



# Fanonian social order of the language/dialect dichotomy



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## INTRODUCTION

- The e-poster works in the field of linguistic ideologies how the language / dialect dichotomy (or any of the labels that substitute it as diatopic variety) involves a social order based on Zone of Being and Zone of Non-Being, proposed by Frantz Fanon in his book *Black Skin, White Masks*, in 1952. It implies a hierarchy based on the inferiorization and domination, with social consequences from the point of view of inequality of people and social justice.
- Assuming the Walter Benjamin's challenge proposed to brush history against the grain, the goal of our work is to relate linguistic and politic ideologies underlying this dichotomy in Spain with Fanonian global hierarchy (racism) in relation to the Andalusian language variety and its speakers. My thesis is based on the idea of how Andalusian people (in general) are linguistically devalued through linguistic hierarchy.

## BACKGROUND

- Previous studies had focused this problem on grammatical aspects. In this sense, it can be pointed out Manuel Alvar's work about Andalusian (language). M. Alvar was a Spanish philologist whose research was based on linguistic geography and dialectology. The Philology and Structuralism influenced his way of thinking languages: he saw languages as systems of signs. However, the main problem concerned the language of Andalusia: for Alvar, Andalusian linguistic variety is "a chaos", "a broken system of signs", a thing "break off" but a same language. Paradoxically, Spanish or Castilian language have unity for advocates of these approaches.
- Such focusing is problematic: 1) structuralist thought, 2) to consider that there are speakers who do not speak a determined language, nor another different language (it is incongruous with the scientific knowledge of the language).
- This approach is widespread among many scholars. This view is typical of hispanic philology (also, in USA: e.g. Holmquist). Sociolinguistics in Spain have dealt with this issue since very similar approaches and analogous assumptions (e.g. Moreno Fernández).

- Studies that inspire and guide my research: Bourdieu's sociology of language, Foucault's discursive approach and his concept of power, Fanon's view of racism, decolonized turn in social sciences, Silverstein's indexicality, Fairclough's concept of discourse and power, critical sociolinguistics and CDA.

## PURPOSE

- In this poster, my purpose is to show the results of a study with speakers who are devalued ontologically by other group members. The marker used to devalue is the language. It is linguistic discrimination, i.e. discrimination against persons. As far as I am concerned, it violates human rights in all senses.
- Language is an indexical marker (Silverstein, Gumperz, Goffman). When people inferiorize other people by their linguistics aspects, it is a form of racism that reflects a Fanonian social order.
- I present some evidences below. These testimonies (translated into English from Spanish) correspond to Andalusian speakers with regard to discrimination that they have experienced. That ethnographic study is fully available in Rodríguez-Iglesias, 2015.

Testimonials
In Castile, somebody told me that he is sure I do not know to write orthographically.
In Cantabria, children cornered us and told us "Gypsies" in school.
A professor of University of Basque Country told me how I can be English teacher being Andalusian.
In Madrid, my colleagues at work tell me: "Learn to speak, hick!".
A group of Catalans accused us of not knowing how to speak well.
No-Andalusian people say that we do not know how to speak correctly and, as a result, they do not understand us.
I have to hide my Andalusian accent to work as a journalist.
In Alicante, somebody told me that we are slacker, that we do not work and that we do not speak well. That person asked me if I know how to write correctly.
In Ávila, somebody told me that nobody would want to work with Andalusian people because of our language.
I am journalist. Andalusian accent doesn't fit into mass media. It's prejudice.
People from Cantabria laughed at our speech. They said us: "You don't know to speak Spanish".
Media companies require you to have neutral accent, but they allow Catalans or Galicians accents.
I was told at work in Galicia: "Do not talk Andalusian because it seems a joke".

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

- The grammar cannot explain this issue, because there is no better (or worse) grammar than other. There are inferiorized groups and dominant groups.
- The idea that reduce one linguistic variety to *language* and other to *dialect* is an ideological construct. In terms of Linguistics, the dichotomy language/dialect is false. It is a old-fashioned way of thinking: 1) it is constructed, 2) it causes problems: that point of view reflects a way of thinking that classifies people ideologically. Furthermore, it produces fallacious knowledge that is no based on the speaker's experience, i.e. in the speech.
- This hierarchy is a Fanonian social order. Fanon's theory of the Zones of Being and Non-Being is an account of ontological classification between people with privilege and people without privilege (Grosfoguel).
- I take the term "linguistic privilege" from Black Feminisms and Crenshaw's intersectionality. Recently, I. Piller. Therefore, the dichotomy language/dialect hides the real dichotomy (ontological): groups with (linguistic) privilege against groups without (linguistic) privilege. In short, it is a form of racism (in Fanon's terms).
- A linguistic ideology results from the dichotomy language/dialect. It supports the abuse of power we check through the shown testimonies here.

## FURTHER RESEARCH

- My research is part of my doctoral thesis about Critical Sociolinguistics. I deal with ontological linguistic discrimination and I understand language as discursive practices (i.e. social practices) whose aspects are indexes that construct ideology (include language ideology) and political actions about human groups, also in the 'science'.
- I have an ethnography (interviews) in process with other Andalusian speakers (workers of the media field: radio and TV announcer). In this field, radio/TV advertising and film dubbing are performed only in Castilian variety that is falsely called "neutral accent": an ideological construct that builds ideology and actions (they are mutually reinforcing). I want to know how they see his practices: why do not they use their own varieties?

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