January 2014

The Effect of Appalachian Regional Dialect on Performance Appraisal and Leadership Perceptions

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By

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Master of Science
Eastern Kentucky University
Richmond, Kentucky
2014

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
Eastern Kentucky University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
May, 2014

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis chair, Dr. Catherine Clement, for her help and guidance. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Yoshie Nakai and Dr. Jonathan Gore, for their assistance over the past two years. I would like to express my thanks to my husband, Tyler, and my parents, John and Sheila, for their support and encouragement throughout this process.

Abstract

Speakers of Appalachian English face unique difficulties in the workplace. Long-held stereotypes of Appalachian English speakers can lead to unfair presumptions about a person's competence and professionalism. Previous research has shown stereotyping on the basis of non-standard dialect can affect recruitment and hiring decisions made by employers. The present study addresses the possibility that these biases extend beyond the hiring process by investigating the impact of Appalachian regional dialect on performance appraisal, perceptions of leadership potential, promotion potential, status perceptions, and solidarity perceptions.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, members of stigmatized groups have faced unique difficulties in the workforce. Long-standing stereotypes about these groups can have a profound influence on the way employers view an individual's intelligence, competence, and overall employability. For this reason, the US government has set in place a system to protect individuals from discrimination based on several factors that may unduly impact their chances in the job market. Race, sex, and religion are just a few of the protected classes that employers may not use as a basis for decision making. While these protections have reduced the impact of stereotypes in the workplace, many other factors that can impact an employer's perceptions are not addressed by these government protections. As one of these unaddressed factors, regional dialect may impact the employment prospects of a large segment of the US population.

Regional dialects are defined as those varieties of speech that differ from the standard in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary and are easily tied to specific geographic regions. Dozens of unique regional dialects exist throughout the United States, and many of these are stigmatized. One of the most derided regional dialects is known throughout the linguistic community as Appalachian English. Appalachian English is a dialect found throughout the American Southern Midlands. It is most commonly spoken in Eastern Kentucky, Eastern Tennessee, West Virginia, and other locations throughout the central portion of the Appalachian Mountains.

Speakers of this dialect are known for their language's unique phonetic, grammatical, and lexical features which have come to be associated with low income, lack of education, and naïveté (Luhman, 1990). Many thousands of people who speak this dialect have faced intense scrutiny in their everyday lives as a result of the negative stereotypes that have long been associated with Appalachian speech. Unfair presumptions about intelligence, class, professionalism, and many other factors relevant to employment may greatly influence the job prospects of Appalachian English speakers.

Workplace discrimination on the basis of Appalachian dialect may not end after the hiring process. If this unfair bias continues to haunt employees after they are hired, it can impact their prospects for promotion and advancement within their field. Once hired, opportunities for advancement largely depend on performance appraisals and perceptions of potential for leadership. The present literature review will examine stereotypes and their role in impression formation, stereotypes for Appalachian English speakers, the effect of dialect on recruitment and selection, bias in performance appraisal, leadership stereotypes and leadership perception research.

Dialect and Impression Formation

The first section of this literature review will focus on impression formation and stereotypes and the role dialects can play in impression formation. One of the mechanisms by which we develop and utilize stereotypes is automatic processing. Our cognitions can be grouped into two basic categories--controlled, and automatic. Controlled cognitions are deliberate and effortful. Automatic cognitions are fast, easy, and completed outside our conscious awareness. Since controlled cognitions require

effort on our part and use up limited cognitive resources, the number of controlled cognitions we are capable of at any given moment is limited (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). However, automatic cognitions are seemingly "free"--they do not use up these precious cognitive resources and are therefore not limited (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999).

One of the unfortunate consequences of the use of automatic processing is the use of stereotypes. Stereotypes are the attribution of characteristics to an individual because of that person's membership in a specific group. We are all exposed to stereotypes about various groups and can easily identify the stereotypes that exist within our culture. While we are generally able to suppress the use of stereotypes during our controlled cognitions, we can fall back on these stereotypes during our automatic cognitions (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). Stereotype primes are distinguishing features of a social group whose mere perception can trigger stereotypical though about that group. The existence of stereotype primes may provide a signal that leads us to rely on automatic processing instead of wasting cognitive resources (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). The existence of a regional dialect may serve as one of these primes.

A person's dialect can have an effect on the way their personality is perceived. Marston (1973) examined the effect of dialect on perceived credibility of a speaker and on perceived personality traits. Researchers collected speech samples from native speakers of General American (defined in this study as a speaker from Southern California), New England, and Southern (which shares many lexical and grammatical similarities with Appalachian English) speech. Each dialect had three different spoken messages—one that implied low credibility of the speaker, one that was neutral in its

credibility, and one that implied high credibility of the speaker. Participants were selected from each of these dialect regions. Participants then listened to 3 of the audio samples—one from each dialect, and one from each level of credibility, the combination of which varied. They were asked to express their opinion of these individuals through a set of rating scales. The General American accent was the most preferred, regardless of the level of perceived credibility in the message, and regardless of the listener's origin. Speakers with a General American accent were also viewed as more credible than speakers of the Southern dialect regardless of the credibility of the message. These results show that the presence of a Southern dialect led to participants judging the speaker as less credible, even when their message implied a high level of credibility. The author suggests that these results may be explained by the negative stereotypes associated with Southern speech, and the positive stereotypes associated with standard speech (Marston, 1973). This finding that participants reason based on their stereotypes and tend to not accept information that is contradictory to these stereotypes is consistent with previous research (Grant & Holmes, 1981; O'Sullivan & Durso, 1984; Taylor & Crocker, 1981)

Further research has also provided evidence that accent plays a role in the way we perceive others. Elwell, Brown and Rutter (1984) looked at the role accent plays in impression formation. In this 1984 study, participants were shown a video of a British-Indian man who either spoke in Standard British English or with an Indian accent. Participants were then asked to rate the speaker on five personality traits (likable, hardworking, intelligent, honest, and friendly). Results showed that on every variable except 'hard-working', the speaker with the standard accent received a higher score.

Speakers with a non-standard accent have been judged as more suspicious by police. A study by Vrij and Winkle (1984) examined the impressions Dutch police officers had about suspects they were interrogating. One variable these researchers examined was accent of the interogatee. Police officers were given a crime scenario and were asked to listen to an audio sample from a suspect interrogation. The suspect in the audio sample spoke with either a native Dutch or Surinamer accent. The police officers were then asked several questions including how truthful the officers thought the speaker was, how suspicious the speaker seemed, and whether or not the officer wanted to interrogate the speaker further. Their results indicated a significant effect of suspiciousness on the basis of accent such that the officers found those with non-native accents to be more suspicious.

Stereotypes of Appalachian Speakers

These effects of dialect on impression formation have been found specifically for Appalachian speakers. While the existence of negative stereotypes about Appalachian natives is commonly accepted, several studies have looked at the perceptions of Appalachian English speakers on the basis of dialect alone. Mulac and Rudd, in their 1977 study, examined the effects of three different American regional dialects—General American, Appalachian, and Bostonian—on speakers from the same three regions. Participants from three regions--Southern California, Eastern Kentucky, and Boston--listened to audio samples of speakers from the same three regions and were asked to rate the speakers, who were only identified by a number. Participants were then asked to rate the speakers Socio-Intellectual Status, Aesthetic Quality, and Dynamism using the

Speech Dialect Attitudinal Scale- 21 (SDAS-21). Results showed General American speakers attained the highest ratings for Socio-Intellectual Status, and Appalachian speakers were rated the lowest. A significant interaction between listener region and speaker dialect was also found. While listeners from Southern California rated Bostonian and Appalachian dialects to be equally low in Socio-Intellectual Status, both listeners from Boston and Eastern Kentucky rated Appalachian speech lowest in Socio-Intellectual Status. Regardless of listener region, Appalachian speakers were rated lowest in dynamism.

While the study above found no relationship between Appalachian speech and aesthetic quality, this relationship has been found in other research. Parsons (2008) also used the SDAS-21 to examine the effect of dialect on perception. A sample of college students from West Virginia and Illinois listened to an audio tape sample of a General American dialect and an Appalachian dialect. They then completed the SDAS-21 for both dialects. The participants, regardless of their state of origin, rated the Appalachian speaker to be lower in aesthetic qualities than the General American dialect.

The studies above illustrate that even speakers of a dialect hold negative stereotypes based on that dialect. Further evidence comes from a study by Luhman (1990). She looked at the language attitudes of Kentucky natives. Participants were given a written description of each speaker, including their level of education, then listened to 8 speech samples that were produced by 4 bidialectical speakers. After listening, the participants were asked to rate the speakers on a 7-point bipolar adjectives scale. Two types of adjectives were included in the scale—those related to status such as "intelligent-

unintelligent", "wealthy-poor", and "successful-unsuccessful", and those related to solidarity such as "trustworthy-untrustworthy", friendly-unfriendly" and "good-bad". Participants were also asked to identify how closely each of the samples matched their own speech. Results showed that each speaker was rated higher in their Appalachian dialect than in their Standard dialect on all solidarity items. However, each speaker was rated higher in their Standard accent than in their Appalachian dialect on all status-related items. Even the Appalachian speakers who were identified as university graduates were rated lower in intelligence and education than their Standard counterparts. Finally, even when listeners identified that their own speech was closely related to the speech of an Appalachian speaker, they still rated the speaker lower on status items including education and intelligence.

This research shows that several stereotypes about socio-intellectual status, solidarity, and aesthetic qualities--including perceptions of intelligence, education, wealth, success, friendliness, trustworthiness, and honesty--exist about speakers of Appalachian English (Mulac& Rudd, 1977; Luhman, 1990). Furthermore, this research has demonstrated that members of stigmatized groups are still susceptible to the same stereotypical beliefs about their group as the rest of the population. Research into the impact of dialect on attitudes and perceptions in particular has consistently shown that even people from the Appalachian region are susceptible to negative biases against Appalachian dialect speakers. (Mulac & Rudd, 1977; Luhman, 1990; Parsons, 2008).

The Effect of Dialect on Recruitment and Selection of Employees

Recruitment procedures provide employers with opportunities to meet and gain an initial impression of potential job candidates (Atkins, 1993). Selection procedures are the means by which employers choose new employees (Carlson, 2006). As such, employers' impressions of candidates play a large role in both of these processes. Previous research has shown that irrelevant factors (e.g. gender, race) can influence selection of employees (Branscombe & Smith, 1990). Research has also illustrated that dialect is one such factor (Atkins, 1993; Carlson, 2006; Elwell, Brown & Rutter, 1984; Rakic, Steffens, & Mummendey, 2011).

The impact of regional dialect on employment opportunities has been previously examined through studies investigating the influence of these dialects on the recruitment and selection of employees. In a study by Atkins (1993), employment recruiters at a West Virginia university were asked to assume they were interviewing job applicants who exhibited language traits consistent with either Appalachian English or African American English. These recruiters were provided a written list of common dialectical features found in each language such as saying "it's his'n" instead of "it's his". Recruiters were then asked to complete a bipolar adjectives scale for a hypothetical individual that exhibited the language traits in the previous list and a 5-point Likert scale measure of how likely they would be to hire the hypothetical individual who exhibited each of the language features described. Both grammatical and pronunciation features of the Appalachian Dialect have been found to hinder chances of employment. The Appalachian

speaker was rated below average on professionalism, sophistication, intelligence, competence, employability, organization, industriousness, and reputability.

Standard accents have been shown to be more appealing than non-standard accents in employee selection settings. A study by Carlson (2006) examined the effect of accent and dialect on employability. Sixty human resource specialists judged speech samples of three female job candidates. All three candidates were bidialectical. One exhibited dialect traits consistent with African American Vernacular English, one spoke in an Asian-influenced English, and another spoke in a Spanish-influenced English. Two speech samples were created from each job candidate--one that showed strong dialectical features and one that showed minimal dialect features. The samples consisted of a brief description of the candidate's job qualifications. Human resource professionals then rated the candidates on the dimensions of employability and comprehensibility using a 7-point Likert scale. Results showed that each candidate was perceived more favorably when they exhibited minimal dialect features.

In interview settings, candidates with standard accents are perceived as more hirable than candidates with nonstandard accents. In a study by Elwell, Brown and Rutter (1984), participants viewed a videotaped interview of an Indian man applying for a clerical assistant position. The interviewee spoke in either Standard British English or with an Indian accent. After viewing the tape, participants were asked to indicate how likely they would be to hire the man. The participants who heard the man speak in a British English accent were more likely to indicate they would hire the interviewee than those who heard him speak with an Indian accent.

Rakic, Steffens, and Mummendey (2011) provided further evidence that regional accents can have a profound effect on the outcome of interviews. In this study, researchers examined how participants perceived the hirability, competence, and socio-intellectual status of individuals based on their regional accents. Participants were informed that individuals were applying for the position in middle management. Audio samples of interviews were created from four different German accents--One standard, and four different regional accents. A sample of university students were randomly assigned to listen to one of these samples. Results indicated that speakers of regional dialects were viewed as less competent, less hirable, and of lower socio-economic status than the Standard German speaker.

Bias in Performance Appraisal

Bias in performance appraisal related to the dialect of the ratee has yet to be studied. However, there is a vast amount of evidence to suggest that performance appraisal is not free from bias. Prior research has shown that the accuracy of performance ratings can be influenced by characteristics of the rater, characteristics of the rate, and the appraisal instrument itself (Landy& Farr, 1980). Previous studies have established that evaluations of performance can be influenced by preconceived stereotypes about the ratee (Schwab & Heneman, 1978). Even prior expectations about a ratee that are entirely unrelated to the job at hand have been shown to influence performance appraisal (Favero & Illgen, 1989; Martell &Evans, 2005).

Studies have shown that even appraisal types that are behaviorally-based are subject to rater biases. In Favero and Ilgen's 1989 study, participants were given a written

description of a nurse's traits. They were then asked to observe videotaped footage of her performing her job before completing a behaviorally anchored rating scale of her performance. Participants were given one of two descriptions of the nurse. One was a list of random traits that would not allow the rater to place the nurse into any particular social category (e.g. tender, clean, artistic, unimaginative). The other description pegged the nurse as a prototypical social activist (e.g. speaks out for causes, attends political meetings). Neither of these descriptions involved any traits or characteristics that would imply anything about her abilities as a nurse. Results showed that participants who received the "social activist" description of the nurse were less accurate in their appraisals of her performance than participants who received the nonprototypical description. Furthermore, participants who received the "social activist" description spent less time watching the nurse perform her duties. This phenomenon could be explained by the idea that the raters felt like they knew something about the ratee based on her membership in the group "social activist". Though this group membership was unrelated to the job of nurse, raters felt less inclined to observe her performance. The authors also suggested that the problem of prototyping in performance appraisal would have even more detrimental consequences if the prototype itself implies a certain level of performance. Therefore, the prototyping that occurs due to regional accent may have an even greater impact on performance appraisal.

Favero and Ilgen's (1989) study illustrated that Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) style rating systems, while intended to reduce bias, are still subject to the biases of raters. Further research into these scales has provided further evidence that BARS style rating scales are subject to rater bias (Boorman & Dunnette, 1975). While

BARS and other behaviorally-based ratings scales have been praised for their greater accuracy, the results of these studies indicate that behaviorally based scales are still flawed.

Martell and Evans (2005) further illustrated that prior information can have a biasing effect on raters. In this 2005 study, participants were given either positive or negative information about a group, and were then asked to observe the group's performance and complete a survey regarding positive and negative behaviors that the group completed. Participants were given a list of positive and negative behaviors and were asked to circle the behaviors that they remembered occurring. Results indicated that participants in the positive prior information condition remembered more positive behaviors and less negative behaviors, regardless of whether those behaviors actually occurred or not. Participants in the negative prior information condition remembered less positive behaviors and more negative behaviors, regardless of whether the behaviors actually occurred. These results imply that not only did the condition influence how positively or negatively the rater viewed the group, it actually influenced the type of behavior they remembered. Both groups tended to remember false information that was congruent with their prior expectations.

Prior expectations about employees' age have been shown to effect performance evaluations. Schwab and Heneman (1978) investigated the relationship between age and performance appraisal. Their study utilized a sample of personnel specialists who appraised written descriptions of work behaviors. The age of the employee being evaluated was varied. Researchers found an interaction between the age of the rater and

the age of the ratee such that younger raters judged older employees more harshly and older raters judged younger employees more harshly. Both the written descriptions of employee work behaviors and the performance dimensions of the appraisal tool utilized in this study were derived from a critical incidents job analysis. The performance appraisal tool was therefore directly linked to the performance being judged. Despite this direct link, these results reflect a bias in participant perceptions.

When raters have prior expectations about an employee's performance and those expectations are not met, raters tend to give lower, less accurate ratings. Hogan's 1987study involved a sample of first-level bank supervisors who were asked to provide ratings for tellers. Raters were asked to complete performance expectation ratings for any employee that had worked for their bank for less than 6 months. Then, six months later, the supervisors were asked to rate the same workers actual performance and rate whether the employee's performance was due to internal or external factors. Performance data was also collected from an objective source through records of cash balancing. Researchers then looked at the relationships between the supervisors' expectation ratings, subjective performance ratings, objective performance ratings, and performance attributions. Results showed that when raters' expectations were disconfirmed by actual performance, supervisors gave lower ratings. The results of this study further emphasize the importance of prior expectations in performance ratings and how these prior expectations can bias raters' appraisals of performance.

Other sources of bias in performance appraisal, such as the influence of impression management on ratings, have also been examined. In a 1996 study,

(Gunderson, Tinsley, & Terpstra, 1996), researchers examined the role impression management plays in evaluation. A sample of 240 college students were randomly assigned to view a videotape of a subordinate describing a year in their performance. Six separate videotapes were created that represented neutral, assertive, or defensive impression management strategies. Each participant viewed one videotape, then rated that employee's performance based on the information contained in the video. Results showed that impression management had a significant influence on performance ratings, with assertive tactics having a positive influence on ratings and defensive tactics having a negative influence on ratings. These results provide additional evidence that irrelevant factors outside of performance influence the way raters perceive and rate others.

While the effect that stereotypes related to language and dialect have on performance ratings have not been extensively studied, researchers have examined the effects of racial stereotypes on performance evaluations. In a 2003 study, researchers asked participants to rate the performance of several hypothetical subordinates and managers. The raters knew the racial identity of each hypothetical ratee. Results showed that participants provided more positive ratings to individuals in stereotypical societal positions-- Black subordinates and White leaders, and gave more negative ratings to those whose race and position did not match to traditional societal stereotypes--White subordinates and Black leaders (Knight, Hebl, Foster, & Mannix, 2003).

Many researchers have examined the effects of sex bias on performance evaluation. Across the board, male subjects tend to receive more positive evaluations than their female counterparts. This effect is even more pronounced when women are in fields

that are traditionally considered to be masculine (Top, 1991). Further research has shown that those who hold traditional stereotypes about women are significantly more likely to rate women negatively, and are significantly less accurate in the ratings they provide (Bauer & Baltes, 2002).Other studies have shown that while raters are equally able to recall information about an individual's performance regardless of that person's sex, the ratings that are then assigned to that individual are influenced by the ratee's sex (Robbins & DeNisi, 1993).When comparing subjective ratings to objective performance information, males are rated higher than their true level of performance and females are rated lower than their true level of performance. (Dobbins, Cardy, & Truxillo 1986).

Other researchers have studied the effects of race on job performance evaluations and have found other biases in ratings. In a 1990 study, African Americans were shown to receive lower job performance ratings than their white counterparts and were deemed less promotable by their supervisors (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Wormley, 1990). Other studies have shown that this racial bias occurs regardless of the race of the rater. Researchers have shown that both black and white supervisors tend to give lower performance ratings to black employees (Mobley, 1982).

Ultimately, this research shows that irrelevant factors, and the stereotypes related to those factors, can influence performance appraisal despite the use of appraisal tools that are intended to reduce the likelihood of these biases (Favero & Ilgen, 1989; Boorman & Dunnette, 1975; Martell & Evans, 2005; Schwab & Heneman, 1978). Negative stereotypes about the Appalachian dialect have been shown to exist (Mulac& Rudd, 1977; Luhman, 1990; Parsons, 2008). The performance appraisal of an Appalachian ratee

will likely be influenced by the prior expectations that are held about individuals from Appalachia. The speaker's dialect will likely prime these prior expectations and influence the judgments of participants.

Leadership Perceptions and Stereotypes

While few, if any, studies have been conducted examining the proposed link between regional dialect and perceptions of leadership, many other studies have examined the impact of stereotypes and prototypicality on leadership perceptions. Research has provided strong evidence to suggest that perceptions of leadership are strongly linked to the prototypicality of the rate. According to the implicit leadership and cognitive categorization theory, individuals have mental prototypes of effective leadership, then use those prototypes to determine whether or not the actions and characteristics of others make them effective leaders (Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984; Cronshaw & Lord, 1987). The more a person falls in line with our idea of what a leader should be, the higher that individual is rated on their personal leadership qualities.

Research has shown that certain character traits are associated with perceptions of leadership. In their 1986 meta-analytic study, Lord, De Vader, and Alliger looked at 19 separate studies of leadership perceptions in order to determine which traits are most consistently associated with leadership ability. The results showed that participants across these studies tended to report similar perceptions of what traits make a leader a leader. Intelligence, masculinity, aggression, decisiveness, dominance, determination, and conservativism were most strongly and consistently associated with perceptions of leadership. Their results also indicated that while these traits did not necessarily predict

leadership success, they were strongly related to leader emergence. This implies that leadership perceptions play a large role in determining which individuals will become leaders in the future.

Cross-cultural studies have indicated that differences in leadership concepts exist across cultures. In a review of leadership prototypes in European nations, researchers found differences between leadership prototypes across regions of Europe (Broadbeck et al., 2000). Across countries, there were differences in perceptions of autonomy, interpersonal directness, and modesty associated with leadership. For instance, while Portuguese participants tended to associate low employee autonomy and high interpersonal directness with successful leadership, Georgian participants felt nearly the opposite--that high employee autonomy and low interpersonal directness were indicative of good leadership. Despite these differences, all nations examined in the study tended to view leaders as being prepared, convincing, and orderly. These results indicate that while leadership perceptions may differ across cultures, all cultures have their own, well-formed prototype of what makes a good leader.

Racial stereotypes can influence how individuals are perceived as leaders. Sy et al. (2010) examined the impact of these stereotypes on leadership perceptions. This study looked at perceived leadership qualities on the basis of race (Asian American and Caucasian American) and occupation (Engineering and Sales). Overall, leadership perceptions of Asian Americans were low compared to Caucasian Americans regardless of profession. However, while leadership perceptions of Caucasians did not differ as a result of occupation, leadership perceptions of Asian Americans were greater for the field

of Engineering--a profession more congruent with Asian American stereotypes--than for sales. These results suggest that race impacts leadership perceptions through the activation of stereotypes--what the rater perceives as a "good fit" for the ratee on the basis of their race.

Further research has provided more evidence that "being White" is perceived as an attribute of the "leader" prototype (Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008). A sample of undergraduate students were asked to read a newspaper article in which an organization's racial composition was described as either 50% white, 20% white, or not specified. In the article, a business leader for the organization was interviewed. After reading the article, participants were asked to answer questions about the interviewee and then indicate what they thought that individual's race was. Regardless of the base rate information provided in the article, participants were far more likely to indicate that the leader was white.

Research has shown similar effects related to sex and leadership perception, particularly of people in management roles. In a study by Heilman, Block, and Martel (1995), a survey of male managers asked participants to complete an attribute inventory for either men and women in general, men and women managers, or men and women successful managers. Women in managerial roles were viewed more positively in terms of personal and leadership characteristics, but were still rated lower than men. When a woman was framed as a "successful" manager, she was still rated lower than men in leadership characteristics, and ratings of her interpersonal attributes were far more negative than for women not in a leadership position.

Other studies have shown that individuals have different perceptions of what a typical leader is like depending on the leader's gender. When asked to describe a generic leader, participants are likely to describe that individual as possessing traditionally masculine qualities such as frankness, forcefulness, and assertiveness. When the leader's gender is identified, participants tend to report that male leaders possess similar traits to the generic leader. When the leader is identified as female, individuals report that a typical female leader possesses traits such as sentimentality, passiveness, and bitterness. These results show that individuals' perceptions of typical leaders differ depending on gender, and male leaders share more qualities in common with a generic idea of "leader" than female leaders (Deal & Stevenson, 1998).

Further research has illustrated that other gender differences exist in leadership perceptions. When looking at aversive and unethical leadership behaviors, female leaders are perceived far more negatively for engaging in aversive leadership behaviors than male counterparts who exhibited similar behavior (Thoroughgood, Hunter, & Sawyer, 2011). When looking at "task-oriented" and "person-oriented" skills, individuals tend to rate men as being more "task-oriented" and women as being more "people-oriented". When asked to rate a good leader based on the same skills, individuals tend to perceive leaders as being more "task-oriented"--meaning typical perceptions of "good leadership" are more consistent with male-typical skill orientation (Sczesny, 2003).

In a 1984 study (Powell & Butterfield, 1984), researchers examined perceptions of poor leadership. Many studies have shown that individuals tend to associate good leadership with masculine traits, but few studies have looked into what characteristics are

associated with poor leadership. In this study, a sample of over 1,000 undergraduate students were asked to describe both a "good manager" and a "bad manager". As expected, good managers were described in masculine terms. However, bad managers were not perceived as masculine or feminine, but rather "undifferentiated", or being low in both masculine and feminine characteristics. This study provides evidence that individuals have a prototypical idea of what makes a "good" as well as a "bad" leader, with good leaders being perceived as forceful, assertive, and self-reliant, and willing to take risks and bad leaders being perceived as passive, lazy, dependent, unsympathetic, and lacking compassion.

This previous research in leadership perceptions implies that our idea of a "stereotypical leader" greatly influences how we perceive the leadership qualities of others. "Standard American English speaker" likely falls into traits of a typical leader research has shown that leadership is associated with success and intelligence (Lord, DeVader, & Alliger, 1986). Research has also shown that Appalachian speakers are rated lower in success and intelligence than their standard speaking counterparts (Luhman, 1990). Since speakers of Appalachian English, and the characteristics attributed to these speakers, stray from this leader prototype, this may lead to differences in the way leadership potential in Appalachian speakers is perceived.

Overview of Study and Hypotheses

This research study is intended to expand upon previous research examining the link between dialect to workplace decisions. Specifically, this study examined participants' perceptions of an Appalachian English speaker's performance, leadership

potential, and status. By examining the relationships between speaker accent, status perceptions, solidarity perceptions, performance ratings, perceptions of leadership potential, and promotion potential ratings, this study has the potential to provide new evidence of the ways stereotypes impact speakers of regional dialects in the workplace. Participants were asked to listen to four audio work samples of a supervisor performing his duties on an average day. The participants were randomly assigned to hear the speaker using a Standard American accent or an Appalachian English accent. After listening to these samples, participants were asked to rate the speaker's performance, leadership ability, and answer questions about the speaker's status (education, intelligence, wealth, success, and ambition) and solidarity (trustworthiness, goodness, sympathy, friendliness, and honesty). Based on previous research, the following hypotheses were developed.

Hypothesis 1. Participants will rate the Appalachian speaker's performance lower than participants will rate the Standard American speaker's performance.

Hypothesis 2. Participants will rate the Appalachian speaker's leadership potential lower than participants will rate the Standard American speaker's leadership potential.

Hypothesis 3. Participants will rate the Appalachian speaker lower in status perceptions than participants will rate the Standard American speaker.

Hypothesis 4. Participants will rate the Appalachian speaker higher in solidarity perceptions than participants will rate the Standard American speaker.

Hypothesis 5. The relationship between dialect and performance evaluation will be mediated by perceptions of status.

Hypothesis 6. The relationship between dialect and performance evaluation will be mediated by perceptions of solidarity.

Furthermore, while region of origin of participants (39.1% of participants were from Appalachia) is variable, we expect hypotheses to be supported regardless of participant region of origin, in keeping with previous research (Luhman, 1990).

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

Participants

The sample was composed of 184 undergraduate students enrolled in introductory psychology at Eastern Kentucky University. The mean age of participants was 20 and the sample was 62.5 percent female. 39.1 percent of participants in the sample reported being from the Appalachian region. 26.2 percent of participants reported speaking with an Appalachian regional accent. 29.9 percent of participants reported that they had experience in managerial workplace roles. The experiment was conducted in groups, with 65 percent of participants participating in groups of 1-8. The other 35 percent of participants went through the experiment in a classroom-style setting in groups of 12-18. Participants were awarded outside activity credit for their psychology course for their participation in the study. Data were collected between Fall 2013 and Spring 2014.

Materials

Statement of Consent. A statement of consent was created to inform participants of the general contents of the study, as well as their right to discontinue the study at any time. The consent statement is shown in Appendix A.

Researcher Script. A standard script was created for the researcher to use during the experiment. It outlines what the researcher should say, as well as the order of events that should transpire. The researcher script can be found in Appendix B.

Participant Instructions. An instruction sheet was provided to the participant at the beginning of the study. The instruction sheet provides an explanation of the participant's role in the evaluation. It also includes information about the company such as industry (marketing) and number of employees (300), as well as a description of the speaker including his role in the company (supervisor), his tenure (five years), and his level of education (Bachelor's degree in business). The participant instructions are shown in Appendix C.

Audio Work Samples. Four pairs of audio work samples were created for this study. In all cases a supervisor was speaking to employees. The pairs represented everyday managerial activities (a weekly meeting, disciplinary hearing, performance review, and policy discussion with employees). The scripts followed in each sample were created on the basis of the performance evaluation scale described below. The script is intended to illustrate the behaviors listed in the performance evaluation. In one sample in each pair, the speaker used Standard American accent and in the other sample, used an Appalachian English dialect. The scripts in each pair were identical, and one bidialectical speaker was used for all samples. The audio work samples are shown in Appendix D.

Performance Appraisal. The performance appraisal tool used to measure performance ratings was created based on tasks and duties listed for related supervisory positions in the ONET database. The 16 job duties listed in this performance evaluation were adapted from these previously established evaluations and are intended to serve as a representative sample of the job tasks required of a low-level manager. An example of a performance domain on the scale is "*plans general operations".* The 5-point rating scale

used in this appraisal uses the anchors of 1= Unsatisfactory, 3=Acceptable, 5=Outstanding. Reliability analysis indicated a Cronbach's α of .94 for the scale. The performance appraisal can be found in Appendix E.

Perceptions of Leadership Potential Scale. This scale was created on the basis of the General Leadership Impression scale (GLI) (Lord, Foti, & DeVader, 1984). Questions from the GLI were adapted to reflect the workplace scenario presented in the audio samples. While questions in the GLI are worded in the present tense, questions for this scale were reworded in the future tense to gauge participant perception of leadership potential rather than the perceptions of present leadership ability. An example of an item is *"How much leadership will Brad exhibit?".* Reliability analysis revealed a Cronbach's α of .90. The Perceptions of Leadership Potential Scale can be found in Appendix F.

Promotion Potential. Participants were asked to answer a single item related to the speakers' promotion potential. Participants were asked to respond to the item *"Brad should be selected as the new department manager"* using a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). The promotion potential item was presented to participants on the same sheet as the perceptions of leadership potential scale and can be found in Appendix F.

Status Perception Scale. The status perception scale used for this study was taken from Luhman's (1990) study of language attitudes in Kentucky (Cronbach's α = .83). This bipolar adjectives scale measures participants' perceptions of a speaker's level of education, intelligence, wealth, success, and ambition. For presentation to participants,

the items of the Solidarity Perception Scale were mixed with items from the Status Perception Scale, and can be found in Appendix G.

Solidarity Perception Scale. The solidarity perception scale used for this study was taken from Luhman's (1990) study of language attitudes in Kentucky (Cronbach's α = .83). This bipolar adjectives scale measures participants' perceptions of a speaker's level of trustworthiness, goodness, sympathy, friendliness, and honesty. For presentation to participants, the items of the Solidarity Perception Scale were mixed with items from the Status Perception Scale, and can be found in Appendix G.

Manipulation Check. As a manipulation check, participants were asked to identify the accent of the speaker in the audio samples. Participants were asked to answer the question, *"What accent does Brad have?"* Participants were given 5 separate accent response options and could respond with "*I don't know"* if they were uncertain of the speaker's accent. The Manipulation Check can be found in Appendix H.

Demographics. Demographic information was collected regarding the participants' age, year in school and gender. Participants were asked if they have any management experience, if they are from the Appalachian region, and if they themselves have an Appalachian regional accent. The Demographics can be found in Appendix I.

Debriefing Form. Participants were given a debriefing form that outlines the study's true purpose, resources to learn more about the topic, and the researcher's contact information. The debriefing form can be form in Appendix J.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to either the Appalachian or standard speech condition. Each participant was given a consent statement (Appendix A) which they read before continuing the study. If they agreed to continue, participants were asked to assume the role of an employee whose job is to assess the job performance and leadership ability of their supervisor. Participants were given a description of supervisor, including the length of the supervisor's tenure at the company, as well as a discription of the supervisor's level of education (Appendix C). The participants were then instructed that they will listen to a series of four work samples on which their performance appraisal and leadership judgements should be based (Appendix D). After listening to the samples, participants assessed the job performance of the speaker using the performance appraisal tool (Appendix E). They then assessed the employee's leadership potential using the Perceptions of Leadership Potential Scale and answer a question regarding the speaker's promotion potential (Appendix F). The participants then completed the Status Perceptions Scale and Solidarity Perceptions Scale (Appendix G). As a manipulation check, participants were asked to identify which listed accent the speaker spoke with (Appendix H). Following the completion of these scales, participants were asked to provide demographic information regarding sex, age, managerial experience, and Appalachian origin (Appendix I).Participants were then given a debriefing form (Appendix J), thanked for their time and awarded research credit for their psychology course.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Manipulation Check

Results of the manipulation check indicate that participants in both conditions were successfully able to identify the accent of the speaker (χ^2= 169.95, p<.01). 97% of those in the Appalachian speaker condition were able to identify the speaker's accent as Appalachian. 73% of those in the Standard speaker condition correctly identified the speaker's accent with another 16% identifying the speaker as having a "New England" accent.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance

In order to test the hypothesized main effect of speaker accent condition on performance evaluation, leadership perceptions, status perceptions, solidarity perceptions, and promotion potential , a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted with speaker accent condition and participant's region of origin as the independent variables and the five outcomes as dependent variables. The results of the multivariate omnibus test yielded a significant main effect of speaker accent condition, $F(5,176)= 16.22$, $p<.01$, $\eta^2 = .315$, and a significant main effect of participant region of origin $F(5,176)= 2.46$, $p<.05$, $\eta^2= .065$. There was not a significant interaction effect. Therefore, follow up univariate analyses were conducted.

Speaker Accent Condition Main Effect. The results of univariate analyses indicate significant main effects of speaker accent condition on performance evaluation

ratings $F(1,180)= 7.38$, leadership perception ratings $F(1,180) = 11.09$, status perception ratings $F(1,180)$ 28.05, solidarity perception ratings $F(1,180) =8.6$, and promotion potential $F(1,180) =5.32$ (all $ps< .01$).Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of participant responses to each rating scale by speaker accent condition. Follow up results indicated that the Appalachian speaker was rated lower in performance evaluation ($M_{appalachian}= 3.25$, $SD=.66$, $M_{standard} = 3.56$, $SD = .83$), lower in leadership perceptions ($M_{appalachian}= 3.24$, $SD=.76$, $M_{standard} = 3.59$, $SD = .79$), lower in status perceptions ($M_{appalachian}= 3.45$, $SD=.62$, $M_{standard} = 3.92$, $SD = .60$), higher in solidarity perceptions ($M_{appalachian}= 4.30$, $SD=.54$, $M_{standard} = 3.96$, $SD = .79$), and lower in promotion potential ($M_{appalachian}= 3.20$, $SD=1.10$, $M_{standard} = 3.53$, $SD = 1.06$). Therefore, the hypothesized effect of speaker accent on performance ratings, leadership perceptions, status perceptions, and solidarity perceptions were supported.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Participant Ratings by Speaker Accent Condition

	Performance Evaluation		Leadership Perceptions		Status Perceptions		Solidarity Perceptions		Promotion potential	
Speaker Accent Condition	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Standard	3.56	.83	3.59	.79	3.92	.60	3.96	.79	3.53	1.06
Appalachian	3.25	.74	3.24	.76	3.45	.62	4.30	.54	3.20	1.10

all p's <.05

Participant Region of Origin Main Effect. The results of the univariate tests revealed significant main effects of participant region of origin on status perception ratings $F(1,180) =6.14$, $p <.05$. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of

participant responses to each rating scale by participant region of origin. Follow up results indicated that participants from the Appalachian region rated the speaker as being higher in status than participants from outside the Appalachian region ($M_{appalachia}$= 3.80, *SD*=.*64*, $M_{outside}$= 3.61, *SD* = .65).

Mediation Analysis

Status Perceptions. To test the hypothesis that status perceptions mediate the relationship between speaker accent condition and performance evaluation ratings, a preliminary hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted based on the three-part Baron and Kenny (1986) method. Results showed a significant relationship between speaker accent condition and status perceptions (r= -.36, p <.05).The results revealed a significant association between speaker accent condition and performance evaluation ratings in the first block (β = -.20, p< .05, R^2 = .04, p< .05), which satisfies the second step in the model. Finally, the results indicated that status perceptions were significantly associated with performance evaluation ratings in second block (β = .60, p< .01, ΔR^2 = .32, p< .01), and the association between speaker accent condition and performance evaluation ratings dropped below significance with the addition of the mediator (β = .02, *n.s.*). Sobel's test for indirect effect was conducted to assess the extent to which speaker accent condition exerts an indirect effect on performance evaluation through status perceptions. Results showed that the indirect effect was significant (z=-4.51, p<.01). The Therefore, the results suggest that status perceptions fully mediate the relationship between speaker accent condition and performance evaluation ratings. This implies that

the relationship between speaker accent condition and performance appraisal ratings occurs through status perceptions.

A second hierarchical linear regression was conducted with speaker accent condition as the predictor, status perceptions as the mediator, and leadership perceptions as the outcome. Results showed a significant relationship between speaker accent condition and leadership perception ratings in the first block (β = -.22, p< .05, R^2 = .05, p< .05). Results indicated that status perceptions were significantly associated with leadership perception ratings in the second block (β = .70, p< .01, ΔR^2 = .43, p< .01), and the relationship between speaker accent condition and leadership perception ratings dropped below significance when the mediator was added (β = .03, *n.s.*). Sobel's test for indirect effect was conducted to assess the extent to which speaker accent condition exerts an indirect effect on leadership perceptions through status perceptions. Results showed that the indirect effect was significant (z=-4.73, p<.01). Therefore, the results suggest that status perceptions fully mediate the relationship between speaker accent condition and leadership perception ratings. This implies that the relationship between speaker accent condition and leadership perception ratings occurs through status perceptions.

A third hierarchical linear regression was conducted with speaker accent condition as the predictor, status perceptions as the mediator, and promotion potential as the outcome. Results showed a significant relationship between speaker accent condition and promotion potential in the first block (β = -.16, p< .05, R^2 = .02, p< .05). Results indicated that status perceptions were significantly associated with promotion potential

in the second block (β = .67, $p < .01$, $\Delta R^2 = .39$, $p < .01$), and the relationship between speaker accent condition and promotion potential dropped below significance when the mediator was added (β = .08, *n.s.*). Sobel's test for indirect effect was conducted to assess the extent to which speaker accent condition exerts an indirect effect on promotion potential through status perceptions. Results showed that the indirect effect was significant (z=-4.65, p<.01). Therefore, the results suggest that status perceptions fully mediate the relationship between speaker accent condition and leadership perception ratings. This implies that the relationship between speaker accent condition and promotion potential occurs through status perceptions. The results of these three mediation analyses provide full support for the hypothesis that the relationship between speaker accent and workplace outcomes is mediated by status perceptions.

Solidarity Perceptions. To test the hypothesis that solidarity perceptions mediate the relationship between speaker accent condition and performance evaluation ratings, a preliminary hierarchical linear regression analysis was conducted based on the three-part Baron and Kenny (1986) method. The results revealed a significant association between speaker accent condition and solidarity perceptions ($r = .24$, $p < .01$), which satisfies the first step in the model. The results also revealed a significant association between speaker accent condition and performance evaluation ratings in the first block (β = -.20, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .04$, $p < .05$), which satisfies the second step in the model. The results indicated that solidarity perceptions were significantly associated with performance evaluation ratings in second block (β = .56, $p < .01$, $\Delta R^2 = .30$, $p < .01$). However, the association between speaker accent condition and performance evaluation ratings did not drop below significance with the addition of the mediator (β = -.33, p<.01). Therefore, the results do

not suggest that solidarity perceptions mediate the relationship between speaker accent condition and performance evaluation ratings and the hypothesis was not supported.

A second hierarchical linear regression was conducted with speaker accent condition as the predictor, solidarity perceptions as the mediator, and leadership perceptions as the outcome. Results showed a significant relationship between speaker accent condition and leadership perception ratings in the first block (β = -.22, p< .05, R^2 = .05, p< .05). Results indicated that solidarity perceptions were significantly associated with leadership perception ratings in the second block (β = .47, p< .01, ΔR^2 = .21, p< .01). However, the association between speaker accent condition and leadership perception ratings did not drop below significance with the addition of the mediator (β = -.34, p<.01). Therefore, the results do not suggest that solidarity perceptions mediate the relationship between speaker accent condition and leadership perception ratings.

A third hierarchical linear regression was conducted with speaker accent condition as the predictor, solidarity perceptions as the mediator, and promotion potential as the outcome. Results showed a significant relationship between speaker accent condition and promotion potential ratings in the first block (β = -.16, p< .05, R^2 = .02, p< .05). Results indicated that status perceptions were significantly associated with promotion potential in the second block (β = .51, p< .01, ΔR^2 = .24, p< .01). However, the association between speaker accent condition and promotion potential did not drop below significance with the addition of the mediator (β = -.28, p<.01). Therefore, the results do not suggest that solidarity perceptions mediate the relationship between speaker accent condition and promotion potential .

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

These results provide support for the majority of the hypotheses proposed for this study. Participants gave lower ratings for the Appalachian speaker's performance than for the Standard speaker's performance. Participants perceived the Appalachian speaker as being lower in leadership potential and status, and perceived the Appalachian speaker as being higher in solidarity. The relationship between dialect and performance evaluation was fully mediated by perceptions of status. However, the relationship between dialect and performance evaluation was not mediated by solidarity perceptions. Further analyses also showed several non-hypothesized findings. Appalachian speakers were rated lower in promotion potential than Standard American English speakers. Status perceptions also fully mediated the relationship between dialect and leadership, as well as the relationship between dialect and promotion potential . While most dependent variables were not significantly related to participant's region of origin, results indicated that participants from Appalachia gave higher status ratings, regardless of speaker accent condition, than participants from outside Appalachia.

Implications

The results obtained from this study are consistent with previous Appalachian language attitude research. As in Luhman's 1990 review of language attitudes in Kentucky, the Appalachian speaker was perceived by raters as being lower in status and higher in solidarity than the Standard American English speaker. Appalachian English speakers were also found to be less hirable than Standard American English speakers--a

finding that mirror's the results of Atkins' 1993 study of nonstandard dialect in recruitment settings.

As anticipated, there was no interaction between participant region of origin, speaker accent condition, and any of the scale ratings. While it may seem counter-intuitive, previous research has shown that individuals who are members of stigmatized groups tend tohold the same stereotypical beliefs about their group as the rest of the population (Marston, 1973; Mulac& Rudd, 1977; Luhman, 1990; Parsons, 2008). The results of this study provide further evidence of this effect.

Results also, as anticipated, revealed that the Appalachian English speaker was rated lower in performance than the Standard American English speaker. While no previous studies have looked specifically at the influence of Appalachian dialect in performance appraisal, the finding that the Appalachian speaker was rated lower in performance than the Standard English speaker is consistent with previous findings that irrelevant factors, and stereotypes associated with those factors, can influence appraisals of performance (Favero & Illgen, 1989; Boorman & Dunnette, 1975; Martel & Evans, 2005; Schwab & Heneman, 1978). While previous research has shown that nonstandard dialect can play a role in the recruitment and selection of employees (Atkins, 1993), these results indicate that the impact of dialect in employment decisions extends past the hiring process, and that speakers of nonstandard dialects may continue to experience workplace discrimination on the basis of their speech. This finding, coupled with the finding that the Appalachian speaker was rated as less hirable for an advanced position, may indicate that

prospects for promotion and career advancement are unfairly influenced by nonstandard speech.

As with performance appraisal research, there isn't extensive prior research examining the relationship between regional dialect and leadership perceptions. However, our finding that the Appalachian speaker was perceived as being lower in leadership potential than the Standard American English speaker is consistent with previous findings that our "leader prototype" influences our perceptions of leadership qualities in others. Previous leadership research has shown that individuals tend to associate leadership with power, influence, and status (Lord, DeVader, & Alliger, 1986). Our finding that Appalachian speakers are perceived as being lower in status dimensions such as wealth, education, and ambition implies that Appalachian speakers do not fit into the typical leadership prototype.

Perhaps the most interesting findings from this study come from the results of mediation analyses. The findings that status perceptions mediate the relationship between dialect and outcome variables such as performance ratings, perceptions of leadership potential, and promotion potential allows us to draw certain conclusions about the reasons why Appalachian speakers are rated lower in these dimensions. Previous research has shown that in both performance appraisal and leadership perceptions highlights the role that stereotypes play in our perceptions of people in various roles. Prior performance appraisal research has shown that individual's performance is rated higher when that person is in a stereotypical role than when they are in a role that defies stereotypes about their group (Top, 1991; Knight, Hebl, Foster, &Mannix, 2003). In the present research

procedure, the speaker that participants rate is presented as white collar worker in a supervisory role. The finding that status perceptions fully mediate the relationship between dialect and performance ratings implies that stereotypes about the education, wealth, ambition, intelligence, and success of Appalachian English speakers may indicate that role incongruence and stereotypes about what a person with an Appalachian accent *should* be doing contribute to these lower performance ratings.

Previous leadership perception studies have shown that the more a person's characteristics fall in line with a prototypical idea of what a leader should be, the higher that individual is rated on leadership ability (Cronshaw& Lord, 1987; Rosette, Leonardelli, & Phillips, 2008) The finding that status perceptions fully mediate the relationship between dialect perceptions of leadership potential fits with the idea that low status does not fit with the leader prototype, resulting in lower leadership potential ratings for Appalachian speakers.

Results of mediation analyses showed that while Appalachian speakers were rated higher in solidarity perceptions (friendliness, sympathy, honesty, trustworthiness, goodness), these perceptions did not translate into higher ratings of performance, leadership potential, or promotion potential . Prior research has shown that individuals tend to associate leadership with masculine characteristics (Lord, DeVader, & Alliger, 1986). The characteristics included in the solidarity scale are more closely related to traditionally feminine traits. This may explain why performance appraisal and leadership perception ratings were seemingly unaffected by higher solidarity perceptions of Appalachian speakers. If the Appalachian speaker were presented as being in a non-

leadership role, these solidarity perceptions may have had a greater impact on performance ratings.

Interestingly, participants were provided with information about the speaker's status (education level, career level) in a written description of the speaker. Despite having this knowledge of the speaker's status, the Appalachian speaker was still rated as being lower in status as the standard speaker. The effect that status perceptions have on appraisals of performance, leadership perceptions, and promotion potential is, therefore, particularly troubling. If Appalachian speakers are likely to be viewed as lower in status even when raters know status information about the individual, then what can be done to alter these status perceptions? Stereotypes about Appalachian natives are long-standing. While these cultural perceptions are unlikely to change in the near future, bringing awareness to misconceptions about speakers of non-standard dialects in the workplace may help reduce these biases. Research findings related to "stereotype negation training" and other methods of reducing the effects of stereotypes in the workplace will be discussed in greater detail in the *directions for future research* section.

Limitations

While the method used to conduct this research study has limitations, steps were taken to eliminate as much error as possible under the method's constraints. While the study's generalizability may be limited by the use of an undergraduate sample, a significant portion of the study's sample reported having supervisory or management experience (29.9%), meaning that many of this study's participants may have conducted performance evaluations in the past. Participants in this study were asked to imagine that

they were employees making assessments of their supervisor rather than a manager judging an employee. By asking participants to make an upward appraisal rather than a downward one, this study is likely more generalizable to real-world settings.

While it is impossible for the two sets of audio samples created for this study to be entirely identical, steps were taken to ensure that the samples were professional and as similar as possible in all ways except for dialect. First, the samples were recorded by a theatre professor at Eastern Kentucky University who has extensive experience in both voice recording and dialect "code shifting". The samples themselves were pre-scripted and each sample's Standard and Appalachian version had the exact same dialogue. Each audio sample's Standard and Appalachian versions were of similar length and had similar vocal inflections. While certain differences in speech delivery are intended to differ due to dialect differences, the resulting audio samples sound consistent outside of these dialect differences.

Due to the nature of this study, the experimenter could not be blind to the condition that each participant group was in. Therefore, it is always possible that experimenter effects are a source of error in the study. However, participants were randomly assigned to their condition and the same experimenter ran all participants in both conditions to eliminate as many differences in study presentation as possible. All experimenter interactions with participants were scripted, with the experimenter's dialogue being identically scripted for both conditions.

Directions for Future Research

In order to address the limitations of this study and expand on the results that were obtained, future research studies should be conducted. Because this study revealed that Appalachian speakers are perceived differently than Standard American English speakers in terms of performance, leadership potential, status, and solidarity, it is important to determine if these effects are present in other contexts and if methods can be used to reduce this rater bias. While upward performance appraisals like the one used in this study are present in many workplaces, downward, supervisor-to-subordinate performance appraisals are still, by far, the most common method of performance rating. By conducting a similar experiment using a sample of professionals with managerial experience, we would learn if the same pattern of results that we obtained from the undergraduate sample would hold true when using a professional sample.

The performance instrument that was used in this study was fairly simple in style. While many organizations continue to use this style of performance appraisal instrument, others have moved on to more complex systems that are intended to reduce rater error and increase accuracy. One such rating instrument, known as the Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) uses examples of actual behavior as anchors (Smith & Kendall, 1963). Certain studies have suggested that BARS is more reliable, less subject to rater errors, and results in less leniency in rating (Boorman & Dunnette, 1975). By adapting the performance rating scale used in this study into a more complex, BARS-style scale, we would be able to investigate if the difference in ratings provided to Appalachian and Standard speakers still remained when using a more specific scale.

One of the most commonly accepted ways to reduce rater error in performance appraisals is through rater training programs. Research suggests that providing raters with greater experience with a particular rating instrument before the rating process improves rater accuracy (Gordon, 1970) and reduces rater error (Bernadin & Walter, 1977). Providing raters with pre-assessment training may help to reduce the difference in performance ratings that we observed in the present study.

Because the results obtained from the present study suggest that stereotypes of Appalachian English speakers may play a role in the assessment of a speaker's performance and leadership ability, it would be interesting to investigate how placing the ratee in a more stereotypical role would influence ratings. Previous research has shown that individuals tend to be rated higher in performance when they are in a role that is consistent with group stereotypes (Top, 1991; Knight, Hebl, Foster, &Mannix, 2003). Previous research, as well as the results of the present study, suggests that individuals tend to associate Appalachian speakers with lower intelligence, lower education, and lower ambition (Luhman, 1990). Therefore, placing the ratee in a blue-collar role that is more consistent with these stereotypes may result in Appalachian speaker ratings that are more consistent with, or even higher than, a Standard American speaking counterpart.

While our results suggest that an Appalachian speaker would be rated lower than a Standard American English speaking peer, the present study did not ask participants to select between candidates who speak in different accents. By asking participants to select a candidate for promotion after listening to work samples from multiple speakers, we could investigate differences that emerge in actual between-candidate selection decisions.

Prior research has also shown that even when the message provided by a non-standard speaker is more credible than that provided by a Standard speaker, the non-standard speaker is viewed as less credible (Marston, 1974). By varying the quality of the work samples among different accents (high quality Appalachian and low quality Standard vs. low quality Appalachian and high quality Standard), we could investigate if these effects hold true in promotion contexts.

Because the results of this study indicate that negative status stereotypes about speakers of non-standard dialects may impact the workplace outcomes of those individuals, future research should also investigate possible ways of reducing the impact of these stereotypes in the workplace. Research related to reducing the effects of stereotypes has revealed the extreme difficulty of changing the pattern of automatic stereotype activation. Individuals, even when exposed to numerous examples of stereotype-inconsistent stimuli, continued to implicitly associate stigmatized groups with cultural stereotypes about that group (Bargh, 1999).

While the answer to how the effects of stereotypes can be lessened in the workplace may not lie in reducing the *activation* of stereotypes, there is still hope that individuals can alter their *application* of stereotypes. Research has shown that when individuals are motivated to be nonprejudiced, those individuals tend not to apply these stereotypes (Devine, Monteith, Zurwerink, & Elliot, 1991; Monteith, Sherman & Devine, 1998). Further research has indicated that "stereotype negation training" may be an effective tool to motivate individuals to avoid the application of stereotypes in their daily lives. Negation training involves continued practice of responding "No" to stereotypic

traits in a category and "Yes" to nonstereotypic associations. Even in situations where participants were previously not aware that stereotypes were influencing their decision making, application of these stereotypes was reduced after they received “negation training” (Kawakami, Dovidio, Moll, Hermsen, & Russin, 2000). In order to test the effectiveness of these trainings in reducing bias against nonstandard dialects in performance appraisal contexts, future studies should provide participants with stereotype negation training prior to their assessment of a speaker’s performance.

Conclusion

This study highlights the effects of stereotyping faced by speakers of Appalachian English in workplace contexts. By examining the relationships between speaker accent, status perceptions, solidarity perceptions, performance ratings, perceptions of leadership potential, and promotion potential ratings, this study has provided new evidence of the ways stereotypes impact speakers of regional dialects in the workplace. These results suggest that status perceptions influence the performance ratings, leadership perceptions, and promotion potential of Appalachian natives. The results of this study have enhanced the understanding of dialect issues in employment settings and has provided the groundwork for future research into ways of reducing these effects in professional settings.

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APPENDIX A

Statement of Consent

Researcher's Name: Amie Sparks Ball

Title: Judging the Performance of a Supervisor

I am a graduate student in the Industrial-Organizational Psychology program at Eastern Kentucky University. I am conducting a study in which you will listen to a series of audio samples of a manager at a midsized company speaking to employees. You will also be asked to complete questionnaires regarding the speaker's performance and leadership ability, and also a brief questionnaire about yourself. Your participation should take no longer than 45 minutes.

Participation is voluntary and you have the right to refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without giving prior notice and without penalty. Your responses are anonymous.

After you complete the session you will be given an explanation of the study. If you wish to participate in this study and all of your questions have been answered, we will begin.

Appendix B

Researcher Script

Researcher: My name is Amie and I'll be your experimenter today. This is a consent form that explains the parts of today's study and your rights as a participant. Please read over it and let me know when you are finished.

Give consent form to participant and wait for participant to read

If participant agrees to continue,

Researcher: Thank you for agreeing to take part in today's study. First, you'll be given a sheet containing the instructions for today's study. I'll be reading these instructions aloud with you.

Give instructions to participant and read instructions aloud to participant.

Researcher: Do you have any questions about the instructions?

If no,

Researcher: You will now listen to the first audio work sample. This is a sample of Brad Johnson speaking during a regular weekly meeting with employees.

Play first audio sample for participant

Researcher: The second work sample is Brad Johnson conducting a disciplinary hearing with an employee.

Play second audio sample for participant

Researcher: The third work sample is Brad Johnson going over a performance review with an employee.

Play third audio sample for participant

Researcher: The last work sample is Brad Johnson describing a new company policy to employees.

Play fourth audio sample for participant

Researcher: Now that you've listened to these work samples from Brad Johnson, you'll be asked to evaluate Brad's performance. We know this may be difficult, but based on the work samples you've heard, please rate Brad using the following scale. Please read the instructions at the top of the page before answering the questions.

Give performance appraisal to participant and wait for them to complete it.

Researcher: Now I'd like you to rate Brad's leadership ability. Because Brad is being considered for a promotion, I'd like you to answer these questions based on how you think Brad would perform if he got this new job. Please read the instructions at the top of the page before answering the questions.

Give leadership potential scale to participant and wait for them to complete it.

Researcher: Now, I'd like you to rate Brad on a few general characteristics. Based on what you know about Brad, please rate Brad on each of the following characteristics.

Give status and solidarity scales to participant and wait for them to complete it.

Researcher: Now, I'm going to ask you about Brad's accent. Please select the accent that you think Brad has. If you aren't certain, you can select "I don't know" at the bottom.

Give manipulation check to participant and wait for them to complete it.

Researcher: Now, I'd like you to answer a few questions about yourself.

Give demographic questions to participant and wait for them to complete it.

Researcher: That was the end of today's study. With this study, I am examining effects of nonstandard dialect in the workplace. This paper provides more specifics about the

study, outlines the questions we are examining and the purpose behind the tasks you were asked to complete today. Please read through it. If you have any questions, feel free to ask me now or contact me at the phone number or email address listed on this sheet. Thank you for your participation.

Appendix C

Participant Instructions

I would like you to imagine yourself in the following situation. You are an employee at a marketing company that employs around 300 people. Brad Johnson is your supervisor at this company. Brad has been working for this marketing firm for five years. He has a bachelor's degree in Business from a local university.

Imagine that it is your job to assess Brad's work performance on a number of dimensions including planning, guidance, communication, and employee relations. You will listen to four audio recordings of Brad during a regular work day. After listening to these audio samples, you will rate Brad's work performance. You will also be rating Brad's leadership skills. Brad will soon be considered for a promotion to Department Manager and this information will be used to help determine if Brad will get the promotion.

Appendix D

Audio Work Sample Scripts

#1 – Weekly Meeting

Hello everyone. Glad to see you all bright and early. Thanks to everybody for getting here on time. I know that's not always easy on a Monday morning. So, let's get down to business. First off, everybody make sure you turn in your schedule for next month to the main office. We haven't gotten our schedule together on time for the last few months, so everyone really needs to get on this. We can't keep posting schedules late, so I want everyone's schedule in by the end of the week. As for last week's progress, I think everyone's doing pretty well overall. There's a few of you who I think are slacking off though, so don't fall in to bad habits. I've heard that some of you are a lot of extra time on your lunch breaks, and I want to make sure that doesn't continue. You guys know how long you're allowed to stay out to lunch, so if any of you are coming back late, you're going to hear about it from me. As for our team responsibilities for the next week, everybody is going to be working in the same groups as last week. I know you all were looking forward to switching things up, but we really can't mess with that right now. I'm worried that if we mess around with everyone's responsibilities, some tasks are going to fall through the cracks and be forgotten. So for now, everybody is responsible for the same things they were last week. You guys really have to pick up the pace on this project though. If possible, I'd like to see it completed by the end of the month. We've been working on this for a long time and we really need to finish this as soon as possible. So, everybody send me your updates by Friday and I'll let you know where we stand. I know you guys can do this. Before we move on, does anybody have any questions?

#2 – Disciplinary hearing

Hi Mike. Thanks for coming in today. I'd like to go ahead and get to the point of this meeting. I don't want to beat around the bush with this, and I think you already know why I've brought you in today. This is the second time this quarter I've had to bring you in for a meeting. We talked about this last time, and I still haven't seen any improvement on your end. You've come in late four times this month, and you called in at the last minute just a few days ago. After our last meeting, I feel like you started back strong. You fell back in to your old habits pretty quickly though, and we really need to address this problem before it gets any worse. You know I like you Mike, but I just can't let this go on anymore. You're placing a burden on your coworkers and it's causing problems for the company. I know you've had other things on your mind recently, but I can't just let this go. I don't want to take any drastic measures, but I have the board to answer to. I don't like having to do this but you've left me no choice. As of right now, I'm putting you on a three day suspension. When you come back next week, you have to be on time. I'm going to meet with you again at the end of the month, and I don't want to have to bring this up again. You know this is the second strike on your record. You have to make an effort or I'm going to have to take this a step further. You're a good guy, Mike, and I don't want to have to report you. Make sure this doesn't happen again and I won't have to.

#3 – Performance Review

Thanks for coming in, Tina. Have a seat. It's that time again, so I've just finished my performance reviews for you guys. I just wanted to set up this meeting to talk about your progress and where we go from here. If you remember, when we had our meeting in

December I'd mentioned some concerns about your productivity. It was nothing serious, but I brought it up to you and let you know you might be falling behind some of the others. Just so you know, everything has turned around now. It's just three months later and I feel like you've made a lot of progress. You're definitely keeping up with the workload here. I know it can be difficult sometimes, and I appreciate the effort you've made to step up your game. I don't have any serious concerns with your work and I can see you've done what you can to improve. You haven't worked here that long and I know it can be hard to get things going at first. Most of your coworkers have worked here a lot longer than you, so it's nice to see that you're keeping up with them. Everything looks pretty good and I can tell you've put a lot of effort into your projects. The only complaint I have is that you can sometimes be a little late on your paperwork. Most of the time, it's just fine, but don't make a habit of turning it in at the last minute. It's okay to take a few extra days to get everything in order. Just make sure you have everything turned in by Friday morning. Otherwise, just keep up the good work! If you don't have any questions, that's it. Just send in the next person on your way out.

#4 – Implementing a new policy

Hey everybody. I just wanted to let you all know that management is setting up a new work safety policy. Management just sent it down to me today. I've had a chance to look it over and there are quite a few new changes to the procedures here. It looks like it might be a headache to get everything moving on this, so bear with us over the next few weeks while we set up all the new procedures. As soon as we get everything in order, we'll have a training to get you guys used to all this new stuff. I know it's just more hassle for you

guys to deal with, but you'll get used to it soon enough. I've got a copy of the new guidelines right here. I don't have enough copies for everyone at the moment, but I'll have them ready for the training. In the meantime, if anybody wants to look over the new changes, stop by my office and you can look through mine. Expect an email from HR sometime later this week about the training date and time. And it's going to be mandatory, so if anyone has a serious problem with the schedule that's set up, let me know and I'll see if we can do something for you. If you can't come to the training during the week, you might have to come in on a Saturday and take care of it. So for now, everybody just go about your business. I'll keep you updated when we start implementing everything.

Appendix E

Performance Appraisal

This is a performance evaluation form. Performance is rated on a scale from 1-5 with 1= Unsatisfactory, 3=Acceptable, 5=Outstanding. We realize you have only heard a small sample of Brad's performance, but based on what you know about Brad, please rate his performance using the scale provided.

Job Duty	Unacceptable		Acceptable		Outstanding
Plans general operations	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Improves employee work methods	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Assigns employee responsibilities	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Delegates authority when appropriate	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Directs everyday work activities	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Ensures safety of employees	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Sets standards of performance	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Guides and coaches employees	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Works cooperatively with others	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Facilitates operation in teams	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Identifies problems in the organization	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Develops effective solutions to problems	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Communicates clearly	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Demonstrates appropriate communication with employees	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Supports employee morale	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Shows concern for employees' needs	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Appendix F

Perceptions of Leadership Potential Scale

Since Brad is being considered for a promotion, please rate Brad on how well you believe he will perform as a leader. Based on what you know about Brad, circle the answer that you feel best represents how Brad would perform as a leader.

1. How much leadership will Brad exhibit?

None at all	Very Little	A Moderate Amount	A Substantial Amount	An Extreme Amount

2. How much control over workplace activities will Brad exhibit?

None at all	Very Little	A Moderate Amount	A Substantial Amount	An Extreme Amount

3. What degree of influence will Brad exert in determining workplace outcomes?

None at all	Very Little	A Moderate Amount	A Substantial Amount	An Extreme Amount

4. How much will Brad contribute to the effectiveness of the workplace?

None at all	Very Little	A Moderate Amount	A Substantial Amount	An Extreme Amount

5. If you had to choose a leader for Brad's department, how willing would you be to choose Brad as the new leader?

None at all	Very Little	A Moderate Amount	A Substantial Amount	An Extreme Amount

6. Brad should be selected as the new Department Manager.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Appendix G

Status and Solidarity Perception Scales

Please rate Brad on these general characteristics. Based on what you know about him, please circle the number that best represents Brad.

1.	**Uneducated**				**Educated**
	1	2	3	4	5
2.	**Untrustworthy**				**Trustworthy**
	1	2	3	4	5
3.	**Unintelligent**				**Intelligent**
	1	2	3	4	5
4.	**Bad**				**Good**
	1	2	3	4	5
5.	**Unsympathetic**				**Sympathetic**
	1	2	3	4	5
6.	**Poor**				**Wealthy**
	1	2	3	4	5
7.	**Unsuccessful**				**Successful**
	1	2	3	4	5
8.	**Unfriendly**				**Friendly**

	1	2	3	4	5
9.	**Lazy**				**Ambitious**
	1	2	3	4	5
10.	**Dishonest**				**Honest**
	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix H

Manipulation Check

1. What accent does Brad have?

_____New Englander (Massachusetts, Connecticut)

_____Standard American (newscaster accent)

_____Appalachian (Eastern Kentucky, West Virginia)

_____Californian

_____I don't know

Appendix I

Demographics

1. How old are you? _____

2. What year are you in school?

____Freshman ____Sophomore _____Junior _____Senior

3. What is your gender?

____Male ____Female

4. Do you have any supervisory or management work experience?

____Yes ____No

5. Is your hometown in the Appalachian region? (Eastern Kentucky, West Virginia, Eastern Tennessee)

____Yes ____No

6. Do you speak with an Appalachian regional accent?

__Yes ____No

Appendix J

Debriefing Form

Judging the Performance of a Supervisor

This study was designed to explore the relationship between dialect, performance appraisal, and leadership perception. Specifically, I wanted to know if the dialect of a speaker would affect participants' perceptions of their performance and leadership ability.

Research has shown that negative stereotypes about people who speak with an Appalachian accent exist in our society (Luhman, 1990). These stereotypes can have a negative impact on the workplace outcomes of employees with Appalachian accents (Atkins, 1993).

In the present study dialect was manipulated by randomly assigning participants to listen to audio samples spoken in either a Standard American dialect or an Appalachian Regional dialect. After participants listened to the samples, they judged the speaker's work performance and leadership ability. I predicted that participants who listened to the audio samples spoken in an Appalachian regional dialect would rate the speaker lower in both performance and leadership than participants who listened to the speaker with a Standard American dialect.

Thank you for your help with this study. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Amie Sparks Ball at (859)705-8862/amie_sparks22@eku.edu

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