English as a lingua franca: The self-reported experience of the non-native speakers

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INTRODUCTION

Key Terms

- Lingua Franca (LF): a common language adopted by speakers whose native languages are different
- · Influencing Language (IL): the source of an accent
- · Target Language (TL): affected by a "foreign" accent from the IL

Study Aim

- Pilot study explored the sociolinguistic and sociocultural power differentials of ILs and TLs (Groves, 2023; 2024)
 - Findings: Relationship between accent "thickness" and its impact on speakers is not always direct (Groves, 2023) and is situation/context dependent
- · Current study focuses on English as the TL
 - $_{\odot}\;$ To explore impact on participants speaking it as a LF
 - o This group is the largest LF group (House, 2018)
 - $\circ\quad \mbox{Massive industry offering accent reduction to this group}$
 - This may affect their attitudes & experiences, and marginalizes them
- Goal: apply a speaker-centered approach by examining the speaker-reported impact of foreign accents on English as a LF

METHODS

Participants

- · 69 survey respondents
 - o Subgroup with English as their TL: 50
 - o Number of ILs in this subgroup: 25

Instrumentation

 Online survey (Purdue University IRB-2021-1744) adapting the Accent Impact Index (Gurevich & Bugel, 2023)

Analysis

- Responses were analyzed to assess the magnitude of impact (positive, neutral, or negative) as a function of perceived accent thickness
- Quantitative analysis: Likert-scale responses were coded for "Thickness Count" (out of a max of 77) and Positive, Negative, and Neutral impact across multiple contexts and situations
- Qualitative analysis: Open-ended questions were categorized by the sentiments or opinions they expressed

Accented speakers can proactively shape their attitudes leading to a more positive experience

RESULTS

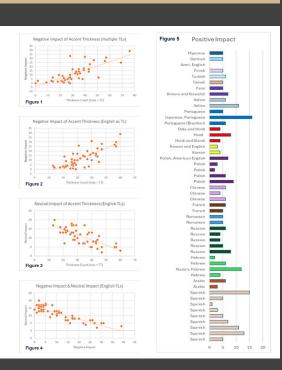
Quantitative Analysis

- High correlation between thickness count (TC) and negative impact (NI)
 - Same as pilot (with 8 diff TLs Figure 1), but slightly different slope (Figure 2)
 - Also same as pilot, no statistical correlation between positive impact (PI) & TC
 - o Unlike the pilot results:
 - TC and neutral impact (N) are also highly correlated (Figure 3)
 - Which also means N and NI are highly correlated (Figure 4)

Qualitative Analysis

Open ended responses regarding psychosocial aspects of speakers of English as a LF (*n*=38)

- 87% expressed the sentiment that their accent made them feel different from their community
- 45% expressed they feel a negative bias towards them stemming from their accent
- 21% expressed that their accent leads to experiencing physical or emotional consequences
- 13% described feeling the need to hide or mask their accent in some way
- · 16% expressed the desire to modify their accent



DISCUSSION

- · NI and N are affected by TC (more than by specific ILs)
- · What affects the PI?
 - Figure 5: scores per IL no trend, confirming pilot hypothesis that context and situation are responsible for PI
- · The ILs play a role in the outliers:
 - Examples of higher NI for TC (from Figure 2)
 - Myanmar: 31 TC/26 NI
 - Chinese: 40 TC/31 NI
 - Polish: 60 TC/39 NI [highest of both, stands out from NI trendline]
 - o Examples of lower NI for TC (from Figure 2)
 - Hebrew: 29 TC/0 NI
 - Russian: 35 TC/2 NI
 - Spanish: 35 TC/ 8 NI

IMPLICATIONS

- · Regardless of NI, very few speakers want to modify their accent
- For English as the TL, TC has highest influence on NI, but IL can also make a difference (outliers)
- PI appears to be less impacted by TC or IL, suggestion context & situation influence this measure
- Need higher number of participants from each IL to get a better picture

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