Evoked expectations and evaluational reactions to accented English

Caridad F. Brito

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/rtds

Repository Citation
https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/rtds/21

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Scholarship@UNLV. It has been accepted for inclusion in UNLV Retrospective Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

The most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book. These are also available as one exposure on a standard 35mm slide or as a 17" x 23" black and white photographic print for an additional charge.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI
University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700  800/521-0600
Evoked expectations and evaluational reactions to accented English

Brito, Caridad F., M.A.
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1989
EVOKE EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATIONAL
REATIONS TO ACCENTED ENGLISH

by

Caridad F. Brito

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Psychology

Department of Psychology
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May, 1989
The thesis of Caridad F. Brito for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology is approved.

Chairperson, Don Diener, Ph.D.

Examining Committee Member, Charles T. Rasmussen, Ph.D.

Examining Committee Member, Lori L. Temple, Ph.D.

Graduate Faculty Representative, Malvin Miranda, Ph.D.

Graduate Dean, Ron W. Smith

University of Nevada
Las Vegas, Nevada
May, 1989
Abstract

Researchers have found that variations in listeners' judgments of speakers are associated with the speakers' accent. It was hypothesized that: 1) Spanish accented speakers would be evaluated less favorably than standard English speakers; 2) listeners would rate both accented and non-accented speakers on the basis of their expectations and not according to the speakers' actual vocal characteristics; 3) listeners would evaluate speakers differently, depending upon the lexical complexity of the speech utilized by the speakers; and 4) listeners would evaluate standard and nonstandard English speakers differently, depending upon the speakers' gender. One hundred-twenty subjects evaluated four speakers on semantic differential type scales. Results indicate that: 1) overall accented speakers were evaluated more favorably than non-accented speakers; 2) listeners did not evaluate the speakers according to their expectations; 3) speakers were rated lower when reading an informal passage than when reading a formal passage; and 4) male and female, accented and non-accented speakers were evaluated differently. Results, limitations, and implications are discussed.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Literature review</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimenter</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech samples</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor I - Competence</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor II - Kindness</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor III - Speech</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor IV - Empathy</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accentedness Item</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Results</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iv
List of Tables

Table 1 ................................................... 26
Table 2 ................................................... 28
Table 3 ................................................... 30
Table 4 ................................................... 31
Table 5 ................................................... 33
Table 6 ................................................... 35
Table 7 ................................................... 36
Table 8 ................................................... 39
Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude to the Graduate Student Association for its generous assistance in funding a major part of this research. I thank the members of my committee for their support and comments. For the contribution of her valuable time, recommendations, and last minute readings, I thank Dr. Lori Temple. Dr. Charles Rasmussen deserves particular thanks for his advice, moral support, and encouragement. And to Dr. Don Diener, I am especially indebted for his continued patience and assistance throughout this project.
Introduction and Literature Review

Our interactions with others are affected by the way we speak and by the way listeners interpret our manner of speaking. We often evaluate others on the basis of minimal information such as subtle vocal cues. Various studies have supported the idea that listeners evaluate a speaker's personality and ethnicity on the basis of vocal cues alone (Giles, 1979; Markel, 1967; Miller, 1975). Other researchers have found that variations in listeners' judgments of a speaker's personality and status are associated specifically with the speaker's accent (Giles & Powesland, 1975). Many of these studies have focused on the attitudes of the listener toward speech samples, and how changes in attitudes accord with variations in speech. This method of varying the speech samples and differentiating between attitudinal responses to them, has allowed researchers to measure listeners' attitudes toward different ethnic groups thought to be represented by the speech samples (Giles, 1970).

Clarification of the distinction between accent and dialect is appropriate. Giles (1970) identified accent as variation from standard pronunciation, and dialect as variation, at most linguistic levels, from
the standard language. Evaluation of a speaker's voice, whether positive or negative, is generally believed to be mediated by ethnic stereotypes evoked by the speaker's accent. In the use of accent variation in research, it is presumed that a listener's evaluation of a speaker with a given accent will reflect the stereotype that the listener holds of the speaker's ethnic group (Webster & Kramer, 1968).

Several studies have shown that listeners may be differentially biased toward speakers of a certain dialect or accent and, consequently, their evaluations of those speakers will be affected. Listeners tend to rate speakers of the standard language or upper-class speech styles more favorably than speakers of lower-class, regional, or ethnic varieties (Giles, 1970; Tucker & Lambert, 1969). Noting an association of inferior status with accented speech, Ryan and her associates have been studying the nature of accented English and attitudes toward it.

Brennan, Ryan, and Dawson (1975), using two psychophysical scaling methods, magnitude estimation and cross modality matching, demonstrated that nonlinguistically trained listeners can make consistent judgments about the accentedness of different speech
samples. Interestingly, their untrained listeners were not able to articulate which pronunciation features of the speech samples most influenced their judgments. The speech samples used by Brennan, et al. (1975) were obtained from Spanish-English bilinguals, however, the authors had no reason to suspect that results would differ if other nonstandard English speaking populations were sampled.

Hispanic Americans have increasingly been of interest to researchers investigating the perception of linguistic variations. Research outcomes suggest that, vocal cues aside, Hispanics are rated less favorably than non-Hispanics merely on the basis of their surnames. Razran (1950) added ethnic surnames to photographs and found that subjects' ratings of the photographs were altered.

It is believed that language minority groups use accented speech at some point during the process of adopting the dominant language. Thus, in the United States, Hispanics will use accented English speech, at some point, while learning and adopting English (Ryan, Carranza, & Moffie, 1977). The speech of Mexican-Americans, a substantial segment of the United States Hispanic population, has been the subject of
investigation by Ryan and her associates, as well as other researchers (De la Zerda-Flores & Hopper, 1975; Politzer & Ramirez, 1975).

Knowing that naive listeners can make fine discriminations among varying degrees of accentedness, Ryan et al. (1977) investigated the nature of listeners reactions to various degrees of accentedness. They questioned whether listeners reactions would be categorical (e.g., standard English or nonstandard English) or gradually shift as the degree of accentedness was varied. In their study a seven point semantic differential rating scale (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957) was employed, rather than the psychophysical scaling methods utilized previously by Brennan et al. (1975). It may be easier for subjects to understand this type of scale, and it has the added advantage that it can be group administered. Ryan et al.'s (1977) results correlated with those obtained by Brennan et al. (1975), indicating that listeners can make fine discriminations among varying degrees of accentedness, when rating a speaker's personal attributes and speech. Specifically, ratings of accentedness, status, solidarity, and other speech characteristics were similar between the two studies.
It was found that gradual increases in perceived accentedness were associated with increasingly negative reactions to the speaker. Thus, the listeners' reactions to the speakers gradually shifted as the degree of accentedness varied. Due, in part, to Ryan et al.'s (1977) success with the semantic differential rating scales, they have become the most common method used in obtaining listeners' evaluative reactions toward speech samples.

Given that listeners can discriminate among varying degrees of accentedness, Ryan and Sebastian (1980) hypothesized that listeners assume speakers of standard English to be middle-class and speakers of accented English to be lower-class. In their study, social class and speech style were independently varied, in an attempt to investigate their separate and possible interactive effects upon listeners' evaluations. Social class was varied by presenting the subjects with descriptions of the speakers before actually listening to the speakers. It was found that speakers with middle-class backgrounds were preferred over speakers with lower-class backgrounds, and standard speakers were evaluated more favorably than accented speakers. The interaction, between social
class and speech style, indicated that being either a
person with a middle-class background or a speaker of
standard English results in relatively favorable
evaluations, but being both a member of a different
ethnic group and an individual with a lower-class
background results in negative evaluations.

Some research in the perception of linguistic
variation has been concerned with the stereotyping
process itself. Several researchers (Kramer, 1977;
Smith, 1979) have examined some of the ways in which
beliefs about how particular groups of people ought to
speak, can influence others' reactions towards them
when they do speak (Lind & O'Barr, 1979). The effects
of prior information about the speakers (e.g., social
status and ethnicity) on evaluations of speech styles
has been investigated by various researchers (Triandis,
Loh, & Levin, 1966; Seligman, Tucker, & Lambert, 1972;
Williams, 1976). Additional researchers have shown
that specific, prior expectations do differentially
bias listeners' judgments of the speakers (Hersh, 1971;

Gardner and Taylor (1968) clarified the role of
prior information in listener judgments by
investigating the effects of message content and social
pressure on the perception of members of stereotyped groups. Three types of messages were utilized in their study, pro-stereotype, neutral, and anti-stereotype in content. Subjects in each group heard one of the messages delivered in English with a French Canadian accent and, while making their ratings, experienced one of the social pressure conditions. The social pressure involved having confederates' pre-record evaluative comments for each of the rating scales, to which the subjects listened while making their ratings. Results showed that subjects' ratings were influenced both by message content and social pressure.

This line of research assumes that the way an individual behaves toward another person will be a function of the individual's expectations about the group represented by the other person. One of the questions arising from this assumption concerns the relationship between stereotypes and attitudes and actual behavior (Jusim, Coleman, & Lerch, 1987). Investigators have dealt with this question by studying how behavior is affected by a discrepancy between internal expectations and external reality. According to Gardner and Taylor, (1968) and Taylor and Gardner, (1969) this discrepancy results in somewhat altered
perceptions. Aboud, Clement, and Taylor (1974), in an attempt to provide a better understanding of the relationship between expectations, reality, and actual social behavior, addressed this discrepancy and how it influences evaluative reactions to a social stimulus.

Aboud et al. (1974) summarized two different theories that may account for evaluative reactions to stimuli when there are discrepancies between internal expectations and external reality. They highlighted the fact that there is disagreement concerning whether discrepancy or consistency between expectations and reality, is preferred. The first theory, suggests that consistency between expectations and external reality is evaluated positively, whereas discrepancy in any direction is evaluated negatively. According to the second theory, moderate discrepancy in either direction is evaluated positively.

Aboud et al. (1974) investigated the role of consistency and discrepancy in explaining subjects' evaluational reactions to speakers who either confirmed or disconfirmed the subjects' expectations. Specifically, social class and language expectations were varied. Results indicated that speakers who disconfirmed the subjects' expectations, were more
favorably evaluated as potential peers than those who confirmed their expectations. This finding would suggest that, if listeners expected to hear a nonstandard English speaker and their expectations were disconfirmed by having listened to a standard speaker, listeners would judge the standard speaker more favorably than if their expectations had been confirmed. Conversely, if listeners expected to hear a standard English speaker, and their expectations were disconfirmed by having listened to a nonstandard speaker, listeners would judge the nonstandard speaker more favorably than if their expectations had been confirmed. However, Aboud et al.'s (1974) results also suggest that discrepancy theory does not entirely account for all of the subjects' evaluations. When their subjects had to visualize the speakers in the roles of superordinate or subordinate (i.e., boss or employee), consistency between stereotyped vocal expectations and actual speech was viewed positively.

Aboud et al. (1974) concluded that often judges' reactions are not based on the objective or portrayed characteristics of the speaker but rather, on an evaluation of those characteristics in the context of the expectations that the other individual has. They
interpreted their findings as suggesting that, overall, in terms of evaluative reactions, discrepancy theory is favored over consistency theory. However, their results also suggest that under certain circumstances (e.g., employment situations) consistency theory will be favored over discrepancy theory.

Another explanation for listeners' evaluative reactions to disconfirming expectations relies on a quite different approach than either consistency theory or discrepancy theory. This explanation focuses on social stereotypes and identities. Given the important role that social stereotyping plays in maintaining and enhancing social identities (Tajfel, 1981), investigators have suggested that listeners will confirm their speech stereotypes of people they hear, irrespective (within certain, unspecified, limits) of how they actually sound (Giles, Scherer, & Taylor, 1979).

Listeners' prior knowledge about a speaker may lead to expectations of how the speaker will sound. These expectations may unconsciously bias the listeners' linguistic perception and psychological judgment of the speaker. When listeners are provided with a description of a speaker, they develop
expectations about that speaker's vocal characteristics. Upon the presentation of a speaker's voice incongruent with the previously developed expectations, the listener may not become aware of the discrepancy. Instead, the listener may perceive the speaker as talking in the manner that had been originally expected (Beebe, 1981).

Evaluative reactions, then, are explained neither by consistency nor discrepancy theory, but rather by the supposition that listeners do not become aware of the discrepancies between internal expectation and external reality. This explanation would suggest, that if listeners expected to hear a nonstandard English speaker and instead heard a standard English speaker, the listeners would not become aware of the discrepancy between their expectations and the speakers actually heard and they would evaluate the standard English speaker consistent with their expectations of the nonstandard English speaker.

Williams, Whitehead, and Miller (1971) found that when the speech patterns of a white child were superimposed on a videotape recording of a black child, teachers' evaluations were affected. Teachers were asked to evaluate the speech patterns of the black
child. Despite the fact that they listened to the speech of a white child, the speech patterns were stereotypically evaluated as those of a black child. The speech was perceived as sounding ethnic, nonstandard and the child was rated low in confidence and eagerness. William et al. (1971) concluded that teachers had biased their perception of the speech (and hence their evaluations of the child) in the direction of their stereotyped vocal expectations.

Expectations have been found to have an impact upon listeners even after having listened to a speaker. Thakerar and Giles (1981) were able to demonstrate the retroactive influence of vocal stereotypes on listeners' linguistic judgments of speakers. In their study, three groups of listeners were asked to attend to an audiotape of a young man describing an intellectual task he had just completed. Afterwards, subjects in a high status group were led to believe that the speaker was above average in ability and highly competent at the task, a low-status group was led to believe that the speaker was below average in ability and not very competent at the task. A control group was not given any information about the speakers ability or competence. Listeners, then, had to
evaluate the speaker. The high-status group perceived the speaker as having spoken at a faster rate, with a more standard accent, and was seen as more ambitious, active, intelligent, and confident than the same speaker as perceived by the control group, who in turn judged him more positively on these dimensions than the low status group. Thakerar and Giles (1981) concluded that vocal stereotypes, once evoked, can mold speech judgments only minutes after listening to a stimulus speaker's voice.

Ball et al. (1982) have labeled this phenomenon the retroactive speaker halo effect or RSHE. They found, in a replication of Thakerar and Giles (1981), that the RSHE is pervasive under diverse circumstances. However, in their setting, the RSHE appeared to be most responsive to status attributes of speakers, less to their ethnic background, and not at all to the social contextual features in which the voice was produced.

Studies of evaluative reactions to speakers traditionally, have subjects listen to either spontaneous samples of speech or specific reading samples that have been controlled for grammar and vocabulary (Anisfeld, Bogo, & Lambert, 1962). The degree of linguistic diversity in a speaker's speech
sample can affect listeners' evaluations. Linguistic diversity refers to the degree of lexical and syntactic redundancy in a message. Compared to a low-diversity message, a high-diversity message exhibits a greater diversity of verb tenses and a greater number and diversity of connectives, subordinate clauses, and complex verbal systems (Bradac, Courtright, Schmidt, & Davies, 1976). Linguistic diversity among American English speakers, previously, has been clearly linked to socioeconomic differences (Williams & Naremore, 1969).

Bradac et al. (1976) found that, although low-status speakers were not differentially evaluated when using different degrees of lexical diversity, higher-status speakers were perceived as more competent when using high rather than low lexical diversity. Their results indicate that listeners' prior knowledge of speaker characteristics and the expectations associated with this knowledge may influence their judgments of several dimensions of communicative performance. However, the various ways in which lexical diversity influences listeners' perceptions and evaluations of linguistic variations of Spanish
accented English speakers, has not been studied in any systematic way.

Speaker gender also plays a role in listeners' evaluations of linguistic variations. Researchers have clearly found that male and female speech samples are perceived and evaluated differently by listeners (Kramer, 1977). The situation is complex because evaluative reactions to spoken language are dependent on the relationship between sender and receiver attributes including age, gender, and social-class. Most studies concerned with listeners' evaluative reactions toward linguistic variations, have utilized speech samples from only either male speakers or female speakers (Markel, 1967). No studies have systematically focussed on the effects of speaker gender upon listeners evaluative reactions to Spanish accented English speakers.

It is the aim of this study to: 1) determine whether Spanish accented English speakers are differentially evaluated relative to standard English speakers; 2) determine which disconfirmation theory of expectations, either discrepancy and consistency theories or cognitive theory, best explains listeners evaluative reactions of speakers; and 3) highlight the
importance of the previously unaddressed issues of lexical complexity in evaluations of Spanish accented English speakers; and 4) examine the effects of speaker gender on subjects evaluations of standard and nonstandard English speakers. To this end the following four hypothesis are offered.

First, it is hypothesized that Spanish accented English speakers will be evaluated less favorably than standard English speakers. This will be true regardless of how listeners determine the speakers' degree of accentedness. Secondly, it is hypothesized that when listeners' expectations about speakers are evoked prior to listening to the speakers, listeners will rate the speakers on the basis of their expectations and not according to the speakers' actual vocal characteristics. For example, subjects listening to a standard English speaker, but initially led to believe that they would be listening to a Spanish accented speaker, will rate the standard English speaker similar to the Spanish accented speaker. Third, it is hypothesized that listeners will evaluate speakers differently, depending upon the lexical complexity of the speech utilized by the speakers. And lastly, it is hypothesized that listeners will evaluate
standard and nonstandard English speakers differently, depending upon the speakers' gender.
Method

Subjects

One-hundred twenty (61 women and 59 men) University of Nevada, Las Vegas students, ranging in age from 17 to 43 years (Mean=20.65, SD=4.11), participated in the experiment. Subjects were recruited from Introductory Psychology and Introductory French classes and received extra credit for participating in the experiment. Over 80 percent of the subjects were white, U.S. born, native English speakers, with little to no fluency in any foreign language. The remaining 20 percent of the subjects were not as easily characterized. Five subjects identified themselves as Hispanic, three were non-native English speakers, nine were born outside of the U.S., three were completely fluent in a foreign language, and four reported having very minor hearing problems.

Experimenter

The experimenter was a 25 year old, native Spanish speaking, Hispanic woman. The same experimenter ran all of the subjects.
Materials

Speech samples. The voices of four different speakers, two men and two women, were recorded while they read, both, a formal and an informal type passage. One of the men (31 years old) and one of the women (29 years old) were native English speakers with no knowledge of Spanish. The second man (23 years old) and the second woman (52 years old) were native Spanish speakers and spoke English with a Spanish accent, perceptible by the experimenter. The passages were adapted from those used by Bradac et al. (1976) and constructed so that the formal passage was lexically more complex than the informal passage. The passages were of approximately the same length and duration.

The formal passage (69 words) read:

When I was almost twelve years old, my family and I moved to Las Vegas because my father obtained a better job here. Therefore, one could say that I am truly a city person. One of the most pleasant memories I have about Las Vegas is of my senior year in high school. I especially remember a certain clinical psychology instructor that was really admired by all the students.

The informal passage (68 words) read:
I came to Las Vegas when I was twelve years old. My father got a better job here in Las Vegas. I guess then, that I'm really from a city. My high school years are good memories about Las Vegas. I really liked a clinical psy. class I had. The other kids liked it too. The teacher you know was from clinical psy. It was kind of a good class.

Four samples from each of the speakers were recorded using a Panasonic RQ-J36 Stereo Cassette Recorder. One sample from each of the speakers was chosen by the experimenter, on the basis of clarity and duration, as the test stimuli. Subjects heard the test passage through Panasonic RP-9530 head phones. The volume level was set by the experimenter to approximate normal conversation level and was held constant for all subjects. Average duration for the four passages was 22 seconds.

Test booklets, given to each subject, contained an Introduction, Questionnaire, and a Personal Data sheet asking for biographical information.

**Introductions.** There were three different Introductions. Each Introduction began by explaining to the subject that the study was concerned with the formation of first impressions from vocal cues alone.
The first Introduction described the speaker as having been born, raised, and educated in the United States. The second Introduction described the speaker as having been born and raised in Latin America, but as having lived in the United States for the last ten years. These first two Introductions ended by telling the subject that the extra information was provided in order to help them better visualize the communication situation. The third Introduction simply informed the subject that after listening to the speech samples they would be asked to rate the speaker on the basis of vocal cues alone, just as one might judge a person if the individual were talking on the telephone. In addition, for the first two Introductions, the subjects were verbally informed by the experimenter that the speech samples were spliced together from a longer conversation the experimenter had with the speaker, and that they would be asked to rate the speaker later on. Subjects receiving the third Introduction were only informed that they would be asked to rate the speaker later on.

**Questionnaires.** Subjects rated the speaker on semantic differential, 7-point Likert type scales. The scales for Section A of the Questionnaire were adopted
from those used by Brown, Strong, and Rancher (1975). Section A asked the subjects to rate the speaker on measures of benevolence (kind - unkind, dependable - undependable, sympathetic - unsympathetic, sincere - insincere) and competence (ambitious - nonambitious, active - passive, intelligent - nonintelligent, confident - nonconfident). Section B asked subjects to rate the speaker's voice on three attributes (accented - unaccented, fluent - nonfluent, pleasant - unpleasant). For Sections C, D and E, the subjects rated the speaker's speech rate (slow - fast), pronunciation (standard - nonstandard), and status (high - low), respectively. The poles for each of the seven-point scales were randomly assigned to eliminate ratings in any single direction. The speakers occupation (i.e, blue collar, pink collar, white collar, or professional), gender and age were also estimated by the subjects.

Procedures

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of 24 conditions, for a completely between subjects design. The 24 conditions were randomized to ensure equal number of subjects receiving each condition. Each subject was provided with a test booklet containing an
Introduction, Questionnaire, and Personal Data Sheet. Each subject listened to either a Spanish accented or standard English speaker, who was either male or female, reading either the formal or informal passage. The subjects' Introduction provided either congruent, incongruent, or no information. In the Congruent information condition, the subjects were informed that they would be listening to a Hispanic person, and in fact listened to an accented speaker or were informed that they would be listening to a US born person and in fact listened to a standard English speaker. In the Incongruent information condition, subjects were told that they would be listening to a Hispanic person but actually listened to a standard English speaker or were told that they would be listening to US born person but actually listened to an accented speaker.

Subjects initially signed a Consent form, were handed a test booklet, and asked to read the Introduction but to not turn the page until instructed to do so. They were then asked to place the headphones on and to adjust them to a comfortable position. The speech sample was then played, subjects answered the questionnaire, and lastly completed the Personal Data Sheet. Each subject's ratings were coded for analysis.
The most positive poles (kind, dependable, sympathetic, sincere, active, intelligent, confident, unaccented, fluent, pleasant, slow speech rate, standard pronunciation, high status) were coded with a 7 and the most negative with a 1.

Throughout the experiment, the subjects sat at a desk in a sound proof room with their backs to the experimenter. Once the speech sample was played, verbal instructions given, and the experimenter had verified that subjects understood how to complete the questionnaire, the experimenter left the room. Subjects were provided with unlimited time to complete the questionnaire. Average experimental time for each subject was approximately 15 minutes.
Results

For a more efficient analysis of the data and in order to test the Competence-Benevolence schema depicted by Brown et al. (1975), a factor analysis was performed on all of the scales in the questionnaire.

A principal-component analysis revealed four factors with eigenvalues greater than one. Scree criterion (Cattell, 1966) also suggested the four factors. Estimated communalities (SPSSx) ranged from .437 to .793. A Varimax rotation was applied to the factor matrix. Four factors were identified: Factor I - "Competence", Factor II - "Kindness", Factor III - "Speech", and Factor IV - "Empathy". The factor pattern is shown in Table 1. The Speech Rate item (Table 1) received a negative loading on Factor I due to the inverse coding of the item. The slowest speech rate was coded with a 7 and the fastest with a 1.

The factors obtained were very similar to the Competence-Benevolence schema identified by Brown et al. (1975). However, in the current study, Brown et al.'s single Benevolence factor was broken down into the Kindness and Empathy factors, whereas the Competence factor remained intact.
Table 1  
Factor Pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>(I)</th>
<th>(II)</th>
<th>(III)</th>
<th>(IV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>.746</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Rate</td>
<td>-.658</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>.650</td>
<td>.401</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>.633</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>.623</td>
<td>.375</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>.553</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td></td>
<td>.755</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasantness</td>
<td></td>
<td>.715</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincerity</td>
<td></td>
<td>.641</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.826</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td></td>
<td>.701</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accentedness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.697</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td></td>
<td>.374</td>
<td></td>
<td>.654</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factor loadings < .300 were suppressed.
An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on the factor scores. Subject gender was included in the design along with the four independent variables, for a 2×3×2×2×2 design representing speaker accent, type of information provided, speaker gender, type of passage, and subject gender, respectively.

**Factor I - Competence**

Main effects of speaker accent ($\frac{\text{F}(1,73)=10.22, \ p<.05)}{}$) and speaker gender ($\frac{\text{F}(1,73)=4.52, \ p<.05)}{}$) were found for the Competence factor. Subjects rated the accented speakers more Competent than the non-accented speakers, and female speakers more Competent than the male speakers. There was also an interaction between speaker accent and speaker gender ($\frac{\text{F}(1,73)=6.52, \ p<.05)}{}$). Post hoc analysis of the factor scores revealed that the non-accented male speaker was rated significantly less Competent than any of the other speakers. Table 2 shows the factor score means for this interaction and for the two main effects.

**Factor II - Kindness**

A main effect of speaker accent was found for the Kindness factor ($\frac{\text{F}(1,73)=7.52, \ p<.05)}{}$). Subjects rated the accented speakers more Kind than the non-accented speakers. An interaction between speaker
Table 2
Mean Competence Factor Scores as a Function of Speaker Accent and Speaker Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Mean*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accented</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Accented</td>
<td>-.66</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean*</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HSD=.617, \( p<.05 \)

*Both differences significant at \( p<.05 \).
accent and speaker gender also occurred ($F(1,73)=20.62$, $p<.05$). Post hoc analysis of the factor scores revealed that the accented male speaker was rated significantly more Kind than both, the accented female and the non-accented male speakers. Table 3 shows the factor score means for this interaction and for the main effect of speaker accent.

A three way interaction also took place between speaker accent, type of information provided, and type of passage for the Kindness factor ($F(2,73)=4.39$, $p<.05$). Post hoc analysis, however, failed to reveal significant differences among the group means. Visual examination of the individual factor scores revealed that subjects rated the non-accented speakers less Kind when no information was provided and they were reading the informal passage.

**Factor III - Speech**

Main effects of speaker accent ($F(1,73)=104.21$, $p<.05$) and passage type ($F(1,73)=10.09$, $p<.05$) were found for the Speech factor. Subjects rated the accented speakers lower than the non-accented speakers on the Speech factor. Subjects also rated the speakers reading the informal passage lower on the Speech factor than speakers reading the formal passage (see Table 4).
Table 3
Mean Kindness Factor Scores as a Function of Speaker Accent and Speaker Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Mean*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accented</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Accented</td>
<td>-.53</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HSD=.596, p<.05

*Difference significant at p<.05.
Table 4
Mean Speech Factor Scores as a Function of Speaker Accent, Speaker Gender, and Passage Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passage Type</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Row Mean*</th>
<th>Mean**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accented</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-.47</td>
<td>-.35</td>
<td>-.41</td>
<td>-.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-.43</td>
<td>-1.34</td>
<td>-.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Accented</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Mean**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HSD=.780, p<.05
*HSD=.469, p<.05
**Both differences significant at p<.05.
An interaction between speaker accent and speaker gender occurred \( \text{F}(1, 73) = 12.00, p < .05 \). Post hoc analysis of the factor scores revealed that the accented female was rated lower on the Speech factor than any of the other speakers (see Table 4).

There was a three way interaction between speaker accent, speaker gender, and type of passage for the Speech factor \( \text{F}(1, 73) = 5.17, p < .05 \). The accented female speaker reading the informal passage was rated lower on the Speech factor than any of the other speakers independent of type of passage read. Table 4 shows the factor score means for the two main effects and the two-way and three-way interactions.

Two three-way interactions also took place with the subject gender variable for the Speech factor. The first three-way interaction occurred between speaker accent, type of information provided, and subject gender \( \text{F}(2, 73) = 3.21, p < .05 \). Visual examination of the means, shown in Table 5, suggested that men receiving no prior information about the speakers rated the accented speakers lower on the Speech factor when compared to the other speakers. Women, however, expecting to hear non-accented speakers, rated the accented speakers lower, on the Speech factor.
Table 5
Mean Speech Factor Scores as a Function of Speaker Accent, Information Provided, and Subject Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Gender</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Accent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cong. (told Hisp.)</strong></td>
<td>-.53</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-.70</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No Info.</strong></td>
<td>-1.14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-.44</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Incong. (told US born)</strong></td>
<td>-.43</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Non-Accented</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cong. (told US born)</strong></td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>No Info.</strong></td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Incong. (told Hisp.)</strong></td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Differences not significant at p<.05.
The second three-way interaction for the Speech factor scores occurred between speaker accent, speaker gender, and subject gender ($F(1,73)=3.97, p<.05$). Visual examination of the means, shown in Table 6, indicated that the non-accented female speaker was rated higher by male subjects than any of the other speakers on the Speech factor. The accented female speaker was rated the lowest, compared to the other speakers on the Speech factor, by both male and female subjects.

**Factor IV - Empathy**

No main effects were found for the Empathy factor. However, there were two three-way interactions with the subject gender variable. The first three-way interaction occurred between speaker accent, speaker gender, and subject gender ($F(1,73)=3.97, p<.05$). Visual examination of the means, shown in Table 7, indicated that the accented male speaker was rated least Empathetic by female subjects, and was rated the most Empathetic by the male subjects.

The second three-way interaction involving subject gender occurred between information provided, passage type, and subject gender ($F(2,73)=4.42, p<.05$). This interaction was not easily
Table 6
Mean Speech Factor Scores as a Function of Speaker Accent, Speaker Gender, and Subject Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Subject Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.49</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-1.01</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.67</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Accented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7
Mean Empathy Factor Scores as a Function of Speaker Accent, Speaker Gender, and Subject Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker Gender</th>
<th>Subject Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-.47</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Accented</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
interpretable however, visual examination of the means suggested that female subjects rated the speakers least Empathetic when they were provided with no information and were listening to speakers reading the informal passage.

These four three-way interactions involving subject gender must be interpreted with caution, because random assignment of subjects resulted in unequal numbers of men and women in each condition. The largest difference between the number of men and women, in a cell with 20 total subjects, was 8.

**Accentedness item**

The data was coded in such a way that congruent information referred to subjects who: 1) were told that the speaker was US born and listened to a non-accented speaker; and 2) were told that the speaker was Hispanic and listened to an accented speaker. While incongruent information referred to subjects who: 1) were told that the speaker was Hispanic and listened to a non-accented speaker; and 2) were told that the speaker was US born and listened to an accented speaker. The second hypothesis stated that listeners would rate the speakers according to their expectations and not according to the speakers' vocal characteristics.
Thus, due to the way the data was coded, to address the second hypothesis, results must be examined through the interaction of the speaker accent and information provided variables. The foregoing analysis revealed no two-way interactions between speaker accent and information provided. Thus, one way ANOVAs were performed on all of the original questionnaire items and the effects of type of information provided was examined. A significant difference for information provided was found in subjects' ratings of speaker on the Accentedness item ($F(2,96)=8.91, p<.05$). Table 8 shows the cell means for the Accentedness item.

Subjects rated the speakers as least accented when they were provided with congruent information. A barely significant ($p<.044$) interaction also occurred between speaker accent and type of information provided ($F(2,96)=3.23, p<.05$). Visual examination of the means indicated that when rating the non-accented speakers, subjects receiving congruent information (told speaker was US born) rated the speakers more favorably than subjects receiving no prior information, who in turn rated the speakers more favorably than subjects receiving incongruent information (told would listen to Hispanic person) (see Table 8).
Table 8
Mean Accentedness Scores as a Function of Speaker Accent and Information Provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Congruent</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Incongruent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accented</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-accented</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean*</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Difference significant at p<.05, HSD=.610, p<.05
Summary of Results

When compared to the non-accented speakers, subjects rated the accented speakers higher on the Competence and Kindness factors and lower on the Speech factor.

Listeners did not evaluate the speakers according to their expectations for any of the four factors. For the Accentedness item (see Table 8) subjects rated only the non-accented speakers according to their expectations.

Speakers reading the informal passage were rated lower on the Speech factor than subjects reading the formal passage. Subjects rated the female speakers more Competent than the male speakers. The non-accented male speaker was rated the least Competent, the accented male speaker the Kindest, and the accented female speaker was rated the lowest, on the Speech factor.

Post experiment examination of the questionnaire indicated that subjects correctly identified the speakers' gender.
Discussion

The first hypothesis, stating that Spanish accented English speakers would be evaluated less favorably than standard English speakers, was not supported. The accented speakers were evaluated differently than the non-accented speakers on three out of the four factors. The accented speakers were perceived as being both, more Competent (Factor I) and Kind (Factor II) than the non-accented speakers. These findings also do not accord with previous research studies (e.g., Ryan et al., 1977) where the accented speakers are consistently rated lower than the non-accented speakers. However, for the Speech factor, the accented speakers were evaluated as hypothesized (i.e., the accented speakers were rated lower than the non-accented speakers). Thus, although listeners rated the accented speakers less favorably than the non-accented speakers on the Speech factor, apparently these lower ratings of the speakers' Speech did not influence ratings of other characteristics of the speakers.

Results did not support the second hypothesis, which stated that listeners would rate the speakers according to their expectations and not according to
the speakers' actual vocal characteristics. Due to the way in which the data was coded, results were examined through the interaction of speaker accent and type of information provided. No simple two-way interactions between speaker accent and information provided occurred for any of the four factors.

A three-way interaction took place between the speaker accent, information provided, and subject gender variables for the Speech factor (see Table 5). Both men and women rated the non-accented speakers in a pattern that appears consistent with their expectations. When rating the non-accented speakers, men and women receiving congruent information (told speaker was US born) rated the speakers more favorably than subjects receiving no prior information, who in turn rated the speakers more favorably than subjects receiving incongruent information (told would listen to Hispanic person). Men appeared to be more influenced by the type of information provided than the women. The ratings for the accented speakers do not follow any immediately apparent pattern.

However, some influences of information provided is seen for the Accentedness item the barely significant (p<.044) interaction between speaker accent
and information provided suggests that listeners evaluated the non-accented speakers according to their expectations (see Table 8). The main effect of type of information provided for the Accentedness item indicates a significant difference between subjects receiving congruent, incongruent, and no information. This main effect would initially lead one to believe that listeners' evaluations were more in line with the consistency theory discussed by Aboud et al. (1974). As can be seen from Table 8, speakers were rated the least accented when listeners received congruent information about the speakers. However, most of this effect is due to the very high ratings that subjects receiving congruent information gave to the non-accented speakers.

The third hypothesis, stating that listeners would evaluate speakers differently depending on the linguistic complexity of the passage heard, was supported. The speakers' Speech (Factor III) was rated lower when reading the informal passage than when reading the formal passage (see Table 4). However, speakers reading the formal passage were not rated more Competent (Factor I) than when reading the informal
passage, as would be expected from Bradac et al.'s (1976) study.

Male and female speakers were evaluated differently, as expected from previous studies (e.g., Kramer, 1977). In addition, several interactions involving speaker accent and speaker gender occurred, thus supporting the fourth hypothesis that listeners would evaluate standard and nonstandard English speakers differently, depending upon the speakers' gender. Analysis of the more interpretable two-way interactions revealed three interactions involving speaker accent and speaker gender. The non-accented male speaker was rated the least Competent (see Table 2), the accented male speaker was rated the Kindest (see Table 3), and the accented female speaker was rated the lowest on the Speech factor (see Table 4).

Two cautions must be pointed out before generalizing from these results. First, caution is warranted over the speakers recruited for the experiment. Only four speakers were utilized, two Spanish accented English speakers (1 man and 1 woman) and two standard English speakers (1 man and 1 woman), thus, the obtained results could be explained as a function of these particular speakers. Second, the
majority of the subjects had prior contact with the experimenter, a Hispanic female, as a classroom assistant, and the remaining students were currently enrolled in an Introductory French class, perhaps making the subjects more accepting of the accented speakers. Subjects greater acceptance of accented could have contributed to the more positive ratings of the accented speakers than was found in previous studies (e.g., Ryan, et al., 1977).

In the current study, a short, one paragraph, descriptive passage about the speakers was relied upon to evoke subjects' expectations and was used in conjunction with the speakers' accentedness to provide listeners with either congruent or incongruent information. Although the paragraph affected the listeners ratings of speaker Accentedness, the paragraph may not have been sufficiently long nor potent enough to fully evoke the subjects expectations of the speakers, leading them to completely evaluate the speakers according to the information provided. Because the information provided had so little effect, it is not appropriate to directly address Aboud et al.'s (1974) consistent and discrepant theories and the cognitive theory of disconfirmed expectation. The
effects of information provided were only significant for listeners' ratings of non-accented speakers on the Accentedness item (see Table 8) thus, somewhat supporting the cognitive theory which states that listeners evaluate speakers according to their expectations and not according to the speakers' actual vocal characteristics. The implications derived from the interaction between speaker accent and type of information provided are interesting. When listeners expected to hear a non-accented speaker and actually heard an accented speaker, listeners evaluated the speaker consistent with the speaker's actual vocal characteristics and not their expectations. These findings indicate that the vocal characteristics of accented speakers may be so pervasive that they cannot be overridden by speakers' expectations. Thus, by manipulating listeners' expectations it is possible to make a non-accented speaker appear to be accented, but it is not possible to make an accented speaker appear non-accented.

Listeners, simultaneously, receive varying information about speakers. Even in the simplest of all cases, a telephone conversation, not only is the speaker's voice heard, but listeners also perceive the
complexity of the language used by the speaker and, with little difficulty, can identify the speaker's gender. Previous studies of listeners' perception of linguistic variation have examined the role of lexical complexity and speaker gender in only a limited way. Current results suggest that closer examinations of linguistic diversity and speaker gender and their interactive effects upon listeners' perception of speakers' vocal characteristics is necessary.
References


