




REVIEW

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Ruth Kircher and Lena Zipp (eds.), *Research methods in language attitudes*.
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Research Methods in Language Attitudes is an extensive and wide-ranging collection of twenty-one up-to-date chapters on language attitude research methods. The volume is divided into four parts, entitled ‘Analysis of the societal treatment of language’, ‘Direct methods of attitude elicitation’, ‘Indirect methods of attitude elicitation’ and ‘Overarching issues in language attitudes research’. The four parts are preceded by the editors’ introduction. Parts 1 to 3 are dedicated to specific research tools and analytic methods. Each chapter in these three parts addresses the same major points: they each introduce a particular method, discuss its strengths and limitations, then provide more detail on planning, design and data analysis; if applicable, they also include sections on further important considerations and new or emerging trends. Part 4 is dedicated to some further important issues in language attitude research, such as data collection in multilingual and signing communities. The chapters close with a list of further readings and particular case studies that indicate how methodological considerations have been applied to an actual study. The editors, Ruth Kircher and Lena Zipp, have tackled a truly monumental task, and they have done a very good job.

The volume starts with a Foreword: a personal view by Howard Giles of how the field and interest in language attitude research have developed. He stresses that this book offers the opportunity to investigate language attitudes from a multitude of methodological perspectives.

In chapter 1, ‘An introduction to language attitudes research’ (pp. 1–16), the editors provide an overview of research on language attitudes. They consider the thorny issue of how to conceptualise and define (language) attitudes and outline why it is important to study them. They also provide a systematic overview of the variety of factors that influence language attitudes and discuss the evaluative dimensions that have surfaced in language attitude research. Finally, they outline the three classic strands in this research tradition – the societal treatment of language, direct methods and indirect methods of attitude elicitation – and locate each book chapter within one of these strands, with the exception of those in the fourth part of the book.

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The first part of the volume is comprised of studies that outline methods suitable for the analysis of the societal treatment of language. Many of these chapters explore a methodological approach in a specific set of texts or activity types. The first chapter in this part is by Olivia Walsh, entitled 'Discourse analysis of print media' (pp. 19–34). The author introduces several types of discourse analysis (content-based approaches, turn-internal semantic and pragmatic approaches, discursive construction approaches) and then homes in on critical discourse analysis (CDA). While the overview is useful, it leaves little room for practical advice on how to do CDA. The author then stresses the strong connection between the exploration of ideologies and attitudes in this research tradition and focuses on language attitudes in France and the UK. The example study shows nicely how the previous discussion and advice can be applied in practice.

Chapter 3, 'Content analysis of social media' by Mercedes Durham (pp. 35–50), is a fast-paced and highly interesting chapter that presents a lot of practical advice. The author provides clear definitions of social media terminology and much helpful guidance on corpus creation and analysis.

Chapter 4, 'Discourse analysis of spoken interaction' by John Bellamy (pp. 51–65), is a very user-friendly chapter. It summarises relevant information on the recording and analysis of spoken interaction and provides invaluable tips on what to look at when conducting a discourse analysis of spoken interaction, and how such an analysis can usefully proceed.

Chapter 5 by Jakob R. E. Leimgruber is entitled 'Analysis of communication accommodation' (pp. 66–78). The fact that attitudes affect the extent to which speakers adapt their communicative resources to their interlocutors is widely known. This chapter focuses on how accommodative behaviour may be used to draw conclusions about language attitudes. The chapter deals primarily with language choice rather than language accommodation within a language. If readers are looking for advice on how to study the impact of language attitudes on communication accommodation, this chapter is not for them. It will, however, be interesting to someone who is looking for advice on how to study language choice and what this may tell us about language attitudes; one caveat here is that relatively little is said about how we draw these conclusions about language attitudes when observing language choice, and the author reminds us that the link between these must be interpreted with caution as many other factors are at play in language choice.

Chapter 6, 'Variable analysis' by James Hawkey (pp. 79–95), demonstrates how independently collected attitude data can be incorporated into a variable analysis, the type of analysis many variationist sociolinguists conduct to explore linguistic and/or social factors that may influence language variation. The author argues that this method 'can be categorised as content analysis of the societal treatment of language' (p. 79); yet how this is the case needs a lot more elaboration. The author proposes to collect attitudes using a questionnaire, which makes this – using the logic presented in the volume – a direct attitude measure, which is then processed further in a variable analysis. While the chapter is a very practical introduction about how to conduct a

variable analysis and incorporate attitude data – with a focus on questionnaire data and qualitative data – it would have been helpful to find out more about score creation for inclusion in the statistical analysis. On the other hand, the outline of how to run a variable analysis is very effective and it is incorporated into an up-to-date view of social meaning that will undoubtedly come in handy for many researchers.

Chapters 7 to 11 are grouped together into part 2, entitled ‘Direct methods of attitude elicitation’. Chapter 7, ‘Semi-structured interviews’ by Petros Karatsareas (pp. 99–113), is a very fitting and straightforward chapter. The section on thematic analysis is particularly effective as this goes beyond what one may find in similar methods chapters. The illustrative case study rounds this chapter off nicely and will put even undergraduate researchers in a position to use semi-structured interviews in their own research. This is followed by a chapter by Michael Hornsby, entitled ‘Focus groups’ (pp. 114–28), which complements chapter 7 well if read consecutively. Hornsby’s contribution is written with the goal of using focus groups to uncover ‘dominant discourses which circulate in relation to commonly held attitudes towards particular languages, or various aspects of language use or linguistics practices’ (p. 114). The technicalities of how to set up focus groups and their advantages and disadvantages are explained very clearly, and a section on data analysis gives some practical pointers on what to do with all the material collected in focus groups. Adding some examples on coding categories would have been helpful for inexperienced researchers.

Chapter 9, ‘Questionnaires to elicit quantitative data’ by Ruth Kircher (pp. 129–44), and chapter 10, ‘Questionnaires to elicit qualitative data’ by Lena Zipp (pp. 145–59), are suitably matched and there is hardly any repetition between the two. These chapters cover everything that would have to be addressed to run a questionnaire-based attitude study. Both are well rounded and to the point. Researchers with different levels of experience will find useful instructions here. The section on reliability and validity is especially welcome: it is very clear and addresses many of the issues that attitude researchers face with these concepts. Some more real-life advice on sampling adapted to attitude research and self-selection in attitude research would have been very welcome here; for example, within the last few years many researchers have switched to paid online recruitment companies that offer balanced and representative samples. I also appreciate the note that it is considered good practice to add the questionnaire used to the appendix of a publication. All in all, these are two excellent and invaluable chapters that, when combined, inform us of everything we need to know about designing an attitude questionnaire.

Chapter 11 by Chris Montgomery introduces readers to perceptual dialectology (pp. 160–81). There are already a variety of introductions to perceptual dialectology available, but the author still manages to write a highly relevant chapter by presenting a methods overview and by updating methods where recent developments have occurred. The chapter then focuses on the draw-a-map task, which is an extremely practical and up-to-date description of this method, and it also outlines some new and emerging trends.

Chapters 12 to 16 are grouped together into part 3, entitled ‘Indirect methods of attitude elicitation’. Chapter 12, ‘The matched-guise technique’ by Verónica Loureiro-Rodríguez and Elif Fidan Acar (pp. 185–202), and chapter 13, ‘The verbal-guise technique’ by Marko Dragojevic and Sean Goatley-Soan (pp. 203–18), are very good overviews of the matched-guise and the verbal-guise techniques respectively. The chapters touch on a wide variety of languages and walk readers through the steps involved in speaker evaluation studies. It is surprising, however, that two separate chapters were required for such similar methods and, inevitably, there is quite a bit of overlap in the discussion of strengths and limitations and the outline of steps involved, which could have been usefully combined. On the other hand, each chapter introduces substantial amounts of new material, which make them unique in certain key aspects. The references to validity are extremely helpful as is the outline of statistical methods.

A parenthetical note seems in order here, since there is no chapter or section dedicated to speaker evaluation studies at the level of variants – chapter 12 mentions these but only under emerging trends and only briefly. Studies that involve manipulation of individual features via the cut-and-paste technique or other methods were used even in the very initial period of sociolinguistics (Labov 1966: chapter 11) and they have been widely used in the last two decades, but their usefulness has more recently been questioned (e.g. Vaughn 2022). Hence an up-to-date chapter on these issues would have been very beneficial.

Chapter 14, ‘The theatre-audience method’ by Tore Kristiansen (pp. 219–33), focuses on one specific method that situates matched- and verbal-guise tests in natural settings, which increases their ecological validity. This is a very detailed chapter, and it is good to have these experiences collected in the volume, as they include information – partly based on hindsight – that may not become apparent in the original studies.

Chapter 15, ‘Experimental methods to elicit language attitudes among children’ by Jasmine M. DeJesus, Radhika Santhanagopalan and Katherine D. Kinzler (pp. 234–49), provides an overview of previous research, findings and assumptions underlying experimental work with children. Due to the number of child-specific methods, the chapter provides more of a review than hands-on advice on how to work with children experimentally. Still, there is no doubt that this contribution contains much useful information on task design and analysis specific to developmental data.

Chapter 16, ‘The implicit association test paradigm’ by Laura Rosseel (pp. 250–67), is a particular highlight of the volume. Implicit Association Tests (IAT) are based on measuring reaction times in categorisation tasks that experimental participants perform. They are aimed at uncovering the extent to which participants automatically associate an attitude object with a certain evaluation, for example positive or negative. The chapter is a very clear and timely description of how to set up an implicit association test with regard to language attitudes. It is sensibly placed in previous language attitude research and provides a very fair outline of the advantages and disadvantages of the method, as well as pitfalls and solutions. It also hints at some further developments and various points to consider when setting up an IAT.

The remaining chapters (part 4) deal with selected overarching issues in the study of language attitudes, and they specify methods for use in particular contexts. Chapter 17, 'Researching language attitudes in multilingual communities' by Bernadette O'Rourke (pp. 271–81), deals with the study of language attitudes in multilingual communities. The author first points to a lack of terminological consensus across disciplines that deal with multilingualism and to the frequent focus on language ideologies. The chapter highlights socially grounded approaches to language attitudes, and touches on various methods that are used when studying language attitudes in multilingual societies. It also outlines the planning and design as well as data analysis of such a study – in very general terms due to the variety of methods available. The two case studies presented here allow more specific methods to emerge when applied to multilingual contexts.

Chapter 18 by Annelies Kusters, Maartje De Meulder and Erin Moriarty is entitled 'Researching language attitudes in signing communities' (pp. 282–96). Here too, terminological issues are addressed: the authors argue that in research on signing communities the term *ideology* appears to be used more widely than the term *attitude*, and it also seems to be used in a fairly broad manner, encompassing various phenomena. The authors provide a good overview of methods used in signing communities when studying language attitudes and of the problems that some methods pose when researching signing communities, such as written surveys. The case studies on attitudes in deaf tourism in Bali, towards International Sign and Flemish Sign Language in Flanders round off the chapter very well, and give a good idea of the richness of methods used in this research strand, ranging from participant observation and interviews to diaries and language portraits.

Chapter 19, 'Researching language attitudes based on historical data' by Anna D. Havinga and Andreas Krogull (pp. 297–312), considers the study of language attitudes in historical data – another area in which language attitude methods need special consideration. In fact, most of the previously discussed methods cannot be used in this field at all. The authors outline the methodological challenges associated with studying language attitudes in historical data – and once again the terminological overlap between ideologies and attitudes finds mention, with a stronger focus on ideologies in historical linguistics. The authors provide some good tips on research planning, design and analysis and round off the chapter with two useful case studies.

Chapter 20, 'The use of priming in language attitudes research' by Abby Walker, Katie Drager and Jennifer Hay (pp. 313–29), represents a bit of an outlier. Initially the links to language attitudes are not completely apparent. The authors define priming for their purposes, outline different priming types and give some practical advice on setting up a priming study. A lot of helpful information is given about lists and norming studies but also several other experimental modalities that overlap somewhat with some of the previous chapters. The connection to language attitudes becomes clear in the case studies where priming is made relevant to attitude research in the discussion of (reverse) affective priming, implicit association tests, higher-order conditioning and methodological issues of experimental attitude research in general. This chapter would have complemented the experimental chapters of part 3 much better as the

priming-based attitude methods discussed here would have represented a natural continuation of the IAT chapter.

Ruth Kircher and James Hawkey's chapter, 'Mixed-methods approaches to the study of language attitudes' (pp. 330–45), concludes the volume. The authors first attempt to define mixed-methods approaches; this is not an easy feat and does not get completely resolved. They provisionally conclude that mixed methods are normally a combination of qualitative and quantitative components, and eventually argue that it is a good idea to mix social treatment studies, direct and indirect methods of elicitation. The authors make some valid points on methods sequencing, data analysis as well as within- and between-subjects designs. They seem to favour the former for mixed-methods research, although it does of course create awareness and recognition issues. Further problems addressed here are that different approaches to the study of language attitudes are difficult to mix because they are based on different methodological assumptions or on different attitude constructs. And indeed, if this collected volume has demonstrated one thing, then it is the flexibility of the attitude construct in different methodological approaches. All in all, Kircher and Hawkey make convincing arguments for mixed-methods approaches and discuss the difficulties that are associated with them. This is an important chapter, but it gets entangled in the limits that the assumed three-part division of language attitude research brings with it.

One might want to question whether this three-part division is still appropriate today. It is not a fortunate choice, as Kristiansen (2020: 9ff.) argues quite rightly. The division is not based on one criterion but several: it shifts from analysis to elicitation methods, and it is difficult to keep methods truly distinct. For example, so-called direct methods, such as interviews and questionnaires, often contain indirect questions; IATs present similar classification issues (see Pantos 2019). While they are normally subsumed under indirect methods by linguists, given that participants are not asked about their language attitudes, many implicit experiments make no attempt to hide the fact that they elicit language attitudes about a specific attitude object. On the other hand, many so-called indirect methods, such as the matched-guise technique, are not considered indirect by many social psychologists, since introspection is required to answer the indirect questions (Pantos 2019). The very important division of experimental versus non-experimental research finds no representation in this categorisation at all. In addition, specific research instruments or methods do not always result in the same type of data regarding consciousness of participants and/or the private nature of the attitudes. The actual outcome depends on the precise study design not the general method selected. Matched-guise studies do not always result in 'more privately held attitudes without the influence of social desirability biases' (p. 339). Then again, the classic terms are now so ingrained in the research culture that any changes – which may create other problems – may not be worth making. If we want to categorise research methods at all, the division has to be critically reflected, however, and it has to remain open to assigning instruments to multiple categories.

While this volume answers many questions, many others must remain open as they still have to be explored in future research. These include the comparability of certain methods,

the attitude constructs that different methods target (under different conditions) and the issue of awareness in speaker evaluation studies. For example, Phrao and Kristiansen (2019: 2) are critical of the fact that researchers have actually not made sufficiently sure that participants remain ‘unaware of the attitudes-to-language nature’ of their speaker evaluation tasks. This volume is ideally placed to help conduct such research and to help make major strides in questioning many of the categories that we may have taken for granted.

The volume is suitable for academics and advanced students. Some chapters may overwhelm novice researchers as they might find it difficult to orient themselves in the research landscape and select appropriate methods for the questions they want to investigate. While some chapters are certainly suitable for undergraduate students, other chapters are clearly not and would need a lot more guidance for use in undergraduate classes. The quality of chapters is very high. All the contributors show detailed knowledge of the subject matter, yet the degree to which chapters are hands on and practical varies. Some chapters can be used as clear guidelines to set up an attitude study, while others require a lot more background reading, which is helpfully provided at the end of every chapter.

In conclusion, this is a very good volume. It represents quite nicely the current state of language attitude research with all its achievements and all of its problems and open questions. It provides detailed summaries of contemporary attitude methods through clear outlines and relevant examples. It represents an ideal starting point for methodological experimentation, innovation and improvement, which will invigorate the field and strengthen methodological rigour in language attitude research. There are no similar handbooks and it will, without a doubt, become and remain the go-to publication for quite some time.

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