ESL LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICAN DIALECTS

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ABSTRACT

MELISSA M. DAMANN: ESL Learners' Perceptions of American Dialects

(Under the direction of David Mora-Marin)

This study was conducted to determine how ESL (English as a Second Language) learners' perception of American dialects differs from the perception of native American English speakers. 39 ESL students and 18 native speakers listened to and rated eight different speakers, representing four different dialects (i.e. Standard American English, Southern American English, African American English and Latino English). These speakers were rated on status, solidarity and language proficiency-related characteristics.

The ESL and native speaker groups ranked the dialect groups similarly on status-related features (i.e. successful, smart, confident). However, the test groups had markedly different rankings of the dialect groups for solidarity-related features (i.e. dependable, funny, friendly).

The ESL and native speaker groups had similar rankings concerning the speakers' language proficiency (i.e. speaking English well). However, with the exception of the Standard dialect, the ESL group generally viewed each dialect's proficiency more positively than the native speaker group.

To Frank, for his unconditional love and support

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Dialect studies have explored a wide range of topics, from phonological and syntactic variation to the interplay of socio-psychological variables. The language varieties that we hear and use each day are surrounded by complex issues of power, prestige and identity. Previous research has looked at how speakers view various dialects of their native language, including how their own dialect compares with the dialects of other groups. Also previously explored are issues of how non-native speakers are viewed by native speakers of a language. However, how do these non-native speakers perceive the various dialects present in their adopted countries? Specifically, how do non-native speakers of English view different dialects found in American society? In this thesis, I detail a study investigating just that question.

In Chapter 2, I discuss some of the research exploring dialects and language attitudes. I also introduce my study and its predictions. In Chapter 3, I detail my study design, discussing participants, samples, surveys and the general method of administering the study. In Chapter 4, I discuss and analyze the study data and results. In Chapter 5, I offer conclusions and suggest direction for potential future research.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND

Dialect is defined by Edwards (1985:19) as a "variety of language which differs from other varieties in terms of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation (accent)." In this chapter, I will discuss various aspects of dialects. First, I discuss differences between standard and more vernacular dialects. Then, I look at how dialects can vary through differing features. Next, I explore language attitudes, both concerning native and non-native speakers and how speakers feel about their own language varieties. I finish this chapter by introducing my study and proposing likely findings.

2.1 Standard vs. vernacular dialects

Much research has focused on how native English speakers view American dialects. Garrett (2001:628) discusses Preston's (1996) comment that "the issue of correctness is the most powerful focus of language awareness in American English". People are quick to label what is correct or right in language and what is wrong, following very prescriptive rules.

As Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006) discuss, American speakers don't necessarily view one American English dialect as the prestigious variety. However,

speakers do have more negative or positive reactions and attitudes to certain dialects than they do to others. Our prejudices for or against certain dialects are influenced by parents, peers, schooling and the media. In general, dialects are viewed more positively if they do not contain socially stigmatized grammatical structures while dialects that do contain more marked grammatical features are viewed more negatively (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, 2006). The former varieties of language are considered more standard, while the latter are viewed as more vernacular.

Preston (2004) states that standard speakers are viewed as more competent than non-standard speakers; however, non-standard, or more vernacular, speakers may be viewed as having more integrity or being more attractive than standard speakers. Much documentation of Giles and his colleagues' and others' language attitude studies exist, showing that people are more willing to provide information to and comply with requests from standard speakers as opposed to non-standard speakers (Bradac, 1990; Edwards, 1985; Giles, Hewstone, Ryan & Johnson, 1987; Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey, 1990; Haslett, 1990; Ladegaard, 2000). The stereotypes that surround dialects are based as much on social, psychological, economic and political factors as they are on linguistic factors. Much literature exists discussing the complex issues of in-group vs. out-group solidarity and overt vs. covert prestige at work in language usage and language attitudes.[1] Edwards (1985) summarizes that standard dialects are generally rated more highly on status-related traits (e.g. competence), while vernacular dialects are generally associated more

[1] For discussion of sociolinguistic variables and in/out-group solidarity and overt/covert prestige associations, see Trudgill (1974, 1983) and Labov (1972).

with solidarity-related traits (e.g. attractiveness, integrity). Which dialect is used in which domain and the adoption or adaptation of certain dialects is very interesting, but as it is not the main focus of this study, will only be lightly touched on throughout this paper.

2.2 Dialect features

Dialect variation can be manifested by various lexical, grammatical and/or phonological features.[2] Various lexical features vary from region to region (e.g. *soda* vs. *pop*; *sprinkles* vs. *jimmies*; *hat* vs. *toboggan*) and are easy for people to identify. As Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006:65) state, "just about everyone has a collection of favorite anecdotes about lexical differences among the dialects of English."

Grammatical variation plays a key role in vernacular dialects being viewed more negatively than more standard dialects of American English. The presence of marked grammatical features results in speakers of these vernacular dialects being labeled as dumb or uneducated. Examples of marked grammatical features include using the bare root of a verb as the past form (e.g. She *eat* dinner last night), habitual *be* (e.g. My dogs *be* barking (all the time)), fixin' to (e.g. I'm *fixin' to* go to the store), double modals (e.g. I *might could* go), subject-verb agreement with leveling to *was* (e.g. The dogs *was* barking all night) and double negatives (e.g. She *wasn't* doing *nothing*).

Dialects are also marked by phonological variation. Many phonological features are easy for people to identify. This type of variation is responsible for the

[2] The majority of examples in this section come from Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006).

"accents" that are assigned to different dialect groups. Phonological variation in a dialect doesn't necessarily lead to that dialect being labeled as more or less prestigious; however, it is of key importance in labeling the regional identity of a given dialect (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, 2006).

Phonological variation affects both consonant and vowel production. Examples of vernacular consonant features include final cluster reduction (e.g. *best* → *bes*), reduction or loss of /r/ and /l/ (e.g. *throw* → *tho*, *help* → *hep*) and alteration of /th/ sounds (e.g. *Ruth* → *Roof*, *they* → *dey*). Variation in vowel production is highly noticeable in many vernacular dialects. Examples of vowel features are vowel shifts or vowel mergers (e.g. Southern Vowel Shift, where short front vowels move upward and take on a glide), final unstressed /a/ raising (e.g. *soda* → *sody*), and *ire* collapse (e.g. *fire* → *far*).

2.3 Language attitudes

Preston (2004) points out that the attitudes that people have about certain dialects are related to the attitudes they have for certain groups of people. Edwards (1985:146) reinforces this idea by noting that "people's reactions to language varieties can reveal their perceptions of the speakers." In general, people "prefer dialects…spoken by historically powerful groups" (Lindemann, 2003:348). However, Lindemann also notes that listeners can have stereotyped responses to a speaker's accent without consciously assigning that speaker to a certain group.

Jaffe and Walton (2000) found that language attitudes even cross the oral-written barrier. When presented with a text written in a vernacular style, participants

in their study correlated vernacularity with low socioeconomic status. Additionally, people spontaneously performed differently when reading texts written in a vernacular, non-standard orthography than when reading texts written in a standard orthography.

2.3.1 Non-native speakers

There is much evidence that foreign-accented speech may be viewed more negatively than standard speech by native speakers of a language (Lindemann, 2003). In various studies by Ryan, Carranza and Moffie (1977) and Ryan and Sebastian (1980), native English speakers in the US rated native Spanish speakers' English negatively on both solidarity and status-related characteristics. However, Cargile and Giles (1998) show that some non-native English speakers, specifically native Japanese, may rate highly on status, but not solidarity-related, characteristics when speaking English.

Munro and Derwing (2000) discuss various studies showing that native speakers tend to have a bias toward and downgrade non-native speakers, based simply on their accent. However, they found that even a strong foreign accent does not necessarily cause low comprehensibility or intelligibility of the non-native speaker. Rather, Schairer (1992) found a hierarchy of errors that affected native speakers' assessments of the comprehensibility of non-native speech. Regardless, Lippi-Green (1997:70) points out that "members of the dominant language group feel perfectly empowered to reject their role (in conversation), and to demand that a person with an accent carry the majority of responsibility in the communicative act".

Moreover, Marx (2002) states that the degree of a non-native accent negatively affects the competence and integrity ratings of a non-native speaker. Lippi-Green (1997) draws the correlation between this realization of how non-native or non-standard accents are viewed and the popularity of courses to reduce one's accent.

Lippi-Green (1997) also discusses how various institutions in American society reinforce negative stereotypes of non-native speakers. In evaluating roles in the television and movie industries, with a focus on animated Disney films, Lippi-Green found that hero characters are significantly more likely to be standard, or mainstream, speakers while the bad, evil or simply stupid characters are more likely to be portrayed as non-native or non-standard English speakers.

In addition, there is evidence that non-native speakers also have a bias against foreign-accented speech. Derwing (2003) discusses how non-native speakers rated other non-native speakers' accuracy even more harshly, and their accents more annoying, than did native speakers.

2.3.2 Self-evaluation

Evans (1999) found that speakers who viewed themselves in an inferior position in their society rated speakers of their variety or dialect less positively on a number of attributes than they rated speakers of the more socially powerful group. The socially-prestigious group was rated more favorably on traits including intelligence, ambition, character, good looks and even height by the speakers that viewed themselves as inferior. Research discussed in Giles, Hewstone, Ryan & Johnson (1987) also notes that the dialects of socially powerful groups are rated

more positively on competence and status characteristics, even by the non-standard, socially inferior speakers themselves.

Derwing's (2003) study of ESL students' perceptions of their own accents showed that the majority of ESL students believed that their pronunciation of English contributed to communication problems, but were generally unable to pinpoint the specific problems with their pronunciation. These ESL students believed they would be respected more if they pronounced English well. Additionally, ESL students that were visible minorities (i.e. dark-skinned, dark-haired, etc) felt that their accent contributed to their being discriminated against. Lippi-Green (1997:238-39) reinforces this concept by noting that not all accents are viewed negatively in the United States, "but only accent linked to skin that isn't white, or which signals a third-world homeland, that evokes such negative reactions".

2.4 Proposed study and predictions

The research discussed above presents a complex picture of how people perceive various dialects, both their own varieties and those spoken by others. Complicated issues of identity, prestige and power are wrapped up in the language that we use and that we hear. One issue that hasn't been explored is how non-native speakers of a language perceive the various dialects heard in their adopted country.

In this study, the tables are turned and non-native speakers in American society have the chance to listen to and rate various varieties of American English on status and solidarity-related characteristics, as well as language proficiency.

Speakers from Standard, Southern, African American and Latino varieties of American English will be evaluated. The non-native participants' feedback will be contrasted with native speakers of American English. Based on research discussed above, I predict that non-native and native speakers will have similar perceptions of these varieties on status-related characteristics. However, the solidarity-related and language proficiency ratings may differ. I predict that the non-native speakers will rate the Latino English speakers more favorably on solidarity features and will rate all speakers more favorably in terms of language proficiency than the native speakers.

2.4.1 Why do this study?

Besides adding to the general field of dialect studies, this study will provide insight into how second language learners perceive native speakers of English. It will give us a general idea of what attitudes non-native English speakers have about different dialect groups in America. Lindemann (2002) points out that the principle of mutual responsibility in communication means that the listener plays a key role in achieving communicative success. On a practical level, by ESL teachers being aware of the types of attitudes and perceptions that their ESL students have, teachers could work to ensure effective communication.

Information from this study may also provide insight into how second language learners may communicate with other key members of society, including doctors, nurses, social workers, lawyers, employers and police officers. If these sectors of society have an understanding of how second language learners view

them (e.g. successful, dependable, etc), it could make them more sensitive in their dealings with these members of the population.

The results of this study could also contribute knowledge to issues of identity for second language speakers. It may provide insight into how identity is viewed as English speakers evolve in their language learning. It may also help identify who these ESL learners want to identify with as they develop their language skills.

CHAPTER 3

STUDY DESIGN

Lambert and his colleagues (1960) are given much credit for establishing the importance of using indirect tools for assessing language attitudes; namely developing the matched guise task. In the matched guise task, the same speaker(s) produces different language or dialect varieties, thereby controlling for voice quality issues. However, a verbal guise task was used in this study; that is, the different dialects evaluated were produced by different speakers. Due to the difficulty of finding speakers able to authentically speak more than one dialect and due to the likelihood that listeners may recognize different guises belonging to the same speaker, Lindemann (2003) discusses Berk-Seligson's (1984) findings that a matched guise task is unsuitable when the speech samples are in the same language. Additionally, Ryan, Giles and Hewstone (1988:1075) observe that outside of the traditionally-accepted matched guise design, speech samples should be obtained from more "wide-ranging naturally-occurring settings", while Bradac (1990:389) notes the use of "more naturalistic messages as vehicles for comparing the effects of…dialect differences."

In this chapter, I first discuss the participants and the demographics of the respondent groups. I then discuss various elements of the dialect samples used in the study. Finally, I detail the method and process I used to administer the study.

3.1 Participants

The study participants included 39 non-native English speakers and 19 native English speakers. The majority of the non-native English speakers were students enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at the Adult Education Center at Wake Technical Community College (Wake Tech) in Raleigh, North Carolina. The ESL students in the Wake Tech program were divided into 6 different levels based on their knowledge of, and ability to communicate in, English. Level 1 was the most basic beginner while Level 6 was the most advanced. Initially, I was interested in working with students from a general beginner level and with students from a more advanced level. However, after discussions with the ESL program coordinators and various ESL teachers, we determined that Level 1 and Level 2 students were unsuitable for this study. The English required for completing the surveys and generally participating in the study would be too much of a struggle for this level of student. We determined that the lowest beginner level that would be appropriate for this study was Level 3 (high beginner or low intermediate). Students from Level 5 (low advanced) and Level 6 (high advanced) were also made available for participation.

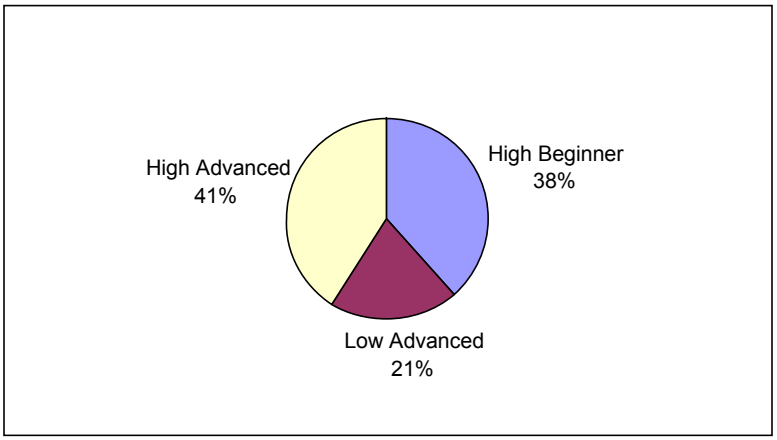
The native English speakers were students enrolled in a World Religion curriculum class at Wake Technical Community College. Additionally, the three

teachers heading the curriculum and ESL classes participated in the study and were included in the control group of native speakers. Three students that were members of the curriculum class were actually non-native English speakers and their results have been included in the advanced ESL group. Since these three students were able to participate in a college-level course taught solely in English, it was assumed that their English abilities qualified them to be included with the high advanced ESL group. Additionally, one native English-speaking participant responded identically to each question on each survey (except for one question on the final survey), indicating that he was not truly interested or invested in participating. To avoid potential skewing of results, I removed his data from the study, leaving 18 participants in the native English control group.

Table 3.1: Number of participants

High Beginner	15
Low Advanced	8
High Advanced	16
Control	18

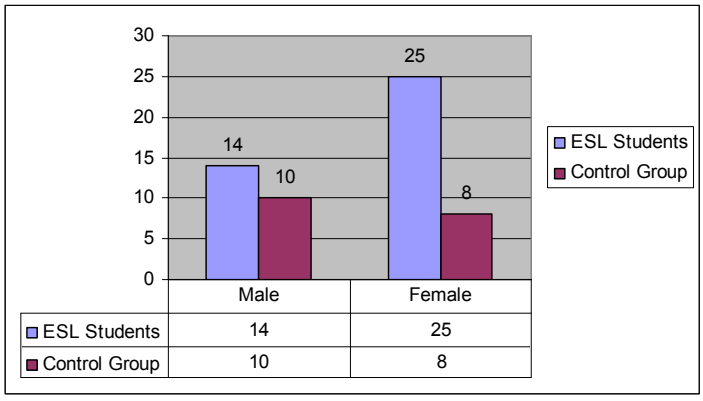
Figure 3.1: ESL participants



The ESL students ranged from 18 to 65 years old. The control group also had a large age range from 18 to 52 years old, although the majority fell in the 18 to 25 year old range. All of the participants were living in North Carolina; the majority of the native speakers, the control group, were natives of North Carolina. Also, the overwhelming majority of the control participants were of European, or white, descent.

About 64% of the ESL students were female as opposed to the control group, in which only 44% of the participants were female.

Figure 3.2: Male vs. female ratio



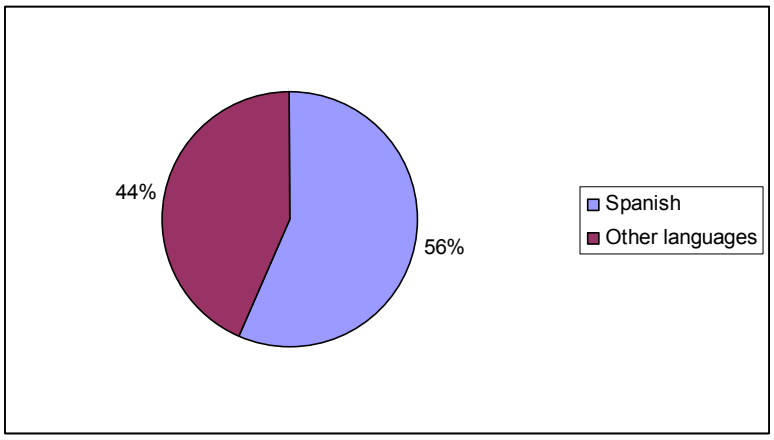
Additionally, there was a broad range of first languages spoken by the ESL students, with a majority speaking Spanish as their first language.

Table 3.2: First languages

Arabic	1
Chinese	1
French	3
Japanese	1

Korean	3
Persian	1
Russian	1
Somali	1
Spanish	22
Thai	1
Turkish	1
Urdu	1
Vietnamese	2

Figure 3.3: First languages



3.2 Dialect samples

The dialect samples consisted of audio recordings of 8 different speakers. The different dialects included were:

- Standard American English
- Southern American English
- African American English
- Latino English

3.2.1 Dialect labels

The dialect labels listed above are relatively ambiguous and potentially controversial. There is no one set prototype of American English that is truly Standard American English or Southern English or African American English or Latino English. As discussed above, all varieties of American English contain various lexical, grammatical and phonological features that make them unique from one another. It is notoriously difficult to define exactly how these different features interact to create a given dialect.

Generally, Standard American English is a dialect that avoids socially stigmatized features. Lippi-Green (1997) discusses Preston's (1989) study looking at non-linguists' opinions on where "correct" or standard English is spoken in the United States. Lippi-Green (1997:58) compiles a general list of characteristics of Standard English, including English that is spoken "with no regional accent (and by people) who reside in the midwest, far west or perhaps some parts of the north-east (but never in the south)." As Lippi-Green points out, even the term "Standard" can be controversial, because it implies that other varieties are substandard. One can endlessly debate appropriate or inappropriate labels. However, for our purposes here, the terms Standard (American English) will refer to the amorphous variety discussed above.

Similarly, Southern American English is a difficult dialect to define. Certainly, dialects in Texas or Mississippi are different from dialects in North Carolina. Yet, all of these can be labeled as Southern. Race and ethnicity also factor into the controversy of the Southern dialect label. Of course, African Americans live in the

south, yet when referring to a Southern dialect, many people intend to reference only European American or white speakers. Sidestepping a political discussion, I will use the term Southern (American English) to refer to people of European descent. Additionally, for this study, I am looking only at dialects from North Carolina. As discussed below, I attempt to control the dialect variation issue by narrowing the dialect even further by choosing speakers from one county, Robeson County, North Carolina.

The dialect spoken by many African Americans has gone by many different labels. In this study, I use the term African American English (AAE). However, there is much variation within this label; urban varieties of AAE are certainly different from varieties of AAE spoken in rural parts of the US and northern varieties differ from southern varieties. For our purposes here, I am looking at the variety of southern AAE that is spoken in North Carolina, more specifically in one county, Robeson County. Thus, our Southern European and AA speakers come from the same part of North Carolina.

Latino English is another dialect that is difficult to define and varies from region to region. Latino refers to people who come from many different countries and backgrounds. Some speakers of Latino English exhibit traits of learning English as their second language, while others have been exposed to English since birth. Urban varieties may differ from more rural varieties. Additionally, Latino English spoken in California or Texas differs from Latino English spoken in North Carolina due to influence from local dialects. For example, adoption of lexical, phonological and grammatical features from local dialects regionally differentiates Latino English

varieties. For this study, I am using Latino (or Latina) English to refer to a variety spoken by non-native English speakers who are currently living in North Carolina.[3]

By focusing on speakers that were originally from North Carolina or are currently living in North Carolina, I attempted to control for the regional influence factor. Additionally, all of these speakers speak dialects that the study participants (both ESL students and native speakers) are likely to have heard.

3.2.2 Sample selection

I used female speakers between 17 and 36 years old. As Lindemann (2003) points out, voice qualities can skew listener reactions to a speech sample. I used two speakers from each dialect group in an attempt to minimize influence from voice quality factors.

The majority of the speech samples were obtained from the William C. Friday Linguistics Lab at North Carolina State University. These speech samples had been recorded on audio cassette over the past ten years as part of the North Carolina Language and Life Project (NCLLP). These samples were obtained by various on-site investigators that had elicited conversation from different groups in various counties throughout North Carolina. The samples did not consist of set passages that the speakers read or answers to a set list of questions; rather the attempt had been made to elicit more free-form, natural speech from these participants. In choosing samples, I looked for passages that discussed relatively neutral topics. I

[3] The Latino dialect is particularly interesting in North Carolina because of the huge influx of Latinos to the area in recent years. As stated in Wolfram, Carter and Moriello (2004:340), between 1990 and 2000, "North Carolina experienced a higher percentage of growth in its Latin American population than any other state."

attempted to avoid particularly controversial topics such as drugs, sex, fighting or religion.

I obtained the Southern and African American speakers from Robeson County, NC and the Latino English speakers from Siler City, NC. For those samples that were unavailable through the NCLLP (i.e. Standard dialect speakers), I recruited speakers and recorded them individually in Raleigh, NC using a Marantz cassette recorder, PMD430.

Three speakers from each dialect group (with the exception of the Standard dialect group, which only had two speakers) were selected. I digitized recordings for these speakers using a TASCAM CC-222 and then burned those samples to a CD. I converted these files to .wav files which I could then manipulate in Praat. Using Praat, I extracted 20 – 25 second samples of each potential speaker and then burned those samples to a CD, using a Sony Vaio CD burner.

The speech samples were then reviewed by a panel of colleagues in the Linguistics departments at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University to ensure that the samples were representative of the intended dialects. They listened to each speaker in a given dialect and were asked both to determine which dialect was being represented and which speaker(s) was most representative of that group. They were not asked to identify specific lexical, grammatical or phonological features that were characteristic of that dialect, but rather to make their decision based on their general perception and feelings as native speakers of English. As Kuiper (2005:29) points out, even "non-linguists can pass judgment on a language variety without justifying that judgment phonologically,

syntactically or lexically." Each of the speech samples was deemed satisfactory and appropriate by all colleagues. After evaluating their feedback, two of the speakers from each dialect group were chosen.

Table 3.3: Dialect sample overview

Speaker	Age	Recorded/Origin
AA 1	36	Robeson County, NC
AA 2	19	Robeson County, NC
Latina 1	17	Siler City, NC; originally El Salvador
Latina 2	25	Siler City, NC; originally Mexico
Southern 1	24	Robeson County, NC
Southern 2	18	Robeson County, NC
Standard 1	31	Raleigh, NC; originally Iowa
Standard 2	36	Raleigh, NC; originally California

Audio samples only were used. If video samples had been used, the appearance of the individual could potentially influence the ratings (e.g. a physically attractive speaker could be rated more positively than an unattractive speaker or a speaker who looks older could be viewed as having more authority than a speaker who looks younger, etc). Each audio clip lasted for approximately 20 – 25 seconds. This length allowed the participants enough time to hear a range of speech but did not allow enough time for the listeners to become immersed in the speaker's story. This allowed the listener's focus to remain on *how* the speaker was speaking rather than to *what* the speaker was saying.

3.3 Method

Each session was conducted in a consistent manner following an outline (see Appendix 1). The outline included an opening script and a mini-lesson to ensure that all the participants understood how the study was to work and understood the necessary vocabulary. Since many of the ESL students had not previously been exposed to a Likert Scale or study environment, it was important to give them a chance to understand what was required of their participation in this study. Using music samples, we discussed the meaning of *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree* and practiced working with a Likert Scale. I then elicited definitions and comparable meanings for each of the characteristics that were included in the study. In cases where the participants did not supply synonyms or definitions on their own, I had a list prepared. The practice information was left on the board for the duration of the study, so the participants could refer to it as necessary. While the mini-lesson may have been redundant for the group of native English speakers, I presented them with the same directions to preserve a controlled experiment.

After answering any questions or concerns, each participant filled out a consent form (see Appendix II). In order to have general information on each of the respondents, each participant then filled out a background information form (see Appendix III). This form asked for both open and closed responses about where the participants were from, their language history and their experience with the English language.

3.3.1 Surveys

The participants were told that they would hear 8 different speakers.[4] All audio samples were played on CD on an RCA CD Portable Dynamic Sound System. First, I played a short sample (i.e. approximately five seconds) from each speaker before the speakers' samples were played individually. As Lindemann (2003) points out, this allowed the students to hear the range of variation in the voices before they began making judgments on the individual speakers.

I then played the audio sample of the first speaker. The audio sample was played two times before the students were asked to fill out the survey for that speaker. The order of the audio clips was assigned using a Random Digits approach (Butler, 1985). Each of the four groups heard the clips in the same order. This attempted to correct for bias due to the study structure (e.g. students getting bored with the task, giving uniform responses for the clips heard later, etc).

Table 3.4: Speaker order

Order	Speaker
Speaker 1	Southern 1
Speaker 2	Latina 2
Speaker 3	AA 1
Speaker 4	Standard 1
Speaker 5	Southern 2
Speaker 6	AA 2

[4] See Appendix IV for transcripts of the speech samples.

Speaker 7 Standard 2

Speaker 8 Latina 1

After each audio clip, the participants were asked to fill out the survey for that speaker (marked 1 – 8) (see Appendix V). Each survey contained identical sentences asking for ratings on status, solidarity and language-related characteristics.

- This person is {successful, dependable, funny, smart, confident, friendly, speaks English well}.

The status-related characteristics were *successful*, *smart* and *confident*. The solidarity-related characteristics were *dependable*, *funny* and *friendly*. *Speaks English well* related to perceived language proficiency.

The participants rated each characteristic on a 4-point Likert scale.

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

The 4-point scale forced the student to choose either a positive or negative response to each speaker. There was no “don’t know” or “undecided” choice in this section of the survey. However, there was an open-response “comments” section for each speaker. Participants were able to write in comments if they felt that their response needed explanation or if they had some additional information that they felt was important.

I monitored the room to determine how much time the respondents needed to complete the survey for each speaker. I then collected all of the surveys for that speaker before moving on to the next speaker’s audio clip.

CHAPTER 4

DATA AND ANALYSIS

The results of the surveys were tabulated using an Excel spreadsheet after each group session. In this chapter, I first look at how responses were scored. Next, I look at how the ESL and native speaker groups rated the dialects based on status, then solidarity, then language proficiency-related characteristics. I then look at each individual trait. Finally, I look at how the different levels within the ESL group responded.

4.1 Calculating results

Each question was scored for each speaker by respondent group. Responses were rated on a 4-point scale. *Strongly Agree* was scored as 1; *Agree* was scored as 2; *Disagree* was scored as 3 and *Strongly Disagree* was scored as 4. Therefore, the lower the mean, the more positive the rating.

Table 4.1 is an example of the results for Speaker 2, as rated by the low advanced group.

Table 4.1: Speaker 2 ratings by low advanced respondents

	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6	Q 7
A2-1	3	4	1	2	2	1	3
A2-2	2	2	1	4	3	2	2
A2-3	3	2	2	3	3	2	3
A2-4	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
A2-5	3	2	4	3	3	3	3
A2-6	3	2	3	2	2	2	2
A2-7	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
A2-8	3	1	4	2	2	2	2
Total	21	17	21	20	19	16	19
Total/8	2.625	2.125	2.625	2.5	2.375	2	2.375

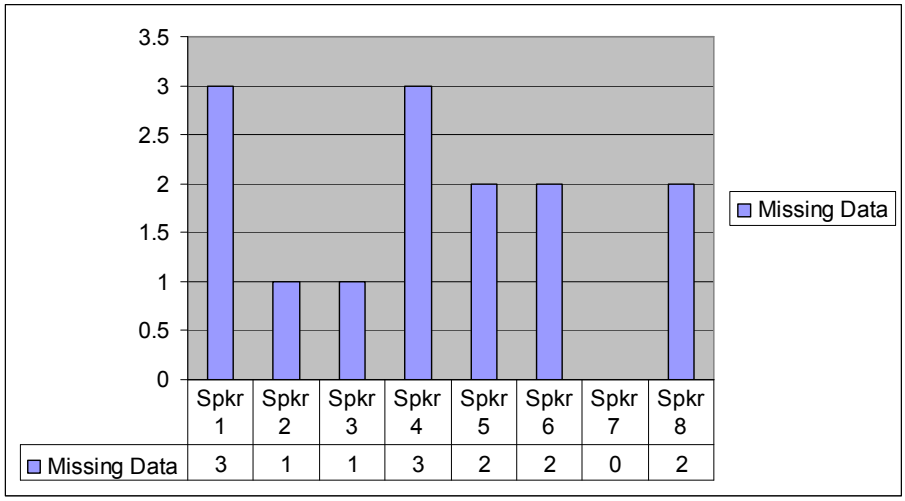
4.1.1 Missing data[5]

In some instances, a respondent did not provide an answer for one of the questions on a survey. Perhaps the respondent was undecided on that particular question for that particular speaker, perhaps the respondent was unsure how a particular trait related to a particular speaker or perhaps a respondent was simply hurrying and missed a question.

After performing a missing data analysis, I discovered that a total of 14 items had been left unanswered out of a possible 3192 responses. The items missing appeared to be distributed over the speakers.

[5] Throughout this thesis, I use *data* to reference singular and plural.

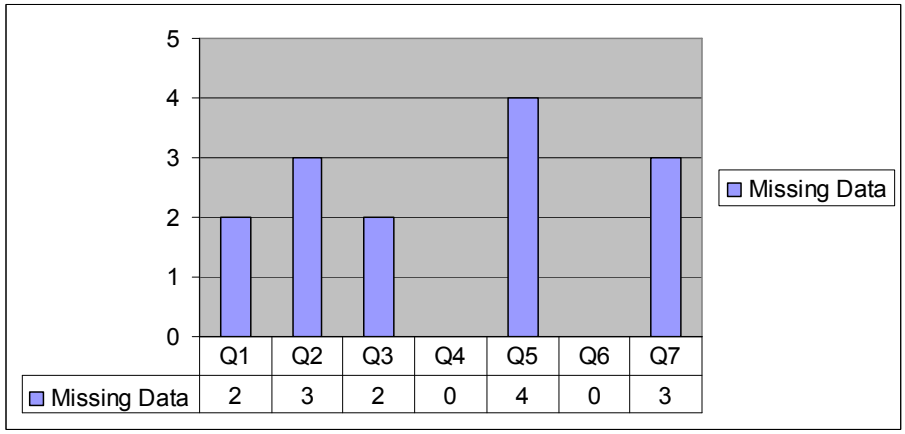
Figure 4.1: Missing data by speaker



Speaker 1 having 3 items missing was not particularly surprising, since the participants may have been uncertain of how to respond on the first survey. It is unclear why items were missing from other speakers. One hypothesis for Speaker 4 missing 3 items is that Speaker 4 was the first standard speaker, so perhaps respondents were unsure of how to react to this variety at first.

The items missing were also generally distributed over the individual questions or characteristics.

Figure 4.2: Missing data by question



A possible explanation for Question 5 having 4 items of missing data is that this question dealt with the speakers' confidence. *Confident* may have been a difficult concept for some of the ESL students to fully understand. Many of the words that were used as synonyms in the vocabulary mini-lesson/review (see Appendix I) may have been even more confusing for lower-level ESL students to grasp than *confident* itself (e.g. self-assured, certain). If they were unsure of the exact meaning of this word, perhaps they were more hesitant to respond to this question.

Regardless, the threshold for significance with missing data is 5% of responses and all of these factors were well under 5%; in fact, they were under 1% of the total responses[6]. I resolved the issue of the missing data by calculating the mean by item by speaker by group and inserting that number as the missing response.

Table 4.2: Speaker 1 ratings by low advanced respondents

	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Q 6	Q 7
A2-1	3	2	1	2	1	2	1
A2-2	3	2	1	3	4	2	1
A2-3	3	3	4	3	3	4	3
A2-4	2	3	3	2	2	2	2
A2-5	3	3	4	2	2	4	2
A2-6	4	3	4	3	2.4	3	2
A2-7	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
A2-8	3	2	4	2	2	3	2
Total	24	21	24	20	19.4	23	16
Total/8	3	2.625	3	2.5	2.425	2.875	2

For example, in Table 4.2, respondent A2-6 did not provide a response for Question 5 for Speaker 1. Therefore, I calculated the mean response for Question 5

[6] Consultation provided by Chris Wiesen, Odum Institute, UNC-Chapel Hill.

without A2-6 (i.e. 17/7=2.4) and inserted that as A2-6's response for that question for that speaker.

Additionally, as previously mentioned, one native English-speaking participant responded identically to each question on each survey (except for one question on the final survey), indicating that he was not truly interested or invested in participating. To avoid potential skewing of results, I removed his data from the study.

4.2 Results by grouped characteristics

In the interest of contrasting the four dialect groups, the numbers for each dialect pair were conflated. As discussed above, I used two speakers from each dialect group in an attempt to minimize influence from voice quality factors.

Table 4.3: Pairs of speakers by dialect

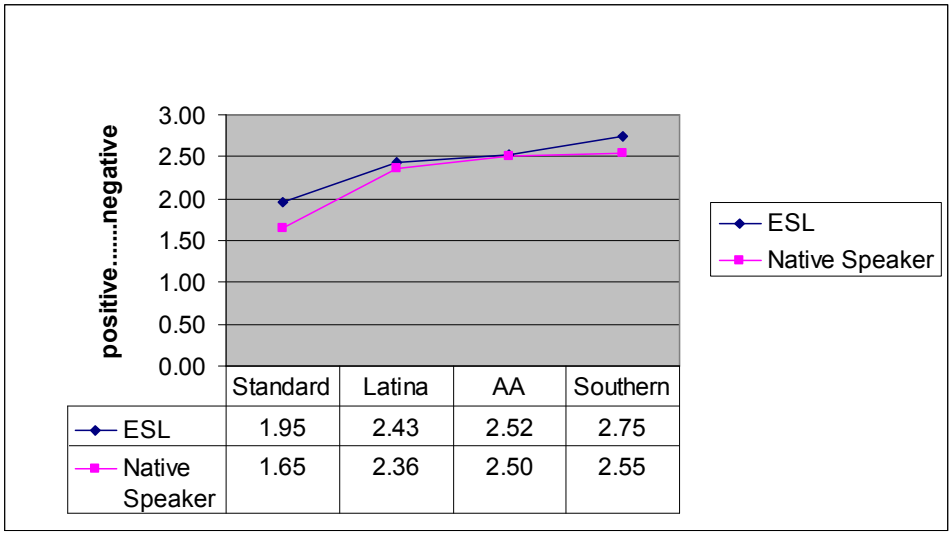
Speakers 1 and 5	Southern
Speakers 2 and 8	Latina
Speakers 3 and 6	African American
Speakers 4 and 7	Standard

4.2.1 Status-related characteristics

First, I combined the results of the three levels of ESL classes as one group and contrasted the ESL group with the native speaker control group. Looking first at

the status characteristics (i.e. successful, smart, confident), we see that the dialects[7] were ranked similarly by the ESL students and the native speakers.

Figure 4.3: Status-related features



	Standard	Latina	AA	Southern
ESL	1.95	2.43	2.52	2.75
Native Speaker	1.65	2.36	2.50	2.55

Both groups ranked the Standard dialect most favorably, followed by the Latina, AA and Southern dialects. The native speaker group rated each of the dialects more favorably overall than the ESL students did. For example, the native speakers rated the Standard dialect as 1.65 on status-related features as opposed to the ESL rating of 1.95.

In my original hypothesis, I predicted that the ESL students, or non-native speakers, and the native speakers would have similar perceptions of these dialects on status-related characteristics. This prediction was based on research discussed in Edwards (1985) and Preston (2004) showing that standard dialects are generally rated more highly on status traits than vernacular dialects and research by Munro

[7] When referencing the ranking or rating of dialects, it is to be understood that the participants were actually ranking or rating speakers of that dialect, not necessarily the dialect itself.

and Derwing (2000) and Derwing (2003) that shows both native and non-native speakers having a bias against non-native or accented speech. This data supports my prediction.

4.2.2 Solidarity-related characteristics

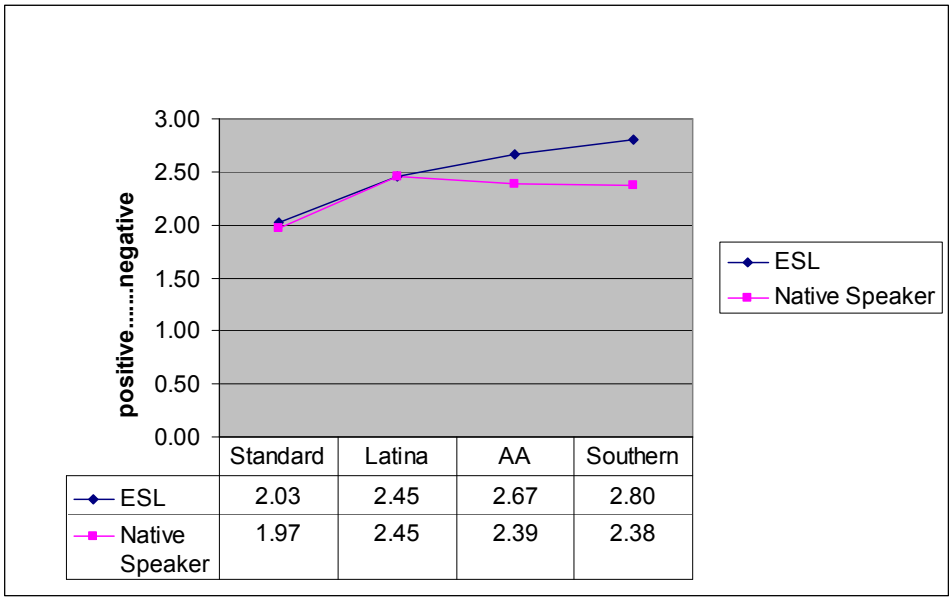
Next, I looked at the ESL vs. native speakers' ratings of solidarity-related features (i.e. dependable, funny, friendly). For these features, there was a marked difference in the rankings of these two groups. Both groups ranked the Standard dialect most positively. However, the ESL group ranked the Latina dialect as the second most positive on solidarity features, followed by the AA dialect and then the Southern dialect. In contrast, the native speakers rated the Southern dialect as the second most positive on solidarity features, followed by the AA dialect and then the Latina dialect.

Table 4.4: Solidarity rankings

ESL	Native Speaker
Standard	Standard
Latina	Southern
AA	AA
Southern	Latina

As with the status features, the native speakers generally rated each dialect more favorably than the ESL students did.

Figure 4.4: Solidarity-related features



	Standard	Latina	AA	Southern
ESL	2.03	2.45	2.67	2.80
Native Speaker	1.97	2.45	2.39	2.38

The means for the native speaker and the ESL students' perception of the Latina dialect were very similar (i.e. 2.4537 vs. 2.45, respectively). However, the native speaker group rated the AA and Southern dialects more positively overall than the ESL group did. For example, the native speaker group rated the Southern dialect as 2.38 as opposed to the ESL rating of 2.80. This caused the overall ratings, or rankings, of the dialects to differ as shown in Table 4.4.

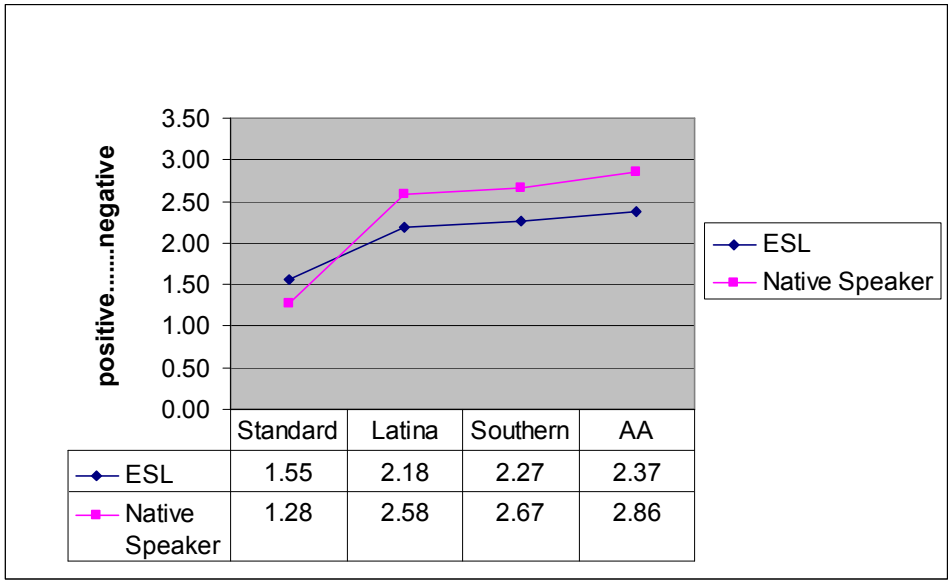
I originally predicted that ESL students, or non-native speakers, would rank Latino English speakers more favorably on solidarity-related features than would native speakers. This prediction was based on Edwards' (1985) discussion of vernacular dialects rating more highly on solidarity traits combined with the idea of group solidarity and in-group prestige. I predicted that ESL students would feel solidarity with other ESL speakers (i.e. the Latino English speakers in the study), while the native speakers would retain a bias against the non-native speakers,

ranking them more negatively. While the number rating between the groups was similar, the overall ranking supported my prediction.

4.2.3 Language proficiency

After exploring the status and solidarity feature rankings, I looked at how the two groups ranked each dialect on language proficiency (i.e. This person speaks English well.) Both the native and non-native speakers ranked the dialects similarly, ranking the Standard dialect as most positive, or as speaking English the best, followed by the Latina, Southern and AA dialects.

Figure 4.5: Language proficiency



	Standard	Latina	Southern	AA
ESL	1.55	2.18	2.27	2.37
Native Speaker	1.28	2.58	2.67	2.86

The native speakers rated the Standard dialect more positively than the ESL group did (i.e. 1.27 vs. 1.55, respectively). However, for all of the other dialects, the ESL students rated each dialect more positively than the native speakers did. For

example, the ESL group rated the Latina dialect as 2.19 as opposed to the native speaker rating of 2.58.

In my original hypothesis, I predicted that the ESL students, or non-native speakers, would rate all speakers more favorably in terms of language proficiency than the native speakers. This prediction was based on research by Derwing (2003) and Lippi-Green (1997) dealing with non-native speakers' perception of their own language abilities. With ESL students' negative opinion of their own ability to speak English well, I predicted that they would generally view all English speakers more favorably than themselves. Based on Preston (1996), I believed the native speakers would be more critical of the language used in the samples and would rate all the speakers more negatively than the ESL students. The data for the Standard dialect does not support this prediction; however, the data for the Latina, Southern and AA dialects does support this prediction.

4.3 Results by individual characteristic

Evaluating the results by grouped characteristics (i.e. status vs. solidarity vs. language proficiency) was of primary interest. However, looking at the rating of each characteristic individually is also important. The status group consisted of questions 1, 4 and 5; the traits *successful*, *smart* and *confident*, respectively. The solidarity group consisted of questions 2, 3 and 6; the traits *dependable*, *funny* and *friendly*, respectively.

4.3.1 Breakdown of status ratings

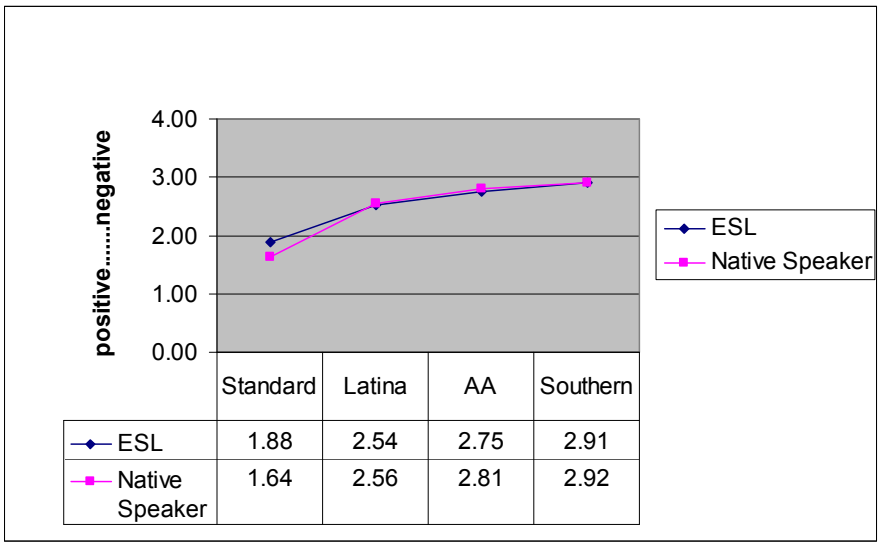
As discussed above, the native and non-native speaker groups ranked the four dialects in identical order concerning status features. The Standard dialect was rated the most positively, followed by the Latina, AA and Southern dialects.

Table 4.5: Status rankings

ESL	Native Speaker
Standard	Standard
Latina	Latina
AA	AA
Southern	Southern

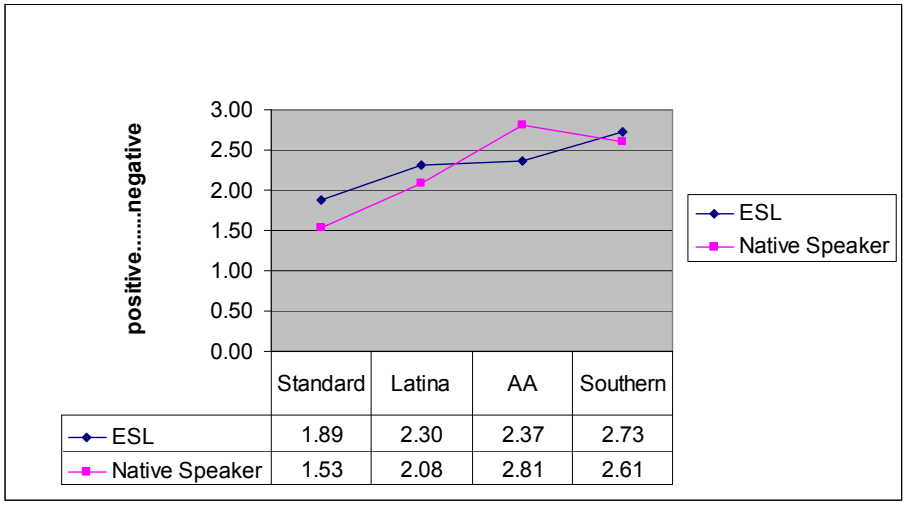
Looking at the individual characteristics that make up the status grouping (i.e. successful, smart, confident), we see that both test groups agreed on the dialect rankings concerning *successful*.

Figure 4.6: Ratings for *successful*



Both groups ranked the Standard dialect as the most positive, or most successful, followed by the Latina, AA and Southern dialects. The native speakers rated the Standard dialect slightly more positively than the ESL students did. The ratings for the other dialect groups were very similar, with the ESL students rating each group only slightly higher than the native speakers (e.g. 2.54 vs. 2.56 for the Latina dialect).

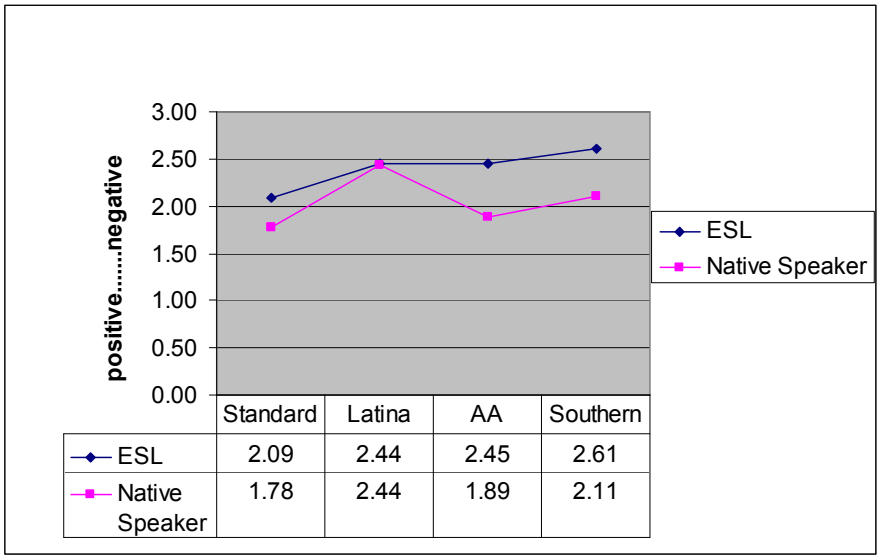
Figure 4.7: Ratings for *smart*



	Standard	Latina	AA	Southern
ESL	1.89	2.30	2.37	2.73
Native Speaker	1.53	2.08	2.81	2.61

In rating *smart*, the ESL group maintained the ranking of the Standard dialect as most positive, followed by the Latina, AA and Southern dialects. The native speaker group also maintained the ranking of the Standard and Latina dialects as the first and second most positive. However, the native group then ranked the Southern dialect more positively than the AA dialect. Regardless of ranking, the native speakers rated the Standard, Latina and Southern dialects more favorably than the ESL students (e.g. 2.18 vs. 2.3 for the Latina dialect). However, the native speakers rated the AA dialect less favorably than the ESL group (i.e. 2.81 vs. 2.37).

Figure 4.8: Ratings for *confident*



	Standard	Latina	AA	Southern
ESL	2.09	2.44	2.45	2.61
Native Speaker	1.78	2.44	1.89	2.11

Concerning the status feature *confident*, the ESL students again maintained the Standard, Latina, AA, Southern dialect ranking. The native speaker group also viewed the Standard dialect as the most *confident*. However, the AA dialect was rated as the second most positive, followed by the Southern and then the Latina dialects. The native speaker group also rated the Standard, AA and Southern dialects more favorably overall than the ESL group. The Latina dialect was rated identically by both groups (i.e. 2.44 vs. 2.44).

For each individual trait in the status grouping, the ESL students viewed the four dialects in a consistent manner. The native speakers differed in their perception of the dialects concerning the *smart* and *confident* traits. By rating the AA dialect more negatively than the Southern dialect for *smart*, perhaps the native speaker group was correlating their negative impression of the AA language proficiency (2.86) with the idea of being *smart*. If you feel that a native speaker of English does

not speak English well, that could reflect poorly on their perceived intelligence overall.

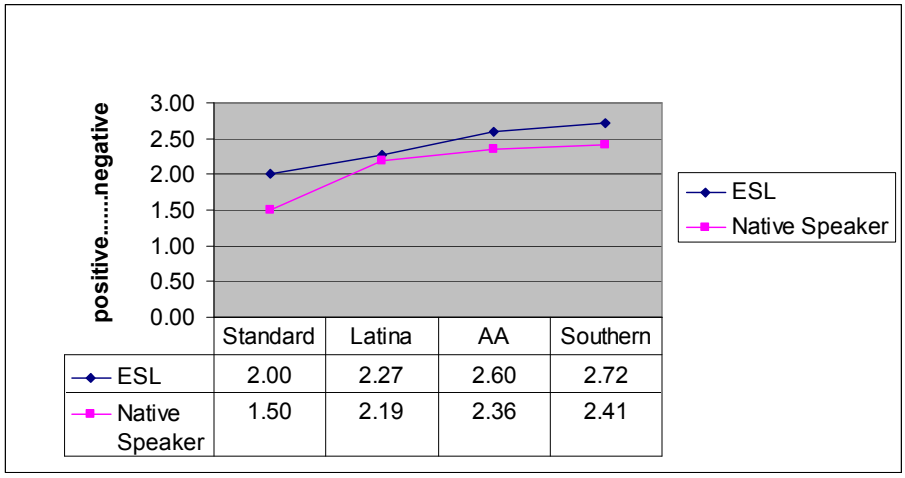
Additionally, the different rankings for *confident,* with native speakers viewing the Latina dialect as the least *confident,* may result from a second language, non-native speaker influence. Perhaps the non-native English-speaking Latinas were perceived as less confident because they were not speaking their first language.

4.3.2 Breakdown of solidarity ratings

The native and non-native English speaker groups ranked the dialect groups differently concerning solidarity features. Both groups ranked the Standard dialect as the most positive. However, in descending order, the ESL group then ranked the Latina, AA and Southern dialects while the native speaker group ranked the Southern, AA and Latina dialects. Essentially, the two groups "swapped" rankings, or have an inverse relation, for the Latina and Southern dialects. So, which solidarity variables resulted in the different rankings?

Looking at the individual characteristics that make up the solidarity grouping (i.e. dependable, funny, friendly), we see that both groups ranked the dialects identically for the *dependable* trait.

Figure 4.9: Ratings for *dependable*

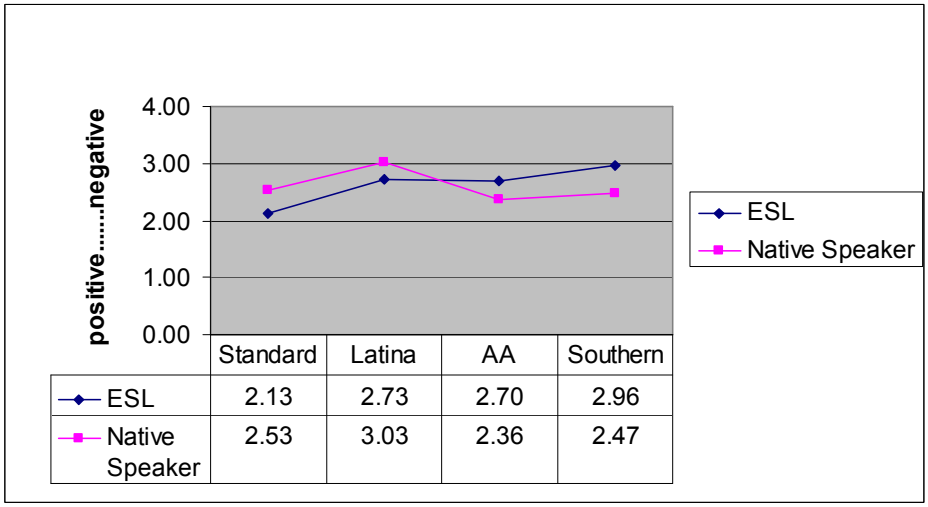


	Standard	Latina	AA	Southern
ESL	2.00	2.27	2.60	2.72
Native Speaker	1.50	2.19	2.36	2.41

Both the ESL and native speaker groups ranked the Standard dialect as the most *dependable*, followed by the Latina, AA and Southern dialects. The native speaker group rated each dialect more favorably than the ESL group (e.g. 2.36 vs. 2.6 for the AA dialect).

However, the dialect rankings diverged when looking at the individual rankings for *funny* and *friendly*.

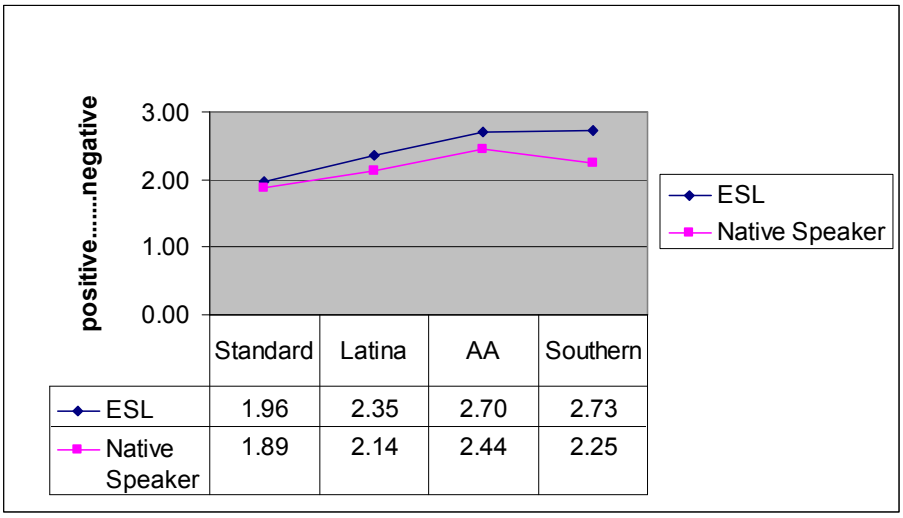
Figure 4.10: Ratings for *funny*



	Standard	Latina	AA	Southern
ESL	2.13	2.73	2.70	2.96
Native Speaker	2.53	3.03	2.36	2.47

The ESL group ranked the Standard dialect most positively, followed by the AA, Latina and Southern dialects. The native speaker group ranked the AA dialect most positively, or as the *funniest*, followed by the Southern, Standard and Latina dialects. The actual ratings for the AA and Southern dialects were more positive from the native speaker group (2.36 (NS) vs. 2.7 (ESL) for the AA dialect), while the ratings for the Standard and Latina dialects were more positive from the ESL group (e.g. 2.13 (ESL) vs. 2.53 (NS) for the Standard dialect).

Figure 4.11: Ratings for *friendly*



	Standard	Latina	AA	Southern
ESL	1.96	2.35	2.70	2.73
Native Speaker	1.89	2.14	2.44	2.25

Concerning the solidarity trait *friendly*, both test groups ranked the Standard dialect most positively, followed by the Latina dialect. However, the ESL group then ranked the AA dialect as *friendlier* than the Southern dialect, while the native speaker group ranked the Southern dialect as *friendlier* than the AA dialect. For each dialect, the native speaker group rated more positively than the ESL group (e.g. 2.44 vs. 2.7 for the AA dialect).

The traits *funny* and *friendly* appear to be responsible for the overall different rankings of the solidarity characteristics. The native speakers ranking the Southern dialect as both *funnier* and *friendlier* than the ESL group, coupled with their ranking the Latina dialect as the least *funny*, influenced the solidarity rankings.

Perhaps the second language, non-native speaker influence also affected the native speakers' ranking of the Latina dialect as the least *funny*. Content, style and timing of humor are very culture specific and if the Latina speakers were viewed as "other" or "foreign" perhaps that impacted the interpretation of being *funny*. In some cases, perhaps Latino immigrants are less incorporated into American popular culture and therefore are less well-versed and competent in American humor. Additionally, the native speakers had ranked the Latina speakers as the least *confident*. Perhaps that trait plays into a person's ability to be *funny*.

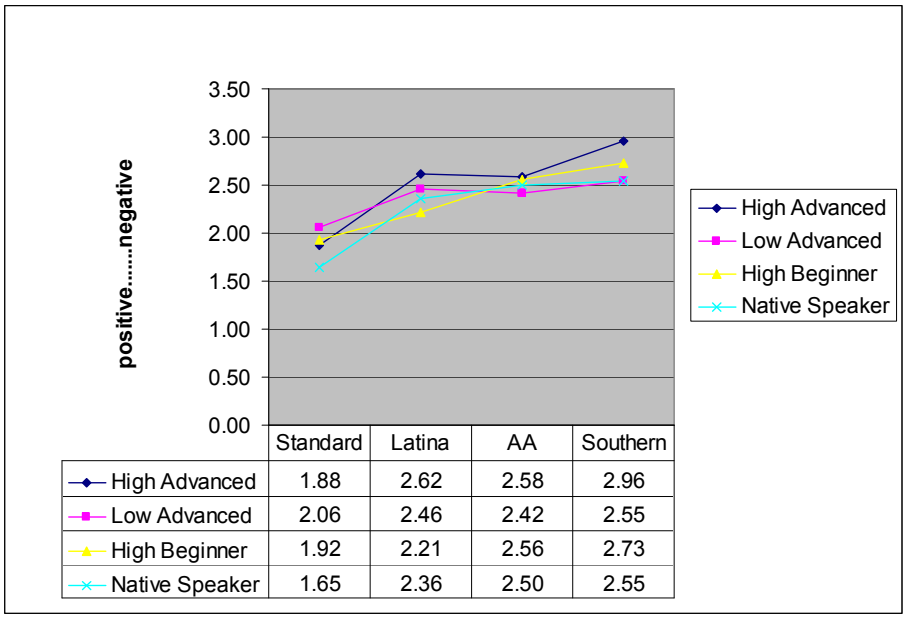
4.4 Results by individual group

Thus far, the data has compared the ESL levels as a group with the native speaker control group. However, the ESL group was made up of three separate ESL levels: high advanced, low advanced and high beginner. I analyzed the data to see if there was a predictable pattern in the ratings and rankings of the various ESL levels. I was interested to see if the results for more advanced students would align with the native speakers.

4.4.1 Breakdown of levels for status features

As discussed above, the native and non-native speaker groups ranked the four dialects in identical order concerning status features. The Standard dialect was rated the most positively, followed by the Latina, AA and Southern dialects.

Figure 4.12: Status ratings by group level



	Standard	Latina	AA	Southern
High Advanced	1.88	2.62	2.58	2.96
Low Advanced	2.06	2.46	2.42	2.55
High Beginner	1.92	2.21	2.56	2.73
Native Speaker	1.65	2.36	2.50	2.55

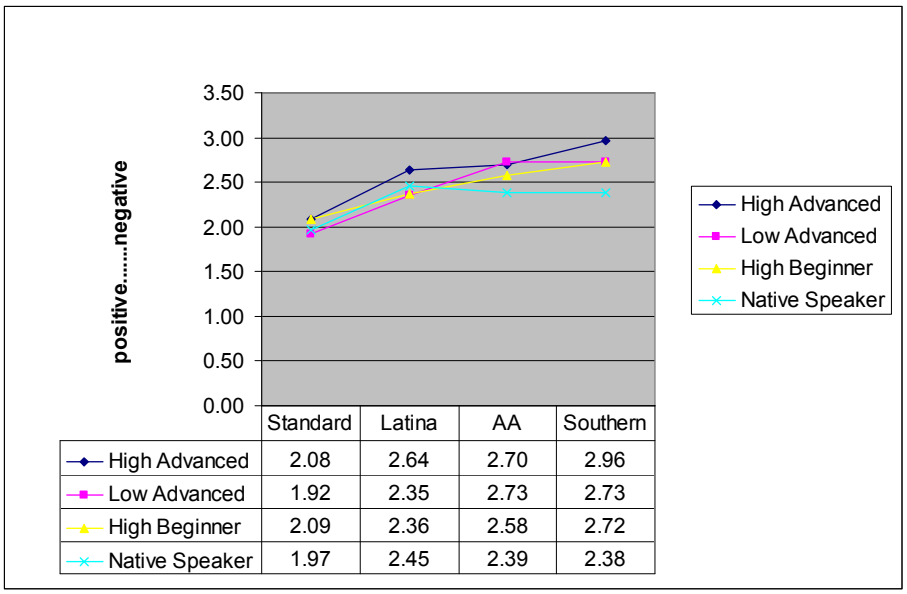
In looking at the individual level ESL responses, we see that the high beginner group ranked the status characteristics in a Standard, Latina, AA, Southern order. However, the low and high advanced groups both ranked the status characteristics in a Standard, AA, Latina, Southern dialect order. In other words, they ranked the AA dialect more positively than the Latina dialect for status characteristics. For this set of features, the two more advanced groups appeared to be aligned in their ranking, yet the beginner group ranked the status features in accord with the native speaker group.

In analyzing the ratings of each dialect, there was no consistent order for which group viewed each dialect most positively overall. For example, the overall ratings for the AA dialect were viewed most positively by the low advanced group, followed by the native speaker, high beginner and high advanced groups. However, the Standard dialect was rated most positively by the native speaker group, followed by the high advanced, high beginner and low advanced groups.

4.4.2 Breakdown of levels for solidarity features

As previously discussed, the native and non-native English speaker groups ranked the dialect groups differently concerning solidarity features. Both groups ranked the Standard dialect as the most positive. However, in descending order, the ESL group then ranked the Latina, AA and Southern dialects while the native speaker group ranked the Southern, AA and Latina dialects.

Figure 4.13: Solidarity ratings by group level



	Standard	Latina	AA	Southern
High Advanced	2.08	2.64	2.70	2.96
Low Advanced	1.92	2.35	2.73	2.73
High Beginner	2.09	2.36	2.58	2.72
Native Speaker	1.97	2.45	2.39	2.38

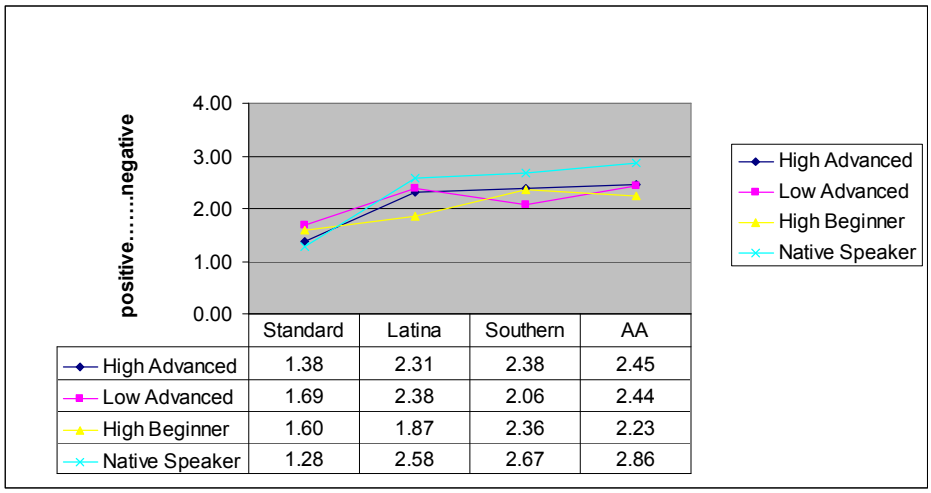
In looking at the individual level ESL responses, we see that the high advanced and high beginner groups agreed in the Standard, Latina, AA, Southern ranking for solidarity features. The low advanced group also ranked the Standard and Latina dialects in a similar order. However, the AA and Southern dialects were rated identically to each other; that is, both dialects were rated as 2.73 by the low advanced group. For this set of features, all of the ESL groups appear to be aligned with their perceptions of Standard and Latina speakers, but vary slightly in their ranking of AA and Southern dialects.

As discovered when analyzing the status feature ratings, there was no consistent order for which group viewed each dialect most positively concerning the solidarity features. For example, the overall ratings for the Latina dialect were viewed most positively by the low advanced group, followed by the high beginner, native speaker and high advanced groups. However, the AA dialect was viewed most positively by the native speaker group, followed by the high beginner, high advanced and low advanced groups.

4.4.3 Breakdown of levels for language proficiency

As discussed above, the native and non-native speakers ranked the dialects identically, ranking the Standard dialect most positively or as speaking English the best, followed by the Latina, Southern and AA dialects.

Figure 4.14: Language proficiency ratings by group level



	Standard	Latina	Southern	AA
High Advanced	1.38	2.31	2.38	2.45
Low Advanced	1.69	2.38	2.06	2.44
High Beginner	1.60	1.87	2.36	2.23
Native Speaker	1.28	2.58	2.67	2.86

In looking at the individual level ESL responses, we see that the high advanced group also ranked the dialects in a Standard, Latina, Southern, AA order. However, the low advanced group ranked the dialects in a Standard, Southern, Latina, AA order. In other words, they switched the Latina and Southern rankings. The high beginner group also rated the Standard dialect most positively, followed by the Latina dialect. However, this group then ranked the AA dialect over the Southern dialect. In other words, they switched the Southern and AA rankings. In this case, the high advanced group appears to be aligned with the rankings of the native speaker group.

However, when looking at the ratings of each dialect by group, there was again no consistent order or alignment. For example, the Latina dialect was rated most positively by the high beginner group, followed by the high advanced, low advanced and native speaker groups. The Southern dialect was rated most positively by the low advanced group, followed by the high beginner, high advanced and native speaker groups.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I first summarize the findings of this study. Next, I discuss implications for what these findings mean and then offer ideas for future research.

5.1 Summary of results by grouped characteristics

Regarding status-based characteristics, both the ESL and native speaker groups ranked the Standard dialect most favorably, followed by the Latina, AA and Southern dialects. Looking at solidarity-based characteristics, both groups also ranked the Standard dialect most positively. However, the ESL group then ranked the Latina dialect as the second most positive, followed by the AA dialect and then the Southern dialect. In contrast, the native speakers rated the Southern dialect as the second most positive, followed by the AA dialect and then the Latina dialect.

Regarding language proficiency, both the native and non-native speakers ranked the Standard dialect most favorably, or as speaking English the best, followed by the Latina, Southern and AA dialects. Additionally, the ESL students, or non-native speakers, rated the language proficiency of the speakers of the Latina, Southern and AA dialects more favorably overall than the native speakers.

5.2 Summary of results by individual characteristic

In evaluating the results by individual characteristic, we see that the ESL group and the native control group agreed in their ranking of *successful*, perceiving the Standard dialect as the most *successful*, followed by the Latina, AA and Southern dialects. However, the native speaker group ranked the Southern dialect as *smarter* than the AA dialect, while the ESL group ranked the Southern dialect as sounding the least *smart*. The native speakers viewed the AA dialect as more *confident* than the Southern and Latina dialects while the ESL participants maintained the Standard, Latina, AA and Southern ranking.

The ESL and native speaker groups agreed in their ranking of *dependable*, ranking the Standard dialect as most *dependable*, followed by the Latina, AA and Southern dialects. However, the groups varied in their ranking of the dialects regarding *funny*. The ESL group ranked the Standard dialect as the *funniest*, followed by the AA, Latina and Southern dialects. The native group rated the AA dialect as the *funniest*, followed by the Southern, Standard and Latina dialects. The two groups also differed in their rankings of *friendly*. They both ranked the Standard dialect as *friendliest*, followed by the Latina dialect. However, the ESL group then ranked the AA dialect as *friendlier* than the Southern dialect while the native speaker group ranked the Southern dialect as *friendlier* than the AA dialect.

5.3 Summary of results by individual group

In evaluating the separate ESL levels, there was no consistent, predictable pattern of alignment among the groups. The two advanced groups identically

ranked the dialects regarding status characteristics while the high beginner group matched the ranking of the native control group. The three ESL levels were generally agreed on their ranking of the dialects regarding solidarity characteristics and the high advanced group aligned with the native speaker group in their ranking of language proficiency of the dialects.

While I was interested to see if the more advanced students would align, in general, with the native speakers, no such overall alignment was found. From these rankings, it is unclear at what level non-native speakers' perceptions align with the perceptions of native speakers. Rather than using the level of English ability of non-native speakers implicit in their classroom assignment, perhaps alignment with native speakers' perception could be tied to time spent living in the United States or time spent studying English.

5.4 Discussion

Overall, the findings of this study have supported my original predictions. However, there have been a few surprises. While the ESL and native speaker groups ranked the dialects identically for status-related characteristics, as predicted, the actual order of ranking was surprising. The ranking of the Standard dialect as the most positive for these features supported research discussed in Chapter 2. However, the ranking of the Latina dialect as the second most positive on status features was unexpected. As discussed in Munro and Derwing (2000), native speakers tend to downgrade non-native speakers. Also noted in Chapter 2, several previous studies have found that native English speakers in the US rated native

Spanish speakers' English negatively on both status and solidarity features. Perhaps this study's findings align more with the findings cited in Cargile and Giles (1998); that is, some non-native speakers may rate highly on status, but not solidarity, characteristics when speaking English.

Additionally, the ranking of the AA dialect over the Southern dialect for status-related features was also of interest. This ranking is surprising for two reasons. First, as Lindemann (2003) points out, the dialects of historically powerful groups are generally preferred. Certainly, the situation of African Americans in US society could not be defined as "historically powerful". Second, the ranking of the Southern dialect as the most negative on status-related features is somewhat surprising. The majority of the native speakers were native Southerners of white, European descent. Much research, including Evans (1999), has found that speakers of a socially inferior dialect may rate themselves less positively than the speakers of a socially powerful group. This supports the native Southerners ranking the Standard dialect above the Southern dialect. However, it does not explain why the native Southerners would rank the Latina and AA dialects above the Southern dialect for status-related characteristics. Do they view the Latino and African American populations as more socially powerful or prestigious than their own? Additionally, do Latinos and African Americans have similar perceptions? Perhaps this topic is one that could be explored further in future research.

In analyzing the results of the solidarity-related characteristics, there were also a few surprises. Both the native and non-native groups ranked the Standard dialect most positively on the solidarity-related characteristics. As discussed in

Edwards (1985), vernacular dialects are generally associated more with solidarity traits. Standard dialects tend to be associated with high-rating status features, not necessarily solidarity features. However, in this study, generally all respondents tended to rate the Standard speakers positively on all traits.

Also of interest was the divergence of rankings between the native and non-native speakers. The ranking of the Southern dialect in second position by the native (Southern) speakers supports the idea of in-group solidarity. Additionally, based on their familiarity with the AA dialect, it was not surprising that the AA dialect was then ranked more positively than the Latina dialect for solidarity characteristics. This ranking supports the idea of native speakers labeling Latino English speakers as “foreign” or as “the other”.

Conversely, the ESL group ranked the Latina dialect in second position, followed by the AA and Southern dialects. Again, this supports the idea of solidarity among second language speakers. While certainly not all ESL respondents were Latino, perhaps they were able to pick up enough of a sense that the Latino English speakers were non-native English speakers, like themselves. This association supports the idea of in-group solidarity. It is unclear why the ESL group then ranked the AA dialect more positively than the Southern dialect. Perhaps the ESL students feel more socially aligned with African Americans than with white Southerners. Again, this topic could be interesting for future study.

Finally, the rankings of both groups for language proficiency were interesting. It was not surprising that the Standard dialect was ranked the most positively. However, the subsequent ranking of the Latina, Southern and AA dialects by both

groups was interesting. Perhaps the test groups identified the Latino English speakers as non-native speakers and were impressed with their language abilities enough to give them a positive rating. Why were the Southern and AA dialects viewed more negatively? An interesting item for future study would be to try to identify which features (lexical, phonological or grammatical) influenced these rankings.

The prediction that ESL students would rate all speakers more positively than the native speakers was generally supported, except for the Standard dialect. Perhaps ESL speakers' insecurity over their own English caused them to rate other people's English abilities more positively overall. The native speakers' ratings were more critical. The one exception was the native speakers' rating of the Standard dialect language proficiency. They rated the Standard dialect even higher than the ESL students did. Perhaps this is tied to the native speakers' overwhelming perception of the Standard dialect being the "correct" dialect in American society.

5.5 Future research

Various ideas for potential future research have been discussed throughout this paper. Of particular interest to me is the question of when non-native speakers' perceptions align with native speakers' perceptions. This question was lightly touched on in this study; however, it would be of interest to contrast true beginner-level non-native speakers with intermediate, advanced and native speakers. To execute a study of this sort, you would need to have translated study materials available in each participant's native language.

Beyond language ability level, it would also be of interest to look at how non-native speakers' perceptions vary based on length of time living in the United States. Additionally, it would be interesting to look more closely at the perceptions of non-native speakers who do not explicitly label themselves as ESL students (e.g. non-native speakers involved in mainstream GED classes).

Appendix I:

Process Outline

1. Intro Script

   Hi. My name is Melissa Damann and I'm a graduate student at UNC-Chapel Hill. I am working on a study looking at how we think and how we feel about how people talk. I have some samples of different kinds of speakers and I'd like you to listen to them and then fill out a form for each speaker, telling me what you think about that person. I want you to pay attention to how the person sounds, not to what the person says.

   It will take about 45 minutes to listen to the speakers and fill out the response forms. All of the study information is confidential and your name will not be associated with the answers that you give. First, I'll have you fill out a consent form and we'll talk more about the study. I'd really like you to participate, but you don't need to participate if you don't want to.

   Are there any questions?

2. Consent Form

   Hand out form/answer any questions

3. Mini Lesson

   a.
   We're going to be using a certain kind of survey for this study and I want us to have a little practice to make sure we all understand how it works. (Write Likert Scale on board)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(YES!!!	yes	no	NO!!!)

   We're going to listen to a music sample. (Play sample) OK. If I say: "This person sings well." Do you agree or disagree? If you really agree, then you circle 1, etc…
   Sample 1: *La Mamma Morta*, performed by Maria Callas
   Sample 2: *Color Me Once*, performed by Violent Femmes

   Great. Any questions about how this kind of question and answer works…?

b.
We're also going to be using some words that I want to make sure we all understand. What are some other words for "smart, successful, confident, friendly, funny, dependable"? (Elicit from the students and write responses on board. Have responses ready in case no one responds.)

successful: rich, well-to-do, fulfilled, has a good job, achieve goals
dependable: reliable, stable, trust this person
funny: amusing, makes me laugh, humorous, comedic
smart: intelligent, clever, bright, quick
confident: self-assured, certain, bold, has courage
friendly: nice, likable, sociable, pleasant, approachable

Great, we're ready to get started.

4. Background form

Here's a form asking for some information about you. Your name will not be associated with this and only I will see these forms. (Hand out forms)

5. Speaker sample

a.
OK, now we're going to start with the samples of the different speakers. You will hear 8 different speakers. First, I'm going to play a quick sample of each speaker so you can get an idea of what you're going to hear.
(Play 3-5 seconds of each speaker.)

b.
Now, we'll start with the first speaker. I will play this speaker for you 2 times and then I'll have you answer questions about this person.

The questions will be: This person is "smart, successful, confident, friendly, funny, dependable, speaks English well" and you'll be asked if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement. There is a "comments section" if you want to explain your answer or give more information.

Please answer each question. If you feel like you don't know, just make your best guess.

Remember, I want you to pay attention to how the person sounds, not to what the person says.

Any questions before we get started?

c.
Play each speaker sample 2x, have them fill out the survey for that speaker and then collect those surveys before moving on to the next speaker.

6. Thank you

Appendix II A:

English Consent Form

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Title of study: ESL Learners' Perception of American Dialects

IRB Study # LING 05-012

Documentation of verbal presentation of English-language consent form

By signing below, I indicate that I have had the study and consent form verbally presented to me in a language I understand. I have had the opportunity to ask, and have had answered, all my questions about this study. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact me, Melissa Damann, at damann@email.unc.edu or my faculty advisor, David Mora-Marin, at davidmm@email.unc.edu.

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

_____ _____
Signature of Research Subject Date

_____
Printed Name of Research Subject

Appendix II B:

Spanish Consent Form

Universidad de Carolina del Norte-Chapel Hill
Consentimiento de Participación en Estudio de Investigación

Título del estudio: Percepción de Dialectos Americanos por Parte de Estudiantes de Inglés como Segunda Lengua

IRB Estudio # LING 05-012

Documentación de presentación verbal del formulario de consentimiento en Inglés

Por medio de mi firma yo hago constar que se me han presentado y explicado verbalmente tanto el estudio como el formulario de consentimiento, ambos en un idioma que yo entiendo. He tenido la oportunidad de hacer preguntas acerca del estudio y éstas han sido contestadas. Consiento voluntariamente en participar en este estudio de investigación.

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta sobre este estudio sírvase de contactarme a mí, Melisa Damann, a la siguiente dirección de correo electronico, damann@email.unc.edu, o a mi supervisor del Departmento de Lingüística, David Mora Marín, a la siguiente dirección, davidmm@unc.edu.

Toda investigación que requiera de voluntarios humanos es supervisada por un comité que trabaja para proteger sus derechos y bienestar. Si usted tiene preguntas acerca de sus derechos como voluntario humano puede contactar, en forma anónima si así lo prefiere, al Instituional Review Board al teléfono 919-966-3113, o por correo electrónico a IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

_____ _____
Firma del Participante en la Investigación Fecha

_____
Nombre del Participante en Imprenta

Appendix III:

Background Information Form

Background Information

Age: _____

Gender: Male Female

Country of Origin: _____

Which languages do you speak? _____

Which language are you most comfortable speaking?_____

How long have you been learning English? _____

How long have you lived in the United States? _____

Where have you lived in the United States? _____

I speak English.	Very well	Well	OK	Not Well
I understand English.	Very well	Well	OK	Not Well

Appendix IV:

Transcripts of Speech Samples[8]

Speaker 1 (Southern 1)
And some days, I mean they're finished at four, some days they're finished at noon, last night they got done at ten. He went in at eight-thirty and they got through at ten o'clock last night. I mean, you know, he never knows his schedule. And his mom'll call, why haven't you called me? And she goes to the beach and she comes home 'bout once, twice a month. She--and she's retired now--why haven't you called me? <(unintelligible) I said say, well>last time I checked, phone lines run both ways, you know you can receive calls as well as make 'em.

Speaker 2 (Latina 2)
In at seven, ok, if you have to be there at seven-thirty, they close the door after they give you like probably fifteen minutes for all the students. You have to be there when that door, uh, opens, you have to be already there. And whoever is there get to go in. But if you're late, they close the doors and you can't come in and sign in like we do here so you ju...you just miss a day of school.

Speaker 3 (AA1)
And a girl hear me at work how we, how I talk about him 'cuz I talk a lot about 'cuz he good to me, yeah, no, he's good to me. And they can't--I said we get along good--I said, she said, married to a preacher? I said yes. I say, she say, the way you talk you sound like you's really in love with him. The older we get the better they get, the older we get the better and now 'bout, 'bout we being on the same level and um…

Speaker 4 (Standard 1)
I don't remember this at all, but apparently he saw me coming in from the field--we were inspectors--so I would go out in the field everyday and come back and he saw me coming back, lugging my crate full of plans and apparently thought, whoa, I could work here. And luckily for both of us, he got the job.

Speaker 5 (Southern 2)
But if I, I had thought about that if I did major in anything it would be something in the medical field, you know, the more, I got more so to thinking 'bout becoming, I like the idea of becoming a doctor, but I don't know specifically, you know, I wouldn't mind something like being an optometrist or something, something like that.

Speaker 6 (AA 2)
But I, I feel like this. I think marriage is a, you know, a very strong, you know very strong thing. If you gonna, if you gonna get married somebody, make sure you're ready, make sure it's what you want, don't do it just because you say you love that person. If you love that person you gotta have mutual, mutual respect for that

[8] Sound files attached to thesis submission.

person. You gotta have a understanding, you know, it's not gonna be like, well, he gonna have everything to say and I'll do it. It's…

Speaker 7 (Standard 2)
But then when I got to be about eight or nine, um, I would walk home with my best friend Kathy and we would just go home and watch tv and make ourselves a snack at, either at her house or at my house and, um, that was perfectly fine and then again, you know, her mom was a school teacher too, funny enough. And so then, we would, um, you know our moms would come home in an hour or two, so it wasn't like we were alone for like hours on end and it was fine.

Speaker 8 (Latina 1)
Basically, I wanted to live with my aunt 'cuz when my mom came here, I was one years old and I was with her and I grew up with my grandma and my aunt. Well, they raised me, so, they raised me and I got used to living with them so when I moved here I did not want to go with my mom, I wanted to go with my aunt and everything. But she was here, she came one year before I did, after I did, and then…

Appendix V:

Speaker Survey Forms[9] (Speakers 1 – 8)

Speaker 1

Comments:

1. This person is **successful**.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. This person is **dependable**.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. This person is **funny**.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. This person is **smart**.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. This person is **confident**.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. This person is **friendly**.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. This person **speaks English well**.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

[9] Format modified to fit thesis margin guidelines.

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