

# The Influence of Accent, Gender, and Ethnocentrism on Stereotype Content

Cammy Bly • The College of Wooster • 2021 – 2022 • Department of Psychology • Supervised by Dr. Amber Garcia

## Introduction

Accent provides immediate social information about the identity of a speaker, introducing positive and negative biases that impact subsequent social interactions. The current study examines the influence of a speaker's accent and gender (IV) on their perceived warmth and competence (DV). This study also considers the relationship between an individual's ethnocentrism and their evaluations of a speaker's warmth and competence. The results are discussed in the context of the Stereotype Content Model.

## Hypotheses

- H1:** Spanish accented speakers will be perceived as less competent than North American accented speakers.
- H2:** Women will be perceived as warmer than men, but men will be perceived as more competent than women.
- H3:** Spanish accented men will be perceived as less competent than North American accented men.
- H4:** Spanish accented women will be perceived as less warm than North American accented women.

## Participants and Procedure

Participants for this study were 72 students from the College of Wooster. Participants responded to questionnaires via Qualtrics through which they rated their own perceived ethnocentrism and evaluated a speaker based on concepts considered in the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al., 2002). Participants evaluated the speaker after listening to an audio recording of one of four possible speakers.

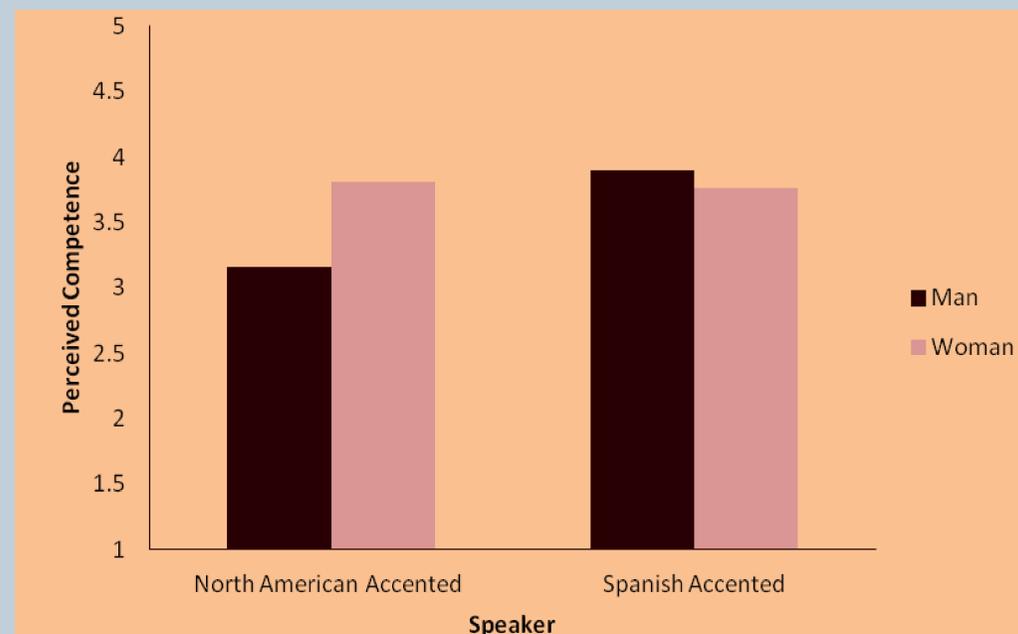
## Materials and Measures

Four audio recordings originally used in a study by Nelson et al. (2016) were obtained for the present study. One of the four speakers was randomly assigned to each participant. Each recording featured a different speaker who read an article from the *New York Times* titled "Biofuels Deemed a Greenhouse Threat" (Rosenthal, 2008). The four speakers included two men and two women. One man and one woman portrayed North American accented English speakers, and one man and one woman portrayed Spanish accented English speakers. The ethnocentrism scale used in this study was the GENE Scale, a generalized ethnocentrism scale developed by Neuliep and McCroskey (1997).

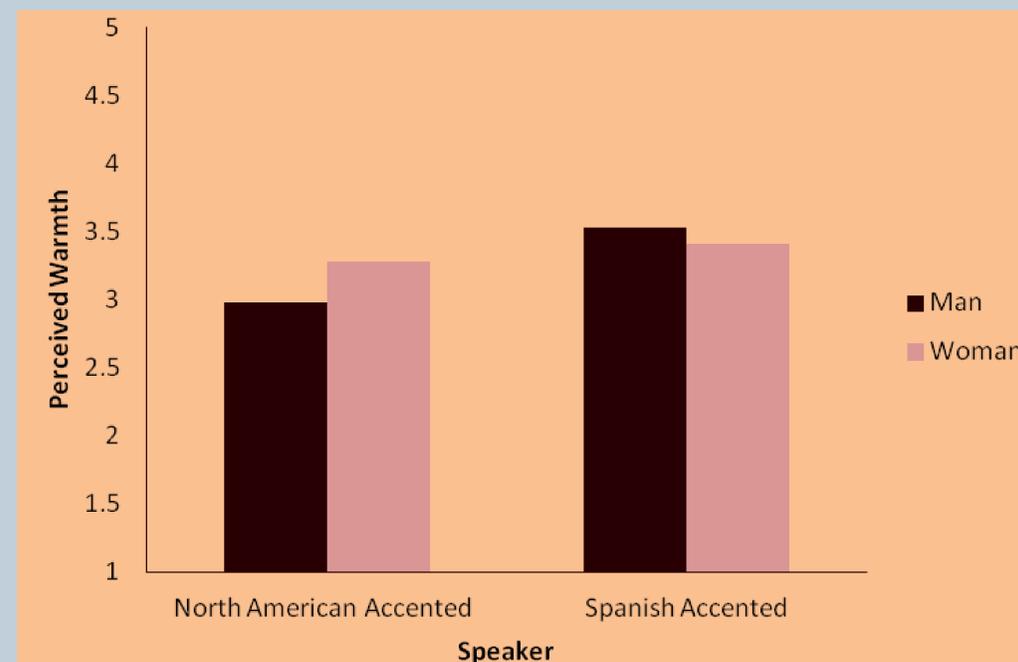
## Results

The Spanish accented man was perceived as the most competent of all four speakers. There were no significant results for evaluations of warmth.

*Perceived Competence of a Speaker based on Accent and Gender*



*Perceived Warmth of a Speaker based on Accent and Gender*



## Stereotype Content Model

	Competence	
	Low	High
High Warmth	Paternalistic Prejudice Low status, not competitive Pity, sympathy (e.g., elderly people, disabled people, housewives)	Admiration High status, not competitive Pride, admiration (e.g., in-group, close allies)
Low Warmth	Contemptuous Prejudice Low status, competitive Contempt, disgust, anger, resentment (e.g., welfare recipients, poor people)	Envious Prejudice High status, competitive Envy, jealousy (e.g., Asians, Jews, rich people, feminists)

*Note.* Adapted from "A model of (of mixed) stereotype content: Competence and warmth respectively follow from perceived status and competition," by S.T. Fiske, A.J.C. Cuddy, P. Glick, and J. Xu, 2002, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(6), p. 881.

## Conclusions

While I hypothesized that the Spanish accented man would be perceived as less competent than the North American accented man, my results indicated the opposite. My results show that the perceived competence of the Spanish accented man is attributed to his accent. Additionally, the significant interaction between gender and accent means that gender and accent combined also contributed to the speaker's perceived competence. There was no statistically significant results for a speaker's perceived warmth. This means that neither accent nor gender accounted for the perceived warmth of any of the speakers. Additionally, we found no significant correlation between ethnocentrism and perceptions of warmth and competence.

## Future Directions

These results, which differ from those of previous research, indicate a need for future research considering the influence of accent and gender on stereotype formation. It is possible that positive biases influenced the perceptions of the Spanish accented man, but this conclusion is inconsistent with other research. Because of this, the influences of accent and gender on stereotype content should be further studied.