BACKGROUND: Foreign accent syndrome (FAS) is a rare speech disorder characterized by the appearance of a new accent, different from the speaker's native language and perceived as foreign by the speaker and the listener.

OBJECTIVE: In most of the reported cases, FAS follows stroke but has also been found following traumatic brain injury, cerebral hemorrhage and multiple sclerosis. FAS was reported only once in a patient with previous bipolar disorder, but FAS had began concomitant with a neurodegenerative disorder.

METHODOLOGY: His neurocognitive exam was unremarkable, except for slight executive function difficulties in Wisconsin test. His MMSE was 30. His neurological exam was normal. Psychopathological exam showed lack of insight, Theory of Mind deficits, mild hyperkinesis, moderate anxiety, logorrhea, mild dysphoria, and hyperthimia. Brain MRI was normal. The diagnosis of bipolar disorder type II was done based on DSM-V.

RESULTS: We report a 30-year-old Brazilian, male, white, right-handed, higher education, with a two years history of altered speech, characterized by profound and permanent modification in pronunciation, with foreign accent resembling Spanish (sounding as, but without all other features of Spanish). His language changed after a travel to Rio de Janeiro in 2013, when he used to stay together with Spanish tourists during his vacations. He never had a different style from his regular, leaving a beard and wearing leather clothes and dark glasses, incorporating a more Latin style caricature. This behavior has been going on for two years and still continues even criticized by family and friends. Patient has no functional impairment and continuous his professional activities as a public server, but with no concern or insight about the estrangement his odd behavior has provoked in his work and other social relationships. He has a history of mood swings since 2000, but without formal treatment or diagnosis. His mother has bipolar disorder type I and his brother has Asperger's syndrome.

CONCLUSION: We report for the first time an association between FAS with an exclusively functional psychiatric disorder, i.e. bipolar disorder. The origin of FAS in our case could be associated with a form of Zelig syndrome, since patient had changed his accent when was exposed to foreign people from Spain.

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