



## THE PHENOMENON OF LINGUISTIC DISCRIMINATION AT THE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY OF CIUDAD JUAREZ WITHIN THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

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### Abstract

This study was developed based on an exploration of the phenomenon of linguistic discrimination among students at the Technological University of Ciudad Juárez, in the Information Technology program, both morning and evening classes. The importance of this study lies in its theoretical and methodological aspects, since, as an exploratory study, it reveals the existence of linguistic discrimination at the university. According to the bibliographic review, there is little research on the topic in the country, the most notable and supportive of this research being that conducted by Hernández-Roseta and Maya (2009). There is no research on the topic at the UTCJ. Given the expected results, they are positive regarding the existence of linguistic discrimination, opening an opportunity for improvement and working with students to achieve pluralistic and inclusive relationships with their peers based on language.

*Keywords: Linguistic, Discrimination, University, Classroom*

### 1. Introduction

The Technological Universities (UT) have been an exceptional case in the field of the country's educational policy. Unlike other programs and actions, support for this short-term, vocational higher education option has been maintained for more than 17 years, or even more illustratively, for almost four six-year terms. This permanence is partly explained by the constant political and economic backing. But this support, in a modern and democratic regime, should also have been accompanied by a thorough analysis of its progress, achievements, and limitations. Any policy considered state-sponsored is public to the extent that its continuity is based on findings derived from research, criticism, and public reasoning (UT, 2025)

The Technological Universities (UT), launched in 1991 with the creation of the Aguascalientes, Nezahualcóyotl, and Tula-Tepeji units, and currently comprising 66 campuses nationwide, are emblematic of the diversification goals of Mexico's higher education technology sector, the provision of intermediate vocational training (the advanced university technical and associate professional degrees), as well as the intention to generate solutions to job demands for specialized technical training.

The research was conducted in the Information Technology program, which currently has 700 students in both morning and evening classes. This program began with the opening of the UTCJ Southeast Campus in 1999, and has earned alumni with advanced technical and engineering degrees. It is currently among the most in-demand programs.

Language discrimination in classrooms is a highly noticeable phenomenon, as it affects students whose native language is not Spanish, making it difficult for them to use the language commonly spoken in Mexico. How does this problem arise? It is very common for students to be mocked and even nicknamed for their classmates who even have an accent different from that of the city.

Several cases of bullying have been reported to the UTCJ Psychopedagogical Support Unit at the university level, where students feel harassed by their peers for speaking "differently." This affects them to such an extent

that some choose to change classes, shifts, or, worse, drop out of school, in addition to increasing low self-esteem and a significant increase in anxiety.

An interesting case is that at the UTs, English is taught regularly every semester. This is where this problem is most evident, as students from different areas of the country who study at the university find it so difficult that they tend to fail due to their inability to master the American language. There have also been cases of poor understanding and lack of empathy on the part of teachers.

An exploratory study is necessary to develop appropriate strategies to reduce the problem. Therefore, this study aims to describe the situation to begin improving the educational process not only for students but also for teachers and administrators.

The article that Fiala-Butora (2023) presents, argues that these examples represent three different models of linguistic equality: formal equality, equality of opportunities and substantive linguistic equality. It will analyse how these approaches empower or disadvantage speakers of minority languages, and what normative guide they provide for linguistic equality.

### **The educational**

In Mexican society, there is a rich multiculturalism, which is evident in every city and state of the country. Even so, this multiculturalism can give rise to language discrimination, especially in contexts where different cultures coexist. At the Technological University of Ciudad Juárez, founded in 1999 in the southeast of Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, students interact daily with classmates and teachers from other parts of the country, including some from the United States and Spain. Thus, this phenomenon of language discrimination, studied by sociolinguistics and ethnoinguistics, is prominent among university students. For Teillier, Llanquiao, and Salamanca (2016), the almost nonexistent problematization of the relationship between linguistics and social reality fails to mention that many linguistic studies that have not focused on this relationship have provided important insight into certain areas related to language studies.

From a critical sociolinguistic perspective (inspired by advances in American linguistic anthropology), important work has been done in highlighting the importance of the representations, ideas, beliefs and attitudes – or linguistic ideologies – that individuals and communities have about different ways of speaking, incorporating them into their analyses in order to more fully understand linguistic change and the place that languages and linguistic practices occupy in social organization, especially (though not only) in the reproduction of inequalities. (Espinoza Alvarado, 2023). The phenomena of cultural and linguistic diversity have become the focus of current debates about the school and its undeniable role as the broadest space for the inclusion of diversity. Key elements of this inclusion process are the knowledge of reading and writing, the difficulties in which students acquire them as the most significant factors in school and social exclusion. Language, as a social practice, objectifies in dialects the different "places" that situate individuals in the space of social relations and objectifies in registers a repertoire of meanings linked to the actions individuals perform. (Herrera de Bett: 2005)

Meanwhile, at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Colombia (2009), a study was conducted on the sociolinguistics of students at the university; the results show that several phenomena emerge within the configuration of student slang, such as the creation of vocabulary based on the students' specific situations, the multiple evaluation of lexical expressions, the use of loanwords, and the influence of the English language in the structuring of slang, among others. In the time of the philosophers, Aristotle (384-322 BC) already spoke about the various "types of language" (logos semantikos). The philosopher proposed that language, as a meaningful content, presented three possible forms: apophantic (logos apophantikos), pragmatic (logos pragmatikos), and poetic (logos poetikos). (Blanco: 2005)

The study of language, or sociolinguistics itself, has existed since human thought and language began to develop, from the physical, psychological, and social perspectives. It is of utmost importance to understand the resistance we have as human beings toward other languages and accents throughout the multicultural world in Ciudad Juarez and even in the Mexican Republic.

For all the above reasons, a study describing the problem of language discrimination is being considered at the Technological University of Ciudad Juárez, Southeast Campus, in the Information Technology program, evening program, hoping to obtain desirable results to propose strategies in the near future. According to the theory proposed by Coseriu (1964), language is based on the arbitrary association of a meaning (semantic content) and a signifier (acoustic image). This implies that in order to establish communication, the speaker and the listener must accept the same symbols for the same objects and that their combination must be carried out according to a certain rule; that is, they must accept a pre-established norm. Eugene Coseriu is a linguist who dedicated his studies to language, its structure, and its functions. It is necessary to address his main concepts in this research to understand how language works. However, Crystal (1983) emphasizes that for communication to occur, the

existence of a sender, a receiver, a message, and an agreement between the interlocutors regarding the use of a code are necessary. According to this author, every communicative activity involves the following steps or phases:

- Source of information: human being
- Coding process: message development
- Production: advertising the encoded signal
- Transmission: sending the signal
- Reception: the signal is received
- Decoding: deciphering the message
- Destination: once the message is decoded, its meaning is recorded.

According to Hernández Rosete and Maya (2016), the school linguistic discrimination is a form of racism whose countercultural resistance is poorly documented. In this paper we analyze the beliefs that favor indigenous bilingual school discrimination migrants and describe some of the answers as there are also mechanisms of school counterculture.

As an example, we have the article of Boulos (2022) “The article criticizes the dichotomy between tolerance-oriented language rights and promotion-oriented language rights. Alternatively, the article suggests that a substantive approach to equality in the enjoyment of human rights could give rise to a duty to accommodate the language of immigrants when the lack of accommodation results in the denial of human rights.” The question here is whether we should go so far in terms of linguistic discrimination for the cases to reach human rights.

Mendez Santos (2025) It's common to hear discriminatory statements like the following: people from the capital speak better; those from the coast speak with a very strange lilt; indigenous dialects are going to disappear; indigenous languages have no grammar; Spanish has recently become impoverished, etc. All of these expressions are examples of a phenomenon that has been called linguistic discrimination.

2. Method

Exploratory research is conducted since, according to Hernández Sampieri

(2010), "Exploratory studies are those that aim to give us a general, approximate view of a specific reality. This type of research is especially conducted when the chosen topic has been little explored and recognized, and even more so when it is difficult to formulate precise or general hypotheses about it."

Therefore, it will be a cross-sectional study, that is, it takes a snapshot of a population at a specific point in time, which allows conclusions to be drawn about phenomena across a broad population. No subsequent studies will be conducted after the time in which this study is conducted.

It will take a quantitative approach since the instrument will be developed in survey format, validated, analyzed, and reliable statistical studies will be produced.

The sample is comprised of 700 students who will participate in the university, both in emerging and early adulthood. This will be a quantitative study, with a proportion formula that has a 5% error and a 1.96 confidence level.

The sample size being studied in the Information Technology program is 250 students. 125 will be administered in the morning shift and 125 in the afternoon shift.

An instrument is being developed that allows for the study of a maximum of 11 items that delve deeper into the problem. The instrument will be administered at the beginning of the September-December 2025 semester at the UTCJ.

3. Findings

TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation.		Variance	Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Standard Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Standard Error
Have you ever personally witnessed or experienced discrimination at the UTCJ?	250	470.00	1.8800	.03266	.51640	.267	.521	.307
Indicate the types of discrimination you believe occur most frequently at the UTCJ.	250	692.00	2.7680	.07900	1.24917	1.560	-.815	.307
Do you believe there are cases of linguistic discrimination in the TICS degree program?	250	691.00	2.7640	.06623	1.04723	1.097	-1.280	.307

What types of discrimination do you believe occur most often in the TICS program?	250	800.00	3.2000	.07281	1.15122	1.325	-.527	.307
Would you accept into your friend group people who use a different language and/or speak with an accent different from what is common in the city?	250	292.00	1.1680	.03129	.49473	.245	9.754	.307
How do you feel around them?	250	411.00	1.6440	.07576	1.19792	1.435	.024	.307
Why would you discriminate against a person?	250	1449.00	5.7960	.05504	.87030	.757	18.882	.307
Do you feel, or have you felt, discriminated against because of the way you speak?	250	516.00	2.0640	.03181	.50291	.253	15.364	.307
Do you believe that a person's language or dialect interferes with being accepted in a group or in society?	250	502.00	2.0080	.05668	.89619	.803	.197	.307
Why do you think people discriminate against others?	250	567.00	2.2680	.06931	1.09589	1.201	-1.160	.307
Who do you think discriminates the most?	250	817.00	3.2680	.09761	1.54328	2.382	-1.588	.307
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>	250							

Total variance sum = 11.325

Variance of the sum of the items = 6995.61688

Table 1: The breakdown of the statistical analysis of the items is shown, as well as the calculation of the total sum and the variances. These data were used for the validation of the instrument.

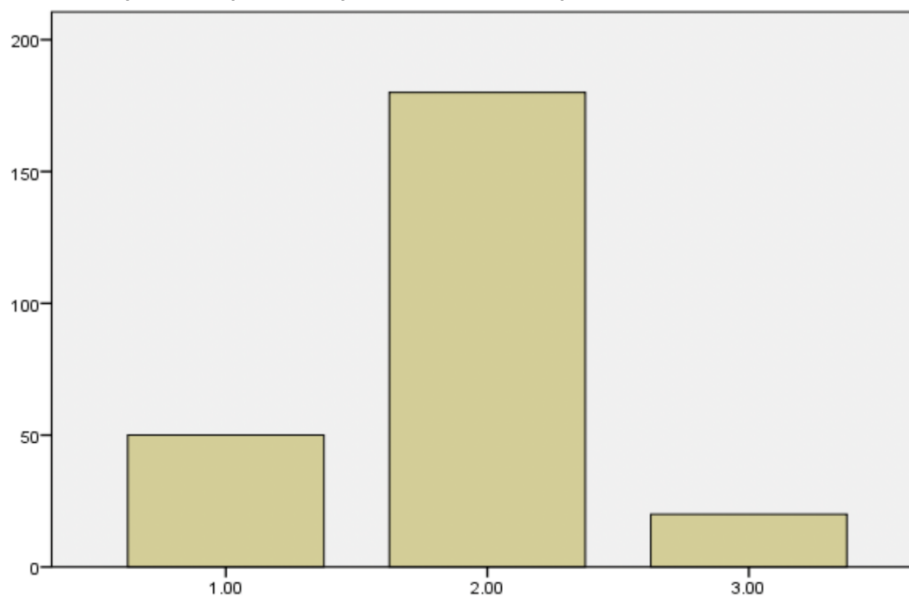
**TABLE 2: Model Description**

Nombre del modelo	MOD_4	
Serie o secuencia	1	Have you ever personally witnessed or experienced discrimination at the UTCJ?
	2	Indicate the types of discrimination you believe occur most frequently at the UTCJ.
	3	Do you believe there are cases of linguistic discrimination in the TICS degree program?
	4	What types of discrimination do you believe occur most often in the TICS program?
	5	Would you accept into your friend group people who use a different language and/or speak with an accent different from what is common in the city?
	6	How do you feel around them?
	7	Why would you discriminate against a person?
	8	Do you feel, or have you felt, discriminated against because of the way you speak?
	9	Do you believe that a person's language or dialect interferes with being accepted in a group or in society?
	10	Why do you think people discriminate against others?
	11	Who do you think discriminates the most?
Transformation	non	
Non-seasonal Differencing		1
Seasonal Differencing		0
Seasonal period lenght	No Periodicity	
Standardization	Applied	
Distribution	Type	Normal

		Ubication	Estimated
		Scale	Estimated
Fractional	rank	estimation	Blom's
method			
Rank assigned to ties		Average rank of tied values	

**TABLE 2:** Applying the specifications of the MOD\_4 model**1. Have you ever personally witnessed or experienced discrimination at the UTCJ?**

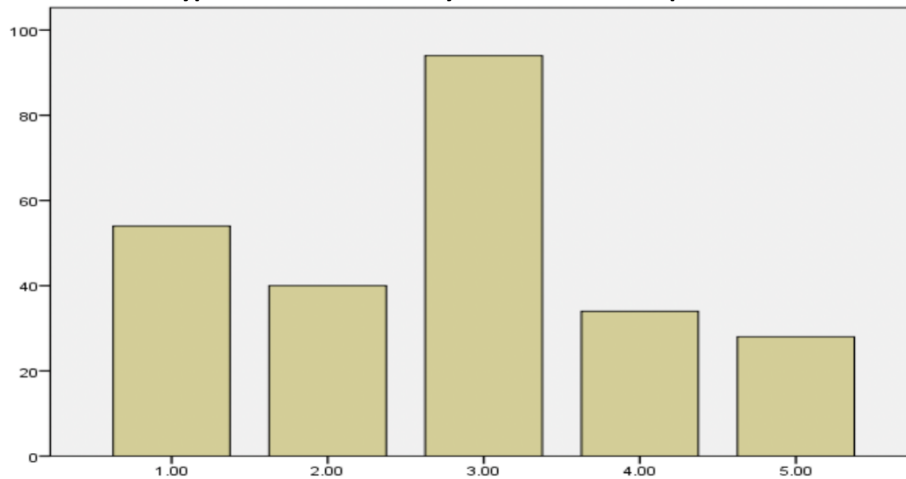
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	50	20.0	20.0	20.0
2.00	180	72.0	72.0	92.0
3.00	20	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

**1. Have you ever personally witnessed and experienced discrimination at UTCJ?**

The most common answer is "NO." Informal communications from the university mention that there are no well-known cases of any type of discrimination in general, although it is well known that the phenomenon, regardless of the type, occurs to a greater or lesser extent. A few students who have experienced discrimination or know of cases of it are still far from the answer. The answer "maybe" is more ambivalent when faced with the knowledge of this.

**2. Indicate the types of discrimination you believe occur most frequently at the UTCJ.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	54	21.6	21.6	21.6
2.00	40	16.0	16.0	37.6
3.00	94	37.6	37.6	75.2
4.00	34	13.6	13.6	88.8
5.00	28	11.2	11.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

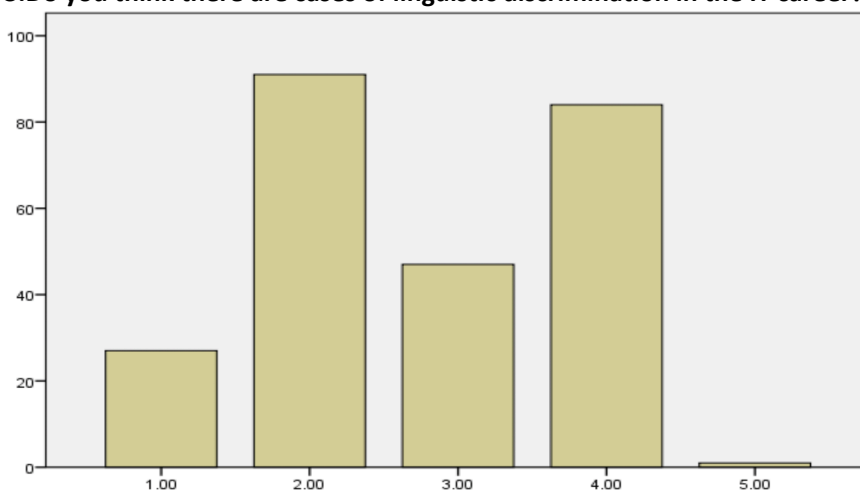
**2. Indicate the types of discrimination you think are most prevalent at UTCJ.**

The discrimination most frequently detected at UTCJ is linguistic discrimination, according to the results of the instrument applied. This is not discussed openly, but as a university that welcomes students from different regions, it is more prone to this type of discrimination.

Then there is racial discrimination, which is highly observable among students in the IT program. Another warning sign is sexual discrimination, which is the most risky and the one that most raises fears about discussing this issue. This is mentioned based on work experiences within the Psychopedagogical Support Unit. Finally, subjects believe that ideological and religious discrimination are the least prevalent.

**3. Do you think there are cases of linguistic discrimination in the IT career?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	27	10.8	10.8	10.8
2.00	91	36.4	36.4	47.2
3.00	47	18.8	18.8	66.0
4.00	84	33.6	33.6	99.6
5.00	1	.4	.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

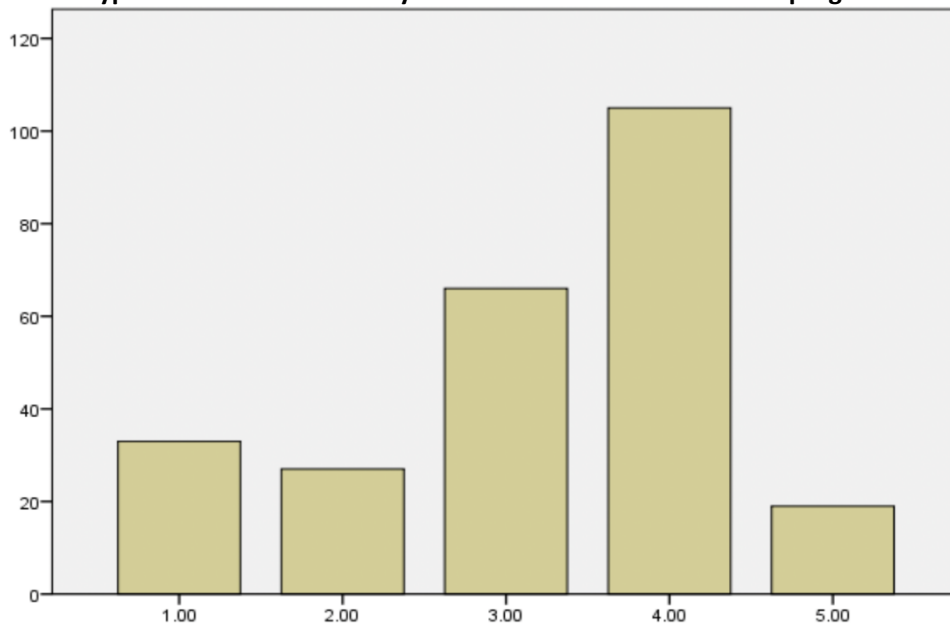
**3. Do you think there are cases of linguistic discrimination in the IT career?**

The most common response to this item was "few"; although the phenomenon exists, it is not widely known among students.

**4.What types of discrimination do you think are most common in IT program?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	33	13.2	13.2	13.2
2.00	27	10.8	10.8	24.0
3.00	66	26.4	26.4	50.4
4.00	105	42.0	42.0	92.4
5.00	19	7.6	7.6	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

**4.What types of discrimination do you think are most common in IT program?**

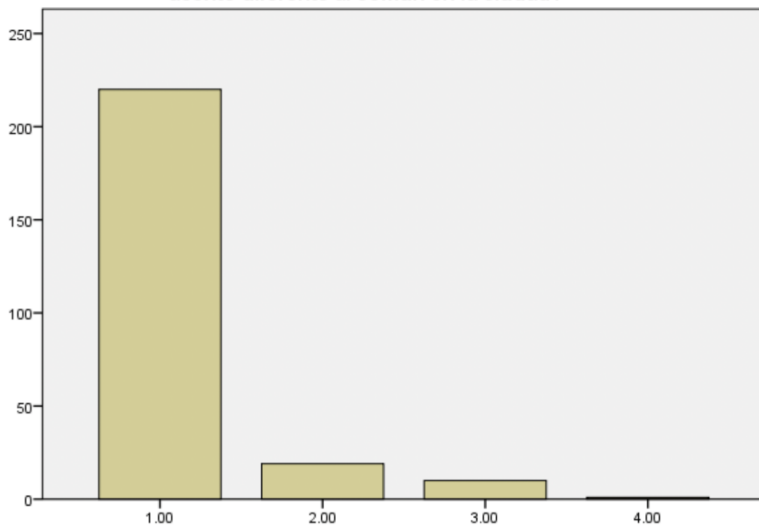


Although there are no cases brought to light outside the university, students do detect linguistic discrimination followed by ideological discrimination, where students believe that they feel discriminated against for having different political preferences.

**5. Would you accept people with a different language or accent into your group of friends?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	220	88.0	88.0	88.0
2.00	19	7.6	7.6	95.6
3.00	10	4.0	4.0	99.6
4.00	1	.4	.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

**5. Would you accept people with a different language or accent into your group of friends?**

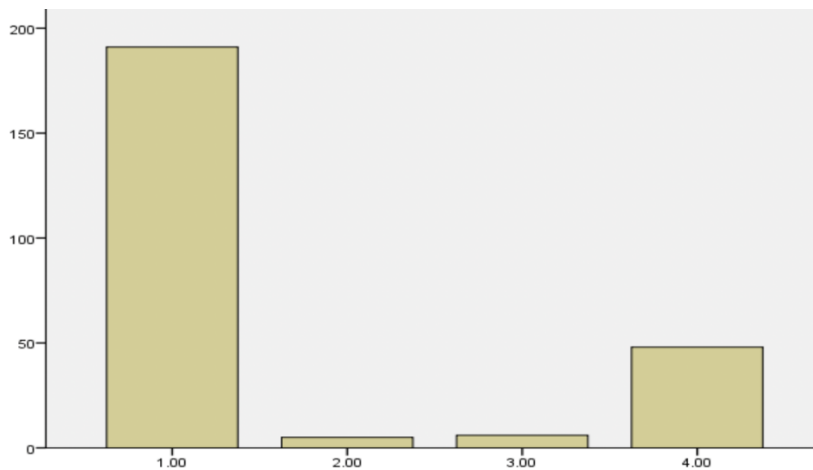


The most frequent response is YES; students agree that they would accept people with different languages (for example, a native language) or even a different accent.

**6. How do you feel about them?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	191	76.4	76.4	76.4
2.00	5	2.0	2.0	78.4
3.00	6	2.4	2.4	80.8
4.00	48	19.2	19.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

**6. How do you feel about them?**



Equality is perceived among students based on their responses and the flattening of the discrimination phenomenon into "I don't care."

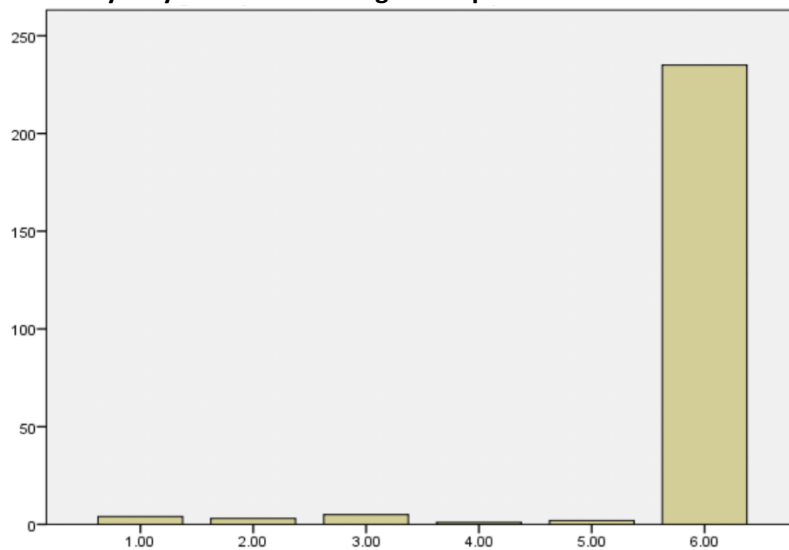
**7. Why do you discriminate against a person?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	4	1.6	1.6	1.6
2.00	3	1.2	1.2	2.8
3.00	5	2.0	2.0	4.8
4.00	1	.4	.4	5.2
5.00	2	.8	.8	6.0
6.00	235	94.0	94.0	100.0



Total	250	100.0	100.0
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### 7. Why do you discriminate against a person?

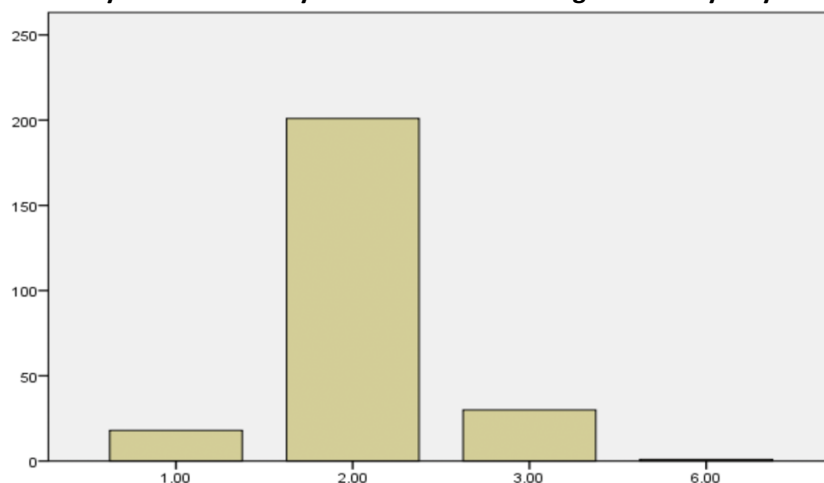


This was the item with the greatest impact, since although the majority responded "I don't discriminate," some respondents responded that they do discriminate based on physical appearance and sexual orientation. What era are we in, then, as a Juarez student society? Freedom of expression, yes, with zero tolerance.

### 8. Do you feel or have you felt discriminated against in any way because of the way you speak?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Valid 1.00	18	7.2	7.2	7.2
2.00	201	80.4	80.4	87.6
3.00	30	12.0	12.0	99.6
6.00	1	.4	.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

### 8. Do you feel or have you felt discriminated against in any way because of the way you speak?



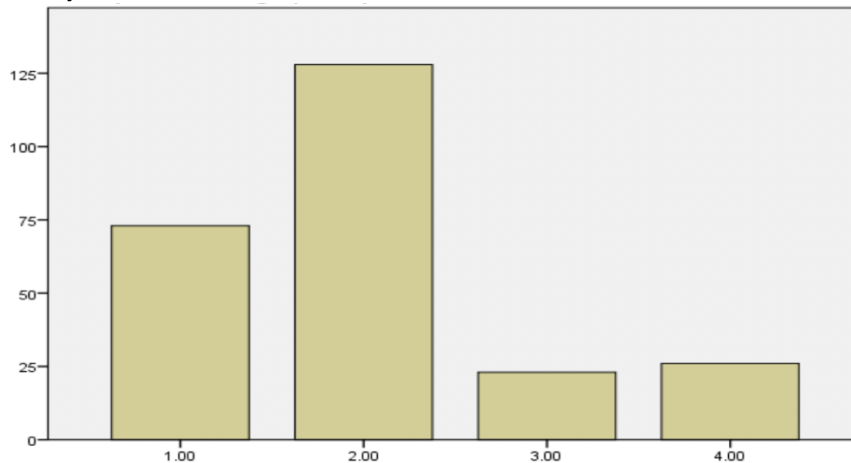
The frequency of responses is NO, although in one of the instruments a student noted that he is discriminated against for speaking too quickly. It's curious how, even though open-ended questions were not included in the instrument, they still left notes of this type.

### 9. Do you think that a person's language or dialect interferes with being accepted in a group of people or in society?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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	1.00	73	29.2	29.2	29.2
	2.00	128	51.2	51.2	80.4
Valid	3.00	23	9.2	9.2	89.6
	4.00	26	10.4	10.4	100.0
	Total	250	100.0	100.0	

**9. Do you think that a person's language or dialect interferes with being accepted in a group of people or in society?**

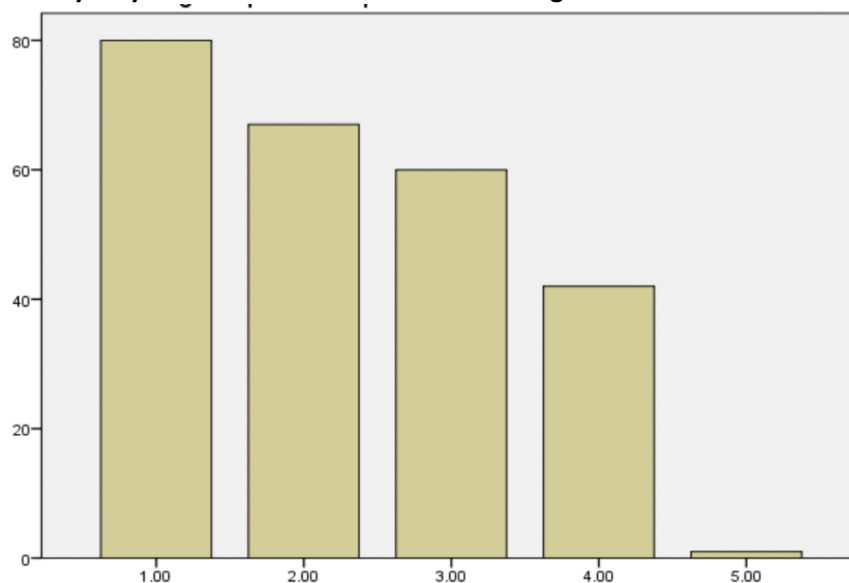


The subjects' most frequent response is that language does not interfere with being accepted in society; although, on the other hand, and in a second response, they mention that, indeed, there is resistance to being accepted in a group or society based on their language.

**10. Why do you think others are discriminated against?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1.00	80	32.0	32.0	32.0
2.00	67	26.8	26.8	58.8
3.00	60	24.0	24.0	82.8
4.00	42	16.8	16.8	99.6
5.00	1	.4	.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

**10. Why do you think others are discriminated against?**



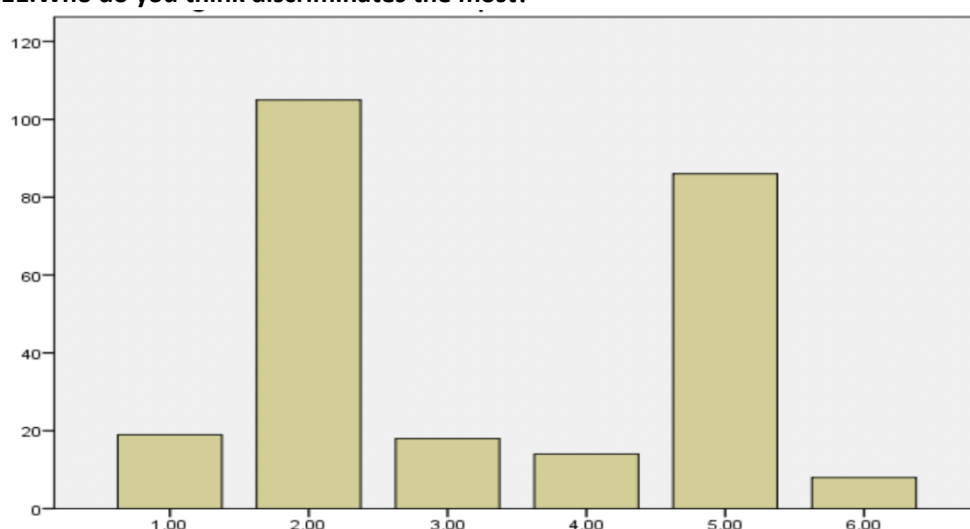
The most common response to this item is that others are discriminated against because

we consider ourselves superior, followed by because we are different, then because we don't accept ourselves, and then because we make fun of others. These are extremely interesting responses since they give rise to an almost equal perception of the responses. One could infer that discrimination is caused by all of the above.

#### 11. Who do you think discriminates the most?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.00	19	7.6	7.6	7.6
2.00	105	42.0	42.0	49.6
3.00	18	7.2	7.2	56.8
Valid 4.00	14	5.6	5.6	62.4
5.00	86	34.4	34.4	96.8
6.00	8	3.2	3.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

#### 11. Who do you think discriminates the most?



The most frequent response is that young people tend to discriminate the most, followed by women. This item could be used to create new research to support the pluralistic and inclusive dynamics of young people in general and of women.

\*Statistics and graphics developed in SPSS. Ruizsparza Flores Betsabé & Trasviña Martínez Jorge Alberto (2025)

### Discussion

According to the exploration of the phenomenon of linguistic discrimination within the Information Technology program, the general objective of this research was positive. Teachers and students comment that this type of discrimination is an "open secret" that we know exists, but those affected do not readily mention it, either because they are embarrassed or because they are about to drop out of the program due to this phenomenon.

Indeed, students identify not only linguistic discrimination within the UTCJ and the IT program, but also other types such as religious, political, and even sexual orientation. These are among the most discriminated against in the program.

One of the most striking results is how students say they do not discriminate, but that if they do, it would be based on the other person's physical appearance. When asked in some cases, the majority commented that if the person is not physically attractive, then "they cannot be considered." At what point in human evolution are we, then? It's incredible that this type of discrimination exists at the professional level.

Even today, according to statistics, students are not entirely plural; they do not accept other accents in speech, much less other types of language.

A highly notable and consistent result is that students perceive female students as the most discriminatory. Is this a social perception based on the belief that women are more judgmental, or are female technology students the most likely to exhibit this phenomenon?

According to statistics, yes.

Language discrimination in technology programs is expressed both in the accent of speech (whether accented in the south, north, or the country) and in the knowledge of a native language. I have had the pleasure of teaching students who speak Mixtec, Tarahumara, or Zapotec. Two of these students dropped out due to discrimination from their classmates. According to Pérez-Ramón (2024) *Discrimination of Degrees of Foreign Accent across Different Speakers*, Second-language learners often encounter communication challenges due to a foreign accent (FA) in their speech, influenced by their native language (L1). This FA can affect rhythm, intonation, stress, and the segmental domain, which consists of individual language sounds. In their critique of the One Nation-One Language ideology, Fuller and Leeman (2020) mention that linguistic diversity is often seen as an impediment to national unity and that people are “expected to speak the national language in order to belong”. Consequently, “speakers of other languages are seen as outsiders, and their social and/or political exclusion is naturalized”. Language functions as a gatekeeper; if people do not have access to the language, they are denied access to social participation. As a result, linguistic barriers contribute to systemic exclusion.

### Conclusions

The main cause of linguistic discrimination in the program is a lack of basic understanding to understand the phenomenon and prove its existence to the point where dropout rates occur, as well as negative group dynamics that lead to conflictive groups.

The paper concludes by mentioning the importance of conducting social research on campus, as it provides an opportunity to identify areas for improvement and thus initiate programs that raise awareness about the various forms of discrimination at UTCJ. Expanding pluralism and inclusion among students should be key to healthy group dynamics and achieving cohesion among the student population.

An exploratory analysis of the problem of linguistic discrimination at the Technological University of Ciudad Juárez is provided, allowing an understanding of the phenomenon and how it occurs.

In the area of sociolinguistics at the university level, a study is expected to serve as a basis for further research to create models that help address this problem, as well as intervention strategies to support students who are immersed in this phenomenon.

A series of characteristics are provided that describe how linguistic discrimination affects students in the Information Technology program and the consequences this problem entails.

Strategies should also be studied and proposed to reduce the problem within the program groups, where students, either due to prejudice or resistance, tend to relegate classmates who speak a different language, as mentioned above.

After listening to, listening to, and observing how this issue plays out on campus, it is impressive how students tend to modify important aspects of their personalities to “fit in” and stop being victims of teasing and bullying. Therefore, one of the contributions will be the identification of intercultural students, in addition to identifying the students who serve as a support network for this issue. The study of sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, and language itself within the UTCJ will take shape from this study; the research reveals whether students and teachers are prepared to welcome people with other languages. This is a key point, as the goal is to work with tutors and professors at the university to foster acceptance, understanding, and collaboration with these students.

The university community is the first to benefit from this research, as initiatives will be taken to reduce the phenomenon of linguistic discrimination at UTCJ.

Tutors and teachers will learn that this is a problem that affects students both personally and in their academic performance, as not all of them are strong enough to withstand teasing and “getting along” with their peers.

It is not easy to work with human qualities, but it is feasible to collaborate with the peers involved to improve this problem; leaving ignorance aside to move toward a state of shared understanding about the impact of this problem within the university, although the university community is home to a minority of people with a different native language, or who speak a language other than Spanish, but whose first language is not their native language.

Based on ethics, morals, values, and inclusion, the social impact of this research is promising and will lead to new strategies for more harmonious university social coexistence, because as Guarín (2025) declares in his research “Linguistic justice in the face of anti-immigrant rhetoric: The threat of English-Only policies to Spanish speakers and multilingualism in the United States. Societies”: The broader emotional and psychological consequences of this linguistic suppression are significant.

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