

## Gendered and Racialized Perceptions of Spanish-accented English: The Case of Lexically Specific Phonology Switches

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Previous research has demonstrated that Anglo-Americans perceive speakers with Spanish-accented English as less competent, poor, uneducated, less suitable for higher status occupations, and even more criminally-inclined (Giles, Williams, Mackie, & Rosselli, 1995; Marín, 1984). Within the study of language and identity, recent sociolinguistic research has focused on the indexical field of sociolinguistic variables (Eckert, 2008). For example, recent research has demonstrated that changing a single variable in a speaker's utterance can have a significant effect on how that speaker is perceived by listeners in a matched guise test (Campbell-Kibler, 2007; Drager, Slater, & Macinkowicz, 2010). The present study employs the matched guise methodology to investigate not just the perceptions of Spanish-accented English but also of lexically specific phonology switches, i.e. the use of Spanish phonology on English words of Spanish origin (e.g. *taco*, *Garcia*) within a larger, English phonology utterance.

The relevant guises for this experiment were recorded by two male Spanish-English bilinguals performing a map task (so as to elicit maximally neutral and comparable content). The target words (in both Spanish and English phonologies) were spliced into longer English-phonology utterances which were used as the stimuli, along with several distractor utterances from other male speakers. One of the bilingual speakers also produced a guise with Spanish-accented English throughout in order to compare the current study to the aforementioned studies. Via an online survey, listeners rated the sound files on a 6 point Likert scale for the following traits: educated, trustworthy, easygoing, and masculine. In order to explore the indexical field elicited by phonology switching, listeners also provided open-ended responses to questions about the speakers' appearance and activities.

Results from 166 participants, all native English speakers from the US, show that, as opposed to previous research on Spanish-accented English, neither the lexically specific phonology switch guise nor the Spanish-accented throughout guise elicit lower ratings for education or trustworthiness than the English phonology throughout guise, which could indicate an improvement in some overt attitudes. However, both the lexically specific phonology switch guise and the Spanish-accented English guise were rated as more masculine than the English phonology guise. We discuss the relation between these results and the portrayal of the *latin lover* stereotype in popular media (Berg, 2009; Mastro & Greenberg, 2000).

Furthermore, while any amount of Spanish phonology elicits higher ratings of masculinity, the results from the open-ended questions reveal a differentially racialized picture for the three guises, particularly with respect to skin color, hair color, and height (see Fig. 1 for the word clouds for the question "What does this person look like?"). Moreover, the lexically specific phonology switch is enough to invoke images stereotypically associated with Hispanic cultural practices within the US, such as playing soccer. These results suggest that having access to and command of both Spanish and English phonologies may not be overtly stigmatized in terms of trustworthiness and education; however, this does not preclude the phonology switchers from being the objects of racial and cultural profiling.

