

The Perceived Role of Accent in Micro-Level Linguicism

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Abstract

This paper qualitatively explores the perceived role of accent in micro-level linguicism from non-native speakers' perspectives. Although accent in English is technically a result of the difference in phonetic systems among different languages, accent associates with linguicism in the daily lives of non-native speakers in the United States. The data was drawn from part of a large study that involved intensive interviews with 15 non-English native speakers (linguistic minorities including Japanese and Spanish speakers) in San Diego. Respondents perceived that, in some cases, they were oppressed due to the intensity of their accent, and this oppression sometimes occurred in interpersonal communications in tandem with other factors such as race, nationality and physical appearance. In some cases, discrimination directed against accent was also used to justify racism or other discrimination. Some respondents took advantage of the perceived connections between accent and race, nationality or physical appearance and used accent as a positive identity marker. Regardless of whether accent was associated with positive or negative features, the frustration, anger and inferiority that respondents felt due to accent discrimination in interpersonal communications with native speakers were evident, demonstrating that oppression was internalized to a certain extent.

Key word: Linguicism, Accent

1. Introduction

In this paper, I will sociologically explore how linguistic minorities – non-native English speakers in the United States – experience accent-related discrimination and how accent is associated with other factors. Secondary, I will empirically discuss the perceived role of accent in micro-level linguicism – a form of oppression based on language – from linguistic minorities' perspectives. As a non-native English speaker and trilingual researcher living in the United States, I have been interested in the ways that linguistic minorities in the United States experience linguicism. In a large-scale study that I conducted in spring 2008, I found that some linguistic minorities were very conscious about their foreign accent and perceived that, to a certain extent, their experiences of linguicism were associated with accent. Yet there are very few studies

that document non-native speakers' experiences of accent-related linguisticism and discuss the possible role of accent in micro-level linguisticism from linguistic minorities' perspectives.

Although accented English is technically a result of the difference in phonetic systems among different languages, accent is also closely linked with linguisticism in the daily lives of non-native English speakers in the United States. For my purposes, I refer to Munro's (2003) conceptual definition of accent: accent discrimination refers to "any case where acoustic speech patterns (i.e. pronunciation) are implicated in a claim of discrimination" (41). Some linguistic studies have been conducted in other countries such as Canada (Munro, 2003) and the United Kingdom (Bishop, Coupland & Garret, 2005) with an effort to describe how accent, particularly a foreign accent, makes a negative impression on native speakers. Moyer (2007), for example, concludes that "[m]any [linguistic minority respondents] openly noted how native speakers react to their accents, often negatively..." (514).

Few scholars such as Rippi-Green (1997), Munro (2003) and Moyer (2007) argue that non-native English speakers' intensity of accent and language standardness may be a crucial factor of linguisticism in micro-level communications. Although current research in linguistics and, particularly phonology, has a strong descriptive power in the non-native English speakers' accent and language standardness, there have been very few studies done, empirically articulating how non-native English speakers' intensity of accent and language standardness may be associated with linguisticism in communication with native English speakers. Micro-level linguisticism is not a well-articulated or well-studied part of the academic, or particularly sociological, research of linguisticism. Documenting everyday experiences of linguisticism, particularly accent-related discrimination, from the standpoint of non-native speakers is very rare in the current literature.

Linguistic minority respondents perceived that, in some cases, they were oppressed due to the intensity of their accent, and this oppression sometimes occurred in interpersonal communications in tandem with other factors such as race, nationality

and physical appearance. In some cases, discrimination directed against accent was also used to justify racism or other discrimination. Some respondents took advantage of the perceived connections between accent and race, nationality or physical appearance and used accent as a positive identity marker. Regardless of whether accent was associated with positive or negative features, the frustration, anger and inferiority that respondents felt due to accent discrimination in interpersonal communications with native speakers were evident, demonstrating that oppression was internalized to a certain extent.

2. Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical concept of language ideologies provides a critical lens to understand a possible role of accent in micro-level human interactions from a broader perspective. Many scholars such as Foucault (1977), Woolard (1985), Bourdieu (1991), Lippi-Green (1997), Fairclough (2001) and Tollefson (2006) emphasize language ideologies to illustrate (and conceptualize) how language can play a role in creating and maintaining power dynamics. In an extremely simple sense, language ideologies are one factor used to divide individuals into groups, exclude certain groups from power positions and make individuals misrecognize (and normalize) the existing of social hierarchies.

At the individual-level, standard language ideology (SLI)¹ provides native English speakers who speak *standard* English with communicative superiority over native English speakers with an accent and over non-native English speakers. Instead of non-native speakers' communicative competence, their *linguistic competence* and other linguistic characteristics, which signify a group unique identity (Kroskrity, 1991), are directly linked to their social status. As Lemert (2005) argues, “[l]inguistic competence is a question of social membership, not sophistication, learning, or even age...” (63), yet linguistic competence and characteristics are considered to be determinants of how standard or *correct* one's language use is and who has advantage

¹ Lippi-Green (1997) defines SLI as “a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language which is imposed and maintained by dominant bloc institutions and which names as its model the written language, but which is drawn primarily from the spoken language of the upper middle class” (64).

in interpersonal communication. Accent could be one of the important factors that determine one's language standardness. A person's accent is influenced by his/her group characteristics; a person's accent reflects his/her social group membership and status.

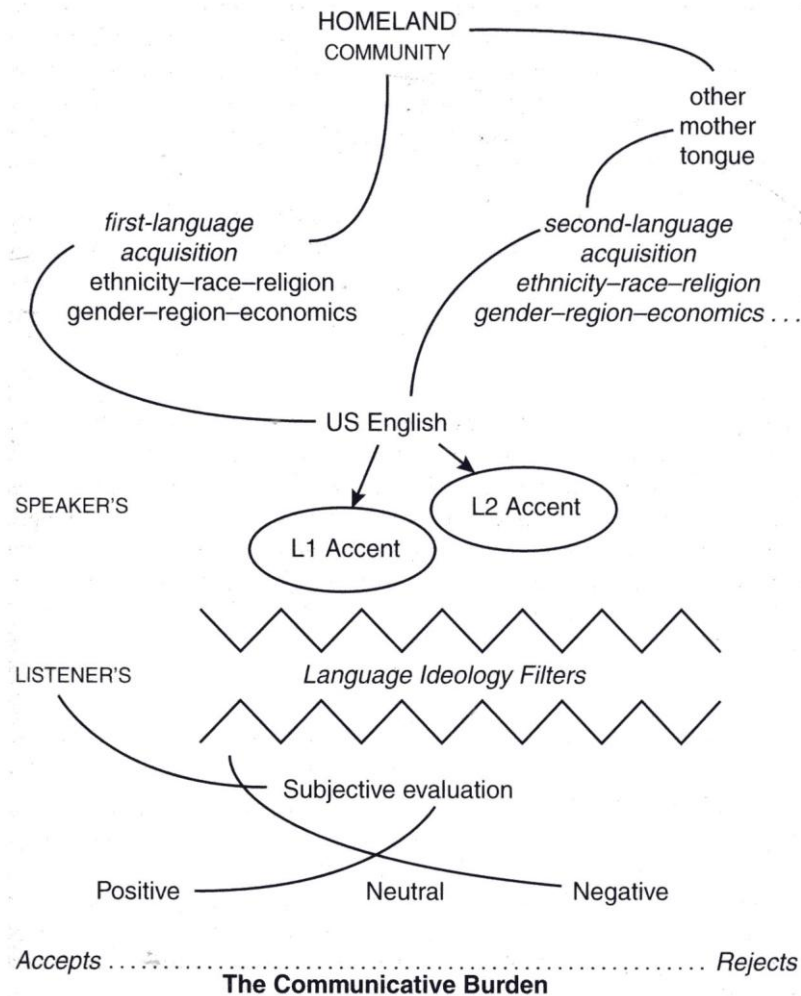


Figure 1: Accepting or rejecting the communicative burden² (Lippi-Green, 1997: 71)

In micro-level interactions, if one's accent is unidentifiable and foreign to native speakers, listeners have to depend on available information – usually non-native speakers' external characteristics – to judge how acceptable and standard the accent is through “language ideology filters” (Lippi-Green, 1997). Lippi-Green (1997)

² The figure is electronically scanned from Lippi-Green's *English with an Accent; Language, Ideology, and Discrimination in the United States* (1997: 71) on March 15, 2008.

developed an empirical model (figure 1) to describe how SLI influences a potential power dynamic in micro-level interactions between “listeners” and “speakers” who have accent. In this model, Lippi-Green (1997) illustrates the concrete process of accepting or rejecting the communicative burden, which demonstrates how, for instance, native speakers take non-native speakers’ both external and internal characteristics (“external cues for subjective evaluation” in Lippi-Green’s terminology) into the accept/reject decision-making-process. “When speakers are confronted with an accent which is foreign to them, the first decision they make is whether or not they are going to accept responsibility in the act of communication” (Lippi-Green, 1997: 70). Native speakers as “listeners” can withdraw or reject from any communication based on the *subjective* evaluation they make according to what kind of accent non-native speakers have. Here, the subjective evaluation is not only based on accent; rather, as Lippi-Green (1997) discusses, native speakers “make a quick series of social evaluations based on many external cues” (72), some of which may be directly linked to external characteristics such as gender, age, nationality, race and physical appearance.

The accent-associated language subordination process is well conceptualized, and non-native speakers who have an accent and certain types of external cues, which lead to negative social evaluation are clearly disadvantaged. However, from linguistic minorities’ perspectives, the model is somewhat abstract as it focuses exclusively on native speakers (or “listeners” who can be non-native speakers and take the initiative) as active agents in the process. Native speakers often take the initiative in the process, while, to a certain extent, non-native speakers (not conceptualized as listeners in most cases) are portrayed as powerless and passive agents who cannot actively negotiate. Indeed, we do not truly know how non-native speakers express oppression due to their accent in this process; most of the related studies discuss linguistic oppression from a native speakers’ standpoint. In response to this gap, this paper focuses on documenting non-native speakers’ experiences of accent-associated discrimination and empirically exploring the role of accent in micro-level linguicism from linguistic minorities’ standpoint. An empirical research study, which is conceptualized based on

these theoretical perspectives and focuses on non-native speakers as active agents, will ultimately contribute to revealing (and reminding us of) their communication disadvantages associated with accent and empowering them to overcome accent-associated linguisticism.

3. Data and Methods

The qualitative data presented in this paper was collected in a large-scale study that I conducted in the spring of 2008. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to explore linguistic minorities' everyday experiences of and perspectives on linguisticism. Interview respondents included fifteen linguistic minorities – five Japanese native speakers, five Mexican Spanish native speakers and five Castilian (Iberian) Spanish native speakers – who resided in San Diego, California at the time of the interviews. These respondents were recruited by using different sampling methods such as convenient sampling and snowball sampling, depending on language groups. Snowball sampling was required to recruit Japanese- and Castilian Spanish-speaking respondents because there were very few, especially Castilian Spanish speakers, in this geographic area, as compared to Mexican Spanish speakers. To avoid different experiences possibly influenced by factors such as age, gender and class, I set a few purposive criteria to define and standardize my research population. All respondents were adults (18 and older, including all age groups); they were both males and females; they were all American citizens or those who hold legal immigration status in the United States. As it was very difficult to find working-class Japanese and Castilian Spanish speakers, socioeconomic status (SES) was held consistent³. However, factors such as jobs, length/date of immigration and race were still diverse, which might have influenced respondents' experiences of linguisticism differently.

With respondents' permission, the entire interview was tape-recorded⁴, and actual data has been electronically stored on my computer. The data was transcribed after each interview, and the original transcriptions needed to be translated into English as

³ All respondents self-identified as middle-class individuals; all American individuals tend to identify themselves as middle-class individuals.

⁴ The entire interview was tape-recorded, using an iPod, so the data was electronically recorded.

closely to the original interviews as possible before the data analysis. This may have been a limitation of this study because my translation might not have exactly presented what respondents expressed in their native languages.

All interviews were conducted in respondents' native languages, Japanese or Spanish, even though English was a common language between the researcher and the interviewees. Conducting interviews in respondents' native languages was critical since all respondents expressed at some point in the interview that they could not express themselves to the greatest possible extent in English or engage in a deep conversation in a language other than their native languages. Furthermore, conducting interviews in their native languages avoided experiences of possible English-accent-associated oppression between the researcher and the respondents to a greater degree than interviews conducted in English by native English-speaking researchers. However, despite my advanced communication competency in Spanish as a foreign language, Spanish is not my native language. There were few times when I experienced communication difficulties with respondents in Spanish, and this may be another technical limitation of this study, besides translation. Nonetheless, as compared to studies conducted by English monolingual researchers, this study is unique and inclusive, allowing linguistic minorities from multiple language groups to express their voices in their native languages.

4. Finding

In the finding section, I will present an empirical analysis of my qualitative data. This section first explores how respondents experienced accent-related micro-level linguisticism. It will then discuss how respondents identify the role of accent, emphasizing the difference between those who perceive that accent is associated with their experiences of oppression and others who do not. Lastly, I will emphasize how respondents' experiences of accent-discrimination are associated with other factors.

4.1. Foreign Accent: A Factor Perceived to Be Associated with Linguicism

Respondents' experiences of accent-associated discrimination were quite diverse. Some respondents believed that their accent was associated with their experiences of

interpersonal-level linguisticism. A Japanese-speaking respondent, Makoto, explained that he was frustrated because of native speakers' negative reaction to his accent:

In a very normal everyday situation, when my accent is very strong and they [native English-speaking Americans] can't hear or understand me, most people respond or act like... a negative bearing shows up in their faces like, "What? Huh? Huh?" very obvious.

(Makoto, 38-year-old male Japanese speaker)

Makoto described that native English speakers reacted negatively (or offensively) to his foreign accent in English and treated him disrespectfully and oppressively. In this excerpt, native speakers did not simply reject the communicative burden and withdraw from the communication; rather, they reacted oppressively. Makoto expressed feelings of anger and frustration towards negative reactions such as facial expression. His emphasis on *accent* is important to consider. Makoto believed that his accent was directly associated with native English speakers' negative reaction, while he seemed to disregard other factors that might have been implicated in that reaction. Many respondents like Makoto associated their foreign accent with their experiences of linguisticism and believed that a stronger accent gave an impression of lower English competency. Indeed, respondents believed that they were discriminated against due to their accent and indicated that "accent-associated prejudice" existed in their everyday lives. Similarly to Makoto, Chika expressed her feelings of disgust toward a particular reaction of native speakers to her accent: "There are many [native speakers] who keep going, "Huh? Huh? Huh?" It's disgusting, it makes me very angry!" (Chika, 29-year-old female Japanese speaker). Thus, native speakers, who theoretically take the initiative, not only decide whether or not to reject the communicative burden based on respondents' accent but also react negatively to it. This reaction appears to respondents to be a discriminatory act.

In addition to Makoto and Chika's cases in which they felt discriminated against due to native speakers' negative reactions to their accent, respondents also experienced a different level of oppression associated with accent. Noriko, a Japanese-speaking respondent, explained:

I have never been made fun of [because of my accent]... but there have been many times when people say "never mind" and ignore me. Many

people are not patient enough, you know? English is not my native language. I cannot speak like them!

(Noriko, 44-year-old female Japanese speaker)

Noriko's experience demonstrates the micro-level process of language subordination in which native speakers simply reject the responsibility of communication by telling her "never mind" and ignoring her. It is evident that Noriko was not aware of the possible process of native speakers' subjective evaluation, which might have included not only Noriko's accent but also other unknown factors. Hence, Noriko simply identified her accent (or her low language competency) as the factor associated with native speakers' particular act. It is important to notice that Noriko's experience not only offers a typical example of Lippi-Green's theoretical model (1997: 71) but also demonstrates two different levels of linguisticism associated with accent – interpersonal and internalized oppression. Although Noriko blamed native speakers for not being patient enough with her low language competency, she also seemed to self-blame and to internalize oppression, accepting the fact that her communicative competency, instead of her linguistic competency in English, was not good enough. Even though native speakers may simply withdraw, not necessarily reacting negatively to Noriko's accent, and do not overtly discriminate against her, her internalized feeling of self-blame and linguistic inferiority is evident. Here, we can observe a possible effect of standard language ideologies on non-native speakers at an intrapersonal level.

Accent-related internalized oppression was common among respondents. Rodrigo, a Mexican Spanish-speaking respondent, expressed that he felt insecure with his communicative competency in English due to his accent:

I don't feel 100% secure [when I speak English] because I don't know that... I am conscious about my accent and this... I can't say this in Spanish... well... I am conscious about my accent and the fact that they may not understand me because I have accent.

(Rodrigo, 23-year-old male Mexican Spanish speaker)

In this excerpt, we again see a possible effect of standard language ideologies at an intrapersonal level, which might occur even without the direct presence of individuals who discriminate against non-native speakers due to their accent. Rodrigo seemed to internalize oppression, being consistently conscious about his accent and blaming his

accent for native speakers' possible rejection of communication responsibility. Rodrigo did not relate any experiences of native speakers' negative reaction to his accent, yet he perceived that his accent was a cause of communication difficulties in micro-level interactions with native speakers. Furthermore, Rodrigo was aware that native speakers usually take the initiative in interpersonal communications with him due to his accent and thus accepts his communicative vulnerability. Language ideologies not only create powerless social groups at a structural level but also influence micro-level human interactions in such a way that these respondents experience accent-associated interpersonal oppression and sometimes *swallow* their feelings of inferiority.

Although many respondents perceived that their experiences of oppression were due to their foreign accent, we have to be attentive that other factors are unknown in these instances such as their voice volume, physical appearance (race), age, sex, etc. which might have contributed. Accent might not have been the only cause of their experiences of linguisticism; accent might have been taken negatively due to other characteristics that respondents possessed. Indeed, Castilian Spanish-speaking respondents – non-racial minorities as compare to Mexican Spanish- and Japanese-speaking respondents – did not perceive the role of accent in the same way even though some of them were aware of a possible role that accent would play.

4.2. My Accent Is Acceptable

My findings revealed that few respondents – in fact only the Castilian Spanish-speaking respondents – identified their accent as a neutral or, at least, non-negative feature of their speech, and something which was not necessarily associated with their experiences of intra-personal or internalized oppression. A Castilian Spanish-speaking respondent, Edurne, explained:

To me, as long as people understand me [I don't mind having an accent]... as long as people understand me, it's not a big deal whether I have accent or not because you don't have any problem. People understand me, so you don't even think about [accent].

(Edurne, 30-year-old female Castilian Spanish speaker)

Edurne did not identify her own accent as a negative feature associated with linguisticism. Although she is aware of the potential difficulty with which accent is associated – not being understood by listeners – in micro-level interactions, she seems to be comfortable with her accent as “she does not even think about her accent as long as people understand her.” Her positive perception of her accent may suggest that she did not experience native speakers’ negative reaction to her accent, similar to cases that other Japanese and Mexican Spanish-speaking respondents described earlier, or possibly she was able to negotiate experiences of micro-level accent discrimination with native speakers. It seems that there have been times when people did not understand Edurne due to her accent, but she did not have to think of accent as a negative feature and thus did not have to internalize oppression. Although Edurne had accent, which agents, including herself, could have characterized negatively, she was able to negotiate the potential effect of language ideologies, possibly by offering characteristics such as race (her European-looking physical appearance) which determined her accent as neutral or positive. Edurne was not aware of her negotiation, and her role in this process is still passive.

Unlike Edurne, Miguel, another Castilian Spanish-speaking respondent who was a Spanish teacher, observed his accent as a neutral (or positive) feature and was aware of his privilege in comparison with his colleague:

I know that here in [this school] there were professors of... the professor is from China and... there were many students who were complaining because they didn't understand this professor, of course, an English literature class... with Chinese accent... but I don't have any problem with my accent... of course, [students] should hope that I have Spanish accent, right?

(Miguel, 40-year-old male Castilian Spanish speaker)

Miguel perceived that his accent was not necessarily a negative feature, and he did not have problem with it, especially because he was a Spanish teacher in an American school. He seems aware that his accent signifies that he is an *authentic* Spanish teacher as he refers to a case of a Chinese professor who does not have the same symbolic advantage. In this sense, like Edurne, Miguel was able to (perhaps at the subconscious level) negotiate experiences of accent-related discrimination, taking

advantage of his privilege in a student-teacher interaction, which is a unique form of communication with native speakers. While his colleague's accent was associated with students' complaints and possibly a lowered symbolic status, Miguel's accent could, in turn, help him manipulate his symbolic status. Furthermore, in this specific context, Miguel and his students were able to ignore the taken-for-granted superiority that *correct* accent offers. Miguel's perception might suggest that external characteristics other than intensity of accent might have stronger impact on linguistic minorities' experiences of micro-level linguicism. However, Miguel did not tell of other experiences in different contexts in which native-speakers did not recognize his privilege as being a Spanish teacher, and Miguel may have experienced discriminatory treatment from native speakers' due to his accent.

These Castilian Spanish-speaking respondents did not tell of any experiences with linguicism associated with their accent and did not even perceive that their accent was a negative factor in micro-level interactions with native speakers. The difference between Japanese- and Mexican Spanish-speaking respondents' experiences and these Castilian Spanish-speaking respondents reveals an inconsistency that we should address. Perhaps Edurne was a passive agent in (or vulnerable to) the language subordination process; however, she might have characteristics that caused listeners to transform her accent from a factor potentially associated with linguicism to a neutral feature. To a certain extent, Miguel was aware of his perceived privilege, which kept him from negative experiences with English-speaking students, yet these respondents did not necessarily recognize that their experiences of accent-discrimination might depend on other factors that they possessed. The different experiences of accent discrimination might not be accidental; rather, as Lippi-Green (1997) argues, there are factors other than accent, which influence how accent is taken. In the following section, I will discuss how accent and other factors are intertwined and explore how respondents perceive accent in relation with other characteristics such as race/physical appearance.

4.3. How Are Accent and Other Factors Associated?

As Munro (2003) argues, “accent is just one of a number of characteristics, along with skin color, dress, or mannerisms, [native speakers] may be used to identify someone as ‘foreign’ or ‘different’ and that can serve as an excuse for discriminatory treatment” (39). Some respondents recognized that the characteristics other than accent such as race, nationality, gender and physical appearance are not independent from accent; rather, accent is possibly intertwined with them. For example, a particular type of accent may serve as a representation of linguistic minorities’ racial identity, especially in the current American context, and be used as an excuse for racist practices in everyday communication. Indeed, some respondents’ experiences suggested this phenomenon. Maria, a Mexican Spanish speaker, was well aware of such a connection and argued how a Spanish accent might be treated differently, depending upon one’s race, nationality and physical appearance:

I am telling you that the communication between [Argentineans and other White Hispanics] and Americans is different. They might have accent but it’s like “wow, it’s so sophisticated” but when you see a Mexican of color and with accent, but you see an Argentinean American or Spanish American, green eyes with accent... “Ay, very educated and sophisticated.” That’s what I think.

(Maria, 25-year-old female Mexican Spanish speaker)

Maria perceived that accent-related discrimination was an excuse for racist practices particularly against Mexicans. As Maria further described, accent might reflect one’s *foreignness* and certain types of accent gave a positive impression like Argentinean or Spaniard accent as very educated and sophisticated. In this sense, Maria is aware that, in a micro-level communication, one’s physical appearance (or race) signifies how linguistic minorities’ accent will be taken and understood. Indeed, Miguel described his personal but remarkable experiment – how a certain accent gives a positive impression:

Miguel: I will tell you my personal experiment. I have a French friend. And so the accent he has in English is French... and I believe that... it sounds very exotic for Americans, like very... and I remember that the girls were like, “How beautiful accent he has,” but I was like, I speak English but nobody said anything to me like that. (laughter)

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Miguel: Based on that experience... as I speak French, I spoke French once at a bar or disco, “I am going to speak English like you do,” I told my friend, I am going to speak English with French accent. “I will see what

happens, I will see what will come out with this [saying this with typical French accent]” with French accent, right? (laughter)

Interviewer: (Laughter)

Miguel: It works! It worked! “Oh, are you from France?” “Yes, I was born in Paris, France [saying this with typical French accent again]” And I... that works, and you make yourself speak French and for... because it’s clear, like Spanish accent... my case, I am telling you that my accent... I don’t know, but, well, at the end, we know that... [although we tell them] that “He is from Spain,” they are like, “Ah, Mexico”! “No, Spain, Europe,” but, fine... they tell you, they don’t pay attention to that accent, of Spanish or something like very exotic [language or culture] for them, right? But, as the French community, so this guy... always people tell him, “ah, what a beautiful accent you have,” furthermore, he even strengthens [his French accent], right? So I am in a position of saying if that’s true. I will speak English with French accent, and it effectively worked.

(Miguel, 40-year-old male Castilian Spanish speaker)

As Miguel explained, the French accent was more “attractive,” or “exotic” than the Spanish accent in association with certain types of physical appearance or race. It was possible that the French accent (even though Miguel was pretending to have it) in tandem with Miguel’s European physical appearance made a positive impression on English speakers when he conducted his personal experiment. Although he did not indicate an awareness of the effect of physical appearance (which could signify how the accent was taken and understood), he suggests that there is a socially constructed hierarchy of languages and foreign accent in the U.S. (the French accent sounds more “exotic” than the Castilian Spanish one). We do not know whether or not his French accent made a positive impression or whether or not his French accent *and* physical appearance gave a positive impression in this particular instance. Yet, as Miguel perceives, it is possible that a non-European looking individual with French accent does not give as positive impression as a European looking individual with French accent like Miguel.

Thus, accent discrimination was not straightforward in the sense that respondents were often *not* discriminated against solely due to their accent. It is probable that, as Munro (2003) argues, respondents were discriminated against for their accent as a justification of racist or other discriminatory practices. It is also arguable that, as some respondents are aware, accent is intertwined with other factors, such as class,

sex, race, nationality, physical appearance, tone of voice and voice volume, which have a great influence on linguistic minorities' experiences of linguisticism. Relating to this interdependence of accent with other factors (or possible intersectionality of accent with other factors), my findings revealed that some respondents were aware of the possibility of negotiating with accent-associated discrimination by taking advantage of available *resources* (e.g. being teacher, having French accent, looking European) to transform their accent to a positive (or neutral) communicative characteristic.

5. Conclusion

Some respondents perceived that they were discriminated against due to their accent, but others did not even perceive accent as a factor associated with linguisticism. This suggests that accent was sometimes dependent on other factors, and accent-discrimination was not consistently present. Indeed, in micro-level interactions, other factors related to the kind of foreign accent such as race (or physical appearance) signify how accent should be understood (or processed): accent could sometimes be a very positive feature of one's characteristics and sometimes could be associated with oppression, depending on other contributing factors. This may indicate that accent-based power dynamics are fluid. Non-native speakers with accents are not necessarily always vulnerable in social interactions; they *could* be active agents. Indeed, accent may be negotiable, depending upon the active agents in a particular interaction, even though such negotiations seem to also be resource dependent. If this is the case, non-native English speakers, together with native speakers, should play an active role in deconstructing the existing language ideology filter and resisting the normalized linguistic authority in micro-level interactions.

It is also important to consider the fact that accent discrimination is associated with internalized oppression. Although reactions to accent may be cases of simple misunderstandings, respondents felt frustrated, angry and inferior in these cases, suggesting self-blame. However, the notion of internalized oppression may indicate that even if native speakers do not *intentionally* discriminate against respondents, there is an evident struggle for respondents to achieve "correct" speech (*standard*

English pronunciation and accent in particular) as determined by standard language ideology and normalized through agents' everyday practices. Here we see an example of how standard language ideology is internalized at a micro level, and language *standardness* is legitimized and reinforced even at an intrapersonal level. The role of accent in micro-level linguisticism demonstrates how standard language ideologies play an important role in oppressing linguistic minorities even without the discriminators and the complicity of the prejudiced.

More empirical studies are needed to explore how accented-speakers experience interpersonal and internalized oppression and how they can possibly negotiate and resist such oppression. The theoretical concept of language ideologies continues to be crucial to conceptualize further studies, yet it is important to consider more empirical and emancipatory approaches that empower speakers with accents to overcome linguisticism.

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