

A Comparison between Dutch and English Language Attitudes towards Varieties of English

Bachelor scriptie

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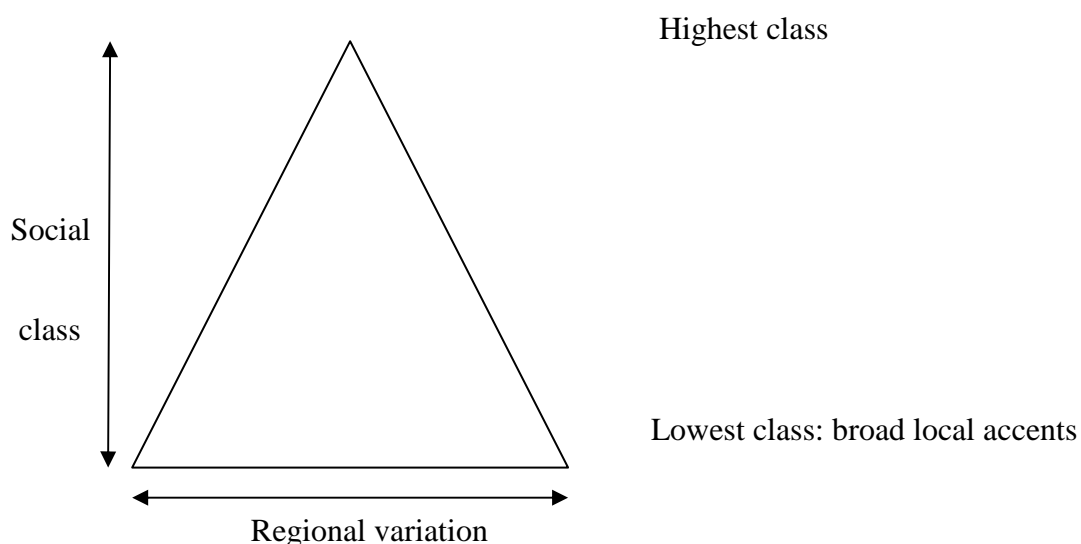
1: Introduction

Edwards & Giles and Wolfram & Schilling-Estes argue that, in some people's opinions, some languages and varieties of languages are more commendable than others. They state that this assumption forms the basis of linguistic stereotypes (qtd. In Al-Dosari 1042). H. S. Al-Dosari summarizes the studies by Edward & Giles and Wolfram & Schilling-Estes: “[l]anguage attitudes arise from users' language ideologies, or prescriptive beliefs about how a language 'ought to be’” (1042). Additionally, H. Daniels says that more and more English is being presented in the media to non-native listeners of English. These include not only normative accents like RP (Received Pronunciation) and GA (General American), but Australian English and Irish English as well (qtd. in Doel 15). This means that non-native listeners of English (Dutch listeners included) have become more familiar with various accents and dialects of English. Dutch listeners are even more familiar with English accents than other listeners because Dutch television uses subtitles, whereas television in, for instance, Germany, Spain, and France uses dubbing. The hypothesis of this paper is therefore that native listeners of Dutch are able to adopt language attitudes toward English varieties, and that these attitudes are similar to the language attitudes of English native listeners.

So far, there has been little discussion about language attitudes of Dutch native listeners towards English accents and dialects. This paper will focus on whether linguistic attitudes towards English varieties are formed by Dutch students of English Language and Culture, and if these attitudes correspond with those of English native listeners. We will first provide a brief overview of the literature that has been written on several issues concerning the present research. The next chapter will describe the methods and materials that were used in the execution of the research. Additionally, the results of the research will be presented,

accompanied by a discussion with respect to the focus of this paper. We will finish with a conclusion and a reconsideration of the hypothesis.

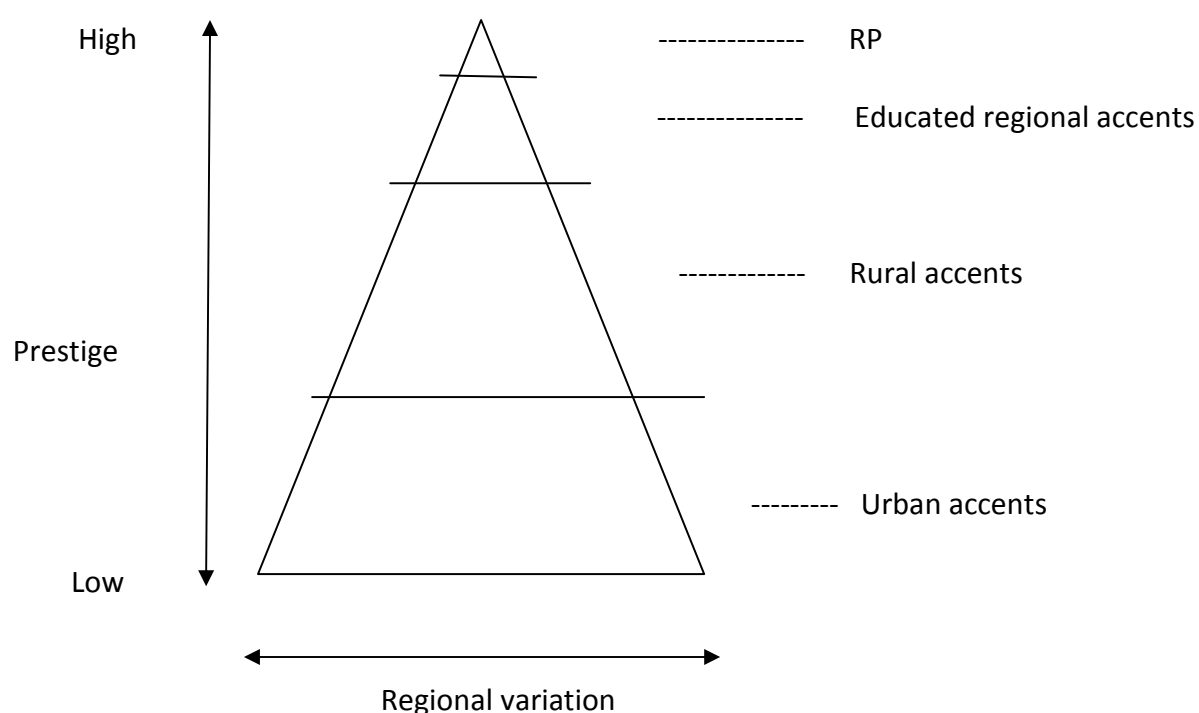
A considerable amount of literature has been published on English accents and dialects. J. Wells points out that the way English listeners perceive the accents and dialects of their country can be portrayed by means of a triangle shape (14). This triangle is visible in figure 1. Wells says that “the horizontal dimension represents geographical variation (regionality), the vertical dimension social class” (14). It can be seen in figure 1 there is little regional variation among the higher social classes, and a great degree of regional variation among the lower classes. However, even though Wells says that “[i]t has long been pointed out that in England the accent situation can be compared to a triangle or pyramid” (14), he does not give any references to studies that have proven this. This means that his triangle may not be based on any valid evidence. Later, he points out that the triangle cannot include accents from outside the UK, because other “countries have their own higher-class accents which differ in many important respects from RP” (15). He also mentions that regional variation in, for instance, American accents and Australian speech is not as broad as in accents from the UK (15). However, even though Wells mentions these restrictions, the principle of the triangle applies to most languages. We only need to note that for some languages regional variation will be less wide, or the top of the triangle will be slightly wider than Wells's example.



(figure 1. Wells 14)

B. Dretzke has created a more detailed version of Wells's triangle, as can be seen in figure 2. Again, this triangle does not seem to be based on previous research. It needs to be mentioned that Wells calls the vertical axis of his triangle 'social class' and Dretzke calls it 'prestige' in his triangle. As is visible on the triangle in figure 2, the prestige of the various accents is high at the narrow top, where the standard accents and the educated accents are. Moreover, prestige is low at the wide bottom, the position of the urban accents, and in the middle are the rural accents, where the prestige is neither high nor low. In his book on English accents, Wells draws attention to the fact that the distinction between urban and rural accents can be explained by the fact that urban accents, of which London, Liverpool, and Derry are examples that are featured in this paper, are largely found "harsh" or "ugly" (11), but that rural accents, such as those of Harrogate in North Yorkshire, a "small village near Glasgow" (Meier) in Scotland, Huntsville in Texas, and Terang in Australia, which are discussed in this paper, are generally supposed to be "charming" or "quaint" (11). Naturally, accents that are found harsh or ugly have a lower prestige than accents that are found charming or quaint. Wells provides a possible explanation for this distinction. He argues that rural accents are usually more slow-paced than urban accents, which possibly gives listeners the feeling that

people speaking with a rural accent are less rushed than people speaking with an urban accent (11). Of course covert prestige should be taken into consideration. This means that a certain group of speakers intentionally uses an accent because they are proud of their heritage ("Sociolinguistics"). However, this only concerns the language attitudes of people toward their own accent, whereas the present research reviews language attitudes of speakers toward a different accent than their own. Because of this, covert prestige will not be discussed any further.



(figure 2. Dretzke 160)

Dretzke's placement of rural and urban accents causes a problem. It may be understandable that rural accents have more prestige than urban accents, but it seems illogical that that urban accents should have more regional variation than rural accents do. Some reasons are that urban accents have developed later than rural accents and urban accents are more similar to the standard varieties than rural accents are. It also needs to be mentioned that there is more social variation within urban accents, but because this is not the main focus of the present paper it will not be discussed any further. Wells's triangle does not have this

problem, because Wells does not mention rural and urban accents. It is interesting to distinguish between rural and urban accents, so Dretzke's triangle will be used in the present research. However, only prestige will be discussed in the 'Results and Discussion' chapter.

As mentioned earlier, the present research is about linguistic attitudes. There is a large volume of published studies describing English linguistic stereotypes. In his analysis, Dennis R. Preston discusses the linguistic aspects of these stereotypes. He draws attention to the relationship between stereotypes and linguistic characteristics (41). An example he gives is that speakers of Southern American English are commonly found lazy because their vowels sound lazy (40-41). However, this is merely his own experience and is not based on research. The research of the present paper features a speaker from Texas. It will be interesting to see if this speaker is found lazy by the listeners. In their study, Randall L. Alford and Judith B. Strother list three questions about non-native listeners identifying the differences between English accents and dialects: “(a) Are nonnative listeners able to perceive the phonological variations in speech by speakers of different varieties of U.S. English? (b) If they do detect differences, do they attach value judgements to those differences? and (c) What factors enter into these value judgements?” (481). Moreover, Preston mentions a study by L. Milroy and P. McClenaghan, in which it is pointed out that, if listeners are familiar with an accent, they can immediately form stereotypical judgements on the speakers (42).

Okim Kang and Donald L. Rubin point out that numerous studies have shown that people can judge someone's social status by merely listening to his accent (443). Kathryn Campbell explains that this is investigated through matched-guise studies, in which subjects listen to a number of speakers and judge them on different personality traits. Examples are ‘friendliness’ or ‘trustworthiness’. The matched-guise technique is used in the present research. It was developed by W.E. Lambert, R.C. Hodgson, R.C. Gardner, and S. Fillenbaum in 1960 (Ball 164). Peter Ball argues that the matched-guise technique is the most effective

way of studying sociolinguistics (165). Stephen J. Gaies and Jacqueline D. Beebe point out that it is important that the legitimacy of matched-guise research must be kept as high as possible (163) and that the material that is used for the research “provide[s] a reliable measure of the behaviour being investigated” (163). With these arguments in mind, the material used in the present research has been selected carefully. Additionally, Gaies and Beebe ask several critical questions about the matched-guise technique. For instance, they mention that in many matched-guise studies, the number of speakers used is relatively small (165). Consequently, it is not clear if the speakers are representative of a specific accent. The present research uses a single speaker for every accent. Of course, in an ideal situation, the research would use several speakers per accent. However, this was not a very practical option, because it would have considerably lengthened the duration of the survey. Another possible alternative would have been the use of only two accents and several speakers, but this would not have given enough material to compare. Gaies and Beebe also argue that matched-guise studies most frequently use semantic differential scales. However, they point out that there are other ways to conduct matched-guise research, and that the use of semantic differential scales is not the most satisfying one (167). They draw attention to John W. Oller’s study, in which he points out that semantic differential scales are considered useful only because of one common result (167): that negative personality traits “tend to cluster together” (qtd. in Gaies & Beebe). However, Gaies and Beebe point out that it is not always clear what a negative or a positive trait is (167). The fact that positive and negative traits are debateable has been an issue since the matched-guise technique was created (Gaies & Beebe 167). However, in the present research, it is evident for every semantic differential scale what the positive and negative traits are.

The present research is about the perception of English accents by Dutch listeners. In their article on second-language listening, Mirjam Broersma and Anne Cutler argue that it is

problematic to distinguish spoken words of a non-native language, especially when there are phonemes in the non-native language that could be confused (74). The subjects used for the research of this paper are all in daily contact with the English language and should therefore be able to distinguish between linguistic variants.

2: Materials & Methods

In most studies on language-based personality judgment, the results are obtained by means of the matched-guise technique. This approach was chosen because it is the best-known technique. Much has been written about the matched-guise technique and it has been used in a considerable number of experiments. The design of the semantic differential scales used in the present matched-guise analysis is based on corresponding studies (see, for instance, the studies by Senaratne 79, Bugel and Santos 153-154, and Alford and Strother 485). The scales used in these studies have served as an example for the research of this paper, because they have proven to be effective in the respective analyses. The following semantic differential scales was applied in the matched-guise analysis of this thesis: 'unintelligent - intelligent', 'unfriendly -friendly', 'unattractive - attractive', 'untrustworthy - trustworthy', 'not self-confident - self-confident', 'lazy - ambitious', 'uninteresting - interesting', 'lower-class - upper-class', 'dependent - independent', 'arrogant - modest', 'introvert - extravert'. The scales range from 1 to 10. This means, for example, that, if a listener rates a specific speaker 1 for 'unintelligent - intelligent', the listener finds her exceptionally unintelligent. However, if the speaker is rated a 7, this means that the listener believes she is modestly intelligent.

The speakers that were used for the research of this paper were all taken from the website of the International Dialects of English Archive. "IDEA was created in 1997 as a free, online archive of primary source dialect and accent recordings" (Meier). The selected speakers were all female. This choice was made to exclude the possibility that listeners would base their answers on the gender of the speakers. The various speakers were: a student from London who speaks Estuary English, a Scottish student from Ayrshire, an actor/teacher from Liverpool, a speaker from Harrogate in North Yorkshire, an Northern Irish speaker from

Derry, a student from Huntsville, Texas, an Australian speaker from Terang, Victoria, Received Pronunciation (RP) speaker Helen Ashton, who is trained in speech and dialect, and General American (GA) speaker Rena Cook, who is also specialized in speech (Meier). Priorities that were taken into account while selecting speakers were the quality of the sound file (with as little noise as possible), reading speed, reading ability, and the age of the speaker. Each speaker read out a short text called 'Comma gets a cure', written by Jill McCullough and Barbara Somerville and edited by Douglas N. Honorof. The IDEA website states that “[t]his passage was specially composed using J.C. Wells's standard lexical sets and allows the dialect researcher to examine a reader's English pronunciation across a wide variety of phonemic contexts” (Meier). In the present research, only a quarter of the text every speaker read out was selected. Consequently, the sound files used in the study of this paper had an average duration of thirty seconds. This choice was made, because the survey would take approximately forty-five minutes if the complete sound files would have been presented. The total duration of the survey was now twenty minutes.

Twenty-six Dutch students of English Language and Culture at Utrecht University participated in the survey. Unfortunately, only seven of the subjects were male, due to the fact that most students are female. All participants were aged between 18 and 26 at the beginning of the research. There were several participants older than 26, but they were not included in the final selection because the majority of participants was between 18 and 26, and the answers of the subjects should be kept as comparable as possible. Seven subjects were in their first year, eleven in their second year and eight in their third year. The reason why only students of English were recruited was that they should have more capability of hearing the linguistic variants between English accents and dialects than other Dutch listeners. An email was sent that asked the participants to fill out a survey. The email contained a link to the online inquiry. The advantage of an online survey is that subjects can take it at home, in their

own time. Subjects even had the possibility to pause the survey and finish it later. The survey started with a short introduction, informing participants about what was expected of them. However, they were not informed of the purpose of the inquiry because this could have influenced their answers. The introduction also included an example question to familiarize subjects with the assessment. Finally, the participants were asked to always give their first impression of the speakers. Moreover, it was explained to them that their answers should be based on the speaker's accent. Subsequently, subjects were asked to fill in their gender, age, number of years studying English Language and Culture, and their nationality. After this short questionnaire, the sound files of the different varieties of English were listed. Each sound file was accompanied by the text that was read out, so subjects could read along with the speaker. The semantic differential scales were placed beneath every sound file. At the end of the inquiry, participants were given the opportunity to leave any comments on the survey.

In the 'Results and Discussion' chapter, the results of the present research will be compared with a similar study by H. Giles. In his study, Giles uses the matched-guise technique to investigate language attitudes of English native listeners towards several English accents. Giles uses three different dimensions in the accent evaluations: aesthetic content, which "concerns the pleasantness - unpleasantness associated with listening to a particular accent" (Giles 212), communicative content, which shows how comfortable a listener would feel when interacting with a speaker of an accent (Giles 212), and status content, which "is concerned with the amount of prestige value inherent in an accent" (Giles 212). However, Giles's contents are somewhat confusing in relation to the scales used in this paper, so from here on we will refer to them differently. Aesthetic content will be called 'unpleasant – pleasant', communicative content will be called 'uncomfortable – comfortable', and status content will be called 'low prestige – high prestige'. The scales Giles uses in his research differ from the scales used in the present research. The choice to not work with the same

scales was made because the number of scales Giles uses is rather small. One of the goals of this paper is to give a more detailed insight in the language attitude of Dutch speakers toward English varieties. Because of this, the present paper uses a larger number of scales. The listeners Giles used in his research were students of 12 and 17 years old from South-West England and South Wales. Giles's material consisted of "one male speaker reading the same passage with [16] different foreign and regional accents" (Giles 214). Giles also mentions that "[t]he speaker attempted to assume the same speech rate, vocal intensity, pitch and personality throughout the recordings" (214). The accents were RP, North American, French, South Welsh, Irish, Yorkshire, Somerset, Indian, Birmingham, Cockney, Italian, German, Scottish, West Indian, Liverpool, and Affected RP. (RP, North American, Irish, Yorkshire, Cockney, Scottish, and Liverpool match to a great extent with the accents used in the present research) It would have been ideal to have one speaker who could speak several English accents for the present research as well, but it is very difficult to find someone who can speak all these accents convincingly. For this reason the present research uses several speakers instead of one speaker reading with several accents. Of course there are differences between Giles's research and the present research, but this study is the most recent one on this subject that could be found, and we will therefore attempt to compare the two as accurately as possible.

3: Results & Discussion

Bar charts are used to show the scores the participants gave to the different varieties of English. Figure 3 presents the average scores per English accent. The horizontal line in each figure indicates the overall average. The method of averaging over the semantic differential scales could be criticized because calculating average scores over different scales may not be meaningful. However, all negative traits were at the low ends of the scales, and the positive traits at the high ends, so that the averages represent negative-to-positive evaluations of the speakers and their accents.

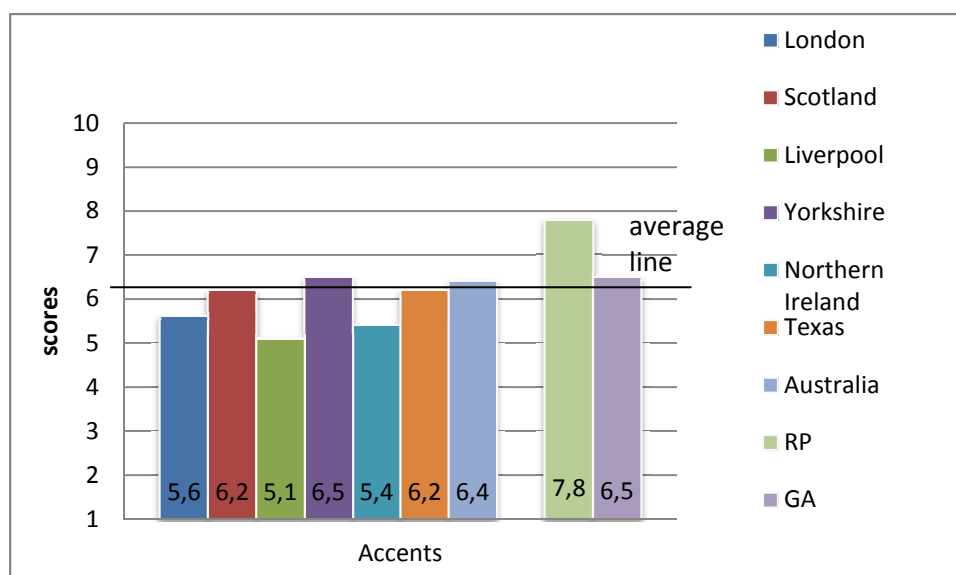


Figure 3: Average scores for the present research.

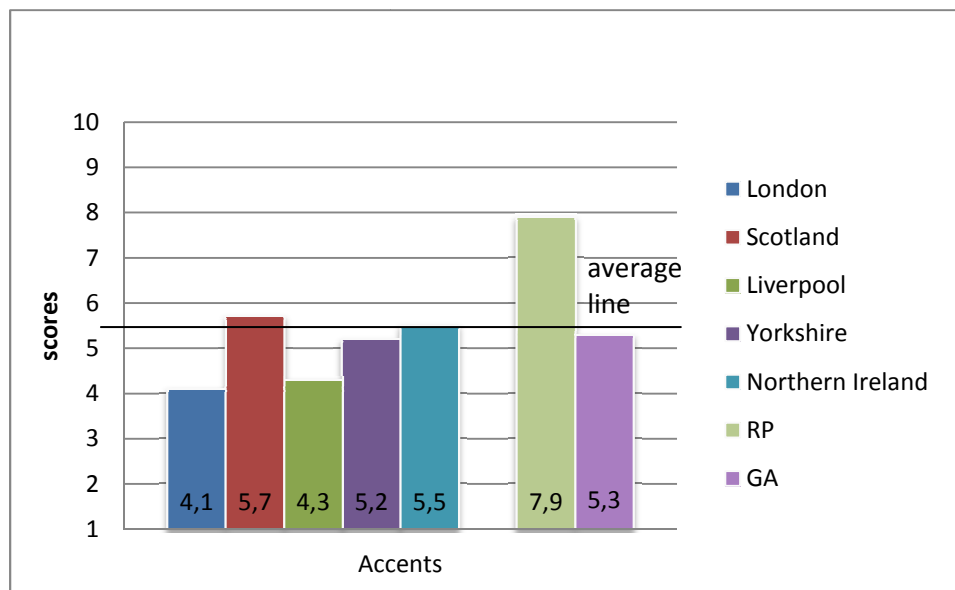


Figure 4: Average scores for Howard Giles's research

The main difference between figures 3 and 4 is that the average score of Giles's research is 0.8 lower than the average score of the present research. This difference in averages indicates that we expect slightly lower scores in Giles's results. However, because the difference is only 0.8, the scores of the two studies are comparable.

With these results, we can have a look at the hypothesis. In the introduction it was mentioned that it was expected that Dutch listeners would adopt language attitudes toward English varieties that are similar to the language attitudes of English listeners. Figures 3 and 4 show that this hypothesis is roughly correct, but that English listeners tend to give lower scores than the Dutch listeners do. Especially London, Yorkshire, and GA speaker show large differences in scores, as can be seen in figures 3 and 4. However, the remaining varieties have scores that are fairly similar. This means that the hypothesis is confirmed for some varieties of English, but that Dutch listeners might judge certain varieties of English more positively than English listeners do.

We will now look at figures 3 and 4 in more detail. As can be seen in figure 3, RP and GA received the highest scores overall. In Giles's study, native listeners of English gave RP by far the highest scores as well. However, figure 4 shows that GA did not score as high in Giles's research as it did in the present research. An interesting difference is that Giles's listeners rated both Scottish and Irish higher (218). A possible explanation for these different outcomes is that Giles only used listeners from South-West England and South Wales and none from the US (214). Listeners may judge accents that are more similar to their own more positively. The present research does not use any native speakers of English, so it is possible that they are less prejudiced about American English than English speakers from the UK are.

If we look at figure 3, it is clear that RP has the highest average, namely 7.8. GA and Yorkshire follow with 6.5, which is strikingly lower. Giles's results show a similar outcome in averages, as can be seen in figure 4. RP is at the top with an average of 7.9. Scotland is in second place, whose average score of 5.7 is notably lower than that of the RP speaker (Giles, 218). This shows that both the Dutch and English listeners considered RP to be the most positive accent.

As can be seen in figure 3, the average scores the GA and the Yorkshire speaker of the present paper received are equal. It was expected that GA would receive an average score that corresponded with the RP result, because they are both standard varieties. For this reason, this low average result for GA is somewhat surprising. A possible explanation may be that the subjects participating in the present research were all students of English. Because the target accent of most of these students is RP rather than GA, they may not have considered the prestige of GA as high as that of RP. However, during the survey, participants were not asked what their target accent was, so, unfortunately, we cannot be certain that this was the reason for GA's low average. Giles also uses a North American accent and a Yorkshire accent in his research. Figure 4 shows that the average results of these two are very similar: GA only

scored 0.1 higher than Yorkshire. In this respect the attitudes of Dutch and English native listeners are very similar. However, Irish and Scottish both scored higher in Giles's research, whereas in the present research GA and Yorkshire share second place. More detailed findings considering these two varieties will be discussed in the 'Interesting Findings' section.

3.1: Standard Varieties vs. Dialects

Now, we will look in more detail at striking differences and similarities between the standard varieties RP and GA, and the English dialects of London, Scotland, Liverpool, Yorkshire, Northern Ireland, Texas, and Australia. The results of the present research will be compared with those of the similar study by Giles. Figure 5 shows the averages for the dialects featured in the present research. Figures 7 and 9 show the results for the RP and the GA speaker. Figures 6, 8, and 10 show the corresponding results of Giles's research.

As was mentioned in the 'Materials and Methods' chapter, Giles uses three scales in his matched-guise study: 'unpleasant – pleasant', 'uncomfortable – comfortable', and 'low prestige – high prestige'. The results of these three scales will be shown in figures and they will be compared with the results of the present research. In the following figures, two bars that are shown together portray similar scales. Giles's 'unpleasant - pleasant' scale will be compared with the 'unattractive-attractive' and the 'uninteresting-interesting' scales of the present research because these are about “the pleasantness associated with listening to a particular accent” (Giles 212), the 'uncomfortable - comfortable' scale will be compared with the 'unfriendly - friendly' scale because these are about the comfort the listener would feel when interacting with someone with this accent (Giles 212), and the 'low prestige - high prestige' scale will be compared with the 'lower-class-upper-class' scale because these are about “the amount of prestige value inherent in an accent” (Giles 212).

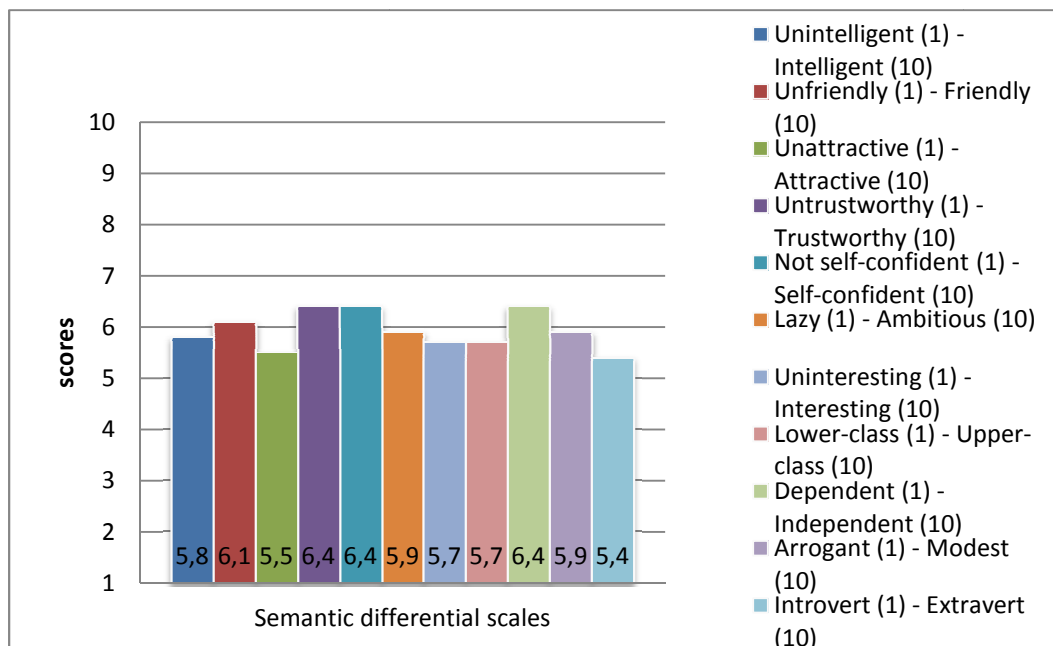


Figure 5: Average scores per scale, non-standard accents, present results

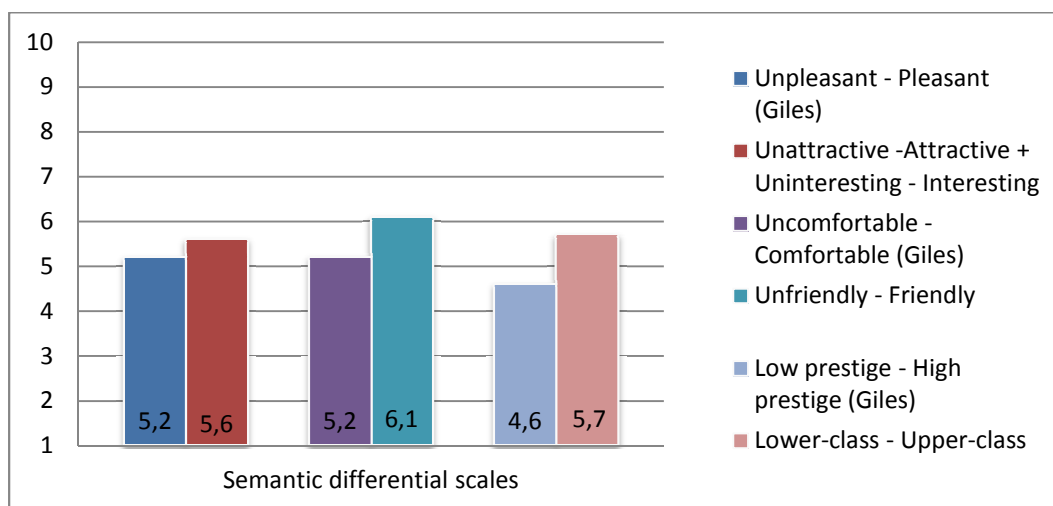


Figure 6: Average scores per scale, non-standard accents, Giles's results & present results

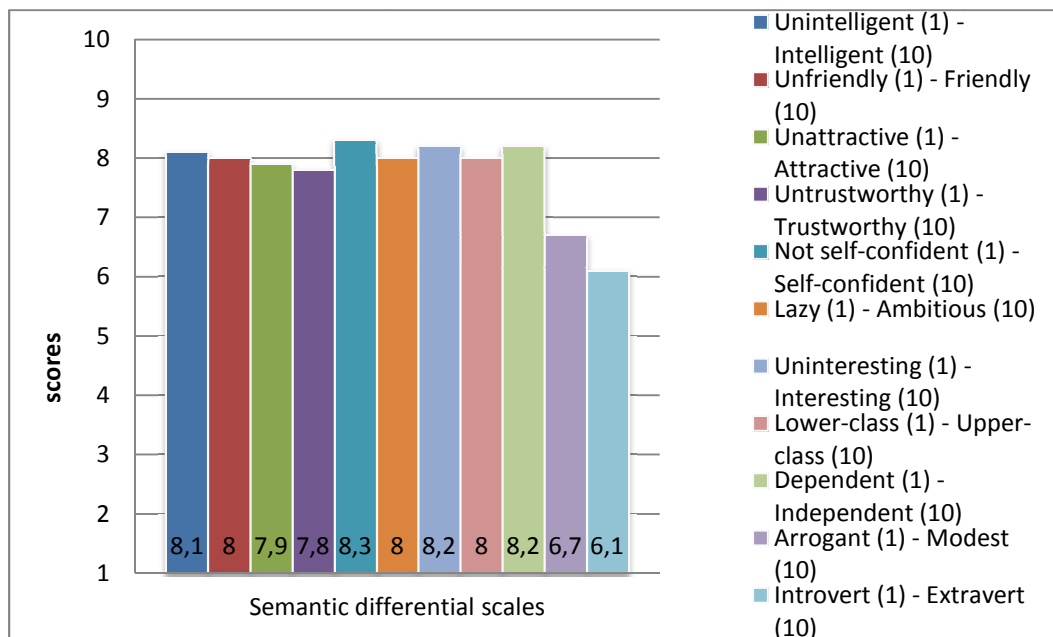


Figure 7: Average scores per scale, RP, present results

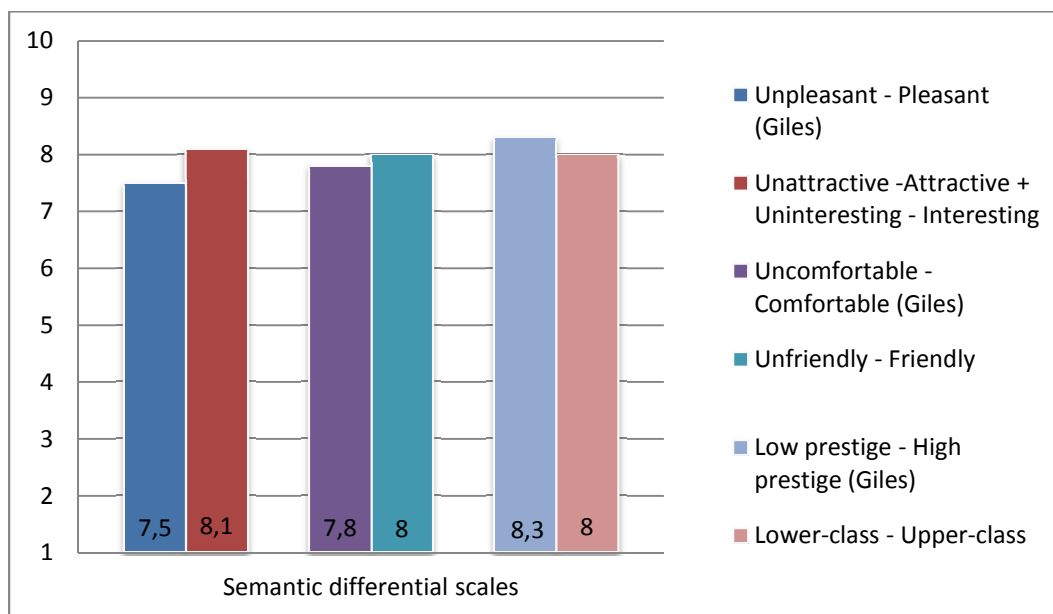


Figure 8: Average scores per scale, RP, Giles's results & present results

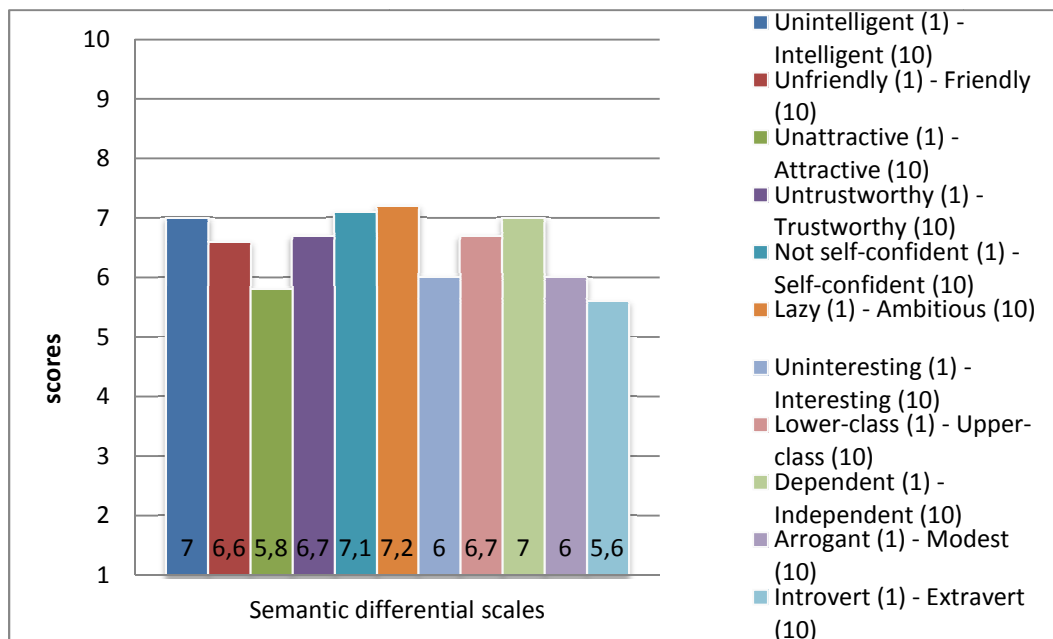


Figure 9: Average scores per scale, GA, present results

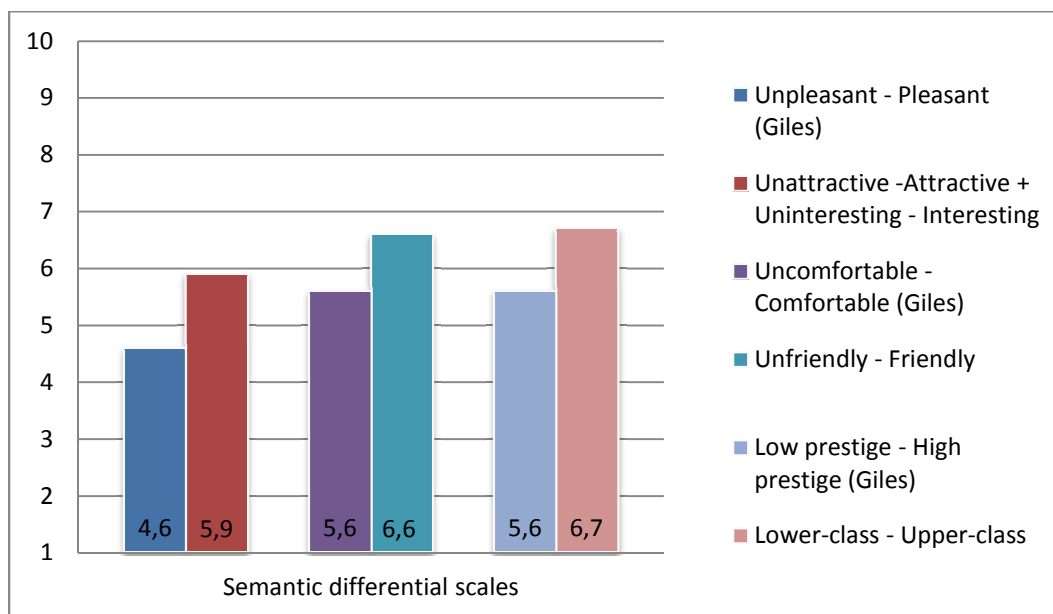


Figure 10: Average scores per scale, GA, Giles's results & present results

As can be seen in figure 5, all scores are close to 6.0. There are no scores that stand out. This shows that Dutch listeners do not have a very positive nor a very negative language attitude towards non-standard varieties of English. In figure 6 it can be seen that Giles's results are slightly lower than the present results. However, as has been mentioned earlier, it

can be expected that Giles's results are slightly lower than the present results so this is not surprising.

Figure 7 shows the present results of the RP speaker. It can be seen that most scores are around 8.0, but there are two scales that have relatively low scores: the 'arrogant - modest' and the 'introvert - extravert' scale. On all three scales, Giles's RP accent received the most positive results (218). In the corresponding scales of the present research, RP scored highest as well, as can be seen in figures 6, 8, and 10. This shows that both English and Dutch native listeners consider RP the most pleasant accent to listen to, the most comfortable one to interact with, as well as the variety with the highest prestige.

Figure 9 presents the average results of the GA speaker used in the present research. Most results are around 7.0 but several are around 6.0. However, there are no scales that stand out noticeably. The lowest score the GA speaker received is 5.6, which shows that Dutch listeners have a fairly positive language attitude towards GA. These results do not fully correspond with Giles's findings. On the 'unpleasant - pleasant' scale, his North American accent is in twelfth place out of sixteen accents (218). The GA speaker of the present research is in fourth place (together with the speaker from Texas) out of nine speakers, which shows that the Dutch listeners find American speech more pleasant than the English listeners do. Additionally, on the 'low prestige - high prestige' scale, Giles's North American and Scottish accents are both in fourth place (218). The results of the present research show that, on the 'lower-class - upper-class' scale, GA is in fourth place as well. However, because Giles discusses more varieties than the present paper does, it can be concluded that Dutch native listeners find GA moderately more prestigious than English native listeners. Additionally, it can be seen in figure 10 that Giles's results are somewhat lower than the present results. This also adds to the conclusion that Dutch listeners regard GA more positively than English listeners do.

These comparisons show that the language attitudes of Dutch and English native listeners towards the standard varieties RP and GA are quite similar. Both groups of listeners find RP the most aesthetic and prestigious accent. However, Dutch native listeners regard GA as slightly more positive than English native listeners do, and Dutch listeners seem to have less strong opinions about non-standard accents than English listeners do.

3.2: Triangle

Now, we will look more closely at the triangle, which was explained in the introduction. The results of the present research will be compared with the predictions of the triangle, and it will be concluded that it can be applied to the language attitudes of Dutch native listeners.

In reviewing the literature, Wells's triangle was discussed. It was argued that it is difficult to use, but that the basis of the triangle can be applied to most languages. It was also concluded that it seems illogical to put urban accents and not rural accents at the bottom of the triangle, as Dretzke does, because there is more regional variation among rural accents. We will not discuss Dretzke's horizontal axis any further because it does not seem valid as regards rural and urban accents. We will only focus on the vertical axis that represents prestige. Y. Hiraga states that English varieties can be separated into three classes of prestige: "'standard', 'rural' and 'urban'" (qtd. in Zhang 152). Hiraga, and H. Giles & N. Coupland point out that native listeners of English give standards such as RP the highest scores in terms of prestige. Additionally, the urban varieties are rated lowest (qtd. in Zhang 152). The prestige of English rural accents is therefore somewhere between that of standard and urban. On the basis of this arrangement of varieties, figure 11 was created. If the theory of Hiraga, and Giles & Coupland applies to Dutch native listeners, the results should look like figure 11. Dividing the different varieties into 'rural' and 'urban' groups did not cause any serious problems. However, there was one accent which was difficult to place, namely Harrogate, the birthplace of the speaker from Yorkshire. At first glance, it seems too urban to belong in the 'rural' group because the population of Harrogate is significantly larger than those of the birthplaces of the other speakers in the 'rural' group, Huntsville in Texas, Terang in Australia, and the "small village near Glasgow" in Scotland (Meier). Nonetheless, the choice was made to place Yorkshire in the 'rural' group, because Harrogate is not as urban as London, Derry or Liverpool.

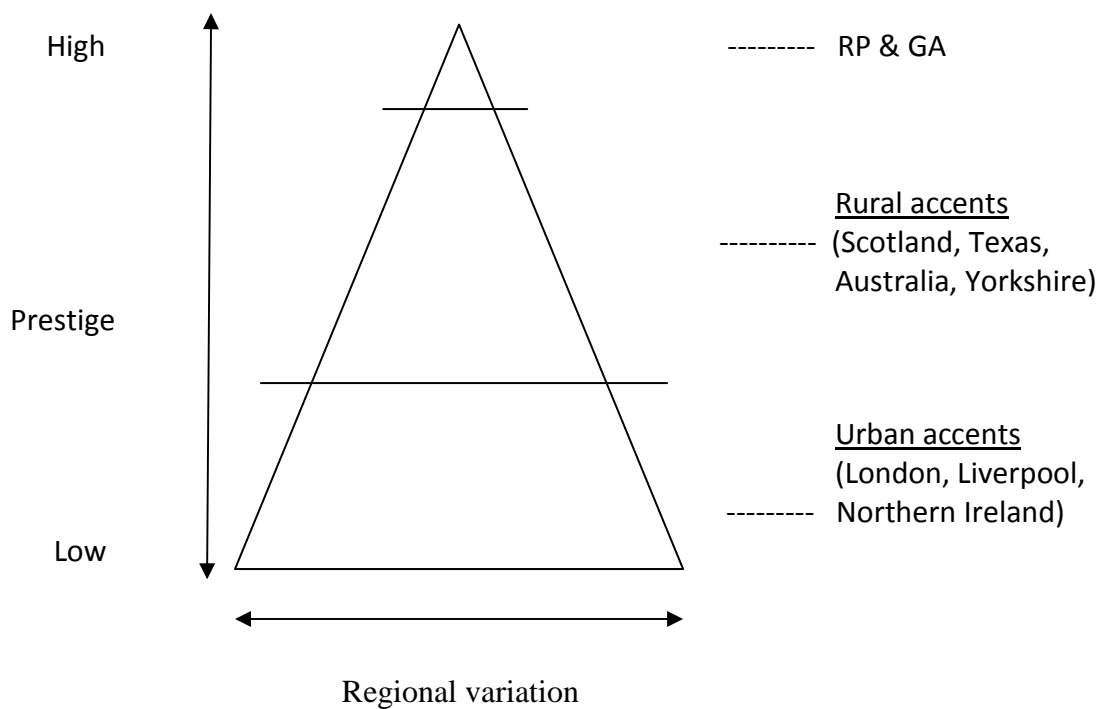


Figure 11

Figure 12 is based on the results of the research of this paper. Each variety of English is followed by a number that represents its average score. If native speakers of Dutch and English have the same language attitudes, figure 12 should be a duplicate of figure 11.

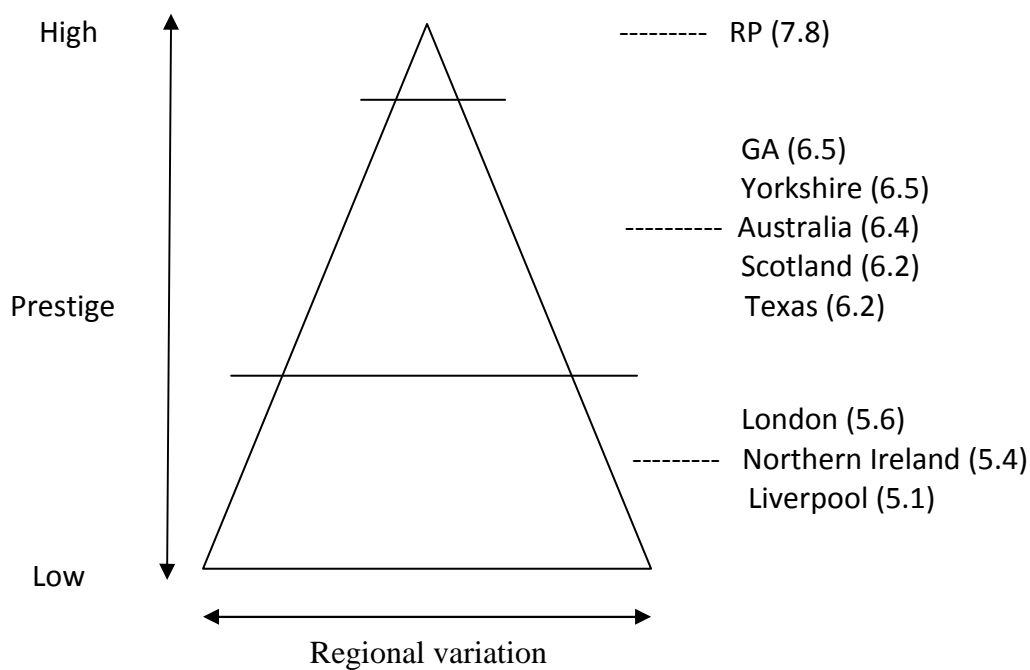


Figure 12

As shown in figure 12, there are three major groups that can be distinguished: firstly, the group with results ranging from 5.1 to 5.6, consisting of London, Northern Ireland and Liverpool, secondly, the group with average scores ranging from 6.2 to 6.5, which contains GA, Yorkshire, Australia, Scotland, and Texas, and finally, the group that consists of a single variety, namely RP, with an average result of 7.8. These groups are based on the Dutch intuition in grading. Everything with a score of 7 or higher is regarded as a good score, lower than 6 is a bad score, and between 6 and 7 is a satisfactory score. Comparing figure 12 to figure 11, it is evident that they match to a large extent. The rural accents form the middle of the triangle and the urban accents form the bottom. An unexpected finding is the generally low average result GA received. Figure 11 shows that the top of the triangle is formed by standard varieties, but, in figure 12, the difference in average scores between RP and GA is 1.3. Because this is a notable difference, GA must be placed in the middle of the triangle, together with the rural accents.

It should be noted that the low average score of GA is the only difference between figures 11 and 12. This means that, in comparison with the studies and theories about prestige by Hiraga, and Giles & Coupland, the language attitudes of native listeners of Dutch and English are very similar.

Of course, it should be mentioned that this chapter is not a perfect example of research on language attitudes toward urban and rural accents. There is no indication if the listeners made a distinction between rural and urban accents, or what their opinions on rural and urban accents were. However, the only purpose of this chapter is to conclude if the Dutch and English native listeners make a similar distinction (consciously or not) between the rural and urban accents used in this research. It would definitely be interesting to research language attitudes toward urban and rural accents more accurately.

3.3: Individual Accents Compared

Here, the most prominent results for the individual accents will be discussed in more detail, and they will be compared with the results of Giles's research. This should give a more detailed view of the differences and similarities between the language attitudes of Dutch and English native listeners.

Figures 13 to 24 present the detailed scores per English variety.

The different varieties all received noticeably different scores. We will see which scales scored best and worst. As has been discussed in the 'Triangle' section, all scores of 7 or higher will be rated as high scores, and all scores below 6 will be rated as low scores. We will also look at the differences and similarities between the results of this research and Giles's research.

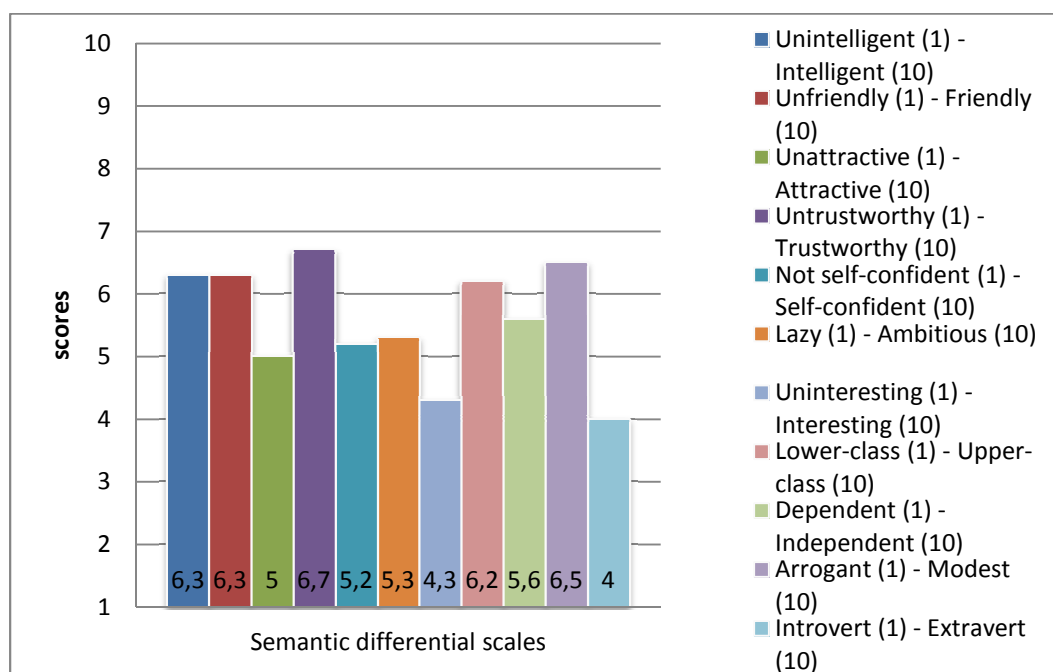


Figure 13: Average scores per scale, London, present results

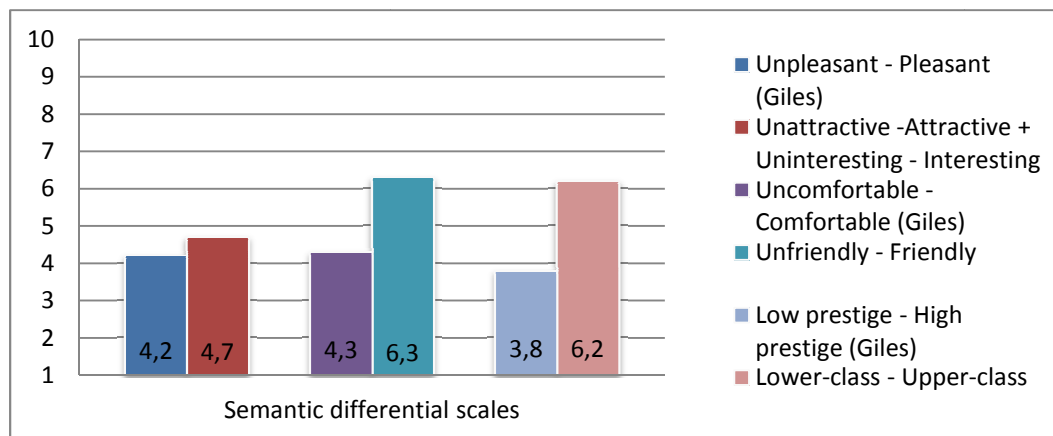


Figure 14: Average scores per scale, London, Giles's results & present results

As can be seen in figure 13, the speaker from London did not score higher than 7 on any scales. The scales that scored lower than 6 are 'unattractive - attractive', 'not self-confident - self-confident', 'lazy - ambitious', 'uninteresting - interesting', 'dependent - independent', and 'introvert - extravert'. These low scores mean that the speaker from London is found rather unattractive, not self-confident, lazy, uninteresting, dependent, and introverted. In fact, this speaker is found the most uninteresting and introverted one of all the speakers. In figure 14, the different scales of Giles's research can clearly be compared with the corresponding scales of the present research. There is not much difference between Giles's 'pleasant - unpleasant' scale and the 'unattractive - attractive' and 'uninteresting - interesting' scales. However, the 'unfriendly - friendly' and 'lower-class - upper-class' scales score much higher than Giles's 'uncomfortable - comfortable' and 'low prestige - high prestige' scales. This shows that Dutch native listeners consider speakers from London more pleasant to talk to and more upper-class than English native listeners. It should be noted that even though both speakers are from London, Giles's is a Cockney accent and this paper uses an Estuary English accent. They are comparable, but not identical. It can be expected that a strong accent such as Cockney scores lower on, for instance, the 'lower-class - upper-class' scale than a much milder accent like Estuary English.

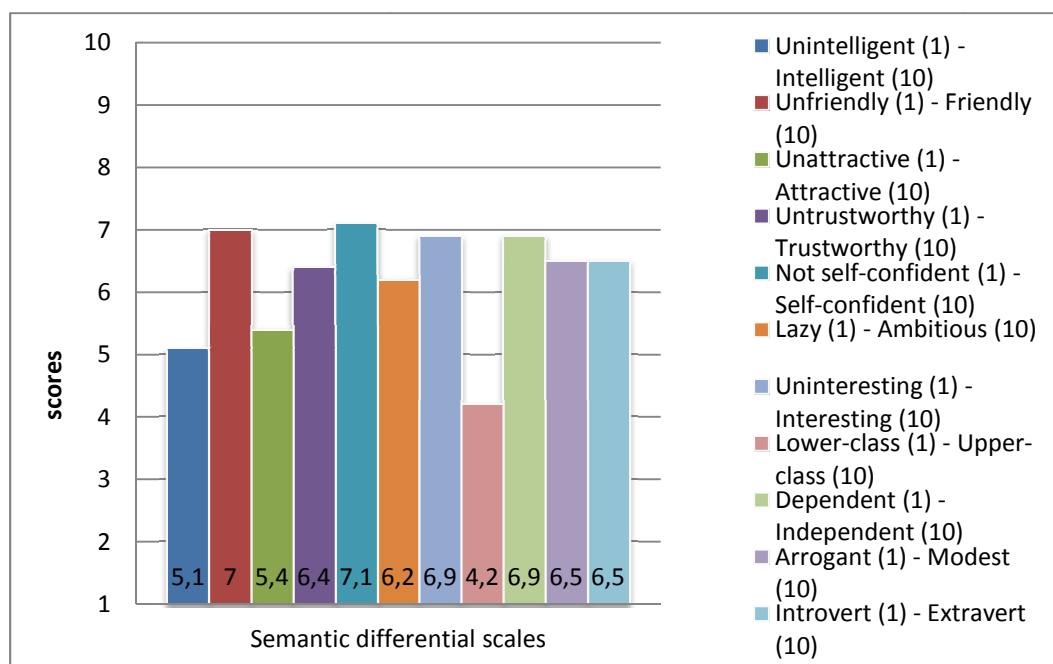


Figure 15: Average scores per scale, Scotland, present results

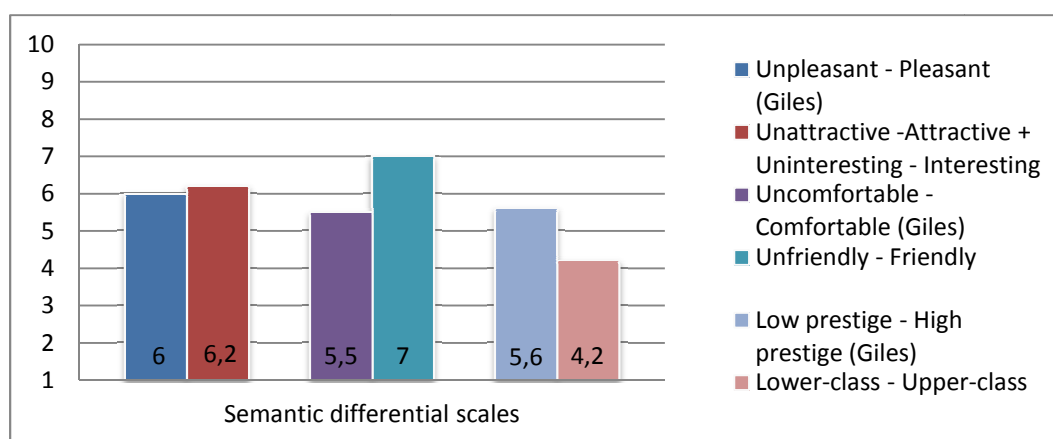


Figure 16: Average scores per scale, Scotland, Giles's results & present results

Figure 15 shows that the Scottish speaker scored more than 7 on two scales. She is found relatively friendly and self-confident. However, there are three scales that received a noticeably low score: the 'unintelligent - intelligent' scale, the 'unattractive - attractive' scale, and the 'lower-class - upper-class' scale. This means that the Scottish speaker is considered quite unintelligent, unattractive, and low-class. In figure 16, it can be seen that the 'unpleasant - pleasant' scale and the 'unattractive - attractive' and 'uninteresting - interesting' scales only

differ by 0.2 points. However, the Dutch listeners find the Scottish speaker friendlier in a conversation than the English listeners do, and the English listeners consider Scottish to be more upper-class than the Dutch subjects do.

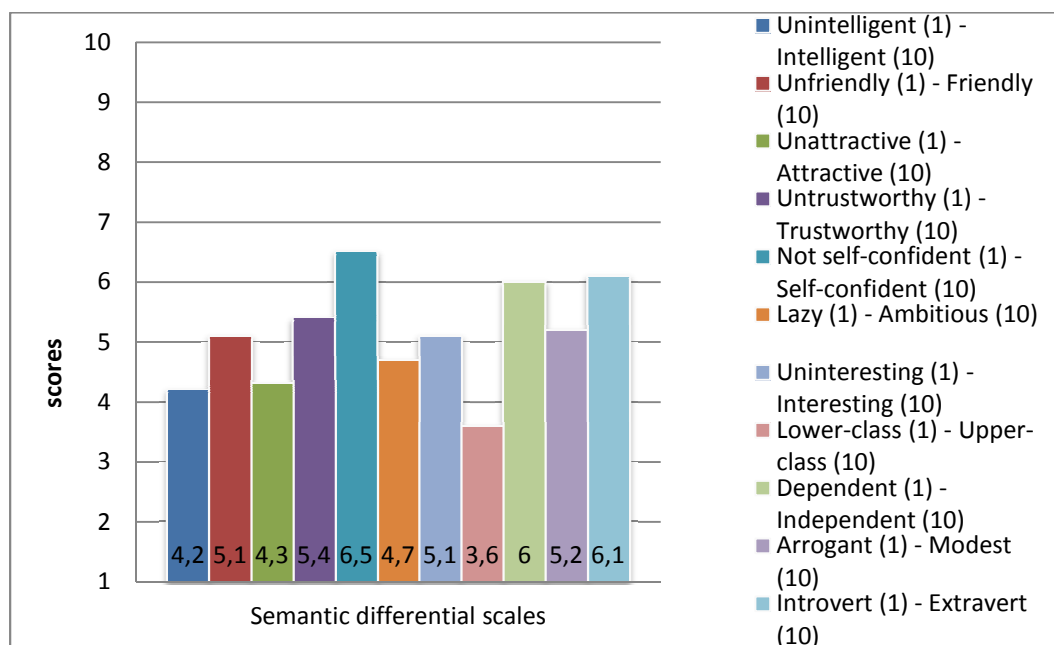


Figure 17: Average scores per scale, Liverpool, present results

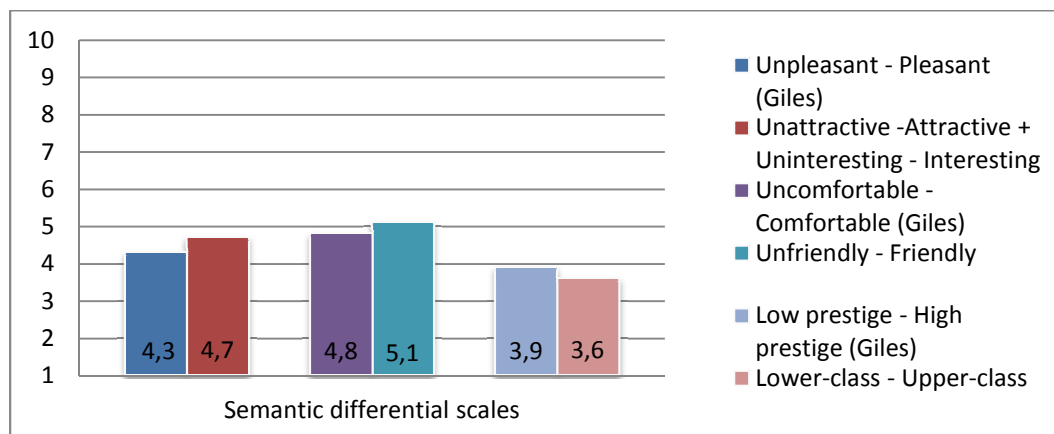


Figure 18: Average scores per scale, Liverpool, Giles's results & present results

It can be seen in figure 17 that the speaker from Liverpool did not score higher than 7 on any scales. The 'not self-confident - self-confident', the 'dependent - independent', and the 'introvert - extravert' scales are the only scales on which the speaker did not receive a score

lower than 6, which shows that she is found unintelligent, unfriendly, unattractive, untrustworthy, lazy, uninteresting, arrogant, and, with a score of only 3.6, very low-class.

Figure 18 shows that Giles's scales do not differ very much from the comparable scales of the present research. Both Dutch and English native listeners find the Liverpool accent not attractive to listen to, not very pleasant to interact with, and extremely low-class.

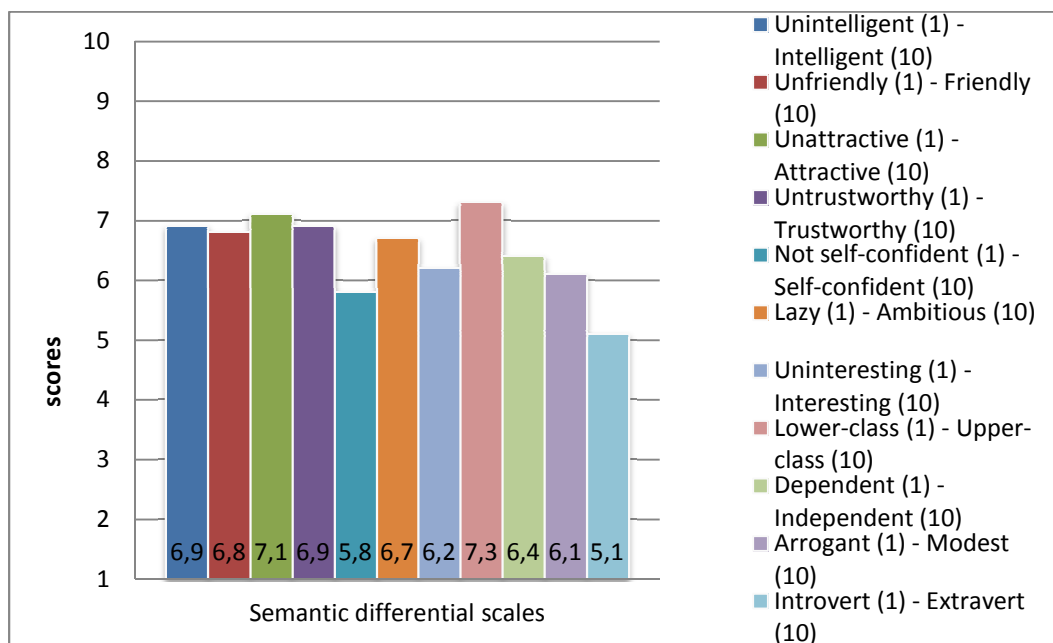


Figure 19: Average scores per scale, Yorkshire, present results

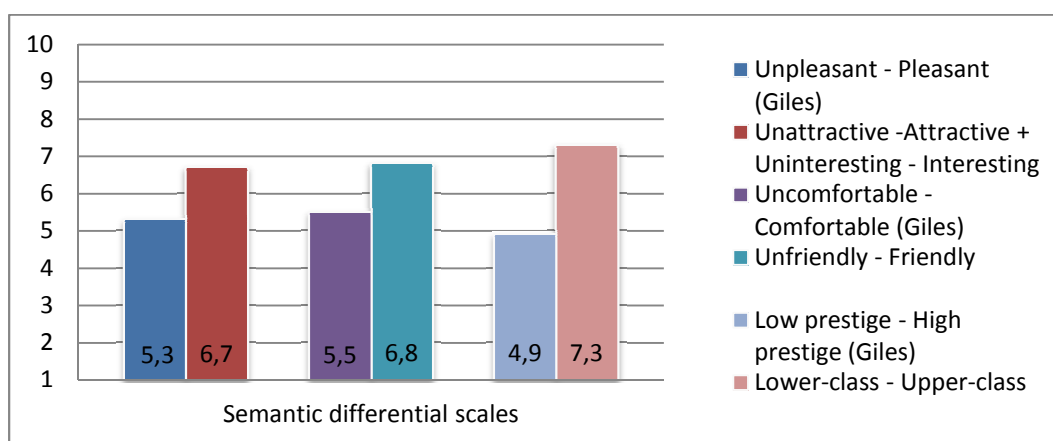


Figure 20: Average scores per scale, Yorkshire, Giles's results & present results

Figure 19 shows that the speaker from Yorkshire has received scores higher than 7 on two scales: the 'unattractive - attractive' and the 'lower-class - upper-class' scale'. As we saw in figure 3, only RP has a higher average score than Yorkshire. There are two scales with a score lower than 6: the 'not self-confident - self-confident' and the 'introvert - extrovert' scale. So she is found quite introverted and not self-confident, but all the other scales are rated positively. It is visible in figure 20 that Dutch native listeners rate Yorkshire higher than English native listeners do. Especially Giles's 'low prestige - high prestige' scale is noticeably lower than the 'lower-class - upper-class' scale of the present research. It is an interesting finding that Dutch native listeners rate the Yorkshire speaker so highly, but there is no satisfying explanation for it.

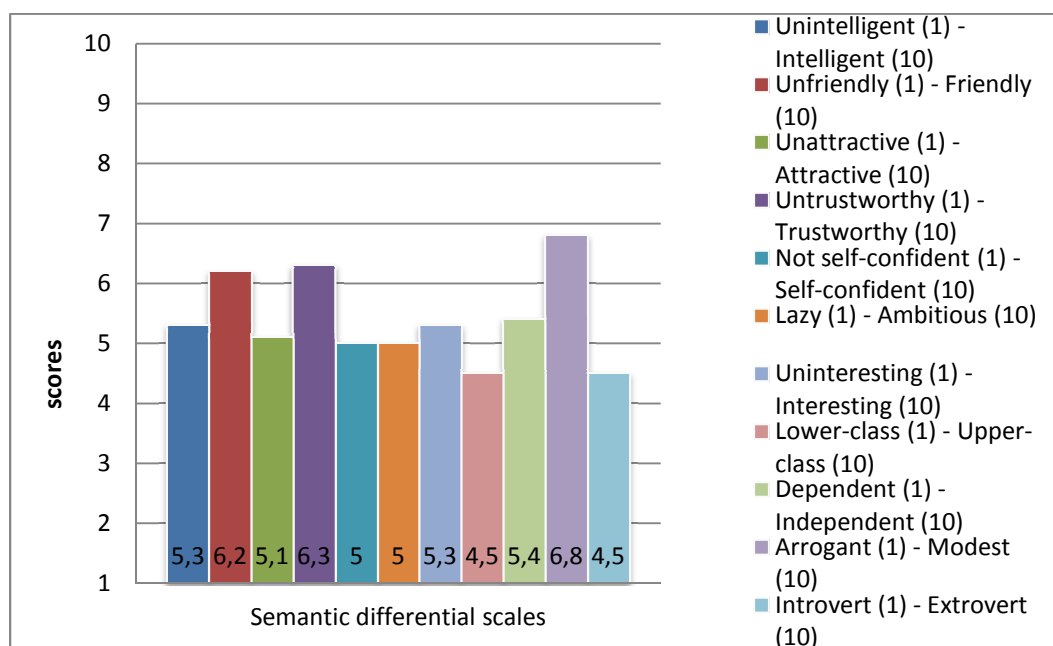


Figure 21: Average scores per scale, Northern Ireland, present results

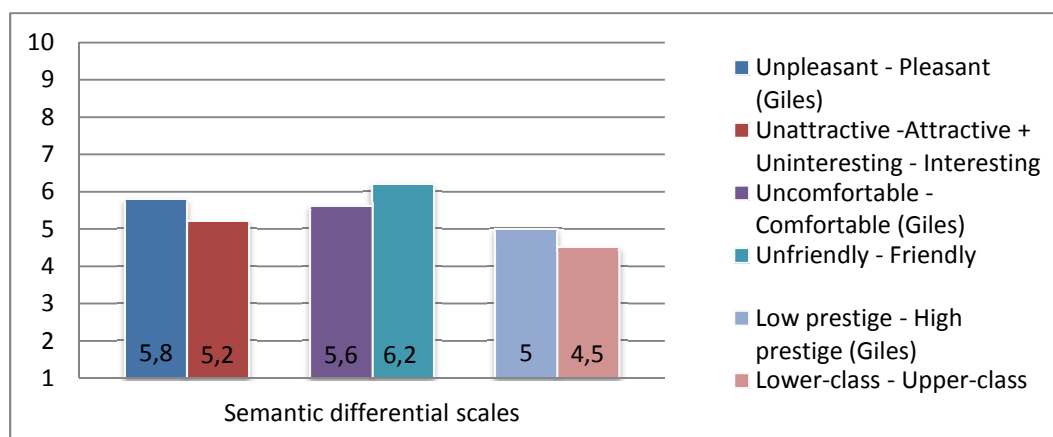


Figure 22: Average scores per scale, Northern Ireland, Giles's results & present results

The scores of the Northern Irish speaker are visible in figure 21. There are no scales with a score higher than 7. However, the scales 'unfriendly - friendly', 'untrustworthy - trustworthy', and 'arrogant - modest' are the only scales that did not receive a score lower than 6, which means that the listeners found the speaker unintelligent, unattractive, not self-confident, lazy, uninteresting, lower-class, dependent, and introverted. Figure 22 shows that the differences between the scales of Giles's research and the comparable scales of the present research are not quite striking. These small differences show that the language attitudes of Dutch and English native listeners towards Northern Irish are fairly alike. Both find this accent not very attractive, moderately pleasant to communicate with, and rather low-class.

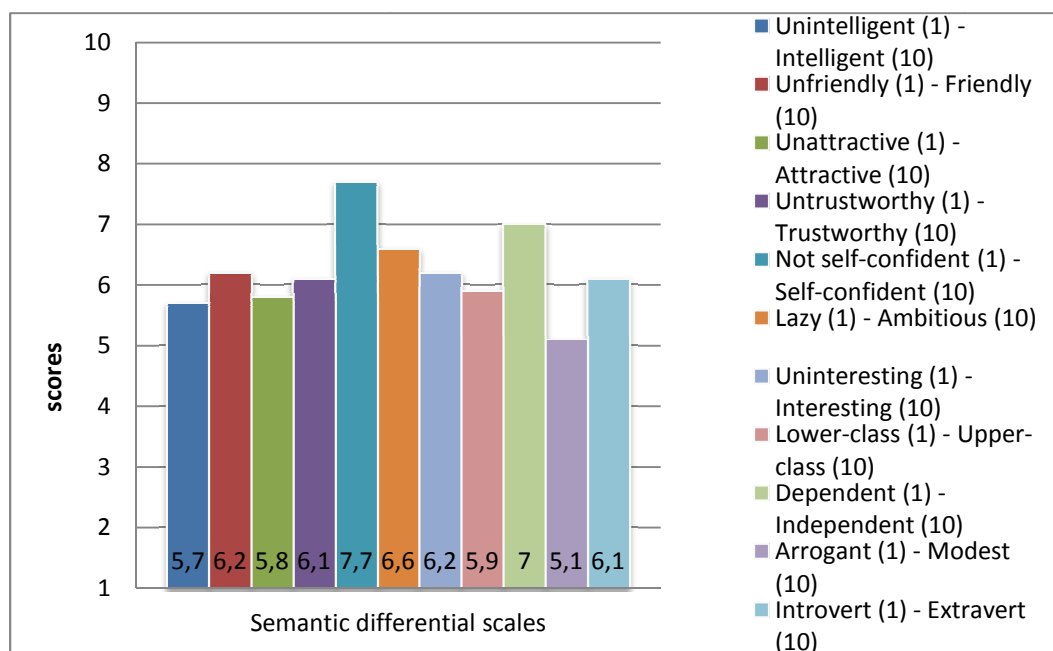


Figure 23: Average scores per scale, Texas, present results

It can be seen in figure 23 that the speaker from Texas has received a 7 or higher on two scales. These scales are 'not self-confident - self-confident' and 'dependent - independent'. These scores show that the Texan speaker is found relatively self-confident and independent. There are four scales with scores under 6. The speaker is found not self-confident, unattractive, lower-class, and arrogant. In fact, this speaker is found the most arrogant one of all the speakers. Unfortunately, Giles did not include an accent from Texas in his research, so there is no data to compare with figure 23.

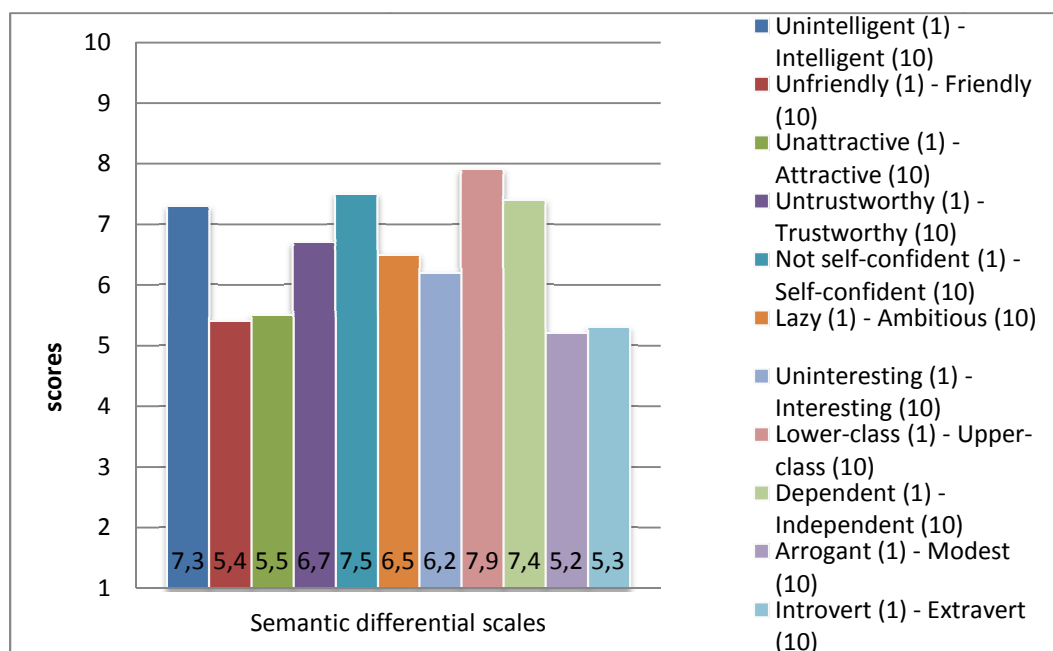


Figure 24: Average scores per scale, Australia, present results

The Australian speaker, as shown in figure 24, has several scores higher than 7. These scales are 'unintelligent - intelligent', 'not self-confident - self-confident', 'lower-class - upper-class', and 'dependent - independent', which shows that she is found quite intelligent, self-confident, upper-class, and independent. This speaker has received scores under 6 on four scales: the 'unfriendly - friendly' scale, the 'unattractive - attractive' scale, the 'arrogant - modest' scale, and the 'introvert - extravert' scale. This shows that she is found unfriendly, unattractive, arrogant, and introverted. Giles did not use an Australian accent in his research, so no comparison can be made between Dutch and English language attitudes, which is also the case with the Texan speaker.

3.4: Interesting Findings

There are several findings that do not contribute to the hypothesis of the present paper, but are intriguing.

As mentioned in the literature review, D. Preston says that speakers of Southern American English are considered lazy because of their speech (41). One of the scales of the present matched-guise study is 'lazy – ambitious'. As can be seen in figure 23, the speaker from Texas scored 6.6 on this scale. Figures 7, 9 and 19 show that only the RP speaker, the GA speaker, and the speaker from Yorkshire are considered more ambitious than the speaker from Texas. This means that the subjects found her moderately ambitious. This finding does not correspond with Preston's comment on Southern Americans. However, as also mentioned in the introduction, Preston does not mention any studies that his theory is based on.

As was mentioned earlier, GA and the Yorkshire accent received the same average result. We will now look at these results in more detail. Most of the scores in figures 9 and 19 do not differ by more than 0.5. Because of the small difference in scores, the results of these scales will not be further discussed. However, there are several noticeable differences between figures 9 and 19. For instance, on the 'lower-class – upper-class' scale, the score of the speaker from Yorkshire is 0.6 higher than that of GA, and she has received 1.3 more on the 'unattractive – attractive' scale. Additionally, the score of the GA speaker on the 'dependent – independent' scale is 0.6 higher than that of the speaker from Yorkshire, and on the 'not self-confident – self-confident' scale, GA is rated 1.3 more than Yorkshire. Even though these differences are still not very large, they show that the speaker from Yorkshire is seen as more upper-class and more attractive. The GA speaker, however, is seen as a 'stronger' person because independence and self-confidence are rated higher than those of the speaker from Yorkshire. Of course it should be noted that the present research is based on

merely one speaker per variety. Because of this, the results might only apply to that particular speaker, and not to the accent of that speaker.

4: Conclusion

This paper has investigated the language attitudes of Dutch listeners towards English accents. The hypothesis, mentioned in the introduction, is that the language attitudes of Dutch listeners towards English accents are similar to those of English listeners. The present study has shown that they appear to be similar, but not identical. The Dutch listeners participating in this research seem to judge English accents slightly more positively than the English listeners of Giles's research.

The standard varieties show different results. Dutch and English listeners seem to consider RP to have the highest prestige, but GA is regarded more positively by Dutch listeners.

The triangles by Wells and Dretzke and the results of the present research show that Dutch and English language attitudes towards English accents also seem to be similar as regards the division of urban rural accents.

However, as was mentioned earlier, it should be kept in mind that there is no information on how the listeners have judged the different varieties. Because of this, it cannot be stated with full certainty that the language attitudes of the Dutch and English listeners are indeed similar.

For further research on this subject more recent studies on English language attitudes are needed. Giles's research was published in 1970, but this was the most recent research on English language attitudes that could be found. It would be interesting to investigate if Dutch and English language attitudes were still similar if the data of English listeners was more recent. It is also commendable to use the same number of speakers in further research on comparing language attitudes.

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