

Name: SHUM, Priscilla Lok Chee

SID: 1155009145

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Abstract

Language attitudes refer to attitudes people hold towards language varieties, including accents and dialects. These attitudes are determined not by the aesthetic qualities inherent in languages, but by social convention, and often reflect stereotypical views towards ethnolinguistic groups. Language attitudes are often measured indirectly by asking participants to evaluate speakers of language varieties. Two studies were conducted to measure language attitudes towards accented Cantonese and Putonghua using explicit and implicit measures. The two dialects (Cantonese and Putonghua) and two accents (Hong Kong and Mainland) formed a 2x2 design with four conditions. In study one, 184 local undergraduates were asked to listen to and evaluate several speakers, whom each represent one condition, on two dimensions: competence and warmth. The results showed that competence ratings were determined by neither dialect nor accent, but by accent standardness: native speakers were rated as more competent than non-native speakers. Warmth was determined by both accent and dialect: significant bias towards both ingroup accent (Hong Kong) and dialect (Cantonese) was observed. Participants' attitudes towards Hongkongers and Mainlanders in general did not affect their speaker evaluations. In study two, 77

undergraduates completed an auditory affective priming task with 0ms, 300ms, and variable (about 700ms) Stimulus Onset Asynchrony (SOA) blocks respectively. The results only showed preference for the ingroup dialect (Cantonese) in the variable SOA block, which implies that dialect choice may determine language attitudes when time is limited. Taken together, the two studies show that Hong Kong locals favour ingroup language variations, especially their local dialect: Cantonese.