



Meaning in English: L2 attitudes, choices and pronunciation in Norway

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English in Europe: debates and discourses

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Research questions

- What characterises the pronunciation of English among Norwegian learners?
- How does English pronunciation relate to language attitudes and reported language choices ?
- What can the study tell us about the status of English in Norway related to English as a global language?

English in Norway

- Academic and business domains
- Imported English language media
 - dominant American exposure (Rindal 2010)

English in Norway: ELT

- 11 years ELT from age 6 (8)
- own syllabus
- influenced by current trends
 - ‘The English language is used everywhere’
 - intelligibility, pragmatic strategies, intercultural competence
 - accent neutral: no variety offered as ‘correct’
 - American and British used as references

English in Norway: debates and discourses

- Caught between paradigms?
 - Not EFL
 - Not ESL
 - Not ELF
- Status of English in transition

The study

- N=74: 41 female, 33 male from 3 Oslo schools
- sociolinguistic methods
 - speaker evaluation experiment
 - RP, GA, Scottish English, Leeds English
 - auditory analysis of 7 phonological variables
 - rhoticity, intervocalic /t/, BATH, GOAT, short /o/, post-coronal yod, voiceless *th*
 - questionnaire and interviews



Evaluation of English accents

STATUS & COMPETENCE	SOCIAL ATTRACTIVENESS	LINGUISTIC QUALITY
(Standard) Southern British English (3.86)*	(Standard) Southern British English (3.40)	(Standard) Southern British English (4.40)*
(Standard) Scottish English (3.11)	(Standard) American English (3.18)	(Standard) American English (3.73)
(Standard) American English (3.06)	(Standard) Scottish English (3.04)	(Standard) Scottish English (3.46)
Leeds English (2.98)	Leeds English (2.92)	Leeds English (3.43)

Numbers in percentages are mean scores (out of 5)

*Accent is rated significantly ($p < 0.001$) higher than all other accents

Reported accent aim

Reported accent aim				
British English	American English	'Neutral'	Other	I don't care
24	30	11	1	4

Answers to the question 'Which accent do you aim towards when you speak English?' N=70

1 participant circled both British English and American English and wrote 'It can be useful to learn both'

None chose the alternative 'Norwegian English'

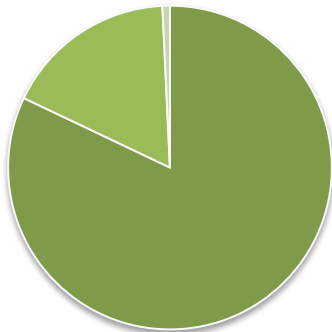
Reason	AmE aimers	BrE aimers	Example
Access	16	2	<i>Because I find American English easier to pronounce and it's talked more on TV, so it's the language I hear the most</i>
Linguistic quality	4	12	<i>I think British English sounds better</i>
Status & Comp	6 (neg)	10	<i>because British English is more classy, and sounds nicer and less vulgar I feel that American English is more relaxed, and not VERY Formal</i>
Authenticity/ Markedness	4	0	<i>(British English is harder), and if you don't quite get it right, you would just sound stupid, and people would think you are trying hard to be something you are not</i>
Other	2	7	E.g. the 'original' English, accent is used by friends, social attractiveness reasons

What is 'neutral' English?

- *English without any sort of specific tone of voice towards any accent (School A)*
- *a cleaner form of English, that there isn't anything dialect-distinctive about it (...) without any special ways to pronounce the words (...) we can sort of speak the way we think is most comfortable, but most of the time you sort of have to find that thing in between (School B)*
- *that you pronounce it based on how it sounds in your head, like, naturally, not that you, like, change it to sound more British or more American. It's actually just reading and talking the way that feels natural to you (School C)*

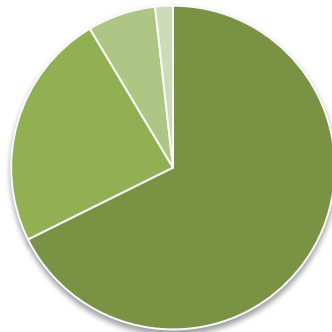
Overall production

RHOTICITY



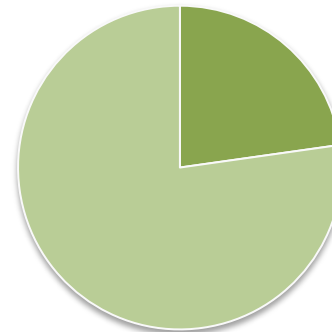
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INTERV /t/



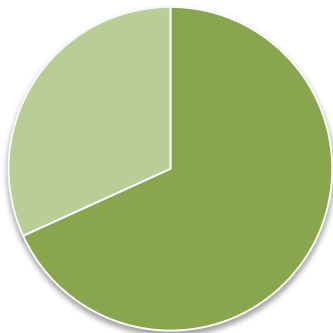
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YOD



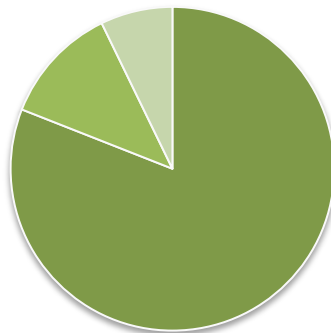
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BATH



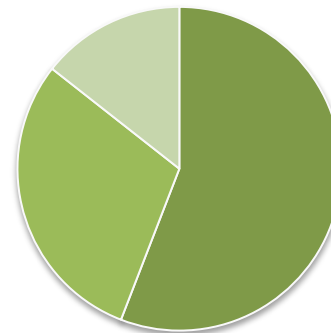
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GOAT



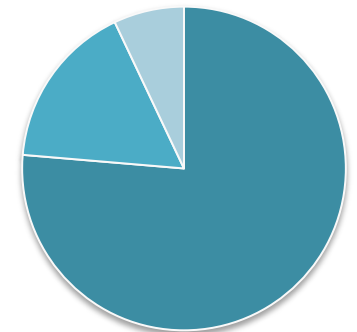
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SHORT /o/



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VOICELESS th

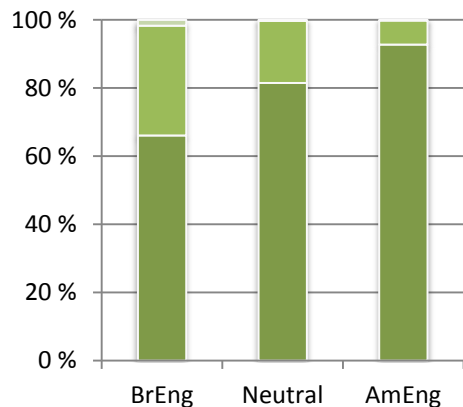


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Accent aim results

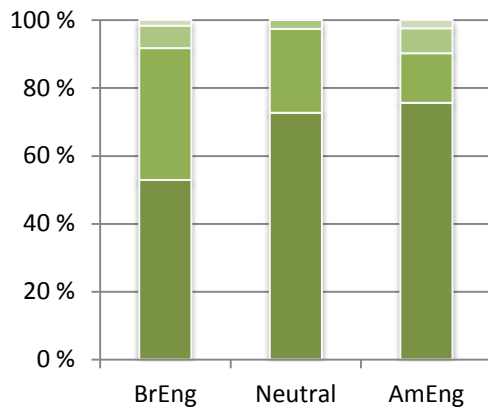
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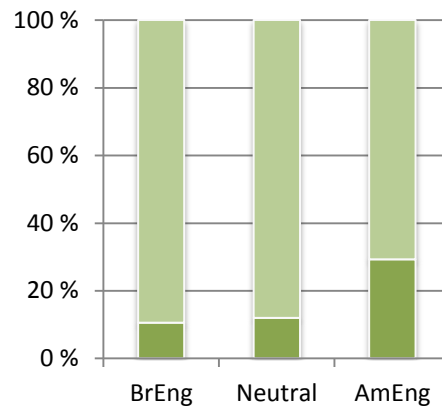
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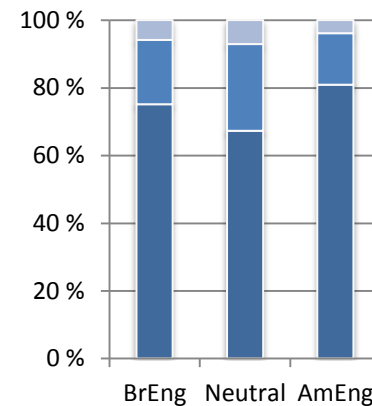
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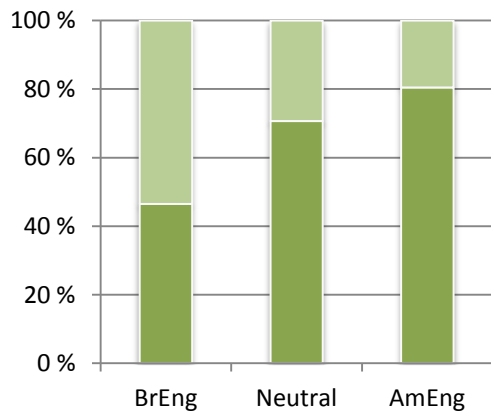
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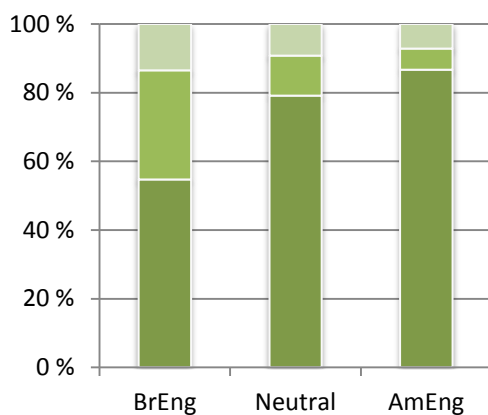
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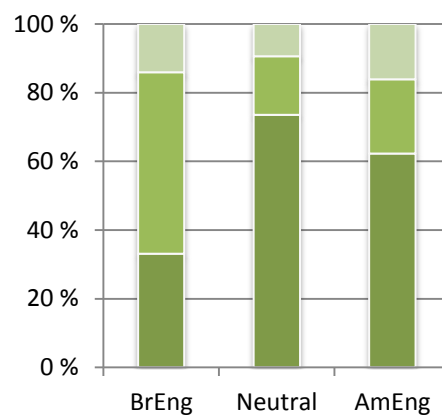
GOAT

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SHORT /o/

■ a ■ ɒ ■ OTHER



An unmarked English?

C21 but I think many of us want to be neutral because I want to be thought of as someone who actually knows the language not- I don't want to, like, be thought of as an American or a Brit, if you see what I mean

(...) the way we speak also reflects a lot of what is around us and stuff. like I said, I have learnt a lot from series, songs, etc, and if I suddenly should start speaking British then that would just be weird, because I don't live in Britain I'm not a Brit and I'm not affected by British culture, like, at all. So that would, like, change parts of the identity, and because- or parts of the culture and what we have been through and experienced

An unmarked English?

Int It would change the identity?

C21 not the identity but, like, language identity because your language and the way you speak also contains who you are and what you have learnt and what, etc, and if I suddenly speak British then that wouldn't, like- that wouldn't be logical

Int Is neutral suitable for your language identity?

C02 yes because I speak in a way what I've learnt and what I've picked up a little here and a little there



English in Norway

- Associations to native varieties
 - aiming for neutral
- Blended use of resources
 - English part of linguistic repertoire
 - English part of identity repertoire
- ELT in transition
 - ‘transitional’ speaker strategies
- Educational implications
 - teacher interpretations
 - ‘learners’ vs. ‘speakers’