Attitudes towards African American Vernacular

English in the Netherlands

Lente Venderink 6225411 BA Thesis Nynke de Haas British English 2 July 2020 5991 words

Table of contents

Abstract
1. Introduction
2. Theoretical Background 4
3. Method
3.1 Participants
3.2 Materials
3.2.1 Background questionnaire10
3.2.2 Listening task
3.2.3 Likert-scale statements
3.2.4 Questionnaire on exposure12
3.3 Procedure
4. Results
4.1 RQ1. What are the attitudes towards AAVE when compared to GA in the Netherlands?
4.2 RO ₂ . To what extent are the attitudes towards AAVE and GA influenced by age? 14
4.3 RQ ₃ . To what extent are the attitudes towards AAVE and GA influenced by amount of exposure?
5. Discussion
6. Conclusion20
References
Appendices25
APPENDIX A
APPENDIX B
APPENDIX C
APPENDIX D28

Abstract

This study attempts to contribute to the wide range of attitude research by looking at the attitudes towards African American Vernacular English (AAVE) when compared to General American (GA) in the Netherlands. This study focusses on different age groups and if exposure to AAVE and GA has an influence on their attitudes. A verbal-guise technique was employed with two female AAVE speakers and two female GA speakers. The hypotheses were that the attitudes towards AAVE were more negative than the attitudes towards GA, that younger participants would rate speakers of AAVE higher than older participants, that age did not have an influence on the attitudes towards GA and that a higher amount of exposure influenced the attitudes towards AAVE and GA positively. The first hypothesis was accepted. The second hypothesis was partially accepted, since the younger participants only rated the AAVE speakers higher on confidence. The third hypothesis was rejected, since the older participants rated the GA speakers higher on confidence and attractiveness. The fourth hypothesis was partially accepted, since the younger participants saw and heard individuals speaking AAVE significantly more than the older participants, and they rated the AAVE speakers higher on confidence. However, the older participants rated the GA speakers higher on confidence and attractiveness, while they did not significantly differ in the amount of exposure to GA with the younger participants.

1. Introduction

Research shows that American listeners are able to ascribe the right ethnicity to a black voice and a white voice in 2.5 seconds between 80 and 90 percent of the time. Mostly, the cues are pitch and intonation, which were indeed proven to have a wider range in the speech of black speakers (Rickford & Rickford, 2000, pp. 101-102). However, black speakers can also be identified when they use African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in their speech. AAVE has been misjudged as 'bad English' for a long time and still continues to be (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). African Americans deem it necessary to be able to speak General American (GA) aside from AAVE, partly because of the negative connotations AAVE carries (Lippi-Green, 2011, p. 196). This has caused many young speakers of AAVE to fail in school, since their speech is seen as ungrammatical, for instance, whereas it is grammatical in AAVE. In the 1990s it became evident that African American students performed worse than other ethnic groups in schools in Oakland, CA, which was due to the language they spoke (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). Furthermore, Beinhoff (2013) states that differences in perception of an accent between individuals that have the accent and individuals that do not, can add to stereotyping (p. 102). Given the close cultural contact between the United States and other countries, misconceptions and stereotypes might spread outside the United States and possibly affect African Americans in other countries as well. These insights show how important it is that we study AAVE and attitudes towards it to understand it better and clear up these misconceptions and stereotypes. This study attempts to aid in doing so by looking at the attitudes towards AAVE in the Netherlands and comparing different age groups and their attitudes, while looking at how much exposure they have had to AAVE and GA.

2. Theoretical Background

Attitudes towards accents have already been studied widely and in some studies native accents are preferred over L2 accents, whereas in other studies L2 accents are preferred over native accents. For instance, Beinhoff (2013) found that German and Greek English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners preferred British English speakers on status traits and Scottish speakers on solidarity traits over their L2 accents. Similarly, Chan (2016) found that EFL students from Hong Kong preferred L1 accents (e.g. Australian English) over L2 accents on both status and solidarity. However, Ballard and Winke (2017) had different outcomes. They found that, for Chinese, Arabic and Korean EFL students, the comprehensibility and acceptability of a non-native speaking teacher was positively correlated with familiarity with

the teachers' accent and their participants' attitudes towards non-native accents were largely positive.

When looking specifically at AAVE, in the United States, AAVE speakers receive lower scores on characteristics related to status (e.g. intelligence) when compared to GA speakers. In some studies, this goes together with positive properties, and in some with negative properties. For instance, Garner and Rubin (1986) found that black individuals from a higher social class thought that speakers of AAVE had a lower socioeconomic status and were poor and uneducated, whereas speakers of GA were considered sophisticated and educated and their English was correct. However, they also found that the same group of participants considered AAVE better than GA for communication, because it "had the 'expressiveness' and 'content' that got ideas across" (p. 42). The same outcomes on communication were found by Speicher and McMahon (1992), who state that African American participants considered AAVE as "good for getting one's point across" (p. 391) and socializing. Furthermore, AAVE was considered as valuable for the African American culture. However, their participants also thought speakers of AAVE were uneducated. Some participants added that not knowing GA would cost them a good job and income.

In some studies, the content of speech influenced the attitudes towards the speakers, as can be found in Johnson and Buttny's (1982) article, who discovered that "sounding black" negatively affected ratings of "Aesthetic Quality" and "Appearance" (i.e. beautiful-ugly) (p. 42) when the content was abstract and intellectual, but when the content was experiential and narrative, "sounding black" negatively affected ratings of social and intellectual status. In contrast, Bishop (1979) found that white students considered a black GA speaker as more pleasant, agreeable, relaxed, honest, determined, informative and responsible than a black AAVE speaker, while the content of speech was the same for both speakers. White students were also more likely to accept a black GA speaker as an intimate friend and they were more

likely to accept to work with her than a black AAVE speaker. Furthermore, Bishop (1979) discovered, when comparing white GA speakers and black GA or AAVE speakers, that the black speakers were considered to be more agreeable, relaxed and sociable than the white speakers, whereas the white speakers were considered to be more informative and comfortable. In addition, Irwin (1977) found that white students thought white speakers had a better vocal quality and a better speech fluency and sounded more confident than black speakers. The present study will take varying characteristics from the aforementioned studies to see if multiple different characteristics will be rated differently. Furthermore, both GA and AAVE speakers will be reading the same text, to avoid influence from the content of speech to the ratings of the participants.

Attitudes towards AAVE in other countries than the United States have also been studied and similar results were found. For instance, Castelan Cargile, Takai and Rodríguez (2006) found that Japanese students rated AAVE speakers lower on status-related traits than GA speakers and Rezaei et al. (2018) found that Iranian EFL learners rated AAVE speakers lower on social attractiveness, social status and quality of language than British, American, Australian and Persian accented English speakers. These studies have looked at attitudes towards AAVE in Japan and Iran respectively, which are countries with cultures that do not resemble the American culture, and, nonetheless, similar results to American attitudes towards AAVE were found. Therefore, it is expected that similar results will be found for the Netherlands as well, since the Dutch and American cultures are both Western cultures.

A larger amount of exposure (e.g. through media) can be of influence on the attitudes towards AAVE. L'Pree Corsbie-Massay (2017) states that "mass media play an intricate role in individual development, activation, and perpetuation of stereotypes regarding race and gender" (p. 125). However, black individuals are not always represented positively in the media. Mastro and Sink (2017) found that Latino's in television shows and films were mostly represented as lazy, criminal and unintelligent individuals with a thick accent. They also found that the more television white individuals watched, the more they judged Latino's as how they were represented on television, which indicates that televised images have a significant influence on social judgments. When looking specifically at black characters, Signorielli (2017) found that black characters in television shows were mostly common in the genre of situation comedies and that they were under-represented in other genres. In addition, these black characters had less professional and more low-status jobs than white characters did. Furthermore, Dixon (2017) found that black and Latino individuals were more likely to appear as perpetrators in the news than white individuals, whereas white individuals were overrepresented in sympathetic positions such as officer or victim. Moreover, heavy news viewers were more likely to assume a black suspect as guilty and felt more uncomfortable and scared when they were exposed to more black than white suspects. This indicates that familiarity with and more exposure to AAVE might have a negative effect on attitudes towards AAVE.

In contrast, Zajonc (1968) claimed that "repeated exposure is a sufficient condition of attitude enhancement" (p. 21) in a positive way, which later became known as the mere exposure effect. For this mere exposure effect, individuals are not required to be consciously aware of the stimulus (Bornstein & D'Agostino, 1992, p. 545). Bornstein and D'Agostino (1992) did a psycholinguistic research and found that for both stimuli presented for a shorter amount of time and stimuli presented for a longer amount of time, mere exposure effects occurred. In addition, Monahan, Murphy and Zajonc (2000) found that participants who were exposed to a stimulus multiple times rated their own mood more positively than participants who were exposed to a stimulus one time. They add that this even happened when a stimulus was unfamiliar to the participants (p. 464). The present study will therefore include frequency of exposure to AAVE and GA, to find out if the mere exposure effect or the negative

portrayal of black individuals in the media has a stronger effect on the attitudes towards AAVE and GA.

Differences in attitudes towards AAVE between certain age groups have not been tested yet. Rezaei et al. (2018) looked mainly at participants aged 18-25 and Castelan Cargile et al. (2006) had a mean age of 20.32 for their group of participants. This study will take a sample of participants that will include older as well as younger individuals. In present-day media AAVE is represented more than it used to be, which means that younger individuals have been exposed to it for a larger part of their life and, thus, are more likely to be familiar with AAVE. For instance, in the Netherlands, hip-hop and rap music have become more popular amongst the youth and AAVE is frequently used in these genres. Therefore, differences in ratings between the two age groups is expected.

The main research question, sub research questions and hypotheses for this study are as follows:

MRQ: What are the attitudes towards AAVE when compared to GA in the Netherlands and to what extent are they influenced by age and amount of exposure?

SRQ₁: What are the attitudes towards AAVE when compared to GA in the Netherlands?

H₁: The attitudes towards AAVE will be more negative than the attitudes towards GA.

SRQ₂: To what extent are the attitudes towards AAVE and GA influenced by age?

H₂: Younger participants will rate speakers of AAVE higher than older participants.

H₃: Age will not have an influence on the attitudes towards GA.

SRQ₃: To what extent are the attitudes towards AAVE and GA influenced by amount of exposure?

H₄: A higher amount of exposure will influence the attitudes towards AAVE and GA positively.

3. Method

A matched-guise technique is seen as a standard measure for attitudes, but it is also criticised as not being authentic, since all languages, dialects or accents are spoken by the same individual (Chan, 2016). Therefore, this study will employ a verbal-guise technique, following Ballard & Winke (2017), Castelan Cargile et al. (2006), Chan (2016) and Rezaei et al. (2018). The verbal-guise technique is a technique where multiple individuals with different languages, dialects or accents are chosen as speakers, instead of one speaker producing multiple languages, dialects or accents, as is the case with the matched-guise technique.

3.1 Participants

40 individuals aged 18-28 and 40 individuals aged 54-70 were asked to participate. Both age groups consisted of 20 male and 20 female participants. There were two test conditions, which is why the participants were separated into two groups. The division of groups can be found in Table 1. All participants were raised monolingually with Dutch as an L1, except for one participant who was raised bilingually with Standard Dutch and Zeelandic Dutch as his first languages. This participant was, however, not excluded from the data.

Table 1. The distribution of the participants between the two groups.

Group A	Group B
10 male, 20-28 years old ($M = 23.8$)	10 male, 19-28 years old ($M = 25.1$)
10 female, 18-23 years old ($M = 20.2$)	10 female, 21-26 years old ($M = 23.4$)
10 male, 57-66 years old $(M = 60)$	10 male, 55-70 years old ($M = 59.2$)
10 female, 58-60 years old $(M = 59)$	10 female, 54-63 years old ($M = 57.3$)

3.2 Materials

Two online questionnaires were distributed to the participants using Qualtrics

(https://www.qualtrics.com) and all data was collected through these questionnaires. Group A

received questionnaire A and listened to speakers A and C, and group B received questionnaire B and listened to speakers B and D. All questions and statements were given in Dutch to assure that the questionnaire was understood by everyone.

3.2.1 Background questionnaire

First, the participants were asked to give general information about themselves. They were asked to give their age, gender, level of education and native language(s). This questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

3.2.2 Listening task

Recordings from four speakers reading the same text (Honorof, McCullough & Somerville, 2000) were used to elicit responses from the participants. This group of speakers consisted of two female GA speakers and two female AAVE speakers. All speakers were from the southeast of the United States. Because the location, gender and age of the speakers had to be kept constant, the options of speakers that could be chosen for this study were limited. The first GA speaker was 64 and lived in Florida at the time of recording (Speaker A). She was born in Cuba and had lived in Egypt for roughly 16 years of her adult life but was one of the most GA sounding speakers with the correct location, gender and age, which is why she was chosen as a first speaker. The second GA speaker was 61 and lived in New York at the time of recording (Speaker B). She also was one of the most GA sounding speakers with the correct location, gender as a second speaker.

The first AAVE speaker was 73 and lived in Alabama at the time of recording (Speaker C). Her speech was analysed and the use of monophthongization (e.g. "...washed /hʌ/ face..."), *r*-vocalization (e.g. "...Duke Street / tauə/..."), develarization of *-ing* (e.g. "...had been /wȝ:kın/...") and final consonant cluster reduction (e.g. "...the /nu:wəs/ area...") were found, which are pronunciation characteristics of AAVE, as identified in Rickford and Rickford (2000). Since she was recorded reading a text aloud, she did not make use of any

grammatical or vocabulary characteristics of AAVE. The second AAVE speaker was 56 and lived in Virginia at the time of recording (Speaker D). She makes use of *r*-vocalization (e.g. "…headed /fʌ/ work…"), develarization of -*ing* (e.g. "…had been /wȝ:kɪn/…") and final consonant cluster reduction (e.g. "…a deserted /dɪstrɪk/…"), which are pronunciation characteristics of AAVE, as identified in Rickford and Rickford (2000). She also deletes the possessive 's (e.g. "…the goose owner…"), which is a grammatical characteristic of AAVE, as identified in Rickford (2000). Since she was recorded reading a text aloud, she did not make use of any vocabulary characteristics of AAVE.

The recordings were taken from the International Dialects of English Archive (https://www.dialectsarchive.com) and are between 1:55 and 3:10 minutes long. The participants were asked to listen to at least the first 30 seconds of the recordings. Group A listened to the recordings of speakers A and C and filled in questionnaire A and group B listened to the recordings of speakers B and D and filled in questionnaire B. The URLs to the specific recordings that were used can be found in Appendix B.

3.2.3 Likert-scale statements

The questionnaire contained statements to which the participants responded through a 7-point Likert-scale, where a 1 meant that they completely disagree and a 7 meant that they completely agree. Mulac, Hanley and Prigge's (1974) 21-item Speech Dialect Attitudinal Scale (SDAS), as cited in Johnson and Buttny (1982), is a scale, where some of the present study's characteristics were based upon (*rich, friendly, attractive, intelligent, wise* and *confident*). Furthermore, this study included *successful* as a characteristic, based on Speicher and McMahon (1992), who found that African Americans deem it necessary to speak GA to get a good job and income. The characteristics *reliable, honest* and *sincere* were also based on Speicher and McMahon's article (1992), since one of their participants called AAVE "ghetto language" (p. 389), which has a criminal connotation to it. All statements containing the

former mentioned characteristics will be presented as positive statements (i.e. *This person sounds intelligent*.) to avoid confusion. The statements were randomized and can be found in Appendix C.

3.2.4 Questionnaire on exposure

Finally, the participants were asked through multiple-choice questions how much they were exposed to AAVE and GA. They were asked whether they have had courses that are given in English and whether they have lived in an English-speaking country or not. Furthermore, they were asked how many times they saw, heard or spoke to speakers of GA and speakers of AAVE. The questions and answers to this questionnaire can be found in Appendix D.

3.3 Procedure

The participants were mostly approached through WhatsApp and Facebook. Group A received the link to questionnaire A and listened to speakers A and C, and group B received the link to questionnaire B and listened to speakers B and D. An independent samples t-test was performed in SPSS (Version 25.0), and no significant differences were found between group A and group B, so the two groups were pooled together. The answers to the questionnaire were then summarized and independent samples t-tests were performed to see if the differences between the ratings of the AAVE and GA speakers were significant, and to see if the differences in amount of exposure to AAVE and GA speakers based on age, variety of English and amount of exposure to AAVE and GA. Consequently, the ratings of the characteristics of the AAVE and GA. and ge, the variety of English and the amount of exposure to AAVE and GA were the independent variables, and age, the variety of English and the amount of exposure to AAVE and GA were the independent variables of this study.

4.1 RQ₁. What are the attitudes towards AAVE when compared to GA in the Netherlands?

A summary of the ratings of the characteristics of the AAVE and GA speakers can be found in Table 1. An independent samples t-test was performed, to establish the significance of the differences in the ratings. First of all, GA speakers were rated significantly higher on intelligence than AAVE speakers, t(158) = -5.73, p = .000. Secondly, GA speakers were rated significantly higher on wisdom than AAVE speakers, t(158) = -3.80, p = .000. Thirdly, GA speakers were rated significantly higher on richness than AAVE speakers, t(158) = -7.57, p =.000. Fourthly, GA speakers were rated significantly higher on confidence than AAVE speakers, t(158) = -3.03, p = .003. Fifthly, GA speakers were rated significantly higher on successfulness than AAVE speakers, t(158) = -6.72, p = .000. Finally, GA speakers were rated significantly higher on attractiveness than AAVE speakers, t(158) = -4.21, p = .000. In

Table 1. The means of the ratings of the characteristics of the AAVE and GA speakers, where l = completely disagree and 7 = completely agree, with the SD in italics and round brackets.

	Participants aged 18-70, 41	Participants aged 18-70, 41
	(18.23) about AAVE	(18.23) about GA
Intelligent	4.30 (1.31)	5.41 (1.14)
Friendly	5.08 (1.21)	5.03 (1.17)
Honest	5.34 (1.07)	4.99 (1.19)
Wise	4.65 (1.27)	5.33 (.95)
Rich	3.35 (1.24)	4.83 (1.22)
Confident	4.65 (1.58)	5.31 (1.14)
Sincere	4.99 (1.19)	4.90 (1.09)
Reliable	4.93 (1.29)	4.80 (1.04)
Successful	3.63 (1.15)	4.86 (1.18)
Attractive	3.36 (1.16)	4.19 (1.31)

contrast, the AAVE speakers were only rated significantly higher on honesty than GA speakers, t(158) = .587, p = .037.

However, correlation tables revealed that there were some significant differences between male and female participants. First of all, a significant negative correlation was found between gender and how the participants rated the AAVE speakers on intelligence (r =-.231, p = .039), indicating that female participants rated the AAVE speakers higher on intelligence than male participants did. Secondly, a significant negative correlation was found between gender and how the participants rated the AAVE speakers on attractiveness (r =-.358, p = .001), indicating that female participants rated the AAVE speakers on attractiveness (r =-.358, p = .001), indicating that female participants rated the AAVE speakers higher on attractiveness than male participants did. Finally, a significant negative correlation was found between gender and how the participants rated the GA speakers on reliability (r = -.243, p =.030), indicating that female participants rated the GA speakers higher on reliability than male participants did.

4.2 RQ₂. To what extent are the attitudes towards AAVE and GA influenced by age?

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict the ratings of the characteristics based on the variety of English spoken and age. For the ratings of friendliness, sincerity and reliability, a nonsignificant regression equation was found and both age and variety of English were not significant predictors of the ratings on these characteristics. For the ratings of honesty, a nonsignificant regression equation was found and only the variety of English was a significant predictor of the ratings of honesty.

However, for the ratings of intelligence, a significant regression equation was found (F(2,157) = 16.332, p > .000), with an R^2 of .172. The variety of English was a significant predictor of ratings of intelligence and GA speakers were rated 1.113 higher than AAVE speakers. For the ratings of wisdom, a significant regression equation was found (F(2,157) = 7.191, p = .001), with an R^2 of .084. The variety of English was a significant predictor of

ratings of wisdom and GA speakers were rated .675 higher than AAVE speakers. For the ratings of richness, a significant regression equation was found (F(2,157) = 29.219, p > .000), with an R^2 of .271. The variety of English was a significant predictor of ratings of richness and GA speakers were rated 1.475 higher than AAVE speakers. For the ratings of confidence, a significant regression equation was found (F(2,157) = 5.045, p = .008), with an R^2 of .246. The variety of English was a significant predictor of ratings of confidence and GA speakers were rated .663 higher than AAVE speakers. For the ratings of successfulness, a significant regression equation was found (F(2,157) = 22.462, p > .000), with an R^2 of .222. The variety of English was a significant predictor of ratings of successfulness and GA speakers were rated 1.238 higher than AAVE speakers.

For the ratings of attractiveness, a significant regression equation was found (F(2,157) = 14.737, p > .000), with an R^2 of .158. Participants' predicted ratings of attractiveness is equal to 1.835 + .017 (AGE) + .825 (VARIETY), where age is measured in years and variety is coded as 1 = AAVE, 2 = GA. The ratings of attractiveness increased by .017 for each year of age and GA speakers were rated .825 higher than AAVE speakers. Both the variety of English and age were significant predictors of ratings of attractiveness.

Furthermore, a significant negative correlation was found between age and how the participants rated the AAVE speakers on confidence, (r = -.315, p = .004), indicating that the younger participants were, the higher they rated the AAVE speakers on confidence. A significant positive correlation was found between age and how the participants rated the GA speakers on confidence (r = .255, p = .023), indicating that the older participants were, the higher they rated the GA speakers on confidence. Finally, a significant positive correlation was found between age and how the participants rated the GA speakers on attractiveness (r = .423, p = .000), indicating that the older participants were, the higher they rated the GA speakers on confidence.

4.3 RQ₃. To what extent are the attitudes towards AAVE and GA influenced by amount of exposure?

A summary of the amount of exposure to AAVE and GA can be found in Table 2. An independent samples t-test was performed, to establish the significance of the differences in amount of exposure. First of all, the participants have seen individuals speaking GA significantly more than individuals speaking AAVE, t(158) = -5.89, p = .000. Secondly, the participants have heard individuals speaking GA significantly more than individuals speaking GA significantly more than individuals speaking AAVE, t(158) = -5.74, p = .000. Finally, the participants have spoken significantly more to Americans in general than to speakers of AAVE, t(158) = -3.68, p = .000.

Table 2. The means of the amount of exposure to AAVE and GA, where 1 = never and 5 = daily, with the SD in italics and round brackets.

	participants aged 18-70, 41	participants aged 518-70,
	(18.23) about AAVE	41 (18.23) about GA
Seeing someone speak	3.66 (.97)	4.44 (.67)
Hearing someone speak	3.63 (1.15)	4.46 (.62)
Speaking to someone	1.68 (.59)	2.11 (.89)

A multiple linear regression was calculated separately for every characteristic to predict the ratings of the characteristics based on how often the participants saw, heard and spoke to speakers of AAVE and GA. For the ratings of intelligence, friendliness, honesty, wisdom, confidence, reliability and attractiveness, a nonsignificant regression equation was found and no types of exposure (i.e. seeing individuals speaking AAVE and GA, hearing individuals speaking AAVE and GA and speaking to AAVE and GA speakers) were found to be significant predictors of the ratings on these characteristics. For the ratings of richness, a significant regression equation was found (F(3,156) = 6.021, p = .001), with an R^2 of .104. However, no type of exposure was a significant predictor of ratings of richness. For the ratings of successfulness, a significant regression equation was found (F(3,156) = 5.159, p = .002), with an R^2 of .090. However, no type of exposure was a significant predictor of ratings of successfulness. For the ratings of sincerity, a nonsignificant regression equation was found (F(3,156) = 2.563, p = .057), with an R^2 of .047. Participants' predicted ratings of sincerity is equal to 5.697 - .366 (SEE) + .194 (HEAR) – .030 (SPEAK), where amount of exposure is coded as 1 = never, 2 = almost never, 3 = monthly, 4 = weekly, 5 = daily. Individuals who saw speakers of AAVE and SAE less rated the speakers .194 higher and individuals who spoke less to speakers of AAVE and SAE rated the speakers .030 higher. Seeing individuals speaking AAVE or SAE was a significant predictor of ratings of sincerity.

Furthermore, correlation tables showed that there was a significant negative correlation between age and seeing individuals speaking AAVE (r = -.228, p = .042), indicating that the younger participants were, the more they saw individuals speaking AAVE. A significant negative correlation was also found between age and hearing individuals speaking AAVE (r = -.309, p = .005), indicating that the younger participants were, the more they heard individuals speaking AAVE. In addition, significant positive correlations were found between gender and seeing individuals speaking AAVE (r = .247, p = .027), hearing individuals speaking AAVE (r = .284, p = .011) and hearing individuals speaking SAE (r = .266, p = .017), indicating that male participants saw individuals speaking AAVE and heard individuals speaking AAVE and GA more than female participants did.

5. Discussion

First of all, this study found that Dutch participants rated the GA speakers significantly higher on intelligence, wisdom, richness, confidence, successfulness and attractiveness than the AAVE speakers. In contrast, the AAVE speakers were rated significantly higher on honesty than the GA speakers. The multiple higher ratings for the GA speakers confirm the first hypothesis. Unsurprisingly, the multiple linear regression showed that the variety of English was a significant predictor of the ratings on intelligence, honesty, wisdom, richness, confidence, successfulness and attractiveness.

Secondly, age was only a significant predictor of the ratings on attractiveness. Furthermore, a significant negative correlation was found between age and the ratings on confidence for the AAVE speakers, indicating that the younger the participants were, the higher they rated the AAVE speakers on confidence. This partially confirms our second hypothesis, since only a significant negative correlation was found between age and the ratings on confidence for the AAVE speakers. Age had no influence on the ratings of the other characteristics of the AAVE speakers. A significant positive correlation was found between age and the ratings on confidence and attractiveness for the GA speakers, indicating that the older the participants were, the higher they rated the GA speakers on confidence and attractiveness. Therefore, the third hypothesis can be rejected, since a significant positive correlation was found between age and the ratings on confidence and attractiveness for the GA speakers, while age was found to be a significant predictor of the ratings on attractiveness. Age did have an influence on the ratings of the GA speakers.

Finally, the multiple linear regression showed that only seeing individuals speaking AAVE or GA was a significant predictor for the ratings on sincerity. This indicated that participants who saw individuals speaking AAVE or GA less, gave higher ratings on sincerity. In addition, a significant negative correlation was found between age and seeing and hearing individuals speaking AAVE, indicating that the younger the participants were, the more they saw and heard individuals speaking AAVE. In contrast, no significant differences were found between age groups' amount of exposure to GA. The fourth hypothesis can be partially accepted, since younger participants saw and heard individuals speaking AAVE

more than older participants did, while they rated the AAVE speakers higher on confidence. However, older participants rated GA speakers higher on confidence and attractiveness, while they did not have significantly more exposure to GA than the younger participants.

Not all the ratings on the characteristics differed between the AAVE and GA speakers. The ratings on friendliness, sincerity and reliability were not proven to be significantly different. This might be due to the fact that the participants thought the AAVE and GA speakers sounded equally friendly, sincere and reliable. However, the participants might have also been aware of the fact that the study compared AAVE speakers to GA speakers and, therefore, their answers might have been influenced. In further studies, this influence could be diminished by letting some participants listen to the AAVE speakers and other participants to the GA speakers. This way, the participants would not be aware of the fact that two groups will be compared, and they might be more honest in their ratings.

Furthermore, the speakers chosen for this study were not properly assessed on how their accents sounded. In further studies, both GA and AAVE speakers should be assessed beforehand, which could be done by using speakers of each variety to test which speakers of the same variety receive similar rating. In addition, the voice quality of the speakers could have also had an influence on the ratings of the speakers, since a verbal-guise technique was used. All of the speakers had an age above 56, which might have made them sound old. This could have influenced the ratings of the speakers. A sample of younger speakers would have been more suitable for this study. However, this was not possible to achieve, since younger speakers would have been further apart in location, which would have made the difference in accents too large. Moreover, the participants had differing listening times, since they were instructed to listen to at least the first 30 seconds of the recordings but were allowed to listen to the whole recording. The differences in listening times might have had an influence on the ratings of the AAVE and GA speakers, either positively or negatively. In further studies, all participants should have the same amount of listening time, to exclude influence of listening time.

The questionnaire about exposure could have been improved on some aspects. First of all, it might not have been completely clear to the participants what exactly AAVE and GA are, and this might have influenced their answers. In further studies, the distinction between AAVE and GA should be explained more clearly to the participants. Furthermore, the seventh question on the questionnaire about exposure (i.e. How often do you talk to Americans in general?) failed to distinguish GA from all other American accents. This might have caused participants to fill in a higher amount of exposure than they actually had. However, the results for this question were very low and did not significantly differ from the results on the eighth question (i.e. How often do you talk to African Americans?).

Interestingly, the male participants had significantly more exposure to AAVE and GA but rated the AAVE and GA speakers significantly lower on some of the characteristics than the female participants did. This is contrary to the mere exposure effect (Zajonc, 1968), which entails that more exposure leads to more positive attitudes. This might be due to the fact that male participants might have been influenced more negatively by the media than female participants. However, it might also be due to the fact that all of the speakers used for this study were female, to whom the male participants might have felt less positive than they would have towards male speakers. In further research, both male and female individuals should be employed as speakers, to see if preference for a male or female voice is present.

6. Conclusion

The hypotheses of the present study were partially accepted. The first hypothesis was accepted, since the ratings of the AAVE speakers were significantly lower than the ratings of the GA speakers. The second hypothesis was partially accepted, since the younger participants rated the AAVE speakers higher on confidence than the older participants did.

The third hypothesis was rejected, since the older participants rated the GA speakers higher on confidence and attractiveness than the younger participants did, and age was found to be a significant predictor of the ratings on attractiveness. The fourth hypothesis was partially accepted, since the younger participants saw and heard individuals speaking AAVE more than the older participants did and rated the AAVE speakers higher on confidence. However, the older participants rated the GA speakers higher on confidence and attractiveness, while they did not have significantly more exposure to GA than the younger participants did.

These findings suggest that, even in the Netherlands, misconceptions and stereotypes about AAVE are there, which shows that further attitude research on AAVE in different countries is desired. This study has discussed the attitudes towards AAVE and GA, in an attempt to show the misconceptions about AAVE. Further research that discusses the effect of exposure on the attitudes towards AAVE specifically is needed, to see if more exposure to or education on AAVE will create a more positive view, which will help in clearing up the misconceptions and stereotypes. It is important that more individuals learn about AAVE, so speakers of AAVE will not be degraded because of their accent anymore.

References

- Ballard, L., & Winke, P. (2017). Students' attitudes towards English teachers' accents: The interplay of accent familiarity, comprehensibility, intelligibility, perceived native speaker status, and acceptability as a teacher. In T. Isaacs & P. Trofimovich (Eds.), *Second language pronunciation assessment: Interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 121-140). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters. doi:10.21832/j.ctt1xp3wcc.11
- Beinhoff, B. (2013). Perceiving identity through accent: Attitudes towards non-native speakers and their accents in English. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang.
- Bishop, G. D. (1979). Perceived similarity in interracial attitudes and behaviors: The effects of belief and dialect style. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *9*, 446-465. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.1979.tb02718.x
- Bornstein, R. F., & D'Agostino, P. R. (1992). Stimulus recognition and the mere exposure effect. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63(4), 545-552. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.63.4.545
- Buck, J. F. (1968). The effects of negro and white dialectal variations upon attitudes of college students. *Speech Monographs*, *2*, 181-186. doi:10.1080/03637756809375580
- Castelan Cargile, A., Takai, J., & Rodríguez, J. I. (2006). Attitudes toward African-American Vernacular English: A US export to Japan? *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 27(6), 443-456. doi:10.2167/jmmd472.1
- Chan, J. Y. H. (2016). A multi-perspective investigation of attitudes towards English accents in Hong Kong: Implications for pronunciation teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 50(2), 285-313. doi:10.1002/tesq.218
- Dixon T. L. (2017). Understanding how the internet and social media accelerate racial stereotyping and social division: The socially mediated stereotyping model. In R. A.

Lind (Ed.), *Race and gender in electronic media: Content, context, culture* (pp. 161-178). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Garner, T., & Rubin, D. L. (1986). Middle class Blacks' perceptions of dialect and style shifting: The case of southern attorneys. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 5, 33-48. doi:10.1177/0261927X8651003
- Honorof, D. N., McCullough, J., & Somerville, B. (2000). Comma gets a cure. Retrieved from https://www.dialectsarchive.com/comma-gets-a-cure
- International Dialects of English Archive (IDEA). [Web site]. Retrieved April 21, 2020 from https://www.dialectsarchive.com
- Irwin, R. B. (1977). Judgments of vocal quality, speech fluency, and confidence of southern black and white speakers. *Language and Speech*, 20, 261-266. doi:10.1177/002383097702000307
- Johnson, F. L., & Buttny, R. (1982). White listeners' responses to 'sounding black' and 'sounding white': The effects of message content on judgments about language. *Communication Monographs*, 49, 33-49. doi:10.1080/03637758209376069
- Lippi-Green, R. (2011) English with an accent: Language, ideology and discrimination in the United States. Abingdon, England: Taylor & Francis Group.
- L'Pree Corsbie-Massay, C. (2017). Manipulating race and gender in media effects research: A methodological review using the media FIT taxonomy. In R. A. Lind (Ed.), *Race and gender in electronic media: Content, context, culture* (pp. 125-143). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mastro, D., & Sink, A. (2017). Portrayals of Latinos in the media and the effects of exposure on Latino and non-Latino audiences. In R. A. Lind (Ed.), *Race and gender in electronic media: Content, context, culture* (pp. 144-160). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Monahan, J. L., Murphy, S. T., & Zajonc, R. B. (2000). Subliminal mere exposure: Specific, general and diffuse effects. *Psychological Science*, 11(6), 462-466. doi:10.1111/1467-9280.00289
- Mulac, A., Hanley, T. D., & Prigge, D. Y. (1974). Effects of phonological speech foreignness upon three dimensions of attitude of selected American listeners. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 60, 411-421. doi:10.1080/00335637409383250
- Rezaei, S., Khosravizadeh, P., & Mottaghi, Z. (2018). Attitudes toward World Englishes among Iranian English language learners. *Asian Englishes*, 21(1), 52-69. doi:10.1080/13488678.2018.1440367
- Rickford, J. R., & Rickford, R. J. (2000). Spoken Soul: The story of black English. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Signorielli, N. (2017). Race and sex in prime time: Five decades of research. In R. A. Lind (Ed.), *Race and gender in electronic media: Content, context, culture* (pp. 21-37). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Speicher, B., & McMahon, S. (1992). Some African-American perspectives on Black English Vernacular. *Language in Society*, *21*, 383-407. doi:10.1017/S0047404500015499
- Zajonc, R. B. (1968). Attitudinal effects of mere exposure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 9(2), 1-27. doi:10.1037/h0025848

Appendices

APPENDIX A. The questions of the background questionnaire in Dutch with their English translation in italics.

1. Wat is uw leeftijd?

What is your age?

Wat is uw geslacht? Man/Vrouw/Overig

What is your gender? Male/Female/Other

- Wat is uw hoogst genoten opleiding/uw huidige niveau van opleiding?
 What is the highest level of education you have completed/you are currently doing?
 vmbo/havo/vwo/Gymnasium/MBO/HBO/WO/Anders, namelijk...
- Bent u tweetalig opgevoed? Ja/Nee
 Were you raised bilingually? Yes/No
- 4. Wat is/zijn uw moedertaal/moedertalen?What is/are your native language(s)?

APPENDIX B. URLs to the audio recordings that were used.

- Speaker A. F, 64, Caucasian, Florida https://soundcloud.com/lente-venderink/audioclip-2/s-wSY0gEdpYyy
- Speaker B. F, 61, Caucasian, New York
 https://soundcloud.com/lente-venderink/audioclip-2-2/s-4EfrPy38eL5
- Speaker C. F, 73, African American, Alabama https://soundcloud.com/lente-venderink/audioclip-1-1/s-MadLabRTD1c
- Speaker D. F, 56, African American, Virginia https://soundcloud.com/lente-venderink/audioclip-2-1/s-rfENPDCIIKw

APPENDIX C. The Likert-scale statements in Dutch with their English translation in italics.

1.	Deze persoon klinkt intelligent.	This person sounds intelligent.
2.	Deze persoon klinkt vriendelijk.	This person sounds friendly.
3.	Deze persoon klinkt eerlijk.	This person sounds honest.
4.	Deze persoon klinkt verstandig.	This person sounds wise.
5.	Deze persoon klinkt rijk.	This person sounds rich.
6.	Deze persoon klinkt zelfverzekerd.	This person sounds confident.
7.	Deze persoon klinkt oprecht.	This person sounds sincere.
8.	Deze persoon klinkt betrouwbaar.	This person sounds reliable.
9.	Deze persoon klinkt succesvol.	This person sounds successful.
10.	Deze persoon klinkt aantrekkelijk.	This person sounds attractive.

APPENDIX D. The questions of the exposure questionnaire with their English translation in italics.

- Heeft u lessen gevolgd/Volgt u lessen die gegeven worden in het Engels? Ja/Nee Have you had classes/Do you currently have classes that are being taught in English? Yes/No
- Heeft u ooit in een Engelstalig land gewoond? Zo ja, welk land? Ja, .../Nee Have you ever lived in an English-speaking country? If yes, which country? Yes, .../No
- 3. Hoe vaak ziet u gemiddeld personen Afro-Amerikaans Engels (Engels dat wordt gesproken door Afro-Amerikanen) praten (in films, series, sociale media)? *How often on average do you see people speaking AAVE (English that is spoken by African Americans) (in movies, shows, social media)?*Dagelijks/Wekelijks/Maandelijks/Bijna nooit/Nooit

Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Almost never/Never

4. Hoe vaak **hoort** u gemiddeld personen Afro-Amerikaans Engels praten (in muziek, podcasts)?

How often on average do you **hear** people speaking AAVE (in music, podcasts)? Dagelijks/Wekelijks/Maandelijks/Bijna nooit/Nooit Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Almost never/Never

5. Hoe vaak **ziet** u gemiddeld personen Standaard Amerikaans Engels praten (in films, series, sociale media)?

How often on average do you see people speaking GA (in movies, shows, social media)?

Dagelijks/Wekelijks/Maandelijks/Bijna nooit/Nooit

Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Almost never/Never

6. Hoe vaak hoort u gemiddeld personen Standaard Amerikaans Engels praten (in muziek, podcasts)?

How often on average do you **hear** people speaking GA (in music, podcasts)? Dagelijks/Wekelijks/Maandelijks/Bijna nooit/Nooit Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Almost never/Never

- 7. Hoe vaak spreekt u met Amerikanen over het algemeen? *How often do you talk to Americans in general?*Dagelijks/Wekelijks/Maandelijks/Bijna nooit/Nooit *Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Almost never/Never*
- 8. Hoe vaak daarvan spreekt u met Afro-Amerikanen? How often do you talk to African Americans? Dagelijks/Wekelijks/Maandelijks/Bijna nooit/Nooit Daily/Weekly/Monthly/Almost never/Never