INTRODUCTION

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In an inspired application of the semantic differential technique, the social psychologist Wallace Lambert and his colleagues developed the matched guise procedure (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, & Fillenbaum, 1960). This technique subsequently became a major research mode in the methodological arsenal of both sociolinguists and social psychologists. Lambert's team presented male and female English and French Canadian judges with recorded samples of French and English speech. They were asked to rate what they assumed to be different speakers on such personality traits as *friendliness*, *attractiveness*, and *intelligence*, but, crucially, the stimulus language samples were produced by the same speaker in French and English guises. The judges' responses turned out to be remarkably regularly differentiated according to ethnicity and gender of both the judges and the speakers, and the matched guise technique was revealed as an effective tool for eliciting both attitudes to language and the underlying stereotyped beliefs held by groups about each other.

Lambert's work attracted the attention of sociolinguists who wanted to find ways of tapping attitudes to standard and nonstandard varieties of a single language; indeed, Labov's early "subjective reaction tests" developed as part of his New York City project (1966) owe much to Lambert's innovations. Lambert's original procedures were subsequently adapted to allow judgments of different speakers, usually using different nonstandard and standard varieties rather than single bilingual speakers in different language guises. They were also developed to elicit more finely tuned assessments of personality traits. Attitude studies since the original Lambert experiment have been both numerous (described by Giles & Coupland, 1991, as an "empirical avalanche" [p. 37]) and illuminating, informing us of which attitudes exist with regard to a large number of varieties and how attitudinal configurations can be organized into more general patterns. Notably, several studies showed a tendency for judges to discriminate between, on one hand, status dimensions such as *intelligence*, *ambition*, and

confidence and, on the other, solidarity-related dimensions such as *social attractiveness*, *friendliness*, and *generosity*. Standard speakers have tended to be rated higher on the former set of traits and downgraded on the latter, the converse being true of judgments of nonstandard speakers (e.g., Ryan, Giles, & Sebastian, 1982, p. 9).

Because many of the leading scholars in this enterprise—for example, Howard Giles and John Edwards—have backgrounds similar to Lambert's in social psychology rather than sociolinguistics, it is perhaps not surprising that the assessment of varieties has usually been conducted at a global level. That is, speech samples submitted for judgment have differed broadly, and rarely has the inquiry extended to consider which linguistic elements (or which combinations or frequencies of elements) were chiefly responsible for the judgments elicited. This lack of linguistic detail and sophistication has been one of the criticisms leveled at attitude studies.

Sociolinguists for their part characteristically take just the opposite approach to language data, focusing on the incidence of specific variable elements associated with particular language varieties. Greater and lesser percentages of emerging and receding features have been shown systematically to correlate with such speaker characteristics as age, gender, status, social network relations, and speech style. Such patterns have been interpreted as revealing not only the synchronic patterning of variable use within and across speech communities but also social trajectories of linguistic change. A persistent pattern emerging from an impressive number of quantitative studies of variation in speech communities has been the interrelatedness of social variation and stylistic variation, such that speakers in more careful styles approximate the patterns of higher status social groups (e.g., Labov, 1972). Sociolinguists have often been criticized for failing to consider these (and other) findings within any kind of principled theoretical framework. However, Trudgill (1986) has used the social-psychological framework of accommodation theory to account for stylistic differences, arguing that pervasive patterns of stylistic variation can be explained by processes of convergence and divergence, which, in turn, are reflexes of interpersonal social dynamics. Such patterns have been shown at specific linguistic studies of accommodation in such work as Coupland (1980).

Bell (1984) has provided the most fully worked-out attempt in sociolinguistics to explain the link between stylistic (intraspeaker) and social (interspeaker and intergroup) variation. Not only does Bell use the general framework of accommodation theory to develop an account of style as "audience design," but he also explicitly links the social, stylistic, and evaluative dimensions in a way that is relevant to the aim of this volume to marry the explanatory potential of social psychology with the focus on linguistic detail characteristic of sociolinguistics. Bell's model proposes that the social evaluation of a group is

transferred to the features associated with that group, much as is suggested by language attitude researchers. In a revised version of his 1984 article, Bell (1997) notes that "[t]he link between differences in the language of different groups ('social' variation in Labov's terms) and within the language of different speakers ('stylistic' variation) is made by society's evaluation of the group's language" (p. 244). For Bell, therefore, style is not (ultimately) a function of the amount of attention paid to speech, as Labov had argued, but is associated with a speaker's psychosocial orientation to others. His audience design theory is directly indebted to the work of social psychologists of language such as Giles and Lambert.

Bell (1984) and Trudgill (1986) thus represent major attempts to integrate the linguistically detailed findings of sociolinguistics with the theoretical frameworks offered by the social psychology of language. However, in only a few cases have scholars considered developing procedures that use specific linguistic features in attitude and other perception studies. Yet, it is clear that both sociolinguistics and social psychology would profit from such an enterprise. For example, although Bell and a few others are unusual in developing a specific theoretical framework (e.g., Finegan & Biber, 1994; Kroch, 1978), the problems they address are classic sociolinguistic issues. Sociolinguists have long followed Labov's lead, as exemplified already in his early Martha's Vineyard study (1963), in assuming attitudinal dimensions from the patterning of performance data. They have rarely gone on to subject specific cases of the incidence or frequency of those variables to respondent judgment, although they have constructed explanations of recurrent patterns (e.g., sharp versus gradient stratification) that could be vigorously supplemented by attitudinal judgments of those very features. Social psychologists, on the other hand, could obviously benefit from an ability to pinpoint linguistic elements that lie at the heart of systematically variable evaluations.

Despite this rather sharp division between the research traditions of social psychology and sociolinguistics, a few early studies have suggested the benefits that can accrue from an interdisciplinary approach.

1. Devised by Labov (1966) and elaborated by Trudgill (1972), the "index of linguistic insecurity" compares a respondent's judgment of his or her own performance on a specific linguistic feature (in terms of a frequency estimate) with his or her actual performance. This productive technique, which, for example, led to Trudgill's interesting characterization of overt and covert prestige as a gender-related sociolinguistic phenomenon, has not often been replicated in other settings.
2. Labov (1966) used subjective reaction tests that resembled—and indeed were influenced by—the matched guise technique in eliciting stereo-typed judgments from respondents who listened to speech samples collected during his extensive study of New York City English. The samples were designed to present instances of a stigmatized variable with a

particular frequency (e.g., deletion of postvocalic /r/). Although he sought judgments of speakers in terms of an occupational scale rather than the classic semantic differential paired adjectives, the results showed that his respondents were sensitive to relative frequencies of such variables. This technique has not been pursued in much subsequent work.

3. Graff, Labov, and Harris (1983), using advances in acoustic phonetics, showed that changes in both variety identification and evaluation could be triggered by subtle modification of a single feature (in this case, the height of the onset in the /au/ diphthong, an ethnicity marker in Philadelphia). By digitally modifying the signal so that an African American speaker's /au/ diphthong was heard to begin at [æ], the researchers were able to elicit significantly different judgments from local respondents (along ethnic lines). Although much less expensive equipment is now available, again, such specific experimental procedures do not seem to be common in this research paradigm.

4. Coupland (in press), Preston (1992), and Rampton (1995), for example, have carried out largely qualitative studies of variety "imitations" or "performances" in which the accuracy and incidence of the use of features not native to a speaker's own variety have been investigated. Acoustic measures could be used to sharpen the account of pronunciation features (as in Evans, 1998; Schilling-Estes, 1998), and new methods could be devised to overcome the difficulty attendant in collecting such data, particularly when the target of imitation is a minority population. Again, few such studies appear to have been carried out.

5. Labov (1966), Feagin (1979), Macaulay (1977), Niedzielski and Preston (in press), and others have elicited respondent accounts (or "folk linguistic" data) concerning self and other linguistic performance. Although these accounts have been displayed for what they reveal about nonlinguists' beliefs about language, they have, in general, not been subjected to the kind of discoursal scrutiny that has grown more common in the social-psychological study of attitudes. Of course, we are especially interested here in those accounts that make reference to specific features. Most of those cited in the literature, however, refer to varieties viewed globally.

Linguists can contribute to attitude studies, it seems to us, by considering carefully the role, identity, and salience of linguistic features at every level. We should be able to determine the ability of speakers to use such features as information in assessments, and we will also want to pay attention to the ability of speakers to use other linguistic and nonlinguistic information in identifying and using the linguistic features themselves. The articles collected in this volume are an attempt to do precisely this. Thomas Purnell, William Idsardi, and John Baugh describe a series of studies that attempt to isolate the components of accent that are capable of triggering judgments of race or ethnicity in situations where housing discrimination is practiced; Renée van Bezooijen and Charlotte Gooskens attempt to isolate the type (and even level) of linguistic feature exploited by hearers in identifying dialects; Charles Boberg and Nancy Niedzielski both examine the relevance of social information in the formation of attitudes to specific

linguistic elements; Elizabeth A. Strand examines the role of gender stereotypes in speech perception, with attention to specific phonetic elements.

All these authors are sociolinguists, but John Edwards, the author of the final article in this volume, has worked for many years within the framework of the social psychology of language and has published a number of influential attitudes studies. His article both contextualizes the work of our sociolinguistic authors within the research tradition of social psychology and offers a commentary on the contribution of each. We hope that together these contributions provide a bridge between the theoretically and methodologically sophisticated work on attitudes to language associated with social psychology, which is short on linguistic sophistication and detail, and the linguistically detailed attitudes research of sociolinguists, which has tended to be presented rather taxonomically without the benefit of a sound theoretical framework.[1]

NOTE

1. Of course, we do not overlook the opportunity such attitudinal and perceptual work on specific linguistic features affords us to "hone" notions within sociolinguistics proper. For example, "classic" characterizations of sociolinguistic variables as "indicators," "markers," "sharp," and "gradient" stratification have nearly all rested more prominently on notions of performance than on those of hearer reactions (i.e., "attitudes").

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