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LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AS A SOCIAL PROCESS: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND NEW DIRECTIONS

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Language is a powerful social force that does more than convey intended referential information. Our views of others—their supposed capabilities, beliefs and attributes—are determined, in part, by inferences we make from the language features they adopt. For example, an American may think a stranger to be 'cultured' and 'refined' simply because of his or her particular British accent. In addition, some important decisions that govern our prospects and social welfare are also shaped by language performance. Course assignments in school may not be evaluated exclusively on the basis of academic quality. They could well be influenced by attributions made about the student based on language behaviours such as his or her dialect, lexical diversity, or speech rate. This process whereby hearers react to both linguistic and paralinguistic variation in messages is at the very center of the language–communication intersection. It affects not only everyday and applied social interactions but also impinges at the macrosociological as well as public policy levels in terms of whether languages have institutional support or are superseded by more prestigious varieties. An understanding of this process, along with the different kinds of evaluative profiles that arise from such language variation in different social contexts and cultures, is the heartland of the study of 'language attitudes'. This research area may now be characterized broadly as an attempt to understand people's processing of, and dispositions towards, various situated language and communicative behaviours and the subsequent treatment extended to the users of such forms.

Language attitude study has an extensive research tradition rooted in an array of disciplines. As can be seen from the bibliography to this paper, the social psychology of language, sociology of language, sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics, communication, and discourse analysis have all made contributions. It is no coincidence then that the authors of articles competitively selected for this special issue come not from a single discipline, but several. As a preface to the empirical contributions to follow in this special issue, the aim of this article is to overview both the past and recent history of language attitude research as well as indicate some new affective and motivational directions for the future. In this context, we also offer a heuristic schema as well as generalizations for the language attitudes process— useful we trust to those new to this area as well as those seasoned in it.

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Language attitudes research historically

As with many other types of research, one can find precursors that go back hundreds of years. For example, Aristotle (1932) believed that the type of language which speakers used had an effect upon their credibility or *ethos,* and a similar idea is apparent in Renaissance rhetoricians' preoccupation with the details of verbal expression, for example, schemes and tropes (Sherry, 1961). Thereafter, although primarily descriptive, the research of dialect geographers in the early twentieth century called attention to language varieties which were stigmatized or, on the other hand, accorded prestige (Bloomfield, 1933). In the 1930s and 1940s, a number of studies in Britain and the U.S.A. attempted to demonstrate that persons can make reliable and accurate judgments of speakers' physical characteristics and personality attributes on the basis of speech (Cantril and Allport, 1935; Taylor, 1934). Pear's (1931) classic study invited BBC audiences in Britain to provide personality profiles of certain voices heard on the radio. He concluded that there was only a very modest overlap between listener-judges' ratings of the 'radio targets' and self-ratings of their personalities. His study along with others showed there to be little advantage in pursuing voice as a cue to actual personality. On the other hand, study after study has shown that there is quite a considerable social consensus among listener-judges about the *stereotypical* traits associated with voices (see Bradac, 1990; Giles and Coupland, 1992). These stereotype-based judgments of voice are, nonetheless, socially vital. There has been an explosion of research in different parts of the world, in the last three decades, showing that people can express definite and consistent attitudes towards speakers who use particular styles of speaking.

Since about 1960, the proliferation of research on language attitudes has primarily made use of three investigative techniques (Ryan *et al.*, 1982). First, content analyses have been conducted on the public treatment accorded to language varieties as an important source of information about the relative status and worth of language varieties. Techniques here include observational, participant-observation, and ethnographic studies (Stevens, 1983); analyses of government and educational language policies (Bourhis, 1982); as well as literature, government and business documents, newspapers, and broadcasting media (e.g. Kramarae, 1982; Rickford and Traugott, 1985). A useful illustration of this type of analysis is provided by Fishman *et al.* (1971) who compared the treatment of the Puerto Rican ethnic group, language, and cultural concerns in the English language and Spanish language newspapers of New York. Non-invasive comparisons such as this allow for inferences about outgroup and ingroup attitudes towards, as well as the social roles of, the two competing languages. However, language attitudes encompass more than attitudes towards different, clearly identifiable language varieties. People develop culturally specific attitudes about variability among a number of language behaviours such as one's accent, voice quality (Pittam, 1987), speech rate (Lee and Boster, 1992), lexical diversity (Bradac *et al.*, 1988), lexical intensity (Hosman, 1989), and so forth. As such, content analyses cannot indicate all types of language attitudes.

A second technique, the direct method, involves openly asking people what their attitudes are about various language behaviours. Language attitudes are measured directly by interviews or with questionnaires, the advantage of which is that information about specific attitudes can be obtained. For example, not only can attitudes toward the speaking of two languages be compared (e.g. Arabic vs English; Zughoul and Taminian, 1984), but attitudes can also be assessed for target dialects (e.g. standard American English vs Black English; Taylor, 1973; regional dialects of Dutch; van Hout and Knops, 1988), for code-switching between languages

(Fitch and Hopper, 1983), and at the microscopic level, for particular pronunciations, grammatical patterns, or lexical choices (Greenbaum, 1973; Labov, 1966). Thus, questioning people directly has allowed researchers to explore more kinds of both language varieties and atitudes than have been offered by analyses of societal treatment of language varieties.

A third methodological approach used in the study of language attitudes attempts to rely on more indirect measures. This approach, referred to as the 'speaker evaluation paradigm' (Ryan *et al.*, 1988) requires participants to evaluate audiotaped speakers without any social group labels attached. The evaluations can cover a range of items. For example, listeners may be asked to indicate whether they think the speaker is friendly or intelligent. Because other linguistic factors are supposedly controlled, speaker evaluations are considered to reflect the listeners' underlying attitudes toward the target language variety or behaviour. This method then provides an indirect way to obtain language attitudes that is less sensitive to reflection and social desirability biases than are those reported in a questionnaire. Although this paradigm is not without its critics (e.g. Giles and Coupland, 1991; Giles and Ryan, 1982), it has, arguably, been the technique most widely used to study language attitudes (see Bradac, 1990, for a review). Consequently, and in what follows, we consider this research in most detail.

The earliest, most frequently cited study in this tradition was published by Lambert and associates (Lambert *et al.*, 1960). Their purpose was to examine listeners' evaluative reactions to English and varieties of French in Montreal. To achieve this, the researchers used a French prose passage and an English translation of it; four balanced bilingual speakers audio-recorded both passages, and these recordings served as experimental stimuli. French and English-Canadian bilingual respondents listened to the English and French versions of the passage and, after each exposure to a reading, rated each speaker (as well as other 'filler' voices included to avoid potential recognition of the same stimulus speakers) on 14, six-point scales pertaining to intelligence, likability, and sociability, etc. The ratings of the eight speaker–text combinations were subsequently compared statistically. Both English- and French-speaking respondents rated the speakers of the English versions more favourably on several traits, including perceived kindness and intelligence. Moreover, the French-speaking respondents found the English speakers more appealing on even more traits than their English-listening counterparts.

Although their results are intriguing (see Tajfel, 1959), this study is seminal—at least in part—for its technique. It was perhaps the earliest attempt to exert experimental control over potentially confounding speaker idiosyncracies through the use of the 'matched-guise' technique or MGT (Lambert, 1967). The heart of the MGT is a design in which each speaker used in a given study of language attitudes crosses all conditions; thus, for example, a speaker with, say, a very high-pitched voice should not appear in a French-speaking condition only, but in conditions of both French and English. Obtained differences between French and English guises would therefore not be attributable to a confounding of high pitch with French.

Another important early study was conducted by Lambert *et al.* (1965). In this experiment, a standard philosophical passage was recorded in Arabic and varieties of (Yeminite and Ashkenazic) Hebrew by bilingual speakers. Jewish and Arab high-school students listened to the three versions and, following each, reacted to the speaker on six-point rating scales. Additionally, the Jewish respondents completed direct measures designed to assess their general attitudes toward the labels, 'Ashkenazic Jews', 'Arabs', and 'Yeminite Jews' (cf. Ball, 1983). Among other things, the results indicated that Jewish respondents were relatively

negative toward the Arabic speakers on traits of humor, friendliness, and honesty. For their part, Arabic listeners downgraded Hebrew speakers on traits such as intelligence, friendliness, and honesty. In other words, both Arab and Jewish respondents devalued each other. In addition, there were low to zero correlations between the generalized attitude measures and the matched-guise ratings. The particular evaluative patterns emerging suggested to the investigators that the two types of assessment procedures tapped somewhat dissimilar attitudinal domains. Moreover, they claimed that the matched-guise procedure can elicit responses which are relatively low in stereotypy and which are less subject to demand features of the measurement process.

Since these studies, work has expanded beyond the above prototypical design (see Giles and Johnson, 1986) which relied on formal stimulus passages across all conditions of the MGT in an attempt to minimize the effect of message content upon the respondent's reactions. It has been recognized that texts themselves, no less than the vocal styles that may realize them, can never be neutral (Giles and Coupland, 1991). It seems clear that whatever 'social evaluations' are produced in relation to 'stimuli' may be better conceived of as responses to textual and contextual interconnections, as indeed would be the case in any face-to-face encounter. In addition, extensions of this paradigm have been made by investigating the joint influences of two or more language variables, by presenting language samples to respondents that are typically high in realism (e.g. Giles *et al.*, 1981) in written, as well as spoken, mode (see Coté and Clément, this issue; Ryan, 1991), and by examining not only social judgments for language features associated with ethnolinguistic groups, but also for style differences within social categories.

A process model of language attitudes

We shall proceed now by attempting to understand language attitudes as a *process* (see also Ryan *et al.*, 1984); what factors influence the language that a speaker uses, the nature of the hearer's attitudes about that language, and the outcomes which those attitudes consequently shape? Towards these ends, we have developed a parsimonious model outlining the basic factors involved in the development, salience, and application of language attitudes in social situations (see Fig. 1). We emphasize, however, that the model should be interpreted broadly
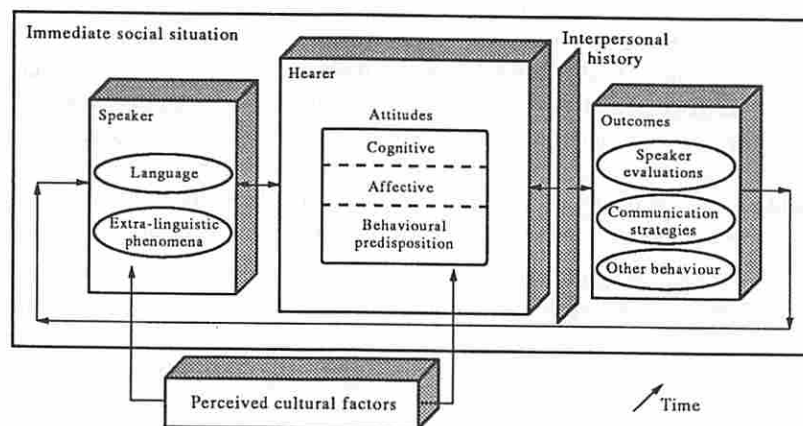

Fig.1. A social process model of language attitudes.

not only in terms of variables invoked (e.g. vocal or stylistic), but also in terms of mode. Despite the lack of relevant literature, we contend that, on most occasions, speaker–hearer distinctions focused upon herein can be translated into the writer–reader domain.

As the bi-directional arrows and feedback loop indicate, attitudes about language are not a singular, static phenomenon. Rather, they affect, and are affected by, numerous elements in a virtually endless, recursive fashion. Thus, any point of entry we choose for describing our model of this process is necessarily somewhat arbitrary and artificial. But we must begin somewhere, and the least arbitrary point to begin a discussion of language attitudes might be with the language itself.

Speaker dynamics and language variation

As we remarked at the outset, language is a powerful social force. It does not exist in isolation or for its own benefit, but is a tool that is shaped and wielded by human beings having both intended and unintended consequences. Because of this, we cannot properly discuss language apart from the person who makes use of it. For this reason, our model situates language within a speaker, indicating that it is a behaviour produced by the speaker. So what constitutes 'language' in this literature?

As our review of methodology suggested, much research has explored attitudes towards different languages and dialects as it has towards different accents (and levels of accentedness) within the same language as well as code-switching and -shifting between them (see Mgbo-Elue, 1987; and Giles et al., 1987; Ryan and Giles, 1982, for reviews). Although this research is the most common and represented herein by the studies of Levin et al., Coté and Clément, and van Bezooijen (this issue), there are many other language behaviours and communicative strategies in different media about which people have developed attitudes and that inform hearers about the speaker. In the current issue, they include lexical formality (Levin et al.), powerful/powerless speech styles (Hosman and Siltanen), strategies of politeness and bragging (Holtgraves and Dulin), and gender-linked variation in written discourse (Mulac and Lundell). Cataloguing such, however, serves to separate artificially a host of linguistic behaviours that occur simultaneously. Given that speech is a multidimensional configuration of phonological, prosodic, paralinguistic, and rhetorical selections, questions arise concerning which features elicit the hearers' evaluations. Similarly, language is not the only speaker feature to which a hearer may react.

Hence we must acknowledge that these kinds of verbal and vocal language behaviours are not the only behaviours produced by the speaker. Non-verbal visual behaviours such as gestures are also displayed and these can either mitigate, reinforce, or interact with attributions made on the basis of language alone. In addition, physical features of a speaker may provide cues that function in much the same way (Williams, 1976). That said, it is not necessarily the case that extra-linguistic cues change attributions made strictly on the basis of language. It has been found that the evaluative potency of accent effects (i.e. Asian vs more standard British accent) was not diminished when the addition of visual cues (via videotaped presentation) was contrasted with audiotape-only conditions (Elwell et al., 1984). Indeed, contextual issues notwithstanding, we maintain that language behaviours are among the most salient and often used cues in social interaction, and thus the importance of focusing on language attitudes (see Seligman et al., 1972).

While recognizing the importance of language along with extra-linguistic behaviours

produced by a speaker, it is of interest to understand why speakers behave the way they do. Even so, it is a nearly impossible task to account for every variable that could possibly affect such behaviours. This is not an attempt to do so. As the enlarged central portion of our figure indicates, our focus in modeling the language attitudes process is on the bearer (or correspondingly the reader in the written mode). We are intent on answering questions such as 'what shapes the content and salience of language attitudes?' and 'how do language attitudes influence social interaction?' Yet despite this chosen focus, we must still consider the role of the speaker in impacting the language attitudes process.

Clearly, a speaker's linguistic performance is determined by a whole host of perceived situational cues, including their perceptions of the hearer's physical and communicative attributes which may be accommodated, to varying degrees, or not (Giles *et al.*, 1991). Hence, if a woman deliberately and effortfully talks slowly so as to convey her message with some exactitude, a respectful, speech accommodative recipient could be seen—by this very same cognitively busy speaker (Gilbert *et al.*, 1988)—as somewhat incompetent given prevailing stereotypic associations between rate and intelligence. Put another way, under some circumstances, we, as speakers eliciting language attitudes, can collude inadvertently in forging the very language attitudes that we so readily hold of others (cf. Snyder, 1981). Moreover, in crafting speech production, variables such as the speaker(-hearer)'s own language attitudes (e.g. deep pitch is associated with strength), as well as beliefs about the hearer's language attitude profile, may well mediate in crucial ways so as to fulfil various self-presentational (Schlenker, 1982) and other efficiency (Higgins, 1992) goals. The dynamic become even more complex here when we consider that speaker's moods may dictate the kinds of goals (Isen, 1984) which can change from moment to moment as they become socially created and redefined (see Coupland, 1985). In other words, different language behaviours are afforded salience and social meaning as interactions unfold. Participants' states and concerns change, in ways that are not as yet represented in the language attitudes tradition, but which are afforded conceptual status by feedback arrows in Fig. 1.

Hearer dynamics

As we know from a whole tradition of work on social biases and cognitive heuristics in the social psychology of language and elsewhere (see, for example, Street and Hopper, 1982), it is what a speaker is perceived to be and how they are perceived to sound and communicate that is often more important in determining hearers' language attitudes (and subsequent behaviours). Perceived ethnicity or regionality of speaker as we have seen above can have profound effects on language attitudes (see also, Gallois and Callan, 1989; Nesdale and Rooney, 1990). In somewhat similar vein, Wilson and Bayard (1992) found that, in New Zealand, and across several English accents, female speakers were rated more poorly overall than male speakers on 12 personality traits. Gender cannot only foster main effects, as it has in this example, but can also interact with the speaker's language behaviours to produce different evaluative reactions. Street *et al.* (1984) report that judgments of social attractiveness are influenced by an interaction of speech rate and speaker's sex. In their study, speech rate had a significant impact on judgments of the male speaker but was unrelated to judgments of the female speaker. In addition to gender in context (Gallois *et al.*, 1984), the perceived age of the speaker can also influence evaluations. Giles *et al.* (1990) found when providing listeners extracts from a spoken text, such as the speaker saying, 'I didn't know what to think', they

interpreted it variously depending on how old they believed the speaker to be. Hence, the above statement was more likely to be attributed to the speaker being 'confused' if elderly (therein, perceived to be in his early 60s), but if young (early 30s), then it was much more likely to be attributed to the speaker wishing to withhold judgment given the complexity of issues at hand. Thus, the individual and group attributes perceived as, categorically or probalistically, associated with the speaker influence the language attitudes process by shaping dispositions towards particular language behaviours and, overall, by informing speaker evaluations.

Objective and subjective attributes of the *hearer* also, of course, fundamentally impact the language attitudes process. Just as developmental factors influence the language behaviours speakers produce (Burleson, 1987), so too do both developmental and socializational processes affect a hearer's response to language (Bradac and Giles, 1991; Callan and Gallois, 1990). Indeed, numerous studies have found that, with development, children become more sophisticated in their ability to interpret, anticipate, and evaluate social events (e.g. Barenboim, 1981). Not surprisingly then, cross-sectional studies have shown children becoming gradually more socialized into accepting the evaluative norms of standardized speech (e.g. Giles *et al.*, 1983; see van Bezooijen, this issue). Adolescents have been found to identify increasingly more with local sociolinguistic ideals across the teenage years (Lambert *et al.*, 1975) and the elderly have been shown to become seemingly more tolerant of non-standard variants in the speech of others (Wilson and Bayard, 1992). We have already seen above that hearers' ethnic group membership affects language attitudes (see also Ryan and Carranza, 1975; White and Li, 1991) as can hearers' subjective definitions of their group memberships in terms of the group labels they adopt (Flores and Hopper, 1975) as well as the sociolinguistic identities they espouse (Luhman, 1990). Clearly, requesting hearers simply to self-categorize into generic labels is interpretively insufficient from our social process perspective. The diverse ideological meanings attached to all those who might claim to be, say, patriotically 'American' (e.g. from those ultra-right wing to those more liberally inclined) might well lead to grossly different language attitudes to the same ethnic stimuli. Relatedly, language attitude studies might profit by examining not only trait attributions accorded speakers on tape but also hearers' construals of their own social identities created as a situated function of reacting to the speech of certain others.

Under certain conditions, all of these (and other) group affiliations can interact with each other and with the speaker's group attributes (see Larimer *et al.*, 1988; Sebastian and Ryan, 1985). For instance, presenting listeners with speeches worded in either masculine or feminine reference forms (e.g. he/his vs she/her), Ng (1991) observed an interaction effect between the listeners' age and gender on their evaluations. Among the youngest group (age 11), both males and females favoured the masculine over the feminine form. Among 14 and 17 year olds, however, only males continued to favour the masculine form; females preferred the feminine form. Naturally enough, two hearers of the same psychological and chronological ages, genders, ethnicities and so forth could well bring different attitudes to bear in the same situation if their social group memberships vary in salience at that time and their personality inclinations (e.g. ethnocentric tendencies) differ radically (see Kalin and Rayko, 1980).

Hearers' language attitudes as a more interpretive process
    Until now, language attitudes have been treated not so much as a *process* but, rather, as

responses to language stimuli. Following a *discursive* perspective to language attitudes on the one hand (Giles and Coupland, 1991) and a motivational approach to social cognition on the other, we now outline a social process orientation whereby social meanings are assumed to be inferred by means of *constructive, interpretive* processes drawing upon the hearers' expertise and influenced by his or her goals and mood. The two-way arrows in Fig. 1 are meant to indicate that speaker language does not inevitably trigger certain attitudes within the hearer, but rather hearers are actively involved in the process of selecting and attending to those language behaviours that meet their needs. Language can indeed lead to particular attitudes, but hearers can also choose those language behaviours around which they construct their attitudes and evaluations. This is a perspective which has much in common with constructivist (O'Keefe and Delia, 1985) and pragmatic (Austin, 1962) orientations. We have adopted it in part because our conception of attitudes has begun to change (see Giles, 1992). As Potter and Wetherell (1987) point out, an individual's social attitudes are inherently variable when they are expressed in talk (even within the same conversation). Similarly, Billig (1987) suggests that attitudes are not simply an enduring evaluation about a stimulus object. Instead, he sees them in a wider historical and rhetorical context *as positions in an argument* and embedded within particular social controversies fashioned at any one time. Following Showers and Cantor (1985), we focus upon three elements (i.e. goals, moods, and expertise) that can affect which language attitudes become accessible and how they are used (see Fazio *et al.*, 1982).

First, depending on hearers' goals, different language behaviours may be attended to and, subsequently, different language attitudes may guide the resulting evaluative or behavioural outcomes. For example, the goal of imprisonment for some parole board members is the protection of society from criminals; for others, it is rehabilitation. Different goals then can sometimes lead to differences in attributions for a given crime (Carroll and Wiener, 1982), attributions that may well be realized through language attitudes. One official with the protection goal may attend to a criminal's non-standard accent and believe that he or she is a member of a particular social group whose members are cruel, remorseless, and undeserving of assistance. Another official with the rehabilitation goal may hear, at the same time, a criminal's slow speech rate and poor lexical diversity, allowing attributions to be made about the criminal's impoverished educational upbringing. The two officials' divergent goals then lead to appropriate perceptions of the criminal based on the 'appropriate' language attitudes that they summoned in this situation.

Second, language attitudes can also be shaped by the hearer's mood. Attitudes traditionally have been distinguished from beliefs and other 'pure' cognitions because they are also affective in nature; emotion is part and parcel of the attitude concept (Ajzen, 1988; Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). Unfortunately, however, little work to date has explicitly incorporated emotion into language attitude research, although clearly we must begin to do so. Accordingly, then, our model allows room for emotions to influence the salience of language attitudes. Specifically, and following the lead of Bodtker (1982), we suggest that the hearer's mood (i.e. their subtle and prolonged feeling state; Clark and Isen, 1982) influences the hearer's perceptions of the speaker and the language attitudes that are made salient in social encounters. For example, two studies have shown a link between experimentally induced negative mood and speaker evaluations. Sebastian *et al.* (1980) demonstrated that the negative affect generated by frustration in a referential communication task due to a noisy tape was enough to elicit downgrading of a speaker of standard English even though explicit attributions correctly identified the problems as external to the speaker. In a similar task, young adult respondents

in Ryan and Laurie (1990) showed greater generalized negative affect due to noisy tapes for older speakers than for the more highly rated young adult speakers. These findings support the argument made by Ryan (1983) that negative attitude toward non-fluent and accented speakers of second languages can arise directly from the affect engendered by intelligibility problems.

When discussing a hearer's mood states and their potential impact on language attitudes, it may seem reasonable to distinguish between several different types of moods (e.g. depressed, happy, excited, etc.). However, empirical research has not reliably made use of such distinctions. Admittedly, much finer distinctions could be crucial in certain judgmental situations, including the perceived, potentially diverse, events which led to them (e.g. in the case of a 'bad' mood—cynicism, guilt, realistic expectation of defeat, fear, etc.). Nonetheless, emotions have been satisfactorily defined, thus far, only in terms of their valence (Fiske, 1981). We shall see that positive moods tend to have a pronounced and relatively direct effect on social judgments and behaviours, while the influence of negative moods is seemingly inconsistent and more complex (Isen, 1984).

Research has found that informants in good moods express greater liking for others and form more positive impressions of them (Forgas and Moylan, 1989). It has been suggested that this occurs because positive feelings serve as retrieval cues for positive material in memory. By influencing what comes to mind (e.g. favourable language attitudes), positive moods influence a host of processes such as judgment, evaluation, expectations, and behavioural outcomes (Isen *et al.*, 1978).

People in negative moods, on the other hand, have been found to respond less consistently. In some cases, negative moods foster negative evaluations and behaviours. For example, participants feel more vulnerable (Davitz, 1969), rate themselves more negatively (Isen and Shalker, 1982), are less attracted to others (Gouaux, 1971), and have less favourable impressions of them (Forgas and Bower, 1987), when negative mood states are induced. At other times, however, negative moods produce positive and prosocial behaviours. Negative feeling states have been associated with increased self-reward (Cialdini *et al.*, 1973) and a proclivity to help others (Isen *et al.*, 1973). In these cases, negative moods encourage *mood repair*, people engage in positive, prosocial activities because they want to enhance their mood.

Taken together, these data are equivocal. We may generally expect positive moods to favour the selective perception of language behaviours for which positive attitudes are held, thereby encouraging benevolent speaker evaluations. Negative moods, however, may encourage mood consistent (i.e. negative) or mood *in*consistent evaluations. Certainly more research needs to be done to specify the impact of a hearer's mood on the language attitude process. Nonetheless, the implications remain clear: speakers may be evaluated differently depending on the current mood of the hearer, a mood that may itself be induced by the variable means by which language attitudes are assessed. Furthermore, and in concert with our recommendation above that social identity be measured as a dependent variable as well as manipulated as an independent variable in language attitude studies, it may also be fruitful to assess hearers' affective states as a function of the speakers' messages.

Third, different levels of expertise in a given situation may have different consequences for the hearer's use of language attitudes. Although expertise is an especially fuzzy concept dealing with the amount and organization of knowledge in a particular domain (Showers and Cantor, 1985), it has typically been linked to the articulation of schemas, stereotypes, scripts or prototypes (Fiske and Kinder, 1981). Because experts can make use of efficiently organized

knowledge, their freed cognitive capacity can be used to process schema-inconsistent information (Fiske *et al.*, 1983) and generate alternative interpretations (Showers and Cantor, 1985) often unavailable to non-experts. When such active information processing occurs, stereotypes (and in particular, language attitudes) are less likely to affect speaker evaluations because other diagnostic information is made available (Zukier, 1982).

Experts, however, do not always process information in such a controlled and systematic manner. When the social situation is perceived as unimportant or uninvolving, the expert will process information heuristically and rely upon their schemas and stereotypes (Cantor and Showers, 1983; see also Petty and Cacioppo, 1986). These schemas guide attention to, and interpretation of, new information. In this way, some behaviours are ignored and missing pieces are filled in to be congruent with the schema (Hastie, 1981). When such heuristic processing occurs, the language attitudes made salient are most likely those which are incorporated in or supportive of an existing schema. Because they function as a heuristic, language attitudes will only affect those social encounters in which an expert (hearer) is uninvolved.

Language attitudes could also be a central feature of processing when the hearer is *not* experienced with a particular sort of social encounter (e.g. interaction with a speaker from an unrecognized outgroup). A non-expert will possess less knowledge about and fewer schema for the situation. Consequently, he or she will most likely rely upon language attitudes to provide (supposed) information about the speaker. In this case, the use of language attitudes will not be the selective, constructive process it is with the involved expert. Rather, the available language behaviours will almost automatically cue attitudes in the hearer.

Schemas, then, can be involved in the language attitudes process (see Foon, 1986). Language attitudes can both cue schemas and function as part of them. Because of this, we must consider a second role for emotion beyond that which it plays in facilitating, or discouraging, the salience of particular language attitudes based on hearers' moods. More specifically, schemas used in the cognitive processing of attitudes will be influenced by emotions, because emotions are part of the information summoned by any given schema. According to schema theory (Crockett, 1988), cognitive material associated with a particular concept or function is grouped and stored together in memory as a unit. To the extent that emotions are also dealt with in this fashion (see Bower, 1981), cognitions and affect are, in some instances, inextricably bound. The consequence of this is that not only can the hearer's current mood state influence the salience and application of language attitudes, but so too can emotions stored away in a schema called forth during a social encounter. For example, a construction worker asked to meet with a group of engineers may invoke a schema of behaviour appropriate in such a situation. This schema may include positive affect that was felt during previous similar encounters. This recalled emotion may then influence the worker's present mood and bias what language attitudes are brought to bear during the meeting. In this way, certain evaluations are almost always achieved in particular encounters. Not only can the schema relied upon encourage selective perception and a 'filling in' of the blanks on the part of the hearer, but it can also influence the hearer affectively. This, in turn, may reinforce the evaluations already suggested by the schema.

Having discussed qualities of the hearer significant to the development, constructed salience, and application of language attitudes, let us turn attention to the nature of the attitudes themselves.

Attitudes

Although there is no single definition of an attitude to which all researchers subscribe, it might be agreed that attitudes generally are 'a disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects' (Sarnoff, 1970, p. 279). In breaking this concept down, it may be said that an attitude is, at the same time, cognitive, affective, and behavioural in nature (see Edwards, 1982). Attitudes are cognitive because they entail *beliefs about* the world, such as French is a useful language to know, or English people are refined. Attitudes are affective because they involve *feelings towards* an attitude object, such as a passion for Irish poetry, or an awful taste in the mouth of Georgians when speaking Russian. And lastly, attitudes are behavioural because they *encourage certain actions*, such as enrolling in a Japanese language course, or hiring a prestige accented speaker for a job. Let us briefly consider each attitude component in greater detail.

In some encounters a speaker's language appears to call up in the hearer's mind a social category (Berger and Bradac, 1982), which may, in turn, lead to inferences about the speaker's personality (language → group membership → speaker personality; standard British English → British upper class → industrious, competent, self-satisfied). In other circumstances, language may trigger an inference about personality directly (language → speaker personality), or may lead only to an inference regarding group affiliation (language → group membership). In all three of these examples, the main attitudinal process at work is cognitive; language can trigger beliefs about the speaker, their group membership, and about attributes of those group members. The specific content of those beliefs is very likely to be shaped by both the individual and collective cognitive functions served by stereotyping in intergroup relations.

Tajfel (1981) proposed two individual cognitive functions with reference to principles of categorization and object judgments. The first of these is to make a complex social world orderly and predictable by, for example, accentuating intracategory similarities and intercategory differences (e.g. *we* all sound different from each other whereas *they* all sound the same). The second function is to preserve and defend the individual's value system which arises from judgments of categories associated with socially valued rather than neutral differentials.

Stereotypes can also serve two major, *social collective* functions for group members as a whole in intergroup contexts. The first is titled a 'social explanatory' function and refers to the creation and maintenance of group ideologies that justify and explain intergroup relations, particularly reactions to and treatment of outgroup members. The second concerns the role of stereotyping in preserving, creating, or enhancing positively valued differentations between relevant ingroups and outgroups. It is argued that the contents of stereotypes (the particular traits attributed to groups), which vary from one intergroup relationship to another, will depend on which group function(s) they serve in the social context under consideration. In this way, beliefs that are a part of attitudes evoked by language behaviours are themselves selectively and favourably constructed to meet both the individual and collective cognitive needs of the hearer. Thus, the selective attention to a speaker's language that can occur based on the hearer's motivational state (e.g. goals and moods) is complemented nicely by the selectivity influencing the development of beliefs contained within language attitudes. Given the functioning of these two processes, a hearer can construct (almost) any speaker evaluation demanded by their ongoing or situational needs. Recent studies by Gibbons *et al.* (1991) and

Giles *et al.* (1992) have attempted to examine in more detail than hitherto how hearers cognitively respond to speakers by requiring them retrospectively to list thoughts that came to them during the presentation of messages.

Although cognitions are clearly an important feature of attitudes, so too is their affective quality (see Gallois, 1993a, b; Mackie and Hamilton, 1993). Sometimes, an attitude may be largely, or even entirely, affective in nature. Consider an encounter with a speaker whose language or accent was unidentifiable to the hearer. Despite the fact that nothing was known about the speaker's group—knowledge from which to derive beliefs about the speaker him or herself—it is still possible for the hearer to be affectively disposed towards the language behaviours produced. More specifically, the language variety or accent may sound 'pleasant' or 'irritating' to the hearer's ear, thus colouring their response during the encounter (see van Bezooijen, this issue). Such a disposition would be considered the hearer's attitude toward the language behaviour, yet the attitude would have little or no cognitive makeup if the language variety was unfamiliar. Rarely, though, will a speaker's language evoke beliefs that are devoid of emotional association.

A third component of attitudes is their behavioural predisposition. It has been proposed that the cognitive and affective components of an attitude combine to predispose people toward certain behaviours. For example, if you believe members of a particular group to be cruel and their presence makes you feel hostile, you are predisposed to behave in a distant manner. Actual behaviour will be a function of, among other things, prevailing social norms (e.g. politeness in public situations) and the specific character (e.g. unexpectedly warm) of the outgroup individual involved (Ajzen, 1988). Even though attitudes are a hypothetical construct originally used to explain the direction and persistence of human behaviour (Baker, 1992), scholars have long debated the magnitude of this relationship. To what extent does someone's attitude about an object *really* influence their behaviour toward it? Many studies have indicated that the link is weak. The most famous example is LaPiere's (1934) research where a Chinese couple was refused service in only one of 251 restaurants in the United States. Six months later, 92% of these same restaurants responded to an inquiry written by LaPiere saying that they would refuse entry to a Chinese couple. Even so, there are indications that the relationship between attitudes and behaviours is actually quite robust. Kim and Hunter (1993) conducted a *meta*-analysis integrating findings from 138 attitude–behaviour correlations with a total sample size of 90,908. When methodological artifacts were eliminated, they found a strong overall attitude–behaviour relationship ($r = 0.79$). Although this new evidence most certainly will not end the debate, it undoubtedly supports continued interest in language attitudes as they have in any case often been found to have direct behavioural consequences. However, before exploring behavioural (and other) outcomes further, appropriate consideration will first be given to the unique nature of the interpersonal relationship which can mediate the language attitude process (see Fig. 1).

Interpersonal history

There are three separate, yet interrelated, processes involved with language attitudes: generation (of content), salience, and application. It is one thing to have developed an attitude about a particular language behaviour, another to have it made salient during interaction, and still quite another to bring that attitude to bear in evaluating and interacting with a speaker. It is this last process, especially, that will be affected by the interlocutors' shared history. For

example, a man may evaluate a 'southern' (U.S.A.) accent negatively and believe that it evidences a lack of intelligence. However, when his good friend whom he believes is intelligent talks in such a manner, he certainly would not act on this stereotype and consider her *less* intelligent. Rather, he is much more likely to make use of other individuated information already provided by their interpersonal history (Fiske and Neuberg, 1990). The more developed and reliable their interpersonal history, the less language attitudes would be used to increase predictability about another's social attributes because there is less uncertainty to be reduced. Regarding relationships between language attitudes and outcomes, and drawing on processes of uncertainty reduction (Berger and Bradac, 1982), we would propose that attitudes triggered by various linguistic features are most likely to affect recipients' behaviours towards senders in contexts of low familiarity.

By including interpersonal history in a model of language attitudes, not only are processes of uncertainty reduction involved, but so too are are expectancy violations. More specifically, language expectancy theory (Burgoon and Miller, 1985) indicates that hearers have expectations about the forms and styles of language that speakers will use in particular contexts, expectations about lexical and syntactic patterns, pronunciation, etc. For example, if hearers have prior knowledge that a speaker is high in status or power, they may well expect fluent, direct, and forceful discourse—use of a 'high-power style' (Hosman and Siltanen, this issue; Ng and Bradac, 1993). If, for whatever reason, the speaker uses many hesitations, hedges ('sort of'), and tag questions ('it is, isn't it?'), the hearer's expectations may be negatively violated and this may result in negative evaluations of the speaker. Conversely, if hearers believe that the speaker is low in status or power, they may expect 'low-power' linguistic forms, and in this case if the speaker is fluent, direct, and forceful, the hearers' expectations may be positively violated which may result in positive speaker evaluations. Language that violates expectancies is marked, whereas expectancy-fulfilling language is unmarked. Generally, marked linguistic forms are likely to be especially useful for purposes of uncertainty reduction as they are relatively informative.

Outcomes

As has been suggested throughout this paper, language attitudes are intimately related to evaluations of a speaker performing a given language behaviour. However, language attitude outcomes are not limited to speaker evaluations. They can also directly suggest certain communication strategies (e.g. your language is unfamiliar to me which leads to judgments of dissimilarity and, consequently, particular strategies for uncertainty reduction) or other behaviours (e.g. disengagement). Moreover, language attitudes can lead to these outcomes indirectly whereby attitudes encourage evaluations that, in turn, shape the hearer's strategies and behaviours. Thus, because speaker evaluations are the primary outcome, we begin with them.

Speaker evaluations can consist of rating the speaker on any number of traits. Some researchers (Lambert *et al.*, 1960; Williams, 1976) have emphasized the ecological validity of first impressions by conducting pilot studies for each specific subject population to determine the scales used spontaneously to describe people. Within this framework, Lambert (1967) has identified three frequently emerging dimensions (personal integrity, competence, and social attractiveness), while Williams (1976) obtained two quite different factors in his work comparing speakers of standard and non-standard English (confidence–eagerness and

standardness). Others have sought to develop a general speech style assessment instrument by using *post hoc* and confirmatory factor analysis to validate generally useful dimensions (see Mulac *et al.*, 1974; Zahn and Hopper, 1985). Finally, others have identified evaluative dimensions from a theoretical perspective and then used confirmatory factor analysis to establish the appropriateness of specific rating scales as reflections of the a priori dimensions (Brown *et al.*, 1974; Ryan and Carranza, 1975).

As we have argued elsewhere (Giles and Ryan, 1982), the evaluative dimensions of social status and ingroup solidarity may have universal importance for the understanding of attitudes toward contrasting language varieties. Indeed, and in some ways irrespective of its status connotations, the association of a strong sense of ingroup solidarity with particular language varieties may be a crucial determinant for why certain minority languages persist (see Ryan, 1979) and why certain language planning policies are formulated and implemented successfully (Woolard, 1989). Moreover, a strong sense of 'outgroup' solidarity can also bolster the motivational support necessary to acquire proficiency in a second language (Gardner, 1985). These theoretically based evaluative dimensions allow researchers to test constrasting predictions concerning the effects of various independent variables upon attitudes across a wide variety of settings. Within this framework, for example, one can make good sense of empirical findings of American listeners' preference for British English speakers on status but for their own English speakers on the solidarity dimension (Stewart *et al.*, 1985). Similarly, Swiss listeners' preference for Swiss German on solidarity related evaluations and for High German on those of status (Hogg *et al.*, 1984) underlines the need for this type of distinction at a theoretical level.

In addition to speaker evaluations, language attitudes also influence the listener's subsequent communication strategies. Bourhis and Giles (1977) showed that when ingroup members (in this case, learners of the Welsh language) were ethnically threatened by an outgroup (English) speaker, they broadened their Welsh accents in their replies, and some even introduced Welsh words and phrases. We would argue that such divergent speech choices conveyed, at least in part, their attitude toward the outgroup speaker as one of dissociation and displeasure. Language attitudes also affect a wide variety of other listener behaviours, including co-operation. Kristiansen and Giles (1992) showed that cinema audiences in Denmark were more likely to assist the theatre in completing an audience survey on site when the request was voiced in standard Danish than other less prestigious varieties (although this pattern was a variable function of the audience type). Research by Henry and Ginzberg (1985) illustrates a real-life paradigm in which individuals with different ethnic/racial accents made telephone inquiries about jobs advertised in the newspaper. Certain kinds of speakers were told that a job was already filled whereas others, in contrast, received invitations to appear for a personal interview for this very same job. In other words, some people do sometimes indeed allow their actions to be shaped by their attitudes about speakers of particular language varieties. What is required now is more work exploring the intervening processes which lead to language attitudes being transformed into particular kinds of linguistic actions (see Giles *et al.*, 1987).

Immediate social situation

Language forms that are negatively evaluated in one situation may be positively evaluated when the situation changes (Gallois and Callan, 1985). For example, the negative effect of a

slow speech rate can be eliminated if hearers can be led to view the slow rate as one designed to facilitate transmission of information. Such is the case when the topic is a highly technical one, and the audience is naïve regarding this topic (Brown *et al.*, 1985). Thus, attitudes towards a speaker's slow rate of speech would be different in the context of a nuclear physics lecture than during introductions at a cocktail party. Likewise, Johnson and Buttny (1982) found that Black (relative to White) standard speech was rated as more socially appropriate the less abstract the topic discussed.

In researching effects of the immediate social situation, studies have examined and or manipulated aspects of the actual context in which language attitudes were tested. For instance, using the direct questionnaire method, Bourhis and Sachdev (1984) found that Anglo-Canadian secondary school students had less favourable attitudes toward Italian language usage when the demographic proportions of Anglos and Italians in the school setting and testing situation were equal compared with when the former was a clear majority. Returning to a matched-guise study, Creber and Giles (1983) found that the typical status upgrading of standard British English (Received Pronunciation: RP) was attenuated significantly in the context of an evening youth club compared with the usual, classroom setting. In contrast, Giles *et al.* (1983) observed status connotations of an RP speaker to be polarized when informants were asked to discuss their speaker evaluations with each other for 90 seconds before making their ratings. Lastly, Abrams and Hogg (1987) found that Dundonian evaluations of a Glasgow accent shifted from negative to positive when the comparison accent changed from Dundee to RP. Taken together, this research clearly indicates that qualities of the immediate social situation have consequences for language attitudes (see also Gibbons, 1983), and especially so when it is appreciated that social group memberships—of both speakers and hearers—are situatedly salient to varying degrees (see Clément and Noels, 1992).

Speaker evaluations in educational settings, for example, have been explored in a number of studies (e.g. Edwards, 1989). Overall, research indicates that the perception of so-called 'poor' speech characteristics of children leads teachers to make negative inferences about their personalities, social background, and academic abilities (Seligman *et al.*, 1972). Clearly, these may then lead to self-fulfilling prophecies to the disadvantage of non-standard-speaking children and may also lead teachers themselves to induce behaviour in the latter which confirms their stereotyped expectations (see Bradac and Giles, 1991). Correspondingly, Rubin and Smith (1990) showed that the more foreign accentedness—in this case, Chineseness—that American undergraduates perceived in speakers the poorer they evaluated them as teachers.

In legal and judicial settings, the avenue of influence for language attitudes is indeed wide. Some research has looked at so-called 'powerless' speech (see Ng and Bradac, 1993; also Hosman and Siltanen, this issue) and its effects on the perceptions of witnesses who use it in simulated courtroom settings (Lind and O'Barr, 1979). Other work has looked at the effect of attitudes toward non-standard varieties. For example, Seggie (1983) presented voices of speakers (in RP, broad Australian, or Asian accents) who were accused of various crimes and were heard protesting their innocence. White collar crimes were more likely associated with the prestige speakers whereas crimes of violence were linked with non-standard speakers.

Most research in employment settings has been limited to the interview. Street *et al.* (1984) found that males and females speaking the same message were more positively evaluated in informal and conversational settings than in a supposed (formal) interview. These results suggest that speech is more carefully monitored in the interview setting and that, consequently,

a standard accent would be more influential therein. This, indeed, has been found in a number of studies (e.g. Hopper and Williams, 1973). Street (1985) presents data showing that participants in an interview develop different evaluations of interviewees than observers. Compared with the latter, interviewers considered interviewees to be more competent and socially attractive. However, whether this finding is unique to the interview context or whether participants and observers across all situations develop different evaluations remains an important empirical and theoretical question. Regardless, the above studies illustrate the influence of several applied contexts, in particular, and the importance of the immediate social situation, in general, for the salience and application of language attitudes.

Perceived cultural factors

Superimposed upon any immediate social situation are several other factors affecting language attitudes, and these can be characterized as 'cultural' (see Gallois et al., 1992; Peng et al., 1993). More specifically, they include the political, historical, economic, and linguistic realities that exert a large influence over the process of language attitude formation. Although the actual macro-context is indeed complex and multifaceted, the study of intergroup language attitudes has normally relied on two relevant, interrelated sociostructural dimensions as indices of its impact. In a scheme originally presented by Ryan et al. (1982), contrasting language varieties can be characterized by the dimensions of standardization and vitality. Although these dimensions are conceivably 'objective', language attitudes will only be affected by the speaker's and hearer's 'subjective' or perceived assessment of such factors.

Standardization is the more static dimension and it describes the extent to which norms for correct usage have been codified, adopted, and promoted for a particular language variety (Fishman, 1971). This might be accomplished through the compilation of dictionaries and grammars while the acceptance of a variety may be advanced by elites and government. Therefore, white middle class English might be placed toward the standard pole while Mexican-American- or West-Indian-accented English might be placed more toward the non-standard pole in the United States and the United Kingdom, respectively.

Vitality, the second dimension of the sociostructual context, is the more dynamic dimension. Specifically, ethnolinguistic vitality reflects the range and importance of functions served by a given language variety and the social pressures toward shifts in language use. Giles et al. (1977) have provided a taxonomy of relevant non-psychological factors that constitute ethnolinguistic vitality: status (the economic, social, political, and historical power wielded by its speakers); demographic strength (the number and distribution of its speakers); and institutional support (the contribution made to the maintenance of the variety by national, governmental, and community bodies). An important aspect of the status component will be intergroup histories as demonstrated in the Quebec (Genesee and Holobrow, 1989) and Catalonian (Woolard and Gahng, 1990) contexts as well as anticipated changes in the future (see Pittam et al., 1991). Moreover, perceptions of intergroup conflict and aggression or collaboration and interdependence between a hearer's and speaker's group will likely determine, to a large extent, the quality of language attitudes held between them (Kraemer, 1992). It was argued that the more ethnolinguistic vitality factors an ethnic group has in its favour, the more likely that its members would act collectively in pursuing goals of group

survival. This relationship, however, is mediated by the respondents' subjective perceptions (see Harwood *et al.*, in press, for a review). If a hearer recognizes another's language variety to be standardized and their social group to exhibit high vitality (as in the case of RP English and Anglo-Americans), such assessments will most certainly influence the hearer's attitudes toward that language (i.e. they will accord it high status).

Another factor that requires highlighting here is the presence of social norms. Internally, all cultural and social groups develop norms and conventions that broadly tell its members what is 'right' and what is 'wrong' and that distinguish the group from others. For example, norms among many fraternity groups tell their members to drink, chase women, play sports, and 'joke around' with one another. Such norms would then distinguish fraternity activities from those of perhaps the society of engineers, who may place more value on study. Norms are important to language attitudes because they provide a basis for judging language that both does and does not serve as a cue for group membership (McKirnan and Hamayan, 1984) as well as dictates what is situationally appropriate or inappropriate communication (for commercial transactions, see Genesee and Bourhis, 1988).

As Edwards (1982) points out, there are three broad possibilities for the underlying patterns of speech-style judgments: they may reflect intrinsic linguistic superiorities or inferiorities, intrinsic aesthetic differences, or social convention and preference. It is clear, however, that there is little or no linguistic evidence whereby one language variety can be intrinsically established as better or more logical than another. Similarly, aesthetic judgments of language varieties do not in fact seem to be based on inherent qualities of 'beauty', though they may be represented as such by members of speech communities. In a series of studies (see Trudgill and Giles, 1978), it has been shown that listeners rating totally unfamiliar (foreign) varieties, which judges could not categorize as class- or status-related varieties, did not discriminate between them on grounds of aesthetic criteria, although they *were* perceived to differ sharply in these qualities within their *own* speech communities. It seems, therefore, that evaluations of language behaviours do not reflect intrinsic linguistic or aesthetic qualities so much as the levels of status, prestige, or appropriateness that they are *conventionally* associated with in particular speech communities. This appears to be true for judgments of language behaviours such as politeness and bragging (see Holtgraves and Dulin, this issue) and judgments of language varieties associated with particular groups, although the work of van Bejooizen (this issue) features the role of mutual intelligibility of outgroup language varieties. Nonetheless, within any group, norms establish that certain behaviours are believed preferable to others, and these perceptions of convention serve as the basis for some language attitudes.

Conclusions and overview

In this article, we have attempted to understand language attitudes as *process* and not in the static input–output manner in which traditional studies in this important domain can be characterized. Previously, we charged the area with examining language attitudes in a cognitive vacuum (Giles and Ryan, 1982). While much more could still be acomplished in this vein, we now implore scholars to examine the *motivational and affective* constituents of the language attitude process and place these in the context of the relevant interpersonal and intergroup histories. Situations and relationships (or situated relationships) energize language attitudes, and this dynamic process remains virtually unstudied. By examining the ways in which

situationally salient goals and moods, for example, focus hearers' attention upon specific features of speakers' language and discourse, it should be possible to enrich our explanations of evaluative reactions to speech styles and to improve the precision of our predictions in this domain. There is much to be learned about relationships between cognitions and emotions in the processing of linguistic and social information.

Based on our discussion of the heuristic model (Fig. 1) and with the above-mentioned contention that speaker–hearer contrasts can be transformed into the writer–reader arena, we proffer the following generalizations about social process and language attitudes:

(1) Speakers' speech styles alone, or in combination with other language and extra-linguistic features, can be socially diagnostic of speakers' attributes to hearers and to observers of speaker–hearer exchanges.

(2) The evocation of language attitudes in hearers can influence their affective states and social identities. Reciprocally, hearers' affective states and social identities can affect the salience and consequences of language attitudes.

(3) The nature of information provided by language attitudes is determined by relevant, perceived cultural factors (e.g. historical relations between groups, their relative sociostructural strengths).

(4) The salience of particular language attitudes is determined by subjective dimensions of the immediate situation, speaker behaviour and social characteristics, and hearer character-istics (such as emotional state and motivational elements).

(5) Dimensions of the perceived interpersonal history between interlocutors mediate (through uncertainty reduction processes) language variation in social interaction and the consequent outcomes of this variation (e.g. speakers evaluations; hearer behaviours and strategies).

(6) Language attitudes can shape behavioural outcomes (e.g. co-operation, accommo-dations) and decision-making in many important contexts including educational, legal, medical, and language public policies.

Having explored both the nature of language attitudes and language attitudes research, we now turn to overviewing the papers presented in this special issue. The first paper by Côté and Clément is unique in that it is one of few studies that has expressly manipulated situational parameters affecting the language attitudes process. As our present model and others (e.g. Giles and Ryan, 1982) have illustrated, context (both the immediate and the larger sociostructural) is important in shaping how language varieties are evaluated. Yet most of our knowledge about context comes from studies in which different contexts are simply defined and *not* manipulated as independent variables. By testing the effects of different immediate social situations (whether they are intimate or task specific) and the larger sociostructural milieu (high or low French language vitality), this study clearly contributes to our understanding of the relationship between language attitudes and the situations in which they are embedded.

The second paper in this issue, authored by van Bezooijen, explores the basis for aesthetic evaluations of four Dutch language varieties. The study is particularly relevant because the design and results question the role that cultural norms play in underpinning judgments of language. Are aesthetic evaluations simple responses to the prestige or appropriateness norms accorded a given language behaviour, or can such ratings reflect values inherent in the

language behaviour itself? Our present model incorporates only the former process, therefore this study merits careful consideration. Studies examining regional dialect variation outside the English language are quite infrequent. This is one of the few studies investigating developmental patterns of language attitudes with both children and adults; moreover, the creation of judgmental materials for children is innovative.

The third paper by Levin, Giles and Garrett compares, in two studies, Latinate and Germanic forms of everyday English speech and the accents used by speakers in realizing them. Importantly, the authors recognize what we have emphasized in describing the language attitudes process: namely that hearers in real social situations respond to a host of language behaviours, not just single, isolated behaviours. Appropriately then, their studies investigate the evaluative consequences of the above-mentioned lexical forms and those consequences in relation to the simultaneous effects of accent. Interestingly, the findings highlight the relatively strong impact of accent, in the context studied anyway, in comparison with the lexical style variable.

Holtgraves and Dulin contribute the fourth article which testifies to the importance of the hearers' own group attributes in judging speaker language behaviours. Both African-American and European–American hearers rated speakers with different conversational styles. Specifically, they were asked for their assessments of speakers who bragged frequently and truthfully, who bragged frequently but not truthfully, and who did not brag. Because the two groups to which the listener-judges belong have different rules for conversation, it was hypothesized and found to be the case that group attributes significantly impacted their impressions of the speakers. This kind of exploration of the evaluative impact of differences in conversational pragmatics across social groups is important because of the obvious opportunity for miscommunication and misinterpretation across ethnic (and other) social boundaries.

The paper by Hosman and Siltanen tested two competing theoretical explanations for the effects of powerful and powerless speech styles (O'Barr, 1982). Powerless speech is that which makes use of hedges, hesitations, intensifiers, and tag questions; powerful speech is that which does not. Past research has shown that a powerless speech style is evaluated negatively and a powerful style is evaluated positively, yet it remains to be seen whether such judgments are the result of a powerful style expressing 'control over others' or 'self control'. Both types of control are respected in (at least) American culture, and the two studies reported here attempt to determine which one is responsible for hearers' favourable impressions of powerful speech. Much of the research in this area has been entirely atheoretical, so Hosman and Siltanen's attempt to test explanatory mechanisms is laudable indeed. As it turns out, support is obtained for both theoretical positions such that future research will need to explore conditions under which perceptions of 'control over others' on the one hand or perceptions of 'self-control' on the other hand assume salience.

The final paper by Mulac and Lundell, also featuring two studies, focused on determining whether a Gender-linked Language Effect exists in the context of adult written discourse. In other words, do men and women writers differ in their use of various language features?; do readers make different attributions about male and female writers based uniquely on their writing?; and can a writer's frequent use of particular gender-discriminating language features determine a reader's evaluation of them? These are the criteria that the authors establish for the Gender-linked Language Effect and the results of their studies plainly illustrate that attributes of the writer do shape the language behaviours that they produce and the manner in

which readers respond to them. An important aspect of this phenomenon is that the differential interpretations of male and female writing samples were not based on any conscious ability to identify author gender. The demonstrated necessity of multivariate analyses of patterns of a large number of linguistic variables for questions related to evaluations of gender-related style suggests that this technique offers promise for expanding the research questions addressed by language attitude researchers.

Language attitudes are an omnipresent feature of most interpersonal communication and it is our hope that both this prologue and the following six papers may lead to a richer and more complete understanding of this important process.

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