Language Attitudes

Evaluational Reactions to Spoken Language

Linda Melander
English C-essay
Högskolan Dalarna
April, 2003
Supervisor: U. Cunningham
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 2
   1.1 Language and attitude 2
   1.2 Aim and hypotheses 3
   1.3 Previous research on language studies 4
   1.4 Outline of the study 6

2. METHOD 7
   2.1 ‘Matched guise’ technique 7
   2.2 Speakers 8
   2.3 Judges 9
   2.4 Procedure 10

3. RESULTS 13
   3.1 Hypothesis 1a 15
   3.2 Hypothesis 1b 16
   3.3 Hypothesis 2 18
   3.4 Hypothesis 3 19
   3.4.1 Listeners’ preferences 19
   3.4.2 Results 21

4. CONCLUSION 21
   4.1 Summary 21
   4.2 Problems and criticism 22
   4.3 Attitudes 23

LIST OF REFERENCES 26

APPENDICES 27
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Language and Attitude

Language is the primary means of human communication. It is a powerful social force that does more than convey intended referential information. It also indicates both personal and social characteristics of the speaker. Depending on the particular listener, a speaker’s accent, speech patterns, vocabulary, intonation etc. can serve as markers for evaluating that speaker’s appearance, personality, social status and character, among other things. Obiols defines attitude as a “mental disposition towards something”, it acts as a bridge between opinion and behaviour (Obiols 2002). Ryan define language attitudes as “any affective, cognitive or behavioural index of evaluative reactions toward different language varieties or speakers” (Ryan et al. 1982:7)

The study of language attitudes is important for sociolinguistics because it can, as Marina S. Obiols writes: ‘predict a given linguistic behaviour: the choice of a particular language in multilingual communities, language loyalty, language prestige...” (Obiols 2002). Suzanne Romaine says that the basis of attitude measurement is that there are underlying dimensions along which individual attitudes can be ranged. However, she also points out that “the translation of attitude from the subjective domain into something objectively measurable is a common problem in any research that involves social categorization and/or perceptual judgements” (Romaine 1980:213). Many experiments have tried to analyse the complex relationship between people’s attitudes and their behaviour (see Wicker 1969 for an overview), but the conclusions are far from unanimous.
1.2 Aim and Hypotheses

The aim of this study is to compare attitudes towards speakers of English and Swedish. I want to see if speakers are judged differently depending on the language they use. I also want to see which language is judged more positively. For this purpose I have used the ‘matched guise’ technique, which I will explain in chapter 2.1.

I have used three speakers: Speaker 1 (Two varieties of British English and accented Swedish), Speaker 2 (Australian English and accented Swedish) and Speaker 3 (American English and Swedish). My hypotheses are

1. a) Speaker 1 and Speaker 2 will be judged more positively on all dimensions (personal characteristics, competence and social attractiveness see Lambert 1967) when speaking English than when speaking accented Swedish.

b) Speaker 1 will be judged more positively when speaking her ordinary British accent (a London accent) than when speaking Cockney. A number of studies made in Britain support this hypothesis. See for example Giles and Sassoon (1983) where RP-speakers are seen as more competent than speakers of Cockney.

2. A dichotomy between standard and non-standard has been found. Non-standard accents are usually rated higher on solidarity dimensions such as friendliness, reliability and sociability while standard accents are seen as more competent and possessing more status (Ladegaard 1998, Edwards 1999). Apart from British and Cockney (see hypothesis 1b) I have not used a standard and a non-standard variety in my study. However, English is from an international point of view a high status language compared to Swedish and I therefore think that Speaker 3 will, when
speaking American English, be judged like a standard variety in previous studies. Thus, my hypothesis is that she, since she speaks perfect Swedish compared to speaker 1 and 2, be judged differently than them and thus be rated higher on competence when speaking English and higher on personal characteristics and social attractiveness when speaking Swedish.

3. The way listeners judge a group reflects their attitudes towards the speakers of that group. Cargile and Giles (1997) have studied how their listeners’ American identity affects their evaluation of non-standard accented speakers. They found that the measured salience of listener’s American identity increased with the exposure to non-standard accented voices, compared with a standard American accented voice. I therefore hypothesise that the more the listeners have been exposed to English and English speaking culture and the more positive their attitude to English and English speakers is the higher they have rated the speakers when speaking English.

1.3 Previous Research on Language Studies

Modern language attitudes research began in the 1930s with one of the pioneers in this area of investigation being Thomas Hatherley Pear (Pear 1931). He questioned whether the voice was capable of yielding sufficient cues for reliable and valid personality assessment. He concluded that the judgements of personality from the voice are based not on any accurate reflection of personality found in the voice, but that the judges tended to stereotype the personality of the speaker according to the sound of his voice (Pear 1931:30). These findings
were further supported by the results of studies conducted by Fay and Middleton (e.g. 1939, 1940).

The two most important theories on language study are the behaviourist theory and the mentalist theory. According to the behaviourist theory attitudes are behaviours or responses to a given situation. The mentalist theory, on the other hand, means that language cannot be observed directly since it is mental. However, it can be inferred using the right stimuli. For behaviourists attitudes only have one component – the affective. This approach has a serious scientific disadvantage since the affective component alone cannot predict verbal conduct. This is not the case with the mentalist approach since attitudes, for the mentalists, have three components: the affective, the conative and the cognitive. This approach makes it possible to predict linguistic behaviour and has therefore become first choice for developing theoretical models on language studies (Obiols 2002)

One of the methodological debates regarding the study of language attitudes concerns the use of direct and indirect methodology. Direct methodology uses for example questionnaires. Direct methodology therefore rises several critical issues such as ambiguity in the formulation of direct and indirect questions and limitations of writing for answering the questions. What, according to Obiols (2002), makes indirect methodology more preferable is that

the use of questionnaires, particularly those that offer written responses to ‘open’ questions, involves choosing or deciding rationally. To avoid this disortion, more indirect methods have been sought, bearing in mind the affective component of language attitudes which are very often irrational and involve many prejudices (Obiols 2002)
The most representative for indirect types of methodology is the matched guise technique. The first “matched guise” study that examined language attitudes was performed by Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner and Fillenbaum (1960). They examined reactions of English and French speakers in Montreal to English and French guises. They found that both English and French speaking listeners rated English speakers as being higher status. This ‘matched guise’ study has served as a model on which the vast majority of subsequent language attitude studies are based.

Since then a vast amount of language studies have been performed. A more recent example is Romaine (1980) who has looked at how speakers were judged depending on context, each reading a text and speaking casually. She also describes some of the difficulties involved in conducting language evaluation tests in Edinburgh. Another is Cargile and Giles (1997) looks at the effects of a Japanese speaker’s foreign accent, the strength of the foreign accent, the fluency of his speech and the aggressiveness of his message on Anglo-American listeners’ mood state and American identity. Ray and Zahn (1999) who looked at attitudes in New Zealand toward a New Zealand English speaker and a Standard American English speaker, where the speakers altered levels of pitch variation and rate.

1.4 Outline of the Study

In this introductory chapter I have presented the topic of the study, stated its primary aims and hypotheses and looked at previous research on language attitudes. Chapter 2 presents the method used, “matched guise technique” as well as the speakers and the listeners chosen to participate in this study. It also includes a detailed description of the procedure of the
experiment. The results of the experiment are presented in chapter 3. And finally, chapter 4 includes a short summary and a discussion about attitudes towards English in Sweden.

2 METHOD

2.1 ‘Matched Guise’ Technique

Lambert, Hodgson, Garner and Fillenbaum (1960) introduced the ‘matched guise’ technique as a means of assessing language attitude. The judges are asked to evaluate the personal qualities of speakers whose voices are recorded on a tape. The same speaker uses different linguistic varieties, however, this is not known to the judges.

The most relevant components of the ‘matched guise’ technique are the following, taken from Obiols (2002):

1. The variables of ‘sex’, ‘age’ and ‘L1’ of the judges evaluating the recorded voices are taken into consideration.
2. The variables of ‘sex’, ‘age’ and ‘linguistic variety’ of the individuals recorded are taken into consideration.
3. The interviewees have no information about the voices.
4. There is total control over the variable ‘voice’, with the removal of all features of volume, timbre, tone etc.
5. The length of the oral stimulus material recording is between 2 and 3 minutes.
6. The judges are asked to evaluate the personal qualities of the recorded individuals on the basis of their voices, as if they were evaluating the voice of somebody on the radio.

7. A questionnaire allows the personality traits of the voices evaluated to be attributed to the voices (intelligence, leadership, physical attractiveness, politeness etc.)

The results obtained using this technique confirm intuitions about stereotyped prejudices towards a given linguistic variety and towards the social group that uses that variety (Obiols 2002).

2.2 Speakers

The selection of speakers was made on the basis of their bilingual ability. Three female speakers were selected for the experiment. They spoke faultless English with either an American (Speaker 3en), Australian (Speaker 2en), or British (Speaker 1en(lo)) accent. Their Swedish proficiency varied. While Speaker 3 spoke perfect Swedish Speaker 2 and Speaker 1 had an accented but fluent Swedish. As Lambert’s first match-guise study (1960), this study is not designed to deal with variations in accent between speakers, attention will therefore mainly be given to over-all comparisons of Swedish and English languages. However, accent differences will be discussed briefly in the concluding chapter.

The speakers were asked to read a 2 ½ minute long passage of *Pippi Longstocking* (Lindgren 1972 and 1997) in Swedish and in English. The speakers were asked to read the passage as if they were reading it for their children. They were recorded individually and a tape recorder
was used for all recordings. As an additional “experiment within an experiment”, Speaker 1, was presented to the judges in three guises: one in which she read the passage in Swedish and two other guises in English speaking two different British accents (cockney and another London accent). The other two speakers were heard twice, once in Swedish and once in English. Seven samples were thus obtained. They were then edited into random order and adjusted so that no two samples from the same speaker would be adjacent. All disturbing noise was removed from the recordings and the samples were recorded on a compact disc.

A “filler” voice in English was placed in first position, used when explaining the procedure, followed by a control sample in Swedish, used as a “filler” voice and for practice for the listeners. It was then followed by the seven experimental samples. Only evaluational reactions to the matched voices were examined.

2.3 Judges

The voluntary participants who acted as judges were fairly homogenous in terms of social background. They all, at the time of the study, lived in Falun, Sweden and were members of the same church. There is no intention to make any claims about the representativeness of the sample for any larger group. The group of listeners comprised 28 people. Both sexes were equally represented. The speakers’ ages varied from 25 to 35. All listeners were born in Sweden and used Swedish as their primary language both at work and in social contexts. The listeners came in groups of three to eleven to my apartment to listen to the recordings.
2.4. Procedure

A passage of about 2 ½ minute taken from the book *Pippi Longstocking* (Lindgren 1972 and 1997) was recorded by three female speakers in Swedish and English. Two additional voices were added, the first one reading the passage in English and the second one reading it in Swedish. There were then nine voices, seven which “matched” each speaker using the two languages and one additional voice used for practice and an additional voice used as a “filler” voice. The “filler” voice was used so that the three guises would not be too obvious. The recordings were presented to the listeners with the practice voice first then the “filler” voice and the other samples following in random order with no two samples from the same speaker following each other.

The study consisted of two parts: (1) a language attitude experiment (using the principles of the ‘matched guise’ technique, Lambert 1960), followed by (2) a partly closed, partly open-ended questionnaire in which the listeners were asked to answer questions about their language proficiency, how accustomed they were to English and English speakers and their attitudes to English. The questionnaires were tested on a test group before using them in the experiment group.

The listeners who acted as judges were told they were taking part in an experiment to study what could be discovered about a person on the basis of a sample of speech. As in Lambert’s study (1960) the speakers were reminded of the common phenomenon of having a voice on the radio summon up a picture in the listener’s mind of the person speaking. The listeners were told that the two languages were used to give a greater scope to the experiment and
needed because the study was made in the realms of a C-level English essay. They were not
told that some samples of the same speaker would appear twice.

The passage from _Pippi Longstocking_ (Lindgren 1972 and 1997) was chosen since it was
familiar to the listeners and they could therefore concentrate on the voices instead of the text.
The passage in itself was also neutral and did not reveal anything about the speaker’s
background. Also, the same passage could be found in both languages.

Prior to the experiment, judges were informed that they were going to hear eight speakers of
Swedish and English and they were requested to characterise them in response to the
questionnaire, following their immediate intuition.

Before listening to the voices the listeners were asked to fill in a questionnaire asking for their
sex, age group (25-29 or 30-35), in what province they spent most of their time before the age
of 20 and their level of education. Lambert (1960) did not ask for the listeners level of
education but for their age, place of birth and religious affiliation. Since the listeners in my
study all were members of the same church I assumed that they were all Christians.

Each listener was given 8 copies of a form on which to make the evaluation of the speakers.
The ratings were made on a five-point scale whose endpoints are described by adjectives that
are polar opposites indicating the degree to which the judges associated the speaker with a
particular category. There were 12 such pairs of opposites listed on each form. The traits used
were reliable (pålitlig) – unreliable (opålitlig), ambitious (ambitiös) – lazy (lat), good sense of
humour (humoristisk) – serious (allvarlig), polite (artig) – impolite (oartig), extrovert
(utåtriktad) – introvert (inåtvänd), dominant (dominant) – subordinate (underordnad),
intelligent (intelligent) – unintelligent (ointelligent), a leader (en ledartyp) – not a leader (inte en ledartyp), tall (lång) – short (kort), attractive (attraktiv) – charmless (charmlös), self-confident (självsäker) – unsure (osäker) and orderly (ordningsam) – sloppy (slarvig). The judges were also asked for the speakers’ age (18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56+ (the categories 56-65 and 65+ have been made into one in order to be able to include age in the statistics), occupational area (unskilled labourer, skilled labourer, clerical worker manager, professional) and likeability. The traits were also put into 3 different groups of dimension, Competence (Intelligence, Occupation, Ambitiousness, Orderliness, Leadership) and Personal characteristics (Reliability, Extroversion, Dominance, Self-confidence). Each speaker was played once and listeners rated that voice on scales while it was playing. Including age, occupational area and likeability there were altogether 15 traits.

At the back of the 8 response sheets was another questionnaire. This questionnaire looked at the listeners degree of bilingualism by asking how much time they spend watching films and TV-programmes in English per week, how much time they have spent in English speaking countries and their perceived language proficiency. The language proficiency was rated from “speak and understand without any problems” (talar och förstår utan problem), “understand but do not want to speak” (förstår men vill inte tala) to “neither understand nor speak very well” (varken förstår eller talar särskilt bra).

The speakers were also asked for their attitudes to speaking other languages than Swedish in public as well as their thoughts whether English speakers should have to learn Swedish if they live in Sweden or not. The speakers also indicated their preference for English or Swedish as baby sitters and tenants. In the draft, I had included their preference for marital partners as
well, but the test group thought this question was too difficult since language only played a minor role in that context and other factors were much more important.

For each question the listeners were given scores where a favourable choice towards English gave a higher score. I valued the ability to speak the language much higher than other preferences on the assumption that speaking experience was most important for the purpose of the study. A maximum score would be 170.

3. RESULTS

The results confirms the hypothesis that the reactions to the different traits of the speakers would change depending on the guise of the speaker. These changes are, however, not always in the same direction or of the same magnitude.

The difference (D) between the evaluations of the Swedish and English guises of each listener was noted for each speaker on each of the 15 traits, with account taken of the direction of the difference. These D values were then summed of the 3 speakers and over listeners and the departure of the D scores from zero was examined.
Table 1
$t$ Values for Significance of Differences in Evaluations of Swedish and English Guises of Speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Speaker 1</th>
<th>Speaker 2</th>
<th>Speaker 3</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>2.53*</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>2.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitiousness</td>
<td>2.25*</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>-1.41</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractiveness</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>3.31**</td>
<td>2.08*</td>
<td>-1.26</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>3.34**</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>2.78**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>2.06*</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>3.33**</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>-2.40*</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likeability</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>-1.04</td>
<td>-0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>3.54**</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>2.76**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politeness</td>
<td>4.90**</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>-0.92</td>
<td>2.54*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>-1.56</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Humour</td>
<td>-2.50*</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>-3.58**</td>
<td>-2.90**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>2.29*</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>-2.02*</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extroversion</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>-4.88**</td>
<td>-1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orderliness</td>
<td>3.15**</td>
<td>-1.59</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. - Positive entries indicate that English guises are evaluated more favourably than Swedish, and minus entries indicate a more favourable evaluation for Swedish guises.
* Significant at 0.05 level, on two-tailed tests
** Significant at 0.01 level, on two-tailed tests

As can be seen in Table 1 above, the following 4 traits were evaluated significantly more favourably for the English than for the Swedish guises: Age ($t=2.24$ This difference is significant on the 0.05 level), Politeness ($t=2.54$ significant on the 0.05 level), Height ($t=2.78$ significant on the 0.01 level), Occupation ($t=2.76$ significant on the 0.01 level). 62% of the listeners ascribed the English guises higher status on occupation than the Swedish guises.

There were no significant differences in evaluations with regard to Ambitiousness, Attractiveness, Dominance, Intelligence, Leadership, Likeability, Reliability, Self-confidence, Extroversion and Orderliness. The Swedish guises were evaluated significantly more favourably on Sense of Humour ($t= -2.90$). This difference is significant on the 0.01 level.
3.1 Hypothesis 1a

Speakers 1 and 2 will be judged more positively on all dimensions (personal characteristics, competence and social attractiveness) when speaking English than when speaking accented Swedish.

There was no significant difference in the evaluation of Speaker 2 when it comes to the different dimensions. When looking at the separate traits Speaker 2 was evaluated more favourably on Dominance ($t=2.08$) when speaking English than when speaking accented Swedish. This difference is significant on the 0.05 level. On the whole she is evaluated more favourably when speaking English than when speaking Swedish (except for Likeability and Orderliness). However, these differences are not significant. The hypothesis that Speaker 2 would be judged more positively on all dimensions when speaking English was therefore not borne out.

Speaker 1 on the other hand was evaluated significantly more favourably on her English guise. The differences in Dominance ($t=3.31$), Height ($t=3.34$), Leadership ($t=3.33$), Occupation ($t=3.54$), Politeness ($t=4.90$) and Orderliness ($t=3.15$) are all significant on the 0.01 level and Age ($t=2.53$), Ambitiousness ($t=2.25$), Intelligence ($t=2.06$) and Self-confidence ($t=2.29$) are significant on the 0.05 level. Only on one trait was she evaluated less favourably in English, namely Sense of Humour ($t=2.50$). A clue to the somewhat skewed distribution on Sense of Humour can, I think, be found in a closer examination of Speaker 1’s way of speaking. She pronounced some particular words in a non-standard Swedish way and her “Swedish melody” was, in general, a bit more “singing” than standard Swedish which therefore sounded a bit humorous.
When looking at the different groups of dimension, Competence (Intelligence, Occupation, Ambitiousness, Orderliness, Leadership) and Personal characteristics (Reliability, Extroversion, Dominance, Self-confidence) did not show any significant differences. However, there was a difference, significant on the 0.01 level, on Social attractiveness (Height, Sense of Humour, Politeness, Age, Attractiveness, Likeability). The hypothesis that Speaker 1 would be judged more positively on all dimensions when speaking English was therefore borne out in parts. When looking at the different dimensions she was not evaluated significantly more favourably on all dimensions when speaking English. However, when taking in account the different traits she was judged more positively on all traits when speaking English, except for Sense of Humour.

3.2 Hypothesis 1b

*Speaker 1 will be judged more positively when speaking her ordinary British accent (a London accent close to RP) than when speaking Cockney.*

The differences in evaluation of the traits can be seen in Figure 1 below where the dark colour represents the cockney guise and the brighter the London accent guise:
Figure 1 Differences in evaluation of traits of Speaker 1en (lo) London and Speaker 1en (co) Cockney

The lower the rating scores the more favourably judged. See section 2.4

In order to see which differences are significant I have done a t-test. The result is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2
\(t\) Values for Significance of Differences in Evaluations of British and Cockney Guise of Speaker 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Speaker 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>2.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitiousness</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractiveness</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant</td>
<td>-1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likeability</td>
<td>-0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>2.55*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politeness</td>
<td>4.48**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>2.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Humour</td>
<td>-1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>-1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extroversion</td>
<td>-0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orderliness</td>
<td>2.52*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. - Positive entries indicate that the London accent guise is evaluated more favourably than Cockney, and minus entries indicate a more favourable evaluation for the Cockney guise.

* Significant at 0.05 level, on two-tailed tests
** Significant at 0.01 level, on two-tailed tests
Speaker 1 was thought of her as being younger when speaking British English than when speaking Cockney \((t=2.24, \text{significant at } 0.05 \text{ level})\). The listeners also believed that her London guise had a higher status occupation than her Cockney guise \((t=2.55 \text{ significant at } 0.05)\). Speaker 1’s London guise was also evaluated as being more reliable \((t=2.13 \text{ significant at } 0.05)\). There was a striking difference in Politeness between the two guises. Speaker 1 was evaluated as more polite when speaking a London accent than when speaking Cockney \((t=4.48)\). (This difference is significant at 0.01)

When looking at the different groups of dimension, there was a significant difference in Social attractiveness. This difference was significant on the 0.01 level. Speaker 1 was judged more positively when speaking her London accent than when speaking Cockney \((t=2.59)\).

### 3.3 Hypothesis 2

*It was hypothesised that speaker 3 will be rated higher on competence when speaking English and higher on personal characteristics and social attractiveness when speaking Swedish.*

This hypothesis was not borne out. On the contrary, speaker 3 was judged more positively on all dimensions when speaking Swedish. However, this difference was not significant. There were only a few traits that showed a significant difference. Speaker 3 was judged more favourably on Leadership qualities \((t=-2.40)\) and was regarded as more Self-confident \((t=-2.02)\) when speaking Swedish than when speaking English. This difference is significant on the 0.05 level. A difference significant on 0.01 level can be seen on Sense of Humour \((t=-3.58)\) and a striking difference on Extroversion \((t=-4.88)\), also significant on 0.01 level.
3.4 Hypothesis 3

The more the listeners have been exposed to English and English speaking culture and the more positive their attitude to English is the higher they have rated the speakers when speaking English.

3.4.1 Listeners’ Preferences

The majority of the listeners spend several hours watching television each week. However, I do think that some of them underestimated their television viewing since some only wrote down one or two hours a week. 19% of the listeners have not spent any time at all in an English speaking country, 15% have spent up to a week, 38% up to a month and 4% a year or more. When it comes to knowing native English speakers, 15% stated that they do not know any English speakers, 42% know up to 5 speakers, 19% know up to 10 speakers and 23% know more than 10 speakers.

Only one listener stated that she neither speaks nor understands English very well. 19% stated that they understand but rather not speak and the majority 77% state that they both speak and understand English without any problems.

When meeting a native English speaker who speaks just a little Swedish, 65% of the listeners prefer to speak with that person in Swedish. The majority of the listeners also said that they were willing to switch to English if speaking Swedish was too difficult for the other person. The reasons given for speaking Swedish were that they feel more comfortable speaking Swedish than English since it is their mother tongue. Some also felt that they want to give the other person the opportunity to show how much Swedish he or she knows and it gives the
other person an opportunity to practise. 35% of the listeners prefer to speak English with the other person. Some found it easier since they could both express their feelings rather well then. Others wanted to practise and learn English better.

85% of the listeners stated that they think it is acceptable to speak another language than Swedish in public (in for example television and open-air meetings). If a lecturer (native English speaker) speaks Swedish with a marked English accent 58% would prefer that the speaker uses English instead of Swedish while 42% prefer the other way around.

Concerning English speakers in Sweden and their knowledge of Swedish only one person stated that she did not think that an English speaker should have to learn Swedish when living in Sweden. The reason given was that the English speaker will manage in Sweden anyway. Reasons given for learning Swedish were that it is the official language in Sweden and the language is a part of the culture, it would make their lives in Sweden easier and everybody in Sweden do not speak English, they need to learn Swedish in order to live on the same conditions as Swedes e.g. jobs and when you move to a country you should learn the language. Furthermore 62% of the listeners stated that they were of the opinion that a child to an English speaking couple living in Sweden should have Swedish as its mother tongue while 38% thought that the child’s mother tongue should be English.

When asking for the listeners’ preferences for baby sitters and tenants, 65% stated that they would not have any problems with an English speaking baby sitter for their kids. However, 35% preferred a Swedish speaker due to language problems between the child and the baby sitter. If they had to choose one tenant, either an English speaker or a Swede, 58% would choose the English speaker since they would have to practise their English then. 42%
answered that they rather choose the Swede, however the majority added that it did not really matter which language the tenant spoke.

3.4.2 Results

For some listeners their number of hours watching television increased their preference scores considerably. I also think that some listeners underestimated their television viewing. I therefore disregarded these numbers when looking at a possible relationship between the listeners preference score and their rating of the English guises. To check a possible relationship, scatterplots were made of the comparative favourableness of reactions to the guises and attitudes toward English speakers for each trait examined separately. Neither did I find any significant correlation between the listeners’ attitudes towards English and English culture and their rating of the English guises.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Summary

Samples of Swedish speaking listeners were asked to evaluate personality characteristics of 3 speakers using Swedish and English guises. They were not made aware that actually bilinguals were used as speakers so that the evaluational reaction to the two language guises could be matched for each speaker.
The results indicate that the listeners differ in their evaluation of the speakers. There is a tendency to evaluate the English guises more favourably than the Swedish guises. However, only a few traits show any significant difference. The evaluations made by the listeners are independent of their attitudes toward English speakers and their exposure to English language and culture.

4.2 Problems and Criticism

All listeners seemed to enjoy the test and discussions about prejudice arose afterwards. There are however a number of problems or uncontrolled variables in the design of the experiment. Even though careful consideration was taken when recording the speakers it was not done in a fully controlled environment. The speakers were free to read the passage as they wanted to and this might have revealed too much of their personality and therefore affected the listeners evaluations.

The choice of traits is another factor that affects the results of a study. If I had chosen other traits I might have got a different result. Like Romaine (1980), I found that the judges differed in their utilisation of the entire range of the scale and there was a tendency to avoid the ends. Lambert himself (1972) asks whether the attitude measurements that emerge are really what the listeners believe or what they think they should express in public about their opinions. Another criticism that Obiols (2002) mentions in her paper is that the matched guise technique can reveal stereotypes that do not actually exist since the listeners judge according to data in the questionnaire and not use their own opinions. However, Lippman argues that stereotyping is necessary for our orientation in the world (see Ladegaard 1998).
4.3 Attitudes

The key to the interpretation of the results lies in two areas of evaluation: perceived identity of the speaker and the way in which the speech style of the speaker is evaluated in two different guises. The three speakers represented different linguistic communities: speaker 1 from Great Britain, speaker 2 from Australia and speaker 3 from the United States. As Lambert (1960) points out further study of accent differences of speakers from different linguistic communities may well extend the usefulness of the technique he developed.

While this was not the main focus of my study, I noticed a difference in the judgement of the speakers’ Swedish guises. While speaker 3, who spoke perfect Swedish, was judged more favourably than Speaker 1, who had an accent when speaking Swedish, and considerably more favourably than speaker 2, who had a marked accent. There was a significant difference in the listeners’ judgement of speaker 2 and 3’s Swedish guises on social attractiveness ($t = 3.09$) and competence ($t = 2.92$). Both differences are significant at 0.01 level. If this difference is due to the speakers’ accent or personality is difficult to decide. However, speaker 2’s English guise (Australian accent) was judged more favourably on all dimensions than speaker 3’s English guise (American accent). This could indicate that having a marked accent in Swedish, even though it is an English accent, means that the speaker is evaluated less favourably by people around him or her. Or, it could also indicate that an Australian accent is evaluated more favourably than an American accent.

Cheyne (1970) found that the Scottish listeners in an evaluative experiment rated their own group as more generous, friendly, good-hearted, humorous and likeable than English speakers, thus displaying “accent” loyalty. Also in my experiment the Swedes rated the
Swedish guises as more likeable and humorous than the English guises. However, the
nationalistic feeling that Romaine (1980) talks about in Scotland does not exist in Sweden. In
her experiment, attitudes towards Scottish nationalism were reflected in the way in which
different speakers were evaluated. Also in Lambert’s (1960) experiment, language (French
and English) was as a whole symbolic of community and national identity. As Romaine
(1980:225) points out Lambert’s experiment tells us more about the social context in which
French exists in Canada today than it does about language.

My third hypothesis that the listeners’ attitudes and exposure to English and English speaking
culture would be reflected in their evaluations, that is the more positive attitude toward
English the higher the listeners would evaluate the English guises, was not borne out. There
might be several explanations for this. Being abroad might lead to a greater openness towards
other cultures as well as a nationalistic view. English is nothing special to them and this might
be the reason why they have not evaluated the English guises higher than the Swedish guises.
Those who do not have much experience or have been exposed to English speakers and their
culture might find English exotic and have therefore judged English guises higher. These
reasons can explain the variety in rating scores.

In Sweden, neither Swedish nor English is inferior to the other language since the two
languages are not used on the same conditions and in the same contexts. There are therefore
not the same questions of identity associated with the languages. Some listeners though
expressed their concern that English has become too influential in Sweden. Romaine writes
that “the way in which linguistic groups are distributed in society and the attitudes which one
group has toward another are important factors in predicting language maintenance and shift”
(1980:227). Since the distribution of people using English as their everyday language in
Sweden is very small I therefore do not think that there are any signs of a language shift in Sweden today (see Melander 2003 forthcoming).
REFERENCES

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


Melander, L. 2003. *English Language Use in the Swedish Daily Press*


