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Competent and cold or incompetent and warm? Effects of compensation and categorization in evaluations of native and German-accented RP

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Competent and cold or incompetent and warm? Effects of compensation and categorization in evaluations of native and German-accented RP

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Language attitudes are organized along competence and warmth dimensions and reflect two sequential cognitive processes. First, listeners use phonetic cues to assign speakers to certain classes (categorization). Second, they attribute to them traits based on the inferred group memberships (stereotyping). Stereotypic competence and warmth perceptions of standard and non-standard (e.g. foreign-accented) speakers are often near-inverse (compensation). Against that background, this study illuminates compensatory evaluation patterns of L1 (native) and German-accented Received Pronunciation (RP) speakers among university students in Austria (n = 217), as well as the role of categorization in the language attitudes process. All speaker evaluations reflected two factor-analytically confirmed constructs, i.e. competence and warmth, with accent affecting the speakers' impressions in both dimensions. Although the out-group L1 RP speaker attracted more favorable competence and news reader ratings from the L2 (non-native) students, the listeners conceded higher warmth to and expressed an inter-personal preference for the L2 RP speaker (i.e. a representative of their linguistic English L2 in-group). The students' categorizations of phonetic features were consequential for competence and news reader evaluations, while this cognitive process only affected the perceived warmth of the L1 RP presenter. Conversely, the raters' consciously expressed affiliation intentions were robust against categorization strategies. Altogether, the data not only show how L1 and L2 speakers of the same accent elicit near-inverse attributions, but also reveal how categorizations engender stereotypic evaluation patterns. The study thereby provides empirical support for the presence of compensatory mechanisms and the activation of distinct stereotypes as a result of categorization differences.

1. Introduction

We intuitively form impressions of others on the basis of how they talk. Although some of the phonetic, semantic or morpho-syntactic variation in people's speech is idiosyncratic, a

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more significant portion varies systematically at the group-level (e.g. Dragojevic, Giles & Watson 2013). Distinct linguistic communities are therefore likely to differ from others in word choice, grammatical structures or pronunciation. Because of such patterned language use, linguistic forms can become indexical of speakers' social identities (McGlone & Giles 2011; Edwards 2009). *Accent*, i.e. a manner of pronunciation (e.g. Roach 2008), is an especially strong trigger of evaluative reactions known as *language attitudes* (Dragojevic 2016). These language attitudes reflect, at least in part, two consecutive cognitive processes. First, hearers use pronunciation characteristics to estimate to which groups a communicator belongs. Second, they attribute to the speaker traits commonly associated with the inferred group memberships (Dragojevic & Giles 2014; Ryan 1983). Based on these psychological mechanisms, even subtle phonetic distinctions in our speech can first reveal our regional or linguistic backgrounds, which communication partners in turn rely on to ascribe clichéd personality characteristics to us. The beliefs people activate in this process about how social groups are characterized by traits and behavioral tendencies are referred to as stereotypes (see Bourhis & Maass 2005). These are socially learned and shaped by the education system (e.g. Giles et al. 1983) or the media (Lippi-Green 2012), among others. In the mainland European English L2 (non-native) context, these agents are especially effective in socializing students' stereotypes towards Received Pronunciation (RP) speakers, because this accent functions as an important teaching model (e.g. Przedlacka 2005) and is often encountered on audio-visual news media (e.g. Mugglestone 2003). Many preceding investigations into evaluations of accented language varieties either focused on categorization or stereotyping in isolation (e.g. Carrie & McKenzie 2018; Cavallaro & Ng 2009; Hiraga 2005) or treated these processes as separate aspects of analysis (e.g. Ladegaard 1998; Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck & Smit 1997). Other studies have begun to use rigorous inferential statistical procedures to inspect more thoroughly the effects of categorizations on evaluations of accented speakers (e.g. Rotter 2019, 2017; Dragojevic, Berglund & Blauvelt 2018, 2015; Yook & Lindemann 2013; McKenzie 2015a).

Located at the interface of sociolinguistics and social psychology, this study contributes to contemporary language attitude research by integrating listeners' self-reported cognitive categorization strategies into their evaluations of accented speakers. Among students of English from the University of Vienna (n = 217), this study investigates (1) the dimensions on which speakers are judged, (2) the compensatory mechanisms in the assessments of L1 and German-accented L2 RP and, most importantly, (3) the effect of categorization on evaluative responses. To provide information on its theoretical background, a comprehensive literature review is provided first. This includes an overview of language attitude theorizing, a description of the evaluations of RP and German-accented speech, as well as a discussion of intra-psychological categorization and stereotyping mechanisms. On this basis, four hypothesis pairs are constructed in line with quantitative empirical social research methods (see Bortz & Schuster 2010) and tested through inferential statistical procedures (see Field 2013). Following a factor-analytical inspection of the latent constructs underlying the impressions of L1 and L2 RP presenters, the article explores how the speakers elicit compensatory evaluations that vary intra-individually. The students'

accuracy in identifying the two accents is then ascertained. After that, the research report demonstrates how distinct categorizations of both L1 and L2 RP lead to between-subjects differences in speaker assessments, which suggests the activation of distinct stereotypes. Finally, the results are interpreted in the local institutional context of the University of Vienna, their implications are discussed and recommendations for future research are provided.

1.1 The socialization of attitudes to RP among Austrian L2 learners

Language attitudes refer to people's evaluative reactions to language varieties[1] (e.g. Myers-Scotton 2006), which vary on a negative versus positive valence scale (e.g. Weber 1992). Their study involves the investigation of the social meanings attached to linguistic variation and their behavioral consequences (e.g. Dragojevic 2016). Like all attitudes (see Perloff 2017), language attitudes are learned from experiences and their acquisition begins early in a person's life. From the time children enter school, for example, they start to show general preferences for standard language varieties over non-standard varieties of their L1, whereas younger children exhibit equal preferences for both (see Day 1982; Cremona & Bates 1977). The difference between these is that standard varieties underwent the standardization process and adhere to codified norms regarding lexis, morpho-syntax and phonology (e.g. Van Herk 2012). At the level of pronunciation, with which this article is concerned, examples of standard L1 varieties of English are RP or General American (GA), whereas departures from prescriptive articulation norms are considered 'non-standard' (e.g. a regional Scouse accent when speaking English or an Austrian German accent when conversing in English). Infants were also shown to preferentially accept toys from native rather than from non-native speakers of their L1, and at the age of five children favor native speakers as friends over non-native speakers (Kinzler, Dupoux & Spelke 2007). As these studies indicate, in the course of becoming members of society, children develop a preference for standard varieties of their L1 over others, while additionally learning to intuitively discriminate between native and non-native varieties of their L1.

Two of the most important agents in socializing and shaping attitudes to different language varieties (e.g. standard versus non-standard or native versus non-native) are the education system (e.g. Giles et al. 1983) and the media (e.g. Lippi-Green 2012). In Austria, which is part of Kachru's (1992) expanding circle, where English fulfills no official function, the importance of foreign language teaching has steadily increased after school reforms in the 1960s. Since 2002/2003 one additional language is obligatory for all learners from the first grade of elementary school onwards (e.g. De Cillia & Krumm 2010) and, although not mandatory, this language is most often English (see Dalton-Puffer, Faistauer & Vetter 2011). Resulting from this policy, English is the first foreign language for about 99% of Austrian

1 The term 'variety' designates any set of linguistic items (e.g. lexical items or sounds) that may be treated as a separate entity for analysis (see Mesthrie et al. 2009; Hudson 1996). In comparison, 'dialect' refers to a variety distinct in the domains of lexicon, morpho-syntax and phonology (see Van Herk 2012), while 'accent' describes varieties characterized by a specific pronunciation (see Hughes, Trudgill & Watt 2012).

learners (see Nagel et al. 2012). Within the area of English pronunciation teaching, the linguistic norms Austrian education institutions approximate to are often defined by the inner circle (Kachru 1992), in which English is acquired as an L1. Underlying this 'nativeness principle' is the assumption that it is possible and desirable for learners to attain native-like articulation skills (Levis 2005). As a result, RP and GA were established as the de facto reference accents in many sectors of the Austrian education system. This is especially relevant for English teacher training at tertiary education institutions. At the University of Vienna, where this study was carried out, future educators of English are encouraged to emulate RP or GA accents while being discouraged from retaining German language features in their target pronunciations (see Thir 2016). These idealized standards, however, are attained by only few students (e.g. Levis 2018) and have been criticized by English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) researchers (e.g. Seidlhofer 2011; Jenkins 2007). Nevertheless, the exposure to these reference accents in the course of their education is likely to shape learners' attitudes to these pronunciation models, i.e. RP and GA. Students' attitudes towards alternatives to such norms (e.g. an Austrian German accent when using English) are equally influenced by the experiences made through education, for example, if students are penalized in the form of bad grades when departing from the RP or GA standards. These socially learned beliefs about what constitutes 'proper' English pronunciation and what does not are, in due course, likely to reinforce available and form new stereotypes about their users, which in turn, engenders stereotypic attributions to the speakers of standard and non-standard accents.

The media play another key role in affecting Austrian students' language-based stereotypes and attitudes to varieties of spoken English. A local radio station supporting the spread of English is *FM4*. It belongs to the public service broadcasting institution (i.e. *Österreichischer Rundfunk*, ORF) and is especially popular among adolescents and young grown-ups. Through broadcasting in English to a considerable extent and by employing English L1 speakers from various L1 territories (along with German-accented co-hosts), it provides listeners access to a range of authentic English L1 accents including RP (ORF 2017). The television channels *ORF eins* and *ORF 2* further show films and TV series in German/English two-channel audio. Between 2017 and 2018, for instance, the ORF televised 154 films in English, while viewers could watch 2,912 episodes of TV-series in English (see ORF 2018). Also, *BBC World News HD* (i.e. British Broadcasting Corporation) is available to Austrians via satellite (see Dencik 2013). The recreational use of English is also increasing, particularly among teenagers and young adults, due to streaming and social media platforms such as *Netflix*, *DAZN*, *Amazon Prime*, *YouTube* or *Facebook* (see also Schwarz 2016). In addition to US-films, US-TV series and US-sports coverage, these platforms allow Austrians to consume British news, British films and TV productions (e.g. *The King's Speech*, *Sherlock*, *Happy Valley* or *Broadchurch*) or British sports events (e.g. *English Premier League*), where both standard (e.g. RP) and non-standard English L1 accents are heard.

It follows that language attitudes are evaluative reactions to different language varieties with a negative or positive valence that people acquire through socialization.

Austrian students are nowadays exposed to a great deal of spoken English and the education system as well as the media are important agents in stereotype and language attitude socialization. RP represents one of the accents most typically heard on news media (e.g. BBC or FM4). It is also prevalent in local education contexts, being the pronunciation adopted by many teachers of English and one of the models that future educators are strongly encouraged to adapt to. The following section offers a theoretical discussion of how students' socially acquired attitudes can be investigated by empirical social research methods and introduces the dimensions along which language attitudes are organized.

1.2 Language attitude research and findings from speaker evaluation studies

Language attitudes can be examined with either of three broad methodological approaches (for a discussion and criticism of these methods see McKenzie 2010). Although direct (e.g. Preston 1999) and content-analytical (e.g. Dragojevic et al. 2016) procedures are also applied, the majority of extant language attitude research employs indirect methods and is conducted within the *speaker evaluation tradition* (see Giles & Marlow 2011). This paradigm presupposes that language attitudes reflect the levels of status they are conventionally associated with, rather than intrinsic differences across language varieties (e.g. aesthetic or functional ones; see Giles & Edwards 2010; Edwards 1999). In other words, people's attitudes to different language varieties originate from perceptions of their speakers (known as the *social connotations hypothesis*). Methodologically, the speaker evaluation approach encompasses the matched (MG) and the verbal guise (VG) techniques. Pioneered by Wallace Lambert in the 1960s (e.g. Lambert 1967), MG tests involve respondents' evaluations of audio-recorded voices that represent different language varieties. Often without full knowledge of the research design, listeners assign traits (e.g. 'educated' or 'polite') to what they believe are different speakers, but what is actually the same individual in various 'guises'. Semantic differential scales[2] (Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum 1957) are especially popular in MG tests and consist of bipolar adjectives at either side (e.g. 'intelligent' versus 'unintelligent') with a number of usually unlabeled intermediate answer options (see Rosenberg & Navarro 2018). Listeners then indicate their attitudes by selecting where their position lies within the frames of these multi-point rating options. By evaluating one speaker in different guises, extraneous vocal characteristics (e.g. pitch or speech rate) of the speaker are largely controlled and response differences can be reduced to the guises compared. In reaction to criticisms of this method with regard to authenticity and salience (see McKenzie 2010), the VG strategy (e.g. Carrie 2017) was developed as an alternative. This technique relies on different speakers for the production of more realistic stimuli, which often consist of free speech or communicative acts elicited in map tasks (see Kang, Thomson & Murphy 2017). To avoid biases because of speakers' idiosyncratic language behaviors,

2 In MG or VG studies, guises can also be assessed by use of other techniques such as Likert-type items (e.g. Hansen-Edwards, Zampini & Cunningham 2018; Matsuura 2007), visual analogue scales (e.g. Rotter 2014) or magnitude estimation continua (e.g. Watson & Clark 2015; McKenzie 2015a).

the presenters in VG tests need to be matched on demographic and vocal characteristics (e.g. Garrett 2010).

By using factor analyses (see Field 2013), speaker evaluation studies have shown that, cross-culturally, accent-based person impressions fall into *status* (e.g. 'intelligent' or 'educated') and *solidarity* (e.g. 'polite' or 'sensitive') dimensions (see Giles & Billings 2004). These two evaluation clusters were replicated in numerous language attitude studies in the United Kingdom (UK; e.g. Hiraga 2005), continental Europe (e.g. Rindal 2014), Asia (e.g. McKenzie 2010), the United States (USA; e.g. Preston 2003), and South America (e.g. El-Dash & Busnardo 2001). While status ascriptions seem to derive from the perceived socio-economic status of communicators (e.g. Woolard 1985), solidarity reflects in-group loyalty (e.g. Dragojevic, Berglund & Blauvelt 2018). That is, status attributions are interrelated with socio-demographic assumptions about speakers and solidarity perceptions arise from an in-group versus out-group positioning of message receivers relative to message senders (e.g. Ryan 1983).

The status and solidarity factors conceptually overlap with *competence* and *warmth* respectively, which constitute the 'big two' categories of human social cognition (see Roessel, Schoel & Stahlberg 2018). This research area (e.g. Cuddy, Fiske & Glick 2008; Wojciszke 2005) assumes that people initially consider whether others mean to do harm or good (i.e. warmth), whereupon they determine if others can enact these intentions (i.e. competence). From an evolutionary perspective, warmth judgments are primary, because in social encounters it is more important for one's own survival to make estimates about other people's intentions rather than about their abilities (e.g. Fiske, Cuddy & Glick 2007). Competence judgments should thus temporally be preceded by warmth impressions and account for greater shares of variance, and warmth judgments are expected to determine whether people decide to approach or avoid others (e.g. Peeters 2001). Many language attitude studies (e.g. Rotter 2019; Carrie 2017; Dragojevic & Giles 2014; Cavallaro & Ng 2009), however, have suggested that competence judgments explain greater portions of variance in speaker evaluations (but see McKenzie, Kitikanan & Boriboon 2016). This may result from the formal situational contexts in which these projects elicited evaluations, which foreground the competence rather than the warmth dimension.

In sum, the dominant speaker evaluation paradigm to language attitudes requires respondents to judge the speakers of different language varieties based on their accent characteristics. People's evaluations of accented speakers are organized along competence and warmth dimensions, which account almost entirely for how we characterize other human beings. Based on these insights generated by speaker evaluation and social cognition research, it can be predicted that:[3]

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3 In quantitative studies, the research process (see Bryman 2016) typically begins with the theory-based deduction of hypothesis pairs, which are, after appropriate operationalizations, tested on a large scale within a sample drawn from the relevant total statistical research population. Every pair of hypotheses consists of a null hypothesis (H_0) and an alternative hypothesis, which are, following data collection, compared through statistical testing. The alternative hypothesis is denoted by H_1 and posits that the phenomena whose relation

H_1-I: *The accent-based attributions to the two RP speakers by the English L2 students will reflect latent competence and warmth constructs*.

The next section uses language attitude theorizing to discuss how different language varieties elicit distinct attributions in the two main categories of social cognition. These evaluation patterns are then explained by use of sociological and social psychological theories.

1.3 The evaluative consequences of perceived 'standardness' and 'nativeness'

Evidence indicates that two normative and ideologically charged distinctions are influential in affecting people's judgments to accented speakers along the competence and warmth dimensions. On the one hand, language attitude research (see Giles & Marlow 2011) has robustly shown that *standard* and *non-standard* varieties of one language elicit different evaluative responses amongst the general public (see Dragojevic 2016). As standard varieties are used in the media and promoted as the most 'correct' forms of languages, they are linked with economic status and power (e.g. Milroy 2001). Users of standard varieties therefore often attain higher competence evaluations than non-standard speakers (e.g. Giles & Edwards 2010) and are preferred for employment in high-status jobs (e.g. Rakić, Steffens & Mummendey 2011). Conversely, non-standard speakers can possess covert prestige (e.g. Marlow & Giles 2008) and may garner more positive warmth assessments (e.g. Dailey, Giles & Jansma 2005), particularly in warmth-stressing contexts such as family, home or friends (e.g. Giles & Ryan 1982).

On the other hand, evaluative reactions to accented speakers can reflect general assumptions about their *nativeness* or *non-nativeness* (e.g. Dragojevic, Giles & Watson 2013). This is especially relevant whenever listeners are asked to evaluate both L1 and L2 speakers in the same experiment, such as in the present study. The ideology behind it rests on a dichotomous division of the world into mutually exclusive classes of 'us' and 'them' (e.g. Giles, Reid & Harwood 2010). Research on foreign accents indicates that people tend to retain the phonology of their L1, even when they achieve near-perfect control over other aspects of the target language (e.g. Moyer 2004; Scovel 2000). These non-native traces in their speech can provoke more negative attitudes than those elicited by L1 speakers (e.g. Roessel, Schoel & Stahlberg 2018; McKenzie 2015a), while disfluency and incomprehensibility perceptions are other important factors in the evaluative downgrading of non-native speakers (e.g. Gluszek, Newheiser & Dovidio 2011). Whereas non-nativeness assumptions about others adversely affect their competence scores (e.g. Fuertes et al. 2012), evidence regarding warmth attributions to foreign-accented speakers is less conclusive. To

is under investigation are somehow associated (e.g. in a correlative or a causal relationship). It derives its name from representing the alternative to the null hypothesis. Conversely, the null hypothesis predicts that there is no relationship between the investigated phenomena (or at least not of the form postulated by the alternative hypothesis). By convention, research in the social sciences usually only lists alternative hypotheses, which is also adhered to in this article. For empirical social research methods and data analysis procedures, see, e.g., Bortz & Schuster (2010), Field (2013) or Tabachnick & Fidell (2013).

the extent that non-native accents invoke favorable in-group solidarity, varieties used by the raters' own linguistic community may be awarded higher warmth scores (e.g. Giles & Marlow 2011; Ryan 1983). Though individuals of other non-native groups can also attract high warmth evaluations in compensation for reduced competence perceptions (e.g. Yzerbyt, Provost & Corneille 2005), such effects have rarely been verified (see Fuertes et al. 2012).

These evaluative phenomena have been explained in various ways. *Social Identity Theory* (e.g. Tajfel & Turner 1986) and *Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory* (e.g. Giles & Johnson 1987) explain competence and warmth attributions via social comparison processes. Through contrasts of in-groups with out-groups, positive self-images can be constructed. Because of institutional support, individuals using standard L1 varieties, i.e. those adhering to codified norms (see Van Herk 2012), are typically attributed more competence than speakers of non-standard varieties, i.e. those departing from such norms. If low-status group members have positive views about high-status representatives, a devaluation of their own group causes their self-regard to suffer. Thus, low-status groups need to achieve positive differentiation in another sphere such as warmth (e.g. Hewstone, Rubin & Willis 2002). Prestige group members may also concede warmth-supremacy to lower-status groups (e.g. non-standard L1-accented or foreign-accented speakers), for their own position is already guaranteed in the competence sphere.

Outside the field of sociolinguistics, the *Stereotype Content Model* (e.g. Cuddy, Fiske & Glick 2008) proposes distinct patterns of warmth and competence attributions. In a two-dimensional warmth-by-competence space, evaluations of social groups (and this also applies to speakers of different accents) can be arranged in a four-field matrix. Sections of any society considered 'competent and warm' evoke admiration and positive behavioral reactions, whereas negative impressions throughout (i.e. 'incompetent and cold') induce negativity and disdain. Ambivalent stereotypes can incite varying affective states and behavioral inclinations. Groups judged as 'unskilled but warm' elicit pity and 'competent but cold' stereotypes result in envy. In the wider context of attitudes to social groups, Fiske, Cuddy and Glick (2007) analyzed stereotypic evaluations of groups in societies from 19 nations on four continents. Their examination demonstrates that the economically disadvantaged are universally perceived as 'neither warm nor competent', while rich people are stereotypically evaluated as 'competent but not warm'. The older generation is seen as 'warm but not competent' and individuals belonging to the middle class are considered 'competent and warm'. The activation of these four distinct stereotypic competence and warmth combinations linked with accented speakers and social groups has expectable emotional concomitants (e.g. admiration or disdain) and results in predictable behavioral inclinations towards them (e.g. willingness to help or harm; see Cuddy, Fiske & Glick 2008).

Together, these theories suggest compensation processes, through which individuals in both linguistic minority and majority groups make up for the competence-upgrading of standard L1 speakers (e.g. L1 RP) by higher warmth attestations to non-standard L1 (e.g. a Scouse accent when speaking English) or non-native speakers (e.g. L2 RP with an Austrian German accent; see Yzerbyt, Provost & Corneille 2005). In the following section, these

considerations are applied to RP, which is relevant both as an L1 accent in the UK and as a teaching model for L2 English learners in continental Europe.

1.4 RP and evaluations of RP and German-accented English among English L1 and L2 speakers

RP can be defined at two different levels.[4] On the one hand, it constitutes the standard pronunciation in England (e.g. Dragojevic 2016) that is used as *a living accent* by L1 speakers within England and, to some extent, also within the rest of the UK. Unverified claims suggest that 3-5% of the English population use RP (Trudgill & Hannah 2008), while Wells (1982) argues that around 10% of all people in England employ RP. Socially, RP continues to be associated with the upper-middle and upper classes of the English society (Trudgill & Hannah 2008), although societal changes and upward social mobility have made a purely social definition of RP problematic (see Altendorf 2003). Within England, RP may nowadays be said to be non-localizable, in the sense that its speakers are not linked with a specific geographical region. Resulting from the BBC's frequent employment of RP news speakers (see Mullany & Stockwell 2015) and its use by the Queen, the accent is popularly also referred to as 'BBC English' or 'The Queen's English' (e.g. Honey 1989). While the BBC has nowadays become more liberal in their selection of regionally accented L1 news readers, RP is still the most common accent in news reading contexts in England that are broadcast both within the UK and to English L2 territories (see Roach 2008). For people in L2 regions who do not use English in their everyday lives, access to such authentic British English speech via television, radio or films is important for pronunciation learning. Some educational course books used for teaching in Austria (e.g. Born-Lechleitner et al. 2017) have therefore transformed authentic BBC and FM4 recordings into listening tasks for practicing students' receptive language skills.

On the other hand, RP refers to a *theoretical and codified abstraction* that is used in dictionaries and textbooks (e.g. Wells 1994). This codification supports uniformity and stability and provides a model for reference and teaching purposes (e.g. Hannisdal 2006; Fabricius 2002). In European education contexts throughout the 20th century, RP used to be the most popular model that was taught to learners at different levels of their education (e.g. Przedlacka 2005). For English students currently undergoing teacher training at the University of Vienna in Austria, who provided the data for this study, RP functions as one of only two reference accents, i.e. RP and GA. While students are 'free' to choose among these models, they are required to adapt their own pronunciation in the 'Practical Phonetics and Oral Communication Skills' classes (see University of Vienna 2018a) according to these prescriptive and idealized norms. Due to this role, virtually every individual in the target population develops attitudes to RP as well as to deviations from RP (e.g. an Austrian

4 Fabricius (2002) uses the labels 'native RP' (n-RP) and 'constructed RP' (c-RP) to refer to a similar distinction, where the former refers to the accent as actually used by a certain percentage of the English population, while the latter is meant to characterize an idealized representation of the accent.

German accent when speaking English) in the course of her or his education. These attitudes can be uncovered in speaker evaluation experiments such as MG or VG tests.

Contrary to popular beliefs, in its native form that is actually used by a certain percentage of L1 speakers from England RP neither is an invariant monolith, nor is it characterized by rigid boundaries. Gimson (1980), for instance, describes three chronologically related subcategories of RP. These are 'conservative RP' (i.e. the RP variant employed by the older generation), 'general RP' (i.e. the type most commonly adopted by BBC newsreaders) and 'advanced RP' (i.e. the form used by younger people of exclusive social groups). Wells (1982) divides RP socially into 'mainstream RP' (i.e. RP used by the upper-middle class), 'u-RP' (i.e. upper-crust RP) and 'adoptive RP' (spoken by adults who did not learn RP as children). In addition to the three main types, Wells (1982) lists 'near-RP', which includes regional pronunciation influences that come close to mainstream RP, but do not fall within the boundaries of RP. Cruttenden (2013) proposes a classification of RP into 'refined RP' (i.e. declining upper-class RP), 'general RP' (i.e. the variant most frequently in use and typified by BBC news readers) and 'regional RP' (i.e. RP including a few regional features). In an attempt to enhance our understanding of the changes currently taking place within L1 RP, Hannisdal (2006) examined the phonetic features that are making their way into RP. These include, for example, the realization of /r/ as a post-alveolar approximant [ɹ] in all positions, where tapped [ɾ] used to be more typical in intervocalic positions. Other changes are the close front realization of final /i/ as [i] instead of close-mid [ɪ], a centralization of /uː/ to [ʉː] or the articulation of /t/ as a glottal stop [ʔ] rather than as the alveolar plosive [t] in certain environments. Eventually, time will tell whether such features are included in pronunciation dictionaries or language teaching material as a result of changes in accent usage by L1 RP speakers. What these considerations do illustrate is that RP in its spoken form is characterized by a lot of variation. Although through education Austrian students are exposed to RP as an idealized abstraction, the portrayal of the accent in different media to which Austrians have access (see Section 1.1) contain more of this variation, but still fall within the boundaries of RP.

Based on the foregoing discussion, RP is both an accent used by L1 speakers within England as well as a codified abstraction that is relevant to L2 learners of English in teaching contexts. In its L1 form, RP exhibits a great degree of variability. While only a small percentage of the English L1 population regularly employs the accent, it continues to serve as one important reference accent for many English L2 learners. In the process of acquiring an RP-like pronunciation, English L2 students are likely to retain some features of their L1. Consequently, an L2 English speaker from Austria is likely to preserve characteristics associated with Austrian German when approximating to codified RP (for Austrian characteristics see Kaltenböck, Milchram & Schwarz 2018). The ensuing product, then, is not within the confines of RP, but may more adequately be subsumed under 'near-RP' (as suggested by Wells 1982) or 'L2 RP' (preferred in this article, as it suggests that foreign rather than regional L1 features are retained). Because these differences between L1 and L2 RP variants are likely to be consequential for stereotypic attributions to their users, the evaluations of RP and German-accented English are reported next.

Throughout many English L1 contexts, positive competence evaluations of L1 RP have been reported, not only within Britain (Coupland & Bishop 2007; Giles 1970), but also in Australia (e.g. Gallois & Callan 1981) or the USA (e.g. Stewart, Ryan & Giles 1985). In the UK, for example, RP is unsurpassed on traits such as 'intelligence', 'self-confidence', 'ambition' or 'leadership' (e.g. Giles et al. 1990), which are part of the competence domain. It is thus not surprising that, in the UK, RP was found to be preferred for employment in high-status jobs (e.g. Giles & Sassoon 1983; Giles, Wilson & Conway 1981). On the other hand, the notion of 'correctness' surrounding L1 RP is becoming increasingly supplanted by 'posh', 'over-precise' or 'cold' attributions in the UK (e.g. Mugglestone 2003; Coggle 1993). Evaluative downgrading of RP relative to other L1 accents in L1 territories on qualities such as 'friendliness', 'humor', 'generosity', 'honesty' or 'integrity' has often been reported (e.g. Haenni 1999; Giles et al. 1990; Bourhis, Giles & Lambert 1975). In expanding circle territories, too, L1 RP garnered especially favorable competence assessments, including Denmark (Ladegaard 1998), Finland (Hartikainen 2000), Norway (Rindal 2010) or Austria (Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck & Smit 1997). Contrariwise, in some learner populations the warmth impressions of L1 RP speakers were less positive when compared to other standard or regional L1 varieties of English (e.g. Rotter 2019; Rindal 2010; Ladegaard & Sachdev 2006). In sum, the evaluations of L1 RP are remarkably robust across both English L1 and L2 contexts. While in the former its association with the upper- and upper-middle classes of the English society may foster positive competence assessments, the role occupied by RP in some teaching environments may lead to favorable competence assessments among L2 learners of English, even though warmth scores may suffer at the same time.

Evidence regarding the perceptions of German-accented speakers of English is less consistent. This may result from the different methodologies used in language attitude studies and further reflect that the German-accented speech stimuli contained diverse phonetic characteristics typical for different German dialect regions.[5] In the UK, Giles (1970) reported slightly positive associations between German-accented English and status, although its aesthetic and communicative abilities were less esteemed. Coupland and Bishop (2007) showed that, in the UK, German accents were ranked lower on both competence and warmth dimensions than other L1 and L2 varieties of English (e.g. Spanish- or French-accented). The latter study, however, only captured conceptual evaluations rather than presenting listeners with actual audio stimuli. Voice evaluation research in other English L1 regions such as the USA and New Zealand confirmed that English with German influences elicits rather unfavorable competence and warmth assessments (e.g. Watanabe 2005; Ryan & Bulik 1982). Even when German-accented English is evaluated by German L1 participants, conflicting assessment patterns emerged. Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck and Smit (1997), for instance, found that an RP speaker from Austria is downgraded both on

5 Many studies relying on German-accented speakers neither provide phonetic transcriptions of the speech stimuli, nor do they explicitly mention which dialect region the speakers come from. This makes a balanced discussion of the perceptions of German-accented English difficult. The present study offers a short description of the most important accent characteristics of the speakers in the methods section.

competence and warmth traits compared to users of Austrian-colored GA and L1 English accents. However, Rotter (2014) demonstrated that RP produced by a speaker with only subtle German influences is not necessarily warmth- and competence-relegated when compared to standard or regional L1 varieties of English. In more detail, Roessl et al. (2018) showed that the degree of the German accent ultimately determines attributions, as speakers who command native-like articulation skills were preferred by Germans in terms of suitability for employment and competence. In the professional domain, Śliwa and Johannson (2014) found that such negative evaluations of non-native speakers have real-world consequences, such as inequalities among co-workers, conflicts or the (self-)exclusion from organizational activities.

Both in inner and expanding circle environments the competence evaluations of L1 RP are especially favorable, which suggests that also among Austrian listeners L1 RP will be associated with high competence. Conversely, its warmth perceptions may be more negative than those of other regional L1 accents. The retention of German features when aspiring to the British RP norm can prompt diverse language attitudes, depending on whether the raters are part of the same German-speaking community as the speakers or not. As the sample for this study was selected from the statistical population of students of English at the University of Vienna, the L2 RP speaker with Austrian German features is a member of the respondents' L2 in-group. Hence, the L2 RP speaker should invoke in-group loyalty among respondents. Consequently, the following two hypotheses can be formulated to describe these expected compensatory evaluation patterns:

> ***H_1-II:*** *Among the L2 students of English the use of L1 RP will be associated with higher competence and news reading skills than the use of German-accented RP.*
>
> ***H_1-III:*** *Among the L2 students of English the use of German-accented RP will correlate with higher warmth ascriptions and a higher consciously expressed affiliation intention than the employment of L1 RP.*

By addressing these aspects alone, however, it is not possible to claim that Austrian L2 students of English have positive or negative stereotypes towards L1 and German-accented L2 RP speakers. This requires that learners indicate their assumptions about the groups to which the two RP speakers belong. The next section draws on advances in social psychology to explain how people derive and apply their language-based stereotypes to actual speech stimuli.

1.5 Categorization and stereotyping mechanisms in speaker evaluations

For Austrian L2 learners of English to retrieve and activate their language-based stereotypes (see Section 1.1), the often neglected process of *categorization* is a necessary prerequisite (e.g. Dragojevic, Berglund & Blauvelt 2018). That means users of different accents must first be recognized and then be interpreted as members of specific social groups to which the

cognitively available stereotypic beliefs apply (Schneider 2005). Even when no other information about communication partners is available, such as in a telephone conversation with an unknown speaker, certain categories such as gender or age are almost immediately activated and people can easily decode such identifying information. Placing speakers into more specific regional or social categories may require more cognitive effort, but even without training we intuitively do so. Often enough, we can perform such a remarkable job at identifying speakers' regional origins that the cognitive class we assigned the speaker to matches his or her actual regional origin. For all such categorization processes we use available *cues* (e.g. accent features) to allocate attitude referents (e.g. speakers) to discontinuous classes. As objects can be characterized by multiple cues, categorization is usually decided by the least ambiguous ones (see Skowronski & Carlston 1987). For instance, the absence of postvocalic /r/ [Ø] can point to different regional classes such as 'England' or 'Australia'. However, the additional realization of /ɜː/ as diphthongized [øᵊ], a replacement of /θ/ with [s] and an articulation of /v/ as [f] increase the likelihood of triggering a 'non-native' categorization. Such a speaker may more specifically possess an Austrian German language background while striving for an RP-like pronunciation (for Austrian pronunciation characteristics when speaking English see Kaltenböck, Milchram & Schwarz 2018). All of these cues, which strongly suggest one categorization (i.e. 'English with Austrian German characteristics') instead of other alternatives (e.g. 'L1 English from London'), are socially *diagnostic* in that they trigger one particular categorization (e.g. Myers-Scotton 2006).

Despite scholars' calls to include accent categorizations in speaker evaluation studies, particularly in L1–L2 contexts (e.g. McKenzie 2015a; Williams, Garrett & Coupland 1999; Preston 1999), sound inferential statistical analyses of categorization effects on language attitudes have remained scarce. As Dragojevic, Berglund and Blauvelt (2018) remark, language attitude studies on their own only allow the conclusion that one variety is rated more favorably than another. Yet, without considering respondents' categorizations, it is not justified to argue that listeners have a positive stereotype towards the linguistic community to which the positively evaluated speaker belongs. Therefore, MG or VG studies are of limited usefulness, unless the raters are asked to provide an account of their cognitive categorizations of the attitude objects. Some speakers may evaluatively benefit from 'miscategorizations', while others could be downgraded as a result of an allocation to an 'incorrect' class. For example, when an L2 English speaker from Austria is classed as an 'L1 English standard' speaker, this may correlate with high competence assessments. Conversely, a 'non-native' categorization of a standard L1 speaker (e.g. L1 RP) could be reflected in less favorable competence attributions.

Research addressing variety categorization and its effects on speaker evaluations demonstrated that non-experts are willing to classify speakers at varying levels of specificity and that these processes motivate different attributions (see Dragojevic 2016). McKenzie (2015b), for example, showed that UK-born students initially categorize both L1 and L2 English speech as either 'native' or 'non-native', after which more fine-grained classifications are attempted. Stephan (1997) found that German-speaking students have

developed an awareness of RP and can place the accent into appropriate regional classes, because of its role as an L2 teaching reference accent. Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck and Smit (1997) reported high recognition rates of RP and an implicit preference for L1 English speakers among Austrian L2 learners of English. Because the authors did not link the categorization strategies to actual evaluations, their results only imply rather than empirically demonstrate that categorizations produce these stereotypic speaker evaluations. Other research projects, in contrast, determined the effect of participants' categorizations on evaluative reactions. By inducing a specific ethnic categorization through a verbal cue (i.e. 'African-American') in one half of their Korean listeners in addition to a recording in African American Vernacular English, Yook and Lindemann (2013) demonstrated that the attitudes of informed respondents were less favorable than those of uninformed participants. Rotter (2019) further showed that different self-reported categorizations of a single L1 speaker engender different evaluations from L2 listeners, which suggests the activation of distinct stereotypes associated with particular cognitive classes. Similarly, McKenzie (2008) reported that 'American' categorizations of a GA speaker by raters from Asia are reflected in higher ratings than different categorizations. Roessel, Schoel and Stahlberg (2018) evidenced that a general 'non-native' category can be activated when L2 learners perceive L2 English speech, which impedes positive evaluations of German-accented speakers of English.

In combination, such studies point out that cognitive categorizations can take place at various levels (e.g. based on nativeness or on finer-grained regional or ethnic classes) and that these processes are consequential for speaker evaluations. Thus, different speech-based categorizations of a single speaker by different individuals may lead them to derive dissimilar stereotypes, which are then reflected in diverging evaluative responses towards the same speaker. Through their university education (see University of Vienna 2018a) many English L2 students at the University of Vienna should be able to detect diagnostic phonetic cues and therefore assign both L1 and L2 variants of RP to particular cognitive classes. Based on these categorizations, the learners are then likely to activate distinct stereotypes for the evaluations of their speakers. Given this rationale, it can be posited that:

> ***H_1-IV:*** *The competence and warmth evaluations as well as the rated suitability of the speakers in professional and personal contexts will vary according to the Austrian students' consciously reported accent categorizations.*

The next section describes the development of an adequate research design for examining the judgment dimensions underlying the overall ratings of the speakers (*H_1-I*), the analysis of the within-participants differences in accent-based speaker assessments (*H_1-II* and *H_1-III*), as well as for investigating the discrepancies in the evaluations of each accented speaker across different categorization groups (*H_1-IV*).

2. Methods

2.1 Sample

For this study, 217 students from the English and American Studies Department of Vienna University participated in paper-and-pencil tests.[6] On average, the investigated learners were 22.41 years old (*SD* = 3.96), with the largest faction aged between 18 and 26. While the majority (81.1%) possessed a German L1 language background, a share of 18.9% reported other first languages. Females outnumbered men at a ratio of almost 5:1. While this suggests a skewed sample composition with respect to gender and language background, the student group authentically mirrors the diversity of the learners currently studying at the English Department (see University of Vienna 2018b).

2.2 Reading passage for stimuli production and attitude elicitation context

Given that perceptual studies without context are difficult to design and unrealistic (see Meyerhoff 2011), this experiment was framed in a formal news reading environment to contextualize the speech samples for the participants. Because reading rather than spontaneous speech is most typical for this context, a local news passage about a zoo (see Appendix A-1) was chosen as the basis for stimuli production. This text was adapted from the BBC website (BBC 2013) and fulfilled three criteria: (1) a duration of approximately 45 seconds when read aloud, (2) the absence of strongly emotional content that could evoke loaded reactions, and (3) easy comprehensibility for entrance-level students of English at an Austrian university.

2.3 Speech excerpts

The attitudinal objects addressed in this article are L1- and German-accented speech samples produced by two female speakers who both approximated to the British RP standard. To avoid additional confounds, speakers of the same gender were chosen. Both had similar education and socio-demographic backgrounds as adult education instructors and high school teachers. While the 51-year-old English L1 speaker was from Essex (England), the L2 English audio sample was recorded by an Austrian teacher from Vienna (36 years). As both speakers were formally trained English language teachers, the differences between the two stimuli were rather subtle, but noticeable.

The L1 RP audio file (41 seconds) featured many characteristics distinctive of this reference accent (see Hannisdal 2006; Wells 1982), such as the absence of post-vocalic /r/ (i.e. [Ø] in *girl* [gɜːɬ], *mother* [ˈmʌðə] or *born* [bɔːn]). In the remaining positions, /r/ was mostly realized as a post-alveolar approximant (e.g. *great* [gɹeɪt]), although a more

6 Data for this study stems from a series of ongoing large-scale speaker evaluation experiments by the author. The results in here are confined to an analysis of the perceptions of L1- and German-accented RP speakers among English students and the role of categorization in the language attitudes process.

conservative alveolar tap [ɾ] was observed in *gorilla* [gəˈrɪlə]. Linking /r/ was employed in *or a girl* [ɒɹə ˈgɜːɬ] or *director of* [daɪˈɹɛktəɹ ɒv]. Neither yod-dropping nor yod-coalescence were perceivable in the stimulus, resulting in realizations of *newborn* and *Tuesday* as [ˈnjuːbɔːn] and [ˈtjuːzdeɪ]. A distinction between clear and dark /l/ was consistently made, with the former occurring before vowels in words such as *lot* [lɒt] or *gorilla* [gəˈrɪlə], whereas the latter was observed before consonants or pauses (e.g. *wild* [waɪɬd] or *gentle* [ˈdʒentɬ]). L-vocalization was not present (e.g. couple [ˈkʌpɬ]) and /t/ was not replaced by glottal stops as in *lot of* [ˈlɒt ɒv] or *not known* [ˈnɒt nəʊn]. H-dropping was also absent (e.g. in *has* [hæz]), while the final /i/ in *baby* was realized in a close front manner (i.e. 'happy-tensing'), i.e. [ˈbeɪbi]. Based on these characteristics, the accent largely corresponds to 'mainstream RP' (Wells 1982) or 'general RP' (Cruttenden 2013), while a few 'u-RP' (Wells 1982) or 'conservative RP' (Gimson 1980) features were found (e.g. /r/ occasionally realized as an alveolar tap in intervocalic positions).

The recording by the L2 RP speaker from Austria (42 seconds) did not feature post post-vocalic /r/ (i.e. [Ø]; e.g. *mother* [ˈmʌðə], *far* [fɑː] or *newborn* [ˈnjuːbɔːn]). Unlike the L1 recording, linking /r/ was non-existent (e.g. [ˈmʌðə ɪz] and [ˈfɑːðə ɪz]). Elsewhere, /r/ was articulated as an alveolar approximant [ɹ] (e.g. *great* [gɹeɪt]). Yod-dropping (e.g. [ˈnjuːbɔːn]) and yod-coalescence (e.g. [ˈtjuːzdeɪ]) were not detected and no assimilation of final alveolar plosives occurred in *but can be* [bət ˈkæn bɪ] and *lowland gorilla* [ˈləʊlænd gɒˈɹɪlə]. The long central vowel in *girl* was realized in a close and front position using lip-rounding, with a slight tendency towards diphthongization, i.e. [gøᵊɬ]. H-dropping was not observed, that is /h/, as in *has* [hæz], was retained. Moreover, /t/ was not replaced by glottal stops (e.g. [ˈnɒt jɛt]) and l-vocalization was not discernible (e.g. *gentle* [ˈdʒentɬ]). The contrast between clear and dark /l/ was, however, perceivable (e.g. *lowland* [ˈləʊlænd] versus *wild* [waɪɬd]). The speaker additionally articulated /v/ as [f] in *conserve* [kənˈsøᵊf] and replaced /ð/ with [d] in *whether* [ˈwedə], while the /z/ in *zoo* was closer to [s], i.e. [suː]. As these examples illustrate, the speaker used many characteristics of general RP (Cruttenden 2013), while retaining certain features typical for speakers with German L1 backgrounds (see Kaltenböck, Milchram & Schwarz 2018). Hence, the accent does not fall within the boundaries of L1 RP, but may be considered 'near-RP' (as suggested by Wells 1982) or 'L2 RP'.

2.4 Variable operationalizations and measures

Independent variable. Based on VG methodology (see Section 1.2) with a repeated measures design, the independent variable was constituted by the speakers' accents, which varied in two perceptually slightly different versions, i.e. L1 RP and German-accented L2 RP. Every participant was required to assess both accent stimuli to allow insights into intra-individual evaluative differences between the two RP speakers.

Dependent measure one (attributions). The Austrian learners assigned ten adjectival traits to both presenters based on their pronunciations. These included 'unintelligent – intelligent', 'uneducated – educated', 'insecure – self-confident', 'unskillful – skillful' and 'lazy –

hardworking' as well as 'unfriendly – friendly', 'humorless – humorous', 'insensitive – sensitive', 'impolite – polite' and 'snobbish – not snobbish'. These traits were adapted from previous studies within the speaker evaluation tradition (e.g. Cavallaro & Ng 2009; Ladegaard & Sachdev 2006; Bayard, Weatherall, Gallois & Pittam 2001; Rotter 2014) and were intended to reflect competence (first five items above) and warmth (last five items above). The qualities were captured on five-point semantic differentials (Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum 1957), scaled from 0 (= least favorable; e.g. 'impolite') to 4 (= most favorable; e.g. 'polite').

Dependent measure two (context suitability). Listeners answered two items targeting the speakers' suitability for news reading professions ('How suitable would the speaker be for a job as a radio news reporter?') and the raters' consciously expressed intention to affiliate with the two guises ('How much would you like to have the speaker as a friend?'; see Sauerland 2006). These items were modified from Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck and Smit (1997) as well as from Rotter (2014) and were scaled from 0 (= lower end of scale) to 4 (= upper end of scale).

Accent categorization. The research instrument also featured an open accent categorization item asking the participants where they thought the two speakers came from ('Which country or region of a country do you think the speaker comes from?').

Socio-demographics. Basic socio-demographic data was obtained from participants at the end of the survey. These included the informants' age (ratio scale), their gender (nominal scale), their country of birth (open item), their first language (open item) and their subject of study (open item).

2.5 Survey procedure

Following a short explanation of the testing procedure, raters heard the first recording without receiving additional cues about the speakers. Based thereon, they assigned ten qualities to the presenter and answered the two context suitability items (i.e. news reader qualification and friend). After that, the listeners reported their regional categorizations of this accent. The second speaker was evaluated in the same way, with a randomized presentation order. During testing, the raters were told to assess two speakers for a student news reading project, but were debriefed after the completion of all tasks and were provided with the researcher's contact information (see Dörnyei 2007). All questionnaire responses were anonymous and judges did not receive financial compensation.

2.6 Data analysis

All questionnaire data were entered into IBM SPSS, where all inferential statistical procedures were performed. The four hypotheses were tested by use of exploratory factor analysis (H_1-*I*), repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVAs; H_1-*II* and H_1-*III*) and multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs; H_1-*IV*).

3. Results

3.1 Evaluative dimensions (H_1-I)

H_1-I posited that competence and warmth constructs underlie the students' evaluations of the two RP speakers. To inspect this prediction, the means in each of the personality traits for both presenters were added up and the ten sum variables were then subjected to exploratory factor analysis. Put simply, this procedure assumes that for a collection of observed variables (in this case the ten perceived personality traits of the two presenters) there exist a set of underlying, but unobserved variables, i.e. factors (according to H_1-I: competence and warmth; see Field 2013 for factor-analytical procedures). It aims to reduce these potentially large numbers of observed variables into a few factors that explain the inter-relationships between the variables and thereby allows researchers to work with a more manageable number of variables. An initial Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test with .812 and a Bartlett's test for sphericity with $p < .001$ suggested the data quality to be within acceptable range (see Field 2013). Based on the criterion 'eigenvalue > 1.00', principal component analysis (PCA) with oblimin[7] (i.e. a type of oblique) rotation was subsequently conducted. This procedure suggested a two-factor solution that altogether accounted for 52.9% of variance (Table 1).

As revealed by Table 1, all ten rating traits were subsumed by two non-overlapping latent constructs. The 'uneducated – educated', 'unskillful – skillful', 'unintelligent – intelligent', 'insecure – self-confident' and 'lazy – hardworking' items were all related to one underlying factor, i.e. *competence* (Cronbach's α = .83; eigenvalue = 3.6), which explained 36.2% of variance. The second dimension, i.e. *warmth* (Cronbach's α = .70; eigenvalue = 1.7), was responsible for 16.7% of variability and consisted of the 'unfriendly – friendly', 'insensitive – sensitive', 'snobbish – not snobbish', 'impolite – polite' and 'humorless – humorous' distinctions.

The extraction of two separate factors evidences that the Austrian university students' judgments of the speakers reflected the two prime categories of social perception. As these are consistent with voice evaluation studies in other research populations (e.g. Dragojevic, Berglund & Blauvelt 2018; Carrie 2017; McKenzie 2015a; Hiraga 2005; El-Dash & Busnardo 2001) and with social cognition research more generally (see Fiske, Cuddy & Glick 2007), H_1-I is provisionally supported within the present learner sample. Based on these PCA results, competence and warmth scales were then constructed for both speakers by adding up the items that represented each factor and a subsequent division by the number of items contained in the indices (lowest possible score = 0.00; highest possible score = 4.00).

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7 Given that competence and warmth are not independent dimensions (see Dragojevic & Giles 2014; Cuddy, Fiske & Glick 2007), oblimin (i.e. a form of oblique) rotation was preferred over varimax. While varimax produces orthogonal factors, oblimin allows extracted factors to be correlated (see Field 2013).

Table 1. *Rotated components matrix (n = 217). Extraction: principal component analysis; rotation: oblimin; loadings < .350 were suppressed.*

	constructs	
	1. ***competence***	*2.* ***warmth***
uneducated – educated	.891	
unskillful – skillful	.806	
unintelligent – intelligent	.803	
insecure – self-confident	.673	
lazy – hardworking	.627	
unfriendly – friendly		.817
insensitive – sensitive		.716
snobbish – not snobbish		.580
impolite – polite		.577
humorless – humorous		.471
variance explained (%)	36.2	16.7
eigenvalue	3.6	1.7

3.2 The within-participants effect of accent on speaker evaluations (*H_1-II* and *H_1-III*)

Even though both speakers approximated to the British RP norm, it was predicted that the diagnostic accent features would lead the message receivers to ascribe more competence and news reading skills to L1 RP (*H_1-II*). Conversely, German-accented L2 RP was hypothesized to be attributed higher warmth and to be preferred as a friend (*H_1-III*). To test these postulates, four sets of repeated measures ANOVA were carried out. This procedure is applied if the same test subjects participate in all conditions of the research (e.g. if every rater is measured multiple times, such as after exposure to stimulus one and then after exposure to stimulus two) and aims to detect any overall differences between these related means (see Field 2013 or Tabachnick & Fidell 2013 for details). For the present within-subjects ANOVA, speaker accent (L1 RP and L2 RP) was defined as the within-subjects factor, because each of the 217 participants evaluated one speaker temporally after the other on four measures (i.e. competence, warmth, news reader and friend). This procedure demonstrated a significant effect of accent on competence attestations, $F(1, 216) = 6.70$, $p = .010$, $\eta_p^2 = .030$. The L1 RP presenter was awarded higher competence scores than the

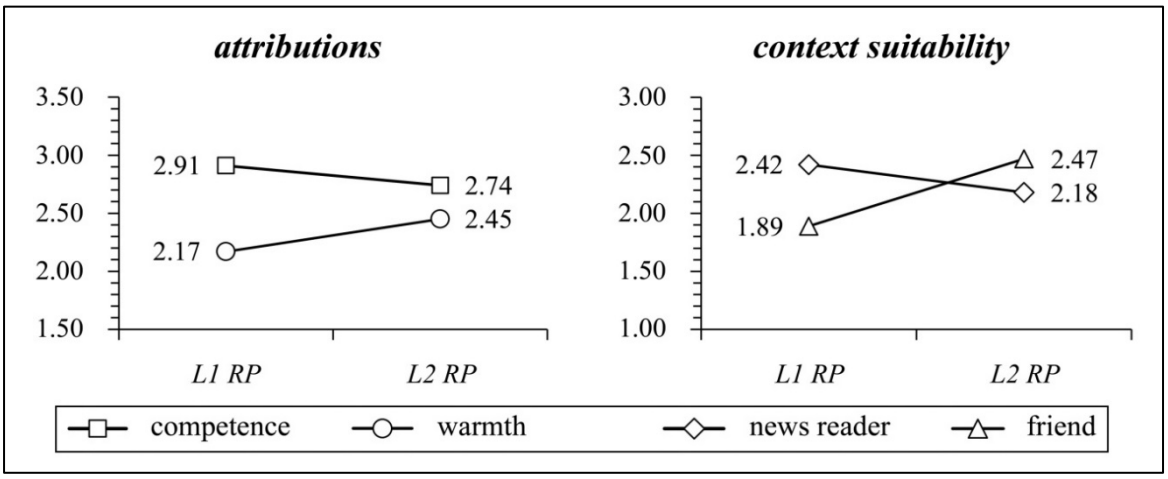

Figure 1. *The within-participants effect of accent (L1 RP versus L2 RP) on attributions (competence and warmth, left panel) and perceived context suitability (news reader and friend, right panel). Notes: n = 217; scales display ranges between 1.50 and 3.50 as well as between 1.00 and 3.00; 0.00 = most negative evaluation, 4.00 = most positive evaluation.*

L2 RP text reader from Austria (see Figure 1, left panel; Appendix A-2). Based on accent use, the respondents also constructed significantly differing warmth impressions of the speakers, $F(1, 216) = 22.63$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .095$. In the warmth domain, the speaker from Austria was afforded significantly higher evaluations than the L1 RP presenter from England (Figure 1, left panel; Appendix A-2).

Further within-participants ANOVA revealed that pronunciation had a significant impact on the perceived news reader qualifications of the two RP speakers, $F(1, 216) = 7.36$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .033$. In the formal attitude elicitation context, the L1 RP guise's news reading skills were regarded as superior to those of the L2 RP presenter (Figure 1, right panel; Appendix A-2). The accents of the two text readers also affected the consciously expressed inclination of the participants to affiliate with the two speakers, $F(1, 216) = 42.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .166$. On an inter-personal level, the respondents reported a clear preference for the L2 RP speaker from Austria over the L1 RP text reader from England (Figure 1, right panel; Appendix A-2).

Taken together, the effects of accent on the competence, warmth, news reader and friend ratings of the guises vary between small and large. The diagnostic accent features employed by the two RP speakers were associated with distinct attributions throughout all dimensions. This lends support to *H_1-II*, inasmuch as among the tested students an L1 RP accent was linked with more favorable competence and news reader evaluations. Conversely, the representative of the learners' own non-native linguistic community who approximated to the RP standard was credited with more warmth and was preferred as a friend, which confirms *H_1-III*. In combination, these near-inverse evaluation patterns point to the presence of compensation strategies in the participants' responses (see Section 1.3).

3.3 Accent categorizations and their effect on speaker evaluations (H_1-IV)

Although the above results allow conclusions about the evaluations of the two speakers in direct comparison with each other, they leave unanswered how the L2 students categorized the accents and how these categorizations influenced their evaluations. In this regard, H_1-IV proposed that the learners rely on diagnostic accent features to assign the speakers to distinct regional classes, which then exerts a significant influence on their evaluations in all dimensions. To illuminate this aspect, the learners' open-ended identifications of the speakers were first coded as a categorical variable that distinguished 'definition-congruent' from 'alternative' responses.

In the literature, RP is described as the standard accent linked with the upper and upper-middle classes of the English society (see Trudgill & Hannah 2008; Section 1.4) that in its codified form functions as a reference model for pronunciation teaching in many L2 territories (e.g. Przedlacka 2005; Section 1.4). Hence, for the L1 RP speaker all regional categorizations within England (e.g. 'England', 'central England', 'southern England', 'London', 'Midlands', 'Manchester', 'Brighton') as well as 'RP' were coded as 'definition-congruent'. Likewise, the labels 'UK', 'GB', 'England' and 'RP' were assigned to the 'definition-congruent' category.[8] All other answers (e.g. 'Australia', 'USA', 'Germany', 'Austria', 'New York' or 'America') and missing data were allocated to the 'alternative' class.

For the L2 RP presenter, who retained some Austrian German characteristics (e.g. /ɜ:/ realized as [øᵊ] or /v/ replaced by [f]; see Section 2.3), the labels 'Austria', 'Germany', 'German-speaking countries' and 'non-native German' were coded as 'definition-congruent'[9] while other responses (e.g. 'Europe', 'Wales', 'UK', 'London', 'England', 'South Africa', 'America' or 'USA') and absent data were coded as 'alternative'.

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8 Within the 'definition-congruent' responses for L1 RP, analyses of the effects of 'GB', 'England', 'RP' and 'UK' categorizations on the evaluations of L1 RP showed no significant effects on competence, $F(3, 121) = 0.17$, $p = .915$, $\eta_p^2 = .004$, warmth, $F(3, 121) = 1.17$, $p = .326$, $\eta_p^2 = .028$, news reader, $F(3, 121) = 1.61$, $p = .190$, $\eta_p^2 = .038$ and friend, $F(3, 121) = 0.15$, $p = .929$, $\eta_p^2 = .004$, scores. As language attitudes involve sequential categorization and stereotyping processes (e.g. Dragojevic, Berglund & Blauvelt 2015; Ryan 1983), homogeneous attitudes across these 'definition-congruent' classes indicate that these categorizations triggered similar stereotypes among the learners.

9 Within the 'definition-congruent' responses for L2 RP, preliminary analyses of the effects of 'Austria', 'Germany', 'German-speaking countries' and 'non-native German' categorizations on the evaluations of L2 RP revealed no significant effects on competence, $F(3, 101) = 0.32$, $p = .814$, $\eta_p^2 = .009$, warmth, $F(3, 101) = 1.35$, $p = .265$, $\eta_p^2 = .029$, news reader, $F(3, 101) = 0.52$, $p = .671$, $\eta_p^2 = .015$ and friend, $F(3, 101) = 0.90$, $p = .446$, $\eta_p^2 = .026$, evaluations. These homogeneous attitudes across the 'definition-congruent' responses suggest that these categorizations activated largely identical stereotypes among the learners.

Table 2. *Listeners' (n = 217) categorizations of the RP speakers.*

	L1 RP		**L2 RP**	
	%	***n***	**%**	***n***
definition-congruent	73.7	160	48.4	105
alternative	26.3	57	51.6	112
total	100.0	217	100.0	217

As specified in Table 2, about three quarters of all listeners categorized the L1 RP text reader in line with the definition above, while marginally more than 25% reported alternative categorizations. Because of the diagnostic Austrian accent features used by the L2 RP presenter, she was classified as distinctly German-speaking by approximately half of all respondents, whereas the other 50% reported 'alternative' categorizations.

For each speaker, MANOVA analysis with these categorization variables ('definition-congruent' versus 'alternative') was then conducted. Belonging to the class of multivariate procedures, MANOVA is generally applied to determine whether there are significant differences in the means of two or more independent groups for more than one continuous dependent variable. With respect to the present data, categorization ('definition congruent' versus 'alternative') was defined as the fixed factor, while the four evaluations (competence, warmth, news reader and friend) were treated as dependent variables. All analyses were run separately for each speaker. The multivariate test for the L1 RP text reader showed a significant result, Wilk's $\Lambda = .924$, $F(4, 212) = 4.33$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .076$, suggesting that categorization was consequential for this speaker's assessments in the four dimensions. A series of ANOVAs with categorization as independent variable was then conducted for each of the dependent variables to examine this influence further. These revealed significant and marginally significant effects of the students' categorizations on the L1 RP speaker's attested competence, $F(1, 215) = 13.17$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .058$, warmth, $F(1, 215) = 3.65$, $p = .057$, $\eta_p^2 = .017$, and news reader qualification, $F(1, 215) = 8.26$, $p = .004$, $\eta_p^2 = .037$. Conversely, categorization did not affect the listeners' overt desire to have the L1 RP speaker as a friend, $F(1, 215) = 0.14$, $p = .706$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$. The L1 RP guise attained higher competence and warmth scores as well as more favorable news reader evaluations among learners who categorized her accent as from within England than by the faction using alternative categorizations (Figure 2). Yet, categorization was immaterial to friend evaluations, as near-identical ratings were found in both groups (see Figure 2).

Further MANOVA analysis revealed a significant multivariate effect of categorization ('definition-congruent' versus 'alternative') on the evaluations of the L2 RP speaker from Austria, Wilk's $\Lambda = .845$, $F(4, 212) = 9.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .155$, suggesting that categorizations were consequential for evaluations. Follow-up ANOVAs demonstrated significant effects of categorization on assessments of the L2 RP presenter's competence, $F(1, 215) = 18.25$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .078$, and news reader suitability, $F(1, 215) = 31.25$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .127$, scores. However, attributions of warmth, $F(1, 215) = 0.29$, $p = .864$, $\eta_p^2 < .001$, and friend evaluations of this speaker,

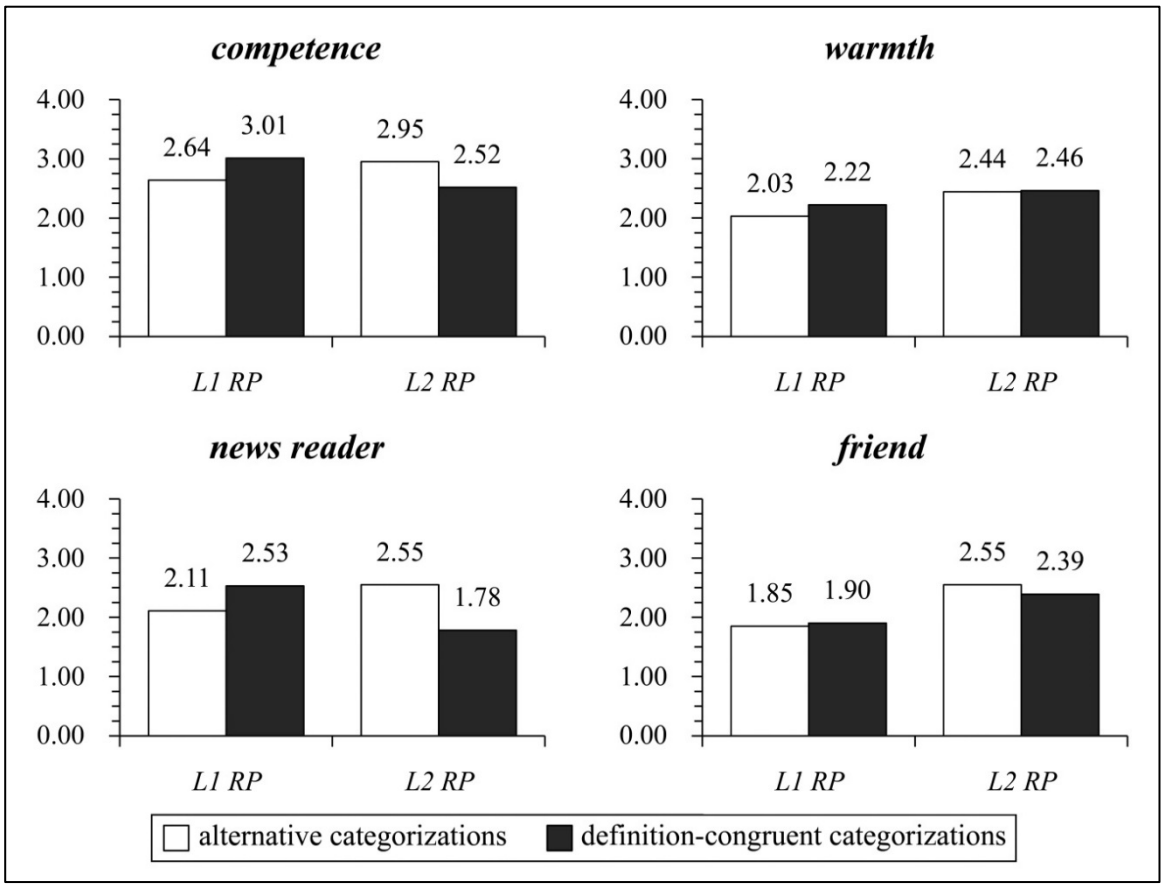

Figure 2. *The effect of categorization on the speakers' competence, warmth, news reader and friend evaluations by the whole sample (n = 217). Notes: 0.00 = most negative evaluation, 4.00 = most positive evaluation.*

$F(1, 215) = 1.50$, $p = .222$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$, proved to be robust against cognitive categorization differences. The Austrian RP text reader was downgraded when categorized as possessing a non-native German language background with respect to competence and news reading skills (see Figure 2). Conversely, the L2 RP presenter's perceived warmth and the raters' consciously expressed inclination to be friends with this speaker were rather homogeneous across both categorization groups (Figure 2).

Categorization exerted non-coincidental effects on both RP speakers' assessments, which indicates that certain stereotypic attributions are preceded by cognitive and consciously reportable categorization mechanisms. More specifically, the competence and news reader ratings of both speakers were strongly affected by categorization, but in opposite directions. Whereas a 'definition-congruent' categorization of L1 RP materialized in more favorable attributions in these dimensions, the converse pertained to L2 RP. Although a 'definition-congruent' categorization positively affected the perceived warmth of the L1 RP presenter, categorization differences were inconsequential for the warmth and friend assessments of the L2 RP speaker. Consequently, *H1-IV*, postulating that evaluative differences emerge as a result of differences in regional categorizations, can be confirmed

for five out of eight sets of scores (i.e. the competence, news reader and friend evaluations of L1 RP, as well as the competence and news reader assessments of L2 RP).

4. Discussion

The results of this study (1) provide support for the existence of two distinct attitudinal components underlying accent-based speaker evaluations, (2) demonstrate that people construct different impressions of others based solely on pronunciation cues and, most importantly, (3) provide evidence that different accent-based categorizations of the same speech stimulus engender different stereotypic attributions to its perceived speaker.

4.1 Two fundamental dimensions of accent-based person impressions (H_1-*I*)

Exploratory factor analysis revealed that latent competence and warmth constructs underlie the speakers' evaluations on the ten rating traits. When forming accent-based impressions of speakers, L2 students of English therefore seem to rely on the universal categories of human social cognition, which have previously been replicated in numerous speaker evaluation studies across a range of contexts (e.g. McKenzie, Kitikanan & Boriboon 2016; Cavallaro & Ng 2009; Hiraga 2005). The difference between the qualities encompassed in the two clusters is that competence comprises self-profitable and agentic traits (e.g. 'intelligent' or 'skillful'), whereas warmth represents an other-profitable and communal trait-constellation (e.g. 'friendly' or 'polite'). Convergent with most preceding speaker evaluation research (e.g. Carrie 2017; Dragojevic & Giles 2014; Cavallaro & Ng 2009; McKenzie 2008), this study could not corroborate a primacy of warmth judgments as suggested by social cognition research (e.g. Cuddy, Fiske & Glick 2008). In the formal news reading setting in which the present language attitude project was embedded, the competence dimension accounts for greater shares of variance than warmth, suggesting that competence carries more weight in status-stressing contexts.

4.2 Compensatory evaluations of L1 and L2 RP speakers (H_1-*II* and H_1-*III*)

Even though both speakers approximated to the standard RP accent, the L1 RP guise was perceptually closer to the popular notion of 'correct' RP, while the L2 RP presenter retained Austrian German characteristics in her pronunciation. These subtle phonetic differences between the two accents, however, suffice for students to attribute significantly different qualities to the speakers in the two systems of social perception. Consistent with numerous other investigations (e.g. McKenzie 2015a; Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck & Smit 1997), the English L1 text reader attracted more favorable competence evaluations from the university students than the non-native-accented speaker. The high competence accorded to L1 RP in formal evaluation contexts may, in large part, be facilitated by its role as a teaching model at education institutions such as the University of Vienna (e.g. Thir 2016). L1 RP is therefore seen as more prestigious than non-native versions of the same accent, which confirms findings in other continental European L2 (e.g. Roessel, Schoel & Stahlberg 2018;

Rotter 2014) and British L1 (e.g. Coupland & Bishop 2007; Giles 1970) contexts. The evaluative difference between both speakers' competence scores is significant, but relatively small. This indicates that the raters consider both text readers as perceptually close to each other and potentially as striving for the same British RP standard. However, this minor yet non-coincidental evaluative difference shows that the phonetic features that set the Austrian speaker apart from L1 RP are interpreted as only a slight but relevant deviation from the RP model the L2 students are familiar with through education or the media.

In the warmth sphere, the listeners expressed in-group favoritism by crediting the speaker who is phonetically closer to themselves as learners of English with more warmth. This can be explained by compensatory mechanisms (see Yzerbyt, Provost & Corneille 2005), according to which judges, especially when they are members of a minority group (in this case L2 English users), compensate for the competence-upgrading of high-status representatives (i.e. L1 RP) by elevated ascriptions of warmth to a speaker who departs from the standard norm (i.e. L2 RP). Specifically, as English students at the University of Vienna the respondents in this study belong to a linguistic group whose members are likely deviate from the native RP standard in some way. Therefore, the learners are likely to award high competence to the L1 RP speaker, who is part of the prestigious out-group. As the L1 RP speaker's status is firmly secured in the competence sphere through high evaluations, raters may be inclined to ascribe more warmth to a representative of their in-group, i.e. RP spoken with some L2 language characteristics (i.e. Austrian German-accented; see Kaltenböck, Milchram & Schwarz 2018).

A similar discrepancy persists in the speakers' evaluations with respect to their perceived suitability in professional and inter-personal domains. The listeners clearly considered the L1 RP guise a more skilled news presenter overall than the Austrian-colored L2 RP speaker. This supports findings by Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck and Smit (1997) and suggests that the German accent features retained by the L2 RP guise correlate with more negative perceptions when it comes to employment in high-status jobs. This downgrading of non-native speech may also be connected to the omnipresence of L1 RP in international (e.g. Mullany & Stockwell 2015; Roach 2008) or Austrian (ORF 2017) media, where native varieties such as L1 RP represent linguistic norms. Yet, in the inter-personal sphere, the learners expressed greater solidarity with the L2-accented speaker by upgrading her in relation to the L1 presenter. This specifies that the Austrian L2 RP speaker's use of German accent features (see Section 2.3) invokes favorable in-group solidarity (e.g. Giles & Marlow 2011; Ryan 1983), which then materializes in higher consciously reported affiliation inclinations (see Sauerland 2006). Overall, thus, the evaluation patterns of L1 RP and L2 RP with respect to competence and news reader qualification versus warmth and affiliation are near-inverse. This points to the application of compensatory strategies by the L2 students when assessing the speakers on the basis of their accents, according to which the L1 RP speaker is endorsed in competence-related dimensions, whereas the L2 RP presenter is upgraded in warmth-related domains.

4.3 The role of categorization in the language attitudes process (H_1-IV)

Most significantly, as language attitudes are theorized to reflect consecutive categorization and stereotyping processes (e.g. Dragojevic, Berglund & Blauvelt 2015; Ryan 1983), this study determined the previously often neglected effect of regional categorization on speaker evaluations. In this respect, it is worth noting that the learners' university education (e.g. the 'Practical Phonetics and Oral Communication Skills' classes; see University of Vienna 2018a) may have positively affected their ability to detect the diagnostic phonetic cues. While about three quarters of the informants categorized the L1 RP speaker as from within England, almost half of the learners were prompted to label the L2 RP presenter as 'German-speaking' by the German language influence in her pronunciation. At a general level, these identification rates indicate that many judges are not only implicitly familiar with the accents through education or the media (e.g. Przedlacka 2005; Roach 2008), but are also capable of cognitively classing and reporting the two accents as 'from England' and as 'German-accented English'.

The allocation of the two speakers to these or 'alternative' categories is consequential for attributions. When the students interpreted L1 RP as being spoken by an L1 presenter from England, both competence and news reader qualifications were more favorable than if classed otherwise. This underlines that the conscious establishment of links between this L2 teaching model and England activates positive competence-related stereotypes (e.g. Mugglestone 2003), which are subsequently reflected in higher competence and news reader assessments. Interestingly, when categorized in line with the literature-based definition (see Trudgill & Hannah 2008; see Section 3.3), also the warmth evaluations of the L1 RP presenter became more favorable. This suggests that if students assign the speaker to the out-group 'L1 English from England' class they show a greater implicit intention to be part of this L1 community (e.g. Tajfel & Turner 1986). This result could, however, again reflect the fact that the informants were students of English, who could subconsciously already have identified more with L1 speakers than students of other subjects. Curiously, the more openly expressed desire to affiliate with the L1 RP speaker did not vary according to regional categorization. This points to an ambivalent role of categorization in the inter-personal attitudes towards the L1 RP speaker, insofar as the students' identification with L1 speech is expressed only subconsciously (i.e. through warmth) but not overtly (i.e. through affiliation).

For the L2 RP speaker, a categorization as 'non-native German-accented' had detrimental effects on competence and news reader evaluations. This confirms that those students who make a cognitive effort to allocate the language features to a 'German non-native' class devalue the L2 RP speaker in these domains in comparison with those who assign her to any other class. In contrast, the warmth and friend assessments of the German-colored RP speaker withstood categorization differences. This implies that affiliation with a speaker possessing an L2 accent like that of the listeners occurs irrespective of cognitive and verbalizable categorizations. Instead, these social attractiveness attitudes to a representative

of the students' own linguistic community could result from more affective or subconscious processes (see Ladegaard 1998; Preston 1999; Milroy & McClenaghan 1977).

The fact that the 'definition-congruent' versus 'alternative' categorizations employed in this study affected attributions lends empirical support to the assumption that people's language attitudes do not merely reflect qualitative differences across varieties (e.g. functional or aesthetic ones; e.g. Myers-Scotton 2006; Edwards 1999). If intrinsic differences across varieties indeed determined language attitudes, then categorization would be entirely immaterial to evaluations (e.g. Dragojevic, Berglund & Blauvelt 2018). As significant effects emanating from categorization on assessments emerged, the students' stereotypic associations with the users of the two RP versions seem to determine the qualities they link with these two RP accents (see also Dragojevic, Berglund & Blauvelt 2015; Yook & Lindemann 2013). The results thereby provide empirical backing for the social connotations hypothesis. Specifically, in impression formation, the phonetic characteristics function as diagnostic cues (see Skowronski & Carlston 1987) that allow L1 and Austrian L2 RP to be assigned to discontinuous classes. Based thereon, the perceivers activate stereotypes associated with these inferred group memberships, which indicates that language attitudes involve consecutive categorization and stereotyping processes (e.g. Dragojevic 2016).

The variance accounted for by categorization does, however, not exceed 5.8% for L1 RP and 12.7% for L2 RP, which corresponds to effect sizes fluctuating between small and medium (see Field 2013). This can be attributed to three main reasons. For one thing, this project only broadly tested students' ability to regionally locate the two different RP speakers based on their pronunciations. Yet, given that accent indexes multiple social identities at various levels (e.g. McGlone & Giles 2011; Edwards 2009), the judges may also have assigned the speakers to socio-economic or ethnic classes. The variance explanation statistics also reflect the method chosen to divide the idiosyncratic open identification responses into mutually exclusive 'definition-congruent' and 'alternative' classes. While this demonstrated general effects of categorization on evaluations, it only allows the conclusion that the ratings by 'definition-congruent'-identifiers differ from the assessments by all others. Relatedly, this method is based on a comparison of an internally homogeneous 'definition-congruent' group with a more heterogeneous 'alternative' group. The heterogeneity within the 'alternative' categorizations, however, can be attributed to the sample size, which did not allow a subdivision of 'alternative' responses into more fine-grained classes and prevented a statistically sound investigation of detailed categorization effects on evaluations. Moreover, language attitudes result from a complex interplay of cognitive and affective processes (see Giles & Marlow 2011). It follows that cognitive and consciously reportable categorizations, be they regional, social or of any other kind, can account only for a limited portion of the variance in speaker evaluations, while additional variability may be explained by affective listener-related factors.

4.4 Limitations and scope for future research

Like all empirical research projects, the present study is not free of limitations. Although the data was solely gathered among students of English at the University of Vienna, the findings are not representative of tertiary learners of English in Austria as a whole. Also, the context in which the attitudes were elicited was predefined as formal in the news reading environment to contextualize the speech samples. While the results resemble assessment patterns for L1- and L2-accented speakers across time, many contexts and study populations, the findings cannot be generalized to more informal environments. Furthermore, the use of different presenters for the production of more realistic stimuli in line with the VG strategy inevitably introduced confounds in the shape of idiosyncratic language behaviors into the research design. Although care was taken to select text readers with similar voice qualities and only small but significant evaluative differences were found, person-specific articulation characteristics could have influenced the listeners' judgments. Although the present study employed a range data analysis procedures from the empirical social research repertoire, the investigation was purely quantitative, which only allows conclusions at a general level. As outlined above, the method for demonstrating categorization effects on evaluations was based on a dichotomous 'definition-congruent' versus 'alternative' comparison, which did not allow more nuanced effects on evaluations to be analyzed. While the raters did not receive additional cues about the two speakers (e.g. name tags as in Dragojevic, Berglund & Blauvelt 2018 or ethnicity as in Yook & Lindemann 2013), categorization may in addition to accent have been determined by suprasegmentals (e.g. speech rhythm or intonation) that were not analyzed in the course of this study.

As these limitations and the variance explanation statistics indubitably indicate, there is much room for further research at the nexus of language attitude and social psychological categorization research. Future studies may, for instance, inspect the effects of more fine-grained regional categorizations on the evaluations of accented speakers by using larger sample sizes. This would allow a more adequate estimate of the amount of variance that regional categorization strategies explain in speaker evaluations. Moreover, the effects of the various non-regional accent categorizations (e.g. allocations of speakers to distinct socio-economic, ethnic or religious classes) on attributions could lead to a fuller understanding of the other categories to which people assign accented speakers and their effects on person impressions. To investigate these aspects, upcoming studies may wish to consider different formats to capture categorizations on the research instruments. While representing respondents' most objective and 'true' categorizations, open-identification tasks inevitably produce highly idiosyncratic listener responses that are difficult to code, as this study has shown. Future experiments could therefore employ closed-ended response item formats, where test subjects are provided the option to select from a list of possible categorizations (see, e.g., Krosnick & Presser 2010 for survey methods). Given the fact that cognitive aspects have received the greatest attention in language attitude research so far, which became apparent from the literature review in Section 1, future investigations are encouraged to take into account affective listener factors in the language attitudes process. In addition,

forthcoming research may opt to manipulate the context in which speech samples are presented in order to investigate how one and the same accented speaker is differently evaluated according to disparate contextual situations. Another variable that is recommended to be systematically varied is the degree of the foreign accent (e.g. German), which would enable a more precise linkage of specific accent features with evaluative down- or upgrading in relation to standard L1 varieties. To allow more detailed insights into why students perform particular categorizations, mixed-methodological approaches can be employed to connect the 'meaning in general' quantitative strategy to the 'meaning in detail' qualitative approach (see Dörnyei 2007).

5. Conclusion

This research project, first and foremost, demonstrates that the attitudes to one particular reference accent within an L2 learner population are susceptible to a great deal of variation. Not unlike evaluations of entire social groups, the judgments of accented speakers reflect two universal social perception dimensions, which account almost entirely for how we characterize other human beings. This shows that language attitudes involve basic mechanisms that reflect evolutionary concepts. At the surface level, even the most subtle phonetic distinctions can greatly affect the impressions speakers make on individual communication partners or on audiences. As no two message recipients are alike, the inclusion of inter-individual differences in their categorizations, as proposed in this article, ensures a greater depth of analysis and sheds light on one mechanism at the heart of the language attitudes process. By evidencing that the superficial evaluations reported in numerous other language attitude studies vary as a function of the differences in the categorization of accent features, this project shows that judgments of a single speaker are informed by stereotypic assumptions about her or his inferred regional group memberships among message receivers. The present investigation altogether extends the series of recent variety categorization research (e.g. Rotter 2019, 2017; Dragojevic, Berglund & Blauvelt 2018, 2015; Yook & Lindemann 2013; McKenzie 2015a) by linking cognitive categorizations to actual speaker evaluations in an L1–L2 interaction context. It thereby intends to inspire further research within the speaker evaluation approach to language attitudes, both at the University of Vienna and elsewhere.

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Appendix

A-1 The text for stimulus production

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. (adapted from BBC 2013)

A-2 The within-participants differences in the evaluations of L1 RP and L2 RP (H_1-*II* and H_1-*III*)

Table A-2. *The speakers' means (and standard deviations) in the four dimensions (n = 217). Underlining between speakers denotes significant differences; double line: p < .001, single line: p ≤ .010; 0.00 = most negative evaluation, 4.00 = most positive evaluation.*

competence		***warmth***		***news reader***		***friend***	
speaker	*M (SD)*	***speaker***	*M (SD)*	***speaker***	*M (SD)*	***speaker***	*M (SD)*
L1 RP	2.91 (0.67)	L2 RP	2.45 (0.67)	L1 RP	2.42 (0.96)	L2 RP	2.47 (0.97)
L2 RP	2.74 (0.78)	L1 RP	2.17 (0.66)	L2 RP	2.18 (1.08)	L1 RP	1.89 (0.89)

A-3 The between-subjects differences in the evaluations of L1 RP and L2 RP according to categorization as 'definition-congruent' and 'alternative' (H_1-*IV*)

Table A-3. *The means (and standard deviations) of the two RP speakers in the four dimensions (n = 217) according to categorization as 'definition-congruent' and 'alternative'. Asterisks and hashtags denote (marginally) significant differences; *** p < .001, ** p ≤ .010; # p < .060; 0.00 = most negative evaluation, 4.00 = most positive evaluation.*

	L1 RP			**L2 RP**		
	definition-congruent	***alternative***	***significance***	***definition-congruent***	***alternative***	***significance***
dimension	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*p*	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*	*p*
competence	3.01 (0.63)	2.64 (0.72)	***	2.52 (0.72)	2.95 (0.77)	***
warmth	2.22 (0.65)	2.03 (0.67)	#	2.46 (0.65)	2.44 (0.68)	
news reader	2.53 (0.87)	2.11 (1.13)	**	1.78 (0.99)	2.55 (1.03)	***
friend	1.90 (0.87)	1.85 (0.97)		2.39 (0.94)	2.55 (0.99)	

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IMPRESSUM:
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