Listeners hypothesized that he might be a student. Interestingly, 2 Listeners guessed that Speaker 4 works as a bus or a cab driver.

Answering the questionnaire during the Self-Evaluation Study, Speaker 4 assessed his level of spoken English as C1 (Advanced), which is how 2 Listeners (11.1%) assessed his spoken language competence as well. Only 1 Listener opted for "C2 (Proficiency)" (5.6%), and 6 Listeners chose the option "B2 (Upper-Intermediate)" (33.3%). 7 Listeners (38.9%) estimated his speaking skills at B1 (Intermediate), which makes it the most popular opinion. The remaining 2 Listeners (11.1%) assessed his level as A2 (Pre-Intermediate) (Figure 3.38).

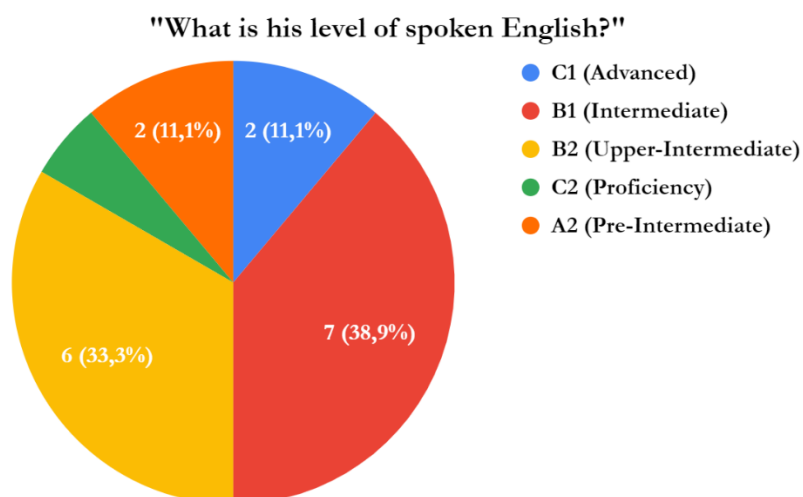


Figure 3.38. Listeners' assessments of spoken English level of Speaker 4

3.4.4.2. Variable-based evaluations

In this section, we will explore the Listeners' evaluations of the accent of Speaker 4 broken down by different variables. We will examine the data collected on Speaker 4 using the identical group distributions of listeners as specified in section 3.4.1.2. for consistency (see section 3.4.1.2. for detailed information on the assembled groups).

Variable: experience of living abroad

Group 1 (Listeners who have lived abroad before) estimated the accentedness of speech of Speaker 4 at 6.09 out of 10 and Group 2 (Listeners who have never lived outside of their home country) assessed it at 6.57 out of 10.

Additionally, we compared the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 4 given by the groups (Table 3.24).

Table 3.24

	Group 1	Group 2
intelligent	3.54	4.14
confident	3.18	3.43
unsuccessful	2.09	1.43

	Group 1	Group 2
unambitious	2.36	1.43
Average:	3.57	4.18
trustworthy	3.64	4
sincere	3.64	4.29
unkind	2.09	1
unfriendly	1.91	1.14
Average:	3.82	4.54

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 4 by Group 1 and Group 2

Interestingly, Group 1 assessed Speaker 4 lower than Group 2 in terms of the level of spoken English. In addition, 63.6% of Listeners in Group 1, as opposed to 28.6% of Listeners in Group 2, accurately assumed that Speaker 4 was a lower-class representative (Figure 3.39 and 3.40).

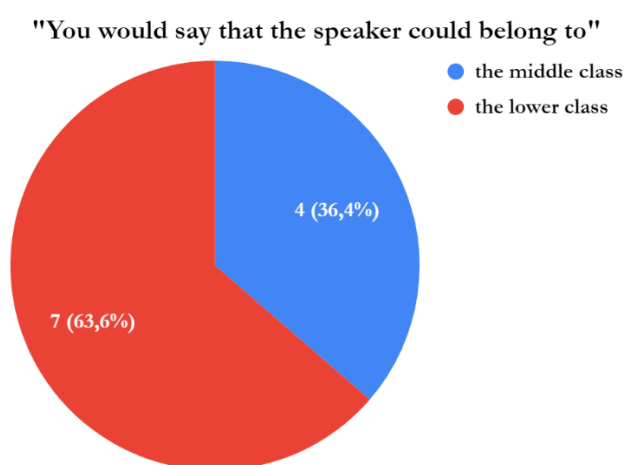


Figure 3.39. Social class assumptions for Speaker 4 in Group 1

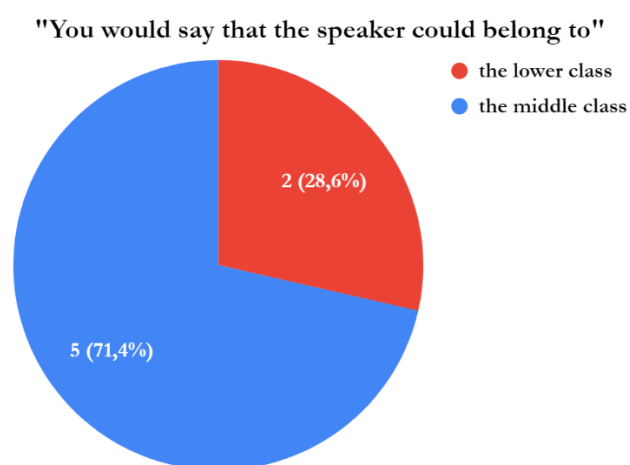


Figure 3.40. Social class assumptions for Speaker 4 in Group 2

Variable: nationality

According to the data analysis based on the Listeners' countries of origin, USA Listeners assessed the heaviness of the accent of Speaker 4 at 6.375 out of 10 whereas UK Listeners estimated it at 6.

Additionally, we contrasted the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 4 as given by USA Listeners and UK Listeners (Table 3.25).

Table 3.25

	USA Listeners	UK Listeners
intelligent	3.5	4
confident	2.875	3.67
unsuccessful	2.125	1.56
unambitious	2.5	1.56
Average:	3.44	4.14
trustworthy	3.75	3.78
sincere	3.75	4
unkind	2.25	1.11
unfriendly	2	1.22
Average:	3.81	4.36

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 4 by USA Listeners and UK Listeners

Curiously, USA Listeners assessed Speaker 4 lower than UK Listeners in terms of the level of spoken English. Moreover, 7 out of 8 Listeners from the USA accurately assumed that Speaker 4 belongs to the lower class, whereas 7 out of 9 Listeners from the UK deemed him to pertain to the middle class (Figure 3.41 and 3.42).

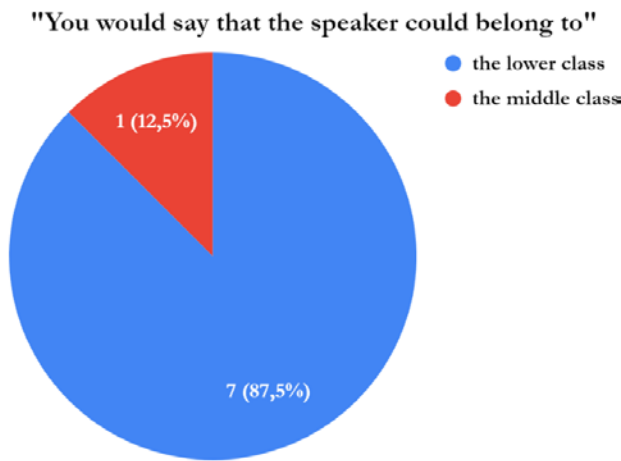


Figure 3.41. Social Class Assumptions for Speaker 4 among USA Listeners

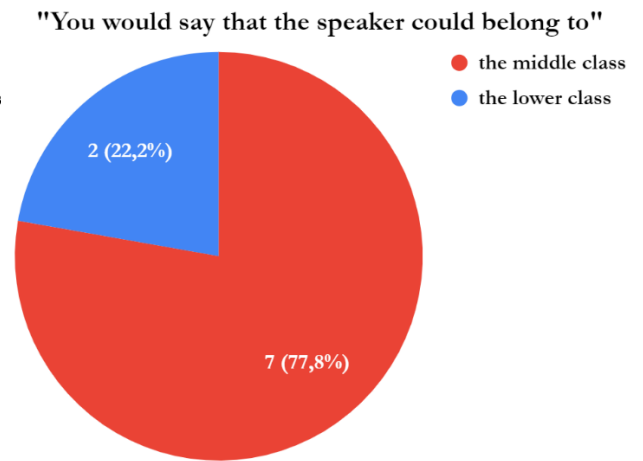


Figure 3.42. Social Class Assumptions for Speaker 4 among UK Listeners

Variable: gender

The calculations of speech accentedness ratings show that Female Group collectively estimated the accentedness of the speech of Speaker 4 at 5.25 whereas Male Group assessed it at 6.57 out of 10. We also compared the status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 4 provided by male and female Listeners (Table 3.26).

Table 3.26

	Female Group	Male Group
intelligent	4.25	3.64
confident	3.75	3.14
unsuccessful	1.25	2
unambitious	1.5	2.14
Average:	4.31	3.66
trustworthy	3.75	3.79
sincere	4	3.86
unkind	1	1.86
unfriendly	1	1.79
Average:	4.44	4

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 4 by Female Group and Male Group

Curiously, 75% of female participants assumed that Speaker 4 belongs to the middle class, whereas 57.1% of male participants accurately deemed him to pertain to the lower class (Figure 3.43 and 3.44).

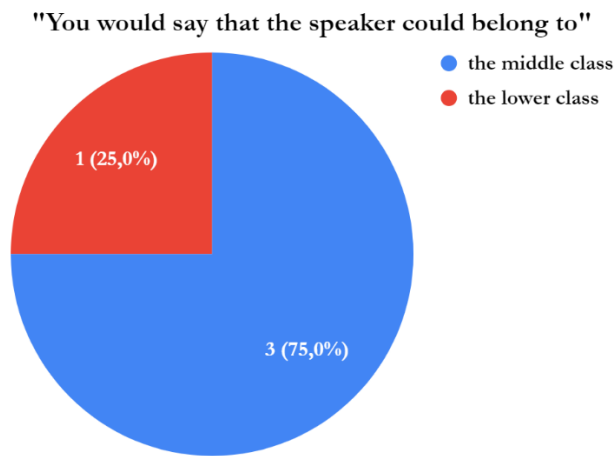


Figure 3.43. Social Class Assumptions for Speaker 4 in Female Group

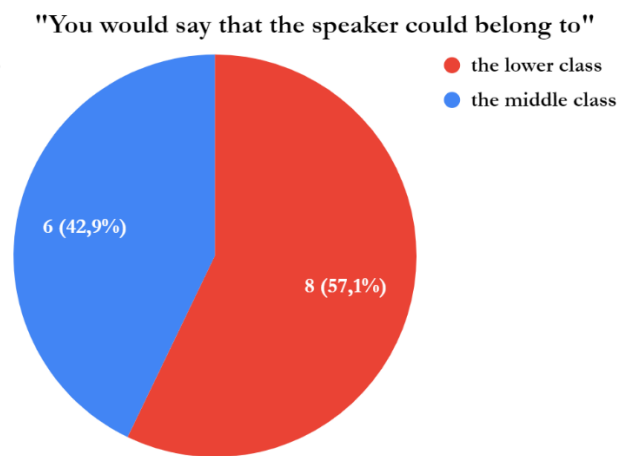


Figure 3.44. Social Class Assumptions for Speaker 4 in Male Group

Additionally, female Listeners assessed the level of spoken English of Speaker 4 higher than male Listeners (Figure 3.45 and 3.46).

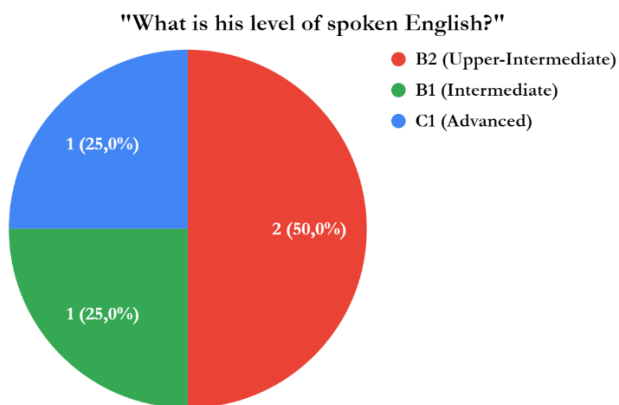


Figure 3.45. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 4 in Female Group

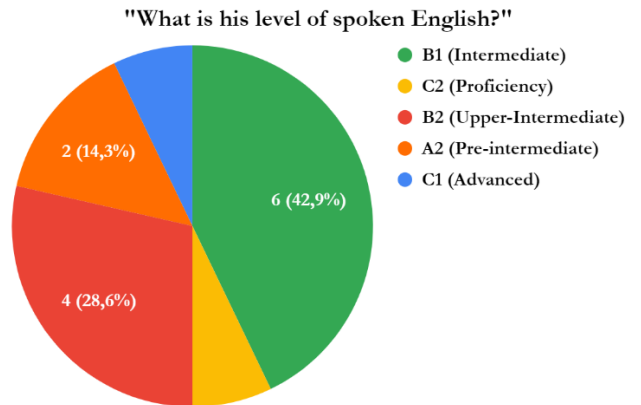


Figure 3.46. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 4 in Male Group

Variable: knowledge of Spanish language

Having compared speech accentedness ratings provided by Listeners of Spanish Group and Non-Spanish Group, we revealed that the former collectively estimated the accent of Speaker 4 as strong at 6.125 out of 10, whereas the latter estimated it at 6.4.

Contrasting Listeners' status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 4 based on this variable, we obtained the following results for Spanish Group and Non-Spanish Group (Table 3.27).

Table 3.27

	Spanish Group	Non-Spanish Group
intelligent	3.375	4.1
confident	2.75	3.7
unsuccessful	2.125	1.6
unambitious	2.625	1.5
Average:	3.34	4.175
trustworthy	3.875	3.7
sincere	4	3.8
unkind	2	1.4
unfriendly	1.875	1.4
Average:	4	4.175

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 4 by Spanish Group and Non-Spanish Group

Curiously, 7 Listeners out of 8 from Spanish Group correctly assumed that Speaker 4 belongs to the lower class, whereas 8 out of 10 Listeners from Non-Spanish Group suggested that he could pertain to the middle class (Figure 3.47 and 3.48).

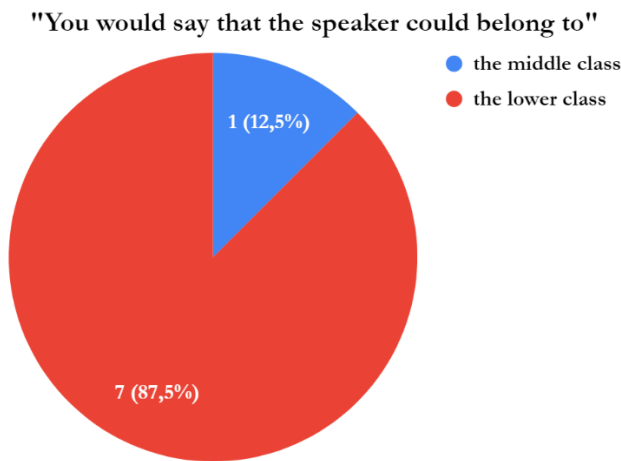


Figure 3.47. Social Class Assumptions for Speaker 4 within Spanish Group

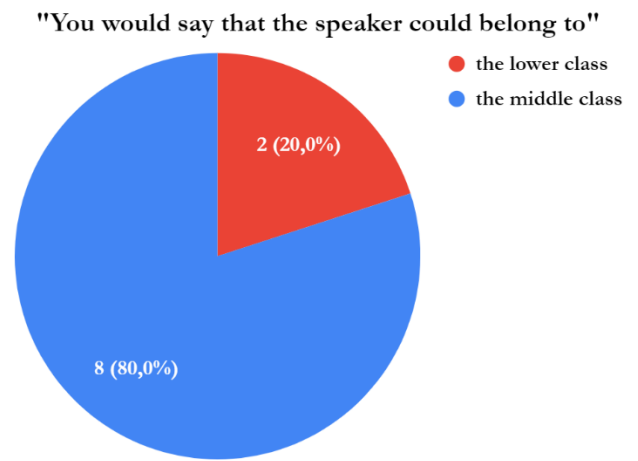


Figure 3.48. Social Class Assumptions for Speaker 4 within Non-Spanish Group

Additionally, Listeners in Non-Spanish Group assessed the level of spoken English of Speaker 4 higher than Listeners in Spanish Group (Figure 3.49 and 3.50).

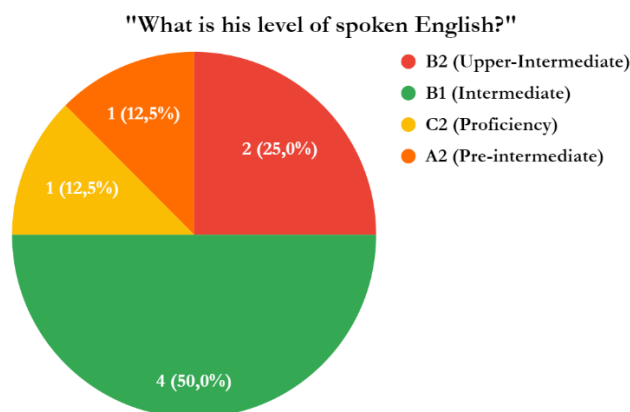


Figure 3.49. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 4 in Spanish Group

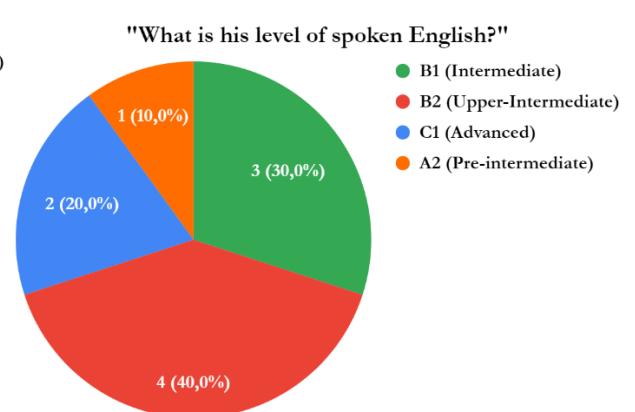


Figure 3.50. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 4 in Non-Spanish Group

Variable: age

Considering the speech accentedness ratings, Younger Group estimated the heaviness of the accent of Speaker 4 at 6 out of 10, whereas Older Group assessed it at 6.625.

The status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 4 based on this variable were contrasted as well (Table 3.28).

Table 3.28

	Younger Group	Older Group
intelligent	3.6	4
confident	3.2	3.375
unsuccessful	1.8	1.875
unambitious	2	2
Average:	3.75	3.875
trustworthy	3.7	3.875
sincere	4	3.75
unkind	1.3	2.125
unfriendly	1.3	2
Average:	4.275	3.875

Status and solidarity evaluations of Speaker 4 by Younger Group and Older Group

Curiously, 50% of Listeners in Younger Group assessed the level of spoken English of Speaker 4 as B2 (Upper-Intermediate), whereas 50% of Listeners in Older Group estimated it at B1 (Intermediate). However, the other half of younger Listeners assessed it as B1 (Intermediate) and A2 (Pre-intermediate) in contrast to Older Group, where another 50% of Listeners opted for B2 (Upper-Intermediate), C1 (Advanced), and C2 (Proficiency) levels (Figure 3.51 and 3.52). Subsequently, older Listeners assessed Speaker 4 higher.

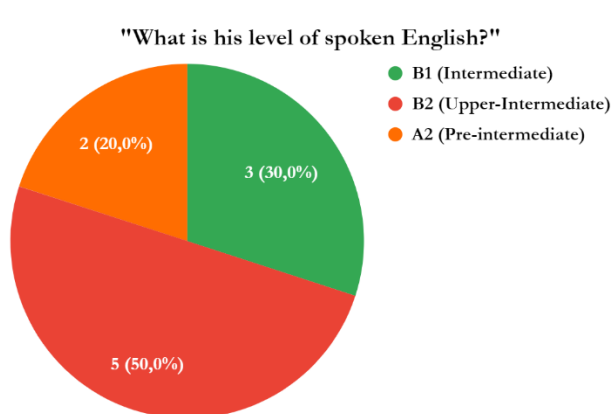


Figure 3.51. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 4 in Younger Group

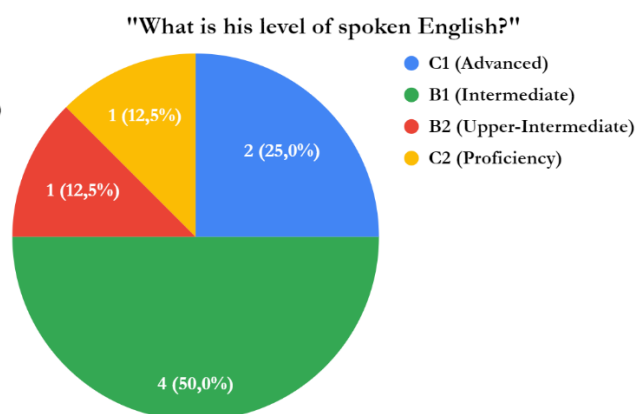


Figure 3.52. Spoken English level assumptions for Speaker 4 in Older Group

3.4.5. Discussion

Listeners provided detailed feedback on the markers of the accent heaviness of all 4 Speakers. Whereas some listeners identified specific non-native features that were unique to each speaker, the features listed below were the most common accentedness markers for all of them:

- non-native pronunciation of certain consonants, such as the voiced alveolar trill, the harsh /r/, soft /l/, soft /s/, and /p/ sounds;
- unusual pronunciation of vowels in general, e.g., /u/, /ʌ/;
- omission of consonants at the ends of words;
- unusual stress patterns;
- non-native intonation patterns;
- non-native choice of vocabulary;
- grammar mistakes, such as unusual sentence structure and the misuse of singular and plural nouns.

Additionally, listeners mentioned that the accent of Speaker 1 sounded potentially Spanish or English, and Speaker 3 talked in an American or Slavic manner.

In contrast, Speaker 2 had a more pronounced Spanish accent than the others. Speaker 4 was not identified as having a particular non-native accent.

Curiously, Listeners identified the incorrect realization of the /θ/ and /ð/ sounds in the speech of Speaker 3 and Speaker 4, who speak in Mexican Spanish, which does not have equivalents in its sound system. Moreover, Listener 16 correctly identified Speaker 1 and Speaker 2 as Spanish.

It is worth noting that Listeners were asked to comment on the phonological and pronunciation features of the non-native speakers' accents. However, some Listeners mentioned vocabulary and grammar mistakes, identifying them as markers of accentedness. It signifies that we accidentally discovered that native speakers perceive the concept of a foreign accent as a whole (including grammar, vocabulary as well as anything unusual) rather than pronunciation alone.

In continuation, we will demonstrate the results of the Perception Study along with the tested hypotheses outlined in section 2.2.2.

Hypothesis 1

Our first hypothesis that native speakers do not differentiate between Spanish- and Mexican-accented speech was proven in the data analysis process. Since Listeners were presented with the audio recordings of the non-native speech only, they had to rely on the accent features and their previous experience to identify the speakers' countries of origin. These findings suggest that English native speakers' attitudes towards foreign accents are influenced mainly by their past interactions with non-native speakers of English.

Hypothesis 2

Our following hypothesis was “Non-native English speakers would estimate their level of English and accent lower than native speakers.” We aimed to test the results of the 2009 study by Ostojic [74], which indicated that non-native English speakers tend to assess their accented speech more critically than native speakers. Within the present study, we disproved Hypothesis 2 since Listeners mainly evaluated

the non-native speakers' speech at one or two levels lower than they indicated within the Self-Evaluation Study.

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis read, "Those native speakers who travel more or have the experience of living outside their home country would be less judgmental towards accented speech." While such native speakers mainly assessed the heaviness of the non-native speakers' accents lower than those native speakers who have not lived abroad before, the status and solidarity evaluations the latter provided were also lower. It signifies that native speakers who have previously lived abroad assess potential personality traits more negatively than others, inferring only from accents. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 can be considered disproven.

Hypothesis 4

We have previously hypothesized that American native speakers would demonstrate more negative attitudes than others due to adverse media representation of Mexican migrants in the USA. In line with the obtained and analyzed data, in most cases, the native speakers from the USA did not assume that the non-native speakers were from Mexico.

Nevertheless, USA Listeners evaluated the heaviness of the non-native speakers' accents higher than UK Listeners in all 4 cases. Furthermore, the status and solidarity evaluations also demonstrated that Listeners from the USA attributed lower values than Listeners from the UK to the non-native speakers' potential personality traits.

In addition, American native speakers attributed higher social classes to Spanish speakers than British native speakers. In contrast, the speakers from Mexico were often considered lower-class representatives by USA Listeners, unlike UK Listeners. Thus, we consider Hypothesis 4 proven; however, additional investigation is needed for more conclusive inferences.

Hypothesis 5

Our last hypothesis was that “less accented speech would be correlated with the higher social status and competence levels, whereas more accented speech would be associated with the lower social status and higher solidarity levels.” We have indeed observed such a correlation: Speaker 1, who was given the lowest assessment of accentedness, scored higher in the status and competence evaluation and obtained a slightly lower result in the solidarity dimension. The opposite results were detected for other speakers who received higher assessments of accentedness. However, they are not proportionate to the status and solidarity evaluation values (Table X). So, based on the results of our study, Hypothesis 5 was proven.

Table 3.29

	Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3	Speaker 4
Accentedness	4.67	7.39	5.94	6.28
Status	4.19	4.01	3.85	3.81
Solidarity	4.08	4.11	4.06	4.1

Correlation of the status and solidarity evaluations with the heaviness of the accent

Regarding other perspectives examined within the study, we also noticed exciting tendencies. For instance, compared to males, female native speakers provided lower accent heaviness assessments and higher status and solidarity evaluations. They also deemed the speakers to belong to a higher class than the one he actually pertains to. It suggests that women may be less judgmental towards foreign accents.

Another perspective taken was the influence of the knowledge of Spanish language on the native speakers’ attitudes towards Spanish and Mexican speakers. The findings were mostly inconsistent to indicate any clear tendencies; however, the differences in individual speakers’ evaluations by the two groups of Listeners were present and distinguishable.

The last aspect that we investigated was age of the native speakers. Unlike Reid et al. [79] who claimed that older listeners tend to be more positively biased towards

the speakers than younger listeners, we could not provide a conclusive proof to this statement. The status and solidarity evaluations of both younger and older Listeners were very similar to each other. The only prominent feature of the older participants is the higher assessment of the level of spoken English when compared to the younger participants. For more solid proof of the assumption, it is advisable to conduct a separate specialized investigation.

Conclusions to Chapter 3

This chapter focused on the analysis of data obtained from the Self-Evaluation and Perception Studies conducted with the present investigation as well as factors that could possibly influence the respondents while completing the questionnaire.

The Self-Evaluation Study tested two hypotheses concerning the self-perception of non-native speakers of their English accent and the amount of judgment they experience from native and non-native speakers based on their accents. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were both disproved. Moreover, the data collected from the Self-Evaluation Study revealed that non-native speakers of English are willing to speak English with others regardless of the way they perceive their own accents. This may be due to the fact that most of them are proud of having an accent, perceiving it as a part of their personality. These findings highlight the importance of embracing linguistic diversity and promoting language inclusivity in diverse social contexts.

In turn, the Perception Study investigated the markers of accentedness in the speech of 4 non-native English speakers (2 Spanish and 2 Mexican speakers) and analyzed the feedback provided by native English speakers who listened to their recordings. Listeners identified a range of accentedness features, including vocabulary and grammar mistakes, which suggests that native speakers do not perceive foreign accents based solely on pronunciation, but rather as a holistic concept.

The Perception Study tested five hypotheses concerning the perception of foreign accents by native speakers of English. The study disproved Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, while Hypotheses 4 and 5 were proven. Furthermore, a number of interesting

attitudinal tendencies based on gender, knowledge of Spanish language, and age of the native speakers were revealed. Even though the findings of the study greatly contribute to our understanding of the process and implications of foreign accent perception and experience-based attitude establishment towards non-native speakers, further research is needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the topic and to explore the mentioned issues in more detail, with larger sample sizes, and in different social contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study focused on the ways native English speakers perceive non-native accented English speech and the effects it can have on the status and solidarity evaluations provided by native speakers, i.e., how non-native accent shapes the native speakers' impressions about the status- and solidarity-related personality traits of the non-native speakers. It was accomplished in the process of investigating the correlation between the accentedness degree of Spanish-accented English speakers and their status and solidarity evaluations that required the fulfillment of several predetermined tasks.

The first task of the study dealt with providing a detailed description of language attitude studies and elaborating on the concept of foreign accent in English. Therefore, this process involved a comprehensive review of the theoretical approaches to language attitude studies, their major categories, and measurement tools that facilitate data processing. Also, the peculiarities of accent perception research within the field of language attitude studies were mentioned, which provided valuable insight that attitudes may be triggered by linguistic features alone rather than by a conscious identification of group membership. Furthermore, the issues with ESL phonology were discussed, such as non-conforming sound systems of English and the native languages, pronunciation teaching methods, and curriculum limitations. The major factors that affect the comprehension of accented speech in general were also described along with the typical features of Spanish-accented English.

The second and third tasks were to prepare and distribute two sets of questionnaires that would be used for the Self-Evaluation and the Perception Studies. After the extensive review of similar prior research, the questionnaire for the Self-Evaluation Study was assembled and presented to non-native speakers for completion. Based on the obtained data afterward, the second set of questionnaires was created for the Perception Study, considering the procedures of the prior research. Finally, the filled-out forms were collected and prepared for analysis.

The fourth task of the study involved choosing the pertinent method and tools for the analysis of the obtained non-numeric responses and numeric evaluations. In

order to decide on the appropriate methods, reliable sources on similar or adjacent topics were consulted, and after a series of considerable contemplations, the following methods were chosen for application within the present study: sampling (for collecting materials in the Self-Evaluation Study to be used within the Perception Study), questionnaires, method of observation (mostly, for initial stages of data analysis), qualitative data analysis (coding and content analysis for processing of the non-numeric data), quantitative data analysis (descriptive statistics and inferential statistics for numeric data), Google Excel (as a platform for carrying out the accurate automatic calculations, and Google Forms (as a platform facilitating data collection process).

The last task of the present study was to prove or disprove the hypotheses formulated for both Self-Evaluation and Perception Studies. The two hypotheses set within the Self-Evaluation Study were eventually disproven. Hypothesis 1 was proven false since, in line with the data obtained from the four non-native English speakers within the study, it may be inferred that the self-perception of their own accents does not correspond to the amount of judgement non-native English speakers observe towards them from others because of their accent. Hypothesis 2 was not proven due to the same reason, the absence of identifiable tendencies and patterns, and the findings did not indicate that non-native speakers with prominent accents tend to face increased scrutiny and judgement based on the accented nature of their speech, in contrast to native speakers or non-native speakers with near-native pronunciation.

As to the hypotheses put forward within Perception Study, 3 of them were proven, and the other 2 were disproven. Hypothesis 1 that “native speakers do not differentiate between Spanish- and Mexican-accented speech” was proven to be true. These results suggest that native English speakers’ attitudes towards foreign accents are primarily shaped by their previous interactions with non-native English speakers.

Hypothesis 2, “non-native English speakers would estimate their level of English and accent lower than native speakers”, was disproven as native speakers tended to evaluate the non-native speakers’ speech at a level one or two notches lower

than what the non-native speakers themselves had indicated in the Self-Evaluation Study.

Hypothesis 3 that “Those native speakers who travel more or have the experience of living outside their home country would be less judgmental towards accented speech” was also proven false since the native speakers who have previously lived abroad assessed potential personality traits of non-native speakers more negatively than others, inferring only from accents.

Hypothesis 4, “American native speakers would demonstrate more negative attitudes than others due to adverse media representation of Mexican migrants in the USA”, was proven. In line with the obtained data, native speakers from the USA generally did not assume that the non-native speakers were from Mexico. However, USA Listeners rated the heaviness of the non-native speakers’ accents higher compared to UK Listeners in all four cases. Additionally, compared to UK Listeners, USA Listeners attributed lower values to the non-native speakers’ potential personality traits in terms of status and solidarity evaluations. Moreover, American native speakers tended to associate higher social classes with Spanish speakers than British native speakers. Conversely, USA Listeners often perceived speakers from Mexico as lower-class representatives, unlike UK Listeners.

Hypothesis 5 that read “less accented speech would be correlated with the higher social status and competence levels, whereas more accented speech would be associated with the lower social status and higher solidarity levels” was proven. The findings showed a correlation between the assessment of accentedness and the evaluations of status and competence. Speaker 1, perceived as having the least accented speech, received higher ratings in the status and competence evaluation, while the opposite pattern was observed for speakers with higher levels of perceived accentedness. However, the correlation between accentedness and the status and solidarity evaluation values was not proportionate.

Among other observations of the study, it was found that female native speakers provided lower assessments of accent heaviness and higher status and solidarity

evaluations compared to males. They also perceived the speakers as belonging to a higher social class. This suggests that women may be less judgmental towards foreign accents. Another perspective, the influence of knowledge of the Spanish language on native speakers' attitudes, provided inconclusive results but revealed distinguishable differences in individual evaluations of non-native speakers between the two groups of listeners. Regarding age, the study did not provide conclusive evidence for the claim, in line with prior studies, that older listeners are more positively biased toward accented English speakers. However, older participants did display higher assessments of spoken English proficiency of non-native speakers compared to younger participants.

The case of the 4 non-native speakers from Spain and Mexico and 18 native speakers from the US, the UK, and Canada who participated in the present study suggests that Spanish-accented speech does affect the attitudes of native English speakers towards them. However, various aspects of the obtained and processed data indicate a need for further research that would involve more subjects and, thus, broaden the corpus of data on the topic.

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- 97.1 audio sample of spontaneous English speech. Speaker 1. The Self-Evaluation Study. URL: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Fd8PxrnmEhwfORv6v1ycccPPjq28dnN/view?usp=sharing>
- 98.1 audio sample of spontaneous English speech. Speaker 2. The Self-Evaluation Study. URL: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OCDCsSFbSiFRc7jQ64d-pCqcG9YHZRll/view?usp=share_link
- 99.1 audio sample of spontaneous English speech. Speaker 3. The Self-Evaluation Study. URL: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sdLdl0JHnOcKOCjMVfHzcjYNDEkhR7Cv/view?usp=share_link
100. 1 audio sample of spontaneous English speech. Speaker 4. The Self-Evaluation Study. URL: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tBSJ8zri0qorpk4rMwXlzWUccsAOk8jd/view?usp=share_link

APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

Questionnaire elaborated for the Self-Evaluation Study

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes
- No

Part 1: Speaking Part

For this part of the survey, you will be asked to record yourself speaking spontaneously. In total, you have to submit 1 recording.

Please ensure that your recordings are clear and free of any background noise or distractions. This will help ensure the accuracy of the analysis of your accent.

- Record yourself speaking spontaneously in English. Follow the instructions below.

Think about your hobbies and interests, anything you like doing in your free time in general. You are welcome to describe your perfect day)

While speaking, please consider the following requirements so that it does not affect the results of this study:

- *Do not specify your name or place of origin.*
- *Do not mention your educational background or your current job.*
- *Keep your recordings under 2-3 minutes total.*

Tip: Imagine that you are speaking to someone in real life - speak without preparation and do not pay attention to any mistakes you could make. Your goal is to share the information :)

Part 2: Personal Information

Please provide the following details that will contribute to a better understanding of your background. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

1. Are you
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other _____
2. How old are you?

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Primary school
- Secondary school
- High school
- College
- University
- Postgraduate
- Other _____

5. What is your current occupation?

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the lower class
- the middle class
- the upper class

Part 3: English Proficiency

English proficiency is an important factor in the study of accents. In this section, I will ask you a few questions about your level of spoken English and your language learning experiences. Your responses to these questions will help to better understand the relationship between language proficiency and accent perception.

1. What is your level of spoken English?

- A1 (Beginner)
- A2 (Pre-intermediate)
- B1 (Intermediate)
- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
- C1 (Advanced)
- C2 (Proficiency)
- Other _____

2. When have you started learning English?

- Kindergarten

- Primary school
 - Secondary school
 - High school
 - College
 - University
 - Postgraduate
 - Other _____
3. How often do you speak English with others?
- Never
 - Occasionally (e.g., a few times a year)
 - Sometimes (e.g., a few times a month)
 - Often (e.g., a few times a week)
 - Always
 - Other _____

Part 4: Self-Perception of the Accent

For the next 6 questions, you will be asked to select the answers that best reflect your attitudes towards your accent in English. Your responses will help to better understand how speakers perceive their accents and how this might affect their communication with others.

1. In my opinion, I have a strong accent while speaking English.
 - Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
2. I would like to get rid of my accent.
 - Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
3. I am proud of my accent. It is a part of my identity.
 - Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral

- Agree
 - Strongly agree
4. I am not willing to communicate in English because of my accent.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
5. While speaking to a native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
6. While speaking to a non-native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neutral
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! Your contribution to my study is greatly appreciated and will help to better understand the relationship between accents, language proficiency, and social backgrounds.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavors! :)

Questionnaire elaborated for the Perception Study

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes
- No

Part 1: Personal Information

Please provide the following details that will contribute to a better understanding of your background. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

1. Are you

- Male
- Female
- Other _____

2. How old are you?

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Primary school
- Secondary school
- High school
- College
- University
- Postgraduate
- Other _____

5. What is your current occupation?

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the lower class
- the middle class
- the upper class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Never
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often
- Other_____

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- Yes
- No
- Other_____

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- Other_____

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

In this part of the survey, you will listen to a recording of Speaker 1 speaking spontaneously in English. You will be asked to rate the heaviness of their accent, as well as guess their country of origin and job based on their accent. You will also be asked to rate the speaker's personality traits.

Your responses will help to understand how people perceive different accents and how this can affect their social identities!

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- A1 (Beginner)
- A2 (Pre-intermediate)
- B1 (Intermediate)
- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
- C1 (Advanced)
- C2 (Proficiency)
- Other _____

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the lower class
- the middle class
- the upper class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					
confident					
unsuccessful					
unambitious					
trustworthy					
sincere					
unkind					
unfriendly					

In this part of the survey, you will listen to a recording of Speaker 2 speaking spontaneously in English.

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- A1 (Beginner)
- A2 (Pre-intermediate)
- B1 (Intermediate)
- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
- C1 (Advanced)
- C2 (Proficiency)
- Other _____

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the lower class
- the middle class
- the upper class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

1	2	3	4	5
(not at all)				(very much)

intelligent					
confident					
unsuccessful					
unambitious					
trustworthy					
sincere					
unkind					
unfriendly					

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

In this part of the survey, you will listen to a recording of Speaker 3 speaking spontaneously in English.

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- A1 (Beginner)
- A2 (Pre-intermediate)
- B1 (Intermediate)
- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
- C1 (Advanced)
- C2 (Proficiency)
- Other_____

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the lower class
- the middle class
- the upper class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					
confident					
unsuccessful					
unambitious					
trustworthy					
sincere					
unkind					
unfriendly					

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

In this part of the survey, you will listen to a recording of Speaker 4, the last one, speaking spontaneously in English.

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- A1 (Beginner)
- A2 (Pre-intermediate)
- B1 (Intermediate)
- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
- C1 (Advanced)
- C2 (Proficiency)
- Other _____

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the lower class
- the middle class
- the upper class

7. Please rate the speaker’s potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “very much”

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					
confident					
unsuccessful					
unambitious					
trustworthy					
sincere					
unkind					
unfriendly					

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! Your contribution to my study is greatly appreciated and will help to better understand the relationship between accents and social backgrounds. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors! :)

Completed questionnaire by Speaker 1

Spain_31

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Speaking Part

Submitted audio recording:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Fd8PxrnmEhwfORv6v1ycccPPjq28dnN/view?usp=sharing>

Part 2: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

31

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Pamplona, Spain

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- University

5. What is your current occupation?

Communications Manager

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

Part 3: English Proficiency

1. What is your level of spoken English?

- C2 (Proficiency)

2. When have you started learning English?

- Other: At home as a kid because my dad is English

3. How often do you speak English with others?

- Often (e.g., a few times a week)

Part 4: Self-Perception of the Accent

1. In my opinion, I have a strong accent while speaking English.
 - Neutral
2. I would like to get rid of my accent.
 - Strongly disagree
3. I am proud of my accent. It is a part of my identity.
 - Strongly agree
4. I am not willing to communicate in English because of my accent.
 - Strongly disagree
5. While speaking to a native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.
 - Disagree
6. While speaking to a non-native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.
 - Agree

Completed questionnaire by Speaker 2

Spain_53

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Speaking Part

Submitted audio recording: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OCDCsSFbSiFRc7jQ64d-pCqcG9YHZRll/view?usp=share_link

Part 2: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

53

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Barcelona (Spain)

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Postgraduate

5. What is your current occupation?

Company Founder and CEO

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the upper class

Part 3: English Proficiency

1. What is your level of spoken English?

- C2 (Proficiency)

2. When have you started learning English?

- Primary school

3. How often do you speak English with others?

- Often (e.g., a few times a week)

Part 4: Self-Perception of the Accent

1. In my opinion, I have a strong accent while speaking English.
 - Agree
2. I would like to get rid of my accent.
 - Strongly agree
3. I am proud of my accent. It is a part of my identity.
 - Disagree
4. I am not willing to communicate in English because of my accent.
 - Strongly disagree
5. While speaking to a native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.
 - Agree
6. While speaking to a non-native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.
 - Strongly disagree

Completed questionnaire by Speaker 3

Mexico_30

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Speaking Part

Submitted audio recording:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sdLdl0JHnOcKOCjMVfHzcjYNDEkhR7Cv/view?usp=share_link

Part 2: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

30

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Zacatecas, Mexico

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Postgraduate

5. What is your current occupation?

Freelancer

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

Part 3: English Proficiency

4. What is your level of spoken English?

- C2 (Proficiency)

5. When have you started learning English?

- Secondary school

6. How often do you speak English with others?

- Always

Part 4: Self-Perception of the Accent

7. In my opinion, I have a strong accent while speaking English.
 - Neutral
8. I would like to get rid of my accent.
 - Strongly disagree
9. I am proud of my accent. It is a part of my identity.
 - Agree
10. I am not willing to communicate in English because of my accent.
 - Strongly disagree
11. While speaking to a native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.
 - Strongly disagree
12. While speaking to a non-native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.
 - Strongly disagree

Completed questionnaire by Speaker 4

Mexico_36

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Speaking Part

Submitted audio recording:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tBSJ8zri0qorpk4rMwXlzWUccsAOk8jd/view?usp=share_link

Part 2: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

36

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Tulcingo de Valle, Tulcingo, Puebla, Mexico

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Postgraduate

5. What is your current occupation?

Worker

6. You would say that you rather belong to

the lower class

Part 3: English Proficiency

7. What is your level of spoken English?

- C1 (Advanced)

8. When have you started learning English?

- College

9. How often do you speak English with others?

- Often (e.g., a few times a week)

Part 4: Self-Perception of the Accent

13. In my opinion, I have a strong accent while speaking English.
- Neutral
14. I would like to get rid of my accent.
- Disagree
15. I am proud of my accent. It is a part of my identity.
- Agree
16. I am not willing to communicate in English because of my accent.
- Strongly disagree
17. While speaking to a native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.
- Neutral
18. While speaking to a non-native speaker of English, I feel judged for my accent.
- Neutral

Completed questionnaire by Listener 1

UK_F_59

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Female

2. How old are you?

59

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Bangor, UK

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- University

5. What is your current occupation?

Real estate agent

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

British standard

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

Welsh

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Very often

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- Yes

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- No

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 **2** 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Change in pronunciation of some sounds

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ C1 (Advanced)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

France or Spain

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Tour guide

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident					✓
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Sounds merged and changed, strange intonation, odd stress in some words

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Spain

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Truck driver, builder

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the lower class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious				✓	
trustworthy		✓			
sincere			✓		
unkind		✓			
unfriendly	✓				

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Incorrect pronunciation of th, 'u' in 'culture'

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

India or Pakistan

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Teacher

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind		✓			
unfriendly	✓				

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 **4** 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Pronunciation of 's', very nasal speech, soft l

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - C1 (Advanced)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Italy, Portugal, Spain

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Accountant

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Completed questionnaire by Listener 2

USA_M_30

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

30

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

New Edinburg, Arkansas, USA

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Postgraduate

5. What is your current occupation?

Teacher

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the lower class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Non-standard, I'm from the south of the US which has a unique accent

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

Spanish, Mandarin

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Occasionally

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- Yes

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- No

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **9** 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Doesn't always hit the 'ing' or the ending 's' when needed. "going around the world".

What is their level of spoken English?

- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

3. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Europe? France? Belgium?

4. What would you say is their current occupation?

teacher

5. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

6. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **10** Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

harsh/deep vowels

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Europe. France? Austria?

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

doctor

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the upper class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind			✓		
unfriendly			✓		

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

'all type of readings'. how he pronounced 'culture'.

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ B1 (Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Europe. France? Sweden?

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

student

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

elongated vowels, especially in words like 'to' and 'go'. mispronounced 'superhero'. rolled his r in 'genre'

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B1 (Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

slavic? Ukraine, Russia, Polish?

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

student

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the lower class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident		✓			
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious			✓		
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Completed questionnaire by Listener 3

UK_F_20

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Female

2. How old are you?

20

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Birmingham, UK

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- High school

5. What is your current occupation?

University undergraduate student

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Standard

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

Russian, French, Spanish

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Sometimes

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- No

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Sometimes

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 **4** 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

The "r" sound is slightly hard; he always makes a slight pause on the "ch" sound and drags it out a little.

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C1 (Advanced)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Spain

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Manager/office job

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident					✓
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Some vowel sounds such as "o" "a" are pronounced like "oh" and "ah"; Missing consonants at the ends of words such as d; occasionally missing short connective words; "d" in the middle of the word pronounced much softer, closer to "th"; Sometimes adding extra vowel sound at ends of words to connect them

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Italy

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

I don't know

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the upper class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind	✓				
unfriendly		✓			

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Missing consonants at end of words; Stretches out certain sounds such as "r" in an American fashion

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Romania

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Factory worker

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the lower class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident			✓		
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Pronounces "s" soft all the time (it is sometimes a "z" sound), occasionally "th" is pronounced "t" or "d"; Some words have wrong stresses (e.g. literature was stressed on second syllable)

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ B1 (Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Denmark

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Bus driver

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the lower class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident			✓		
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious			✓		
trustworthy				✓	
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Completed questionnaire by Listener 4

UK_M_21

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

21

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

London, UK

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- High school

5. What is your current occupation?

third-year maths undergraduate

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

standard for london

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

basic mandarin

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Occasionally

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- Yes

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Sometimes

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

the ʊ əʊ and oo sounds particularly

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Dutch e.g. Netherlands?

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

dk

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident				✓	
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious				✓	
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

consonant 's' is not clear, ee and i are particularly off

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Cyprus

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

no way of guessing

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent		✓			
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious				✓	
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

moderately americanised; incorrectly pronounced vowels

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B1 (Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

dk

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

dk

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent		✓			
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious				✓	
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

vowels

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Israel

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

dk

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious			✓		
trustworthy			✓		
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Completed questionnaire by Listener 5

USA_M_40

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

40

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Los Angeles, California

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- University

5. What is your current occupation?

Entrepreneur

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the upper class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Neutral American accent

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

Spanish B1, Italian A1, Russian <A1, Thai ~200 words

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Very often

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- Yes

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Sometimes

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Yes to the above examples

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ C2 (Proficiency)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

England

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

I would guess a working professional. Maybe an accountant or a white collar employee.

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident				✓	
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious				✓	
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Pronouncing English letters with their native language sounding equivalent letters

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Spain

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Businesses owner

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the upper class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy			✓		
sincere				✓	
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Some stress patterns, intonation, small grammar mistakes, and unusual word choices and sentence structure

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Eastern European, maybe Romanian?

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Student

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the lower class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious				✓	
trustworthy				✓	
sincere			✓		
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Lots of pausing to think of words, lack of vocabulary, but not heavily accented with sounds.

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B1 (Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Ukraine, maybe Poland

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Student

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the lower class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious			✓		
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Completed questionnaire by Listener 6

UK_F_24

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Female

2. How old are you?

24

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Leeds, the UK

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- University

5. What is your current occupation?

UX-designer

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Yorkshire accent, pretty standard in the North of England :D

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

-

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Sometimes

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- No

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Other: Very rarely

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable **1** 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Hard to say

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C1 (Advanced)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Some sort of Scandi country like Sweden or Denmark

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Paternal leave?

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident					✓
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Soft “L” sound

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Somewhere in South America?

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

?

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker’s potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “very much”

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident					✓
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker’s accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

?

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Eastern European country

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

?

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident					✓
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

?

3. What is their level of spoken English?
- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Germany or the Netherlands?

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Maybe some office worker

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
- the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Completed questionnaire by Listener 7

USA_M_41

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

41

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

SF, CA, USA

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- University

5. What is your current occupation?

Self Employed

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Standard USA

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

Mandarin, and a bit of Spanish and Russian.

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Very often

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- Yes

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Yes

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Slang words, intonation, stress patterns. But he's 90% understandable so that's all that matters. It's not a negative or bad accent.

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C2 (Proficiency)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

South Africa or Holland

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Business

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident					✓
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy					✓
sincere					✓
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

All, specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ C2 (Proficiency)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Spain or South America

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

There's no way to answer this.

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious			✓		
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

All - specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C2 (Proficiency)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Portugal or Brazil?

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

There's no way to answer this without a wild guess.

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the lower class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious			✓		
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind			✓		
unfriendly			✓		

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

All =- specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - C2 (Proficiency)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Somewhere in Europe

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Guessing.

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the lower class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious			✓		
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind			✓		
unfriendly			✓		

Completed questionnaire by Listener 8

CA_M_56

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

56

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Canada

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Postgraduate

5. What is your current occupation?

Librarian

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Standard

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

German French

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Sometimes

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- Yes

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Sometimes

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

intonation

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Unsure

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Teacher

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind		✓			
unfriendly				✓	

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Stress patterns and pronunciation

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 ■ B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Southern Europe

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Unsure

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 ■ the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Stress patterns

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - B1 (Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

unsure

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

unsure

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Stress patterns and pronunciation

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B1 (Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

unsure

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

unsure

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident			✓		
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Completed questionnaire by Listener 9

USA_F_41

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Female

2. How old are you?

41

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Dubuque, Iowa, USA

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Postgraduate

5. What is your current occupation?

Teacher

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Standard, Midwestern U.S.

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

Spanish, Russian

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Sometimes

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- No

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- No

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

vowel sounds

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C2 (Proficiency)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Middle East, perhaps Iran

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Computer Programmer

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident					✓
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy					✓
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

stress patterns, sound of r, vowel sounds

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ C1 (Advanced)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Spain

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Professor

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy					✓
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 **4** 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

th sound, stress of function words

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C1 (Advanced)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Spain

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Teacher

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy					✓
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

stress patterns, lack of linking, difficulty with some consonant clusters

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Spain

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Midlevel employee at business

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy					✓
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Completed questionnaire by Listener 10

UK_M_29

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

29

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Chatteris, Cambridgeshire, England

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Postgraduate

5. What is your current occupation?

Gallery Attendant

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Standard. Southern English

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

N/A

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Occasionally

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- Yes

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- No

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

A bit too much reposition and the stresses on the word "something"

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ C2 (Proficiency)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Scandinavian

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Academic

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident					✓
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

The choice of words wasn't that of a native speaker, also the use of "umm" then speaking

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C1 (Advanced)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Germany

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

IT manager

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

The word “around” stuck out. Also the stress pattern was off.

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C2 (Proficiency)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Dutch

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Runs a coffee shop

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker’s potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “very much”

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident				✓	
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker’s accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Choice of words and repetition

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Afghanistan

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Cab driver

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the lower class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident				✓	
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy				✓	
sincere					✓
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Completed questionnaire by Listener 11

UK_M_24

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

24

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Wales, Uk

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- University

5. What is your current occupation?

Unemployed

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Welsh accent

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

English, Welsh

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Sometimes

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- No

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- No

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Strange sounds pronunciation

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Europe

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Banking sphere

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy	✓				
sincere			✓		
unkind		✓			
unfriendly	✓				

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Can't say

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Europe/South Europe

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Gardener

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the lower class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident		✓			
unsuccessful				✓	
unambitious			✓		
trustworthy		✓			
sincere				✓	
unkind			✓		
unfriendly	✓				

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Some sounds pronunciation

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Italy

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Services sphere

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident			✓		
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 **4** 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Pauses and intonation

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Greece

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Don't know

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly		✓			

Completed questionnaire by Listener 12

UK_M_23

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

23

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Bangor, Wales(UK)

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- University

5. What is your current occupation?

No occupation currently

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

English accent is non-standard

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

Welsh

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Sometimes

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- No

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Sometimes

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

specific sounds & intonation

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ B1 (Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Poland

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Sales associate

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident			✓		
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

specific sounds

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ B1 (Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Switzerland

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Engineer

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

specific sounds, intonation of some words

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ B1 (Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Czech Republic

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

History teacher

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident			✓		
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Specific sounds & intonation

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - A2 (Pre-intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Croatia

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Student

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident			✓		
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy				✓	
sincere			✓		
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Completed questionnaire by Listener 13

USA_M_27

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

27

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Boulder, USA

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- College

5. What is your current occupation?

English Teacher

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the lower class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Standard US

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

Spanish, Ukrainian, Russian, basic Czech

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Often

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- Yes

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Sometimes

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Slightly off standard, almost Scottish accent

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C1 (Advanced)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Scotland

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Business

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious				✓	
trustworthy					✓
sincere					✓
unkind			✓		
unfriendly	✓				

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Long sounds after /d/ and /h/, sounded as a nonnative Latin language speaker (Spanish or Portuguese)

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ C1 (Advanced)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Mexico

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Business

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident					✓
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy					✓
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Sounded potentially Slavic, different lengths of /u/ sound and trilled r, tendency to misuse singular and plural nouns

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Poland

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

No idea

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the lower class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Distinct accent, uses /d/ or r sounds for th, soft s sounds, different vowel lengths

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Ukraine

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

No idea

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the lower class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident			✓		
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious			✓		
trustworthy					✓
sincere				✓	
unkind		✓			
unfriendly	✓				

Completed questionnaire by Listener 14

USA_M_37

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

37

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Wichita kansas

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- College

5. What is your current occupation?

Soldier

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Standard

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

Spanish german

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Very often

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- Yes

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Sometimes

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Rs Ls and Ps

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B1 (Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

All over the world

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Soldier or NGO

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the upper class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident			✓		
unsuccessful				✓	
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy				✓	
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Rs Ls Ps

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 ■ B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Many places

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Ngo or soldier

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 ■ the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident				✓	
unsuccessful					✓
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy				✓	
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

R L P

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - C1 (Advanced)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Eastern europe

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Business man

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident					✓
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere				✓	
unkind		✓			
unfriendly	✓				

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Pronunciation

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - B1 (Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Far east europe

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Retail

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the lower class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident		✓			
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious			✓		
trustworthy				✓	
sincere			✓		
unkind				✓	
unfriendly				✓	

Completed questionnaire by Listener 15

UK_M_25

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

25

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Newport-on-Tay

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- University

5. What is your current occupation?

Graduate Planner

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Scottish (east coast)

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

French (very badly)

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Occasionally

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- Yes

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Sometimes

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

It was well spoken. Some words.

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B1 (Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Ukraine / eastern European

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Student

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident			✓		
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy	✓				
sincere	✓				
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Some words

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 ■ B1 (Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Eat

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Eastern european

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 ■ the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy				✓	
sincere	✓				
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Somw words

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - B1 (Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Student

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Student

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Some words

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - B1 (Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Eastern European (Ukrainian)

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Student

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy				✓	
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Completed questionnaire by Listener 16

UK_M_33

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

33

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Edinburgh, Scotland

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Postgraduate

5. What is your current occupation?

Youth Arts Worker

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Standard

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

None fluently

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Occasionally

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- No

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Sometimes

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 **6** 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

The way the pronounced certain words like "sport", "pairs" sounds interesting. So is the way they say "a lot" - has an interesting stress. And "travelling". They say "mountain" when I'd expect a native English speaker to say "mountains". I think he pronounces a lot of things like he's from northern England, but also the speech patterns and stresses remind me of Spanish people I have worked with.

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ C2 (Proficiency)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Spain

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

No idea

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident					✓
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy					✓
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				

unfriendly	✓				
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Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **9** 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Sounds much more spanish than the previous speaker but i still understood everything he said.

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C1 (Advanced)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Spain

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

No idea

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident					✓
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy					✓
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 **9** 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

They have an American twang to their accent, but in a way that is learnt rather than naturally American. The way they pronounced "hobbies" was interesting and their grammar was slightly off but still totally understandable.

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C1 (Advanced)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Eastern Europe somewhere

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

No idea

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy					✓
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Some words were pronounced interestingly like movies and photos. One phrase i had trouble understanding at the beginning, something was important to his life.

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C1 (Advanced)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Maybe Poland

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

No idea

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy					✓
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Completed questionnaire by Listener 17

USA_M_23

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

23

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Murphysboro Illinois USA

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- College

5. What is your current occupation?

Insurance agent

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Standard

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

Some Spanish

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Sometimes

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- No

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Sometimes

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

The word football is very accented to me also the snack he describes is nothing I've heard of

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- C2 (Proficiency)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

England

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Possibly a businessman from home

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the upper class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy			✓		
sincere				✓	
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **10** Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

The way his sentences are structured the verb before the noun also combined words kind of just run together

3. What is their level of spoken English?

- B2 (Upper-Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

A Latin one can't tell which one

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

A Company owner or high up business man

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

- the upper class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident			✓		
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy					✓
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **10** Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Couldn't pronounce some words and very delayed in speech he was really thinking about what he was saying

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ B1 (Intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

I couldn't tell

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

A worker maybe blue collar job

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent			✓		
confident		✓			
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy				✓	
sincere					✓
unkind		✓			
unfriendly		✓			

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 **10** Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Slow very thought out

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ A2 (Pre-intermediate)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Middle East or India

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Not sure

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the lower class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident		✓			
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy			✓		
sincere					✓
unkind	✓				
unfriendly	✓				

Completed questionnaire by Listener 18

USA_M_47

Do you consent to the processing of the personal data?

- Yes

Part 1: Personal Information

1. Are you

- Male

2. How old are you?

47

3. Where are you from? (Please specify a village/town and a country)

Los Angeles

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Postgraduate

5. What is your current occupation?

Guildhouse School

6. You would say that you rather belong to

- the middle class

7. Is your accent standard or non-standard? Please specify.

Standard

8. Please mention any foreign languages you can speak below.

Arabic

9. How often do you have a chance to travel?

- Sometimes

10. Have you lived anywhere else outside your home country?

- Yes

11. Do you struggle with understanding accented speech?

- Sometimes

Part 2: Listening to Speaker 1

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 **2** 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Intonation

3. What is their level of spoken English?

■ C2 (Proficiency)

4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

England

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Dont know

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to

■ the middle class

7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind			✓		
unfriendly		✓			

Part 3: Listening to Speaker 2

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker's accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Intonation

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 ■ B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Middle East

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Manager

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 ■ the upper class
7. Please rate the speaker’s potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “very much”

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent					✓
confident					✓
unsuccessful	✓				
unambitious	✓				
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind			✓		
unfriendly			✓		

Part 4: Listening to Speaker 3

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker’s accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Stress Patters and Sounds

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - B2 (Upper-Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Eastern Europe

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Student

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the middle class
7. Please rate the speaker’s potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “very much”

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident			✓		
unsuccessful			✓		
unambitious			✓		
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind			✓		
unfriendly			✓		

Part 5: Listening to Speaker 4

1. Rate the heaviness of the speaker’s accent

Practically unnoticeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 **8** 9 10 Very noticeable

2. What markers make their speech sound accented to you? (e.g., specific sounds, intonation, stress patterns, etc.)

Sounds and intonation

3. What is their level of spoken English?
 - B1 (Intermediate)
4. In your opinion, what could be their country of origin?

Eastern Europe

5. What would you say is their current occupation?

Clerical

6. You would say that the speaker could belong to
 - the lower class
7. Please rate the speaker's potential personality traits on the scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "very much"

	1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (very much)
intelligent				✓	
confident				✓	
unsuccessful		✓			
unambitious		✓			
trustworthy			✓		
sincere			✓		
unkind			✓		
unfriendly		✓			

Listener distribution according to the experience of living abroad

Group 1	Group 2
Listener 1 (UK_F_59)	Listener 3 (UK_F_20)
Listener 2 (USA_M_30)	Listener 6 (UK_F_24)
Listener 4 (UK_M_21)	Listener 9 (USA_F_41)
Listener 5 (USA_M_40)	Listener 11 (UK_M_24)
Listener 7 (USA_M_41)	Listener 12 (UK_M_23)
Listener 8 (CA_M_56)	Listener 16 (UK_M_33)
Listener 10 (UK_M_29)	Listener 17 (USA_M_23)
Listener 13 (USA_M_27)	
Listener 14 (USA_M_37)	
Listener 15 (UK_M_25)	
Listener 18 (USA_M_47)	

Listener distribution according to nationality

USA Listeners	UK Listeners
Listener 2 (USA_M_30)	Listener 1 (UK_F_59)
Listener 5 (USA_M_40)	Listener 3 (UK_F_20)
Listener 7 (USA_M_41)	Listener 4 (UK_M_21)
Listener 9 (USA_F_41)	Listener 6 (UK_F_24)
Listener 13 (USA_M_27)	Listener 10 (UK_M_29)
Listener 14 (USA_M_37)	Listener 11 (UK_M_24)
Listener 17 (USA_M_23)	Listener 12 (UK_M_23)
Listener 18 (USA_M_47)	Listener 15 (UK_M_25)
	Listener 16 (UK_M_33)

Listener distribution according to gender

Female Group	Male Group
Listener 1 (UK_F_59)	Listener 2 (USA_M_30)
Listener 3 (UK_F_20)	Listener 4 (UK_M_21)
Listener 6 (UK_F_24)	Listener 5 (USA_M_40)
Listener 9 (USA_F_41)	Listener 7 (USA_M_41)
	Listener 8 (CA_M_56)
	Listener 10 (UK_M_29)
	Listener 11 (UK_M_24)
	Listener 12 (UK_M_23)
	Listener 13 (USA_M_27)
	Listener 14 (USA_M_37)
	Listener 15 (UK_M_25)
	Listener 16 (UK_M_33)
	Listener 17 (USA_M_23)
	Listener 18 (USA_M_47)

Listener distribution according to the knowledge of the Spanish language

Spanish Group	Non-Spanish Group
Listener 2 (USA_M_30)	Listener 1 (UK_F_59)
Listener 3 (UK_F_20)	Listener 4 (UK_M_21)
Listener 5 (USA_M_40)	Listener 6 (UK_F_24)
Listener 7 (USA_M_41)	Listener 8 (CA_M_56)
Listener 9 (USA_F_41)	Listener 10 (UK_M_29)
Listener 13 (USA_M_27)	Listener 11 (UK_M_24)
Listener 14 (USA_M_37)	Listener 12 (UK_M_23)
Listener 17 (USA_M_23)	Listener 15 (UK_M_25)
	Listener 16 (UK_M_33)
	Listener 18 (USA_M_47)

Listener distribution according to age

Younger Group	Older Group
Listener 2 (USA_M_30)	Listener 1 (UK_F_59)
Listener 3 (UK_F_20)	Listener 5 (USA_M_40)
Listener 4 (UK_M_21)	Listener 7 (USA_M_41)
Listener 6 (UK_F_24)	Listener 8 (CA_M_56)
Listener 10 (UK_M_29)	Listener 9 (USA_F_41)
Listener 11 (UK_M_24)	Listener 14 (USA_M_37)
Listener 12 (UK_M_23)	Listener 16 (UK_M_33)
Listener 13 (USA_M_27)	Listener 18 (USA_M_47)
Listener 15 (UK_M_25)	
Listener 17 (USA_M_23)	

Abstract

Nowadays, English serves as a vital tool for communication, connecting individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures all over the world. However, successful communication between native and non-native speakers may be hindered by various factors, including the distinctive accentedness of non-native speech. The present study focuses on the impact of accented speech on intercultural interactions and communication dynamics, particularly in the context of intercultural stereotypes and societal attitudes. It explores how personal experiences and political conflicts, such as those surrounding illegal migration between the United States and Mexico, can influence attitudes towards accented speech and affect cross-cultural communication on a broader scale.

This study aims to establish a correlation between the degree of accentedness in Spanish-accented English and the status and solidarity evaluations provided by native speakers. In order to do so, two studies were conducted: the Self-Evaluation Study with 4 non-native English speakers and the Perception Study with 18 native English speakers. The findings disprove hypotheses related to the lower self-perception of spoken English proficiency level by non-native speakers and increased amount of observed judgement based on accent. However, the study confirms that native English speakers do not differentiate between Spanish and Mexican accents in English, and that American native speakers demonstrate more negative attitudes due to media representations of Mexican migrants. Additionally, the study reveals a correlation between accentedness and evaluations of status and competence, with less accented speech associated with higher social status and competence levels.

Furthermore, the study highlights that female native speakers provide lower assessments of accent heaviness and higher status and solidarity evaluations compared to males. The study did not provide conclusive evidence regarding native speakers' attitudes related to their age or the Spanish language knowledge.

While the study offers a glimpse into the perceptions of accented speech, further research larger sample size is necessary to expand the data corpus.