

Hernan Diaz is the associate director of the Hispanic Institute at Columbia University. He presented a video on PBS news hour in 2018 of which he discussed accent discrimination. Hernan was born in Argentina, grew up in Sweden, spent a few years in London in his twenties, and spent most of his life in the United States. He has an accent that is a mix of many. Hernan spoke about how he has seen flyers on Columbia university campus that advertised accent reduction. This struck a nerve with him as he is proud of his accent even though it is quite unique. The burning question that came to mind was "Does my accent need to be corrected?" Hernan then stated that he can tell when someone can genuinely not understand something he is saying and when someone is simply underscoring their difference of pronunciation to put him in his place. The most impactful part in my opinion of his speech is his statement that language does not belong to anyone. Language does not even belong to its native speakers. Language is something that is shared by everyone.

Hernan is a well-respected professor at Columbia University and Pulitzer prize finalist. The presentation he gave for PBS was powerful and mind opening. One of my other sources speaks about accent reduction as something that can be positive. Hernan's belief is that nobody needs to have their accent corrected. Who should it be corrected to sound like? I think this is something that is very powerful and that is why I wanted to include his presentation as a primary source. I also truly resonate with the quote "Language belongs to everyone". This quote spoke to me and I believe can be a corner stone in my argument of why we should strive to eliminate accent bias.

(2018, July 03). Retrieved July 19, 2020, from <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/we-stigmatize-accent-but-language-belongs-to-everyone>