Dialect Perception and Attitudes to Variation

Dennis R. Preston

Department of Linguistics, German, Slavic, Asian, and African Languages

Gregory C. Robinson

Department of Audiology and Speech Sciences

Michigan State University

East Lansing, MI 48824, USA

preston@msu.edu

robin465@msu.edu

I. Language and People

It is perhaps the least surprising thing imaginable to find that attitudes towards languages and their varieties seem to be tied to attitudes towards groups of people. Some groups are believed to be decent, hard-working, and intelligent (and so is their language or variety); some groups are believed to be laid-back, romantic, and devil-may-care (and so is their language or variety); some groups are believed to be lazy, insolent, and procrastinating (and so is their language or variety); some groups are believed to be hard-nosed, aloof, and unsympathetic (and so is their language or variety), and so on. For the folk mind, such correlations are obvious, reaching down even into the linguistic details of the language or variety itself. Germans are harsh; just listen to their harsh, gutteral consonants. US Southerners are laid-back and lazy; just listen to their lazy, drawled vowels. Lower-status speakers are unintelligent; they don’t even understand that two negatives make a positive, and so on. Edwards summarizes this correlation for many social psychologists when he notes that ‘… people’s reactions to language varieties
reveal much of their perception of the speakers of these varieties’ (1982:20). In the clinical fields of speech-language pathology and audiology, these perceptions can have major implications. Negative attitudes about the individuals who use certain linguistic features can pervade service delivery causing testing bias, overrepresentation of minorities and nonmainstream dialect speakers in special education, and lack of linguistic confidence in children. Although folk correlation of stereotypes to linguistic facts have little scientific basis in reality, an understanding of this correlation is particularly important to the clinical fields of speech-language pathology and audiology. Folk beliefs can pervade clinical practice via school teachers, parents, peers, spouses, physicians and other medical professionals, as well as fellow speech-language pathologists and audiologists.

Research into folk perceptions and attitudes about language variation has been scarce within the fields of speech-language pathology and audiology; however, the domains of sociolinguistics and social psychology have contributions that can benefit the clinical professions greatly. In this chapter, we will discuss some of the studies that shed light on folk perceptions and attitudes regarding linguistic variation that have significant implications for clinical professionals.

The apparent difficulty in establishing language-and-people connections was, at first, a great concern to social psychologists. The person-in-the-street might not be so willing to own up to racist, sexist, classist, regionalist, or other prejudicial attitudes. Questionnaires, interviews, and scaling techniques (which asked about such characteristics directly) were suspect data-gathering methods since they allowed respondents to disguise their true feelings, either to project a different self-image and/or to give responses they thought the interviewer might most approve of.
Several methods have been used to circumvent such suspected manipulation of attitudes by respondents (Osgood et al., 1957; Lambert et al., 1960; Giles and Powesland, 1975). These studies involved “guises” in which the respondents are told to rate something that is apparently distinct from language in scales of opposites (e.g. fast-slow, heavy-light). Although this work was not without criticism (for its artificiality and other drawbacks, e.g., Agheyisi and Fishman 1970), it set the standard for such studies for quite some time and managed to provide the first important generalization in language attitude studies — that of the ‘three factor groups.’ Analyses of large amounts of data seemed to group together paired opposites which pointed to competence, personal integrity, and social attractiveness constructs in the evaluation of speaker voices (summarized in Lambert 1967). A great deal of subsequent research in this mode confirmed that these constructs were very often at work, and, more interestingly, that standard (or “admired accent”) speakers were most often judged highest on the competence dimension while nonstandard (or regionally and/or ethically distinct speakers) were rated higher for the integrity and attractiveness dimensions. Subsequent work has often conflated the two latter categories into one, usually referred to as solidarity, e.g. Edwards 1982.

Even early on, however, it became clear that the path from stimulus to group identification to the triggering of attitudes towards the group so identified was not a trouble-free one. There is evidence to suggest that when respondents assign attitudinal judgments from linguistic stimuli they may not first assign group membership. In fact, the linguistic features themselves may trigger the attitudes. This was evident in one particular study in which attitudinal responses were statistically significant between speakers of different dialectal groups in Great Britain in spite of the fact that respondents were inaccurate in the identification of the area from which the speakers came (Milroy and McClenaghan, 1977). Irvine (1996) suggests
that this has to do with the “iconicity” of linguistic features. Thus, individuals semiotically link social attitudes toward various groups to the common linguistic features that have been noted within those groups. Milroy and McClenaghan (1977) suggest that this is below the level of consciousness for most individuals, and that attitudes, therefore, may be assigned without first assigning group membership. Extremes of such iconicity in American English might include “ain’t” and multiple negation, both of which apparently trigger negative evaluations with no need for any (specific) group association.

Although this program of social psychological research into language attitudes has been productive, we believe it has left much to be done. If Irvine is correct, there are at least two very large areas left relatively unexplored.

1) What linguistic features play the biggest role in triggering attitudes?

2) What beliefs (theories, folk explanations) do people have about language variety, structure, acquisition, and distribution which underlie and support their attitudinal responses, and how might we go about finding them out and using them to supplement and even guide future language attitude research?

II. The Linguistic Detail

Research in perception of linguistic details has been relatively scarce in the clinical literature. The core of this research is reflected in determination of “dialect rate,” or the rate at which a speaker uses features associated with a particular dialect. Researchers in speech-language pathology have used several methods for determining “dialect rate” (see Oetting and McDonald, 2001 for a summary of these methods). These methods either rely totally on listener perception for group identification or they rely solely on researcher identification of linguistic
“tokens.” These tokens are added together and divided by some linguistic unit (e.g. C-unit, sentence, word, etc.) and usually consist of syntactic tokens rather than phonological tokens. These methods are very different from similar research being conducted by sociolinguists.

Sociolinguists have sought to determine if certain linguistic features (tokens) affect the perceptions and attitudes of listeners, and their findings suggest that such tokens are not always equally weighted in the perception of listeners, as is assumed in many of the methods for coding dialect rate in the clinical literature. Several sociolinguistic studies make it clear that language attitudes can be related very specifically to individual linguistic features, but it is equally clear that that relationship is not a simple one.

In some cases, precise acoustic features appear to trigger accurate identification. In a study by Purnell, Idsardi and Baugh (1999), a single speaker said the word “hello” in three dialects: Standard American English (SAE), Chicano English (ChE), and African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Variation in the frontness or tenseness of the vowel and pitch prominence on the first syllable of “hello” was enough to elicit significantly accurate identification of the dialects by listeners. When the stimulus was expanded to include “Hello, I’m calling about the apartment you have advertised in the paper,” in actual calls to landlords, the SAE speaker guise was given an appointment to see housing at roughly the seventy percent level. Both the AAVE and ChE guises were given appointments only about thirty percent of the time.

In other cases, an acoustic feature appears to be so strongly identified with a group that it can overcome all other surrounding evidence. In a study by Graff, Labov, and Harris (1983), the [æ] onset to the /aU/ diphthong was enough of a marker of European-American identity in Philadelphia that when the sound was superimposed onto the recording of a speaker of African
American English (AAE), respondents identified him as European-American in spite of the presence of other phonological features of AAE.

On the other hand, some sociolinguistic studies seem to confirm the idea that “rate” is important, even for an individual feature. In a study by Labov (1966), inconsistent use of “r” in New York City was shown to affect the judgments of respondents regarding the occupation that the person would be suited for.

In other studies, a great deal of inaccuracy in both self-report of the use of a specific feature has been detected. For example, in a study by Trudgill (1972) in Norwich (England), men over-reported the use of the nonprestigious form of the vowel in the word “ear,” while women under-reported its use. Also, in a study by Niedzielski (1999), the identification of the vowel quality of a specific feature was influenced simply by the words “Canadian” and “Michigan” superimposed at the top of the response sheet for Detroit respondents.

The three areas of perception, evaluation, and production are so intimately connected that it is not surprising that the findings of these studies are not simple and clear-cut. It is also worthy to note that the areas of perception, evaluation, and production are so intimately connected in the clinical practice of speech-language pathology and audiology that it is clear that these studies are vitally relevant to the issues of least-biased assessment procedures and treatment of culturally and linguistically diverse clients.

To help explain the complexity of the findings of these studies, Preston (1996a) suggests that some of these differential responses to a variety of linguistic details may operate along a continuum (or several continua) of consciousness or “awareness” (just as language use involves degrees of “monitoring” or “attention to form,” e.g., Labov 1972:208). Preston (1996a) reviews a number of these possibilities for “folk linguistics,” suggesting that folk-linguistic facts (i.e.,
linguistic objects as viewed by nonlinguists) may be subdivided for “awareness” along the following clines.

(1) **Availability**: Folk respondents range in their attention to linguistic features from complete disregard for to frequent discussion of and even preoccupation with them.

(2) **Accuracy**: Folk respondents may accurately, partially accurately, or completely inaccurately represent linguistic facts (and their distribution).

(3) **Detail**: Folk respondents’ characterizations may range from *global* (reflecting, for example, only a general awareness of a variety) to *detailed* (in which respondents cite specific details).

(4) **Control**: Folk respondents may have complete, partial or no “imitative” control over linguistic features.

An important fact about these clines is their relative independence. For example, a respondent who claims only a general awareness of a “foreign accent” may be capable of a completely faithful imitation of some of its characteristics. On the other hand, a respondent who is preoccupied with a variety might have no overt information about its linguistic makeup but be capable of performing a native-like imitation of it.

Perhaps the range of so-called language attitude effects ought to be treated in a similar way. That is, attitudinal responses which are based on the respondents’ association of a sample voice with a particular social group may be different from ones based on reactions to linguistic caricatures such as *ain’t*. Responses which may be based on some sort of cline (e.g., masculine-
feminine, degree of “accent”) may be different from those based on the recognition of “categorical” features (e.g., correct-incorrect).

III. Attitudes and Folk Perceptions
Since linguists know, however, that linguistic details have no value of their own (in spite of the “life” they seem to achieve by virtue of their social associations), it will be important to return to the second of the questions suggested above: what underlying beliefs, presuppositions, stereotypes, and the like lie behind and support the existence of language attitudes? Ultimately, it seems to us, this will require linguists to give something like an account of a folk theory of language. Such a theory can illuminate the causes of some of the issues that are pervasive in the clinical professions when treating or assessing clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

In doing language attitude research, perhaps it is important to first determine which varieties of a language are thought to be distinct. Preston (1989) has complained that language attitude research did not determine where respondents thought regional voices were from and, worse, did not know if respondents even had a mental construct of a “place” where a voice could be from; that is, their mental maps of regional speech areas might not include one with which a sample voice could be identified. So Preston (1996b) asked Michigan respondents to draw lines on a map of the US to denote where linguistically distinct places were in America (See Figures 1 and 2).
Figure 1: A Michigan respondent’s hand-drawn map

Figure 2. Another Michigan hand-drawn map
Hartley and Preston (1999) analyzed each of these individual maps (and others) to study the stereotypic labels assigned to various regions; and Preston and Howe (1987) utilized a digitizing pad which feeds the outlined area of each salient region into a computer so that a more precise numeric determination can be made of the “boundary” of each hand-drawn region. Figure 3 shows a computer-determined map for the mental map of US regional speech areas derived from the hand-drawn maps of 147 southeastern Michigan respondents (from a variety of status and age groups, male and female).

Armed with this “cognitively real” map of the dialect areas of the US (as seen by Michiganders), we might now approach the study of attitudes towards these regions in a classically social psychological manner. What characteristics would be relevant to an investigation of attitudes to these speech areas? Again, the best method is to go to the respondents themselves. Characteristics for judging were elicited by showing a large number of Michigan respondents a simplified version of Figure 3 and asking them to mention any characteristics of the speech of those regions which came to mind. The most frequently mentioned items were selected and arranged into the following pairs.

- slow — fast
- smart — dumb
- nasal — not nasal
- drawl — no drawl

- formal — casual
- polite — rude
- normal — abnormal
- twang — no twang

- educated — uneducated
- snobbish — down-to-earth
- friendly — unfriendly
- bad English — good English
The judges (eighty-five young, European-American lifelong southern Michigan residents who were undergraduate students at Michigan State University) were shown a simplified version of Figure 3 and given the following instructions:

Figure 3. Computer-assisted generalizations of hand-drawn maps showing where southeastern Michigan respondents believe speech regions exist in the US

This map shows where many people from southern Michigan believe speech differences are in the U.S. We will give you a list of descriptive words which local people have told us could be used to describe the speech of these various regions. Please think about twelve of these regions, and check off how each pair of words applies to the speech there.

For example, imagine that we gave you the pair “ugly” and “beautiful”
You would use the scale as follows:

If you very strongly agree that the speech of a region is “ugly,” select “a.”

If you strongly agree that the speech of a region is “ugly,” select “b.”

If you agree that the speech of a region is “ugly,” select “c.”

If you agree that the speech of a region is “beautiful,” select “d.”

If you strongly agree that the speech of a region is “beautiful,” select “e.”

If you very strongly agree that the speech of a region is “beautiful,” select “f.”

Through statistical analysis, it was determined that the twelve scales could be conflated into two groups (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Group #1</th>
<th>Factor Group #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smart</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good English</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No drawl</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No twang</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual [Formal]</td>
<td>-.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down-to-earth [Snobbish]</td>
<td>-.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: The two factor groups from the ratings of all areas. Parenthesized factors indicate items which are within the .25 to .29 range; “-” prefixes indicate negative loadings and should be interpreted as loadings of the opposite value (given in brackets).
The first (which we will call “Standard”) contains those characteristics which we associate with education and the formal attributes of the society. Note, however, that the last three items in this group ("Formal," “Fast,” and “Snobbish”) are not necessarily positive traits. Group #2 (which we will call “Friendly”) contains very different sorts of characteristics (including two which are negative in Group #1 but positive here — “Down-to-earth” and “Casual”).

These two groups will not surprise those who have looked at any previous studies of language attitudes. As already noted, many researchers have found that the two main dimensions of evaluation for language varieties are most often those of social status (“Standard”) and group solidarity (“Friendly”).

The Michigan respondents rated Michigan highest in all of the “Standard” attributes, while they rated the South highest in almost all of the “Friendly” attributes. Since many of the hand-drawn maps of US dialect areas by Michigan respondents label the local area “standard,” “normal” (as in Figure 1), “correct,” “and “good English,” there is obviously no dissatisfaction with the local variety as a representative of “correct English.” What is the source of the preference for the southern varieties along the “friendly” dimensions? Perhaps a group has a tendency to use up what might be called the “symbolic linguistic capital” of its variety in one way or the other (but not both). Speakers of majority varieties have a tendency to spend their symbolic capital of their variety on a “Standard” dimension. Speakers of minority varieties usually spend their symbolic capital on the “Friendly” dimension.

Perhaps many northerners (here, southeastern Michiganders) have spent all their symbolic linguistic capital on the standardness of local English. As such, it has come to represent the norms of schools, media, and public interaction and has, therefore, become less suitable for
interpersonal value. These young Michiganders, therefore, assign an alternate kind of prestige to
a variety which they imagine would have more value than theirs for interpersonal and casual
interaction, precisely the sorts of dimensions associated with Group #2.

Already armed with the information that respondents tend to evaluate language variety
along these two dimensions, Preston took an even more direct approach to eliciting judgments
about such variety, again with no recourse to actual voice samples. He asked southeastern
Michigan respondents to rate the fifty states (and Washington, D.C. and New York City) for
“correctness.” The results are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Means of ratings for language “correctness” by Michigan respondents for US English
(on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 = least and 10 = most correct)

Again, it is clear that the south fares worst. On a one-to-ten scale (with one being “least
correct”), Alabama is the only state which reaches a mean score in the 3.00 - 3.99 range, and,
with the exception of New York City and New Jersey, the surrounding southern states (Texas,
Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Georgia) are the only other areas rated in the 4.00 to 4.99 range. In short, the importance of southern speech would appear to lie in its distinctiveness along one particular dimension — it is incorrect English. It is only Michigan which scores in the heady 8.00 to 8.99 means score range for language “correctness.”

What parallel can we find in such work as this to the scores for the attributes in Factor Group #2 (“Friendly”) already reported? Figure 5 shows what Michigan raters have done in a direct assessment of the notion “pleasant” (as was shown above in Figure 4 for “correctness”). As Figure 5 shows, the South fares badly again. Alabama (tied here by New York City) is the worst-rated area in the US, and the surrounding southern states are also at the bottom of this ten-point rating scale. One may note, however, that the ratings for the “pleasantness” of the English of southern states are one degree less harsh than those for “correctness.” Similarly, there is no “outstanding” (8.00-8.99) rating as there was for “correctness,” making Michigan no longer the uniquely best-thought-of area (since it is joined here by Minnesota, Illinois, Colorado, and Washington). In previous work (e.g., Preston 1996b), Preston has taken this to indicate that northern speakers have made symbolic use of their variety as a vehicle for “standardness,” “education,” and widely-accepted or “mainstream” values.
Figure 5. Means of ratings for language “pleasantness” by Michigan respondents for US English (on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 = least and 10 = most correct)

Then what about US southerners? If northerners (i.e., Michiganders) are committed to their “correctness” but only half-heartedly to their “pleasantness,” will southerners (e.g., Alabamians) show an interestingly different pattern of responses? Unfortunately, we have no factor analytic study based on the cognitive maps of southerners, but we can show you how they have responded to the “correct” and “pleasant” tasks already discussed for Michiganders.
Figure 6. Means of ratings for language “correctness” by Alabama respondents for US English
(on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 = least and 10 = most correct)
Figure 7. Means of ratings for language “pleasantness” by Alabama respondents for US English (on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 = least and 10 = most correct)

Just as one might have suspected, as Figure 6 shows, Alabamians are much less invested in language “correctness” (and well they should not be, since they are constantly reminded in popular culture and even personal encounters that their language is lacking in this dimension). Imagine the horror of a Michigander in seeing Figure 6. Their own “correct” English speaking state scores no better than the fair-to-middling “5” which Alabamians assign to many areas, including their own (showing no break in correctness on a trip from Alabama all the way north to Michigan!).

Upon inspection, Figure 7 resembles Figure 4, indicating that Alabamians are invested in something, just as Michiganders are, but it is clearly “pleasantness,” not “correctness.” This simple task shows very straightforwardly the sort of differential investment in local varieties discussed above.
In one sense, of course, such studies are “language attitude” studies; in another sense, however, they form important background understandings for the study of attitudes among different social and regional groups. How can we study more detailed aspects of language attitudes unless we know that a group is “correctness” investing or “solidarity” investing? And, of course, as we hope to have shown in this entire section, how can we measure language attitudes unless we know something of the cognitive arrangements our respondents have made of the terrain we want to explore. Although part of the game belongs to linguists (the linguistic detail), the real territory (as perhaps in any linguistic work) lies within the cognitive maps (whether of geographic or social facts) of those we study.

IV. Conclusions

What of the larger promise? How can we go about fashioning a more general folk theory of language, one which surely underlies all attitudinal responses? Also, what implications do this folk theory of language have for speech-language pathologists and audiologists? We believe much of the attitudinal data outlined above, including the mental maps of and attitudinal responses to regional varieties of US English, is dominated by the notions of “correctness” (the more powerful) and “pleasantness.” We also believe a great deal of folk belief and language ideology stems from these facts. Speakers of “correct” dialects do not believe they speak dialects, and educational and even legal repercussions arise from personal and institutional devaluing of “incorrect” varieties. On the other hand, speakers of stigmatized varieties (like stigmatized groups in general) derive solidarity from their distinct cultural behaviors, in this case, linguistic ones.
In a more direct attempt to get at this underlying fact, some attitude researchers have collected and analyzed overt folk comment about language (e.g., Labov 1966, Niedzielski and Preston, 1999). These include complex (and rewarding) conversations about social and regional varieties of US English which may be analyzed to show not only relatively static folk belief and attitudes but also how these beliefs and attitudes are used in argument and persuasion. Such investigations are particularly important in showing what deep-seated presuppositions about language are held (e.g., Preston, 1994). Many of these conversations (and their parallels and contrasts to professional opinion) are given in Niedzielski and Preston (1999), but we will provide only one here. We think, however, it is an especially representative one which supports the claim that correctness dominates in US folk perceptions of language and which also allows a slightly deeper look at what sort of theory might allow that domination. H (the fieldworker) has asked D and G (his respondents) if there is any difference in meaning between the words “gift” and “present.”

D: Oftentimes a gift is something like you you go to a Tupperware party and they’re going to give you a gift, it’s- I think it’s more impersonal,- than a=

H: Uh huh.

D: =present.

G: No, there’s no difference.

D: No? There’s real- yeah there’s really no difference.

G: There is no difference.

D: That’s true. Maybe the way we use it is though.

U: Maybe we could look it up and see what “gift” means.

D: I mean technically there’s no difference. ((They then look up gift and present in the dictionary.)) (Niedzielski and Preston, 1999)
Although there are several interesting folk linguistic (and of course discoursal) facts about this short excerpt, the shock for linguists comes in D’s remark that there is no difference in the meaning except in “the way we us it.” Of course, what other difference could there be? We believe this remark (and many others noted in the course of surveying “folk linguistic conversations”) points to a folk theory of language in which language itself is somehow external to human cognitive embedding — somewhere “out there.” Figure 8 illustrates the essential difference between folk and professional theories.

Figure 8. Folk (above) and “Linguistic” theories of language
In the linguistic theory, one moves up (and away from) the concrete reality of language as a cognitively embedded fact in the capacities of individual speakers to the social constructions of language similarity. These higher-level constructs are socially real but considerably more abstract than the “real” language, embedded in individual speakers.

In the folk theory, just the opposite is true. A Platonic, extra-cognitive reality is the “real” language — such a thing as English or German or Chinese, a level which has only an abstract or social reality in the linguists’ world. Speakers who are directly connected to this ideal speak a fully correct form (the only rule-governed variety), although, one may deviate from it comfortably not to sound to “prissy.” Go too far, however, and error, dialect, or, quite simply, bad language arises. Since this connection to the rule-governed, exterior “real” language seems a natural (and even easy) one, many folk find it difficult to understand why nonstandard speakers, for example, persist in their errors (and often find them simply lazy or recalcitrant).

If this is the theory of language for most nonlinguists, the implications for clinical professionals are numerous. If professionals involved in positions of power over speakers of stigmatized dialects operate with such a theory of language, major repercussions can occur (e.g. over/under-diagnosis of speech-language disorders, inadequate service delivery, etc.). Since “correctness” is deemed the governing factor in attitudinal judgments of regional dialects, the pervasive attitude is that individuals who speak nonmainstream dialects are speaking “incorrectly.” What happens when a child moves mid-year from an area that uses a stigmatized dialect to an area with high linguistic security? Although no research that we know of has been conducted that tests this scenario directly, the literature regarding the folk theory of language suggests that the child’s speech has a high likelihood of being labeled “incorrect” by anyone who
operates under the folk theory (teachers, peers, medical professionals, and even fellow speech-language pathologists and audiologists). The more we understand about folk theories of language, the more we can hope to understand the underlying sources of much behavior previously studied as “language attitude” and to solve these ever-present problems within the clinical professions.
Notes:

1 Although the paired opposites were presented to the respondents with “negative” and “positive” sides randomly distributed, the “positive” poles were all moved to the high (i.e., “6”) end of the scale for all the quantitative analyses reported below. I (Preston) realized after I did this that there might be cultural misunderstandings of what I consider to be the “positive” end. They are “Fast,” “Polite,” “Down-to-earth,” “Educated,” “Normal,” “Smart,” “Casual,” “Good English,” Not nasal,” “Friendly,” “Speaks without a drawl,” and “Speaks without a twang.” I apologize to readers who disagree with my assignments. That should not detract from the contents of the paper.

2 Since H is not a native speaker, such a question seemed “reasonable.”

References:


Further Readings:


Bios:

Dennis R. Preston is University Distinguished Professor of Linguistics at Michigan State University. He is a past president of the American Dialect Society and was Director of the 2003 Linguistic Society of America Institute. His most recent work focuses on what real people (i.e., nonlinguists) believe about language and how they respond to it (“folk linguistics” and “language attitudes,” respectively) and how minority, second language, and rural groups accommodate to new dialects, particularly the Northern Cities Chain Shift.

Gregory Robinson is a speech-language pathologist and a doctoral student at Michigan State University focusing on multicultural issues in communication sciences and disorders with a minor in sociolinguistics. He has practiced as a speech-language pathologist in skilled nursing facilities, public schools, and university clinical education programs. He is currently investigating the attitudes and perceptions that practicing speech-language pathologists wittingly or unwittingly carry with them when evaluating children with stigmatized dialects.