Metastereotyping, anticipatory epistemic injustice, and defensive storytelling

It can be difficult to have productive conversations with people from different backgrounds because of the biases and preconceived notions everyone carries. Defensive storytelling is one strategy meant to disconfirm negative stereotypes individuals believe others hold about them.

### Introduction

Conversations are so much more than the words that are said. Social systems and structures affect how people engage in conversations (Berger & Packard, 2021; Lewis & Lupyan, 2020; Talafar et al., 2020).

### Key Concepts & Definitions

**Epistemic Injustice**
- Certain groups are systematically silenced (Dotson, 2011; Ichikawa, 2020; Lewis, 2009; Fricker, 2007)

**Metastereotyping**
- Individuals can internalize or perceive negative stereotypes others may hold about them (Amâncio, 2003; Klein & Asp, 2005; Wout et al., 2011)

**Anticipatory Epistemic Injustice**
- These injustices are anticipated by people are silenced by others, and people are silenced by others speak (Lee, 2021; Dotson, 2011)

### Research Questions & Hypotheses

- Are there certain linguistic/structural features of defensive storytelling?
  - Defensive storytelling involves a higher frequency of uncertain language than non-defensive storytelling language.
  - Defensive storytelling involves a higher frequency of negations than non-defensive storytelling language.
- Do participants’ genders affect the frequency of their use of defensive storytelling?
  - Defensive storytelling will be more prevalent in conversations between people of different genders than people of the same gender because there is an added dimension of difference and stereotyping in these conversations.
  - Is defensive storytelling concentrated around specific topics?
  - More politicized topics will more frequently include defensive storytelling events than other, more mundane topics.

### Data Overview

- 155 conversations from the Storycorps “One Small Step” initiative
  - Each between 2 participants
  - ~50 minutes
  - Inherently political in nature
  - Pre-processed to remove third party speakers (i.e. facilitators)
  - Tagged with events of defensive storytelling
  - At least two taggers had to identify an utterance as containing defensive storytelling for it to be considered a “valid” defensive storytelling event

### Methods

**Hedging & Uncertain Language**
- List of hedging words and phrases
- Frequency of hedging words
- Chi-squared tests

**Negations**
- Defined negation structure
- Calculated the frequency of negations
- Chi-squared test

**Topic Analysis**
- Clustered topics into thematic subgroups
- ANOVA to test for a difference in frequency of defensive storytelling across clusters
- Used Tukey HSD to identify which pairs of clusters are significantly different
- Repeated excluding trivial clusters

**Limitations & Future Research**
- Events of defensive storytelling may be clustered around certain topics
- While identity factors such as gender may impact who does defensive storytelling, this idea was not supported in this dataset
- There are identifiable linguistic features of defensive storytelling, such as hedging and negations