En français or in English? Examining perceived social roles of international students in response to their French and English speech

Oguzhan Tekin and Pavel Trofimovich

Canada's growing population of international students brings ethnolinguistic diversity and socioeconomic benefits to their host communities. However, students often experience social exclusion and lack of belonging, reporting little communication with local community members for many cultural, ethnic, and religious reasons. The goal of this quantitative study, conducted in Montréal (Québec), was to examine language as a dimension of students' social evaluations by members of the local community, investigating international students' second language speech in relation to listeners' perception of the social roles that students can assume in a host society (e.g., friend, neighbour, colleague). Four English- and French-speaking international students' recordings were presented to 38 francophones, all non-student residents of Montréal, who evaluated the students' comprehensibility and accentedness and assessed how acceptable these students were in various social roles (e.g., friend, neighbour, colleague) in two languages (French vs. English) and in two situations, namely, when students made a request for help versus when they expressed a potentially controversial statement. The students' ratings were greater when they spoke French than English (regardless of speech content) and when they requested help than expressed a controversial statement (regardless of language). Social ratings were generally associated with comprehensibility, not accentedness, where more comprehensible speech was linked to greater perceived acceptability. Findings highlight the importance of sociolinguistic context and language (particularly, comprehensible second language speech) in local residents' judgments of international students' social roles.

Keywords: international students; belonging; comprehensibility; accentedness; social capital

En français or in English? Examining perceived social roles of international students in response to their French and English speech

International students, who make up a growing proportion of students on university campuses across the globe, have been attracting increased attention from educational institutions and governments due to the ethnolinguistic diversity and socioeconomic benefits they bring to their host communities (Smith, 2016). In 2021 alone, Canada hosted 621,565 international students (CBIE, 2022), ranking third after the US and the UK (Erudera College News, 2020). International students contribute approximately $22 billion to Canada's yearly economy and create around 170,000 jobs (El-Assal, 2020). With its population growth almost entirely dependent on immigration (Statistics Canada, 2020), Canada has intensified its efforts to attract qualified students (Government of Canada, 2019), considered top candidates for permanent residency because they receive Canadian credentials and gain proficiency in one or both of Canada's official languages (Howthorne, 2012). These initiatives have been successful, inasmuch as many students obtain permanent residence in Canada within 10 years after graduation (Choi et al., 2021).

However, when it comes to international students' academic and professional success, and especially their decision to leave or stay in a host community, what appears to matter is the quality of their social contact (Netierman et al., 2022). Whereas positive experiences such as feeling welcomed and accepted may foster students' academic achievement and encourage them to join the local workforce, negative experiences such as social exclusion may cause them to suffer academic and professional setbacks and seek employment elsewhere (Esses et al., 2018; Kukatlapalli et al., 2020). Some social challenges felt by international students stem from

cultural, ethnic, and religious stereotypes, particularly for people of colour (Boafo-Arthur, 2014).

These stereotypes contribute to students' isolation (Myburgh et al., 2002), discrimination (Jean-Francois, 2019), and failure to build meaningful social relationships (Rajapaksa & Dundes, 2002). Yet other (and largely underexplored) challenges may be linguistic in origin, where a host community's acceptance of international students may be related to how well they can communicate in one or both of Canada's official languages. Our goal in this study was therefore to examine the relationship between international students' French and English speech and local residents' perception of the social roles that students can assume in the community (e.g., friend, neighbour, colleague).

Background Literature

International Students' Social Capital

The social dimension of international students' experience can be broadly captured through Bourdieu's (1986) notion of social capital, defined more recently as "the productive value of relationships between people" (Clark, 2006, p. 3) or "resources embedded in social networks accessed and used by actors for actions" (Lin, 2001, p. 25). According to Nawyn et al. (2012, p. 257), social capital encompasses "social networks that have the potential to provide either material or nonmaterial resources (including achieving physical and mental health, a sense of personal safety, and feeling integrated into a community and valued by others in that community)." A sobering conclusion reached by many studies is that international students are frequently lacking in precisely these types of resources, facing multiple challenges in the social sphere, such as exclusion, isolation, and lack of belonging (e.g., Fritz et al., 2008; Pritchard & Skinner, 2002). Therefore, to understand international students' challenges and to ultimately

address those, it would be important to identify and document diverse variables (including linguistic ones) that might enable students to benefit from the social capital they need.

International students frequently report low levels of social contact with members of their host communities. For instance, only 15% of Chinese students in the UK reported having domestic friends (UKCISA, 2004), and half of the US-based international students surveyed by Rajapaksa and Dundes (2002)—the majority from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East—had no American friends. In Canada, only 10% of international students reported spending time with local peers outside instruction, and the reported relationships were described as superficial (Zhou & Zhang, 2014). In a rare study including a focus on off-campus interaction, international students, particularly from China and Southeast Asia, reported little connection to the local community in Northern Ireland, feeling excluded and sometimes overtly targeted in racist remarks (Cena et al., 2021).

There are multiple reasons for international students' limited contact with the local community and the resulting perception of exclusion. Some explanations invoke cultural differences (Pritchard & Skinner, 2002), where the locals are concerned about being misunderstood (Myburgh et al., 2002) but international students see them as unfriendly (UKCISA, 2004) and lacking in intercultural communication skills (Cena et al., 2021). Other explanations for international students' exclusion stem from the local community's fear that students compete for limited resources such as university admission and employment (Hanassab, 2006; Myburgh et al., 2002), or from stereotypes about specific ethnic groups such as that they are untrustworthy, lazy, or aggressive (Hanassab, 2006). Perceived unfriendliness of the host community may exacerbate international students' anxiety, decreasing their willingness to interact with the locals (Fritz et al., 2008). Even well-intentioned attempts to help international

students such as through focused communication programs involving a local community sometimes fail to create long-lasting relationships (Gresham & Clayton, 2011), indicating the severity of the problem.

Among various variables which might determine international students' access to the social capital they need, linguistic issues are among the least explored, despite the critical role language plays in creating social bonds (Bourdieu, 1977), where certain language practices (e.g., specific lexical expressions or pronunciation patterns) are favoured over others in terms of the social currency they generate (e.g., positive evaluations, job offers, etc.) during communication in the so-called linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1991). For instance, students often experience negative attitudes based on their accent or second language (L2) proficiency (Gbadamosi, 2018). In the US, international students reported being ridiculed for their language errors, causing them to feel embarrassed and avoid participation in class activities (Maeda, 2017). In Australia, international students received negative comments from local peers about their English presentations (Robertson et al., 2000), and some were harassed over their pronunciation, sometimes leading to depression and suicidal thoughts (Dovchin, 2020). US students' responses to statements such as "I find it unpleasant to listen to foreign students who speak with a strong accent" were among the strongest predictors of their attitudes toward international students (Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002). Elsewhere, accented speech has been shown to elicit unfavourable evaluation from course instructors (Jean-Francois, 2019), negative bias in employment contexts (Kukatlapalli et al., 2020), and exclusion from group work (Haugh, 2016). While it is clear that language contributes to negativity toward, if not overt prejudice against, international students, the link between students' linguistic performance and their access to social capital is not well understood.

Language as a Marker of Otherness

A possible relationship between international students' social contact with members of a local community and their language skill can be conceptualized within several theoretical perspectives. For instance, according to Tajfel's (1974) social identity theory, people aspire to belong to one or more social groups, which allows them to define their sense of self. As people negotiate group membership, they tend to emphasize similarities between themselves and other similar individuals (highlighting within-group cohesion) while also maximizing differences from those perceived as outsiders (thus accentuating group distinctiveness). One consequence of this process is that individuals often develop positive views about their own social group and may express various biases toward out-groups and their members (Tajfel & Turner, 2001). Similarly, according to group threat theory (Blumer, 1958), people hold unfavourable attitudes toward other groups if they feel threatened by them, particularly when individuals believe that groups— defined at the intersection of various ethnic, linguistic, religious, and personal identities— compete for limited resources, where a gain for one group means a loss for another (Wilson, 2001). People might therefore perceive members of dispreferred groups as less socially or professionally desirable and, in extreme scenarios, deny them access to various social resources.

Language is a salient marker of people's out-group status, contributing to the perception of "otherness," especially because even slight variations from the expected speech pattern may signal a departure from the "legitimate" language in the linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1991; Grenfell, 2011) and mark a speaker as an outsider in a given ethnolinguistic community. Indeed, listeners readily make inferences about others based on their accent (Dragojevic et al., 2016; Giles & Watson, 2013), which broadly captures various features of a speaker's pronunciation (e.g., vowel quality, stress placement). L2 accents tend to be perceived negatively, for instance,

in terms of speakers' competence traits such as knowledge and intelligence, and their personal characteristics such as friendliness and honesty (Baquiran & Nicoladis, 2020; Hosoda et al., 2007; Nelson et al., 2016). In an example of accent-based categorization, Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan (2022) showed that US listeners expressed more positive attitudes toward German-accented L2 English speakers than toward Hindi-, Russian-, and French-accented speakers, who in turn elicited more positive perceptions than Vietnamese-, Farsi-, and Mandarin-accented speakers, with Arabic-accented speakers downgraded the most. More importantly, listeners' evaluations of these speakers were associated with their comprehensibility, a scalar measure of listeners' perceived difficulty in understanding a speaker (Derwing & Munro, 2015). This implies that listener-based evaluative hierarchies are at least in part linguistic in nature. Put simply, difficulty understanding an accented L2 speaker can trigger unfavourable attitudes, and poor attitudes can exacerbate how the speaker's linguistic skill is perceived.

While listeners' attitudes toward L2 speakers, including international students, might be affected by L2 speakers' linguistic skill (e.g., in terms of accentedness or comprehensibility), these attitudes are likely subject to contextual influences (Dragojevic et al., 2016; Giles & Watson, 2013). For one, the same speakers might elicit more or less favourable attitudes from listeners depending on the reference group against which they are compared. For instance, as American listeners evaluated English speakers with a Southern US accent, they rated these speakers as more friendly, sociable, and honest when they were presented together with Punjabi-accented L2 speakers than with California-accented native English speakers (Dragojevic & Giles, 2014). Similarly, the same speaker might be evaluated differently depending on the broader sociolinguistic context where attitudes are elicited. For example, Kutlu et al. (2022) compared how listeners from Montréal (Québec) and Gainesville (Florida) responded to

American, British, and Indian English speech samples presented with images of either White or South Asian female faces. Unlike the Gainsville listeners, those from Montréal did not show poorer comprehension or provide less favourable evaluations of the speakers presented with a South Asian than with a White face. These findings are likely attributable to contextual differences, where Montréal residents experience far greater linguistic diversity than residents of largely unilingual Gainsville.

The Present Study

Given a well-established link between speakers' language (particularly, in terms of accentedness and comprehensibility of L2 speech) and the attitudes they elicit from listeners (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022), it might be reasonable to assume that linguistic dimensions of international students' speech might determine the extent to which they are assigned various social roles and thus the social capital they are attributed by members of a local community. Even though L2 speech is a source of negative attitudes, stereotyping, or outright discrimination toward international students (Dovchin, 2020; Gbadamosi, 2018), to our knowledge, there is no research establishing a relationship between international students' L2 speech and their social evaluations by members of a host community. Our goal in this study was therefore to examine this relationship for international students in Montréal (Québec), exploring the accentedness and comprehensibility of these students' English and French speech in relation to listener-based judgments capturing specific social roles (e.g., *this person would be a good neighbour, a good friend, a good colleague*), which collectively might capture students' perceived social capital in a given local community. We focused on listener-perceived social capital, because it is the value judgment of individuals belonging to a dominant (or legitimate) social group that typically

determines how much social capital is attributed to another person (Grenfell, 2009), in this case, an international student.

In addition, previous work has typically focused on university students as real or presumed interlocutors communicating with international students (e.g., Maeda, 2017). However, international students do not only interact with fellow students but engage in communication with members of a local off-campus community. Therefore, to address this gap, we recruited non-student residents of Montréal as individuals who represent the off-campus community. Finally, because the notion of in- and out-group membership can shift as a function of listeners' imagined in-group (Dragojevic & Giles, 2014) or a specific social context (Kutlu et al., 2022), we examined the relationship between the linguistic dimensions of international students' speech and listener-based social judgments of students in two languages (French vs. English) and in two situations, namely, when students made a request for help (e.g., *I am looking for a café, could you please recommend one?*) versus when they expressed a statement which might be perceived as controversial (e.g., *The last person I talked to insisted on speaking French with me, is this typical around here?*).

This study was carried out in Montréal (Québec), a context particularly suitable for investigating the role of Canada's two official languages (French and English) in the social evaluations of international students by members of the local community. First, Québec is a bilingual French–English province where 45% of the population can speak both French and English (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, n.d.) despite being an officially French-language province. Moreover, even though 57% English-speaking Quebecers live in Montréal, the city is home to 63% of francophones (i.e., individuals who report French as their mother tongue), who constitute the ethnic majority, and to over 120 cultural communities

(Statistics Canada, 2016). In essence, although French is the official language, English and French are often used by speakers from various backgrounds, which makes it possible to elicit listeners' reactions to English and French speech in the same context. Second, examining the role of language in social evaluations of international students is particularly fitting in Québec, where the linguistic market is not wholly unified, meaning that the norms regarding the preferred linguistic practices (i.e., French vs. English) have been shifting over the years in the social and professional domains (Genesee & Holobow, 1989; Kircher, 2012; Lambert et al., 1960). Moreover, issues of language have always been salient in Québec's social life (Fraser, 2006). For instance, Québec recently introduced legislation to strengthen the status of French (Bill 96: An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec, 2022) as a way of addressing concerns about its decline (Denoncourt, 2020), which has been a subject of much debate in politics and media. If there is a link between students' linguistic performance and their social evaluations by a local community, this link should emerge in a context such as Québec, where issues of language and identity are salient in public discourse.

In terms of francophone residents' social evaluations of international students, we predicted that international students would be rated higher in French than English, because francophones value French and would want people to use it (Kircher, 2012), although this has not always been the case, in the sense that francophones tended to previously favour English over French, especially in Montréal (Genesee & Holobow, 1989; Lambert et al., 1960). We also expected francophones' social evaluations of students to be higher in situations where students request help rather than express a charged statement, on the assumption that a challenging statement might create some resentment or might elicit a defensive, non-accommodative reaction from listeners (Bourhis & Giles, 1977), resulting in less favourable evaluations. Finally, in light

of the salient role of speech as a marker of a speaker's out-group status (Dragojevic et al., 2016; Giles & Watson, 2013), we expected to obtain associations between listener-assessed linguistic dimensions of students' speech and their social evaluations, where more favourable language ratings (less accented, more comprehensible L2 speech) would be associated with greater evaluations of students' social roles (e.g., as a friend, neighbour, colleague), with these associations particularly pronounced in French (as a majority language) than English. Although accentedness is a salient marker of otherness (Baquiran & Nicoladis, 2020; Nelson et al., 2016), comprehensibility has recently been implicated as a key variable predicting listener attitudes toward L2 speakers (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022). We therefore expected that comprehensibility might reveal stronger links with listeners' social evaluations of students than accentedness. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Are there differences in how francophone residents of Montréal evaluate various social roles of international students (e.g., friend, neighbour, colleague) based on language (French vs. English) and situation (making a request vs. expressing a charged statement)?

2. Is there an association between francophone residents' ratings of various social roles of international students and the quality of these students' French and English speech (captured through the dimensions of comprehensibility and accentedness)?

Method

Audio Recordings

Given that (as of 2021) the second largest group of international students in Canada is Chinese in origin (CBIE, n.d.) and that approximately 36% of Québec's international students are Asian (Statistics Canada, 2022), the target audios were recorded by four L2 speakers of English and French, all with Mandarin as their mother tongue. Considering the increased

incidence of anti-Asian prejudice, particularly against women (e.g., Ouellette-Vézina & Ferah, 2021; "Thousands in Montreal Denounce Anti-Asian Racism", 2021), and to control for potential gender effects on listener responses (Nelson et al., 2016), only female speakers were recruited. The speakers, whose mean age was 28.75 years ($SD = 7.72$, $range = 21$–38), self-rated their proficiency higher in English ($M = 88.33$, $SD = 9.14$) than French ($M = 74.44$, $SD = 14.60$), where 0 corresponded to "very basic" while 100 meant "nativelike."[1] They also reported using more English ($M = 77.50$, $SD = 12.5$) than French ($M = 27.50$, $SD = 22.17$) on a daily basis, where 0 meant "not at all" and 100 corresponded to "all the time." The speakers' higher self-rated proficiency and greater use of English than French reflected a common language profile of international students attending English-medium universities in Montréal.

The recordings were elicited through four short scripts under two prompt categories (request for assistance vs. charged statement), with four other scripts designated as filler items, for a total of 12 prompts. The four request scripts asked for a possible café or restaurant to visit or directions to a well-known city location. They included a brief contextualizing introduction (e.g., *I am looking for a nice place to take my friends out for a coffee. I'm not looking for anything special, just a nice cozy place*) followed by a question (*Could you please recommend a café you know and tell me how to get there?*). The four charged statements expressed the speaker's concerns about speaking French, discussing religious beliefs, or revealing one's ethnic origin. These statements were considered to be charged because there has been significant controversy in Québec regarding the use of French and the role of religious beliefs in society for various ethnic groups (Denoncourt, 2020; Fraser, 2006). The charged statements similarly included a brief introduction (e.g., *I am really upset! The last person I talked to insisted on speaking French with me even though I told her my French was not good*) followed by a

question (*Is this typical around here?*). The filler prompts were similar in structure and length but elicited listener reactions about experiences common to Montréal residents, such as navigating the city (e.g., *Montréal roads and sidewalks are terrible! There are so many bumps and holes, and roads are always blocked by construction. Do you also feel that getting around the city is impossible?*). The English versions of all scripts were translated into French by a French–English bilingual speaker and verified for accuracy by another bilingual.

The final script versions (see Appendix A) were similar in word length across English ($M = 36.25$, $SD = 4.79$) and French ($M = 35.50$, $SD = 3.12$). They were also comparable in word coverage, where the English ($M = 96\%$, $SD = 2.46$) and French ($M = 95\%$, $SD = 2.58$) scripts included similar proportions of words from the first three most frequent thousand-word bands in each language (Lonsdale & Le Bras, 2009; Nation, 2012), as assessed through the Lextutor interface (Cobb, 2020). After meeting the researcher (first author), the speakers received the scripts with instructions to read and practice them in each language as many times as needed. During an individual recording session, they were asked to produce their utterances as naturally as possible, speaking at a normal pace and addressing the researcher as their interlocutor, with the opportunity to record each script multiple times. The recording that featured the most optimal pace (not too fast, not too slow), that did not include many obtrusive false starts, self-corrections, and repetitions, that sounded natural, and that excluded any features typical of Québéc French, as judged by the researcher and verified by each speaker as reflecting their typical everyday speech, was considered for the final set of recordings.

Listeners

To assess francophone listeners' reactions to L2 French and English recordings, 38 individuals (18 females, 20 males) with a mean age of 37.76 years ($SD = 10.41$, *range* $= 25–65$)

were recruited. The majority (26) were born and raised in Québec, while the rest reported France as their country of origin (see Appendix B for additional information on listeners). Listeners were recruited among current residents of Montréal at the time of the study who self-identified as francophone and self-reported at least an intermediate level of English. In keeping with the diverse profile of locals belonging to an off-campus community, listeners' length of residence in Montréal varied markedly ($M = 17.58$ years, $SD = 14.84$, $range = 1–63$).[2] Listeners reported having completed various degrees, including BA (13), MA (14), PhD (1), and other diplomas (10), and worked in various occupations, such as hair stylist, lawyer, and financial analyst. None were current students or members of a university community. Thirty-five reported French as their mother tongue while two identified themselves as French–English bilinguals. One participant cited Spanish as her mother tongue; however, this individual (born and raised in Montréal) received all her education in French and self-identified as francophone. Through recruitment procedures, all listeners self-reported sufficient knowledge of English to understand and evaluate L2 English speech. According to a recent meta-analysis (Saito, 2021), listeners also show high consistency in their speech evaluations regardless of their language proficiency.

To provide estimates of their language proficiency and use, listeners completed several scales. Using a 100-point sliding scale (0 = "very basic," 100 = "nativelike"), they rated their overall language skills higher in French ($M = 96.14$, $SD = 15.90$) than English ($M = 68.63$, $SD = 25.77$), $t(37) = 5.97$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.97$. They used a similar scale (0 = "not at all," 100 = "all the time") to estimate their daily use of French ($M = 82.63$, $SD = 20.40$) and English ($M = 25.71$, $SD = 21.56$), with a strong difference in favour of French, $t(37) = 9.02$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.46$. Finally, using another 100-point scale (0 = "not at all," 100 = "very much"), listeners self-rated their familiarity with foreign-accented French ($M = 83.97$, $SD = 16.90$) and English ($M = 78.76$, $SD = $

21.71). Although mean familiarity values were higher for French than English, there was no difference in these ratings, $t(37) = 1.96$, $p = .058$, $d = 0.32$. To sum up, listeners were francophone residents of Montreal who mostly used French for daily interaction but reported proficiency in English and familiarity with both foreign-accented English and French.

Procedure

Listeners evaluated the audio-recorded scripts online through a French-language LimeSurvey interface (https://www.limesurvey.org). The interface presented each audio recording followed by several 100-point sliding scales with only endpoint descriptors marked ("disagree" on the left and "agree" on the right). The scales captured listener evaluations of each speaker across several dimensions. Two scales targeted the speaker's linguistic performance in terms of comprehensibility (*She is easy to understand*) and accentedness (*She has a strong accent*). Since social capital encompasses various social relationships (Clark, 2006), four additional scales captured the extent to which the speaker would be attributed different roles in the host community such as a friend (*She would be a good friend*), a neighbour (*She would be a good neighbour*), a work colleague (*She would be a good colleague*), and a member of Québec's society as a whole (*She would be a valuable member of the Québec society*). These roles were specifically chosen to represent typical social domains in which international students could encounter members of the local community (i.e., friend, neighbor, colleague); the final domain (member of Québec society) was chosen to reflect many international students' desire to settle in Canada upon graduation (Choi et al., 2021).

The final set of recorded prompts included 24 audios per language, where each of the four speakers was randomly chosen to contribute two requests and two charged statements, in addition to two filler scenarios, for a total of six audios per speaker. The audios were similar in

length across French (*M* = 10.31 seconds, *SD* = 1.91) and English (*M* = 9.23 seconds, *SD* = 1.13), and the speakers produced the prompts at a similar speaking rate (words per second) in French (*M* = 3.87, *SD* = 0.51) and English (*M* = 3.26, *SD* = 0.52). The audios were normalized for loudness by setting the peak amplitude to –0.1 dB but were not manipulated in any other way, aside from removing an initial pause or a disfluency (e.g., *uhm*) before the speaker started speaking. Because the scripts were identical in English and French, it was important to ensure that no listener should evaluate the same scenario twice. Therefore, the 48 audios (4 speakers × 6 scripts × 2 languages) were organized in four balanced experimental versions containing 12 audios, which ensured an equal distribution of prompts (4 requests, 4 charged statements, 4 fillers), languages (6 English, 6 French audios), and speakers (each heard 3 times). Across the four experimental versions, each speaker was evaluated 12 times, producing all scenarios, half in English and half in French, with the order of the English and French blocks counter-balanced across the four versions (see Appendix C for the distribution of materials across survey versions). The 38 listeners were assigned randomly to one of the four versions of the interface, each completed by either 10 listeners (Versions 1, 2) or 9 listeners (Versions 3, 4).

The online rating interface first asked listeners to sign a consent form, after which they read general instructions about how to navigate the survey. Listeners then practiced using the scales by evaluating another, unrelated audio recorded by an additional speaker. In the main rating task, which included six audios presented in English and six in French, all randomized within each block, listeners first saw a brief contextualizing statement (i.e., *You are at a bus stop downtown. It is daytime. There are some people here and there close to you. An international student smiles at you. A few minutes later, she starts talking to you*), to create a comparable situational context. This was followed by a recording, which listeners could pause and replay.

After hearing the recording, they had the option to respond to the speaker through an online recorder, though not all used this option or recorded a response to all audios. They then could listen to the recording again, before rating the speaker's comprehensibility and accentedness and evaluating the speaker's social roles. Before proceeding to the next audio, listeners also evaluated the speaker's personal traits (e.g., honesty) and provided affective reactions to each situation (e.g., nervousness). However, because these additional rated data, including listeners' audio-recorded responses to the speaker, targeted conceptually different questions, these data fall outside the scope of this brief report and are not discussed further. At the end of the survey, listeners completed several brief questionnaires eliciting their demographic and language use information. The survey took approximately 60 minutes to complete, and each listener was compensated $30 for their time.

Data Analysis

The four ratings of the speakers' social roles were first checked for internal consistency (Cronbach's α). These analyses revealed high values for listeners' evaluations of the English (.90–.94) and French (.91–.94) audios, suggesting that the ratings of potential roles that each speaker could assume in the host community (i.e., a friend, neighbour, colleague, and more generally member of Québec's society) likely captured a single dimension. Therefore, in keeping with the study's design, which focused on a comparison of listener reactions to requests versus charged statements in two languages, a mean score was computed per listener by averaging across these four rated roles, separately for the two types of prompts in English and French.

Next, the ratings of speaker comprehensibility and accentedness were checked for reliability using two-way, consistency, average-measure intraclass correlations (ICCs). In three cases for comprehensibility and three cases for accentedness, one or two listeners' data were

removed from the English or French dataset (accounting for less than 5% of data) due to very low corrected item-total correlations (.08 or below), which implied that those listeners were outliers. The final ICC values were high for comprehensibility ratings in English (.75–.82) and French (.75–.94) and for accentedness ratings in English (.71–.85) and French (.76–.90), exceeding the benchmark value of .70–.80 (Larson-Hall, 2009). Therefore, again, a single score was derived for comprehensibility and accentedness by averaging across a given listener's reactions to the speakers producing requests versus charged statements, separately in French and English. In the end, the dataset contained three sets of scores, where one set targeted listener ratings of the speakers' social roles (derived value across four scales) while two sets captured listener evaluations of the speakers' linguistic performance (comprehensibility, accentedness), all computed separately across prompt type (request vs. charged statement) and language (French vs. English).

Finally, the data were checked for various statistical assumptions. The ratings were normally distributed except for comprehensibility in the request and charged statement scenarios, where the distributions showed a negative skew. No data violated the assumption of sphericity (with Mauchly's tests yielding non-significant values), and there were no concerns regarding homogeneity of variances because of the fully within-subjects design. Because some linguistic ratings were non-normally distributed, all analyses involving comprehensibility and accentedness were carried out either descriptively or through the use of non-parametric procedures (e.g., Spearman correlations). The social role ratings, which passed all checks, were analyzed through repeated-measures ANOVAs. For all statistical analyses, the alpha level for significance was set at .05 and was Bonferroni-adjusted for multiple comparisons. Effect sizes were interpreted based on field-specific guidelines (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014), using Cohen's *d* for repeated-measures

comparisons (0.60, 1.00, 1.40) and *r* for correlation strength (.25, .40, and .60), where each value designates small, medium, and large effects, respectively.

Results

Our initial analysis focused on the linguistic ratings of the speakers in French and English, regardless of the prompt type, as a way of checking that the selected speakers represented a typical linguistic profile of international students engaged in English-medium instruction in Montréal. As summarized in Table 1, the speakers were perceived as more comprehensible (higher ratings) and less accented (lower ratings) in the English than French scenarios. A comparison of 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for the mean values across the speakers' English and French evaluations, which is considered an alternative (and often superior) practice to traditional null hypothesis significance testing (Cumming & Calin-Jageman, 2017), confirmed that the CIs for the mean values of the comprehensibility and accentedness ratings were either minimally overlapping or entirely distinct. Thus, as far as the linguistic profile of the speakers was concerned, listener ratings confirmed the student profile sought through speaker selection. The speakers represented individuals for whom English was the stronger L2 compared to French, at least in terms of listener-rated comprehensibility and accentedness.

Table 1 *Linguistic Ratings by Language*

Linguistic rating	English			French		
	M	*SD*	95% CI	*M*	*SD*	95% CI
Comprehensibility	78.10	18.50	[71.38, 84.71]	67.80	19.51	[61.46, 73.72]
Accentedness	53.38	22.85	[46.07, 60.34]	70.62	17.01	[65.36, 75.95]

Our first research question asked whether francophone listeners assign different social

ratings to L2 speakers depending on language (French vs. English) and prompt (request vs.

charged statement). The listeners' social ratings (summarized in Table 2) were submitted to a

two-way (language × prompt) repeated-measures ANOVA, which yielded significant effects for

language, $F(1, 37) = 4.98$, $p = .032$, $\eta^2_p = .12$, and prompt type, $F(1, 37) = 12.08$, $p < .001$, η^2_p

$= .25$, but no significant two-way interaction, $F(1, 37) = 1.44$, $p = .237$, $\eta^2_p = .04$. The listeners

thus tended to provide higher social ratings when they were addressed by the speakers in French

than English, $M_{diff} = 4.23$, $p = .032$, 95% CI = [0.39, 8.07], $d = 0.36$, and when the speakers

requested help than when they expressed a charged statement, $M_{diff} = 7.45$, $p < .001$, 95% CI =

[3.11, 11.79], $d = 0.56$, both with small effects. Put simply, the listeners generally assigned

higher social ratings to L2 speakers (indicative of greater acceptance of those speakers in various

social roles) when the speakers requested help rather than expressed a charged statement and

when they spoke French rather than English.

Table 2 *Social Ratings by Prompt Type and Language*

Prompt type	English			French		
	M	*SD*	95% CI	*M*	*SD*	95% CI
Request	65.39	17.62	[59.47, 71.46]	71.66	16.60	[66.04, 77.62]
Charged statement	59.99	20.26	[53.26, 66.36]	62.17	18.81	[55.80, 68.37]

The second research question asked whether there is a link between listener-assessed

social ratings of L2 speakers and the quality of their speech (captured through ratings of

comprehensibility and accentedness). To address this question, we carried out Spearman

correlations (two-tailed) between the social ratings (derived value across four scales) and the two

linguistic ratings, separately by language and prompt type. As summarized in Table 3 (which also shows bootstrapped 95% CIs for the obtained coefficients), L2 speakers' social ratings were associated with their comprehensibility rather than accentedness.

Table 3 *Spearman Correlations Between Social and Linguistic Ratings by Prompt Type and Language*

	Comprehensibility		Accentedness	
Prompt type	English	French	English	French
Request	.56* [.21, .80]	.38* [.05, .64]	.01 [–.33, .34]	.13 [–.21, .44]
Charged statement	.24 [–.15, .54]	.57* [.29, .79]	.14 [–.25, .48]	.11 [–.32, .51]

Note. *$p < .05$ (two-tailed). Higher ratings designate speech that is easier to understand and that is more heavily accented. Bootstrapped 95% CIs are shown in brackets.

The relationships between speakers' English and French comprehensibility and their social ratings ranged from weak (.24) to medium (.38) and in fact approached strong relationships (.56–.57), with comprehensibility ratings accounting for 6–32% of shared variance in the social evaluations. By contrast, speakers' accentedness was not associated with their social ratings, inasmuch as all associations fell far below the benchmark for a weak association. The obtained relationships between L2 speakers' comprehensibility and their social ratings are illustrated graphically in Figure 1, showing scatterplots for speakers evaluated in the scenarios where they requested help in English (left panel) and French (right panel). Similar scatterplots depicting the scenarios where the speakers expressed a charged statement in English and French are provided in Appendix D. Although we consider Spearman (rank-order) correlations listed in

Table 3 more conservative representations of our results, these illustrations show meaningful links between speakers' comprehensibility and their social ratings, with linear relationships accounting for around 20% of shared variance in each case.
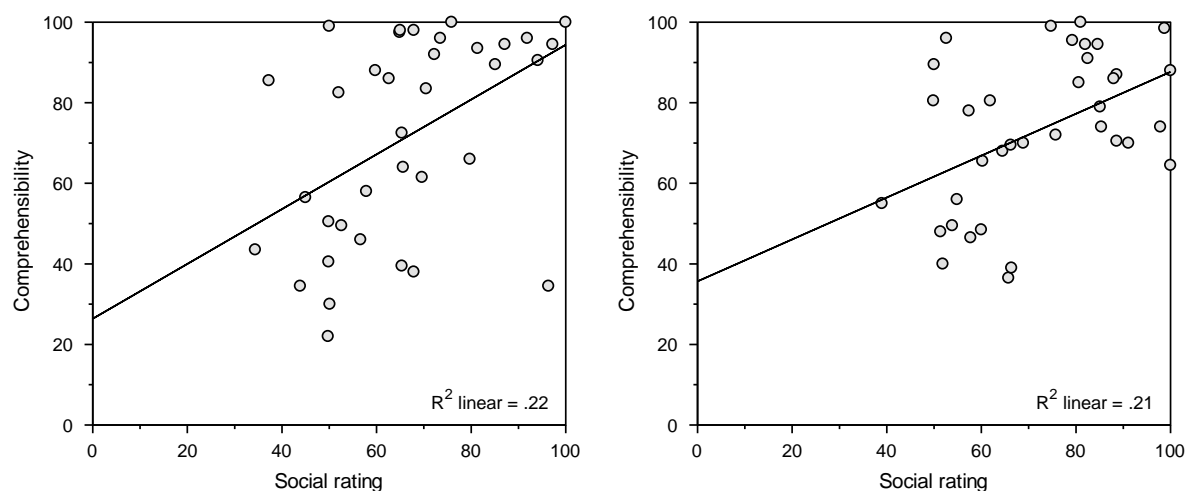

Figure 1. Association between speakers' comprehensibility and their social ratings when making requests for help in English (left panel) and French (right panel), with regression lines showing the best linear fit to the data.

Discussion

In this study, we examined how francophone listeners representing non-student residents of Montréal evaluate various social roles of international students (e.g., friend, neighbour, colleague) as a function of language (English vs. French) and situation (making a request vs. expressing a charged statement), focusing on the role of accentedness and comprehensibility of students' speech. Francophone listeners provided higher social ratings to students (indicative of greater acceptance of those students in various social roles) when students spoke French than English (regardless of speech content) and when they requested help than expressed a charged

statement (regardless of language). Listeners' social evaluations of international students were generally associated with students' comprehensibility rather than accentedness, where more comprehensible speech was linked to higher social ratings for students.

Linguistic Dimensions of Perceived Social Roles

This study appears to be among the first to establish a relationship between international students' L2 speech and local residents' perception of the social roles that students can assume in the community (e.g., friend, neighbour, colleague). In the sociolinguistic context of Montréal, where French is the dominant language of the majority but English is widely used (especially around the campuses of English-medium universities), listeners provided higher social ratings to students speaking French than English. This finding was expected, based on listeners' greater self-rated proficiency in French than English, the generally positive attitudes held by francophones toward French (Kircher, 2012), the high ethnolinguistic vitality of Québec's francophone majority (Bourhis, 2019), and the ongoing government initiatives to strengthen the status of French, most recently through Bill 96 (Busque, 2021). If francophones feel strongly about the importance of French and its use in the public domain, then it is reasonable that they should evaluate international students more positively when those students speak French than English. A difference in favour of French may have also emerged because listeners, who had reported using French more frequently than English and were themselves more proficient in French than English, were more used to hearing French, their mother tongue, on the assumption that frequency of exposure moderates evaluative judgments of speech (Lindberg & Trofimovich, 2020). Regardless of the explanation, this finding points to a relative importance of French over English in francophone listeners' social evaluations of international students, which is

particularly noteworthy because students' speaking skills were stronger in English than French. As far as social ratings are concerned, even less than optimal French was preferable to English.

When evaluating the social roles that international students can assume in the community, francophone listeners similarly gave preference in their ratings to utterances in which students requested assistance rather than expressed a controversial, charged statement. As residents of Montréal, listeners may have been accustomed to hearing similar requests from strangers, including tourists and immigrants, particularly about well-known city locations. In contrast, hearing strangers communicate a concern about ethnolinguistic or religious identity is an uncommon experience. A charged statement expressed in a casual interaction between strangers at a bus stop might have also been interpreted as pragmatically awkward and inappropriate, which may have factored into listeners' more favourable evaluations of requests for assistance. More likely, however, a preference for requests over charged statements stemmed from the content of the statements themselves, where they may have elicited resentment or defensiveness from listeners, especially in the current climate of sociolinguistic and sociocultural tensions in Québec. In this sense, listeners' reaction to charged statements—shown through lower social ratings—was not unlike the behaviour of Welsh speakers, who distanced themselves from a British English speaker by speaking with a more pronounced Welsh accent when they heard this speaker challenge their Welsh identity (Bourhis & Giles, 1977). Regardless of the underlying motive, a pragmatically and socially expected utterance requesting assistance of an unfamiliar interlocutor elicited higher social evaluations from listeners, even if this utterance may have positioned the speaker as an outgroup member in need of help to navigate the city.

Although the language and content of the utterance mattered for how listeners evaluated international students in terms of those students' possible social roles, these effects did not

interact, meaning that requests for assistance and charged statements did not elicit different ratings in French versus English. An interim conclusion emerging from this finding is cautiously optimistic. It may be that members of a host community do not engage in overly complex decision-making as far as social ratings are concerned. International students are evaluated more positively in various social roles (e.g., friend, neighbour, colleague) when they speak the dominant and thus more legitimate language in the linguistic market of the host community or when their utterances are pragmatically and socially appropriate in the context where they are heard. Yet international students' social capital—operationalized here through listeners' perception of the social roles that students can assume in a host society—is not a simplistic, undifferentiated construct either (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991; Grenfell, 2011). It is subject to contextual influences (Dragojevic & Giles, 2014; Kutlu et al., 2022), where the notion of in- and out-group membership shifts as a function of the speaker's language choice and utterance content. Put simply, speaking one language versus another or requesting directions versus expressing a potentially controversial statement may generate more or less social currency (as shown here through listener-based social ratings) for a speaker in a given host community.

Finally, with respect to the link between the linguistic dimensions of international students' speech and their social ratings, as expected on the basis of prior work highlighting language as a salient marker of a speaker's group membership (Dragojevic et al., 2016; Giles & Watson, 2013), students' comprehensibility was positively associated with their social evaluations by listeners (rho = .24–.57) while accentedness showed no relationship with those evaluations (rho = .01–.14), largely irrespective of the language or situation evaluated by listeners. Although L2 accent has been implicated in listener-based evaluations of L2 speakers' personal and professional qualities (e.g., Baquiran & Nicoladis, 2020; Nelson et al., 2016), its

role in social ratings might have been attenuated due to listeners' exposure to and familiarity

with various L2 French and English accents in Montréal, home to over 120 different

ethnocultural communities (Statistics Canada, 2016). High intergroup contact may have thus

made francophone listeners less sensitive to accent (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), as many

Montréal speakers have L2-accented speech. Comprehensibility, however, seems to be a key

component of social evaluations of international students, which is a novel finding. In essence,

difficulty understanding L2 speakers not only triggers unfavourable attitudes toward these

speakers (Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2022) but also results in L2 speakers being evaluated

more or less positively in various social roles that they could assume in a host community, with

potential consequences for their access to important social resources.

The role of comprehensible (easy to understand) speech in social evaluations of

international students might be broadly conceptualized within the construct of processing

fluency, which captures people's perception of the ease or difficulty with which they process

information (Schwarz, 2018). Central to research on processing fluency is the idea that a

person's subjective experience of ease or difficulty while processing various types of stimuli,

such as texts, images, or sounds, might predict their judgment stemming from this experience,

including assessments of perceived risk, liking, beauty, ease of learning, and truthfulness (Graf et

al., 2018). For example, speakers with lower comprehensibility elicit feelings of annoyance and

irritation from listeners, who also judge these speakers as less intelligent and successful

compared to more comprehensible speakers (Dragojevic, 2020). If assessing international

students in various social roles (e.g., friend, neighbour, colleague) includes a subjective

dimension of ease or difficulty, where in-group members are perceived as those with whom it is

easy to interact (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010), then it is unsurprising that comprehensibility will

have implications for listeners' social assessments of speakers. Needless to say, the role of comprehensibility—as a measure of processing fluency and a factor in listener-based judgments of international students—must be revisited in future work.

Implications

This study offers several implications with relevance to international students. Conceptually speaking, the present findings not only confirm a key role of language in how a speaker's social capital might be negotiated in a linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991; Grenfell, 2011) but also extends this work (albeit in a tightly controlled quantitative study) to include a listener-relevant dimension of speech comprehensibility. Building on the initial conceptualization of social capital (Bourdieu, 1977), researchers have continued to explore this concept in relation to language, examining links between individuals' access to social capital and their economic, social, and psychological well-being (e.g., Clark, 2006; Nawyn et al., 2012). The present findings thus add to this overall research agenda by highlighting (yet again) that language—and communication more generally—is a key conduit through which social relationships are negotiated in interaction between individuals and groups. In terms of practical implications, considering that lasting social relationships are associated for international students with multiple social, academic, and professional benefits (e.g., Esses et al., 2018), host institutions could develop new or augment existing opportunities for international students to intersect and communicate with members of the local community through various structured or spontaneous activities such as work placements, volunteering, internships, integrated housing options, and community initiatives (Jean-Francois, 2019). To further increase cross-cultural contact, academic programs or individual instructors might also consider curricular or extracurricular activities involving local and international students performing fieldwork or

research projects in the community, given that extended interactions across cultural and linguistic divides help improve mutual understanding and facilitates intercultural cohesion (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Considering that international students' social evaluations by listeners might be determined by listeners' processing difficulty (i.e., low comprehensibility of students' speech), instructors and university administrators could also help students reflect on and improve their language skills. In contexts such as Montréal, where students might study in a language which is different from the language of the community, students might be encouraged to, and provided with structured or informal opportunities, to develop basic knowledge of the majority language, either prior to the beginning of their studies or soon thereafter. Other possible initiatives might involve targeted interventions for international students to improve comprehensibility (Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2010) or for members of on- and off-campus communities to develop listening comprehension strategies for communication with international students (Derwing et al., 2002).

Limitations and Future Directions

This study is not without limitations. First, with respect to the speaker sample, the recordings included only female speakers of Mandarin, and the analysis did not distinguish between-speaker variation in French- and English-speaking samples. In future work, it would be important to explore the relationship between social evaluations and L2 speech for individuals of different genders, by students from various linguistic backgrounds (e.g., Tamil, Farsi), and for speakers of different proficiency levels, on the assumption that speakers' social roles, such as those of a colleague or a friend, are negotiated at the intersectionality of various linguistic, ethnic, and religious identities. Second, with respect to the listeners and the sociolinguistic context from which they were recruited, our findings are limited in that francophone listeners all

reported above-average skills in English, which may not be representative of Québec's

francophone majority, and the bilingual city of Montréal is a specific setting, which limits the

generalizability of our findings to other locations, including multilingual, multicultural hubs and

smaller municipalities in predominantly monolingual English Canada. Additionally, because

Montréal is a multilingual and multicultural city, other members of the local community, such as

immigrants, refugees, heritage speakers, and multilinguals, must be recruited as listeners if we

are to obtain a nuanced picture of international students' local experience. Third, because social

capital is a complex construct (Clark, 2006), it would be important to employ various measures

of social relationships, supplementing rating scales with students' questionnaire responses and

their answers to interview questions or debrief protocols following authentic interaction

experiences with local community members. Lastly, as much as it is crucial to investigate social

issues relevant to international students at the level of attitudes, it is perhaps even more important

to determine whether and how attitudes lead to action, as people' evaluative judgments might not

always reflect their behaviours (Garrett, 2010). In the end, it is actions, not attitudes, that can

have tangible consequences for students' daily experience, and these actions—by international

students and those with whom they interact—should be targeted in future work.

Conclusion

In this study, we examined the accentedness and comprehensibility of international

students' English and French speech in relation to local residents' perception of the social roles

that students can assume in the community (e.g., friend, neighbour, colleague). Speaking French

was found to lead to higher social ratings than speaking English, and asking for assistance, for

example, in terms of directions to a café or a city landmark, elicited higher social ratings than

expressing a potentially controversial statement. Most importantly, local residents' ratings of

various social roles of international students were associated with how comprehensible (but not how accented) students sounded to their listeners. A positive message emerging from our work for international students engaged in English-medium instruction in Montréal (and presumably elsewhere in Québec) is that they can elicit a positive response from the local francophone community by choosing French for their daily interaction. Most importantly, speaking with an accent in a multicultural and multilingual context such as Montréal may not be as critical for how students are perceived by local residents. At least in this study, listener-based social evaluation of L2 speakers was a matter of comprehensible L2 speech.

Notes

1. An anonymous reviewer pointed out that the scalar endpoint labeled "nativelike" cues a deficiency-based view of language and language speakers, implying that accented L2 speech is something to be rid of and promoting an unhelpful focus on the elusive "native" standard (Cheng et al., 2021). We agree and would avoid using this label in the future.

2. Inspection of individual data patterns by listeners' country of origin (Québec vs. France) and their length of residence in Montréal (more vs. less) yielded no discernible response patterns that would suggest that these background variables influenced listeners' evaluations of international students. Therefore, the entire set of listeners was treated as single sample in all further analyses.

References

Antonsich, M. (2010). Searching for belonging: An analytical framework. *Geography Compass*, *4*(6), 644–659. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2009.00317.x

Baquiran, C. L. C., & Nicoladis, E. (2020). A doctor's foreign accent affects perceptions of

    competence. *Health Communication*, *35*(6), 726–730.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2019.1584779

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal

    attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*(3), 497–

    529. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497

Bill 96: An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec (2022).

    http://m.assnat.qc.ca/en/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-96-42-1.html

Blumer H. (1958). Race prejudice as a sense of group position. *Pacific Sociological Review*,

    1(1), 3-7. https://doi.org/10.2307/1388607

Boafo-Arthur, S. (2014). Acculturative experiences of Black-African international students.

    International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, *36*(2), 115–124.

    https://doi.org/10.1007/s10447-013-9194-8

Bourhis, R. Y. (2019). Evaluating the impact of Bill 101 on the English-speaking communities of

    Quebec. *Language Problems and Language Planning*, *43*(2), 198–229.

    https://doi.org/10.1075/lplp.00042.bou

Bourhis, R. Y., & Giles, H. (1977). The language of intergroup distinctiveness. In H. Giles

    (Ed.), *Language, ethnicity, and intergroup relations* (pp. 119–135). Academic Press.

Busque, A.-M. (2021). Quebec language policy. *The Canadian encyclopedia.*

    https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/quebec-language-policy

CBIE (Canadian Bureau for International Education) (2022). https://cbie.ca/infographic

Cena, E., Burns, S., & Wilson, P. (2021). Sense of belonging and the intercultural and

    academic experiences among international students at a university in Northern Ireland.

Journal of International Students, *11*(4), 812–831.

https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v11i4.2541

Cheng, L. S. P., Burgess, D., Vernooij, N., Solís-Barroso, C., McDermott, A., & Namboodiripad,

S. (2021). The problematic concept of native speaker in psycholinguistics: Replacing

vague and harmful terminology with inclusive and accurate measures. *Frontiers in*

Psychology, *12*, Article 715843. https://doi.org 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.715843

Choi, Y., Crossman, E., & Hou, F. (2021). International students as a source of labour supply:

Transition to permanent residency. *Economic and Social Reports*, *1*(6), 1–10.

https://doi.org/10.25318/36280001202100600002-ENG

Cobb, T. (2020). *VocabProfilers* [computer program]. Accessed 5 February 2020 at

https://www.lextutor.ca/vp

Cumming, G., & Calin-Jageman R. J. (2017). *Introduction to the new statistics: Estimation, open*

science, and beyond. Routledge.

Denoncourt, J.-P. (2020, November 9). *Quebecers want more French language protection:*

Poll. Global News. https://globalnews.ca/news/7450908/quebec-french-language-

protection

Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2015). *Pronunciation fundamentals: Evidence-based*

perspectives for L2 teaching and research. John Benjamins.

Derwing, T. M., Rossiter, M. J., & Munro, M. J. (2002). Teaching native speakers to listen to

foreign-accented speech. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *23*(4),

245–259. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434630208666468

Dovchin, S. (2020). The psychological damages of linguistic racism and international students in Australia. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *23*(7), 804–818. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2020.1759504

Dragojevic, M. (2020). Extending the fluency principle: Factors that increase listeners' processing fluency positively bias their language attitudes. *Communication Monographs*, *87*, 158–178. https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2019.1663543

Dragojevic, M., & Giles, H. (2014). The reference frame effect: An intergroup perspective on language attitudes. *Human Communication Research, 40*(1), 91–111. https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12017

Dragojevic, M., & Goatley-Soan, S. (2022). Americans' attitudes toward foreign accents: Evaluative hierarchies and underlying processes. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *43*(2), 167–181. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1735402

Dragojevic, M., Gasiorek, J., & Giles, H. (2016). Communication accommodation theory. In C. R. Berger & M. E. Roloff (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of interpersonal communication* (pp. 1–20). Wiley-Blackwell.

El-Assal, K. (2020, February 20). 642,000 international students: Canada now ranks 3rd globally in foreign student attraction. *CIC News*. https://www.cicnews.com/2020/02/642000-international-students-canada-now-ranks-3rd-globally-in-foreign-student-attraction-0213763.html#gs.cv7pls

Erudera College News (2020). Top 20 countries to study abroad as of 2020. https://collegenews.org/top-20-countries-to-study-abroad-as-of-2020/

Esses, V., Sutter, A., Ortiz, A., Luo, N., Cui, J., & Deacon, L. (2018). *Retaining international students in Canada post-graduation: Understanding the motivations and drivers of the decision to stay*. Canadian Bureau for International Education. https://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Intl-students-post-graduation-RiB-8-EN-1.pdf

Fraser, G. (2006). *Sorry, I don't speak French: Confronting the Canadian crisis that won't go away*. Mcclelland & Stewart.

Fritz, M. V., Chin, D., & DeMarinis, V. (2008). Stressors, anxiety, acculturation and adjustment among international and North American students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *32*(3), 244–259. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2008.01.001

Garrett, P. (2010). *Attitudes to language: Key topics in sociolinguistics*. Cambridge University Press.

Gbadamosi, A. (2018). The anatomy of international students' acculturation in UK universities. *Industry and Higher Education*, *32*(2), 129–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950422218760335

Giles, H., & Watson, B. M. (Eds.) (2013). *The social meaning of language, dialect, and accent: International perspectives on speech styles*. Peter Lang.

Gluszek, A., & Dovidio, J. F. (2010). The way they speak: A social psychological perspective on the stigma of nonnative accents in communication. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *14*(2), 214–237. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868309359288

Government of Canada (2019). *Building on success: International education strategy 2019–2014*. https://www.international.gc.ca/education/strategy-2019-2024-strategie.aspx?lang=eng

Graf, L. K. M., Mayer, S., & Landwehr, J. R. (2018). Measuring processing fluency: One versus five items. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *28*(3), 393–411. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcpy.1021

Gresham, R., & Clayton, V. (2011). Community connections: A programme to enhance domestic and international students' educational experience. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 33*(4), 363–374. https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2011.585736

Hanassab, S. (2006). Diversity, international students, and perceived discrimination: Implications for educators and counselors. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *10*(2), 157–172. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315305283051

Haugh, M. (2016). Complaints and troubles talk about the English language skills of international students in Australian universities. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *35*(4), 727–740. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2015.1137878

Hawthorne, L. (2012). Designer immigrants? International students and two-step migration. In D. K. Deardorff, H. de Witt, J. D. Heyl, & T. Adams (Eds.), *The SAGE book of international higher education* (pp. 417–436). SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218397.n23

Hosoda, M., Stone-Romero, E. F., & Walter, J. N. (2007). Listeners' cognitive and affective reactions to English speakers with standard American English and Asian accents. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, *104*(1), 307–326. https://doi.org/10.2466/pms.104.1.307-326

Jean-Francois, E. (2019). Exploring the perceptions of campus climate and integration strategies used by international students in a US university campus. *Studies in Higher Education*, *44*(6), 1069–1085. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1416461

Kennedy, S., & Trofimovich, P. (2010). Language awareness and second language

pronunciation: A classroom study. *Language Awareness*, *11*, 171–185.

https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2010.486439

Kircher, R. (2012). How pluricentric is the French language? An investigation of attitudes

towards Quebec French compared to European French. *French Language Studies*, *22*, 345–

370. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959269512000014

Kukatlapalli, J., Doyle, S., & Bandyopadhyay, S. (2020). An investigation into the English

language experiences of Indian international students studying in New Zealand

universities. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *39*(3), 485–499.

https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2019.1685940

Kutlu, E., Tiv, M., Wulff, S., & Titone, D. (2022). Does race impact speech perception? An

account of accented speech in two different multilingual locales. *Cognitive Research:*

Principles and Implications, *7*(7), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-022-00354-0

Larson-Hall, J. (2009). *A guide to doing statistics in second language research using SPSS*.

Routledge.

Lindberg, R., & Trofimovich, P. (2020). Second language learners' attitudes toward French

varieties: The roles of learning experience and social networks. *The Modern Language*

Journal, *104*(4), 822–841. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12674

Lonsdale, D., & Le Bras, Y. (2009). *A frequency dictionary of French: Core vocabulary for*

learners. Routledge.

Maeda, J. (2017). Self-efficacy reduces impediments to classroom discussion for international

students: Fear, embarrassment, social isolation, judgment, and discrimination. *IAFOR*

Journal of Education, *5*(2), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.5.2.07

Myburgh, C. P. H., Niehaus, L., & Poggenpoel, M. (2002). International learners' experiences and coping mechanisms within a culturally diverse context. *Education*, *123*(1), 107–128.

Nation, I. S. P. (2017). The BNC/COCA Level 6 word family lists (Version 1.0) [Data file]. http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul–nation.aspx

Nelson, L. R., Signorella, M. L., & Botti, K. G. (2016). Accent, gender, and perceived competence. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *38*(2), 166–185. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986316632319

Netierman, E., Harrison, L., Freeman, A., Shoyele, G., Esses, V., & Covell, C. (2022). Should I stay or should I go? International students' decision-making about staying in Canada. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, *23*, 43–60. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-021-00825-1

Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *90*(5), 751–783. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.5.751

Plonsky, L., & Oswald, F. L. (2014). Methodological review article: How big is "big"? Interpreting effect sizes in L2 research. *Language Learning*, *64*(4), 878–912. https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12079

Pritchard, R. M. O., & Skinner, B. (2002). Cross-cultural partnerships between home and international students. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *6*(4), 323–353. https://doi.org/10.1177/102831502237639

Rajapaksa, S., & Dundes, L. (2002). It's a long way home: International student adjustment to living in the United States. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, *4*(1), 15–28. https://doi.org/10.2190/5HCY-U2Q9-KVGL-8M3K

Robertson, M., Line, M., Jones, S., & Thomas, S. (2000). International students, learning environments and perceptions: A case study using the Delphi technique. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *19*(1), 89–102. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360050020499

Saito, K. (2021). What characterizes comprehensible and native-like pronunciation among English-as-a-second-language speakers? Meta-analyses of phonological, rater, and instructional factors. *TESOL Quarterly*, *55*, 866–900. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3027

Schwarz, N. (2018). Of fluency, beauty, and truth: Inferences from metacognitive experiences. In J. Proust & M. Fortier (Eds.), *Metacognitive diversity: An interdisciplinary approach* (p. 25–46). Oxford University Press.

Smith, C. (2016). International student success. *Strategic Enrollment Management Quarterly*, *4*(2), 61–73. https://doi.org/10.1002/sem3.20084

Spencer-Rodgers, J., & McGovern, T. (2002). Attitudes toward the culturally different: The role of intercultural communication barriers, affective responses, consensual stereotypes, and perceived threat. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *26*(6), 609–631. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(02)00038-X

Statistics Canada (2016). *Census Profile, 2016 Census: Montréal [Census metropolitan area], Quebec*. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CMACA&Code1=462&Geo2=PR&Code2=24

&SearchText=montreal&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=Language&TABID=1
&type=1

Statistics Canada (2020). *Annual demographic estimates: Canada, provinces, and territories, 2020*. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-215-x/2020001/sec1-eng.htm

Strayhorn, T. L. (2012). *College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students*. Routledge.

Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information*, *13*(2), 65–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/053901847401300204

UKCISA: UK Council for International Student Affairs (2004). *Broadening our horizons: International students in UK universities and colleges*. Report of the UKCOSA Survey. https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Research--Policy/Resource-bank/resources/90/Broadening-Our-Horizons-Survey-2004

Wilson, T. C. (2001). Americans' views on immigration policy: Testing the role of threatened group interests. *Sociological Perspectives*, *44*(4), 485–501. https://doi.org/10.1525/sop.2001.44.4.485

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice*, *40*(3), 197–214. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331

Zhou, G., & Zhang, Z. (2014). A study of the first year international students at a Canadian university: Challenges and experiences with social integration. *Comparative and International Education*, *43*(2), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.5206/cie-eci.v43i2.9253