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ACCENTS, ATTITUDES AND SCOUSE INFLUENCE IN NORTH WALES ENGLISH

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1 Introduction

Regarding the sociolinguistic situation in Wales, one can say that centuries of Anglicisation brought about by political, commercial and educational forces have not only left Wales with a new language, but have also left the Welsh with an inferiority complex. Today there are virtually no more monolingual Welsh speakers, whereas the number of monolingual English speakers in Wales increases. With the media, BBC English has become an omnipresent speech model and can be seen as the prestige norm, associated with correctness and status. Subsequently, “Welsh speakers of non-standard English have been scorned for their inability to speak Welsh as well as for their inability to speak proper English” (Pitkänen, 2000). The Welsh English accent (henceforth WE) is a rhotic accent (see Wells, 1982, 390) characterised by a *foot* – *strut* split (/fʊt/ and /strʌt/ coexist); distinctive prosodic features (e.g., no secondary stresses in longer words); the lengthening of word-medial intervocalic consonants (e.g., the /d/ in *ready*); the “absence of glottalised allophones” so that “*cup* is typically [kʰəpʰ] not [kʰəʔp] and *fat* [fatʰ] not [faʔ]” (Wells, 1982, 388); and by the fact that “[t]he voiceless plosives /p, t, k/ are strongly aspirated in most positions” (Wells, 388). Welsh English can be classified as a vernacular variety of English. This more ‘conservative’ Welsh-influenced variety of English is the norm in North Wales and can therefore be considered the *standard vernacular*. WE has been the subject of parody and jokes, as can be seen in national shows such as *Little Britain*. Although many people speak with a clear Welsh accent, in North Wales, where the accent is very strong, other (notably younger) people consciously downplay their accent when not in homely settings.

Close to North Wales another non-standard accent of English is spoken. Liverpool English or *Scouse*, associated with the city of Liverpool and the neighbouring areas in the northwest of England¹, is arguably one of the most recognisable accents in the British Isles. Interestingly, Liverpool English (henceforth LE or Scouse)-like accents are reportedly heard in North Wales as well. Salient features of LE include: the absence of a *foot*–*strut* split (*foot* and *strut* have the same vowel: /ʌ/), the older form [ŋ] in words like *bring*, *song* [bring, song] (see Knowles, 1987, 70; Watson, 2002, 196), and perhaps most saliently: consonantal lenition such as affrication and glottalisation. The LE plosives /p, t, k/ are heavily aspirated or (af)fricated (see Hugh and Trudgill, 1996, 93).

¹ This urban conglomeration is also called *Merseyside*.

This is often spoken of anecdotically as ‘a /t/ coming out like an /s/'. Similarly, the velar stop /k/ slurs into /x/. Thus, *night* becomes [nait̪s], *crime* becomes [kxraim] and *right-rice* are homophones. Affrication in /p/ is less clear: there is no clear ‘fading out’ option for /p/, in the way that /t/ typically glides to /s/ and /k/ to /x/. Affricated /k/ and /p/ are more marked: they are physically more difficult and hence less frequent than affricated /t/.

Although Scouse is well known for its affricated plosives, the majority of sources classify WE as aspirated. However, Penhallurick (2004) allows for “strong aspiration (which sometimes approaches affrication) [for] the voiceless plosives /p,t,k/” (108-109) in WE. He also mentions that “[t]his strong aspiration is exceptionally prominent in the north” (108-109). This careful recognition of affrication as a feature of North Wales English is in line with personal observations of apparently affricated pronunciations such as *daughter* [dɔːtsəɹ̥] and *university* [iʊnɪvərsətsɪ] in the speech of seemingly non-Scouse-influenced (elderly) speakers of WE. The aforementioned tendency to strongly pronounce final voiceless plosives rather than glottalise them, creates an excellent environment for affrication of especially /t/.

Many people regard LE as low-prestige, coarse, or ill educated. A recent BBC voices poll² concluded that “Asian, Liverpool and Birmingham accents were all deemed both unpleasant to listen to and lacking in social status” (BBC, 2004). Regarding its societal status in North Wales, Scouse, with its associations of criminality, can be said to have covert prestige, and can be considered the *non-standard vernacular*.

The three accents heard in North Wales, Welsh English, Scouse, and BBC English, have different societal meanings, which reflect the general attitudes that prevail towards them. Interestingly, the well-known, negative attitudes towards WE and especially towards Scouse are not always reflected in people’s behaviour. Scouse appears to be heard more and more in North Wales. As early as 1973 Knowles states that “[Scouse] is having influence across Chester and Wrexham into North Wales” (14), and Coupland mentions “accelerated in-migration and tourism, and with these the penetration of Merseyside English into northwest Wales” (1990: 7).

Whether the people who adopt such less popular accents (i.e. Scouse) also have more positive attitudes to those accents is the focus of this study. Some understanding of the concept attitude is necessary for such an investigation. Research on attitude has produced contradictory conclusions about attitude-behaviour relations. Cohen (1964) sees a positive correlation, but Wicker argues that “attitudes are unrelated [to] or only slightly related to overt behaviours” (1969: 65). Although there is no agreement on the nature of the concept itself, most would claim that attitudes always have a strong *affective* component (Perloff, 1993, 28) and the *behavioural* dimension is often mentioned, but less straightforward to incorporate. The tripartite view of attitudes (see MacGuire 1985) has been influential since the beginning of attitude research. The tripartite model assumes that attitudes have an affective, cognitive, and behavioural component, with each varying on an evaluating dimension. The affective component (A) refers to all evaluations of, opinions about, and emotions toward an attitude-object; the cognitive component (C) consists of knowledge about and experience with an attitude-object; the

² In November 2004, the BBC commissioned a poll to find out how people feel about accents and languages across the British Isles. 5000 people took part in the online poll.

behavioural component (B) entails self-perception inferences from prior behaviour towards the attitude-object. Breckler (1984) provides strong support for the tripartite view and for the interrelationship between the three components of attitude. Following Breckler, Ladegaard (2003) analyses people's speech (i.e. behaviour) as part of, and as making up, their attitudes.

In a study of attitudes and linguistic behaviour (i.e. accents), the social factors *age* and *socioeconomic status* play an important role. Non-standard or covertly prestigious speech forms are popular in adolescence when peer group pressure not to conform to society's norms is greatest (Holmes, 2001: 169). Similarly, Chambers (2003) finds that in adolescence vernacular norms tend to accelerate beyond the norms established by the previous generation, whereas in young adulthood standardisation tends to increase (158-159). In addition, the results of a large-scale study of Cardiff English (Mees, 1983) showed that non-standard forms were more common in the speech of lower class than higher class speakers. Cheshire (1982) shows the joint influence of age and class: the frequency with which adolescent speakers use non-standard features of Reading English was correlated with the extent to which they adhere to the norms of the vernacular culture, which typically belong to lower socioeconomic classes.

The aspects discussed above, WE and LE, affrication, social factors, and attitude, are central to the questions investigated in this study: what speakers, in terms of age and socioeconomic status, are susceptible to Scouse influence on North Wales English, whether affrication in NWE is a result of that influence, and what the role of attitudes is in it. The study reported here tests the following hypotheses:

1. The speech of young, lower-class speakers will be closer to the non-standard variety than that of older, higher-class speakers. Thus, an influence from Scouse will mainly be found in the speech of younger, lower-class speakers. Both young and older speakers will have a WE accent, because WE, apart from being the vernacular, still is the norm (standard) in North Wales. Moreover, the fact that WE has status predicts that the accent will be found among speakers from both socioeconomic classes. Being the prestige norm, BBC English will be restricted to higher-class speakers.
2. Affrication (of /t/) in North Wales English is not the result of Scouse influence but is a characteristic of WE, and that affrication will therefore be found in the speech of participants with a non-Scouse influenced WE accent as well as in the speech of participants with a Scouse-influenced accent.
3. Following Breckler (1984) it is hypothesised that the three attitude components in the questionnaire will be correlated, and that accents will be positively correlated to attitudes: speakers with a Scouse accent, the young, lower-class participants, will express positive attitudes towards Liverpool (English) and speakers with a WE accent, all participants, will express positive attitudes towards the Welsh (English accent). Following the literature on attitude (Perloff, 1993), a prominent role for the affective attitude component will be found.

Given the scope of the present article, these questions are answered in a concise way. For an exhaustive account of background literature and statistical procedures, I refer to the author's dissertation.

2 *The study*

2.1 *Design*

To investigate which speakers in North Wales are susceptible to Scouse influence and what the role of attitudes is in this, a study consisting of two parts was conducted: i) an accent study in which accents are evaluated and possible Scouse influence traced, and ii) an attitude study determining the relation between accents and attitudes. To establish participants' accents the natural speech of 24 people from North Wales was recorded through interviews. Five expert judges made judgements of the recorded people's accents. This is where the features discussed above play a role. Overall accent judgements are assumed to give a reliable view of speakers' accents, since all aspects of speech are judged. To determine whether affrication in North Wales English (NWE) shows Scouse influence or whether it is simply a characteristic of NWE (research question two), acoustic measurements were done and related to accent judgements. For each speaker, realisations of /t/ were analysed in PRAAT. Thus, the constructs *accent* and *affrication* were operationalised into the dependent variables *accent judgement* and *affrication score*.

To establish the role of attitudes in accent behaviour (the third research question), first participants' attitudes toward the two accents in focus, LE and WE were determined using a questionnaire drawing on Gardner (1973) and Dörnyei (2001). The questionnaire covered all three components of attitude (emotion, cognition and behaviour). Then, accent judgements were correlated to the attitude scores.

Following the sociolinguistic literature, the independent variables chosen are age and SES.

2.2 *Participants*

The study included a total of 24 participants, 10 male and 14 female, from Welsh families living within 20 miles of Bangor, Gwynedd. Participants who had lived outside of Wales or who had an English parent were excluded to eliminate 'foreign' influences. Many of the participants spoke Welsh as a first or second language, English being the other language. Apart from several teenagers, none of the participants spoke other languages to any considerable level. Two age groups were included: 12 speakers were between 13 and 17 years old and 12 speakers were around 60 years old. Each age group consists of six participants from a higher socioeconomic class (+SES) and six participants from a lower socioeconomic class (-SES), to establish the possible class effects discussed (e.g. Mees, 1983). Both genders are included as it proved difficult to find enough suitable participants from one gender group. Participants had to be free from speech impediments.

Participants were selected through retirement homes, secondary schools, private acquaintances, and several people were approached in the street. Eventually, over 34 interviews had been conducted. 24 of them met all requirements.

Regarding the class distinction, people from (upper) middle classes were counted as belonging to the +SES group. Class depended on profession and education level. Thus, (children of) parents with some form of higher education were labelled +SES; participants with a working class background and with lower professional or only

secondary school level education were labelled as -SES. 'In between' cases were excluded.

Judges were five native English lecturers from the University of Wales, Bangor, from the English and the Linguistics departments. Thus, experience in English language studies and an 'expert ear' were guaranteed. A CD with extracts of the speech recordings of all participants was blindly played to them. Their task was to judge the type of accent in each recording, helped by a response sheet (see section 2.3) consisting of three questions.

2.3 *Materials*

To collect the speech data, 24 interviews were conducted and recorded with a Sony minidisk (MD) recorder. All 24 recordings were transmitted from TDK recordable MDs onto a laptop. To prepare 24 speech samples for the judges, the interview recordings were edited and cut using the acoustic software PRAAT and Audacity so that of each of the 24 interviews 40-50 seconds of only the interviewee's speech remained. First, the interviewer's voice and unclear bits were cut out of the original interviews and then, chunks (preferably containing /t/) were selected until a total of 40-50 seconds was arrived at. This was done so that speech samples could be used by the accent judges and for phonetic measurements. These 24 speech samples were burned onto CDs which were given to the five judges who judged each speaker's speech on type of accent and on influences they heard. The provided response sheet consisted of two open questions, "By which accents of English has this speaker's speech been influenced?" and "Where would you say this speaker is from?", and one item based on semantic differential scales: "To what extent has this speaker's speech been influenced by Liverpool English/ Welsh English/ BBC Standard English?". The answer options ranged from "strongly" through "moderately" and "slightly" to "not at all".

The attitude questionnaire used was of the type where respondents are asked to register their reactions to statements by choosing selected-response items along a one to seven Likert scale. The response items along the scale ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The neutral option "don't know" was assigned the middle value of four points; the other three options on both sides were assigned one to three and five to seven points depending on whether the statement was positive or negative. Internal consistency is reported in section 3.

Considering the controversial role of the behavioural component of attitude, in this study it is elicited on two levels. It is left in its attitudinal dimension through the attitude questionnaire, in which behaviour is one of the three components of attitude measured, and it is analysed as a separate entity, through the elicitation of real, semi-unconscious linguistic behaviour (i.e., speech recordings). For the questionnaire, 60 statements on attitudes, stereotypes, value systems, and social situation were designed to investigate each participant's disposition toward the three language varieties. The general design was adapted from Gardner's A/MTB (1985) and three dimensions are worked into this: the attitudinal components affect (A), behaviour (B) and cognition (C); the language varieties WE and LE; and accent-related vs. culture/people-related items.

Half of the questionnaire was made up of items on Welsh English and half of items on Liverpool English (30:30). Statements were not only on accent, but also on culture and people (the proportion accent: culture/people was 22:38.) Statements were positively or negatively phrased to 'keep people thinking' (12 of the 60 items are

negative). For example, the item “Liverpoollians/Scousers are social, warm-hearted and creative people” is a positively phrased item on culture/people, about Liverpool English, and reflects the affective (A) component of attitude. The following two items both focus on culture/people. The first one pertains to Welsh English and the behavioural attitude (B) component: “I enjoy meeting and listening to Welsh people”. The second item relates to Liverpool English and the cognitive attitude component (C): “Scousers are an important part of British cultural identity”.

The following three examples of questionnaire items on accent each focus on a different component of attitude, indicated by (A), (B), and (C):

(A) “I think Scouse sounds agreeable”

(B) “I would prefer having a neutral accent to having a Scouse accent”

(C) “Having a strong Scouse accent can be bad for your career”.

The questionnaire contained two differently phrased types of questions that can be calculated in the same way. The first type, and by far the most used, is a statement on the particular language variety without necessarily containing an adjective (e.g. “Many young people from Wales go far”). The second type of question consists of a statement followed by a number of adjectives/value traits (e.g. “People from Liverpool are: friendly, polite, disagreeable, ...”). The degree of agreement must be indicated for each.

Ideally, the value traits to be assessed in a questionnaire are generated from within the community. For the logical reason that they may mean different things to different people. For example, a trait such as *religious* may have a positive value for older people while younger people might well judge this adjective as negative. Therefore, discussions with undergraduate students, lecturers and local people on Welsh English and Scouse were used to form some idea of the range of opinions and values. But as this is difficult, ambiguous traits, such as *dangerous*, *exciting*, or *cool*, have been avoided. The questionnaire was piloted with three local people, a student from North Wales, a student from a half Welsh-half English family, and an adult from South Wales. These pilot sessions resulted in slight corrections and clarifications in the questionnaire.

The attitude components were distributed across the questionnaire as follows: the 30 statements on WE and the 30 statements on LE contained ten items per attitude component ($3 \times 10 = 30$). The total of $2 \times 3 \times 10 = 60$ items was randomised and numbered.

2.4 Procedures

The 24 participants were recorded in the summer of 2005 during informal interviews aimed at eliciting natural speech. This was achieved by making speakers feel at ease, asking questions about their life and/or exciting things that had happened to them. Recording equipment was usually switched on after the conversation had started. Participants were interviewed in their homes or at the researcher’s office at the university. Interviews lasted from 20 minutes up to an hour, depending on whether the researcher deemed enough useful speech had been recorded. During the interview speakers’ SES and factors relevant to the speaker’s social situation were noted, to help determine which participant group the participant belongs to.

After the interview, participants were asked to fill out the attitude questionnaire. Personal details such as name, age, place of birth, occupation of parents, etc. were filled out by participants at the end of the questionnaire. Filling out the questionnaire took about 15 minutes, although mostly the teenagers did it faster than the elderly.

For the acoustic analysis of the 24 speech extracts the phonetic software PRAAT was used. As explained in the literature section, the realisations of the phonemes /t/, in initial and final positions, were examined: affrication was rated. Initially, the affrication measurements used the same speech samples that were played to the judges.

The five judges received the CDs with anonymous speech samples. The CD was accompanied by an accent judgement response sheet, explaining the task and providing questions. The accent judges judged the influence from Welsh English, Scouse and BBC English on each speaker. Judges were free to listen to the recordings as often as they felt necessary to come to an accent judgement.

Questionnaires were scored by calculating an attitude score for each participant from the points assigned to the participants' answers, as described in section 2.3. Thus, the resulting attitude score reflects how positive a participant's attitude is towards WE or LE. Beside total attitude scores for WE and for LE, separate scores for each of the three attitude components were calculated.

As an affrication influence from Scouse in WE would manifest itself in /t/ rather than in /k/, measurement procedures were as follows. To determine what speakers show affrication of /t/, all words containing initial and final /t/ were selected. By measuring ten initial and ten final /t/s for each speaker, 20 data points were collected, amounting to a total of 480 data points for 24 participants. Measurements focused on visible cues in the spectrogram rather than on acoustic cues. Spectral properties, notably formant patterns, were chosen as a stable guideline in measuring affrication. Firstly, the band of energy around 5 kHz, the typical 's-formant', in the 'noise' of affricated /t/ is easily recognisable through formant patterns in the noise colouring (Rietveld & Van Heuven, 2001). The more the typical s-formant is visible in [t], the more [t] is affricated. Individual variation in [s] as well as sex differences in the pitch range of the human voice were recognised as being important in determining the similarity of a speaker's /t/-friction to their /s/-realisation. Therefore, first, a speaker's individual s-range for the characteristic '/s/-formant' was determined and the speaker's /t/-realisations were investigated to see how similar [s] and [t] are spectrographically. A score was assigned to each participant, indicating the degree of similarity between the noise colouring in [s] and the post-release friction in [t] on a four-point scale: clearly similar (3)/ some similarity (2)/ slightly similar (1)/ not similar (0).

3 *Results and discussion*

In Welshness and Scouseness judgements, judge three deviated from the other judges and was consequently excluded from further analyses. The considerably stronger Scouseness judgments of this judge may be due to the fact that he was familiar with the aims of the study and thus knew 'what to listen for'.

Interjudge reliability for accent judges was strong after removing judge three from the analyses. Hence, results are based on averaged accent judgements of the four judges. Figures 1 and 2, resulting from a Repeated Measures analysis, present the effect of age and the effect of SES on accent respectively. The analysis (using the Huynh-Feldt measure) showed that age has a significant effect on accent ($F[2,40]=3.3$; $p=0.049$) and that SES had a significant effect on accent ($F[2,40]=14.3$; $p=0$).

fig. 1 about here

fig. 2 about here

Figure 1: Effect of age on accent of all participants.

Figure 2: Effect of SES on accent of all participants.

The numbers in the figures indicate the three accents: 1=WE, 2=Scouse, and 3=BBC English. It can be seen from these figures that SES has a bigger effect on accent than age does. These outcomes are in line with the outcomes of a more appropriate Kruskal Wallis (non-parametric) analysis. It showed significant group differences for accent rankings of Welshness ($\chi^2=12.8$; $df=3$; $p=.005$), Scouseness ($\chi^2=8$; $df=3$; $p=.045$) and BBC-ness ($\chi^2=11.5$; $df=3$; $p=.009$). Mann-Whitney U tests showed that within the young participant group, as predicted, lower class participants had more of a WE accent ($Z=-2.8$; $p=.01$) and more of a Scouse accent ($Z=-2.1$; $p=.03$); as predicted, higher class participants had more of a BBC English accent ($Z=-2.5$; $p=.01$). Within the group of older participants, a similar, but marginally significant SES effect was found: lower class participants tend to have a more WE accent than higher class participants ($Z=-1.8$; $p=.08$). Age differences within the group of higher class participants were significant for WE only: although both higher class age groups had a preference for BBC English, older participants spoke significantly more with a WE accent ($Z=-1.9$; $p=.05$) than younger participants. This confirms the hypothesis that the WE accent is used by participants from both age groups and both SES groups. Yet, the higher class elderly had slightly more of a BBC than of a WE accent and the higher class teenagers did not have a WE accent. An explanation could be that lower class speakers are more attracted to vernacular varieties than higher-class speakers. It can be tentatively assumed that WE is becoming a lower class accent. Following the above, the part of the accent hypothesis on BBC English was not confirmed. Although both higher-class groups speak predominantly with a BBC English accent as predicted, of the older participants also the lower-class participants spoke slightly with a BBC English accent. This seems to confirm the status of BBC English as prestige norm as well as indicate its status of 'correct' accent. Within the group of lower class participants, age effects were significant for Scouseness only: although both lower-class age groups had a preference for WE, the teenagers spoke significantly more with a Scouse accent ($Z=-2.1$; $p=.04$) than older participants, as was hypothesised.

The two main findings of the affrication analyses support the hypothesis that affrication is a characteristic of WE. Affrication scores were correlated to accent judgements and analysed for group effects. Spearman's rho analyses showed no significant correlation between affrication score and Scouseness judgement, but a significant correlation between affrication score and Welsh Englishness ($r=0.611$; $p=0.002$). Thus, the more affricated /t/ is, the more an accent is judged as sounding WE. That affrication score and Scouse accent were not correlated can be explained by the fact that affrication is not exclusive to a Scouse accent: speakers with a Scouse-influenced accent had high affrication scores (e.g. the young, lower class group) but speakers without a Scouse-influenced accent (e.g. the older, lower class group with a WE accent) also had high affrication scores.

The amount of affrication found in people's /t/s depended significantly on SES. A Kruskal Wallis test showed significant group effects for SES ($\chi^2=9.4$; $df=1$;

$p=.002$) but not for age ($Chi-Square=1.34$; $df=1$; $p=.25$). This is shown in Figure 3, which shows the mean affrication scores of the four groups.

fig. 3 about here

Figure 3: Mean affrication scores of the two age and SES groups

The figure clearly shows that within both the young and the older age group, lower class speakers had significantly more affrication of /t/ ($Z=-2.8$; $p=.005$ and $Z=-1.9$; $p=.05$ respectively as found in a series of Mann Whitney tests), because the two lower-class groups had WE and Scouse accents, as shown by the accent judgements. All further group differences in affrication scores are explained by the accent differences between those groups.

Considering this result, it seems that the literature on Welsh English understates the prominence of affrication as a feature of (northern) WE. The literature on WE at best states that in North WE aspiration in /p,t,k/ “sometimes approaches affrication” (Penhallurick, 2004). The fact that much of the research data on WE dates from the 1980s could explain this.

As far as consistency is concerned, the attitude questionnaire consistently measured the B and C components of attitude (*Cronbach's alpha* = .93 and .96). The answers to the A items were only marginally consistent for WE and were inconsistent for LE. The A component of attitude thus measures a less precise aspect of attitude and is hence less reliable. As 5 out of 6 sets of items (2x3 sets) were reliable (of which one was marginally reliable), the results reported are based on total A, B, and C scores. That the affective items about Scouse on the questionnaire do not measure a one-dimensional aspect of attitude might be caused by the different nature of the items on language (l) and the items on culture and people (c). For *affective* items, these two types appear to differ more than for *behavioural* or *cognitive* items. An example from the questionnaire will explain this. While someone may agree with the affective statement that “Liverpudlians/ Scousers are social, warm-hearted and creative people” (c), they might at the same time agree with the (negative) affective statement that “Scouse English sounds uneducated” (l). Behavioural statements on the other hand, such as “I enjoy meeting and listening to Liverpudlians” (c) and “If I were to move to Liverpool, I would soon speak with a Liverpool accent” (l) are more likely to elicit similar responses. It can be said that affective statements elicit more extreme responses, causing inconsistent answers to slightly varying questions.

Pearson's correlation analyses between the three attitude components for both WE and LE, showed that for WE, A and B components of attitude are correlated ($r=.4$; $p=.05$) and that B and C components are correlated ($r=.5$; $p=.02$). For LE, A and C components are correlated, and B and C component are correlated ($r=.5$; $p=.0$). This rejects the first part of the attitude hypothesis that all components are correlated. It is difficult to say why for LE different components were correlated than for WE. As for both WE and LE, it is the affective component that is correlated to only one other component, this outcome may be related to the lesser reliability of the affective items on the questionnaire. Slight flaws in questionnaire design can also be a cause, although these are difficult to overcome.

Regarding group effects, only significant effects of age on overall attitude score were found. A MANOVA showed a significant effect for both WE ($F[1,20]=7$; $p=.02$)

and LE ($F[1,20]=10$; $p=.01$). Figure 4 shows that in general the older participants are more positive and that across the board attitudes towards WE are more positive than towards LE. That is not surprising as all participants are Welsh. A logical reason could be that attitudes towards Liverpool (English) and the Welsh (English accent) depend on one's generation: many older people have had more concrete experiences with Liverpool and Liverpudlians, whereas the younger groups have been influenced by the negative portrayal of Liverpool and Scouse(rs) in the media.

fig. 4 about here

Figure 4: Mean attitude scores for Welsh English and Liverpool English for the two age groups

For two out of three attitude components older participants were significantly more positive towards WE and LE. A MANOVA showed a significant age effect in WE affective attitude ($F[1,20]=6.3$; $p=.02$), in WE behavioural attitude ($F[1,20]=5.2$; $p=.03$), but not in WE cognitive attitude. For LE, this effect was found in affective attitude ($F[1,20]=28.5$; $p=0$) and in cognitive attitude ($F[1,20]=7.3$; $p=.01$), but not in behavioural attitude. The strongest effect of age was on participants' affective attitudes: for both accents, the two age groups differ most in their affective attitudes. People's affective attitude divides people most, one could say. This confirms the predicted prominent role for affective attitude. An effect which may be lost if questionnaire items are not as narrow as possible.

Interestingly, attitudes towards the two accents were not exclusive, i.e. having positive attitudes towards Scouse did not mean having negative attitudes towards WE. A Pearson's correlation analysis showed a significant correlation ($r=.50$; $p=0.01$). This relationship indicates overall positive or overall negative attitudes. To pinpoint which component(s) caused the correlation between the attitudes towards the accents, another Pearson's correlation analysis zoomed in to the individual attitude components. Significant, positive correlations were shown for the A components ($r=.64$; $p=0$) and the C components ($r=.47$; $p=.02$). The B components of attitude were not correlated. Thus, the behavioural items on the questionnaire were most likely to elicit inconsistent attitudes towards WE and LE. An explanation could be the possibly different nature of behavioural attitudes as opposed to the other attitude components, which is mentioned in the literature (Wicker, 1969) or, more likely, the realisation of the attitude components in the questionnaire. People may be equally motivated to meet Welsh people or Liverpudlians, but may not be equally motivated to change their accent to WE or to Scouse, or to live in Wales or Liverpool (i.e. change their behaviour). This indicates a delicate role of behavioural attitude within attitude.

The relation between (linguistic) behaviour and attitude, as predicted by the third hypothesis, is only partly confirmed. Spearman's correlation analyses did indeed show a positive relation between a WE accent and (affective) attitude towards WE ($r=.47$; $p=.02$). Also, across the board, participants express more positive attitudes towards WE than towards LE, and they sound more WE than LE. Despite this general accent-attitude congruence for WE, a negative correlation was found between (cognitive) attitudes towards Scouse and a Scouse accent ($r=-.45$; $p=.03$). Whereas participants' factual ideas about Scouse are negative, the accent still appeals to them, or vice versa. This is compatible with, and can be explained by, the group effects found for accent and attitude: in general, younger participants had more negative attitudes towards

Scouse and their accent was most Scouse-like. This does not confirm the hypothesis that attitudes and accent are congruent, but it is an interesting outcome. It could mean that the negative connotations of Scouse (identified as negative on the questionnaire) covertly appeal to young speakers and make them adopt a Scouse(-like) accent. This would confirm the typical picture that exists in the literature of young (lower class) speakers being attracted by covertly prestigious forms (Mees, 1983; Holmes, 2001), as opposed to older speakers who feel more attracted by the (prestige) norm: WE or BBC. This is exactly the picture of the elderly that the results give. The divergence of accent and attitude found for Scouse also works the other way: older speakers had no Scouse accent, but had significantly more positive attitudes towards Scouse than younger speakers. This can be explained by the fact that the elderly had overall positive attitudes. There were no correlations between attitudes to WE and LE accent judgement, nor between attitudes to LE and WE accent judgement.

4 *Conclusions*

The results of this study show that the relationship between accent and attitude is a highly complex one, influenced by social and situational factors. Whereas sociolinguistic attitudes in North Wales are mainly determined by age (a clear generational gap is visible between the attitudes of teenagers and elderly people), accents depend mainly on people's socioeconomic status: whereas Welsh English is still the main accent of English in North Wales, it is becoming a lower class accent. Among higher class speakers, BBC English was found to be the popular (prestige) norm. In the accents of teenagers, Scouse was heard besides WE and BBC English; among older speakers, both WE and BBC were found, depending on class.

A clear influence of Scouse in Bangor, Wales was found in the speech of lower class teenagers. This may indicate that even though "RP is often regarded as a 'neutral' and often 'correct' accent" (Wells, 1982), for many lower class teenagers the social importance of using a non-prestigious variety is more important than what is overtly considered as correct. Affrication was identified as a characteristic of North Wales English and not as an influence from Scouse. The possibility that affrication in North Wales English has once been introduced under the influence of Liverpool English ought to be recognized.

In general, attitudes and accents run parallel, but lower-class teenagers show that "sociolinguistic behaviour may in some cases be, not in accordance with but, in opposition to attitudes" (Ladegaard, 2003, 230). Attitudes seem to be able to explain rather than predict behaviour. Teenagers' negative comments on Scouse suggest that the accent may have more appeal to them than they realise. Whereas their attitudes towards Scouse do not predict their (linguistic) behaviour, a more detailed attitude analysis may well be able to explain it. The older people's attitudes towards LE show the feasibility "to have positive attitudes toward a particular variety without expressing these in overt behaviours" (Ladegaard, 2003: 230).

This study confirms Ladegaard's conclusion that "language attitudes [can] predict broad behavioural patterns of sociolinguistic behaviour" (2003: 230), but is critical of such a conclusion, as it is the inherently complex and covert nature of attitudes that makes them never conclusive and thus never fully predictive of linguistic behaviour.

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