

Attitudes to Norwegian-accented English among Norwegian and non-Norwegian listeners

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Abstract

This study investigates Norwegian and non-Norwegian listeners' attitudes towards degrees of Norwegian-accented English.

A phonological analysis of 20 Norwegians recording a stimulus text has provided a description of Norwegian-accented English as a construct. The analysis reveals two dimensions of strong Norwegian-accented English: strong intonation and strong phonology.

In a matched-guise experiment, 98 listeners from three listener groups (native and non-native speakers of English and Norwegians) listened to stimulus recordings created by three matched guise speakers. Two of the matched-guise speakers (MG1 and MG2) recorded four degrees of accentedness (native-like (RP), slight, strong intonation and strong phonology), whereas MG3 recorded two (native-like (RP) and moderate). Findings indicate that native-like (RP) accents are perceived with the most status, but that Norwegian listeners have much more negative attitudes towards Norwegian-accented English than non-Norwegians. The results also show that non-Norwegian listeners do not regard an accent with a strong Norwegian intonation as a strong foreign accent, as compared to accents with a strong Norwegian phonology, and non-Norwegian listeners give equally positive evaluations of strong intonation accents as slight Norwegian accents. Norwegian-accented English does not seem to affect evaluation of sociability, and even the strongest Norwegian accents are by non-Norwegians perceived as very intelligible.

The study has didactic implications because the results show that having a Norwegian-influenced pronunciation of English is mostly unproblematic for intelligibility, and the negative attitudes Norwegians themselves have towards Norwegian-accented English are primarily an issue of aesthetics, not pragmatics. The discussion calls for a paradigm shift in English language teaching from teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to teaching English as a lingua franca (ELF). For pronunciation this means a shift from aiming towards traditional native-speaker standards to an approach that deals with pronunciation pragmatically to meet the students' needs for international communication. This study provides knowledge of what kind of aspects are important for oral skills in English, which is needed to inform teacher education and teacher practices.

Sammendrag

Denne studien undersøker norske og ikke-norske lytteres holdninger til ulike grader av norsk-aksentuert engelskuttale.

En fonologisk analyse av 20 nordmenns innspillinger av en stimulustekst har bidratt til en beskrivelse av norsk-aksentuert engelsk som et konstrukt. Analysen viser at det finnes to dimensjoner av sterk norsk-aksentuert engelskuttale: sterk intonasjon og sterk fonologi.

En masketest med 98 lyttere fra tre lyttergrupper (morsmålsbrukere og ikke-morsmålsbrukere av engelsk samt nordmenn) lyttet til fire grader av aksent. Av de tre hovedstimulusinntalerne gjorde to av dem innspiller av fire aksenter hver (morsmålsliknende (RP), mild, sterk intonasjon og sterk fonologi), mens stimulus-inntaler nummer 3 spilte inn to (morsmålsliknende (RP) og moderat). Funnene fra masketesten viser at de morsmålsliknende aksentene blir vurdert med høyest status, men at vurderingen av norsk aksent, enten den er mild eller sterk, er atskillig mer negativ når det er nordmenn selv som lytter; ikke-norske lyttere vurderer norsk-aksentuert uttale mer positivt. Ikke-norske lytteres vurdering av sterk norsk intonasjon blir for øvrig ikke vurdert til å være en like sterk aksent som en sterk norsk fonologi. Derfor vurderer også de ikke-norske lytterne den sterke norske intonasjonen omtrent like positivt som en mild norsk aksent. Norsk-aksentuert uttale ser ikke ut til å ha noen effekt på vurdering av selskapelighet, og selv de sterkeste norske aksentene som er representert i studien blir av de ikke-norske lytterne oppfattet som fullt forståelige.

Denne studien har didaktisk relevans fordi resultatene viser at det å ha norsk-påvirket engelskuttale for det meste er uproblematisk for forståelse; de negative holdningene nordmenn selv har til norsk-aksentuert engelskuttale har først og fremst å gjøre med estetikk, ikke pragmatikk. Det argumenteres *for* et paradigmeskifte i engelskundervisningen i Norge, fra å undervise engelsk som et fremmedspråk (EFL) til å undervise engelsk som et lingua franca (ELF). For engelskuttale betyr dette å gå bort ifra det å rette seg mot og måle elevene etter tradisjonelle morsmålsstandarder, til en undervisning der man har en pragmatisk innfallsvinkel til engelskuttale og tar hensyn til hva elevene trenger for å kunne bruke engelsk til internasjonal kommunikasjon. Denne studien gir kunnskap om hvilke aspekter som er viktige for muntlige ferdigheter i engelsk, noe som er viktig i engelsklæreres utdanning og praksis.

Preface

A year and a half ago, I had no idea that I could actually write an MA thesis about Norwegian people's pronunciation of English. Fortunately, Ulrikke Rindal, who later became my supervisor, revealed to me that the field of English didactics was in need of just this kind of research. As a lifelong accent enthusiast, this information made it extremely easy for me to pick a topic for my thesis. Thank you so much, Ulrikke, for encouraging me to do this project and for your extensive and excellent guidance throughout the year. And thank you, Lisbeth, for your clear-headed and solid-as-a-rock advice regarding the complex methodology of the study.

To all the stimulus speakers who were willing to be recorded speaking English: Thank you for providing on-the-spot excellent recordings of your authentic English accents. I am also extremely thankful to the panel of experts, who were willing to spend their time (one even travelling from out of town) to listen to and verify the stimulus recordings. Your discussions proved extremely valuable for the later development of the methodological process. The same goes for my foreign group of friends who were willing to get free wine for a whole evening to participate in the focus group interview. My sincere gratitude for providing your experiences and valuable insights with regard to English pronunciation in Norway.

I also want to express my deep appreciation for all of the 98 respondents of my survey, who were willing to sit out and listen to 12 recordings of people reading the same text and evaluate all of them. I already thanked you at the end of the survey, but I would like to do it again: Thank you!

Last, but not least, I want to thank all of my family and friends who have been supportive of my working on this thesis. Not only have you showed great interest in the topic when I have explained it, but many of you have also challenged me with questions and remarks about the process, which has been incredibly valuable for me in terms of sharpening my ability to effectively convey the topic of the study.

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1. Introduction

What is *good pronunciation* of English? Is it about aesthetics, i.e. what is pleasing for someone to listen to, or is it whatever sounds closest a native speaker? Or, does good pronunciation just mean that it is intelligible? The answers to these questions will be different depending on who is asked. While someone might say that an ideal or optimal pronunciation is the traditional Oxford/RP English, another might say that any native-speaker variety is equally good, whereas others would say that accent does not matter as long as it is possible to understand.

When seeking to determine the concept of *good pronunciation*, one should treat it in the light of *good for what?* The purpose of pronunciation must be identified in order to determine what good pronunciation is. This MA thesis seeks to answer that question with relevance to Norwegian learners specifically. What are the important aspects of pronunciation that a Norwegian speaker of English needs to consider, and what are a student's needs from an educational point of view? These questions can be answered by assessing the unique role of English in today's world and in Norway, and how English today is so much more than a language people learn just to interact with its native speakers. The idea that good pronunciation, i.e. pronunciation that serves its purpose, is that which resembles a native speaker might therefore not be entirely true, as will be argued in this thesis.

This study is an investigation of attitudes towards Norwegian-accented English among Norwegian and non-Norwegian listeners and how intelligible Norwegian-accented English is perceived to be.

1.1 English in the world and in Norway

English plays *the* leading role among all languages in the world. Not only is it spoken as a first or second language in many of world's biggest countries; it is also the default language for communication in most parts of the world when people with different linguistic

backgrounds interact. Around a quarter of the world's population are either fluent or have some competence in English (Crystal, 2003).

With its geographical and cultural proximity to the British Isles, Norway has a tight historical connection with English-speaking countries, and in recent decades the English language has become a central language in contexts of business, education, media and so on. Norwegian children learn the language from first grade at age six and are massively exposed to the language, particularly through the media. The English competence level of the Norwegian population, especially amongst the younger generations, is very high (Linn & Hadjidemetriou, 2014), and educational authorities consider English as a necessary skill in Norwegian society (KD, 2013). Even though English is officially a foreign language in Norway, the central role that it plays in Norwegian society makes it a de facto second language (Rindal, 2013).

1.2 English as a school subject

English is referred to as a world language (“a universal language” in the English version) in the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion (KD, 2013). The curriculum states the purpose of English to be to enable students to “have knowledge” of how English “is used in different contexts” and further that they need the ability “to adapt the language to different topics and communication situations” (KD, 2013: 2) A component of English oral skills is to be able to adapt “the language to purposeful objectives and adapting the language to the recipient” (KD, 2013: 3). Among the specific competence aims for upper secondary school are to “evaluate and use suitable listening and speaking strategies adapted for the purpose and the situation“ as well as being able to “express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation” (KD, 2013: 11). There is an emphasis on a pragmatic approach to English language teaching (ELT), but the curriculum gives little direction on what exactly this means with regard to pronunciation. The aim is for students to “use patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and various types of sentences in communication” (KD, 2013: 11). What these patterns consist of exactly is not stated. The evaluation of students’ oral skills will therefore be dependent on whether the teacher

interprets these competence aims to mean patterns of Received Pronunciation (RP), General American (GA), other native-speaker varieties or no specific standard at all.

1.3 ELF and pronunciation standards

With somewhat vague guidelines in the national curriculum with regard to which kind of pronunciation is required, it is understandable that teachers are still inclined to instruct their students to aim for the traditional standards of RP and GA. However, the general purpose for which to use and learn English is different now than just half a century ago, and this has led to a growing interest in a new research field that encompasses the role that English plays for international communication, namely English as a lingua franca (ELF). The introduction of ELF has provided a new perspective in ELT that focuses on pragmatic pronunciation and questions pronunciation standards that are based on native-speaker norms. As the increasingly globalized world puts the English language at centre stage for international communication, the need to learn English is shifting more and more towards the need to communicate with other non-native speakers, not primarily with native speakers (Seidlhofer, 2011). Therefore, having pronunciation standards based on native-speaker norms does not harmonize with the pragmatic ELF approach and might not be necessary if Norwegian-accented English is not harmful for intelligibility. Research conducted on Norwegian English teachers by Hansen (2012) and Torbjørnsen (2015), however, indicates that teachers are still reluctant to accept Norwegian-accented pronunciation. Even though they do acknowledge that the main purpose of ELT is to develop communicative skills, they still intend to move their students closer to their native-speaker based pronunciation ideals. The ELF paradigm rejects any native-speaker norm as a categorical ideal, the reasons for which will be discussed in-depth throughout this thesis.

1.4 Objectives and research questions

Considering that native-speaker standards are still predominant in teachers' practices in Norwegian classrooms, it is the objective of this thesis to explore how Norwegian-accented English is perceived by non-Norwegians as compared to Norwegians, and to what extent

there might be problems associated with having a Norwegian accent when speaking English. Not only native speakers English, but in particular non-native speakers of English are of interest when exploring this topic. As will be argued in Chapter 2, the English language no longer belongs solely to the native-speaker population, and it is first and foremost other non-native speakers with whom Norwegian students will need to communicate. In that respect, the way that other non-native speakers perceive Norwegian-accented English may be even more important than how it is perceived by native speakers. The way in which this accent is perceived and the extent to which it is intelligible are the factors that will determine how well it communicates.

It is a hypothesis of this thesis that British English pronunciation (RP) overall may be perceived as higher status and as more prestigious, which is the common result in similar language attitude studies (cf. section 2.4), but that Norwegian-accented English is a lesser problem than many Norwegians make it to be (cf. section 2.5.3). If non-Norwegian listeners find Norwegian-accented English unproblematic, then Norwegian people's concern for *Norwegianness* when speaking English is likely to be a problem of aesthetics, not pragmatics, in which case it arguably no longer has any didactic relevance. In line with previous research on attitudes to NNS accents (see section 2.5.2 and 2.5.3), it is also the hypothesis that differences in accent will have less influence when it comes to evaluation of sociability-related qualities. In order to investigate these hypotheses, both Norwegians and non-Norwegians have been recruited to an online survey to listen to Norwegians speaking English and evaluate them. The survey is designed as a matched-guise experiment, meaning that some of the recordings have been made by the same speakers changing the accent between each recording. This methodology is suitable for investigating attitudes of different degrees of accentedness and answering the main research question of the thesis:

What are the attitudes of Norwegian and non-Norwegian listeners towards Norwegian-accented English?

In addition to the MGT, interviews with an expert panel and a focus group have also been conducted, meaning that the study has a mixed-method approach. Using a mixed-methods approach is particularly relevant in language attitude research because social reality is complex and needs to be investigated from several angles.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of 6 chapters. The introduction chapter provides the general background and the didactic reasons for choosing to conduct this research. Chapter 2 provides the conceptual framework of the thesis, in which the role of English in the world is outlined, and the language learning and teaching paradigms of EFL and ELF are compared. The theoretical chapter also presents the study of attitudes to language and the previous research that has been done on non-native speaker accents of English. Chapter 3 gives a detailed account of the methodology of the study. This chapter is considerably longer than the other chapters in the thesis because of the comprehensiveness of the methodological process. The complexity of studying language attitudes requires diligence in the development and validation of the methodological process. This process involved creating stimulus recordings, conducting interviews with an expert panel and a focus group, mapping out the main features of Norwegian-accented English through phonological analysis, and developing an online survey, the latter being the main set of data in the thesis. In chapter 4, the results of the survey are presented. These results are discussed in chapter 5 along with comments from the survey respondents and excerpts from the focus group interview. Chapter 6 contains conclusive remarks about the project and provide suggestions for further research.

2. Conceptual framework

This chapter will provide an overview of the research that comprises the theoretical background for the thesis. The role of English in the world and in Norway will be outlined, followed by a comparison of two paradigms in English language teaching (ELT) with regard to teaching pronunciation, namely English as a foreign language (EFL), which is based on second language acquisition (SLA) and English as a lingua franca (ELF). Finally, this chapter presents the sociolinguistic approach to the study of attitudes with research conducted on non-native accents of English. The relevance of this kind of research for the English didactics field will be argued.

2.1 The status of English in the world

2.1.1 International English

Through colonization and political and cultural influence from Britain, and later USA, the English language has become unique on a world scale by eventually growing into the world's primary language for international communication (Graddol, 2006). It is today often referred to as a global language or international language. A rough estimate of half a billion native-speakers (Graddol, 2006), supplied with just as high a number of people who have English as their second language, makes English the second (to Mandarin Chinese) biggest language in the world (Graddol, 2006). However, even though there is an increase in learners of Mandarin Chinese, it is estimated that in English, more than 1,5 billion people – a quarter of the world's population - are either fluent or competent (Crystal, 2003: 6). This makes English by far the world's dominant world language. The ever growing number of non-native speakers has the consequence that the native speakers are being outnumbered, and as Jenkins (2000: 1) has pointed out, "interaction in English increasingly involves no first language speakers whatsoever". Even ten years before, Beneke (1991) estimated that this number may be as high 80 % of all English interactions.

2.1.2 Circles of English

In the 1980s, sociolinguist Braj Kachru established the *Concentric Circles of English*, which illustrated the status of the English language in the world (Kachru, 1985). In Kachru's model the *inner* circle contains the countries with primarily native speakers, such as USA, England and Australia. The *outer* circle contains those countries where English has the status of an official language alongside other native languages, such as India and Bangladesh. Finally, the countries where English does not have status as an official language, but where English is still learnt and used, are said to be in the *expanding* circle. Scandinavia traditionally belongs to the expanding circle, although English is generally spoken fluently in these countries - albeit officially as a foreign language.

Kachru's model of world Englishes has come under a lot of criticism because it was described as too centrist and failed to portray the importance of English in many of the expanding circle countries (see e.g. Graddol, 1997; Pennycook, 2012). David Graddol acknowledged how the model may be "a useful starting point for understanding the pattern of English worldwide", but that it would no longer "be the most useful for describing English usage in the next century" (Graddol, 1997: 10). In a Norwegian context, a PhD thesis by Rindal (2013) showed that the function of English is more complex than that of a mere foreign language. The thesis concludes that adolescents "express local and individual identity through English" and that "English accents are socially evaluated by the participants, not only when these accents are spoken by native speakers of English, but also when these are appropriated by peers" (Rindal, 2013: III) Thus, Norwegian adolescents' use of L2 is systematic and cannot be considered "an interlanguage or an incomplete learner language" (Rindal, 2013: 65-66). Rindal's findings illustrate how English, albeit officially foreign, is a *de facto* second language in Norway.

2.1.3 The native and the non-native speaker

A native speaker (NS) is usually understood to be a monolingual speaker, living in a homogenous speech community (Beinhoff, 2013: 15). NSs are traditionally regarded as models one appeals to for the "truth" about the language, and it is the NSs that "control its maintenance and shapes its direction" (Davies, 2003: 1). NSs are usually believed to have intuitive knowledge of the language (Crystal, 2003: 308). However, the concept of a native speaker is not necessarily as straightforward a definition, even though it may seem common

sense. People who grow up with more than one L1 do not always become NSs, according to the given definition, sometimes not even in any of their languages. As language skills are dynamic, with practice or the lack thereof people may also lose or improve their ability over time. Language skills are also context-dependent, and different speakers will be more linguistically skilful in different situations (Beinhoff, 2013: 15). Additionally, there is a diversity of accents and dialects, especially in the English speaking world, ranging from inner and outer circle standards, such as General American and Indian English, as well as a significant diversity within some of the inner circle countries particularly.

A NNS is someone who is characterized by Beinhoff (2013: 6) to have “had their first contact with English at a later stage in life (e.g. in school) and often in their L1-environment.” This “means that they mostly had limited access especially to spoken English”. There are somewhat blurred boundaries between the definitions of native and non-native speakers of English. However, it will not be of fundamental concern for the validity of this thesis to extensively analyse the edges of the non-native speaker concept because Norwegians, as well as the majority of the project’s participants clearly fit into the NNS category.

2.2 Language learning paradigms

2.2.1 Second language acquisition (SLA)

Second language acquisition (SLA) is the field of research that studies the process of learning a second or later language. This process involves individual learners developing an *interlanguage*, a concept based on the idea that the proficiency of a non-native learner of English can be determined in relation to a native-speaker norm (Ellis, 1997). Officially recognized as a foreign language, the methods of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) have traditionally been developed alongside research on second language acquisition (SLA). In the EFL paradigm the teacher’s ideal is for his/her students to become like native-speakers. Someone who is learning English (as a foreign language) can thus be placed on a continuum with native-speaker proficiency on the one end, but where most learners remain on an interlanguage level. However, it is argued that teaching English as a foreign language may not account for the extraordinary position that English has on the world stage of languages. Baxter (1980) criticized the term EFL itself for being “inadequate as a means for

describing present-day roles of English in the world.” The ever-increasing spread of the use of English in the world has led to a different view of the language as a whole.

2.2.2 English as a lingua franca (ELF)

The term lingua franca emerged in the academic discourse in the 1960s (Beinhoff, 2013: 12) and was defined as “any lingual medium of communication between people of different mother tongues, for whom it is a second language” (Samarin, 1987: 371). Any language could in theory, then, be a lingua franca, and there are indeed several existing lingua francas locally or regionally in many parts of the world (Seidlhofer, 2011). With particular regard to English as a lingua franca, Barbara Seidlhofer (2011) defines it as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7). By this definition, not only non-native speaker interactions comprise ELF speech, but also native speakers can be included because the native speaker and the non-native speaker do not share the same mother tongue.

The research on ELF has been a thriving field over the last decades. From initially aiming to codify a “new” variety of English, “this has now developed into an interest in the processes and motives of ELF communication” (Rindal, 2013: 17). ELF is fundamentally a perspective of how English functions as “a common tool” (Beinhoff, 2013: 16) and strategy for intercultural communication. Thus, it is not primarily studied as a linguistic form because it is fundamentally defined as a perspective. Research on ELF speech has generally been focused on naturally occurring speech, although there is growing interest also in the phenomenon of writing from an ELF perspective, albeit still with little available data (Cogo & Dewey, 2012). The spoken corpus VOICE led by Barbara Seidlhofer at the University of Vienna, has so far been the most comprehensive ELF project, comprising English conversations between speakers of numerous nationalities in a wide range of contexts. The corpus projects serve the need for empirical data to support the construction of ELF as a concept.

To describe the concept of ELF in further depth, it is helpful to first introduce the criticism that has been put forward by ELF sceptics.

2.2.3 Criticism of ELF as a teaching standard

There has been a steadily growing narrative among scholars about embracing the ELF perspective in English language teaching. This has been met with resistance because ELF is not a codified variety of English and because “English-target interlanguages vary greatly according to their source languages” (Dürmüller, 2008: 244). A concern is therefore that it is too complicated to set a standard based on the myriad of differences in interference-based errors between speakers of different languages, and as Dürmüller (2008; 244) points out, it “might not be so easy if each is making use of their own form of English”. The argument for an implementation of ELF in ELT has been seen as fallacious in the view of ELF sceptics because “it is not possible to get to a uniform lingua franca core that is shared by fluent bilinguals from different first-language” (Shim 2009: 113). Kachru (1992: 66) was also clear in that what he called a “monomodal approach” to non-native English could not be defended, and that attempts to subsume different local variations within a common version were doomed to failure because the functional roles assigned to English and the contexts in which these apply are different from one place to another. There has been discussion whether ELF is a language in its own right and attempts to codify it as such, but as Beinhoff (2013: 13) asserts, it seems difficult enough, “if not impossible, to find enough similarities in the structure of English used by speakers of one native language, such as Japanese”.

It is problematic to attempt to accurately describe ELF as a linguistic form, given “the understanding of language as fluid and hybrid” (Rindal, 2013: 17). However, contrary to what many critics have claimed, scholars who advocate the teaching of ELF are generally not referring to a non-existing international, codified pronunciation standard, but rather to “awareness and choice, making students aware of different ways of speaking English” (Cogo (2012: 104). Dürmüller (2008: 247) maintains that most people who learn English no longer primarily need “information about traditional Britishness and Americanness, but the teaching of transcultural politeness strategies, that are part of the pragmatics of International English.”

It is emphasized by Jenkins (2009) that it is this repertoire of linguistic strategies that is what lies at the very core of ELF. She advocates, contrary to what many ELF critics claim, that mutual intelligibility does not depend on the application of a single model of pronunciation, but rather, as Dewey (2011: 207) puts it, “the ability to develop accommodation skills, for speakers to thus be able to draw on core and local features wherever appropriate, and to do so

in line with the particular needs of current interlocutors.” What the teacher advocates as the pronunciation aim can then be of major importance for a student’s oral skills and communicative competence. The core argument for teaching according to an ELF perspective is therefore that “ELT should reflect the needs of non-native speaker interactions, and consequently emphasize intelligibility and pragmatic strategies for intercultural communication” (Rindal, 2013: 19). ELF ultimately comes down to letting this perspective on communication be the guiding principle for teaching English. The goal is not to set a new standard, but to alter the view on the process of learning English.

2.2.4 Pragmatic strategies for communication and accommodation

Accommodation is one of the most characteristic features of ELF. It means, in short, that interlocutors converge or diverge with regard to language forms and speech styles during an interaction (Dewey, 2011: 205). Through a wide repertoire of linguistic and extra-linguistic resources that speakers may draw on, they adapt “the key repertoire features by accentuating, modifying and downplaying these” at any given moment (Dewey, 2011: 206). This occurs as a means of achieving communicative effectiveness or as a social practice to emphasize sameness or difference in identity. Convergence can be both receptive and productive (Cogo & Dewey, 2012: 103) in that interlocutors are accepting of and often agreeing upon and echoing lexical phrases and items, regardless of whether these conform to standard ENL (English as a native language) forms, agreeing on the “let-it-pass principle” (Firth, 1996). Provided that the threshold of communication is achieved, this is an interpretive procedure that diverts attention from any linguistic abnormality that may take place in an interaction (House, 2012). Seidlhofer (2004: 218) describes ELF talk as “overtly consensus-oriented, cooperative and mutually supportive, and thus fairly robust.”

Altering one’s pronunciation in order to facilitate understanding is one way of accommodating, which sometimes means having to avoid “native-speaker ‘shibboleths’ that indicate membership of a very specific confined native-speaker community, and of which some accomplished EFL learners exhibit impressive mastery” (Seidlhofer, 2005: 71). Barbara Seidlhofer (2011: 134-137) has coined the term “unilateral idiomaticity” for when speakers do not cooperate and inappropriately position themselves in native-speaker territory rather than in ELF territory. ENL or EFL speakers who are not aware of this may therefore be less effective ELF communicators and, by failing to accommodate, inadvertently act in an

unfriendly manner “in the sense that it is unfriendly to impose your habits on somebody else” (Seidlhofer, 2011: 135).

This section has shown that the traditional view of an English learner’s interlanguage inherently implies that deviations from a native-speaker norm are imperfections, i.e. in accordance with a *deficit hypothesis* (Beinhoff, 2013: 46). The modern *English as a lingua franca* (ELF) approach, on the other hand, harmonizes more with the *difference hypothesis* (Beinhoff, 2013: 46), which is more descriptive in nature. ELF strategies are not attempts to cover up for a lack of competence, but about *the* competence to communicate with other English language users on different levels and for different purposes. The research shows that NNSs are often better at using these strategies than NSs.

2.3 Pronunciation

2.3.1 The lingua franca pronunciation core

The idea of *good* pronunciation in an ELF perspective comes down to its effectiveness in communication, and not, as in the ELF paradigm, how well it resembles standard native-speaker pronunciation. In her seminal work on the phonology of English as an International Language by Jennifer Jenkins (2000), the lingua franca pronunciation core (LFC) is presented. The LFC is a set of guidelines based on research on ELF speech, with special attention to how pronunciation affects intelligibility. The LFC presents the elements of pronunciation that have to be in place to prevent a breakdown in communication. Primarily, it advocates that these 4 main aspects from standard native-speaker accents be preserved: most consonant sounds (and the vowel sound /ɜ:/), most consonant clusters (such as /kt/ in *product*), vowel length before voiced/unvoiced consonants, and nuclear stress.

By way of example, relating the lingua franca core to a Norwegian speaker of English, a few consonant sounds may be problematic. For example, the lenis fricatives /ʒ, z, ð/, which do not feature in Norwegian phonology, could therefore be difficult for L1 speakers of Norwegian to produce. As for /ð/, however, as well as the fortis /θ/, these are argued to be exceptions to the ‘all consonants rule’, as they do not appear to cause intelligibility problems in ELF (Jenkins, 2000). Since the /ɜ:/ vowel needs to be accurate, this could in theory be problematic in ELF

speech, as it is often realised as /ø/ by Norwegians (Nilsen & Rugesæter, 1999: 78). However, an example pointed out by Rugesæter (2012: 128), of voiced and unvoiced *s* - “you’re full of lies” vs “you’re full of lice” – illustrates how small deviations in the realisation of phonemes will “not necessarily hamper communication as such, but may produce some unintentional, and sometimes funny, effects.” These characteristics of Norwegian-accented English are treated in depth in the methodology chapter.

There were findings in Jenkins’ data about aspects of native-speaker pronunciation that in fact had *negative* effects on ELF intelligibility, such as schwa and weak forms, assimilation and coalescence (Jenkins, 2000). These aspects have, of course, traditionally been taught as any other part of aiming for so called “good” (i.e. native-like) pronunciation (Simensen, 2007). There is still to this day a common imperative for a native-speaker norm in Norwegian classrooms (Simensen, 2014) (see section 2.3.2). However, in order to avoid unilateral idiomaticity when it comes to pronunciation, it may prove valuable for teachers to make students aware of, for example, that /t/ should not always be flapped (as in GA “Italy” sounding like “Idaly”); nor should it always be glottalized (as in Cockney “better”) (Patsko, 2013). That way, students can stay clear of the mentioned ENL ‘territory’ that might exist at the expense of communicative effectiveness. However, Patsko & Davies (2013) point out that, with the students’ listening skills in mind, such non-ELF-core items will still be worth teaching. They suggest it is important to be aware of the features of connected speech, but students should not be expected to produce them, as it may result in becoming less intelligible in a general ELF context.

Based on the phonemes native-speakers of Norwegian will know and be able to transfer from their own language, there are very few aspects in the lingua franca core that seem likely to cause problems. The question thus becomes which, if any, aspects of pronunciation should be spent time teaching at all in Norwegian ELT classrooms. Relatively few studies have been done to this day on how non-native (or native) speakers perceive the Norwegian accentedness of English, and very little research has so far been conducted on non-native accents of English, especially with regard to how it is perceived by other non-native speakers. Teachers are in need of research that investigates the respective sociolinguistic contexts that will be relevant for students. In this case, that means ELF contexts involving Norwegian speakers (cf. section 5.2.1).

2.3.2 Pronunciation standards in Norway

So far, with such a small amount of research on the topic of Norwegian accentedness, teachers have little else than the traditional SLA research on which to base their teaching. Therefore, it is understandable that there is hesitation regarding the norm for pronunciation and that a de-facto native-speaker standard is still maintained. An MA thesis written by Thomas Hansen (2012) showed that English teachers in Norway evaluated students with a native-like pronunciation as more competent. This meant that the intercultural-speaker model, the view of people in the expanding circle being *users* of English, not only learners, was only partially recognized (Hansen, 2012). The tradition of teaching either American or British English seems still to permeate Norwegian classrooms, and Hansen found that the intercultural-speaker model did “not extend beyond the outer circle” and that “cultures and language varieties within the ‘expanded circle’ are not considered as part of the English-speaking world which the national curriculum refers to” (Hansen, 2012: 52). It is therefore not unlikely that many teachers will assess quality of pronunciation relative to a native-speaker standard. The precedence for interpretation of the competence aims might still go in favour of the students who are the closest to sounding like native speakers.

2.3.3 Norwegian learners’ phonological competence

There has been research on young Norwegian learners’ pronunciation of English, conducted by Rugesæter (2014), who compared the phonological competence of today’s learners with similar studies from the 1970s, seen against the backdrop of incidental foreign language learning, i.e. the massive increase in exposure to English through media. The realisation of some “difficult contrasts” of English pronunciation was compared, and Rugesæter found very little improvement in today’s young learners, the conclusion being that basic L2 phonological competence in no way automatically enhances by passive exposure to the language (Rugesæter, 2014). However, this research is not compatible with the ELF perspective because Rugesæter, by measuring competence based on phonological variables without communicative context and with native-speaker realisations as a standard, places Norwegian learners on an *interlanguage* continuum. Considering the role of English in Norway, a de-facto second language, deviations in how people produce different phonemes do not necessarily reveal anything about their actual competence as users of English. Within an ELF paradigm, meaning in English is locally negotiated through pronunciation (Rindal, 2013), and whatever aspects of pronunciation that are not in traditional native-speaker territory can in

fact be locally adapted features that do not necessarily represent a lack of skills in communication.

The lingua franca pronunciation core depicts the pronunciation variables that are important for general intelligibility, but, as pointed out, it is not immediately clear which ones are the most crucial for Norwegian teachers to focus on. The contrasts investigated in Rugesæter (2014) were the distinction between /s/ and /z/, between /ɪə/ and /eə/ (US /ɪr/ and /er/), between /e/ and /æ/ and between /əʊ/ (US /oʊ/) and /aʊ/. The main issue to consider in an ELF perspective is the extent to which any of these variables are potentially problematic for communication. Nilsen & Rugesæter (1999) argue that, for example, the “importance of teaching the difference between /s/ and /z/ cannot be underestimated, because a great many pairs of words are distinguished solely by the use of these two fricatives”. They then conclude “teachers will do their pupils a disservice if they do not insist on the correct pronunciation of the “inflectional -s” (Nilsen & Rugesæter, 1999: 47). However, even though minimal pairs clearly exist, the authors fail to consider the unreality of any conceivable context in which intelligibility would rely on a mere voicing of an s. This illustrates the main distinction between teaching English as a foreign language and teaching English as a lingua franca, the former being based on a native-speaker ideal and the latter being a highly pragmatic approach based on students’ actual needs.

2.4 Attitudes to language

Attitude has long been a central concept in fields such as social psychology, and it has been an integral part of sociolinguistics research ever since it was first introduced by William Labov in 1966. His investigation of the social stratification of speech communities in New York revealed attitudes to local accents and “how language change is influenced by the prestige and stigma afforded by speech communities to specific language features” (Garrett, 2010: 19).

Attitudes have often been defined as a preference or affect for or against a particular entity or psychological object (Thurstone, 1931: 18-20; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993: 1), and they are for the main part considered to be learned (Garrett, 2010: 22). Allport (1954) defined an attitude

as a “learned disposition to think, feel and behave toward a person (or object) in a particular way.” This definition not only entails preference or affect, but also behavior and thought as integral to the concept of attitude. Research has shown that “there is a strong relation between affect and behavior towards the attitude object” (Beinhoff, 2013: 24). Oppenheim (1982), in his more elaborated definition of attitudes, calls it “a construct” and an “inner component of mental life”, in which case they cannot be studied directly. Allport (1935) stated that attitudes therefore “are admitted, through inference”, which is why the question of how to study attitudes is a source of “a great deal of debate” (Garrett, 2010: 20). Issues on the methodology of how to study attitudes, and more specifically how to study attitudes to non-native accents, are outlined in the methodology chapter.

Given that attitudes are related to and influence behaviour, attitudes to language become important for communication (Garrett, 2011). Attitudes constitute a major component of our communicative competence (Hymes, 1971), so not only would language attitudes be expected to influence the reactions we have to people around us, “but also to help us anticipate others’ responses to our own language use and so influence the language choices that we make as we communicate” (Garrett, 2010: 21). Attitudes, then, can be seen not only through input, but also through output. To adjust one’s way of speaking in order to be seen “as friendly, as intelligent, as being a member of a particular community, as dynamic and as the best person for the job” would be a manifestation of language attitudes through output (Garrett, 2010: 21-22).

Investigation of attitudes is therefore tightly connected with ELF perspectives and important for communicative competence, which in turn becomes important for English didactics. Negative attitudes towards an interlocutor may be harmful to communication just as any positive attitudes will be conducive to one’s “willingness to contribute to mutual comprehension” (Beinhoff, 2013). Furthermore, as argued by Beinhoff (2013: 5), “willingness to lead a successful communication is considered to be especially important in ELF-communications where the accents and cultures of the interlocutors can be more varied than in communication amongst NS of English.” Therefore, teachers will do their students a favor by successfully promoting awareness of the existence of language attitudes and the implications thereof.

2.5 Previous research on attitudes towards English pronunciation

2.5.1 Pronunciation choices and attitudes among Norwegian adolescents

Ulrikke Rindal's PhD (2013) on L2 attitudes and choices of pronunciation found that Norwegian adolescents socially evaluate English accents, not only when these "are spoken by native speakers of English, but also when these are appropriated by peers" (Rindal, 2013: III). Her thesis suggests that English is a social practice in Norway, and that one's pronunciation aim becomes closely related to one's identity. Rindal's interviewees illustrate that an RP accent will elicit different attitudes towards a speaker than what a strong Norwegian accent will, and these choices can be motivated by a desire to either approximate or distance oneself from certain social meanings that these accents connote. Given that Norwegian adolescents are so acutely aware of this social reality of accents, Rindal argues that it is not unproblematic to offer one "correct" model of pronunciation, and that it is imperative that teachers "take social aspects into account when developing curricula and instructional design" (Rindal, 2013: 2).

2.5.2 Attitudes to non-native speaker accents

NNS accents usually "reveal the origin and social status of the speaker" (McArthur, 1992). A lot more research has been done on attitudes towards NS accents than towards NNS accents of English, although the latter is of growing interest in the sociolinguistic field. Among the works on NNS accents is Bettina Beinhoff's *Perceiving Identity Through Accent* (2013), which presents research conducted on attitudes towards Greek and German accents of English, evaluated by both native and non-native speakers. The non-native accents were perceived as a lot less prestigious than Southern British English accents in English (Beinhoff, 2011). Accentedness with a lot of L1 influence in the Greek accents was found to be less prestigious than the accent with little L1 influence, whereas strong German accentedness was less significant for the evaluation of status qualities. Two similar studies have been done with regard to Dutch-accented English by Nejari, Gerritsen, van der Haagen & Korzilius (2012) as well as by Hendriks, van Meurs & de Groot (2015). Nejari et al. (2012) investigated native speakers' responses to Dutch accentedness, and the findings indicated that "British pronunciation evoked more status than both Dutch English accents" and that the strong

(referred to as moderate) Dutch accent commanded less affect than the British and the slight Dutch accent. Another Dutch study was done by Hendriks et al. (2012), who investigated non-native speakers' (French, German and Spanish) attitudes to three degrees of Dutch accentedness in English in a matched guise test. The main finding was that there was not much difference in the evaluation between the accents that sounded NS-like and the slight Dutch accents. However, a strong Dutch accent in English was evaluated as less competent than a slight accent. Their findings overall suggested that “non-native listeners appear to be generally tolerant towards foreign-accented English provided the accent is not strong” (Hendriks et al., 2015: 17). In other words, people do not mind a slight or moderate accent, but a very strong accent can be negative.

2.5.3 Attitudes to Norwegian accentedness in English

Interestingly, NNSs seem to have more concerns and are more self-conscious about their own accents than of other NNS accents (Derwing, 2003; McKenzie, 2008). This seems to be the case also in Norway. In an MA thesis by Hordnes (2013), native speakers of English listened to three degrees of Norwegian accentedness in a matched guise test. Pronunciation with few phonological tokens (of L1-transfer) was rated as more prestigious than pronunciation with many phonological tokens. The results showed, however, that accentedness did not play a role in the evaluation of sociability qualities. In other words, accentedness seemed irrelevant for whether a listener wanted to be friends with the speaker. This thesis was written on the background of the immense reaction to the pronunciation of former Nobel Prize committee leader Thorbjørn Jagland: Whenever he has held his speeches, Norwegian media has been “full of comments on Jagland’s ‘awful’ English with comments like ‘Take a hint, Jagland. People were applauding because they thought you were finished with your speech’” (Hordnes, 2013: 31-32). However, while Norwegians mockingly commented on his delivery of it, comments from abroad reportedly never contained negative remarks about his pronunciation, only the content of his message. Hordnes argues that this strongly suggests that it is self-consciousness that is the problem for Norwegian speakers. Norwegian-accented pronunciation of English, as in the case with L1-influenced pronunciation in general, does not cause problems of communication; it primarily elicits the embarrassment of fellow Norwegians.

To the author's knowledge, no studies have yet investigated NNS attitudes to Norwegian-accented English.

3. Methodology

This chapter gives a detailed description of the methodological process that has been undergone during the project. The project has been an exploratory investigation with a mixed-methods approach. Interviews with both an expert panel and a focus group have been conducted. Additionally, a survey with both quantitative and qualitative elements has comprised the main set of data for the thesis. Social reality is complex, and a mix of the qualitative and quantitative approach with interviews provides the researcher with different angles from which to construct a more nuanced, in-depth understanding, which strengthens the validity of the conclusions. The decision to use a mixed-methods approach was a pragmatic decision to meet the research objective (as described in e.g. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), which was to investigate how Norwegian people's pronunciation of English is perceived by different listener groups.

The main listener groups were Norwegians, non-native speakers of English from outside of Scandinavia and native-speakers of English. Due to the scope of the thesis and the fact that the author resides in Norway, there were natural restrictions in the recruitment of particularly the two latter groups. The study therefore uses convenience samples, i.e. groups that are not recruited for representativeness, but because of their accessibility, were thus gathered. The claims made on the basis of the response data from these groups are not pretending to be valid as a complete representation of any population. However, the total number of 98 respondents might be sufficient to identify trends that do not appear as a result of chance, and the results of the survey may serve as strong indicators of trends in the populations that are represented.

Different methods used to investigate language attitudes are presented in section 3.1. The process of developing the stimulus is then presented along with the stimulus text (section 3.2). Then, the phonology of Norwegian-accented English is described, on the basis of previous literature and with an analysis of how it compares to the lingua franca pronunciation core (section 3.3). The next section presents the verification of each stimulus recording through an extensive phonological analysis conducted by the author, as well as assessments of the recordings done by an expert panel (section 3.4). The process of developing the online survey is then presented (section 3.5). In section 3.6, the procedure of the online survey is

described, along with information about the respondents of the survey. This is followed by a description of how the data was handled (section 3.7) and finally the ethical considerations of conducting this study (section 3.8).

Due the large number of methodological steps, questions of validity, representativeness and generalizability in this chapter are tied in where they are the most relevant instead of being treated in one section. The one exception is the validity of the accents, which is presented separately (section 3.4.4).

3.1 Investigating attitudes

Research has shown that people are judged based on how they speak and that just about everyone has views about language. Everything from status to friendliness to group status etc is judged by the way we communicate (Lambert et al., 1960; Labov, 1966; Garrett, 2010). There are both direct and indirect ways of investigating such attitudes. A direct approach implies that people are asked “directly about language evaluation, preference etc.” (Garrett, 2010: 39). An indirect approach, on the other hand, seeks to implicitly elicit attitudes to language by means of “using more subtle, even deceptive, techniques” (Garrett, 2010: 41). There are pros and cons with both approaches. Using the direct method, e.g. asking about someone’s opinion about a speaker’s accent, will elicit conscious responses. This is a fairly uncomplicated way of getting opinions, as it only requires questions and answers, but the answer a researcher gets from a survey can only be verified at face-value because it is a cognitively created statement, i.e. an opinion. An attitude, however, has been pointed out to have more than just a cognitive component. It can be a learned disposition to think, feel or behave, or an affect for or against a psychological object or a person (Thurstone, 1931; Allport, 1954). People’s reported attitudes may thus not give a completely accurate picture of their actual attitudes, for many possible reasons. People are not always conscious of their own attitudes, and even if one is conscious, it may be challenging to formulate an accurate description of them. Self-censorship may also occur if a listener is asked to state an attitude which may not align with his/her certain ideological positions, e.g. if someone is asked about opinions about immigrant accents compared to standardized accents etc (for discussion about anonymity, see section 3.8). Allport (1935: 839) states that attitudes can never be observed

directly - only admitted through inference. In other words, it is not the attitude itself that is observable if the attitude itself is just the inclination to act or behave in a certain way towards something or someone. A method by which a researcher asks a respondent directly about attitudes will therefore not be sufficient to investigate the behavioral component of an attitude because attitudes must be inferred from what people do, not only what they say.

With an indirect method a researcher will not ask directly about attitudes. Self-censorship is less likely to become a problem because participants usually do not get complete information about the aim of the study initially. The indirect method may thus be preferable because, given the behavioral component of attitudes, it has the advantage of enabling the researcher to observe certain attitudes in action. It is through the indirect method that one can study people's actual behavior, as opposed to asking directly and interpreting people's self-report. A potential weakness of the indirect method is that if participants suspect what the survey seeks to elicit, this may alter their responses accordingly. From an ethical standpoint, it should be noted that the indirect method could be somewhat deceitful. Therefore, it is imperative to inform participants about the actual objective immediately after participating as well as explaining why an indirect method has been used (see section 3.8).

3.1.1 Matched guise test

The matched guise test (MGT) was developed by Lambert et al. in the early 1960s, who studied attitudes to language in the French-speaking part of Canada. They recorded auditory stimuli of bilingual speakers both in French and English and presented the recordings to listeners. The listeners evaluated what they thought were many different speakers, and were asked to evaluate them in terms of friendliness, dependability, intelligence and so on. The results were that listeners who were native speakers of English gave more favorable evaluations to English than to French speakers and, surprisingly, that the French-speaking listeners did the same; they did also rate the English speakers more positively, which showed how language may itself directly affect how people are perceived. This matched-guise (MG) methodology was first used for investigating attitudes to different languages and was further developed to investigate attitudes to accents, language varieties and phonological variables. It takes an indirect approach "because the respondents are not aware of exactly what they are rating (e.g. accents)" (Garrett, 2010). The purpose of the MGT is that people listen to stimulus, which could be either a recording from an authentic situation or artificially

constructed, as is the case in this thesis. Listeners then make evaluations of what they think are different people, when in reality the recordings are created by the same speaker who changes the way of speaking between each recording. To prevent listeners from noticing that it is the same voice, the order of the MG speaker recordings needs to be spread out in the stimulus and separated by recordings of other MG speakers and/or buffer speakers (i.e. speakers who are recorded only once).

This thesis will use the term *stimulus speakers* when referring to all speakers who were recorded for the stimulus, and *MG* or *buffer speaker* when one or the other is referred to specifically. In this study, there were three MG speakers - Speakers 1, 2 and 3. They were all native speakers of Norwegian and were recorded using different accents: one RP (Received Pronunciation) accent, one slight Norwegian accent and one strong Norwegian accent. Speakers 1 and 2 recorded two different versions of the strong Norwegian accent, (see section 3.4.1), amounting in a total of four accents each. MG speaker 3's recording of strong Norwegian accent had to be excluded because it was deemed too unconfident by both an expert panel of phoneticians as well as in a focus group interview (see sections 3.4.2 and 3.5.1). Respondents therefore only listened to two recordings of Speaker 3. In addition to the 10 MG recordings, four recordings were included as buffers to reduce the chances of voice recognition of the MGs, and to add validity to the MGT results. The buffer recordings were also recorded by native Norwegian speakers who were asked to read the text with their natural accent, with a neutral to positive level of enthusiasm and at a normal pace. These recordings were categorized by the expert panel (see section 3.4.2) on a scale from native-like to strong Norwegian accent. Even though they primarily functioned as buffer speakers, these four speakers meant that the survey was partially also a verbal guise test (cf. section 3.1.2). In total, there were 14 recordings, 10 of which were presented to all the listeners. The remaining four recordings with the two versions each of the strong accents, created by MG1 and MG2, were split so that listeners would only hear either recordings 11a and 12a or 11b and 12b (see section 3.4.1).

3.1.2 Verbal guise test

The verbal guise test (VGT) is the closest relative of the MGT. The VGT differs from the MGT in that different people are used as stimulus speakers. The VGT is advantageous in that stimulus speakers only use their natural accents, and listeners are therefore presented with

authentic stimuli which is more true to a real-life context. An MGT is more challenging to create and validate because it may not provide a completely authentic version of all the intended accents. After all, it is difficult, even for professionals, to do a perfect imitation of a native-speaker accent or do an authentic Norwegian accent if one usually speaks like a native speaker. However, the VGT does not rule out the possibility that differences in evaluation may be attributed to other things such as voice quality or gender (if both male and female voices are used). The VGT can therefore only give an *indicator* of how accent may affect evaluations. The MGT, on the other hand, isolates the accent variable almost completely because voice quality will be the same - it is the same speaker. If pace, level of enthusiasm and quality of recording are made sure to be similar, systematic differences in evaluations of the MG recordings will almost certainly be attributed to the accents themselves.

3.2 Developing the stimulus

A stimulus text was created in order to gather a selection of typical features of (Standard Eastern) Norwegian-influenced accentedness in English (Nilsen & Rugesæter, 2008; Rugesæter, 2014; Bird, 2005). Several linguistic variables (instead of one specific), were investigated in this survey because the project is exploratory and seeks to investigate how the Norwegian accent is perceived generally. The recorded text could not be too long because that would increase the risk of listener fatigue, and this made it impossible to amply represent all the typical characteristics of Norwegian-accented pronunciation. However, it was designed to encapsulate the most predominant features, and in sufficient numbers to clearly distinguish different degrees of accentedness.

It is helpful to have a somewhat plausible cover story to present to the listeners; the text was therefore written as an introduction to an under-construction *talking website* (see Hendriks, van Meurs & de Groot, 2015) of a fictitious hostel that was soon opening up in Oslo. The respondents were told that their assessment of the speakers would help the hostel choose the person that best matched their desired marketing profile. This placed the stimulus in the context of travelling, in which the presence of a Norwegian accent would be meaningful. The text was based on real segments of descriptions from a handful of actual hostel websites. The following stimulus text was constructed for the study:

This is Viking Hostel and welcome to our new website! We are a modern hostel, located in the middle of Oslo. Here, we can offer you private rooms with laundry services, bar, kitchen, luggage lockers, parking and a 24-hour reception, where you can ask us anything. We also have free WiFi, coffee and tea and a basic breakfast. The hostel lies in the busy city center, but in our quiet and charming backyard you can relax with a beer, away from the city crowd.

3.2.1 Recording the MG and buffer stimuli

The matched guise recordings initially intended to adhere to phonetic transcriptions written in advance. These transcriptions were artificially made to include a certain amount of phonological tokens that could determine the degree of accentedness, and to assist the MG speakers in producing these different degrees of accentedness. However, this approach led to the recordings sounding unnatural and stifled, and the approach was therefore changed because the buffer recordings ended up serving as models for the final MG recordings.

In order to gather a set of buffer recordings, 20 people in total were asked to read the stimulus text aloud, with their own accent of English and with a natural and positive tone at a normal pace. There were both academic scholars and friends/acquaintances of the author participating in the process. As this process went on, it became apparent that the aggregate trends of Norwegian accentedness of which these recordings gave an overview would be suitable as models for finalizing the MG recordings. The buffer speakers were after all the authentic speakers that the MG speakers would intend to emulate. Transcriptions were no longer needed to create the final MG recordings because the buffers helped serve as models. Instead, the MG stimuli were recorded by reading the text freely with the general intention of emulating the intended degree of accentedness, which could be analyzed and verified after the fact.

3.3 The phonology of Norwegian-accented English

The following section will give an overview of the phonological components that are represented in the stimulus text, based on phonetics materials for Norwegian teachers and

students of English (Bird, 2005; Nilsen, 1989; Nilsen, Rugesæter & Daae, 1999; Nilsen & Rugesæter, 2008). These materials often describe how the pronunciation of Norwegian learners might deviate from Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA), and these standard English accents are also used as reference accents in this study. Additionally, the process of recording 20 people as buffer speakers comprised a set of data of its own; the aggregate of all the buffer recordings created an overview of the actual manifestation of people's different accents in this specific context, e.g. how a strong accent showed up in two different ways, by intonation or phonological tokens. Claims about Norwegian people's pronunciation will thus be based on both the literature and on the empirical observations of phonological features among the speakers recorded. Finally, it will be outlined how Norwegian-accented English fits with the lingua franca core (Jenkins, 2000).

3.3.1 Phonological features

Consonants

Lenis fricatives

There are no lenis (voiced) fricatives in Norwegian, and /v, ð, z, ʒ/ are potentially problematic to imitate for speakers with Norwegian as L1 (Bird, 2005: 79):

- The dental fricative /ð/ is represented in the stimulus text in the words *this*, *the* and *with*. It could often be replaced with a /d/, which is its closest equivalent in Norwegian.
- The alveolar fricative /z/ is represented in the words *is*, *Oslo*, *rooms*, *services*, *lockers*, *lies* and *busy*. The lenis /z/ is often replaced by the fortis (voiceless) /s/ by Norwegians (Nilsen & Rugesæter, 2008), and this is the most frequent phonological token in the recordings (cf. figure 1).
- The labiodental fricative /v/ is represented in the words *viking*, *of* and *private*. Since /v/ is not a phoneme in Norwegian, many Norwegians will realise it as a labiodental approximant /ʋ/. Because of the non-distinction in Norwegian pronunciation between the letters *w* and *v*, some Norwegians may even replace /v/ with the open approximant /w/.

- The letter *w* may also be confused the other way around, i.e. with the letter *v*, which could lead to a replacement of /w/ with the Norwegian /v/ in words such as *welcome*, *we*, *website*, *wifi* and *away*.

Fortis fricative

- The fortis fricative /θ/ does not exist in Norwegian phonology. Its closest equivalent in Norwegian is /t/, and the strongest Norwegian accents (based on the observation of the stimulus speakers) use /t/ in its place.

Vowels

Different English vowels vary in patterned ways between accents, and it is useful to use lexical sets to describe these patterns, represented by keywords. These keywords, such as BATH, MOUTH and LOT stand “for a large number of words which behave the same way in respect of the incidence of vowels in different accents” (Wells, 1998: 120). Wells’ keywords are used here to illustrate, in contrast to standard varieties, how the same systematic patterns are manifested among Norwegian speakers of English.

Stressed vs unstressed vowels

Some grammatical words change their pronunciation when they occur in unstressed positions, such as *of*, *our* and *can* in the stimulus text. Norwegians often use a stressed pronunciation for unstressed words (Nilsen, 1989). GOOSE and STRUT words, such as *you* and *but*, that are erroneously stressed by the stimulus speakers are not counted in this category (in the phonological analysis of the speakers, cf. table 3.1) because they are included as tokens in the /u:/ or /ʊ/ category.

Monophthongs

- The back vowels /u:/ or /ʊ/ (for weak forms), represented in GOOSE words, e.g. *rooms*, *to* and *you*, are often confused with the Norwegian vowel /u:/. This is a front vowel and is therefore quite different from its seeming equivalents in English. The confusion seems to be due to Norwegian spelling and that the Norwegian letter *u* does not correspond with the phonetic symbol /u/ (Nilsen & Rugesæter, 1999: 82), which rather corresponds with the Norwegian letter *o*.

- The STRUT words have an open-mid back unrounded /ʌ/ in most standard varieties of English. When stressed and with the spelling *ou* or *u*, these words are often pronounced as a close-mid front rounded /ø/ by Norwegians e.g. in the words *but*, *us* and *luggage* (Nilsen & Rugesæter, 1997). This is possibly the most problematic vowel for Norwegian learners (Nilsen & Rugesæter, 1999: 78).
- NURSE words are pronounced with the low-mid central unrounded vowel /ɜ:/ and are also sometimes substituted with /ø/ (Nilsen & Rugesæter, 1999: 78). The word *service* is represented in the text, but the category had to be excluded because it proved too hard to accurately identify whether /ø/ or /ɜ:/ had been pronounced (see further discussion in section 3.3.1.1).

Diphthongs

- English diphthongs are generally very different from those in Norwegian (Bird, 2005: 84). Some Norwegians find it difficult to differentiate the distribution of the back-closing RP vowel /əʊ/ (/oʊ/ for GA) and /aʊ/, which features in both. For example, MOUTH words are sometimes pronounced with /oʊ/ by Norwegians, which is a deviation from both RP and GA. The MOUTH words are *crowd* and *hour*, which have the same pronunciation in RP and GA, but for which some Norwegians use /oʊ/. The explanation for this confusion in pronunciation is likely because of the spelling, which does not correspond with pronunciation of words such as *show*, *grow*, *though*. As for GOAT words all the stimulus speakers except the ones with RP, use the back closing diphthong /oʊ/, but these words are not counted as phonological tokens for Norwegian accentedness, but identified as a means of distinguishing between RP and GA features in the speakers' accents.

- An add-on to this point is the dynamic of this diphthong in stressed vs unstressed positions. The word *our* occurs twice in unstressed positions and is therefore pronounced /ɑ:/ in RP and /ɑ:r/ in GA. The stimulus speakers sometimes pronounce it as a stressed syllable and use /aʊ/ instead. When both erroneously stressed *and* pronounced with /oʊ/, this is counted as two phonological tokens, one in each category.

- NEAR and SQUARE words have the centring diphthongs /ɪə/ and /eə/ in RP and /ɪər/ and /eər/ in GA. As Both Bird (2005: 84) and Nilsen & Rugesæter (1999: 92) point out, it is the

case with the MOUTH and GOAT words as with NEAR and SQUARE words, that confusion is caused by different spellings, as in *near* and *here*; *bear* and *there*. NEAR words seem to be more susceptible to being pronounced as SQUARE words than the other way around. The /ɪə/ /eə/ distinction is featured by two words in the stimulus: *here* and *beer*. These are strictly speaking not diphthongs in GA, but the pattern of the /i/ becoming /e/ still applies.

Not included in the stimulus

Since the stimulus text had to be of limited length, there were contrasts between English and Norwegian phonology that were not given priority because they are not generally pointed out in the literature as problematic. The lenis affricate /dʒ/ does not exist in Norwegian, and was therefore not included as a category. Another contrast is the alveolar approximant /r/, which does not exist in Standard Eastern Norwegian (it exists as an alveolar tap or trill). However, it is not problematic because it is pronounced accurately in even the strongest Norwegian accent recordings pronounce it accurately.

3.3.1.1 The lingua franca core (LFC) in relation to Norwegian

The LFC (cf. section 2.3.1) establishes that an accurate pronunciation of all consonants except /ð, θ/ are important for communication. The consonants that can be problematic for Norwegians are the lenis fricatives, but it is voicing that primarily causes the trouble because the lenis (voiced) fricatives in English all have their fortis (unvoiced) equivalents in Norwegian. It is therefore a relatively minimal distinction that separates the phonemes, which makes it not immediately obvious that this will actually cause problems of intelligibility. On the contrary, a substitution of /l/ with /r/, which is stereotypical among many Asian speaker groups, in words such as *lack*, *last* and *lonely*, makes for a drastically different pronunciation from any native-speaker standard, which clearly is not the case when it only comes down to voicing. However, the distinction between /w/ and /v/ is different because these are indeed two completely separate phonemes which could potentially cause problems of intelligibility. It is not to the author's knowledge if this phenomenon is also common for English speakers outside of Scandinavia, but it would seem likely, as the letter *w* is associated with /v/ or /ʋ/ in many other languages as well (e.g. in German). Intelligibility problems would in that case, in theory, be more likely with native-speaker listeners more so than with non-native speaker listeners, who may be already more familiar with the sounds /v/ or /ʋ/ representing the letter *w* or the letter *v* being confused with the phoneme /w/.

In terms of vowels, it is consistency that is emphasized in the LFC. The quality of the vowel itself is not the crucial point, as long as it is consistent. The one exception to this rule is the vowel in NURSE words, which is the open-mid central unrounded /ɜ:/. This vowel needs to be accurate according to the LFC core (Jenkins, 2000). As stated above, it is common for Norwegians to substitute /ɜ:/ with /ø/, but this proved to be too hard to identify in the pronunciation of *services*. The fact that these sounds were challenging to distinguish in a phonological analysis situation could indicate that it is not the “Norwegian version” of /ɜ:/ that leads to intelligibility problems.

The other main points of the LFC are that consonant clusters must be preserved (e.g. the /r/ in *product*), that vowel length should be preserved (as in *ship and sheep*) and that the placement of nuclear stress needs to be appropriate. These points have not been pointed out in the literature as problematic for Norwegians; nor have they appeared in the recordings.

3.3.2 Allophonic variation

Very revealing of a non-native speaker accent is allophonic variation, i.e. differences in the pronunciation of the same phonemes. Allophone is a subcategory of phoneme, and even though the right phoneme is pronounced (and not exchanged with another existing phoneme), pronunciation may still differ considerably from native-speaker speech. Allophonic variation was not counted as phonological tokens. Initial attempts of counting every single instance proved too exhaustive and not fruitful; it was instead categorized by degree. It should be noted that degree of allophonic variation tended to correlate strongly with the amount of phonological tokens; the more phonological tokens in a recording, the stronger the allophonic variation became. Therefore, these two are not entirely two separate categories, but they are treated separately in the stimulus analyses and in this chapter.

Even though there are many allophonic contrasts between Norwegian and English, only the aspects that are the most predominant in the stimulus recordings are outlined here:

- English /t, d, n/ are apico-alveolar, meaning that “the tongue tip (or apex) forms the closure against the alveolar ridge” (Bird, 2005: 80). In Norwegian, however, it is generally the tongue blade (or lamina) that is “touching the alveolar ridge and/or the teeth”, which gets transferred to the pronunciation of English.

- Aspiration, which is a burst of breath accompanying a consonant, differs from Norwegian to English, which is especially apparent with /t/ before a vowel. A strong Norwegian accent will tend to have little to no aspiration in a word such as *tea*, whereas in GA and RP (particularly), the aspiration is strong.
- As well as differing places of articulation, English /t/ and /d/ also differ in manners of articulation. Even though this is strictly speaking not a contrast between Norwegian and English phonology, the flapping of /t, d/ could rather be used to distinguish a GA-aimed pronunciation from an RP-aimed pronunciation. Several words in the stimulus text accentuate this distinction, such as *center*, *middle* and *modern*.

3.3.3 Intonation

Because of the wide variety of intonation patterns within the Norwegian dialects, this study limits itself to the general intonation pattern of standard Eastern Norwegian, which is mainly characterized by the fall-rise pattern in affirmative sentences (Nilsen & Rugesæter, 1999: 144-150). This is a very characteristic feature in the pronunciation of some Norwegian speakers of English, but as with the strong correlation between many phonological tokens and degree of allophonic variation, a strong Norwegian intonation is not necessarily combined with a strong phonological (i.e. many phonological tokens) pronunciation. There are also different degrees of intonation in that, even though rise-fall and fall-rise patterns cannot be used at the same time and are mutually exclusive, certainly one pattern could be used after the other. There are also nuances in the intonation pattern when it comes to pitch range, emphaticness and so on. However, the intonation analysis conducted for this project was limited to the general fall-rise/rise-fall distinction

3.3.4 Britishness, Americanness or “the neutral accent”

A simple way of determining degree of accentedness is by use of a one-dimensional continuum, that is, if one only takes into account a single model of native-like pronunciation. However, given the wide range of native-speaker (NS) accents, a one-dimensional model fails to consider that Norwegian adolescents usually have access to both standard British and American English varieties as target accents (Rindal & Piercy, 2013: 211). L1-influenced

accents thus differ significantly, not only in degree, but also in adherence to different native-speaker standards.

There is also a middle ground between the two main target accents, which is referred to as a “neutral accent”. Although there is, from a (socio)linguistic point of view, no such thing as a neutral accent, a large minority of Norwegian adolescents in Rindal & Piercy’s study (2013) report this as their accent target. Their study shows that “neutral aimers position themselves in between in the traditional BrE/AmE dichotomy” (Rindal & Piercy, 2013: 223). Although accent target is not investigated in this thesis, many of the stimulus speakers systematically combine certain American and British phonemes and position themselves, consciously or unconsciously, in the “neutral” accent territory. The main markers of the GA/RP dimension in this study are the distinction between LOT, GOAT and BATH words as well as non-prevocalic rhoticity (the pronunciation of /r/ before consonants and at the end of words) and the flapping of intervocalic /t, d/.

3.4 Verifying the stimulus recordings

In a matched guise experiment, the MG speakers usually record the stimulus in an accent that is not theirs, which raises what is referred to as the “*mimicking-authenticity question*” (Garrett, 2010: 58). The accuracy of the accent renderings may be reduced because it is challenging for a speaker to produce significantly different ways of speaking in a way that authentically represents the accent. Therefore, the stimuli had to go through a scrutinizing process in order to verify that they are valid representations of the degrees of accentedness that exist among Norwegian speakers of English. The materials underwent detailed phonological analysis from the author (section 3.4.1) as well as verification and characterization from an expert panel (section 3.4.2). The experts’ accent verdicts were analyzed and compared with the phonological analysis of the recordings. Additionally, their verdicts were compared with a rating of accent strength done by all of the participants (listeners) of the study (section 3.4.3). Conclusive remarks about the validity of the accents are presented in section 3.4.4.

3.4.1 Phonological analysis

Analyzing the recordings meant counting phonological tokens, assessing intonation pattern and degree of allophonic variation, and determining adherence to either the RP or GA standard. All the recordings were roughly analyzed underway, and some were weeded out early, i.e. before the expert panel meeting, for reasons of voice quality, wrong level of enthusiasm etc. The phonological analysis below is more detailed and provides a general overview of the degree of accentedness. The main focus was still the general features of the accent. *Figure 1* and the subsequent descriptions are the analyses of all the 14 recordings used in the survey (S = speaker; buf = buffer; sli = slight; pho = strong phonology; int = strong intonation; mod = moderate Norwegian accent).

Table 3.1 Count of phonological tokens. R = (stimulus) resampling; buf = buffer; sli = slight; pho = strong phonology; int = strong intonation; mod = moderate Norwegian accent.

	R1 MG1 sli.	R2 MG3 RP	R3 buf. pho	R4 buf sli.	R5 MG2 sli.	R6 MG1 RP	R7 buf int.	R8 MG2 RP	R9 MG3 mod.	R10 buf sli.	R11a MG1 int.	R12a MG2 int.	R11b MG1 pho.	R12b MG2 pho.
/ð/ realised as /d/			4									1	2	1
/θ/ realised as /t/			1										2	2
Non- voicing of <i>s</i>	7		9	5	5	4	5	2	6	7	5	6	6	7
<i>V</i> realised as /w/ or /v/			2	1									2	1
<i>W</i> realised as /v/ or /v/			6						1				4	5
/ʊ/ or /u:/ realised as /ɪ:/			2						2		2		2	3
/ʌ/ or /ɜ:/ realised as /ø/			2	2	1					1		1	2	2
/aʊ/ realised as /oʊ/													4	1
/ɪə/ (/ɪr/) realised as /eə/ (/er/)									1	2			1	1
Stressed weak forms			2					1		1	1		2	1
Total	7	0	30	8	7	4	5	3	10	11	8	8	27	24

The MG speakers

MG speaker 1 (S1, S6 and S11a/b in the figure above. These will be referred to as recording #1, #6, #11a/b and so on) is a 33-year-old female university phonetician who normally uses an RP-like accent when speaking English. She has a pleasant, bright voice.

- Recording #1 (slight Norwegian accent): 7 phonological tokens; mostly rise-fall intonation; mostly American phonemes, e.g. /æ/ in BATH words and long /ɑ:/ in *Oslo*, but short /ɒ/ in other LOT words such as *lockers*, *coffee* and *hostel*; GA-like allophonic variation with flapping of /t/; very little L1 influence in general.
- Recording #6 (RP): 4 phonological tokens; rise-fall intonation; some L1 influenced allophonic variation, e.g. no post-consonantal aspiration in *tea*; RP phonemes.
- Recording #11a (strong intonation): 8 phonological tokens; fall-rise intonation; partially L1 influenced allophonic variation, e.g. nasal release in *kitchen*, no aspiration in *tea*, but flapping of /t/ in *city*; RP vowels in LOT and BATH words, but non-prevocalic rhoticity as in GA.
- Recording #11b (strong phonology): 27 phonological tokens; rise-fall and fall-rise intonation combined; L1 influenced allophonic variation, e.g. Norwegian place of articulation of /d, t, n/ in *modern*, *city* and *center*; non-prevocalic rhoticity as in GA and RP vowels in LOT words.

MG speaker 2 (#5, 8, 12a/b) is the author himself, a 27-year-old male who normally uses a GA-like accent when speaking English, although with a lot of experience with speaking other accents, such as RP and Australian.

- Recording #5 (slight Norwegian accent): 7 phonological tokens; mostly rise-fall intonation; slight L1-influenced allophonic variation, most notably in the place of articulation of /t/ in *website*, *city*, *twentyfour* and no aspiration in *tea*; mix of GA and RP phonology, e.g. short /ɒ/ in *coffee* and *Oslo* (RP), /oʊ/ in *located* and *Oslo*, long /ɑ:/ in *lockers*, /æ/ in *bathrooms* (GA).
- Recording #8 (RP): 3 phonological tokens; rise-fall intonation; no detectable L1-influenced allophonic variation; RP phonemes.
- Recording #12a (strong intonation): 8 phonological tokens; fall-rise intonation; moderately L1-influenced allophonic variation, e.g. nasal release in *kitchen*, place of articulation of /d, t, n/ in *modern*, *website* and *anything*; slightly more towards GA

than RP, e.g. rhoticity, /ou/ in GOAT words and flapping of /t, d/ in *located* and *middle* (GA), but short /ɒ/ in *coffee* and *hostel*.

- Recording #12b (strong phonology): 24 phonological tokens; mostly rise-fall intonation; strong allophonic variation such as nasal release in *kitchen*, place of articulation of /t, d, n/, no aspiration after /t/; rhoticity as in GA, but RP vowels in LOT words.

MG speaker 3 (#2, 9) is a 52-year-old female university professor in phonetics who normally uses an RP-like accent. She has a pleasant voice, but she is not used to speaking with a Norwegian accent, which may have led to her sounding slightly insecure in recording #9. Her strong accent recording had to be excluded, as it sounded too nervous and unconvincing.

- Recording #2 (RP): 0 phonological tokens; rise-fall intonation; no detectable L1-influenced allophonic variation; RP accent.
- Recording #9 (moderate¹ Norwegian accent): 10 phonological tokens; rise-fall and fall-rise intonation combined; very little allophonic variation; mostly RP phonemes, e.g. /əʊ/ in *Oslo*, but non-prevocalic rhoticity as in GA.

Buffer speakers

Buffer speaker 1 (recording #3) is a 25-year-old Norwegian male who speaks with a strong Norwegian accent, albeit with a clear rise-fall intonation pattern. He does not have higher education.

- Recording #3: 30 phonological tokens; rise-fall intonation; strongly L1-influenced allophonic variation with Norwegian place of articulation of /t, d, n/, no /t/ aspiration; GA rhoticity, RP vowels in LOT words.

Buffer speaker 2 (recording #4) is a 33-year-old highly educated female. She has a slight Norwegian accent with relatively little L1 influence and with features from both GA and RP.

¹ Recording #9 by MG3 was initially intended to be a slight accent, which the phonological analysis and the expert panel confirmed. However, the survey listeners rated it as one of the strongest accents, and therefore it will be considered a moderate accent.

- Recording #4: 8 phonological tokens; mostly rise-fall intonation; little allophonic variation, except absence of /t/ aspiration of; particularly dark /l/s and a strong rhoticity gives the accent a strong GA coloring, but it does have short LOT vowels as in RP.

Buffer speaker 3 (recording #7) is a 28-year-old highly educated Norwegian female. She has a pleasant, bright voice and speaks with a strong Norwegian accent in terms of intonation.

- Recording #7: 5 phonological tokens; a clear Norwegian fall-rise intonation; very little allophonic variation absence of /t/ aspiration and some instances of Norwegian place of articulation of /d/, e.g. in *modern*; mostly clear-cut GA phonemes in LOT words, such as long /a:/ in *Oslo*, *coffee* and *modern*, but short /ɒ/ in *hostel*.

Buffer speaker 4 (recording #10) is a 28-year-old Norwegian highly educated male. He speaks with a slight Norwegian accent.

- Recording #10: 11 phonological tokens; mostly rise-fall intonation; Norwegian place of articulation of /t, d/; mostly RP features, such as long /a:/ in BATH words, but GA non-prevocalic rhoticity.

3.4.2 Expert panel

Having initially recorded 20 people as buffer speakers in addition to all the MG speakers, an expert panel was gathered to classify the accents. Some of the buffer recordings were already excluded before the panel meeting because they either had pronunciation influenced from a different L1 or from a different Norwegian accent (the L1 influence had to be limited to Standard Eastern Norwegian because of relatively big differences between the phonology of Norwegian accents). 25 recordings were presented to the expert panel. This panel was comprised of: one female Professor of English phonetics/phonology, one male PhD fellow in English Didactics whose thesis concerned oral assessment in English and one female Postdoctoral fellow in Sociolinguistics whose research concerned prosody among Norwegian learners of other languages.

Before the expert meeting, an A2-sized chart was drawn with a line that represented the continuum for level of accentedness (see figure 2 below). The chart also had a (more or less) diagonal line meeting the main line slightly right of center, providing the extra dimension of

different NS accents, i.e. General American English. This line was not drawn to the far-right end because the stronger the accent the less apparent the GA/RP distinction becomes. At the other end, the closer one gets to native-sounding pronunciation, the more space opens up between the two lines for a neutral accent area - an area where a speaker has very few signs of L1 influence but who does not sound like he/she comes from any particular native-speaker area. This chart was explained to the experts, and with different-colored pens they were asked to place the accent of all the 25 recordings on the continuum. Individual charts were also created (see appendix) for each expert to give the recordings specific number ratings in terms of “phonology” (i.e. phonological tokens), intonation and allophonic variation, on a scale from 1 (NS-like) to 3 (strong Norwegian accent).

Procedure

At the meeting, which was recorded using a Samson Zoom H4n Handy Recorder, the expert panel were initially informed about the matched-guise project design and given instructions on how to fill in the charts. They were, however, not informed which recordings were the MG recordings. This was in order to let them assess each accent independently without any bias. The recordings had the numbers 1 to 25, and the experts used the number of the recording to place the accent on the chart. They also gave each recording a number score (1-3) on their individual charts. As for the allophonic variation, this proved to be challenging to assess in combination with phonology and intonation because the panel only heard each recording once, and it was given up on after a few listens (see appendix).

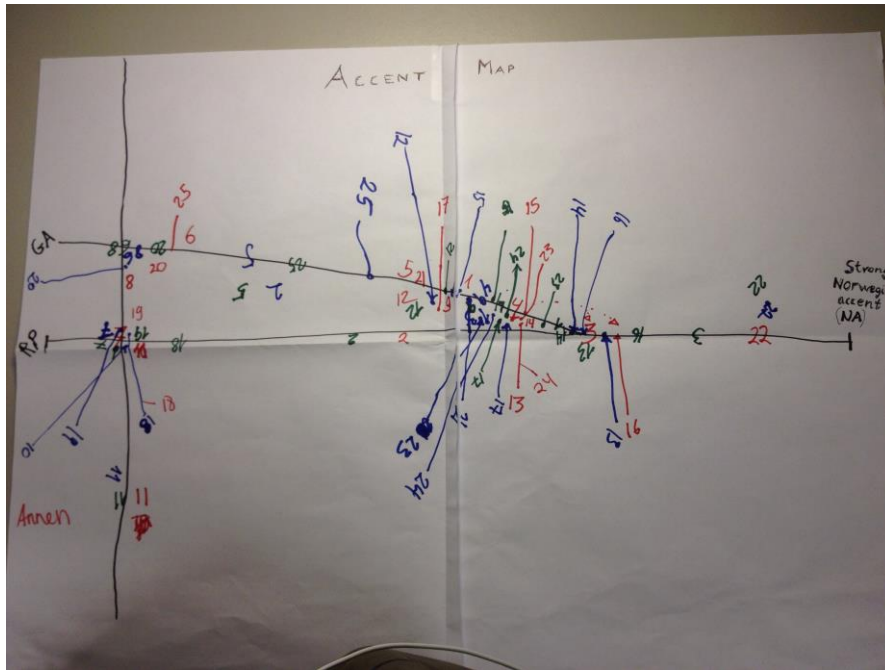


Figure 1 The accent chart created by the expert panel. The numbers seen on this map do not correspond with the final enumeration of the recordings, which are used in the section below.

3.4.3 Analysis and comparison

After the meeting, the final A2 chart was compared with the scores of 1-3 that were given on the experts' individual charts to see if the number rating corresponded with the chart placement. The way this was done was to translate the number scores onto the map itself. A score of 1 translated into the left end (the native-speaker line) of the map, with 2 exactly in the middle and 3 on the right end (strong Norwegian accent line). One of the experts consistently wrote 1+, 1/2, 2-, which was interpreted as 1.25, 1.5 and 1.75 and so on. For example, the average score of recording #8 was 1.23 on the 1-3 scale. This was MG2 RP, which was given the scores of 1+, 1+; 1.1, 1.1; 1.5, 1.2. This did not correspond perfectly because it had been placed slightly closer to the native-speaker line on the map, which means it was presumably somewhere in between, slightly closer to a NS accent than the 1.23 score suggested. The respondents of the online survey were also asked to rate the strength of each accent, which they did on a 6-point likert scale. The results of these ratings, from all 98 participants, were converted from a 1-6 to a 1-3 scale and are included in this section for comparison with the experts' analyses.

The following figures are digital representations of the accent chart and show where the experts placed the different accents on the chart. Additionally, they present the average scores

(1-3) of the ratings by the experts and respondents of the survey. The line above is with numbered marks to provide a visual representation of where the number ratings would be placed on the chart. The native-speaker range is between 1.0 and 1.5, whereas the slight accents are in the 1.5 to 2.0 range and strong accents in the 2.0 to 3.0 range.

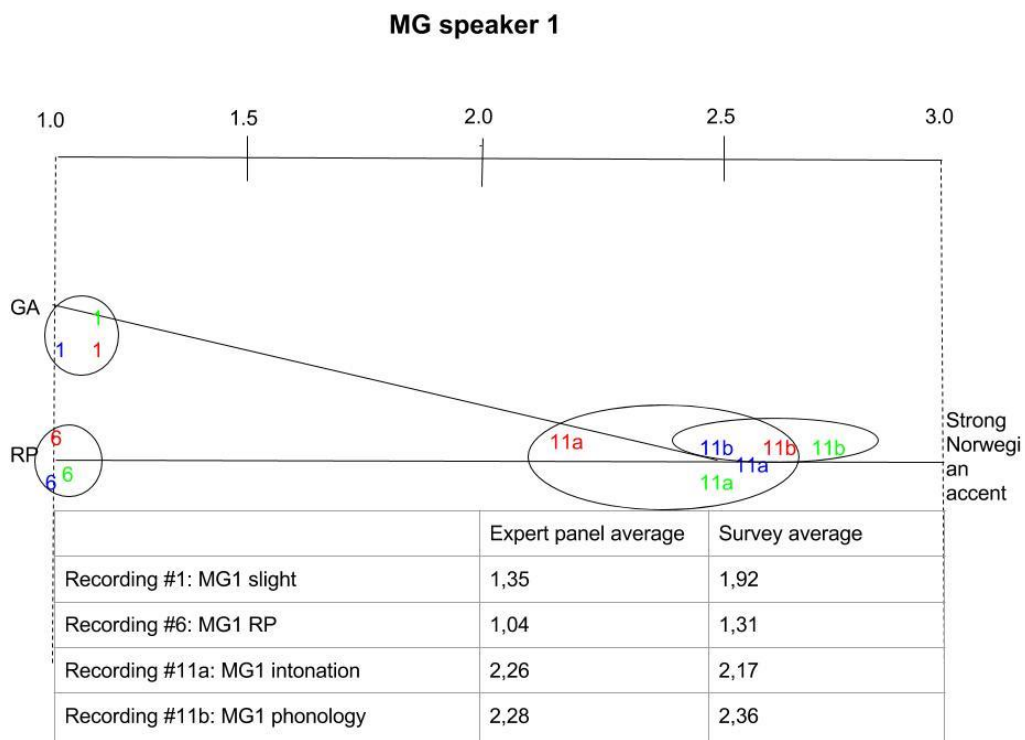


Figure 2 Experts' chart placements and number scores of MG1's recordings.

MG speaker 2

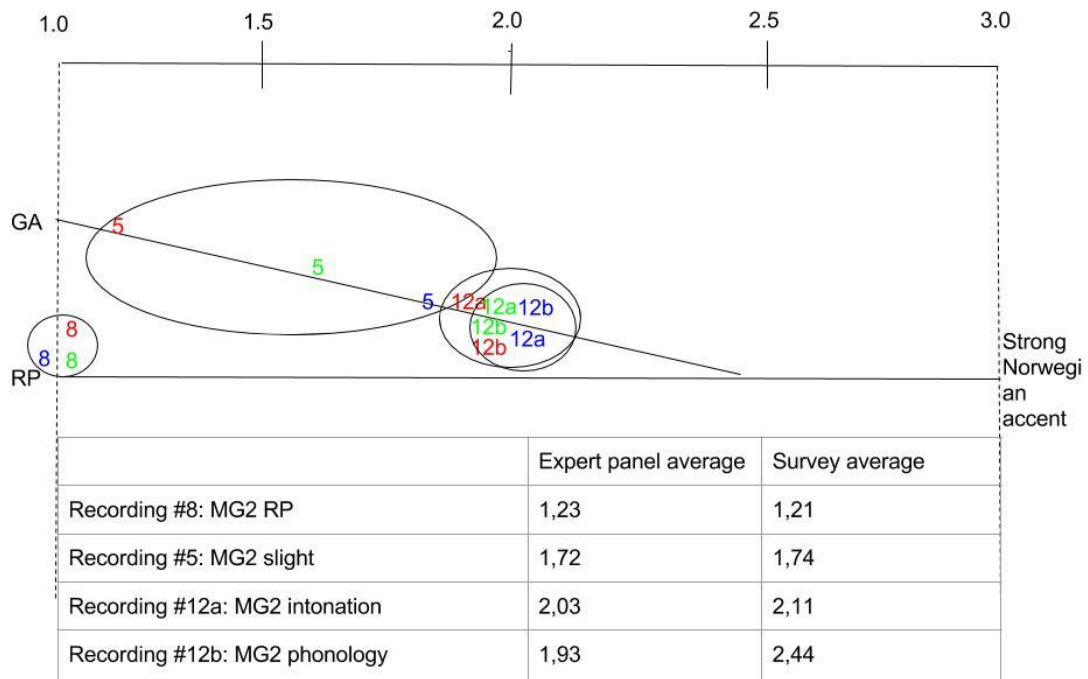


Figure 3 Experts' chart placements and number scores of MG2's recordings.

MG speaker 3

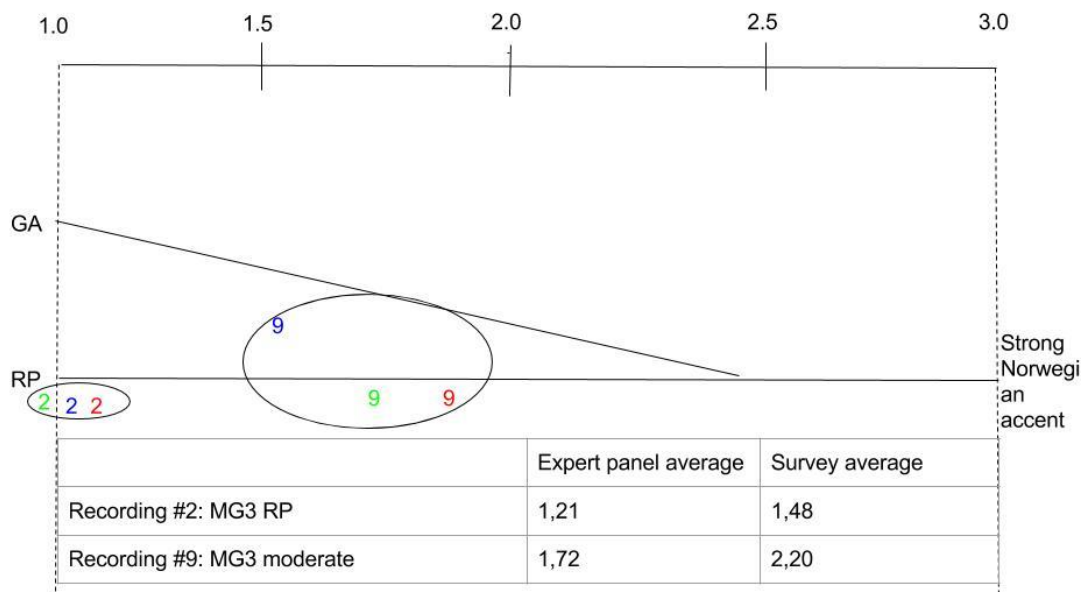


Figure 4 Experts' chart placements and number scores of MG3's recordings.

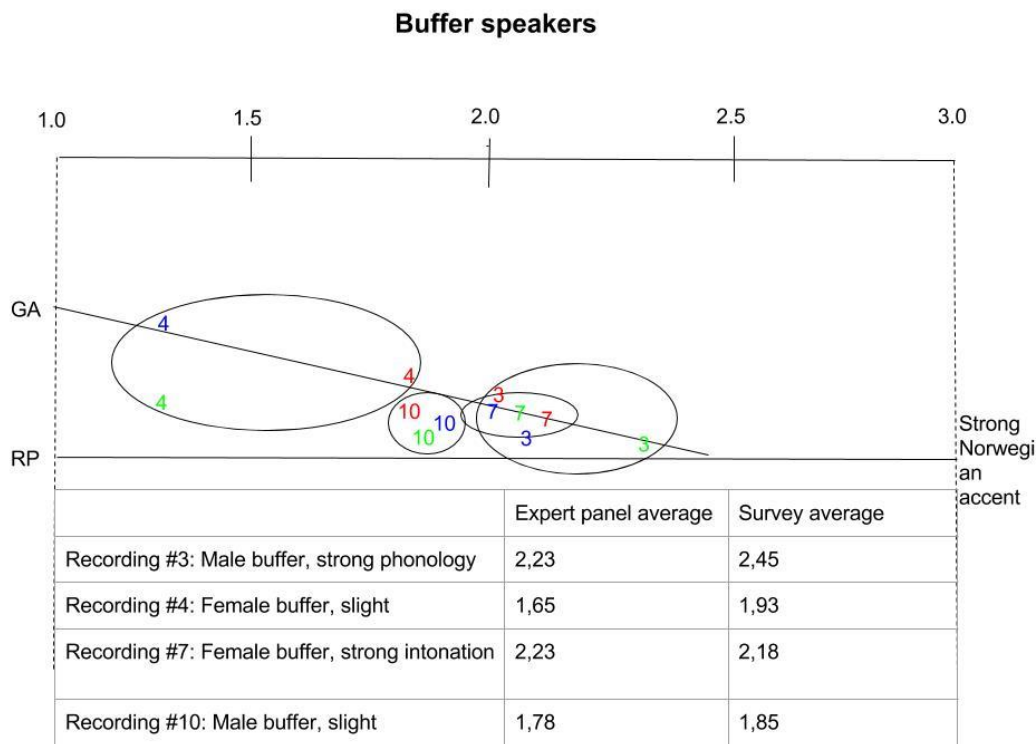


Figure 5 Experts' chart placements and number scores of the buffer recordings.

The figures show that there were mostly consensual ratings of accentedness, but also a few disparate ratings of some of the recordings. Figure 3 shows that MG1 slight was rated as significantly more native-like by the experts than by the respondents of the survey, who rated it as closer to a strong accent (1.92). There was, however, a slight discrepancy in the assessment done by the experts themselves since they had placed it right in GA-speaker territory, but at the same time given it a higher score (1.35) than the placement would suggest. The fact that they all placed it on the left native-speaker line is perhaps because they were in some way influenced by one another and because the recording did have some distinct GA features (see section 3.4.1). The other indicators, i.e. the phonological analysis and the survey average, did not confirm the experts' assessment and the recording thus remains in the slight accent category.

Another disparity is between the survey and expert ratings of MG2 strong phonology, 2.44 and 1.93, respectively, which is just inside the slight accent range. However, the aggregate of the phonological analysis as well as an average score given by the 98 respondents validates it as a strong Norwegian accent. The experts seemed to consistently put equal emphasis on

intonation and phonology, whereas the survey respondents generally evaluated strong phonology accents as much stronger than strong intonation accents (see more in the Results chapter).

As for the recordings of MG3, the experts were presented with one RP recording, one accent that was intended to be slight and one that was strong. Only one version of the strong accent was presented because these recordings were done at an early stage, before the distinction between strong phonology and intonation had arisen. However, the panel invalidated the strong accent recording because it was regarded too insecure and non-convincing. There were thus only two remaining recordings of MG3, an RP version (#2) and an intended slight version (#9). The slight accent recording was given an average of 1.72, which corresponded well with the placement on the chart. However, the survey average evaluation was as high as 2.20, which means that overall it was judged by the participants as, not a slight, but a fairly strong accent. The phonological analysis (section 3.4.1) of this recording showed that it had instances of both rise-fall and fall-rise intonation as well as 10 phonological tokens. It therefore qualified as neither strong intonation, nor strong phonology, nor a slight accent because the respondents very much disagreed with the experts. Instead, it is referred to as a moderate accent because it is a synthesis of the three established categories of Norwegian accentedness.

3.4.4 Validity of the accents

The level of accentedness was verified through thorough phonological analysis, expert assessment and the rating from the 98 survey respondents, and, as one would expect, there were some discrepancies between the assessments of some of the recordings, e.g. the slight accent recording of MG1, the assessment of which ranged from native-speaker-like (by the expert panel) to strong Norwegian accent (by the survey respondents). The same count of phonological tokens (7) for the slight accent recordings of MG1 and MG2, however, suggests that they are in reality similar in accent strength. Having three different, substantial processes by which to characterize the accentedness of the recordings has served as checks and balances and given increased validity to the description of Norwegian-influenced pronunciation of English as represented in the recordings.

3.5 Developing the survey

3.5.1 Focus group interview

Before designing the survey, a focus group was gathered to listen to the 25 recordings. They were gathered through personal contacts and the group was comprised of people from the Netherlands, France, Canada and Poland. They had all resided in Norway for a longer period of time and were thus familiar with Norwegian-accented English. The meeting was recorded using a Samson Zoom H4n Handy Recorder. The focus group was not initially informed about the MG methodology so that they would not make an effort to recognize which recordings were of the same voices. They were not told to concentrate on accent either. Instead, they were given the instruction to freely talk about and describe their impression of every person (stimulus speaker). In that respect, it became a matched-guise interview with the goal of eliciting perceived qualities associated with the speakers, which could then be used in the survey scales. They were on some occasions asked to give their opinion on the accent explicitly, to which they mostly made remarks about the fall-rise intonation (or as they referred to it as “it goes up at the end of the sentence” or “upward inflection”). One participant also consistently pointed out the “Norwegianness” of the nasal release from /ʃ/ to /n/ in the words *kitchen* and *reception* in many of the recordings.

The focus group provided their evaluations of each speaker, often with specific adjectives uttered during the interview. These descriptive adjectives were extracted and added with the pile of adjectives used in the matched-guise tests in Hordnes (2013) and Hendriks et al. (2015). The most frequent adjectives (i.e. used in two or three of the studies) were given a place in the final survey. The adjectives that came up in the focus group interview were prioritized, except when they were synonymous with any of the adjectives that had already been included, e.g. *authentic*, which “vetoed” the inclusion of *genuine*. Furthermore, any remaining adjectives that would provide further depth to the survey were added. The final adjectives to be included in the online survey were *friendly*, *intelligent*, *cheerful*, *trustworthy*, *well educated*, *humorous*, *ambitious*, *confident*, *professional*, *warm*, *charismatic*, *authentic*, *assertive*, *organized*.

At the end of the focus group interview, the group participants were all asked to describe their experience of using English in Norway when they first arrived. The key excerpts from this discussion are presented in the discussion chapter.

3.5.2 Survey design

The final survey was separated into two parallel surveys, A and B. They consisted of 12 recordings each, of which the first 10 were identical (see table 3.2 below). Recordings 11 and 12 were strong Norwegian accents. In survey A, the accents were strong in terms of intonation, and in survey B in terms of phonological tokens. The surveys were split into two parallel ones because there were too many recordings for one survey. Simply adding two more MG recordings would require more buffer recordings to avoid the MG speakers being recognized, and the total number of 12 in one survey was already on the limit in terms of risking listener fatigue and low completion rate.

Table 3.1 Order of recordings in the online survey

Survey A	Survey B
1. MG speaker 1, slight	1. --- ---
2. MG speaker 3, RP	2. --- ---
3. Buffer speaker 1, strong phonology	3. --- ---
4. Buffer speaker 2, slight	4. --- ---
5. MG speaker 2, slight	5. --- ---
6. MG speaker 1, RP	6. --- ---
7. Buffer speaker 3, strong intonation	7. --- ---
8. MG speaker 2, RP	8. --- ---
9. MG speaker 3, slight	9. --- ---
10. Buffer speaker 4, slight	10. --- ---
11. MG speaker 1, strong phonology	11. MG speaker 1, strong intonation
12. MG speaker 2, strong phonology	12. MG speaker 2, strong intonation

The order of the recordings made sure that the MG recordings were widely spread out. This would reduce the chances of listeners recognizing the same voices. Using the same order from speaker 1 to 10 in both surveys meant that surveys A and B were identical up to that point. The only changing variable was put at the end in order not to distort the evaluations of the other speakers, which ensured that the data of speakers 1-10 could be analyzed together as one survey. There was thus a distribution of two different URLs in the recruitment process. These were shared more or less the same amount of times to make sure they got the equal amount of respondents.

The survey was operated through the

platform SurveyGizmo. The initial page of the survey introduced the cover story of the fictitious hostel that was opening up soon in Oslo, which was that *Viking Hostel's* under-construction website was to have an in-built welcoming voice and be a talking website. The listeners' opinions were therefore "needed on how these different voices are perceived." In that way, the hostel could "choose the person that best matches their desired marketing profile". It was not presented as finding "the best English accent" because a hostel would not necessarily want a market profile that, say, an RP accent would represent.

The survey then ensued with a new page for each recording, with a total of 16 items related to each recording (including assessment of accent strength and intelligibility). The audio could be manually paused, rewinded and replayed, and the items (in the form of statements to be rated on a Likert scale) could be filled in while the audio was playing in order to ease the amount of time listeners had to spend doing the survey. The formulation of the items was "In my opinion, this person is..." with a 6-point Likert scale with "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" as extreme points for the 14 descriptive adjectives. A 6-point scale was chosen to avoid a "complacency mid-option" where listeners do not have to take a stand (Bijvoet & Fraurud, 2014: 6-7). Two additional items were added on each page with the goal of gauging the perceived intelligibility as well as the perceived level of foreign accentedness of each speaker. While intelligibility is not actually measured, listeners reporting it can serve as an indicator. The additional rating of foreign accentedness would add to the phonological analysis and expert panel verdicts as a means of verifying the strength of the different accents. The design of the survey can be seen in the appendix.

3.6 Respondents and procedure

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how Norwegian-sounding English is perceived, both outside of Scandinavia by native and non-native speakers, and by Norwegian listeners themselves. It was impossible to have a representative sample of listeners from these three groups in this study; therefore, what seemed the most valuable was to recruit a sample in a meaningful context that was also aligned with the context of the stimulus itself. The author thus recruited many of the respondents personally, during a trip through Europe at hostels, trains, cafes etc. Foreign acquaintances and friends were also recruited through private

messages and Facebook walls. No one language group was of particular interest as participants for the study because of the multilingual nature of the hostel travelling context and because of the overarching theme of English as a lingua franca. The majority of people encountered when travelling abroad would have very little to no previous exposure to a Norwegian accent of English. Once abroad, therefore, most people with some proficiency in English would perfectly fit the main sample, i.e. non-Scandinavians whose native language is not English.

Native speakers of other Scandinavian languages did not fit the main sample because Norwegian, Swedish and Danish are mostly mutually intelligible and in that way less relevant in an ELF context. Non-Scandinavians who had lived or were currently living in Norway were not prioritized in the process either, as they would already be accustomed to the Norwegian accent, but some of them did participate. Norwegians were also included as a listener group because the main hypothesis of the project was that Norwegian-accented English is more of a problem when it is Norwegians who are listening, and the sample was chosen to investigate any differences between Norwegian listeners and foreign listeners. The non-Norwegian listeners were not exclusively non-native speakers of English; a group of native speakers was also included, but this was the group that was given the least priority of the three in terms of recruitment, and the sample was therefore became relatively small. All these variables of linguistic background and so on were managed on the last page of the survey with biographical data, which also included gender, age, home country, mother tongue, education and profession. The nationalities represented in the listener groups are as follows:

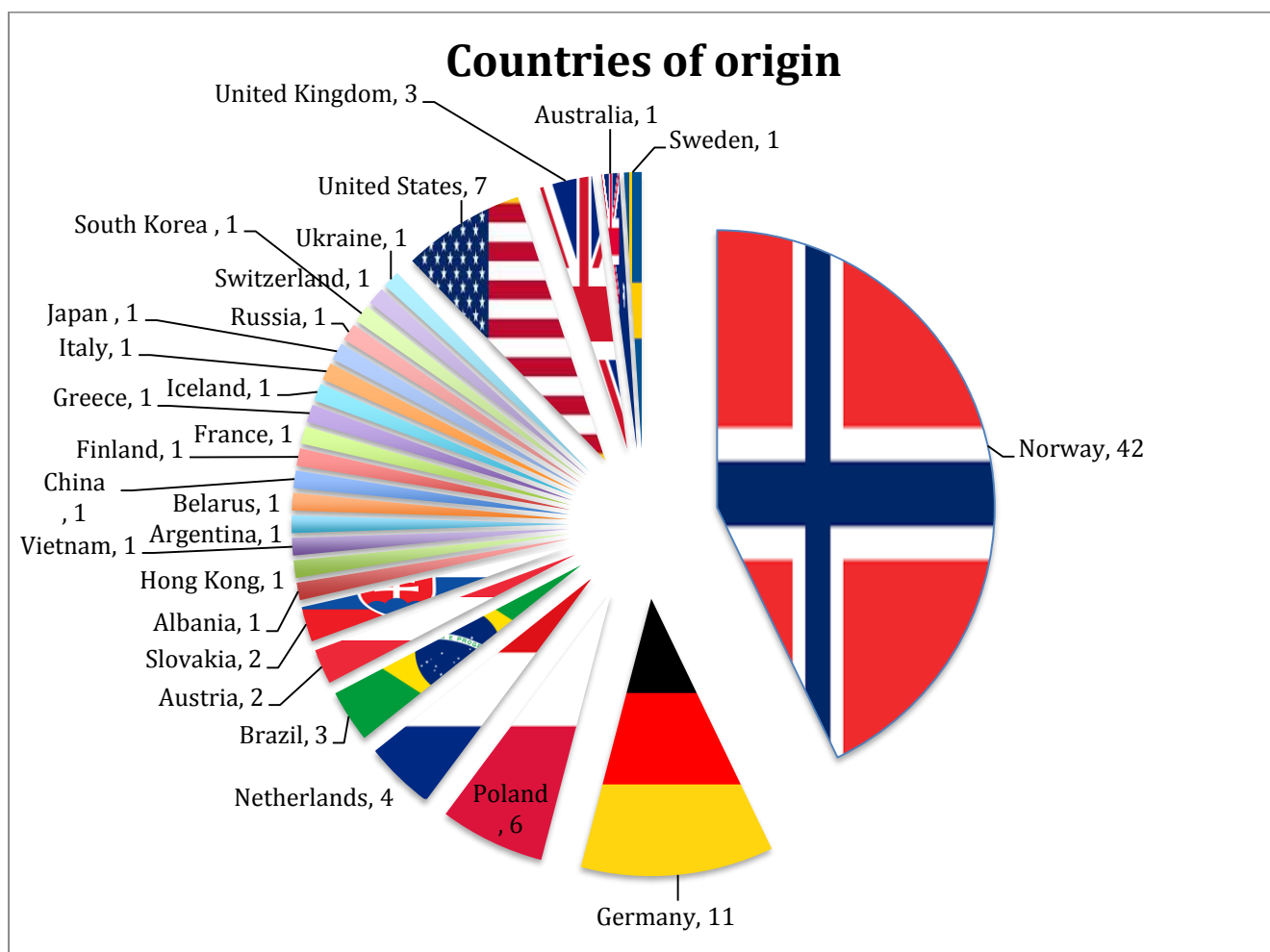


Figure 6 Countries of origin for the 98 respondents (answer to the survey question “In which country were you born/raised?”)

The pie chart in figure 8 above shows all the listeners’ countries of origin. The Norwegian listeners comprised 43 % (42) of the respondents, whereas the NS listeners comprised 11 % (11). Excluding the one Swedish respondent, the remaining 45 % (44) of the respondents comprised the NNS listeners, with Germans as the biggest group. A couple of the non-native respondents were filtered out because they had lived in Norway. Since the survey was split into two parallel ones (A and B), the listeners only heard either recordings 11a and 12a (strong intonation) or recordings 11b and 12b (strong phonology). The distribution of respondents to survey A and B among the Norwegian listeners was 30 for survey A and 17 for survey B. Among the NNSs the distribution was 20 for survey A and 17 for survey B. The NS group had 5 respondents in survey A and 6 respondents in survey B. Due to the small sample size of the NS group, the strongest emphasis will be put on the results from the Norwegian and NNS listener groups.

The profession table (appendix 1) shows that the majority of the respondents are students and educators, and the education table (appendix 1) shows that most respondents are either highly educated or currently studying. It is the natural consequence of a student choosing a convenience sample that the sample becomes skewed with an over-representation of fairly young and highly educated people. Any conclusions drawn on the basis of the response data are therefore less valid for other demographical groups.

3.7 Handling the data

When the survey had been open for a little over a month, enough responses were gathered to start the analysis. Data was then extracted through the data export function on the SurveyGizmo platform and organized in Microsoft Excel. Score averages, correlation numbers and graphs and charts were created with the in-built Excel functions. Since there were two parallel surveys, named *A: Viking Hostel* and *B: Viking Hostel*, the response data had to be put together manually before calculating averages for recordings 1-10, whereas the averages for recordings 11a/b and 12a/b had to be calculated separately. This procedure was done for each listener group as well as for all the 98 respondents combined.

A principal component analysis (PCA) of the data was run in order to find out how the descriptive adjectives grouped together and in order to control for the possibility of a correlation that is too strong (see Results chapter for the results from the PCA). This would mean that adjectives measure the same phenomenon and that they consist of redundant information, as would e.g. *genuine* and *authentic*. A PCA would show negative correlation numbers for antonymous adjectives, e.g. *friendly* and *arrogant*, whereas e.g. *intelligent* are both positive evaluations, but do not necessarily fall into the same category (see Results chapter). This analysis was run through the SPSS statistics program by plotting the average score that each adjective was given for all 14 stimulus recordings, e.g. the average of *friendly* for recording #1, recording #2, recording #3 and so on. Data from all 98 respondents was used in the PCA, and the analysis was generated by the SPSS factor analysis function. The *varimax* option was chosen to display the *rotated solution*, which generated the PCA.

3.8 Ethical considerations

This project has been approved by the Norwegian Data Protection Official for Research (NSD), and the data has been handled according to their guidelines. A matched-guise test implies that the researcher does not inform the respondents completely about the aim of the study. This raises certain ethical concerns that need to be well addressed. In the recruitment process, people were generally requested to respond to the survey without being provided with information about what the survey was about exactly. There was no false information, but a lack thereof. If they had been told up front that the project had to do with pronunciation, some of the effects of the matched-guise could have gone moot because it relies on the idea that people do not know that it is accent that they are really rating. Some of the respondents did, however, ask beforehand about what the project was about. These questions were usually answered with an up-front confession that not all information could be provided before taking the survey, which without exceptions was met with acceptance. It is essential that respondents are made aware of the true nature of the survey immediately after having completed it. Respondents in this survey were lead directly to a final page with a description of how the survey was designed and why, as well as a statement of appreciation for their participating. Finally, it was emphasized that participation in the study could be retreated at any point, and the author's email address was provided.

Additionally, anonymity is another important ethical aspect. Participating in the study provides the researcher with some sensitive information, for example attitudes around what could be sensitive matters such as ideology and culture. All information about respondents gathered through response data is deleted at the end of the project. Any possible effects of the publishing of the study must also be taken into consideration. It is important that a research project does not have a possibility of inflicting harm on anyone. The stigmatizing of certain people for having a certain pronunciation of English is, for the record, the opposite of what this thesis attempts to achieve.

4. Results

This chapter will present the main findings of the study. The respondents' evaluations of the stimulus speakers in the online survey comprise the main set of data for the thesis, and these results have been categorized in two main components, sociability and status (section 4.1). The main findings are that Norwegian listeners have more negative attitudes than non-Norwegians towards Norwegian accentedness and that this is especially the case for perception of status (section 4.3). Norwegian listeners also rate Norwegian influence on English accent as stronger than do non-Norwegian listeners (section 4.4). Strong intonation accents, in particular, are much more harshly received by Norwegian listeners, but for sociability ratings, accent mostly seems to play a less significant role (section 4.5). Finally, Norwegian listeners rate the strong accents as stronger and higher on unintelligibility than do non-Norwegian listeners, but the overall results for intelligibility suggest that even the strongest Norwegian accents are mostly unproblematic. The results regarding accent strength and intelligibility will be presented first in section 4.2, as these will be used for reference for the results in sections 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5.

4.1 Principal component analysis

A principle component analysis of the data was run for the survey responses from all of the 98 listeners together as well as from for the NNS and Norwegian listener groups separately. This was done in order to reveal how the adjectives were grouped together and also to investigate whether there were any differences in how qualities associated with Norwegian-accented English pattern into attitudinal dimensions among Norwegians and non-Norwegians.

The PCA of table 4.1 shows how the respondents' evaluations of stimulus speakers pattern into two

Table 4.1 PCA Principle component analysis of the data from all 98 respondents

Professional	0,865	0,233
Educated	0,851	0,291
Organized	0,849	0,241
Trustworthy	0,828	0,38
Intelligent	0,815	0,365
Confident	0,804	0,401
Assertive	0,79	0,277
Humorous	0,102	0,899
Cheerful	0,354	0,867
Warm	0,374	0,837
Charismatic	0,471	0,761
Friendly	0,462	0,698
Ambitious	0,637	0,601
Authentic	0,617	0,454

main components. The first component shows how a certain group of adjectives group together: *professional, educated, organized, trustworthy, intelligent, confident, assertive*. The second component is comprised of: *humorous, cheerful, warm, charismatic* and *friendly*, whereas *ambitious* and *authentic* fell into neither category. In language attitude studies, one usually finds evaluations that can be separated into two dimensions: status (sometimes referred to as prestige) and sociability (sometimes referred to as affect) (Garrett, 2010). The PCA run here shows a similar picture, revealing attitudinal dimensions that reflect those established by previous research. These two components, which will be referred to as *status* and *sociability*, will comprise the basis for the data analysis in this chapter.

The adjective *ambitious* was not included in any of the categories because the PCA showed only a partial association with both components (0,637 and 0,601). It could either have been included in both categories or excluded from both. *Authentic* was also excluded because it was only partially associated with the status adjectives (0,617 - which was already less than *ambitious*), and not associated with the sociability adjectives (0,454).

4.2 Assessment of accent strength and intelligibility

The listeners were asked to rate the accent strength of each speaker on a scale from 1 to 6, but as mentioned in section 3.4.3, this scale was converted for comparison with the scales used by the expert panel. The figure below shows how the question/statement was worded.

3. This person has a strong foreign accent.

1 No, it is not strong at all 2 3 4 5 6 Yes, it is very strong



Figure 4.1 Accentness assessment

When the scale is converted, 3 then means a strong foreign (Norwegian) accent and close to 1 means not a strong accent, i.e. native-like accent. The figure below shows the accent strength of all the speakers as evaluated by all the listener groups, individually and combined, and as evaluated by the expert panel. What will be referred to as the survey average is the average of

all the respondents of the online survey, i.e. not the experts, but the average accentedness evaluation from the Norwegian, NNS and NS listeners.

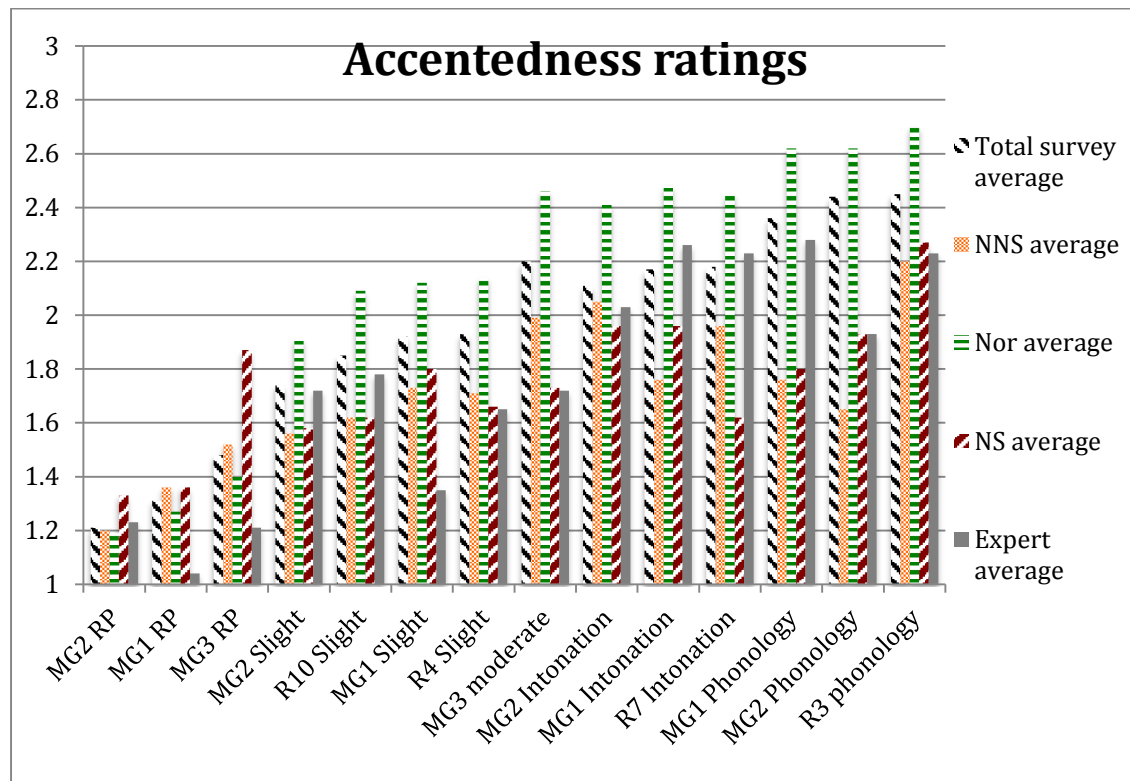


Figure 4.2 Assessments of accent strength by the expert panel and from all listener groups, individually and combined.

The chart shows that “Nor average” is consistently higher than the other columns except for the RP recordings, meaning that the Norwegian listeners evaluate Norwegian accents of English as stronger than non-Norwegian listeners. The six columns farthest to the right show three phonology recordings and three intonation recordings. These show that Norwegian listeners regard strong phonological influence as the strongest accents, whereas the expert panel rate strong intonation accents as slightly stronger than strong phonology accents. The NS and NNS evaluations of the Norwegian-accented recordings are mostly in correspondence.

The intelligibility of the speakers is not actually measured in the survey, but perceived intelligibility is reported by all listeners. The figures below show how the question was worded and the results among all listener groups.

2. This person is easy to understand.

1 Strongly agree 2 3 4 5 6 Strongly disagree



Figure 4.3 Intelligibility assessment scale

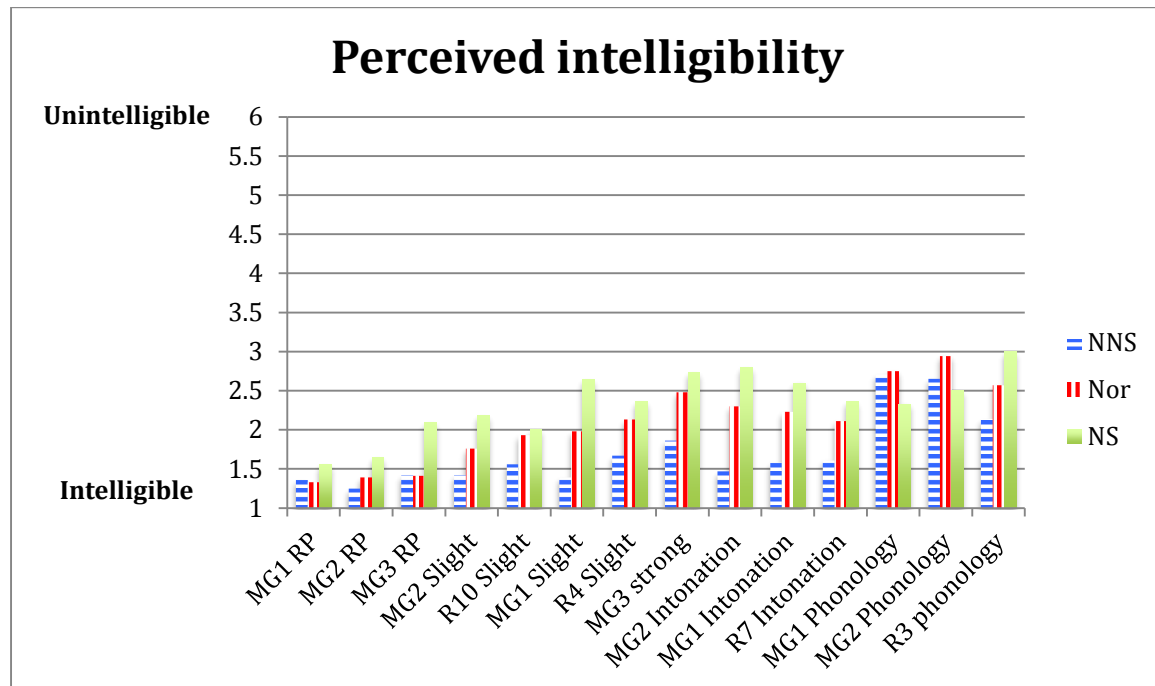


Figure 4.4 Perceived intelligibility reported by all listener groups.

Figure 4.4 shows that the native-speaker listeners consistently report the strongest difficulty with intelligibility, whereas the NNS listeners, by a substantial margin, report the least difficulty. The phonology recordings of MG1 and MG2 are the exception to this, as these are, by the NNSs, rated in the 2.5 range, as opposed to the intonation recordings which clock in at around 1.5. The distinction in intelligibility between intonation and phonology is more equal between the Norwegians and NSs. The overall intelligibility ratings are fairly low among all listeners, with no recordings being rated higher than the middle point of 3.5, in contrast to the accentedness ratings in figure 4.2 where many of the accents were rated beyond the middle point of 2.0. Even the strongest Norwegian accents of the survey are therefore not particularly hard to understand according to the listeners' reports.

4.3 Norwegian listeners have more negative attitudes

Non-Norwegian listeners rate Norwegian accentedness higher for status qualities than Norwegian listeners. In other words, Norwegians take a more negative view towards their own L1-influenced variety of English and consistently evaluate it more negatively for status qualities than NNSs and NSs. Figure 4.5 below presents the evaluation of status in relation to perception of accent strength for each of the three listener groups, so all 14 recordings are plotted three times, with three geometrical figures each. The 1-6 scale (y axis) is the average score of all the adjectives in the status group. 1 refers to "1 strongly agree" (positive) and 6 refers to "6 strongly disagree" (negative) on the evaluation scale. The 1-3 scale (x axis) is the survey average (see section 4.1.3).

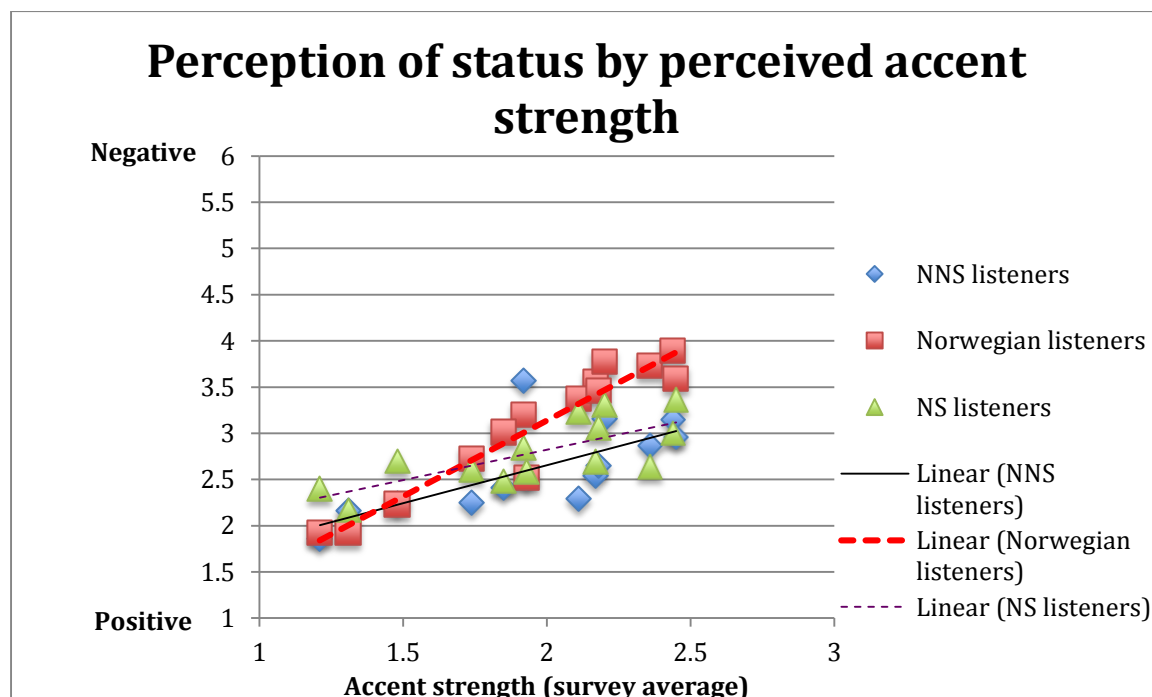


Figure 4.5 Perception of status by accent strength among NNS listeners, Norwegian listeners and NS listeners

Figure 4.5 shows considerable correlation between Norwegian accentedness and perceived status, especially among Norwegian listeners. The bottom left corner shows that NS-like recordings are rated relatively similarly by all listener groups, albeit with slightly less status by the native speakers themselves. As accent becomes stronger, attitudes towards speakers become more negative for status qualities. The red line shows the most considerable

correlation between status and accent strength for Norwegian listeners, whereas this trend is somewhat weaker among the two other listener groups.

The figure below shows the Norwegian listeners' evaluation of status for all the speakers.

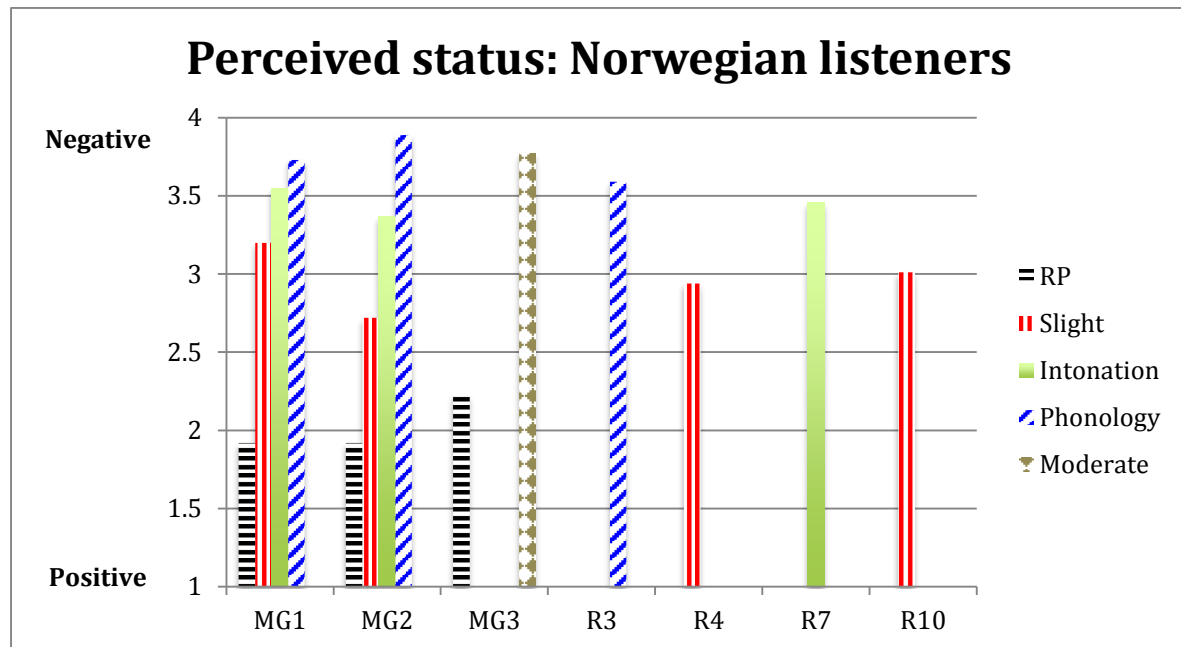


Figure 4.6 Perceived status among Norwegian listeners

Figure 4.6 shows that, when it is Norwegians who are listening, a native-like or RP-like accent is significantly more positively evaluated for status qualities than strong *and* slight Norwegian accents. Slight accents are also consistently rated more positively than strong accents. As for the strong accents, the Norwegian listeners have slightly more positive attitudes to those with a strong intonation than those with a strong phonology.

A comparison to the attitudes in the figures below shows how Norwegian-influenced accentedness is more positively evaluated by non-Norwegian listeners.

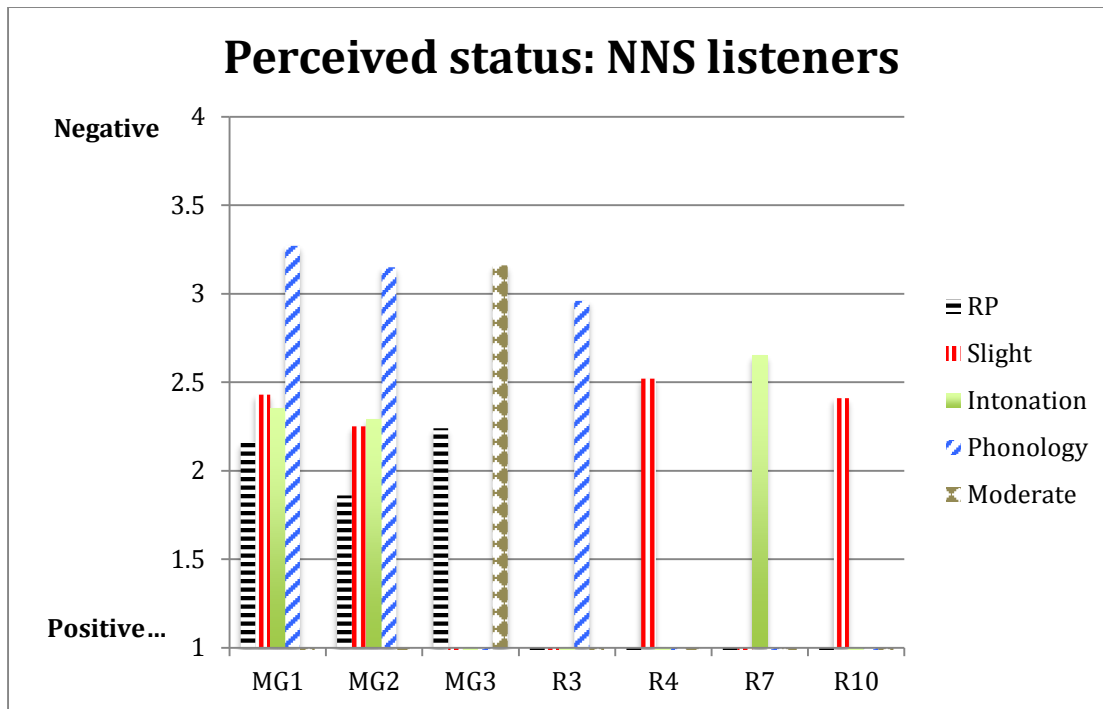


Figure 4.7 Perceived status among NNS listeners

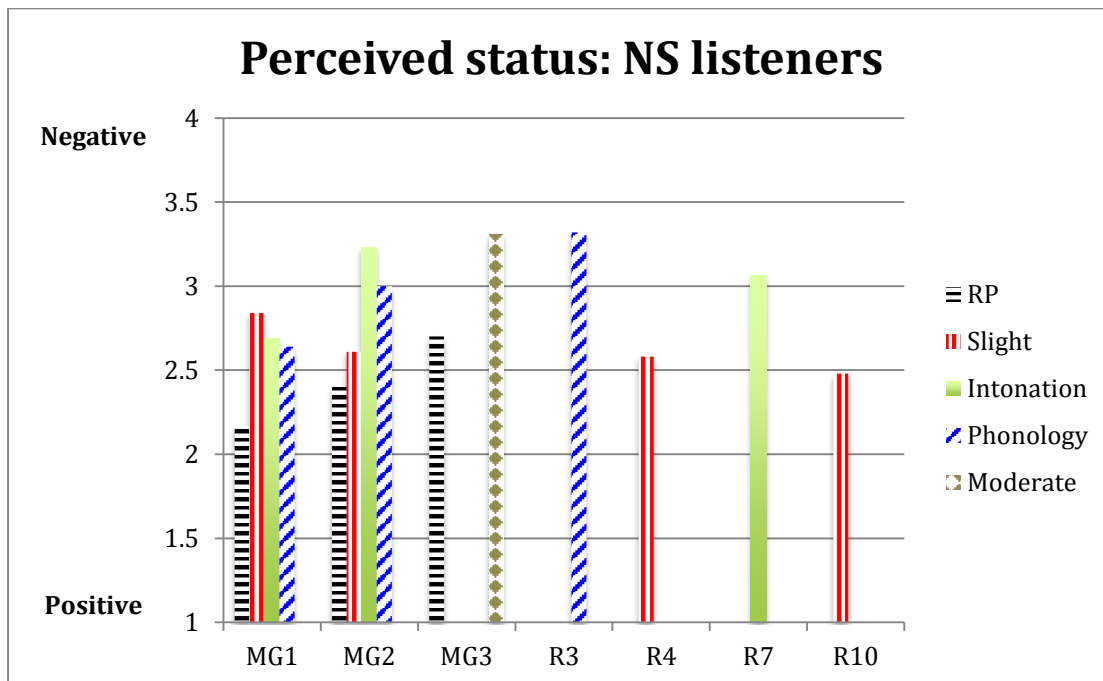


Figure 4.8 Perceived status among NS listeners

It is the trend among both among NNSs and NSs of English that Norwegian-accented English is less problematic for evaluations of status qualities. The figures above show that non-Norwegian listeners rate the strong accents mostly in the 2.3-3.0 range, whereas most of the

strong accents are placed in the 3.0-3.7 range by the Norwegian listeners. At the other end, it is the Norwegians who give slightly more positive evaluations of the RP-like accents.

In figure 4.7, the tendency between slight accents and strong intonation accents, is that they are in fact rated with the same positive attitudes overall by the NNS listeners. For both MG1 and MG2, the NNSs give more or less the same evaluations of the slight and the strong intonation recordings, whereas the strong phonology recordings are more negatively evaluated. This tendency is consistent with the result among the buffer speakers – recording #7 as compared to recording #4 and recording #10 - who also get more or less equally similar evaluations from the NNSs. The evaluations of phonology and intonation from the NSs do not correspond, however, with the NNSs. Figure 4.8 below shows that for the MG speakers phonology is in fact slightly more positively rated overall than intonation, but this is not the case between the buffers, as R7 is slightly more positively evaluated than R3 on the status dimension. Overall, the Norwegian listeners give more negative evaluations the stronger the accent becomes, whereas the differences in evaluation are smaller for the non-Norwegian listeners.

4.4 Positive attitudes towards Norwegian intonation

As previously shown in the evaluations of status qualities, Norwegian listeners react more negatively to a strong Norwegian intonation than non-Norwegians, and particularly the NNS group show equally positive attitudes towards a strong Norwegian intonation as to a slight Norwegian accent.

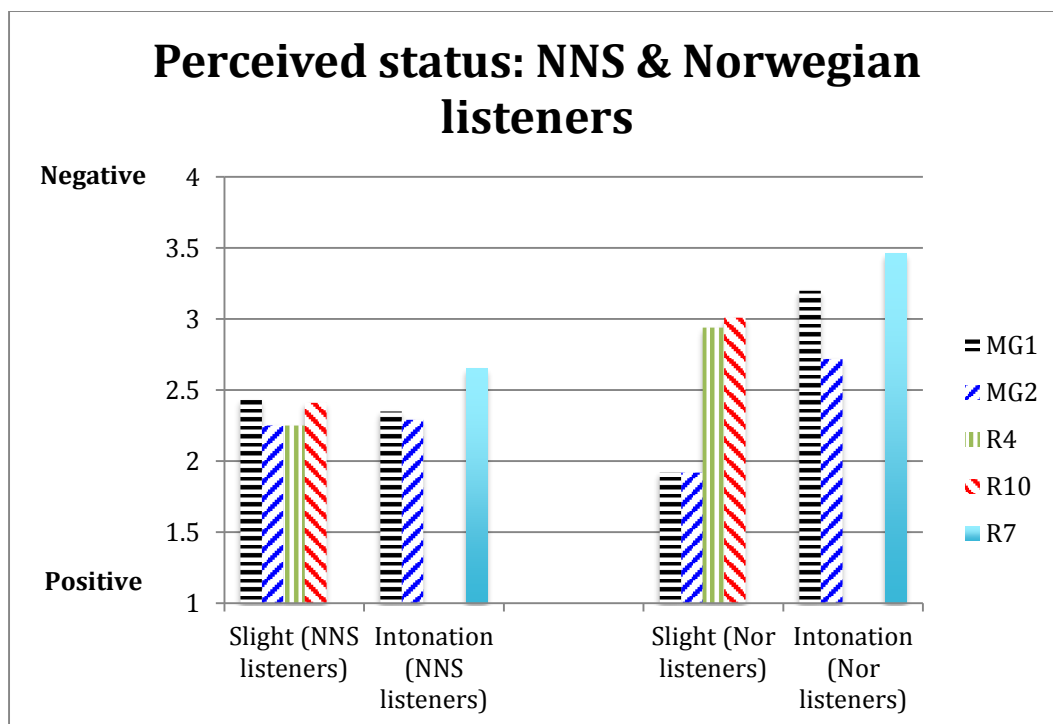


Figure 4.9 Comparison of status evaluations of slight accents and strong intonation accents by NNS and Norwegian listeners

The most notable aspect of this chart is that the MG speakers' slight and intonation recordings are evaluated equally by the NNS group, whereas by the Norwegian listener group, the MGs' slight accent recordings are evaluated much more positively than the intonation recordings. There is some difference, however, in the case of recording 7 (buffer 3), which gets a slightly more negative evaluation by the NNSs, but this difference is amplified among the Norwegian listeners, and for this buffer speaker, there may have been other factors at play than just accent. The results of the MG speakers either way show that, compared to having a slight Norwegian accent, having a strong accent in terms of intonation does not damage perception of status in the ears of non-native speaker listeners.

This non-divergence in evaluation between slight and strong intonation calls for a closer investigation of how accentedness is evaluated by the NNS group as compared to the Norwegian listener group.

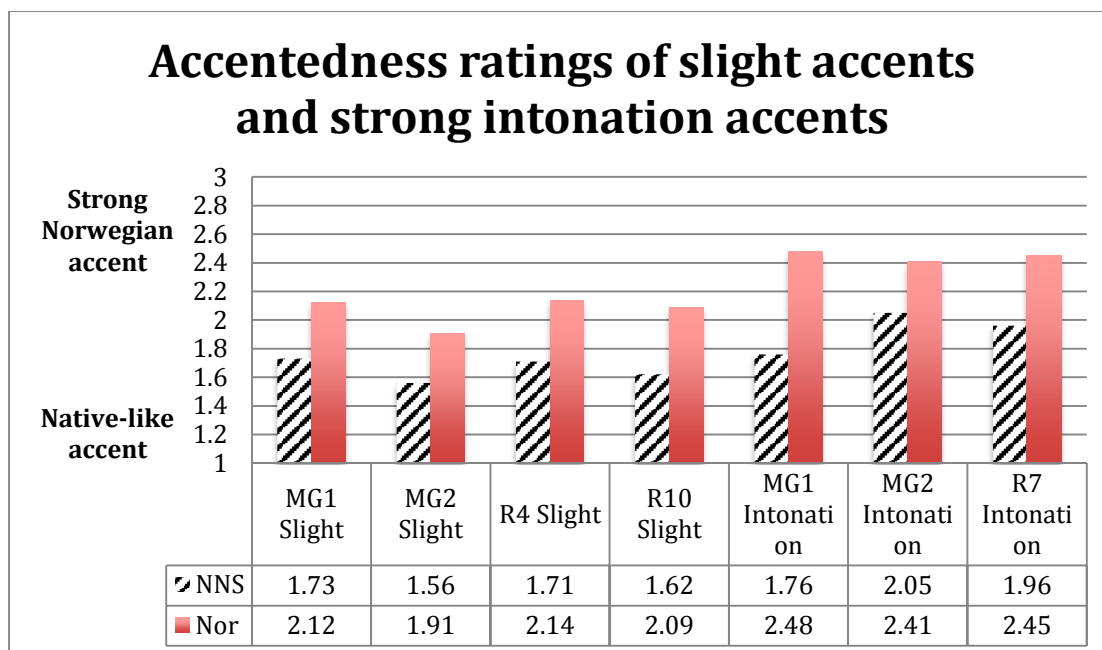


Figure 4.10 Comparison of accentedness ratings given by the non-native speaker listeners and the Norwegian listeners.

Figure 4.10 shows that NNSs regard the strong intonation accents as slightly stronger than slight accents, but the difference is bigger within the Norwegian listener group. Norwegian listeners evaluate the strong intonation accents as very strong (all in the 2.5 range) but the NNSs do not; they are mostly placed within the slight accent range below 2.0. The fact that NNSs' have similar attitudes to the slight accents and strong intonation accents must therefore be seen in light of the fact that the recordings are simply regarded less different in accent strength.

4.5 Sociability

The tendencies in sociability evaluations are very different than evaluations of status qualities. Non-Norwegian listeners have equally positive attitudes to strong Norwegian accents as to native-sounding accents. The figure below shows how sociability evaluations correlate with accent strength for all of the 14 recordings among all listener groups.

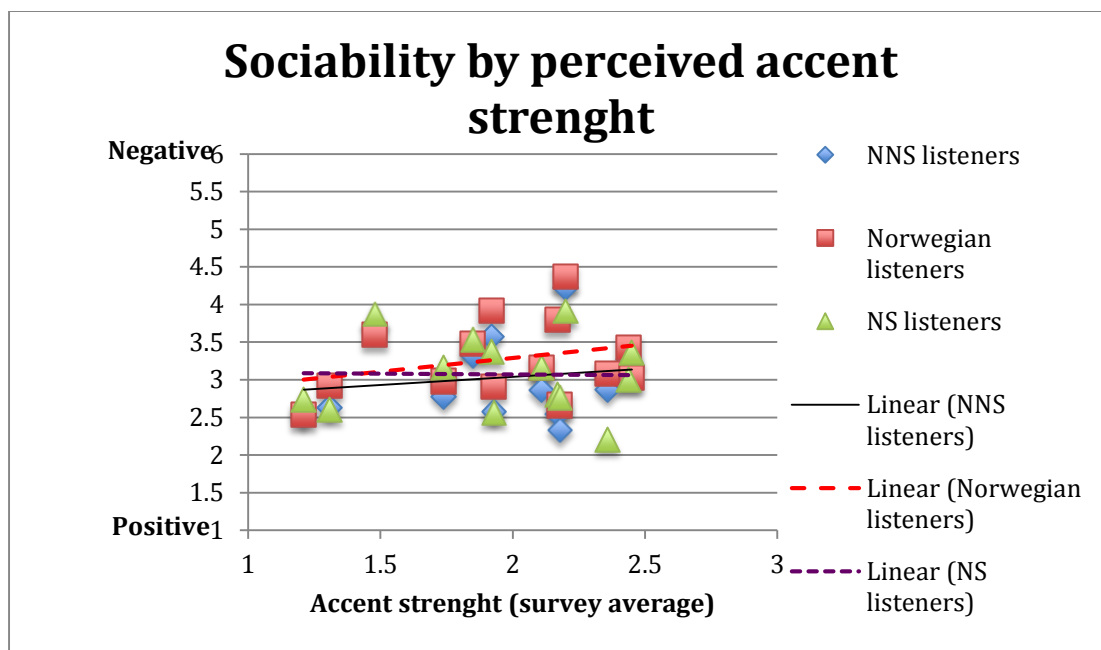


Figure 4.11 Evaluations of sociability correlated with perceived accent strength (survey average)

Figure 4.11 shows evaluations of sociability by all listener groups. Among all listener groups, accentedness is a lot less important for how sociable a person is perceived. The trend lines among the NNS and Norwegian listener groups in this figure are flat, and among the native speaker listener group, it is slightly inverse, which means that the strong accent recordings are overall considered slightly more sociable than less strong accents. It must be emphasized, however, that due to the small sample size, the results of the NS listener group can reveal no more than, at best, a slight indication of what the results from a bigger sample size might have been. The native-like recordings to the left of the chart are rated fairly similarly, but there is a wider distribution of evaluations amongst the strong accent recordings. Some strong accent recordings are rated negatively and some very positively, which suggests that there might have been other factors apart from accent strength that have affected the sociability rating, such as voice quality, gender and so on. These factors are not further investigated in this thesis.

Comparing the response data from all listener groups, one finds fairly similar patterns of sociability evaluations between speakers, as shown in the figures below.

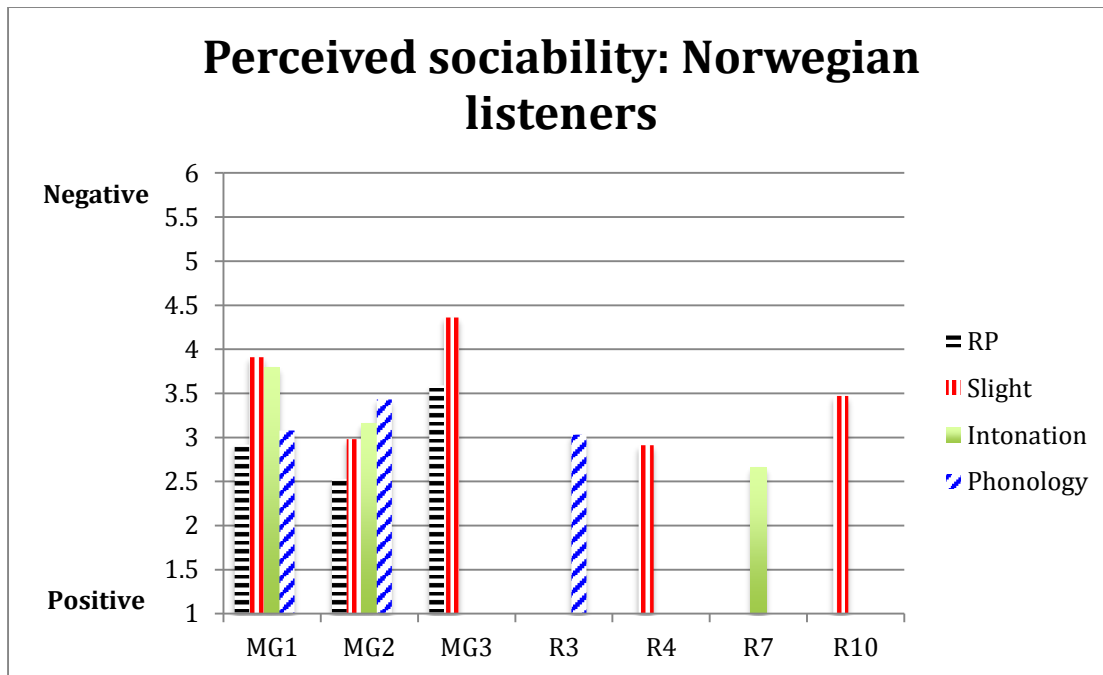


Figure 4.12 Perceived sociability among Norwegian listeners

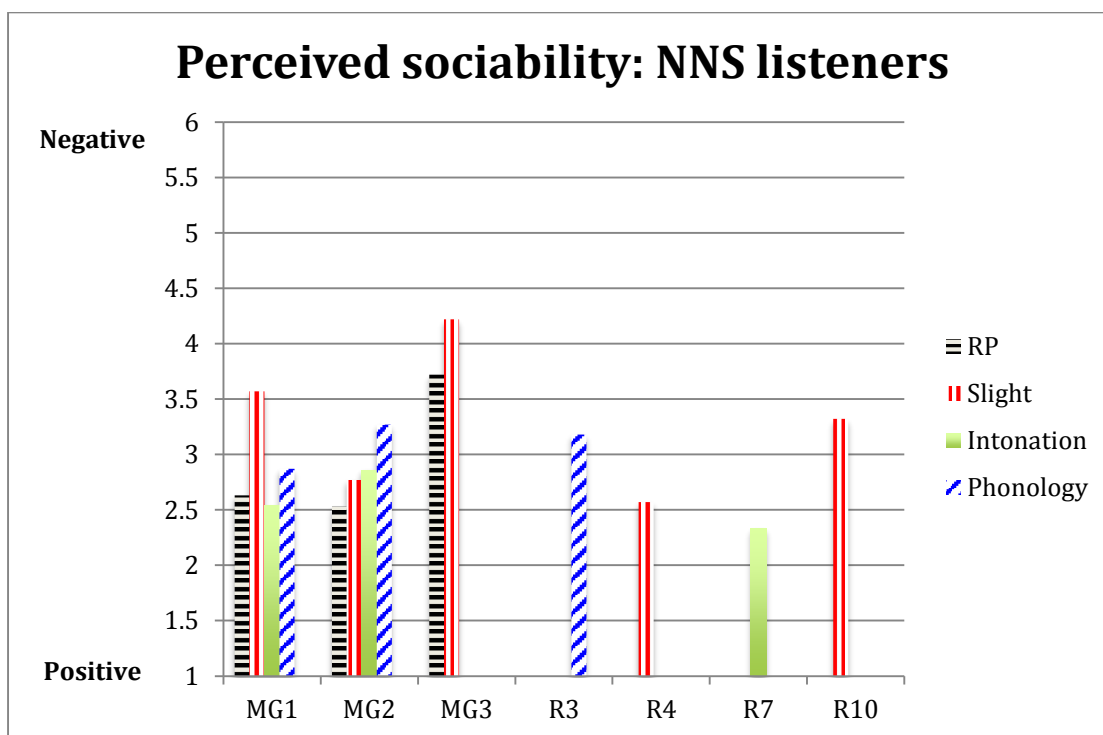


Figure 4.13 Perceived sociability among NNS listeners

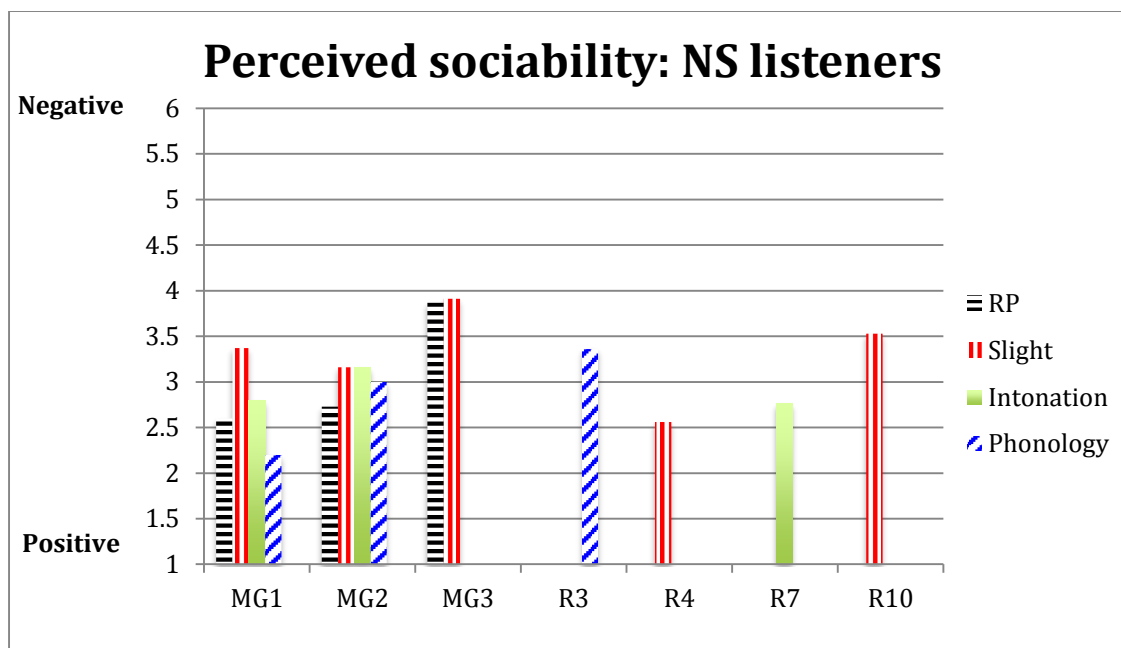


Figure 4.14 Perceived sociability among NS listeners

The figures above show very similar patterns of sociability evaluations among all listener groups. For example, all listener groups rate the slight accent recording of MG1 negatively with regard to sociability, whereas the strong phonology of MG1 is rated very positively in comparison. Figure 4.14 shows that the NS listeners in fact find MG1 more sociable when she speaks with a strong phonology than with any other accent. In the case of MG2, NS listeners also regard the phonology recording as more sociable than the slight and intonation recordings. The only notable difference between the evaluation patterns across accents is that the Norwegian listeners' evaluation of MG1's intonation recording is significantly more negative than the evaluations from the non-Norwegian listeners. The other difference is not in the pattern of evaluations across accents, but rather across listener groups; the Norwegian listener group evaluates almost all speakers more negatively than the other listener groups, except the native-like accents.

This chapter has shown how evaluations of the stimulus speakers pattern into two dimensions, namely status and sociability. The four main results of the online survey are: Norwegian listeners have more negative attitudes towards Norwegian-accented English than non-Norwegian listeners; strong intonation accents are not regarded as strong accents by non-Norwegian listeners and are evaluated equally positively to slight accents on the status dimension; Norwegian accentedness does not affect evaluations of sociability; strong Norwegian accents are perceived as easily intelligible by non-Norwegian listeners.

5. Discussion

In this chapter, the results of the matched-guise experiment will be discussed in light of the theoretical background for the thesis. A particular emphasis will throughout the chapter be put on the educational implications of the research through the perspective of the ELF teaching paradigm. It will be argued for the importance of shifting from an out-dated view of learning English to one that establishes communication as the fundamental principle.

The four main results are discussed in section 5.1. To expand the understanding of the quantitative data, qualitative data, i.e. excerpts from the open commentary fields in the survey and from the focus group interview, will be included in the discussion. The subsequent sections discuss in broader terms how the results of this study may provide a more accurate view of Norwegian students' needs when it comes to pronunciation. As shown by the PCA in section 4.1.2, there are attitudinal patterns associated with Norwegian-accented English, which suggests that different degrees of Norwegian accentedness do in fact affect the attitudes of listeners in ELF contexts. The final section of the chapter argues for the embracing of ELF as a perspective in ELT.

5.1 Attitudes and intelligibility of Norwegian-accented English

The results of the survey show that Norwegian listeners consistently evaluate Norwegian-accented English more negatively than do non-Norwegian listeners. Non-Norwegians have tolerant attitudes towards Norwegian accentedness in general. The results suggest that they do not mind a slight Norwegian accent, but that a very strong accent may disturb listening. However, having a strong Norwegian accent can mean both having a strong fall-rise intonation (strong intonation) and having a high frequency of L1 transfer in the realisation of phonemes (strong phonology). Having a strong Norwegian intonation when speaking English did not elicit negative attitudes in non-Norwegian listeners. It seems that it is the strong Norwegian phonology, when it is very strong, that may have the potential of causing

problems in terms of receiving negative reactions and in some cases causing intelligibility problems (see section 5.4).

Conversely, the tendencies described above are all regarding the status dimension on the attitudinal scale. The sociability dimension, on the other hand, shows no association between accent strength and how sociable a speaker sounds, except only to a certain extent when Norwegians themselves are listening. There is nothing in the survey results that indicates that having a strong Norwegian accent makes a person sound less sociable in the ears of a non-Norwegian listener. The idea that an RP-like pronunciation is slightly more favourably rated on the status dimension and that it does not play a role for sociability is as predicted by the hypothesis of this project (cf. section 1.4).

5.1.1 Attitudes to pronunciation in different contexts

The comments from the survey respondents frequently revolved around the idea that pronunciation is context-based and that an RP accent thus fits differently in different contexts. Some of the comments suggested that different pronunciation choices were either suited or not suited for the purpose in this context. Since the survey was framed as a marketing survey for developing the marketing profile of a hostel, some of the comments were written as direct evaluations of the quality of the recordings from a marketing point of view, as the one below, which is a comment on MG1's RP recording.

“This speaker had a very relaxing and calm voice. She seems simultaneously well educated and inviting with the inflection and accent in her voice. When I hear her speak, I feel as though I am in a luxury stay hostel and I would assume the target market she would be speaking to is well educated and well mannered 21+ year olds.”

This quote is from a native-speaker listener's assessment of MG1's RP recording. By stating that the voice is suited for a luxury hostel for older well-mannered people (presumably, the listener meant a luxury *hotel*), the listener makes a connection between a prestigious context and the traditional RP accent. The comment suggests that the RP accent, in this listener's view, would be even more suitable for the marketing strategy of a luxurious hotel, because a hostel by definition is more casual. The same type of comment was also made for the RP recording of MG2:

“This speaker had a very calming and believable voice. He seemed very confident and sure of what he is doing and speaks as if he is painting a picture in your mind. His voice is quite suitable for those who are opting for a more luxurious stay.”

This comment expresses a very positive attitude towards the speaker. It is not stated that the speaker does not fit in the context of a hostel, but it is explicitly stated that the speaker *is* suited in a luxurious, i.e. prestigious one. It is unclear whether or not this means that the presence of a Norwegian accent, in this listener’s view, *would* be regarded as well suited for the purpose of representing a hostel, and not just a prestigious hotel. A hostel is (arguably by definition) a sociable context, in which one would expect foreign-accented English to be just as welcome as traditional native-speaker (NS) accents because the results show that non-Norwegian listeners have more or less equally positive attitudes to Norwegian-accented English as to RP-like accents on the sociability dimension. Conversely, while some listeners pointed out the professionalism of the RP speakers, others, mostly Norwegian listeners, pointed out that the presence of a Norwegian accent was unprofessional, as shown by a comment about recording #7 (female buffer, strong intonation):

”Ah, the typical Norwegian way to speak English; just replace the Norwegian words with English ones, and mix a little between British and American pronunciations. Certainly authentic, but I find it a bit immature/unprofessional in its accent.”

The comment above is from a Norwegian listener, and it serves as a good example of the main result of the thesis, namely that Norwegian listeners are self-conscious about fellow Norwegians’ L1-influenced accents; having a detectable trace of “Norwegianness” in one’s English pronunciation is viewed by other Norwegians as unprofessional. The survey was intentionally framed in a non-prestigious, non-formal context because in this context it would *not* be far-fetched to use someone with a Norwegian accent. This would be a test to see if Norwegian listeners would give more negative evaluations than non-Norwegians on the sociability dimension even in a context that was sociable. Even though the listener emphasizes that the buffer speaker does sound authentic, and despite of the context, the comment suggests an unfavourable view of the speaker because of her accent. These respondent comments thus support the main result that a standard NS accent in general is associated with higher status than Norwegian-accented English.

However, this is not the case for all respondents and all types of Norwegian-influenced accents. As shown in the phonological analysis (table 3.1, section 3.4.1), recording #7 of the female buffer speaker only has 5 phonological tokens, distributed to only one category, namely non-voicing of *s*. Therefore, it is the strong fall-rise intonation that is causing the negative reaction, according to the Norwegian respondent. The survey results also showed that Norwegian listeners rated the strong intonation accents more negatively than slight Norwegian accents. Additionally, these accents were by Norwegian listeners rated as stronger accents (cf. section 4.2), whereas the non-Norwegians' general assessment was that the strong Norwegian intonation accents were not particularly stronger than the slight Norwegian accents. Furthermore, the non-Norwegians did not rate these more negatively than the slight Norwegian accents. This result opposes the argument set forward by Nilsen & Rugesæter (1999) that a native speaker will automatically react negatively to Norwegian intonation:

A lot of native speakers who are aware of the difficulties involved when learning a foreign language (vocabulary, grammar, speech sounds), and who therefore generally may be quite understanding when foreigners make mistakes, will nevertheless automatically react negatively when someone's intonation is wrong. The basic intonation patterns are so deeply embedded in people's linguistic awareness that a native listener reacts intuitively if you send out the wrong signals through your intonation patterns. It is therefore of utmost importance that intonation teaching constitutes an integral part of your English lessons." (Nilsen & Rugesæter, 1999: 130)

The point made here is that when "intonation is wrong", a native-speaker will react negatively and therefore a teacher must focus extensively on teaching intonation. This conclusion is made in an EFL paradigm (cf. section 2.2.1). As described in chapter 2, most previous research on Norwegian people's pronunciation of English is mostly conducted within this paradigm, in which Norwegians are viewed as mere learners of English by investigating where they may be lacking in skills (e.g. Bird, 2005; Nilsen & Rugesæter, 1999; Rugesæter 2012). The presupposition that learning English is for communication with native speakers seems to have been a dominant one in the research field, which has led to emphasis being put on the importance of getting rid of one's own Norwegian-influenced accent and make as big of an effort as possible to sound like a native speaker. The results in this thesis suggest that such an effort is not necessarily productive.

5.1.2 Intelligibility of Norwegian-accented English

The listeners' assessment of intelligibility, even of the strongest Norwegian accents, showed very low (i.e. positive) scores, meaning that none of the speakers were perceived as unintelligible. As previously stated, intelligibility has not been directly measured in this project, but the phonological analysis of the stimulus speakers has been conducted with reference to the lingua franca pronunciation core (see section 3.4), and intelligibility was reported in the survey (see section 4.1.4). Additionally, it was discussed in-depth in the focus group interview. This section will combine the discussion of survey results on intelligibility with excerpts from the interview.

While certain modes of pronunciation will elicit different attitudes in listeners and thereby affect communication, the mere intelligibility of one's pronunciation itself is a slightly different, yet central element of how (Norwegian-accented) pronunciation affects communication. Even though it is not directly investigated in this thesis, there is very little indicating that Norwegian accentedness could cause significant intelligibility problems. As described in section 3.3.1.1, the phonology of Norwegian-accented English does align with most of the lingua franca pronunciation core principles, and as shown by the phonological analysis, the aspect most likely to become problematic in Norwegian-accented English, could seem to be the confusion around the *v* and *w* distinction. However, as was also argued in section 3.3.1.1, this may be more likely to happen when native speakers are involved because most non-native speakers will already be somewhat familiar with the confusion from their own L1s. Additionally, a failure to distinguish certain minimal pairs can cause intelligibility problems, as shown in the following excerpt from the focus group interview. This is an example told by a native speaker, a Canadian who points out that the *v/w* distinction did cause intelligibility problems when he was first introduced to the Norwegian pronunciation of English.

CM: The one or two things I would stick out is the
v's and the *w*'s... they ...

(Unclear mumbling from the whole group)

CM: "Wiking hostel", "vebsite" ... but it was
nothing I couldn't figure out after a few "huh?"s.

I: Interviewer (author)

CM: Canadian male

DM: Dutch male

PM1: Polish male

PM2: Polish male 2

FF: French female

The Canadian participant here expresses that even though he did experience a few oddities in Norwegian people's English pronunciation, it did not go beyond the point of a couple of "huh?"s, suggesting that a failure to distinguish *v* and *w* may in fact lead to a breakdown in intelligibility, but only temporarily. However, inaccuracies in pronunciation could in fact lead to not only intelligibility problems, but even genuine misunderstandings. This is exemplified in the next excerpt, which is an anecdote, also from the Canadian, with an example of an amusing, yet legitimate misunderstanding caused by a minimal pair of vowels:

CM: And then, like, somebody said, like, "oh, are you going to Canada? Watch out for beers", and I'm like "yeah, we have lots of beers in Canada, I get it, we drink a lot". And they were like "no, actually..." (laughter)

I: You actually thought they meant something else?

CM: No (meaning yes), I thought they said *beers* (emphasizes the /i:/, as in the beverage beer) (laughter)

Here, the Norwegian has meant to say "bear", but pronounced it "beer". It could be argued that because of the context of this anecdote, it should be reasonably clear that the advised precaution is with concern for the dangerous animal, even though it perhaps does make sense for someone to *look out for* an alcoholic beverage. But, because of the /i:/ sound, the Canadian initially did not make the connection that his interlocutor could be referring to anything else than the beverage because "beer" was after all the word that had been pronounced, and the utterance was actually interpreted as advice to take caution in an excessive drinking culture. This is an example of the idea that the communication skills of a native speaker in an ELF context may not necessarily be superior to the skills of a non-native speaker (Jenkins, 2009). Surely, minimal pairs could cause problems among non-native speakers, too; nevertheless, since native speakers rarely have to consciously learn or consider the existence of, say, minimal pairs in their own language, they may have less awareness of it, whereas non-native speakers may have had to put conscious effort into learning to pronounce minimal pairs. If then non-native speakers as a result become slightly more aware of this and therefore participate in interactions differently by paying slightly more attention to context, pronunciation slips as a whole may be less problematic for intelligibility. Earlier in the interview, an example of the exact same phenomenon of minimal pairs was given by one

of the Polish focus group participants, who says he did not experience intelligibility problems when he came to Norway:

I: “But you never had problems understanding people here?”

PM1: No, but sometimes when they would say “beer”, let’s say, they won’t say “beer”, but “bear”.

I: Did you ever, like, encounter any situations where you thought they referred to bear, the animal?

PM2: (interjects) You have to look at the context

PM1: No, no.

CM: I’ve had that.

I: Have you ever encountered any situations where you’ve had a hard time understanding a Norwegian?

PM1: Mmm, no. No. No. It was a little bit funny, but still I could understand, like, based on the context.

In this sequence, both PM1 and PM2 mention how intelligibility is context dependent, and PM1 concludes that inaccurate pronunciation can have funny effects, but that it does not cause problems in terms of intelligibility, as admitted by Rugesæter (2012). The native speaker CM, however, again confirms that he *has* had instances of misunderstanding because of pronunciation inaccuracies. The two excerpts below show further experiences of non-native speakers and their having little difficulty understanding Norwegians and that NNS accents from certain L1s and certain NS varieties sometimes are more challenging in terms of intelligibility.

PM2: ...actually for me the way Norwegians speak English was really good, was like, Swedish, Norwegian, was easier to understand than British people... back seven years ago. Now I divide Norwegian people into these, like, speaking like you now (referring to the author with a General American accent), very good English, almost without any accent, and these that have the square Norwegian accent which sounds just funny, but I have no problems to understand them; it just sounds funny and a little bit like ... you suffer the lack of the flow of the talk, that’s it...

FF: Ah, yes

PM2: ...but not the understanding

PM1: Yeah

PM2: The understanding is like... Indian accent is a problem; Chinese accent is a problem, sometimes Russian, but not Norwegian...

CM: Mhm

PM2: No matter how strong Norwegian accent is, usually... as opposed to good English accent, they slow down and square the language.

...

DM: ... but I never had problems understanding Norwegians, like, I think it's more tough to understand an Australian than Norwegians

CM: I agree! (laughs)

In the first excerpt, PM2 states that Norwegians, even with strong accents, are generally easier to understand than British people. He acknowledges that some accents from certain language groups that are heavily influenced by L1 transfer can be problematic, but that the way in which a strong Norwegian accent is manifested is that it slows down and that people “square the language”. A strong Norwegian accent is described as *aesthetically* deficient by lacking flow, but as *pragmatically* sufficient for serving the function of communicating intelligibly. Although it may sound funny, this is not expressed as fundamentally problematic. This is backed up explicitly by the Dutch participant DM (in the second excerpt), who says that Norwegians are easier to understand than Australians, with which the Canadian agrees.

Revisiting the low (i.e. positive) intelligibility evaluations of all the recordings in figure 4.3, these results are understood in further depth here in the interview excerpts. These excerpts have shown that intelligibility of pronunciation is not something that is likely to become a problem for the average Norwegian learner/user of English, probably because Norwegian phonology aligns with the most of the LFC principles (see section 3.3.1.1). Only in a few specific cases can it lead to breakdowns in communication or misunderstandings, both of which seem more likely to occur in interactions with native speakers of English than with proficient non-native speakers. This is because non-native speakers may be equipped with a different set of more cooperative and pre-emptive communication strategies (Seidlhofer, 2011). Presupposing that non-native-speaker interlocutors pay closer attention to context in

communication in order to bridge possible communication gaps is just one example of how ELF is defined as a strategy for international communication, not a linguistic variety of its own.

5.2 Didactic implications

In the national English subject curriculum, is stated in the competence aims for students' oral skills that they be able to use communication strategies and patterns of pronunciation that are suited for the purpose and the context (cf. section 1.2). It is argued that the core principle for curriculum and teaching design in an ELF paradigm should be for it to “reflect the needs of non-native speaker interactions, and consequently emphasize intelligibility and pragmatic strategies for intercultural communication” (Rindal, 2013: 19). This thesis seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of what is required and not required of Norwegians to successfully communicate in English on a global stage. Norwegian students need to be prepared for the sociolinguistic reality that awaits them, i.e. the arena of international communication through the use of English.

5.2.1 Questioning pronunciation standards for Norwegian ELT

One of the main goals of conducting this research was to empirically verify Norwegian listeners' attitudes towards Norwegian-influenced accents. Teachers might experience that they do not have a clear alternative to a pronunciation standard other than the traditional RP or GA standards, but a more useful paradigm may be to question whether there should be a native-speaker-based standard in the first place. The stated purpose of learning English in school is to be able to use the language for international communication (KD, 2013); English is the contact language through which Norwegians can communicate with people from all types of linguistic backgrounds, and English will likely be used just as much in communication with non-native speakers as with native speakers.

Therefore, skills in pronunciation are not one-dimensional, and it cannot be adherence to native-speaker standards that determines communicative competence. Someone who has spent several years in a native-speaker country may have become more able to communicate in a native-speaker community, but not necessarily more able to communicate with non-

native speakers because this requires a different set of strategies. A successful interaction between non-native speakers will often, on the part of both interlocutors, require some degree of mutual cooperation that arises from the awareness of the fact that they both may not have native-speaker proficiency (Seidlhofer, 2011).

The ability to communicate effectively will also be context dependent; not only is there an innumerable amount of possible combinations of nationalities in English interactions – e.g. a Norwegian talking to a South Korean, a Spanish person talking to an Indian and an Australian person and so on – but there is additionally an endless amount of contexts in which there will be a need for different usages of the English language – e.g. in business meetings, over the counter at cafés or at hostel dorms. These contexts all require a different set of communication strategies (Cogo & Dewey, 2012). In any context, then, the different choices one makes with regard to pronunciation are an important part of one’s communication strategy. The role that pronunciation plays for communication is what this thesis seeks to illuminate because the attitude a speaker will elicit in a listener will be conducive to the communication between them.

As Jenkins (2000) emphasizes, ELF is not about setting any one specific pronunciation standard, but about awareness and choice. With intelligibility in place, what the students additionally will need when it comes to pronunciation is primarily the awareness that different varieties of English have different social connotations, which in turn will affect the perceived status and sociability of the speaker. On one hand, rejecting certain aspects of traditional standards, such as not pronouncing non-prevocalic /r/ in RP, will make sense from a pragmatic standpoint because in the lingua franca core all consonant sounds should be pronounced (Jenkins, 2000). On the other hand, there are also aspects of how one’s identity will be perceived if one chooses to speak with an RP accent; this is an essential element to be aware of when speaking English (Rindal, 2013). Communicative competence in English therefore requires the ability to appropriately adjust pronunciation for intelligibility purposes as well as being aware of the attitudes that are associated with different forms of pronunciation. In the example of RP, it is important to *not* be oblivious to why and how this type of pronunciation might be less intelligible and be perceived with less or more appraisal in different contexts.

The unique role of English in the world means that people across the globe will have at least some degree of shared awareness of the associations and meaning that different varieties of pronunciation bring to the table. The results of this study show how this is the case for Norwegian-accented English, and as argued by Rindal (2013) this kind of research on English in an increasingly complex globalised world needs to be made available in teacher education, “so that teachers can better meet the language needs among their learners” (Rindal, 2013: 12). The language attitudes that emerge in this study can be used to inform speakers’ communicative competence because they show which qualities are associated with a Norwegian-influenced accent among different groups of listeners.

This discussion has outlined the main results of the thesis with relation to previous research, and argued for embracing the ELF paradigm in ELT, on the basis of the general sociolinguistic environment that Norwegian students will face. Bearing in mind that the main purpose of English language teaching is to teach English as a medium for international communication, the issue boils down to valuing the pragmatic ELF approach over the traditional EFL approach.

6. Conclusion

In this thesis, attitudes towards Norwegian-accented English has been investigated and discussed related to the role of English in Norway. Despite the official status of a foreign language, English is increasingly recognized as a de facto second language in Norway. The national curriculum for English states communicative competence as the main purpose of learning English, and it is not required that students adapt a specific pronunciation standard, but that students be able to use appropriate strategies suited to the purpose and context of communication. This pragmatic approach to English pronunciation is also at the core of the ELF paradigm, which is a perspective on English teaching that opposes the traditional EFL approach. Even though many teachers do acknowledge that communicative competence is the most important principle of ELT, it seems that the traditional native-speaker pronunciation standards (especially RP) might still permeate Norwegian classrooms. Additionally, some of the research conducted with regard to Norwegian-accented English is still done from the paradigm of viewing deviations from native-speaker norms as deficiencies, not differences. However, the English language plays a unique role in the world and no longer belongs to only its native speakers. It is the default lingua franca of choice between speakers of different L1s on a world basis. Thus, the majority of interactions in English do not involve native speakers, which means that the need for English is not primarily for communication with native speakers. This calls into question the SLA concept of interlanguage, which determines linguistic competence on an interlanguage continuum based on a native-speaker norm. ELF, on the other hand, is not a linguistic form per se, but a view of English as a tool for international communication. In the ELF paradigm, therefore, one views non-native speakers as *users*, not *learners* of English.

This thesis has also outlined how research shows that people are judged based on how they speak, and that different pronunciation of English elicits different attitudes in listeners. With regard to non-native speaker pronunciation of English, studies usually find that a slight or moderate degree of accentedness does not have negative effects on listeners, but that a very strong accent may be problematic. Non-native speakers in general seem to be more concerned about their own L1-influenced pronunciation of English than the L1 influence of non-native speakers from other L1s. Language studies in general show that it is primarily the perception of status that is lowered by strong accentedness, whereas the perception of

sociability is less affected by accent. The awareness that different choices of pronunciation may elicit different attitudes in different contexts is argued to be a core principle of communicative competence in an ELF perspective.

Language attitudes can be studied through the use of matched-guise and/or verbal-guise experiments, which has been the main methodology in this study. Stimulus recordings were created for an online survey, in which the respondents did not know in advance that they were about to hear some of the same voices several times with different accents. Respondents were also presented with buffer speaker recordings, which were made by native speakers of Norwegian who read the stimulus text with their natural pronunciation of English. These recordings constituted a set of data on which was conducted an analysis of the phonology of Norwegian-accented English (Standard Eastern Norwegian). The analysis was conducted on a phoneme level and also considered basic patterns of intonation and allophonic variation. The analysis shows that there are two different dimensions of strong Norwegian accentedness, namely *intonation* and that which has been referred to as *phonology*. These dimensions can be determined by degree, i.e. the extent to which the speaker uses Norwegian fall-rise intonation in declarative sentences and the frequency of L1-influenced phonemes that occur in their speech. The phonology and intonation dimensions could either be combined, or only one of them could be strong, in which case non-Norwegian listeners rate the accents with strong phonology as much stronger than the ones with strong intonation. Additionally, accents have been characterized by determining adherence to the two main native-speaker standards, namely GA and RP, which showed that Norwegian-accented English usually has traits from both standards, e.g. short /ɒ/ in LOT words and no intervocalic flapping of /t, d/ (RP features) and the realisation of non-prevocalic /r/ as well as /oo/ in GOAT words (GA features).

In addition to the phonological analysis, a panel of experts were gathered to listen to the recordings and verify the validity of the accents before they could be used in the survey. Based on the experts' analysis, the accents were divided into three categories: RP-like, slight and strong (which meant either intonation or phonology). The recordings were piloted in a focus group interview with non-Norwegians who were living in Norway, in which they gave their opinions about all the speakers and discussed Norwegian-accented English in general. The survey was then designed using attitudinal scales based on the results from the focus group interview. 98 respondents were recruited and divided into three listener groups: native

speakers, non-native speakers and Norwegians. The response data from the online survey were to answer the main research question of this thesis:

What are the attitudes of Norwegian and non-Norwegian listeners towards Norwegian-accented English?

The main results of the study have provided the answers to the research question:

1. Norwegian listeners have more negative attitudes towards Norwegian-accented English than non-Norwegian listeners.
2. A strong Norwegian intonation is not regarded as a strong accent by non-Norwegian listeners and is evaluated as equally positively on the status dimension as slight Norwegian accents.
3. Norwegian-accented English does not affect perception of sociability in non-Norwegian listeners and only to a slight extent in Norwegian listeners.
4. Non-Norwegian listeners perceive Norwegian-accented English as very intelligible. Even the assessments of the strongest accents seem unproblematic.

The results show that attitudes towards Norwegian accentedness are different among Norwegian and non-Norwegian listeners. When it comes to perception of status, Norwegian listeners have particularly negative attitudes towards speakers with strong accents. Non-Norwegian listeners also perceive higher status in the RP speakers, but are much more positive towards strong Norwegian accents than Norwegians themselves. The distinction between a strong intonation and a strong phonology is also perceived differently among the Norwegians and the non-Norwegians. Norwegian listeners rate both versions of the strong accents negatively on the status dimension, whereas non-Norwegians give equally positive evaluations of strong intonation and slight Norwegian accents.

The discussion elaborates further on the main results through a qualitative investigation of some of the comments from the survey respondents and focus group participants. It is illustrated how the appropriateness of pronunciation is context-dependent, e.g. that RP accents are well suited for prestigious contexts. Some of the Norwegian listeners' opinions of strong Norwegian accents are that they are unprofessional, despite the context of a hostel, which was chosen deliberately as a casual, non-prestigious context, so that the presence of a Norwegian accent would make sense.

Questions of intelligibility have also been discussed at length. It has not been measured directly in this study, but respondents have been asked to give their assessment of how easy each speaker is to understand. Even the strongest Norwegian accents are rated in a way that suggests there is very little in Norwegian-accented English that has the potential of breaking down communication because the majority lingua franca pronunciation core principles are easily achieved by most Norwegians who use English.

6.1 Implications for teaching

It is one of the main characteristics of ELF interactions that interlocutors use cooperative strategies so as to establish optimal environments for communication (Cogo & Dewey, 2012). This is sometimes done by rejecting certain native-speaker features of pronunciation that may have negative effects on communication, such as non-rhoticity in many British accents. This does not mean that students should be discouraged from targeting native-speaker pronunciation. Speaking like a native speaker does not mean that one is opposing the goal of communication in ELF interactions. Furthermore, the aesthetic elements of language, one would assume, could be a significant source of joy in students' learning process. Considering that there are musical elements to language, many non-native speakers may treat the language as an art and find great value in the performance aspects of pronunciation (see e.g. Kramsch, 2009). It would be counterproductive to discourage a student from aiming towards a native-speaker accent if the aesthetic aspects do not conflict with the pragmatic aspects of his/her pronunciation.

However, it is argued in this thesis that a teacher should use the students' needs for English as his/her guiding principle when developing instructional design. If one presupposes that Norwegian students will need English for communication with other non-native speakers more than 80 % of the time (as shown in 2.1.1), it makes little sense to actively encourage them to aim towards one specific native-speaker norm. As is argued in 2.3.1, it does make sense to focus on native-speaker varieties with the students' listening skills in mind. On the other hand, there will be clear opportunity costs associated with spending time and energy on aiming to reproduce native-speaker accents, as every hour spent focusing on the imitation of native speaker accents is an hour spent not focusing on skills that more likely will impact the ability to use English effectively in an international context.

In no way does the lingua franca perspective of English reject the science of SLA, which is at the core of the paradigm of teaching English as a foreign language. But, as is showed in this discussion, the EFL paradigm does not take into consideration the unique role of English in the world. It is this unique role that requires that the approach to English language teaching be fundamentally different from the approach to teaching almost any other language. When it comes to pronunciation, all the results of this study indicate that Norwegian-accented English is almost unproblematic as a means of communicating on the global arena of English. Therefore, dealing with pronunciation pragmatically, as argued by ELF scholars, is preferable to the traditional approach of aiming for a native-speaker standard.

6.2 Suggestions for further research

This has been an exploratory study investigating attitudes towards different degrees of Norwegian accentedness among Norwegian and non-Norwegian listeners. The project has attempted to describe and conceptualise Norwegian-accented English as a construct. This investigation has been fairly detailed with regard to phonemes, but relatively broad in terms of intonation and allophonic variation. Further research is needed to expand knowledge of the construct of Norwegian-accented English - not only Standard Eastern Norwegian-influenced accents, but also based on the other main dialect groups in Norway.

With the lingua franca pronunciation core established as a set of guidelines for ELF speech in general, the guidelines for Norwegian-accented English specifically needs further description. Thus, there is a need for research that directly measures the intelligibility of Norwegian-accented English in the ears of both native and non-native speakers of English (not just perceived intelligibility as reported by listeners). This research needs to be conducted within an ELF paradigm, and if it is to have didactic implications, the investigation needs to be conducted in a real-life context. It is not relevant for Norwegian students whether non-Norwegian listeners fail to identify minimal pairs, e.g. “lies” or “lice” when these words are presented without a context. However, if a clear context is provided and non-Norwegian listeners still fail to identify the right, say, minimal pair, then the findings will have implications in an ELF perspective.

Finally, further research on attitudes towards Norwegian-accented English is needed for validation and comparison with the findings of this study. Bigger samples of both native and non-native speakers are needed, and with a broader demographic representation and variation in contexts of communication, in order to make qualified claims for bigger populations as a whole. Providing a deeper understanding of what kinds of oral skills students need, this research is needed to inform teacher education and teacher practices.

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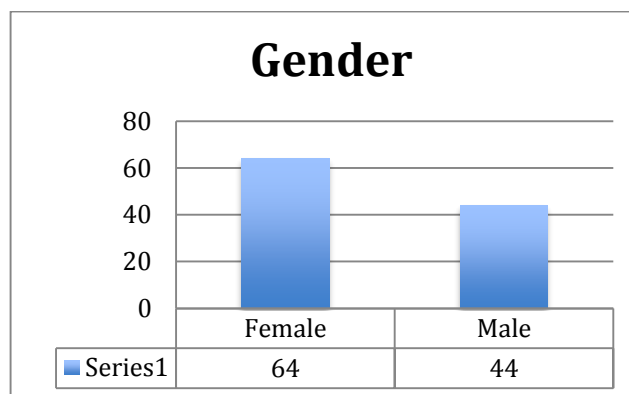
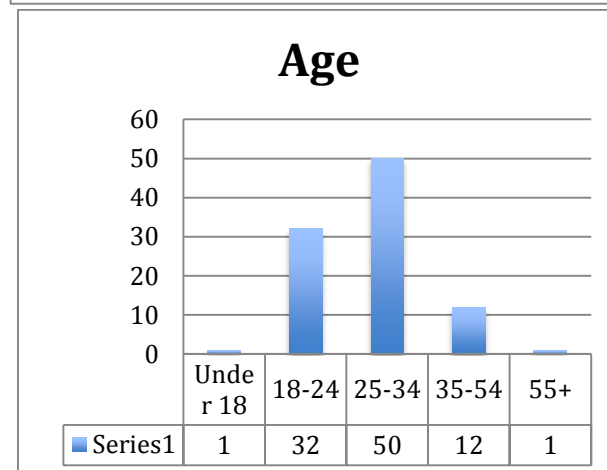
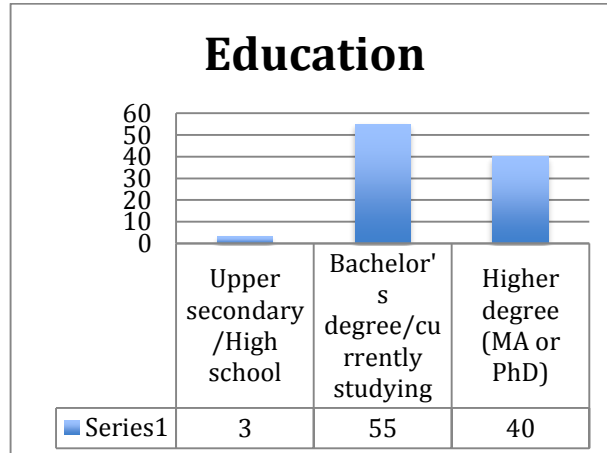
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Appendix

Appendix 1: Biographical data the survey respondents

Profession

Student	43
Education	17
Accounting / Finance / Banking	5
Consulting	4
Science / Technology / Programming	4
Advertisement / PR	3
Customer Service	3
Administration / Clerical / Reception	2
Health Care (Physical & Mental)	2
News / Information	2
Research	2
Sales / Marketing	2
Architecture / Design	1
Arts/Leisure / Entertainment	1
Buying / Purchasing	1
Planning (Meeting, Events, etc.)	1
Unemployed	1
<i>Other. Write in:</i>	
"Event technician (apprenticeship)"	1
"Education + technical support agent"	1
"Lecturer, teacher and translator"	1
"Hospitality"	1



Appendix 2: Online survey

Speaker 1 (of 12)



1. In my opinion, this person sounds/is *

	1 Strongly agree	2	3	4	5	6 Strongly disagree
Friendly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intelligent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cheerful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Well educated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Humorous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ambitious	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confident	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Warm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Charismatic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Authentic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assertive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organized	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. This person is easy to understand *

1 Strongly agree	2	3	4	5	6 Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. This person has a strong foreign accent *

1 No, it is not strong at all	2	3	4	5	6 Yes, it is very strong
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Other comments

Appendix 3: Expert panel evaluation charts

rød

Ranger på en skala fra 1-3 hvor 3 er sterkest (norsk uttale)

	Fonologi	Intonasjon	Allofonisk variasjon
1	2	2	2
2	2 [÷]	2 [÷]	2 [÷]
3	3 [÷]	3 [÷]	2
4	3 [÷]	2+	2
5	2	2	
6	2 [÷]	2 [÷]	
7	1	1	
8	1+	1+	
9	2+	2 [÷]	
10	1+	1+	
11	1+	1+	
12	2 [÷]	2 [÷]	
13	2+	2+	
14	2	2	
15	2+	2+	
16	2+	2	
17	2 [÷]	2 [÷]	
18	1+	1+	
19	1+	1+	
20	1+	1+	
21	2	2+	
22	3	3	
23	2+	2+	
24	2	2 2	
25	1/2	1/2	

AM
Am.

RP
RP

Am - RP

AM

grønn

Ranger på en skala fra 1-3 hvor 3 er sterkest (norsk uttale)

	Fonologi	Intonasjon	Allofonisk variasjon
1	2.3	3	2
2	2	2	1.2
3	2.3	3	?
4	2	2.7	2
5	1.5	2.7 (1.8)	1.5
6	1.1	1.2	1.1
7	1	1.1	1
8	1	1.1	1
9	2	2.1 1.8	2 1.8
10	1.3	1.3	1 1.5
11	1.3 ?	1	1
12	1.8	1.8	
13	2.2	2.3	
14	2.2	2.3	
15	2.2	2.8	
16	2.5	2.6	
17	2.3	2.2	
18	1.8	1.8	
19	1.5	1.2	
20	1.6	1.5	
21	1.9	2.3	
22	3	3	
23	2.3 ? 2.1	2.3	
24	2	2.5	
25	1.6	1.8	

= 2.7
 = 1.8
 = 2.7
 = 2.2
 = 1.7 stress
 = 1.1
 = 1+
 = 1+
 = 1.9

Austr. *æ
 rholu zi
 a:
 GA
 2v a:

temporal rhythm

GA attempt
 GA

ɔ̃ > d mid-At
 mid-At stack of
 enthus.
 GA

blå

Ranger på en skala fra 1-3 hvor 3 er sterkest (norsk uttale)

	Fonologi	Intonasjon	Allofonisk variasjon
#3			
1	2,2 2,2	2,4	2
2	1,5	1,7	1,5
3	2,2	2,4	
4	2,1	2,2	
5	1,3	1,6	2,0
6	1,1	1,1	1,3
7	1,0	1,1	1,0
8	1,2	1,2	1,2
9	2,1	1,8	
#2			
10	1,2	1,2	
11	1,0	1,0	
12	1,8	1,8	
13	2,1	2,5	
14	2,0	2,4	
15	1,7	2,4	
16	2,0	2,3	
17	1,9	2,3	
18	1,1	1,2	
19	1,1	1,1	
#1			
20	1,3	1,2	
21	1,3	2,4	
22	2,2	2,9	
23	1,9	2,2	
24	1,7	2,0	
25	1,7	2,2	