

tags. The hunt for candidate tags is open: Cohen has made a case for accent, and we look forward to future research in which other cultural traits are assessed according to the conceptual framework developed in the paper. A complementary endeavor will be to provide a model for the integration and dynamic selection of the most appropriate tags for a given place, time, and interaction.

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Cohen's linguistic-tag-based account of human cooperation provides a discerning, carefully documented, and analytically forceful argument. Drawing on a large number of disciplines in the social sciences, she attempts the formidable task of describing the evolution of human cooperation and seeks explanatory power over many aspects of modern human sociality. As a psychologist, I am particularly intrigued by the interesting empirical predictions about human social behaviors that stem from Cohen's work. Some predictions are clear; furthermore, additional empirical inquiries could refine the theory and advance the synergistic dialogue between empiricists and theorists that Cohen so eloquently begins.

Cohen reviews experimental literature suggesting that, early in development, children attend to accent in guiding their early social preferences. Much recent research in developmental psychology (e.g., by Warneken, Tomasello, and colleagues) provides evidence that children are spontaneously helpful to others. Critically, interesting future experiments could probe whether children's earliest collaborative gestures are directed most reliably toward unknown others who exhibit a local accent.

Other interesting predictions can be made about the language-based social behavior of modern humans (both adults and children) based on Cohen's work. Cohen discusses the possibility of "accent chameleons," or those who convincingly assume a nonnative accent. If accent is interpreted as an honest signal of native-group membership that begets collaborative behavior, and a supposed native speaker speaks in a manner that betrays that categorization, he or she might be judged harshly. This idea could easily be tested in a laboratory setting. Potentially even more intriguingly, Cohen describes that a tag-based approach allows for some flexibility in the system. Depending on the ecological conditions at play, individuals could extend their range of accent tolerance to include a wider distinction if resources were plentiful or larger scale collaboration was advantageous, whereas they might shrink the range of accents that are accepted as "local" in situations of scarcity or when in competition with rival neighboring groups. Cohen argues that social selection mechanisms could thus be used to explain language variation and "spe-

ciation" in modern times, where the degree of ecological risk across a geographic area could predict the degree of language diversity. I propose that such effects might be observed in a laboratory setting, too, which could shed additional light on the mechanisms that guide both linguistic perception and diversification. When placed in a simulated situation of either scarcity or plenty, listeners might differentially perceive linguistic boundaries in categorizing which accents would count as "in-group" versus "out-group."

Furthermore, the ideas presented in this paper could facilitate interesting experimental explorations concerning people's perception of accent as continuous versus dichotomous. One aspect of Cohen's model specifies that accents are comparable along a continuous dimension and that this linguistic continuity allows for measures of dialect difference. Indeed, research in sociolinguistics supports the idea that accents can change subtly and continuously over geographic spaces. Yet, Cohen also reviews evidence that individuals are better able to discriminate subtle differences in accents that are similar to their own accent, and that adults can even exhibit out-group homogeneity effects whereby two foreign accents are not readily discriminated. To provide a further illustration of how these two ideas can intersect, although linguists acknowledge subtle variations in accent across geographic spaces in the United States, naïve perceivers often identify discrete speech regions such as "the South." As Cohen describes, accent variation can be used to maintain group boundaries, and decreased contact across social groups (which are also linguistically dissimilar) can result in decreasingly effective communication across group borders. Nonetheless, humans may also be inclined to perceive linguistic borders even in situations where the language change is gradual and continuous, and a discrete border may not in fact exist. Interesting open questions concern the nature of peoples' perception of accent as continuous versus dichotomous, and future research could continue to explore the psychological factors that contribute to exercises in linguistic line drawing.

Finally, I found myself contemplating two particular facets of the modern human linguistic landscape. The first is that—at least in modern times—a majority of human children are raised in bilingual or multilingual environments. The second is that modern accents indicate not only regional affiliation or geographic origins, but also status or prestige both within and across social groups that occupy geographically proximate spaces. Research in sociolinguistics (e.g., the work of Labov) demonstrates that variation in speech maps reliably to many aspects of social category membership, often among groups living in the same place at the same time. Further research might integrate proposals of accent as a tag-based strategy for cooperation with situations of multilingualism and with findings that demonstrate the pervasive instances of accent marking social status.