CHAPTER 5: WIDER DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

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Abstract
Chapter 5 offers an extensive critical discussion of the study findings in relation to the seven hypotheses introduced earlier in the book. It begins with a comprehensive discussion of central theme of this book: English nationals' implicit and explicit attitudes towards Northern English and Southern English speech in terms of status and social attractiveness. There then follows a discussion of the influence of the selected individual differences investigated upon the English nationals' implicit and explicit attitudes. The chapter continues with an in-depth examination of the relationship between the participants' implicit and explicit evaluations, with a particular focus on any evidence of implicit-explicit attitudinal discrepancy (IED). From the evidence uncovered, this section considers the direction of, and the specific groups who may leading, language attitude change in progress in England. Moreover, in light of the study findings, the chapter considers the methodological and theoretical value of the study for (socio)linguists and (social) psychologists. Finally, a discussion of the study limitations and suggestions for future research, both inside and outwith England, is offered.

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the fine-grained statistical analysis of the participant responses collected by the different research measures together with a preliminary discussion of the results obtained. Chapter 5 offers a more extensive critical discussion of the study findings in relation to the seven hypotheses introduced earlier in the book. It begins with a comprehensive discussion of central theme of this book: English nationals' implicit and explicit attitudes towards Northern English and Southern English speech in terms of status and social attractiveness. There then follows a discussion of the influence of the selected individual differences investigated upon the English nationals' implicit and explicit attitudes. The chapter continues with an in-depth examination of the relationship between the participants' implicit and explicit evaluations, with a particular focus on any evidence of implicit-explicit attitudinal discrepancy (IED). From the evidence uncovered, this section considers the direction of, and the specific groups who may leading, language attitude change in progress in England. Moreover, in light of the study findings, the chapter considers the methodological and theoretical value of the study for (socio)linguists and (social) psychologists. Finally, a discussion of the study limitations and suggestions for future research, both inside and outwith England, is offered.

5.2: English nationals' explicit language attitudes towards Northern English and Southern English speech

As detailed in Sections 3.4 and 4.3, to gauge the English participants' self-reported evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech we constructed separate explicit attitude instruments for the non-overlapping status and social attractiveness dimensions.

For the status explicit attitude measure, descriptive analysis of the mean self-report responses indicated that the English nationals evaluated Southern English speech much more favourably when compared to Northern English speech. Follow-up *t*-test analysis demonstrated that this difference between self-report ratings for the status of Southern English and Northern English speech was significant.

This evidence indicating English nationals more favourable self-report evaluations of the status of (speakers of) Southern English forms when compared to (speakers of) Northern English forms is generally consistent with the findings of the prior equivalent language attitude studies undertaken in England / the wider UK using direct measures. For example, in a large-scale study employing specific variety labels, Coupland and Bishop (2007) demonstrated that forms of Southern

English speech presented – Southern British Standard English (labelled 'Queen's English') as well as Bristol, Cornish and Norwich English - were typically ranked more positively for status than Northern English varieties spoken in Liverpool, Leeds, Newcastle and Manchester. In a recent replication of Coupland and Bishop's study, Sharma, Levon and Ye (*accepted*) also found evidence that explicit attitudes towards 'Queens English' and 'RP' were significantly more favourable when compared to Northern English and Midlands English speech forms in terms of status. Likewise, in a perceptual dialectology study undertaken by Montgomery (2007) amongst high school students from the north of England, it was shown that participants were frequently able to identify as well as self-report especially negative attitudes towards the status of Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham English accents.

The results obtained by the status explicit attitude measure in the current study also mirror the findings of the plethora of MGT and VGT studies investigating English nationals' evaluations of spoken varieties of English. Indeed, a great deal of consistency has been found from the results utilising these relatively unobtrusive measures over the last 60 years with regard to the perceived status of spoken forms of Northern English and Southern English. Earlier matched-guise studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s, for example, demonstrated that psychology students from the south of England rated London English more prestigiously than Yorkshire English (Strongman and Woosley, 1967) and that English (and Welsh) secondary school students ranked Liverpool English and Birmingham English much lower than SSBE (termed 'RP' and 'near RP') in relation to speaker status (Giles, 1970). A more recent VGT study undertaken by Hiraga (2005) involving participants from the south of England, and which partially replicated Giles (1970) study, also found that greater levels of prestige were afforded to speakers of SSBE when compared to speakers of West Yorkshire English and Birmingham English.

Nevertheless, the self-reported status preference for the speakers of Southern English demonstrated in the current study contrasts sharply with the findings of our foundational research (McKenzie and Carrie, 2018), where explicit evaluations of Northern English speech were found to be significantly more favourable than Southern English speech on the status dimension. However, the explicit measure employed in this foundational study comprised the two magnitude estimation statements: 'I like to hear varieties of English spoken in the north of England'; and 'I like to hear varieties of English spoken in the south of England'. It is important to point out that 'like' is typically regarded as a *general evaluative trait*, that is, it does not specifically gauge affective evaluations (such as cold-warm) or cognitive evaluations (such as perfect-imperfect) (see Crites, Fabrigar and Petty, 1994; Verplanken, Hofstee and Janssen, 1998). Given the use of 'like' within the two statements, the extent to which the instrument assesses participants' status evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech seems somewhat uncertain. It is also notable that the sample recruited for this foundational study was composed solely of English nationals who self-identified as northern (English). Since this group of individuals are also likely to speak Northern English forms, the greater levels of self-reported positivity towards speakers of Northern English are likely attributable to ingroup favouritism (see also Bestelmeyer, Belin and Ladd, 2015). For precisely this reason, in the case of the current study we also examined the potential influence of the participants' self-identified regional provenance, and aimed to determine the potential effect of the strength of this regional affiliation, upon their implicit and explicit evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech. The findings of this analysis are discussed in detail in Section 5.4.

By contrast with the finding for status, preliminary descriptive analysis revealed an overall self-reported preference for Northern English over Southern English speech forms in terms of social attractiveness. Subsequent *t*-test analysis again demonstrated that the difference between self-report social attractiveness ratings for the Northern English and Southern English speech was significant. This result thus *confirms* the prediction made in *Hypothesis 1*, that English nationals would express an explicit preference for Northern English speech in terms of social attractiveness.

The result also parallels the findings of the majority of prior studies employing self-report language attitude measures and conducted both within and outwith England, where more positive social attractiveness ratings were typically found for varieties perceived as non-standard when compared to those forms deemed standard (for overviews see Garrett, 2010; McKenzie, 2010). For instance, the results of several MGT and VGT studies conducted amongst English nationals have uncovered significantly more positive self-report social attractiveness ratings for speakers of

Yorkshire English over London English (Strongman and Woosley, 1967), Southern Welsh English over Standard Southern British English (Giles, 1971) and West Yorkshire English over SSBE (Hiraga, 2005). The explicit social attractiveness ratings obtained in the current study, however, somewhat contradict the findings obtained from Coupland and Bishop's (2007) large-scale conceptual study of language attitudes in the UK. Coupland and Bishop found that Southern English variety labels were frequently ranked more highly in terms of social attractiveness as well as status (though to a lesser degree) when compared to the Northern English variety labels, such as Liverpool, Newcastle and Leeds, and the Midland English labels, such as Birmingham and Black Country. Nonetheless, Coupland and Bishop were themselves critical of the employment of broad variety labels as stimuli and called for the additional incorporation of 'less abstract' self-report instruments within the design of future language attitude studies undertaken within the UK context (2007: 85) (see also Sharma, Levon and Ye, *accepted*). Moreover, whilst the study involved a large number of participants (N = 5010), they were recruited from throughout the UK, as opposed to from England only, and information regarding the regional provenance of the English participants was not provided. In the case of the current study, it is hoped that the specific employment of a series of fine-grained magnitude estimation scales to assess the self-report attitudes of *English* nationals, as well as the detailing of the participants' self-reported regional affiliation within England, has helped respond to Coupland and Bishop's (ibid) call for additional research incorporating other attitudinal measures. An in-depth discussion of the influence of the English nationals' regional affiliation upon their self-report and automatic evaluations of the status and social attractiveness of Northern English and Southern English speech can be found in Section 5.4.

In short, analysis of the data obtained from the self-report measures indicated that the English nationals were significantly more positive towards Southern English in terms of status but significantly more favourable towards Northern English in terms of social attractiveness. This evaluative pattern seems broadly consistent with the findings obtained from the plethora of explicit language attitude studies undertaken over the previous 60 years – whether employing direct questioning or the matched-guise / verbal-guise technique – where it has been demonstrated repeatedly that varieties perceived as standard are typically rated highly for status whereas varieties deemed non-standard are generally evaluated highly for social attractiveness (Garrett, 2010; Dragojevic, Giles and Watson, 2013).

As detailed in Section 2.3, the two non-overlapping status and social attractiveness dimensions demonstrated within sociolinguistic research align with the primary attitudinal dimensions uncovered by abundant studies conducted within the fields of social cognition and social psychological investigating explicit evaluations of a range of non-language related social groups: competence (related to perceived ability and efficacy); and warmth (related to friendliness and trustworthiness) (Cuddy, Fiske and Glick, 2008; McKenzie, Kitikanan and Boriboon, 2016). Interestingly, social psychologists have found strong evidence for a compensatory evaluative pattern whereby higher status groups - such as doctors - are typically rated positively for competence, they are frequently evaluated negatively for warmth. By contrast, lower status groups - such as the elderly - are frequently judged negatively for competence but positively for warmth (see Fiske, Cuddy, Glick and Xu, 2002; Kervyn, Yzerbyt, Demouline and Judd, 2008).

Language scientists have also begun to investigate whether similar compensatory patterns of self-report evaluations are expressed towards the language employed between and within different speech communities. For instance, in a relatively recent verbal-guise study, McKenzie, Kitikanan and Boriboon (2016) uncovered evidence of compensation in relation to Thai university students' explicit ratings of (standard) Mid-West United States English and Indian English. Specifically, it was discovered that the Thai participants rated the US English variety higher in competence / status but lower in warmth / social attractiveness in comparison with Indian English. Similarly, in a large-scale questionnaire study, Yzerbyt, Provost and Corneille (2005) found that both French and Belgian nationals rated (standard) French highly on competence / status but lowly on warmth / social attractiveness when compared to (non-standard) Belgian French. Nonetheless, Yzerbyt, Provost and Corneille highlighted a need for further language attitude research which tests the extent to which, if at all, compensatory patterns can account for status and social attractiveness evaluations within other speech communities.

Given the wealth of findings obtained by social psychology and social cognition researchers – together with the above mentioned results gained from equivalent sociolinguistic research – pointing to the apparent universality of competence and warmth as primary dimensions of human social perception (Fiske, Cuddy and Glick, 2006), it is not unreasonable to assume that a similar compensatory evaluative pattern can account for the ambivalence of the English nationals' self-report ratings for speakers of Northern English and Southern English demonstrated in the current study. Specifically, the high status-low social attractiveness compensatory pattern uncovered in relation to the English nationals' self-report ratings for Southern English points to enduring perceptions of the English spoken in the south of England as 'elite language' (Mugglestone, 2003). It seems likely that these linguistic perceptions reflect the continuation of southern England, and London and the Home Counties in particular, as the centre of power in England and in the UK more widely (Taylor, 1991; Bryant, 2003). Nonetheless, since many of the English participants were recruited from the south of the country, the less favourable self-report social attractiveness ratings for Southern English speech suggest a relatively weak sense of a distinct southern identity and, by extension, a comparative absence of the ingrouping of speakers of Southern English.

Conversely, the higher social attractiveness ratings found for Northern English over Southern English speech likely tap into wider perceptions of English nationals in the north of England as warmer, more humorous and more industrious than their southern contemporaries (Wales, 2006). Furthermore, it has been widely demonstrated that social attractiveness speech ratings are indicative of the level of solidarity expressed with the perceived communities of speakers (e.g., Garrett, 2010; McKenzie and Gilmore, 2017). As a consequence, the positive self-report social attractiveness evaluations of the English spoken in the north of England are consistent with claims surrounding the existence of a strong sense of 'northerness' which remains distinct from broader notions of Englishness (Taylor, 1993; Bond and McCrone 2004). This issue is discussed in greater detail in Section 5.4 with regards to the differences found in the current study between the evaluations of participants from the north and the south of England.

Status attitudes towards a particular language or language variety are also considered to be indicative of wider prestige stereotypes surrounding the speech community concerned (McKenzie and Gilmore, 2017; Dragojevic, Fasoli, Cramer and Rakic, 2021). The English nationals' comparatively lower self-report responses to Northern English speech on the status dimension thus point to a continuation of long-standing negative status-related perceptions of, and accordant prejudices against, the north of England and its inhabitants as socio-economically disadvantaged when compared to the wealthier and more powerful south of the country (Wales, 2000; Wellings, 2018). Again, a more in-depth discussion of this issue is provided in Section 5.4.

5.3 English nationals' implicit language attitudes towards Northern English and Southern English speech

As detailed in Section 3.4, to assess participants' automatic evaluations of Northern English speech and Southern English speech, we specially constructed two implicit measures: a status Implicit Association Test and a social attractiveness Implicit Association Test. This section presents our analysis of the participants' response latencies for each IAT. To ensure comparability between participants' explicit and implicit evaluations we employed the same five positive status and five positive social attractiveness traits used in the self-report magnitude estimation scales, together with their bipolar opposites, in order to form the status IAT and the social attractiveness IAT.

In the case of the status IAT, preliminary descriptive statistical analysis of the participants' responses revealed that their mean reaction times were more rapid for the positive-Southern English block when compared to the positive-Northern English experimental block. Since, more rapid (i.e., lower) reaction times constitute stronger associations, a pro-Southern English / anti-Northern English bias was uncovered in terms of speaker status, with a medium *D* score effect size ($D = 0.22$). One sample t-test analysis indicated that the difference between the *D*-IAT scores across participants was significantly different from zero. This result is in-line with the findings obtained from the status magnitude estimation scales where a significant explicit preference for Southern English over Northern English speech was also found.

In light of the above analysis, *Hypothesis 2*, predicting that English nationals would express an overall implicit preference for Southern English speech on the status dimension was thus *confirmed*. The (medium) strength of this *D*-IAT effect obtained for this implicit status bias in favour of Southern English speech over Northern English speech is broadly consistent with the *D* score effects obtained from IAT studies undertaken by psychologists examining automatic status evaluations of a wide range of other socially important topics. The results of these prior psychological studies have frequently demonstrated implicit biases towards socially prestigious groups and, in turn, uncovered evidence of implicit prejudices against their dichotomous less prestigious valued groups. For example, similar *D*-IAT effects, indicating particular status-related implicit prejudices, have been demonstrated for light skin over dark skin ($D = 0.35$), white American over native American ($D = 0.23$), black over white amongst children ($D = 0.33$) and adults ($D = 0.37$), 'other people' over Arabs / Muslims ($D = 0.14$) and straight over gay ($D = 0.35$) (for detailed meta-analyses see Lane, Banaji, Nosek and Greenwald, 2007; Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann and Banaji, 2009) (see also Section 2.2). Given robust empirical evidence demonstrating the key influence of categorisation processes in the formation and maintenance of prestige-related intergroup biases across different populations (e.g., Tajfel, 1981; Macrae and Bodenhausen, 2000) it seems unsurprising that the implicit (status-related) prejudices against groups deemed to be subordinate – and which have frequently been uncovered by studies employing the Implicit Association Test - have been found to be relatively ubiquitous (Yogeeswaran, Devos and Nash, 2017).

Moreover, as detailed in Chapter 2, a more limited but growing number of studies have employed an IAT and / or other implicit attitude instruments in order to assess automatic evaluations of linguistic stimuli amongst the general public. The majority of these sociolinguistic studies have employed conceptual IATs, i.e., where the linguistic stimuli is composed of a series of textual labels or photographic stimuli, such as lexis in the target languages or linguistic varieties, and which is deemed prototypical of the specific language-based attitudinal object dimensions under consideration. These sociolinguistic IAT studies have also typically involved the incorporation of status-related traits as evaluative attributes. Analysis of the data obtained from these implicit language attitude studies has again frequently indicated significant implicit preferences, and resultant small to medium *D*-IAT effects, with regards to the perceived status of the (speakers of) the particular languages or varieties relative to others.

For example, in recent study conducted in Catalonia, Ianos, Rusu, Huguet and Lapresta-Ray (*in press*) uncovered a significant implicit preference for Catalan over Spanish, together with a medium *D*-IAT effect ($D = 0.24$). Research undertaken in other contexts has found significant implicit biases towards Luxembourgish over French in Luxembourg (Redinger, 2010), native over non-native accents in Germany (Roessel, Schoel and Stahlberg 2018), native speaker English teachers over non-native English teachers in Thailand (Todd and Pojanapunya, 2009), French over English amongst Quebecers in Canada (Lehnert and Horstermann, 2019) and Welsh over English amongst students attending a Welsh-medium school and English over Welsh amongst students attending an English-medium school in Wales (Lee, 2015).

Further evidence of significant implicit linguistic biases has also been demonstrated in the somewhat more limited number of prior auditory IAT studies, i.e., where speech tokens were presented as stimuli. Examples include: towards L1 Italian speech over Chinese-accented Italian speech in Italy (Calamai and Ardolino, 2020); local standard over vernacular variety in Luxembourg and vernacular over distant standard in Belgium (Vari and Tamburelli, *in press*); Standard South African English over Afrikaans-accented English in South Africa (Alvarez-Mosquera and Marin-Gutierrez, 2018, 2021a); and US English over Korean-accented English in the United States (Pantos and Perkins, 2013). The findings from these prior sociolinguistic studies provide strong evidence that individuals typically hold implicit biases in favour of speakers who use standard linguistics forms and, by contrast, implicit prejudices against communities of speakers who are considered to use non-standard forms. This pattern was also demonstrated clearly within our own auditory IAT study where analysis uncovered a significant pro-Southern English / anti-Northern English implicit bias in terms of status.

The results obtained from the status IAT in the current study are also broadly in line with the findings obtained from the status IAT measure employed in our foundational study (McKenzie and Carrie, 2018) examining the automatic attitudes of 90 northern-affiliated English nationals towards

Northern English and Southern English speech. Analysis of the data collected in this prior study also indicated a significant implicit bias in favour of Southern English speech over Northern English speech, albeit with a slightly lower - though also medium - *D*-IAT effect score (*D* = 0.21). However, this foundational study employed a conceptual IAT. As such, instead of speech tokens, the study design involved the presentation of stimuli consisting of textual labels of cities deemed representative of locations in either the north or the south of England. As detailed above, the prior IAT study also involved the responses of comparatively fewer numbers of participants from the north of England only.

For the current project, by contrast, we deliberately recruited a much larger sample (*N* = 308) of English nationals from throughout England to complete the status IAT in the current project. A deliberate decision was also taken to employ an auditory IAT, i.e., to include speech as stimuli. Consequently, it is felt that the implicit status preference demonstrated for Southern English speech in the IAT employed in the current study provides more robust, as well as very up to date, evidence of deeply embedded linguistic bias towards a historically dominant group (speakers of forms of Southern English) and, in turn, prejudice against a traditionally subordinate group (speakers of forms of Northern English) amongst English nationals.

The current study was also composed of a comparatively large sample of self-identifying English nationals from very different social backgrounds, for instance, in terms of age range, regional provenance in England and gender. As a consequence, it is likely that the findings obtained are more generalisable to the wider population (of English nationals) when compared to much of the existing research assessing implicit attitudes towards linguistic variation in English and other languages. Specifically, prior equivalent studies tended to recruit smaller sample sizes (e.g., Redinger, 2010; Campbell-Kibler, 2012; Alvarez-Mosquera and Marin-Gutierrez, 2021a) and / or recruited only specific groups of participants, such as school pupils or university students (e.g., Campbell-Kibler, 2012; Pantos and Perkins, 2013; Alvarez-Mosquera and Marin-Gutierrez, 2018; Lehnert and Horstermann, 2019).

As detailed above and in Section 3.4, we also constructed a social attractiveness Implicit Association Test which differed from the status IAT only in relation to the selection of the evaluative attributes. Initial analysis of the participant responses gathered from the social attractiveness IAT again demonstrated more rapid mean response latencies for the positive-Southern English experimental block when compared to the positive-Northern English experimental block. In accordance with the results for the status IAT, this indicated a pro-Southern English / anti-Northern English bias in terms of speaker social attractiveness, albeit with a small effect size (*D* = 0.12) (see Nosek, Smyth, Hansen, Devos, Lindner, Ranganath, Smith, Olson, Chugh, Greenwald and Banaji, 2007). Once again, one sample t-test analysis indicated that the difference between the *D*-IAT score across participants was significantly different from zero.

As noted in Sections 2.2 and 2.3, previous implicit attitude research, including those studies concentrating specifically upon automatic evaluations of linguistic stimuli, have either included solely status-related traits or an amalgamation of status and social attractiveness traits as evaluative attributes within the instrument design. Somewhat curiously, the concentration upon status evaluations within these implicit studies differs hugely from much of the existing language attitude research employing the MGT, VGT or other self-report measures, where considerable time and effort was frequently invested in the selection of socially meaningful evaluative traits in order to better able to accurately ascertain participants' explicit ratings for social attractiveness / warmth as well as status / competence (Garrett, 2010; McKenzie, 2010). Paralleling the results gained from the self-report magnitude estimation scales utilised in the current project, the findings of prior sociolinguistic studies employing self-report attitude measures have typically revealed a compensatory evaluative pattern where standard speech forms, such as Southern English, are rated positively for status whereas non-standard varieties, such as Northern English, are evaluated more favourably for social attractiveness (Dragojevic, Giles and Watson, 2013; McKenzie, Kitikanan and Boriboon, 2016). However, to the best of our knowledge, social psychologists and sociolinguists have yet to employ discrete implicit measures as a means to compare and contrast social attractiveness as well as status automatic attitudes towards the stimuli under examination. For this reason, the extent to which ambivalent attitudes, including towards linguistic stimuli, are held at implicit as well as explicit levels of evaluation was not known. It was thus felt that the construction and use of an additional social attractiveness-related IAT

as well as a status-related IAT could help address the question of whether the same compensatory evaluative pattern demonstrated for the self-report responses would be found for English nationals' implicit evaluations of (speakers of) Northern English and Southern English.

Overall, fine-grained analysis of the data obtained from the two IAT tasks indicated that, for both status and social attractiveness dimensions, participants expressed a significant preference for Southern English over Northern English speech. This analysis revealed an aligned as opposed to contradictory pattern of evaluations. Clearly, this pattern differs from the findings gained from the self-report magnitude estimation instruments employed in our study where the expected compensatory distribution of high-status ratings for Southern English speech and, by contrast, high social attractiveness ratings for Northern English speech was demonstrated. A more extensive discussion of the similarities and differences between the English nationals' implicit and explicit language attitudes is offered in Section 5.5.

It is considered that the discussion above demonstrates the potential value of incorporating separate social attractiveness and status IAT instruments when the objective is to assess participants' implicit and explicit attitudes towards socially important topics, including towards language-based phenomena. In particular, it is felt that the incorporation of a specific social attractiveness Implicit Association Test, in conjunction with a status IAT, into the design of our experiment can help provide a more valid comparison and contrast with the plethora of prior self-report (language) attitude studies which have frequently included social attractiveness / warmth in conjunction with status / competence measures.

Overall, the ease and manner in which the English participants were able to correctly categorise short sections of speech stimuli – as either Northern English or Southern English speech forms - in the two IATs suggests that the specific linguistic variants presented were socially meaningful for them. Specifically, the findings provide compelling evidence of the perceptual robustness of the presence or absence of vowel lengthening in the BATH lexical set, i.e., the utterance of the shorter [a] vowel or the longer [ɑː] vowel as indexical of Northern English speech or Southern English speech respectively. This result accords with the findings of prior equivalent research conducted over the last 40 years amongst English nationals (see Wells, 1982; Beal 2008a) and highlights that the TRAP-BATH remains a stable and prototypical distinction between the forms of English spoken in the north and the south of England.

There is increasing evidence from the field of speech perception that, when requested to self-report classifications of speaker place of origin from speech stimuli, listeners typically attend to segmental features as opposed to differences in morpho-syntax, lexis, grammar, pragmatics or discourse (e.g., Van Bezooijen and Gooskens, 1999; McKenzie, Huang, Ong and Snodin, 2019). The perceptual prominence of phonological features has been demonstrated in self-report speech perception and variety recognition studies regardless of whether the speech samples were provided by native or non-native speakers (e.g., McKenzie, 2008b; Bent, Atagi, Akbik, Bonifield, 2016; McCullough and Clopper, 2016) or whether the study participants were L1 or L2 users of the language (variety) under consideration (e.g., McKenzie, 2015a, 2015b; Atagi and Bent, 2016). For example, it has been demonstrated that L2 users of English - who are likely to have received lower levels of exposure to variation in the language when compared to native English users - were also generally able to categorise speech accurately as either native or non-native on the presentation of a single phoneme (Park, 2013).

The findings of existing language attitude studies employing direct measures and which have incorporated additional self-report variety recognition tasks into the study design point to the expression of language attitudes as reflections of two sequential processes (e.g., McKenzie, 2008b, 2015a; Yook and Lindemann, 2013; Dragojevic, Berglund and Blauvelt, 2018). First, on the presentation of speech stimuli, it appears that listeners initially categorise speakers according to perceived factors such as age, nationality, gender and social class. Following on from this categorisation, it is thought that listeners are then generally able (and willing) to self-report their stereotypes surrounding, and attitudes towards, the perceived status and social attractiveness of the community to which each speaker is judged to belong (see Dragojevic, Berglund and Blauvelt, 2018; Rotter, 2019; Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan, *in press*). The results of more recent sociolinguistic research incorporating auditory IATs suggests that listeners' categorisations of linguistic stimuli may also lead to the activation of automatic evaluations of the status of the speech varieties presented, e.g.,

in the United States (Campbell-Kibler, 2012), Belgium (Rosseel, 2017), South Africa (Alvarez-Mosquera and Marin-Guitierrez, 2021a) and Italy (Calamai and Ardolino, 2020). Nevertheless, the results of the current study demonstrate for the first time that the presentation of discrete phonemic stimuli – i.e., specifically involving the articulation of BATH variants within single lexical items – is perceptually robust for English nationals at implicit levels of evaluation. The results thus offer robust evidence that the sequential two-stage process of linguistic categorisation and evaluation functions at implicit as well as explicit levels of awareness and along the primary dimension of speaker social attractiveness as well as speaker status.

5.4 The influence of individual differences

Since language attitudes are not homogenous within any given speech community (Baker, 1992; McKenzie, 2010), a specific objective of the project was to help identify individual differences within the population of English nationals which may account for variation in their social attractiveness and status evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech at explicit and implicit levels. A further reason for the investigation of the participants' self-report and automatic evaluations was to help identify which groups may be leading any language attitude change in progress within the English population.

Specifically, in light of evidence uncovered from prior language attitude research undertaken in England and elsewhere, a decision was taken to examine the potential effect of the following individual differences upon the English participants' implicit and explicit evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech: regional affiliation in England; strength of regional affiliation; gender; and age. In the case of the latter, it was felt that the examination of differences in age evaluations in apparent time - in conjunction with the analysis of any implicit-explicit attitudinal discrepancy within the whole sample (see Section 4.6) - may help provide greater clarity regarding of the direction of any generational change underway in status and social attractiveness evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech in England. Moreover, given the robust empirical evidence demonstrating that differences in level of social dominance orientation (SDO) can be a powerful predictor of attitudes towards a range of non-language based constructs (Ho, Sidanius, Pratto, Levin, Thomsen, Kteily and Sheehy-Skeffington, 2012) - together with the current relative lack of research examining the effect of SDO on evaluations of linguistic diversity, and especially amongst L1 users - it was decided to investigate the potential influence of SDO upon implicit and explicit attitudes within the current project. An in-depth discussion of the results presented in Chapter 4 for each of these variables is provided below.

Regional affiliation

During the course of the study, the English participants were requested to classify their regional affiliation in England into one of three categories: northern; southern; or other (typically the English Midlands). Since the specific objective of this part of the project was to examine the potential influence of the English nationals' northern or southern regional affiliation in England upon their self-report and automatic evaluations of Northern English or Southern English speech, the responses of the other (English) cohort will not be discussed in this section. Instead, the potential value of including a larger sample of English participants from the English Midlands in future equivalent studies will be considered later in the chapter (see Section 5.6).

In terms of the self-report status evaluations, fine-grained analysis indicated that English nationals who affiliated as southern were indeed significantly more positive towards Southern English speech than those who affiliated as northern. This result parallels the findings of much of the existing language attitude research examining the influence of differences in regional provenance / regional affiliation where evidence has also been uncovered that those groups who are socio-economically advantaged typically rated the status of their own language or language variety particularly highly (see Dragojevic, Berglund and Blauvelt, 2015). In the United Kingdom, Coupland and Bishop (2007) also found that participants from the south of England were particularly positive towards the prestige of Southern English variety labels than those from other areas of the UK, including from elsewhere in England.

A significant effect for regional affiliation was also demonstrated upon the explicit ratings for Northern English: participants who affiliated with the north of England were significantly more favourable than those participants who affiliated with the south of England. Interestingly, Bishop, Coupland and Garrett (2005) and Coupland and Bishop (2007) uncovered similar evidence of self-reported ingroup loyalty amongst Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish nationals, relative to participants from other UK nations, towards the status of their own traditionally downgraded forms of English (see also McKenzie, Kitikanan and Boriboon, 2016 in relation to Thai nationals' positive self-report ratings for Thai English speech). Nonetheless, the results of our study provide up to date evidence that *English* nationals from the *north* of the country may also be more favourably oriented at explicit levels of evaluation towards the prestige of the historically stigmatised forms of English which they themselves are likely to speak.

In terms of social attractiveness, when compared with the southern English participants, the explicit evaluations of participants from the north of England were again found to be significantly more favourable towards Northern English speech. This result is perhaps unsurprising given the wealth of findings from prior language attitude research indicating that speakers of varieties deemed non-standard frequently express solidarity with those speech forms on self-report measures (see Edwards, 1982; Garrett, 2010). By contrast, the English participants from the south of England rated the Northern English and Southern English broadly similarly on the on the social attractiveness dimension. Since evaluations of linguistic forms are indicative of broader attitudes towards the community of speakers (McKenzie and Gilmore, 2017), the lack of explicit solidarity expressed by the southern cohort towards their own English points – at least to some extent - to the absence of a distinct sense of English 'southerness'. It is interesting to note that this finding is broadly consistent with the view of Bond and McCrone (2004) who maintain, in contrast to individuals from the north of England, English nationals from the southern counties were less likely to express regional pride.

In light of the discussion above, and to *partially confirm* the prediction made in *Hypothesis 3a*, regional affiliation was found to have a significant main effect upon the English participants' self-report ratings for both speaker status and speaker social attractiveness. Specifically, as predicted, English nationals who affiliated with the north of England expressed greater positivity towards Northern English speech when compared to their counterparts from the south of the country. Conversely, the self-report attitudes of the southern English nationals were significantly more favourable towards Southern English speech on the status dimension.

We also aimed to ascertain the potential influence of regional affiliation upon the English nationals' IAT responses. In terms of status, and in line with the self-report ratings, we found that those English nationals who identified as southern expressed a significant implicit bias for the Southern English speaker. Such consistent implicit-explicit evaluations point to the intensity with which many southern participants perceive Southern English speech as prestigious and, conversely, underline the strength of their status-related biases against (speakers of) forms of English spoken in the northern counties of England. However, whilst we found that the northern English nationals' self-report ratings were more significantly favourable towards Northern English speech when compared to the southern cohort, this pattern was not replicated within the northern participants' implicit status IAT scores. The lack of any implicit preference for Northern English amongst the northern group, and thus divergent implicit-explicit status ratings, points to relatively weaker and less stable language attitudes towards the prestige of Northern English speech forms. This finding differs markedly from the consistent positive automatic and self-report attitudes held by the southern-affiliated participants towards the status of their own spoken variety of English.

For social attractiveness, the northern-affiliated English nationals' IAT responses echoed the pattern uncovered for their responses on the magnitude estimation instrument. That is, in accordance with the self-report social attractiveness ratings, further fine-grained analysis of the IAT data demonstrated significant biases for Northern English speech amongst the northern group. The implicit-explicit attitudinal consistency on the social attractiveness dimension obtained from the responses of the northern participants suggests that the comparatively high degrees of solidarity afforded to speaker of their own variety remain strong and resistant to change. However, by contrast with the explicit ratings – where no preference was uncovered - we found that the southern participants expressed a significant implicit bias in favour of Southern English speech. This implicit-explicit attitudinal discrepancy suggests attitude change in progress amongst the southern group in the

direction of a greater tolerance for Northern English speech in terms of social attractiveness (see also below).

We also examined, by means of a further 100-point self-report magnitude estimation measure, the potential influence of differences in participants' intensity (i.e., strength) of regional affiliation upon their implicit and explicit attitudes. Analysis uncovered a main effect within both northern and southern participants' self-report ratings on the status dimension. Specifically, we found that the explicit evaluations of English nationals who affiliated strongly with either the north or the south of England rated the prestige of the English speech of this region were significantly more positive than those who affiliated less strongly. By contrast, no significant effect was uncovered for strength of regional affiliation upon the implicit status responses or upon the implicit and the explicit social attractiveness evaluations. In terms of the latter, *Hypothesis 3b* – that strength of ingroup affiliation with the north of England or the south of England would predict a concomitant explicit preference for Northern English speech or Southern English speech in terms of status and social attractiveness - was only *partially supported* (that is, the effect was uncovered for self-report status ratings only).

The lack of effect upon the social attractiveness ratings is intriguing considering the results of similar prior language attitude research employing direct instruments, where evidence has been found that high levels of (regional) ingroup affiliation, i.e., (regional) solidarity, typically lead to more positive evaluations of the speech of the community in question (see Dornyei, Csizer and Nemeth, 2006; Garrett, 2010; McKenzie, Kitikanan and Boriboon, 2016). Moreover, it was surprising that no effect was found for the participants' responses on the regional affiliation magnitude estimation scale upon their social attractiveness and status IAT evaluations. Clearly, in order to determine the validity of this finding it would seem to be of both methodological and theoretical value to employ other instruments – for instance, though the development of specific implicit measures of regional affiliation – which can help clarify the potential influence of regional affiliation upon implicit language attitudes of study participants in future equivalent research.

Gender

To investigate the potential effect of gender differences, we firstly examined the English nationals' responses on the self-report magnitude estimation scale. Our analysis uncovered a significant main effect for gender upon the explicit evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech for both status and social attractiveness. For both dimensions, female participants rated both Northern English and Southern English speech somewhat more positively than the male participants did. In terms of status, this result partially supports the findings of the majority of prior language attitude studies employing self-report measures to assess the effect of gender, where it was frequently demonstrated that females were more positive towards standard forms of language when compared to males. Evidence for females' greater preference for prestige speech has been uncovered amongst L2 users (e.g., Lai, 2007; McKenzie, 2008a, 2010) as well as L1 users (e.g., Labov, 1966; Baker, 1992; Bilaniuk, 2003; Kristiansen, 2018).

Moreover, as most sociolinguists will be aware, the general pattern of greater female preference for prestige varieties uncovered in these language attitude studies parallels the findings of much of the existing variationist research investigating gender differences in language use. It has been repeatedly demonstrated – for both stable sociolinguistic variables and when linguistic change occurs above the level of awareness – that women tend to employ variants perceived as standard more frequently than men do (though the opposite effect is often observed when the linguistic change underway is below the level of explicit awareness) (see Labov, 1990, 1994 for a more in-depth discussion of principles of gendered variation in language use).

The tendency for females' greater preference for and, relatedly, more frequent use of standard speech forms has traditionally been interpreted by sociolinguists in relation to females' higher sensitivity to the categorisation of the particular linguistic variants deemed standard and non-standard within the particular speech community. This is thought to be because women are generally more status-focussed than men who, in terms of their linguistic use, are thought to be better able to express their masculinity through the usage of non-standard speech (see Trudgill, 1972; Kramarae, 1982). This is broadly comparable with the view of Eckert (2000) who notes that since females generally make greater use of symbolic resources - including linguistic resources - to establish and maintain

their social status, they are more likely to favour and employ prestige speech variants. According to *social role theory* (Eagly, 1987; Eagly and Wood, 2012), gender differences are formed early in life through socialisation processes which derive from culturally specific social norms about how males and females should think, feel and behave (Vianello, Schnabel, Sriram and Nosek, 2013). As such, it would seem likely that any differences between the attitudes held by men and women – including the divergent linguistic evaluations revealed in the present study – are deeply embedded and thus more reliably ascertained through the utilisation of implicit together with explicit measures.

In contrast to the results of much of the prior language attitude research, we found that females were also marginally – though not significantly - more favourable towards the traditionally less prestigious Northern English speech than males in terms of status, i.e., our analysis demonstrated that females' self-report status ratings were a little higher than males for both Northern English and Southern English speech forms. In the specific case of England, our result parallels the findings obtained from two relatively recent studies where similar evidence of positive status ratings amongst females for the varieties of English spoken in the north (in addition to the south) of England was uncovered.

First, in a large-scale investigation of UK nationals' deliberative attitudes towards 34 English accent labels, Bishop, Coupland and Garrett (2005) found that women were significantly more positive towards those forms of English spoken in Lancashire, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle when compared to males (see also Coupland and Bishop, 2007). Whilst the difference between male and female ratings was not found to be significant, more favourable explicit evaluations of Northern English speech were also demonstrated amongst female participants in our recent foundational study (McKenzie and Carrie, 2018). It should be borne in mind, however, that the participants involved in this smaller-scale study were all from the north of England. Nonetheless, the results of the current study provide tentative support to our prior research findings since they offer additional evidence that women from other areas of England, as well as in the north of the country, tend to explicitly evaluate Northern English speech – in addition to Southern English speech - significantly more positively in terms of status in comparison with English men. In light of the analysis discussed above, and in accordance with the findings obtained by McKenzie and Carrie (2018) and Bishop, Coupland and Garrett (2005) examining the self-report evaluations of English nationals, the first part of *Hypothesis 4* of the current study – predicting that female English nationals would express a significantly greater explicit preference than male English nationals for Northern English speech in terms of status – was thus *not confirmed*. It is worth reiterating that whilst our findings point in the direction of Hypothesis 4, the lack of significance suggest that any gender effect is likely to be small.

As indicated above, when compared to males, we found that females expressed a stronger explicit preference for Southern English speech on the social attractiveness dimension. Whilst prior language attitude research has often demonstrated that females were more positive than males towards language varieties on the status dimension, a few studies have revealed the same pattern for self-report social attractiveness ratings. For example, the results of a verbal-guise study conducted in Thailand by McKenzie, Kitikanan and Boriboon (2016) showed that female university students were generally more favourable than males towards both L1 and L2 forms of English on dimensions of warmth (social attractiveness) as well as competence (status). Similarly, in the aforementioned large-scale conceptual language attitude study, Coupland and Bishop (2007) also found that UK-born females afforded significantly higher levels of social attractiveness – as well as status - than males for the vast majority of UK accent labels ('Cornish English', 'West Country English' and 'accent identical to own' were the exceptions).

Further analysis of the gender self-report ratings in the current study, however, indicated that females' higher social attractiveness evaluations were significant for Southern English only. We thus *rejected* the additional prediction made in *Hypothesis 4*, i.e., that females would express a greater explicit preference than males for Northern English speech on the social attractiveness dimension. This finding is of interest since many of the participants who expressed greater levels of solidarity with speakers of Southern English forms affiliated as northern. This is especially intriguing since, as far as we are aware, our study offers the first piece of evidence that females (in England) are more favourable than males towards forms of standard speech, but not non-standard speech, in terms of *social attractiveness*.

Significant effects for gender were also uncovered with regard to the English nationals' IAT responses. Specifically, in terms of status, we found that females were again more implicitly biased towards Southern English speech than males. This finding differs from the participants' explicit evaluations for status, where females rated both Northern English and Southern English speech more positively.

One possible explanation for the somewhat more favourable self-report ratings amongst women, but absence of gender differences within the IAT ratings, with regards to the perceived prestige of Northern English speech is that the female participants felt a little more pressurised, when compared to males, not to appear prejudiced against speech forms traditionally considered subordinate in England. As discussed in the earlier chapters of this book, within England, Northern English forms have historically been considered less correct, and its speakers stereotyped as comparatively poorer and disenfranchised. By contrast, Southern English varieties - spoken by and associated with the more politically and economically dominant English nationals in the south of the country – have been traditionally perceived as more prestigious by English nationals (Wales, 2000; Montgomery, 2007).

An alternative, and perhaps more plausible explanation is that the female participants' differential implicit and explicit evaluations of the prestige of Northern English and its speakers is indicative of (early stage) community language attitude change in progress amongst English nationals. This explanation is supported by the results of prior research demonstrating that divergence between implicit and explicit responses – in this case with regard to English females' evaluations of Northern English – reflects weaker attitudes that are susceptible to change (Luttrell, Petty and Brinol, 2016). Since outwith laboratory settings attitude change typically occurs more easily and rapidly at explicit level, it may be the case that females' somewhat more favourable self-report ratings for Northern English speech provides evidence that this group of English nationals are leading (early stage) language attitude change towards a greater acceptance, in terms of the perceived status, of the (speakers of) English employed in the north of the country. It is worth noting that whilst we did not find a significant difference between females' explicit ratings, the direction of the results was consistent, i.e., in comparison with males, females were significantly more positive towards Southern English speech at implicit level and slightly more positive towards Northern English speech at explicit level of evaluation. This issue is discussed in greater depth in Section 5.5.

Further between-groups ANOVA analysis demonstrated a significantly greater implicit bias amongst females in favour of Southern English speech on the social attractiveness dimension. Since females' self-report social attractiveness ratings for Southern English were also significantly higher than males, these convergent implicit-explicit attitudes, it appears that females' levels of solidarity with English speakers from the south of England are both strong and comparatively resistant to change. This result likewise indicates, in line with established sociolinguistic theory (Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1972, 1974; Eckert, 2000), that English males typically hold consistent and relatively stable social attractiveness evaluations of, and express solidarity with, speakers of traditionally downgraded forms of Northern English.

Social dominance orientation (*SDO*)

In order to ascertain the influence of differences in social dominance orientation upon the English participants' automatic and deliberative evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech, we employed a 16-item SDO scale (Sidanius and Pratto, 2001). Each of the sixteen item statements were assessed by means of 100-point sliding scale (see Section 3.4).

Initial analysis involved the calculation of a combined mean score for participants' responses. Somewhat surprisingly, we found that the English participants who completed the SDO instrument generally exhibited rather low levels of social dominance orientation. This seems especially the case when compared to the higher levels of SDO uncovered amongst study participants in the United States, where much of the prior SDO research has been conducted (see Sidanius, Levin and Pratto, 1996; Kteily, Ho and Sidanius, 2012). Nevertheless, we subsequently classified the participants into high social dominance orientation or low social dominance orientation groups. The next stage of the analysis was to determine the effect of SDO level upon the English nationals' explicit and implicit perceptions of the status and social attractiveness of (speakers of) Northern English and Southern English.

Repeated measures ANOVA analysis showed a significant effect for SDO on explicit status ratings, where it was discovered that English nationals with comparatively high SDO scores were less positive towards Northern English when compared to the low SDO group. This finding is broadly consistent with prior research undertaken by social psychologists, where robust evidence has been uncovered that those individuals with higher levels of social dominance orientation typically self-report more negative attitudes towards groups perceived as lower in status (Kteily, Sidanius and Levin, 2011). Indeed, a plethora of studies have found that SDO is a significant predictor of explicit status-related attitudes towards a wide range of social groups within numerous countries and across many different languages (see Ho, Sidanius, Pratto, Levin, Thomsen, Kteily and Sheehy-Skeffington, 2012; Kteily, Ho and Sidanius, 2012; Pratto et al, 2013). Social dominance theory (SDT) posits that such self-reported attitudinal differences towards dominant and subordinate groups are indicative of individuals' levels of support for existing group-based hierarchies, where those higher in SDO typically endorse the dominant group and those lower in SDO tend to favour equality between groups (Sidanius and Pratto, 2011). As a consequence, research has demonstrated that SDO is a cause, rather than a simple reflection, of negative prestige-related attitudes and prejudices against subordinate groups in a range of social domains (see Kteily, Sidanius and Levin, 2011).

Our finding that higher SDO is a determinant of English nationals' self-report status evaluations of Northern English is also consistent with the results of the limited number of prior sociolinguistic studies investigating the potential role of SDO on attitudes towards speakers of L2 speech forms. For instance, in a matched-guise study, Hansen and Dovidio (2016) demonstrated that US nationals with high SDO, when compared to those with low SDO, were significantly less likely to recommend that Latino and Mandarin English speakers were hired for employment. In a follow-up investigation, Hansen (2020), through the employment of a self-report questionnaire, also found that high social dominance orientation – together with high levels of right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1981; Duckitt and Sibley, 2007) - was predictive of both US and Polish nationals' negative prestige-related perceptions of (speakers of) non-native accents of English and Polish respectively.

Interestingly, no effect for SDO was found on the English nationals' implicit status evaluations of Northern English and Southern English. As such, *Hypothesis 6* - which predicted that higher levels of SDO would predict a significantly greater implicit preference for Southern English speech over Northern English speech in terms of status – was thus *rejected*. It is worth again highlighting that, following established procedure (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle,1994; Sidanius and Pratto, 2001; Ho, Sidanius, Kteily, Sheehy-Skeffington, Pratto, Henkel, Foels and Stewart, 2015), we attempted to ascertain participants' levels of social dominance orientation by means of a self-report scale. It is thus currently unknown whether the use of an implicit measure of SDO – if it is indeed possible to develop one – would have yielded different results. Nonetheless, as indicated below, we did in fact uncover a significant effect for SDO upon the English nationals' implicit social attractiveness evaluations. Moreover, as far as we are aware, researchers have yet to investigate the potential influence of differences in SDO upon implicit attitudes towards either language or non-language-based stimuli. For this reason, the current study should be considered exploratory in nature and further research, employing more fine-grained measures of social dominance orientation to investigate its potential effect upon the implicit status-related evaluations of dominant and subordinate social groups seems necessary (see also Section 5.6).

A significant effect was again uncovered for the participants' explicit social attractiveness ratings. Specifically, paralleling the explicit status evaluations, those participants with higher SDO expressed greater negativity towards Northern English speech. This effect upon *social attractiveness* self-report attitudes is interesting given that social dominance orientation – the individual's degree of preference for inequality amongst social groups – is viewed specifically as a *status-related* personality variable (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle, 1994). The effect is additionally intriguing since SDO was also found to play a significant role in determining implicit social attractiveness attitudes, where English nationals with higher levels of SDO were shown to be more favourable towards Southern English. Indeed, it is worth noting that there does not appear to be any research specifically examining the role of SDO on social attractiveness / warmth evaluations of social groups. Hence, whilst somewhat speculative, the findings of the current study suggest that, in addition to prestige evaluations, high levels of SDO can also unduly affect individuals' levels of solidarity with

subordinate groups – at least amongst English nationals – and imply that the influence of SDO on social group attitudes may be more complex and nuanced than currently thought. Notably, in contrast with the findings of prior SDO studies where it was often demonstrated that men held higher levels of SDO than women (see Sidanius and Pratto, 2011), no interaction effect was uncovered in the current study between SDO level and gender upon the English participants' implicit or explicit language attitudes.

To summarise, the results of the current large-scale study serve to clarify the findings of the limited amount of sociolinguistic research which have examined the influence of SDO upon US and Polish nationals' self-report evaluations of the status of speakers of L2 accents. Specifically, the results obtained indicate that higher levels of SDO can also determine negative deliberative status and social attractiveness attitudes amongst English nationals towards subordinate groups of L1 speakers of English in England. Fine-grained statistical analysis also demonstrated that high SDO is predictive of unfavourable evaluations – at implicit as well as explicit levels – towards a historically denigrated community of speakers in terms of social attractiveness. According to social dominance theory, group-based hierarchies are formed and perpetuated by hierarchy legitimising myths within particular communities (Sidanius and Pratto, 2011). Consistent with current language attitude theory (e.g., Dragojevic, Berglund and Blauvelt, 2018; McKenzie, Huang, Ong and Snodin, 2019), analysis of the SDO data in the current study highlight that that language-based myths and associated positive and negative stereotypes about the perceived group(s) of speakers under consideration can play an important role in the legitimatisation of social group hierarchies.

It is worth noting that we also examined the influence of age as an individual difference upon the English nationals' self-report and automatic evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech (see Sections 3.4 and 4.6). Since we requested that our study participants state their age principally to be better able to determine any potential change in English nationals' implicit and explicit language attitude in apparent time (Bailey, Winkle, Tillery and Sand, 1991), the discussion of the effect of age differences is detailed in Section 5.5 below.

5.5 Comparing and contrasting implicit and explicit language attitudes

In order to assess the intensity of English nationals' evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech, and to be able to identify the direction of any language attitude change in progress, a further objective of the project was to examine the extent to which English nationals' automatic and deliberative attitudes diverge or converge. As detailed in Section 2.2, empirical evidence suggests that consistent implicit-explicit evaluations indicate attitudinal strength whereas implicit-explicit attitudinal divergence (IED) is indicative of weaker and less stable evaluations (see Karpen, Jia and Rydell, 2012). Evaluations which exhibit high levels of IED are also more susceptible to attitude change (Wilson, Lindsey and Schooler, 2000; Luttrell, Petty and Brinol, 2016). Moreover, empirical research has indicated that in naturalistic settings, rapidly and recently learnt explicit evaluations generally change at a faster rate than more slowly-acquired and deeply-entrenched implicit evaluations (Gregg, Siebt and Banaji, 2006; Dovidio, Kawakami, Smoak and Gaertner, 2009). For this reason, when evidence of IED is uncovered, any early-stage attitude change in progress can generally be ascertained from participant responses on the self-report measure(s) as opposed to the implicit measure(s) employed (Lai et al., 2016; Charlesworth and Banaji, 2019).

To examine the relationship between the English nationals' implicit and explicit evaluations, correlation analysis was firstly conducted on their responses obtained from the *status* measures. The analysis revealed a weak, although significant, positive relationship between the *D*-IAT scores and self-report difference ratings ($r = 0.28$). This result is consistent with the generally positive but weak relationships uncovered between implicit and explicit attitudes towards other socially sensitive domains, where meta-analyses found average implicit-explicit correlations of 0.19 (Hofmann, Gawronski, Gschwendner, Le and Schmitt, 2005) and 0.22 (Lane, Banaji, Nosek and Greenwald, 2007). These include low correlations between the responses obtained from IAT and explicit measures with regard to differences in age ($r = 0.13$), disability ($r = 0.14$), gender ($r = 0.16$) weight ($r = 0.20$), skin tone ($r = 0.22$) and race ($r = 0.31$).

Interestingly, the majority of these status-focussed studies have also found greater levels of negativity towards socially disadvantaged groups on implicit when compared to explicit measures

(Lane, Banaji, Nosek and Greenwald, 2007), most particularly with regard to implicit-explicit racial attitudes ((Petty and Brinol, 2009). Moreover, since higher implicit-explicit correlations have generally been demonstrated for less socially meaningful topics, such as consumer attitudes (Dovidio, Kawakami, Smoak and Gaertner, 2009), the low status-related implicit-explicit correlation found in the current sociolinguistic study points strongly to English language diversity as a highly socially meaningful topic for English nationals throughout England.

Similar weak implicit-explicit relations have also been found by language scientists investigating attitudes towards linguistic variation in New Zealand (e.g., Babel, 2010), the United States (e.g., Campbell-Kibler, 2012), Luxembourg (e.g., Lehnert, Schwerdt and Horstermann, 2018a, 2018b), Belgium (e.g., Rosseel, Speelman and Geeraerts, 2019a, 2019b), Italy (Calamai and Ardolino, 2020) and the Netherlands (Dekker, Duarte and Loerts, 2021). Most importantly, the asymmetric relationship between English nationals' implicit and explicit language attitudes uncovered in the current study also broadly supports the results of the foundational study undertaken by McKenzie and Carrie (2018) amongst English participants from the north of the country, where a low correlation between automatic and deliberative status attitudes towards Northern English and Southern English speech was also revealed. More specifically, this earlier foundational study discovered that participants' self-report ratings were most favourable for Northern English speech whereas their implicit attitudes were most positive towards Southern English speech.

Notably, implicit-explicit attitudinal discrepancy (IED) was demonstrated in the current study despite the previously mentioned finding that the English nationals evaluated the prestige of Southern English speech significantly more positively than Northern English speech at both implicit and explicit levels (see Sections 5.2 and 5.3). It is also worth bearing in mind that subsequent t-test analysis confirmed that the difference between the participants' automatic and deliberative evaluations of Southern English speech and Northern English speech for status was not significant.

However, further ANOVA analysis uncovered an effect for self-identified regional affiliation: southern participants showed a somewhat stronger *implicit* bias in favour of Southern English whereas northern participants expressed a somewhat stronger *explicit* preference for Southern English speech. In the case of the latter, the northern English nationals' more positive self-report ratings for Southern English in comparison to Northern English speech forms points to a degree of linguistic insecurity amongst this group. Evidence of linguistic insecurity with regards to New York City English was also uncovered amongst New Yorkers in Labov's (1966) seminal study which utilised the direct attitude measures of an Index of Linguistic Insecurity lexical test together with follow-up interviews. This finding led Labov to claim that, in linguistic terms, New York '…was a great sink of negative prestige' (1966: 499), particularly amongst lower-middle class New Yorkers (see also Macaulay, 1975). The findings of the current study also suggest that linguistic security exists in the north of England. It is intriguing, nonetheless, that our evidence of linguistic insecurity amongst English nationals from the northern regions contrasts with the findings obtained by McKenzie and Carrie (2018), which indicated that northern English participants' self-report ratings were significantly more positive for Northern English than Southern English speech: a finding which was interpreted as evidence of language change in progress in the direction of greater favourability towards the prestige of spoken forms of Northern English. As noted above, it is again worth bearing in mind that McKenzie and Carrie (2018) did not include traits related specifically to speaker status within their self-report measure.

In the case of the current study, southern English participants' greater bias towards Southern English speech at implicit when compared to explicit levels of evaluation, by contrast, points to language attitude change in progress amongst the community of L1 English users from the *south* of England. Since it is conceptualised that evaluative change typically occurs initially at explicit level, evidence that southern English participants' self-report ratings are less biased against Northern English in comparison with their implicit ratings suggests that this group is leading attitude change in progress in the direction of a greater acceptance of, rather than outright positivity towards, (speakers of) the English spoken in the north of England. As detailed in Section 5.4, we also found that females' self-report status evaluations of Northern English were slightly more positive than males. Although the difference was not found to be significant, it may thus be the case that females from the south of England are driving any evaluational change towards more favourable prestige-related attitudes towards Northern English speech.

However, this interpretation should be treated with some caution. First, it cannot be discounted that the southern participants' comparatively less unfavourable responses towards Northern English on the explicit status measure were a consequence of their particular susceptibility to self-presentation concerns (i.e., that they were less likely to self-report the Northern English speech negatively in order to avoid appearing prejudiced). Secondly, although there is some evidence that females, as opposed to males, tend to drive attitude change towards socially important topics more widely (Wales, 2006), given the historic rivalry between the north and the south of England more broadly (e.g., Osmond, 1988), there does not seem to be a particular reason why females from the southern regions would drive community attitudinal changes towards the English spoken in the north of England. Rather, it seems more likely that northern-affiliated English nationals previously led evaluational change in the direction of greater positivity towards the prestige of those forms of English spoken in the north of England. This earlier northern-led language attitude change may now be largely complete. From this perspective, our up-to-date evidence of more favourable self-report status ratings for Northern English amongst the (laggard) southern-affiliated English cohort – who were historically most negative towards Northern English and its speakers - points to late stage evaluational change in progress within the wider community of English nationals. This explanation is supported by the findings uncovered by McKenzie and Carrie (2018), who also found that (younger) female participants from the *north* of England were leading the change in the direction of a greater status-related tolerance for Northern English speech forms. However, it should be borne in mind that this earlier study recruited participants solely from the north of England and, as such, no regional comparisons were possible.

We also conducted correlation analysis on the English nationals' IAT and magnitude estimation scale responses on the *social attractiveness* dimension. As a reminder to the reader, the English participants' self-report responses were significantly more favourable for Northern English speech whereas their automatic responses were significantly more positive towards Southern English speech in terms of social attractiveness (see also Sections 5.2 and 5.3). We thus expected that the responses obtained on the social attractiveness IAT and self-report measure would diverge. Somewhat surprisingly, the analysis revealed a medium, and significant, positive correlation between the implicit and explicit evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech ($r = 0.438$). This finding is interesting since, in comparison with the status ratings, it suggests a stronger tendency for the same participants to be similarly positive or negative towards the speech stimulus on the implicit and explicit social attractiveness measures.

Subsequent t-test analysis nonetheless uncovered a significant difference between the automatic and deliberative responses: providing robust evidence that the IAT and self-report social attractiveness measures tapped into conceptually distinct levels of evaluation (see Nosek, Smyth, Hansen, Devos, Lindner, Ranganath, Smith, Olson, Chugh, Greenwald and Banaji, 2007). A potential explanation for the positive explicit but negative implicit evaluations of the social attractiveness of Northern English once again relates to the absence or presence of social desirability bias in the participants' responses to the self-report tasks. Specifically, by their very design, explicit attitude measures aim to ascertain evaluations which come to mind upon reflection and are open to manipulation (Rosseel, 2017; Pharao and Kristiansen, 2019). Hence, the comparatively positive self-report ratings for Northern English speech in terms of social attractiveness may be influenced by the English nationals' desire not to appear prejudiced against a variety of English often perceived as non-standard. That is, some *high restraint participants* may have edited their responses, i.e., those individuals who are especially willing to inhibit their evaluations in order to maintain a positive self-image, to appear more tolerant and fair-minded and / or to avoid potential conflict with others (Olson and Fazio, 2009). Conversely, implicit measures, including the Implicit Association Test, are designed specifically to control for social desirability bias (Fiske and Taylor, 2021) and, as such, it is more likely that the English participants were unable to conceal their responses to the IAT task. As a consequence, the evaluative pattern uncovered (i.e., significant pro-Southern English implicit biases for social attractiveness as well as status), may better reflect the English nationals 'true' (automatic) attitudes: suggesting that they may be more prejudiced against Northern English speech than the explicit ratings indicate, i.e., English nationals are prejudiced on both dimensions (see also Section 5.3).

Nonetheless, this interpretation cannot fully account for the particular pattern of divergent explicit evaluations but aligned implicit evaluations of social attractiveness and status. Indeed, there exists a more nuanced explanation for the English nationals' differing patterns of self-report and automatic attitudes towards Northern English and Southern English speech. Specifically, it has been noted that that whilst implicit attitudes are especially likely to mirror wider hierarches of domination and subordination within the society under consideration, explicit attitudes are frequently more personal and distinct from wider societal norms and cultural associations (Karpinski and Hilton, 2001; Dasgupta, 2013). From this perspective, English nationals' more positive self-report social attractiveness attitudes towards Northern English speakers would thus likely be reflective of perceptions of personal identity and affiliation. By contrast, their more favourable implicit attitudes towards Southern English speakers on both status and social attractiveness dimensions can be better explained by the endurance of historical and deeply held ideologies which exist within English society more broadly and which stigmatise the inhabitants within the north of England and, by extension, the English varieties associated with the region (e.g., Wales, 2000, 2006). Certainly, because social attractiveness evaluations typically reflect the levels of solidarity with the group(s) under consideration, it is perhaps unsurprising that self-report attitudes (which generally tap into personal affiliations) were found to be more favourable when compared to implicit attitudes (which are thought to gauge wider societal ideologies).

We also uncovered a significant effect for regional affiliation upon implicit-explicit social attractiveness responses to the English speech varieties. Specifically, the participants who affiliated with the north of England expressed both an implicit and explicit bias in favour of Northern English speech. This finding again seems unsurprising since expressions of ingroup solidarity, including positive social attractiveness / warmth evaluations of speakers of one's own language or language variety, are frequently indexical of local, regional or national identities, including in the north of England (e.g., Dyer, 2002; Llamas, 2007; Beal, 2010). Hence, in support of current language attitude theory (McKenzie, Kitikanan and Boriboon, 2016; Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan, *in press*), the positive implicit and explicit social attractiveness attitudes towards spoken forms of Northern English seem to reflect broader, and likely compensatory, positive perceptions of the warmth and resilience of Northern English people, especially amongst members of the community of northern English residents themselves. Contrastingly, although the IAT and self-report evaluations of the southern English participants were more positive towards Southern English speech in terms of social attractiveness, their implicit bias was found to be significantly more intense than their explicit bias. This evidence of IED amongst the southern-affiliated English nationals, where self-report social attractiveness attitudes towards Northern English were revealed to be less negative than automatic attitudes, again suggests some degree of attitude change towards a greater tolerance of Northern English speech.

In summary, analysis revealed conceptually distinct implicit and explicit attitudes towards Northern English and Southern English speech on dimensions of both status and social attractiveness. For status, the English nationals automatic and deliberative evaluations were significantly higher for Southern English speech when compared to Northern English speech. For precisely this reason, the first part of the prediction made in *Hypothesis 7* - that English nationals would hold significantly more positive explicit attitudes than implicit attitudes towards Northern English speech in terms of status – was *not accepted*. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that participants from the south of England were significantly more positive towards Northern English speech at explicit when compared to implicit levels of evaluation. This evidence, in turn, points to evaluational change in progress amongst southern English nationals in the direction of less biased attitudes towards (the community of speakers of) English forms employed in the north of England. This issue is also discussed below in relation to generational change in language attitudes in England.

For social attractiveness, conversely, the second part of *Hypothesis 7* - that English nationals would hold significantly more positive explicit attitudes than implicit attitudes towards Northern English speech in terms of social attractiveness – was *confirmed*. The significantly more favourable self-report responses are again indicative of attitude change underway at explicit levels of evaluation, where English nationals, from both within and outwith the north of the country, appear to express growing levels of solidarity with speakers of Northern English. Moreover, as discussed above, whilst the IAT and self-report social attractiveness responses of the northern-affiliated English participants

were found to be similarly favourable, the attitudinal shift underway seems to be driven especially by English nationals from the south of England. Consequently, whilst prior smaller-scaler sociolinguistic research has suggested that northern English nationals are becoming less biased against Northern English speech forms (McKenzie and Carrie, 2018), the data obtained from the current large-scale study extends our understanding of language attitudes in England by providing empirical evidence that social attractiveness evaluations of Northern English are also increasingly favourable for a considerably larger sample of English nationals from throughout the country.

Age

As detailed in Sections 3.4 and 4.2, we also asked participants to state their age. This information was requested in order to validate (or not) the findings of our foundational study (McKenzie and Carrie, 2018) investigating apparent time age differences within the explicit and implicit status attitudes of English nationals from the north of England. It was likewise felt that the collection of age data could offer further insights into the direction of any language attitude change in progress on dimensions of status and social attractiveness as well as help determine the specific groups who may be leading any attitudinal change underway towards Northern English and Southern English speech. It is for precisely this reason that we consider the effect of age immediately following our discussion of implicit-explicit attitude discrepancy rather than earlier in the chapter.

The initial stage of the analysis involved the categorisation of participants into three different age groups: younger (18-35 years old); middle-aged (36-55 years old); and older (55 to 80 years old). Subsequent analysis uncovered no significant effect for age upon the English nationals' explicit status ratings for Southern English or Northern English speech. The first part of *Hypothesis 5* - which predicted that younger English nationals would express a significantly greater preference for Northern English speech in terms of *status* - was thus *rejected*. This result contrasts with the findings of our foundational study (McKenzie and Carrie, 2018) undertaken amongst English nationals solely from the north of England, where the self-report ratings of younger participants were found to be more favourable than older participants towards Northern English speech forms on the status dimension. In the case of the current study, the lack of age-graded differences demonstrated between the participants' responses obtained from the self-report status measure suggests that English nationals' evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech are either broadly stable or that earlier attitudinal shifts are almost complete and thus not currently changing at explicit level.

Nonetheless, subsequent repeated measures ANOVA analysis revealed that older participants held significantly more positive implicit evaluations of (speakers of) Southern English speech when compared to the middle-aged or younger participants. In other words, the group of older English nationals demonstrated a greater implicit status bias against Northern English speech. If we once again take into account that evaluational change in progress tends to occur initially at explicit level and only later at implicit level, this finding suggests generational attitude change over the medium to longer term in the direction of lower levels of prestige-related bias against the community of Northern English speakers. Our analysis indicated that this ongoing generational shift in linguistic attitudes is led by both younger and middle-aged northern-affiliated English nationals within the wider community of English users in England. It is for this reason that the most intense status biases against Northern English speech forms were to be found amongst the implicit evaluations of the cohort of older English nationals. Interestingly, further evidence of a generational attitude change away from traditional prestige-related ideologies surrounding the dominant speech community of Southern English speakers, and towards a greater tolerance of the historically subordinate group of users of forms of English spoken in the north of England (see also Mugglestone, 2003), was provided by the finding that the IAT status responses of younger participants were also considerably less biased than middle-aged participants towards the Northern English speech stimuli (though the difference was not significant).

No significant age-graded effect was uncovered amongst the English nationals who also completed the self-report social attractiveness measure. Accordingly, the second part of *Hypothesis 5* - that younger English nationals would express a significantly greater explicit preference for Northern English speech in terms of social attractiveness - was similarly *rejected*. However, further analysis demonstrated that the older English nationals' IAT evaluations were significantly more biased

towards Southern English speech when compared to the younger and middle-aged participants. This result both parallels and provides further nuance to the uncovering of IED on the social attractiveness dimension discussed above, where evidence of shifting attitudes towards Northern English amongst English nationals was also found. Specifically, the higher level of implicit bias in favour of forms of English spoken in the south of England amongst the older cohort provides additional evidence, in apparent time, that younger English nationals are leading attitude change towards the expression of greater levels of warmth for the community of Northern English speakers.

Moreover, the generational change in language attitudes appears to be prolonged because the middle-aged group were also found to hold comparatively lower levels of implicit social attractiveness bias against the Northern English speech stimuli. Conversely, it was discovered that older English nationals remained the most positive towards Southern English speech in terms of social attractiveness. Nonetheless, as discussed in the previous section, we also found evidence that the rate of language attitude change towards a greater acceptance of spoken forms of Northern English was most rapid amongst the southern-affiliated group of English *laggards* i.e., those individuals within the wider (speech) community who were most likely to held the most traditional attitudes and who typically resisted the adoption of incoming (attitudinal or linguistic) changes most intensely (for an overview of adopter categories see Rogers, 2003; Stuart-Smith and Timmins, 2010). Building on established variationist sociolinguistic theory in relation to the process of incoming changes in linguistic *usage* within a given speech community (e.g., Bailey, Winkle, Tillery and Sand, 1991; Tagliamonte, 1998), evidence of ongoing evaluational shift amongst older English nationals in apparent time data – in the direction of greater tolerance of Northern English speech - points to the diachronic *attitudinal* change in progress as almost complete on the social attractiveness dimension as well as the status dimension.

5.6 Final remarks, limitations and the future

The specific linguistic features a speaker employs carry considerable social meaning for listeners and can evoke strong reactions regarding notions of the correctness and appropriateness of the speech as well as determine perceptions of the speaker's status and social attractiveness. Indeed, there is evidence that language, and phonology in particular, acts as a more meaningful cue for social categorisation when compared to visual information (e.g., Rakic, Steffens and Mummendey, 2011a). Public attitudes towards specific languages and language varieties are especially impactful since they reflect evaluations of the communities to which speakers are perceived to belong and are indicative of wider social stereotypes and group biases. As detailed in Chapter 2, since linguistic variation is socially structured within speech communities and, by extension, different speech forms index membership of particular social, national and / or ethnic groups, the study of language attitudes can thus reveal linguistic preferences and prejudices against communities of speakers of different languages and their varieties.

Knowledge of attitudes towards language-based diversity can thus help researchers account for wider societal prejudices. Specifically, prejudicial linguistic attitudes have undue social implications for speakers of stigmatised language forms whilst speakers of more positively evaluated forms are socially advantaged. Indeed, there exists considerable empirical evidence that lay attitudes towards different speech varieties have a range of important social implications for speakers, including determining job interview outcomes, the perceived guilt or innocence of court defendants, the acceptance (or not) of specific immigrant groups, teachers' ratings of their students' abilities and the perceived credibility of the utterance itself (see McKenzie and Gilmore, 2017).

In light of growing concerns surrounding the validity of the data obtained by more traditional explicit self-report attitude instruments, social psychologists developed implicit measures in order to investigate individuals' automatic evaluations of a range of stimuli. The utilisation of these instruments has helped researchers uncover and account for more deeply embedded prejudice - which is difficult to change - in a number of different socially sensitive domains. Implicit biases have been found, for instance, against particular national and ethnic groups as well as particular genders and sexual orientations (see Hofmann, Gawronski, Gschwendner, Le and Schmitt, 2005). Since individuals' implicit and explicit attitudes do not change at the same rate, the examination of implicit-explicit attitude discrepancy (IED) can also reveal valuable information about any attitude change in

progress, the social groups leading evaluational change and, in turn, help ascertain whether levels of prejudice are increasing, decreasing or broadly stable. Nevertheless, language scientists have traditionally investigated only explicit ratings of linguistic diversity, including amongst English nationals, and only very recently assessing individuals' implicit language attitudes (e.g., Campbell-Kibler, 2012; Rosseel, Speelman and Geeraerts, 2019b). As such, prior to the current project no in-depth research had been undertaken which specifically examined implicit language attitudes in England and none investigating the extent to which implicit-explicit attitude divergence (IED) towards linguistic use determines language attitude change. This is surprising given the importance linguistic use plays in person perception as well as the relative paucity of research examining changes in community linguistic attitudes.

In view of the above discussion, the principal objective of the current sociolinguistic project was to gauge English nationals' implicit attitudes together with their explicit attitudes towards Northern English and Southern English speech: the most socially meaningful distinction made between regional varieties in England (Wales, 2006). Consistent with the findings of prior equivalent studies, fine-grained statistical analysis of the English nationals' self-report responses demonstrated the expected compensatory pattern of more positive status evaluations of Southern English speech but more favourable social attractiveness evaluations of Northern English speech. This finding points to the continuation of the long-established perception amongst many English nationals that forms of English spoken in the southern counties correspond to standard English and, conversely, that Northern English speech forms represent non-standard English. In contrast to the self-report ratings, the responses obtained from the employment of a separate social attractiveness Implicit Association Test in addition to a status IAT revealed a convergent pattern of implicit evaluations. Specifically, our analysis indicated implicit biases in favour of Southern English speech, and against Northern English speech, on both dimensions.

Rigorous statistical analysis of the data obtained from the status IAT and the status self-report magnitude estimation measures revealed only a weak relationship between automatic and deliberative attitudes towards the prestige of Northern English and Southern English speech. Whilst a stronger correlation was found between the social attractiveness IAT and the social attractiveness self-report scale, further analysis demonstrated significant differences between the participants' implicit and explicit evaluations. Taken together, the results indicated significant levels of implicit-explicit attitudinal discrepancy between the English nationals' perceptions of both the status and the social attractiveness of (the speakers of) forms of English used in the north and the south of England.

The divergent evaluational pattern obtained from the four IAT and self-report instruments underlines the theoretical value of investigating implicit as well as explicit attitudes towards linguistic diversity. Specifically, the differences found point to structurally distinct language-based evaluations amongst English nationals and thus accord with contemporary theories espousing the dual nature of attitudes, where automatic and deliberative evaluations are considered to stem from separate mental processes (Bassili and Brown, 2005).

The depth and texture of the results obtained by the different attitude measures employed in the current project also highlight the methodological value of incorporating evaluational traits which are of particular social meaning for the (speech) community under investigation. Awareness amongst sociolinguists has increased in recent years that the traits which elicit evaluative responses from particular communities are highly culture bound. Consequently, when employing the MGT or VGT to investigate self-report attitudes towards linguistic diversity, it has become increasingly common for language attitude researchers to obtain salient bipolar traits in advance of the main study by means of pilot research amongst a smaller group of participants considered representative of the target population (e.g., El-Dash and Busnardo, 2001; McKenzie, 2010; McKenzie and Gilmore, 2017). By contrast, there has been a general tendency in much of the existing implicit attitude research conducted by social psychologists to employ the same set of evaluative adjectives when investigating different topics and amongst very different populations. The results of the current study suggest that when investigating implicit attitudes as well as explicit attitudes, in order to be able to interpret any results gained with greater confidence, researchers should not assume that the same evaluative traits are salient for different communities.

The current research project also appears to be the first to incorporate a separate implicit social attractiveness measure into the study design. The divergent automatic and self-report social

attractiveness evaluations of the English spoken in the north and the south of England, in particular, provide important evidence that expressions of linguistic solidarity are not unidimensional and are thus more nuanced than previously assumed. It is worth bearing in mind that we cannot completely discount that social desirability biases had an undue affect upon the self-report social attractiveness ratings. Nonetheless, as discussed in Section 5.5 above, it seems more likely that the implicit bias demonstrated in favour of Southern English speech for social attractiveness – in addition to status – reflect broader community ideologies surrounding the stigmatisation of the north of England and its inhabitants and, in turn, the varieties of English associated with the region. From this perspective, the favourable self-report attitudes towards the social attractiveness of (speakers of) Northern English, by contrast, were likely a reflection of more personal affiliations. In terms of status, the positive evaluations of Southern English speech demonstrated at both implicit and explicit levels offered evidence that forms of English spoken in the north of England – including General Northern English – remain relatively stigmatised.

As detailed earlier in the book, and perhaps surprisingly, there is a dearth of research investigating the potential role of individual differences upon implicit and explicit attitudes towards language-based stimuli. The results of the current study indicated that differences in the English nationals' regional affiliation, strength of regional affiliation, gender and age were significant predictors of their automatic and self-report attitudes towards the status and social attractiveness of varieties of English. In the first study of its kind, we likewise found evidence that level of social dominance orientation had a significant effect upon the English nationals' implicit and explicit evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech.

Moreover, the analysis of the effect of these individual differences, in conjunction with further comparison and contrast of the implicit and explicit evaluations of the whole sample of participants, afforded valuable information regarding language attitude change in progress in England. Specifically, whilst Southern English and its speakers continue to be perceived as high status, we found some evidence of later stage attitudinal change in progress towards a greater tolerance for, if not unreserved positivity towards, the prestige of (the community of speakers of) forms of English employed in the north of England. This gradual generational evaluational shift away from traditional ideologies surrounding the elevation of those forms of English spoken in the southern regions as the sole representations of standard English in England – and especially RP and SSBE - appears to be well underway. Our analysis thus suggests that the evaluational shift was previously driven by northern-affiliated English nationals and in turn - during the fieldwork period - seems to point to (late-stage) attitudinal change amongst younger English nationals from the historically more biased (laggard) community from the south of England.

Interestingly, analysis of the English nationals' implicit and explicit evaluations also revealed some evidence of generational change in progress in the direction of more favourable social attractiveness evaluations of Northern English speech. This attitudinal change appears to be led by younger northern-affiliated participants: offering evidence of growing levels of solidarity with fellow inhabitants from the north of England and pointing to a strengthening sense of northerness distinct from a broader English identity. In addition, the favourable self-report and automatic social attractiveness evaluations expressed by northern-affiliated English nationals towards Northern English speech offers up to date evidence that solidarity with forms of English spoken in the north of England play an important role in the maintenance of this northern regional identity. The analysis of the automatic and deliberative evaluations for social attractiveness indicated that southern-affiliated English nationals also expressed somewhat higher levels of solidarity with Southern English speech. This result is intriguing since it seems to challenge Bond and McCrone's (2004) assertion that there is an absence of a distinct southern English identity (see also Section 1.2).

This monograph represents the first book-length examination of implicit and explicit language attitudes. It is hoped, in particular, that the considerable care taken to specially construct and incorporate separate implicit and explicit status and social attractiveness measures into the study design has highlighted the methodological potential for a more nuanced approach to the examination of automatic and deliberative attitudes towards linguistic diversity in England and elsewhere. Relatedly, it is also hoped that the findings of this large-scale sociolinguistic project underline the theoretical value of employing a dual processing framework to aid understanding of the complex and often contradictory attitudes which individuals hold towards language varieties as well as to help

ascertain and better account for any language attitude change underway within the community under investigation.

Nonetheless, there are undoubtedly several limitations associated with the design of the study and further examination seems necessary. First, although a great deal of care was afforded to the design of the large-scale empirical study, the stimuli for the Implicit Association Tests were composed of speech recordings of the two variants of the BATH lexical set whereas the stimuli for the self-report magnitude estimation scales constituted written text. The possibility thus exists, however unlikely, that the divergence uncovered between the English nationals' implicit and explicit evaluations may have been due the different stimuli presented for evaluation. To discount this possibility and to help validate the results of the current study, it is imperative to undertake further research investigating automatic and deliberative language attitudes which incorporates specially developed implicit and explicit instruments composed of the same speech stimulus.

Secondly, since the IAT is designed specifically to compare and contrast automatic evaluations of binary attitudinal objects, during the course of the study it was possible to present recordings of phonological features of two linguistic forms only – i.e., General Northern English and Standard Southern British English – provided by two young and highly educated females. In order to help build up a more detailed picture of the English nationals' implicit and explicit attitudes towards linguistic variation it would be profitable to include recordings of other forms of English spoken in the northern and southern regions of England for evaluation. For instance, further studies investigating differences between automatic and deliberative evaluations of Liverpool English, Tyneside English, East Anglian English, Estuary English and Multicultural London English seem necessary. Moreover, our project findings suggest that the specific linguistic differences between the English forms spoken in the northern and southern areas of England – in terms of phonology, phonetics, morpho-syntax, lexis and grammar - continue to be the most socially meaningful and perceptually robust distinction which English nationals make between regional varieties of English in England (see Trudgill, 1999; McKenzie and Carrie, 2018). However, much remains to be understood with regards to the place of those forms of English spoken within, and the perceptions of speakers from, the East Midlands and West Midlands of England within this binary north-south sociolinguistic division (see Clark and Asprey, 2013; Braber, 2014).

Thirdly, and relatedly, a decision was taken to employ [a] and [ɑː] realisations of BATH as stimuli within the status IAT and social attractiveness IAT because there is reliable evidence that the presence or absence of the TRAP-BATH distinction is prototypical of north-south linguistic divide in England (e.g., Beal, 2008a). Nevertheless, future equivalent research could include other linguistic features which may help English nationals categorise speakers to be from the north or the south of England. In terms of phonology, for example, it be worthwhile to investigate differences in English participants' implicit biases in relation to speech stimuli composed of Northern English and Southern English variants of the STRUT variable. If possible, it would also be interesting to present stimuli consisting of different lexical, morpho-syntactic and / or grammatical features spoken in the north or the south of the country (see Sections 1.4 and 1.5). Further research of this type, across different languages and amongst a range of speech communities, seems especially important since it may help researchers uncover the specific linguistic features (or combinations thereof) of particular languages or language varieties which are most salient for listeners at implicit levels of categorisation and evaluation, including in England.

Fourthly, the results gained from the employment of the two Implicit Association Tests to assess the English participants' implicit attitudes in the current study has allowed for meaningful comparison and contrast with the findings uncovered from the plethora of IAT studies examining implicit evaluations of linguistic variation or other socially important topics. However, as a consequence of its frequent use in prior attitude research over the past two decades, the IAT has been subject to extensive criticism. A particular criticism relates to the extent to which, by capturing an index of associations between concepts, the IAT also taps into implicit attitudes (e.g., De Houwer 2002; Fielder, Messner and Bluemke, 2006). Such claims that the IAT merely assesses participants' familiarity with and / or awareness of wider cultural stereotypes have, to some extent, been addressed both empirically and theoretically (see Jost 2019a). Nonetheless, to help counter criticisms of the specific use of the IAT in the current research project, there seems a requirement for sociolinguists investigating automatic evaluations of linguistic diversity to incorporate other implicit attitude

instruments into the design of their studies. Potential additional implicit attitude measures include the Go/No-Go Association Task (GNAT) (Nosek and Banaji, 2001), the Affective Simon Task (De Houwer, 2003), the Implicit Relational Assessment Procedure (IRAP) (Barnes-Holmes, Murtagh, Barnes-Holmes and Stewart, 2010), the Relational Responding Task (De Houwer, Heider, Spruyt, Roets and Hughes, 2015) as well as modifications on the IAT such as the Personalized Implicit Association Test (P-IAT) (Olson and Fazio, 2004) and the Single Category Implicit Association Test (SC-IAT) (Karpinski and Steinman, 2006) (see also Section 2.2).

Fifthly, and relatedly, the IAT - alongside other implicit attitude measures - has been subject to further criticisms with regards to the underlying assumption that attitudes are relatively stable and enduring. Instead, Potter, Hepburn and Edwards (2020), take a discursive psychology approach and argue that attitudes are dynamic and constructed in interaction. From this viewpoint attitudes are context-sensitive evaluations which are highly dependent upon the specific demands of the situation (Schwarz, 2007). To study attitudes in interaction, social psychologists, as well as sociolinguists, have tended to employ sophisticated qualitative methods of discourse analysis (see Liebscher and Daily-O'Cain, 2009; McKenzie and Osthus, 2011). Whilst, by their very nature of their design, these discourse methods are unable to investigate differences between implicit and explicit evaluations, we welcome further micro-level studies specifically examining attitudes towards forms of English spoken in the north and the south of England in interaction.

Sixthly, in order to comply with the British Academy project funding requirement (Grant number MD20\200009), the project fieldwork was undertaken in early 2021. Unfortunately, as a consequence of COVID-19 pandemic, UK Government restrictions during this period prevented the originally envisaged collection of face-to-face data under strict experimental conditions within the laboratory. As a consequence, the only possibility available was to collect the data online and, as detailed in Chapter 3, participants were recruited through the survey website platform Prolific. The major benefits of using Prolific were that we were able to specify that only adult English nationals could partake in the study as well as control for and balance participant numbers in relation to the individual differences under investigation, that is, in terms of gender, age group and regional provenance in England. A major drawback of undertaking the study in this way was that participants were self-selecting in the sense that they were required to register individually with Prolific beforehand and subsequently had to respond positively to our online invitation to partake in the research project. The participants, for instance, may have volunteered to take part in our study because of a particular interest in linguistics or as a result of the relatively generous participant payments offered. As a result, we were unable to ensure that the sample was wholly representative of the wider population of English nationals, i.e., there was a potential issue of selection bias. In order to discount the possibility of any undue influence of selection bias it would be worth a) replicating the research project under laboratory conditions and b) recruiting participants by means of more systematic probability sampling methods.

Seventhly, in the first large-scale empirical study of its kind, we uncovered evidence that differences in the English participants' gender, regional affiliation and age influenced their implicit and explicit evaluations of English speech varieties on both status and social attractiveness dimensions. However, there is also a requirement to determine the extent to which, if at all, other individual differences within the population of English nationals influence automatic and deliberative status and social attractiveness evaluations of (speakers of) Northern English and Southern English speech. It would, for instance, be worthwhile to examine the implicit and explicit language attitudes of participants from England and elsewhere in relation to differences in ethnicity, socio-economic status, and level of educational attainment.

In accordance with the findings of smaller-scale self-report attitude studies conducted amongst L2 learners, the results of our study substantiated social dominance orientation as a potential predictor of automatic and deliberative attitudes towards language variation. However, the 16-item SDO scale employed in the current study (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle, 1994) was originally constructed and subsequently frequently utilised to ascertain the judgements of study participants based specifically in North American contexts. It is perhaps for this reason that, taken together, the participants who took part in our study expressed somewhat lower levels of SDO than typically expressed by study participants from the United States (e.g., Kteily, Ho and Sidanius, 2012) and Canada (e.g., Dhont, Hodson, Costello and MacInnis, 2014). It would thus be valuable for

sociolinguists assessing the influence of SDO on evaluations of linguistic diversity in England to construct and employ an SDO instrument targeted specifically for use amongst English nationals. The findings obtained from such research, it is felt, would help clarify the extent to which, if at all, the degree of preference for inequality (i.e., social dominance orientation) differs between study participants from North America and England. Nonetheless, social dominance orientation is but one of several 'preference for hierarchy' variables which have been examined by social psychologists as potential predictors of attitudes. It is also notable that the 16-item SDO scale utilised in the current study required participants to self-report their responses. One particularly interesting predictor variable which has been investigated in a range of empirical research studies and which could be examined in future language attitude research is *system justification*, that is, the individual's socio-psychological propensity to support the status quo (Jost and Banaji, 1994) (for an overview of System Justification Theory and studies conducted and measures employed within the SJT framework see Kay and Jost, 2003; Jost, 2019b). Since SJT predicts that members of lower-status groups should demonstrate lower levels of implicit preference for their own group when compared to higher status group members, it would seem to be of particular methodological and theoretical value to incorporate measures of social justification into the design of implicit language attitude studies in order to assess its potential influence upon automatic attitudes towards particular language varieties.

Eighthly, when compared to the field of social psychology - where the investigation of attitude change and persuasion remains a central concern - studies of language attitude change remain scarce. However, in the case of the current empirical project, the analysis of the English participants' scores on the implicit and explicit measures, in conjunction with the analysis of the mean evaluations provided by the different age groups, uncovered evidence of generational change in linguistic attitudes in the direction of lower levels of prejudice towards the status of Northern English and its speakers. As detailed above, this attitudinal shift appeared to be in its latter stages and, as such, was most marked amongst younger English nationals who self-affiliated with the southern regions of England. Since the systemic investigation of evaluational change in progress in relation to linguistic diversity is in its infancy, there is a clear requirement for language scientists to conduct further studies. In particular, there seems a need to undertake longitudinal research in order to be better able to identify any language attitude changes in real time as well as to help build up a better picture of the rate and the direction of any evaluational shifts in progress (McKenzie and Carrie, 2018). It would likewise be of considerable theoretical value to conduct additional language attitude studies investigating real time age differences to help identify the extent to which any evaluational shifts between generations are indicative of community wide attitude change in progress or whether, as Sharma, Levon and Ye (*accepted*) posited, age group differences can offer evidence of lifespan attitude change within the individual.

Moreover, as detailed previously, sociolinguists increasingly consider language attitude change to be an important component of the ideological processes which contribute to (socio)linguistic change at both individual and community wide levels (Kristiansen, 2009; Coupland, 2014). It would thus also be useful to conduct longitudinal studies focussing specifically upon the extent to which any real time shifts in evaluations of linguistic features of a given speech community map onto any community changes in the frequency of use of those features. It would, for instance, be valuable to investigate the relationship between any real time shifts in implicit and explicit attitudes towards the BATH variants in Northern English and Southern English and any associated changes in the frequency of use of these variants within different communities of English nationals. In short, it is felt that further investigation of language attitude change in conjunction with the examination of shifting patterns of linguistic use within a specific speech community can contribute to one of the great unknown theoretical issues in sociolinguistics: the relationship between linguistic perception and linguistic usage.

Finally, and relatedly, in addition to evaluational differences between age groups, evidence of language attitude change in the current study was based on the premise that evaluation shifts generally occur more rapidly at explicit than implicit levels. Indeed, as discussed above, there exists a considerable body of empirical evidence confirming that more recently learnt deliberative attitudes change at a faster rate when compared to more slowly acquired and deeply entrenched attitudes (which are less malleable) (Lai et al., 2014, 2016). However, in recent years researchers have also successfully initiated *short-term* attitude change on implicit measures *under laboratory conditions*

(see Brinol, Petty and McCoslin, 2009; Cooper, Blackman and Keller, 2016). In light of these findings, Dasgupata (2013) posited that implicit attitudes change momentarily, and typically return to baseline, because they are malleable in only very local environments (e.g., during individual encounters and / or within restrictive laboratory contexts). Accordingly, Dasgupta maintained that more enduring implicit evaluational shifts are only possible in accordance with wider societal changes, for instance, in association with greater public awareness of the undue implications of racial prejudice and / or linguistic prejudice. We consider that further sociolinguistic studies from this perspective, where implicit attitudes are thought to be largely reflective of deeply embedded societal norms - and social change typically, though not always, occurs gradually – can help account for disparities between rates of implicit and explicit attitudinal shifts and, in turn, further our understanding of language attitude change in progress. However, it is important to bear in mind that the scientific investigation of, and theoretical explanations for, changes in implicit and explicit attitudes is currently in its infancy, and future research employing different implicit and explicit measures as well as more theoretically fine-grained interpretations of implicit and explicit language attitude change seems essential.

To sum up, it is felt that the findings of the current sociolinguistic research project demonstrate that the incorporation of implicit as well as explicit attitude instruments into the design of language attitude studies can offer a more nuanced understanding of language-based prejudice than is generally attainable from the employment of explicit measures alone.

Specifically, although we found evidence of English nationals' comparatively negative explicit status-related biases against (users of) the English spoken in the north of England, it also seems clear that prejudices against Northern English, and its speakers, are also held at deeper levels and are expressed in more subtle ways. Conversely, tentative evidence was uncovered that younger English nationals were more accepting of Northern English speech in terms of its prestige. It was also found that self-report evaluations of the social attractiveness of the English spoken in the north of England were relatively favourable, especially amongst northern-affiliated English nationals. However, it is important to bear in mind that status-based evaluations of linguistic diversity are a stronger determinant of an individual's potential level of socio-economic advancement when compared to social attractiveness-related evaluations (Edwards, 2011). This is precisely because status language attitudes index groups of individuals perceived as dominant or subordinate within the community under consideration. As a result, the speech of the dominant group(s) within a particular society are, in turn, typically perceived as 'standard', afforded high levels of prestige and frequently legitimised through institutional support. The generally positive implicit and explicit status evaluations of Southern English speech demonstrated in the current research project therefore suggest that users of those prestige forms of English spoken in the southern regions hold socio-economic advantages in comparison with their counterparts in the north of England. Accordingly, speakers of Southern English forms are likely to benefit from greater opportunities for social and economic advancement including, for example, better employment prospects and higher levels of educational attainment. Hence, it seems clear that language-based prejudice is alive and well in England and woven into the fabric of English society.

In a broader sense, the last six decades of language attitude research has highlighted the disparity between the belief held by most professional linguists that no language or language variety is inherently superior or inferior to another and the largely prescriptive views about language diversity held by the general public. Unfortunately, attempts by sociolinguists to reduce language-based prejudice have thus far been largely met with resistance, amusement or indifference within the public sphere. As Aitchison (2001) and McKenzie and Osthus (2011) point out, this appears to be because professional linguists are frequently dismissive of the public as misinformed about issues surrounding language variation. As such, a mutual distrust seems to have developed between language scientists interested in the social meaning of language and the general public and the views of both sides appear to be entrenched.

Changing attitudes towards socially important topics, especially at implicit levels, is a challenging and lengthy process. It is now clear that it is not enough for sociolinguists to merely express outrage about language-based discrimination. Likewise, mere criticisms of widely held folk ideologies surrounding the purity and correctness of particular language varieties in comparison with others - typically expressed by linguists in the name of scientific authority – are also unlikely to

diminish the general public's explicit and implicit stigmatisation of certain language varieties and the myriad of negative social, educational and occupational consequences that speakers of these forms suffer. Instead, linguists should be more mindful of the ways in which they engage with the general public with regards to language issues. It seems essential that professional linguists, and sociolinguists and applied linguists in particular, are more sensitive to non-linguists views about language and take their perceptions with the seriousness they deserve.

As this book has demonstrated, sociolinguistic research investigating implicit as well as explicit language attitudes can help reveal the complex nature of folk perceptions of language variation within a given speech community. The book has also shown that individual evaluations of language varieties - and especially implicit evaluations – generally reflect broader social group norms. Language attitude research can also be useful to enhance our understanding of why individuals, as members of a wider speech community, hold the perceptions that they do. The understanding obtained from the results of these fine-grained sociolinguistic studies seems an essential step in the construction of a framework for more meaningful dialogue between professional linguists and the general public about language-related topics and, ultimately, to help overcome deeply-embedded linguistic biases.

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