GOT CLASS? COMMUNITY-SHARED CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF SOCIAL CLASS IN EVALUATIVE REACTIONS TO SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIABLES

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Abstract: In recent years, researchers have successfully used information about cultural identity and consumption behavior to uncover class-based variation in linguistic production data. Is this variation reflected in implicit class-related language attitudes, of which listeners may not even be aware? And which types of evaluative conceptualizations of class membership do listeners in fact use? In a two-alternative forced choice task, we compared how listeners associate linguistic variables with both more classic and newer conceptualizations of class membership. High social class responses were significantly more likely for standard linguistic variants than for nonstandard linguistic variants (for all five types of social class conceptualizations we used). The fact that there was no difference between the class conceptualizations indicates that conceptualizations in terms of economic production, culture, and consumption were equally successful in probing evaluative reactions to class-based linguistic variation in the region investigated.

1. Introduction

Investigations of language as it relates to social class are a cornerstone of variationist sociolinguistics (Rickford 1986). Social class, in its many incarnations, is inextricably bound to how people produce language in the communities they live in. This makes it equally important to study language perceptions in those communities in order to investigate how language is evaluated in relation to social class values and memberships.

There are two major challenges in investigating evaluative reactions about relationships between linguistic behavior and social class in a community. One is a challenge common to all evaluation or attitude research: directly asking people to discuss their language attitudes does not always result in accurate information about how language use is perceived in a community (see Garrett [2005] about the disadvantages of direct elicitation in attitude research). This raises the question of how we can study language-related evaluative reactions and attitudes in a way that will result in an accurate and valid picture. The other is a challenge common to all sociolinguistic investigations involving social class: how can we operationalize this social variable such that our ways of classifying and representing it are suited to the way our communities are organized and conceptualize it in everyday life?

As far as the latter point is concerned, the methods used to operationalize social class in production studies may not always be perfectly suited for perception studies. Observing people's linguistic and other behavior and proposing social categories that capture locally important distinctions may not automatically lay the foundation for questions about evaluative language reactions and attitudes if these distinctions are not

part of the public discourse about language. Unless community members are explicitly aware of such categories, they may not respond helpfully to questions that depend upon them. In this paper, we build on *indirect* methods as well as different types of indices of social class (or, to use a word which better profiles the processing character of attitudes, *conceptualizations* of social class).

In response to the first challenge, obtaining unbiased evaluations, researchers have developed many different elicitation methods. While the most traditional attitudes studies involve directly asking participants about their attitudes towards language varieties or usages, this approach has several potential pitfalls. As Mallinson and Dodsworth put it, "However robust our ethnographic methods, speakers are generally unable or unwilling to verbalise anything like a comprehensive model of class distinctions in their own communities, even those distinctions that are critical to the use of locally meaningful linguistic variables" (20010:267-8). Studies of explicit attitudes may not uncover the truth about attitudes because respondents are unaware of their own biases and opinions, or because respondents do not wish to be identified with their true biases or opinions, fearing that they are politically incorrect.

The concern that direct strategies for assessing attitudes may not be tapping into our true object of interest has been expressed by many researchers over the years (concerning attitudes about many subjects, not just language attitudes). Greenwald & Banaji (1995) argued that in view of the fact that people in general are not consciously aware of their attitudes, we need to use *indirect* measures to assess them. But explicit and implicit attitudes may both be deserving of attention. Strack & Deutsch (2004) argued that explicit and implicit attitudes are two separate but interacting systems, and we need ways to assess them both in order to fully understand attitudes. Pantos and Perkins (2013) showed that measuring implicit and explicit language attitudes in the same participants can produce divergent results, reinforcing the legitimacy of this concern. Squires (2014) also found that when participants respond directly (choosing a picture to represent the speaker of an utterance), they may not distinguish between categories that appear distinct when compared using an indirect response measure (mouse trajectories to make this choice). In sociolinguistically oriented work on language (de)standardization, explicit and implicit language attitudes suggest diametrically different hierarchies (see the studies in Kristiansen and Grondelaers 2013): while explicit value systems typically uphold the prestige of the conservative standard variety promoted by the cultural establishment and formal education, implicit attitude investigations increasingly confirm the (dynamic) prestige of "modern" standard varieties which are explicitly rejected.

So, what methods, then, should we use to assess language attitudes? There are two aspects of a language attitudes task that can vary on the continuum between direct/explicit and indirect/implicit: the presentation of linguistic material, and the ways of collecting responses. Some methods, such as the Matched Guise Technique, are intended to mask the linguistic variable that is being investigated via the presentation method. By presenting speech samples that are produced by a single speaker and vary along a single critical linguistic dimension (ranging from whole language varieties [Lambert et al. 1960] to phonetic variants [Campbell-Kibler 2007, 2008]) as though they are from different speakers, this method obscures the linguistic object of study. However, many matched guise studies are still accessing explicit attitudes in the sense that they ask listeners to evaluate the social or personal characteristics of the speakers. After hearing

the speech samples, respondents provide reactions or opinions via open-ended questions or respond on Likert scales to questions about speaker traits such as intelligence or sincerity. The purpose of the experiment remains hidden, as respondents are not aware that the study focuses on language, but it can only query social characteristics and categories that listeners can interpret and are explicitly aware of.

Existing methods leave open the question *how* to elicit associations between social class and linguistic variables without directly referring to social class. More importantly, how can we represent social class in such a way that people can make judgments about it on the basis of their implicit evaluations? Researchers have developed increasingly complex and locally defined ways of operationalizing social class in studies of sociolinguistic production in recent years. Rather than focusing on the traditional measures of "education level, family income, and occupational rank" (Dodsworth 2009, p. 1315), sociolinguists are turning to information about cultural identity and consumption behavior, among other things, to uncover class-based linguistic variation that is not predicted by classic measures such as education, income, and occupation (Dodsworth, 2009; Mallinson & Dodsworth, 2009). This change in focus helps to resolve theoretical concerns about, for example, the marginalization of members of society without paid employment. It also adds more practice-based criteria to the operationalization of social class, consistent with the notion of linguistic behavior as an integral component of social practice (Eckert, 2000).

Eckert demonstrated that among adolescents, groups that reproduce the adult social class distinction do not do so perfectly, and the critical dimensions on which they vary are behavioral, rather than strictly economic. In some communities, the standard dimensions of income, education, and occupation are not sufficient to separate groups from one another, even among adults (Mallinson, 2007). What seems to matter for predicting linguistic behavior is other symbolic behavior. That is, linguistic behavior is part of a package of symbolic behavior that expresses social allegiances and belonging in a community. So, if we want to identify the groupings of individuals that will correspond best to linguistic behavior, we should look to other types of symbolic behavior for guidance. As Dodsworth points out, we should define our categories "primarily in social terms, and secondarily in economic terms, because our objects of study are linguistic practices that have meaning within social rather than purely economic space" (2009, p. 1321).

Of course, symbolic behavior is not entirely separable from economic behavior. For example, the kind of job that someone has (their occupation) has both symbolic and economic value. The "church ladies" in Mallinson's study of Texana, North Carolina have jobs that differ in symbolic value from the jobs held by the "porch sitters," despite having very similar education and income levels. These occupations might be ranked similarly in a system of socioeconomic indexing, because they require similar levels of skill and education, but they have different symbolic value – the church ladies have occupations that are consistent with their identities as proper ladies, such as working for the Department of Social Services, whereas the porch sitters have occupations that would not be consistent with such an identity, such as working at a tool-making plant. Mallinson argues that these identity differences are not separate from class, but rather they are part of what makes up class in Texana. Indeed, these symbolic differences are good predictors of linguistic behavior, suggesting that the symbolic, rather than economic, value of

someone's occupation may be the most relevant dimension for sociolinguistic analysis. This proposal is consistent with the idea that someone's engagement in the standard language market is a better predictor of their linguistic behavior than their income (Labov, 1966), but it goes beyond that to predict that even among people whose jobs show very low engagement in the standard language market, differences in the cultural interpretations of these jobs may predict the linguistic behavior of those who hold them better than intrinsic properties of the jobs and their standard language associations.

Advances in the way social class is conceived and measured have been made primarily in the area of community studies of sociolinguistic production (e.g. Mallinson & Dodsworth 2009). However, more nuanced approaches to social class may also be valuable to the study of language attitudes. For example, when we ask participants to rate the speaker of a clip on a scale from 1 to 9, we have to choose what the scale represents. Do we ask participants to rate someone's "social class" from "low" to "high"? Do we ask them to rate someone's "education level" from "low" to "high" or from "less than high school" to "graduate or professional degree"? Most of the ways in which traditional language attitudes studies (such as matched guise studies) approach social class are restricted to these kinds of class representations, because more symbolic ways of representing class, as embodied in porch sitting or church singing, do not lend themselves to assessment with Likert scales.

As discussed above, the study of language attitudes has expanded to include a wide variety of approaches, including more indirect measurement techniques. Some of these indirect approaches lend themselves more easily to investigating sociolinguistic consequences of class using symbolic representations. Probing attitudes on the basis of locally defined or symbolic representations of social class has the additional advantage that such representations tend to require less explicit consideration of class differences. Or, to reverse the logic, using indirect response-eliciting techniques may allow us to include a wider variety of conceptualizations of social class in our research. A practical concern is whether judgments about symbolic and locally appropriate conceptualizations of class are robust enough to be used in the investigation of class-based language attitudes. In this paper, we explore the possibilities of investigating language attitudes and evaluations using five ways of expressing social class through symbolic means: personal appearance; first names; occupations; workplaces; and cars.

These conceptualizations also have non-symbolic components; for example, someone's personal appearance is made up not only of symbolic components such as body hexis, hair style and dress, but also of physical components such as skin color and face shape. The symbolic components of personal appearance may influence the way these physical characteristics are interpreted, but the physical characteristics exert some constraint over the symbolic content also.

Likewise, occupations and workplaces have obvious economic components that are not inherently symbolic, and can be interpreted in their own right (as ways of estimating more traditional notions of class like education, income and wealth). However, as discussed above, occupations have symbolic value above and beyond their economic value. Workplaces provide a good example of the extent to which occupations can have symbolic value. People who work in the same place may have very different educations and incomes: imagine a secretary, a paralegal, a first-year associate, and a partner who all work at a law firm. On a first date, all can give the same answer to the initial question,

"Where do you work?" And this answer holds some value, at least sociolinguistically, as demonstrated by the results of Labov's famous department store study, in which speakers with very similar job titles and earnings used sociolinguistic variables differently depending on the prestige of the store in which they worked (Labov 1966).

First names also have a great deal of symbolic value. Perhaps one reason for this is that they are something that, by and large, our parents choose for us, rather than something we choose for ourselves. Thus they become the repository for our parents' hopes and dreams for us, and can symbolize those aspects of our social class that we inherit and that are dependent upon the opportunities available to us at a young age. First names may be a good index of how likely someone is to have taken horseback riding lessons, or to have worked a part-time job as a teenager – factors that reflect our upbringing more than our adult achievements.

Lastly, cars represent our consumer behavior. While income and wealth constrain consumer behavior somewhat, they do not correlate with it perfectly. Other factors also influence what and how much we buy, including our explicit and implicit desires to construct a particular type of consumer identity. What type of car a person drives can thus be a symbolic representation of his or her self-identified social class. It can also identify someone as a member of a smaller sub-group of people, which may be more specific than social class but still be informative about it. For example, if you have a souped-up sports car, it may identify you as a member of the drag-racing subculture, which places you as a most likely working class or middle class individual who nonetheless does not aspire to climb the class hierarchy and achieve higher status in the same way that someone who drives an equivalently valued BMW might want to. Cars are informative about values as well as means, which makes purchasing and driving cars a form of symbolic behavior that may be expected to correlate well with linguistic behavior.

Because these categories of symbols represent a diverse array of conceptualizations of social class, they may not all be equally effective at eliciting evaluative reactions or attitudes about language and social class. Broadly, the symbols fall into two larger categories, which we will be able to compare: the workplace and occupation categories represent social class primarily via information about economic production and education, whereas the names, cars, and appearance categories represent consumption patterns, culture, and other indirect aspects of social class. If both of these kinds of symbols are an effective way for individuals to express or mark social class membership, then they should all be accessible for listeners to use in assessing the social meanings of linguistic behavior.

2. Methods
2.1 Participants
Forty members of the Radboud University community participated in exchange for payment.

2.2 Materials
Four sets of 80 words were created, each representing a well-studied socio-phonetic variation pattern in Netherlandic standard Dutch (e.g. Van de Velde 1996; Van de Velde, Gerritsen & Van Hout 1997; Van de Velde & Van Hout 1999; Jacobi 2009; Van den

Berg & Van Bezooijen 2004). In all four cases, the standard variant is in competition with a newly emerging non-standard variant.

The long mid vowel (e) has a standard variant that is slightly diphthongized (e.^{i}) (cf. Van de Velde 1996; Adank, Van Hout & Van de Velde 2004) and a stronger diphthongized, lower variant (e‧i). The diphthong (ij) has a standard variant / ɛ i/ and a newly emerging lower, nonstandard variant /ai/ (cf. Jacobi 2009). The two other variables are consonants. The fricative (z) originally was a voiced /z/, but it has a nonstandard devoiced variant /s/ (Van de Velde, Gerritsen & Van Hout 1996). The (r) has a lot of variants, the tap or flap being the most frequent standard variant in coda / ɾ /. A recent innovation is the non-standard retroflex/bunched approximant / ɻ / (a mid vocalic approximant, occurring in coda position, known as the 'Gooise r') (Van de Velde & Van Hout 1999; Van den Berg & Van Bezooijen 2004).

The two vocalic variables always appeared in the primary stressed syllable of the stimulus words, which ranged from one to four syllables. Two trained phoneticians (both male) were recorded producing two versions of each of the words: the standard variant (which we predict to be associated with higher social class membership in the Netherlands) and the non-standard variant (predicted to converge with lower social class membership in the Netherlands) of the relevant sociolinguistic variable.

It should be noticed that the restriction of the stimulus materials to single phonetic variables in isolated content words also represents an important innovation in Dutch perceptual sociolinguistics. While the study of native speaker attitudes has always been at the forefront of sociolinguistic attention in The Netherlands and Belgium (Grondelaers 2013), a recurrently voiced concern (see for instance Knops 1984) is that experimental speech samples as they are used in speaker evaluation research [i.e. audio-recorded fragments of prose containing multiple perception triggers – LSC, SG and RVH] do not allow the researcher to correlate perceptions with specific linguistic features (Grondelaers 2013: 591 ff). While Knops (1988) addressed this concern by investigating the relative impact of phonological vs. phonetic deviations from standard speech on the basis of neutral prose fragments *and* isolated content words, almost nothing is known about the perceptual impact of specific phonetic features represented in single words in Dutch. In view of the standard practice to elicit attitudes and evaluations on the basis of 10 to 20 second speech clips, it is worthwhile to find out whether phonetically untrained listeners are perceptually sensitive to tiny manipulations in single words.

In addition to the word sets, we created five sets of class markers: names, occupations, portraits, cars, and workplaces. Each set consisted of eight high Socio-economic status (SES) examples and eight low SES examples. All examples were suited to male potential speakers, since the recordings of the words containing the sociolinguistic variables were made by male speakers.

The names category consisted of names that high-SES Dutch speakers tend to have (e.g. Jan Peter), and names that low-SES Dutch speakers tend to have (e.g. Matt). The occupations category consisted of occupations that high-SES Dutch speakers tend to have (e.g. surgeon), and occupations that low-SES Dutch speakers tend to have (e.g. construction worker). The portraits category consisted of photographs that showed plausibly Dutch adult males who were dressed in a manner consistent with being high SES or low SES. The cars category consisted of photographs that showed cars that were likely to be owned by high SES people (e.g. a Rolls Royce) or low SES people (e.g. a

rusty Honda). The workplaces category consisted of photographs that showed locations where a high SES individual would be likely to work (e.g. an office) or where a low SES individual would be likely to work (e.g. an automotive shop). Lists of class markers were created by the first two authors in consultation with a native Dutch-speaking research assistant.

2.3 Procedure

Participants were seated in front of a computer screen and heard one of the recorded words after which two of the visual class markers appeared side-by-side. Participants were asked to make a two-alternative forced choice between the two items, answering the question, "Which of these two items goes best with the speaker of this word?" The five different types of class markers were displayed in blocks, with all the cars together in one block, all the names together in another block, etc. The order of the blocks was counterbalanced between subjects, so that some participants did the names first, others did the cars first, etc. Each word was heard only once by each listener. The speaker in the recording was counterbalanced across items, so that each item was spoken by Speaker 1 for half of the participants and by Speaker 2 for the other half of the participants. The variant used in the recording was also counterbalanced across items, so that each item contained the standard variant for half the participants, and the non-standard variant for the other half of the participants (crossed with the speaker, so that these were not conflated). In order to obfuscate the purpose of the experiment, half of the trials were filler trials in which both class markers came from the same class category (high or low). The remaining half of the trials, in which the class markers came from different categories, were target trials. Both the participants' responses and their response times were recorded. The experiment lasted for about half an hour.

3. Results

High SES class choices were classified as positive outcomes (a score of 1), low SES class choices as zero outcomes (a score of 0). High scores for a variant mean it is valued as a high SES class marker, indicating high standard language prestige, low scores meaning that the variant is rejected as a marker of high SES class and that the variant is marked as nonstandard. We will use proportions to indicate how frequently high class choices occurred.

We started by analyzing the outcomes per linguistic variable by logistic generalized mixed modeling. The variables included were speaker (1 and 2), variant (standard vs. non-standard variant), SES class marker (five categories), plus word and participants as random factors. The factor SES class marker was never significant as a main effect, nor in any interaction with the other two explanatory variables. The significant effects found were related to speaker, to variant and to their interaction. We simplified the statistical analysis by using mean scores aggregating over words, computing the proportion of high SES class choices, keeping the variables of speaker, variant, and SES class marker as explanatory variables.

We used repeated measures ANOVAs to analyze and estimate the effects for speaker, variant and SES class marker. We started by including the SES class markers, but we never found any significant difference between the five categories. In the final

analyses we left out the SES class markers as an explanatory variable. The five categories apparently cover the same conceptualization of social class.

We found, for all four variables, significant effects of either speaker, variant or their interaction. The (r) variable gave only one significant outcome, i.e. for speaker (F(1,39) = 9.457, p = .004, η_p^2 = .195), speaker 2 being evaluated higher in general, for both variants. Variant did not yield a significant result (F(1,39) = 2.180, p = .148, η_p^2 = .053), nor the interaction between speaker and variant (F(1,39) = 0.670, p = .418, η_p^2 = .017). The (z) variable returned a significant effect for variant (F(1,39) = 20.120, p = .000, η_p^2 = .341) but not for speaker as a main effect (F(1,39) = 2.500, p = .122, η_p^2 = .060). There was a significant interaction effect between speaker and variant (F(1,39) = 5.417, p = .025, η_p^2 = .122), indicating that the nonstandard variant of speaker 1 was evaluated lower than the nonstandard variant of speaker 2.

The two vowel variables showed strong effects for the variant variable. The (ee) had a significant effect for variant with a high effect size (F(1,39) = 91.015, p = .000, η_p^2 = .700). The variable speaker was significant as well (F(1,39) = 15.600, p = .000, η_p^2 = .286), as well as the interaction of speaker by variant (F(1,39) = 19.994, p = .000, η_p^2 = .339). The low variants of speaker 2 were evaluated lower than the low variants of speaker 1. The (ij) had a highly significant effect for variant (F(1,39) = 318.987, p = .000, η_p^2 = .891). Speaker was significant as well (F(1,39) = 26.842, p = .000, η_p^2 = .408), but not the interaction between variant and speaker (F(1,39) = 0.022, p = .882, η_p^2 = .001). Speaker 1 was evaluated higher in general than speaker 2.

The three variables with a significant variant effect all had lower scores for the nonstandard variants (as predicted). Figure 1 gives the means and standard errors for the standard and nonstandard variants of the four sociolinguistic variables.
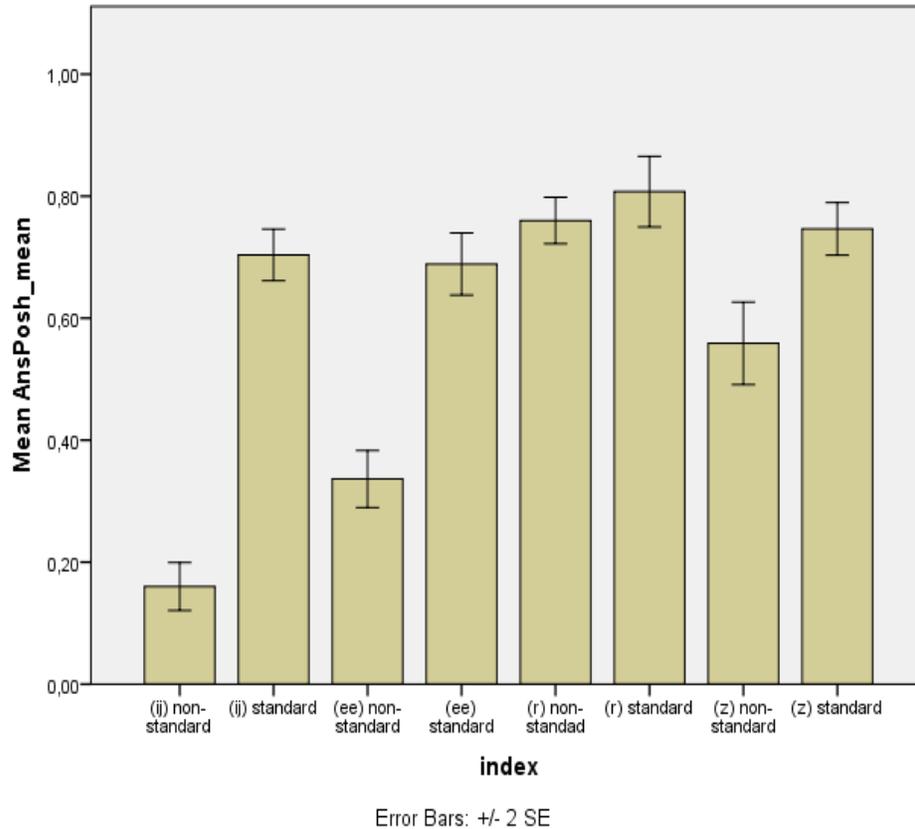
Figure 1: Means and standard errors of the SES class scores of the non-standard and standard variants of four sociolinguistic variables.

Figure 1 reveals that all standard variants were positively evaluated (all scores above .70) which seems quite high given the forced choice between pictures and the different social class categories used. Non-standard variants were evaluated positively as well in the case of (z) and (r), with no significant distinction between the two variants of the (r). This matches the findings in Van Bezooijen & Van den Berg (2004), who obtained positive evaluations for the nonstandard (r) variant. They conclude that the nonstandard variant is no longer evaluated as nonstandard, but as a new standard variant typical of younger generations. The two nonstandard variants of the (ee) and the (ij) have scores below .50, indicating that they are associated stronger with low SES class markers. Especially the scores for the (ij) show a sharp distinction between the standard and nonstandard variant.

4. Discussion

To our knowledge, the findings in the previous paragraphs are the first to confirm the social stratification of socio-phonetic variables on the basis of symbolic representations. Our data suggest that linguistic laymen strongly converge in their perception and evaluation of the social (class) meaning of minimally embedded single vowels and consonants. In a research paradigm which increasingly makes use of naturalistic multi-word stretches of spontaneous, non-controlled speech (see Knops's 1984 concern above), it is encouraging to notice that isolated word stimuli, which afford much greater

experimental control, are just as efficient to probe language-triggered evaluative reactions.

In addition, our findings suggest that relatively diverse symbolic class markers afford similar access into the social stratification of phonetic variables. Judgments on occupations and workplaces were not statistically distinguishable from judgments on names, cars and personal appearances. Thus it appears that it is feasible to investigate language attitudes in this community using indicators of either production or consumption. When these two facets of social class go together (as they seem to in The Netherlands), relationships between language and social class can be investigated equally well by asking listeners to make judgments about production- and consumption-based aspects of identity.

Beyond their methodological implications, our results have theoretical implications for the interpretation of language attitudes data, as well. Even in a community where production, consumption, and other cultural aspects of social class tend to pattern together, there are differences in how things like cars, names, occupations, workplaces, and personal appearances relate to language variation. Yet these differences were not evident in our implicit language attitudes task. This suggests that participants were drawing on a core notion of social class which underlies the individual symbolic markers when making their assessments in the task, rather than estimating likelihoods of different types of linguistic behavior based on each individual pairing they responded to. While this response pattern may be specific to the task at hand, it's consistent with the idea that somewhat stereotyped notions of class underlie people's evaluative reactions, attitudes and expectations about language and social class.

At the end of this section, there are a number of caveats to be reported. Observe, to begin with, that the effects reported here need not be universal: social class aspects may correlate differently with linguistic behavior in other speech communities with more complex class landscapes. Language attitudes researchers may uncover previously invisible relationships between class and language by tuning their instruments to the variables and speakers they are investigating. Our results show that it is feasible to steer clear of explicitly articulated class distinctions and to build on the more implicit evaluations afforded by symbolic representations.

In addition, it should be noticed that in their capacity of trained phoneticians, our two experimental speakers were inevitably privy to some of the social and linguistic conditioning on the variables when making the recordings. Because of this, it would be reasonable to wonder whether the guises we created really differed exclusively with respect to the particular variables we intended them to. Could the speakers have been doing something differently in the two guises beyond the production of the four variables (such as for instance, change their voice quality)? While we cannot exclude that there were non-intended differences, we know that these cannot be the source of the social class effect, because the variables did not elicit identical effects. This indicates that rather than a general difference between the guises, it was the production of the variables themselves that produced the effect of interest.

A somewhat more serious concern is the fact that the bipartite social model ("high" vs. "low") which underlies this experiment is overly one-dimensional and binary, and that it builds on a view of society in which distinct variables automatically coincide. As far as the latter point is concerned, a growing class of wealthy but uneducated

entrepreneurs belie the historical correlation between education, income, and social status. Somewhat more problematic, however, is the automatic association on which this experiment builds between traditional notions of (high) SE class, prestige and standard language. The past decades have seen the emergence of a new type of dynamic prestige (see Grondelaers & Kristiansen 2013 for an elaborate discussion) which draws heavily on media cool and the casual image of low-status urban speech. This dynamic prestige has been found to motor the emergence and vitality of non-standard phenomena in a number of European languages (including Belgian and Netherlandic Dutch – see Grondelaers & Kristiansen 2013; Grondelaers & Speelman 2013). In a perception study into the publicly downgraded but highly vital dissemination of the non-standard object form *hun* ("them") as a subject in Netherlandic Dutch, the standard subject form *zij* ("they") triggered traditional high class prestige, whereas the non-standard object form *hun* was awarded the new dynamic prestige which may account for its vitality. A non-standard pronunciation of *zij* which was included as a third variant in the experiment, and which equates the non-standard variant of the (ij) variable included in the present experiment, elicited more or less the same upper class associations as the standard pronunciation *zij*. Interestingly, this nonstandard [ai]-pronunciation has previously been reported to index "intellectualism, commercialism, and pop culture" in Smakman (2006: 50), and might well have triggered symbolic representations of "dynamic" social categories (cheap but "cool" cars, "lofty" work places) if these had been included in the experiment. The fact that the non-standard pronunciation of the (ij)-variable is downgraded as low class in this experiment does not, however, invalidate our design: the lowered [ai]-pronunciation of (ij) clearly is an upwardly mobile marker in social terms, but it is *not* received standard (yet). While a more-dimensional social stratification model may have better accommodated the change in progress, the present design with its isolated variables and binary forced choice categorization appears to bring out somewhat more conservative evaluations in our listener-judges.

5. Conclusion
Language attitudes research has many challenges, but some of them may be best approached by trying to solve them together. Creating more implicit ways of investigating listeners' attitudes may allow people to be honest about their attitudes at the same time that it allows researchers to explore (hidden) attitudes about specific aspects of social identity. Beyond social class, many different types of social variables can be operationalized in ways that are sensitive to what is important in local communities, not just for studies of language production, but also for studies of attitudes and perception. As our understanding of social categories and their relationship to language variation becomes more nuanced, studies of language attitudes will be needed to discover how social distinctions are 'translated' through the lens of language to those who interpret them.

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