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THE SOCIAL PERCEPTION OF
THREE FEATURES OF NEW YORK CITY ENGLISH

by

GIACOMO CASTRONOVO JR.

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Linguistics in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

2018

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in
Linguistics in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

The Social Perception of Three Features of New York City English

by

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Advisor: Michael Newman

Since the late 19th Century, the accent particular to New Yorker City natives of European descent has been negatively perceived by both the American general public and the speakers themselves. The stereotypification of New York City English speakers has largely been the cause of this negative evaluation, in that the features of the accent, as well as the unique New York discourse style, have long been utilized by actors and comedians to create characters of uneducated, uncultured provenance, as well as, all too often, unscrupulous behavior. Thus, the features of European-American New York City English appear to be inextricably linked to the stereotype, and so it is difficult to learn if negative perception is simply due to the aural quality of the phones, which may be displeasing to interlocutors, or if the interlocutors consider the phones to be markers of abhorrent values, attitudes, and traits. The current study attempts to disentangle the perceptions by presenting to participatory listeners three European-American New York City English features alone and in combination. Moreover, the features are presented in contextually ambiguous stimuli devoid of stereotypical New York characterization. In this way, the participants would only be able to rely on phonetic cues to elicit their visceral negative or positive responses. The results of two experiments reveal that the features alone are insufficient to generate anything more than a medial evaluation from 200 participants, thereby supporting the possibility that a Campbell-Kibler “stylistic package” that conforms to the participant schema of a stereotypical New Yorker is required to elicit negative reaction.

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Though he is long departed from this world, I would like to thank the brilliant British novelist, philologist, and *homme de lettres* Anthony Burgess for his literary works that ignited my nearly lifelong interest in linguistics. I also need to thank the people of New York City past – everyone from the creeps, the freaks, the crackpots, the weirdos, the punks, the shysters, the hustlers, and the ne'er-do-wells, right on up through the grocers, the bartenders, the cops, the firefighters, the cabdrivers, the ticket-takers, the doormen, the hot dog vendors, the waitresses, short-order cooks, and soda jerks – everyone whose rich accent and colorfully brash conversational style once made this city a great place to live.

My utmost thanks, of course, go to my advisor, Michael Newman, who somehow managed to endure my admittedly sometimes non-discipline train of thought and often importunate personality for four courses over the period of five years – right from my undergraduate days at Queens College to my departure from The Graduate Center. Whatever you're paying him, it certainly wasn't enough to put up with me.

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1. Introduction

Over an approximate two-week period in 2014, Gawker.com asked readers to vote for their choice of “America’s Ugliest Accent”, and what began as a seed-competition of 16 seemingly arbitrarily selected cities ended with Pittsburgh earning the (dis)honor of worst accent over second-place Boston. But where, we may ask, was the long-reviled New York City accent to be found in all of this? Surely, with its raised THOUGHT vowel and intricate set of rules that govern the Short-a Split, the accent had to have at least run third in this humorous competition. Yet, such a presumption would have been proven wrong, for of the 4,663 votes cast in the quarter-finals, New York City only took 46.34% of the vote, losing to its seed-match rival, Providence, Rhode Island (Evans, 2014).

That Boston came in second in the competition might have irked Massachusetts native John Adams, for the founding father hadn’t apparently been too fond of New York discourse. On one particular 1774 visit to the city, the future president clearly expressed his distaste for both the character of the local inhabitants and their manner of speaking, as his diary entry of August 23 notes:

With all the opulence and splendor of this city, there is very little good breeding to be found. We have been treated with an assiduous respect. But I have not seen one real gentleman, one well bred man since I came to town. At their entertainments there is no conversation that is agreeable. There is no modesty — no attention to one another. They talk very loud, very fast, and all together. If they ask you a question, before you can utter three words of your answer, they will break out upon you, again — and talk away. (Adams, 1774, para. 13)

Though it is unfortunate that we do not have Adams' opinions on the phonetics of the New York City lect, we at least have a workable starting point for what was to become a well-documented two-hundred-and-some-odd-year-history of aspersions cast upon its speakers. Americans foreign to the New York City isogloss, and even some within it, would for years to come express displeasure similar to that of Adams, describing the accent as everything from, as *The Boston Herald* put it, "queer-vowelled Manhattanese" ("Halls of Montezumas", 1889, p. 21) to downright "infantile" ("Noise and tension", 1940, p. D-6)", as posited by the 1940 Director of Speech at City College of New York.

Certainly, in a city that has maintained a comparatively extraordinary population since its 1624 founding, not all speakers will produce identical accent features, and this is noted well in the seminal studies of New York City English (henceforth, NYCE) by Babbitt (1896), Hubbell (1950), and Labov (2006). The laxing and tensing of /æ/, for example, during the production of words subject to the Short-a Split (also known as the TRAP-BATH Split), varies in degree not only amongst speakers of NYCE, but it can undergo intra-speaker variation, as well (Hubbell, 1950). Moreover, as Labov and the sociolinguistic researchers following his footsteps have learned, though r-dropping – the practice of eliding /r/ in certain environment – is widely associated with NYCE, the practice is not shared by all its speakers (Labov, 2006).

Despite these inter- and intra-speaker differences and variations, three-quarters of the lower and working class informants of the original 1966 Labov study for *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (henceforth, TSSENYC) reported that, just based on their speech pattern, they were immediately recognized as a New Yorker when traveling outside the city limits (Labov, 2006). And while this phenomenon cannot be taken as evidence that the New York City accent is, or has ever been, the most recognizable of American accents (no explicit study seems to have been

done on this possibility) it does lead us to posit that certain NYCE features appear to have become so thoroughly entrenched in the collective consciousness of the American public that instant recognition of its speakers appears to be more the rule than the exception.

Yet, as Hubbell (1950) wrote, many of the NYCE features of his time were found in other American accents, and what seemed to make NYCE unique was only the “particular combination of these features” (p. 9). For instance, the Eastern New England and Southern accents have historically been noted for their non-rhoticity and as we shall see in the current study, /æ/-tensing is still common to most other varieties of American English, albeit in a more limited range of phonetic conditions (Labov, Ash, & Boberg, 2006a). Given, these commonalities, the current research investigates which of three NYCE features could be a basis for the historic prejudice of listeners toward speakers of NYCE. Additionally, it asks if there is among these features one in particular that causes listeners to formulate negative evaluations of personality traits or if it takes a combination of features to provoke such censure.

After this introduction, Part 2 will provide a list of the phonetics and features of NYCE and how each will be transcribed and referred to throughout the work. This is deemed necessary due to the many different transcriptions employed by various researchers over the approximately 120 years of study of NYCE. The history of the stigmatization of NYCE will then be given in Part 3. As will be shown in the section, although inter-class linguistic prejudice might have occurred within the isogloss before the 1880s, as New York newspaper reporters and cartoonists of that era began to transcribe the colorful vernacular of the lower and working class New Yorkers, the stereotype of the uneducated, uncultured NYCE speaker not only emerged but quickly radiated throughout the nation by way of syndication. Part 4 will then concern itself with previous research

on both the phonological structure of the features in question and the social perception of NYCE, with particular focus on the work of Labov (2006) and Becker (2014).

Moving on to the methodology employed for the current research, Part 5 will begin with the discussion of the work of Labov et al. (2006a, 2011), and Campbell-Kibler (2007, 2011), as it is these papers that directly informed the experimental methodology for this paper. This first leads us to an outline of the current research in Part 6, in which I also offer my hypotheses, and in Part 7 I will discuss both my rationale for the selection of the phones to be studied and the final methodology employed for the current research.

Parts 8 and 9 will cover Experiments I and II of the research, as well as the results, and Part 10 will discuss the ramifications of those results. The paper will then conclude with a summary of the study in Part 11.

2. The Features of European-American New York City English

New York City has always been the proverbial melting pot of ethnicities, and as such, there are currently many variations of NYCE to be heard in the modern era. There is African-American NYCE, Latino NYCE, and Asian NYCE, to name a few, and while these lects are all integral to the composition of NYCE (as the lect is generally referred to as a whole), this paper focuses solely on the stigmatization and current perception of what I term, for clarity, European-American New York City English (EANYCE). As will be shown in the historical section of this paper, this is the NYCE lect that evolved from the interaction of 19th century, primarily European, immigrants on Manhattan's Lower East Side and then spread to the outer boroughs as those immigrants settled into working class lives and middle class environments. Though speakers of other varieties of NYCE may share some of the features of ENCYE, any of my comments on these features should,

unless stated otherwise, be considered in reference to EANYCE alone. Moreover, when referring to previous research that made no distinction of subclasses, I will use the umbrella term of NYCE.

Since the following section of this paper will discuss the history of EANYCE stigmatization, it is deemed necessary to first present both the features pertinent to the current research and the phonetic transcriptions and nomenclature that I will use throughout this paper. As for the rationale for the selection of only certain phones to be included in the experimental part of the current research, that will be addressed in the section on methodological design. We will then begin our discussion of the relevant features of EANYCE with the Short-a Split.

Short-a split: The documented phonetic history of EANYCE reveals that at least since the mid-19th century, speakers have pronounced the near-low front unrounded vowel /æ/ in two different manners depending on phonetic environment (Babbitt, 1896). Babbitt appears to be the first researcher to address this differentiation in pronunciation, noting that in his time the older speakers of NYCE were producing higher examples of the vowel in words such as *ask*, *half*, and *pass* than those they were producing in such words as *man* and *cab*. Moreover, he found that among the working class “the general vowel (that being [e]) has overtaken the special one” (Babbitt, 1896), and thus, during his time, the sound pattern appeared to be a “change in progress” (Newman, 2014).

Since the time of that early research, the nature of the Short-a Split has been thoroughly studied (Trager, 1930; Hubbell, 1950; Labov, 2006; Becker & Wong, 2010) leading to the documentation of the environments in which lax and tense /æ/ generally occur. Unfortunately, past research has not agreed on a standard transcription of the tense version of this vowel, but the current research will, in the manner of Newman (2014), transcribe it as [ɛ̹].

Being that the system of rules governing the EANYCE Short-a Split is quite complex and that pronunciation is subject to individual variation (especially in the pronunciation of words such as *jazz* and *glad* (Hubbell, 1950)), I shall limit the description to the environments relevant to the current research.

1. [æ] raises to [ɛ̞] before nasals /m/ and /n/, but only when the phones are tautosyllabic (Becker and Wong, 2010). For example, a speaker of EANYCE will produce *ban* as [bɛ̞n] but *banner* as [bænər] when it indicates the sense of a type of flag. This is due to the fact that the speaker doesn't consider the nasal to be a first-syllable coda but, rather, a second-syllable onset. Yet, raising will occur to produce [bɛ̞nər] when it indicates the sense of a person who bans things. This is due to the root's pronunciation, [bɛ̞n], affecting other lexical forms. (Newman, 2014)
2. [æ] is produced before tautosyllabic consonants, p, t, k, and tʃ.
3. [ɛ̞] is produced before all other tautosyllabic consonants and words formed from their lexical roots. Thus, for *cab* and *cabbie* a speaker will produce [cɛ̞b] and [cɛ̞bi] but not [cɛ̞bɪdʒ] for *cabbage* because, here, non-tautosyllabic /b/ causes the speaker to produce [cæbɪdʒ].

/ɜ/-replacement: Although the now (or most certainly nearly) defunct EANYCE phenomenon of phonetically producing /ɜ/ as a variably central to low diphthong or glide ending in /i/ is well documented, there appears to have never been put forth, for the sake of convenient reference, any suggestion of nomenclature assignment. Therefore, for clarity and uniformity, I will refer to it as /ɜ/-replacement and transcribe it as /ɜ̞/, again after the manner of Newman (2014). It is, according

to Babbitt, the diphthong that many late 19th century working class speakers produced when saying words such as *girl* and *world*, the first phone of which “runs the gamut down through ə and ɒ until it reaches the point which leads the comic papers to print "goil," "woild," etc., in attempting to give the ‘Bowery dialect’” (Babbitt, 1896). Although the current research does not concern itself with the current social perception of /ɜː/, it is necessary to note its profound contribution to the historical stigmatization of EANYCE on the whole, as will be revealed in the next section.

Raised-THOUGHT: *The Atlas of North American English* (2006) (henceforth, ANAE) reports an F1 700hz demarcation between non-raised and raised /ɔ/, with examples under 700hz being considered the latter. Although ANAE also reports that raised-THOUGHT can be found among several dialects of American English, particularly those found in the eastern coastal strip that runs from lower New England through the mid-Atlantic, the feature has primarily come to be “indexical of a ‘stereotypical New Yorker’” (Becker, 2014).

Interdental Fricative Stopping: Labov notes that the production of dental /t/ and /d/ for the respective phones /θ/ and /ð/ (e.g. [tɪŋ] for /θɪŋ/; [dɪs] for /ðɪs/) “is everywhere considered to have less prestige,” but also states that they “are not peculiar to New York City” (Labov, 2006). In this work, I will refer to particular cases as either stopped-/θ/ or /ð/ (depending on the involved phone), but for a blanket term for the two, I will use “IF-stopping”.

Intrusive-/r/; dropped-/r/; dropped-/h/: Though not germane to the current research, these features are noted here due to their contribution to the stigmatization of EANYCE. Intrusive-r occurs when some EANYCE speakers insert /r/ into a word or phrase even though it has no

“etymological source” (Newman 2014). This can be heard in the case of /rɔroɪstəz/ for “raw oysters”, for example (Babbit, 1896). More known to the laity, though, and thereby exponentially contributing to EANYCE stigmatization, is intrusive-/r/’s replacement of the diphthong /ɔɪ/ in words such as “coin” [kɔɪn], “oil” [ɔɪl], and “toilet” [tɔɪlɪt]. Although the feature is largely considered to be extinct (Labov, 2006), numerous examples can be found in mid-20th century New York-centric fare, such as the Dead End Kids/Bowery Boys film series and the television programs *The Honeymooners*, *Car 54 Where are You?*, and *All in the Family*.

Dropped-/r/ (also known as r-lessness and non-rhoticity) is the well-documented process of eliding /r/ in “final and pre-consonantal” positions (Labov, 2006). However, the feature is certainly not limited to EANYCE, as ANAE reports that it is also a traditional feature of the Eastern New England and Southern dialects (Labov et al., 2006a). Examples of the feature are [ka] for /kar/ and [pak] for /park/. As for h-dropping, Hubbell reports that during his time the “initial cluster /hj/ (in words like *huge* and *humorous*) is very frequently lacking on the uncultivated and intermediate levels” (Hubbell, 1950). Although, the feature is currently on the wane (Newman, 2014), it underwent a brief period of national exposure during the 2016 United States presidential campaigns, this due to its use by native New York candidates Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump. Prior to the campaign, its recognition appeared to be limited to native New Yorkers, as evidenced by the multitude of articles appearing during the campaign needing to explain the phenomenon to non- (and, one presumes, even younger) EANYCE speakers. Thus, having never before attained the national level of enregistration (Agha, 2005), it might have only been viewed as a marker of EANYCE rather than as a stereotypical (and therefore stigmatic) feature to the order /ɜ/-replacement and raised-THOUGHT.

As noted, the above features are listed and explained only in preparation for the following section centering on the history of EANYCE stigmatization. Details of each feature germane to the current research will be developed and analyzed in appropriate sections to follow.

3. History of Stigmatization of EANYCE

“Oy Gevalt!” moans the headline of a 1993 *New York Times* article, “New Yawkese an Endangered Dialect?” and it is seemingly the first of many to-date on the alleged impending death of the New York accent. Quoted for the piece is sociolinguist William Stewart, then of the CUNY Graduate Center, who mourns the loss of the accent by stating, “We all sound like TV announcers” (Sontag, 1993, p. 1), and only five years later, Stewart is quoted for yet another article on the very same subject, stating that New York ways of speaking are “either being dropped or incorporated into the language as a whole” (Stamler, 1998, p. CY1). The subject was again taken up in a 2010 *New York Post* article in which George Jochnowitz of the College of Staten Island states, “In Manhattan, [the accent] is definitely dying” (McClear, 2010, para. 27). Yet, in the very same article, sociolinguist Kara Becker slightly disagrees by claiming that it’s not dying, but rather changing (McClear, 2010). Despite the different perspectives linguists may have on the subject – whether the features are disappearing or changing – they all agree that it is due to stigmatization: historically, speakers of NYCE have been thought uneducated (Labov, 2006).

Though it will be presently argued here that EANYCE had largely become a stereotype even before the 1920 arrival of broadcast radio, it is first necessary to note that individual features of the accent have not historically been uniformly stigmatized. For example, in her raised-THOUGHT study, Becker (2014) notes the change in social perception of that particular feature since 1966. Whereas Labov (2006) stated that raised-THOUGHT was, in the early 1960s, still

“lagging behind the other NYCE variables with respect to negative evaluation” (Labov, 2006) in 2013, he and his team argued that “the withdrawal from raised THOUGHT in Philadelphia is in fact a consequence of negative associations with NYCE raised THOUGHT and with the low prestige of NYCE more generally” (Labov, Rosenfelder & Fruehwald, 2013). In other words, in 1966, THOUGHT was still only a marker of EANYCE – negatively evaluated, but not yet stigmatized – but by 2013 it had become an iconic and stereotypical feature. Moreover, this same transition from indicator to marker to stereotype can be seen with the EANYCE feature of r-lessness. Prior to World War II, the feature had been viewed prestigiously, but during the post-war era it quickly fell to becoming a marker of unintelligence (Labov, 2006). Yet, as we shall see, as EANYCE came to be stigmatized on the whole, the individual features that composed the accent at any point in time seemed to be of little importance to those prejudiced against its speakers. That is, once non-New Yorkers and “educated” New Yorkers alike perceived EANYCE as a lect of the lower and working class, the individual features that actually composed the lect mattered very little.

Though it is difficult to determine the exact first print reference of the working class accent found in Manhattan during the second half of the 19th century, an apparent early entry exists in the January 9, 1889 edition of *The New York Evening Post*. In a scathing review of the acting talents of a certain Mrs. Potter, evidently a nouveau riche socialite who seems to have had bought herself the starring role in Broadway’s *Antony and Cleopatra*, the critic notes that the actress appears to have borrowed “many of her attitudes and much of her pronunciation” from the Bowery (Mrs. Potter, 1889). No doubt, the writer was here being as equally critical of the new “Boweryese” he was hearing in the city as he was of Mrs. Potter, and even more criticism of the accent followed not two weeks later with the publication of a letter by a mystified reader of the *New York Sun*.

Addressed to the “Questions from Correspondents” section of that paper, the letter even contains an early effort to transcribe what was soon to become one of the accent’s most salient features, thus suggesting that it was still in its infancy. Seeking enlightenment from the editor, a J.D.W asks:

Is there any authority for the peculiar pronunciation almost universally employed in the city of New York, at least among young people, of such words as “bird”, “earth” and “work”? These are invariably pronounced, as nearly as I can express it, as “buh-id”, “uh-ith”, and “wuh-ik”, the rolling or trilling of the ‘r’ being totally ignored. In New England, these words are pronounced differently, the full value of each letter being given. Which is correct?”

To which the paper replies:

The New England pronunciation is correct. There is no good authority for the Manhattanese pronunciation. It is a localism, like the New England habit of dropping the “g”. Mr. Howells¹ first took up this mispronunciation, and a discussion of its origin sprang up. Whether any definite origin was decided on, we do not know (Questions, 1889).

That the columnist replies without much embellishment is even further evidence for the infancy of the feature, for as we shall see, *The Sun* would very soon become home to a series of short comedic fictions that would spread the feature, and the concomitant stereotyping of it, nationwide. In the interim, however, the transcription that would prove to be laicly enduring for the phonetic feature, though in a different phonetic environment, appears in a horse racing column in the September 12, 1890 edition of the *New York Herald*. The reporter writes of famed trainer

¹ Through research for this paper, it was determined that Mr. Howells might have been a 19th century standard pronunciation/spelling guide, possibly penned by American literary figure William Dean Howells. Efforts to locate an edition, or even further information about it, proved fruitless.

“Father Bill” Daly and his “loidy” friends (Potomac, 1890), and though the feature is here ascribed to the /ei/ diphthong, the fact that Bill Daly was a colorful rough and tumble turn-of-the-century character given to whipping the jockeys he trained illustrates that the feature had, by that time, already become associated with less-than-cultured speakers. Indeed, it was already well on its way from indicator to marker.

Predating both these appearances, however, is the work of Edward Waterman Townsend, then a contributor to the San Francisco *Argonaut*. Sometime in the 1880s, Townsend had begun to transcribe the vernacular pronunciation found among the San Francisco working class for comedic short pieces, which were then syndicated to various newspapers and journals around the country. Though he is uncredited for an 1887 piece syndicated to, at least, the *Dallas Morning News* and Baton Rouge’s *Capitolian Advocate*, the work is decidedly his, as it originates from *The Argonaut* and refers to “Chimmie”, a rough-talking, slang-heavy character that Townsend would bring to the *New York Sun* in the early 1890s.

Published in 1895, a collection of these “Chimmie Fadden” stories reveals that the characters’ accents may actually be an amalgam of New York and San Francisco working class accents, although it also appears that Townsend had been trying to faithfully represent the speech patterns he was hearing in his new city. While the use of stopped /θ/ and /ð/ (e.g. /θink/ → [tink], /ðem/ → [dɛm]), as well as “poipers” for “papers” (Townsend, 1895), is consistent throughout both sets of stories, the first person subject pronoun changes from the San Franciscan [ɔɪ] to the New York [aɪ] after relocation. Moreover, /leɪdi/ always appears as *lady* in the San Francisco stories but overwhelmingly appears as *loidy* in the New York stories. Though at first gloss this seems to corroborate the Father Bill Daly pronunciation as recorded by the unknown 1890 *Sun* columnist, Babbitt begs to differ. While the dialectologist does verify the existence of both an /ê/

glide and the /ɜ/-replacement among local speakers, he asserts that the regional pronunciations of *loidy* and *poipers* is pure fabrication. “It may be worth noting,” he writes, “that the use of i for r does not occur after any other vowel [than /o/], whatever Mr. Howells may say. The solitary instance of anything of that kind that I have heard was an order for ‘poik tenderloin’ in a restaurant from a person who, as I have afterwards noticed, could not produce r at all” (Babbitt, 1896).

Babbitt’s contention evidences that by the mid-1890s there was already overextended stereotyping of the accent, and Townsend certainly was not the lone culprit. By 1893, Stephen Crane had produced the Bowery-centric *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, littering it with *goils* and *Gawds* (Newman, 2014), and in the same year, *Truth* cartoonist R.F. Outcault was already capturing the lives of street children of the Lower East Side, transcribing their productions of *skirt* as *skoyt*. His one-panel feature *Hogan’s Alley*, where unshod, uncultivated denizens of the Bowery spilled from overcrowded tenements and often beat each other with pipes, arrived in 1895, and each week a half-million readers of the *New York World* would await the humorous words of wisdom, cynicism, and protest that Outcault placed on fences, signs, and placards throughout the work. In regards to phonetic transcription, however, the February 16, 1896 installment brings us the raised THOUGHT of “dawg”, while the July 12, 1896 installment is particularly interesting in that it offers an early example of “Noo York”, thereby capturing the local pronunciation of the high back rounded vowel, which, as Babbitt notes, doesn’t align to the “usual American *iu*” (Babbitt, 1896).

Outcault’s strip was not only a local success, but a national one, as well. In the autumn of 1896, newspapers from Boston, MA, Wilkes-Barre, PA, and Charleston, SC were reporting on local parades stocked with *Hogan’s Alley* characters, and by early 1897, *Hogan’s Alley* theatrical productions were even appearing in cities nationwide. It was in late October of 1896, however,

that *Hogan's Alley* had been renamed *The Yellow Kid*, this due to the singularly overwhelming popularity of one particular character: a bald-headed urchin with weekly aphorisms, adages, and witticisms emblazoned on his oversized yellow shirt. Indeed, *The Yellow Kid* is today known as the world's first truly successful comic strip, and it is largely due to the machinations of William Randolph Hearst (Outcault, 1895). The publisher had recently purchased the struggling *New York Journal*, and not only did he hire Outcault away from the *World*, but he paired him with none other than Chimie Fadden creator E.W. Townsend. Importantly, upon reading the revamped strip/narratives that the team created for the *Journal*, one immediately notices that although Outcault had always peppered *Hogan's Alley* with EANYCE, Townsend joyously dumps the entire contents of the shaker, his copy thoroughly congested with raised /ɔ/'s, stopped-IFs, iu-less /u/'s of "Toosday"s and "Noo Yaurk"s (sic) and an occasional dropped /r/ (e.g. "on bawd d' ship") (Outcault, 1995).

Largely due to the runaway book sales of Townsend's Fadden series and *The Yellow Kid* reprints in national humor magazines, "Boweryese" had by this time fully entered the national consciousness to take on a life of its own. Indeed, it was even in international consciousness, for in 1896, the *Noo York* transcription even appeared in Rudyard Kipling's *Captain's Courageous*. More importantly, for the current research, is the fact that the orthography and pronunciation, whether it was *Noo York*, *Yawk*, or *Yaurk*, had quickly come to be used to identify New Yorkers as a group, especially when a non-New Yorker sought to mark the natives as objects of derision. In 1899, for example, one particularly irate *Washington Post* columnist blasts "the tawdry, pulp headed princoxes who form a considerable element of the population of Noo York" (They Call it, 1899) while a 1905 nationally syndicated short fiction from the *Chicago Record-Herald* has an irritated golfer complain, "I'm gettin' sick of hearing of Noo York and how half-baked Chicago is" (A Game, 1905).

Thus, the widespread dissemination of EANYCE through newspaper articles and fiction was beginning to help mold the stereotype of the ill-spoken, arrogant New Yorker. Moreover, the Superintendents Board for New York City Public Schools didn't help to dispel the "ill-spoken" facet when, in a 1912 pamphlet for city educators, it discussed the "deplorable manner" (Imperfect Speech, 1912) in which the students spoke. Planned as an educators' guide for correction, the pamphlet was evidently distributed to the press, and within a few weeks newspapers in Miami, Boston, and Chicago, among others, were informing their readers that the Board was finally preparing to mount the difficult task of turning "'Goil' into 'Girl'" (New York Prepares, 1912). But perhaps it was the readers of the *Tucson Citizen* who came away with the most limited perspective of the "typical" New Yorkers, in that the reporter began his piece with, "Those who have cherished the delusion that the comic supplement language, as served to public by the brilliant cartoonists of the New York newspapers, was an exaggeration as gross and distorted as their pictures may now be convinced of their error" (New York English, 1912).

It must here be clarified that this stereotype had begun to emerge before most Americans had either met or had even heard a New Yorker speak. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, tourist travel was still only affordable to the upper classes, which comprised only 2% of the American population (Weiss, 2004); thus, there were not many Americans who were travelling to New York at that time. And though it is true that the *Hogan's Alley* and *The Yellow Kid* stage shows had enjoyed their time on the theater/vaudeville circuit, it must also be considered that the fad was over by 1897, with the strip being cancelled in January of 1898. In short, it would be difficult to posit that any great number of non-New Yorkers had heard the accent via the stage. Nevertheless, as the Tucson piece illustrates, since the 1890s, the EANYCE of the lower classes had by then become entrenched in the popular culture – so much so, in fact, that the nation's press

had apparently grown tired of it, as the flood of transcriptions of *goil* in the 1890s slowed to a trickle in the newspapers of the 1920s. Even Ring Lardner, the best-selling writer celebrated for his brilliant capture of local dialects in his stories about folksy baseball players, dim-witted prizefighters, and irascible Broadway personalities, began to eschew the orthographical use of the, by then, stereotypical transcriptions of *dere* and *goil*. For example, he limits his fast-talking Brooklyn protagonist of *Sun Cured* (1927) only to a few instances of /ɜ:l/ for /ɔil/ and the like.

Overall, it seems as though the comic portrayal and derision of New Yorkers by accent had finally come to a close by the 1920s, in print anyway, for unfortunately, there are few extant recordings of period radio broadcasts to learn if it had continued in the new medium. Moreover, although 1922 radio fans as far as Bridgeport, Connecticut might have heard famed vaudevillian and Lower East Side native Eddie Cantor drop his /r/'s and produce /ɜ:/ in [rəhɜ:'s] and [pɜ:'sənəli], as he does in 1929's *A Zigfield Midnight Frolic*, coast-to-coast radio transmission wouldn't begin until 1926 with the establishment of the NBC Network. Thus, even with the growth of radio over the last few years of the decade, it would have still been a bit difficult for the average American to actually hear the accent. This would, of course, change not only with the continued growth of radio in the 1930s, but with the introduction of "talking pictures" in 1927.

Though inaugural talkie *The Jazz Singer* is set on New York's Lower East side, the dialogue is mostly limited to a few prelude lines to each song. Therefore, the film would still not provide a national audience much in the way of the New York accent. However, 1929 would see box-office favorite Clara Bow bringing her native Brooklyn accent, marked by a high tense /ɛ^o/, to three films released in 1929, and in the same year, Groucho Marx's /ɔɪ/² would make its film debut

² It is here necessary to remark on the distinction between what could be considered authentic /ɜ:/ and an inauthentic /ɔɪ/ that has been historically used to create stereotypical New York characters. "To find a clear pattern in the variation between /ɜ:/ and /ɔɪ/ is difficult" states Hubbell (1950), but one would reasonably expect that if a speaker's idiolect contains the feature, it would at least be fairly consistent. Yet, this is not what we find in the comedians of the early

in *The Cocoanuts*. Moreover, Philadelphia born actor John Wray would also in that year use /ɔɪ/ to create underworld figure Joe Prividi for 1929's *New York Nights*, thereby offering us an early glimpse of what was to become a phonetic mainstay in period crime drama. Regarding other EANYCE features, Bronx native Sylvia Sidney would contribute her raised-THOUGHT to 1931's *Street Scene*, a film about lives in a New York City tenement, which would also feature Beulah Bondi as a θ-stopping, loudmouth busybody.

In short, by the end of the 1930s, theater screens were teeming with New York characters created purely through phonetic stereotyping of EANYCE, and a clear and enduring pattern had emerged: when New York City features are specifically and exaggeratedly used to delineate character, the character is usually either working class, unintelligent, comical, disreputable, or a combination of any or all of those traits. A case in point is the Ann Sothern character of Maisie Ravier, a fast-talking and likable but not-too-bright Brooklynite featured in a ten-film series beginning in 1939. Though Sothern was a native of North Dakota, she affects a stereotypical, if uneven, “Brooklynese” to create the popular character, which immediately became problematic

to mid-20th century. While Groucho's shifty confidence man Mr. Hammer of *The Cocoanuts* produces [pɔɪsənəli], we find that during his non-character 1970s interviews on *The Dick Cavett Show*, he produces more of the centralized glide /ʌy/, as transcribed by Labov. This can be heard in his interview utterances of /bʌyθ/ and /θʌyd/.

Based on further analyses of extant interviews with Mr. Marx's coeval native New York comedians, the current research posits that those comedians who, like Mr. Marx, had an alter ego nearly inseparable from film persona, occasionally slipped between /ɔɪ/ ~ /ɜ/ ~ /ɜ/ production – this possibly due to their years of on-screen inauthentic /ɔɪ/ production. Moreover, even on screen the production of these phones tends to vary. For example, in inaugural Three Stooges short *Woman Haters*, Brooklyn native Jerome “Curly” Howard introduces 1934 movie audiences to his trademark [sɔɪtənli], but this inauthentic pronunciation is later belied by his standard pronunciation of [gɜl] in the same film. Yet, during non-character interviews in his later years, older brother and comedic teammate Moe Howard only occasionally produces an extremely slight trace of /ɜ/ in some words and absolutely no examples of comical /ɔɪ/ at all. On the other end of the spectrum, however, is Leo Gorcey, a native of the Washington Heights section of Manhattan. Gorcey seems to have used an inauthentic /ɔɪ/ to create his longtime on-screen persona variably known as Spit, Muggs, and Slip, and this is evidenced during a rare “non-character” interview in 1968. During the approximately 30-minute conversation, he regularly uses the more centralized /ɜ/ until, when speaking of his car, a Mercury, he accidentally produces [mɔɪkjəri]. Noticing the phonetic lapse into character, he laughs before correcting himself with [mɜkjəri], and this is followed by a few standard pronunciations of [wɜk] before finally reverting to his authentic [wɜk]. Suffice to say that even though /ɜ/ had by the 1930s already become a stereotypical feature of NYCE, comedians seemed to believe it was necessary to produce “hyper-phones” of it in order to thoroughly delineate character.

for a group of Brooklyn school teachers. According to the August 18, 1940 edition of the Washington D.C. *Sunday Star*, Sothern received a letter from the group asking, “if there wasn’t some way for Maisie to improve her English” because they were “trying to wean [their students] from typical Brooklyn slanguage” (Heffernan, p. F-2). Apparently, the teachers’ efforts were proving unsuccessful, as the students would combat them with arguments of “Maisie was ‘from Brooklyn, and she says so and so’” (Heffernan, 1940, p. F-2).

The appeal to Ms. Sothern seems to be an omen of what was to come, for a year later, Board of Education director Dr. Letitia E. Raubicheck both revisited and ramped up the Board’s (evidently failed) 1912 plans to “cultivate acceptable diction and pleasant pronunciation” (Erl, Boid, and Voise, 1941, p. 10) amongst the student body. She insisted that Bronx speech was substandard due to palatalization, while Brooklyn speech was nasal and egregiously rife with /ɜ/-replacement and /ɪ/-intrusion. By deploying a force of speech teachers throughout the city, Dr. Letitia hoped to “establish one standard American speech, free from local deviations” (Erl, Boid, and Voise, 1941 p. 10), and though it is unknown if the program was ever realized, a few noticeable changes in the phonetic structure of EANYCE did occur over the next few decades. Indeed, the change is even bookended by two items in the *New York Times* dated approximately 32 years apart. The first item, a letter to the editor, appeared just five days after the Raubicheck article, and it is from one Francis Griffith, an obviously proud Brooklynite who was, apparently, also an amateur linguist. After arguing that Raubicheck’s plan to reform Brooklyn speech could not come at a worse time, for Brooklyn’s beloved Dodgers were in the pennant race, he corrects Raubicheck (and the *Times*) about the phonological mechanics of /ɜ/-replacement. “The digraph “oi”, he writes, “gives an erroneous auditory concept of the sound. It is more accurately a diphthong composed of the vowels in “up” and “ill,” the former being stressed and the latter treated as an off-

glide” (Griffith, 1941, p. 9). Mr. Griffith then goes on to educate Ms. Raubicheck on the Anglo-Saxon history of the phone, which, he claims, disappeared before the time of Chaucer but curiously reappeared in the 19th Century New York.

Yet, as we know, Mr. Griffith’s plea to save “Brooklynese” was for naught, and this is evidenced by an August 16, 1972 Times obituary, written by none other than that very same letter writer, Francis Griffith himself.

“Brooklynese died from lack of native speakers” (Griffith, 1972, p. 37), he claims, and the linguist goes on to note the increased population of African Americans and Latinos in Brooklyn, stating also that:

The inhabitants of the remaining white areas are not native speakers of Brooklynese. The only surviving speakers of that lovely dialect are television comedians and a small number of elderly citizens...Because Brooklynese has died, American English is less varied and vigorous. It has been diminished; part of the main has been lost. The bells should be tolling in Brooklyn” (Griffith, 1972, p. 37).

While Mr. Griffith was correct in his claims of the changing population of Brooklyn, his assertion that it was the sole killer of “Brooklynese” is unfounded. For as Labov had already learned in his research for TSSENYC, the changing population clearly had a partner in the wrongful death of “Brooklynese”, and it went by the name of “linguistic self-hatred” (Labov, 2006).

4. Previous Research and Current Perception

Labov began his work on TSSENYC in the early 1960s, and it partly concerned the linguistic attitudes of both native and non-native New Yorkers toward the lect. Having culled the opinions of 68 New York City adults, he found that two-thirds of them wholly believed that non-New Yorkers held a negative view of the NYCE. Yet, the actual opinions of the 28 non-New Yorker participants he recruited for the study painted a slightly different picture: 19 of them were nearly split on their view of NYCE – ten positive and nine negative – while the remaining nine said they were neutral. So, despite the years of stigmatization through the educational system and media, it appeared that non-New Yorkers weren't as decidedly negatively biased against NYCE as the natives assumed (Labov, 2006).

Further native insecurities were revealed when Labov asked his NYC respondents to describe the lect and they came back with, “‘It’s terrible’, ‘Distorted’, ‘Terribly careless’, ‘Sloppy’, and ‘Lou-zay!’” (Labov, 2006, p. 330). Moreover, personal narratives centered on being immediately identified as a New Yorker by their speech when out of town, and Labov reports that “the overwhelming majority of respondents felt that recognition as a New Yorker was tantamount to stigmatization as a New Yorker” (Labov, 2006, p. 327). Indeed, the opinions his respondents held of their own lect were so overwhelmingly negative that it led him to coin the term “linguistic self-hatred” to describe the phenomenon.

Though Labov had discovered that non-New Yorker opinions of NYCE during the mid-20th weren't as negative as New Yorkers perceived, it must, of course, be considered that his non-New Yorker participant pool was extremely small. It must also be considered that actual public opinion of the time, should a larger scale study with data collected, tallied, and disseminated have even be mounted, might have done little to alleviate the psychological damage of what was, by

then, approximately 75 years of continual castigation and belittlement of the lect. Moreover, as it is made clear by Labov's reported cases of individual speakers, actual and not presumed collective opinion would have little import when one is the direct victim of linguistic prejudice. We can take Nathan B. as an example.

Labov reports that Nathan B. was a Lower East Side native who had earned a PhD in political science, and though he was a candidate for professorship, he was ultimately rejected by his academic cohorts due to his uncontrollable fortification of the interdental fricatives. While this may first be taken only as qualitative evidence of stigmatization, it is quantitatively supported by the data culled from Labov's 12 upper middle class respondents. For his research, Labov created respondent phonological indexes for each of his studied features, and he then measured actual use of those phones in various registers on a scale of informal to formal. When Nathan B.'s index is included with his class (that being upper middle), the index for formal usage of /θ/ and /ð/ is, respectively, 10 and 14, but when his index is removed, it drops to 2 and 4. Thus, Nathan's lack of linguistic conformity to his socio-economic group is clear, but more importantly, Labov's data on the upper middle class respondent subjective judgments of IF-stopping led the researcher to state "it is evident that they [Nathan's SEC cohorts in the study] too would have rejected him from that community" (Labov, 2006, p. 160).

From the above, we can see that although the overall opinion of the non-EANYCE general public might not corroborate EANYCE speaker assumptions, qualitative and quantitative evidence shows that the stigmatization of EANYCE and its consequences existed in the era of the original Labov study. Moreover, even though the two seemingly most stigmatized and reviled features of EANYCE had begun to wane by the 1960s – those being /ɛ'/-replacement and intrusive-/r/ – the lect would continue to be stigmatized by stereotypical portrayals of New York characters. In the

1970s, New Jersey-born actor John Travolta brought to the public his /r/-dropping, /ð/-stopping, uneducated and uncultured Brooklyn characters of Vinnie Barbarino and Tony Manero to television and cinema in, respectively, the highly successful series *Welcome Back, Kotter* (1975-1979) and the box-office smash *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), while throughout the 1980s, Brooklyn-born Tony Danza didn't do much to disabuse the general public of its connection between EANYCE and low education by using his natural stopped /ð/, raised-THOUGHT accent to portray knuckle-dragging dimwits in television hits *Taxi* (1978-1983) and *Who's the Boss* (1984-1992). While true, however, that some well-known EANYCE-speaking characters, such as those in 1992's theatrical hit *My Cousin Vinny* (the /θ/-stopping lawyer Vinny Gambini and his girlfriend Mona Lisa Vito, respectively portrayed by New Jerseyan Joe Pesci and Brooklynite Marisa Tomei) and television smash *The Nanny* (portrayed by Queens native Fran Drescher, 1993 - 1999), were portrayed as having street smarts and not being exactly uneducated, these characters are certainly exceptions to the rule. Moreover, it must be noted that the characters in question were still portrayed as not being particularly cultured. Suffice to say, one would be hard-pressed to find in the history of radio, cinema, and television the character of a physicist or art impresario who speaks with EANYCE phones in question.

Since the work of Labov 1966, a number of studies have asked participants to rank their general perception of American lects by geographical area alone, meaning no stimuli were provided for judgment and that the researchers were asking the participants to simply rely on their preconceived notions of the local speech. Thus, it is unknown if those preconceived notions were of EANYCE or one of the many other lects found in NYC, but again, being that NYC had, by the time of these studies, become inextricably linked to the concept of "non-standard accent", whatever version of NYCE the participants envisioned matter little: the collective results of these

studies indicated, contrary to Labov's findings, a general disdain for NYC speech. Some of these studies include Preston (1989, 1996), in which university students of Southern Indiana and Michigan rated NYC speech at the bottom of the "correctness" and "pleasantness" scales, as did Oregonians, in a Hartley (1996) study modeled on Preston's work.

It must be noted, however, that these studies were conducted either before or at the very dawn of the Internet era, and we don't know if the new paradigm of a digitally connected society has in any way changed the perception of NYC or EANYCE. That the increase of shared information since the time of the Preston and Hartley studies might have engendered a more forgiving perception of accents in general is a reasonable hypothesis, but one that is not supported by a Hartley, 2005 study. Here, the research shows that even though Bostonians place NYC at the middle of the "correctness" scale, they give it the absolute lowest rating for "pleasantness" (Hartley, 2005). More recent surveys, however, indicate current attitude toward the city is mixed. On the one hand, we have polls and studies indicating that the public has a positive attitude toward the accent, one of them coming from Internet dating site OkCupid.com. In a poll of 2,000 participants, the generally perceived NYC accent was proclaimed to be "sexy," especially among women, coming second only to the Southern accent (Mango, 2013), and a similar 2018 poll conducted by Babel.com found that 57% of the French hotel workers based in Europe thought the perceived NYC accent was also romantic (Medgie, 2018). However, on the other end of the scale, a 2013 survey of 934 U.S. adult participants revealed that a full 50% of them linked the accent to "Impatience", while 24% associated the accent with "Trouble", and only 18% associated it with "Beauty" (YouGov, 2013).

A qualitative analysis of current opinion culled from Internet resources also reveals mixed opinion. First, that the actual accent is actually still thought to be the one historically stereotyped

in film and television is illuminated by the number of YouTube videos posted by professional accent/dialect coaches offering to teach it. Of the seven coaches and their methods examined for this research, all heavily rely on exaggerations of the phonetic features to create the accent. For example, though Becker (2009) reports that NYCE is moving to rhoticity, and that her seven participants were 36% rhotic and that two of them, age 45 and 55, were 55% rhotic (as compared to some of the Labov 1966 participants, who were 100% [r-0]), six of these dialect coaches make it a point to say that rhoticity does not exist in NYCE. “Forget about any r’s at the end of words,” says coach Ivan Borodin – “Erase them from your thoughts” (Borodin, 2012) – and this is seconded by Broadway theatrical dialect coach Amy Stroller, who litters her lesson on NYCE with such exclamatory clichés “Gedoudda here” [gɛdɑʊdəhi^ə] and “Fuhgeddaboutit” [fəgɛdəbɑʊdɪt] (Rocketboom, 2010).

While it must be said that many of the viewer comments to these videos laud the coaches for their instruction, it is generally noticeable that (apparently) native New Yorkers find the accents inauthentic. “This is a Vinny Barbarino accent” (Mercado, 2014) is one response to an EANYCE lesson by coach Andrea Caban, and another viewer voiced his displeasure with coach Amy Walker by writing, “This video is only useful if you’re auditioning for the role of a mob moll in some 1940s gangster movie, or maybe some insipid remake of ‘The Nanny’” (Snow, 2016). Finally, one viewer accurately sums up the stereotypification of EANYCE through dialect coaching with his question posted to the Stroller video: “What’s with all these tutorials imitating old-timey-gangster New York accents? Doesn’t sound anything like modern New York accents” (Youngmane, 2015).

Despite the continued stereotypification, which native speakers may find offensive, many of the comments posted to these videos and others on the EANYCE accent praise rather than revile it. “I love NY accents...so sexy...” (Rae Smith, 2017), and “Holy fuck your accent is beautiful,”

(Cny Rskin, 2017) are typical of the positive replies to an audio clip supplied by Brooklyn native Vinny Mullini. Mullini himself had posted the audio clip of his authentic EANYCE in response to the glut of videos posted by alleged EANYCE speakers who, according to Mullini, “put on such an act” (Mullini, 2012).

Indeed, though a quantitative analysis of web-based positive and negative comments about EANYCE is not feasible for the current research, the former generally appear to outnumber the latter, thereby suggesting that public opinion actually aligns more to the OkCupid and Babel data than it does that of the Preston, Hartley, and YouGov studies. However, as indicated by other posts on the subject, negative perception of NYCE, in general, still occurs:

It's so fucking annoying when they drop the er sound and replace it with a soft a sound that just hangs there at the end of a word, not quite a comment but not quite and inflection like a question, just a slightly awkward insecurity [sic] to it that fades out of existence lol, have some conviction when you speak and use an r for Christ sake (Weatherford, 2017).

I can't stand this new york accent. It sounds ghetto as hell and is equivalent to those thugs who say shit like "naw im sayin fool? Yeah b dats right chea!". I'd never hire anyone who said crap like "gah ahead" instead of "go ahead". You simply sound ghetto and un-educated [sic] (Nightcrawler30, 2016).

New York accents are like New York itself, obnoxious and it SUCKS
(Alcondriver100, 2015)!

Among people I hang out with, the standard "stupid"-sounding accent is a working-class New York-sounding accent -- whatever accent it is where people say "dis" and "dese" and "hey youze guyz!" and such. The idea is to sound like some uneducated guido (yBeayf, 2009).

Worst: that New York and Jewish accent (Fran Drescher). Sorry, its [sic] not meant to be antisemitic [sic] but it just sounds so whiny. I have no idea why this subgroup has its own accent but I imagine it's because they are a close-knit community (What accent, 2016)?

Coupled with the continued stereotypification of EANYCE, the negative comments regarding grammar/lexicon (e.g, youze guyz), phonetics (r-dropping), and delivery (loud and obnoxious) leads us to a few key points that the current research needs to address. As it has been shown throughout this paper, EANYCE has phonetically adapted itself to at least some of the demands of non-EANYCE speakers, and yet it continues to be reviled by at least some, if not a large, part of the public. First, from approximately 1895 to the 1960s, /ɛɪ/-replacement and /r/-intrusion were considered the prime offenders, and even though New Yorkers began to abandon the phones before World War II, in the post-war period, the public found yet another feature to despise: r-lessness.

As already noted, in the pre-war period, r-lessness was considered a prestige feature, and within a short period after, it was, as Labov found, considered *déclassé* and a marker of low education. Bonfiglio (2014) attributes this to America's longtime association of New York with "foreignness" – that non-NYCE speakers had come into the habit of "ghettoizing" the pronunciation of NYCE, regardless of the phones and features that actually composed the accent.

“The speech preferences of American listeners,” he writes, “parallel their cultural and regional preferences, and the pronunciations that evoke images of marginalized cultures and regions become themselves marginalized and tabooed” (Bonfiglio, 2014). In other words, it’s the cultural image of New York and its inhabitants that is condemned, and so by extension, the accent, regardless of its features at any given point, is reviled due to its permanent place as a marker of that condemned culture.

Part of that cultural image of New Yorkers, of course, is “rudeness”, and we have already seen that the trait has been ascribed to New Yorkers since at least the time of John Adams. Indeed, even with the gentrification of the city and the influx of residents from other areas of the country over the last two decades, the state (though as a whole) is still viewed as being the rudest and the most arrogant in the nation – this, according to a 2013 *Business Insider* poll of 1,600 people (Hickey, 2013). Moreover, in Deborah Tannen’s extensive research and writings on conversational style, the sociolinguist notes that New York City speakers’ predilections for “friendly contentiousness” (Tannen, 1981), “machine-gun questions” (Tannen, 1981), “overlapping” (Tannen, 1983), and a general “high involvement” approach to conversation (Tannen, 2000), all tend to be seen as impolite and offensive to non-NYCE speakers. Thus, as she writes in a New York Times article on NYCE conversational style, “It’s not what you say, it’s the way that you say it. (Tannen, 1981)”

We therefore have three general factors that may contribute to the negative perception of EANYCE by non-EANYCE speakers and those EANYCE speakers suffering from linguistic self-hatred. First, there is the historically perceived corruption of the phones and pronunciation of what is thought to be “Standard English”. Second, there is the inseparable link between the perceived corruption of these phones and the stereotype of an uneducated, uncultured working class speaker.

And third, there is a negatively perceived conversational style that is permanently linked to the accent. Thus, any attempt to discover how listeners really view the phones and features themselves – to learn if they are offensive simply due to perceived phonetic corruption – becomes difficult, in that it doesn't seem possible to disentangle the phones from other factors. For example, we might ask if raised-THOUGHT is negatively perceived simply because its height is aurally displeasing to lowered-THOUGHT speakers – the sound being a bit like nails on a blackboard – or if it is due to its intrinsic association with speakers who are thought to be rude and of low education. We might even ask if it could even be because it has become an enregistered marker of New York City itself, a place that may not be highly regarded by the listener.

Becker (2014) sought to learn the modern perception of raised-THOUGHT through a matched guise test. She first asked Reed College undergraduates to judge discourse samples she had collected from her native-NYCE speaker interviews, and she then selected for stimuli those speakers that the students believed were middle-aged Caucasians. In reality, however, the interviewees did not fit that profile. Moreover, the selected speakers' THOUGHT vowels were neither particularly high nor low, which allowed the investigator to digitally raise or lower the target phone by 100-150hz, thereby creating two samples of each audio clip: one with THOUGHT decidedly in the NYCE range below 700hz and one decidedly in the range of +700hz range of GA. Care was taken to ensure that no other features present in the clips could differentiate the speakers from NYCE and GA, lest participants evaluate the clips based on other cues. Finally, the clips to be used were also judged to be content neutral, so that participant responses would not be affected by subject matter. After creating the stimuli, the clips were rated by students for 'naturalness', and only those rated 'natural' were used for the final experiment.

The experiment was administered online, with participants being asked to judge twelve clips in total, four of them being filler. The remaining eight were two samples each of four speakers. The instrument consisted of an open-ended section to elicit personal feelings about each clip and a second section that asked the participants to estimate the speaker's age, as well as surmise his or her ethnicity and place of residence. This second section then asked participants to rate five personality traits of each speaker on a Likert scale of 1-7. While anyone could participate in the study, with Becker's interest lying in the judgement of native New Yorkers, only the 101 responses culled from those participants were analyzed. The results indicate that participants believed the raised-THOUGHT speakers to be older, white, and from one of the outer boroughs (Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, Staten Island). There is also a significant difference in two of the five traits, in that participants judged the raised-THOUGHT speakers to be "meaner" and more "aloof" than lowered-THOUGHT speakers.

While Becker's results indicate the perception of native New Yorkers, who, as it has been shown, may be suffering from linguistic self-hatred, it is unfortunate that the investigator did not analyze the perception of non-New Yorkers. Indeed, although this perception is much discussed by sociolinguistics and laypeople alike, and there are the general surveys in the vein conducted by YouGov and Gawker, there is an utter dearth of quantitative data related to the perception of the individual features of EANYCE in an ambiguous context. For example, while a body of subjective evidence allows us to presume that the general public regards IF-stopping as a stereotype of low education, in regards to EANYCE, there has apparently been no quantitative study to support this presumption. It is the hope of the current research to rectify this situation.

5. Previous Methodology

Labov, Ash, Ravindranath, Weldon, Baranowski, & Nagy (2006b) posit the existence of a “sociolinguistic monitor”, which processes and stores sociolinguistic information, such as “social judgements”, attached to the grammatical and phonological features of a language or lect. In short, this means that individuals may ascribe social value to perceived linguistic variables of a speaker depending on the sociolinguistic monitor’s properties of “temporal window” (the period of time over which tokens of a variable are heard), variable “sensitivity” (the detectable frequential differences) , and “linearity” (the effect successive tokens of the same variable has on a listener’s social perception of a speaker) (Labov, et al. 2006b).

To support their hypothesis, the team created stimuli that varied in the production of word-final /ɪŋ/ (ING) in a fabricated newscast. First, the announcer was recorded reading seven news items that contained a total of ten words ending in /ɪŋ/, all of the morphemes being clearly pronounced with final /ɪŋ/. The announcer was then instructed to record the very same items, this time pronouncing the morpheme as /ɪn/. The team then digitally created ten conditions in which the target variable was pronounced as /ɪn/ in 10% increments. For example, /ɪŋ/ was produced for all ten targets in the 0% condition, for nine targets in the 10% condition, and so forth, continuing in this manner all the way up to the 100% condition, in which all the variables were pronounced /ɪn/. Participants at University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia were then told that the announcer was applying for a position as a newscaster and that they were to rate each of the conditions on a scale of “Perfectly Professional” to “Try Some Other Line of Work”. After the initial experiment, the test was repeated with slight alterations (detailed logarithmic analysis, participant evaluative scaling) in two other regions (Columbia, SC, and Durham, NH). The combined results of the separate studies, along with those from a follow-up experiment (Labov, Ash, Ravindranath,

Weldon, Baranowski, & Nagy, 2011) led the researchers to posit that in the 57-second timeframe of their conditions, 1) the temporal windows is “reasonably wide” and “operates continuously”, 2) adults consistently evaluate sociolinguistic cues, showing sensitivity in frequencies as low as 10%, and 3) the sociolinguistic model is not linear but is “proportional to the increase to the marked forms observed” (Labov et al., 2006b).

In 2011, Campbell-Kibler expanded the above methodology to learn if certain combinations of features affect listener perception of male sexual orientation. First, she notes that although gay male speech has been historically stereotyped by high pitch (Labov, 1972 as cited in Campbell-Kibler, 2011) studies reveal that no correlation between the feature and participant accuracy for determining gender or sexual preference (Gaudio, 1994; Smyth et al., 2003 as cited in Campbell-Kibler, 2011). Also stereotyped, she states, are /s/-fronting and /s/-backing, the former derogatively known as the “gay lisp”. Past research on the features, she reports, has been limited and the results mixed, with a Dutch study (Van Borsel et al., 2009 as cited in Campbell-Kibler, 2011) finding a correlation between s-fronting and perception of sexual orientation, and a Levon study (2007 as cited in Campbell-Kibler, 2011) showing that listener perception of gayness decreases only when the temporal shortening of /s/-fronting is combined with flattened pitch. Identical to the work of Labov et al. (2006b) and her own previous work (Campbell-Kibler, 2007), her third and final feature included in the study is word-final ING, for listeners, she reports, have been shown to link the /m/ rather than /ɪŋ/ to masculinity (Fisher, 1958; Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974 as cited in Campbell-Kibler, 2011).

Working from informal interviews with four men, the investigator digitally manipulated the three features to create 96 conditions that presented them in every combination. Thus, one condition presented to the participants might be a combination of /m/, fronted /s/, and a normal

pitch throughout the speech signal, while another might be a combination of /ɪn/, mid-/s/ (neither fronted nor backed) and a high pitch throughout the speech signal. The instrument was then administered online, requesting that participants listen to one clip each from the four speakers and then rate nine personality traits on six-point Likert scales. These traits were “smart”, “knowledgeable”, “masculine”, “gay”, “friendly”, “laid-back”, “country”, “educated”, and “confident”.

Statistically, the results show that there are two main effects: /s/-fronting is generally perceived as “gay” and the pronunciation of /ɪŋ/ in word final position is perceived as a marker of “competence”. More germane to the current research, however, is that the combination of /s/-fronting and /ɪŋ/ leads the listener to specifically evaluate the speaker to as a “smart, effeminate gay man” (Campbell-Kibler, 2011, p. 64).

While Campbell-Kibler describes the listener perception created by intersecting variables as a “stylistic package” (Campbell-Kibler, 2011, p. 64), she notes that this confluence of covarying factors to evoke a certain package is difficult to interpret. This, she states, is due to listener perceptual variability. For example, though her own research indicates that listeners perceive fronted-/s/ as a marker of gayness, she admits that, depending on the listener, it can also connote low competence. Similarly, velar ING may be perceived as either a marker of gayness, urbanity, or high competence (Campbell-Kibler, 2011). Despite this drawback, I modeled the current experimental design on Campbell-Kibler’s methodology, as well as those of Labov et al. (2006b) and Becker (2014), by selecting three features of EANYCE to determine if any one feature or combination of features would cause the participants to make certain judgments about a speaker.

6. The Current Research

As we have seen, EANYCE has historically been viewed as a lect of negative prestige, and its stereotypification continues to this day. Moreover, Becker (2014) has shown that raised-THOUGHT is still considered a marker of meanness and aloofness by native NYCE speakers. As of yet, however, the social perception of other EANYCE features has been understudied, so it is unknown if these features are negatively perceived in isolation or if there is a certain combination of features that triggers negative perception. As already noted, Gaudio (1994) found no correlation between pitch and the perception of gay speech, despite its long-term stereotypification, and as Tannen points out, the phones of EANYCE in themselves aren't necessarily triggering negative perception of New York speakers. Indeed, we can even borrow Campbell-Kibler's apt term "stylistic package" here, going on to suggest that more than a solitary phone or combination of phones is needed to create social evaluation, whether it be negative or positive. In other words, the phones are only one part of the stylistic package that engenders evaluation of EANYCE, and a NYC conversational or discourse style is perhaps required to complete the package.

Thus, the current research was designed to learn how EANYCE features are perceived in isolation and in combination in an ambiguous context, and though the details of the methodology will be given below, it is here necessary to provide a summary of the experiment in order to present my hypotheses. First, Table 1 shows both the selected features for study (stopped-/ð/, raised-THOUGHT, and the Short-a Split) and the conditions in which they appeared. Note that Condition 0 contained only the GA versions of these features.

		<u>Conditions</u>							
		0 (GA)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (EANYCE)
<u>Features</u>	stopped- /ð/	-	*	*	*	-	-	-	*
	EANCYE /æ/ - /ɛə/	-	-	*	-	*	*	-	*
	raised- THOUGHT	-	-	-	*	-	*	*	*

Table 1: Conditions and Features

Social perception of the features, and the lack of them in Condition 0, was measured by participant ratings of nine personality traits and one aspect (Financial Security). Intelligence and Ambition and Financial Security were grouped to form a Socio-economic speaker profile (SES), the traits of Coolness, Style, and Street Smarts were grouped to form a Cachet profile, and Kindness, Politeness, Generosity, and Honesty were grouped to form a profile of Social Attractiveness (SA).

As will be explained, the study ultimately consisted of two experiments, but based on the past research and current subjective attitudes of EANYCE, as revealed in the surveys and Internet posts discussed, I hypothesized the following for Experiment I:

- 1) Condition 0, which contains no EANYCE features, would be rated the highest in the areas of SES and SA.
- 2) Due to raised-THOUGHT's engregration on a national level, any condition containing the feature would rate below average in SES and SA but above average in Cachet. The favorable response to the feature in the area of Cachet, I posited, would be due to raised-THOUGHT's status as a stereotype of a streetwise personage.
- 3) Due to lack of research on the social perception of the Short-a Split, its current classification as either a marker or stereotype of ENCYE is not clear. Certainly, it does not

appear to be nationally enregistered to the same level as EANYCE THOUGHT, but nevertheless, I posited that as a marker of EANYCE, if negative perception exists, it would clearly be registered in Condition 4, which presented it without any other EANYCE features.

- 4) Due to stopped-/ð/'s presence in both the lower and working class speech on a national level (Labov, 2006), the feature would cause neither a salient positive nor negative evaluation.
- 5) Condition 7, which contained all the EANYCE features, would rate the lowest in SES and SA but the highest in Cachet. This would be due to the high volume of EANYCE features in the speech signal, thereby allowing the participants to either consciously or subconsciously perceive the speech signal as a stereotype of EANYCE.

7. The Current Methodology

The first step in the construction of the methodology was to determine which of the features would be included for study. As noted, Labov (2006) determined that the most salient EANYCE features are raised-THOUGHT, the Short-a Split, dropped-/r/, and IF-stopping, and although I first considered including all for study, I ultimately deemed it a too statistically intricate route to take. Unlike the Campbell-Kibler (2011) study, which presented only four of the 96 conditions to each participant – thereby not collecting individual responses to every combination – I judged that the Labov et al. (2006) framework of collecting individual responses to each of the conditions would provide more meaningful results. In order to achieve this goal, and avoid listener fatigue, the number of presented conditions therefore needed to be small and the time required to complete the survey needed to be short. Thus, I determined that the inclusion of all five features would require

an inordinate number of permutations to present all possible conditions to each participant, while the presentation of three conditions would only require the eight permutations shown in Table 1.

As to which of the features would be included for study, the first decision made was to include only one variety of IF-stopping. Though both /θ/ and /ð/-stopping are found in lects throughout the United States, and both are generally considered low prestige, it appears that /θ/-stopping is currently less common than /ð/-stopping in the variety of EANYCE under current investigation.³ Additionally, given that /θ/-stopping appears to be used to frequently create what could be termed *hyper*-stereotypical New York characters of lower social standing – Joe Pesci’s infamous [juts] for [juθs] in *My Cousin Vinny*, for example – I deemed that the inclusion of the feature would be akin to including /ɔɪ/ in the conditions. That is, whereas /ð/-stopping may still be viewed as a general feature of EANYCE, as well as other American lects, /θ/-stopping may have become far too associated with stereotypical characters, thereby causing participants to negatively evaluate the target traits in any condition it appears. In short, I thought it best to remove the possibility of low ratings based on features now wholly considered comical.

Given /r/-lessness’s notoriety as a New York feature, it was difficult to exclude it from the study, but being that speakers have been moving toward rhoticity, I decided that the features of raised-THOUGHT and the Short-a Split are currently more salient and therefore might provide more meaningful results. Raised-THOUGHT, of course, needed to be included, as it builds on the work of Becker, while the Short-a Split was included due to its appearance, as described earlier, in General American as a “nasal system”. To expound, being that non-EANYCE speakers

³ Unfortunately, quantitative data regarding the occurrence of IF-stopping in current EANYCE does not exist. Yet, my participation in innumerable conversations with fellow native EANYCE speakers 2nd generation and higher indicates that /ð/-stopping is far more common than /θ/-stopping. However, it is also acknowledged that /θ/-stopping may be still common in other varieties of NYCE, such as those spoken by particular ethnic groups (Newlin-Luckowicz, 2013).

pronounce the BATH vowel in different and more limited environments than EANYCE speakers, I found it important to learn how these speakers would perceive the feature in environments unaligned to their own speech patterns.

With the target features selected for study, the next step was to create a set of stimuli for delivery. Here, I utilized the matched-guise newscast methodology employed by Labov et al. (2006b), but with a few changes. First, rather than present the speaker as a newscaster, I presented him as an actor attempting to capture his character in eight different readings of the same monologue. The reasoning for this is that I did not want participants to have any qualms about rating the personality traits of an actual speaker. For example, modern, objective participants might not want to rate an actual person's traits based only on 20-seconds of speech signal, but rating a fictional character, I surmised, should pose no problems. As for the second design change, rather than inserting one token of each feature into the condition, I inserted three. This was done to ensure, as much as possible, that the participants heard the tested variable at least once per condition, for it must be said that with the instrument being delivered online, it was impossible to control the testing environment. Within the participant's testing environment, someone may unexpectedly speak, thereby distracting the participant, or the participant may cough or sneeze. And even though the participants were given the opportunity to replay each condition before rating the traits, it was presumed that many would not take advantage of this ability due to the nature of MTurk work: workers are paid for each job, and the faster they complete each job, the more they can earn in an hour.

Thus, the following monologue was carefully created to deliver exactly three tokens of each feature. However, before examining those tokens and features, it must first be noted that the creation of the content and context of the monologue was just as important as the selection of the

features, for I determined that the speech signal should be completely devoid of any text or subtext that could possibly color participant perception. Though the “newscast” approach of Labov et al. suited the team’s goal to determine the presence of the sociolinguistic monitor, doubtlessly, the very design of it primed the participants to expect a speaker that would match their schemata of “professional newscaster”. This priming effect needed to be avoided at all costs in the current research, and the only way to achieve that would be through ambiguous context, so that the character would appear as an “everyman” from anywhere in the United States. In this way it would be difficult for participants to make any assumptions about his intelligence, style, honesty, geographical background (urban or rural) etc., based on contextual cues. Only the phonetic variables could be used to evaluate the traits.

Having addressed the reasoning for the context, we can now turn to the monologue itself. Here it is, as presented to the participants in audio format.

And **with those** rough nights of *last August* behind us, *Janice* and I caught a train up to *Canada* – **without** any kids – to spend a few days in my Uncle *Sebastian’s* cottage. Just two people enjoying life and *hanging* out. Now, I won’t say **there** wasn’t any love between us, but wherever⁴ we went, *bad* stuff always followed.

/ð/-stopping: The boldface items were used to present /ð/-stopping. In non-stopped Conditions 0, 4, 5, and 6 the phone was fully and clearly realized as [ð]. In EANYCE conditions 1, 2, 3, & 7, it was realized as [d]. The stopped versions were created by alveolarization, making sure that they

⁴ Here, word-final /r/ was fully rhoticized.

sounded like part of the natural speech of actual EANYCE speakers rather than that of stereotypical characters presented in film and television.

Short-a Split: The italicized items were used to present lax [æ] or tense [ɛ^ɔ]. Following the nasal system, Conditions 0, 1, 3, and 6 presented [ɛ^ɔ] before all nasals, while [æ] appeared elsewhere. Following EANYCE, Conditions 2, 4, 5, and 7 presented [ɛ^ɔ] in “last”, “Sebastian”, and “bad”, while [æ] appeared in “Janice”, “Canada”, and “hanging”. Though the nasal system frequency range varies by isogloss, most North American lects have a range between these two phones of less than 100hz or from 100hz – 200hz (Labov et al., 2006a). As for EANYCE, though the ANAE views /æ/ and /ɛ^ɔ/ as two separate phonemes, and thus does not offer a clear frequency range, it reports it as characteristically having a “wide gap”. This is reflected in its model speaker, Nina B. (aged 65 in 1996), who exhibits a range of approximately 300hz – 350hz. However, it has also been shown that the sound is currently undergoing change, with younger white speakers moving toward the nasal system, thereby producing a 100hz – 200hz range in certain phonetic environments (Becker & Wong, 2010). In initial recordings for the current research, tokens were produced to reflect the range of Nina B., but these were deemed to be comical and stereotypical in context. On the other hand, the range of the younger speakers was thought too low and not reflective of the traditional EANYCE accent. Thus, it was decided to aim for a range of 200hz – 300hz, so that the split would neither sound too much like the nasal system nor too comical.

PRAAT (Version 6.0.36) was then used to find the peak F1 values for each token, and then the values for each condition were normalized using the Labov ANAE Telsur G method. This created a three-token average for /æ/ and three-token average for [ɛ^ɔ]. The difference between the

averages were then used to create the TRAP/BATH range for each condition. These are show in Table 2.

		<u>Conditions</u>							
		GA	+/ð/	+ /ð/	+ /ð/	+EANYCE Split	+EANYCE Split	+THOUGHT	EANYCE
			+ EANYCE Split	+THOUGHT	+EANYCE Split	+THOUGHT	+THOUGHT	EANYCE	
/æ/ (TRAP)		753.44	763.62	840.08	716.30	836.65	872.65	720.32	865.80
/ɛə/ (BATH)		615.15	609.01	609.36	601.71	630.86	610.16	614.21	592.90
RANGE		138.29	154.61	230.72	114.59	205.79	262.49	106.11	272.90

Normalized averages and range of /æ/ ~ /ɛə/ in hz for each condition.

Table 2: Range /æ/ - /ɛə/

Raised-THOUGHT: The underlined items in the monologue were used to present lowered or raised-THOUGHT. Conditions 0, 1, 2, and 4 presented the lowered-THOUGHT of GA, while raised-THOUGHT was presented in EANYCE Conditions 3, 5, 6 and 7. As already noted, EANYCE THOUGHT is under 700hz, and GA THOUGHT is over that figure, and identical to the production of the TRAP/BATH tokens, great care was taken to produce THOUGHT tokens that were well in the EANYCE realm but not obviously comical and stereotypical. As to my own

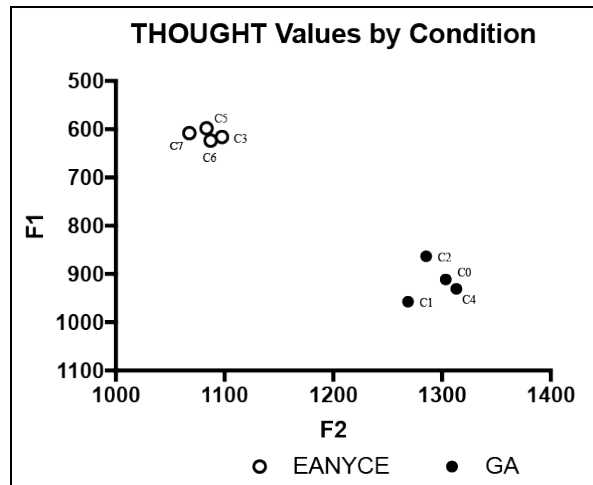


Figure 1: Thought Values by Condition

natural EANYCE idiolect, my THOUGHT F1 peak is approximately 528hz (measured over three tokens), and in the context of the monologue this value normalizes to 644hz. Yet, in comparing my THOUGHT vowels to those of generational EANYCE-speaking cohorts, I found that mine are not as raised, and so I affected a pronunciation that normalized to 612hz in the Labov ANAE Telsur G methodology. Through trial and error, it was discovered that lower normalized values began to sound comical and stereotypical, which, of course, was to be avoided.

Regarding the stimulus creation process, some attempts were made to digitally manipulate the /ɔ/ and /æ/ tokens using both PRAAT and Adobe Audition, but I did not find the results satisfying. In short, the cutting and pasting of tokens into the monologue at the lexical level resulted in fluctuations of volume, as well as noticeable speech signal mismatches, thereby making the recordings sound unnatural. In order to overcome this problem, I created the conditions out of a series of line by line takes. To clarify, I first recorded the entire monologue in GA, and this would become the base version for Condition 0. The condition contained three tokens of realized [ɔ̃], three tokens of nasal system [æ], three tokens of nasal system [ɛ̃], and three tokens of lowered-THOUGHT. No other GA features were used in the signal. A second recording was then made of the same tokens as pronounced in EANYCE. This recording would become the base version of Condition 7. To create the other six conditions, I then recorded each line of the monologue in the various required combinations. For example, I recorded one version of the line “And with those rough nights of August behind me,” with an EANYCE /ð/-stop between “with” and “those” [wɪdɔ̃z], but pronounced “last” and “August” in GA. The next version was then recorded with realized /ð/ but with EANYCE [ɛ̃] in “last” and a GA [ɔ] for “August”. A third version contained GA “last” but an EANYCE “August”. I continued in this manner until I had every combination for every line. The individual takes were then assembled in Adobe Audition (Version 11.0.1.49)

with volumes equalized to create the eight conditions to present to the participants. Each of the final clips had a duration of approximately 20 second.

The Instrument

A delivery system was created through JotForm.com, an online survey service. While the system proved to be fairly robust, there was a software limitation that would not allow for complete randomization of the order in which the eight conditions were delivered. Deeming randomization necessary to avoid possible order influence, a pseudo-randomization process was created. First, an online random series generator was used to create ten permutations of the conditions. Once these were ordered, ten identical surveys were created and the eight conditions were entered into them in the order generated. Finally, a welcome page was created that randomly selected one of the ten forms to deliver to the participant. Thus, while there were actually only ten random permutations of the conditions, these permutations were also randomly delivered to the participants.

After accepting the Participant Consent form, the participants were briefed on the nature of the study. Instructions informed them that they would hear an actor perform eight takes as he tried to create his character and that they were to rate ten traits or aspects on Likert scale of 1-7. Figure 2 is a typical example of the question.

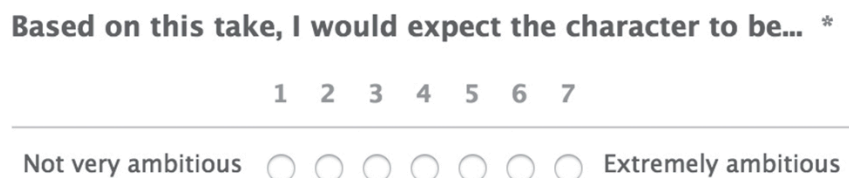


Figure 2: Survey Sample

The participants were allowed to listen to each condition as many times as they wanted. They were also required to rate every trait before continuing to the next condition. After rating all

eight conditions, they were taken to a page where they were required to record their own take of the monologue. It was originally intended that these recordings would be used to analyze the relationship between participant ratings for THOUGHT and TRAP/BATH F1 values (particularly those of native New Yorkers, should any participate), but this part of the research was ultimately abandoned. Finally, after submitting the recording, the participants were required to enter their demographics of age group, gender, and the nearest city to their primary residence between the ages of 3 and 16. Upon demographic submission, participants were debriefed on the study.

8. Experiment I

The Participants

One hundred General Public (GP) participants were recruited through Amazon MTurk. Participants were required to be aged 18 and over, native speakers of English, currently living in the U.S., and have a worker approval rating of 85% and higher. After an initial run of participants, however, it was found that three workers did not give honest answers (a rating of 4 for every trait in every condition or not enough time taken to give honest answers) and it was also suspected that eight were not native English speakers. The ratings of these participants were not used in the final analysis, and another group of participants was selected as replacement. Thus, the total participant number was brought back to 100. The final participant pool was geographically diverse, with participant childhood residences in proximity to many major and minor cities throughout the U.S. For their aid in the researcher, the GP participants were paid \$2.25 U.S.

Results

Participant ratings were entered into the statistical application Graphpad Prism (Version 7.0d) and all the traits were separately subjected to One-way ANOVA analyses. No matching or pairing was performed and the means of every condition were compared. Post-hoc Tukey were employed to correct for multiple comparisons and the confidence interval was set to 95%. None of the analyses returned a significant p-values between the conditions. Being that there were four participants who listed New York City as the closest city to childhood residence, they were extracted from the data and another One-way ANOVA was performed for the remaining 96 participants. This was done to learn if the New York participants had possibly rated some of the EANYCE conditions low due to linguistic self-hatred, but yet again, there were no significant p-values between the conditions.

The results of the individual traits and aspects were then grouped and averaged to analyze the three main profiles of SES, SA, and Cachet. The same statistical methodology was used as above, but yet again, no significant p-values was returned for any of the profiles.

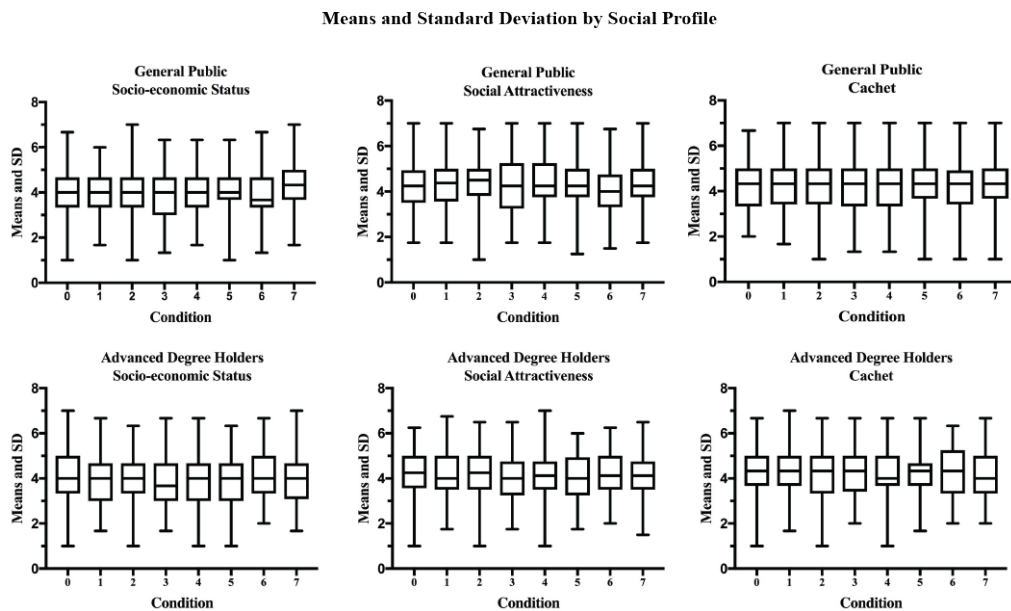
9. Experiment II

After the initial run and analysis of results of the GP group, I decided it would be valuable to learn the perceptions of participants who have earned the minimum of a graduate degree. Thus, a second experiment was performed and another 100 participants were recruited in the same method as described above. The only difference between the GP pool in Experiment I and the Advanced Degree (AD) pool in Experiment II was that the educational status of the second pool was known. Identical to the GP pool, participants in the AD participants were paid \$2.25 U.S.

Results

The same statistical methodology for the GP analysis was employed, and similar to that analysis, no significant p-value was returned between conditions. A grouped profile analysis was also performed, (SES, SA, and Cachet) resulting in the same non-significant results.

Finally, all 200 participants (GP + AD) were combined for analysis by age group. It was considered that perhaps there would be some significance between the three groups, 18-35, 36-54, and 55+, in that the oldest group, having had more exposure to stereotypical EANYCE accent, would more negatively evaluate the associated conditions. This was not found to be true, however, as the One-way ANOVA did not report any significant p-values. Figure 3 shows the Means and Standard Deviation of the three social profiles by participant group.



Conditions: 0=GA, 1 = stopped-/ð/, 2 = stopped-/ð/ + EANYCE /æ/~-/ε/, 3 = stopped-/ð/ + raised-THOUGHT, 4 = EANYCE /æ/~-/ε/, 5 = EANYCE /æ/~-/ε/ + raised-THOUGHT, 6 = raised-THOUGHT, 7 = EANYCE

Socio-economic Status is determined by ratings for Intelligence, Ambition, and Perceived Financial Security

Social Attractiveness is determined by ratings for Kindness, Politeness, Generosity, and Honest

Cachet is determined by ratings for Coolness, Style, and Street Smarts

Figure 3: Means and Standard Deviation by Social Profile

10. Discussion

While the interpretation of negative results can be difficult, I posit that two factors have engendered the non-alignment of participant evaluation to my original hypotheses. First, there is the matter of a possible “weakened attitude” towards phonetic features, a concept first suggested by Levon and Fox (2014).

Also basing their study on the previous research of Campbell-Kibler (2007, 2011) and Labov et al. (2006a, 2011), the Levon and Fox replicated the “newscast” matched-guise test to learn the current social perception of speaker productions of [f] for /θ/ and [ɪn] for /ɪŋ/ in Great Britain. Identical to the current research, that study also ended in negative results, and the team proposed for explanation that even though stratification of the two phones certainly still exists in Great Britain, their automatic evaluation by listeners is not, according to their results, reflective of any deliberate sociolinguistic monitoring. Rather, they theorize that the insignificant results may be due to weakened attitudes toward these phones as markers of unprofessionalism, and that it was this weakened attitude that led participants to a lack of negative evaluation under test conditions (Levon & Fox, 2014).

In relation to the current research, as suggested by the already presented qualitative evidence, some speakers may be finding a new appreciation for the rapidly disappearing lect that is EANYCE. Yet, as we have also seen, the quantitative results of national polls vary, with speakers split on their perception of EANYCE speakers. Thus, I cannot suggest that there definitely exists a weakened attitude toward the lect in its entirety, and even though the results do show an ambivalence toward the three features studied, the causes for the ambivalence of at least two of the features may not be directly related to the perception of EANYCE.

First, in a comparison of realized-/ð/ and stopped-/ð/, we see that the evaluations are statistically insignificant between Conditions 0 (GA), in which it is realized, and Condition 1, in which it is stopped. In this condition, the feature is also presented with no other EANYCE phones. Thus, for Condition 1, the participants essentially evaluated the feature as it exists in GA, and as seen in Table 3, the mean differences between Conditions 0 and 1 are inconsequential. It must be reiterated, however, that stopped-/ð/ is known to be associated with both the lower and working class lects throughout the U.S. and that “the prestige form is the fricative” (Labov, 2006). Therefore, if the perception of stopped-/ð/ has been weakened since the first publication of TSSENYC in 1966, then the current results would reflect a weakened attitude toward it in the language as a whole and not just in EANYCE. To summarize my position, then, I posit that if a weakened negative perception of stopped-/ð/ in American English, as whole, does exist, then it would naturally entail a weakening of it in EANYCE and not the other way around.

Next for analysis is the perception of the intricate Short-a Split of EANYCE in comparison to its regularized counterpart in the nasal system. Labov (2006) reports that lax /æ/ is the prestige form, and I had hypothesized that participants would register the use of tense /ɛ^ə/ in the conditions that presented the EANYCE form in the words “last”, “Sebastian”, and “bad”, which are pronounced with lax /æ/ in the GA nasal system. This recognition, I posited, would engender negative evaluation, but as I reported, this did not occur. Indeed, we can see in Table 3 that the mean differences between the two in all social profiles were as inconsequential as those of stopped-/ð/.

In regards to the prospect of this being due to a weakened attitude, however, without more research it is difficult to posit that it was a contributing factor to the ambivalent evaluation. I do argue, however, that if /æ/ is indeed still seen as the prestigious form, then any negative perceptions

that the non-EANYCE speaking participants might have formed upon hearing [lɛ^əst], [səbɛ^əstjən], and [bɛ^əd] in the EANYCE conditions might have then been neutralized by the production of prestige forms [dʒænəs], [kænədə], and [hæŋɪŋ] in those same conditions. That is, with the phone in these three last items being produced with (theoretically) non-prestigious /ɛ^ə/ in the GA nasal system,

<u>Realized-/ð/ vs Stopped-/ð/</u>						
	GP SES	GP SA	GP Cachet	AD SES	AD SA	AD Cachet
Mean GA	4.013	4.225	4.233	4.053	4.188	4.210
Mean stopped-/ð/	3.973	4.293	4.273	3.853	4.143	4.307
Mean difference	0.04	-0.068	-0.04	0.200	0.045	-0.097
<u>Nasal System Short-a vs EANYCE Short-a</u>						
	GP SES	GP SA	GP Cachet	AD SES	AD SA	AD Cachet
Mean NS	4.013	4.225	4.233	4.053	4.188	4.210
Mean EANYCE	4.067	4.45	4.160	4.00	4.165	4.187
Mean difference	-0.054	-0.225	0.073	0.053	0.023	0.023
<u>Lowered-THOUGHT vs Raised-THOUGHT</u>						
	GP SES	GP SA	GP Cachet	AD SES	AD SA	AD Cachet
Mean GA	4.013	4.225	4.233	4.053	4.188	4.210
Mean Raised THOUGHT	3.927	4.098	4.197	4.017	4.213	4.243
Mean difference	0.086	0.127	0.036	0.036	-0.025	-0.033
GP = GENERAL PUBLIC AD = ADVANCED DEGREE						

Table 3: Means Differences of the Three Features

the participants might have less negatively evaluated the EANYCE conditions under the impression that the pre-nasal production of /æ/ is more prestigious than the /ɛ̃/ they usually produce. This, in turn, resulted in the perception of a balance of prestigious/non-prestigious forms, which might have engendered the ambivalent evaluation. Again, this is only one possible explanation for the ambivalent results, but as noted, a more detailed study focusing solely on the current perception of /æ/ and /ɛ̃/ as it exists in the nasal system, may provide more clues.

Finally, we arrive at raised-THOUGHT, a feature found in only a few other American lects. Again, the results show an insignificant mean difference between the isolated EANYCE condition and GA condition, and it is again uncertain if this is due to a weakened attitude toward the phone. Given the enregistration of EANYCE THOUGHT on a national level, however, I find the medial evaluation of the phone by both the GP and AD groups to be both the most unexpected result of the survey.

As noted, Becker (2014) found that native New Yorkers perceive raised-THOUGHT speakers to be “meaner” and more “aloof” than lowered-THOUGHT speakers, and based on both these results and the nationally enregistered status of raised-THOUGHT, I hypothesized that the conditions in which it appears would be more negatively evaluated than those in which it didn’t. As we know, this did not occur, and so we can see that the results are actually in line with Labov’s findings that non-New Yorkers (who, in the current research, made up 96% of the GP group and 93% of the AD group) are less judgmental than Becker’s native participants about the lect, or at least in regards to raised-THOUGHT. Therefore, one interpretation of the results can suggest a link between a possibly weakened attitude toward raised-THOUGHT by non-New Yorkers (though it must be questioned if a quantifiably strong negative attitude ever really existed) and the ambivalent perception registered.

This leads us to our final comparison of GA Condition 0 in which no EANYCE features appear and Condition 7, in which they all appear. Although an interesting pattern appears in comparing the two, in that for each social profile the AD group shows a slight preference for GA while the opposite was true for the GP group (see Table 4), it must be reiterated that none of the statistical analyses reveals any significance in these figures. In summary, it cannot be said that the three features, in isolation or in any combination, cause listeners to register a negative perception to any of the traits and aspects tested in the study or to stratify the accent in its entirety.

<u>GA vs EANYCE - All Features</u>						
	GP SES	GP SA	GP Cachet	AD SES	AD SA	AD Cachet
Mean GA	4.013	4.225	4.233	4.053	4.188	4.210
Mean stopped-/ð/	4.263	4.388	4.397	3.937	4.118	4.147
Mean difference	-0.25	-0.163	-0.164	0.116	0.07	0.063

GP = GENERAL PUBLIC
AD = ADVANCED DEGREE

Table 4: General American vs. European-American New York City English

As interesting as the weakened attitude theory may be, however, I posit that the most probable cause for medially evaluated perception across all conditions is that the EANYCE conditions failed to provide the New Yorker “stylistic package” needed to evince a stereotype in line with the participants’ schemata. Just as Gaudio (1994) noted that other phonological areas need to be investigated to understand the link between social perception of pitch and “gayness”, one of those areas being “voice quality”, I posit the same for the current study. For the recordings, I affected a folksy “everyman” delivery, and this was adhered to even in Condition 7, the condition that contained all the EANYCE features. Yet, had I, for example, lowered my pitch for Condition 7 to affect the stereotypical New York Mafioso style or adjusted the nasal quality to affect the

stereotypical New York Jewish style, I posit that participants might have had a more visceral and therefore measurably salient reaction due to the creation of a stylistic package that fits their schemata of these stereotypical EANYCE speakers.

As we have learned from Tannen’s extensive research in the field, discourse style is as equally important as linguistic cues in the perception of EANYCE, and the results of the current research indicate that without the associated style, listeners are unable to negatively evaluate even the traits of Politeness and Kindness for Condition 7. Unequivocally, EANYCE has been historically linked to “rudeness” in both qualitative and quantitative research, and yet not only did the participants generally not make this connection between trait and phonetic features, but the GP group even rated these two traits higher in Condition 7 than they did in Condition 0.

<u>GP Mean Trait Evaluation</u>			
	GA	ENYCE	Mean diff.
Politeness	4.27	4.43	.16
Kindness	4.23	4.34	.11

Table 5: General Public Mean Trait Evaluation

Due to this general inability of the participants to link the long-standing qualitative negative perception of EANYCE to the three features presented in the current research, I reiterate my position that the features alone are insufficient to elicit any statistically significant positive or negative reaction. In summary, either other linguistic cues, such as tone, rate of speech, and possibly timbre, are required to fulfill the listener’s schema of the stereotypical EANYCE speaker of low education and culture, or the discourse context must provide enough cues to elicit the same. Certainly, it could be a combination of these two factors that is required, or it may be that some

other yet unknown factor is necessary to elicit a visceral reaction, but this discovery can only be made through extensive research beyond the scope of the current study.

11. Conclusion

I began this paper with a detailed history of the stigmatization of EANYCE – from its germination in the 1880s, when authors and cartoonists began to capture the “non-standard” accent of lower class Bowery residents, to its utilization by actors to create stereotypical characters of low education and/or culture or questionable repute, a practice that continues to this day. As shown in that history, by the mid-20th century the phones of EANYCE had become so thoroughly inseparable from both the stereotypical cinematic characters that uttered them and the image of New Yorkers being rude and obnoxious that even though EANYCE speakers had begun to align their speech closer to the “standard”, such as by losing /ɛ¹/-replacement and becoming more rhotic, the accent was, and still is, largely considered an index of the characters described.

Thus, I sought to learn if three prominent EANYCE features that are still in currency are the actual cause for listener negative evaluation of the accent. The three features tested were raised-THOUGHT, stopped /ð/, and the intricate EANYCE Short-a Split, and I presented them both in isolation and every combination with their counterpart features of GA in seven matched guise conditions. Additionally, there was an eighth GA condition that contained no tokens of these features. In order to ensure that the participants evaluated the speaker by feature quality alone, a monologue of ambiguous context was created, in that it contained no social cues that could influence participant evaluation. In the online administered experiment, 200 U.S.-based, native-English speaking participants were asked to rate nine traits and one social aspect on a scale of 1-

7, a typical question being, “Based on this take, I expect the character to be...Not Very Intelligent (1)...Extremely Intelligent (7).”

Based on Becker’s (2014) results of raised-THOUGHT being negatively evaluated for the traits of meanness and aloofness, I posited that the conditions that presented this feature would be similarly negatively evaluated in close or corresponding traits (Politeness, Kindness, etc.). Furthermore, due to raised-THOUGHT’s national enregistration and its indexing of the streetwise New Yorker, I hypothesized that those same conditions would receive positive evaluation in the traits linked to Cachet (Coolness, Style, and Street Smarts). This, however, did not occur, and moreover, the participants actually had no statistically significant evaluation of any of the traits and aspects in any of the conditions presented. In short, there appears to be no quality inherent to the phones that causes negative evaluation of the EANYCE accent, at least as they exist in a 20-second speech signal.

In the Previous Research section of this paper, I presented the work of Deborah Tannen, who asserts that New Yorker discourse style is a salient influence on interlocutor perception of the accent. I posit that the negative results of the two experiments of the current research lend support to that theory. Though I cannot contend that interlocutors would not be able to identify EANYCE speakers without cues from discourse style, either audio or visual, I do argue that, based on the results of the current research, EANYCE speakers are not negatively evaluated when the speaker of these three features does not provide the stereotype that matches interlocutor schema. Yet, it must be said that this may be the case for only short speech signals, such as those used in the current research, as longer speech signals, should they be presented in future experiments, may generate different results.

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