A Contrastive Study of Argentinean and Spanish People's Language Attitudes towards Different Varieties of English

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Abstract

This study examines and compares the language attitudes of Argentinean and Spanish individuals towards different varieties of English in terms of two evaluative dimensions: solidarity and status. In order to do so, 50 Argentineans and 50 Spaniards completed a survey which included a direct questionnaire and a verbal-guise study in which participants rated two native and three non-native English varieties from the following countries: UK, USA, Argentina, Bolivia and Spain. Results from the survey were analyzed and compared by means of one-way repeated measures ANOVAs taking into account the participants' nationality, their age and their gender as independent variables. Findings show that, across all groups, participants usually awarded more positive ratings to the native accents than the non-native accents in both dimensions, although the Bolivian speaker did receive quite high solidarity ratings in some groups. Unexpectedly, participants did not feel more solidarity towards the non-native speakers representing their own varieties. Males also generally gave more positive evaluations than females, as did younger participants in contrast to older ones. Finally, when comparing participants' indirect and direct attitudes, differences emerged across Argentineans and Spaniards and males and females.

Keywords: language attitudes, varieties of English, native accent, non-native accent, verbal-guise study

Resumen

El presente trabajo examina y compara las actitudes lingüísticas de los argentinos y los españoles hacia distintas variedades del inglés en cuanto a dos dimensiones de evaluación: solidaridad y estatus. Para ello, 50 argentinos y 50 españoles completaron una encuesta que incluía un cuestionario directo y la técnica del *verbal-guise*, mediante la cual los participantes evaluaron dos variedades nativas y tres variedades no nativas del inglés, pertenecientes a los siguientes países: Reino Unido, Estados Unidos, Argentina, Bolivia y España. Los resultados de la encuesta se analizaron y compararon mediante un análisis de varianza unidireccional de medidas repetidas teniendo en cuenta la nacionalidad, el género y la edad de los participantes como variables independientes. Los resultados demuestran que, en todos los grupos, los participantes en general calificaron de forma más positiva a los hablantes nativos que a los no nativos en ambas dimensiones, aunque el hablante de Bolivia recibió una calificación de solidaridad bastante elevada en algunos grupos. Inesperadamente, los participantes no sintieron mayor solidaridad hacia los hablantes no nativos que representaban su propia variedad. Los hombres también otorgaron calificaciones más favorables que las mujeres, al igual que los participantes más jóvenes en comparación con los más mayores. Por último, al comparar las actitudes directas e indirectas de los participantes, surgieron diferencias entre los argentinos y los españoles y los hombres y las mujeres.

Palabras clave: actitudes lingüísticas, variedades del inglés, acento nativo, acento no nativo, técnica del *verbal-guise*

Introduction

Research in the field of language attitudes has garnered significant attention and importance in recent years due to globalization and language contact. As individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds increasingly find themselves in constant interaction, the potential for language attitudes to develop grows exponentially, which may give rise to even more linguistic stereotypes and discrimination. Within this dynamic landscape, the focus on English as a lingua franca becomes especially relevant, as it serves as the primary means of communication for speakers from diverse backgrounds who lack a shared first language (Lasagabaster, 2005).

This study aims to explore and compare the language attitudes of Argentinean and Spanish individuals towards different varieties of English, which have not been analyzed contrastively in past studies. Apart from the fact that research of this kind with both Argentinean and Spanish participants is scarce, the motivation behind this project is to uncover the language attitudes of Argentinean and Spanish people associated with different varieties of English and to raise awareness about the stereotypes held by them towards certain accents.

In order to achieve said objectives, a group of Argentinean people (n = 50) and a group of Spanish people (n = 50) take part in a survey, whereby their attitudes are gauged first indirectly in terms of solidarity and status by means of a verbal-guise study comprising five audio recordings in English, two of them by native speakers (USA and UK), and the remaining three by non-native speakers from three different Spanish-speaking countries (Argentina, Bolivia and Spain), and then through a series of direct questions about their opinions on native and non-native accents.

In so doing, this study will answer the following research questions:

(RQ1) How do Argentinean participants evaluate the different varieties of English included in this study in terms of solidarity and status?

(RQ2) How do Spanish participants evaluate the different varieties of English included in this study in terms of solidarity and status?

(RQ3) In which ways do Argentinean and Spanish participants' attitudes towards the different varieties of English included in this study differ?

(RQ4) How do gender and age affect participants' attitudes towards the different varieties of English included in this study?

The analysis of the data gathered in this study will aim to either confirm or refute the following hypotheses:

(H1) Participants will generally evaluate native accents more favorably than foreign accents in both evaluative dimensions. This hypothesis is supported by previous research carried out by Ryan et al. (1977), Fuertes et al. (2012), Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997), Giles and Watson (2013), and Dragojevic et al. (2017).

(H2) Argentinean participants will rate the Argentinean speaker more favorably on solidarity traits, while Spanish participants will do so with respect to the Spanish speaker. This hypothesis is in accordance with previous studies in which participants rated their own — standard or non-standard — variety more positively in terms of solidarity than any out-group variety (Cargile & Giles, 1998; Giles & Marlow, 2011; Kircher & Zipp, 2022).

(H3) Argentinean participants will rate the US speaker more positively than the UK speaker, and vice versa in the case of the Spanish participants. This hypothesis is in agreement with the results obtained by Friedrich (2003), in whose study Argentinean participants exhibited preference for

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the American variety, and those obtained by Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997), in whose study the

participants exhibited preference for the native varieties they were more familiar with. This

preference may be influenced by geographical proximity or the variety of English taught in each

country. For this reason, in this study, Spanish people are expected to favor British English and

Argentinean people are more likely to prefer American English.

(H4) Female participants will mostly assign speakers more favorable evaluations than male

participants, especially on status traits, in line with the findings obtained in previous studies

carried out by Giles (1970), Brown and Cichocki (1995), Coupland and Bishop (2007),

McKenzie (2010), McKenzie et al. (2015), Chien (2018) and Martens (2020).

(H5) Younger participants will rate the US speaker more favorably than the speakers of other

varieties given the strong influence that US audiovisual and media content consumed in its

original version may have on them, and they will also award more positive evaluations than older

participants to all speakers in general. This hypothesis is in accordance with the results obtained

by Giles (1970), in whose study older participants were more restrained than younger

participants when rating different varieties.

In Argentina and Spain, English has played an essential role in education and the job market for

years (Friedrich, 2003; Carrie, 2017), and contrastive studies measuring the language attitudes of

Argentinean and Spanish people towards different varieties of English have not been undertaken

in the past, which is why examining them in this study is relevant. Besides, foreign speakers are

frequently the target of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, since they are members of

linguistic out-groups (Goatley-Soan & Baldwin, 2018).

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Much research has been carried out regarding language attitudes towards both English as a first language (L1) and English as a second language (L2), after Lambert et al.'s (1960) and Lambert's (1967) pioneering studies. As regards the attitudes of L1 speakers, standard accents typically receive higher ratings on status traits, whereas non-standard accents may be more positively evaluated on solidarity traits (Giles, 1971, 1972; Giles & Coupland, 1991; Garrett et al., 2003; Kircher & Zipp, 2022). However, foreign accents are sometimes rated lower in terms of both status and solidarity (Ryan et al., 1977; Fuertes et al., 2012; Giles & Watson, 2013; Dragojevic et al., 2017; Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020).

Regarding the attitudes of L2 speakers, when only standard native varieties of English are involved, the Received Pronunciation (RP) accent is associated with higher status, while the General American (GA) accent is awarded higher solidarity (see Carrie, 2017). Like L1 speakers, L2 speakers usually assign more status to standard native accents with respect to non-standard native accents as well (see Ladegaard, 1998). The same happens when L2 speakers are presented with native and non-native English varieties: native varieties are rated more positively on status traits (see Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997; El-Dash & Busnardo, 2001). Except for the participants in Friedrich (2003), L2 speakers mostly favor the RP accent as a pronunciation model (see Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997; Ladegaard, 1998; Mompeán González, 2004; Carrie, 2017).

This study is organized into six sections. After this introduction, section 2 includes relevant definitions about attitudes, language attitudes and stereotypes. Section 3 presents a summary of the research methods employed in the field and a literature review on previous research, including studies on the attitudes of L1 speakers and studies on the attitudes of L2 speakers. Then, section 4 outlines the methodology implemented, which comprises the participants, the

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survey administered, the verbal-guise study and the procedure. Section 5 presents the analysis

and discussion of results. Lastly, section 6 offers a conclusion, states the contributions of this

project to the field, identifies its limitations, and provides suggestions for future research on

language attitudes.

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Defining *Language Attitudes* and *Stereotypes*

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In an attempt to provide a sound background for the analysis that is carried out in this

research project, this section includes relevant definitions of the terms *attitude* and *language*

attitudes, as well as definitions and explanations of what stereotypes entail within language

attitudes research, together with illustrative examples.

Language Attitudes

Language attitudes are elusive and difficult to define given that they are subjective in

nature. In an often-quoted definition, Oppenheim (1982) defines an *attitude* as "an inner

component of mental life which expresses itself, directly or indirectly, through […] stereotypes,

beliefs, verbal statements or reactions, ideas and opinions […]" (p. 39). From this definition, it

must be highlighted that attitudes are psychological constructs and are therefore not directly

observable. This means that they have to be inferred from people's actions and statements, which

is how they manifest their inner thoughts and stereotypes.

Another commonly cited definition is that by Eagly and Chaiken (1993), who explain that

an attitude is "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with

some degree of favor or disfavor" (p. 1). In their definition, Eagly and Chaiken emphasize that

people's attitudes are internal and that they are revealed by their agreement or disagreement

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towards an object. Thus, a typical way of measuring people's favor or disfavor towards an entity — be it an object, a concept or a language variety — is by means of attitude rating scales.

Considering the above cited definitions of the term attitude, *language attitudes* can be broadly defined as "the attitudes which people have towards different languages, dialects, accents and their speakers" (Trudgill, 2003, p. 73). A more specific definition is that proposed by Carrie (2017), who details that language attitudes are "one's evaluation of and disposition towards a speech variety and its speakers, consisting of thoughts, feelings and behavioural tendencies" (p. 430). Taken together, such definitions imply that, as individuals interact with other individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds, they develop a wide array of attitudes, either directly or indirectly, towards different levels of language. These levels range from the broadest scope, which encompasses languages as a whole, to more specific foci, such as attitudes towards speakers of particular languages, regional varieties, dialects, or accents, and even towards grammatical features, spellings and specific words (Garrett, 2010, p. 2).

Furthermore, language attitudes are said to have three components: affective, cognitive and behavioral, which arise from the different ways in which people react towards or evaluate language (Ryan & Giles, 1982, p. 7). First, the affective component refers to how people *feel* about a language or certain aspects of it. Second, the cognitive component refers to what people *believe* about a language or certain aspects of it. Third and last, the behavioral component refers to how people *act* towards a language or certain aspects of it in accordance with their affective and cognitive judgements (Garrett, 2010, p. 23).

Language attitudes are a highly complex phenomenon, since they are composed by a wide variety of factors, and in fact, previous studies have proven that they are affected by certain

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demographic characteristics such as location, age, gender, educational level and contact with the relevant language (Kircher & Zipp, 2022, p. 9). Thus, as argued by Edwards (1982, p. 21), they should be conceived as expressions of preference and social convention which reflect individuals' awareness of the prestige and status that are accorded to the users of said varieties. Nevertheless, it should be noted that language attitudes are not static, and they may change if the prestige or status of a language or its users changes over time (Kircher & Zipp, 2022, p. 6). This occurred with the French-Canadian variety, which received more positive ratings in Quebec in the 1970s than in the 1960s, reflecting the increased prestige of this variety thanks to political and social changes (Holmes, 2013, p. 410).

Building on the abovementioned concept of status and prestige, in pioneering language attitudes studies, speakers' personalities were evaluated on three distinct categories: competence, personal integrity, and social attractiveness (see Lambert, 1967), which have evolved into the dimensions used in most of the research carried out today. Language attitudes nowadays are mostly deemed to have two evaluative dimensions: *solidarity* and *status*. According to Woolard (1989, p. 90), status is "the desire to get ahead in some way", whereas solidarity is "the desire to be accepted by [a social] group". Therefore, when a language variety receives a high-status rating, it is associated with power, success and ambition, as is generally the case of standard varieties. By contrast, when a language variety is positively evaluated in terms of solidarity, which happens more often with regional or non-standard varieties, it implies belonging, attachment and in-group loyalty. Some authors also include *dynamism* as a third dimension (Zahn & Hopper, 1985), which is defined by Fuertes et al. (2012, p. 121) as the level of liveliness and activity of a speaker.

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Stereotypes

As indicated above, language attitudes have three components: affective, cognitive and behavioral. The cognitive component is the one that causes the attitudinal object to be subject to stereotyping (McKenzie, 2010, p. 22). The term *stereotype* was used in the modern psychological sense for the first time by Lippmann (1922), who stated that stereotypes are pictures in our head, simplified images of what groups do and look like.

More recently, Lakoff (1987) described social stereotypes in terms of metonymy, "where a subcategory has a socially recognized status as standing for the category as a whole" (p. 71). In other words, stereotyping occurs when people share certain beliefs and disbeliefs about specific categories of people, objects or events which are cognitively grouped together (Kristiansen, 2001, p. 138). Kristiansen (2001) further argues that even if stereotypes derive in part from cognitive processes, they are *contextually* and *socially* determined as well, since two mechanisms are at play when stereotypes are formed: accentuation of perceived similarities and differences, and out-group homogeneity effect, whereby members of out-groups are seen as more similar to one another than members of the in-group.

This categorizing process takes place in the minds of individuals because the social content is too complex for us, so that simplifying strategies, like making quick judgements about people, are employed as a way to make sense of the world around us and be able to function (Fiske, 2000, pp. 303-304). Moreover, even though stereotyping is typically viewed as negative, it serves some positive functions, such as making society more coherent, creating and maintaining group ideologies, and enhancing differentiations between the in-group and the out-group (Tajfel, 1981, pp. 147-162).

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Given that language and social identity are closely linked, people usually react to language as if it were an indication of the language user's personal and social characteristics (Cargile & Giles, 1997, p. 195). In fact, people often form an impression of a speaker's presumed attributes, personality and capabilities in only a few seconds, and even categorize them as a member of the in-group or the out-group, i.e., they stereotype them (Kircher & Zipp, 2022, p. 7).

Stereotypes are useful to look into how certain language features can activate a set of associated traits that go beyond language itself (Garrett, 2010, p. 14). As demonstrated by previous research, when judging speakers with minimal contextual information, people generally rely on stereotypes, even if these stereotypes are latent (Cheyne, 1970, p. 77). These latent stereotypes, as Ladegaard (1998, pp. 269-270) explains, may be evoked by speech samples, whether or not people are able to consciously assign their stored information to a specific reference group.

According to Edwards (1999, p. 102), different speech forms may be evaluated following uniform patterns owing to the fact that language attitudes reflect social conventions and preferences, and listening to a speech variety triggers attitudes, prejudices and stereotypes about a particular speech community. In line with this argument and as mentioned above, evaluations of language varieties reflect the prestige and status associated with different speech communities in the form of stereotypes (Giles & Coupland, 1991).

For example, McKenzie (2010, p. 22) states that a listener's stereotypes may be triggered by an audio recording, leading to the speaker's categorization with respect to their perceived social group membership, which could resemble reality or not. Previous studies have proven that "nonlinguists differentiate amongst speech varieties within a single language and have stereotyped attitudes towards them" (McKenzie, 2010, p. 53). In this way, people are evaluated

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as having different levels of friendliness, intelligence, and other traits simply based on how they speak (Hudson, 1980, p. 193).

McKenzie (2010, p. 147) also suggests that media transmitted stereotypes may lead to negative responses towards the competence and status of non-native English speakers. This is because non-standard accents, i.e., foreign accents or accents used by a lower socioeconomic group or a minority (Fuertes et al., 2012, p. 121), are commonly perceived more negatively than standard ones, i.e., accents used by the majority of the population, spoken by higher socioeconomic groups, or associated with power and media usage (Giles & Billings, 2004, p. 192). Hence, the most desirable outcome ends up being for non-native speakers to try to accommodate to and resemble more prestigious or standard varieties.

However, as stated above, it must be kept in mind that stereotypes are not solely negative, but that they can be positive too. For instance, speakers with non-standard accents are mostly evaluated as more trustworthy, honest and friendlier than speakers with standard accents (Tucker & Lambert, 1969; Hewett, 1971). Additionally, speakers of non-standard regional varieties in general are stereotyped as having more social attractiveness and personal integrity than speakers of RP English, who tend to be viewed as more competent (Giles, 1972). Another common stereotype is that people who are perceived as having high competence are often perceived as having low warmth, and vice versa (Giles & Billings, 2004; Yang, 2014).

As claimed by Labov (1984), an important goal of language attitudes research is to create a "record of overt attitudes towards language, linguistic features and linguistic stereotypes" (p. 33), in order to provide valuable insights into the linguistic behavior of individuals. As people interact with language, they develop conscious or subconscious attitudes that influence their

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language use, preferences, and evaluations of different linguistic elements, thus uncovering their linguistic stereotypes, which in turn reveal the prevailing social biases, power structures, inequality, prejudices and discrimination that impact different language varieties and their speakers in many ways. Therefore, this does not only help to partially explain language variation and change, but also how we behave, position ourselves in society and relate to other groups and individuals (Garrett, 2010, p. 15).

Research on Language Attitudes

In this section, a summary of the main research methods used in the field is presented, as well as a literature review on previous research on language attitudes towards English, including studies on the attitudes of L1 speakers and studies on the attitudes of L2 speakers.

Research Methods

Language attitudes can be measured using different methodologies, including direct, indirect, or mixed methods. Direct methods are those which ask participants explicitly about their language attitudes (Kircher & Zipp, 2022, p. 14). For this reason, participants are more likely to be influenced by the *social desirability bias*, i.e., to respond in accordance with what is socially desirable or acceptable (Baker, 1992), and the *acquiescence bias*, i.e., to agree with the interviewer's questions regardless of their content to portray a more positive self-image (Garrett et al., 2003).

Direct methods include questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and perceptual dialectology studies. Questionnaires are one of the most common methods used in language attitudes research and they ask participants explicit questions which can be closed — to gather quantitative data — or open-ended — to gather qualitative data (Kircher, 2022, p. 129). Interviews are used by

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researchers to elicit information from participants in the form of a one-to-one conversation. Depending on how fixed the exchange is, interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured (Karatsareas, 2022, pp. 99-100). In the case of focus groups, researchers elicit information from several participants at a time. Focus groups are informal, semi-structured sessions in which multiple participants interact, guided by a moderator (Hornsby, 2022, p. 114). Lastly, perceptual dialectology is used to examine how non-linguists perceive dialects and dialect variation through different tasks, such as drawing a map, identifying dialects, and ranking regions according to degrees of difference or correct and pleasant speech, among others (Montgomery, 2022, pp. 160-161).

On the other hand, indirect methods are those which use experimental designs and aim at revealing people's more subconscious and private reactions, since participants are presented the attitude object — in this case, a language, a variety, a specific feature of a variety — indirectly, which triggers a subconscious evaluation of said object, disguised as an evaluation of the speaker instead of their linguistic production (Preston, 2009, p. 112). In this way, the real purpose of the research is not revealed to participants, who are in turn less likely to answer following what is socially desirable. The two most common indirect methods of language attitudes elicitation are the matched-guise technique and the verbal-guise technique.

While the matched-guise technique presents different language varieties recorded by the same speaker, the verbal-guise technique includes different language varieties recorded by different speakers (Garrett, 2010, p. 42). In both cases, speakers read aloud the same neutral text, maintaining voice quality, speech rate, pitch and hesitations as constant as possible, so that each recording differs from the others in only one aspect, for example, accent (McKenzie, 2006, p.

59). After listening to each recording, participants are asked to answer some questions about each speaker, typically in the form of attitude rating scales, such as Likert scales, with response options expressed in words for respondents to state their agreement or disagreement, and semantic differential scales, which present polar adjectives at each end (Kircher, 2022, p. 133). Nowadays, other indirect methods are being used to elicit language attitudes. One of these is the theatre-audience method, whereby the audience in a movie theatre is asked to complete a questionnaire about the movie they just watched. Informants are addressed over the loudspeakers in different language varieties on consecutive nights and language attitudes are measured taking into account the number of completed questionnaires and the number of tickets sold (Kristiansen, 2022, p. 219). Another of these methods is the Implicit Association Test (IAT) Paradigm, which is a time-based categorization task used to find automatic associations made by participants between an attitude object and an evaluation (Rosseel, 2022, p. 250).

Nevertheless, to gain a better understanding of language attitudes, Ryan et al. (1988) suggest adopting a mixed-methods approach, given that, as mentioned above, direct methods yield more conscious reactions and indirect methods yield more subconscious reactions. Because of this, these two methods generally lead to different and sometimes contradictory data, which serves to prove how complex language attitudes are (Kircher & Zipp, 2022).

Previous Research

Ever since the emergence of attitudinal research in linguistics, a large number of studies have been conducted with respect to several different languages. This section discusses a selection of those research projects carried out with respect to English and which are relevant to the present study given the research methods employed and the contexts in which they took place. Said

projects are examined in two subsections: the attitudes of L1 speakers and the attitudes of L2 speakers, to both native and non-native varieties of English.

Attitudes of L1 Speakers

Regarding the attitudes of L1 speakers, research using the matched-guise and the verbal-guise technique has been conducted in various settings, such as Canada (see Lambert et al., 1960; Lambert, 1967), the UK (see Giles, 1971, 1972), and the USA (see Ryan et al., 1977; Dragojevic et al., 2017; Goatley-Soan and Baldwin, 2018; Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan, 2020).

In one of the first language attitudes studies to be carried out, Lambert et al. (1960) uncovered a minority group reaction among French-speaking Canadian students who downgraded their own group. The researchers used the matched-guise technique in Canada to investigate the attitudes of both English-speaking and French-speaking students towards English and French. All students evaluated the English guises more favorably, and unexpectedly, the French students were more negative than the English students towards the French guises. This study was extended by Lambert (1967) by using the same technique and the same guises with a new group of Canadian students, obtaining similar results. This time, traits were grouped into three categories: competence, personal integrity and social attractiveness, and the independent variable of gender was taken into consideration, uncovering differences between the ratings of male and female students on some of the traits. For instance, females were less positive than males when evaluating competence, but they were more positive when evaluating all French speakers.

Since then, research in the field of language attitudes has demonstrated that, among native speakers, standard accents usually receive higher ratings in terms of status, while non-standard accents are sometimes evaluated more positively in terms of solidarity (Giles, 1971, 1972; Giles

& Coupland, 1991; Garrett et al., 2003; Kircher & Zipp, 2022). For instance, Giles (1971, 1972) conducted language attitudes research using the matched-guise technique to investigate the patterns of evaluation of standard and non-standard British accents. In both cases, participants rated the personality of speakers with RP, South Welsh and Somerset accents on competence, social attractiveness and personal integrity traits. Results for both studies show that RP accents were evaluated more positively on competence traits and that the regional accents were favored on social attractiveness and personal integrity traits. More specifically, in the 1972 study, participants were divided into two groups: highly and lowly ethnocentric, depending on their degree of ethnocentrism. Highly ethnocentric individuals are those who view their own culture as central to reality, whereas lowly ethnocentric individuals are more accepting of other cultural perspectives (Bennett, 1993, pp. 2-3). The highly ethnocentric group rated the non-standard accents less favorably than the standard accent on competence traits. Conversely, the lowly ethnocentric group evaluated all accents more favorably on social attractiveness and personal integrity than the highly ethnocentric group.

In spite of that, it has been proven by previous works that people tend to evaluate the speakers whom they perceive as representing their own speech community more favorably on solidarity traits, such as good looks and humor, than speakers with other accents (Giles, 1971). Fuertes et al. (2012) carried out a meta-analysis of 20 extant studies on language attitudes that used the matched-guise technique and found that standard accents are evaluated more positively across three dimensions — status, solidarity and dynamism — than non-standard accents. The authors had expected non-standard accents to be favored in terms of solidarity, but this was not the case.

A possible explanation put forward by the authors is that the participants in these studies were

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standard-accented speakers who awarded higher solidarity to the standard-accented guises due to in-group loyalty.

Foreign-accented varieties, in contrast to native varieties, in general receive lower ratings on both status and solidarity traits (Ryan et al., 1977; Fuertes et al., 2012; Giles & Watson, 2013; Dragojevic et al., 2017; Dragojevic & Goatley-Soan, 2020). A study conducted by Ryan et al. (1977), for instance, demonstrated by means of a verbal-guise test that the solidarity and status attributed to speakers diminished as their accentedness increased, and that Spanish-accented English was negatively stereotyped among native speakers of English.

Similarly, Dragojevic et al. (2017) employed the matched-guise technique to conduct two experiments with American participants to test whether heavy foreign-accented speakers would be rated more negatively than mild foreign-accented speakers on status and solidarity traits. The speakers were Punjabi-accented in the first study and Mandarin-accented in the second study. In both cases, the heavy-accented speaker was awarded less status than the mild-accented speaker, was deemed to be more prototypical of the corresponding group, disrupted participants' processing fluency, and elicited more negative affective reactions.

In a similar vein, Goatley-Soan and Baldwin (2018) employed the verbal-guise technique to investigate the language attitudes of American university students towards four South African English accents across three personality dimensions: superiority, attractiveness and dynamism. Participants also assessed the similarity of the speakers' accents to their own to determine possible in-group and out-group perceptions. As expected, results indicate that the American accent was rated higher on superiority and dynamism. Surprisingly, no significant differences emerged among accents in terms of attractiveness. It should be pointed out that this study was

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carried out to test whether there was a relationship between accent and hireability or attractiveness. However, this was not the case, and some positive aspects were perceived in connection with the different accents.

More recently, in a study conducted by Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan (2020) on the language attitudes of Americans towards Standard American English (SAE) and nine foreign accents using the verbal-guise technique, the SAE accent was rated higher in both status and solidarity traits in comparison with all foreign accents, although some foreign varieties were rated better than others. This gave rise to an evaluative hierarchy in which speakers who were taken to belong to non-stigmatized foreign groups received higher status and solidarity ratings than those believed to be part of stigmatized groups.

Attitudes of L2 Speakers

As regards the attitudes of L2 speakers, studies concerning the English language have been carried out using different methods in different countries, such as the direct method in Argentina (see Friedrich, 2003), Spain (see González Ardeo, 2003; Mompeán González, 2004; Lasagabaster, 2005), and the Nordic countries (see Kristiansen, 2005), the indirect method in Austria (see Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997), Denmark (see Ladegaard, 1998), Spain (see Carrie, 2017), and the mixed-method in Brazil (see El-Dash & Busnardo, 2001), and the Nordic countries (see Kristiansen, 2010), among others.

Previous research on attitudes towards the English language in general has been conducted through direct methods of language attitudes elicitation, such as questionnaires and interviews. To the best of my knowledge, only one study of this kind has been carried out in Argentina. Friedrich (2003) used a direct questionnaire to investigate the attitudes of 100 Argentinean MBA

students at a major university in Buenos Aires. Most respondents favored American English, some were indifferent, and only a minority preferred British English, unlike in other previous studies carried out in Europe (cf. Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997; Ladegaard, 1998; Mompeán González, 2004; Carrie, 2017). The author explains this preference based on the students' desire to learn English for employment purposes, in which case American English is considered to be more useful and more marketable.

Within Spain, studies using direct methods to elicit language attitudes have had positive results towards the English language in general. González Ardeo (2003) investigated the attitudes towards English and ESP acquisition of monolingual and bilingual university students from the Basque Country and found overall positive attitudes. Lasagabaster (2005) delved into the attitudes of undergraduate students not only towards English, but also towards Basque and Spanish, and confirmed the superiority of English over other foreign languages in the educational system of the Basque Country.

In the Nordic countries, Kristiansen (2005, 2010) carried out first a study by means of a direct method and subsequently extended his research by adopting a mixed-methods approach. In both cases, the researcher aimed to examine the attitudes towards the influence of English in seven Nordic linguistic communities: Denmark, Faeroe Islands, Finnish Finland, Swedish Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, by determining which communities were more "English-positive" and which were more "English-negative". Kristiansen's (2005) study employed a direct questionnaire over the telephone and found that the attitudes towards English of each community were a reflection of their traditional language policies. All of them were found to award high status to the English language, explained by the researcher as occurring due to US dominance in

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world politics and economics. Then, Kristiansen (2010) extended his previous study by comparing consciously offered attitudes, obtained from a direct telephone interview similar to the one used in the previous project, with subconsciously offered attitudes, obtained from a matched-guise study. Results show that the attitudes of the communities towards English changed drastically at different levels of consciousness, but no convincing explanation of this phenomenon was found by the author. Still, Kristiansen (2010) serves to prove that a mixed-methods approach is recommended to yield more comprehensive results and find differences between implicit and explicit attitudes (Pharao & Kristiansen, 2019, p. 6).

As for studies carried out through indirect methods, most of them employ the matched-guise or the verbal-guise technique. As regards the attitudes of L2 speakers towards standard native varieties of their L2, Carrie (2017) conducted a verbal-guise study with Spanish university students towards RP and GA English, and she found that the former was awarded higher status while the latter was associated with higher solidarity. These results match those obtained in Stewart et al.'s (1985) study, in which American university undergraduates awarded higher status to RP English than to their own variety, even though the opposite occurred in the solidarity dimension. Despite that, it is worth noting that, since both male and female guises were included in the experiment, the gender of the speakers may have affected the results. Unsurprisingly, as in other studies, participants expressed greater solidarity towards the individuals they felt spoke more similarly to them (see Giles, 1971; Kircher & Zipp, 2022).

Just as L1 English speakers commonly rate standard native accents higher on status traits than non-standard native accents, so do L2 English speakers (Ladegaard, 1998). In an attempt to uncover the stereotypes held by foreign speakers about different native English varieties,

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Ladegaard (1998) conducted a study in which Danish secondary school and university students evaluated five native English varieties in a verbal-guise experiment: RP, Scottish, Cockney, Australian and Standard American English. Results were similar to those of previous studies conducted with native participants in the UK and the USA, and indicated that students perceived the RP speaker to represent the most prestigious variety. Findings show that, even when participants could not identify some of the accents in the study, they were still able to allocate the prevailing social stereotypes to the speakers, which could mean that stereotypes towards social groups are present whether people are consciously aware or not of the social connotations attached to a certain speech variety (Ladegaard, 1998, p. 269).

Similar studies have been carried out to investigate the language attitudes of L2 speakers towards both native and non-native varieties of their L2, with comparable results regarding the higher status of standard native varieties with respect to non-native — and therefore — non-standard ones (Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997; El-Dash & Busnardo, 2001). Previous research has also uncovered that individuals in general evaluate their own variety — be it standard or non-standard — more positively in terms of solidarity than any out-group variety (Cargile & Giles, 1998; Giles & Marlow, 2011; Kircher & Zipp, 2022).

Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997) examined the language attitudes of EFL Austrian university students towards three native and two non-native varieties of English with the verbal-guise technique and noted that native accents were evaluated as having a higher status than non-native accents, since participants reported preference for the native varieties, especially the variety they were most familiar with. What is more, the authors found a connection between accent preference and geographical proximity, as participants indicated RP English as their preferred model of

pronunciation. However, they did not exhibit positive attitudes towards their own non-native variety of English, which contradicts previous findings.

In another study, El-Dash and Busnardo (2001) adopted a mixed-methods approach to investigate the language attitudes of Brazilian people towards native and non-native English and Portuguese varieties. They first used an indirect method, i.e., a verbal-guise test, and then a direct method, i.e., a comparative subjective vitality questionnaire, whereby participants were asked about their beliefs towards Portuguese and English and their speakers for the purpose of assessing the perceived vitality of a native majority language with respect to a dominant foreign language. In this project, half of the participants evaluated the English guises as having higher status, but the other half rated these guises more favorably in the solidarity dimension, which contradicted expectations.

When asked about their accent of preference, L2 English speakers participating in different studies around the globe usually agree on RP being the one they aim for, as RP speakers are mostly taken to represent the most prestigious English variety and, in most of the language attitudes studies examined herein, RP English is typically the highest rated in terms of status (see Dalton-Puffer et al., 1997; Ladegaard, 1998; Mompeán González, 2004; Carrie, 2017). In fact, in the study carried out by Mompeán González (2004) with first-year English Philology university students in Murcia, most participants expressed their desire to learn a British accent because they deemed the English pronunciation from England to be the purest given that that is where English originated.

In addition to examining language attitudes towards different varieties of English within a given context, some studies have also looked into the independent variables of gender or age to find

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whether they had an effect on people's attitudes (see Giles, 1970; Brown & Cichocki, 1995; Coupland & Bishop, 2007; McKenzie, 2010; McKenzie et al., 2015; Chien, 2018; Martens, 2020).

As for gender, previous research has shown that it has an effect on language attitudes, although not to a large extent. In general, female participants tend to be more positive than male participants when rating speakers in language attitudes studies (Brown & Cichocki, 1995, p. 47). For instance, in their study carried out by means of the verbal-guise technique to evaluate Thai university students' attitudes towards native and non-native varieties of English, including US, UK, Chinese, Indian, Japanese and Thai English, McKenzie et al. (2015) uncovered that females generally had more positive attitudes than males towards the speech varieties on both competence and warmth traits. These results are in line with those obtained in previous studies carried out with L1 speakers in which females mostly produced more favorable evaluations than males (Giles, 1970; Coupland & Bishop, 2007).

In other studies, differences between rater gender are only found on some traits, e.g. competence, or towards certain accents, e.g. native/non-native. McKenzie (2010) used the verbal-guise technique to investigate Japanese university students' attitudes towards standard and non-standard, native and non-native English varieties, including US, UK and Japanese accents. The researcher found that, in terms of competence, female participants were significantly more favorable than males towards native English varieties, whereas male participants were more favorable than females towards non-native varieties. These results support those of previous research in which females were found to be more sensitive to prestige than males (Chien, 2018; Martens, 2020).

As regards age, as far as I am concerned, no comparable studies with L2 speakers have been carried out in the past. Nonetheless, previous studies with L1 speakers have shown that younger informants usually assign lower ratings to standard accents than older informants, even though the opposite is true in the case of non-standard accents (Coupland & Bishop, 2007), and that older participants are more restrained when evaluating different varieties (Giles, 1970). Yet, in Giles' (1970) study of the language attitudes of British high school students, younger participants were less favorable towards the French accent but more favorable towards the American accent than older participants. The researcher speculated that these results could have been caused by the fact that the American accent is strongly associated with power, scientific and technological advancements, and the movie industry, which could have a stronger influence on younger rather than older participants.

Methodology

This section puts forward the methodology implemented, and includes information about the participants, the survey administered, the verbal-guise study, the speech stimuli and the procedure followed in the analysis.

Participants

A total of 155 people from Argentina and Spain participated in this study by responding an open online survey. One subject was excluded from the analysis for not having provided their consent, another subject was excluded for being underage, and two subjects were excluded for not being Argentinean nor Spanish. The sample was further cleaned and participants who appeared not to have paid attention to the instructions and the questions included in the survey were discarded as well. Since there were more responses by Argentinean people a randomized selection of the

Argentinean participants was carried out to form two balanced groups of subjects. The final sample in this research project is thus made up by a group of 50 Argentinean participants and a group of 50 Spanish participants.

The 50 Argentinean participants are from different Provinces in Argentina (82% from Buenos Aires, 6% from Tucumán, 4% from Chubut, 4% from Córdoba, 2% from Mendoza and 2% from Río Negro), they range in age from 19 to 64 years (mean age = 39.5), and 25 are female and 25 are male. They also reported their own level of English as basic (A1-A2) (14%), intermediate (B1-B2) (20%), advanced (C1-C2) (56%), and native (10%).

The 50 Spanish participants are from different Autonomous Communities in Spain (44% from Comunidad de Madrid, 12% from Andalucía, 8% from País Vasco, 6% from Comunidad Valenciana, 6% from Extremadura, 4% from Canarias, 4% from Cantabria, 4% from Castilla y León, 4% from Principado de Asturias, 2% from Aragón, 2% from Castilla-La Mancha, 2% from Cataluña and 2% from Galicia), they range in age from 19 to 63 years (mean age = 34.5), and 31 are female and 19 are male. They also reported their own level of English as basic (A1-A2) (14%), intermediate (B1-B2) (30%), advanced (C1-C2) (48%), and native (8%).

Apart from this basic personal data, participants provided information about their experiences living abroad, indicating the country and length of their stay. Finally, they provided further details about their contact with the English language.

Data-gathering Instrument

Survey

In order to gather the data for this research project, an online survey was used (see Appendix A for the complete survey). First and foremost, a consent form was included to inform potential

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participants about the study and ask for their agreement to participate. Then, the survey was divided into different parts.

The first part was designed to gather personal data about participants so as to collect the demographic information needed to analyze a number of sociolinguistic variables which include *nationality* (Argentinean and Spanish), *gender* (female and male) and *age* (generation 1 and generation 2).

The second part of the survey was devoted to the speaker evaluation study, i.e., the verbal-guise study. Participants were given clear instructions about what they were expected to do: they listened to five speakers reading the same elicitation paragraph (see Appendix B) and rated each one on the same ten 6-point Likert scale questions. Likert scales were used in this survey because they can be completed fast and therefore elicit participants' first impressions. It should also be highlighted that each scale had six points so that there was no 'neutral' mid-point and participants were made to lean either way. Participants were then asked to identify the country of origin of each speaker. Separate sections were used for the speech stimulus of each speaker together with its corresponding questions so that participants could focus on one speaker at a time and were not tempted to answer the questions about other speakers before listening to the corresponding stimulus.

After the verbal-guise study, the third part of the survey presented seven direct questions about language attitudes towards native and non-native accents, once again using 6-point Likert scales. This was done as a way to obtain more nuanced insights about participants' language attitudes, by combining an indirect method, i.e., an experimental design in the form of a verbal-guise study, with a direct method, i.e., questions which ask respondents explicitly about their language

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attitudes. For the purpose of the analysis, these seven direct questions were placed in the following two groups: positive attitudes towards foreign accents (questions 1, 3 and 6) and negative attitudes towards foreign accents (questions 2, 4, 5 and 7).

The final part of the survey comprised questions about the participants' level of English, including a direct question about what they believed to be their level pursuant to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), their time spent learning the language, their education at a bilingual school or not, and any English exams or certificates they sat for or held. Lastly, participants were given the option of writing a free comment about their contact with the English language.

Online surveys were selected to carry out this research project because they allow for rapid, easy and cost-effective collection of data from a large number of respondents whose participation is not bound to place nor time (Zipp, 2022, p. 146). This was of particular interest taking into account the fact that the study was conducted in Madrid with participants living in different parts of both Argentina and Spain. Furthermore, this type of anonymous data gathering instrument is useful to avoid the social desirability bias and the acquiescence bias. On the contrary, disadvantages of using online surveys include the lack of control over participants' honesty in their answers and the conditions under which each participant responds. It should also be noted that it was not possible to create a stratified sample for this study and that the project depended on the participants who willingly decided to take part in the survey.

Verbal-guise Technique

As indicated above, this research project employed the verbal-guise technique, an indirect method of language attitudes elicitation which includes different language varieties recorded by

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different speakers, as opposed to the matched-guise technique, in which different language varieties are recorded by the same speaker (Garrett, 2010, p. 42). In this specific study, it is essential to have recordings by different speakers to ensure that all accents are properly represented, since the main objective is to measure participants' attitudes towards both native and non-native English varieties. Although it is true that hearing different speakers may affect participants' attitudes towards the different varieties of English, the speakers selected share similar demographic characteristics, which are detailed in the following subsection. Moreover, speakers' speech rate and pauses were kept as constant as possible by selecting audio recordings of similar duration so that the only relevant difference among speakers is their accent.

For the purpose of this study, five audio recordings were selected from the *Speech Accent Archive* (http://accent.gmu.edu/), a webpage which stores the same neutral, written text recorded in English by people from all over the world. The audios chosen were recorded by speakers from the UK, Bolivia, Spain, the USA and Argentina, and were presented in that order in the survey as Speaker 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, respectively. Participants were not given any information about the speakers' nationalities either before or during the project. It should be stated that due to software restrictions, the order of the audios in the survey could not be randomized. Because of this, all participants heard the recordings in the same order, which could have had order and practice effects on them, thus impacting the results obtained in the survey.

The verbal-guise study comprised first a question which included 6-point Likert scales, in which participants had to rate each speaker according to ten adjectives appearing in random order and belonging to two evaluative dimensions: status (*intelligent, well educated, successful, hard-*

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working, ambitious) and solidarity (*friendly, generous, likeable, polite, honest*). Then, participants were asked to identify the country of origin of each speaker.

Speech Stimuli

All five speakers were male, ranging in age from 18 to 31 (mean age = 23.8), and were chosen given that they were deemed to accurately represent their variety. The personal and linguistic characteristics of each speaker are detailed below.

Speaker 1 (UK)[2] was born in Littlehampton, UK. His native language is English, acquired through naturalistic methods, and he speaks no other languages. At the time of recording, he was 27 years old. This speaker was selected as one of the two native guises given the prestige and status awarded to the RP accent worldwide, and also to test whether the variety of English taught in each country and geographical proximity—between the UK and Spain, and between the USA and Argentina—had an effect on participants' language attitudes. Being from the UK, this speaker represents RP English. One of the most salient characteristics of this speaker's variety in contrast to GA is rhoticity. Rhoticity is the distinction between the accents which have pre-pausal and pre-consonantal [r], i.e., those which are rhotic, like GA, and the accents which do not, i.e., those which are non-rhotic, like RP (Cruttenden, 2014, p. 237). This means that in RP, since postvocalic [r] occurs mostly only before vowels, diphthongs and long vowels such as [ɜ:] and [ɔ:] are used instead of GA [ɝ] and [ɔr] in words like *bird* and *store*, respectively. Some examples of this in the recording can be appreciated in the words *her*, *store*, *for* and *brother*.

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[2] Recording available at: https://accent.gmu.edu/browse_language.php?function=detail&speakerid=97

Another typical long vowel in RP English is [ɑ:], as in *ask* (cf. GA [æsk]). Lastly, a clear feature of RP English is the use of the vowel [ɒ] in LOT words such as *Bob*, *small* and *frog*.

Speaker 2 (Bolivia)[3] was born in Cochabamba, Bolivia. His native language is Spanish, he started learning English academically at age 26, and he also speaks Quechua. At the time of recording, he was 31 years old, and had lived in the USA for nine years. This speaker was selected as one of the non-native guises in order to include a third variety unrelated to the participants in the study and evaluate if this had an effect on their attitudes. With respect to his accent, in spite of his somewhat long stay in an English-speaking country, there are several features which make his English sound Spanish-accented. First, an epenthetic vowel [e] is added in initial position in the following words: *Stella*, *spoons*, *snow*, *snake*, *scoop* and *station*. Second, in final position, target [z] is realized as voiceless [s], as in *please*, *these*, *things*, *peas*, *slabs*, *cheese*, *kids* and *bags*, target voiced obstruents are pronounced as voiceless, as in *of*, and target voiced stops are deleted, as in *five*. Third, target [θ] becomes [t], as in *things*, and target [ð] becomes [d], as in *these*. Fourth, the voiceless plosives [p, t, k] are not aspirated, as in *please*, *call*, *to*, *peas*, *plastic* and *toy*. Fifth, some long vowels are shortened, as in *please*, *call*, *these*, *peas* and *cheese*. Sixth, the glottal fricative is changed for a velar fricative in the word *her*. Finally, a voiced alveolar tap is used in *her*, *store*, *for*, *brother*, *three* and *red*.

Speaker 3 (Spain)[4] was born in Burgos, Spain. His native language is Spanish, he started learning English academically at age 6, and he also speaks French, German, Swedish and Esperanto. At

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[3] Recording available at: https://accent.gmu.edu/browse_language.php?function=detail&speakerid=1575

[4] Recording available at: https://accent.gmu.edu/browse_language.php?function=detail&speakerid=341#

the time of recording, he was 18 years old, and he had never lived in an English-speaking country. This speaker was selected as one of the non-native guises to investigate whether the Spanish people who took part in the study would feel identified with him and if this could be reflected in their attitudes. Regarding his accent, the features that make his English sound Spanish-accented are the following. First, an epenthetic vowel [e] is added in initial position in the words *Stella*, *spoons*, *slabs* and *snake*. Second, in final position, target [z] is pronounced as voiceless [s], as in *these*, *things*, *peas*, *slabs*, *cheese* and *kids*. Third, the voiceless plosives [p, t, k] are not aspirated, as in *please*, *call*, *to*, *peas*, *plastic* and *toy*. Fourth, some long vowels are shortened, as in *call*, *these*, *peas*, *cheese* and *Bob*. Fifth, the glottal fricative is changed for a velar fricative in the word *her*. Finally, a voiced alveolar tap is used in *her*, *bring* and *store*.

Speaker 4 (USA)[5] was born in West Covina, California, USA. His native language is English, acquired through naturalistic methods, and he speaks no other languages. At the time of recording, he was 20 years old. This speaker represents GA English and he was selected as the second native guise bearing in mind the widespread use and pervasiveness of American English in the media and the audiovisual industry across the globe. As stated above, the GA accent is rhotic, which means that apart from occurring before vowels, [r] also occurs before consonants and pauses. Examples of rhoticity in this recording can be found in the words *her*, *store*, *for* and *brother*. Unlike RP, GA does not have the BATH-TRAP split and thus BATH words are realized with [æ], as in *ask*. Lastly, a clear feature of GA is the use of the unrounded vowel [ɑ] in LOT words such as *Bob*, *small* and *frog*.

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[5] Recording available at: https://accent.gmu.edu/browse_language.php?function=detail&speakerid=134

Speaker 5 (Argentina)[6] was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. His native language is Spanish, he started learning English academically at age 4, and he also speaks French. At the time of recording, he was 23 years old, and he had never lived in an English-speaking country. Like the speaker from Spain, this speaker was selected as one of the non-native guises to investigate whether the Argentinean people who took part in the study would feel identified with him and if this could be reflected in their attitudes. Regarding his accent, the following features make his English sound Spanish-accented. First, in final position, target [z] becomes voiceless [s], as in *please*, *these*, *things*, *slabs*, *cheese*, *kids* and *bags*. Second, the voiceless plosives [p, k] are not aspirated, as in *please*, *call*, *peas* and *plastic*. Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that, unlike the speakers from Bolivia and Spain, this speaker does aspirate the voiceless plosive [t]. Third, some long vowels are shortened, as in *please*, *call*, *these*, *cheese* and *Bob*. Fourth, a voiced alveolar tap is used in *three*. Finally, unlike the speakers from Bolivia and Spain, this speaker does not add an epenthetic vowel [e] in word-initial position.

Procedure

Participants were asked to complete an online survey administered via Google Forms from June 12, 2023 to July 14, 2023. Before being launched, the survey was first piloted with a group of applied linguists and modified accordingly. It was then piloted again with a sample of Argentinean people (n = 50) and further adjusted. After piloting, some of the audio recordings and traits were changed, and direct questions were added.

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[6] Recording available at: https://accent.gmu.edu/browse_language.php?function=detail&speakerid=1400

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Once all the data had been gathered, it was analyzed quantitatively. To do so, responses were cleaned and participants were appropriately filtered and discarded. The remaining participants were classified into different groups considering the following demographic characteristics: nationality, gender and age. Unfortunately, due to time and scope constraints of the project, the independent variables of level of studies, level of English and living abroad, which were collected in the survey and were initially going to be included in the analysis, had to be discarded.

To test the independent variable of nationality, participants were placed in two groups based on their country of origin: Argentinean and Spanish. Each of these groups was made up by 50 participants. It should be mentioned that the small number of participants did not allow for gender and age subgroups to be created within each nationality. Therefore, the groups created to study gender and age include both Argentineans and Spaniards. To test the independent variable of gender, participants were divided into two groups: female and male. The female group was made up by 56 participants, while the male group was made up by 44. To test the independent variable of age, it would have been ideal to create several groups according to the different generations, but this was once again not possible because of the small number of participants who responded the survey. For this reason, only two groups were created: one for participants up to 35 years old and another one for participants over 35 years old. The first of these groups was made up by 61 participants, ranging in age from 19 to 35 (mean age = 26.3). The second group was made up by 39 participants, ranging in age from 39 to 64 (mean age = 53.6).

Mean ratings and standard deviations were calculated, and with the use of Jamovi (version 2.3.26)[7], one-way repeated measures ANOVAs of the solidarity and status awarded to each of the five speakers (dependent variable, DV) were conducted taking into account the following independent variables (IV): nationality, gender and age. Attitudes towards solidarity, on the one hand, and status, on the other hand, were calculated with the mean ratings obtained from the five adjectives included in each dimension, namely: *friendly*, *generous*, *likeable*, *polite* and *honest* (for solidarity) and *intelligent*, *well educated*, *successful*, *hard-working* and *ambitious* (for status).

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to compare the means of two or more distinct groups so as to find significant differences between them. Results provide first an overall statistic, known as the *F*-ratio (*F*), the *p*-value (significant at $p < .05$), and the effect size, given as eta squared (η^2_p), where 0.01 represents a small effect size, 0.06 represents a moderate effect size, and 0.14 represents a large effect size. Prior to the analysis, Mauchly's test of sphericity was conducted with the purpose of examining the equality of the variances between all combinations of related groups, and results indicate that the assumption of sphericity was violated in all cases ($p < .05$). Thus, as $\varepsilon > .75$ in each case, all degrees of freedom were adjusted by means of the Huynh-Feldt correction. Subsequently, post-hoc pairwise comparisons were carried out using the Bonferroni correction to find out which groups were the ones that presented significant differences. The results of this statistical analysis are presented in section 5 below.

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[7] Computer program used to perform data analysis and statistical tests, especially ANOVA (analysis of variance).

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Analysis and Discussion of Results

The results obtained in the statistical analysis conducted in this research project are organized in accordance with the independent variables under study and explained below in the corresponding three subsections: nationality, gender and age. Additionally, there is one last section in which the results of the direct questions are presented and contrasted with those obtained in the verbal-guise study.

Language Attitudes by Nationality

Table 1 presents the mean ratings (and standard deviations) of the solidarity and status dimensions of the five speakers according to the nationality of the participants.

Table 1. Mean ratings (and standard deviations) by nationality

	Accent									
	Argentinean					**Spanish**				
	USA	UK	Arg.	Bolivia	Spain	USA	UK	Arg.	Bolivia	Spain
Solidarity	4.05	4.30	3.88	4.21	3.81	4.15	4.00	3.84	3.81	3.58
	(1.27)	(1.34)	(1.14)	(1.14)	(1.18)	(1.15)	(1.32)	(1.13)	(1.26)	(1.13)
Status	4.35	4.00	3.50	3.55	3.41	4.22	3.94	3.34	3.43	3.18
	(1.21)	(1.43)	(1.08)	(1.19)	(1.15)	(1.16)	(1.33)	(1.08)	(1.19)	(1.05)

As regards solidarity, among Argentinean participants, the speaker from the UK received the highest rating ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 1.34$), followed by the speaker from Bolivia ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.14$), then the USA ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.27$), Argentina ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.14$), and Spain ($M =$

3.81, $SD = 1.18$). Among Spanish participants, the highest rated was the speaker from the USA ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.15$), followed by the speaker from the UK ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.32$), then Argentina ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.13$), Bolivia ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.26$), and Spain ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.13$). See Figure 1 for estimated marginal means.
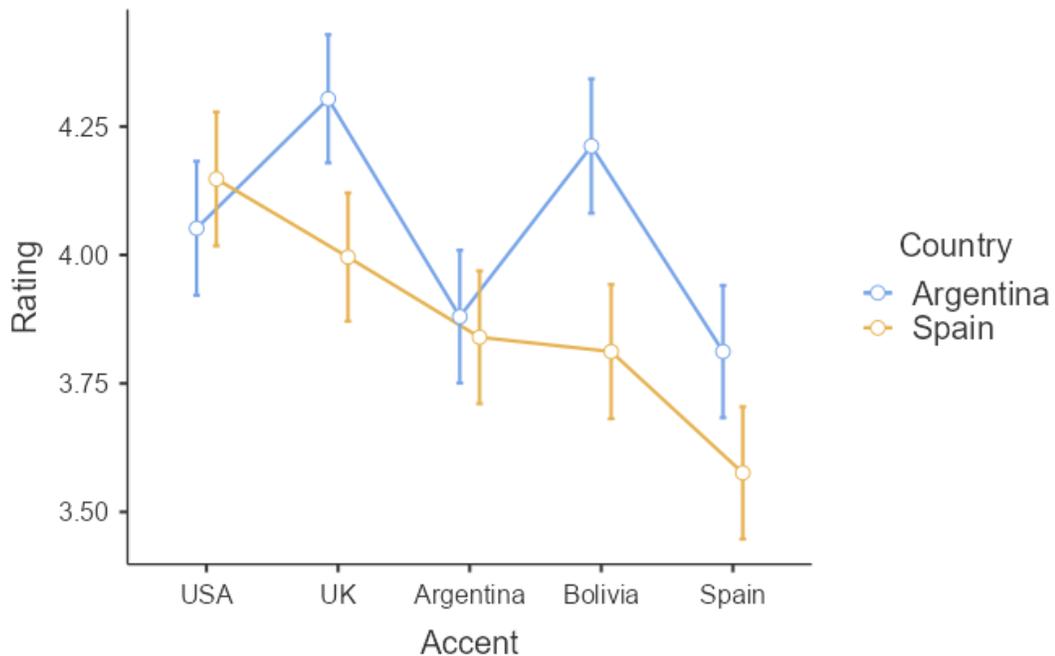

Figure 1. Estimated marginal means of the solidarity dimension by nationality   A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean ratings of the solidarity dimension of each speaker (DV) according to the nationality of the participants (IV). Results of Mauchly's test indicate that the assumption of sphericity was violated, $W = 0.828$, $p = 0.033$, $HFe = 0.948$. At first sight, results of the ANOVA show that the variation across speakers according to participants' nationality is not statistically significant, $F (3.79, 371.58) = 2.08$, $p = 0.087$, $\eta^2_p = 0.021$. Upon closer inspection, however, post-hoc pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction reveal that there are, in fact, statistically significant differences between

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the ratings awarded by Spanish participants to the speaker from the USA and the speaker from Spain ($t = 4.114$, $p = 0.004$), the ratings awarded by Argentinean participants to the speaker from the UK and those awarded by Spanish participants to the speaker from Spain ($t = 4.062$, $p = 0.004$), and the ratings awarded by Argentinean participants to the speaker from Bolivia and those awarded by Spanish participants to the speaker from Spain ($t = 3.468$, $p = 0.035$). No other significant differences were found.

On the other hand, regarding status, Argentinean participants rated more positively the speaker from the USA ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.21$), followed by the speaker from the UK ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.43$), then Bolivia ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.19$), Argentina ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.08$), and Spain ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.15$). Among Spanish participants, the same hierarchy emerged, where the most positively rated was the speaker from the USA ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.16$), followed by the speaker from the UK ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 1.33$), then Bolivia ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.19$), Argentina ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.08$), and Spain ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.05$). See Figure 2 for estimated marginal means.

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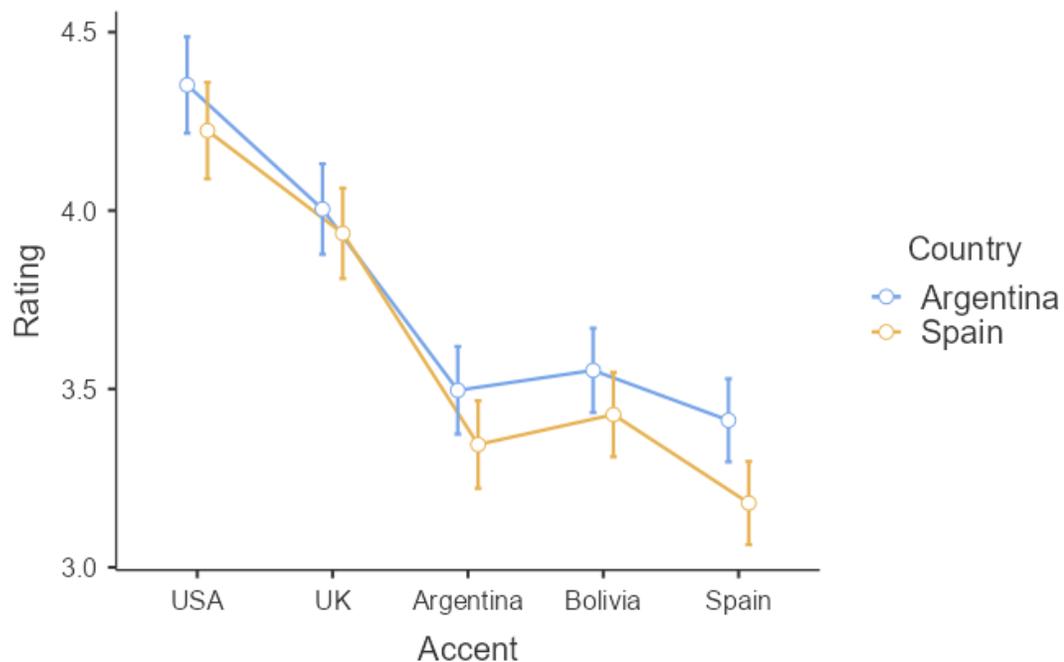
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Figure 2. Estimated marginal means of the status dimension by nationality

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean ratings of the status dimension of each speaker (DV) according to the nationality of the participants (IV). Results of Mauchly's test indicate that the assumption of sphericity was violated, $W = 0.591$, $p < .001$, *HFe* $= 0.792$. At first sight, results of the ANOVA show that the variation across speakers according to participants' nationality is not statistically significant, $F (3.17, 310.57) = 0.195$, $p = 0.908$, $\eta^2_p = 0.002$. Upon closer inspection, once again, post-hoc pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction reveal that there are several statistically significant differences across groups. As for the ratings given by the Argentineans to the speaker from the USA, there are statistically significant differences with respect to those given by both groups to the three non-native guises: Argentina ($t = 5.6457$, $p < .001$), Bolivia ($t = 5.1986$, $p < .001$) and Spain ($t = 6.4608$, $p < .001$), as rated by the Argentineans, and Argentina ($t = 5.5213$, $p < .001$), Bolivia ($t = 5.1460$, $p < .001$)

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and Spain ($t = 6.5687$, $p < .001$), as rated by the Spaniards. The same occurs between the ratings given by the Spaniards to the speaker from the USA with respect to those given by both groups to the three non-native guises: Argentina ($t = 3.9876$, $p = 0.006$), Bolivia ($t = 3.7425$, $p = 0.014$) and Spain ($t = 4.5510$, $p < .001$), as rated by the Argentineans, and Argentina ($t = 5.8040$, $p < .001$), Bolivia ($t = 5.1726$, $p < .001$) and Spain ($t = 7.1756$, $p < .001$), as rated by the Spaniards. Regarding the ratings given by the Argentineans to the speaker from the UK, there are statistically significant differences with respect to those awarded to the speaker from Argentina by the Spaniards ($t = 3.7392$, $p = 0.014$), and the speaker from Spain by the Argentineans ($t = 4.3931$, $p = 0.001$) and the Spaniards ($t = 4.7847$, $p < .001$). Similarly, the ratings given by the Spaniards to the speaker from the UK differ significantly from those given by the same group to the three non-native guises: Argentina ($t = 3.7590$, $p = 0.013$), Bolivia ($t = 3.5113$, $p = 0.030$) and Spain ($t = 5.6101$, $p < .001$). No other significant differences were found.

When asked to state where they thought the speakers were from in the survey, 36 out of the 50 (72%) Argentinean participants and 44 out of the 50 (88%) Spanish participants correctly identified the country of origin of the speaker from the UK, with 46 (92%) Argentineans and 49 (98%) Spaniards recognizing him as native, even if they were not able to provide the correct country. Answers were similar for the speaker from the USA, correctly identified as American by 35 (70%) Argentineans and 28 (56%) Spaniards, and recognized as native by 47 (94%) Argentineans and Spaniards. As regards the non-native guises, all three were recognized as such by almost all participants: the speaker from Argentina by 49 (98%) Argentineans and 45 (90%) Spaniards, the speaker from Bolivia by 48 (96%) Argentineans and 47 (94%) Spaniards, and the speaker from Spain by 49 (98%) Argentineans and 48 (96%) Spaniards. This time, participants

had more difficulty identifying the countries of origin. Half of the Argentinean participants identified the Argentinean speaker as such, whereas only 6 (12%) Spaniards did so. No participants correctly identified the country of origin of the speaker from Bolivia, but he was largely believed to be Latin American. Lastly, 27 (54%) Argentineans and 44 (88%) Spaniards were able to identify the country of origin of the speaker from Spain.

In sum, both groups of participants had relatively little difficulty in recognizing the native from the non-native guises, with an efficacy of 90% or more in all cases. Participants did have more trouble identifying the countries of the speakers, especially in the case of the non-native guises, even though the origin of the native guises was correctly stated by over half of the participants in each group. It seems that the nationality of the participants did have an effect on speaker identification, as both groups of participants were able to identify the speaker of their in-group, i.e. the Argentinean and the Spaniard, respectively, to a higher degree than the other group.

On average, Argentinean participants gave higher ratings than Spanish participants to all speakers in both dimensions, except for the speaker from the USA on solidarity traits. Native guises received the most positive solidarity ratings, while non-native guises received the most negative solidarity ratings, except for the speaker from Bolivia, who was evaluated as positively as the two native guises on solidarity traits among Argentinean participants. Regarding status, in both groups of participants, both native guises received notably higher ratings than the three non-native guises, with the speaker from the USA being the most positively rated and the speaker from Spain being the most negatively rated in this dimension.

The findings of the statistical analysis confirm H1 since both native accents are among the highest rated in both dimensions. In terms of solidarity, Argentineans gave the most positive

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evaluation to the speaker from the UK and Spaniards awarded the highest rating to the speaker from the USA. Previous studies in which native English guises received high solidarity ratings include those conducted by El-Dash and Busnardo (2001), Carrie (2017) and Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan (2020). As for status, among both groups of participants, the speaker from the USA was rated in the first place, followed by the speaker from the UK. In this dimension, as expected, all three non-native accents are the lowest rated among both groups, the speaker from Spain with the most negative rating, followed by the speaker from Argentina and then Bolivia. These findings are consistent with those obtained by Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997), El-Dash and Busnardo (2001) and Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan (2020), in whose studies non-native accents also received more negative solidarity and status evaluations than native accents.

Unexpectedly, results reject H2 and contradict those obtained by Cargile and Giles (1998), Giles and Marlow (2011), and Kircher and Zipp (2022), as participants did not rate their own variety more positively in the dimension of solidarity than the out-group varieties. As indicated above, the speaker from Argentina was the second lowest rated among the Argentineans and the speaker from Spain was the lowest rated among the Spaniards. Nonetheless, these findings are in agreement with those obtained by Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997), whose participants did not exhibit positive attitudes towards their own non-native variety of English. Besides, in this dimension, all three non-native accents were the lowest rated among the Spaniards, although this was the case only with respect to the speakers from Argentina and Spain among the Argentineans. Surprisingly, the Argentineans awarded the second highest solidarity rating to the speaker from Bolivia, who surpassed the speaker from the USA in said group. A possible explanation for this could be that his evaluation was influenced by the preceding guise, i.e., the one from the UK,

since he was the second guise and the first non-native guise to appear in the study. However, this does not account for the lower ratings given to him by the Spanish participants. Speaker identification also does not account for this difference across groups in the solidarity ratings of the speaker from Bolivia, given that the vast majority of the participants deemed him to be Latin American and a non-native speaker, like the speakers from Argentina and Spain. These findings could be due to the small number of people who took part in the survey, which means that results are unfortunately not generalizable and further research should be carried out to find whether L2 speakers do feel more solidarity towards other L2 speakers or not.

Finally, H3 is partially confirmed by the results obtained in the analysis. As regards solidarity, H3 is rejected, because Argentinean participants exhibited preference for the speaker from the UK, and Spanish participants did so with respect to the speaker from the USA. These findings contradict Friedrich (2003) and Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997), according to whose studies results should have shown more solidarity by Argentinean participants towards the speaker from the USA and more solidarity by Spanish participants towards the speaker from the UK, taking into consideration geographical proximity. It could be that these specific Argentinean participants had more contact with British than American English and vice versa in the case of the Spanish participants. Despite that, these results match those obtained by Carrie (2017) in her study, in which Spanish university students awarded higher solidarity to the speaker from the USA when evaluating RP and GA English guises. Regarding status, H3 is partially confirmed by the results, as both groups of participants exhibited preference for the speaker from the USA, followed by the speaker from the UK. While these results were expected for Argentinean participants, Spanish participants were expected to favor RP English. In this case, findings contradict those

obtained by Carrie (2017), in whose study RP English was preferred over GA English by Spanish university students in the status dimension. This change in preference could be a consequence of the widespread use of online platforms over the last years and the consumption of audiovisual content in its original version, mostly dominated by GA English. In spite of that, as both native guises represent standard accents in contrast to the non-native guises, results are in line with Fuertes et al. (2012), pursuant to whom standard accents usually receive overall higher ratings than non-standard accents.

Language Attitudes by Gender

Table 2 presents the mean ratings (and standard deviations) of the solidarity and status dimensions of the five speakers according to the gender of the participants. Once again, it should be clarified that the female and male groups are made up by both Argentinean and Spanish participants.

Table 2. Mean ratings (and standard deviations) by gender

	Accent									
	Female					**Male**				
	USA	UK	Arg.	Bolivia	Spain	USA	UK	Arg.	Bolivia	Spain
Solidarity	4.13	4.06	3.82	3.97	3.65	4.06	4.26	3.91	4.07	3.75
	(1.25)	(1.39)	(1.16)	(1.27)	(1.21)	(1.16)	(1.27)	(1.09)	(1.15)	(1.09)
Status	4.40	3.91	3.30	3.38	3.16	4.15	4.05	3.57	3.63	3.47
	(1.26)	(1.43)	(1.16)	(1.24)	(1.17)	(1.07)	(1.32)	(0.97)	(1.11)	(0.99)

In terms of solidarity, female participants awarded the highest rating to the speaker from the USA ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.25$), then the speaker from the UK ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.39$), Bolivia ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.27$), Argentina ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.16$), and Spain ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.21$). Male participants gave the highest rating to the speaker from the UK ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.27$), then the speaker from Bolivia ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.15$), the USA ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.16$), Argentina ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.09$), and Spain ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.09$). See Figure 3 for estimated marginal means.
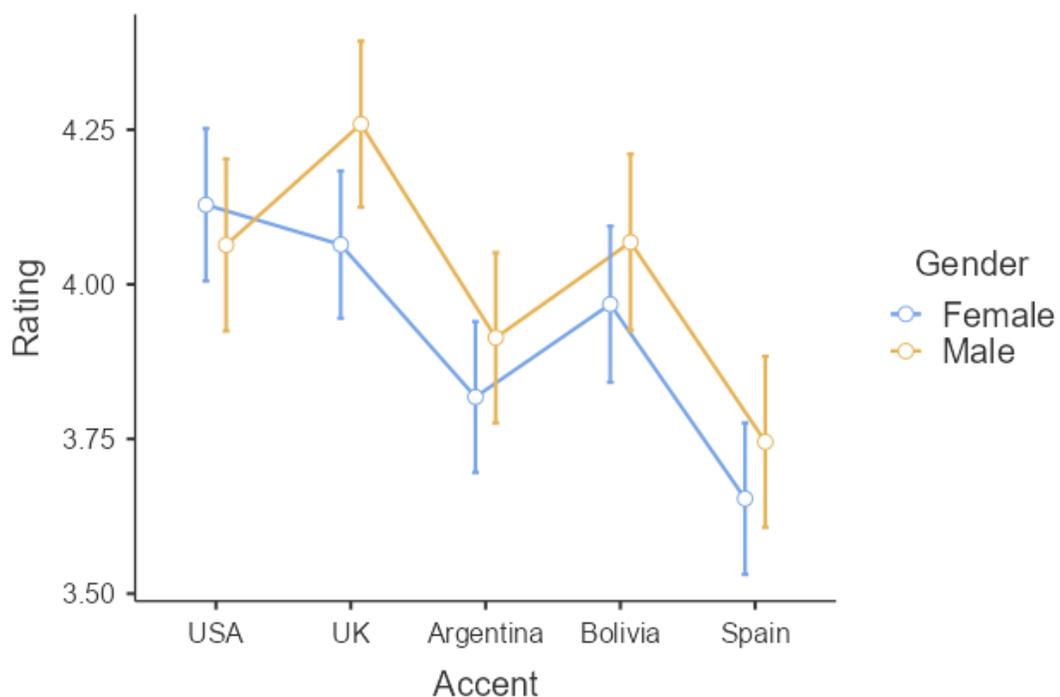
Figure 3. Estimated marginal means of the solidarity dimension by gender

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean ratings of the solidarity dimension of each speaker (DV) according to the gender of the participants (IV). Results of Mauchly's test indicate that the assumption of sphericity was violated, $W = 0.827$, $p = 0.031$, $HFe = 0.948$. At first sight, results of the ANOVA show that the variation across speakers according to participants' gender is not statistically significant, $F (3.79, 371.60) = 0.430$, $p =$

0.777, $\eta^2_p = 0.004$. Nevertheless, post-hoc pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction reveal that there is a statistically significant difference between the ratings awarded by the female participants to the speaker from the USA and the speaker from Spain ($t = 3.57524$, $p = 0.025$). No other significant differences were found.

As regards status, among female participants, the speaker from the USA was the most positively rated ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.26$), followed by the speaker from the UK ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.43$), then Bolivia ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.24$), Argentina ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.16$) and Spain ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 1.17$). Among male participants, the same hierarchy emerged, in which the most positive status rating was given to the speaker from the USA ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.07$), followed by the speaker from the UK ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.32$), then Bolivia ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.11$), Argentina ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.97$) and Spain ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 0.99$). See Figure 4 for estimated marginal means.
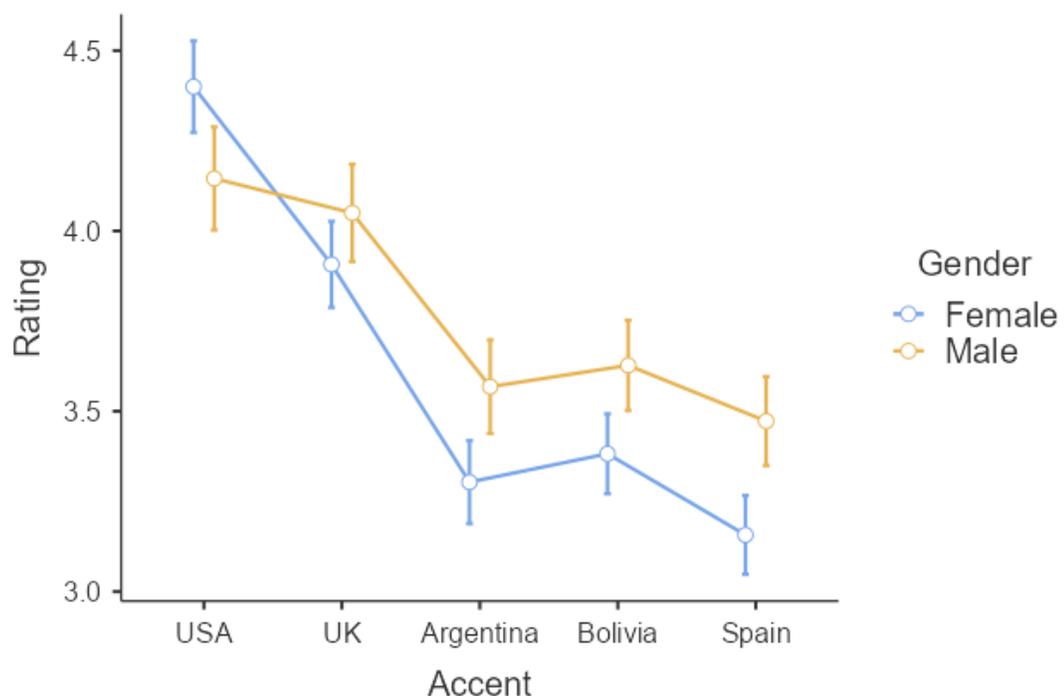

Figure 4. Estimated marginal means of the status dimension by gender

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean ratings of the status dimension of each speaker (DV) according to the gender of the participants (IV). Results of Mauchly's test indicate that the assumption of sphericity was violated, $W = 0.604$, $p < .001$, *HFe* $= 0.799$. Results of the ANOVA show that the variation across speakers according to participants' gender is statistically significant, $F (3.20, 313.30) = 2.97$, $p = 0.029$, $\eta^2_p = 0.029$. Post-hoc pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction reveal that there are many statistically significant differences across groups. As for the ratings given by the female participants to the speaker from the USA, there are statistically significant differences with respect to those given by the same group to the speaker from the UK ($t = 4.571$, $p < .001$) and those given by both groups to the three non-native guises: Argentina ($t = 7.889$, $p < .001$), Bolivia ($t = 7.193$, $p < .001$) and Spain ($t = 9.398$, $p < .001$), as rated by the female participants, and Argentina ($t = 4.583$, $p < .001$), Bolivia ($t = 4.339$, $p = 0.002$) and Spain ($t = 5.245$, $p <$ .001), as rated by the male participants. Something similar occurs between the ratings given by the male participants to the speaker from the USA with respect to those given by both groups to the three non-native guises, except for Bolivia in the case of the male participants: Argentina ($t =$ 4.585, $p < .001$), Bolivia ($t = 4.217$, $p = 0.002$) and Spain ($t = 5.491$, $p < .001$), as rated by the female participants, and Argentina ($t = 3.682$, $p = 0.017$) and Spain ($t = 4.509$, $p < .001$), as rated by the male participants. As for the ratings given by the female participants to the speaker from the UK, there are statistically significant differences with respect to those awarded by the same group to the three non-native guises: Argentina ($t = 4.059$, $p = 0.004$), Bolivia ($t = 3.844$, $p =$ 0.010) and Spain ($t = 5.892$, $p < .001$). Similarly, the ratings given by the male participants to the speaker from the UK differ significantly from those given by the female participants to the three

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non-native guises: Argentina ($t = 4.210$, $p = 0.003$), Bolivia ($t = 3.826$, $p = 0.010$) and Spain ($t = 5.146$, $p < .001$), as well as those awarded by the male participants to the speaker from Spain ($t = 4.020$, $p = 0.005$). No other significant differences were found.

As regards speaker identification, 46 out of the 56 (82.14%) female participants and 34 out of the 44 (77.27%) male participants were able to identify the country of origin of the speaker from the UK, and 55 (98.21%) females and 40 (90.91%) males recognized him as native. The rate of correct identification of the speaker from the USA was a bit lower, with 33 (58.93%) female participants and 30 (68.18%) male participants indicating the correct country, and 52 (92.86%) females and 42 (95.45%) males recognizing him as native. Regarding the non-native guises, once again, all of them were recognized as such by the vast majority of participants: the speaker from Argentina by 52 (92.86%) females and 42 (95.45%) males, the speaker from Bolivia by 54 (96.43%) females and 41 (93.18%) males, and the speaker from Spain by 54 (96.43%) females and 43 (97.73%) males. Participants had more difficulty identifying the countries of origin, except in the case of the speaker from Spain. The country of origin of the speaker from Argentina was correctly identified by 19 (33.93%) females and 12 (27.27%) males. As mentioned in the nationality subsection, none of the participants was able to identify the country of origin of the speaker from Bolivia, but he was mostly deemed to be Latin American. Lastly, 42 (75%) females and 29 (65.91%) males identified the speaker from Spain as such.

All in all, both females and males had little difficulty in identifying the native from the non-native guises, with an efficacy of 90% or more in all cases. While it is true that participants did have more trouble recognizing the countries of origin of the speakers, well over 50% was able to correctly state the origin of the speakers from the UK, the USA and Spain. However, efficacy

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with respect to the speaker from Argentina was quite low, at around 30%, whereas Bolivia was not reported by any participants as the origin of speaker 2.

Male participants on average awarded higher ratings than female participants to all speakers in both dimensions, except for the speaker from the USA. Both native guises received the most positive solidarity ratings among both groups of participants, together with the speaker from Bolivia, who was the second highest rated among the male participants, surpassing the speaker from the USA. The remaining non-native guises, i.e. Argentina and Spain, received more negative ratings. Once again and as expected, on status traits, both native guises received more positive evaluations than the three non-native guises among both groups of participants.

Findings confirm H1 given that both native accents were among the most positively rated in both dimensions, in line with Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997), El-Dash and Busnardo (2001), Carrie (2017) and Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan (2020). As for solidarity, the speaker from the USA was preferred among females and the speaker from the UK was preferred among males. In terms of status, both groups of participants favored the US speaker, followed by the UK speaker. Interestingly, the speaker from Bolivia received more positive ratings than the other two non-native guises, and was even the second highest rated on solidarity traits among males. This also happened among Argentinean participants, and the same explanation offered in the above subsection could be applied in this case. Nonetheless, on status traits, both native guises were rated notably higher than the three non-native guises.

Conversely, H4 is almost completely rejected by the results, since male participants were more positive than female participants in their evaluations of all speakers in both dimensions, except for the speaker from the USA, which once again could be due to the small number of participants

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in the study. Thus, these findings contradict those obtained by Giles (1970), Brown and Cichocki (1995), Coupland and Bishop (2007) and McKenzie et al. (2015). As regards status, it is interesting that female participants awarded such high ratings to the speaker from the USA that significant differences emerged not only with respect to the three non-native guises, but with respect to the speaker from the UK as well. If female participants had given the speaker from the UK a more positive evaluation, these results would have been entirely in accordance with those obtained by McKenzie (2010), Chien (2018) and Martens (2020), pursuant to whom females are more favorable towards native varieties whereas males are more favorable towards non-native varieties. It should be noted that, even if the gender of the participants did not create much variation across speakers in terms of solidarity, it did cause statistically significant results in the status ANOVA, leading to many differences across speakers.

Language Attitudes by Age

Below, Table 3 presents the mean ratings (and standard deviations) of the solidarity and status dimensions of the five speakers according to the age of the participants. Once again, it should be clarified that the Gen1 and Gen2 groups are made up by both Argentinean and Spanish participants.

Table 3. Mean ratings (and standard deviations) by age

	Accent									
	Generation 1					**Generation 2**				
	USA	UK	Arg.	Bolivia	Spain	USA	UK	Arg.	Bolivia	Spain
Solidarity	4.13	4.17	3.85	4.07	3.67	4.05	4.11	3.87	3.93	3.74

	(1.17)	(1.30)	(1.13)	(1.12)	(1.13)	(1.26)	(1.40)	(1.14)	(1.35)	(1.20)
Status	4.39	3.93	3.51	3.59	3.43	4.13	4.04	3.28	3.34	3.09
	(1.05)	(1.31)	(1.05)	(1.12)	(1.10)	(1.36)	(1.48)	(1.12)	(1.28)	(1.09)

Regarding solidarity traits, among Gen1 participants, the most positive evaluation was given to the speaker from the UK ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.30$), closely followed by the speaker from the USA ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.17$), Bolivia ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.12$), then Argentina ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.13$), and Spain ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.13$). Among Gen2 participants, the same hierarchy emerged, in which the most positive solidarity rating was given to the speaker from the UK ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.40$), closely followed by the speaker from the USA ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.26$), then Bolivia ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.35$), Argentina ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 1.14$), and Spain ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.20$). See Figure 5 for estimated marginal means.
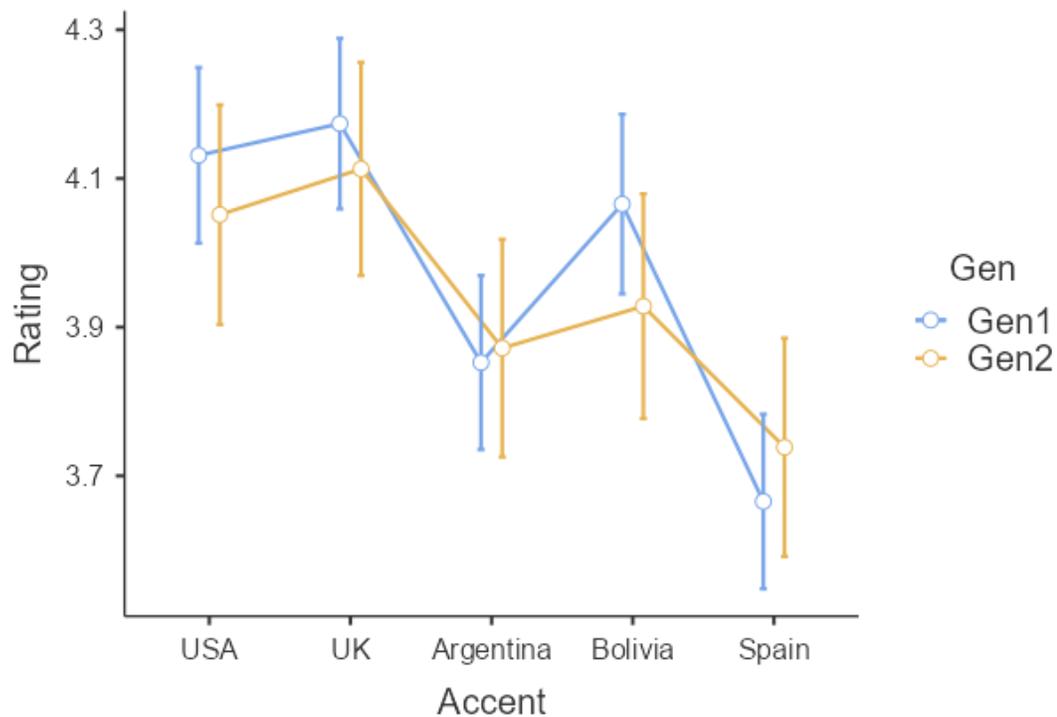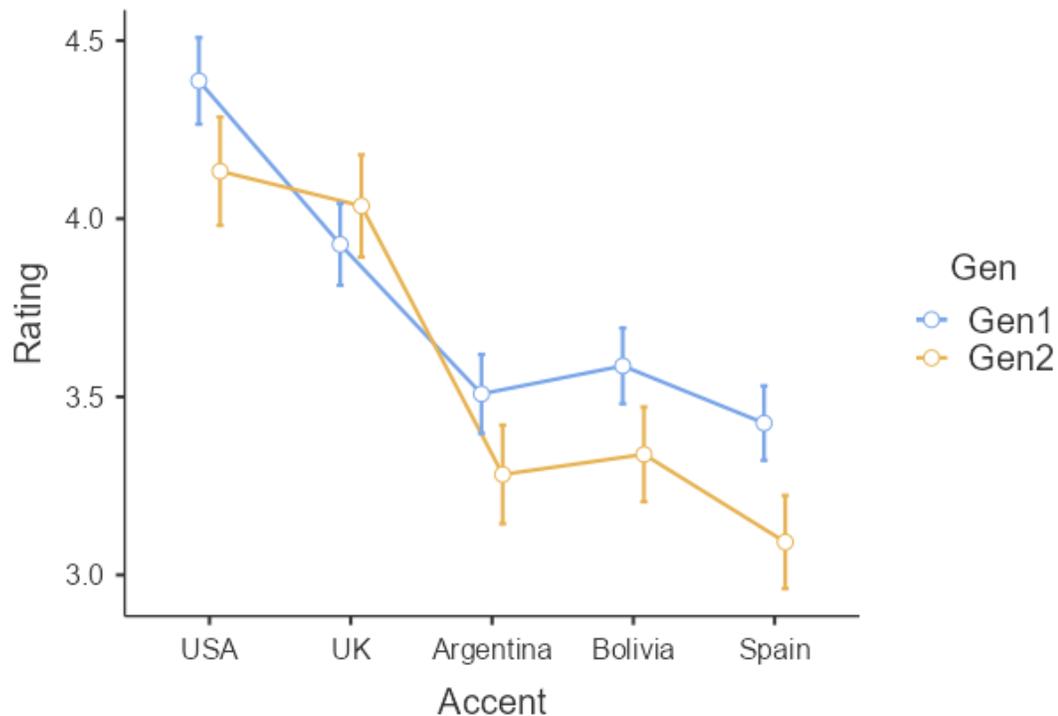
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Figure 5. Estimated marginal means of the solidarity dimension by age

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean ratings of the solidarity dimension of each speaker (DV) according to the age of the participants (IV). Results of Mauchly's test indicate that the assumption of sphericity was violated, $W = 0.830$, $p = 0.035$, $HFe = 0.949$. At first sight, results of the ANOVA show that the variation across speakers according to participants' age is not statistically significant, $F (3.80, 372.10) = 0.329$, $p = 0.849$, $\eta^2_p = 0.003$. However, post-hoc pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction reveal that there are statistically significant differences between the ratings awarded by Gen1 participants to the speaker from the USA and the speaker from Spain ($t = 3.6564$, $p = 0.019$) and the ratings awarded by Gen1 participants to the speaker from the UK and the speaker from Spain ($t = 3.7954$, $p = 0.011$). No other significant differences were found.

As for status traits, Gen1 participants awarded the highest rating to the speaker from the USA (*M* = 4.39, *SD* = 1.05), followed by the speaker from the UK (*M* = 3.93, *SD* = 1.31), then Bolivia (*M* = 3.59, *SD* = 1.12), Argentina (*M* = 3.51, *SD* = 1.05) and Spain (*M* = 3.43, *SD* = 1.10). Among Gen2 participants, the same hierarchy emerged, in which the highest solidarity rating was awarded to the speaker from the USA (*M* = 4.13, *SD* = 1.36), followed by the speaker from the UK (*M* = 4.04, *SD* = 1.48), then Bolivia (*M* = 3.34, *SD* = 1.28), Argentina (*M* = 3.28, *SD* = 1.12) and Spain (*M* = 3.09, *SD* = 1.09). See Figure 6 for estimated marginal means.

Figure 6. Estimated marginal means of the status dimension by age

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean ratings of the status dimension of each speaker (DV) according to the age of the participants (IV). Results of Mauchly's test indicate that the assumption of sphericity was violated, *W* = 0.582, *p* < .001, *HFe* = 0.788. At

first sight, results of the ANOVA show that the variation across speakers according to participants' age is not statistically significant, F (3.15, 308.78) = 1.57, $p = 0.194$, $\eta^2_p = 0.016$. Post-hoc pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction reveal that there are many statistically significant differences across groups. As regards the ratings given by Gen1 participants to the speaker from the USA, there are statistically significant differences with respect to those given by the same group to the speaker from the UK ($t = 4.416$, $p = 0.001$) and those given by both groups to the three non-native guises: Argentina ($t = 6.401$, $p < .001$), Bolivia ($t = 5.742$, $p < .001$) and Spain ($t = 7.289$, $p < .001$), as rated by Gen1 participants, and Argentina ($t = 5.998$, $p < .001$), Bolivia ($t = 5.823$, $p < .001$) and Spain ($t = 7.255$, $p < .001$), as rated by Gen2 participants. Something similar occurs between the ratings given by the Gen2 participants to the speaker from the USA with respect to those given by the same group to the three non-native guises: Argentina ($t = 4.959$, $p < .001$), Bolivia ($t = 4.562$, $p < .001$) and Spain ($t = 6.316$, $p < .001$), and those given by Gen1 participants to the speaker from Spain ($t = 3.833$, $p = 0.010$). Regarding the ratings given by Gen1 participants to the speaker from the UK, there are statistically significant differences with respect to those awarded by the same group to the speaker from Spain ($t = 4.207$, $p = 0.003$) and those given by Gen2 participants to the three non-native guises: Argentina ($t = 3.593$, $p = 0.023$), Bolivia ($t = 3.358$, $p = 0.050$) and Spain ($t = 4.807$, $p < .001$). Similarly, the ratings given by Gen2 participants to the speaker from the UK differ significantly from those given by the same group to the three non-native guises: Argentina ($t = 4.271$, $p = 0.002$), Bolivia ($t = 4.320$, $p = 0.002$) and Spain ($t = 6.327$, $p < .001$), as well as those awarded by Gen1 participants to the speaker from Spain ($t = 3.436$, $p = 0.039$). No other significant differences were found.

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When asked to identify the country of origin of the speakers, 52 out of the 61 (85.25%) Gen1 participants and 28 out of the 39 (71.79%) Gen2 participants provided the correct country of the speaker from the UK, with all Gen1 participants and 34 (87.18%) Gen2 participants recognizing him as native. The speaker from the USA was also recognized as native by almost all participants: 58 (95.08%) Gen1 participants and 36 (92.31%) Gen2 participants, even though they had more trouble identifying the correct country of origin, with 41 (67.21%) Gen1 participants and 22 (56.41%) Gen2 participants stating that he was American. The non-native guises, once again, were recognized as such by the majority of the participants: the speaker from Argentina by 57 (93.44%) Gen1 participants and 37 (94.87%) Gen2 participants, the speaker from Bolivia by 59 (96.72%) Gen1 participants and 36 (92.31%) Gen2 participants, and the speaker from Spain by 59 (96.72%) Gen1 participants and 38 (97.45%) Gen2 participants. The speaker from Argentina was only identified as such by 21 (34.43%) Gen1 participants and 10 (25.64%) Gen2 participants. As mentioned in the nationality subsection, no participants correctly identified the country of origin of the speaker from Bolivia, but he was largely believed to be Latin American. Finally, out of the three non-native guises, participants had the least difficulty identifying the country of origin of the speaker from Spain, recognized by 47 (77.05%) Gen1 participants and 24 (61.54%) Gen2 participants.

To sum up, participants could easily identify the native and the non-native guises with an efficacy of over 90%, except for the speaker from the UK, whom Gen2 participants had a little more trouble identifying as native. As regards the identification of the countries of origin, the rate of efficacy of Gen1 participants was notably higher than that of Gen2 participants, except in

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the case of the speaker from Bolivia, whose origin was not correctly identified by any participants.

On average, Gen1 participants awarded higher ratings than Gen2 participants to the speakers in both dimensions, except for the speakers from Spain and Argentina on solidarity traits, and the speaker from the UK on status traits. In both dimensions, the same evaluative hierarchy emerged across both groups of participants, with the speaker from the UK receiving the most positive solidarity rating, the speaker from the USA receiving the most positive status rating, and the speaker from Spain receiving the most negative solidarity and status ratings.

H1 is confirmed by the results given that, in both age groups, both native accents received more positive solidarity and status evaluations than the three non-native accents. Across both age groups, the speaker from the UK was preferred in terms of solidarity, while the speaker from the USA was preferred in terms of status, and the non-native speakers received less positive evaluations in the following order, from highest to lowest: Bolivia, Argentina and Spain. Once again, these findings support previous research conducted by El-Dash and Busnardo (2001) and Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan (2020). In spite of this, the fact that participants favored the UK accent on solidarity traits and the US accent on status traits contradicts the findings obtained by Carrie (2017). These results could be related to the level of English proficiency of the participants, who had no problem distinguishing native from non-native accents, but did have more difficulty identifying the correct country of origin of the speakers.

Findings confirm H5 since, as stated above, younger participants were on average more favorable in their evaluations of all speakers except for those from Argentina and Spain in terms of solidarity and the speaker from the UK in terms of status. Despite this, the differences in the

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ratings of these speakers were not significant across both age groups. As in Giles' (1970) study, older participants were more restrained in their evaluations of the speakers. In addition, although native accents were preferred by both age groups with respect to non-native ones, younger participants were generally more positive than older participants towards not only native accents, but non-native accents as well, which partially supports the results obtained by Coupland and Bishop (2007). As expected, Gen1 participants awarded much higher status ratings to the speaker from the USA than to those of other varieties, which gave rise to significant differences with respect to the ratings awarded by Gen1 participants to the speaker from the UK and the ratings awarded to all non-native guises by both Gen1 and Gen2 participants. These findings are in agreement with those obtained by Giles (1970), who suggested that younger participants are influenced to a greater extent than older participants by the power, scientific advancements and audiovisual content strongly associated with the American accent.

Direct Questions about Language Attitudes

In order to examine whether participants' indirect — and therefore subconscious — attitudes matched their direct — conscious — ones, they were asked a series of direct questions about their attitudes towards native and non-native accents. As indicated in the survey subsection, the seven direct questions appearing in the survey were classified into two groups: positive attitudes towards foreign accents (questions 1, 3 and 6) and negative attitudes towards foreign accents (questions 2, 4, 5 and 7). Table 4 below presents the mean ratings (and standard deviations) of the language attitudes of all participants according to the independent variables under study.

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Table 4. Mean ratings (and standard deviations) of participants' direct language attitudes

	Groups					
	Argentinean	**Spaniard**	**Female**	**Male**	**Gen 1**	**Gen 2**
Positive attitudes	4.18 (1.59)	4.67 (1.42)	4.60 (1.45)	4.20 (1.58)	4.55 (1.51)	4.23 (1.52)
Negative attitudes	3.89 (1.50)	3.89 (1.71)	3.79 (1.65)	4.01 (1.55)	3.78 (1.70)	4.05 (1.44)

Regarding nationality, Spanish participants demonstrated more positive attitudes towards foreign accents than Argentinean participants when answering direct questions, in contrast to the more positive ratings awarded to almost all speakers in both dimensions by the Argentinean participants during the verbal-guise test. As it can be seen in Table 4 above, the mean rating of the positive attitudes of the Argentinean participants is the lowest across all groups ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.59$). However, their indirect evaluations of the non-native speakers are quite high in comparison to those of other groups, especially with respect to the solidarity of the speaker from Bolivia. What is interesting is that the mean rating of the positive attitudes of the Spanish participants is the highest across all groups ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.42$), whereas their indirect evaluations of the non-native guises are among the lowest in both dimensions. In fact, as indicated in the nationality subsection, more statistically significant differences were found between the ratings awarded by the Spaniards to the native and the non-native guises in both dimensions than those awarded by the Argentineans. Additionally, one of the non-native guises

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— the speaker from Bolivia — actually received the second highest solidarity rating among Argentineans, which caused statistically significant differences with respect to the rating awarded to the speaker from Spain by the Spaniards. These findings from the direct questionnaire could be interpreted as demonstrating that Spanish participants were influenced by the social desirability bias, i.e. that they responded according to what they consider to be socially acceptable.

As for gender, it is surprising that males were more positive in the verbal-guise test but they were more negative when asked directly about their language attitudes ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.58$). These results are especially unexpected since one of the non-native guises—the speaker from Bolivia—was among the highest rated in terms of solidarity among males, and even if the remaining non-native guises received lower ratings, they were still awarded more solidarity and status by males than females. A possible explanation for this could be that males were not affected by or simply not concerned about the social desirability bias. On the other hand, in line with previous studies and unlike in the verbal-guise test, females exhibited higher positive attitudes in the direct questionnaire when compared with their male counterparts ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 1.45$).

When it comes to age, not much variance emerged between the indirect and direct attitudes of the two groups. Gen1 participants awarded on average more positive ratings to the speakers in the verbal-guise study than Gen2 participants, except in some specific cases. In the direct questionnaire, younger participants' positive attitudes ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 1.51$) were also higher than those of older participants ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.52$). It is worth mentioning that the negative attitudes of Gen2 participants towards foreign accents are the highest across all groups ($M =$

4.05, *SD* = 1.44), which matches the more restrained evaluations they made of the speakers in the verbal-guise study and the results obtained in other studies, such as the one by Giles (1970).

All in all, it should be pointed out that, even though some differences emerged between the direct language attitudes of participants across groups, this variation is small and not precisely significant. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see how, in some groups, positive and negative attitudes were inverted when comparing the results of the indirect method with those of the direct method, which serves to prove that a mixed-method approach leads to more comprehensive results and helps to bypass the social desirability bias that participants may be subject to when participating in direct studies. In fact, this inversion between positive and negative attitudes in some groups could be the result of the social desirability bias, since some participants could have uncovered the true purpose of the survey by the time they reached the direct questions after having completed the entire verbal-guise study.

The results of both the verbal-guise study and the direct questionnaire have proven that non-native accents are still the target of negative attitudes and linguistic stereotypes, not only in terms of status, but also when it comes to solidarity traits. These findings are even more surprising considering that all the participants in this study were L2 speakers who mostly did not feel identified with the non-native varieties presented to them in the survey. Such results are in line with Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997), in whose study Austrian participants did not evaluate their own non-native variety positively, but contradict Cargile and Giles (1998), Giles and Marlow (2011), and Kircher and Zipp (2022). Nevertheless, these findings are in accordance with those obtained in similar studies conducted with L1 speakers, such as those by Ryan et al. (1977), Giles and

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Watson (2013), Dragojevic et al. (2017) and Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan (2020), since non-native varieties received lower solidarity and status ratings than native varieties.

Conclusion

This study has examined and compared the language attitudes of 100 Argentinean and Spanish participants towards different varieties of English taking into account their nationality, gender and age to uncover and raise awareness about the stereotypes held by L2 speakers towards both native and non-native varieties of their L2. The motivation behind this project was that foreign-accented speakers are commonly stereotyped, prejudiced and sometimes even discriminated against solely based on the way they speak because they belong to linguistic out-groups (Goatley-Soan & Baldwin, 2018).

To conduct this research, a mixed-method approach was selected to analyze the responses of 50 Argentineans and 50 Spaniards of a survey which included both an indirect method, i.e., a verbal-guise study, and a direct method of language attitudes elicitation, i.e. direct questions. The verbal-guise study was designed to elicit more private and subconscious attitudes and comprised five audio recordings in English, two of them by native speakers, one from the USA and one from the UK, and the remaining three by non-native speakers from three different Spanish-speaking countries: Argentina, Bolivia and Spain. The direct questions were meant to obtain more conscious or even 'socially-desirable' attitudes.

Throughout the analysis of the data gathered in this project, the four research questions posed in the introduction were answered and the results confirmed some of the hypotheses, while others were refuted. H1 was completely confirmed by the findings of the statistical analysis across all groups, since in all cases, participants exhibited more positive attitudes towards the native

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accents than the non-native accents, in line with El-Dash and Busnardo (2001), Carrie (2017) and Dragojevic and Goatley-Soan (2020). In both dimensions, either the speaker from the USA or the speaker from the UK received the highest rating across all groups. Interestingly, in terms of solidarity, the speaker from Bolivia was evaluated as positively as the two native guises among Gen1 participants, Argentineans and males, surpassing the speaker from the USA in the latter two cases.

The most unexpected results were the ones that rejected H2, given that participants were meant to feel more solidarity towards the non-native speakers, who represented their in-group. It could be that these specific participants did not feel that the non-native speakers represented their own variety of English, even if they did recognize them as non-native and were mostly able to identify the origin of the speakers from Argentina and Spain. In all cases, the speaker from Spain received the lowest rating. These findings contradict those of Cargile and Giles (1998), Giles and Marlow (2011), and Kircher and Zipp (2022), but support those of Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997).

H3 was refuted in the solidarity dimension but partially confirmed in the status dimension. Unexpectedly, Argentineans awarded higher solidarity to the speaker from the UK, whereas Spaniards did so with respect to the speaker from the USA, contradicting Friedrich (2003) and Dalton-Puffer et al. (1997), but supporting Carrie (2017) in the case of the Spaniards. These specific Argentinean participants could have had more contact with British English, while the Spanish participants could have had more contact with American English, which could account for the results obtained in the solidarity dimension. As for status, both groups preferred the speaker from the USA, which was not expected for the Spanish participants. In this case, results

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contradict those obtained by Carrie (2017), but support Fuertes et al. (2012), as the standard accents were preferred over the non-standard ones.

H4 was almost completely rejected, since female participants were not more positive than male participants in their evaluations of the speakers, except for the speaker from the USA. These findings contradict those of Giles (1970), Brown and Cichocki (1995), Coupland and Bishop (2007) and McKenzie et al. (2015). Notwithstanding this, females did award very high-status ratings to the speaker from the USA, which somewhat confirms that they are more sensitive towards prestige and that they favor native varieties, in accordance with McKenzie (2010), Chien (2018) and Martens (2020).

Lastly, H5 was confirmed by the results. As explained by Giles (1970), older people tend to be more restrained when evaluating speakers. Hence, Gen1 participants in general exhibiting more positive attitudes than Gen2 participants towards the speakers, including the non-native ones, is not surprising and supports the results obtained by Coupland and Bishop (2007). Gen1 participants also gave a much more positive status evaluation to the speaker from the USA, in agreement with Giles (1970), indicating their influence by US audiovisual and media content.

In light of the above, this study has contributed to the field of language attitudes by shedding light on Argentinean and Spanish people's attitudes towards different varieties of English. Besides, participants' attitudes were compared taking into consideration not only their nationality, but also their gender and age, variables which usually remain unaddressed in such studies. The analysis carried out in this project delved deeper into the attitudes of L2 speakers towards their L2 and helped to reaffirm some previously studied hypotheses, such as the fact that native varieties are evaluated more positively than non-native varieties and that younger

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participants award higher ratings than older participants, while refuting others, such as the fact that L2 speakers feel more solidarity towards non-native speakers and that female participants give more positive evaluations than male participants. Furthermore, results demonstrate that linguistic stereotypes and negative attitudes towards non-native accents, especially in terms of status, are still active nowadays, even among L2 speakers. Thus, more work still needs to be done in the field in order to confront these stereotypes and help to prevent prejudice and discrimination against non-standard accents.

Like all research projects, this one is not free of limitations. The main limitation of this study was the size of the sample. Since data was gathered only from 50 Argentineans and 50 Spaniards, the results cannot be said to represent the entire population and can therefore not be generalized. Moreover, the small number of participants did not allow for subgroups to be created within each nationality, so that the other two independent variables studied herein, i.e. gender and age, were created from the general pool of participants and include both Argentineans and Spaniards. Due to constraints of time and scope, other independent variables gathered in the survey, such as level of studies, level of English and living abroad, had to be discarded. Finally, it is worth stating that software restrictions did not allow for the recordings to be randomized during the administration of the survey via Google Forms. For this reason, all participants heard the audios in the same order, which could have had an effect on the results obtained.

Bearing in mind the abovementioned limitations, it is clear that more projects of this kind need to be conducted in the field. Although some demographic variables were considered in this study, larger projects with more participants from diverse backgrounds would enable more variables to

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be studied, leading to a more comprehensive analysis. For instance, future studies could focus not only on participants' L1, but also on their gender and age, and even on their level of studies and level of English proficiency. Besides, larger studies would allow for subgroups to be created across the different independent variables, which would yield more specific results and would help researchers better understand participants' language attitudes.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey

CONSENT FORM

I understand that participation in this project is entirely voluntary and I may withdraw at any time. If I do so, all information provided by me will be deleted.

I understand that the information provided by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, dissertations, publications or presentations undertaken by the researcher, but my personal information will not be included and all reasonable measures will be taken in order to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project.

I understand that all my answers will be kept entirely confidential and that only academic researchers will have access to the information collected during the study and they too will keep all the information confidential.

I understand that results obtained from this survey will be used only for scientific purposes and that my responses will not be traced back to me.

I confirm that I have read the consent form included above. This consent is granted pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and to Spanish Law No. 3/2018 on Personal Data Protection.

I agree to take part in this study.

a) Yes   b) No

PERSONAL DATA

1) What is your gender?

a) Male   b) Female   c) Prefer not to say

2) State your age **in numbers** (e.g. 25).

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_____

3) Where were you born?

a) Argentina   b) Spain

4) Which province are you from?

_____

5) Have you ever lived abroad?

a) Yes   b) No

6) If you have lived abroad, please write the name of the **country** and indicate the length of your **stay** (e.g. United States, 2 years).

_____

7) What is your level of studies?

a) I'm still in school   b) I have a high school diploma   c) I'm a university student

d) I have a university degree e) I'm a master's student   f) I have a master's degree

g) I'm a PhD student h) I have a PhD

SPEAKER EVALUATION

Please read the following instructions carefully.

In this part of the survey, you will hear 5 very short recordings in English. After listening to each recording, answer the questions included below. Please respond with honesty and without thinking too much about your answers. You don't need to understand the recordings, just mark your impressions.

The text and the questions are THE SAME for all the speakers. This is NOT a test.

You may need to ROTATE YOUR PHONE to see all options.

SPEAKER 1

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Listen to speaker 1 and then answer the questions below.

1) On a scale from 1 (strongly **disagree**) to 6 (strongly **agree**), I think speaker 1 is:

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Friendly	○	○	○	○	○	○
Intelligent	○	○	○	○	○	○
Well educated	○	○	○	○	○	○
Generous	○	○	○	○	○	○
Successful	○	○	○	○	○	○
Likeable	○	○	○	○	○	○
Polite	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hard-working	○	○	○	○	○	○
Honest	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ambitious	○	○	○	○	○	○

2) Which country do you think speaker 1 is from?

[The questions in this section were repeated for speakers 2, 3, 4 and 5]

On a scale from 1 (strongly **disagree**) to 6 (strongly **agree**), to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1) I feel more comfortable speaking English with non-native speakers than with native ones.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

2) I believe that foreign speakers who speak English with a native-like accent are more respected than those who speak with a foreign accent.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

3) I think non-native speakers of English should be proud of their foreign accents.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

4) I believe speaking English with a non-native accent can make someone feel less comfortable in a professional setting.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

5) I think non-native speakers of English should try to sound more like native speakers.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

6) I think the English level of foreign speakers should not be judged by their non-native accent.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

7) I find it difficult to understand someone who speaks English with a foreign accent.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	○	○	Strongly agree

LEVEL OF ENGLISH

1) What is your level of English?

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a) Basic (A1-A2)   b) Intermediate (B1-B2)   c) Advanced (C1-C2)   d) Native

2) How long have you been learning or studying English for? (e.g. 5 years)

_____

3) Did you go to a bilingual school?

a) Yes   b) No

4) If you ever sat for any English exams or you have any English certificates, please include them below.

_____

5) Please leave a comment below if there is anything else you would like to say about your level of English or your contact with the language.

_____

Appendix B: Elicitation paragraph

Please call Stella. Ask her to bring these things with her from the store: Six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob. We also need a small plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids. She can scoop these things into three red bags, and we will go meet her Wednesday at the train station.

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