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“Give me your name and I’ll tell you whether you speak with an accent” The Effect of Proper Names Ethnicity on Listener Expectations¹

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Abstract

The mastery of a national language tends to be regarded as a key element in foreigners’ integration in Switzerland and as a gateway to equal opportunity. In this article, the limitations of this claim are explored through a study measuring the effect of proper names’ ethnicity on speech perception. A hundred and fifty Swiss respondents had to rate six speakers who were presented as candidates for a job as a communication manager in a Swiss bank. These six speakers spent most of their lives in French-speaking Switzerland and spoke the Standard variety. Our findings indicate that a proper name with an ethnic minority component can result in their bearers being judged as having more foreign accent and as being less suitable for the job. Results are discussed in terms of a discrepancy between cultural nationality and legal citizenship in modern nation-states. This article also shows that studying the effect of proper names, and more generally fine-grained non-verbal cues, on speech perception is a promising research domain in the sociolinguistics of migration, as it provides us with a multi-dimensional appreciation of ethnic identities.

Keywords: accent; migration; proper names; Reverse Linguistic Stereotyping; Standard Variety; speech perception

¹ We would like to thank the editors of this volume and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this article. Any shortcomings that may remain are, of course, our responsibility.

1. Introduction²

Since the 1990s, the Swiss policy of integration, conceived as all actions aiming at establishing equality of opportunity between Swiss people and foreigners, tends to consider the acquisition of a national language as a key condition to a successful integration.³ This is not specific to Switzerland as other Western countries have undergone a similar development.⁴ As a consequence of such a focalization on one element amongst others of the integration process, the local language became a favoured assessment tool of foreigners' improvements in terms of integration. Thus, a high level of integration, which enables naturalization, is supposed to correspond to a better mastery of a national language.

This trend in policy of integration could account for the consequences of the shift in patterns of immigration observed in Western societies and conceptualized as *super-diversity* by Steven Vertovec.⁵ Compared to the pre-1990s, a great diversification in terms of both cultural and geographical immigrants' origin can be observed. As for Switzerland, for instance, immigrants' countries of origin are no longer confined to the European Union, as was the case in the 1960-1980s with incomers from Italy, Spain and Portugal.⁶ Compared to the latter, new minorities have fewer similarities with the local population in terms of education, labour market, religion, and language.

Such diversity comes to challenge the traditional conception of national identity, which combines two components – nations and states – into one.⁷ Anderson's notion of *imagined community*⁸ is useful in understanding nationhood by linking it to identity: a nation is imagined and supported by shared social representations of a common ground (ethnic origin, culture, language). In general, the national identity ideology within a nation-state involves an understanding of immigrants as being outside of the imagined community, which causes, in

² This contribution is a modified and extended version of the article: Alexei Prikhodkine and David Correia Saavedra: Pratiques langagières légitimes et ethnicité: quels rapports? In: Laurence Arrighi and Annette Boudreau (ed.): *Langue et légitimation: La construction du locuteur francophone*. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval (forthcoming).

³ For example, Loi fédérale sur les étrangers, 2005, Article 4, accessed on 07/01/2015 on http://www.admin.ch/ch/f/rs/142_20/index.html.

⁴ Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, Clare Mar-Molinero, and Patrick Stevenson (ed.): *Discourses on language and integration*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2009.

⁵ Steven Vertovec: Super-diversity and its implications. In: *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30/6 (2007), p. 1024-1054.

⁶ Rosita Fibbi, Mathias Lerch and Philippe Wanner: Naturalisation and socio-economic characteristics of youth of immigrant descent in Switzerland. In: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33/7 (2007), p. 1121-1144.

⁷ Joan Pujolar: Bilingualism and the nation-state in the post-national era. In: Monica Heller (ed.): *Bilingualism: a social approach*. New-York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 71-95, p. 72.

⁸ Benedict Anderson: *Imagined communities: reflections of the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.

terms of Rogers Brubaker, a discrepancy between nation and state or, in other words, between nation membership and state membership.⁹ This discrepancy accounts for situations where an immigrant becomes a citizen without being accepted as a national, even if nationality and citizenship should be tied in within an ideal nation-state. According to Brubaker, the gap between nation and state may lead to a more assimilationist politics of belonging, “premised on the claim that migrants must become members of the nation before they can become full members of the state.”¹⁰

This is at least what seems to have happened in Switzerland and more generally in Western societies during the implementation of the integration policy, which focuses on the acquisition of a national language. In this respect, several studies highlighted the role of language as a metonymic representation of the local culture as well as of the nation as an imagined community.¹¹ In addition, while acknowledging the facilitating function of the national language when it comes to immigrants’ access to the labour and formation markets, these studies also demonstrate that language testing can function as a mechanism for exclusion and controlled migration.¹² Without denying the facilitating function of the national language when it comes to migrants’ access to the labor and formation markets, the emphasis put on this criterion raises the question: to what extent does local language mastery allow non-discriminatory treatment of immigrants? It is to this question that we try to answer in the present article, by examining the effects of the ethnicity conveyed by proper names on speech perception.

2. Reverse linguistic stereotyping

A number of language attitudes studies provide ample evidence that speech stimuli can trigger an association with a social group and elicit subjective reactions based on the stereotypes attached to that group.¹³ There is also extensive evidence that speech perception can be determined by what Kang & Rubin call *reverse linguistic stereotyping* (RLS).¹⁴

Within this framework, speech stimuli become objects of stereotypes activated by non-verbal

⁹ Rogers Brubaker: Migration, membership, and the modern nation-state: internal and external dimensions for the politics of belonging. In: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XLI/1 (2010), p. 61-78, p. 73.

¹⁰ Brubaker, Migration, membership, p. 73.

¹¹ For example, Tommaso Milani: Language testing and citizenship: A language ideological debate in Sweden. In: *Language in Society* 37/1 (2008), p. 27-59. Ingrid Piller: Naturalization language testing and its basis in ideologies of national identity and citizenship. In: *International Journal of Bilingualism* 5/3 (2001), p. 259–278.

¹² For example, although Switzerland is not part of the European Community, immigrants from the EU are not required to follow a language training course.

¹³ Nancy Niedzielski and Dennis Preston: *Folk Linguistics*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 2003.

¹⁴ Okim Kang and Donald Rubin: Reverse Linguistic stereotyping: Measuring the effect of listener expectations on speech evaluation. In: *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 28/4 (2009), p. 441-456.

group identification cues. In an experiment assessing the perception of US teaching assistants' language proficiency, Rubin found that when looking at a photo presenting an Asian speaker, students report hearing an accented speech and their comprehension ability decreases, despite the fact that the recorded lecturer is actually a speaker of US Mainstream English.¹⁵ In addition to ethnicity, several other social categories can affect speech perception, such as age, gender, and regional origin.¹⁶ The effect of social information on speech perception has been studied both at the macro level and at the micro level of variation. Using phonetic similarity matching-tasks, Niedzielski found that Detroit listeners tend to choose the actually produced variant (raised) of a diphthong when the label "Canadian" is written in red across the top of the response sheet, while they choose a low token of the diphthong if "Michigan" is written instead.¹⁷ Thus, Detroit listeners hear the variant they actually produce only when the researcher leads them to think that the speaker is Canadian.

While these studies improved our understanding of the RLS phenomenon, more work is still needed to assess to what extent social category cues affect speech perception. One of the potentially interesting areas is the way in which RLS is activated. There is evidence that social characteristics can be activated by different means. This may be a photograph, a video clip or a written social category label.¹⁸ It should be noticed however that proper names received relatively little attention in speech perception studies.¹⁹

The social information conveyed by surnames and first names also deals with a large spectrum of social identities²⁰ and can have consequences on expectations regarding their bearers' skills. Bertrand & Mullainathan show, for instance, that proper names with an ethnic consonance that triggers an association with white people results in their bearers being called to job interviews twice as often as proper names with an African American consonance.²¹ In

¹⁵ Donald Rubin: Nonlanguage factors affecting undergraduates' judgments of nonnative English-speaking teaching assistants. In: *Research in Higher Education* 33/4 (1992), p. 511-531.

¹⁶ Katie Drager: Sociophonetic Variation in Speech Perception. In: *Language and Linguistics Compass* 4/7 (2010), p. 473-480.

¹⁷ Nancy Niedzielski: The effect of social information on the perception of sociolinguistic variables. In: *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 18/1 (1999), p. 62-85.

¹⁸ Drager: Sociophonetic Variation in Speech Perception, p. 476-478.

¹⁹ We should mention Cargile's study on the interplay between accent and surname. However, he didn't treat proper names as an independent factor (Aaron Cargile: Evaluations of employment suitability: does accent always matter? In: *Journal of Employment Counseling* 37/3 (2000), p. 165-177).

²⁰ For example, Robert Young, Ana Kennedy, Ann Newhouse, Pam Browne, and Del Thiessen: The impact of names on perception of intelligence, popularity, and competence. In: *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 23/21 (1993), p. 1770-1788.

²¹ Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan: Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination. In: *The American Economic Review* 94/4 (2004), p. 991-1013.

Switzerland, while observing a similar pattern, a study also highlighted the role of the composition of the denomination: people having both minority surnames and first names were perceived as having a lesser probability of getting a job interview than people with only one minority element.²² A more positive attitude towards “mixed” denominations could be explained by the fact that they also convey reference to the majority culture. The impact of a double ethnic reference was outlined by Verkuyten & Thijs, who showed that dual labels of ethnic minority groups elicit more favourable feelings than single labels.²³ Therefore, the interest of including proper names in a speech perception study is the possibility to incorporate what Drager called “more subtle social information.”²⁴ Indeed, using proper names as social identity cues could make it possible to go beyond the holistic treatment of social categories (e.g., European vs. Asian) by creating, for example, mixed cues with first and last names referring to different social identities.

Given the above, we posed the following research questions:

Research Question 1: To what extent does proper names ethnicity affect speech perception?

Research Question 2: What effect does the names’ labelling (dual or single ethnic reference) have on speech perception?²⁵

3. Method

150 residents of the Canton de Vaud²⁶ in Switzerland were asked to fill in a questionnaire in which they had to judge the recordings of six female speakers describing a comic strip picture.²⁷ The respondents had to judge the suitability of the speakers for a job as a communication manager in a Swiss bank and were also asked to judge them on different aspects, such as their likability, comprehensibility, correctness and the presence of a foreign accent. Two types of questionnaires were designed (n=75 respondents per type), the only difference between the two types being the fictitious proper names given to each speaker.

²² Alexei Prikhodkine, Pascal Singy, Noémie Charton, and Alessandro Iannelli: Tout nom n’est pas bon à dire. Discriminations à l’embauche en Suisse romande. Lausanne: *Bulletin de l’institut de linguistique de l’Université de Lausanne*, 2008.

²³ Maykel Verkuyten and Jochem Thijs: Ethnic minority labelling, multiculturalism, and the attitude of majority group members. In: *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 29/4 (2010), p. 467-477.

²⁴ Drager: *Sociophonetic Variation in Speech Perception*, p. 478.

²⁵ We also investigated the impact of respondents’ social demographics on speech perception. Given the allotted space and since few and non-systematic effects were found regarding social demographics, they will not be discussed here.

²⁶ The Canton de Vaud is the biggest canton within French speaking Switzerland. Lausanne is its capital. French is the only official language in this canton.

²⁷ The Adventures of Tintin by Hergé. The picture comes from its eighteenth album *The Calculus Affair* (*L’affaire Tournesol*. Tournai: Casterman, 1996, p. 13). Regionally marked items were replaced by neutral ones (e.g. “Friture” became “Frites”).

The central aspect is that all respondents were in fact listening to the same recordings. Table 1 summarizes the fictitious names of the speakers and their order. For example, respondents who had a type 1 questionnaire were led to believe that the excerpt 2 speaker was called *Monique Aubert*, whereas respondents who had a type 2 questionnaire thought she was called *Samira Halladj*. Nevertheless, in both cases, it was the same audio recording that respondents were listening to. We are therefore interested in the different evaluations a speaker may receive depending on their proper name. Furthermore, notice that excerpts 2 and 6 were actually recorded by the same person, which thus also allows comparison within one type of questionnaire.

| Excerpts | Type 1 Questionnaire | Type 2 Questionnaire |
|----------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Sophie Bonvin | Sophie Bonvin |
| 2 | Monique Aubert | Samira Halladj |
| 3 | Isabelle Teixeira | Isabelle Meylan |
| 4 | Emilie Chappuis | Manuela Chappuis |
| 5 | Anne Aguet | Sadbera Aguet |
| 6 | Samira Halladj | Monique Aubert |

Table 1. Fictitious names of the speakers in each type of questionnaire. Whether they had a type 1 or type 2 questionnaire, all respondents were listening to the same stimuli. Speakers 2 and 6 are actually the same person.

Participants

Data was collected from a quota sample²⁸ of 150 participants, demographically stratified according to age, education and gender. Based on the immigration peaks determined by the Swiss federal office of statistics,²⁹ the age variable was represented by three groups (18-31, 32-57 and 58+). A degree in higher education (completed or in progress) was used in the attribution of the educational level. Table 2 shows the precise numbers of the sample stratification. All participants were residents of the Canton de Vaud, did their schooling in French-speaking Switzerland and had at least one parent born in that area. Half of the sample (n=75) completed a type 1 questionnaire, while the other half (n=75) responded to a type 2 questionnaire. The two halves of the sample are completely identical in their stratification.

²⁸ Zoltàn Dörnyei: *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

²⁹ Office fédéral de la statistique: *Vers l'égalité entre femmes et hommes*. Neuchâtel: OFS, 2004.

| | Educational level I | | Educational level II | | Total |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | |
| 18-31 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 18 |
| 32-57 | 11 | 13 | 7 | 6 | 37 |
| ≥ 58 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 20 |
| | 23 | 26 | 14 | 12 | 75 |

Table 2. Sample stratification according to age, gender and education.

Speech Stimuli

The speech stimuli used for this experiment were collected in the context of a study on accent perception in French-speaking countries.³⁰ For the present study, we only selected stimuli produced by female speakers under 40, having at least a Master's degree and working as teaching assistants in the field of social sciences at the University of Lausanne. All speakers had French as their native language and spent most of their lives in French-speaking Switzerland. All stimuli were similar in content, as speakers were asked to describe the same comic strip picture. A high degree of homogeneity of stimuli was also obtained by removing all nonstandard lexical and syntactic variants, long pauses and hesitations. In addition, a speech rate analysis³¹ was carried out between the two samples from speaker 2 and 6 to make sure that they were homogenous.

Six excerpts, each 20 seconds long, were separated by 5 seconds of silence. Two excerpts came from the same speaker. The order of stimuli was chosen randomly, except for the second and for the sixth positions used for the speaker with two excerpts, in order to space them out and prevent the speaker from being recognized the second time. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire while listening to the stimuli.

Proper Names

Proper names were picked from a study on the social meaning of immigrants' names in French-speaking Switzerland.³² This study showed that social judgments were significantly dependant on the identification of the name's origin. To enhance the interpretation of the results, we selected for the present experiment only highly homogeneous names as to their

³⁰ Marie-Louise Moreau, Pierre Bouchard, Stéphanie Demartin, Françoise Gadet, Emmanuelle Guerin, Bernard Harmegnies, Kathy Huet, Foued Laroussi, Alexei Prikhodkine, Pascal Singy, Ndiassé Thiam, and Harry Tyne: *Les accents dans la francophonie*. Une enquête internationale. Bruxelles: Service de la langue française, 2007.

³¹ We used the method suggested by Grosjean and Deschamps. François Grosjean and Alain Deschamps: Analyse contrastive des variables temporelles de l'anglais et du français: Vitesse de parole et variables composantes, phénomènes d'hésitation. In: *Phonetica* 31/3-4 (1975), p. 144-184.

³² Alexei Prikhodkine et al.: Tout nom n'est pas bon à dire.

origin attribution.³³ To account for cultural diversity in Swiss society, three ethnicities were included in the experiment: names identified by lay persons as mostly used in the Lusophone area (the first name *Manuela*, and the last name *Texeira*), the Arabophone area (*Samira* and *Sadbera* as first names, and *Halladj* as last name), and the French area. First and last names were then arranged into three groups: completely majority (*Sophie Bonvin*, *Monique Aubert*, *Isabelle Meylan*, *Emilie Chappuis*, *Anne Aguet*), completely minority (*Samira Halladj*) and dual labels (*Isabelle Texeira*, *Manuela Chappuis*, *Sadbera Aguet*).

Measures

The number of questions per speaker was fixed to five (total of 30 questions), for respondents had to answer them without stopping the tape. Each question had an associated four point scale. To reduce the possible effect of non-differentiation, we labelled all the points and reversed the valence of two of the five scales. In order to minimize listeners' propensity to "satisficing", we avoided a middle alternative.³⁴

To assess the role of RLS in the occupational context, we asked a question on the job suitability of the speakers. Attentive to the role of context in assigning a job description, we investigated the suitability of the speakers for a job as a communication manager in a Swiss bank. This job was selected due to its salient communicative and linguistic components.

To examine whether listeners had different subjective reactions to the speakers, they rated stimuli on language "correctness" and "pleasantness". These labels tend to represent two major dimensions along which language attitudes vary and have been largely used in previous research.³⁵

To measure listening comprehension, we adapted a scale from Moreau et al.,³⁶ which assesses a subjective judgment of comprehensibility (*To what extent do you find this person comprehensible?*).

The accent standardness scale was adapted from Kang & Rubin.³⁷ In our experiment, this scale was also a single item measure, however differently labelled. Respondents were asked

³³ To be more explicit, we took the proper names which had the highest percentage of identification by respondents as names from a certain origin.

³⁴ Satisficing is a tendency to minimise effort when answering questions. Jon Krosnick: Survey research. In: *Annual Review of Psychology* 50/1 (1999), p. 537-567.

³⁵ Denis Preston: A language attitude approach to the perception of regional variety. In: D. R. Preston (ed.): *Handbook of Perceptual Dialectology* Vol. 1. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1999, p. 359-373.

³⁶ Moreau et al.: *Les accents dans la francophonie*.

³⁷ Okim Kang and Donald L. Rubin: Reverse Linguistic stereotyping.

to indicate whether they perceived a foreign accent. No mention was made of any accent with local association, as in the area of language evaluation in French speaking Switzerland, general concepts such as "Swiss" are not necessarily associated with standardness.³⁸

Procedure

Data was collected in various settings (mostly at work and at the homes of the participants). Respondents were not remunerated. The research project was presented as a study concerned with how people rate speakers on the basis of brief speech samples.³⁹ Speech stimuli were then presented as extracted from job interviews of six women who had applied for the position of communication manager in a bank situated in French speaking Switzerland. It was also stated that these candidates had been asked to describe the same comic strip picture.

Participants listened to the stimuli through iPods. During the experiment, listeners had to rate each stimulus on five scales, which were preceded by the written name of the fictional candidate. In order not to draw too much attention to the names and reduce a possible social desirability bias, participants had limited time to answer the questions (there was only a pause of 5 seconds between each excerpt) and the first candidate was labelled with an identical completely majority name (*Sophie Bonvin*) in both types of questionnaires. After the experiment, respondents were asked to indicate their biographical information (age, education, gender, parents' origin), and comment on the study.

4. Results

Across-subjects

A discriminant analysis was computed (SPSS 18, discriminant analysis). A discriminant analysis (DA) aims at classifying individuals into different groups, based on their features. In the present case, the DA model discriminates the type of questionnaire (1 or 2) based on the given answers. Then, the *predicted* type of questionnaire is compared with the *actual* type of questionnaire. This process is done for every questionnaire in the database, and the total percentage of correct classification is calculated. A high percentage of correct classification shows that the model discriminates efficiently the 2 types of questionnaires based on the given answers. The percentage of correct classification of questionnaire type is 76.7%.

³⁸ Alexei Prikhodkine: *Dynamique normative du français en usage en Suisse romande*. Enquête sociolinguistique dans les cantons de Vaud, Genève et Fribourg. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2011.

³⁹ For a similar instruction, see: Stefan Grondelaers, Roeland van Hout, and Mieke Steegs: Evaluating regional accent variation in standard Dutch. In: *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 29/1 (2010), p. 101-116.

Therefore, at a general level, the respondents gave quite different answers depending on the type of questionnaire they had to fill. It shows that the only difference between the 2 types of questionnaires (i.e. the speakers' names) indeed had an influence on the answers.

One-way ANOVAs were made for each question (a total of 30 one-way ANOVAs were made). Their aim is to determine if there is a link between the answer given to a question and the type of questionnaire. The direction of the link is given by mean comparison. The effect of social demographics was tested through a series of analyses of variance with the combination of respondent age, gender, education and type of questionnaire. Since few and non-systematic effects of three- and four-way ANOVAs were found, only double effects of interaction are presented here.⁴⁰ Finally, speaker 1 is not discussed because this speaker had the same name in both questionnaires.

Speaker 2 is significantly judged as having a stronger foreign accent ($F(1,148) = 5.659$, $p = 0.019$) when she is called *Samira Halladj* (completely minority name) than when she is called *Monique Aubert* (completely majority name). However, speaker 6, who had the same pairing of names and who was actually the same person as speaker 2, was not judged differently from one type of questionnaire to the other. A two-way ANOVA, combining age of the respondents and questionnaire type, shows that the elderly (more than 57 years old) evaluate speaker 2 less favourably when she has a minority name. In detail, *Samira Halladj* is assessed as having a less pleasant ($F(2,144) = 3.288$, $p = 0.040$) and less correct ($F(2,144) = 4.578$, $p = 0.012$) language.

Speaker 3 is significantly judged as having a more correct language ($F(1,146) = 4.049$, $p = 0.046$) when she is called *Isabelle Teixeira* (majority first name, minority surname) than when she is called *Isabelle Meylan* (completely majority). Also, a two-way ANOVA showed that this speaker was also judged, mainly by the female respondents, as more suitable for the job when she had the minority last name ($F(1,145) = 4.498$, $p = 0.036$).

Speaker 4 is significantly judged to be more suitable for the job ($F(1,147) = 9.066$, $p = 0.003$) and more pleasant to listen to ($F(1,148) = 5.715$, $p = 0.018$) when she is called *Emilie Chappuis* (completely majority) than when she is called *Manuela Chappuis* (minority first name, majority surname).

In the case of speaker 5, no significant one-way ANOVA were found. However, double effects of interaction were found with this speaker. A two-way ANOVA, using the

⁴⁰ Note that these three- and four-way ANOVAs did not include the same factors as the two-way ANOVAs reported here.

educational level of the respondents as another variable in addition to the type of questionnaire, shows that people with a higher educational level judge speaker 5 less favorably when she is called *Sadbera Aguet* (minority first name, majority surname) than when she is called *Anne Aguet* (completely majority name). Indeed, *Sadbera Aguet* is judged as having a less correct language ($F(1,146) = 8.694, p = 0.004$) by people with a higher educational level. In the same manner, respondents with a higher education judge *Sadbera Aguet* as less suitable for the job ($F(1,147) = 4.513, p = 0.035$) and as having more of a foreign accent ($F(1,146) = 4.622, p = 0.033$) than *Anne Aguet*. Just one effect of age was found on the correctness dimension: again the elderly (more than 57 years old) evaluate *Sadbera Aguet* as using language less correctly ($F(2,144) = 3.085, p = 0.049$).

Within-subjects

As discussed earlier, speaker 2 and speaker 6 are actually the same recorded person. Therefore, the influence of the speaker's name can be tested within one type of questionnaire. Also, remember that the names of speaker 2 and 6 are reversed from one type of questionnaire to the other, as Table 1 summarizes. A paired t-test was made to determine if there is a significant difference between the answers given to the questions regarding speaker 2 and 6 within one type of questionnaire (therefore, the process was done twice, once for each type). Table 3 shows that significant results are only found for type 2 questionnaires. In type 2, *Samira Halladj* is judged as less suitable for the job (paired $t(74) = -2.274, p = 0.026$) and as speaking with a more noticeable accent (paired $t(74) = 2.803, p = 0.006$) than *Monique Aubert*. Indeed, as Table 3 shows, respondents presented with a type 2 questionnaire give a higher mean to *Monique Aubert* to the job suitability question (3.05) than to *Samira Halladj* (2.87). Also, the respondents think that *Samira Halladj* has more of a foreign accent than *Monique Aubert* as their means to this question are respectively 1.29 and 1.13.

| | | TYPE 1 (mean) | TYPE 2 (mean) | Sig (type 1) | Sig (type 2) |
|------------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Job suitability | Samira Halladj | 3.01 | 2.87 | 0.124 | 0.026 |
| | Monique Aubert | 2.84 | 3.05 | | |
| Pleasantness | Samira Halladj | 1.81 | 1.91 | 0.094 | 0.161 |
| | Monique Aubert | 2.00 | 1.78 | | |
| Correctness | Samira Halladj | 1.66 | 1.75 | 0.559 | 0.310 |
| | Monique Aubert | 1.71 | 1.65 | | |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|------|------|-------|-------|
| Comprehension | Samira Halladj | 3.29 | 3.21 | 0.892 | 0.113 |
| | Monique Aubert | 3.28 | 3.39 | | |
| Accent | Samira Halladj | 1.21 | 1.29 | 0.146 | 0.006 |
| | Monique Aubert | 1.12 | 1.13 | | |

Table 3. Paired t-tests between speaker 2 and speaker 6 (who are in fact the same person).

What within-subjects analysis shows us is that significant differences between speaker 2 and speaker 6, within one type of questionnaire, only occur in type 2 questionnaires. In this type, the completely minority name (*Samira Halladj*) appears in position two, whereas in type 1 it is localized at the very end of the questionnaire. Therefore, when the completely minority name is in final position, it is not judged in a different way to the completely majority name. This is consistent with the across-subjects results. One explanation might be that exposure to the samples reduces the effect that proper names have on speech perception. Several studies highlighted the impact of previous exposure on dialect awareness. Clopper and Pisoni show, for instance, that the amount of previous exposure to a dialect affects accuracy at identifying the regional origin of the speaker.⁴¹ In our study, subjects were exposed to six quite homogeneous speech samples, all falling under the Standard Swiss-French variety and performed by legitimized speakers. Therefore, it is possible that after having heard several of these speakers, the respondents acquire more awareness of the national origin and are less likely to engage in Reverse Linguistic Stereotyping. Towards the end of the questionnaire, this awareness may be even greater when the name is a fully minority one, creating a wide gap between the actual performance of the speaker and the expected performance given the name's origin. This can be illustrated by the comments of some of the respondents, who didn't believe that the last speaker was Arabic, saying "She talks like us, in spite of her name!" Therefore, dialect exposure and, more generally, expertise in the task turns out to be a potential factor limiting the impact of non-verbal social category cues on speech perception.

5. Discussion

This article has reported a survey, which revealed that proper names ethnicity indeed has an effect on speech perception. This is supported by the results of the discriminant analysis,

⁴¹ Cynthia Clopper and David Pisoni: Homebodies and army brats: some effects of early linguistic experience and residential history on dialect categorization. In: *Language Variation and Change* 16/1 (2004), p. 31–48.

which displays a high correct classification rate. At a more localized level, one-way ANOVAs show that significant differences only occur with specific speakers and questions. These results show that the constitution of the names seems to play a role in engaging in RLS, but not always in the way predicted.

First, dual labels with a minority first name elicited negative judgments just as much as minority-minority labels. This observation is different from the results reported by Verkuyten & Thijs who suggested that dual labels of ethnic minority groups should elicit more favourable feelings than single labels.⁴² Second, as discussed earlier, in dual labels, the first name and the last name do not convey the same social information. Our results indicate that a dual label with a minority surname elicits more favourable attitudes than dual labels with a minority first name. One explanation is that women's surnames are treated differently to first names when it comes to the identification of the speakers' origin. Indeed, in Switzerland, for the moment, the law requires women to take the names of their husbands, and post-survey debriefing reveals that especially women are aware of the name change after marriage.⁴³ In this regard, remember that mainly female respondents judged speaker 3 as more suitable for the job when she had a minority last name. Therefore, the names might not mobilize the same social information: the first name seems to convey more national inclusion than the last name. Despite the fact that they both have one Swiss name, *Isabelle Texeira* might be perceived as Swiss by birth, as opposed to *Manuela Chappuis*. These results show that studying the effect of proper names, and especially mixed names, on speech perception is a promising research domain in speech perception, as it provides us with a multi-dimensional appreciation of social identities, in line with Vertovec's notion of *super-diversity*.⁴⁴

Fundamentally, this finding concerns a different degree of social information inclusion into speech perception. Despite the prominence of research on the effect of non-verbal group identification cues for the last ten years, sociolinguists have paid little attention to the reasons leading to a variation of non-verbal social cues' impact. One could roughly sketch two types of studies based on the degree of social information included into speech evaluation. On the one hand, several studies show a complete inclusion when social cues take over speech information. In this case, listeners don't hear what is really produced. They expect the

⁴² Verkuyten and Thijs: Ethnic minority labelling.

⁴³ It should be noted that after an initial refusal in 2009, the Swiss Parliament has adopted (30. 9. 2011) the initiative for equality between spouses in respect to choice of name upon marriage. This initiative has provoked lively debate, widely reported by national media.

⁴⁴ Vertovec: Super-diversity and its implications.

speaker to sound a certain way and therefore they are more likely to hear the speaker that way.⁴⁵ On the other hand, numerous studies show an interaction between social and linguistic information: social cues shift indeed the impact of speech information. In this case, listeners hear what was actually produced and compare this information to that provided by non-verbal social cues. Campbell-Kibler shows, for instance, that professors were seen as more knowledgeable when using a velar variant of the (ING) variable, whereas experienced professionals were perceived as more knowledgeable using an alveolar variant.⁴⁶ Drawing on these studies, we can identify some factors potentially involved in the inclusion of non-verbal cues' social information into speech perception. First of all, one can argue that social cues don't take over speech information when a speech contains linguistic variables with high degree of conscious awareness (or stereotypes, in Labov's terms).⁴⁷ That's what emerges from Campbell-Kibler's study on (ING) variable. Another factor could be the nature of social category cues. While the interaction between social and linguistic information can be observed in survey designs dealing with socio-economic status,⁴⁸ a complete inclusion of social information is mainly demonstrated with variables relating to the definition of national identity, such as ethnicity or national origin.⁴⁹ Implying both standard language and national identity ideologies, these cues may bear stronger ideological schemes and social categories with discrete boundaries (e.g. European or not). Then, listeners' characteristics could also account for the inclusion or not of social information, such as contact and exposure to a language variety, endorsement of multiculturalism, or training in linguistics.⁵⁰ Finally, complete inclusion of social information may be favoured by holistic and highly stereotyped non-verbal social cues; for instance, a photograph showing a European or Asian person, or toys (kangaroos, koalas and kiwis) that were thought to represent a dialect area.⁵¹

Our study suggests that the work on non-verbal social categories could be a fruitful research field for understanding speech perception, provided it is done with as much care as the work on language material. By taking socially grounded linguistic and non-verbal cues, we should

⁴⁵ For example, Niedzielski: The effect of social information.

⁴⁶ Kathryn Campbell-Kibler: Accent, (ING), and the social logic of listener perceptions. In: *American Speech* 82/1 (2007), p. 32-64.

⁴⁷ William Labov: *The social stratification of English in New York City*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1966.

⁴⁸ For example, Kathryn Campbell-Kibler: The effect of Speaker Information on Attitudes Toward (ING). In: *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 29/2 (2010), p. 214-223.

⁴⁹ For example, Jennifer Hay and Katie Drager: Stuffed toys and speech perception. In: *Linguistics* 48/4 (2010), p. 865-892.

⁵⁰ Kang and Rubin: Reverse Linguistic stereotyping.

⁵¹ Hay & Drager: Stuffed toys and speech perception.

be able to address social issues, just as those outlined in the introduction to this article, that result from the reaction to the increasing diversity of Western societies.

Indeed, the actual migration policy in Switzerland (also in other European countries, see §1) considers national languages as a favoured assessment tool of foreigners' improvements in terms of integration. This research provides empirical evidence that the mastery of the Standard variety of French is not a magical key for a non-discriminatory treatment of people of immigrant descent. This situation can be linked with the idea of a discrepancy between cultural nationality and legal citizenship.⁵² This discrepancy happens when someone can become a citizen of a state from a legal point of view, but when this person, however, won't be included as being part of the nation. Importantly, data obtained from the mixed names suggest that listeners make inferences about the degree of speakers' national inclusion. Although the dividing line in our results seems to pass through the perceptual opposition Swiss-by-birth vs Foreign-born, it is likely that further investigations testing other ethnic origins, adding other social cues could describe respondents' perception of national inclusion as a gradient based on the criteria of cultural distance. In the words of Charles Tilly,⁵³ this gradient could be thought as a continuum between "thick" and "thin" citizenship, where some individuals are considered as less of a citizen than others, resulting in social discriminations and in a weak feeling of belonging to the host society.⁵⁴ Then, the fine-grained social cues' effect is worth studying not only for its importance for a better understanding of speech perception, but also for challenging the ideology which associates the Standard language variety with one ethnicity.

⁵² Brubaker: Migration, membership.

⁵³ Charles Tilly: Citizenship, Identity and Social History. In: *International Review of Social History*, 40 (Supplement 3) (1996), p. 1-17.

⁵⁴ Silvia Lucchini, Philippe Hambye, Gilles Forlot, and Isabelle Delcourt: *Francophones et plurilingues*. Bruxelles: Service de la langue française, 2008.