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„Attitudes across Language Boundaries"

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Ability is what you are capable of doing.

Motivation determines what you do.

Attitude determines how well you do it.

<div align="right">

(Lou Holtz)

</div>

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Apart from one's own efforts, the success of scientific research depends to a certain extent on the support and encouragement of others. I take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to the following people.

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Table of Contents

PART TWO - THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

List of Figures

List of Tables

PART ONE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

1. Introduction

The human mind is an amazing, yet puzzling instrument that frequently succeeds in playing tricks on us. Imagine you are sitting on a train in order to commute to your workplace and you perceive chatting voices in the background. Although you are unable to see the speakers, within a few moments your mind successfully creates a relatively precise picture of those people. Solely on the basis of the speech observed, a wide range of judgements can be made. At first glance, one can determine whether the interlocutors are female or male. Their pronunciation immediately provides clues regarding their mother tongues and allows for a general differentiation between non-native and native speakers. At best, one can even figure out where the speakers come from, for example, if strong regional expressions or grammatical patterns (dialect) or pronunciations (accent) are used, such as Carinthian in the Austrian context or Scouse in the English context. The same applies for a categorisation in terms of social class. Unknowingly and unintentionally, the interlocutors reveal information on whether they are members of the working class or middle class. In due course, an even finer impression begins to form by the subconscious association of various presumed positive or negative character traits with the two persons. On the one hand, they can be rated according to their social skills and thereby assumptions with respect to their friendliness, politeness or trustworthiness can be made. On the other hand, the persons' competences can be estimated, which includes considerations in connection with their intelligence, education or self-confidence. All these judgements, be they ever so small, are like mosaics and when taken together compose a fairly detailed picture that our mind has created of those strangers.

As this scenario is intended to illustrate, we very quickly conceive opinions about people, which are grounded on nothing but the way they talk. As trivial as such estimations might appear, the interest in the inferences about language use have formed the firm basis of a research area. As time progressed and as the interest increased, this field has grown into a distinct academic discipline.

Take, for instance, the first four types of evaluation in the above example, i.e. sex, mother tongue, regional variation and social variation. Questions of that kind are part of the domain of *sociolinguistics*, a sub-branch of linguistics that has as its target the investigation of the relationship between language and society (Yule 2006: 205). The sociolinguist is, among many other subjects, interested in whether females and males use language differently and

why that might be the case. He or she is also concerned with non-native and native varieties of a language and the differences between them. Researchers in the field further concentrate on language variation, which can either be of the regional or social type. Regional differences essentially comprise the study of accents, dialects and other language varieties. Contained in the social aspects of language variation are considerations of the socioeconomic status of social groups or individuals and the corresponding effects on their language use.

The remaining judgements in the foregoing scenario, i.e. the language-based personality trait evaluations are known as *language attitudes* and basically describe non-neutral positions (Weber 1992: 17) the listener holds towards the speakers. That means all characteristics (friendly, polite and trustworthy, as well as intelligent, educated and self-confident) can evoke certain reactions on the part of the listener. These judgments can range from very positive to very negative ones, with a wealth of shades in between. In language attitude research, the dimensions according to which speakers are rated have been found to be *social attractiveness* and *competence*. Thus, the first three traits of our example, i.e. friendly, polite and trustworthy fall into the former category, whereas assessments regarding the speakers' intelligence, their education and self-confidence are of the second type. The study of these language attitudes has its roots in *social psychology*, where attitude is a hypothetical, but highly significant construct. For this inner concept is used as the basis for language-related research in sociolinguistics, one could conclude that the study of language attitudes is located at the interface of social psychology and sociolinguistics.

To disparate degrees, all the judgements illustrated through the above example play a role in the production of this master thesis. In the examination of these issues, the previously introduced academic disciplines function as frameworks for scientific investigation. More specifically, the present project has been designed to examine the language attitudes held by non-native Austrian university students towards different varieties of English. For that purpose, five stimulus recordings were produced by only three speakers, which enable speaker-independent comparisons of three L1 language varieties (RP, Standard Scottish English and Estuary English), while the fourth recording primarily functions as a distractor (Manchester English). The fifth audio file (near-RP) stems from an Austrian high school teacher and allows insights in terms of the differing perceptions of L1 and EFL varieties of English to be gained. This frequently employed language attitude research method is referred to as the *matched-guise technique*. By the appointment of Austrian students as judges who

rate four L1 accents and one EFL variety of English, this field study effectively works across language boundaries.

As this project targets to bring to the fore insights into the evaluative schemata made use of by the students, the initial step involves an investigation of the interrelatedness within all character traits, based on which larger attitude dimensions can be factor-analytically validated.

For a contrastive analysis of attitudinal discrepancies in these dimensions, the participants are subsequently divided into factions according to their subject of study, their travel- and study-related English language experiences abroad and the variety of English they speak themselves.

In addition, variety recognition rates for the five guises are determined, whereupon the potential influence of identification or misidentification on the evaluations of the attitude dimensions is more closely inspected.

After a general evaluation of the successfulness of the matched-guise technique by statistical methods, a discussion of the findings and their standing in comparison to related language attitude research concludes the present thesis.

2. Language

Before a meaningful discussion of attitudes can take place, the object of inquiry in the present study deserves special attention. As the title already implies, the experiment is thematically concerned with attitudes towards language, which is why *language* is the first of a number of constructs that will be elaborated on in this chapter.

2.1. Defining language, dialects, accents and varieties

Since language is, by no means, easily definable, the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English was initially consulted, which provided a twofold explanation of the term. On the one hand, language is "the use by humans of a *system* of sounds and words to communicate" (Wehmeier 2008: 862; emphasis added). This dictionary definition seems to emphasise language as a system and, by extension, as a grammatical system, which Ferdinand de Saussure, the founder of modern linguistics, referred to as *langue* (Saussure 1916: 9). On the other hand, language can also be regarded to be the "communication in speech and writing that is *used* by people of a particular country or area" (Wehmeier 2008: 863; emphasis added). This definition, in contrast, stresses the social uses of language, which became known as *parole* in Saussure's conception of language (Saussure 1916: 9). Fifty years later, a similar contradistinction was also made by Noam Chomsky, who identified *competence*, that is "the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his [or her] language", and *performance*, "the actual use of language in concrete situations" (Chomsky 1965: 4). The present thesis is embedded in a sociolinguistic context, as has already been pointed out, which has as its prime focus the social aspect of language, and can hence also be described as "the science of parole" by researchers in the field (Chambers 2004: 8).

On closer inspection of any single society, it can be seen that the actual language use of its members is all but homogenous. The investigation of ensuing variation deservedly occupies a place in sociolinguistic research. Among scholars working in this tradition, the heterogeneity in this respect enables a classification of languages into numerous subcategories. Of special interest within this discipline, and thereby also for the present project, are dialects, accents and varieties, which will be briefly characterised in the following sections.

4

A *dialect*, in essence, is a kind of language that is discriminable from others through vocabulary, grammar as well as pronunciation (Roach 2008: 64). George Yule (2006: 195) illustrates this exemplarily by providing "Ye dinnae ken whit yer haverin' aboot" as an approximation of one Scottish English dialect. As is obvious, in this sentence, whose meaning is 'You don't know what you are talking about', occur dramatic differences in pronunciation (e.g. "aboot", "whit"), in vocabulary (e.g. "haverin'", "ken") and in grammatical form (e.g. "dinnae") (Yule 2006: 195).

Whenever deviations are less extensive and purely found in terms of pronunciation on the phonetic and/or on the phonological level, such a subtype of language is referred to as an *accent* (Trudgill 1985: 16). If one, for example, intends to exclusively look at pronunciation features found within the speech of people from Newcastle, he or she can refer to this type as the Newcastle accent.

Variety, in comparison, is a more neutral and less loaded description that can be applied to any particular kind of language which one wishes to consider as a single entity (Chambers & Trudgill 1994: 5) and will also find application in this master thesis. Depending on the intended level of specificity, reference can for instance be made to Manchester English, as well as to working class Manchester English as examples of varieties.

Even though these constructs can seemingly be demarcated clearly from each other, the reality suggests quite a different picture, as the following scenarios underline. Experts in linguistics assume that there altogether exist between 6,000 and 7,000 distinct languages in the world (Grenoble 2011: 27). Such numbers, however, need to be treated with caution, given that these estimates are the result of a potentially arbitrary distinction between languages and dialects. Even though one might justifiably assert that a language consists of the sum of all its dialects, the intricacy of drawing up a dividing line between languages and dialects has been the subject of heated linguistic debates and is perhaps more easily comprehensible by the use of the following two examples below.

If a look is taken at the language situation in Scandinavia, it can be said that Norwegian, Swedish and Danish are all languages corresponding to three distinct nations. Due to the fact that speakers of all three are capable of communicating with each other (Trudgill 1985: 16), there seems to be no reason for making this distinction from a linguistic viewpoint (Chambers

& Trudgill 1994: 7). Rather, the situation can be described as a geographical dialect continuum (Chambers & Trudgill 1994: 5-6). In spite of this fact, it would appear utterly strange to argue that Norwegian, Danish and Swedish are one and the same language. In this case, the dividing line in the form of a national frontier is grounded on political and cultural factors, although it might linguistically be arbitrary.

As a more up-to-date example, the situation in the former republic Yugoslavia can be listed. When this region was still united, linguists were talking about Serbo-Croatian as one language (albeit one with regional variations), yet with the separation into distinct and warring territories as well as the concomitant population transfer and insistence on ethnic difference, Serbian and Croatian emerged as two languages (Spolsky 1998: 30), while Bosnian now constitutes a third language distinct from the other two (Chambers & Trudgill 1994: 7). In such a context, the frequently cited quotation that a language is a dialect with a flag, or an army (Spolsky 1998: 30) takes on a whole new meaning.

Ultimately, what counts as a language, and by extension the total number of languages worldwide, is dependent on how languages and dialects are defined. What the previous two examples doubtless underline is the fact that the distinction between these concepts does not always have its roots in linguistics, but rather in their political or cultural nature. These aspects subsequently also have to be taken into account in sociolinguistic research.

2.2. Regional and social language variation, the concepts Standard Language and Received Pronunciation

Having defined languages, dialects, accents and varieties in technical terms, supported by the consideration of practical scenarios, it is now time to discuss the dimensions involved in language variation and to illustrate these more practically by the inclusion of concrete examples which are relevant to the research design of the present study. The language situations described in the foregoing section already suggested that languages, dialects and accents identify speakers' regional origins. Indeed, the study of this type of variation in language has constituted a very commonly inspected source of variation and was especially well-researched in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whereby a vast body of literature and pronunciation atlases were established (Meyerhoff 2011: 13).

In addition to regional characteristics, dialects, accents and varieties also provide information on where their speakers are positioned socially within society. In this connection, linguistic variation can be scientifically analysed in relation to the speakers' participation or membership in social groups (Meyerhoff 2011: 17). Whether people are consciously aware of it or not, typical and distinctive features in their language use mark them as belonging to particular social groups (Yule 2006: 207). Within any given familiar society distinctive social levels can be distinguished from each other on the basis of income, occupation and education (Spolsky 1998: 40). By the help of all these aspects, a person's socioeconomic status can be determined. Employing this division method, two main groups can be identified. The first is referred to as the middle class and includes people who have undergone more years of education and perform non-menial work, whereas the second faction is known as the working class and comprises manual workers whose educational level is generally lower (Yule 2006: 206). In order to obtain even finer nuances, these two groups can further be subdivided into upper and lower middle or working classes (Yule 2006: 206). The arguably most famous pioneer in the study of class distinction in speech, i.e. the social stratification, is William Labov, who investigated, among other topics, the presence or absence of postvocalic /r/ in various social classes in New York City and the social connotations attached to this feature (Spolsky 1998: 39).

As the previous discussion pointed out, the basis for the analysis of language variation can be constituted by the investigation of regional or social differences within the groups of individuals under scrutiny.

2.2.1.   Trudgill's conception of regional and social linguistic variation

In 1985 Peter Trudgill, among other scholars before him, discussed the link between regional and social factors that potentially exert an influence upon language use. These theoretical considerations with respect to linguistic variation were graphically incorporated into two coordinate systems. The illustration below portrays two triangles, of which the left is a representation of dialect variation (Figure 1a), while the right displays accent variation (Figure 1b).
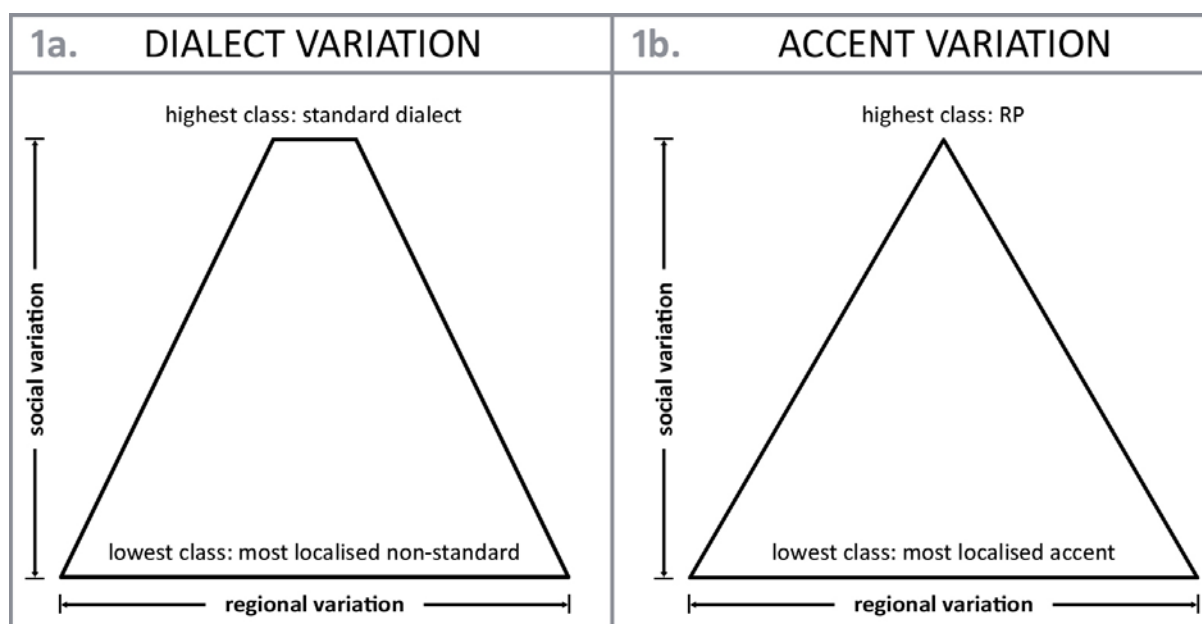
Figure 1. Regional and social dialect and accent variation (adapted from Trudgill (1985: 41-42)).

In both coordinate systems above, the regional factors are indicated on the horizontal axis and the vertical axis presents the social stratification. The basis of the triangle outlines the most localised regional speech forms, which corresponds to a chain of regional dialects in Figure 1a and to regional accents in Figure 1b. In terms of social class, the lowest, i.e. the lower working class, is located at the bottom, in contrast to the highest social levels which are found at the apex. As is visible, there exists substantial regional variation in dialects and accents within the lower classes of society. However, with increasing levels of social hierarchy, these regional differences tend to abate, whereby the triangle becomes narrower towards the top. Exactly here at the apex lies the difference between Figure 1a and 1b. In the former, the upper end of the triangle is flattened, which suggests that even in the highest social classes some regional variation can be observed. The dialect (or variety) found at this flattened top is what is commonly referred to as the *Standard Language*. Compared with other language varieties, standard languages result from a direct and deliberate intervention by society through a process labelled standardisation (Hudson 1996: 32). It is therefore an idealised and artificially constructed variety, which is usually taught in schools and to non-native speakers as the perfect language learning model (Trudgill 1985: 17). Additionally, standard languages are used in the mass media, such as in print or in news broadcasts, and are generally spoken by educated people (Trudgill 1985: 17). In comparison, Figure 1b is characterised by the presence of an apex, which implies the existence of an optimum accent worth striving for.

In the English context, in which this master thesis is essentially embedded, it can be said that the highest social class employs the dialect called *Standard English*, which differs only slightly in particular parts of the country (Trudgill 1985: 40). With reference to Figure 1a, Standard English would be located at the flattened apex of the pyramid. This variety has its historical roots in the English dialects employed in and around London, which, with the passing of time, became subject to considerable change by speakers at the court, by scholars from universities, by writers and by public schools (Trudgill 1985: 17).

When the focus is solely on pronunciation, the most desirable accent in England, which corresponds to the apex of the triangle in Figure 1b, is known as *Received Pronunciation* (or RP for short). This variety is characterised by the absence of virtually all regional variation and will be the subject of closer inspection in Section 2.4., since it plays a pivotal role in the present empirical field study. Received Pronunciation will firstly be described and used as a reference accent in order to outline the remaining four varieties of the study. Secondly, in the present experiment a speaker of this variety will be evaluated by non-native respondents. Prior to these considerations, however, a brief look will be taken at the worldwide growth of the English language, because it is only due to this hitherto unprecedented spread that this language can de facto be heard everywhere and that attitudes towards English can be investigated in countries such as Austria.

2.3. The growth of English into World Englishes

Nowadays there are altogether 75 territories where English is spoken either as a first language (L1) or as an official second language (L2). Even though the corresponding numbers of its speakers cannot be determined exactly and hence vary, it is estimated that approximately 330 million English-speaking people possess L1 status, while an additional 431 million speakers acquired English as a second language (Jenkins 2009: 2).

The reasons for this unseen and rapid spread are primarily historical and geographical. English first came into being in roughly the form we are familiar with in around 1350 (Strevens 1992: 29). For 250 years, that is until 1600, English was spoken only in England by not even seven million inhabitants (Strevens 1992: 29). As time progressed, two main dispersals of English enabled its spread at an ever increasing pace. The first diaspora took place in the 17th century and initially involved the migration of approximately 25,000 people

from the South and the East of England principally to America and Australia (Jenkins 2009: 5). This process led to the emergence of new mother tongue varieties of English. Already in 1780, the second President of the United States John Adams claimed that "English will be the most respectable language in the world and the most universally read and spoken in the next century, if not before the close of [the eighteenth century]" (Adams 1809: 376). He further argued ambitiously that English is "destined to be in the next or succeeding century, more generally the language of the world, than Latin was in the last, or French is, in the present age" (Adams 1809: 161). As fate would have it, he almost correctly foresaw the destiny awaiting the English language, although the occurrence of his prophecies took more time. Adams predicted accurately, however, the effect of the second diaspora in the 18th century, in which process Africa and Asia were colonised, and subsequently a great number of second language varieties developed that are often referred to as New Englishes (Jenkins 2009: 5).

As direct consequences of these historical developments, the users of English can now be assigned to three groups. Firstly, there are those born and raised in countries where English is historically the first language to be spoken and, as a result, they have English as a native language or mother tongue (ENL). Secondly, there are people for whom English is a second language (ESL) and that applies to those living in territories that were once colonised by the English. The third group comprises all people who learned English as a foreign language (EFL). For them, however, this language serves no purposes within their own countries (Jenkins 2009: 15-16).

Based on this classification of English speakers, the Indian scholar Braj Kachru designed a model of the spread of this language. According to his conception, World Englishes can be divided into three concentric circles. They represent the "patterns of acquisition", the "types of spread" and the "functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts" (Kachru 1992: 356). Within the Inner Circle are contained all traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English, which include, for example, England, Scotland, Australia or the United States of America (Kachru 1992: 356). Altogether, 320 – 380 million people belong to the Inner Circle (Crystal 2003: 61). The Outer Circle comprises the institutionalised non-native varieties (ESL) in territories that have undergone colonisation such as India, Singapore or Nigeria. These regions are the homes of between 300 and 500 million English speakers (Crystal 2003: 61). The Expanding Circle refers to the regions where the English language is basically used in EFL contexts and applies, for instance to China, Germany or Austria. These varieties,

however, lack official status and are restricted in their uses (Kachru 1992: 356). The exact number of English speakers belonging to this Circle vary, however it is assumed that there are between 500 million and one billion additional speakers, for whom English is a foreign language (Crystal 2003: 61).

Kachru's theory can also be usefully applied to the present field study, whereby the five guises, as well as the student population to be investigated can be allocated to different Circles of English. As has been explained before, the present experiment has been designed to collect information on Austrian attitudes towards five varieties of English. The respondents were made up of students at the University of Vienna and, thus, consisted of people who acquired the English language in an EFL context through the Austrian education system. As such, they were members of the Expanding Circle in Kachru's model.

Conversely, four of the five language variants the informants were supposed to evaluate were produced by speakers who have English as their mother tongue. These L1 accents included RP, Manchester English, Standard Scottish English and Estuary English, which all have to be regarded as ENL varieties and are subsequently to be found in the Inner Circle. In addition, also one non-native EFL speaker of the Expanding Circle, who acquired near-native English language attainment through Austrian tertiary education at university, was used in the experiment. By an installation of non-native judges for the assessment of altogether four L1 and one EFL varieties, this thesis not only effectively works across language boundaries, but by extension, also across the Circles in Kachru's model.

The following section provides a description of the phonological characteristics of the four L1 and the one EFL accents employed as stimuli for evaluation in this study, while the internal composition of the EFL informants will be the subject of detailed scrutiny in Section 6.1.

2.4. Received Pronunciation

Received Pronunciation (or RP for short) is a social rather than a regional accent that is closely associated with members of the upper-middle and upper classes of the English society and tends to co-occur with the Standard English dialect (Trudgill and Hannah 2008: 9). Its name is the cause of considerable confusion, as it relies on an outmoded meaning of *received*, which was earlier understood as 'generally accepted' (Wells 1982a: 117). Contributing to this

lack of clarity, the accent has also been referred to as Queen's English or BBC English (Graddol et al. 1996: 259). Due to the BBC's once virtually exclusive selection of RP speakers for their news programmes from the 1920s onwards (Honey 1989: 31), the phonetician Peter Roach (2008: 6-7), among others, even argues for an abandonment of its current name in favour of BBC English. This supposition is, of course, open to counterargument. RP will herein nevertheless be adhered to for convenience and will be employed to refer to this variety.

Even though only three to five percent of the English-speaking population use RP in everyday matters (Trudgill and Hannah 2008: 9), the accent can be heard in all over England. The reason for this lies in the fact that it is characterised by the absence of prominent regional pronunciation features. Subsequently, speakers of this accent can impossibly be localised geographically as coming from one highly specific area. Despite its now non-regional nature, the historical origins of Received Pronunciation are to be found in South East England, given that historically it used to be the accent of the educated, of the court and of the upper classes (Trudgill and Hannah 2008: 9-11). It seems only logical, thus, that the non-regional RP became established throughout England and that, owing to these characteristics, it can now linguistically function as a model for the description of other regional or social accents in terms of their distance from the standard RP.

Although RP is frequently discussed as being one stable variant, clearly discriminable from others, no accent, including RP, is a homogenous invariant monolith (Wells 1982b: 279). Therefore, it has to be stressed that there also exists variation within RP. In 1980 Alfred Gimson distinguished three forms of RP: conservative RP (i.e. the type used by the older generation), general RP (i.e. the type most commonly in use and adopted by the BBC) and advanced RP (i.e. the form employed by young people of exclusive social groups) (Gimson 1980: 84-85). John C. Wells, divides RP into mainstream RP (i.e. upper-middle class), U-RP (i.e. upper-crust) and adoptive RP (spoken by adults who did not learn RP as children) (Wells 1982b: 279-283). In 2013 (77-79), Alan Cruttenden revised Gimson's classification scheme and altered it into refined RP (i.e. declining upper-class RP), general RP and regional RP (i.e. basically RP except for few regional features). What these advances show is not only the fact that there is substantial variation within RP, but also that it is becoming increasingly difficult to define what actually counts as RP.

In the next subsection, the phonemic inventory of Received Pronunciation will be briefly overviewed. This description presents the features that most closely correspond to mainstream or general RP and relies on a structure of the sounds suggested by Peter Roach (2004; 2008). This outline will subsequently be used as a model for the description of the other accents. The theoretical considerations here are naturally focus-dependent and thus selective as to necessity and specificity. It has to be acknowledged, however, that more particularised analyses are possible. Unfortunately, more detailed elaborations would go beyond the scope of the present discussion, yet Roach (2004; 2008), Carr (1999) or Wells (1982a; 1982b) can be consulted for an in-depth description of the reference accent RP. For a scrutiny of the changes currently taking place within RP, please see Hannisdal (2006).

2.4.1. The short vowels, long vowels and diphthongs found in RP

In the forthcoming considerations, the phonemes described are always abstract. It is essential, however, to keep in mind that one and the same phoneme can have several different realisations, i.e. physical forms referred to as allophones (Roach 2008: 17). By common convention, the former type is enclosed in slant brackets, whereas the latter appears in square brackets (Roach 2008: 18).

At the most basic level, the vowel inventory found in RP falls into three categories: short vowels, long vowels and diphthongs (Roach 2004: 241). Their duration has to be understood as a relative matter (Carr 1999: 24) rather than as an absolute criterion, which means that some vowels can be described as being short in relation to others.

Figure 2 on the following page represents the pure RP short vowels, whose position is highlighted in red colour, and the long vowels of Received Pronunciation, which are recognisable by the blue colour. The latter are by IPA conventions also followed by a colon, which indicates length.

As can be seen, there exist altogether seven short phonemes within RP, which are in the following list mostly illustrated by use of Wells's lexical sets (1982a: xviii-xix) as examples. As Figure 2 shows, these are /e/ (as in *DRESS*), /ɪ/ (*KIT*), /ʌ/ (*STRUT*), /ʊ/ (*FOOT*), /ɒ/ (*LOT*) and /æ/ (*TRAP*). The latter vowel /æ/ is frequently lowered and pronounced as open [a] (Hannisdal 2006: 93).
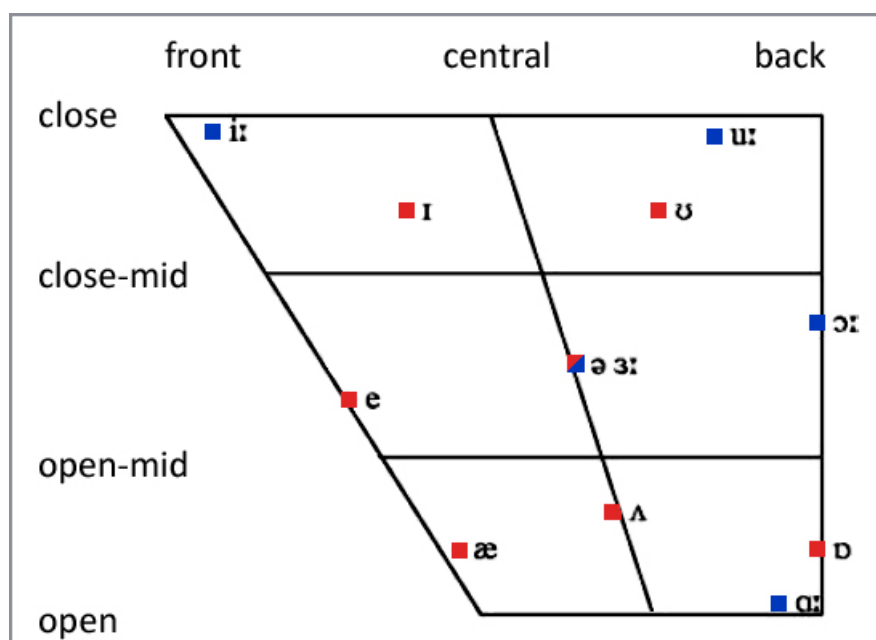
Figure 2. Short and long RP monophthongs, adapted from Roach (2004: 242).

The schwa /ə/, moreover, is of immense importance in the English language. Despite possessing no unique representation in spelling and often being pronounced so weakly as to be virtually undetectable, it nevertheless is the most frequently occurring vowel (Roach 2004: 241). Unstressed /i/ and /ʊ/ are nowadays often replaced by /ə/, for example in the word possible [ˈpɒsəbł] (Hannisdal 2006: 93).

The long RP vowels, highlighted by blue dots in Figure 2 above, consist of five phonemes, which comprise /iː/, /ɜː/, /uː/, /ɑː/ and /ɔː/ and appear in the lexical sets *FLEECE*, *NURSE*, *GOOSE*, *BATH* and *THOUGHT* respectively. RP /iː/ and /uː/ are typically realised as relatively pure monophthongs without diphthongisation (Hannisdal2006: 35). The quality of /uː/ can vary from back [uː] to centralised or even fronted [ʉː ~ ʏ] (Hannisdal 2006: 35).

For completeness' sake, it has to be mentioned that the two additional symbols [i] and [u] are in use in RP, which, however, cannot be classed as true phonemes. They represent unstressed vowels occurring before vowels and in final positions and are qualitatively more similar to long /iː/ and /uː/ than to short /ɪ/ and /ʊ/ (Roach 2004: 241). These two symbols can be employed whenever the contrasts between long and short vowels are neutralised.

The third type of RP vowels is referred to as diphthongs, which can be likened to gliding movements from one vowel to another (Roach 2008: 108). With reference to Figure 2, the diphthongs can be visually conceived of as arrows starting from their first element with a subsequent glide to their second vowel. Within these, a general twofold subdivision can be made according to the second element of the diphthong. The first type of diphthongs ends in the centrally positioned /ə/, which is why they are labelled centring diphthongs (Roach 2004: 241). Altogether, there exist three centring diphthongs. The first of these is the /ʊə/, which can be found in words of the lexical set *CURE*. This diphthong is, however, often optionally realised as /ɔ:/ (Hannisdal 2006: 35). The remaining two centring diphthongs are found in *SQUARE* and *NEAR*, which employ /eə/ and /ɪə/ respectively. Of those, the former, i.e. /eə/, can be realised as [ɛ:], thereby possessing a monophthongal articulation (Hannisdal 2006: 93).

The second kind of diphthongs ends in either /ɪ/ or /ʊ/, which are articulated close-front and close-back respectively (Figure 2), and are commonly known as closing diphthongs (Roach 2004: 241). Altogether, five closing diphthongs can be distinguished from one another, including /eɪ/ (as in *FACE*), /aɪ/ (*PRICE*), /ɔɪ/ (in *CHOICE*), /əʊ/ (*GOAT*) and /aʊ/ which is typically found in words of the lexical set *MOUTH*. It has to be stressed that RP /eɪ/ and /ɔɪ/ have close-mid and open-mid starting points, but never [æɪ] or [oɪ] respectively (Hannisdal 2006: 35).

2.4.2.   The consonants of RP

In general, consonants can be classified according to four characteristics. The first of these is voicing and allows for a division of consonants into voiced or voiceless sounds (Roach 2008: 21). The second criterion is the place of articulation where the obstruction is made (Roach 2008: 21). Thirdly, it is possible to distinguish consonants on the basis of the manner of articulation, or the type of obstruction (Roach 2008: 21). Lastly, also the airstream used for the production of the consonants can be used as a distinctive characteristic (Roach 2008: 21).

In order to provide an overview of the consonants found in RP, the following, simplified table has been adapted from Roach (2004: 240). As can be seen, Table 1 on the next page reveals information about the consonants' place of articulation and their manner of articulation.

Table 1. The consonants of RP, adapted from Roach (2004: 240).

		PLACE OF ARTICULATION							
		Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
MANNER OF ARTICULATION	Plosive	p　　b			t　　d			k　　g	
	Affricate					tʃ　　dʒ			
	Nasal	m			n			ŋ	
	Fricative		f　　v	θ　　ð	s　　z	ʃ　　ʒ			h
	Approximant	(w)				r	j	w	
	Lateral approximant				l				

Some consonants additionally show a distinction between voiced and voiceless. Where that is the case, the consonant to the right marks the voiced one (Table 1). This applies to the distinction in plosives between /p/ (as in *pin*) vs. /b/ (as in *bin*), /t/ (found in *tip*) vs. /d/ (in *dip*) and /k/ (as in *could*) vs. /g/ (in *good*). The affricates can also be contrasted according to this division, that is voiceless /tʃ/ (as found in *chin*) is different from its voiced counterpart /dʒ/ (as in *gin*). With the exception of /h/ (as in *head*), the fricatives behave in the same way, which means /f/ (as in *fast*) is distinct from /v/ (found in words like *vast*), /θ/ (in *thing*) can be contrasted with /ð/ (appearing in *there*), /s/ (e.g. in *seek*) is discriminable from voiced /z/ (in *zip*) and /ʃ/ (found in *ship*) is different from /ʒ/ (found in *treasure*). As examples for the nasal consonants /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/ the words *map*, *nice* and *hang* can be listed, whereas *right*, *yes* and *win* correspond to the approximants /r/, /j/ and /w/, while /l/ can exemplarily be illustrated by the word *love*. The /r/ is usually realised as a post-alveolar approximant [ɹ] in all positions, while formerly a tapped [ɾ] was the common realisation (Hannisdal 2006: 93). The /l/ phoneme might furthermore possess two distinct realisations, either as clear [l] before vowels or as dark [ɫ] elsewhere (Roach 2004: 241). Yet, L-Vocalisation is not considered to be part of this accent (Wells 1982b: 295).

2.4.3.　General characteristics of RP

Received Pronunciation is a non-rhotic accent, which means that /r/ sounds are not pronounced unless they are immediately followed by a vowel (Wells 1982a: 76). There are, however, two exceptions in particular to this general rule of thumb. These are the linking /r/ and the intrusive /r/, which are both said to be frequently made use of by RP speakers

(Hannisdal 2006: 106). The first occurs in utterances such as *far away*, which can be realised as [fɑːɹə´weɪ] (Hannisdal 2006: 106), while the latter occurs in cases where there is no <r> in spelling, e.g. *America and Canada* [ə´meɹɪkə ɹænd ´kænədʌ].

Whereas many other varieties of English in Britain permit H-Dropping, this phenomenon is not typically found in RP (Wells 1982a: 253-255). That means, in words such as *horse* or *head*, the /h/ at the beginning is always pronounced, but is optionally elided in some other British accents (Wells 1982a: 253-255).

Native RP speakers extensively employ assimilation and elision (Hannisdal 2006: 17). Assimilation is a type of coarticulation that affects a phoneme's place of articulation, e.g. in *good boy* [ɡʊb bɔɪ], whereas elision is the omission of a phoneme that would be present in careful citation form, e.g. *next cab* [neks kæb], where the /t/ can be elided (Hannisdal 2006: 91).

This highly general overview of the RP inventory is merely intended to increase the readers' awareness of the sounds that are being produced when speaking English. In the forthcoming characterisations of the remaining accents that conclude this chapter, this RP description will take on the role of a descriptive framework.

2.5. Estuary English

Estuary English (henceforth also abbreviated to EE) is a variety of English commonly spoken in South East England. While the heartland of this variant lies in the banks of the river Thames and its estuary, this accent is not restricted to usage in London, but can also be heard in adjacent counties such as Surrey, Essex, Kent or Hertfordshire (Coggle 1993: 23). The term Estuary English was brought to public prominence by David Rosewarne in 1984, who at that time was dissatisfied with a then existing gap between the descriptions of the standard accent RP and those of the non-standard accent varieties in South East England and London in particular (Rosewarne 1994a: 3). According to his incipient explanatory remarks, EE is a "variety of modified regional speech" that mixes non-regional and local south-eastern English pronunciation and intonation (Rosewarne 1994a: 3). Hence, in a conception of a continuum with RP and Cockney (i.e. the variety Rosewarne meant when referring to local south-eastern

English) at opposing ends, Estuary English speakers are located in the middle ground (Rosewarne 1994a: 3).

Peter Trudgill (2002: 178-179) identifies three main reasons for the advance of EE, which are shortly summarised here. Firstly, the waning prestige of RP has led those who would formerly become adoptive RP speakers to no longer do so. Even though they continue to rid their language of regional features, some of these inevitably remain. In consequence, more people with lower-middle class accents can be heard in public situations and the most important of these geographically stem from the South East of England, since this is the most densely populated area. Additionally, there is metropolitan bias in the British media. Secondly, the last few decades enabled increased upward mobility, which has projected many more people from lower-middle class backgrounds into prominent positions, thereby increasing people's exposure to this variant. Thirdly, the outward spread of phonological features contained within EE is taking place in all directions, as has happened with London-based phonological innovations for centuries. As no end of this distribution is yet in sight, the features cover ever wider areas than before.

While the existence and the spread of this phenomenon is generally acknowledged by experts in the field, its name is frequently deemed too imprecise and has thus provoked considerable debate. On the one hand, Coggle and Rosewarne opted to stick to the term since its coinage. On the other hand, McArthur (1994: 63) proposed the term New London Voice in place of EE, for he considered the phenomenon new in respect of impact and news value and the focus of this variant London-based. Alternatively, Wells (1994: 259-260) proposes either London English or General London as labels for this phenomenon, yet concedes that for want of a valid alternative, linguists are forced to go along (Wells 1994: 259 - 260). The present thesis follows in suit and employs the term Estuary English for reference to this variety and the phonological features associated with it.

As the boundaries in the continuum between RP, EE and Cockney are naturally blurry, the concept of Estuary English is highly vague. This is not helped by the fact that the features which are now ascribed to EE, have been observed prior to the coinage of its name. As the lack of definitional clarity surrounding this concept leaves much room for misunderstandings, the following discussion is centred on an overview of those EE features about which there exists reasonable consensus among linguists.

2.5.1. Vowel and diphthong features of EE

In Estuary English, the final vowel in words like *pity* or *heavy* is different from the one found in RP. In this process, the short RP vowel /ɪ/ is altered into long /iː/ (Rosewarne 1994b: 5). The long vowel /iː/ as in *me* or the second in *city* is noticeably longer in EE than in RP and may even tend towards the quality of a diphthong (Rosewarne 1994a: 6).

Some noteworthy diphthong discrepancies can be observed when comparing Estuary English with RP. The first of these is found in words of the lexical set FACE. Here, the typical RP realisation as [feɪs] is altered into [fʌɪs], which is caused by the London Diphthong Shift (LDS for short) (Altendorf 2003: 13). PRICE words seem to undergo changes as well, given that the RP pronunciation [praɪs] turns into [prɑɪs] (Altendorf 2003: 13), which means the first element of the vowel glide is further back in EE than in RP. The EE GOAT vowel displays further variation from the one occurring in RP. Whereas the common RP pronunciation would be [gəʊt], in EE the realisation is [gʌʊʔ] (Altendorf 2003: 13). In connection to this shift, Wells (1982b: 312-313) claims that a phoneme split has occurred in London English, whereby the GOAT and GOAL words become distinct from each other. In contrast to GOAT words, which have the [ʌʊ] diphthong, the lexical set GOAL is realised as [gɑʊɫ], because of the dark [ɫ] preceding the diphthong (Wells 1982b: 312-313). It has to be emphasised, though, that Rosewarne (1994a; 1994b) and Coggle (1993) make no mention of this phenomenon.

2.5.2. The most distinctive consonantal features of EE

One of the defining features of EE is its use of T-Glottalling, which most frequently involves the replacement of the voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ by a voiceless plosive [ʔ] (Altendorf 2003: 63). In this process, vowels and consonants can be affected, in the case of the latter it can take on the form of glottal reinforcement or glottal replacement (Altendorf 2003: 63). In particular, the plosives /p, t, k, d/, and more recently the affricate /tʃ/ can be under the influence of glottalisation (Wells 1982a: 260). Whereas Cockney speakers make extensive use of this feature in almost all environments except for syllable-initial positions, in RP it is restricted to occurring in word- or morpheme-final positions before a consonant, such as in *quite good*, or within words before obstruents or nasals (Wells 1982a: 260). As Rosewarne explains, the typical Estuary English speaker uses fewer glottal stops for /t/ or /d/ than a Cockney speaker, yet more than an RP speaker (Rosewarne 1994a: 5). That suggests, in EE glottal stops are used within words if they are followed by most consonants and preceded by

vowels, but also after /n/ or /l/, and in word-final positions either before vowels or in absolute-final environments (Wells 1982b: 260; Altendorf 2003: 64). However, it needs to be clarified that intervocalic T-Glottalling (e.g. in *butter*) is rather not considered acceptable in EE (Altendorf 2003: 13), although it remains being associated with Cockney.

Another feature typically associated with Estuary English is L-Vocalisation. In this variety, the dark allophone of /l/, i.e. [ɫ], which occurs in pre-consonantal positions and final environments, is replaced by back vowels of the [o] or [ʊ] quality (Wells 1982a: 258-259). This process has the effect that words such as *milk* or *bottle* are realised as [miok] and [ˈbɒto] respectively.

Moreover, two types of Yod-Phenomena are prone to occurring in Estuary English, which affect word-initial consonant clusters consisting of the alveolar stops /t, d, n/ and a following palatal glide /j/ (Altendorf 2003: 67). The first of these processes is referred to as Yod-Dropping and has the loss of the palatal glide /j/ as a consequence (Altendorf 2003: 67). The second kind is commonly known as Yod-Coalescence and is responsible for the mutual assimilation of the glide /j/ and the preceding consonants, thereby resulting in palato-alveolar fricatives (Altendorf 2003: 67). To illustrate these peculiarities more practically, Yod-Dropping can occur in words such as *tune* or *new*, which are realised as [tuːn] and [nuː]. Yod-Coalescence, which can take place in after /t, d, s/ in stressed and unstressed syllables, within words or across word boundaries (Altendorf 2003: 67), can be found in words and utterances such as *education*, *statue* or *would you*. In EE these subsequently have to be described as [edʒuːˈkeɪʃn], [ˈstætʃuː] and [ˈwʊdʒuː] (Altendorf 2003: 67).

2.6. Standard Scottish English

Standard Scottish English (frequently abbreviated to SSE) refers to the variety used by many Scots when they speak the Standard English dialect (Carr 1999: 156). It is the characteristic speech of the Scottish professional class and the accepted norm in Scottish education (McClure 1994: 79-80). However, SSE is neither to be confused with Scots, i.e. a group of dialects of English sometimes even considered a distinct language, nor with Scottish Gaelic, which is the Celtic language closely related to Irish (Wells 1982b: 393). As a result of this linguistic situation, many Scottish people have at their command two forms of speech, i.e. Standard Scottish English and Scots. While the distinction between those varieties is quite

sharp in rural areas, a continuum of variation can be observed in industrial cities that does not allow for a clear-cut differentiation (Wells 1982b: 395).

2.6.1.   SSE vowels and diphthongs

Realisationally, /i, e, ɛ, a, u, ʌ, ɑ, o/ are the monophthongs considered to be part of SSE (Wells 1982b: 400). One of the major vowel characteristics of this variety is the lack of evidence for phonemic vowel length, but the presence of proof for allophonic vowel length. In SSE, /i/, u/, /e/, /o/, /ɔ/, and /aɪ/ seemingly participate in displaying this two-way variation between long and short environments (Carr 1999: 157). A.J. Aitken, who discovered this phenomenon and labelled it the Scottish Vowel Length Rule (SVLR for short or alternatively referred to as Aitken's Law), specifies this argument more clearly by explaining that long vowel duration applies if a voiced fricative, an /r/ or morpheme boundaries follow, all of these cases can either be final or followed by a consonant constituting a second morpheme (Aitken 1984: 98). Under all other circumstances, a short realisation of the vowel is expected (Aitken 1984: 98). Applying these criteria, the following oppositions pertain. *Leaf* [ɫif], *beat* [bit], *bead* [bid], *feel* [fiɫ], *field* [fiɫd] and *greed* [grid] are short environments, whereas *leave* [ɫiːv], *dear* [diːr], *agree* [ʌˈgriː] and *agreed* [ʌˈgriːd] constitute examples of long environments (Aitken 1984: 98-99).

For the reason stated above, this rule also accounts for the non-existent distinction in SSE between /uː/ vs. /ʊ/, that is the *pull* vs. *pool* or the FOOT v. GOOSE contrast. While this is not true for RP, this accent has one single phoneme /u/ instead, which is usually realised as [ʉː] in the Scottish vowel length contexts and as [ʉ] elsewhere (Carr 1999: 157). Unlike other northern England accents, SSE does have the *put* versus *putt*, i.e. the /ʊ/ vs. /ʌ/ type of distinction. The former phoneme is realised similarly to the RP [ʌ] (Carr 1999: 157). Hence, the word *put* has to be transcribed as [pʰʉt], while [pʰʌt] corresponds to *putt*. Another difference between the reference accent and SSE is the absence of the /ɔː/ vs. /ɒ/ contrast. In their place, SSE has the single phoneme /ɔ/, which means the RP minimal pairs *cot/nought* are homophones in this variety (Carr 1999: 157). The picture is, unfortunately, further complicated by the fact that the /ɔ/ frequently undergoes the Scottish Vowel Length generalisation, resulting in a short vowel in the word in *not* and a long one in *nor*.

Standard Scottish English speakers also make no distinction between TRAP and PALM words or between the phonemes /æ/ and /ɑː/ respectively (Wells 1982b: 403). According to Wells (1982b: 403) there is the single phoneme /a/ in SSE, while Carr (1999: 158) reckons it to be /ɐ/, which would mean a rather low and unrounded central realisation [ɐ]. What seems certain is that this vowel does not undergo the Scottish vowel length process.

Although the quality of /ɪ/ in KIT words in educated SSE accents is fairly comparable to that of RP /ɪ/, more popular Scottish accents employ a more open and/or more retracted pronunciation of that sound (Wells 1982: 404). In some north-eastern parts of this country and indeed even for some educated speakers, it is pretty open and [ɛ]-like, especially before /r/ (Wells 1982b: 404). In other areas such as Glasgow, the pronunciation ranges from [ɪ] to [ʌ] with numerous possible intermediate qualities (Wells 1982b: 404).

The SSE equivalents of RP /eɪ/ and /əʊ/ are /e/ and /o/ respectively, yet variation in accordance with the SVLR can occur (Carr 1999: 158). As a consequence, *bait* and *boat* have the short realisations [bet] and [bot], whereas long contexts can be found in *days* [deːz] and *bore* [boːɾ] (Carr 1999: 158). Thus, these diphthongs can be said to be monophthongal in SSE.

The Scottish Vowel Length Rule also applies to the /aɪ/ diphthong, which is subsequently realised as [ɐːɪ] in long and as [ʌɪ] in short contexts (Carr 1999: 158). The /ʌʊ/ diphthong does not participate in this process, thus possessing an [ʌʊ]-type realisation (Car 1999: 158). In the case of the lexical set CHOICE, the common pronunciation of the /ɒɪ/ phoneme phonetically ranges over [ɒɪ ~ ɔɪ] (Wells 1982b: 406).

2.6.2. The consonants of SSE

With regard to rhoticity, Standard Scottish English has to be classified as a rhotic variety, for it has retained /r/ in all positions where it historically occurred (Wells 1982b: 410). In reality, its different realisations are more complicated, though. The most typical is the alveolar tap [ɾ], or sometimes a post-alveolar or retroflex fricative or approximant dependent on the environments (Wells 1982b: 411). Also possible is the realisation of /r/ as [ɹ], that is as an alveolar approximant comparable to RP, which is claimed by Carr (1999: 158) to be relatively frequent. Despite being very typical, the use of the voiced alveolar trill [r] can still be observed in SSE (Wells 1982b: 411). Even uvular [ʁ] is surprisingly common as personal

idiosyncrasy in some parts of Scotland, but can hardly be viewed as a local accent feature (Wells 1982b: 411).

The speech of many SSE speakers exhibits a difference in their aspiration of initial /p, t, k/ when compared to RP (Wells 1982b: 409). While in the reference accent these instances would be subject to considerable aspiration in words such as *pen* [pʰen], *turn* [tʰɜːn] or *kind* [kʰaɪnd], SSE has less aspiration in these positions or even none at all (Wells 1982b: 409).

SSE is additionally marked by the fact that it does not exhibit the alternation of clear and dark /l/, which is typically found in RP. Instead, the /l/ phoneme possesses a dark realisation, i.e. [ɫ], in all contexts (Carr 1999: 159).

The Scottish consonant system can be described as conservative for retaining the item [ʍ], which is realised as a voiceless bilabial fricative with a secondary velar articulation, and thereby the /ʍ/ vs. /w/ distinction occurring in *witch/which* or *watt/what* is still present, which has largely been lost in RP unless consciously acquired through speech training (Carr 1999: 159). SSE has furthermore retained the velar fricative [x], although the use of this feature is restricted to proper names or to Hebrew- or Greek-derived names (Wells 1982b: 408). It is common for RP speakers to utter [k] instead (Carr 1999: 159).

As far as non-initial /t/ is concerned, SSE shows a good deal of T-Glottalling in words such as *butter* [ˈbʌʔɚ] (Wells 1982b: 409). Some speakers even extend the usage of this feature to environments involving a following stressed vowel, as in *guitar* [giʔɑɾ] (Wells 1982b: 410).

Yod-Dropping is usual in SSE after /l/ and frequent also after /s/, which suggests that *lure* and *suit* are realised as [ɫʉːr] and [sʉt] (Wells 1982b: 412). There seems to be less Yod-Coalescence in SSE than in other accents (Wells 1982b: 412). Instances of Voicing Assimilation can moreover be found in SSE, which leads to realisations of *most valuable* as [ˈmoz ˈvaljəbl] (Wells 1982b: 412). While the elision of the /t/ does not strike one as strange in most English accents, the change from [s] to [z] under the influence of the following voiced /v/ is presumably unique to Scotland (Wells 1982b: 412).

Conversely, H-Dropping is virtually uncharacteristic for SSE, except, of course, in unstressed pronouns and auxiliaries, which is why *heat* is always [hit], but *him* can have a weak form [ɪm] alongside its strong form [hɪm] (Wells 1982b: 412).

2.7. Manchester English

The term Manchester English is herein used to refer to the English spoken in the city of Manchester and its environs. This variety is also known as Mancunian or Manc, which can further stand for the people inhabiting this region. Geographically, Manchester lies in the North West of England. Due to its location, the pronunciation features common in this area are summarily described as 'North West Midlands' in Hughes and Trudgill (1996) and as 'northern accents' in Wells (1982a, 1982b).

2.7.1. Vowel- and diphthong-specific phenomena of Manchester English

The accents of the North are generally set apart from those of the South by two main characteristics. On the one hand, the so-called FOOT-STRUT Split can be absent in these varieties, which is responsible for *put* and *putt* potentially being realised as homophones with /ʊ/ (Wells 1982b: 350). On the other hand are BATH words often pronounced with the same short open vowel /a/ as in TRAP, which corresponds to RP /æ/ (Wells 1982b: 350). *Back* is subsequently realised as [bak], with a fully open vowel somewhere between front and central.

The vowels in KIT, DRESS, TRAP, LOT and FOOT-STRUT are /ɪ, ɛ, a, ɒ, ʊ/ (Wells 1982b: 356). The FLEECE Merger has not been carried through everywhere in the North, which is why one can observe [miːt] as the pronunciation of *meet*, whereas *meat* can be realised as [mɪət] (Wells 1982b: 357). In other northern regions the opposition between *meet* and *meat* is [məɪt] vs. [mɪət] or between [mɛɪt] vs. [miːt] (Wells 1982b: 357).

In PRICE words that have historically had a velar fricative, which is now indicated by *igh* in spelling, the vowel is not of the /aɪ/-type, but rather of the /iː/-quality, leading to realisations of *night* or *right* as [niːt] and [riːt] (Wells 1982b: 357).

Whereas in northern English accents the GOOSE vowel is frequently very similar to that of RP, in some regions of Greater Manchester there exists a fronted version [ʏ], which ranges variably to a diphthongal realisation [əu] in adjacent parts of the country (Wells 1982b: 359).

The vowels found in PALM and START furthermore display variation, insofar as their realisation is between front [aː] and back [ɑː] (Wells 1982b: 359). In some areas, NURSE and SQUARE can be merged, which results in *pair* and *purr* becoming homonyms, with at least variable merging of these two lexical sets taking place in Manchester (Wells 1982b: 361). The quality of the merged vowels, then, is usually [ɜː], yet also [ɛː] or [ɛə] are possible and the phrase *fair shares* can hence be transcribed as [ˈfɜː ˈʃɜːz] (Wells 1982b: 361).

Typical diphthongs can be found in PRICE, CHOICE, MOUTH, NEAR and CURE words, which are represented phonemically as /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aʊ/, /ɪə/ and /ʊə/ by Wells (1982b: 364-365).

Another vowel that calls for mention is the happY vowel, which is usually realised as [ɪ] in Manchester, similarly to RP /ɪ/ in KIT words, but there are some areas where the happY vowel approaches the open quality of /ɛ/ as in DRESS (Wells 1982b: 361).

One more characteristic feature of northern accents is that they sometimes retain strong vowels in certain environments where RP and many other accents show weakening, which most notably can be observed in Latin prefixes such as *ad-*, *con-*, *ex-* when pretonic (Wells 1982b: 362-363). Thus, the verbs *advance* or *consider* can be realised as [adˈvans] and [kɒnsɪdə] in northern accents, while the RP forms would be [ədˈvans] and [kənsɪdə] (Wells 1982b: 363).

2.7.2. Manchester English consonant features

Comparable to RP or EE, Manchester English is also non-rhotic, as /r/ is not pronounced post-vocalically (Wells 1982b: 365). A further peculiarity of this variety can be found in that it is non-NG-coalescing throughout most of the social scale, which means that words never end in [ŋ], at least not after a stressed vowel, but that a velar plosive is phonetically present after the nasal (Wells 1982b: 365). The [g] is retained not only word-finally, but also before suffix-initial vowels or liquids, from which it follows that *singer*, *finger* and *kingly* are pronounced as [ˈfɪŋgə] and [kɪŋglɪ] instead of the RP realisation [ˈfɪŋə] and [kɪŋlɪ] (Wells 1982b: 365).

Some northern accents additionally lack the sharp distinction between clear and dark allophony of the /l/ typically associated with RP (Wells 1982b: 370). A middle type [l] is hence employed in basically all environments (Wells 1982b: 370-371).

H-Dropping is prevalent in popular accents of the Midlands, as well as for the Middle North, while this is not true for the Far North, which is not characterised by the presence of this feature (Wells 1982b: 371).

3. Attitudes

"Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference" are the famous words by the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Winston Churchill. This statement already provides an indication of the importance attributed to this concept, which will extensively be explored in this chapter.

3.1. Towards a definition

Attitude itself is a versatile term that ranks among those relatively often employed in popular usage. It finds application in various contexts, such as in the media, where it denotes an American television talk show, in the music industry, where a great number of albums or songs bearing that title were released, or in arts, where attitude can refer to a posture given to a figure of a painter or to a ballet position. With the exception of a group of academics, however, only few would have ever thought it possible that this concept was and indeed continues to be one of the most ferociously debated topics in social psychology. As Gordon Allport already remarked in 1935, attitude is "probably the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary American social psychology" (1935: 798). Beyond that, it has also developed into a pivotal construct in sociolinguistics ever since William Labov's pioneering investigations into the social stratification of speech communities in 1966 (Garrett et al. 2003: 2). Thus, there has to be more to attitudes than meets the eye of the lay person.

For an initial familiarisation with this noun, the Oxford Modern English Dictionary was consulted, which provided "a settled opinion or way of thinking" or "a behaviour reflecting this [opinion or thinking]" as definitions of attitude (Swannell 1992: 62). What appears to be satisfactory at first, will likely fail to comply with academic standards the closer one approaches the level of scientific description.

The quest for a concise and an all-encompassing explanation of the term has been going on for almost a century, having generated a plethora of varying definitions by researchers. The intricacy of coming to terms with a universal definition lies in the latent nature of attitudes (Garrett et al. 2003: 2), which results from the fact that attitudes cannot be explicitly observed (Baker 1992: 11). Allport comments on this difficulty by noting that they "are never directly

observed", yet that "unless they are admitted, through inference, as real and substantial ingredients in human nature, it becomes impossible to account satisfactorily either for the consistency of any individual's behavio[u]r, or for the stability of any society" (1935: 839).

As a consequence, the definitions vary in their respective degrees of specificity or generality and range from broad and detailed to succinct and compact. The latter applies to a quote by Icek Ajzen, who argues that an "attitude is a disposition to respond favo[u]rably or unfavo[u]rably to an object, person, institution, or event" (2005: 3) and to Daryl Bem, who at one stage of his argumentation construed attitudes simply as "likes and dislikes" (1970: 14). Similarly, Weber in 1992 proposed that attitudes can be understood as "non-neutral positions" (1992: 17). Conversely, the most famous and probably most oft-cited definition in scientific contexts stems from Gordon Allport. He conjectured that

> [a]n attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organi[s]ed through experience,
> exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects
> and situations with which it is related.
> (1935: 810)

In theory, thus, there exist no confines to the topics about which people may develop attitudes, ranging from football and rock music to politics or religion. In succeeding to arouse interest as well as causing disagreement among fellow researchers in 1935, Allport's incipient considerations with regard to attitudes paved the way for two contrasting schools of thought.

Traditionally the definitions have been classified into two basic categories named mentalist and behaviourist theories of attitudes. One of the first of a series of mentalist contributions to the notion of attitude was constituted by the above definition by Gordon Allport from 1935. Thirteen years later, Krech and Crutchfield defined attitude as an "enduring organi[s]ation of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual's world" (1948: 152). According to the mentalist (or cognitive) approach, therefore, attitudes are conceived of as internal states aroused by some sort of stimulation, which might mediate a person's subsequent response (Williams 1974: 21).

A dramatic difference in focus formed the basis for the behaviourist point of view. Behaviourism, in very general terms, is a theory that contends that all human behaviour may be reduced to behavioural units (McKenzie 2010: 21). As a result, the behaviourist approach

to attitudes assumes that attitudes are found in the responses people make to social situations (Smit 1996: 24).

The two theories, first of all, vary in whether attitudes are dependent or independent variables. In the behaviourist view, attitude is interpreted as a dependent factor, intervening between behaviour and the consequences of this behaviour (Skinner 1971, quoted in Smit 1996: 25). The analysis is therefore bound to one specific situation, and hence attitudes cannot be used to explain other behaviour (Ageheyisi & Fishman 1970: 138). Such a view does not account for the variety of attitudes, nor for the individualistic difference in attitudes (Smit 1996: 25).

The mentalist view, in comparison, allows for instance-independent interpretations, as attitude is understood as an independent variable in the form of a latent psychological constant (Agheyisi & Fishman 1970: 138).

Although both approaches have been applied to scientific work in social psychology, the divergent conceptions of attitudes presuppose the employment of different research methodology, which affects the results that can be obtained. Given that mentalists see attitudes as internal states of readiness, rather than as observable responses, researchers depend on people's reports about their attitudes or have to infer them indirectly from patterns of behaviour (Agheyisi & Fishman 1970: 138; Fasold 1993: 147). In contrast, the behaviourist view facilitates research, as no indirect inferences nor self-reports are required. Instead, the only necessity is to observe, tabulate and analyse overt behaviour (Fasold 1993: 148). Hence, the former approach has the disadvantage that the self-reported data are of questionable validity (Fasold 1993: 147), whereas the latter does not allow predictions to be made for other behaviour (Agheyisi & Fishman 1970: 138).

In practice, however, none of the definitions discussed so far are by themselves sufficient for application in scientific work, as is frequently the case in the social sciences. Peter Garrett (2010: 20), for example, suggests that it is best to select a general and simple core definition that is in due course elaborated on by looking at various aspects of attitudes about which there is reasonable consensus. Most working definitions commonly used by researchers therefore incorporate features of both traditions, which give prominence to those characteristics of attitudes most relevant to their studies (Smit 1996: 25).

Throughout this master thesis, the working definition of attitudes is based on Weber (1992: 117), Baker (1992: 10-11) and McGuire (1985: 239). Henceforth, attitudes have to be interpreted in the following way:

> An attitude is a hypothetical sociopsychological construct, which cannot be directly apprehended, but is inferred from the direction and persistence of external behaviour. It locates objects of thought on dimensions of judgement. The attitude manifests itself as an evaluative reaction, a judgement in terms of one's liking or disliking of a person, event or institution. This reaction has to be understood as a non-neutral position about the attitude object, which can vary in intensity.

The working definition has to be in accordance with the goals of the present field study, which aims at the identification of attitudes towards accents. The evaluation is the predominant and central aspect of attitudes, as Olson and Zanna (1993: 119) assert. In attitude measurement and also in this project, only the feelings towards the attitude object can be analysed and treated by researchers (Fishbein 1966: 203). Thence, it seems conclusive that the above definition fits the research interests, as the participants' stimuli responses are seen as predispositions to react favourably or unfavourably to the attitude object. These likes and dislikes, i.e. the evaluations, can range in powerfulness, which are captured through research instrument. This means, the judges in the study are given the choice to select from complete agreement to strong disagreement, with shades in between. The research setup and the questionnaire design will be more closely scrutinised in Chapter 5. For now, it is important to note that the aspects of the above definition represent the underlying core of the practical work.

3.2. The three component model of attitudes

The internal structure of attitudes constitutes a further subject that has given rise to seemingly endless controversy, dividing theorists into factions. While some behaviourist researchers, albeit the clear minority, adhere to the opinion that attitudes consist merely of one component, the absolute majority of mentalist theorists argues for a tripartite internal conception of attitudes (Fasold 1993: 148). The former equate attitude with affect (Smit 1996: 26) or the feelings, as has already been pointed out. The latter, on the contrary, favour a multi-componential analysis of attitudes, following Plato, who proposed three components to be distinguished: the cognitive, the affective and the conative (Baker 1992: 12). Among the

researchers after Plato and Aristotle to draw such a distinction were Rosenberg and Hovland in 1960, who proposed this tripartite view of attitudes (Lasagabaster 2004: 399).

The first component is labelled the *cognitive*, which describes people's thoughts and beliefs about the attitude object (Lasagabaster 2004: 399). This element can alternatively also be referred to as the knowledge component (Agheyisi & Fishman 1970: 138). At this stage, an example might facilitate the practical illustration of this unit. A person who attempts to learn a British RP accent, should believe that this pronunciation will improve his chances of employment in a high status job or an integration into a new society in order to succeed in his endeavours.

The second element is denoted the *affective*, or evaluative (Agheyisi & Fishman 1970: 138) component and relates to feelings towards the attitude object. It can also be understood as a barometer of favourability or unfavourability, which is typically augmented by an assessment of intensity (Garrett 2010: 23). Thus, it has to be understood as a matter of degree, since humans can entirely agree or mildly disagree about something. A person from Edinburgh, for instance, might prefer a news presenter who speaks a similar, local accent of the region, because of his or her familiarity with this variety. Yet, at the same time this individual might completely reject an RP variety of English without regional features.

The third component is entitled the *conative*, action, or readiness for action component, which is an intention or plan of action in a particular context under specific circumstances (Baker 1992: 13). In other words, the conative element is a predisposition to act in a certain way (Garrett 2010: 23). For example, if a student at the University of Vienna is fond of British RP pronunciation, he or she will enrol for the Oral Communication Skills 1 (formerly Practical Phonetics and Oral Communication Skills 1) class for British English, and not for the American English course.

These considerations are summarily represented in Figure 3, where the cognitive (cyan), affective (purple) and conative (orange) components make up the three foundations, which merge into a single attitude unit (green).

Figure 3. The tripartite view of attitudes.

In spite of this multi-componental model being preferred by the majority of academics (Smit 1996: 26), the question remains in what kind of a relationship the individual components stand to the superordinate concept of attitudes. A hierarchical understanding has prevailed against other theories, according to which the three subcomponents (affective, cognitive, conative) merge into one single construct of attitude at a higher level of abstraction (Ajzen 2005: 21-23). In this connection, Garrett (2010: 23) interprets cognition, affect and behaviour as causes and triggers of attitude.

Moreover, there exist cases, where the affective and the cognitive components are in a state of disharmony. Stated beliefs may at times be at variance with irrational prejudice, deep-seated anxiety or fears, which, in due course, cause an imbalance of the two components (Baker 1992: 12). A student, for example, might out of sympathy give relatively positive feedback about a fellow student's presentation of an academic paper, even though he or she actually has a different impression. As can be seen in this example, the affective or feeling component seems to exert a higher amount of influence on the whole attitude concept, which has also been contended by Smit (1996: 27).

Another issue that intensifies this controversy is whether the three components are separate entities. Until the present day today, however, no consensus has been reached among researchers in this regard (Smit 1996: 26; Lasagabaster 2004: 400).

3.3. Are attitudes learned?

Both the mentalist and the behaviourist views are grounded on the belief that individuals are not born with attitudes, yet that these have to be learned, especially through socialisation during childhood and adolescence (McKenzie 2010: 21). This is a major problem of both traditions, as their definitions are based solely on either mental or behavioural aspects of an individual, yet there exist several learning-related factors and circumstances that exert an influence upon attitudes (McKenzie 2010: 21). In effect, whenever attitudes are discussed, at the same time reference is being made to what people have learned in the process of becoming a member of a family, group or of society. This procedure causes a person to react in a consistent, characteristic way (Sherif 1967: 2).

Other factors affecting attitudes are the learning of religion or education, which altogether might contingently lead people to adjust their attitudes to conform with those of the social groups to which they belong (Lasagabaster 2004: 399).

In an educational, language learning context, attitudes are assumed to become established as children enter the school system, which, in due course, indicates that parents and teachers can play a crucial role in attitude development, be they conscious or not (Garrett 2010: 22).

In addition to the social environment, which also includes the media (Garrett 2010: 22), a second factor deserves special mention. Direct personal experiences are another important source of attitudes, which are highly likely the most influential factor in attitude formation (Lasagabaster 2004: 400). Morgan (1998: 71) singles out three factors that seem most likely to have an impact. These are the national culture, the social groups encountered by an individual, and the temperament of the individual with respect to adaptability and flexibility.

There exists, however, fairly recent research that stresses the fact that hereditary factors also has an effect on attitudes (Alford et al. 2005). Additionally, McGuire (1999: 99) claims that genetic endowment and transient physiological states, such as illness, aging or body chemistry, may also affect attitudes, but have hitherto been neglected in analyses.

3.4.   Attitude stability, strength and change

As previously discussed, attitudes are almost exclusively formed through experience, which means that attitudes are something a person learns at a particular stage of his or her life. Given that the experiences we make are subject to change as we lead our lives, the question has to be raised whether the attitudes concomitantly alter as well. Subsequently, it has to be asked if all attitudes change to a similar extent or whether there might be attitudes that are more conductive to change and others that withstand shifts.

A distinction between superficial and less stable attitudes, and others that are more enduring can generally be made in this connection, indicating disparate degrees of attitude strength. In spite of the fact that strength is by no means easily definable, a very promising effort has been made by Petty and Krosnick (1995: 3-6), which is also in agreement with the viewpoint in this thesis. They identified durability and impactfulness as causal indicators of attitude strength. On the one hand, the durability comprises the persistence of an attitude to remain unchanged over an extended period and the resistance, which refers to the ability to withstand attack (Petty & Krosnick 1995: 3-6). Strong attitudes, thus, are those likely to exhibit persistence and/or resistance. On the other hand, impactfulness includes the influence on information processing and judgements, in the sense that particular information comes to mind or that certain decisions will be rendered (Petty & Krosnick 1995: 3-6). Strong attitudes are hence more likely to impart a bias to information processing activity than weak ones. Additionally, strong attitudes are more prone to guiding behaviour than are weak attitudes. Morgan's conception, which has been mentioned above, emphasises the durable or stable qualities of attitudes, which are presumably acquired early in the life span and unlikely to alter in later life (Garrett et al. 2003: 5). Alternatively, less stable and superficial attitudes have been identified, such as first reaction phenomena (Garrett et al. 2003: 5).

The true strength of attitudes especially becomes uncovered when attempts at attitude change are made. In general, most attitudes are dormant and are only expressed in speech or behaviour whenever the attitude object is perceived (Oppenheim 1992: 174-175). These attitudes can be subject to considerable change as time progresses (Baker 1992: 97). Researchers have developed various theories that seek explanations as to why and how attitude alterations occur. One concept regards role models as powerful sources of attitude change and is known as human modelling (Baker 1992: 103). These models might include

family members such as parents or siblings as well as teachers, cultural and media figures. Operant conditioning is another factor that can trigger attitude change, through arrangements of rewards that make attitudes more favourable (Baker 1992: 102). These reinforcements may be non-verbal (such as raised eyebrows or smiles) or verbal (praise, criticism), overt (congratulations) or covert (less eye-contact) (Baker 1992: 102). Thirdly, classical conditioning has also been found to bring about change in this respect (Baker 1992: 102). If attitudes are associated with pleasant events, they become more favourable towards the stimuli (Baker 1992: 102). Lastly, the functional theory designed by Katz (1960: 163-170 in Smit 1996: 26) highlights four functions that have significant implications for change in attitudes and will here be summarily presented. The instrumental function is based on rewards or the avoidance of punishments. The ego-defensive function is responsible for attitude changes aiming at achieving greater security or reducing one's anxiety. Also, attitudes are expressed and activated when they are congruent with the self-concept and personal values, which is subsumed under the value-expressive function (Baker 1992: 101). The final function is referred to as the knowledge function and is premised on the idea that attitudes facilitate the understanding of people and events and draws on a person's aspiration to look for meaning, clarity and understanding and also to structure the universe (Smit 1996: 26).

For the realisation of this project, attitudes are understood as something learned through experience, which have already manifested themselves and are thus relatively stable. It is only these deeply rooted attitudes that can and should be measured in language attitude testing. The study therefore targets the uncovering of exactly these attitudes and has been designed to exclude any potential confounding factors, which might have a negative influence on the results. More information on the field work will be provided in the following chapters.

4. Language Attitudes

After having approached language and attitudes individually, the next step involves the merging of the foregoing considerations by precisely delineating what *language attitudes* are.

4.1. Definition and classification

Even though both concepts are of high complexity when taken on their own, a concise definition of language attitudes is offered by Fasold (1993) and Smit (1996). The former explains (1993: 148) that language attitudes can be distinguished from other attitudes plainly by the fact that they are precisely about language. Ute Smit (1996: 31) more technically expounds on the topic in declaring that language attitudes must comprise all attitudes that are directed towards language as referent. These definitions certainly constitute a boundary to other attitudes, but they leave unspecified the scope of language attitudes. Some research has been directed towards the attitudes to language itself and have investigated whether particular languages are perceived as rich or poor, as beautiful or ugly, or as sweet or harsh-sounding (Fasold 1993: 148). Fasold further maintains (1993: 148) that the language attitude definitions most frequently have to be broadened to include also attitudes to a speaker of a language.

The expansive understanding of the concept has prompted social scientists to devise a more practical scheme for the classification of language attitudes. One of these was developed by Baker in 1992, who segmented this umbrella term into more practicable subcategories. He identified altogether eight domains, each clearly delimited from one another according to its field. These are (Baker 1992: 29):

- attitude to language variation, dialect, and speech style;
- attitude to learning a new language;
- attitude to a specific minority language (e.g. Scots);
- attitude to language groups, communities and minorities;
- attitude to language lessons;
- attitude to the uses of a specific language;
- attitude of parents to language learning; and
- attitude to language preference.

A similar classification of language attitudes was introduced in 1991 by Josef Schmied, who also arranged his scheme according to topics. His subdivisions include attitudes towards certain languages, attitudes towards particular varieties of a language and attitudes towards sociolinguistic topics (1991: 164).

Another way of distinguishing types of language attitudes rests on people's motivations and desires and is the one most often used by researchers (Smit 1996: 39). Lewis (1975: 113-115), for example, makes a division into six groups and singles out general approval, commitment to practice, national tradition, economic and social communication importance, family and local considerations, and personal and ideological considerations as foundations for the evolvement of language attitudes.

Alternatively, in 1972 Gardner and Lambert proposed two core orientations, designated as instrumental and integrative, which are responsible for desire-dependent language attitude formation (1972: 14). An instrumental orientation is the "desire to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of a foreign language" (1972: 14). This can apply, for example, to a person who tries to find a better job or to someone who intends to become more educated through the acquisition of a new language. This type of orientation is usually self-oriented and individualistic and would seem to have conceptual overlap with the need for achievement (McClelland 1958; 1961, quoted in Baker 1992: 32). The integrative orientation, on the other hand, is the "desire to be like representative members" of the respective language community (Gardner & Lambert 1972: 14). This is, for instance, the case if a person strives to communicate more with other people and hopes to become more respected by them. The integrative orientation is interpersonal and social and has a conceptual overlap with the need for affiliation (Baker 1992: 32). Smit, however, concludes that neither of the two orientations provides the possibility to identify the source of motivation (1996: 40).

As has been pointed out, the classification of language attitudes can be based on either contentual aspects or on its underlying motivations. In the following section, the origins of, the influences on and the change of language attitudes will be surveyed.

4.2. Language attitudes: the origins, influential factors and change

In a detailed discussion of language attitudes, a consideration of their origins and developments seems indispensable. Of prime interest appears to be why they exist at all and why people hold them. According to Smit (1996: 36), two language-internal reasons could offer an explanation. On the one hand, it is possible that some languages are linguistically inferior or superior to others, which would suggest that languages are unequal concerning their systematic qualities (Smit 1996: 36). On the other hand, some languages might be aesthetically superior or inferior when compared with others, implying that one variety is more pleasing than others (Smit 1996: 36). The latter statement would support the inherent value hypothesis, which has been refuted, for absolute aesthetic criteria have been found not to exist. Instead, the so called imposed norm hypothesis has taken its place, which argues that language attitudes are in existence due to a "system of differing social values and preferences linked to specific varieties in response to the social structures of a society" (Smit 1996: 36).

Even though Smit's explanations provide clues as to the origin of language attitudes, there is a great variety of factors that exert an influence upon language attitudes and, when taken to the extreme, might result in attitude change. In this respect, it is generally assumed that attitudes can alter with the passage of time. Baker (1992: 105) more generally enounces that attitudes alter both as a function of individual needs and motives and as a function of social situations. The need for success, reward and cognitive consistency interacts with the effect of pleasurable contexts and environments and value models (Baker 1992: 105). Change can also come about through self-directed, purposefully planned activity and the need for security and status within a group and through societal demands (Baker 1992: 105). It has to be clarified, however, that attitude change is substantially a cognitive activity, although it is formulated through social activity (Baker 1992: 106).

On the assumption that attitudes are subject to change, the questions of interest now are who effects language attitude change, what situations are associated with attitude change, and how does change take place.

The first factor that influences language attitude change is age, as attitudes to language seem to be modified with age (Baker 1992: 106). This is, for example, the case when teenagers use youth language on attitude grounds, which they usually drop again after their adolescence.

Within social psychology, it is believed attitude change occurs through social interaction and environmental experience, whereas genetics, physiological states, body chemistry and maturation play only a small role in the process of attitude change (Baker 1992: 106). Therefore, age-related changes are more likely to eventuate from social than physiological changes. Age as a variable has to be treated with care, however, as it is only an indicator or holding variable, which sums up movement over time and does not disclose the underlying reasons for this development (Baker 1992: 42). Notwithstanding the significance of the age factor, research on that sort of changes has received little attention so far.

The most important influences emanate from society, which includes diverse domains, some of which will be mentioned here. Each person is a member of many different groups within society and as such he or she has to find their place in society, defend him- or herself against others and reconcile him- or herself those that are different in nature (Smit 1996: 37). In view of the fact that these processes include a great amount of knowledge and experience and create many disparate and deeply-felt emotions, the varieties involved do not remain neutral but arouse feelings in correlation with their perceived role and status (Smit 1996: 37). The logical consequence is that attitudes are being formed.

Community effects have been identified to play a part in attitude change, especially through the integration of minority language communities (Baker 1992: 107-108). In this regard, language attitude changes may occur when community integration is sustained, when it is felt to be voluntary, when areas of similarity between monolinguals and bilinguals are used to promote contact, when relationships between monolinguals and bilinguals are friendly and intimate, and when the social, economic, political and cultural environment is supportive of minority languages (Baker 1992: 107-108).

A further source of influence on attitude change can be found in society, in parents and in peer groups. The parental effects on language attitudes are observable whenever children's attitudes match those of their parents, or if they hold the exact opposite view (Baker 1992: 109). As concerns peer group influences, it has been found that the familial influence weakens with peer groups having increasing effects, for example through youth culture or involvement in pop culture (Baker 1992: 109). At same time, the mass media affects attitudes in an influential way. On the grounds that people are constantly exposed to mass media reports, the effect of mass media, however, is too easily overemphasised (Baker 1992: 111). Nevertheless,

some influence must be accepted. These effects summarily make up a person's language background (Baker 1992: 44).

In the societal context, also institutional effects have been detected which influence attitudes towards language. First and foremost, through the teaching of a language attitudes may change, thereby making schools the most influential institution that can bring about alteration in this process (Baker 1992: 43, 110). Factors that are expected to potentially modify language attitudes comprise the formal curriculum, extra-curricular activities, cultural lessons, or the languages of the playground and sports field (Baker 1992: 43, 110).

The cultural background might have an impact on language attitude change as well. Changes can occur via a ritual and ceremonial devices, for example through national holidays or the singing of national anthems before sports events (Baker 1992: 111).

Furthermore, language attitudes and concomitant changes can also be investigated according to gender differences. Similarly to the age factor, it appears unlikely that the difference is biological or maturational (Baker 1992: 42). Reasons can assumedly be located in the sociocultural behaviours of the two genders. It has long been known that favourable attitudes towards a language are highly likely to facilitate the learning of a foreign language (Gardner 1982: 135). Austrian girls, for example, might have a more favourable attitude to the English language than boys, which can be reflected in their English language attainment.

All factors mentioned in the previous discussion seem to influence language attitudes or contribute to their formation, albeit to varying degrees. One more peculiar aspect has to be discussed in this respect. There exists considerable evidence of a linkage between ability in a language and attitude towards that language. In stark contrast to the previous factors, which merely exert a uni-directional influence on language attitudes, ability is regarded as having a mutually reciprocating influence on attitudes (Baker 1992: 44).

So far, the considerations have focussed on who effects language attitude change and on which situations can lead to attitude change. The attention of the final deliberations in this section will be on how language attitude change can come about.

The underlying assumption in attitude change is always that this change does occur in a slow and gradual process – it develops and evolves rather than changes quickly and drastically (Baker 1992: 106). In the domain of language, a revolutionary language attitude shift can be brought about by language activists, as was the case in Quebec or Israel where tension was the immediate consequence (Baker 1992: 107). Killings, personal or on-personal violence, mass protest or guerrilla activity have the power to alter attitudes practically overnight and thereby minority languages may be looked upon with hostility as a result (Baker 1992: 107). A single event, imposed by government or by a group in radical opposition, may change language attitudes in differing directions for different people. Such a rash switch can either be intended or unintended (Baker 1992: 107).

4.3. Reasons for studying language attitudes and insights to be gained

Given that research on language attitudes has become hugely popular in recent decades, it is of essential significance to demonstrate the motivation behind the production of studies in this field and to illustrate how the tasks are coped with in different disciplines. In social psychology, a tendency towards working at unspecific levels is discernible, sometimes employing the notion of a whole language (Garrett et al. 2003: 13). For example, research can be directed to the whole English or the whole German language. In contradistinction to this approach, most sociolinguists might even find terms such as British English too general and unspecific (Garrett et al. 2003: 13), since there exist numerous regional dialect communities within Great Britain and it would not be clear to which of these the attitudinal data refers. In his most famous study, William Labov focussed on the evaluative meanings of the sociolinguistic variable (r) in postvocalic position in New York City, while the emphasis in other studies was on the uses of grammar features (Garrett et al. 2003: 13).

The underlying reasons for investigating language attitudes are many and varied, yet always focus-dependent. In order to establish a general structure in the field of language attitudes according to focal point, Colin Baker (1993: 29) identified the eight domains that have been introduced in Chapter 4.1. Despite this classification scheme, all investigations have in common the fact that language attitude research provides a backdrop for explaining linguistic variation and change (Labov 1984: 33). One important goal is thus to construct a record of

overt attitudes towards language, linguistic features and linguistic stereotypes (Labov 1984: 33).

The study of language attitudes, however, goes beyond discovering simply what people's attitudes are and what effects they might have in terms of behavioural outcomes (Garrett et al. 2003: 13). In collecting language attitude data, the results gained can provide information on the historical development, the current and future states of a language or language variety. The attitude measurement in terms of favourability or unfavourabilty towards language varieties might be indicative of their health (Baker 1992: 30). Thus, language attitudes are of paramount significance when it comes to the status of a language variety, insofar as favourable attitudes can lead to the language variety being maintained or to language revival. This applies, for example, to the Gaelic language, which has in recent decades been promoted in Ireland (Spolsky 1998: 56). In contrast, negative attitudes towards a variety may cause language decline, language shift or, at worst, language death.

Although these areas are unquestionably crucial, the more typical concern in the study of language attitudes lies in identifying differences between groups of individuals (Baker 1992: 30). As Ralph Fasold professes (1993: 158), language attitude research reveals the social importance of language as a symbol of group membership. Due to language attitudes towards varieties, sociolinguistic and sociopsychological phenomena become evident, e.g. the group stereotypes by which we judge others or how we position ourselves within social groups (Garrett et al. 2003: 12). Language attitude studies can additionally supply information about variation within communities, the variation between communities and about cultural differences (Garrett et al. 2003: 12). The focus can therefore be on detecting disparities according to age, gender or language background. Research questions could for example include whether Austrian males or females are more favourably disposed to the English language, or whether older or younger people respond more favourably to Viennese German.

After this brief discussion of the relevance of language attitude studies, the attention will now be shifted to how language attitudes can actually be measured. Subsequently the methods researchers have at their avail when attempting to uncover these attitudes will be presented and thoroughly described.

4.4. Language attitude measurement

The methods employed in language attitude research can be grouped according to three broad approaches. These are the societal treatment approach, direct measures and indirect measures (Ryan, Giles & Sebastian 1982: 7). Additionally, Robert McKenzie (2010: 52) supplements the considerations by Ryan and his colleagues by identifying a mixed methodological approach. These techniques will be summarily overviewed in this section.

4.4.1. The societal treatment approach

Language attitude studies in the societal treatment paradigm are typically qualitative and are conducted through participant observation or ethnographic studies (McKenzie 2010: 41). In consequence of its unobtrusive design, this approach compels researchers to infer attitudes from various kinds of observed behaviours and sources (Garrett 2010: 37). It usually involves a content analysis of the status and the stereotypical associations of languages and language varieties and their speakers (McKenzie 2010: 41). In academic writings, the societal treatment approach only plays a minor part and is frequently not mentioned at all. There are, however, contexts in which the application of societal treatment approaches makes sense. These comprise instances where restrictions of time or space do not permit direct access to the informants or cases in which it is not possible to investigate research subjects under entirely natural conditions (van Hout & Knops 1988: 7). In addition, this approach might be useful as a preliminary study for more thorough sociolinguistic or psychological inquiry, which then makes use of direct or indirect data collection methods (Garrett et al. 2003: 16-17). As an example of a study in this paradigm, McKenzie (2010: 42) lists Harald Haarmann's research (1986; 1989), which was concerned with the use of foreign languages in advertising as symbols of prestige in Japan.

4.4.2. The direct approach

This approach is based on elicitation and is characterised by the asking of direct questions, which might include respondents' judgements about language preference or language evaluation (Garrett et al. 2003: 16). The main data collection techniques identified by Henerson et al. (1987: 24-29) are the word-of-mouth procedure, which includes interviews, surveys and polls, and the written-response method, which utilises questionnaires or attitude rating scales. According to van Hout and Knops (1988: 7), the major difference between the

direct approach and the societal treatment approach lies in the fact that in the direct method the respondents themselves are questioned about their attitudes, while in the societal treatment approach the researcher infers attitudes from observed behaviour. As a result, a higher degree of obtrusiveness is necessary in the direct approach. This method has been employed in various contexts. Gardner and Lambert (1972), for example, investigated second language learning and relative language use, whereas MacKinnon (1981) was concerned with attitudes towards the preservation of the Gaelic language. The direct methods found further application in Baker's 1992 study, in which he examined attitudes to English and Welsh in bilingual contexts.

4.4.3. The indirect approach

The indirect approach to the investigation of language attitudes involves the use of more subtle techniques of measurement than the direct asking of questions, which can in some circumstances go as far as deceiving research participants (Garret et al 2003: 16; McKenzie 2010: 45). Three strategies in attitude research are of importance in connection with the indirect approach. These are firstly the observation of subjects without their awareness that they are being observed; secondly, the observation of aspects of people's behaviour over which one can assume they have no control; and thirdly, successfully fooling subjects into believing that the questioner is testing something other than their attitudes (Garrett et al 2003: 16). This method is capable of penetrating deeper than the direct method and indeed often below the level of conscious awareness or behind the individual's social facade (McKenzie 2010: 45). Thus, the indirect approach can be successful in revealing stereotypes, or self-images, for instance. Even though this method can be useful in cases where it is too intrusive to administer direct questions through interviews or questionnaires, there are at the same time ethical issues that have to be taken into account. Whenever participants of a study are deceived, it is usually through debriefing that ethical issues are dealt with. This includes the informing of the subjects as soon as possible after the completion of the research project about the purposes, procedures and the scientific value of the study and eventually also discussing potential questions the participants might be interested in (Smith & Mackie 2000: 52).

In language attitude research, the most frequently utilised indirect measurement instrument is the matched-guise technique, or MGT for short (McKenzie 2010: 46), which is why Garrett et al. (2003: 17) even go as far as claiming that the MGT is generally seen as synonymous with the indirect approach as a whole. This technique was developed by Lambert in the 1950s in Canada (McKenzie 2010: 46), since he felt that the public, overt responses elicited through direct approaches did in actuality not match the people's privately held attitudes (Garrett et al. 2003: 51). The most common MGT procedure consists of respondents listening to a series of single speakers who read out the same prepared, neutral text (McKenzie 2010: 46). The MGT then attempts to control out all but the manipulated independent variable and hence only this variable remains to explain variable patterns of responses among listeners (Garrett et al. 2003: 52). That means where accent is the manipulated variable, a single speaker is recorded reading the same passage in a range of accents while keeping other variables such as speech rate constant (Garrett et al. 2003: 52).

The MGT is indubitably a rigorous and elegant design for investigating people's private attitudes and has brought to the fore a considerable number of studies which allow for comparability. It also laid the foundations for cross-disciplinary work at the interface of social psychology of language and sociolinguistics. At the same time, though, the MGT is subject to criticism for varying reasons, which are discussed in Garrett et al. (2003: 57-61) or in McKenzie (2010: 45-52) and are only briefly overviewed and contrasted with its advantages here.

One of the main criticisms of the MGT is the so-called salience problem. If the MGT is employed, the speech or language variation may be systematically made more marked than it otherwise would be in natural conditions.

The second disadvantage is the perception problem, which postulates that in most studies one cannot be entirely sure whether the judges (i.e. the people who participate in experiments) have reliably perceived the manipulated variables.

The accent authenticity problem occurs if some characteristics which usually co-vary with accent varieties are eliminated. These can, for example be intonational characteristics or discourse patterning.

Whenever one speaker produces a number of different varieties for MGT studies, the accuracy of the renderings is questionable and not always expected to be high. Yet, one also has to be keep in mind the fact that test subjects might not be aware of what is not incorporated and might subsequently still perceive mimicked voices as authentic. This is referred to as the mimicking authenticity problem.

Additional mention has to be made of the neutrality problem. Given that it is doubtful that any text can be described as factually neutral, the selection of the appropriate text is a highly difficult task for the experimenter.

As opposed to its criticisms, McKenzie (2010: 45-52) and Garrett et al. (2003: 57-61) also rightly argue that this method also boasts numerous considerable advantages that will shortly have to be presented as well.

First and foremost, the MGT is an elegant and rigorous design for the investigation of people's privately held attitudes. It is highly unlikely that direct questioning of respondents can produce such private attitudes but would rather result in responses that are socially acceptable or desirable.

Among the commonly claimed successes of the MGT is the fact that it has in very detailed fashion demonstrated the role of language code and style choice when it comes to impression formation.

Owing to its widespread application, the MGT has internationally already generated a very remarkable number of studies in various contexts, such as bilingual or multi-ethnic. This allows for a reasonable degree of comparability and thus for cumulative development of theory.

It has moreover provided insights into the central dimensions along which evaluations are made. These include prestige, social attractiveness and dynamism.

Eventually, it needs to be reiterated that the MGT has successfully laid the groundwork for cross-disciplinary work, conducted at the interface of social psychology and sociolinguistics.

On the grounds of its enormous advantages, the MGT is frequently employed in language attitude research. Among the earlier studies that used the MGT are, for instance, Lambert et al. (1960), who investigated attitudes towards French and English amongst both Francophone and Anglophone communities in Canada. A decade later, Howard Giles (1970) conducted a study in which he was concerned with Welsh accents and subsequently (1971) also researched the personality attributed to Welsh accents in relation to RP. A more recent example is a study conducted by Hans Ladegaard (1998), who attempted to study Danish attitudes towards British, American and Australian English by using a variant form of the matched-guise technique known as the verbal-guise technique. On the strength of its unquestionable successes and the concomitant comparability of results, for example to the above mentioned Danish experiment, a pure matched-guise technique was the method of choice for investigating language attitudes towards varieties of English among Austrian students in this master thesis.

4.4.4. Mixed methodological approaches

For completeness' sake, it has to be mentioned that also mixed methodological approaches can be employed in language attitude research. This applies to cases when there are inherent problems with both direct and indirect methods. Researchers often opt to design research studies that incorporate multiple techniques and both direct and indirect methods of language attitude measurement (McKenzie 2010: 52). In this paradigm, the goal is to gain insights into how differing methods best supplement each other in order to achieve more certainty in terms of the findings (McKenzie 2010: 52).

4.5. Previous language attitude research

The overwhelming majority of language attitude research has been conducted in either native speaker – native speaker or native speaker – non-native speaker interaction contexts (Jenkins 2007: 78). In 1969, Tucker and Lambert carried out one of the first language attitude studies towards varieties of American English by employing the matched-guise technique. They found that their judges made a social distinction between American dialects. Subsequently, an ever increasing number of such studies was conducted, which primarily focussed on native speaker attitudes to varieties of English and other languages in American contexts. As the emphasis in this master thesis is on the evaluation of British English accents, some findings of

previous language attitude research in the British context are of more interest. In the case of native speaker evaluations, it has been demonstrated by various studies that those especially hold negative attitudes towards non-standard varieties of speech (McKenzie 2010: 56). RP is generally rated more prestigiously than local varieties in most parts of the United Kingdom. Striking is the fact that, among Glaswegians, RP is often looked upon with hostility (McKenzie 2010: 56). Attitudes in the UK towards the standardised variety of Scottish, i.e. Standard Scottish English (SSE), appear to be particularly positive (McKenzie 2010: 56).

The relationship between language attitude research and non-native speakers is more complicated, though. Earlier on, only few studies have been produced, in which mostly non-native attitudes towards English have been tested that ignored geographical and social variation within the Englishes (McKenzie 2010: 58). That means, what part of Kachru's Circle Model the varieties belong to has received no attention in these examinations. The tendency was to investigate non-native speaker attitudes towards English, conceptualised as one entity (McKenzie 2010: 58). In recent years, however, a renewed interest in English language variety evaluations by non-native speakers has become discernible. Some findings of these will be briefly described at this stage. In 1997, Dalton-Puffer et al. carried out an experiment that examined the attitudes of 132 university students of English in Austria. Informants of their study were required to evaluate two Austrian accents of English and three native English varieties (RP, near-RP and General American). Their findings indicated a preference for RP, followed by the other two native accents (1997: 126). Also, RP was identified correctly by more than 85% of the study population (Daton-Puffer et al. 1997: 120). Their conclusion was that the results can be ascribed to the familiarity of Austrian students with RP, as it was the variety favoured by English teachers in Austria at that time (1997: 126).

One year later, Hans Ladegaard conducted a study that aimed at uncovering the language attitudes and national stereotypes of 96 schoolchildren and university students in Denmark (Ladegaard 1998: 255). His conclusion was that RP was the unchallenged prestige variety, which was rated most favourably whenever it came to status and competence traits (Ladegaard 1998: 258). In addition, Ladegaard (1998: 258-262) found that RP was the best model of pronunciation. On the other hand, the Scottish and Australian accents were rated more positively on social attractiveness (Ladegaard 1998: 259). With regard to accent recognition, he demonstrated that RP was among the most easily recognisable varieties,

whereas a correct identification of Scottish English, Cockney and Australian English was most difficult for Danish students (Ladegaard 1998: 260-261).These studies indicate that, in the European context, RP is allegedly seen as the most prestigious variety and the optimum pronunciation model that learners can strive for. A comparison of these findings to the present study 15 years later will offer insights into whether this standing has changed or remained unaltered.

PART TWO

THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

5. Research Design of the Study

In consequence of the current state of language attitude research, questions of relevance for the Austrian university context were defined, whereupon the methodological design underlying this investigation was developed. This chapter details all stages involved in this process by means of a step by step approach.

5.1. Aims and hypotheses

The principal goal of the present study was the identification of attitudinal differences towards varieties of the English language in dependence of varying parameters. For this purpose, five phonologically differing English accents were made use of, which had to be evaluated by the test subjects. On the grounds of these theoretical foundations, the following general research questions were initially formulated.

(i) What are the dimensions according to which Austrian students rate the character traits of the five guises?

(ii) Which parameters are responsible for causing evaluative discrepancies in the students' response behaviour?

(iii) Which of the parameters tested exert an influence upon the students' rank ordering results?

(iv) Which speaker-independent dimensions are most associated with the qualities of good news readers?

(v) Does the students' identification or misidentification of the varieties exert an effect upon their evaluative judgements?

(vi) Does the study population recognise that the five varieties were produced by only three speakers?

In due course, nine more specific alternative research hypotheses were generated on the basis of the research questions above. In contrast to these alternative hypotheses (H_1-I – H_1-IX), the corresponding null hypotheses (H_0-I – H_0-IX) postulate no statistically significant relationship between the variables measured.

H$_1$-I   Austrian students apply a twofold character trait classification in their judgements on the five language varieties whereby they distinguish between status and competence and social attractiveness.

H$_1$-II   Distinct perceptions of the five varieties lead to evaluative discrepancies at the individual character trait level, as well as at the attitude dimension level.

H$_1$-III   Evaluative differences result from the respondents' subject of study and, by extension, also from their level of English language competence.

H$_1$-IV   The evaluation of the accents is influenced by the presence or absence of education- or travel-related experiences in the English-speaking world.

H$_1$-V   The students' own variety of English exerts an influence upon their attitudinal judgements on the speakers.

H$_1$-VI   The five speakers' assumed news reader suitability depends more strongly on competence variables than on social perceptions.

H$_1$-VII   The rank ordering is influenced by the informants' subject of study and by potential Anglophone language experiences abroad.

H$_1$-VIII   The evaluation of the attitude dimensions is affected by the identification or misidentification of the speakers' language varieties.

H$_1$-IX   The informants evaluate the varieties irrespective of the speaker who produced the recordings.

5.1.1. Variables

In order to investigate attitudinal discrepancies, the following variables were defined for the present field study. The accent produced by the speakers functioned as the independent variable, which was assumed to have an effect on the dependent variable (Gerrig & Zimbardo 2005: 26). In very general terms, the latter is the variable the researcher measures to assess the impact of variation in the independent variable (Gerrig & Zimbardo 2005: 26). With reference to this investigation, the attitudinal judgements made by the participants constituted the dependent variable. Deliberate and controlled modifications of the independent variable were hence in varying degrees expected to be reflected in the test subjects' attitudinal evaluations. In addition, certain moderating variables were employed, which exerted an influence upon the correlation between the independent and the dependent variable. In this experimental design, such moderating effects refer to the students' respective English language competence, to their travel- and study-related stays abroad in Anglophone regions, or to the English language

variety spoken by the respondents. A potential moderating effect emanating from the correct identification or the misidentification of the varieties on the informants' attitudinal evaluations was moreover one subject of closer inspection. As can be seen above, these moderating variables were incorporated into numerous research questions and alternative hypotheses.

5.2. Methods

The scientific scrutiny of the research questions and hypotheses was premised on quantitative data collection methods by use of a questionnaire, which will be presented below, and the so-called matched-guise technique. As already discussed in Section 4.4.3., the MGT design belongs to the indirect approach to language attitude measurement and is generally characterised by the employment of one and the same speaker for the production of multiple language varieties. In doing so, the potential influence of confounding variables, such as voice, pitch, gender and colour of sound can be reduced. By selecting this method, such confounding variables were thus controlled and to the greatest extent possible eliminated, while the independent variable, i.e. the accent, was consciously varied by the examiner. In excess to the three recordings which were produced by one female speaker, two more speakers of the same sex were utilised in order to reduce the risk of person-dependent evaluations. One of them was a native L1 English speaker who functioned primarily as a distractor. These four L1 accents were supplemented by one non-native EFL variety, which was produced with phonological characteristics often found in the pronunciations of Austrian speakers of English. This step was taken to allow insights relating to the differing perceptions of non-native and native varieties to be gained.

The participants were, however, not informed about the experimental design of the study at first and were therefore in the belief that they heard five different speakers and rated them accordingly. The judges were also made think that they should evaluate their respective linguistic aptitude for positions as news readers. Due to ethical reasons, the listeners were informed about the experimental design of the study after the completion of all tasks, as is recommended by Smith & Mackie (2000: 52).

5.3. Operationalisation and questionnaire design

The theoretical background for the investigation of attitudes is located in personality psychology or differential psychology. Within this field, the so-called Sedimentation Hypothesis (or Lexical Hypothesis) is defined by two postulates. Firstly, it states that the personality characteristics of greatest importance in people's lives will eventually become part of their language. Secondly, it follows therefrom that more important personality characteristics are more likely to be encoded in language as single words (John, Angleitner & Ostendorf 1988: 174). In essence, that suggests that all relevant personality traits are represented by adjectives in the language in question (Asendorpf 2007: 478). For the transformation of a theoretical construct such as language attitudes, as defined in Section 4.1., into empirically measurable quantities, a questionnaire was created on the basis of the Sedimentation Hypothesis. The variables to be operationalised were therefore mainly described in the form of items consisting of semantically differentiable adjectives, which comprised aspects relevant to language attitude measurement. These items allowed the informants to express their attitudes in varying degrees of markedness.

In order to ensure the most exact measurability possible, the research questions were methodologically approached from diverse angles. In addition to the collection of basic sociodemographic data, such as age or gender, from the participants, also potential moderating variables were obtained through the questionnaire. These included the subject of study, the progress of study, the international English language experience and the English variety spoken by the respondents. The questionnaire used in this field study has been attached in its entirety to the Appendix of this thesis.

In Part I of the questionnaire, a semantic differential scale was employed. This type of bipolar rating scale is capable of measuring the connotative meaning of objects with the aid of adjective pairs, which provides the test subjects the opportunity to judge the object of enquiry (Bortz & Döring 2006: 186). The result thereby obtained is a profile characteristic for the attitude object (Bortz & Döring 2006: 186). Given that the basis for valuation is constituted by the emotional affinity in terms of the attitude object towards the rating scales (and not by the often non-existent denotative connections), this kind of research instrument is frequently applied in the measurement of stereotyped reactions (Bortz & Döring 2006: 185).

Given that in this research project the error of central tendency among the responses of the judges had to be avoided at any rate, a semantic differential scale with an even number of options was decided upon. Thereby, students who would normally select the middle category were urged to ponder their attitudes to the stimuli more closely and eventually had to make a favourable or unfavourable decision towards it. This criterion is also what Brosius and Koschel (2005: 97) single out as one of the main strengths of this approach.

With respect to the number of options provided to the participants, a four point forced choice scale was found to guarantee sufficiently marked differentiation in the respondents' answers. In the final questionnaire, this type of bipolar scale was utilised in Item 1 to measure altogether 16 character traits of the five speakers through adjectives. Half of these traits were arranged so that the positive adjective appeared on the left, while the negative one was found on the right hand side. In the remaining eight character traits the positioning was reversed in order to counteract fatigue effects among the students and to avoid potential left or right biases in their responses. This was, however, explicitly brought to their attention in the instructions and they were, furthermore, given sufficient time to answer this item to ensure that no mistakes in their judgments occurred. The first four out of 16 character traits of Item 1 are exemplarily illustrated by Figure 4 below. The same type of semantic differential scale found further application in the collection of information in regard to the friendship dimension (Item 5) and in measuring their judgements on the pronunciation of the speakers (Item 2).

1. *SPEAKER A* is … (tick the appropriate boxes):

	VERY	← RATHER	→ RATHER	VERY	
humorous	☐	☐	☐	☐	humourless
unintelligent	☐	☐	☐	☐	intelligent
friendly	☐	☐	☐	☐	unfriendly
insecure	☐	☐	☐	☐	self-confident

Figure 4. Questionnaire Item 1 (Part I).

While this semantic differential scale only allows an expression of a finite number of characteristic values, i.e. four, the five speakers' overall suitability for employment as news readers was measured by means of a visual analogue scale (VAS for short), which essentially is a continuous measurement device (Reips & Funke 2008: 699). Since this scale functions as a continuous variable, it has the potential to capture a theoretically infinite number of nuances of attitude measurement and is therefore considered a "reliable instrument for valid measurement" (Reips & Funke 2008: 700). In terms of appearance, the VAS consists of a line and two anchors located at each pole, which mark opposite ends of a semantic dimension (e.g. *good* versus *bad*) (Reips & Funke 2008: 700). Figure 5 below stems from the final questionnaire and offered the participants of the study the option to place a mark at any value on a scale from 0 to 10. It has to be stressed that in the data evaluation process the potentially infinite number of nuances (e.g. 6.586374…) was rounded to one decimal place. This means the students' response behaviour ranged from 0.0 to 10.0.

3. **On a scale from 0 (not suitable) to 10 (very suitable), how suitable do you think *SPEAKER A* would be for a job as a radio news reporter? Place an *X* on the line below to indicate your opinion.**

0 |——————————————————————| **10**

Figure 5. Questionnaire Item 3 (Part I).

In order to gather information on the participants' global, non-rational and implicit attitudes towards the news presentation styles of the speakers, they were required to provide an associative one word assessment. For this purpose, six adjectives with disparate positioning in a multidimensional semantic space were supplied to the respondents for selection. This format is illustrated through Figure 6 below.

4. **How would you describe *SPEAKER A*'s way of presenting the news in one word? Circle the most fitting adjective of the list below.**

ugly   interesting   harsh   beautiful   dry   energetic

Figure 6. Questionnaire Item 4 (Part I).

Whereas in Part I of the questionnaire the respondents rated each speaker individually, Part II aimed at obtaining a comparative evaluation of the five guises in relation to one another through two more items. First, a rank ordering according to the students' overall impressions of the five accents had to be provided. After that, the informants were asked to perform a regional localisation of the language varieties they heard. For this task, there existed no restraints in terms of the specificity or generality of the answers. The basis for valuation in these final two questions was constituted by one shortened stimulus recording per speaker.

5.4. The reading passage

The text passage, first and foremost, had to be in congruence with the general research design. Given that the participants assumed they would rate five potential English news readers, a text representative of that genre had to be searched for. Altogether three requirements had to be met in connection with the selection of the stimulus text.

The arguably most relevant parameter in this process was the appropriate length of the text, which is, as a result, also directly reflected in the duration of the recording. On the grounds that the students' capacity of concentration should never be overstrained in experiments, the length of the audio files was defined at 45 seconds with a variation range of less than 10%. This criterion ensured that all language samples were virtually of the same duration.

The second requirement concerned the content-related comprehensibility of the reading passage. In accordance with the B2 standard on the Common European Framework for Reference of Languages, which roughly corresponds to the Austrian Matura level, the text should under no circumstances have exceeded this level. The reason for this decision lies in the fact that students whose English language competence was in this particular range were also present in the student population under investigation.

The final criterion was connected to the content of the news passage. In this respect, the story should not have been emotionally moving or disturbing for the informants, nor should it have contained any names of places or people that might have evoked loaded reactions. Otherwise, the student's attention would have been diverted from the phonological characteristics of the five English accents.

After the creation of a pool of various sample news texts which met these demands, the following, factually relatively neutral news story was selected. It was adapted from the BBC's official internet site.

Twycross zoo has announced the birth of a western lowland gorilla.

The baby, which has not yet been named, was born on the third of January 2013.

Nowadays there are fewer than one hundred thousand of the critically endangered animals left in the wild.

The director of the zoo said the infant represented a vital contribution to the conservation of the species.

According to the wildlife park, the mother, who was born at the zoo in 1994, is a confident, attentive mother and is taking great care of her baby.

The father is gentle but protective and is showing a lot of interest in the infant.
The infant, whose sex is not yet known, will stay close to its mother for the next couple of years but can be seen by visitors to the park.

(http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-21232175, 3 March 2013)

As the news passage had to be congruent with the above criteria, appropriate modifications had to be made to this first version of the text. Reviews by two native speakers from England guaranteed authenticity and intelligibility of the simplified news story. The final text used in this study consisted of 124 words in very simple English and can be found below.

Twycross Zoo has announced the birth of a western lowland gorilla

The baby was born on Tuesday and has not yet been given a name. Whether it is a boy or a girl is not known so far.

According to the wildlife park, the mother is confident and attentive, and is taking great care of her baby.

The father is gentle but protective, and is showing a lot of interest in the newborn.

Nowadays there are only a few of these gorillas left in the wild, so the director of the zoo said the newborn would help conserve the species.

The baby ape will stay close to its mother for the next couple of years but can be seen by visitors to the park.

5.5. The speakers and corresponding phonology-based variety descriptions

The speaker selection procedure proved to be intricate, inasmuch as the quality requirements were very high. The person searched for had to be capable of producing various accents of equal authenticity. After testing numerous candidates, an applicant with sufficiently marked skills and a language-didactic background was found. By virtue of her Essex origin, the 51 year old person was capable of speaking an Estuary English accent, which can commonly be encountered in this region. Through her teaching duties, she was also perfectly able to produce an authentic RP accent, free from any regional influences. For the present study, the candidate additionally acquired a Standard Scottish English pronunciation by an analysis of video and audio material and by conversing with Scottish English native speakers in person. As a distractor, a 37 year old English native speaker from Manchester was cast, who, owing to her regional provenance, spoke a highly punctual and regional variety of English found typically in the Greater Manchester area. In order to enable a contrastive analysis between native and non-native RP variants, a female Austrian high school teacher was selected, who was 36 years of age and delivered a performance according to her skills acquired through university English language teacher education. All speakers were asked to perform the text described above as if they were news readers who addressed a message to their audiences. All candidates were recorded several times at multiple sessions, of which the qualitatively best files for every accent were chosen for inclusion in the actual research experiment.

In order to ensure that the phonological characteristics of these accents were present in sufficient quality, quantity and continuity, the final recordings were subjected to an expert rating. The audio files generally allowed for a differentiated allocation of the varieties to their respective region. The Manchester English accent, however, was identified only as a 'northern England' variety by the experts, to which this variety definitely belongs. As this variant was primarily used as a distractor, an exact regional assignment was irrelevant for the answering of the research questions.

The general phonological characteristics associated with these varieties were summarily outlined in Chapter 2. The actual manifestations of these in the final recordings of the news text are briefly described here at this stage.

5.5.1. The RP guise's recording

A great number of features commonly associated with Received Pronunciation can be found within the speech sample produced by this guise. Throughout the whole audio file, no use was being made of post-vocalic /r/, which is recognisable in this speaker's phonological realisations of the words *mother* [ˈmʌðə], *born* [bɔːn], *girl* [gɜːl] or *father* [ˈfɑːðə]. Linking /r/, however, occurred between words in some utterances in the recording, including the phrases *director of* [daɪˈɹektərɒv], *or a girl* [ɒɹəˈgɜːl] or *there are* [ðɛəɹɑː]. In RP, the incorporation of this feature is highly recommended, yet optional. At the same time, this characteristic seemed to be absent in the utterances *whether it is* [ˈweðəɪtis] or *mother is* [ˈmʌðəɪs]. In these cases, the linking /r/ appeared to have been abandoned in favour of some kind of vowel glide or a pause. In the noun *gorilla* [gəˈɾɪlə], the /r/ sound articulated by the speaker gave the impression that it was realised as something close to a post-alveolar tap and would subsequently have to be transcribed as [ɾ]. This characteristic is sometimes observed in the speech of RP users, yet more typical for U-RP, i.e. upper-crust RP variants.

Unlike in other accents, Yod-Coalescence was searched for in vain in the RP speaker's recording. While the word *Tuesday* would in some accents permit the use of this feature, the RP guise's realisation was [ˈtjuːzdeɪ]. No instances of the reverse process, i.e. Yod-Dropping, were detectable in this recording. Therefore, her pronunciation of the noun *newborn* was [ˈnjuːbɔːn], which means the [j] sound was explicitly perceptible.

The RP speaker furthermore made a distinction between clear and dark /l/. The former type was detectable before vowels as in words such as *gorilla* [gəˈɾɪlə] or *lot* [lɒt], while the latter was observed before consonants or pauses as, applies to her pronunciations of gentle [ˈdʒentɫ] or wild [waɪɫd]. The last two examples are also testament to the fact that no L-Vocalisation was employed by this speaker, while some London variants might allow the use of this feature in these contexts.

Moreover, /t/ was never replaced by glottal stops as in *not known* [ˈnɒtnəʊn] or *lot of* [ˈlɒtəv], where some accents and even some RP speakers might use that feature. Throughout this guise's recording, H-Dropping did not occur, as the [h] sound was always present word-initially. Other accents, in contrast, might allow this phenomenon in words as *has* [hæz], naturally depending on the stress of the utterance.

As a result of the aforementioned pronunciation characteristics within this guise's speech sample, it can be concluded that the candidate produced a recording that bears most resemblance to mainstream or general RP. The accent of this speaker will thus from now on be labelled 'RP'.

5.5.2.   The Manchester English speaker's recording

Within the Manchester speaker's recording, no post-vocalic /r/ in words as *born* [bɔːn] was present, underlining that this variety is non-rhotic. Linking /r/ occurred only variably, but not consistently through the whole recording. While it was present in the phrase *father is* [ˈfɑːðəɹɪz], where it was realised as an alveolar approximant, this kind of linking was absent in the phrase *great care of* [ˈgreɪʔkɛɐɒv], where it seems to have been abandoned in favour of a pause of only minimal duration. The previous example, as well as the candidate's realisation of the phrases *not known* [ˈnɒʔnəʊn] and *whether it is* [wɛðəɹɪʔˈɪz], function as proof for the fact that this accent makes heavy use of T-Glotalling. The latter transcription, by the bye, again indicates that linking /r/ was occasionally heard in this audio file.

This speaker, moreover, employed Yod-Coalescence in the word *Tuesday*, which was articulated as [ˈtʃuːzdeɪ]. On the other hand, Yod-Dropping did not occur in this speech sample, as the noun *newborn* was pronounced as [ˈnjʏbɔːn].

The words *mother* and *but* were realised as [ˈmʊðə] and [bʊʔ] respectively, which confirms that in environments where RP would normally use [ʌ], speakers from the Manchester region tend towards a [ʊ]-type pronunciation. Incidents of H-Dropping were not discovered in this recording, since the [h] sound was present word-initially in *has*. In her realisation of the word *wildlife*, the /l/ sound was not articulated. Given that no full vocalisation was clearly perceptible, it remains uncertain whether it was partly vocalised or whether this sound was omitted at all. Conversely, the word *wild* on its own was pronounced [waɪɫd], indicating the presence of a dark [ɫ].

The articulation of the final vowel in *baby*, which has to be transcribed as [ˈbeɪbɪ], was unexpectedly short and comparable to the vowel found in RP KIT. In this recording, the so-called happY tensing phenomenon could not be observed, whereby final or prevocalic /ɪ/ is located qualitatively between /ɪ/ and /iː/. The vowel in *zoo* was also articulated relatively

front, which is why the speaker's realisation of this noun might be transcribed as [zʏ:]. Even though the first and the last vowels in *gorilla* are not stressed and thereby could, in theory, be uttered weakly, the Manchester guise pronounced the noun as [gɒˈɹɪla]. This implies that the speaker retained strong vowels in environments where in other accents such as RP there would be expected a weak one.

The speaker's realisation of *according* deserves additional mention. Unlike in RP where this word would typically end in [ŋ], the presence of an additional velar plosive [g] was observable in this audio file. As a result, this articulation would have to be transcribed as [aˈkɔ:dɪŋg].

The candidate's realisation of *for the* was rather atypical. Instead of an articulation as [fəðə] as in RP, she articulated these words as [fɒvə]. In doing so, she altered the voiced dental fricative /ð/ into the voiced labiodental fricative /v/. This process is generally referred to as TH-Fronting, whereby the dental fricatives are replaced by labiodentals (Wells 1982b: 328). This feature is in widespread use in the Cockney accent, but can also be encountered in some northern varieties (Wells 1982b: 328). Nevertheless, its usage is not particularly associated with Manchester and it remains unclear why and where the speaker picked up this pronunciation characteristic.

Eventually, the Manchester English speaker's use of regressive assimilation in the phrases *lowland gorilla* and *but protective* needs to be pointed out. The former was realised as [ˈləʊlaŋ gɒˈɹɪla], while the latter was articulated as [bʊʔ pɹɒˈtɛktiv]. In both cases there was good reason to assume that the final /d/ and the final /t/ assimilated to the place of articulation of the consonant in the next syllable. Here these phonemes assimilated to /g/ and /p/, which led to realisations of the former as [g] and [ʔ].

As the characteristics of the Manchester English speaker's recording are broadly compatible with the theoretical description of this accent in Section 2.7., this variety will subsequently be referred to as 'Manchester English' within this thesis.

5.5.3. *The Standard Scottish English guise's recording*

In contrast to the previous two accents, the Standard Scottish English guise pronounced the post-vocalic /r/ in all positions, which confirms that this accent is rhotic. Throughout the recording, the /r/ had three distinct realisations. In the words *girl* and *far* the speaker used alveolar trills [r]. Most frequently, though, the /r/ was realised as an alveolar tap [ɾ], which applied, for example, to the pronunciations of the words *birth* [bɜːɾθ], *mother* [ˈmʌðəɾ] and *conserve* [kənsˈɜːɾv]. A third distinct realisation of the /r/ as the alveolar approximant [ɹ] could be identified in the pronunciations of *according* [əˈkɔːɹdɪŋ] and *years* [jɪəɹz]. This feature is not in widespread use among SSE speakers, yet can occasionally be heard within their speech.

Some of the diphthongs used by this guise have undergone the process of monophthongisation. This, first of all, applied to words of the lexical set GOAT, which have the /əʊ/ dipththong in RP. In the audio file produced by the SSE speaker, this feature was altered into monophthongal /o/, which effectively changed the pronunciation of the word *lowland* and *known* into [ˈloländ] and [non].

A similar process caused FACE words to undergo an alteration into the monophthong /e/. This was found within the recording in the words *taking* or *name*, which subsequently have to be transcribed as [tekəŋ] or [nem]. For completeness' sake, it has to be mentioned that these resulting monophthongs might have two distinct realisations either as short or as long monophthongs depending on the Scottish Vowel Length Rule.

The SSE guise did not employ Yod-Coalescence, which is why *Tuesday* was realised as [ˈtjʉːzdeː]. Also, Yod-Dropping did not occur in *newborn* [ˈnjʉbɔɾn], as this feature only applies to cases when /l/ or /s/ follows in SSE. H-Dropping could not be detected in this recording, which means /h/ was retained in all positions. T-Glottalling, however, was observed in the speech sample in the phrase *not known*, which was articulated by this guise as [nɔʔˈnon].

Many words that would be of the lexical set KIT in RP had /ɜ/ instead, which applied for example to the noun *interest* or the preposition *in*, which were realised as [ˈɜntɾest] and [ɜn] in the speech file. The articulation of the word *zoo*, i.e. [zʉː], also differed from that of RP in that the vowel was far more central rather than back.

These pronunciation peculiarities allow the assertion to be made that this guise can be considered a variety representative of the SSE accent. In the present study, the variety corresponding to this guise will hence be labeled 'Standard Scottish English'.

5.5.4.   The near-RP speaker's recording

The speech sample recorded by the Austrian speaker is characterised by the absence of post post-vocalic /r/, which indicates that the English pronunciation this person acquired is non-rhotic. This was distinctly recognisable when considering the pronunciations of *far* [fɑ:], *mother* [ˈmʌðə] or *newborn* [ˈnjuːbɔːn]. Even linking /r/ seemed to have been non-existent in this audio file. The environments where the incorporation of that linking device can be deemed acceptable comprise, among others, the phrases *mother is* or *father* is. These two instances, however, were realised as [ˈmʌðəɪs] and [ˈfɑːðəɪz].

The linguistic example *newborn* [ˈnjuːbɔːn] also underlined that Yod-Dropping was not included in her speech repertoire. The opposite trend, i.e. Yod-Coalescence, could neither be found within the audio file, as *Tuesday*, which would permit the application of this phenomenon was articulated as [ˈtjuːzdeɪ].

The speaker did not make use of assimilation in the phrases *but can be* and *lowland gorilla*, which were perceived as [bʌtˈkænbɪ] and [ˈləʊlænd gɒˈɹɪlʌ]. Within these utterances, as well as in the phrases *to the park* [tʊðəˈpɑːk] or *director of* [dʌɪˈɹektɒɹɒv] and most of the remaining recording weak forms were non-existent, which already provides an indication to linguists that this variety might not have been produced by an L1 speaker, for this is one of the critical areas where foreign learners tend to experience difficulty.

As the above transcriptions have already shown, /r/ was typically realised as an alveolar approximant [ɹ]. One exception, however, was found in the phrase *or a girl*, which was pronounced as [ɒjʌˈgøəɫ]. Here, the /r/ was replaced by the palatal approximant /j/, whereby a vowel glide from [ɒ] over [j] to [ʌ] was achieved. This, indeed, is a strikingly odd pronunciation and it is not clear why it occurred at all. What this example additionally displays, is the fact that the pronunciation of the long central vowel in *girl* [gøəɫ] was uttered completely differently than in RP. In the articulation of this noun, the speaker made two mistakes that are common for learners with a German language background. Firstly, the

vowel was produced in a close-mid and front position with far too much lip rounding. Secondly, she even slightly diphthongised the resulting vowel by the addition of [ə].

H-Dropping did not occur at all in the speech sample, leading to /h/ having been consequently retained, as in *has* [hæs]. What is more, /t/ was never replaced by glottal stops and no instances of L-Vocalisation were observed. However, the contrast between clear and dark /l/ was discernible, for example in the opposition between *lowland* [ˈləʊlænd] and *wild* [waiɫd].

On the basis of the linguistic evidence discussed above, the variety produced by the Austrian EFL speaker was more closely related to RP than it was to any of the other accents considered in here. Wells (1982b: 279) uses the notion 'near-RP' to refer generally to accents that differ only minimally, yet noticeably from RP. For want of a better term, the Austrian speaker will nevertheless be labelled 'near-RP' in the forthcoming study, even though it has to be acknowledged that Wells subsequently uses this notion more restrictively, which does not apply to its usage here.

5.5.5. The Estuary English guise's recording

In this recording, the speaker did not make use of post-vocalic /r/ in words such as *birth* [bɜːθ], which confirms that Estuary English is a non-rhotic accent. The /r/ was realised as an alveolar approximant [ɹ] throughout the whole recording, which was recognisable by the pronunciation of *gorilla* as [gɒˊɹɪlə]. Linking /r/ was present in the phrase *whether it is* [ˈweðəɹɪts]. Additionally, this example, as well as the articulation of *couple of* [ˈkʌpʰlʌ], illustrates two cases of contraction. Plus, the latter distinctly showed the presence of considerable aspiration of the /p/ sound, which was consequently transcribed as [pʰ].

In the audio file, two diphthong shifts in comparison with RP were observed. The first deviation from the reference accent occurred in words of the lexical set FACE. Instead of the typical realisation as /eɪ/, this vowel was realised as /ʌɪ/, which means the position of the first element was open-mid and central, instead of the close-mid and front realisation typical of RP. This shift caused the words *baby*, *taking* or *ape* to be pronounced as [ˈbʌɪbɪ], [ˈtʌɪkiŋ] and [ʌɪp].

The second deviation from RP was found in the lexical set GOAT. Different from the /əʊ/ RP realisation, this diphthong was altered into /ʌʊ/ in the Estuary English recording, which suggests that the first vowel element was [ʌ] instead of [ə]. This distinct feature could be found in the pronunciations of the words *lowland* [ˈlʌʊlənd], *known* [nʌʊn] and *close* [klʌʊs]. Unlike in the RP speech sample, this guise made heavy use of non-intervocalic T-Glottaling, for instance in the utterances *not yet been* [ˈnɒʔjeʔbiːn] or *not known* [ˈnɒʔnʌʊn], where /t/ was consistently replaced by glottal stops.

It was possible to discern another difference between Estuary English and RP with respect to Yod-Coalescence. While this phenomenon was undetectable in the recording of the former speaker, it was evidently present in the Estuary English guise's audio file in the word *Tuesday*, which was realised as [ˈtʃuːzdʌɪ].

One more discrepancy was found to pertain between these two varieties in terms of L-Vocalisation. Whereas in the RP accent this characteristic was not detectable at all, the Estuary English speaker employed this feature, which led to back vocoid realisations of the /l/ sound in the words *gentle* [ˈdʒento], *couple* [ˈkʌpo] or *wild* [waɪod].

The analysis of phonological characteristics contained within this speech sample lends credence to the theoretical considerations in respect of the general Estuary English description offered in Section 2.5. As a result, this variety will herein be described as 'Estuary English' in the following chapters.

5.6.   The arrangement of the recordings in the field study

After a detailed comparison of the language samples with one another, the recordings were arranged in the following order for the data collection process, so that the students did not recognise that three of these were produced by the same speaker. The initial position was given to the L1 RP variety, which was succeeded by Manchester English. Needless to reiterate, those two audio files exhibited considerable pronunciation differences, as the latter was clearly set apart from the former in terms of her use of distinct regional features. After those two recordings, the Standard Scottish English guise constituted the third stimulus for evaluation, which was distinct from Manchester English, as well as from RP. In the fourth spot followed the Austrian near-RP speaker, who, owing to her typical Austrian pronunciation

features, appeared to be unrelated to all remaining varieties. The final recording was that of the Estuary English guise. Due to the fact that this variety sounded most similar to the native RP recording, even though containing some marked regional features, it was felt those had to be most removed from each other, which is why they were assigned the first and the last positions respectively.

5.7. The data collection

The feasibility of the data collection by the aid of the constructed questionnaire was tested prior to the main data collection process in a small-scale pilot study. On the one hand, this step was taken to identify general problems that might arise in the realisation of such a project. On the other hand, valuable experience in terms of organisational issues and time management was gained. On this basis, the questionnaire was thoroughly revised, while the data gathering process was effectively optimised.

Following pre-testing, the data collection for the present study took place in June and July 2013 at various departments of the University of Vienna. These included the English Department, the Life Sciences Faculty, the Department of Computer Science and the Mathematics Department. Altogether this resulted in 326 accurately filled out questionnaires.

When the data was gathered, the moral principles Zoltan Dörneyi (2007: 68) recommends for quantitative studies were consistently adhered to. In accordance with these, the participation was entirely voluntary and the respondents were free to refuse to take part in the experiment. They furthermore were within the right to leave particular questions unanswered. All data received was dealt with confidentially and the listeners' right to privacy was respected at all times, which is why the questionnaires were also entirely anonymous.

5.8. Data analysis

For the scientific investigation of the research hypotheses, all questionnaire data was numerically coded and entered into the IBM SPSS 21 statistics programme. This process will exemplarily be demonstrated by the coding of questionnaire Item 5 (Figure 7) on the next page.

5. Do you think *SPEAKER A* would make a good friend?

	$\leftarrow$	$\rightarrow$	
VERY	**RATHER**	**RATHER**	**VERY**

good friend ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ bad friend

Figure 7. Questionnaire Item 5 (Part I).

For this item, the response behaviour ranged from 0 to 3 and was put into SPSS by the following method. The answer 'very bad friend' was ascribed a 0, the label 'rather bad friend' corresponded to a 1, 'rather good friend' received the value 2 and the most positively connotated option, here 'very good friend', the optimum number 3. The same actions were consequently performed for all Items employing semantic differential scales for all 326 questionnaires. Furthermore, also the participants' sociodemographic data was coded, whereby each label found was assigned a number. For example, in the category 'sex', a 0 indicated 'female', while the quality 'male' was represented by the number 1. The coding of the variables 'mother tongue' or 'stays abroad', among others, was naturally of higher complexity, given that 25 disparate first languages and 42 different travel destinations were stated by the participants (thus numbers from 0 to 24, and from 0 to 41 respectively). The data generated solely through the final questionnaire consisted of altogether 131 variables, while another 85 were created in the data analysis process. Altogether, thus, 216 variables were involved in the calculations. All SPSS calculations are transparently made available on the enclosed CD-ROM.

The statistical methods used for the computations of the data included a principal component analysis (PCA), an analysis of variance (ANOVA), independent means t-tests and the calculation of Euclidian distances. These procedures will more closely be explained in the upcoming sections. The results thereby obtained were interpreted as objectively as possible in order for the research questions and the corresponding hypotheses to be scrutinised. In addition to these inferential statistical methods, the results were also presented descriptively. Included in these procedures were the calculation of absolute frequencies and statistic dispersion, and measures of central tendencies, such as mean values and standard deviations.

6. Results

Chapter 6 is predominantly concerned with an analysis of all data collected according to the parameters and hypotheses defined in Section 5.1.

6.1. Sociodemographic description of the participants

A total number of 326 students participated in the study, who stated 49 different academic disciplines as their main subjects of study, including Bachelor, Master and Magister programmes. The age range of the informants was between 18 and 50, with 23.67 years as the mean average and a standard deviation of 4.53. This indicates that the vast majority of the respondents was between 19 and 28 years old. A general division according to the participants' sex showed that 239 of them were female, whereas 87 were male. The men who took part therefore represent slightly over one quarter of all informants, in contrast to their female counterparts, who approximately constitute three quarters of the total sample.

Data was collected from 219 participants, who at the time of testing, were studying at the English Department of the University of Vienna. Within this sample an imbalance between men and women was strikingly apparent, given that 178 female and 41 male respondents were taking classes at this faculty. Due to the main classification scheme, premised on a division according to their study time, the English students were effectively split into two factions. The first group basically included the beginner English students and was made up of those in their first three semesters. The justification for this partition is twofold and appeared reasonable when taking a closer look at the curriculum. Firstly, the initial semester consists mostly of an orientation phase, whereby students are only generally introduced into the subject matter and at the end assessed in terms of their suitability for this programme. Hence, first semesters were not used as informants, since their education undergone at this department did probably not exert a great influence upon their judgements in comparison to those who did not study English. Secondly and most significantly, at the end of the third semester, students are required to pass the so-called Common Final Test, which measures their basic language competence acquired in Integrated Language and Study Skills 1 (semester 2) and in Integrated Language and Study Skills 2 (semester 3) for the upcoming, more advanced courses of the curriculum. This highly important test functioned as an efficient dividing line between

RESULTS

beginner students and advanced students, leaving all study participants between their second (as first semesters were not used) and third semesters in the former group, while students from their fourth semester onwards were assigned to the second group. Applying this partition, the English informants were composed of 106 beginners and 113 advanced students. Within the 106 beginner English students further subdivisions can be found in terms of their subjects of study and their semesters. 57 participants of this group were teaching degree students, whereas 49 studied in order to obtain their Bachelor Degree in English and American Studies. An internal composition of 86 second and 20 third semester students was found in this group.

With respect to the 113 advanced English students, 55 respondents were training to be future teachers, 26 were English and American Studies Bachelor programme students, 14 were English Language and Linguistics Master students and 18 were Anglophone Literatures and Cultures Master students. All of them were between their fourth and their eighteenth semesters, with the great majority, namely 42 respondents, currently in their fourth semester.

In addition, a third group was defined in which all 107 students whose subjects did not comprise English, were chosen for inclusion, irrespective of their student levels. The decision not to group the non-English students according to their numbers of semesters resulted from the fact that these subjects do not offer any English language-related education. On these grounds, no difference in terms of their judgements on English speakers was expected between the beginner and advanced non-English students. The largest group of contributors was constituted by students of the Life Sciences at the University of Vienna. At this faculty the subjects Biology, Pharmacy, Molecular Biology and Nutrition Science are taught. Altogether 50 students claimed one of these disciplines to be their field of study. The biggest subdivision within this faction was made up of 30 individuals who studied Pharmacy. Six of them were male, while 24 were female. Their study time ranged from the fourth to the sixteenth semester, whereby exactly half the participants were in their eighth semester. The second largest group consisted of 18 students who listed a programme in Biology as their subject of study. Of these, two were men and 16 women. All of them were between the first and the fourteenth semesters. On the other hand, a reverse gender trend was found in the participating group of Computer Science students (one female, 11 male), in the Mathematics students at the University of Vienna (six male, one female), and in the Economics students (all five male). However, the numbers of these informants were too small for statistical significance. The remaining 63 students were scattered among 30 different programmes and

69

departments where data collection was pointedly feasible in June and July 2013. Thus, the number of students per subject is of little importance here. Yet, a full list of all participants of the study can be found on the enclosed CD-ROM.

All in all, that the ratio between males and females in the study population was all but equally balanced, with more female than male participants at the English Department and at the Life Sciences Faculty of the University of Vienna, and more male than female informants at the Computer Science, Mathematics and Economics Departments of the University of Vienna.

An analysis of the participants' mother tongues revealed that 25 distinct answers were reported as such. A minority of only ten people contended that they were bilingual, which comprised Italian/German (three), German/English (two), Albanian/German (one), Serbian/German (one), Romanian/German (one), Filipino/English (one) and Russian/Ukrainian (one). In the final statistics these designations were reduced to the informants' first choices, on the assumption that these were the languages they felt were most important to them. This led to the following statistics. 273 respondents claimed German to be their mother tongue, 15 people listed Serbian as their first language, five people named Hungarian and five English as their mother tongues. Furthermore, four Albanian speakers, four Italian speakers, three Polish speakers, three Russian speakers, two Bulgarian speakers, two Slovak speakers and two Croatian speakers took part in the study. The rest of the participants (eight) maintained that Spanish, Romanian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Arabic, Persian and Turkish were their native tongues, which means that among these informants there was only one speaker of each of these languages.

Closely related to their mother tongues were the respondents' reported countries of birth. 277 students were born Austria, which was the solid majority. Ten people's country of origin was Serbia, seven participants were born in Germany and four each stated Hungary and Italy as their places of birth. Two informants per country said they were born in the USA, Slovakia, Bulgaria, the Philippines, Poland and Turkey. Remaining were twelve countries in each of which only one student was born. These were China, Vietnam, Russia, Syria, the Iran, Kirgizstan, the Ukraine, Bosnia, Albania, the Kosovo, Spain and England.

As is evident, the countries of birth and the mother tongues roughly corresponded. Where this was not the case, it can be assumed that migration to other countries led to differing statistics.

In order to inquire about the students' pronunciation models, they were given the chance to select from one of the following accents on the questionnaire: American, Scottish, British, Irish and Australian. These were complemented by the opportunity for the respondents to define a more local variant of their own choosing. As expected, most of the students used one of the proposed labels to refer to their pronunciation. The two most frequent responses were British, which was spoken by 144 people. This variety was closely followed by the number of American English speakers, which was claimed to best describe the accents of 132 students. Only two students opted for Australian as their model of pronunciation, and one for Scottish. None of the participants stated to be Irish English speakers, yet the open question was a popular choice in the denomination of more specific varieties. Of the 20 accents listed, four groups were formed. The largest faction was made up of 21 students who labelled their accents Austrian English, while for 18 informants a British-American mixture was the best delineation. Six furthermore argued that different blends of other suggested varieties best fit as the description of their pronunciation. Still missing in this statistic are two students who said they spoke Eastern European varieties of English.

Data in relation to the participants' stays abroad was also collected. A total number of 160 students claimed to have visited English-speaking countries, while 166 have had no previous travel experience in such nations. 40 different destinations were listed by the participants, with the duration of the stays varying between one week and 21 years. In order to enable a clear overview, the countries were arranged into eight basic categories. 88 people made their experiences abroad in regions of the British Isles, which included Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. 14 of those 88 students even said they enjoyed an additional stay within these areas. The second category comprised the United States of America and Canada and was chosen by 35 respondents as their travel or study destination. Group three consisted of twelve students who spent some time in Australia or New Zealand. Of those twelve, one participant even visited both of these countries. All additional destinations were subsumed under one label, which applied to 6 people who spent their stays abroad in Malta, Liberia, Singapore and South Africa. The fifth category, consisting of a combination of two stays in the British Isles and North America, was chosen by nine students. Three students visited the British Isles and Australia, further five travelled to the British Isles

and other countries. The final group included two people who had stays in North America and Australia.

6.2. Analysis of mean evaluations of all individual traits

For an initial familiarisation with the data, the mean scores for all 16 character trait variables of Item 1 were calculated for each speaker. Due to the employment of a four point semantic differential scale, the values for the traits ranged from 0.0 to 3.0. A value in the range of zero points indicates unfavourable responses on the part of the informants, whereas values of up to 3.0 denote favourable impressions. That can be illustrated by a more practical example. A low value corresponds to the opposite of the described quality, e.g. a person's humorous value of 0.3 out of 3.0 indicates that the candidate was considered humourless.

As the following tabulated results indicate, the ratings for the speakers varied dramatically, which was principally indicative of the fact that, even though hearing only three speakers, the judges seemed to have perceived the news readers as if they were five different people (Table 2). This initial supposition will be more closely inspected in Section 6.11.

Table 2. Mean scores of all individual character traits for each of the five speakers (N = 326).

Variables	Speakers				
	RP	**Manchester**	**SSE**	**Near-RP**	**Estuary English**
humorous	0.94	0.72	1.73	1.07	1.94
intelligent	2.08	1.32	1.66	2.11	1.69
friendly	1.92	1.66	2.17	2.09	2.18
self-confident	2.22	0.81	2.22	2.06	2.46
polite	2.31	1.85	1.97	2.30	1.95
educated	2.36	1.34	1.68	2.30	1.78
reliable	2.19	1.45	1.78	2.23	1.86
hardworking	2.16	1.12	1.79	2.14	1.94
outgoing	1.67	0.75	2.28	1.71	2.54
wealthy	2.07	1.10	1.62	1.98	1.76
sensitive	1.65	1.77	1.55	1.86	1.54
urban	2.13	1.04	1.16	1.94	1.56
trustworthy	2.14	1.56	1.92	2.17	1.83
skilful	2.10	1.12	1.63	2.12	1.82
dynamic	1.34	0.50	2.07	1.56	2.44
not snobbish	1.31	2.55	2.02	1.91	1.76

The RP speaker received the highest rankings of all guises in altogether five character trait evaluations. These included the qualities educated (M = 2.36), polite (M = 2.31), hardworking (M = 2.16), urban (M = 2.13) and wealthy (M = 2.07). On the contrary, the RP speaker obtained a remarkably low evaluation in terms of the humorous trait, with an average of only 0.94.

The Manchester English distractor was constantly rated relatively low on 15 out of 16 character traits, of which no mean value exceeded 1.85. The lowest scores of the traits of all speakers were found in the students' evaluations of this guise in terms of her dynamism (M = 0.50), her humour (M = 0.72) and her outgoingness (M = 0.75). At the same time, however, the only remaining character trait stood out, insofar as it constituted the highest mark a speaker was awarded by all students on any variable. This was the case for the not snobbish trait, where the Manchester speaker obtained an average rating of 2.55 out of 3.0.

Extreme values of these kinds were searched for in vain in the ratings of the Standard Scottish English guise. As a result, this variety did neither top any character trait evaluation, nor had she received the lowest ranking on any of the variables. The character trait that respondents associated with this speaker most was outgoingness. Here the Standard Scottish English guise managed to attain an average score of 2.28. On the other hand, she was also perceived as relatively rural, indicated by a mean evaluation of 1.16.

Only the Austrian near-RP speaker came close to matching the RP guise when the number of highest ratings received is concerned. She was dominant in altogether five character trait evaluations, comprising the means for the reliable (M = 2.23), trustworthy (M = 2.17), skilful (M = 2.12), intelligent (M = 2.11) and sensitive (M = 1.86) variables. According to the informants' impressions, humorous was not among the qualities this speaker possessed, for a score of 1.07 denoted her lowest evaluation of all traits.

The Estuary English guise obtained the best mean scores in five character traits. Her most highly ranked qualities included the outgoing (M = 2.54), self-confident (M = 2.46), dynamic (M = 2.44), humorous (M = 1.94) and friendly (M = 2.18) variables. Conversely, she was rated low on sensitiveness and urbaneness with corresponding mean values of 1.54 and 1.56.

Various interesting insights can be gained by a first glimpse at the mean evaluations. Whereas the RP and the non-native RP accents were awarded consistently high ratings on most dimensions, the opposite trend seemed to apply to the Manchester variety. Located somewhere in between these extreme evaluations were the Standard Scottish and the Estuary English accents, with a slight preference for the latter having been detectable on the part of the respondents. These very basic initial findings pose a number of interesting questions for subsequent analysis. Before variance can be examined, however, another pivotal step is required to be performed.

The next phase was predominantly concerned with the reduction of the data generated by the first item on the questionnaire, i.e. the character traits discussed above. In this connection, patterns of similar responses by the students were sought, which aimed at establishing a classification scheme of the traits with a more manageable number of components. In order to achieve that, a principal component analysis was conducted.

6.3. Reducing Item 1 data through principal component analysis (PCA)

Principal component analysis (often abbreviated to PCA) belongs to factor analysis and has as its primary goal the reduction of large amounts of data by grouping related variables together. Thereby, a decline in the number of components is achieved through the creation of larger sets formed by the individual variables, which enables researchers to work with more manageable numbers of components.

Factor analysis needs to be treated with caution, however, since there are requirements that have to be met in order to conduct such a test. The most important condition concerns sample size, in connection to which Tabachnick and Fidell (2001: 588) argue that at least 300 informants are comfortable for a PCA. In the interpretation process of the results, moreover, a degree of judgement is needed from the experimenter.

As the minimum requirements regarding sample size were met in the present study, this method was utilised in order to condense the data that was collected through Item 1 (Part I). As has been explained before, the initial method for grouping the qualities was a fundamental distinction between social attractiveness, and status and competence variables. In

investigating the interrelatedness of particular qualities in the data within the sum of all these variables, this technique can provide answers to Research Question (i). The results gained through this method then functioned as the foundation for further examination of the variation within different groups of students.
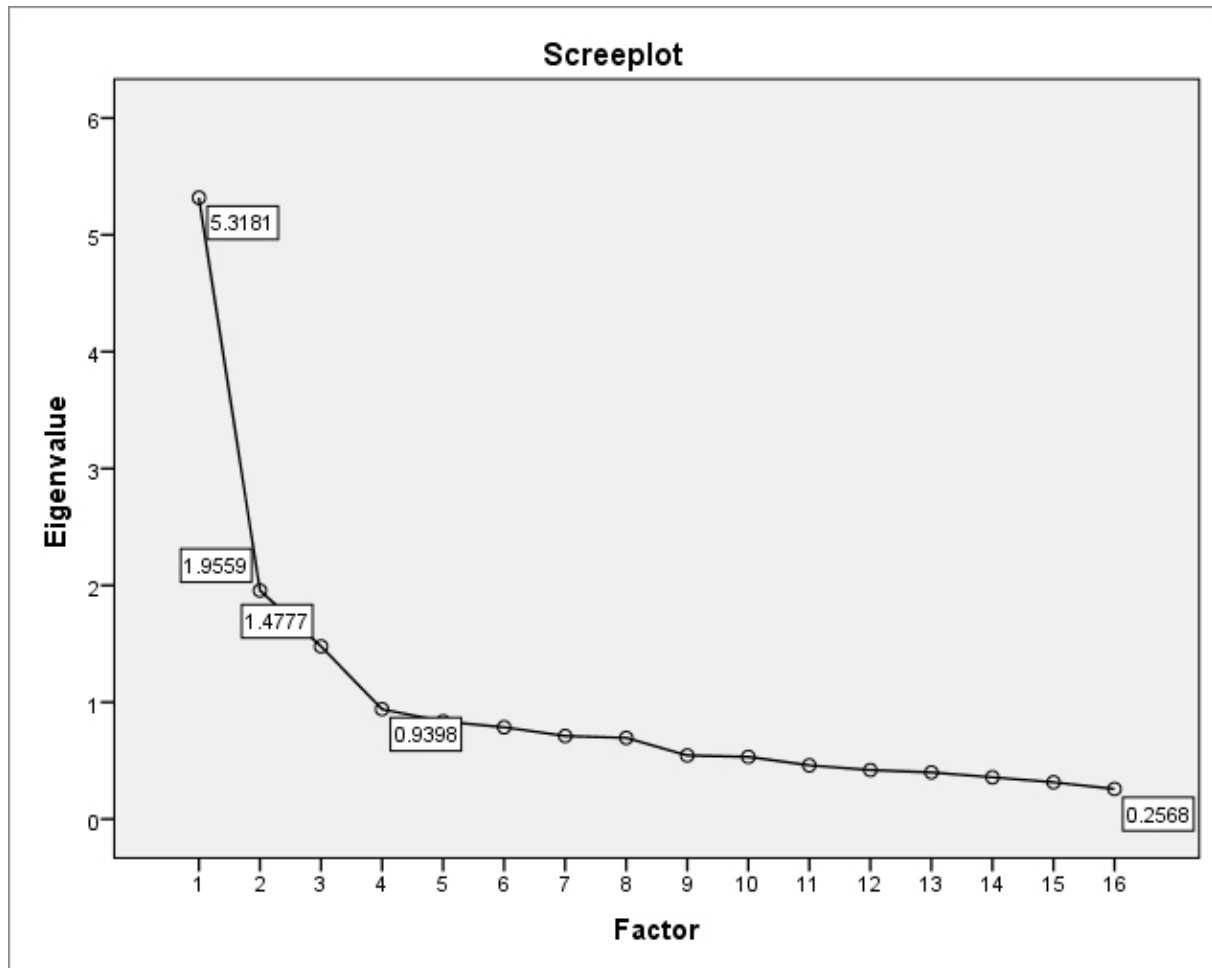
Figure 8. Screeplot of Item 1 data.

In order to run a PCA test, the overall evaluations of the speakers for each character trait on the semantic differential scale were calculated. First, the individual values of all five speakers per trait were added and the resulting overall number was divided by five to give an overall score for each of the traits. After that, a principal component analysis was conducted, which indicated the existence of three components with eigenvalues in excess of one, which can be seen in in Figure 8 above. These three components together account for minimally more than 54.6% of all variance. The individual components contained therein are component 1 (accounted for 33.2% of variance), component 2 (12.2%) and component 3 (9.2%). After these components, a break is visible in the scree plot, given that the next component has an eigenvalue below one and thus possessed no explanatory power in terms of variance.

As the next step, a Varimax Rotation with Kaiser Normalisation was performed, which was converged in five iterations. The following matrix (Table 3) demonstrates to which of the three components identified through the scree plot the individual variables were most strongly loaded.

Table 3. Rotated components matrix.

Variable	Component		
	1	2	3
mean educated	**0.798**	0.229	0.139
mean wealthy	**0.762**	-0.043	0.103
mean skilful	**0.708**	0.249	0.233
mean intelligent	**0.699**	0.187	0.102
mean hardworking	**0.607**	0.302	0.015
mean urban	**0.570**	-0.138	-0.020
mean polite	0.252	**0.738**	0.099
mean friendly	0.017	**0.703**	0.281
mean sensitive	0.143	**0.656**	0.042
mean trustworthy	0.465	**0.606**	0.152
mean reliable	0.462	**0.601**	0.103
mean not snobbish	-0.248	**0.544**	0.097
mean outgoing	0.123	0.022	**0.831**
mean dynamic	0.226	0.216	**0.715**
mean humorous	-0.130	0.181	**0.616**
mean self-confident	0.440	0.103	**0.587**

As can be seen, three components were extracted on the basis of intercorrelations between the character traits. The numbers in the Table 3 for the components refer to the correlation of the individual items with the larger set of components they form. Every trait is loaded to the group where the largest value occurs. Table 3 clearly demonstrates that six character features were strongly loaded to component 1, which included the educated, wealthy, skilful, intelligent, hardworking and urban traits.

The existence of the second component is also recognisable in the above table. Similar to component 1, component 2 also consisted of six variables. Based on the highest loadings, the variables corresponding to component 2 were the polite, friendly, sensitive, trustworthy, reliable and not snobbish adjectives.

The final four traits of Table 3 were most strongly loaded to component 3, which comprised the outgoing, dynamic, humorous and self-confidence traits.

The next step involved in the principal component analysis was the search for labels for the three components extracted, under which the corresponding character traits could be subsumed. This process naturally required some degree of interpretation. The solution decided upon here was to divide the 16 character traits into three groups entitled status and competence, integrity, and sociability. Table 4 below illustrates the newly devised classification scheme.

Table 4. Revised character trait categories.

Status and Competence	Integrity	Sociability
intelligent	friendly	dynamic
skilful	polite	outgoing
hardworking	sensitive	humorous
educated	trustworthy	self-confident
wealthy	reliable	
urban	not snobbish	

A look at the Table 4 above reveals the modifications made on the basis of the PCA in comparison with the initially expected structure. On the one hand, the PCA revealed that the respondents did not distinguish between competence and status traits, as is suggested by differently shaded blue elements in the status and competence column, which are now subsumed under a dark blue *status and competence* title. The lighter blue elements including intelligent, skilful and hardworking were, according to the initial scheme, competences, while the three slightly darker blue coloured elements were status traits.

The *integrity* factor validated through principal component analysis was made up of five attributes usually referred to as social attractiveness, i.e. friendly, polite, sensitive, trustworthy and reliable. One exception included in this dimension was the not snobbish trait, which was originally expected to possess a loading to component 1.

The third component was labelled *sociability*, for all items comprised therein were related to dynamism and communicative skills, which enable and facilitate human interaction. Included here were the dynamic, the outgoing, the humorous and the self-confidence traits. The latter is usually associated with competence, yet was similarly evaluated by the students as the other three sociability traits.

In the following stages of investigation, the PCA validated factors provide the basis for subsequent cross-group comparative analyses, which, among other factors, take into account the students' English language competence, the presence or absence of language experiences in the Anglophone world and their own pronunciation model of English. Before that can be done, however, a more general description of the data by the whole sample group will be provided.

6.4. Descriptive evaluation of attitude dimensions by the whole sample

In this section, a description of the answers of all test subjects in respect of the parameters tested will be provided with the help of graphical illustration methods. First, a comparison of the three previously extracted character trait dimensions (status and competence, integrity, sociability) towards the five accents of English will be provided. Subsequently, the evaluations of the speakers in terms of their pronunciation and whether they make good friends will also be contrasted. Eventually, the speakers' perceived suitability for employment in news reading professions will be discussed.

The diagram on the next page gives an overview of the speaker's mean scores in the three dimensions extracted through Item 1 (Part I) data, which were labelled status and competence, integrity, and sociability. The mean values for the five speakers in these three dimensions were calculated by the addition of the related qualities and the subsequently division by the number of individual traits loaded to each of the three components. In Figure 8, the five speakers are represented on the x-axis, while the y-axis illustrates their mean evaluations in the three dimensions extracted through the PCA.
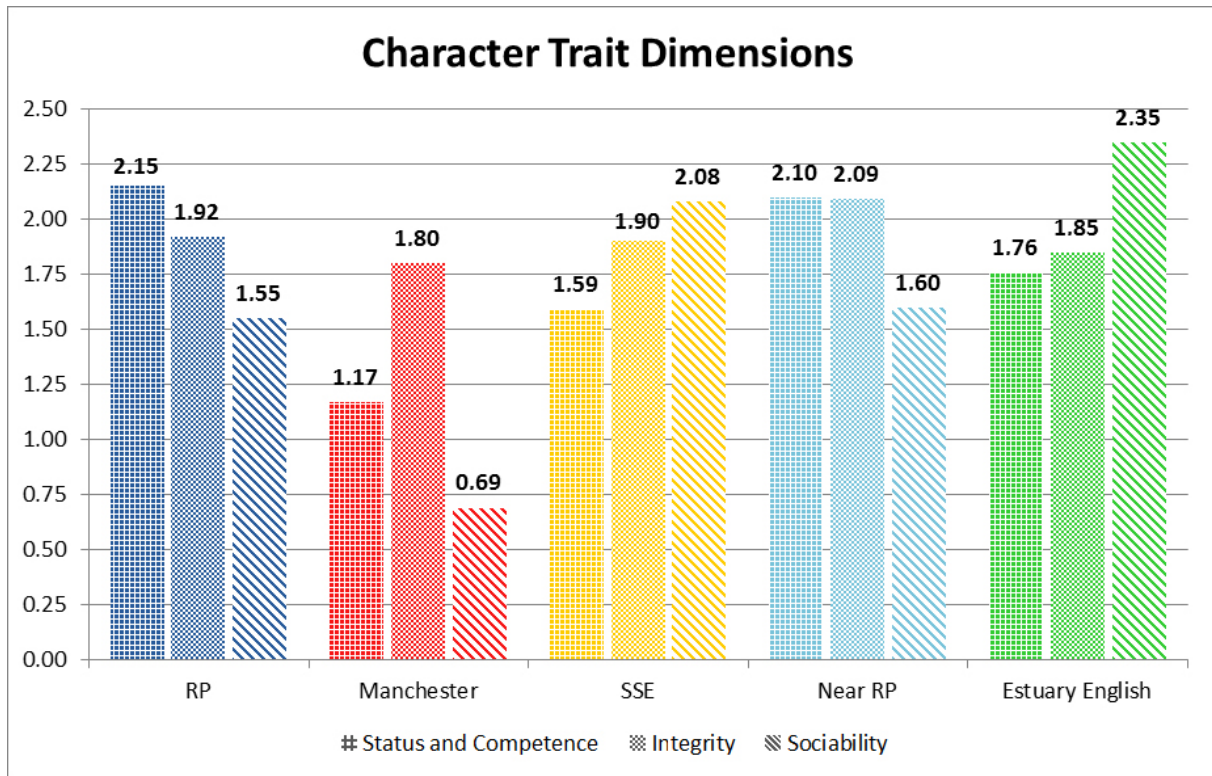
Figure 9. Character trait dimension evaluations of the speakers by all respondents.

The chequered bars in Figure 9 on the left hand side of each speaker illustrate their respective evaluation with regard to status and competence. As is immediately obvious, both RP variants were unsurpassed in this dimension. The native RP accent, which will from now on be graphically represented by the dark blue colour, was rated most highly in this dimension with a mean evaluation of 2.15 out of 3.0. The difference between this and the second most highly evaluated variety merely amounts to 0.05, since near-RP received 2.10 points on average, which can be seen in the corresponding chequered light blue bar in the diagram. Evaluations of 1.76 and 1.59 for Estuary English, henceforth highlighted in green colour, and Standard Scottish English, from now on signalled by the yellow colour, indicate that these accents were by far not considered as prestigious and competent as both RP variants. Placed at the distant fifth position, the Manchester English distractor was found, which is hereinafter visually shown in red colour. This guise achieved a mean average of 1.17 in the status and competence dimension, which was almost 1.0 points behind the native RP accent. This suggests that of the five variants used in this experiment Manchester English was least associated with high competence and status.

The small squared chequered bars in the middle for each speaker in the graphical illustration correspond to the five speakers' ratings in the personal integrity dimension. Here, slightly disparate trends began to surface. This category was topped by the near-RP accent (light blue), which was by all respondents evaluated with a 2.09 average score. A considerably lower value of 1.92 was calculated for the native RP accent, which in the diagram is recognisable by the dark blue colour. In contrast, the discrimination in this regard between the native RP and the Standard Scottish English (yellow) varieties is only marginal, with a difference of only 0.02 points. Mean evaluations of 1.85 for Estuary English (represented in green) and 1.80 for Manchester English (red) point out that these two accents occupied the fourth and fifth places in the integrity ranking. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that, unlike in the competence and status dimension, integrity-wise the Manchester English distractor hardly trails behind its counterparts.

The third character trait category extracted through the PCA was the sociability dimension, which essentially comprised the communicative skills. In the diagram, the rightmost, diagonally striped bars for each speaker refer to their mean sociability evaluations. In comparison to the previous two dimensions, entirely dissimilar evaluation patterns were observed with respect to sociability. With a mean rating of 2.35 by the whole sample group, the Estuary English guise received the highest evaluation of all five accents in this dimension. The second most highly rated variety in terms of sociability was the Standard Scottish English speaker, whose mean totalled 2.08 points. Located 0.48 points behind the SSE guise, the near-RP speaker was found, who obtained an overall rating of 1.60 by all students. A minimally lower sociability mean evaluation of 1.55 was calculated for the RP speaker. A difference of 0.86 points between the RP and the Manchester English varieties indicates that Manchester English (M = 0.69) was least favourably assessed by the participants.

Apart from the three dimensions extracted through principal component analysis, another distinct dimension measured in the present study was the five speakers' pronunciation in terms of their intelligibility and clarity. The information of the students' pronunciation assessment is incorporated into Figure 10 on the succeeding page, where this dimension is indicated by the horizontally striped bars.
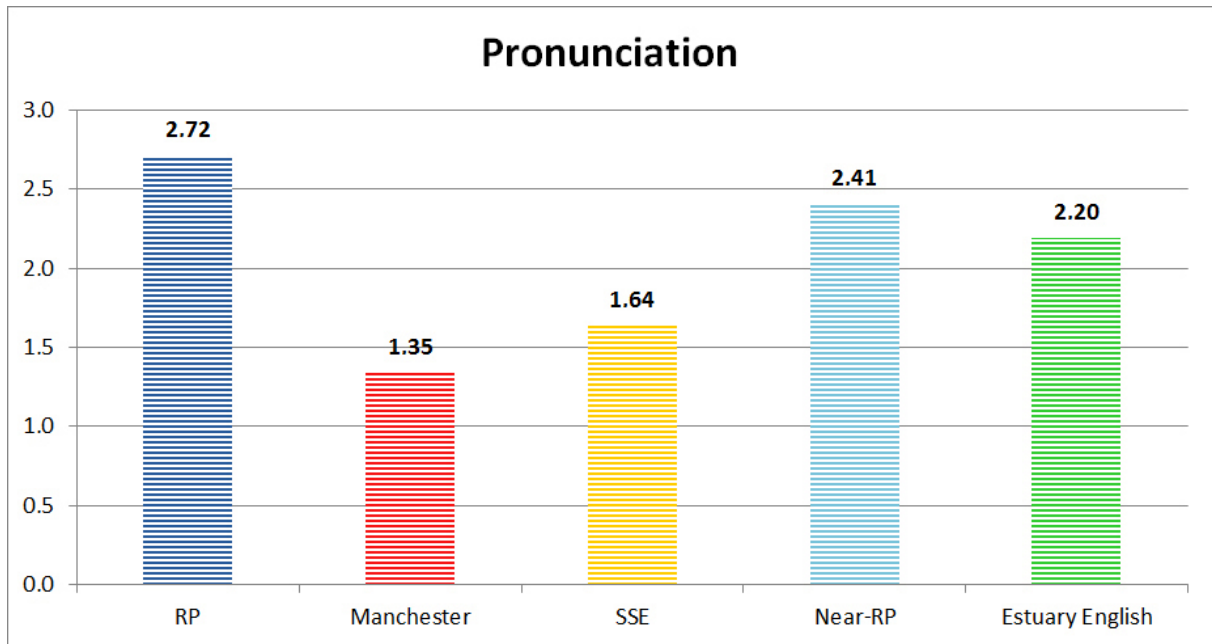
Figure 10. The pronunciation dimension, evaluated by the whole sample.

As is immediately visible in Figure 10, the mean evaluations were relatively distinct from one another, which portends a relatively clear consensus among the respondents in this category. Native RP, in dark blue colour, was awarded 2.72 points and thus constituted the accent that received the highest mean evaluation in terms of pronunciation. Then followed the non-native near-RP variety (light blue), which garnered a 2.41 average rating by the whole sample. Estuary English was found to rank in third place, with a mean of 2.20, indicated in the above diagram by the greenly striped bar. Between the third and the fourth most highly evaluated accents, however, occurred a gap of 0.56 points, which can be deemed substantial, given that the first three varieties were all positioned within a range of only 0.52 points. This implies that the remaining two variants did not come close to matching the native RP, the near-RP and the Estuary English accents in terms of pronunciation. Of these two accents, Standard Scottish English, indicated by the yellowy striped bar, was rated higher by the respondents with an average of 1.64, minimally within the top half out of 3.0. With a mean evaluation of 1.35, Manchester English, signalled by the red colour in the diagram, was seen as the least favourite accent by all respondents in the pronunciation dimension.

The five speakers were also evaluated in respect of whether the participants of the study believed the speakers would make good friends. The results of all speakers in this dimension are shown in Figure 11.
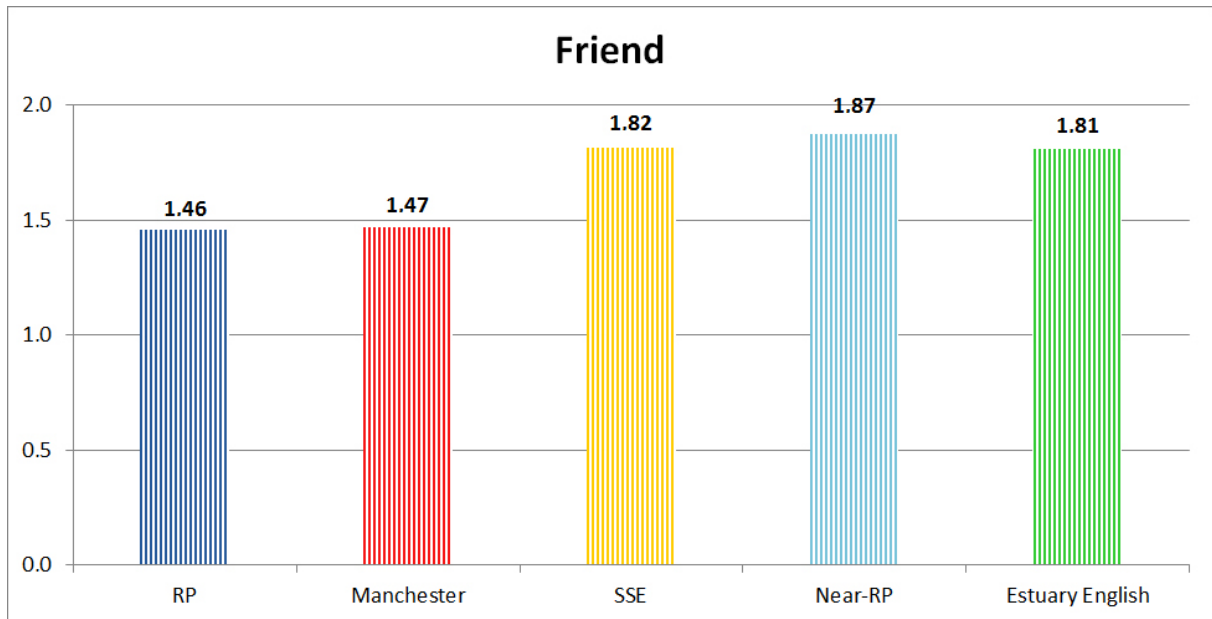
Figure 11. The five guises' overall scores in the friend dimension, rated by all respondents.

In the graphical illustration above, the bars with lenghtways stripes give an account of their assessments in this attitude dimension. With a mean average of 1.87, the whole sample rated the EFL near-RP accent, indicated graphically by the light blue bar, to be the one that was most likely a good friend. Interestingly, the Standard Scottish English accent, identifyable by the yellow bar, received the second highest evaluation with a mean score of 1.82. Estuary English, represented by the green bar, was voted into the third position as for this category, with 1.81 points on average. Yet, with a gap of merely 0.01 between Standard Scottish English and Estuary English, the difference was minmal at best. What can certainly not be claimed to be negligible, however, was the difference found between the third and the fourth ranks. Comparable to the pattern discovered in the pronunciation dimension, here also existed a dividing line between the first three and the last two positions. Mean evaluations of 1.47 for Manchester English (in red) and 1.46 for native RP (dark blue) suggest that these two accents were clearly not regarded to be good friends by the judges, even though the evaluative difference of 0.01 between these varieties was only slight (Figure11). Notwithstanding this, it has to be emphasised that the Manchester English speaker was still regarded to be marginally better a friend than the native RP speaker.

The sample group was moreover requested to report their impressions of the five speakers' overall newsreading presentation skills. In order to voice their opinions, the respondents were given the option to select the most fitting of altogether six adjectives that in their view best

described the candidates, as has been discussed in more detail in the questionnaire design section. The results are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Presentation technique descriptions of the five speakers as described by all judges.

| Variables | Speakers | | | | |
	RP (A)	Manchester (B)	SSE (C)	Near-RP (D)	Estuary (E)
ugly	0.9% (3)	**31.0%** **(101)**	11.7% (38)	3.7% (12)	7.1% (23)
dry	**58.0%** **(189)**	**54.6%** **(178)**	11.3% (37)	**36.5%** **(119)**	5.2% (17)
harsh	4.9% (16)	6.7% (22)	15.0% (49)	2.5% (8)	11.7% (38)
interesting	**20.6%** **(67)**	5.8% (19)	**28.8%** **(94)**	**34.7%** **(113)**	**20.6%** **(67)**
energetic	4.0% (13)	0.9% (3)	**29.4%** **(96)**	4.0% (13)	**50.0%** **(163)**
beautiful	11.7% (38)	0.9% (3)	3.7% (12)	18.7% (61)	5.5% (18)
total	100.0% (326)	100.0% (326)	100.0% (326)	100.0% (326)	100.0% (326)

The two most frequently chosen descriptions for the native RP accent were 'dry', which was opted for by 58.0% of the sample group and 'interesting', which 20.6% of the respondents thought best described this speaker. At the same time, only three out of the 326 participants considered the native RP variety 'ugly'. When these adjectives are compared with the descriptions assigned to the near-RP speaker, it can be seen that the identical two options were most often also selected by all respondents to characterise near-RP. However, with a perctentage of 36.5%, the non-native near-RP accent was regarded by 70 fewer participants as 'dry' than the native RP variant. Near-RP was believed to be 'interesting' by 34.7% of the respondents, which implies that near-RP was rated as 'interesting' by 46 students more than was the case for the native RP variant. On the other hand, the adjective that was least associated with near-RP was 'harsh', as only 2.5% of the sample group decided for this delineation.

Manchester English was predominantly perceived as 'dry', given that 54.6% of the participants chose this adjective in order to refer to this accent. The second most frequent answer for this variety was 'ugly', which was selected by 31.0% of all judges. Conversely,

only three each out of 326 listeners were convinced that the speaker from Manchester presented the news item 'energetically' or 'beautifully'.

Comensurable patterns were also observed in the adjectives assigned to Standard Scottish English and Estuary English. The latter was considered 'energetic' by half of the participants, that is 163 people, which marked the highest percentage as far as energy of the presentation style was concerned. The second highest ranking in this respect was achieved by the Standard Scottish English speaker, who 29.4% of the respondents characterised as 'energetic'. With 28.8% for Standard Scottish English and 20.6% for Estuary English, those two varieties were also regarded 'interesting'. An adjective the whole sample group did hardly associated with Estuary English was 'dry', which only 5.2% chose to describe this accent. Standard Scottish English, in contrast, was least linked with the 'beautiful' quality, which is recognisable by the fact that a mere 3.7% of the respondents, that is only 12 out of 326 students, opted for this characterisation.

Eventually, students were asked to evaluate the five speakers' presumed suitability for jobs as news readers. A visual analogue scale was used to provide insights into this attitude dimension and enabled a fine differentiation of the responses by allowing the participants to assign values between the minimum of 0.0 and the maximum of 10.0 to the speakers. The results this item brought to the fore are contained within Figure 12 below.
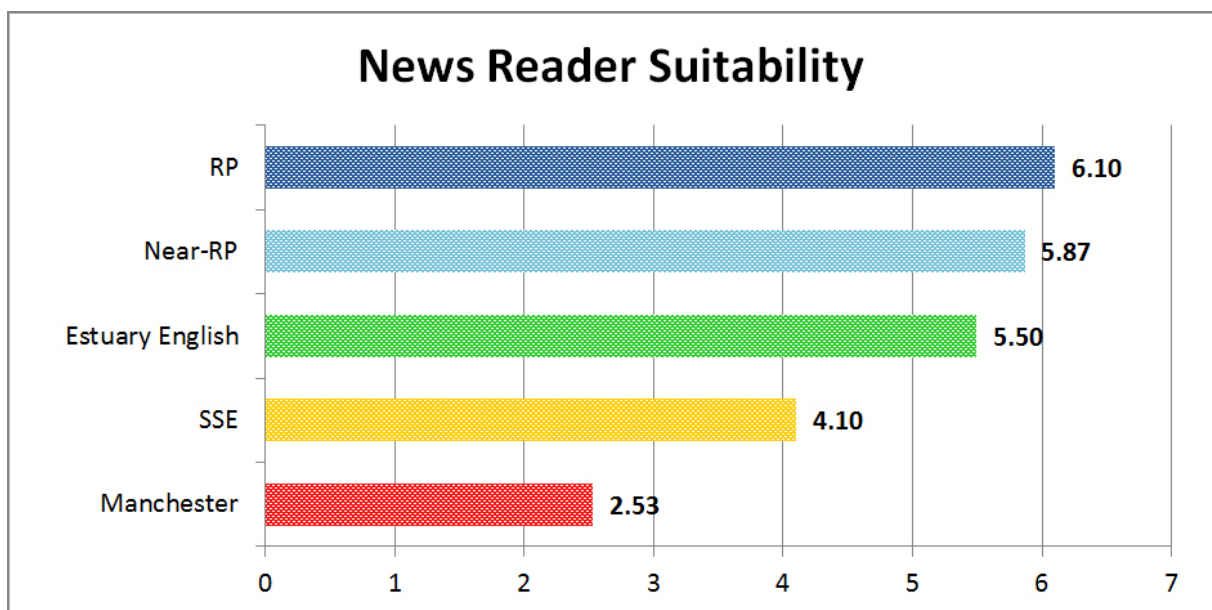

Figure 12. The speakers' perceived news reader suitability, evaluated by the whole sample.

With an unexcelled mean score of 6.10, the native RP speaker achieved the highest evaluation in this category (Figure 12). In second place followed the non-native near-RP guise, with an average score of 5.87. The Estuary English accent received a mean rating of 5.50 by all respondents, which put this speaker in the third rank in terms of news caster aptitude. A mean evaluation of 4.10 out of 10.0 in the case of the Standard Scottish English guise only sufficed for the fourth place in this suitability ranking (Figure 12). The Manchester English speaker received the lowest average value (M = 2.53) of all five speakers. The results seem to indicate a clear preference of the participating students for both RP speakers used in this study when it came to the skills that news readers should bring with them.

The analysis of the five speakers' mean evaluations by the whole sample group across the attitude dimensions measured in the survey has yielded interesting and noteworthy results. In conclusion, the overall impressions of the speakers will here be summarily presented, before a comparison of the dimensions will be conducted between different student groups.

To put all findings in a nutshell, the native RP accent was especially associated with high status and competence and was also rated relatively high on personal integrity. As far as pronunciation is concerned, native RP received the highest evaluation of all the accents used in the present study, even though the presentation style of this guise was characterised as prevalently dry, but still interesting. These results are also reflected in this speaker's news reader suitability evaluation, in which of all accents native RP was most favourably rated by the sample group. Apart from these thoroughly positive evaluations, this variety was considered a very bad friend, given that no other guise scored lower in this dimension than native RP.

According to the whole sample group, the Manchester English speaker was linked with lower status and competence in relation to all other guises. This speaker received a significantly humble rating in terms of sociability, which suggests poorer communicative skills when compared to the other guises. The pronunciation was described as rather unclear, for all other accents scored higher in this dimension, whereas the news presentation technique was mainly characterised as dry and ugly. All these evaluations together seemed to have been factored into the news reader suitability rating. In this regard, the Manchester English speaker's average points out that the whole sample group was in agreement that this speaker was rather

not suitable for such a position. Despite these evaluations, though, this guise was still thought to make a better friend than the native RP speaker.

The Standard Scottish English speaker was rated slightly beyond the borderline in terms of integrity and averagely when it comes to status and competence. Even though the pronunciation of this guise was considered rather unclear, undercut only by the Manchester English distractor, the presentation style was described as energetic and interesting. This speaker received her highest rating in the dimension assessing whether the speakers seemed to make good friends. In this category the Standard Scottish English speaker was only inferior to the near-RP guise. Altogether, this variety was rather not considered a good news reader, which is supported by a substandard evaluation in this attitude dimension.

The near-RP speaker was evaluated very positively in the status and competence and in the personal integrity dimension. By the whole sample, the near-RP speaker was thought to have the second best pronunciation of all speakers, while her presentation style was labelled dry, but interesting. Since these are all qualities that news readers should possess, the near-RP speaker was characterised as a relatively good news reader. As for the question whether the speaker would make a good friend, the majority of all respondents reckoned that this guise would make a very good friend indeed.

The Estuary English guise was evaluated poorly as for personal integrity and averagely in terms of status and competence. Nevertheless, this guise's exceptional and even unexcelled rating with respect to sociability also has to be accentuated. Her pronunciation was characterised as relatively clear and the news presentation style was thought to be energetic and interesting by all respondents. Indicated by a mean evaluation slightly above average, this variety was considered a relatively good news reader. The same also pertains for her rating with regard to the friend dimension, where this speaker had the potential to almost be on par with the near-RP and the Standard Scottish English guises.

6.5.   Comparison of dimensions across student groups

One of the central questions that motivated the production of this master thesis was to determine whether the English language-related educational background exerts an influence upon the evaluation of the language varieties. In order to investigate this issue, a student population whose English language skills did not exceed high school level was formed. In the Austrian context this criterion was the Matura, which is comparable to the British GCE A-levels, and corresponds to the B2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This applied to 107 non-English students, who were then contrasted with students who majored in English linguistics, English literature or teacher training in English. To obtain even finer nuances in the attitude judgements, this group was in due course further split into beginner English students and advanced English students. As detailed in Section 6.1., the former faction encompassed those 106 students between their second and third semesters, while the latter included all 113 English students from their fourth semesters onwards. The resulting three sample groups were scrutinised on the basis of their respective attitudes towards the five accents across various dimensions.

In inferential statistics, a mean evaluation comparison of more than two groups is typically conducted through an analysis of variance, or ANOVA for short. The first requirement for that procedure is often a normal distribution of the sampling variables. However, as Robert McKenzie (2010: 97) rightly asserts, this requirement can be relaxed in the case of large samples. Bortz and Schuster (2010: 214) specify this argument more lucidly by explaining that an ANOVA is robust against all violations of their requirements, provided that the samples are equally large and necessarily bigger than 10 per group. The sample sizes of the student groups in the present study, which boasted 106, 107 and 113 students respectively, can doubtless be considered almost equally large and, above all, sufficiently big for such a procedure, which is why parametric tests of significance were applicable at any rate and testing for normality could thus be omitted.

Moreover, there exists a second type of requirement for the implementation of an ANOVA, which is the homogeneity of variance within the sample groups. It rests on the assumption that the variance within each of the populations to be contrasted is equal. In this respect, Brian S. Everitt (1996: 55-56) states that procedures such as the ANOVA are in addition to being robust against deviations from normal distribution, also robust against departures from

homogeneity of variances if the numbers of observations in each group are at least approximately equal. In the case of the present study, the homogeneity of variances was proven through a Levene's Test, which revealed homogeneity of variance in all forthcoming calculations (p > 0.05). The statistical computations are made available on the CD-ROM attached to this thesis.

As outlined above, the whole sample was assigned to three groups according to their English language competence, resulting in non-English students, beginner English students and advanced English students. In order to perform a comparison of these factions with one another, an explanation of the techniques and the interpretation of the results to be gained is necessary. In psychology, the use of statistical inference procedures is standard practice, which aims at determining whether the probability of observed differences could have occurred by chance. Two factors play an important role in the calculation process: the size of the difference and the spread of the scores (Gerrig & Zimbardo 2005: 52). By common agreement, psychologists accept a difference between groups as real if the probability that it might be attributed to chance is less than five out of one hundred (p < 0.05) (Gerrig & Zimbardo 2005: 52). For the subsequent analysis this criterion was considered satisfactorily strict and, as a result, any difference that met this criterion was regarded a significant difference. In addition, there exist slightly less meaningful differences (p < 0.1) which cannot be neglected in analyses and are referred to as trends in the predicted direction. This pertains to all cases in which a difference is identified that would emerge by accident only ten times in one hundred (Gerrig & Zimbardo 2005: 52). This second commonly utilised criterion will also find application in the interpretation of results in the present study.

In the following illustrative radar charts, the evaluations of the non-English students are indicated in orange, the beginner English students are represented by the cyan colour, while the advanced English students are recognisable by the pink colour. Additionally, the statistically significant evaluative differences are indicated where applicable. At first, the three groups were collated on the basis of their perceptions of the speakers' status and competence, as Figure 13 shows.

In the cobweb diagram below, each speaker's mean values for status and competence are presented on their corresponding axis, which here range from 1.0 to 2.25 for facilitated extraction of the information contained.
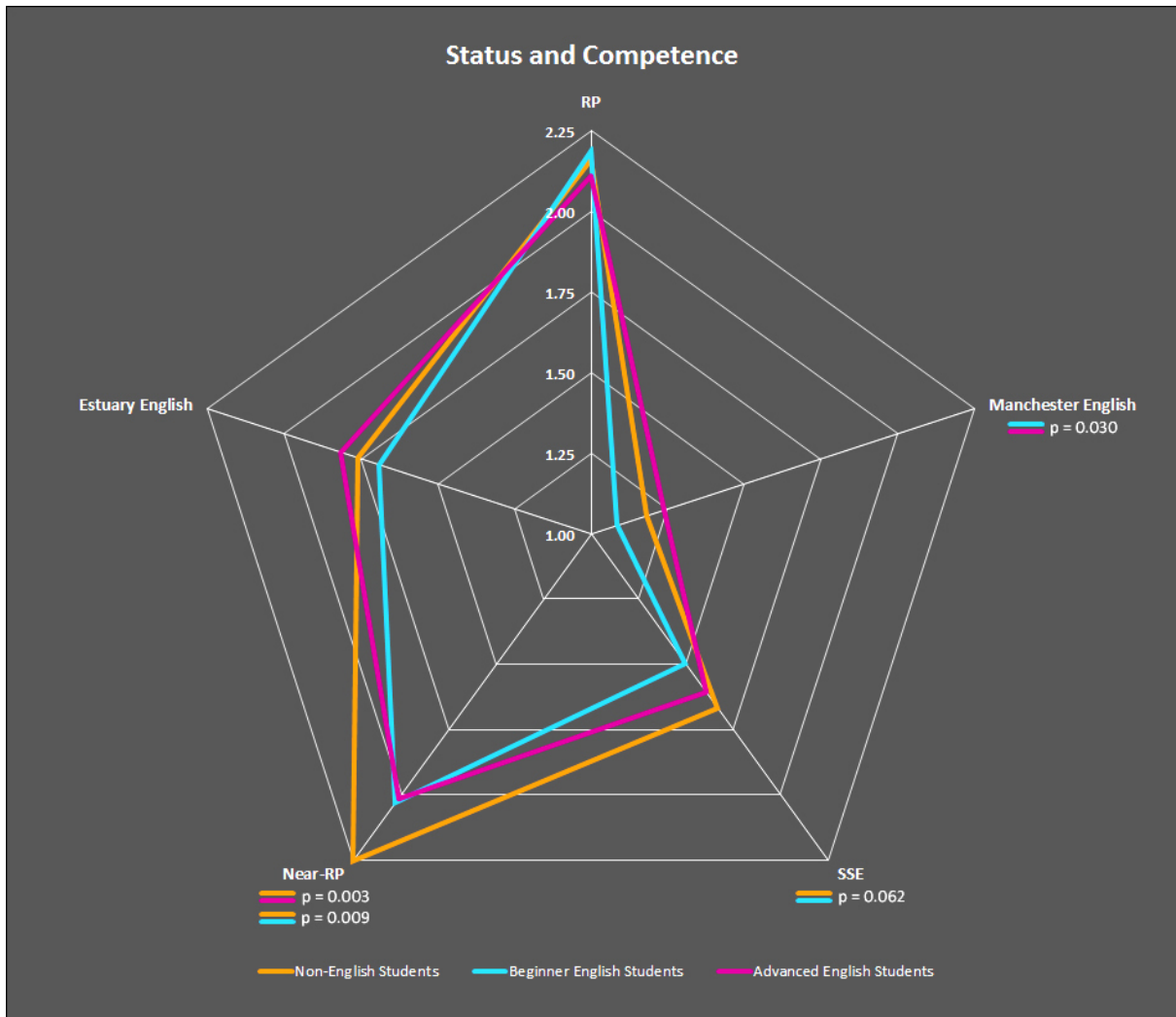
Figure 13. Mean scores of the speakers in the status and competence dimension.

On the basis of homogenous variances, significant differences and trends were identified in the status and competence attitudes towards the Standard Scottish English, the near-RP and the Manchester English speakers (Figure 13). The judgements of the three factions on the native RP guise and on the Estuary English speaker did not differ significantly in this respect.

In this attitudinal dimension, the Manchester English accent was rated significantly higher (p = 0.030) by the advanced English students (pink), with a mean score of 1.24, than by the English beginner students (cyan), whose mean average was 1.09.

The status and competence of the Standard Scottish English guise was by tendency (p = 0.062) rated lower by the beginner English students, with a mean of 1.50, than by the non-English students, with an average of 1.67. The significance level of 5% was here only scarcely missed.

With regard to the status and competence the groups attributed to the near-RP speaker, the evaluations of the non-English students varied significantly from those of both groups who majored in English. With a mean evaluation of 2.25, the non-English students firstly rated this accent higher in relation to the beginner English students (M = 2.03). Secondly, the difference between the non-English and the advanced English students (M = 2.01) was even more pronounced. These attitudinal differences are in great measure significant and are reflected in the corresponding significance values. In the discrepancy found between the non-English and the beginner English students a significance value of p = 0.009 was calculated. The cross-group difference between the non-English and the advanced English students is even more distinct, as the results were found to be significant on value of p = 0.003.

An analogous procedure was performed for the five guises' evaluations in the integrity dimension. The results are graphically incorporated into Figure 14 below.
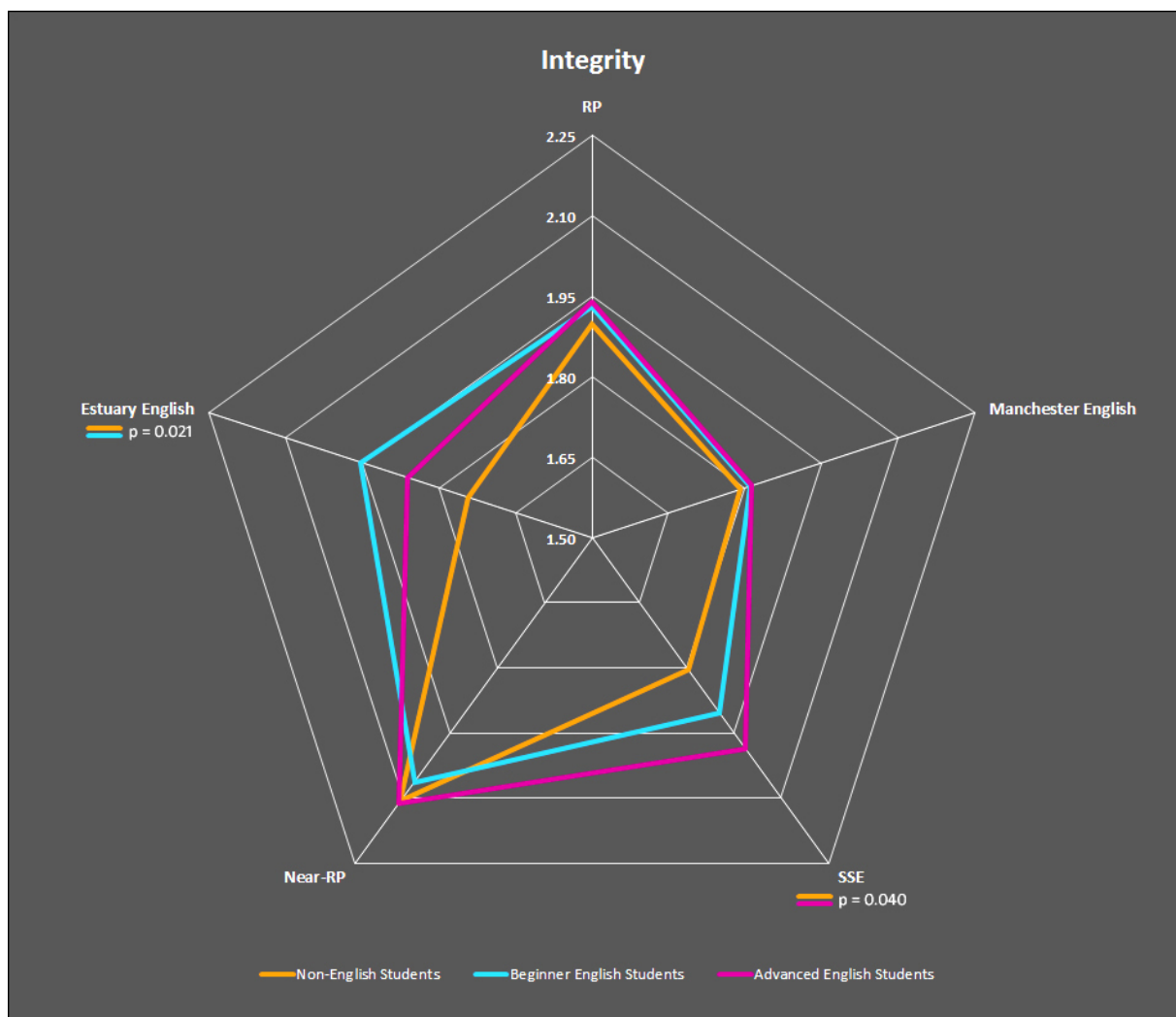
Figure 14. Mean scores of the speakers in the integrity dimension.

In the integrity dimension, three of the five guises received relatively uniform mean evaluations. The averages of the native RP, the Manchester English and the near-RP speakers maximally differed by 0.05 points, which therefore did not suffice for exhibiting significant differences (Figure 14).

Significant attitudinal discrepancies in terms of personal integrity were, however, identified in the evaluations of the Standard Scottish and the Estuary English speakers. As is visualised in Figure 14 above, the former obtained an average score of 1.99 in the integrity dimension by the advanced English students (pink), which is significantly higher ($p = 0.040$) than the 1.81 average awarded to this guise by the non-English students (orange). By the same token, the integrity mean evaluations ascribed to the Estuary English speaker also differed significantly. This guise was rated significantly higher ($p = 0.021$) by the beginner English students, with a mean evaluation 1.95, than by the non-English students, whose mean evaluation only amounted to 1.74 (Figure 14).

With reference to the three student groups' perceived sociability of the five guises, no non-coincidental attitudinal differences were observed in the cases of the RP and the Standard Scottish English accents. Yet, significant and tendential differences were detected in the judgements made on the remaining three varieties. This information is illustrated by the aid of Figure 15 on the following page.

In contrast to the beginner English students (cyan), the Manchester accent was significantly more highly evaluated by the advanced English students (pink), as well as by the non-English students (orange) as far as sociability is concerned (Figure 15). While the advanced English students awarded this speaker an average rating of 0.80 and the non-English students an evaluation of 0.72, this guise achieved a mean score of only 0.54 by the English beginners. For this reason, the difference in evaluation proved to be more marked between the beginner English students and the advanced English students ($p = 0.001$) than between the non-English students and the beginner English students ($p = 0.034$).

Furthermore, one significant difference and one trend were found in the sociability attitudes towards the near-RP speaker (Figure 15). With a mean value of 1.47, the beginner English students assessed this guise significantly lower ($p = 0.004$) than the non-English students, from whom the near-RP speaker received 1.75 points on average. Also, a comparison of the

mean evaluation of 1.58 in this dimension by the advanced English students and an average rating of 1.75 by the non-English students uncovers a trend indicating a noteworthy discrepancy ($p = 0.093$).

The scores of the Estuary English speaker in terms of sociability also differed by tendency between two of the three student groups. The students whose major subject did not include English evaluated this guise tendentially lower with a mean of 2.28 than the English beginner students, by whom the Estuary English accent received 2.43 points on average. This attitudinal discrepancy is non-coincidental ($p = 0.080$) on a significance of 10%. This can be seen in Figure 15 below.
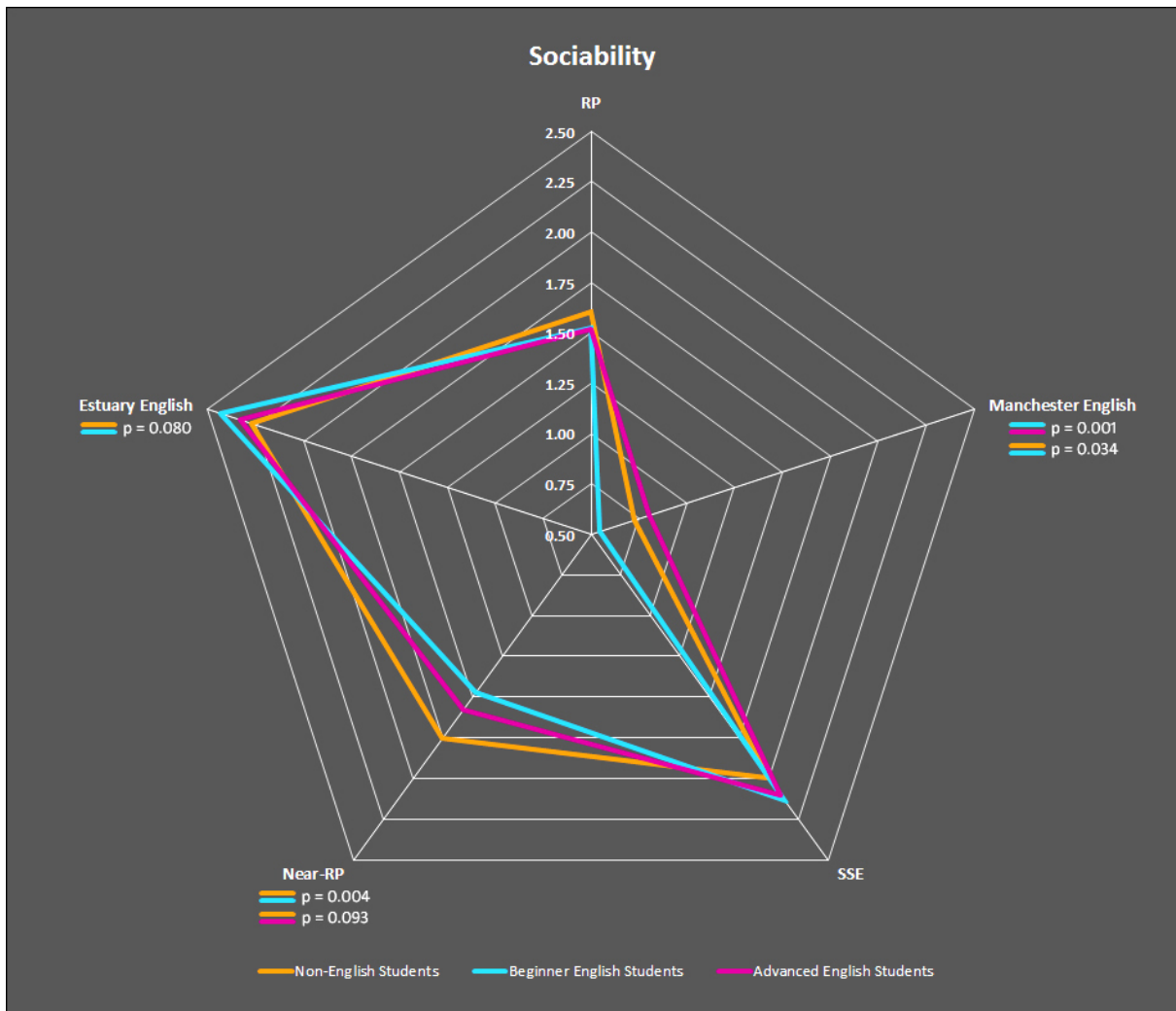
Figure 15. Mean scores of the speakers in the sociability dimension.

A closer inspection of the pronunciation dimension revealed significant differences in the evaluations of the Standard Scottish English and the near-RP speakers, while the mean scores of the native RP, the Manchester English and the Estuary English guises exhibited no significant differences. This information is visually displayed by the aid of Figure 16, which can be found below.
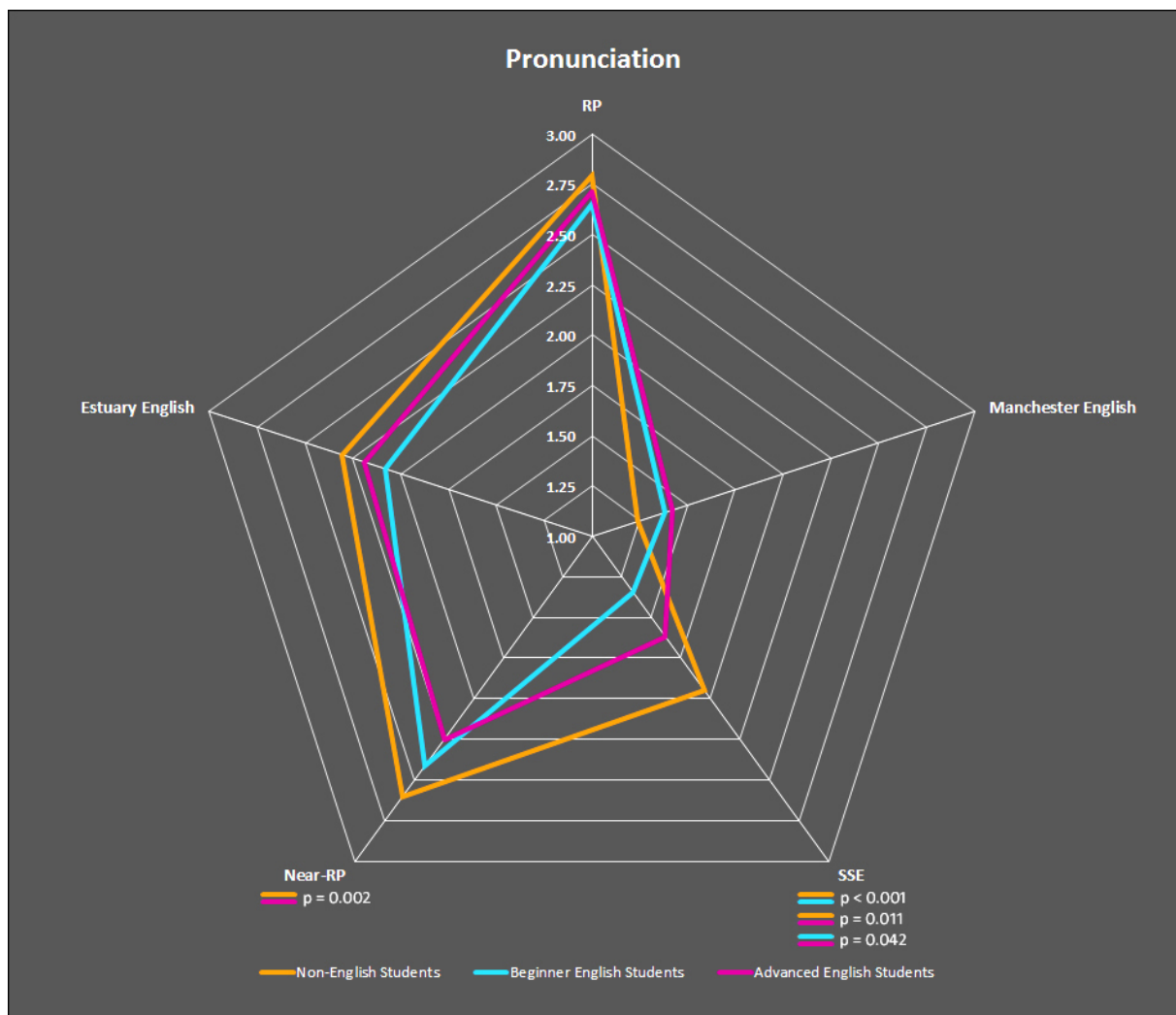
Figure 16. Mean scores of the speakers in the pronunciation dimension.

The greatest variations concerning pronunciation were detected in the attitudes towards the Standard Scottish English speaker, given that all three groups' mean scores varied significantly from one another, albeit to disparate degrees. The weakest significant difference ($p = 0.042$) was noted between the beginner English students (cyan) and the advanced English students (pink). With a mean of 1.35, the former rated this speaker's pronunciation significantly lower than the latter, whose average score reached 1.62 points.

A highly significant difference (p = 0.011) also pertained between the advanced English students (M = 1.62) and the non-English students (orange), whose pronunciation assessment of the Standard Scottish English guise aggregated to 1.95. That suggests that the Standard Scottish English speaker's pronunciation was rated significantly more favourably by the non-English students than by the advanced English students.

Lastly, with an average evaluation of 1.95, the judgements of the non-English students differed highly significantly (p < 0.001) from those of the beginner English students, who awarded this guise a 1.35 overall rating as far as this dimension is concerned. This means, the beginner English learners evaluated the Standard Scottish English speaker to the highest degree possible significantly more negatively than the non-English students.

What is more, discrepancies were also found in two student groups' mean pronunciation scores of the near-RP speaker. On a significance of p = 0.002, this guise was evaluated far less positively by the advanced English students than by the non-English students. The corresponding mean values were 2.25 points among the former group and 2.60 points among the latter faction.

Through an analysis of variance of the three groups' evaluations in the friend dimension, significant differences were discovered in the perceptions of the native RP speaker, the Standard Scottish English speaker and the Estuary English speaker. No significantly divergent evaluations were cognisable in the attitudes of the groups towards the Manchester English and the near-RP guises, though. This information can summarily be accessed through Figure 17 on the following page.

As for the native RP speaker's assumed friendship compatibility, a relevant evaluative disparateness was discerned, which is clearly visible in the cobweb diagram below (Figure 17). This guise was by a tendency of p = 0.087 more highly evaluated by the non-English students, which are represented in the figure by the orange colour, with a mean score of 1.55, than by the beginner English students (illustrated by the cyan colour), whose rating amounted to 1.34 points on average.
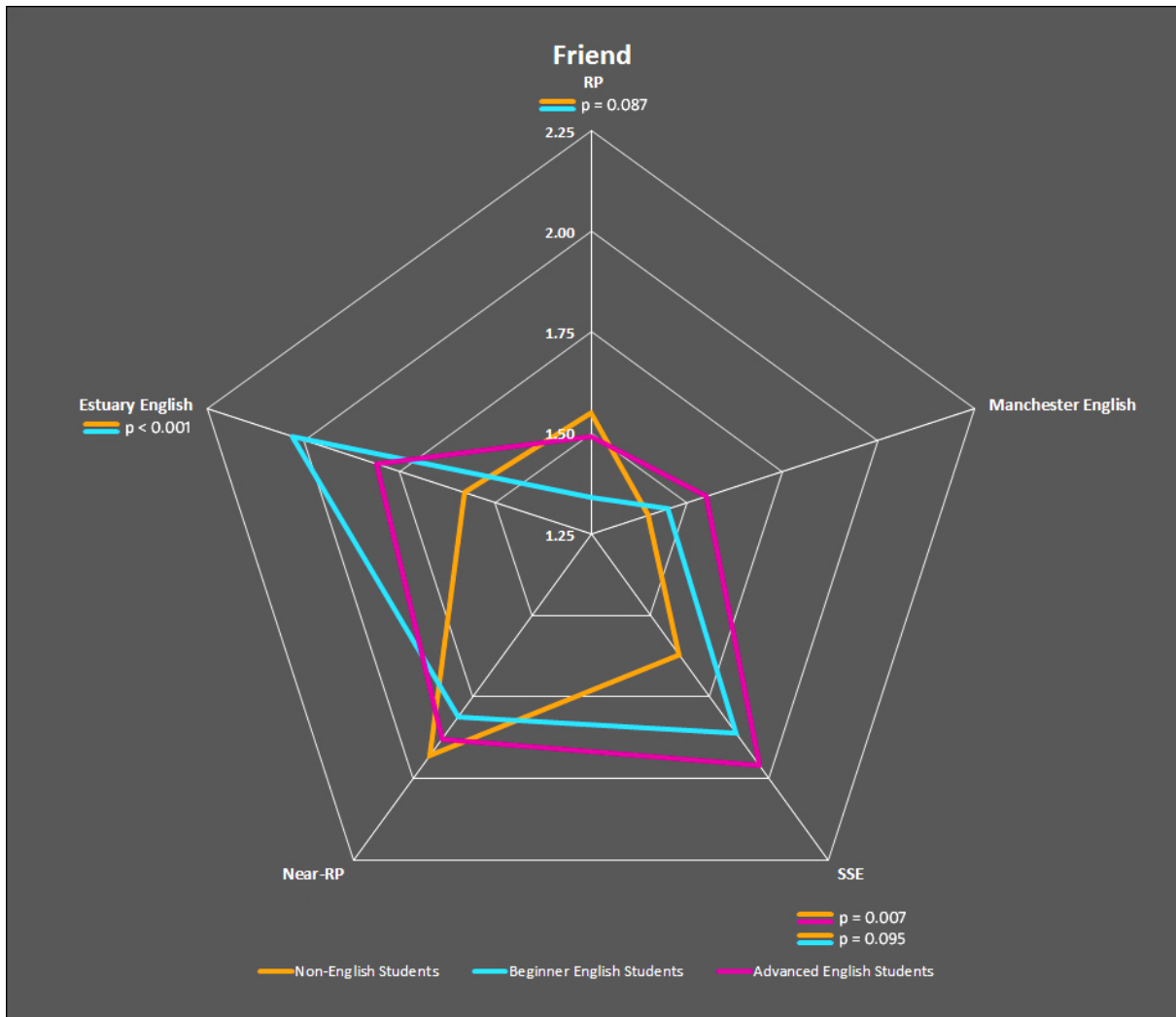
Figure 17. Mean scores of the speakers in the friend dimension.

One trend and one significant difference were measurable in the evaluations of the Standard Scottish English speaker in the friend dimension. This guise was by tendency ($p = 0.095$) rated lower by the non-English students, with a mean of 1.62, than by the beginner English students, with an average of 1.86 points. A greater discrepancy of $p = 0.007$, and thereby a highly significant difference, seemed to persist between the evaluations of the advanced English students and those of the non-English students. This result can be ascribed to the fact that the former rated this speaker significantly higher in the friend dimension, with a mean score of 1.96, than the non-English students, with a mean evaluation of only 1.62.

The third guise that was in the friend dimension significantly divergently evaluated by the student groups was the Estuary English speaker. A highly significant difference of $p < 0.001$ was found to pertain between the non-English students, who, with an average score of 1.58, evaluated this speaker far more negatively than the beginner English students, with a rating of

2.03. This suggests that chance can almost be excluded as a cause of this difference, as the result cannot even in one out of one hundred times have occurred by accident.

The last dimension tested with the help of the questionnaire was the general suitability of the five guises for jobs as news announcers, for which a ten point visual analogue scale was employed. Figure 18 below illustrates the significant differences identified for the group evaluations of two speakers. These concerned the Standard Scottish English and the near-RP speakers, while the evaluations of the RP, the Manchester and the Estuary English accents did not exhibit significant characteristics.
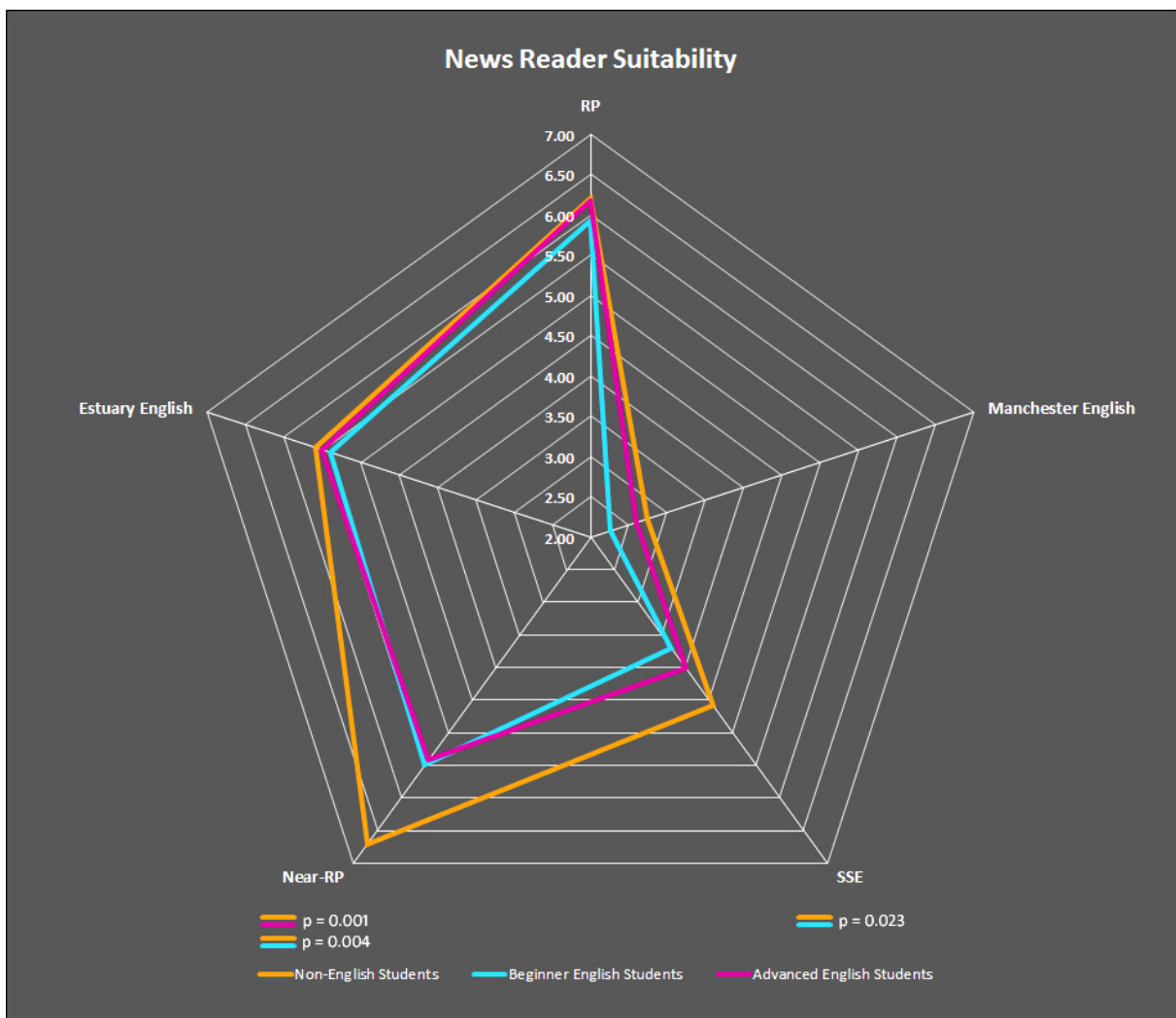
Figure 18. Mean scores of the speakers in terms of job suitability.

Two of the three groups formed on the basis of students' major subjects of study significantly varied in terms of their average news caster ability scores for the Standard Scottish English speaker. With a mean of 5.58, this guise was rated significantly higher ($p = 0.023$) by the non-English students (orange), when opposed to the beginner English students (cyan), who only awarded this guise 3.71 points in terms of news reader suitability.

In view of the near-RP speaker's perceived suitability for employment as a potential news caster, two highly significant differences between the student groups were discerned. This guise received a significantly higher ($p = 0.004$) mean evaluation of 6.71 by the non-English students when compared with the mean score of 5.50 assigned to the near-RP speaker by the beginner English students. An even more striking and highly significant difference ($p = 0.001$) was calculated between the assessments of the advanced English and the non-English students. The former rated this variety significantly lower with an average score of 5.42 than the non-English students, from whom this speaker received a mean evaluation of 6.71. This difference is also highly significant and almost certainly non-coincidental.

On balance, an investigation into variance that took into account all six evaluative dimensions and the participants' subject of study as a parameter resulted in altogether 22 statistically relevant attitudinal discrepancies between factions. The RP speaker received the most uniform evaluations, as only one evaluative difference of interest could be found. The same applies to the Manchester English accent and to the Estuary English variety, given that for both speakers three relevantly divergent mean evaluations each were calculated. In contrast, the cross-group mean scores of the near-RP speaker varied dramatically, which is reflected in the fact that discrepancies of importance occurred in seven instances. The speaker who was most divergently rated was the Standard Scottish English guise, which is indicated by eight significant differences and trends between the evaluations of different student groups. Altogether, the data points out that the parameter subject of study, and by extension English language competence, exerts an interestingly high influence upon the students' mean evaluations of the five guises.

6.6. Comparison of dimensions according to travel and study experience in Anglophone areas

The main subject of investigation in this section is the effect of the participants' travel and study experiences in the English-speaking world on their attitudinal evaluations of the five language varieties. An initial analysis is intended to uncover differences between the attitudes of those students who had acquired international experience and those who lacked any kind of foreign experience. Whereas 166 participants had not made study- or travel-related experiences in Anglophone regions, in total 160 students of the whole sample group claimed to have enjoyed stays in such areas. The durations of these foreign experiences varied between one week and 21 years.

In order to scrutinise general and speaker-independent evaluative discrepancies in the dimensions between these two groups, the scores of all five speakers per dimension were added and subsequently divided by five. The method that best enables an investigation of that problem is the so-called *t-test*. This test is frequently applied in language attitude studies and allows for an assessment of the statistical significance of differences between the mean evaluations of two sets of scores (Field 2005: 286). Essentially, two different t-tests can be distinguished, i.e. the independent means (or unrelated samples) t-test and the dependent means t-test. The former is used whenever a comparison of the mean evaluations of two distinct groups of informants is required, whereas the latter analyses the mean scores of the same participants in two experimental conditions or at two time periods (Field 2005: 286). Since the evaluative differences between the students who had international experience and those who did not were of prime interest, an independent means t-test was employed here.

As for the general status and competence, sociability, pronunciation and friend dimensions, almost identical mean evaluations were found in the evaluations under investigation. The same also applied to the overall scores of the two groups in the newsreader suitability dimension, where no pronounced differences could be identified. Nevertheless, one significant evaluative difference was detected in the speaker-independent integrity dimension. With 1.95 points on average, the students who possessed travel or study experience in Anglophone regions evaluated the total integrity of all speakers significantly ($p = 0.016$) higher than those who did not list stays abroad on their questionnaires, whose mean totalled only 1.88 points.

Following this preliminary, general investigation, a more detailed examination was concerned with the differences in the mean scores of the individual five language varieties in dependency of the students' exposure to the English language through travel or study experiences.

Although the mean evaluations of both groups frequently proved to be relatively consistent, an influence of international experience on students' attitudes towards the RP, the Standard Scottish English and the Estuary English guises was observed.

Most of the discrepancies were identified in the judgements made on the native RP speaker. With a mean score of 2.19, students who gathered foreign experience evaluated this speaker higher by tendency ($p = 0.098$) in the status and competence dimension than those with an absence thereof, who awarded the RP guise 2.11 points on average.

Similarly, also the impression in way of the perceived integrity of the RP speaker was, with an average score of 1.97, tendentially ($p = 0.068$) higher among the students who enjoyed stays in the English-speaking world, in contrast to those who spent their lives and study time entirely in non-English-speaking countries ($M = 1.87$).

There also existed a tendency ($p = 0.057$) to the effect that internationally experienced students rated the RP speakers' pronunciation higher, with 2.78 points on average, than their colleagues who had not visited Anglophone areas. By the latter, the RP guise obtained a lower mean evaluation of 2.66.

In addition, differences were identified in two attitude dimensions corresponding to the Standard Scottish English speaker, which can purely be reduced to Anglophone travel and study experiences abroad. Students who travelled to English-speaking regions awarded this guise a significantly ($p = 0.041$) more positive mean evaluation of 1.96 in the integrity dimension than their internationally inexperienced counterparts, by whom the Scottish accent received 1.84 points on average.

With a mean of 1.91, the Standard Scottish English guise was also evaluated higher by tendency (p = 0.051) in the friend dimension by test subjects with foreign experience than by those without any experience of that sort, whose overall score as a result only amounted to 1.73 points.

A significant evaluative difference was moreover discerned in the sociability attitudes towards the Estuary English speaker. Students in possession of international experience rated this guise significantly higher (p = 0.008), with an overall score of 2.42, than the students without experience in Anglophone countries, who awarded this speaker 2.27 on average.

6.6.1. International English language experience-related extreme group comparison

Resting on the above results, an effect of language experiences in the English-speaking world on the evaluations of numerous attitude dimensions was verified. To further examine this effect, a more particularised analysis was performed, which took into account the duration of the stays abroad. As a great number of participants visited the Anglophone world on more than one occasion, the total length of their time spent abroad was calculated by an addition of their individual international stays. On this basis, the respondents with experience in English-speaking regions were segmented into two extreme groups and their respective mean evaluations were compared. The classification scheme utilised was premised on the contrast between the first and the fourth quartiles from the 160 respondents with English language-related experience abroad. The first quartile encompassed 48 students who stayed in such areas between one and three weeks. Opposed to this faction were 47 individuals whose international experience lasted between 24 weeks and 1100 weeks. It has to be clarified that such a long period spent Anglophone regions was the absolute exception, yet there was one student in the sample group who leaded such a time span of his or her life in the English-speaking world.

Through this extreme group comparison, relevant evaluative differences were uncovered in four out of six attitude dimensions, which were manifested in the varying perceptions of the factions with respect to the near-RP and the Standard Scottish English speakers. The scores of the remaining three guises did not exhibit significant characteristics.

Participants who had enjoyed stays in Anglophone areas of short duration rated the Standard Scottish English guise's perceived friendship ability tendentially lower (p = 0.072), with an overall score of 1.83 than the respondents who gathered international experience of at least 24 weeks. This group's mean score even reached a total of 2.15 points.

The most relevant results pertained to the two extreme groups' attitudinal estimations of the Austrian near-RP speaker. The first discordance dependent on the duration of the stays abroad was of utmost significance (p = 0.004) and relates to this guise's assumed level of status and competence. The students with very limited Anglophone language experience abroad awarded this speaker a mean evaluation of 2.28. When contrasted with a mean average of 2.00, which the near-RP speaker obtained from the highly internationally experienced participants, a difference of more than 0.28 points was calculated, which provides an explanation of the high degree of significance.

Another attitudinal discrepancy was discerned in the near-RP speaker's mean scores with respect to pronunciation. On a significance of p = 0.005, participants who had gained experience abroad in excess of 24 weeks evaluated this guise significantly more negatively than their internationally relatively inexperienced colleagues. Whereas the mean average among the former amounted to only 2.19, the near-RP speaker received an extremely high overall score of 2.60 by the latter. That is an evaluative difference of 0.41 on a four point scale, which is reflected in the high significance calculated.

The dissent in terms of the non-native RP guise's ascribed status and competence and pronunciation between the two extreme groups already provides an indication of the results in her estimated total news reader qualification. Long stays abroad in Anglophone countries led to a significantly lower mean evaluation of the non-native near-RP speaker as for this dimension, which was reflected in the data by a significance of p = 0.022. With an average of 5.32, informants with a minimum exposure of 24 weeks to the English language abroad evaluated this guise far less favourably than participants with hardly any international experience, who awarded her a mean rating of 6.53. The discrepancy totalled 1.21 points on a ten point scale.

All in all, a comparison of the dimensional evaluations dependent on study- or travel-related experiences in Anglophone regions yielded altogether six discrepancies of relevance, pertaining to the native RP, the Standard Scottish English and the Estuary English guises. The common ground in respondents' divergent perceptions of all L1 accents was that the general presence of international experience led to more favourable evaluations. Through an extreme group comparison, four additional differences of interest were discovered in the ratings of the Austrian near-RP speaker. This guise received far less favourable evaluations by students with international experience in excess of 24 weeks, than by those who maximally stayed in English-speaking countries for three weeks.

6.7. Comparison of dimensions with respect to varieties spoken

Another factor that potentially affected students' attitudes towards the accents used in this study were the varieties of English they claimed to speak themselves. As has been discussed in full detail in Section 6.1., the questionnaire was designed to provide the participants altogether five variants to select from, which included British, American, Irish, Scottish and Australian English. To find the most accurate description of their accents, the students were also allowed to list a more local variant of their own choosing. As previously explained, the two largest groups of varieties spoken by the participants were British English, which was opted for by 144 students, and American English, which 132 students claimed to be their accent of English. The predominant concern in this section therefore is to seek contrasts between these two groups in the mean evaluations of the five speakers.

For this purpose, another independent means t-test was conducted to uncover non-coincidental average score differences between the students with British accents and those with American pronunciations. This test revealed only three differences of relevance between the British English- and the American English-speaking students in terms of their attitudes towards the five speakers. The first of these attitudinal discrepancies was detected in the Standard Scottish English speaker's pronunciation. With a mean of 1.74, this guise was rated significantly higher ($p = 0.025$) in this dimension by the British English speakers than by the American English speakers, whose average score was 1.52.

The second measurable difference was also found in the judgements on the Standard Scottish English speaker, yet in the integrity dimension. By a tendency of p = 0.092, this guise was evaluated lower by the American English students with a mean evaluation of 1.83 when compared to the British English-speaking participants, who awarded this speaker a mean evaluation of 1.94.

The third attitudinal discordance was identified in the friend dimension of the near-RP speaker. This variety was rated tendentially higher (p = 0.090) by the American English-speaking students, with a mean score of 1.97, than by the British English-speaking students (M = 1.82).

As the above results underline, the attitudes towards the five speakers were only slightly influenced by the variety the participants themselves spoke. Generally, the Scottish English guise was evaluated better by the British English-speaking students than by those with an American pronunciations. The reverse trend was true for the near-RP speaker's rating in the friend dimension, where the American English-speaking informants provided more positive evaluations.

6.8. Correlations between PCA validated factors and pronunciation, friend, and news caster suitability

After a contrastive analysis of variance dependent on major subjects of study, travel- and study-related experiences in the English-speaking world and the variety of English spoken by the participants, general intercorrelations between the dimensions were sought. This was achieved by calculations of bivariate Pearson correlations, for which a significance level of 0.001 was decided upon. To determine the degree of correlation between two variables, usually a statistical measure referred to as the correlation coefficient (r) is computed. This coefficient can take on values between -1 and +1, where +1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, -1 suggests the presence of a perfect negative correlation, and 0.0 implies that there exists no correlation at all (Gerrig & Zimbardo 2005: 30). The results to be gained need to be interpreted in the following way. Whenever a positive correlation efficient is computed, it means that as one set of scores increase, a second set of scores also increases. In the case of a negative correlation coefficient, the opposite trend is true, which means that the second set of scores goes into the opposite direction of the first set of scores. Lastly, a correlation

coefficient in the range of 0.0 is indicative of the fact that there is hardly any or no relationship between two scores.

Bortz and Schuster (2010: 159) profess that even though correlation is a requirement for a causal relationship, the concomitant results cannot be interpreted causally. That is to say that if two properties or variables A and B strongly correlate, different causal explanations are possible: either A influences B, B influences A, A and B exert an influence upon each other, or A and B are likewise influenced causally by a third or potentially even by more variables (Bortz and Schuster 2010: 159). With reference to the present study, a strong, positive and significant correlation between two variables under scrutiny implies that students provided similar evaluations, while a negative correlation allows the interpretation that one dimension was evaluated highly whereas at the same time another was rated lowly.

In the following correlation calculations, the total evaluations of all respondents, which were independent of the speakers, were used, as was already done and explained in Section 6.6. With regard to the total news reader suitability dimension measured by means of a visual analogue scale, a correlation of strong markedness with the total status and competence dimension (r = 0.474; p < 0.001) was identified.

Furthermore, a correlation of similar intensity was detected between the total news reader qualification dimension and the total attitudinal judgements on the speakers' pronunciation (r = 0.411; p < 0.001). Another significant correlation was recognisable between the total status and competence evaluations and the total pronunciation ratings (r = 0.403; p < 0.001).

With a Pearson coefficient of r = 0.560 (p < 0.001), the most highly pronounced correlation was discovered between the total integrity dimension and the total friend dimension. The total sociability dimension was also found to correlate positively with the total friend dimension, albeit to a lesser degree (r = 0.306; p < 0.001).

In addition, a strong positive correlation pertained between the judgemental tendencies in the total integrity dimension and the ratings in the total sociability dimension (r = 0.406; p < 0.001). Only a moderate correlation was noticed between the total sociability and the total evaluations in terms of pronunciation (r = 0.114; p = 0.040). The students' total estimation with regard to the speakers' news caster suitability were almost equally dependent on their

total integrity evaluations (r = 0.324; p < 0.001) and on their total sociability assessments (r = 0.316; p < 0.001).

A relatively high and unanticipated correlation was present between the total integrity dimension and the perceived status and competence of all speakers, for a correlation coefficient of r = 0.435 and a significance of p < 0.001 were calculated. There moreover existed some kind of influence between the total status and competence and the total sociability dimensions (r = 0.355; p < 0.001).

In terms of the total correlations between the attitudinal dimensions, the highest positive correlation was discovered between the total integrity dimension and the total friend dimension. The second most highly marked correlation was found between the total status and competence and the total news reader suitability dimensions.

6.9. Rank ordering results

In the final part of the questionnaire, the students were requested to create a rank ordering of the five guises according to their preferences were and afterwards provided the chance to guess where the speakers come from. For these two concluding tasks, the participants were allowed to listen to a shortened version of the original stimulus recordings again. The rank ordering will be the focus of analysis in this section.

Item 1 (Part II) of the questionnaire targeted the collection of information on the respondents' total impressions of the guises in relation to one another. The students were asked to assign ranks from one to five to the speakers, whereby rank one was awarded to the speaker who delivered the best subjectively perceived performance, whereas rank five should have been given to the speaker who was least favourably estimated.

Figure 19 on the following page represents how many students voted a speaker in a particular position, which means that on the one hand the individual five ranks consist of 100% and, on the other, that also the speakers' shares across all ranks, identifiable by colour, add up to 100% of all votes.
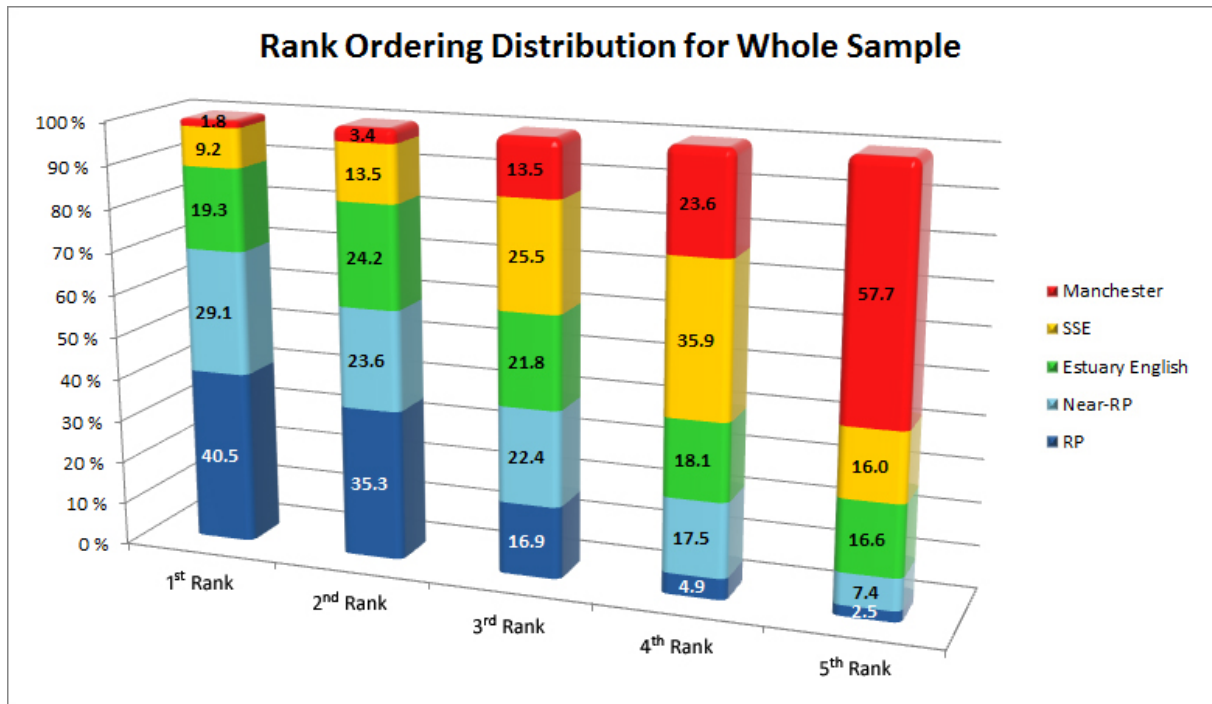
Figure 19. Rank order distribution by the whole sample group.

As the above diagram reveals, altogether 40.5% of the sample group assigned the first rank to the native RP speaker (dark blue), while a considerably smaller percentage of 29.1% thought the near-RP speaker (light blue) should be ranked on top. The third largest faction, which was made up of 19.3 % of the respondents, decided to give the best spot to the Estuary English guise (green). Only clear minorities of 9.2% and 1.8% respectively ascribed the first rank to the Standard Scottish English (yellow) and to the Manchester English speaker, who is represented by the red colour in the above diagram.

Similar trends were observed in regard to the second rank, with one exception, however. With a percentage of 35.3%, the native RP guise was also most frequently assigned the second rank. Yet, the second largest faction of 24.2% of the participants argued that the Estuary English speaker should be ranked in place two. A minimally smaller number of students, i.e. 23.6%, ranked the near-RP speaker in the second position. The remaining two guises did not have a strong tendency of having been voted into the second rank, as is indicated by percentages of only 13.5% and 3.4% of the students who listed the Standard Scottish English speaker and the Manchester English speaker in rank two.

With a percentage of 25.5%, the Standard Scottish English guise was most frequently found in the third position. 22.4% voted the near-RP and 21.8% the Estuary English speaker into the middle rank. Only a small group of 16.9% assigned rank three to the native RP guise, whereas 13.5% opted for the Manchester English distractor to be classified in this position.

35.9% of all participants ranked the Standard Scottish English guise in the fourth position. The second largest faction, i.e. 23.6%, awarded the Manchester English speaker the fourth rank. Virtually equally large groups of 18.1% and 17.5% decided that the Estuary English speaker and the near-RP speaker should follow in the fourth position. The native RP guise was not prone to occurring in this rank, as only 4.9% of the respondents voted her into position four.

The overwhelming majority of 57.7% of the sample put the Manchester English speaker into the last position, which indicates that this accent was least favourably appreciated by the students. Factions of 16.6% and 16.0% respectively listed the Estuary English and the Standard Scottish English speakers in the fifth rank. Only 7.4% were convinced that the near-RP speaker was least appealing to them and an even smaller number of only 2.5% of the test subjects voted the native RP speaker into the bottom rank.

This distribution of the ranks enabled a calculation of every guise's mean rank. With a mean rank of 1.94, the RP speaker received the most positive evaluation of all speakers when the entire study population is taken into account. She was most closely followed by the near-RP speaker, whose mean rank was 2.50. The third best mean rank rating by the whole sample was achieved by the Estuary English guise, who was voted into the 2.88^{th} position on average. An overall rank of 3.56 suggests that the Standard Scottish English speaker was most frequently found between the third and fourth positions. The mean rank of the Manchester English speaker amounted to 4.32, which indicates that this variety was regarded as inferior when compared to the other four accents.

6.9.1. Subject of study-related rank ordering differences

After a general description of the ranking peculiarities of all respondents was offered, ordering differences emanating from the students' major subject of study will now be investigated and the mean ranks corresponding to the individual groups will be contrasted. On the grounds that the ranking of the speakers did not conform to an interval scale level, but provided nominally scaled data instead, non-parametric methods were employed for multi-group comparisons. Hence, a Kruskal-Wallis test was used to test for significance, whereupon multiple u-tests were conducted as Post-Hoc tests. In order to avoid an α error cumulation, which is caused by multiple pairwise comparisons, the significance level was adapted according to the requirements. Therefore, the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ was divided by the number of u-test comparisons that were planned to be conducted, which resulted in a corrected significance level of $\alpha \approx 0.017$.

The computations indicated general significant evaluative differences in the rank ordering of the Manchester English speaker ($p = 0.005$) and in that of the near-RP guise ($p = 0.002$). These were further investigated by the use of Post-Hoc tests, which firstly verified rank ordering differences with regard to the Manchester English variety. On the one hand was this accent significantly more poorly ($p = 0.003$) ranked by the beginner English students, with an average rank of 4.45, than by the advanced English students, whose mean rank was 4.12. On the other hand, with a mean rank of 4.40, the Manchester accent was also less favourably evaluated ($p = 0.010$) by the students who did not major in English than by the advanced English students. This implies that higher English language competence led to a higher rank evaluation of the Manchester English variety.

In due course, two significant results were detected in the ranking of the near-RP speaker. With an average position of 2.17, the non-English students classified this person significantly better ($p = 0.016$) than the beginner English students, who assigned the Austrian near-RP variety an average rank of 2.58. Moreover, an even greater and highly significant ($p = 0.001$) rank ordering discrepancy was discernible between the non-English students and the advanced English students. While among the former this speaker was ranked 2.17[th] on average, the latter awarded her an overall position of 2.75. In this context, deficits in terms of English language competence led to a significantly better ranking of the non-native near-RP speaker.

6.9.2. Effects of Anglophone language experiences abroad on the rank ordering

In dependency of the participants' language experiences in the English-speaking world, differences in the rank orders of two guises were discovered through Mann-Whitney u-test calculations. Indicated by an average rank of 2.38, the near-RP speaker was evaluated significantly ($p = 0.043$) more positively by participants who lacked international experience than by students in possession of experience abroad, who listed the Austrian in the 2.64[th] rank on average.

In addition, the Estuary English guise was by tendency ($p = 0.059$) evaluated more negatively by students without experience abroad (MR= 3.02) than by respondents who had spent time in Anglophone areas. By those, the Estuary English guise received an overall rank of 2.74.

The rank ordering peculiarities with respect to the non-native RP speaker were confirmed by a comparison of the two extreme groups, which were formed according to the length of the stays abroad (see Section 6.6.1. for a description of these extreme groups). With regard to the Estuary English guise, however, significant differences in way of ranking pertained only when a dichotomous distinction in terms of presence or absence of Anglophone experience abroad was applied. Yet, the results could not be underlined by a comparison of the extreme groups in dependence of the duration of the international experience.

With an average position of 2.33, the students with international experience of less than 3 weeks evaluated the Austrian near-RP speaker significantly better ($p = 0.022$) than those who listed stays in Anglophone countries in excess of 24 weeks. The latter only assigned the near-RP speaker an average rank of 2.91. Once again, data from the extreme group comparison demonstrated that less international experience resulted in a significantly more negative evaluation of the non-native near-RP speaker as far her rank ordering standing in relation to the other speakers is concerned.

6.10. Variety recognition rates

In order to determine the recognition rates by the whole sample group for the five guises, the participants' responses to the recognition item, i.e. Item 2 (Part II) on the questionnaire had to be categorised as either correct or incorrect. Such a dichotomy turned out to be of limited practicability, given that a large number of informants frequently provided very general labels such as 'UK', or 'Great Britain' as answers to the speakers' regional provenance. These were considered too broad for inclusion in either of the two categories, which is why the number of the categories was expanded and a third category was introduced. Comprised therein were descriptors that identified the speaker's place of origin only peripherally and could therefore neither be assigned to the incorrect nor to the correct responses. An overview of all correctly, peripherally and incorrectly regarded labels for all guises can be found on the CD-ROM. A preliminary analysis built on these criteria yielded the following results, which are graphically illustrated in Figure 20 on the following page.

The next diagram represents the distribution of correct (green), incorrect (red) and peripheral (diagonally striped in green and red) answers given by all judges. As not every student who took part in the present study offered guesses with respect to the speakers' home countries, a fourth category was added, which captured all those cases (grey). Subsequently, all categories taken together constitute 100% (N = 326).

The RP accent as used in this experiment was previously defined as the standard (social) accent of Standard English in England, which is in great measure associated with the South of England. In accordance with this description, the following labels rank among the correct responses for this speaker: 'RP', 'Southern England', 'London', 'Brighton', 'Central England', 'Manchester' and 'England'. The answers 'United Kingdom' and 'Great Britain' were only deemed peripherally correct, while all remaining responses were categorised as wrong. Based on these criteria, a relatively large faction of 42.3% of all students correctly identified the RP speaker employed in this study. A slightly smaller group of 27.3% provided rather broad and thus only peripherally correct responses. The assumptions of 10.7% in terms of the speaker's country of birth were regarded as misidentifications, while 19.6% of the informants did not provide any answers at all.
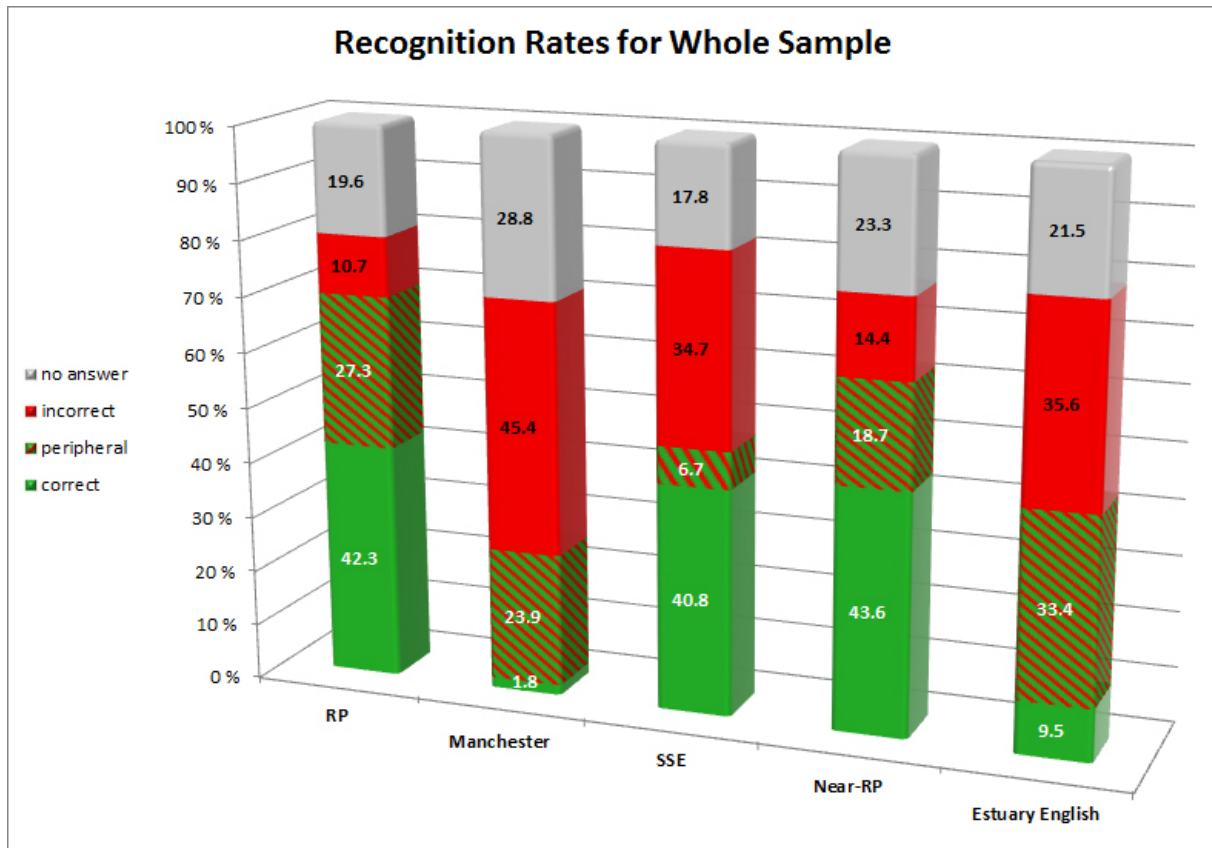
Figure 20. Recognition rates by the whole sample.

As the bar corresponding to the Manchester English speaker immediately reveals, very few students were capable of correctly identifying the speaker's home nation. Altogether only six out of 326 participants listed either 'Manchester' or 'Northern England' as answers, which equalled a proportion of 1.8% of the whole sample. 23.9% of all responses were considered peripherally correct, including the labels the 'United Kingdom', 'Great Britain', 'England', 'Southern England', 'London', the 'Midlands', 'Central England', 'Oxford', 'West England' and 'Western UK'. In contrast to the RP accent, which is a social rather than a regional accent, it is possible in theory to locate a Manchester English variety exactly on a map. Thence, 'England' was deemed too broad here, as the Manchester accent can hardly be heard outside the city of Manchester. Descriptions such as 'Southern England' or 'Central England' were regarded geographically partially correct, for in these regions this variety can generally rather not be heard. Misidentifications were found in 45.4% of all responses, which comprised all previously unstated denominations. What is more significant, however, is the fact that 28.8% of the informants did not provide any guesses as to the Manchester speaker's regional provenance, which was the highest percentage of all five guises in this connection, indicated by the grey part of the bar in the diagram.

An entirely contrary trend was discerned in the answers with respect to the Standard Scottish English speaker's nationality. A relatively large proportion of 40.8% provided responses which were considered correct, which merely included the label 'Scotland'. Still, this guise only had the third highest recognition rate. Peripherally correct were the labels found in 6.7% of all students, which comprised the 'United Kingdom' and 'Great Britain'. Even though Scotland is geographically located on the largest island of the United Kingdom, i.e. Great Britain, these were regarded too broad, as Standard Scottish English is virtually not encountered outside Scotland. 34.7% of the students misidentified the Scottish guise, whereas 17.8% opted not to answer this question at all.

The near-RP speaker's Austrian origin was correctly recognised by an impressively large faction of 43.6% of all participants, which was the highest recognition rate of all five guises. The labels chosen for inclusion in this category were 'Austria', 'German-speaking countries', 'non-native' and 'Germany'. Of great importance were the peripheral identifications of the near-RP speaker. Given that this guise produced an RP accent with typically Austrian features, it was expected that many misidentified her regional provenance and evaluated her similarly to the native RP speaker. Indeed, the results seem to confirm this assumption, for almost 20% of all students provided such guesses. Included within these were the 'United Kingdom', 'Great Britain', 'England', 'Southern England', 'London', 'Liverpool' and 'Leeds', which were all considered partially correct and can be seen in the diagonally striped part of this speaker's bar in Figure 20. Complete mismatches occurred in 14.4% of all participants, while 23.3% left this item on the questionnaire unanswered.

The Estuary English guise's regional provenance was rightly detected by 9.5% of all participants, which comprised the denominations 'Essex', 'Southern England', 'London' and 'Cockney'. The latter term was included, since some Cockney features have made their way into Estuary English. Most interesting, however, was the fact that 3 out of 326 students identified the speaker's actual place of origin, i.e. Essex. 33.4% of all students' answers were peripherally correct, which contained the labels the 'United Kingdom', 'Great Britain', 'England', the 'Midlands' and 'Cambridge'. Wrong responses were provided by 35.6% of the sample and no answer was given by 21.5% of the participants.

6.10.1. Subject of study-specific recognition rates

In addition to the general recognition rates of the whole sample, also subject of study-dependent recognition rates were determined. Students were grouped into non-English students, beginner English students and advanced English students according to this criterion, as has previously been explained. For every guise, a diagram was created and the corresponding results are discussed below.
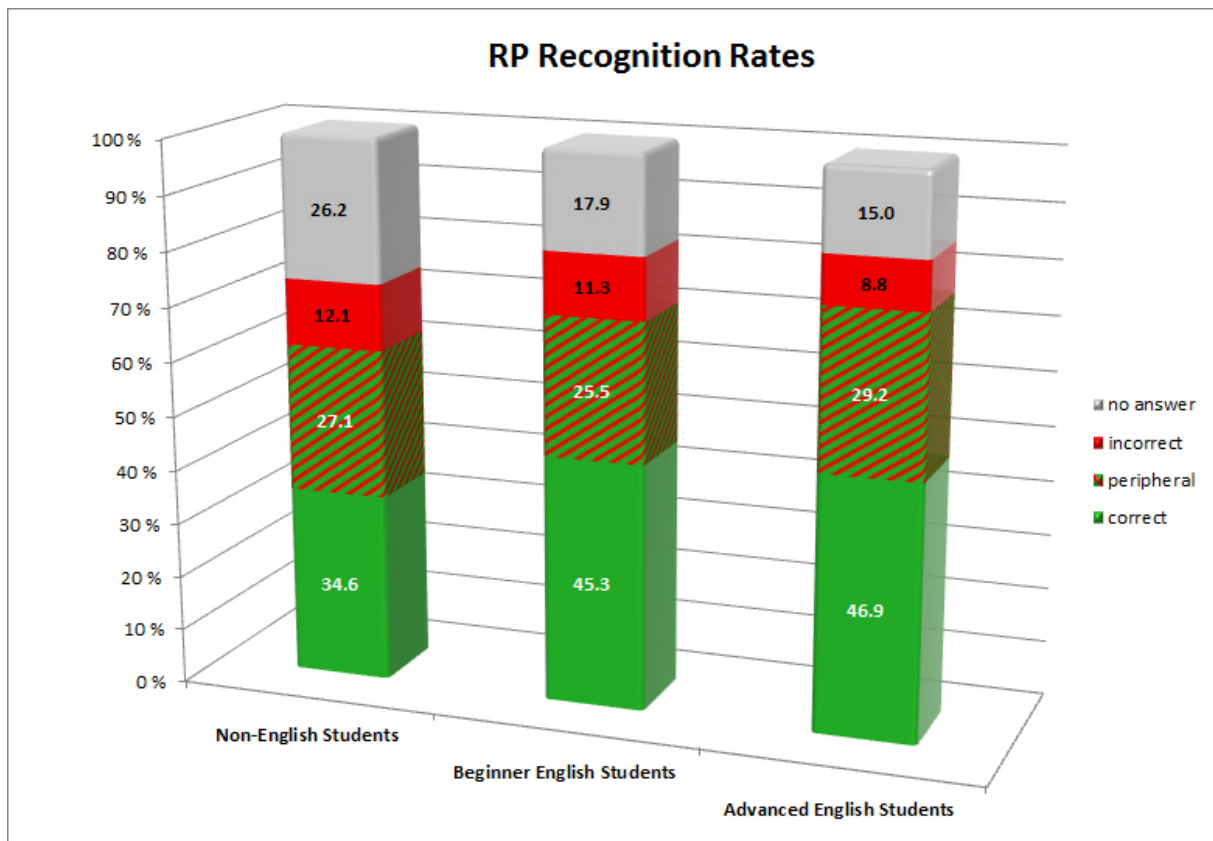
Figure 21. The recognition rates for the RP speaker, dependent on the level of English competence.

A closer look at Figure 21 above reveals noteworthy trends in the three student groups' recognition rates of the RP speaker. Most importantly, the percentages of correct speaker identifications increased with higher English language competence acquired through university education. While 34.6% of the non-English students and 45.3% of the beginner English learners correctly identified the RP guise, the highest identification rate was found among the advanced English students, with a percentage of 46.9%. Secondly, the incorrect answers were, with a percentage of 12.1%, most frequent among the students who did not major in English and least frequent in the responses provided by the advanced English students, of which only 8.8% misidentified the RP speaker. The same trend applied to the

number of students who left this item unanswered. A faction of only 15.0% of the advanced English students provided no guesses as to the speaker's origin, whereas 26.2% of the non-English learners did not answer this item. With a percentage of 17.9%, the number of beginner English students who could not give a response ranged between the other two groups.

The percentages of correct identifications of the Manchester English speaker were utterly low, as a look at Figure 22 below immediately reveals. Among the advanced English learners, 2.7% were capable of recognising this variety, while 1.9% of the non-English and only 0.9% of the beginner English students successfully identified the Manchester accent. Interestingly, the highest percentage of misidentifications was also detected among the advanced English students, indicated by a corresponding percentage of 50.4%. The number of students who did not answer the recognition question seemed to have stood in direct proportion to the English language competence level, i.e. it was lowest among the non-English students and highest among the most highly proficient English learners.
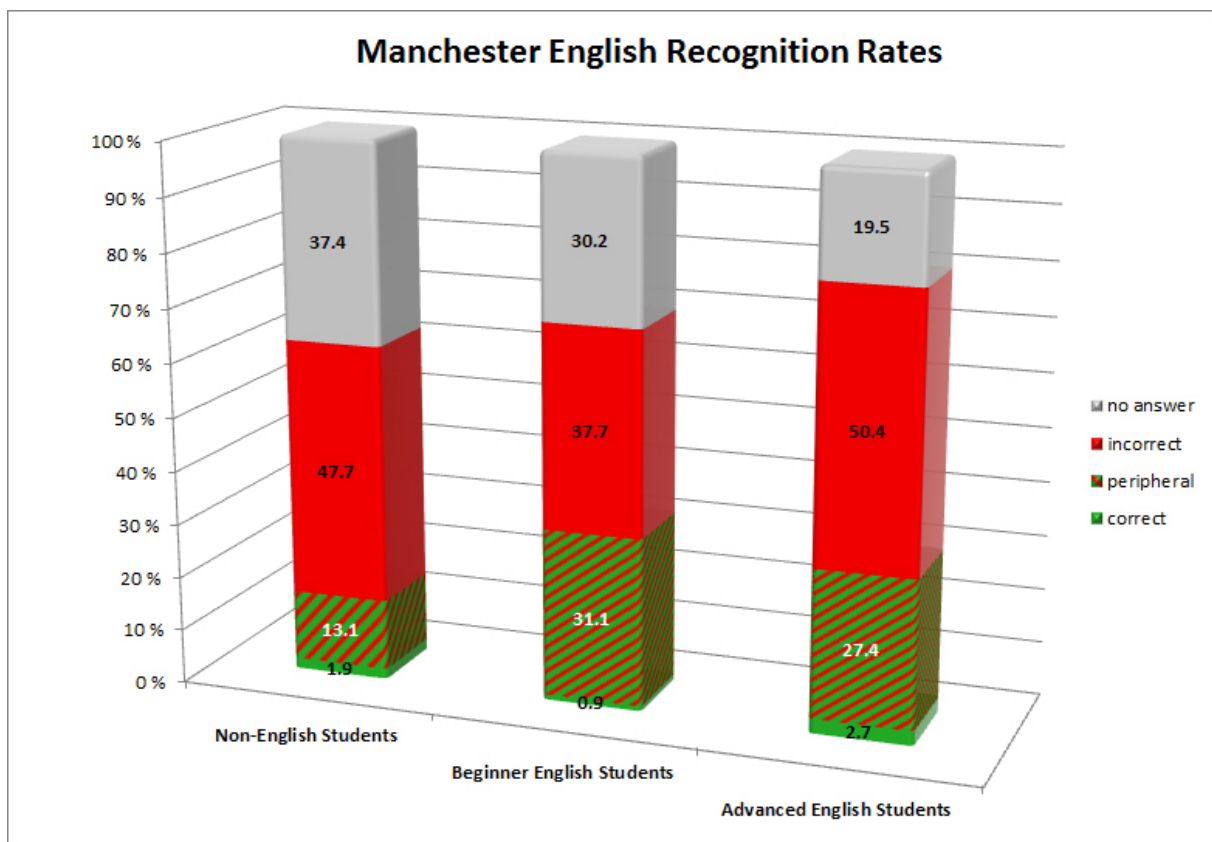
Figure 22. Recognition rates for the Manchester English speaker, dependent on English competence level.

As is visible in Figure 23, the Standard Scottish English accent was generally recognised by great proportions of all three groups. Once again, the highest recognition rate was detected among the advanced English learners, with a percentage of 56.6%. A marginally smaller faction of 45.3% of the beginner English students also correctly identified this guise, while the lowest recognition rate (19.6%) was observed among the students whose principal subject of study did not include English. With reference to the incorrect and unanswered items, the percentages were higher among the non-English students and lower among the advanced English learners, as can be seen in the grey and red parts of the bars in the figure below.
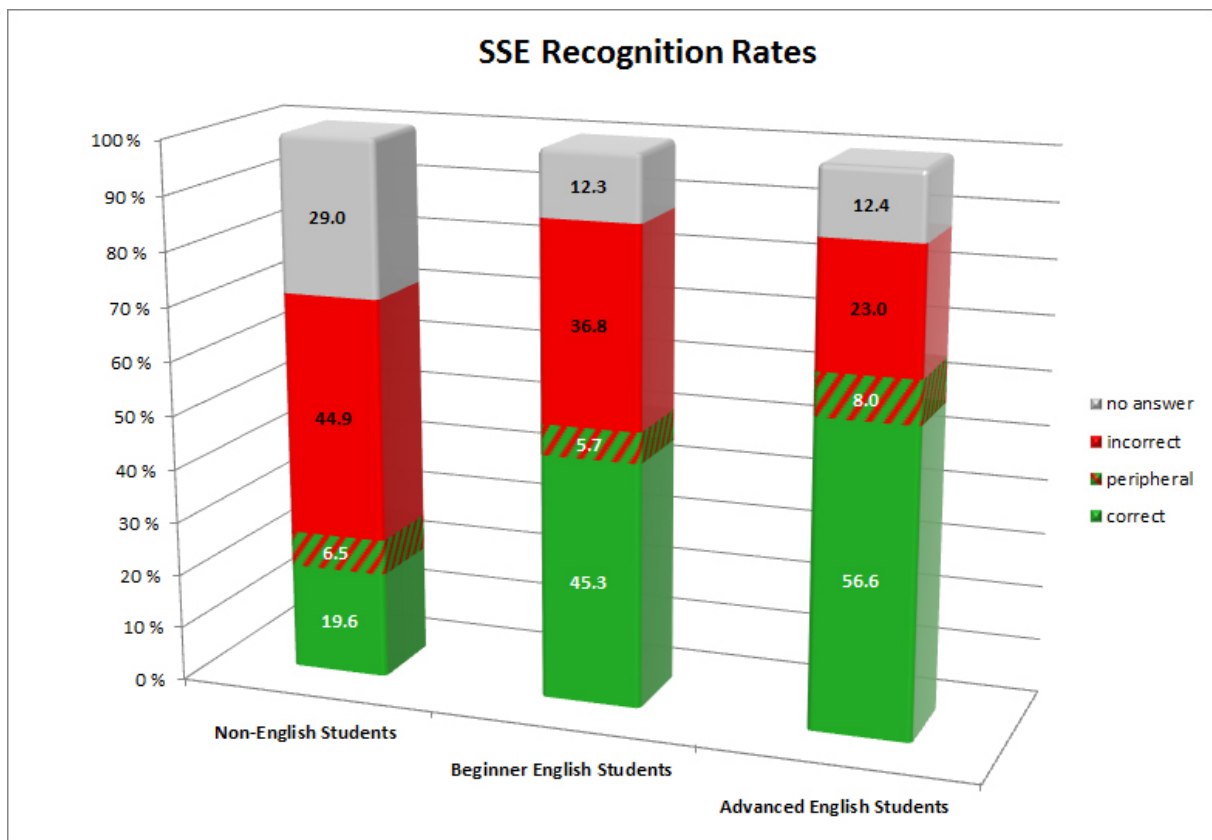
Figure 23. Recognition rates for the SSE speaker, dependent on the students' level of English competence.

A strong effect of English language proficiency was discerned in the cross-student group comparison of identifications of the near-RP speaker (Figure 24). 52.2% of the advanced English-learning participants successfully recognised this person's German language background and the resulting influence on her pronunciation. Amongst the beginner English students the percentage of correct recognitions was considerably high, as is indicated by a percentage of 43.4%. The lowest identification rate, i.e. 34.6%, was calculated for the responses of the non-English students. The same trend was found in the peripheral identifications, which comprised those who thought the speaker stems from England. This

applied to 21.5% of the non-English students, 17.0% of the beginner English students and 17.7% of the advanced English learners. These proportions of the three groups mistook the near-RP speaker for a native English speaker. The absolutely incorrect identifications were most frequently encountered in the answers given by the non-English students. 15.9% of this faction, 15.1% of the beginner English learners and only 12.4% of advanced students entirely misidentified the near-RP speaker. The number of students who did not answer this item was highest among the non-English students and lowest among the advanced English learners, with the percentage among the beginner English students located somewhere in between.
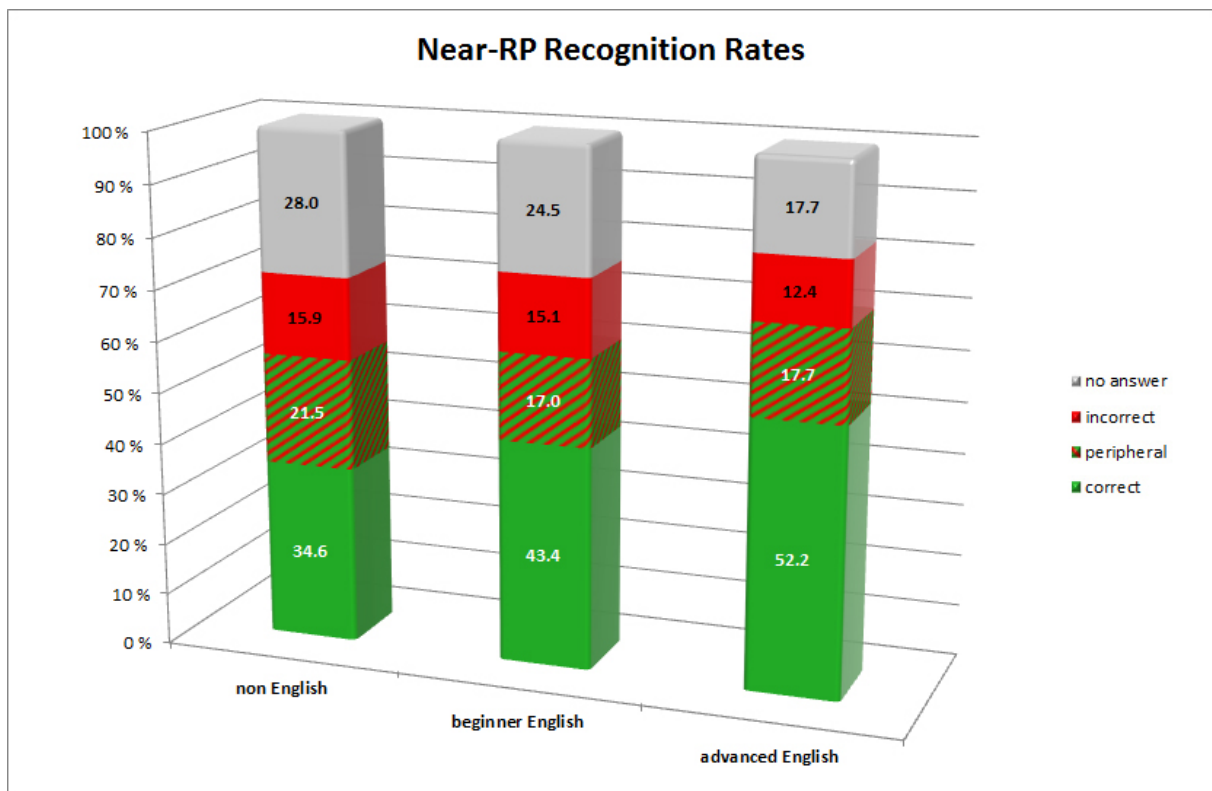
Figure 24. The recognition rates for the Near-RP speaker, dependent on the level of English competence.

Figure 25 on the following page graphically illustrates the identification rates for the Estuary English guise. Comparable to universal trends, this speaker was also most frequently recognised by the advanced English students, with a corresponding percentage of 13.3%. Only 6.5% and 8.5% of the non-English and beginner English students correctly identified this speaker's regional provenance. The percentages of peripherally correct responses were roughly equal among the non-English and beginner English students, yet, with a percentage of 39.8%, considerably higher among the advanced English informants. As can be seen, incorrect answers occurred most often in the beginner English group, with a percentage of 45.3%. Approximately one third of the non-English students and 28.3% of the advanced

English learners provided inaccurate responses. The percentages of answer omissions for this item were roughly equal in both English student groups (17.9% and 18.6%), while, with a percentage of 28.0%, it was almost 10% higher among the non-English students (Figure 25).
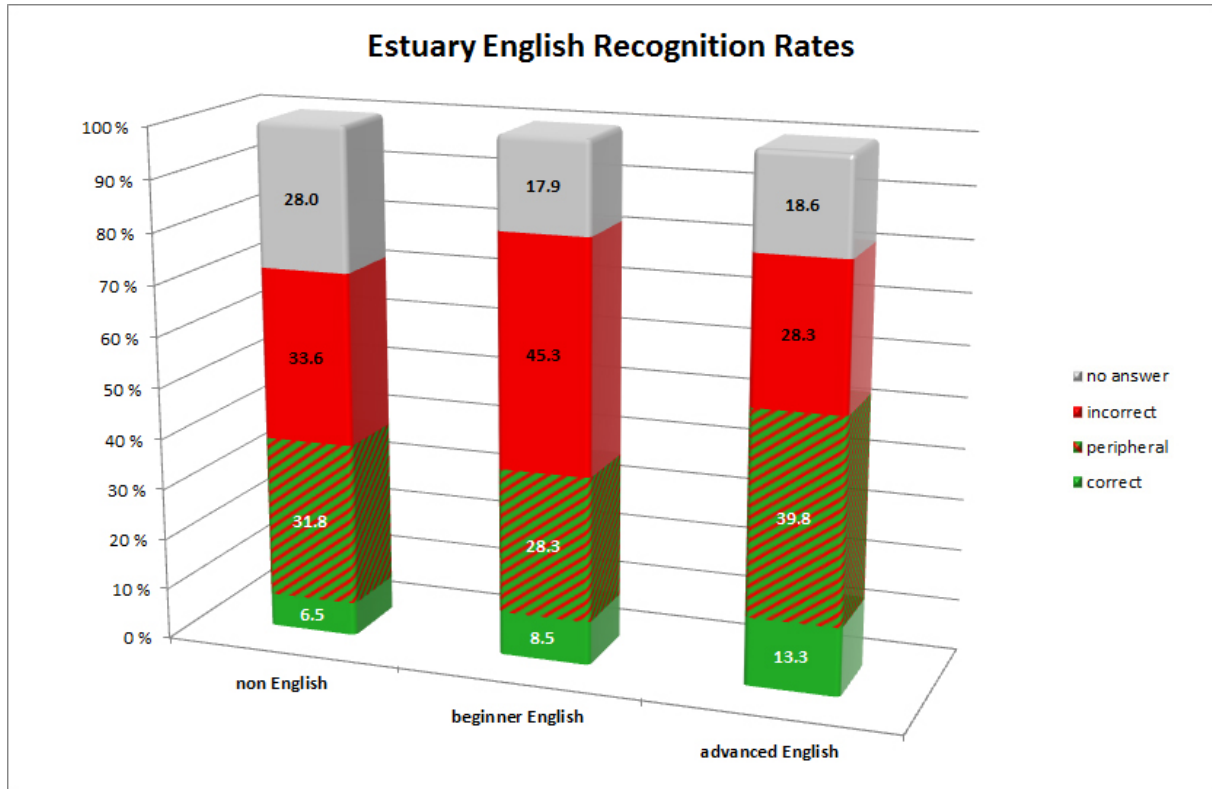
Figure 25. The Estuary English speaker's recognition rates, dependent on the level of English competence.

In all recognition rate comparisons according to English language competence, a general trend was discernible. The correct identifications were most frequently found among the advanced English students and most infrequently detectable in the responses of the non-English students. The correct identification rates pertaining to the beginner English students were found to most often range between the advanced English and the non-English student groups.

6.10.2. Recognition rates dependent on Anglophone experiences abroad

Based on the criteria stated above, the variety recognition rates for all speakers in dependence of Anglophone language experiences abroad were ascertained in due course. The groups selected for analysis were the participants who listed stays abroad and those who had no international English language experience at the time of testing. Figure 26 summarily represents the identification rates of both factions for every guise. In this illustration, the same

colouring scheme as in the previous recognition rate diagrams is made use of, according to which correct (green), incorrect (red), peripheral (green and red diagonal stripes) and answer omissions (grey) can be distinguished. The labels 'yes' and 'no' for each speaker refer to the presence or absence of students' stays abroad.

The RP speaker was recognised as a representative of this variety by 47.5% of the students who possessed Anglophone experience abroad, whilst the recognition among the participants who had never visited Anglophone nations was only 37.3%. The discrepancy between these factions is considerable, given that among the internationally experienced students 10.2% more correct identifications were found. In respect of the peripherally correct answers, 30.0% of the experienced students provided such responses, opposed to only 24.7% of their inexperienced colleagues. The numbers of incorrect answers and missing responses, on the other hand, were lower among the participants who enjoyed stays abroad, as is indicated by the red and grey sections of the bars corresponding to the RP speaker in the diagram.
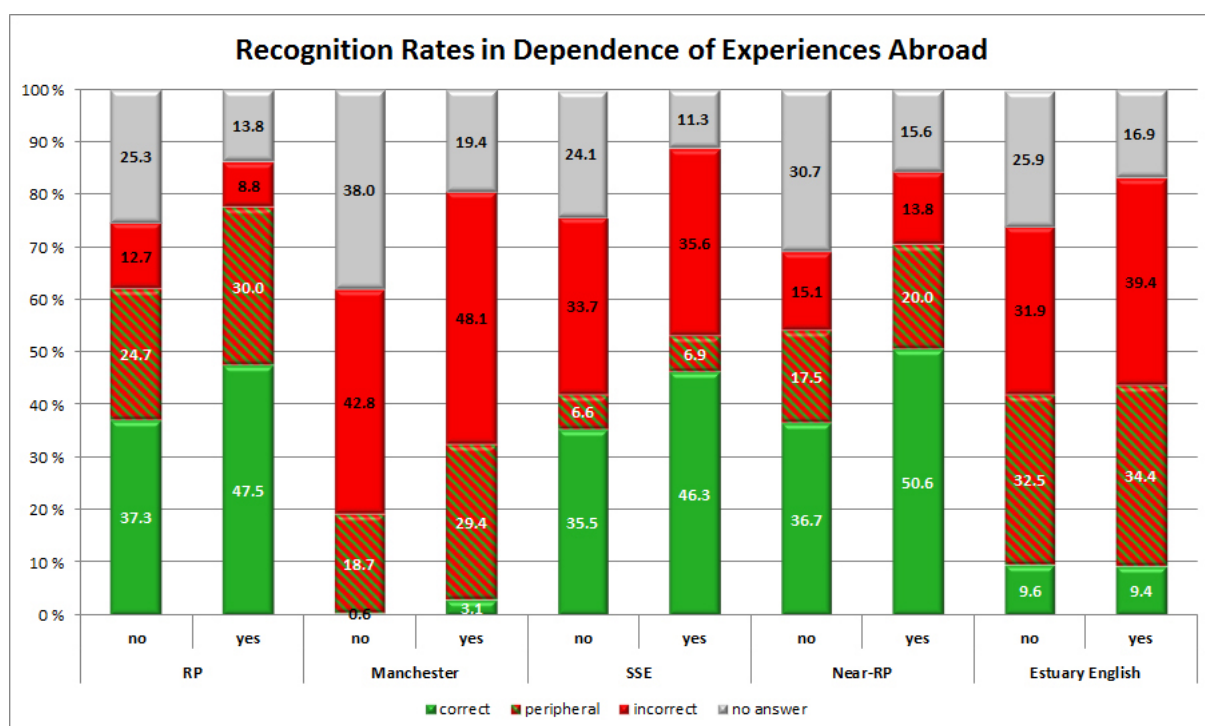
Figure 26. Recognition rates, dependent on students' language experiences in the English-speaking world.

The Manchester English speaker, whose recognition rate was generally lower, was correctly identified by 3.1% of the students in possession of Anglophone language experiences abroad, whereas only 0.6% of the internationally inexperienced participants provided correct answers. In addition, with a percentage of 29.4% the number of peripherally correct answers was

higher among the former when contrasted with the latter, for whom a peripheral recognition rate of 18.7% was calculated. Interestingly, the incorrect responses were also 5.3% higher among the experienced informants, while the number of omitted answers was higher among the inexperienced respondents (Figure 26).

With a correct hit rate of 46.3% for the Standard Scottish English speaker in the internationally experienced group, this rate was found to be 10.8% higher in comparison with their inexperienced colleagues. With a mere difference of 0.3%, the percentages of peripherally correct identifications are circa equal. Among the students who had already spent time abroad in English-speaking regions, the number of incorrect responses was also higher (35.6%), albeit only by 1.9%. Only 11.3% of those who travelled to English-speaking countries, however, left this item unanswered, while a total of 24.1% of the inexperienced students did so.

For the near-RP speaker, correct identifications were found in minimally over one half of the students who enjoyed stays abroad. In contrast, only 36.7% of the inexperienced participants recognised this speaker's Austrian origin. 20.0% of those possessing international English language experience identified this speaker's language background as English, whereas only 17.5% of their counterparts did so. With a difference of only 1.3%, more incorrect answers were detected in the responses of the inexperienced group. Yet, almost twice as many students (30.7%) who lacked substantial English language experience abroad left the recognition item unanswered.

Of all five guises, the differences with respect to Anglophone language experiences abroad were least pronounced in the recognition rates of the Estuary English speaker. In this connection, more correct identifications were found among the students who had never travelled to English-speaking countries (9.6%), albeit the difference was merely 0.2%. The percentages of peripheral identifications were relatively equal among both groups, i.e. 32.2% and 33.8% respectively. Inaccurate responses were found in 40.0% of those who visited English-speaking regions, while only 31.9% of the inexperienced faction provided wrong responses. With a percentage of 25.9%, missing answers were more frequent in the former group than among the responses of the latter (16.9%).

Observable in almost all international English language experience-related recognition rates for the speakers was the tendency that more correct identifications were found in the answers of the students who spent time in Anglophone regions.

6.10.3. General recognition rates and their effect on the evaluations of attitude dimensions

In the following stage, the effect of the recognition rates on the students' evaluations towards the language varieties will be examined. Given that the number of correct identifications for the Manchester (only 6 out of 326 people) and the Estuary English (31 out of 326 participants) speakers were very low, a comparison of these versus all who were incapable of right identification could have produced results of questionable validity. In the recognition rates for the RP, the Standard Scottish English and the near-RP guises, the relation between correct identifications and all inaccurate responses was more evenly balanced. Thus, these three varieties were chosen for a more thorough investigation of the influence the recognition rates exerted upon the speakers' attitudinal scores. Included in the inaccurate responses were all who either incorrectly or peripherally identified the speakers' origin, as well as those who left the item unanswered. The rationale for the inclusion of those who did not provide answers was that the participants were explicitly instructed to leave Item 2 (Part II) unanswered if they had absolutely no clue in this respect. Hence, it has to be concluded that missing responses occurred only in cases where the students did not know the answer.

Table 6 details the recognition-dependent mean evaluations of the RP speaker in all six attitude dimensions measured in the study.

Table 6. Recognition-dependent attitude evaluations of the RP speaker.

	Attitude Dimension Evaluations of the RP Speaker					
Recognition	**Status & Competence**	**Integrity**	**Sociability**	**Pronunciation**	**Friend**	**News Reader Suitability**
correct	2.180	1.934	1.583	2.730	1.450	6.530
inaccurate	2.127	1.913	1.520	2.710	1.470	5.784

As is immediately apparent by a look at the above table, the RP speaker was across all attitudinal dimensions, except for friendship compatibility, more highly evaluated by the participants who correctly identified this speaker in terms of regional provenance. In the

friend dimension, however, the students who did not succeed in recognising the RP guise awarded her a marginally better score of 1.47, compared to the 1.45 she obtained from those who correctly identified her. In order to determine whether any of these differences occurred non-coincidentally, the values were subsequently tested for statistical significance through an independent means t-test. This procedure revealed one statistically significant difference in the RP guise's perceived news reader suitability ($p < 0.001$). With a mean rating of 6.53, this speaker received a better mean evaluation by the students who correctly recognised her than by those who failed to do so, which is reflected in this group's overall score of only 5.78.

Table 7 below demonstrates the evaluative differences between the two factions with respect to the Standard Scottish English guise.

Table 7. Recognition-dependent attitude evaluations of the Standard Scottish English speaker.

| Recognition | Attitude Dimension Evaluations of the SSE Speaker | | | | | |
	Status & Competence	Integrity	Sociability	Pronunciation	Friend	News Reader Suitability
correct	1.554	2.036	2.205	1.650	2.060	4.429
inaccurate	1.616	1.806	1.987	1.640	1.650	3.866

Table reveals two obvious trends. Firstly, in the integrity, sociability, pronunciation, friend and news caster aptitude dimensions, the Standard Scottish English guise received more favourable evaluations by the informants who detected her Scottish accent. Secondly, this speaker was afforded a higher status and competence by the students who were incapable of correctly identifying this guise. When these data were subjected to statistical significance tests, four non-coincidental evaluative discrepancies were found. With a significance value of $p < 0.001$, the Scottish accent was statistically divergently perceived by these two groups with regard to integrity, which is reflected in the mean evaluations of the factions. Whereas the respondents who correctly identified her (intended) Scottish background awarded her an overall score of 2.04, she only obtained a mean rating of 1.81 among the participants who could not recognise her. With an average evaluation of 2.21 in terms of the sociability dimension, the Scottish English speaker was significantly better ($p = 0.001$) evaluated by the students who correctly identified her than by those who failed to do so. From the latter, this guise only received a mean evaluation of 1.99. A significant difference ($p < 0.001$) was also discerned in the friend dimension, where the correctly responding students awarded her a mean of 2.06 and those who misidentified the speaker an average of only 1.65. Eventually,

also a significant evaluation difference (p = 0.031) was found in the news reader suitability dimension. Here, the guise obtained a higher mean rating by the judges who successfully recognised her (M = 4.43) than by the participants who were unable to do so (M = 3.87).

An analogous procedure was moreover performed for the recognition-dependent evaluations of the Austrian near-RP speaker. Table 8 contrasts the mean values of those who correctly identified this speaker's regional provenance with the average scores of the students who misidentified her.

Table 8. Recognition-dependent attitude evaluations of the near-RP speaker.

Recognition	Attitude Dimension Evaluations of the Near-RP Speaker					
	Status & Competence	Integrity	Sociability	Pronunciation	Friend	News Reader Suitability
correct	1.921	2.063	1.482	2.270	1.820	4.996
inaccurate	2.235	2.119	1.692	2.520	1.920	6.541

The results of Table 8 indicate that the non-native RP speaker was less favourably evaluated throughout all attitude dimensions by the students who recognised her German language background, when contrasted with those who inaccurately identified her. A test for statistical significance revealed that the divergences in four of these dimensions were non-coincidental. This, first of all, applies to the status and competence dimension (p < 0.001), where an evaluative cross-group difference of more than 0.31 occurred. Sociability-wise, the discrepancy ($M_{correct}$ = 1.48 vs. $M_{inaccurate}$ = 1.69) was also found to be statistically significant, given that p = 0.002. As far as this speaker's pronunciation is concerned, the two groups' evaluations differed significantly (p = 0.002), which was reflected in their respective mean evaluations of 2.27 among the students who correctly identified her and 2.52 among the inaccurately responding participants. The last significance (p < 0.001) was determined in the near-RP speaker's news caster suitability evaluations, where the guise received only 5.00 points on average by those students who recognised her Austrian background and a total of 6.54 points by those who misinterpreted her accent.

In connection with the results corresponding to the near-RP speaker, another question was chosen for investigation. Of special interest was a contrastive analysis of mean evaluations of this guise between the students who identified her German language background correctly and those respondents who mistook her for a native RP English speaker. In the previous analysis,

this group was subsumed under inaccurate identifications, whereas henceforth it will be examined separately from the incorrect identifications and answer omissions. The results this comparison brought about can summarily be seen in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Attitudinal evaluations of the near-RP speaker as German speaker, as opposed to an L1 variety.

Recognition	Attitude Dimension Evaluations of the Near-RP Speaker					
	Status & Competence	Integrity	Sociability	Pronunciation	Friend	News Reader Suitability
as AUT/GER	1.921	2.063	1.482	2.270	1.820	4.996
as native ENG	2.359	2.161	1.775	2.590	2.020	7.327

This contrastive analysis unveiled even more pronounced differences between the groups who thought the near-RP speaker was German or Austrian (or non-native) and those who considered her a native English speaker. As the table clearly shows, the latter faction provided this guise disproportionately high mean scores in all six dimensions tested in the study. In comparison with the results detailed in Table 8 and the concomitant significances, the data presented in Table 9 yielded altogether five statistically relevant differences between the groups when an independent means t-test was conducted. Implied by an overall rating of 2.36 in the status and competence dimension, students who mistakenly identified the near-RP speaker as a native RP English speaker evaluated this guise significantly higher ($p < 0.001$) than the participants who correctly recognised the speaker, from whom the near-RP guise obtained only 1.92 points on average. In the sociability dimension, the variety representative was rated significantly less favourably ($p = 0.001$) by the students who recognised her (M = 1.48), than by those who failed to do so (M = 1.78). The same trend also applies to the speaker's pronunciation, which was significantly ($p = 0.005$) more highly rated by the participants who correctly identified her German influence on her pronunciation (M = 2.27) than by those who thought her to be a native RP speaker (M = 2.59). In respect of the friend dimension, the informants who rightly recognised the speaker's country of origin evaluated her less favourably by tendency ($p = 0.068$) with a mean rating of 1.82, than the students to whom the Austrian guise appeared to be an English native speaker. The latter awarded her 2.02 points on average. A large statistically significant discrepancy ($p < 0.001$) was observed in the near-RP speaker's ratings in the overall news reader aptitude dimension. Whereas this guise received a 7.33 mean rating from the group that considered the guise a native English speaker, the students who were capable of identifying her true origin provided her an average

evaluation of merely 5.00 points. This suggests a difference of more than 2.33 points, although one has to bear in mind that a ten point scale was employed for measurement.

Across the board, it was demonstrated that the correct recognition or the misidentification affects the attitudes of the informants towards the five guises. The corresponding evaluative differences were most pronounced in the attitudes towards the native and the near-RP speaker. The former was in virtually all dimensions evaluated more positively by the students who correctly recognised the variety. The latter was always rated far more positively by those who misidentified her and considered her to be a native English speaker than by the respondents who recognised her German language background.

6.11. Evaluating the success of the matched-guise technique

In order to assess the general successfulness of the matched-guise technique, a statistical method known as Euclidean distances was utilised. This measure is capable of capturing similarities or dissimilarities in the evaluations of the five guises, relative to each other. Using the data from the whole sample group, attitudinal differences towards all varieties in all dimensions were added up and put in relation with each other. Thereby it became feasible to examine whether the participants evaluated the stimulus recordings respective of the speaker who produced the recordings or whether the influence of the pronunciation features of the variety itself prevailed in their attitude judgements. That means, if the presence of striking similarities in the evaluations of the RP, the Standard Scottish English and the Estuary English guises were discovered, which were spoken by the same person, it can be assumed that these three accents were associated with one speaker. If that were actually the case, the implementation of this technique were of questionable reliability, since individual-related parameters such as voice quality, pitch, rhythm or voice level would have acted as the basis for valuation on the part of the students, and not the specific phonological characteristics of the five accents. If, however, disparate Euclidean distances occurred, the results can be regarded as evidence for the successful employment of the matched-guise technique.

Table 10 on the next page represents the five guises' Euclidean distances between one another in the status and competence dimension (therein abbreviated to 'S/C'). It has to be stressed that smaller values in the following tables point to great evaluative similarity for a speaker combination.

Table 10. Approximation matrix for the five guises in the status and competence dimension.

	Euclidean Distance				
	RP - S/C	Man - S/C	SSE - S/C	N-RP - S/C	EE - S/C
RP - S/C	.000	**20.873**	15.287	**11.470**	14.297
Man - S/C	**20.873**	.000	14.049	20.532	16.295
SSE - S/C	15.287	14.049	.000	15.893	12.279
N-RP - S/C	**11.470**	20.532	15.893	.000	15.260
EE - S/C	14.297	16.295	12.279	15.260	.000

This is a dissimilarity matrix.

As is immediately apparent, the ratings of the native RP speaker and the near-RP speaker bear most resemblance to each other, which is recognisable by the smallest value of the table, i.e. 11.47, when rounded to two decimal places. This suggests that these two speakers were evaluated most analogically by the sample group in this dimension. The highest value of Table 10 occurs in the distances between the native RP and the Manchester English speakers, which suggests that the ratings of these two speakers were most different in the status and competence dimension. With a Euclidean distance of 20.53, the dissimilarity in the scores between the near-RP and the Manchester English speakers was comparatively high.

Table 11 shows the speakers' Euclidean distances in relation to one another in the integrity dimension (abbreviated to 'I'). As was already observed in the status and competence dimension, the most striking evaluative similitude was identified between the scores of the native RP and the near-RP speakers, indicated by a value of 10.73. In strong opposition to this trend, were the divergent integrity ratings of the Standard Scottish English guise and the near-RP speaker, as is suggested by a Euclidean distance of 13.90.

Table 11. Approximation matrix for the five guises in the integrity dimension.

	Euclidean Distance				
	RP - I	Man - I	SSE - I	N-RP - I	EE - I
RP - I	.000	12.760	12.393	**10.729**	12.378
Man - I	12.760	.000	12.432	12.840	12.999
SSE - I	12.393	12.432	.000	**13.895**	10.872
N-RP - I	**10.729**	12.840	**13.895**	.000	13.373
EE - I	12.378	12.999	10.872	13.373	.000

This is a dissimilarity matrix.

With reference to sociability, which appears as 'S' in the Table 12 below, entirely different trends were discernible. With a Euclidean distance of 32.82, the greatest evaluative discrepancy was detected between the ratings of the Manchester English and the Estuary English speaker. The smallest value was found between the sociability scores of the Standard Scottish English and the Estuary English speaker, which portends relatively homogenous evaluations between these varieties.

Table 12. Approximation matrix for the five guises in the sociability dimension.

	Euclidean Distance				
	RP - S	Man - S	SSE - S	N-RP -S	EE - S
RP - S	.000	19.648	16.275	13.463	19.347
Man - S	19.648	.000	28.332	21.519	**32.823**
SSE - S	16.275	28.332	.000	17.766	**11.914**
N-RP - S	13.463	21.519	17.766	.000	20.194
EE - S	19.347	**32.823**	**11.914**	20.194	.000

This is a dissimilarity matrix.

The differences in the friend dimension ('F') are illustrated by the help of Table 13 below. High-degree similarities were discovered between two speaker combinations. Firstly, a Euclidean distance of 17.46 revealed great congruence in the participants' evaluations of the Standard Scottish English and the Estuary English guises. Secondly, a minimally higher value of 17.75 between the scores of the Manchester English and the native RP speakers deserves special mention. This indicates that these two varieties, spoken by two different people, were highly analogically evaluated by the whole sample group as well. On the other hand, the greatest discrepancy in terms of the evaluations in the friend dimension was found between the Estuary English and the Manchester English speaker, which implies that differentiated ratings were awarded to these two speakers by the students.

Table 13. Approximation matrix for the five guises in the friend dimension.

	Euclidean Distance				
	RP - F	Man - F	SSE - F	N-RP - F	EE - F
RP - F	.000	17.748	20.149	18.682	20.273
Man - F	**17.748**	.000	21.048	20.199	**21.772**
SSE - F	20.149	21.048	.000	21.095	**17.464**
D - F	18.682	20.199	21.095	.000	20.298
E - F	20.273	**21.772**	**17.464**	20.298	.000

This is a dissimilarity matrix.

Table 14 overviews the Euclidean distances calculated for the pronunciation dimension ('P'). Comparable to the patterns found in the status and competence dimension and in the integrity ratings, a value of 16.46 indicates that the native RP and the near-RP speakers were rated in accordance with each other also as far as pronunciation was concerned. Conversely, the greatest difference between students' evaluations was identifiable in the scores of the Manchester and the native RP accents, which is implied by a Euclidean distance of 29.00.

Table 14. Approximation matrix for the five guises in respect of pronunciation.

	Euclidean Distance				
	RP - P	Man - P	SSE - P	N-RP - P	EE - P
RP - P	.000	**29.000**	26.179	**16.462**	18.547
Man - P	**29.000**	.000	20.019	25.962	23.854
SSE - P	26.179	20.019	.000	23.391	21.009
N-RP - P	**16.462**	25.962	23.391	.000	19.105
EE - P	18.547	23.854	21.009	19.105	.000

This is a dissimilarity matrix.

The last dimension according to which the sample group was requested to rate the five accents was the speaker's perceived news reader suitability (abbreviated to 'NRS' in Table 15). All differences here are greater than in the previous five dimensions, which is due to the employment of a ten point scale for that item on the questionnaire. A look at Table 15 reveals that the highest degree of similitude was found in the ratings of the Standard Scottish English and the Manchester English speakers. The Euclidean distance between these two accents amounted to 52.94. In stark contrast, a considerably higher discrepancy of 78.52 was detected in the news caster suitability scores of the near-RP and the Manchester English speakers, which is suggestive of extremely disparate scores in terms of pronunciation.

Table 15. News reader suitability approximation matrix for the five guises.

	Euclidean Distance				
	RP - NRS	Man - NRS	SSE - NRS	N-RP - NRS	EE - NRS
RP - NRS	.000	77.470	63.668	57.393	56.276
Man - NRS	77.470	.000	**52.937**	**78.516**	73.163
SSE - NRS	63.668	**52.937**	.000	67.120	55.854
N-RP - NRS	57.393	**78.516**	67.120	.000	62.032
EE - NRS	56.276	73.163	55.854	62.032	.000

This is a dissimilarity matrix.

The above results are altogether testament to the fact that the closest similarities in the ratings in the individual attitude dimensions occurred in varying combinations of the guises. The most remarkable peculiarity was the unexpectedly high congruence in the evaluations of both RP variants, produced by two persons, across the status and competence, the integrity and the pronunciation dimensions. This was additionally supported by the identification of similarities and dissimilarities between differing pairs of guises in the remaining dimensions.

7. Discussion

Finally, the results obtained through this empirical study will be interpreted and their relevance in relation to other language attitude research projects will be elaborated on. Its significance as the potential basis of follow-up investigations will moreover be one of the foci of discussion at this stage. In order to facilitate the readability and comprehensibility of the forthcoming argumentations, the general structure underlying this chapter adheres to the organisation of the research hypotheses.

7.1. Character trait dimensions

Much of the language attitude measurement research available so far, was unquestioningly and uncritically premised on bipartite character trait divisions. In this process, such models were ascribed a varying number of traits according to face validity, which oftentimes were not even subjected to statistical scientific investigation. Ball (1983), McKenzie (2010) and Plot (2005), amongst others, are scholars who proposed a general distinction between competence and solidarity traits, in which competence and status elements are mingled into one set of variables that together oppose the solidarity dimension. In contrast to this method of classification, Zahn and Hopper (1985) identified three groups of character traits, i.e. dynamism, superiority, and attractiveness. Researchers such as Garret et al. (2003: 106), Dalton Puffer et al. (1997: 126) and Robert McKenzie (2010: 104-105) argue that Zahn and Hopper's scheme can further be condensed into two salient categories of evaluation. In order to counteract the potentially ensuing contradictions and the lack of conceptual clarity, the present study made use of a factor-analytical validation of the attitude dimensions. For this purpose, 16 character traits frequently employed in the existent literature were selected and the students' responses to these were in due course submitted to a data reduction process. The results of this intercorrelative data matrix indicated the presence of a threefold attitude dimension model within students' answers. That means, the alternative research hypothesis H_1-I, which postulates a twofold structure, has to be rejected in favour of a tripartite conception of the traits relevant to language attitudes. The largest factor extracted in this process comprised, alongside competence variables such as intelligence, also status elements, such as urbaneness and was therefore entitled status and competence. In this respect, the respondents did not distinguish between these two types, but rather blended features of both

and evaluated them as one entity. Therefore, this factor is comparable to the general competence dimension identified in the aforementioned research projects. The second largest component consists of the attitude dimension integrity, which was proven to consist of attributes such as trustworthiness, sensitiveness or reliability. This dimension corresponds in high measure to the general solidarity dimension found in related studies. Furthermore, the evidence generated by statistical analysis procedures verified the existence of a third dimension within the participants' evaluations, here referred to as sociability. While the present classification scheme is altogether to some extent in accordance with the findings of Zahn and Hopper (1985), it has to be noted that significant differences still persist.

In the discussion of the three factors extracted in this empirical study, additional mention has to be made of the fact that a total of 16 personality features underlay Item 1 (Part I), while other language attitude examinations are usually grounded on eight to ten character traits. Robert McKenzie (2010), for example, employed only eight adjectives, from which he extracted two sets of variables, i.e. social attractiveness and competence. In the present study twice as many traits were incorporated, which might have affected the number of dimensions identified.

In contrast to the previously outlined suggestion by Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997), McKenzie (2010) and Garret et al. (2003), the present factor-analytical results give no compelling reason to reduce the dimensions into a twofold attitudinal model. This would lead to a substantial loss of information and to a large-scale distortion of the attitudinal perspectives. In view of the fact that this statistically sound method allowed for the identification of the most objective parameters possible, the factor-analytical approach to attitude dimension validation has proved to be successful. This method can thus be recommended for future research within this subject area.

7.2. General variety evaluations

Resting upon the principal component analysis results, the status and competence, integrity and sociability attitudes of the whole sample towards the five language varieties were ascertained. This was supplemented by evaluations of all respondents' perceptions with respect to the speakers' pronunciation, their friendship capability and their perceived overall news reader suitability.

A notable association of the RP accent with high levels of status and competence was discernible in the data generated by the present study. This conclusion is congruent with the findings of Hans Ladegaard in 1998, who investigated the language attitudes of 96 Danish secondary school pupils and students at university. He found that RP was regarded superior on competence scales and those relating to this speaker's language use (1998: 258).

The results obtained by Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997: 121), which indicated a preference in favour of native speakers and especially for RP can very generally be confirmed here. This effect, however, seems to have been present only to a minimal extent, given that the near-RP accent produced by an Austrian speaker received almost equally favourable evaluations in most dimensions tested. Already in terms of status and competence, which is typically associated with L1 RP variants, the Austrian speaker came close to matching the native RP guise.

The preference for native RP proved to be more marked in the students' answers in terms of pronunciation, where the L1 RP guise was dominant. Moreover, the above observation made by Dalton-Puffer and her colleagues in 1997, can be confirmed through the speakers' mean news reader suitability evaluations in the present study. The native RP speaker clearly tops this category, well before the near-RP and the Estuary English varieties. The strong association between RP and the language use in public media has a long, intertwined historical tradition. The use of this accent within the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) contributed in large measure to its dissemination, due to the BBC's exclusive selection of RP speakers from the 1920s onwards (Honey 1989: 31). This reasonably consistent pronunciation was hence employed by English news announcers on channels such as Radio 3, Radio 4 and the BBC television news and the World Service of the BBC (Roach 2008: 6-7). As a result, some researchers, such as Peter Roach, even prefer to label it BBC accent. It was not until the recent past that more regional and more localised varieties have made their way into these media, as applies among others to the BBC (Roach 2008: 6). Given this policy change within the company, Wells (1999) considers the propagated abandonment of the term RP inappropriate. Nevertheless, the effects of the dominating position occupied by the RP accent are omnipresent, insofar as this variety has not solely been brought into the awareness of L1 speakers, but also into that of Austrian EFL learners, as the data suggests. It can thus be

assumed that this factor continues to play a pivotal role in the news caster suitability evaluations.

On the other hand, the near-RP speaker with an Austrian background received the most favourable evaluations with respect to integrity from the student population under investigation. This dimension comprises mostly solidarity traits such as friendliness, reliability or trustworthiness. In view of the fact that non-native students evaluated a non-native RP variety, with the employment of pronunciation characteristics similar to their own, there is reason to believe that the participants' potentially subconscious closeness and similarity to this accent accounted for this result. A similar conclusion was drawn by Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997: 126), who argue that their study participants generally preferred the varieties with which they were most familiar. Given the high recognition rate of the Austrian near-RP speaker and the concomitant evaluation phenomena in the present study, which will be discussed in more detail below, the data suggests that this familiarity must be embedded at a subconscious level.

In the sociability dimension consisting of dynamism and communicative skills, the Estuary English guise obtained the highest overall rating. This finding is surprising indeed, given that through a study conducted in 1994, David Rosewarne came to the conclusion that "Estuary English is not rated very highly internationally" (1994a: 8). This statement has been shown not to generally apply to the non-native student population examined in the course of this investigation. While in most dimensions the Estuary English guise trails behind both RP versions, it dominates with respect to sociability. As there exists relatively little empirical research on language attitudes towards Estuary English, yet it still enjoys significance in linguistics, further investigations in this area would be desirable.

In respect of the extraverted communicative skills, captured by the sociability dimension, the Standard Scottish English guise was also eminently highly evaluated. This result conforms to a trend McKenzie (2010: 56) describes, who explains that in an L1 – L1 context within Great Britain this accent is relatively highly evaluated. In an L1 – non-native context, Ladegaard (1998: 265) found that Scottish English received positive ratings in solidarity dimensions. Both claims can here be confirmed also in an L1 – EFL Austrian context, pertaining especially to sociability and less markedly also to the integrity dimension, as defined in this thesis.

As for the friend dimension, the Austrian near-RP variant has been awarded the highest rating, before the Standard Scottish English and the Estuary English guises. The preference among the Austrian student population for the near-RP speaker seems to exist independently from all other dimensions, except for integrity. Also here, the subconscious phonological familiarity with the Austrian RP pronunciation through the education system might influence the high-degree friendship compatibility attested to the speaker.

Altogether, the five guises were perceived and evaluated highly differently both at the individual character trait as well as at the dimensional level, as is suggested by the alternative hypothesis H_1-II. Therefore, this hypothesis can be confirmed through the data.

7.3. Evaluations dependent on moderating variables

In the first step of the parameter-dependent analysis, the effect of the informants' English language competence on their attitudinal judgements was the subject of inspection. In accordance with this moderating variable, the sample was divided into non-English, beginner English and advanced English students, on the assumption that more English-related academic training leads to higher English language competence. The impact of present or absent language proficiency was best discernible in the status and competence evaluations of the non-native near-RP speaker. While students whose skills did not exceed B2 level ascribed this variety the highest status and competence, the beginner English students evaluated this non-native accent significantly more negatively in this respect. The near-RP speaker obtained the lowest rating in this dimension from the group with the highest language competence. This proficiency-related evaluation phenomenon could underlie two possible explanations. Firstly, the familiarity among the non-English students with this variety, which is commonly encountered in the Austrian school system, might have been the cause for a better evaluation. Secondly, more English language proficiency amongst those who major in English also leads to more pronounced skills that allow for a better differentiation between non-native and native varieties. In contrast, this cannot be assumed for the non-English students.

In the integrity dimension, more negative evaluations of the Standard Scottish and the Estuary English guises by the non-English students were observed. Both accents contain pronunciation characteristics, which are not present in the English language used in schools in Austria. Therefore, these features seemed to be hardly localisable for this faction. The lack of

familiarity, which is grounded on a distance between their own language model acquired through education and the perceived stimulus, might exert a negative effect on the evaluation in this emotional and personal dimension. Both groups whose main subject included English were capable of classifying these varieties as correct and authentic, which seemed beneficial for more favourable integrity evaluations.

In connection to the communicative and dynamic aspects integral to the sociability dimension, statistically relevant differences were most distinctly recognisable in the judgements on the near-RP variety. The non-English students provided the Austrian RP form a higher evaluation when compared with those who major in English. Whereas identical overall scores in both English language student groups were calculated, the contingently subconscious identification among the non-English students with their own English language model could constitute the basis for this proportionally high evaluation. In contrast, all factions uniformly provided the Estuary English guise the highest sociability ratings, pursued somewhat distantly by the Standard Scottish English accent. This evaluation phenomenon could have the following explanations. The absence of characteristic regional pronunciation features in the cases of the native RP accent and also in less dramatic degree for the near-RP speaker, who only makes use of some Austrian characteristics, might account for the perception of less dynamic quality among the test subjects. Conversely, the presence of prominent pronunciation characteristics, such as the /r/ realisation as alveolar taps in SSE and some diphthong shifts typical for the London area found in Estuary English, could give the students the impression that dynamism and extrovertly communicative aspects are existent in these language varieties, thereby causing more favourable sociability attitudes.

In the assessment of the five guises' pronunciation, a general tendency towards more positive evaluations among the non-English students of all speakers, except for the Manchester English distractor, could be identified. Since it can be assumed that higher English language proficiency constitutes the most appropriate and objective basis for valuation, lower English language competence might in this respect imply that this basis was non-existent for this student group. At the same time, increasing proficiency levels led to less favourable perceptions of the near-RP speaker's pronunciation. This was especially apparent when the evaluations of the advanced English students were compared to those of the non-English students. The Manchester English distractor's pronunciation, however, was more positively rated by the advanced English students, who apparently correctly classified this variety as

authentic, while less English language competence did not allow for such a differentiated perception.

The test subjects' judgements in terms of the speakers' friendship capability appeared to be influenced by their phonological familiarity among students whose major subject did not include English. Among this faction, the Estuary English, the Standard Scottish English and the Manchester distractor received decidedly more negative evaluations. It is only in the assessment of the RP variants that they provided more favourable ratings than the two factions that majored in English. Owing to the fact that English language university programmes allow more opportunities for familiarisation with various other accents such as SSE or Estuary English, more favourable scores in the friendship dimension are likely to be the logical consequence.

The native RP accent was consistently preferred by the informants as far as their overall news reading skills were concerned. The impact of language competence was more clearly demonstrated in the Austrian near-RP speaker's assessment. Her aptitude in this dimension was rated significantly more highly among non-English students when contrasted with both groups that had English as their main subject of study.

Given that the alternative hypothesis H_1-III singles out English language proficiency as a source of variance in the respondents' attitudes, this hypothesis can without doubt be confirmed due to the identification of competence-based evaluation discrepancies. These phenomena were manifested in altogether 22 divergent perceptions in varying dimensions pertaining to the five speakers.

Subsequently, the informants' international English language experience was employed as a parameter of variance. The attitudinal evaluations of the students who spent time abroad in English-speaking countries differed dramatically from those of the internationally inexperienced judges. The native RP guise garnered more positive evaluations in the status and competence, in the integrity and in the pronunciation dimensions among students in possession of Anglophone experience abroad. In addition to these trends, the SSE guise was in the integrity and friend dimensions more positively perceived by internationally experienced respondents, while the Estuary English speaker was more highly evaluated by this group sociability-wise. Based on these results, it can be concluded that stays abroad in

English-speaking countries and the concomitant exposure to and contact with native populations creates tolerance and openness and hence this seems to have led to more positive evaluations, especially in the social attitude dimensions.

The realisation of an extreme group comparison taking into account also the duration of the experiences abroad verified the results for the near-RP speaker. For the latter, long stays in English speaking regions, i.e. those in excess of 24 weeks, resulted in lower attributions of status and competence, more negative evaluations of pronunciation and lower assessment when it came to news reader suitability, when contrasted with inexperienced students. Additionally, the previously discussed attitudinal discrepancies pertaining to the SSE speaker can be explained through this extreme group comparison, as highly internationally experienced students evaluated this guise significantly more positively in the friend dimension than those with international stays of only minimal duration.

Thusly, the alternative hypothesis H_1-IV, which postulates an effect of stays abroad in Anglophone regions on the attitudinal evaluations, can generally be affirmed. It has to be stressed that this parameter exerted a slightly lower influence on the attitudinal judgements than did English language proficiency (22 significances), since international English language experience only caused ten evaluative discrepancies of relevance.

Lastly, the students own English language variety was employed as a parameter of variance and was found to also exert an influence upon the attitudes towards the accents, inasmuch as non-coincidental discrepancies were identified in the evaluations of two speakers. The SSE guise was in terms of pronunciation and integrity far more positively evaluated by British English-speaking informants than by colleagues with American pronunciations. It can be supposed that this evaluative discrepancy was attributable to the geographical or ideological proximity between their own and the SSE variety. The near-RP speaker, on the other hand, was more favourably evaluated in the friend dimension by the judges with American pronunciations than by those with British accents. Apparently linguistic knowledge in way of what counts as correct British English led to differentiated perceptions and identifications of this accent as a non-native variant and thus to a more negative evaluations. In contrast, it is likely that the typical 'ex pluribus unum' American Melting Pot philosophy leaves more room for the positive evaluation of non-familiar language varieties in this respect. A similar

observation was made by Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997: 123-124), who found that the students who prefer American English were more tolerant in their ratings of non-native varieties.

On these grounds, the alternative hypothesis H_1-V, which suggests that the students' own English language pronunciation affects their attitudes towards the speakers, can also be confirmed. It has to be mentioned, though, that the influence of this parameter only resulted in three discrepancies of significance and was therefore weaker than that of English language competence (22 statistical differences) and also less marked than that emanating from international Anglophone language experience (ten significantly diverging results).

7.4. Correlations between PCA validated dimensions and pronunciation, friendship ability and news reader suitability

In order to examine which factors were responsible for the evaluations of the speakers in the total news reader suitability dimension, speaker-independent intercorrelations between the all dimensions were calculated. As postulated by the alternative hypothesis H_1- VI, the total news caster suitability depends most strongly on competence variables. As for this dimension, the most highly marked correlation pertained between the overall news reader suitability and status and competence, closely followed by the correlation between the former dimension and pronunciation. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis H_1- VI can be confirmed through the intercorrelative data calculated.

In contrast, only minimally marked correlations could be discerned between news caster aptitude and the social dimensions, i.e. integrity and sociability. The strongest correlation was detectable between the friend and the integrity dimensions. That means, whether people wished to be friends with the speakers was predominantly dependent on whether these were thought of highly integrity-wise (e.g. reliable, trustworthy, etc.). A less important basis for friendship seemed to have been the extraverted, communicative skills, which are included in the sociability dimension.

7.5. Rank ordering peculiarities

For a direct comparison of the five speakers' overall news reading skills, the sample was requested to bring the candidates in an order according to their personal preferences. This ranking was topped by the native RP guise, who was voted into the first position by more than 40% of the respondents. With approximately 35% first ranks, the native RP variety was most closely followed by the near-RP speaker. The Estuary English guise was only by 17% considered to be the best news reader, while the Standard Scottish English speaker was by 5% of the responses thought to top the ranking. The distractor from Manchester occupied the first place in only in 2.5% of all answers. It can be seen that, even in an ELF context, such a profession is strongly associated with the RP accent, which is underlined by the fact that 75% of all students argued that one of the two RP speakers was their favourite news anchor. Altogether, one can further conclude that accents which are geographically rather limited in their usage (e.g. Estuary English, Manchester English and to less dramatic degree Standard Scottish English) are not deemed appropriate for positions as news presenters in an international context, in comparison to regionally independent accents, such as RP.

The analysis of the influence of the students' English language competence on the rank ordering yielded two specifically significant evaluative discrepancies. On the one hand were higher proficiency levels directly reflected in a higher ranking of the Manchester English distractor. This might point out that students with high English language competence recognised her as authentic and native, while the lack of familiarity with this particular variety among the students with maximally B2 level led to an inferior positioning in the ranking. On the other hand, significant evaluative differences were detectable in the ranking of the near-RP speaker. In these ordering results, reduced language proficiency correlated with unusually high positions. Hence it can be surmised that students with high levels of English language competence instinctively regarded this variety as inauthentic when collated with the native RP variant and she was therefore evaluated less positively.

In the rank ordering investigation based on students' English language experience abroad, the Austrian near-RP speaker was significantly more highly evaluated by students who entirely lacked any experience of that sort than by their colleagues who spent time abroad in English-speaking regions. This evaluative phenomenon was verified by an international experience-related extreme group comparison, which revealed that less experience still results in a higher

positioning of that speaker than amongst the highly experienced students. It can therefore be alleged that international exposure to the English language is crucial for the conscious differentiation process between L1 and L2/EFL or between authentic versus inauthentic varieties. In accordance with the data calculated, the varieties classified as authentic and native were ranked more highly when more international experience was at avail. Furthermore, no such experience at all resulted in a far less favourable ranking of the Estuary English guise. In contradistinction to the near-RP variety, the latter was basically considered an authentic and typically South England variety, which can commonly be encountered in this region. One has to subsequently infer therefrom that students in possession of international English language experience might have perceived some phonological characteristics of Estuary English in their travels and as a result ranked this authentic variety more highly. Less familiarity with this accent on the part of the informants did not allow for such a differentiated perception and was reflected in their uncertainty and, by extension, in inferior positioning.

The alternative hypothesis H_1-VII claims that the rank ordering is influenced by the respondents' subject of study and by the presence or absence of English language experiences abroad. As the disparate rank ordering results in dependence of these parameters underline, this hypothesis can be confirmed by the data.

7.6. Effects of identification or misidentification on attitudinal judgements

Given that the alternative hypothesis H_1-VIII postulates the existence of an effect of correct or incorrect geographical localisations of the varieties on the judges' attitudinal evaluations, all response behaviour evoked by Item 2 in Part II of the questionnaire was classified. A correct identification took place whenever the informants were able to provide a relatively detailed description of the regional spread of the varieties. Partially correct responses in way of the regional provenance of the five speakers were those of lower specificity. These were supplemented by inaccurate descriptions and answer omissions. Applying these criteria, the highest identification rates for the whole sample were determined for the Austrian near-RP, the native RP and the SSE speaker. In the case of the first of these, the high recognition rate can be ascribed to the candidate's phonological transfer of typically Austrian pronunciation features (e.g. the diphthongal realisation of the long central vowel or shortcomings in the production of weak forms), given that students' own experiences in the educational context

acted as basis for valuation. The distractor from Manchester, on the contrary, was accurately recognised by less than 2% of the whole sample, which might be connected to the highly limited geographical distribution of that variety, especially in the international context.

Comparable identification difficulties were observed in the recognition rates for the Estuary English guise, who was rightly identified by less than 10% of the sample. In this case, it can be proclaimed that regional phonological characteristics (e.g. those from Cockney) have made their way into this language variety, which are, however, not commonly present in the language awareness of the Austrian student population under investigation. Hence, these features were hardly localisable by the sample.

A high recognition rate was determined for the native RP guise, which basically corroborates with the findings of Ladegaard (1998: 266), who also determined one of the highest identification rates for the RP accent in Denmark. The difference between the recognition of the Manchester English or Estuary English and the native RP guise lies in the regional spread of these accents. The supra-regional native RP variety is marked by an absence of virtually all regional characteristics. In addition, the high recognition rate has to be considered in conjunction with a contradictive phenomenon pertaining to RP. Even though this variant is employed by only three to five percent of the English-speaking population (Trudglill and Hannah 2008: 9), there exists a cross-border presence of this variety in public media, also in the international context. Similar facts apply to the Standard Scottish English variety, which can generally be defined as the speech of the professional class in all over Scotland (McClure 1994: 79-80), which is influenced by few highly punctual and regional language characteristics. Nevertheless, many media oftentimes make use of typically Scottish language characteristics to the effect that these began to be incorporated in the language awareness of some test subjects, which was pointed out by the proportionally high recognition rate for the SSE speaker.

The recognition phenomenon pertaining to SSE is in stark contrast with the findings of Ladegaard (1998: 261), who found that among Danish learners the recognition rate was below 25%. It has to be borne in mind, though, that he used different classification criteria. Conversely, Robert Jarvella et al. (2001: 49) calculated a 59% identification rate of Standard Scottish English among more advanced Danish students, which more closely corresponds to the detection rate ascertained in this study. It has to be reiterated, however, that the criteria

employed by these researchers do not necessarily match those used here, which renders a comparison of exact numbers impossible.

In relation of the informants' English language competence, and by extension their subject of study, disparate identification rates were discerned. Higher English language proficiency principally resulted in higher correct recognition rates. This was explicitly apparent in the case of the native RP speaker. The identification rates among the beginner English and the advanced English students unambiguously exceeded that of the non-English students, which suggests that already at the very beginning of English language programmes at the University of Vienna a process is being initiated through which the RP variety is called into the language awareness of its students. A look at the curriculum reveals that among the beginner English students, i.e. those between their second and third semesters (first semesters were excluded form this study), this process might in part be caused by the two Introduction to the Study of Language and the Phonetic Transcription lectures. The advanced English students additionally benefit from the knowledge acquired in the two Oral Communication Skills (formerly Practical Phonetics and Oral Communication Skills) courses, which can, according to the curriculum, be taken from the fourth semester onwards. These classes make use of RP as the model of pronunciation, if students opt to enrol in British pronunciation training courses. This fact very likely accounts for the highest recognition rate of this speaker among the advanced English students.

The same process appeared to have been responsible for the correct recognition of the near-RP speaker's Austrian origin. Increasing levels of English language competence led to higher identification rates of this speaker. The aforementioned practical phonetics courses at university have as one of their main goals the elimination of students' personal accents or regional influences on their varieties, such as typically Austrian pronunciation characteristics. Hence, it can be seen that the conscious awareness of such features was connected with higher recognition rates of the Austrian speaker.

An analogous student group-related identification phenomenon was also detectable in the case of the Standard Scottish English speaker. Already among the beginner English students, the hit rate was more than twice as high as among the non-English students, while the recognition rate among the advanced English students was approximately three times as high as that of the non-English students. Based on these results, the correct identification rate rose most

distinctively with increased English language competence, which suggests that also this variety was called into students' language awareness through scientific discourse at some stage of university training.

The rise in the numbers of correct identifications of the Estuary English guise was connected with increased English language proficiency, albeit to a less drastic extent. It has to be stressed, though, that the recognition rate among the advanced English students was more than twice as high as that of the non-English students. A possible interpretation of this peculiarity is the curriculum-dependent familiarisation with this accent, especially in the Oral Communication Skills 1 class. The corollary of the knowledge acquired in this course can be a higher identification rate of the Estuary English guise.

The investigation of the recognition of the varieties dependent on English language experience abroad also prompts the conclusion that the existence of this moderating variable correlated positively with a rise in the identification rates. This pertained to all speakers, except for the Estuary English guise, whose recognition rates were virtually evenly high among those who had enjoyed international experience and those who had not. These minimal differences are, however, negligible.

Given that the alternative hypothesis H_1-VIII postulates that identification or misidentification affects the speakers evaluations in the dimensions tested, identification rate-based mean evaluations were calculated for the three guises with the highest hit rates, i.e. the native RP, the SSE and the near-RP speaker. The first of these guises received higher mean evaluations in all dimensions, but friendship ability. This portends that the native RP accent has retained its upper class status and is hence not thought of a good friend among Austrian students.

The participants who accurately spotted the SSE speaker's intended regional background evaluated this variety notably more favourably throughout all dimensions, except for status and competence. In consequence, the Standard Scottish English accent did not seem to be associated with high status and competence among those EFL students who recognised her regional provenance.

The most highly marked recognition rate-dependent evaluative discrepancies could be found in the assessments of the near-RP speaker. When a dichotomous distinction between correct

versus all incorrect identifications was applied, judges capable of accurate recognition assessed this variety considerably more negatively. This means that, amongst the latter informants, Austrian pronunciation features hindered positive evaluations. In due course, the overall scores of the group that took an Austrian, German or non-native background as their basis for valuation had to be compared to the evaluations of those who inaccurately identified her as a native RP speaker. This method revealed with uttermost obviousness that the students who thought her to be an Austrian, German or non-native speaker also rated her in high measure more negatively than those who evaluated her as a native RP speaker, which is additional evidence for the above conclusion.

Due to these effects, the alternative hypothesis H_1-VIII, which claims an influence of the recognition or misidentification of the varieties on students' attitudinal judgements, is tenable.

At the end of this section, also the limitations of the validity of the previously discussed recognition rates and the corresponding attitudinal differences call for mention. The explanations solely pertain if those criteria are applied, which have been laid out in Chapter 6.10 and in even more detailed fashion on the accompanying CD-ROM. Furthermore, the sociodemographic internal composition of the sample groups examined by other researchers differed dramatically from the one accessed here. For these reasons in particular, comparisons with exact recognition rates calculated in other studies are of little significance, as these employed different classification methods. Altogether, the scheme presented here is perfectly appropriate to analyse very specific differentiation in the responses provided by the test subjects.

7.7. Evaluating the success of the matched-guise technique

In the language attitude research conducted so far, the matched-guise technique was frequently employed without any scientific validation of whether the respondents evaluated the stimuli speaker-independently. Thus, the present study attempted to investigate evaluative tendencies with the aid of Euclidean distances, whereby the successful implementation of this technique can theoretically be verified.

The informants' attitudes in all six dimensions measured were found to be independent of the speaker who produced the recording. As a result, it can be hypothesised that the informants

predominantly used the phonological characteristics contained within the five varieties as their basis for valuation.

In the status and competence, as well as in the integrity dimension the closest resemblance in the judges' response behaviour was found to pertain between both RP variants. In the communicative-dynamic traits captured in the sociability dimension, the Standard Scottish and the Estuary English speaker were rated most similarly. An analysis of the assessments in the friend dimension revealed similar evaluations of Manchester English and native RP, while in the speakers' pronunciation similar tendencies were discerned in the scores of the native RP and the near-RP speakers. The total news reader suitability results additionally showed related patterns within the judgements on the Standard Scottish English and the Manchester English distractor.

These evaluative similarities and dissimilarities allow the conclusion to be drawn that the assessments occurred in all probability solely on the basis of the respondents' attitudes towards the language varieties. The use of the matched-guise technique in the experiment can hence be considered successful. As additional proof for this statement, the related evaluative patterns for both RP variants in three of six dimensions can be provided. Given that these varieties have been produced by two different speakers, the participants' evaluations can merely be grounded on the speakers' pronunciation. In the remaining three dimensions, also disparate pairs of speakers were assessed most similarly. Hence, the alternative hypothesis H_1-IX, according to which the MGT enables the identification of speaker-independent evaluative tendencies, can be accepted.

7.8. Conclusion and outlook

The following aspects range among the most central results this study has brought to the fore. The attitudes of Austrian students towards English language varieties are composed of one competence and status, and two social dimensions, i.e. integrity and sociability.

The total news reader suitability depends mostly on competence variables, whereas the decision on whether informants would like to be friends with the speakers is primarily based on their integrity attitudes.

DISCUSSION

Across the board, the RP accent seems to exist within the language awareness of the Austrian student population, while this does not seem to be the case for Manchester English, nor for Estuary English. Therefore, the native RP variety is the most frequently recognised native accent, is ascribed high levels of status and competence and is subsequently considered the most appropriate candidate for a position as a news reader in a public medium. On the other hand, the possession of highly marked communicative and socially extroverted skills integral to the sociability dimension is associated with the Standard Scottish English and the Estuary English guises. Higher levels of English language proficiency principally lead to more favourable attitudes towards the L1 varieties. In contradistinction, the presence of this parameter results in a distinctly more negative evaluation of the non-native near-RP variant. Furthermore, a positive influence of long stays abroad in English-speaking countries is cognisable in all dimensions.

The correct geographical localisation of the five accents is also reflected in higher evaluations of the L1 varieties, yet the opposite trend applies to the non-native RP accent, which is assessed lower when recognised. The successful implementation of the matched-guise technique in this study can eventually be verified by statistical methods.

Future research in this field can take various aspects of the results obtained here as starting points. The necessary basis should be formed by a factor-analytical validation of the attitudinal dimensions extracted here. In this connection, also the influence of the numbers of character traits on the number of dimensions constitutes one possible subject of investigation. The present hypotheses can function as the foundation for the replicative scientific analyses of these research questions in other study populations. Differing levels of English language competence might, for example, alter the degrees of markedness of the attitudes towards language varieties. Intercultural attitude phenomena, which have here only been investigated on the basis of the Austrian near-RP accent, would additionally deserve cross-language investigation in L2 or EFL contexts. Thereby, one could assess whether subconscious phonological familiarity in other languages also constitutes a parameter for more favourable evaluations when fewer language competence is at avail. Moreover, a scrutiny of the successful employment of the matched-guise technique by use of statistical methods is highly recommended.

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9. Appendix

9.1. Final questionnaire

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NEWS REPORTER

EVALUATION

</div>

In the following survey, you are going to hear five people who applied for a position as a radio announcer. To assess their suitability for the job, we test the impression they make on potential listeners.

The opinionnaire is entirely **anonymous** and will be treated **confidentially**. Please answer the questions **honestly**.

Thank you for your participation in advance.

You are given four options to answer the items. Please tick the box which, in your opinion, best describes the person. In the example below, the listener thinks the speaker would be a **_rather_** *good radio announcer*.

Example:

Do you think the *SPEAKER* would be a good radio announcer?

		←	→		
	VERY	**RATHER**	**RATHER**	**VERY**	
good	☐	☒	☐	☐	bad

1. SPEAKER A is … (tick the appropriate boxes):

	VERY	← RATHER	→ RATHER	VERY	
humorous	☐	☐	☐	☐	humourless
unintelligent	☐	☐	☐	☐	intelligent
friendly	☐	☐	☐	☐	unfriendly
insecure	☐	☐	☐	☐	self-confident
polite	☐	☐	☐	☐	impolite
uneducated	☐	☐	☐	☐	educated
reliable	☐	☐	☐	☐	unreliable
lazy	☐	☐	☐	☐	hardworking
outgoing	☐	☐	☐	☐	shy
poor	☐	☐	☐	☐	wealthy
sensitive	☐	☐	☐	☐	insensitive
rural	☐	☐	☐	☐	urban
trustworthy	☐	☐	☐	☐	untrustworthy
unskilful	☐	☐	☐	☐	skilful
dynamic	☐	☐	☐	☐	passive
snobbish	☐	☐	☐	☐	not snobbish

2. How clear was SPEAKER A's pronunciation?

	VERY	← RATHER	→ RATHER	VERY	
clear	☐	☐	☐	☐	unclear

3. On a scale from 0 (not suitable) to 10 (very suitable), how suitable do you think *SPEAKER A* would be for a job as a radio news reporter? Place an *X* on the line below to indicate your opinion.

0 ├──────────────────────────────────┤ **10**

4. How would you describe *SPEAKER A*'s way of presenting the news in one word? Circle the most fitting adjective of the list below.

ugly   interesting   harsh   beautiful   dry   energetic

5. Do you think *SPEAKER A* would make a good friend?

	← **VERY**	**RATHER**	→ **RATHER**	**VERY**	
good friend	☐	☐	☐	☐	bad friend

1. **Please recall your overall impressions of the five speakers one more time and try to rank them accordingly. Give the highest rank to the speaker you liked best, and the lowest rank to the one you liked least.**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

2. **Where do you think the speakers come from?**

SPEAKER A: _____

SPEAKER B: _____

SPEAKER C: _____

SPEAKER D: _____

SPEAKER E: _____

1. Please fill out some basic information about yourself.

Age: _____

Sex: female ☐ male ☐

Country of birth: _____

Mother tongue: _____

Studies: _____

Semester: _____

Stays abroad in English speaking countries:

yes ☐ no ☐

where: _____ how long: _____

Which variety of English do you speak?

American ☐ Scottish ☐ British ☐

Irish ☐ Australian ☐

☐ a more local variant, namely _____

Thank you again for your time and participation!

9.2. Abstract

The present research project examines language attitudes as hypothetical and sociopsychological constructs among an Austrian student population (N = 326). Their value judgements towards the language varieties RP, Manchester English, Standard Scottish English, near-RP and Estuary English constitute the subjects of scientific scrutiny.

The quantitative data collection methods are based on the matched-guise technique, which here eliminates potential confounding variables through the production of five language varieties by only three speakers.

Three character-related evaluative dimensions were factor-analytically validated: status and competence, integrity, as well as sociability, while the variables pronunciation, friendship compatibility and total news reader suitability were acquired separately by the research instrument. Inferential statistical analyses reveal that status and competence, as well as high quality of pronunciation is most strongly associated with the native RP guise. High evaluations in the integrity and friendship dimensions, however, are predominantly ascribed to the Austrian near-RP variety. With regard to the communicative-dynamic aspects integral to the sociability dimension, the Estuary English and Scottish English speakers are afforded the most favourable assessments. The highest estimations in terms of news reader suitability are attested to both RP variants. The results are altogether indicative of the fact that the English language competence, language experience in Anglophone regions and the own pronunciation model of English are responsible for causing evaluative discrepancies. These parameters additionally influence the correct geographical localisation of the language varieties.

The successful application of the matched-guise technique was investigated by means of Euclidian distances. The data thereby brought to the fore explicitly confirms that the phonological language characteristics function as speaker-independent basis for valuation.

9.3. Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Forschungsarbeit untersucht Spracheinstellungen als hypothetische und soziopsychologische Konstrukte an einer österreichischen studentischen Population (N = 326). Die evaluativen Wertungen beziehen sich auf die Sprachvarietäten RP, Manchester Englisch, Standard Schottisches Englisch, near-RP und Estuary Englisch.

Die quantitative Erhebung basiert auf der Matched-Guise Technik, bei der hier durch die Produktion der fünf Akzente durch lediglich drei Sprecher etwaige Störvariablen eliminiert werden. Drei charakterbezogene Bewertungsdimensionen wurden faktorenanalytisch validiert: Status und Kompetenz, Integrität sowie Geselligkeit, während die Erfassung der Variablen Aussprache, Freundschaftskompatibilität und Nachrichtensprechereignung im Messinstrument separat erfolgte.

Inferenzstatistische Analysen belegen, dass Status und Kompetenz sowie hohe Aussprachequalität am stärksten mit dem nativen RP Sprecher assoziiert wird. Die Integritäts- und Freundschaftsdimensionen hingegen werden überwiegend der österreichisch gefärbten near-RP Varietät zugeschrieben. Hinsichtlich kommunikativ-dynamischer Geselligkeit erfahren Estuary Englisch und Standard Schottisches Englisch die höchsten Einstufungen. Die beste Eignung zum Nachrichtensprecher wird vorwiegend den RP Varianten attestiert. Die Resultate zeigen weiters, dass die Parameter Englischkompetenz, Spracherfahrung im englischsprachigen Ausland und die eigene Englischaussprache sowohl evaluative Diskrepanzen bedingen als auch die korrekte geographische Lokalisierung der Sprachvarietäten beeinflussen.

Zudem konnte die erfolgreiche Anwendung der Matched Guise Technik mithilfe des Euklidischen Distanzmaßes überprüft werden. Aus den Ergebnissen geht explizit hervor, dass die phonologischen Sprachcharakteristika als sprecherunabhängige Bewertungsgrundlage herangezogen werden.

9.4. Curriculum Vitae

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Nationality: Austrian
Birth: 07 April 1987

EDUCATION

2012 – present	Master Programme English Language and Linguistics
	University of Vienna
	Focus: Applied Linguistics and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)
2007 – 2012	Bachelor Programme English and American Studies
	University of Vienna
	Graduation: Bachelor of Arts Degree
Jan. 2006 – June 2006	Military Service
	Military Base: Bechtoldsheim Wr. Neustadt
	Military truck and automobile driver, transportation of hazardous goods, passenger transportation
1997 – 2005	Bundesgymnasium Babenbergerring Wr. Neustadt
	Secondary School
	Focus: Computer Science, Latin
	Graduation: Matura

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Languages	German (C2, mother tongue)
	English (C1–C2, near–native competence acquired through tertiary education)
	Latin (6 years of training)
Computer	Perfect MS Office Skills (Access, Power Point, Word, Excel)
	Excellent Digital Image Processing Skills (Adobe Photoshop)
	HTML
Courses	Business English (2003-2004) – Certificate Vantage B2
	Presentation techniques and rhetoric I (2001)
	Presentation techniques and rhetoric II (2004)