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Brains, ears and eyes on language: Review of *Language Regard: Methods, Variation and Change*
Edited by Betsy E. Evans, Erica J. Benson, James N. Stanford
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. xxv + 304.
ISBN 9781107162808;

Reviewed by
Chris Montgomery, University of Sheffield, UK

Language Regard, a term first introduced by Preston (2010) to "cover the object of several approaches that highlight nonlinguist perceptions of language" (Preston 2018: 3), is the subject of this excellent collection edited by Betsy E. Evans, Erica J. Benson, and James N. Stanford. Dissatisfaction with the scope of the term *language attitudes*, due to its association with evaluation, led Preston to propose his new term, as explained in his introductory chapter which sets the scene for the remainder of the volume. Happily, this means that the contents of the book cover a broad sweep of research examining non-linguists' perceptions, from studies using more typical language attitudes methods, through those that take a perceptual dialectology angle, to research whose focus is more experimental. This highlights the richness of the field of "Prestonian Language Regard" (Evans, Benson & Stanford 2018: xix).

The volume celebrates the work of Dennis R. Preston, who is cited in all but one of the chapters. This is a fitting testimony to his pioneering involvement in many of the approaches that are used over the course of the book. Preston, of course, revitalised the field of perceptual dialectology in the 1980s (e.g. Preston 1989). He has continued to consider how best to access non-linguists' beliefs and attitudes about language variation, developing theory addressing these matters, and encouraging others to strike out on their own paths to understanding more about perception amongst ordinary 'folk' with no linguistic training. Many of the fruits of these efforts can be found in this volume, which contains 16 chapters dealing with non-specialists' perceptions of language variation in ten different languages (plus a whistle-stop tour of 20 historical dialect contact situations in 18 different countries in the chapter by Peter Trudgill).

The book is arranged in three sections. Echoing the title of the volume, these sections deal with methods, language variation, and language change. The longest section is the first, which contains six chapters all dealing in some way with the varied methods of language regard research. Cukor-Avila's chapter discusses the use of the classic perceptual dialectology 'draw-a-map' technique, in which respondents are invited to draw lines on a map indicating where they believe dialect areas to exist. Using data collected in Texas and South Korea, this chapter presents findings related to change in perception in apparent time, with an interesting discussion of the changing perceptions of *drawl* and *twang* amongst Texans. Cramer also employs the 'draw-a-map' task in her chapter, which discusses perceptions of variation in Kentucky. She illustrates, to good effect, the advantage in bringing the *emic* and *etic* together when asking non-specialists to rate dialect areas by using the composite results of draw-a-map fieldwork to present cognitively real dialect areas to respondents (rather than relying on official or state boundaries). Cornips' chapter examines perceptions of the social meaning of the north-south divide in the Netherlands, and the Limburg region of the country. Using the 'draw-a-map' technique alongside analysis of popular media texts, Cornips is able to examine the 'two Limburgs' (north and south) ideology. She finds that concepts of north and south found in the Netherlands more generally recur in respect of Limburg, and that ideas such as 'centre' and 'periphery' are relative notions that depend on the notion of scale.

Benson and Risdal's chapter moves away from perceptual dialectology methods and concentrates instead on the role of non-specialists' *sociolinguistic receptivity*. They define the term as the extent to which their research participants are comfortable with language variation, their understanding of the

rule-governed nature of language varieties, and their acknowledgement of a lack of a link between, for example, dialect use and intelligence. This is an important area of study, as attempts up until this point have either not taken such matters into account or have done so in a relatively superficial manner (e.g. Coupland & Bishop 2007). Their findings uncover a link between high receptivity scores and an acceptance of non-standardness amongst speakers of American English. Kontra's fascinating chapter on the extent of linguistic discrimination in Hungary by Hungarians towards their national language points directly towards the vital need for research that addresses discrimination based on language (in short, it provides a compelling reason for work in the field of language regard to be undertaken). Detailing the intertwining of nationalist sentiment with the role of 'correct' use of Hungarian, Kontra demonstrates the serious consequences of some language regard phenomena. The research presented in the chapter is damning, showing that the ideal of 'Standard Hungarian' is not something that most speakers can live up to (with high linguistic insecurity an inevitable result). Furthermore, the language regard data presented in the chapter shows that speakers who are more prescriptive are actually less likely to be able to use the 'correct' variants than those who are less prescriptive. Kontra concludes the chapter with some suggestions about what can be done about this situation, focussing on changing teacher education. The first section of the volume concludes with Fridland and Kendall's chapter which examines the role of regional identity in listener perception amongst American English speakers, presenting the results of experiments in which listeners were asked to place single words they had just heard along a /e/~/ɛ/ continuum. Their previous work has showed that, in the absence of information about the speaker's region, listeners from the South are likely to say that they have heard tokens of /e/ even as the they hear tokens closer to /ɛ/. The the chapter, the authors show what happens when regional information was given for the speaker. This changed the results, and listeners were more likely to hear more /e/ along the whole continuum. These findings suggest that listeners perceptions of vowels are affected by their own dialect experience and expectations about how regional varieties should sound.

The first chapter in the second section, which deals with language regard and variation, is by Gabriela Alfaraz. Focusing on the link between language regard and migration amongst Cuban immigrants in the United States, the chapter presents data from conceptual studies performed in the late 1990s and in 2010, as well as findings from a matched-guise experiment. The concept study revealed a high regard for the pre-revolution variety of Cuban Spanish, with high correctness ratings for this in both the earlier and later fieldwork. Post-revolution varieties of Cuban Spanish were rated poorly in the 1998 study, and even more poorly in the 2010 research. One imagines that this is due to the stereotypes relating to the 'correctness' of the pre-revolution variety, and this is borne out in the findings from the matched-guise study, which showed low ratings for speakers that listeners were told came from Cuba, and higher ratings when listeners were told that speakers were resident in the United States, again showing the power of what listeners *think* that they are hearing.

A theme that runs through the volume relates to the mismatch between perception and 'reality', and this is in evidence in the chapter by Bayley, Hill, Lucas, and McCaskill which deals with perceptions of Black American Sign Language. After an interesting account of the history of Black American Sign Language and its link with segregated education, the authors move on to a discussion of the central themes that emerge amongst black Deaf signers when they discuss Black American Sign Language. Aside from the more structural theme that deals with the extent to which white deaf education is superior to that provided to black Deaf signers, there are further themes which cover perceptions of linguistic matters. The feeling that white signing is better than black signing seems typical of a linguistically insecure group, but additional themes discuss motivations for differences based on "style, attitude, and culture", and observations that younger black signers style shift in a way that older black signers do not. This discussion of the themes that emerge around Black American Sign Language are interesting in themselves but are especially interesting when contrasted with linguistic 'reality'. For the two features that the authors choose to focus on they find that, contrary to

perceptions amongst black signers about white signing being 'better', black signers consistently produce more signs in citation form than their white counterparts. It seems relatively clear that stereotypes about the behaviour of particular groups lie behind a good deal of the language regard processes discussed in this book, from what speakers 'should' sound like, to how competent certain groups should be (despite evidence to the contrary). Baugh's chapter deals with stereotypes and ethnolinguistic assertions about people who 'talk White' and 'talk Black'. He attempts to uncover what, precisely, people mean when they use these terms, which despite being "amorphous and vague" are nonetheless stereotypes which people frequently refer to. Via analyses of social media and other mass media, Baugh discusses White and Black impressions of 'Black Speech' and 'White Speech', before moving on to consider ideas of 'Acting White' and 'Acting Black'. Baugh (2018: 194) concludes with an important point, to which I will return below:

> Whilst the vast majority of stereotypes are grounded in some semblance of fact, they do not capture deviations in behaviour that defy stereotypes, and therefore they are likely to miss evidence of changing behaviours or attitudes in progress

Change, both in behaviour, and in language regard, are the subject of the chapter by Stanford, Ito, and Nibbs, who investigate change in Hmong American communities. They suggest that the liminality, or 'in-betweeness', experienced by these communities results in an ideal testing ground to understand changes in language regard. The chapter shows changing linguistic practices amongst newly-married women, who are beginning to resist community expectations of them learning to speak the dialect of their husband's family. The chapter also discusses the extent to which contact with English is changing linguistic practices amongst respondents. In both of these cases, interview data is used to contextualise and explore these changes. This provides a window into the processes of change that have been observed by the authors and demonstrate that accommodation to European American speech is not viewed as simply assimilating to the majority but is instead part of a complex positioning in respect of the respondents' liminal situation. Issues of majority- and minority-languages are also considered in the chapter by Prikhidkine, who examines the attitudes of non-native speakers in French-speaking Switzerland towards different varieties of French. A verbal guise study is described, in which non-native listeners heard 40 speech stimuli from speakers in one of six French-speaking countries and rated them on scales of suitability for a job as a teacher, comprehensibility, as well as placing the speaking in a particular country. These data are compared to native speakers' language regard, with the finding that in some key respects native and non-native listeners' judgements do not match, with less toleration for language variation amongst non-native listeners.

The final section of the book is the shortest, containing four chapters. Its focus is on the relationship between language change and language regard and starts with a chapter by Chambers on lexical standardisation in Canadian English. The fortunate timing of two dialect surveys in 1990 and 2000 resulted in a window on the standardisation of the term *wedgie*[1]. In the earlier survey, a wide variety of words were provided (*wedgie*, *gotchie-pull*, *rooney*, etc.), but ten years later the term *wedgie* had nearly completed won out. The chapter attempts to account for this widespread adoption by tracking the use of the term in the public domain, which saw a sizeable increase and increasingly explanation-free use in Canadian newspapers. This meant that, by 1998, other terms were having to be explained or glossed if used in print, and *wedgie* had become the de facto standard form. Chambers hypothesises that this was to do with *wedgie*'s predominant use in Toronto, the most important cultural and commercial city in the region. The example of the widespread adoption of *wedgie*, according to Chambers, illustrates Preston's (2011) language regard framework of noticing, classifying, and imbuing.

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[1] A schoolyard prank involving pulling up a person's underpants at the back, in order to hoist the person from the ground.

Purschke's chapter speaks to these aspects of Preston's framework as it deals with language regard and cultural practice in German regional varieties whilst making a serious attempt to tie language regard processes with language change. The chapter presents Purschke's REACT framework for attitudes, which views them as a phenomenon comprising situated constructions of social meaning, and sedimented evaluations which arise from experience of the world. The REACT framework helps to account for some of the phenomena seen earlier in the book by examining concepts such as *salience* and *pertinence*, which explains why a feature might be salient to a listener as it is not perceived to be 'correct', but also pertinent as it indicates that a speaker doesn't belong to the listener's social group. Using draw-a-map tasks, questionnaires, and localisation tasks, in which respondents are asked to allocate speakers to the place they believe them to be from, the chapter examines case studies from three regions of Germany. Purschke finds that in Franconia respondents draw dialect boundaries and can place speakers either side of these boundaries (although they are less adept at placing speakers within areas). In the case of Thuringian and Upper Saxon, however, different perceptual tasks reveal differences in language regard: draw-a-map task reveal perceptual boundaries, but listening tasks result in no differences being detectable. For Hessian, perceptions seem to rely on stereotypes of older speakers. Purschke concludes his chapter by outlining a useful set of structuring processes that shape social interaction, meaning, and cultural practice, and underscore the need to understand perception when thinking about language change.

The link between perception and language change is also considered in the chapter by Peter Trudgill. Subtitled 'On the occasional irrelevance of language regard', it nails its colours to the mast at an early stage. Via the aforementioned tour of numerous historical dialect contact situations in various countries, Trudgill claims time and again that language regard processes played no role in the resultant new dialects that appeared as a result of *tabula rasa* new-dialect formation. Trudgill has of course argued this in more length elsewhere (Trudgill 2006), but this adds further case-studies to support his deterministic model of new dialect formation in *tabula rasa* settings. The chapter ends with an acceptance that language regard may play a role in other *non-tabula rasa* situations, although no evidence is discussed to support this. Kristiansen is left to argue this point in his chapter which concludes the volume and focusses on language regard amongst young Danes. The chapter explains that in Denmark, Copenhagen speech has been rapidly adopted to the extent that there is very little variation left amongst young speakers at the level of grammar and vocabulary, with some residual phonological variation based on a long-standing difference between high- and low-status Copenhagen speech. Data from production studies shows that contemporary Danish is spoken in three accents: Conservative, Modern, and Local, with young speakers spearheading the drive towards the Modern variety. In order to test the extent to which language regard plays a role in these changes, Kristiansen reports on various responses to voice samples, focussing on overt and convert responses. Overt responses in the form of rankings are shown to be irrelevant for language change, but the covert responses (recorded via evaluation tasks using ratings scales) show much more likelihood of these being a driving force in language change. The covert norm (i.e. the Modern accent) was found to be shared across various communities and appears to play a major role in the 'Copenhagenisation' of the Danish language.

Most of the chapters in the volume, with the obvious exception of Trudgill, appear to tacitly or explicitly support Preston's (2011: 31) claim that "studies of language regard are absolutely essential to our understanding of language variation and change". There is a good deal of evidence provided over the course of the book that perceptual factors do indeed provide explanatory power to our understandings of language variation, through a deeper understanding of the important role of stereotypes, for example. There seems to be less evidence, in this volume at least, of the role that language regard plays in language change. Indeed, as the quote from Baugh's chapter I cite above states, stereotypes are likely to miss change as it is happening. The shorter length of the language change section, running to only four chapters (one of which denies the importance of language regard

in many examples of change), is perhaps a tacit admission of this. In fact, only Kristiansen's chapter really probes the role of language regard in actual change. He disregards the role of overt perceptions (which might be based on, or contribute to, stereotypes) in language change but shows that covert perceptions can reveal a good deal about change from below. This is something that Preston's introductory chapter deals with in its review of the previous literature, but it might have been expected that a greater number of chapters aimed at showcasing current work in the field might have been able to show a more concrete link between language regard and language change if such studies are definitely essential to our understandings of both variation *and* change. Despite this, all of the work presented in the volume is fascinating, relevant, and important. Taken together it convincingly and undoubtably shows that a deep knowledge of language regard is of huge importance if we are to fully understand how people use language to transfer linguistic and social meaning.

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