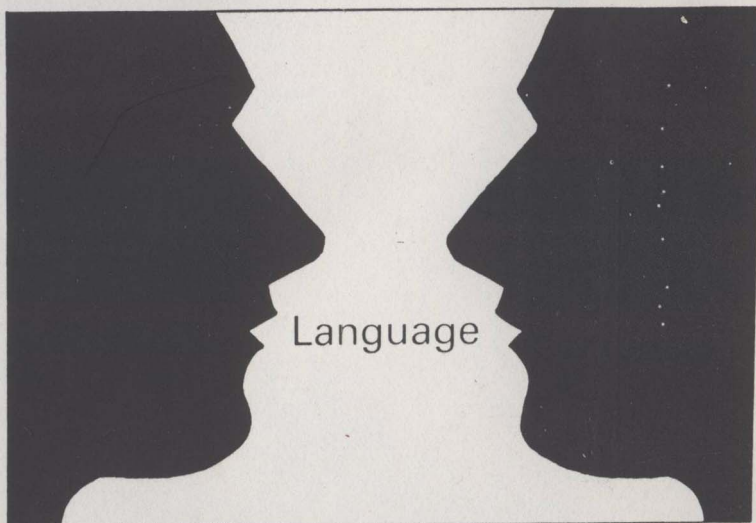


Attitudes towards Language Variation

Social and Applied Contexts



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Edited by
Ellen Bouchard Ryan and Howard Giles

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Preface

Those fascinated by the importance and complexities of language in social life might look to psychology and especially social psychology for some insights. After all, much of an individual's behaviour occurs in a social context, is manifest linguistically, and mediated by cognitive processes. While language figures prominently in many areas of psychological inquiry such as cognition and development (albeit predictably asocial and acommunicative in the former case), detailed exploration of the dynamics of language and communication within social psychology are conspicuous by their absence. Although there are admittedly important exceptions by way of certain individuals, a few books and a couple of research topics, an examination of mainstream journals and influential texts in social psychology suggests that language and communication hold at the most a peripheral status within the discipline. This is not however to suggest that important research has not been documented. Yet it does exist – as a perusal of the present volume's bibliography will show – across an extremely wide set of outlets in the social and communication sciences. Our potential enthusiasts then are liable to be soon disappointed at the apparent dearth of mainstream interest in social psychology for the topic, and understandably reluctant to invest much effort in discovering the inevitably rich stores of information actually available.

They are more likely to be attracted by the equally important but far more accessible perspectives in other disciplines such as philosophy, sociology and anthropology which not only have long-serving labels for their endeavours (i.e. the sociology of language) but can justifiably display their wares proudly. One obvious venue for our language enthusiasts, apart from communication science (which in the interpersonal domain has an active social psychological perspective especially in methodology), is sociolinguistics. This, for many, is a healthy multidisciplinary field examining the relationships between language and society from (to name a few) political, demographic, economic and linguistic perspectives. It has in fact generated the most impressive array of interesting and societally important findings. And once again, understandable in terms of the above, neglects a coherent social psychological approach; again, there are important exceptions particularly with regard to the study of bilingualism and forms of address.

We might then ask: what is this social psychological approach that is so lamentably missing from language studies? It lies in two domains. First, language and society are viewed as *interdependent* not as dichotomies as reflected in much traditional sociolinguistics; it is tremendously difficult to separate linguistic and social processes in many instances. Thus, not only do speakers' language behaviours reflect the norms of the situation as perceived by them but that very language

behaviour itself can often act creatively to define, and subsequently redefine, the nature of the situation for the participants involved. Second, attention is drawn to the fact that language behaviour is likely to be dependent upon how speakers cognitively represent their social and psychological characteristics and subjectively define the situation in terms of its norms and their goals as is any objective classification of that situation imposed from without (e.g. by investigators). In this sense, *cognitive representations* are seen to be important mediators between language and social context. Given that social psychological theories – as well as their methodologies – are all about the complexities and dynamics of cognitive organization and representation of the social world, it is felt that this perspective can broaden the explanatory scope of the study of language.

Notwithstanding the reasons why a social psychological approach to language and communication has never really gelled – apart from in the early days of its history and in certain national contexts such as Canada – suffice it to say that there are many indications now that it has 'arrived'. For instance, some sociolinguists are beginning to acknowledge the contributions that social psychologists of language are making toward predicting and explaining linguistic variation in social contexts, and the former are themselves integrating speakers' feelings, values, attitudes and perceptions into their research designs. Indeed, research activity in the last five or more years has grown enormously. This is evident in the advent of a number of books on social psychological aspects of language in the 1970s, the emergence of two International Conferences on this perspective (at Bristol) in 1979 and 1983 attracting enthusiastic participation world-wide, as well as the establishment of the *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* as a coherent forum for this speciality. Obviously, it is timely to promote the coherence of the approach by means of a Monograph Series of interest to those in social psychology on the one hand and language and communication on the other. In this way, we can resurrect language and communication ultimately to its rightful place as a mainstream concern in social psychology as well as concurrently continuing to promote a social psychological perspective to the study of language and communication as an essential one comparable in impact to its linguistic, sociological and anthropological counterparts. In this vein, authors and editors to this Series are being asked to expend considerable energy on taking into account the cross-disciplinary nature of the potential readership. In other words, the Utopian aim is to have volumes which are not only appealing to experienced researchers in the social psychology of language but are also compelling reading for students of linguistics having little social psychological background and for social psychological students having little linguistics background. The choice of 'language attitudes' to be the first topic in this Series may be particularly appropriate (dedicated as it is to the pioneering work and inspiration of Wallace E. Lambert). For instance, many commentators have viewed social psychology as basically the study of attitudes; certainly, it is a core construct in virtually all social psychological theorizing. Because of this ubiquity, attitudes always have been used as explanatory concepts in sociolinguistic investigations probably more so than any other social psychological entities. Moreover, the field of language attitudes arguably accounts for more empirical investigations than any other single topic under the rubric of the social psychology of language. Indeed, probably as many linguists have conducted language attitude studies and adopted the attending methodologies as social psychologists

themselves. The topic as addressed herein shows the tremendous potential for applications of the approach to language studies in terms of policy making as well as in theory. It also highlights to social psychologists the fundamental importance of language variables in moulding people's social lives. Finally, the present volume demonstrates well two of the major themes of paramount importance to the social psychology of language as indicated above and therefore to the Series as a whole. That is, not only is speech behaviour in important social settings influenced by a complex set of cognitive mechanisms but also these very same speech behaviours can influence (sometimes change and othertimes even determine) one's own and others' attitudes and cognitions as well. It will be apparent from this and succeeding volumes that social psychologists of language can be highly self-critical on many levels with respect to what has been achieved. However, while it seems important to develop more wide-ranging and sensitive methods, more precise concepts and sophisticated theory, contributors to this Series will be at pains to stress that we do not see a social psychological approach as any more than an important *complement* to other equally important perspectives in language and communication; many of us are actually interdisciplinarians at heart.

Howard Giles
Bristol, May 1982

Notes on Contributors

Richard Y. Von Bourhis was born in Montreal and was educated in both French and English. After a BSc in Psychology at McGill University, he obtained his PhD in Social Psychology at the University of Bristol, England. His main academic interests are the social psychology of intergroup relations and conflict, and problems of communication in multilingual communities. Through his collaboration with numerous colleagues, Bourhis has conducted research in Wales, England, Belgium, Switzerland and Australia. Current research is concerned with language use in communications between Anglophones and Francophones in Quebec, Ontario and Acadia. Other research interests also include the investigation of the impact of language planning on language attitudes and language behaviours in multilingual settings. Dr Bourhis is presently editing a volume entitled, 'Conflict and language planning in Quebec' on the impact of the *Charter of the French Language* (Bill 101) in Quebec scheduled to appear in 1983. Dr Bourhis joined the Psychology Department at McMaster University as an Assistant Professor in July 1978.

James J. Bradac obtained his PhD in 1970 from Northwestern University. He taught at the University of Iowa for 10 years prior to moving to the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he is Professor of Communication Studies. His publications include the articles, 'Reciprocal disclosures and language intensity: Attributional consequences' (with L. Hosman and C. Tardy) and 'Three language variables in communication research: Intensity, immediacy and diversity' (with J. Bowers and J. Courtright), both of which won outstanding research awards from the Speech Communication Association. He is co-author (with Charles Berger) of *Language and social knowledge: Uncertainty in interpersonal relations* which will be the second volume in the present Edward Arnold Series, the Social psychology of language.

John T. Cacioppo is an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Iowa. He received his PhD from Ohio State University and has co-authored with Richard Petty numerous articles that have appeared in the *American Psychologist*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *Psychophysiology*, and others. They have co-authored books entitled *Attitudes and Persuasion: Classic and Contemporary Approaches* and *Attitude Change: Central and Peripheral Routes to Persuasion*, co-edited books entitled *Perspectives in Cardiovascular Psychophysiology* and *Social Psychophysiology: A Sourcebook*, and along with Robert Cialdini have authored the chapter on attitudes and

attitude change in the 1981 edition of the *Annual Review of Psychology*.

Miguel A. Carranza (PhD in Sociology, University of Notre Dame) is Associate Professor of Sociology and Ethnic Studies at the University of Nebraska. For the past ten years he has been conducting research into language attitudes of Hispanics and is preparing a monograph on language issues in the Hispanic community in the United States. His other interests are social gerontology and minority relations in the United States.

Richard R. Day received his doctorate in linguistics in 1972 from the University of Hawaii. He is an associate professor and chairman of the Department of English as a Second Language. In addition to his interests in language attitudes and pidgin and creole languages, he has conducted research on native speaker-nonnative speaker discourse, and also done extensive research on the relationship between minority languages and educational achievement. His major publications include editing *Issues in Pidgins and Creoles: Papers from the 1975 Hawaii Conference* (1980); 'The acquisition and maintenance of language by minority children,' *Language Learning* (1979); 'The development of linguistic attitudes and preferences,' *TESOL Quarterly* (1980); and 'The ultimate inequality: Linguistic genocide' in *Language of Inequality* edited by J. Manes and N. Wolfson (forthcoming).

John Edwards (PhD, McGill) is Associate Professor in the psychology department at St Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia. He was formerly Research Fellow at the Educational Research Centre, St Patrick's College, Dublin. His major interests include the linguistic aspects of 'disadvantage', bilingual education and its social implications, and ethnicity; he has published articles and chapters on these and other topics. He is the author of *Language and Disadvantage* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979) and *The Irish Language* (New York: Garland, 1982), and the editor of *The Social Psychology of Reading* (Silver Spring, Maryland: Institute of Modern Languages, 1981). Dr Edwards is currently editing a book dealing with linguistic minorities and their treatment in educational and other spheres, and is writing another on the relationship between language and identity.

Robert C. Gardner is Professor of Psychology at the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada. For more than two decades, beginning with his graduate training at McGill University, he has conducted research on second language learning in Canada, the United States, and the Philippines. He is co-editor of a book entitled *A Canadian Social Psychology of Ethnic Relations* (Methuen, 1981) and is editor of the *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, a publication of the Canadian Psychological Association.

Howard Giles obtained his PhD in 1971 at the University of Bristol. His first teaching appointment was at University College, Cardiff and then he moved back to the University of Bristol where he is now Reader in Social Psychology. His major academic interests revolve around the development of the social psychology of language and communication with a very strong emphasis on theory-building. In this vein, he is co-organizer of the first two International Conferences on Social Psychology and Language (1979 and 1983) at Bristol and is the founding Editor of the *Journal of Language & Social Psychology*. He has published eight books and

numerous articles on language attitudes; speech accommodation; language, situations and social categories; and the role of language in interethnic relations in a wide range of multicultural settings. In 1978, he was awarded the British Psychological Society's 'Spearman Medal'. His most recent research interests are in second language acquisition and the application of social psychological studies of language and communication in many areas including the educational and clinical spheres and especially with regard to speech abnormalities.

Robert Hopper (PhD, University of Wisconsin, 1970) is Professor of Speech Communication at the University of Texas at Austin. He has written 20 scholarly articles focusing on the concerns of 'linguistic underdogs' including women, children and members of ethnic minority groups. His major concerns are linguistic stereotyping, how people 'take things for granted', and the teaching of communication skills (he is author of half a dozen college textbooks).

Rudolf Kalin is Professor of Psychology at Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. He has done extensive research on ethnic relations in Canada, in which context he has conducted studies on evaluative reactions to varied accents. Another major interest has been sex bias in social evaluations.

Cheris Kramarae is Associate Professor of Speech Communication at the University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, USA where she teaches courses in sociolinguistics (language and gender; language and power) and interpersonal communication. Her publications include *Voices and Words of Women and Men*, ed. (1980), *Women and Men Speaking* (1981), and *For Alma Mater: Essays on the Nature of Feminist Scholarship*, co-ed. (in press). She is currently co-editing a feminist thesaurus.

Richard E. Petty is an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Since receiving his PhD at Ohio State University, his programme of research with John T. Cacioppo has focused on the cognitive, physiological, and behavioural antecedents and consequents of attitude change. They have co-authored two books entitled *Attitudes and persuasion: Classic and contemporary approaches* and *Attitude change: Central and peripheral routes to persuasion*; co-edited two books entitled *Perspectives in cardiovascular psychophysiology* and *Social psychophysiology: A sourcebook*; and contributed numerous articles to journals including the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, and *Psychophysiology*.

Ellen Bouchard Ryan obtained an MA in Linguistics from Brown University and a PhD in Psycholinguistics from the University of Michigan. She has held visiting faculty positions at the Universities of Guelph and Waterloo and at the Modern Language Centre in Ontario and is Professor and Chairwoman of the Department of Psychology at the University of Notre Dame. Her research interests focus especially on bilingualism, language minorities and first and second language learning.

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Richard L. Street, Jr is an Assistant Professor in Speech Communication at Texas Tech University. His research interests entail the investigation of factors influencing the social evaluation and production of speech behaviour. His major publications are in *Language and Communication*, *Human Communication Research*, *Communication Quarterly*, as well as in several edited book volumes.

To Wally Lambert
for his personal inspiration and encouragement

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An integrative perspective for the study of attitudes toward language variation

Ellen Bouchard Ryan, Howard Giles and Richard J. Sebastian

Whether speaking one or five languages, all individuals belong to at least one speech community, a community all of whose members share at least a single speech variety and the norms for its appropriate use. Language variation within and between speech communities can involve different languages or only contrasting styles of one language. In every society the differential power of particular social groups is reflected in language variation and in attitudes toward those variations. Typically, the dominant group promotes its patterns of language use as the model required for social advancement; and use of a lower prestige language, dialect, or accent by minority group members reduces their opportunities for success in the society as a whole. Minority group members are often faced with difficult decisions regarding whether to gain social mobility by adopting the language patterns of the dominant group or to maintain their group identity by retaining their native speech style.

The dilemma facing minority group members is exemplified in a compelling personal essay by Rodriguez (1975), a college teacher who writes regretfully and self-questioningly of abandoning his Spanish-Mexican heritage in order to succeed in school and in the broader American society represented by the school.

The change came gradually but early. When I was beginning grade school, I noted to myself the fact that the classroom environment was so different in its styles and assumptions from my own family environment that survival would essentially entail a choice between both worlds. When I became a student, I was literally 'remade'; neither I nor my teachers considered anything I had known before as relevant. I had to forget most of what my culture had provided, because to remember it was a disadvantage. The past and its cultural values became detachable, like a piece of clothing grown heavy on a warm day and finally put away. . . .

I remember when, 20 years ago, two grammar-school* nuns visited my childhood home. They had come to suggest . . . that we make a greater effort to speak as much English around the house as possible. The nuns realized that my brothers and I led solitary lives largely because we were the only Spanish-speaking students. My mother and father complied as best they could. Heroically, they gave up speaking to us in Spanish – the language that formed so much of the family's sense of intimacy in an alien world – and began to speak a broken English. Instead of Spanish sounds, I began hearing sounds that were new, harder, less friendly. . . . The bonds their voices once secured were loosened by the new tongue. (p. 46)

The choice facing minority group members is complicated by several facts. It must

* Grade school, ages 6 to 14.

be made over and over again, in major decisions like whether to move to a region where one's language is attributed higher status and in perhaps less major, more frequent decisions like which code to use in an employment interview. The choice of speech style is, furthermore, not a simple dichotomous one. For example, even within the dominant language one can convey identification with a particular social group by pronunciation, intonation, or vocabulary.

Whereas the range of speech-style choices available is typically greater for members of minority groups, all speakers make choices regarding their speech along a variety of dimensions. In general, speech cues can be used by listeners to make inferences regarding an individual's personal characteristics (e.g. age, sex, intelligence), social group memberships (e.g. regional, ethnic, class, occupational), and psychological states (e.g. need for social approval, interest in continuing an interaction, anxiety, depression). Selection of a particular speech style and subsequent evaluations by listeners depend upon the specific situation and upon the symbolic values associated with the selected style as it contrasts with relevant alternatives.

The views of speech community members toward the contrasting language varieties characteristic of their society have been examined from several disciplinary perspectives. Within a sociological framework, the symbolic values of language are viewed within societal and situational contexts. Thus, according to Fishman (1971, 1),

Language is not merely a carrier of content, whether latent or manifest. Language itself is content, a referent for loyalties and animosities, an indicator of social statuses and personal relationships, a marker of situations and topics as well as of the societal goals and the large-scale value-laden arenas of interaction that typify every speech community.

Sociological studies tend to utilize the questionnaire or interview method to elicit attitudes. In addition, content analyses are conducted of historical developments within society and of particular aspects of social treatment of the target language varieties. From a sociolinguistic perspective, research following the lead of Labov (1966, 1972) has focused upon two main problems: (1) understanding the association between specific linguistic features (e.g. phonological variants, lexical patterns, and grammatical contrasts) and characteristics of the societal, social group, and situational contexts in which they occur; and (2) understanding the inferences listeners make about these associations. From social psychological and communication perspectives, emphasis is upon the individual and his/her display of attitudes toward ingroup and outgroup members as elicited by language and as reflected in its use. Most of the research conducted within social psychological or communication traditions has followed the lead of Lambert (1967) and has involved the elicitation of evaluative reactions toward speakers using contrasting language varieties. Attitudes toward particular varieties are then taken to be attitudes toward speakers of those varieties. Since this book is part of a series on social psychology, the primary focus is upon studies of the speaker-evaluation type, but important themes from the sociological and sociolinguistic approaches also flow throughout the volume.

An organizational framework

In the following section, we provide a general framework within which to consider