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American attitudes toward accented English

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McGill University, Montreal

November 2002

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.

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Abstract

This study draws on previous research (e.g., Labov, 1969; Carranza & Ryan, 1975; Brennan & Brennan, 1981; Alford & Strother, 1990) which has revealed and confirmed the many language stereotypes and biases in existence in the United States The present study differs from earlier investigations in that it specifically addresses the current-day attitudes of American English speakers toward a selection of accents that include both native (U.S. regional) and nonnative (foreign or ethnic) accents of English.

The purpose of the present study was to determine the evaluative reactions of an American-born audience toward accented English speech. Fifty-three American college students listened to an audio recording of eight accented English speakers, four representing regional U. S. accent groups and four representing ethnic or foreign accent groups. The students' evaluative reactions indicated favoritism toward the American English speakers with a consistent downgrading of the ethnic speakers. Analysis of the personality ratings suggests that participants based their judgments to some extent on their perceptions of the accented speakers in terms of three dimensions: *appeal*, *accommodation* and *aspiration*. The conceptual affinity of these three dimensions and the subsequent revelation of three-dimensional model of "absolute accommodation" are discussed.

This exploratory study clearly implies a need for further research, particularly into educational programs or interventions aimed at countering the negative attitudes and stereotypes associated with language variety.

Résumé

Cette étude s'inspire de recherches précédentes (ex., Labov, 1969 ; Carranza et Ryan, 1975 ; Brennan et Brennan, 1981; et Alford et Strother, 1990) qui ont révélé et confirmé l'existence de plusieurs stéréotypes et préjugés langagiers aux États-Unis. L'étude diffère des investigations précédentes de par sa manière d'aborder spécifiquement les attitudes actuelles de gens parlant l'anglais américain envers certains accents, incluant des accents de langue maternelle anglaise (l'américain régional), et des accents non issus de l'anglais langue maternelle, c'est-à-dire des accents étrangers ou ethniques.

Cette étude vise à déterminer les réactions d'évaluation des auditeurs, qui sont tous américains de naissance, lors de l'écoute d'un enregistrement d'élocutions contenant divers accents anglais. Cinquante-trois étudiants de collèges américains ont écouté un enregistrement sur lequel huit personnes parlaient anglais avec accent. Ainsi, quatre personnes représentaient des accents de groupes régionaux des USA et quatre représentaient des groupes ethniques (des accents étrangers). Les résultats ont révélé un certain favoritisme envers les personnes parlant l'anglais américain, ainsi qu'un classement inférieur des personnes représentant les différentes ethnies. L'analyse de l'évaluation de la personnalité démontre que, jusqu'à un certain point, les participants se basent sur leurs propres perceptions des personnes parlant anglais avec accent selon trois dimensions: l'attrait, l'adaptation et l'aspiration. L'affinité conceptuelle de ces trois dimensions et la révélation subséquente du modèle tridimensionnel de « l'adaptation absolue » sont également discutées.

Cette étude exploratoire laisse supposer la nécessité de recherches supplémentaires, particulièrement au niveau des programmes éducationnels ou des interventions visant à compenser les attitudes négatives et les stéréotypes associés aux variétés langagières.

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The preparation of this thesis has been an education made possible by the help of many people. While I cannot really thank them adequately, I would like to record my great gratitude to the kind souls who were so patient with my questions, so generous with their time and knowledge, and so hospitable.

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I cannot pretend to have done more than scratch the surface of this type of sociolinguistic research. However, it has been an endlessly interesting, rewarding and enjoyable scratch.

Chapter One: The Social Life of Language

1.1 Overview

When we first hear someone speak or listen to a voice in the media, we assume many characteristics about the person speaking based purely on that individual's language variety and style of speech. To illustrate, just imagine the voices of famous people such as Prince Charles, Henry Kissinger, Dolly Parton and Jean Chretien. Despite their fame and notoriety, their speech evokes certain reactions in each of us and can lead us to make judgments about their respective social status, background, education and even intelligence. Previous research has confirmed that people not only form a distinct impression about other individuals based upon the speaker's language variety, but also tend to attribute certain traits to the person speaking, traits that they associate with the group to which they assume that person belongs (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In other words, a key part of stereotype formation is the value judgment a person makes about different languages or dialects. These value judgments are often referred to as a person's "language attitudes".

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the current personality judgments Americans make, or the language attitudes they adopt, when they hear speakers with accents of native *American* English and speakers with nonnative (foreign or ethnic) accents of English. This study is designed as an attempt to determine the impressions, that is, the attitudes of a U.S. audience to various accented English speech and the effect of such speech upon the listeners' judgments of the speakers' personalities.

In the context of the United States, popular language stereotypes abound and are applied to native and nonnative speakers alike. It is not uncommon to find humorous, condescending or derogatory references to various U.S. regional-accented groups (e.g., Southerners, African-Americans, New Yorkers) in the contemporary media. Likewise, it is not difficult to find Americans who are prejudiced and pejorative with regard to foreign- or ethnic-accented groups residing in the U.S. Historically, Americans have demonstrated (though not unanimously) a solidarity, identity and loyalty toward a language variety, and the result is a vigorous and dynamic *American* English. However, when it comes to recognizing and accepting the variations, such as accent, within American English, or accepting other nonnative English accents, Americans have shown aversion, arrogance, or apathy (Nelson, 1982). This is due, at least in part, to the ethnocentrism that prevails in the American society, and the (mostly monolingual) Americans' self-proclaimed ownership of English. It can be said that, in general, the United States is a linguistically intolerant society in which deviation is looked upon with a negative attitude (Lippi-Green, 1997).

Yet, because of the present global spread and use of English, Americans are finding themselves exposed to, and interacting with, a vast array of accented Englishes, originating from both within and outside their country. This ever-burgeoning environment of multiculturalism in the U.S. comprises a fascinating setting for exploring the language attitudes of American listeners. Moreover, this type of sociolinguistic research may not only reveal the stereotyped attitudes Americans have toward other groups, but also might be used to counteract narrow and negative beliefs about accented English speech in the United States.

Whether speaking one or many languages, all individuals are associated with a minimum of one speech community, a community whose members all share at least a single speech variety and concomitant norms for its appropriate use. Language variation within and between speech communities can involve different languages, or in some environments, contrasting styles of only one language. In every society, the differential power of particular social groups is reflected in language variation and in attitudes toward those variations. Typically, the dominant group promotes its patterns of language use as the model required for social advancement. The use of a lower prestige language, dialect or accent by minority group members reduces their opportunities for success in the society as a whole. According to Abrams and Hogg (1987), the strength of one's in-group identity is positively correlated with ratings favoring the in-group, and with ratings downgrading the out-group. This general acceptance of a standard language ideology[1] accompanied by negative attitudes toward other language varieties is said to be an unavoidable product of the interaction of language and society (Preston, 1996).

Moreover, in most contexts, this type of philosophy places an onus on the nonstandard speakers for communication difficulties by asking them to suppress or deny the most effective way they have of situating themselves socially in the world in which they live. These reactions and biases held by members of the dominant language group against the different varieties of language (in this case, English) are constructed by the discourse and social practices of the dominant language group, and are nothing short of discrimination. Although it may not be possible to erase such linguistic

[1] A full definition of the concept of a standard language ideology is provided in section 1.2.2

prejudice and discrimination, a diminishment or realignment of such attitudes is in order.

The concept of attitude, though widespread in social psychology, is not one about which there has been substantial agreement. However, from a layperson's viewpoint, one might see attitude as a disposition to react favorably or unfavorably to particular objects or information. Attitude is thought to be comprised of thoughts, feelings and behaviors. In other words, a person knows or believes something (thought), reacts emotionally to it (feeling), and therefore can be assumed to act on that basis (behavior). In the field of sociolinguistics, this means that various linguistic features evoke, in listeners, beliefs ('His manner of speech makes me think he is a lawyer') and evaluations ('She certainly sounds smart'), and these beliefs and evaluations are most likely to affect listeners' behaviors toward the speakers, especially in contexts where the stimuli and respondents are unknown to one another. This listener behavior toward a particular speech style arises from the fact that a person's reaction to language varieties reveals much of his or her perception of the speakers of the varieties. In fact, most studies of language attitudes would be more accurately described as studies of attitudes toward speakers of language varieties (Edwards, 1979).

Hence, such studies infer that personal attitudes are judgmental or evaluative in nature, and targeted at other persons and populations, rather than the language or variety itself. The literature is replete with arguments that demonstrate that languages and language varieties, although clearly contrasting, cannot be considered or described in terms such as better/worse, correct/incorrect, or logical/illogical. Similarly, it has been said that aesthetic judgments do not appear to be based on any intrinsic quality or

inherent characteristic of attractiveness or unattractiveness in the language or variety itself (Trudgill, 1995). Therefore, one can conclude that evaluations of languages, varieties (dialects), and accents are not reflective of either linguistic or aesthetic qualities. Instead, they are declarations of social preferences and perceptions, which are quite salient, influential, and can be consequential in human interactions.

1.2 Previous Research

The study of language attitudes has a rich history that spans multiple decades and social science disciplines, as well as investigative means. Research in this area began in the 1930's with Pear's (1931) classic study, which invited BBC audiences in Britain to provide personality profiles of certain voices heard on the radio. Much research followed over the years to determine whether voice cues were an external mirror of someone's actual dispositional states. From this early work, it was concluded that there was only a very modest overlap between the judges' ratings of the vocal features of the radio announcers and the same ratings of those particular personalities involved. Therefore, there seemed to be little advantage in pursuing voice as a cue to actual personality. However, historically, a multitude of studies has shown that there is a substantial and prevailing social consensus among listener-judges about the *stereotypical* traits associated with voices (Giles & Coupland, 1991). These stereotype-based judgments of voice are socially significant, and the proliferation of research in this area since 1960, which has been conducted in different parts of the world, demonstrates conclusively that people can express definite and consistent attitudes toward speakers who use particular styles of speech. The following sections in this

chapter address attitudes toward language variation from a sociolinguistic perspective, and illuminate the fact that they are not only open expressions of social perceptions that can occur in every conceivable social context, but also that they can have grave and irreversible consequences in everyday life.

1.2.1 *Social Perceptions*

Although studies of perception are still largely appointed to the territories of experimental phonetics or psychology, sociolinguists have increasingly been recognizing the importance of perceptions. Thus, several lines of inquiry about perceptions or language attitudes have emerged and are seen in both the qualitative and quantitative traditions. For instance, a relatively new notion in the study of language variation and language attitudes is that of 'folk linguistics', the term employed by some researchers to describe the investigation of what non-linguists may believe about language. Hoenigswald's (1966) proposal for the study of folk linguistics was primarily heeded by Preston, who began publication of his research in this area in1982. Although the concept of folk linguistics is not without its critics, it appears to represent something of a trend that has gained much consideration and presence within more recent literature. Most of Preston's work in this area (1982, 1986, 1989, 1993) has been conducted within the geographical confines of the United States, and has utilized a multidimensional approach making use of cognitive linguistic mapping, mapping of correctness (and related affective factors), and interviews aimed at eliciting overt linguistic notions.

This alternative research approach asked respondents from various regions of the United States (i.e., Michigan, Indiana and "the South") to perform a number of

evaluative tasks. The participants were asked to hand-draw boundaries on a U.S. map around areas where they believed the regional speech zones of the United States to be located, to rank the 50 states for the perceived degree of dialect difference from their respective home areas, to rate the 50 states (as well as the areas of New York City and Washington, D.C.) for 'correct' and 'pleasant' speech, to delineate from North to South where nine regional voices should be located, and to express their opinions (in a post-performance interview) about language distribution and status. From a comparison and contrast of the maps, statistical calculations of the rankings and ratings, and the conversational evidence, Preston (1993) reaches many compelling conclusions in his work.

Among his findings, Preston concludes that Southern United States English and New York City English are clearly varieties against which some prejudices exist. His research indicates that, even along various affective dimensions, Northern speakers are prejudiced against Southern speech. He notes significant differences in the patterns of pleasantness and correctness when the perceiving listeners are divided into two groups, one comprised of those suffering from some degree of linguistic insecurity (in his research, Indiana respondents), and another group comprised of those having a generally positive linguistic self-concept (in his studies, those respondents from Michigan). It is interesting to note that both the linguistically "confident" group and linguistically "insecure" group agreed that certain speech emanating from particular geographical areas (i.e., the South) was "incorrect". However, the comments gathered from respondents from the South did not share the concept of geographical incorrectness. When given the opportunity for expression regarding their own "correct"

speech ratings, the Southern respondents did not report widespread insecurity. The closest those respondents came to the concept of geographical incorrectness was reflected in their efforts to deflect the concept of incorrect speech to parts of the South other than their own. Nevertheless, the Southerners rated themselves very high for pleasantness. Concomitantly, they rated those from the North very low in speech correctness, consistently assigning New Yorkers the lowest mean ratings for any group in any task utilized in the research effort.

While demonstrating both shame and pride in the quality of local speech, the Southern respondents, unlike those from both Michigan and Indiana, indicated only limited and begrudging appreciation for Northeastern speech "standards". The only speech standard acknowledged by the Southern respondents was a national government standard, that is, Washington, D.C. speech, which is interestingly close, geographically, to the South. From these findings, Preston (1993) purports that, "such folk concepts represent strongly held, influential beliefs in the linguistic life of large and small speech communities" (p. 375). Preston proffers that even though these overt folk notions of language are not based upon either production of, or response to, forms, they provide a meaningful corollary to studies of regional and other varieties of speech. In his opinion, they help build more thorough and precise insights into the relative regard for language use and variety within a specific speech community (Preston, 1993).

The study of folk linguistics has been explored on a culture-by-culture basis and reported anecdotally, although there have been a few similar studies conducted that employed qualitative and quantitative research methods. Perhaps because of its relatively recent debut as a research field and its perceived lack of direction, the concept

of folk linguistics is not without substantial criticism. Among other complaints, its critics consider the field as contravening more reliable and traditional forms of research. In fact, the objections range from it being "impoverished" to "inaccessible" and "simply unscientific and worthy only of disdain" (Niedzielski & Preston, 2000). One might also inquire as to how the 'folk' in folk linguistics research differ from those 'folk' that participate as subjects in the abundance of qualitative and quantitative explorations, investigations and experiments that have been conducted across the vast array of disciplines associated with linguistic elements. However, despite these enthusiastic criticisms, proponents of this contemporary approach to language attitudes research believe it to be a major contributor in the general understanding of linguistic variation and language attitudes in America. The notion of folk linguistics, as well as some of the findings from Preston's work (e.g., 1982a, 1989bd, 1993c) are relevant to the present study in that, the research was not only executed in America, but also was conducted with similar folk and produced some similar results.

While it appears that the qualitative methods of mapping and interviewing utilized in the folk linguistics studies have been adopted with some success, most of the research on language attitudes has been contained within the quantitative tradition. More specifically, most of the studies have employed the "speaker evaluation paradigm", an approach that can, in large part, be found in the Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner and Fillenbaum (1960) study, which introduced the matched-guise technique ("MGT"). In fact, many researchers suggest that the study of language attitudes can be traced back to 1960 and the social psychology research study by Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner and Fillenbaum, which successfully demonstrated the scientific study of

attitudinal consequences of dissimilar language varieties. This frequently cited investigation is seen as the first contemporary study designed to exert experimental control over potentially confounding speaker idiosyncrasies through the use of the (now famous) matched-guise technique (Lambert, 1967).

The MGT procedure is built on the assumption that speech style triggers certain social categorizations, which will lead, typically, to a set of group-related trait inferences. In this technique, judges evaluate aspects and dimensions of a speaker's personality after hearing him or her read the same tape-recorded passage in each of two or more language varieties. The fact that the speaker is actually the same person is not revealed to the evaluators. For example in Lambert's study, balanced bilinguals (individuals with nearly equal capabilities in two languages) were tape-recorded reading a standard passage of prose in both French and English. These tape recordings were then used as stimulus material for evaluation. Consequently, it is argued that, since the internal vocal elements (such as pitch, voice quality, speech rate, etc.) of the speaker are thought to remain constant across "guises", the judgments made by these listeners can be seen to represent stereotyped reactions to the specific language varieties. Another notable aspect of this method is that respondents react to the various guises by way of standard rating scales – a semantic-differential type instrument that has been a methodological mainstay in the speaker evaluation paradigm. Within this framework of the speaker evaluation paradigm, respondents are asked to evaluate the tape-recorded speakers without any disclosure or attachment of social group labels. The evaluations are performed by completing the person-perception rating scale. The evaluations can cover any range and number of items.

For example, in Lambert's (1960) study, speakers were perceived and evaluated on 14 individual traits, which yielded three underlying dimensions he labeled as *competence, social attractiveness* and *personal integrity.* Usually, judges or raters are asked to undertake their task in the same way as people acquiring first impressions about speakers they can hear but cannot see, such as someone seated behind them in a bar or someone speaking over an intercom. Additionally, the use of a standard, formal passage is thought to minimize the effect of message content on the participants' reactions. In the past, the matched-guise technique has been criticized, primarily for its supposed deception and artificiality. However, the value of the initial matched-guise technique is, at least, four-fold. First, Lambert et al. (1960) invented a meticulous design model for studying language attitudes, which has controlled for confusing and irrelevant variables. Second, the findings from this seminal study (which are reported below) highlighted the important role of language in impression formation. Third, the dependant variables (14 individual traits) used in the study gave rise to the now pervasively recognized (though relabeled) judgment clusters of status versus solidarity traits. Finally, the original study served to inspire an enormous number of studies across the world, including the present study. In addition to these justifying reasons, the primary rationale behind the employment of a matched-guise technique is that it is thought to provide useful information that can be confirmed by other means (e.g., by questionnaire, or by ratings of actual speakers *not* adopting guises). In general, the MGT provides samples of speech that are thought to act as identifiers, allowing the expression of social stereotypes (Edwards, 1982).

The seminal study by Lambert et al. (1960) investigated attitudes toward French and English "guises" in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. More specifically, the study examined the way in which French and English Canadians perceived each other at the time. The English-speaking judges in the study generally reacted more favorably to English guises than to French guises. Even more interesting, French-speaking judges also rated English guises more positively. The research team concluded that the results demonstrated not only positive reactions from members of the high-status group toward their own variety of speech, but also that these reactions had been assumed by members of the low-status community. This minority-group reaction is an enlightening comment on the power of social perceptions in general, and particularly, the way in which those who are (themselves) the objects of such unfavorable stereotypes may assume the same or similar attitudes. Accordingly, the historically dominant position of English Canadians and the subordinate position of French Canadians in Quebec at the time of the study are reflected throughout Lambert's series of studies using the matched-guise technique (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner & Fillenbaum, 1960, Lambert, 1967, 1979). Invariably, the results of these studies demonstrated that not only did English Canadians in Quebec prefer the English guises, but also so did French Canadians. The results indicate and support the author's conclusion that French Canadians, at the time of this study, had essentially accepted the negative stereotype imposed upon them as a result of their variety of speech within the communities studied.

Other early work that employed the matched-guise technique to examine the social perceptions of language varieties includes that of Strongman and Woosley (1967). These British researchers presented a group of psychology students with two

speakers, each of whom read the same passage twice, once with a Yorkshire accent and once with a London accent. Half of the student adjudicators were considered "southerners", and half were from the north of England. The outcome indicated no significant differences between the ratings of northern and southern subjects on any of the personality traits evaluated. Thus, "both groups of subjects tended to hold the same stereotyped attitude toward each accent group but did not regard either of them particularly more favorable than the other" (p. 164). This research duo attributed these results to the fact that, unlike Lambert's (1960) study, neither group (or speech community) could be classified as minority or majority. Consequently, no minority-group reaction would have been anticipated or observed in this study.

In another study, Cheyne (1970) utilized the matched-guise technique to investigate attitudes toward Scottish and English regional accents. In general, both Scottish and English raters tended to view the Scottish speakers as somewhat lower in status than the English ones. However, the overall results revealed some abnormalities in the evaluative responses. For example, some Scottish judges rated male Scottish speakers more favorably than English-accented males on personality dimensions that suggested 'warmth', and both groups of judges rated them as being more 'friendly'. This variance in feedback is what prompted Lambert (1967) to refine and categorize the many personality dimensions on which judges typically rate speech and speakers. The three groups he developed are said to reflect a speaker's *competence* (e.g., intelligence and industriousness), *personal integrity* (e.g., helpfulness and trustworthiness), and *social attractiveness* (e.g., friendliness and sense of humor). The studies that followed

this outline of dimensionality distinctions provided further evidence that, contrary to earlier hypotheses, accent evaluations are not one-dimensional.

An Irish study by Masterson, Mullins and Mulvihill (1983), which used judges from different linguistic backgrounds, explored the evaluations of three varieties of Irish accent: standard, rural and Dublin. Through use of a principal component analysis, two major dimensions identified as 'prestige' and 'solidarity' emerged, with the solidarity dimension corresponding to five separate solidarity scales and the prestige dimension corresponding to ten additional scales. Overall, the standard accent was rated the highest, especially on the features reflecting prestige. In fact, for this dimension, the standard accent was perceived most positively, the rural accent was next in order, and the Dublin accent received the lowest ranking. However, with regard to the solidarity dimension, the standard speaker was viewed significantly less positively than the rural accented-speaker. Interestingly, the mean score for the rural accent was the highest for all five of the solidarity scales.

Similarly, Gallois and Callan (1981) identified two dimensions in their study of accented English conducted in Australia. They found that almost 60 percent of the statistical variance appeared to represent an 'evaluative' dimension, while the dimension identified as 'dynamism' accounted for an additional 28 percent of the variance. At first glance, it might appear as though these dimensions are analogous to those developed or observed by Masterson et al. (1983), since the evaluative dimension in this particular study included such scales as dependable/undependable, friendly/unfriendly, and helpful/unhelpful, which are similar to those traits Masterson et al. (1983) included on the solidarity scales employed in their research. However, this

study's dynamism factor included additional descriptive aspects such as weak/strong, big/little, intelligent/stupid, and powerful/powerless, of which only intelligence was included in the Masterson et al. study.

Research that is more closely related to the present inquiry includes studies conducted in the U.S. that address the dimensionality of subjects' responses to speech samples. Of particular interest are those by Carranza and Ryan (1975) and Ryan and Carranza (1975). In these studies, the authors report a factor structure having a dimensional framework of three groups: status, solidarity, and dynamism. In the first of these evaluative reaction studies, Mexican-American and Anglo-American students were employed to investigate attitudes toward speakers of Spanish and English. In general, it was found that both Mexican-American and Anglo-American listeners rated the Anglo-American accent more favorably than the Mexican-American accent. In terms of the speaker rating, the findings show that English was rated more favorably than Spanish on the status-related traits. Additionally, English was favored with respect to a few of the solidarity items, such as integrity and attractiveness. However, overall, Spanish was seen more positively on the solidarity dimension than on the status scales. These results square with many of the findings from the studies previously discussed, thereby reflecting a tendency for a language variety that possesses lower prestige to be awarded somewhat more favorable connotations along other lines.[2]

Studies involving speakers of African American Vernacular English in America also have shown that language attitude investigations reveal social perceptions. In one of the early examinations, Labov (1969) studied Black English [sic] vernacular in New

[2] Similar results were found in a study by Brennan & Brennan (1981) who investigated reactions to Mexican-American English speech.

York, and found that "many features of pronunciation, grammar, and lexicon are closely associated with black speakers – so closely as to identify the great majority of black people in northern cities by their speech alone" (p. 242). Although he notes the fact that many white northerners, particularly those living in close proximity to black communities, share some of these speech characteristics (while some black northerners have none, or almost none of these features), he nevertheless concluded that "[this is] a stereotype that provides correct identification in the great majority of cases, and therefore [has] a firm base in social reality. Such stereotypes are the social basis of language perception..." (p.242).

Furthermore, Tucker and Lambert (1969) used three groups of American college students (one northern white, one southern white and one southern black) to evaluate recorded readings by six U.S. dialect groups: network (the speech of television newscasters), educated white southern, educated black southern, Mississippi peer, Howard University, and New York (NYU) alumni. They found that the subjects were not only capable of reliably differentiating between American-English accents, but also that white and black judges were different in the favorability rating each made according to accent. In other words, all groups rated 'network' speakers most favorably (network English being roughly equivalent to British Received Pronunciation), and black speakers and others were downgraded. It was found that white judges perceived black college students less favorably than their white counterparts on the dimensions of voice quality, fluency and confidence.

Overall, these studies of accent evaluation show that speech samples may evoke stereotyped reactions reflecting differential views of social groups. Along the

dimensional scales, standard accents usually connote high status and competence; regional accents may be seen to reflect greater integrity, attractiveness and solidarity. These findings seem fairly consistent when judges, themselves, are regionally accented speakers. Also, there is evidence that similar results occur when evaluators use standard accents. In summation, all of these studies have shown agreement on, and added credence to, the notion that language attitudes are actually social perceptions, indicative of the language bias and stereotypes that exist within the specific contexts. In other words, in any given context, there is a tendency for listeners to favor those language varieties identical or closest to their own, and to downgrade those varieties that are considered most divergent from their own (Tucker & Lambert, 1969). It is important to note, however, that the social context in which language attitudes investigations occur is not itself a static entity, as examined in the next section.

1.2.2 *Social Contexts*

Because attitudes toward language variation can exert strong influences in many real-world situations, their role in several applied settings is of considerable importance. It is in the educational setting, however, where such attitudes may have the greatest importance or impact. Teachers, like the rest of the population, are prone to make and hold generalized expectations. There is no doubt that in regular classroom contexts, teachers also evaluate pupils and form judgments of them. These evaluative tasks are generally expected as a necessary part of the pedagogy. However, there is evidence clearly demonstrating that teachers' expectations and evaluations can be erroneous. Such perceptions may be consequential to some students, in that they may unduly hinder children in their life at school and beyond.

A useful study that illustrates this idea is that of Seligman, Tucker and Lambert (1972). In this particular experiment, the judges were student-teachers and were provided with more than just voice samples. In addition to speech samples, photographs of children, drawings by children and writing samples of children were compiled. The research team obtained and assembled these elements from third-grade Montreal boys in an effort to collect the work of eight 'hypothetical' children. All of the elements were then presented to the judges. Each of the eight packages of work represented all possible permutations of 'good' and 'poor' voices, photos, drawings and written work. The results revealed that each type of information provided influenced the ratings given to these 'imaginary' children. Thus, boys who were perceived to have 'better' voices, who appeared to 'look intelligent', and who had produced 'good' work, were judged as more intelligent, better students and were assigned additional positive characteristics. In fact, the authors note that speech style was a very strong cue to the student-teachers in their evaluations of students. Even when combined with other cues, the effect of the speech samples did not weaken.

Further evidence that demonstrates the fact that teachers' judgments may be affected by speech cues or variants can be found in a study conducted by Edwards (1979). This study, undertaken in Dublin, Ireland, also utilized student-teachers as judges and employed both boys and girls to provide speech samples as the only stimuli for the experiment. The adjudicators were asked to evaluate 20 working-class, and 20 middle-class, primary school children on the basis of their respective speech styles. On all dimensions evaluated, the working-class children were perceived less favorably than their middle-class counterparts. In addition, the factor analysis of the results yielded

only one principal or underlying dimension, which the author labeled as 'disadvantage/nondisadvantage'. This suggests validity in the notion that teachers' reactions are derived from an already elicited stereotype. As discussed above, this information verifies, in one sense, that classroom teachers – like other members of the population – do sustain stereotyped and often negative perceptions of certain language varieties and their speakers.

A similar classroom controversy that has drawn considerable attention in contemporary research is concerned with student evaluations of instructors, more specifically, student attitudes toward teaching assistants. The debate surrounds the instructional role of teaching assistants in American universities who are not native speakers of English and who received their undergraduate training outside the United States (hereinafter referred to as "ITAs"). The University of Minnesota was among the first institutions to design and develop an International Issues Questionnaire (the 'Mestenhauser survey') to survey undergraduates regarding international issues such as ITAs.

In an exploratory study, Matross, Paige and Hendricks (1982) found that 43% of the undergraduate respondents to the 'Mestenhauser survey' said that an ITA had hurt course quality, whereas only nine percent indicated that an ITA had helped the course. In addition, they discovered that less than one-third of the respondents agreed that there was meaningful contact between U.S. and international students at the university, and that less than one-sixth agreed that international students had contributed to their education. Other statistics demonstrated that 64% of the respondents reported having an international student as a casual friend, while only 16% reported that they had an

international student as a close friend. Those subjects who had known international students as friends, but not as ITAs, had more positive attitudes than those who had both international friends and ITAs. The least positive attitudes toward international students were those shown by students who had known only ITAs. In their examination of background characteristics, these researchers found that female students, older students, those enrolled in graduate school, and those living off campus were more likely to have positive attitudes toward international students (including, but not exclusively limited to ITAs).

In an attempt to measure the communication skills of ITAs by developing a rating instrument to directly test their respective language proficiencies, Hinofotis and Bailey (1981) investigated undergraduate students' attitudes toward videotaped speech samples of ITAs. This research duo selected a group of ten freshmen at the university along with a group of six trained ESL raters. The participants were asked to evaluate the ITAs on a five-minute mock lecture before and after instruction in oral communication, and to complete a questionnaire regarding their respective impressions of, and reactions to, the ITAs. These investigators found that the undergraduates complained most about language proficiency, communication of information, and delivery. It is important to note that both the undergraduates and the ESL raters ranked pronunciation as the single most important failure in ITAs' overall ability. As with the bulk of the research that has analyzed student evaluations of ITAs, this study concentrated primarily on the linguistic and discourse competencies of the ITAs, without regard to the role the native English-speaking students play in these specific contexts.

Much like the Matross et al. study, Plakans (1997) utilized a specifically developed instrument (with modifications) designed to yield quantitative data concerning undergraduate student experiences with, and attitudes toward, ITAs. Similarly, this study examined the relationship between the attitude scale and several student background characteristics (e.g., year of enrollment, academic college, age, sex, size of hometown, etc.). However, divergent from the previous research, the author added two additional sources of data (university records and focus group interviews), and concentrated on the assessment of the generalized attitudes of undergraduates, rather than the focused evaluation of the particular ITAs who were teaching the respondents at that time. This study supports much of the research findings cited earlier, in that students who had one or more ITAs had a less positive attitude toward them than students without the classroom ITA experience. Females and older students had a more positive attitude toward the ITAs than males and traditional (18 to 24-year-old) students. Additionally, students whose ITA experiences were not in courses in their majors, but nevertheless in required courses, were significantly more negative. In an effort to provide a comprehensive picture of the students with the most negative attitudes, the author profiles them as "traditional-aged males majoring in agriculture or business with an expected grade point average in the "C" range who had not traveled outside the country and who lived in a rural area or small town in the north central part of the U.S." (p. 112).

From these negative attitudes arising directly from the problems in communication between international teaching assistants who speak nonnative varieties of English and undergraduate students who are native speakers of American English, it

is apparent, to some, that in these contexts, both the listener and the speaker need to share responsibilities in order for meaningful communication to take place. Plakans (1997) is one of the first investigators to include suggestions for augmenting insular students' perspectives and helping them to become cross-culturally sentient.

The classroom context is not the only setting in which language attitudes, their implications and negative consequences exist. Just as the evaluative judgments made in schools of students or teachers can cause behavioral changes, they can also influence opportunities and powers in other domains, such as in the law and the workplace. For instance, in legal cases, a witness testifying in a prestige or non-prestige variety of language may be perceived by the triers of fact as having so much more credibility as a witness that the jury or judge in the courtroom may be led to deliver a favorable or unfavorable verdict based only upon that impression. Likewise, in the workplace or employment interview, the interviewer may pronounce the applicant as being an ideal or unsuitable candidate for the potential position, based, in part, on the applicant's variety of speech.

A solid example of the implications found in the legal context has been highlighted in a study by Seggie (1983). This language attitude research investigated the role of accent and the resultant assumptions made (regarding the type of crime the speaker might commit) in attributing guilt to people accused of a crime. The study employed seventy-five university students as raters and one male Australian speaker as the stimuli for the experiment. In keeping with the matched-guise technique, the Australian speaker produced three tape-recorded guises: English RP, Broad Australian and Malaysian Chinese. Three groups of university students were asked to rate the

accents based on the probability that the speaker had committed one of the following crimes: embezzlement, damage to property or violence against a person. The results revealed a distinct interaction between the accented speech and the listeners' assumptions about the type of crime allegedly committed. Additionally, significant differences were found in the assumptions arising as a result of the English RP accent when compared to the Australian accent. Specifically, more guilt was attributed to the RP accent when the crime was embezzlement, and to the Australian accent when the crime was violence. Interestingly, the ratings of the Asian accent contributed the least variance to the results. According to the researcher, attitudes toward (and stereotypes of) Asians may not have been established in this context, whereas pre-existing perceptions of the English and Australian guises were quite prevalent in the community studied.

The situation among the work force in America provides another excellent example of how language attitudes can negatively affect those who speak a different variety of English. Essentially, new arrivals to America find themselves in a "no win" situation. According to Tollefson's (2001) interpretation of the U.S. language policy regarding immigrants, "refugees need to be taught to work hard and to adopt the American philosophy of self sufficiency. In order to do this, they need to accept entry level jobs, regardless of their education or experience." Clearly, elements of this policy have been remarkably successful; approximately 25 states have adopted, by law or ordinance, the declaration that English, and English alone, is their state's only official language. Perceptions such as these leave little room for immigrants to adjust to or advance in their new society. For example, employment agencies in New York City (a

major destination for immigrants to the U.S.) have been known to list "no accent" as a job requirement. Because, arguably, every speaker has an accent, the agency's policy implies a code used for the elimination of job applicants having certain ethnic affiliations. In these contexts, language is used as a tool for sorting out and deciding who is a viable and admirable member of the specific society and who is an inept and undesirable participant within the same society. Once again, this idea offers convincing evidence that attitudes about language reflect attitudes about people. As seen from the immediate discussion, these attitudes can, and have been viewed as, language subordination.

This notion of language subordination is a contemporary issue in the United States, an issue that has been sensitively examined and explicated in the work of Lippi-Green (1997). Through reliance upon a great body of empirical work in sociolinguistics, largely conducted by other scholars, Lippi-Green (1997) exposes the ways in which discrimination based on accent occurs and is sustained in the U.S. In her work she advances the idea that accent discrimination stems from the acceptance of, and adherence to, a "standard language ideology" (a term coined by Milroy & Milroy, 1985). In her writing, she defines standard language ideology as "a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogeneous spoken language, which is imposed and maintained by dominant institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of white, upper middle class Midwesterners" (p. 64).

Lippi-Green (1994) identifies the four principal proponents of the standard language ideology. They are the U.S. Educational system, the news media, the

entertainment industry and the entity commonly known as "Corporate America". In this same article she argues that the American judicial system should be recognized as a fifth proponent of the standard language ideology. Through numerous examples, she illustrates how each of these proponents either instills, promotes, supports or protects this ideology. She argues further that this blind adherence, when coupled with the common social insistence in America that a foreign-born person relinquish, or at least suppress, his or her accent is not grounded upon a theory that the accented speech, itself, is the problem. In her opinion, it is centered, instead, upon the social allegiances made clear by the accented language, and it is those social allegiances made on the basis of speech that reflect the true and material underlying problem. It is her strong conviction that while it is true under the rules of jurisprudence, those in the United States of America cannot be discriminated against because of the color of their skin, their religion or their gender, they can be made to deny or suppress "...the most effective way they have of situating themselves socially in the world" (Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 63). This viewpoint can be illustrated by the following examples.

Within the educational system, strong evidence of the standard language ideology is not only found in materials written for both teachers and students, but also is reflected in administration policies and empirical studies, especially those that have examined student and teacher attitudes. For instance, in one language arts text written for teachers, the advice is to use "overt authoritarianism" when there is "a direct link between nonstandard language and lack of logic and clarity, with the blurring of the written/spoken boundaries" because "there is one correct way to speak and write English"(Lippi-Green, 1994, p.168). In 1987, the Board of Education of Hawaii put

forth a proposed policy, which would serve to outlaw Hawaiian Creole English in the schools. This policy regarding standard English and oral communication was supported by the majority of the students surveyed, whose comments included, "Pidgin is a lazy way to talk; it promotes backward thinking" and "correct English will get you anywhere". Other American students have been shown to uphold this standard language ideology as well. In fact, in the study by Carranza and Ryan (1975), reviewed earlier in this paper, African-American, Anglo, and Hispanic students all found Spanish-accented English to be lacking in prestige and inappropriate for a classroom setting. Thus, it is clear that a standard language ideology is instilled in the youth of America as a basic tenet of the elementary and secondary school approach to language arts and communication education.

The media also contains many representative examples of the standard language ideology. In fact, it is the media that positions itself as a primary enforcer of the standard language ideology. This it accomplishes by means of language-conscious reporting, insisting upon the use of the standard language even when it is without factual basis and, often, overtly discriminatory. In view of the vast reaching modern media, no one is immune to such exposure. For example, Lippi-Green (1994) illustrates how, as a result of his appearance on National Public Radio, the Governor of Hawaii's code-switching (between Hawaiian Creole English and Creole-accented English) was made an issue. The announcer went so far as to "correct" the governor's speech on air. She states that the print media is also replete with examples, such as the excerpt she offers from a syndicated opinion column in the *Ann Arbor News,* 1992, which questioned (then) Governor Clinton as to why, after an international and ivy league

education, did he "still talk like a hillbilly". Although, generally, the media claim not to enter the realm of social change or norm enforcement, they appear as agents of such when they highlight diversions from the standard language ideology and bring to the public's attention other institutions (such as accent-reduction schools) that promote this ideology.

Many, if not most cases of language subordination and discrimination in the workplace occur during the initial employment interview process. However, even the gainfully employed encounter a wide range of prejudices and discrimination as a result of accents. This notion is supported by a study conducted on the pervasiveness of accent discrimination, which reported that, "10% of their sample or 461,000 companies employing millions of persons, openly if naively admit that they discriminated on the basis of a person's foreign appearance or accent" (Lippi-Green , 1994, p. 174). Excellent examples of this sort of discrimination are found in the Xieng, Park and Fragante cases, which the author illustrates through the following quotes, "...Linda Sincoff told Xieng he was not being promoted because he could not speak "American", and "...[Park's] supervisor had removed her because of concern about the effect of her accent on the "image" of the IRS, not any lack in either communication or technical abilities" and in the Fragante case, "...the ability to speak clearly is one of the most important skills...we felt the applicants selected would be better able to work in our office because of their communication skills."[3]

According to Lippi-Green (1994), the opinions put forth by the courts display a range of approaches toward communication and accent. One might assume that the

[3] For a comprehensive account of each case, see Lippi-Green (1997).

American courts are impartial, and sometimes there is evidence demonstrating a lack of bias. However, at the same time, sometimes in the same cases, where an effort to avoid bias is apparent, it is clear that the courts are too willing to depend on a factually incorrect understanding of language issues in reaching a decision. This reliance on amateur knowledge and proletarian understanding of language issues is not only exemplary of the standard language ideology, but also is reminiscent of the foundation of folk linguistics. It is this paradox of the judicial system, a system which purports to recognize, at least in theory, the link between language and social identity, while often confounding this apparent awareness by insisting upon a loyal adherence to a standard language ideology that prompted Lippi-Green's (1994) argument that those comprising the American judicial system should be included on the list of primary advocates of the standard language ideology.

From these examples, it is clear that the standard language ideology is initiated in American schools, enthusiastically advanced by the U.S. media and further institutionalized by the corporate sector. It is highlighted by the entertainment industry and endorsed in both understated and obvious ways by the judicial system. Thus, it is not surprising that many individuals do not recognize the fact that, for spoken language, variation is systematic, structured, and inherent, and that the national standard is an unrealistic abstraction. What is most surprising, even deeply distressing, is the way in which many individuals who consider themselves egalitarian, fair-minded, rational and without prejudice, hold on tenaciously to a standard language ideology, an ideology which is used by some to justify restriction of individuality and rejection of the other.

1.3 Summary

As demonstrated in this chapter, a plethora of international research on evaluative reactions to spoken language has confirmed that there are tendencies for the speech patterns of regional speakers, ethnic group members and lower-class populations to evoke negative attitudes from listeners who may or may not be standard speakers themselves. However, many of the empirical studies reviewed in this paper can be considered distant, both chronologically and geographically, and, hence, only historically significant. Even unique and modern perspectives like those of Preston and Lippi-Green are approaching "middle-age" in terms of cutting-edge research investigations in the rapidly changing U.S. culture. That is not to say that those studies are insignificant. However, with the remarkable and continuing influx of immigrants, both legal and illegal, to the U.S., in addition to the millions born in the U.S. who speak with regional accents that may not be currently fashionable, and those who are native speakers of a variety of English directly connected with race, ethnicity or income, it is crucial to determine whether the stereotypical American attitudes toward accented English in the U.S. are static or shifting, and on what elements such attitudes and impressions are based. Therefore, the intent of the present study is to determine the extent to which a society that, historically at least, has been strongly monolingual and Anglophile in its attitudes, has or has not progressed in terms of its penchant to assign stereotypes to those speaking accented English. This study involves a contemporary examination of the status of such historical biases within the American context, a context known for its penchant for linking ethnicity with language non-standardness, perceptually and cognitively, and, conversely, for linking standardness with the

dominant Anglo-American culture. The purpose of this study is to determine if the same historical penchants apply when the ratings of speakers are based on accent alone, and when there is a mixture of native and nonnative varieties that are not clearly labeled for the judges. An additional aim of the present study is to determine the dimensional framework along which these modern Americans' attitudes are applied. While it is expected that this examination may offer a contribution to the growing chain of research involving language attitudes, the findings, in particular, are expected to contribute to the design of a subsequent intervention study aiming to counter negative judgments of accented English speech in the United States.

Chapter Two: Methodology

2.1 Overview

Sociolinguists and other investigators have examined social perceptions by using a variety of approaches to answer several types of sociolinguistic questions. Most work on perception in language variation has employed spoken words. Typically, phrases or texts are played to listeners for the purpose of testing various issues such as the ability of listeners to identify the regional dialect, ethnicity, or socioeconomic level of speakers (see Preston, 1993), how stereotypes can influence the perception of sounds (see Niedzielski, 1999), and stereotypical attitudes, which have been investigated by having participants evaluate the personality of a speaker, the speaker's appropriateness for particular jobs, or other personal attributes of the speaker (Thomas, 2002). The present study is most concerned with the third issue -- stereotypical attitudes toward language variation. More specifically, it is concerned with the current-day stereotypical attitudes of an American audience toward accented English in the U.S, and seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Which accent group is most favored/least favored?
2. What primary personality dimensions are revealed in the favorability ratings?
3. What are the effects of raters' accentedness and exposure to accents on the favorability ratings?

2.2 Participants and context

On a snowy Monday in February of 2002, 54 college students enrolled in the College of Arts & Sciences at the University of Colorado at Boulder participated in the

study. A sample strategy of convenience was employed since the participants were sought and utilized during actual class time of various courses in the Department of Communication. All of the participants were undergraduates, over the age of 18, majoring in Communication, and all but one were native speakers of English. One participant, a "foreign exchange student", was a native speaker of French and was nearing the end of her residency in the U.S. Therefore, the data for this particular subject was collected but not used, thereby leaving the total number of participants at 53. Of these remaining participants, 22 were females and 31 were males. The average age of the participants was 23 years old.

2.3 Instruments

2.3.1 *Participant Information Sheet (Questionnaire No. 1)*

A comprehensive background questionnaire (Appendix A) was administered to each participant as the commencement exercise of the rating session. The first design element of the questionnaire was intended to enable the researcher to identify all of the eligible and viable participants to be included in the present study. As conditions precedent to participation, each prospective participant was required to be of majority age and to be able to speak and recognize spoken English. Accordingly, the questionnaire includes questions intended to disclose each participant's age and information regarding his or her English use (see Appendix A, questions 1, 6, and 7). Additionally, the questionnaire provided the researcher with personal information about the respondents' respective linguistic environments. This information was gleaned from responses to questions concerning native, second- or multiple, and generational

(parental) language knowledge and use (see Appendix A, questions 6, 7, 8, and 9). For the purposes of this study, this author coined the term "accent exposure" to describe a category comprised of inquiries about place of birth, hometown residency and travel experience (see Appendix A, questions 4, 5, 11, and 12). In an effort to establish if a baseline attitude toward accents existed among the participants, each was asked to indicate whether or not he or she spoke with an accent, and if so, was asked to identify or label the perceived accent (see Appendix A, question 10). Overall, an effort was made to structure the queries in such a way as to elicit a reasonably broad scope of information that might be of use in later analyses or subsequent investigations.

2.3.2 *Tape-recorded Speech Samples*

A modification of the matched-guised technique, which has been used by Carranza and Ryan (1975), Ryan and Carranza (1975), Brennan and Brennan (1981), and Alford and Strother (1990) was the experimental technique utilized in the present study. The particular modification selected involves the use of speech samples recorded by speakers who are not only actually (or originally) from specific regions of the U.S., but also who are native speakers of the specific languages to be utilized. Unlike in the original MGT, all speakers speak with their normal accents. This alteration of the matched-guise technique allows for natural, rather than counterfeit or feigned, accents, which often generate the common stereotypes applied to speakers associated with a specific variety of language. The modified technique has the added advantage of preventing speakers from varying voice quality and style in an attempt to distinguish among the various accents (Alford & Strother, 1990).

Accordingly, stimuli for the present study consisted of the same tape-recorded English text read by four adult males (two with U.S. accents and two with European accents) and four adult females (two with U.S. accents and two with European accents). Each of the speakers represented one of the following eight accent groups: American-Prairie (Kansas female); British RP (England male); New England, USA (Massachusetts female); French (France female); Italian (Italy male); Spanish (Spain female); Great Lakes, USA (Michigan male); and Southern U.S. (Mississippi male). All recorded speech samples were obtained from the website of the International Dialects of English Archive ("IDEA") at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas (http://www.ukans.edu/~idea/). Each of the eight recordings were downloaded and then re-recorded onto a master tape. Each speaker read a passage entitled The Rainbow Passage (Appendix B), in English, as if he or she was reading aloud from a newspaper. The selected reading was obtained by the producers of the recordings from Fairbanks' (1960) voice and articulation drill book. This standard passage encompasses all sounds of English and can be read by most readers in 30 seconds or less. The tapes were piloted in an attempt to match the voices as closely as possible for voice qualities, strength of accent, and number of dysfluencies. The final master tape played the eight voices in the following order:

1. Italy male
2. Massachusetts female
3. England male
4. Spain female
5. Mississippi male

6. France female

7. Michigan male

8. Kansas female

The presentation of the stimulus material was accomplished by use of a third-generation recording on a Maxell Professional Communicator Series, 60-minute cassette tape, and delivered through a Sony compact stereo and cassette recorder.

2.3.3 *Semantic Differential Rating Scale (Questionnaire No. 2)*

The use of semantic differential scales to elicit attitudinal responses has been most prevalent in evaluation studies, although Likert-type items have been used to assess the belief components of language attitudes in a more 'direct' manner (see Agheyisi & Fisman, 1970; Ryan, Giles & Sebastian, 1982). Measurement instruments such as semantic differential scales have varied in the number of items contained in the instrument, the nature of the items selected, the procedures followed in item development, the directness of assessment, the complexity of the resulting scale analysis, and the type and number of factors said to underlie such evaluations (Zahn & Hopper, 1985). Thus, following Tucker and Lambert's (1969) suggestion that "to be most useful, the rating scales provided [to] listeners for evaluating speakers should be developed specifically for the sample of subjects to be examined" (p.464), an original semantic differential rating scale was developed for, and employed in, the present study (Appendix C).

The semantic differential rating scale is the primary instrument utilized in one approach to assessing language attitudes, referred to as the "speaker evaluation paradigm" (Ryan et al., 1988). This assessment method requires participants to

evaluate tape-recorded speakers without any description of the speakers in terms of social identifiers or direct labels. Since efforts are made to control other linguistic factors, these sorts of speaker evaluations are considered to reflect the listeners' underlying attitudes toward the target language variation. Consequently, this method presents an indirect way to reveal language attitudes that are considered more immediate and unmitigated as responses than are those reported on a survey questionnaire.

In order to create a suitable semantic differential rating scale for the present study, questionnaire items were gleaned from instruments used in previous research efforts. Through a process of elimination, items were narrowed to a list of 17 affective adjectives thought best to reflect the very traits, other than language, on which stereotypes ordinarily are based. From this inventory, the word-pairs selected were scrutinized in an effort to a) ensure that they were true opposites, b) that the word meanings would be obvious and understood by the eventual raters, and c) that the traits were reflective of attitude-based evaluations. Three items were discarded because they were repetitious. Five more were eliminated because they were not pertinent to personality aspects (e.g., big/little, young/old, strong/weak, etc.) In the end, a scale consisting of 13 bipolar pairs of descriptors was constructed (see Appendix C), which included the following traits:

pleasant to listen to / not pleasant to listen to

without accent / strong accent

easy to understand / difficult to understand

attractive / unattractive

honest / dishonest

helpful / unhelpful

friendly / unfriendly

intelligent / unintelligent

ambitious / unambitious

cooperative / uncooperative

active / inactive

dependable / undependable

non-aggressive / aggressive

All adjectives were chosen for their appropriateness to judgments of people, and were presented on the scale in a set order for every speaker.

These 13 attributes then were divided into two sections on the instrument. Section one of the rating scale was designed to measure a listener's perception of the acoustical aspects of the speech samples. It included a four-point rating scale to be used to record impressions of the voice (general sound) of each speaker, with the number 1 representing the positive pole and the number 4 representing the negative pole. The items on this scale pertain to qualities of pleasantness, accentedness and comprehensibility (see Appendix C). Section two of the rating scale was developed in an effort to address affective characteristics, that is, various personality features of the speakers. The ten descriptors selected for this section pertain to qualities of attractiveness, honesty, helpfulness, friendliness, intelligence, ambitiousness, cooperativeness, activeness, dependability, and aggressiveness. As in section one of the instrument, section two included a four-point rating scale to be used to record the

listener's judgments of the speaker. During the pilot study, strenuous objections were raised by many of the participants to the original design of this section of the instrument. They felt that the original four-point scale forced them to make judgments about certain aspects of the speakers' personalities, even when they felt they were unable to judge due to the limited sample provided. As a result, an additional "point" was added to the rating scale in section two. The point added was labeled "unable to judge", and was offered as a valid neutral response to all participants (see Appendix C). Each time this rating appeared in the data, it was treated for the purposes of calculation as a "missing value".

2.3.4 *Preference Probe (Questionnaire No. 3)*

A third and final questionnaire (Appendix D) was developed in an effort to generate qualitative data to add to the body of information to be analyzed, to confirm or clarify the quantitative data obtained, and in furtherance of the view held by a minority of social scientists (including this researcher) that, in the context of language attitudes research, at least, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data may provide a richer and more complete perspective of a listener's preferences. The first element of this questionnaire was designed to enable each participant to rank the accented speakers in order of the participant's general preference. It can be said to include both quantitative and qualitative components, and was included for two primary purposes. First, it was intended to be used to determine if any correlation existed between the rank ordering in this exercise and the favorability ratings previously made by the listeners on the semantic differential scales. Second, it was designed to elicit additional personal judgments, as an adjunct to oral instructions to the participants to record, in writing, any

cues, clues or remarks that would assist them in their efforts to determine their preferences. The oral instructions included a request that any such qualitative comments be noted in the white space of this instrument (see Appendix D) while the full master tape of speakers replayed without pause.

The second element of this instrument is comprised of a recognition task. Here, the participant is asked to indicate the "most easily identifiable accent" among those on the stimulus tape, and to label or identify the selected accent.

The remainder of this instrument was included to address issues raised during the pilot study. As previously mentioned, a number of the pilot study participants raised earnest concerns about any absolute requirement that every speaker be judged on every item. These concerns resulted in the addition of the "unable to judge" point to the semantic differential rating scale. The primary complaint about the original design was that the lack of a neutral response made the rating scale task "too difficult". Accordingly, the final two questions of this instrument were posed to determine each participant's measure of the difficulty or ease of this experiment, while possibly disclosing additional insight into the participants' perceptions and attitudes that led to his or her assessment of difficulty (see Appendix D, questions 3 and 4).

2.4 Procedure

Data collection was effected by means of three rating sessions in each of which a group of 17 to 20 students participated. Prior arrangements were made with a

university professor who volunteered access to three of his classes. Discussions with the professor included the mutual agreement that no extra credit, concessions or other benefits would be afforded to encourage participation. The researcher was introduced to each participating group by the class professor, who encouraged participation as a contribution to knowledge, and confirmed the voluntary nature of any participation. During the introductory segment of each rating session, prospective participants were informed that the experiment to follow involved, generally, the solicitation of their impressions of the personalities of certain people based on a limited amount of information.

To ensure compliance with applicable ethical standards, an "Informed Consent Form" (Appendix E) was provided to each prospective participant. The provisions of the Form were each discussed and, in view of the "captive" nature of the audience, the voluntary aspect of participation was emphasized repeatedly. Reviewing the Form with each group provision by provision, the researcher methodically explained the eligibility criteria, the nature and process of the data collection, and that each participant would be treated fairly and confidentially. Next, the Informed Consent Forms were signed, collected and reviewed for confirmation of signature.

After distribution of the research instruments, a detailed description of the entire exercise was presented and the instruments to be completed carefully explained. In keeping with prior studies (e.g., Brennan & Brennan, 1981; Gallois & Callan, 1981, Ryan, Carranza & Moffie, 1977), participants were asked to listen to and rate each tape-recorded speaker on the basis of voice cues alone, much like one might judge a person if he or she was talking on the telephone or listening to a person speaking on the radio.

Prior to the commencement of the actual rating session, the tape of a "practice speaker" was provided as an opportunity for the participants to become acquainted with the rating scale and overall course of action. This was strictly a simulation of the actual exercise and therefore no data collected during the practice activity was used.

After completion of the practice session, actual data collection began by the playing of the master recording. The master tape was paused for a period of one minute between speakers. During each pause, after each speaker finished reading the text, the participants were asked to complete the semantic differential scales. Even though the participants were advised that one minute was provided for completion of the rating scale, it was observed that every participant took considerably less time to complete this exercise. In fact, most participants had completed their respective speaker evaluations before each speech sample had finished its 30-second running time.

When all eight voices had been rated, the master tape was played again without pause or other interruption. During the replaying of the master tape, the participants were asked to make any notes they wished regarding each speaker's recording directly on the questionnaire, which could then be referred to as a tool in a subsequent ranking of the voices in terms of favorability. For this final activity, the participants were asked to rank their three favorite accents, in order of preference, from among the eight samples played.

2.5 Analyses

The data collected were analyzed by recording each participant's reaction to each speaker in a numerical index for each accent group. This index was obtained by

finding the mean and standard deviation for each trait for each speaker. In an effort to explore the primary personality dimensions the participants might be utilizing in making their judgments, the semantic differential ratings for all speakers were subjected to and examined with relationship analysis, more specifically, a correlation matrix available through the Excel software program.

2.6 Summary

A quasi-experiment in which the attitudes of an American audience toward accented English in the U.S. was conducted. The research program was based on the historical reliability of the MGT, but included a common modification. Additionally, this novice research was centered in the speaker evaluation paradigm and was augmented with a qualitative instrument. As an investigative study of language attitudes, the 13 individual (personality) traits were treated as independent variables where the dependent variable was the favorability rating on the semantic differential rating scale. This overall design allowed the researcher to not only explore any correlations that might be found, but also to expose any already existing attitudes toward accented English in the United States.

Chapter Three: Results and Discussion

3.1 Overview

The following sections of this chapter report and display the findings of the present study, which were obtained through various analyses of the data collected in efforts to answer the three research questions posed. In each section, the research question is clearly stated and the presentation of the pertinent results includes descriptive and statistical information.

An interpretation and discussion of the particular findings immediately follows each presentation. The results obtained in the present study lead to three areas of discussion: a) consideration of evaluative reactions, b) dimensional models of speech and social perceptions, and c) group differences.

3.2 Evaluative Reactions

Previous studies have shown that the accent of a speaker's voice influences how his or her personality is evaluated by others. In the present study, 53 collegiate raters produced evaluative reactions to eight speakers on 13 adjective pairs on a scale ranging from 1.00 (favorable) to 4.00 (unfavorable). Each sample speaker received a score for each attribute, which was calculated by averaging the ratings applied by every participant to that attribute. The mean ratings along with standard deviations and sample sizes are presented in Table 1. The most favorable score for each attribute is indicated in bold italics.

TABLE 1
Participants' Mean Ratings of Characteristics of Accented English Speakers

	Statistics	Italy Male	Massachusetts Female	England Male	Spain Female	Mississippi Male	France Female	Michigan Male	Kansas Female
Pleasant	*M*	2.94	3.15	2.07	3.22	2.19	3.04	***1.84***	2.24
	sd	.84	.87	1.08	.84	.94	.97	.81	.99
	n	53	53	53	53	53	53	53	53
Accent	*M*	3.57	2.26	3.58	3.07	3.21	3.83	***1.32***	1.73
	sd	.74	.94	.84	1.07	.86	.54	.54	.71
	n	53	53	53	53	53	53	53	53
Understandable	*M*	3.13	2.20	2.37	3.66	1.47	3.47	***1.16***	1.33
	sd	.83	.84	.90	.55	.57	.60	.50	.51
	n	53	53	53	53	53	53	53	53
Attractive	*M*	2.67	3.19	2.24	2.41	2.57	2.19	***2.11***	2.35
	sd	.89	.82	.95	1.09	.88	.99	.83	.90
	n	43	47	45	41	46	47	42	45
Honest	*M*	2.22	1.84	1.84	1.92	1.65	2.02	1.61	***1.52***
	sd	.85	.76	.79	.79	.66	.86	.60	.58
	n	41	45	45	37	48	42	47	46
Helpful	*M*	2.45	2.06	1.85	2.48	1.59	2.53	1.59	***1.46***
	sd	.86	.83	.75	1.04	.57	.97	.57	.61
	n	42	48	47	44	51	47	49	49
Friendly	*M*	2.08	2.29	2.04	2.04	2.10	2.29	2.00	***1.80***
	sd	.80	1.05	.97	.89	1.12	.94	.86	.86
	n	50	52	49	46	52	51	52	52
Intelligent	*M*	2.35	2.62	***1.55***	2.84	2.56	2.49	1.58	2.40
	sd	.73	.57	.79	.81	.86	.85	.75	.77
	n	46	47	49	43	45	43	50	47
Ambitious	*M*	2.05	2.61	1.76	2.57	2.07	2.32	***1.71***	2.35
	sd	.77	.78	.65	.88	.86	.88	.75	.71
	n	41	38	42	35	45	40	46	45
Cooperative	*M*	2.02	2.06	1.93	2.14	2.02	2.04	1.93	***1.73***
	sd	.70	.92	.87	.95	.83	.80	.75	.63
	n	47	49	46	42	48	47	48	49
Active	*M*	2.49	2.96	2.21	2.69	2.11	2.43	***1.97***	2.60
	sd	.73	.78	.84	.92	.93	.81	.81	.91
	n	37	46	42	36	45	44	45	45
Dependable	*M*	2.36	2.27	2.00	2.32	1.94	2.33	***1.71***	1.82
	sd	.71	.89	.88	.84	.89	.95	.75	.76
	n	44	44	44	38	47	45	46	47

Non-aggressive	*M*	2.02	1.55	1.91	***1.51***	2.27	1.64	2.52	1.57
	sd	.86	.76	.92	.81	1.00	.69	.96	.76
	n	50	49	47	45	48	50	48	49
Overall	*M*	2.51	2.38	2.14	2.57	2.13	2.54	**1.77**	1.91
	sd	.92	.96	1.00	1.06	.96	1.03	.81	.85
	n	600	624	615	566	639	615	632	633

The first research question posed in Chapter Two of this thesis is: which accent group is most/least favored? In order to answer that question, a mean "favorableness score" for each sample speaker representing his or her respective accent group was computed using the data set forth in Table 1. The results indicate that the Michigan Male speaker was the most favored, with a mean favorableness score of 1.77. The female speaker from Spain was the least favored, with a mean favorableness score of 2.57. The favorability outcome for all of the eight speakers is delineated in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Speakers' Mean Favorableness and Favorability Ranking

Speaker	**Mean Favorableness Score**	**Favorability Ranking (based on Mean Ratings)**
Michigan Male	1.77	Most Favored
Kansas Female	1.91	2nd
Mississippi Male	2.13	3rd
England Male	2.14	4th
Massachusetts Female	2.38	5th
Italy Male	2.49	6th
France Female	2.53	7th
Spain Female	2.57	Least Favored

3.2.1 *Evaluative Reactions Discussion*

A major preoccupation of Americans is the belief that some varieties of English are not as good as others. It is a belief widely applied by Americans to ethnic speakers, minorities, rural people, and even well-educated speakers of some regional varieties (Preston, 2000). In view of this, one might speculate that U.S. English

speakers would provide homogeneous responses regarding various dialect or accent groups without the added impetus of listening to a tape. Such speculation would be warranted because of the well-established existence of strong cultural biases based on both personal experience and impressions imprinted from existing stereotypes. Such a view also would be confirmed by those studies that have demonstrated a tendency for listeners to favor those language varieties identical or closest to their own, while downgrading those varieties that are considered most divergent from their own (Tucker & Lambert, 1969). At first glance, the results of the evaluative ratings produced by the American audience employed in the present study confirm this tendency, especially in view of the selection of the Michigan Male as the most favored and the selection of the Spain Female as the least favored. Perhaps the most compelling reason for the favorableness rating given to the Michigan Male is seen in his mean rating of accentedness (a rating of 1.32, where 1.00 is considered "without accent"). While Michigan and Colorado are not in close proximity to one another, the speakers in both areas hold similar sensibilities of a leveled, unremarkable, but essentially standard speech. To illustrate, Preston (2000) found that "Michiganders" believe that they do not speak a dialect at all, and in the present study conducted with Colorado university students, more than 81% reported that they did not speak with any accent whatsoever. Therefore, it is not surprising that the affinity for the Michigan Male surfaced in the results.

What is surprising in the favorability results is the fact that the Spain Female was evaluated more negatively than any other speaker. While the country of Spain is certainly a far distance from the state of Colorado, Hispanics (native Spanish speakers)

represent a large and highly visible accented-English-speaking immigrant group in Colorado. Consequently, one might assume that those who speak with a Hispanic accent would be more favorably rated by those listeners accustomed to or familiar with that accent group. Clearly, this was not the case among the participants in this study, and is reminiscent of the results found in prior evaluative reaction research done in the United States that employed Mexican-Americans (both native Spanish and native English speakers) and Anglo-Americans (white native English speakers). In these studies, a pervasive and systematic downgrading of the nonstandard speech varieties was found. In other words, the Spanish accented English and the Mexican-American accented English evoked negative stereotypes and thus, were not seen as favorable except on certain dimensions[4] (see Carranza & Ryan, 1975; Ryan et al., 1977; Brennan & Brennan, 1981).

As reported in Lippi-Green's (1997) work, the standard language ideology is implicitly and explicitly supported by the information industry, more specifically, the broadcast news industry. Therefore, it follows that most people in the U.S. consider "network standard" (that English language variety identified with journalists and broadcasters) to be the most acceptable accent since it is considered both regionally and socially neutral. Furthermore, many native speakers of U.S. English consider the Midwestern accent to be closest to this network model, a finding supported by a survey conducted by Strother and Alford (1989). This is interesting and pertinent to the present study in that the second most favored speaker was the female from Kansas. This Midwestern speaker received more favorable ratings than the Michigan Male on

[4] Dimensional aspects of language attitude research are discussed in section 3.3.1

five of the 13 characteristics. In addition, she received more positive ratings than any other speaker, other than the Michigan Male. It is worth noting that, together, these two "neutral" or "un-accented" speakers were afforded the most favorable ratings on 11 out of the 13 attributes. These ratings not only exemplify, but also support and confirm the notion of judges favoring language varieties (or elements of language varieties) that are closest to their own. In this case, "their own" is clearly perceived as a standard, accentless variety. This outcome, in conjunction with the unfavorability ratings afforded the Spain Female speaker, implies that the Americans who participated in the present study possess inert evaluation patterns, that is, static attitudinal biases and stereotypes against any accented English or foreign-sounding speech in the U.S., in spite of the currently changing demographics in their country.

3.3 Personality Dimensions

The second research question to be investigated was stated as "What primary personality dimensions are revealed in the favorability ratings?" Traditionally, the answer to this type of question is obtained through the assessment of correlations between measures, or predicting one measure from another, where the measurement overlap is seen as the extent to which measures of different variables are measuring something in common. Factor analysis is the statistical procedure applied for this purpose. This procedure aids in answering a common research question, that is: Given a relatively large number of variables, does their measurement overlap, indicating that there may be fewer, more basic, and unique variables underlying this larger number? The factor analytic procedure takes the variance defined by the intercorrelations among

a set of measures and attempts to allocate it in terms of fewer underlying hypothetical variables. These hypothetical variables are called factors.

Unfortunately, due to the small number of participants in the present study (N=53), a limitation more fully discussed in Chapter Four, it was determined that a factor analysis solution would not yield significantly reliable or valid results. Therefore, in the present study, efforts to determine if there is an interpretable underlying structure which can be found in the relationships among the variables were advanced by utilizing an examination of correlation matrices. All correlational analyses were performed using the Analysis ToolPak-VBA available through Excel 2000 software. In the first phase of analysis, correlation coefficients were inspected item-measure by item-measure to see what each measure had in common with each other measure. From a broader perspective, the ways in which the 13 item-measures tended to cluster about one another was considered. Given the hypothetical foundation on which these results are founded, one would expect that a number of the foregoing variables would be interrelated or intercorrelated.

For example, in the present study, it was hypothesized that the different measures involving the adjective pairs of pleasant to listen to/not pleasant to listen to, easy to understand/difficult to understand, attractive/unattractive, and friendly/unfriendly would probably be interrelated as evidenced by low to moderate inter-item correlations, perhaps reflecting some general aspect of the *appeal* of a speaker (and his or her speech). Similarly, it was expected that the variables or attributes of helpful/unhelpful, cooperative/uncooperative, and dependable/undependable would be related to each other and possibly suggest a concern

with qualities reflecting service to others, that is, the general characteristic of *accommodation.* Furthermore, the item correlations for the characteristics of ambitious/unambitious, active/inactive, intelligent/unintelligent, and honest/dishonest were assumed to exhibit similar magnitudes, as these items tend to be oriented toward a person's drive, desires and goals, which could be seen as *aspiration.*

In a larger study, these matrices of intercorrelations would be subjected to an exploratory factor analysis and the resulting factor matrix would indicate three principal dimensions of common variance found in the analysis. However, in the present study, the knowledge that such a small sample size would unlikely produce statistically significant results from a factor analysis, and that the estimation of correlations would be biased, restricts the presentation of these results. Consequently, only the magnitude and direction of the correlation coefficients (r) for each perceived correlation are presented in Table 3. The correlation coefficient indexes these two properties of a relationship.

The first property is the magnitude of the relationship, that is, the degree to which the variables vary together. The second property is the direction of the relationship, that is, whether the variables vary together directly (positively) or whether they vary inversely (negatively). The range of values for the coefficient itself is between +1.00 (a perfect positive correlation), and –1.00 (a perfect negative correlation). A correlation coefficient of zero means there is no correlation between the two variables. In the following table, cells containing low correlation coefficients representing definite but small relationships (.20-.40) have been shaded in gray. Moderate correlations demonstrating substantial relationships (.40-.70) are seen in cells

of reversed black and white text. To be consistent in the terminology used to describe the magnitude of the coefficients, the following guide set forth by Guilford (1956) was utilized.

< .20	slight; almost negligible relationship
.20 - .40	low correlation; definite but small relationship
.40 - .70	moderate correlation; substantial relationship
.70 - .90	high correlation; marked relationship
> .90	very high correlation; very dependable relationship

For the purposes of the present study, only correlation coefficient magnitudes of ± .30 or greater are considered and discussed.

TABLE 3
Matrix of Overall Intercorrelations

	Pleasant	*Accented*	*Understandable*	*Attractive*	*Honest*	*Helpful*	*Friendly*	*Intelligent*	*Ambitious*	*Cooperative*	*Active*	*Dependable*	*Non-aggressive*
Pleasant	1												
Accented	0.01	1											
Understandable	0.35	0.14	1										
Attractive	0.46	0.07	0.16	1									
Honest	0.23	0.18	0.1	0.24	1								
Helpful	0.37	0.16	0.22	0.24	0.45	1							
Friendly	0.21	0.02	0.17	0.32	0.19	0.23	1						
Intelligent	0.35	0.04	0.14	0.25	0.21	0.27	0.36	1					
Ambitious	0.25	0.22	0.11	0.24	0.28	0.33	0.12	0.36	1				
Cooperative	0.25	0	0.17	0.16	0.27	0.23	0.4	0.29	0.1	1			
Active	0.23	0.07	0.01	0.26	0.25	0.23	0.13	0.16	0.41	0.04	1		
Dependable	0.21	-0.02	0.23	0.29	0.32	0.28	0.38	0.29	0.15	0.5	0.11	1	
Non-aggressive	0.13	-0.11	0.14	0.11	0.16	0.15	0.28	0.15	-0.13	0.27	-0.18	0.27	1

3.3.1 *Personality Dimensions Discussion*

Certain similarities have emerged in the dimensions of evaluation and have been identified by a large number of previous researchers (e.g., Lambert et al., 1960; Hopper & Williams, 1973; Carranza & Ryan, 1975; Ryan et al., 1977). Dimensions labeled similarly to *competence*, *status*, *character*, *solidarity* and *dynamism* appear in the findings of a majority of these studies. Dimensions like *competence* share attributes or items such as intelligent/unintelligent, ambitious/unambitious, organized/disorganized and experienced /inexperienced. *Status* dimensions include items such as literate/illiterate, white-collar/blue-collar, rich/poor and other characteristics or items showing some amount of overlap with *competence* (e.g., intelligent/unintelligent, educated/uneducated). The dimensions alternately labeled *character*, *benevolence*, and *trustworthiness* share items such as honest/dishonest, kind/unkind, pleasant/unpleasant, friendly/unfriendly. These dimensions also share quite a few items with those labeled *attractiveness*, *solidarity*, *likeability* and *aesthetic quality*. A final dimension of *dynamism* includes items such as aggressive/non-aggressive, active/passive, and confident/unsure. It is important to note that, in every case, the interpretation of what each dimension or underlying factor means (and how it is labeled) is left to the subjective evaluation of the researcher.

Many of the earlier researchers who studied attitudinal consequences of ethnically and regionally determined language variation essentially were concerned with describing attitudinal differences attached to different forms of accent and dialect; they did not concern themselves ordinarily with explaining results or developing theories. A desire to explain such attitudinal consequences of language variation by

application of new or existing theories has surfaced recently in the literature. For example, theories that have been incorporated into studies of language attitudes for the purpose of explanation include "uncertainty-reduction theory" (Berger & Calabrese, 1975), the concept of "ethnolinguistic vitality" (Giles & Johnson, 1981), and "speech-accommodation theory" (SAT), originally articulated and developed by Giles (1973), which has been extolled as one of the most influential of the explanatory structures. The dimensions that were hypothesized in the present study are similar, in many ways, to those found or hypothesized in the earlier studies. Thus, this discussion will describe the relationships found between the various items and speculate about the dimensions that might be applicable as an explanatory framework by means of which these particular Americans' speech and speaker evaluations can be discussed more fully.

The first dimension hypothesized in the present study was thought to involve item-measures tapping into the acoustical and aesthetic aspects of a speaker, which included the attributes of pleasant to listen to/not pleasant to listen to, easy to understand/difficult to understand, attractive/unattractive, and friendly/unfriendly. This dimension was initially and hypothetically labeled *appeal*. From an examination of the correlations revealed in Table 3, it is evident that the item 'pleasant' is not only correlated with the attribute of 'understandable' (.35), but also with the attribute of 'attractive' (.46). However, the correlation between 'understandable' and 'attractive' is less than slight (.16), which, in this case, represents a negligible relationship. The remaining item or attribute that was anticipated to fall within this cluster or dimension was 'friendly'. Yet, through an inspection of all correlates with the item of 'pleasant', it is found that the characteristic 'helpful' is more highly correlated with 'pleasant'

(.37), than is the characteristic of 'friendly' (.21). Interestingly, out of this first dimension, the item 'friendly' only correlates in a definite way with one other of the attributes, that is, the attribute of 'attractive'. While some researchers might be inclined to include the attribute of 'friendly' in this hypothetical dimension of *appeal* based on its definite relationship with 'attractive' (.32), the correlation matrix indicates that 'friendly' is also correlated definitely with a number of the other attributes and exhibits greater magnitudes. These numerous and varied relationships suggest that 'friendly' may constitute a dimension in and of itself, or it may be considered a complex variable. The nature and destination of 'friendly' is discussed later in this section.

More immediate to this discussion point is the substantial relationship seen between 'pleasant' and 'helpful', as evidenced by the correlation coefficient magnitude of .37. It was hypothesized that the trait 'helpful' would be correlated with others that might load highly on a second dimension or factor called *accommodation.* However, its clustering with aspects of *appeal* in the present study might have some basis lying within the theory of "communicative burden" as explained by Lippi-Green (1997). Most models of the communicative act are based on the principle of mutual responsibility, in which participants in a conversation collaborate in the establishment of new information. That is, in human interaction, both the listener and the speaker should share responsibilities so that communication takes place. However, often a speaker who uses a non-mainstream accent or language variety carries the entire "communicative burden", and the member of the dominant language group feels justified to reject his or her role as a listener (Lippi-Green, 1997).

In the present study, the correlations that exist among the attributes of 'pleasant', 'attractive' and 'understandable' appear to form a dimension accurately identified as *appeal*. That is, if a sufficient number of participants had been involved to justify reasonably the performance of a factor analysis of these intercorrelations, one would expect that these three attributes would load highly on a factor representing some quality of *appeal*. What was not anticipated, however, was the appearance of the attribute 'helpful' within this group of intercorrelations. The inclusion of that attribute in the *appeal* dimension may reflect the common penchant of many American English speakers to see the attributes contained within the *appeal* cluster as being 'helpful' to their role as listeners. In other words, a speaker determined by the participants to be 'pleasant sounding', 'attractive' and 'understandable' also might be viewed as 'helpful' to the extent such attributes facilitate or even relieve the American listener of his or her share of the communicative burden.

The next hypothetical dimension to be discussed is the one previously identified as *accommodation*. The hypothesized items in this dimension include the attribute pairs of cooperative/uncooperative, dependable/undependable, and, as mentioned earlier, helpful/unhelpful. For this second hypothetical dimension, the data in Table 3 reflect a substantial relationship between 'cooperative' and 'dependable', revealing a correlation coefficient magnitude of .50. In fact, this relationship constitutes the highest correlation among all of the attributes discussed in this study. In view of the stronger correlation among 'helpful' and the attributes constituting the *appeal* cluster discussed above, and its minimal correlation with the traits of 'dependable' (.23) and 'cooperative' (.23), the 'helpful' attribute does not cluster with the other attributes of the *accommodation*

dimension, and is properly included in the *appeal* dimension, and therefore, excluded here.

However, another important and somewhat surprising correlation in the *accommodation* dimension appears between 'dependable' and 'friendly' (.38) and 'cooperative' and 'friendly' (.40). Although the initial hypotheses anticipated the inclusion of 'friendly' within the *appeal* cluster, an examination of the applicable correlations suggests that it belongs here, in the hypothetical *accommodation* dimension. In other words, in this dimension, a very strong correlation exists between 'cooperative' and 'dependable', with a definite and a substantial correlation between those two attributes and 'friendly', respectively. Therefore, these apparent correlations confirm the suitability of forming the hypothetical dimension of *accommodation*, now comprised of the attributes of 'dependable', 'cooperative' and 'friendly'. The high degree of correlation between 'dependable' and 'cooperative' (.50) is somewhat predictable, in that both of these descriptors may have been perceived by the participants as measuring the same general attribute. It is further obvious that both of these attributes demonstrate some characteristic of accommodation. However, the reason for the additional correlation with the attribute of 'friendly' is not so readily apparent.

Perhaps, the inclusion of the 'friendly' attribute in the *accommodation* dimension might be explained, at least in part, by an extension of the same concept discussed in the context of the *appeal* dimension, that is, the concept of "communicative burden". The concept of sharing communicative responsibility echoes the notion of "mutual accommodation", an issue studied most commonly in

multicultural education (Kubota, 2001). The primary tenet of this theory states that, in a community that promotes monoculturalism and monolingualism, the dominant group forces the dominated group to accommodate and acquire the dominant way of life. The American society is replete with this kind of accommodation or assimilation advocacy on every level. It is not uncommon to hear linguistic, personal and cultural admonishments for non-conformity or non-compliance being issued by members of the dominant group to legitimate citizens, immigrants and tourists alike.

According to Kubota (2001), "the stereotypes and biases against non-mainstream languages held by members of a dominant language group are constructed by the discourses and social practices that surround them" (p. 49). The examples of such discourses appearing in Lippi-Green's (1997) work on language subordination are indicative of this implied or direct control. An adherence to the American insistence upon language assimilation is likewise apparent from the anecdotal evidence she provides. As one student observed, "I signed up for this chemistry course but dropped it when I saw the Teaching Assistant. I shouldn't have to have TAs who can't speak English natively" (p.72). Another commented, "You can speak your own language, you can have your own way, but don't force someone else to have to suffer and listen to it...if you want to speak Black with your friends, that's fine. But don't insult someone else's ears by making them listen to it" (p. 72). In addition to these examples of language domination and discrimination, other efforts and accomplishments of assimilation are ubiquitous in every area of the American society.

Hence, this notion of mutual accommodation may help explain the presence of the 'friendly' item in this cluster of correlated attributes representing *accommodation.*

That is to say that Americans are seen, generally, as friendly people, sometimes exhibiting such a projected and enthusiastic friendliness that their exuberance is viewed with suspicion or skepticism. When encountering American gregariousness, some even think of such sociability as insincere or facetious. Despite these doubts, Americans have an undeniable reputation for friendliness, which extends to, and infiltrates, their social environment. To illustrate, Americans can be heard using the term 'friendly' to describe activities (as in a friendly game of poker), locations or spaces (a house that is completely pet-friendly), and even information contained in a computer program (software that is very user-friendly). There is even a national restaurant chain called "Friendly's". At any rate, to be friendly is a highly valued personality characteristic in the American society and is pursued and praised so vehemently that it could be deemed as part of the American "way of life". In fact, this attribute is so emphasized that many "self-help" books published in America offer advice on how to be (more) friendly. Perhaps the most enduring and reputable example of this is the best-selling book, "How to Win Friends and Influence People" (Carnegie, 1936). Therefore, when this inclusion of the attribute of 'friendly' in the hypothetical dimension called *accommodation* is viewed through the lens of mutual accommodation, a philosophy "foreign" to most Americans, it is not surprising to find a major American attribute like 'friendly' in a cluster of characteristics suggesting accommodation.

A third and final dimension suggesting *aspiration* was hypothesized to reveal correlations among the attribute pairs of active/inactive, ambitious/unambitious, intelligent/unintelligent, and honest/dishonest. As evidenced in the correlation matrix (Table 3), the traits identified as 'active' and 'ambitious' reflect a correlation coefficient

magnitude of .41, which is considered as a moderate correlation reflective of a substantial relationship. While 'intelligent' and 'ambitious' have a lower correlation (.36), a definite relationship is still indicated. Although it was expected that the attribute of 'honest' would fall within this hypothetical dimension of *aspiration*, it did not correlate with the other attributes to any material degree. However, from an examination of the attributes that do correlate with 'honest', a substantial relationship is found between 'honest' and 'helpful' (.45), and a definite relationship is found between 'honest' and 'dependable' (.32). Initially, one might be tempted to form another hypothetical dimension consisting of these three attributes. However, in the present study, the item 'helpful' has been already attributed to the first dimension, *appeal*, and is supported by its relationship with the other attributes in that cluster. Also, as previously demonstrated, the attribute of 'dependable' is securely embedded in the second dimension, *accommodation*, an allocation evidenced by the correlates contained in that cluster. In view of the lack of any meaningful correlation involving the attribute of 'honest' among the other attributes of the *aspiration* dimension, a reexamination of the proper placement of that attribute is warranted.

From the correlation coefficient magnitudes presented here, it is apparent that there is a stronger relationship between 'honest' and 'helpful' (.45) than that appearing between 'honest' and 'dependable' (.32). In view of this substantial correlation, especially when considered in light of dimensions defined in previous research studies concerned, similarly, with the general concept of pleasantness (dimensions such as *attractiveness*, *solidarity* or *aesthetic quality*), which included the attribute of 'honest', 'honest' might be placed more appropriately in the present study's *appeal* dimension.

Therefore, for the purposes of this discussion, the attribute of 'honest' will be included in the first hypothetical dimension of *appeal.*

Perhaps the most serviceable manner in which to illustrate and explain the remaining hypothetical dimension on which these native English-speaking, American university student-participants based their attitudes and impressions of the accented English speakers is, once again, through the application of theory. With the recent inclusion of 'honest' in the first dimension, that cluster now contains 'pleasant', 'attractive', 'understandable', 'helpful' and 'honest'. The integrity of this hypothetical dimension remains intact and therefore can accurately continue to be labeled as *appeal.* The theory of communicative burden was applied to this dimension in order to explain the surprising revelation of 'helpful' in this cluster. The same theory may be employed again in much the same way to help justify 'honest' as one of this dimension's attributes. The second hypothetical dimension was formed by the attributes of 'cooperative', 'dependable' and 'friendly', which were considered to represent a general characteristic of *accommodation.* In this dimension, the theory of mutual accommodation was introduced in an effort to help explain the addition of an attribute not originally hypothesized as part of this dimension, that is, 'friendly'.

Accordingly, in this discussion of the proposed third dimension, *aspiration*, the theory of mutual accommodation is applied in an effort to explain how the cluster of the attributes, 'active', 'ambitious' and 'intelligent' might reveal a salient dimension of general American attitudes. Just as 'friendly' was recognized to be a definitive component in the American "way of life", the attributes that comprise the dimension of *aspiration* can be seen as essential and powerful aspects of the American lifestyle. In

fact, these three attributes are so interwoven within the American society that is difficult to conduct a comprehensive discussion about each one individually. Consequently, this dimension of *aspiration* is considered to be the core of the American value system and is discussed from that perspective.

In general, Americans usually conceive of activity as good, and any reluctance to "just do it" is interpreted as laziness or indifference. Americans routinely schedule an extremely active day, where even relaxation may be listed as an entry on one's daily agenda. This philosophy clearly encompasses the concept of American ambition, drive and productivity. To illustrate, Americans take great pride in having "climbed the ladder of success", to whatever level, especially when the success obtained can be attributed to personal accomplishment, that is, to the individual efforts of the persons, themselves. In fact, in an English language dictionary (Webster's New World Dictionary, 1988), there are more than 100 composite words that begin with the prefix *self*, many of which are commonly used by Americans such as *self*-confident, *self*-sufficient, *self*-concept, *self*-aware, and *self*- starter. Certainly, this "self-centered" ideology is an indicator of how highly Americans regard a *self*-made man or woman. To wax colloquial, a great many Americans aspire to the ideal of being "self-made" men and women, which is evidenced in their constant pursuit to "get ahead" and enjoy "sweet success". As a result, this intense ambition has created a nation of "workaholics" and "supermoms" who perpetuate this drive in their children by encouraging a quest for achievement and intelligence.

Intelligence (as the product of education) is viewed as the key to opportunity in America, and Americans take a proactive and pragmatic approach to gaining

intelligence. That is, what one may learn outside the classroom through camps, internships, extracurricular activities and the like is often considered as important as what is learned in the classroom. At the heart of the matter is a constant effort to increase national intelligence levels by offering and promoting all kinds of formal education. For instance, in America, there are preschools, Montessori schools, private and parochial schools; there are gifted, remedial, and afterschool programs; there are vocational, technical and corporate schools; there are junior colleges, community colleges and universities, all of which not only rely on, but also support the aspiration of Americans to be intelligent, as intelligence leads to success. This is demonstrated by the common American mantra, "knowledge is power".

Certainly, these are not the only attributes that are highly regarded by Americans, or upon which they place great importance. Several others exist that could be seen as synonymous to, or extensions of, this "core" of attributes that have hypothetically formed the dimension termed, *aspiration*. However, from the relationship analysis in the present study, it is evident that the American student-participants not only distinguished from among the 13 available items the three attributes of 'active', ambitious', and 'intelligent' as representing facets of *aspiration* but also, as in the argument presented above, indirectly confirmed strong beliefs that this notion of *aspiration* is a vital and influential concept in shaping the American way of life. Therefore, it follows that these findings might be better understood with an overlay of the mutual accommodation theory.

To reiterate, the accommodation theory states that, in an environment that promotes one culture and one language, the dominant group obliges the subjugated

group to accommodate and acquire the dominant way of life. Conversely, a multicultural society affirms cultural and linguistic differences and rejects one-way accommodation. This idea presents somewhat of a paradox when applied to the revelation of the present study's third dimension. Explicitly advanced throughout this thesis is the fact that the United States is no longer a monocultural or monolingual society and yet, there are obvious indications that one culture (the dominant and so-called "American culture") and one language (Standard American English) are being advocated and encouraged by this particular group of homogenous, mainstream young Americans. Once again, it appears that, as the dominant group, these Americans might be endorsing and expecting one-way accommodation from a very multifarious and populous nation.

This investigation, analysis and discussion of possible personality dimensions, while evidencing some inconsistency with the original hypotheses (see Table 4 below for final distribution and clustering of attributes), may denote an overall theoretical attitude of "absolute accommodation". To demonstrate, in the resulting first dimension it was determined that *appeal*ing attributes appear to be appreciated by Americans because, collectively, these qualities are thought to accommodate their perceived share of the communicative burden. In other words, for the American participants in the present study, the occurrence of this personality dimension may have been based on a supposed need for "audiolingual accommodation". That is, the value placed on these attributes not only enables certain American listeners to refuse their ordinary communicative responsibility, but also engages their attitude that, as the speakers of the dominant language, it is they who should be accommodated.

The second dimension, which was originally labeled *accommodation*, actually could be considered "personal accommodation", due to the inclusion of the attribute 'friendly'. As explained in the discussion of this dimension, Americans are easily offended when such a paramount feature of personality like being 'friendly' is not mirrored in their society. Therefore, it seems logical that they would desire and anticipate this element of personal accommodation from their fellow citizens. In short, the emergence of this hypothetical dimension may have resulted, once again, from the Americans' demands to be accommodated. In this case, the message is a personal one: "be like me – friendly".

Finally, the third dimension was explained as having attributes that constitute a concept of *aspiration*, which, in turn was deemed to represent a significant cultural dimension in the United States. Thus, when the present study's final dimension appeared to accompany a necessity for accommodation, it spoke volumes concerning the underlying attitudes of the sample population of collegiate-judges. In other words, this dimension of *aspiration* might have appeared as an impetus of "cultural accommodation", which seemed to be a natural and logical explanation and process for the appearance of a hypothesized dimension of *aspiration.*

Based upon this review of the three hypothetical dimensions, it is apparent that all demonstrate certain, specific aspects of the concept of "absolute accommodation" employed in the present study. Overall examination of participant input data implies that these particular Americans demonstrate the historical attitudes previously revealed in substantial prior research, that is, they confirm the notion that, if one does not speak fluent Standard American English and does not demonstrate the personal and cultural

accommodations expected in America, he or she must bear the burden of communicating with those that do. In short, it appears as if this small sample of Americans demonstrates the continuing existence of previously demonstrated stereotypical thinking, which has resulted in the American advocacy of absolute accommodation and the importance of requiring the rapid assimilation of all "others".

Accordingly, the following table is intended to demonstrate the differences between the original, hypothesized grouping of the personality attributes utilized and, for comparison purposes, the grouping of the attributes as suggested by the correlational data obtained. For convenience, the phrase "Triple A" framework was applied to describe, collectively, the overall hypothetical personality dimensions originally identified for the purposes of discussion as *appeal, accommodation* and *aspiration.* Likewise, the phrase "absolute accommodation" was applied to describe, collectively, the overall resulting personality dimensions (finally) identified as *audiolingual accommodation, personal accommodation* and *cultural accommodation.*

TABLE 4
Hypothesized and Final Personality Dimensions

"Triple A" Framework	Dimension 1 *Appeal*	Dimension 2 *Accommodation*	Dimension 3 *Aspiration*
Attributes Originally Hypothesized	Pleasant Understandable Attractive Friendly	Cooperative Dependable Helpful	Active Ambitious Intelligent Honest
"Absolute Accommodation" Framework	*Audiolingual Accommodation*	*Personal Accommodation*	*Cultural Accommodation*
Final Attribute Clusters	Pleasant Understandable Attractive Helpful Honest	Cooperative Dependable Friendly	Active Ambitious Intelligent

3.4 Rater Effects

From an analysis of the personal information sheets completed by the student-judges, it was found that every participant reported using English 100% of the time. However, 52% of the participants also reported being able to speak at least one other language, and of those respondents, 82% reported an ability to speak Spanish. All 53 participants lived in and around the Boulder area, with an average length of residency of slightly more than four years (4.15 years -- the traditional duration of an American university undergraduate degree program). When asked about experiences in other countries, over 90% of the participants had visited another country, whereas less than 20% claimed to have lived in another country. A very interesting demographic of this sample population was their accentedness. Only 10 out of the 53 raters perceived themselves as speaking with an accent when speaking English.

These descriptive statistics aided in the identification of two separate sub-groups from the sample population. The first sub-group was comprised of those ten participants who identified themselves as being accented speakers. The second sub-group was comprised of particular participants who were determined, by the application of three classifying criteria, to have enjoyed exposure to accented speech. The criteria used to classify members of the second sub-group were: 1) reported ability to speak a second language, 2) experience in visiting other countries, and 3) experience in living in other countries. In order to be included in this sub-group, a participant was required to meet all three of the qualifying criteria. These two sub-groups were utilized in an effort

to answer the third research question, which seeks to determine the effects of raters' accentedness and exposure to accents on the favorability ratings.

The mean favorableness scores of each speaker as rated by each of these sub-groups are presented in Table 5, and demonstrate that, overall, the Michigan Male speaker remained the most favored while the Spain Female continued to be the least favored. Hence, the examination of these two sub-groups indicated no significant effect on the overall favorability ratings. However, when comparing the evaluations made by the full group of raters to those made by the sub-groups, results from the accented raters demonstrated less favorable evaluations of six out of the eight speakers (including the Michigan Male and all four accent group representatives from outside the U.S. borders). Conversely, the group of exposed raters produced more favorable evaluations of six out of the eight speakers (also including the favored Michigan Male, but not the least favored Spain Female).

TABLE 5
Comparison of Mean Favorableness Scores by Group

	N Size	Italy Male	Massachusetts Female	England Male	Spain Female	Mississippi Male	France Female	Michigan Male	Kansas Female
Accented Raters	10	2.61	2.37	2.28	**2.65**	2.06	2.52	**1.93**	2.18
Exposed Raters	10	2.25	2.50	1.83	**2.71**	2.12	2.33	**1.60**	1.79
All Raters	53	2.49	2.38	2.14	**2.64**	2.13	2.53	**1.77**	1.91

3.4.1 *Rater Effects Discussion*

As previously discussed, in addition to their status as members of the study group as a whole, some of the participants could be classified readily into two sub-groups. The first of the two sub-groups is comprised of "accented" raters, that is, those who expressed the opinion that they speak some variety of accented English. The second sub-group consisted of raters who, based upon prior living and traveling experiences, have been classified as participants who have been exposed more than others in the group, to accented speech, and are referred to in this study as "exposed" raters. It should be noted that each of these sub-groups contained only ten participants, each, and cannot be viewed scientifically as an adequate sample size for statistically significant results (see Chapter 4 for additional discussion regarding this limitation). Therefore the results are discussed on a hypothetical basis, only. Although it was anticipated that the members of both of these sub-groups, by virtue of their own language variations and multicultural exposure, would be likely to produce more favorable ratings of accented speakers, the results obtained do not support that general hypothesis.

Rather than demonstrating the expected magnanimity toward accented speech anticipated at the onset of this study, the raters in the "accented" sub-group registered less favorable evaluations of the accented speakers than those reported by the participant group as a whole. Remarkably, the accented sub-group assigned less than favorable ratings to six out of the eight speakers. As reflected in the personal data reported by these participants, all of the accented raters believed themselves to speak English with a U.S. regional accent. Interestingly, this sub-group, unlike the full group

of raters, gave the Michigan male and each of the four, non-U.S. accented speakers their lowest ratings. However, upon reflection, it may be that the higher ratings made by this group could be viewed to confirm the existence of established American stereotypes. Specifically, the highest ratings given by members in this subgroup were assigned to the Massachusetts female and the Mississippi male. It is pertinent that one-third of this subgroup, or three members, was comprised of students from the New England geographical region (where Massachusetts is located), and two-thirds of the group, or seven members, were from the Southern United States (where Mississippi is located). These ratings may serve to confirm the historical penchant of American listeners to rate most favorably those who speak with an accent close or identical to that of the rater. Conversely, they may demonstrate a tendency to give lower ratings to those who speak with accents that are different from or foreign to those of the raters.

Unlike the first sub-group of "accented" raters, the second sub-group of "exposed "raters produced more favorable ratings for six out of the eight speakers evaluated, including the Michigan Male, the speaker most favored by the entire research group, and all four of the speakers from outside the United States. The favorable ratings issued by this group, however, did not extend to the Spain Female, the speaker least favored by the entire sample population as well as this sub-group. While the low ratings assigned to the Spain Female may reflect some local cultural bias against the large population of Spanish-speaking persons residing in the area where this study was conducted, the favorable ratings assigned to all four of the ethnic-accented speakers more readily could be seen to demonstrate the strong possibility that prior exposure to speakers of accented English, and perhaps experience visiting or living in a culture

outside of the geographical confines of the United States, may serve to generate a more favorable, even accepting, view of those exhibiting accented speech.

Hence, in answer to the research question regarding the effects of raters' accentedness and raters'exposure to accents on the favorability ratings generated, the results may be viewed as mixed. The ratings recorded for the accented sub-group may be viewed as indicative of the existing stereotypes assigned by Americans to those speaking accented English, as revealed in prior speech-evaluation research. However, the ratings made by the exposed sub-group help support the notion that exposure to accented speakers and their cultures may help to counteract any such negative and pre-conceived American attitudes and stereotypes. These speculations may add some credence to the proposed and subsequent development of the type of intervention study more fully described in the next Chapter of this thesis.

3.5 Summary

In summary, this chapter presents and discusses the results obtained in this study in the context of the three research questions posed in Chapter 2. Conceptually, the questions are aimed at determining, in part, whether the stereotypical American attitudes toward accented English in the U.S. still exist or are changing or diminishing as the United States population becomes more culturally diverse. Further, it was hoped that an examination and reporting of the results of this study would assist in exploring the nature of the elements upon which the raters based their attitudes and impressions. Overall, the results obtained are consistent with Edwards' (1979) theoretical proposition

that most language attitudes research would be more accurately described as studies of attitudes toward speakers of language varieties.

Specifically, the evaluative reactions generated by this study support the conclusion reached by Tucker and Lambert (1969), that is, listeners demonstrate a tendency to embrace and favor language varieties closest or identical to their own language varieties while, at the same time, reveal a negative attitude toward language varieties that differ from their own. The relationship analyses performed on the data obtained revealed three primary hypothetical personality dimensions, each containing a number of the personality attributes judged. These dimensions, identified for the purposes of this study as those reflecting qualities of *appeal*, *accommodation* and *aspiration*, can be justifiably equated with similar, although differently labeled, dimensions revealed in prior language attitude studies. Moreover, through the application of particular research theories, the three dimensions were shown to reflect a conceptual affinity. The affinity revealed by the application of the theories employed was identified in the present study as the concept of "absolute accommodation" and served as a useful structure in explaining the elements upon which the attitudes of the American participants may have been based.

Additionally, two sub-groups contained within the sample population were identified. The two sub-groups, identified as "accented" raters and "exposed" raters, produced results which offer some support to the continuing existence of American stereotypes disclosed in the course of previous research studies, while, at the same time, offering some evidence that exposure to other languages and cultures may lead to a wider acceptance of those speaking accented English. Collectively, the results found in

the present study indicate that, despite rapid changes in the demographics of the American population, previously demonstrated stereotypes arising from accented speech may still be prevalent. Consequently, further investigation of remedial education efforts designed to alter such stereotypes may be warranted and productive.

Chapter Four: Conclusions and Implications

4.1 Overview

This final chapter presents the general conclusions reached through the analysis of the data obtained in the present study, discusses the implications of such conclusions, and recommends a remedial course of action for future research. Additionally, this chapter details the limitations arising from the design and the methodological execution of this exploratory research study of language attitudes.

4.2 Findings

The conclusions reached in this study confirm that stereotypes assigned to accented speakers by American listeners are still present despite the fact that the global spread of English has generated many new and emerging forms of the English language in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, idioms, and styles of discourse, even within the borders of the United States. In fact, America is facing increased cultural and linguistic diversity in various social settings. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of foreign-born people living in the U. S. doubled between 1970 and 1995, from 4.8 percent to 8.7 percent, and millions of people residing in the U.S. are nonnative speakers of English who use other languages in their homes and personal lives (Lippi-Green, 1997). It was hoped that this cultural evolution in America would have served to have diluted its cultural traditions of ethnocentrism and led to the adoption of a more inclusive perspective of English speakers, regardless of accent, thus implying that Americans might have begun to accept the challenges that the growing pervasiveness of English has presented them.

The outcome of this study, however, does not confirm this optimistic hypothesis. The participants in this study disclosed strong preferences not only for the American English speakers, generally, but also especially for those they perceived to use standard, "un-accented" American English. The results of this study further demonstrate the prevalence of an attitude among these American participants, an attitude proclaiming that it is **they** who should be accommodated audiolingually, personally and culturally in the context of human interactions. Also, it is apparent from the findings that only the ten "exposed" raters demonstrated any sensitivity to the linguistic diversity exemplified by the eight speech samples used as stimuli in this investigation.

Overall, the conclusions reached from this contemporary exploration of American attitudes toward accented English denote a consistency with the body of research that has previously demonstrated this sense of xenophobia and accompanying negative attitudes, especially among Americans.

4.3 Limitations

The research goal of determining the extent to which the American society, a society which, historically, has been strongly monolingual and Anglophile in its attitudes, has or has not progressed in terms of its penchant to assign, uphold and perpetuate stereotypes and biases against the many speakers of accented or varietal English would appear to have been met. However, a few problems remain. As Voltaire (1819) has advised, one "...shouldn't let the need for perfection stifle good work; there's no such thing as a perfect study; there's no such thing as a perfect society..."(p. 608). In keeping with this admonition, the present study, although having some

limitations, was conducted independently in good faith and with an emphasis on honesty and impartiality.

Perhaps the best place to begin is with a discussion of the complications encountered in the assembly, reproduction and use of the stimuli. According to Thomas (2002), the vast majority of speech evaluation experiments use real voices, often generated in the course of study-related interviews, as the most desirable stimuli bases, especially when compared to artificially generated or synthesized speech samples (text-to-speech). However, many investigations, like the present study, must utilize speech samples, which, for the purposes of convenience, accessibility and uniformity, are typically the products of read and recorded speech. In view of the difficulty in obtaining samples from various regional American English speakers in Montreal, it was necessary for the purposes of this study to rely upon speech samples obtained from the website of the International Dialects of English Archive, or "IDEA", maintained by the University of Kansas (http://www.ukans.edu/~idea/index2.html), a repository of primary source recordings.

The text read by the speakers (see Appendix B) providing the speech samples utilized in this study was selected and originally recorded by IDEA for use by actors and other artists in the performing arts. The speech samples obtained were not ideal for this study for two reasons. First, because of the variations in reading fluency among the speakers providing samples, it is possible that, when using such stimuli, spurious language variation may occur. Such unanticipated variations may attract or distract the attention of the listener to such an extent that listener biases may be generated toward other variables appearing in the sample unrelated to the variables under investigation--

in this study, the accent of the speaker. Second, when speech samples are obtained from a third-party source, the researcher has no control over the degree to which a speaker's dialect is strongly marked. Although it may be advantageous to use speech samples from speakers who show exceptionally strong traits of the dialect under study, the speech sample selected may not truly typify the speech community it is intended to represent and, thus, an unwanted bias may be introduced into the study.

Additionally, both the recording equipment and listening equipment used, necessarily, in the course of this investigation, were lacking in the following respects. The equipment used to record the speech samples from the IDEA website was the same as that used in the presentation of the stimuli tape. Judging from the comments received from the participants in both the pilot and present studies, the sound quality of the equipment used "...could have been better." As a result, the machine and background noises arising from the use of the third-generation samples employed may have hindered, interrupted or impacted upon the reception by the listeners of the speakers' actual voices. Hence, it is possible that the accuracy of the responses obtained may have been affected.

Next, a discussion of the shortcomings in the design and development of the instruments used in this study is warranted. The first problem encountered in this regard arose from the arrangement of the item pairs selected for use in the original design of the semantic differential scales. As previously discussed, the pairs used were bipolar, containing a positive and negative pole for each item, such as 'without accent' (positive pole)/ 'strong accent' (negative pole) and 'honest' (positive)/ 'dishonest' (negative). A four-point scale was used in this study. However, the number 1

represented the positive pole in eight of the adjective pairs employed, while the number 4 represented the positive pole in the remaining five pairs. This original design was based upon reference to the instrument design used previously in similar studies (e.g., Gallois & Callan, 1981). This inconsistency required additional instruction to the participants to ensure that the inconsistencies in the item list were noted and did not impact inadvertently upon the results obtained. Additionally, in most studies, unlike in the present study, the higher number appearing on the scale indicates the most positive response. These inconsistencies served to require greater care and additional steps in subsequent data entry. In retrospect, to ensure consistency of response and to facilitate data entry and analysis, it would have been more helpful to begin each pair systematically with the positive pole, using the higher number as indicative of the most positive response.

Another limitation in the semantic differential rating scale arose from what might have been a somewhat overzealous attempt to correct an alleged defect in the instrument identified by some of the participants in the pilot study. It is important to note that the pilot study was conducted at McGill University in Montreal utilizing an internationally diverse group of graduate student participants, while the research study was conducted at the University of Colorado at Boulder utilizing a less ethnically diverse group of undergraduate students. In fact, the present research study group was comprised of 53 participants of American origin. During the pilot study, the graduate students participating complained rather enthusiastically about the lack of a neutral or 'inability to judge' response option. Accordingly, such a response option was added to the scale used in the present study to ensure that no aspect of coercion was implied. It is

possible, maybe even probable, that the actual study group would not have raised the same complaint. Hence, the revisions made to the scale in an effort to satisfy the concerns of the pilot group might have been unnecessary in the context of an American undergraduate group less concerned about making such judgments. As discussed below, this decision to include a neutral response not only affected, adversely, the total sample size of respondents judging particular attributes, but also reduced the significance of the resultant analyses.

Notwithstanding the foregoing limitations, the validity and generalizability of the findings in this study are tentative, in large part, because of the small size of the sample, especially the sample size of the two sub-groups ($n = 10$, respectively) identified in an effort to address rater effects on evaluative reactions. The original arrangements made for this study granted the researcher access to three classes, each comprised of approximately 30-35 students. Hence, the total sample size was expected to contain at least 100 participants. Unfortunately, a high level of attrition occurred due to sudden, inclement weather, and insufficient time remained to permit rectification of that problem. It is well established that a sample must be sizable and adequately representative of the general population if it is to be used to generalize the results to a larger population. In this study, the sample size was limited, unexpectedly, to 53 participants, a number that restricted, statistically, the final analyses, and yielded unreliable or statistically insignificant results, thereby limiting broad generalizations. In fact, it could be stated that the present study's sample size is sufficient only to afford a reasonably accurate and applicable measure of the responses of these 53 particular American university students.

4.4 Implications

There are several important implications that can be drawn from the conclusions reached in the course of the present study. It is apparent that the youth of America need to prepare themselves for a more linguistically diverse environment, as many schools in the U.S. now enroll "English language learners" (formerly referred to as "limited English proficient" students) who have differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Also, many colleges and universities hire international teaching assistants who speak different varieties of English, and American workplaces are increasingly staffed with individuals who do not speak English fluently. Linguistic diversity in the U.S. is not only implicated by these conditions, which reflect global varieties of English, but also by domestic varieties of English spoken by regional and social dialectal speakers. In such a diverse community, students need to develop an awareness of different varieties of English, a positive attitude toward such diversity, and a willingness and ability to engage in intercultural communication. They face a growing need to accept, value and establish cultural and linguistic differences and to take communicative responsibility as participants in cross-cultural interactions (Kubota & Ward, 2000).

These implications and the conclusions reached as a result of this study, especially when combined with the plethora of previous research confirming the existence of linguistic stereotyping, linguistic prejudice and even linguistic intolerance in the U.S., provide a primary direction for future language attitudes research. Specifically, they indicate a compelling need for additional studies that address the pedagogical and educational implications for the integration of education programs into

appropriate academic forums, programs designed to focus on all forms of linguistic variety in the multicultural society of the U.S.

One way to liberate people from prejudiced discourse regarding language variety is to expose them to, and educate them about, linguistic diversity. For instance, Rubin (1992) and Plakans (1997) found that the more courses that American university students took from international instructors, the more positive their attitudes actually became toward them. This idea is reflected as well in the responses obtained from the "exposed" sub-group of raters in the present study. In addition, educational efforts to enhance native speakers' sensitivity toward accented or varietal English and dialectal speakers have been made in areas such as English as a Second Language teacher training (Brown, 1993,1995), professional development in associations dedicated to the study of human communication and disorders (Montgomery, 1999), and students' rights activism (Smitherman, 1999). Hence, developing a genuine respect for the integrity of the diverse varieties of English through educational programs very well could be the key to attitudinal change.

Although knowledge about dialects, according to Wolfram, Adger and Christian (1999), can reduce misconceptions about language and the accompanying negative attitudes, unfortunately very few linguistic diversity education programs or interventions exist. Therefore, the design and development of a unique educational program, which, when implemented, would act as an agent of change by encouraging an understanding of, and appreciation for, the great amount of linguistic diversity that exists within the English language is suggested as an area of future research.

Most educational programs concentrating on dialect differences are designed to move speakers toward the standard variety. However, as Wolfram (1990) suggests, dialect study as language study in its own right introduces dialects as resources for learning about language and its use in various realms of society, as well as in one's own linguistic manners. If conducted within the theory of critical pedagogy, the teaching of dialect diversity could provide the opportunity for students to become directly involved in scientific inquiry (empirical research) and to develop critical thinking skills, such as observation, comparison, and argumentation. Through examinations of personal speech patterns, this approach could enhance self-awareness and individual cultural identity. Additionally, the opportunities for experiential learning and subsequent reflection on such experiences might instill empathy and compassion among the shared language users. It is suggested that an intervention of linguistic diversity education conducted under optimal pedagogical conditions would empower students to confront and overcome current English dialect stereotypes and prejudices. In turn, as individual agents of change, these affected students might enter larger arenas of society where their knowledge and engagement of dialect issues could be affirmed, supported and, most importantly, perpetuated.

Of the dialect awareness programs previously implemented in the U.S., a few found potential for change (e.g., Wolfram, 1990, Kubota & Ward, 2000, Kubota, 2001). The overall results of the interventions, however, underscore the need for more pervasive and continuous programs that affirm linguistic diversity through critical pedagogy. Therefore, in the tradition of critical pedagogy, which aims to transform educational and social assumptions, structures and practices that either benefit or belittle

people based on such aspects as one's race, ethnicity, or language (e.g., Kanpol, 1997), future research could investigate the development of a comprehensive curriculum unit on dialect diversity. The new curriculum could be implemented in English-speaking institutions in an effort to raise critical consciousness in students, staff and society, question the common (often inaccurate) assumptions that exist within the context, and explore ways to achieve egalitarianism of the spoken language of English.

Dialect diversity seems to pique the natural curiosities of most people. This inherent interest can be seized upon to help students understand the true dynamics of language and its role in society and education. The concept of studying dialect diversity as a specific subject, as well as using it as a resource across the curriculum, presents a viewpoint that is very different from many traditional approaches. Traditional approaches, especially in the U.S., often see such differences as barriers to overcome, and tend to ignore the increasing multicultural populations of the nation's schools, the role of power and bias in shaping language attitudes, and the changing nature of the language with which these English speakers operate. However, with a proactive and explicit study of dialect diversity, rooted in critical pedagogy, students would have the opportunity to obtain accurate information about, and enjoy experiences with, language diversity that would not only empower them to expose the language evidence and challenge the deep-seated attitudes that have tended to fuel the fire of linguistic bigotry, but also enable them to embrace and endorse the richness that exists in the many varieties of English.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire No. 1
Rater No. _____

Personal Information:

1. Age _____

2. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

3. Academic Major _____

4. Country of Origin (Birthplace) _____
   City and State or Province _____

5. Current Place of Residence:
   City _____
   State/Province _____
   Country _____
   For how long? _____

6. Do you consider yourself a ☐ native or ☐ non-native speaker of English?
   If non-native, what is your native language?
   _____

7. What proportion of your language use involves English?
   ☐ 25% ☐ 50% ☐ 75% ☐ 100%

8. What language(s) do your parents speak?
   Mother _____ Father _____

8. Do you speak other languages? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   If yes, which ones (list all) _____

10. When you speak English, do you think you speak with an accent? ☐ Yes ☐ No
    If yes, how do you label it? (e.g., French-Canadian, Southern American, British, etc.) _____

11. Have you ever visited another country? ☐ Yes ☐ No
    If yes, which one? _____ For how long? _____

12. Have you ever lived in another country? ☐ Yes ☐ No
    If yes, which one? _____ For how long? _____
    At what age? _____

Appendix B

Speech Sample Text

When sunlight strikes raindrops in the air, they act as a prism and form a rainbow. The rainbow is a division of white light into many beautiful colors. These take the shape of a long round arch, with its path high above, and its two ends apparently beyond the horizon. There is, according to legend, a boiling pot of gold at one end. People look, but no one ever finds it. When a man looks for something beyond his reach, his friends say he is looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

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Appendix C

Questionnaire No. 2
Rater No._____

Semantic Differential Rating Scale
Speaker No. _____

Section One:
Please rate the voice you have just heard on the following aspects.

1.	Pleasant to listen to	1	2	3	4	Not pleasant to listen to
2.	Strong Accent	1	2	3	4	Without accent
3.	Easy to understand	1	2	3	4	Difficult to understand

Section Two:
Based on the voice you have just heard, please rate the speaker on the following qualities.

1. Attractive	1	2	3	4	Unattractive	☐ Unable to judge
2. Dishonest	1	2	3	4	Honest	☐ Unable to judge
3. Unhelpful	1	2	3	4	Helpful	☐ Unable to judge
4. Friendly	1	2	3	4	Unfriendly	☐ Unable to judge
5. Intelligent	1	2	3	4	Unintelligent	☐ Unable to judge
6. Unambitious	1	2	3	4	Ambitious	☐ Unable to judge
7. Cooperative	1	2	3	4	Uncooperative	☐ Unable to judge
8. Inactive	1	2	3	4	Active	☐ Unable to judge
9. Dependable	1	2	3	4	Undependable	☐ Unable to judge
10. Non-aggressive	1	2	3	4	Aggressive	☐ Unable to judge

Appendix D

Preference Probe

Questionnaire No. 3
Rater No. _____

1. **Please rank in order of general preference, the voices you have just heard.**

   1st _____

   2nd _____

   3rd _____

2. **Please indicate which voice you feel best fits the following category.**

   Most easily identifiable accent: _____

   Please label the accent, e.g., French-Canadian, Southern American, Korean, German, etc.

3. **Did you find this exercise easy or difficult** (please circle one)?

4. **Please indicate why** (feelings, reasons, limitations, etc).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form
For
"A Study of Attitudes Toward Accented English"

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Kristina Eisenhower, a graduate student at McGill University, Department of Integrated Studies in Education. This project is conducted under the direction of Dr. Rov Lyster, Department of Integrated Studies in Education.

If you are over the age of 18, you are invited to participate in a research study concerning attitudes toward accented English speech. You will be asked to participate in a one-time class session during which you will hear tape-recordings of 8 speakers of accented-English, and be asked to complete a rating scale and brief background questionnaire.

This exercise should prove to be a pleasant and productive experience for you. One benefit to you as a participant is the knowledge that your involvement in this study will make a contribution to the social sciences.

If you participate in this project, please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right not to answer any specific question, to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time.

This study shall be conducted in a confidential manner, that is, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. The questionnaire and rating scale are anonymous documents, which means there is no way to identify individual participant's responses.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, any concerns regarding this project or any dissatisfaction with any aspect of this study, you may confidentially report them to the Chair of the Faculty of Education Ethics Review Committee, McGill University, Faculty of Education,

I understand the above information and voluntarily consent to participate in the research project entitled, " A Study of Attitudes Toward Accented English".

Attached are two forms. Please sign both and retain one for your records.

Signature_____ Date_____

Appendix F

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MCGILL UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY FOR FUNDED AND NON FUNDED RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMANS

The Faculty of Education Ethics Review Committee consists of 6 members appointed by the Faculty of Education Nominating Committee, an appointed member from the community and the Associate Dean (Academic Programs, Graduate Studies and Research) who is the Chair of this Ethics Review Board .

The undersigned considered the application for certification of the ethical acceptability of the project entitled:

Attitudes Toward Accented English

as proposed by:

Applicant's Name Kristina Eisenhower Supervisor's Name Dr. Roy Lyster

Applicant's Signature Supervisor's Signature

Degree / Program / Course Master of Arts Granting Agency N/A

The application is considered to be:
A Full Review _____ An Expedited Review ✓

A Renewal for an Approved Project _____ A Departmental Level Review _____
Signature of Chair / Designate

The review committee considers the research procedures and practices as explained by the applicant in this application, to be acceptable on ethical grounds.

1. Prof. Ron Stringer
Dept of Educational and Counselling Psychology

_____
Signature / date

4. Prof. Ada Sinacore
[illegible] and Counselling Psychology

01-02-02
Signature / date

2. Prof. Ron Morris
Department of Culture & Values

_____
Signature / date

5. Prof. Brian Alters
Department of Educational Studies

Feb 6, 02
Signature / date

3. Prof. René Turcotte
Department of Physical Education

_____
Signature / date

6. Prof. Kevin McDonough
Department of Culture and Values in Education

Feb. 1 '02
Signature / date

7. Member of the Community

_____
Signature / date

Mary H. Maguire Ph. D.
Chair of the Faculty of Education Ethics Review Committee
Associate Dean (Academic Programs, Graduate Studies and Research)

Feb 13, 2002.
Signature / date