

Implicitness and experimental methods in language variation research

ORGANIZERS

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WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Implicitness, whether it is used in the context of language attitude research (Garrett 2010), work on language regard (Preston 2010) or studies focussing on the social meaning of language variation (Campbell-Kibler 2007), is a problematic concept in linguistics. Few researchers have taken up the challenge of reflecting on, and defining its nature, let alone that anyone has ever pinpointed its theoretical significance or how exactly we can measure it.

Firstly, from a conceptual point of view, several definitions and interpretations of implicitness have been put forward, but in linguistics the focus tends to be on awareness/level of consciousness (e.g. Labov 1972; Kristiansen 2009; Garrett 2010; Grondelaers & Kristiansen 2013; Preston 2013; Preston 2015). In social psychology, by contrast, the concept of implicitness has been questioned extensively and researchers have proposed multidimensional definitions that recognize more facets in the concept of implicitness than just awareness, facets which are not usually considered in linguistic research. Implicitness in this field is usually understood in terms of automaticity which comprises multiple features (unintentionality, resource-independence, uncontrollability as well as unconsciousness) that need not all be present, but can qualify the way in which the outcome of an attitude measure is implicit (De Houwer et al. 2009; De Houwer & Moors 2010; Gawronski & De Houwer 2014). Such definitions of implicitness seems to allow for a conceptualization in terms of gradience, or a continuum between implicitness and explicitness.

Secondly, when it comes to the theoretical importance of implicitness, it has been claimed that implicit, private, deep evaluations can access the perceptual correlates of linguistic change (Grondelaers & Kristiansen 2013; Kristiansen 2010; Preston 2013). However, studies like Soukup (2013) which showcases that the use of an open guise technique (where participants are aware of the fact that one speaker uses different language varieties), claim to be able to explain language variation in certain contexts. This may raise questions like: do we always need implicit measures? What is the theoretical significance of implicitness in the study of language variation and change? Should it occupy a privileged position when it comes to explaining the driving force behind language change as suggested by Kristiansen (2010) contrary to for instance Labov's (2001) current more anti-subjective position?

Finally, challenging the linguistic conception of implicitness has important methodological consequences. If we ask ourselves the question what exactly we mean by implicitness, and if we should find that it is a multifaceted concept, we should also ask ourselves *which* aspect of implicitness we are measuring with specific methods and tools. This goes for traditional sociolinguistic methods like matched guise experiments, but the question is especially relevant in the context of the recent upsurge in social psychological measures to study implicit associations. Linguists are gradually starting to use methods originally developed in social psychology, like the Implicit Association Test (e.g. Campbell-Kibler 2012; Redinger 2010; Babel 2010; Pantos & Perkins 2012; Lee 2015; Rosseel et al. 2015; Loudermilk 2015; Watt & Llamas 2015). Yet, they do not always question what it is exactly that these tools measure, how these methods fit in with sociolinguistic conceptions of attitudes and social meaning, and how the measurements compare to the ones obtained from more traditional tools (e.g. matched/verbal guise experiments).

This workshop aims to bring together experimental research into language regard and into the social meaning of language variation, which approaches and reflects on implicitness from different angles: conceptual, theoretical or methodological. Contributions to the workshop deal with questions such as:

- What aspects of implicitness play a crucial role for linguistic attitude research and research into language variation and change?
- How do different interpretations of implicitness relate to different methods to capture language regard/attitudes/social meaning of language variation?
- What is the relationship between implicit and explicit attitudes? Are they discrete entities or are they the extreme ends of a continuum?
- What is the link between concepts like implicitness, salience and awareness?
- Which research questions require measuring implicit attitudes/associations and which ones are better studied using explicit measures or a combination of both?

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- Watt, D., & Llamas, C. (2015). Perception of difference: Socioindexical forms in the Scottish/English border region. Talk presented at *ICLaVE 8*, Leipzig.

PROGRAMME (SLOTS OF 20 + 10 MINUTES)

1. Introduction

Laura Rosseel | University of Leuven
Stefan Grondelaers | Radboud University Nijmegen

2. Implicit and explicit evaluations of Northern English and Southern English speech in England: Implications for the measurement of language attitude change and the investigation of language change in progress

Robert McKenzie | University of Northumbria

3. Tapping practical relevance in artificial situations. Evaluation routines and sociolinguistic experiments.

Christoph Purschke | Université du Luxembourg

4. Measuring the strength of factors on the implicitness-explicitness continuum

Gitte Kristiansen | Universidad Complutense de Madrid
Jesús Martín Tévar | Universidad Complutense de Madrid

5. Implicitness, automaticity, and consciousness: Are they related and how do we measure them?

Andrew J. Pantos | Metropolitan State University of Denver

6. Effects of Implicit Attitudes on Epistemic Credibility

Eric McCready | Aoyama Gakuin University Japan
Gregoire Winterstein | Hong Kong Institute of Education

7. The persuasiveness of British accents in enhancing parental self-efficacy towards children's oral health

Zoe Adams | Queen Mary University London

8. Towards an integrated model of perception: Linguistic form, social structure and the dynamics of sociolinguistic cognition

Isabelle Buchstaller | Universität Leipzig
Erez Levon | Queen Mary University London

9. The relational responding task (RRT): a novel approach to measuring social meaning of language variation

Laura Rosseel | University of Leuven

10. Implicitness, variability, and the complexity of language regard

Dennis R. Preston | Oklahoma State University & Michigan State University (emeritus)

**IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT EVALUATIONS OF NORTHERN ENGLISH AND SOUTHERN ENGLISH SPEECH IN ENGLAND:
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDE CHANGE AND THE INVESTIGATION OF LANGUAGE
CHANGE IN PROGRESS**

Robert McKenzie | University of Northumbria

Socio-psychological research has generally reported low correlations between explicit and implicit attitude measures for a range of socially sensitive topics. There is also mounting evidence that implicit and explicit evaluations do not change at the same rate, with rapidly learnt explicit attitudes changing at a faster pace than more slowly acquired, and more stable, implicit attitudes (see Gawronski and Bodenhausen, 2006). Thus, any implicit-explicit discrepancy (IED) may be an indication of attitude change in progress (Gregg, Siebt and Banaji, 2006).

However, sociolinguists have yet to investigate whether differences between implicit and explicit attitudes towards language use can determine the direction of any language attitude change in progress; surprising given recent evidence community language attitude change can result in micro-level linguistic change over time (e.g., Kristiansen, 2009). This talk details the results of a recent study (McKenzie, under review), employing an implicit association test and self-report attitude scale, measuring the relationship between 108 Newcastle-based English nationals' implicit and explicit ratings of Northern English speech and Southern English speech. Multivariate analysis of the data collected demonstrated a significant implicit-explicit attitude discrepancy, providing evidence of language attitude change in progress, led by younger males, with explicit attitudes changing more rapidly towards a greater tolerance of the English spoken in the north of England. Implications for the investigation of language attitude change and for the potential measurement of (socio)linguistic change in progress are discussed.

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- McKenzie, R.M. (under review) I'm not prejudiced but...: Measuring implicit-explicit language attitude discrepancy, attitude change and the investigation of (socio)linguistic change in progress. *Language in Society*.

**TAPPING PRACTICAL RELEVANCE IN ARTIFICIAL SITUATIONS. EVALUATION ROUTINES AND SOCIOLINGUISTIC
EXPERIMENTS.**

Christoph Purschke | Université du Luxembourg

Experimental research on language attitudes is facing many problems regarding the constitution of its topic. e.g. the artificial character of experimental settings. Since attitudes are situated evaluation routines that arise from action, we have to make assumptions regarding the ways in which experiments are related to lifeworld practice. This affects the connection between

1. action and evaluation routines in practice;
2. practically relevant and experimentally constructed evaluations;
3. externalized and concealed evaluations in experiments;
4. purposefully concealed evaluations and implicit attitudinal inventories.

To address these problems, I will discuss basic conditions of sociolinguistic experiments against the background of the REACT framework for attitudes and its consequences for the ways in which attitudes can be surveyed.

1. The framework revolves around the notion of attitudes as routinized evaluations and therefore actions that prepare or accompany the individual's readiness for action. Thus, experimental settings underlie specific preconditions regarding their topic, dimension, task, and configuration.
2. Experiments are artificial situations that simulate specific aspects lifeworld practice to make visible specific evaluation routines. Therefore, we should design experimental settings that relate conceptually to evaluation practice in everyday life.
3. Not all attitudes that may be pertinent in everyday life are socially acceptable or situationally adequate. Thus, we have to account for the fact that the action horizons we create in experiments may differ from those offered by our participants.
4. Although evaluation routines define the practical relevance of phenomena for action, in many cases participants may not only be unwilling but unable to express them, be it that they are routinized to such a high degree or that they are directed towards aspects of practice that are only indirectly linked to the experimental task. Therefore, the evaluations we survey may be biased by the implicitness or nescience of the addressed attitudinal inventories.

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In traditional attitude research the prototypical indirect method involves triggering subconscious evaluations of language varieties or linguistic features through questionnaire-based experiments eliciting reactions to speech fragment stimuli by means of indirect questions about the speaker instead of the language. The prototypical direct method consists of asking informants about attitudes towards explicitly labelled speech varieties through a series of direct questions about the target in question.

However, neither indirect techniques (those designed to elicit subconscious evaluations by distracting attention away from the actual target to diminish awareness and reduce intentionality) nor direct techniques (those which do not pretend to direct attention away from the actual purpose of the questionnaire) is necessarily combined with specific question types, nor with specific measurements of target-related information. For instance, Grondelaers & Van Hout (2010) and Grondelaers and Speelman (2015) implemented prototypicality judgments involving production rate in combination with a direct question type, thus monitoring control levels while keeping the target consciously in focus. Martín Tévar (forthcoming) compares different degrees of implicitness in indirect types of questions and concludes that the more indirectly the questions were formulated, the more positive the attitudes obtained from male listeners became.

In this paper we examine the explicit-implicit continuum in a series of controlled experiments by stepwisely combining indirect and direct elicitation techniques with different question types, and gradually proportioning visual and textual cues that likewise serve to enhance target awareness (e.g. L2 or/and L1 varieties, variety-specific variants or speaker-related characteristics). One specific variety and corresponding speech fragments form the base of the experiments.

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- Martin Tevar, Jesús (forthcoming) *Perceptions of English Varieties in the Spanish Context: Effects of Gender, Visual Priming, and Question Types*. Unpublished PhD dissertation.

IMPLICITNESS, AUTOMATICITY, AND CONSCIOUSNESS: ARE THEY RELATED AND HOW DO WE MEASURE THEM?

Andrew J. Pantos | Metropolitan State University of Denver

Over the past several years, there has been increasing interest in incorporating implicit attitude measures into language attitudes research (*e.g.*, Pantos & Perkins 2013; Campbell-Kibler 2012). These measures rely on the conceptualization of attitudes as comprised of both implicit and explicit constructs and the assumption that each construct can be captured only by using certain types of measurement tools (*e.g.*, Greenwald et al 1998). While the tools used to measure implicit attitudes are relatively new to linguists, they are grounded in a long history of social cognition research, where dual processing models of attitude formation have been discussed and debated for decades (*e.g.*, Petty & Cacioppo 1986; Fazio 1990). Researchers familiar with this tradition understand that their choice of measurement tools, the terminology they use, and the conclusions they draw from experimental results all invoke specific theoretical bases and assumptions. While some current language attitudes research reflects a familiarity with this rich body of literature, much of it does not. Furthermore, as the use of these methods becomes more prevalent in language attitudes research, there is a growing tendency to overlook the foundational literature and focus only on sociolinguistic studies as precedent. As a result, there is a tendency to conflate and misuse terminology—most notably the terms automatic, implicit, and unconscious—and to mischaracterize the kinds of conclusions that can safely be drawn from experimental studies. The purpose of this paper is to help language attitudes researchers assess the future of implicit measures by providing perspective on the theoretical traditions of dual processing models, an analysis of the implications of selecting particular attitudes measures, an appeal for the use of clear and consistent terminology, and an evaluation of the kinds of claims that can safely be drawn from experimental research grounded in different theoretical traditions.

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EFFECTS OF IMPLICIT ATTITUDES ON EPISTEMIC CREDIBILITY

Eric McCready | Aoyama Gakuin University Japan

Gregoire Winterstein | Hong Kong Institute of Education

The use of not-at-issue expressive content such as that conveyed by slurs or gender marking can activate stereotypes which have effects on the attribution of epistemic credibility. This talk reports on experimental results of examining how such stereotypes, while never explicitly invoked, affect judgements about the credibility of source-based arguments, focusing on the case of gender-marked pronouns and anaphoric noun phrases in English and Cantonese. Our results indicate that not-at-issue content does indeed induce bias effects in these cases.

THE PERSUASIVENESS OF BRITISH ACCENTS IN ENHANCING PARENTAL SELF-EFFICACY TOWARDS CHILDREN'S ORAL health

Zoe Adams | Queen Mary University London

This is an exploratory investigation of how implicit attitude testing can inform the utility of oral health interventions from a sociolinguistic perspective. The work builds on a clinical trial with families from Tayside, Newham and Kent which uses children's storybooks containing embedded behaviour change techniques. These aim to improve parental self-efficacy to deliver effective tooth brushing to and control sugar consumption in their children, which was the most significant variable predicting dental caries in young children (Pine et al., 2005). The storybooks are being adapted into animated cartoons, providing an opportunity to examine the persuasiveness of six British accents (Yorkshire, Irish, Received Pronunciation, Estuary English, Dundee, Multicultural London English (MLE)). Phase one used 115 parents (Tayside 46, Newham 34, Kent 34) to examine the effect of British accents on explicit attitudes via a matched-guise test, and implicit attitudes using a reaction time test which measured accent persuasiveness. Mixed effect regression results revealed inconsistencies between explicit and implicit attitudes. This difference was most stark in Newham where participants explicitly preferred RP and Estuary English ($p < .001$). However, they were persuaded by MLE (the local accent) compared with Dundee ($p < .001$), Yorkshire ($p < .012$) and RP ($p < .016$). Phase two, in progress, applies the most and least persuasive accents in Newham (MLE and Dundee), to the animated cartoons to test their effect on thought confidence – a recently developed concept which has proven integral to the persuasion process (e.g. Briñol, Petty & Tormala, 2004; Briñol & Petty, 2009; Petty, Briñol & Tormala, 2002). It is predicted that MLE will increase participants' confidence in thoughts generated about oral health messages. This study has implications for our understanding of the impact of accent on behaviour change, bridging a gap between Sociolinguistics and Public Health, whilst also contributing to our knowledge of the relationship between explicit and implicit attitudes.

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**TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED MODEL OF PERCEPTION: LINGUISTIC FORM, SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND THE DYNAMICS OF
sociolinguistic cognition**

**Isabelle Buchstaller | Universität Leipzig
Erez Levon | Queen Mary University London**

In this paper, we examine factors that condition the ways in which listeners perceive variables that co-occur in the speech signal in real time. Specifically, we describe results from an experiment that investigates the sociolinguistic processing of phonetic and morphosyntactic variability in the speech of two individuals (one woman and one man) from the North East of England. Our methodology relies on a bespoke sliding evaluation tool (adapted from Watson & Clark 2013) to examine listeners' real-time reactions to both singular and cumulative occurrences of two regional phonetic features (monophthongization of FACE, alveolar/velar realization of ING) and three morphosyntactic ones (stative possessives, the Northern Subject Rule, relative pronouns). We include both phonetic and morphosyntactic variables since recent evidence demonstrates that while listeners attend to both types of features, they do so in systematically different ways (Levon & Buchstaller 2015).

In this paper, we discuss the responses of 81 listeners from the North East (i.e., local) and North West (i.e., supra-local) of England. Responses are analysed in two ways: Change Point Analyses (Killick 2013) allow us to identify specific linguistic features that elicit evaluative responses from listeners in real time. These analyses are complemented by the results of Generalised Additive Regression models, which reveal that listener reactions are constrained both by listener gender and by listener cognitive style. The findings are important because together they further demonstrate the contingent nature of sociolinguistic cognition (Campbell-Kibler 2009). In the talk, we focus on the analytical methods employed to tease apart the different factors (social, linguistic, cognitive) that influence online reactions to sociolinguistic variability, and describe the ramifications that our findings have for the development of a theory of how listeners process sociolinguistic heterogeneity in real time.

**THE RELATIONAL RESPONDING TASK (RRT): A NOVEL APPROACH TO MEASURING SOCIAL MEANING OF LANGUAGE
VARIATION**

Laura Rosseel | University of Leuven

For decades, quantitative language attitude research has known little methodological innovation (Speelman et al. 2013). Yet, in the last few years, linguists have started to overcome this deadlock and have turned towards social psychology for new attitude measures. Especially the Implicit Association Test (IAT) has proven a successful new addition to the sociolinguist's toolbox (e.g. Campbell-Kibler 2012; Rosseel et al. 2015). Despite its relative success, the IAT has a number of limitations, such as the fact that it measures the association between two concepts (e.g. 'I' and 'skinny') without controlling for the relationship between those two concepts (e.g. 'I am skinny' vs. 'I want to be skinny'). The Relational Responding Task (RRT), a novel implicit attitude measure recently developed by social psychologists (De Houwer et al. 2015), makes up for exactly that limitation by presenting participants with full propositions expressing beliefs rather than loose concepts.

In this paper, we will present research that explores the RRT as a novel measure of language attitudes. In our study, we investigate the social meaning of two varieties of Dutch: Standard Belgian Dutch (SBD) and *tussentaal*, a more colloquial variety which, according to some, is spreading and may be competing with SBD in certain contexts (Grondelaers & Speelman 2013). It has been hypothesized that the rise of *tussentaal* is enabled by a new modern type of dynamic prestige which competes with the traditional prestige of SBD. We use the RRT to check whether speakers indeed associate the two varieties with different types of prestige. In addition to presenting the results of this study, our paper will reflect upon the usefulness of the RRT as a new measure for (socio)linguists to study social meaning of language variation.

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IMPLICITNESS, VARIABILITY, AND THE COMPLEXITY OF LANGUAGE REGARD

Dennis R. Preston | Oklahoma State University & Michigan State University (emeritus)

I have formulated the term “language regard” to cut across the notion of attitudes (which have an evaluative dimension), beliefs (which need not be evaluative but lie behind attitudes), and ideologies (which are beliefs, attitudes, and actions organized into coherent, cultural systems). If we caricature these three areas of interest separately, only the first (attitudinal) has been predominately experimental, the focus of this session. The second (beliefs) has been predominately discorsal, typical of many folklore (and folk-linguistic) studies, and the third (ideological) has relied more on field observation, typical of anthropological research. In other work I have suggested that the awakening of regard responses depends not only on the nature of the stimulus and the topic itself but also on the neuro-cognitive strength of the associated factors that give rise to such responses. This complexity is what allows the variability of response and suggests that modifying the nature of the stimulus will not necessarily lead to “deeper” (and presumably truer and more valuable) results but instead will be only one strategy that leads to more adequately covering the respondents’ repertoire of potential responses and, at the same time, helps link the type of response to a situation. I will suggest that these considerations allow a more integrated approach to the three areas that I collapse into the notion regard, permitting a use of interpretive commentary that is more uniform while at the same time suggesting the essential supplementary uses of discorsal and field observational techniques in the territory more often reserved for experimentalism.