

Attitudes towards Variation in the Pronunciation of Recent Anglicisms in Spanish

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The study of linguistic attitudes started in the 1960s with the work of Wallace Lambert and has gradually become a popular field within the Sociolinguistic framework, especially thanks to the work of Dennis Preston and his introduction to the field of Perceptual Dialectology. Within this framework, this pilot study is a first step towards a major research that aims to analyse the linguistic behaviour of Spanish native speakers and their attitudes towards the pronunciation of recent anglicisms such as *Twitter* and *WhatsApp* or *Instagram*.

In Spain, being the *lingua franca* of our age, English plays an essential part in, among many other areas, our academic curriculum, the media and social networks. However, there seems to be a tendency to mock and/or laugh at those who pronounce English loans with an English pronunciation instead of a more adapted one to the Spanish phonological system, and to even consider them as arrogant and presumptuous. Articles such as “Why do we laugh at people who speak English well in Spain?” in the Spanish newspaper *El País* may account for such behaviour. This study aims then to corroborate if such attitudes truly exist.

As regards to the methodology, three different techniques were employed: an individual recorded interview in which informants’ pronunciation of the variables was elicited; a matched-guise test combined with a semantic differential scale to obtain informants’ attitudes towards the different pronunciations; and a questionnaire in order to request further information about how important and useful informants regard English as a language. Moreover, informants were organised according to three independent variables: age, sex and educational level.

Results show that there is a tendency among speakers to consider an English pronunciation of anglicisms as pretentious and less modest, no matter the age, sex, or educational level. Moreover, the most prestigious pronunciation in Sevilla (Andalusia) appears to be the Spanish adapted pronunciation of the loans, and English appears to be barely practised among the community.

Therefore, not only does this study corroborate the negative attitudes towards the English pronunciation of anglicisms, at least in Western Andalusia, but also shows the covert prestige that the Spanish adapted pronunciation of the loans seems to hold, which is, on the other hand, one of the main reasons that may account for such attitudes.

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