Effects of Instructor Accent on Undergraduate Evaluations and Learning at a Catholic College

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Abstract: Catholic institutions of higher education are called to form citizens who fight against injustice, including persistent racial oppression. To do this, Catholic, public, and other private institutions must provide students opportunities to learn about and confront racism (Johnston, 2014). It is important that these institutions confront these issues because they employ faculty and staff who may experience systemic racism and can provide cultural knowledge to aid deconstructing racist ideologies. Undergraduate student evaluations of instructors or faculty, however, indicate discrimination against those perceived as non-white and with non-native English accents. This study focuses on one form of racism at a Catholic liberal arts college: bias against instructors who speak with a non-native English accent. This between-groups experimental study was guided by critical sociolinguistic theory and sociocultural theory to examine patterns in undergraduate engagement with material that varied only by instructor accent. Participants (*n*=98) completed a pre-assessment, a microlecture (randomized by accent), a post-assessment, and a microlecture evaluation. The study's theoretical frameworks suggest that students would demonstrate bias against non-white presenters, despite the Catholic context and having no visual cues about the race or ethnicity of the presenter. Pre-and post-assessment results indicated that the microlecture had some limited effects on student learning regardless of instructor accent; however, instructors that were perceived as white had significantly higher ratings in terms of the student belief that they "showed enthusiasm about the subject matter" and that "watching this microlecture improved [their] score on the quiz." These findings suggest continued work is needed to understand and confront issues of systemic racism in higher education.

Keywords: racial bias, student evaluation, accent, higher education

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As demonstrated by the Black Lives Matter movement, the killings of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery, and persistent racial disparities in employment, wealth, education, health, and incarceration, racism and racial inequality remain ever present in the United States. Research indicates that 50-75% of Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans experience discriminatory treatment (Lee et al., 2019). The Pew Research Center reported that eight in 10 Asian Americans believe that violence against them is increasing (Ruiz et al., 2021). In this national context, higher education is an important location for studying bias and racism. These institutions employ faculty and staff who may experience racism from the larger institution and the students they serve, and also provide key cultural knowledge and socialization on issues surrounding systemic and individual racism that can either undermine or contribute to implicit racism in students.

For the purposes of this paper, we conceptualize racism based on Rev. Massingale's (2010) definition: "a *cultural* phenomenon, that is a way of interpreting human color differences that pervades the collective convictions, conventions, and practices of American life" (p. 15, emphasis in original). Similarly, Morning (2009) proposed the Theory of Racial Conceptualization with four main components: 1) there is no single definition of race, 2) racial conceptions are grounded in historical and social configurations of race, 3) racial stereotypes are bounded by conceptual assumptions, and 4) demography and changing contexts are important to the malleability of racial conceptions. Thus, racism is learned and consists of shared beliefs that shape our attitudes and influence our behaviors. Finally, we incorporate Omi and Winant's (2014) conceptualization of "racial formation" and "racial projects." Through this perspective, in addition to being malleable and context specific, the meanings attached to race and racism exist in a contested space. Hegemonic understandings of race and racism are formed through contestation of competing racial projects at both the interactional and systemic level. Current American culture competes to define race and racism either through the "color-blind" lens – which conceals systemic racism while not espousing inherently racist ideas – or through an anti-racist lens – which defines racism not only as an individual trait, but as systemic and as a set of outcomes that privilege one group over another, regardless of the implicit or explicit biases of the actor (Bonilla & Silva, 2006).

Institutions of higher education are not immune to the culture of racism, including Catholic colleges and universities that recognize racism as "America's original sin" and are called to "strive to cultivate a deep sense of human dignity and to form engaged citizens who fight every form of injustice and effect positive change" (Holdschneider, 2020, p. 1). Faculty and students of color at predominantly white colleges and universities, both public and private, report experiencing exclusion, isolation, and racism (Turner & Myers, 2000; Turner, 2002). Student evaluations of faculty demonstrate consistent evidence of bias due to instructor race, ethnicity, and gender (Chavez

& Mitchell, 2020; MacNeil et al., 2015; Reid, 2010). This study focuses on one form of racism among many undergraduate students: bias against instructors who speak with an accent.

This article describes a study that explores the impact of instructor non-native English accents on student evaluations of instructors and learning outcomes at a small, Catholic liberal arts college that, like most Catholic colleges in the United States, enrolls primarily white students (Nichols, 2017; Rizzi, 2018). A review of the literature on accented language and racism overviews the research, with a particular focus on studies conducted in higher education. This study takes a different methodological approach than previous research, which often provides visual or other background information on the speaker (the speaker's name, education, job title) when presenting participants with accented language (Rubin, 1992). Thus, findings from these studies may confound the impact of accent with visual and background information. Participants in this study were randomly selected to view a microlecture read with five different accents with no background or visual information on the speaker. Results include statistical analyses of pre- and post-assessments as well as evaluations of the instructor. Using the study's theoretical frameworks, critical sociolinguistic theory (Lippi-Green, 2012), and sociocultural theory (Sarason, 1971), the discussion section examines the results with a particular focus on the influence of the Catholic academic context, which promotes the dignity of all, regardless of race and ethnicity (*Ex Corde*, 1990) yet has not always stood in solidarity with the racially oppressed, examples of which include involvement in the slave trade (Swarms, 2016) and failing to serve enslaved Africans (Franklin, 1996). The complexity of this context requires a specific examination of the existence of bias well-documented in previous work in other settings. The findings indicate student bias patterns that both align with and challenge previous research. Ultimately, the current study demonstrates that work is still needed to help students identify and confront their biases to create a college climate that benefits all members of the community.

Literature Review

Empirical studies find that racism is learned from our local and broader community contexts, and that, while it is easy to think in terms of race, it is "difficult to think about" race and how it influences our thoughts and actions (Hirshfield, 1996, p. x) Disrupting these conceptualizations of race requires pedagogies that directly confront racist ideologies. Thus, the majority of college students operate and think with underlying conceptualizations about race without acknowledging or realizing how racism impacts their actions and thinking. To confront this issue, higher education institutions must "intentionally create contexts that help students better understand the multiple ways race may shape society" (Johnson, 2014, p. 228) To teach for racial equality, classrooms must directly discuss race based on the specific "identities of the students as well as to the specific social institutions in which they are enrolled" (Rothschild, 2003, p. 33).

This study focuses on one particular form of racism: racism based on accented speech. Research has consistently found that speaking with an accent in the United States, particularly a non-native English accent, results in miscommunication, bias, stereotyping, and other forms of racism. "Language and accent have become an acceptable excuse to publicly turn away, to refuse to recognize the other, or acknowledge their rights" (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 67) Those with non-native English accents are more likely to report expectations of stigmatization due to their accent and native speakers deliberately not engaging with them (Derwing, 2003; Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010). Accented speech conveys social information and identity about the speaker (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; Lambert et al., 1960). Listeners make judgments about speakers based on accent, including "speech-linked stereotypes" about the speakers' ethnicity, socioeconomic status, academic success, or even enthusiasm and confidence (Lippi-Green, 1997; McGowan, 2015; Rubin, 2012). Learning to judge speech begins early in social development. When shown images of potential friends, 5-year-old children preferred friends of the same race. However, when shown videos, participants discriminated based on accent and preferred children of a different race without a "foreign accent" over children of the same race who did, even when children found the accent to be comprehensible (Kinzler et al., 2009). These interpretations reflect qualities of the speaker, but also the listener, including previous experiences and biases that have been learned in the culture of racism that persists in the United States.

Studies on the comprehensibility (ease of understanding) and intelligibility (understanding the intended content) of non-native speakers often use methodological approaches where participants are presented with images, names, and/or background information about the speaker. Sometimes the information provided to participants is accurate and other times not. Participants are then asked to listen to a presentation and rate or answer comprehension questions. For example, several studies have provided images of white speakers with background information indicating the presenter is a native English speaker when the actual speech was given by a non-native speaker (McGowan, 2015; Rubin, 1992). One common method is matched guise, which tries to eliminate the impact of differences in voice quality and speaker style by providing participants with the same sample, but different background information on the speaker (Rubin, 2012).

Research on comprehensibility and intelligibility of non-native speakers indicates that miscommunication and discrimination are particularly prevalent in educational settings, including higher education. For example, studies have found that mainstream college students expect international instructors and teaching assistants to "speak with incomprehensible accents" that then impede their comprehension (Rubin, 2012, p. 11; see also Lima, 2012) and in the case of an Australian study, offer harmful and nonconstructive evaluations of teaching, including statements such as, "She needs to adopt an Australian accent better" (Lakeman et al., 2021). Undergraduates also do not ask instructors they believe to speak a negatively stereotyped non-native English accent

as many questions (Lindemann, 2002). Studies indicate that *perceived* ethnicity, accent, and social attitudes toward the instructor rather than their *actual* pronunciation often results in bias against their teaching ability, comprehensibility, and intelligibility (Baese-Berk et al., 2020; Rubin, 1992; Rubin & Smith, 1990).

Empirical studies on the impact of other organizational contexts on attitudes toward accents most often rely on college student participants in lab settings. Hosoda and Stone-Romero (2010), in a study examining the effects of accent on employment decisions, demonstrate that, controlling for the understandability of the speaker, job applicants with a Japanese accent were evaluated significantly lower for high-status positions than applicants with a "standard American English" accent and faced an even harsher penalty for high-status jobs with communicative demands. Hosoda et al. (2012) find similar results, using similar methods, of applicants for a software engineering position who speak with Mexican-Hispanic accents. In both cases, the connection between accent and bias is not rejection of all members of a perceived race for all jobs. Instead, the applicants are deemed unqualified for certain positions on the basis of cultural expectations of the ideal candidate's social identities (for "communicative" positions, "communicative" is coded to mean native European/American English speaker). These findings, however, do not directly test the impact of particular workplace cultures, but instead the cultures that college student participants either currently experience or imagine these workplaces to have. Thus, more empirical research is needed to explore further the impact of organizational contexts on bias and racism, including that toward accented speech.

While processing and comprehending accented speech can take more effort for the listener (Baese-Berk et al., 2020; Gass & Varonis, 1984; Munro & Derwing, 1995), many factors contribute to a student's ability to understand non-native English speakers. These factors include student prior knowledge of the content; prior experience with accented speech and, in particular, that of the instructor; familiarity with the specific instructor; and the working memory, attention, and motivation of the student (Baese-Berk et al., 2020; Crowther et al., 2015; Gass & Varonis, 1984; McGowan, 2015). Based on these findings, research has called for training not just of speakers but also of listeners, especially in education settings. Many higher education institutions provide training for non-native speakers with teaching obligations, but institutions must also acknowledge and address "the need to educate undergraduates to discern between real communicative difficulties and those stemming not from language, but from stereotype and bias" (Lippi-Green, 2012 , p. 90; see also Baese-Berk et al., 2020; Rubin & Smith, 1990). Studies have found that providing cross-cultural instruction as well as accent training, where students learn about characteristics and aspects of language that can make it difficult for non-native English speakers to pronounce, can result in students being "more likely to persevere" and influences their "attitudes and perceived listening ability" (Dering et al., 2002, p. 256). Thus, similar to the research on anti-racist pedagogy

outlined above, institutions must provide students opportunities to think directly and critically about racism and its impacts in order to gain more understanding and empathy.

This study was conducted in a Catholic college where courses addressing racism are not required and students do not receive accent training. Students are, however, exposed to strong messages about the dignity of all people, which could impact their conceptualizations of racism. There is a lack of research on how this religious context might influence student perceptions of accented speech. This study, therefore, adds to the research base by providing insight into this specific context and has broader implications for higher education, which seeks to prepare students for careers and citizenship in diverse communities where they can communicate and contribute without bias or discrimination.

Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes two theories: critical sociolinguistic theory and sociocultural theory. Critical sociolinguistic theory posits that an ideology of standardized English language perpetuates broader institutional structures of racism and discrimination that impact oral communication. Conversation requires active listening and speaking where individuals change roles throughout and work collaboratively to ensure that the listener has comprehended what the speaker intended (Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986; Lippi-Green, 2012). Social constructions of "proper and good English" provide the basis for assumptions about a speaker's race, ethnicity, education, and socioeconomic background (Lippi-Green, 2012). The socially constructed "proper English" is "primarily Anglo, upper middle-class, and ethnically middle-American" (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 68) This pervasive ideology impacts communication where, when confronted with accented language or language that is not "proper English," dominant group members may refuse to take on their responsibility in comprehending the speaker, or in other words, their share of the "communicative burden" (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 68; see also Perkins & Milroy, 1997). This can lead to a communication breakdown that often "is due not so much to accent as it is to negative social evaluation of the accent in question" (Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 73; see also Derwing et al., 2002). As noted above, these breakdowns in communication are particularly prevalent in higher education. This framework allows for a close consideration of how undergraduate perceptions of "accepted" speech and "less accepted" speech impact their receptiveness to communication and whether ideologies of "proper English" impact their judgment of the speaker and learning.

This study also uses sociocultural theory to explore, in a Catholic college context, how social constructions of "proper English" might impact undergraduate ideologies and perceptions of the instructor and their comprehension of course content. Sociocultural theory posits that as people engage within their distinct cultures, they negotiate and create shared understandings of what it means to live within those cultures (Sarason, 1971; Wenger, 1998). This negotiation affects

how people interpret their experiences, preferences, emotions, choices, and identity (Eisenhart, 2001; Wenger, 1998). These shared understandings are contextually bound and influenced by history, tradition, race, power, cultural myths, and societal norms, which have also been co-constructed (Sarason, 1971; Wenger, 1998). According to theorists, schools have a distinct culture that includes shared norms and values (Hargreaves, 1997; Sarason, 1971).

Research on the impact of non-educational organizational contexts shaping perspectives toward accented speech remains largely theoretical or experimental. Stone-Romero and Stone (2007) argue that the social identity of those in positions of power in an organization (in addition to hegemonic national culture) shape the culture of that organization in ways that influence the expectations for the "social identities" of ideal candidates. For example, given the prevalence of male white Anglo Saxon Protestants (MWASPs) in business, business organizations are likely to embody a culture that presumes that the ideal candidates for particular jobs will reflect the values of MWASPs. Similarly, Ray (2019) theorizes organizations as racialized, rather than race-neutral and purely driven by bureaucratic rationalization. Ray contends that organizational cultural contexts often legitimatize the unequal distribution of resources, treat whiteness as a credential, and engage in the decoupling of organizational actions from formal rules in ways that are racialized. While not specifically addressing the impact of accents, taking Lippi-Green's (1997) evidence that particular accents are racialized, Ray adds to the theoretical grounding, which suggests the importance of organizational cultural context shaping members' racialized perceptions and expectations.

In light of this theoretical role that organizations can play in mediating hegemonic culture, a Catholic context could shape student racial conceptualizations because the Catholic Church and its schools promote the value of every human being, regardless of race, gender, ability, and even religion due to the belief that all people are made in the image and likeness of God (*Ex Corde*, 1990; *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965). The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (2012) stipulates that Catholic Social Teaching – the teachings that proclaim the life and dignity of the human person, a call to seeking the common good, and a preferential option for the poor and vulnerable – should be integral to the mission of Catholic higher education and explicitly manifested in the education and formation of students, faculty research, and expressions of corporate and institutional identity. Catholic colleges and universities, thus, are "called on to become an ever more effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals as well as for society," including the study of "serious contemporary problems in areas such as the dignity of human life [and] the promotion of justice for all" (*Ex Corde*, 1990, §32). This call for social justice directly confronts the culture of racism in the United States. Students attending Catholic schools, therefore, should receive direct formative experiences as well as indirect messages about respecting all, which could impact bias and ideologies about speech. Insights from scholars such as Bonilla & Silva (2006) highlight the need to avoid adopting a color-blind approach to understanding racism in

institutions promoting the notion of "justice for all." Color-blind approaches – which attempt to define all as inherently equal while promoting a worldview in which individuals feign blindness to a person's race and assume that all have the same experiences and opportunities – ignore existing systemic and cultural processes that, when left to function without critical assessment, continue to produce racist outcomes even without individuals holding explicitly racist attitudes.

Even from their early history, Catholic schools in the United States have sought to meet the call for social justice. Many Catholic elementary and secondary schools were founded to provide bilingual and bicultural education to support immigrants and help them integrate into society. "Native-language Catholic schools provided an environment where the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students were acknowledged and respected," in contrast to public schools that made negative assumptions about their ability and intellect (O'Keefe & Scheopner, 2009, p. 73). Catholic elementary and secondary schools were established to educate Black students prior to the Civil Rights Movement and often were some of the first in major cities to offer education for Black families (Franklin, 1996). These same patterns happened in 19th-century Catholic colleges, which "sought to preserve the religious and cultural roots of first-generation Catholic immigrants [while] they also sought to give those immigrants an opportunity to advance in American society" (Rizzi, 2018, p. 158). Catholic K-12 schools were also some of the first to desegregate, even prior to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (Ritter, r 20; Rummel, 1953). Today, Catholic K-12 schools like the Nativity Miguel and Cristo Rey Network seek to serve families of color and families from low-socioeconomic backgrounds. In Catholic higher education, "social justice is an explicit part of the charisms of many religious orders" (Rizzi, 2018, p. 173; see also Bergman, 2011; Leming, 2016), and colleges and universities continue in the long-standing tradition of "education of the non-poor and privileged...on behalf of the poor and marginalized" (i.e., education for social justice; Bergman, 2011, p. 79).

Despite these historical advancements, Catholic educational institutions and the Catholic Church itself have not always acted consistently with these social justice aspirations. Rather, the Catholic Church has historically communicated conflicting messages regarding conceptualizations of race. Racism is recognized as a sin by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2018), which also recognizes that the Catholic Church has too often been complicit with systemic oppression of people of color. For example, Catholic boarding schools sought to "civilize" Indigenous children in the United States by stripping them of their language and culture often through violence and abuse (Pember, 2019). While Catholic schools were established to evangelize and "in defense of the Native American population" against conquest, this was not the case for enslaved Africans where few schools were founded and the Church was "more likely to participate in Black exploitation and oppression" (Franklin, 1996). Even with its history of serving immigrant populations, one reason the Catholic Church sought to establish national Churches

and native-language elementary and secondary schools was to ensure these populations remained Catholic (O'Keefe & Scheopner, 2009). These efforts took precedence over evangelizing or recruiting clergy among African Americans after emancipation (Franklin, 1996, p. 47). In Catholic schools that were founded for or served Black communities, these families struggled to provide their children with biculturalism because the curriculum was Eurocentric, there were often few positive accounts and representations of African Americans, and schools often sought out assimilation rather than accommodating the racial and cultural identities of their students (Foster, 1996). Thus, despite the goal to honor the backgrounds of their students, Catholic schools often forced assimilation for their students of color. Today, there is a consistent absence of Black Catholic history in Catholic educational institutions as an area of study (Crary, 2020). This stands in sharp contrast to messaging about human dignity. Further, many Catholic elementary, secondary, and post-secondary schools have often served and continue to serve white, wealthy student populations (McDonald & Schultz, 2020; Nichols, 2017; Rizzi, 2018) despite an influx of Catholic Hispanic immigrants, including nearly eight million Catholic school-aged children, only 2.3% of whom attend Catholic elementary and secondary schools (Ospino & Weitzel-O'Neill, 2016).

Thus, while the Catholic Church and its K-12 and higher educational institutions have sought to confront the culture of racism in the United States, they have been inconsistent and, at times, perpetuated white supremacy. This history and current practice are part of the culture of racism that students learn as members of these communities. In response to the call for justice within Church teachings, its history briefly summarized above, and the renewed recognition of systemic societal racism, Church leaders have challenged Catholics to build "empathy of the privileged toward the plight of those racially marked as 'other'" and to address "the 'cultural logic' that continues to ground social callousness toward persons of color" (Massingale, 2014, p. 138). Research examining the role of racial bias within higher education can better elucidate the perceived barriers for learning and teaching within diverse contexts that contribute toward discrimination, "social callousness," and a "lack of empathy."

Research Questions

The robust findings of bias in student evaluations of marginalized faculty members along with the Catholic Church context generate several research questions. First, does the pattern of pro-white bias in student perceptions of, and interactions with, faculty hold in Catholic higher education? Like other institutions, the potential exists for a mismatch between the stated goals of the institution and the actual outcomes. This is further complicated by the fact that the definition of racism is socially constructed and variable across cultural contexts even within the same time period (Omi & Winant, 2014). If leaders in the Church and those implementing policy on the ground define racism using the "color-blind" narrative, it is likely that less visible and implicit racist processes persist along with the racial outcomes they create (Bonilla & Silva, 2006; Omi & Winant, 2014). By

contrast, the Catholic Church differs from other secular institutions by tying organizational beliefs and statements specifically to a religious identity. This potentially provides greater weight and importance to overall commitment to broad goals, like racial justice. It could be that students who attend Catholic institutions differ from the general trend in higher education and are less likely to exhibit racial bias toward educators given the divine component of the commitment to racial justice.

A second guiding research question is whether patterns in undergraduate engagement with material vary by instructor accent when visual cues or background information are not provided. The absence of these cues could help determine the specific role of accent in line with the theoretical frameworks of this study. The analyses that follow are based on presentations in which students were given no information about the background of the instructor other than the sound of their voice. As noted, much of the existing research on student bias against instructors includes students who have been given visual cues or background information regarding the race of the instructor (McGowan, 2015). In addition, the population for the current study are students attending a Catholic institution where there are predominantly white faculty, staff, and students and, therefore, most participants lack experience with accented language and accent training. Given that the racialization of language is often prompted by the perception of the speaker's physical characteristics, it is expected that the students in this study with little experience with speakers of accented speech will struggle to accurately identify an instructor's race solely on their speech. Thus, students should not demonstrate consistent bias against non-white presenters if their face and name are unseen/unknown.

To the extent that racial bias is present among the students, critical sociolinguistic theory suggests two potential outcomes. First, students may racialize and stigmatize the accent of the instructor and, as a result, display unwillingness to carry their share of the communicative burden (Lippi-Green, 2012). This "shutting down" on the student's part should result in less efficacy of the lesson and more negative evaluations of the instructor (Lima, 2012; Rubin, 2012). A second potential bias process primarily impacts the instructor's evaluations, wherein students stigmatizing the accent of the instructor perceive the instruction as less helpful and well communicated, while actually performing as well as students taught by instructors with non-stigmatized accents (Baese-Berk et al., 2020; McLaughlin & VanEngen, 2020; Rubin, 1992). Thus, it is expected that bias should be most pronounced around students' perceptions of communication efficacy, instruction efficacy, and clarity of communication/grammar.

In either of the two processes described above, bias against instructors with a racialized accent in student evaluations is expected. Critical sociolinguistic theory suggests a variety of ways biases could be defined. In one form of bias, a racialized accent could cause the material (presentation slides, lecture scripts, etc.) to be evaluated harshly, as the accent triggers stereotypes projected onto the material (Lippi-Green, 2012; Rubin, 1992). Another form of bias could cause

harsher evaluations of the instructor's teaching efficacy, but not the materials themselves. As the instructors in this study all used the same script and presentation slides, this study's analyses could differentiate between these different types of bias.

Finally, it is important to note that critical sociolinguistic theory focuses on how people make meaning from interactions with others. Instead of using objective standards to evaluate accents, the receiver of the information defines the accent as meeting or failing to meet "proper English" standards (Lippi-Green, 2012). As a result, the conversation is interpreted according to this assessment and cultural messages about those who fail to speak "proper English." According to the critical sociolinguistic approach, when the face and background information such as the name of the instructor are not visible, students are expected to associate accents that are not "proper English" with non-white instructors, leading to biased outcomes (Lippi-Green, 2012). Accordingly, when perceived instructor ethnicity and actual ethnicity do not align, it is expected to be student perception, rather than actual ethnicity, that will affect bias.

Methods

Design and Procedure

This between-groups experimental study examines the role of accent in student assessments and evaluations of a prerecorded microlecture. Participants were asked by their professors to view the short lecture on ethics in human subject research as part of their course content. The microlecture included the history of ethical principles in research as well as specific principles (respect for persons, justice, beneficence) and their relation to scientific research. Viewed through Qualtrics, students received an informed consent for the study, followed by a pre-assessment, the microlecture, a post-assessment, an evaluation of the microlecture, and demographic questions. Students were assured their answers would not be shared with their professors. Using random assignment through Qualtrics, participants viewed one of five microlectures read in different individual accents: North American[1], Indian, and Taiwanese.[2] The timing of the microlecture varied from 12 to 17 minutes across the different recordings. The presentation slides and script were consistent across the five microlectures. Again, no picture, name, or other background information of the instructor was displayed.

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[1]   Both the male and female instructors were from Pennsylvania.
[2]   The authors acknowledge that there is no single white or even North American accent, nor is there a single Indian or Taiwanese accent. Accents vary by region in any country.

Measures

The pre- and post-assessment both included the same six multiple-choice questions and three theoretical examples. The theoretical examples asked participants to identify which ethics principles applied to three different research scenarios. A total number of correct answers was computed for each of the pre- and post-assessments with scores ranging from 0 to 9 (see Appendix).

The evaluation of the microlecture included questions about the "usefulness" and potential for "improvements" of the microlecture. Participants were asked how much they agreed with eight statements on a 5-point Likert-type scale from "*strongly agree*" to "*strongly disagree*" (see Table 4). The Likert scale items were designed to be brief and similar to questions on faculty evaluations that students typically receive in their courses to ensure external validity in the experiment. A pilot study was conducted prior to data collection as a measure of construct and face validity. Evaluation items were coded so that higher scores reflected agreement.

For the demographic questions, participants were asked the perceived race and ethnicity of the microlecture instructor. Participants also reported their own gender, race, and ethnicity.

Participants

The sample consisted of 98 students enrolled in the second semester of a year-long freshman seminar course at a small, Catholic, liberal arts college (see Table 1). The seminar course focuses on the relationship between the individual, the community, and the divine, with course readings that include Augustine's *Of Free Choice and the Will*, the Gospel of Luke, and lectures and readings on Catholic monasticism and the Catholic Church. Thus, all students, regardless of religious background, received instruction on Catholic social teaching prior to the study. Participants were 70.4% (n = 69) female and 91.84% white (n = 90). Approximately 504 students were invited to take part in the study, while 275 viewed the microlecture, and 100 completed the survey. Participants were assigned to a microlecture presented by native English-speaking instructors (34.9%) or by instructors with Asian accents (65.31%)[3].

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[3] Here "Asian" refers to both East Asian (Taiwanese) and South Asian (Indian). Students were randomly assigned to one of 5 conditions (White US female, White US male, Taiwanese male, Indian female, and Indian male). Unfortunately, students who should have been assigned to a Taiwanese female instructor were also assigned to the Indian female condition (resulting in a doubling of the students in that condition). Analyses showed no significant difference in student performance or instructor evaluation between those receiving the Taiwanese and the Indian conditions.

Data Analysis

Analyses were conducted using difference of means t-tests and OLS regression in STATA Version 16. Two independent variables were included in the main analysis based on the randomization of the microlectures: (a) the students' perceived race of the microlecture instructor (white, non-white) and (b) the actual background of the instructor (white, non-white). Evaluation items and quiz improvement were taken as dependent variables. OLS models were run only for instructor evaluation items and controlled for student gender, student race, instructor gender, and student improvement on the quiz.[4]

Table 1
Participant Characteristics

Observation (individuals)	n	%
Students' Demographic Characteristics		
Gender		
Male	28	28.57
Female	69	70.41
Transgender	1	1.02
Race/Ethnicity		
White	90	91.84
Non-White	8	8.16
Black	3	-
Hispanic/Latino	2	-
Asian	1	-
Others	2	-
Assigned Microlecture Groups		
Presenter's accent		
Northern American accent	34	34.69
Asian accent	64	65.31
Post-test performance relative to pretest		
Improved	54	55.1
Stayed the same	29	29.6
Declined	15	15.3

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[4]   OLS analyses examining the relationship between instructor demographics and student performance on the assessment were run but are excluded from this paper since they also showed no significant correlation.

Results

The results from the pre- and post-assessments indicate that the presentation improved student learning; however, this improvement was mostly in the multiple-choice questions. The average score improved from 4.81 to 5.59 correct answers, and the percentage of students who answered all questions correctly improved from 0% to 5.10%. In general, half of the participants' (50%; $n = 49$) test scores improved after the microlecture.

In terms of student perception of instructors' race, Table 2 shows that only about 70% of students ($n = 68$) accurately perceived whether or not their instructor was white based on their accent during the microlecture.[5] This binary construction is required because of the sample size but is also congruent with the study's theoretical framing. About 80% of the white Northern American presenters were perceived as white by students, and about 65% of the Asian presenters were recognized as non-white. Notably, while only 34.69% of presenters in this study were actually white, just over half of the students thought their lectures were presented by white instructors.

Table 2

Presenter's Accent and Students' Perceptions of Presenter's Race

	Students' perception of presenters' race			
	White		Non-White	
Presenters' accent backgrounds	*n*	*% in condition*	*n*	*% in condition*
North American (White; *n* = 34)	27	79.41	7	20.59
Asian (Non-White; *n* = 64)	23	35.94	41	64.06

Dependent mean *t*-tests were conducted to examine associations between student perception of instructor race and student performance. According to critical sociolinguistic theory, one potential outcome is a shift of communicative burden from the student to the instructor, resulting in poor student performance. However, our findings regarding this hypothesized process are complex. The mean post-assessment score is significantly higher than the mean pre-assessment score (see Table 3), regardless of the lecturers' accents. Additionally, we found no statistically significant association between student perception of instructor race and student performance. Comparisons were made using both the raw change in score and item response theory to account for the varying difficulty of the test questions.

That said, there remains an interesting and seemingly contradictory trend in the bivariate comparisons. While a greater proportion of students assigned to North American accents improved (55.88%) than of those assigned to an Asian accent (46.88%), the opposite trend was observed regarding student perception of instructor race. There was less improvement among students

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[5]   This number includes students who, for example, perceived their Taiwanese instructor to be Black.

who believed their instructor to be white compared to those who believed their instructor to be non-white (44% versus 56.25%). Although not statistically significant, these differences highlight the complex nature of perceived race and ethnicity and the need for careful consideration of measurement when evaluating the impact of instructor demographics on student outcomes and evaluations. While the sample in these categories make it difficult to disentangle these processes, they suggest the potential of a much more complex internal process than students shutting down when they perceive an accent to be non-white. This is highlighted by the reduced performance among students who incorrectly identified the race of their non-white presenter as white.

Table 3

The Effect of Instructor Accents and Students' Perceptions of Presenters' Race on Students' Test Performance

Groups	n	Pre-assessment score (Mean)	Post-assessment score (Mean)	Change	t-value†	Improvement on the post-assessment	
Presenter's accent backgrounds						n	%
North American White	34	4.67	5.47	.80	2.67**	19	55.88
Asian	64	4.88	5.66	.78	3.89***	30	46.88
Students' perception of presenters' Race							
White	50	4.40	5.18	.78	3.33***	22	44.00
Non-white	48	5.23	6.02	.79	3.32***	27	56.25

†Dependent mean *t*-test, one tailed, *t*-test (posttest-pretest score)

Independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to examine student perception of instructor race in relation to student evaluations. Table 4 shows the average evaluation rating for instructors perceived as white and non-white, as well as the results of a *t*-test comparison of means for the groups. Results in Table 4 suggest that student perceptions of instructor race influence their evaluations of the instructor. Specifically, instructors perceived as white received significantly higher ratings in terms of the student belief that they "showed enthusiasm about the subject matter" and that "watching this microlecture improved [their] score on the quiz" (though, the former is only significant at the 0.1 level [p=0.059]). Importantly, these were the only questions that did not ask specifically about the content of the presentation, which did not vary by presenter. Thus, there is evidence of a bias against instructors based on perceived race.

Table 5 replicates the analysis of Table 4 with the instructors' actual race rather than perceived race. When these groups are compared, the two significant results from Table 4 are eliminated. This suggests that it is not accent itself that drives bias, but instead, the students' perception of a non-white accent. Again, this conforms to critical sociolinguistic theory in that significant differences in presenter evaluations are observed only when the student racializes an accent as non-white.

Table 4

Mean Evaluation Scores Based on Students' Perceptions of Presenter's Race

Evaluation[a]	Range	White (n = 50)		Non-white (n = 48)		t-value[b] (df = 96)
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
1. The [professor]'s presentation was professional.	1–5	4.54	.82	4.48	.62	.42
2. The [professor] was knowledgeable about the subject matter.	1–5	4.58	.64	4.54	.68	.29
3. The [professor] showed enthusiasm about the subject matter.	1–5	**4.08**	1.07	**3.73**	1.07	1.63†
4. The [professor] presented the material in a way that I was able to understand.	1–5	4.42	.73	4.27	.79	.97
5. The [professor]'s slides were effective and well organized.	1–5	4.38	.83	4.44	.65	-.38
6. The [professor]'s slides were clear with correct grammar and content.	1–5	4.54	.68	4.63	.49	-.71
7. The [professor]'s examples helped me understand the concepts.	1–5	4.42	.86	4.34	.70	.50
8. Watching this microlecture improved my score on the quiz.	1–5	**4.14**	.76	**3.79**	1.01	1.94*
Total Score (Questions 1–8)	-	*4.39*	*.65*	*4.28*	*.55*	*.91*

[a] A higher score refers to a higher rating

[b] Independent samples, one-tailed, *t*-test (difference = mean (0, White)-mean (1, Non-White))

†*p* < .10; * *p* < .05 significant

Finally, Table 6 provides OLS regression analysis that further examines the two student evaluation items that differed by perceived race (Models 1-3 for instructor enthusiasm and Models 4-6 for student perception that the microlecture helped their post-assessment score) with the addition of control variables. Models 1 and 4 replicate the *t*-tests from Table 4, Models 2 and 5 introduce controls for student race and gender, and Models 3 and 6 incorporate a control for student improvement on the post-assessment. The patterns in Models 1 and 4 are also observed when controlling for student demographics in Models 2 and 5. However, after controlling for student improvement on the post-assessment, the relationship between perceived instructor race and enthusiasm is no longer significant. Taken together, these results support the findings that students who perceived an instructor as non-white believed that instructor to be less enthusiastic (Model 1 and 2) and more ineffective (Models 4, 5, and 6). In both cases, perceiving the instructor as non-white is significantly associated with about a third of a point reduction in their evaluation (on a 5-point scale).

Table 5

Mean Evaluation Scores Based on Presenters' Actual Ethnicity

Evaluation[a]	Range	North American White (n = 34)		Asian (n = 64)		t-value[b] (df = 96)
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
1. The professor's presentation was professional.	1–5	4.53	.71	4.50	.73	.19
2. The professor was knowledgeable about the subject matter.	1–5	4.51	.56	4.56	.71	-.03
3. The professor showed enthusiasm about the subject matter.	1–5	4.03	1.03	3.84	1.10	.81
4. The professor presented the material in a way that I was able to understand.	1–5	4.38	.74	4.33	.78	.33
5. The professor's slides were effective and well organized.	1–5	4.32	.73	4.45	.75	-.82
6. The professor's slides were clear with correct grammar and content.	1–5	4.56	.56	4.59	.59	-.28
7. The professor's examples helped me understand the concepts.	1–5	4.39	.74	4.38	.78	.11
8. Watching this microlecture improved my score on the quiz.	1–5	4.06	.78	3.92	.96	.71
Total Score (Questions 1–8)	-	*4.35*	*.55*	*4.32*	*.63*	*.24*

[a] A higher score refers to a higher rating

[b] Independent samples, one-tailed, *t*-test (difference=mean (0, White)-mean (1, Non-White))

$^\dagger p < .10$; * $p < .05$ significant

Discussion

This study contributes to the scholarly knowledge on student biases against professors who speak nonstandard English by investigating student performance and evaluation of instructors in the context of a small Catholic college. By choosing not to provide students with an image or background information of the instructor, the findings differentiate between the actual and perceived race of the instructor solely based on accent, which revealed interesting insights and implications for higher education.

Consistent with the findings from higher education at large, the study finds evidence of pro-white bias in student interactions with, and perceptions of, faculty in the context of Catholic higher education. Specifically, the findings evidence bias against Eastern and Southern Asian professors. Bias in the current study was specifically examined in relation to accented communication. A

Table 6

Students' Perceptions of Race Presenters' Actual Race in Evaluation: "The [professor] showed enthusiasm about the subject matter" and "Watching this microlecture improved my score on the quiz" (n = 98)

	"The [professor] showed enthusiasm about the subject matter."			"Watching this microlecture improved my score on the quiz."		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Students' perceptions of presenters' races (ref. = white)						
Non-white	-.35†	-.31†	-.27	-.35*	-.35*	-.31*
	(.22)	(.22)	(.23)	(.18)	(.18)	(.18)
CONTROL VARIABLES						
Gender (ref. = female)		-.25	-.18		-.05	.01
Male		(.24)	(0.25)		(.20)	(.20)
Race (ref. = white)						
Black		.51	.52		-.19	-.26
		(.65)	(.65)		(.53)	(.53)
Hispanic/Latino		-.96	-.97		-1.0†	-.94†
		(.77)	(.77)		(.63)	(.63)
Asian		.32	.44		1.19	1.30
		(1.09)	(1.09)		(.90)	(.89)
Other		-.18	-.20		-.81	-.89†
		(.78)	(.78)		(.64)	(.64)
Students' test performance after online lecture (ref. = Decline)						
Stayed the same			.07			-.19
			(.32)			(.26)
Improved			-.29			-.38*
			(.26)			(.21)
Constant	4.08***	4.24***	4.30***	4.14***	4.20***	4.38***
	(.151)	(.233)	(.282)	(.13)	(.19)	(.23)
R-squared	.03	.06	.09	.04	.10	.13

One-tailed test

Standard errors in parentheses

*** *p* < .001, ** *p* < .01, * *p* <.05, † p < .10

guiding question concerned the role of visual racial/ethnic cues in the bias process. Without an image or video of the instructor, pro-white bias among the participants was observed; however, student perceptions of instructor race patterned the bias, not the actual accent of the instructor. Students who perceived their instructor as non-white believed the instructor to be less effective and enthusiastic, despite there being no difference in the content of the lecture and no significant differences in student learning across the instructors. Importantly, there were no significant differences in student evaluations when comparing instructors' actual race to perceived instructor race. In line with critical sociolinguistic theory (Lippi-Green, 2012) and previous research (Baese-Berk et al., 2020), simply hearing an accent does not cause the bias; the process of hearing an accent and assigning a non-white racial identity to that accent impacts student evaluations.

One potential process suggested by critical sociolinguistic theory is that lack of student willingness to carry their portion of the "communicative burden" will lead to students "shutting down" and a decrease in retention of the material. The analysis, however, does not find evidence of this process. A higher percentage of students who perceived their instructor to be non-white improved on the post-assessment (56%) than the percent who perceived their instructor to be white (44%); however, given the small sample sizes, even this 12-percentage point difference is not statistically significant. These findings are consistent with previous research that demonstrates that processing and comprehending accented speech often requires more listener effort and may be influenced by student prior experiences, familiarity with the accent, and attention and motivation (Baese-Berk et al., 2020). The perceived accented speech may have resulted in increased effort to comprehend the material, which in turn improved performance on the post-assessment. Another possible explanation is that students were more willing and motivated to engage because of the sociocultural messages they receive in their Catholic institution about the dignity of all. Participants are enrolled in an institution with a mission to foster engagement in local, national, and global communities. One form of engagement is communication. Students may have been willing to take on the communicative burden because they valued engagement with others, a principle reinforced in their Catholic context. Future research is needed to better elucidate these explanations for the findings.

Regardless of whether bias impacts student performance, critical sociolinguistic theory suggests that the perception of non-white and racialization of accents triggers student bias on instructor evaluations. In the current study, students display bias by evaluating perceived non-white instructors as less helpful and enthusiastic. There was no significant evidence of bias against the presentation material (text on slides, organization of slides, language in the script, etc.) of perceived non-white instructors.

The finding that instructors perceived as non-white were evaluated worse for "enthusiasm" does not hold in the OLS models when student performance on the exam is included as a covariate.

Students who perceived their instructor as non-white were both more likely to improve on their post-assessment and to rate that instructor as less enthusiastic. This is indicative of the conclusion that the relationship between student perceptions of racial background, evaluation, and performance are less straightforward than one might imagine. One might assume that students who performed worse on the post-assessment would more negatively evaluate the presenter and this would explain the correlation between perception of the presenter as non-white and lower evaluation of enthusiasm. Instead, the opposite pattern appears true. Those who benefit from the instruction penalize the instructor's enthusiasm (Model 3). Given the small sample size, future research should further evaluate the robustness of these connections.

In addition to lower enthusiasm ratings, instructors perceived as non-white were rated lower in terms of the student's belief that "watching this microlecture improved [their] score on the quiz." The only variation in the microlecture across instructors was the instructor's voice. Herein lies yet another level of nuance: students did not evaluate the content and professionalism of the microlecture differently, but were bias against those perceived as non-white based on accent when evaluating the presentation's ability to improve scores. This finding supports the validity of the measure because it holds even though students who perceived their instructor as non-white performed better than those who perceived their instructor as white. In addition, even after controlling for student demographics and assessment improvement, instructors perceived as non-white were still penalized in terms of perceived helpfulness. Messages of racial justice and dignity for all from students' sociocultural context may have reflected some areas of non-bias for professionalism and knowledge of the speaker as well as the quality of the microlecture content; however, a bias against non-white instructors remained in other areas. Consistent with previous research on the impact of student experiences in understanding non-native English (Crowther et al., 2015), the possible extra effort to comprehend the accent could be why students thought the microlecture would not help improve their quiz score. Unlike the results for enthusiasm, though, the general trend of lower evaluation of effectiveness for perceived non-white presenters was robust to the inclusion of control variables in Table 6.

To summarize, students' evaluations of their ability to improve their score and instructor enthusiasm was dependent on the perceived race of the instructor rather than actual race. Ironically, students who perceived their instructors as non-white had greater post-assessment improvement while reporting the lectures as less helpful in this area. It is again important to highlight that the enthusiasm and effectiveness evaluation questions were the only ones that did not specifically ask about presentation content, which was consistent across lectures. In that respect, the lack of significant difference for questions related to content is unsurprising; finding such a difference would imply an overt form of bias. Instead, the evaluations appear to indicate a more nuanced, but still harmful, bias.

Implications

These findings suggest implications for the scholarly understanding of student bias against instructors as well as for scholars and administrators concerned with the experience of faculty of color. The findings imply a student attitude about non-native English-speaking instructors expressed anecdotally: "They are nice and know what they are talking about, but I just can't learn from them." Non-white professors who speak outside the bounds of "accepted" English may find themselves at a disadvantage. This research design does not address semester-long processes. For example, over the course of an entire semester, this attitude may manifest itself in other ways that disadvantage the faculty. The belief that the instructor is ineffective could lead to increased disruptive behavior, dismissive and aggressive behavior toward the professor, or a word-of-mouth expectation that shapes students' perceptions before the semester begins. An entire semester of learning would allow instructors to develop relationships with students that could help counter biases, but this task could be made more difficult by student discrimination. Ultimately, this form of student bias could affect student evaluations and perceived teaching ability by colleagues and administrators weighing tenure and promotion decisions (Chavez & Mitchell, 2020; Reid, 2010).

This study also has particular significance for Catholic higher education. Despite learning in a context with explicit messages about the dignity of all and a commitment to social justice that directly confronts the culture of racism in broader society, student bias persisted. There are several explanations, including the Church's complex history of working toward its social and racial justice aspirations, which sends mixed messages about the importance of thinking about racism. The results indicate that relying on mission statements that incorporate Catholic social teaching as well as implicit and explicit messaging about social justice are not enough to negate bias. Catholic higher education institutions need to ensure that all students have formative experiences directly related to racism. Prior research suggests that providing explicit cross-cultural and accent training for students with pedagogies that direct students to actively disrupt their racial conceptualizations are needed to mitigate these biases (Baese-Berk et al., 2020; Derwing et al., 2002; Lippi-Green, 2012; Rothschild, 2003). Not only could these pedagogical approaches and experiences help Catholic institutions reach their racial justice goals and disrupt the culture of racism, but empirical studies in public and private higher education settings also find that providing opportunities to confront racism and explore multiculturalism has significant positive effects on student cognitive development, intellectual engagement, meaningful interactions, college satisfaction, and leadership abilities (Antonio, 2002; Astin, 1993).

In addition, Catholic colleges and universities must acknowledge and address their campus cultures that often reflect predominantly white, wealthy student populations (Nichols, 2017; Rizzi, 2018). While Pope Francis has reinforced the Catholic Church's commitment to social justice, some question the mission of Catholic institutions of higher education that continue to educate

wealthy students to "assume their place in the next generation of corporate and professional elites" (Wepehowski, 2014, p. 7). Students who attend Catholic higher education may lack opportunities to interact with people of marginalized identities in meaningful ways. This, in turn, impacts their conceptualizations of race and bias against those who speak with accented language. In this context, the need for the sort of institutional programming described above is even more essential. There are calls from within Catholic higher education to "reevaluate, revise, and rejuvenate" curricular and institutional practices to "engage 'the other' in a climate of welcoming hospitality" (McQuillan et al., 2018, p. 24). Also critical is the understanding of these less visible forms of bias faced by marginalized faculty members on Catholic campuses. To the extent that colleges are devoted to increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of their faculty and students, fostering a supportive campus culture is vital for both attracting and retaining individuals. This refers to both institutional and peer support grounded in an understanding of the differential experience and treatment of faculty and students of color depending on their racial characteristics. Additional research on this topic is needed for institutions to identify, plan programming for, and track the progress of bias against instructors. These changes will require significant commitment and sustained efforts.

Finally, limitations of this study and implications for future research should be highlighted. First, the study was conducted on a single small liberal arts college campus in the US northeast. While the results are suggestive of an interesting and nuanced form of bias on Catholic campuses, future research should investigate the replicability of these findings on other campuses.

The study's relatively small sample size limits the ability to conduct more complex analyses and comparisons. Additionally, future research would benefit from a comparison across non-white groups that differed by both gender and accent. This is especially true since descriptive comparisons in the current study showed some potential variation between male and female non-white instructors (instructors were grouped together regardless of gender in the current study due to the sample size). Replication is also needed since early pilot work showed that students had trouble identifying the Taiwanese accent as "Asian." Future work should explicitly examine the ways in which the critical sociolinguistic process ensues when individuals are presented with an ambiguous accent.

One reason for the relatively small sample size for the study is that it occurred just as the college closed and shifted to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is reason to suspect that students at that time had little experience with online and remote forms of learning, particularly given that the college had limited online instruction. It is important to evaluate how student familiarity with the form of instruction may impact the patterns of bias like those observed in this study.

Finally, the study design does not allow for a complex and nuanced evaluation of the conscious and subconscious processes driving the results. Future research would benefit from incorporating

qualitative approaches to understanding the process through which students racialize accents and voices.

Despite these limitations, this study provides unique, relevant data. Unlike previous studies where students were given visual or background information on the speaker, participants received no information about the speaker other than voice to trigger bias. In this study, bias based on perception of instructor race persisted within the context of a Catholic college, which demonstrates the need for scholars, administrators, and researchers to study processes and potential interventions that could improve the experience of both faculty and students of color.

Appendix A: Pre- and Post-Assessment Questions

These are the questions that participants were asked before and after watching the microlecture.

Section 1: Multiple-Choice

1. Which of the following statements is true about the term "research"?

    (a) Research is a systematic investigation to answer a question and establish new information and facts about phenomena.

    (b) Research is mostly done by the "hard sciences" like physics, chemistry, and biology.

    (c) Research can be done by social scientists, like psychologists and sociologists, but is not done in the humanities like philosophy and theology.

    (d) Research rarely includes people or living creatures.

2. Which of the following is true about research ethics?

    (a) Ethical standards for research primarily concern issues of reporting research, including making sure that researchers do not plagiarize or fabricate results.

    (b) There have always been moral principles to guide research that involves humans and living creatures.

    (c) Research ethics are a set of voluntary guidelines that researchers can choose to follow.

    (d) Ethical issues in research were influenced by societal factors like racist Jim Crow laws and the Holocaust.

3. Which of the following statements is representative of the five ethical principles upheld by the Institutional Review Board?

    (a) Researchers must ensure there are no risks posed to the participants in the study.

    (b) Researchers must obtain permission and consent to study the participant.

    (c) Researchers must disclose the identity of the participants if there are positive results.

    (d) Researchers must ensure that all people in the study benefit or face risks from participating in the study.

4. In the aftermath of WWII, which of the following suggested that all participants in a research study should volunteer and give their consent to participate?

    (a) The Nuremburg Code

    (b) The National Research Act

    (c) The Tuskegee Syphilis Study

    (d) Brown v. Board of Education

5. Which of the following required that all research institutions in the United States have their own Institutional Review Board?

    (a) The National Research Act

    (b) The Nuremberg Code

    (c) The Civil Rights Act

    (d) Brown v. Board of Education

6. The Tuskegee Syphilis Study and Dr. Chester Southam's cancer experiments are important because _____.

    (a) they illustrated the need for laws that protect research subjects.

    (b) they illustrated the need for a set of suggested guidelines for how research subjects should be treated.

    (c) they illustrated how the Nuremberg Code provided protections for research subjects.

    (d) they illustrated how the Civil Rights Act provided protections for research subjects.

Section 2: Theoretical Examples

The Institutional Review Board ensures that research upholds five ethical principles: Respect for Persons, which requires that participants enter the research voluntarily and with adequate information about the study; Beneficence, requiring that researchers maximize possible benefits while minimizing possible harms; Justice, where the benefits and risks are equally distributed to all participants; Confidentiality that ensures anonymity of participants and their families; and Informed Consent or obtaining permission or consent to participate.

In the prompts that follow, indicate which of the five ethical principles the example violates. Choose all that apply.

1. Researchers at the college want to understand how people respond to insults from strangers. So, they tell all of the students in their classes they have to sign up for a meeting as part of an assignment. The researchers set up a camera outside of their office and have a paid actor insult the students' appearance while they wait for their meeting. The researchers make sure that no one else sees the video, and they do not identify the students in their notes or research, but they never tell the students they were filmed or explain that they were part of a study.

   (a) Respect for persons

   (b) Beneficence

   (c) Justice

   (d) Confidentiality

   (e) Informed Consent

2. A researcher wants to test a new drug that they believe will cure acid reflux. They enlist 300 people who suffer from acid reflux but are not currently taking medication to treat it and inform them that some will be given the treatment and some will be given a sugar pill. The researcher makes sure that all notes do not contain the patients' names and that no one other than the researcher will see their medical files. The researcher then gives all of the men the medication and all of the women the sugar pills.

   (a) Respect for persons

   (b) Beneficence

   (c) Justice

   (d) Confidentiality

   (e) Informed Consent

3. A researcher conducts a series of interviews with the employees at a local Walmart to study low-wage employees' attitudes about their bosses. All participants signed informed consent and volunteered to participate. The researcher publishes a paper that includes information that allows the reader to identify the store included in the study. The researcher also includes quotes about harassment from a manager that employees faced. Along with the quotes, the paper included detailed descriptions of the participants describing the harassment. Shortly after it was published, several of those who discussed the harassment with the researcher were fired.

   (a) Respect for persons

   (b) Beneficence

   (c) Justice

   (d) Confidentiality

   (e) Informed Consent

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